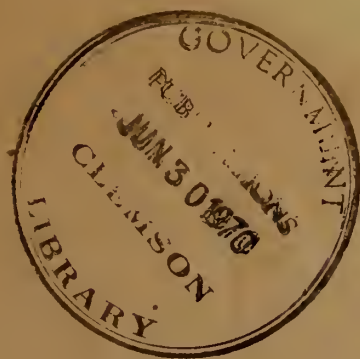


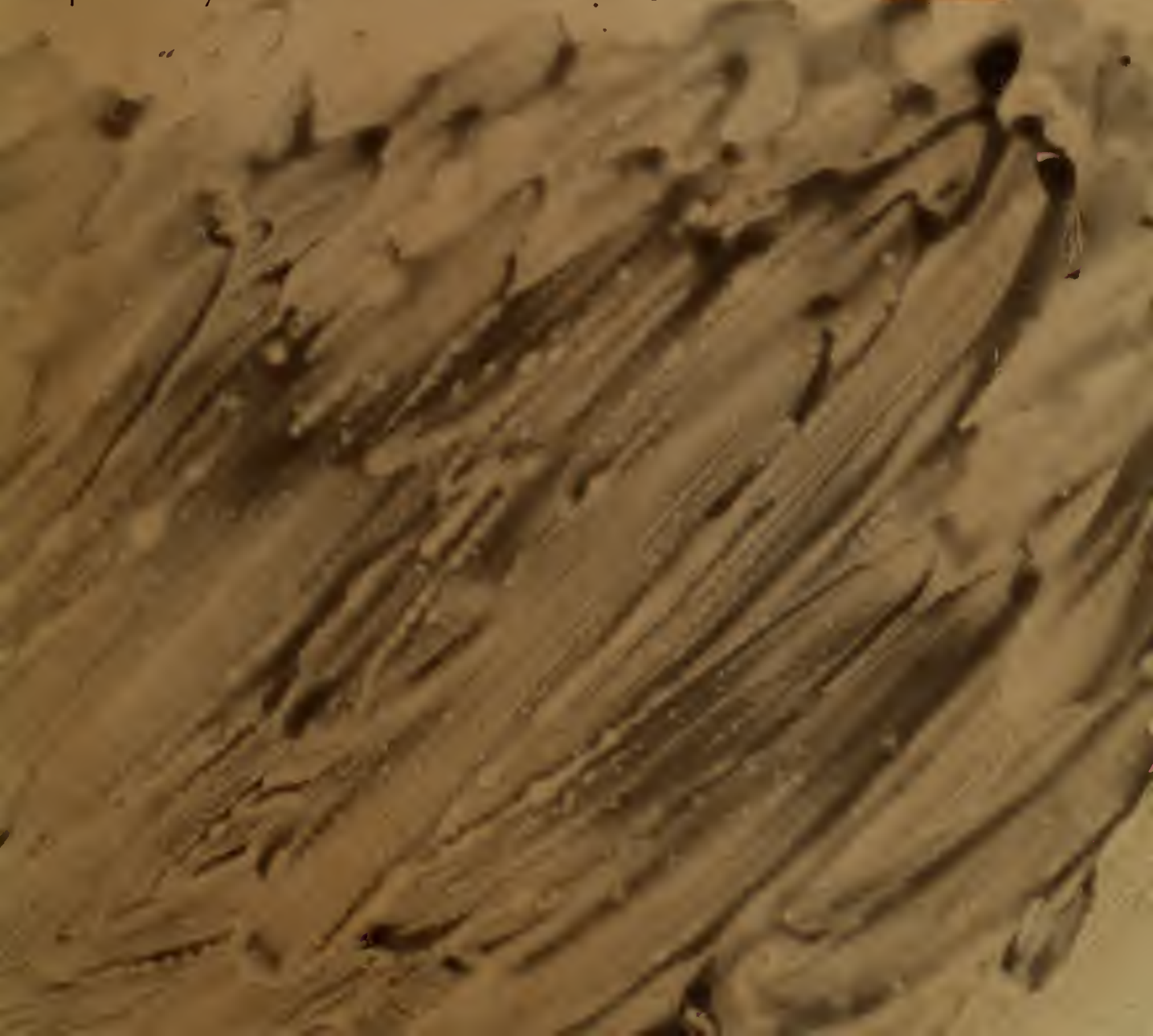
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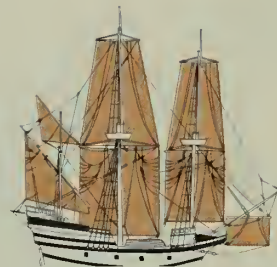
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Proposed Plymouth Rock National Memorial



Proposed Plymouth Rock National Memorial



1969

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service



In 1964, at the request of several members of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation, the National Park Service undertook a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a Plymouth Rock National Memorial. That report proposed three choices for a park—one of 7.48 acres, one of 8.70 acres, and one of 13.62 acres—and invited the townspeople and other interested citizens to comment on the proposals.

