

### History of Stephen Hosmer

If the achievements of a man's children are any measure of a person's worth, as an individual and as a parent, then Captain Hosmer counted among his large brood, a future signer of the Articles of Confederation, a prominent physician and judge, a Connecticut infantry officer, and a Revolutionary War hero. To this list must also be added several daughters who married well. Apparently, Captain Hosmer instilled in his children, at an early age, a sense of duty and dedication to purpose. That so many of his children achieved success is, without question, a reflection of his guidance and strength of character.

Stephen Hosmer, son of Captain Thomas and Ann (Prentiss) Hosmer was born on 6 January 1704. Of his early years, nothing is known. Records indicate that on 18 June 1730, Stephen married Deliverance Graces, daughter of Thomas Graves. They lived in the Hartford area and documents show that their children were born there. Unfortunately, the nature of his occupation is unknown. About the only thing which has survived the years is that he served as an officer in the French and Indian War. In 1755, he commanded a garrison at Pantusich, a small settlement, located approximately 30 miles north of Canaan, Connecticut. He served in this capacity until 8 September 1755. A letter from Roger Wolcott to the Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives reported, in some detail, on Captain Hosmer's assignment. The following is an excerpt from Mr. Wolcott's letter:

Sir

Last February the Council for the War were informed that the Inhabitants of Stockbridge and Pontoosuke were like to draw off unless supported and application was made to the Council for support from Connecticut.

To prevent this the Council sent up Captain Hossmer with 65 men with Instructions to Guard the people scout and assist the Inhabitants in building forts and to take Brigadier Dwights Direction for the place where to dwell.

When Captain Hossmer came to Pantoosuke the Inhabitants were mainly Drawn of and the rest resolved to follow but the Council knew nothing of this and upon Brigadier Dwights direction the Captain proceeded to build a fort at Pantoosuk in which there is no Dwelling house.

The Inhabitants are all Drawn of but two who live in the fort under pay from Connecticut the fort is Called fort Connecticut and a Garasson of sixteen men are Constantly kept there.

.

.

.

R. Wolcott

Captain Stephen Hosmer died in 1758. While only 54 years old at the time of his passing, Captain Hosmer accomplished much in the time allotted him. Hard work and perseverance were two qualities which set him apart in life and which survived him in death. The extraordinary accomplishments of his children and grandchildren illustrate how well he fulfilled his role as parent and teacher.

#### Last Will and Testament of Stephen Hosmer

I Stephen Hosmer of hartford being Now In Good Health And of Sound memory Calling to mind the mortality of my body that It Is apointed unto man once to die do make and ordain this to be my last Will & Testament hereby Revoking All former Wills made & Declared that Is to Say first & Principly I give my soul to God & my body to the Earth to be Decently Buried Not Doubting but Att ye Resurrection I Shall Receive the Same Again by the power of God and as to my Worldly Estate after my Jist Debts & Nesisary funeral Charges Are paid I give as follows Itm to my Sons Titus Hosmer Graves Hosmer Timothy Hosmer John Hosmer Prentis Hosmer & Graves Hosmer An Equal part In my Estate to be Set out to them As Shall a[ ] [ ] Inventory & Whereas I have Given my Son Titus A Libral Education A Hundred & forty pound Shall be Deducted be fore he Shall Come to Receive his part I Give my Son George Liberty to C[ ] part Att the house & Land I Bought of John Hopkins over And Above his part I give him four Acres of Land Joynung that Where his Lot Shall fall for his Extraordinary Service Itm I Give to my daughters Sarah the Wife of John Whiting Jr. Marianne Hosmer Ann Hosmer Deliverance Hosmer Esther Hosmer Mary Hosmer Half So much for Each of As I have Given

