

**THE NEBRASKA SOCIETY OF MAYFLOWER DESCENDANTS
BURT & BECKY WHEDON 2021 MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENT**

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

**SIERRA RAE LYNN BRYANT
NORRIS HIGH SCHOOL/FIRTH**



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.

DECEMBER 8, 1620

61 WEST STREET

DORKING, ENGLAND

TO MY DEAREST CHILDREN, SARAH AND WILLIAM,

I INDITE TO TELL OF THE NEW WORLD. TO READ, HOWEVER, IS NOT TO BEHOLD ITS LURKING CREATURES, WEATHER ITS BITTER WINDS, OR TREAD ITS VIRGIN GROUND. THOUGH MY BODY BEARS FORTY-EIGHT YEARS, AS I CROUCH IN MY ACQUAINTED, CRAMPED CORNER OF OUR MAYFLOWER, SHELTERED FROM THE ICY WINDS, FLOATING ON THE WATERS THAT BROUGHT US HERE, AND HAVING BEEN ONE TO HAVE SET FOOT ON THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY, I FEEL AS A YOUNG STAG ONCE MORE. IT IS WITH THIS FRESH SPIRIT, AS OF YOUTH, THAT I ENDEAVOR TO WRITE OF OUR VOYAGE, THE NEW WORLD, AND, MOST SURELY, THE EXPERIENCES OF MYSELF AND OUR FAMILY - LOVELY ALICE, PRISCILLA, KID JOSEPH, AND, HUMBLE SERVANT, ROBERT CARTER.

I WRITE, FOREMOST, TO RELAY THE SUITABLE CONDITION OF OUR FAMILY. REGRETFULLY, THE SAME CANNOT BE SAID FOR MUCH OF OUR COMPANY. THIS FIRST WINTER IN THE NEW WORLD HAS PROVEN PERILOUS AND GRIM, MORE SEVERE THAN ALL THE WINTERS IN OUR HOME OF DORKING. COLD AND HUNGER HATH STRICKEN US GREATLY. I CONFESS, WE FIND OURSELVES GRAVELY ILL-PREPARED, LACKING SUFFICIENT RATIONS OF RAIMENT AND MEAT, EVEN FOR SUBSISTENCE; OUR LACK OF SETTLEMENT HATH CONFINED US TO QUARTERS OF OUR VESSEL. EACH DAY, MORE SOULS SUCCUMB TO WINTER AND PESTILENCE, WHICH PLAGUE US PERSISTENTLY. TWO MORNS PASSED, JASPER MORE, A LAD, NONE MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS OF AGE, FELL TO SICKNESS. HIS PASSING HATH STRICKEN ALICE GREATLY WITH GRIEF; SHE INCREASES IN HER FEAR FOR PRISCILLA AND JOSEPH. WERE JASPER'S EXPIRY NOT SORROWFUL ENOUGH, WE MOURN ALSO THE LOSS OF THE WIFE OF WILLIAM BRADFORD. UPON YESTERDAY'S RETURN TO THE MAYFLOWER, WE LEARNT FAIR DOROTHY HAD SLIPPED ON THE SLICK OF THE GREAT SHIP'S DECK, FALLEN OVERBOARD, AND DROWNED IN THE WATERS BELOW. FOLLOWING THIS PASSING, THERE IS GREATER DIFFICULTY IN LEAVING BEHIND ALICE AND THE CHILDREN TO PARTAKE IN THE EXPLORATIONS OF THE NEW WORLD, AND, INDEED, THE WIND AND BITING COLD HATH RENDERED OUR ENDEAVORS INEFFECTUAL.

I AM BURDENED GREATLY BY THE GRIEF ALICE SUFFERS, AND I, ALSO, AM PLAGUED BY BOUTS OF WORRIEDNESS AND DESPAIR. FOR, AFTER MANY UNSUCCESSFUL VALES DUE TO THE SORRY ESTATE OF OUR SISTER SHIP, THE SPEEDWELL, ALICE, JOSEPH, PRISCILLA, ROBERT, AND I WERE CONFINED TO OUR DAMP CORNER FOR SIXTY-SIX DAYS. WHILST TAME WATERS ACCOMPANIED THE FIRST THIRTY, TERRIBLE STORMS FOLLOWED, BATTERING OUR MAYFLOWER FOR WEEKS. ON ONE OCCASION, AS ANGRY WATERS EMERGED FROM THE PLANKS BENEATH OUR FEET, MY EARS DID PERCEIVE A TERRIBLE CRACK, AND, FROM DOWN IN

OUR DWELLING, I FELT THE MAYFLOWER SHAKE MIGHTILY. I THEN BEHELD ALICE, HER DRESS SOAKED IN SEA WATER, DRAWING OUR CHILDREN TO HERSELF, CRYING INTO THE MAT OF JOSEPH'S HAIR. THROUGH MANY DARK AND SOLEMN NIGHTS, ALICE'S FEAR ON THE NIGHT OUR SHIP'S WOODEN BEAM FELL VICTIM TO THE STORM OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC, REMAINED IN MY MIND. EACH NIGHT, AS ALICE AND THE CHILDREN SLEPT, I PETITIONED OUR LORD, WITH GREAT PERSISTENCE, THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER OUR SHIP TO LAND.

