

Every Day Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony by George Francis Dow A picture of some phases of life in the early days of the Massachusetts Bay Colony is presented in the following pages; lightly sketched, as much of the detail has become dim or has disappeared with the passage of years, it never having been placed on record even among the traditions. For why keep an exact record of doings with which every one is familiar? It follows that many of the every day happenings, the manners and customs of daily life—much of the intimate detail of existence in the Colony, in the seventeenth century, have been lost forever. Few realize how modern are the furnishings and comforts of our present-day houses and how different was the home life of our ancestors. Chairs were unknown in ordinary English households until a generation or so before the sailing of the Mayflower. Hats were worn at meals and the use of table forks did not become general until the last of the 1600s. Food was placed in the mouth with the knife or the fingers. Washing the hands and face was not considered essential on rising from bed in the morning and few of the laboring classes in any country in Europe washed their faces every day. This is a collection of source materials, somewhat digested, rather than a comprehensive, well-balanced narrative of daily life in the Colony—an impossible task at this late day. Moreover, the exact limitations of the Colonial Period have not been observed too closely as it has seemed desirable to include some material from newspapers and other later sources.

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a man's world. Women did not participate in town meetings and were excluded from decision making in the church. Puritan.

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