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## **Henry Hornblower II Plimoth Plantation's Founding Father Backgrounder 2013**

A Bostonian by birth, Henry "Harry" Hornblower II had spent his boyhood summers at his family's summer estate in Plymouth, Massachusetts. During this time, Harry became fascinated by the story of the Pilgrims and their Native neighbors. Not satisfied with learning about the town's history through books and various local history exhibits, Harry carried out a number of archaeological excavations around Plymouth. It became Harry's ambition to bring the remarkable story of Plimoth Colony and the Pilgrims' struggle for survival to the people of America in the most effective way possible.

Unfortunately for Harry, there was nothing surviving to show what the Pilgrim experience had been. Harry explored various means to overcome this challenge and increase Pilgrim recognition. Finally, it was the idea of recreating the "Plimoth Plantation" that is the subject of Governor William Bradford's history, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, that allowed Harry to focus his efforts. Inspired by the restorations of several early structures in the town of Plymouth, Harry managed to convince his father Ralph Hornblower in 1945 to make a donation of \$20,000 to Plymouth's Pilgrim Society as the foundation for a future open-air museum. It took only two years to recognize that the Pilgrim Village project was beyond the scope of its parent organization. It was then decided by the trustees of the Pilgrim Society that an independent corporation should be created. Plimoth Plantation, Inc. was created on October 2, 1947 to serve as a "memorial to the Pilgrim Fathers...[to further] the historical education of the public with respect to the struggles of the early settlers in the Town of Plymouth, with the expansion of that settlement and the influence of the Pilgrim fathers throughout the world...."

Harry was devoted to Plimoth Plantation. He was instrumental in establishing and building the institution, and maintained a life-long interest in the Museum's ability to bring the history of the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag people to life. Harry wanted the museum experience to be exciting and challenging for staff and public alike. He was concerned with maintaining the historical integrity of every aspect of the Museum and never lost sight of its need to inspire as well as educate its guests. He was Plimoth Plantation's greatest advocate and fundraiser, charming and cajoling people into supporting his dream of bringing the Plimoth Colony story to a worldwide audience.

Today, Henry Hornblower's step son, Steve Brodeur, is Plimoth Plantation's Chairman of The Board, and he is committed to keeping Harry's dream alive for future generations.

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