



Dear Stowe Society Members,

This past year has been an exciting one for Stowe scholars, and we would like to acknowledge the work of our many members to celebrate Stowe's ongoing legacy. 2016 marked our 20th anniversary as a Society, and we hosted our first conference in the Pacific Northwest, with Dr. Laura Korobkin as keynote. The conference theme was "Everyday Stowe," and it not only included stellar panels about Stowe's domestic writing, but it also contained the annual meeting of the SSAWW Pacific Northwest Reading Group that was likewise centered on the conference theme. In addition, the conference hosted a theatrical performance by Megan Burnett from Bellarmine University, details of which can be found in this newsletter. We look forward to future conferences in other areas of the country.

This past year we also hosted two panels at the American Literature Association that focused on "Stowean Legacies"—again using our anniversary as a launching pad to incite fresh discussions about Stowe's life and work. In this vein, we instituted our Up and Coming Scholar Award, which is given to graduate students to encourage their continued interest in Stowe's writing. This annual award will be announced prior to the American Literature Association and the triennial Society for the Study of American Women Writers conferences. The winner is guaranteed a spot on one of our Stowe Society panels at one of these conferences, is provided a small honorarium for travel, and is acknowledged during the panels themselves. More information about last year's winner, Julia Cosacchi, can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Further, we would like to call your attention to our updated Stowe Society website. Webmistress Allison Speicher and bibliographer Seth McCulloch have been working diligently to increase and update our online presence. We now have featured spaces for current work on Stowe, and we invite you to check out our Bibliography page at [www.stowesociety.org](http://www.stowesociety.org) and to submit your own work to post.

This newsletter highlights recent scholarship on Stowe and provides information about the activities the Stowe society has been a part of in the past year. If you have other information you'd like for us to include in future newsletters, please contact me at [ldamico@uiwtx.edu](mailto:ldamico@uiwtx.edu).

Finally, you'll notice we have a new slate of officers listed at the end of this newsletter. I would like to thank Dr. Beth Lueck, outgoing Stowe president, for her many of years of service and leadership in the Society. Dr. Lueck acted as President of our society for ten years, and her dedication to Stowe's legacy is unmatched. While she may no longer have an official title, she will continue to serve as an unofficial mentor: the generosity of sharing her time and expertise cannot be overstated. Dr. Lueck will remain the primary point of contact for the Transatlantic Women conference in Dublin next year. Personally, I am indebted to Beth's guidance and friendship, and, quite frankly, Stowe scholarship and this society's community would not be what it is today without her contributions.

With Dr. Lueck's legacy in mind, we look forward to yet another year of honoring Stowe's goals of pushing for equality and empathy as well as encouraging change even in the most difficult of circumstances—all needed reminders in our current political and social climate.

Warm Regards,  
LuElla D'Amico, Stowe Society President

***A Report on the Twentieth Anniversary Harriet Beecher Stowe Society Conference***  
***“Everyday Stowe,” by Christopher Allan Black,***  
***University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley***

On June 24-25, 2016, the Twentieth Anniversary Conference of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Society, “Everyday Stowe,” took place in the scenic woods on the campus of Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington. Sponsored by the Humanities Division at Lewis-Clark State College and the English and Women’s and Gender Studies departments at Whitworth, the conference was directed by LuElla D’Amico and brought renowned scholars, faculty, and advanced students of Harriet Beecher Stowe and nineteenth-century American women writers together to engage in stimulating discussions about the role of Stowe and her contemporaries in transforming public policy and affecting social change during the antebellum period. Over 25 participants from universities in the Pacific Northwest region and from across the United States representing the fields of Literature, Early American Studies, History, Women’s and Gender Studies, Theatre Studies, and Cultural Studies explored in a series of panels, small reading groups, dramatic performances, and professional workshops, the impact of domestic women authors upon antebellum culture and American society. In addition to analyzing the historical context of Stowe’s work, the interdisciplinary panels and presentations dealt with themes such as slavery, race, women’s rights, suffrage, politics, religion, and social justice. The thought-provoking presentations challenged the audience to consider how these ideological and political concerns are still relevant to our modern society.