to Each of their Brethren & that their part Shall be made up out of  
ye moveables So far As they Will Go & the Rest In Land Where It  
Will Least Incomode their Brethren & Whereas my Daughter Sarah  
Whiting has Received A part Att her Mariage As Will Apear by my  
Book that Shall be Deducted before She Shall Come In for An Equal  
part With her Sisters & Whereas my Daughter Marianne [ ] & Must  
take the oversight of my family I give her twelve pound to be  
Received In ye manner Above & beyond her Equal part It Is my Will  
that All my Children that Shall be that Is to Say Sons till they  
Shall be twelve Daughter till ten years old Shall be Supported out  
of my Estate Each one bearing their proportion Acording to their  
Interest & As ye Children needs shall Require Itm I Give to my  
Grandaughter my Son Stephen Hosmer & [ ] Child An Equal part With  
my own Daughters and In the Same manner With this Consideration &  
Reflection that If She Shall Die before She Shall Arive to the Age  
of Eighteen years of Age then this Clause In this Will Shall be  
void & her part Divided to my own Children In the proportions As Is  
Above Set In the Will And If She Shall live to Receive her part &  
Shall after Die Without An heir Lawfully Begoten of her Body then  
It Shall Return And be divided amongst my Children As Is Above  
Described her part in her fathers Inventory to be Acouted As [ ]  
of her portion And I nominate & Apoint my Sons Titus Hosmer &  
George Hosmer to be Executors to this my Last Will 7 testament

those Words Deliverance Hosmer

Were [ ] before Signing

In Witnes of the Above Will I have here unto Seting hand

And Seal this 15 Day of August 1758

[signed]

Signed Sealed Published

STEPHEN HOSMER

And Declared by Stephen

Hosmer to be his Last

Will & testament In Presence of

[signed]

ISAAC GOODWIN

ISAAC GOODWIN JR.

URIAH GOODWIN

Hartford June 15, 1761. Then Mr Isaac Goodwin & Uriah Goodwin Personally appeared & made Solemn Oath that they Saw Capt Stephen Hosmer Sign & Seal the above written testament & heard him Publish & Declare in to be his Last will & testament & [ ] they then Judged him to be [ ] of Disposing mind & memory & Set to [ ] hand as witness with Isaac Goodwin [ ] & in the Presence of the above Named testators Before me

[signed]

Tho Hosmer Justc Peace

Last Will & Testament of Deliverance Hosmer

I Deliverance Hosmer of Hartford Being at this time in a Comfortable State of Health yet Calling to mind the mortality of my Body Do think it Proper (Being by Gods Goodness of Sound mind & memory by & with the) advice of my Dear & Loving Husband Stephen Hosmer do make & ordain this to be my Last Will & testament vist after my Just Debts & funeral Expenses are paid I Give & Bequeath

to my Sons vist Stephen Hosmer Titus Hosmer George Hosmer Timothy  
Hosmer John Hosmer Prentice Hosmer & Graves Hosmer a Single part of  
my Estate apearing as it Shall be appointed and to my Daughters  
vist Sarah Whiting the wife of John Whiting Jnr Marianne Hosmer Ann  
Hosmer Deliverance Hosmer Esther Hosmer & Mary Hosmer half a part  
that is half So much as Sons above mentioned to them their Heirs &  
assigns forever and further I Give my sons Liberty to Redeem my  
Land if they Shall think best at What it Shall be appraised [?] at  
when they Shall Redeem it and further I Do Nominate and appoint my  
two Eldest Sons vist Stephen Hosmer & Titus Hosmer to be Executors  
to this my Last will & testament

In Wittness Whereas I have Set my hand & Seal

this 12th Day of May 1757

[signed]

DELIVERANCE HOSMER

Signed Sealed Published

& Declared by Deliverance

Hosmer to be her Last

Will & testament in

Presence of

[signed]

ISAAC GOODWIN

THO. HOSMER

EBENEZER GOODWIN

I Stephen Hosmer Do herby Declare my Content to the above Last will  
& Testament of Deliverance my Dearly Beloved wife according to the  
true Intent & meaning therof

May 12, 1757

Signed Sealed &

[signed]

In Presence of

STEPHEN HOSMER

[signed]

ISAAC GOODWIN

Hartford June 15, 1761 then Mr Isaac Goodwin & Ebr Goodwin  
Personally appeared & made Solemn oath that they Saw the then Named  
Deliverance Hosmer Sign & Seal the [ ] written testament & heard  
her Publish & Declare it to be the Last will & t. [ ] [ ] an that  
they then Judged her to be of Disposing mind & memory & Set to  
their hand as witness with Tho Hosmer Esqr in the presence of the  
testators and also that they Saw Capt. Stephen Hosmer Sign & Seal  
the following article of Content Before me

