

# DOWNLOAD PDF INFANT MORTALITY: RESULTS OF A FIELD STUDY IN NEW BEDFORD, MASS.

## Chapter 1 : New Bedford Preservation Society

*Infant mortality: results of a field study in New Bedford, Mass., based on births in one year.*

It was designed for the singular purpose of providing a quality and aesthetically pleasing environment for textile mill workers. The origins of this development have deep roots in the Quaker tradition of social consciousness, egalitarianism and sense of Christian responsibility. Howland, the man behind the village that bears his name was the son of Matthew and Rachel Howland Born on March 27, he was raised in a household of considerable wealth earned through efforts of his grandfather, George Howland and his father and uncle, George Howland, Jr. Rachel Smith Howland had a life-long career as a committed and tireless social activist. She was a figure of local, regional and even national significance. Always dressed in traditional Quaker clothing, she was acquainted or perhaps they acquainted with her with most of the prominent feminists and social visionaries of her day. She was primarily responsible for mediating and ending the Wamsutta Mill textile strike of She and her husband sponsored and built in the Howland Mission Chapel, a nondenominational house of worship for textile workers on Purchase Street near the Wamsutta Mill. At the end of her life she was still active at the national level in the peace movement. Small wonder that William Howland would not only have the ambition of his father but also the compassion of his mother. After graduation from Brown University in , it is also clear that he followed his own path. As with many in his generation, he did not attend the Monthly Meetings of the Society of Friends. He became a member and vestryman of Grace Episcopal Church. It appears that he traveled extensively. He was also an avid sailor with a sizable yacht and maintained an active membership in the New Bedford Yacht Club. William chose the burgeoning New Bedford textile industry in which to make his mark. After serving a stint as a clerk at the Wamsutta Mill and a year researching the textile industry outside of New Bedford, he successfully organized his own textile mill in , the New Bedford Manufacturing Co. He did so without the financial help of his parents. As wealthy and successful as George, Jr. The catastrophic losses of the Arctic whaling fleets in and again in ruined the firm and the finances of the Howland family. Matthew and Rachel owned considerable property in New Bedford including their residential estate on Hawthorn Street now 81 Hawthorn Street , a wharf and a block-sized parcel on the waterfront at the foot of North Street, the north half of the acreage that is now Hazelwood Park among perhaps other holdings. Before Matthew died in , he sold the North Street property, formerly the site of his counting house, to his son for the New Bedford Manufacturing Co. The house on Hawthorn Street was sold to William W. The Howlands owned the Gothic Revival building in Hazelwood Park that stands north of the more familiar stone house. This building was formerly a barn and was converted to a summer home sometime after The New Bedford Manufacturing Co. It did not make cloth but supplied yarn to the other mills in New Bedford and elsewhere. Howland was Treasurer, a Director and de facto head of the operation. Other directors included Charles W. Clifford, also the first President, Charles W. Plummer and Edward T. As with all of the mills throughout their history in New Bedford, the practice of interlocking directorates was the norm with the Howland mills. Pierce was the son of Andrew G. The elder Pierce was arguably the most powerful man in the textile industry in New Bedford during this time. It appears that much of the financing for the mill came from the Rotch family through the National Bank of Commerce. Rotch scion of the renowned New Bedford whaling dynasty was one of the wealthiest men in New Bedford at the time. His commercial interests in New Bedford spanned the entire spectrum of business activity. The success of the New Bedford Manufacturing Co. The Howland Mills Corporation was conceived in With his investors from the previous project, acres of woods and former nursery land in the south end of the city was painstakingly acquired. Crapo who had left New Bedford many years earlier and eventually became the Governor of Michigan. A large lot was purchased from the estate of Cornelius Howland, a distant relative as well as a number of other parcels. This land is currently bound, approximately by the following streets: With the land acquired and surveyed, the Howland Mills Corporation was incorporated in May of as a producer of

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fine cotton yarns. Rotch was named President, William D. Howland, Treasurer and the directors nearly identical to those at New Bedford Manufacturing. Work was begun immediately on the mill and the residential village. Construction on both projects proceeded rapidly. The mason contractors were Brownell Alfred M. The designer of the mill is not known. It is possible that William had a hand in its design. He was hired by the Potomska Mills around to redesign space at that complex to accommodate new machinery. The mill opened with workers and was equipped with over 30, spindles. Twenty-five of the cottages were constructed by the end of and another twenty-five in . Although much more residential development was planned for the site, it was never undertaken. Clearly, he believed that he could create on a large scale a modern manufacturing environment that would not only be profitable for the shareholders but pleasant for the plant workers. Utopian communities were not uncommon during this period of American history. Factory-owned worker housing was commonplace in New Bedford and elsewhere at this time where labor-intensive mills required many hundreds of hands. The Howland Mill Village was a stunning departure from the norm. The cottages were placed on winding roads at slightly differing angles. Paths wound around and through the village to enhance the feel of a pastoral setting. Fifteen five room cottages and thirty-five seven room cottages were built. A tenement for single male employees was also part of the development. Each residence had indoor plumbing connected to the public sewer system, flush toilet, tub, hot and cold running water and a full, concrete basement among other amenities. In short, there were no hidden agendas. While recruitment of the most skilled workers may have been a goal, there were as many unskilled workers living in the village as skilled. The houses in the village were designed by the Boston architectural partnership of Edmund M. Wheelwright and Parkman B. At the time, Wheelwright and Haven was a relatively young firm although they had other commissions in the area. Wheelwright would later become the city architect for Boston and design a number of notable structures including the Longfellow Bridge. They designed four distinct cottages for the development displaying elements of the prevailing styles of the day, Queen Anne, Shingle and Colonial Revival. The four distinct designs are the gable-end, jerkin head end, gambrel Dutch colonial roof and gambrel-end. There were slight differences from building to building in each style. An example of this variation is seen in the gambrel roof style. Some of the dormers on these homes have jerkin head ends and some have traditional gables. The tenement was built as a double gambrel-end structure, an oversized version of the cottages. The Howland Mill Village became the model of corporate funded worker housing. The national press took notice as well as government sponsored reports. All reviewers highly praised the innovative designs and the attractive environment of the development. The contrast between the new village and other mill-built housing was duly noted by critics. This remarkably generous gesture included scheduled events such as a baseball game with an island team, a bicycle race with cash prizes, a band concert from musicians that also performed on the voyage and a fine noon-time dinner followed by dancing and song in the afternoon. In , the investors, flush with success, established another yarn mill, the Rotch Spinning Co. It differed in name only from the management and directorship of the other Howland mills. It was built on the north end of the Orchard and Bolton Streets site later, the Goodyear plant. The benevolent empire that William D. Howland had envisioned mushroomed to three manufacturing facilities with over one thousand employees operating in excess of , spindles and millions of dollars invested. The heady times were short-lived. The American economy experienced one of its many cyclical depressions with one called the Panic of . The suffering economy came to New Bedford. But not at the Howland mills. For the most part, wages and hours remained at pre-Panic levels at all three mills. Workers at the Howland mills continued to work their full schedule of hours and receive their normal wages. Dividends continued to be paid to shareholders. However, the business conditions that Howland anticipated and hoped for to do not occur. By the spring of , the finances of the three mills were in serious arrears. While Howland had not stolen from the mills he had hidden from the investors the dire nature of the debt the mills had accumulated. Rumors of financial problems at the Howland mills were circulating. Howland had any hope of buying more time, it was swept away by the events at another mill in April,

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