

Benjamin Beal Howard

Benjamin Beal Howard, son of Col. Edward and Abigail Howard, was born at his ancestral home in Bridgewater (West) on March 2, 1788. He was the fifth generation to live and successfully farm the land on which his great grandfather had established an inn. He became a learned man by diligently availing himself of the educational advantages of the schools of the day. Prominent in town affairs, he served as captain of a local company of militia, held positions in town government, and was a respected businessman. In 1837, he moved his business to New Bedford where he became connected with whaling and merchant activities.

Captain Howard was a man of strong character and energetic will. Firmly fixed in his opinions, he did not willingly bend to opposition. In business, he was a powerful force. Remarkable was his ability to distill problems to the core, live simply, and keep his affairs wholly to himself. Unitarian in his religious convictions, he judged people by their real worth without reference to station or condition. His son said that he often heard him say that no loss of property, no matter how great (he once lost \$20,000 in a fire) caused him to lose even one hour of sleep. Money was only a means to doing good things for others (especially children).

Upon his death, it was discovered that he had bequests for the benefit of his hometown in the amount of one hundred and two thousand dollars. They were as follows: 'to the town, eighty thousand dollars, the income of which is to be used for the establishment of a high school or seminary of learning to be called, The Howard School; twenty thousand dollars to the First Congregational Society of this town the income of which is to be applied to the support of Unitarian or liberal preaching; and two thousand dollars, the income of which is to be applied to scientific lectures in town.' ('History of W. Bridgewater' by D.H.Hurd, 1884, *History of Plymouth County*)