

STOW-INFO

Newsletter of the Stow Historical Society

February, 2001

Stow, Massachusetts

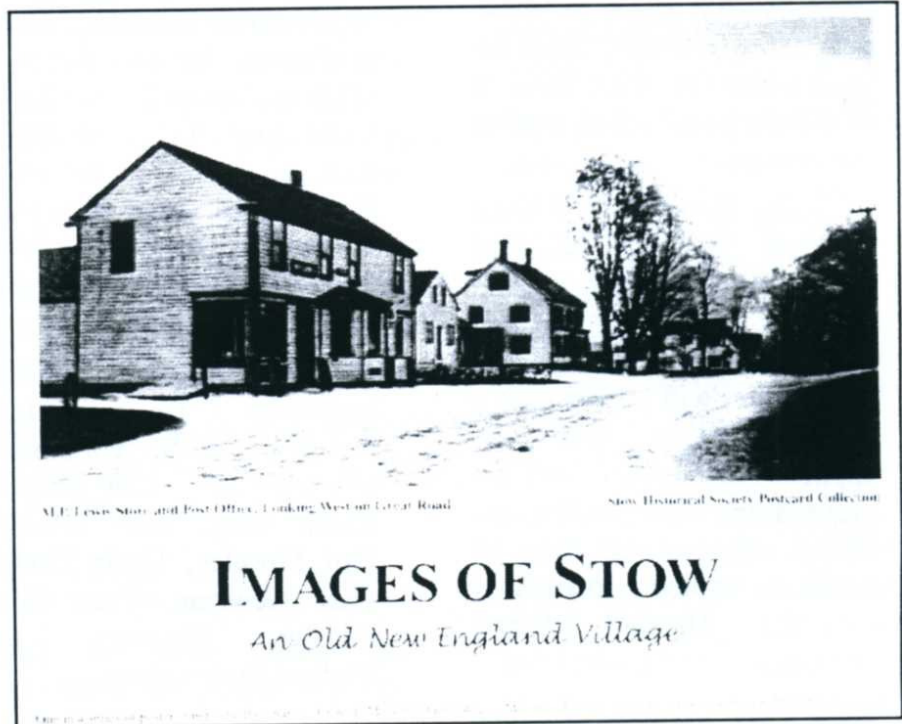
Reception Planned

AIR FIELD CAFÉ TO SHOW POSTERS OF OLD STOW

During the month of February old photographs of Stow from the collection of the Stow Historical Society will be featured in "Posters of Old Stow" at Nancy's Air Field Café at Minute Man Air Field. **A reception for the society will be held at the café from 2 to 4 p.m. on Friday, February 23, with refreshments provided by the café. All society members and their friends are invited.**

The Stow Historical Society is developing a series of posters showing scenes of old Stow, and the posters on display at the Air Field were first shown last May at Springfest. A second series of posters is now in the planning stages. The posters are funded through grants from the Charles D. Childs Memorial Fund, Warren Memorial Fund and the Stow Historical Society Publishing Company.

Photographs in the show, many from the early 1900's, include Gleasondale Mill, Princess on Lake Boon, Town Hall, Stow Minutemen, Ancient Church, Places That Last, Randall Library (two views), Electric Trolley,



POSTER SHOW – A photograph of the M. P. Lewis Store and Post Office in the early 1900's is on one of the posters at the Air Field Café during February. The Mini-Mart is now in this location on Great Rd.

Union Church, and The Store on Great Road.

Prints of unframed posters can be ordered at \$65 each by calling Phil Moseley, 897-4930.

The 24 x 30 prints will be individually reproduced on high quality paper, matte finish, high resolution digital output, and mounted on foam core.

The posters will be displayed again at the Town Hall during Springfest 2001 on May 19.

What's in a Vault?

John Burk knows what's in the Town Vault. Do you?

To help answer that question, the Stow Historical Society plans a meeting on Thursday, March 22, at 7 p.m. in the Friendship Room in Town Building. Displays of treasures from the vault, which is located in the Town Building, will be shown and tours given of the vault by the Ancient Documents Committee. Refreshments will be served.

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VAULT: cont. from page 1

And who is John Burk? Last April Burk spent hours leafing page by page through the old yellowed Stow Proprietors' Records in the Town Vault.

Burk was looking for trees! As a researcher from the Harvard Forest in Petersham, he was compiling an inventory and tally of all the tree species cited by surveyors in these early Stow records—"from the large white oak three rods to an old chestnut." That kind of surveying.

By going from town to town in New England, Harvard researchers are getting a good look at what presettlement forests looked like. The information will be used for a historical study, and also applied to other relevant projects involving the Harvard Forest. Data sheets from all towns are stored permanently in the Harvard Forest Archives.

