Special Agricultural Exhibition Opens at Concord Museum October 12th

In Concord today, farmers, educators, planners, environmental activists, food distributors, health professionals, parents, and policymakers are engaged in a community-wide discussion about building local food connections. The town’s agrarian heritage and historic farmland are compelling starting points for that conversation. In celebration of this farming tradition, past and present, The Greatest Source of Wealth: Agriculture in Concord, a new exhibition and related programming at the Concord Museum, explores the changing agricultural landscape of Concord over time. The exhibition focuses on both the innovations of the 19th century, when Concord was at the forefront of agricultural reform, and the challenges of the 21st century.

Elements of agriculture permeate almost every aspect of Concord’s past from its farms and families, to the look of its landscape and buildings, to its economic success. Concord’s meadows have been farmed essentially without interruption for more than three thousand years. For perhaps fifty generations, Native American farmers grew crops of corn, squash and beans here. Then, in the 1630s, English immigrant farmers began producing new crops such as wheat, rye, barley, and English hay from the fields. Over the succeeding centuries, Concord farmers, many of whom emigrated from Italy, Ireland, Nova Scotia, and Norway, have produced a great range of products, from teasels for the woolen mills of Lowell to strawberries for the breakfast tables of Beacon Hill to today’s seasonal produce for many of Boston’s finest restaurants.

“Agriculture is the greatest source of wealth to the town.”
Lemuel Shattuck, History of Concord, 1835

Continued on page 4.
Freedom’s Way Heritage Association

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of Freedom’s Way,

The end of summer is always bittersweet, but I find excitement in every hint that fall is coming. A few yellowing leaves, gourds at the farm stand — it all signifies that the Freedom’s Way Landscape will soon be in its full glory. To celebrate the land and the harvest this fall, Freedom’s Way has partnered with a variety of organizations to pack our calendar with events (see page 11).

No doubt you are involved in other like-minded organizations in the region (we heritage-lovers tend to have many irons in the fire!) so as you plug away through the coming year, keep in mind that Freedom’s Way is a ready partner. Don’t recreate the wheel to craft a tour, don’t struggle to find a preservation carpenter — call on Freedom’s Way! We thrive and our members thrive on the exchange of ideas and resources. We are in this preservation mission together.

Speaking of togetherness, I do hope to see you at our Annual Meeting on October 14th. Our members will be treated to a once-in-a-lifetime tour along the Battle Road in Minute Man National Historical Park. Be there and bring a friend — this is going to be a good one!

Sincerely yours,

Alene W. Reich
Executive Director

Join Freedom’s Way

☐ Renewal  ☐ New Membership

Annual Membership Categories

☐ Individual  $35  ☐ Family  $50
☐ Business Roundtable  $100  ☐ Community/Non-profit  $50

Please Print

Name: _____________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________

Town: ___________________________ State: _________ Zip: ___________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Email: _____________________________________________

Thank You!  Important for email newsletter and other FWHA information

Join Online at www.freedomsway.org

Editor: Margaret Coppe
Layout/ Copy: Linda Bowie

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
Fall Following “In Thoreau’s Footsteps”

By Corinne H. Smith

Freedom’s Way continues this fall to use Henry David Thoreau’s work to connect people across town lines and across the centuries.

We officially launched our “Thoreau Trail: A Walk to Wachusett” guide in both print and online formats in July. Now bicyclists, drivers, and hikers can follow the path that Thoreau and his friend Richard Fuller took from Concord to Mount Wachusett, 170 years ago. Anyone who travels the entire length of this circle tour (66+ miles) will see a wide range of fascinating sites in ten towns in central Massachusetts. The number of orchards located along the route should soon entice visitors from both far and near for a festival of the senses. [For Thoreau Trail Guide visit www.freedomsway.org.]

Events held at Mt. Wachusett and in Westminster this summer attracted dozens of interested people. This was in no small part due to publicity received via the Worcester Telegram & Gazette’s Thoreau feature article in the July 16th issue.

Still ahead are four outings in September. One will be a lecture and discussion about Henry Thoreau’s writings as well as his intersections with the town of Groton Junction, now known as Ayer. The other three will be walks and talks with the man himself (courtesy of historical interpreter Richard Smith) at Middlesex Fells Reservation, Fitchburg Riverfront Park, and along the Nashua River Rail Trail in Ayer. Our intent is not just to emphasize Mr. Thoreau’s relationship with our region, but to also get off walking and exploring the great natural features that make up a large portion of the Freedom’s Way landscape.

