



Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

Summer 2012

Treason or Liberty?

New Interpretive Exhibit at North Bridge Visitor Center

At the North Bridge in Concord, colonial militia from Concord, Acton, Lincoln, and Bedford faced off against the King's soldiers on the morning of April 19, 1775 and were ordered to fire. Three British soldiers were killed and several wounded. Two militiamen

were also killed, and four were wounded. This "Shot Heard Round the World," as Emerson named it more than 60 years later, represents the first time colonists were ordered to fire on the army of their King.

With the other events of the day, this action became the "last straw" in more than 10 years of tense conflict, leading to the opening of the American Revolutionary War. Englishmen killing Englishmen! Was it treason or liberty? What brought the British soldiers to Concord? Was escalation to war inevitable or could it have been prevented? Why did the colonial militia take a stand

against the world's most powerful army?

With the opening of the 2012 summer season at Minute Man National Historical Park, the North Bridge Visitor Center will feature a new interpretive exhibit about the



Visitors at the Old North Bridge.

Photo courtesy of Minute Man NHP.

events on that fateful day. Using documents, images, a diorama, and a video program, *Treason or Liberty?*, the exhibit explains the events and tells the stories of the militia and minute men David Brown, Colonel James Barrett,

and Major John Buttrick, illustrated with artifacts from the park's history and archaeological collections. A plank of the original North Bridge, the Hancock Cannon, loaned by the Bunker Hill Monument Association, and the musket David Brown carried on April 19, loaned by the American Revolution Center, will be on display.

The exhibit will be open daily, beginning Saturday, June 30th, 9:00 a.m. until 5:00p.m.

North Bridge Visitor Center is located at 174 Liberty Street, Concord, Massachusetts. For further information, please call (978) 318-7831 or visit www.nps.gov/mima

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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.

Editor: Margaret Coppe
Layout/Input: Linda Bowie

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of Freedom's Way,

Summer in our beautiful National Heritage Area holds the promise of sunshine, relaxation, and fun with many treasures to explore — local farmer's markets filled with an amazing array of foods, back-to-nature escapes with woodland paths, mountain trails and scenic vistas, and museums, libraries and exhibits with engaging programs.

Here you'll find a few highlights that will not disappoint. Add them to your summer explorations and celebrate this great Heritage Area!

Sincerely yours,




Freedom's Way brings such diverse interests as museums, cultural institutions, government officials, businesses, and educators together to capitalize on our regional features. But we cannot do it alone. We need your support! Please join today, and help us continue these programs.

Join Online at

www.freedomsway.org

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Important for email newsletter and other FWHA information

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!

Mt. Wachusett Summit Auto Road Reopens

By Marge Darby

Henry David Thoreau walked to Wachusett from Concord and wrote about it — you can too. Well, maybe you don't want to walk all the way from Concord to the mountain and write about it, but you can certainly visit the mountain. The road up to the summit is now open seven days a week from 9AM to sunset. It is a pleasant enough walk up, but it can be driven -- either way the view is spectacular. On a clear day you can see a fifty-mile radius that includes New Hampshire, the Berkshires and the Boston Skyline.

The mountain was “discovered” by Governor Winthrop when he spotted it from Boston Harbor in 1632. After this so-called discovery, and again after the additional revelation of the existence of a path up to the summit, attempts were made to give the mountain a proper English name. A “proper” English name meant honoring someone of importance. Somehow, despite such efforts, the Algonquian name Wachusett which means “great hill” remains. The mountain was a rallying point for Native Americans during King Philip's War. Wachusett is a majestic, 2006-foot monadnock with 17 miles of hiking trails, the largest known Old Growth Forest east of Connecticut, alpine meadows, ponds, streams, fields, and even a perched bog.

There are many popular recreational opportunities at Wachusett Mountain State Reservation including hiking, nature study, hawk-watching, picnicking, and skiing. Bird watchers flock to the



View from the summit of Mt. Wachusett.

Photo courtesy of DCR.

mountain to watch the hawk kettles in the fall, when migrating hawks travel in large flocks called “kettles” because they resemble black kettles with spouts.

