



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!*

April 2012

Renew Your Acquaintance with Stow on *The History Bus Tour*



The Boaz Brown House on Harvard Road, dating to the 1690s, is one of Stow's oldest houses and is on the National Register of Historic Places. It's also on the History Bus Tour.

Celebrate Spring, if not SpringFest, this May by taking the Stow Historical Society's bus tour of Stow history on Saturday, May 19. SpringFest may not be an officially organized event this year but the SHS has decided to join several other town groups in presenting individual events.

For the SHS, that means a two-hour bus tour covering the abundance of Stow's historical sites, from its oldest home, the "Minister's Manse" constructed in the Lower Village in the 1680s, to former Secretary of State (and Stow selectman) George Shultz's modest 1950s home on Red Acre Road. (Sorry. We won't be stopping and going into any of them.)

The Stow Council on Aging has generously offered us the use of their bus for the tour and Jim Sauta has generously offered to drive. Conducting the tour will be SHS president Ralph Fuller, author of the 2009 book *Stow Things*. The society last presented a Stow History Tour in 2009.

Since the COA bus accommodates 20 passengers, the Society will offer two tours – the first at 1 pm and, if demand warrants, a second at 3:30 pm. Cost for the tour is \$15 per person. **To reserve a spot, call Dorothy Sonnichsen, SHS treasurer, at 978-897-3344.** Since geography unfortunately trumps chronology, the tour will start in the Town Building parking lot and begin with a discussion of Upper Village. From there it will proceed to Stow's original center, Lower Village, and then makes its way through sites north and south of Great Road.

Come with your imaginations activated. The goal is to see Stow as it was, not as it is now – the Lower Common where Minutemen trained and assembled in the early hours of April 19, 1775; not forests but open



landscapes of pastureland laced with rock walls; the mills and owners' and workers' houses of Rock Bottom (now Gleasondale); inns long gone and still standing; Dr. Whitman's House on Crescent Street and Captain Whitman's House on Whitman Street. Not to mention orchards, golf courses and residential developments reflecting Stow's evolution from farming community to residential suburb during its 300-plus years.

The Box Mill Dam at Fletcher's Pond on Elizabeth Brook. Mills of one sort or another were located by the dam from the early 18th Century into the 20th.

Planning Under Way for SHS's Coming Year

The Stow Historical Society's new Board of Directors met in March and began planning for a series of quarterly SHS program events, beginning with the Stow History Bus Tour on May 19th. "Quarterly," it should be explained, is a misnomer in one sense.

Plans call for Spring, Fall and Winter program meetings, most likely to be held in Town Hall, with the summer program represented by the four-part West School Museum summer series that has been presented jointly by the SHS and the Stow Historical Commission for a number of years.

The Board of Directors is comprised of Mike Busch, Ralph Fuller, Karen Gray, Phil Moseley, Barbara Sipler, Dorothy Sonnichsen and Linda Stokes. Karen, Linda and Ralph also serve as the West School Program Committee for the SHS and the SHC.

Plans for the Fall meeting in November are being developed. Plans for this year's West School Museum series include an oral history program in June, involving interviews with several Stow stalwarts about their experiences in the town; a focus on Native American traditions in July, presented by the United Native American Cultural Center; a September visit (hopefully) by Mark Twain, as interpreted by actor Bern Budd; and a "Skills in Our Town" program in October, highlighting the talents of some of Stow's artists and artisans.



Andy Mintz of White Pond Road gave demonstrations – and hands-on experiences – in stone sculpting at last summer's "Skills in our Town" program at the West School Museum.