

THE FORERUNNER - ROWLAND

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After telling Rowland Hazard that he could never regain his role in society, Dr. Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) the renowned Swiss psychiatrist was asked, "Is there no exceptions?" "Yes," replied Dr. Jung, "...once in a while alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences." He went on to describe a spiritual experience as "... huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once guiding forces ... are suddenly cast to one side and completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them." (Page 26-27 Alcoholics Anonymous, Also called: "Big Book")

The doctor admitted his failure in bringing about this psychic change in Rowland. He went on to dash Rowland's hope that strong religious convictions could alone bring about a "vital spiritual experience."

Rowland's father Rowland Gibson Hazard, (The Hazard family tree had an unbroken chain of Rowland's dating back to 1763. Every alternate generation bore the middle name of Gibson) had been superintendent of the Congregational Sabbath School for twenty-five years. The comments in the "Big Book" coupled with the religious upbringing in his father's home leads us to conclude that he had more than a passive belief in God. His mother's father, a Yale graduate, was a man of the cloth. At the time of his death, (December 20, 1945) Rowland was a vestryman in Calvary Episcopal Church, New York City and a member of ST. Peter's-by-the-sea, Narragansett, R.I. AA students will identify Calvary Episcopal with the Rev. Sam Shoemaker and the Oxford Group which served as the spiritual support group for Bill Wilson and other early sober alcoholics. According to Louis Wilson, Rowland was an ardent Oxford Grouper until his death. NOTE: The Oxford Group changed its name in 1938 to Moral Re-Armament (MRA). No mention is found in any of three lengthy obituaries about Rowland's affiliation with either the Oxford Group or MRA. The Rev. Sam Shoemaker one of the founders of the Oxford Group in the U. S. broke with the movement in 1941. During the late thirties and early forties many Groupers distanced themselves from the misunderstood views of Frank Buchman, the principle leader of the Movement. While they may have fled the Movement it is difficult to believe they abandoned its teaching of the Four Absolutes: Love, Honesty, Purity and Unselfishness, nor the Group's practice of self-evaluation, confession, restitution, guidance from God and working with others. The Oxford Group's teachings and practices were not distant from AA's Twelve Steps. A note of interest: In the Cleveland/Akron AA the Four Absolutes are still emphasized.

Hazard family of Rhode Island was a paragon of respectability and moral values. Their leadership in education, government and industry bore witness to their values. Roots in Rhode Island reached back 350 years as early settlers of the colony. Rowland was the tenth generation of Hazards in Rhode Island. His forebears were large landowners, manufacturers, men and women of learning in literature and science. They left their imprint on a growing America as achievers, leaders and philanthropist. It was into this regal family style that Rowland was born October 29, 1881. (Two years after Dr. Bob Smith and fourteen years before Bill Wilson)

Rowland grew up in wealth, respectability and in a family' that for its day placed great value on human relations. His grandfather was known as the "Father of the American Alkali Industry." Unlike the robber barons of his day, Grandfather Rowland had unusual respect for the dignity of his employees. At the family woolen mills in Rhode Island he introduced one of the first profit sharing programs in America. After the purchase of a lead mine in Missouri in 1874 he found the miners living in "ignorance, wretchedness, squalor and drunkenness." He shortened the workweek, built decent housing and started a school. Writing he said, "Place a people face-to-face with vast labors, lower their physical tone by an enervating climate, let them find experience that the labors are too great for their powers: slipshod habits result with whiskey as a relief from trouble." In 1875 his fellow industrialists must have considered this enlightened statement liberal and radical.

Grandmother Margaret is credited with introducing one of the first kindergartens to America. Aunt Caroline was President of Wellesley College at the turn of the century. Father Rowland Gipson was President of Peace Dale Manufacturing, Peace Dale, R.I. and Vice-President of Solvay Process, Syracuse, N.Y.

