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Making an Impact

When my grandma, who is a registered member of the Society of Mayflower Descendants, told me William Bradford and his granddaughter, Dr. Hannah Bradford Ripley, were my ancestors, I initially had no idea who they were. That soon changed when I learned that William Bradford had signed the Mayflower Compact in 1620 and was the first governor of Plymouth Plantation. Although, my interest in the Bradford family hadn't started to blossom until a few years ago when I was tasked to write a research paper on a prominent person in American History. With a bit of prompting from my family, I chose Dr. Hannah Bradford Ripley. At first, I wasn't very intrigued by Hannah and her colonial customs but that soon changed when I found out what a trailblazer Hannah truly was.

Dr. Hannah Bradford Ripley, a woman of excellent education, started her career as a physician in 1682, a mere sixty-two years after William Bradford first came to America and founded Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts. Despite all odds, she became the first woman doctor in the colonies even though it was considered a man's profession. She is undoubtedly an inspiration to female physicians even today. She is an inspiration to me as well since her story shows us that although you may encounter hardships you can overcome them if you persevere. It gives me so much pride to say that Dr. Hannah Bradford Ripley is my tenth great-grandmother.

Hannah impacted her community in many ways. She brought help and care to those who needed it. She also paved the way for other women to become physicians as well. I would like to

follow Hannah's lead by using my skills to help my community thrive. Thanks to her unforgettable story, I have a drive to live up to her example and achieve the impossible whether big or small because you can't have a healthy community without those who are willing to help it flourish.

The Bradford family's story of perseverance is most definitely an incredible one. William Bradford had lived in Holland for eleven years when he and a group of people, who would later be known as the Pilgrims, became concerned with the worldliness of the culture around them. Braving the seas in 1620, they embarked on a journey to start a colony in America based on biblical principles and rule of law. That voyage has undoubtedly changed our country for the better. America is built on the perseverance of men and women, the trailblazers, and the bold - people like William Bradford, and Dr. Hannah Bradford Ripley. They saw a problem and found a solution to overcome it. They were willing to risk all to make their and everyone else's lives better.

Through all their hardships, the Bradford family persevered, overcoming obstacles and changing the world as they did so. It started with William Bradford when he and the other pilgrims decided to leave everything they knew behind, journey to the New World and begin a new life. The Bradfords' legacy continued with Dr. Hannah Bradford Ripley when she chose to become the first woman doctor in the colonies. Both Hannah and her grandfather are an inspiration and have made an impact on me, the community, and our nation.

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