

Stow-Info

Newsletter of The Stow Historical Society

April 2006

Why Is Stow So Special?

Grant Received for Heritage Landscape Program

WHAT: Public Meeting--"Preservation of Our Heritage Landscapes"

WHEN: Wednesday, April 12, 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Stow Town Hall

WHO: Presented by Freedom's Way Heritage Association and the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation in conjunction with the Stow Historical Commission

WHAT: What are your favorite landscapes in Stow? What defines the character of Stow and reflects its past?

Think about those historic, scenic, and environmental sites in Stow that make this town so special. Stow received a grant to sponsor this public meeting to focus on preservation planning for special landscapes in Stow. Refreshments will be served.

"Landscapes mirror and landscapes matter...they tell us much about the values we hold and affect the quality of the lives we lead...."

DW Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene"

Save the Date

2006 Minuteman Regional Historical Society Meeting

Sunday, April 23

Col. Francis Faulkner Room

Acton Town Hall

472 Main Street, Acton, MA

The Acton Historical Society is the host this year for the annual meeting of the Minuteman Regional Historical Society on Sunday, April 23, from 1:30 to 5 p.m. at Acton Town Hall. The afternoon program will feature a talk by Gordon Wood, Pulitzer Prize winning author and Professor of History at Brown University. His topic will be "The Invention of Benjamin Franklin."

Wood received the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for his book "The Radicalism of the American Revolution." His lecture will be based on another of his books, "The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin." A book signing will follow.

In 2003 the Stow Historical Society hosted the regional meeting with a talk on stonewalls. Each year an area historical society is the host, and each group is invited to have a display table. Refreshments will be served. The public is invited.

Changes Made at Randall Library Museum

A new display on John Randall, chief benefactor of Stow's library, is the start of a facelift in the upstairs museum at the Randall Library. The display includes copies of the Romantic era poetry written by Randall as well as other treasures from the Randall collection. The newest addition in the Randall collection is the book, "Consolations of Solitude," donated by Dori Rogers of Ohio, a former resident. The Canton punchbowl, also on display, came down through the family from the famous Randall ancestor, Samuel Adams. John Randall was the great grandson of Samuel Adams.

The china display, long a feature of the collection, is in the process of being updated with new identification labels and shelf covers. An inventory of all paintings and other artwork has been started, and more museum changes are planned.

The work is under the direction of Karen Green, Dorothy MacDonald, Serena Furman and Katie Hardiker.

GIFTS TO THE STOW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Each year the Stow Historical Society receives gifts of bits and pieces of Stow history to add to the archives in the Town Vault. We thank the following friends for their generosity:

Chris Childs--Slides of Springfest activities, 1973, 1975, 1978 and Lafayette Commemoration, 1974.

Ann Allison--Pilot Grove School bracelet, first grade graduation gift about 1958. Miss Perkins, teacher.

Dori Rogers of Stow, Ohio--Copy of "Consolations of Solitude" by John Randall.

Philip Ineson--Ineson and Eriksen family histories, family photographs, WWI VFW Auxiliary armband.

Barbara Jones--Father Kemp's Old Folks Concert Music Book.

Jim Sauta--1969 Stow Calendar Book; old Ten Acre Farm tax receipt; old receipts for purchases from C. D. Fletcher for lumber mill supplies.

Joanne Veracka--Hale High School Yearbooks for 1949, 1952, 1953, 1956 and 1957. Other school items.

Ann DeCristofaro--Copy of the book, "Stow, Massachusetts: A View from All Seasons," scenic photographs taken by the donor.

Ken Warkentin--A Canadian resident traces his family roots in Stow--a genealogy of the Thomas Brown family.

Union Church--Copies of newsletters, news clippings, and other records of church history were given to the SHS following the 100th anniversary celebration of the church.

If you would like to donate items about Stow to the Stow Historical Society, please call Karen Green, SHS Curator, 978-568-9499.

