

# W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite and Great Barrington: A Plan for Heritage Conservation and Interpretation

Final Planning Report     July 2009



Supported by:

President's Creative Economy Fund, University of Massachusetts  
Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Friends of the Du Bois Homesite  
Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area  
W.E.B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts

Planning Report Compiled by: Michael Singer Studio

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## Background

This project is the first comprehensive planning effort by the University of Massachusetts Amherst's (UMass Amherst) W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Committee in partnership with the Friends of the W.E.B. Du Bois Homesite, and the Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail (a project of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area). Working together, these project partners plan to transform the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite and other sites in Great Barrington into a regional, national, and international destination. They seek to create an enduring memorial to celebrate the life and legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois, a pioneering African American scholar and activist born in Great Barrington in 1868.

Walter Wilson and Dr. Edmund W. Gordon purchased the Du Bois Homesite property in 1967, assembling a five-acre, U-shaped parcel, to establish a memorial for Du Bois in his own hometown. In 1968 Wilson and Gordon co-founded the Du Bois Memorial Foundation, which received the property in 1969. Among more than two hundred founding sponsors of the Du Bois Memorial Foundation were Horace Mann Bond, Edward W. Brooke, Aaron Copland, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Martin Luther King Jr., Sidney Poitier, William Gibson and Norman Rockwell. Although Du Bois's house was demolished in 1954, the Du Bois Memorial Committee dedicated a Boulder and memorial park at the Homesite in 1969, six years after Du Bois's death. In 1976, the Du Bois Memorial Committee saw their memorial park recognized as the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite by the National Park Service as a National Historic Landmark, an occasion celebrated in 1979 with an elaborate public ceremony at Tanglewood. And in 1987, the five-acre site became the property of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with UMass Amherst as its custodian.

The W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite should join the ranks of nearby celebrated homes of other famous artists and writers in Western Massachusetts that have become national destinations, such as those of Herman Melville, Edith Wharton, Norman Rockwell, and Daniel Chester French. Since 1983 UMass Amherst has sponsored archaeological research at the Homesite, and recently, in collaboration with the Friends of the Du Bois Homesite began to develop the Homesite for the general public. Ongoing archeological, historical and oral history investigations have continued. In 2006, with support from the National Park Service, the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area dedicated an African American Heritage Trail with the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite as an anchor. Equally important, in 2008 UMass Amherst Chancellor Thomas Cole authorized funding to build a modest parking and interpretive area so that visitors to the site can safely pull their cars off the busy highway, walk a short trail to the boulder, and learn a bit about Du Bois.

At the same time, local scholars, cultural workers, and community leaders have focused activities elsewhere in Great Barrington and the region to foster public awareness of Du Bois's legacy. "Fifty Sites in Great Barrington, Massachusetts Associated with the Civil Rights Activist W.E.B. Du Bois" was developed by Bernard Drew and published in 2002 by the Great Barrington Land Conservancy and the Great Barrington Historical Society in conjunction with the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area, with support from the National Park Service. Other significant Du Bois related sites include a large mural, a river garden park, and historical signage marking places in the town center of importance to Du Bois. There is also a speaker's series and annual celebration sponsored by the Clinton AME Zion Church, an annual Du Bois lecture at nearby Simon's Rock College, and an annual Du Bois lecture at UMass Amherst.

In February 2009, the W.E.B. Du Bois Center was established in the UMass Amherst Library to follow in the footsteps of its namesake to harness academic rigor and public engagement in the service of positive social change. The UMass Amherst Du Bois Center is creating opportunities for the direct support of younger scholars to engage in challenging scholarship and public discussion of critical social issues in race, equality, and democracy. The UMass Amherst Library Special Collections and University Archives are also the steward of the W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, a collection of more than 100,000 letters, photographs, manuscripts of published and unpublished writings, memorabilia and audiovisual materials. The Du Bois Homesite and the other Heritage Sites in Great Barrington are key components of the UMass Amherst Center's overall mission to disseminate scholarly research and findings that contribute to the understanding of Du Bois's life and legacy and its relevance for today's world.

One of the long-term goals of the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center and the primary goal of the Du Bois Heritage projects in Great Barrington is to build upon the many past efforts and create a significant national memorial and cultural center appropriate to W.E.B. Du Bois's global significance. This document is the first step in the articulation of the vision and strategies for celebrating Du Bois at his Boyhood Homesite and other sites in Great Barrington. This planning document is meant to inform the next phase of the project: the efforts of UMass Amherst, the Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, and the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area to raise funds to realize this plan and to engage in a request for proposals from design teams to make this vision a reality.

## The Planning Process

The First Planning Workshop of September 26th and 27th, 2008 at Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts had as its goal bringing together participants from UMass Amherst, the Friends of Du Bois Homesite, the Great Barrington community, and specially invited experts from outside the region to discuss the future of the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite and related opportunities.

The Workshop was held with fifteen distinguished community leaders, educators, museum professionals and scholars devoted to the Du Bois legacy. Additionally six participants working with the Michael Singer Studio planning team and three UMass Amherst student note takers participated and recorded all of the findings. The Workshop reviewed past plans for the Homesite and its surroundings; tested previous concepts and new ideas with current information and aspirations; and produced an outline of a vision for the Homesite, sites in Great Barrington, and program and content possibilities.

The Workshop came up with feasible and exciting possibilities for the physical sites and programs related to commemorating and furthering an understanding of W.E.B. Du Bois and his legacy. A Workshop One Findings Report was created and distributed to the Workshop participants and also to select individuals and groups nationally for feedback. Of the 80 reports distributed about a quarter of the selected group responded with insights, suggestions and concepts that helped to guide discussions for the Second Planning Workshop and this Report.

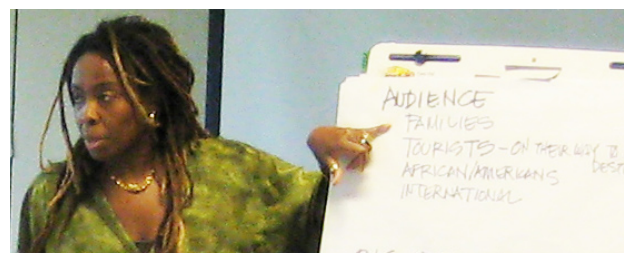
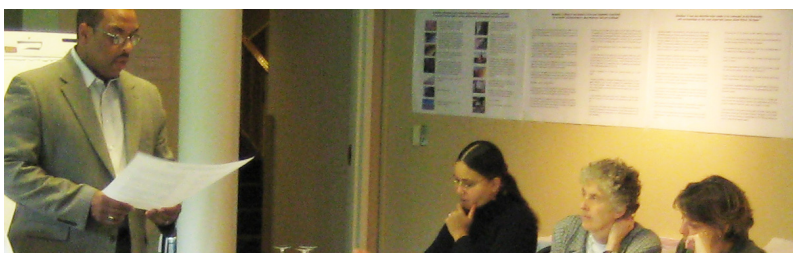
The Second Planning Workshop was held on April 17th 2009 to review the comments on the Workshop One Report, integrate programs and content with the various sites, prioritize actions, and develop an outline for the next steps in the process. This Second Workshop was a day long collaboration with many of the same participants who attended the First Planning Workshop, and resulted in a more refined and directed vision, which is the basis for this Report.

This Report provides a framework for the further development of the *W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite and Great Barrington: A Plan for Heritage Conservation and Interpretation* project and planning process. This document outlines the goals and objectives of the main project sites including key ideas for major design elements, interpretive programming and critical content. This Planning Report will be used as the primary resource for conveying project objectives to potential project collaborators, donors, and future design teams. It will also be the primary support document for any Requests for Qualifications or Proposals (RFQs or RFPs) released by the project partners.

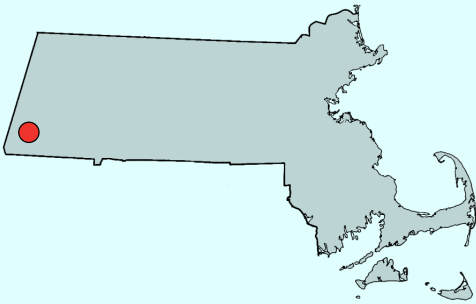
Quotes from the Planning Workshops are placed throughout this report in the blue sidebars. Quotes are from the Workshop participants unless otherwise noted.

The complete list of participants from both Planning Workshops can be found on page 48.

Photos from the September 2008 First Planning Workshop



Photos from the September 26th and 27th, the First Planning Workshop

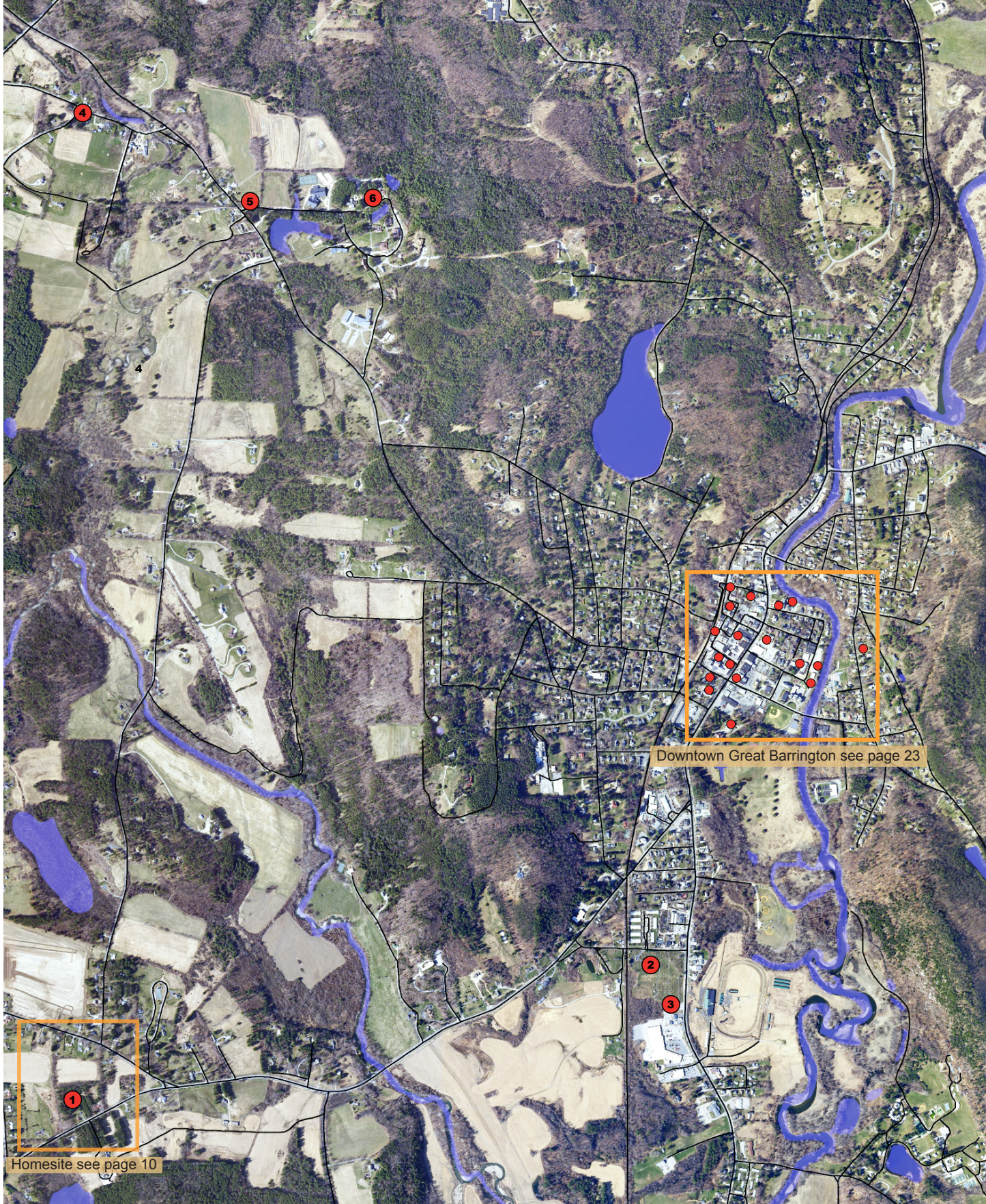


- 1 W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite  
National Landmark
- 2 Mahaiwe Cemetery  
(see Interpretive Node I in Heritage  
Trail description on page 30)
- 3 Du Bois Center for American History  
(within the bookstore, see Interpretive Node I  
in Heritage Trail description on page 30)
- 4 John Nail Summer Home
- 5 James Weldon Johnson Summer Home
- 6 Simon's Rock College Library  
(see Interpretive Node J in Heritage  
Trail description on page 30)
- Non Numbered Locations Available  
on the Downtown Map (see page 23)
- Surface Water

## Great Barrington Area Context Map

The map highlights sites that are a part of the African American Heritage Trail and other resources that are within a short drive of downtown Great Barrington. The graves of Du Bois's wife, Nina, and children, Burghardt and Yolande, are at the Mahaiwe Cemetery (#2). Nearby is the Du Bois Center for American History, a small resource center within a rare bookstore (#3). Several other notable sites are nearby, to the northwest of Great Barrington (#4, 5, and 6). John Nail became one of the wealthiest and most influential real estate entrepreneurs in Harlem. James Weldon Johnson was a leader of the NAACP, a Harlem Renaissance essayist, wrote the lyrics of the African American National Anthem (Lift Every Voice and Sing), and was a prolific author who wrote much of his collection of poems, *God's Trombones*, from his Great Barrington summer home. Simon's Rock College Library houses the Du Bois Collection of African American History and Culture; the Library hosts an annual Du Bois lecture, and it is where the 1969 Du Bois Memorial committee held its meetings.





1/4 Mile = Average 5 Minute Walk



This overview map shows the Great Barrington area and the relationship of the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite to Downtown Great Barrington. The map also highlights sites that are a part of the African American Heritage Trail and other regional points of interest. The blue areas indicate lakes, rivers and streams and the thin dark gray lines highlight major roadways.



## The Planning Workshops: Establishing a Consensus

The goal of the Planning Process was to reach consensus about key questions regarding the future of the Homesite; how it will be developed and programmed and its relationship to the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center and the other Great Barrington sites related to Du Bois. The challenge is how to interpret the life and significance of Du Bois regionally, nationally and internationally through different sites and program opportunities. The Planning Workshops reached the following primary decisions regarding site and programs:

**The Du Bois Boyhood Homesite:** A focus on archeology and interpretation based on the original Burghardt homestead and the 1969 Commemorative Boulder. The design of the site will build upon the contemplative nature of the site as it exists today. Additional trails and interpretation, a gathering space for a group of 50, and a rest area with bathrooms and an informational kiosk are included in the planning for this area.

**Du Bois Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail:** A strategy for integrating ten key interpretive nodes, related to Du Bois within Downtown Great Barrington and nearby sites within the African American Heritage Trail. Some nodes could host signage while other locations could support a small kiosk with pamphlets and a display with guidance to more in-depth information, trail maps, and related events and programs.

**Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center\*:** A downtown community facility dedicated to youth programs, education, and interpretive exhibits about the life and legacy of Du Bois. The vision for the Interpretive Center is a place of interaction: hosting community youth programs and field schools, connections to a global audience and network, multi-media and changing exhibits, and venue for the scholars and artists to develop and share their work with the larger community.

“It is the first home that I remember. There my mother was born and all her nine brothers and sisters....On this wide and lovely plain, beneath the benediction of gray-blue mountain and the low music of rivers, lived for a hundred years the black Burghardt clan.”

W.E.B. Du Bois. 1928  
*The House of the Black Burghardts*

To reach this consensus the Planning Workshops reviewed and discussed opportunities and constraints at the rural Homesite and in Great Barrington. Workshop participants quickly realized that the 5 acre Homesite was too small and out of the way to adequately present Du Bois and his legacy to the world. It was decided that the Homesite the single best place, given the development of Great Barrington since Du Bois’s times, where visitors can pay homage to Du Bois and learn key aspects of his life and his family’s legacy as rural farmers within the small but important African American community of historical New England. It was also established that developing the Downtown Heritage Trail was the best way to transport visitors to the Great Barrington that figures so prominently in Du Bois’s writings about his formative experiences. And finally, the Planning Workshops concluded that Downtown Great Barrington is the best place to locate the Interpretive Center housing extensive visitor experiences, community interactions and programs that more deeply engage people in the Du Bois legacy.

The Planning Workshops also kept firmly in mind that a driving principle in Du Bois’s life was the goal of racial uplift and creating institutions aimed at addressing and improving the conditions of people of African descent in the U.S. and around the world. As part of furthering this goal, the Du Bois Boyhood Homesite, the Downtown Heritage Trail, and the Interpretive Center will all be venues to provide accomplished African American designers, artists, scholars, educators, and museum professionals the opportunity to make this goal a reality.

Experiencing the unique spirit of both the Homesite and Housatonic River in Great Barrington is central to understanding Du Bois and his inspirations (see quotes, left and on page 29).

### \* Please note:

Reference to the “Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center” or the “Interpretive Center” is used throughout this report to identify an in-town facility in Great Barrington. It is understood that naming this facility will become the task of decision makers in the future.

## Audience

An important aspect of planning any new cultural and historic center is understanding the potential audiences that may visit and establishing a method for presenting content to engage these diverse audiences. Du Bois is a challenging cultural and historical figure. Will the scope and breadth of his ideas attract a larger audience than schools and those who would visit other African American Heritage sites? Is there a larger audience to be found in scholars, historians, activists, educators, and policy makers that are interested in exploring social justice? Can the local community, and especially young audiences, benefit from a Center that is founded on Great Barrington's support of the young Du Bois? Can programs at the Center encourage today's youth to relate to the young Du Bois and his journey rising to his full potential as a public intellectual and a world changing leader? How can the Homesite and Du Bois Center experience reflect the interests of African, Asian, European and other foreign visitors?

