



The Pilgrim Press

The Pilgrims lived in the city of Leiden between 1609 and 1620. They worked in crafts and trades to support their families.

Towards the end of the Pilgrims' stay in Leiden, William Brewster operated a printing press. Between 1617 and 1619, this press, known informally today as the "Pilgrim press," printed and distributed controversial religious books. These books were banned by English law and had to be smuggled into the country.

Brewster printed two books by David Calderwood that were directly critical of King James I of England. The English ambassador to Holland instigated a search for William Brewster and his press. Brewster went into hiding but his house in Leiden was searched and his printing type seized. The next year, the Pilgrims journeyed to Plymouth on the *Mayflower*. The Pilgrims never set up a press in Plymouth and, in fact, there were no presses in Plymouth until the late 18th century.



Several of the "Brewster imprints" published by the "Pilgrim press" in Leiden feature the "Brewster bear."

The Library of the Pilgrim Society contains a number of "Pilgrim press" books, available to scholarly researchers by appointment. A small selection of the "Pilgrim press" books is always on display in Pilgrim Hall.