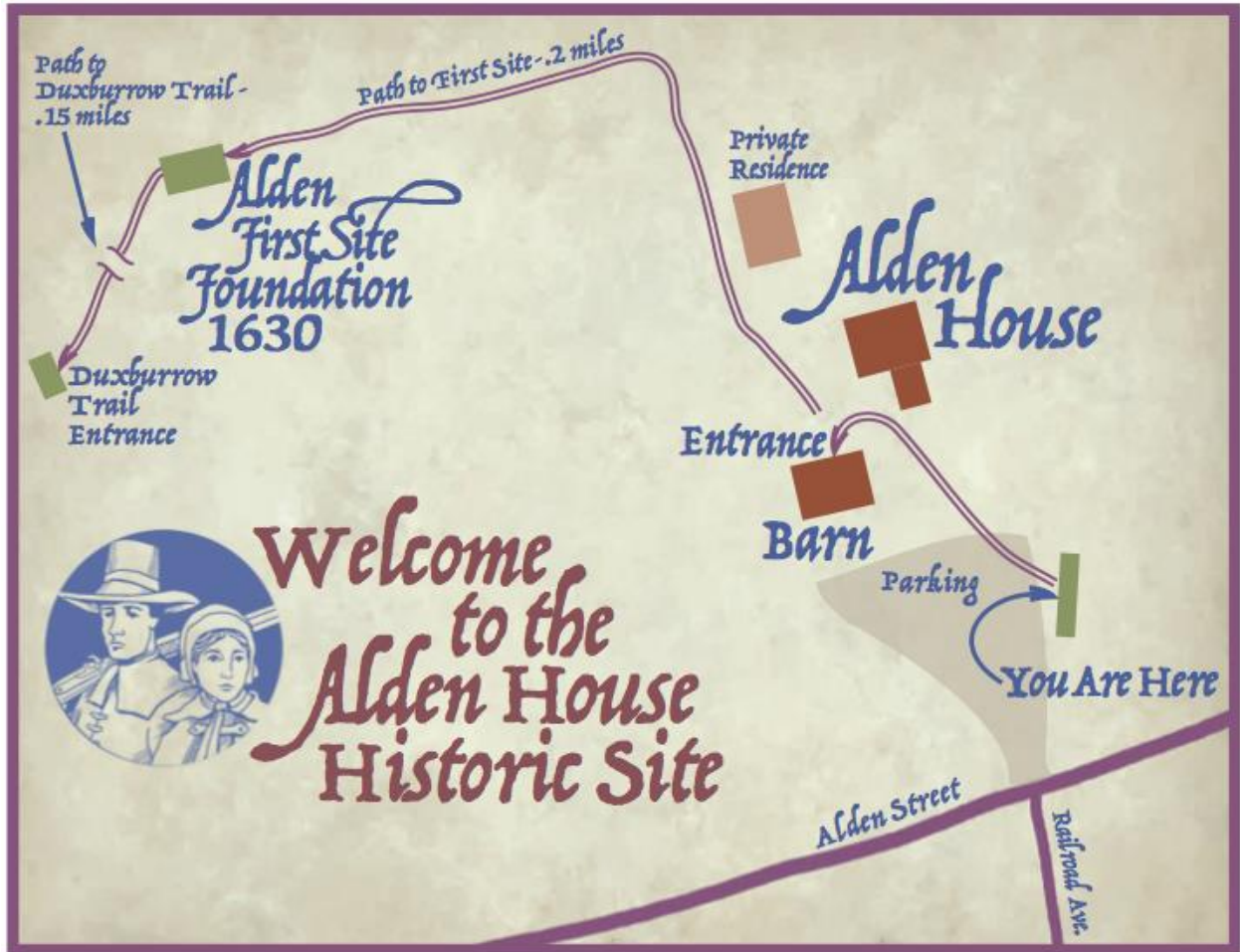


Exploring Duxbury's Pilgrim Story: Alden House Historic Site



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Exploring Duxbury's Pilgrim Story

Created by Duxbury students Emma Kane and Sam Elliott for the Alden House Historic Site

