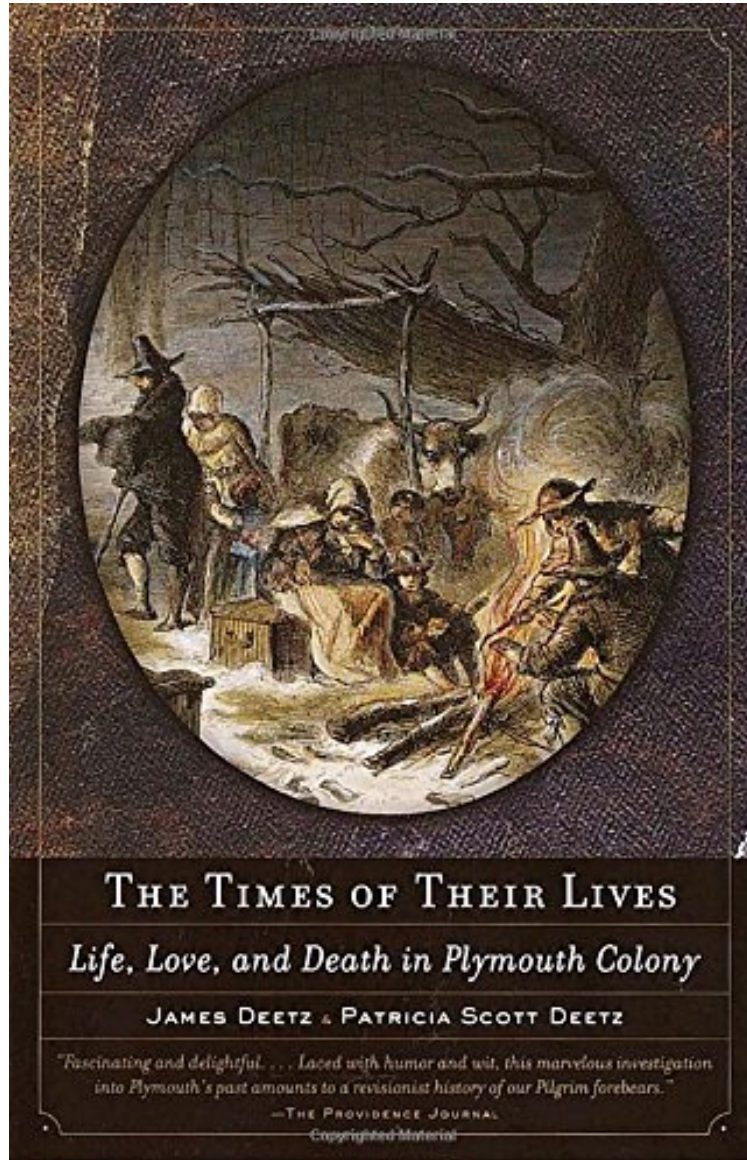


(Read free ebook) The Times of Their Lives: Life, Love, and Death in Plymouth Colony

The Times of Their Lives: Life, Love, and Death in Plymouth Colony

James Deetz, Patricia Scott Deetz
ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



[Download](#) [Read Online](#)

#217814 in Books 2001-10-16 2001-10-16 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.99 x 1.01 x 5.221, .82 #File Name: 0385721536402 pages | File size: 78.Mb

James Deetz, Patricia Scott Deetz : The Times of Their Lives: Life, Love, and Death in Plymouth Colony before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Times of Their Lives: Life, Love, and Death in Plymouth Colony:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. factual accounts of what the early settlers were like, rather than the

