

DOCENT MANUAL
HOSMER HOUSE ROOM HISTORIES

October 25, 2018

HOSMER HOUSE DOCENT MANUAL

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide new and experienced docents with Hosmer House (HR) information so that they have accessible and portable facts to use when greeting HR guests. Some of this information is copied and updated from earlier sources, including existing docent materials, such as the "brown books" developed by Barbara and Adolph Bahlkow and the general docent handout. In addition, the Docent Education Committee developed a fact sheet for each HR room based on an oral history provided to the committee by Lyn MacLean and Liz Radoski. The committee incorporated these HR room oral histories into this manual. By putting together important information from these various sources into one concise, organized manual, we hope to make it easier for docents to use this as a reference.

This manual does not contain all available material on the Hosmer House, its contents and its occupants. There is additional material in Helen Casey's book, *My Dear Girl*, and in the information on the family tree which is posted on the wall in the back of the entry hall. Another source of information is a video on the HR given by Lyn MacLean which can be viewed on You Tube and other videos on the Sudbury Historical Society's website.

We are also most grateful for the feedback we have received from Helen Casey, whose expertise we continue to rely on. Her book, *My Dear Girl*, contains a great deal more than what is presented in this manual.

Providing useful material for docents is an ongoing process as we continue to get feedback and suggestions for improvements. There may still be some discrepancies between documents which will be corrected at a later time.

The docents make important contributions to the visitor's experience during the Hosmer open house days. They bring the history of the times alive to visitors of all ages.

Hosmer House

The Hosmer House was built in 1793 by Asher Goodnow. The first owner was Captain Elisha Wheeler. James L. Willis and his wife Ella ran the Sudbury Country Store and post office on the first floor, west side, and a cobbler's shop on the second floor, back west side. At one time this space was also a candy shop.

The Hosmer family purchased the house in 1896. The Hosmers were visiting a cousin, Harriet Eaton, in Concord when they drove by this house and saw a 'for sale' sign. They decided to purchase the house. Florence's brother, Albert, bought it for \$2,000.

Florence was the last surviving family member. The Hosmer's first born child died in infancy. There were four children: Alice (b.1867), Albert (1871), Winfred (1879), Florence (1880). Florence was still living in the home when she died in 1978. In 1959 she had given the deed to the Town of Sudbury stipulating that the house, its contents, her personal belongings and many of her paintings would be on display to the public as a memorial to her father after her death.

The house was built in the Federal Style with a center entrance. It has 11 rooms, 2 large main hallways, 2 bathrooms, 10 fireplaces and an attached two bay carriage shed. There had been a large barn used to house cattle, which was taken down in 1980 by the town. The four chimneys were originally 12 feet tall but were reduced to 6 feet.

The Hosmer House is listed in the National Register of Historic Districts.

Florence Armes Hosmer

Florence moved to this house with her family when she was 16 years old. She earned a diploma in 1902 from Massachusetts Normal Art School in Boston after completing the four-year program. This was the first publicly supported art school in America. It had been established in 1873 to train teachers of art. It was created as part of legislation that made teaching of drawing an obligatory part of public school education.

Florence's studies included drawing from casts, from life, watercolor studies of plants and flowers, details from historic schools of ornament, portraiture, sculpture and design. Among her teachers were Joseph DeCamp, Albert Munsell and Anson Cross. She continued her art education at Charles Woodbury's School in Ogunquit, Maine, during the summers.

Florence taught art for more than 20 years at public and private schools in Sudbury, Wayland, and Framingham. Her summers were spent at artist colonies in Peterborough, NH, Ogunquit, ME, and Provincetown on Cape Cod. At one time she had an art studio in Copley Square and later on Newbury Street in Boston. She also had a tearoom at her Newbury St. studio. John Singer Sargent had previously occupied that same studio.

She was a member of the Copley Society and the Cambridge Art Association. She exhibited her art at both places as well as at the Massachusetts Women's Club and the Boston Art Club. Her portrait of her grandmother in the front parlor was painted when Florence was in her twenties. It was shown at the Boston Art Club, the Rochester, NY, Fair in 1908, and at the Copley Society in 1930. Many of her paintings are here in the HH and others can be seen at Dartmouth College, NH, at the Peabody Essex Museum, the Pierce-Nichols House in Salem, MA, the Ogunquit, ME, Museum of Art, the Wayside Inn, and at Sudbury's Goodnow Library. The Ogunquit Art Museum has had special exhibits of Florence's paintings.

A close friend, Zoie Morse, an artisan from Provincetown, lived with Florence for many years. Zoie had maintained a tearoom and gift shop on the Cape.

FIRST FLOOR

Entry Hall

To the left of the entrance is a portrait of a woman with a violin. The candle holder in the painting is displayed below. There is a painting of Florence's brother Winfred entitled 'Man in Gray Suit with Black Tie'. There is also a portrait of her brother Albert in formal attire. He taught music at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, from 1909 to 1919. There is another painting of Albert and his wife Gean playing dominos with a cat and dog next to them.

The photos on the small stand next to the doorway to the dining room include one of Florence at age 95 with another picture of Florence when she was young.

There is a convertible wooden chair with table by the back door. This was originally kept on the porch facing Concord Road. The hallway carpeting is original to the house.

To the right of the back door are paintings which include a copper tea pot and floral ceramic piece. These objects are displayed on the stand in front of the paintings. Also on the back wall are two old photos of the HH which show the change in chimney size when the chimneys were reduced from 12 feet to 6 feet in height.

Also on the back wall is the Distinguished Women of Achievement award given to Florence in 1970.

Bathroom

The small downstairs closet was converted to a bathroom in the early 1970s after Florence became ill and the front parlor had become her bedroom.

FIRST FLOOR

Parlor

The furniture in this room, the Victrola, and the books are original to the home and belonged to Florence. The Victrola is still in working condition. The bench by the fireplace was once a pew in the Congregational Church. It was given to Florence by the minister.

Many items in the room including the lamp and furniture as well as small decorative items, are shown in Florence's painting to the left of the fireplace. This portrait shows Florence's mother in a rocking chair and her father's portrait over the mantel.

Her father, Edwin Barrett Hosmer, was born in Mason, NH, in 1840 and died in 1910. He married Abigail Armes in 1864. He was a farmer and a church deacon. They lived in Mason, NH, then in Woodstock, CT, and in 1897 moved to Sudbury with their children Alice, Albert (Burt), Winfred (Fred), and Florence.