Burk found the most common species in Stow from 1681 to 1760 were white oak and pine, with slightly more white oak citations. Others species in order of frequency were black oak, red oak, unnamed oak, maple, walnut, swamp oak, poplar, chestnut, birch, grey oak, white pine, black birch, pitch pine, willow, and spruce.

If you are curious about what else is in the vault, you are invited to attend the March 22 meeting. If you would like to bake cookies, please call Patty Selin, 897-5357.

Who's an Ancient?

If you are a member of the Ancient Documents Committee, that's what you are, an "Ancient" and proud of it!

Since 1973 the Ancient Documents Committee, which is town appointed, has been charged with the acquisition, preservation and cataloguing of old town records. These permanent records, dating to 1669, are housed in the Town Vault located in the lower level of the Town Building. Photographs from the vault formed the basis of the Stow Picture Book, published recently by Arcadia.

The late Frannie Warren, long-time Town Clerk, founded the committee. Members are: Lew Halprin, Karen Gray, Bob Walrath, Phil Moseley, Linda Dodge, Jody Newman, Tom Oller, Carolyn Hastings, and Barbara Sipler, chair.

Maxine Buckman and Sarah Dyer have volunteered to help with genealogical research this year, and additional researchers are most welcome. Many thanks are extended to Alice Grady, genealogical researcher, who has retired from the committee after serving since its inception.

Work meetings have been scheduled at 9:30 a.m. in the Friendship Room of the Town Building on February 7 and 21, March 7 and 21, April 4 and 18, May 2 and 16, and June 6 and 20. Please call Barbara Sipler, 897-5996, if you would like to know more about the Ancients.

Kattelle Turns Hobby into Book

In November Alan Kattelle's 20-year dream turned into a published book. Kattelle is known for his one-of-a-kind museum in his Lake Boon home for amateur movie making equipment, and now his book, "Home Movies: A History of the American Industry, 1897-1979, is in print.

For more than 30 years Kattelle has been collecting both amateur and some professional equipment for his museum, and no modern history book on the subject existed until he published the 416-page book complete with 320 illustrations. Book sales are going well, he reported.

Recently Alan, Lew Halprin and Dan Yagusic put together a presentation for the Photographic Historical Society of New England—using the latest in digital slide projectors!

The Historical Society has made plans to purchase a copy of the book for presentation to the Randall Library in memory of Alan's wife, Natalie Kattelle.

Help Wanted

The Ancient Documents Committee needs copies of the 1998 Town Report. Call Jody Newman, 897-7076, if you have a spare copy.

Henry Gardner's Fame Known to Few Today

A curious Nashoba Regional High School student digging through records in the Town Vault became interested in Stow's most famous Revolutionary War patriot, Henry Gardner, and wrote a paper last June for his history class. Gardner was Provincial, then State Treasurer, 1774-1782, and a marker on the Stow Lower Common serves to commemorate this key figure in our history.

Steven Lauritano, a NRHS senior, found that Gardner is known to very few people, and unknown outside of Stow. "In the years following the Revolutionary War, the man who once conversed with Paul Revere and Joseph Warren, and was held in a similar light to John Adams and Sam Adams, slowly disappeared from the pages of history." However, through the study of yellowed letters, old files and historic volumes, all in the Town Vault, "it is possible to reconstruct the contributions of this diligent worker, the patriot and the resourceful treasurer," Lauritano writes. The paper is entitled: "Henry Gardner: The Case of the Disappearing Patriot."

In 1975 Stow celebrated Henry Gardner Day with a parade and other festivities, and that, too, is a long time ago. Is there another historian in the wings ready to give Gardner proper recognition?

Lauritano also worked for 20 hours with the Ancient Documents Committee last spring as part of community service requirements for NRHS National Honor Society members. Thanks are extended to Lauritano for his diligent work.

Books on Sale

Many newcomers to Stow are finding a treasure trove of books about Stow's history, and old timers are finding that these histories makes wonderful holiday and birthday books. The newest books are the two Images of America picture books, one on Stow and the other on Lake Boon. Also still available are the "History of Stow" by Ellie Childs, published in 1983 and "Recollections of Stow" by Frannie Warren, both published by the Stow Historical Society Publishing Company.

All of these books are available for purchase at the Town Clerk's office and Randall Library. The new picture books also may be purchased at Community National Bank and Call-a-Copy in Maynard. Thanks are extended to local businesses which also sold the picture books last year including Derby's, Pilot Grove Shop, Warren Insurance, Minute Man Air Field, and Applefield Farm.

Stow magnets are also sold at the Town Clerk's office. If you have questions about the books, postcards, or any other publications of the Historical Society, call Phil Moseley, 897-4930.

PHOTO COLLECTION TO BE DIGITIZED

Stow Historical Society soon will have a computer scanning facility to preserve the growing collection of photographs of Stow. The new facility will feature a computer, scanner and laser and color printers, capable of converting the town's photo archives into digital form onto CD's. The equipment is located in the Town Hall.

