



FREEDOM'S WAY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

Spring/Summer 2004

Volume 8, Issue 1

Heritage Landscapes Series A Highlight of 2004

"How can we protect Massachusetts' valuable landscapes in view of continued growth and decreased public funding?"

This is a question that is central to the mission of Freedom's Way Heritage Association, and so we are sponsoring a trio of forums entitled, *The Heritage Landscapes Series*; and we have also adopted this as our theme for the year. There is a wonderful book on the subject, *"Reading the Land — Massachusetts Heritage Landscapes; A Guide to Identification and Protection."* This book is published by the Mass. Dept. of Environmental Management, and while it celebrates *"the beauty and character inherent in the landscapes of every community,"* it also offers some very concrete steps on how

each of us can assist in the preservation of the landscapes in our own hometowns.

The recently completed *Heritage Landscape Inventory Pilot Project* in SE Mass. is a pioneering program that helps to *"lay the groundwork at the local level for an integrated planning approach to preservation of the overall cultural landscapes: the historic, scenic, and environmental qualities that define each community and region."*

FWHA is dedicated to exactly that: preservation in the 42 towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire that comprise our region.

On January 6, 2004, Senator Pam Resor (D-Middlesex & Worcester), Bob Durand, Former Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Jessica Rowcraft, Preservation Planner, Department of Conservation and Recreation and Lucy Wallace, Town of Harvard Selectman and former planner were part of a forum sponsored by FWHA to discuss *"Master Planning and Heritage Landscapes."* The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service generously hosted the event, held at Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Sudbury, MA. It offered an opportunity to address and discuss the preservation of heritage landscapes in the context of major planning initiatives. The second forum, *"Heritage Landscapes 101,"* with Jessica Rowcraft, was held on June 8 from 8:30-11 AM at the Pepperell Community Center.

FWHA will also host a third in the series in the fall.

As *"Reading the Land"* so aptly puts it: *"Only those who value the heritage landscape can define the solution or the desired outcome of preservation."*

It is our goal to support and initiate ways to accomplish that; through Master Planning Legislation, forums like our Heritage Landscape Series, and helping to increase awareness and activism in each FWHA community — an area rich in irreplaceable sites, trails, landscapes and viewsheds, which are important to our country's history and its future.

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President's Message

As your new President, it is a pleasure to take over the reins from Marge Darby, who brought stability and professionalism to FWHA and I'm excited to be asked to take on this leadership role.

Part of the excitement comes from having our first employee: Meg Bagdonas as our part time Executive Director. Her skills as a manager and marketer are already bearing fruit. With a degree in journalism, Meg's background includes newspaper publishing and small business ownership as well as the leadership of a non-profit organization. Her writing and editing skills have come in handy with our newsletters. Meg also has extensive experience in communications and marketing with large public and private companies. She has been the chief spokesperson for organizations in Florida, New Jersey and here in Massachusetts. We're pleased that Meg came to us as a volunteer and decided to stay.

Organizations grow from the energy and fresh ideas brought by newly elected board members. They augment the stability and experience of those who continue their terms with us. A profile in this newsletter of one of our newest board members as well as a board alum who is continuing her association with us is a perfect example: *Gail Bloom*, newcomer and designer of our new "Footprints" brochure and *Zelda Moore*, this year's recipient of the First Annual Freedom's Way Heritage Association Award. Subsequent issues will highlight other FWHA members.

Your 2003-2004 Board of Directors made a strong commitment to the organization – our latest budget is ambitious, but it is an expression of how much we all care about FWHA. The 2004-2005 Board of Directors continues that commitment by planning and supporting that budget through outreach, education, fundraising, and legislative affairs activities. We hope you will participate and share the benefits of this group.

We are striving to broaden the exposure of Freedom's Way through expanding the interests represented on our board of directors. At annual meeting in March at the Fay Club in Fitchburg, you elected six new members, each one representing a town or organization not previously represented on the Board: Gail Bloom, Leominster resident and Fitchburg's Millennium artist; Michael Ellis, Executive Director of the Gardner Chamber of Commerce; Andrea Freeman, Doyle Conservation Institute Director of Trustees of Reservations; Stephanie Guidetti, Westford resident and freelance writer; Michael Sczerzen, President, Lancaster Historical Society; and John Mitterholzer, Executive Director of the Great American Downtown Project, Nashua, NH. They bring a wonderful level of expertise from their combined associations and affiliations – business connections, heritage and conservation planning, history, arts, and letters. This year's nominating committee, headed by Bonnie Biocchi has brought us some exceptional talent. The energy and excitement for the work keeps us on our toes, but it is the sense of purpose that makes it so worthwhile.

