

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!

November 4, 2016

VOTE November 8, 2016

228 years ago, the first presidential election was held.

There was tension between the Federalists and Antifederalists.

The Constitution allowed each state to decide how to choose its presidential electors.

1788- 1789: The first United States of America Presidential Election

The first election was held on the first Wednesday of January 1789. George Washington was the country's first candidate of choice, yet he was reluctant to run. John Adams, John Jay, John Hancock and a few others were also on the ballot. **"Before the adoption of the Twelfth Amendment, each elector cast two votes for president. The candidate with a majority won the presidency, and the runner-up became vice president."**

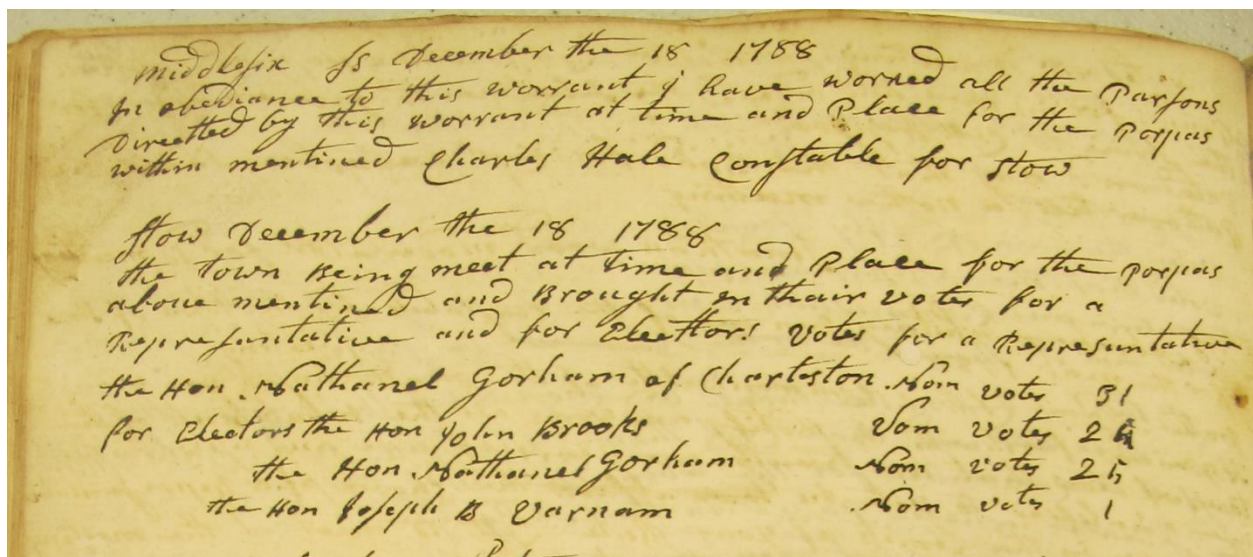
<http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/presidential-elections>

Choosing the Electors

For the Commonwealth of Massachusetts electors were nominated by the People, each town voting for their electors. This voting "was held from Monday, December 15, 1788 to Saturday, January 10, 1789."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1788%E2%80%931789

Stow held its Electors' voting on December 18, 1788.



TRANSCRIPTION of Stow's voting with modern spellings and punctuation

Middlesex, this December the 18, 1788

In obeisance to this warrant I have warned all the persons directed by this warrant at time and place for the purpose within mentioned. Charles Hale, Constable for Stow

Stow, December the 18, 1788

The town being met at time and place for the purpose above mentioned and brought in their votes for a Representative and for Electors.

Votes for a Representative:

The Honorable Nathaniel Gorham of Charlestown number votes 31

For Electors:

The Honorable **John Brooks** number votes 25

The Honorable **Nathaniel Gorham** number votes 25

The Honorable **Joseph B. Varnum** number votes 01

Massachusetts 1788 Electoral College, Middlesex District

A small portion of this chart from

<http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/catalog/tufts.ma.electors.middlesex.1788>

Office: Vice President of the United States (Federal)

Title: Elector

Jurisdiction: Federal

[View more information](#)

Electors:	Francis Dana [1]	John Brooks [2]	Nathaniel Gorham	Eleazer Brooks	Oliver Prescott	Joseph B. Varnum	William Winthrop	Elbridge Gerry
Affiliation:	Federalist	Federalist						
Presidential Candidate:	George Washington / John Adams							
Final Result: [3][4][5][6][7]	572	338	333	267	259	182	87	78

Francis Dana and John Brooks were the two Electors from Massachusetts.