Peace Dale, Rhode Island was the Hazard family seat. It could well be called their town from the mill that provides jobs to the cluster of Hazard estates. There was Oakwood built in 1854 by grandfather Rowland; Holly House where young Rowland lived from age eleven; Aunt Helen's home where Pulitzer Prize (1941) winning poet Leonard Bacon grew to adulthood; and the Scallop Shell, home of Aunt Caroline upon her return from Wellesley.

The "well to do" customarily sent their young men to prep school for education directed toward college and for training in moral disciplines and social skills. Young Rowland attended Fay School in Southborough, Mass., and Taft School in Watertown, Conn. On to Yale in 1899, Rowland received a Bachelor-of-Arts degree with the class of 1903. At Yale he was called "Ike", "Roy" and "Rowley". He sang in the freshman and Varsity Glee Clubs as well as the chapel choir. Rowland's choice of Yale *was* a break from his father and grandfather's tradition of Brown University. On his mother's side of the family there *was* a long line of Yale attendees including Eli Whitney of --cotton gin fame.

The years following Yale were spent learning the family business. Pace Dale Manufacturing Company was the base industry from which the family's business empire sprang. The wool mill at Peace Dale was in family ownership from 1802 to 1918. During the Civil War it was a major producer of army blankets. By the time Rowland entered the milling business it was in its waning years in the North. Rowland started out in the wool-sorting Department. Upon the death of Rowland's father the milling Business was sold to the Stevens Company who moved it to North Carolina.

The Hazard's had many investments and businesses far more exciting than the wool milling business. One such business was Semet-Solvay, the nations leading producer of coke and coke ovens. Its sister company Solvay Process Company produced soda ash, caustic soda, calcium chloride, ammonia and soda bicarbonate. The latter product was sold exclusively to Church and Dwight of "Arm and Hammer" brand fame. As part of Rowland's "on-the-job" training, he worked for Semet-Solvay in Chicago. In 1906 he was transferred to Syracuse.

The 3rd Annual Yale Class of 1903 Reunion Book made special note that Rowland had an appendectomy in 1906 and spent the Summer recuperating at Peace Dale. Hardly news worthy today, but in 1906 any abdominal surgery was a major medical procedure.

Following his recuperation he joined Peace Dale Manufacturing as Secretary-Treasure. Working up the business ladder as son-of-the-owner is much more rapid than as the normal aspiring employee. Not intending to distract from Rowland's effort and ability as a business manger, he did have doors of opportunity open more quickly because he was a Hazard of Rhode Island. Life in the business world could adjust to accommodate his desired life style. Dr. Jung in one of his writings refers to a wealthy American businessman he treated for alcoholism. While not mentioning the man by name, Dr. Jung wrote that the man's success in business was do to a powerful protective mother who shielded him from being judged by his performance. (It's this writer's view that Dr. Jung was writing about Rowland)

The winter of 1909-10 was spent traveling in the Western states. Upon return he married Helen Hamilton Campbell the daughter of a Chicago banker and a graduate of Briar Cliff. They spent the next several months traveling abroad.

The Hazards were involved in local, state and national politics. Being involved in politics came with being a Hazard. Rowland became active in the Republican Party. As a delegate, he attended the 1912 Republican National Convention that re-nominated President William H. Taft to the slate. From 1914 to 1916 he served in the Rhode Island State Senate. As World War I got started he became a civilian member of the U. S Ordnance Department. Later Rowland resigned to accept a commission as Captain in the Army's Chemical Warfare Service.

Helen and Rowland had for children: Caroline (1913), Rowland Gibson (1917), Peter (1918) and Charles W. B. (1920). (All are now dead, with Charles passing away February 27, 1995.)

When Rowland's father died in 1918 neither he nor his younger brother Thomas wanted to manage the day-to-day operation of the several companies that the Hazard family controlled. Peace Dale Manufacturing was sold July 1, 1918 to the Stevens Company. Semet-Solvay Company and the Solvay Process Company joined with three other chemical companies December 17, 1920 to create Allied Chemical and Dye Corporation (now Allied Signal, multi-billion corporation). Rowland served on Allied's board of directors from its inception until his death. He also served many years on the board of Interlake Iron Corporation (now Acme Metals Inc.) Any problem Rowland had with alcohol did not lead to dismissal from either board. However, with the Hazard family so deeply invested in the companies the antics of the drinker can be explained away and covered up. Yes. There is corporate denial.

