

JOHN HOWLAND

OF THE

MAYFLOWER

Volume 1

THE FIRST FIVE GENERATIONS

Documented Descendants Through

his first child **Desire² Howland**

and her husband **Captain John Gorham**

by

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SECOND GENERATION

2. Desire² Howland and Captain John Gorham

1. Desire² Howland (*John*¹) was born in Plymouth, Mass., about 1625 or 1626,¹ the daughter of John and Elizabeth (Tilley) Howland. Desire and her brother, John, were listed with their parents in the Division of Cattle in Plymouth, 22 May 1627 (old style), 1 June 1627 (new style). John's birth date, 24, 2, 1627 (old style) [24 April 1627], was recorded by Judge Sewall who met John² Howland on the road and asked him when he was born. Therefore, Desire must have been the eldest child, born one year or eighteen months earlier than John. Desire died in Barnstable, Mass., 13 October 1683.²

Desire Howland married in Plymouth, about 1643 John Gorham,³ who was baptized in Benefield, Northamptonshire, England, 28 January 1620/1,⁴ the son of Ralph Gorham. Capt. John Gorham was buried in Swansea, Mass, 5 February 1675/6.⁵

The Northamptonshire branch of the Gorhams are supposed to have descended from Sir Hugh de Gorham and his wife, Margaret, daughter of Sir William l'Angevin. Sir Hugh de Gorham, in 1281, possessed the manor of Churchfield in the parish of Oundle, and land in Benefield which had belonged to his wife's father. More than three hundred years later, the baptism of "John Gorram, son of Ralph Gorram" was entered in the Benefield register.⁶

A John Gorham, perhaps this man, was a passenger on board the *Philip*, bound for North America, 20 June 1635, with Richard Morgan, master.⁷ A Ralph Gorham was granted land in Plymouth 2 October 1637 for a house and garden. On 5 March 1637/8, he complained against Frances Sprague. A year later, "Ralph Gorham the older" was presented for breaking the peace. On 1 September 1640 he complained against Ralph Smith and on 2 March 1640/1 Smith complained against Ralph Gorham. On 5 April 1640 he sued Tristram Clark and John Crab for debt.⁸ He then disappeared from Plymouth records.

On 8 March 1648 Desire's father, John Howland, sold to his "son-in-law, John Gorum," half of the lands in Marshfield that he had bought from Governor William Bradford.⁹ In 1672, Desire's mother, Elizabeth Howland, "wife of Mr. John Howland, deceased, came into court at Plymouth and acknowledged that she freely gave and surrendered rights in the lands of her late husband lying in Namasket in the township of Middleboro to Mr. John Gorum of Barnstable,"¹⁰

The exact date of their marriage is not known but Desire was called "Desire Gorum" in her father's will dated 29 May 1672. Additional proof that Desire Howland married John Gorham was found in a land transaction dated 16 February 1673, in which "John Gorum Sen^r of Barnstable" sold to George Dawson, "now resident at Barnstable," land in Middleboro formerly belonging to John Howland and Elizabeth, his wife, and given to the said John Gorum before John Howland's death. The transaction was witnessed by Joseph Laythorpe and John Thompson, and acknowledged 24 February 1673 before Thomas Hinckley, Assistant. Desire, wife of John Gorum, gave her consent 30 April 1674.¹¹

John and Desire Gorham lived in Plymouth after the birth of their first child, Desire, 2 April 1644, and then moved to Marshfield. Their great-grandson, Col. John Gorham, in his "Wast Book," recorded that "John Gorum, alias Gorham - which Son after Having Married With an Howland and Had Sevrall Children Went home to England and Returned Soone again to his family. . . . Moved From Marshfield to Barnstable and Settled there in ord^r to begin a township Called Barnstable. Built Mills - tan fatts &c."¹²

John Gorham's name was on a list of men able to bear arms in Plymouth in 1643. He was chosen constable in Marshfield in 1648. He was made a freeman 4 June 1650 and in 1651 he became a member of the Grand Inquest of Plymouth Colony. He and his family moved to Yarmouth, Mass., in 1652, and then went on to Barnstable where he owned a grist mill and a tannery. He was a surveyor of highways in 1654. As a captain in the militia in King Philip's War, he took part in the Narragansett fight in December 1675, where he was wounded "by having his powder horn Shot and Split against his side," He died of the resulting fever and was buried in Swansea 5 February 1676/7.¹³ His widow, Desire, survived him for more than five years, dying after her father, John Howland, but before her mother, Elizabeth Tilley. Desire was mentioned in her father's will in 1672, but not by her mother in 1686.¹⁴