In testimony before Congress, letters, and a referendum by the voters of Plymouth, the public overwhelmingly favored administration of the site by the Park Service. Though the voters of Plymouth preferred Plan 1 by a narrow margin, the greater part of the public response favored a park along the lines set out in Plan 3, the largest of the options. That plan has several obvious advantages: it offers the greatest chance for improving the general appearance of the waterfront, providing room for the constantly growing numbers of visitors, controlling automobiles in the heart of the historic sections, improving pedestrian paths, and interpreting the story of the Pilgrims and their colony.

This master plan is based on the third option. It provides for a National Memorial of 11.67 acres, taking in Commonwealth land along the waterfront, the memorial garden across Water Street, Coles Hill, and some privately owned land. The Government would not acquire by condemnation the five residential properties included so long as they are used as residences. Three commercial or institutional properties would be purchased and sold back with deed restrictions to insure that their operation is compatible with the purposes of the National Memorial. The remaining private property is required for development.

The major intentions of this plan are to achieve a dignified setting for Plymouth Rock, good traffic circulation, and adequate visitor parking. Perhaps the most far-reaching recommendation is that Water Street, near Plymouth Rock, be closed. The plan also provides for a visitor center and establishes a framework for an interpretive program.

The Park Service has found it impractical to try to satisfy parking needs within the boundaries and recommend that parking facilities be provided by the town or private interests outside the National Memorial. This is such a critical point that unless adequate parking space is provided nearby, it will not be feasible to establish Plymouth Rock National Memorial.

The balance of this report contains two parts: a summary of the events symbolized by Plymouth Rock, and a digest of the main ideas of the master plan. If the National Memorial is established by Congress, this plan will guide the park's future management and development.



PLYMOUTH COLONY

The Pilgrim settlement at Plymouth stemmed directly from the religious controversies that swept over England in the 16th and early 17th centuries. In 1534, Henry VIII broke with Rome and set about establishing the Church of England. Under his successor, Queen Mary, who was married to the Catholic Sovereign of Spain, the Roman Church flourished again, with considerable persecution of Protestants. After Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558, Protestantism became firmly rooted among the people and a buttress of the State. Yet not all Englishmen were satisfied. During her reign, a radical wing of the Protestants emerged in opposition to the established church. They were commonly known as the Puritans because they wanted further “purification” of the church. Eventually, they divided into two broad factions. While the moderate wing was willing to work within the framework of the Anglican Church, the extremists demanded a thoroughgoing reform of both church ritual and government.

In 1608, one part of the radicals—Separatists, as they were called—left England for the more tolerant surroundings of Holland, settling first in Amsterdam and then Leyden. Ten years later, unsatisfied with their life there and fearing assimilation by the Dutch, the Pilgrim leaders decided to move once more to a new land where they could found a new community on their own principles. They considered several locations in America before choosing to settle somewhere near the Hudson River, then controlled by the Virginia Company of London. As with the Jamestown colony, this venture was backed by a group of London capitalists.

On July 22, 1620, some 30 Pilgrims left Leyden for London on the ship *Speedwell*, where they were joined by other settlers recruited in England for the expedition. After two false starts, during which the *Speedwell* proved unseaworthy, the expedition set sail again on September 6 aboard the *Mayflower*, a square-rigged merchant vessel of about 180 tons. After a stormy passage, they sighted the highlands of Cape Cod on November 9 and turned south toward the Hudson.

Massachusetts Bay





But after half a day on this course, the shoals and breakers of Pollock Rip forced the ship to turn north and find safety within the Cape. On November 11, (November 21 by our calendar), the Mayflower dropped anchor in the sheltered waters off what is now Provincetown. "Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land," the Pilgrim leader William Bradford wrote in his diary, "they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element."

