

**THE NEBRASKA SOCIETY OF MAYFLOWER DESCENDANTS
BURT & BECKY WHEDON 2016 MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENT**

THIS YEAR'S AWARD IS \$1,620.

**NATALIE TERESA BIELENBERG
MILLARD SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL/OMAHA**



NATALIE IS A SENIOR AT MILLARD SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL IN OMAHA WHERE SHE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN MARCHING AND CONCERT BAND, ORCHESTRA AND VOLLEYBALL. SHE RECEIVED A SILVER MEDAL ON NATIONAL SPANISH EXAMS IN 2013 AND 2015 AND IS AN AP SCHOLAR. HANNAH IS ALSO A VOLUNTEER SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

IN HER LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION, NATALIE'S SPANISH TEACHER, JUVENTINA C. SLOTER, WROTE "NATALIE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING STUDENTS I HAVE EVER HAD THE PLEASURE OF KNOWING IN MY 26 YEARS OF TEACHING. NATALIE IS A YOUNG PERSON WITH OUTSTANDING CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP QUALITIES."

THIS YEAR'S ESSAY TOPIC FOCUSES ON THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT:

ON NOVEMBER 11, 1620, THE PILGRIMS COMPOSED AND SIGNED A DOCUMENT WE NOW KNOW AS THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT. SHIPS VISITING PLYMOUTH COLONY GAVE THE PILGRIMS THE OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE LETTERS TO THEIR FAMILIES IN ENGLAND AND HOLLAND.

APPLICANTS WERE ASKED TO COMPOSE AN ESSAY, BETWEEN 750 AND 1,000 WORDS, IN THE FORM OF A LETTER TO FAMILY IN ENGLAND DESCRIBING THE IMPACT THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT HAD ON THE EARLY LIFE OF PLYMOUTH COLONY. THE ESSAY INCLUDED REFERENCES TO DOCUMENT THE FACTS IN THE LETTER.

ESSAYS WERE EVALUATED FOR CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, STYLE, GRAMMAR AND CREATIVITY. SOURCES WERE CITED IN APPROPRIATE BIBLIOGRAPHIC STYLE.

**PLIMOTH, MASSACHUSETTS
APRIL 3 ANNO 1621**

DEAREST BROTHER,

WHAT A TRYING TIME THIS JOURNEY HAS BEEN! IT TOOK MORE THAN TWO MONTHS—INDEED, SIXTY SIX DAYS!—TO ARRIVE. NOT ONLY THAT, BUT WE DIDN'T EVEN MAKE IT TO OUR ORIGINAL DESTINATION IN VIRGINIA. RATHER, THE MEN FOUND IT PRUDENT TO SAIL TO PLIMOTH INSTEAD, DUE TO VERY SEVERE STORMS AND A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH SHIPWRECK. HOWEVER, BEFORE I GO ON ABOUT THAT, I MUST TELL YOU THE EXCITING NEWS: MY BABY WAS BORN ABOARD THE MAYFLOWER, SAFE AND HEALTHY. STEPHEN AND I WERE BLESSED WITH A SON. HIS NAME IS OCEANUS, FOR HE WAS BORN ON THE OCEAN. GIVING BIRTH TO DAMARIS MAY HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT, BUT I NEVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED THE CHALLENGE OF GIVING BIRTH ON A SHIP WITH SO MUCH SEA SICKNESS, SO MANY PEOPLE, AND SO MUCH MOVEMENT FROM THE BOAT AROUND (“PLIMOTH PLANTATION.”).

WE HAD QUITE A SCARE WITH SOME OF THE PEOPLE ON BOARD. I DO NOT KNOW ALL OF THE DETAILS, HOWEVER IT SEEMS THAT HERE IN PLIMOTH WE ARE OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY—THE VIRGINIA COMPANY PATENT—AGREED UPON IN ENGLAND. THE PILGRIM LEADER, MR. WILLIAM BRADFORD, WAS FRIGHTENED BY TALK AMONG SOME OF THE MEN ON BOARD OF THEIR LACK OF OBLIGATION TO FOLLOW THE PILGRIM RULES (HISTORY.COM STAFF). THIS PROBABLY REMINDED THEM OF THE NEW WORLD’S EARLIER SETTLERS. THEIR SETTLEMENT FAILED BECAUSE OF A LACK OF GOVERNMENT (ALL ABOUT GOD MINISTRIES). I, TOO, WAS FRIGHTENED OF WHAT THOSE PEOPLE MIGHT DO WITHOUT RULES TO KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL. IT IS A GOOD THING THAT OUR MEN ARE SO SMART. THEY DECIDED TO HAVE THE MAN OF EACH FAMILY GET TOGETHER TO FORM A WRITTEN AGREEMENT. TOGETHER THEY COMPOSED A COMPACT THAT BOUND ANYONE WHO SIGNED TO COMPLY WITH ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT THAT MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED AFTER WE HAD LANDED. BEFORE ANY ADULT MALE COULD GO ASHORE, HE WAS REQUIRED TO SIGN THIS AGREEMENT (HISTORY.COM STAFF).

