



# Freedom's Way Heritage Association

Serving 45

Communities in

Massachusetts and

New Hampshire

- Rediscovering the Native Landscape
- Inventing the New England Landscape
- Shaping the Landscape of Democracy

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Freedom's Way Heritage

Spring/Summer 2007

## It's Official: FWHA is a MA state heritage area!

November 10, 2006 marks the official passage of the bill creating the Massachusetts Freedom's Way Heritage Area and Commission. The heritage area includes all 37 FWHA Massachusetts communities and recognizes "the significant historic, cultural and natural resources of the Freedom's Way Heritage Area," and its work to "preserve and interpret them for the education and inspiration of present and future generations."

The bill, originally submitted by MA Sen. Pam Resor and MA Rep. Jamie Eldridge, was closely shepherded to passage by Representative Pat Walrath.

A 15-member FWHA commission was also created to coordinate the heritage area activities, participate in estab-

lishing guidelines, administer funds and grants, and prepare and implement a historic preservation and interpretive plan for the area.

MA Gov. Duvall Patrick will receive the recommendations for potential members of the 15-member board, which will include representatives from local town and city governments within the area, local historic societies, chambers of commerce, regional environmental organizations, museums, local land managers, African American and Nipmuc community representatives. The commission will include, as ex-officio members, the commissioner of the Department of Recreation and Conservation as well as the Massachusetts Historical Commission Executive Director.

## Legislators Pass NH Freedom's Way Bill

FWHA board member Will Ludt of Amherst, NH spearheaded a large effort to create a similar heritage area in New Hampshire. With great assistance of NH Rep.

Peter F. Bergin, a bill establishing a FWHA state heritage area encompassing the towns of Amherst, Brookline Greenville, Hollis, Mason, Milford, Nashua and New Ipswich was filed.

With the additional support of



NH Rep.  
Peter Bergin  
of Amherst,  
NH

Cont on page 3

## FWHA All-Chamber Summit held in Shirley



Standing: Andrew Syiek, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce; Jessica Rowcroft, DCR; Mary Jo Bohart, Lexington Chamber of Commerce; May Balsama, Souhegan Chamber of Commerce; John Ott, National Heritage Museum; Eric Shapiro, Phoenix Park. Seated: Marge Darby, Freedom's Way; Michele Meagher, Arlington Chamber of Commerce; Stephanie Stillman, Concord Chamber of Commerce; Maegen McCaffrey, Wachusett Chamber of Commerce; Jessica Strunkin, North Central MA Chamber of Commerce.

By Andrew Syiek  
On March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce partnered with Freedom's Way Heritage Association, Phoenix Park and the Department of Conservation and Recreation to conduct an initial meeting of several area Chambers of Commerce leaders. The event provided a successful venue to embrace the concept of the Freedom's Way national heritage designation and to begin collaborating on how Heritage designation will benefit commerce and community. What's more, in early March, federal legislation was introduced seeking national heritage designation for Freedom's Way. We are familiar with heritage as primarily a preservation program, but are we familiar with what a national Freedom's Way Heritage designation would mean for business?

Cont. on page 2

## Chamber Summit (cont from page 1)

Would you say that food manufacturing, technology or manufacturing is the state's third largest industry? Tourism actually, is Massachusetts third largest industry. Tourism generates over 31 million visitors to Massachusetts each year. Tourism generates many millions of dollars in state and local tax and over a billion dollars in travel-related expenditures.

Freedom's Way celebrates and symbolizes the very foundation of civilization in the United States. A Freedom's Way National Heritage designation would attract people and businesses from all over the world to enjoy our richly preserved heritage and resources while focusing on this special part of the country. These new designations will spur a natural outgrowth, a more focused effort to create plans for tourism management. Area businesses ranging from hotels to museums will be involved in coordinated, cooperative efforts to attract tourism.

Freedom's Way embodies the physical, cultural, historical and idealistic landscape so primary to the foundation of our nation.

Most Chambers of Commerce are chartered to promote and support business and/or tourism. There are eleven that encompass the Freedom's Way Heritage area. In the future as tourism management plans are developed, Chamber of Commerce members will likely play an important role coordinating and fulfilling those management plans.

