

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 1 of 34

Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District: National Register Significance Statement

The Sherwood Quaker Crossroads Historic District meets the criteria for National Register listing at the national level of significance under Criterion A for its importance in American social history and reform, most especially the Underground Railroad, women's rights and suffrage, and education (especially for African Americans and women) and under Criterion B for its association with Emily Howland, a nationally known Quaker who devoted her life to racial justice, education, and women's rights. Emily Howland was honored as a pioneer and major financial contributor of the national woman suffrage movement, as well as a major contributor to about forty schools throughout the United States, most of them African American schools in the South. The Sherwood Quaker Crossroads Historic District is also significant at the state level under Criterion C as a virtually intact nineteenth century rural crossroads community, surrounded by a remarkably intact agricultural landscape. The district includes an important Quaker meetinghouse, a cobblestone store, an early hotel, two extant homes of African Americans, and a cemetery with several African American gravestones, as well as the home of Emily Howland and one major safe house on the Underground Railroad.

The district meets the requirements established in the Multiple Property Document for Historic Resources Associated with the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Central New York for sites associated with freedom seekers who stayed in central New York, sites related to helpers on the Underground Railroad, and sites related to abolitionism.

Overview

In 1842, Herman and Hannah Phillips left slavery in Maryland with their four children, heading north on foot toward freedom, traveling at night and hiding in the woods by day. What route they took we do not know. Eventually, however, they reached the home of Matthias and Hannah Hutchinson in King's Ferry. The Hutchinsons kept them overnight and told them they would take them the next day to Sherwood, where Slocum Howland would help them find a home. Herman Phillips agreed, but only if this was the place that he had seen in a vision before he left the South. When they arrived in Sherwood, he recognized his new home: "There is the house in the hollow, there is the elm tree, there is the hill, there is the house in the grove, there is the orchard, there are all the houses, there is the stone store, there is the tavern, and there is the man crossing the street that is to be my friend."¹

Today, driving north from Ithaca along Route 34B, following the trail of the Phillips family, you will come to the hamlet of Sherwood. There you will see almost all the buildings that Herman and Hannah Phillips saw when they arrived in 1842. At the four corners stand the cobblestone store (now the Howland Stone Store Museum), a two-story hotel, a small house (once the home of the Mastin family, who were shoemakers, seamstresses, store clerks, and printers), and a vine-covered building (which has served in various incarnations as a carding shop, store, post office, house, boarding house, and inn). In the hamlet, the home, store, and orchard of Slocum Howland still stand, as does the tenant house where the Phillips family lived, the home they bought in 1854, the school their children attended, and the cemetery where they lie buried. The homes of Emily Howland, William and Hannah Howland, and Isabel Howland—who for three generations continued the work for equal rights for African Americans, woman suffrage, and education—also stand.

Like the buildings, the landscape surrounding Sherwood looks very much as it did when Herman and Hannah Phillips arrived. Sherwood is situated in the middle of rich agricultural fields once tilled by Cayuga Indians. European American settlers continued to clear the land, creating the sense of openness to sky and lake that gives this area its compelling character. The hamlet sits on a ridge, the Poplar Ridge, and the blue waters of Cayuga Lake remain visible between Sherwood's small houses. The elm tree that Herman Phillips saw in Sherwood once stood at the southeast corner of the Sherwood-Aurora Road and Poplar Ridge Road (near the Mastin House). It remained a landmark in the community until it came down in 1942, almost 170 years old. One native hickory also remained in Sherwood as late as 1881. Josiah Letchworth set out the first shade tree in the village in 1844, noted postmaster S.W. Greene in 1881. As late as the 1880s, Sherwood residents still pointed to apple trees, left over from Cayuga Indian orchards, and apple trees remain in Sherwood today.²

¹ [S.W. Greene], "Reminiscences of Cayuga County: Sherwood and Vicinity," Chapter IV, *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, June 10, 1881.

² In 1881, S.W. Greene recalled that "Indian apple trees were plenty when the white man came." "Three, so admired by Humphrey Howland and others, stood in an equilateral triangle, a few rods west of the village; they were cut down by M.B. Kerr." In 1881, one still remained on Rebecca Searing's land, and "one on land owned by Henry Koon, than which no better fruit for pies has ever yet been found." [S.W. Greene], "Reminiscences of Cayuga County: Sherwood and Vicinity," *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, April 22, 1881; June 10, 1881.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 2 of 34

The man crossing the road who became Herman Phillips' friend was Slocum Howland. Howland was a Quaker and abolitionist, "a man of the widest sympathies and the tenderest feelings . . . never to busy to render a kindness," remembered his daughter.³ He owned the Stone Store (NE-6) and the Howland house (NW-7) behind the tavern ((NW-8), across from the orchard (SW-4). Howland put the Phillips family into a tenant house on the post road (SW-9) and later behind the Stone Store (NE-6), before he sold them a house and land (NE-12) that still stands today across from the Sherwood Cemetery (NW-14), where Herman and Hannah and many of their children and grandchildren lie buried. Slocum Howland, his daughter Emily Howland (SE-4), and his neighbor and in-law Josiah Letchworth (SE-5) became a friend not only to the Phillips family but also to many other freedom seekers who came through Sherwood. Some of them also settled nearby, including Thomas and James (Frederick Hart) (NW-7), Jerome Grieger, and Philip and Mary Gaskin and their children. Philip Gaskin later joined North Street Meeting of Friends (NW-1).

Of the **twenty-eight** properties in the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District, at least **ten (36 percent)** are associated with African Americans and five more are related to **known European American** abolitionists and supporters of the Underground Railroad. **In the larger Sherwood historic area**, eleven of the fifty-five properties extending to the four corners are related to African Americans and seven are related to known European American abolitionists.

The Howland family and many of their allies in abolitionism and the Underground Railroad were Quakers, members of North Street Meeting of Friends (Orthodox) (NW-1). Much of the reform impetus for people in Sherwood emerged from that Quaker meeting. At least **sixteen (57 percent)** of the **twenty-eight** sites in the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District were associated with Quakers.

Beginning in the 1830s, abolitionism in Sherwood formed the roots of the early woman's rights movement. By the 1890s, the Howlands, along with women and men in several other Sherwood families, formed the cohesive and long-lasting core of the Sherwood Equal Rights Association, organized in 1891. At least eleven of the twenty-eight buildings (39 percent) in the Sherwood Historic District are directly related to people and events associated with the Sherwood Equal Rights Association.

Herman and Hannah Phillips, Slocum Howland, Emily Howland, and their fellow villagers in Sherwood illustrate the community roots of American democracy. Community sociologists often categorize people as either local or cosmopolitan in their worldview, but Sherwood citizens were both; they identified strongly not only with their own local area but also with the ideal of America. Founded in the 1790s, Sherwood's physical and cultural identity crystallized before 1880, coinciding with the nation's struggle over slavery and freedom. As Americans, people in Sherwood believed that "all men are created equal," and they carried that ideal into practice, promoting the abolition of slavery, the Underground Railroad, Native American rights, and women's rights. Unlike people in many communities, however, Sherwood citizens retained their commitment to equal rights reform in the post-Civil War period. Because agricultural land around Sherwood remained productive, families were relatively stable across generations, and early cultural imprints remained strong.

Second and third-generation Sherwood residents expressed their equal rights ideals in movements for woman's rights and education. Four local institutions reflected women's rights ideals: the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which lasted into the late twenty-first century; the Sherwood Political Equality Club, one of the most active branches of the Cayuga County Political Equality Club and the National American Woman Suffrage Association; the Sherwood Ramabai Circle, devoted to the Pandita Ramabai Mukti [Liberation] School for young women in Pune, India; and Sherwood Select School, which, until its absorption into the public school system in 1926, was organized and operated entirely by women. Women from Sherwood graduated in disproportionate numbers to college, including three who became medical doctors.

In terms of education, not only did Sherwood citizens support both the Pandita Ramabia Mukti School and Sherwood Select School. At least three Sherwood citizens supported schools for freed people in the South during Reconstruction, Slocum Howland with financial contributions and Emily Howland and Anna Searing as teachers. Hannah Howland and Isabel Howland (Emily's sister-in-law and niece) created Sherwood's first library and museum in 1884. Both library and museum survive today as the core of the Howland Stone Store Museum. Assets include one of the nation's best (if not the best) collections of woman suffrage posters. At least eleven of the fifty-five buildings in the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District relate directly to education, as schools, libraries, museums, or boarding houses for teachers and students.

³ Emily Howland to Pandita Ramabai, April 1888, Howland Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, www.co.cayuga.ny.us/history/ugrr/emilyltr.html.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 3 of 34

Nationally-known reformers who came to Sherwood included Abby Kelley (lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society), Harriet K. Hunt (early woman doctor), Mary and Emily Edmondson (who had escaped from slavery), Joseph John Gurney (English Quaker reformer), Sojourner Truth (born in slavery, who became a major abolitionist and woman's rights lecturer), Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, Susan B. Anthony, probably Booker T. Washington, and Harriet Tubman.

Several of Sherwood's citizens worked in a state and national arena, including Slocum Howland, who was well known to leaders in the American Anti-Slavery Society and to members of an Underground Railroad network that stretched into southeastern Pennsylvania and Delaware; Job Otis, a leader in the Wilburite movement among Orthodox Friends; Anna Searing, through her work in a Virginia school for freed people of color; and Isabel Howland, who was well-known in the New York State Suffrage Association, the National American Woman Suffrage Association, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Across the country, however, Emily Howland was Sherwood's best known citizen, nationally significant for her work in education (especially African American education) and women's rights. In education, Emily Howland supported about fifty schools, not only as a teacher but also as a philanthropist. In 1857, she began to teach in a school started in Washington, D.C., by abolitionist Myrtilla Miner. During the Civil War, she worked in schools for freed people of color. Beginning in 1867, she started a community for freed people in Heathsville, Virginia, called Arcadia, on 400 acres purchased by her father, with a school called Howland Chapel School, still standing. From then until the end of her life, donated money, books, and energy to approximately fifty schools, most but not all of them African American schools in the South, including Tuskegee Institute; Holley School in Lottsburgh, Virginia; Kowaliga School in Alabama; and Manassas Industrial School in Alexandria, Virginia. Many of these schools constructed buildings named Howland Hall. Emily Howland visited these schools and corresponded regularly with their administrators, including Booker T. Washington. She also supported many individual African American and female students at schools throughout the country, including Oberlin, Howard University, and Cornell. In 1882, Miss Emily, as she was known locally, built Sherwood Select School, which became the center of much of Sherwood's community life. It became a public school in 1926. Torn down in 1955, it was replaced by the current Emily Howland Elementary School. In 1926, Emily Howland received for her work in education the first (and for at least thirty years the only) honorary doctorate granted to a woman by the State University of New York.

In terms of woman's rights, Emily Howland (1927-1929) was honored as a pioneer of the suffrage movement. She was also a major financier of both the New York State Women Suffrage Association and the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Emily Howland, like many women, came to women's rights through the abolitionist movement, publishing an antislavery letter when she was only seventeen years old; organizing abolitionist activities; and teaching in abolitionist schools. Beginning in 1858, she worked with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to organize woman's rights lectures and meetings. She continued her woman's rights work after the Civil War. She spoke at the thirtieth anniversary of the Seneca Falls woman's rights convention in 1878 and to the New York State legislature in 1894. She was president of the Cayuga County Political Equality Club and regularly attended county, state, and national suffrage meetings. She also attended an international suffrage meeting in London in 1903 and, with other suffrage leaders, took tea with Queen Victoria. She spoke before Congress in 1904, marched and rode in the great suffrage parades in New York City in 1912 and 1913 (at age 85 and 86), and continued to give speeches at national meetings until increasing age limited her travel in the 19-teens. Beginning in 1892, suffragists began to introduce her at national woman suffrage meetings as a "pioneer and leader," and they continued to do so until the end of national suffrage meetings in 1920. She remained a friend of Susan B. Anthony until Anthony's death in 1906. We will never know the extent of Emily Howland's financial contributions to the suffrage movement, but Susan B. Anthony thought she was one of the two most important contributors from New York State. When she died, her obituary appeared in the *New York Times*, and eleven biographical encyclopedias carry entries about her life.

Slocum Howland died in 1881. Miss Emily, as she is still known in Sherwood, died in 1929, aged 101. Miss Isabel died in 1942. Estelle Phillips, Herman and Hannah Phillips' granddaughter and the last of the Phillips family to live in Sherwood, died June 10, 1951, and is buried in Sherwood Cemetery.

The legacy of these remarkable generations lives on. As we begin to understand, once more, the depth of their commitment to ideals of equality for all people, we recognize the impact that individuals in this one small community had on the nation as a whole.

Table of Contents

- 1. Sherwood: A Lake Country Crossroads**
- 2. "The life of righteousness": Quakers in Sherwood**

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 4 of 34

3. "A Storm Center of Reformers": Abolitionism, the Underground, and Women's Rights, 1835-1865
 4. "A Vital Question": Woman's Rights, 1850-1929
5. "A school is what I would like my name perpetuated by": Emily Howland and Education
 6. The Legacy: Sherwood and Its Meaning in Twenty-first Century America

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 5 of 34

1. Sherwood: A Lake Country Crossroads

Named after Seth Sherwood (1768-1820), the hamlet of Sherwood, New York, was settled in 1794 at the southeast corner of the 1795 Cayuga Indian reservation. Before the American Revolution, Cayuga Indian villages, farms, and orchards filled this area, and some of the Cayuga apple trees remained in Sherwood long after the Cayugas themselves had moved to Canada, Ohio, and western New York.

Sherwood stood at the crossroads of two main transportation routes, one connecting Ithaca in the south with Auburn in the north, and the other going east and west from Moravia to Cayuga Lake. Sherwood derived its main income as a trading area for local farmers, who brought goods from rich agricultural lands surrounding Sherwood for transport to national markets through Slocum Howland's store and docks on Cayuga Lake. By the 1830s, Sherwood had formed the basic matrix that sustained it into the twentieth century. It was a crossroads hamlet with a tavern, two stores, one grist mill (that later become a factory producing dried apples and jelly) and several houses. Barns, outbuildings, and small shops filled in spaces between the houses, where local craftsmen made shoes, chairs, carriages and wagons, harnesses and (in the early days) cast-iron plows designed by local farmer and inventor Jethro Wood.

Anchored in the broad open fields that led down to Cayuga Lake, Sherwood citizens were rooted also in the larger landscape of America. Much of what happened locally in this small community connected Sherwood citizens directly to national issues. Locally, they were intimately connected in a complicated intergenerational network of intertwined families, and many of them remain so to this day. But these families had all migrated from widely different places on the east coast and western Europe (including England, Ireland, and Germany). They read national newspapers. They traveled widely and regularly, and they were connected as friends, neighbors, family members, and business partners with people, including many influential people, all across the country. Paradoxically, their former neighbor, Millard Fillmore, signed the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, as President of the U.S. He also commuted the sentence for Daniel Drayton and Edward Sayre, captured for attempting to rescue 77 people from slavery aboard the ship the *Pearl* in 1848. Sherwood residents also followed the career of their Auburn neighbor and Fillmore's rival, William Henry Seward. First as Governor, then as Senator, and finally as Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln, Seward took an antislavery stance. Sherwood residents had a personal interest in Seward through his friend Josiah Letchworth and Emily Howland, a classmate of Seward's wife Frances. As citizens of their small hamlet, Sherwood residents were also citizens of their country and the world.

Attracted by some of the richest farmland in New York State, with easy access to transportation by land and water, people came to Sherwood from many different places along the east coast of North America and the west coast of Europe. By 1850, when the census began to list places of birth for each individual resident, most people in Sherwood (79 percent) were born in New York State. Many of these were already second generation citizens of Sherwood. A sample of 190 core people living at the Sherwood crossroads in 1850 showed a significant number of people, however (21 percent), who listed their birthplaces as outside the state, including 6.3 percent born outside the country, in England (9), Ireland (2), or Canada (1). Of the 14.2 percent from the east coast, six were from Maryland, seven were from Pennsylvania or New Jersey, ten were from New England (Massachusetts and Connecticut), and four were from Illinois.

A similar pattern emerged in 1860. Of 151 core residents at the crossroads, 115 (76 percent) were born inside New York State and 24 percent were born outside New York. Of the 9.3 percent from the east coast, seven were from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, six from New England (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, and Rhode Island), one from Maryland. Sixteen (10.6 percent) were from abroad (one from Canada, nine from Ireland, and three each from England and Germany).

Many of these families were African American. In the earliest years, Edward Pierce, who built the Pierce-Holley House, was African, Indian, and European. Later, Thomas and James (or Frederick) Hart came as freedom seekers from Maryland and settled in the area, Thomas in Aurora and Frederick in Sherwood (although in the 1860 census he listed his place of birth as Connecticut). The John and Genette Baker family, born in New York State, perhaps originally in slavery, lived in Sherwood from an early date and are buried in the Sherwood Cemetery. In 1843, Herman and Hannah Phillips and their four children arrived as freedom seekers from Maryland. They settled in Sherwood and purchased a home in 1856. Three generations of the Phillips family lived in Sherwood until Estelle Phillips moved to Auburn in 1942. Many members of the Phillips family are buried in the Sherwood Cemetery. Freedom seekers Philip and Mary Gaskin lived nearby, and Philip Gaskin joined North Street Quaker meeting in 1874. Other African Americans, including freedom seeker Jerome Grieger and his son Sherburne Grieger, worked for Slocum Howland and undoubtedly often came to Sherwood. Many other African American students boarded with the Howland family while they attended school at either the Howland School in Union Springs or Sherwood Select School. Both Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth stayed with the Howland family in the 1870s. Of the fifty-four sites in the Sherwood Equal Rights district, eleven of them (20.3 percent) were associated with African Americans.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 6 of 34

Sherwood's citizens kept in regular touch with the world through daily mail, trade, and personal travel. In 1804, Seth Sherwood's tavern on the northeast corner of the crossroads (on the site of NE-7) briefly became the site of the county seat, only to be moved the following year. From 1822 to 1840, mail came through Sherwood from Moravia to Aurora. After 1824, mail coaches also traveled north and south between Auburn and Ithaca, with four-horse teams changing at the stables on the corner. Ports on Cayuga Lake at Aurora and Levanna connected Cayuga County farmers directly to the Seneca and Cayuga Canal, the Erie Canal, and urban markets. In 1874, the railroad came through central Cayuga County.⁴ (See photo 1, New York State Map, 1842; Photo 1, Post Road, looking north toward Auburn).