fictionalized stories we were told ...By WickedTwisterFinally, factual accounts of what the early settlers were like, rather than the fictionalized stories we were told as kids. Extremely interesting history.9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A Book CritiqueBy Rebecca BaileyThe Deetz's start out the book Times Of Their Lives where most of their readers education on the Pilgrims began, on Thanksgiving. A day that many people just take as it was taught to them in elementary school. Pilgrims and Indians sitting around the large food laden table in their pilgrim hats and fathers all having a wonderful time consuming turkey and pumpkin pie. James and Patricia Scott Deetz give us a different look at the population of the Plymouth Colony and the colonies that sprang up around it, in their book The Times of Their Lives. As Deetz and Deetz slowly begin to strip the reader of what they the authors consider, one myth after another, of the English men and woman that sailed out of Leiden, Holland. During this debunking, we the reader should be wary of having ourselves swayed the opposite direction completely from what we learned in elementary school. Deetz and Deetz dont give room for middle ground unless you grasp for it. The reader needs to remember that the authors show the research they want shown. We the reader are not privy to all of the documents. An author can skew history one way or another depending on what they choose not to share with the reader. The traditional Thanksgiving turkey has to duck out of the way. Grave robbers are exposed, as are drunks and witches. Using the personal letters, wills and other court records left behind by the colonists, the Deetz's help the colonists tell who they really were, as they see it. They have stripped them of the pilgrim costumes of elementary school plays. As the reader hits the half way point of the book Deetz and Deetz make a dramatic change in direction and take the reader into the world of archeology and all the excitement of learning about the colonists from what they left behind. The book ends with the reader experiencing a taste and history of the living museum of, Plimouth Plantation.Immediately the Deetz's take the turkey off the table as well as the pumpkin pie.1 The numbers of people around the table shrink on the English side, were as they expand on the Native side to 90 or so men.2 In this overwhelming revamp of Thanksgiving Day we learn to rethink our perspectives on the Mayflower passengers as a whole. Are they really who we have been taught they are? Now that the Thanksgiving as we once new it has been reduced to a myth Deetz and Deetz back up in history to England where our future Plymouth colonists hailed via Leiden, Holland. So why did these Planters sail across the pond? Was it religious freedom? Real estate?3 Advancing the gospel?4 Deetz and Deetz take us into a small slice of the planters lives before they left on the Mayflower. As throughout the book the Planters are looked upon by the authors with what seems like disfavor. Church separatists who couldnt get along with their fellow Englishmen. Who wanted to escape Holland after 12 years, to go were things might be better for them.5 Deetz and Deetz list four reasons for the separatists to go to America, interestingly they are calling into question the last reason.The fourth reason for removal to America is slightly suspect. Bradford states that it would permit an opportunity for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world. . . .(Deetz and Deetz 2001, 34)Deetz Deetz then look at whether or not the colonists actually followed through on this last reason. Almost as though they were accusing them of lying about their reasons for going. Though the authors never point out that it is very possible that William Bradford had no idea how difficult the job of colonizing would actually be. That their very survival had to take precedent over converting the savages. Deetz and Deetz do an admirable job of helping the reader see the Plymouth Colony; topographical location, appearance of the palisade and the houses. As well as the population of both people and livestock. Using information gleaned from much research that lacks the strong criticism that appears once again in chapters 3 4.In chapters three and four Deetz and Deetz wade into the world of legal documents. Wills, probate inventories and records of the court as well as through archaeology6. These documents were being used to help get a better look at the lives of the Plymouth Colonists 400 years ago. There be witches too many, chapter 3 starts with the aging and changing of the citizens of Plymouth. Children when they arrived now young adults, the colony is evolving. Amid that evolving old superstitions abound in the lives of the residents. From witches and wizards to hobgoblins and elves the colonists believed in them all7.Such a close-knit society was a fertile breeding ground for accusations of witchcraft. (Deetz Deetz 2001, 91)Did they all believe? Was this true of Plymouth?The base of Plymouth residents were in Holland for 12 years, they were separatists from the Church of England. Is there not a chance that things were different in Plymouth. There was only one court document showing an indictment for witchcraft in Plymouth8.Given studies of the remarkable resilience of popular beliefs in rural England and what occurred not only in the Bay Colony, but in Connecticut and New Haven in the seventeenth century, it is certain that such were to be found in Plymouth. (Deetz and Deetz 2001, 91)Were the beliefs of the original Plymouth Colonists different from those of the Bay Colony, Connecticut and New Haven? Did witch hunting really became a pass time that caused havoc upon innocent peoples lives in Plymouth? Is the evidence strong enough to lay serious accusations of superstition on Plymouth? In chapter four, the reader is learning about the colonies trouble with rape, incest, and buggery as well as other crimes and death. A very dim picture of the colonists are painted in these chapters, the reader begins to question anew, why these people needed to leave England and then Holland. Did they behave in this manner before? Mentioned in the Deetz's book is the case of Thomas Granger, servant to Love Brewster9. Upon first reading of the account and without further research I, the reader was asking myself the above questions. Then I read the account several more times. Granger was not of Plymouth, even though the Brewster family came in on the Mayflower they no longer lived in Plymouth. In fact they all lived in Duxbury10,

