

News from the Stow Historical Society

A newsletter for all friends of Stow history.
Please feel free to pass it along to others who might be interested!

February 28, 2021

In this issue:

- Stow Town Hall survey about future renovations of this historic building – pages 2-6
- Friends of the Assabet River NWR – “History of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge on April 21st.”
- Stow’s Spindle Hill was once a ski area – pages 7-12.
- *Celebrating Stow’s Women: 1920 and the 19th Amendment* - SEE PAGE 12

Town of Stow Seeks Community Input on Town Hall Restoration




Survey is due by March 7th

1895 photo

Survey Will Help Chart Project’s Future Course

STOW – The Town of Stow and the Town Hall Restoration Committee are asking residents for feedback and opinions about the future renovation of the historic building in the town center.

 The town has posted the survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/58DTBQ5>

Residents’ voices will be critical in directing the Restoration Committee’s next steps.

*Read about the survey on <https://www.stow-ma.gov/> .

A bit of the Town Hall’s history is on pages 2-6.

Save the Date

Wednesday, April 21, 2021



Please plan to join the Friends of the Assabet River NWR for their Annual Meeting via **Zoom**, on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 7pm.

Our featured program will be a slideshow presentation led by Board Members Jan Wright and Chris Stahl, "History of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge". If you would like to attend, please send an email to info@farnwr.org with **FARNWR 2021 Annual Meeting RSVP** in the subject line.

The Zoom meeting invitation will be sent a day or two before the meeting.

A large section of today’s refuge had been part of Stow.

Articles between March 10 – September 15, 1894

STOW TOWN HALL – a new addition

March 10, 1894

TOWN MEETING.

Town meeting day was fine enough for anyone and the attendance was good in consequence. A. J. Smith was chosen moderator. All the reports of town officers were accepted as rendered.

The vote for town officers was as follows: Town clerk, Henry Gates, 102 votes; selectmen, W. H. Parker 100, J. P. Underwood 100, Pearl Packard 101 votes; Messrs. Hapgood, Puffer and Wiley receiving 13 votes each.

Town treasurer, Parks 50, Stevens 52; overseer of poor, Silas Clark, 43; assessors, B. F. Folsom 58, Henry Gates 58, Lewis Parks 55; road commissioners, Hallock 41, Mulcahey 26, Whitcomb 43, Peck 61, Robbins 31.

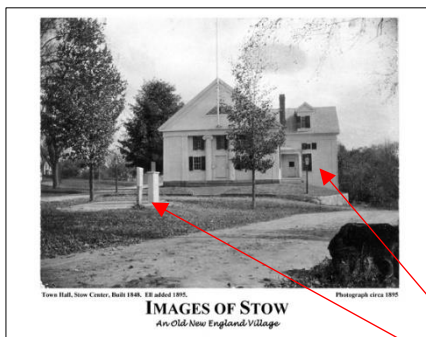
School committee, Bradley 58, Peck 58, Packard 35, Goding 1, Lewis 1; constables, Croft 28, Heminway 28.

Fence viewers, selectmen; tax collector, Grant Davidson, \$100; surveyors of lumber, E. F. Wheeler, A. W. Puffer, A. J. Smith; fielddrivers, W. H. Parker, R. Heminway, Hartshorn; fire wardens, S. A. Lawrence James Parker, H. S. Hapgood; sealer of leather, N. A. Newhall; fish reeve, Lewis Bemis; auditors, L. F. Priest 10, T. F. O'Brien 7, A. D. Gleason 4, A. W. Puffer 2.

Appropriated for contingent expenses, \$1000 schools \$1300, highways \$1200, salaries of town officers \$400, overseers of poor \$1500, care of town clock \$25.

Henry H. Warren, Lyman F. Priest and W. S. Lewis were appointed a committee to employ an architect on the remodeling of the town hall. Voted not to reconsider the vote to transport scholars.

