



Freedom's Way Heritage Association

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FREEDOM'S WAY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION IS DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF OUR REGION'S SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES THROUGH THE DESIGNATION OF A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.

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Revolutionary Patriots Paths

Hats off to Zelda!

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Activities

In Memory of Carl and Gloria Chandler

Congressman Martin Meehan, Acting Governor A. Paul Cellucci, and Senator Robert A. Durand lead the support effort for a Freedom's Way National Heritage Area.

The conclusion of the Feasibility Study signalled the beginning of an all-out effort to enlist support from members, friends, government officials and businesses -- in short all the "stakeholders" of the proposed Freedom's Way National Heritage Area.

Senator Durand arranged for us to present the study results to the Acting Governor, A. Paul Cellucci, who pledged his support and help in enlisting support from the New Hampshire Congressmen. That same day, we also spoke to Michael Hogan, Director of the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, who told us of his favorable reaction to the concept. (Some of you may remember, that our offices are in the Devens Commerce Center, courtesy of the MDFA and Stephen Joncas, Devens Redevelopment Director.)

In August of 1997, we met with Sarah Peskin, Regional Director of the National Park Service to present her with a copy of the positive summary report. Joining Freedom's Way officers Robert Farwell, Richard Canale, Millie Chandler, and Marge Darby to show their support for a national designation were: Kate Dempsey, Economic Development Assistant for Congressman Meehan; James Baecker, Project Manager, Department of Environmental Management; William Ashe, President of the Nashua River Watershed Assoc. and Director of Fish and Wildlife Foundation; and the consultant, Jonathan Lane of ICON architecture, inc.

Rep. Pam Resor of Acton, a member of Freedom's Way who has been interested in this project for many years hosted a day at the State House in January. Our slides were viewed by the legislators using a self-activated projector supplied by Rep. Resor. She also arranged delightful refreshments to welcome the visiting state officials. Rep. Pat Walrath gave us a letter pledging her support that day! Lexington's Rep. Jay Kaufman spent considerable time reviewing the slides and the table displays. The Representatives and aides offered suggestions

(Continued next page)

Support Effort continued.

for ways to spread the Freedom's Way story: Donna Bensch, aide to Rep. Walrath; Robin Childs, aide to Sen. Durand; Don Siriani, Chief of Staff to Sen. Fargo; Rachel Hulette, aide to Rep. Knuutila.

We are beginning to feel as if we are latter day revolutionaries or Minutemen, marching to enlist support from our compatriots.

The effort continues. We have met several times with **Congressman John Olver** to come to agreement on the appropriate language for the legislation. Congressman Olver wants written support from: Selectmen, Mayors, Planning Boards, Economic Developers, Conservation Commissioners, Historical Commissions, and town businesses. He has expressed concern about the amount of support evidenced in his area towns: Ashby Ashburnham, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Lunenburg, Townsend and Westminster. This is where you can help. We have sample letters on file -- join the action.

Welcome New Liaisons

Thanks to the newest point people for joining our ranks :

Acton, Donna DeBoever
Arlington, Carol Kowalski
Carlisle, Sarah Brophy
Concord, Chris Rinaldo
Princeton, Deborah Carey
Shirley, Sylvia Shipton

Presentations

Towns have invited us to speak to special groups: The Concord Historical Commission, Ashby Board of Selectmen, Lexington officials, Lunenburg Board of Selectmen, for example. We deliver our slide presentation, answer the tough and easy questions, and usually initiate discussion that informs us about the towns we are visiting.

Once we are able to locate some portable equipment, we will look forward to mobilizing our speakers bureau to help with these meetings. If you are interested in making presentations on behalf of Freedom's Way, or if you know of a group interested in hearing from us, call 978-772-3654.

A GUIDE TO THE
BLACK FREEDOM TRAIL
IN HARVARD, MASSACHUSETTS



Deacon Reuben Whitcomb Home and Store

New Publications

African American History ... "The Black Freedom Trail in Harvard, Massachusetts" by Nancy Reifenstein, an 11 page research paper funded by the local Cultural Council is available for \$3.50 with guide. The Guide, illustrated by Janet Fowke, purchased alone is ninety-five cents plus fifty cents postage. Both are available from Freedom's Way Heritage Assoc. For the research paper and guide, add \$1.50 for shipping and handling.

It is hoped that this publication will be a model to stimulate other towns to undertake research on this subject to identify and protect their underground railroad stops (documented or legendary) so that the network of regional efforts will be revealed.