The Reservation offers miles of hiking and walking trails, including a portion of the Midstate Trail, a long trail that runs from Ashburnham to the Rhode Island border.

Wachusett Mountain is part of an extensive greenway area that includes Leominster State Forest, Massachusetts Audubon's Wachusett Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary and Minns Wildlife Sanctuary. Evidence of the glacial activity which shaped the mountain can be seen at Balance Rock where two large boulders were stacked one on top of the other by moving glaciers thousands of years ago.

There is a \$2 fee to drive to summit. The summit fire tower restorations may still be in progress, but parking and sight-seeing areas are open. Please call park headquarters at (987) 464-2987 for updates and parking suggestions for hiking activities. Due to construction there may be times when the road will be closed for safety reasons, so please call ahead.

Freedom's Way publication, *Old Growth Forests in Southern New England*, by Joel Gerwin, PhD — Small monograph written for high-school age students and their teachers; 34 pages including Learn More! Guide, bibliography and illustrations. \$ 4.25 per copy, may be ordered through the web site at www.freedomsway.org

Westminster Historical Society Finds New Home in Old School

By Betsy Hannula

A beautiful old school building in Westminster will have an infusion of life in the next five years. The Upton School will become the new headquarters of the Westminster Historical Society. Built in 1912, the Upton School is one hundred years old this year, having served children from grades 1 through High School until it closed in 1999.

The Society has been bursting at the seams in its house on Main Street, which it has owned since 1983. A needs assessment in 1997 told members that more room was needed for programs and collections storage, and after looking at the options of building a new structure, using the old Town Hall or the empty Upton School, the Society decided that the Upton School would best meet their needs. It was right next to the new Elementary School, and it would be easy to accommodate the children for student programs.

After more than ten years of surmounting obstacles,



Early class of Upton School students on front steps of school.



Upton School building gets new life at home of Westminster Historical Society.

the Selectmen finally signed the deed on September 10, 2010. Since the Upton School is quite visible to those who vote at elections, the Society wanted townspeople to know that we finally had the building, so painters were hired to paint the columns and pediment right away in the fall of 2010. What a striking improvement! The building is a key structure in the Westminster Village/Academy Hill National Register Historic District, and is one of the loveliest buildings in town.

The Society's Board of Directors spent the past year planning a Capital Campaign and creating brochures for fundraising. The Campaign Committee has begun meeting with businesses and families. This fall will be the public kickoff, the largest fundraising effort by a non-profit organization in the town's history. The goal is \$2.5 million for the renovation of the building and another \$500,000 for the Endowment Fund. A subcommittee has been working on making a list of all the students who attended school there from 1912 to 1999; over 4,000 names have been collected to date.

SHINE A LIGHT ON YOUR COMMUNITY'S BIG PROJECT

Share your story in the next Freedom's Way newsletter. Just send us an email with pictures of the site and a 200-300 word description of your project: Are you raising awareness for a threatened site? Do you have a plan and funding in hand? Is it time to celebrate a restoration and reopening? Feel free to contact us with questions.

2012 Strollin' & Rollin'

Cloudy skies couldn't dampen spirits for the **2012 Strollin' & Rollin'** kick-off in Lancaster, coinciding with their "On the Green" celebration. Heather Lennon, of the Lancaster Historical Commission, stated "... the S&R event was a



Maud Ayson, Dir. of Educ. & Public Programs, Board member Jason Murray, & a young helper greeted visitors, shared tour brochures, and declared **This Place Matters**.

great success! We were able to accomplish everything we had hoped, especially introduce the citizens to the many offerings we have here in town." Martha Remington, Bolton Historical Commission, concurred, "The BHC commends your work, and that of the Bolton Historical Society... highlighting our treasures here in town" The self-guided heritage tours for Bolton and Clinton were launched on the second and third weekends in May. Hundreds of Spotlight Brochures were made available at Sponsor locations, libraries, town halls, and historical societies.

Freedom's Way would like extend our sincere thanks to our Program Sponsors in each of the 3 towns for their support, and to the historical societies and commissions—their many hours selecting places, photos and descriptions made the Spotlight Brochures engaging. And special thanks to the many town volunteers who made this annual May event such a success!