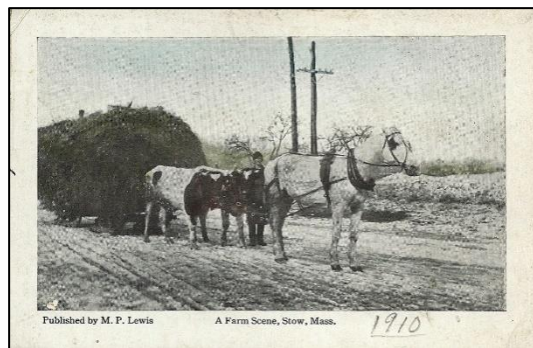
The vote on license was yes 27, no 61.



1895 photo



Stow Town Hall – 1848
Ell added in 1895
Town Scales



1910 Postcard:
Hay being pulled to the Town Scales for weighing

Massachusetts supplied a balance to every county, city and town to implement an 1848 Act of the Great and Common Court of the Commonwealth. To complement the balance in its handsome wooden case, the Commonwealth also furnished a complete set of standard weights and measures for each county, city and town. Massachusetts government considered these balances, and the accompanying sets of weights and measures, to be critically important to the fair conduct of commerce.



Made for the Town of Stow by Howard & Davis, Boston, Mass



Stow's Standard Weights, Measures and Balance's cabinet is 76 x 66 x 22.

March 24, 1894

[gift]

Randall Library had just been built and opened.

The committee on remodeling the town hall has consulted an architect in regard to the same. It would seem that we ought to do something in regard to the hall. This town has had a very generous lift from the Randall family, and it ought to make an effort to do something on its own account to improve the appearance of its public buildings. The town hall needs shingling and painting very much and while we are about it, why not have it put in a little more convenient shape for the purposes for which it is used. Think it over before town meeting and let us do something.

April 7, 1894

At the town meeting Monday voted to appropriate a sum not to exceed \$3000 for an addition to and remodeling of the town hall. \$150 for W. H. Whitney's road, \$300 for the selectmen to use in enforcing the liquor law, but this last sum will in all probability not be used as it is reported that Stow is now a strictly temperance town.



Part of the 1848 roof can be seen in the attic space of the 1895 addition.

April 28, 1894

At town meeting last week the town voted for the second time for the wing and basement to the town hall, while there were quite a number at the meeting in [f]avor of the improvement that hadn't the courage to vote for fear of their neighbor who thought otherwise. There were some present that had to be told what they came for.

June 2, 1894

There are many inquiries to know when the town hall is to ascend with the new wing.

June 23, 1894

Large timbers have arrived at the town hall and work will begun at once. Mr. Jewett of Clinton will raise the hall two feet as the plans call for.

July 4, 1894

The grounds around the town hall at the present time look as though a cyclone had passed through town.

July 6, 1894

John Noon, who has the contract for the stone work on the town hall is making good progress and the carpenters are expected to begin on the woodwork next week.

July 22, 1894

The carpenters were expected to be at work on the town hall this week.

July 28, 1894

Carpenters have been at work on the town hall and the frame of the addition is partly up.

August 4, 1894

The town hall and First parish church were built the same year 46 years ago and this year they are both having an addition built on.

The Town Hall and First Parish Church were both built in 1848.

September 8, 1894

The plastering in the old part of the town hall has been taken off and new will be put on, making a good job of the whole inside.

September 15, 1894

The town hall is plastered and as soon as it is dry the inside finish will be put on. It is expected to be ready to occupy Oct. 20.