Chambers of Commerce membership businesses will provide food, accommodations, museums and points of interest to the multitude of tourists anticipated once promotional tours and educational programs are coordinated upon confirmation of a national designation.

Contact your area chamber of commerce and introduce yourself as a Freedom's Way enthusiast!

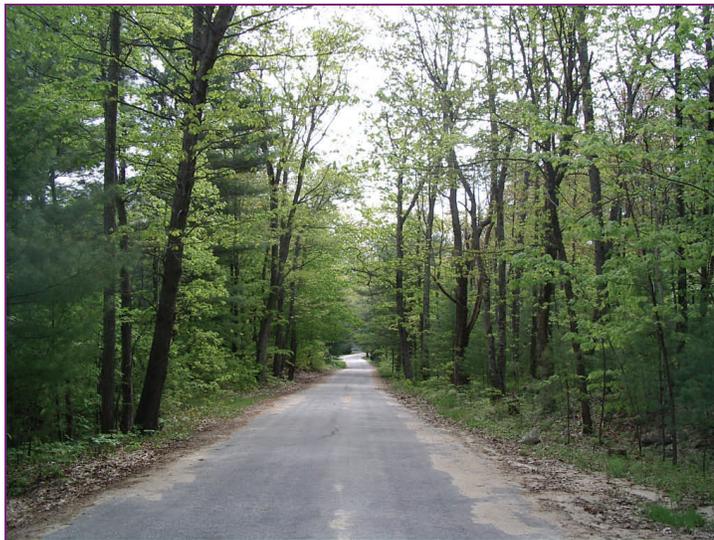


Photo: DCR

## Walk or Ride Historic Harvard June 16, 2007

**Starting Point: Fruitlands Museum**  
Route Maps Provided identifying interesting and historic sites

**10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

### Freedom's Way Heritage Association

John Ott, President

Jerry Van Hook,  
Vice President

Mary Shasta, Treasurer

Meg Bagdonas,  
Secretary

Marge Darby,  
Chair, Advisory Council  
Board Member Emeritus

Milly Chandler,  
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Board Member Emeritus

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Freedom's Way Heritage Association Serves the Communities of Acton, Arlington, Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Clinton, Concord, Dunstable, Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Harvard, Hudson, Lancaster, Leominster, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Lunenburg, Malden, Maynard, Medford, Pepperell, Princeton, Shirley, Sterling, Stow, Sudbury, Townsend, Westford, Westminster, Winchendon and Woburn in Massachusetts. Amherst, Brookline, Greenville, Hollis, Mason, Milford, Nashua and New Ipswich in New Hampshire.



## President's Message



John Ott

Our New England Landscape is quite resilient and has been in survivor mode for more than a century. As our communities struggle with

issues like population growth, fiscal priorities, property tax rates and their citizens who face all the stress factors of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, one has to ask oneself, is what Freedom's Way stands for important? Where does the preservation of the local landscape, historic buildings, protecting environmental sites and the history of all of the above fit into the picture?

Well, from where I stand, Freedom's Way is now more relevant than ever and its work more significant given the recent renewed interest of Americans in their planet.

One of the most important things that the FWHA has done recently is to partner with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to carry out the Heritage Landscape Inventory surveys in 22 towns within its state border. (see related story, page 5)

From Arlington to Ashby groups of citizens, children and

adults, town planners and farmers, teachers and students, small business owners and retirees got together to explore the elements of their communities that make them unique, significant to them and to find ways to insure the preservation of those elements for future generations.

A further outgrowth of this Landscape Heritage Project led to a meeting of representatives from 9 area Chambers of Commerce, led by board member, Andrew Syiek. Meeting in a conference room at Eric Shapiro's restored and adapted Phoenix Mill business complex, in Shirley, Andrew, I and others described the work going on. What we found was that everyone was enthusiastic and willing to help join our efforts.

Understanding that landscape and building preservation can be good for business and local economies and can produce cost savings when properly guided, and can make both boards of selectmen and developers look good, well you could see the lights go on as it all of a sudden just seemed to make good common sense.

Knowledge and enlightenment are good things and when backed up by visual images of local town landscapes and buildings ripe for adaptation, I felt we had reached another

milestone in our journey.

