



Upper Housatonic Valley
National Heritage Area, Inc.
P.O. Box 493
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Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area

Annual Report 2007



An update from your regional heritage partner.



2007 – Building a National Heritage Area

During the past year UHVNHA has moved to a fiscal year ending September 30, coinciding with the Federal Government's fiscal year. Because of this, this report covers the nine month January-September period. Having been designated as a National Heritage Area in October, 2006, these nine months have seen us moving forward to obtain the authorized Federal funding, beginning to develop the required Management Plan and carrying out our range of ongoing Heritage Programs - a very busy time for all!

With the Federal funding arriving during the coming year, we will be looking to the region's residents and organizations for thoughts and guidance on how we can organize and operate to best carry out our mission. Our mandate is broad, with the four identified heritage themes covering:

- 1) The past and present activity of writers, artists, musicians and others in creating a cultural oasis,
- 2) Our unmatched scenic beauty, both natural and man made,
- 3) Our role in key early industries of national significance and
- 4) Our role in the development of democracy - the independent spirit.

Our mission is defined in our designation legislation as "heightening appreciation of the region, preserving its natural and historical resources, and improving the quality of life and the economy of the area". With your help in the coming months and years, we will explore how to achieve this.

During our fiscal 2007 we organized six public meetings and plan more for the coming year. We thank all of you who have helped us achieve our present status and are working with us for a future that will benefit the entire region.

Ronald D. Jones, Chairman

Heritage projects currently in progress

The heritage area has again advanced several projects in 2007, with the generous support of individuals and organizations. These projects remain an important step in realizing the full potential of our heritage area – collaborative efforts that offer residents and visitors the opportunity to experience the rich heritage that is ours. Our Board of Trustees, in concert with other regional partners, perpetuated these projects:

1. **Heritage Walks.** On September 22nd and 23rd, and October 6th & 7th we coordinated nearly four dozen heritage walks with varying themes, and in dozens of locations. This sixth annual event created partnerships between various historical, cultural and natural resource institutions, and provided a platform to showcase the diversity of the region.
 2. **African-American Heritage Trail.** Now in its fourth year, this trail tells the story of African Americans in the Upper Housatonic Valley. In 2007, we partnered with The Trustees of Reservations to celebrate the second annual Mum Bett Day and with Jacob's Pillow Dance to formally dedicate the Pillow as a site on the African American Trail. AAHT has also joined an emerging Massachusetts-wide African-American/Abolitionist Bike Route Network. The MAAAB network of 10 to 400-mile bicycling routes will take individuals, families and clubs on a journey through a rich African American heritage found in the many cities and towns across the state.
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3. Upper Housatonic Valley Experience – this graduate-level teachers’ course was designed to bring a local heritage curriculum into our schools. We’ve completed the fifth such course this past June, 2007, and have successfully inaugurated another group of teachers from middle and high schools throughout the area to the region’s wealth of heritage. Under the direction of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Berkshire Community College, these teachers explored the region’s industrial, cultural and natural heritage with the purpose of developing regional heritage curriculums in local classrooms.
4. Performing Arts Trail. The Performing Arts Trail is comprised of over a dozen leading performing arts cultural organizations from Northwest Connecticut and Berkshire County. We are poised to move forward with marketing and creative initiatives, including outlining a trail and developing our own subsection of the Heritage website, as soon as a Heritage staff person is in place to field informational requests about our community as a whole.
5. We continued to distribute our Iron Heritage Trail brochure, describing the nationally important 1734-1923 iron industry. Numerous presentations were made at East Canaan’s Beckley Furnace and at other locations on the trail.

Contributors and Supporters 2007

Contributions from local sources allowed us to carry out these activities and stand ready for the Federal funding when it becomes available. We thank all of those generous people and organizations who have made this possible. In addition to members of our Board of Directors, we specifically thank the following for their support this year:

Becton Dickinson Co.
 Interlaken Inn
 Crane & Co.
 Berkshire Bank Foundation
 Berkshire Taconic Community
 Foundation
 Clinton AME Zion Church
 Anita Danker
 Rachel Fletcher
 Foggy River Fund

Friends of Beckley Furnace
 Robert and Marilyn Gansel
 High Meadow Foundation
 Legacy Banks
 MCLA
 Nancy Bushnell - Victor Reiling
 Louis and Joan Oggiani
 Russell Cohen
 Sara Wardell
 Willard T. Weeks

A look ahead to 2008

Goals for 2008 include the hiring of our first Executive Director. With the uncertainty of federal funding, we have postponed this process until early 2008, and anticipate having a director in place by July 1st, 2008.

