

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

ALDEN, JOHN AND PRISCILLA, FAMILY SITES

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Alden, John and Priscilla, Family Sites

Other Name/Site Number: Alden House (DUX.38) and Original Alden Homestead Site (aka Alden I Site, DUX-HA-3)

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 105 Alden Street

Not for publication:

City/Town: Duxbury

Vicinity:

State: Massachusetts

County: Plymouth

Code: 023

Zip Code: 02331

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: X

Public-State: \_\_\_

Public-Federal: \_\_\_

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: \_\_\_

Site: X

Structure: \_\_\_

Object: \_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

\_\_\_

\_\_\_

2

Noncontributing

3 buildings

\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_ structures

1 objects

4 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: Original Alden Homestead

Designated a National Historic Landmark

OCT 06 2008

by the Secretary of the Interior

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ Entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_ Determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ Removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic:	DOMESTIC	Sub:	Single Dwelling
Current:	RECREATION AND CULTURE	Sub:	Museum
	SOCIAL		Monument/Marker
	EDUCATION		Meeting Hall
	DOMESTIC		Library
	LANDSCAPE		Single Dwelling
			Park

**7. DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: COLONIAL: Postmedieval

MATERIALS:

- Foundation: Stone
- Walls: Wood
- Roof: Wood
- Other: Brick (Chimney)

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**SUMMARY**

The John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites in Duxbury, Massachusetts, consist of two discontinuous parcels, the ca. 1700 Alden House and the ca. 1630 Original Alden Homestead Site. Both parcels were part of the 1628 100-acre grant to *Mayflower* passenger John Alden and his family. The property is being nominated under Criteria 1, 2, and 6 and Criterion Exception 8.

This property owes its prominence to the national cultural impact of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, a poem about the courtship of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins published in 1858 by their descendant Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The desire of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Americans for a more human, family-focused story about the cultural and historical origins of the United States quickly made *The Courtship* the most popular national origins story in American folklore. The public's embrace of *The Courtship* and its incorporation into American folklore made the surviving Alden House the most important physical site associated with John and Priscilla and a focus of on-going national public interest, especially since descendants continued to live in and own the house. This property illustrates, in a highly visible way, a link between folklore and material culture.

In addition, no other site is so prominently associated with John Alden (ca. 1598/9-1687), a person of national significance in the colonial period. Ship's cooper on the *Mayflower* and a founder of the Plymouth Colony, Alden held positions of high economic and political importance for almost the entire seventy-one year history of the Plymouth Colony (1620-1691), a span of public service unrivaled in seventeenth-century colonial America and perhaps in the entire colonial period. He served the colony in almost every available capacity save that of governor (although he served as deputy or acting governor on two occasions).

The Original Alden Homestead Site, the actual Duxbury, Massachusetts, home of *Mayflower* Pilgrims John and Priscilla (Mullins) Alden and their children, was the location of important fieldwork and analysis by Roland Wells Robbins (1908-1987), a pioneer in the field of historical archeology. Although his early work on Thoreau's Walden Pond cabin site or the Saugus Iron Works may be better known, Robbins's work at the Alden site represented his work at the top of his professional form. Consequently, the Original Alden Homestead is a site of national significance in the development of the field of historical archeology and is an example of a site of exceptional national significance with regard to the history of archeology.

Roland Wells Robbins located and excavated a foundation of the Alden home in 1960. This work revealed a structure whose early date (ca. 1630), seeming permanent construction, and narrow dimensions made it a discovery of major scientific importance. It also yielded nationally significant data that shed light on the lifeways of the first English settlers in New England and North America. A 2006 geophysical survey of the area surrounding the foundation shows that the site retains very high integrity. Moreover, this survey revealed a number of sub-surface anomalies of potentially manmade (cultural) origin. Since 1960, several historical archeologists have advanced hypotheses about the interpretation of this site in light of subsequent findings at other sites. As a result, the original Alden Homestead Site has high potential to yield additional information that would address nationally significant research questions and make a major contribution to the existing archeological literature on early seventeenth-century English settlement sites in North America.

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**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**Alden House (contributing building)

The property is located in a mixed residential/commercial (but primarily residential) setting in Duxbury, Massachusetts, and is sited on a 2.45-acre lot accessed by a gravel driveway from Alden Street. This lot is bounded on the north by Alden Street, on the west by a lot occupied by a twentieth-century residential dwelling, on the south by land owned by the Town of Duxbury, and on the east by a lot occupied by a twentieth-century residential dwelling. The parcel itself is occupied by four structures, the Alden House and three noncontributing structures: a modern (1999) colonial-replica post-and-beam, timber box frame “barn” that houses meeting, office, and storage space, a caretaker’s cottage originally constructed in the 1930s but thoroughly renovated in 2004, and a small standalone structure previously housing restrooms. The Alden House is an outstanding example of a timber box frame, plank-sheathed, five-bay, two-story, central chimney, hall and parlor, gable roof house with an ell, representative of First Period New England colonial architecture. The lot that contains the Alden House was part of the original 1628 100-acre Duxbury grant to *Mayflower* Pilgrim John Alden. This parcel has never left the ownership of the Alden family. The house has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978.

Alden House Exterior

The house faces south. The front or southern elevation of the house has a five-bay façade with an off-center entrance located in the second bay from the west. The three first story windows on this façade are simply-framed, single-hung 12/12 sash that were installed about 1920. The four second story windows are single-hung 6/6 sash. The façade is sheathed with white cedar shingles.

The eastern elevation has five asymmetrically spaced windows—two on the first story, two on the second story, and one at the attic level. All of the windows save the northerly most on the first story and the attic window are single-hung 12/12 sash. The first story window at the northern end of the elevation is 12-pane casement and the attic window is single-hung 6/6 sash. There is a modern external cellar bulkhead attached to this elevation and located at the approximate midpoint of the main structure.

The northern or rear elevation of the main structure has six asymmetrically-spaced windows—three each on the first and second stories. The two windows on the eastern end of the first story are single-hung 12/12 sash, but the single window on the western end of the first story is single-hung 6/6 sash. The ell joins the main structure in-between these windows at approximately the midpoint of the house. On the second story there is a single-hung 6/6 sash window on the right or west side of the ell roof ridgeline and a single-hung 8/8 sash window to the left or east of the ridgeline. On the western end of the second story a smaller 12-pane casement window was squeezed into the space between the larger window and the ell roof ridgeline about 1930 by Charles L. Alden.

The western elevation, like the eastern elevation, has five asymmetrically spaced windows—two on the first story, two on the second story, and one at the attic level. The two windows on the second story and the northern end window on the first story are all single-hung 9/9 sash. The southern end window on the first story is single-hung 6/6 sash. The attic window is single-hung 12/12 sash.

The ell attached to the main structure on the north elevation is one story with a gable roof and an interior chimney. A wooden entry door with a 12-pane window and a single single-hung 8/8 sash window are located on the east elevation. The north elevation of the ell has two windows: a single-hung 8-pane window installed by Charles L. Alden about 1930, and a single-hung 9/6 sash. The west elevation of the ell has a wooden entry

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door with a 12-pane window and two single-hung 8/8 sash windows. The ell roof and walls are sheathed with white cedar shingles like the main structure.

The Alden House has a gable roof with a central chimney. The roof is sheathed with white cedar shingles.

### Alden House Interior

The front entrance door opens onto the entry hall. The stair is built against the central chimney mass opposite the front door in the entrance hall. To the right, or east, a stile and rail, two feather-edged panel door enters the Great Room and to the left, or west, a similar door enters to the Parlor. The stair is entered to the left turning right with winders against the fireplace mass, thence straight up to the hall chamber. This run is shielded from the entry by feather-edged vertical tongue-and-groove sheathing. Three-quarters of the way to the top of the stairs one may turn 90° and step-up onto a narrow shelf on the fireplace mass and walk along the shelf to steps into the parlor chamber.

The Great Room, to the east of the entry hall, which also has a door from the kitchen at the rear, has a painted pine floor that is five inches lower than the kitchen. The Great Room was originally (with the room above and a shed out back where part of the kitchen is today) the entire house. Overall, this room measures approximately 17-foot square, making it, together with the Master Chamber directly above, the largest room in the house. The windows of this room are deeply recessed and the boarding around them, as well as much of the other eighteenth-century woodwork in the house, shows the marks of the tools by which they were hand-smoothed. Through the center of the ceiling, half exposed, runs a 12" x 12" summer beam, one of the main timbers of the house. It contains chamfered edges and stops indicative of early construction. The plastered ceiling, a mixture of crushed clam shells and horsehair, is essentially unchanged since the eighteenth century. The fireplace, or west partition, is paneled and a corner cupboard was added to the interior northwest corner at some later date. Except for the eighteenth-century paneling on the fireplace wall, the walls in this room include an interior wall of lath and plaster with a space between it and the outer wall. It is believed that the second interior lathed and plastered walls, as well as the paneling around the fireplace, were done within a half-century after the house was built. The paneled doors still have the butterfly and HL hinges secured with wrought-iron nails. In fact, the other rooms of the house have virtually every type of early hardware employed. For example, there are H, ornamented H, and HL hinges, butterfly, strap, wedge and strap, and rare rat-tail hinges. There are triangular latches and other latches from successive colonial periods.

The Great Room has a cellar dug beneath it where dry-laid stone walls have been placed under the ground sills. The cellar floor is laid with river cobbles and the floor joists are logs with top hewn ends placed directly on the stone walls but below the 6" x 8" sill. The joists run from the east wall to the intermediate foundation wall and then to the fireplace brick almost on grade. Access was gained by a hatch in the Great Room floor whereas as now it is gained by a modern external cellar bulkhead. A low stone wall or step separated this cellar space from another and probably older cellar space under the kitchen and buttery. The cellar floor under the Great Room is five inches lower than the adjacent older cellar under the kitchen and buttery, reflecting the difference in the respective floors above.

The parlor occupies the southwest corner of the first story directly under the parlor chamber, and it is entered from the front entry hall and from both the kitchen and the kitchen chamber at the rear. It measures about 12' x 17'. In this room, the timber box frame is trimmed or cased-out with applied wood and quirked beads. The south wall is double-plank sheathed and plastered, while the west wall is single-sheathed and plastered with the sill plate exposed. The room also contains a nineteenth-century "Count Rumford Fireplace"—a cast-iron "surround" encompassing a shallow-flared hearth—which was installed in the old fireplace to improve its

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heating ability. (A similar Rumford iron surround was removed from the Great Room fireplace about 1920.) The parlor also has painted pine flooring, painted plastered walls and ceiling, and a paneled east fireplace partition. A unique feature of this paneling is a closet panel to the left of the Rumford insert which opens to a small low closet with parget walls formed by brick of the main fireplace mass on the right and the back of the kitchen cooking fireplace and its oven. The kitchen flue rises up from the back to lean against and be engaged with the main mass before it passes the second floor north girt.

The kitchen is located on the north side of the first story. It measures roughly 10 ½' x 26 ½'. A huge fireplace of original bricks laid in clay with a beehive oven at the back and connecting to the central chimney mass, dominates the room. There is a steep stairway leading from the east side of the kitchen fireplace to the upstairs workroom. The use of the term "staircase" is appropriate as these stairs are enclosed within a casement of boards, keeping the heat and smoke in the kitchen.

On the east side of the kitchen there is floor access (via a hole with a small, wide access stair that is large enough for passage of a hogs head barrel) to the cellar below. This cellar has a floor of large flat field stones indicating use as a dairy and work space. The foundation walls are of dry-laid field stones. On the east side of this cellar an oak sill was dated to 1636 or 1698 by dendrochronological analysis.

The buttery, which is above the northeasterly end of the cellar, is located in the northeast corner of the first story and is entered from the kitchen. This room measures about 10 ½' x 4'.

At the west end of the kitchen is the kitchen chamber, or "Borning Room." It is a small room measuring roughly 7' x 11'. The 2002-03 historical architectural survey and dendrochronological testing proved that the room was not built until the early eighteenth century. Wide vertical boards are evident on the inner wall, including one that is 28"-wide. The kitchen chamber has a two-paneled door into the parlor and all walls are plank-sheathed and lath and plastered, as is the ceiling; the corner post and down braces are exposed. The door to the kitchen is battened feather-edged sheathing.

In the early to mid-1800s, an ell, perhaps originally an independent structure, was added to the north elevation at the back of the Alden House. The one-story structure is about 24 feet by 16 ½ feet and is divided into two rooms. This ell provided additional storage space and functioned as the "back" or "summer kitchen" once a cooking stove was installed. This ell had fallen into disrepair but it was restored several years ago to function as a gift shop and reception area.

The master chamber is located on the east side of the staircase and occupies the southeastern corner of the second story. It is interesting in that the post-and-beam construction used throughout the house is plainly visible here. Situated directly over the first floor Great Room and similarly a part of the original structure, it is slightly larger (approximately 18 feet by 17 feet) because the walls have not been "thickened" by lathes and plaster. Although there is a small fireplace on the west partition, this wall construction perhaps made the master chamber more difficult to heat in the long, cold New England winters, but it provides modern visitors with better insight into just how a colonial-era house was built. Details of wood-frame construction are clearly visible in the room. In the southeast corner heavy oak framing timbers are pegged together. The heavy upright posts clearly resemble a gunstock for which they are named. The smaller diagonal timbers called "wind" or "down" braces provide vertical stability. Vertical planking that extends from plate to sill was affixed to the exterior of the house making a wall only a few inches thick, with shingles on the outside and lathe and plaster within. The remaining original walls are riven lath over the vertical plank sheathing with one window on the east side and two on the front or south. Another unusual feature of the master chamber is a real, walk-in closet, a feature seldom found in colonial-era homes where wardrobes were the order of the day for clothes storage.

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Like the first story Great Room, the master chamber has a summer beam running from an east girt to the fireplace girt with chamfers and pips.

The Parlor Chamber or “Henry’s Room” is a smaller upstairs bedroom located on the west side of the “good morning” staircase in the southwestern corner of the second story. It measures about 11 ½' x 17'. On the north end of the east wall is a closet door leading to a closet abutting the chimney. The south wall is double plank-sheathed and plastered, while the west wall is single-sheathed and plastered with the sill plate exposed. Between the parlor chamber and the master chamber on the south face where the staircase ascends from the first floor, there is a small room or passageway located directly above the front entrance door that connects the two rooms. The closet-like room was a “front clothespress” provided with hooks and wallpaper in the early nineteenth century. It was used to hold the growing accumulation of off-season clothes which could not be kept with those in use in the family’s bureaus and chests. When old wallpaper was removed it was discovered that the rough wooden surfaces had been given an “undercoat” with pages from an old newspaper—the conservative Federalist *Columbian Centinel* of Boston—dating from 1813.

Located on the northern side of the second floor, the workroom is located directly over the kitchen. It measures about 10 ½' x by 21'. One interesting feature of this room is that one half of it is painted and papered and the other is not, a feature that reflects a division of the house between heirs in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as described below.

To the west of the workroom is the northwest chamber, or Aunt Polly’s Room, a small bedroom that measures about 7 ½' x 10 ½'.

To the east of the workroom is another small bedroom called the Northeast Chamber. It measures about 8 ½' x 10 ½', and it has an eighteenth-century paneled partition that contrasts with the modern milled boards that divide Aunt Polly’s Room from the workroom.

The attic, reached by stairs from the workroom (a continuation of the stair from the kitchen), is framed with principal rafters with collar ties and sawn purlins, and pine sheathing run from eave to ridge. The second-story floor boards and attic floor boards are sawn pine. They are half-lapped at the edges and were not originally nailed in place to allow them to be pushed up and moved aside so food materials could be handed up into the spaces for storage.

### *Alden House—Historic Appearance*

#### Phase I (ca. 1653-1700)

Based on historic architectural analysis done in 2002-4 by Willard E. Gwilliam, FAIA, former Director of Architecture at Colonial Williamsburg, it is believed that the Alden House began as a timber box frame, vertical plank-sheathed, three bay, single pile, two story, end chimney, hall and entry house with a lean-to.<sup>1</sup> The appearance was post-medieval with riven oak clapboards, small casement windows, and a wood shingle or clapboard roof. It was constructed during the First Period of New England colonial architecture. The original three bays were timber box-framed in oak with clean chamfers, plain stops, and pips. The frame was vertical

<sup>1</sup> The information and claims in this section, unless otherwise indicated, are all based on the analysis of Willard E. Gwilliam, FAIA, and his personal communications with the author; James W. Baker, “The Alden House at Houndsditch House Tour,” draft II, April 27, 2004, copy in possession of the author; James W. Baker, *Alden House History: A Work in Progress* (Duxbury, MA: privately printed by The Alden Kindred of America, 2006); and Dorothy Wentworth, *The Alden Family in the Alden House* (Duxbury, MA: Duxbury Rural and Historical Society, 1980). An Alden descendant, Gwilliam has been conducting the most thorough analysis of the house and its construction undertaken to date.

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plank-sheathed in white pine. Taking advantage of the unusual strength, longevity, and economy of plank-sheathing, clapboards were attached to the exterior and lath and plaster applied to the interior creating an exterior wall of only 3-inch thickness. This thin wall required the windows to be projected on the exterior. A strong possibility also exists that the original house was two bays wide with an end fireplace on the hall with the front facing south. If it was three-bays wide, the fireplace mass was in the narrow chimney bay behind the entry with the stair rising between it and the west wall. This plan and pattern is found elsewhere in the Plymouth region, including the extant 1640 Sparrow House on Summer Street and the Churchill House on Sandwich Street, both in Plymouth.

The Alden House was either the second or possibly the third house built on John Alden's Duxbury property.<sup>2</sup> A date for the original construction of the Alden House cannot be determined with precision. A construction date of 1653 existed in family lore current in the 1880s, based (it was said by family members who then lived in the house) on the discovery of this date carved on a board temporarily removed while doing repair work on a sill in the Great Room of the house.<sup>3</sup> If such a timber ever existed, it has been replaced or not yet rediscovered. There are no surviving documents that mention the house before the death of Alden's son Jonathan in 1697. Jonathan had been given the house and Duxbury property by his father, John Alden, who died in 1687 without a will, having deeded his various landholdings in Duxbury and elsewhere to his children during his lifetime.

Architectural historian Abbott Lowell Cummings, who inspected the house twice in the mid-1950s and again in 1976, classified it as "Late First Period Colonial" with a probable date of construction of a ca. 1700. Cummings characterized the house as "one build," but he recommended a more thorough analysis.<sup>4</sup> Gwilliam differs with Cummings about the house being "one build." Dendrochronological analysis done in 2003, further confirmed by a shift from oak to pine framing, indicates that the house was not "one build." Shovel test pits dug around the house in October 1995 by Mitchell T. Mulholland and Paul Mullins, archaeologists from the University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services, revealed no conclusively seventeenth-century artifacts.<sup>5</sup> Archeological testing at long-occupied New England historical properties typically has not found evidence dating to documented initial occupations. However, Mulholland's comparisons of the artifact assemblages from the Alden House and the Original Alden Homestead Site, combined with new data from architectural analyses, bears out that the original homestead site had been abandoned at the end of the seventeenth century after the Alden House was newly built. Justin Winsor in his 1849 *History of the Town of Duxbury* stated that the present house was built by Alden grandson Colonel John (3) Alden (ca. 1681-1739), who inherited the property from his father Jonathan (2) Alden (1632-1697) after the latter's death in 1697.<sup>6</sup> Probate evidence from Jonathan (2) Alden (1697/1704) and Colonel John (3) Alden (1739) is consistent with Winsor's statement. The question is whether the house that Colonel John Alden built contained parts of an earlier house on the site.

Dendrochronological tests on eight oak timbers in the house—none with the minimum eighty-plus growth rings needed for conclusive dating—found a probability that a sill timber under the eastern side of the buttery was

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<sup>2</sup> Justin Winsor, *History of the Town of Duxbury, Massachusetts* (Boston: Crosby & Nichols; Samuel G. Drake, 1849), 58-59, states that the present house was built as the third house on the property by Alden grandson Colonel John Alden. Although Winsor was only a Harvard student when he published his town history, he was an Alden descendant closely related to the occupants of the Alden House. He later served as one of the early presidents of the American Historical Association. As a source, he is best classified as possibly credible rather than suspect.

<sup>3</sup> See James W. Baker, *Alden House History* for a discussion of this date.

<sup>4</sup> Abbott Lowell Cummings, "Report by Abbott L. Cummings on the Structural History of Evolution of the Alden House, in Duxbury, Massachusetts," November 9, 1976, copy in possession of the author.

<sup>5</sup> Mitchell T. Mulholland, "An Interdisciplinary Study of the John Alden Houses, 1627 and 1653, Duxbury, Massachusetts: Archaeology and Architecture," in *The Archaeological Northeast*, eds. Mary Ann Levine, Kenneth E. Sassaman, and Michael S. Nassaney (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1999), 235-248.

<sup>6</sup> Winsor, *History of Duxbury*, 58.

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felled in either 1636 or 1698.<sup>7</sup> All other timber samples had probable felling dates after 1698. However, archeology on the builder's trench and cellar floors of the house remains to be done. Therefore, while the preponderance of the evidence clearly points to a construction date at the end of the seventeenth century, the crucial question of whether John Alden and Priscilla Mullins built and lived in the house—which would make the house the only surviving house built and lived in by *Mayflower* Pilgrims—cannot yet be answered with finality.

### Phase II (1700-1733)

Jonathan (2) Alden died in 1697 and his estate was settled in 1704. His eldest son, Colonel John (3) Alden, inherited the house and lived there with his wife, Hannah Briggs, whom he married in 1710, and their children. The second phase of development in the early eighteenth century corresponds with his occupancy and ownership of the house. It appears that he had considerable work done during his ownership, including the addition of the single parlor bay to the west. By the end of this phase, the house had expanded to five bays and taken on a saltbox form. Dendrochronological analysis indicates the presence of timbers from the ca. 1698-1733 period. If the original house was two bays, Colonel John Alden added the shorter entry stair bay at this time. Accordingly, the house is asymmetrical with two bays right of the front door with two windows, and one bay to the left with one window, a style often described in the region as a “three-quarter house.”

The major changes made during this phase were: the addition of the parlor with a fireplace on the west side; the replacement of the lean-to addition with a kitchen with an enlarged fireplace; and adjoining service spaces on the north side of the house. The fourth bay parlor addition is framed in pine with quirked bead trim, which has precluded dendrochronological analysis at this time. However, floor framing of the Phase I Great Room was replaced at the same time as the parlor addition, and the floor lowered to be below the sill plates. This accounts for the five-inch step-down between the kitchen and the Great Room and parlor. Dendrochronological analysis indicates that oak sleepers in this area, intermixed with pine, were installed around 1733. A significant change then occurred to the plank-sheathing. The exposure of the sills allowed a second interior plank-sheathing with lath and plaster to be installed, creating a unique early thermally-improved wall. Interior vertical sheathing was installed between the now exposed 6" x 8" sill above the floor and the girts above and subsequently lathed and plastered. This created an 8-inch air space on the north, south, and east exposed walls, which increased the thermal insulation of the Great Room (and which also occurred in the parlor south wall and the parlor chamber above). (The north wall of the Great Room is now against the kitchen, suggesting that it was originally an external wall.) This is very rare. When this was done the windows were changed from casement-lead glass to the then emerging popular double-hung or sliding style. The windows had to be hung on the original projected exterior frame due to the thin 3-inch wall thickness. The interior planking and plaster was splayed back to the widows at the jambs and recessed below the window sill to form a seat. These windows were finished with beaded trim. The ceiling was lathed and plastered with a clam shell and horse-hair mixture concurrently. The fireplace mass evolved from the single large working fireplace in the Great Room to a more refined and paneled unit when the kitchen was moved into the rear shed. During this construction and repair period a second cellar was dug underneath the easterly portion of the Great Room to augment the smaller shed cellar under what now became the kitchen and buttry.

The parlor had similar double sheathing on the south wall but not the west wall. The exposed sill and end girt was trimmed-out with quirked beading, as is the summer beam. The north wall, now common to the newly expanded work room, is plank-sheathed and plastered over. A fireplace was added to the east wall back-to-back

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<sup>7</sup> Nicole K. Davi and Paul J. Krusic, “Dendrochronological Examination of Wood Samples from the John Alden House, Duxbury, Massachusetts,” 2003, report in possession of the author.

