

The 1627 Division of Land

(Plymouth Colony Records 11:4-5)

The 3d of January, 1627: it was agreed in a full court about division of lands as followeth:

That the first division of the acres should stand and continue firm according to the former division made unto the possessors thereof and to their heirs forever: free liberty being reserved for all to get firewood thereon but the timber trees were excepted for the owners of the ground.

2ly. That the 2 division should consist of 20 acres to every person and to contain five in breadth and four in length and so accordingly to be divided by lot to every one which was to have share therein.

3ly. The ground to be judged sufficient before the lots were drawn and the rest to be left to common use.

4ly. This being done, that for our better subsistence and convenience those grounds which are nearest the town, in whose lots soever they fall shall be used by the whole for the space of 4 years from the date hereof: viz. first that the right owner make choice of twice that quantity he shall or may use within the said term and then to take to him such neighbors as shall have need and he think fit: but if they cannot agree then the Governor and Council may appoint as they think meet: provided that the woods be ordered for felling and lopping according as the owner shall appoint: for neither firewood nor other timber either for building or fencing or any other use is to be felled or carried off of any of these without the owners leave and license, but he is to preserve them to his best advantage.

5ly. That whatsoever the surveyors judge sufficient shall stand without contradiction or opposition and every man shall rest contented with his lot.

6ly. That after the purchasers are served as aforesaid; that then such planters as are heirs to such as died before the right of the land was yielded to the adventurers have also 20 acres a person proportionalbe to their right laid out in part of their inheritance.

7ly. That first they shall being where the acres of the first division end and lay out that to the Eel River so far as shall be thought fit by the surveyors, and return to the north side of the town and so proceed accordingly, and that they leave all great timber swamps for common use.

8ly. That fowling, fishing and hunting be free.

9ly. That the old pathways be still allowed and that every man be allowed a convenient way to the water wheresoever the lot fall:

Lastly that every man of the surveyors have a peck of corn for every share of land laid out by them to be paid by the owner thereof when the same is laid out.

The names of the layers out were these

William Bradford
Edward Winslow
John Howland

Francis Cooke
Joshua Pratt
Edward Bangs