



Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

Spring 2013

Patriot's Day — The Spirit of Acton

For many of the New England militia companies and minute men who answered the alarm and boldly stood upon the brow of Punkatasset Hill, defiantly facing an intimidating formation of British Regulars at Concord's Old North Bridge in the early morning hours of April 19, 1775, destiny happened upon them. For the Acton men of Capt. Isaac Davis's company of minute men, however, destiny and eternal glory was purposely forged.

Acton gunsmith Captain Isaac Davis's minute men were among the only patriots equipped with both bayonets and powder cartridges for their muskets, and vigorously trained twice a week in marksmanship well before the events of April 19th. The Acton patriots seemed to have determined long before that if the moment came, they would purposely take the front of action and bravery wherever it may be. Therefore, when Colonel James Barrett prepared to march upon the Regulars stationed at the North Bridge it was Captain Isaac Davis that boldly stated, "I haven't a man that is afraid to go." And, it was Acton's young fifer Luther Blanchard, playing the old march tune "The White Cockade", that led the column of militia and minute men down Punkatasset Hill to confront the Regulars at the North Bridge. As the two forces converged, the Regulars fired first and Acton's brave Captain Isaac met his destiny being struck in the heart by a musket ball and falling dead at the front of the patriots. Acton's Private Abner Hosmer also was instantly



Re-enactment of Minute men at attention for Robbin's Ride to alert Acton.. © 2012 Photo courtesy of Iron Works Farm.

killed, and the brave fifer was severely wounded. The bravery of the Acton men at the front of the patriots rallied those behind them resulting in the now legendary Old North Bridge victory and the retreat of the British forces all the way along the Battle Road back to Boston.

Presented by the *Acton Historical Society, Inc.* and *Iron Work Farm in Acton, Inc.*, the people of the Town of Acton proudly commemorate their revolutionary heritage and heroes with their community program "**The Spirit of Acton 1775 & 1861**" on Patriot's Day, Monday, April 15, 2013, from 1-4:00PM. 2013 marks the 8th occurrence of this annual event.

Continued on page 6.

For information on events taking place on Patriots' Day Weekend, April 13-15th, events at *Minute Man National Historical Park* or along the *Battle Road*, visit www.freedomsway.org.

Freedom's Way Heritage Association

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Freedom's Way Heritage Association serves the communities of Acton, Arlington, Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Clinton, Concord, Devens, 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.

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Dear Friends of Freedom's Way,

We are pleased to report that we have selected the consultant who will be working with us for the next year or so to develop the Management Plan which will guide us to 2023 and beyond. The plan will be the result of a public process which is sure to generate a renewed interest in our work to date, as well as in our future activities. It will be a process by which we will identify stakeholders, build working relationships with the region's people and businesses, and develop sustainable support and programs.



It is a big step for us, and we are grateful to have the National Park Service as a partner in this undertaking. We are also thankful for our members, partners, and supporters who have helped in the past and will be helping in the future to chart our course.

When Congress designated Freedom's Way as a National Heritage Area, the legislation identified 12 necessary elements of the final FWNHA management plan. One of the most critical elements is public input. We need your input as we formulate the means to fulfill our mission. We will soon be reviewing our inventory of the special heritage resources of our region, and we want your help to be sure that the assets of your community are recognized.

Together we are caretakers of our land, culture and history. With your help we will shape the programs that will showcase that unique heritage for current and future generations. Together we will build an organization which sustainably serves this precious endowment shared by the 45 communities of our national heritage area.

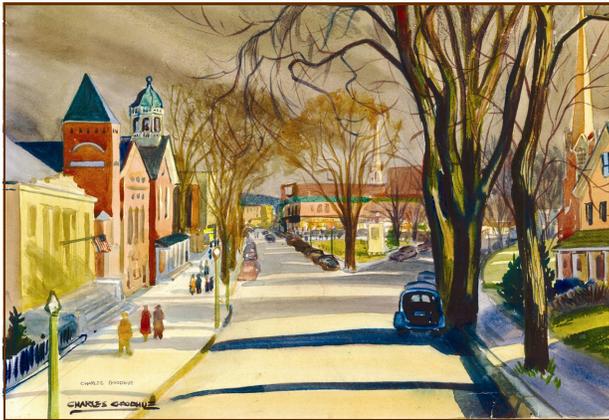
Your ideas and comments are welcome. I look forward to seeing you at our public meetings and programs throughout this year.

