

In a brief program at Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Great Barrington, UMass interim Chancellor Dr. Thomas W. Cole Jr., left, and Dr. Edmund Gordon, who with Walter Wilson acquired the Du Bois Boyhood Homesite property in 1967, praised progress at the Route 23 property.

said. "We struck up a friendship."

Gordon made another friend a decade later, Walter Wilson, whom Gordon described as the most liberal person of European descent he had ever met. Wilson was an admirer of Du Bois, and he sold the Gordons a small property in the area. One day, Wilson phoned Gordon to say he'd located land that was likely the Du Bois boyhood homesite. They bought it for \$5,000 and with others created the Du Bois Memorial Park in 1969.

Dr. Gordon sees great potential in the homesite property, and suggested there is opportunity for everything from a recreation of the old Burghardt house to creating a Center for the Advanced Study of the African Diaspora. At the very least, he said he would like to see the old fireplace reconstructed so that the set of tongs that Du Bois took with him most of his life could again hang there with all their rich symbolism.

Elaine Gunn of Great Barrington, chairwoman of the Friends of the Du Bois Boyhood Homesite and an original member of the 1969 Memorial Committee, speaking at the boulder remembered Julian Bond spoke, Pete Seeger played and Ozzie Davis made remarks that day. Despite anticipation in the community, it was a peaceful, enriching event.

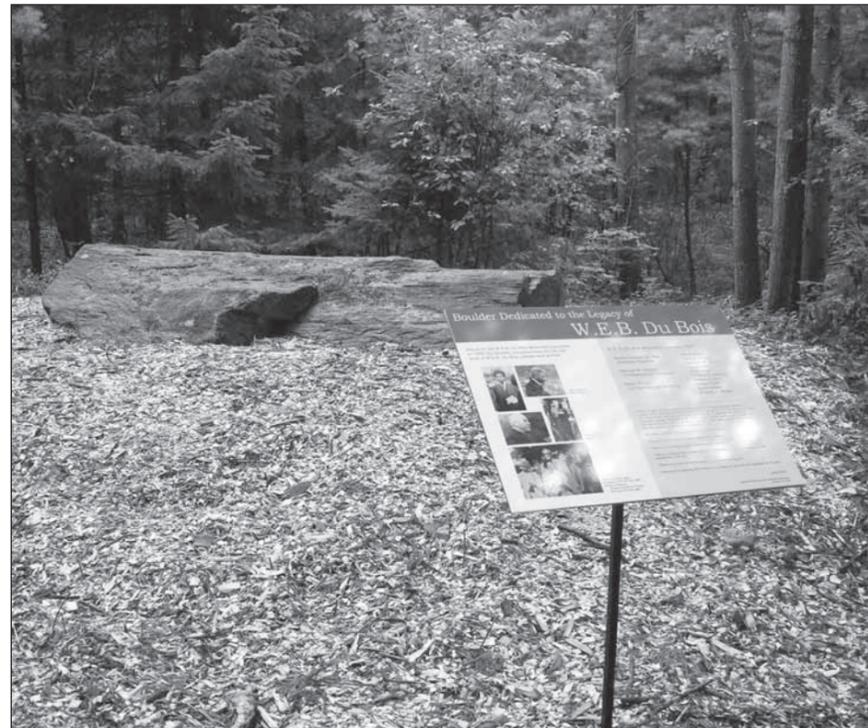
Dr. MaryNell Morgan-Brown, SUNY-Empire State college, sang four songs, sorrow songs and spirituals familiar to Du Bois.

It's a new beginning.

— Bernard A. Drew



Friends of the Du Bois Boyhood Homesite Steering Committee Chairwoman Elaine Gunn, above, spoke at the preview and MaryNell Morgan-Brown, left, sang.



FRIENDS OF THE DU BOIS HOMESITE

Working with University of Massachusetts Amherst to restore and maintain the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite, a National Historic Landmark

UMass Builds New Woods Trail, Parking Lot



UMass Chancellor Thomas W. Cole Jr. and Dr. Edmund W. Gordon and Dr. Susan Gordon examine the descriptive sign at Memorial Boulder with UMass Amherst Director of Libraries Jay Schafer.

We knew it would happen, we just didn't know it would happen in such a short time and with such pleasant results.

There are a new walking path to a special destination, signage and a parking lot at the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite on Route 23, constructed in two weeks' time and now open to the public.

Here's how it went.

July 8: The Friends steering committee received e-mail notice a grounds crew from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, would arrive July 10 to clear trees on the eastern portion of the U-shaped property. Foresight Land Services in late June had identified all of the property's boundaries and installed granite posts.

