

STOW HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STOW, MASSACHUSETTS 01775
ESTABLISHED 1961



A newsletter for all friends of Stow history.

Please feel free to pass it along to others who might be interested!

July, 2026

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER EDITION!



CELEBRATING AMERICA₂₅₀!

THIS YEAR WE CELEBRATE AMERICA'S SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL!

~ 250 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE ~

How many times did you hear someone say that July 4th is the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence?

THAT IS SO WRONG! July 4th, 1776 was the day the Continental Congress voted to ratify the Declaration, not sign it. Most of the 56 members of Congress who signed it didn't do so until **August 2nd**. And historians still debate exactly when a few of them finally got around to signing it.

Feel free to use that little tidbit on your next trivia night!

(We even made that little mistake in our last newsletter at the bottom of Page 3, where we talked about Stow voters endorsing "independancy" on July 1st, three days before the Declaration was **signed** by the Continental Congress. Oops.)

In This Issue:

- The Hapgood House is 300!
- What has the Stow Historical Society done to honor America's 250th?
- What you missed on our Facebook page recently.
- What was happening in the Revolutionary War in the summer of 1776?
- And what else happened in history on the big anniversaries of this year?
- One BIG anniversary at Stow Acres Country Club! And Honey Pot, too!
- Book sales
- Our members, and our need for space, and an upcoming event

The **Hapgood House**, situated at the far end of Treaty Elm Lane was built c. 1726, making it 300 years old this year! It is a well-preserved late First Period, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.



What have we done to celebrate the Semiquincentennial?

As we promised, on **May 29th** we performed to a packed house at the Stow Town Hall our version of the production "***Declaring Independence: Then & Now***".

The award-winning program was created by Freedom's Way National Heritage Area to depict how residents of communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire debated the idea of declaring independence from Great Britain in 1776. The production has been presented in many towns, each in their own unique way. Here in Stow, we added our own mock town meeting in the middle of it, imagining how the debate might have unfolded at the Stow town meeting held on July 1, 1776. The script for the mock town meeting portion of the program was written by our own Town Moderator, Jim Salvie. The "Now" part of "Then & Now" consisted of a lively discussion among audience members following our presentation, about the relevance of the Declaration *now*, today.

The program can be viewed on You Tube at this link:

<https://youtu.be/H63qflzASjU?si=XpWmmdCzdoy94HUY>



The cast of *Declaring Independence: Then & Now*:

Marcia Stevens (Mr. Brooks), J.T. Toole (Mr. Hapgood), Lora Moore (Speaker), Bruce Fletcher (Mr. Withington), Dorcas Sefton (Widow Hale), Jim Salvie (Henry Gardner), Gianna Melone (Mr. Whitney)



Selectman Hapgood makes the case on the need to vote for independency.

And then, on **July 4th**, we invited the public to mark this historic year by participating in the ringing of the **Paul Revere Bell** in the church formerly known as the First Parish Church of Stow and Acton. The occasion also marked renaming of the church after a merger with Hudson and Marlboro congregations. The Reverend Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum announced the new name, Unitarian Universalist Congregation in the Assabet Valley, to the assembled masses right before we started ringing the bell 250 times. She also talked about the history of the bell.

The bell was made by Paul Revere's company, *Paul Revere & Sons*, in the North End of Boston, and installed in a new meetinghouse at the same location in 1827. (Paul Revere died in 1818, so we can assume this one was made by his sons.) That building burned 20 years later, and the bell cracked when it fell from the steeple, and had to be recast by the successor to the Paul Revere foundry before being installed in this new building at the same location in 1848, where it has been ringing ever since. This same bell has tolled at the end of the two World Wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam conflict, as well as at numerous weddings, funerals, Fourth of July celebrations, and other special occasions for almost 200 years.

See more about the first meetinghouses in our newsletter of November 2012, which you can find on our website here: <https://stowhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/shs-newsletter-november-2012.pdf>