ONCE THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT HAD BEEN SIGNED BY ALL OF THE MEN, THEY BEGAN BUILDING OUR VILLAGE. WE LIVED ON THE SHIP FOR

SOME MONTHS AFTER ANCHORING OFF THE SHORE OF PLIMOTH. DURING THE DAYS, THE MEN WOULD ROW ASHORE TO BUILD THE HOUSES; AFTER SUNSET THEY WOULD RETURN, EXHAUSTED AND FREEZING COLD. WHAT A WRETCHED TIME THAT WAS! EVERYONE, BUT ESPECIALLY THE MEN, WAS COLD AND WET ALL OF THE TIME. THERE SIMPLY WAS NO ESCAPING IT. BECAUSE OF THIS, PEOPLE STARTED TO GET VERY UNWELL, WITH COLDS, COUGHS, FEVERS, AND JUST GENERAL SICKNESS. ABOUT HALF OF THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO THE NEW WORLD ON THE MAYFLOWER DIED THIS PAST WINTER, AND I SUPPOSE I AM EXCEPTIONALLY LUCKY TO HAVE SURVIVED. IT TOOK UNTIL JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO FOR ENOUGH HOUSES TO BE BUILT SO THAT EVERYONE COULD LIVE ON LAND. HOW STRANGE IT IS TO NO LONGER CONSTANTLY FEEL THE ROCKING OF THE SHIP BENEATH MY FEET! ALSO STRANGE ARE THE RANDOM THINGS WE KEEP FINDING IN THE AREA AROUND OUR VILLAGE. IT WOULD SEEM THAT SOME GROUP OF PEOPLE LIVED HERE IN PLIMOTH BEFORE US, BUT EVIDENTLY THEY LEFT IN A GREAT HURRY, FOR THEY LEFT MANY OF THEIR STRANGE POSSESSIONS BEHIND. IN JUST TWO DAYS THE MAYFLOWER, CARRYING THIS LETTER, WILL LEAVE IN ORDER TO RETURN TO ENGLAND (“PLIMOTH PLANTATION.”).

OUR MAYFLOWER COMPACT IS ONLY TEMPORARY, OF COURSE, BUT IT IS LEGALLY BINDING, WHICH IS VERY REASSURING TO ME. I DO BELIEVE THAT IT HAS CREATED A PEACE HERE WHICH OTHERWISE MIGHT NOT HAVE EXISTED. AT ANY RATE, IT WILL SERVE US WELL UNTIL THE COMPANY CAN RECEIVE FORMAL PERMISSION FROM THE COUNCIL OF NEW ENGLAND (JOHNSON). ALTHOUGH I DID NOT WANT TO COME HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE, I AM STARTING TO HAVE MORE HOPE FOR MY FAMILY’S LIFE HERE. MY HUSBAND HAS EXPLAINED TO ME THAT HERE IN PLIMOTH HE WILL OWN LAND, WHEREAS BACK IN ENGLAND HE DID NOT. HE HAS BEEN HERE TO THE NEW WORLD BEFORE AND HE IS CONVINCED THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE A BETTER LIFE HERE (“ON THE MAYFLOWER: ELIZABETH HOPKINS, PASSENGER | SCHOLASTIC.COM.”). MY HOPE IS THAT, BECAUSE OF THE LAND WE’LL OWN AND THANKS TO THIS MAYFLOWER COMPACT, OCEANUS AND THE REST OF MY AND STEPHEN’S CHILDREN—BOTH THOSE BORN ALREADY AND THOSE YET UNBORN—WILL BE ABLE TO GROW UP SAFELY HERE IN THE NEW WORLD AND LEAD GOOD, GOD-FEARING LIVES.

WHEN YOU RECEIVE THIS LETTER, KNOW THAT I AM THINKING OF YOU AND THAT I MISS YOU. PLEASE SEND MY LOVE AND BY VERY BEST

**REGARDS TO ALL OF OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY BACK IN ENGLAND. DO
WRITE BACK TO ME SOON!**

SINCERELY AND LOVINGLY YOURS,

**YOUR SISTER,
ELIZABETH HOPKINS**

WORKS CITED

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