The wall to the left of the fireplace has paintings of Florence's brothers, Albert on the left and Winfred on the right. Winfred (Fred) Everett Hosmer studied nursing, enjoyed writing occasional poems, and loved painting. Albert (Burt) Edwin Hosmer was a musician and voice teacher and performed with some members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He taught music at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio.

The paintings on the wall near the entry hall show Florence's grandmother to the right of the door and her mother on the left. The younger woman in the painting in the corner by the book cabinet is probably Florence's mother at a young age. This would have been done from a photograph. The woman in a white dress by the doorway to the dining room is a cousin, Harriet Eaton. It is not known who did the bust of a woman.

FIRST FLOOR

Dining Room

This room was originally the kitchen. The hearth was the cooking area. To the right of the fireplace is a bricked opening with a door which was used to keep food warm, including the bread and pies that she made.

The green depression glass on the dining table was used for company, not for everyday use. The dishes in the glass cases were all owned by the Hosmers and were found in the attic. Above the hearth are paintings of fruit baskets that Florence received when she was ill. She painted them and showed them to those who gave her the gifts.

The bowl on the small table is pictured in the painting on the wall above. Also the copperware located by the dish cabinet which houses the Cantonese dishes appears in the painting on the wall above. On the top of the hutch is a white teapot with matching cup and saucer which is pictured in the painting above done by Florence.

The yellow dishes, a gift to Florence from Zoie, were from Mexico. Yellow was Florence's favorite color. The dishes with the blue pattern are Cantonese ware. In the doorway between the dining room and parlor are sealed glass cases which contain Van Briggle pottery.

Kitchen

The kitchen and the bedroom above was added to the house in the 1930s. There had been a fireplace in the kitchen which has been covered. The closet had been used for ice before refrigerators were used.

There is a large cupboard called a Hoosier. Inside are storage bins for flour and other dry goods and it has a built-in sifter. The metal surface was used for rolling out dough and kneading bread. The sink, table, chairs and cooking tools hanging on the wall are all original to the house.

Burt liked to paint and did several of the food paintings in the kitchen. Florence painted the family's rooster. There is a poem on the back of the painting which is reproduced next to the painting.

FIRST FLOOR

Store Room

Most of the room as seen today is original, with some renovations. The narrow wooden beams on the store room ceiling are original. The wider cross beams were added. They cover the structural steel beams that were installed to make the ceiling and ballroom floor above the store room stable. The original floorboards were refinished in 1978.

The counter is original. The shelving was added later. Some of Florence's original pottery is on display behind the counter on the shelves. The large barrel was used for storing molasses. The typewriters on display were owned by Florence. There's also the family butter chum and Florence's desk.

The upright piano is not original. It was added in the 1980s to provide on-site music for school group programs and others. The black stencil backed chairs were added to accommodate volunteers and visitors.

Before the Hosmer family purchased the house, this room was the Sudbury post office and a general store. The original PO boxes are displayed with the names of town residents in the 1800s. On the Concord Road side of the room are books with photographs on a pedestal that show the house as it was before renovations were done in the early 1980s.

Under glass in the front corner of the room is a ledger from the 1800s. Handwritten entries recorded goods that people bought and what they paid. Next to the ledger, also under glass, is an old document that may have been an artist's workbook.

After the Hosmer family acquired the house, the store room was used as a family room. Florence also used this room as an art studio.

Above the mantel is a painting of Florence's brother Burt playing a piano in this room. On the piano is a picture of Florence's cat. The painting shows the furniture arrangement in this room as it was at that time.

To the left on the front wall facing Route 27 is a painting of Mr. Hadley, the next door neighbor. He provided water to visitors on July 4th. The water pump is still visible on the front of the house but is no longer usable. Over the upright piano is a picture of Miss Hitchcock and her mother entitled "Open Door". Miss Hitchcock worked at the Sudbury bank in the 1970s. To the right is a painting of the Little Red School House.

In the south corner of the room is Florence's original studio sign advertising her art on one side and the tea room on the other side. It was displayed at her studio on Newbury Street in Boston. On the table next to her sign are her original palettes and some of her brushes. In the same corner are several paintings of local buildings from the era.

FIRST FLOOR

Alice's Sitting Room

This room, and the room above it were added to the original house the year after the house was built. It was moved from Framingham by sled during the winter and attached to the original house. The wall behind the desk shows the original siding of the house. The settee, chair and chest belonged to Alice.

This room served multiple purposes over the years. It was used as a storage area. The door facing Concord Road was used for deliveries. Later, after this became the Hosmer family home, this room served at one time as Alice's sitting room. The staircase in the corner connects this room with the upstairs room which became Alice's bedroom when she moved back to the HH after she became ill .

The large religious painting of Jesus was done by Florence and hung for many years in the Sudbury Methodist Church. There is also a painting entitled "West Side of Old Wayside Inn" over the fireplace. The picture on the door is of the "Old Town Center." Over the couch is an enlargement of the HH brochure.

SECOND FLOOR

Upstairs Hallway

The wallpaper in the hallway is a replica of the original paper. The original paper was yellow and moldy when the town took over the house. A piece of the old wallpaper was taken to a factory in Beverly where it was reproduced. All of the molding is original except for one strip in the middle of the hallway which was restored to show how pictures were originally hung in the house. The rugs are also original.

The paintings hanging on the long wall were chosen by the Danforth Museum as examples of Florence's best works and varied styles. A landscape, a portrait, and a still life were exhibited at the Danforth Museum. Many of the paintings were scenes that Florence painted from her studio on Newbury Street in Boston. The painting in the middle is one of the paintings exhibited at the Danforth. It is a self-portrait of Florence at age 16 wearing a gold necklace that she loved and wore often. It was given to her for her birthday by her aunt who was visiting Florence, Italy, at the time.

Some of Florence's books and jewelry are displayed at the end of the hallway. It is not known who did the sculpture in the enclosed glass case.

There are portraits of women from Salem, MA. The painting of the woman in the green and white dress entitled "Salem Lady" is Miss Belle Whipple. The painting entitled "A Bit of Old Salem" shows Anna Endicott in a yellow floral dress. Another painting done in 1936 is of Miss Huntington, a DAR member, from Salem. Similar portraits can be seen in the Peabody Essex Museum.

The paintings by the bathroom door are of Provincetown and Old North Church.