AFTER OVER TWO MONTHS AT SEA, LAND WAS SIGHTED ON NOVEMBER THE NINTH. IT WAS A DAY OF GREAT HOPE AND PROMISE. WE LANDED, FIRST, A DISTANCE NORTH OF OUR ANTICIPATED DESTINATION; SEVERAL DAYS OF ATTEMPTED VOYAGE SOUTH, TO THE COLONY OF VIRGINIA, PROVED THE MAYFLOWER NO MATCH FOR THE STRENGTH OF THE WINTER SEA, COMPELLING US TO ANCHOR IN THE HARBOR OF OUR ARRIVAL. MANY ABOARD BEGAN TO QUESTION WHETHER THEY SHOULD ABIDE BY THE VIRGINIAN CHARTER, OBSERVING THAT THERE WERE NONE TO COMMAND OR GOVERN THEM IN THIS REGION. THIS AFFAIR CONCERNED THE PURITANS, AS WELL AS MYSELF AND MR. WILLIAM BRADFORD, A SCRIBE OF A MAN, STAINED WITH INK FROM HIS THOROUGHGOING DOCUMENTATION OF OUR MAYFLOWER'S JOURNEY TO FREEDOM.

IN EFFORT TO HASTILY QUELL THE FORTHCOMING REBELLION, WE PASSENGERS CONVENED TO FORM, FOR OURSELVES, A CODE OF LAWS. MANIFEST IN OUR CHARTER WAS A CONSENSUS THAT WE REMAIN LOYAL SUBJECTS TO OUR KING JAMES, LIVE ACCORDING TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, AND ACT TOGETHER FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OUR NEW SETTLEMENT, HONORING OUR NEWLY FOUNDED COMPACT. ON THE DAY OF NOVEMBER THE ELEVENTH OF THIS YEAR, SIXTEEN-TWENTY, OUR LAWS WERE PUT TO PAPER, AND RATIFIED BY FORTY-ONE MEN, MYSELF AMONG THEM. OUR SET OF ORDINANCES IS NOT MERELY AN INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNANCE, BUT AS A FIRST SIGN OF THE HOPE AND FREEDOM TO BE GAINED IN THIS NEW WORLD. I AM A GOD-FEARING HUSBAND, FATHER, AND PROUD MEMBER OF OUR NEW COLONY. TO ENDEAVOR TO DESCRIBE THE JOY OF MY HEART TO BEHOLD MY NAME, *WILLIAMS MULLINS*, UPON OUR COMPACT WOULD BE BUT VANITY.

DESPITE OUR PERSISTENT EXPLORATIONS OF THE LAND, AN APPROPRIATE SETTLEMENT HATH YET TO BE FOUND. BITTER WINTER HAS FORCED RETREAT TO THE SHIP, WHERE CONDITIONS WORSEN BY THE HOUR, AND DEATH HATH TAKEN MANY ALICE, ROBERT, THE CHILDREN, AND I, CALLED FRIENDS. AS OUR FAMILY GATHERS FOR WARMTH, WE ENDURE, CONSTANTLY, THE SOUND OF COUGHING, WAILING OF ILL CHILDREN, AND GRUMBLING OF APPETITE.

PERHAPS IN SELF-MINDEDNESS, WITH ME I STOWED BOOTS AND SHOES OF ALL VARIETIES; ABSENT THE PRACTICE OF MY CRAFT, I DO YEARN, ONCE AGAIN, TO BE JOINED WITH THE RICH FRAGRANCE OF LEATHER AND POLISH. WITH EACH PASSING SUN, THE BROWN LEATHER DYE THAT ONCE RESIDED IN THE CREVICES OF MY PALMS HATH FADED, 'TIL I CAN NO MORE DETECT IT. ALAS, MY SPIRIT IS STRONG.

MY SARAH AND WILLIAM, IT IS AMONG DEATHLY ILL PASSENGERS I SIT, SCRIBING BY DIM CANDLELIGHT, UNAWARE IF THIS LETTER EVER SHALL BE GRACED BY THINE EYES. I MEAN NOT TO INSPIRE FEAR IN THEE, BUT IN THE INSTANCE I SHOULD FALL TO WINTER OR SICKNESS, I SHALL PREPARE A WILL, BY WHICH YOU EACH SHALL SEE A SHARE OF MY ESTATE. FORGET

**NOT THAT I REMEMBER AND PRAY FOR THEE AND HOPE THIS LETTER WOULD, ONE DAY, FIND
THEE IN RIGHT HEALTH AND SPIRIT.**

LOVINGLY,

WILLIAM MULLINS