MEMORIES OF A MILL

It's amazing how the history trail leads from one thing to another. A gift to the Stow Historical Society from a donor in Oregon answered a number of questions. The donor, Ann Wheeler Bosney, is the granddaughter of Edward F. Wheeler for whom Wheeler Rd. is named. Mrs. Bosney shed light on the questions we had about the mill.

Wheeler ran a blacksmith shop, sawmill, gristmill and grain store at the Wheeler Rd. site. His large Victorian house still stands across from Butternut Farm Golf club on Wheeler Rd., and on the left side of the house was a general store (pictured here) which sold anything from doughnuts to penny nails. Today it is a private home. On the right side of the house was a large yellow barn flanked by a windmill. The blacksmith shop was on the street just before the house with a swampy area behind it. The sawmill, operated until the 1920's, was across the street, water-powered by a dam at the easterly end of Wheeler Pond. Remnants of the now breached dam still remain. Only memories of the barn, windmill, blacksmith shop, and sawmill exist today.

The mill was built in the mid 1800's by Andrew Smith and sold to Abraham Priest and Benjamin Folsom, then to the firm of Folsom, Folsom and Wheeler, then to Edward Wheeler. In Frannie Warren's book, "Recollections of Stow," Frannie recalled hauling logs to the mill and taking the lumber home, and having taken corn to be ground at the gristmill.

Edward Wheeler apparently was quite well known as a sawyer and ran the sawmill for many years. In his book Frannie Warren tells of the time in 1915 that the Derby's house on Great Rd. burned down, but Ed Wheeler stood in the window of the barn, took extinguishers which were passed to him and saved the barn. He was the Town Hero that day even though his eyebrows and eyelashes were singed off. The town had voted to purchase 50, 2-1/2 gallon soda-acid extinguishers which were stored in the homes of ten men who agreed to respond to all fires with these extinguishers. That was the fire department.

Mrs. Bosley added a few other memories in her correspondence--her father, Arthur Gates Wheeler, entered the first naval aviator program when World War I erupted and was the 361st aviator upon graduation. She noted that he was shot down in the waters of the Atlantic and was rescued from the wing of his plane. He spent time in France, and when he returned to Stow after the war he brought a spider monkey. His mother, Carrie Wheeler, did not like the busy monkey, and the monkey did not like the cold weather in Stow. It expired.

Such are our memories.



Wheeler's Mill



The General Store

Postcard Collections Make History Come Alive in New Lake Boon Book

You will never know what can happen to your old postcard collection. Avid collectors of Lake Boon postcards never dreamed there would be a book, "Postcards of Lake Boon," until Alan Kattelle and Lew Halprin put their heads together and selected 200 postcard views of old Lake Boon for the paperback book published by Arcadia Publishing Company.

The new book is a companion to the "Pictures of Lake Boon" book published in 1998 which contained many pictures of life on the lake in the early 1900's but included few postcards. Alan and Lew launched the new postcard book at a narrated slide show and book signing in November at Town Hall. Postcards were used from the collections of both authors, Stow Historical Society, Robert Collings, Neal Phalan, the Parker family, Maynard Historical Society, Ralph Case, Paul Boothroyd, Richard Conard, Hudson Historical Society, and the late Muriel Batsford, granddaughter of Prof. George Barton, founder of the Lake Boon Association.

Copies of all publications of the Stow Historical Society Publishing Company and the Arcadia Publishing Co. are available at Randall Library and the Town Clerk's office.

Dates to Remember

Wed., April 12--Heritage Landscape Program, Stow Town Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Sun., April 23--Program on Benjamin Franklin, Regional Historical Society, Acton Town Hall, 1:30 p.m.

Sat., May 20 --Springfest. See a blacksmith demonstration at the Old Blacksmith Shop at Center School, sponsored by the Stow Historical Commission, Stow Cultural Council and Massachusetts Cultural Council. Both the Stow Historical Society and Stow Historical Commission will have display tables at Center School.

West School Summer Programs on Sundays: June 11, Staying Healthy in the 18th Century; **July 9,**

Weathering the Depression; **August 13,** Keeping Cool; **September 10,** Going Back to School. Each summer the Stow Historical Commission plans four programs, open to the public.

Stow Historical Society
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