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Living in Leiden: The Forgotten Years of the Pilgrims

NEH Seminar 2009: The Dutch Republic and Britain



Landing of the Pilgrims-Henry A. Bacon 1877

“It is wiser to think of history not as a pile of dead leaves or a collection of dusty artefacts but as a pool, sometimes benign, often sulfurous, that lies under the present, silently shaping our institutions, our ways of thought, our likes and dislikes.’

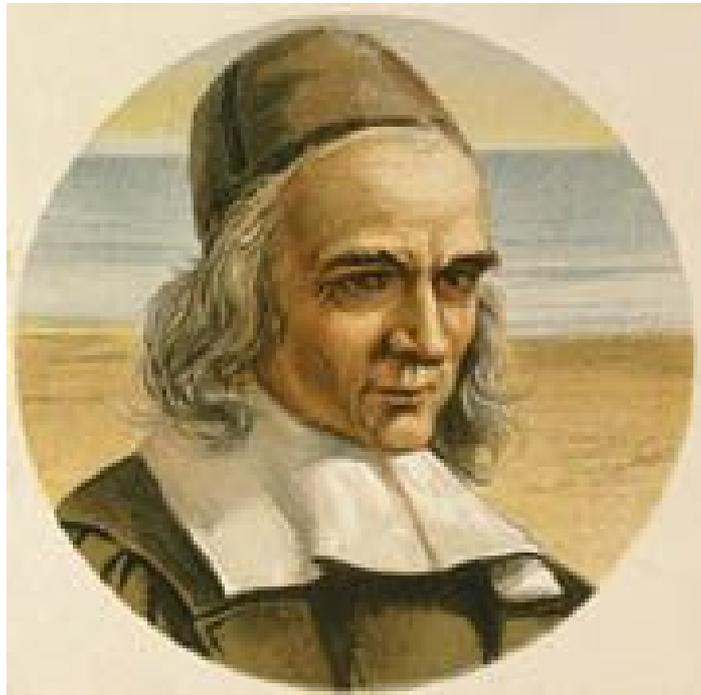
-Margaret MacMillian, *The Uses and Abuses of History*, 2009

Margaret MacMillian’s work on the value of history is useful on many levels. For those of us in the trenches often facing students who wonder about the actual relevance of history to their lives, it is a welcome reminder of the importance of history in understanding who we are. In tackling the issue of the building of the Dutch Republic and of Britain, an underlying theme has been the necessity of building a state and national identities. MacMillian underscores that the task for a central government is to convince the different groups that they owed their loyalty not to the local community or village, but to the ruling powers of the country as a whole. The Dutch Republic, as well as the modern nation state of the Netherlands has been given much credit for its “tolerance.” The history, the limits, the definition, and the authenticity of this tolerance have been much debated. One of the small stories in the

much larger picture is the topic of the Pilgrims. In the nineteenth century, the Pilgrims were taught as “heroes.” By the twentieth century, the focus was on the treatment of the Native Americans and the Pilgrims were taught in a much different way. Their contributions and story became largely limited to the story of the first Thanksgiving. (According to a recent study, 33% of Texas students think Magna Carta was signed by the Pilgrims on the Mayflower, *The Guardian* 7/23/2009). It can be argued that the treatment of the Pilgrims in England and in Holland still has relevance today. The “toleration” story is far from over. England, the Netherlands, and for that matter, Europe as a whole (especially since 9/11 and other more geographically close terrorist attacks) is struggling with the ways new immigrants and those with different religious beliefs will live harmoniously. MacMillian tells us that it really doesn’t even matter if “history” can explain the past, much less predict the future. She states, “If the study of history does nothing more than teach us humility, skepticism and awareness of ourselves, then it has done something useful.” The big public fights over how a nation sees itself are important, but we, as history teachers can be content with small victories on a more personal level.

Personal Note

As we age and grey and the grave looms closer and closer, it is not uncommon for many of us to be more interested in our roots. As teachers, our own personal stories can be quite compelling (or a frightful bore I fear – we hope the former). If told enthusiastically our stories can be a model for personal histories undertaken by our students. Most teachers are not surprised to find that many of their students have not discussed their own backgrounds with their parents, much less with grandparents or other relatives. Finding connections in history within their own lives can be a worthwhile journey for most young people. It is with this in mind that I chose this topic for investigation. Crucial to this task is putting aside the book or stepping away from the computer. As I will require my students to conduct a personal interview, and the Pilgrims are no more, I have placed the notes from my interview of the Director of the American Pilgrim Museum in Leiden at the end of this essay. I am a descendant of William Brewster who sailed on the “Mayflower.” My great-great-great-great grandfather Martin Bryant married Elizabeth Sears of the Brewster line in Rochester, Massachusetts in 1791.