SECOND FLOOR

Bathroom (upstairs off the hallway)

The bathroom was added in the 1930s. The original toilet, which still exists, was a two-holer located outside in the shed. The bathroom still has the original 1930's water closet, with a raised tank on the wall with chain from the original toilet. This had been thrown out during a 1984 renovation. However, one of the Historical Commissioners retrieved it from the town dump.

In the bathroom is an invalid chair, a standing tub, and a sink on legs. All of the displayed toiletries--Martens Bath Crystals, Fels Naptha laundry bar soap, Leverton's Lightning Hair Dye, Melba Bouquet Talcum Powder, etc., were found in the bathroom drawers. The rug is original.

The paintings on the bathroom walls are different in style and subject matter than most of Florence's other work. All were painted during summers in Ogunquit, Maine, while studying under Charles Woodbury, the founder of Ogunquit's first art colony. The white building on Perkin's Cove shown in one of the paintings is still standing in Ogunquit

SECOND FLOOR

Florence's Bedroom

This was Florence's bedroom for most of her life. Only when she became ill and infirm did she begrudgingly move downstairs. It contains her desk where she wrote numerous letters, her chair where she often sat looking out the window, her rope bed with its original feather mattress, and a dresser full of her clothes.

The rare cranberry glass light fixture was found in pieces in a box in the attic. It was reassembled and placed in its original location above her dresser.

The portrait over the fireplace is of Stella Burns Hosmer, Burt's first wife.

On the southern wall, is a painting of her favorite cat, Muffett. Behind the door are two self-portraits of Florence, one when she was 53 (1933) and one when she was 63 (1943). The glasses that she's wearing in the earlier painting are in her desk. The curtains are not original.

SECOND FLOOR

Fred's Bedroom

When Florence's brother Fred came to visit, he stayed in this bedroom. The clothes exhibited in the room were his.

The rugs are original. The bedroom furniture, thought to have belonged to Florence's parents, is called Honeymoon Furniture. It has four matching pieces. The frame of the rocking chair is original, but has been rewoven as it had a large hole in the middle. The bottom of the gas lamp on the dresser is original. The red floral top was donated by one of the Historical Commissioners. Although the wallpaper is not original, its design was based on a flowered vase located on the mantel. The pattern is close to the original wallpaper pattern.

When the Hosmers lived in the house, there was a walkway, which is now a closet, between Fred's bedroom and Florence's bedroom. The once very cluttered attic is accessed through the staircase behind a door in the bedroom. The door on the opposite wall leads to a bedroom and a stairway to the kitchen below.

The large painting over the fireplace is a portrait of Barbara Maynard Trombly when she was five years old. A photograph of Ms. Trombly, who was in her late 80s at the time, sits on the night table next to the bed. Ms. Twombly came back to visit the Hosmer House when in her 80s and she immediately recognized herself and said "that's me. I know because Miss Hosmer made me put the bow in my hair. I pulled it out, but my mother made me put it back in."

The painting to the left of the fireplace is a self-portrait of Florence when she was 18. The painting to the left of the bed of a woman in a white dress has been cleaned and restored. Before the painting was restored, viewers could not see the details of the lace on her dress or the window area. Over the bed is a painting of Florence's grandmother.

The painting to the left of the bed is a portrait of Mr. Piper. The Pipers are one of the oldest families in Sudbury. They have lived here for over 100 years. They have generously donated 70 acres of conservation land known as Piper's Farm to Sudbury.

SECOND FLOOR

Ballroom

The Ballroom, with its original floor and ceiling was divided into two rooms when the Hosmers lived in the house. The Hosmers installed a wall in the middle of the room, added built in closets, and used the two rooms as bedrooms. Later, Florence rented out the rooms to teachers in order to help support herself.

After Florence's death, the Town restored the ballroom to its original form. Rather than replace the floors that had begun to shrink, roping was placed in between the floorboards in order to fill the gaps caused by the shrinkage.

The painting on the back wall to the right of the door is a portrait of Alice. It's the only painting of Alice in the house. The picture next to Alice's is a self-portrait of Florence in the downstairs store room when she was in her 30's wearing a yellow suit. In 1992, it was used as the cover for the Sudbury telephone book. The picture to the right is also a self-portrait of Florence.

Under the portraits sits a working melodeon, or foot operated pump organ. Very few melodeons are left in the US.

On the wall on the left side of the door is a 1936 portrait of Yves Chardon, a cello player with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Members of the Orchestra came to visit Florence. There were Sunday picnics on the lawn attend by some members of the BSO. About ten years ago, Mr. Chardon, then in his nineties, came to the House, and exclaimed "that's my picture." As a result, the *Town Crier*, published an article including the portrait. In front of that painting is a spinning wheel that belonged to the Hosmer family.

In May 1940, several of Florence's portraits of Boston area musicians and composers were displayed at the Boston Public Library as part of the celebration of National Music Week. Included were portraits of Charles Repper, composer of operettas, and Raymond Havens, a pianist who played with the Boston Symphony.

There are two pictures of women to the left of the painting of the cello player. The one in the black coat done in 1916 is Anna 'Bobby' Knight, a

Sudbury teacher. She may have been one of the boarders. The woman in the red blouse is Walter Richard Eaton's mother.

Florence painted portraits of the Dik children who lived on the other side of Heritage Park when they were about seven and four years old. Florence painted a miniature picture first and then painted a larger version for her client. Ms. Dik visited the Hosmer House when she was in her eighties. She told one of the Historical Commissioners that her brother would also be likely to donate his portrait if they gave him a call. One of the Commissioners did call and she was told they could have the portrait but she should bring a truck. It seemed a bit odd for one painting. When they arrived, Mr. Dik not only donated his portrait, but also the sofa that he was sitting on when Florence painted him. So now, the HH has both of the original portraits and the sofa. The blocks were donated at another time. Although they are from the same time period, they are not the blocks shown in the painting.

On the opposite wall to the left, is a large portrait of Mr. Walker painted by Florence. He was a principal at a private school in Grafton, Vermont. It is one of the few paintings that the Town doesn't own. Rather, it is on permanent loan. The school didn't feel comfortable relinquishing ownership as students commissioned and paid for the portrait.

In the center of the room on the west side is a painting entitled 'Pensive Woman'. This painting was chosen by the Danforth Museum for the cover of its brochure for a show in 1987 entitled "Lifting the Veil: Women Artists of New England 1890-1925". There was another Danforth art exhibit in 1991 entitled "Three New England painters: Hosmer, Pooke, and Woodward: January 23, 1991 through April 7, 1991" which featured Florence Hosmer, Mabel Woodward, and Marion Pooke.