The final 1789 vote for president and vice president:

Washington, 69 electoral votes

John Adams, 34

John Jay, 09

John Hancock 04

and others, 22

<http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/presidential-elections>

Bringing history alive has been a long-time goal of the SHS and the SHC.

The Web of Life

On **September 25th** at West School Museum, the SHC hosted Ray LaChance and his Native American

program, *The Web of Life*, the value structure it presented in the past and presents today.

It was a fun-filled afternoon for all ages.



1942 – How Preparations for WWII Changed Stow



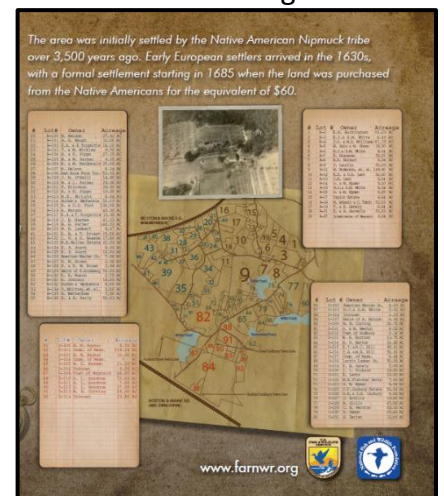
This program literally took center stage at the Stow Town Hall on **October 22nd**. With 100 guests seated, it was standing-room only.

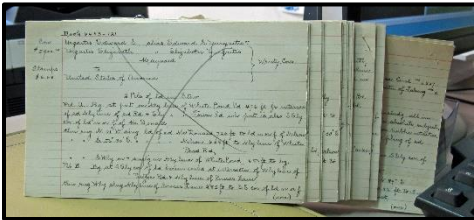
The quest had been to find **Stow** primary documents and first-hand accounts of the federal government's spring 1942 seizure by eminent domain of 3,100 acres taken in the towns of Stow, Sudbury, Maynard and Hudson. Today this land is the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge.

Presenters: Bill Wickey, Vivian Dean, Sylvia Estabrook and Jim Sauta

Research had begun in earnest in June. Where to begin was a good question, since this secretive land-taking event did not leave much of a paper trail. The Friends of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge have an in-depth website, one portion of which features the kiosk displays near the Visitor Center at the ARNWR. <http://www.farnwr.org/refuge1.html> These kiosks give a historical written and pictorial overview. Listed in one display were the names of the Stow property owners who had their land, the homes, and their farms taken by the federal government for the building of the Ammunition Depot.

With that data entered on a spreadsheet, the first stop was Stow's Assessors office. Louise Nejad, Assistant Assessor, shared the office's 1942/1943 index cards, which detailed the many Stow land transfers to the U.S. government. These cards also listed the price paid for the land and





the book and page number, where each transaction could be accessed at the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds website.

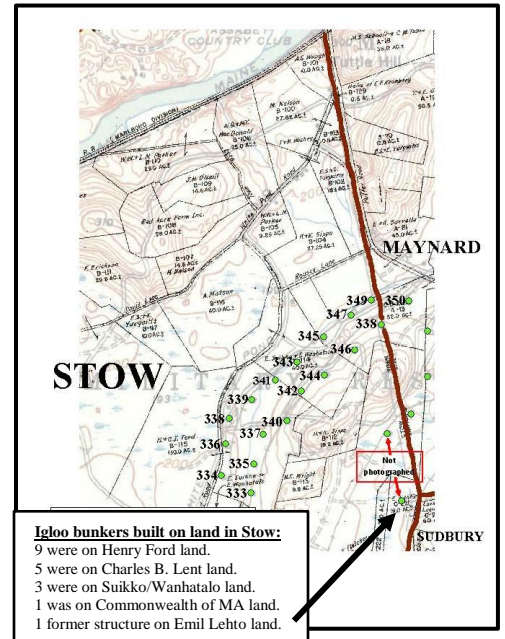
Kathy Sferra, Stow Conservation Coordinator, learned of our

research and offered the overlay maps she had created, using the town's GIS software. The 1942 Army's Acquisition Map of properties was paired with the 1943 and 1950 USGS maps (US Geological Survey) and the 1987 Natick Laboratory map. The results were spectacular.

