

The *Mayflower*...It's been 400 years!

America is poised for an anniversary of national and international significance, the 400th anniversary of the *Mayflower* voyage and the founding of Plymouth Colony. November 2019 marked an ambitious year-long commemoration will mark the 400th anniversary of the *Mayflower*'s pioneering voyage, telling the story of a ship and its passengers - a group of people that a remarkable 30million+ US citizens have descended from.

The *Mayflower* set sail on 16th September 1620 from Plymouth, UK, to voyage to America, known to English explorers at the time as the New World. There 102 passengers and approximately 30 crew aboard the *Mayflower* when it landed in Plymouth Bay, Massachusetts, in the harsh winter of 1620. On board were men, women, and children from different walks of life across England and the city of Leiden in Holland.

Virginia in America was an attractive destination because several colonies had already settled there. However, they also felt that they should not settle too near and end up with a similar environment to which they originally fled. The *Mayflower* took 66 days to cross the Atlantic – a horrible crossing afflicted by winter storms and long bouts of seasickness – so bad that most could barely stand up during the voyage. One man was swept overboard, and one woman, Elizabeth Hopkins, gave birth to a baby boy, aptly named Oceanus.

The Pilgrims intended to land in Northern Virginia and the Hudson River (today New York) was their intended destination. They had received good reports on this region while in the Netherlands. The *Mayflower* was almost right on target, missing the Hudson River by just a few degrees. They searched much of the coastline in this region and, after several stops, finally arrived in what is now Plymouth Bay, Massachusetts, on 26th December 1620.

The *Mayflower* lay in New Plymouth harbor through the winter of 1620–21, then set sail for England on April 5, 1621, her empty hold ballasted with stones from the Plymouth Harbor shore. The *Mayflower* made excellent time on her voyage back to England, and she arrived at Rotherhithe in London on May 6, 1621, in less than half the time that it had taken her to sail to America." For the next two years, the *Mayflower* lay at her berth in Rotherhithe. By 1624, she was no longer useful as a ship; her subsequent fate is unknown, but she was probably broken up about that time.

But, the *Mayflower* rides again! The *Mayflower II* is a replica built in Devon, England during 1955–1956. The ship In December 2015, the ship arrived in Mystic, CT for restoration. The ship returned temporarily for the 2016 summer season and is due to return permanently to Plymouth in 2020, just in time for the 400th anniversary of the pilgrims' arrival.



Mayflower II at State Pier in Plymouth, Massachusetts, 2006