The planning process addressed these questions and identified programs Workshop participants agreed would relate to general and specific audience interests. Some of these programs could be realized now within areas of the Homesite, and others will require a built Interpretive Center to realize their full potential. Among the general audience will be those who are apt to be familiar with Du Bois as well as people who are knowledgeable about Du Bois's writings, and visitors who are making a pilgrimage to his Homesite. The majority of these visitors are from the African American community. For this audience, even with the modest improvements to the Homesite property today, there is now the possibility for a profound experience by standing on Du Bois's land at the Homesite. For these visitors the Homesite is a place to have time for personal reflection and to experience a deep sense of connection.

Also among the general audience will be school groups and casual tourists, most of whom will not know much about Du Bois. For these groups it is critical to have a basic outline narrative and timeline of Du Bois's life and achievements at all of the major sites and interpretive areas. This information should be found at the Homesite, the Interpretive Center, in brochures, and at select nodes within the Great Barrington section of the African American Heritage Trail. Access to this basic information at several locations will help visitors to understand the significance of Du Bois and his legacy, and encourage them learn more about his life and contributions.

### **The Primary Audience is Based in Education and Heritage Tourism**

The Homesite, the Downtown Heritage Trail, and programs at the Interpretive Center will attract school groups, scholars, families, and local, regional, and international tourists traveling through the area. K-12 school groups and interested tourists could easily make a day of visiting these sites and learn about the African American Heritage in the region. All of these groups would be seeking knowledge about Du Bois and his legacy and will have different expectations about the depth of information and content that is made available. Each site has the potential to tell specific stories and convey knowledge about Du Bois's life (this is explained further in the next section on critical content). Those looking for the most in-depth information available should be directed to the Interpretive Center and archives at the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center and its internet accessible resources.

A key idea developed during the planning process was placing emphasis on Du Bois at a young age, and relating this to today's youth. Participants of the Planning Workshops noted the importance of recognizing Great Barrington's support of the young Du Bois and his education. The Interpretive Center is the ideal place for content about Du Bois's youth and it is the ideal venue for educational programs. Like Great Barrington nurtured Du Bois, it is important to nurture future leaders in communities today. One way these sites could help do this is by fostering a Youth Program for Global Citizenship within the Interpretive Center, which would look, as Du Bois did, globally in addressing issues of social and racial injustice worldwide.

### **Attracting a Broader Audience**

The ideas and legacy of Du Bois also resonate with a broad audience interested in social change in a global context. The history and legacy of Du Bois can be marketed to groups beyond traditional educational, academic, or culturally interested parties. Consider the impact of the marketing of major public figures in the last decade and how the availability of the t-shirt and the soundbites led many young audiences to a deeper interest in and understanding of history and ideas. Du Bois and his ideas should not be over-simplified or trivialized, but the potential to raise awareness of Du Bois to a larger audience is great. Further research and analysis is needed to understand this broader audience. A comprehensive audience study is recommended in the early phases of planning prior to any further extensive programming and design. An audience study will help guide further planning and also assist with marketing, branding, naming, and fundraising initiatives.

## Critical Content Overview

Each of the three primary Heritage Sites has an opportunity to reveal aspects of Du Bois's life, and together form a cohesive knowledge base with interconnections to more in-depth resources at the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center. The Planning Workshops reached the following primary decisions regarding critical content for each of the main sites:

**The Du Bois Boyhood Homesite:** The critical content will focus on the two stories that can only be told here: the interpretation of the original Burghardt homestead based on the archaeology and documentary sources, and the story of the 1969 Commemoration and the placing of the Commemorative Boulder. Additional interpretive themes will include Du Bois's ancestry, his youth, African Americans and the New England Landscape, and his Civil Rights Legacy, especially in relation to the 1969 Commemoration.

**Du Bois Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail:** Key interpretive nodes will tell stories related to Du Bois within Downtown Great Barrington and nearby sites within the African American Heritage Trail. Each of the ten nodes will tell a unique story related to the site and its context. In addition to Du Bois's life in Great Barrington the content will focus on how the town helped to "nurture a giant" and Du Bois's thoughts on environmental activism related to the Housatonic River.

**Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center:** Among the three sites, the Interpretive Center will provide the most comprehensive and detailed picture of Du Bois's life and legacy. Exhibits will relate to Du Bois's Civil Right Legacy, his pursuit of higher education, his role as a public intellectual and his global influence. Programs will focus on youth education, community organizing and events, and global interconnections such as a Youth Program for Global Citizenship and a cultural exchange with the Du Bois Center in Accra, Ghana.

"There are more people that don't understand him, than those that do."

"Most people won't even know who he is when they come."

Before expanding on the critical content for each of the three Heritage sites in the following sections, it is important to note key concepts that the Workshops felt were critical and fundamental to all of the Heritage Sites.

### A Basic Understanding of Du Bois

Encountering Du Bois is revelatory for any citizen of the US or visitor from abroad. Participants in the Workshops believed the majority of casual visitors will not be familiar with who Du Bois actually was other than that his name is familiar and associated with the Civil Rights movement. Many are surprised that African Americans lived in New England since Colonial times. Even if visitors do know Du Bois, they are surprised he came from a rural New England town. These visitors will require access to a narrative, a timeline of his life, major achievements, affiliations and historic milestones within the Civil Rights and international Human Rights movements. A basic outline narrative and timeline of Du Bois's life and achievements should be found at all three Heritage Sites and within brochures related to regional tourism, such as that of the African American Heritage Trail. Families and tourists visiting the area should have immediate access to this basic information at several locations in order to understand his significance and be encouraged to learn more.

# Critical Content Overview (continued)

## Layered Content

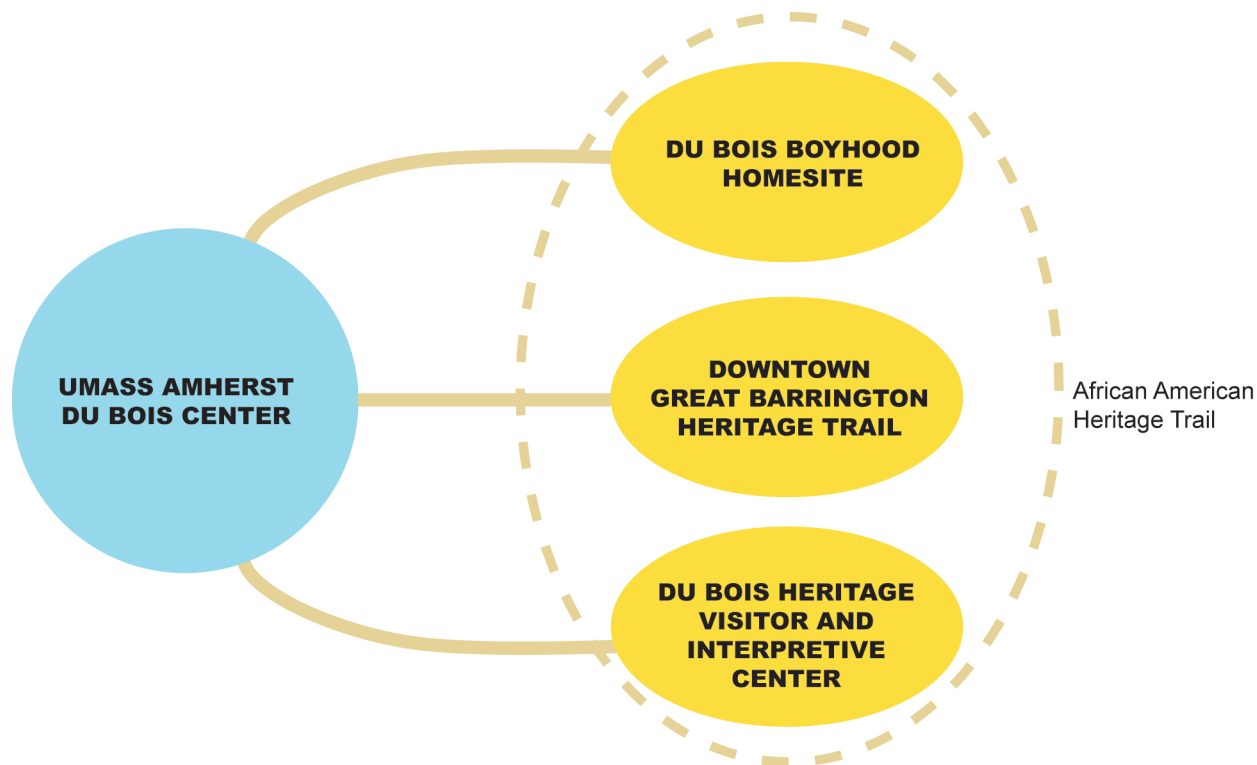
The participants of the Planning Workshops expressed how critical it is to not oversimplify Du Bois. His story is complex and participants expressed concern that over simplified content could be misunderstood or taken out of context. Several participants referred to the FDR Memorial in Washington DC as an example of a place that has contemplative spaces along a pathway through an historical timescape of outdoor rooms, but fails to provide further layers of information. However, it works because the story of FDR is better known by the general public. But such a strategy would not work for the less well-known Du Bois.

Du Bois’s life story and its ramifications require a more layered approach to the presentation of contextual information. The experience should engage visitors in the gathering of information, weaving, constructing, and collating distinct content. The visitor’s experience should give insights into the multi-dimensional and interconnected layers of Du Bois’s life, its resonance with the visitor’s life, and its importance to the world today.

## Connection to the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center

The UMass Amherst Du Bois Center, and the Du Bois papers and material artifacts in the UMass Amherst Library Special Collections and University Archives, are key sources for the continued exploration and development of scholarship related to Du Bois’s life and legacy. Current work by scholars and graduate students, utilizing the archival and archaeological resources at UMass Amherst, can provide the content for exhibits and interpretive programs at the Heritage sites as well as internet resources and traveling exhibits. Moreover, the collaboration and involvement of scholars, graduate students and artists in the development of public interpretation will enrich and enliven exhibits, signage and public programs. This fulfills one of the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center’s central missions, to “promote scholarship and public engagement with the wide range of issues in social and racial justice central to the thought of W.E.B. Du Bois”.

## The UMass Amherst Du Bois Center and the Du Bois Heritage Sites



The diagram above depicts the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center in relationship to the three primary Du Bois Heritage Sites. In this document the three Great Barrington sites are often referred to as the “Heritage Sites”.



# The Homesite

The critical content at the Homesite will focus on the two stories that can only be told here: the interpretation of the original Burghardt homestead based on the archaeology and documentary sources, and the story of the 1969 Commemoration and the placing of the Commemorative Boulder. The design of the site will build upon the contemplative nature of the site as it exists today. Additional trails and interpretation, a gathering space for a group of 50, and a rest area with bathrooms and an information kiosk are included within this expanded park-like environment. The planning for the Homesite is intentionally based on simple low maintenance strategies that will not require full-time stewardship or staffing at the site. Interpretive themes will include Du Bois's ancestry, his youth, his Civil Rights Legacy (especially in relation to the 1969 Commemoration), and African Americans in the New England Landscape.

The W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite on Route 23, approximately two miles from the center of Great Barrington, resonates with history going back to the 1700's with Du Bois's mother's family, the Black Burghardts. The Black Burghardts, descended from an African man and his wife, were both captured in Africa and brought to labor in Great Barrington when the Dutch and English were colonizing the region in the 1700s. Du Bois lived on a portion of today's Homesite, the original Burghardt homestead, in the 1870s and he owned it from 1928 until 1954.

Today's five acre Homesite, which includes the .3 acre original Burghardt homestead, was purchased by Walter Wilson and Dr. Edmund Gordon in 1967, who then formed and transferred the property to the Du Bois Memorial Committee. In fact, Du Bois wanted to rebuild his family's dilapidated house in the late 1920's to honor and pay tribute to the lives of his ancestors. He was not able to realize that plan. In 1969 the W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Committee was formed and a Commemorative Boulder was dedicated at the site. The Boulder was intended as the centerpiece of an "earthen stage in the Park's natural amphitheater" as described by the 1969 Memorial Committee. This amphitheater was not realized at that time and over the years the Boulder became overgrown and lost to view. In 1976 the National Park Service recognized the Homesite as a National Historic Landmark placing a small plaque on the property in 1979 that, within a few years, also became lost in the trees and vines surrounding it. In 1983, 1984 and 2003 members of the UMass Amherst Anthropology and Afro-American Studies Departments conducted archaeological investigations of the Homesite, uncovering nearly 30,000 artifacts, and learning about Du Bois' and his ancestors' residence at the Homesite.

## Homesite Existing Conditions Map Key

- 1 Route 23 from downtown
- 2 Gravel parking lot
- 3 Woodland interpretive trail
- 4 1969 Commemorative Boulder
- 5 Original Burghardt homestead and archeologically sensitive area
- 6 Hitchcock Property



300 Feet 1/4 Mile = Average 5 Minute Walk



## The Homesite (continued)

Recent planning efforts were initiated in early 2004 with modest short-term goals to clean up the site and unbury its history. Today with support from the UMass Amherst W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Committee in partnership with the Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, and funding in 2008 facilitated by UMass Amherst Chancellor Thomas Cole, the Homesite is now accessible. Renovations include a new parking area, signage, and the opening of a woodland trail culminating at the 1969 Commemorative Boulder.

The Planning Workshops reviewed, considered and acknowledged the Homesite's several limitations. This is a small five-acre rural property. Because of limited parking, problematic and dangerous roadway access, residential zoning, and potential objections from neighbors, the site is not feasible for a sizeable museum, campus, or place for large events with extensive programs. Route 23 is a well-trafficked road with noise pollution that will limit programs at the southern half of the property near the house foundation. The Hitchcock property impinges upon the Homesite land in ways that limit and complicate additional program space on this relatively small parcel. Through the course of many discussions it has been agreed that acquiring the Hitchcock Property is not a priority for the development of the Homesite, and available funding should be used elsewhere unless there are excess funds to obtain the house and its surrounding land.

However, the Planning Workshops agreed that the Homesite has qualities that are unique, evocative and specific to understanding the life, times and legacy of Du Bois. These qualities make it the most significant site for many visitors, especially visitors knowledgeable about Du Bois and seeking more about his history. Du Bois's ancestry is best understood at the Homesite. This property can become a "living memorial" where discoveries are still being made about daily life at the time of Du Bois's childhood through on-going UMass Amherst archeology at the site. There is only limited information about the actual house and it was agreed that the building should not be reconstructed at the site, although small models of the house depicting different historical periods could be built for interpretive purposes. This is an ideal place to convey the changing western Massachusetts 19th and 20th Century landscape and its relation to African American residents. The Workshop agreed the Homesite's most significant qualities and future potential are its ability to induce reflection and contemplation. The site offers visitors a genuine feeling and appreciation of the past, its challenges, and the lives lived there.

Wherever possible it is most important to use Du Bois's own words to tell his story. Even though today the house is only a cellar hole, this quote from Du Bois's 1928 article *The House of the Black Burghards* has a loving remembrance that activates and engages the visitor's imagination: "a delectable place – simple, square and low, with the great room of the fireplace, the flagged kitchen, half a step below, and the lower woodshed beyond. Steep strong stairs led up to Sleep, while without was a brook, a well and a mighty elm".



Above, the 1969 Commemorative Boulder was recently uncovered and has a small interpretive sign that explains the history of its dedication.

"The Homesite right now is genuine. There is enough archaeology to understand Du Bois's footprint. I was really struck by the trail, it is introspective and evocative."

"The Homesite connects in a meaningful and profound way to the rest of the sites along the African American Heritage Trail."

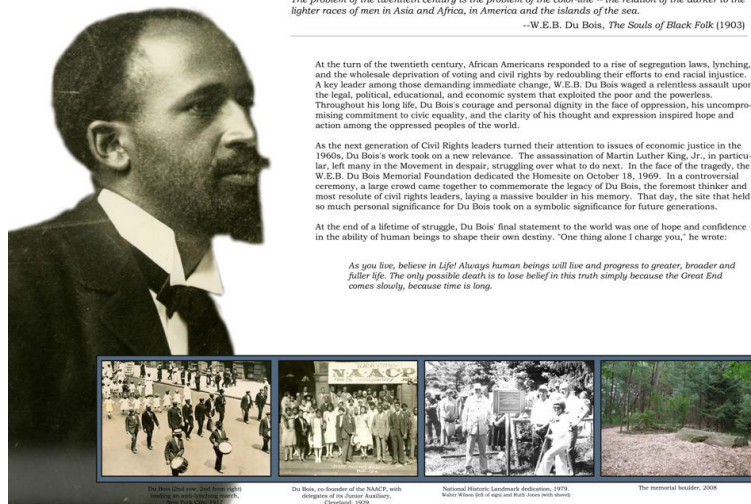
"There are layers of meaning at the site. Du Bois spoke passionately about the land and what the land meant to him."



Above, the National Historic Landmark designation sign for the Homesite along Route 23. The sign is dated 1979, but the site was recorded as a Landmark in 1976.



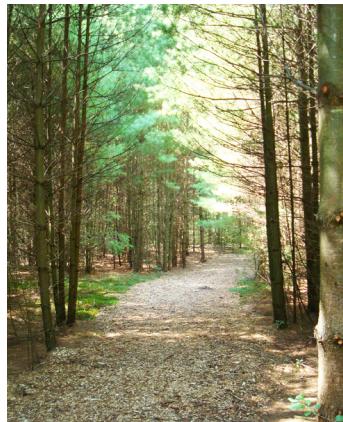
# W.E.B. Du Bois: Life and Legacy



“We need to foster the visitor’s imagination and not spoon feed them too much, a minimal approach to the Homesite... the trail can evoke so much”

“The foot trail should be a journey though time.”

“A timeline at the site would be good, and should be about Du Bois and the rest of the world - to place him in a historic context.”



Above, one of three interpretive signs at the Homesite which provide an outline of Du Bois’s life and the meaning of the Homesite.

Left, the meandering woodland path within the Homesite property. Extensive cleaning, trimming, and woodland understory plant removal occurred in 2008 with funds provided by UMass Amherst.