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with the Great Hall fireplace. When the fine feather-edged paneling on the fireplace was installed is yet to be determined.

At the same time, the lean-to workroom was expanded to the width of the parlor and the fireplace mass extended northerly to the expanded work room to form a large cooking fireplace with an oven for what now became the new kitchen. The fireplace mass was built using clay mortar for those elements contained within the house away from the weather, but lime mortar was used where the chimney pierced the roof and was exposed to the elements. The exterior northern wall of the kitchen was of exposed feather-edged pine vertical sheathing as was the westerly partition, which set-off the new small bedroom, the kitchen parlor or Boring Room. The kitchen had a buttery built on the east side using feather-edged vertical paneling. It may date from this period or much later. (The Aldens who lived in the house in the mid-1930s remember it as just the entry into an attached but now removed woodshed. It may be that Charles L. Alden installed the partition when he "restored" the kitchen in 1924 as it was certainly not built in place from evidence of the backside of the boards which show both re-use and different provenance.) The exposed brick fireplace projected into the kitchen and had an oak lintel to hold the front edge of the flue which sloped back against the main fireplace mass. Built into the back wall of the firebox on the left, was an oval brick baking oven.

The parlor chamber had a double-sheathed and plastered south wall with one window and a single-sheathed and plastered west wall with one window. The east wall was apparently open to the fireplace mass but without a fireplace. At some period, a thimble was cut into the flue for the fireplace below to allow for a pipe flue from a Franklin-type stove for the chamber. All floors were wide-pine flooring. The shed roof area behind the chambers was accessible by the original back stair or was accessed by lifting the boards as noted above for the attic.

The form of the house probably changed during this period. It is likely that the north wall of the house, which was then one story, was raised to two stories and the roof was raised to its gable form from the lean-to or saltbox shape. This change is indicated by the odd dendrochronological dating of the oak principal rafters and the similarity of framing details in the revised principal roof. Likewise, the second floor chimney girts are pine as are a number of other framing members in reworked areas where oak predominates elsewhere. This switch in tree species and difficulty in finding wane-on-oak members precluded total dendrochronological analysis. The changes in the roof slope and construction are interesting because the old method of principal rafters and purlins with sheathing running from cornice to ridge persisted across time and modifications. The entire attic floor or second floor ceiling was raised by four inches and lathed and plastered concurrently.

Raising the roof to gable form created more usable space above the rear kitchen spaces and made possible the construction of two new rear second-story rooms. On the east side, the Northeast Chamber (described as such in the probate inventory of Colonel John (3) Alden), was formed above the buttery with plaster walls on the vertical sheathing, a plaster ceiling, and an exposed corner post with down braces. The remainder of the new space was a workroom with exposed vertical sheathing, joists, and attic flooring. With the lower-sloped roof, the house became a five-bay, central chimney, two-story, gable-roof house similar in appearance to salt-water Cape Cod houses.

Colonel John (3) Alden died in 1739 and his wife died the following winter. Samuel (4) Alden (1712-1757), their eldest son, who was living in Bristol, England, inherited the house but a younger son, 16-year old Briggs (4) Alden (1723-1796), continued to live there. In 1741, he married Mercy Wadsworth. Samuel (4) Alden died in 1757 and left the house to his younger brother, the then Colonel Briggs (4) Alden. Briggs (4) Alden died in 1796 leaving the house to his son Amherst (5) Alden, who died in 1804 still single and living with his mother and aunt. Ownership of the house reverted to Amherst's older brother, Major Judah (5) Alden (1754-1845),

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who continued to live in his own home nearby while his mother lived in the Alden House. During this period, the tenancy is poorly defined and little in its construction appears to have changed.

### Phase III (1811-1887)

Judah (5) Alden's son, John (6) Alden (1784-1871), who was known as "Storekeeper John," moved into the Alden House with his wife Mary Winsor probably sometime after their marriage in 1811. He shared the residence with his brother Briggs (6) Alden, who died before their father, Judah. John (6) Alden apparently made the final major revisions to the structure. The parlor fireplace was upgraded to add a Rumford insert. Sometime before 1849, when Justin Winsor's *History of the Town of Duxbury* was published with an illustration of the Alden House, an ell was added to the exterior north elevation at the rear of the house for a new kitchen, apparently to utilize the new wood-burning cast iron cooking stoves being manufactured in nearby Taunton and then coming into use. The former main cooking fireplace in the kitchen was closed.

Storekeeper John died in 1871 and left the house to his wife, Mary [Winsor] ("Aunt Polly") Alden, (ca. 1788-1882), the only period when the house was not owned by actual descendants of John and Priscilla Alden. Probably shortly after his death, she had the northwest corner of the rear second story above the kitchen chamber or Boring Room partitioned from the workroom to serve as her bedroom. This room, known as the Northwest Chamber or Aunt Polly's Room, has plaster on vertical sheathing, a plastered ceiling, and exposed corner posts.

Aunt Polly lived in the house with her two sons, John (7) ("Captain Jack") Alden (1813-1887) and Henry P. (8) Alden (1815-1891), until her death in 1882 when she left the western half of the house to Henry, and the eastern half to Captain Jack, who were not on the best terms. They literally divided the house. The second-story workroom was partitioned down the middle. Directly below the workroom partition was very likely a second partition dividing the kitchen (that is old "middle kitchen") between Jack and Henry. Henry opened a door into the ell as the original door was now on Jack's side. The opening can still be seen from the ell side. The kitchen side of this same wall has reproduction boards that were probably installed during the 1920s or 1930s by Charles L. Alden. Captain Jack removed the buttery partition and made the easterly half of the kitchen a dining room. Upstairs, Captain Jack made the easterly portion of the workroom a ship's quarters space with odd painting and wallpaper that still shows. He opened the house to visitors for cash and *Harper's Monthly Magazine* did a major article on the house featuring Captain Jack in January 1877. Captain Jack died in 1887, having deeded his half of the house to son Frank (8) Alden (ca. 1854-1904) in 1883. Henry P. Alden died in 1891, leaving his half to son Henry B. (8) Alden, who lived in Plymouth. In 1892, another of Captain Jack's sons, John Winsor (8) Alden (1847-1925), who had been renting the eastern half of the house from his brother, Frank, bought out his cousin Henry B. Alden's western half of the house. In 1896, John W. Alden bought the other half of the house from his brother Frank, thus reuniting both halves of the house under a single owner once more. But John W. Alden apparently bought the other half of the house in order to immediately sell the entire house and property to a St. Louis, Missouri, businessman and Alden descendant, John Tolman Alden, who wished to make the house an Alden museum. John Tolman Alden apparently made an oral agreement with John Winsor Alden to allow the latter to live in the house with his family for the duration of his life rent-free. But within a decade, John Tolman Alden's business fell on hard times and he was declared mentally incompetent. His guardian, Gordon A. Southworth, sold the Alden House to the Alden Kindred of America, Inc. on November 13, 1907.

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Phase IV—Twentieth Century Renovations

In October 1921, Charles L. Alden, treasurer of the Alden Kindred, took a twenty-year lease on the house from the family association with the intention of creating a combination house museum and antiques business. John Winsor Alden had moved out of the house by 1923 (perhaps as early as 1921). Charles L. Alden consulted with the noted New England antiquarian Wallace Nutting, who in 1924 urged that the kitchen be restored to resemble what was believed to have been its original appearance. The kitchen fireplace was then reopened and “restored.” Underneath a nineteenth-century partition were found the original feather-edged pine boards and walls that dated from the original construction of the kitchen. Unfortunately, this renovation also removed the original paint and plaster that belonged to Colonel John (3) Alden’s eighteenth-century kitchen. Fortunately, Charles L. Alden did not share (or perhaps lacked the resources to fully pursue) the Colonial Revival movement’s penchant for “restoration.” Instead, he adopted an exhibit philosophy that presented the house as “a home that, from the first, has been inhabited by successive generations of the same family.”<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the rest of the house was spared “restoration” to 1653 or any other particular date in the past.

In 1955, the Alden Kindred abrogated its lease (renewed for another twenty years in 1938) to the heirs of Charles L. Alden and undertook needed repairs before opening the house as a seasonal house museum. At this time, the sills under the south elevation were replaced and the window sash in the Great Room, the Northeast Chamber, and the east window of the master chamber, were replaced with 12/12 reused period sash and glazing taken from elsewhere. Wallpaper was removed and the walls painted white. The leader in making these changes was Helen Delano Howe, who underwrote and supervised the changes. Charles L. Alden had furnished the house with a combination of Alden family furniture and antiques that he sold as part of his antiques business. His heirs offered to sell the entire collection to the Kindred for \$5,000. The Kindred apparently did not have the funds to purchase the furniture and make needed repairs to the house, and thus passed on the furniture. The contents of the house were sold at auction. Howe and the Kindred, therefore, had to refurnish the house and chose 1810 as an exhibit date, apparently for reasons of financial expediency—antiques older than that date were too expensive to purchase in a number sufficient to refurnish the house. Over time, however, Alden family items have found their way back to the house.

Through the years, Alden descendants enlarged the Alden House using techniques compatible with its original construction while making period-appropriate style and form changes in order to remain contemporary with their period and community status. The house thus conveys an evolution in plan, style, and construction across time, neither leading nor following, but always adapting to the prevailing cultural tastes in house design as modified to meet specific family needs. The Aldens who lived in the house were parsimonious. The changes made were the minimum required in order to convert the house to a more contemporary style and to serve family need; materials were mostly reused. As a result, the house largely hides its earliest origins and the subsequent changes quite well, posing an interpretive challenge to architectural historians. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the house had been modified into a quintessential two-story, central-chimney hall and parlor colonial house with a kitchen ell that is evident today. Since 1955, no extensive removal archeology or maintenance has been performed on the structure. The Alden House is important to the continuing study of early New England house function, style, and construction technology. Its early construction and unrestored status demands a thorough architectural archeological investigation as significant historic data remains concealed behind finishes.

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<sup>8</sup> Edward S. Alden, *Alden Homestead* (Holyoke, MA: Alden Press, 1932), 50.

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Barn (noncontributing building)

Between 1997 and 1999, the Alden Kindred had a two-story, timber-box-frame colonial replica barn built by the Benson Woodworking Company on the site of a nineteenth-century barn that had once stood in this spot to the east of the Alden House. The barn, sheathed in vertical wood planking with a partly stone-faced cinder block foundation and modern shingled ridge-roof, is built into the side of the rise on which sits the Alden House about 20 feet from the house, and may be entered on either the first or second story. The second story contains an office, a bathroom, and a pantry, as well as an L-shaped open space that is used for exhibition and meeting space. The first story, or ground level, contains climate-controlled archival storage space and two bathrooms, as well as open space that is used for administrative and office functions.

Caretaker's Cottage (noncontributing building)

A single-story, shingled, wooden-frame, and cinder-block cellar foundation caretaker's cottage is located about 120 feet south of the Alden House. The structure was built sometime in the early 1930s as a rear-end addition to the Log Cabin Tea Room built by Charles L. Alden shortly after 1924. The Log Cabin Tea Room was dismantled in November 1971 but the rear-addition caretaker's cottage was left standing. The south interior wall of the Log Cabin Tea Room became the north exterior wall of the caretaker's cottage, and the stone fireplace of the Log Cabin Tea Room (now bricked-up) is part of this exterior wall. The caretaker's cottage was extensively renovated inside and out in 2004. It is presently rented out by the Alden Kindred to generate revenue.

Restrooms (noncontributing building)

A small square wooden outhouse about 10' x 10' with a gable roof previously containing men's and ladies rest rooms, is located about 80 feet east of the Alden House and about 60 feet south of the barn near the eastern boundary of the property. Today, this building is being used for storage.

**ORIGINAL ALDEN HOMESTEAD SITE**Original Alden Homestead Site (contributing site)

Like the extant Alden House, the Original Alden Homestead Site is on land that was part of the original 100-acre grant that John Alden drew by lot in January 1628. The Aldens were living on this property, possibly at this site, no later than 1632. Local and family tradition current in the mid-nineteenth century suggested the possibility of two Alden houses on the property prior to the construction of the existing Alden House, which would mean that the Original Alden Homestead Site was either the Aldens' first or second home on their Duxbury property. Although the site was abandoned by the end of the seventeenth century and then filled, the general location of it was known. Rev. Timothy Alden (1771-1839), who first documented the love triangle story that became the basis for Longfellow's *Courtship of Miles Standish*, visited the site during his lifetime and found a well. Justin Winsor discussed what little was known of the earlier site(s) in his 1849 *History of Duxbury*.<sup>9</sup> In the 1880s, then land owner William Wright placed a granite and bronze marker bearing the words "Site of John Alden House Built 1627" to mark what was thought to be the site of the first Alden Homestead. The archeological remains of the house were located about 75 feet from this marker in 1960 by the pioneering self-taught historical archeologist Roland Wells Robbins.<sup>10</sup> Robbins found a dry-laid stone foundation (with

<sup>9</sup> Winsor, *History of Duxbury*, 58-59.

<sup>10</sup> Roland Wells Robbins, *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress: Archaeological Excavations in Duxbury* (Plymouth, MA: Pilgrim Society, 1969).

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end-cellar), approximately 38 feet long and 10½'-wide. His work yielded artifacts that have been dated to 1630-1700. The Alden site work was among the best documented of Robbins' excavations, and the site's significance in the history of historical archeology is discussed by Donald W. Linebaugh in *The Man Who Found Thoreau* (2005).<sup>11</sup>

### *Environmental Setting*

The Original Alden Homestead Site is located at the southeast base of a knoll about 240 feet north of a diked pond on the Bluefish River, and about three-quarters of a mile from where the river enters Duxbury Bay. The river formed the southern boundary of the original Alden grant. The environmental setting in 1630 cannot be described with accuracy, but a description by local resident and historian Dorothy Wentworth in her 1980 book *The Aldens in the Alden House* may serve as a reasonable approximation: "The Alden land was good, some cleared upland where the Indians had planted, some woodland, and a long stretch of fresh and salt meadow where hay could be cut. There was a freshwater stream, and at least one spring. It was a good farm."<sup>12</sup>

Since archeological evidence of Native American habitation has been found in various places on the original Alden property, and because this general area of the Massachusetts coastline is known, from European historical records, to have been densely settled up to a date approximately fifteen years prior to the Aldens' settlement at the site, it is reasonable to assume that the site was either cleared or only lightly forested prior to 1620.<sup>13</sup> From roughly 1630 to 1700 the site was a farmstead. Thereafter, to the mid-twentieth century, the site was apparently used principally for cultivating crops and/or pasturing livestock.

Today, the site is located in the southernmost portion of a larger 65-acre plot owned by the Town of Duxbury and its Schools Committee occupied chiefly by the Duxbury Junior High School and its playing fields. The Original Alden Homestead Site is situated on the easterly side of a grass-covered knoll south and east of the playing fields. The school buildings are several hundred yards northeast of the site. Much of the expanse between the site and the diked-pond to the south is covered in new-growth forest and marsh. The homestead site is evident from a shallow depression in the ground and the wooden posts that mark the outline of the 38' x 10½' stone foundation located by Robbins in 1960. A granite and bronze marker bearing the words "Site of John Alden House Built 1627" stands about seventy-five feet from the depression on the crown of the knoll. The town property was part of the original 100-acre grant to John Alden in 1621. The overall town parcel is contiguous to the parcel that contains the extant Alden House, and one can walk via dirt footpath and the school playing fields between the two sites, in about five minutes. The Original Alden Homestead Site lies about 750 feet in a straight line southeasterly from the Alden House.

### *Archeological Investigations—Original Alden Homestead Site and Alden House*

#### Early Interest

Local tradition identified the general area of the Original Alden Homestead Site as the location of the first Alden home in Duxbury. Casual relic-hunting, motivated in part by the presence of Native American artifacts as much as the Alden connection, is known to have occurred in and around the site over the years. Bricks and a

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<sup>11</sup> Donald W. Linebaugh, *The Man Who Found Thoreau: Roland W. Robbins and the Rise of Historical Archaeology in America* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Wentworth, *Alden Family in the Alden House*, 13.

<sup>13</sup> William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1983), 24-30, 36 *passim*.

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halberd head, now in the collections of the Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth, were recovered at the site in the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

### Massachusetts Archaeological Society (1950s)

In the early 1950s, Massachusetts Archaeological Society members did some test excavations near the granite marker that failed to yield any signs of habitation.<sup>15</sup>

### Roland Wells Robbins (1960)

In 1960 the Alden Kindred hired the noted self-taught archeologist Roland Wells Robbins to further explore the site. Limited funds and other commitments on the part of Robbins at the time severely circumscribed the amount of work that he could undertake at the site. Nonetheless, working over several weekends between March and October 1960, Robbins discovered the remains of a dry-laid stone foundation of a building 38'-long and 10 ½'-wide at an average depth of 22". The structure had a very deep cellar 7 ½ feet at the westerly end of the foundation. He also found a depression inside the foundation that he interpreted as possibly being from a chimney and a stone pier several feet beyond the northwest corner of the foundation.

Robbins principally excavated the foundation stones, the area inside the foundation, and within that, the cellar. He found 7,151 colonial artifacts at the site. Among artifacts associated with the construction of the house, he found nearly 4,000 hand-wrought square nails, 127 tacks, 1,474 fragments of diamond-shaped window glass, more than a ton of red bricks and brick fragments, and two tons of foundation stones. He also found 1,209 fragments of seventeenth-century pottery, of which 1,103 (91 percent) were red earthenware, but also including eighty-nine pieces of Seville jars, and pieces of delft, stoneware, and North Devon pottery. Metal artifacts included seven knife blades, a knife handle, a latten spoon bowl, clothing hooks, buckles, tinned copper alloy straight pins, scissors, buttons, buckles, a horseshoe, a gun fork, four pieces of a snaphaunce gun, a pike head (dated by Ivor Noël Hume to the early seventeenth century), two Charles I copper farthings, and a 1652 New England Oak Tree silver sixpence (subsequently dated to 1665-67). Eighty-four clay pipe stems were found, and Robbins, applying J. C. Harrington's diameter measurement data, concluded that one-third (34.5 percent) dated from before 1650 and another 35 percent dated from 1650-1680.

Based on analysis of recovered artifacts that Robbins did in consultation with Ivor and Audrey Noël Hume of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and Jamestown curator J. Paul Hudson, among others, he concluded that the building was likely a house that dated from the end of the first third of the seventeenth century (i.e., 1630). In his published report, *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress* (1969) he placed the date of construction at 1632, a date probably taken from documentary evidence when John Alden signed an agreement promising to bring his family back to Plymouth during the winter.<sup>16</sup> He concluded that the house was probably abandoned by 1675. From the presence of the glass and large number of nails, he ventured that the house was dismantled. He found no evidence of fire.

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<sup>14</sup> The Native American artifact discoveries at the site are recorded in the Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth as 19-PL-38. The inventory form on file at the Massachusetts Historical Commission indicates that George B. Frazar collected artifacts from this location in the 1880s. The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University acquired his collection between 1900 and 1910. David W. Anthony, Frederick M. Carty, and Linda A. Towle, *Prehistoric Survey Team Interim Report* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1980), 16.

<sup>15</sup> Mitchell T. Mulholland, personal communication, summer 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Robbins, *John Alden's Progress*; Esther Littleford Woodworth-Barnes, *Mayflower Families through Five Generations*, ed. Alicia Crane Williams, vol. 16, part 1: *Family of John Alden* (Plymouth, MA: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1999), 5.

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Robbins also found nearly 2,000 Native American artifacts and 660 sea-shells at the site, evidence of habitation at the site by Native Americans prior to the Aldens.<sup>17</sup>

Artifacts from the Robbins excavation are the property of the Alden Kindred of America by agreement with the Town of Duxbury. Most of them are held at University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services in Amherst, Massachusetts. Others are at the Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the Alden House in Duxbury, Massachusetts.

Robbins summarized his findings in *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress*, published in 1969.<sup>18</sup> Donald W. Linebaugh discussed Robbins' Alden site work and *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress* in his dissertation and subsequent monograph, *The Man Who Found Thoreau: Roland W. Robbins and the Rise of Historical Archaeology in America* (2005).<sup>19</sup> Robbins extensive field notes and photographs from the Alden excavation are in the Roland Wells Robbins Collection at the Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, Massachusetts.<sup>20</sup> No further archeological fieldwork has been done at the site.

### Mary C. Beaudry & Douglas George (1981-1987)—The Plimoth Project

Beginning in 1981 under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Mary C. Beaudry, then an Assistant Professor in the Department of Archaeology at Boston University, and her graduate student Douglas George (also sometimes employed with Plimoth Plantation and the Massachusetts Historical Commission) proposed a reanalysis of collections of artifacts and associated documentation from seventeenth-century Plymouth Colony archeological sites. Their project chiefly focused on item-level cataloguing and analysis of artifacts and associated documentation curated at Plimoth Plantation. It is not known if Beaudry and George initially intended to also attempt to reanalyze the Original Alden Homestead Site collection. In a 1984 conference paper, Beaudry wrote, "as initially conceived...up to six early Plymouth Colony sites" were to be included in the project. Because of time and funding constraints, and access issues, the field records and archeological collections from three sites (but not including Alden) were directly examined. However, the implications of the published Alden site data were considered in resulting papers. The Plimoth Project reinterpreted the architecture of the Alden House and other notable sites, and reconsidered the material implications of seventeenth-century Plymouth Colony lifeways, social structure, economy, and architecture in comparison to the Chesapeake region. The Plimoth Project reinvigorated prospects for analysis of Plymouth Colony archeological collections; advocated excavation approaches (beyond cellar holes) to capture data lacking in previous archeological forays; and rigorously applied a comparative research and interpretive orientation grounded in anthropology, history, and material culture studies. Thus, the Plimoth Project figures importantly in the scholarly history of Alden site studies because it created a context and methodology for reviewing and reinterpreting Robbins' excavation results.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Timothy L. Binzen and Christopher L. Donta, "A Native American Archaeological Site in the Plymouth Commemorative Landscape," *Northeast Anthropology* 64 (2002): 31-42, provide a model that could apply to interpret the colonial period resettlement of the Native American habitation area at the Original Alden Homestead Site.

<sup>18</sup> Robbins, *John Alden's Progress*.

<sup>19</sup> Donald Walter Linebaugh, "'The Road to Ruins and Restoration': Roland W. Robbins and the Professionalization of Historical Archaeology" (PhD diss., William & Mary, 1996), 345-375; and Donald W. Linebaugh, *The Man Who Found Thoreau: Roland W. Robbins and the Rise of Historical Archaeology in America* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, "The Walden Woods Project," The Roland Wells Robbins Collection, Henley Library, Lincoln, Massachusetts, <http://www.walden.org/institute/Collections/Robbins/RobbinsFindingAid.htm>.

<sup>21</sup> Robbins, *John Alden's Progress*; Beaudry and George had Robbins' report, and also were aware of the Alden site through James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977), 30, 96-97, 150, 168 (n. 1), citing Robbins' *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress*. Beaudry recognized the research value of Robbins' archeological documentation and advocated strongly for acquisition of his archives when Robbins offered them to Boston University. Douglas George, "A Reexamination of Plimoth Plantation: Analysis of Material and Documents Relating to Several Early Collections

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Mitchell T. Mulholland and Paul R. Mullins (1995)—Extant Alden House Site

On October 13-14, 1995, Mitchell T. Mulholland and Paul R. Mullins of the University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services, Amherst, Massachusetts, conducted an intensive archeological (locational) survey of the entire two-acre property on which the extant Alden House is located prior to the construction of the new barn/visitor's center on the site of a nineteenth-century barn demolished in the 1880s.<sup>22</sup> Fifty-nine shovel test pits were dug, covering the full area of the property. Soils in the test pits were found to be undisturbed with the exception of topsoil. The survey found a "dense quantity of mid-nineteenth to early twentieth-century artifacts" in the barn area. Mulholland and Mullins found "little similarity in artifacts between the two houses" (the Original Alden Homestead and the extant Alden House) because "no conclusively seventeenth-century European artifacts were recovered" from the grounds surrounding the house. All the artifacts recovered there dated from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries, seemingly suggesting "an occupation postdating 1700." Historic New England properties inhabited continuously after the seventeenth century typically do not yield much material from initial occupation periods.<sup>23</sup> A small prehistoric site dating to the Late Woodland period was also found. Mulholland subsequently published a comparison of the two sites, "An Interdisciplinary Study of the John Alden Houses, 1627 and 1653, Duxbury, Massachusetts: Archaeology and Architecture" in *The Archaeological Northeast* (1999).