William Brewster (Library of Congress)



Leiden American Pilgrim Museum

“Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by his hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone to many, yea in some sorte to our whole nation; let the glorious name of Jehova have all the praise.”

-William Bradford

This NEH seminar is concerned with “The Dutch Republic and Britain,” and “the making of modern society and a European world economy.” The Pilgrims clearly play a part in this story. This group of English colonists who eventually settled in North America in 1620 were dissatisfied with the Church of England, thus they left for the Netherlands and formed a congregation in Leiden. The time spent in Leiden is often overlooked though the Pilgrims played a small, yet important role in the city during their stay. Another interesting and related topic is recent scholarship that claims that a quarter of all pilgrims gave up on the New World to return to Britain. This too is a relatively little known part of the “Great Migration.” The connections continue to be more complicated than we have realized.

The traditional telling of the story of the Pilgrims emphasizes that the Pilgrims fled England because they felt oppressed. We are told by William Bradford in his memoirs, “Of Plymouth Plantation,” of their wish to practice their religion without persecution. The Pilgrims create the famous “Mayflower Compact,” which is often taught as influencing the Constitution of the United States. The Pilgrims are part of the wider “Great Migration” of the 1630s and beyond. Anywhere between 13,000 to 21,000 people were involved in this movement by the end of the decade of the thirties. (Moore, p. 1)

Until recently, the Pilgrims were usually taught as heroic figures. Crossing the Atlantic was no easy feat at that time. Many ships were lost at sea and the long voyage was certainly a miserable undertaking. It also was expensive and many of those who made the voyage had to borrow heavily. During this time the voyage would cost at least a year’s income for the average craftsman. One had to have a great deal of faith to cross the ocean under severe conditions to a new land far away. The Pilgrims saw themselves as on a divine mission, attempting to create a heaven on earth. They believed they were also a “chosen people,” and “successors to the Israelites.” More recently the Pilgrims are often taught as the oppressors of a

peaceful Native people.” (Bangs, “Travellers and Sojourners”). Bangs has spent the last two decades battling this perception (see interview below). That topic will not be addressed here.

The Pilgrims were Calvinist dissenters from the state Church of England (the Anglican Church). Bradford tells us that dissenting groups were punished by the government in a cruel manner, “Some times by bloody death and cruell torments.” He had basically given up on England and feared that things would only get worse. At the start of the seventeenth century punishments like racking, dismembering, confiscation of goods, banishment, burnings and other forms of torture were practiced. The Pilgrims were known as “Separatists” as they complained that the established church surrounded itself with “earthly power.” They did not want to remain in the Church of England to reform or “purify” it, as the “Puritans” hoped to do. Bradford was quite worried about a Catholic revival. His group formed what he believed to be a separate group. He was not happy when they were merged together. In the end the group of Pilgrims that eventually fled to America were from several small villages near Scrooby in Nottinghamshire.

By 1607, Bradford tells us that the conditions in England had become intolerable. Some of his flock were imprisoned and they decided to flee to what they saw as an enlightened Holland where, in general, freedom of religion had been allowed since the second half of the sixteenth century. For a detailed description of the history of this tolerance and the wide geographic and change over time of this religious tolerance, one can turn to David Israel’s massive volume on *The Dutch Republic*. For our purposes, suffice it to say that Bradford believed Holland was the place to go.

It was not an easy transition. The Pilgrims were betrayed along the way and of course they did not speak the language. The Pilgrims were used to a “plain country life” of animal husbandry. They were not acquainted with the busy atmosphere of trade and merchants, not to mention the complex political and social issues of the day. The Pilgrims had to acquire a license to travel overseas. Once they finally started on their voyage they had to endure a dreadful storm and it took them fourteen days to make the crossing (it normally took two days). Overcoming the betrayal had not been easy either, as it was necessary to leave the women behind. Eventually they were able to join the rest of the group. Bradford tells us the English authorities expelled them as

“they wer glad to be ridd of them in the end upon any termes; for they were weraried and tired with them.”

