

# News from the Stow Historical Society

*A newsletter for all friends of Stow history.*

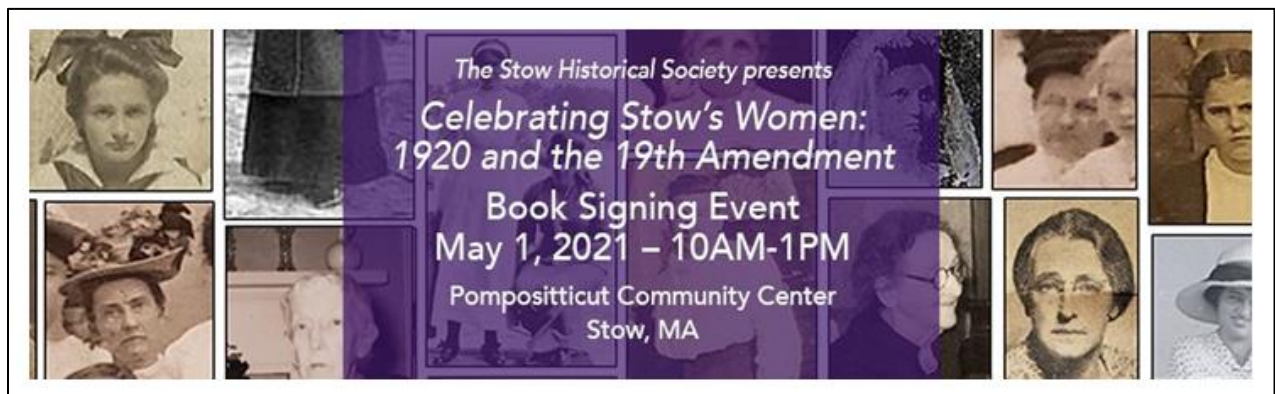
*Please feel free to pass it along to others who might be interested!*

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April 29, 2020

## **In this issue:**

- *Celebrating Stow's Women* book signing, May 1st
  - An 1832 Stow letter written by Stow's Rufus Hosmer, Esq. to his son, Rufus Hosmer, Jr.
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Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

*Experience Patriots' Day & Earth Day in the Heritage Area event published April 15, 2021.*

**On August 24, 2020, the SHS bought on ebay the 1832 letter on the right.**

Many, many thanks are extended to Bob McDonald who located it on the e-commerce website.

And what a letter this is! For a preview understanding: Mr. Rufus Hosmer (at Harvard University, Cambridge) was the 15-year-old son of Rufus Hosmer, Esq. who owned the white-painted house in the oil painting at the top of this page. This oil painting is one of two painted by Louisa Hosmer Cheney, the daughter of Rufus Hosmer, Esq.



Stop by the **Pompositicut Community Center** parking lot for the SHS book signing event.

**Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>**

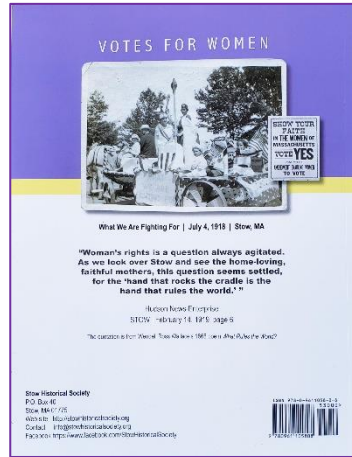
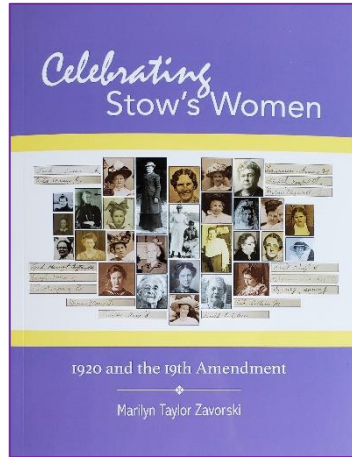
**10am – 1pm**

Under the **blue** canopy

Representative Kate Hogan will be present for the opening welcome.

This limited-edition, 146-page book is printed in color and priced at \$20 – cash or check made out to the Stow Historical Society.

For a mailed single copy add \$5.00.



FLAG

August 18, 1920  
Washington, D.C.

“Photograph of **Alice Paul** standing over ratification banner hanging from the balcony of the **National Woman's Party** headquarters, with members watching outside the building below.”

Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000256/>

This photograph was published in *The Suffragist*, Vol. 8, No. 8 (September 1920)

“Upon the word that Tennessee had ratified, Alice Paul unfurled the Woman's Party ratification banner with its thirty-six victory stars, and from the balcony of the headquarters it proclaims the triumph of the cause for which the Woman's Party was founded--the national enfranchisement of the women of America.”

# The 1830's home of Rufus Hosmer, Esq.

Lower Common  
Stow, MA

In the 1830's **Louisa Hosmer Cheney**, the second daughter of Rufus Hosmer, painted two oil landscapes of the Stow.