To the right, is a portrait of Mary Cram, the granddaughter of the well-known architect Ralph Cram who lived on Concord Road. He is known for his Gothic Revival style churches, including the chapel of the Episcopal Church in Sudbury and several churches in the Boston area and elsewhere.

SECOND FLOOR

Children's Room (aka Alice's Bedroom)

This room along with the room below was an addition put on the year after the house was built. Originally, the second floor of the addition was the cobbler's workshop and the room below was used for storage.

It is not known why the chimney is slanted. It's possible that the hole was cut in the roof before the addition was installed.

Alice, Florence's sister, was a teacher in Weston for most of her life. In her later years when she became ill, she moved back into the home and occupied this room as her bedroom and the room below became her sitting room. The stairs on the side of the room led to her sitting room below. Known to be a quiet and shy individual, this room with its own staircase gave her some privacy. She also had her own toilet which is inside the small closet.

On the left is a built-in cupboard with shelves and two steps inside to allow head room for the stairs underneath. The quilt on the iron framed bed is original. The pictures in the photo album are not labeled. The ceiling and floor do not match the house since this was an addition.

Above the staircase is a painting of a little girl that Florence painted when she was 10. The painting below of a young boy is not signed by Florence, so it is not known who painted it.

On the west side over the desk is a painting of a little boy with blond hair and red tie holding a stuffed animal. The little boy is John Bartlett of Bartlett Nurseries in Sudbury. When John saw the painting as an adult, he said he remembered sitting for the portrait and being very unhappy that he had to hold the stuffed pig. The painting over the bed of a girl with blond ringlets and black dress is his sister, Mary.

Most of the remaining paintings are portraits of local girls who attended the Whiting School for Girls on Concord Road. Florence taught art at the school and painted many of the girls' portraits.

The dolls and toys in the room belonged to Florence and her siblings.

Hosmer House Docent Education
Suggestions for Interacting with Visitors
October 4, 2018

For your consideration when a visitor/ guest enters the room:

- Stand to greet (if able).
- Name tags are helpful to guests.
- Make eye contact and smile.
- Introduce yourself.
- Take your cues from what your visitor indicates they want to do.
- Some people will want to engage, others prefer to look on their own.
- Some suggested opening questions and or comments to orient the visitor:
 - o Welcome to the Hosmer House.
 - o Have you been here before?
 - o How did you hear about the Hosmer House?
 - o Where are you visiting from?
 - o You are in the (name room) of the Hosmer House. This room was used by the Hosmer Family for (state general purpose). This room was once the (name function, such as post office) for Sudbury.
 - o This house is unique among museum houses as the house was donated to the town by a woman (Florence Hosmer). She was a prolific and accomplished artist. She provided almost 500 of her paintings to the town, many of which are on display throughout the house. The majority of furnishings and objects belonged to the Hosmers.
 - o You may make an observation about an object in the room. Your visitor may be looking at a specific object, so that can be a good opener.
 - o You may have other ideas to open and continue a discussion.
- In addition, for children:
 - o Point out objects in the paintings that are also in the room and or point out objects you think might capture their attention.
 - o Ask questions such as "How old do you think this house is?"
 - o Engage in interactive activities and discussions if or when possible.
- If your visitor indicates an interest in learning more, you can provide some basic facts about the room, house, Florence and the Hosmer family, etc.
- Ask questions along the way to engage. Open-ended questions may work better than yes-no questions.
- Allow the guests sufficient time to think about the discussion, respond, and formulate additional questions.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, it's fine to say "I don't know; I'll look into that" but try to find out an answer and get back to them before they leave.
- Watch for cues when the visitor is ready to move on and explore the room on their own.
- Let the visitor know that you are available for any other questions.
- You should be familiar with the basics of the house, such as:
 - o The house is open for special events, and by appointment.
 - o The bathroom is located on the first floor near the back door.
 - o There are seats for the guests in the hallway, store room and ballroom.
- If it is helpful for you, jot down some ideas of things you might want to say in advance of meeting the public.
- Enjoy yourself. This should be fun.

The Sudbury Chronicle



Sudbury Historical Society, Inc.

2017—Winter

Seven Ways That History Is Essential

As the SHS continues to raise funds for the future Sudbury History Center, it is important for the SHS to express why the project is significant for our community. At the start of the new year the SHS endorsed the History Relevance Campaign's statement on the value of history in contemporary life. The HRC is a diverse group of history professionals posing questions about what makes the past relevant today. They believe that with common agreement, commitment, and open conversation about why history is important, the historical community can change the common perception that history is nice, but not essential. The HRC's statement resonates with the SHS's mission. Here is why the History Center project matters:

History is Essential for Ourselves

1) IDENTITY » History nurtures personal identity in an intercultural world. History enables people to discover their place in the stories of their families, communities, and nation. They learn the stories of the individuals and groups that have come before them and shaped the world in which they live. Through these varied stories, they create systems of personal values that guide their approach to life and relationships with others.

2) CRITICAL SKILLS » History teaches critical 21st century skills and independent thinking. The practice of history teaches research, judgment of the accuracy and reliability of sources, validation of facts, awareness of multiple perspectives and biases, analysis of conflicting evidence, sequencing to discern causes, synthesis to present a coherent interpretation, clear and persuasive written and oral communication, and other skills that have been identified as critical to a successful, productive life.

History is Essential for Our Communities

3) VITAL PLACES TO LIVE AND WORK » History lays the groundwork for strong, resilient communities. No place really becomes a community until it is wrapped in human memory. No place is a community until it has awareness of its history. Our connections and commitment to one another are strengthened when we share stories and experiences

4) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT » History is a catalyst for economic growth. People are drawn to communities that have preserved a strong sense of historical identity and character. Cultural heritage is a demonstrated economic asset that attracts talent and enhances business development.

History is Essential for our Future

5) ENGAGED CITIZENS » History helps people craft better solutions. At the heart of democracy is the practice of individuals coming together to express views and take action. By bringing history into discussions about contemporary issues, we can better understand the origins of and multiple perspectives on the challenges facing our communities and nation.


6) LEADERSHIP » History inspires local and global leaders. History provides leaders with inspiration and role models for meeting the complex challenges that face our communities, nation, and the world. It may be a parent, grandparent or distant ancestor, a local or national hero, or someone famous or someone little known. Their stories reveal how they met the challenges of their day, which can give new leaders the courage and wisdom to confront the challenges of our time.

