

**THE NEBRASKA SOCIETY OF MAYFLOWER DESCENDANTS
BURT & BECKY WHEDON 2018 MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENT**

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

**CASSIDY AMBER LOUCKS
RALSTON HIGH SCHOOL/RALSTON**



CASSIDY IS 2018 VALEDICTORIAN, THESPIAN PRESIDENT, NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY TUTORING OFFICER, SENIOR CLASS OFFICER AND RAMBASSADOR. SHE IS AN ACTIVE VOLUNTEER AT RALSTON COMMUNITY THEATRE AND PARTICIPATES IN GIRL'S TENNIS AND GIRL'S GOLF.

SHE WORKS AT VILLAGE INN AS A HOSTESS/SERVER AND AT WHITNEY'S LANDSCAPING. CASSIDY PLANS TO STUDY MARINE BIOLOGY AT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY IN FT. LAUDERDALE.

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.

MARCH 29TH ANNO. 1621

DEAR READER,

I ASK YOU TO RECALL THE COLOR BLUE. IMAGINE ITS PRESENCE WHEREVER YOU TURN FOR OVER TWO MONTHS, FROM THE DISTANT SKIES ABOVE TO THE SWIRLING DEPTHS BELOW. IMAGINE THE BLUE OF THE SEA CHURNING AFTER A RAGING STORM, A ONCE RESPECTABLE DRESS BLEACHED FROM CONSTANT EXPOSURE TO SUN AND SALTWATER. IMAGINE THE DEEP BLUE SHADOWS OF PINE TREES ON FRESHLY FALLEN SNOW, ALL OF CREATION BOWED IN SOLITUDE. IMAGINE THE LIPS OF LOVED ONES, STAINED BLUE FROM THE COLD WINTER, AND THE GRAY BLUE STONES TO MARK THEIR GRAVES. FINALLY, THINK OF THE ENDLESS BLUE SKY THE FIRST DAYS OF SPRING, THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS. I CANNOT ESCAPE THE COLOR BLUE, AND SO IT IS ONLY FITTING I WRITE THIS ON THE SEASHORE, STARING FORWARD INTO THE DEPTHS WHICH BROUGHT ME HERE. MY NAME IS ELIZABETH TILLEY, AND I AM MOST PROUDLY A MEMBER OF THE PLYMOUTH COLONY.

FIRST READER, LET ME DESCRIBE TO YOU MY JOURNEY TO THE NEW WORLD. MY FAMILY AND I DEPARTED FROM PLYMOUTH SEPTEMBER SIXTH, ON THE MAYFLOWER. OUR JOURNEY FARED WELL IN THE BEGINNING, THE ONLY AILMENTS WERE CASES OF SEASICKNESS. NEVERTHELESS, THE SECOND LEG WAS A MUCH ROUGHER PASSAGE. CONSTANT STORMS ASSAILED MAN AND WOMAN, MASTER AND SERVANT

ALIKE. THE ONLY GLIMMER OF LIGHT WAS IN THE FORM OF A BABY BOY, OCEANUS, BORN TO STEPHEN AND ELIZABETH HOPKINS DURING THE JOURNEY. IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE NINTH OF NOVEMBER THAT WE FIRST GLIMPSED OUR NEW HOME.

OUR SHIP LANDED MUCH FARTHER NORTH THAN PLANNED, OFF THE COAST OF MASSACHUSETTS. THOUGH WE ENDEAVORED TO CONTINUE OUR VOYAGE TOWARDS VIRGINIA, THE COMBINATION OF GHASTLY WEATHER, A DAMAGED SHIP, AND AILING PASSENGERS COMPELLED US TO REMAIN ISOLATED FROM OTHER SETTLERS. OUR COURSE OF ACTION WAS UNCERTAIN; WE HAD SECURED A CONTRACT FROM THE VIRGINIA COMPANY TO SETTLE NEAR THE HUDSON RIVER, BUT THE MAYFLOWER DID NOT REACH ITS INTENDED DESTINATION. DID WE CONTINUE TO LIVE AS IF UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION, OR HAD THE CONTRACT BEEN ANNULLED? IT WAS CLEAR WE NEEDED SOME FORM OF GOVERNMENT, BUT MANY ARGUMENTS AROSE CONCERNING ITS CREATION AND DETAILINGS.

