

AZEL AMES

THE MAYFLOWER AND
HER LOG; JULY 15,
1620-MAY 6, 1621.
VOLUME 3

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**The Mayflower and Her Log; July
15, 1620-May 6, 1621. Volume 3**

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CHAPTER V

THE OFFICERS AND CREW OF THE MAYFLOWER

The officers and crew of the MAY-FLOWER were obviously important factors in the success of the Pilgrim undertaking, and it is of interest to know what we may concerning them. We have seen that the "pilot," John Clarke, was employed by Weston and Cushman, even before the vessel upon which he was to serve had been found, and he had hence the distinction of being the first man "shipped" of the MAY-FLOWER'S complement. It is evident that he was promptly hired on its being known that he had recently returned from a voyage to Virginia in the cattle-ship FALCON, as certain to be of value in the colonists' undertakings.

Knowing that the Adventurers' agents were seeking both a ship and a master for her, it was the natural thing for the latter,

that he should propose the Captain under whom he had last sailed, on much the same voyage as that now contemplated. It is an interesting fact that something of the uncertainty which for a time existed as to the names and features of the Pilgrim barks attaches the names and identity of their respective commanders. The "given" name of "Master" Reynolds, "pilott" and "Master" of the SPEED WELL, does not appear, but the assertion of Professor Arber, though positive enough, that "the Christian name of the Captain of the MAY-FLOWER is not known," is not accepted by other authorities in Pilgrim history, though it is true that it does not find mention in the contemporaneous accounts of the Pilgrim ship and her voyage.

There is no room for doubt that the Captain of the FALCON—whose release from arrest while under charge of piracy the Earl of Warwick procured, that he might take command of the above-named cattle-ship on her voyage to Virginia, as hereinafter shown—was Thomas Jones. The identity of this man and "Master Jones" who assumed command of the MAY-FLOWER—with the former mate of the FALCON, John Clarke, as his first officer—is abundantly certified by circumstantial evidence of the strongest kind, as is also the fact that he commanded the ship DISCOVERY a little later.

With the powerful backing of such interested friends as the Earl of Warwick and Sir Ferdinando Gorges, undoubtedly already in league with Thomas Weston, who probably made the contract with Jones, as he had with Clarke, the suggestion of the

latter as to the competency and availability of his late commander would be sure of prompt approval, and thus, in all probability, Captain Thomas Jones, who finds his chief place in history—and a most important one—as Master of the MAY-FLOWER, came to that service.

In 1619, as appears by Neill, the Virginia Company had one John Clarke in Ireland, "buying cattle for Virginia." We know that Captain Jones soon sailed for Virginia with cattle, in the FALCON, of 150 tons, and as this was the only cattle ship in a long period, we can very certainly identify Clarke as the newly-hired mate of the MAY-FLOWER, who, Cushman says (letter of June 11/21, 1620), "went last year to Virginia with a ship of kine." As 1620 did not begin until March 25, a ship sailing in February would have gone out in 1619, and Jones and Clarke could easily have made the voyage in time to engage for the MAY-FLOWER in the following June. "Six months after Jones's trip in the latter" (i.e. after his return from the Pilgrim voyage), Neill says, "he took the DISCOVERY (60 tons) to Virginia, and then northward, trading along the coast. The Council for New England complained of him to the Virginia Company for robbing the natives on this voyage. He stopped at Plymouth (1622), and, taking advantage of the distress for food he found there, was extortionate in his prices. In July, 1625, he appeared at Jamestown, Virginia, in possession of a Spanish frigate, which he said had been captured by one Powell, under a Dutch commission, but it was thought a resumption of his

old buccaneering practices. Before investigation he sickened and died."

That Jones was a man of large experience, and fully competent in his profession, is beyond dispute. His disposition, character, and deeds have been the subject of much discussion. By most writers he is held to have been a man of coarse, "unsympathetic" nature, "a rough sea-dog," capable of good feeling and kindly impulses at times, but neither governed by them nor by principle. That he was a "highwayman of the seas," a buccaneer and pirate, guilty of blood for gold, there can be no doubt. Certainly nothing could justify the estimate of him given by Professor Arber, that "he was both fair-minded and friendly toward the Pilgrim Fathers," and he certainly stands alone among writers of reputation in that opinion. Jones's selfishness,

[Bradford himself—whose authority in the matter will not be doubted—says (Historie, Mass. ed. p. 112): "As this calamitie, the general sickness, fell among ye passengers that were to be left here to plant, and were basted ashore and made to drinke water, that the sea-men might have ye more bear [beer] and one in his sickness desiring but a small can of beare it was answered that if he were their own father he should have none." Bradford also shows (op. cit. p. 153) the rapacity of Jones, when in command of the DISCOVERY, in his extortionate demands upon the Plymouth planters, notwithstanding their necessities.]

