



# 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!*

June 2012

## Recording Today's History for the Future at the West School Museum – Sunday, June 24



The Stow Minutemen on a 1960s Patriot's Day march to Concord.

The West School Museum Summer Series will kick off with a Sunday-evening Oral History project on June 24. The program, interviewing three long-time Stow stalwarts on facets of recent town history, will begin at 7 pm.

All West School programs, jointly sponsored by the Stow Historical Society and the Stow Historical Commission, are free and open to the public. The Oral History session will focus on:

■ **The founding of the Stow Minuteman Company.** Don Rising, one of the original members of the modern-day Minutemen, will be interviewed about the group's establishment in 1965 to keep alive the memory of the Stow militiamen who fought on April 19, 1775.

■ **The work of the Collings**

**Foundation** since its establishment in 1979. In Stow, we see the Collings organization as a unique museum of classic airplanes and automobiles on Barton Road. In fact, the Collings Foundation has a national role, flying World War II and Vietnam War era aircraft on "Wings of Freedom" and "Vietnam Memorial Flight" tours throughout the country. Foundation president Bob Collings will be interviewed about the creation of the organization and its mission, role in Stow and commitment to "living history."

■ **The development of small farm.** Physicist-turned-farmer Dwight Sipler will be interviewed about the evolution of small farm (he spells it without capital letters) from a tractor for plowing his driveway into one of Stow's agricultural icons – and, as the chairman of the Stow Agricultural Commission, about the Commission's efforts to help maintain the rural character of Stow by preserving agriculture.



The Collings Foundation museum on Barton Road focuses on classic cars, early aviation and a superb collection of World War II aircraft like the Grumman TBM Avenger, at rear.



small farm, on Gleasondale Road, is one of three working commercial produce farms operating in Stow today.

**Other programs planned at West School in the coming months include:**

■ **Native American Culture, Sunday, July 8, 3-5:30 pm.** This program features traditional Native American drumming, crafts for children to complete and an exhibition of objects related to native culture. The Native Americans were here before anyone else, and this program celebrates their traditions. The program is being presented by the United Native American Cultural Center, based in Ayer, and is organized by Stow residents Barbara and Roland Jerome. Mr. Jerome is the Cultural Center's current president.

■ **Open House, Sunday, August 5, 4-5:30 pm.** No program is planned, but come learn about the West School Museum and see the new video recreating a school day in the 1840s.

■ **A visit by Mark Twain, Sunday, September 23, 3 pm.** Actually, it's a visit by actor and Mark Twain interpreter Bern Budd, who'll present a one-man show called "The Hannibal Years." It's based on the great American author's life growing up on the banks of the Mississippi and stories about the real life characters behind "Tom Sawyer." As Mark Twain put it, "This is my tale – and some of it is true."

Fittingly for the West School setting, he'll also talk about Mark Twain's education in the 1830s and '40s. The production is geared for ages 10 to 100, but Mr. Budd has found that younger children do seem to enjoy the show even if they do not understand it all.

■ **"Stow Knows: Skills in Our Town," Sunday, October 14, 3-5:30 pm.** This family-oriented program features artists and artisans from Stow demonstrating their work. Last year's skills ranged from painting, quilting and spinning to wood working and stone sculpting.

**This year, we hope to feature such activities** as beekeeping, cider-making and weaving. Potter Ted Carvalho will repeat last year's visit, offering kids in attendance a hands-on chance to make their own ceramics.



**These Stow West School Museum programs are supported in part by a grant from the Stow Cultural Council,** a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



West School served as a schoolhouse in Stow from its construction in 1825 until 1903. After six decades as a private dwelling, it was restored by the West School Society, a private citizens' group, and given to the town as a museum. It's one of only two one-room schoolhouses preserved in Massachusetts.