We will also make substantial progress on the creation of our Management Plan. The process is complex and requires the collaboration and support of the many existing individuals and organizations in the region. We have contracted with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and with Housatonic Valley Association to assist us in uncovering existing plans for the preservation and celebration of our many heritage assets, and are seeking to include a wide range of plans and projects for consideration as heritage projects.

The year ahead will bring collaboration among many parties. We seek to reach all of those individuals and organizations who had expressed support during the Feasibility Study phase

of the heritage area, and uncover new potential partners. As our mandate is to collaborate and assist our heritage partners to accomplish their goals - it is these partners, and their established goals, that will guide us in the creation of our own mission. We need your help with this task, and ask for your participation in our public meetings and in an advisory capacity.

In 2008 the Upper Housatonic Valley NHA is seeking to bring together an Advisory Board of some 50 members. The Advisory Board (and the 5 sub-committees) will provide us with guidance on the creation of our Management Plan, and subsequently, on the mission of the heritage area. Further, this Board will have direct input as to which heritage themes are explored in the years ahead, and will serve as a community liaison as information about potential heritage projects is gathered and decisions are made.

We already have several significant projects before us, including the Great Barrington Trails and Greenways Project and a Native American Heritage Trail. Our various public meetings bring many suggestions that we have had to defer while awaiting funding. In addition, we intend to implement a heritage grants program for individual projects that fit with our mission and our identified basic themes.

The challenges of funding remain as we strive to move each of our existing heritage projects forward, but remain reliant on the generosity of our supporters. We are extremely grateful for the continuing support that you all have shown, and ask for your support for the year ahead. Our teachers' program is again scheduled for June, our Heritage Walks for October and our Iron Industry Heritage Walk for August. The African American Heritage Trail will be expanding the number of dedicated sites and available printed materials, and we will also consider other heritage projects.

Please help by continuing to spread the word to friends and organizations in the region, by participating in our development, and, as you see fit, providing a financial contribution for our activities.

The Board of Trustees

The road to designation as a National Heritage Area, and the subsequent challenges of its implementation has been possible through the strong support that we have felt from our communities. As our eighth year of heritage activities gets under way, we to again acknowledge the strong support that we've received from many individuals, companies, heritage organizations and governments. It is your continued support that insures this important work to continue in the years ahead, and we're deeply appreciative.

By the Trustees:

Richard Aldrich, Lee
Dan Bolognani, Lime Rock
Beryl Jolly, Great Barrington
Steve McMahon, Stockbridge
Rachel Fletcher, Great Barrington
Paul Ivory, Great Barrington

Ronald D. Jones, Lakeville
Edward Kirby, Sharon
Dennis Regan, Hinsdale
Stephen A. Sears, Dalton
Thomas Shachtman, Salisbury
Talbot Smith, Kent

Appendices:

1. 2007 Financial Statement (9-month / Fiscal year change)
2. 2008 Budget
3. Description of HERITAGE Projects

2007 Financial Results

Operating Revenues:

Individual . Business Contributions	\$ 36,037
Foundation Grants	25,000
Trusts	4,000
Dividends / Securities Income	324
Guidebook Sales	<u>3,403</u>
Total	\$ 68,764

Expenditures:

Heritage Walks 2007	11,563
African-American Heritage Trail	7,615
AFAM Guidebook	3,517
Housatonic Experience Program	15,000
Administrative	<u>4,968</u>
Total	\$ 41,663

Cash on Hand:

Cash Balance, December 31, 2006	\$ 5,949
Revenues during 2006	68,764
Less Expenses during 2006	<u>- 41,663</u>
Balance, December 31, 2006	\$ 33,050

Housatonic Heritage Endowment:

Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Fund	
Balance 1/1/07	\$ 71,747
Gifts to the endowment 2007	30,000
Earnings / Loss on investments	6,903
Administrative costs	<u>- 941</u>
Fund Balance 9/30/07	\$107,709

2008 Budget * (October 1st – September 30th)

Revenues:

Federal 2007 Funding	\$ 20,000
Federal 2008 Funding	\$ 145,000
Foundation Grants	\$ 85,000
Organizations, businesses, individuals	\$ 32,000
Guidebook sales	<u>\$ 3,000</u>
Total	\$ 285,000

Expenditures:

EXPENDITURES	
Administrative and Accounting	\$ 25,000
Management Plan (beyond Staff work)	\$ 100,000
Logo design, marketing, website	\$ 30,000
Brochures and maps	\$ 5,000
Heritage Area public presence	\$ 25,000
Heritage Trails, Projects, Grants	<u>\$ 100,000</u>
Total	\$ 285,000

* * Generally the matching funds for the various projects will not be run through the UHVNHA accounts..

** Ongoing Projects:

October Walks	\$14,000
African American Trail	\$12,000
Teachers' Course	\$21,000
Iron Heritage Trail	\$ 5,000
Housatonic River summer	\$ 5,000
Performing Arts Trail	\$ 5,000
Native American Heritage	\$ 5,000

Summary of Current Heritage Projects

Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail

To identify, preserve, share and celebrate our African American heritage in the Upper Housatonic Valley, through the creation of a heritage trail and related interpretive materials.

The project brings together the efforts over many years by a diverse group of local scholars, historians, educators and community leaders to identify, preserve and share the area's rich African American heritage. Representatives from every higher education institution in Berkshire County and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, as well as local historical societies, restoration sites, African American churches, and other organizations formally came together for the first time in January 2004 as the African American Heritage Trail Advisory Council.

In 2006 we saw the inauguration of the Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail, the publication of a 250-page guide African American Heritage in the Upper Housatonic Valley, a national conference, exhibitions, and more.

In 2007, the Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail (AAHT) partnered with The Trustees of Reservations on August 21 to celebrate the second annual Mum Bett Day and with Jacob's Pillow Dance on August 25 to formally dedicate the Pillow as a site on the African American Trail.

Jacob's Pillow is the second African American site to be formally recognized, following the dedication in September 2006 of The Trustees of Reservations' Col. John Ashley House, where Elizabeth "Mum Bett" Freeman began the fight that helped end slavery in Massachusetts. The second annual "Mum Bett Day" celebration took place at various locales in South Berkshire County, commemorating the 1781 court case in which Elizabeth ("Mum Bett") Freeman successfully sued Col. Ashley for her freedom.

To mark the occasion, the Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail produced a free 10-panel Trail Guide to 48 sites along the trail, and Jacob's Pillow produced a companion brochure, "African American Heritage: Jacob's Pillow Dance". Future brochures on the region's African American heritage themes are planned.

AAHT has joined an emerging Massachusetts-wide African-American/Abolitionist Bike Route Network. The MAAAB network of 10 to 400-mile bicycling routes will take individuals, families and clubs on a journey through a rich African American heritage found in the many cities and towns across the state. AAHT has delineated Sheffield/Great Barrington and Jacob's Pillow/Lee/Lenox/Stockbridge bicycle routes within its trail.

In addition to the heritage trail and guidebook, the Advisory Board has undertaken:

- to develop a parallel African-American Educators Network of college, high school, and elementary/middle school educators to incorporate guide materials in local school curricula;
 - to compile a bibliography of regional sources;
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- to build upon the Berkshire County Historical Society's Invisible Community oral history project and document the largely unwritten local history of African-Americans in the region
- to support emerging African American heritage centers including an Elizabeth 'Mumbet' Freeman center at the Col. Ashley House in Sheffield; the Samuel Harrison House (Chaplain of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment) in Pittsfield; and the W. E. B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite in Great Barrington