July 10 to 12: Six workers and their supervisor, Jack Rogala, head of Grounds Service at UMass, arrived for the first of three intense days of cutting and chipping a stand of nearly 40-year-old, self-seeded pine trees. It was a difficult task, Rogala said, as there was at first no place to fell a tree, no place to

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STEERING COMMITTEE

Chairwoman Elaine S. Gunn, 1969 DuBois Memorial Committee • Rachel Fletcher, Great Barrington Land Conservancy • Wray M. Gunn, Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Great Barrington • Bernard A. Drew, Great Barrington Historical Society • Frances Jones-Sneed, Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail

FRIENDS OF THE DU BOIS BOYHOOD HOMESITE

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set up the chipper. Neighbors Ted and Alice Hitchcock graciously allowed storage of trucks and equipment along their driveway.

The UMass workers, despite at least one equipment crisis, completed their task, including placing the wood chips along a section of existing farm road and onto a new, short, meandering path to a boulder placed on the property in 1969 for the dedication of a memorial park.

At various times Steering Committee members Rachel Fletcher, Elaine Gunn and Bernard Drew were at the site, as were Robert Paynter and David Glassberg, anthropology and history faculty at UMass, respectively, and Jay Schafer, director of libraries, and also Bruce Thomas, UMass landscape architect.

July 14 to 17: A work crew from Gary Ogiani's Great River Construction Co. of Great Barrington removed tree stumps, smoothed the land (which slopes gently to the west, and, below the topsoil layer, is pure sand) and staked out a parking area for about eight vehicles. Mass. Highway engineer Kevin Whalen confirmed the best location for the driveway. Equipment operator Dan Andrews did most of the backhoe and roller work. By Thursday, it was ready for a delivery of surface material.

July 21: Two men from Great River and Jeff Wood from Ghi Signs in North Canaan installed two poster cabinets, one at the edge of the trailhead, another at the turn in the path. Robert Cox, head of the UMass Du Bois Library archives, had designed the two informational posters, which Ghi printed on vinyl over aluminum. Steering Committee members on different days took care of small details to ready the property for a preview for UMass interim Chancellor Thomas W. Cole Jr., whose keen interest in the property had resulted in \$50,000 in funding for this step of what will become a much larger project.

July 23: Rachel Fletcher and Mark Pieropan installed the last interpretive sign, next to the memorial boulder.

July 24: Four vans arrived from UMass



The UMass work crew cleared the parking lot space in three days, top. Neighbors Ted and Alice Hitchcock, above left, enjoyed the company of Jack Rogala, third from left, and the hard-working crew from UMass Amherst. Robert Paynter, anthropology faculty, records data from a test hole, top right. David Glassberg, history faculty, and Jay Schafer, libraries director, below, discuss progress at the site.

at Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Great Barrington for a brief program. Speakers included Dr. Edmund W. Gordon who, with the late Walter Wilson, in 1967 had purchased the property with the intention of making it into a Du Bois memorial.

Jay Shaffer, director of libraries at UMass, in introducing the chancellor explained that in September 2007, he had met Dr. Cole at a football game. He persuaded Dr. Cole to come to the site.

Dr. Cole said he became familiar with Dr.



PHOTOS BY RACHEL FLETCHER & BERNARD DREW



Great River Construction of Great Barrington staked out and installed the parking lot. Dan Andrews, below left, operated the backhoe to place the surface material and the roller to compact it. Bernard Drew carried stakes to mark out the parking lot limits, below.



Du Bois while at Clark Atlanta University. Du Bois had taught there (when it was known as Atlanta University) from 1897 to 1910 and from 1934 to 1943.

"Du Bois created a legacy of research about Black people," Dr. Cole said. "He walked erect and was well-dressed. He wore white gloves and carried a cane. He was the image of a distinguished scholar, and that image permeated Atlanta University."

Dr. Cole described his anticipation, the first time he visited the property. "I came here expecting to see... something," he said. "We met Rachel (Fletcher) and the Friends of the Du Bois Homesite Committee, and heard their passion and commitment to work until something was done in which we can all take pride."

Dr. Gordon, John M. Musser Professor



Ghi Sign and Great River workers install the poster cabinets. Finished results, below.

of Psychology, Emeritus, Yale University, and Richard March Hoe Professor of Psychology and Education, Emeritus, Teachers College, Columbia University, told how he and Du Bois became friends in the early 1950s when both lived in Brooklyn. "He lived next door to the clinic where I was chief psychologist," Gordon