Sherwood's first tavern found an early rival across the street in the hotel that still stands today (NW-8), built originally in 1814 by Samuel Phelps and renovated in 1880.

Sherwood also became a major center for local trade. Farmers brought grain, pork, and wool to trade at local stores. Quaker Slocum Howland and his brother-in-law, Thomas Alsop, ran one store, first on the southwest corner (SW-6) and then probably on the site of the Annex (NW-9), where Howland went into partnership with his nephew, Ledra Heazlit. In 1837, they moved across the street to the Stone Store (NE-7). In the early years, Slocum Howland also acted as the major manufacturer and sales outlet for the new cast iron plow, invented in 1819 by his brother-in-law, Jethro Wood, whose home still stands on Poplar Ridge Road (and is now a National Historic Landmark). According to his neighbor, S.W. Greene, Howland bought iron in Albany, had pieces for the plow cast at a foundry in Montville, and then brought to Sherwood, where they were "wooded, and finished up, at his own shop" (SE-7). They would then have been shipped to national markets from his port at Levanna on Cayuga Lake.⁵

As changing technology transformed their economic world, Sherwood citizens used their increasing power to impose their vision of traditional American values on the rest of the country, to emphasize a definition of the Declaration of Independence that highlighted personal liberty and respect for individual rights: "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Many of them were motivated to do this by their affiliation with a reform-minded group of Quakers connected with the North Street Meeting (Orthodox), whose new brick meetinghouse was located just a mile west of the village center (NW-1).

2. "The life of righteousness": Quakers in Sherwood

Of the fifty-four sites included in the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District, at least thirty-seven (67 percent, and perhaps as many as forty-four, or eighty percent) were affiliated with Quakers. The Baptists built a church in 1803 on the east side of Route 34B, at the intersection of Goose Lane, but it had "to beat against wind and tide," noted one local resident, "from the day of its inception it was environed by Quakers on the west and flanked by them on the south." Quakers dominated Sherwood and the surrounding towns from the 1790s to the end of the nineteenth century. Some of these Quaker families came from eastern New York, southeastern Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Many of them, however, migrated from Dartmouth, Massachusetts (near New Bedford) or Nantucket. Some came with considerable wealth earned from the whaling trade, which they now invested in agricultural land along Cayuga Lake. Among the earliest were Benjamin Howland and Mary Slocum Howland, who built a house in 1799 on what is now Poplar Ridge Road. Mary Slocum's Uncle Walter Easton, who lived with them, was a retired sea captain. The Chase family, who lived at the corner of Dixon Road, also had connections with the sea, as did Elizabeth Otis, of the East Otis Farm, whose brother, Stephen Gorham, brought tropical plants and parrots to adorn their Sherwood residence and to show off in the village museum (SE-11, NE-8).⁶

Finished in 1799, with masonry constructed by Benjamin Howland himself, Benjamin and Mary Howland's house became a social center and the site of the first Quaker meetings in the area. "What crowds of them overflowed the old homestead on Sundays," remembered their granddaughter, Emily. The saltbox house still stands on land now owned by Cornell University, near the agricultural experiment station.

⁴ [S.W. Greene], "Reminiscences of Cayuga County History," *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, June 10, 1881.

⁵ [S.W. Greene], "Reminiscences of Cayuga County History," *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, May 11, 1881.

⁶ The number of properties associated with Friends is based on a comparison of known property owners with a list of members of Scipio Monthly Meeting of Friends at the time of the separation in 1828 (listed as Hicksite, Orthodox, and "Neutral") in the James E. Hazard Index to the Records Friends of New York Yearly Meeting, online through Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore (<http://www.swarthmore.edu/library/friends/hazard/index.html>).

[S.W. Greene], "Reminiscences of Cayuga County History," *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, May 20, 1881.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 7 of 34

After Scipio Monthly Meeting was established officially under the care of Farmington meeting, Aaron Baker, a Sherwood resident (NE-14) completed the first Quaker meetinghouse in 1810 on Poplar Ridge Road (demolished in 1914) on Poplar Ridge Road, patterned after traditional Quaker meetinghouses in New England. They built a meetinghouse of similar style and size near Barber's Corners, called the North Street Meetinghouse, to distinguish it from the older building, which became the South Street Meetinghouse. (All of these buildings are outside the boundaries of the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District.) They were all part of Scipio Quarterly Meeting, which also included Quaker meetings in Union Springs and Skaneateles.

Nationally, Quakers split in 1828 into Hicksite and Orthodox branches. Quakers in the Sherwood area divided along the same lines. Sometimes people in individual families agreed to disagree. Benjamin Howland, e.g., "one of the kindest, gentlest of men," became a Hicksite, while Mary Howland, "not at all religious, not a constant meeting goer, rather worldly minded," joined the Orthodox, "some said because the most wealth was to be found on that side," noted her granddaughter, Emily, but "they never had any ill feeling about their differences."⁷

So painful was the split for many Quakers, however, that they refused to admit that the other group deserved to be called Quakers at all, so they referred only to "the larger body," remembered Emily Howland, an Orthodox Friend. As the larger group, Hicksites took control of both original meetinghouses. Orthodox Friends built a new brick meetinghouse in 1834 for North Street Meeting of Friends (Orthodox) just west of Sherwood, on land donated by Augustus Howland (NW-2). So active were these Orthodox Friends in abolitionism and woman's rights that this meeting became known as "a storm center of reformers."⁸

Eventually, Orthodox Friends who objected to such radical activism broke away in yet another split—the Wilburite-Gurneyite split. In 1839, British Orthodox Friend Joseph John Gurney toured the U.S. His goal was to convince U.S. legislators to abolish slavery, but on his way to Washington, D.C., he stopped to lecture on antislavery and Quakerism at various places throughout the Northeast. North Street Meeting gave him a warm welcome. Many Quakers in the Sherwood area had migrated directly from England, including weighty Friends such as William King, who with his wife and two sons had migrated from Nottinghamshire, England, to Ledyard about 1828, and Susannah Marriott, who migrated from England in 1793 and kept a noted school in Aurora. Not all Friends found his message appealing, however, and in his wake, Gurney left yet another split among Quakers. Orthodox Friends who felt uncomfortable with Gurney's reform message withdrew to form a new Orthodox meeting, the Wilburites.⁹

Sherwood Quakers Job Otis and Deborah Otis, a minister, became leaders among the Wilburites in New York State. Job Otis left a memoir and diary that, after his death, was published in Sherwood. The diary discussed the spiritual journeys of both Job and Deborah Otis. Born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, Deborah Otis had been a Quaker minister, taking a strong stand in the 1820s against what Job Otis called "New Lightism" and then against "incipient Gurneyism." As a result, "she was arbitrarily, and without any just cause whatever, silenced, and not allowed to exercise her gift in the ministry, nor take any part in the administration of the discipline, for some two years," until, in 1833, "*way opened* . . . by the immediate and sensible pointings of Truth itself, for us to make our escape, to come away and leave it all, to our great relief and comfort, by a removal to this country," i.e. Sherwood.¹⁰

Deborah Otis continued her ministerial work after she came to Scipio. Yet, like her husband, she was plain spoken. She spoke the Truth as it was given to her, and not everyone welcomed her ministry, especially if they were "governed more by human tenderness for the offender, than right concern, and true tenderness for the Truth, and for the welfare of the Society."¹¹

⁷ Extracts from a letter to Herbert Howland from his Aunt Emily Howland, dated March 4, 1924, typescript, Howland Stone Store Museum.

⁸ Emily Howland to Caroline Putnam, 1906.

⁹ Mary Jane Howland Taber, "Friends Here and Hereaway," *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches, No. 12*, Old Dartmouth Historical Society, December 8, 1905. Thanks to Bradley Mitchell for finding this. "King-Gaskin House," "Susannah Marriott Houses," Judith Wellman, "Finding the Freedom Trail in Auburn and Cayuga County," (Auburn: Historic Resources Review Board, 2005).

¹⁰ Job Otis, *Memoirs of the Life and Religious Exercises of Job Otis* (Sherwoods, N.Y.: Published by his children, 1861). Online in the Harvard University digital

collection:<http://books.google.com/books?id=INpFreoueAYC&dq=%22job+otis%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=ihtPuNeRV4&sig=HxNFQzaFThpV2Fn7fvEumJqQMRY>, 173-74.

¹¹ Job Otis, *Memoirs of the Life and Religious Exercises of Job Otis* (Sherwoods, N.Y.: Published by his children, 1861), 178-79.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 8 of 34

When J.J. Gurney visited Sherwood in 1839, he proposed to visit Job and Deborah Otis and their family. Job Otis wrote him a detailed letter opposing Gurney's views and refusing his visit. Widely circulated, this letter made Otis a leader of the anti-Gurney Friends, the Wilburites, in New York State. Otis believed, he wrote, that "I have done what I could to support ancient Quakerism, (Primitive Christianity in faith and practice,) sound doctrine, administration of discipline, maintenance of the testimonies of Truth, &c.; and above all, to maintain the life of righteousness both in myself and others." "As to the popular and stirring associations and movements of the day, I am as dead to them all as a man of ninety."¹²

The split between Wilburites and Gurneyites left deep and painful divisions among local people. Humphrey Howland, son of Benjamin and Mary, staunchly supported Gurney, whom he had met in England, while Job Otis bitterly opposed him. One cold winter day, when Otis was visiting the Howland House at Poplar Grove, remembered Howland's daughter, Mary Howland Taber, their disagreement erupted in a decidedly unQuaker-like manner. Sitting before a roaring fire in a Franklin stove, they felt the heat both of the fire and their argument:

The wood . . . came down with a clatter and shower of coals to the front of the hearth. Job continued his railing, the heat of the burning coals was intense, between Job and the excessive heat the host lost his temper, and seizing the long handled shovel, raised it in the air, and with action that would have graced Satan's stoker in the bottomless pit brought it down on the old Franklin like the opening of the anvil chorus. The shovel was flattened out into a pancake turner, and the fire flew. Humphrey Howland said: "If thee repeats this abuse, I will call my men, and have thee taken out of the house, and thrown into the high way."

Job Otis needed no further hints. Taking his hat and coat and cane, he left the house, and the two men "never recognized each other again in public or private life."¹³

Deborah Otis played a "conspicuous part," noted her husband, in this split, and after the separation, she spoke in almost every meeting. One Elder noted that the meetings seemed "more nearly to resemble those we have an account of in early times, than any he had ever before witnessed, the overshadowing and breaking forth of divine power and goodness were so eminently witnessed in them. Oh! It was a precious season of favor, . . . a rich reward for all the trials and sufferings some of us had endured for the cause' sake; it crowned all, and proved beyond a shadow of doubt, that our beginning was right."¹⁴

Splits between Orthodox and Hicksites, Wilburites and Gurneyites were not the end of Quaker divisions in the Sherwood area, however. A third division occurred among the Wilburites at South Street Meeting. While the issues are not clear, the split centered around the Otis household and took its name from them. Followers of the Otis family were called Otisites, and their opponents were called Kingites, perhaps after the family of English-born Quaker William King, his sons Alfred and John, and their wives, Mary, Marianne, and Susan, who lived nearby on Dixon Road.

Locally, Wilburites met at a new meetinghouse in Poplar Ridge, the South Street Meeting, while Gurneyites met at North Street Meeting. Both Otisites and Kingites continued to use the South Street Meetinghouse, passing each other solemnly and silently as they switched from one meeting to the other.

The power and pain of these divisions marred social life in Sherwood and surrounding area for decades. What seemed like a harmonious rural community was in fact a center of intense debate and frequent and passionate divisions over basic beliefs. This sometimes made even social visiting difficult. Emily Howland noted in a letter to her mother that "the less visiting the less danger of quarreling & that is the besetment of relatives or of people much alike living near. There is scarce a family in our circle that is exactly pleasant to mention the others in, yet they are all good people, only too comfortable, too wealthy & too near together."¹⁵

Many Sherwood citizens responded by developing social institutions and events where people could come together on joint projects, creating ties that bound the community together in spite of ideological disagreements. Some of these community institutions were economic. Sherwood became a center of agricultural fairs in the nineteenth century and of the Grange in the early twentieth century. Many,

¹² Job Otis to J.J. Gurney, July 11, 1839; Draft of a letter from J. Otis to _____, October 12, 1845, Job Otis, *Memoirs of the Life and Religious Exercises of Job Otis* (Sherwoods, N.Y.: Published by his children, 1861), 245-51. 222.

¹³ Mary Jane Howland Taber, "Friends Here and Hereaway," *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches, No. 12*, Old Dartmouth Historical Society, December 8, 1905, 14.

¹⁴ Job Otis, *Memoirs of the Life and Religious Exercises of Job Otis* (Sherwoods, N.Y.: Published by his children, 1861), 179-80.

¹⁵ Judith Colucci Breault, *The World of Emily Howland: Odyssey of a Humanitarian* (Millbrae, California: Les Femmes, 1976), 122.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 9 of 34

however, were reform organizations, such as the American Anti-Slavery Society, the Sons of Temperance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Sherwood Political Equality Club, organized in 1891 to promote woman suffrage. Many were educational, organized around private or public schools or community educational institutions, such as literary societies. Many were organized and led by women. Quakers formed the energizing power behind most of these organizations, but all brought Quakers into regular organized contact with the larger community around them, locally, regionally, and nationally.¹⁶

3. "A Storm Center of Reformers": Abolitionism, the Underground, and Women's Rights, 1835-1865

Before the Civil War, North Street Meeting of Friends (Orthodox) was the source of much of the reform energy in central Cayuga County. Emily Howland called that meeting "the storm center for reformers." These Quakers acted as the engine of sentiments for peace, abolitionism, the Underground Railroad, Indian rights, and woman's rights, and they saw all these reforms as part of one large commitment to equal rights, based on their belief in the Light Within all people.

Quakers Slocum and Hannah Howland, their sons William and Benjamin, their daughter Emily, and their in-laws Josiah and Ann Letchworth, lived in Sherwood. They helped make this community a center of reform. Remembering her father Slocum Howland after his death, Emily Howland wrote that he was:

a member of the Society of Friends and believed heartily in the sect to which he belonged, without prejudice or bigotry in regard to the beliefs of others. I never heard him as though he thought that they were wrong and his views the true ones. He had the same large-heartedness in regard to races, all mankind was of our blood. He believed that our Declaration of Independence was vitally true. "All men are born free and equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." All men," he understood to mean both men and women.¹⁷

Other important Quaker reformers in this network included David and Edna Thomas, who ran a nursery just west of the North Street Meetinghouse, and Susannah Marriott, British Friend who operated a boarding school in Aurora, attended by Emily Howland. Four known freedom seeking families settled in Sherwood and the immediate area, including Herman and Hannah Phillips and their four children; Thomas and James (Frederick) Hart; Richard and Mary Gaskin and their four children; and Jerome Grieger and his son Sherburne Griger. All were associated with the Howland family. The Phillips family owned a home in Sherwood itself, and Frederick Hart and his wife Jane lived in one of Slocum Howland's houses in Sherwood. Several other probable freedom seekers lived for brief periods on area farms.

Quaker peace testimonies lay at the heart of much of their work for equality and reform. While we do not have specific evidence for Quaker involvement in peace movements in the Sherwood area before the Civil War, we do have anecdotal evidence of its importance to local families. In 1924, in a letter to her nephew Emily recalled about her grandfather Benjamin Howland, that he "must have felt strongly about violence; father told me that grandfather would not let him go to see the soldiers mustered for the War of 1812; nor to see the execution of an Indian that took place in Aurora when it was the County Seat."¹⁸

Immediately after Friends first built the North Street meetinghouse in 1834, they began their public commitment to changing the world. In 1835, Slocum Howland, trustee of North Street Meeting, signed an antislavery petition printed in *The Friend*, asking *The Friend* to cover more antislavery news. Other members of this monthly meeting also signed this petition, including trustee Abram M. Underhill, Charles Gifford, Abram Samuel Savage, Samuel Shords, David Thomas, Martha Heazlit, Susannah Marriott, William King, and James C. Fuller. The last three were all originally British Friends, and James Canning Fuller was an extremely active Underground Railroad agent in Skaneateles. Notably, two of these signers—Susannah Marriott and Martha Heazlitt—were women.¹⁹

¹⁶ Sherwood resident (and non-Quaker) Justus Allen mentioned the Sons of Temperance and the Literary League in his diary in 1848, noted in Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 16-17.

¹⁷ Emily Howland to Pandita Ramabai, April 1888, Howland Papers, Swarthmore, online, Cayuga County Historian's Office, www.co.cayuga.ny.us/history/ugrr/emilyltr.html.

¹⁸ Extracts from a letter to Herbert Howland from his Aunt Emily Howland, dated March 4, 1924, typescript, Howland Stone Store Museum.

¹⁹ *The Friend*, 9:11 (December 12, 1835).