This project is being encouraged by the National Park Service and will assist our effort to receive NPS designation as a National Heritage Area. The Author will be using this in the fifth grade along with a tour of the town center, its underground railroad stops and the cemetery where there is a slave's headstone for "Othello, faithful friend."

Women's History ... "Three Centuries, Three Women" another paper to be published in the fall will feature the interconnections between these women: Mother Ann Lee, Abigail Alcott and Clara Endicott Sears to be researched by Cynthia Barton, biographer of Alcott and Sears.

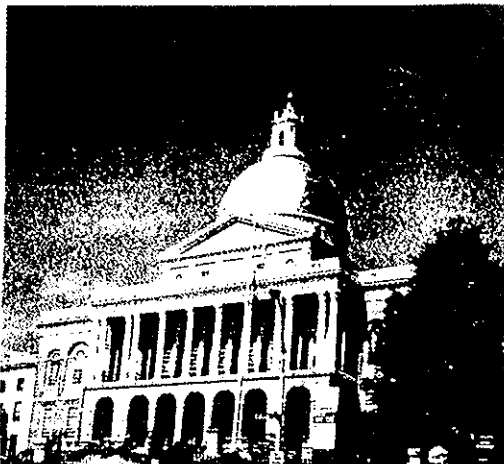
Outreach

The Day at the State House

Beatrice Bernier, ICON architecture, inc., David Gilmore, Shirley; Maryanne MacLeod, Sterling; Michael Sczerzen and Cathy Griffen, Lancaster; Diane Sullivan, Ayer; Jean McCrosky, Harvard; Millie Chandler and Marge Darby attended the meeting at the State house to give the legislators a brief description of the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area proposal.

As mentioned earlier, the meeting was arranged by Rep. Pam Resor, a longtime supporter of ours and a FWHA member. Bernice, Diane and Jean arrived by their own steam, but the rest of us piled our huge maps and display items into Cathy's commodious van. David amused us with an imitation of Mr. Bean, so we were in good spirits when we arrived.

The State house is a confusing labyrinth if you are not familiar with its layout. After a few wrong turns, we found our room which was adjacent to the main chamber. By the time our entourage had finished setting up the displays, the room had been transformed. The tables were strewn with summary reports, maps, and brochures; photographs illustrating the heritage area decorated the mantle and every available window niche we could use. Maryanne brought early Native American artifacts and Jean copies of the book *Nashaway*. Rep. Resor supplied great cheese and crackers and other nibbles. She also provided a self-activated slide projector so the legislators had fun clicking through the presentation. We talked a great deal, we listened very hard to suggestions, and a tired, but satisfied group of stragglers piled into Cathy's van for the long trip home.



Mini-Regional Meetings

Subregional meetings are being arranged throughout the National Heritage area to bring neighboring communities together to talk about the process of receiving national designation and to share by displays, some materials which demonstrate the historical and natural sites which will be featured in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area themes.

David Gilmore of the Shirley Village Partnership hosted a meeting there in November. He spoke about the project the SVP has in Shirley Village called "The Reinvention of Shirley Village." Plans are underway to improve lighting, provide street furniture, and bury power lines. He pointed out the linkages between the work of the SVP and FWHA by noting his project " respects Shaker traditions and the influence of the late nineteenth-twentieth century's railroad era." A good sized crowd came to hear the story and participate in the discussion in Shirley's new Town Library. Invitees were residents and officials of the towns of Ayer, Lancaster, Lunenburg and Shirley. Ann Geary Roche, Shirley Selectman was one of the attendees.

Diane Sullivan, Economic Development Director of Ayer, with the help of Ruth Rhonemus, created Ayer's presentation. It was so effective as an educational tool that Diane is currently working on turning it into a more permanent display which can be taken from place to place. Michael Sczerzen and Cathy Griffen arranged an excellent and attractive presentation about Lancaster, which also came with us to the State House (see State House meeting). Sharon Lindsay of SVP arranged the display for Shirley. All the towns are justifiably proud of their historic centers. We are most grateful to those who arranged the details of location, refreshments and the attractive exhibits.

Suzy Becker of Bolton, hosted another meeting for the towns of Bolton, Boxborough, Harvard and Stow at the Bolton Town Hall in April. More than thirty persons attended including Rep. Pat Walrath and town officials. The historic Town Hall of Bolton was a perfect setting for the displays arranged by each town.