Entrance to the new woodland interpretive trail at the Homesite from the gravel parking lot.



View of the gravel parking lot and the woodland from the south east corner of the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite Property.

# The Homesite Key Ideas

## Expand Upon the Homesite's Park-Like Environment and the Existing Interpretive Trail

Maintain and expand upon the interpretive trail at the site. The quiet contemplative feeling of the site should remain. Aspects of the interpretive trail may include a timeline of Du Bois's ancestry and life and a relationship with the growth and succession of the surrounding landscape. As a part of any on-site work it will be critical to improve the local and regional signage to direct people to the Homesite and improve signage identifying the Homesite on Rt. 23. Trails should be fully ADA compliant, constructed from local and/or recycled materials, and require relatively little maintenance. Similar to a seasonal public park the Homesite should only be accessible from dawn to dusk, and closed during the winter months.

## Build Upon the Contemplative Feeling of the Site

Planning Workshop participants agreed that it is important to build upon the existing character of the site by creating contemplative outdoor spaces including a small interpretive kiosk and rest shelter as a part of the interpretive trail. Spaces should reflect different critical concepts about Du Bois, his philosophy and life. The spaces could also present a "timescape" of Du Bois's life starting from his childhood through his career. Different areas can reflect expressions of "memory" at the site, including Du Bois's desire to rebuild the homestead in 1928 (invoking his earliest memory as a child). The 1969 Commemorative Boulder signifies the beginning of a new period of "public" expressions of memory, followed by the 1979 National Historic Landmark sign that for many years was covered by brush and is now visible.

"[The Homesite] is not just a sacred space... a place for pilgrimage, it must be a motivating space... a space to touch Du Bois"

"The site is a sacred place. ..the main purpose; to focus, reflect and appreciate."

"A site memorial must be multifaceted and not just about one thing"



Left, the Vietnam Memorial and below, the FDR Memorial, both major tourist destinations in Washington D.C.. Prior to the First Planning Workshop participants were provided a questionnaire specifically about memorials; the majority of respondents mentioned these two projects as the most evocative memorial spaces they had experienced. These memorials were primarily noted for the reflective experience they create for the visitor, not a specific design relative to the Du Bois Homesite.



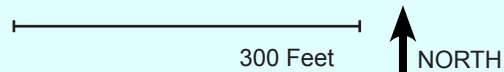
During the Workshops it was cautioned that Du Bois's life and legacy is too complex to be treated in a similar 'minimal' manner. The history of the Vietnam War and FDR are well understood by the general public and can be represented through metaphor, quotes, and sculpture. Du Bois can be misunderstood or misinterpreted if his history is oversimplified. His life and legacy will require more contextual information and access to additional resources in order to provide a full and rich picture of his contributions.





#### Proposed Site Plan Diagram Key

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 Route 23 from downtown          | 7 Future interpretive trails and spaces   |
| 2 Roadway signage from the east   | 8 Woodland amphitheater space around the 1969 Commemorative Boulder                     |
| 3 Site entry signage              | 9 Boardwalk through archeology area   |
| 4 Gravel parking lot              | 10 Boardwalk and interpretive areas around the original Burghardt homestead foundations |
| 5 Bathrooms and information kiosk | 11 Roadway signage from the west  |
| 6 New outdoor interpretive space  |   |



Right, Biddy Mason: Time and Place, designed by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and Betye Saar in Los Angeles in 1989. This well known sculptural space consists of an 81' long 8' high black concrete wall divided into decades containing photographs, imprints, maps and drawings. The wall interprets the life and legacy of Biddy Mason, a freed slave who became a nurse and midwife in the Los Angeles area in the late 1850's.

This project is a strong precedent for the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite which may use landscape elements such as walls to define spaces and provide interpretive content.



## The Homesite Key Ideas (continued)

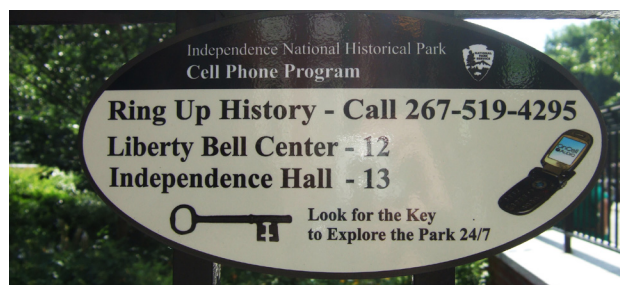
### Layer Information through Multimedia Access

Experiences at the Homesite may be largely contemplative and reflective with information and context provided through traditional means of interpretive signage, markers, and pamphlets. Numbered markers at various interpretive areas may be referenced at the rest area kiosk to get more in-depth information on a particular subject. Alternatively, reusable laminated booklet tour guides could be available at the rest area kiosk for visitors to reference while walking through the various trails and spaces.

Currently cell phone access is not available at the Homesite, but it could be potentially expanded in the future allowing for a range of multimedia opportunities. Should a visitor at the Homesite choose to obtain more in-depth information, there are various ways to connect to a larger knowledge base of Du Bois information including the Du Bois Papers at UMass Amherst, audio recordings of Du Bois, photo and film documentation including the 8 minute 1969 dedication film with Ossie Davis and Julian Bond. This may be accomplished through various media including (but not limited to) cell phone or podcast access to an audio guide, a website with a virtual tour that connects directly to markers at the site (may be accessed by iPhones and similar devices), or interactive media that may allow a person to actively send questions or comments to a larger network of visitors, scholars and students that are also engaged in studying Du Bois.

### Provide Basic Site Amenities

A small shelter with bathrooms and an informational kiosk are critical site features that would best be sited near the parking area and entry. This shelter could also contain interpretive guides or reusable laminated booklets that are described in the previous section. Minimally the shelter should have African American Heritage Trail pamphlets/guide, a Downtown Great Barrington Du Bois Trail Guide brochure, a map of the area, tour dates/times, and security lighting. The shelter should be designed with low-impact and low maintenance strategies that will not require full-time stewardship or staffing at the site. Composting ADA compliant toilets, timed bathroom locks and lighting, and durable green building materials should be considered for the rest shelter. If funding is available to purchase the Hitchcock Property the existing home could be retrofitted for this purpose, however the Hitchcock Property is not considered a priority for the development of the Homesite.



Above, a National Park Service program that allows visitors in Philadelphia to dial up a audio tour. Similar systems can be created for interpretive exhibits, allowing the viewer to gain access to a range of additional information at the Homesite without the need for on-site staff or digital kiosks.

As communications technology continues to advance, more visitors will be able to access online resources through iPhones and Blackberry devices, creating access to audio and visual resources. Online resources are more readily updated with new and evolving content and will therefore offer new experiences at the site over time with minimal additional costs.

“The site should be a place of dialogue where visitors can reflect and engage. Then perhaps people would go into the town because they would naturally have more questions.”

“We’ve had people from Ghana coming to Great Barrington looking for the Homesite. They want to touch the earth there and give thanks.”

“Multiple mediums, but not interfering with the landscape or the contemplative nature of the site.”



## The Homesite Key Ideas (continued)

### Integrate an Education Curriculum that Brings Students to the Site

Currently there are a handful of regional and state African American curriculum programs that are being implemented or are in development. The Berkshire Country Day School designed a Du Bois curriculum for their school in 2002-2003 in honor of the 100th anniversary of the publishing of *The Souls of Black Folk*. New efforts could include a site visit to the Homesite (and other sites within the African American Heritage Trail) connected with curriculum readings and activities based on themes related to Du Bois's life. Site visits could occur with small classroom groups in the spring and fall. UMass Amherst should continue the Archeology Field School and investigate other field school programs which could be supported by appropriate UMass Amherst departments (Arts, Theater, Design, Public History, Anthropology, African American Studies, Forestry, etc).

### Create a Small Outdoor Amphitheater Gathering Space

It is desirable to have a gathering space at the Commemorative Boulder that can accommodate up to 50 people. Classroom and tour groups can gather at the Boulder amphitheater. This space would need to be carefully sited and placed with existing large trees and the general topography. This key idea resonates with the planned amphitheater suggested by the 1969 W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Committee. The amphitheater site should be fully ADA compliant and constructed from local stone. The 50 person capacity was established by considering the parking and bus access constraints, as well as a general desire to keep visiting groups small.

“How do you keep a local and state audience returning? Whatever program happens at the site has to be ever-evolving and ongoing.”



Conceptual rendering of the proposed outdoor amphitheater space around the 1969 Commemorative Boulder.



## The Homesite Key Ideas (continued)

### Maintain a Distinct Archeology Site at the Homesite

Archeology is an ongoing process at the site with thousands of artifacts recovered over many years. It was generally agreed that this work should continue while allowing some restricted public access (on a raised boardwalk) to view the existing foundations and at the same time protect the archaeological remains that are still awaiting excavation. The archeological work on site will act as an evolving exhibit, changing overtime and revealing new aspects of Du Bois's life and that of his family who lived at the site throughout the 19th and into the 20th century. A more in-depth explanation of Archeology at the Homesite can be found in the Homesite Critical Content section on the following page.

Similar to the trails, the boardwalk should be a temporary raised structure that is fully ADA compliant, constructed from local and/or recycled materials, and require relatively little maintenance. The boardwalk platforms, railings and signage should be modular to enable the boardwalk to form multiple configurations as the archeology area changes over time. This modularity will also allow the boardwalk to be easily deconstructed and stored within the rest shelter for the winter months.

“Tourists love to see archeology at a heritage site and witness discoveries.”

“Create a place on the Homesite that is respectful to the archeology, that is a memorial, and a point of departure for various references for information in and around town.”



Conceptual rendering of the proposed modular boardwalk overlooking the original Burghardt homestead.



# The Homesite: Critical Content

## Archeology at the Homesite

Archeology is an ongoing process at the site with thousands of artifacts recovered over many years. In 1983 members of the UMass Amherst Anthropology and Afro-American Studies Departments began archaeological, historical and oral history investigations of this property and the residents of the Homesite. Over the past twenty five years Dr. Robert Paynter from UMass Amherst and his students have continued to contribute to the understanding of Du Bois's life in Great Barrington. Their work seeks to understand Du Bois by situating him within the setting of his family, the surrounding neighborhood that was home to members of the Burghardt family, the town of Great Barrington, and the region of Western Massachusetts.

Archaeological Field Schools are conducted as summer programs at UMass Amherst. Three seasons of archaeological research in 1983, 1984 and 2003 uncovered nearly 30,000 artifacts, which is believed to be only a fraction of the potential artifacts awaiting excavation. Most of these are from the daily life of the Wooster family, Du Bois's cousins, who lived at the Homesite during the first two decades of the 20th century. There are additional findings around the cellar hole that suggest future excavations need to be conducted in this area, studies that will yield information about earlier Burghardt residents, including Du Bois when he lived at the Homesite as a youth. The information will illuminate the lives of this rural African American family, how they ate, how they engaged with the local, regional, and national markets, how they equipped their kitchen, dining room and sitting room, the toys they bought for their children, and how they negotiated life and created a distinctive African American homeplace in the midst of White New England. The Homesite, the Interpretive Center, and the Special Collections and University Archives in the Du Bois Library at UMass are all potential venues to present these findings.

Archeology will continue to play a key role at the Homesite providing important discoveries and providing an important aspect of programming at both the Homesite and Interpretive Center. These future studies would include analyzing the extensive midden and thereby providing further information about the lives of the Woosters at the turn of the 20th century, studying the foundation for evidence of an earlier Burghardt house, testing the small backyard that Du Bois would have played in as a youth and where artifacts have been found that date to his time there, and assessing the use the Burghardts made of the Homesite's kitchen and herb garden.

The .3 acre area that was the original Burghardt homestead can be considered the most important existing artifact a visitor can directly experience at the Homesite. It is here that a visitor can stand and experience an object that Du Bois also touched. Providing this experience along with protecting the integrity of the archaeological remains was a challenge recognized at the Planning Workshops. The consensus is to first clearly delineate the excavation areas and to have the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center and archeology team prioritize areas and seek funding to continue the site excavation. Balancing the visitor needs with those of the archaeology will be met by means of public programming and such devices as the use of a removable and flexible boardwalk along with signage. The resolution of this challenge should be a key aspect of the design team's work as they develop a carefully thought out program and design for the entire Homesite and its interactions with the Interpretive Center and UMass Amherst Du Bois Center.



In 1983 members of the UMass Amherst Anthropology and Afro-American Studies Departments began archaeological, historical and oral history investigations of this property and the residents of the Homesite. Three seasons of archaeological research in 1983, 1984 and 2003 uncovered evidence for a working farm and a retreat.

Archaeological Field Schools are conducted as summer programs by UMass Amherst. Similar field schools in other departments could engage with the site to create new programs and events which would in turn raise public awareness of the Homesite.



## The Homesite: Critical Content (continued)

### Civil Rights Legacy and the 1969 Commemoration at the Homesite

Du Bois's role as a co-founder of the Niagara Movement and the NAACP are a critical part of his legacy along with his influences on the inception of the Civil Rights Movement. While much of his work took place away from New England many Workshop participants believe that a Great Barrington venue offers an opportunity to include the role of New England in the Civil Rights Movement- a subject rarely examined.

Du Bois's legacy as laying the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement is especially poignant at the 1969 Commemorative Boulder at the Homesite. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 spurred the Du Bois Memorial Foundation Committee to create a memorial in earnest. When the Committee presented its plans for a park in 1969, the Great Barrington selectmen and local citizens threatened to stop the effort with numerous legal and political challenges. The legality of using the property for a park remained in question. However, the right to free assembly prevailed, and on October 18, 1969, Du Bois's boyhood home was dedicated as the W. E. B. Du Bois Memorial Park. Civil-rights activist and future Georgia legislator Julian Bond gave the keynote address, and Ossie Davis presided as master of ceremonies. The dedication took place amidst newspaper attacks and reported threats of violence and disruption both from "local ultrapatriots" and "black militant groups" ("Du Bois Rites," Berkshire Eagle, October 25, 1969). Medical personnel and ambulances were on hand, as were local police equipped with riot gear shipped from Hartford, Connecticut. A State Police single-engine aircraft made passes overhead, and a unit of the National Guard stood by. But Great Barrington resident Elaine Gunn recalls, "It was a beautiful day, a lovely day; people sat around on bales of hay. The afternoon came off without a hitch, then everyone left quietly." A reported eight hundred people came from as far away as Boston and New York City. The Commemorative Boulder remains on site today and is a powerful expression of public memory and sense of place. The Boulder is planned as the center of the amphitheater gathering space as the Du Bois Memorial Foundation Committee originally intended.

"There are very few sites that relate to the Civil Rights movement in the North, Great Barrington can tell this story about Western Mass."

"This is also a place to tell stories about the efforts to commemorate Du Bois. There were several attempts starting with Du Bois's wish to honor his own family heritage when he owned the land in the 1930's."

**MEMORIAL PARK TO DR. DuBOIS**

Near the golden river of which he wrote and in the shadow of the two hills, 800 men, women and children met Saturday, October 18, and dedicated the meadowland on which W. E. B. DuBois played as a boy as a permanent memorial to his memory. They came to Great Barrington from cities for miles around, and sat on bales of hay and on folding chairs in the warm sunshine, while behind them stretched orchards of ripening apples, and the great stone hills that seemed to be the very substance of his unyielding conscience. "His granite conscience," Dr. Horace Mann Bond, father of Julian Bond, declared, "was drawn from the granite mountains" of Massachusetts where he was born and where he spent his childhood with his mother and where he first learned the realities of oppression.

A great rock has been brought here and anchored on the earth. Standing beside it, young Julian Bond, member of the Georgia State Legislature recalled the impact that the teachings of DuBois had had on his life. So, too, did Ossie Davis, actor and playwright. And Mrs. Esther Jackson, editor of "Freedomways," reminded the listeners that for DuBois the struggle for human emancipation had always been international, had always struck chords of understanding in the young.

The Next Stage Youth Theatre read excerpts from the writings of DuBois, and the Rev. Frederick Kirkpatrick sang.

A letter from his widow, Shirley Graham, was read.

And so a memorial park was born.

*Dr. DuBois and his boyhood homesite*

Rev. Frederick Kirkpatrick

Photos by Matt Weinstein

Relatives of Dr. DuBois: (B) Mrs. Alice D. Crawford, nee Davis; (C) Mrs. DuBois Peck, granddaughter. Next to Mrs. Peck is her son, Andre, nee relation to Dr. DuBois.

"There were mountains to climb and rivers to wade and swim; lakes to freeze and hills for coasting. There were orchards and caves and wide green fields..."

Autobiography of W. E. B. DuBois

Rev. William Mellich

Julian Bond

Mrs. Esther Jackson

## The Homesite: Critical Content (continued)

### Ancestry- the Black Burghardts

An explanation of Du Bois's ancestry in New England reveals a lot about his youth and values. The Black Burghardt (Du Bois's mother's family) ownership of land dates to an 1820 deed involving Du Bois's grandfather and grandmother, James Freeman and Sally Burghardt Freeman. His family lived in Great Barrington for generations and his relations fought in the American Revolution and the Civil War. Of his boyhood, Du Bois wrote: "In general thought and conduct, I became quite thoroughly New England." Exploring this history at the Homesite will help ground the audience with a sense of time and place; with the role that African Americans had in shaping the 18th and 19th Century New England landscape. Moreover, Du Bois has written, "In my family, I remember farmers....", and indeed there were farmers in his family, and in the many African American families that lived in New England in the 17th century through today. Their role in shaping the New England landscape is an overlooked and underappreciated aspect of New England history, one that can begin to be addressed at the Homesite.

### The Homesite and His Youth

The archeological discoveries and the physical foundations of the Homesite offer a unique opportunity to present the history of Du Bois's formative years and his ancestry. Although Du Bois only lived there for about three years as a child, he later owned the property for nearly forty years as an adult and memories of his childhood at the Homesite had deep meaning to him. Artifacts may be selected for their ability to introduce a particular narrative or aspect of his childhood. Site interpretive signage can use digitized images from the UMass Amherst collection. Presenting a narrative about Du Bois's youth allows younger audiences to engage on a more immediate level, relating their environment and future aspirations to his.