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 10 of 34

On January 20, 1835, Friends from North Street Meeting (including Slocum Howland [NW-7], Humphrey Howland, probably Allen Thomas [SW-6], Josiah Letchworth [SE-5], and Benjamin Gould [NE-16]) also signed the first antislavery petition sent to Congress from Cayuga County:

Your petitioners Inhabitants of the County of Cayuga and State of New York

Do earnestly entreat Your Honorable body to pass such laws at the present session that will immediately liberate the slaves in the District of Columbia that all may enjoy freedom within the limits of our capital District and put it out of the power of any persons living at the seat of our government to exact the labor of a fellow being without paying satisfactory wages.

Your petitioners sensible of the excited feelings that rests on this subject do not ask Congress to interfere with slavery as it exists in any of the states. The experiment of immediately emancipating the slaves in the District of Columbia may be beneficial to the interest of those states where slavery is not abolished.

Your petitioners trust that the wisdom of Congress will easily devise some plan by which the slaves of the District may be liberate without injustice to any and to the entire satisfaction of all parties. January 20th 1835.²⁰

Emily Howland recalled that “there was much more freedom of speech there [in the brick meetinghouse] than there ever was in the South Street meeting, because David Thomas and Susan Marriott and my father [Slocum Howland] were active abolitionists as well as leading members of the meeting.” In contrast, when James Canning Fuller, “the little English Friend, who always wore knee breeches, was to give an address in that house on slavery, and when the speaker and some others arrived they found the house barred and bolted; nothing daunted, a window was raised. I think James himself crawled through it, unbolted the door on the inside, and so the audience assembled and held their meeting.” (The home of James Canning Fuller and Lydia Fuller on West Genesee Street in Skaneateles in on the National Register as part of the Multiple Property Document of Historic Resources Relating to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Central New York.)²¹

In 1837, the Cayuga County Anti-Slavery Society, barred from holding its meeting in the Aurora Presbyterian Church, met in the North Street Meetinghouse. “The meeting was well attended principally by the Friends who are numerous in this quarter and quite generally abolitionists,” reported the *Friend of Man*, newspaper of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society.²²

In 1843, Abby Kelley, a Garrisonian abolitionist, spoke at an antislavery convention at the North Street Meetinghouse. Kelley’s first public speech was at a national women’s anti-slavery meeting held in Philadelphia in 1838. So hostile were local people to these abolitionist women, black and white, that they burned down the brand new hall around them. When Kelley made a tour through upstate New York for the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1843, she spoke out against churches as proslavery institutions, and so radical were her words that few people gave her space in which to lecture. The North Street Meetinghouse was an exception. At that convention, Emily Howland, then an impressionable sixteen-year-old girl, also met John Collins, founder of a Fourierist utopian community near Skaneateles, New York, and Thomas and Mary Ann M’Clintock and their daughters, Elizabeth, Mary Ann (and perhaps also Sarah and Julia), who in 1848 helped organize the first woman’s rights convention in the United States at Seneca Falls, New York. “Those were thrilling, mentally active times in this country,” remembered Emily Howland. “The struggle to improve caused intense activity and brightening of the mind in that time.”²³

About 1843, hundreds of citizens of Cayuga County, most of them from the greater Sherwood area—Springport, Venice, Ledyard, and Scipio--sent six petitions to Congress (one signed by men and women and the rest signed only by men) supporting the claims of Seneca Indians to keep their lands in western New York. Members of North Street Preparative Meeting signed at least one of these, signed by J[osiah] Letchworth [SE-5], Allen Thomas [SW-6], Slocum Howland [NW-7], Humphrey Howland, Augustus Howland [NW-2], and others (155 men in all) that read:

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Assembled:

²⁰ National Archives and Records Administration. HR23A-H1.2.

²¹ Emily Howland to Caroline Putnam, January 8, 1908, from Jane Simkin, online at Cayuga County Historian’s Office website.

²² *Friend of Man*, December 27, 1837.

²³ Emily Howland to Caroline Putnam, January 8, 1906, from Jane Simkin, online at Cayuga County Historian’s Office website.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8: Significance. Page 11 of 34

The undersigned, inhabitants of the County of Cayuga in the States of New York being convinced that a majority of the Seneca Nation of Indians are decidedly averse to emigration, and have never given their assent to the treaty for the sale of their lands, as amended by the Senate, and believing that the honour, dignity, and interest of the United States do not require that Treaty to be forced upon said Indians; would most respectfully petition your Bodies to adopt such measures, as in your wisdom shall appear best adapted to sustain the honor of the United States, and prevent injustice to the Indians [sic].²⁴

As a child, Emily Howland read William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, *The Liberator*, as well as *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the Orthodox Quaker newspaper, *The Friend*, the *Friend of Man* (which she saw at Susannah Marriott's school), and the *The Slave's Friend*. This publication, she remembered, "bore a picture on its cover of two little girls, one white, one colored, playing among flowers," teaching those who read it that "children of a darker hue were entitled to an equal share in the pleasures of life." "I took the lesson to heart," wrote Emily, "and when the colored woman who came to wash for us brought her little girl about my own age. I took her by the hand and led the way to my father's store. I well remember the raillery of the clerk, which I bore with the sturdy spirit of a martyr."²⁵

Every year, Slocum Howland closed his store for four days in May to attend the annual meeting in New York City of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and Emily Howland often accompanied him. There, she may have met William Harnad, who coordinated many abolitionist and Underground Railroad activities in the New York City area. She collected clothes in Sherwood to send to fugitives from slavery in Canada, but Harnad advised her to send them to fugitives in New York City instead, since there was no agent in Canada at that time.²⁶

Unlike many Quakers, the Howland family did not avoid politics. Slocum Howland served as Supervisor for the Town of Scipio in the late 1820s. In 1846, Slocum Howland ran as a candidate for delegate to the New York State Constitutional Convention. "When it was whispered from afar that he was opposed to slavery," however, "an irrepressible howl was interposed against him, and what proved fatal to him, was that he could not deny the undemocratic charge, but boldly admitted its truth. Consequently," his neighbor, S.W. Greene noted wryly, "he was defeated by a small majority, his Democratic opponent having a clean record on the slavery question." In 1852, Slocum Howland was president of a meeting of the "friends of freedom," held in Port Byron, New York, that celebrated the emergence of slavery as the one great issue before the American people at the next election and freedom of speech, and of the press, as "the great weapon of defence of civil liberty; that when we part with these, we part with all; and we will, therefore, never associate nor vote with any political party that is willing to purchase peace from the enemy, by delivering as hostages our principal means of protection."²⁷ "Slocum Howland," noted Greene, "was an old time abolitionist, when there were but a few such in the country; he strenuously advocated equal rights for all."²⁸

In addition to European Americans, North Street Meeting had at least two African American members. One, in the 18-teens, was the nephew of Paul Cuffe, the famous African American sea captain who established a colony in Sierra Leone. The other was Richard Gaskin, born in Virginia, who brought his family (including his wife Mary and his four children) to Ledyard in 1864. By 1869, they had purchased a home on Dixon Road. In 1874, Gaskin joined a Quaker meeting in Scipio, most likely this one, where his neighbor, William King, was also a member.²⁹

²⁴Sent to Christopher Morgan with five other similar petitions, National Archives and Records Administration, HR27A-H1.6.

²⁵Emily Howland to Pandita Ramabai, April 1888, Howland Papers, Swarthmore, online, Cayuga County Historian's Office, www.co.cayuga.ny.us/history/ugrr/emilyltr.html. The only Black family listed in the census with children in 1850 in Sherwood was the Phillips family. If the woman who did the wash was Hannah Phillips, her oldest daughter was Martha, age 13 in 1850, which would have made her ten years younger than Emily Howland, not Emily's own age. John and Genette Baker were also listed in the census, but they did not have children. Other African American families may have lived in Sherwood who were not listed in the census, or who lived there in between 1850 and 1860,

²⁶ Emily Howland to William Harnad, October 16, 1850, Howland Papers, Cornell University.

²⁷ Emily Howland, "Early History of Friends in Cayuga County, N.Y., Read before the Cayuga County Historical Society, April 8th, 1880," *Collections of Cayuga County Historical Society*, 2 (1882): 49-90, online through Cayuga County Historian's Office; *North Star*, January 25, 1850; *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, March 18, 1852; August 13, 1852; May 13, 1853; August 24, 1855.

²⁸ [S.W. Greene]. "Reminiscences of Cayuga County History," May 11, 1881.

²⁹ Scipio Monthly Meeting Records, found by Jane Simkin. Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 12 of 34

North Street Preparative Meeting was a center of Quaker education, including education for girls. Susannah Marriott, b. 1769, immigrated from England about 1793, spending time in Dutchess County, New York; Muncy, Pennsylvania; and Manhattanville, New York, before moving to Ledyard. Susannah Marriott settled in Aurora, where she took over a school that she named Brier Cliff, after her birthplace in England, from 1820-27. Earlier, daughters of Judge Elijah Miller in Auburn—Lizette and Frances—later Lizette Miller Worden and Frances Seward, wife of William Henry Seward, who would both become strong abolitionists and advocates of woman's rights—attended this school. In 1827, Susannah Marriott purchased a house, still standing on the southeast corner of Court Street and the Sherwood Road in Aurora.³⁰

After Susannah Marriott left Brier Cliff, she ran another school. According to research by Sheila Edmunds, Village Historian of Aurora, she was listed in the 1840 census as operating a “grammar school” with 10 pupils about a mile east of Aurora on Sherwood Road. Emily Howland probably attended this school about 1836, because she listed Susannah Marriott as one of the three most influential people in her life (the others were her father and her maternal grandfather, Joseph Tallcott, noted Quaker educator). Susannah Marriott was one of several signers from North Street Preparative Meeting of the antislavery petition published in *The Friend*, a Quaker newspaper in 1835. She kept an antislavery library, circulated antislavery petitions, and promoted antislavery lectures.³¹

Lecturers, remembered Emily Howland, “singly or in groups, kept interest in the cause alive, by coming once or twice a year, and holding conventions in the Friend’s Meeting houses, or a series of evening lectures in the country district school houses. The speakers were educated persons, generally from Boston, not only eloquent and zealous advocates of their cause but interesting socially. They were entertained at the houses of abolitionists, so that we young people had the benefit of their intelligent conversation.” Harriot Hunt, for example, an early woman physician, lectured there. Emily Howland remembered little about her lecture except that she was “a bright lovable woman,” with “fat dimpled hands” and “a little fat figure,” and “a young woman who was one of her hearers thought some of her allusions to maternity were immodest.”³² In 1850, Mary and Emily Edmondson, two teenaged girls who had been rescued from slavery, came to speak at North Street Meeting. William Chaplin, an antislavery editor and Underground Railroad activist, had attempted in April 1848 to rescue 77 people from slavery in Washington, D.C., including the Edmondson sisters. Captured and thrown into jail in Maryland for another rescue attempt two years later, Chaplin’s only hope of survival was to raise bail and escape to the North. At a large meeting in the North Street Meetinghouse, abolitionists raised money not only for Chaplin’s bail but also for an inscribed silver pitcher to commemorate Chaplin’s bravery. Emily Howland collected money, a dime from each donor.³³

Like women in other key abolitionist communities, women Sherwood held a fair to benefit the abolitionist cause. They sold local produce and handiwork. Emily Howland contributed the first embroidery she ever did, a potholder labeled “Anti-slaveholder,” with a double pun, since the sale of the article would attack slavery and its use to hold pots. During the Civil War, women in Scipio met at the North Street Meetinghouse to sew clothes for freed people of color.³⁴

People in the Sherwood area also took an active part in the Underground Railroad. Slocum Howland (NW-7, SE-4), Josiah Letchworth (SE-5), and others in the Sherwood area were key parts of an Underground Railroad network connected to Friends in Cayuga County, southeastern Pennsylvania, and farther south to Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia as well as north to (F)riends in Auburn, Skaneateles, Port Byron, Pultneyville, and Canada. The long length of Cayuga County, with Cayuga Lake on the west side, acted like a funnel for freedom seekers. Slocum Howland’s house and store—with wagons going constantly east to Moravia, west to Levanna on Cayuga Lake, and north to Auburn and Skaneateles—was right in the middle of this network. Just as many Quakers from Scipio Monthly Meeting had come from Pennsylvania, so Quakers in Pennsylvania sent many freedom seekers to central Cayuga County.³⁵

³⁰ Deed, Charles Kimball to Susannah (Susan) Marriott, both of Ledyard, Book FF, p. 360, December 2, 1826, for \$400.

³¹ Emily Howland to Pandita Ramabai, April 1888, Howland Papers, Swarthmore, online, Cayuga County Historian’s Office, www.co.cayuga.ny.us/history/ugrr/emilyltr.html.

³² Emily Howland to Caroline Putnam, January 8, 1906, from Jane Simkin, online at Cayuga County Historian’s Office website.

³³ Emily Howland to Pandita Ramabai, April 1888, Howland Papers, Swarthmore, online, Cayuga County Historian’s Office; Emily Howland to Caroline Putnam, January 8, 1906, from Jane Simkin, online at Cayuga County Historian’s Office website, www.co.cayuga.ny.us/history/ugrr/emilyltr.html.

³⁴ Emily Howland to Pandita Ramabai, April 1888, Howland Papers, Swarthmore, online, Cayuga County Historian’s Office, www.co.cayuga.ny.us/history/ugrr/emilyltr.html.

³⁵ This discussion of Underground Railroad work in the Sherwood area comes from Judith Wellman et al, Slocum Howland House, National Register nomination, 2006.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 13 of 34

Emily Howland, Slocum Howland's daughter, noted that people "were usually sent forward from a station in Pennsylvania by John Mann, a Friend, who was head of a school. Some came from another station, further south, the home of Dr. Fussell. All these stations were homes of Friends."³⁶

Many freedom seekers chose to stay in Cayuga County, rather than travel on to Canada. The Town of Ledyard, just west of Sherwood, had more African Americans listed in the census than any other town in Cayuga County outside the City of Auburn. Fifty-one African Americans lived in Ledyard in 1855, compared to 48 in the Town of Mentz (which included Port Byron, an Erie Canal village, and home of William Duvall, who kept an Underground Railroad safe house that was so important that neighbors dubbed his home "Hayti") and 184 in Auburn. Some of those in Ledyard had been born in New York State, either in slavery or freedom. Others, however, had been born in the South.³⁷

At least three and probably four of these families were directly associated with Slocum Howland, whose home was the best documented safe house in central Cayuga County. (See Continuation Sheet: Photos 3 and 4, Slocum and Emily Howland and dog Grant.) Probably many others were, too, but we lack documentation for them.

1. Thomas and James Hart, 1840. On April 9, 1840, John Mann, the same Friend who described above, addressed the following on a small piece of paper to "Slocum Howland, Sherwood's Corner, Scipio, N.Y., Owego, Ithica":

I have mailed two passengers to thee, in the "shank's horse diligence": baggage free, and at the risk of the owners. 9th of 4th mo. 1840. John Mann

This is a remarkable and rare extant example of a pass for two freedom seekers. A note in shaky handwriting at the bottom, probably Emily Howland's, adds details:

"This note introduced two fugitives from Slavery in Maryland Thomas and James Hart, stalwart vigorous and young." (See Continuation Sheet: Photos, 2.)

Emily Howland implied later that both Thomas and James remained in the area. Only Thomas Hart's name appeared in the Cayuga County census. He married Sarah Jane Cromwell, daughter of William and Zilpah Cromwell of Aurora, and, in Sarah Jane's name, the family owned a home next to the African American Cromwell-Cooper family on the shore of Cayuga Lake in Aurora, just west of Sherwood, where Thomas lived at least until the 1860s. Sarah Jane lived into the 1880s.³⁸

James Hart was most likely Frederick Hart, listed in the 1860 census as a 26-year-old farmer, born in Connecticut, living with New York-born Jane Hart, age 18 who worked as a domestic. Could this Frederick Hart have been the James Hart that Emily Howland remembered, disguising his place of birth? Was Jane Hart Frederick's sister (since both listed their marital status as single)? Had she also escaped from slavery? Was she also disguising her identity? They were living with John and Lida Chase, farmer and housekeeper, and their three children, Lida, Ellen, and Lois (aged 9, 7, and 3), in what may have been (from their location in the 1860 census record) Slocum and Hannah Howland's former home on the Sherwood-Aurora Road.

2. Hannah and Herman Phillips. This family arrived from Maryland in 1843 with four children, the youngest an infant. Discovered by a neighbor from Maryland, who visited Sherwood, they fled to Canada, where their son James was born in 1849. Canada, however, was too cold for them, reported Emily Howland, and they returned to the U.S., only to be confronted with the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

³⁶ Emily Howland to Leonard Searing, October 8, 1928, copy in Cayuga County Historian's Office; original pass in Howland Stone Store Museum.

³⁷ Manuscript census, 1855, New York State; "William Duvall," in Judith Wellman, *Uncovering the Freedom Trail in Auburn and Cayuga County* (Auburn: Historic Resources Review Board, 2006).