7) LEGACY » History, saved and preserved, is the foundation for future generations. History is crucial to preserving democracy for the future by explaining our shared past. Through the preservation of authentic, meaningful places, documents, artifacts, images, and stories, we leave a foundation upon which future Americans can build.

If you have ideas about how we can show that History is Essential at the Sudbury History Center, contact the SHS. To learn more about the History Relevance Campaign visit www.historyrelevance.com.



Sudbury citizens at the opening of the new Town Hall in February 1932 understood why history is essential. The new building honors the old and preserved Town Center. See page 8.

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Basic Information: Florence Hosmer, The Hosmer House Museum, and Sudbury Historical Commission

Updated: October 10, 2018



Image: Florence Hosmer in front of Hosmer House, with palette, unknown date.

Information on Florence Armes Hosmer and Hosmer House

Florence

- Born: 20 October 1880
- Died: 17 February 1978; Age: 97

Mother's Name:

- Abigail Louisa Armes
- Born: 5 November 1845; Died: 26 November 1912; Age: 67

Father's Name:

- Edwin Barrett Hosmer
- Born: 9 November 1840; Died: 15 January 1910; Age: 69

Year Hosmer House (HH) was built: 1793 (in the Federal Style)

HH Builder: Asher Goodnow

First HH Owner: Captain Elisha Wheeler

Previous HH owners:

- James L. Willis and his wife Ella ran the Sudbury Country Store on the first floor, west side. A cobbler's shop was on the second floor; back west side.

HH Purchase Date to the Hosmers: 1897

Number of rooms: 11 rooms, two large main halls, and a shed with a double privy

- The Hosmers converted the ballroom into two smaller bedrooms when they bought the house. It was restored to one large room in 1982.
- The current kitchen was added to the house in the 1920s. Prior to that, the dining room fireplace and adjacent warming ovens were used for cooking.
- One bathroom was added in 1920; a second bathroom was added in 1976.

Fireplaces: Formerly 11; the kitchen fireplace was removed when the kitchen was upgraded. Currently there are 10 fireplaces.

When the HH was bequeathed to the town by Florence Hosmer : On June 1st 1959, it was agreed that the house would be donated to the town upon her death. In exchange, the town provided Florence with care for her remaining years. She lived another 19 years under this arrangement.

Florence Hosmer's art style: Oil, watercolor, portrait, landscape, still life

Number of Paintings: 479 that have been inventoried by the Historical Commission. There are many others that are not owned by the Town of Sudbury.

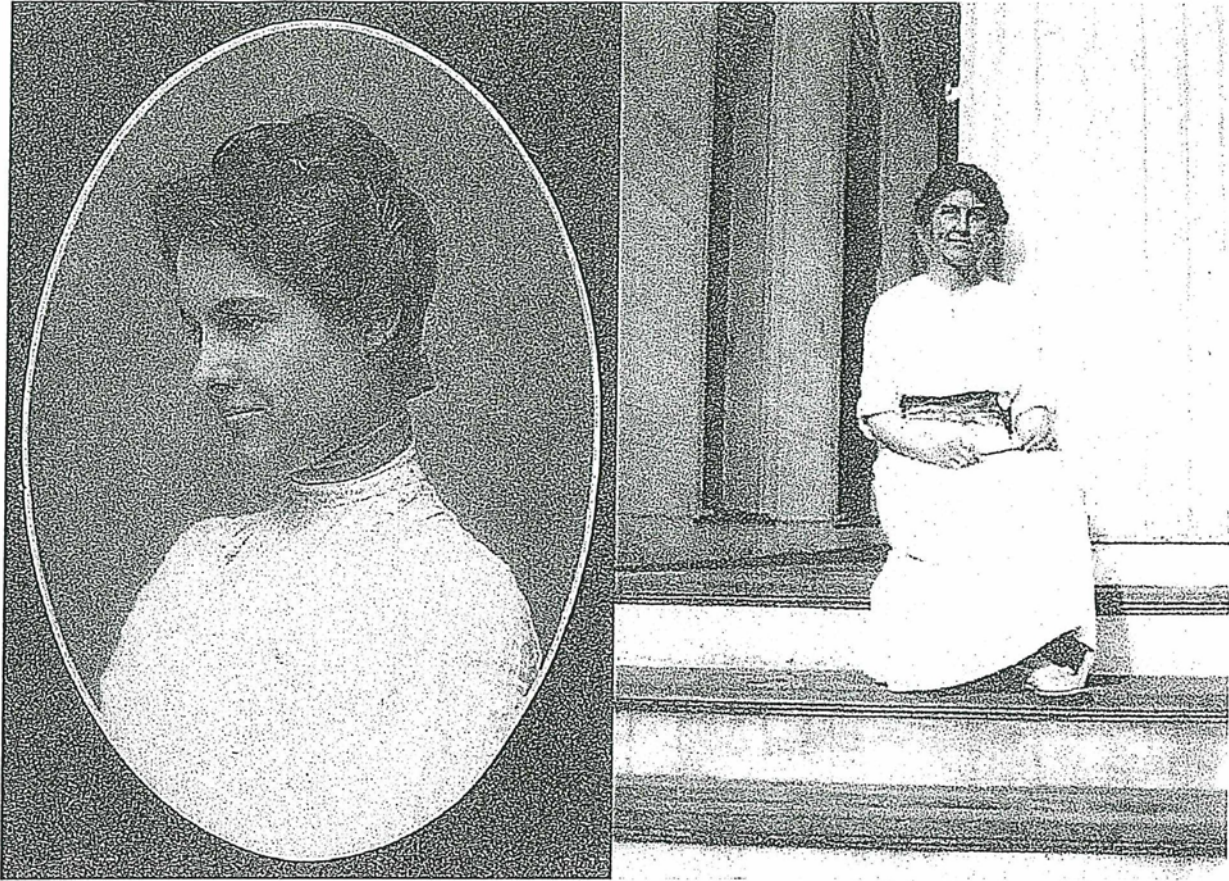
Grant Funding:

- First grant: 1983 - \$50,000, appropriated by the town, voted by town meeting that year
- Second grant: 1984 - \$20,000, from the Massachusetts Historical Commission

What was accomplished with the funds: New furnace, electrical work replaced, plumbing repaired, sills replaced, support columns in cellar to re-support storeroom ceiling. Plastered the walls and ceilings, took down bedroom partition. Added exit signs and new lamps outside of building. Painted ballroom, repointed chimneys and foundation wall, repaired roof framing, repaired entrance doors, fireproofed chip in basement stairs, repaired upstairs bathroom floor, placed flashing around the chimneys.