Peter Webb
President

Strollin' & Rollin' in 2013

Vibrant with historic town centers, scenic back roads, recreational trails, and unique attractions, Freedom's Way offers interesting places to explore close to home. During *National Preservation Month* in May, the **2013 Strollin' & Rollin'** communities of **Leominster**, **Lunenburg** and **Sterling** join earlier towns of Ayer, Bolton, Clinton, Devens, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton, Shirley, MA, and Hollis, NH to showcase their sites.

As spring beckons, experience preservation by meandering by foot, bike or car and join the *Strollin' & Rollin'* celebration. Take time to admire local landmarks and landscapes, grab a bite at local eaterys or bring a picnic, and stretch your legs along Main Street or on a trail. Visit FreedomWay.org, download a brochure, access our online maps and plan one or more seasonal outings!



Tour **Leominster**, the 2nd largest city in Worcester county, with its many mills and industries that grew along with the opening of the turnpike and railroad. The inventions of celluloid and injection molding earned this town the nicknames of *Comb City* in the 19th century and *Plastics City* a century later. *Photo: Goodhue painting of Leominster Square. Courtesy of Leominster Historical Society.*

Visit **Sterling** where its history of past prominent residents can be found in their street names: Ebenezer Butterick who developed dress patterns, Lt. Pratt who was George Washington's aide, and Mary Sawyer who inspired the poem, "Mary Had a Little Lamb". *Photo: Statue commemorating Mary's Lamb stands on the Sterling Town Common. Courtesy of Sterling Historical Society.*



Explore **Lunenburg**, a sprawling hill town that sits above the Nashua River Valley, with winding country roads, farms and farm stands and hilltop views of Mt. Monadnock, Mt. Wachusett and even Boston on clear days. Don't miss the **Preservation 101** lecture on May 5th. *Photo: 1800 Bigelow farm, now Stillman Dairy. Courtesy of Lunenburg Historical Society.*

Experience the heritage that surrounds you in your community. Enjoy the landmarks and landscapes that create our sense of place. Rediscover the charm and character of your hometown and this heritage area. Let *Strollin' & Rollin'* inspire you to go exploring in your own backyard.

For the complete program of events and activities, please visit www.freedomsway.org.

The Mount on Devens — Celebrating 50 Years!

Established fifty years ago by the Massachusetts Legislature as one of the first eight of 15 community colleges, Mount Wachusett Community College today serves 29 towns with campuses in Leominster, Fitchburg and Devens along with the main campus in Gardner. Since its founding, more than 100,000 students have attended “the Mount’s” affordable higher education, workforce development and lifelong learning training programs.

MWCC Devens is located on the historic landscape of what was once Fort Devens. Until its deactivation in 1996, the Fort served New England as a military center, training camp for National Guard troops, detention center for POWs, and as a test site for the early rocket scientist Robert Goddard. While several U.S. Military Training Centers still remain, this site is now home to private citizens, businesses, non-profits, schools, **Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge**, and the **Fort Devens Museum**. *Continued on page 6.*



IN THOREAU'S FOOTSTEPS 2013

On January 17th, Thoreau visited Clinton, MA to reprise his lecture “*An Excursion to Cape Cod*”. Offered in partnership with the Clinton Historical Society, historical impersonator Richard Smith, stepped out of character to answer questions on industrialization and why Thoreau’s ideas inspire people of today.

“It clearly was one of the most stimulating programs we have offered in a long time and as Thoreau stayed in character, our audience did too!” said Terrance Ingano, Clinton Historical Society.

Thoreau at Stillwater Farm — April 21st • 1–3pm *Stillwater Interpretive Trail, Sterling, MA*

Celebrate Earth Day and learn how Thoreau used wildness to think about an individual's connections with the natural world and with society. *Organized by Mass DCR/ Div. of Water Supply Protection.*

A Walk Toward Wachusett — June 2nd • 1–3pm *Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary, Princeton, MA*

Thoreau's walk towards Mount Wachusett includes his observations on the sights he encountered in 1842.

River Towns: Along the Nashua — June 15th • 1–4pm *Nashua River Festival, Lancaster, MA*

Engage Thoreau in lively conversations as he walks the shores of the Nashua River.
Thoreau portrayed by historical impersonator Richard Smith.

Westward, I Go Free: Tracing Thoreau's Last Journey **September 19th • 6:30–8:00pm**

Bigelow Free Public Library, Clinton, MA
A visual travelogue of Thoreau's longest journey when Thoreau and Horace Mann, Jr. traveled from Massachusetts to Minnesota and back.

Seeing Wildness • November 16th • 9am–Noon *Thoreau Farm Birthplace, Concord, MA*

Explore a 21st Century trail system that leads through Thoreau's old neighborhood. Take in some of the scenery that he did by venturing behind the Thoreau Farm.