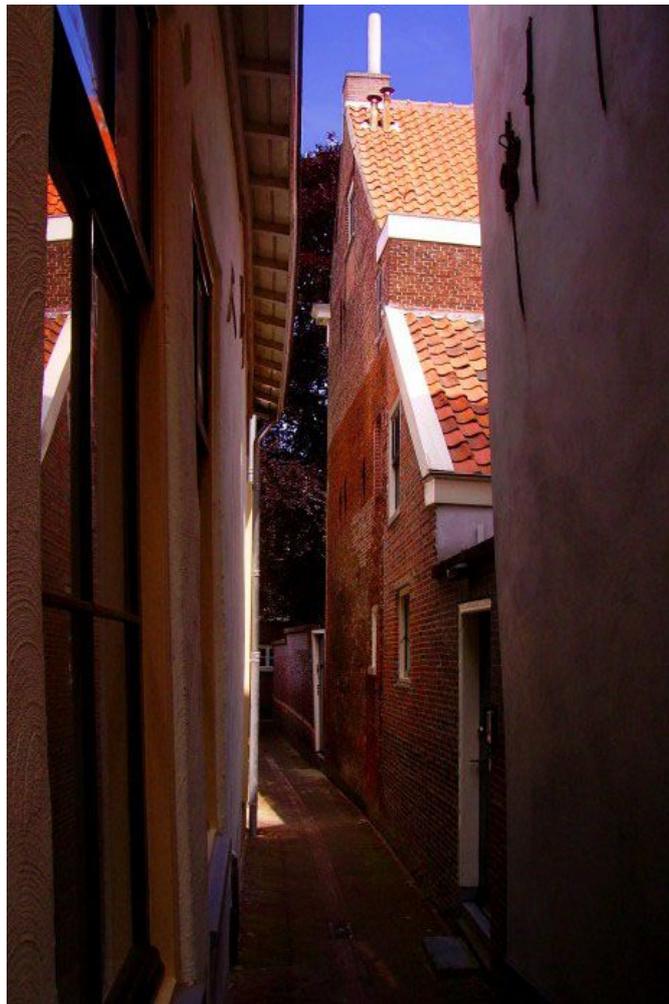
Thus, by August of 1608 the group was together. The story of the crossing had become famous. The group was not large, approximately one hundred and twenty five strong. At first, the Pilgrims, were thrilled to be in Leiden; “Yet seeing them selves thus molested, and that ther was no hope of their continuance ther, by a joynte consente they resolved to goe into the Low Countries, wher they heard was freedome of Religion for all men.” Bradford is thrilled to be a part of what would later be called the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic. Holland was rich, it was tolerant for its age and there was a freedom of the press far more extensive then in the England they had left.

The Pilgrims had sailed into a tangle of politics, theological debate. England was to continue to play a major part in the affairs of Holland. The Pilgrims arrive first in Amsterdam, and soon move on to Leiden. This was the time of the Twelve Years Truce. The Dutch needed English help to defend against the Spanish. As a condition for this support, King James demands a say in the Dutch government and theological issues of the day. Bangs tells us that this intervention had a direct affect on the safety of the Pilgrims in the Netherlands.

The Pilgrims were attracted to Leiden because it was a town with a university. The University of Leiden had been founded in 1575, and was said to be at the forefront of scholarship in the Christian world. John Robinson formed his church and the church leaders began to find a way to make a living. Bradford worked as a silk manufacturer and William Brewster began printing and many others found work as weavers. Leiden had given the Pilgrim’s permission because Leiden, “refuses no honest people free entry to come live in the city, as long as they behave honestly and obey all the laws and ordinances, and under those conditions the applicants arrival here would be pleasing and welcome.” Bangs tells us that the city refused to denounce the Pilgrims when the British ambassador complained about them. The Pilgrims then were dedicated at first to be productive members of the community.

Bangs tells us that the church leaders (especially Robinson and Brewster) believed in the value of a democratically governed congregation “living separated from the world in ethical purity.” At first, all does go well. A third of the citizens of the city (about 40,000) were refugees. Leiden’s recent history however, as Bangs and

Israel tell us, was anything but peaceful and pure. Leiden's cloth industry had been nearly wiped out by taxes to pay for the wars of Charles V and Philip II. Leiden had joined the Reformed movement in 1572 and chose the side of William the Silent. In 1573 and 1574 Leiden endured a long siege by the armies of Philip II. More than six thousand citizens died of starvation and disease. With the founding of the university, Leiden turned the corner and was on the way back to prosperity. The refugees were encouraged to work in the textile industry. Bangs states that about half of the Pilgrims became textile workers during the time in Leiden. The Pilgrims lived in the southwestern corner of Leiden near St. Peter's Church (Pieterskerk). At the time, there was a large open marketplace where they would buy their food and have discussions. Robinson spent most of his time lecturing at the University of Leiden and William Brewster lived in "Smelly Alley."