[signed]

THO HOSMER Just Peace

### History of Stephen Hosmer

The greater part of Stephen Hosmer's abbreviated life was lived in the shadow of his successful father, Thomas Hosmer. There were, of course, many advantages associated with being Thomas only son (education, money, business opportunities and the like), but there were also a number of disadvantages (pressure, self-doubt, and unfulfilled expectations), as well. Unfortunately, Stephen did not share all of his father's interests and abilities. He lacked, in other words, his father's considerable social and business skills. Nevertheless, Stephen was a community leader in his own right and proved himself to be a moderately successful businessman. Perhaps, not in the same class as his father, but still a respected member of Connecticut society.

As already noted, it was Thomas Hosmer who developed West Hartford. Although his son Stephen was not involved in the original land transactions, he was still a participant and one of the principal beneficiaries of the West Hartford venture. At the age of 34 [1679], Stephen was the town's first resident. He was also the area's first businessman, operating a sawmill near Trout Brook.

Historical evidence suggests that Stephen Hosmer was as intent on divesting himself of his West Hartford properties as his father had been, years before, in acquiring them. The 90 acre parcel closest to the Center was the first to go. In 1692, five years after his father's death, Stephen sold large tracts of land to the Hooker, Whiting, Stone, Spencer and White families. These West



Hartford parcels ran from the Commons west to Trout Brook.

Although information is lacking, it appears that Stephen Hosmer was married about 1668. His wife was Hannah Bushnell, daughter of Deacon Francis Busnhell, one of the original settlers of Saybrook, Connecticut. By Hannah, Stephen had ten children. This was a large family even by colonial standards. Providing for such a large brood placed a considerable strain on Stephen's limited resources, and could very well explain why he was so eager to dispose of his West Hartford holdings.

According to the provisions of Thomas Hosmer's will, Stephen inherited his father's house and lands in Hartford's South Meadows. As a result, Stephen and his family moved from West Hartford to Hartford. It was here, in Hartford, that his leadership qualities were recognized. He was appointed to the position of Townsman for the years, 1673, 1676, 1677 and 1689 and was chosen as one of the deacons of the First Congregational Church in 1686. He also served as a deputy to the General Court, held in Hartford on 9 October 1690. To illustrate Stephen's interest in civic affairs, the following come from Rev. Love's book, "The Colonial History of Hartford":

In the time of Sir Edmund Andros, the General Court, fearing that their rights were in danger, had required each town to take out a patent from the Governor and Company, the grantees under the Charter, and had divided among them the western lands. Such a patent of the land within the town's bounds, was issued

May 26, 1685, to Major John Talcott, .... Mr. Stephen Hosmer, and the rest of the proprietors of the town, 'sayd parcell of land hauing been by purchass or otherwise Lawfully obteyned of the Indian Natiue proprietors'.

Evidently, the political intrigues of the period required constant vigilance on the part of the town's inhabitants. Encroachments of any type were met swiftly and with stern determination.

Stephen Hosmer's life came to an end on 4 November 1693. He was only 48 years old. He left behind him a big family and a large body of friends and associates. Emerging from the shadow, Stephen became his own man. His life was short, but he accomplished much in the time that was allotted to him.

## History of Thomas Hosmer

Thomas Hosmer was, apparently named after his paternal grandfather. Like his distinguished forebear, Thomas, the younger, had a natural aptitude for business. According to his will, he owned a number of properties in Hartford, and he also had a share in a local "boalting mill". Although he lived and worked in Hartford, Thomas' business interests were not confined to the town. He had, for example, a share in the tract called "the Western Lands", a large parcel belonging to the, "Proprietors of Hartford and Winslor". In addition, he bought, in 1707, land in West Hartford. His business instincts were good, and, from these various business ventures, he lived a comfortable life. An inventory, taken in April 25, 1732, placed the value of his estate at 2,954 pd, 14 s, 11 p.

