



Organization and Structure of the Pilgrim Society and Pilgrim Hall Museum

The General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts incorporated the Pilgrim Society in 1820 for the declared purpose of "...procuring in the Town of Plymouth, a suitable lot, or plat of ground, for the creation of a Monument to perpetuate the memory of the virtues, the enterprize, and unparalleled sufferings of [the Pilgrims]; and for the erection of a suitable Building, for the accomodation of the meetings [of the Society]."

Pilgrim Hall Museum was built and opened to the public in 1824. Pilgrim Hall is the oldest public museum in continuous operation in the United States.

Long after Pilgrim Hall Museum was erected, respect for the indomitable spirit of the Pilgrims continued to motivate the Pilgrim Society, as it still does today. Defining the purposes of the organization in contemporary terms, the Trustees approved the following statement:

"The Mission of the Pilgrim Society and Pilgrim Hall Museum is to achieve worldwide awareness of the Pilgrims' significance as an enduring narrative of America's founding."

Pilgrim Hall Museum is accredited by the American Association of Museums. This is one of the highest honors a museum can receive -- accreditation certifies that a museum operates according to professional standards, manages both its collections and its finances responsibly, and provides a quality experience for the visitor. Of over 15,000 museums nationwide, fewer than 800 have received accreditation.

Accreditation is a very rigorous process, and we are proud of having achieved this special status! The report of the American Association of Museums Visiting Committee applauded Pilgrim Hall:

"The Pilgrim Hall Museum of the Pilgrim Society can claim being not only the oldest continuously operating museum in the country, but also a terrific example of a well-run institution that utilizes its limited resources for maximum effect. The enthusiasm of its staff and volunteers is clearly evident in all facets of its operations."

The Pilgrim Society is a non-profit educational institution. It is funded through admissions, memberships, and donations. Membership in the Pilgrim Society is not genealogical. We warmly welcome anyone who shares in our goals and appreciates the heritage of the Pilgrims.

The Pilgrim Society is governed by Officers and a Board of Trustees elected by the membership at the annual meeting of the Society, held in its Hall on December 21 (the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims in Plymouth) each year.

A professional staff runs the daily operations of Pilgrim Hall Museum.