"Smelly Alley"

Sadly, during the first few years they were in Leyden, the social and political situation was changing. Bangs tells us that in reality, the Pilgrims sought toleration for their own ideas about religion and society, in the hope that the people around them would be converted to their point of view. Thus, toleration as such was not to the Pilgrims a virtue. Bradford and Robinson started to become vocal about their Dutch neighbors. The Pilgrims were especially unhappy about observing the Sabbath. They were also unhappy about the “hidden” chapel that the Catholics maintained in the city. The Pilgrims also, as many in Leiden, were worried about the possibility of further war with Spain and the fear of a Spanish Inquisition was present.

One aspect of daily life that may surprise some readers, is the fact that it is clear that many of the Pilgrims certainly drank beer. It has to be remembered that at this time, water was often unsafe to consume. The water in the canals of Leiden was unfit to drink. Beer was considered safer to drink. Beer for home use had to be brought in jugs or small casks from nearby inns or taverns. Bangs tells us that one advantage of being registered as a member of the university was an annual allowance of tax-free beer; he believes that Robinson himself may have “shared this bounty.”

We know from Bradford and Bangs that the members of the Pilgrim congregation in Leiden worked at many different kind of jobs. As mentioned, most worked in the cloth industry but others were tailors, hatmakers, golover, hosierer, shoemaker, carpenter, block and tackle maker, twinmaker, leather-worker, cooper, cabinetmaker, brewer’s employee, mason, watchmaker, mirror-maker, tobacco seller, tobacco-pipe maker, midwife and merchant. Bangs states that the occupation of housewife and mother is not mentioned as it must have “been considered self-evident.”

The leaders of the Pilgrims became important members of the University of Leiden. Rev. John Robinson was a graduate of Cambridge and became a member of the University. William Brewster never enrolled as a “student”, but as a leader in the publishing trade had contacts in the University and taught English to students. Bradford and Bangs do inform us that even though many Pilgrims were poor, some did have significant wealth, many were educated and a few had important connections among the university and the merchant social circles.

Bradford and Bangs both note that Rev. John Robinson was a famous debater. Open debates were held on various topics including predestination and free will. Robinson is said to have serious public debates against Simon Episcopius. This would

have been fascinating to witness. Israel tells us a great deal about Episcopius. He was famous for making a speech in which he made an innuendo about Prince Maurits's notorious sexual promiscuity. Episcopius had quite modern ideas about toleration. For him, it meant the unrestricted freedom of practice, as well as conscience. He believed in the freedom of the individual and that coercion was wrong. He also argued that toleration in fact strengthens a state and that citizens will not resent the state and want to overthrow it, rather they will cherish and defend it. In theological areas, Episcopius stated that Christians largely agree on the essentials of their faith and that most theological disputes are over trivia. A variety of views, in his eyes, was not harmful. Everybody has equal access to God's word and God's truth. Surely Rev. Robinson would have found much to dispute.



This is where Robinson and Episcopius debated.(Bangs).

William Brewster also was active in the university community. Back in England, he had been employed by Elizabeth as a personal adviser to Sir William Davison. Brewster is believed to have acted as a spy for Sir William. We know that Brewster printed or published at least eighteen different books in Leiden between 1617 and 1619. Many were theological in nature. One book was in Dutch, four were in Latin and thirteen were in English. Many of the books were smuggled into Britain. The books were packed into brandy kegs and wine casks. We know that most of these books were not kindly received by King James in England. James considered himself an amateur theologian. Several of Brewster's works are on display at the Stedelijk Museum in Leiden. The display tells us that the English used the type font to discover where the books came from. This is the first time that this method was used. Brewster and his partner Thomas Brewer are arrested for their publishing. A letter dated September 21, 1617 for his arrest is displayed in the museum. Also shown is a pamphlet that Brewster published that criticizes James I for wanting to apply an Anglican system to Scottish ecclesiastical organization. Brewster and Brewer were questioned. Both were put in jail. Brewster was released to preserve diplomatic relations with England but Brewer was held in prison for fourteen years and dies in prison.