Because they had no patent to the land before them and were outside the law of Virginia, the leaders on November 21 drew up the famous "Mayflower Compact." Signed by 41 of the 44 men on the voyage, it pledged them to form a "Civil Body Politic" and to frame just and equal laws for "the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience."

Over the next few weeks, landing parties explored the Cape and found a corn cache belonging to the Indians but no site suitable for permanent settlement. As their supplies ran low and the weather turned foul, they sailed across the bay and into a good harbor, "fit for shipping" with "divers cornfields, and little running brooks." They anchored there on December 26, and set about the work of settlement.

The first years of Plymouth were a time of hardships: hunger, illness and death, an overwhelming sense of isolation in a vast wilderness. The settlers overcame much by raw courage. They were also befriended at a crucial time by the Indians Squato, Samoset, and Chief Massasoit. A town gradually took shape. Its main street, Leyden, stretched from the beach, where the common house stood, to the foot of a steep hill, crowned with a fort and later a burial place; dwellings lined both sides of the street between these points.

The Pilgrims slowly adapted to their new environment. Until the harvest of 1623, food was scarce, and for several years more their merchant backers in London failed to give the enterprise more than token support. But the fur trade and fishing prospered, and the settlement survived and even began to grow.

The great Puritan migrations between 1630 and 1640 brought many more settlers into the region. By 1643, there were 643 male adults in Plymouth, and some 10 towns in the region. One neighbor to the north was the Massachusetts Bay Colony, founded in 1629 by a more moderate faction of Puritans. The new colony soon surpassed the Plymouth colony in population (within two years it had five times the population), economic growth, political development, and cultural institutions. In 1691, Plymouth was finally absorbed by her larger rival.

HISTORICAL REMAINS

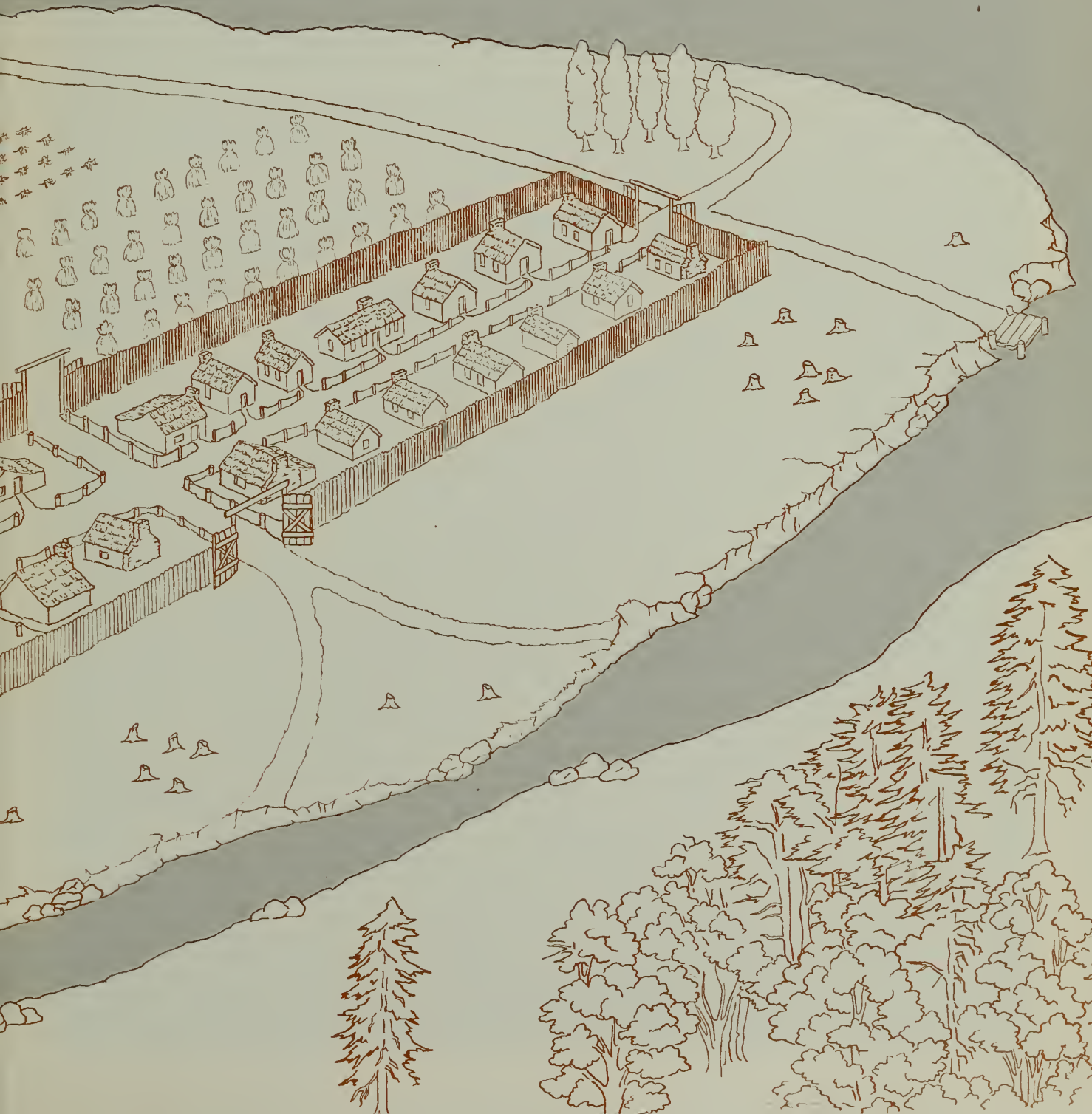
In the 300 years since the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, features associated with the Pilgrim settlement have given way to later developments, and little is left of the wilderness and untrammelled seascape which formed the original setting.