Further steps in restoration: CPA funds were granted to the Sudbury Historical Commission to upgrade and repair the deterioration which had occurred in recent years. The Sudbury Foundation provided a third grant to put in a cement cellar with French drains.

Florence Hosmer's Artistic Career



Images: Florence Hosmer in 1902, age 22. Florence Hosmer on Town Hall Steps, unknown date.

Florence Armes Hosmer (1880-1978) was a resident of Sudbury Massachusetts for 82 years, having moved here with her family from Woodstock, Connecticut when she was 16. She began painting in her teens, and earned a diploma from the Massachusetts Normal Art School in 1902 "to satisfy the need for teachers for art." Drawing was an obligatory part of public school education at this time.

During her four years at the school, Florence's course of study included drawing from casts and from life; watercolor studies from plants and flowers; and details from historic schools of ornament, portraiture, sculpture, and design. Among her teachers were Joseph Decamp, Albert Munsell, and Anson Cross. DeCamp's influence is especially evident in her confident modelling of heads and her rich, fluid handling of paint. Later she continued her education at Charles Woodbury's school in Ogunquit, Maine.

As a member of the Copley Society and the Cambridge Art Association, Florence Hosmer exhibited her work in both places, as well as at the Massachusetts Women's Club and the Boston Art Club. Her portrait of her grandmother was shown at the Boston Art Club and the Rochester NY Fair in 1908, and again in 1930 at the Copley Society. Painted when she herself was still in her 20s, "Grandmother" is one of several paintings which illustrate her sympathetic treatment of elderly women. This painting now hangs in the parlor at Hosmer House.

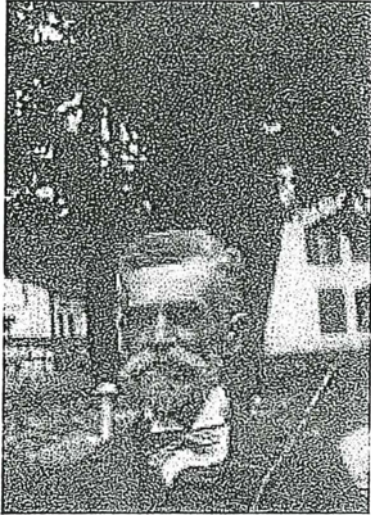
Florence was a teacher of art for more than 20 years at public and private schools in Sudbury, Framingham, and Wayland. Her summers were often spent at artists' colonies in Peterborough, New Hampshire; Ogunquit, Maine; and Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

In 1926 she painted portraits of several members of the Daughters of the American Revolution dressed in period costumes, in connection with the 300th anniversary of the founding of Salem, Massachusetts. One of these, a portrait of Charlotte Nichols wearing her grandmother's silver wedding dress, hangs in the Pierce-Nichols House in Salem.

After retiring from teaching, Florence maintained a studio in Boston; first in Trinity Court, Copley Square, and then on Newbury Street. In May 1940, a group of her portraits of Boston-area musicians and composers was shown at the Boston Public Library as part of the celebration of National Music Week. Included were portraits of Charles Repper, Boston composer of operettas, and Raymond Havens, a pianist who soloed with the Boston Symphony.

While still in her 70s, Florence Hosmer bequeathed her house and paintings to the Town of Sudbury. She died at the house on February 17, 1978 at the age of 97.

Meet the Hosmer Family



Edwin Barrett Hosmer, circa 1899.



Abigail Hosmer, circa 1899.



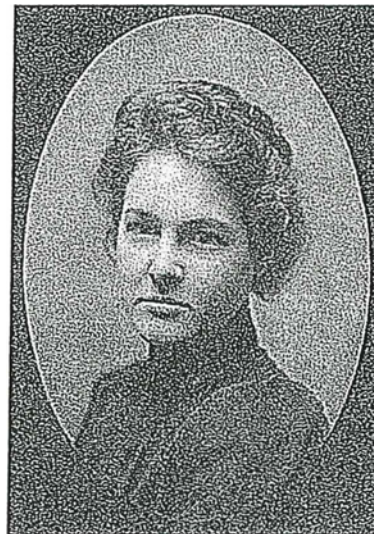
Alice Hosmer, circa 1895, age 18.



Burt Hosmer, circa 1899, age 28.



Fred Hosmer in 1899, age 20.



Florence Hosmer in 1899, age 19.