threats, boorishness, and extortion, to say nothing of his exceedingly bad record as a pirate, both in East and West Indian

waters, compel a far different estimate of him as a man, from that of Arber, however excellent he was as a mariner. Professor Arber dissents from Goodwin's conclusion that Captain Jones of the DISCOVERY was the former Master of the MAY- FLOWER, but the reasons of his dissent are by no means convincing. He argues that Jones would not have accepted the command of a vessel so much smaller than his last, the DISCOVERY being only one third the size of the MAY-FLOWER. Master-mariners, particularly when just returned from long and unsuccessful voyages, especially if in bad repute,—as was Jones,— are obliged to take such employment as offers, and are often glad to get a ship much smaller than their last, rather than remain idle. Moreover, in Jones's case, if, as appears, he was inclined to buccaneering, the smaller ship would serve his purpose—as it seems it did satisfactorily. Nor is the fact that Bradford speaks of him—although previously so well acquainted—as "one Captain Jones," to be taken as evidence, as Arber thinks, that the Master of the DISCOVERY was some other of the name. Bradford was writing history, and his thought just then was the especial Providence of God in the timely relief afforded their necessities by the arrival of the ships with food, without regard to the individuals who brought it, or the fact that one was an acquaintance of former years. On the other hand, Winslow—in his "Good Newes from New England"— records the arrival of the two ships in August, 1622, and says, "the one as I take [recollect] it, was called the DISCOVERY, Captain Jones having command

thereof," which on the same line of argument as Arber's might be read, "our old acquaintance Captain Jones, you know"! If the expression of Bradford makes against its being Captain Jones, formerly of the MAY- FLOWER, Winslow's certainly makes quite as much for it, while the fact which Winslow recites, viz. that the DISCOVERY, under Jones, was sailing as consort to the SPARROW, a ship of Thomas Weston,—who employed him for the MAY-FLOWER, was linked with him in the Gorges conspiracy, and had become nearly as degenerate as he,—is certainly significant. There are still better grounds, as will appear in the closely connected relations of Jones, for holding with Goodwin rather than with Arber in the matter. The standard authority in the case is the late Rev. E. D. Neill, D. D., for some years United States consul at Dublin, who made very considerable research into all matters pertaining to the Virginia Companies, consulting their original records and "transactions," the Dutch related documents, the "Calendars of the East India Company," etc. Upon him and his exhaustive work all others have largely drawn,—notably Professor Arber himself,—and his conclusions seem entitled to the same weight here which Arber gives them in other relations. Dr. Neill is clearly of opinion that the Captains of the MAY-FLOWER and the DISCOVERY were identical, and this belief is shared by such authorities in Pilgrim literature as Young, Prince, Goodwin, and Davis, and against this formidable consensus of opinion, Arber, unless better supported, can hardly hope to prevail.

The question of Jones's duplicity and fraud, in bringing the Pilgrims to land at Cape Cod instead of the "neighbor-hood of Hudson's River," has been much mooted and with much diversity of opinion, but in the light of the subjoined evidence and considerations it seems well-nigh impossible to acquit him of the crime—for such it was, in inception, nature, and results, however overruled for good.

The specific statements of Bradford and others leave no room for doubt that the MAY-FLOWER Pilgrims fully intended to make their settlement somewhere in the region of the mouth of "Hudson's River." Morton states in terms that Captain Jones's "engagement was to Hudson's River." Presumably, as heretofore noted, the stipulation of his charter party required that he should complete his outward voyage in that general locality. The northern limits of the patents granted in the Pilgrim interest, whether that of John Wincob (or Wincop) sealed June 9/ 19, 1619, but never used, or the first one to John Pierce, of February 2/12, 1620, were, of course, brought within the limits of the First (London) Virginia Company's charter, which embraced, as is well-known, the territory between the parallels of 34 deg. and 41 deg. N. latitude. The most northerly of these parallels runs but about twenty miles to the north of the mouth of "Hudson's River." It is certain that the Pilgrims, after the great expense, labor, and pains of three years, to secure the protection of these Patents, would not willingly or deliberately, have planted themselves outside that protection, upon territory where they

had none, and where, as interlopers, they might reasonably expect trouble with the lawful proprietors. Nor was there any reason why, if they so desired, they should not have gone to "Hudson's River" or its vicinity, unless it was that they had once seemed to recognize the States General of Holland as the rightful owners of that territory, by making petition to them, through the New Netherland Company, for their authority and protection in settling there. But even this fact constituted no moral or legal bar to such action, if desirable First, because it appears certain that, whatever the cause, they "broke off" themselves their negotiations with the Dutch,—whether on account of the inducements offered by Thomas Weston, or a doubt of the ability of the Dutch to maintain their claim to that region, and to protect there, or both, neither appears nor matters. Second, because the States General—whether with knowledge that they of Leyden had so "broken off" or from their own doubts of their ability to maintain their claim on the Hudson region, does not appear—rejected the petition made to them in the Pilgrims' behalf. It is probable that the latter was the real reason, from the fact that the petition was twice rejected.