Mary Whitney, President, FWHA

From the Director's Desk

This year's theme is the Freedom's Way Heritage Landscape Series. The first seminar in the series was Master Planning and Heritage Landscapes, held in early January at the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Sudbury, MA. Back by popular demand, *Jessica Rowcroft* conducted our second workshop on June 8th in Pepperell, MA on identifying and interpreting Heritage Landscapes. In the fall, we plan another workshop for heritage landscape planning and the innovative visionary land developers among us who understand the benefits of protecting and enhancing heritage landscapes.

We were pleased to sponsor Utopia historian Cynthia Barton for a lecture and book signing this winter. Cynthia is a FWHA author and friend and we were pleased to have a standing room only audience for her at Fruitlands in Harvard.

Your past president, Marge Darby traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with our legislative aides on behalf of the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area legislation, to seek new ways to support passage. We continue talks with MassDevelopment, state and federal legislators and others to further our goals.

The FWHA cycling trails project continues as we build new loops for family outings that include exercise and history. Our latest trail in the Nashoba Valley is nearly ready for a test spin. In a similar vein, we are exploring a series of historic walks in collaboration with local Volkssport organization.

Thanks to Emilie Coolidge, our Boxborough liaison, for setting up a table at Boxborough's History Day. It is wonderful that our liaisons represent us and take the pulse of their community when they can. We consider our liaisons to be conduits -- we send them important announcements and occasional requests. They, in turn, give us feedback.

We are planning to update our town files of historic inventory and resources this year. We will need your help and the help of each of our town liaisons to make this huge effort a success. We hope you have been attending our Heritage Landscapes seminars and were taking good notes.

Also in our future is a special event in October ... something musical and seasonal that will be interesting for all ages. Be on the lookout for more information coming soon.

Meg Bagdonas



Marge Darby, President Emeritus, and Mary Whitney, FWHA President

Annual Meeting Held at Historic Fay Club

The stately surroundings of the *Fay Club in Fitchburg, MA* was the venue for FWHA's annual meeting on March 10, 2004. The Fay Club is an elegantly restored Gothic revival mansion built in 1883 by George Fay, who served as Director of Turner Falls Water Power Company, and Director of Fitchburg National Bank to name a few. When he died in 1895, his daughter Lucy Fay inherited the house and his millions. When she married and moved to California in 1910, she donated the lovely home to the Park Club, who retains ownership today.

The interior of the Fay Club illustrates fine Arts and Crafts style workmanship in the woodwork, hand-tooled leather wallpaper, the stained glass windows and the mural panels.

C. Howard Walker, an architect by training, designed and painted the murals in the Fay Club's main hall.

It was in this setting that *Marge Darby* called the meeting to order after a delicious meal, new board members were elected, and a bylaw amendment approving the designation of a prior or retiring Director as Director Emeritus. *(For a brief profile of our new board members, see page 2)*

Ms. Zelda Moore, whose vision and support of Freedom's Way has been an inspiration to all, was presented with the *Freedom's Way Heritage Association Award*. *(For more on Zelda Moore, see page 6)*

Marge Darby was also recognized for her invaluable contributions to FWHA, as she stepped down as President. Mary Whitney will now assume that role.

Attendees were then treated to a presentation by Tom and Brenda Malloy, called, *"It's Written in Stone! Ministers' Gravemarkers"*

Tom Malloy is a professor emeritus of American History from Mount Wachusett Community College and Brenda is also a retired teacher. Both have been active in the Association for Gravestone Studies, and have presented regionally and nationally on this topic.

They shared a wonderful slide show that they had compiled themselves of gravestones from 21 surrounding towns — the oldest stone being the obelisk of Chelmsford's first minister, John Fiske who died in 1676; and many tablestones that are indicative of a ministers' burial site. Gravestones of the ministers' wives were also included, and Tom and Brenda provided many anecdotes and family connections between New England's earliest ministers.

Association for Gravestone Studies Fall Cemetery Tours Saturday, October 16, 2004

Westminster's Woodside Cemetery 10 AM- Noon

Ashburnham's Meeting House Hill Cemetery 1- 3 PM

Tour Guides Tom and Brenda Malloy from AGS Sponsored by the Ashburnham Historical Society, The Gardner Museum and the Westminster Historical Society

The Fitchburg Watch: History of a Masterpiece, by Richard Meibers

When is a watch story not simply a watch story? Answer: when it is the story about how a watch came to be made, who helped to make it and why it was part of a major attempt to revitalize a city.