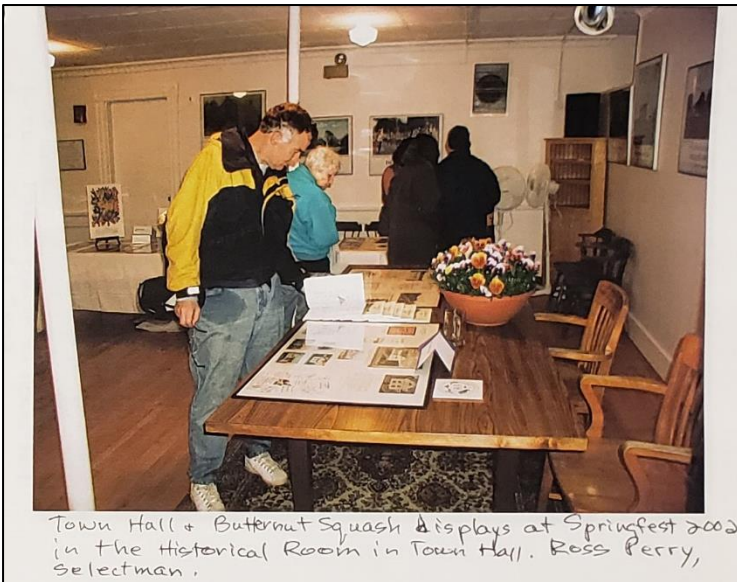


Stow's Tercentenary Celebration – May 1983
1683-1983



1992 – SHS moving into their office.

The Stow Town Hall basement was remolded into the Historical Room



Town Hall + Butternut Squash displays at Springfest 2002 in the Historical Room in Town Hall. Ross Perry, Selectman.

Springfest 2002



Karen Gray John Makey at Stow Historical Commission, Springfest 2002, Table in Historical Room.



Melinda Shebell, jigsaw puzzle maker, at Springfest 2002 - Historical Room.

The Main Auditorium - 2017

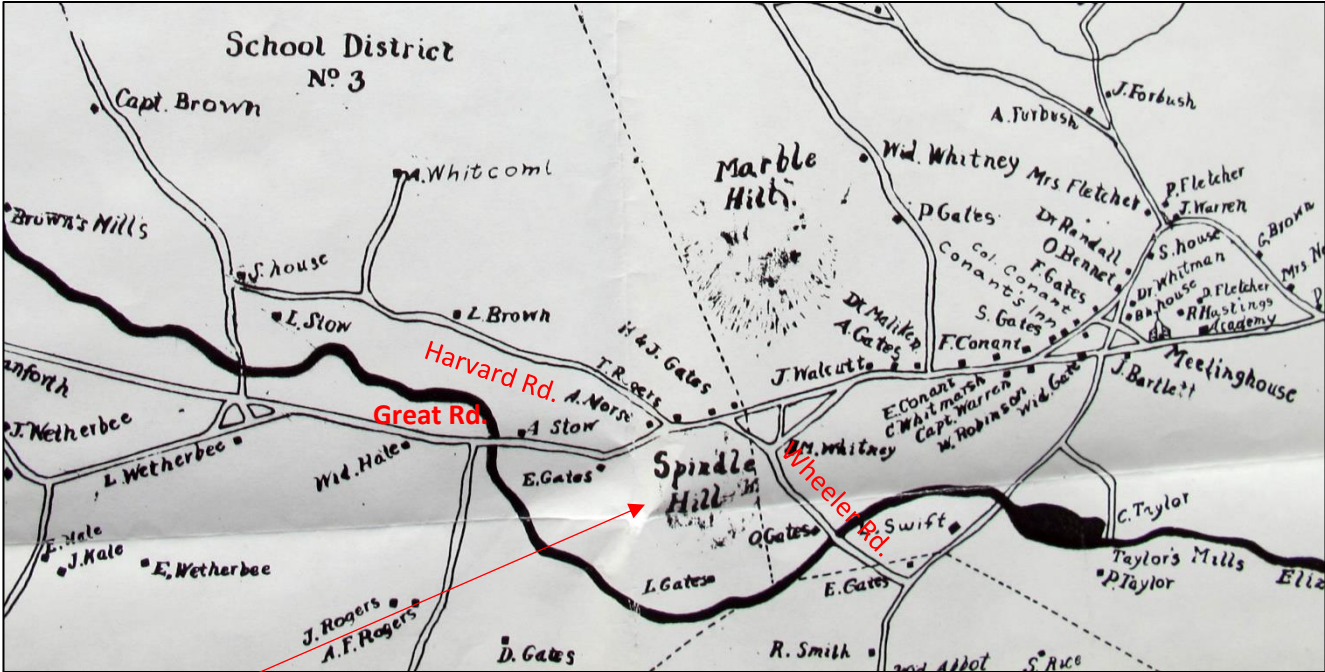


Stow's Town Hall uses have included:

