



Upper Housatonic Valley
National Heritage Area, Inc.
P.O. Box 493
Salisbury, CT 06068

Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area

Annual Report 2006

(The year of designation....)

An update from your regional heritage partner.



2006 – The Year of Designation as a National Heritage Area

On October 12, 2006, the Upper Housatonic Valley, ranging from Kent, Connecticut north to Lanesborough, Massachusetts, was officially designated as a National Heritage Area. We are one of ten new areas added to the existing twenty seven throughout the country. The legislation states our goals – “to heighten appreciation of the region, preserve its natural and historical resources, and improve the quality of life and the economy of the area”. Our path towards achieving these goals will be close relationships with the region’s heritage organizations, schools, local and state governmental officials, businesses and individuals.

The designation was the culmination of a seven year effort by many people. Special thanks to our Federal legislators and especially Senator Joseph Lieberman and Congresswoman Nancy Johnson for their leadership roles. Thanks also to Dr. Jim O’Connell of the National Park Service for his thorough study of the area and conclusion that we met all the criteria for designation. Finally, thanks to all of our supporters, who allowed us to testify in Washington that not only did we have broad public support, but that the support was unanimous!

Designation will bring technical and financial support through the National Park Service. The funding, up to \$1,000,000 a year to a cap of \$10,000,000 over fifteen years, is to be used for matching grants for locally determined heritage projects that work towards meeting our goals. We are already working with our Park Service Coordinator, Linda Cook, Superintendent of the Weir Farm National Historic Site in Wilton, Connecticut.

2006 was a solid year in our evolving as a National Heritage Area, as our very active Board of Directors continued to explore the organizational steps to make us an efficient, effective and transparent operation so as to best achieve our goals. Although we had no Federal financing, with the help of generous supporters we raised more than \$50,000 that allowed us to carry out our activities. We also have started an Endowment Fund at Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, a step towards our long term sustainability. This funding allowed us to move forward with five important heritage projects, outlined below.

Heritage projects currently in progress

Through the generous support of individuals and organizations over the past years we’ve been the catalyst for a number of heritage projects. These projects were advanced again during 2006, providing continuity and growth for these important initiatives. Our Board of Directors, in concert with other regional partners, perpetuated these projects:

1. Heritage Walks. On October 6th & 7th we coordinated nearly four dozen heritage walks with varying themes, and in dozens of locations. The fifth such “walks weekend” was met with much enthusiasm and participation from the public. Our partners included numerous historic and cultural sites, and the Appalachian Trail.
 2. African-American Heritage Trail. A three-year effort to tell the story of African Americans in the Upper Housatonic Valley culminated in September 2006 with 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.
 3. UHV Experience. The third annual Upper Housatonic Valley Experience educational course was completed in 2006. In attendance were eleven teachers from middle and high schools throughout the area, and under the direction of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Berkshire Community College they
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- explored the region's industrial, cultural and natural heritage. The purposes of this project include the development of regional heritage curriculums in local classrooms.
4. Performing Arts Trail. The performing arts organizations in the region have formed a collaborative group to create a Housatonic Heritage Performing Arts Trail and narrative guide. Representatives of numerous performing arts venues, cultural organizations and others 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.
 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 2006

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.
 Mass. Foundation for Humanities
 Friends of Beckley Furnace
 Elaine LaRoche
 Salisbury Association
 Salisbury Bank and Trust
 Russell Riva
 Berkshire Bike Path Council
 F. Herbert Prem
 Leon and Norma Siegel

J.B. Warren and F.D. Barth
 Sarah and William Bell
 Sara Wardell
 Dr. David and Karin Crawford
 Stewart and Karen Jones
 Dominick Villane &
 Elizabeth Pelletier
 Stephen Sears
 Edward Goddard
 Town of Stockbridge
 City of Pittsfield
 Town of Great Barrington

A look ahead to 2007

Our great challenge in 2007 is to increase public awareness and participation in our activities. We have active relationships with the local Town governments, our State representatives, many regional and local organizations and people, but we still must increase general public awareness of the great opportunities for furthering the regional culture and heritage. To this end, we have scheduled public meetings for early 2007 and will be working on this through the year. We ask your help on this front.

Our talented volunteer Board has worked effectively over the years but we must now expand the participants by creating a larger, more representative Board, an effective Advisory Board and theme related Committees to help move our projects forward. Even though our Federal funding is not scheduled to begin until next winter, we plan to hire a professional Executive Director and possibly one or two other Staff members to organize and step up our operations to meet the challenges before us. One of our first tasks is to develop a Strategic Plan that will be submitted to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior for approval.

Although major activity on heritage projects must await our Federal funding, we are seeking financial support this year to carry on our operations and specifically our ongoing projects.

Early results have been promising and we thank all of our financial supporters for your special help. Our teachers' program is scheduled for June, our Heritage Walks for October and our Iron Industry Heritage Walk for August of 2007. We plan to issue brochure guides to our African American Heritage Trail and start the basic research on our Performing Arts Heritage Trail, as well as consider other heritage projects.

Every reader of this report can help us in 2007 by getting the word around to friends and organizations, by participating in our development, and, as you see fit, providing a financial contribution for our activities.