Thomas Hosmer was baptized in Hartford on 20 February 1675 or 1676. He was the fourth child and eldest son of Stephen and Hannah (Bushnell) Hosmer. Most of his life was spent in Hartford, and it was here, on 14 December 1700, that he married Ann Prentiss, daughter of John Prentiss Jr., of New London, Connecticut and the great granddaughter of Velentine Prentiss, one of the early settlers of Roxbury, Massachusetts. By Ann, Thomas Hosmer had six children.

It might come as a surprise to some, but New England, like the South, had the institution of slavery. Not to the same degree, to be sure, but up to the 1780's, it did exist, unfettered and unrestricted. Thomas Hosmer owned three black slaves. In his will, he listed them simply, as "my negro woman", and, "my negro

boys". Perhaps, these terms were more palatable to the Yankee mind. Nevertheless, this repugnant practice, by whatever name, stained and tarnished New England's reputation as a haven for free men and women. In the eyes of the law, slaves were chattels that could be bought, sold, leased, rented or transferred at the discretion of the owner. In his will, dated 10 January 1731 or 1732, Thomas Hosmer made the following provisions regarding his black slaves:

I give unto my wife, Anne Hosmer .... my negro woman, to be at her own dispose forever. Likewise I give her one of my negro boys, viz., Ceaser, for her service so long as she remains my widow. If she marry, the boy I give to my son Stephen. I give to my eldest son Thomas Hosmer .... my negro boy named Hanniball ...

In such a manner, Thomas passed on his human property.

Like most of his neighbors, Thomas attended the Congregational Church. All of his children were baptized in the church, and he took an active role in its maintenance. An example of his service is given below:

PERSONS WHO WILL AID REV. TIMOTHY  
WOODBIDGE [in handwriting of Rev. Woodbridge]  
A listing of persons who have kindly promised  
me to giue a days Carting To fetch home Timber  
for my House Janr A. D. 1715/6

Mr Thomas Hosmer

Judging from his military title, it appears that Thomas Hosmer was a member of his town's defense force. His rank of Captain would also seem to indicate that he was not only a citizen soldier, but that he was probably one of the unit's leaders.

Like a faceted gem, there were many sides to the complex nature of Thomas Hosmer. He was, above all a family man, but he was also a successful businessman, a church member, a slave holder, and a military leader. He was, quite literally, the model colonial citizen.

Captain Thomas Hosmer departed this life 9 March, 1731 or 1732 at night in the 57th year of his age.

The Last Will and Testament of Captain Thomas Hosmer

I, Thomas Hosmer of Hartford, do make this my last will and testament: I give unto my wife, Anne Hosmer, 1 - 3 part of all my lands in Hartford for her improvement during life, also 3 rooms (one lower room and chambers) in my dwelling house, which she shall choose, the third part of my household stuff, 1 - 3 part of my stock of cattle and other creatures, and my negro woman, to be at her own dispose forever. Likewise I give her one of my negro boys, viz., Ceaser, for her service so long as she remains my widow. If she marry, the boy I give to my son Stephen. I give to my eldest son Thomas Hosmer, besides what I have conveyed to him by deed of gift, all my land (excepting 15 acres that I shall otherwise dispose of) lying and being on the east side of the highway at the

west division, always provided that my son Stephen shall have the use of 1 - 2 the mowing land for two years, and then to return to his brother Thomas, and half the apples in the orchard for the space of six years. I also give to my son Thomas my negro boy named Hanniball, he paying 20 pd to his brother Stephen towards building his house, for him, my sd. son Thomas, his heirs and assigns forever. I give to my sone Stephen Hosmer, besides what I have conveyed by deed of gift, 15 acres of land lying and being on the east side of the highway at the west division, bounding north on the heirs of Mr. Hain's land and south on land I have given to my son Thomas. I also give him 20 pd towards his house, which his brother Thomas is to pay, for him, my sd. son Stephen, his heirs and assigns forever. I give to my son Joseph Hosmer 1 - 2 of my land, excepting six acres that I shall otherwise dispose of, at home, both meadow and upland, with my dwelling house, barn and other edifices thereon erected, the sd. land to be measured out and bounded on the north side. Also I give to my son Joseph the northern half part of my lott of land lying below Rocky Hill. I give to my son John Hosmer the remainder of my land (excepting 4 acres that I shall otherwise dispose of) at home, both meadow and upland, lying southward of the land which I have given to my son Joseph. And likewise I give to my son John the southern half part of my lott of land below Rocky Hill. I give to my four sons, Thomas, Stephen, Joseph and John, all my right, share, part and interest of, in and to the large tract of land called the Western Lands, belonging to the Proprietors of Hartford and Windsor, to be equally divided between them. I give to my sons, Joseph and John,

