

WHIST-ory Moments



Howland Family of Dartmouth and New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Sails into the History of Wilmington, Delaware.

By Stacey Inglis, VP/GM Tilton Mansion home to University & Whist Club

The Howland family, similar to the Tilton family, had roots from England and Ireland both settling in Massachusetts when arriving in America in the late 1600's.

George Howland was a whaling merchant. The Howlands had been among the earliest settlers in Old Dartmouth and George had numerous relatives in the area. At the age of 16 he began his career as an apprentice in the office of William Rotch Jr., one of the three leading New Bedford whaling merchants and shipping agents of the day.

For many years George Howland's ships carried freight and cargos from New Bedford, New York City, and Norfolk to a number of European ports including Dublin, Liverpool, Cadiz, Leghorn, Archangel, etc. and

imported a variety of items.

In 1817, George Howland began sending ships on whaling voyages. Some were converted from merchant use, others selected specifically for whaling. His whaling vessels included the *George and Susan*, *Golconda*, *Ann Alexander*, *Hope*, *Cortes*, *Java*, *George Howland*, *Rousseau*, and *Corinthian*.

George Howland continued to send cargoes of oil to Europe, especially to Bremen and Rotterdam; he imported Swedish iron as well as English-made try pots, which he sold to other merchants in the whaling industry. He also sent oil and candles to his American agents in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

On September 29, 1803 George Howland married his cousin,

Elizabeth Howland, the daughter of John Howland. George and Elizabeth had three children, but Elizabeth died on December 12, 1806.

Just seven years later, on April 26, 1810 George Howland married Susanna Howland, the daughter of his cousin Cornelius Howland. George and Susan, had 14 children, 8 of whom died young. Of the 6 children who survived into adulthood, Charles Wing Howland, is the Howland who would move into the Tilton Mansion.

He and his family first lived in Union Springs, New York but moved to Wilmington, Delaware.

Charles Wing Howland moved his family; wife Gulielma and seven children to Wilmington, Delaware in the 1850s.

Charles hired a renowned Philadelphia architect, Robert Morris Smith to enlarge the building. The structure was renovated into what the architect called the "pure Italian style." The tower on the Ninth Street side was built to house a spring water cistern with a power pump for running water in the house. The tower was topped by an observatory. Howland renamed the Tilton mansion, Hilton.

Charles Wing Howland was a Director of the Wilmington Institute; Formed by a merger of the Library of Wilmington and the Young Men's Association for Mutual Improvements. The merger was passed by legislation on January 27, 1859.

Among its first officers were its President, Joshua Heald, a Vice President William Hilles. Hilles' sister Gulielma Maria Hilles was married to Charles Wing Howland. Another Vice President of the Wilmington Institute was George Washington Bush whose son Joshua Danforth Bush bought the Tilton Mansion from Howland and would go on to become the 6th Lieutenant Governor of Delaware.

In 1857, a stock committee had been formed to oversee the merger and the building of the home for the new entity. Several Wilmington notables were among the committee members: William Tatnall, William Hilles, Joshua Canby and George W. Bush.

Institution Hall was to be located with its façade on Market, between 8th & Shipley. The architect for the building was S.D. Button of Philadelphia.

Charles Samuel Howland married Mary Catherine Shipley of Ohio on December 7, 1873. Charles and Mary built a house at 808 N. Broom Street across from the Tilton Mansion on 805 N. Broom Street. When the Howlands moved to Lower Merion Township in Pennsylvania, the property was sold to Coleman DuPont. The property is presently home to the Greek Church. (Photo below: 808 N. Broom St.)



Charles S. Howland was the Treasurer of the Jackson & Sharp Company. He was educated at the Clark Taylor School and Haverford College.

Charles Samuel and Mary had a son Murray Shipley Howland who became a clergyman and moved to Buffalo, NY. He was the Reverend of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church of Buffalo.

Their daughter Alice Guliema Howland became Associate Principal of the Misses Shipley Schools of Bryn Mawr in Lower Merion, PA.

Gulierma Maria Howland was born in Wilmington in 1822. After her husband Charles Wing Howland passed away in February of 1896, the 1900 census shows her still living in

the Tilton Mansion with her widowed daughter Margaret Howland Cookman 50, her grandson Harold 16, her grand-daughter Gertrude Maria and their Irish cook named Margaret Tierney.

Over the years, the Howlands had several Irish, Swiss and German live-in servants, including a gardener named Edward, Mary O'Neal and Mary Lenard.

By the time Gulielma passed away in 1907, she was living at 712 West Street in Wilmington according to her death certificate.

Gulielma's father Samuel's occupation was shown in the 1850's U.S. Census as a *Gentleman: a man of leisure*. His death certificate however, shows him as a retired professor. Perhaps he preferred to be remembered as man of leisure.

History doesn't share why the Howlands are predominately buried in Lower Merion up in Pennsylvania instead of here in Delaware.

We do know that Gulielma moved out sometime between 1900 and 1907 when she passed away in her West Street home.

But we do know the family who purchased the Tilton Mansion after the Howlands; the Bush family. Family friends of the Howlands.

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