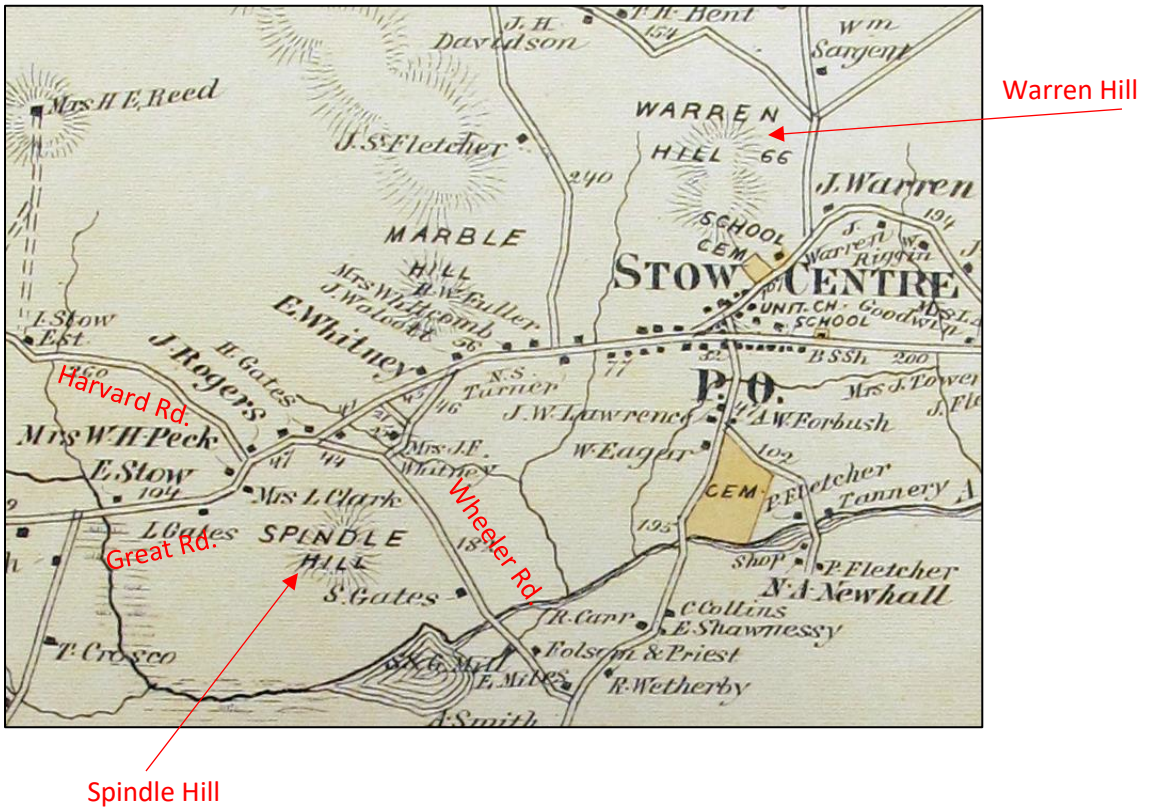
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|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Town Offices | Town Meetings |
| 1907 – a school | Grange meetings |
| High School plays | Boy Scout meetings |
| High School graduations | Civic Club meetings |
| Gym | Church suppers |
| Music School | Garden Club meetings |
| Town plays and musicals | Celebrations & programs |

Historic Spindle Hill – became a Ski Slope in 1953

1830 Stow Map



1875 Stow Map



Page 8 details the information SHS has available about Spindle Hill and skiing in Stow during the late 19th century and the early 20th century.