Only five related features have survived.

1. PLYMOUTH ROCK first came to public attention in 1741 when Elder Faunce, aged 95, pointed it out as the very rock on which the forefathers told him they had landed. In 1769, the Old Colony Club of Plymouth began to commemorate the landing by celebrating "Forefathers Day" every year.

The Mayflower (opposite), barque rigged with a lateen mizzen and square spritsail, as a sailor would describe her, had an overall length of about 90 feet and a width of 26. On the voyage over she was manned by a crew of 20 or 25, besides the master and his mate. After taking provisions for the long Atlantic crossing and providing accommodations for 102 passengers, the ship must have been perilously crowded.





Five years later, when the Plymouth Sons of Liberty tried to move the rock to the public square, it split while being loaded, and only the upper part was carried away. The lower half remained in place at the head of a wharf and was soon forgotten. The two halves were finally rejoined in 1880 through the work of the Pilgrim Society. During the Tercentenary celebration in 1920, the rock was again removed while the waterfront was being landscaped. The present neoclassical portico, designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White, was erected over the rock in 1921.

2. COLES HILL is by tradition the burial place of those who died during the terrible first winter. Later developments have somewhat altered its profile.
3. LEYDEN STREET follows the axis of the first street laid out by the Pilgrims. The grade has probably changed over the years. Eighteenth-century structures line the first block.
4. TOWN BROOK. The first gardens of the Pilgrims were planted on the rich, grassy flat along the north bank of this stream.
5. BURIAL HILL was the site of the fort erected by the Pilgrims soon after they landed. Later, perhaps as early as 1637, a cemetery was located there.

THE PLAN

Three fundamental realities, each interrelated and each instrumental to the effectiveness of the National Memorial, have controlled the planning.

First, Plymouth Rock—the dramatic focus of the events commemorated here—is on, or very near, its original site and should not be moved. All operations must thus be adapted to the present location of the rock, now squeezed in between the water and a busy street. Unfortunately, viewing it is for most visitors a hurried and hazardous experience.