Grangers parents living in Scituate¹¹. So why is this trial being lumped in with Plymouth history? Even if the case occurred in the Plymouth courts the crime, if indeed there was a crime it took place elsewhere. Again and again we see in *The Time of Their Lives*, crimes listed as Plymouth Court documents, of crimes that didn't take place in Plymouth but the surrounding colonies. Deetz and Deetz don't give evidence that the Mayflower passengers held the same superstitions as the colonists that populated other communities, they give assumptions. Assumptions supported by the evidence they choose to provide. Unmentioned by Deetz and Deetz were the positive things that the residents of Plymouth did for one another. They persisted in muddying the waters with incidences that happened in other locations, that went through the courts in Plymouth. *The Times of Their Lives* reads as two books and will be treated accordingly in this critic. For the first four chapters, as you have seen Deetz and Deetz focus on the society of the Plymouth Colony. The remaining chapters focus on the physical structures and belongings of the Plymouth Colony and its residents. Then ending with a chapter of the history of the Plimouth Plantation village represented in the 21st century. As a historical archaeologist and cultural historian James Deetz and Patricia Scott Deetz receptively, seem very at home in the second half of their book. I was continually amazed by what can be discovered about people and their lives through their homes and possessions. Through the use of probate inventories Deetz and Deetz can construct a house!¹² The readers learn that much of the home construction was of a two room variety, with the up stairs, if there was one, mirroring the first floor. The colonists were clever folks, any addition on their homes would be added to the chimney side in order to capture that heat.² The scant information from the time of the homes and only five structures that survived at all shows what a puzzle this is for archeologists. To extrapolate construction techniques to those used in raising literally hundreds of houses from such a small sample is a risky proposition at best. (Deetz Deetz 2001, 185) No matter the types of dwelling built any significant time on the housing front would have upset their funders as it would take time away from pursuits that could pay them back.¹³ It seems not a single theory put out isn't questioned and put aside when it comes to house construction. Leaving this quandary behind the authors move on to the house contents as found in probate inventories. Through these room by room inventories the type of house in Plymouth begins to take shape.¹⁴ These probate inventories often went room by room, right down to the color of clothes and whether or not they were lined. These contents tell the story of financial footing, if they were literate or perhaps show that they were brewing beer. Of course the accounts don't say if a spoon is pewter or brass, earthenware could be locally made or from England. The simple fact that so much can be gleaned from what is written is interesting. Exciting is what can be determined from what is found hidden in the ground! The first excavations done in Plymouth were in 1863 and 1864 by James Hall a decedent of Miles Standish. No further excavations happened until the 1920s. Pipe stems are a recurring find throughout these digs and others in Colonial New England, as both men and woman smoked.¹⁶ After much research J.C. Harrington was able to determine that the smaller bore holes indicated newer pipes¹⁷, thus allowing archeologists to use pipe stem fragments to help in dating finds. In this section of the book this reader got a special surprise. In 1972 one of the homes built¹⁸ and possibly lived¹⁹ in by my 10 great grandfather, Isaac Allerton, was located and a dig began. Isaac Allerton was a Mayflower passenger in his family group was his daughter Mary Allerton of whose line I descend. Isaac Allerton was a shrewd if not down right scoundrel of a business man. The Allerton site as it became known is in Kingston, Massachusetts. Deetz and Deetz go into great detail on how a dig is performed. The way a dig is done help keep artifacts from being harmed and allows reproach on size of dwellings. The Allerton site turned out to be first earth fast or post-in-ground structure to be discovered archaeologically in New England, intersected by the cellar of a post-1650 house. (Deetz Deetz, 2001) In yet another interesting change in direction Deetz and Deetz take the reader to the Plimouth Plantation in 1997 the changes that happened to that living history museum. Every sense is engaged. The earthy tones of the little village, set off against the deep blue of the ocean, bewitch the eye. Each fence post we touch, or fabric of a bed curtain we feel deepens our awareness of the year 1627 [telling] us that we have left the twentieth century. (James W. Baker, *Plimouth Plantation: Fifty Years of Living History*, 1997) The Hornblower family made a \$20,000 gift to the Pilgrim Society in 1945²⁰ which allowed Plimouth Plantation to become a reality. The village slowly took shape and changed paths a couple of times. A story that the authors tell very well, giving information on why and how each change was made. As the reader I am a little stumped by the inclusion of the Plimouth Plantation museum in *The Times of Their Lives*, but it was interesting nonetheless. Engaging as *The Times of Their Lives* was to read I want to ask the authors what did the Plymouth Colony do to you? Deetz and Deetz while debunking the myths of Plymouth Colonies history come across as if they have an axe to grind. Is the issue with the colonists themselves? Annoyance that history hasn't been written in a balanced way? *The Times of Their Lives* includes the following statement: So it was that Plymouth was chosen to represent the beginnings of the infant nation, but the nineteenth-century construction of the Pilgrims way of life reflects more of the values of the 1800s than the reality that it was meant to represent. The word construction is of particular importance. Although we frequently hear references to reconstructing the past, this is an impossibility simply because we do not have full access to all of the complexities of life in earlier times. What we do is construct the past, and in so doing, decide what is important and what is not. Such construction invariably reflect, to some extent, the values and biases of the time in which they were written. (Deetz and Deetz 2001, 11) I don't think the Deetz's go far enough in the above quote, they are not warning the reader to consider the writers own values and biases. The Deetz's are not warning you about their book