In 1800, only about one in ten homes had a clock, only one in every 32 people had a watch. Town and steeple clocks were how people told time. By the middle of the twentieth century it was difficult to find a person who did not own a watch. "This democratization of portable time could only have

come about through the American System of machine-made, mass-produced watch manufacture," Meibers writes.

The watch was also a symbol of something greater — the effect of the industrial age on the expectations of Americans. Once the jewelry of the elite, the watch became the symbolic reward for good behavior or loyal service to a company.

Eventually, inexpensive mass-produced watches were truly available to all. And this change signaled a new concept — that success, if measured by profitability,

could come from providing as many people as possible with an inexpensive product.

Richard Meibers, author of "The Fitchburg Watch" tells us a wonderful story that connects the industrial revolution, the fate of one watch, the men of the Fitchburg Board of Trade and the City of Fitchburg.

Published in 2002 by Martin and Lawrence Press in Groton, this book is a good read if you like history.

By Marge Darby

Nathaniel Hawthorne

The year 2004 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of one of New England's most gifted writers: Nathaniel Hawthorne. Although well known for his connection to such towns as Salem and Boston, Hawthorne spent a great deal of time in some of Freedom's Way towns — sharing the company of Henry Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Ralph Waldo Emerson among others. Together, these great minds eloquently articulated what it meant to be an American in a young and growing country— each in their own unique way.

Hawthorne was born in Salem, Massachusetts on July 4, 1804 — in fact, as a boy, when fireworks were used to celebrate the birth of America, he thought it was for him! An introspective and shy child, he found his love of the written word early. At the age of 16, he wrote, edited and published a newspaper: *"The Spectator,"* writing essays on wealth and benevolence, including samples of his poetry.

"The Spectator" was an interesting and prophetic name for Hawthorne's first venture, because in many ways he played the part of a spectator with increasing expertise. He was an absolute master of seeing straight into others' hearts and understanding the reasons behind their behavior. He could see into the darkest heart, such as Chillingworth in *"The Scarlet Letter"*; imagine innocence in its purest form, as in Ibrahim in *"The Gentle Boy"*; portray guilt as a physical manifestation such as in Reverend Mr. Hooper in *"The Minister's Black Veil"*; and weave complex and prophetic family stories based in American history as he did in *"The House of the Seven Gables"*. Hawthorne's gifts as a writer of "romances" is undisputed, as his works are still widely read around the world.

Many people are also familiar with his romantic courtship of Sophia Peabody of Salem — a love found late in life as both were in their 30's by the time they married. No matter the age, love can make one *"as happy as people can be, without making themselves ridiculous,"* as Hawthorne would write to his family. Happily for us, his love letters to Sophia fill two volumes, even though she burned many of them after his death in 1864.

Most of Hawthorne's stories have their roots deep in New England soil, and many of his characters have "Yankee" sensibilities. But perhaps it is lesser known that much like Thoreau, Hawthorne had a great love of nature and could "write" a picture of nature with great skill, and a bit of humor.

When Hawthorne and Sophia began their honeymoon by renting The Old Manse in Concord, he at once likened them to Adam and Eve in Eden. He describes the Concord River, that flows right behind the house: in his collection of short stories, titled *"Mosses from an Old Manse"* — *"It may well be called the Concord, the river of peace and quietness; for it is certainly the most unexcitable and sluggish stream that ever loitered imperceptibly towards its eternity — the sea. Positively, I had lived three weeks beside it before it grew quite clear to my perception which way the current flowed. It never has a vivacious aspect, except when a northwestern breeze is vexing its surface on a sunny day."*

Hawthorne befriended Thoreau, each appreciating the others' comfort with silence. He traveled to the Shaker village in Harvard with Emerson, who called Hawthorne a great listener — perhaps because Emerson himself was such a prodigious orator.

Minute Man National Historic Park in collaboration with many other organizations is sponsoring a commemorative symposium called *"Living Legacy: a Bicentennial Celebration of the Life and Writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne,"* June 25-26, 2004. (Contact the MMNHP for more information.)

I invite you to meet or reacquaint yourself with Hawthorne this year by visiting some of the places he lived or visited right here in the FWHA region. The writer who gardened at The Old Manse in Concord; the spectator who walked the footpaths of Shirley, Harvard and perhaps other surrounding towns; the companion who paddled along the Concord and Assabet Rivers with Thoreau; the homeowner who looked out over Concord from his study tower at the Wayside; the genius that recognized that in the history of our lives is our future — he sought to tell us those stories from the written page. *by Stephanie Guidetti, Board Member*



FWHA Bike Tours Take Shape

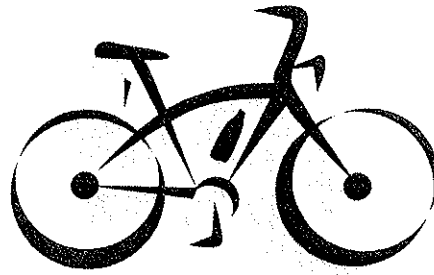
Continuing to build toward FWHA's goal to showcase the rich history in our 42-town area, we are developing a series of historic intercommunity bicycle tours.