Desire's husband, Capt. John Gorham, died intestate. On 7 March 1675, Mistress Desire Gorum (*sic*) and her sons, James Gorum and John Gorum, were named as administrators of the estate. The court appointed "Mr. Hinckley, Mr. Chipman and Mr. Huckins" to take care of the estate of the youngest children until they came of age. The inventory, amounting to £710-4-3, was taken 29 February 1675 and sworn to 7 March 1675. It included the dwelling house, barn, upland, meadow, tan vats, a bark mill, and two houses and tools "belonging to the tanning." In the division of Capt. John Gorham's estate, dated Plymouth 7 March 1676/7, widow Desire Gorham received her dower thirds. Son James received "the dwelling house he now lives in," with the barn and half of the upland. Son John Gorham received the tan vats, bark mill, tools, stock and the

other half of the upland. Son Joseph was given forty acres of land next to Joseph Hallet's land, and some meadow. The rest of the estate was divided into five equal parts among the rest of the children, who were named as Jabez, Mercy, Lydia, Hannah and Shubael Gorum. Shubael was allotted £50 for the costs of his education, in addition to receiving his share of the estate. Three married daughters, Desire, Temperance and Elizabeth, had already received £40 each. If there should be an overplus, the married daughters were to share equally with the other children, except that James, the eldest son, was to have a double share.¹⁵

The inventory of Desire's estate was dated 3 August 1683, more than two months before her death, 13 October 1683. On 5 March 1683/4, the Assistants of Plymouth Colony, Gov. Hinckley, Major Bradford, Deputy Gov. Mr. Freeman, Mr. Lothrop and Mr. Thacher, "with the mutual consent of the children then appearing," named as James, John and Joseph Gorham, and with the consent of the sons-in-law, agreed that the eldest son James would receive a double share, according to custom, and the rest of the children, namely John, Joseph, Jabez, Shubael, Desire, Temperance, Elizabeth, deceased, Mercy, Lydia and Hannah, should have an equal portion. As Elizabeth had died, they agreed that her children, not named, "should have an equal part that did belong to their mother."¹⁶

Children (Gorham), born in Plymouth, Marshfield, Yarmouth and Barnstable, Mass.:¹⁷

- +2 i. Desire³, born in Plymouth, 2 April 1644.
- +3 ii. Temperance, born in Marshfield, 5 May 1646.
- +4 iii. Elizabeth, born in Marshfield, 2 April 1648.
- +5 iv. James, born in Marshfield, 28 April 1650.
- +6 v. John, born in Marshfield, 20 February 1651/2.
- +7 vi. Joseph, born in Yarmouth, 16 February 1653/4.
- +8 vii. Jabez, born in Barnstable, 3 August 1656.
- +9 viii. Mercy, born in Barnstable, 20 January 1658.
- +10 ix. Lydia, born in Barnstable, 11 November 1661.
- +11 x. Hannah, born in Barnstable, 28 November 1663.
- +12 xi. Shubael, born in Barnstable, 21 October 1667.

REFERENCES

1. MD 2:72; 10:66 and Franklyn Howland, *Gen. and Biog. Hist. of Arthur, Henry and John Howland* (1885), 323, both transcribed the date in Judge Sewall's Diary, "24, 2, 1627," incorrectly as 24 February 1627. Before 1752, the year of the great calendar change, the new year began in March, which was called "first month." April was "second month." 2. MD 4:217. 3. *Ibid.* 4:153-58. 4. *Ibid.* 5:174; James Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England* 2:281; *Collectanea Topographica and Genealogica* (London 1838) 5:334-36, 342-43. 5. MD 4:153. 6. *Collectanea* 5:342-43. 7. Otis, *Barnstable Families* 1:407. 8. Gorham MS 1:3-4; N.B. Shurtleff, *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth*, Court Orders 1:66, 118; Judicial Acts 7:8. 9. Shurtleff, *Plymouth Colony Records* 12: Deeds. 10. Thomas

A. Weston, *History of the Town of Middleboro* (Boston and New York 1906), 547. 11. *ME* 2:70-77: Plymouth Colony Wills and Inventories 3:1:49-54 (John Howland); Shurtleff *Plymouth Colony Deeds* 4:108 (original), 134 (copy). 12. *MD* 5:177. 13. *Ibid.* 5:179; see Gorham MS 1:2-9 for a long list of activities and court actions. 14. *MD* 2:70-77; 3:54-56. 15. *Ibid.* 4:153-58: Plymouth Colony Records, Wills 3:1:162-64 (John Gorham). 16. *Ibid.* 4:217-20: Records of the Colony of New Plymouth 6:124 (Desire Gorham). 17. *NEHGF* (July 1898) 52:358; *MD* 5:72.