But there is still a lot of work to do. Even with the official designation of Freedom's Way Heritage Area as a Massachusetts State Heritage Area and with New Hampshire likely to follow suit, we must make many more citizens, business people, developers and local government representatives aware of our efforts.

I hope each of you will visit your town sites and think about how you can help. Are you a member of Freedom's Way? Has your town carried out a Heritage Landscape Inventory? Are townspeople aware of the treasures that make up their community and are they sure of their preservation for future generations? Think about your community and get involved.

John Ott  
President



***“Landscape and building preservation can be good for business and local economies and can produce cost savings when properly guided.”***

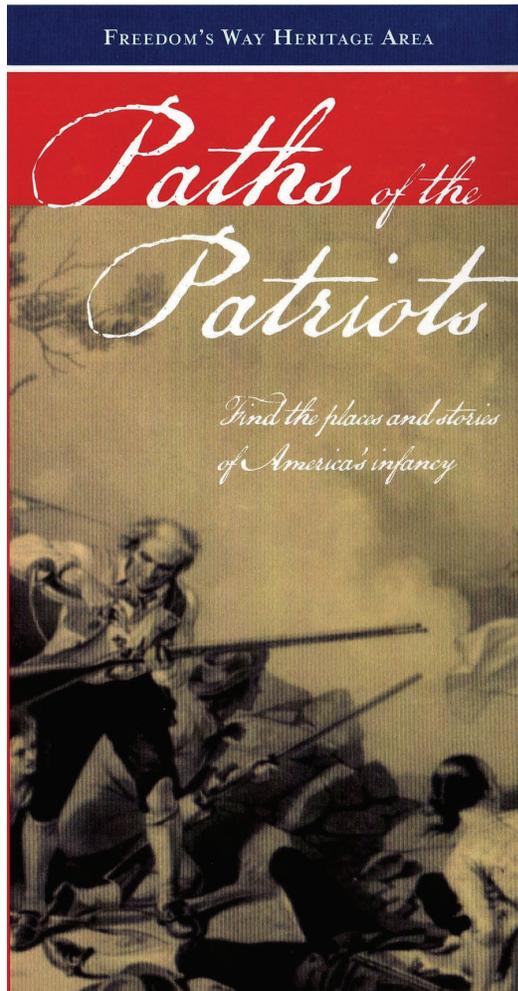
### New Hampshire Scenes



### NH Bill (cont. from Page 1)

Reps Cynthia Dokmo of Amherst, Carolyn Gargas of Hollis, Peter Leishman of Milford, and state Sen. David Gottesman of Nashua and Sen Peter Bragdon of Milford, the NH House Bill 468 was passed May 2nd and awaits Gov. Lynch's signature.

## Paths of the Patriots Nears Completion



For several years, FWHA has been researching the little known and overlooked paths taken by revolutionary fighters aside from the famous and often re-enacted sites in Lexington and Concord. Hundreds of men and boys, from all the towns, marched off to protect the military stores in Concord and stayed to support the conflicts. We consider the paths of these local men no less important than the Battle Road. They tell a story of the size and extent of the action. Each town has records of where the patriots gathered, who went to war, and the burial sites for those who did not survive. We will certainly never identify all the paths they took, but we know they are there, the silent footprints of our history.

Freedom's Way will publish those little known routes, the sites along the way and the stories of the Patriots who traveled them.

The Middlesex County Soldiers who traveled to Fort Ticonderoga in 1776 passed through Groton, Pepperell, Townsend, Ashby, Ashburnham and New Ipswich, NH. Do you have a story to share about a patriot from one of those towns? Let us know!

We are grateful to the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati for contribution toward the cost of some of the graphics. The Shiver Jobs Corp and Bromfield student Jessamine Kelly provided invaluable help with data entry, site verification, and documentation. Without their volunteer help, this work would be incomplete.

### An Ayer Patriot's Story:

Henry Farwell was a captain in the Groton minutemen at the start of the Revolution. He marched to Cambridge on the 19th of April, 1775 and was severely wounded by a musket ball that passed through his body, lodging in the spine. He had it engraved and kept it as a precious relic until he died in 1803.