There are many reasons why the Pilgrims decided to leave Leiden. The most obvious reason is probably the language difficulty. Bangs tells us that the life in Leiden was quite difficult and the Pilgrims could not attract more folks to join them. There was also a feeling that their children would assimilate in Dutch culture. The leaders of the Pilgrims were getting old. Many, in fact, did not make the journey across the Atlantic. Some of the leaders wanted to make the trip to convert the Indians (as Bangs reminds us, they failed to change the Dutch habits). As mentioned previously, the end of the Twelve Year Truce and the direct British interference in their affairs was disturbing. Another frightening occurrence was an attack on April 28, 1619 when sixty three year old James Chilton and his daughter were attacked and stoned by twenty boys while out walking. Both joined the Mayflower.

Legal problems also were on the horizon for the Pilgrims. On July 15, 1619 an edict was passed in the Estates General prohibiting separatist religious gathering and money collections for the poor as well as a ban on non-conformist marriages. Bangs tells us that these edicts were not enforced, but that the Pilgrims saw the

handwriting on the wall. All in all, Bangs tells us, “life among the savages, even reputed cannibals might be safer (than Holland).”

As the Pilgrims considered leaving, they faced a choice between Guiana and America. Eventually, the group votes to leave Holland for the New World. The Pilgrims selected Virginia as their destination. Note, not New England. The Pilgrims attempted to get permission to join the Virginia settlement. After months and months of haggling and virtually begging for permission and funding, the Pilgrims were successful in getting both. The rest is another story.

We also need to remember that the Pilgrims were contemporary of the Stuart Kings. William Brewster was twenty two when the Spanish Armada of 1588 took place. He was thirty seven and the father of two in 1603 during Elizabeth’s reign. He was forty one when Jamestown was settled in 1607. Four years prior to the Mayflower sailing, in 1616 Shakespeare died.

A final, often forgotten connection between the United States and Leiden is the fact that John Adams was the first American ambassador to the Netherlands. Adams was a great-great grandson of Pilgrim John Alden. John Quincy Adams had been enrolled as a student at the University of Leiden. He was among the first to call attention to the importance of the Mayflower Compact. In 1786, Abigail Adams visited Leiden and noted, “I visited the church at Leyden, in which our forefathers worshipped when they fled from hierarchical tyranny and persecution. I felt a respect and veneration upon entering the doors like what the ancients paid to their Druids” I felt the same way in Leiden.

Informal Interview with Jeremy Bangs- Highlights

7.18.9 at The American Pilgrim Museum, Leiden. Subsequent communications through email thru 2-25-10



Mr. Jeremy Bangs was born in Oregon but has lived in Leiden for nearly thirty years. He studied at the University of Chicago and completed his PhD at the University of Leiden in 1976. He was formerly the Curator of the Leiden Pilgrim Documents Center of the Leiden Municipal Archives (1986-1985), Chief Curator of Plymouth Plantation (1986-1991), visiting curator of manuscripts, Pilgrim Hall Museum (1994-1996) He is currently the Director of the Leiden American Museum which he founded in 1997. He has published numerous books and scholarly articles on many topics. His most recent book, *Travellers and Sojourners- The Pilgrims, Leiden and the Foundations of Plymouth Plantation* has been published by the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, Plymouth Massachusetts.

Mr. Bangs began the conversation noting the fact that 17th century history is not given its proper due today in the Netherlands. He stated that Dutch historians believe that there is no more work to be done and that due to policy choices; it is no longer possible to do doctoral work at Leiden on Dutch history prior to 1815. Through email, Dr. Bangs informed me that this subject is covered at Amsterdam, Utrecht and Groningen, as well as Nijmegen (for Catholic topics). According to him, the political leanings and backgrounds of individuals can be of paramount importance, even more so than in the States. He finds it interesting that much of the work done on the Pilgrims and on the 17th century in the Netherlands has been done by Americans.

Dr. Bangs works to respond to current interpretations when he finds primary source material that contradicts prevailing assumptions. He describes his work as a “comprehensive re-examination of the history of the Pilgrims and of Plymouth Colony.” Dr. Bangs believes that Pilgrim descendants are a natural audience of his work (which I can personally attest to). He also believes that historians of early America should read his books. Dr. Bangs states that “the subject is out of fashion.”

