

JOHN HOWLAND OF THE *MAYFLOWER*

Among those on board the ship *Mayflower* when it finally reached New England in November, 1620 was a young man named John Howland, who came as a servant to John Carver. He was born in Fenstanton, Huntingdonshire, England about 1592. His brothers Arthur and Henry Howland came to this country at a later date.

A religious group called the Separatists had fled from England to Holland to escape the fines and punishments for their illegal religious practices. After about 10 years in Holland, the Separatists found that jobs were hard to find and they were poor. They did not approve of the Dutch customs and way of life, and they did not approve of their children mixing with the Dutch children. They wanted to keep their English customs and their own religion, so they decided to go to the New World in search of religious freedom.

After several financial and political problems, two ships were obtained. The *Speedwell* (which leaked and could not make the trip) sailed from Leyden, Holland with the Separatists. And the *Mayflower* sailed from Southampton, England with the London and English group. One problem after another delayed their departure until they had to cross the stormy North Atlantic Ocean during a bad time of the year. During one bad storm, young Howland fell overboard. But fortunately he got tangled in some ropes and was hauled back on deck. After 66 miserable days at sea with 102 passengers packed in that tiny ship, they finally anchored near Provincetown on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Because of the mumbling and grumbling on board the ship, an agreement was signed by 41 men, including John Howland, called the Mayflower Compact. This famous historic document is an example of our country's earliest democratic government.

It was December and very cold before the area at Plymouth Rock was finally selected as the site to establish Plymouth Colony. Today we call this group of people who settled there the Pilgrims. John Howland survived that first terrible winter when half of those who had just arrived perished from some unidentified epidemic, but both John Carver and his wife died the next Spring.

John Howland married about 1623 Elizabeth Tilley, also a passenger on the *Mayflower*, whose parents John and Joan (Hurst) Tilley, had died during the terrible sickness. Elizabeth was baptized at Henlow in Bedfordshire, England on August 30, 1607. Though he not been an original member of the Separatist group, John Howland served on special committees and was an import lay leader of the Plymouth Church and an upstanding citizen of the community. He died in Plymouth on February 1673 in his 80th year, the last of the men on the *Mayflower* who lived in Plymouth. After her husband's death, widow Elizabeth went to live with a daughter in Swansea and died there on December 21, 1687.

John and Elizabeth (Tilley) Howland had 10 children and 84 grandchildren:

1. DESIRE married JOHN GORHAM. 2. JOHN JR. married MARY LEE. 3. HOPE married JOHN CHIPMAN. 4. ELIZABETH married EPHRAIM HICKS and JOHN DICKINSON. 5. LYDIA married JAMES BROWN. 6. HANNAH married JONATHAN BOSWORTH. 7. JOSEPH married ELIZABETH SOUTHWORTH. 8. RUTH married THOMAS CUSHMAN, grandson of Pilgrim Isaac Allerton of the *Mayflower*. 9. JABEZ married BETHIAH THATCHER. 10. ISAAC married ELIZABETH VAUGHN.

Which child of Pilgrim John Howland is your Mayflower ancestor?