



TERCENTENARY:
How Plymouth Celebrated its 300th Anniversary in 1920-21

On Exhibition from October 8th through December 30th, 2016

PIDC Temporary Exhibition Gallery

Proudly Sponsored by Eastern Bank

Opening Reception, Friday, October 7th, 5:30-7:30 pm

Exhibit Description:

Almost a century ago, the celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims in Plymouth drew enormous crowds and garnered national attention. A successful series of events held from December 1920 through 1921 included a Presidential visit, public ceremonies, a grand parade, costumed processions, an elaborate historical pageant, a reproduction “Indian Village,” concerts, educational programs, and an extraordinary level of community participation.

Events were only part of the Tercentenary’s scope. The core project was a massive redevelopment of Plymouth’s old waterfront. The working maritime district was cleared of buildings, piers, and residents to create a tourist-friendly park of Pilgrim monuments and memorials. Designed for an emerging automobile culture, the new waterfront redefined Plymouth as a modern tourist destination in the post WWI era, and profoundly altered the town’s character and economy.

The anniversary was a huge undertaking that involved the entire Plymouth community and the wider region. It brought together groups of people that usually remained apart, the descendants of old Pilgrim families and more recently arrived residents of German, Irish, Italian, Canadian, and Portuguese lineage. Newspaper reports on the “great stir” in Plymouth observed how social barriers were dropped in the rush of preparations. Over 1300 residents of Plymouth and surrounding towns participated in an extraordinary historical pageant, “The Spirit of the Pilgrims,” billed as one of the most spectacular performances ever presented. Hundreds of thousands attended. Pilgrim Hall Museum’s new exhibition displays for the first time many of original costume designs with rare surviving actual costumes worn in the 1921 pageant.

The Tercentenary produced a vast corpus of ephemera - souvenirs, print, and memorabilia - and a wealth of photographic images. The exhibition features a 21-foot panoramic view of the pageant cast, hundreds of Tercentenary images, objects, posters, drawings, maps, plans, and memorials that reveal how, a century ago, Americans commemorated the Pilgrims and unabashedly celebrated America’s early founding in Plymouth. The story of the Pilgrim Tercentenary exposes the depth of changes in American culture since 1920, and poses a remarkable model for today, with the pending 400th anniversary of Plymouth, of the challenges of planning and carrying out a nationally significant historical commemoration.

Pilgrim Hall Museum is located at 75 Court Street (Route 3A), Plymouth, Massachusetts 02360. **Information:** Phone: 508-746-1620; Website: www.pilgrimhallmuseum.org. **Hours:** 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 7 days a week. The Museum is closed the month of January and Christmas Day, but open every other holiday including Thanksgiving. **Admission:** Adults \$10.00; seniors (62+) \$8:00; Children \$6.00; Families (2 adults with their children) \$25.00. Residents of Plymouth, Massachusetts are admitted free.