Photos courtesy of Lora Moore

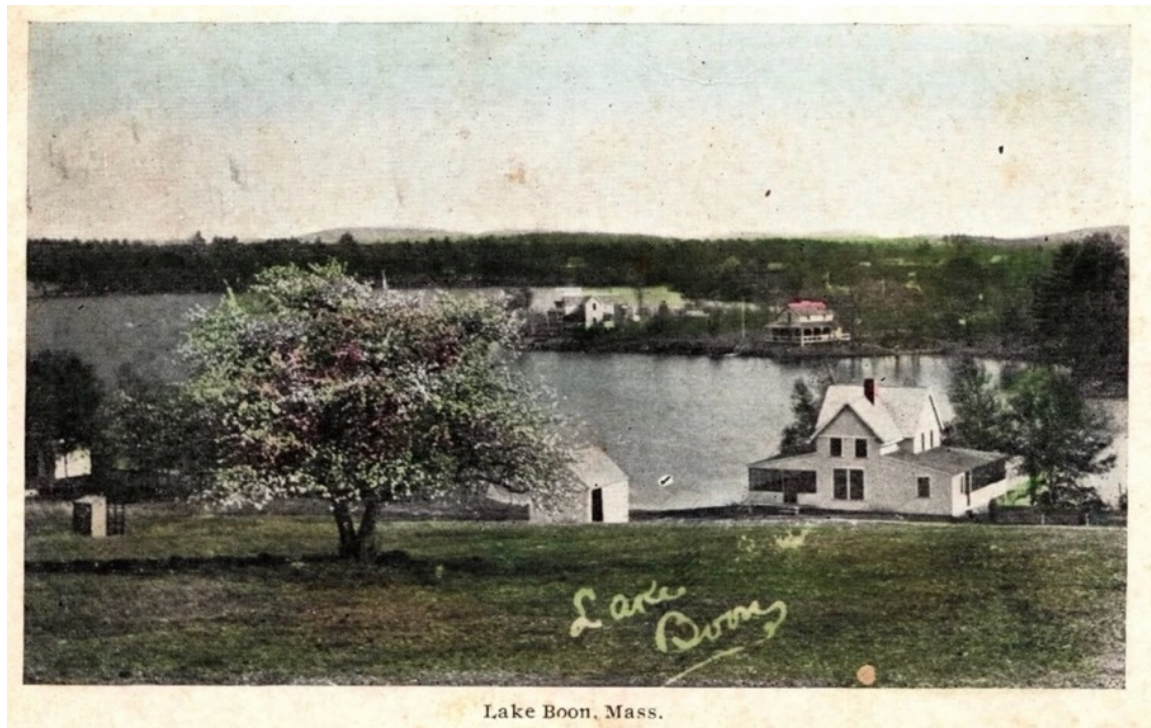
It was another well-attended event, and many folks got to help us be a part of history. You can see the event on You Tube at this link, and admire the amazing skills of Stow TV's Jonathan Daisy, who had a camera in the sky, a camera in the belfry, and a camera capturing the crowd: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWskol1GVnU> .

And here's that same event 50 years ago July 4th, 1976:



Here's a sample of what you missed if you're not following us on Facebook:

We shared several photos of Lake Boon. Here's just one:



Our post about Stow's electric trolley generated a lot of discussion.
We plan to do more on this topic in the future.



Folks reminisced on Facebook about the gas station, candy shop, barber shop on Crescent St from the photo below:



Not following us on Facebook? “Like” the Stow Historical Society today!

Memberships...

We had a wonderful response to our spring membership drive. Thank you! Your dues help sustain our work. If you're reading this newsletter and not already a member, please consider joining us by sending in the modest amount of \$25.00 as annual dues. And, of course we take donations in any amount! You can join in just minutes here: <https://stowhistoricalsociety.org/donate/>

We would also like to encourage our members to get more involved by joining one of our Board committees. We have several committees where folks can help us carry out our work: Collections Committee (archiving), Programs & Events Committee (planning public events), and the Membership & Outreach Committee. Interested? Drop us an email today!

SO, HOW WAS THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR GOING IN THE SUMMER OF 1776?

Not all that well, actually. Washington's Army was trying to defend New York City, but took heavy losses, and by September, New York was in British hands, and would remain so for the remainder of the war.

Washington retreated from New York through New Jersey and into Pennsylvania in November and December of 1776. As the year drew to a close, the Army faced disintegration with the exhaustion of supplies and the expiration of troop enlistments. Bold actions were necessary. But Washington was up to the task. Things started to improve the following year.

From the Crowell history of Stow: Up to March, 1778, covering a period of three years, Stow had sent 260 men to the war for periods varying from three weeks to a year. During the next four years she was liberal with her supply of men and money until 1783 brought Peace, Liberty and Independence.

Stow was an earnest and active town during the Revolutionary War in furnishing men and means for the successful prosecution of the great struggle for liberty. Not for a day during that entire period did its patriotism lag. Provisions were furnished, fire-arms supplied, clothing provided, and the needy families of the soldiers were cared for.