In view of the high opinion of the Leyden brethren, entertained, as we know, by the Dutch, it is clear that the latter would have been pleased to secure them as colonists; while if at all confident of their rights to the territory, they must have been anxious to colonize it and thus confirm their hold, increase their revenues as speedily as possible, and

Third, because it appears upon the showing of the petition itself, made by the New Netherland Company (to which the Leyden leaders had looked, doubtless on account of its pretensions, for the authority and protection of the States General, as they afterward did to the English Virginia Company for British protection), that this Company had lost its own charter by expiration, and hence had absolutely nothing to offer the Leyden people beyond the personal and associate influence of its members, and the prestige of a name that had once been potential. In fact, the New Netherland Company was using the Leyden congregation as a leverage to pry for itself from the States General new advantages, larger than it had previously enjoyed.

Moreover it appears by the evidence of both the petition of the Directors of the New Netherland Company to the Prince of Orange (February 2/12, 1619/20), and the letters of Sir Dudley Carleton, the British ambassador at the Hague, to the English Privy Council, dated February 5/15, 1621/22, that, up to this latter date the Dutch had established no colony

[British State Papers, Holland, Bundle 165. Sir Dudley Carleton's Letters. "They have certain Factors there, continually resident, trading with savages . . . but I cannot learn of any colony, either I already planted there by these people, or so much as intended." Sir Dudley Carleton's Letters.]

on the territory claimed by them at the Hudson, and had no other representation there than the trading-post of a commercial

company whose charter had expired. There can be no doubt that the Leyden leaders knew, from their dealings with the New Netherland Company, and the study of the whole problem which they evidently made, that this region was open to them or any other parties for habitation and trade, so far as any prior grants or charters under the Dutch were concerned, but they required more than this.

To Englishmen, the English claim to the territory at "Hudson's River" was valid, by virtue of the discovery of the Cabots, under the law of nations as then recognized, notwithstanding Hudson's more particular explorations of those parts in 1609, in the service of Holland, especially as no colony or permanent occupancy of the region by the Dutch had been made.

Professor John Fiske shows that "it was not until the Protestant England of Elizabeth had come to a life-and-death grapple with Spain, and not until the discovery of America had advanced much nearer completion, so that its value began to be more correctly understood, that political and commercial motives combined in determining England to attack Spain through America, and to deprive her of supremacy in the colonial and maritime world. Then the voyages of the Cabots assumed an importance entirely new, and could be quoted as the basis of a prior claim on the part of the English Crown, to lands which it [through the Cabots] had discovered."

Having in mind the terrible history of slaughter and reprisal between the Spanish and French (Huguenot) settlers in Florida

in 1565-67,

[Bancroft, History of the United States, vol. i. p. 68; Fiske, Discovery of America, vol. ii. p. 511 et seq. With the terrible experience of the Florida plantations in memory, the far-sighted leaders of the Leyden church proposed to plant under the shelter of an arm strong enough to protect them, and we find the Directors of the New Netherland Company stating that the Leyden party (the Pilgrims) can be induced to settle under Dutch auspices, "provided, they would be guarded and preserved from all violence on the part of other potentates, by the authority, and under the protection of your Princely Excellency and the High and Mighty States General." Petition of the Directors of the New Netherland Company to the Prince of Orange.]

the Pilgrims recognized the need of a strong power behind them, under whose aegis they might safely plant, and by virtue of whose might and right they could hope to keep their lives and possessions. The King of England had, in 1606, granted charters to the two Virginia Companies, covering all the territory in dispute, and, there could be no doubt, would protect these grants and British proprietorship therein, against all comers. Indeed, the King (James I.) by letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, his ambassador at the Hague, under date of December 15, 1621, expressly claimed his rights in the New Netherland territory and instructed him to impress upon the government of the States General his Majesty's claim,—"who, 'jure prime occupation' hath good and sufficient title to these parts." There can be no question that the

