

CALL FOR PAPERS

INTERNATIONAL LEIDEN MAYFLOWER400 CONFERENCE



A. Willaerts, *The Pilgrims' Departure from Delfshaven* (1620)
Rose-Marie and Eijk de Mol van Otterloo Collection

Four Nations Commemoration, 1620-2020: The Pilgrims and the Politics of Memory Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands, 26-28 August 2020

2020 marks **the 400th anniversary** of the sailing of the *Mayflower*. Of the one hundred English “Pilgrims” undertaking the 1620 voyage, fifty hailed from Leiden, the Netherlands, where they had lived as religious refugees since 1609. Among them was William Bradford, the later governor and chronicler of Plymouth Colony in New England. The *Mayflower* voyage and the foundation of Plymouth Colony have become linked with origin narratives of the United States, which ignore not only the Pilgrims’ almost twelve-year sojourn in Leiden and the larger Atlantic networks in which they were operating, but also the continuing impact of colonialism on indigenous societies and cultures. While a century ago, as [a recent exhibition](#) at Pilgrim Hall Museum has shown, the tercentenary of the founding of Plymouth in 1920 was, “unabashedly, a celebration of America’s founding,” such a blithely nationalist narrative no longer is acceptable in an age in which we have become increasingly aware of the need to find more inclusive ways to memorialize “difficult” histories in all their historical, ideological, and ethical complexities.

In the city of Leiden where their pastor John Robinson led the Separatist congregation, and William Brewster operated a secret dissenting press, **this conference** will challenge the Anglo-American approach which has so often dominated the popular narrative of the early colonization of North America, and prioritize a **“four-nations” approach** to include Dutch and Native American perspectives. Taking the Mayflower anniversary as starting point and central concern, this interdisciplinary conference seeks to interrogate the myths, power-bases, mobility, and knowledge production of colonial pasts through three distinct but related strands:

- **Contesting memories and commemorations**
- **Colonialism, migration, and Indigenous impact and resistance**
- **The production of knowledge, print culture, and national myths**

The organizers are planning to edit a **series of publications** according to these themes and participants will be invited to submit their work for consideration following the conference.

Confirmed keynote speaker: [Francis J. Bremer](#), Professor Emeritus of History at Millersville University, and internationally renowned Puritanism scholar and coordinator of the website [New England Beginnings](#).

We welcome **paper and panel proposals** from scholars in a wide range of disciplines – including history, literary and cultural studies, art history, religious studies, indigenous studies, linguistics, law, anthropology, and archaeology. **Topics** may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Pilgrims and the construction and politics of public memory
- The politics of historical commemorations
- Indigenous responses to ‘founding’ narratives
- The reclamation and reconstruction of indigenous languages
- Puritan dissenters and missionaries in North America
- Colonialism and indigenous resistance
- U.S. Indian policies, nation building and national identity constructions
- Memory culture and national myth production
- Heritage and tourism
- Pilgrim heritage sites; Pilgrim descendant organizations and communities
- Dutch commemorations of the Pilgrims
- Dutch cities as ‘cities of refugees’ and the history of religious tolerance in the Dutch Republic
- Leiden in the Atlantic world
- Religious mobility in the 16th and 17th centuries
- Children’s literature and the colonial Atlantic world
- The representation of (New England) Native Americans and/or the Pilgrims and Puritanism in American literature and art
- Pilgrims and the construction of political culture: theocracy, democracy and tolerance
- William Bradford’s *Of Plymouth plantation*, through the ages
- Print, press and propaganda, material exchange and intellectual heritage.

Proposals for individual papers or panels (normally comprising three papers of 15-20 minutes) should be submitted by **November 15, 2019**. Paper abstracts should be c. 300 words and accompanied by a short bio (for panels, include abstracts and speakers’ bios). Abstracts can be sent to Johanna C. Kardux, j.c.kardux@hum.leidenuniv.nl (please put in the subject heading “Mayflower400”). Submitters will receive notification of acceptance by January 1, 2020.

For more info [Leiden Mayflower400 conference website](#).

Organizing committee

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[Dr. Kathryn Gray](#), Early American Literature, University of Plymouth, UK

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