



George W. Howland, Sr. Family Reunion June 2002

FAMILY ORIGIN AND COAT OF ARMS

Arms: Argent, two bars sable, in chief three lions rampant of the last.

Crest: A leopard passant sable, ducally gorged or.

HOWLAND

The first record of this family says he was a "citizen of London, England." A descendant came to Plymouth, Massachusetts on the "Mayflower." He was a member of the Plymouth Colony, 13th Signer of the Mayflower Compact in 1620 and a Commissioner of the United Colonies.

Descendants of this family have fought in the Colonial Wars and the American Revolution. Among the members of this family are business and professional men who have served their fellow men faithfully.

Persons bearing this name can be justly proud of their heritage.

100 Monmouth County Families Represented On Painting Depicting Howland Family Tree

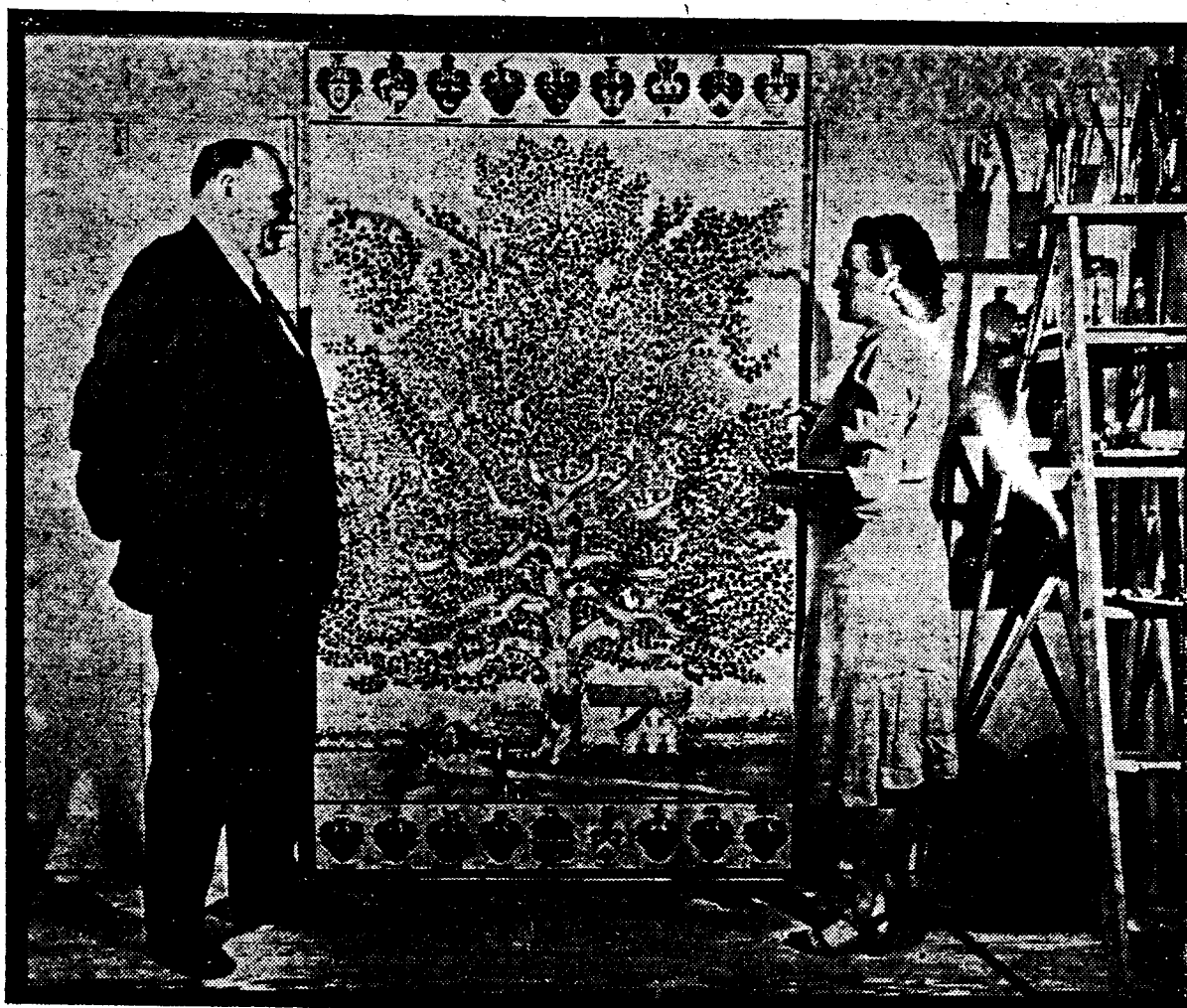
What is considered to be the most remarkable family tree yet conceived and painted in this area is now on exhibition in the window of the Asbury Park Press, where it will be on view until Oct. 1.