Bolton continued... This time the displays were both informative and touched with a sense of humor as well as pride: apples in a basket, miniature replicas of historic houses. Several of Stow's participants sported buttons with the wording "The Ancient Ones" a provocative attention-getter for town archivists. From the enthusiastic Boxborough people we learned about History Day. Harvard's conservation trail guide and maps were on display and all the towns had pictures of precious buildings to share.

Jackie Davison, arranged a meeting at the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington on April 28 at 8:30 A.M. Perhaps it was the early hour, or Jackie's refreshments, but this meeting prompted Lexington's officials to share their suggestions for regional linkages with economic benefits: emphasize the "Paths of the Patriots" project; encourage bike rentals and places to buy box lunches; use town web-sites to identify and show historic sites; perhaps hotels would provide signage; don't overlook Garden Clubs' interest in civic beautification and signage. Among the attendees was Nancy Nelson of the National Park Service whose enthusiastic participation was most welcome.

Additional subregional meetings are being planned with other town liaisons. If you are interested in helping to schedule one for your town, call us at 978-772-3654.

Stakeholder Meetings

Janet Kennedy, was our host and facilitator for a scoping session at the beautiful Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge of US Fish and Wildlife on Weir Road in Sudbury. This is the facility that elicits the "oohs" during our slide presentations. Even more beautiful are the views (aahs) through the windows of the building. And Janet works there every day!

The session was to scope out subjects of interest for a forum to be held in the near future for Freedom's Way National Heritage Area land managers.

The National Park Service recommends a process for arriving at a regional vision through consensus, called "Building Gateway Partnerships." We intend to follow the NPS recommendations.



Frank Gohlke

A gateway community is any town associated with a shared regional landscape, and impacted by its use. Those of you who attended any of the subregional meetings may remember that the process we are using to garner consensus on a regional vision includes meeting with gateway stakeholders as well as the gateway communities. The subregional meetings are the first step in the process of informing the communities.

Gateway stakeholders are: communities, educators, land managers, businesses, historic organizations, environmental groups, museums, legislators -- those who share a gateway area. Our plans are to hold a series of forums for each of the various stakeholders. In the planning stages are the meeting for area land managers as mentioned above, and another for businesses. We'd be happy to explain more about the gateway process if you call the Freedom's Way Office.

Welcome New and Renewing Members !

Bill Ashe, Audrey and John Ball, Harriet Bridges, Ellie Buford, Ann Chapman, Walt Clancy, Thomas and Catherine Crocker, Jackie Davison, Piali De, Ernest and Cathy Elliot, Sandra and Bob Farwell, Eleanor Fitzgerald, Liz Fletcher, Pam Frederick, Audrey Friend, Anthony Galaitis, Robert Gardner, Sarah and James Hamill, Trev Hammett, Jeff and Ronni Harris, George Krusen, Judy Larter, Sandra and Henry Lefkovits, Carol Lodi, Kathy and Curtis Marble, Jean McCrosky, A. Dale and Clare McMullen, Robert Morrison, Peter and Mary Ellen Onno, Katherine Poor, Nancy Reifenstein, Pam Resor, Mary Rivet, Nancy and Rex Schirmer, Connie Schwarzkopf, Marion Stoddart, Betsi Tennessee, Kevin and Therese Thompson, Jim and Lucy Wallace, Bill and Barbara White, Harvard Historical Society, Harvard Women's Club.

National Treasures Are Meant to Be Shared

Revolutionary Patriots Paths

Here once the embattled farmers stood and fired the shot heard round the world.
Emerson

Freedom's Way Heritage Area Towns prepare for the year 2000 and cooperate with Nancy Nelson of the Minute Man National Park Service plans for a major celebration.

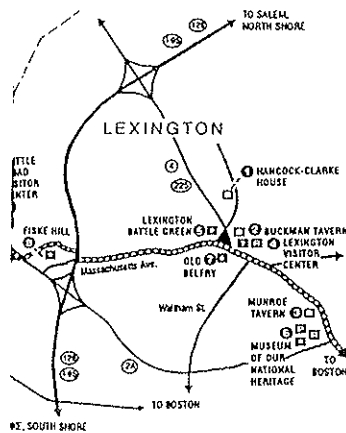
The exciting stories of the American Revolution stir us all, because it is the stuff of fantasy and yet it is real. It is our shared history. Men riding into the night to raise the alarm. Hundreds of men and boys gathering in Acton, Boxborough, Dunstable, Pepperell, Lancaster and beyond, then marching through fields enlisting others to join them.