overtures of Sandys, Weston, and others to make interest for them with one of these English Companies, agreed as well with both the preferences and convictions of the Leyden Pilgrims, as they did with the hopes and designs of Sir Ferdinando Gorges. In the light of these facts, there appears to have been neither legal nor moral bar to the evident intention of the Pilgrims to settle in the vicinity of "Hudson's River," if they so elected. In their light, also, despite the positive allegations of the truthful but not always reliable Morton, his charges of intrigue between the Dutch and Master Jones of the MAY-FLOWER, to prevent the settlement of his ship's company at "Hudson's River," may well be doubted. Writing in "New England's Memorial" in 1669, Morton says: "But some of the Dutch, having notice of their intentions, and having thoughts about the same time of erecting a plantation there likewise, they fraudulently hired the said Jones, by delays while they were in England, and now under pretence of the shoals the dangers of the Monomoy Shoals off Cape Cod to disappoint them in going thither." He adds: "Of this plot between the Dutch and Mr. Jones, I have had late and certain intelligence." If this intelligence was more reliable than his assertion concerning the responsibility of Jones for the "delays while they were in England," it may well be discredited, as not the faintest evidence appears to make him responsible for those delays, and they are amply accounted for without him. Without questioning the veracity of Morton (while suggesting his many known errors, and that the lapse of time made it easy to misinterpret even

apparently certain facts), it must be remembered that he is the original sponsor for the charge of Dutch intrigue with Jones, and was its sole support for many years. All other writers who have accepted and indorsed his views are of later date, and but follow him, while Bradford and Winslow, who were victims of this Dutch conspiracy against them, if it ever existed, were entirely silent in their writings upon the matter, which we may be sure they would not have been, had they suspected the Dutch as prime movers in the treachery. That there was a conspiracy to accomplish the landing of the MAY-FLOWER planters at a point north of "the Hudson" (in fact, north of the bounds defined by the (first) Pierce patent, upon which they relied), i.e. north of 41 deg. N. latitude,—is very certain; but that it was of Dutch origin, or based upon motives which are attributed to the Dutch, is clearly erroneous. While the historical facts indicate an utter lack of motive for such an intrigue on the part of the Dutch, either as a government or as individuals, there was no lack of motive on the part of certain others, who, we can but believe, were responsible for the conspiracy. Moreover, the chief conspirators were such, that, even if the plot was ultimately suspected by the Pilgrims, a wise policy—indeed, self-preservation— would have dictated their silence. That the Dutch were without sufficient motive or interest has been declared. That the States General could have had no wish to reject so exceptionally excellent a body of colonists as subjects, and as tenants to hold and develop their disputed territory—if in position to receive them

and guarantee them protection— is clear. The sole objection that could be urged against them was their English birth, and with English regiments garrisoning the Dutch home cities, and foreigners of every nation in the States General's employ, by land and by sea, such an objection could have had no weight. Indeed, the Leyden party proposed, if they effected satisfactory arrangements with the States General (as stated by the Directors of the New Netherland Company), "to plant there [at "Hudson's River"] a new commonwealth, all under the order and command of your Princely Excellency and their High Mightinesses the States General: The Leyden Pilgrims were men who kept their agreements.

The Dutch trading-companies, who were the only parties in the Low Countries who could possibly have had any motive for such a conspiracy, were at this time themselves without charters, and the overtures of the principal company, made to the government in behalf of themselves and the Leyden brethren, had recently, as we have seen, been twice rejected. They had apparently, therefore, little to hope for in the near future; certainly not enough to warrant expenditure and the risk of disgraceful exposure, in negotiations with a stranger—an obscure ship-master—to change his course and land his passengers in violation of the terms of his charter-party;—negotiations, moreover, in which neither of the parties could well have had any guaranty of the other's good faith.

But, as previously asserted, there was a party—to whom such

knavery was an ordinary affair—who had ample motive, and of whom Master Thomas Jones was already the very willing and subservient ally and tool, and had been such for years. Singularly enough, the motive governing this party was exactly the reverse of that attributed—though illogically and without reason—to the Dutch. In the case of the latter, the alleged animus was a desire to keep the Pilgrim planters away from their "Hudson's River" domain. In the case of the real conspirators, the purpose was to secure these planters as colonists for, and bring them to, the more northern territory owned by them. It is well known that Sir Ferdinando Gorges was the leading spirit of the "Second Virginia Company," as he also became (with the Earl of Warwick a close second) of "The Council for the Affairs of New England," of which both men were made "Governors," in November of 1620, when the Council practically superseded the "Second Virginia Company." The Great Charter for "The Council of Affairs of New England," commonly known as "The Council for New England," issued Tuesday, November 3/13, 1620, and it held in force till Sunday, June 7/17, 1635.

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