The African American Heritage Trail encompasses all 29 Massachusetts and Connecticut towns in the UHVNHA. On Friday September 15, more than 250 people inaugurated the trail with a three motor-coach tour of major trail sites, including the Rev. Samuel Harrison House in Pittsfield, the Great Barrington birthplace and boyhood home of W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Col. John Ashley House in Sheffield where in 1781, Elizabeth "Mum Bett" Freeman began the fight that helped end slavery in Massachusetts. The inaugural tour, called "Road to Home," is the name of a Berkshire landscape by the great African American photographer, James VanDerZee, taken at his Lenox home.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a physical trail that articulates, interprets and visualizes in the physical landscape the heritage themes that tell the story of African-Americans in the Upper Housatonic Valley. The trail and the sites it showcases will become vehicles for educational initiatives and for a fully developed program of heritage tourism—lecture series and publications on specific themes, audio tours, a web site, and signage and other amenities for on-site interpretation.

Heritage Walks Weekend

Each autumn season the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area organizes an impressive list of historic, cultural and natural sites. Over two Fall weekends the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area and its supporting organizations host nearly 50 free walks by historians, naturalists and environmentalists for the public to learn about and enjoy the rich natural and cultural resources of the upper Housatonic River Valley.

For 2007 – the Heritage Walks weekend was expanded to two weekends in order to accommodate the wide variety of destinations and participants. This was the sixth season for the heritage walks, and this event has boasted the best turnout to date.

The sixth annual Heritage Walks weekend were successful overall and by spreading the program out across two weekends, it allowed participants to more easily attend multiple walks, as well as give walk leaders an opportunity to other events. Walk participation ranged for the most part from three to twenty participants, with most walk leaders reporting seven to twelve people. As hoped for, feedback was very positive. As one participant stated in a letter "I just would like to thank you for the wonderful events I have been privileged to attend each year through the Heritage Walks..."

This year's program offered 39 diverse activities spread over two weekends. The events were diverse and include such events as: walking tours of historic downtowns, bird walks, wild edibles walk, various river walks, and also included for the first time a canoe/kayak river trip. Participants were excited and enthused about this year's events and are already planning for involvement in next year's program. At this time, the planning committee will keep the two weekend schedule and will continue to add new and varied events to the schedule. Please contact the Housatonic Heritage program if you are interested in leading an event for next year.

Many of the walks had terrific turnouts—approximately 30 people toured the Richmond furnaces on Saturday, while Rachel Fletcher, Elaine Gunn, Bernie Drew, and Esther Dozier took a full group to the Du Bois Homesite; the walk at The Mount had 44 people; over 40 people joined Dennis Regan’s walks along the Housatonic in Hinsdale; and Jon Piasecki reports that more than 50 people turned out for the Native American Prehistory walk on Sunday morning.

This degree of active participation shows us that the hikes are an important event for our communities, and that they are supporting the work of developing and protecting our natural, scenic, and cultural heritage.

Performing Arts Heritage Trail

The Performing Arts Trail is comprised of over a dozen leading performing arts cultural organizations from Northwest Connecticut and Berkshire County. We are poised to move forward with marketing and creative initiatives, including outlining a trail and developing our own subsection of the Heritage website, as soon as a Heritage staff person is in place to field informational requests about our community as a whole.

One of the most vibrant assets of the Upper Housatonic Valley is its historically rich and currently thriving arts scene. The performing arts organizations in the region have recently formed a collaborative group to create a Housatonic Heritage Performing Arts Trail and narrative guide. Representatives of eleven performing arts venues, two cultural organizations, and the editor-in-chief of Berkshire Living magazine have been meeting to organize their own historical materials and to collectively shape printed and web-based materials to promote the active cultural vitality of the area.

The group also hopes to collaborate on performances grounded in the region’s history and artistic residents, and to expand school-based programs to incorporate performing arts heritage projects.

The Performing Arts Trail will include the Connecticut based TriArts at the Sharon Playhouse, and Music Mountain at Falls Village, as well as in Massachusetts, the Berkshire Museum, Berkshire Opera Company, Berkshire Theater Festival, Colonial Theater, Daniel Arts Center at Simon’s Rock College, Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Shakespeare & Company, and Tanglewood.

Outreach efforts are currently under way to ensure the collective is including information on all past and current performing arts organizations that have based their roots in the Housatonic Valley landscape.

The Housatonic Experience - Educational Initiatives

In response to a need to bring a local-heritage curriculum into our regional schools, the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area consorted with the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Berkshire Community College, and the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce to create a graduate-level teachers’ course, now entering its fourth year.

