

UPPER HOUSATONIC VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, INC

ANNUAL REPORT - 2002

During the past year, UHVNHA, Inc. continued to assist Dr. James O'Connell in his preparation of the National Park Service Report on our area and also continued to evolve to become an appropriate management entity. Dr. O'Connell's Draft Report was released to broad general acclaim in mid-December and constructive, supporting comments were received during the following forty-five days. The Report will serve as the basis for Congressional legislation, to be introduced in early 2003, designating us as a National Heritage Area.

Brenda Barrett, NPS National Coordinator for the Heritage Areas, visited the Housatonic Valley in March and spoke at meetings convened in Pittsfield, Stockbridge and South Canaan. She provided much good advice and renewed the challenge - "if you want to be designated as a National Heritage Area, start acting like one".

Our activities were highlighted by our successful May "Shays' Rebellion" History Fair and the October Weekend of Heritage Walks. Congresswoman Nancy Johnson, a strong supporter, spoke at the History Fair, as more than a hundred attendees browsed through the exhibits and listened to the talks. The October weekend featured twenty three heritage walks covering a range of scenic, historical and cultural aspects at sites from Bulls Bridge to Pittsfield. We also co-sponsored East Canaan's August Iron Heritage Walk, the September dedication of the W.E.B. DuBois River Garden in Great Barrington and the November Berkshire Regional Planning Commission program on sprawl.

Our Board of Directors met eleven times during the year and our Advisory Board met twice. We published three newsletters and issued several heritage brochures. The IRS has confirmed our tax exempt status, so that donations are fully deductible.

Although we work entirely through volunteers, we do have operating costs and look towards developing a modest professional office to coordinate our activities and allow us to better serve our supporters and our mission. During the year we received generous support from the National Park Service, as part of its study activity, and from the following supporters:

Ms. Jean W. Blackmur	Mr. Stewart K. Jones	M/M Hector Prud'homme
Ms. Susan Eisley	Mr. Alan Lipman	M/M Carter Smith
Falls Village/Canaan Hist. Soc.	Ms. Lael M. Locke	Mr. Crosby Wells
Mr. John Granbery	Ms. Carol Nelson	

Our quest for National Heritage Area designation has moved steadily forward because of the broad and enthusiastic support of so many organizations, local governments, State officials and individuals. We thank you all and look forward to continuing to work together to preserve and celebrate the very special heritage of the Upper Housatonic Valley.

Ronald D. Jones, Chairman