and all others written about history. Because it is simply impossible to write about history accurately. So did James Deetz and his wife Patricia Scott Deetz do what they set out to do, debunk the myths as we learned them throughout school, of the Plymouth Colony? I think they did that quite handily, in fact I would say that they went to far. There doesnt seem to be a balance to their writing. I am left with questions about my ancestors and all the other Mayflowers passengers and residents of Plymouth Colony. Were they how Deetz and Deetz make them out to be? I wonder?1. James Deetz Patricia Scott Deetz, *The Times of Their Lives* (New York.: Anchor Books, 2001), 62. Ibid, 43. Ibid, 344. Ibid, 353. Ibid, 344. Ibid, 355. Ibid, 356. Ibid, 817. Ibid, 888. Ibid, 92 9. Ibid, 13510. Ibid, 13511. Ibid, 13612. Ibid, 17213. Ibid, 17314. Ibid, 18215. Ibid, 19016. Ibid, 21717. Ibid, 21618. Ibid, 22219. Ibid, 23020. Ibid, 2743 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A unique book on the Plymouth Colony written from an archaeologist point of viewBy EconGuyThe Time of Their Lives by James Deetz and Patricia Scott Deetz is about the Pilgrims' culture in Plymouth Colony. The book explores Plymouth Colony through archaeological evidence. The thesis of the book is "Plymouth Colony has an organizing story that is worth recounting in all its colorful detail, enlivened and expanded by contemporary archaeology, cultural research and living history" (xv). This book gives an improved description of who the Pilgrims were.This book clears up the false interpretations of the Pilgrims as being holy and enlightened by examining their behavior. The book tells about the myths of Thanksgiving in the first chapter. The myths are portrayed as inaccurate when looking at the affairs of the Pilgrims with the Indians. The Pilgrims' laws were based off of English law with adjustment to the new world when necessary. There was use of indentured servants. The book also goes into detail about the different laws and crimes committed. Some sexual crimes that have been documented are bestiality, sodomy, adultery, incest, and fornication. Domestic violence also occurred in Plymouth times. The court was also unlikely to grant divorces because of its strong belief on marriage. The book also explains the different housing in Plymouth Colony. The book goes into detail about the importance of archaeologist findings that explain Plymouth Colony.The Time of Their Lives is a well-written book. The Deetz use a lot of primary sources to provide first hand evidence to bring to life what it may have been like to live in Plymouth Colony. Court documents are used to demonstrate the types of crimes that were committed in Plymouth Colony and the punishments that were used. There are a lot of court documents that dealt with sex crimes like adultery and bestiality. Some other sources the Deetz also use are artifacts, folklore, ethnic studies, demographics, ethnography, and letters. The Deetz use secondary sources to add expertise to their research. For example, "Historian David Hackett Fischer emphasizes the number of saltbox houses in the eastern counties of England in the late sixteenth centuries, and suggests that New Englanders simply built houses with which they were familiar" (190). The authors show how primary sources are useful to give a clear picture of Plymouth Colony.The Deetz's approaches in making their ideas are clear and effective. Occasionally they will propose a question and then answer it at the end of the paragraph. For example, they start a paragraph off asking "What might it really have been like to live in Plymouth close to four hundred years ago," and then they conclude with "It is not possible to know what life was really like but the records that do enable us to obtain a glimpse of what did and could happen" (84). The proposed question causes the reader to think. The book also has a lot of different topics in the chapters, which prevents the book from being repetitive. The Deetz's approaches are clear and effective because they keep the book interesting from start to finish.This book is also effective on explaining how primary sources are used. The authors demonstrate that primary sources may lack certain information by saying, "Population figures are difficult to obtain with accuracy, but by 1643 there were probably 1,500 and 2,000 people living in the colony" (132). The Deetz also explain what evidence was used to come up with their conclusion. For example, "The four most useful and significant bodies of material that provide us with access to the material world of Plymouth are few early descriptions available, standing houses, probate inventories, and those findings obtained through excavating the homesteads of the early settlers of Plymouth" (172). The Deetz also explain the importance of archaeology as a primary source when they say, "Wherever archaeologists uncover the material evidence of the past, connections are made with the people who ate pottages using the spoons that have been excavated" (269). This book is good at explaining the importance and reliability of primary sources.The Time of Their Lives is different then other books of its genre because it is from an archeologist perspective instead of an historian perspective. The archeologist perspective differs from the historian perspective by focusing on culture instead of chronological order of historical events. For example, *The First Frontier* by R.V. Coleman organizes the chapters into chronological order instead of culture characteristics. Coleman's book also focuses on the importance of historical events instead of the culture in daily life. The Time of Their Lives is different from other books in its genre because it is about culture instead of historical events.The Time of Their Lives is also different than books in its genre because how it portrays myths and certain historical figures. The book goes into detail about the myths of the first thanksgiving, forefathers, the rock, and the Mayflower compact. The myths do not resemble who the Pilgrims really were because their research explains otherwise. The Deetz portray certain historical figures differently than other books of the genre. For example, the Deetz say about Squanto, "Being able to speak both languages, he played off one side against the other on a number of occasions" (64). *The First Frontier* by R.V. Coleman only told about the positive aspects of Squanto instead of the negative aspects. The Time of Their Lives is different from other books in the American colonial genre because its different perspective on the myths and historical figures that made Plymouth Colony legendary.James Deetz's