The tours will follow routes of different length for cyclists of moderate ability and for all age groups.

Each tour will include a map, description of significant sites along the way, their historical and cultural setting – including the sites' natural beauty and geologic significance. The ride descriptions will also give information on distance, degree of difficulty and facilities that would be of use to bicyclists, such as rest stops, food, bike repairs and parking.

Each tour in the FWHA series will begin at a FWHA interpretive or affiliated site and follow a suggested route through neighboring FWHA

towns, ending up back at the official site. The tours will provide opportunities to show how the FWHA communities share common threads that contributed toward this area's special role in American history.



An additional benefit is that the riders can visit the museums or interpretive sites as part of their day to build the educational experience and

to learn more about Freedom's Way themes.

With invaluable expertise and tireless assistance from FWHA board member **Jerry Van Hook**, the tours on the drawing board include a loop through Lexington and Concord area that begins at the National Heritage Museum, as well as a more ambitious series of loops linking the Nashoba Valley towns of Ayer/Devens, Harvard, Groton, Pepperell, Shirley and Townsend, originating at Fruitlands Museums. FWHA is seeking underwriting for the final mapping, production and distribution costs.

*by Meg Bagdonas,
Executive Director of FWHA*

Volunteering ... Do You Have the Heart?

Like the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, Freedom's Way Heritage Association relies heavily on its volunteers.

Webster's defines a volunteer as "a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service." But that doesn't begin to describe what a volunteer really is or does. Nor does it indicate the value of the work a volunteer achieves.

What makes people willing to become volunteers?

Robert Kennedy said it best: "few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each one of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

Volunteering makes you feel needed. You are doing something useful and productive, and, you can usually see the fruit of your labor!

Volunteering can lead to new skills or can help you to keep your skills current. It introduces you to new ideas, people and cultures, enhancing your sense of self and enlarging your world.

It gives credence to the words of John Ruskin who said "the highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it."

Volunteers don't necessarily have the time, but they do have the heart. They have learned to turn "no" into "yes", the impossible into the possible and in the process have changed lives...their own and others. They know that "people may not remember exactly what you did, or what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel."

If you would like more information about volunteering opportunities for FWHA, contact Meg Bagdonas at **978-772-3654** or mail@freedomsway.org.

You might find the opportunity of a lifetime!

By Bonnie Biocchi, FWHA Board Member

Zelda Moore — This Year's First Annual Freedom's Way Heritage Association Award Recipient

As an extraordinary example of dedication to preservation and love of the history of our area, we could not have chosen a more worthy recipient than **Zelda L. Moore** for our First Annual Freedom's Way Heritage Association Award this year.

She joined FWHA's board in 1995, and serves on the Theme Development committee. Many of you may have heard about Mrs. Moore and her son, Cal's restoration of the Page-Moore block in Ayer center. This project has brought together two of her great loves: researching old deeds and preservation.

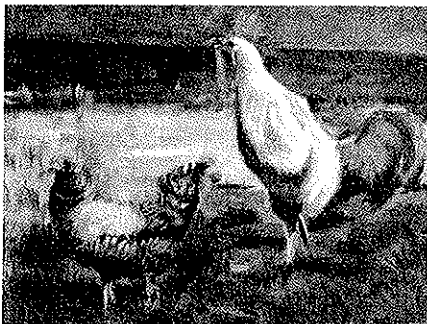
Mrs. Moore belongs to the Ayer Historical Commission and received the Service and Leadership award from the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce in 1998. She also received the Dedication of the Ayer Annual Town Report in 1999. Mrs. Moore is currently

researching a Shaker quarry site in Ayer, and is developing a historical library in the newly renovated Page-Moore Block building in Ayer.

She first became interested in FWHA because it was an organization that shared her love of history and preservation. "Marge [Darby] and Millie [Chandler] were so full of enthusiasm and energy, that I knew I would enjoy being part of the organization." Mrs. Moore loves the outdoors and researching the history of land parcels. Currently, she is researching the history of Snake Hill in Ayer and its' significance to the Shaker Community. Mrs. Moore said she is pleased to see so many new people and communities actively supporting FWHA.



