



## **2008 Princeton Historical Commission Annual Report**

2008 has been a very productive year for the Princeton Historical Commission (PHC). We have accomplished several objectives.

The PHC has been awarded \$8,000 by the DCR Partnerships Matching Funds Program to prepare a nomination of Wachusett Mountain for the Nation Register of Historic Places. This is a 2:1 matching grant. The requisite \$4,000 local contribution was secured as follows: Westminster Historical Commission, \$2000, Princeton Historical Commission, \$500, Private donation, \$1000, Town of Princeton, \$500. The total raised yielded the \$12,000 cost of nomination preparation.

The PHC has nominated an area in Princeton known as “West Village” for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Formal acceptance is anticipated in the spring of 2009. Permission has been granted by a resident for placement of a plaque honoring West Village as a National Register District.

Russell Corner and Town Center have been granted National Register status in past years. The PHC has worked to honor all of these areas with permanent plaques. We have been successful in raising most of the funds needed to provide plaques to commemorate the National Register status of Town Center, Russell Corner and West Village. Dedication of these plaques will occur during the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and will be part of the celebration schedule.

The Meetinghouse Cemetery conservation project is in its second year. Last year, we completed a photographic inventory of all stones and completed the first phase of repair work. In 2008, we rehired the conservator for a second phase of repairs for \$1,000 (the first phase was also for \$1,000). We thank Joe Lee and Chestnut Forestry Services, Inc. for generously providing gravel for this project, which is critical to resetting the stones properly. Our hands-on workshop in October was well-attended and we thank the many volunteers whose efforts allowed us to conserve several gravestones and further stretch our funds. Funding has come from a \$3,350 transfer from the Town Common Capital Project in May 2007.

The Historic House Plaque Program begun in 2007 continued in 2008. During 2008, The PHC entered a second phase of this program by enlisting the involvement of a professional title examiner to research the more cryptic 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century records to ensure accuracy. The increased cost of this assistance was borne by the homeowners whose property required such attention. No town funds were expended. As of this writing, the PHC has provided researched and approved plaques for 60 historic homes. The wealth of information gathered during the 2007 and 2008 phases of this program are a lasting legacy for Princeton. This project is currently suspended.

In 2008, the PHC began work on crafting suggestions for a Demolition Delay Bylaw to help encourage the preservation of historically significant structures in Princeton. To this end, as of September 18 2008, the Historical Commission has become a signatory on demolition permits for buildings older than 50 years.

Several members of the PHC have begun work on a book about Princeton's National Register Districts. The PHC has been successful in contracting with a commercial publisher, History Press, for this book, scheduled for publication in 2009. No town funds or donations were requested or expended for this project.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alexandra Fiandaca