



HOWLAND STONE STORE MUSEUM

2956 ROUTE 34 B – SHERWOOD
BOX 124 AURORA, NEW YORK 13026



The Story of the Howland Stone Store Museum and Opendore

The cobblestone building which houses the Howland Stone Store Museum was built in 1837 by Slocum Howland for use as a store. In 1848, Slocum's son, William, became a partner in the business. Upon Slocum's death in 1881, William built a new structure as his place of business, The Block, a wooden building still standing, is immediately north of the cobblestone building, which then became a storage area. Upon the death of William's daughter, Isabel, in 1942, Alice and Charles Koon inherited the cobblestone building; they used the building as a small local library. At a later date not definitely known, the museum collection previously upstairs in The Block was moved to the upstairs of the cobblestone building.

Prior to her death in 1966, Alice Koon transferred the ownership of this building to the Cayuga Museum (in Auburn), with the stipulation that it should be kept as the Isabel Howland Museum. Some Sherwood residents learned, in 1987, that the Cayuga Museum had plans to sell the building. After numerous community meetings and conversations with the Board of the Cayuga Museum, as well as contact with appropriate state agencies, the cobblestone building was transferred via provisional charter to the group of community members called Friends of the Howland Stone Store. In 1996, this group was awarded an Absolute Charter by the Board of Regents of the State of New York under the name of Howland Stone Store Museum (HSSM). HSSM is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a single listing as well as a significant contributing parcel to the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District, also on the National Register. This building has been documented as an authentic Under Ground Railroad site (UGRR), based on Slocum Howland's extensive involvement in UGRR and abolitionist activities.

In September, 2008, HSSM acquired a second building, the home of William Howland and his wife, Hannah Letchworth, and later of their daughter, Isabel. Built in 1837, remodeled by William in 1888, and then significantly remodeled by Isabel in 1910, this site is also a contributing property to the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District, primarily for its connection to the Women's Rights movement. In December, 2011, HSSM received a \$400,000 matching grant from the Environmental Protection Fund for the purpose of revitalizing a portion of that house for use as additional museum programming and storage.