Mrs. Howe’s Maternity Home

Notes by Susan Barlow & Noreen Palladino Cullen, Manchester Historical Society, September 2016.

Hundreds of children were born at Mrs. Howe’s Maternity Home, 52 Wadsworth St., Manchester, CT, between about 1922 and 1935. Some of those children are in the “reunion” picture below, provided to us by Bob Gorman, who was born at Howe’s maternity home in July 1922. Bob received the photo from Don Lappen, who currently owns the house at 52-54 Wadsworth Street.

On May 31, 1931, the picture appeared in the Society pages of The Hartford Courant, with this caption: “MOTHERS AND BABES IN REUNION AT MANCHESTER – 325 mothers and children, former patients of the Howe Maternity Home, Manchester, were the guests May 12 of Mrs. George H. Howe of the Home at a reunion party. 150 of the number were mothers. The guests present were from Hartford, West Hartford, East Hartford, Windsor, Glastonbury and Manchester. © Fallot”

Mrs. Howe’s establishment was patronized by residents of Manchester, Hartford, West Hartford, and other towns. Hospitals were also an option for families: Manchester Memorial, Hartford, St. Francis, Mt. Sinai. Mrs. Howe’s maternity home is listed in the 1927 Manchester directory (see copy below); in the 1934 directory it’s listed as a maternity hospital, as it is in an ad in the 1934 Courant classifieds, under private hospitals. Announcements in The Courant show births at the home from 1927 to 1934. Historical Society member and volunteer Ron Schack (1936-2018) and his brother (1934) were both born at Mrs. Howe’s. Also, volunteer Mary Jane Pitkin Cooper (1927-2020), and Gladys Risley Hall (1932-2021),

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**A birth, 9/5/1928 Courant**
- A daughter, Joyce Lavina Clarke, was born to Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Clarke of Union Avenue, Monday, September 5, at Howe’s Maternity Home in South Manchester.

**A birth, 7/1/1934 Courant**
- A daughter, Doris Elaine, was born Saturday morning to Mr. and Mrs. Howard P. Webster of Oak Street, at Mrs. Howe’s Maternity Home on Wadsworth Street.

**Home’s listing in 1934 directory**
- Mary S. nurse and (Mrs. Howe’s Maternity Home) 52 Wadsworth r do.
- Newell C. (Hilda) chas Hartford h 481 Parkers RD
- Ruth M. student r of Hamlin
- Howe’s Maternity Home (Mrs. Mary S. Howe) 52 Wadsworth
Mary (née Sanderson) Howe (1881-1964) was married three times, the second time to George Howe (1860-1940), whom she married in 1915. It was while married to George that the Wadsworth Street maternity home operated. Here is her obituary, from The Hartford Courant 12/17/1964:

**Mrs. Mary Hedrick.** Funeral services for Mrs. Mary S. Howe Hedrick, 83, of Lombardo, Ill., formerly of Manchester, who died Tuesday in Brookfield, Ill., will be held Friday at 11 a.m. at the Watkins-West Funeral Home, 142 East Center St. The Rev. Clifford O. Simpson, pastor of the Center Congregational Church, will officiate and burial will be in East Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home today from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m.

Born in Rockville Oct. 10, 1881, she had been a resident of Manchester for many years and operated and owned the former Howe Maternity Home here before moving to Lombardo.

She leaves a daughter, Mrs. Edgar J. Elliott, with whom she made her home; a granddaughter, Mrs. Milton H. Carr of Coventry; and two great grand-children.

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George Howe had served as postmaster in South Manchester, resigning in 1910. Transcription of the October 4, 1910 Hartford Courant article on right:

**George Howe Resigns.** George H. Howe, who has been postmaster at Sub-Station No. 2 of the South Manchester post office, located at the Center has resigned as postmaster, and yesterday the books and other papers connected with the office were moved out. Mr. Howe forwarded his resignation to the post office officials at Washington last July, but it was not accepted until Saturday evening. An inspector came to town and tried to have him continue in the office, but he decided that there was insufficient pay for the work done, and his decision to resign was final. Yesterday the books and papers were turned over to Postmaster W. B. Cheney.