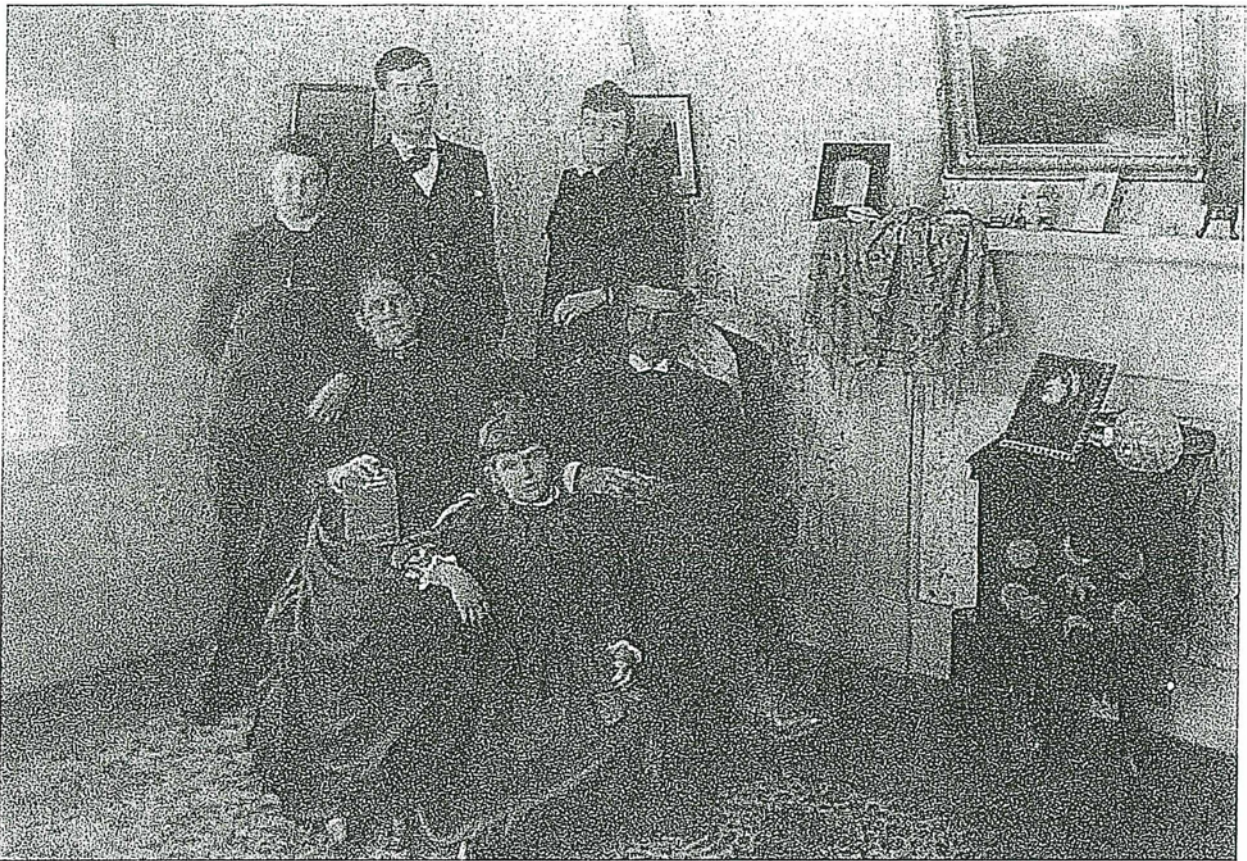


Image: The Hosmer Family at their home in Woodstock Connecticut, 1891. The family resided in Woodstock for some years prior to moving to Sudbury in 1897. Clockwise from left: Fred Hosmer, age 12, Burt Hosmer, age 20, Alice Hosmer, age 24, Father Edwin Barrett Hosmer, Florence Hosmer, age 11, Mother Abigail Hosmer.

The Hosmer Family History

Edwin Barrett Hosmer was the son of Amos Haynes Hosmer and Abigail Barrett Hosmer. He was born in Mason NH on 9 November 1840. He married **Abigail Louise Armes** on 11 September 1864. She was born in Foxborough MA on 5 November 1845, the daughter of Josiah Lyman Armes Jr. and Marcia Kingman Kieth.

Edwin Barrett and Abigail Hosmer lived in Mason NH, Woodstock CT, and Sudbury MA. They had five children:

1. A baby boy who was born in Mason NH, but died in infancy, 1865.
2. **Alice Lillian Hosmer** was born on 14 August 1867 in Mason NH. She died in Sudbury on 3 November 1924.
3. **Albert Edwin Hosmer** was born on 29 April 1871 in Woodstock CT. He died on 11 June 1957.
4. **Winfred Everett Hosmer** was born on 15 May 1879 in Woodstock CT. He died on 19 January 1948.
5. **Florence Armes Hosmer** was born on 20 October 1880 in Woodstock CT. She died on 17 February 1978.

Edwin Barrett died on 15 January 1910, and Abigail Louise (Abbie) died on 25 November 1912. The entire Hosmer family listed above, with the exception of Albert, are buried in Lot 166 in Wadsworth Cemetery in Sudbury MA. Albert died in Oak Bluffs, MA, and is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery in Tisbury, in Lot 644, on Ailanthus Lane, on Martha's Vineyard.

Albert and Alice attended Woodstock Academy in Connecticut. Edwin Barrett is listed as a trustee of the Academy in 1887, and Albert is listed as a teacher in the academy in 1894-95. Edwin Barrett was a Deacon in "The Church on Woodstock Hill" in 1882.

The Hosmers moved to Sudbury in 1897. Albert signed an agreement to purchase the house, barn, and nine acres from Ella Willis for \$2,000 on 6 September 1897. She was the widow of James Willis.

The oldest Hosmer sibling, Alice Hosmer, was a sensitive and disciplined person. She was a grammar school teacher at several nearby schools, including those in Nashua, New Hampshire, and later Weston, Massachusetts. She also served as a school principal for some years.¹ Alice died of an unknown illness - possibly cancer- at age 57.

Albert Hosmer was a spiritual man with a baritone voice and an appetite for travel. When he was young, he was a music teacher at Sudbury schools and sang in the Memorial Congregational Church. He moved from Sudbury to the Midwest to work as part of the faculty at the Conservatory of Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio. He was also a Professor of Voice, Singing, and Chorus in Ohio, and taught voice at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Burt married Stella Burns Hosmer in 1914. Stella was of poor health, and died in 1934. Two years later, Burt married Eugenia "Gean" Hunt Hosmer, a long-term friend of the family. Burt and Genie spent many years living in Florida, before retiring to Martha's Vineyard, where they would live for their remaining years. Burt lived to the age of 86.²

Fred Hosmer was an artistic person who enjoyed painting and writing poetry. He was the only one of the Hosmer siblings to marry young and have a child. On 23 May 1902, in Woodstock CT, Winfred (Fred) married Mary E. Boyden Hosmer. He was 23, and a student in New York. Mary was the daughter of Samuel and Caroline Appletree Boyden, born in Oxford MA, and 25 years old at that time. Fred and Mary had one daughter: Lois Frazier Hosmer. In 1928, Fred and Mary divorced, to the displeasure of the Hosmer Family. Fred's death certificate (19 January 1948) lists his wife as Harriet Willis. Fred's occupation was listed as a shoe salesman. Throughout his life, Fred had difficulty finding satisfactory work. He did, however, in his twenties, have the pleasure of traveling to Stockholm, Sweden. He was there in 1902, likely with someone he had met when he worked at Bellevue Hospital in New York.³ He wrote a short story titled "The Norway of Happier Days," which was based on his travels.

¹ Casey, Helen Marie. *My Dear Girl: The Art of Florence Hosmer*. Chapter Four: "We Talked Literature and Ate Chocolates." Pittsburgh: Black Lawrence Press, 2011. Print.

² Casey, Helen Marie. *My Dear Girl: The Art of Florence Hosmer*. Chapter Nine: "Esteemed by All." Pittsburgh: Black Lawrence Press, 2011. Print.

³ Casey, Helen Marie. *My Dear Girl: The Art of Florence Hosmer*. Chapter Eight: "Where Do People Find Money?" Pittsburgh: Black Lawrence Press, 2011. Print.