Scholarly panels addressed a wide range of innovative interdisciplinary approaches and topics. Marlowe Daly-Galeano of Lewis-Clark State College moderated a panel titled “Stowe’s Subjects and Objects,” which analyzed aesthetics and domestic cultural symbolism in the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Frederick William Beecher’s 1855 Williams College Journal. The “Extensions of Stowe” panel, chaired by Gail K. Smith of Capilano University, addressed the critical response of major social reform authors of the nineteenth century, including Solomon Northup, Josiah Henson, Ellen Glasgow and Edith Wharton to racial and cultural stereotypes resulting from the publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1852. Christopher Allan Black of Francis Marion University facilitated an undergraduate research panel, which explored issues of religion, the gothic, and the commercial success of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The concluding panel of the conference, moderated by Donna Campbell of Washington State University, titled “The Social and Spiritual in Stowe,” included three engaging presentations on pious commentary in Stowe, female spirituality in antebellum culture, and romantic racialization and theology in *The Minister’s Wooing* (1859).

A series of forums on pedagogy provided participants with an opportunity to address key texts and innovative teaching methods. The roundtable discussion on “Stowe in the Classroom: Pedagogical Considerations,” facilitated by Gwen Sullivan of Lewis-Clark State College, discussed the rewards and challenges of teaching *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* to

undergraduate students. Marlowe Daly-Galeano discussed the issue of managing such a lengthy work as Stowe’s masterpiece in the Early American Literature Survey Course. LuElla D’Amico and James McPherson of Whitworth University talked about their collaborative experience of teaching *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) and the *Autobiography of Josiah Henson* (1849) in a cross-listed English and Communications course. Professor Vic Bobb delivered a talk on teaching the works of Stowe along with Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick* (1851).

In addition to these conference presentations, Professor Beth Lueck from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and then President of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Society, led a reading group sponsored by the Northwest Society for the Study of American Women Writers about Stowe’s short domestic fiction. She directed discussions about Stowe’s short pieces “Trials of a Housekeeper,” “What is Home,” “Servants,” and “Home Decorations,” among others. This reading group was attended by scholars from the conference, along with members of the local community.

An engaging dramatic performance and two insightful lectures were likewise highlights of this year’s conference. Megan Burnett, a professor of Theatre Studies, from Bellarmine University presented a one-act play on the life of Martha Griffith Browne, a former slave owner, abolitionist, suffragist, and contemporary of Harriet Beecher Stowe, from Owensboro, Kentucky, who published the controversial novel *Autobiography of a Female Slave* in 1856. Professor Burnett’s historical reenactment and dramatic performance traced Mattie Browne’s personal conversion to abolitionism in the 1850s. Brown’s fictional work flawlessly imitated the storytelling style and conventions of the slave narrative to the extent that her reading audience mistakenly believed the text to be an actual life account of an African-American slave.

In an opening address that was delivered on Friday night, Dale Soden, a member of the History department from Whitworth, delivered a lecture on civil rights and social protest in the Pacific Northwest, which invited scholars and students of antebellum social reform literature and culture to reflect upon how the social justice philosophy of Harriet Beecher Stowe and other contemporary abolitionists manifests itself in modern day movements for equal rights in American society. Tying this address together with the panels and activities aforementioned, the conference concluded with a keynote lecture by Professor Laura Korobkin of Boston University titled “Harriet Beecher Stowe: Literary Innovator.” Dr. Korobkin’s talk examined recent trends in criticism which argue that reading Stowe in a transatlantic context have contributed to a rise in Stowe’s literary celebrity. The conference concluded on Saturday evening with a dinner and reception.

