FOUR NATIONS UNITE TO REALIZE THEIR 400TH COMMEMORATION PROGRAM FOR 2020

March 14, 2019—Boston, Massachusetts —Four nations are set to unite and share their 2020 Commemoration Program plans for the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower Voyage with an audience of guests invited to attend the event, which will be hosted today at the New England Historical Genealogical Society in Boston. Presenters will include representatives from Mayflower 400, Leiden 2020, Plymouth 400, Inc., VisitBritain, American Ancestors, and the General Society of Mayflower Descendants.

Over the course of the event, each of the nations: United Kingdom, United States of America, the Wampanoag Nation, and the Netherlands will share their unique perspectives of that pivotal moment that defined the course of world history.

The four international Mayflower compact partner nations are united in their passion to commemorate the anniversary and to celebrate shared values of freedom, democracy, humanity, and the future.

Anticipating the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower in 2020, American Ancestors and New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) will play a major role in its national and international commemoration.

“The story of what happened in 1620 is foundational to the story of our democracy and has widespread genealogical and historical ramifications,” stated Brenton Simons, President and CEO of American Ancestors and NEHGS, in his announcement of programs to be undertaken by the organization leading up to 2020. These programs will be highlighted at the Mayflower 400 Launch Event in Boston, Massachusetts, at the headquarters of American Ancestors.

“As the largest nonprofit involved—with more than 250,000 members and millions of online users—we have a responsibility to educate people everywhere about this historic occasion,” he said. “We will carry out our work in many different ways—through events, tours, published scholarship, exhibitions, educational opportunities, and online research resources. We have had an important stake in telling this story since our founding
in 1845 and we are dedicated to helping our members and the public connect to this important moment in American history,” Simons added.

“We’re privileged to be able to host distinguished representatives of four nations that are all deeply committed to the commemoration of this 400th anniversary—and the stories and legacies the historic event has given us.”

Charles Hackett, Chief Executive Officer - Mayflower 400 said, “This project explores centuries of shared history between Britain, Holland and America. It is an opportunity to create a broad cultural programme in multiple locations, to bring visitors to the UK to explore the past along the national Mayflower Trail, and to increase awareness of this pivotal event on all four nations.”

Some of the Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower were brought from Holland on the Speedwell, a smaller vessel that accompanied the Mayflower on its initial departure from Southampton on August 15, 1620. When the Speedwell proved unseaworthy, the Mayflower set sail on September 16, 1620 from Plymouth, UK, to voyage to America, known at the time as the New World. Its passengers were in search of a new life of religious freedom.

On the crowded ship, many endured hunger and terrible living conditions, but this was only a sign of what was to come. To make matters worse, the winter storms blew the ship off course. Instead of landing in New Virginia, the ship arrived in Cape Cod Harbor, at what is now Provincetown, on November 21, 1620.

That day, the settlers wrote the Mayflower Compact. Signed by 41 men on board, the compact was an agreement to cooperate for the general good of the colony. They would deal with issues by voting, establish constitutional law and rule by the majority. This was later claimed to be the foundation of American democracy.

“The story of 1620 is complex with multiple perspectives but is one which is relevant now more than ever,” stated Michele Pecoraro, Executive Director of Plymouth 400, Inc. “The way the story is being told is different than past commemorations because each of the four nations involved are at the table together for the first time. The cultural contributions and traditions that began with the interaction of the Wampanoag and English peoples have significantly shaped the building of America but until now, this complex story was told from a narrow perspective. For the first time the Native voice is included and the fact that the story begins with the indigenous people who had lived on this continent for thousands of years and are still here today.”

- More -
Michael Roumen, Executive Director, Mayflower 400 Leiden comments: “Leiden is proud to participate in this four nation commemoration, focusing on the themes that make this fascinating and complex story relevant to this day, such as migration, tolerance and oppression. We are putting together local and international programs (cultural, educational and economic) aimed to contribute to mutual understanding and critical reflection, and to inspire future generations.”