Spindle Hill Road closed at Town Meeting

Hudson Enterprise

March 31, 1894

The road to be discontinued, referred to in an article in the town warrant, extends through the land of F. K. Gates on the west side of Spindle hill, and is about half a mile in length. No repairs have been made on it for 12 years. If it is continued as a public way, some repairs are needed. It is not used much as a public way, but is an accommodation to Henry Gates who owns a pasture at its southern end, and would still have a right of way if the road was discontinued.

Skiing in Stow

Hudson News Enterprise

January 10, 1919, page 4

John Fletcher is about the only person in Stow who uses skis. The recent snow gives him a chance to go over the country easily.

An early 1900's gift box, featuring a female skier

This box was in the former Stephenson house, now the site of Small Farm, 184 Gleasondale Road, Stow, MA.

Box is 13" x 4.24".



January 2021, the Stow Historical Society received an inquiry about a former ski area on Wheeler Road in Stow.

New England Lost Ski Areas Project is an excellent resource.

<http://www.nelsap.org/>

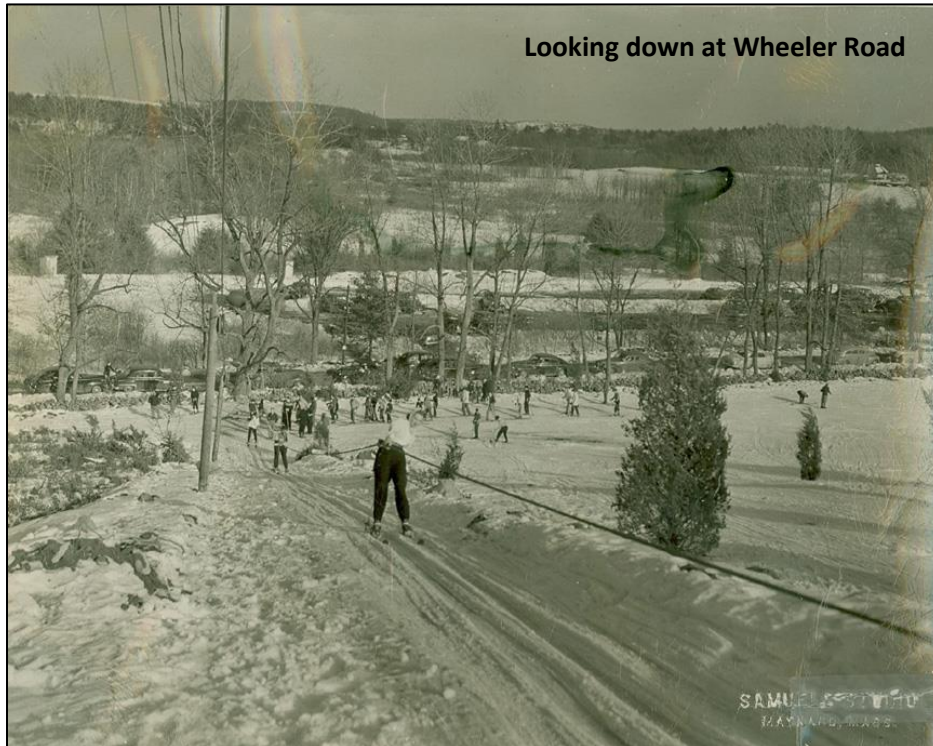
Juniper Hill (aka Spindle Hill)

Stow, MA

1953-early 1960's

<http://www.nelsap.org/ma/juniper.html>

Look at this website and view Stow in the mid-1950's into the 1960's. What landscape!



Yes, the website is fascinating to read, however, what is the absolute best is having those who skied, sledded, or tobogganed on Juniper Hill tell their stories.

The SHS contacted those whose childhood was in Stow during these years for their recollections or memories.