Intended for middle/high school teachers of history, social studies, English, science and industrial technology, this interdisciplinary, team-taught course provides a contextual experience that integrates these core subjects by introducing information about the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. History, business, and environmental experts will weave their content and perspective through a series of mini-lectures, hand-on activities and guided field trip experiences.

The purpose of this course is to introduce teachers to:

- The industrial, historical and cultural heritage of The Upper Housatonic Valley, and to
- Infuse this information into contextual applications and hands on strategies that will enhance students' understanding of social studies, history, science and technology.

Models and practices that encourage underachieving students' participation in class will be demonstrated. Participants will review their current curricula and develop lessons that integrate contextual content with motivational strategies including those that address gender differences and learning styles. Field trips to local cultural, environmental and business sites and presentations by guest lecturers will also be included.

In 2007 we completed the 4th annual "teach the teachers" course the "Upper Housatonic Valley Experience". This was a one week master's level course taught through Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in conjunction with Berkshire Community College.

Each college had two teachers participate as instructors for the class. Ten teachers from local middle and high schools were participants. Within their program they visited local historical, environmental and economically important sites from Beckley Furnace, at trip on the Housatonic River in Lenox, and a tour of Interprint, Crane and EACo. After their week course was complete, each teacher developed a curriculum based on their area of study and wove the important features of the Heritage Area into course content.

Student tours have already started for this school year where the teachers from the program bring their students on field trips to our Heritage Area sites to extend their learning.

Based on the feedback of the administrators of the program, this has been the best course to date and the teacher's enthusiasm has been outstanding.

Support for this program has continued to be strong from both MCLA and BCC along with the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, the Berkshire Regional Employment Bureau and the Berkshire County Principals. Planning has already started for the 2008 course.

The 1734 – 1923 Iron Heritage Trail

GOAL: To preserve selected archival sites, provide informational materials and conduct educational programs concerning the heritage of iron production in the Tri-State section of Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York including Litchfield, Berkshire, Dutchess and Columbia counties.

For nearly 200 years the Upper Housatonic Valley region produced iron for the nation's development. Known as the "Arsenal of the Revolution", Lakeville's blast furnace produced some 80% of all cannons provided for General Washington's army. More than forty furnaces operated during the 1800's, providing iron for military armaments and civilian needs.

In 2004, with National Park Service assistance, we produced an Iron Trail brochure that has been widely distributed. Although further development of that trail must await our Federal funding, iron heritage preservation, research and activity is continuing at East Canaan's Beckley Furnace.

2007 has been an active year, with our successful 10th Annual Iron Heritage Walk, presentations for school classes, and the successful completion of a documentary about iron making. The Trail is working to secure funding for interpretive signage at the numerous historical sites in the region, and modest development of those sites as funding permits.

Also during calendar year 2007, the Iron Heritage Trail was witness to continually increasing activity. The Beckley Furnace (centerpiece of the Iron Heritage Trail) showed a daily increase in visitor numbers over the past years. In addition to walk-in visitors programs were presented for adults, public and private elementary and secondary school groups from northwestern Connecticut and southwestern Massachusetts. Each Saturday from late May to mid-October the Friends of Beckley Furnace provided a docent for visitors to the site.

To the south in Kent, John Pawloski president of the Connecticut Antique Machinery Association, provided tours and school programs at the former Kent Iron Works site including the partially restored blast furnace. On the same location Mr. Pawloski has added considerably to his excellent Connecticut Mining Museum.

Volunteers from several of the region's historical societies regularly conducted tours of other sites including the 1810 Mt. Riga Furnace, Lime Rock Furnace #2, Bull's Falls Furnace, Richmond Furnace, Ames Ironworks, the charcoal industries of Monument Mountain, Wassaic Beehive Charcoal Kilns and the Sharon Valley Lime Kiln.

In cooperation with the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area the Sharon Historical Society is in the process of developing a film titled Visions of Iron. This one-half hour documentary telling the story of nearly two hundred years of iron production in the Upper Housatonic Watershed will be released early in 2008.

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See our web site at www.housatonicheritage.org.