There are stories of those who spread the alarm, of men who brought ammunition to the battle from outlying areas; of women who stayed behind to protect the homesteads. Taverns were town meeting places when the churches swore allegiance to the King and many played an important function relaying the news and events of war. All the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area cities and towns which participated in the April 19th march to Concord, Lexington and Boston will be part of the Paths of the Patriots project to identify the roads taken, the significant stops, the stories of people and their circumstances -- including stories of families torn by differing allegiances. Not

only the march to assist in the attack, but of how the alarm was conveyed, and the responses are to be included in completing this history.

We owe it to our children to keep alive the significant events by telling the stories yet untold and retelling the others. Some towns have accounts already published, others engage in reenactments. We wish to gather details and are asking historical groups, Minutemen organizations and history buffs to help us. An outline of the details we are looking for will be mailed upon request.

Acton saw the significance of this activity and compiled data in 1970 which put the Isaac Davis



trail and buildings on the National Register in 1972. All of the sites and the route are marked with permanent granite markers to assist school children and others in identifying these memorable locations. Part of Route 2 is named the Isaac Davis Trail.

This FWNHA project is to assist the towns tie into the National Park Service Minute Man National Park

celebration planned for the year 2000. We have two years to complete our Paths of the Patriots. We urge your cooperation. Call 772-3654

Lexington and Concord

MAP AND GUIDE



The
"Birthplace
of Liberty"
...and much more!



drawing from the Littleton Guide 3rd. ed.

Mt. Wachusett A Natural and Recreational Resource

Mt. Wachusett State Reservation (MWSR) is a unique public land, part the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area. The mountain is a state landmark, the ninth highest point east of the Connecticut River. Once a pristine and wild area, naturalist writers John Greenleaf Whittier and Henry David Thoreau were inspired by its beauty. Thoreau's description of his "Walk to Wachusett" has in turn inspired many hikers. The slopes were home to the Nipmuc Indians during the time of King Philip's War. Many have claimed Wachusett is the only hill in Central Massachusetts worthy of being called a mountain. Even today, Native Americans of the area consider Mt. Wachusett sacred. And it is a place dear to many for its diverse and natural resource values.

In 1994, Gordon Brownell found what he believed to be Virgin Forest on Mt. Wachusett. If true, he knew this was indeed unique for an area that had been mostly stripped of woodland in the past through heavy logging activities. After several extensive reports by researchers and forest ecologists, it was

Wachusett continued... confirmed the Mt. Wachusett holds the largest stand (130 acres) of old growth forest in the Commonwealth. At a press conference in August of 1996, the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Peter Webber, and the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Trudy Coxe stated their commitment to the protection of the ancient forest by prohibiting the cutting of trees above a certain line. The Mt. Wachusett ancient forest is the only identified old growth stand east of the Connecticut River. In this rare forest, yellow birches and red oaks, twisted and gnarled by centuries of snow, wind and rain, have survived for more than 250 years. The Wachusett ancient forest was here before the founding of our country in 1776.

Close to 1,000,000 people visit or ski the mountain each year. With this recent discovery Massachusetts DEM, the stewards of this unique area are charged with the difficult task of maintaining the appropriate balance of usage of the mountain in order to protect a rare, natural resource for future generations.

For more information write: Donna Brownell, P. O. Box 690, Westminster, MA 01473

New Voice?

Have you heard the new sweet voice on our office phone? That is Bobbi Atkinson's, and she has volunteered to work Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Since she began working here the office has become more efficient. Bobbi is a retired teacher from Westford. We are happy to have her help.

Thanks also to Pam Frederick who has been kind enough to help lick stamps and address envelopes.

If you can commit a few specific hours a week, we'd welcome the assistance.

Funding

The need to raise funds for operating and programs has prompted the writing of several grants to foundations and businesses. We wish to become acquainted with businesses who will want to invest in the Heritage project. Our immediate goal is to raise \$200,000 for the completion of the Management Plan. To achieve this sum, we will need to have participation of the State, National Park Service, business and private funding. While we work to acquire this funding, we are continuing with those pieces of the Plan which can be accomplished by volunteers, thus reducing the total cost.

New Projects, and Creative Ideas

Heritage Homecomings



The Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor is planning a series of events, called Heritage Homecomings to reunite families, promote tourism, and build local pride. Some of the events include: road races, canoe tours, historic walks, salutes to volunteers, bike tours, breakfasts, candlelight tours of historic houses, and more.

Boxborough has its own form of Heritage Homecoming called "History Day." Only three years old, it has become a popular day of in-gathering for past and current town residents as well as a draw for history buffs. Held in early May, the admission is free.