These programs are supported in part by grants from the local Cultural Councils of Clinton, Concord, Lancaster and Princeton and by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

A Strollin' & Rollin' 2013 Event

Presented by Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

in partnership with Lunenburg Public Library and Lunenburg Historical Society

A Freedom's Way Conversation— Preservation 101

Lunenburg Public Library, 1023 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA

Sunday, May 5th, 2013 • 3:00 – 4:00 pm plus Q&A

Calling all old-home owners, careworn stewards of historic buildings, or beleaguered planners! Come be inspired by this thoughtful conversation with preservationist, Robert Adam. He will share his thoughts on owning and caring for historic property in the 21st Century. This Strollin' & Rollin' conversation will offer guidelines and approaches about sustainable preservation practices locally and across the region.

Robert Adam is an active advocate for preservation issues and education. Using local buildings as illustration, some areas he will cover include:

- Local and state codes and resources
• Restoration and Rehabilitation
• Contemporary issues and preservation trends
• Evidence and clues to building histories

Preservation 101 is FREE and open to the public.

To reserve a place, contact Lunenburg Public Library at 978-582-4140.

Robert Adam is the founder and former head of the Preservation Carpentry program at Boston's North Bennet Street School, the only full-time preservations skills training program in the United States. A resident of Shirley, a long-time member of the Historic Commission and other town organizations, and the president of the Shirley Meeting House Preservation Society, Robert is currently consulting and working on several preservation projects.

Yes, I want to help preserve and promote the special places in Freedom's Way!

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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, 94 Jackson Road, Suite 311, Devens, MA 01434

Thank You!

The Mount on Devens

Continued from page 4. The College had long been drawing students from the Devens region, initially providing academic and training programs first location was in a former barracks at 94 Jackson Road that today is the headquarters for Freedom's Way. The Devens' satellite campus moved to 100 Jackson Road before finally settling in a 40,000-square foot facility in the former Fort Devens intelligence building at 27 Jackson Road.

MWCC Devens works with area companies, including Bristol-Myers Squibb, Bionostics, Celltreat, Lonza, Johnson-Matthey, Integrated Process Technologies, Genzyme Corporation, and New England Peptide to develop training and education options pertinent to industry needs. Graduates can pursue careers as lab technicians or assistants, quality technicians, and manufacturing technicians.

"As part of our mission at the college, the Devens



MWCC hosted Freedom's Way NHA Sharing Stories Workshop which included Jayne Gordon from Mass Historical Society shown engaging attendees with key information on bringing life to historical documents and archives.

Campus, working with local industry leaders, develops and delivers programs to meet the economic and employment needs of the surrounding community and businesses," says Julie Crowley, director of the Devens Campus. "Devens is quickly growing in the areas of advanced manufacturing and biotechnology and we are offering more programs focused in these areas."

Patriot's Day & Revolutionary War Historical Events

Patriot's Day Weekend, April 13–15, 2013 — Minute Man National Historical Park, Lincoln, MA
Historical re-enactments celebrating this special Massachusetts holiday commemorating the opening battle of the American Revolutionary War, April 19th, 1775. Visit www.nps.gov/mima/patriotsday/htm for a Schedule of Events.

Patriot's Day, Monday, April 15, 2013 — 1–4:00PM • "The Spirit of Acton 1775 & 1861", Acton, MA
Historical demonstrators, storytellers, re-enactors, site tours, and a Community March down Main Street to Meeting House Hill. Here the Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps and the US Army Drill Team will thrill the crowds with their performances. Patriot's Day Trolley rides provided by Old Town Trolley of Boston; 3 Trolleys enable event goers a chance to visit all the sites. For more information contact actonhistoricalsociety.org or ironworkfarm.org.

April 7th — 2pm The History of the Sudbury Militia & Minute, in Fact & Fiction, Sudbury, MA
Visit sudbury01776.org to learn more about this program and the Sudbury Historical Society.

April 23rd - 7:30 pm Outlying Towns: Their Early & Vital Roles in the American Revolution
Organized by the Arlington Historical Society, visit www.arlingtonhistorical.org for location and directions.

April 27th & 28th — 2pm Fletcher Tavern House Tour, Westford, MA
Timed tickets may available from the Westford Historical Society: westford.com/museum or 978-692-5550

June 3rd — 2pm Mass History Conference • Listen My Children and You Shall Hear: Balancing History & Myth, Holy Cross College, Worcester, MA
Sessions include, *Massachusetts Beyond the Tea Party*, *Redefining Freedom on the Trail*, and *It Didn't Happen Here*.