Paul Mullins and Constance Crosby (1995)

In 1995, Paul Mullins of the University of Massachusetts and Constance Crosby of the Massachusetts Historical Commission did a brief re-analysis of the artifacts from the Robbins collection then in the possession of the Alden Kindred.<sup>24</sup> Under a University Public Service Endowment Grant, Mullins inventoried and analyzed the Robbins collection and repackaged it using archival-quality materials. Conducted apparently without benefit of Robbins' extensive field notes and photographs (which were not with the artifacts), presumably because the investigators were not then aware of their existence in the hands of Robbins's heirs, Mullins and Crosby focused on the ceramics, an artifact class for which considerable comparative data had been developed since 1960, and concluded (in support of Robbins) that the artifacts do indicate occupation of the site before 1650.

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of Plymouth," 1983, cited in Mary C. Beaudry, "Old Data, New Findings: 1940s Archaeology at Plymouth Reexamined," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1984; Douglas George, "Re-Excavating Plymouth Plantation," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1984; Mary C. Beaudry, "An Archaeological Perspective on Social Inequality in 17th-Century Massachusetts," *American Archeology* 4, no. 1 (1984): 55-60; Mary C. Beaudry, "New England Historical Archaeology and the Peter Pan Syndrome," paper presented at the Interdisciplinary Conference on New England Culture and History, Boston, 1986, 3-4; Mary C. Beaudry and Douglas George, "Old Data, New Findings: 1940s Archaeology at Plymouth Reexamined," *American Archeology* 6, no. 1 (1987): 20-30.

<sup>22</sup> Paul R. Mullins and Mitchell T. Mulholland, *Archaeological Site Locational Survey for a Proposed Barn Project, The John Alden House, Duxbury, Massachusetts*, University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services Report No. UM-209, 1996.

<sup>23</sup> David Starbuck, ed., *Seventeenth Century Historical Archaeology in Cambridge, Medford, and Dorchester* (Boston: Boston University Center for Archaeological Studies, 1980); cited in and further explored in Mary C. Beaudry, "The Archaeology of Historical Land Use in Massachusetts," *Historical Archaeology* 20 no. 2 (1986): 42; and, cited in and further explored in Anne E. Yentsch, "Legends, Houses, Families, and Myths: Relationships Between Material Culture and American Ideology," in Mary C. Beaudry, ed., *Documentary Archaeology in the New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Mitchell T. Mulholland, "An Interdisciplinary Study of the John Alden Houses, 1627 and 1653, Duxbury, Massachusetts: Archaeology and Architecture," in *The Archaeological Northeast*, eds. Mary Ann Levine, Kenneth E. Sassaman, and Michael S. Nassaney (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1999), 244-247.

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Claire C. Carlson (1997)—Extant Alden House Site

On May 16-19 and 28, 1997, a crew from University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services, under the direction of Claire C. Carlson, conducted an archeological site examination/data recovery project of the barn area next to the extant Alden House.<sup>25</sup> The purpose of this work was to excavate areas of high artifact density and potential features identified during the 1995 intensive archeological (locational) survey. Six units were excavated and yielded 9,133 artifacts from the late eighteenth through twentieth centuries. No foundation for the barn was discovered. The investigators hypothesized that the barn sill may have rested on several rocks/boulders that were still present. Recovered materials suggest that the area to the north and east of the barn was used as a nineteenth-century trash disposal site. Substantial disturbance from earth-moving had occurred at the site, so that the integrity of portions of the site was poor. No further survey was recommended and the Alden Kindred subsequently built its new barn/visitor's center on the site.

Mary C. Beaudry, Karin J. Goldstein, & Craig Chartier—Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony Project (2001-2003)

Because of her long-term specific interest in the history and archeology of Plymouth Colony, and her more general contributions to the archeology of the household and home lot that in part rely upon and compare the Plymouth Colony data, Beaudry (now a Professor at Boston University) collaborated with Karin J. Goldstein (Plymouth Plantation) and Chartier for information to publish several more articles.<sup>26</sup> Again, while not exclusive to the Original Alden Homestead Site, one resulting co-authored article prominently features and retrospectively analyzes the data from Robbins' publication (1969) and incorporates Mulholland's (1999) analysis.<sup>27</sup> The co-authored article presents the most comprehensive scholarly statement to date on the important data from Plymouth Colony archeology projects for the material implications of seventeenth-century New England lifeways, social structure, economy, architecture, and husbandry practices, and provides important direction to scholars to better understand the Alden site in its site-specific, regional historical, and anthropological interpretive contexts.

Craig S. Chartier (2001)

In 2001, professional archeologist Craig S. Chartier, who specializes in Plymouth Colony archeology, re-analyzed Robbins' work at the site and Mulholland's subsequent interpretation.<sup>28</sup> Chartier did not analyze the actual artifacts themselves, and it does not appear that he made use of Robbins' field notes, correspondence, and photographs at the Thoreau Institute, apparently relying chiefly on Robbins' publication *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress*. He focused most of his attention on the clay tobacco pipes and the ceramics because research

<sup>25</sup> Claire C. Carlson, *Archaeological Site Examination/Data Recovery for the Barn Area of the John Alden House, Duxbury, Massachusetts*, University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services Report No. UM-245, 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Mary C. Beaudry, "Plymouth Massachusetts," in *Encyclopedia of Archaeology: History and Discoveries*, ed. Tim Murray (Denver: ABC-CLIO, 2001), 1034-1037; Mary C. Beaudry, "Plymouth Massachusetts, USA" in *Encyclopedia of Historical Archaeology*, ed. Charles E. Orser, Jr. (London: Routledge, 2002), 428-429; Mary C. Beaudry, "Archaeology and the Historical Household," *Man in the Northeast* 28 (1984): 27-38; Beaudry, "The Archaeology of Historical Land Use in Massachusetts," Mary C. Beaudry, "House and Household: The Archaeology of Domestic Life in Early America," in *Old and New Worlds*, eds. Geoff Egan and R. L. Michael (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1999), 117-126; Anne E. Yentsch and Mary C. Beaudry, "American Material Culture in Mind, Thought, and Deed," in *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. Ian Hodder (Oxford: Polity Press, 2001), 214-240; Mary C. Beaudry, "Doing the Housework: New Approaches to the Archaeology of Households," in *Household Chores and Household Choices: Theorizing the Domestic Sphere in Historical Archaeology*, eds. Kerri S. Barile and Jamie C. Brandon (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 254-262.

<sup>27</sup> Mary C. Beaudry, Karin J. Goldstein, and Craig Chartier, "Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts," special issue, *The English in America, 1497-1696, Avalon Chronicles* 8 (Ferryland, NJ: Colony of Avalon Foundation, 2003), 155-185.

<sup>28</sup> Craig S. Chartier, "A Reevaluation of the John Alden Archaeological Site (DUX-HA-3)," July 2001.

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undertaken since 1960 had increased the likelihood that a re-appraisal of these artifacts might shed new light on dating the site. Applying the Binford formula to the pipe fragment assemblage, Chartier arrived at a median date of 1663. "Analysis of the clay tobacco pipes indicates that there was occupation at the site prior to 1650," he wrote, "but the majority of the . . . fragments recovered and the two complete bowls, represent later seventeenth century occupation, ca. 1660-1690." Most of the ceramics recovered by Robbins were redwares, which Chartier conceded were found at known pre-1650 Plymouth sites. However, those sites also yielded Borderware, which Robbins' work at the Alden site did not. Chartier concluded that most of the ceramics dated to the later seventeenth century. Therefore, he believed that the cellar had been filled toward the latter end of the century and that habitation at the site had ended sometime between 1680 and 1690, while leaving open the strong possibility of occupation prior to 1650. He also hypothesized that the stone foundation found by Robbins represented a later addition to what had originally been a 20 x 20-foot square earthfast house that stood to the north of Robbins' foundation. Structures of that dimension and construction, he argued, were more typical of pre-1650 homes in Plymouth Colony. He suggested that the stone pier that Robbins found just outside the northwest corner of the foundation may have been evidence of one of the corner postholes of the original house. He concluded that the site was the principal home of *Mayflower* Pilgrim John Alden for most of his nearly sixty-year period of residence in Duxbury.

Daniel P. Lynch / Soil Sight (2006)

In July 2006, the Alden Kindred (with permission of the Duxbury Schools) contracted with Daniel P. Lynch and his firm, Soil Sight LLC, to conduct a geophysical survey of the Original Alden Homestead site in order to determine boundaries for the proposed National Historic Landmark site and whether there was evidence for any as yet undiscovered features.<sup>29</sup> Using electrical resistance (ER) and ground penetrating radar (GPR) to survey a 240' x 240' (57,600 square foot) grid (encompassing and aligned with Robbins' 1960 grid), Lynch was able to clearly delineate the northern, western, and eastern boundaries of the site. The disturbance from the grading for the school athletic fields at these boundary edges was, in fact, more starkly visible through these remote sensing techniques than it is to the naked eye. More important, he discovered twelve (12) subsurface anomalies distributed across the knoll to the west, northwest and north of the Robbins stone foundation. Lynch characterized two anomalies (possibly constituting a single anomaly) located 40-50 feet north of the Robbins foundation as having a high probability of being the result of human disturbance. The GPR data was suggestive of a filled cellar hole or foundation. Several other anomalies have north-south or east-west orientations that make them perpendicular or parallel to the Robbins foundation, and thus possibly human in origin. The survey methods chosen were not discerning enough to reveal the presence of subtle features such as evidence of earthfast construction. Lynch recommended use of a high-resolution magnetometer survey to search for such features, an opportunity for future researchers.

*Site Analysis*Stratigraphy

Robbins found that in the general vicinity of the site black loamy topsoil overlay natural sand to an average depth of about 9-11 inches. The sand was yellow and fine in consistency, free of stones and gravel. Robbins removed the sod from a plotted rectangular grid 30' x 60' (1,800 sq. feet) that contained the outline of foundation stones that he located first by probing the soil with a steel rod. The sod was screened for artifacts. He then excavated a much smaller 10' x 40' (400 square foot) area that contained the foundation.

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<sup>29</sup> Daniel P. Lynch, "Geophysical Investigations at the Alden House Early Site, Duxbury, Massachusetts," October 2006.

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Robbins found that when the foundation was constructed the builders had excavated 22 inches below the original ground level. When the house was abandoned the interior of the foundation was filled, apparently with soils and debris from immediately adjacent to the foundation. Inside the foundation, seventeenth-century artifacts were distributed throughout the 22 inches of fill. However, most of the artifacts were found at depth between 12 and 22 inches. In this mixture of 300 cubic feet of rubble and soil Robbins discerned no strata, leading him to conclude that the foundation had been filled all at once. Nor was there evidence of an earthen or brick floor on the sand bottom below the fill.

In the deeper cellar hole there were no discernable strata in the 300 cubic feet of soils and artifacts that Robbins removed, either. Robbins also concluded that the cellar had been filled at the same time with the same soil and debris as the foundation.

In the 300 cubic feet of soil that he removed from around the outline of the foundation he found little disturbance to the natural layers of loam and sand.

### Features

Robbins uncovered four notable features at the site, starting with the partially-intact stone foundation (38 feet in length and 10.5 feet in width) that ran in an east-west direction. The foundation averaged 18 inches in width and 12 inches in height. Inside the foundation natural sand was encountered at an average depth of 20-22 inches. Robbins therefore concluded that the site had been dug out when the stone foundation was laid.

At the west end of the foundation he found a 7.5 feet deep, stone-lined root cellar that had been built into the foundation. It averaged approximately 6.5 feet square. Only the lower 3.5 to 4 feet of dry-laid stonework was still intact. The cellar walls ranged in thickness from 13 to 23 inches, averaging 19.5 inches. The north, west, and south walls were thicker than the east wall, presumably because these walls were part of the foundation.

Robbins also found "what appeared to be a 17th century stone and brick footing" 3 feet northwest of the northwest corner of the foundation. The stone was 17.5" long, 12" wide, and 2.5" thick. The stone's flat surface was horizontal, running lengthwise in a north-south direction, about 10.5 inches below the sod. Bricks were laid end-to-end (with some stacked) around the outside of a portion of the perimeter of the stone. No mortar was used. Robbins conjectured that the stone may have been completely encircled by the brick and that the bricks may have been stacked to ground level.

No chimney remains were found, but Robbins interpreted a depression on the northerly side of the south foundation wall near its midpoint where the natural sands had been dug out 6.5 inches deeper than elsewhere inside the foundation as possibly being the chimney base. The dimensions of the depression were 48 inches along the foundation wall by 34 inches (at greatest width), a small dimension, Robbins concluded, for a seventeenth-century fireplace. There was no evidence of a depression outside the foundation wall contiguous to the depression and no evidence of a chimney outside the foundation whatsoever.

### *Site Integrity*

The artifacts that Robbins found and identified at the site, as well as their use as fill in the cellar and house foundation, suggest that the house was abandoned before the end of the seventeenth century. Robbins speculated that the foundation had been partially dismantled so that the site could be graded and the land used for farming or pasture thereafter.

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The only man-made disturbance to the site for the next two-hundred and fifty years was apparently plowing by the Alden and Wright families, respective owners of the site. There were no known natural disturbances.

The region was affected when the Town of Duxbury acquired the property and built the school in the mid-twentieth century. Robbins indicated that starting within six feet of the easterly end of the foundation the land had been stripped of its loam and sand to a depth of several feet. This stripping ran some distance eastward, according to Robbins. Similarly, to the north and further west of the site the land had been graded for playing fields, but not coming as close to the Robbins site as the grading to the east. The areas that were graded were even more starkly evident in the data collected from the 2006 geophysical survey. Grading came to within about 90 feet of the Robbins foundation to the north, 110 feet to the northwest, 100 feet to the west, possibly some grading within a few feet or not at all to the south and southeast (the survey was not as clear in these directions), a few feet to the east, and 30 feet to the northeast.

During his excavation Robbins stripped the sod from a grid that measured 30 x 60 feet, which corresponded to the foundation dimension and approximately ten feet outside the foundation on all four sides. The sod was screened for artifacts, but the soil away from the foundation was left undisturbed. Robbins' excavations were confined to the immediate foundation and inside it.

The proposed 1966 Historic District contained approximately 41,000 square feet, comprising the knoll and the house foundation. The 2006 geophysical survey showed that all of the undisturbed areas to the east, north, and west, as well as all of the twelve anomalies, fall within the proposed boundaries of the historic district. Robbins removed the sod from 1,800 square feet within the district and then excavated 400 square feet within the larger grid. Moreover, an area of approximately equal size to the south that lies between the southern boundary of the district and the diked pond is also apparently totally or very nearly totally undisturbed. Thus, while the foundation was excavated in 1960 and a small portion of the contiguous area (to the east) was destroyed by grading and soil removal during the 1950s, by far the major portion of the area surrounding the site has remained undisturbed, or (in the case of plowing and the later sod removal by Robbins) only lightly disturbed. The 2006 geophysical survey indicated a high probability of archeological remains in this undisturbed area.

Original Alden Homestead Marker (noncontributing object)

An upright granite slab about 26"-high and 40"-inches wide (showing above ground) with a 24 inch by 18 inch bronze plate bearing the words "Site of John Alden House Built 1627" bolted to the east side of the stone stands about 75 feet from the actual Original Alden Homestead Site depression on the knoll.

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:  
 Nationally: X Statewide:    Locally:   

Applicable National

Register Criteria:           A X B X C    D X

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions):               A    B    C    D    E    F    G X

NHL Criteria:               1, 2, and 6

NHL Criteria Exception:   8

NHL Theme(s):

III. Expressing Cultural Values  
       6. Popular and traditional culture  
 I. Peopling Places  
       3. Migration from outside and within

Areas of Significance:

Architecture  
 Exploration/Settlement  
 Social History  
 Archeology—Historic—Non-aboriginal

Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1630-1960

Significant Dates:       ca. 1700

Significant Person(s):   Alden, John

Cultural Affiliation:     English

Architect/Builder:

Historic Contexts:

II. European Colonial Exploration and Settlement  
       C. English Exploration and Settlement  
           2. Settlement of New England  
 XXXIII. Historic Preservation  
       D. Regional Efforts: New England  
           1. Regionalism and Preservation  
           2. Private Historical Societies  
       I. History of U.S. Archeology  
           2. Historical Archeology

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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.****SUMMARY****Criterion 1**

The John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites in Duxbury, Massachusetts, consist of two discontinuous parcels, the ca. 1700 Alden House and the ca. 1630 Original Alden Homestead. Both sites were part of the 1628 100-acre grant to *Mayflower* passenger John Alden and his family. The Alden House property has never left the Alden family—379 years of continuous ownership by one family, and counting. The strength of this connection between family, place, and American history and culture is shown by two claims under Criterion 1:

- The John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites owe their prominence to the national cultural impact of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, a poem about the courtship of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins published in 1858 by their descendant Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The desire of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Americans for a more human, family-focused story about the cultural and historical origins of the United States quickly made *The Courtship* the most popular national origins story in American folklore. At the dawn of the twentieth century, John and Priscilla, in the popular mind, were the “First Couple” of European immigration to the United States, lovers who, in historian Ann Uhry Abrams’s phrase, “rode off on a bull to sire a nation.” The public’s embrace of *The Courtship* and its incorporation into American folklore made the surviving Alden House the most important physical site associated with John and Priscilla and a focus of on-going national public interest, especially since descendants continued to live in and own the house. This property illustrates, in a highly visible way, a link between folklore and material culture.
- The Original Alden Homestead Site was the site of important fieldwork and analysis by Roland Wells Robbins (1908-1987), a pioneer in the field of historical archeology. Although his early work on Thoreau’s Walden Pond cabin site or the Saugus Iron Works may be better known publicly, Robbins’ investigations at the Alden site is prodigiously cited in the scholarly literature on New England historical archeology and represented his work at the top of his professional form. His work is a very fine example of early historical archeology in the United States. Consequently, the Original Alden Homestead is a site of national significance in the development of the field of historical archeology and meets NHL Criterion Exception 8 for exceptional significance for achieving national importance within the last fifty years as Robbins’ excavations date to 1960.

**Criterion 2**

No other site is so prominently associated with John Alden (ca. 1598/9-1687), a person of national significance in the US colonial period. Ship’s cooper on the *Mayflower* and a founder of the Plymouth Colony, the second permanent English colony in North America, Alden held positions of high economic and political importance for almost the entire seventy-one year history of the Plymouth Colony (1620-1691), a span of public service unrivaled in seventeenth-century colonial America and perhaps in the entire colonial period. When he died in 1687 Alden was the last surviving signer of the *Mayflower* Compact and still serving the colony as an Assistant (i.e., magistrate and member of the governor’s council). During the intervening sixty-seven years, he served the colony in almost every available capacity save that of governor (although he served as deputy or acting governor on two occasions). As one biographer put it, his name appears on nearly every page of the colony’s records.

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**Criterion 6**

The Original Alden Homestead Site was the actual Duxbury, Massachusetts, home of *Mayflower* Pilgrims John and Priscilla (Mullins) Alden and their children. Pioneering historical archeologist Roland Wells Robbins located and excavated a foundation of this home in 1960. This work revealed a structure whose early date (ca. 1630), seeming permanent construction, and narrow dimensions made it a discovery of major scientific importance. It also yielded nationally significant artifacts that shed light on the lifeways of the first English settlers in New England and North America. Robbins' work at the site was careful and well-documented, but it was limited. A 2006 geophysical survey of the area surrounding the foundation shows that the site retains very high integrity. Moreover, this survey revealed a number of sub-surface anomalies of potentially manmade (cultural) origin. Since 1960, several historical archeologists have advanced hypotheses about the interpretation of this site in light of subsequent findings at other sites. As a result, the original Alden Homestead Site has high potential to yield additional information that would address three nationally significant research questions:

- *Was the Alden home constructed with an eye toward permanence?*
- *Was this home a narrow "long house" or a combination stone foundation-earthfast house?*
- *Given John Alden's prominent role in the Plymouth Colony's trade, to what extent does the site provide evidence about social, material, and economic interaction with Native Americans and with the larger Atlantic world?*

Potentially recoverable data at the site may well answer these questions. Thus, further work could substantially modify major historic concepts, contribute to several major historical/anthropological debates, or, at least, add significant new evidence that speaks to these issues, thereby making another major contribution to the existing archeological literature on early seventeenth-century English settlement sites in North America.

**CRITERION 1—THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH AND THE ALDEN HOUSE**

The John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites in Duxbury, Massachusetts, are the best single place to understand the creation of a national origins story in American folklore through a unique combination of efforts by Alden descendants to celebrate the first of their family to come to America, and the desire of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Americans for a more human, family-focused national origins story that expressed their own sense of the past. This property demonstrates the power of folklore to dominate the American psyche and the link between folklore and history that is often not explored.

From the time of the American Revolution onward, Americans linked themselves to a national story of the United States by remembering and celebrating the arrival of the first of their forebears in America. This commemorative impulse encouraged genealogical research as a pastime, the preservation and publication of oral traditions and primary source documents that in turn provided the means for the creation of a national history for the United States, influenced American literary, visual, and performing arts, and, ultimately, shaped popular historical memory and American folklore. No American family demonstrated the full range of these connections better than the Aldens, descendants of *Mayflower* "Pilgrims" John Alden and Priscilla Mullins. From the publication of *The Courtship of Miles Standish and Other Poems* by Alden descendant Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1858 until well into the twentieth century, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins enjoyed a status as national cultural icons. Their fame began with Longfellow's poem, but Americans rapidly added their story to the national folklore and retold it in an astonishing variety of cultural forms. Not only did John and Priscilla become the most famous of the *Mayflower* Pilgrims, but, as the first young single adults to marry in the Plymouth Colony, they came to be viewed as the prototypical American family founders, a couple whose

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American marriage and family represented a permanent commitment to a better life in the Europeans' "New World." As the United States struggled with sectional rivalry in the mid-nineteenth century and emerged as a world power at the end of the nineteenth century amid the stresses of industrialization, urbanization, and mass immigration, the American public also worked to define themselves as a unique people. In this context, Americans embraced Longfellow's human, even humorous, tale of John and Priscilla as a positive national origins story without racial or ethnic conflict, religious hair-splitting, or economic gain, thereby transcending its regional associations. At the dawn of the twentieth century, John and Priscilla, in the popular mind, were the "First Couple" of European immigration to the United States, lovers who, in historian Ann Uhry Abram's phrase, "rode off on a bull to sire a nation."<sup>30</sup> The *Courtship* continued to appeal to Americans well into the twentieth century, which led Alden descendants to organize a nationwide family association to purchase, maintain, and present the Alden House as a museum, as well as hire Roland Wells Robbins to successfully locate the Original Alden Homestead. Once Americans had enshrined John and Priscilla in the national folklore, they made the surviving Alden House and the surrounding property the physical location that they associated with the tale. It became the physical link between the real people in the story and the story as the cultural icon it had become.

**JOHN & PRISCILLA ALDEN'S RISE TO PROMINENCE: *THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH***

The establishment of John and Priscilla in American folklore in the mid-nineteenth century was not the work of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow alone. The popularity of the *Courtship of Miles Standish*, while owing much to Longfellow's skill and reputation, was also an outgrowth of an active one hundred year process of promoting the *Mayflower* Pilgrims as the founding European settlers of both New England and the United States.<sup>31</sup> Around Plymouth, Massachusetts, the *Mayflower* passengers had been remembered by their descendants and other local residents as the "First Comers." But in the years just before the outbreak of the American Revolution, as tensions with the mother country increased, patriot orators and writers touted the *Mayflower* Pilgrims as the American progenitors of a people with an important history that differed from that of Great Britain. Whig and Patriot speakers found the memory of the Pilgrims rhetorically useful in the political struggles of the time, and commemoration of the *Mayflower* became one of the first examples of the use of history in a developing New England and American "nationalism." Indeed, these New England "nationalists" were so successful, Abrams argues, that the *Mayflower* Pilgrims eventually provided "the origin myth for the entire United States."<sup>32</sup> "Penn, Baltimore, and Williams, like Washington and Franklin, have been honored for their leadership," wrote historian Wesley Frank Craven in *Legend of the Founding Fathers*, "but the Pilgrim Fathers have represented the people themselves."<sup>33</sup>

These early Pilgrim commemorative efforts provided the source story that Longfellow used as his starting point in the *Courtship*. In 1814, Rev. Timothy Alden (1771-1839), the son of a grandson of a grandson of John and Priscilla, published his five-volume *Collection of American Epitaphs and Inscriptions*.<sup>34</sup> Timothy Alden, who

<sup>30</sup> Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Pilgrims and Pocahontas: Rival Myths of American Origin* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 213.