If you missed it, or want to explore other Strollin' & Rollin' towns, please visit our web site at www.freedomsway.org/projects/strollin.html and download a tour of your choice.

And do stay tuned! 2013 Strollin' & Rollin' will be here soon.

Meet Henry David Thoreau — Reflections on Westminster Saturday, July 28th — 1:00 - 3:00 pm

The tracks of the Vermont & Massachusetts Railroad brought many 19th-century passengers *to and through* the town of Westminster. One such traveler was writer-naturalist Henry David **Thoreau of Concord**. In late **October** 1854, he disembarked at the station in Westminster to begin his hike to the top of Mount Wachusett.

Join Mr. Thoreau on the Common on top of Academy Hill in Westminster for a lively conversation. Thoreau will talk about his time on Walden Pond and the Westminster sights he saw



View of Wachusett Mountain Photo courtesy of Westminster Historical Society.

during his hike to Wachusett Mountain. Designed for all ages, in case of rain, look for Mr. Thoreau in the bandstand. *Sponsored by the Westminster Historical Society with funding from the Westminster Cultural Council.*

Locally Grown in Leominster, MA & Hollis, NH

Within easy reach of any Freedom's Way towns are farms like **Sholan Farms** in Leominster and **Brookdale Fruit Farm** in Hollis. Nestled amidst pastoral landscapes and separated by 33 miles, these working farms offer fascinating stories about the people advocating for the preservation of agricultural lands and our historic community character.

Sholan Farms' history reaches back to 1642, when Chief



Tree pruning at Sholan Farms.

Sholan of the Nashaway tribe deeded 80 square miles of land to Thomas King and Henry Symonds. That tract of land was incorporated in 1653 and called "Lancaster New".

But eight decades later was renamed to Leominster after Leominster, England. And, so the telling goes, John Chapman, AKA Johnny Appleseed roamed the meadows and woodlands of Sholan Farms as a child.

Today **Sholan Farms** is a 169-acre farm owned by the City of Leominster and operated by the **Friends of Sholan Farms**. This community supported non-profit organization is managed by a group of extraordinary volunteers. Funding comes from produce sales, festivals, tours, sponsors, membership, private donations, and a popular Farmer's Market. www.sholanfarms.com

Founded in 1847, **Brookdale Fruit Farm** has been owned by the Hardy family for seven generations. During the early years of subsistence farming, extra cash was earned from making barrels and being a cooper. Each generation made changes to the farm and in the 1960's changed from a partnership to a family held corporation. They began selling produce out by the road in front of Elwin and Betty Hardy's house.

The Hardy family protected this living landscape through the transfer of development rights under the New Hampshire's Land Conservation Investment Program. Brookdale has received the Ag-Earth Partnership's Millennium Farm/Ranch Family Award for their ongoing stewardship efforts

helping America's farmers contribute to clean water and air, healthy soil, sustainable forestry, and improved open space.



Brookdale's first farm stand—set up in 1960s.

On June 17th Brookdale Fruit Farms is celebrating 165 years of continuous operation. www.brookdalefarms.com

Visit your local Farmer's Market & Celebrate the growing season

These nearby "local stands" are connecting communities, farmers, and food. You'll find an array of other farm products, including baked goods, jams and jellies, honey, cheeses, flowers, eggs and much more! Market days and times vary, allowing you to visit as many as you wish from summer through fall. So plan your local shopping by checking out these links:

www.mass.gov/agrmassgrown.farmers_markets.htm

www.nhfarms.org

Thoreau Trail Celebrates HDT's 150-year Legacy

By Corinne Smith

This summer and fall, Freedom's Way will continue to celebrate the 150-year legacy of Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). Our variety of events mirrors the places and activities that Mr. Thoreau engaged in, at sites scattered throughout our region.

Thoreau was well known for his fondness for walking, and for the art of what he termed "sauntering." He combined this love with his fascination for the natural world; and he examined all that he saw as he passed through various neighborhoods and towns. "I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least – and it is commonly more than that – sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements," he wrote.

