



0. ESCAPE FROM ENGLAND - Story Preface

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When Separatists tried to leave England for other places (such as The Netherlands), government authorities did their best to stop them (because it was illegal to leave without governmental permission). In 1608, some of the Separatists were able to board a ship, bound for Holland, but not all the women and children were able to board before the ship left. From *A Popular History of the United States*, by William Cullen Bryant and Howard Gay Sydney, published in New York, during 1881, by Charles Scribners' Sons. Online, courtesy U.S. History Images.

Disaster followed when the Pilgrims first tried to flee England (from the Lincolnshire town of Boston) on a Dutch ship. The Dutchman (whom William Brewster had hired to take them to Holland) must have turned-in his passengers to the authorities.

Prevented from leaving, searched for money and imprisoned in dungeon cells, they endured further hardship. Once released from confinement, in Boston's Guildhall, they decided to escape again.

Later, William Bradford wrote about the group's decision to leave. In their minds, they had no choice:

Yet seeing themselves thus molested, and that there was no hope of their continuance there [in their own country], by a joint consent they decided to go into the Low Countries, where they heard was freedom of religion for all men; as also how sundry from London and other parts of the land had been exiled and persecuted for the same cause, and were gone thither, and lived at Amsterdam and other places of the land.

Although they did not speak Dutch, Bradford and his fellow separatists were determined to live in Amsterdam. When they tried to flee again, the group faced more heartache:

Next spring [in 1608] they agreed with another Dutchman to take them on board at a lonely point on the northern coast of Lincolnshire, between Grimsbey and Hull, "where was a large common, a good way distant from any town." This spot has been located as Immingham...

Families traveled separately to the meeting place:

The women, with the children and their goods, came to the Humber [a river] by boat down the Trent [for centuries a major waterway] from Gainsborough; the men travelled forty miles across country from Scrooby. Both parties got to the rendezvous before the ship, and the boat was run into a creek. This was unfortunate, as when the captain came on the scene next morning the boat was high and dry, left on the mud by the fallen tide, and there was nothing for it but to wait for high water at midday.

The delay was worse than "unfortunate." Once again, authorities had learned the Pilgrims were escaping. Before everyone was onboard ship, the captain decided to leave:

Meanwhile the Dutchman set about taking the men on board in the ship's skiff, but when one boatload had been embarked he saw to his dismay, out on the hills in hot pursuit, "a great company, both horse and foot, with bills and guns and other weapons," for "the country was raised to take them." So the laconic historian says, "he swore his country's oath -- Sacramente," and heaving up his anchor sailed straight away with the people he had got.

Their feelings may be imagined; and their plight was aggravated by a violent storm, which drove them out of their course and tossed them about for a fortnight, until even the sailors gave up hope and abandoned themselves to despair. But the ship reached port, at last, and all were saved.

As Pilgrim men sailed southeast to their new home, their wives and children (who had not-yet boarded the ship) were stranded:

The scene ashore meantime had been scarcely less distressing than that at sea. Some of the men left behind made good their escape; the rest tarried with the forsaken portion of the party. The women were broken-hearted.

Some wept and cried for their husbands, carried away in the unkindly prudent Dutchman's ship. Some were distracted with apprehension; and others looked with tearful eyes into the faces of the helpless little ones that clung about them, crying with fear and quaking with cold.

Women were arrested, but for what crime? Would a judge actually jail them?

The men with the bills and guns arrested them; but, though they hurried their prisoners from place to place, no justice could be found to send women to gaol for no other crime than wanting to go with their husbands. We know not what befell them. The most likely suggestion is that "they took divers ways, and were received into various houses by kind-hearted country folk."

Yet this we do know. They rallied somewhere at a later day, and John Robinson and William Brewster, and other principal members of the devoted sect, including Richard Clyfton, "were of the last, and stayed to help the weakest over before them;" and Bradford tells us with a sigh of satisfaction that "notwithstanding all these storms of opposition, they all gatt over at length, some at one time and some at another, and some in one place and some in another, and mette togeather againe according to their desires, with no small rejoycing" ... (Addison, pages 40-43)

Having left their English homes, they "met together again" in Amsterdam, before the end of 1608. They remained in the city of canals one year.

Let's virtually visit some of the places important to these future American colonists during their Dutch sojourn.