Alfred Du Bois, father of W.E.B. Du Bois (far left), undated



W.E.B. Du Bois and his mother, Mary Sylvina Burghardt Du Bois (left) undated

Images from the Special Collections, UMass Amherst Libraries

### Du Bois and the New England Landscape

The Homesite, located on the Egremont Plain, is one part of a historic three family complex with the Ira Burghardt Homestead a ¼ mile to the east and the Harlow Burghardt Homestead a ¼ mile to the west. While the two other sites are not accessible to the public, the Homesite's rural landscape and the potential for expansive views of the surrounding agricultural and wooded landscape creates an opportunity to link a timeline between Du Bois's life and the changing New England landscape. The Homesite property, supported by deeds, tax rolls, and other local records, provides an ideal location to relate the history of African Americans in the New England landscape and offer specific information about a Black family negotiating a landscape that did not offer a great deal of opportunity, and yet they managed to hold onto this property.

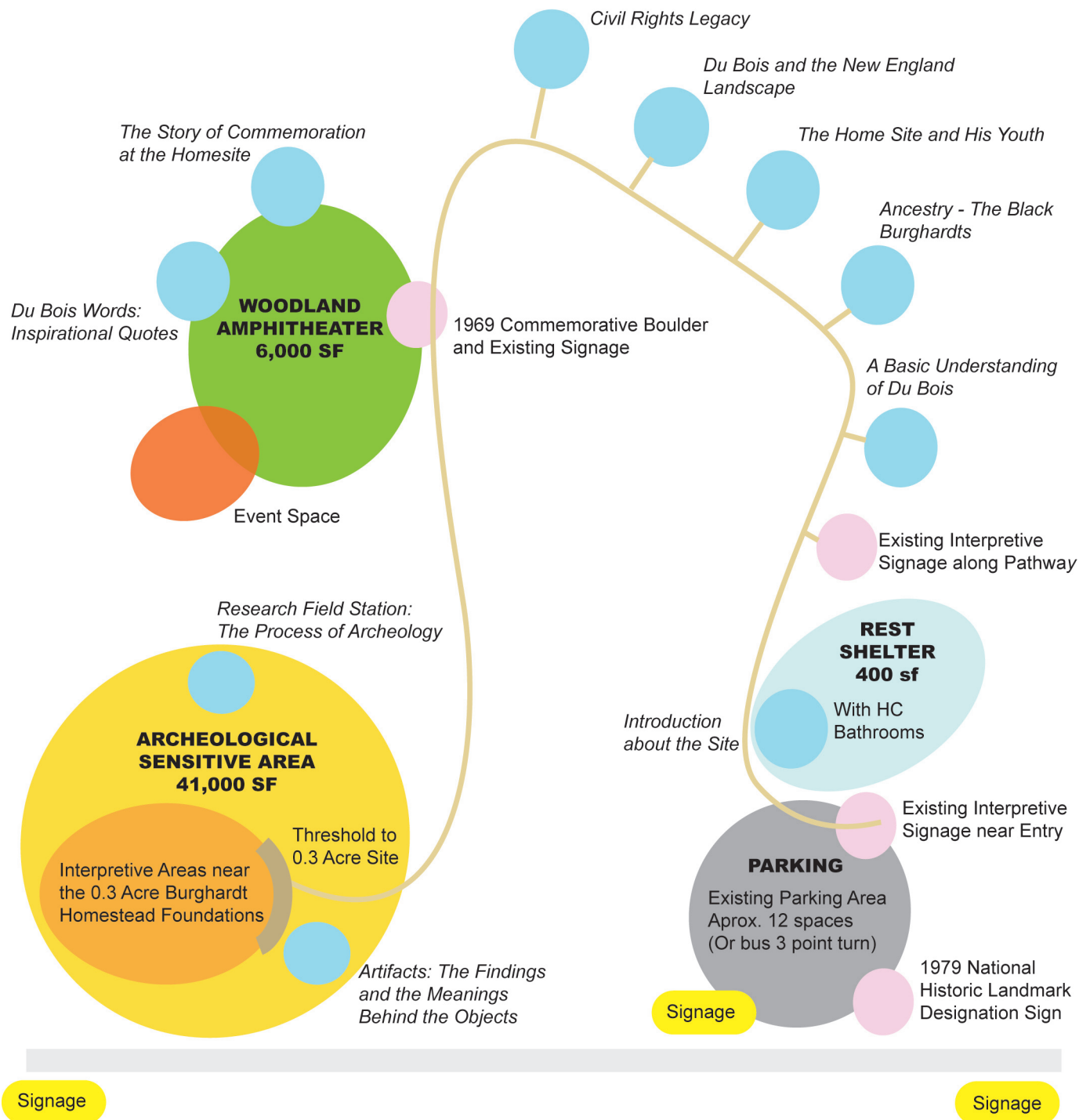
"How did this place form the individual he became and [how do we create a] sense of place [and time at the] Great Barrington site?"

"Young people are interested in how people such as Du Bois grew up in their particular contexts."

"With some simple trimming of the trees near the trail you could see out to the agricultural fields surrounding the Homesite. It's a good place to understand the evolving New England landscape and its relation to the African Americans who lived there."



# The Du Bois Boyhood Homesite Program Diagram



The program diagram above is a visual representation of the Key Ideas and Critical Content sections of the Du Bois Boyhood Homesite. Square footage areas are suggested for planning purposes only, actual size will be determined during later phases of design. These program diagrams have been created for each of the three main Heritage Sites and are represented with similar colors. The pink circles represent existing signage while the blue circles represent new interpretive areas. The orange-yellow hues represent key programmatic areas, in this case the archeological areas. The green represents an outdoor gathering space. Light blue represents a support area. Light brown lines indicate connections. Event spaces are represented with an orange-red color.

## Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail

“The ancestry is at the Homesite. Du Bois’s boyhood legacy is in Great Barrington.”

Efforts by many individuals and groups in Great Barrington have recently sought to place Du Bois prominently within the downtown landscape. What is missing from the present endeavors is a physical signaling of the interconnectedness of all these efforts. This current planning effort proposes signage, markers, and informational strategies that will weave all the sites together, giving the visitor a more complete sense of Du Bois in Great Barrington. These elements will also have a consistent graphic strategy that interconnects with brochures, signage at the Homesite, the future Interpretive Center and online content.

Key interpretive nodes will tell stories related to Du Bois within Downtown Great Barrington and nearby sites within the African American Heritage Trail. Each of the ten nodes will tell a unique story related to the site and its context. In addition to Du Bois’s life in Great Barrington the content will focus on how the town helped to “nurture a giant” as well as Du Bois’s thoughts on environmental activism related to the Housatonic River.

Du Bois had many of his noted childhood and young adult experiences in downtown Great Barrington. Du Bois’s birthplace is located and marked in downtown Great Barrington near the Housatonic River. Other significant Du Bois related sites include a large outdoor mural, river garden park, and historical signage marking places in the town center of importance to Du Bois. There presently exists an extensive guide, “Fifty Sites in Great Barrington, Massachusetts Associated with the Civil Rights Activist W.E.B. Du Bois,” created by founding member of the Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, Bernard Drew, and published in 2002 by the Great Barrington Land Conservancy and the Great Barrington Historical Society in conjunction with the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area, with support from the National Park Service. There is an annual Du Bois birthday celebration sponsored by the Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Several of the sites within the Du Bois Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail are also a part of the regional African American Heritage Trail, though many currently lack markers or interpretive signage.

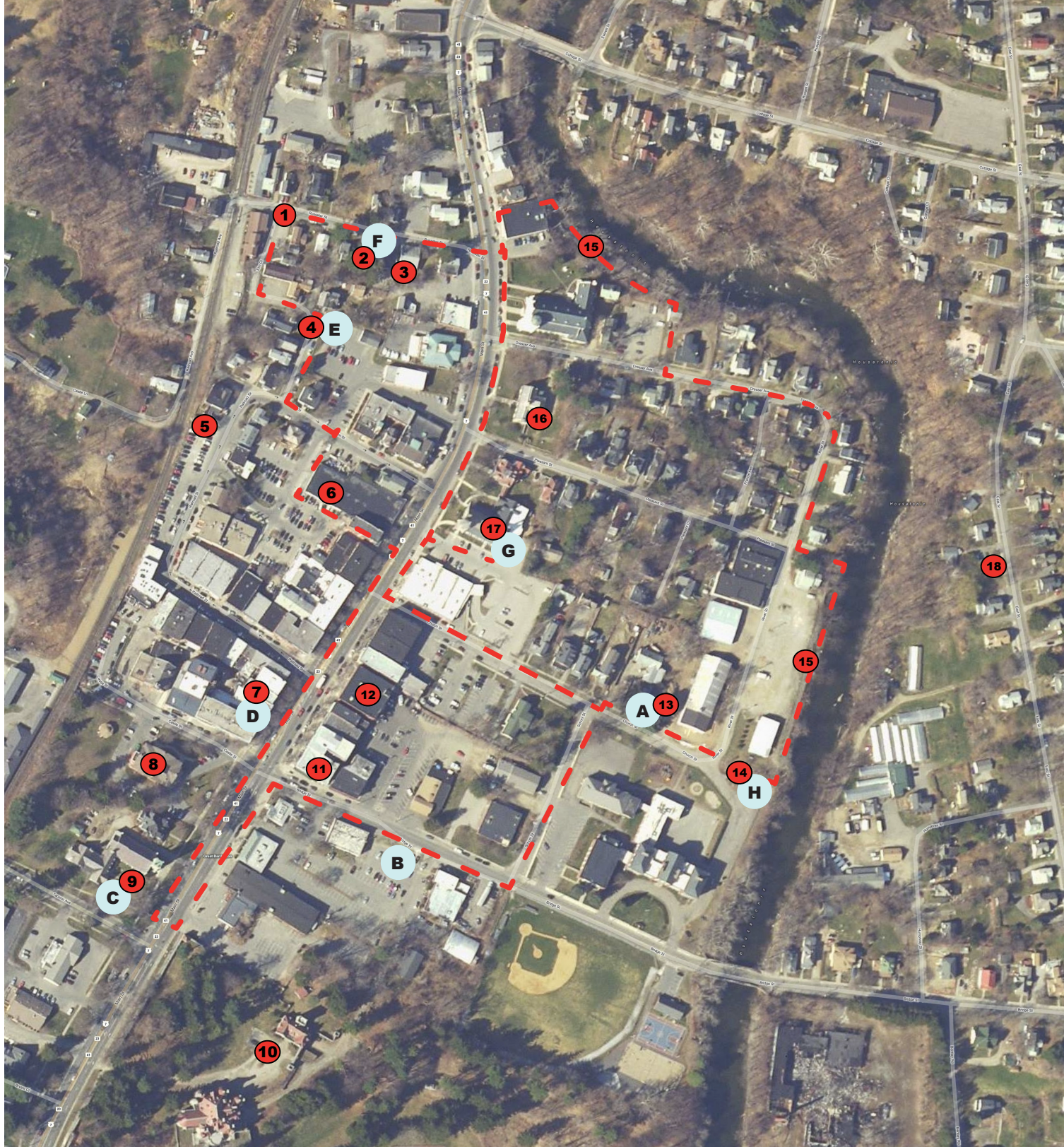
To further the awareness of the existing Du Bois Great Barrington Heritage Trail and its connection to other Heritage Sites, there are several suggested program opportunities that require minimal funding. An ongoing lecture series at the Clinton AME Zion Church can be extended beyond the annual Du Bois birthday celebration. The local Triplex movie theater is an excellent place to have an annual Festival Series of Black History Films. The Library could organize a special day, perhaps within African American History Month, for community readings from Du Bois’s works and a Book Reading Seminar featuring the work of African American Scholars and Activists. Downtown activities also present an opportunity to survey participants and gain more input regarding community interests as well as raise awareness in the local community, informing them about the plans for the Homesite, the Downtown Heritage Trail and the Interpretive Center.

“Focus on downtown, people will go downtown before going to the Homesite. From the [Interpretive] Center and downtown people will bring their knowledge to the Homesite”



Above, the W.E.B. Du Bois Mural by Railroad Street Youth Project participants in the Taconic Parking Lot in Downtown Great Barrington is a popular contemporary mural. See location number 6 on the map to the right.





## Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail

Site locations are numbered in red and listed below. Interpretive Nodes are shown alphabetically in light blue. See the following Critical Content section for Interpretive Node descriptions.

- 1 Rosseter Street / Elm Court Neighborhood
- 2 Home of Warren Davis
- 3 Macedonia Baptist Church
- 4 Clinton AME Zion Church
- 5 Railroad Street Apartment
- 6 W.E.B. Du Bois Mural
- 7 Sumner Hall
- 8 Elizabeth Freeman's "Suit for Liberty" memorial, Town Hall
- 9 St. James Episcopal Church

- 10 Searles Castle
- 11 Berkshire Hotel
- 12 Morgan's News Stand
- 13 W.E.B. Du Bois Birth Site
- 14 W.E.B. Du Bois River Garden Park
- 15 Housatonic River Walk
- 16 Mason Library
- 17 First Congregational Church
- 18 Jason and Almira Cooley House

1/4 Mile = Average 5 Minute Walk



300 Feet



## Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail: Key Ideas

“Great Barrington was and is a thriving commercial and cultural center. While many of the sites associated with Du Bois’s youth are gone—victims of progress—there are sufficient remnants to give a sense of the town in the 1880s.”

*Fifty Sites in Great Barrington,  
Massachusetts Associated with  
the Civil Rights Activist W.E.B.  
Du Bois* published in 2002

“Satellite sites, kiosks, and signage require an ongoing consistent identity”

## Downtown Interpretive Trail, Kiosk and Signage

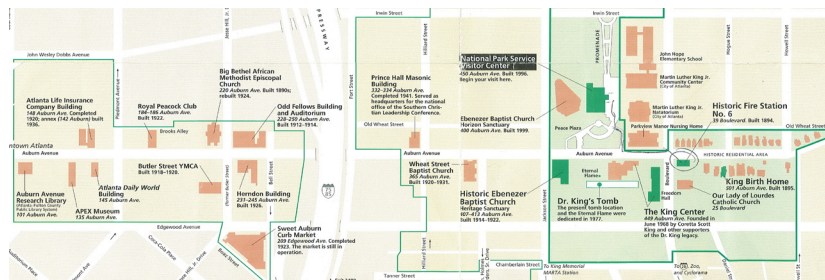
Key interpretive nodes will tell stories related to Du Bois within Downtown Great Barrington and nearby sites along the African American Heritage Trail. Each of the ten nodes will tell a unique story related to the site and its context (see node descriptions A through J). Some nodes could host signage while other locations could support a small kiosk with pamphlets and a display with guidance to more in-depth information, trail maps, and related events and programs. All interpretive signage should connect to and expand upon educational outreach associated with the Homesite and the Interpretive Center. School groups and tours that start at the Homesite should also tour downtown and vice-versa. The new interpretive nodes will host signage with similar graphic design and branding to the Homesite and other Heritage Sites- connecting downtown visitors to multiple venues. These interpretive signage elements will have a dual function of interpretation and raising the profile of all of the Heritage Sites by creating a highly visible trademark for Du Bois legacy venues. This is especially critical for the casual tourist audience that may be briefly visiting or passing through Great Barrington, a tourist destination of the Berkshires, and unaware of the Heritage Sites. Signage elements should be designed to be easily modified for additional information such as directing visitors to the Interpretive Center, a new exhibit or a special event. Similar to the Homesite, the Downtown Heritage Trail may employ multimedia opportunities allowing a visitor to access more in-depth information on the history and context of a given location or theme. This may be accomplished through various media including (but not limited to) cell phone or podcast access to an audio guide, a website with a virtual tour that connects directly to markers at the site (may be accessed by iPhones and similar devices), or interactive media that may allow a person to actively send questions or comments to a larger network of visitors, scholars and students that are also engaged in studying Du Bois.



Left, interpretive historic markers at New York City Hall use engraved granite pavers to tell a series of stories about the City and City Hall. In-ground markers also create a type of wayfinding, guiding viewers along a path of discovery through time and place.



Above, interpretive historical signage at the Housatonic River Walk was created in a simple and durable manner and integrated with railing supports. In-town signage for the African American Heritage Trail as well as the Du Bois Heritage Trail within the town should be similarly designed to respect the context and visual impact.



Above, the Sweet Auburn Trail (Auburn Avenue) in Atlanta is a model for the Du Bois Heritage Trail in Great Barrington. The Sweet Auburn Trail connects the site of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Headquarters (shown right), the first Black owned daily newspaper (Atlanta Daily World), and several churches, businesses and clubs of historical importance. The Trail culminates at the King Center for Non-Violent and Social Change, the National Parks Service Visitor's Center, Ebenezer Baptist Church and Dr. Martin Luther King's birthsite.