Dr. Bangs also claims to be “idealistic” in his work. I personally believe he may indeed find a wider audience as political fashion and historical movements change over time.

Dr. Bang’s museum is a private institution. He receives funding from a wide variety of sources to support his research. His museum now draws several thousands visitors a year, though attendance is down due to the economic recession. He is not associated with the Pilgrim Archives across town. However, both cover some of the same topics and likely appeal to similar audiences.

I asked Mr. Bangs if there was any book he would recommend on William Brewster. He told me that no modern book exists. He did say that he believes one may be forthcoming someday. Years ago, he received a phone call from a fellow in Nebraska who had found a volume that had the words Elder and “Brewster” on it. If this book actually exists, it is likely valuable for historical purposes. Mr. Bangs believes that this book could contain Brewster’s diary and perhaps his sermons and journal. Someday he hopes it may be made available for scholars and a book will be written.

He did show me his book on Pilgrim Edward Winslow (“New England’s First International Diplomat” published 2004 by NEHGS). Mr. Bangs did comment that he feels Winslow is vastly underappreciated in history. He informed me the book has come out in a paperback edition sold at the Pilgrim Hall. Mr. Bangs noted that Edward Winslow spent nine years in England defending the Puritans and that he held an office under Cromwell and is mentioned in the text of the 1654 Treaty of Westminster, which ended the First Anglo-Dutch War. He believes that Winslow is an example of a Pilgrim who made important contributions to history after returning to England from the Colony. He hopes his book will continue to add to Winslow’s life and legacy.

I asked Mr. Bangs why he thought the Pilgrims have gone from being “heroic” to being seen as unimportant and exploiters of the Natives. He then led me through a long discussion of the historiography of the roots of the movement to show that the Pilgrims were insignificant. He claims it began early on and that the historians in New England focused on events north of the Charles River. The rest was seen as trivial. (This was a play on words about Harvard and the world view of Cambridge – a joke lost on me until Dr. Bangs explained it to me later.) Secondly, he noted the classic book “Saints and Strangers” by George F. Willison written right after World War II. It became the standard work and additional works built on his study. He also discussed Samuel Eliot Morison who edited William Bradford’s work “Of Plymouth Plantation.” Mr. Bangs stated that Morison simplified the complex history and ended up putting many of the documents in the appendix (Dr. Bangs later explained that the paperback version omitted this material which also help distort the story.) Also, George Langdon wrote an important work on the Pilgrims in 1962: “Pilgrim Colony- A History of New Plymouth 1620-1691.” Through email, Dr. Bangs reminded me that he had mentioned Eugene Stratton’s history of Plymouth Colony as well as the work of Douglas Anderson.

Dr. Bangs also said things have gotten a bit better and he praised Cynthia Van Zant’s recent work (Brothers Among Nations; The Pursuit of Intercultural Alliances in Early America 1580 -1660.)

I turned to the question of the enduring legacies of the Pilgrims. He said he would give me three. He believes that the Pilgrims did create the first self-enclosed democratic system in the New World. He emphasized that this was government by the people, and in unusual conditions. He argued that the settlers in Virginia were subject to oversight. Dr. Bangs later added that “laws enacted in Virginia were subject to review and potential rejection by the company in London, while similar laws in Plymouth were not.” This meant that “Plymouth’s democratic government was independent and self-contained.” He stated that John Quincy Adams had written about this fact.

Secondly, he added that the Pilgrims learned about civil marriage registration in the Netherlands and that they brought it to the New World and established it there. This fact is part of a larger point that Dr. Bangs wished to make: “Plymouth Colony had a constitution (1636) in which the clergy were given no role in the civil government. The Pilgrims did not reject English common law. In some cases where they found no English precedent they looked for biblical precedent. In their inheritance law they protected widows and orphans from rapacious mortgage lenders, following biblical precepts, while such protections were not found in English law and are not now found in American law.”