Issued by:

Jim Power
NEHGS Communications Manager
jim.power@nehgs.org
Office: 617.226.1261 / Cell: 508.367.8058

For any media enquiries please contact:

Pamela Badham
FOUR PR & Marketing
T: 07825 567808
E: Pamela@four-pr.com

Note to editors:

About American Ancestors and New England Historic Genealogical Society

The founding genealogical society in America, New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) was established in 1845. Today it has a national collecting scope and serves more than 250,000 constituents through an award-winning website, AmericanAncestors.org. Since its organization, NEHGS has been the country’s leading comprehensive resource for genealogists and family historians of every skill level, today providing constituents with worldwide access to some of the most important and valuable research tools anywhere.

American Ancestors is the public brand and user experience of NEHGS, representing the expertise and resources available for family historians when researching their origins across the country and around the world. NEHGS’s resources, expertise, and service are unmatched in the field and their leading staff of on-site and online genealogists includes experts in early American, Irish, English, Scottish, German, Italian, Atlantic and French Canadian, African American, Native American, Chinese American, and Jewish research. The NEHGS library and archives, located at 99–101 Newbury Street in downtown Boston, Massachusetts, is home to more than 28 million items, including artifacts, documents, records, journals, letters, books, manuscripts, and other items dating back hundreds of years.

About Mayflower 400

Mayflower 400 is the UK-based organization created to align 11 core UK partners locations across England, alongside the USA, the Native American community and the Netherlands to deliver an exceptional programme of heritage and modern culture that explores arguably the most influential journey in Western history; and to celebrate shared values of Imagination, Freedom, Humanity and the Future.

2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the historic voyage of the Mayflower ship from the UK to the ‘New World’ of America. The anniversary will commemorate the legacy of the passengers and crew who undertook the epic journey inspired by an unquenchable desire for freedom; and for whom the voyage promised newfound liberty.

The International Mayflower Compact partnership has been created to align 11 core UK member destinations across England, alongside the United States of America, the Native American community and the Netherlands. The international Mayflower Compact partners are united in their passion to commemorate the anniversary and to celebrate shared values of freedom, democracy, humanity, and the future.

-More-
The 11 UK destinations are working together for the first time. Each with their own unique connection to the story, a new ‘Mayflower Trail’ has been developed for visitors to explore. During 2020, destinations will stage a world class events and cultural programme to commemorate the journey of the Mayflower Pilgrims.

The cultural programme will unite communities, inspire creativity, drive economic growth, enhance the visitor experience and promote understanding and education of this pivotal moment in history. The commemorations will recognise the impact of the Mayflower’s journey on Native American communities and address themes of migration, tolerance, freedom and democracy that have such contemporary relevance, as well as the longstanding relationship between the UK and the US and the history of Thanksgiving, ensuring the Mayflower’s legacy lives on.

There are over 35 million descendants of the passengers and crew who sailed on the Mayflower. The Mayflower 400 UK national visitor project aims to reach out to the descendants and other ancestral tourists to invite them to visit England and be a part of the anniversary year. [Mayflower400UK.org](http://Mayflower400UK.org)

### About Plymouth 400, Inc.

Plymouth 400, Inc. is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 2009 in Plymouth, Massachusetts formed to lead the planning and execution of programs and events commemorating the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower voyage and the founding of Plymouth Colony in 1620. The Plymouth 400 Commemoration will highlight the cultural contributions and American traditions that began with the interaction of the Wampanoag and English peoples, a story that significantly shaped the building of America. [www.Plymouth400inc.org](http://www.Plymouth400inc.org)

(Above) The NEHGS Library and Research Center is located at 99-101 Newbury Street in Boston's Back Bay. It is the headquarters of American Ancestors and the site of a gathering today of representatives of four nations who will announce plans for the 400th commemoration program for [Mayflower 2020](http://Mayflower2020.org).