<sup>31</sup> The process by which the first settlers of Plymouth Colony became "the Pilgrims" is covered well by John Seelye, *Memory's Nation: The Place of Plymouth Rock* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) and Abrams, *The Pilgrims and Pocahontas*. See, too, Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, "Commemorating Colonial New England's First Families: The Triumph of the Pilgrims," in *The Art of Family: Genealogical Artifacts in New England*, eds. D. Brenton Simons and Peter Benes (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002) for a historical survey that focuses more narrowly on visual images of the pilgrims. To place the Aldens and the *Mayflower* pilgrims in the larger context of creating an American collective memory, see Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991) and Wesley Frank Craven, *The Legend of the Founding Fathers* (New York: New York University Press, 1956).

<sup>32</sup> Abrams, *Pilgrims and Pocahontas*, 213.

<sup>33</sup> Craven, *Legend of Founding Fathers*, 85.

<sup>34</sup> Rev. Timothy Alden, *A Collection of American Epitaphs and Inscriptions with Occasional Notes* (New York: S. Marks, 1814). For background on Alden, see Charles D. Cashdollar, "Timothy Alden," in *American National Biography* and C.M.B., "Timothy

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cataloged the collections of both the Massachusetts Historical Society and the New York Historical Society and helped found the American Antiquarian Society, is best known as a compiler and publisher of primary source material. He was one of the most important early contributors to the establishment of American history as a field for research. In the third volume of *American Epitaphs and Inscriptions* he included material about John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, including an “anecdote, which has been carefully handed down by tradition” of a love triangle involving John, Priscilla, and Miles Standish.<sup>35</sup> According to the tale, the recently widowed Standish sent his young friend John Alden as his emissary to Priscilla Mullins, the daughter of another *Mayflower* passenger, to present Standish’s proposal of marriage. “Miss Mullins listened with respectful attention,” wrote Timothy Alden, “and at last, after a considerable pause, fixing her eyes upon him, with an open and pleasant countenance, said, prithee, John, why do you not speak for yourself?”<sup>36</sup> Needless to say, Alden, and not Standish, married Priscilla.

Although former United States president and Alden descendant John Adams had touted John Alden as the first of the Pilgrims to step on to Plymouth Rock, John and Priscilla were not among the most prominently remembered Pilgrims during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Their status changed abruptly in 1858 with the publication of *The Courtship of Miles Standish* by poet and Alden descendant Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882).<sup>38</sup> In a letter to his friend, Massachusetts’ United States Senator Charles Sumner, Longfellow indicated that the poem was the “‘well-known adventure’ of his maternal ancestor John Alden.”<sup>39</sup> Timothy Alden’s tale of the love triangle had inspired several versions before the publication of Longfellow’s *Courtship*. James Thacher and Justin Winsor had retold the story in their town histories of Plymouth and Duxbury, respectively. An 1843 verse rendition attributed to a “Moses Mullins” appeared in a New York weekly magazine called *The Rover*.<sup>40</sup> Pilgrim Hall librarian William S. Russell summarized the story in his 1846 *Guide to Plymouth and Recollections of the Pilgrims*, one of the nation’s earliest published tour guides.<sup>41</sup> Longfellow had even attempted a play based on the story. So there is no question that the story had been established in Pilgrim lore before *The Courtship* was published. But it was the Longfellow poem, an instant best-seller in both the United States and Britain, which made the story internationally famous and a fixture in American popular culture. In Boston Longfellow’s publisher, Ticknor and Fields, sold 25,000 copies of the poem in two months.<sup>42</sup> In the United Kingdom twenty-four publishing houses published the poem simultaneously, and ten thousand copies were sold in London in a single day.<sup>43</sup> Multiple editions appeared in the decades that followed, and the poem has remained in print to this day.

As the preeminent poet of the literary “Flowering of New England” and one of the best-selling poets in the English-speaking world, Longfellow recognized a good story that he believed would be popular with the public. Consequently, he took “poetic license” with Timothy Alden’s tale and made no pretense of squaring his John Alden, Priscilla Mullins, and Miles Standish with the historical record. Although his aim was obviously literary, Longfellow decisively severed the historical impulse from the celebratory impulse behind the Alden

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Alden” in *Dictionary of American Biography*.

<sup>35</sup> Alden, *Collection of American Epitaphs*, 3:264-271.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>37</sup> John Seelye, *Memory’s Nation: The Place of Plymouth Rock* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 384.

<sup>38</sup> This paragraph and the one following it draw principally on Seelye’s book and James W. Baker, “The Aldens in American Culture,” *Aldens’ Progress* (Winter 2002-3): 5-6. *The Courtship of Miles Standish* was the title of the book, a volume that contained several poems, the longest and most important of which was the “The Courtship of Miles Standish.”

<sup>39</sup> Longfellow to Sumner, as quoted in Abrams, 211.

<sup>40</sup> Moses Mullins, *The Rover* 1, no. 12 (1843).

<sup>41</sup> William S. Russell, *Guide to Plymouth and Recollections of the Pilgrims* (Boston: George Coolidge, 1846), fn. 181. Craven calls it a tourist guide, 93.

<sup>42</sup> J. D. McClatchy, “Chronology,” in *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Poems and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 2000), 812; Also, see J. D. McClatchy, “Return to Gitche Gume,” *New York Times Book Review*, October 22, 2000, 39.

<sup>43</sup> Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England* (New York: Modern Library, 1936, 1941), 509.

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story with the effect of bestowing semi-legendary status on John and Priscilla just as he had earlier with Hiawatha and would do several years later with Paul Revere. Longfellow's poem struck several popular chords. After nearly a century of commemorating the Pilgrims as Olympian founders of a new nation and people, the Longfellow love triangle humanized the Pilgrims for the first time. Indeed, for two centuries the descendants of the Pilgrims and Puritans had exalted their ancestors for their piety, while agonizing over the degree to which they fell short of the saintly standard set by their forebears. After being on the short end of such comparisons for so long, New Englanders were more than ready for Longfellow's John and Priscilla. More importantly, the poem was consistent with the Victorian-era middle class desire to sentimentalize romantic love and to idealize the marriage, family, home and domestic felicity that naturally ensued from romantic love. In the character of Priscilla, the young woman who forthrightly took destiny into her own hands, Longfellow obliquely tapped stirrings that were evident in the emerging American women's rights movement without directly threatening the domestic ideal in which married women were the center of the family and home.<sup>44</sup> Longfellow's poem also offered Yankee New Englanders a nostalgic and romantic image of their forebears, as they looked backward seeking reassuring cultural touchstones amid the disturbing forces of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration that were rapidly altering their own lives and the New England they knew. While the story may have had a special resonance for Yankee New Englanders, Longfellow gave all Americans an appealing, accessible couple to stand for all the founding forebears of American families.

**IMPACT OF JOHN AND PRISCILLA'S STORY ON AMERICAN CULTURE**

The impact of *The Courtship's* popularity on Pilgrim commemoration and American culture was immediate, widespread, and long-lasting. An astonishing number of people working in a variety of cultural forms retold or took inspiration from the story. One of the most dramatic impacts was on visual representations of the Pilgrims. According to Alden House curator and former Plimoth Plantation senior historian James W. Baker, "Representations of the Pilgrim lovers . . . soon surpassed the images of the Landing (in number if not in size) as the most popular images of the Pilgrims."<sup>45</sup> Scenes from Longfellow's poem inspired a number of illustrators and painters over the next three generations. The first two illustrated editions of *The Courtship* were published in 1859. These volumes were illustrated by John Whetton Ehninger (1827-1889) and John Gilbert in the United States and England respectively. The eight illustrations in the Ehninger volume were actually made from photographs of Ehninger's original drawings taken by the soon-to-be-famous Civil War photographer Mathew Brady.<sup>46</sup> The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has three wood-engravings in its collections by Joseph S. Harley (American, active 1850s-1860s), entitled "John Alden and Priscilla," "John Alden with flowers in his hand," and "Marriage of John Alden and Priscilla."<sup>47</sup> *Courtship* illustrations by Ehninger and Gilbert inspired late nineteenth-century painter George Henry Boughton (1833-1905). Boughton specialized in Pilgrim paintings, and he painted a number of scenes from *The Courtship*, including *March of Myles Standish* (1870), "*Why Don't You Speak for Yourself, John?*" (bef. 1885), and *Priscilla and John Alden* (1889). Reproductions of his paintings were widely distributed, and his Alden images in particular became well-known through their publication on trade cards, postcards and souvenirs. His painting "*Why Don't You Speak For Yourself, John?*" was even made into a popular drawing room sculpture by John Rogers (1829 – 1904), creator of the famous "Rogers' Groups" in 1885.<sup>48</sup> The most prolific marketer of Pilgrim pictures and souvenirs was Alfred S. Burbank (1856 – 1946) of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Burbank opened his Pilgrim Bookshop in 1872 and commissioned Pilgrim souvenirs and Plymouth pictures until his retirement in 1932. No one was more

<sup>44</sup> Seelye makes this point, 394.

<sup>45</sup> Baker, "Aldens in American Culture," 6. Abrams essentially says the same, 82 and 207.

<sup>46</sup> John W. Ehninger, *Illustrations of Longfellow's Courtship of Miles Standish* (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1859).

<sup>47</sup> MFA Accession Nos. K2454, K2458, & K2459, accessed at <http://www.mfa.org/collections/>; for Harley, see <http://www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/bios.html>.

<sup>48</sup> For an ad for the "Why Don't You Speak" Rogers group, see "Higgins & Seiter," *New York Times*, December 11, 1898, 13. For a report on a retrospective exhibition of Rogers' work, see "Other Events Current," *New York Times*, April 12, 1936, X8.

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indefatigable in presenting the story of the Pilgrims and its imagery to the American public through books, cards, figurines, dishes, and other objects. The Boughton Alden pictures were among his most popular images.

Early twentieth-century illustrators Howard Chandler Christy (1873-1952) and N. C. Wyeth (1882-1945) followed in Boughton's footsteps. Christy, a Miles Standish descendant, illustrated a 1903 edition of *The Courtship* published by Bobbs-Merrill.<sup>49</sup> ("John Alden," a *Washington Post* reviewer noted of Christy's rendering, "is the perfect type of Saxon beauty and manhood."<sup>50</sup>) Wyeth produced illustrations for a 1920 *Mayflower* tercentenary edition of *The Courtship* by Houghton-Mifflin.<sup>51</sup> He returned to the theme of John and Priscilla in his great lobby murals for the Metropolitan Life Building in New York City (1940-45) where he depicted John visiting Priscilla at her spinning wheel and the wedding scene from *The Courtship*.<sup>52</sup> Other notable single paintings depicting John and Priscilla in various scenes from *The Courtship* include J. L. G. [Jean Leon Gerome] Ferris (1863-1930), *The Return of Miles Standish, 1622*, C. Y. [Charles Yardley] Turner (1850-1918), *Bridal Procession of John Alden and Priscilla* (1887), as well as several works by Arthur A. Dixon.<sup>53</sup> Scenes from *The Courtship* also became standard fare in historical and literary *tableaux vivant*, the posed picture-like still scenes struck by appropriately-costumed silent and motionless people that were a popular entertainment at charitable fundraising events around the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>54</sup> The painter C. Y. Turner, in fact, composed and presented three tableaux from *The Courtship* at an event for the Messiah Children Home held at the Berkley Lyceum in New York City in 1890.<sup>55</sup> "The Marriage of John Alden and Priscilla" was among the historical tableaux presented by the National Society of New England Women at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1897 in order to raise money to build a clubhouse.<sup>56</sup>

*The Courtship* naturally lent itself to active dramatization and, when combined with music, even to opera and musical comedy. There were a number of productions based on the popular John and Priscilla story. "The Maid of Plymouth," a comic opera by Clay M. Greene (book) and Thomas Pearsall Thorne (music), was given its premiere by the Bostonians at the Columbia Theater in Chicago in November 1893 and subsequently performed by the same group at the Broadway Theatre in New York and the National Theater in Washington, DC.<sup>57</sup> The Bostonians returned to the same theme in 1896 when they produced the romantic opera, "John and Priscilla," libretto by Harry G. Sommers and score by H. H. Thiele.<sup>58</sup> In 1897, the Mary Washington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution presented the comic opera "Priscilla" to the annual national convention of the DAR at the Columbia Theater in Washington as a benefit to raise funds for the construction of Continental Hall, the society's Washington, DC national headquarters building (NHL, 1972).<sup>59</sup> Henry B.

<sup>49</sup> For the claim concerning Christy's Standish ancestry, see the biography by Laurence S. Cutler at the following website: [www.americanillustration.org](http://www.americanillustration.org).

<sup>50</sup> "Poetry," *Washington Post*, December 5, 1903, 15.

<sup>51</sup> Percy Hammond, "Saturday Page of Book News and Reviews," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 20, 1920, 9.

<sup>52</sup> Reproductions of Wyeth's murals can be seen in Robert San Souci, *N. C. Wyeth's Pilgrims* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1991).

<sup>53</sup> For a mention of what may be the same Turner painting, see "Society," *Washington Post*, June 19, 1887, 3.

<sup>54</sup> The earliest representation of John and Priscilla in a tableau that I have identified to date is found in "Society at the Capital," *Washington Post*, April 5, 1885, 6.

<sup>55</sup> "Tableaus for Charity," *New York Times*, February 22, 1890, 4.

<sup>56</sup> "The Historical Tableaus," *New York Times*, November 30, 1897, 7; "New England Tableaus," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 1, 1897, 3; and "Scenes from Our History," *New York Times*, December 1, 1897, 5.

<sup>57</sup> "Bright with Color," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 19, 1893, 25; "Music Gems in Store," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 26, 1893, 37; "The Maid of Plymouth," *New York Times*, November 28, 1893, 5; "Music and Drama," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 28, 1893, 6; "Notes of Music," *New York Times*, January 7, 1894, 19; "The Maid of Plymouth," *New York Times*, January 14, 1894, 10; "New Bills at the Theatres," *New York Times*, January 16, 1894, 5; "At the Theaters Next Week," *Washington Post*, November 8, 1894, 3.

<sup>58</sup> "John and Priscilla," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 10, 1896, 48.

<sup>59</sup> "Daughters to Present 'Priscilla,'" *Washington Post*, February 7, 1897, 7; "Fashion Will Patronize 'Priscilla,'" *Washington Post*, February 24, 1897, 7; "Final Rehearsal of Priscilla," *Washington Post*, March 9, 1897, 7; "Music and Musicians," *Los Angeles*

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Coolidge wrote the libretto for this opera and Thomas W. Surette, the score. This opera was reprised as a benefit for the Woodmen of the World at the Mason Opera House in Los Angeles in 1903. In March 1901, “The Wooing of Priscilla,” a comedy drama (with incidental music) written by Stanislaus Stange, was produced at the Tremont Theatre in Boston.<sup>60</sup> In 1932, an opera entitled “Priscilla and John Alden” by Scripps College faculty members Henry Purmort Eames (music) and Hartley Burr Alexander (lyrics) was produced by the Claremont Community Players at the Little Theater of Padua Hills, California.<sup>61</sup> A dramatic rendition of *The Courtship* was even produced in sign language by deaf mutes.<sup>62</sup>

The John and Priscilla story also appealed to artists working in the new creative forms of the early twentieth century. In 1921, Realart released the comedy-drama *The Beloved Villain*, a film based on a French farce that used the *Courtship* triangle as the basis of its plot.<sup>63</sup> In 1923, the actor-director-producer Charles Ray (1891-1943), one of the great stars of the silent film era, released *The Courtship of Myles Standish*, starring himself as John Alden and Enid Bennett as Priscilla.<sup>64</sup> He marketed it as Hollywood’s third historical epic after D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* and James Cruze’s *The Covered Wagon*. The film cost a staggering \$800,000 and took eight months to make. Ray had his art director, Robert Ellis, built a 102-foot replica of the *Mayflower* at a cost of \$63,000 and placed it in a large water tank in order to film the shipboard scenes. The film premiered on October 1, 1923, at Grauman’s Million Dollar Theater in Los Angeles and opened in Washington, DC in time for Thanksgiving, before playing elsewhere. But it was not a popular or critical success, and Ray, who had sunk both his personal and business fortunes into the film, declared bankruptcy. There were apparently no further attempts to film *The Courtship*, although Stan Laurel & Oliver Hardy, costumed as John and Priscilla, appeared in a photograph published in the *Los Angeles Times* for Thanksgiving 1929.<sup>65</sup> If John and Priscilla did not make it into the talking era of motion pictures, they did make it onto the radio. On November 26, 1929, a singing group named the Eskimos performed Harry Roser’s new song “Why Don’t You Speak for Yourself, John?” as part of a pre-Thanksgiving broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC).<sup>66</sup> Businessmen were not long in making use of John and Priscilla’s prominence in the national folklore to add luster to their brands or stores. Department stores like R. H. Macy’s, John Wanamaker’s, and Abraham & Straus used John and Priscilla in their advertising copy at Thanksgiving and other times.<sup>67</sup> Abraham & Straus sold Priscilla brand grape juice and called its baked goods department the Priscilla Bake Shop, explicitly linking the latter to John and Priscilla in their advertising. Most of the associations that retailers made with the couple

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*Times*, October 11, 1903, E2; and “The Playhouses,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1903, 6.

<sup>60</sup> “The Wooing of Priscilla,” *New York Times*, May 28, 1901, 9; and “Player Folk,” *Washington Post*, June 9, 1901, 28. For an earlier report of Stange’s work on this play, see “In the World of Drama,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 20, 1893, 29.

<sup>61</sup> “Claremont Players in New Season,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 4, 1932, 6; “Tryouts Today for Operetta,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 15, 1932, 13; Katherine T. von Blon, “First Offering Due at Playbox,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 1932, B14; Katherine T. von Blon, “Women’s Club Drama Praised,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1932, B14; “Pen Points,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 13, 1932, A4.

<sup>62</sup> “Entertainment for Deaf Mutes,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 28, 1895, 6.

<sup>63</sup> “Her Beloved Villain,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 3, 1920, A4A; “Wanda Hawley is Star at Forsyth,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 5, 1921, D6; “Her Beloved Villain,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 7, 1921, 13.

<sup>64</sup> “Descendants of Pilgrims to Celebrate,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 19, 1922, II7; “Niblo Gets Noted Artist,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 10, 1923, 18; “Story of Mayflower Is Told,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1923, III33; Grace Kingsley, “Flashes,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1923, II7; “Courtship Second Week,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 1923, II7; Advertisement, “The Courtship of Myles Standish,” *Washington Post*, November 25, 1925, 73; “Myles Standish’ Is Continued at the President,” *Washington Post*, December 3, 1923, 9; Advertisement, “The Courtship of Myles Standish,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 18, 1924, 12. For details on Ray’s career, see “Charles Ray,” <http://www.goldensilents.com/stars/charlesray.html> and “History of the KCET Lot,” <http://www.kcet.org/about/station-history/index.php>.

<sup>65</sup> “This Is Not a Ham Poster,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 24, 1929, 19.

<sup>66</sup> “Bridge Game Over Radio in Afternoon,” *Washington Post*, November 26, 1929, 14.

<sup>67</sup> Advertisement, “Macy’s Methods Mark Macy’s Name for Fame,” *New York Times*, November 20, 1898, 13; Advertisement, “Peculiarities of the Present Month of August,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1900, 4; Advertisement, “The A&S Priscilla Bake Shop,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 11, 1927, 2.

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concerned clothing and furniture. The John M. Smyth Company of Chicago actually ran an ad for its early American furniture in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* that featured four illustrations of the Alden House in Duxbury.<sup>68</sup> However, an astonishing variety of products were marketed with John and Priscilla associations. These included china, jewelry, shoes, hats, playing cards, cranberries, cigars, cigarettes, and codfish, as well as Alden Fruit Vinegar. The National Biscuit Company [later Nabisco] sold John Alden Old Fashion Molasses Cookies and Priscilla Butter Cookies.<sup>69</sup> According to James and Patricia Scott Deetz, “there was until the 1960s a line of canned goods produced in Massachusetts with the brand name John Alden, which carried a slogan in small print on its label: ‘It speaks for itself,’ referring of course to the can’s contents, whether peas, corn, beans, or some other vegetable.”<sup>70</sup> John even lent his name to the sales of Beverly Hills real estate.<sup>71</sup> A needlework magazine for women called *The Modern Priscilla* was published between 1887 and 1930. John and Priscilla also gave their respective names to two brands of navel oranges grown in Highland, California, that were marketed on the East Coast and whose daily price fluctuations were reported in the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>72</sup>

“Every school child that arrives at the dignity of fifth grade work,” Elisabeth Poe wrote in 1921, “has heard the romantic story of Priscilla and John Alden.”<sup>73</sup> The claim was not far off the mark in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most telling evidence of the familiarity of Americans with John and Priscilla and the cultural resonance of their story was simply the number and variety of allusions to the couple that came to mind and made it into print in newspapers around the United States (including papers in regions less directly influenced by the cultural patrimony of New England like the South and Southern California). Such allusions naturally occurred most often in the context of romance and courtship. Not surprisingly, many of them had to do with courting or wooing technique.<sup>74</sup> John and Priscilla also made many lists of great lovers in literature and history (often produced around St. Valentine’s Day) and were considered the first great lovers in American history.<sup>75</sup> In this context John and Priscilla were popular choices for couples at costume balls.<sup>76</sup> More surprising, however, were the political allusions made to the couple. In a period when Americans demanded at least a false modesty from ambitious politicians by requiring them to have others put their names forward for office, Priscilla was often cast in the role of Democracy, and her famous rejoinder, “why don’t you speak for yourself,” was used to tout the political virtues of the touters in turn.<sup>77</sup> Another political use of the *Courtship* was made in October 1915 by a float in a Boston parade held by 16,000 advocates of the woman

<sup>68</sup> Advertisement, “The John Alden House,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 12, 1925, 7.

<sup>69</sup> Marian Manners, “Home Service Bureau,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 1933, A6. For an A&P ad mention of the cookies, see “Special Week-End Feature,” *New York Times*, November 10, 1933, 17.

<sup>70</sup> James Deetz and Patricia Scott Deetz, *The Times of Their Lives* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 2000), 21.

<sup>71</sup> Advertisement, “Faint Heart Ne’er Won Fair Lady,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1925, 14.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, “Daily Eastern Citrus Markets,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1932, 17.

<sup>73</sup> Elisabeth Poe, “Half Forgotten Romances of American History,” *Washington Post*, November 13, 1921, 86.

<sup>74</sup> On technique, see “First Class in Courting,” *Washington Post*, November 18, 1907, 9; “Laura Jean’s Monologue Tells All About Love,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 7, 1910, B5; Isma Dooly, “In the Social Whirl,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 24, 1914, B7; and “Course in Love-Making Is Debated at Emory,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 8, 1914, 6.

<sup>75</sup> For examples of lists, see “Novel Entertainments for Young and Old for St. Valentine’s Day,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 10, 1901, 54; “Pi-ing Names of Famous Lovers,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 10, 1901, A4; and “Some of the Prize Winners,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 20, 1907, F4; and “Big Post-Lenten Events Take Shape,” *New York Times*, March 30, 1930, X15.

<sup>76</sup> For some examples, see “Annual Costume Charity Ball at Narragansett Pier One of Most Brilliant of the Season,” *Washington Post*, August 21, 1915, 7; “Women Radiant in Gems and Silks,” *Washington Post*, February 18, 1916, 4; “Events in Capital Society,” *Washington Post*, March 20, 1916, 7; and “Big Post-Lenten Events Take Shape,” X15.