Covering a canvas 53 inches by 88 inches, and bordered top and bottom by coats-of-arms, this reproduction of a famous old buttonwood tree that once stood near the continuation of Broadway just outside of the Upper Village of Long Branch, contains more than 3,000 individual leaves upon each of which are from one to four names of members of the family of Jesse A. Howland, Rumson, upon whose commission Viola Ayers Rudloff of Elberon, made the genealogical investigation and painted the tree.

It has taken Mrs. Rudloff more than a year and a half to complete this task, involving as it did the examination of the original records at Freehold, Toms River, Burlington, New Brunswick, and Trenton, in New Jersey, New York and Long Island records in New York city, and the original vital statistics and histories of the New England states, together with numerous privately-owned records and documents. Also, scores of genealogies of individual families, dozens of histories and historical works, dozens of graveyards, both public and private, were examined. Scores of individuals were interviewed in an effort to authenticate every "clue" every "tradition," every "supposition." And finally the careful tabulation of all this information on dozens of charts to establish its correct position on the tree, before making the oil painting.

The setting for the family tree is the original plantation where the first Monmouth county Howlands lived in the early seventeen hundreds, and for the purpose is used the huge buttonwood tree which towered above the homestead six times the height of the house to a height of 150 feet with a limb spread of 175 feet. It was used as a landmark for centuries. Old deeds read, "Beginning at the great buttonwood tree," "On a line with the great buttonwood tree," "East of the great buttonwood tree." Sailors used it from time immemorial as a landmark, for it was fully grown and already ancient when the first white man came across the Atlantic ocean.

All the early explorers in these parts must have sighted it. It was old when Columbus discovered America.



Jesse A. Howland, left, jetty and beach erosion expert of Rumson, with the Jesse A. Howland family tree, being completed by Viola Ayers Rudloff, genealogist, of Elberon, for whom the investigation and painting was an 18-month task. The picture is an exhibition in the window of The Asbury Park Press and more

than 100 Monmouth county families are included in the information on the more than 3,000 leaves which comprise the tree. President Roosevelt, the late Hetty Green, Monmouth County Common Pleas Judge J. Edward Knight are among the notables on the tree

the female branch of the Howland family had invaded the county two generations earlier, making nine generations of Howlands to have lived continuously in this county.

Thru these earlier records it was shown that the wife of Jedediah Allen in Old Shrewsbury Towne was Elizabeth Howland, daughter of the first Henry, brother of Arthur and John, which three were the brothers who came from England between 1620 and 1623 to Plymouth, Mass. Thus one early connecting link was

When Mr. Howland went to the E. T. Osborn and Sons lumber mill in Red Bank to make arrangements for the framing of the picture with wood delivered to Monmouth county by boat in the early 1800's when Oceanport was known as Eatontown Dock, one of the firm, after hearing the story of the tree, asked why Mr. Howland didn't frame the picture with wood of the original buttonwood tree. Mr. Howland replied that he had tried everywhere to trace down that wood and had failed.

the Howland plantation.

The portions of land granted the early settlers in Plymouth were small and they soon began to look about for larger tracts on which to settle, and the Howland brothers went to Duxbury. From here the gradually gravitated farther afield as other new lands were opened up. By 1682 Henry's son Zoeth was in Dartmouth, Mass. Shortly after that his daughter Elizabeth with her husband Jedediah Allen and the 10 children, and members of the

Found an Ancient Wood

By one of those too-strange-to-be-rue coincidences, after Mr. Howland had despaired of ever finding part of this ancient tree with which to frame his picture, and had planned to use other historic wood for the purpose, he located wood from the original tree at the very moment he was ordering the frame made, and was thereby enabled to gratify one of his fondest hopes, and have the family tree framed with part of the tree itself. The homestead was burned in 1911, and the huge tree, which was over 27 feet in circumference at a point six feet above the ground was killed. When it was felled there was no saw in the county large enough to cut the nine foot trunk, but wood from the limbs had been used for fine interior trim and stair cases, and an unused plank had waited and seasoned for 30 years as if for the particular purpose of becoming a memorial, and it is written on the painting so that future generations may be aware of it.

The creation of the Howland tree and the production of a corrected Howland genealogy in printed form which is now under preparation by Mrs. Rudloff, constitute the successful conclusion of a dream which Mr. Howland has cherished for many years. In 1905 he came into possession of a Howland genealogy which didn't even mention his own branch of the family, and such Monmouth county families as were mentioned were incorrectly placed, giving incorrect connections with this famous old family whose descendants include, among many other notables, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Spurred by this slight upon his home county, Mr. Howland, who for years has been an outstanding dock and bulkhead builder and is considered one of the foremost experts on sea jetties and the control of beach erosion, devoted much spare time and effort to tracing down some of the discrepancies which appeared in the first Howland genealogy. He especially wanted to prove the correct connection of the Monmouth county branch of the Howland family with the New England branch.