Lew Halprin obtained funding from local businesses and foundations for a primary scanning facility in Hudson, the satellite facility in Stow and another satellite for the Lake Boon Association. The Hudson facility will have specialized equipment for slides and glass negatives.

At the Stow center the first order of business will be scanning photographs from the Town Vault. Since the publication of the Stow Picture Book, the Stow Historical Society has received photographs and other materials for its collection from Bob White, Bob Washburn, Jo Langley, Susan Maxfield, Hudson Historical Society, Bernie Fletcher, Bob Derby, Bobby Head, Kay Desmond, Bruce Ayer, Bob Mong, and Dyane and Cliff Smith.

Halprin stated that a Digital Image Scanning Committee to operate the Stow facility will be formed, and computer buffs interested in joining are asked to call him at 562-9839.

Town Pride Stages Beautiful Show Thanks to Penny

Stow put on a lovely face at Christmas. Who didn't enjoy the beautiful decorations on our historic buildings and twinkling lights on Upper and Lower Commons. If a vote were taken, do you think the winner would have been the starry lights on the flowering crabapple trees adjacent to the Town Building?

This special show was the brainchild of one person, Penny Cushing. She was assisted by Kay Desmond, Kathy Myles, Patty Selin, Marge Alessio, Judy Kelley, Diane Loughlin, Sera Mangiafico, Newell and Daisy Dearborn, Richard Raggaveen, John Paul Benoit, Mike Clayton and the Highway Department. Thanks also go to the Hudson Power and Light Company for their work.

Donations for the project were given by more than 90 individuals and local organizations. Penny is to be thanked for putting the display together, and she is already planning patriotic displays for Patriots' Day, Memorial Day, July 4, and Veterans' Day.

Donations for the ongoing Stow Decorations Project may be made to the Stow Decorations Fund, P. O. Box 418, Stow, MA 01775.

Town Hall Keeps Getting Better

The facelift at Town Hall continues unabated. Plans call for a new paint job in the main hall and construction of disability access ramps for both building levels. New window treatments for the main hall also are planned.

New bathrooms with new fixtures and tile floors have replaced the old facilities; however, the location has been reoriented and both are handicapped accessible. A new septic system already is in place. Two storage closets have been added at the side of the stage in the main hall, and two storage credenzas were built at the rear of the hall. A new sign dating this 1848 structure was completed by Lee Heron and installed on the front of the Town Hall.

Funding for changes to the old building have been voted at Town Meeting for the past few years, and additional funds will be asked at the May Town Meeting.

Handwork continues on the oversize quilt which is to be hung at the back of the stage in the main hall. The quilt, designed by Rose Colosi, has a dedicated group of quilt makers working weekly to prepare for dedication of this handsome focal point. It is hoped that work will be completed in time for Springfest in May. Quilters are Clare Tozeski, Dottie Scraggs, Laura Orsatti, Judy Scraggs, Diane Johns, Jody Newman, Rose Colosi, Peggi Irwin and Dorothy Sonnichsen. The quilt fabric

was chosen to complement the stately main hall, and the reproduction fabric patterns match those from the mid-1800's when the Town Hall was built. If you are interested in joining the quilters, call Clare Tozeski, 897-8381.

The Town Hall Improvement Committee has asked the Stow Historical Society and the Stow Historical Commission to help organize a dedication ceremony for the quilt. Plans for the dedication will be announced at a later date.

In Memoriam

We are greatly saddened at the news of the death on February 2 of Bobby Head who joins a long list of loyal supporters of the Stow Historical Society who have died in recent years. Bobby and her husband Jack, who died last year, had been called "Mr. and Mrs. Stow" for their delight and devotion to Stow's history. Bobby was a charter member of the Ancient Documents Committee. Others who have died include Thelma Fletcher, who also was a member of the Ancient Documents Committee; Herb Potter and Leland Lewis, who knew so much about Stow; and Natalie Kattelle who was killed in a tragic accident.

Photo Crosses Ocean

Whitney Homestead, the beautiful rest home on Route 117, is pictured in a new book published last year in England. In the 1940's during World War II, the homestead served as the headquarters for the Little School for British children evacuated at the outbreak of the war, 1941-42. The photo is reproduced from a postcard loaned from the collection of the Stow Historical Society.

The school was operated by the late F. Matthais Alexander, who is known for his development of the Alexander Technique, a method for developing conscious use of oneself in all activities of living. This technique is still taught today world-wide. A copy of the book, "The Universal Constant in Living," was donated to the Stow Historical Society.

Honors

Pilot Grove Farm, established in 1782, was one of 70 Massachusetts farms honored in September as "Century Farms" by the Department of Food & Agriculture. These farms have been owned by the same family for 100 years or more. The Warren family farm is one of the favorite landmarks in Stow.

