

# 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 2013

## An Evening of Oral History: Sunday, June 9th at 7 pm



**Tucked amidst the woods** of today's Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge are some 50 quonset hut-shaped ammunition bunkers – remnants of the area's role as a military ammunition depot during World War II.

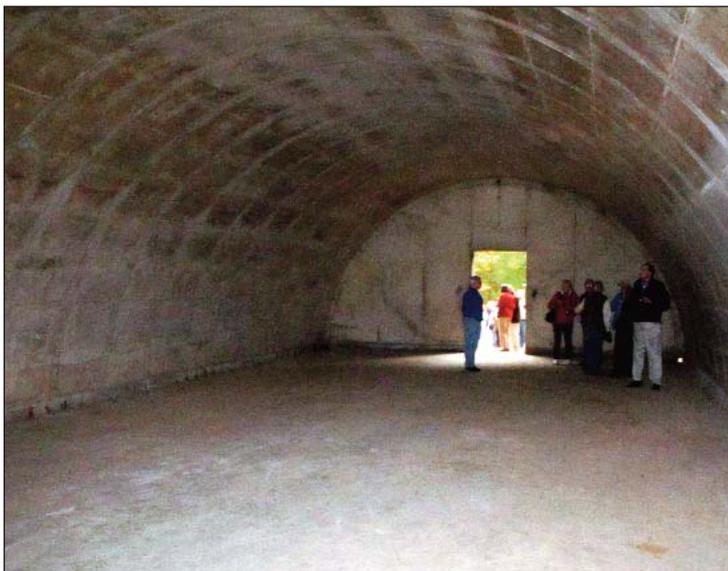
**Many of us have toured them**, and we're likely aware of the sad events in which the land was appropriated by the federal government for the ammunition facility – far enough away from the Atlantic coast to be safe from shelling by enemy vessels but close enough for efficient access to shipping.

**But what was the ammo depot itself like in its heyday?** (For one thing, it wasn't woodsy.) Stow's Jim Sauta remembers the depot from his teenage years, when he knew the depot commander and toured it several times.

■ **Jim will lead off an Evening of Oral History** at Stow's West School Museum on Sunday evening, June 9th, discussing his recollections of the ammunition depot. The program will begin at 7 pm.

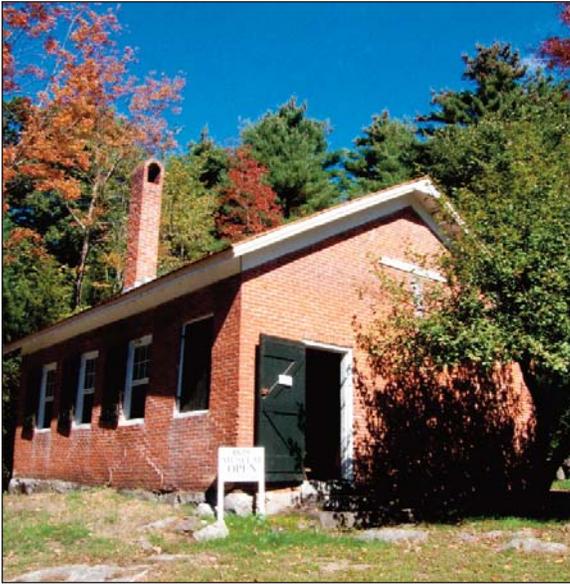
■ **He'll be followed by Bruce Fletcher**, the town's former Superintendent of Streets, who will give his perspective on the changes in Stow as it transitioned from a rural farming community to a residential suburb in the decades between the 1950s and the 2000s.

■ **Kristen Donovan, chairman of Stow's Council on Aging**, will discuss the town's commitment to its senior citizens, from safety programs to members' group excursions (led by Jim Sauta) to diners throughout the region.



*Blanketed by earth – and, now, forest – the Wildlife refuge's ammunition bunkers are somewhat hidden from the outside. Inside, they're easier to see, hollow and empty. And creepy.*

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## Stow's West School Museum

**Located on the site of an earlier school building built in the 1700s**, West School served as a school for Stow from its construction in 1825 until 1903.

**After six decades as a private dwelling**, it was acquired, restored and preserved as a museum in the 1960s by the West School Society, a private citizens' group.

**One of only two one-room school buildings still standing in Massachusetts**, today it's maintained under the oversight of the Stow Historical Commission.

**Free and open to all interested persons**, the Oral History program is the first of four events scheduled at West School in the coming months. All West School programs are jointly sponsored by the Stow Historical Society and the Stow Historical Commission. The museum is located on Harvard Road at the intersection with Hiley Brook Road.

**Subsequent programs in the coming months include:**

■ **Sunday, July 7, 3 to 5:30 pm:** “Skills in Our Town,” showcasing the broad range of skills of Stow artists and artisans. Among those scheduled to take part: potter Ted Carvalho and stone sculptor Andy Mintz.

■ **Sunday, August 11, 3 to 5:30 pm: A West School Museum Open House.** Come and learn about the preserved schoolhouse, one of only two surviving one-room school buildings in Massachusetts. A video depicting a typical 1840s school day will be available for viewing, along with reproductions of McGuffey's Readers and other period school items.

■ **Sunday, September 22, 3 pm: A visit by Mary Rowlandson**, the Lancaster resident captured and held for ransom by Indians during King Philip's War in 1675.

**Actually, she'll visit in the person of actress Katie Green**, who will assume Mary Rowlandson's character and tell her story. Mary, the wife of the minister in Lancaster, was kidnapped by the Indians along with Elizabeth Kettell, one of Stow's first settlers, who fled with her husband John to the Rowlandson's garrisoned home in Lancaster. Despite their efforts, they both were taken prisoner when the homestead was attacked.

**Sometime after her release, Mary's account of her experience was published as *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson***. Going through multiple printings, it was America's first best-selling book.



*An illustration said to be from Mary Rowlandson's book about her experience as a captive of Indians during King Philip's War.*

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