Located at Alden House Historic Site, 105 Alden Street, Duxbury

Time to complete 45 minutes

Easy walk

Parking at Alden House Historic Site

In 1627, several Pilgrims who had journeyed to Plymouth on the *Mayflower* seven years earlier in 1620 began moving out of the original settlement to lands they were granted along the shore a few miles north of Plymouth. Here they created farms for their growing number of cows, built homes and raised their children. The land had earlier been inhabited by Native Americans for thousands of years who used it as a seasonal home for fishing and farming. The settlers named the new town "Duxbury" and many of the streets and other landmarks in town that you can visit are named for these families. The quest will take you back in time to explore this story through the footprint of two of the most famous of these early settlers -John and Priscilla Mullins Alden. As you look carefully at the landscape, you will discover clues that people have lived here for centuries.

After you park in the main lot, walk up the path to the National Historic Landmark plaque. The award recognizes Alden House for its importance to the national history and culture of America in three ways: (1) It is believed to be the oldest homestead in the United States still owned by its original family; (2) The foundation of the family's earlier 17th-century homesite, which has significant archaeological importance, sits nearby; and (3) John and Priscilla became household names through the publication of the best-selling romantic poem in the mid-19th century, "The Courtship of Miles Standish," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The date of the award is marked on the plaque. The first letter of the last number of that year spelled out is Clue# 2, 8, 13, & 14.

Walk to the side of the house that has seven windows. This is the front of house. In an effort to keep houses warm in winter and to let in more light, it was a custom in New England to face the front of the house this direction. The first letter of this direction is Clue #11.

Continue walking past the house and the cottage.

A sign marks the trail ahead. The first word on the sign is the surname of the family who lived here. The second letter of this surname is Clue #9 & 10.

Look to your right for a large evergreen tree with a trunk that measures several feet around and is estimated to be about 170 years old. This type of tree was used by Native Americans to build mishoons, which are large boats that were burned and carved out of a single tree trunk. The first letter of this tree is Clue #15.

Follow the signs to an open field. Walk to the pine trees on the far side of the field. There you will find a roped off area. In that area is the foundation of an earlier house where *Mayflower* passengers John and Priscilla and their children lived, worked, and entertained their friends. They had 10 kids! The foundation was discovered and excavated by archaeologist Roland W. Robbins in 1960. The dig also unearthed a large number of Pilgrim and Native American artifacts, some of which are on display in the Alden House. To learn more about this history go to www.alden.org.

The square space outlined in the foundation was called the root cellar and was where the family stored vegetables, fruits, cheeses and another milk products that were created by churning cream. The first letter of this product is Clue #1.

With the Alden First Site on your right, walk through the fence ahead and look for the sign marking the beginning of the path. The last letter of the name of this path is Clue #7 and Clue #12.

This path was the first official Colonial highway in Duxbury. It was laid out in the 1630s incorporating an older path used by Native Americans. The path connected the farms of the early settlers to the meetinghouse where they worshipped and conducted town business. Today this is the site of the Myles Standish cemetery.

This area has been inhabited for thousands of years because of its access to fishing and its abundance of this type of fish that travels upriver seasonally. The first letter of this fish is Clue #3. *(If you are stumped on this question there will be a second clue for this letter later in the quest.)*

Native Americans used hemp fibers to make a device to catch large schools of fish traveling upriver. The first letter of this three-letter device is Clue #5. Plummets were attached to this device to help it sink in the water. You can see a Native fishing plummet on display in the archaeology exhibit at Alden House.

Now you can either head back or take a short stroll along the rest of the path which loops around. Once you are back at the head of the trail retrace your steps to the Alden First Site. Next to the pine trees noted earlier, you should spot a granite marker with a bronze plaque. On the plaque is the name of the famous *Mayflower* cooper for whom the site is named. The third letter of his first name and the third letter of his last name are Clue #3 and Clue #6 respectively.

Head back towards the Alden House. The house is thought to have been built by the children and grandchildren of John and Priscilla. The Alden family lived here until the 1920s. The house was heated by multiple fires lit in this brick structure that funnels smoke out of the house. The third letter of this structure is Clue #4.

With the clue phrase revealed, head around the left side of the house and you will find the object referenced ahead and the location of the clue box.

We hope you enjoyed this quest. For more information about the Alden family and Alden House, please visit www.alden.org.