OUT OF THESE ARGUMENTS AROSE THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT. IT PROMISED THAT WE WOULD WORK TOGETHER TO FORM A UNIFYING SOCIETY, AND THAT WE WOULD CREATE AND ENACT VARIOUS LAWS AND OTHER ORDINANCES AND FOLLOW THEM FOR THE GOOD OF THE COLONY. 41 MEN ABOARD SIGNED IT, INCLUDING MY DEAR FATHER AND UNCLE. ALTHOUGH A GREAT PART OF OUR COMPANY HAD BEEN STRANGERS TO ONE ANOTHER, THIS DOCUMENT FELT LIKE THE FIRST PROMISING STEP TOWARDS A FAIR FUTURE. WE MAY HAVE COME FROM DIFFERENT DEGREES AND FAITHS, BUT THE DOCUMENT WAS A CONJOINT ACTION.

WERE IT NOT FOR THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT, I AM CONFIDENT WE WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED THE WINTER. AT FIRST, WE RESIDED ON THE MAYFLOWER, WHILE THE MEN MADE EXCURSIONS EACH DAY TO FIND THE BEST SETTLING PLACE. BY CHRISTMAS, WE HAD CHOSEN A LOCATION, BUT THE WEATHER FAIRED TOO POOR TO BUILD MORE THAN A FEW STRUCTURES. THUS, OUR QUARTERS REMAINED CONFINED TO THE MAYFLOWER. HERE THE SICKNESS BEGAN TO SPREAD. AS THE MEN RETURNED FROM EXCURSIONS DRENCHED AND FROZEN, THEY SPREAD SEVERE MALADY TO THE PEOPLE. AT FIRST, IT WAS ONE OR TWO, BUT IN THE THREE MONTHS THROUGH THE DEAD OF WINTER, WE LOST OVER HALF OUR NUMBER. THIS INCLUDES MY MOTHER AND FATHER, JOAN AND JOHN

TILLEY, AS WELL AS AUNT AGNES AND UNCLE EDWARD. LET MY LETTER BE A RECORD OF THEIR UNDENIABLE BRAVERY, AND THE INSPIRATION THEY PROVIDE TO ME. I REFLECT UPON WHY I LIVED AND THEY DIED, BUT I DO BELIEVE IN HIS PLAN, AND HIS WILL BE DONE. IT IS TRULY A TEST OF OUR DEVOTION TO ONE ANOTHER AND OUR CAUSE TO HAVE SUFFERED THESE FATES. THE SICKNESS MAY HAVE MADE OUR BODIES WEAK, BUT THE COMPACT KEPT OUR HEARTS AND MINDS UNITED AND STRONG, RATHER THAN DESCEND INTO THE MADNESS SO LIKELY TO COME AFTER GREAT LOSS.

NOW AS WE NEAR THE END OF MARCH, WE HAVE MOVED PERMANENTLY TO THE SHORE, AND HAVE FURTHER ESTABLISHED OUR COLONY. OUR LAW DERIVES ITS POWER FROM THE GOVERNED, NOT THE FIXED MIND OF KINGS, AND THE COMPACT IS LIVING PROOF THAT ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE FOUNDATION OF STRONG GOVERNMENT AND HIS GRACE. OUR SURVIVAL SETS A PRECEDENT FOR YEARS TO COME, AND THUS, MANY OTHER COLONISTS WRITE TO FAMILY ACROSS THE SEA, ENTREATING THEM TO JOIN US ON THIS GREAT EXPERIMENT OF THE HEARTS OF MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE. ALTHOUGH I AM ORPHANED HERE, I DO NOT FEEL ALONE. MY FAMILY AND MY FAITH REMAIN STRONG IN MY HEART, AND I KNOW THE WORSE HAS SURELY PASSED.

THE MAYFLOWER WILL RETURN TO ENGLAND IN A WEEK, BUT THIS LETTER WILL NOT BE ON IT. I PLACE MY MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE, IN THE HOPES IT WILL FIND ANOTHER SOUL LIKE MINE. SPRING IS DESCENDING UPON OUR COLONY AND I DRAW STRENGTH FROM THE LAND, FROM MY PEOPLE. AS NEW BLADES OF GRASS PUSH THROUGH LADEN MUD, SO WE FORAGE TOGETHER IN ESTABLISHING THIS BRAVE NEW WORLD. ABOVE ALL, I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF GOD'S GRACE, AND MY PEOPLE, THAT WE WILL NEVER SURRENDER FROM THE CREATION OF A WORLD THAT PROVIDES FREEDOM, PROTECTION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

**PRAY THEE REMEMBER ME,
ELIZABETH TILLEY**

SOURCES:

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EAR GRANDFATHER,**