From Fran Pugsley: Spindle Hill before it became Juniper Hill Ski Area

Prior to the time the ski tow was constructed, the name of the hill was Spindle Hill. It must have been changed to Juniper Hill about the time it was sold for the ski tow. Dan Fitzgerald had a farm on Gleasondale Road across the street from the beginning of Wheeler Road. (Now Juniper Hill Estates.) My older brother worked for Dan (who I would guess must have been in his late sixties or seventies at the time.) Dan used to pasture young cattle up on Spindle Hill each summer and at the end of the season, we used to have to go round up these, by then, wild animals. It seemed just like the wild west as depicted on Wagon Train. By the end of the round up, poor Dan looked like he was about to die.....and we didn't look much better. Years later, Dan Fitzgerald sold the farm to John Lemos, who sold it to Ivan and Evelyn Rehill.

From John H. Peck: Building the ski lift at Juniper Hill + skiing at Warren's hill

My dad, Bill Peck, loaned his tractor to the guy who built the ski lift (rope tow) to help drag the rope to the top of the hill. For that, my sister, Posie, and I got free passes for the first year of operation. I learned to ski on those slopes with 7-foot wooden skis with no steel edges and flexible leather bindings. Trying to stop was difficult, but I soon learned to shift my weight or go headlong into the stone wall at the bottom. Posie learned from Arnie Wanahatalo on Warren's hill, but I had to make do on Juniper Hill (Spindle Hill). Tobogganing on the ski slope was awfully dangerous, because of the wall at the bottom. Sledding when the slope was icy was even worse...but we did it

WHOA! There's another story here: Warren's hill!

I recall that one day a guy (who will remain nameless) said that he would ski straight from the top without turning and do the fastest run ever. He did...hit the wall with his skis and flew into Wheeler Road which was bare pavement. Luckily, no car was coming, and he escaped with only minor cuts and bruises. However, his skis were demolished. He never did it again.

One day I took the side run which was narrow and required many turns. About halfway down I missed a turn and shot off the course into a huge juniper bush. So much for skiing prowess. I lived on the north side of Spindle Hill so used to ski home after the ski run closed for the night. When the moon was not out, it was treacherous going, and I ran into boulders a few times. Kind of makes you wonder why I took up skiing!

From Bill Wickey: Warren's Hill (aka Pilot Grove Hill)

My first adventure on skis was Warren's Hill in the late 40's on pair of 7-foot wooden skis with bear trap bindings. There was a rope tow there with a LaSalle engine for the power and a scary stone wall at the bottom. Later it was skiing at the famous Juniper Hill Resort. Anyone out there remember skiing with me?

From Skip Warren: Warren's Hill (aka Pilot Grove Hill)

I did not ski down the steep slopes when we had the tow rope at Pilot Grove. All I remember is that Otto Kunelius brought an engine to operate the tow. There was barbed wire fence at the bottom, so it was a bit dangerous. Some kids did get hurt when they could not stop in time when sliding. I do recall the ski tow at Juniper Hill or aka Spindle Hill.

From Tom Quinn: Juniper Hill

Wow does this bring back memories. My best friends in Maynard schools Ken and Edward Troisi', their father owned the ski tow. We also crashed many times into the stone wall, we called it the suicide run. Then I met my future wife Mary Tervo and we also would walk from her house to go sledding or in the summer to look out over the beautiful visual areas of Stow.

From Judy McConnell Anderson: Juniper Hill

My memories of Juniper Hill start in the winter of 1954-55, the first winter we lived in Stow. My Dad took me skiing over there, using the rope tow - my first time with a rope tow. I had a great time, actually, getting a ride up the hill - until then, we'd always had to hike up any hills we skied down.

My other main memory of Juniper Hill was when I was in high school - probably either Junior or Senior years, as several of my class were driving. We went over at night with toboggans, hiked up the hill in the dark, and took several rides down - we were having a great time until one toboggan went off the little ski jump that some people had made during the day, the toboggan flew through the air, sped down the hill, and crashed into the stone wall at the bottom - as a result, Joy Norgoal had a broken arm, as I recall. One car went to the hospital, the rest of us headed home, as none of us were really supposed to be there at night.

From Lorna Harris, replying to Judy Anderson above:

And I had a broken nose! And a boy from Maynard that I was riding with almost had his ear torn off when we hit a ski stanchion. We all trucked over to Joyce Punty's house where her mother assessed us. It had to be the Winter of 1958 before I met Phil 😊

I think Joy broke her ankle when she tried to slow down the toboggan.