And by the way, the Nashua River Rail Trail is ten-years-old this month! Visit the Friends of Willard Brook web site www.willardbrook.org for more on this milestone celebration taking place on Sunday, September 15th, 2012. Congratulations all around!

Now, let’s all go for a walk!
Concord Museum Exhibit

Continued from page 1. Guest Curator John Ott, an authority on the history of agriculture in Massachusetts, is organizing the exhibition with Concord Museum Curator David Wood. Ott explains, “What made Concord different as a farm community was the abundance of intelligent men, who made common sense the fulcrum of their intellectual curiosity. Some were ordinary farmers, but others like Thoreau, Emerson, and Alcott were well known writers and philosophers, and more observers of agriculture, while others like Simon Brown, Ephriam Bull and John B. Moore were scientific farmers. These men used science, experimentation, innovation as well as their access to the media of the day — the agricultural newspaper and rural publications — to elevate farming in Concord to new heights.”

Drawing from the Museum’s collection, the William Munroe Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library, as well as private collections, the exhibition includes:

- an assemblage of 3000-year-old agricultural stone tools;
- 18th-20th century tools ranging from a scuffle hoe to a barking spud to an asparagus cutter;
- paintings of Concord farms;
- issues of the innovative The New England Farmer, edited by Concord’s Simon Brown, 1851-73;
- a newly-created oral history video featuring Concord farmers and residents who are passionate about the land and maintaining the vitality of local farms;
- a video of the first robotic milking system in Massachusetts installed in the “smart” barn at Great Brook Farm in nearby Carlisle;
- Resource materials about community supported agriculture programs, farm stands and more.

“This exhibition,” as Ott explains, “will look at the people, their tools and farming methods from the earliest settlement period to the present time and study what has taken place on the land. It will be a show that both young and old can enjoy and relate to, through their own family gardens, their local markets and vegetable stands, as well as their interests in land conservation, the green movement and the changing role of agriculture in the lives of Concord citizens today.”

The Greatest Source of Wealth: Agriculture in Concord is on view from October 12, 2012 through March 17, 2013 at the Concord Museum.

Concurrent with the Concord Museum’s exhibition, The Concord Free Public Library William Monroe Special Collections presents, This Garden Spot of Concord, Mass: Farming at Nine Acre Corner. Curated by Leslie Wilson, this exhibition is drawn from the Library’s remarkable assemblage of material associated with Nine Acre Corner, an area kept in agricultural production by the Wheeler family for three centuries.

Women have never taken a subordinate role on the farm. Accomplishing farm work means being ready to do what is needed at any given moment. On most farms both men and women have always shared the workload as a practical necessity. And each new generation begins carving their own place in that continuum. A successful farming operation will find women and men out riding tractors, spraying the orchards, weeding, pruning and packing. There has never been time for arbitrary role assignments.

The Freedom’s Way oral histories offer a peek into the lives of the local farmers who have shared some of their personal stories with appealing candor. Eleanor Whittemore talks about the generational changes on her farm in Hollis, New Hampshire: “My great-grandfather started the farm as a subsistence farm. He was a cooper, which was a very common work back in the mid-1800s because everything was moved by barrels and wooden products...

Continued on page 9.
Growing Places--Building Gardens & Growing Gardeners

This year new gardeners across central MA began digging into the dirt in their new vegetable gardens. Growing Places Garden Project (Growing Places), a nonprofit dedicated to helping communities realize the numerous benefits of growing their own food, installed raised bed and container vegetable gardens for over 80 low-income people throughout the region this past spring. Growing Places partners with local groups to identify individuals and families who need and will most benefit from a vegetable garden and then mobilizes over a hundred volunteers to help install the raised bed and container gardens and to serve as mentors to the new gardeners.

“I have had a FANTASTIC time with the garden! My son is always so excited to go check what has grown and what we can pick. I have had a bountiful harvest the whole season and was lucky to have almost everything I planted grow. I am already planning out next year’s garden,” enthused new gardener Gloria Castaño of Leominster explains.

Growing Places has been installing home and community gardens throughout North Central MA and teaching people how to grow their own vegetables since 2001. Located in Clinton, the organization targets its services to low-income individuals and communities in Fitchburg, Leominster, Clinton and the surrounding towns. This year, Growing Places also reached out to serve people in Gardner.

“Quite simply, we seek to build gardens and grow gardeners”, says Executive Director Joanne Foster. She notes that gardeners realize numerous benefits from a GP garden. “The back yard gardener gains easy access to fresh, healthy foods, and often a place of respite from the day’s hectic pace. The community gardener has a free source for nutritious, affordable food, and a built-in support network and a means to connect to their community.”