³⁸ Pass owned by Howland Stone Store Museum. Sarah Jane Hart purchased property in 1857 from Moses and Mary Cromwell Johnson. Thomas and Jane Hart to Ann Martin, 1861, Book 101, p. 46.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 14 of 34

In 1888, Emily Howland, abolitionist, teacher, woman's rights advocate and daughter of Slocum Howland, wrote a brief essay summarizing her life for Indian woman's rights activist Pandita Ramabai. In it, she recalled scenes from her abolitionist childhood, including the story of the Phillips family:

Once a man and his wife and four children, the youngest being an infant, carried in a bag slung on its father's back, who escaped from Maryland, settled under my father's protection for some time. But one hapless day a lady came to visit in the neighborhood who recognized them at once, having visited at their master's house. She promised not to betray them to the slave holder, but they could not thus risk the liberty for which they had dared and suffered, to an uncertainty, and fled in terror to the Queens' dominions where they suffered so much from the more rigorous climate and from other causes that they returned, and the parents ended their days where they began their life of freedom. They were both worthy and industrious, and earned a comfortable home, as well as the respect of those who knew them.³⁹

On October 8, 1928, Emily Howland wrote to Leonard Searing (NW-13), President of the Cayuga County Historical Society, giving more clues about this family, including their name, date of arrival, and possible routes of travel, as well as indicating her own family's work on the Underground Railroad:

My father's house was the station for those who fled from slavery. I can remember several arrivals from what was called the patriarchal institution. There was Herman Phillips, his wife and four children, coming about 1843. At another time two young men, all from Maryland. Another man came from West Virginia. Footsore and weary they reached here, having walked all the way. They were usually sent forward from a station in Pennsylvania, by John Mann, a Friend who was head of a school. Some came from another station farther south, the home of Dr. Fussell. All of these stations were the homes of Friends. The fugitives whom I have mentioned felt so safe that they made their home here. The family of one of them went to Canada but suffered so from cold that they returned. Just after their return the Fugitive Slave law was passed but they decided to take the risk of remaining here, which they did unimpeded [?] to the end of their lives. Two of their sons served in the Civil War. Later Harriet Tubman had a station and was the leader of many of her people to freedom. This was a very important station on the road, which was traveled without line or compass.⁴⁰

In a second letter to Searing, March 19, 1929, when she was 102 years old but still of sound mind, she amplified her story about the Phillips' family. Most refugees "came, rested, and then passed on to Canada," she recalled, with the exception of one family having four small children, the parents settled down here, and were contented in their new estate of freedom, until a Lady from the South on a visit to friends here recognized them. Tho' she promised not to reveal here knowledge to their former master—they felt their freedom so uncertain that they sought refuge in Canada—They found their lot there so hard that they returned here. Not long after[,] the fugitive slave law was passed making their freedom more perilous but they decided to take the risk and were unmolested, passing their lives in this place."⁴¹

Contemporary evidence confirms much of Emily Howland's recollections. We know they did go to Canada because succeeding census records listed son James as born in Canada in 1849. In October 1851, the rescue of William "Jerry" Henry in Syracuse, New York, made African Americans in central New York, especially those born in slavery, fear capture. Both Slocum and Emily Howland made inquiries with Underground Railroad contacts farther north about possibilities for employment and safe living conditions for a fugitive family. As Joseph McCaffery has argued in his careful study, these letters may relate to efforts by the Phillips family to find alternative places to live, in case they needed to leave Sherwood quickly.

Slocum Howland wrote to William O. Duvall, who had been an antislavery agent for the Quaker-dominated Western New York Anti-Slavery Society in the 1830s. Duvall lived on a swampy point, almost an island, in the Seneca River near the village of Port Byron, Town of Mentz. Because Duvall hired African Americans rather than European Americans on his farm, locals called his place "Hayti," a place name still retained today, when it is pronounced with a long "I." Duvall replied, somewhat brashly, since he was writing to a Quaker:

³⁹ Emily Howland to "My dear Ramabai," Bermuda, April 1888, typescript in collections of Howland Stone Store Museum, Sherwood, New York; original in Phebe King Papers, Emily Howland Collection, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

⁴⁰ Emily Howland to Leonard Searing, October 8, 1928. Copy in Cayuga County Historian's Office.

⁴¹ Emily Howland to Leonard Searing, March 19, 1929. Photocopy in Cayuga County Historian's Office.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 15 of 34

Respected Friend Howland

Morning of the 14th, just received and hasten to answer it. It strikes me I would not go to Canada. The winter will soon be upon us. And doubly there are more there now that can maintain themselves with any degree of comfort. If he were to come to my place I would protect him to the last drop of blood in my veins, and I think that our location is such that it would be hard to get him. My own opinion is that he and his family will be safe here and I will give him employment.

If he is a fugitive slave, of course, he is not without a good, loaded revolver and constantly in his pocket. If he has not these weapons let him sell his coat and get them forthwith, and then in case of an arrest let him defend himself like a man who loves freedom better than life even though the blood flows to the horse bits.

Friend Slocum, you know my location and its facilities for escape if necessary, and the pretty healthy sentiment here about on the subject if you and him think it is a good plan, fetch him out and I will do the best I can.

Ever and Truly Yours, W.O. Duvall.⁴²

About the same time, Emily Howland wrote to Samuel C. Cuyler, then living in Pultneyville, New York. Cuyler had been a leading abolitionist in Scipio in the late 1830s. He hosted a meeting with Samuel R. Ward in Aurora in 1837, acted as Secretary and Treasurer of the Scipio Antislavery meeting in September 1839, attended the New York State Antislavery Society meeting that fall, and promoted a Cayuga County abolitionist meeting in 1841.⁴³ He kept an active Underground Railroad station in Pultneyville, Wayne County. On October 31, 1851, he described his situation to Emily Howland:

I rec'd yours making enquiries in reference to the facilities for the escape of Fugitives to Canada from this place. In Answer, I would say, that the opportunities at this season of the year are not good at all but in the Summer pretty good. . .

As to the situation for a man to labor, it is the same with us probably as with you, not much needed at present, and I do not now know of a house. As to the AntiSlavery Sentiment it is as good as the average of this thrice guilty people. As to advising the Fugitive to remain or go, it is difficult to determine. I do not think however there is much danger in your community or ours. They will not come in the country for fugitives. . .

Yours for Freedom
S.C. Cuyler

The Phillips family apparently did not return to Canada in the early 1850s. Instead, they remained in Sherwood, and Slocum Howland may have purchased their freedom. In 1854, Slocum and Hannah Howland sold them one-half acre of land just north of the village, on the east side of what is now State Route 34B.⁴⁴ They may have moved two older houses from the corner near Howland's store and created a two-story frame house, which is listed on the National Park Service's Network to Freedom (NE-12). Bradley Mitchell, archivist of the Howland Stone Store Museum, has recently discovered Herman Phillips's name in the account books of the Stone Store for 1854, in which Slocum Howland paid Herman Phillips to supervise repair of the Sherwood-Aurora Road in front North Street Meeting. Three sons served in the Civil War, and Hannah, Herman, son James, and daughter-in-law Rose Gaskin Phillips lived here until they died. They are all buried in the Sherwood village cemetery, across the street from their house (NW-14).⁴⁵

3. Gerome (Rome) Gregor (Griger). We know very little about Jerome) Gregor except what he told various census takers. Born about 1795, he consistently, he reported his occupation as carpenter. From one census year to another, however, he variously reported his place of birth as unknown (1850), the West Indies (1855), Spain (1865), and New York (1870). It is reasonable to assume that Gregor was a freedom seeker, and that to protect his identity, he did not tell the census takers (or us) his real place of birth. We do know that Jerome Gregor and his son, Sherburne, both owned property directly across from Slocum Howland's

⁴² W.O. Duvall to Slocum Howland, October 16, 1851, Howland Papers, Cornell University. I am indebted to Jim Driscoll of the Queens Historical for finding and transcribing this letter. Many thanks to Penny Hevell and Michael Riley of Port Byron and the Town of Mentz for locating W.O. Duvall's house and for historical information about the Duvall family.

⁴³ Charles T. Porter to John and Abigail Porter, [October 18, 1841], Village of Aurora Archives, Transcribed by Sheila Edmunds. Many thanks to Sheila Edmunds, Historian, Village of Aurora, for sharing this reference. *Friend of Man*, September 25, 1839; August 17, 1841.

⁴⁴ Slocum and Hannah Howland to Herman Phillips, October 10, 1854, Deeds, Liber 95, page 105, Cayuga County Clerk's Office. Samuel Geil's 1853 map of Cayuga County shows no house on this land, but Ormando Willis Gray, *Map of Cauga and Seneca Counties, New York* (Philadelphia: A.R.Z. Dawson, 1859) clearly shows a building at this location.

⁴⁵ Wellman, Network to Freedom Nomination, January 2005.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 16 of 34

docks, right next to Howland's warehouse at his Cayuga Lake port, Levanna Square, so we can surmise that he was an integral part of Howland's operations there. Howland may also have had a mill at that facility, and Gregor may have been involved in making barrels and crates for shipping flour and other goods on lake boats. Between 1851 and 1870, he was assessed for property on Lot 124, Town of Ledyard (directly north of Levanna Square) valued between \$250 and \$500. In 1851-52, he was also assessed for personal property worth from \$2500-\$3000. His name appeared on a local poll list in 1849 as a voter.⁴⁶

4. Richard and Mary Gaskin. Emily Howland mentioned another man who settled in the area "from West Virginia." Since West Virginia did not separate from Virginia until Virginia seceded from the Union at the start of the Civil War, it is a puzzle as to who this might be. Richard and Mary Gaskin and their four children, all born in Virginia, did arrive in Cayuga County in 1864, however, and purchased land on Dixon Road in Ledyard in 1869, next to the home of John and Susan King, Friends from England who had taken care of the famous Quaker teacher, Susannah Marriott, in her old age. Richard Gaskin may have been the West Virginia man that Emily Howland referred to. Richard Gaskin joined North Street Meeting of Friends in 1874.⁴⁷

Josiah Letchworth, Slocum Howland's neighbor (whose daughter Hannah married Slocum's son, William) was also an active Underground Railroad supporter. He seems to have had an affectionate relationship with Emily, with whose reform interests he shared. He advised her in 1852 on wording she might use for a petition to President Millard Fillmore, asking that Daniel Drayton and Edward Sayre, still in prison for trying to rescue seventy-seven African Americans on board the *Pearl* in 1848 (an escape planned by William Chaplin). And after his move to Auburn in 1853, he reported in detail to Emily about his part in the dramatic rescue of freedom seeker George Washington. Washington had escaped from slavery in South Carolina and had been sent to Auburn prison on a minor offence. About to be released, he was subject to reenslavement under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Act.⁴⁸

Hundreds of abolitionists in central New York decided that George Washington would never be sent back to slavery, and they developed several elaborate schemes to prevent his enslaver from taking him back. With the collusion of prison wardens, they arranged his release on a Sunday, when, they argued, no writ could be served to recapture him. Two hundred people—both black and white—met Washington when he walked out the door of the prison. Notably, Letchworth referred both to "Seward," probably William Henry Seward's son, Frederick, and "Wright," probably Martha Wright's husband David Wright, who "had been parleying the matter with the Sheriff." Two "sable brothers," one on each side, whisked him away, some thought to a waiting carriage. They took Washington to a house, "procured a horse and cutter, formed a line from the door put him on board and drove off full speed—softly not with the fugitive though. I don't know where he is now. . . presume he is on the underground Rail Road." If that plan had failed, Letchworth and "young Seward" had another plan: Letchworth would accuse George Washington of stealing his wallet with \$3.00 in it, so Washington could be returned to jail and saved from enslavement. "Tis true I carried my cane but not with any intention to hurt anybody," Letchworth, a Quaker, noted. "It was quite fashionable this morning and might have been useful as it was some slippery notwithstanding the snow. I hope friends will not draw any improper inferences."⁴⁹

"It is conclusion we have come to," he added, "that the following resolutions would have passed by acclamation—firstly

That all men if not created equal, are entitled to life, Liberty and pursuit of happiness—

2nd It is the humble opinion of this meeting, that the fugitive Slave law ain't worth a fig in Auburn.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Jerome Gregor appeared in census records, 1850, 1855, 1860, 1865, 1870. Available online through Cayuga County GenWeb site and Cayuga County Historian's Website. Compiled by Mary Loe and Tanya Warren, Database Coordinator, through Survey of Historic Sites Relating to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African Americans in Auburn and Cayuga County, New York, Judith Wellman, Coordinator, sponsored by the City of Auburn Historic Sites Review Board and the Cayuga County Historian's Office, with funding from Preserve New York. Tax assessment research by Tanya Warren. Many thanks to Sheila Edmunds, Village of Aurora Historian, for information on tax rolls and on Rome Gregor generally.

⁴⁷ Wellman, "King-Gaskin House," *Uncovering the Freedom Trail in Auburn and Cayuga County* (Auburn: City of Auburn Historic Resources Review Board, 2006).

⁴⁸ Josiah Letchworth to Emily Howland, August 8, 1852, Howland Papers, Cornell University; "Auburn Prison," in Wellman, *Uncovering the Freedom Trail in Auburn and Cayuga County*.

⁴⁹ Josiah Letchworth to Emily Howland, March 26, 1854, Howland Papers, Cornell University.

⁵⁰ Josiah Letchworth to Emily Howland, March 26, 1854, Howland Papers, Cornell University.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 17 of 34

Emily Howland absorbed women's rights ideals along with this abolitionist work. While she was at the Wanzer School in Poplar Ridge, at seventeen years old, she took the unusual step, both for a woman and a young girl, of writing a letter to the local paper urging the Whigs to take a stand against slavery. She and three other young women published a letter to local Whigs, advising wavering men in their community to oppose the admission of Texas to the Union, to vote for Henry Clay, and to use their influence to "stop the cursed step of slavery, persevere til every bond is broken, and the clanking of no chain is heard within our borders; let your sympathies be aroused, your better feelings animated into action and your whole heart engaged in the cause of liberty to prevent the extension of this evil."

Although some may think the ladies of this vicinity evince too much enthusiasm in the politics of the day, yet we cannot understand why we are to be debarred the privilege of participating in that which we feel to be of vital importance and which affects our happiness and welfare as much as yours. For certainly we as warmly wish the continuation of our country's glory, and that the luster of its fame may not be dimmed, as any of your warmest partisans.⁵¹

In working for the rights of people in slavery, women had no choice but to stretch the limits of their own assigned roles. Within a month, Emily Howland had a further opportunity to do that. Perhaps impressed by his daughter's exceptional ability and commitment, Slocum Howland sent her to Mary Grew's school in Philadelphia. Mary Grew was part of a biracial abolitionist-women's rights network affiliated with the Philadelphia Female Anti-slavery Society. Through Mary Grew's school, Emily Howland became part of a network of feminist abolitionist friends that sustained her for the rest of her life. They included her teacher, Margaret Burleigh; Lucretia Mott, the most influential Quaker preacher in the country; abolitionist lecturer Sallie Hollie; classmate Caroline Putnam; and teacher Sarah Pugh. Much to Emily Howland's dismay, her father brought her home before her eighteenth birthday, but she would spend months of every year in Philadelphia. She would correspond regularly with these friends. Many of them, especially Sallie Holley and Caroline Putnam, worked with her in maintaining African American schools in the South. For the rest of her life, she found her main intellectual support and some of her most important social networks among the network of nine friends she found in Philadelphia. These few months in Philadelphia when she was seventeen years old connected Emily Howland with the cutting edge of urban reform and, through her, would bring Sherwood itself into national prominence.⁵²

For not everyone in North Street meeting was a reformer. Many were very conservative in their dress, speech, and attitudes, focused on maintaining traditional Quaker ways rather than on changing the larger world. "Sometimes when the bonnet rose skyward too high," remembered Howland,

as the fashion of those days required, a reproving hand would be raised to press the lofty front down to a lower level. This was a kind of freedom that was decidedly exasperating to the victim and made an unpleasant impression that must endure as long as life lasts. They knew not what they did; they thought they were doing their duty; they permitted their lives to run in such narrow grooves that instead of enforcing the value of high moral sentiments, they put all of their emphasis on their peculiarities, which give no reason for their strenuous enforcement of saying "thee" instead of "you," except that it was the rule of their society. . . . It used to seem to me that they said more about it than they did about what was really wrong.⁵³

Emily Howland, feeling increasingly frustrated by the narrowness of such views, withdrew into herself in the late 1840s and early 1850s, except for her sojourns in Philadelphia, including a brief time at Mary Robinson's school in 1851. In 1857, however, she found an opportunity that would shape the rest of her life. She left the relative security of Sherwood to work in the relative insecurity of a school for African American girls in Washington, D.C. Madison County abolitionist Myrtilla Miner was horrified by her contact with slavery as a teacher in Mississippi in the late 1840s. Living with the family of Asa B. and Hannah Smith in Farmington, New York, in 1848, Miner met Phebe Hathaway, Maria E. Wilbur and other Quakers who had started a school for Mary and Emily Edmonson, recently escaped from slavery. They talked with her about taking charge of a school for African American girls in Washington, D.C. With the assistance of African Americans in Washington, including Bishop Daniel A. Payne of the AME Zion Church, as well as of European American abolitionists, including Rev. Henry Ward Beecher of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, Miner opened her school in 1851. When Miner experienced a health crisis in the mid-1850s, she needed someone to take her place. Emily Howland was that person.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 11-12.

⁵² Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 12-13.

⁵³ Emily Howland to Caroline Putnam, January 8, 1906, from Jane Simkin, online at Cayuga County Historian's Office website.

