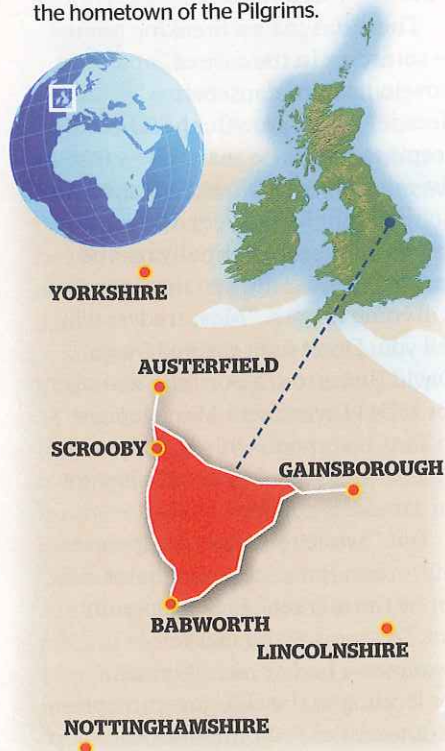




Most people know actor Kirk Cameron from the hit 1980s-era TV show *Growing Pains* and for his movie roles in *Left Behind* and *Fireproof*. In a dramatic career change, he has become fascinated with the heroic men and women who founded our nation. In his new documentary, *Monumental: In Search of America's National Treasure* (out on DVD July 4), Cameron travels America and the world to trace the origins of our country. The places he visits are off-the-beaten-path historical sites that appeal to travelers with a patriotic interest. Here, in the first of a series exclusively for Newsmax, the star relates to writer Troy Anderson his trip to Babworth, England, the hometown of the Pilgrims.



# Kirk Cameron's

The TV star travels to England to tour the tiny town that spawned a band of outcasts we now call the Pilgrims. ::

BY KIRK CAMERON

**A**S A FATHER OF SIX, I'M very concerned where our nation will be in 10 or 20 years. But I haven't heard a clear voice telling us how we can get back to greatness.

Then, about two years ago, it occurred to me: Maybe it's as simple as we've forgotten what made this nation so successful in the first place. Maybe if we could go back and talk to the men and women who built this country they could tell us what we're doing wrong and how to fix it.

So, I bought an airplane ticket to England to retrace the escape route of the Pilgrims. I wanted to find out who they were and why they did what they did. What I learned blew my mind. My first stop was a sleepy little village called Babworth, England, where I met with local historian and Pilgrim expert, Sue Allan.

Allan is a member of The Pilgrim Fathers UK Origins Association and gives "Mayflower Pilgrim Tours" of the villages, towns and historic buildings in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, and Nottinghamshire where the Pilgrims once lived. (Her website is [mayflowermaid.com](http://mayflowermaid.com).)

Allan took me to some of these historical sites, teaching me about the fascinating histories of Scrooby Manor, Scrooby Church, the Pilgrim



**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE** Allan and Cameron discuss the importance of the Pilgrims' mission to start a new life.

father memorial near Fishtoft, and the magnificent Gainsborough Old Hall. For anybody who loves history and loves America, I recommend her fascinating tours. If you are visiting London, Babworth makes for an excellent day trip. It is a couple hours' drive to the north.

Allan told me that the foundation for the most prosperous nation on earth was laid during secret meetings at Scrooby Manor, a 39-room palace surrounded by a moat along the Great North Road in the Nottinghamshire countryside. Although the palace is gone, vestiges of the deep moat are still visible today.

Fearing persecution for their radical religious beliefs, William Brewster, William Bradford, and John Robinson — the free-thinkers of their time — met in the early 1600s at this remote estate owned by the Archbishop of York. Both Robinson



ALLAN

# Search for America's Roots



**PILGRIMS' PRIDE** On the grounds of the original 39-room estate, the Scrooby Manor House functions as a private residence.

The medieval church of Scrooby, St. Wilfrid, still stands today, and you can visit the place where Brewster and other Pilgrims worshipped before their rebellion.

With their children as lookouts, these religious dissidents gathered secretly, right under the nose of the second most powerful archbishop in the church, holding illegal services and studying the Geneva Bible — the first mass-produced English scriptures. What they learned shocked them. Far from the church Jesus Christ had intended, the Anglican Church, with its bishops and palatial manors, had grown corrupt and rich, ignoring its parishioners as they suffered and starved.

King James I had tripled the debt, nearly bankrupting the country. Invoking the “divine right of kings,” he vowed to put an end to church reform movements and began imprisoning the Separatists. He enforced an earlier law, making it illegal for the Pilgrims to hold their own services. Furthermore, the

Geneva Bible was not permitted to be read in English churches.

Amid the persecution of their members, the Pilgrim leaders decided they had no choice but to sever ties with the Church of England and leave their native land. Some were hauled into court for disobeying English laws that mandated religious conformity. Others were imprisoned. This was a time when you could be hanged, burned at the stake, beheaded, or drawn and quartered for disagreeing with the king or queen. Fearing for their lives, the Pilgrims decided they would try to escape to Holland.

In 1608, the Pilgrims managed to make it to Holland where they hoped to find “freedom of religion for all.”

Before I embarked on this journey, I had thought of the Pilgrims as people in funny black and white suits with big hats, belt buckles on their shoes and turkey guns. But what I learned tracing the path of

the Pilgrims wasn't the story I was told in school. These weren't quiet, little religious fuddy-duddies who scurried out of England with their tails between their legs.

If anyone knew what it was like to live in difficult times, it was them. But what was their attitude? It wasn't put your head down and get ready for the end. It was, “We're getting off the defense and getting on the offense because

we see victory in our future.”

They had a 500-year plan and went on to build the most prosperous, generous, and blessed nation on the face of the earth. □



**PILGRIM FATHERS MEMORIAL** Located in Lincolnshire, England.

and Brewster were educated at Cambridge, a hotbed of dissenting theology at the time.

Brewster had once served under the assistant to one of Queen Elizabeth's secretaries of state, but was exiled after his mentor became a scapegoat in the controversy surrounding the queen's decision to behead her cousin, Mary, queen of the Scots. Following this tumultuous era in the English Reformation, Brewster became the postmaster at Scrooby where he and other Separatists planned their split from the Church of England.

These men, known today as our Pilgrim forefathers, were viewed as a threat to the church and its supreme ruler, King James I.

They opposed having a king as head of both church and state and advocated a closer alignment of church doctrines with New Testament principles, seeking a more “pure” Christian church.