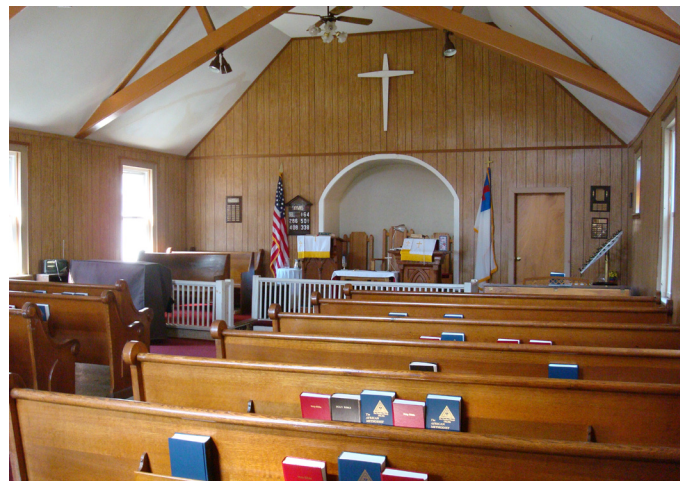
## Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail: Key Ideas (continued)

### Interim Location for Coordinating the Downtown Heritage Trail and the Great Barrington Legacy Project

Great Barrington needs a central location where visitors can learn about the Downtown Heritage Trail, the Homesite, and any special programs. The eventual place for this would be the Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center. But until the purchase of property and the building of this new facility (see following section) a temporary highly visible ground floor space, perhaps a storefront on Main Street, may serve this purpose. This space will be identified as the central Great Barrington hub of the Du Bois legacy project, housing a director's office with meeting space and small-scale graphic exhibits to keep the local community and visitors up to date on the overall project's progress. An important role for this office would be project fundraising. This space can also provide specific information about the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center's fellowship programs, colloquia schedules, and a computer research station for access to information from the UMass Amherst Library's Special Collections and University Archives on-line collections. This space does not need to be large; it may be 300 to 500 sq ft.



Above, storefronts along Main Street in downtown Great Barrington.



Above, an interior view of the Clinton AME Zion Church.

### Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church - New Programming

Like many Black churches, the Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has a long history of serving as a social, educational and political center. Public meetings, lectures, and Du Bois programs happen there now and will continue. The Clinton AME Zion Church will remain the home of a vital congregation and with their agreement continue its role as part of the African American Heritage Trail as well as part of the Du Bois Downtown Heritage Trail. The Clinton AME Zion Church could also host an interpretive kiosk with signage and pamphlets to interconnect with other trail sites and the Homesite. Until the planned Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center property is constructed, the Clinton AME Zion Church can serve as a gathering place for arranged school or other group visits. Creative strategies using sound and projection can be used in the main sanctuary to provide these groups with an engaging orientation to the key themes at the various Du Bois legacy sites. These types of interpretive strategies involve minimal impact on the present Church building and should not interfere with the Church's day to day operations or worship services. The Church has some immediate facility needs, including a first floor restroom and site work to prevent water seepage in the basement that will be addressed as part of the Du Bois legacy project's funding program.

"The Clinton AME Zion Church is its' own little gem."

"The Church should remain a church; it is an important center of the Black Community."

# Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail: Critical Content

## Du Bois and the Great Barrington Community

The Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail Interpretive Nodes are locations within the town (and 2 outside of town) that have been determined as ideal interpretive locations. The layout brings visitors through downtown and retraces Du Bois's life in relation to Great Barrington as closely as possible in a chronological order. Each of the ten nodes will tell a unique story related to the site and its context (see node descriptions A through J).

## Nurturing a Giant

The role of downtown churches and the community's support for Du Bois's higher education is perhaps one of the most inspiring stories about his upbringing in Great Barrington. The concept of a community working together to raise up an individual with great potential is a story with deep local roots. As a part of the Heritage Trail you can visit the various churches and communities that supported Du Bois at a young age. The First Congregational Church on Main Street (Node G) assisted with Du Bois's expenses at Fisk and Harvard. Their relationship continued; "William E.B. Du Bois, the talented young colored student who has done so much and promises so much more to the honor of this, his native town, has been engaged by the recently organized entertainment committee to deliver a lecture at the chapel of the Congregational church..." The Berkshire Courier reported 24 December 1890. In 1909, the Congregational Sunday School donated \$30 to his work in the South, and received a letter of thanks that was read to the children.

Within this local history is a story with national relevance about the role of small communities within a societal whole; and the critical importance of youth education and encouraging young leaders. The participants of the Planning Workshops noted the significance of this story and suggested that the Du Bois Heritage and Visitor Center in Downtown Great Barrington be a place with active youth education and empowerment programs. This concept, combined with the international nature of Du Bois's later work, inspired the Youth Program for Global Citizenship which will be established at the Interpretive Center. The Youth Program for Global Citizenship is described in more detail within the next section of this Planning Report.

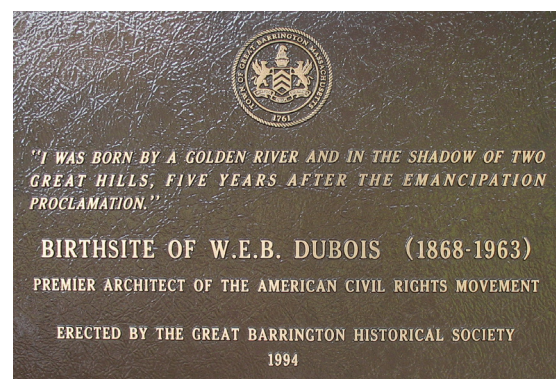
## Environmental Activism

The Downtown Heritage Trail begins and ends at the W.E.B. Du Bois River Garden. The Park is an ideal meeting point for groups, connected to the Housatonic River Walk with nearby public parking. This location (Node H) and/or other locations along the Housatonic River Walk provide opportunities to present Du Bois's deep interest in the Housatonic River and environmental activism. Du Bois's address to the Annual Meeting of the Alumni of Searles High School on July 21, 1930 expressed his concern for the health of the river and linked its environmental regeneration to his agenda for social regeneration. If the Du Bois Interpretive Center is located along the Housatonic River it could potentially host programs related to the River Walk and/or combine community efforts for shared maintenance and facility operations. The Heritage Trail can begin and end at the Du Bois's birthplace during the winter months when the Housatonic River Walk and W.E.B. Du Bois River Garden are closed.

## Interpretive Nodes

### Node A: Starting Point and Birthplace

As he would later write, William E.B. Du Bois was born February 23, 1868, "by a golden river in the shadow of two great hills, five years after the Emancipation Proclamation." His mother, Mary Sylvina Burghardt Du Bois (1831-1885), daughter of a rural farming family, had met and fallen in love with a new arrival from the Albany area, Alfred Du Bois. The Du Boises rented one of two dwellings at the base of Church Street owned by Thomas Jefferson "Old Jeff" McKinley, a man who escaped slavery and followed Union troops home to Great Barrington. The house was razed about 1897 to make way for construction of an electrical manufacturing plant. Alfred Du Bois left town when William was a child. He and his mother moved to her parents' home on Egremont Plain, today known as the W.E.B. Du Bois Homesite.



Above, the W.E.B. Du Bois Birthsite Historical Marker dedicated in 1994. See location number 13 on the map on page 23.



## Downtown Heritage Trail: Critical Content (continued)

### Node B: Center School and High School

Du Bois attended the Center School, which he described as a “wee wooden schoolhouse.” It stood at the end of a lane across from St. James Episcopal Church. The three-room schoolhouse served the community until replaced by Bryant Elementary School in 1889. The two-story brick Great Barrington High School was completed in 1870 and stood directly beside Center School. Du Bois was younger than most of his classmates and, thanks to his mother’s quiet urging, excelled at his studies. The Berkshire Courier reported of his graduation in its July 2, 1884 issue: “[Abolitionist] Wendell Phillips was an appropriate subject for William E. Du Bois, a colored lad who has had good standing in the High School. It was an excellent oration and provoked repeated applause”.

### Node C: Du Bois’s Third Home (Taconic Ave), St. James Episcopal Church and Searles Castle

After moving back into town from the Egremont Plain (the Homesite), the Du Bois household lived over the stables at the Sumner estate, two doors south of St. James’ Episcopal Church. Mary Du Bois likely did housework for the Sumners. The property was cleared in 1899 to make way for what is today Taconic Avenue. Du Bois attended services at St. James Episcopal Church with his mother until 1878. Constructed in 1857, the building is still standing. After high school, at the age of 16, Du Bois worked as a timekeeper on the construction site for Kellogg Terrace (called Searles Castle today). This was a unique responsibility given to Du Bois at such a young age because his position determined the pay to be received by the laborers working on the site.

### Node D: Sumner Hall

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Society began meeting in Great Barrington in 1861, sometimes at Sumner Hall, sometimes at the carriage house at Kellogg Terrace. Du Bois attended many meetings and wrote reports of the Society’s activities for the New York Globe and Freeman. The church heard guest pastors such as the Rev. J. Anderson or the Rev. J.F. Lloyd. Sumner Hall, used by many social organizations in town, is the upper floor of the mansard-roofed commercial block that still stands today.

### Node E: Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and Railroad Street Apartment

Du Bois and his mother, when he was a young teen, lived at the top of Railroad Street near the freight yard on the second floor of a house that is now gone. This was their fourth home in town. In 1888 the African Methodist Episcopal Zion congregation completed a church building on Elm Court that is still in use today. Du Bois, fresh home from Germany, gave a talk on “Some Impressions of Europe” for the congregation in July 1894. The oldest Black church building in Berkshire County and the oldest building in Berkshire County in continual use by an African American organization, Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. The Church continues to promote the legacy of Du Bois with an annual lecture initiated by the late Rev. Esther Dozier in 2001.

“What does it mean to have a giant that lived here? Could there be another, or one to nurture?”

“Help the audience understand how Great Barrington helped shaped his life. Make it something that meets the audience where they are; make it relevant to them.”



Left, the front facade of the Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Du Bois was affiliated with the early congregation; he also lectured there during a later visit. See location number 4 on the map on page 23.

## Downtown Heritage Trail: Critical Content (continued)

“[The Heritage Sites] must be integrated with the town as part of the cultural community... the African American experience is an integral part of the town and the American community.”

### Node F: Home of Warren Davis, Rosseter Street and Elm Court Neighborhood

Elm Court and Rosseter Street are part of a working class neighborhood that has always had a mixed population. One resident here, Warren H. Davis, an entrepreneur, sawmill owner and real estate broker, is doubly important to the Du Bois story in that he served as Du Bois's go-between in the late 1920s when he attempted to restore his grandfather's Homesite on Route 23 and again in the 1960s when he introduced Walter Wilson to the Burghardt property on Egremont Plain — the future Du Bois Memorial Park. Davis's house is now an office for WAMC Radio. When his friends in the NAACP gave Du Bois the Homesite in 1928 as a 60th birthday gift, he made several trips to Great Barrington, and stayed at Edgar Willoughby's Sunset Inn in this neighborhood (a different house is now on the site). Over time, several Black businesses were established in this area, including Jason and Elmira Cooley's restaurant, Martha Crawford's Tearoom (in the 1940's) on Main Street, and Crawford's Inn (in the 1950s and 1960s) on Elm Court, across from the Clinton Church, now gone.



Left, the historical home of Warren H. Davis, an entrepreneur, sawmill owner and real estate broker who worked with Du Bois and helped to establish the Homesite.

Davis's house is now an office for WAMC Radio. See location number 2 on the map on page 23.

### Node G: First Congregational Church, Fifth House Location

With his mother increasingly disabled, the Du Boises took up lodging in a house directly beside the horse sheds of the First Congregational Church. The original 1860 church building was destroyed by fire in 1882 and rebuilt, with a manse added. Mary Du Bois joined the church in 1878 and her son sometimes attended services during the pastorate of Everts Scudder from 1867-1886. The church community assisted with William's expenses at Fisk and Harvard (see "Nurturing a Giant" in the critical content section). The church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. "Our landlord, Mrs. Cass, received no rent, I am sure, for long intervals. I think the rent was four dollars a month, and finally it was accounted for by settlement as a gift when I went to college," Du Bois once wrote. Mary Du Bois died on March 23, 1885 at this home; her burial site is unidentified but is likely at the family plot in Mahaiwe Cemetery just outside of town.



Left, the First Congregational Church on Main Street. The church community assisted with Du Bois's expenses at Fisk and Harvard.

See location number 17 on the map on page 23.



## Downtown Heritage Trail: Critical Content (continued)

### Node H: W.E.B. Du Bois River Garden and Downtown Trail Endpoint

Great Barrington is “turning its back to the river,” W. E. B. Du Bois warned in a talk about the Housatonic River for the annual meeting of the alumni of Great Barrington and Searles high schools in July, 1930. The speaker commended the town for having created what is now Stanley Park near Cottage Street, according to *The Berkshire Courier* for July 24, 1930, but he “expressed the hope that upon his next visit to his native town he would see even greater improvements along the Housatonic.” If Du Bois were to visit today, he would appreciate the result of twenty-two years of community effort to create a Housatonic River Walk, designated a National Recreational Trail in 2009, where some 2,200 volunteers have transformed a once-blighted section of riverbank into a public riverside greenway. The W. E. B. Du Bois River Garden Park, which was dedicated on September 28, 2002, is located a few paces from where Du Bois was born and is a fitting location for the end of the Heritage Trail. Node H relates to critical content section on “Environmental Activism”.



Left, the W.E.B. Du Bois River Garden located where Church Street meets the Housatonic River. The park, with its native gardens, is a primary entry of the River Walk. See location number 14 on the map on page 23.



Above, the Housatonic River Walk, constructed and maintained primarily by volunteers, has restored a large portion of the in-town stretch of the Housatonic River. The regenerated banks of the river have shaded paths for public access and signage at key locations. The River Walk runs along several potential locations identified for the Du Bois Center (see page 33).

“Rescue the Housatonic and clean it as we have never in all the years thought before of cleaning it... restore its ancient beauty; making it the center of a town, of a valley, and perhaps-who knows? of a new measure of civilized life.”

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Housatonic River*, speech delivered to the Annual Meeting of the Alumni of Searles High School, July 21, 1930

“For this valley, the river must be the center. Certainly it is the physical center: perhaps, in a sense, the spiritual center. ...Perhaps from that very freeing of spirit will come other freedoms and inspirations and aspirations which may be steps toward the diffusion and diversification and enriching of culture throughout this land.”

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Housatonic River*, speech delivered to the Annual Meeting of the Alumni of Searles High School, July 21, 1930

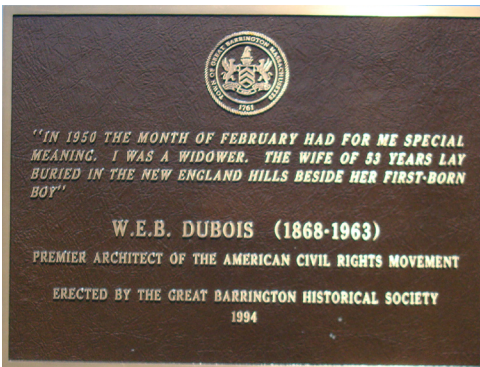


## Downtown Heritage Trail: Critical Content (continued)

“A legacy that is not just Du Bois’s but the community as a whole”

### Node I: Out of Town Node: Mahaiwe Cemetery and Du Bois Center for American History

“In 1950 the month of February had for me special meaning. I was a widower. The wife of 53 years lay buried in the New England hills beside her first-born boy,” Du Bois is quoted on a bronze marker installed in the Mahaiwe Cemetery, located between the Homesite and Downtown. Young Burghardt Du Bois died on May 24, 1899 of diphtheria and was buried (without stone) with his Burghardt ancestors. Daughter Yolande was also buried here in 1961, her grave unmarked. Both children were born in Great Barrington. Their mother Nina Gomer Du Bois, who died 1 July 1950, was interred in the same plot. Mary Sylvina Burghardt Du Bois died March 23, 1885; her burial site is unidentified but is likely located at the family plot in Mahaiwe Cemetery. The Du Bois Center for American History is located in a nearby rare book store and offers additional educational resources related to Du Bois, Great Barrington history, and African American history.



Above and right, the Great Barrington Historical Society marker at the Mahaiwe Cemetery.

The Cemetery is located between the Homesite and Downtown Great Barrington. See location number 2 on the Great Barrington Area map on page 5.