Growing Places Annual Garden Harvest

The Barn at Gibbet Hill ~ Groton, MA ~ October 4th • 6pm – 8pm

Join us for locally sourced foods and a keynote address by co-founder and Chairman of the world’s leading organic yogurt producer, Stonyfield Farm’s Gary Hirshberg. For more information and tickets, visit www.growingplaces.org and click on News and Events. To learn more about Growing Places, contact Joanne Foster at 978-598-3723x801 or joanne@growingplaces.org

Newly installed garden at home for veterans in Gardner.

Groton volunteers installed 9 raised garden beds in Shirley.
The Harvard Shaker Village in Harvard, Mass. was home to a Community of Shakers from 1781 until the village closed in 1918. Since that time, the Shaker buildings have been privately owned.

On September 15, 2012, the Harvard Historical Society is hosting an event that will – for the first time – allow the public to tour the village and buildings that once belonged to the Shakers.

Spend the day exploring the places where the Harvard Shakers lived, worked, and worshipped. Buildings will include Mother Ann Lee's Square House, the 1791 Meeting House, the 1841 Trustee’s Office, shops, dwelling houses, and more. Stroll through the famous Shaker "Lollipop” cemetery and walk a maple-lined avenue to reach the Holy Hill of Zion outdoor worship area. Visit the Harvard Historical Society to see the Shaker artifact collection on display, and enjoy 2 day’s entrance to Fruitlands Museum, which houses the original Harvard Trustee's office, built in 1794 and moved to Fruitlands in 1920, to serve as the first Shaker Museum.

Ticket Prices:
$75. Non-Members  $60. HHS Members

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO PURCHASE TICKETS, VISIT
WWW.HARVARDHISTORY.ORG
Old and New — Country Fairs in Sterling & Princeton

Agricultural fairs offer something for everyone to see, taste, experience, and remember for a lifetime. There are demonstrations, exhibits, crafts, local farm products and the people who grow them. Happening across Massachusetts for over 200 years, two of the 40 Community Fairs held annually are an easy drive away.

**Sterling Fair**, taking place from Friday evening September 7th through Sunday, the 9th, is the last free fair in the country. What began as a Cattle Show on the town common in the 1850s has become a 3-day agricultural celebration on the grounds of the Sterling Airport. Fair volunteers have planned unique and fun activities for the whole family including tractor and oxen pulls, frog jumping contests, apple pie and chocolate chip cookie making, antique engines and machinery displays, a midway of livestock and agricultural products, local bands, farmers market, pancake breakfast, food vendors and fireworks on Friday. To learn more about daily events, special guests like master gardener Paul Rogers, and to plan your trip, visit [sterlingfair.org](http://sterlingfair.org) today.

**3rd Annual HeyDay at Wachusett Meadow**, Princeton, MA happens one month later on October 6th (rain date Oct. 7th) from 11AM–4PM. Mass Audubon, the Princeton Art Society, and the Princeton Agricultural Commission join forces to offer the event. Young and old can choose from guided nature walks, a mini-maze, old-time games, 4H Club animals, pony rides and hands-on farm activities such as cider pressing. The Princeton Arts Society members, and other area artists and artisans, will exhibit, demonstrate and sell rural landscape and farm related art. You won’t want to miss the special art exhibit by the late Fred Mason, beloved Princeton artist, author, and former Wachusett Meadow Sanctuary Director. Admission is $5.00 per person and $20.00 max for families.

A word to the wise – bring cameras and smart phones because you’ll be busy snapping memories galore to share with family and friends. —MA

To learn more about these fairs and others in every season, visit these links:

- [www.sterlingfair.org](http://www.sterlingfair.org)
- [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org)
- [www.mass.gov/massgrown](http://www.mass.gov/massgrown) — a gateway to local products, artisan foods, and FUN ag-tivities.
Two Women Farmers, Continued from pg. 5.

After he retired, his son Hardy, took over the farm and he was not a cooper. He put in dairy cows. [When] My father ran the farm and he liked the apples and the cows and we raised vegetables when I was a child.” Owners of family farms constantly weigh their own interests against the demands of the market. And there are always the external forces of weather, cash flow, crop damage and disease. Linda Hoffman talks about a disastrous spring that has affected her apple crop. “This summer, we have no apples. It is incredible to me that we have no apples, and we’ve been here over 10 years. There was a heat spell in the spring, if you remember. We had 80-degree weather. And then it dropped to 26 degrees at night. And we had two nights at 26 degrees in April, at the time of pollination. It was an early season this year, everything was early this year, and things froze, all the flowers. So there are no apples out there.”