<sup>77</sup> A cartoon in this form appeared on the front page of the *Washington Post*. See “Miles Standish’s Courtship,” *Washington Post*, September 23, 1895, 1. For other examples in the same vein, see “Modern Version of an Old Story,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 22, 1892, 4; Frank G. Carpenter, “Garfield’s Bullet,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1896, 25; “The Brave Heart and the Fair Lady,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 1907, II4; Willis J. Abbot, “Democrats See Signs of a Panic,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 15, 1908, 2; “Pen Points: By the Staff,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 31, 1912, II4; and “Priscilla Said to John,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 23, 1919, 8.

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suffrage amendment then on the ballot in Massachusetts.<sup>78</sup> In reply to Priscilla's usual rejoinder, John says: "Why don't you vote for yourself, Priscilla?"

For the historian, perhaps the most impressive evidence of the cultural impact of *The Courtship* was the degree to which the story and the figure of Priscilla, in particular, muscled their way into the realm of history. John Alden left an extensive mark on the historical record, but the popularity of *The Courtship* almost completely obscured his substantial six-decade record of public service and accomplishment. The real-life Priscilla left almost no trace in the historical record, yet the Priscilla of *The Courtship* became in the judgment of many Americans one of the most important women in American history.<sup>79</sup> Her repeated depictions in historical tableaux, where she and John often represented (inaccurately) "Puritan New England," were the best evidence of this assertion. Priscilla appeared as a principal subject in several published popular histories, including *Three Heroines of New England* (1894).<sup>80</sup> She was even said to have been the one among the Pilgrims who prepared the first Thanksgiving.<sup>81</sup> John and Priscilla rated a float in the great Columbus Day parade held in New York City on October 12, 1892, to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the "discovery of America."<sup>82</sup> At the official bicentennial ball given in honor of George Washington's two-hundredth birthday at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC on February 22, 1932, Priscilla managed another representation in the pageant.<sup>83</sup> Later the same year, John and Priscilla figured in a series of scenes from American history presented as part of the opening ceremonies for the 1932 Summer Olympics before 105,000 spectators at the Coliseum in Los Angeles (Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, NHL 1984).<sup>84</sup> Yet, ironically, while the popularity of *The Courtship* guaranteed a place for the couple in the 1920-1 Pilgrim Tercentenary celebrations in Plymouth, they did not dominate the event. In fact, the general tenor of the celebration was far more serious than Longfellow's poem allowed, and John, Priscilla, and Miles Standish rated only a depiction in a series of ten tableaux presented as part of an evening program at the Old Colony Theatre in Plymouth to mark the tercentenary of the return of the *Mayflower* to England on April 15, 1921.<sup>85</sup>

By the mid-twentieth century, the prominence of John and Priscilla in American folklore began to give ground to the story of the First Thanksgiving. But the story continued to have an impact on American culture. In September 1941 *Life* magazine ran a seven-page story entitled "The Alden Family: A Sequel to the First American Love Story" that began with an excerpt from *The Courtship* and continued: "As every American schoolchild knows, John did speak for himself."<sup>86</sup> Trailblazing modern dance choreographer and Alden descendant Martha Graham (1894-1991) wrote in her 1991 autobiography *Blood Memory* of the inspiration that her work took from her Pilgrim forebears, which included Miles Standish as well as John and Priscilla.<sup>87</sup> The British author Graham Greene (1904-1991) paid a left-handed tribute to the cultural influence of *The Courtship* in his 1955 novel *The Quiet American* by naming his idealistic, New England-born, Indochina-based CIA operative, Alden Pyle.<sup>88</sup> In a 1967 episode of the television series *Bewitched* ("Samantha's Thanksgiving to

<sup>78</sup> "16,000 in Vote Parade," *Washington Post*, October 17, 1915, 2.

<sup>79</sup> "Our Women in History," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 20, 1897, 16.

<sup>80</sup> "New England Heroines," *New York Times*, November 18, 1894, 23. The book was published by Little, Brown.

<sup>81</sup> "Thanksgiving," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 25, 1897, 12.

<sup>82</sup> "Program of the Night Pageant," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 30, 1892, 3; "The Night Pageant," *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 1892, n.p.

<sup>83</sup> "Society," *Washington Post*, February 4, 1932, 8.

<sup>84</sup> Braven Dyer, "Stirring March of Athletes Brings Out Goose Pimples," *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 1932, E1.

<sup>85</sup> Frederick W. Bittinger, et al., *The Story of the Pilgrim Tercentenary Celebration at Plymouth in the Year 1921* (Plymouth, MA: Memorial Press, 1923), 29, 34.

<sup>86</sup> "The Alden Family: A Sequel to the First American Love Story," *Life*, September 8, 1941, 85-91.

<sup>87</sup> Martha Graham, *Blood Memory* (New York: Doubleday, 1991). For references to her Pilgrim ancestry, see pages 18. The significance of Graham's Pilgrim ancestry is also underscored by Maureen Needham, "Martha Graham," *American National Biography*.

<sup>88</sup> Graham Greene, *The Quiet American* (New York: Viking, 1956).

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Remember,” Season 4, Episode 12, November 23, 1967), the actor Richard Bull played John Alden who is featured centrally in many scenes and portrayed as exceptionally fair and just. Appropriating the First Thanksgiving for its setting, and using the Pilgrim fear of witches as a plot line, Darrin Stephens (Dick York) was accidentally sent back in time to seventeenth-century Plymouth, accused of being a witch for his perceived differences (using modern speech, for one thing) and put on trial. Darrin asks, “Hath I no rights at all?” John Alden responds, “Indeed in this village ye do,” to which Miles Standish (Peter Canon) retorted to Alden, “Speak for yourself John.” The theme, as in most episodes of this popular TV series, was to value individual differences and community diversity. This screenplay—echoing the same sociopolitical themes and implicit contemporary context as Arthur Miller’s “The Crucible” (1952), but with a happy ending—takes on poignancy as the writers, credited as “Tom and Helen August,” were in fact Alfred Lewis Levitt (1916-2002) and Helen Levitt (1938-1993). Mr. Levitt “[w]as blacklisted for his involvement with the Communist Party by the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1951 but was not charged with any crime.” Obviously drawing from their own experiences, the Levitts were appealing to an imagined American historical precedence of community tolerance, fairness, and justice, and chose to portray John Alden as an exemplar of those principles.<sup>89</sup> *Peanuts* cartoonist and animator Charles M. Schulz had his character Linus explain the essential plot of *The Courtship* to Peppermint Patty in his Emmy Award-winning holiday television special *Charlie Brown Thanksgiving* (1973), a program still annually broadcast on network television.<sup>90</sup> Dragon Models Ltd. in 2003 released a children’s action figure toy called “Alden’ 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force Southern Iraq” to capitalize on Operation Iraqi Freedom. More recently, the poet David Roderick used the Aldens for inspiration in two poems (“Excavation of the John Alden House” and “Priscilla Alden’s Sickness”) in his 2006 collection *Blue Colonial*, which won the *American Poetry Review*’s Honickman First Book Prize.<sup>91</sup>

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF *THE COURTSHIP* WITH THE ALDEN HOUSE

The publication of *The Courtship* and the rapid incorporation of the story into American folklore gave surviving artifacts associated with John and Priscilla the character of “sacred relics.” The New England Farmer’s Home at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition displayed what James D. McCabe in *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition* called “John Alden’s writing desk,” which the author linked to *The Courtship*.<sup>92</sup> “Here also,” he continued, “was an ancient spinning-wheel . . . which may be the very one which Priscilla, the Puritan maiden, whirled so deftly that poor John Alden could find no way out of the web she wove about him.” Historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich recently called attention to just this connection between the *Courtship* and the Alden artifacts in her 2001 book *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*.<sup>93</sup> But the most important “sacred relic” was the surviving Alden House. *The Courtship* made the house the most important physical site associated with John Alden and Priscilla Mullins and a focus of on-going national public interest. The fact that Alden descendants still owned and lived in the house featured prominently in many of the published pieces that connected the *Courtship* to the house. By the 1920s, 5,000 people a year visited the house.<sup>94</sup> Published and broadcast examples of the link that demonstrate national interest include:

<sup>89</sup> For more on this topic see: “Alfred Lewis Levitt” and “Helen Levitt,” Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/>, and Writers Guild of America, <http://www.wga.org/awards/awardssub.aspx?id=1528>.

<sup>90</sup> This television program is still widely available on video and DVD.

<sup>91</sup> David Roderick, *Blue Colonial* (Philadelphia: American Poetry Review, 2006), 5-6, 60-61. Roderick references the Robbins dig in a note on page 69 and *The Courtship* in a note on page 70. The author thanks Edward L. Bell for this reference.

<sup>92</sup> James D. McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition, held in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of American Independence* (1876; repr., Philadelphia: National, 1975), 239-240. These items were like sacred relics because their connection with John and Priscilla was questionable, to say the least.

<sup>93</sup> Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 27. The author thanks Edward L. Bell for this reference.

<sup>94</sup> James W. Baker, *Alden House History: A Work in Progress* (Duxbury, MA: privately printed by The Alden Kindred of America, 2006).

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- The earliest known article on the house in a national publication appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in January 1877.<sup>95</sup> The unnamed author of this seventeen-page article used a tour of sites associated with the Pilgrims to retell their story. A discussion of the Alden House is set in the context of retelling the *Courtship* story. The illustration of Captain Jack Alden sitting in the Great Room which appeared in this article was from a photograph that, according to family tradition, had been displayed at the Massachusetts pavilion at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876.<sup>96</sup>
- By the 1890s, news about the Alden House found its way with some regularity into newspapers around the nation.<sup>97</sup> For example, in 1895 the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* both made mention of the Alden descendants that still lived in the house, while alluding to the *Courtship*. Similar mentions appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* and *Washington Post* over the next decade.
- In 1908, the *Washington Post* reported the purchase of the Alden House by the Alden Kindred in a front page article.<sup>98</sup>
- Sylvester Baxter published an article on the house in *The Architectural Record* in May 1921.<sup>99</sup>
- When the last Alden descendant to live in the house moved out in 1923, the *New York Times* reported the development.<sup>100</sup>
- *Better Homes & Gardens* did a piece on the house in 1924.
- In September 1941 *Life* ran a seven-page article entitled "The Alden Family: A Sequel to the First American Love Story" that featured the house, property, and mid-twentieth century descendants.
- In March 1987, the house was featured with several other historic Duxbury homes in *Antiques* magazine.<sup>101</sup>
- A number of scenes for the November 19, 2006, three-hour History Channel special "Desperate Crossing: The Untold Story of the Mayflower" were shot at the Alden House.

**JOHN AND PRISCILLA'S STORY AS THE PROMINENT ORIGIN MYTH**

The 1941 *Life* magazine article could be said to mark the end of a seventy-five to eighty-year period in which John and Priscilla's story occupied a very prominent place in American folklore and popular historical consciousness. By mid-century, John and Priscilla began to cede pride of place among *Mayflower* Pilgrim stories to a growing focus on the First Thanksgiving.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps *The Courtship* had run a natural lifecycle for a popular story. Perhaps, like many things Victorian, *The Courtship* began to seem old-fashioned. Perhaps, too,

<sup>95</sup> "The Good Old Times' at Plymouth," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, January 1877, 192-195.

<sup>96</sup> James W. Baker, The Alden House at Houndsditch House Tour, Draft II, 27 April 2004, 8.

<sup>97</sup> "Miles Standish and John Alden," *New York Times*, September 7, 1895, 13; "Floating Facts," *Los Angeles Times*, December 1, 1895, 22; "Personals," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 6, 1897, 6; "Interesting Reunion," *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 1902, 10; "General Notes," *New York Times*, August 9, 1903, 6; "Sequel to Courtship," *Washington Post*, August 5, 1906, L7.

<sup>98</sup> "Alden Home Is Sold," *Washington Post*, January 11, 1908, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Sylvester Baxter, "The Alden House at Duxbury, Mass.," *Architectural Record* (May 1921): 399-407.

<sup>100</sup> "Alden House Tenantless," *New York Times*, April 10, 1923, 22.

<sup>101</sup> Alexandra B. Earle, "History in Towns: Duxbury, Massachusetts," *Antiques* (March 1987): 616, 624-625.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

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Americans no longer needed a story like it. Ann Uhry Abrams argued in *The Pilgrims and Pocahontas: Rival Myths of American Origins* that the Pilgrim story acquired greater importance and ultimately national currency due to the sectional rivalry between the North and the South in the period prior to the Civil War, and in its aftermath down to 1920. In this view the Pilgrim story with John and Priscilla near its core, was eventually adopted as Americans' preferred story of their national origins in good measure because the North won the Civil War. Abram's argument is certainly valid. But John and Priscilla also got a boost from other important factors as well. Indeed, it might be more accurate to argue that the Civil War North and the Pilgrims in popular history both benefited from underlying economic power. Boston was the intellectual capital of the United States through the middle of the nineteenth century because for two generations before the Civil War prosperous Bostonians and New Englanders spent their money to create cultural institutions and then patronized them. Between the American Revolution and the Civil War, New England Yankees and their descendants spread across the northern tier of states all the way to the Pacific Ocean. As they settled new regions, they pioneered vigorous commercial and industrial enterprises. The wealth from these undertakings made it possible for them to do as New Englanders had done at home, to create and support a wide range of cultural institutions and the result was to provide a national cultural infrastructure where none had existed before but one with a natural bias toward New England. When the intellectual and cultural capital of the United States shifted after the Civil War to New York City, it was due in no small measure to the efforts of transplanted New Englanders, who knew one another through that city's New England Society (which Abrams discusses) and who sought to create even greater cultural institutions than found in Boston. The same process occurred wherever people of New England descent created cities. This national network of social and cultural institutions provided the context that encouraged Longfellow's poem in the first place, ensured its wide dissemination and popularity, and even supported its reproduction in multiple cultural forms.

The Southerners described by Abrams, who wished to push the tale of Pocahontas and John Smith as a rival myth of American origin, lacked a comparable cultural network and the economic wealth (especially after the Civil War) to create and support one. They also had less help from the historical record itself. While the founders of Virginia (actually Captain John Smith) left posterity a far more dramatic story to fashion into myth, the Pilgrims and their neighbors left their descendants values such as family, hard work, and piety which made especially good material in an era like the late nineteenth century when Americans wanted their founding myths to be, not only entertaining, but to at least have a connection to the moral high ground (as all Pilgrim stories did implicitly). Finally, there was simply the matter of numbers. *Mayflower* passengers like John and Priscilla Alden left far more progeny than the very first settlers at Jamestown, very few of whom left any descendants at all. John and Priscilla had ten children, seventy grand-children, and more than 310 great-grandchildren. (The 310 figure is counting only those in that generation who left children in turn.) Few families in the less-healthy Chesapeake region could match the cumulative numbers of descendants that the early New Englanders had after three hundred years. *The Courtship* and the Pilgrim story generally were the beneficiaries of the intensified competition between the North and South, an unsurpassed cultural infrastructure created and supported by wealthy Americans of New England descent, an amenable historical record, and the efforts and interest of millions of Americans of *Mayflower* descent.<sup>103</sup>

But it was Americans themselves that made the story part of American folklore. *The Courtship* continued to resonate with them, even as the nineteenth-century sectional rivalry lessened. As Americans at the turn of the twentieth century made the transition to an urban, industrial, and multiethnic modern America, *The Courtship* offered them a human, accessible, and innocent national origins story rooted in the timeless optimism of new love in a new land. For Americans who had been born here and looked back nostalgically to the very different America in which they had been born, the story offered reassurance that, despite the great outward changes, at a

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<sup>103</sup> James W. Baker, "Haunted by the Pilgrims," in *The Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honor of James Deetz*, eds., Anne E. Yentsch and Mary C. Beaudry (Boca Raton, FL: CRC, 1992), 343-352.

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deeper human level the present and the future did not and would not differ so greatly from the past. The story was also a readily understandable immigrant's tale for new Americans who were just starting lives, families, and futures in America. While *The Courtship* clearly resonated strongly in the minds of native-born, white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans, its impact on immigrant Americans during this period is less clear. Their school-age children clearly learned the story in the nation's public schools, if direct statements of the fact as well as newspaper notices of Thanksgiving pageants are any indication. During a period when the celebration of one's colonial forebears was not only a popular expression of nationalism or patriotism but also linked to ideas of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and immigration restriction, John and Priscilla (if a large sample of allusions to the couple in prominent newspapers around the country from 1880 to 1940 is indicative) remained remarkably untarnished by these darker associations. About the closest such association was a piece entitled "The Future American Mother" that appeared in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in 1914.<sup>104</sup> "Will the American child of a generation or two hence have a greater familiarity with the heroes of Polish insurrections, Russian revolutions, and the great fighters in the last Balkans war," the paper asked rhetorically, "than with the men who came over in the Mayflower with the Pilgrims, with Priscilla and John Alden?" The paper concluded, if recent immigration statistics were any indication, that the answer would be yes, but went on to argue that the immigrant women would go on to make great American mothers nonetheless.

Today, the John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites in Duxbury are the single best place in America to understand how the impulse to celebrate the founding of one's family in America intersected with literary skill and national need to produce a national origins story (*The Courtship of Miles Standish*) that had great resonance in popular historical memory and a central place in American folklore.<sup>105</sup> By this standard, no family has been more successful in celebrating their immigrant forebears than the Aldens. Their efforts across two hundred years have inspired thousands of other families to identify and celebrate the first of their family in America.

**CRITERION 1— ROLAND WELL ROBBINS AND THE ORIGINAL ALDEN HOMESTEAD SITE**

The Original Alden Homestead Site is nationally significant as the site of some of the finest work done by Roland Wells Robbins (1908-1987), a pioneer in the field of historical archeology. Best known as the discoverer of the site of Henry David Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, and for his work at the Saugus Iron Works in Saugus, Massachusetts, Robbins was an important figure in the post-World War II development of the fields of historical archeology and industrial archeology in the United States.<sup>106</sup> Between 1945 and 1975, Robbins worked at more than sixty sites in New England and the northeastern United States. He is the subject of a recent professional appraisal by Donald W. Linebaugh, *The Man Who Found Thoreau: Roland W. Robbins and the Rise of Historical Archaeology in America* (2005). Linebaugh, currently director of the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Maryland, places Robbins' work in the context of the larger development of historical archeology in the United States. He argues that Robbins' significance as a pioneer in the field was devalued—even disparaged—by the first generation of university-based historical archeologists, who in their eagerness to establish professional standards for their field unfairly made the self-taught Robbins and his work objects of disdain. Early academic historical archeologists worked to disassociate themselves from amateurs, for-hire projects, and efforts to reconstruct buildings on excavated sites. Robbins, who had earned a public reputation as an archeologist through self-promotion and doing just these things, made a tempting target. Instead, the academics aligned themselves with the research agenda of

<sup>104</sup> "The Future American Mother," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 15, 1914, B14.

<sup>105</sup> For an anthropological model in the folklore and historical ethnography of commemorative historic places, see Yentsch, "Legends, Houses, Families, and Myths: Relationships between Material Culture and American Ideology," 1-19.

<sup>106</sup> On the significance of Robbins, see Donald Walter Linebaugh, "The Road to Ruins and Restoration': Roland W. Robbins and the Professionalization of Historical Archaeology" (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 1996), 345-375; and Donald W. Linebaugh, *The Man Who Found Thoreau: Roland W. Robbins and the Rise of Historical Archaeology in America* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).

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anthropology and viewed archeological sites as opportunities to study the lifeways of the people who had lived and worked there.

But Linebaugh shows that Robbins' importance as a pioneer in the fields of industrial and historical archeology should not be underappreciated.<sup>107</sup> Ironically, academic historical archeologists subsequently came to recognize the need to do many of the things that Robbins pioneered. As examples, Linebaugh argues that Robbins made important contributions to contract archeology and "developed an approach to presenting archeology to the public that would eventually be adopted as standard practice in the profession."<sup>108</sup> In fact, says Linebaugh, "Robbins' school programs and hands-on projects anticipated the current integration of archeology into the school curriculum by twenty-five to thirty years."<sup>109</sup> Moreover, much of Robbins' work came about as a consequence of his own very active efforts to involve the public in archeology and history. At a time when university-based archeologists turned inward to seek professional recognition from peers in academic disciplines like anthropology, Robbins turned outward, cultivating enthusiasm in the public for archeology, while helping local groups and family associations like the Alden Kindred find and tell their own histories. "Robbins," writes Linebaugh, "ultimately succeeded in locating and reconstructing important American monuments and in capturing the public's interest."<sup>110</sup> His work thus foreshadowed and contributed to the emergence of a more grass-roots-based public history in the 1960s, as myriad groups took charge of telling their own stories.

In Linebaugh's judgment, Robbins' involvement with the Original Alden Homestead "exemplified his best work."<sup>111</sup> In contrast to the caricature promulgated by his critics, Linebaugh notes that "Robbins' work at the John Alden site demonstrates careful research and excavation techniques." "In many ways," he writes, "the Alden project marked a major watershed in Robbins' career; it represented his closest approach to contemporary academic practice in terms of methodology and analytical techniques. The work was equal to and exceeded typical restoration-oriented historical archeology projects across the region and country when conducted in the early 1960s."<sup>112</sup> According to Linebaugh: "He approached the problem of locating the original house site in a meticulous way, excavating by natural strata and utilizing systematic vertical and horizontal provenience controls. The results of the initial survey provided him with stratigraphic information that guided the rest of the excavation. He observed and utilized stratigraphic evidence, reading this data with precision, accurately describing the soil sequence, and identifying features. Horizontal and vertical provenience controls at the Alden site were among Robbins's most accurate."<sup>113</sup> Linebaugh was especially impressed by Robbins' approach to the artifacts recovered at the site, which he "analyzed much more systematically than at any of [his] previous projects, and more thoroughly than at many restoration projects of the period."<sup>114</sup> He noted that Robbins compared the site and the artifacts to other contemporary sites, and that he visited and consulted with nationally significant archeologists such as Ivor and Audrey Noël Hume of Colonial Williamsburg and

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<sup>107</sup> In fact, despite the criticism Robbins suffered in his day from many of his university-based colleagues, scholars utilize Robbins' crucial data from the Original Alden Homestead Site, particularly for interpretations of seventeenth-century New England architecture, but also ceramics, in their comparative reports and publications. Robbins' work at the Alden site has lasting value and has been cited by many scholars. Just as with the Robbins' collection from Saugus Ironworks, the provenienced artifacts and meticulous documentation from the Alden site "constitute a known archaeological resource with considerable research and interpretive value." Eric S. Johnson, *Archeological Overview and Assessment of the Saugus Ironworks National Historic Site, Saugus, Massachusetts* (Boston: New England System Support Office, National Park Service, 1997), 61; quoted in Linebaugh, *Man Who Found Thoreau*, 79.

<sup>108</sup> Linebaugh, *Man Who Found Thoreau*, 195.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

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Jamestown curator J. Paul Hudson and other prominent material culture specialists including C. Malcolm Watkins of the Smithsonian Institution, Lura Woodside Watkins (an expert on historical glass and ceramics in New England), and Harold Peterson at the National Park Service.

**CRITERION EXCEPTION 8 – EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE/ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE LAST 50 YEARS**

While his early work at Walden Pond or Saugus may be better known, Robbins' work at the Alden site may be said to represent his work at its peak professional development. Indeed, his work at the site is a fundamental and prodigiously cited example of the then incipient field of historical archeology in the United States. While Robbins' work did not take place until the 1960s, Linebaugh's study has shown that there has been sufficient historical perspective to evaluate Robbins' work and the place of the Alden Original Homestead site within the discipline. Consequently, the Original Alden Homestead is a site of exceptional national significance in the development of the field of historical archeology.<sup>115</sup>

**CRITERION 2—THE HISTORICAL JOHN ALDEN AND HIS SIGNIFICANCE IN FOUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLYMOUTH COLONY**

John Alden (ca. 1598/9-1687) was a founder of the Plymouth Colony, the second permanent English colony in North America and the first in New England. More significantly, Alden held positions of high economic and political importance for almost the entire seventy-one year history of the Plymouth Colony (1620-1691), a span of public service unrivaled in seventeenth-century colonial America and perhaps in the entire colonial period.<sup>116</sup> Alden was the youngest signer of the *Mayflower* Compact in 1620, the social contract signed by forty-one adult males that established democratic-style self-rule in the colony, an action celebrated by early national historian George Bancroft in his *History of the United States* (and many historians who followed) as the first such communal political agreement adopted in territories that became the United States.<sup>117</sup> When he died in 1687, Alden was the last surviving signer of the Compact and still serving the colony as an Assistant (i.e., magistrate

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<sup>115</sup> For all the numerous citations in the specialized scholarly literature to the Original Alden Homestead Site and Robbins' *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress*, James Deetz can be credited for popularizing the archeology of the Alden site in his widely read book *In Small Things Forgotten* (1977), 30, 96-97, 150, 168 (n. 1); Deetz, *Small Things Forgotten*, rev. ed. (1977; repr., New York: Random House, 1996), 39, 135, 202, 265(n. 3); see also references to the Alden site and Robbins in James Deetz and Patricia Scott Deetz, *The Times of Their Lives: Life, Love, and Death in Plymouth Colony* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 2000), 219, 237, 239-240, 350 (n).