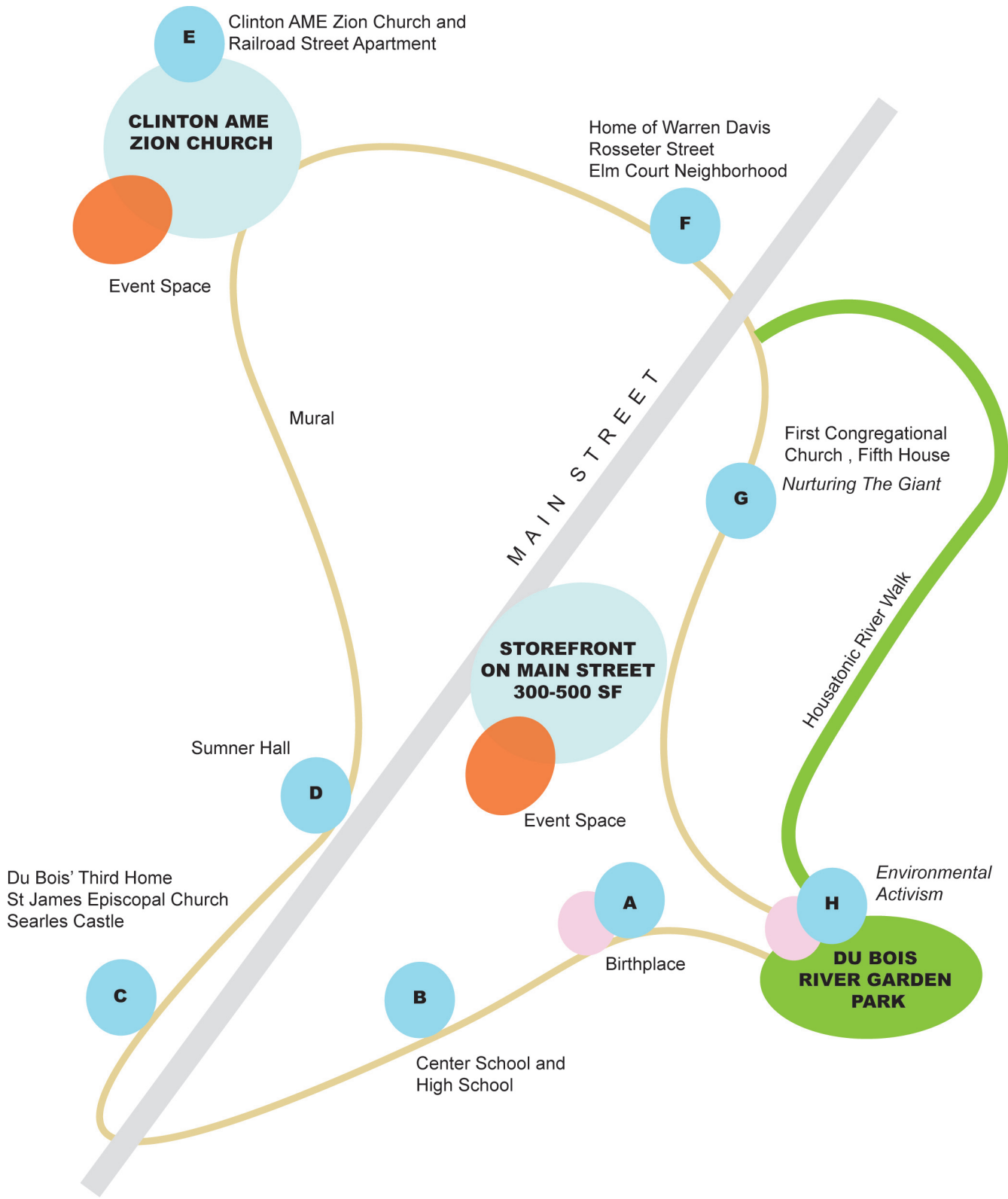


### Node J: Out of Town Node: Simon’s Rock College Library

The Library at Bard College at Simon’s Rock has a special history in relationship to the commemoration of Du Bois and documenting his legacy as it relates to Great Barrington. Ruth D. Jones was the first library cataloger, hired by Betty Hall, the school’s founder, just as it was opening in the mid-1960s. She was one of the leaders dedicated to compiling the record, preserving the story of Du Bois in Great Barrington and the slow creation of the Du Bois Memorial Park (the Homesite). Jones was the Secretary and Treasurer of the W. E. B. Du Bois Memorial Committee founded in 1968 by Walter Wilson and Dr. Edmund Gordon. Mrs. Hall allowed the Committee to meet in a room at the college. At Simon’s Rock Jones continued to preserve Du Bois’s legacy by creating and expanding the Du Bois Collection in the 1970s and 1980s with the support of college librarian Comstock Small. Today the library houses the W.E.B. Du Bois collection of African American history and culture, and holds an Annual W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Lecture. Simon’s Rock also runs classes related to Du Bois, including a recent class “The Way Back: Modern Africa, Slavery and the Diaspora” which involved a group of students who traveled to Ghana to make connections between the Du Bois Center there and ongoing work to celebrate Du Bois’s legacy in Great Barrington.



# Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail Program Diagram



The program diagram above is a visual representation of the Key Ideas and Critical Content sections of the Du Bois Downtown Heritage Trail. These program diagrams have been created for each of the three main Heritage Sites and are represented with similar colors. The pink circles represent existing signage while the blue circles represent new interpretive areas. The green represents an outdoor gathering space. Light blue represents key spaces within the downtown that can support small events and programs. Light brown lines indicate connections. Event spaces are represented with an orange-red color.

## Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center

“Create a youth institute to develop the character of young people towards service as a global citizen.”

“Du Bois cannot be stuck out here on an island, away from town, he needs to be seen as part of the larger community- the region”

“The Homesite is important but it has liabilities, it will never be able to do what [an in-town] Center can do... [the Homesite] will provide a view, but not the view.”

The Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center will serve as the main visitor center, providing information about the Homesite and the Downtown Heritage Trail, and housing changing exhibitions, and community programs including a community and scholarly center operating on a daily basis. The vision for the Interpretive Center is also as a place for youth leadership activities including afterschool programs, youth clubs, study areas, a small library, and a research station with access to available Du Bois archives information. The space should be large enough to host events, such as lectures and community group meetings. The Interpretive Center redefines the idea of a visitor center or museum and creates a living place devoted broadly to community and education.

The Planning Workshops concluded that there are many reasons to locate the Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center within downtown Great Barrington. An infrastructure already exists for shared downtown amenities for visitors, connections with other cultural and tourist venues, and an opportunity to promote the Interpretive Center in a highly visible and trafficked area. A downtown location will also be more closely tied to the local economy, which will foster partnerships and support economic growth. A downtown Interpretive Center overcomes several limitations related to creating a Center at the Homesite, such as parking, zoning issues, and a lack of basic infrastructure.

The riverfront area along the Housatonic River Walk was identified as an ideal place for the Du Bois Interpretive Center. Proximity to Du Bois's birthplace is important, as is Du Bois's interest in the restoration of the Housatonic River. Most downtown riverfront sites have good pedestrian and vehicular access, nearby public parking, and (depending on the site) an interconnection with the Housatonic River Walk. Potential riverfront development sites include the Searles Bryant School Redevelopment Site, the Berkshire Corporation Warehouse, and the Log Homes Site (see plan and photograph on the facing page). Further research needs to be conducted on the costs associated with purchasing and developing the Interpretive Center along the riverfront. Alternative locations in the downtown, such as the Masonic Temple Building, should also be studied further, evaluating the opportunities and constraints of each site.

The Planning Workshops acknowledged there are difficulties developing a sizeable Du Bois Interpretive Center. The costs associated with purchasing and developing a site will require significant grants and extensive fundraising efforts. Any organization like this will need in-depth organizational planning and a staff to oversee and maintain it. However, even given these challenges, the Planning Workshop participants were confident and enthusiastic about the timeliness of undertaking the larger vision of a Du Bois Interpretive Center. The participants all strongly feel that a Du Bois commemorative and educational Center is, at this time, an essential focus for the African American Community nationally and will become significant among other African American heritage and educational centers in the United States.

The Planning Workshops also suggested that because of its meaning for Du Bois, and the special experiences it offers, the Great Barrington Area and the Homesite are the most logical and best positioned places in the United States to realize this significant legacy project. Even if the downtown Du Bois Interpretive Center is not immediately funded it should remain a goal to identify a downtown site, preferably on the Housatonic River and near the Du Bois birthplace. Nurturing partnerships with several regional, national and international organizations will also be an important aspect of a future Du Bois Interpretive Center.



Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center (continued)



Above, an ideal site identified in the Workshop for the Du Bois Center. The site was identified due to its proximity to Du Bois’s birthplace, its location near many in-town attractions, the adjacent Housatonic River Walk, and easy access by foot, bike, and vehicle. The existing warehouse building (6 on the map and the photo) is on a raised foundation above the floodplain which could be adaptively re-used (and made ADA accessible) for the Du Bois Interpretive Center foundation. Several other riverfront and downtown sites have also been identified as potential locations for the Interpretive Center.



“An active [center in the community] will create life out of what most people think is dead”

“Secure a site to eventually realize a larger dream”

- 1 Clinton AME Zion Church
- 2 Masonic Temple Building alternative site
- 3 Du Bois Birthplace
- 4 Existing gravel parking area
- 5 Housatonic River Walk
- 6 Berkshire Corporation Warehouse
- 7 Du Bois River Garden Park
- 8 Existing public parking
- 9 Searles Bryant School Redevelopment Site
- 10 Potential future bikeway connection at Bridge Street
- 11 Log Homes alternative site

300 Feet



# Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center Key Ideas

## The Du Bois Youth Program for Global Citizenship

The community within Great Barrington recognized the talent and potential in Du Bois as a young student and helped to shape him and support him through his higher education (see “Nurturing a Giant” in the Downtown Heritage Trail content section). A fitting way to convey this part of the Du Bois legacy, which is unique to Great Barrington, is to focus the programs and intended users of the Du Bois Interpretive Center on young people. Young people who become engaged in the local story of Du Bois’s youth come to understand his challenges and commitment to education and how he eventually became a powerful leader. This concept, combined with the internationalist nature of Du Bois’s later work, inspired the Du Bois Youth Program for Global Citizenship which will be established at the Interpretive Center. The Youth Program for Global Citizenship will build upon this unique history through a focus on community programs and youth leadership initiatives with the life history, evolving legacy, and global perspective of Du Bois at the core of its mission.

The Interpretive Center is therefore a community center at its heart: hosting community youth programs and youth leadership activities, afterschool programs, summer field schools, youth clubs and interactions with visiting scholars and artists. The Interpretive Center is planned with classroom spaces that can be subdivided into three rooms or connected as a single event space for lectures or small performances. The Digital Archives access areas can double as computer terminals for youth programs. Youth programs could participate in the design, fabrication, installation and maintenance of exhibits, signage and brochures for the Heritage Sites. The Interpretive Center may also administer a community based Du Bois Scholarship Program, rewarding highly motivated young students with college financial aid.

The Railroad Street Youth Project (RSYP) is a possible local partner for the Youth Program for Global Citizenship. RSYP is a dynamic non-profit organization “helping young people bring their ideas and inspirations to fruition and discover their place within the [Great Barrington] community”. It is run by a staff of six young people and adults with oversight from an executive board and a youth operational board. The youth operational board meets on a weekly basis to review proposals for youth-inspired projects. RSYP created the large Du Bois Mural in the Taconic Parking Lot downtown. RSYP is located downtown near the Housatonic River a few blocks away from the sites being considered for the Interpretive Center.

## Interpretive Exhibits

Contemporary innovative and interactive exhibit strategies that mix artifacts with layered and multi-media experiences are encouraged for the Interpretive Center, creating dynamic experiences for the visitors. The Interpretive Center can include a place to gather oral histories related to many themes and especially to the African American experience in New England. Along with a basic introductory Du Bois exhibit and the critical content identified in the next section, the Interpretive Center will offer the opportunity for changing exhibitions based on themes and also related to the research findings of the UMass Amherst Center. The UMass Amherst Du Bois Center’s central mission is to “promote scholarship and public engagement with the wide range of issues in social and racial justice central to the thought of W.E.B. Du Bois”. The Interpretive Center can be an important venue for the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center to disseminate scholarly research through public programs and exhibitions. These changing exhibitions can be curated and designed through collaborative partnerships between scholars, graphic designers, artists and museum professionals. A computer room with access to the UMass Archives can be designed to encourage visitors to research and make further discoveries.

“It is the trained, living human soul, cultivated and strengthened by long study and thought, that breathes the real breath of life into boys and girls and makes them human, whether they be black or white, Greek, Russian or American.”

W.E.B. Du Bois

“[The Center] can create an atmosphere where young Americans can come together to grapple with issues.”

“[The Project] needs to be a living memorial, one that fosters and motivates change... a place within the community.”

“Consider products and revenue generation. How do people take Du Bois home? How do we brand Du Bois?”



## Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center Key Ideas (continued)

### Connect with the Du Bois Center in Accra, Ghana

The W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan-African Culture was established in 1985, “as a research institution for Pan-African history and culture, and as a crucible for African/Diasporan creativity and promotion of the social, political, cultural, and intellectual legacy of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois.” The programming at the Accra Center is similar to the planned programs at Great Barrington Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center and includes a memorial, library, research center, artists and scholars in residence, lectures, performing arts, cultural events and celebrations, meeting spaces and a planned museum and bookshop. Both Centers could connect through artist/scholar/student exchange programs, traveling exhibit exchanges, collaborative lecture series and the sale of Ghanaian arts and crafts at the Great Barrington Interpretive Center among many other possibilities. The Great Barrington Interpretive Center is ideal for digital and web based interactive programs that explore connections among Pan-African scholars, visitors and institutions.

Another concept related to Du Bois’s work as a founder of the Pan-African Movement is inviting African craftspeople to design and work on special areas of the Interpretive Center building, especially interiors. To symbolize a touchable “Pan-African” symbol, one concept from the Planning Workshops suggested collecting small amounts of earth from all areas of the African Continent to build an interior earthen wall at the Interpretive Center based on Ghanaian construction methods.

“We need to call attention to the gifts the people of Africa give to the world, possibly through involving African craftspeople in whatever is built.”



Above, the W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan-African Culture. Several Planning Workshop participants stated that a strong bond should be established between the Center in Great Barrington and the Centre in Accra, Ghana. Both Centers will benefit from cultural, program, and travel exhibit exchanges. Online links to the Accra Center are provided at the end of this Planning Report.

## Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center: Critical Content

“[People] need a lesson about Du Bois’s struggle for racial justice, his grasp of the global nature of this struggle, about his linking the ills of racism with the logic of unbridled capitalism, and about his pride in coming from this town in New England.”

“[Create] something that helps people understand the legacy and radicalism of Du Bois in relation to his time rather than be confused by it.”



Above, a 1905 photograph of the original members of the Niagara Movement, co-founded by Du Bois and a forerunner of the NAACP.

Image from the Special Collections, UMass Amherst Libraries.

A significant challenge for the Du Bois Heritage and Interpretive Center will be designing exhibits and programs that inform the visitor about Du Bois’s many contributions to U.S. and world history and engage people in his ongoing struggles to achieve liberation for particularly African Americans, and through their struggles, all the peoples of the world. This is an inspiring story; it is also one that challenges many Americans’ understanding of the United States’ place in the modern world. Herein lies the challenge for future curators and designers.

The Planning Workshops gravitated towards using Du Bois’s life story (rather than a catalog of accomplishments or a literary dissection of his writings) as a means to accomplish this goal. What follow are strategic directions to help shape specific exhibit themes and goals.

### Timeline

The Planning Workshops realized that the casual visitor will need an introduction to the scope of Du Bois’s life. It is worth noting that his 95 years spanned nearly one quarter of the entire life experience of African descent people in America, and nearly forty percent of the span of the United States. Signal moments in Du Bois’s life can be paired with significant moments in American and world history to help the visitor understand Du Bois’s breadth of personal experience with challenges we continue to face today. Such moments include Du Bois’s high school graduation address in 1884 on the abolitionist Wendell Phillips just as the U.S. is renegeing on the promises of Reconstruction and moving towards the implementation of Jim Crow; Du Bois’s publication of “The Damnation of Women” in the same year that the 19th amendment gave women the right to vote; and Du Bois’s 1940s and 1950s efforts to curb the development of nuclear weapons just as the hydrogen bomb was being developed and exploded. An important effect of such a timeline would be to let the visitor understand that Du Bois’s thoughts and actions emerged in response to the dangerous and abhorrent conditions the world faced; his motivation to become a dissenter and radical cannot be reduced to mere personality traits. Such an understanding is crucial for positioning one of the most controversial moments in his and Great Barrington’s history, the attack on his patriotism and the subsequent protests about the 1969 Commemoration of the Homesite. Exploring specific aspects of his life and their connection to world affairs could be the focus of more in depth exhibits.

### Civil Rights Legacy

Dr. Du Bois’s role as a co-founder of the Niagara Movement and the NAACP are a critical part of his legacy along with seeing how his work influenced the entire Civil Rights Movement from its inception. While much of his work took place away from New England many participants of the Planning Workshops believed that a Great Barrington venue offers an opportunity to include the role of New England in the Civil Rights Movement- a subject rarely examined.

### Global Influence

Dr. Du Bois was a global scholar and activist who co-founded the Pan African Congresses and traveled throughout the world to address problems of racial oppression of Africans, African Americans and other oppressed peoples living under the colonial rule of White Europeans. The scope of his work was vast and created the groundwork for independence movements all over the world. A symbol of the regard for Du Bois is that his *The Souls of Black Folk* has been translated into many world languages. Forming a partnership with W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan-African Culture would be one contemporary step towards keeping this aspect of Du Bois’s legacy alive.



## Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center: Critical Content (continued)

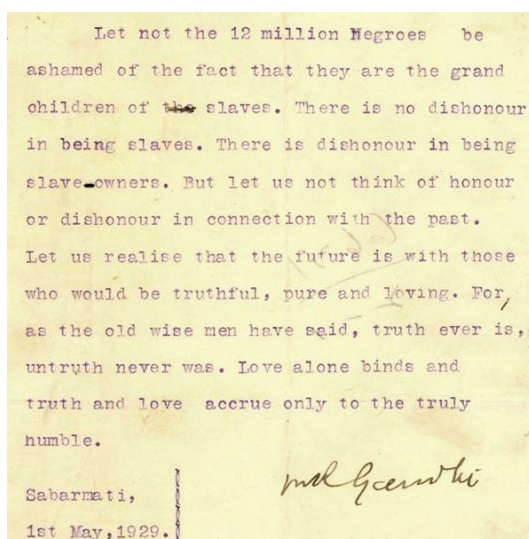
### Higher Education and Political Action

Du Bois's story involves a singular dedication to learning and teaching. His academic background included study at Fisk, Harvard, and the University of Berlin eventually obtaining his PhD from Harvard in 1896 (the first PhD granted to an African American by that institution). During the summers, Du Bois taught school to the children of ex-slaves in rural Tennessee in log cabins built before the Civil War. He held academic positions at Wilberforce University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Atlanta University. His pursuit of higher education and his specific study of sociology were inextricably linked to his long-term goal to raise awareness of the oppressive conditions of Black Americans and create social change. The examination of this lesson through Du Bois, the role of public intellectuals in society as agents of change, was expressed as critical content and highly relevant to today.

### What it Means to be a Patriot, Dispelling Myths

Later in his career Dr. Du Bois found himself criticizing a U.S. government and society that had become obsessed with confronting Communism. A series of events were used to symbolize Du Bois in the mainstream media as a danger to society: his high profile indictment and trial (and acquittal) for seeking to abolish nuclear armaments, his joining the Communist Party USA at the age of 93, his taking up residency in Ghana from which it was falsely rumored that he renounced his citizenship and where he died at age 95. These fragments of his long life, torn out of context and focused on by governmental and media leaders had an impact at the Homesite by fuelling the controversy, threats, and FBI surveillance that accompanied the 1969 dedication of the Homesite. As a result, this stage in the Homesite's history offers a unique site-specific opportunity for telling Du Bois's story, of how an effective social critic and political activist was hounded by powers within the government and the society at large during his life, and how his reputation was besmirched after his death. The Homesite 1969 Commemorative Boulder thus offers a venue for a case study in the ways misguided patriotism deprives the country of voices of dissent and undermines the foundations of democracy. And though an important lesson and a clear opportunity for the Homesite, it only makes sense within the larger message the Homesite has to communicate, that Du Bois was a brilliant, multitalented, tireless activist for social justice whose works bettered the lives of White people as well as People of Color, in the U.S. and around the globe.