## Freedom's Way website to get a new look

Thanks in part to a generous donation, the FWHA website — [www.freedomsway.org](http://www.freedomsway.org) — is receiving a top-notch re-design. ICON Architecture of Boston has undertaken the careful study and design to capture and depict the spirit and mission of FWHA on the internet.

Featuring iconic symbols of the independence and democracy, and a color scheme that invokes a sense of history, any web surfer is likely to get an instant feel for what Freedom's Way is working to accomplish.

Be looking for the new scenes appearing on a computer monitor near you!

*The new design  
will depict  
the spirit and  
mission of  
FWHA*

## How are you using your Heritage Landscape Survey?

Of the 22 towns that participated in the Heritage Landscape Inventory program in 2006, some were selected for participation in a variety of small follow up projects to help launch them on the way towards protection, and also to develop a set of products that can be used as models for other communities in the region. These small projects represent landscape types and issues that were found throughout the region, and were selected for further assistance by DCR due to some impending needs as well as the presence of strong local partners.

**Ashby:** documentation of three small cemeteries on MHC inventory forms, and development of a mini-preservation plan for the Old Burial Ground. The cemetery commission and a local landscape architect have taken a very active rolls and assisted with the fieldwork and research.

**Harvard:** development of a scenic roads inventory. This pilot project has developed a methodology to inventory, document and photograph the town's scenic roads to determine the character defining features of these roads and how to best protect them. This project will hopefully serve as prototype for other communities.

**Stow & Hudson:** an MHC area form for the Lake Boon

area cottages has been completed, documenting an early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential area that spans two communities that is facing development pressures and changes to an adjacent town park.

In **Westminster**, DCR is offering guidance to the town to help launch a bid to establish a Local Historic District in the town center. The study committee has been approved by the Board of Selectmen and a public informational meeting has been scheduled for June 13<sup>th</sup>.

To publicize the



"April Morning Pilot Grove Farm" painting by Bruce Davidson

completion of their report, the Town of **Stow** gave residents the opportunity to enter an art show by drawing or photographing scenes of Stow that provide a sense of place. Townspeople selected their favorite entries at the Heritage Landscape Art Show displayed at the Springfest in the Stow Town Hall. The show included hundreds of paintings, drawings and photographs. Even though the weather was wet, townspeople turned out to view the pictures and vote. This idea, of celebrating the town's favorites bring the concept of identifying significant community landscapes to a larger audience and

helps planning efforts for future growth and the preservation of the quality of life. What was surprising, is that Stow residents were asked to vote on their favorite painting and their favorite photograph and chose a painting and photograph of the same site: The Pilot Grove Farm.

Stow follows Hudson's example (see Fall 2006 Newsletter, "Sharing Our Favorite



"Misty Morning" photograph by Bob Smart of Boxborough (formerly of Stow).

Heritage Landscapes") when that town held a photography contest heralded by the Boston Globe and titled "These are a few of my favorite things." Coming together to view what bonds residents is a first step in community planning: the first item on any planning agenda is to look at what exists, and then plan for how to protect that which is important.

**Hudson** will host one of a series of Preservation Mass educational programs: *Preservation 101*. This program, hosted by FWHA, DCR, Preservation Mass, and the Town of Hudson's Historic District/Historic Commission committee, is being planned for Wednesday, September 26th at 4 PM – stay tuned for announcements! The program will also be open to members of the local and regional Chambers of Commerce in Freedom's Way – another important partner in helping to

**Even though the weather was wet, Stow townspeople turned out to view the pictures and vote for their favorite. They chose a painting and photograph of the same site: Pilot Grove Farm**

preserve your town's heritage. Watch for more news as these projects evolve – and let us know how you have been using your reconnaissance survey materials! Finally, please send us your photographs of your town's heritage landscapes for our collection. For access to Heritage Landscape Surveys: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/esssex.htm>

## What is smart about smart growth?

One of the concerns of many towns and confirmed by our Heritage Landscape Surveys is the changing face of our area due primarily to the loss of farmland. How can this tide be stemmed? How can we save our views, landscapes, and sense of place?