between them, my team, one yoke of oxen and two old horses, and all the utensils belonging to the team. I give to my daughter, Sarah Hosmer, 2 acres of meadow land at the east end of my meadow land, and 1 - 2 the breadth on the north side; also that allotment of land lately laid out on the right of my grandfather Thomas Hosmer decd., in the Five Miles of land, commonly so called, on the east side of the Connecticut River on Hartford, for her my sd. daughter Sarah forever. I give to my daughter, Anne Hosmer, 2 acres at the east end of my meadow land, half the breadth thereof, and bounded north on the land given to my daughter Sarah; and also I give to may daughter Ann that allotment of land laid out on the right of my father Stephen Hosmer decd., in the Five Miles of land, so called, on the east side of the Connecticut River in Hartford, forever. I give to my sd. two daughters, Sarah and Ann, after my just debts and legacies herein given are paid, all my moveable estate whatsoever that shall remain, with my interest, share and part in the boalting mill adjoining to the lower gristmill in Hartford, to be equally divided between them. I appoint my wife and son Thomas executors.

Witness: John Knowles,

THOMAS HOSMER, LS.

John Cole,

Rachel Knowles.

## The Life and Times of Thomas Hosmer

The life of Thomas Hosmer, our emigrant ancestor, can aptly be described as one of incredible courage, determination and enterprise. Coming from a well ordered society in England, Thomas and his fellow adventurers faced an untamed land in America -- a frontier full of dangers and uncertainties. Disease, Indians, harsh winters, crop failures, scarce supplies and an admixture of other natural and man-made obstacles faced these early settlers. In this harsh environment, not everyone survived, and not everyone succeeded. Yet, out of it all, Thomas was one of the fortunate ones. Like a fragile flower on the mist of a desert, Thomas burst forward, blossomed and grew. Even after 350 years, one can not but marvel at the perseverance and unconquerable spirit of this remarkable man. To some, perhaps, these words might seem excessive and overly flattering. An examination of the facts, however, will show them to be an accurate reflection of a truly uncommon man.

Thomas Hosmer was born in the parish of Hawkhurst in the county of Kent. Baptized on 2 January 1602 or 1603, Thomas was the eldest son of Stephen and Dorothy (Selden) Hosmer. Of his early life, we know almost nothing.

In or about the year 1631 or 1632, Thomas Hosmer, then young man of 28 years, left England for America. The reason or reasons which prompted his departure from his native England will probably never be known for certain as journals and other personal records, for this periods, are lacking. The lure of adventure, however, must have been a factor in his decision.



The ships of the day which ventured between England and America were incredibly small by modern standards. The Mayflower, for example, the ship which brought the pilgrims to Cape Cod in 1621 weighed only 180 tons. From bow to stern, the Mayflower, measured 90 feet. Living space on board was even smaller. The Mayflower's deck measured a scant 20 feet by 75 feet and its hold was only 15 feet by 25 feet. In addition, the hold's ceiling was so low that a man could not stand up without bumping his head. It was probably on a ship of similar proportions that Thomas Hosmer and his fellow passengers made the crossing 10 years later. The typical passage time between the Old and New Worlds, via the northern route, was 8 to 10 weeks.

Unfortunately, the exact date of the circumstances which surrounded his landing in the fledgling Massachusetts Bay Colony have been lost to history. We do know, however, that he lost little time in making his mark in the New World. On 2 February 1633, the colonial authorities granted Thomas Hosmer three acres in Newtown. In 1635, records show that he resided on the south side of Brattle Street.

In the early history of Massachusetts Bay Colony, the division between church and state was, to say the least, blurred. Church officials often wielded more power and influence than their secular counterparts. In such a social structure, church membership became essential for any man who wanted to improve his station in life. Unfortunately, this membership was not automatic and did not come with church attendance. Indeed, it was limited to a very elected

"saints".