While this story will be partially told at the Homesite in relation to the 1969 Commemorative Boulder, the Interpretive Center will provide opportunities for more in-depth exhibits and content related to Dr. Du Bois's interest in social justice.



Left, a 1929 correspondence between Du Bois and Mohandas Gandhi. Many documents such as this one are unknown to the public and the Homesite and Du Bois Center should be the publicly accessible 'home' for the collection (the actual physical papers would remain at the library).

Image from the Special Collections, UMass Amherst Libraries.

"There is in this world no such force as the force of a person determined to rise. The human soul cannot be permanently chained."

W.E.B. Du Bois

"Violence is black children going to school for 12 years and receiving 5 years of education.

Violence is 30 million hungry stomachs in the most affluent nation on earth.

Violence is a country where property counts more than people."

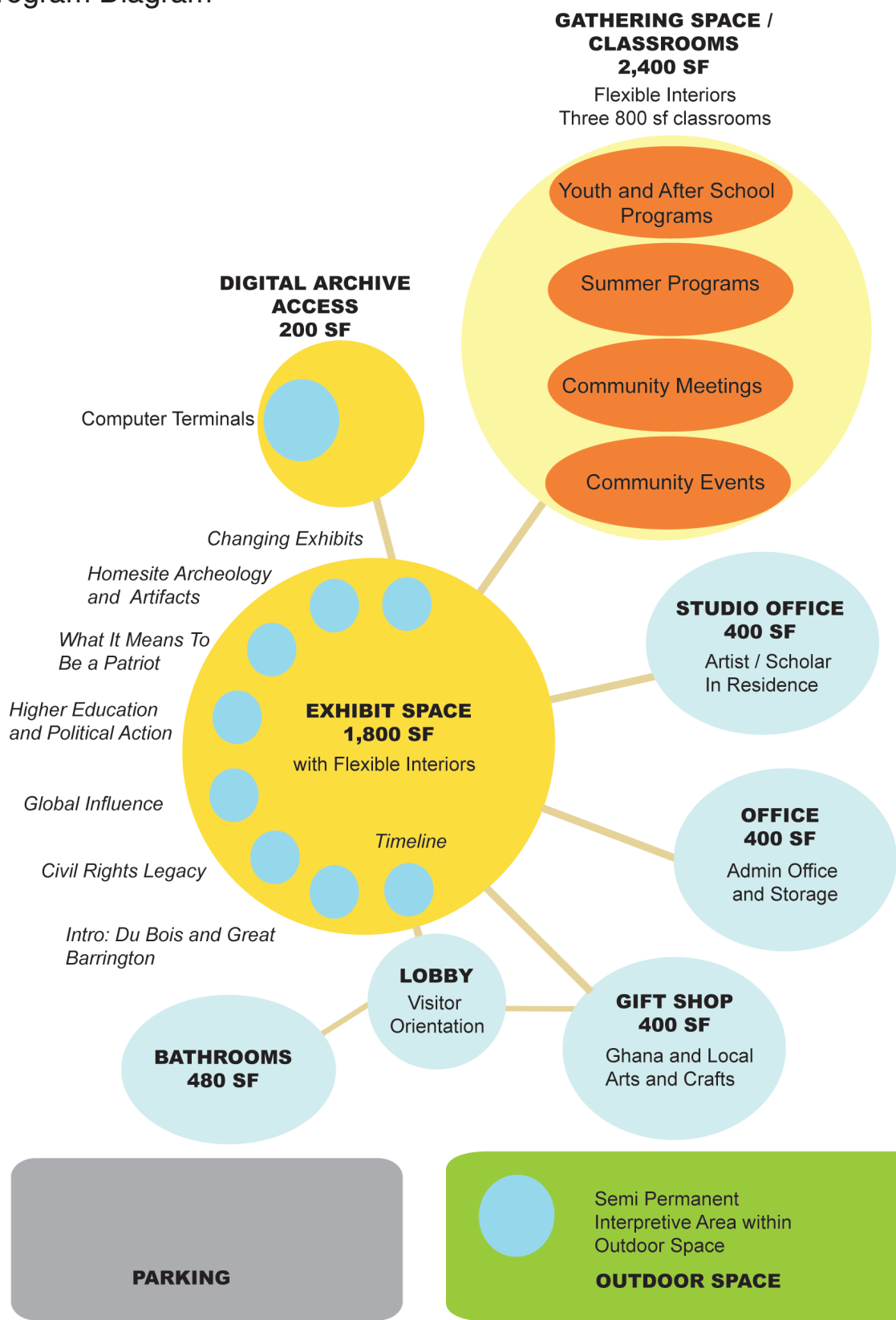
From Julian Bond's keynote address at the 1969 dedication of W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Park (the Homesite)

"I had again at Berlin as at Harvard, unusual opportunity...I began to see the race problem in America, the problem of the peoples of Asia and Africa, and the political development of Europe as one."

W.E.B. Du Bois

"Du Bois is an Ambassador for the race"

Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center  
Program Diagram



The program diagram above is a visual representation of the Key Ideas and Critical Content sections of the Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center. Square footage areas are suggested for planning purposes only, actual size will be determined during later phases of design. These program diagrams have been created for each of the three main Heritage Sites and are represented with similar colors. The blue circles represent new interpretive areas. The orange-yellow hues represent key programmatic areas such as exhibit space, indoor gathering spaces, and classrooms. The green represents an outdoor gathering space. Light blue represents a support area. Light brown lines indicate connections. Events and specific activity areas are represented with an orange-red color.



## Initiatives Common to All Three Sites

### Connection to the UMass Amherst W. E. B. Du Bois Center

The UMass Amherst W. E. B. Du Bois Center will promote scholarship and public engagement with the wide range of issues in social and racial justice central to the thought of W.E.B. Du Bois. In confronting the color line, Du Bois, a pioneer in urban sociology and history, was always an activist scholar. From the time of the Supreme Court's 1896 decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* to Martin Luther King's March on Washington in 1963, he was among the nation's most prominent public intellectuals, using insights drawn from his academic research to spur social action.

Disseminating its work through fellowships, colloquia/seminars, and print/electronic publications, the Center will be the basis for on-going intellectual interchange within an extensive community of scholars, activists and the public at large. UMass Amherst also bears a singular relationship to the legacy of Dr. Du Bois, serving as stewards of his personal and professional papers. The UMass Amherst Du Bois Library Special Collections and University Archives are providing on-line access to this collection. The UMass Amherst Du Bois Center will focus on four interrelated areas of activity:

1. A fellowship program
2. Seminars, colloquia, and publications
3. Educational initiatives; interdisciplinary curriculum development, on-line education
4. The Boyhood Homesite and related activities in Great Barrington

Drawing on a distinguished group of scholars in the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies, the Anthropology Department, the History Department and many others, the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center has a combination of intellectual and material wealth that permits it to uniquely advance the study and public understanding of social justice and democracy in the Du Boisian tradition, as well as establish Du Bois's beloved Great Barrington hometown as a national and international destination celebrating the life and legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois. The Du Bois Homesite and the other Heritage Sites in Great Barrington are integral components to realize the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center's overall mission to disseminate scholarly research and findings that contribute to the understanding of Du Bois.

### Create Programs and Events that Engage

The Homesite, Downtown Trail and Interpretive Center can all be alive with activity, debate, art, theater and music. Encouraging artists, scholars and activists, especially from the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center, to collaborate using these venues to create site-specific interactive projects will promote a continual public reinvigoration of the discussion about Du Bois and his legacy. These collaborative innovative site-specific activities address the mission of inter-connecting the Great Barrington sites with the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center's mission to promote scholarship and public engagement. Symposiums and lecture series created by the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center should engage with sites in Great Barrington, such as the Clinton AME Zion Church, the Homesite woodland amphitheater, the Du Bois River Garden Park, and the future Interpretive Center.

Field school programs and summer youth programs in partnership with Simon's Rock, UMass Amherst, or other institutions could use the Homesite and the Interpretive Center as venues for academic study for on-site focused learning in the arts, environment, design, history, and social studies. Field schools could supplement the Center's program needs for exhibition development, special events in the arts, and interpretive planning and development. These field schools should also interconnect with the Youth Program for Global Citizenship and other youth and community programs at the Interpretive Center, creating new opportunities for young students to engage in programs that might otherwise not be available to the local community.

"The Boyhood Homesite, the Downtown Heritage Trail and the Interpretive Center will encourage a dynamic living history approach to the understanding of Du Bois."

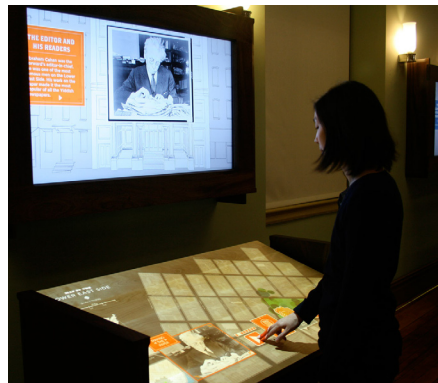
"I hope that modern design and interpretation will be embraced here. While we are celebrating a centuries' old homestead and landscape, Du Bois was nothing if not a modern man, indeed a definer of the 20th century's highest hopes. I hope that modern design and new ideas of memorials will be a part of the final project."

Quote from a Workshop One Planning Report Reviewer

## Initiatives Common to All Three Sites (continued)

### Layered Content for a Range of Interests

Experiences at the Heritage Sites should be layered to provide the basic level of information in the form of signage or displays while allowing a viewer to access more in-depth content. Content may be expanded in multiple ways: by directing a visitor to another location with related content (such as an exhibit at the Interpretive Center), creating specific dates for tours, providing links to online content (such as the Du Bois Papers at the UMass Amherst Du Bois Library Special Collections and University Archives), providing cell phone audio tours, and pamphlets with maps and expanded text and bibliographic information. Visitors should not be overwhelmed with too much content, but should have easy access to any additional content they might wish to seek.



Above, a digital interactive interpretive kiosk at the Eldridge Street Synagogue by American History Workshop and Potion Design. The kiosk has a range of programs for different levels of interest and age groups. One program allows the viewer to access historical newspapers and clippings as a way of better understanding the history and context of the neighborhood and communities interacting with the synagogue over time. The available programs can be changed or updated over time by Potion Design.



Left, the Montgomery Civil Rights Memorial by Maya Lin in Montgomery, Alabama. The Civil Rights Memorial honors the achievements and memory of those who lost their lives during the Civil Rights Movement. The memorial surface is engraved with a timeline of events washed over by a thin layer of water. The memorial is a part of the Civil Rights Memorial Center and is also located across the street from the Southern Poverty Law Center's office building.

The plaza is a contemplative area — a place to remember the Movement, but it also is a sculptural space that interests a range of visitors and raises awareness of the Center to a greater audience.

“It is a multi-layered, multifaceted endeavor and approach...”

“We need to embrace technology in a way that does not trivialize him.”

“There are a variety of opportunities . . . educational programming and intellectual exchange. . . especially as it relates to continuing a national dialogue on issues of race, black empowerment, democracy, and social justice. As you move all of your projects closer to reality we will be interested to see how you fashion your public programs, and the ways you will construct your narratives on Du Bois.”



## Initiatives Common to All Three Sites (continued)

### Scholars and Artists in Residence

A scholar and artist in residence could create special programs that engage with the community through a lecture series, a site specific project, oral history, theater, temporary art installations, engaging the schools, creating special workshops, or working on a new exhibit. This program is directly connected with UMass Amherst Du Bois Center scholar program as mentioned above. Scholars and artists in residence in Great Barrington will also be encouraged to become mentors and actively involved with the Youth Program for Global Citizenship and other youth and community programs at the Interpretive Center.

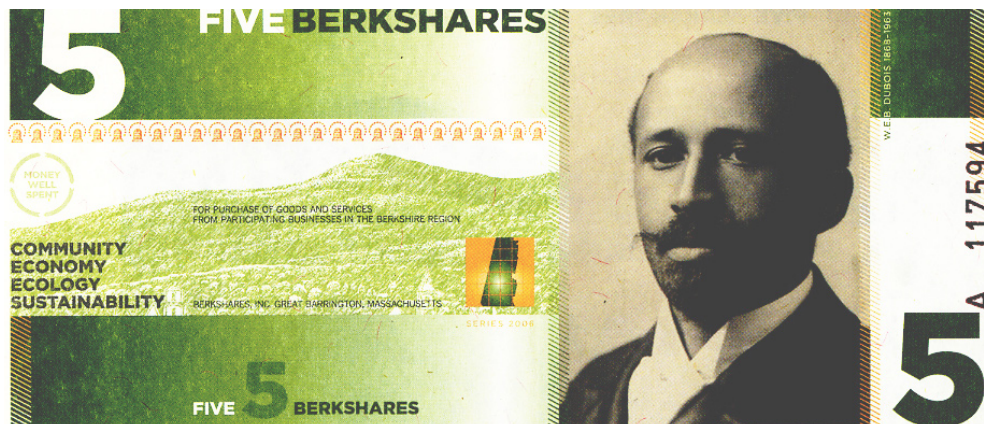
### Connect with the Cultural Community

The project team for the Du Bois Heritage Sites should build upon the existing network of cultural institutions in town, linking to events and programs that can be mutually supported and attended. Working with local and regional tourism groups will have a similar affect by combining resources. Groups such as the Berkshire Visitors Bureau and the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area may be able to offer technical assistance or resources. Other regional partnerships include incorporating the Du Bois Heritage Sites into regional tourism signage on major roadways. The project team should explore partnerships on a national level with the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC (or other institutions with a similar mission) on establishing the Du Bois Heritage Sites as a satellite.

“How do we devise a landscape that is engaging and encourages social change?”

“Can [Great Barrington] be considered a cultural district? Include Du Bois as part of a cultural community—cultural marketing.”

Below, interpretive exhibits at the Civil Rights Institute, in Birmingham, Alabama. The Civil Rights Institute and several other national museums have traveling exhibits, archives, and online content that can be shared with the Du Bois Interpretive Center in Great Barrington.



Above, a Five Berkshare Note (equivalent to \$5.25 when used in the Berkshires Region) featuring W.E.B. Du Bois. BerkShares are a local currency designed for use in the Southern Berkshire region of Massachusetts with issue by BerkShares, Inc., a non-profit organization working in collaboration with participating local banks, local businesses, and local non-profit organizations. Widely used in the early 1900s, local currencies are again being recognized as a tool for sustainable economic development. The people who choose to use the currency make a conscious commitment to buy local first. They are taking personal responsibility for the health and well-being of their community by laying the foundation of a truly vibrant, thriving local economy. The use of Du Bois's portrait is an excellent example of combining efforts with the local and regional tourism / marketing organizations to raise awareness of local history.

## Project Development Priorities

The Planning Workshops established an outline for the phasing of the various Heritage Sites. It is understood that project fundraising will occur over a period of several years and it will be important to show progress as funds become available. While beyond the scope of this report, it is assumed that during phase one a director/fundraiser will be hired and an organizational structure to manage and integrate the different components will be established.

Phase One focuses on modest improvements to the Homesite and the Downtown Heritage Trail, establishing several venues and methods of raising awareness about the project. Phase One includes the creation of a comprehensive website that links the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center and all of the Heritage Sites, and provides a method of contributing online donations. Phase One should also include creating a comprehensive branding strategy (including signage, pamphlets, letterheads, naming, digital content, etc.) and an audience study for the Heritage Sites. Phase Two concentrates funding on the Homesite since the land is already under the stewardship of UMass Amherst. Archeology could technically occur in Phase One and Two, but funding should be established no later than Phase Two for this critical aspect of the Homesite visitor experience. Phase Three will require a significant amount of funding for implementation and is therefore viewed as the final Phase. Phase Three may be divided into several stages, such as design, construction and operations, especially for the Interpretive Center. Phase Four is listed as optional because purchasing the Hitchcock Property was deemed a good idea, but not essential, for the Homesite to function as a passive educational area. Any funds raised for the Heritage Sites should be focused on the Phases as listed; the Hitchcock House should only be considered for purchase if excess financial resources are available.

### **Phase One**

- Establish National Committee and Fundraising Leadership
- Enhance Homesite Trails
- Homesite Maintenance and Forestry Management Plan
- Homesite Rt 23 and Parking Lot Signage
- Enhance Downtown Heritage Trail (including printed and digital materials)
- Events and activities to raise awareness
- Establish Downtown Storefront as Fundraising and Meeting Space
- Branding, Website, and Audience Study for all Heritage Sites

### **Phase Two**

- Complete Homesite:
- Expand Trails with Interpretation spaces
- Continue Archeology with Boardwalk and Interpretation Areas
- Amphitheater
- Rest Shelter and Bathrooms

### **Phase Three**

- Du Bois Interpretive Center in Great Barrington
- Clinton AME Zion Church improvements
- Upgrade and Finalize Downtown Heritage Trail

### **Phase Four (optional)**

- Purchase Hitchcock House Property



## Project Budget Outline

The Planning Workshops established an outline for the budgeting of major project components for the purposes of overall planning discussions and fundraising initiatives. This outline is not an estimate of costs, but rather a general consensus on the allocation of funding for various aspects of the project. Budgeting and cost estimating will become more accurate as the project evolves and the design of project sites and elements are developed. The substantial cost of staffing for the fundraising campaign, project administration and the operations and maintenance of project sites and elements are not included in this budget. These budget items will depend on many factors that will be established in the future by the project partners, the University of Massachusetts Amherst's W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Committee, the Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, and the Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail.