We have watched the diminution of farmland, the growth of huge shopping malls, the inability to fund new roads or to repair the old. Small towns depend upon increasing the property tax base that is pricing out the young, the less affluent and the old. The declining values of empty city buildings stretch city budgets beyond capability – isn't there a lesson here? Can we create liveable cities where those who do not want big houses can live and enjoy the amenities of a city? Some people think so, and there are examples of cities that have managed to combine redevelopment, heritage development and tourism into success stories.

Here are two clear examples that illustrate the contrast between cities and towns:

1.) Winchendon's planners and residents are coping with a proposal to develop 750

woodland acres on the 19<sup>th</sup> Hill in their town. The projected housing would swamp town boards and committees trying to plan for growth and development. Winchendon residents worry about the

same characteristics: declining population, lower per capita assessed values and lower revenues from taxes; increased poverty, higher levels of crimes and low bond ratings.

family houses on larger lots, because the incentives are there.

In her textbook, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth 1820-2000*, Dolores Hayden documents the public policies such as tax incentives or credits, and the lack of policies to require developers to help pay for infrastructure or other costs that have encouraged the growth of an unplanned suburban American landscape. The result of this has been escalating costs that have become unsupportable for: road maintenance, highways, schools, municipal services, energy, conservation and the environment.

The Commonwealth wants "Smart Growth" to include regional planning but what does that mean? Smart growth is sustainable development planning, dressed up in a new title. What is needed is a balance within communities and between communities. We need a dialog about how heritage development can foster smart growth to everyone's advantage.

This year FWHA hopes to initiate that dialog by bringing in speakers to address some of these issues.

### Recommended Reading

#### Smart Growth Tool Kit:

[http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit)

#### The State of the Cities:

Revitalization for Smaller Cities in Massachusetts

<http://www.chapa.org/pdf/SmallCities.pdf>

#### Rebirth of Older industrial Cities:

<http://www.curp.neu.edu/pdfs/Final%20Report%20PDF.pdf>

#### Rehabbing Urban Development:

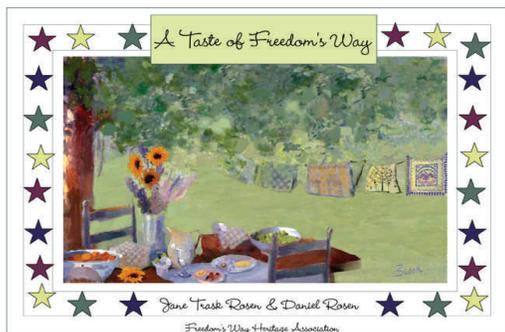
[http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/07\\_urban\\_development.pdf](http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/07_urban_development.pdf)

loss of their sense of community as they face the possibility of sudden unplanned growth that exceeds planning efforts.

2) Fitchburg was cited in the recent report on cities with faltering economies in "The State of the Cities: Revitalization Strategies for Smaller Cities in Massachusetts" published by Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) along with the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC). The report notes that cities like Fitchburg share many of the

Those who worry about the loss of open space and agriculture, rarely care about the sagging inner city cores such as Fitchburg's. But it is the demand for housing and attendant services that drives both the development of the countryside and decline of city Main Streets. Why? Economic development activities have been trending to city outskirts – eating up both outlying open space and drawing people away from the city centers where commerce and housing used to flourish side by side. Housing developers prefer single-

A



## A Taste of Freedom's Way

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# Join Freedom's Way — it's worth it

There is no other organization in this region that brings such diverse interests as museums, cultural institutions, government officials, businesses, educators, to talk about the importance of our regional landscape. Our primary focus is to show the benefits of cultural heritage development and to enhance opportunities for combining the need for preservation with the needs of growth communities.

We offer a unified regional ap-

proach that will exponentially expand economic opportunities for our partners. Diverse stakeholders can pool resources; but unless they can become aware of how that might be accomplished, they are not ready to effectively coordinate their activities. That is our job. To accomplish this, we need your support.

The region's cultural heritage resources are plentiful, but the larger community may not have grasped its potential. With your help, we can do

this together.

Look through this newsletter and see what we are doing, then consider what you think we are worth. You are the visionaries and experimenters of Freedom's Way.