From Jack Head: Excerpts from a 4-page recollection of night sledding after the ski hill was closed

Edward Troisi of Maynard had installed and operated a classic rope tow ski area from 1953 to the early 1960s on Juniper Hill that now appeared to my left. In those days, Juniper Hill consisted of a single rope tow with two "trails" to the skiers' right of the tow. The rope tow ran up approximate 300 vertical feet. That is high for New England. The trails were somewhat dangerous until enough snow had fallen to cover the granite boulders lying about on the trails. The tall, like telephone poles, still line the slopes were flood light allowed for nighttime skiing used to be. Parking was on the street unless you found a spot in the field across the street. Someone had removed enough of a stone wall to drive a car through to the field.

A gate blocked my entrance to the field, so like everyone else that evening, I parked on the street. Friends greeted me as I emerged from my parent's car and retrieved the sled from the back of the station wagon. Dressed in blue jeans, winter jacket, toboggan hat, and gloves, I was ready to go sliding. Others were caring store-bought and handmade sliding equipment not to mention the 8-man toboggan that three of them were caring across the street to the hill.

There wasn't enough left of the old lodge and outhouses that once stood in that area to see. The shed at the top of the rope tow was gone as well. Except for the 100-foot-wide area that once was a ski slope, the area was just like the rest of the hill, covered with juniper bushes dotted with a few trees. Yes, the clearing of the land was evidence enough that something has once been here.

An 8-man toboggan left just before Donna and I so we watched as they shot gaps between rocks descended more quickly than us. "Jack, did you hear that wood crack sound?" Donna was asking in my ear. Her lips just inches from my head. It is hard for a 16-year-old boy to concentrate when a girl who is wrapped around you is almost blowing in your ear. The toboggan had caromed off a rock partially covered with snow and in the shadow of the moon. The movement of bodies flying everywhere was accompanied with screams that had replaced the giggle and laughter hears just moments before.

We pulled up alongside the carnage anticipating broken bones and a few head injuries but just a broken toboggan. As others came to their aid, most just climbed onto others sleds, and now stacks of sliders

were descending. By the time we got to the bottom, the story had escalated to near death experience. There were going to be some sore bodies the next day, but for the night it was more sliding.

My sister, Penny, and boyfriend from Maynard arrived with thermoses of hot chocolate. Penny's boyfriend said his father use to tell stories about Juniper Hill "Ski Resort" in Stow. How at the time, it was the place to ski and be seen. Donna and I joined others at the bottom of the hill as others kept up the pace of sliding, walking back up the hill and sliding.

"We're going over there," I hear a couple of guys say as they dragged their banged-up sled to a different starting spot. And with that, they were off. Sitting on the sled, the way Donna and I rode they started down the hill with precision and grace avoiding everything and picking up speed. They were soon out of sight behind rocks on the far side of the slope. They were flying.

The screams shattered what was left of the night. Their decent was in unfamiliar territory, and when they passed the bottom of the hill, they continued between a couple of cars, across the road and rode a snowdrift over the stone wall and were finally stopped as the top strain of barbed wire caught the kid in the throat.

It was winter, it was cold, and we were dressed for it. Many layers of cloths kept us warm, and in this case, a turtleneck, a sweater, a jacket, and a scarf were between the wire and his bare skin. He was sore, but I saw him in school the next day.

Bruce Fletcher: After Spindle Hill (aka Juniper Hill) was being reclaimed by nature

I spent many days in my youth, in the 1960s, on Wheeler Rd, on that hill, and around Wheeler Pond. So much so that five of us called ourselves "The Wheeler Road Gang". We were a biker gang - bicycles, that is. Remnants of the ski tow were still there, but the juniper bushes were reclaiming the hillside. A bunch of them mysteriously caught on fire one day.

The Stow Historical Society's new book is ready for publishing.

Celebrating Stow's Women 1920 and the 19th Amendment

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