**The Conference Keynote**  
**Dr. Laura Korobkin, Boston University**

Laura Korobkin's talk, "Harriet Beecher Stowe: Literary Innovator," argued that while recent turns in criticism toward valuing sentimentality and reading in a transatlantic context have led to a welcome rise in Stowe's literary stock, her new status as "the admirable cover girl for affective activist authorship" still rests on an unchanged assumption that her work fails "traditional" criteria for literary excellence like formal complexity and irony, the development of new authorial strategies, skillfully sophisticated writing, and well-informed intellectual scope and analysis. Korobkin challenges this notion, arguing instead that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* changed the shape of the Victorian novel and was a major player in influencing British Victorian fiction by writers like Dickens and Eliot toward its greatest achievements: big, formally complex, generically hybrid, socially inclusive fictions. The success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* should be seen not only as grounded in its ability to marshal readers' sympathies toward important political aims, but also for its construction of a risky, highly innovative, issue-centered, hugely ambitious and original new form: a multi-modal hybrid novel that deploys a powerful range of authorial strategies, moving rapidly back and forth, in and also out from the intimacy of pathos to the detached stances of irony, parody, and intellectual analyses, with diction that vividly renders a range of informal speech and dialects, and brilliantly deploying techniques like free indirect discourse and sharply delineated verbal irony and satire. Once Stowe's complex achievement is recognized, Korobkin argued, she should have an important place in the history of the development of the big realist novel of high moral seriousness, intricate form, and national reach.



**Play about Mattie Griffith Browne**  
**Megan Burnett, Bellarmine University**

Megan Burnett presented the world premiere of her one-woman play about Mattie Griffith Browne at last year's Harriet Beecher Stowe Society conference at Whitworth University in Washington. Mattie Griffith Browne (1825/33 – 1906) was raised on a plantation in Owensboro, Kentucky along the Ohio River. Mattie grew up with slaves serving her, but rejected slavery and fought to end it. Upon moving to Philadelphia as a young woman, she met Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Maria Child, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, William Lloyd Garrison and others through the National Anti-Slavery Society. Stowe and others encouraged her to write her book, *Autobiography of a Female Slave* (1857). Griffith did not tell her editor that she was not a slave and that the book was fiction until a few months after it was published. Griffith used funds from her book, other writings, and donations to return to Kentucky to manumit the slaves she and her sister inherited from their parents. The play included information from recently discovered documents that revealed details of Griffith's life as a child. It is possible Stowe was among the group of women organized by Peabody who subscribed to pay Griffith a sustaining salary while she wrote her articles for NASS. Griffith's relationships with these women and men, including Stowe, offer a glimpse into the little things that made up a life of lasting impact.

The play is set in the parlor of the home of a local woman hosting a women's rights political and fundraising meeting. The date is 1870, five years after President Lincoln's assassination, and nearly four years since Mattie's marriage to Albert Gallatin Browne, Jr. It is one year after Mattie became a vice president of the first radical feminist organization, the National Woman Suffrage Association. She is seeking to persuade women and men to become volunteers and to sign a petition before the 15th Amendment is ratified, demanding that it clearly include women in its decree for the right to vote. Mattie has been asked to discuss her book, and her work as an abolitionist and suffragist.



### **Excerpt from *Mattie Griffith Browne***

My dear friend, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, asked that I come especially to address your chapter of suffragists as she knew you have been most supportive of our abolitionist work in the past. Thank you for your kind welcome. I see some of you are reading my book. And now I will address what some might describe as my ‘infamy’. (Pick up book.) I am the author of this book: I am Mattie Griffith. I wrote *Autobiography of a Female Slave* in 1857 not to try to hoodwink people into thinking I was a former slave, no, but to help raise the funds I needed to free the slaves I inherited from my parents. Yes, I know from birth what it means to own another human being. I know what it means to see men and women, no different from me, save “Circumstance, Accident and Condition” having “cast my life among them,” (Ceplair, 1994, p. 224) what it means to see men and women bought and sold and treated worse than animals. I knew it was wrong from my earliest childhood memories, and did all in my power to free the slaves I had inherited from my parents. Kentucky law did not expressly bar a freed slave from residing in the state, I feared that once I freed these men and women, rogue slave traders would capture them and sell them back into slavery. To prevent this I needed to purchase manumission bonds to free them and to provide them with the means to leave Kentucky and start new lives in a free state. Several of my dear friends and colleagues, acquainted with my cause, aided me in collecting money to pay for the purchase of six manumission bonds. Thanks to these funds and those raised from the sale of my book, I was able to return to Owensboro just one short year after having published, *Autobiography of a Female Slave*. That October in 1858 would test my faith in many of my fellow Kentuckians.

Upon returning to Owensboro, “I was quite retired, did not see many people, those whom I did see were coldly polite to me. My family – those whom I saw – were civil but said I would surly live to regret what I had done – that it was rash and ill advised but as I ‘made my path so must I walk.’ My uncle thought it was commendable to ‘practice what I preached.’ But let me tell you they did not like to see me in the kitchen, appeared to look upon me as a dangerous person. This was mortifying – some friends refused to see me...I met frost with ice.”

