

Where does the Pilgrim story begin?

In England, many years ago, everyone had to obey the rules of the King's church. There were some Englishmen who wanted to have their own separate church. They were called *separatists*. They had secret church meetings.

The King found out about the secret meetings and he put some of the men in prison.

Now the separatists were afraid to stay in England. They went to Holland in 1608. There they could worship God as they pleased. They lived in Holland for twelve years.

Life in Holland was not easy. The men had to work very hard. They made very little money.

And they were worried. They did not want their children to forget how to speak English. They did not



want their children to become soldiers and sailors for Holland.

What could they do? Perhaps they could go to the New World, some of them thought. These are the people we call Pilgrims today.

The Pilgrims needed a ship to take them to the New World. They bought a ship—the *Speedwell*—in Holland. But the *Speedwell* was small and old. They would need a second ship too—a bigger and better ship. But where would they get such a ship? They didn't have any more money.

At last they made an agreement with some businessmen in England. The businessmen got them a ship—the *Mayflower*—and bought some food and supplies.

In return, the Pilgrims had to agree to work for the businessmen for seven years. The Pilgrims promised

to send furs and lumber from the New World. Then, after seven years, they could begin to work for themselves.

The Pilgrims thought the agreement was not fair, but that was the only way they could get to the New World.

They sailed the *Speedwell* from Holland to England where the *Mayflower* was waiting for them.