Individuals and town organizations contribute displays illustrating three themes: Home and Family; Work and Farm; Personal Memories. One woman brings old kitchen gadgets and the children guess at their use. The firemen bring out their old fire engine, and a glass hearse is on display. The Minutemen have a shooting demonstration that is as scary as the Fourth of July boomers to the little ones. People display old pictures and memorabilia.

By far the biggest hit are the "dueling" projectors: Two slide presentations show buildings and sites, one then and the other now.

We think this is an idea that could catch on! Would your town like to have a History Day? If several towns had similar events on the same day or weekend people could visit several towns for a real taste of Freedom's Way!

Projects

The Nashua River Watershed Association and the four towns of Ayer Harvard, Lancaster, Shirley in cooperation with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission have begun a five-part project called, "Communities Connected by Water." FWHA supports such regional planning partnerships and looks forward to each iteration of the initiative. This type of inter-community planning effort recognizes the need to think beyond our own town boundaries for planning purposes. FWHA has been recommending such broader planning efforts for some time, now.

We applaud the NRWA and the Towns.

Projects continued... Concord is to be congratulated for finding assistance in its effort to repair its priceless Sleepy Hollow figure, "Mourning Victory" by Daniel Chester French. *Yankee Magazine's* Community Partners Program supports the work of eligible community groups in New England. Call 800-729-9265 Ext. 132.

Also in Concord, The Minute Man National Park Association has been formed to help preserve the Park's heritage. For information call: 978-369-6993

Littleton's Open Space Plan Implementation Committee directed by the Board of Selectmen used a recreational facilities survey to assess town priorities in July 1997. It also included a valuing survey of the waters, wetlands, agricultural lands, forests, scenic area, wildlife habitat, historic features, ancient trees, and unique geological features. It stated that the town budget has doubled in ten years partly to support town services for 449 new homes built.

Ayer. Does your town have a drinking fountain on a main street? Ruth Rhonemus, Ayer, is looking for other towns which have a fountain donated by the Women's Christian Temperance Union. A hundred years ago, these fountains would have ice delivered each day to make cold water readily available. Call her with your information evenings 978-772-5890



Water Fountain, Ayer

Tavern Tours

We have decided to fold the Tavern Tour Project into the Paths of the Patriots Project. Because most taverns were situated on main roads and intersections, they played an important role during the American Revolution. Our preliminary research has given us some insight into the social and political importance of the taverns. Since most taverns were also inns as well as stage coach stops, the exchange of news was rapidly disseminated from innkeepers to townspeople. Innkeepers became important cogs in the wheels of the revolutionary activities.

We will include the existing taverns in the Paths of the Patriots tour, noting special stories about each tavern and the roles particular innkeepers played during the War of Independence.

In response to our first query, we have received information about taverns still standing from the following towns: Bedford, Bolton, Harvard, Lexington, Shirley, Townsend, and Westford. If we have not heard from you about your town's tavern, call the office for a copy of the tavern information sheet. Feel free to send along any story/ies you might have about your town's tavern, whether it is extant or gone, the Revolutionary lore is part of our heritage as well.

Historic landscape reservation grants

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) offers grants of up to \$50,000 for the preservation and restoration of municipally-owned historic landscapes.

Grants are available to municipalities only, and require a cash match of 30 to 40 percent.

The grants may be used for studies, construction activities, maintenance, or public education projects to protect historic landscapes such as parks, commons, cemeteries, and the grounds of public buildings.

The landscape must be listed or eligible for listing on the state or national Register of Historic Places.

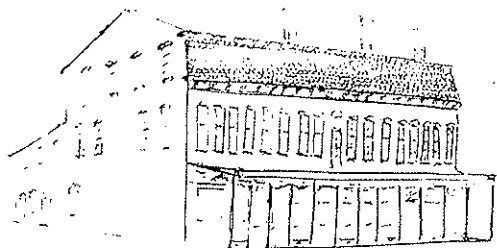
The deadline for this spring's applications was May 15. **Now** is the time to begin planning for the next funding round. Contact: Gordon Marshall, DEM grant coordinator, at 617-727-3610, ext. 519.

The preservation movement has one great curiosity. There is never retrospective controversy or regret. Preservationists are the only people in the world who are invariably confirmed in their wisdom after the fact.
John Kenneth Galbraith

We Are Rich With Friends, But Oh, How We Wish For...

