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JOHN HOWARD c. 1620 - c. 1700

Tavernkeeper, Bridgewater, Mass.

John Howard born c. 1620 in England; died c. 1700 in Bridgewater, Mass. He married in 1645 Martha, daughter of Thomas Hayward.

John Howard came from England with his brother James and settled in Duxbury, Mass. where he bore arms in 1643. He is reputed to have lived awhile in Capt. Miles Standish's family. James it is said, went to Bermuda and John later removed to West Bridgewater and was one of the 54 proprietors and original settlers in the town about 1651. He was a man of much influence in the new plantation, taking the oath of fidelity in 1657 and was one of the first military officers in Bridgewater, being promoted from ensign to lieutenant in King Philip's War. He was a selectman and also a deputy to the General Court of Massachusetts.¹

As the Bridgewater Book said that John Howard's house was the first tavern, for more than a century the only tavern in the region,² John may have been the partner of Samuel Packard who also was licensed in 1670. Since John's daughter Sarah married Zaccheus Packard, it is possible the parents of the young people worked together in the early days, although this is purely hypothetical. It is known that John's descendants for 150 years owned and lived on the place where he first settled at the corner of Howard and River Streets, West Bridgewater.⁴

-by Katherine Parkins Robison

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REFERENCES

- 1 Mitchell's History of Bridgewater, 1840, and
Howard Genealogy
- 2 Bridgewater Book by Ellis, 1899 p. 7-9
- 3 History of Bridgewater p. 264
- 4 Bridgewater Book, p. 9