The Board of Directors

As we enter our seventh year of heritage activities we wish to acknowledge the strong support that we've received from many individuals, companies, heritage organizations (such as our regions historical, cultural and natural resources partners) and governments. It is the direct and unwavering support of the communities that we serve that has allowed us to celebrate the rich local heritage that belongs to us all.

By the Directors:

Ward C. Belcher, Lakeville
Dan Bolognani, Lime Rock
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

Appendices:

1. 2006 Financial Statement
 2. 2007 Budget (9-Month)
 3. Description of HERITAGE Projects
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2006 Financial Results

Operating Revenues:

From local governments	\$ 4,066
From Local Businesses, Organizations and Foundations	8,200
From Individuals	36,868
Grants	1,500
Guidebook Sales	<u>189</u>
Total	\$ 50,823

Expenditures:

Heritage Walks 2006	14,062
African-American Heritage Trail	21,719
Housatonic Experience Program	6,000
Liability Insurance	500
2006 Planning	3,895
Meetings, Postage, Administrative	<u>46</u>
Total	\$ 46,222

Cash on Hand:

Cash Balance, December 31, 2005	\$ 1,348
Revenues during 2006	50,823
Less Expenses during 2006	<u>- 46,222</u>
Balance, December 31, 2006	\$ 5,949

Housatonic Heritage Endowment:

Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Fund	\$ 70,000
2006 Fund expenses	- 75.35
Fund earnings	<u>1,923</u>
Fund Balance	\$ 71,748

2007 Budget (January 1st – September 30th)

Revenues:

Foundations	\$ 74,000
Heritage Organizations	10,000
Businesses	20,000
Individuals	56,000
Guidebook Sales	<u>5,000</u>
Total	\$165,000

Expenditures:

A.	
General Operating Expenses (including Exec. Director)	\$ 50,000
Programs:	
Teachers' Educational Heritage Courses	15,000
African-American Heritage Trail	20,000
Performing Arts Heritage Trail	3,000
October Walks 2006	14,000
2006 New Heritage Project	3,000
Logo Design / Marketing	5,000
Newsletter / Public Relations	4,000
Meetings, Postage, Administrative	<u>1,000</u>
Total	\$115,000
B.	
Development of Necessary Working Capital	\$ 50,000
Total use of Funds	\$165,000

Notes

(a) Potential Sources of Funding:

Individual Contributions (received)	\$ 40,000
Friends of Beckley Furnace (confirmed)	4,000
Berkshire Bank Foundation (requested)	10,000
Legacy Bank Foundation (requested)	10,000
Salisbury Bank & Trust (past contributor – received)	3,000
High Meadow Foundation (past contributor – requested)	10,000
Salisbury Association (past contributor – confirmed)	1,000
Others (including past contributors – requested)	<u>82,000</u>
Total	\$160,000

(b) October Walks Expenses:

Organizing schedule	\$ 2,000
Layout and printing	6,000
Distribution, publicity	<u>6,000</u>
Total	\$14,000

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 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;
- 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 this single Fall weekend 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 2006 - Over the Columbus Day weekend, Saturday and Sunday, October 7 and 8, the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area, and its supporting organization, hosted the fifth annual Heritage Hikes weekend. From an initial couple of dozen hikes, the program has grown to the 47 hikes that were offered this year, which were led by a varied group of historians, naturalists, and environmentalists.

There were eleven hikes in Connecticut from Kent to North Canaan, and one in Wassaic, New York. The remaining 35 were scattered throughout the watershed in Massachusetts, from Sheffield and New Marlborough north to Lanesborough. Building on four successful years of programming, this year's hikes featured a diversified array such as walks through historical towns, Falls Village and Great Barrington; iron industry heritage in Cornwall Bridge, Connecticut and in Richmond, Massachusetts; and in cultural locations such as the gardens and grounds at the Mount in Lenox, and the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge.

We were also very pleased for the second year in a row to offer 14 hikes along the National and Scenic Appalachian Trail (AT) in Massachusetts, and also on a very scenic section of the AT in Kent, CT.

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

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.

Eleven teachers from local middle and high schools participated in the 2006 course. These teachers spent one week under the direction of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Berkshire Community College exploring the heritage of the Upper Housatonic Valley.

During the course the group visited businesses, and historical and environmentally important sites that all interweave to create our heritage. It is expected that these teachers will now bring their experience back to their classrooms to enrich the education of their students, as previous graduates have done. Frequently, for instance, the teacher graduates arrange field trips for their students to the very sites they recently visited themselves.

One of the region's greatest challenges is to make certain that we retain in the region our young and talented students as they become part of the workforce. This is an extremely significant issue in the local economy.

We know that many children in the area are unaware of the Housatonic Valley's heritage and potential local opportunities for employment. The intent of the UHV Experience program is to help our children better understand the wonderful history of our region and alert them to the opportunities they may have here when they are choosing a path in adult life. It is up to us to assist our communities and our school systems to make our heritage a reality for today's

students. Doing this will help us all reap the benefits of a stronger economic and cultural future for the Upper Housatonic Valley.

The Berkshire County School Superintendents, Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, and the Berkshire Regional Employment Board have been instrumental in supporting the continuance of this effort. We have already started planning for the 2007 course.

The 1734 – 1923 Iron Heritage Trail

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.

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See our web site at www.housatonicheritage.org.
