

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!

September 13, 2013

Stow West School Museum Event: **Meet Mrs. Mary Rowlandson** September 22 at 3 pm



The Museum will host National Award Winner and Master Story teller **Katie Green's** performance: **Meet Mrs. Mary Rowlandson**. Mary Rowlandson was a 17th Century Puritan from Lancaster who was captured by Native Americans during King's Phillips War and lived to write a book about her experiences. The program invites thought-provoking discussion on prejudice, racism,

and theocracy – issues that are still with us today. It will bring to Stow information about a little-known episode in a little-known war that took place in our own backyard. Ms. Green extensively researched, wrote and performs this one-person show.

Ms. Green gives a riveting performance – You do not want to miss it!

This performance is appropriate for ages 14 to 104. There may be an opportunity for discussion and question and answers at the end of the performance.

The West School Museum is located at the junction of Hiley Brook and Harvard Roads. The programs are run jointly by the Stow Historical Society and the Stow Historical Commission.



This program is sponsored in part by a grant from the Stow Cultural Council which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

See an article below for more about King Philip's War.



Upcoming Historical Society Meeting: ***Graveyard Graphics: Stow's First Sculptures and their Stories***



Saturday, November 2

6 pm at Stow Town Hall

Pot luck Dinner

Guest Speaker: Marilyn Zavorski

Join the Stow Historical Society for a pot luck dinner and presentation by Stow's Marilyn Zavorski on Lower Village Cemetery's early gravestones and their carvers.

Stow's Lower Village Cemetery - a place where time stands still.

- What stories do the gravestones tell?
- Who carved Stow's stones?
- How is a carver identified?
- Where did the local carvers quarry their slabs?
- What artistic motifs decorate the stones?
- Why do the early stones face west?

These questions that we have all wondered about and much more will be answered in Marilyn's talk.

Marilyn envisions her work with Stow's gravestones will preserve the images of these early gravestones for future generations and make these images available for research online. Her work augments the cemetery documentation begun in Stow in the early 1990s. It also supports Historical Commission chair Dot Spaulding's detailed re-documentation of the interments in Stow's three cemeteries using the resources stored in the Stow's Town Vault.

Marilyn Zavorski and family moved to Stow in 1984. She is a retired educator and former researcher for the Boston National Historic Park. Recently she served as coordinator for Teaching American History Federal Grant program for nine Central MA school districts, including Nashoba Regional. In her spare time she enjoys her grandkids, gardening and researching genealogy.



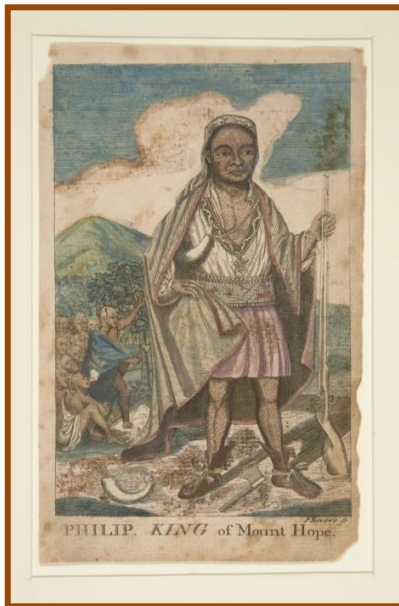
King Philip's War:

Mary Rowlandson was the victim of the last major Indian war in New England. It is a little-known but important part of our history, clearing New England of Native Americans, allowing the English colonists to flourish unhampered, and it heralded, or possibly set the precedence for, our treatment of Native Americans throughout later challenges as our country developed.

It started for many reasons but most importantly because of the land grab that the American colonists were making for the natives' land. It was a clash of two distinct cultures that could not understand each other's point of view. While the Indians did cultivate the land, they did it in a nonpermanent but environmentally friendly way that led the settlers to think that they did not own the land and was thus ripe for them to take over. Many of the English colonists from the very beginning wanted to acquire more and more land, since this would lead to the wealth they so greatly desired. In the early colonists' view, the natives did not use the land in the Western European sense, so they really didn't have a right to it. While the American colonists claimed they bought the land legally, it was mostly done with subterfuge, like using alcohol to get an Indian to sign over the property or letting their animals ravage the natives' gardens so they left for other sites and thus "abandoned" the land.



Graphic of Mary Rowlandson from her book.



A fanciful picture of King Philip done by Paul Revere

King Philip, whose native name was Metacom, was a Wampanoag sachem or chief. The Wampanoag were situated from Eastern Narragansett Bay to Cape Cod. His father was Massasoit of Plimouth Plantation fame. Natives such as Massasoit made it possible for the British colonist to live successfully in New England; in exchange they were looking for allies to help with their often unfriendly interactions with other native tribes. The local natives and colonists had lived in relative peace for fifty years, but the encroachments made by increasing number of colonists made war inevitable. The war started in June of 1675 with the Wampanoag but quickly spread to other tribes. It was the Nipmuc of Central Massachusetts along with the Narragansett (Western Rhode Island) and Wampanoag who attacked Lancaster on February 10, 1676 killing many of the settlers and taking Mary Rowlandson and others captive. Mary endured many hardships, including the death of one child and the separation from her other children and her husband (who was in Boston

at the time of the attack), little food, shelter and clothing in winter while marching through Massachusetts into southern Vermont and New Hampshire. Her inner fortitude, her Puritan faith, and use of her skills to make herself useful to the natives helped her to survive, when many of the other captives were killed, especially when they complained.

The war spread to a large portion of New England, but it did not last long. A year later, more than half of New England's towns had been attacked and many towns were completely destroyed and abandoned, including Lancaster. Even the ones that survived Indian attacks were impacted by multiple deaths of residents while away fighting, and taxes to maintain a standing army. The death rate for the settlers was nearly double that of the Civil War and seven times the rate of World War II. In all about 1 in 65 settlers were killed or around 1.5%. Stow's forefather Matthew Boon was also killed in the war in what would become Stow in 1683.

The war was disastrous for the English settlers, but it was far worse in the end for the Native Americans. The death rate for the Native American people was nearly ten times that of the colonists. That is close to 1 in every seven Native Americans or about 15%. Included in this count were women and children who were slaughtered while trying to escape the fighting. Many of the survivors, including women and children, were sold into slavery to help clear the land of the natives and, after the war, to recoup some of the cost of the war. Others abandoned their ancestral homes and moved to Canada or other locations. Even the remaining natives who had supported the English against the other Indians often lost their property rights and liberties. Never again would the native population effectively challenge the expansion of the English and other colonists in New England.



Natives attacking a Garrison House

The above information was taken from *King Philip's War, The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict* by Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Touglas published by The Countryman Press, Woodstock, Vermont in 1999. This book is an excellent read if you are interested in learning more about King Philip's War and Mary Rowlandson.

war	Est. deaths	Est. Population	Deaths per 100,000
King Philip's War			
<i>English</i>	800	52,000	1,538
<i>Native American</i>	3,000	20,000	15,000
American Revolution	4,435	2,464,250	180
Civil War	305,235	35,630,885	857
WWII	291,557	141,183,318	206

Table from *King Philip's War, The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict*, by Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Touglas, page 5.