

# American Phoenix: How a 19th-Century Entrepreneur Managed Tragedy & Disaster



When tragedy or disaster strikes a one-person business, he or she may have to cope with the day-to-day responsibilities of entrepreneurial activities solo.

In today's world, experienced business owners who have grappled with these issues recommend sending a message via e-mail to inform business clients or customers, and updating using e-mail or an answering service.

These methods allow one to stay in touch yet maintain distance in an understandably emotional period.

An inspirational example of how a business owner survived tragedy is recounted in *American Phoenix*.

The riveting true story of William Skinner, a poor English textile worker who immigrated to the U.S. and settled in a New England town where he gradually built a successful life as a silk textile manufacturer.

But one morning, in the 1800s, without warning, a dam broke and flooded the town with 600 million gallons of water. The entire town was destroyed and

lives were lost. Skinner and his family and surviving townspeople literally ran for their lives with seconds to spare.

*American Phoenix* reveals how despite losing everything William Skinner was the only manufacturer who eventually rebuilt his company, which thrived well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### References

*American Phoenix* Video... 4 min

<http://sarahkilborne.com/books/american-phoenix/video/>

C-Span: American Phoenix:

The Remarkable Story of William Skinner...

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*Working Woman Magazine, 2000*

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<https://nichecreativity.com/the-midwest-book-review/>