In an effort to perpetuate their own power, Puritan leaders decreed that no man could be admitted a freeman until he had proved to the assembled congregation that he had experienced "a personal conversion" or "conviction of salvation". Without such convincing testimony, the much sought after status of freeman could not be granted. The right to vote and the privilege of holding public office hinged on this "proof of election". The Massachusetts Body of Liberties, written in 1641, defined quite clearly the rights and duties of freemen:

62. Any shire or town shall have liberty to choose their deputies whom and where they pleased for the General Court. So be it they be freemen, and have taken their oath of fealty, and inhabiting in this jurisdiction...
66. The freemen of every township shall have power to make such by-laws and constitution as may concern the welfare of their town, provided they be not of a criminal, but only of a prudential nature, and that their penalties exceed not 20 shillings for one offense, and that they be not repugnant to the public laws and orders of the country...
68. It is the liberty of the freemen to choose such deputies for the General Court out of themselves, either in their own towns or elsewhere as they judge fittest.

Thomas was well aware of these religious requirements for social and financial success. On 6 May 1635, he was admitted a freeman.

At that moment, he became a member of the town's small influential elite.

Becoming a freeman was not an end in itself, but rather a beginning it opened doors. This was particularly true in the case of Thomas Hosmer. In the months that followed, Thomas' stature in the community expanded greatly. Many of the town's leading citizens considered him worthy of public office. In November 1635, Thomas was chosen as one of the town's nine new "selectmen". Essentially, this meant that he and his eight associates were responsible for the conduct of the town's affairs for the coming year. Below is a transcription of that 1635 document:

Att A Gennerall Meeting of the whole [ ]  
ther was then Chossen to order bussines of the  
whole Towne for the year following and vntell new  
bee Chossen in their Rooms

mr Roger Harlackenden

William Spencer

Andrew Warner

Joseph Cooke

John Bridg

Clement Chapline

Nicho: Danforth

Tho: Hosmer

William Andrews

wch nyne men are to haue the power of the whole  
Towne as those formerly Chossen hadd as may Apear

in the orders made the 3 february 1634

The trust and respect of his citizens must have been a heady tonic for a young man barely into his 30's.

The cornerstones of Puritan society in Massachusetts Bay Colony was piety and practicality. The strong religious views of the people and their leaders, however, were tempered by the realities of frontier life. In such a community, the acquisition of earthly possession -- property, goods, money -- was not looked upon with disfavor, but rather was considered a token of God's favor and approval. Such views coincided nicely with Thomas' own desire for prosperity and respectability.

Discipline and order were the prime concerns of the colony. Deviations from the established order - whether on religious or secular grounds - were simply not tolerated. Those dared to question the principles of the community were dealt with promptly and severely. Roger Williams was one of those mavericks. For questioning the right of the state to take Indian lands, and for suggesting the separation of church and state, the authorities banished him in 1635.

It was in such an uncompromising political climate that the settlement of Connecticut took place. It began, ostensibly, as a move to seek better farming and grazing land. There were, of course, other reasons. Rev. Thomas Hooker and his associates were not comfortable with the stern and unending attitudes of the colony's leadership. They wanted to administer their own affairs. Taking a lesson from the Williams' affair, they proceeded prudently

and with the grudging approval of the Bay authorities. Thomas Hosmer was a prominent member of the Hooker congregation. He participated in the decision to leave.

According to a number of sources, Thomas was among the main body of the Hooker congregation which set off in June 1636 for the Connecticut River Valley. It must have been a strange sight, reminiscent of the Biblical story of the Israelites in search of the promised land. They numbered a hundred souls. Driving their cattle in front of them, this hardy group made entire journey on foot.

Once they reached their destination, the Connecticut River, the settlers proceeded at once to lay out the roads, lots, and boundaries of their new community. The town that thus sprang up was named Hartford, in honor of Samuel Stone's birthplace, Hartford, England. It was built on land that Thomas Hooker and Samuel Stone purchased from the Sulkiaug Indians. Thomas Hosmer is recorded as being one of the original settlers of Hartford.