For a long time, however, his efforts led nowhere but did stimulate an interest in authentic antiques, with which his Rumson home is now furnished, and in old Monmouth county papers and records which he began to acquire privately and from dealers and junk men. Eventually he did get some very old papers in which he could see the name "Howland" appearing many times. When the ancient and faded script was finally deciphered these papers proved to be a real find for they were the wills of his great-great-grandfather and his great-great-great-grandfather.

Later a still earlier will proved that Mr. Howland was the seventh generation of Howlands in Monmouth county, instead of the fifth as he had always believed. Furthermore there came to be proof that

Tree 1,000 Years Old
Mr. Howland believes that the great buttonwood tree, 150 feet high, on the old Howland plantation, gave him the inspiration to have the Howland genealogy in pictorial form and later, when he acquired a photograph of the tree, taken in its very old age, that idea crystallized into a purpose. Tree experts, working from the dimensions of the tree, known to the foot by persons now living, calculate that it was more than 1,000 years old and was probably the tallest and broadest tree ever to grow in Monmouth county soil. During the Revolutionary War Light Horse Harry Lee and his men camped under its spreading limbs.

Almost two years ago Mr. Howland, then retired from the active leadership of his bulkhead and jetty building corporation and devoting much time to baffling researches into his family's connections, was referred to Mrs. Rudloff, who had been making private investigations into the connections of other Monmouth county families. These investigations had turned up Howland connections. Because Mrs. Rudloff not only had the experience in research but a background of art that would enable her to do the double job of investigation and painting, Mr. Howland suggested that she devote her full time to the Howland tree and book. Eventually in February, 1940, she decided to do this and then followed the more than 18 months of work which has resulted in the tree and in the foundation of material for a book on the Howlands which will be published by Mr. Howland as soon as the material can be authenticated.

The Howland tree will be on exhibition in The Press office until Oct. 1. Later this fall it is expected to go to the Monmouth County Historical society at Freehold for a week. It will be unveiled in Mr. Howland's home on the night of Oct. 14, the occasion of the 50th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Howland, at a reception.

Meanwhile those who view the tree are urged to register their names and addresses if they have any information concerning the Howland family or any family connected with the Howlands by marriage. This further information will be checked and, if found correct, will be included in the material to be published later in the Howland book. Monmouth county family names already listed, many of which are on the Howland tree itself, include the following: Allen, Hartshorne, White, Wolcott, Slocum, Woolley, Borden, Lippincott, Cook, Stout, Tilton, Harris, Maps, Emmons, Havens, Chamberlain, Lane, Harvey, Potter, West and others.

Many persons of local prominence are on the tree, including Common Pleas Judge J. Edward Knight. Notables outside the county, in addition to President Roosevelt, include the late Hetty Green, and others.

Mr. Howland was then told that, among other rare woods in which the Osborn mill specializes, there was one stick of buttonwood which had been cut from a limb of the Howland tree that would provide enough lumber for the frame. This was just the finishing touch Mr. Howland had hoped for but had despaired of finding.

The Howlands were an ancient and honorable family in England from very early times, Bishop Richard Howland having been granted arms in 1584, and the first to come to America was John, who came on the Mayflower in 1620. He was soon followed by his two brothers Arthur and Henry, but the ship on which they arrived has never been definitely determined. They could have come on the "Anne," the "Fortune," or the "Little James." Or they may have come with Mr. Winslow on his return from England on the "Charity" in 1624 when he brought to the new colony at Plymouth, Mass., "3 heifers and a bull, the first beginning of any cattle of that kind in the land," as the first mention of Henry Howland, the ancestor of the Monmouth county branch, was in 1624 when he is mentioned as the owner of the "black cow." It is to commemorate this event that Mrs. Rudloff has placed black cows in the pasture of

family of his daughter Sarah and her husband, Robert Dennis, was in Shrewsbury, N. J. The exact date of the arrival of Henry's great-grandson, James Howland, with his wife and his younger children, Monmouth county is not known, but he died here in 1748 on the plantation shown on the Jesse A. Howland painting of the family tree.

The will of James left his farm in Dartmouth, Mass., to his son Thomas and James who were already married and living on Dartmouth homesteads. His Monmouth county properties were left to his three younger sons, and in 1797 his son George willed the plantation at Long Branch to his son Michael, the great great grandfather of Jesse A. Howland.

Mr. Howland's great grandfather Jesse Howland, married Meribah the daughter of Brittain M. White Meribah and her father and his White grandfathers for many generations before her were born on the White homestead, said to have been the first house on the land that is now Asbury Park. This quaint house still survives and now stands on Asbury avenue on the western outskirts of town. It has been moved at least twice. Its earliest remembered location was on Sumner field avenue, just west of La Ford street. Jesse and Meribah were married in this house.