

# John Howland Story and Mayflower Compact Thanksgiving 2022

## John Howland (abt. 1598 - 1673)

### John Howland

Born **about 1598** in **Fenstanton, Huntingdonshire, England** 📍 [uncertain]

Son of Henry Howland and Margaret (Unknown) Howland

Brother of Arthur Howland, George Howland, Humphrey Howland, Henry Howland II, Margaret (Howland) Phillips and Simon Howland

Husband of **Elizabeth (Tilley) Howland** — married about 1623 (to 23 Feb 1673) in Plymouth Colony 📍

Descendants 🌳

Father of Desire (Howland) Gorham, John Howland Jr., Hope (Howland) Chipman, Elizabeth (Howland) Dickinson, Lydia (Howland) Brown, Hannah (Howland) Bosworth, Joseph Howland, Jabez Howland, Ruth (Howland) Cushman and Isaac Howland

Died **23 Feb 1673** at about age 75 in **Plymouth, Plymouth Colony** 📍



John Howland was a passenger on the [Mayflower](#).

### Birth

John Howland, the 1620 *Mayflower* passenger, was the son of Henry Howland of Fenstanton, England, and Margaret. His date of birth is estimated as 1598 based on him being the 4th son, being old enough to sign the Mayflower Compact; being an apprentice in 1620 to John Carver; and marrying about 1623. John's brothers, Arthur and Henry, also migrated to Plymouth, where their Quaker leanings were at odds with the established government and religion. <sup>[3][4]</sup>

### Mayflower

Sept 1620, John Howland sailed on the *Mayflower* as one of two "man-servants" of Gov. Carver.

William Bradfor wrote about this in his book, *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

John almost lost his life by being swept overboard. "In sundry of these storms the winds were so fierce, & the seas so high, as they could not handle any sail, but were forced to hull for days together. And in one of them, as they thus lay adrift in a mighty storm, a lusty young man (called John Howland) coming upon some occasion above the grates, was, with a rolling of the ship, thrown into the sea; but it pleased God that he caught hold of the top-sail halyards which hung over board, & ran out at length; yet he held his should (though he was sundry fathoms

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under water) till he was hauled up by the same rope to the brim of the water, and then with boat hook & other means got into the ship again & his life saved and though he was something ill with it, yet he lived many years after, and became a profitable member both in church and Commonwealth."

### Marriage

John married before the 1623 land division, in Plymouth Colony, fellow *Mayflower* passenger, Elizabeth Tilley. Elizabeth, daughter of John and Joan (Hurst) Tilley, was baptized at Henlow, Bedfordshire, England, 30 Aug 1607. She died, at Swansea, 22 Dec 1687, aged eighty. The Howland's had 10 children.

### Plymouth

1620: 11 Nov, John Howland signed the [Mayflower Compact](#).

1621 Winter: Death of about half the passengers on the *Mayflower*, including Gov. Carver and the entire Tilley family except Elizabeth. John Howland was "man-servant" to [Governor Carver](#) and was part of his household family. The Governor and [his wife](#) were among the fifty Pilgrims who died during the first year at Plymouth. It is believed that John Howland inherited John Carver's estate as the Carvers had no children of their own.

1623: John Howland received 4 acres in the 1623 Land Division

1626, 1627: The expedition to Plymouth was funded by about 70 men, known as "Adventurers." After several years, for various reasons, it was decided to purchase the shares in the colony from these Adventurers. John Howland became one of the group (eight men from Plymouth and four in England) known as "undertakers" who purchased the shares for £1800.

1627: The Plymouth cattle division of 1627 listed John as the head of the fourth lot. His wife, Elizabeth, and children John Jr and Desire were also listed. Their share was one of the 4 heifers that came in the *Jacob*.

1633: The first list of Plymouth freeman in 1633, contains the name of John Howland placed as part of the Council. His name was on subsequent lists of freeman dated 6 Mar 1636/7 and the Plymouth sections in 1639, 1658, and 1670.<sup>1</sup>

1634 April: The Plymouth colonists began trading with the natives of the Kennebec area about 1626. In 1629, they secured legal rights to this trade known as the [Kennebec or Plymouth Patent](#). In April of 1634, when John Howland was in charge of the trading, John Hocking challenged those exclusive rights to trade. John Howland told Hocking to weigh anchor. Hocking replied with angry words, and Howland ordered three of his men to cut the anchor. Unfortunately, the current was strong, so they added a fourth man Moses Talbott. When they reached the ship, Talbott was shot and killed by Hocking, despite Howland's protests that Talbott was only doing as ordered, and that Hocking should shoot himself (Howland) instead. Before any more people could be shot by Hocking, he was shot and killed by someone on Hocking's boat.

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1633-5: Plymouth Colony Assistant

14 Mar 1635/6 John represented the "Duxbury side" in a meeting. He was one of the early settlers in the area known as Duxbury. He sold his property in Duxbury 2 April 1640, but had previously purchased land in Plymouth 2 Feb 1638/9. This property was in the area known as Rocky Nook.

1641: Plymouth Deputy to the Plymouth General Court for about 30 years between 1641 and 1667.

1641-1665: As early as 1641, Mr. John Howland was active in the affairs of the town of Plymouth. He served on committees, as a "rater" (assessor), as surveyor of highways (1649), selectman (1665). About 1665, John fades from the town records and his sons Joseph and Jabez become active. John would have been in his 70s.

1643: John Howland Sr. was on the 1643 list of men in Plymouth "able to bear arms"

1656: In his years in Plymouth Colony John acquired many parcels of land for himself and to see that his children were well settled. Many of these can be found in the Plymouth Colony Records especially in Vol 12.

1659: John Howland served on the committee for Fur trade.

### Death

Death: February 23, 1672/3 at Plymouth, Plymouth Colony. "The 23th of February, 1672, Mr. John Howland, Senior of the town of Plymouth, deceased. He was a godly man and an ancient professor in the way of Christ; he lived until he attained above eighty years in the world. He was one of the first comers into this land, and proved a useful instrument of good in his place, & was the last man that was left of those that came over in the ship called the Mayflower, that lived in Plymouth; he was with honor Interred at the town of Plymouth on the 25 of February, 1672.

### Some Descendants

John Howland is an ancestor to President George Bush, to First Lady Edith (Carrow) Roosevelt (Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt), and to former Vice President Dan Quayle. Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford are descendants of John Howland's brother Henry. Winston Churchill is descended from John Howland's brother Arthur.

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## THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT

Composed by William Bradford Adopted November 11, 1620

This Compact, drawn up in the cabin of the Mayflower, was not a constitution, a document defining and limiting the functions of government. It was, however, the germ of popular government in America. Governor Bradford makes this reference to the circumstances under which the Compact was drawn up and signed: "This day, before we came to harbor, observing some not well affected to unity and concord, but gave some appearance of faction, it was thought good there should be an association and agreement, that we should combine together in one body, and to submit to such government and governors as we should by common consent agree to make and choose, and set our hands to this that follows, word for word."

**In the name of God, Amen.** We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James, **by the grace of God,** of Great Britain, France and Ireland king, defender of the faith, etc., **having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith,** and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually **in the presence of God,** and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape-Cod the 11 of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign lord, King James, of England, France, and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620