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**2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower voyage, one of the most influential journeys in global history and a defining moment in the shared history of England, America and the Netherlands. Before the Pilgrims founded Plymouth Colony in 1620, they spent twelve years living, working and praying in Leiden, free from religious persecution by the English crown.**

### **The Leiden Story**

Their arrival in Leiden in 1609 is no coincidence as it was a city that advocated itself with tolerance and freedom: Leiden welcomed French Huguenots, Walloons and Flemings fleeing from persecution. The Pilgrims' houses stood in the shadow of Leiden's St. Pieterskerk, close to the newly founded university where at that time, scientists like Snellius, Scaliger, Gomarus and Arminius worked. In those years, Clusius grew the first tulips in Leiden's Hortus botanical garden and a young Rembrandt attended the Latin school, all at a stone's throw from each other. The Pilgrims lived in Leiden at the very heart of this dynamic period and even contributed in to the start of Holland's Golden Age: John Robinson took part in the Arminian debates and William Brewster taught English to Dutch Leiden University students.

### **Influence on the new world**

From the departure of the Pilgrims in 1620, the story continues, linking our city to other places in the world, from Delfshaven, Southampton and Plymouth to Cape Cod. It is estimated that today, some 25 million Americans are descendants of the Pilgrims and no fewer than nine US presidents had ancestors who travelled across on the Mayflower, including Barack Obama. Leiden has tangible American heritage within its centre, like the Pieterskerk (where John Robinson is buried) and the Pilgrim Archives. The free-thinking spirit of Leiden has influenced the United States directly. Civil marriage for example, lies at the very basis of the separation between church and state. The Pilgrims had learned about this legal 'innovation' in Leiden and took it with them across the Atlantic. The first street in the United States, called First Street, was renamed Leyden Street in honour of the city that welcomed them and gave them freedom.

### **Themes behind the commemoration**

But it's more than a remarkable chapter in history. It's a story about themes that are relevant today: freedom of religion, tolerance and migration. The story of the Mayflower is also the story of 102 people in search of liberty and prosperity who risked their lives crossing the ocean in the hold of a small cargo ship. Strikingly, this is reminiscent of the images we see on our TV screens daily. Today too, we struggle with the consequences of immigration. It is important to note in this context that the migration of the Pilgrims also had negative consequences for the native inhabitants of America. In this sense, the story mirrors the complex issues of tolerance and intolerance.





## International opportunities

Although this story is highlighted in the US every year during thanksgiving, 2020 will see a first ever 'four nation commemoration' by the US, Wampanoagh Nation, Britain and the Netherlands with an extensive international program in the fields of arts and culture, heritage, education, sports, science and tourism: to make our shared heritage visible to a wider audience, but also to evoke and investigate the ever relevant themes of migration, tolerance and oppression in order to inspire current and future generations with this story. For the Netherlands, and Leiden in particular, this commemoration offers a number of unique economic and social opportunities, not only in but also after 2020.



## 1. Sustainable development of heritage tourism from the US and UK

Leiden will invest in the structural development of the infrastructure around our 'Dutch-American' heritage: walking routes and apps, digitalizing heritage archives for future applications (AR / VR), unlocking the Pilgrim Archives and making them accessible through a 'Meet Your Pilgrim Relative Booth' (personalized tour through the Archives), creating a visitors info centre at the Pieterskerk in 2020, and making the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum more sustainable for the long term.

We are currently developing touristic products and packages with multiple destinations in the Netherlands and will bring them to market with our partners in the UK and US. From 2017 on Leiden will be present at international trade fairs with VisitBritain and develop custom genealogy & heritage travels for specialized institutions and tour operators (for example with the New England Historical & Genealogical Society). The Holland-America Line is exploring the possibilities of offering a themed cruise.



## 2. Promoting Leiden as a city of freedom and tolerance

We are shaping the program around the themes of migration and tolerance to make our shared heritage relevant to a wider audience in this day and age. Our education program is initially aimed at serving Leiden schools, but there is interest from the UK as well as the US in either translated or collaborative education programs. In addition to any educational programs, we use a targeted media & PR strategy to convey the message that the Pilgrim's stay in the Netherlands (and the experience of freedom that accompanied it) demonstrably influenced the Mayflower Compact (think of civil marriage) and New England culture and thus also the origin of the US.