Thomas, apparently returned to Newtown shortly after the establishment of the town. The historian Rev. William Love reported the following:

Some of the most prominent members of Hooker's Congregation were detained at Newtown. Benjamin Burr and Thomas Hosmer seem to have been there June 6, 1637, but probably followed that season.

Whether his stay in Newtown was prompted by personal or church

business or a combination of both is unclear. It is interesting to note, however, that even as late as 1642, Thomas Hosmer had interests in Newtown. In that year, according to one source, Thomas's Newtown holdings included a parcel of land situated on the south side of Winthrop Street between Brighton and Spring Streets.

On the personal side of Thomas' life, records indicate that he was married and the father of four children. His wife was named Frances. Her maiden name is unknown. Judging from the dates of birth of his four children, it appears that Thomas entered fatherhood at a rather mature age. At the birth of his first child, Clemence, in 1642, Thomas was 39 years old.

Thomas' years in Hartford proved to be the most prosperous and satisfying years of his life. In the distribution of land in January 1639, Thomas received 60 acres. His home lot in Hartford was located on the edge of South Meadow, not far from the south end of Governor Street. He was a neighbor of Rev. Hooker. As the years passed, so did Thomas' land holdings. He became one of the largest land holders along the Connecticut River. Thomas was also an active trader in the area. His business dealings touched communities as far south as Middletown.

As Thomas' personal fortune increased so did his social and civic responsibilities. In 1643 and 1647, Thomas was elected as townsman for Hartford. Thomas also served as a deputy to the General Court of Connecticut.

In addition to these offices, Thomas was chosen Hartford constable on 1639 and 1663. In this later capacity, Thomas became

embroiled in a dispute between local and Dutch settlers. The confrontation came about as a result of a land dispute. It seems land distributed to either James Ensign or Andrew Bacon was also claimed by Dutch settlers. Pursuing their rights to the property, the Dutch, on April 24, 1637 [1639?] proceeded to plough the land. This brought a quick response from the English settlers in Hartford. Of the events which followed, Rev. Love wrote:

Thereupon the English constable - who was most likely Thomas Hosmer -living near, came with a dozen men armed with sticks. With blows and shouts, they frightened the horses so they ran away. An hour later the Dutch resumed their ploughing without hindrance. That night, however, the English sowed corn in the field.

As with so many international disputes, the outcome was inconclusive. Governor Hopkins and the Dutch Commissary Opdyck exchanged written protests. When tempers on both sides had cooled, a truce was arranged.

By the late 1670's, Thomas Hosmer's land holdings (including those properties touching into East Hartford) totalled 691 acres. In a bold move, Thomas sold it all, and in 1679 bought 90 acres in the undeveloped "West Division" of Hartford. This West Hartford parcel consisted of a narrow strip of land running from The Commins [Quaker Lane] to Farmington Bounds [Mountain Road]. As time went

on, Thomas added to his West Hartford holdings until they totalled over 300 acres.

Stephen Hosmer, Thomas's son, is credited with being West Hartford's first white settler. This is true, although much of the town's early development came as a direct result of Thomas' own entrepreneurial initiatives. It was Thomas Hosmer, for example, who built the dam across Trout Brook at the point where it meets North Main Street. It was also Thomas Hosmer who erected the first house, where his son lived, and constructed the first sawmill. Built for his son Syephen, the sawmill was the town's first business. Both Stephen's house and the sawmill were built on what is now North Main Street, slightly north of Wyndwood Road.

Frances, Thomas's wife died on February 15, 1675. At the time of her passing, she was 73 years old. From our vantage point three centuries removed, it is almost impossible to accurately assess Thomas' state of mind at the death of his wife. Whether it was meek acceptance of the inevitable or fiery blind anger, one can only speculate. The nature and length of his wife's illness surely influenced his emotional state when the end finally came. Unfortunately, no personal papers for this period have come to light. Whatever his feelings, loneliness unquestionably followed. After so many years of marriage to be alone again must have been a terrible blow. His life as a widower continued for four years until he met the widow, Katherine Wilton. A Windsor minister recorded the following:



May 6th, '79 Goodman Osmer of Hartford  
and the Widow Wilton, that had been wife  
to David Wilton, were to be married at  
Hartford.