The Sudbury Historical Commission - Hosmer House

The Hosmer House Museum was willed to the Town of Sudbury by the painter and teacher Florence Armes Hosmer as a memorial to her father, the Deacon Edwin Barrett Hosmer:

The Sudbury Historical Commission has the responsibility of care of the building and contents left in its entirety by Florence Hosmer, to be preserved in perpetuity.

Museum rules

- Apply for the care and management of the house.
- Guests and visitors may not enter roped rooms.
- Designated workers may enter to perform their tasks, under the restrictions given below.
- No object or artifact may be touched, moved, used within the roped room.
- In any other room, lamps, accessories on desks, tables, bookcases, shelves, desks, trunks, fireplaces may not be used, opened, etc. without permission from a Commission member or designated person.
- The Kitchen Hoosier Cupboard contents in the kitchen are to be unused and undisturbed.
- The closed green door in the dining room next to the kitchen is utilized by the SHC and Hosmer Docents for storage.
- All other cupboards in this room must remain untouched and closed.
- The contents of the shelves between dining and living room remain as Miss Hosmer displayed them.
- Paintings may not be touched or moved without previous notice and Commission approval.
- The storage room for the paintings is off limits for all but the Commission and the Arts Committee.
- No one is to enter the attic. The door must be kept locked.
- No additional holes, hooks, etc. will be made to the surfaces of the house.
- No tape of any kind can be applied to any wall or surfaces.
- Special wall clay may be applied to room walls, but only under the supervision of a SHC commissioner.
- The office has a telephone that may be used for emergencies, a desk for messages and notes, a sofa, chairs, Alice Hosmer's dresser, and a coat rack.
- Large objects such as a Christmas Tree should be tied up or wrapped so as not to damage the newly painted surfaces, especially door casings.
- Vases and other containers must be watched closely; especially before leaving the house.

Sudbury Historical Organizations

The following is a brief explanation of the responsibilities of the historic committees in town and their differences.

The Historical Commission was established by special town meeting vote in 1968 for the preservation, protection, and development of our historical archeological assets and landmarks. We have jurisdiction over the alteration, repairs, attachments, furnishing, and occupancy of all aspects of historic buildings and properties currently owned or acquired by the town. Presently these include the Hosmer House, Loring Parsonage, Haynes Garrison site, Revolutionary War Training Field, and the old town cemeteries, to name a few. The Historical Commission also comes under the guidelines of the Massachusetts Historical Commission located in Boston. Our Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Selectmen for a three -year term and reports directly to the Selectmen and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The Historical Districts Commission's responsibilities are to determine the appropriateness of any new construction or exterior changes to existing buildings within the four designated districts in town. These include Town Center, Wayside Inn District, George Pitts Tavern District, and King Philip District on Route 20, The Historic Districts Commission is a five-member board appointed by the Selectmen.

The Ancient Documents Committee was adopted in 1956 for the preservation and management of town documents such as indexing records of birth, death, and marriages, plus historical records. Sudbury has one of the most complete town records in the US dating back to 1638. The Town Clerk is a member of this Committee and helps in the archiving of important town papers.

Sudbury's Town Historian is appointed by the Selectmen and is knowledgeable in the area's history. The Town Historian serves as a consultant to town boards when advice is needed on old road layouts, old laws, and historic sites.

The Sudbury Historical Society is a non-governmental organization that collects and preserves artifacts of our town heritage and traditions. Their membership is open to the public and they are presently setting up a history center in the Loring Parsonage. Persons wishing to donate to this collection or give their time should contact Historical Society Director Sally Hild.

Developed by:
Lyn MacLean
Past Chairperson, Sudbury Historical Commission

The Hosmer House - by John C. Powers

Copied from the inside of the front and back covers of the Sudbury, MA Town Report for 1962, for Miss Florence A. Hosmer, by one of her grateful guests at a delightful luncheon at Grange Hall across the square from the Hosmer House.

Neither time nor change seem to affect Sudbury Centre. If anything, the passing of years serve only to etch more severely the lines of character in its face. We may well wonder why it is that the old Centre, heart of our civic life for more than two centuries of human activity, should remain somehow a place apart. And yet, despite all of the ravages of logical thought and political, economic and social change, it remains so.

One of the keystones of the mystery is the Hosmer House.

The four huge chimneys of this ancient Federal period "brick-ender" have dominated the Centre since sometime in the early 1800's. Ashael Goodnow did more than he knew when he set his carpenters and masons to work. The house he built - that masterpiece of wood and brick- somehow captured the heart and soul of the town from which he had grown. And from his lead, the rest followed. In 1797, the small, cramped quarters of the First Parish gave way to the present structure, unerringly designed by the rude craftsmen of Sudbury as a counterpart.

From there it is a matter of history how Rocky Plain became the heart of the "west side," how the old Town Hall was built, how the carriage shed appeared, how the new Town Hall was recreated by Charles Way out of the ashes of the old.

So, Hosmer House stands today, a structure fused into the idea of Sudbury. Once wrested from its original purpose, it became a general store and tavern - the long bar still evident in the living room. Upstairs once was raised a beautiful ballroom where the young in heart danced (under watchful eyes) to tunes of yesteryear. Once it served as a post office for the town. Once it accommodated a small cobbler's shop, where those that walked the ways of a long-forgotten life repaired for assistance. For a time, to the delight of Sudbury's children, it was a candy shop, and here home-made ice cream was produced and sold. All of these traces remain in the old structure.

But somehow - despite necessities of the day- the old house withstood the claims of commercialism, and became again, what it must always be - a place wherein people must dwell. It is a house for people.

Some of us have gentle memories of it. The small boy's remembrance of tramping past it on a snowy evening in the dark, and hearing from the warm golden glow of its interior the voice of Mr. Hosmer at his keyboard, filling the square with melody. We remember the rich oil paintings which still flow from his sister, Florence Armes Hosmer - views from the open front door of scenes and times which belong to our fathers and posterity.

For time has passed, for this old house. Now the rich late afternoon sun of winter evokes from the old brick walls a perennial response, and a sense of settled warmth reflected back to the square.

And we think, in trying to puzzle out the great riddle of Hosmer House, that perhaps Ashael Goodnow, by his insistence upon comfort, grace, and architectural honesty, captured the spirit of Sudbury. Honesty - not ostentation, truth - not presumption, are built into this house. And in them lies the answer.

Hosmer House is still a monument to an idea, as is the Centre which grew about it. We have not lost faith with that idea.

John C. Powers.