Finally, he talked of the nature of the church and its influences on the United States: “The Pilgrims thought that a true church consisted of a covenanted congregation of believers. Following Calvinist ideas, they did not think that all people living within the boundaries of their colony would be believers who could affirm the church’s covenant. They therefore attempted to devise equitable laws that treated church members and non-members fairly. Church membership was not a requirement for suffrage in Plymouth Colony. While John Adams was certainly aware of the Pilgrims (he visited Pilgrim sites in Leiden), I do not make claims for any influence on the Continental Congress, other than that the structure of the confederation that formed the United Colonies of New England (1643), in which Winslow played an important role, was perceived as the formal model for the confederation of 1774; John Quincy Adams (as quoted by David Pulsifer) said that ‘The New England confederacy of 1643 was the model and prototype of the North American confederacy of 1774.’ “

I turned to the question Nathaniel Philbrick’s popular book on the Mayflower. Mr. Bangs and Philbrick are friends and Dr. Bangs was grateful that he reviewed his book on Winslow. He also considers him a very good writer. Dr. Bangs intends to write a history of the colony himself one day. Philbrick’s book, in his opinion, is an improvement on Willison’s work but that there is more to say.

I also asked about Russell Shorto’s book on New Amsterdam. He prefers Jaap Jacob’s history of New Netherlands. (The Colony of New Netherland; A Dutch Settlement in 17th Century America) Mr. Bangs believes that the whole issue of “toleration” in the Netherlands has been overdone. He believes that the theological and philosophical arguments for religious toleration were developed in The Netherlands by specific Mennonite and Remonstrant thinkers in the context of a massive relief action attempting to bring a halt to persecution of Swiss and Palatine Mennonites by Calvinists and Catholics. This work of Mennonite and Remonstrants

was directly influential on John Locke (through whom these originally Dutch ideas become part of the discussion in England and America). In other words, according to Mr. Bangs, religious toleration can be considered a Dutch idea but not an idea permeating Dutch society. Mr. Bangs argues, in one of his books, (*Letters on Toleration, Dutch Aid to Persecuted Swiss and Palatine Mennonites, 1615-1699*) that “John Locke was aware of these efforts and that William Penn was involved in them.” He also has an article under consideration for publication where he points out that “these actions were internationally significant for the debate on toleration.” He believes that the Dutch enjoy a reputation for toleration because Motley’s (John Lothrop Motley) famous histories of Dutch events are based on earlier history of the Dutch revolt written from an outspokenly Remonstrant point of view (arguing idealistically that toleration was a Dutch virtue from long before). This was work done by Gerard Brandt. Mr. Bangs hopes to write further that some sort of Dutch toleration was an inherent characteristic of society in New Amsterdam/New Netherland.

I asked Mr. Bangs if he was aware of a very short work or essay that high school students could handle on the Pilgrims that he approved of. He quickly told me that last year he contributed a chapter called “Re-Bunking the Pilgrims” in a volume edited by Donald Yerxa entitled “Recent Themes in Early American History; Historians in Conversation.” He said that it is only six to eight pages long and very readable.

Finally, I asked what Mr. Bangs thought he would work on next. He said that he has several books that he would still like to write. Mr. Bangs told me he has done extensive research on the issue of land and the Natives. He wrote a book entitled “Indian Deeds, Land Transactions in Plymouth Colony, 1620 – 1691,” and that in the book; he has clearly argued that Native Americans had private property. He has gone through the archival documentation. There are twenty four volumes. Dr. Bangs informed me that twelve volumes were published in the mid-nineteenth century. He is currently working on the remaining twelve. Dr. Bangs has already excerpted the deeds “from sachems to the colony court and from the court to the first private owners of that land and that there are 450 deeds in “Indian Deeds.”

He discussed the fact that many historians do not realize that by 1650, Plymouth itself was no longer the economic center of the colony; the center had become Scituate. He has learned that ca. 1650 on , “several indicators (militia lists, tax levies) show that Scituate was estimated to be about 60% bigger and wealthier than Plymouth; and that Scituate was the colony’s largest town, while Plymouth was second.”

Mr. Bangs commented how it is sometimes forgotten that additional Pilgrims came to the New World after the Mayflower as well and that the Pilgrim community founded several churches which became the first Congregational churches in Massachusetts. His ideas on this topic can be found in his new book “Strangers and Pilgrims, Travellers and Sojourners.”

As you can see, Mr. Bangs is quite passionate about the importance of the Pilgrims. Though the museum is small, he will give you a quick tour and he certainly is willing to chat extensively with visitors. Pick up his new book “Strangers and Pilgrims,

Travellers and Sojourners; Leiden and the Foundations of Plymouth Plantation.” Any mistakes are the result of rapid note taking and unclear handwriting. I added some of the titles that he referred to later after a bit of research. Dr. Bangs and I corresponded through email to correct mistakes in my note taking. I still apologize in advance for any inaccuracies. -Chris Bryant

Leiden American Pilgrim Museum



Leiden