Taking on varied tasks can put one in harms way, which might require spunk as well as care. “When I was going through things after my parents passed on,” Eleanor says, “we came upon a gun which my older sister told me that my grandmother used when she took the money to the bank. She went by horse and buggy and she had a gun in her hand, a little pistol to protect herself on her way into the bank because she had to go into Nashua.”

Our farmers are inventive and creative, and the women have made a difference. Linda talks about her artwork. Hers may be the first working orchard sculpture garden: “…one of the first large projects I did a couple of years after moving here was “The Circus”, [an exhibit] at Fruitlands, made up of old agriculture tools. And then in the fall, I always have a sculpture walk as part of our pick-your-own here. I invite sculpture friends to bring a piece. People can come and pick, and they love it. And they go around the pond and through the woods, for a walk, and see the sculptures. I like bringing people here.”

Enjoying the people who come to their farms also seems to be a common trait – the laughter of children riding a hay wagon or spying a berry under a leaf is a pleasure reminiscent of their own happy childhoods. And those who grew up on farms always talk about how happy they felt playing freely in the fields and orchards. We are grateful that they are willing to share that experience with us.

Working for the Green

A Conference on Accelerating Green Growth Throughout the Commonwealth

Thursday, October 18, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm
Devens Common Center, 31 Andrews Parkway, Devens, MA
Keynote Address by Secretary Gregory Bialecki, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
This day-long conference will showcase the triple bottom line (economic, environmental, and community) benefits of sustainable development.
For full details and to register visit www.MassAudubon.org
Barrel Making in Townsend

By Jeannie Bartovics

When William O. Taylor posed for this photograph and accompanied ‘Uncle Daniel’ from farm to farm, Townsend was still primarily an agricultural town. Farmers were practical men and engaged in coopering for extra income whenever the seasons, weather, and crops allowed. By 1856 there were 118 little cooper shops in Townsend, most belonging to farmers. Since it took a very skilled cooper three weeks, working full time, to turn a pine tree into a barrel, most farmers worked on producing just the heads, staves or hoops. Some worked assembling delivered parts into finished barrels for pick-up by men like Daniel Adams (Uncle Daniel from Taylor’s memories).

Coopering came early to Townsend, introduced by the Scotch-Irish Wallace Brothers, cooper by trade. When they arrived in Boston in the 1730’s, they were directed to the north Middlesex area, known for its great stands of pine and oak. They settled in Townsend, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Like Daniel Adams, Benjamin Fessenden paid local farmers to produce finished barrels. He hauled them to Boston by oxcart until 1848, when the train supplanted the oxen. But unlike Adams, Fessenden had an ambitious young son interested in the family coopering business.

— Memories of William O. Taylor, 1862

HARVEST HOME — TOWNSEND COMMON

Meet Henry David Thoreau — Fall Arts & Crafts Fair  September 16th Noon–3PM

Drop by the 31st Fall Arts & Crafts Fair and you may engage naturalist and poet Henry David Thoreau, as portrayed by Richard Smith, in a conversation about his life and teachings.

Mr. Thoreau is a guest of Townsend Historical Society and Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area.
When Anson Fessenden returned from the Civil War, he and his father built a cooperage close to the Townsend Center depot. The finished stock could easily be transported by horse and wagon to waiting freight cars, then directly unloaded onto the train for shipment to larger markets. Production and profits soared when the Fessendens mechanized the process of barrel making. The B&A.D. Fessenden Company hit its zenith in 1929, producing 5,000 barrels a day (45 boxcar loads). And Townsend became a major coopering center. Cardboard and plastic eventually replaced wooden staves and hoops. Fessenden’s mill closed in 1960, and the building is gone. One of the few reminders left of the industry is a little 19th century cooper shop, now owned by the Townsend Historical Society. Long ago a farmer produced barrels in that shed for someone to transport to Boston. Someone Willie Taylor might even have known.
Please join us for the
Annual Meeting of the
Freedom’s Way Heritage Association

Minute Man National Historical Park
October 14th, 2012

3 pm  A Sense of Place
A special walking tour along the battle road with
Lou Sideris, Chief of Planning & Communications

5 pm  Annual Meeting

Light refreshments will be served at 4:30pm  ~  Registration required
Online registration and info available September 13th at
www.freedomsway.org

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 re-
maining in the hands of local people and organizations.