Clemence, Thomas' eldest daughter, lived in Northampton,  
Massachusetts with her husband Jonathan Hunt and their children.  
Evidence suggests that Thomas visited or, perhaps, lived with the  
Hunts sometimes after Frances' death and while there he met the  
widow Wilton. The autumn years of his life were spent in  
Northampton. These final years were peaceful and apparently  
uneventful. Death came in April of 1687, at the age of 83. He was  
buried in Northampton. His tombstone contained the following  
inscription:

THOMAS  
HOSMER, AGED  
83 YEARS. HE  
DYED APRIL 12.  
1687

According to an 1871 source, Thomas, tombstone was one of the  
oldest in the cemetery. Its letters after 200 years were, "as  
plain as those engraved the previous years". At the foot of the  
grave was another stone almost as large as the head stone. It was  
inscribed with the initials "T.H." On either side of his grave  
were graves of the Hunt family.

An inventory of Thomas Hosmer's property indicated that he  
left a considerable estate. The inventory totalled 1,036 pd,

exclusive of his Northampton holdings. By 17th century standards, this was a very substantial sum. When viewed from his humble beginnings in the New World, his achievements were nothing short of remarkable.

#### The Last Will and Testament of Thomas Hosmer

I Thomas Hosmer, being aged and weak in body, not knowing the day of my death, doe count it my duty, that now while I have my perfect understanding an memory, to make this my last will and testament - in the disposing of what estate the Lord hath graciously given me.

Imps. I give to my loving wife five pounds, and the agreement to be made good that was made betwixt her and myself upon the account of marriage, and if she desires it, to live in the house, and as she now liveth, the time of her widowhood.

It. I give unto my grandson, Thomas hosmer, one-third part of all my lands in Hartford, except what is otherwise disposed of my will; also twenty pounds to stock said land, all to be delivered him at twenty-one years of age, and in case he dyed before he attayne that age, then to be divided equally betwixt my son Stephen's sons.

It. I give to my son Buckingham one hundred and fifty pounds, part whereof is in his owne hands. It. I give unto my daughter Hunt, one hundred and twenty-five pounds, whereof the greater part is in her hands. It. I give unto my daughter Hannah Malby, eighteen pounds, to her and her heirs forever, which is the reversion due to me of the estate of Josias Willard in

Wethersfield. It. I give unto my three grandchildren, Thomas Buckingham, Thomas Hunt and Hannah Hosmer, five pounds apiece, and to the rest of my grandchildren, forty shillings apiece, to be paid the men at twenty-one years of age, the women at eighteen years of age; also, if any of my children shall bring up any of their children to learning so as to make them fitt for publique service, to each such grandchild I doe bequeath ten pounds apiece to be payed them at the age of twenty-one years, or the their parents. It. I give five pounds towards a free school in Hartford, to be payed when there is any such settled effectually. I give to the poor forty shillings, as my executors shall see fit.

It. I give my books to be equally divided betwixt my son Buckingham and my sone Stephen. It. I give to the Rev. Mr. John Whiting five pounds. It. I give to my daughter Hunt and to my daughter Buckingham, twenty shillings apiece in money. It. I give to my son Buckingham, in money, forty shillings, It. I give to Reverend Mr. Samuel Hooker, in money, forty shillings. It. I give unto my son, Stephen Hosmer, three acres of my meadow, and my now dwellings house and barn, and yard, and orchard, whome also I appoynt and ordain my sole executor of this my last will and testament. It. I give unto my daughter, Hannah Malby, forty shillings in money, and in case she should live to be a widow and in want, I do bequeath her twenty pounds more to be payd her as she needs it. It. I doe give unto the children of my kinsman, Thomas Seldon, forty shillings. And that is my last will and testament, I doe hereby ratify and confirm, by setting my hand and seale, this

twenty-seventh day of February, one thousand six hundred and eighty-five.

THOMAS HOSMER, and a seale

In Presence of

John Wilson,

Nathaniel Cole,

Ichabod Wells.

The executor to have one  
year's time to pay the legacies  
after my decease.