“[I]...sent for the servants and informed them of my intention. I explained the laws as simply as I could, and told them it would be necessary for them to leave the State, as soon as they were free. I warned them of the inevitable danger of staying, or of returning, under any pretext whatsoever. When they were made to understand this, they became resigned to the hard conditions, and said with an eloquent sigh, “All places are alike to the negro.”

“It was delightful to watch their countenances, as they slowly received the idea of personal freedom. It seemed as if they underwent some heavenly transfiguration. Their faces, even their bodies, appeared to glow. ‘What!’ ‘Are we going to be FREE? To belong to ourselves? Oh, it seems like a dream.’ They laughed and they wept, they sang and they danced. Indeed, I almost feared Henderson was crazy, he was so bewildered with joy. It was a blissful moment for me when I placed the deeds of manumission in their hands. I never expect to experience such a thrill of happiness again. Poor creatures! They embraced my knees, they kissed my hands, they would have covered my very feet with caresses, if I would have permitted it. They called me by every exalted name in the English language. But when these first ebullitions of feeling were over, they began to think more of me than of themselves. They returned with downcast looks, and said, ‘But Miss Mattie, you can’t afford to do this. You will have to work. Take us back, Miss Mattie. We are all willing to keep on working for you.’ Now wasn’t this very touching? Poor, faithful, loving creatures! I can never be forgetful of my duty to their race” (Ceplair, 1994, p. 225).

For more information about Mattie Griffith Brown, contact Professor Burnett at [mburnett@bellarmine.edu](mailto:mburnett@bellarmine.edu).

# New Must Reads for Society Members

**Schultz, Nancy Lusignan.** "Literary Legacies: Recovering the Poetry of Harriet Beecher Stowe." *Mass Poetry Blog* (2016). <http://www.masspoetry.org/poetry-of-hb-stowe>  
<http://www.masspoetry.org/poetry-of-hb-stowe>

Stowe Society Treasurer and Founding Officer, Nancy Lusignan Schultz (English, Salem [MA] State University), published an article which followed her well-received presentation on Stowe's poetry at the Massachusetts Poetry Festival in May 2016. Schultz is currently on sabbatical, working on recovering, annotating, and writing a scholarly introduction for Stowe's poetry. Schultz will situate Stowe's poetry in its transatlantic contexts, and explore the translation history of her poems. She hopes this project will add to our knowledge and appreciation of Stowe as a major nineteenth-century writer.

**Newman, Judie.** "Harriet Beecher Stowe and the 'Book That Started This Great War' ". In Coleman Hutchison (ed.) *Cambridge History of American Civil War Literature.*, CUP, 2016, 3-16.(Choice Outstanding Academic Title 2016).

Judie Newman explores the transatlantic significance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, taking her cue from Stowe's political view (*Men of Our Times*) that the war was not a local event but a war of principle for the rights of the working man against the usurpation of privileged aristocracies. A revolution was thus already in train which would lead to the establishment of a truly Christian society. It is therefore a misapprehension for critics to argue that Stowe caused the war, or indeed that she did not. The war was not a defined event but a process already under way when Stowe began to write the novel. Stowe had an international audience in her sights and emphasised that she was dramatizing a global conflict. Serial publication in the *National Era* allowed her to respond to global political events contemporaneously, notably in relation to the expeditions of Narciso López in Cuba, and she drew upon one of the first antislavery novels, set in colonial Cuba, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab* (1841), for characters, symbolism and incidents.

See also Judie Newman "Harriet Beecher Stowe's Cuban characters: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab*," in *(Re)mapping the Latina/o Literary Landscape: New Works and New Directions*, ed. Cristina Herrera and Larissa Mercado-López (Palgrave Literatures of the Americas, 2016) 21-34.

**Zwarg, Christina.** "Who's Afraid Of Virginia's Nat Turner? Mesmerism, Stowe, And The Terror Of Things." *American Literature: A Journal Of Literary History, Criticism, And Bibliography* 87.1 (2015): 23-50.