*PS - If you prefer a full color version of the newsletter - please sign up with your email address to receive our electronic version!*

Renewal    New Membership

### Annual Membership Categories

- Individual                      \$35
- Family/Nonprofits/Community \$50
- Business Roundtable            \$100

### Supporting Membership Categories

- Minuteman                         \$250-\$499
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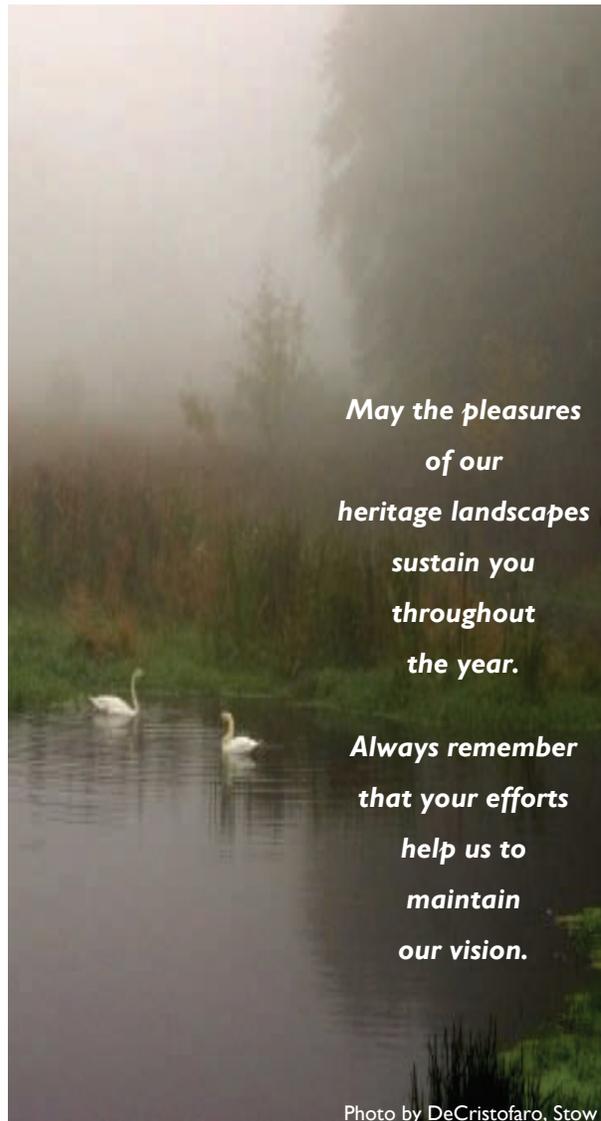
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*Important for email newsletter and other FWHA info*

**Thank You!** We operate entirely with volunteers giving their time and resources. Your contribution will help to create and foster our National Heritage. Freedom's Way is a 501(C) 3 non-profit organization and, as such, your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Mail with your check made out to FWHA:  
To FWHA, 100 Sherman Avenue, Suite 2; Devens, MA 01434



*May the pleasures  
of our  
heritage landscapes  
sustain you  
throughout  
the year.*

*Always remember  
that your efforts  
help us to  
maintain  
our vision.*

Photo by DeCristofaro, Stow

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**Ask Freedom's Way**

This picture doesn't look like much, but once you know what you are looking at, it makes sense.

Can you guess where and what this is?

Railroad round houses are built to service locomotives. In the early years, they were large, circular or semicircular buildings, hence the name. Because most rolling stock was designed to go in one direction only, a mechanism was devised to allow locomotives or other stock to be wheeled into the roundhouse for repairs and then turned around for return journeys.

This mechanism was a large turntable that would receive the stock from radiating



rail lines. The table would turn until the locomotive, or other car, was adjacent to an empty stall so it could be wheeled into the roundhouse for service.

What you see in the picture is part of the Ayer turn-

table -- the roundhouse is gone. Ayer's roundhouse was actually a quarter round -- but even today, when service buildings are no longer round, the term "roundhouse" is still in use. Some turntables were built to simply turn one locomotive around at the end of a line.

*Researchers: Ruth Rhonemus from Ayer and Eddie Diaz from the Shriver Job Corps. Photo: DCR*