June 6th — 7pm Parallel Lives of a Patriot Heroine and a Spy • American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA
Visit www.americanantiquarian.org for details about their free spring programs or phone 508-755-5221.

For a complete calendar of events visit www.freedomsway.org.

Revolutionary Woman Makes History



By Alan Manoian

In today's world of cell phones, twitter and the internet, events cross the globe in seconds. Not so as our nation began its fight for freedom. Yet, the heroic action of Menotomy's — now Arlington — Mother Batherick on April 19, 1775 was so very compelling, it made its way back across the ocean to England, much to the political dismay of Prime Minister Lord North.

Sometime after midnight, as the tale goes, Paul Revere charged along the Mystic Road from Charlestown coming to the King's Highway or Great Road at Menotomy, warning the townsfolk as he headed westward toward Lexington and Concord. The British Regulars had begun their march in the darkness, and entered the Village of Menotomy at about 2 o'clock in the morning. As the Regulars passed through the township along today's Mass Ave., the population was fully alarmed and had begun preparations as companies and individuals.

The British appreciated the sense of alarm and possible resistance in those early morning hours, so a second detachment was sent out of Boston under the command of Lord Percy to reinforce the first large detachment. They met no resistance until they arrived at Menotomy. There a stout and brave band of elderly men, so-called "exempts" ... positioned themselves behind a stone wall (near the site of today's First Parish/ Unitarian Church on Mass Ave). They were determined to engage the enemy at this place.

As described in Smith's "West Cambridge on the Nineteenth of April 1775", "The exempts took their position ... when the convoy came between them and the meet-

ing house they took aim and ordered a surrender. As no attention was paid to this demand, except to hasten the speed of the convoy, the exempts fired and killed, probably two of the enemy, and wounded several, shot five horses, drove off the guard, and took possession of the convoy and all its contents; making besides six of the guards prisoners, who...ran as far as the shore of Spy Pond, into which they threw their muskets before they surrendered".

As detailed in David Hackett Fischer's "Paul Revere's Ride"; "The surviving British soldiers took another look at these old men, and fled for their lives. They ran down the road, threw their weapons into a pond, and started running again. They came upon an old woman named Mother Batherick, so impoverished that she was digging a few weeds (dandelion greens) from a vacant field for something green to eat. The panic-stricken British troops surrendered to her, and begged protection. She led them to a house of militia Captain Ephraim Frost. Mother Batherick may have been poor in material things, but she was rich in the spirit."

Menotomy's Mother Batherick secured her legendary place in New England Revolutionary War history on both sides of the Atlantic with what she then boldly proclaimed to those six terrified British grenadiers at the home of Captain Ephraim Frost, "If you ever live to get back, you tell King George that an old woman took six of his grenadiers prisoner."

And later, Lord North's critics pointedly inquired,

***"If one old Yankee woman
can take six grenadiers,
how many soldiers will it
require to conquer America?"***

With a grant received from the *Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati*, Freedom's Way has invited ten towns to explore ways of sharing local resources that will bring to life the people, events and stories about the American Revolution with tours, programs and regional events. The towns taking part are Acton, Arlington, Bolton, Leominster, Medford, Pepperell, Shirley, Sudbury, Townsend and Westford, MA.

Freedom's Way Heritage Association

New England Landscape
of
American Ideals

Serving 45 Communities in
Massachusetts
&
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Freedom's Way
94 Jackson Road, Suite 311
Devens, MA 01434
www.freedomsway.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Patriots' Day Celebrations • April 13th – 15th , Day-long events

Acton, Concord, Lexington, and surrounding towns

Re-enactment activities and tours. (*See article on page 1.*)

Earth Day at Oxbow NWR • Saturday, April 20th, 1– 3pm

Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge , Still River/Harvard, MA

Celebrate Earth Day with Native American neighbors UNACC, Bolton Local.

Naturalists will provide guided tour of refuge & answer questions.

Thoreau at Stillwater Farm • Sunday, April 21st, 1– 3pm

Stillwater Farm, Redemption Rock Trail , Sterling, MA

Celebrate Earth Day and learn how Thoreau used wildness to think about

an individual's connections with the natural world and with society.

Preservation & Restoration of Gravestones • Sunday, April 28th , 3pm

Lancaster Historical Society, Lancaster, MA

Minxie Jensvold Fannin of Fannin-Lehrer Preservation Consultants

Strollin' & Rollin' — Preservation 101 • Sunday, May 5th , 3 – 4:00 pm

Lunenburg Public Library, 1023 Mass Avenue, Lunenburg, MA

Conversation with Robert Adam on historic property ownership in 21st Century.

Visit www.freedomsway.org for full details on all events.

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