<sup>116</sup> The known facts of John Alden's life derive chiefly from two sources: William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952); and Nathaniel B. Shurtleff et al., eds., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England* (1855-1861). Morison was an Alden descendant. For the best biographical treatments of Alden—absent filial piety and hagiography, see Esther Littleford Woodworth-Barnes (as edited by Alicia Crane Williams), *Mayflower Families through Five Generations: Family of John Alden*, vol. 16, pt. 1 (Plymouth, MA: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1999), 1-13; Mark A. Peterson, *American National Biography*, s.v. "Alden, John;" and Alicia Crane Williams, "John and Priscilla, We Hardly Know Ye," *American History Illustrated* 23, no. 8 (December 1988): 40-47. Williams is also an Alden descendant. To understand Alden's role within the colony and within a larger historical context, see George D. Langdon, Jr., *Pilgrim Colony: A History of New Plymouth, 1620-1691* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*; Eugene Aubrey Stratton, *Plymouth Colony: Its History and People, 1620-1691* (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1986); and Nathaniel Philbrick, *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War* (New York: Viking, 2006).

<sup>117</sup> Although historians agree that the perceived historical significance of the Mayflower Compact is due largely to efforts made by Americans in the generation after Independence, especially James Wilson and Alden descendant John Quincy Adams, they disagree about how important the Compact was to the colonists themselves. For the view that the significance of the agreement was an early nineteenth-century development, see Mark L. Sargent, "The Conservative Covenant: The Rise of the Mayflower Compact in American Myth," *New England Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (June 1988): 233-251. For the argument that the Mayflower Compact was important to the Plymouth colonists, see Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, "Mayflower Compact—A Dissenting View," *New England Ancestors* 4, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 54-56, and 4, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 56-57.

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and member of the governor's council). During the intervening sixty-seven years, Alden served the colony in almost every available capacity save that of governor (although he served as deputy or acting governor on two occasions). As one biographer put it, his name appears on nearly every page of the colony's records.<sup>118</sup> Ironically, Alden's mythical *Courtship* fame and the absorption of the Plymouth Colony into the larger Massachusetts Bay Colony worked to obscure his public service.

Alden's contributions to the colony began with his trade as a cooper. He was hired in Southampton, England, as the *Mayflower's* cooper or barrel-maker. As such, he was responsible for the safe-keeping of the ship's provisions of food and drink necessary for the Atlantic crossing and the New England winter to come. After the landing at Plymouth in December 1620, Alden's woodworking skills were undoubtedly employed in building the community's meeting house-hospital at the foot of Leyden Street, the community's first houses, and the 1622 meetinghouse-fort on Burial Hill.<sup>119</sup> In 1626, Alden was among the fifty-three inhabitants of the colony and five London men ("Purchasers") who contracted for £1,800 to buy out the colony's original financial backers ("Merchant Adventurers"). Although still a young man in his late twenties, Alden's economic and social position had advanced by July 1627 to the first rank of the Plymouth colonists because in that month he and seven other senior members of the community agreed to assume sole responsibility for paying the debt owed to the colony's English financial backers. In exchange for undertaking this contractual obligation Alden and the other seven "Undertakers" (plus five London merchants) were granted the company's boats, furs, and other property in the colony as well as a six-year monopoly on the colony's fur trade with Native Americans. Alden's trade as a cooper was essential for packing furs for shipment back to England, but he also helped supervise the series of trading posts that the Plymouth colonists established on the New England coast to conduct this trade. The debt owed the colony's English investors was successfully discharged in the early 1630s.

The surviving records of the Plymouth Colony date from 1632. At that time, Alden was already serving as one of seven Assistants to the colony's governor. The Assistants served as an upper house of the colony's legislature, advisors to the governor, and as magistrates who exercised both local and colony-wide judicial responsibilities. Alden served as an Assistant until 1640. For the next decade he represented Duxbury as a deputy in the Plymouth legislature's lower house, before returning to the ranks of the Assistants in 1650, where he served for thirty-six consecutive years (the last twenty as the senior assistant) until the arrival of Sir Edmund Andros in December 1686 and the temporary suspension of the Plymouth government, which occurred only nine months before Alden died. During this extended period, Alden also served as the colony's treasurer for three years (1656-1658) and as the colony's deputy governor in 1665 and 1677.<sup>120</sup> He also sat on numerous Councils of War when security issues involving the French, Dutch, and Native Americans required planning and action. He was frequently asked by his fellow colonists to arbitrate disputes between colonists and between towns. He also served as an agent for the colony in concluding land purchases from the local Native Americans and represented Native Americans in boundary disputes with Europeans and mediated disputes among Native Americans and between Native Americans and Europeans. In the only close analysis of the land transactions between Plymouth and the Native Americans conducted to date, historian Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs concluded that the colony by and large dealt fairly with the Native Americans, especially during the first fifty years of European settlement, the period when Alden played the roles mentioned above.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Alicia Crane Williams, "John and Priscilla, We Hardly Know Ye," 44.

<sup>119</sup> Deetz and Deetz in *Times of Their Lives*, 197, suggest that Alden was one of two *Mayflower* passengers with woodworking skills. The other was Francis Eaton. I thank Jim Baker, email to the author, July 9, 2004, for helping me get my meetinghouses straightened out.

<sup>120</sup> Plymouth did not have a formal office of deputy governor until 1679. Prior to this date, the governor asked one of the assistants to be deputy governor in his absence.

<sup>121</sup> Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, *Indian Deeds: Land Transactions in Plymouth Colony, 1620-1691* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002). See references to John Alden on pages 77, 83, 92-94, 115, and 119 in the text, as well as in the

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The historical evidence clearly demonstrates that for nearly seven decades John Alden was asked by his fellow colonists to shoulder important economic and political responsibilities for the colony. It seems a fair conclusion that most if not all of this respect and trust derived from the positive regard that his contemporaries (including Native Americans) had for his abilities, accomplishments, integrity, and commitment to public service. His contributions to the colony were apparently viewed as exceptional and appreciated as such. For example, in 1660, the Plymouth General Court voted that “In regard that Mr. Alden is low in his estate, and occasioned to spend much time at the courts on the country’s occasions, and so hath done this many years, the Court hath allowed him a small gratuity, the sum of ten pound.”<sup>122</sup> When Alden died in 1687 his passing was widely noted and lamented. In his journal the famous Boston Puritan diarist (and later jurist) Samuel Sewall (1652-1730) noted the passing of “Mr. John Alden, the Ancient Magistrate of Plymouth.”<sup>123</sup> The Rev. John Cotton, Jr. of Plymouth also published a broadside verse-elegy following Alden’s death in which he noted among many other virtues that: “He came one of the first into this land . . . With all the Governors he did assist . . . God therefore gives him everlasting fame.”<sup>124</sup>

As it transpired, John Alden’s everlasting fame had more to do with the story related in Longfellow’s *Courtship* than with the extraordinary length and quality of public service that he rendered in his lifetime and that his contemporaries believed deserved special recognition. No doubt, if the Plymouth Colony had persisted and if it had eventually become a state within the United States, Alden would have been better remembered, not just as a *Mayflower* passenger, but as a colony-founder who provided two and a half generations of leadership that saw his colony well-established. In contrast to Alden, the public service of the other senior leaders of the Plymouth Colony who came on the *Mayflower* was not as lengthy and the scope of their contributions often less varied. The early leaders of the Plymouth Colony were the *Mayflower* passenger “Undertakers” that assumed the colony’s debt in 1627. The most prominent of these men were: William Bradford, William Brewster, Miles Standish, Edward Winslow, Isaac Allerton, and John Alden.<sup>125</sup> The first governor, John Carver, died during the first winter of 1621. William Bradford (1590-1657) served as governor in most years from 1621 to his death in 1657. He was involved in all aspects of the colony’s affairs, although his position prevented him from leaving Plymouth to take an active role in trade or serve as an emissary to other groups in the region. William Brewster (ca. 1566-1644), as the ruling elder of the Plymouth church, was the religious leader of the Plymouth Colony, but he did not hold government office or manage the colony’s economic affairs. Miles Standish (ca. 1584-1656) was the colony’s chief military officer. Like Alden, Standish usually served as an Assistant and served as treasurer most years between 1644 and 1655. Standish was deputy or acting governor on one occasion. Edward Winslow (1595-1655), an early and frequent emissary to other groups in the region, served as an Assistant with Alden and Standish and was governor three times (1632/3, 1635/6, and 1644), but he left the colony in 1646 to return to England as an emissary to Parliament from the Plymouth and the Massachusetts Bay Colonies. Winslow then served as a diplomat for the English Commonwealth government under Oliver Cromwell, and died in 1655 while serving as a co-leader of the military expedition that England sent to conquer Jamaica from the Spanish. Isaac Allerton (ca. 1586-1659), also an early Assistant, was the most entrepreneurial of the Plymouth leaders, but he left the colony in the 1630s under a cloud after being accused of unscrupulously managing the colony’s financial affairs. He later lived in New Amsterdam and New Haven, where he died. Thus, while Alden’s service was comparable and in several instances more varied in scope than the other

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transcriptions of the deeds that follow.

<sup>122</sup> Plymouth Colony Records, v. 3, 195, quoted in Woodworth-Barnes, *Mayflower Families through Five Generations*, 9.

<sup>123</sup> Sewall Diary, 150, as quoted by Woodworth-Barnes, *Mayflower Families through Five Generations*, 12.

<sup>124</sup> Cotton’s elegy is reprinted in Winsor, *History of the Town of Duxbury*, 60-62.

<sup>125</sup> The seventh *Mayflower* passenger “undertaker” was John Howland (ca. 1599-1673), who came to Plymouth as a servant to Governor Carver, but who later became an assistant and served as a deputy from the town of Plymouth. He also ran the colony’s Kennebec River trading post. In colony affairs he played a role somewhat less prominent than the other six.

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*Mayflower* passenger founder-leaders of the colony, his tenure as a senior leader was almost double that of Bradford, who otherwise served in senior capacities longer than any of the other founder-leaders.

No trace has ever been located of the original Plymouth homesteads of these six *Mayflower* passenger founder-leaders. No homes built elsewhere in the colony remain for which evidence can be produced to show conclusively that they were built and lived in by these men. The only house for which this claim has been made is the extant Alden House in Duxbury. If John Alden built or lived in the Alden House, which seems from the balance of the evidence to be unlikely (although still a remote possibility), the Alden House would be the only one built and lived in by a senior Plymouth Colony leader who came on the *Mayflower*. It is claimed (although without documentary proof) that *Mayflower* passenger John Howland lived for a time near the end of his life with his son at the Jabez Howland House (built in 1666 by Jacob Mitchell) on Sandwich Street in Plymouth, the only extant house for which another claim that a *Mayflower* passenger lived there can be made. The oldest extant seventeenth-century houses in Plymouth, the Richard Sparrow House (1640) on Summer Street, the Jabez Howland House (1666), and the William Harlow Old Fort House (1677) on Sandwich Street, were not built by *Mayflower* passengers. The owners of these houses were not among the senior leadership of the colony.

Homestead sites outside of Plymouth have been located for four of the colony's six founder-leaders. The Isaac Allerton homestead in Kingston was located and excavated by archeologists James Deetz and Eric Ekholm in 1972.<sup>126</sup> This archeological site was recently reinvestigated by Timothy L. Binzen, et al. who found soil features that are probably the earthfast sill foundation of an outbuilding and a small quantity of related artifacts. While Isaac Allerton had a prominent role in the history of the Plymouth Colony and in colonial American history, it has not been determined that he actually occupied this property. It is known that he owned the property, that he lost, then reacquired the property, and that his son-in-law received the property. During his lifetime, Allerton lived in other places in the colonies (initially in Plymouth, and later in Marblehead and in New Haven). He was also well traveled. It is not known if any other site associated with Allerton survives elsewhere. Additional primary documentary research on the occupational history of the Allerton Site, in tandem with more analyses of the archeological collections, is needed to attempt to conclusively determine the still-uncertain associations and chronology of the seventeenth-century archeological features and deposits at this site.<sup>127</sup> The Miles Standish Homestead in Duxbury was excavated by civil engineer and amateur archeologist James Hall in 1863-4.<sup>128</sup> There has been no further work at this site and no special historical or cultural importance has ever been attached to it. The only other homestead site for a senior Plymouth leader who came on the *Mayflower* that has been identified are two cellar holes presumed to have been the homestead site of Edward Winslow, not far from the 1699 Winslow House in Marshfield that was built by Edward Winslow's grandson, Isaac Winslow. Harry Hornblower and the Harvard Excavators Club excavated this site in 1940-43 and 1949.<sup>129</sup> Again, no special historical or cultural importance has been attached to this site, either.

<sup>126</sup> Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 220-230.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 222-223, 228-229, 230; Timothy L. Binzen, Antonio Medina, F. Timothy Barker, and Jennifer Wendt, *Archaeological Investigations for the Phase II Sewer Extension Project, Kingston, Massachusetts. Reconnaissance and Intensive (Locational) Survey for Cross-Country Lines and Pump Stations and Site Examination for Design Alternatives at the Spring Street Native American Site (19-PL-118)*, University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services Report No. UM-498 & UM-511 (Amherst: Archaeological Services, University of Massachusetts, 2006); Brona Simon (Massachusetts Historical Commission) to Isabel Simoes (Camp, Dresser & McKee, Inc.), November 17, 2005 (MHC No. RC.19231), copy on file, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston.

<sup>128</sup> Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 230-235.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 245-247; Beaudry and George, "Old Data, New Findings"; Beaudry et al., "Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts."

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**CRITERION 6—ARCHEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ORIGINAL ALDEN HOMESTEAD SITE**

The Original Alden Homestead Site is one of the most important archeological sites for understanding seventeenth-century English settlement and lifeways in North America.<sup>130</sup> It was the actual Duxbury, Massachusetts, home of *Mayflower* Pilgrims John and Priscilla (Mullins) Alden and their children, thus making it a strong candidate for designation as the oldest site of European habitation in Plymouth Colony for which archeological remains have been found, and among very few where additional, intact and significant archeological deposits and features can be expected.<sup>131</sup> Pioneering historical archeologist Roland Wells Robbins located and excavated the foundation of this home in 1960. This work revealed a structure whose early date (ca. 1630), seeming permanent construction, and narrow dimensions made it a discovery of major scientific importance. It also yielded nationally significant artifacts that shed light on the lifeways of the first English settlers in New England and North America. Robbins' work at the site was careful and well-documented, but it was partial. A 2006 geophysical survey of the area surrounding the foundation by Daniel P. Lynch showed that the site retains very high integrity. Moreover, this survey revealed a number of sub-surface anomalies of potentially manmade (cultural) origin. Since 1960, several historical archeologists have advanced hypotheses about the interpretation of the site in light of subsequent findings at other sites. As a result, the original Alden Homestead Site has high potential to yield additional information that would address three nationally significant research questions:

- *Was the Alden home constructed with an eye toward permanence?*
- *Was this home a narrow "long house" or a combination stone foundation-earthfast house?*
- *Given John Alden's prominent role in the Plymouth Colony's trade, to what extent does the site provide evidence about social, material, and economic interaction with Native Americans and with the larger Atlantic world?*

The Original Alden Homestead site may be the earliest (certainly among the earliest) and best-preserved example of a *long house* constructed on stone footings, a comparatively rare (at least in comparison to later colonial houses) and possibly more permanent style of house construction than the post-in-ground (or "earthfast") structures that apparently predominated during the first generation of European settlement in New England from 1620 to 1650-60 and in the Chesapeake from 1607 to the early eighteenth century.

Responding to this first possibility, several archeologists have argued that, despite the *long house* appearance given by the dimensions of the stone footings, the structure may actually have combined earthfast construction with the construction evident from the extant stone footings. Was this home a narrow "long house" or did it begin, as Beaudry et al., have suggested, "as a small, single-cell structure, [that] was added to at various times...and that [in] its final plan...[was a] rambling, vernacular form"?<sup>132</sup> Several structures that appear to be of this type have been identified among first generation Plymouth Colony sites. Elsewhere, evidence for a combination of these two forms of construction often remains open to interpretation as well, so that there is a

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<sup>130</sup> The author, who is not a professional archaeologist, acknowledges the help and thanks Edward L. Bell, Senior Archaeologist at the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and Craig Chartier for advice in preparing this section. Bell to author, October 16 2001, and email to author, March 23, 2004. The interpretation presented here draws on but does not rest entirely on Bell and Chartier. Bell (with Betsy Friedberg and Phil Bergen at the MHC) also reviewed the draft NHL nominations. Bell undertook additional research, and provided additional text and citations incorporated throughout the final nomination.

<sup>131</sup> Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 235, 239; Binzen et al., *Archaeological Investigations for the Phase II Sewer Extension Project*.

<sup>132</sup> Beaudry et al., "Archaeology of Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts," 176.

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need for more sites like the Original Alden Homestead site where the hypothesized combined construction can be examined more closely and perhaps more definitively ascertained.<sup>133</sup>

While the distinctive archeological signatures of the architecture at the Original Alden Homestead Site have drawn the attention of many historical archeologists and a few specialists in seventeenth-century architecture, and several reviews of the artifact collection have been attempted, no systematic and comprehensive reanalysis of the material culture with Robbins' field documentation from the site has been undertaken with the full benefit of contemporary reference sources for comparative objects in museum and other curated archeological collections.<sup>134</sup> Several of the artifacts Robbins recovered were featured in the 1982 catalogue for a major exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston about the "First Period" settlement of New England.<sup>135</sup> Archeological materials from the site (both in the curated archeological collection, and others recoverable from intact deposits) could be further compared to other New England and extra-regional collections to fill out and extend understandings of the nature of the material culture used by the colonists to survive and enjoy their lives in the New World.<sup>136</sup> Alden's positions of high economic and political importance should be discernable symbolically in the architecture and material goods his family enjoyed.<sup>137</sup> Alden's coopering trade, and the activities and status of other known or undocumented residents in the household (such as servants or children) may be revealed through discarded objects and features in separate activity areas and gender-based domains that can be initially conceptualized as the "toft" and "croft," to include the "remnants of barns and outbuildings" that Robbins predicted, as well as the kitchen garden.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Robert Blair St. George, "Architectural Report on 'The Great House,' Charlestown, Massachusetts" (1988), copy on file, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston; Joan Gallagher and Duncan Ritchie, *Archaeological Data Recovery, Synthesis Volume, Central Artery North Reconstruction Project, Charlestown, Massachusetts*, vol. 8, PAL Report No. 50-8. (Pawtucket, RI: Public Archaeology Laboratory, 1992), 101-105; Gallagher and Ritchie, 103, used Robbins' Alden site data in their interpretation.

<sup>134</sup> Mulholland, "An Interdisciplinary Study of the John Alden Houses," 244-247; Chartier, "A Reevaluation of the John Alden Archaeological Site." See also Donald W. Linebaugh, "The Road to Walden Pond - Revisiting Roland Robbins' 1945 Excavation of Thoreau's House (15FA218), Middlesex County, Massachusetts," <http://www.uky.edu/AS/Anthropology/PAR/thoreau.htm>, for an example of a productive retrospective reanalysis of another of Robbins' archeological collections.

<sup>135</sup> Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent, eds., *New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), 63-64, 349-350, 351. The objects from Robbins' excavation are Exhibit Catalogue Nos. 53, 54, 367a, 367b, and 370. Robert Blair St. George, "Woodworking Craftsmen in Southeastern New England, 1620-1700: A Checklist," in *The Wrought Covenant: Some Material for the Study of Craftsmen and Community in Southeastern New England, 1620-1700* (Brockton: Brockton Art Center/Fuller Memorial, 1979), 45 (item number 36), illustrates a "joined cupboard" that "descended in Alden family of Duxbury" dating 1650-1700 from the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

<sup>136</sup> Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh, "Ideo-Cultural Variation and Change in the Massachusetts Bay Colony," *The Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology Papers 1977* v. 12 (1978): 169-235. Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh, "17th and 18th Century Lead-Glazed Redwares in the Massachusetts Bay Colony," *Historical Archaeology* 17, no. 1 (1983): 3-17. Turnbaugh cites Robbins and applies the Alden site data in both articles. cf. Anne E. Yentsch, "Expressions of Cultural Variation in Seventeenth Century Maine and Massachusetts," in *Forgotten Places and Things: Archaeological Perspectives on American History*, ed. Albert E. Ward (Albuquerque: Center for Anthropological Studies, 1983), 117-131; Beaudry, "An Archaeological Perspective on Social Inequality in 17th-Century Massachusetts"; Paul G. Chace, "Traditional Patterning of Earthenware Entries and the Form of the Probate Inventory in Seventeenth-Century Plymouth Colony," in *Domestic Pottery of the Northeastern United States, 1625-1850*, ed. Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh (Orlando: Academic Press, 1985), 49-65; Beaudry and George, "Old Data, New Findings"; Anne E. Yentsch, "Engendering Visible and Invisible Ceramic Artifacts, Especially Dairy Vessels" *Historical Archaeology* 25, no. 4 (1991): 132-155; Beaudry, et al., "Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony."

<sup>137</sup> cf. Beaudry, "An Archaeological Perspective on Social Inequality in 17th-Century Massachusetts;" Brian Cullity, *A Cubberd, Four Joyne Stools & Other Smalle Things*; Karin J. Goldstein, *The Winslow Family as Gentry in Seventeenth-Century New England* (master's thesis, University of Massachusetts, 2001); Beaudry et al., "Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts;" Philip Levy, John Coombs, and David Muraca, "Notions of Comfort in the Early Colonial Chesapeake," paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology, York, England, 2005, in *A Comparative Archaeological Study of Colonial Chesapeake Culture*, eds. Julia A. King, Catherine L. Alston, Gregory J. Brown, Edward E. Chaney, John C. Coombs, C. Jane Cox, David Gadsby, Philip Levy, Al Luckenbach, David F. Muraca, Dennis J. Pogue, Benjamin J. Porter, and Shawn Sharpe. Report prepared for the National Endowment for the Humanities, June 2006, [http://www.chesapeakearchaeology.org/HTM\\_Interpretive\\_Papers/NEHFinalReport.htm#h18](http://www.chesapeakearchaeology.org/HTM_Interpretive_Papers/NEHFinalReport.htm#h18).

<sup>138</sup> Robbins, *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress*, 56; Cary Carson and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Material Life of the Early American

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Potentially recoverable data at the site may well shed new light on these questions. Thus, further work could substantially modify major historic concepts, contribute to several major historical/anthropological debates, or, at least, add significant new evidence that speaks to these issues thereby making a nationally significant contribution to the existing archeological literature on early seventeenth-century English settlement sites in Plymouth Colony, New England, and North America.

**NATIONAL COMPARATIVE CONTEXT**

The Original Alden Homestead Site is significant in the historical and archeological context of pre-1650 English settlement in North America. The most important comparative context is provided by archeological findings from pre-1650 settlement sites in New England and the Chesapeake. The most extensive archeological studies have been done on seventeenth-century sites in the Chesapeake.<sup>139</sup> In New England most archeological studies between the late 1930s and early 1970s were done on Plymouth Colony sites, primarily by Henry Hornblower, James Deetz, and others associated with Plimoth Plantation.<sup>140</sup> Unfortunately, much of this work was not written-up or published. There has been considerable archeological fieldwork at seventeenth-century English settlement, fisheries, and trading post sites in Maine, New Hampshire, and Newfoundland.<sup>141</sup>

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Housewife," paper presented at the Conference on Women in Early America, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1981; Robert Blair St. George, "'Set Thine House in Order': The Domestication of the Yeomanry in Seventeenth-Century New England" in *New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 2, *Mentality and Environment*, eds. Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), 159-188; James W. Baker, "Seventeenth-Century English Yeoman Foodways at Plimoth Plantation," in *Foodways in the Northeast*, ed. Peter Benes, Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings, 1982 (Boston: Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 1984), 105-113; Beaudry, "The Archaeology of Historical Land Use in Massachusetts," 42-43; Anne E. Yentsch, "The Symbolic Divisions of Pottery: Sex-Related Attributes of English and Anglo-American Household Pots" in *The Archaeology of Inequality*, eds. Randall H. McGuire and Robert Paynter (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 196-208, and Yentsch, "Engendering Visible and Invisible Ceramic Artifacts, Especially Dairy Vessels," 138-140, 145-150, for the significance and purposes of space and gender-related artifacts and domains at domestic sites.

