

## History Department News

### Archive for October, 2011

#### [Field trip to Plimoth Plantation and Mayflower II](#)

Twenty-two undergraduate students visited Plimoth Plantation & the Mayflower II on Saturday, 8 October, 2011. The outing was sponsored by the Erasmus Lectureship, the Office of Undergraduate Education and the History Department at Harvard University. Dr. Martine van Ittersum and Dr. Jaap Jacobs, Erasmus Lecturers in the academic year 2011/12, acted as tour guides.

On Saturday morning, we started out bright and early at Robinson Hall, and traveled to Plymouth by School Bus. Several members of the Boston Chapter of the Netherland-America Foundation, including honorary consul Hans Gieskes, joined us at the entrance of Plimoth Plantation. Before we explored the reconstructed village, Dr. Jacobs gave a short talk on the Separatists' experience in Leiden, The Netherlands, and on the eastern seaboard of North America, including their cordial relations with the Dutch colony of New Netherland (nowadays New York). The weather proved perfect for a reenactment of the visit which New Netherland merchant Isaac de Rasière paid to the Plimoth Plantation in October 1627. De Rasière went on to write the first outsider report on the fledgling colony. You will find a digital picture of the first page of De Rasière's letter and a modern English translation at the bottom of this document, along with a timeline of the Dutch connections of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Students were very impressed by the knowledgeable actors-in-period-dress who walked the streets of the reconstructed village. The actors were happy to explain the Pilgrims' reasons for crossing the Atlantic and did so in both English and Dutch. The Wampanoag Homesite proved an eye-opener as well: it brought the Native view of Colonial American history into sharp focus. Cyrus, a History senior, writes in an e-mail:

It was fascinating to speak with the re-enactors up on the hill and then to the native people in the valley. In a way, the existence of a reconstructed Wampanoag village is very impressive. Even after 400 years of invasion, the people have remained and retained the essence of their cultural identity.

On Saturday afternoon, we hopped on the School Bus again to go down to Plymouth harbor and visit the Mayflower II, a sailing ship built in the 1950's. The volunteers on board explained shipbuilding and navigation techniques in the seventeenth century and informed us about the crews that had manned coastal vessels like the Mayflower II. When we left the ship, we passed through Wampanoag Customs & Immigration. Although the Native officials were very humorous, their admissions criteria proved to be quite strict. Several 'entry visas' were voided on the grounds of disease control and/or as part of a Native clampdown on the smuggling of alcohol, guns, and ammunition. That is Homeland Security for you! Fortunately, all students made it back to the School Bus and returned to Cambridge, MA, in the late afternoon. First-year students had a particularly good time. Delia informs us that she "really enjoyed the field trip," while Hannah chimes in with: "I had a great time last Saturday!"

Dr. Martine van Ittersum  
Dr. Jaap Jacobs

Off we go with the School Bus: for many students it brought back memories from long ago

There is much to admire when you converse with a Pilgrim woman right on the doorstep of her house. Love the hat!

The gracious host. William Brewster served as the Pilgrims' printer back in Leiden, by the way. Did he take his printing press with him when he crossed the Atlantic Ocean?

Explaining the native point of view to other (white) Americans and visitors from Europe.

A gorgeous day to go sailing!

Cyrus, a senior History student, quizzes a Plimoth Plantation volunteer about shipbuilding and navigation in the seventeenth century

Other students are listening in on the conversation.

\*Photo credits: Dr.s Martine Van Ittersum and Jaap Jacobs

\*De Rasière's letter, reporting on his visit to Plimoth Plantation

Source reference: Dutch National Archives, The Hague, Collectie Verspreide Westindische stukken, Nat. Arch. 1.05.06 inv.nr. 2

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Posted on October 25th, 2011

### [Charles Maier wins Helmut Schmidt Prize in German-American Economic History](#)

October 3, 2011

The German Historical Institute in Washington is pleased to announce that it will award the 2011 Helmut Schmidt Prize in German-American Economic History to Professor Charles S. Maier of Harvard University.

Professor Maier's large and wide-ranging oeuvre comprises several books that have become classics, including *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* (1975), *The Marshall Plan and Germany* (1991), and *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (1997). These works

have influenced several generations of students all over the world. Maier is Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University. Among his recent publications is *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors* (Harvard University Press, 2006).

The prize will be awarded at the German Historical Institute in Washington on December 8, 2011. Professor Maier will deliver a lecture on the topic “Lessons from history? German economic experiences and the crisis of the Euro.”

The Helmut Schmidt Prize pays tribute to the former German chancellor for his part in transforming the framework of transatlantic economic cooperation. The Prize is awarded every second year. Since 2007 it is generously sponsored by the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius.

The Helmut Schmidt Prize is being awarded for the fourth time. The first three honorees were Professors Harold James (Princeton University), Volker Berghahn (Columbia University), and Richard Tilly (University of Münster).

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