Take a Tour of Town Center

A guided tour of the Town Center is planned again at Springfest on May 19 under the sponsorship of the Stow Historical Society and the Stow Historical Commission. Last year the same tour drew dozens of townspeople who wanted to know more about our historic town center.

The brochure shown here was developed by Karen Gray and Jody Newman last year for the tour, and copies are available at the Randall Library and Town Clerk's office for use in self-guided walks.

If you would like to be a tour guide for Springfest, call Karen or Jody.

THE WALK

Historical Walking
Tour of
Stow's Upper Village



Stow Town Hall

Souvenir of Springfest
May 13, 2000

A Joint Project of the
Stow Historical Society and
Stow Historical Commission

Thank You

Fred and Linda Dodge are to be thanked for an antique double glass paneled cabinet, suitable for wall hanging, of a photo of the original Declaration of Independence complete with tinted portraits of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. The print was reproduced by an insurance company from original photos of the document taken in 1876. It is impossible today to take a photo of that document—it is constantly guarded in the National Archives in Washington, D. C.

Gifts in memory of long time member Thelma Fletcher were made to the Historical Society by Bob and Janet Derby, Eleanor Creech and Carolyn Halloran.

And thanks go to Emily Neilsen Power of California, former Stow resident, who has donated a copy of her book, "Forever Oatmeal," to the Stow Historical Society. The softcover book about living in Stow in the 1920's and 30's can also be found at the Randall Library.

NEW VETERANS MEMORIAL GRACES CENTER COMMON

A new look came to the Veterans Memorial on Center Common this year as Stow took a major step to honor men and women who served in the armed forces during World War II, Korean, Vietnam and Gulf Wars. New granite monuments inscribed with names of veterans were added to either side of the 80-year-old World War I monument, and a dedication ceremony was held November 11, 2000.

The monuments are angled horizontally in a half-circle facing Route 117, near Stow's only traffic light. The World War I granite monument was dedicated on May 30, 1921, and the wooden WWII Honor Roll, erected by the firemen in 1946 across from First Parish Church, has been removed.

A stone bench and another granite marker complete the new memorial. The latter marker carries the official insignias of all branches of the armed forces. An inscription reads: "A Grateful Community Dedicates This Memorial in Honor and in Memory of All who Served Their Country in Times of War and Conflict."

Names of the Korean and Vietnam War veterans were compiled in 1983 by David Walrath as a project for an Eagle Scout badge. David spent months at the Adjutant General's office in the State House inspecting war records, lists of bonus recipients, and newspaper articles in order to make these lists. A computerized list of names of veterans was submitted to the engraving firm, a rubber stencil was cut by computer and applied to the stone, and the engraving then done by sandblasting.

The granite slabs, quarried in New Hampshire, were selected to match the color of the stone of the old World War I monument. Credit for the new memorial goes to the Center Common Improvement Committee including Roy Dudley, clerk of the works, Daisy Dearborn, Lester Garvin, Pam Weathers, Tony Todesco, Nancy Maldari and Marcia Rasmussen, chair. Funds for the project were voted at Town Meeting, and donations were received from individuals and organizations.

The committee also made improvements to the Waiting Station and coordinated new landscaping using funds from the Warren Memorial Fund and contributions collected by the Stow Garden Club. Wiring was installed through the efforts of the Stow Decorations Project to provide illumination of the memorial and the American flag. Many town departments and volunteers from town organizations were involved in this major project.

A STOW FLAG IS IN THE WORKS

Stow has no official town flag. That omission is about to be corrected. A year ago Webelos Cub Scouts in Den 7 visited the State House and found that Stow had no flag in the Great Hall display. Of the 280 towns in this state, Stow is one of 71 communities without a flag in the colorful display.

And that visit started a chain

of events, and the flag project was born. Two scout mothers, Linda Danowitz and Dorrie Langelo, started to contact the schools and local groups. Mary Wetherbee's seventh grade class responded by submitting designs, and local artists and others students joined in the project.

The suggested designs are now in the hands of Rosemary

Bawn, local resident, who is known for her creative quilts and other needlework, and she will meld the ideas into several flag designs. The public then will be invited to vote on the final design.

Dates to Remember:

Friday, February 16: 4-7 p.m., Town Hall. Retirement Party for Kay Desmond, long-time town employee. All invited.

Friday, February 23: 2-4 p.m., Reception for Stow Historical Society Poster Show, Nancy's Air Field Café, Minute Man Air Field. All invited.

Thursday, March 22: 7 p.m., Stow Historical Society Meeting, "What's in a Vault," Friendship Room, Town Building. All invited.

Saturday, May 19: Save the date for Springfest. Town Center tours by Stow Historical Society and Stow Historical Commission. Watch for information on the dedication date of the new quilt for Town Hall.