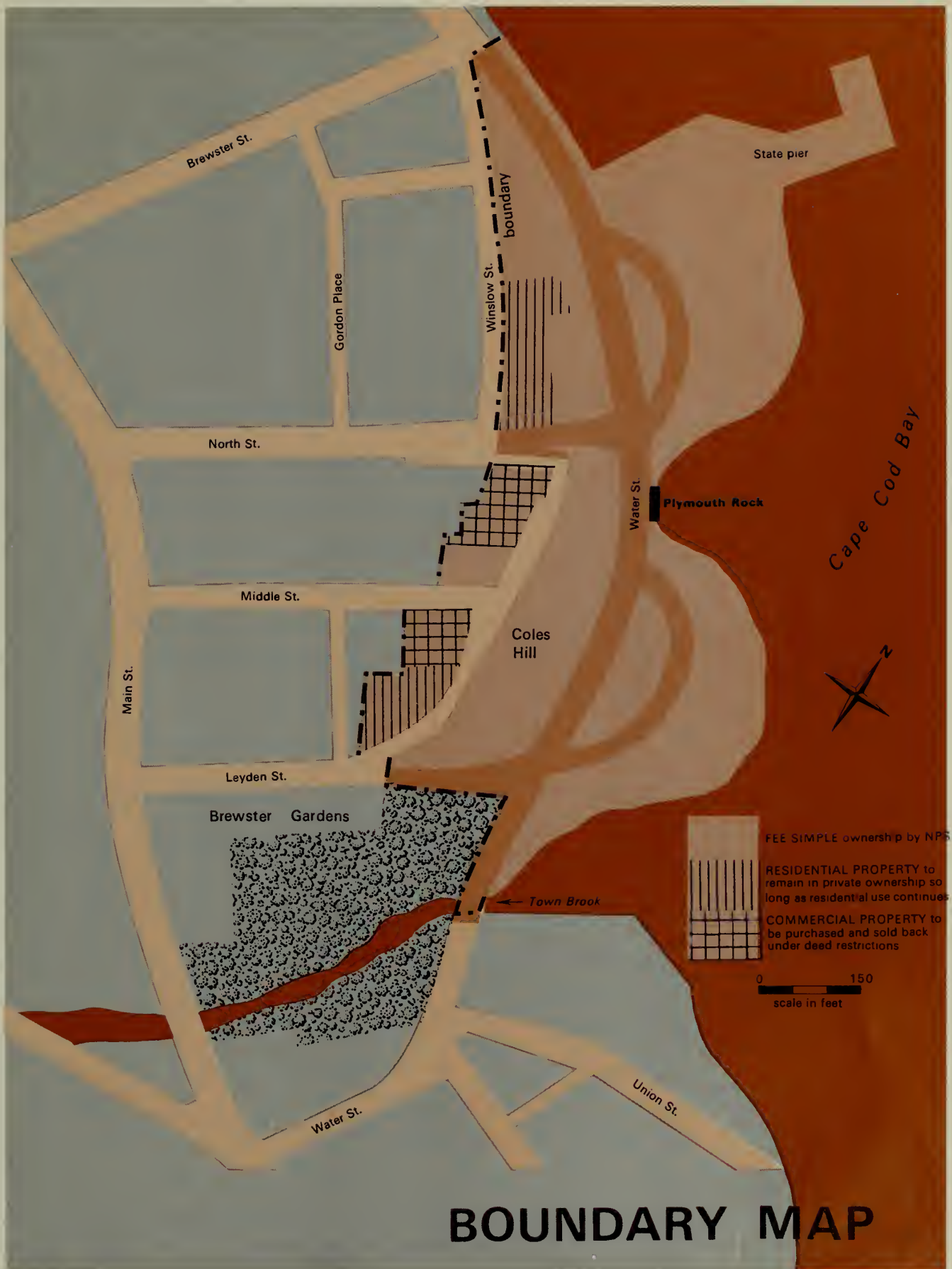
Second, if the rock cannot be moved, then Water Street—the source of the hazards—must be closed in the vicinity of the rock. But this can only be done if suitable visitor parking can be provided.

Third, this parking space must necessarily be provided outside the boundaries of the National Memorial. The most recent Plymouth town plan, issued in 1966 after the Park Service's Study of Alternatives was prepared, proposes that a marina be constructed along the waterfront between the State pier and the town wharf. The presence of this marina and objections on the part of both the town and the Park Service to using any more of the waterfront for an unsightly parking lot require that some local group or authority construct suitable parking space within walking distance of the National Memorial.

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Before the Park Service can recommend the establishment of the National Memorial, a solution must be found to the problem of traffic congestion and inadequate parking along Water Street.

The most practical way of dealing with the traffic and creating a more dignified setting would be to close Water Street to vehicles and to work out with non-Federal interests a way whereby parking (for at least 150 cars at reasonable rates) is provided outside the boundary but within easy walking distance of Plymouth Rock. Other solutions were considered, but they would have meant either the introduction of more cars onto the waterfront (which all agree is undesirable) or the expensive and destructive relocation of the street. One such relocation would have followed the general route



of Carver and Winslow Streets, requiring a deep fill from Town Brook to Coles Hill and adversely affecting a number of fine old 18th-century houses along lower Leyden Street. The only other possible relocation would be on fill outside Plymouth Rock, which would have severed the rock's relationship to the harbor, introduced a discordant element into the setting, and radically altered the seascape. Obviously, neither relocation could be justified historically or economically.