<sup>139</sup> Carson et al., "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1981), 113-158.

<sup>140</sup> Marley R. Brown III, "A Survey of Historical Archaeology in New England," in *New England Historical Archaeology*, ed. Peter Benes, Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings 1977 (Boston: Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 1978), 4-15; Beaudry and George, "Old Data, New Findings;" Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*; Beaudry et al., "Archaeology of Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts."

<sup>141</sup> Helen B. Camp, *Pemaquid Lost and Found* (Pemaquid: Ancient Pemaquid Restoration, 1967); Helen B. Camp, *Archaeological Excavations at Pemaquid, Maine, 1965-1974* (Augusta: Maine State Museum, 1975) (Robbins is acknowledged in the 1967 publication, and his *Hidden America* [with Evan Jones; New York: Knopf, 1959] appears in the bibliography of her 1975 report); Robert L. Bradley and Helen B. Camp, "The History of Research at Pemaquid," in *The Forts of Pemaquid, Maine: An Historical and Archaeological Study: Occasional Publications in Maine Archaeology, No. 10* (Augusta: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 1994), 33-34; Faith Harrington, "Deepwater Fishing from the Isle of Shoals," in *Documentary Archaeology in the New World*, ed. Mary C. Beaudry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 249-266; Emerson W. Baker, *The Clarke & Lake Company: The Historical Archaeology of a Seventeenth-Century Maine Settlement* (Augusta: Maine State Historic Preservation Commission, 1985), 57 (Baker used the archeological data on the Alden site house form and dimensions comparatively); Alaric Faulkner, "Archaeology of the Cod Fishery: Damariscove Island," *Historical Archaeology* 19, no. 2 (1985): 57-86; Alaric Faulkner, "Followup Notes on the 17th Century Cod Fishery at Damariscove Island, Maine," *Historical Archaeology* v. 20, no. 2 (1986): 86-88; Emerson W. Baker et al., eds., *American Beginnings: Exploration, Culture, and Cartography in the Land of Norumbega* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); James A. Tuck, "The Forgotten Colonies: Seventeenth-Century English Settlement in Newfoundland, Canada," *The Review of Archaeology* 17 (1996): 28-32; Jeffrey P. Brain, "Introductory Remarks," special issue, *Contributions to the Historical Archaeology of European Exploration and Colonization in North America, The Review of Archaeology* 17 (1996): 1-5; Peter H. Morrison, *Architecture of the Popham Colony, 1607-1608: An Archaeological Portrait of English Building Practice at the Moment of Settlement* (master's thesis, University of Maine, 2002). Additional citations to the numerous reports on the Popham Colony (Maine) research directed by Jeffrey P. Brain, can be found at <http://www.pophamcolony.org>. For more on the Avalon Colony projects directed by James A. Tuck, begin with *Avalon Chronicles* vols. 1-8 (Ferryland, NL: Colony of Avalon Foundation, 1996-2003). Emerson W. Baker et al., "Earthfast Architecture in Early Maine," paper presented at the Vernacular Architecture Forum Annual Meeting, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1992, accessed at "Virtual Norumbega: The Northern New England Frontier,"

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Surprisingly, little work has been done on seventeenth-century sites associated with the more populous Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut Colonies.<sup>142</sup>

There are two obvious specific areas of comparison between the Original Alden Homestead and other pre-1650 English sites. Both comparisons involve the nature of the structure built at the Alden site. The first comparison involves the stone foundation at the Alden site. Archaeologists presently believe that earthfast construction techniques characterized a substantial portion, if not the overwhelming majority, of the first homes and buildings constructed by English settlers in the Chesapeake and New England.<sup>143</sup> Archeologists had tended to view earthfast construction as evidence for comparatively impermanent construction and stone foundations as building for the long-term. In southern New England (Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, and Connecticut Colonies) the transition to stone foundations was apparently under-way by 1650. In the Chesapeake the transition did not begin until the early eighteenth century, a hundred years after settlement began. Indeed, the Great Migration colonists of Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut seem to have moved rather rapidly to stone foundations. Emerson W. Baker et al. have also shown that in seventeenth-century Maine earthfast construction was used as early as the 1620s and persisted into the second quarter of the eighteenth century. They have also suggested that earthfast techniques be viewed, less as a conscious decision for impermanence, and more as a low cost, expedient form of construction that served the needs of settlers and traders whose priorities lay elsewhere.<sup>144</sup> One of the Maine earthfast structures was the Plymouth Colony trading post at Cushnoc (NHL 1993), built ca. 1628 quite possibly by John Alden himself.<sup>145</sup>

The second comparison involves the narrowness of the Original Alden Homestead's foundation dimensions and, thus, the seeming narrowness of the house that sat on the foundation. In his *In Small Things Forgotten* James Deetz called attention to the Original Alden Homestead among seventeenth-century English North American structures for the narrowness of its dimensions.<sup>146</sup> He suggested that the Alden homestead and the nearby Miles Standish homestead were examples of a comparatively rare building form, a "long house." This may still be the consensus among archeologists today, but it is also clear that "long houses," including some sites in New England and the Chesapeake that have long, narrow stone foundations, have cropped up in a number of places. In fact, a majority of the early Plymouth sites excavated thus far had stone foundations with partial cellars and long, narrow dimensions.<sup>147</sup> Baker et al. have identified a number of "long house" structures

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<http://w3.salemstate.edu/~ebaker/earthfast/earthfastpaper.html>, May 16, 2006.

<sup>142</sup> The interpretation of one archeological site in the Massachusetts Bay Colony also in part relied upon Robbins' excavation data to interpret what may be a long house form, and which may be "The Great House" (ca. 1629), built in Charlestown, Massachusetts, by a group from Salem. Identification and interpretation of the archeological feature was not conclusive. It was the site of the later (1635-1775) Three Cranes Tavern. The feature was a combination of stone and post-in-ground construction. It was subject to archeological data recovery for the Central Artery project and no longer exists, but stones from the feature were reused to create a reconstruction of the archeological site at City Square Park. St. George, "Architectural Report," Gallagher and Ritchie, *Archaeological Data Recovery*, 101-105; Rita Reinke, "Charlestown," in *Highway to the Past: The Archaeology of Boston's Big Dig*, ed. Ann-Eliza Lewis (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Commission, 2001), 18-19, 27; Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 255, also mysteriously refer to an "earthfast structure" excavated in Boston in 1973, without further information or citation.

<sup>143</sup> Carson et al., "Impermanent Architecture;" Carson and Walsh, "Material Life;" and Baker et al., "Earthfast Architecture in Early Maine."

<sup>144</sup> Baker et al., "Earthfast Architecture in Early Maine;" David A. Brown, "Domestic Masonry Architecture in 17th-Century Virginia," *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 27 (1998): 102-103, 108, 110-111; Robert A. Sloma, "Archaeology and Vernacular Architecture in Vermont: Expect the Unexpected," paper presented at the Council on Northeast Historical Archaeology, Glens Falls, New York, 1992, reports on early nineteenth-century domestic earthfast architecture in Vermont, and includes a very helpful summary of data from Virginia to Maine.

<sup>145</sup> Leon E. Cranmer, *Cushnoc: The History and Archaeology of Plymouth Colony Traders on the Kennebec: Occasional Publications in Maine Archaeology*, No. 7 (Augusta, ME: Maine Historical Preservation Commission, 1990), 109-110.

<sup>146</sup> Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten* (1996), 134-135, 202.

<sup>147</sup> Beaudry et al., "Archaeology of Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts," 161.

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from seventeenth-century sites in Maine.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, in an earlier publication, Baker compares one such long house uncovered at the Clarke & Lake trading post site on the Kennebec River to the Original Alden Homestead and other Plymouth Colony sites.<sup>149</sup> The term “long house” has been applied by archaeologists to the apparent long buildings suggested by what, in many cases, are archeological features that are open to broad interpretation. Although the “long house” existed in England as a more definitive structure form, historical archaeologists in the United States have applied the term to structures that were more than just residences with end byres for livestock. A number of archeologists have hypothesized that so-called “long houses” with long narrow stone foundations may actually have been houses that combined both stone foundations and earthfast construction, so that the resulting buildings were not so long after all. At present, this contention is supported more by its obvious plausibility than archeological remains.

The third basis for comparison is between the lifeways and aspirations reflected in the artifactual remains recovered at the sites. Further fieldwork at the Alden site directed toward locating outbuildings and trash pits would tell us much about the spatial organization and layout of this farmstead, as well as yield comparisons with other seventeenth-century North American English farmsteads and outposts.<sup>150</sup>

### **POTENTIAL TO ANSWER SIGNIFICANT ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

“There is little question in my mind,” Robbins wrote in 1969, “but that the field surrounding the site of the early Alden home in Duxbury, with the exception of where the bulldozing and land removal took place [for the school athletic fields], can still contain the remnants of barns and outbuildings, the well and many artifacts associated with Alden’s more than a half-century of living in Duxbury.”<sup>151</sup> Professional archeologists today concur that, in addition to shedding light on the original homestead structure, the site still has the potential to yield artifacts of significance, especially if the locations of outbuildings and trash pits were identified.<sup>152</sup> This prospect was strongly affirmed by the evidence from the 2006 geophysical survey. “We can reanalyze and reinterpret maps and plans made by earlier archaeologists endlessly,” Beaudry, Goldstein, and Chartier noted in 2003, “but, as Deetz and Deetz point out . . . and Chartier has noted in reference to the 1627 John Alden House, in most cases we need to return to these sites and bring what we know now to bear upon the investigation of what lies beyond their cellar holes.”<sup>153</sup>

The Original Alden Homestead Site offers what is almost certainly the best remaining early Plymouth Colony site for further exploration, and it may be one of the best in the country for pre-1650 settlement, certainly among sites associated with historically and culturally prominent persons. Linebaugh, who has reviewed Robbins’ field notes and photographs, strongly believes that Robbins’ 1960 Alden notes, photographs, and artifacts are of sufficiently high quality to merit a complete re-analysis in light of interpretive developments that have taken place since 1960. Linebaugh undertook just such an analysis of Robbins’ artifacts and field documentation for the excavations at Thoreau’s cabin site at Walden Pond with constructive results. The far more sophisticated degree of meticulous field recording Robbins applied at the Alden site indicates that a

<sup>148</sup> Baker et al., “Earthfast Architecture in Early Maine.”

<sup>149</sup> Baker, *Clarke & Lake Company*, 57.

<sup>150</sup> Such as the recent discovery of what is probably the earthfast sill foundation of an outbuilding beyond Deetz and Ekholm’s excavated and topsoil-stripped area at the Allerton Site in Kingston. Binzen et al., *Archaeological Investigations for the Phase II Sewer Extension Project*.

<sup>151</sup> Robbins, *Pilgrim John Alden’s Progress*, 56.

<sup>152</sup> Beaudry et al., “Archaeology of Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts,” 175; Edward L. Bell, e-mail message to author, March 23, 2004; Craig Chartier, personal communication; Mary Beaudry, personal communication.

<sup>153</sup> Beaudry et al., “Archaeology of Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts,” 180.

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similar retrospective analysis would be highly productive.<sup>154</sup> Edward L. Bell, Senior Archaeologist at the Massachusetts Historical Commission, strongly concurs.<sup>155</sup>

Robbins also found 1,988 Native American artifacts when he did his work, raising the possibility that the Aldens chose a previously-occupied Native American site for their homestead. Resident native populations had suffered decades of epidemics prior to and after the arrival of the Plymouth Colony group, which depopulated previously densely occupied territories. This depopulation, combined with the seasonal residence patterns of Wampanoag families, contributed to the mistaken perception that cleared areas maintained for millennia were unoccupied.<sup>156</sup> Robbins' collection includes artifacts that indicate a native residential area was present at the Original Alden Homestead Site from at least ca. 7,500 years ago. The presence of several Levanna-style projectile points (dating ca. 1,600 years ago to the seventeenth century) is possible evidence that the site had been occupied not long (in archeological terms, but conceivably months, years, or decades) before it was selected by Alden for his home site.<sup>157</sup> Barbara Luedtke reported that, "a broken Levanna point, probably made on ballast flint [i.e., European flint tossed from a ship's hold] and probably burned, was excavated at the John Alden House site."<sup>158</sup> The site therefore has the potential to shed light on the process and timing of colonial progressions into Wampanoag settlement areas.

### Nationally Significant Research Questions

*Was the Original Alden Homestead House constructed with an eye toward permanence?*

The current consensus among archeologists is that seventeenth-century English settlers built their first homes in North America utilizing the more expedient earthfast construction. Eventually, the colonists made the transition to stone foundations. The transition took place at different times in different areas of English settlement. "New Englanders built permanent English houses within a very short time of settlement," Robert Blair St. George

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<sup>154</sup> Donald W. Linebaugh, "The Road to Walden Pond - Revisiting Roland Robbins' 1945 Excavation of Thoreau's House."

<sup>155</sup> Edward L. Bell, e-mail to author, March 23, 2004.

<sup>156</sup> David Grayson Allen, "Vacuum Domicilium: The Social and Cultural Landscape of Seventeenth-Century New England," in *New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 1, *Migration and Settlement*, eds. Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), 1-10; Robert F. Trent, "Coastal Algonkian Culture 1500-1680: Conquest and Resistance," in *New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 1, *Migration and Settlement*, eds. Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), 66-71; William A. Starna, "The Pequots in the Early Seventeenth Century," in *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation*, eds. Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 33-47.

<sup>157</sup> In contrast to the high-density and diversity of Native American artifacts at the Original Alden Homestead Site that indicate a long-occupied residential area, the lower density and less diverse assemblage from the small Late Woodland campsite at the Alden House suggests a temporary occupation at that other location some time between ca. 1,600 years ago and the seventeenth century. Mullins and Mulholland, *Archaeological Site Locational Survey*, 15, 36-37; Mulholland, "Interdisciplinary Study of the John Alden Houses," 242. New England archaeologists conventionally date Levanna points from 1,600 to 450 years B.P. ("before present," calculated from A.D. 1950 using radiocarbon dating), but this standard chronology is problematic and does not signify that native stone tool-making traditions suddenly ended in A.D. 1500. Robert S. Grumet, *Historic Contact* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 45, extends the date "in most areas of the Northeast" to A.D. 1750, but that date is too late for Levanna points in Eastern Massachusetts where, as in other Northeastern places, a dramatic decline in stone tool-making traditions occurred in the early to mid-seventeenth century. Bert Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Early Period" in *Northeast: Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 163; Duncan Ritchie, "Lithic, Bone and Antler Artifacts," in *Burr's Hill: A Seventeenth-Century Wampanoag Burial Ground in Warren, Rhode Island*, ed. Susan G. Gibson (Bristol, RI: Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, 1980), 49; Dena F. Dincauze "An Introduction to the Archaeology of the Boston Area," *Archaeology of Eastern North America* 2 (1974): 57 cited in Ritchie, "Lithic, Bone and Antler Artifacts," 49.

<sup>158</sup> Barbara E. Luedtke, "Worked Ballast at Aptucxet," *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 27 (1998): 38, citing a personal communication with Eric S. Johnson, 1997.

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noted.<sup>159</sup> In the Chesapeake, this transition did not take place until the eighteenth century. The ca. 1630 stone foundation and stone-lined root cellar at the Alden site suggested that John Alden built with an eye toward permanence. By the early 1630s, Alden, although only in his early thirties, had made a successful place for himself in the world. Bradford called him a “hopeful” [i.e., optimistic] young man and indicated that the colonists wanted him to join their company in 1620. He did so, apparently fulfilling their expectations and his own in short order. By 1630, he had a large landholding in Duxbury with the prospect of obtaining more land over time (eventually the Duxbury holding contained 169 acres). As a cooper and as one of the seven “undertakers” who assumed the colony’s debt to its London backers, he was at the very nexus of the colony’s trade with Native Americans and the larger Atlantic World. Alden could look forward with some confidence about his status, wealth, and future prospects. New Englanders built more permanent homes for themselves earlier than the English settlers in the Chesapeake. The reasons for this difference remain open to interpretation. The question of when the early English colonists began to use more permanent construction methods and why they did so is a major research question in U.S. colonial historical archeology.<sup>160</sup> With Alden and his home is a chance to explore a site that may have been at the leading edge of the transition to permanent construction and to generate important new information that sheds light on this nationally significant issue.

*Was the Alden home a narrow “long house” or a combination stone foundation-earthfast house?*

Excavations at the Miles Standish site in Duxbury (done by James Hall in the 1850s) and the Alden site revealed buildings that were similar to one another in dimensions and construction but in stark contrast to the square dimension and earthfast construction revealed by James Deetz at the Isaac Allerton site in Kingston, Massachusetts and more typical of seventeenth-century English sites in North America generally. In fact, the Standish and Alden houses were very elongated in shape with a length-breadth ratio of nearly 4:1, dimensions that make them rare in colonial Anglo-American house construction and major scientific discoveries that have stimulated competing interpretations ever since. For example, in his classic *In Small Things Forgotten* James Deetz called attention to the Original Alden Homestead Site as the most notable example of an Anglo-American house that was smaller than twelve feet in one direction.<sup>161</sup> (Sixteen feet was the common dimension for the width of a seventeenth-century house.)<sup>162</sup> Robert St. George linked houses of this type with the English uplands where the isolated homesteads characteristic of a predominantly pastoral economy required less privacy.<sup>163</sup> Similar conditions prevailed in Duxbury in the 1630s. These houses were known as “byre houses” because often a room at the end of the elongated structures was used to house livestock.<sup>164</sup> Similarly, R. W. Brunskill identified the “long house” as a particular type of British rural farmhouse.<sup>165</sup> It may be that the Standish and Original Alden Homestead sites were variations on these styles. This building style did not survive to be represented among the existing Plymouth Colony structures, all of which date from the post-1650 period.

<sup>159</sup> St. George, “Set Thine House in Order,” 165; see also Richard M. Candee, “A Documentary History of Plymouth Colony Architecture, 1620-1700,” *Old-Time New England* 59, no. 3 (1969): 59-71, vol. 59, no. 4 (1969): 105-111, and vol. 60, no. 2 (1969): 37-53, cited in Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 344.

<sup>160</sup> Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten* (1996); James Deetz, “Plymouth Colony Architecture: Archaeological Evidence from the Seventeenth Century,” in *Architecture in Colonial Massachusetts*, ed. Abbott Lowell Cummings (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 43-59; Beaudry, “An Archaeological Perspective on Social Inequality in 17th-Century Massachusetts;” Beaudry and George, “Old Data, New Findings;” Carson et al., “Impermanent Architecture;” Baker, *Clarke & Lake Company*; Cranmer, *Cushnoc*; Gallagher and Ritchie, *Archaeological Data Recovery*; Tuck, “The Forgotten Colonies;” Brain, “Introductory Remarks;” Morrison *Architecture of the Popham Colony*; Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*; Beaudry et al., “Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts;” Baker et al., “Earthfast Architecture in Early Maine.”

<sup>161</sup> Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten* (1996), 202.

<sup>162</sup> Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 226.

<sup>163</sup> St. George, “Set Thine House in Order,” cited in Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten* (1996), 134, 265 (n. 2).

<sup>164</sup> Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 233-235.

<sup>165</sup> R. W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture*, 3 ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 101-105, 110-111, 143 and 147.

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In 1987, Mary C. Beaudry and Douglas C. George, pondering the seeming long, narrow houses that archaeologists of Plymouth sites have found, suggested that instead of representing a rare *long house* building style, the Original Alden Homestead Site and others simply may have combined earthfast portions with portions that rested on the stone footings, giving interpreters the misleading impression of an elongated structure.<sup>166</sup> In 2001, Craig Chartier reappraised the Original Alden Homestead Site in light of his own work on other Plymouth Colony sites and concurred.<sup>167</sup> Beaudry, Karin J. Goldstein, and Chartier wrote in 2003 that:

“it seems likely that there is more to the 1627 Alden House than has ever seen the light of day. Chartier suggests that excavation beyond the stone perimeter of the cellar hole would reveal that the structure, while it may have originated as a small, single-cell structure, was added to at various times in the seventeenth century and that its final plan was not that of a single-pile long house but something more closely resembling the rambling, vernacular form of New England’s earliest surviving timber frame house, the Fairbanks House in Dedham, Massachusetts [NHL, 1960]. The site has remained undisturbed since Robbins’ excavations in the 1960s, so in theory the potential exists to determine whether Chartier’s hypothesis is borne out by the archeological evidence.”<sup>168</sup>

The discovery of twelve anomalies by Daniel P. Lynch during his 2006 geophysical survey lends further credence to Chartier’s hypothesis.<sup>169</sup> If Chartier’s hypothesis is correct, the Original Alden Homestead Site would be unique among investigated Plymouth Colony homestead sites. Of greater national significance is the site’s very high integrity and the likelihood that the site would yield more definitive evidence of the dimensions of the structures that once stood there. Since so many sites where combined earthfast-stone footing construction has been hypothesized yet remains open to interpretation, the Original Alden Homestead Site has the potential to contribute new data of major scientific importance that adds significantly to our understanding of the construction methods of the English settlers in the first half of the seventeenth century.

*Given John Alden’s prominent role in the Plymouth Colony’s trade, to what extent does the site provide evidence about interactions with Native Americans and with the larger Atlantic world?*

John Alden was one of the Plymouth Colony’s seven “undertakers,” leaders who personally assumed the colony’s debt in return for privileges regarding the fur trade with Native Americans. Alden was prominently involved in this trade, traveling to and helping to supervise the colony’s various trading posts. As a cooper, he undoubtedly packed furs for shipment back to Europe. The site of his home might well yield new artifacts that attest to or further clarify nationally significant questions about the Plymouth Colony’s trade with the larger world. Apart from the twenty-year struggle to pay off the colony’s debt to the London merchants that originally financed the *Mayflower* voyage and colony, scholars relying on the written record have not had much evidence that speaks to the colony’s material connections to the larger Atlantic world. Unfortunately, since little has been published on the artifact collections recovered from other Plymouth Colony sites, the archeological record has not yet said much on this issue either.<sup>170</sup> Thus, the Original Alden Homestead offers a superb opportunity to generate data of major scientific importance that contribute to and perhaps change our understanding of Plymouth Colony and its connections to the larger world.

<sup>166</sup> Beaudry and George, “Old Data, New Findings,” 26.

<sup>167</sup> Chartier, “A Reevaluation of the John Alden Archaeological Site.”

<sup>168</sup> Beaudry et al., “Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts,” 176, parenthetical citation deleted.

<sup>169</sup> Lynch, “Geophysical Investigations at the Alden House Early Site, Duxbury, Massachusetts.”

<sup>170</sup> Ironically, Deetz and other professional archeologists published few detailed reports on their work at Plymouth Colony sites, and thus, Robbins actually provided the best documented work.

