

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds

other names/site number Memorial Park; Charlemont Fairgrounds

2. Location

street & number Park Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Charlemont

☐ vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Franklin code 011 zip code 01339

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Signature of certifying official Brona Simon

March 29, 2011
Date

Title _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____

_____ Date

Title _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

☐ determined eligible for the National Register

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain:)

For Edison H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

5-11-11
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☐	private
☒	public - Local
☐	public - State
☐	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box)

☐	building(s)
☒	district
☐	site
☐	structure
☐	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	3	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
1	1	structure
0	0	object
4	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE, fair

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE, outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: STONE

walls: WOOD, Weatherboard

roof: STONE, Slate

other: EARTH (racetrack)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds, also known as the Charlemont Fairgrounds or Memorial Park, are located on Park Street in Charlemont, Franklin County, Massachusetts. Charlemont is situated in the eastern foothills of the Berkshire Mountains along the Deerfield River; the Mohawk Trail (State Rt. 2) is the Main Street of the town. The fairgrounds occupy a plateau elevated above the town on the east side of North Heath Road (State Rt. 8A), which leads north into nearby Vermont. The access road connecting the fairgrounds to the highway is named Park Street. Comprising approximately 24 acres, the fairgrounds—now the town-owned Memorial Park—are nestled into the reforested mountainside with less than half of its area maintained as a clearing (PHOTOS 1 & 2). The nominated property contains eight components, including two contributing buildings, three noncontributing buildings, one contributing site (the landscape), one contributing structure, and one noncontributing structure. Three distinctive historic features characterize the historic property: a racetrack, a grandstand, and an exhibition building, all of which were constructed in between 1885 and 1892 by the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society for their annual agricultural fair. A fourth significant feature is the organization of the landscape with its racetrack, buildings, and associated open space that was designed to support temporary structures, corrals, concessions, amusements, and vehicle parking during fair times (PHOTO 3). The three buildings and one structure that are noncontributing are considered such due to their recent construction dates.

Narrative Description

The plan and landscape development of the 24-acre property reflects the customary organization and design of local and county fairs in the period. It is situated on a plateau elevated above the north side of the hill-town hamlet, and the site probably was leveled to suit its purpose (FIGS. 1-3). The majority of the rectangular site is defined by a half-mile dirt racetrack, with the open space inside and outside the oval filled to capacity with temporary structures during fair times (FIG. 2). When in full operation, the otherwise vacant area became a densely packed city of entertainments. Permanent structures on this small local fairground were few, including one exhibition building and a grandstand. The racetrack measures 1,000 feet long by 400 feet wide; it is constructed of packed earth with a track surface about 15 feet wide (FIG. 2). Substantially completed in 1892, the track was extended on the north end in 1911 to increase the length to one-half mile. It is the second track on the site, replacing or enlarging a smaller track that opened with the fairgrounds in 1872, and occupying land purchased in 1892. The 1911 extension is located on a parcel purchased earlier that year. It was used for animal judging, parades, and horse racing. It has not functioned in these ways for many years, as indicated by the mature pine grove that was planted along the rear (eastern) stretch of the track and on half of the infield (FIG. 2 & PHOTO 14). As further evidence of its inactivity, an area for automobile demolition derbies was constructed along the home (western) stretch just north of the grandstands in 1997 (PHOTO 12). Currently, the track is used by townspeople for running, walking, and exercising.

Built ca. 1889, the existing exhibition building replaced one constructed in 1872 that had become inadequate. The building is located at the brink of the plateau at the southern edge of the fairgrounds. It is an exceedingly rare 19th-century fairgrounds building type (FIGS. 4-6 & PHOTOS 6-11). Few similar fairgrounds buildings of this age survive in the state. The two-story, gable-roof building is not framed as a farm building, as might be expected in an agricultural fair. The first story is framed in a conventional industrial manner with two-rows of square wood posts supporting cross beams or girts at regular intervals. With doors at either end, this lower level originally may have been used for animal exhibits (PHOTO 11). The upper story is more finished, with well-executed joinery and exposed roof framing. The single post-less space was spanned by massive trusses (PHOTOS 8-10). Although all the wood members were sawn,

(continued)

the framing was a celebratory display of precise craftsmanship that recalled a long tradition of wood construction. This upper room likely was used for displays of domestic crafts and hand workmanship that complemented its setting. An earthen ramp runs up perpendicularly to an entrance on the west end of the north (front) wall. The existing exterior stairs on the east side are recent replacements of earlier ones. The exterior of the building was rehabilitated in 2002; window sash had been removed years earlier and replaced with wire sheeting to discourage vandalism.

