

STOW-INFO

Newsletter of the Stow Historical Society

April 1998

Stow, Massachusetts

RESIDENTS INVITED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PROPOSED HERITAGE AREA

Stow townspeople and town officials are invited to an informational meeting on the proposed National Heritage Area on **Monday, April 13, at 8 p.m.** at Bolton Town Hall, 663 Main St. (Route 117). The one hour presentation including slides and discussion will detail information on the two-year study by the Freedom's Way Heritage Association about the proposed Heritage Area which stretches from Lexington to Gardner.

The Heritage Area concept uses themes to connect towns across the region and highlights sites, events and personal stories. The goal of the program is a National Park Service designation. Residents from Bolton, Boxborough and Harvard also are invited to this program, one in a series in the area. Refreshments will be served.

The objective of a Heritage Area (there are two in Massachusetts--Essex and Blackstone Valley) is to provide a way to address regional growth by integrating agriculture, social and economic development, historic interpretation and research, open space, recreation and tourism. For more information call Robert McDonald, 568-1751; Barbara Sipler, 897-5996, or Freedom's Way Heritage Association, 978-772-3654.

FOGG ART MUSEUM TO MARK CENTENARY OF RANDALL COLLECTION

A celebration of the centenary of the John Witt Randall collection of prints and drawings at the Fogg Art Museum will be held June 4 through mid-August at the museum. In 1898 the Fogg acquired Randall's collection comprising more than 15,000 prints and 500 drawings.

Randall is Stow's best known benefactor--Harvard as well as several other colleges shared his legacy and Stow's library is named for him. His home and grounds now house the beautiful Stow Acres Country Club on Randall Rd.

The Fogg exhibit entitled "The John Witt Randall Collection: Seeking the True and the Beautiful" will represent a small part of his large art collection and will explore Randall's diverse interests including the history of engraving, natural science and poetry. After Randall (1813-1892, Harvard Class of 1834) died, his sister, Belinda L. Randall, donated the collection to Harvard College, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts became the temporary repository until the Fogg was established.

Along with Randall's collection and an endowment for its care and preservation, Harvard received Randall's manuscripts and research notes devoted to the history and classification of engraving and engravers. Randall's appreciation for the Romantic movement in art and literature, especially the northern European tradition with its focus on the sublime in nature, marked the culmination of his manuscript on the history of printmaking and is a dominant theme in the show.

Sarah Vure, graduate researcher, visited the Stow Town Archives and Randall Library to delve into background material for the exhibit. Several documents from the Town Archives will be included in the show. A brochure, edited by Ms. Vure, on Randall and 19th century aesthetic and scientific thought will be available at the exhibit.

Many members will remember that Ellie Childs featured the drawing of "The Old Assabet Oak" by Henry Hitchings, American artist, on the cover of her History of Stow (1983). This drawing is from the Randall Collection and a copy is in our own Randall Library. It was presented by the Fogg to Stow during its Tercentenary celebration in 1983. In her research, Ms. Vure located a portrait of Belinda Randall which hangs in the Harvard Faculty Club. A copy is now in the Town Archives.

A bus trip to the Fogg including a guided tour of the exhibit is in the planning by the Stow Historical Society for a Saturday visit, either in June or July. Further information will be mailed to members.

TOWN BUILDINGS TO AGE GRACEFULLY

Old photographs, maps, painting and drawings of old Stow will be featured in a rotating art exhibit planned initially for the Town Building and the Stow Post Office. Copies of these materials will be reproduced for matting and framing in a project started this spring by a committee of the Ancient Documents Committee, the town-appointed group which cares for the historic articles in the Town Vault.

Funds for these exhibits will be used from the Charles Childs Memorial Fund. Charlie Childs, long time resident and art historian, was at the helm of collecting Stow historical art for many years, and his family set up a fund in his memory for the Stow Historical Society. The Society is indebted to the family for these gifts.

The committee recognized that new buildings in town have few if any reminders of the historic Stow, established in 1683. The town's earliest map is 1794; Randall Library has a collection of early paintings, drawings and maps, and the Town Vault has a collection of photographs and other materials. The Ancient Documents Committee is constantly on the lookout for photographs, art pieces or maps in local residents' attics or closets, and the committee would like to make copies of these materials. Members of the committee working on this project are Patti Selin, Ginger Pearlman, Karen Gray, Bobby Head, Bob Walrath, Stan Sherman and Lew Halprin. The Ancient Documents Committee meets at 9:30 a.m. at the Town Building first and third Wednesdays through June. Call Barbara Sipler, 897-5996, for information.

LAKE BOON PICTORIAL HISTORY TO BE PUBLISHED

Lew Halprin and Alan Kattelle are at work on a pictorial history of Lake Boon to be published by Arcadia Publishing in its "Images of America" series. The pictures will be reproductions of postcards and photographs depicting Lake Boon as a vacation mecca in the early 1900's. The materials have been selected from Halprin and Kattelle's personal collections and from a large postcard collection owned by Neal Phalan. Photos taken by Alexander Berry and now in the hands of Richard Conard also will be part of the book. The Stow Historical Society also has a collections of early postcards of Stow and Lake Boon

Halprin has asked the Ancient Documents Committee and the Stow Historical Society to join him in publishing a pictorial history of Stow, and it is expected that the Stow book will be started when the Lake Boon book is completed. Hundreds of towns nationwide have published similar pictorial histories through this publishing company.