Why was the land taken? The federal government needed an



ammunition storage site, which was 30 miles inland from Boston, so that enemy missiles would not hit the stockpile. 50 igloos, storage bunkers, were built, 18 of which were in Stow.



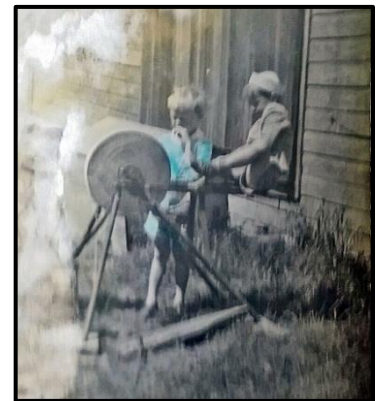
Our four presenters wove their stories into a spellbinding hour program. Among many topics, the Wanhatalo sisters (Sylvia Estabrook and Vivian Dean) and Bill Wickey spoke of the loss of their farms with ten days' notice, the heartache of losing everything with little compensation, the scramble to find new housing, and the bleak future for the farmers in their 60's and 70's, who had never paid into social security. Jim Sauta, who was a young teenager, spoke



Sylvia and Vivian Wanhatalo

of the air raid drills, the blackouts, the night trains bringing the ammunition into the depot, and how the love of music afforded him a tour of the secure army base.

This program was a group effort. The Stow Historical Society sends special thanks to the Stow Conservation Commission, Stow Planning Board, Stow Assessors Office, Stow Historical Commission, Maynard and Hudson libraries for their old local newspapers on microfilm, to Dorothy Sonnichsen, who organized the fabulous dessert tables, and to emcee, Marilyn Zavorski.



Bill Wickey and cousin, Fred Wright

Our utmost appreciation goes to our panel: Sylvia Estabrook and Jim Sauta of Stow, Vivian Dean of Maynard, and Bill Wickey of Morristown, NJ.

It is their voices which brings this historical story alive!



Watch for it on Stow TV.



Jim Sauta

Center School's Third Grade Visits West School Museum



Mrs. Messina's Class

On the frosty morning of **October 25th**, the Stow Historical Commission and Stow Historical Society hosted the first of Center School's four third grade classes at 1825 West School Museum on Harvard Road. The scholars quickly understood what it was like to attend school in the 1800's, as the room temperature hovered around 53 degrees during the early morning hours.

The scholars' enthusiasm warmed the air, as they learned what a school day was like. Heat? There were two fireplaces and then a wood stove after 1831. Water? There was a bucket to gather water at the brook below the school. Discipline? Absolutely! They met *Ichabod*, who was standing in the corner. Restroom? After 1835 there was an outhouse. Lunch and recess? *Nooning* was at noon for an hour with bring-your-own lunch and playing outside.



Ichabod



Mrs. Duda's Class

Using chalk and slates, the third-grade scholars proved they were very adept in mental math and helping-verb language arts lessons. Why the wasp nest hanging in the corner? This school taught all subjects. Currently, science lessons were about winged insects.

With distinguished guests (teachers, parents and volunteers) sitting on the benches along the east wall, third grade reenactors came forward to demonstrate their math, social studies and reading/elocution skills.

Text books used at West School by the Peck children in the 1840's through 1860's were the source of the questions asked. Seven reenactors from each class were chosen in advance, giving them time to review their questions and the answers. Each could read the answer in front of the assemblage or recite it from memory. Student comfort level was number one. Two *scholars* read a short story about THE CARS, an 1860's dialogue about the conflict between railroad cars and teams of horses. *Cars* and *teams* certainly had different definitions 150+ years ago!



Ms. Albano's Class

The Stow Historical Commission and the Stow Historical Society sincerely thanks Bob Walrath, Linda Stokes, Liz Moseley, Rosemary and Dennis Bawn, Dot Spaulding, Bill Byron, Emily Beyette, and Tom and Marilyn Zavorski for their dedication and time to bring history alive to Stow's school children.

This annual event is in its second year and is made possible by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council's *Big Yellow School Bus*, which provides \$200 grants to help schools meet the transportation costs of educational field trips to non-profit cultural institutions.



Mrs. Johnson's Class