Another computer, preferably a MAC System 7.5
A copier
A plain paper fax
A Kodak Slide/Audio Tape Projector
Volunteers to help with: data entry, fundraising, and computer graphics.

Hats Off to Zelda !



Page Block, Ayer



Carl and Gloria Chandler

Ayer Historian and Freedom's Way Heritage Association Board Member, Zelda Moore has signed a purchase agreement for the historic Page Block in Ayer and two residences on Washington Street. The properties were part of the estate of the late Ralph H. Richardson.

Zelda has been concerned about preserving the history of her town for many years. Among her many activities, she diligently recorded an oral history of Ralph Richardson, himself a historian who shared with Zelda an abiding interest in the history of their town.

Page Block, built by the Page family in 1872, is the most prominent building on Main Street and as such, uniquely contributes to the special character of the town.

Main Street Ayer was selected as a National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street USA project. The purchase of Page Block will strengthen the town's historic image and add a measure of economic benefit as the rehabilitation project proceeds.

Hurrah for Zelda and the Moore family! Hurrah for Ayer! Most of all, we know Ralph would be pleased.

Appreciation

The family and friends of Carl and Gloria Chandler of Harvard have remembered them with contributions to the Freedom's Way African American Heritage Effort. Carl died in February of this year. He was proud of his wife Gloria's Hazard family heritage and fascinated by the stories of her many relatives who settled in the Freedom's Way area as early as the 1700s. Gifts in memory of Carl and Gloria have been designated for restricted use for heritage work about: early settlement, the Black Freedom Trail, the Underground Railroad, the Civil War and other stories. Few families can trace their American Heritage as far back as the Hazards. Their history is unique in this way. We urge those of you who can help document the Hazard heritage, through family bibles, town, school, farm and church records, to become part of this project. Our gratitude to: Marie Bakun, Josie Carothers, Elizabeth Marr, Frances Callbeck, Norm and Buddy Schmidt,

Frances Anderson, Joyce and Will Garrick, Phyllis Newman, Lois and Bayard Underwood, Susan Leeming, Marge and Steve Darby, Esther and Clyde Fairbanks, Elsie and Phil Shutt.

In-Kind Gifts and Other Support

Freedom's Way Heritage Association has received many gifts, monetary donations and in-kind support. We count among our supporters a growing list of townspeople, mayors and selectmen, preservationists, economic development planners, conservationists, and businesses, among them: Congressman John Tierney, Mayor Dean Mazzarella of the City of Leominster, Rep. Patricia Walrath, Acton Chamber of Commerce, Community Chambers of Commerce (Hudson, Maynard, Bolton, Berlin, Stow), Gardner Superintendent of Schools, Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce, the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, Atlantic Union College, The Perkins School, Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, Mt. Wachusett Community College, Lancaster Land Trust, Lancaster Historical Commission, Lancaster Historical Society, Town of Lancaster Environmental Coordinator, Jean Lidstone, Town of Ayer Office of Economic Development, Town of Ashby Board of Selectmen, Town of Harvard Board of Selectmen, Town of Hudson Board of Selectmen, Lancaster Town Library Director Sue Hoadley, Lancaster First Church of Christ, City of Leominster Office of Planning and Development, City of Leominster Conservation Commission, Leominster Historical Commission, City of Gardner Department of Community Development, Town of Westminster Planning Board, local historical societies and Rotarians. Organizations who have helped us in some way include: ASERT, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Minute Man Regional Historical Society, Nashua River Watershed Association, Museum of Our National Heritage, Fruitlands Museums, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, Citizens to Protect Residential Harvard, Harvard League of Women Voters, Harvard Garden Club, Harvard Women's Club, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Shirley Village Partnership. In addition, we count the following as our friends: Marjorie Panott Adams, Phyllis Farnsworth, Nancy McDowell, the Little Flour Breadshoppe, Lancaster Gardens, Bolton Country Properties, Lancaster Garden Ornaments, Herbal Acres, Carter Washburn House.

Freedom's Way National Heritage Area Designation

The Feasibility Study for a National Heritage designation from Lexington to Gardner, Sudbury to Nashua, NH was completed the summer of 1997. The conclusion indicated there is "sufficient evidence to demonstrate to Congress the area's uniqueness, national significance, and the ways in which it might serve as a sensible growth management device." The Summary Report outlines the project consultant's examination of preliminary data, and explains the preferred alternative approach selected by the participants. The report is available for \$1.50 from the offices of Freedom's Way Heritage Association, 43 Buena Vista Street, Devens, MA 01433.