He was also an admirer of New England's highest mountains. Before the railroads were built, Henry Thoreau walked to Mount Wachusett (1842), Mount Monadnock (1844), and Mount Greylock (1844), all from his home in Concord, Massachusetts. After the Fitchburg Railroad opened and provided faster access to the west, Thoreau revisited both Wachusett and Monadnock by taking trains most of the way first, then walking the remaining distances.

In 2005, Leominster resident Robert M. Young re-enacted



Boxborough marker shows where Thoreau visited in November 1860 to study the old growth forest.

Thoreau's 1842 sojourn to Wachusett on foot, using the Concordian's own essay and old maps as his guides. Young penned a book on his adventure: *Walking to Wachusett: A Re-Enactment of Henry David Thoreau's "A Walk to Wachusett."* In his volume, Young relates not only his own interpretations about what Henry saw long ago, but also the likely routes he took.

In Spring 2012, Freedom's Way Board member Thomas Conroy and consultant Corinne H. Smith drove along Young's recommended path between Concord and Princeton. Together they deciphered which paved roads would serve best as a Thoreau Trail for cars and bicycles. After Corinne compiled directions and quotations for a printed pamphlet, Tom created an online map feature for computer and en-route Smart Phone access. The duo will unveil this new Thoreau Trail to the Thoreau Society at its Annual Gathering in Concord on July 13. Both the print and online versions will be available through the Freedom's Way web site.

If you get a chance this year, read Thoreau's essays "Walking" or "A Walk to Wachusett." Both are available online and in printed anthologies. You might be inspired to set out on your own explorations.

We'll see you out there!

Words to Ponder : Thoreau's Economy

Thursday, June 21st

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Lecture by Henry David Thoreau / Richard Smith

Medford Public Library

111 High Street, Medford, MA

Residents of Medford were one of the early audiences to hear HDT's opening chapter of his second book, *Walden; or Life in the Woods*. Once again the people of Medford can experience this most famous work from a now world-famous thinker who has inspired movements for peace, human rights, and environmental conservation in Massachusetts and around the globe.

Sponsored by the Medford Historical Society with funding by the Medford Arts Council.

Freedom's Way Heritage Association

New England Landscape
of
American Ideals

Serving 45 Communities in
Massachusetts
&
New Hampshire



Freedom's Way
94 Jackson Road, Suite 311
Devens, MA 01434
www.freedomsway.org

Calendar of Events

- June 14th** **Sustaining Working Farms; Landscapes of Plenty**
Thursday, 6:30 PM—8:30 PM
Harbor Church, 80 Main St (Rt 119), Townsend, MA
- June 21st** **Words to Ponder: Thoreau's Economy ***
Thursday, 7:00 PM — 8:30 PM
Medford Public Library, 111 High Street, Medford, MA
- July 13th** **He Traveled a Good Deal: Promoting Thoreau Beyond Concord's * Borders** Panel discussion with Corrine H. Smith & Tom Conroy of Freedom's Way during The Thoreau Society Annual Gathering
Friday, 10:30 AM—Noon *Conference registration is required to attend.*
Masonic Lodge Hall, 58 Monument Square, Concord, MA
- July 22nd** **Walking to Wachusett — Then and Now (For Adults) ***
Sunday, 1:00 PM — 3:00 PM
Hike to summit and talk by author Robert Young.
Wachusett Mountain State Reservation, Princeton, MA
- July 28th** **Meet Henry David Thoreau — Reflections on Westminster ***
Saturday, 1:00 PM — 3:00 PM (Family-friendly event)
Discussion by Henry David Thoreau / Richard Smith
Westminster Historical Society, 110 Main St., Westminster, MA

* Events are supported by grants from the local Cultural Councils of Ayer, Fitchburg, Medford, and Westminster, agencies supported by the Mass Cultural Council.

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National Park Service: Freedom's Way Partner

Since 1916, the National Park Service has been caring for our national parks, preserving and protecting America's special places. The NPS also provides technical, planning and limited financial assistance to National Heritage Areas, including the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area. The NPS is a partner and advisor, with decision-making authority remaining in the hands of local people and organizations.