Zelda Moore with the First Annual Freedom's Way Heritage Association Award, presented to her at the FWHA Annual Meeting in March 2004.



"Keeping Order" by Gail Bloom

Appointed Fitchburg's Millennial Community Artist in May 2001 by then Mayor Mary Whitney, **Gail Bloom** has received citations from the Massachusetts House of Representatives as well as from current Mayor Dan Mylott of

the City of Fitchburg for her work as the city's "Image Maker."

In June 2002, she received the "Founding Artist Award" from the Fitchburg's Millennium Community Committee for her outstanding photography and on going art projects in the city.

She is also involved with the city of Fitchburg through the Fitchburg Cultural Alliance, the Redevelopment Authority and the Longsjo Classic Bike Race Committee.

Gail is a graduate of the Pratt

Institute of New York and Tufts and The Boston Museum School of Fine Arts.

She joined FWHA in 2002 as a member of the Membership committee, designing the membership brochure and supplying all artwork.

Gail feels very strongly about the arts as being the essential provocateur of real communication.

"I especially believe the arts are essentially important to the children as a real ex-

pression of themselves, which encourages acceptance; of themselves and others; opens them up to non-judgmental thinking; lessens prejudice through acceptance of another's message; encourages respect and listening; and creates the ability to negotiate successfully.

"I feel that what is most important is the community building we are establishing with the children."

She is proud to be involved in FWHA with their obvious efforts at community building.

The Gardner Area Project

Mt. Wachusett Community College (MWCC) is launching a project to archive the history of furniture production in the greater Gardner area. The project's ultimate goal is to preserve the region's history through documents — not artifacts — and to make that history readily available for anyone who wishes access.

First steps are to gather, identify, and assess documents and records from the furniture making industry in the Gardner area. That includes business and personal letters, diaries, journals, books, photos, company records, catalogs, sales literature, blue prints and other printed materials.

Funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Records Advisory Board, MWCC hired an archivist consultant to oversee the project. Organizers are asking for help in obtaining historic documents relating to the region's furniture making and the crafts people who worked within the industry here.

To donate documents or to otherwise support the project, contact **Linda Oldach** at **978-630-9126**.

**FWHA Board of Directors 2004-2005
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Old-Growth Forests in Southern New England

Old-growth forests do at least three very important things:

- Homes:** Many plants and animals only thrive in old-growth forests.
- Classrooms:** Providing a way for us to learn what natural, old forests are like, including a genetic diversity that may be lacking in secondary growth forests.
- Inspiration:** Old-Growth forests can take your breath away!

If you would like to learn more about old-growth forests in our area, send in \$13, with the form below, and check the box for this fascinating book by Joel Gerwein.



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Marge Darby

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Libby Herland, Project Leader, Eastern Complex NFWS
Nancy Nelson, Superintendent, Minute Man National Historical Park

Membership Information

You may send a check or money order with this form to:

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Renewal

New Membership

Annual Membership Categories

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Family/Nonprofit \$50

Thoreau Associate \$500-\$999

Business roundtable \$100

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Send me "Old Growth Forests in Southern New England." I am enclosing \$13 to cover cost and shipping.

Name _____ Email _____

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*We also have gift memberships. Call us for more information.
 Your contribution will help to create and foster our National Heritage area.*



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Ask Freedom's Way!

Q: I hear that the wind farm on Mt. Wachusett is expanding. What does that mean? I'm in favor of wind power, so what's the down side?



A: There is a proposal to expand the Princeton Wind Farm off Westminster Road in Princeton, operated by the Princeton Light Department. The proposal replaces the eight existing wind turbines that are each approximately 100 feet tall, with two larger turbines that will be 364 feet tall to the tip of the blades. The new towers will be constructed from 230 foot tall poles with 134 foot long wind blades affixed on a nacelle at the top. The tips of the blades will reach a height less than 100 feet below the elevation of Mt. Wachusett's summit — reportedly tall enough to need aviation warning lights. Today's wind farm can be seen from Route 2, Fruitlands or other viewpoints from the east looking west across the Devens South Post and Leominster.

Opponents of the expansion cite safety concerns from ice that will drop from the tower onto adjacent hiking trails without adequate set backs, as is the case with the existing wind turbine towers. Other opponent concerns focus on the safety of bats, raptors and other birds that concentrate at the wind farm location, especially during migration.

According to *The Landmark*, a weekly newspaper serving the Wachusett Region (updated 5/20/04), The Massachusetts Secretary of Environmental Affairs issued a certificate that allows the project to move forward without an Environmental Impact Report.

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