Support for the Heritage Area

Towns and citizens are joining to support the continuation of a process, to accomplish the purpose of a heritage area designation. A National Heritage Area designation will bring opportunities for public stewardship and civic pride to a region worthy of celebrating its uniqueness. The next step will be for one or more congressmen to submit legislation based on this satisfactory study.

At FWHA we are undertaking parts of the Management Action Plan which can be accomplished without funding, while we seek funds from the State and private foundations.

The management action plan will be the result of a cooperative effort between the National Park Service, State and local officials, and regional coalitions of stakeholders including: citizens, town representatives, land managers, environmental groups, business organizations, historic organizations, and museums. It is estimated to require approximately \$200,000 to complete.

A one-sided plan representing only one viewpoint, one business organization, or any other single concern would not be a true regional effort. Consequently, Freedom's Way Heritage Association is holding a series of meetings to bring together the various stakeholders. Mini-regional presentations (three or four towns together) for citizens and town representatives are being conducted until all the towns in the area have had an opportunity to learn about the concept.

Planning is underway for similar meetings for: land managers, business associations and historic preservation groups and other stakeholders.

The management action plan process will examine all the management, marketing and action options for the existing and proposed visitor destinations, and their interrelationships.

Explanation of a Heritage Area Concept

Within the Heritage Area, specific visitor destination sites, relating to historic themes, are developed and maps are drawn which identify area highlights, historic sites, districts and information centers. All the centers are illustrative of main or sub-themes, and show their connections to each other through historic events or personal stories. Using this type of theme related experience, towns can highlight the most important events drawing connections to other towns across the region. As a result, visitors are encouraged to plan for longer stays and the local economy will benefit substantially.

Quality of Life

A National Heritage Area designation is about the quality of life, and the special identity of a proposed area. The designation helps provide a mechanism through which a region establishes its identity, a vision for the future and ways to address the towns' changing needs. The designation is also a proven method to address regional growth planning through integrated efforts for: agriculture, social and economic development, education, historic interpretation and research, linkages, open space, recreation, and tourism. John Lipman, Director of Growth Planning of the EOEA, who has praised the Freedom's Way Heritage Area initiative, offers grants to municipalities for unified growth planning through town efforts and the Regional Planning Commissions.

Heritage Area Designation Does Not Eliminate Local Control

- Acquisitions of buildings or lands are not part of The National Park Service agenda with respect to the Heritage Area proposal.

- National Heritage Area designation is designed to be locally driven. The legislation for the Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor, for example, specifically states the management entity shall not: *“interfere with: the rights of any person with respect to private property; or any local zoning ordinance or land use plan....”*
- The responsibility of the local Historic or other Commissions remains the same.
- Local management of local initiatives are the focus of heritage areas, which are designed to obviate the need for the Park Service to acquire expensive tracts of lands, or historic buildings.
- A federal designation of a National Heritage Area supports local bylaws, local development.
- It is not a regulatory authority.

What Does the National Heritage Designation Do?

A National Heritage Area designation provides a cohesive framework and brings a broader dimension to economic development, growth planning and preservation.

In designated Heritage Areas, the community becomes a classroom. Teaching local history is an important activity that cannot be easily measured in economic terms, yet provides long-term benefits.

A designation will help bring a regional focus by delineating a breadth of scope, establish a mechanism to develop historic theme linkages, utilize the services of the National Park Service to help highlight important national sites and resources.

What Is It Going To Cost? Who Will Pay?

Once designation is secured and the Management Action Plan is in place, it is also anticipated that funding for specific projects will be available from many sources. Over the long term, support will be shared by three main entities: the National Park Service; the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; a private consortia or coalition of “friends,” foundations, businesses, and corporations.

The Affects of Tourism

Tourists have a variety of interests, they might be: architects, artists, students, bird watchers, canoers, geologists, elder hostellers, hikers, historians, cross-country skiers, visitors to museum exhibits, to libraries, to athenacums, or to botanical gardens. Towns will chose how, or if, they wish to encourage tourism. Fragile sites can be excluded, or used with cautionary interpretive signage. Planning would address ways to mitigate unwanted impacts.

Consistently, respected published studies of both national and state heritage tourism show little or no adverse impacts from local tourism efforts, particularly where those efforts are tied to regional planning goals.

Old or Older Buildings

‘The US Dept. Of Commerce measures the impact of production within a given industry three ways: the number of jobs created , the increase in local household incomes, and the impact on other industries. In state after state, building rehabilitation outperforms new construction on each of those measurements.