⁵⁴ "Myrtilla Miner's School: Education, Feminism, Biracialism," Stanley Harrold, *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 174-202.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 18 of 34

Emily Howland first heard about the opportunity through Margaret Burleigh, from her network of Philadelphia Friends. The obstacles were enormous. Most obvious was her lack of teaching experience. Most pressing was the almost universal disapproval of her family and neighbors in Sherwood. The first she remedied by practice teaching for a month in Auburn. The second was more difficult, but she finally mustered the courage, at age twenty-nine, to write her mother a remarkable letter explaining her decision:

May I give a little of my life to degraded humanity? May I work a little while for that class which has so long enlisted by closest sympathies? May I try if I really can to make the world a little better for having lived in it? Can't thee spare me a while to do what I think my portion? . . . Thee may think other daughters remain at home contentedly why can't i? Because I have inherited such an amount of the desire to work that I cannot. If I am different from the stereotyped kind I can't help it. I must be filled. For the last thirteen years I have been busy about nothing, it did not satisfy me, it never can, until I have done something more.⁵⁵

Myrtilla Miner's school, noted historian Stanley Harrold, illustrated "the growing role of black and white women in the city's antislavery community during the 1850s. . . . Their activism during the 1850s anticipated the emergence of women during the Civil War years as leading agents in behalf of thousands of freedpeople who came to Washington from Virginia and Maryland."⁵⁶

In Washington, Emily lived with teaching assistant Emma Brown, her first long-term African American friend. Together they carried on the day-to-day work of the school, faced harassment from hostile mobs, dealt with Myrtilla Miner's increasingly erratic behavior, and visited Congress, the Smithsonian, and the local Unitarian Church. In Emma Brown's opinion, Emily "is so good and kind, in fact I think her *everything* a human being *could* be." In October 1858, Emily Howland returned to Washington, bringing Anna Searing, a Quaker friend from Sherwood, to help with the school. When Miner closed the school in 1860, due to her own increasingly ill health, Emily Howland returned to Sherwood, where she spent three years.⁵⁷

By 1863, however, she found a new role for herself as a teacher in schools for freed people of color in Virginia. When she returned home, she and fellow Sherwood teacher Anna Searing, noted one local newspaper, "devoted themselves to the work of getting deserving colored families North." She was undoubtedly instrumental in helping Philip and Mary Gaskin and their four children settle on Dixon Road in the Town of Ledyard, just three miles southeast of Sherwood, where they purchased property in 1869. Philip Gaskin joined North Street Meeting in 1874. Philip's son, also named Philip, married Harriet Tubman's great-niece, Mary Stewart, and many of their descendants still live in Auburn and central New York. His daughter Rose married James Phillips and lived in Sherwood the rest of her life. Their daughter Estella worked for Emily Howland's niece Isabel until Isabel's death in 1942, when Estella moved to Auburn. At Estella's death, she was buried with the rest of her family in the Sherwood Cemetery (NW-14).⁵⁸

Emily Howland's commitment to education, especially African American education, forged at Myrtilla Miner's school in the 1850s and at schools for freed people of color in the 1860s along with her work for woman's rights, became the twin legacies of the last half of her life.

4. "A Vital Question": Woman's Rights, 1850-1929

In the period between the mid-nineteenth century and passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the vote, in 1919, Sherwood citizens (led by Emily Howland; her niece, Isabel Howland; her sister-in-law, Hannah Letchworth Howland; and several other area residents, including Kings Ferry citizen Jane Slocum and Auburn resident Eliza Wright Osborne) devoted their lives to campaigns for woman's rights, including temperance, education, and suffrage. Most significantly, women in Sherwood organized branches of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Sherwood Political Equality Club, affiliated with the Cayuga County Political Equality Club, the New York State Suffrage Association, and the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Both of these became major social as well as reform organizations, uniting Sherwood women into an organized sisterhood of reform.

Emily Howland was important both locally and nationally. Isabel Howland was an important statewide suffrage leader, serving as a statewide officer and at least once as President of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association. Although Emily Howland never

⁵⁵ Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 4-5, 28-32.

⁵⁶ Stanley Harrold, *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 175-76.

⁵⁷ Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 33-40.

⁵⁸ "Woman's Rights," *Auburn Bulletin*, January 9, 1911; Judith Wellman, "King-Gaskin House," *Uncovering the Freedom Trail in Auburn and Cayuga County* (Auburn: City of Auburn Historic Resources Review Board, 2006).

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 19 of 34

served formally as an officer of a national suffrage organization, she was a major financier, and the National American Woman Suffrage Association several times honored her as a pioneer. National leaders recognized her as one of “pioneers and leaders” of the movement at the 1892 National American Woman Suffrage convention in Philadelphia, for example. (See Continuation Sheet: Photo 5 “Group of State Presidents and Officers of the N.A.W.S.A. at Nat. Convention 1892” and Photo 6, Emily Howland and Susan B. Anthony). They also honored her in 1908, 1916, and 1920. She spoke at the thirtieth anniversary celebration of the Seneca Falls convention in Rochester, New York (with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and Frederick Douglass) and again at the sixtieth anniversary celebration at the NAWSA convention in 1908. She also spoke on woman suffrage before the New York State legislature in 1894. She attended the international woman suffrage meeting in London in 1903.

Beginning with her schooling first in Aurora at Susannah Marriott’s school and then in Philadelphia at Mary Grew’s school and Mary Robinson’s school, Emily was part of a national network of women’s rights sympathizers and activists, rooted in abolitionism, that included Frances Seward, wife of William Henry Seward (an Aurora classmate), Lucretia Mott, Mary Grew, and Sallie Holley. This network extended by the 1850s to embrace Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Myrtilla Miner. After the Civil War, Emily Howland hosted at her home state and national suffrage leaders such as Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw (President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association after Anthony’s death), Elizabeth Smith Miller (key activist in the New York movement from Geneva, New York), Eliza Wright Osborne (from Auburn), Ida Husted Harper (Anthony’s biographer), and Harriet May Mills (major organizer of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association and first woman to run for Secretary of State in New York, after whom the women’s building at the New York State Fair is named), as well as Pandita Ramabai, Indian feminist and educational activist; Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, both African American activists and woman’s rights advocates; and Booker T. Washington, African American educator. She also corresponded late in her life with Alice Stone Blackwell, daughter of Lucy Stone and major national woman’s rights leader. One legacy of woman’s rights activism in Sherwood is a collection of suffrage memorabilia in the Howland Stone Store Museum, including one of the largest collections of woman suffrage posters in the country.⁵⁹

Woman’s rights came naturally to many Sherwood citizens. Children growing up in Sherwood were surrounded with important women as role models. All Quakers—whether they were Hicksite or Orthodox, Wilburite or Gurneyite—were infused with ideas of the Light Within, trained to conduct business in separate women’s meetings, and used to hearing women preachers. Deborah Otis, who lived on the eastern end of the hamlet, was a recognized minister among Friends. So was Emily Howland’s own grandmother on her mother’s side, Hannah Tallcott. Her father’s mother, Mary Howland, was recognized as “the head of her family, looked up to by them all,” who made her home the social center of the neighborhood. Mary Howland was also a committed woman’s rights activist in the larger world. She was listed as one of 103 corresponding members of the first antislavery convention of American women, held in New York City in 1837. Other members of North Street Meeting, although certainly not all, also actively promoted woman’s rights. Emily Howland particularly remembered Edna Thomas, “rosy, her face handsome,” who ran a nursery just west of Sherwood with her husband David and espoused both abolitionism and woman’s rights. Howland looked forward to “heart-to-heart chats” with Edna Thomas and “enjoyed meeting her more than any other person whom I met” at meeting.⁶⁰

Woman’s rights was intertwined from its earliest years with abolitionism. Speeches from Abby Kelley, Harriot Hunt, the Edmondson sisters, and the M’Clintocks profoundly affected a generation of young women attending North Street Meeting. Susannah Marriott promoted egalitarian ideas about both abolitionism and woman’s rights for all her students, including Emily Howland. The Wanzer School at Poplar Ridge, which Emily attended when she wrote the antislavery letter to the local Whigs in 1844, received similar teaching.

As far as we know, no one from Sherwood or the immediate area attended the Seneca Falls woman’s rights convention in 1848. Three Quaker signers of the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments had once lived near Sherwood, however. Amy Post lived near Sherwood with her husband Isaac and probably belonged to South Street Meeting (Hicksite) before they moved to Rochester in 1836. Susan and Elias

⁵⁹ This list is was compiled from various sources, including Judith Colucci Breault, *The World of Emily Howland*, and Maryanne Felter and Dan Schultz, “Time Capsule At The Crossroads”: The Howland Suffrage Poster Collection,” *New York History* 86:3 (2005): 227-249. Thanks to Jane Wessel for researching this material.

⁶⁰ Extracts from a letter to Herbert Howland from his Aunt Emily Howland, dated March 4, 1924, typescript, Howland Stone Store Museum; *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, Held in the City of New-York, May 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th, 1837* (William S. Dorr, New York, NY, 1837), 5; Emily Howland to Caroline Putnam, January 8, 1908, from Jane Simkin, online at Cayuga County Historian’s Office website.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 20 of 34

Doty (who both signed the Declaration) lived in a house that still stands on Nolan Road before they moved to Macedon and joined Farmington Monthly Meeting of Friends in 1843.⁶¹

By the early 1850s, people in Sherwood were also aware of the woman's rights lectures of Lucy Stone. In 1904, Emily Howland recalled that she remembered her uncle (probably Humphry Howland) coming home and reporting that Lucy Stone "was lecturing and putting up her own posters; that she was very bright and he was not sure but that she was right and what she advocated would have to come." "Our cause," noted Emily Howland, "came straight from the anti-slavery cause."⁶²

After the Civil War, that direct link with abolitionism kept Emily Howland in contact not only with European American reformers but also with two nationally-known African American activists, Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. In 1872, Slocum and Emily Howland hosted Harriet Tubman at their home, after a dramatic episode in which Harriet Tubman found herself attacked by two thieves who promised her \$5000 in Confederates gold in exchange for \$2000 in greenbacks. A local jeweler, Anthony Shimer, agreed to invest in this scheme, but instead of gaining \$5000, Tubman found herself bound and gagged, alone in the woods near Poplar Ridge (the village just south of Sherwood) with a box that was full not of gold but of stones and leaves, having lost all her \$2000. She spent a few days recuperating with Slocum and Emily Howland before returning home to Auburn. Emily Howland and Harriet Tubman continued to keep in contact. In 1897, Howland sent Tubman \$12.50, in care of Eliza Wright Osborne, to go to Baltimore for her health. She may credit this "to the Lord if she wishes," noted Emily Howland. "She looked and seemed poorly when I saw her at the meeting. . . . I hope Harriet will have a visit that will refresh and restore her."⁶³

In 1878, Sojourner Truth spoke in Sherwood, probably at Hepsibeth Hussey's school house (SE-1), where she "sold the shadow to support the substance." On Eighth Month, 20th, 1878, Charles A. Howland noted in his diary that "there was a lecture delivered at the School House this evening at Sherwoods by a colored woman her name is Sojourner Truth, she is very old, she spoke for about an hour, she then sang for a good while, the price for a ticket to go in was 15¢, she sold pictures of herself for 25¢ and she had a book of her life she sold for \$1.00, there was a white woman with her from Syracuse, she lectured on woman's rights." On August 26, he explained that "Sojourner Truth was a slave in New York State until the year 1817, she was then liberated and made free, she is selling the picture of herself, she said I sell the Shadow to Support the substance."⁶⁴

Sometime in the 1850s, Emily Howland met Susan B. Anthony. At Anthony's death in 1906, Howland had known her for half a century. "The first time I ever met Miss Anthony," she recalled at the National American Woman Suffrage meeting in 1907, "was at an anti-slavery meeting in my own shire town of Auburn, N.Y., which was broken up by a mob and we took refuge with Mrs. Martha Wright. A sister of Lucretia Mott."⁶⁵

By the late 1850s, Emily Howland herself began to organize major woman rights events. In 1858, she promoted a series of benefit lectures in Mozart Hall in New York City for the Shirt-sewers' and Seamstresses' Union, advertising George William Curtis in "Fair Play for Women," Lucy Stone on "Woman and the Elective Franchise," Hon Eli Thayer on "Benefit to Women of Organized Emigration," and Rev. E.H. Chapin on "Woman and her Work."⁶⁶

Emily Howland returned to New York City in February 1860 to develop another series of lectures on woman's rights. These were held at Cooper Institute. The first speaker was Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, minister of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, probably the best-known preacher in the country. Women's rights advocates paid him the enormous sum of \$100 to give the talk, and, when the *New York Independent* published his speech, they bought enough copies to put one on the desk of each member of the New York legislature. It is likely that Emily

⁶¹ Tanya Warren, "The Cayuga County Homes of Susan White Doty and Elias Doty."

⁶² Ida Husted Harper, "Chapter IV: The National American Convention of 1904," *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 5: 1900-1920* (National American Woman Suffrage Association, New York, NY, 1922), 107.

⁶³ Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, An American Hero* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), 255-59; Auburn newspaper account, 1872; Emily Howland to Eliza Wright Osborne, February #, 1897, Osborne Papers, Syracuse University. Thanks to David Connelly for finding this.

⁶⁴ Many thanks to Patricia White, descendent of Charles A. Howland and owner of this diary, for sharing this transcription.

⁶⁵ *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 5: 1900-1920* (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922),

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage, v. 1: 1848-1861* (New York, Fowler and Wells, 1881), 666, 679.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8: Significance. Page 21 of 34

Howland also helped Susan B. Anthony with arrangements for the tenth annual national woman's rights convention that met in Cooper Institute that May.⁶⁷

By 1860, Emily Howland had also met Elizabeth Cady Stanton, perhaps when Stanton spoke in Auburn in 1860. The first extant correspondence between Emily Howland and Elizabeth Cady Stanton is a letter from Emily Howland in Albany on March 15, 1860, regarding legislation about woman's rights. She reported on a bill regarding property rights for widows, which she expected to pass the legislature, and then, writing with authority, she gave specific advice about points she hoped Stanton would make in her speech before the joint legislative committee the following week. "Remind them," she wrote, "how small a portion of the time and interest of the Legislature is devoted to our interests, though we constitute one half of the state." Specifically, she noted, tell them not to fund any college that does not admit women, and ask them to support the sanitary bill for New York City and Brooklyn. She ended, "I anticipate great pleasure in hearing it [your speech] and working for the suffrage question. We are certainly making headway in the legislature. Yours in haste, Emily Howland." Hers was not the voice of an awed subordinate but of a sophisticated and knowledgeable lobbyist.⁶⁸

Emily Howland spent the years during and after the Civil War in Virginia, working with freed people of color. Anna Searing, a Sherwood neighbor (NE-13), accompanied her. When she returned home after her mother's death in 1867, she spent most of the next decade taking care of her father in Sherwood. She did not neglect her woman's rights beliefs however.

By 1867, Stanton knew Howland well enough to write her a letter containing the story of Stanton's famous interchange with Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, the nation's most influential reform newspaper. Stanton had embarrassed Greeley at the New York State Constitutional convention in 1866. Greeley opposed woman suffrage at this convention. Knowing this, Stanton presented a petition for woman suffrage, headed with the name of Greeley's own wife. Instead of announcing her name as written, Mary Cheney Greeley, however, Stanton submitted the petition as presented by Mrs. Horace Greeley. Greeley was so infuriated that he promised never to mention Stanton's name again in the pages of his newspaper, unless he absolutely had to do so, and then only to call her "Mrs. Henry B. Stanton." Stanton commented to Emily Howland that "it will take more than Horace Greeley and the *New York Tribune* to prevent the success of the movement which we both have so much at heart. So, more valiant than ever, I am as always, Your old friend and co-worker, "MRS. HENRY B. STANTON!"⁶⁹

As they were traveling by steamboat through Cayuga Lake in 1868, Emily Howland happened to meet with Ezra Cornell, founder of Cornell University. She reputedly planted the seed for the creation of Cornell as a co-educational institution. If Howland would find and support women interested in attending Cornell, said the founder, he would not oppose their admission. Emily Howland did just that, supporting not only her niece Isabel Howland but also several other young women.⁷⁰

Also in 1878, Emily Howland made a direct connection with the national woman's rights movement when she gave a speech at the thirtieth anniversary of the Seneca Falls woman's rights convention, held in Rochester in July 1878.

Like many reformers, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage, the Howland family seems to have been influenced by the Free Thought movement in the years after the Civil War. In 1880, these reform convictions assumed a very public face in Sherwood when the Sherwood Hotel (NE-2), perhaps under the ownership of William Howland, was renamed the Bob Ingersoll House, in honor of Robert Ingersoll, a popular orator known for his advocacy of free thought, separation of church and state, abolitionism, and woman suffrage. Supporters often quoted Ingersoll's pithy comments, such as: "Any doctrine that will not bear investigation is not a fit tenant for

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage*, v. 1 (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1881), 688.

⁶⁸ Emily Howland to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, March 15, 1860, Stanton-Anthony Papers, ed. Patricia Holland Ann Gordon, Microfilm, Reel 9. In 1860, Emily Howland also lobbied in Albany for legislation called the "Boarding House Law," which woman's rights activists promoted for the benefit of many housekeepers. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage*, 1 (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1881), 688.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Emily Howland, September 1, 1867, in Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage, 1848-1861* (Fowler and Wells, Publishers, New York, NY, 1881), 116-17.

⁷⁰ Judith Colucci Breault, Emily Howland to Slocum Howland, 1868, Friends Historical Library, quoted in "The Odyssey of a Humanitarian, Emily Howland, 1827-1919." Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, (1974), 261.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8: Significance. Page 22 of 34

the mind of an honest man.” “In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments. There are consequences.” “The true civilization is where every man gives to every other every right that he claims for himself.”⁷¹ At the same time, the hotel was “remodeled and enlarged and beautified.” New porch supports, railings, and window sashes may have been added, and the Annex (NE-3) was most likely remodeled at this time.

After her father’s death in 1881, Emily Howland began to work more actively in woman’s rights, temperance, and peace movements at the state and national level. As she did so, she brought other people in Sherwood into these movements with her, including her brother William Howland, her sister-in-law Hannah Letchworth Howland, and her niece Isabel Howland. As women in Sherwood organized the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, Ramabai Circles, and the Sherwood Equal Rights Association, they became committed woman’s rights activists, part of a national and international sisterhood of reformers.