Academy Building  
Leiden University

### 3. Developing a business acquisition strategy

In the bids for conventions and companies (or events) it is desirable to have – apart from good infrastructure such as hotel rooms and convention spaces – a good ‘selling point’ that makes the location unique in comparison to others. That why we use our American-Dutch heritage and shared history explicitly when developing our business propositions. Through partners such as MPI US, the US Embassy in The Hague and individual contacts, we will cultivate the first relationships with American businesses starting from 2018.

### 4. Developing relationships between Dutch, English and American institutions

*Some examples below, whole program can be found online.*

#### Heritage & culture

**‘Intellectual Baggage’ exhibition** An exhibition by the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum on the ‘library’ of the Pilgrims: what books did they read? Which old and new ideas and concepts did they process? This exhibition will bring together five worldviews: the England and the Netherlands of the 16th century, the America of the Native Americans and the Pilgrims, and a contemporary translation of those stories. The exhibition will hopefully travel to Pilgrim Hall Museum Plymouth Mass. after its premiere in Leiden.

**‘Pilgrims to America’ exhibition by Museum De Lakenhal** The seventeenth century environment in which the Pilgrims lived will be reconstructed through the books they brought with them to the colony and the publications they imported. Beside books, the exhibit will show a combination of paintings, engravings, and objects of daily life mentioned in the inventories will present the world of the Pilgrims as never before. Comparison with other groups of refugees who left their homelands in search of a better future will be drawn.

#### ‘Native Nations in the 17th Century’ exhibition (February - July 2020)

In 2020, Museum Volkenkunde will open an exhibition featuring key works by indigenous artists from North America. Works by unknown artists of the past will be presented alongside contemporary artworks to consider community, resistance, self-representation and futurism. This will celebrate the vibrance and resilience of indigenous communities throughout North America during the year when other museums turn their attention to the histories of encounter.

#### Theatre production music theatre VeenFabriek and National

**Theatre** Musical theatre group de VeenFabriek will perform a grand piece inspired on the Pilgrim story, in cooperation with producers from the United States and England (and also perhaps ‘het Nationaal Toneel’, the Dutch national theatre group). The show is intended to be performed on the large theatre festivals in the Netherlands, but also to be performed abroad.

#### PS | theater - The Global Village

PS|theater, city company of Leiden, will explore ‘the global village’ in 2020. How does a small community relate itself to the big world? How do you hold on to your own identity? In a series of theatre performances along town halls, club buildings and football canteens in the region of Leiden, local democracy is celebrated as a village festival while the globalising world gets roasted.



**Exhibition Pilgrim-clothing** In cooperation with historical clothes-crafter Geeske Kruseman, het Leids Wevershuis (the Leiden Weaver House) organises a special exhibition, in which the clothing of the pilgrims is the central theme.

**Exhibition Hortus botanicus (Botanical gardens Leiden)** In 2020 the Hortus botanicus Leiden organises an exhibition about the herbal book of Dodoens (the Pilgrims took this book with them on the Mayflower). What herbs or plants did the Pilgrims bring to America?

**Pilgrim Walking Tour** A wonderful new Pilgrim Walking Tour (both Dutch and English) is launched in October 2018. It has been set up by collaboration of Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, Museum De Lakenhal and Leiden Marketing. The tour also has connecting points with other interesting walking tours, e.g. the Rembrandt-tour. In the future, the walking tour will be expanded with AR (Augmented Reality) and/or VR (Virtual Reality) features.

**Digital Reconstruction lost heritage** Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken is starting a project together with Leiden University to digitally reconstruct lost heritage, such as the house in which Rembrandt was born, and the Lady's Church. The digital heritage can also be used for educational, scientific, but also touristic purposes. The year 2020 also offers a great chance for the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum by making plans to affirm the building, the collection and the organisation.

**Meet Your Pilgrim Relative Booth** Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken is setting up the special 'Meet Your Pilgrim Relative Booth' in the year 2020. In this booth, descendants and other interested visitors can search through pieces in the 'Pilgrim Archives' under the supervision of a curator. They even can get their hands on pieces that their ancestors have signed themselves!