### Phase One

Enhance Homesite Trails: \$30,000  
Maintenance and Forestry Management Plan: \$5,000  
Homesite Rt 23 and Parking Lot Signage: \$30,000 (3 permanent signage elements at \$10,000 each)  
Enhance Downtown Heritage Trail: \$60,000  
(2-4 select Downtown Nodes with audio tour/podcasts and a Downtown Du Bois Heritage Trail Brochure)  
Events and activities to raise awareness: \$24,000 (4 years at \$6,000 a year)  
Establish Downtown Storefront as Fundraising and Meeting Space: \$198,000  
(4 years based on \$12,000 a year rent, \$30,000 a year part-time staff, and \$30,000 for equipment and utilities)  
Branding, Website, and Audience Study for all Heritage Sites: \$80,000 (assumes reduced fees)

**Phase One Total: \$427,000**

### Phase Two

Complete Homesite:  
Expand Trails with Interpretation Spaces: \$160,000 (5 spaces at \$20,000 per space, \$60,000 for new trails)  
Continue Archeology with Boardwalk and Interpretation Areas: \$400,000 (\$200,000 allocation for archeology, \$150,000 for adjustable/ removable boardwalk, \$50,000 for interpretive areas)  
Amphitheater: \$150,000 (assumes 25 granite benches, site work, and associated interpretive areas)  
Rest Shelter and Bathrooms: \$80,000

Subtotal: \$790,000  
Estimated Soft Costs for Design and Interpretation: \$80,000

**Phase Two Total: \$870,000**

### Phase Three

Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center in Great Barrington:  
Approximately 7500 sq ft at \$300 per sq ft: \$2,250,000  
Land and Site Work budget allocation: \$600,000  
Exhibits and Associated Interiors, approximately 1,800 sq ft at \$900 per sq ft.: \$1,620,000  
10% Additional Contingency: \$450,000  
Estimated Soft Costs for Design and Interpretation: \$400,000

Interpretive Center Budget Subtotal: \$5,320,000

Clinton AME Zion Church Improvements: \$450,000 (includes interiors, bathrooms, repairs and soft costs)  
Upgrade and Finalize Downtown Heritage Trail: \$200,000 (\$20,000 for all 10 Interpretive Node Sites, includes design and digital access)

**Phase Three Total (rounded): \$6,000,000**

## Summary and Next Steps

The project partners from UMass Amherst and Great Barrington along with the Michael Singer Studio extend our great appreciation for the time and efforts all Workshop One participants gave at the September 26th and 27th 2008 meetings. Thank you to all of those who responded to the January 2009 Workshop One Report Survey questions and to the participants in the April 17 Second Workshop.

A long-term goal of the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center and Du Bois Heritage Sites in Great Barrington is to build upon the many past efforts and to create a significant national memorial and cultural center appropriate to W.E.B. Du Bois's global significance. This document is the first step in the articulation of the vision and strategies for celebrating Du Bois at his Boyhood Homesite, the Downtown Heritage Trail, and the Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center. This planning document is meant to inform the next phase of the project: the efforts of UMass Amherst, the Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, and the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area to raise funds to realize this plan and to engage in a request for proposals from design teams to make this vision a reality.

The Planning Workshops identified feasible and exciting possibilities for the physical sites and programs related to commemorating and furthering an understanding of W.E.B. Du Bois and his legacy. There were extensive discussions about audience, content and the programming that will interconnect the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center with the Great Barrington Heritage Sites. The design and programs of all these components are layered and meant to reveal the complexity of Du Bois's life, offering and motivating visitors at one site to seek further knowledge that can be revealed and presented in an engaging manner at other sites.

For example, an archeology discovery at the Homesite may present new information and questions to be addressed through the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center's resident scholars program. The scholarly research done at the UMass Amherst Center can then become the basis to collaboratively curate an exhibit of the findings at the Great Barrington Interpretive Center, or engage an artist to perform or create a site-specific installation at one of the Downtown Heritage Trail sites. Each component, therefore, reinforces the larger endeavor of scholarly and public understanding of Du Bois and his legacy. These interrelated UMass Amherst and Great Barrington components can further W.E.B. Du Bois's mission to promote an understanding of the potential for social activism in one's own community, the nation and globally.

Each of these UMass Amherst and Great Barrington components have specific resources and resonances that are supportive of the whole. To summarize, the Workshop concluded that the Homesite is a place of reflection, a commemorative site with several themes related to Du Bois's boyhood and ancestry, as well as a place to understand and witness the past efforts to commemorate this great man. Its size limitations, zoning, and accessibility problems prevent the Homesite property from housing a large building and facility. The original Burghardt homestead (and the one acre archeologically sensitive area) of the Homesite will continue as an archeological research site with carefully planned and designed public access that protects this area's sensitive ground. Work will continue on enhancing the Homesite's educational walking trails through the woodland landscape and interpretive spaces.

The Du Bois Downtown Great Barrington Heritage Trail situates Du Bois's early life and provides specific places to learn about, experience and imagine events that nurtured his intelligence and talents. These many trail sites are flexible to ongoing programming. For example, the Clinton AME Zion Church, still in operation as a place of worship, will continue its Du Bois birthday celebrations and host lectures as well as provide an important stop along the Downtown Heritage Trail.



## Summary and Next Steps (continued)

The best place to locate a nationally significant Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center is within downtown Great Barrington. It was acknowledged that this downtown Interpretive Center as well as the Homesite and Downtown Heritage Trail will need an organization for fundraising, planning and management. The participants of the Planning Workshops expressed that this is now an excellent time to undertake these tasks and begin the process.

This Final Report for the *W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite and Great Barrington: A Plan for Heritage Conservation and Interpretation* Project concludes the consensus building Planning Workshop process. Following this planning phase it is appropriate to identify the person who will lead a national awareness and fundraising campaign that will also lead to a design process. The design process will be organized around a request for design team proposals (RFP) to design and develop the Heritage Sites based on the programs identified and described in this Planning Report. The chosen design team will be tasked with the physical design of spaces and places for all venues of the Great Barrington sites as well as the design of distinctive interpretive programming and exhibition strategies for those venues. This Planning Report is intended to provide program descriptions and guidelines for the design team.

It is clear from the enthusiasm of all the Workshop participants and survey respondents that furthering the commemoration and legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois inspires all of us to work at ensuring a dynamic and exceptional UMass Amherst Du Bois Center and Homesite, Downtown Heritage Trail, and Du Bois Heritage Visitor and Interpretive Center in Great Barrington. These combined venues will be an outstanding national resource and a strong catalyst for generating better understanding of race, civil rights, environmental and social justice locally and globally.

## Appendices

46	Online Resources
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48	Workshop Participants
49	About Michael Singer Studio and the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite

## Online Resources

UMass Amherst Du Bois Papers/Special Collections  
(includes several short presentations on Du Bois's history)

[www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/dubois/](http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/dubois/)

Friends of the Du Bois Homesite

[www.DuBoisHomesite.org](http://www.DuBoisHomesite.org)

Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail

[www.AfricanAmericanTrail.org](http://www.AfricanAmericanTrail.org)

River Walk and Du Bois River Garden Park

[www.gbriverwalk.org](http://www.gbriverwalk.org)

Town of Great Barrington

[www.townofgb.org](http://www.townofgb.org)

South Berkshire Chamber of Commerce

[www.greatbarrington.org](http://www.greatbarrington.org)

Great Barrington Historical Society

[www.greatbarringtonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.greatbarringtonhistoricalsociety.org)

W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan-African Culture in Accra, Ghana  
For more information about the Centre visit:

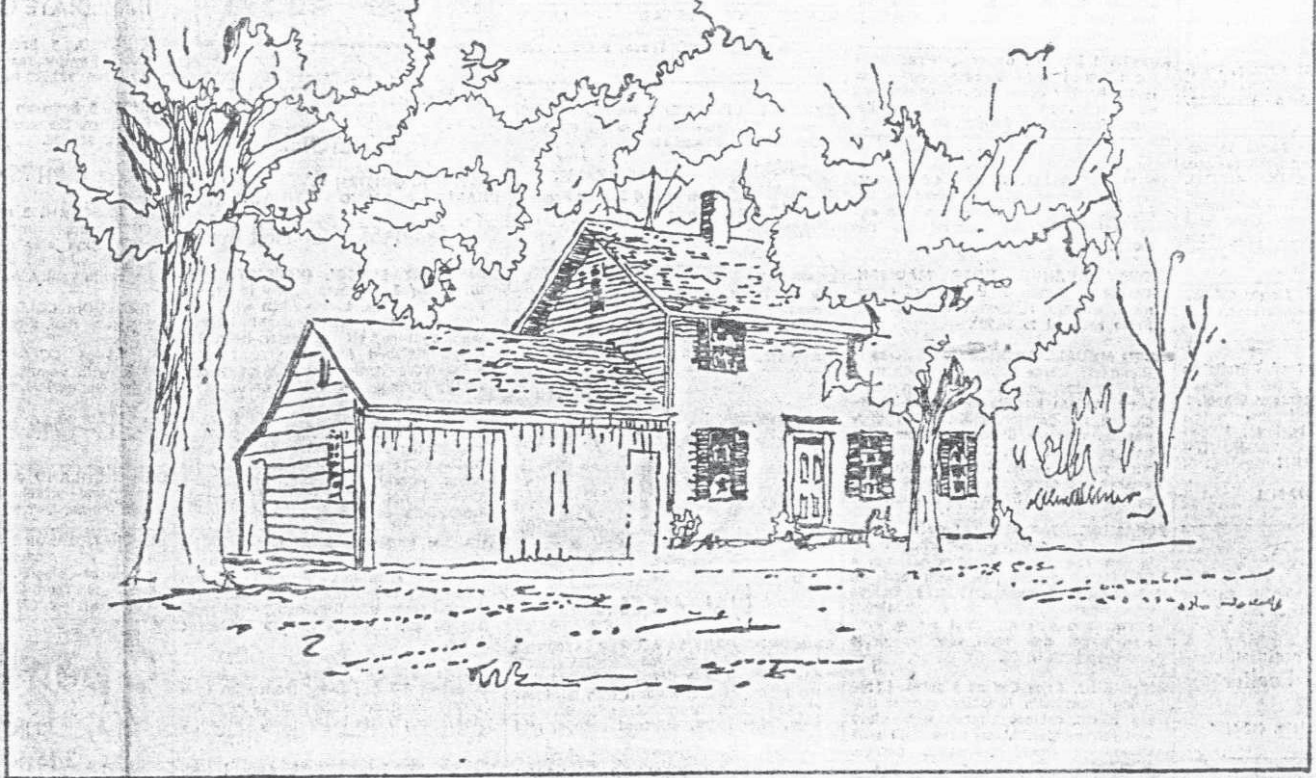
[www.webdubois-gh.org/](http://www.webdubois-gh.org/)

For a virtual tour of the Centre visit:

<http://journalism.berkeley.edu/projects/mm/luckie/dubois.html>

Railroad Street Youth Project: <http://rsyp.org/>





ARTIST'S CONCEPTION OF THE HOUSE OF THE BLACK BURGHARDTS—DU BOIS' BOYHOOD HOME.  
ORIGINAL PICTURE IN POSSESSION OF WALTER WILSON.

## THE HOUSE OF THE BLACK BURGHARDTS

"If one slips out the northern neck of Manhattan and flies to the left of the silver Sound, one swoops in time onto the Golden River; and dodging its shining beauty, now right, now left, one comes after a hundred miles of lake, hill and mountain, in the Old Bay State. Then at the foot of high Mt. Everett one takes a solemn decision: left is sweet, old Sheffield; but pass it stolidly by and slip gently right into tiny South Egremont which always sleeps. Then wheel right again and come to Egremont Plain and the House of the Black Burghardts.

"It is the first home that I remember. There my mother was born and all her nine brothers and sisters. There perhaps my grandfather was born, although that I do not know. At any rate, on this wide and lovely plain, beneath the benediction of gray-blue mountain and the low music of rivers, lived for a hundred years the black Burghardt clan. Up and to the east on a hill of rocks was Uncle Ira; down and to the south was Uncle Harlow in a low, long, red house beside a pond—in a house of secret passages, sudden steps, low, narrow doors and unbelievable furniture. And here right in the center of the world was Uncle Tallow, as Grandfather Othello was called:

"It was a delectable place—simple, square and low, with the great room of the fireplace, the flagged kitchen, half a step below, and the lower woodshed be-

yond. Steep, strong stairs led up to Sleep, while without was a brook, a well and a mighty elm. Almost was I born there myself but that Alfred Du Bois and Mary Burghardt honeymooned a year in town and then brought me as a baby back to Egremont Plain.

"I left the home as a child to live in town again and go to school. But for furtive glimpses I did not see the house again for more than a quarter century. Then riding near on a chance journey I suddenly was homesick for that house. I came to the spot. There it stood, old, lonesome, empty. Its windowless eyes stared blindly on the broad, black highway to New York. It seemed to have shrunk timidly into itself. It had lost color and fence and grass and up to the left and down to the right its sister homes were gone—dead and gone with no stick nor stone to mark their burial.

"From that day to this I desperately wanted to own that house for no earthly reason that sounded a bit like sense. It was 130 long miles from my work. It was decrepit almost beyond repair save that into its tough and sturdy timbers the black Burghardts had built so much of their own dumb pluck that—

"Why the stairs don't even creak!" said She, climbing gingerly aloft.

"But I fought the temptation away. Yachts and country estates and limousines

are not adapted to my income. Oh, I inquired of course. The replies were discouraging. And once every year or so I drove by and stared sadly; and even more sadly and brokenly the House of the Black Burghardts stared back.

"Then of a sudden Somebody whose many names and places I do not know sent secret emissaries to me on a birthday which I had firmly resolved *not* to celebrate. Sent emissaries who showed me all the Kingdoms of this World, including something in green with a cupola; and also The House; and I smiled at the House. And they said by telegram: *The House of the Black Burghardts is come home again—it is yours!*

"Whereat in great joy I celebrated another birthday and drew plans. And from its long hiding-place I brought out an old black pair of tongs. Once my grandfather, and mayhap his, used them in the great fireplace of the House. Long years I have carried them tenderly over all the earth. The sister shovel, worn in holes, was lost. But when the old fireplace rises again from the dead on Egremont Plain, its dead eyes shall see not only the ghosts of old Tom and his son Jack and his grandson Othello and his great grandson, me—but also the real presence of these iron tongs resting again in fire worship in the House of the Black Burghardts."

W.E.B. Du Bois 1928



## Workshop Participants List

Whitney Battle-Baptiste, Assistant Professor, Anthropology, UMass Amherst

Robert Cox, Acting Director, W.E.B. Du Bois Center, UMass Amherst

Bernard Drew, Local Historian, Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, Great Barrington, Former President, Great Barrington Historical Society

Dr. Rex Ellis, Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs, Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African American History and Culture

Peter Fish, Former Selectman, Great Barrington

Rachel Fletcher, Co-Director, Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail, Trustee, Great Barrington Land Conservancy; Trustee, Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area

David Glassberg, Professor, History, UMass Amherst

Joseph Guillory, Graduate Student, W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at UMass Amherst

Elaine Gunn, Du Bois Memorial Committee, Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, Great Barrington

Wray Gunn, Trustee, Clinton A.M.E. Zion Church, Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, Great Barrington

Cora Portnoff, Friends of the Du Bois Homesite, Great Barrington

Veronica Jackson, Founding Partner, Principal and Senior Exhibit Designer for the Jackson Brady Design Group

John James, Principal Architect and Historic Preservationist, John A. James Architects

Evelyn Jeffers, Graduate Student, Anthropology Department UMass Amherst

Lauri Klefos, President and CEO, Berkshire Visitors Bureau

Anthony Martin, Graduate Student, Anthropology Department, UMass Amherst

Robert Paynter, Professor, Anthropology, UMass Amherst

Jay Schafer, Director of Libraries, UMass Amherst, and Chair, Du Bois Legacy Committee

Amilcar Shabazz, Chair, Du Bois Department of African American Studies, UMass Amherst

William Strickland, Professor, Department of African American Studies, UMass Amherst

Catherine Turton, Historian, National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service

Michael Singer, Artist and Designer, Michael Singer Studio

Dolores Root, Anthropologist and Museum Program Specialist, Michael Singer Studio

Susan McMahon, Community Planning Specialist, Consultant to Michael Singer Studio

Jason Bregman, Planner and Designer, Michael Singer Studio

Jonathan Fogelson, Planner and Designer, Michael Singer Studio

Josiah Simpson, Community Planning, Consultant to Michael Singer Studio



## About Michael Singer Studio and the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite

In 2004 Michael Singer Studio began working with the Friends of W.E.B. Du Bois on identifying the opportunities for using the Homesite and the surrounding area of Great Barrington as a means for honoring W.E.B. Du Bois. The Singer Studio engaged stakeholders from the Great Barrington community including the Clinton AME Zion Church, The Great Barrington Land Conservancy, the Great Barrington Historical Society, and UMass Amherst in interviews and fact finding to determine opportunities and constraints at the home site and at specifically identified sites in Great Barrington.

In 2006 Michael Singer Studio provided the Friends of W.E.B. Du Bois, the Clinton AME Zion Church, and the UMass Amherst Du Bois Center a report including a strategy for potential informative venues at the home site and in Great Barrington titled “Commemorating W.E.B. Du Bois.” This report included a power point presentation exploring other landmark memorial sites as precedents for the Du Bois home site as well as graphic plans and drawings of several options. The report helped inspire a collaborative community effort exploring the opportunities and immediate needs at the Du Bois home site. One result of this effort was an identification of immediate needs for parking, trails, and historic markers at the Homesite. This renovation was completed in June 2008.

Presentations of “Commemorating W.E.B. Du Bois” were made by Michael Singer at the “Shaping Role of Place in African American Biography” (September 2006), an interdisciplinary conference funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. He also presented the report at an open community meeting at the Clinton AME Zion Church in Great Barrington as part of a W.E.B. Du Bois birthday celebration in February 2007. These community based presentations led by Michael Singer initiated questions, spurred excitement and creativity, developed more ideas and encouraged future discussions and actions that led to the current phase of the project “Integrated Community Planning and Heritage Site Design”.