Slocum Howland’s death left his three children—William, Emily, and Benjamin—with considerable wealth, at least fifty thousand dollars in cash for each (equivalent to several million dollars in late twentieth century terms), plus houses, farms, commercial buildings, and mills. William Howland spent his money remodeling his house and investing in business. In 1884, he became a member of New York State’s Assembly, where he promoted bills for woman’s rights, including a bill granting women the right to vote at charter elections in Union Springs.⁷²

Emily Howland used her inheritance to become a major donor for two causes she had worked for all her life: woman suffrage and African American education. With judicious investments, her inheritance allowed Emily Howland to promote both the National American Woman Suffrage Association and education, especially education for African Americans and for the Sherwood community. Beginning in the 1880s, she began to explore how she would carry out what she increasingly saw as her life’s work: spending her time and money as a wise philanthropist.⁷³ Appropriately enough, Emily Howland’s first known office in the New York State Woman Suffrage, in 1888, Association was on the Finance Committee.⁷⁴

Her financial acumen brought her to the attention of directors of the First National Bank of Aurora. In 1891, they invited her, as one of their largest shareholders and “a strong-minded, energetic woman” “of wealth and intelligence” to become a member of their Board of Directors. Reputedly, she was the first woman in the country to serve on the board of a national bank. She served on the Board for more than thirty years.⁷⁵

By 1891, Emily Howland’s connections had brought national leaders to Sherwood itself. In 1891, she hosted Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, nationally known woman speaker for the National American Woman Suffrage Association, at her home in Sherwood. Rev. Shaw spoke on “Our Unconscious Allies,” a speech she had given earlier in Auburn “to one of the largest audiences ever assembled.” “Women cannot vote,” acknowledged Rev. Shaw.

What class of citizens are they classified with? The idiots, the imbeciles, the paupers, the criminals; and yet men say; worship women. Well there are a large class of women in this country who are sick of that kind of worship and have stepped down and off from that pedestal to fight out this battle of the ballot. Perhaps some will count that bad taste; but we can’t help it. It is our taste, and we will fight for it.⁷⁶

As Emily Howland continued her suffrage work, her sister-in-law Hannah Howland and her niece Isabel Howland joined her. In February 1891, they organized the Sherwood Equal Rights Association, with Hannah Howland as the first president. Several men were also active in

⁷¹ Robert Green Ingersoll, *Complete Writings*, www.infidels.org/library/historical/robert_ingersoll/.

⁷² “Another fine dwelling for William Howland,” *Weekly News and Democrat*, March 26, 1885; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 3 (Privately published, Rochester, NY, 1886), 437.

⁷³ “Slocum Howland’s Will,” *Auburn News and Bulletin*, July 13, 1881; Slocum Howland’s will, July 1881, Cayuga County Records Office, Box 28, p. 638.

⁷⁴ *Weekly News and Democrat*, July 20, 1888.

⁷⁵ “Woman’s Rights,” *Auburn Bulletin*, January 9, 1891.

⁷⁶ “Bulletined News,” and “Rev. Miss Shaw,” *Auburn Bulletin*, January 26, 1891.

*Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 23 of 34

this group. Isabel Howland was their delegate to the National American Woman Suffrage Association convention in Washington, D.C. All three Howland women served as officers of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association between 1883 and 1900.⁷⁷

By 1892, Emily Howland was so well known in suffrage circles that the National American Woman Suffrage Association included her in a photo of state presidents and officers at their 1892 convention in Philadelphia, and Carrie Chapman Catt included this photo in her album labeled “pioneers and leaders.”

As the Women’s Christian Temperance Union began to ally itself, under Frances Willard, with the suffrage cause, the Howlands began to work closely with that organization, too. In April 1892, Isabel Howland gave a paper on suffrage, “A Vital Question,” before the Cayuga County WCTU meeting in Auburn.⁷⁸

In 1894, the woman suffrage movement in New York State faced an immense opportunity, and the Howland women rose to the challenge. New York State convened another convention, its fifth, to rewrite the state’s constitution. Woman suffragists were determined that the new constitution would allow women to vote. The legislature provided the delegates to the convention could be “any citizen of the State above the age of twenty-one years,” so the New York State Woman Suffrage Association asked major political parties to appoint three women, including Emily Howland, “a large taxpayer and an excellent business woman,” and Susan B. Anthony. Unsuccessful in getting official representation, they raised \$10,000 to continue the effort. Emily Howland was the single biggest contributor, with \$1200. Hannah Howland gave \$100. Headquartered in the Anthony home in Rochester, they organized a massive state-wide campaign of lectures, petitions, newspaper articles. A team that included the 74-year-old Susan B. Anthony spoke in every one of New York State’s sixty counties.⁷⁹

In the midst of this statewide effort, the Cayuga County Political Equality League held its annual meeting in Auburn in April 1894, chaired by President Emily Howland. All the twenty-three towns in Cayuga County sent representatives, the Scipio, the site of the Howland home in Sherwood sent ten people, more than any other town in the county. People heard a rousing speech from Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, signed petitions, and donated money. William Howland gave \$15; Hannah Howland and Emily Howland each donated \$10.⁸⁰

Women gathered 5000 petitions with 332,148 signatures (about half of them women’s signatures), along with memorials from labor organizations and Granges, for a total of about 600,000 named supporters. Isabel Howland counted and labeled all these petitions, arranging them in volumes tied with wide yellow ribbons. She also collected statistics on women who owned property and paid taxes throughout the state. In Brooklyn, for example, she found that women paid one-quarter of all the taxes. Presenting these petitions to the legislature formed some of the most dramatic moments of the convention. One observer noted that each volume of petitions had the name of the member who was to present it.

At the opening of the sessions, when memorials were called for, he would rise and say: ‘Mr. President, I have the honor to present a memorial from Mary Smith and 17,117 others (for example), residents of _____ county, asking that the word ‘male’ be stricken from the Constitution.’ Often one after another would present a bundle of petitions until it would seem as though the entire morning would be thus consumed. They were all taken by pages and heaped up on the secretary’s table, where they made an imposing appearance. Later they were stacked on shelves in a large committee room. □□ Mrs. Burt, the president of the W. C. T. U., brought in the petitions of her society all at once, many great rolls of paper tied with white ribbon. A colored porter took them down the aisle on a wheelbarrow.⁸¹

⁷⁷ “Female Suffragists Adopt a Long Set of Resolutions and Adjourn,” *Auburn Daily Bulletin*, [n.d.], 1891; Emily Howland, diary, February 1892, typewritten notes by Mildred Myers [?], Hazard Library, Poplar Ridge.

⁷⁸ In 1891, Emily Howland and Isabel Howland served on the program committee for the New York State Woman Suffrage Association, for example, and Hannah Letchworth Howland served as an auditor. *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 4: 1883-1900* (Privately published, Rochester, NY, 1902), 846, fn. 1; “Female Suffragists Adopt a Long Set of Resolutions and Adjourn,” *Auburn Daily Bulletin*, [n.d.], 1891; *Weekly Auburnian*, April 21, 1892.

⁷⁹ *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 4: 1883-1900* (Privately published, Rochester, NY, 1902), 849, fn 1 noted contributions from Emily Howland and Hannah Howland. The whole story was outlined in pages 848-851.

⁸⁰ *Auburn Bulletin*, April 18, 1894.

⁸¹ *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 4: 1883-1900* (Privately published, Rochester, NY, 1902), 850, fn. 1.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8: Significance. Page 24 of 34

On June 7, women from every Senatorial District gave five-minute speeches to the Suffrage Committee. Among the speakers was Emily Howland.⁸²

The Constitutional Convention was not impressed. Before the convention opened, the chair, Joseph H. Choate, had declared himself opposed to woman suffrage. He appointed anti-suffragists to the Suffrage Committee, and the vote was 98 to 58, opposed. Suffragists took heart, however, reminding themselves that, in the last constitutional convention, in 1867, only one-seventh of the delegates had supported them. This time, more than one-third of the votes had been in their favor. All three Howland women had done their part, contributing enormous amounts of both money and time. In doing so, they had forged lifelong bonds with women who were leaders of the suffrage movement across the state and nation.⁸³

Ties between Emily Howland, Hannah Howland, Isabel Howland, and state and national suffrage leaders continued strong through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both Emily and Isabel regularly attended state and national suffrage meetings and served as state officers. Emily Howland “occupied a pulpit” in 1895. In 1896, Emily and Isabel sided with Stanton and Anthony in a debate that threatened to split the movement apart. Stanton’s increasing spiritual and philosophical liberalism alienated many conservative women, many of whom had come to the suffrage movement through the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. At the annual meeting of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1896, the issue came to a head with a resolution to censure Elizabeth Cady Stanton for her publication of *The Woman’s Bible*, a compilation of biblical passages relating to women. Her theme was the persistent oppression of women in the Christian tradition. Susan B. Anthony was outraged. “I shall be pained beyond expression,” she told the crowd, “if the delegates here are so narrow and illiberal as to adopt this resolution. You would better not begin resolving against individual action or you will find no limit. This year it is Mrs. Stanton; next year it may be I or one of yourselves who will be the victim.” In spite of Anthony’s passionate plea, the convention passed the resolution, 53 to 41. Both Emily Howland and Isabel Howland voted with Anthony, however, in opposition.⁸⁴

In the late 1890s, Emily Howland regularly corresponded with Mariana Wright Chapman, Brooklyn President of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association, about suffrage tactics and politics in New York State. There is no use in asking politicians “to pass this or that,” she advised in 1898, “unless they know that their constituents are willing that they would, so of course our work must begin with the constituents.” Suffragists must focus on the press, on organizing constituents, and “the work of the National Assn. in moulding sentiment.” “These three lines of work are those that are sure to lead to results and I believe to ultimate triumph, it may be in the remote future.”⁸⁵

At the same time that Emily, Isabel, and Hannah worked at the state and national levels, they also organized and actively participated in local and county reform activities. They organized the Sherwood Equal Rights Association in 1891, which seemingly involved almost every woman in the local area. Emily Howland was President of the Cayuga County Political Equality Club for many years. They also worked actively in the local Women’s Christian Temperance Association. They took such local work seriously. “I took the liberty of borrowing the three elderly table cloths which went [to the fair] last year,” Emily wrote to Hannah on June 21, 1890.

I procured a quantity of lit. on different subjects, cruelty to Animals, Social Purity, W. Suffrage, the “Indian Helper,” . . . I had a ball of orange col’d cord & tied the papers in small coll[ect]ions so that they should not be thrown away, and I stood on my feet two days rolling up & giving away, with some remarks when I could. One of my strategems was to offer to tie the advertisements etc. that the visitors gathered to take home, and when tying I put in my little roll, telling what they would find in it. I think that they all went to the homes. I gave away over 4000 pages.⁸⁶

On July 20, 1898, the Sherwood Equal Rights Association organized a fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Seneca Falls woman’s rights convention that rivaled in size and enthusiasm the one held by the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Washington, D.C. They gave talks on women and the law, education, industry, the professions, nursing, and politics to a crowd of between forty and fifty people. As part of its collection, the Howland Stone Store Museum includes an ancient piece of cake labeled, in Emily Howland’s own hand, “Susan B. Anthony’s birthday cake, 1898. Could this be a memento of this fiftieth anniversary celebration?”⁸⁷

⁸² *History of Woman Suffrage*, v. 4 (Rochester, NY, 1902), 851, fn. 1.

⁸³ *History of Woman Suffrage*, v. 4 (Rochester, NY, 1902), 851-52.

⁸⁴ *History of Woman Suffrage*, v. 4 (Rochester, NY, 1902), 264, fn 1.

⁸⁵ Emily Howland to Mariana Wright Chapman, January 30, 1898, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

⁸⁶ Emily Howland to Hannah Howland, June 21, 1890, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

⁸⁷ Typescript of minutes of the Sherwood Equal Rights Association, July 20, 1898, Olin Library, Cornell University.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 25 of 34

In the early twentieth century, they continued their active suffrage work. In 1901, Emily Howland and Isabel Howland became life members of NAWSA.⁸⁸ Isabel Howland served as an officer in the New York State Woman Suffrage Association for a decade in the early twentieth century.⁸⁹ In 1903, Emily Howland traveled to Europe with Susan B. Anthony to attend the International Council on Women in London, where she and other suffrage leaders took tea with Queen Victoria. In February 1904, Emily Howland spoke before a Senate committee in Washington, D.C., with Susan B. Anthony and other notable suffrage leaders. It was the last congressional hearing that Anthony ever attended.⁹⁰

As Emily Howland grew older, she continued to be active locally as well as nationally. Local citizens continued to expect regular speeches from her and regular participation in local and regional meetings. In 1908, the Sherwood Equal Rights Association devoted its February meeting to a memorial to Susan B. Anthony, her sister Mary Anthony, and to Abraham Lincoln, with Emily Howland reading a tribute. In 1911, Emily Howland, a member of the Committee on Resolutions, gave a talk at the twentieth annual meeting of the Cayuga County Political Equality Club meeting in Auburn, in which she tied woman's rights to causes of peace and racial justice. "If one side of humanity was created to slay each other," she said, "the other side must be created to conserve and foster life." She also paid tribute to Harriet Tubman and read a letter from the Board of Managers of the Harriet Tubman Home, inviting club members to visit the Home and Harriet Tubman. Sherwood was proud to announce that one woman was on the school board and that fifteen women and eleven men had attended the last school meeting.⁹¹

In 1907, Emily Howland was eighty years old. Slightly younger than Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others of the first generation of woman's rights activists, Emily Howland had outlived many of her contemporaries. Her friend Susan B. Anthony had died the year before, and she herself was becoming a symbol of the first generation of suffragists, an honored foremother. She came to represent for twentieth century suffragists that earliest generation of pioneers. In 1907, Howland gave "an intimate and loving" tribute to Susan B. Anthony at the NAWSA convention in Chicago, speaking of Anthony's "genius for friendship." In 1908, she talked on the "Spirit of 1848," at the NAWSA convention held on the sixtieth anniversary of the Seneca Falls woman's rights convention. Although Howland herself did not attend the Seneca Falls convention, she was introduced as a "reformer, educator and philanthropist, a co-worker and friend of the early suffragists," and "herself a living embodiment of that spirit."⁹²

In May 1912, both Miss Emily and Miss Isabel were among the Cayuga County suffragists who marched in the huge suffrage parade in New York City, all wearing white dresses with purple banners. At the parade the following year, on May 3, 1913, Miss Emily, billed as one of the few remaining pioneers, rode in an "electric."⁹³

In 1912, at the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Philadelphia, Emily Howland, then eighty-five years old, was led to the stage and introduced as a pioneer of the suffrage movement and one of Susan B. Anthony's co-workers. The entire audience cheered. In a trembling voice, Emily Howland announced that, while she was not likely to be able to attend many more conventions, she felt she must make one more large gift, and she gave NAWSA \$800 towards its annual expenses of \$10,000. The convention broke into cheers so loud that they were only duplicated when Jane Addams appeared later that week, noted one news reporter.⁹⁴

In 1916 and again in 1917, suffragists sent greetings to Emily Howland, as one of "original surviving pioneers." When New York State finally passed woman's suffrage in 1917, Emily Howland wrote Isabel:

Congratulations by phone and calls that Suffrage is won in New York State. I feel as though I was receiving as proxy for the absent and gone before. It seems too wonderful to be true.

⁸⁸ *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 4: 1883-1900* (Privately published, Rochester, NY, 1902), 1101.

⁸⁹ *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 6: 1900-1920* (National American Woman Suffrage Association, New York, NY, 1922), 448.

⁹⁰ *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 5: 1900-1920* (National American Woman Suffrage Association, New York, NY, 1922), 110.

⁹¹ *Auburn Semi-Weekly Journal*, February 28, 1908; *Auburn Daily Advertiser* [?], June 9, 1911; *Auburn Citizen*, June 5, 1911.

⁹² *History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 5: 1900-1920* (National American Woman Suffrage Association, New York, NY, 1922), 215.

⁹³ Newspaper clipping, May 17, 1912, and letter noted from Emily Howland Papers, Olin Library, Cornell University, typewritten notes [Mildred Myers?], Hazard Library, Poplar Ridge.

⁹⁴ *Auburn Citizen*, November 26, 1912.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 26 of 34

I went to Auburn yesterday to get in touch with the spirit of the time. Mr. Bowen rolled us in thy car. We were requested to be at Headquarters by 10 a.m. to be photographed. Everybody wished that thee was there. It did seem too bad that thee could not be there at the last.⁹⁵

(See Continuation Sheet: Photo 7, "Cayuga County Political Equality Club, c. 1917.")

In 1920, national suffragists held the last NAWSA convention, called the Victory Convention because it was held after the Nineteenth Amendment finally gave women the right to vote. They honored Emily Howland--along with Rev. Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Charlotte Pierce (the only living signer of the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments), and Rev. Olympia Brown--as among the few remaining pioneers of the early woman's rights movement.⁹⁶

During World War I, Emily Howland increasingly linked woman's rights with issues of peace. "War has been through all time not only the greatest scourge of mankind and the greatest foe to civilization but the most formidable obstacle to the advancement of woman," she declared in 1914. "The world is sick of war," she wrote to the Cayuga County convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1922, "but the air is filled with hate. That spirit must be cast out before the healing of the nations can follow."⁹⁷

We will never know the full extent of Emily Howland's financial support for the woman suffrage movement, Her \$1200 was the single largest known contribution to the campaign to include woman suffrage in the 1894 New York State Constitution, and sporadic notes in the *History of Woman Suffrage* suggest that she continued regular and often large contributions through the years (\$300 at the 1912 NAWSA meeting, for example)⁹⁸. One anecdote illustrates Susan B. Anthony's estimation of her importance. Lyman Ward, who operated the Southern Industrial Institute, a manual labor school for white students in the South. Dependent on contributions from people such as Emily Howland for sustaining the school, Ward made periodic visits north to report on the school's progress. During one such visit, he stopped first to visit Susan B. Anthony. "As we sat looking out upon the world," he wrote, "I mentioned that I was soon to call upon Miss Emily Howland, of Sherwood, New York. Instantly Miss Anthony said, 'Don't ask her for any money,' and she added that for many years Miss Howland has been one of her chief backers. I think Miss Anthony told me that only one other woman in the state belonged in the same class with her and that was Mrs. Eliza Wright Osborne of Auburn."⁹⁹

5. "A school is what I would like my name perpetuated by": Emily Howland and Education

A commitment to equality of opportunity and respect for all people infused the core of Emily Howland's personality. It was one of two themes that unified her life from beginning to end. It informed her abolitionism before the Civil War and her work for woman suffrage and woman's rights throughout her life. The other theme was her commitment to learning. For Emily Howland, learning was a great gift.