Also in 1776, while the war was raging elsewhere, the original mills in Gleasondale were sold to Abraham Randall, leading to the name "Randall's Mills" for this locality, later called Rock Bottom, and eventually Gleasondale, of course.

50 years later in 1826, America's first planned industrial city, Lowell Massachusetts was incorporated and became the epicenter of the Industrial Revolution. And the Rock Bottom Cotton and Woolen Company certainly played its part in the Industrial Revolution.

And in that same year, 200 years ago, on July 4th, you may recall what happened. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both died that day. It was the 50th anniversary of the ratification of the Declaration of Independence (but NOT the signing, hope you caught that above).

THIS YEAR WE CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF GOLF IN STOW!

But it's more than that! It's the centennial anniversary of the Mapledale Country Club (now Stow Acres, of course), one of the first Black owned and operated golf courses in the country, right here in Stow.

You can participate in that legacy by signing up for the 3rd Annual Robert H. Hawkins Memorial Golf Tournament hosted by Rediscover Mapledale on Saturday August 29, 2026, and/or join them at the "100 Years of Golf" Gala that same day at 6:30 pm. More information is below.

Sign up and purchase tickets at www.rediscovermapledale.org

3RD ANNUAL ROBERT H. HAWKINS MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT
FROM \$175.00

Since 2024, Rediscover Mapledale has held the Robert H. Hawkins Memorial Golf Tournament to honor Robert H. Hawkins, a co-founder of the United Golfers Association in 1925 and founder of Mapledale Country Club (now Stow Acres), the first golf course built, owned, and operated in Massachusetts by an African American. Mapledale Country Club hosted the first three UGA "Negro National" Open Championship golf tournaments in 1926, 1927, and 1928 before closing in 1929 under the weight of the Great Depression.

Part of the proceeds from the golf tournaments goes to the United Golfers Association, which is committed to the development of Black youth and adults in the sport of golf.

If purchasing entries separately from your group, please make sure to note your group leader in the form!

COMING TO OUR "100 YEARS OF GOLF" GALA AS WELL?

Gala Tickets purchased at the time of Tournament Entries receive a \$50 discount (Gala Tickets normally \$175 per ticket)!

REDISCOVER MAPLEDALE PRESENTS

100 Years of Golf Gala
SATURDAY AUGUST 29TH
6:30 PM | STOW ACRES

SCAN ME

TICKET COST \$175
Proceeds benefit the United Golfers Association and the Urban Golf Club

UGA
UGC

Stow Acres 1926

Attire is Business Casual
Theme is the nineteen-twenties
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.REDISCOVERMAPLEDALE.ORG

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~ There's another centennial anniversary in town this year. ~
Honeypot Hill Orchards turns 100! According to their website,
"Honey Pot Hill Orchards was founded in 1926, when Clifford Martin purchased a 70 acre all-purpose farm in Stow, MA. The farm has since grown and evolved to 186 acres of **apples**, **peaches**, **blueberries**, and a few other small crops. Honey Pot Hill has been in the Martin family for four generations--now run by Andrew and Chelcie Martin, a father-daughter team." ~ **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, HONEY POT HILL ORCHARDS!**

Exploring Space...

The Stow Historical Society has launched a search for space to meet our short-term needs. Can you help? We are looking for modest accommodations to consolidate our collection of Stow historical materials (mostly boxes, books, and papers) with room for a work table and a few chairs where we can spread out and catalog items and hold occasional small (non-public) meetings of board members. The ideal space would have electricity, heat and air conditioning (and not be damp), along with room to park a few cars while we are there and (ideally) an external access. We're a small nonprofit and hoping to find something that's free or low-cost (but that is negotiable). If you've got something that might work, send us a message by email at historystow@gmail.com and we'll talk further!

Read all about it!

Stow! We have history books for sale, all about Stow. And they contain colorful pictures, so you won't get bored. They make excellent gifts! Our display of books at Nan's Kitchen sold out so quickly it was amazing. Check back there for replenishment of the supply when you get a chance. Or come to one of our events - we usually have a table set up for book sales.

Save the Date

Speaking of upcoming events. Our next Annual Meeting will be October 25, 3-5 pm at Town Hall. More details in the next newsletter!

Thank you for reading our Newsletter!

Your 2026 Executive Board: Dorcas Brown Sefton, Bruce E Fletcher, Lora Moore, Rob Gardner, Kathy Sferra, Kelly Lawlor, Liz Moseley, and last but not least Tom Zavorski.



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