## *"View of Stow Lower Common"*

Stow's painting



The restored painting at First Parish Church



The Lower Common was a place where cows could graze and the militia could drill.

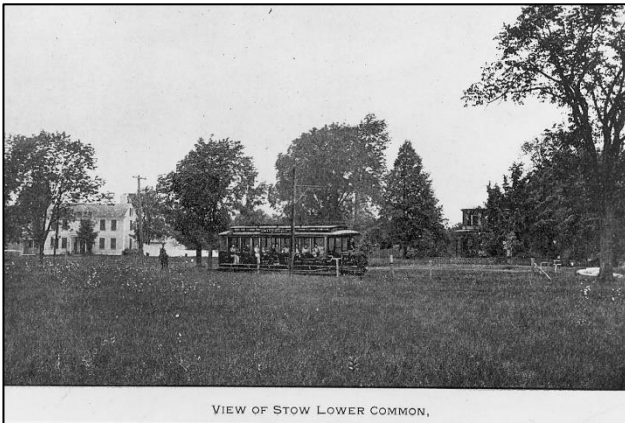
(left to right)

Joseph Soper's house with his square blacksmith shop to its left. (**Today's site of the Stow Shopping Center.**)

Squire Hosmer's house with the squire's little square, white law office.

The Minister's Manse

The Captain Thorndike's house



Stow Lower Common

(Left) Sopher house, built in 1752 and burned in 1964

(Middle) Electric trolley

(Right) Corner of Hosmer's Folly



Stow Lower Common

(Center) Hosmer's Folly

(Behind pole) Minister's Manse, circa 1686

### November 4, 2015



The Hosmer house represented a more fashionable, even ostentatious, character than most Stow homesteads. Sumptuous additions made in 1810 to an existing 18<sup>th</sup>-century home caused it be dubbed "**Hosmer's Folly.**" Squire Hosmer was the grand marshal for Lafayette's 1824 Stow reception.

## ***View of Stow Lower Common Returns to FPC***

Article written by Phil Moseley and Marilyn Zavorski

Thursday evening, November 10<sup>th</sup>, Marilyn Zavorski, President, Stow Historical Society, and Phil Moseley, member of the SHS Executive Committee, returned the restored 1830's Louisa Hosmer painting, *View of the Lower Common*, to the First Parish Church of Stow and Acton during the church's Trustees Committee meeting. Lynda Layer, President of the FPC Board of Trustees and Reverend Thomas Rosiello accepted the painting back into their community. Accompanying the painting was a plaque which gives the title, painter, era and how the painting came to FPC. This plaque will be mounted below the painting, which will be hung in the church's upstairs parlor.

The restoration initiative began with a recommendation by then President, Barbara Sipler, to the Stow Historical Society Executive Committee in the fall of 2015. With her astute eye for Stow's treasures and their preservation, Barbara made a motion that the SHS should offer to restore the historic, circa 1830, Stow painting, *View of Stow Lower Common*, which had hung in the entrance vestibule of the FPC. Cracks and fading were visible in the painting after years of hanging in the light. The Parish's Board of Trustees readily agreed to the restoration and stated that the painting would be rehung in a protected area.

Phil Moseley researched the restoration options for the SHS. Several sources were considered, and a decision was made to select "The Woodshed Gallery LLC" of Franklin, MA (<http://www.woodshedgallery.com/>), whose work had been seen on the PBS "Antiques Road Show" program. A review of the painting condition during a consultation with the restorer provided a recommendation for a full restoration which included removing coats of varnish that had been applied over the surface of the painting, a thorough cleaning, relining (resupporting) the canvass, flattening the painting, retouching the painting to remove the major cracks, restoring any paint damage and then resealing the surface of the painting.

The frame of the painting was also in very poor condition and so during the restoration of the painting, Gallery Seven of Maynard, MA., was selected to restore the frame by filling in chips and bringing the surface of the frame to level and then rubbing and buffing the surface with gold paint. The edges of the frame were also refinished with a museum quality application of paint. At the completion of the restoration of the painting, it was professionally placed into the restored frame by the person who performed the painting's restoration, and it was made ready for hanging.

The history of this painting dates to the early 1830s when Louisa Paine Hosmer, as a young adult, painted two pictures of the Stow's Lower Common. Louisa, second of four children, was the daughter of Esq. Rufus Hosmer, who built *Hosmer's Folly* on Stow's Lower Common. This home is the majestic white house, which stands today behind Papa Gino's.

Historic Stow church documents recorded Louisa's 1809 baptism. She married John Milton Cheney, a Harvard College graduate, in Concord in 1833. Her surviving daughter, Caroline, inherited her estate in 1886. At Caroline's death, the Concord Historical Society presented the painting to the FPC. Louisa Hosmer's second painting of the Lower Common hangs in the Randall Library. It is among many historic paintings and maps, hanging above the glass display cases in the upstairs historical works wing, where the SHS displays Stow's treasures. This wing was bequeathed to the library by the estate of Martha G. Whitney in 1925.