These twin values came together in her career choice as a teacher, first in Myrtila Miner's school for African American girls in Washington, D.C., from 1857-60 and then in schools for freed people of color in the South during the traumatic years of the Civil War and Reconstruction. The imprint of this career choice never left her. For the rest of her life, education became the lens through which she viewed the world. Teaching fit her personal interests and gifts as a scholar and intellectual. In this, she followed the model of her grandfather, Joseph Tallcott, a well-known educational reformer in the early nineteenth century, and her early teacher, English Quaker Susannah Marriott, who taught a school near the Howland home.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Emily Howland to Isabel Howland, November 8, 1917, Howland Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore Library.

⁹⁶ *History of Woman Suffrage*, v. 5 (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922), 203, 501, 559, 610.

⁹⁷ *Auburn Citizen*, September 17, 1914; September 8, 1922.

⁹⁸ *History of Woman Suffrage*, v. 5 (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922), 341.

⁹⁹ Lyman Ward, "Emily Howland, Litt.D." *The Industrial Student* 26.10 (November 1926), 1, as quoted in Maryanne Felter, "Emily Howland, Self-help, and Philanthropy: How One Woman Made a Difference," Unpublished paper.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Tallcott, *Memoirs*, <http://books.google.com/books?id=LaxWacPNE5MC&dq=joseph+talcott+memoirs&pg=PA5&ots=L-ODm5dMRE&sig=-5dTb54X50HtogiCHdYW2HSOrX4&prev=http://www.google.com/search%3Fhl%3Den%26client%3Dsafari%26rls%3Den%26sa%3DX%26oi%3Dspell%26resnum%3D1%26ct%3Dresult%26cd%3D1%26q%3Djoseph%2Btalcott%2Bmemoirs%26spell%3D1&sa=X&oi=print&ct=result&cd=2#PPA46,M1>

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 27 of 34

By the 1870s, her family situation, combined with her own personality style, led her to channel her teaching ideals away from actual classroom work into supporting schools maintained by others. After her mother's death in September 1867, she returned home as the primary caretaker for her father. When her father died in 1881, Emily Howland had wealth enough to carry out her educational goals, not simply in one classroom but in the community and the world. Unlike her older friends, Susan B. Anthony, for example, she had no need to support herself or her family. By the time the daughters and granddaughters of the first generation of activists came of age (including her friends Eliza Wright Osborne, major organizer of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association, daughter of Martha Wright of Auburn; Harriet May Mills, first woman to run for Secretary of State in New York, daughter of Harriet Smith Mills and C.D.B. Mills of Syracuse; and her own niece, Isabel Howland, President of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association), Emily Howland was well on her way to her career as a philanthropist, supporting schools both in Sherwood and in the South, that sustained her ideals of racial and sexual equality and educational excellence for all.

By the 1860s, Emily Howland wrote from Virginia that her "school had become my life." When she returned to Sherwood in 1865, she came with Susy Baker, a fifteen-year-old freed person who had worked with her in Virginia as a teacher's assistant. Susy Baker became for Emily a surrogate daughter. Torn between tending her mother during her long final illness and returning South, Emily received constant letters from people who were still in Virginia, including friends Anna Searing, from Sherwood; Emma Brown, one of Emily's earliest and closest African American friends, who taught near the Freedmen's Village; and cousins Sarah and Benjamin Alsop, who worked on a government farm in St. Mary's County, Maryland. All told of constant difficulties that freed people faced from bureaucracy within the Freedman's Bureau as well as from local whites.¹⁰¹

In the spring of 1866, Emily Howland worked in Virginia as a coordinator and supervisor, organizing services among the federal Freedmen's Bureau, the American Missionary Association, and the many state freedmen's bureaus and missionary associations who were sending money, teachers, and supplies to rural freedmen's schools. In her self-appointed role as ombudsman between local African Americans, Freedman's Bureau officials, and the U.S. military, she became friends with many African American families and wrote lovingly in her journals and letters of Moses Brown, Aunt Charity, Sarah, Benjamin, and others. She developed a policy of promoting black autonomy and leadership, involving local preachers in distributing food, clothing, and seeds, for example.¹⁰² (See Continuation Sheet: Photos 8, "Freedmen's School, Camp Todd" and 9, "Camp Todd, Teachers' Quarters.")

Frustrated with working with the inefficiencies of the Freedmen's Bureau, Emily convinced her father to purchase between 300 and 400 acres of land in Northumberland County, near Heathsville, Virginia, between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, at \$5.00 per acre, an area recommended by Moses Brown and Lewis Carter, who knew this land well because they had once lived in slavery here. She christened this place Arcadia and decided to take only three families as the first settlers. They settled in December 1866.¹⁰³

Emily quickly developed plans to build a school in Heathsville, along with a house for herself. She enlisted help from Philadelphia friend, Sallie Holley, who before the war had been an effective antislavery lecturer, and her partner Caroline Putnam, both of whom moved to Virginia, where they established the Holley School in nearby Lottsburgh. Holley and Putnam lived in Lottsburgh until they died, and for a time it seemed as if Emily herself planned to do the same in Heathsville, perhaps inspired by the presence in Washington, D.C., of Colonel Charles Folsom, a Boston-born military officer who supported her efforts and expressed a romantic interest in her, as well.¹⁰⁴ (See Continuation Sheet: Photo 10, "Caroline Putnam with African Americans at Holley School.")

Although local freed people initially intended to call their new school the "Howland Chapel," Emily preferred that, if it had to be named after her, they call it the Howland School, for "a school is what I would like my name perpetuated by. Preaching is darkness or no light when practiced by ignorance and conceit." Within a new weeks, both black and white children filled the school by day and more than forty adults, both black and white, attended class at night. Emily taught both day and evening sessions, helped manage the farm, and raised money, soliciting help from freedmen's aid associations in the north, through advertisements in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Sallie Holley's lectures, and her father's continued generous donations. She loved her work. "If it were not for the wood ticks," she wrote to Isabel, "I should find nothing disagreeable here." Teachers recruited from the American Missionary Association arrived in 1867, as well as

¹⁰¹ Judith Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 72.

¹⁰² Judith Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 74-78.

¹⁰³ Judith Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 80-82.

¹⁰⁴ Breault, *World*, 84-88

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 28 of 34

a young woman, Sarah Goodyear, from King Ferry, New York, just south of Sherwood.¹⁰⁵ (See Continuation Sheet: Photo 16, Howland Chapel School.)

After her mother died, Emily Howland returned to Sherwood in 1868 to take care of her aging father after her mother's death. She never again lived at Arcadia on a full-time basis, but she continued to visit there regularly, overseeing the management of Howland School, corresponding with its managers, and supporting it financially until it became part of the public school system in 1921.

Emily Howland's experience in teaching in the South—first at Myrtilla Miner's school, then in Freedmen's Village, and finally in Howland School at Arcadia in Heathsville, Virginia—initiated her life-time commitment to supporting schools, both for African Americans and for local students. Her wealth enabled her to do this increasingly not as a classroom teacher but as a philanthropist.

She began her work as soon as she returned home from Virginia in 1869. That year, she initiated two models that she followed the rest of her life. The first was to support African American schools in the South. The second was to sponsor individual students at educational institutions such as Howland School in Union Springs, Cayuga County, Oberlin College, Howard University, or Cornell. For the first plan, she convinced her father to back the work of her friend, Cornelia Hancock, who proposed to establish a colony at Cat Island, South Carolina, on the model of their own Arcadia in Virginia. Cornelia must have echoed Emily's own thoughts when she wrote "I am so impressed with the feeling that it is such a sphere of usefulness open for single women to come among and be eyes, ears, and understanding for these people for a time." The following winter, she returned to Arcadia herself. She felt she had "been led thither to be put through the Wilderness of Virginia for some cause, to make it blossom as the rose." She established another school in Westmoreland County, Virginia, before returning home in 1870, this time to stay.¹⁰⁶

Emily Howland initiated the second plan as early as 1869 (and perhaps earlier), when she brought Sidney Talfso, age sixteen, the first of many young women from various schools in the South to attend Howland School in Union Springs, owned by Emily's distant cousin, Robert Howland. Sidney came with her friend (and perhaps fellow student) Lucy Honesty, age twenty. In 1870, the census noted the names of thirteen African American women and one young man attending Howland School, including Sarah Thomas (born in New York), Elizabeth Davis (from Maryland), Hattie Graham (Maryland), Margaret Shorter (Maryland), Sarah Young (Virginia), Anna Turner (Virginia), Adeline Couley (Tennessee), Lyida Manning (Tennessee), Harriet Johnson (Maryland), Sarah Dysun (New York), Frank Thomas (New York), Nancy Thomas (New York), Jane Langley (New York), and Mary James (Virginia), who worked as the cook. Moses Woodland (born in Alabama) worked as a laborer on Robert Howland's farm, and Sarah Mathews (birthplace unknown) worked as a servant in his household. Ten other African American women, some of them young and some of them widowed, were listed as servants living with Mary Newton, matron. They were probably associated with the school, as well. Emily envisioned Sidney Talfso and others like her returning to Heathsville to become teachers themselves, empowering future generations with the gift of education. Most of these students, like Sidney, worked for their room and board at Emily's home in Sherwood. Some attended Sherwood Select School after the building opened in January 1883. She also sent about half a dozen of these young women either to Howard University or Oberlin College. She had brought young African American women with her to Sherwood before, perhaps as early as 1860, when Susan Bruce, born in Maryland, lived with the family, although it is possible that Bruce was a freedom seeker rather than one of Emily's students.¹⁰⁷

Emily Howland often noted that "the negro opened the book of life to me," and she intended to return the gift. From 1857 until her death, Emily's support for African American education never wavered. She funded at least fifty schools, most of them for African Americans in the South and several for European Americans in the North and West, beginning in 1867 with Howland School in Heathsville, Virginia. After Slocum's death, Emily increased her financial support for southern schools dramatically. "By 1890," noted Breault, "the number of requests from newly established Southern black teaching and vocational schools increased so rapidly that, at times, a week without an appeal for funding was highly unusual." Schools which she consistently supported included Holley School, operated by her friends Sallie Holley and Caroline Putnam in Lottsburgh, Virginia; Cornelia Hancock's school on Cat Island, South Carolina; Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington's school in Alabama; Piney Woods School in Georgia; Kowalinga School in Alabama; Manassas Industrial School in Virginia; and George Junior Republic in Freeville, New York.¹⁰⁸ (See Continuation Sheet: Photo 12 and 13, Emily Howland at Holley School, Lottsburgh, Virginia and Tuskegee, Alabama.)

¹⁰⁵ Judith Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 88-94.

¹⁰⁶ Judith Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 105-06.

¹⁰⁷ Judith Breault, *World of Emily Howland*, 105-08; U.S. Manuscript Census, 1860, 1870.

¹⁰⁸ Breault, *World*, 133. For visits by Howland to these schools, see letters in 1897 and 1913, Howland Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 29 of 34

We may never know how many schools Emily Howland actually supported. When she died in 1929, at 101 years of age, she listed thirty-seven schools as beneficiaries in her will, almost all of them African American schools in the South. By the time she died, however, some of the schools she had funded (such as Howland Chapel School in Heathsville, Virginia, the very first one she started, and Kowaliga School in Alabama) had become public schools or were no longer on her list for other reasons. Bradley Mitchell estimated that she supported at least fifty-one schools.¹⁰⁹

We may also never know how much money Emily Howland gave in total to these schools. We do know that she gave enough to many of them to fund buildings named Howland Hall. (See Continuation Sheet: Photos 10 and 11: Howland Hall, Kowaliga School and Manassas School.)

Howland did not take her support of these schools lightly. She was often involved in details of administration, and African American educators, including Booker T. Washington, regularly reported their progress. She visited these schools herself, as well.

Tuskegee Institute was one example. She normally sent \$500 a year to Tuskegee, and she often supplemented this with scholarship money and donations of books and periodicals. She remained a warm supporter of Booker T. Washington from at least 1890 until his death in 1915. At the time of his Atlanta speech, she wrote him that “it was the true word fitly spoken.” She visited Tuskegee at least twice. In 1897, she attended a conference at Tuskegee, where she heard reports from African American schools all over the South. She visited again in 1913.¹¹⁰

In the early twentieth century, when many white reformers had abandoned African Americans in the face of lynchings and pervasive racism, Emily Howland did the opposite. At home, she reminded white suffragists in 1904 that “our cause came straight from the anti-slavery cause. All its early advocates were also advocates of freeing the despised race in bondage. Let us not forget them now. Neither a nation nor an individual can be really free till all are free.” She paid tribute to Harriet Tubman at women’s rights meetings. And she continued to support, in every way she knew how, the efforts of educators—both African American and European American—to work with African American children in the South. She focused especially on rural schools, perhaps because her own rural, religious background made her especially comfortable with rural religious people. In 1913, she toured many of the schools she supported. In the fashion of the day, students greeted her with garlands and honored her with presentations.¹¹¹

She also began to fund schools in the North and West, with a special interest in women’s education, including schools in Kansas and Idaho (where her friend from King Ferry, Jane Slocum, was principal) and the George Junior Republic in Freeville, New York. George Junior Republic was a model community where young men and women at risk of failure in urban areas earned money and governed themselves as a model republic. So generous were her scholarships to young women at the George Junior Republic (and so many young men had joined the Army) that in the 19-teens, for the first time, girls made up the majority of the student body.¹¹²

Emily Howland also funded a school for young widows, operated by Pandita Ramabai, in India. From 1886-99, Pandita Ramabai traveled widely throughout the U.S., raising money for a college for young widows. Pandita Ramabai was born in Maharashtra to Brahmin parents. As a young woman still in her teens, she earned the honorary title Pandita, scholar, for her work as a Sanskrit scholar. She married a Bengali lawyer, not of the Brahmin caste, who died after only a few months of marriage, leaving her a widow with a young daughter to support. She studied briefly in England before coming to the U.S., where she traveled through the country, raising funds to support a

¹⁰⁹ Will, Emily Howland, July 20, 1929, Cayuga County Wills, Box 32. Interview with Bradley Mitchell, June 12, 2007; Maryanne Felter, “Emily Howland, Self-help, and Philanthropy: How One Woman Made a Difference,” unpublished paper, has an excellent discussion of Emily Howland’s philanthropy, and her appendix includes a list of as many schools as she has been able to find.

¹¹⁰ Booker T. Washington to Emily Howland, January 15, 1890; Emily Howland to Booker T. Washington, September 26, 1895, *Booker T. Washington Papers*, v. 3, Louis Harlan, ed. (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 23 and p. 23, fn. 1; Emily Howland to Miss A.G. Flanders, February 28, 1897, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore.

¹¹¹ *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 5: 1900-1920 (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922), 107; Breault, *World*, 134-35. Many letters remain in the Howland collections at both Cornell and Swarthmore, documenting this tour and her relations with African American educators.

¹¹² For more details on these schools, see Marianne Felter, unpublished paper. Bradley Mitchell, archivist at the Howland Stone Store Museum, has personally visited many of these schools.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 30 of 34

school for widows, appealing “to no particular church or sect, but to men and women throughout the country.” In the process, she converted to Christianity, without abandoning basic Hindu customs. Pandita Ramabai was Vice-President of Woman’s Christian Temperance Union for Indian, and the WCTU in the U.S. supported her efforts to set up “Ramabai Circles,” in which each member pledged to donate a dollar per year for ten years to support the new college. In 1889, Ramabai set up Sharada Sadan, which became the Pandita Ramabai Mukti (“liberation”) Mission. This still survives today, now as a Christian mission in Pune, near Mumbai. In 1919, the King of England gave her the Kaiser-i-Hind award, the highest honor bestowed on an Indian citizen during the Raj.¹¹³ (See Continuation Sheet: Photo 15, Pandita Ramabai.)

Sherwood formed one of the Ramabai Circles. Pandita Ramabai visited Sherwood, stayed with Emily Howland, and corresponded with Emily Howland for many years afterward. The Mukti Mission became one of the schools that Emily Howland supported, and the Howland Papers at Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, contain many photographs of Ramabai and students at the school.