**Singelpark Leiden: Exhibition: borders & freedom** The original function of the Singelpark, the old ramparts, was to protect the city so that the inhabitants could enjoy freedom of thought and action, something considered of great importance in Leiden since the 16th century. In the inaugural exhibition, six monumental art works by nationally and internationally known artists serve to show what freedom means today and what the effect of borders is or can be.

## Education

**Education Program by Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken (ELO)** ELO is working together with a British partner to create an educational program for students between the ages of 8 and 11, surrounding the theme 'economical migration'. Also the New Netherlands Institute and a couple other American organisations have shown their interest.

**International conference at the Stedelijk Gymnasium (November 2020)** LEMUN, an international conference at the Gymnasium high school in Leiden, will work with themes of the commemoration year in 2020. It is being investigated whether a special exchange program can be organized for high schools in Plymouth (USA) and Plymouth and Nottinghamshire (UK).



Jean Pesijnhof



Rapenburg

**National DNA Day (April 25 2020)** Migrants are inextricably linked to the history of Leiden. The story of the Pilgrims raises interesting questions that are also relevant today, for example with regard to the current migrant flow in the Mediterranean region and at the Mexican border. What does this actually mean for the DNA? What is DNA? What do you inherit and what is yours alone (nature versus nurture)? BplusC, Technolab and LeveDNA are currently developing a varied programme with readings, debates, a workshop on 'Leiden roots', lectures and other activities.



## Social Program

### City of Refugees: International Cities of Refugees Network (ICORN)

In 2018, a pilot was started to connect Leiden to the International Cities of Refugees Network (ICORN), together with the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. One of the concrete examples of a project would be to start a 'residency' for a refugee artist. It is being looked into if the international partner-destinations in England and in the United States can also be added to this network.

### Exchange program Leiden Marathon with Southampton & (hopefully) Boston Marathon (March - June)

Leiden Marathon has joined forces with Southampton Marathon to look into the possibilities of an exchange in terms of marketing and starting tickets.



### Exchange Program MBO Rijnland & Plymouth City College

From 2019 onwards, MBO Rijnland will start a multi-year exchange program for students of vocational schools (and also teachers, on the long run) with Plymouth City College, perhaps to be expanded also with a school in Southampton.

### We Are Leiden

'We are Leiden' is a long term program aimed at connecting newcomers (expats, students, refugees) with Leiden residents. This bottom-up program is inspired by the Mayflower 400 commemoration in 2020. 400 years later, Leiden still has a relative high percentage of new immigrants compared to other cities in the Netherlands. It is a program that revolves around the question: are we still a city of tolerance?

### Thanksgiving Service Pieterskerk Leiden

For many Americans, Leiden, and especially the Pieterskerk, is inextricably linked to the Pilgrims. One of the Pilgrim leaders, John Robinson, lived opposite the Pieterskerk in what is now the Pesijnshof. The Thanksgiving Day Service in the Pieterskerk Leiden is an ecumenical gathering where everybody is welcome.

## Science and knowledge

**Conference exchanges in 2020 (March 18 - 21, 2020)** The European Social Science History Conference (with 1750 participants) will take place in Leiden in 2020, drawing attention to the Mayflower 400 year. Leiden is also interested in making an exchange with the Dutch Atlantic Conference, that will take place in New York City in 2020.

**Academic program by Studium Generale** Studium Generale is an academic program that seeks to bring academic education to the general audience by hosting popular lectures by academics. We are currently working with them to host a series on Mayflower 400 themes, such as immigration, the context of Leiden's Golden Age and the culture of the native nations in 17th century America

**Theme program University Library** De University Library is creating a theme program called 'Freedom and Repression', that connects to the Mayflower 400 year. It is currently developing its program.

**Leiden Freedom Lecture 2020 ('A Tribute to Tolerance')** In cooperation with Leiden University, the Leiden City Government and the Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC), the organisation of the Mayflower 400 year is looking for a remarkable speaker for the Vrijheidslezing (Freedom Lecture) in 2020.

**'Freedom and Repression'** The University Library is creating a theme program called 'Freedom and Repression', that connects to the Mayflower 400 year. It is currently developing its program.

### Academic network group with Leiden University, Plymouth & Southampton

Various academics of Leiden University, Southampton and Plymouth have joined forces in an academical network that will organise several symposiums and a conference relating to the Mayflower-themes.

## And so much more ...

The whole program can be found online.

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