THE SETTING

The General Development Plan shows the kind of setting that would be achieved if Water Street were closed and parking provided elsewhere. Plymouth Rock would be linked to a visitor center on the north and Town Brook on the south by a pedestrian path. It is anticipated that most out-of-town visitors would enter Plymouth over relocated U.S. 44, park in the lot in the vicinity of the marina, tour the National Memorial on foot, and depart via well-marked arterial streets, leaving Main Street and other commercial ways to mostly local traffic.

To display the rock itself and the memorial building to their best advantage and provide for appropriate related services and facilities the National Memorial will be composed of three zones: a Preservation Zone, a Public Development Zone, and a Private Development Zone—divided according to the predominant character of use.

LAND ACQUISITION

Only that land will be acquired in fee simple that is needed to protect historical resources or accommodate development. Most fee-simple land will be in the Preservation Zone and includes 6.10 acres of Commonwealth land and 1.43 acres of Pilgrim Society land. Seven private parcels must also be purchased outright for the visitor center.

The Memorial's boundaries will embrace two residential sections. Such use by single families is compatible with the purposes of the National Memorial. All that is required is a guarantee of continued residential use of the properties, good upkeep, and no major exterior alterations. So long as these conditions are met, the Secretary of the Interior would have no authority to acquire the properties by condemnation. This residential property would be within the Private Development Zone.

The commercial establishments on Coles Hill are also compatible with the purposes of the Memorial, so long as exterior signs are not distracting, the properties are kept up, and only those services are supplied which meet real visitor needs. These conditions would be assured by purchasing the properties and selling them back with deed restrictions which prevent architectural changes unless agreed to by the National Park Service, set reasonable standards for maintenance and operation, and limit the number, size, and design of advertising devices. This property would also lie within the Private Development Zone.

The Public Development Zone would embrace two principal facilities: the visitor center and the State pier, with approach roads and walks. This land would be held in fee simple.

INTERPRETATION

For many Americans, Plymouth Rock symbolizes the story of the Pilgrims in America. If William Bradford and his voyagers did not land on this very spot, they nevertheless came ashore in the vicinity and made their homes



GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

nearby. The Park Service's interpretive program would build upon this awareness of the past. The principal theme would be the significance of the Pilgrim migration in American life. Other aspects of the story—who the Pilgrims were, what they believed, why they left England, how their settlements took form in the New World, and what manner of life they led—are dealt with at such nearby institutions as Pilgrim Hall, Plimoth Plantation, and several 17th-century historic house museums.

Concretely, the Park Service program would provide an effective setting for the rock, communicate the meaning of the Pilgrims and their colony through on-site interpretive talks and publications, and supply information on other interpretive services in the vicinity. If the park is established, one of the first orders of business would be to prepare an interpretive prospectus, spelling out the most effective ways of conveying this story.

COOPERATIVE PLANNING

Because the substance of the Pilgrim story will continue to be presented by several nearby historical institutions, the Park Service would cooperate with those institutions in preserving and interpreting their properties, to the extent that resources permit. Legislative authority to enter into cooperative agreements would be sought as part of the authorizing legislation.

One important interpretive effort that the Park Service will encourage, and assist if possible, is the *Mayflower II*, now exhibited at the State pier. It makes an effective backdrop for Plymouth Rock and should remain in operation.

RESEARCH

The Pilgrim Society, the Plymouth Antiquarian Society, and Plimoth Plantation all have comprehensive research programs underway. The Park Service would supplement this work, as its own interpretive program required.

PRIORITY OF NEEDS

Three things must be done before the National Memorial can be realized:

1. This master plan must be adopted by the town of Plymouth;
2. Adequate visitor parking must be provided to the satisfaction of the township and the Park Service;
3. Enabling legislation must be passed by Congress.

After the National Memorial has been established, development would proceed in two phases, subject of course to the appropriations process.

During the first phase, the lands held by the Pilgrim Society and the Commonwealth and the several private parcels needed for the visitor center would be acquired. Then, after the town has provided adequate parking space for visitors, Water Street would be closed, the visitor center and walks built, and the grounds landscaped. This work would generally take place within the Preservation and Public Development Zones.

In the second phase, interest would be acquired in the properties in the Private Development Zone to insure that the character of these properties are compatible with the purpose of the Memorial.



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

