

Name _____



Compact Beginnings

In 1620, a group of people called the Pilgrims sailed from England on a ship called the Mayflower. They were looking for religious freedom and wanted to start a new life in America. After a long and difficult journey, they landed in what is now Massachusetts. However, they realized they were outside the land owned by England, so their charter did not apply. This meant they needed to

create their own government to keep order in their new colony.

The Mayflower Compact: A New Idea

Before stepping off the ship, 41 men signed an agreement called the Mayflower Compact. It was a promise that they would make fair laws and work together for the good of the colony. This was an important step toward self-governance because it showed that people could create their own rules instead of relying on a king.

Self-Government in the Colonies

The Mayflower Compact helped create a democratic system where the settlers had a say in how things were run. Instead of just following orders from a king, they would elect their own leaders and make decisions as a group. This idea influenced other colonies to form their own governments, leading to town meetings and early laws.

A Lasting Influence

The idea that people should govern themselves became an important part of American democracy. Many years later, when the United States was formed, the ideas from the Mayflower Compact helped shape the U.S. Constitution. The Pilgrims' promise to work together and follow fair laws is similar to how people in the United States vote and elect leaders today.

The Mayflower Compact was a simple document, but it played a big role in shaping self-government in America. It showed that people could govern themselves and work together to create a fair and orderly society.