The socially prominent New England families of the 1920's and 30's were mum about family problems. Especially were they guarded about moral weakness in their ranks. In that day many considered alcoholics to be morally weak people. The exact onset of Rowland's problem with alcohol is difficult to fix. Some events would lead this writer to believe it could have been as early as World War I. When his father died in 1918 why didn't he take over the operating helm? Rowland was 37 and had held several positions within the corporations. Younger brother Thomas was 26 and only three years out of college, yet Thomas not Rowland became the one to administer the Hazard estate.

There is a brief mention of Rowland being president of Solvay Securities (Likely a family holding) from 1918-21. This was probably a token position. His obituary reports that 1920-27 he was a member of Lee Higginson & Company, a New York investment banker. The public accounting of 1927 lists that Rowland resigned Lee Higginson to travel in Africa. This adventure was generally reserved for the rich and the royal of that day,

We know from Bill's letter of January 23, 1961 to Dr. Jung that Rowland was under Dr. Jung's care in Zurich, Switzerland in 1931. On page 26 of the "Big Book" we find more insight into Rowland's battle with alcohol: "For years he had floundered from one sanitarium to another. He had consulted the best know American psychiatrists." This short statement leads us to believe that several years prior to 1931 Rowland and his family sought solutions to his problem with alcohol. Ebby Thacher who carried the message to Bill had this to say about Rowland, "I was very much impressed by his drinking career, which consisted of prolonged sprees where he traveled all over the country." The 1927-35 period is vague and sketchy. In published accounts of Rowland's life (Yale Class Reunion Books and obituaries) one is left with the feeling he and the family went to great effort to explain his absence from the business world.

According to published accounts, the eight-year period was a mixture health problems and private ventures away from Peace Dale and New York City. While in Africa the reports say he contracted a tropical disease, and in 1928 he traveled to the Pacific Coast for his health. In 1929 he bought a ranch in New Mexico. Upon discovery of high-grade clay on the ranch, he organized in 1931-32 the La Luz Clay Products Company to produce floor and roof tile. In 1932 he took up residence in Vermont. Between 1932 and 1936 he divided much of his time between Vermont and New Mexico. There is never any mention of Rowland's travel to Zurich in 1931 nor the "about one year" spent in Dr. Jung's care. (Mentioned in Bill's January 23, 1961

letter to Dr. Jung). In the letter to Dr. Jung, Bill writes, "Mr. Hazard joined the Oxford Groups, an evangelical movement then at the height of its success in Europe... Returning to New York he became very active with "O.G." here, then led by an Episcopal Clergyman, Dr. Samuel Shoemaker."

August 1934 Rowland was at his home in Shaftsbury, Vt., 15 miles south of Manchester. It was during this stay in Shaftsbury that he learned through two Groupers of Ebby Thacher's possible six-month sentence to Windsor Prison for repeated drunkenness. The Groupers were Shep Cornell and Cebra Graves. Cebra's father was Judge Graves before whom Ebby was to appear in Bennington, Vt. Rowland and Cebra intervened at the hearing and asked to have Ebby be bound over to Rowland who would take him to New York. Judge Graves agreed and Rowland took Ebby to his home in Shaftsbury. Later Ebby was taken to New York City where he stayed with Shep Cornell. Of the first meeting with Rowland, Ebby said, "...he was a good guy. The first day he came to see me he helped me clean up the place."

Ebby's carrying the message to Bill is well known, but little is known about Rowland's personal sharing with Bill. Robert Thomsen in his book Bill W. writes that Bill could never recollect if it was Ebby or Rowland who gave him William James', The Varieties of Religious Experience. A likely scenario is that Rowland gave the book to Ebby who in turn passed it on to Bill. Thomsen also reveals that Grace McC., Rowland, Ebby and others would join with Bill, after the "O.G." meetings, around a little table in the rear of Stewarts Cafeteria (New York City) for coffee and sharing.