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The Original Alden Homestead Site contains a Native American habitation that was repeatedly occupied and maintained over a 7,000-year period. At the time Alden chose the spot, it was likely cleared or lightly forested, and offered the same pleasant setting that had been appreciated by generations of Wampanoag families. The general mindset, timing, and process of English encroachment into Wampanoag territory are understood by scholars but only recently has it been considered in mainstream histories, popular accountings, and public interpretations of the history of Plymouth Colony.<sup>171</sup> While artifacts and features might be present to determine more precisely the timing between the occupation of the site by Wampanoag families and the Aldens, the site does provide educational value to more fully appreciate the process of dispossession of the Wampanoag from their traditional homelands, as these were resettled and claims to bounded parcels were established by the colonists. More specific to Alden's mindset and reasonable fears, archeological features of a defensive works (such as a palisade) would not be implausible to expect at the site, given its remoteness and the unsettled relations among the colonists, competing Native American groups, and other European powers.<sup>172</sup> The bulk of the trade or gift items received by the colonists from the Native Americans were organic, but more durable items of native manufacture, or remains of Native American-gathered food (e.g., shells and bones) given or traded to the Alden household might be preserved in archeological contexts. Alden's diplomatic involvement with native leaders suggests that gifts of durable materials received in reciprocation, or even casual finds of interesting and useful Native American-made artifacts from the house lot's previous occupants, could appear in seventeenth-century archeological contexts. At the Aptucxet Trading Post Museum Site (dating 1670s-1720s) in Bourne, Massachusetts, Barbara Luedtke discovered that "the English sometimes re-used [ancient] native-made artifacts. Portions of several stone pestles of native manufacture were re-used as whetstones and then discarded in the colonists' trash dumps, and the base of a quartz projectile point had apparently been re-used as a strike-a-light...English colonists also appear to have sometimes used local raw materials to make both gunflints and whetstones," and European flint to fashion, in a rudimentary manner, gunflints and strike-a-lights.<sup>173</sup> With John Alden's frequent and close contact with native people, it is possible

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<sup>171</sup> Allen, "Vacuum Domicilium;" Trent, "Coastal Algonkian Culture;" T. J. Brassier, "Early Indian-European Contacts," in *Northeast: Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 78-88; Wilcom E. Washburn, "Seventeenth-Century Indian Wars," in *Northeast*, 89-100; Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675* rev. ed. (1965; repr., New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 139 and passim; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans and the Making of New England 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1983); Neal Salisbury, "Social Relationships on a Moving Frontier: Natives and Settlers in Southern New England, 1638-1675," *Man in the Northeast* 33 (1987): 89-99; Bangs, *Indian Deeds*. For the impact on public history, see, for example, <http://plimoth.org/discover/wampanoag-life/holistic-history.php> and <http://www.bostonkids.org/educators/wampanoag/index.htm>.

<sup>172</sup> Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 139, reports that around 1636, leading up to the Pequot War, "the Plymouth Colony Court had directed that Captain Standish and Lieutenant William Holmes be 'employed in the teaching of armes' in Plymouth and Duxbury." On September 7, 1642, *Plymouth Colony Records*, vol. 2, 45-46, <http://www.pilgrimhall.org/aldenjohnrecords.htm>) state that, "This Court was occasioned [sic] by the Indians to puide [provide] forces against them for an offensiue and defensiuue warr; and though all the inhits were warned, yet they appeared by their seull deputies, as they had liberty to doe. For Duxborrow[Duxbury], Capt Miles Standish, Mr John Alden, Johathan Brewster, Mr Comfort Starr, Mr Wm Wetherrell, Willm Basset, Christopher Waddesworth, Georg Soule." See Deetz and Deetz, *Times of the Lives*, 227; and Anonymous, "Descriptions of the Fortified Town of Plymouth, 1620-1628" (2000), <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/users/deetz/Plymouth/fortdesc.html> for examples of palisade construction in Plymouth Colony.

<sup>173</sup> Luedtke, "Worked Ballast Flint at Aptucxet," 37. Luedtke, 38, observed that, "the Aptucxet ballast flint debitage indicates remarkably poor knapping skills...[to] the eyes of someone used to studying native workmanship, these flint artifacts represent shockingly poor quality work" in some examples by having employed metal hammers and "nodule smashing" to uneven and wasteful results, and clearly not the result of apprenticeship with native flintknappers, the craft by then being lost. See also Barbara E. Luedtke, "Gunflints in the Northeast," *Northeast Anthropology* 57 (1999): 27-43, where she contrasted these sorts of "gunflints of desperation" (ibid. 32) from more expertly made types. Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 216, n. 348, provide the overall date of the Aptucxet site, citing Craig S. Chartier, "The Aptucxet Trading Post: Fact, Fiction, and a Study in 20th Century Myth Creation," (a report on the 1995 archeological field school of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, 2000). Luedtke ("Worked Ballast Flint at Aptucxet," 46), however, dated most of the colonial lithics from an area of the site from 1673 to 1680. cf. Chaney, "Archaeological Indicators of Native American Influences on English Life," paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology, York, England,

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that he admired their technology and possibly adopted some at his homestead, perhaps even less casually than re-using a conveniently found tool or displaying a curious find or prized gift. Priscilla, her servants, and her daughters, too, may have interacted and occasionally learned skills and practices from native women, particularly about medicinal, nutritious and other useful plants, horticulture, culinary arts, cordage, weaving, and basketry, or acquired finished crafts. In turn, the Alden household women could have conveyed some English ways and objects to native women, particularly relating to sewing and needlework. There were Native American servants in some seventeenth-century homes in the Plymouth Colony and some were employed as temporary laborers or were slaves, although there is no documentary record for Native Americans at the Alden household.<sup>174</sup> The site therefore could plausibly yield information about cross-cultural technological interests, adaptations, or borrowings of folkways and folk knowledge, in circumstances of “cultural syncretism that may emerge from a blending and sharing of technologies and artistic traditions in multiethnic colonial situations...[and] the maintenance of cultural differences.”<sup>175</sup>

### Other Research Questions

*When did John Alden and his family settle and build at this site? Was this site the location of the first or second home on their Duxbury property?*

Justin Winsor in his *History of Duxbury* (1849) called the extant Alden House the third house on the original 100-acre Alden Duxbury property.<sup>176</sup> He wrote:

[John Alden] built his house on a rise of land, near Eagle-tree pond, and the site is still identified to the eastward of the present building [extant Alden House], near the dike; and here was his well, which long since having been filled up, it is now with difficulty that its precise situation is found. The second house stood a little further to the westward; and the present house, which was erected by his grandson, Col. John Alden, stands still further towards the west, which is now occupied by a descendant of the sixth generation.

If Winsor is a reliable source (and as a Duxbury descendant of the branch of the Alden family that retained the property and a future president of the American Historical Association, he may well be), the Original Alden Homestead Site must be either the first or second house. The permanent-seeming nature of the stone foundation argues for the site being the second house. Indeed, James W. Baker has suggested (as a speculative hypothesis) the possibility that the 1653 construction date traditionally associated with the extant Alden House actually may have been the construction date for the house excavated by Robbins.<sup>177</sup> Yet Robbins and other archeologists

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2005, in *A Comparative Archaeological Study of Colonial Chesapeake Culture*, eds. Julia A. King, Catherine L. Alston, Gregory J. Brown, Edward E. Chaney, John C. Coombs, C. Jane Cox, David Gadsby, Philip Levy, Al Luckenbach, David F. Muraca, Dennis J. Pogue, Benjamin J. Porter, and Shawn Sharpe. Report prepared for the National Endowment for the Humanities, June 2006, [http://www.chesapeakearchaeology.org/HTM\\_Interpretive\\_Papers/NEHFinalReport.htm#h18](http://www.chesapeakearchaeology.org/HTM_Interpretive_Papers/NEHFinalReport.htm#h18).

<sup>174</sup> Salwen, “Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Early Period;” St. George, *The Wrought Covenant*, 14; Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 207; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 185; Salisbury, “Social Relationships on a Moving Frontier,” 90-92; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, “An Indian Basket, Providence, Rhode Island, 1676” in *The Age of Homespun*, 41-74; Trudie Lamb Richmond and Amy E. Den Ouden, “Recovering Gendered Political Histories: Local Struggles and Native Women’s Resistance in Colonial Southern New England,” in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, eds. Colin G. Calloway and Neal Salisbury (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003), 180-181; Mary C. Beaudry, *Findings: The Material Culture of Needlework and Sewing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 112-114; Karin J. Goldstein “Stitches in Time: Archaeology and Women’s Technology,” *Plimoth Life* 1, no. 1 (2002): 16-19, cited in Beaudry, *Findings*, 193 (n. 66).

<sup>175</sup> Patricia E. Rubertone, “The Historical Archaeology of Native Americans,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29 (2000): 438.

<sup>176</sup> Justin Winsor, *History of the Town of Duxbury* (Boston: Crosby & Nichols, 1849), 57-58. Again, as a source, Winsor is probably best classified as possibly credible rather than suspect.

<sup>177</sup> James W. Baker, *Alden House History: A Work in Progress* (privately printed, 2006).

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since have dated many of the artifacts from the site to the 1630s, which would make it more likely the first, unless the first house was a very temporary home. Careful analysis of artifacts from the site as well further fieldwork has the potential to answer this question. A confirmation of a ca. 1628-32 construction date with a more comprehensive analysis of the surrounding farmstead site would make the Original Alden Homestead one of the nation's premier sites to understand pre-1650 English settlement.

*Is there another Alden homestead site on the original Alden grant property?*

If Winsor's information is accurate or if settlement at the Original Alden Homestead site can be more definitively dated to sometime after 1630, there is another, as yet unlocated, home-site on the original Alden 1628 grant. Locating this site, if it exists, and investigating it would be a major find, especially if it was the ca. 1628-32 first house. The most likely location for this earliest house has not been developed and thus likely retains very high integrity. If it was the second house, it would still be a seventeenth-century structure, since the evidence from the extant John Alden House and surrounding site suggests occupation there from ca. 1700.

*To what status did the Alden family aspire with its home and possessions? Do the artifacts and architecture convey the household's prominent role in the social structure and economy of Plymouth Colony?*

John Alden's English origin and social status are not known. Thus, the specific information necessary to determine whether he sought to replicate the English social status of his family of origin in the New World or sought to manifest a higher or simply different material status, is not available. Some scholars have called him a yeoman, a reasonable conjecture, but he was also among the Plymouth Colony's most skilled craftsmen. As a cooper and one of the colony's seven "undertakers," Alden personally played a central role in the colony's regional and international trade. He was also one of the colony's seven magistrates. What was he then? Yeoman? Craftsman? Merchant? Magistrate? If his roots were indeed in the English yeomanry, Alden in New England filled multiple roles that included but also went beyond that of the typical English yeomen. Alden's home and material possessions would shed light on the status that he assumed with his new life in America.

*How was the farmstead spatially organized?*

Few pre-1650 New England farmsteads have been excavated, and a considerable number of these sites have been disturbed by subsequent development. Robbins recognized the obvious fact that only the domicile had been located, and that outlying areas beyond the foundation likely contained additional important deposits and features, and specifically noted "remnants of barns and outbuildings."<sup>178</sup> The largely undisturbed nature of the Original Alden Homestead and the evidence of subsurface anomalies surrounding the Robbins foundation from the 2006 geophysical survey suggest that the site has the potential to tell us a good deal about the spatial organization and inter-relationships between activities on an early English North American farm.<sup>179</sup>

*Did the Aldens have a single barn that combined the functions of housing livestock and storing grain, or separate outbuildings for these functions?*

<sup>178</sup> Robbins, *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress*, 56.

<sup>179</sup> St. George, "Set Thine House in Order;" Beaudry, "The Archaeology of Historical Land Use in Massachusetts;" Beaudry, "Archaeology and the Historical Household;" Beaudry and George, "Old Data, New Findings;" Beaudry, "House and Household;" Beaudry et al., "Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts."

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Evidence from other archeological sites suggests that these functions can be separated or combined. The Alden site is an early English settlement site that may provide evidence that further clarifies why settlers chose one way or the other.

*To what extent did the Aldens participate in the regional livestock economy?*

Was Duxbury an especially suitable place to raise cattle? By summer 1629, the first wave of Massachusetts Bay Colony settlers had begun arriving to the north, which meant the rather sudden development of a large market for surplus cattle, meat, and hides. Plymouth Colony apparently experienced a cattle boom during the 1630s, supplying the market to the immediate north. The colony established an annual colony-wide cattle fair at Duxbury in 1639, which suggests that Duxbury, more than Plymouth, was the colony's "cattle country."<sup>180</sup> The near-term pressures to take advantage of this market opportunity must have been strong. Robbins found a good deal of redware at the Alden site, which has been linked to dairying.<sup>181</sup> Further work at the site may shed light on this possibility.

*To what extent had Alden and his family incorporated local American fauna and plants into their diet?*

Among the earliest English homestead sites in New England with significant intact remains, the site will likely provide important information about the types and degree to which native plants, fauna and marine life had been incorporated into the settlers' diet and how the use of these foods may have changed during the first several decades of settlement.<sup>182</sup> Faunal remains from other early Plymouth sites suggest that the English did hunt and eat native fauna.

*When and why did the Aldens abandon this site?*

The artifacts recovered by Robbins were overwhelmingly seventeenth-century in origin, which suggests that the site was abandoned by 1700. Chartier argues that a majority of artifacts can be dated to the third quarter of the century. So it seems reasonable to conclude that the site was abandoned in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. John Alden died in 1687, midway through this twenty-five year period. Family tradition had it that the earlier Alden house had burned, but Robbins' fieldwork found no evidence of fire. Robbins, in turn, raised the hypothesis that the house had either been dismantled or moved elsewhere. Mulholland has called attention to the number of nails that Robbins found at the site, which he argued was not consistent with portions of the house being moved to another site. He has suggested that the house may have been destroyed by a hurricane and left to rot in place with the cellar and foundation being filled and graded somewhat later. Further work at the site might shed light on when and why the Aldens abandoned the original house.

## CONCLUSION

"The Pilgrims in a sense have become the spiritual ancestors of all Americans," historian Samuel Eliot Morison wrote, "whatever their stock, race or creed."<sup>183</sup> Although other historians have labored successfully to show that this need not be so, Americans have embraced the Pilgrim story as an expression of their own sense of the origins of themselves and the American people for more than two hundred years. The time that Nathaniel Philbrick's *Mayflower* spent on the *New York Times* Bestseller List in 2006 is only the most recent evidence of

<sup>180</sup> St. George, "Set Thine House in Order," 178, citing *Plymouth Colony Records*, vol. 11, 32; Joanne Bowen, "A Comparative Analysis of New England and Chesapeake Herding Systems," in *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake*, ed. Paul Shackel and Barbara Little (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994).

<sup>181</sup> Baker, *The Clarke & Lake Company*, 27; Beaudry et al., "Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts," 176-178.

<sup>182</sup> Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 235-239.

<sup>183</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Pilgrim Fathers: Their Significance in History* (Plymouth, MA: Plimoth Plantation, 1951), 9.

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the story's continuing appeal. The on-going resonance of the Pilgrim story in American culture has involved many factors, but an important one has been efforts by *Mayflower* passenger descendants to remember and celebrate their forebears. This larger cultural impulse inspired Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to write *The Courtship of Miles Standish* about his ancestors, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins. The poem provided a human face to the Pilgrim story and made John and Priscilla Alden the best known of the individual Pilgrims. The poem's popularity led nineteenth-century Americans to rapidly incorporate the story into American folklore and to retell it in myriad forms as the most popular national origins story of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the embrace of *The Courtship*, Americans made the extant ca. 1700 Alden House in Duxbury, Massachusetts, the physical site most associated with the poem. Thus, the John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites became the physical sites most prominently associated with specific *Mayflower* passengers. In fact, no other sites associated with specific *Mayflower* passengers have attained national prominence.

*The Courtship* and its folkloric association with the house led to the formation of a national family association, the Alden Kindred of America, which purchased the Alden House from the last Alden descendant owner-occupiers in order to preserve it and ultimately open it to the public as a house museum. The continuing popularity of the story and the stewardship of the Alden Kindred led the family association to hire the nationally significant pioneering historical archeologist Roland Wells Robbins to locate the site of the Original Alden Homestead, which he did successfully in 1960. Robbins' approach to excavating and analyzing the site represented his work at its professional apogee, thus making the site an important one in the history of archeology in the United States.

Robbins' work at the Original Alden Homestead revealed a structure whose early date (ca. 1630), seeming permanent construction, and narrow dimensions made it a discovery of major scientific importance. It also yielded nationally significant artifacts that shed light on the lifeways of the first English settlers in New England and North America. Robbins' careful work, the site's high integrity, and the subsurface anomalies of probable manmade origin, revealed by the 2006 geophysical survey, suggest that the Original Alden Homestead has the potential to yield evidence of major scientific importance likely to add to or change our understanding of pre-1650 English settlement in North America.

The Original Alden Homestead Site has provided crucial comparative data to a bevy of historical archeologists, particularly for the interpretation of "First Period" architecture and redware. Numerous scholars have relied upon Robbins' data to understand findings from other seventeenth-century sites throughout New England, and for comparisons with specific architectural forms in the Chesapeake region. Artifacts from Robbins' dig were incorporated into a major museum exhibition on early seventeenth-century New England life and material culture. A series of re-examinations of the artifact collections has been undertaken by several well-regarded historical archeologists, but not comprehensively to integrate Robbins' meticulous field documentation, as has been done by Linebaugh with the collection from Robbins' excavations at Thoreau's Cabin in Concord. The curated archeological collection and additional artifacts and features from as-yet-unexcavated areas at the site have enormous potential to provide critically needed comparative data to inform pressing, nationally important research questions about history, life experiences, and material culture in early seventeenth-century North America, as established by Beaudry and George using the Plimoth Plantation collections. The productive re-excavations at the Howland Site in Plymouth by Deetz and students from 1998 to 2003 (and possibly to continue), and at the margins of the Allerton Site in Duxbury by Binzen, et al. in 2005 and 2006, demonstrate similar potential at the more promising Alden site. As Beaudry, et al. inspirationally conclude in a charge to their colleagues: "Deetz and Deetz, in *The Times of Their Lives* (2000), seek to answer the question, 'who were the Pilgrims?' Odd as it may seem, after over 100 years of archival research, excavation, and analysis of Pilgrim sites and artifacts, we are still trying to find out."<sup>184</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Beaudry and George, "Old Data, New Findings;" Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 270-271; Beaudry et al.,

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Robbins' significant pioneering role in the development of the field of American historical archeology has been established by thorough biographical research. Robbins was a self-educated, visionary archeologist representative of the restoration, reconstruction, and recreation trends of American historic preservation.<sup>185</sup> Robbins is now recognized, creditably in hindsight, for his business-oriented initiatives, for his overt championing of the intellectual, the symbolic, and the emotional values of historic places, and for his successes in public engagement during a formative period of the discipline.<sup>186</sup> Public outreach and public involvement are now considered *de rigueur* for contemporary archeology projects, particularly those undertaken under the rubric of "cultural resource management" ("contract") archeology. Robbins contributions to the archeological database are lasting, and his archives and the associated archeological collection from the Alden site are preserved. In technical archeological considerations only, his published work at the Original Alden Homestead Site reflects the height of both his abilities and his efforts. *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress* represents the best published example of a formal archeological report Robbins was to produce in his lifetime, and also his most-cited publication by scholars. The Original Alden Homestead Site has an important place in Robbins' career, as it also reflects an important period in the development of American historical archeology.<sup>187</sup>

Finally, the popularity of *The Courtship* led to interest in the historical John Alden and his rescue from undeserved historical obscurity. Ship's cooper on the *Mayflower* and a founder of the Plymouth Colony, the second permanent English colony in North America, Alden held positions of high economic and political importance for almost the entire seventy-one year history of the colony (1620-1691), a span of public service unrivaled in seventeenth-century colonial America and perhaps in the entire colonial period.

Today, the John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites in Duxbury are the single best place in America to understand how the impulse to celebrate the founding of one's family in America (the context that gave rise to and provided the story for *The Courtship* in the first place) intersected with Longfellow's literary skill and national need to produce a national origins story that rapidly became part of American folklore to be retold over and over again in an astonishing variety of cultural forms. This cultural impact in turn motivated nationally significant historical and archeological research that enriched our understanding of early English settlement in North America. Considered together, these developments suggest that no family has been more successful in celebrating their immigrant forebears than the Aldens. Their efforts across two hundred years have inspired thousands of other families to identify and celebrate the first of their family in America. As these men and women contemplated, researched, and commemorated John and Priscilla, they also "spoke for themselves" as much as their *Mayflower* forebears, and, in doing so, had a powerful impact on American folklore, culture,

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"Archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts," 181; Derek Wheeler, "Plymouth Colony Archive Project, Archaeological Field School and Excavations, 1998 to 2003," <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/users/deetz/Plymouth/Fieldschool/fieldscl.htm>, 2004; Linebaugh, "The Road to Walden Pond;" Binzen et al., *Archaeological Investigations for the Phase II Sewer Extension Project*.

<sup>185</sup> Donald W. Linebaugh, "Walden Pond and Beyond: The Restoration Archaeology of Roland Wells Robbins," in *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstructions in the Public Interpretation of Archaeology and History*, ed. John H. Jameson, Jr. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), 21-46. Gentler preservation treatments that retain more historic fabric have since eclipsed those trends. Lu Ann De Cunzo, "Technical Leaflet No. 173: Historical Archaeology as a Tool for Researching and Interpreting Historic Sites," *History News* 45, no. 4 (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1990).

<sup>186</sup> Robbins' *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress* inspired David Roderick's poem, "Excavation of the John Alden House," first published in *The Massachusetts Review* 44, no. 4 (2004), and included in Roderick's *Blue Colonial* (Philadelphia: American Poetry Review, 2006), 5-6, a book that won *The American Poetry Review's* Honickman First Book Prize, selected by Robert Pinsky (US Poet Laureate 1997-2000). see <http://www.poems.com/noterode.htm> that features the poem as one of the two selections from the prize-winning book. Robbins, too, was a published poet, and likely would have been delighted at the honor.

<sup>187</sup> Paul R. Huey, "The Beginnings of Modern Historical Archaeology in the Northeast and the Origins of the Council on Northeast Historical Archaeology," *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 15 (1986): 5, 7, citing Robbins and noting the Alden site; Linebaugh, *The Road to Ruins and Restoration*; Linebaugh, *Man Who Found Thoreau*; Vergil E. Noble, "The Value of Reconstructions: An Archaeological Perspective," in *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstructions in the Public Interpretation of Archaeology and History*, ed. John H. Jameson, Jr. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2004), 277, 285, discussing Robbins.

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archeology, and history. To understand the power of this impulse and the remarkably rich and varied nature of its impact on Americans, these sites are without peer.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

\_\_\_ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

Previously Listed in the National Register. NR# 78000476, 12/14/78

\_\_\_ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.

\_\_\_ Designated a National Historic Landmark.

\_\_\_ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #

\_\_\_ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office

\_\_\_ Other State Agency

\_\_\_ Federal Agency

\_\_\_ Local Government

\_\_\_ University

Other (Specify Repository): Archaeological Services of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA; Roland Wells Robbins Collection, Henley Library at the Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, Lincoln, MA; Pilgrim Hall Museum, Plymouth, MA.

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: less than 4 acres

UTM References:	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
	19	361470	4655940

Because the Original Alden Homestead Site is only 750 feet from the Alden House property and the total combined acreage of the two parcels is less than 4 acres, only one UTM point is given in the nomination and marked on the included USGS map.

Verbal Boundary Description: The Alden House property that includes the Alden House is bounded as follows: northerly by Alden Street, 141.06 feet, S 81° 48' 18" W; easterly on land owned in 1989 by Betty Barco Gibson, 330.50 feet, N 5° 11' 02" E and 298.90 feet, N 14°, 18' 44" W; southerly on land of the Town of Duxbury, 257.45 feet, N 81° 33' 15" E; and westerly on land owned by Ture Bengtz, Lillian Bengtz, and Lanci Bengtz in 1989, 640.43 feet, S 6° 21' 58".

The boundary of the Duxbury Schools property that includes the Original Alden Homestead Site is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points:

	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
A	19	360655	4655932
B		360709	4655941
C		360753	4655892
D		360657	4655854

These UTM points are used only to define the boundary of the Original Alden Homestead Site and not marked on the included USGS map.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries include the structures and archeological site that have historically been associated with the original 1628 Duxbury grant to Mayflower Pilgrim John Alden which have historic integrity. The boundary includes that land which John Tolman Alden's guardian sold to the Alden Kindred of America, Inc. on November 13, 1907, and is therefore the only piece of the property never to have passed from ownership by John Alden's descendants. It also includes that portion of the adjacent Duxbury Schools property that contains the cellar and foundation located by Roland Wells Robbins in 1960 and the extent of the surrounding site that the 2006 geophysical survey suggested contains anomalies of possibly human origin that were not disturbed by mechanical grading.

**ALDEN, JOHN AND PRISCILLA, FAMILY SITES**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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