background and knowledge of the subject matter makes him the more reliable of the two authors. James Deetz received his Ph.D. from Harvard, which has the reputation of being the best college of the United States. He was a Professor at University of Harrison where he taught Historical Archaeology. His experience of leading research on Plymouth has given him an understanding of the subject matter that another writer would not have because he works directly with a variety of primary resources. He has also written other books about archaeology in the colonial era. Patricia Scott Deetz credentials come from working with her husband in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Virginia. She also has a master's degree in history with an emphasis in cultural history from Rhodes University in South Africa. Patricia Scott Deetz has written a few scholarly articles. The Deetz's first hand experience of spending years researching in Plymouth with their academic background has made them a reliable source. Two authors provide more expertise than one author. The Deetz's have the credentials for writing a reliable book about Plymouth Colony. This book is one that should be read because it provides a different perspective than other books in the American colonial genre. The emphasis on culture is important because it provides a better understanding of Plymouth Colony. The book also evaluates evidence more than other books in the genre, which would be helpful for students to understand what the reliable sources are. Overall this book is a good book that students should read to have a better understanding of Plymouth Colony.

The utterly absorbing real story of the lives of the Pilgrims, whose desires and foibles may be more recognizable to us than they first appear. Americans have been schooled to believe that their forefathers, the Pilgrims, were somber, dark-clad, pure-of-heart figures who conceived their country on the foundation of piety, hard work, and the desire to live simply and honestly. But the truth is far from the portrait painted by decades of historians. They wore brightly colored clothing, often drank heavily, believed in witches, had premarital sex and adulterous affairs, and committed petty and serious crimes against their neighbors in surprisingly high numbers. Beginning by debunking the numerous myths that surround the landing of the Mayflower and the first Thanksgiving, James Deetz and Patricia Scott Deetz lead us through court transcripts, wills, probate listings, and rare firsthand accounts, as well as archaeological finds, to reveal the true story of life in colonial America.

From School Library Journal Adult/High School-The authors demystify both the political realities and the daily social lives of the New England colonists popularly identified as "Pilgrims." Both casual readers and researchers are offered an engaging and edifying introduction to the actual ramifications of life in the early 17th-century colony. The Deetzes look at how order was maintained, relations with the native people, the roles and maintenance of law and punishment, gender relations, violence, death, and the habits of the hearth and home. While knocking down the mythologies that have taken root across the generations, the narrative supplies images that are just as lively and compelling. Sources are retained as notes at the back so that readers need not follow footnotes, yet have documentation close at hand. Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Rejecting both the sacred myth of the Pilgrim fathers and the revisionist view of the rigidly repressed Puritans, the Deetzes present a radically different picture of the settlers who populated Plymouth Colony. To humanize their subjects within their historical context, the authors scrutinized a variety of primary sources, including court records, probate inventories, wills, archaeological artifacts, and first-person chronicles of life in the early settlement. Although vivid descriptions of folk customs, houses, and furnishings are provided, the detailed accounts of superstitions, sexual indiscretions, and criminal proceedings offer an especially fresh perspective on daily life in seventeenth-century America. Neither saints nor villains, the Plymouth colonists were very much a product of their unique social, political, and cultural environment. Margaret Flanagan Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "[A] fascinating and delightful?revisionist history of our Pilgrim forebears."--The Providence Journal "The Deetzes have knocked the dust off these Thanksgiving pageant characters and given them new life."--The San Diego Union-Tribune "A hard-headed description...based on the evidence, of life in the Plymouth Colony."--The New York Times