The absence of mention by Bill, Lois, Ebby or other early AA members about Rowland joining the fellowship, leads us to conclude he never joined AA. Lois write in Lois Remembers, "...he remained an ardent Oxford Grouper until his death in 1945." Lois goes on to mention that Cebra later joined AA in Paris. From Rowland's perspective there was no compelling reason to join AA. After all he was sober eight years by the time the "Big Book" was published. His sobriety is evidenced (pg. 26 "Big Book"), "But this man still lives and is a free man... He can go anywhere on earth where other free men may go without disaster, provided he remains willing to maintain a certain attitude."

Rowland returned to Wall Street as general partner in Tailer & Robinson a brokerage firm. That was in 1935. The years 1938-39 saw him associated with Lockwood Greene Engineers Inc. In 1940-41 he reports that he was an independent consultant. This later job position is often a resume explanation for periods of unemployment. In 1941 Rowland became Executive Vice-President, Bristol Manufacturing of Waterbury, Conn. Bristol (now Bristol Babcock of Watertown, Conn.) is a leading manufacturer of industrial measuring and recording devices.

While at his office desk on Thursday, December 20, 1945, Rowland suddenly died of a coronary occlusion. At the time of his death he and his wife Helen resided on Park Avenue in New York City, but also held a legal residence in Peace Dale, R.I.

Much sadness filled his last years. Rowland Gibson his oldest son, a Captain in the army was killed in 1941. Peter his second son, a Naval pilot, deliberately flew his plane into a screen of American flax while pursuing a Japanese kamikaze plane. Peter was first reported missing in action March 1945, but this was later confirmed as killed in action. (Helen died October 17, 1946 from pneumonia which develop after she was over come by carbon monoxide fumes in her garage.)

Of all the contributions Rowland and his famous family made in industry and through philanthropic activities, none has had a more far-reaching impact as Rowland's unselfish effort in sobering up Ebby. If not the first 12th Step call, certainly one that gave birth to a chain of events that have impacted the lives of millions of men and women.

MORE NOTES ON ROWLAND HAZARD

May 7, 1995, I finally made telephone contact with the home of Charles W.P. Hazard Spoke with Edith the wife of Charles. She told me that Charles had died February 27, 1995

She claimed to know very little about Rowland except that Charles found it difficult to talk about his father. This could be in part to Rowland's long absences from the family. She said as far as they, the family, knew - Rowland never took another drink after getting sober.

Having read this paper on Rowland, Edith wrote me on May 12, 1995: "Your paper shows evidence of much hard work, however, I do not feel capable or authorized to validate or add to its content."

The traditional link of "Rowland/Rowland G./Rowland" that had been the chain of father-to-son passing the name down was broken when Rowland's oldest son was killed while serving in the Army in 1944. Charles did name a son Rowland.

October 17, 1946, Helen the wife of Rowland died from pneumonia which developed after she was overcome by carbon monoxide fumes in her garage. Her personal estate was valued at \$80,000. This should not be read as her total net worth. No doubt much of the family wealth was concealed in a trust to protect it from taxes and drain. The rich of New England had a saying, "Never touch the principle."

It was reported to me that Helen and Rowland were divorced for short period circa 1929/31. I have no hard evidence to this claim, but it would fit in to the chain of events around Rowland seeking help from Dr Jung.

Peter the second eldest son was awarded the DFC posthumously for action in the battle of Okinawa. His story is reported in the book, LITTLE GIANTS by W. T. T. Blood Naval Institute Press. The book is about the "baby flat-tops" of WWII.

One of Rowland's more famous kin was Oliver Hazard Perry of the "War of 1812" fame. The Eastern Kentucky town of Hazard in Perry County was named in honor of the Naval Hero.

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