

In our modern society, we often fail to recognize the similarities between our experiences and circumstances, and those of the past. Recognizing and respecting these similarities is key in affecting the future for the better. One such notable experience that we can learn much from is the story of the Mayflower. Elementary school students are taught that the Pilgrims traveled to America on the Mayflower in search of religious freedom. What is often overlooked is the Pilgrim's original plan. One that included moving to Holland, not America, for religious freedom. The Separatists' reasons for leaving Holland and moving to America are still visible in today's society.

In 1608, a group of Separatist Englishmen and their families, led by William Bradford, moved from Scrooby, England, to Leyden, Holland. What they found in Holland was religiously ideal, yet intolerable concerning work, income, and social life. These Separatists found that many crafts and craft guilds excluded immigrants, leaving only unskilled work. For approximately 11 years, parishioners of the Separatist congregation suffered through these arduous jobs. This included young children who would not have usually been required to work. Due to this, as well as other factors relating to the beliefs of Hollands citizens, the Separatists decided that other steps may need to be taken to find the "perfect land".

Similar to the Pilgrims' story, immigrants came to America looking to fulfill their version of the "American Dream". This included better working conditions, more opportunities for success, religious freedom, or escaping turmoil in their home country. Regardless, all had one thing in mind; they needed a change. When they arrived in America through Ellis Island, many expected a new opportunity to be immediately available. Although, what they found were low-paying jobs that could barely keep a family of four alive. Immigrants were treated without

respect and were not given the same working opportunities as European migrants. The story of immigrants in America is not dissimilar to those of the Separatists in Holland.

As of 2019, 47 million immigrants are living in the United States. Of these, 15% are considered poor, or below the poverty line. This is in comparison to 13% of American-born citizens. Approximately 57% of immigrants have private health insurance and 30% have public health insurance, compared to 69% and 37%, respectively. While immigrants have increasingly been treated with more respect and given more opportunities, there is still a stigma attached to them in certain social circles. What we can learn from these experiences is the repeated lack of opportunities provided to immigrants within our communities, as well as the similarities between today's immigrants and those from the Mayflower. We can also use this knowledge in the future to ensure that other immigrants do not suffer the same injustices.