# The May 6, 1832 Hosmer letter

## Rufus Hosmer, Esq. to Rufus Hosmer, Jr.

**Rufus Hosmer, Esq** March 18, 1778 – April 19, 1839  
 Concord – Concord  
 --married **Amelia Paine** April 7, 1804, Concord  
 (1785 – Aug 25, 1846)

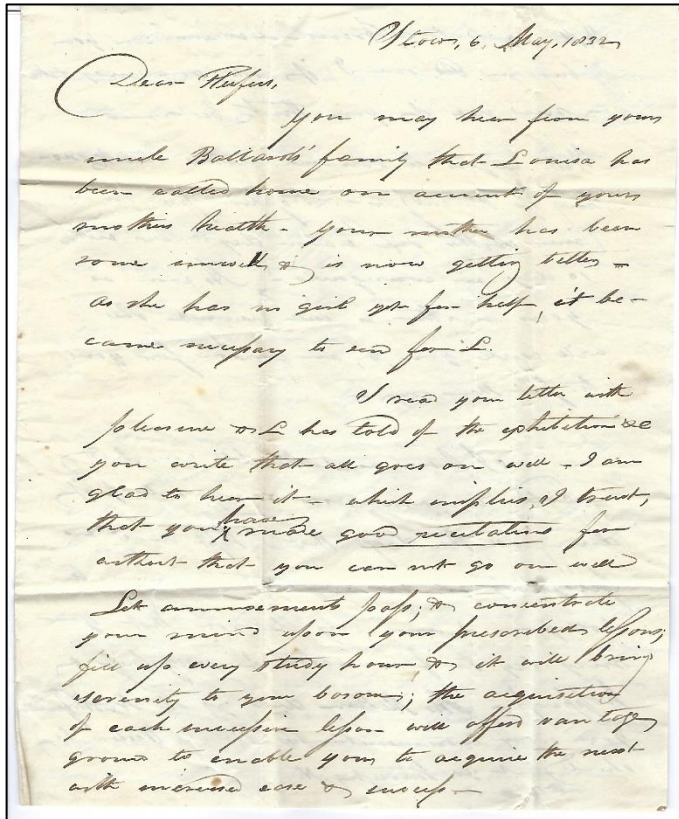
The letter has been transcribed as written by the *team* of Tom and Mariana Oller, Bill Wickey, and Marilyn Zavorski.

The Hosmer children

- Caroline Hosmer** (Feb 3, 1805 – Mar 13, 1883)  
Stow - Cambria, MI
- Louisa Paine Hosmer** Cheney (pb. Aug 12, 1809-1885)  
Stow - Concord
- Rufus P. Hosmer** (July 19, 1816- April 20, 1861)  
Stow – Lansing, MI
- Josephine Hosmer** (bp.) May 20, 1821 – 1873  
Stow - Concord

Mentioned in the letter:			
Uncle Ballard	Josephine (sister)	Louisa (sister)	Washington
Mother (Amelia)	Luther	Mr Mc'Keen	

Rufus P. Hosmer, Jr. entered Harvard University in 1830 and graduated in 1834 at the age of 18. He continued then studying law. Therefore, in this letter, he was just shy of his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.



Stow, 6 May, 1832

Dear Rufus,

You may hear from your uncle Ballard's family that Louisa has been called home on account of your mother's health. Your mother has been some unwell & is now getting better. As she has no girl yet for help, it became necessary to send for L [=Louisa].

I read your letter with pleasure & L has told of the exhibitions & you write that all goes on well. I am glad to hear it – which implies, I trust, that you have made good recitations for authors that you can not go over well.

Let amusements pass; & concentrate your mind upon your prescribed lessons; fill up every study hour, & it will bring serenity to your bosom; the acquisition of each successive lesson will afford vantage, ground to enable you to acquire the most with increased ease & success.

**NOTE:** This might have been when Louisa Hosmer Cheney painted the two landscapes of the Lower Common. She had been called home to care for her mother.

With regard to a French Lexicon can you buy an old one? If not, you may take a new one if you think best.

With regard to summer clothes think nothing of the subject - Josephine put on summer clothes one warm day & was sick 10 days in consequence - As soon as your mother is well enough she will write you, & in season for you to put them on.

I have, as Luther told you, had a cold & am now nearly well of it, during all the days that I kept in I was frequently in imagination saving to college. I am very desirous that you may lay the foundation of usefulness & happiness. Mr Mc'Keen did go to Northfield, you may remember he said at Weston, he should not go through N [=Northfield].

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Washington has been here, he told me that he asked after you. Mr McKeen told him your conduct was unexceptionable but that he did not know your ranks, as you did not go in to him. Washington observed that when he came to Cambridge, he should call on you & could tell you what the instructors say of you.

Dear boy, God has given you a sound mind in a sound body; your good sense has enabled you to select the good & to avoid the bad, thereby preserving & invigorating your moral principles. The man is now developing; let all the faculties & powers intellectual as well as moral progress pari passu [=side by side], and you may depend upon the truth & Justice of this remark. That few, very few, every advantage & disadvantage taken into account, are more favored than you.

Your father

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