“Dollar for dollar, preservation is one of the highest job-generating economic development options available Historic preservation creates more jobs than the same amount of new construction.” *The Economics of Historic Preservation*, Donovan D. Rypkema.

Quality of Life

The quality of life is the single most important factor for choosing a place to live and a place to conduct business. Studies conducted by well-known analysts repeatedly find the business communities are as interested in the quality of life as the ordinary resident. Not surprisingly therefore, there is a surge of interest in protecting the sites and places that contribute to a community’s sense of place.

* * *

Freedom’s Way Heritage Association strives to unify people, entire cities and towns, businesses, heritage organizations, environmental groups, and state government to work together to interpret, preserve and enhance the region’s special identity by promoting public stewardship, education, integrated historic preservation and planning where private ownership predominates but change is creatively guided.

Activities

- May "One Thousand Generations" Presentation series by Native people to accompany opening of new exhibit in Indian Museum. Fruitlands Museums 978-456-3924.
- May 8 "The Evolution of Puritan Meetinghouse to Church, slide show by Robert Coyle at the Shirley Museum at 7:30 PM
- May 10 Exhibition Tour with curator Marianne Menger. Families invited to Fitchburg Art Museum 2-4 PM. Free
- May 16-17 UNACC 3rd Annual Powwow Antietam Street, Devens 978-772-1306
- May 17 Sleepy Hollow Walk in Concord's Westminster Abbey with Concord Museum director Jayne Gordon. Registration: Concord-Carlisle Community Education at 978-371-9450
- May 30 Hand Colored Photography Exhibition from 1 - 3 PM at Fitchburg Art Museum. Free
- June 4-Aug 15 The Centenary of John Witt Randall Art Collection from Stow's best known benefactor will be celebrated in a special exhibit at Harvard's Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge.
- June 5 Garden Tour of Concord's outstanding gardens. Box lunches available by preregistration 978-369-9763 served 12 noon to 1:30. Tour 9 to 4.
- June 6 All Town Hoe Down at Shirley Common
- June 7 Guided tour of the Shirley Shaker Village 12:30 to 2:30 and on the first Sunday of succeeding months. Call 978-425-9328 for reservations at \$10 each.
- June 7 Watercolor: Going with the Flow. From 1-3:30 Demonstration and Workshop. At Fitchburg Art Museum. Call for reservation 978-345-4217 Free
- June 13 Townsend Historical Society Victorian Tea and talk about Victorian plant varieties by Priscilla Williams. Sale of heirloom herbs, vegetables and flowers. At Reed Homestead.
- June 20 "Caribbean for Kids" multicultural music for children from 1-2 PM at Dunn State Park, Gardner
- June 21 "Foolproof Follies", outdoor recreation, juggling, magic tricks, interactive stories, plus juggling workshop for kids from 1-2 PM at Dunn State Park, Gardner.
- June 27 "Garbage is My Bag" environmental awareness for children and adults from 1-2PM at Dunn State Park, Gardner.
- June 27-28 Summer Solstice Spiritual Gathering: Sterling Camp Grounds, Sterling MA. 987-791-5007
- June 28 "Earth Rhythms" environmental education music for children from 1-2 PM at Dunn State Park, Gardner
- July 10 "The Restoration of the 18th Century Longley Barn" at the Shirley Museum at 7:30 PM
- July 11 Chaubunagungamaug Council: Strawberry Moon Festival and Potluck, UNAAC, Devens 978-772-1306
- July 12 Lancaster Garden Tour and Ice Cream Social to benefit the Library Building Fund. Six Gardens. Tickets \$10.00 ea. available at the Library on the Town Green, P. O. Box 5, Lancaster, MA 01523 or call Cathy at 368-8875

Membership is the best way to Participate in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

If you are not yet a member, or you would like to give a gift membership or a donation, you may send us this form:

I would like to become a member:

Please send a gift membership to:

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Telephone _____

Circle your choice of membership level:

Individual \$30

Senior/Student \$25

Non-profit or Public Agency \$50

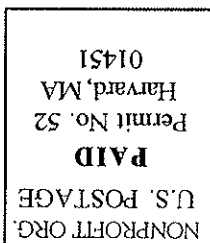
Corporate \$100

Commemorative Gifts

I/We hereby contribute to Freedom's Way Heritage Association as gift of \$ _____

Purpose of gift: _____

Make checks payable to Freedom's Way Heritage Association, 43 Buena Vista St., Devens MA 01433



Freedom's Way Heritage Association
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Devens MA 01433