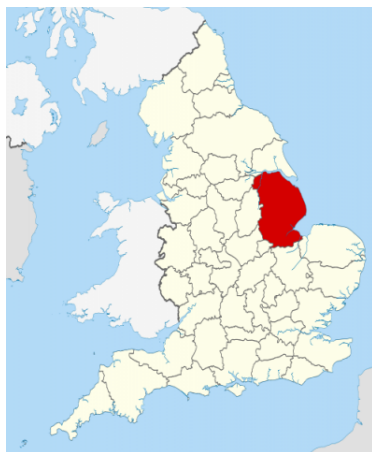
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Media Stream



Lincolnshire - Map Locator

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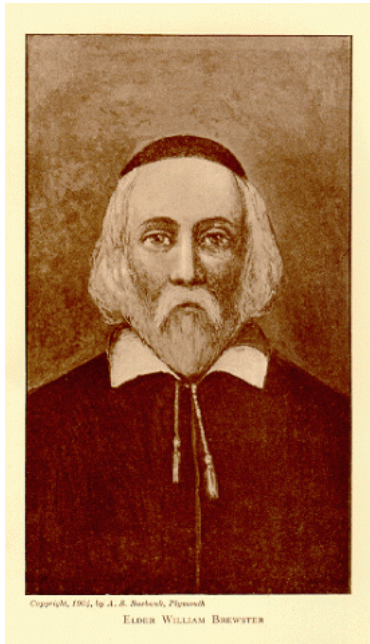


Town of Boston

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William Brewster

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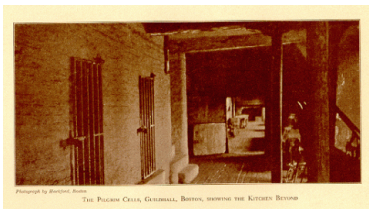


Pilgrim Prison Cells - Boston, England

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Pilgrim Cells - Scene of Incarceration

Image online, courtesy the [University of Virginia](http://www.universityofvirginia.edu) website.

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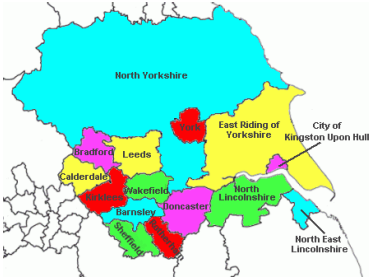
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Grimsby - Map Locator

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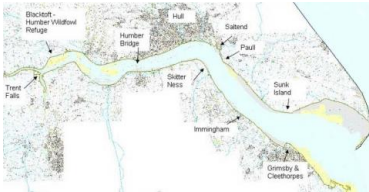
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Hull - Map Locator

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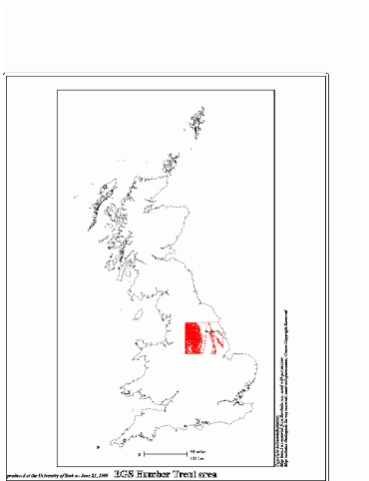
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Immingham - Map Locator

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Humber - Map Locator

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British Towns Important to the Pilgrims

Image online, courtesy the smoothhound.co.uk website.

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The Netherlands - Map

Image online, courtesy the cia.gov website.

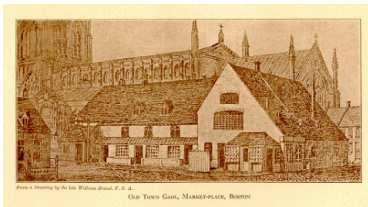
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Amsterdam - Its Location

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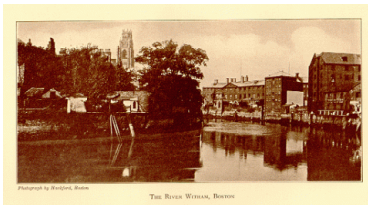


Jail in the Old Town of Boston, England

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View of Boston

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View of a Canal and Houseboat in Amsterdam

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