Sherwood Select School

In terms of education, Emily Howland did not neglect the local Sherwood community. She built Sherwood Select School next to her own home, designed as a high school to accommodate the growing number of students in a school run by Hepsibeth Hussey (SE-1). Encouraged by Sherwood resident Elizabeth Otis, whose own children needed a local high school, Quaker school teacher Hepsibeth Hussey had come from Nantucket to open Sherwood Select School in 1871, on the northeast corner of Route 34B and Townline Road, with fourteen pupils. She brought with her three mottoes, which she installed on the walls of her classroom: “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth;” “What man has done may be done by man;” and “Procrastination is the thief of time.”¹¹⁴

Isabel Howland thought that “the most remarkable quality” of Hepsibeth Hussey’s teaching was “its thoroughness.” “The tendency in other schools was becoming more and more pronounced to rush thru many subjects,” but “with her the paramount object was to have us really understand, really know, really learn with the idea of remembering afterwards, no matter how long it took. Her *interest* in the school was unflinching. . . . She never for an hour relaxed her efforts or yielded to indifference.”¹¹⁵

Students quickly outgrew the space in the original school, and, in 1882, Emily Howland built a new building in the latest Eastlake style. When Sherwood Select School opened in January 1883, it was, noted one newspaper account, “the finest structure of its kind outside the cities anywhere in New York State.” With two recitation rooms and a study hall, it held three teachers—Isabel Howland, Amy Otis, and Lois Otis—and sixty students, both boys and girls. They studied Geography, Philosophy, Latin, French, Botany, Rhetoric, Astronomy, Physiology, History, Geometry, German, Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics. In the Quaker fashion, they were governed, “entirely by moral suasion, pupils being taught, as far as possible to govern themselves.” Miss Hussey moved her mottoes to the new Sherwood Select School. So beloved were they that when the Nantucket Historical Society asked for their return in 1912, the alumni of Sherwood Select School refused. Two of the mottoes still hang in the stairwell of the Emily Howland Elementary School.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, *Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting, in Nashville, Tenn., 16 to 21 November, 1887*, 46; Judith Andrews, “The Ramabai Association,” *Transactions of the National Council of Women of the United States* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1891), 325-31; Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission: <http://www.ramabaimuktimission.com/>; Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati, *Pandita Ramabai’s America: Conditions of Life in the United States*, ed. Robert Eric Frykenberg, trans. Kshitija Gomes and Philip C. Engblom (Grand Rapids, Cambridge, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), org. published 1889.

¹¹⁴ [Phebe King], “Historical Sketch of Sherwood School, 1871-1964,” 5-7; “The Mottoes Stay: Old Scholars of Sherwood Select Have Sentiment,” *Auburn Democrat/Argus*, 1912, from Fulton.com.

¹¹⁵ Isabel Howland, “Tribute to Hepsibeth Hussey,” Written for June 1908 Alumni Association Meeting, Sherwood Select School, March 24, 1908, Algiers, Africa, Typewritten Notes in Hazard Library, Poplar Ridge. “By founding Sherwood Select School,” noted Miss Isabel, “she made herself an historical character of our region and her name will live long after ours are perhaps forgotten. If we had a written history she would have a prominent place in it. Perhaps we may sometime have one and when the educational part is compiled, S.S.S. and Hepsibeth C. Hussey will be there. Without a written book such things are passed on by word of mouth from parents to children and to children’s children. How often I have heard of the old Wanzer’s School at Poplar Ridge which lasted a short time, indeed, compared with our own, but whose memory is green today. May we and those who come after use keep green and fresh the memory of ours and of her.”

¹¹⁶ *World*, 131; [Phebe King], “Historical Sketch of Sherwood School, 1871-1964,” 5-9.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 31 of 34

Students and teachers who did not live in Sherwood boarded in local homes, including Emily Howland's house and tenant houses that she and her brother, William, owned across the street (SE-4, SW-9, SW-10), in the Thomas-Brown house on the southwest corner of Route 34B (SW-6), and in Isabel Howland's house, Opendore (NE-11). When Hepsibeth Hussey retired in 1890, she moved to the house across the street from Emily Howland (SW-9), where she lived with her sister, Mary Makeel, and her brother Samuel Hussey. Emily Howland took over the school's administration directly. She hired teachers and janitors, managed the building, supervised curriculum development, and supplemented the budget, since the \$10 tuition did not cover expenses.¹¹⁷

Several women who graduated from Sherwood Select School went on to become professionals in various fields. Isabel Howland became one of Cornell's earliest woman graduates (1877-1881). Three women from the Sherwood area became medical doctors: Eliza Mosher, who lived just west of Poplar Ridge, became Dean at the University of Michigan Medical School. The Howland Stone Store Museum has a large photograph of her. Amanda Sanford Hickey, medical doctor and woman's rights advocate, was one of Emily Howland's protégé's and friends. Susan Otis, who grew up in Sherwood at the East Otis Farm (SE-11), graduated from Sherwood Select School and the Woman's Medical College in New York City. She had an office and private hospital at 40 South Street, Auburn before she retired to her childhood home in Sherwood, where she died in August 1930.¹¹⁸

In 1907, New York State forced Sherwood Select School to close for two years because it did not offer New York State Regents' diplomas. Emily Howland negotiated with the state and reopened the school under New York State control, with a Board of Trustees. Although local residents rejected a plan for a tax-supported public high school, Emily Howland believed so strongly that "the light must not go out in this community" and that "the gates of knowledge must be kept open" that she turned over the property to the community and agreed to continue financial support for the school. Every year, Miss Emily gave the address at graduation. When she did so, reported one graduate, "a hush fell over the audience, an evidence of the love and respect which everyone felt for her." "All looked with love at this woman who had made it possible for little country girls to get an education," remembered another.¹¹⁹

Isabel Howland thought of these commencement addresses as "Emersonian," the highest praise she could give them. "She wanted to strike the high note for them and she always did," remembered Miss Isabel. "She wasted no words on commonplaces. She urged them to make of life one long chance for improvement of mind and character. Because she was talking to students, some of them leaving school not to return, she spoke very earnestly to them about keeping up the habit of study. She did that herself. If she were here now she would make that appeal to the class now graduating and I am sure you would be touched by it."¹²⁰

In 1926, Sherwood Select School housed grades seven through twelve of a Central Rural School District, comprised of six district schools in neighboring areas. Emily Howland agreed to turn over the building and grounds plus \$4000 toward maintenance and \$8000 towards an endowment for the school. On June 19, 1926, Emily Howland wrote in her diary that "This P.M. I did what I can never do again, I signed the diplomas of the graduates, eight there were. They are the last that will be given by the dear old Sherwood Select School for, as a school name it is no more." The school was renamed Sherwood Central School, although locally people called it the Emily Howland Central School. Emily Howland, age 99, was elected to the first Board of Education. In 1926-27, students met in the Sherwood Grange Hall while the new school was being renovated. At the dedication in September 1927, Emily Howland, within two months of her 100th birthday, gave a speech. "What I care for most," she said, "is the intangible infinite value of what these walls assemble. The newest thought expressed in school architecture may minister to the comforts, but these accessions may do little toward your real growth. In the last analysis, some writer has said that Mark Hopkins sitting on one end of a log and a student on the other are a university."¹²¹

¹¹⁷ [Phebe King], "Historical Sketch of Sherwood School, 1871-1964," 8; Census records, 1900; Oral reports, Sherwood community meeting, April 28, 2007.

¹¹⁸ Information from Bradley Mitchell; Obituaries for Susan G. Otis, newspaper clippings, vertical file, Hazard Library, Poplar Ridge.

¹¹⁹ Breault, *World*, 131-32; Interview with Edith Scileppi [by Mildred Myer?], Notes in Hazard Library, Poplar Ridge.

¹²⁰ Isabel Howland, Paris, June 1938, letter to Memorial Tea for Graduates of Emily Howland School, Held at Robin Hood Inn, notes from Mildred Myers [?], Hazard Library, Poplar Ridge.

¹²¹ [Phebe King], "Historical Sketch of Sherwood School, 1871-1964," 19-28, discussed the transition to a public school in detail.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 32 of 34

On October 28, 1926, Emily Howland traveled to Albany to receive an honorary degree of doctor of letters from the Board of Regents of the State University of New York. She was the first (and for many years the only) woman to receive an honorary doctorate from New York State.¹²²

The transition to a public school directly undercut female administrative authority in the Sherwood school. Up to 1926, all principals of Sherwood Select School except one (from 1921-25) had been female. From 1909-1921, they had all been graduates of Wellesley College. After the State of New York assumed control of the Sherwood school, only two women were principals. Phebe M. King was principal during its first year (1926-27) and Anne Griffin was principal during World War II, (1942-45).¹²³

In 1955, the original Sherwood Select School building was demolished, replaced by a newer and larger school building (built in 1936 and 1955) to accommodate the much enlarged student body. The portraits of Hepsibeth Hussey and Emily Howland, painted by Amy Otis, along with Miss Hussey's two Nantucket mottoes, were transferred to the new school building, where they still hang. A new bronze plaque, now on the lobby wall, also commemorated Emily Howland's life:

Emily Howland Litt. D.
1827-1929

Humanitarian-Educator-Philanthropist
Citizen of Sherwood for more than a century, Emily Howland worked for
Abolition of Slavery, Education of
the negro, Woman's Suffrage,
Temperance and World Peace.

In her 99th year the University
of the State of New York conferred
upon her the degree of Doctor of
Letters.

In 1882 she erected Sherwood
Select School on this site and
largely financed it until 1926
when she gave it to be organized
as a public school.¹²⁴

Sherwood Library and Museum

Beginning in the 1880s, thanks to Hannah, Isabel, and Emily Howland, Sherwood had both a library and museum to complement its school. Hannah Howland and Isabel Howland dedicated the first Reading Room in Sherwood in January 1884 in the south end of the second floor of The Block, the new commercial building constructed by William Howland just north of the Howland Stone Store. Also on the south end, across the hall from the library, Hannah and Isabel created Sherwood's new museum, a collection of curiosities brought home to Sherwood by Isabel Howland, Emily Howland, and others connected to Sherwood who traveled throughout the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today, this museum survives, virtually intact, on the second floor of the Howland Stone Store Museum.¹²⁵

6. The Legacy: Sherwood and Its Meaning in Twenty-first Century America

Impelled both by Quaker ideals of the Light within all people and by a commitment to the Declaration of Independence, that "all men [and women] are created equal," many Sherwood citizens devoted their lives to creating a world where these ideals of equality of opportunity

¹²² [Phebe King], "Historical Sketch of Sherwood School, 1871-1964," 40-41.

¹²³ [Phebe King], "Historical Sketch of Sherwood School, 1871-1964," 24-25, 43.

¹²⁴ [Phebe King], "Historical Sketch of Sherwood School, 1871-1964," 36-37.

¹²⁵ Cody, Paul. "Isael Howland: A Remarkable Life, Well-Lived." *Cornell Alumni News* (May 1992): 24-29.

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 33 of 34

and respect for all people—without regard to race, sex, or class—became real. Before the Civil War, Sherwood people worked for the abolitionism of slavery (through petitions, lectures, fund-raising, and the Underground Railroad), as well as the rights of Native Americans and women. After the Civil War, they focused on women's rights and education, with special attention to education for African Americans and women. They worked both locally and nationally, participating for more than sixty years in organizations for woman suffrage and continuing their commitment to education from the 18-teens to the present. While dozens of Sherwood citizens participated in these movements, the Slocum Howland family (including Slocum Howland, his daughter Emily Howland, his son and daughter-in-law William and Hannah Howland, and his granddaughter Isabel Howland) was particularly important for three generations. Among African Americans, three generations of the family of freedom seekers Herman and Hannah Howland settled in Sherwood, beginning in 1842.

Sherwood's built environment and surrounding landscape reflect these people and their work for equal rights. Of the fifty-five properties, eleven have some association with African Americans, six with Underground Railroad supporters who were European American, and eleven are directly related to education. Many more related to woman's rights sympathizers.

This Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District comes at an opportune time for the hamlet of Sherwood. The two main commercial properties in the village—The Block (NE-8) and the Sherwood House (NW-8)—may potentially reap considerable benefits from both the federal and state historic preservation tax credits. While most houses in Sherwood have been well cared for, three key properties have been abandoned since 1976 and are in poor condition (Isabel Howland's house, Opendore-NE-11; Sherwood Grange—SE-9; and the Thomas-Brown Store/House—SW-9—on the southwest corner of Route 34B and the Sherwood-Aurora Road). Another extremely important property, the Slocum Howland-Brewster House (NW-7), has a large hole in the roof, which local volunteers have recently covered with a tarp.

The Howland Stone Store Museum acts as an anchor for the village, interpreting the story of reform in Sherwood and the nation—including abolitionism, the Underground Railroad, and women's rights—especially as they relate to the Howland family. The Howland Stone Store Museum owns an extraordinary collection of women's rights memorabilia, including one of the largest collections of woman suffrage posters in the United States, collected by Miss Emily and Miss Isabel. It also incorporates the nineteenth century library and museum established by Hannah and Isabel Howland. While the Howland Stone Store is already on the National Register of Historic Places, it has recently been listed on the National Park Service Service's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, along with the Phillips House, the Slocum Howland House, and the North Street Meetinghouse.¹²⁶

If Herman Phillips (or Slocum Howland, Emily Howland, or Isabel Howland) came back to Sherwood today, they would certainly recognize this community as their own. While the elm tree is now gone, and Slocum Howland, the "man crossing the street that is to be my friend" died in 1881, five years after Herman Phillips himself, there is still the hill, the house in the hollow (Slocum Howland's house-NW-7), the orchard (SW-4), the Stone Store (NE-7), the tavern (NW-8). And there are almost all the houses. Of the fifty-five properties in the historic district, forty-six of them (84 percent) date from 1883 or before.

Emily Howland is a central figure in Sherwood's story and also in the national story of abolitionism, woman's suffrage, and education (especially African American education). When she died on June 29, 1929, she was almost 102 years old. She wrote her own obituary: "I strove to realize myself and to serve." Isabel Howland added at the bottom of her simple gravestone: "Purposes nobly fulfilled." She was buried near her parents in the family graveyard, across the road from the 1798 home of her grandparents, Benjamin and Mary Slocum Howland. The *New York Times* published two brief articles about her, one an obituary and one a notice about her estate, worth \$239,300. Eleven biographical dictionaries published sketches of her life.¹²⁷

In September 1967, the Sherwood Board of Education voted formally to rename Sherwood Central School the Emily Howland Elementary School. The wish she had expressed to her father in 1867, that "a school is what I would like my name perpetuated by" had at long last been granted in her own hometown, as it had been granted long before in Heathsville, Virginia. The Howland School in Heathsville still stands. In 1991, the building was restored and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Felter, Maryanne and Schultz, Daniel. "Time Capsule At The Crossroads": The Howland Suffrage Poster Collection," *New York History* (2005) 86(3): 227-249; Paul Cody, "Isabel Howland: A Remarkable Life, Well-Lived." *Cornell Alumni News* (May 1992): 24-29.

¹²⁷ Inscription on gravestone, Dog Corner's cemetery; *New York Times*, June 30 and July 26, 1929. See bibliography for citations for biographical dictionary entries for Emily Howland.

¹²⁸ [Phebe King], "Historical Sketch of Sherwood School, 1871-1964," 39; <http://www.chesapeakestyle.com/celebrate/mar06.html>

Property Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8: Significance. Page 34 of 34

After her death, one of Emily Howland's neighbors recalled that "Emily knew her own worth, felt she had something of value to say and expected it to be attended to, and heeded." Miss Emily herself wrote to her nephew Herbert that "I am like the Ancient Mariner: I am so obsessed that I want to tell my story."¹²⁹

And what a story it is! As historian Maryanne Felter suggested, "what Howland contributed to America and the world was the belief that one single person, even a nineteenth-century woman who was effectively powerless at the time, nevertheless could make a profound difference in the world. . . . During the 102 years of her life, she became a model of activism on the local, the national, and the international levels."¹³⁰

People in Sherwood have cherished Miss Emily's story. Phebe King, principal of Sherwood Select School, worked hard to collect Emily Howland's papers, which she sent to Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. Mildred Myers continued this work, interviewing many local people, collecting extensive notes, and writing a readable fictionalized biography. Extensive materials on Sherwood and the Howland family have been organized by Margaret Redmond and preserved by librarian Sally Otis in Hazard Library, Poplar Ridge.¹³¹

In many ways, however, Miss Emily's worth has not been appreciated by succeeding generations outside Sherwood, and the story of her nationally significant work has never been fully told. Howland's major biographer, Judith Breault, made a beginning toward resurrecting Howland's national reputation. She noted that Emily Howland was "a central . . . figure in a broad segment of key nineteenth century American social reforms." But she was more, argued Breault. She was "a skilled writer who perceptively chronicled the growth taking place within her own life as well as in American society. Emily managed to capture the pace and sense of American social change over time while exploring the details of her own odyssey first as daughter, then as woman, and finally as venerated sage."¹³² Breault focused her story on Emily Howland's internal life, however, and much remains to be documented about Emily Howland's external story and her importance to the country as a whole.

People in Sherwood, from the nineteenth century to the present, have carefully preserved records and oral traditions about Emily Howland's work and their own for equal rights and education. People in Sherwood took the ideals of the Declaration of Independence seriously, "that all men (and women) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Their buildings and landscape remain to tell their story. The Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District may help people all across the nation heed that story, including the story of Emily Howland, Slocum Howland, Isabel Howland, and Herman and Hannah Phillips, and their century-long struggle for equal rights for all people.

¹²⁹ Marion Mosher, interviewed by Mildred Myers [?] Notes in Hazard Library; Emily Howland to Herbert Howland, March 4, 1924, typescript, Howland Stone Store Museum.

¹³⁰ Maryanne Felter, "Time Capsule at the Crossroads": The Howland Suffrage Poster Collection," *New York History* 86:1 (Winter 1005): 247.

¹³¹ Mildred D. Myers, *Miss Emily: Emily Howland, Teacher of Freed Slaves, Suffragist, and Friend of Susan B. Anthony and Harriet Tubman* (Charlotte Harbor, Florida: Tabby House, 1998).

¹³² Judith Breault, *Odyssey*, xvi; *World of Reform*, vii.