When mesmerism first came to this hemisphere by way of Saint-Domingue, a complex association between radical abolition and the new science was born. Harriet Beecher Stowe takes up that association in her second abolitionist novel *Dred*. In so doing she begins to chart an emergent trauma theory developing among slaves like Douglass that deliberately focused on perpetrators rather than victims of New World slavery. Such a reading widens our understanding of early trauma theory by making visible the tension between Stowe's sentimental strategy famously inscribed in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and her adaptation of theories being improvised by thinkers like Frederick Douglass. If the first strategy depends upon familiar but discrete bonds of sympathy between her reader and slaves like Uncle Tom, the second involves recognition of uncontained levels of fear compulsively linking abolition with the violence of slave insurrection and revenge. The title *Dred* deliberately puns on that fear, working to undo what Brian Massumi has called its preemptive logic.

With uneven results, Stowe attempts to defuse the fear that came with the legacy of Haiti and the tradition of Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner. She does so by stepping beyond her resort to personal feeling, with its familiar dyadic structure, and taking up the collective and electric properties of the "crisis state" where sentimental distance is collapsed in uncontained transmissions of terror. Stowe could easily invite her reader to sympathize with a sentimental object like Uncle Tom. But her ambitious project in *Dred* proved more challenging; it was impossible to engage the fear of abolition this way without stimulating her own uncertainty about "things" that were beyond her own experience and control.

**Speicher, Allison.** "The Schooldays of Topsy and Friday: Edward Everett Hale's Revision of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Robinson Crusoe*," *ESQ*, 62.2, 2016, p. 319-53

In his 1878 novel about freedmen's schooling, *Mrs. Merriam's Scholars*, Edward Everett Hale draws on two literary predecessors who share his interest in interracial educational encounters: Harriet Beecher Stowe and Daniel Defoe. Hale's novel routinely echoes Stowe and Defoe, but he doesn't simply allude to their landmark novels: instead, he revises them, depicting a capable and independent black girl who forms affectionate and protective relationships with whites while never ceasing to own herself. By doing so, he seeks to revive white support for African American education as Reconstruction comes to an end.

## ***The 2016 Stowe Society Up and Coming Scholar Award Announced***

Julia Cosacchi, a Ph.D. candidate in English at Fordham University, won this past year's Up and Coming Scholar Award. Her dissertation research focuses on American women authors' engagement with the idea of self-making in the mid- and late-nineteenth century. She is also a contributor for Digital Stowe, the online home for Stowe studies in the 21st century ([www.digitalstowe.org](http://www.digitalstowe.org)). Her winning paper, "Feeling Right' about Liberia: Aunt Chloe's Kitchen and Colonization in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" considers the metaphoric function of Chloe's kitchen--the domestic interior of the physical structure known as Uncle Tom's cabin--as a colonizationist counterpoint to the utopian promise of Rachel Halliday's kitchen. The paper argues that Liberia stands in at the end of Stowe's novel as a translocation and transformation of Chloe's kitchen in an effort by Stowe to reconcile with her own colonizationist leanings in the 1850s.



## ***New Slate of Officers***

At the business meeting held at the Harriet Beecher Stowe 20th Anniversary Conference in Spokane, Washington last June, the following slate of officers was proposed:

LuElla D'Amico, University of the Incarnate Word: President  
Marlowe Daly-Galeano, Lewis-Clark State College: Vice President  
Allison Speicher, Eastern Connecticut State University: Secretary and Webmistress  
Nancy Lusignan Schultz, Salem State University: Treasurer  
Beth L. Lueck, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: Past President

This slate was approved by 93% of the voters in an online election disseminated by email in January, 2017. The elected officers are now serving and will hold their positions for the term of two years, concluding in 2019. The Society wishes to thank Beth Lueck for her years of service as president and her ongoing guidance as past president. Thanks as well to all of the HBSS past officers and to those who participated in the election.



## ***Current Call for Papers***

The Harriet Beecher Stowe Society and the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society will co-sponsor Transatlantic Women 3 in Dublin, Ireland, 21-22 June 2018. The conference focuses on Women of the Green Atlantic and will take place at the Royal Irish Academy. Please see the complete call for papers at the Stowe Society website: <http://www.stowesociety.org/>.