The grandstand was built in 1892 for spectators of events taking place on the racetrack (FIGS. 4, 5 & 7; PHOTOS 1-5 & 12). The large, wood-frame building has 14 rows of wood bleachers elevated atop an enclosed first story, which would have originally functioned as an exhibition and/or dining hall. The base is framed with sawn wall studs and floor joists, with the bleacher level supported by two rows of chamfered posts joined and braced to massive girts (PHOTOS 4 & 5). The end walls contained entrances and all four sides were punctuated with sash windows, the framing of many of which survive. In some more recent period, probably in the mid 20th century, four service windows were cut into the front (east) façade when the lower level was used for food concessions. These were later walled over on the exterior, leaving the existing blank gap between end windows on the track-side facade (PHOTOS 1 & 4). Original wood novelty siding is largely intact. The upper bleacher section is tucked under a gable roof covered with slate tiles that are probably original. It is supported by the rear wall and eight seven-inch-square posts evenly spaced—about 10 ft. apart—across the open front façade. All structural members—post, beams, rafters, bleacher stringers—are sawn and display circular saw kerf marks. Posts and beams in the roof system are connected by mortise-and-tenon joints, and plates are attached to the tops of lower posts by heavy lag screws. Bench seats are fabricated from one-by-six-inch boards, which double as steps leading upward. Wire nails are used throughout, consistent with the 1892 date of construction. Access to the grandstands was made by stairs at the lowest level at one or both ends of the building. These have been removed. (A ca. 1895 photograph suggests that there then had been a stair on the front at the north end of the building, and at present there is no access to grandstand seating other than by ladder.) A one-story ell is attached to the center of the rear (west) wall of the building; its original function is unknown (perhaps a kitchen), but it has functioned as a comfort station for many years. The exterior and interior were rehabilitated in 2005. (PHOTOS 2 & 3). Once typical of late 19th-century fairground grandstands in western Massachusetts, the Charlemont example has become an exceptionally rare survivor. The stone foundation of the building was rehabilitated in 1975.

The slate roofs of both the grandstand and exhibition building have played a significant role in their longevity. Charlemont's proximity to slate quarries in neighboring Vermont surely made it convenient to use this long-lasting material.

There typically were draw pits on fairgrounds where farmers could put their work horses and oxen to a test of their strength. The chore of clearing rocks and stumps from the mountainous landscape of western Massachusetts became a sport at fair time. Horse pulls have not been supplanted by tractor pulls in New England, where work horses are coveted by its few remaining hardscrabble farmers. (Machinery always has had a difficult time working the rocky hillsides and small fields in the Berkshires.) The precise location of an original draw pit at Charlemont is unknown. The existing one within the oval at the south end of the racetrack was constructed in 2005, with the requisite corrals and sheltered competition area and bleachers (PHOTO 13). A more modern competition area was added to the northwest section of the racetrack in 1997. This was built for automobile demolition derbies. The material features—concrete Jersey barriers, chain-link fencing, and steel bleachers—reflect its industrial-age nature (PHOTO 12).

The two final features of the Charlemont fairgrounds are an information booth constructed ca. 2000 (PHOTO 12), and a picnic pavilion built in 2007 (PHOTO 13). The one-story, wood-frame buildings have metal gable roofs, open walls, and concrete pad floors. While the Deerfield Valley Fair is an event now long in the past, the recent transformation of the fairgrounds into a town park has made it accessible for a wide range of public uses, including picnicking. During one weekend in the summer, the fairgrounds host Yankee Doodle Days, which were reinstituted in 1997 after a hiatus, and include activities that recall the spirit of the old agricultural fairs.

A list of the components of the Charlemont Fairgrounds follows below.

FEATURE NAME	DESCRIPTION	DATE BUILT	RESOURCE TYPE	STATUS (contributing or noncontributing)	PHOTO NO.
Fairgrounds	24-acre parcel with planned landscape containing buildings and structures to support an agricultural fair, including a racetrack, exhibition building, grandstand, and open space for temporary structures.	1871	Site	C	FIGS. 1-5 PHOTOS 12-14
Racetrack	Dirt oval measuring 1000 ft. x 400 ft. with a race course 15 ft. wide. Replaced or expanded original track in 1892; extended in 1911 to current half-mile length. The track has been altered by the addition of a demolition derby area on the home stretch north of the grandstand; the back stretch is contained in a later pine grove that covers the northeastern half of the infield; the infield contains a new roofed draw pit, an information booth, and a picnic pavilion.	1892 1911	Structure	C	FIGS. 1-5 PHOTOS 12-14
Exhibition Building	Two-story wood-frame exhibition building, slate gable roof, wood board-and-batten siding; lower level partially below grade, 4 windows on front (north) façade, west end covered by stone ramp leading to second story, doors on gable ends, 5 windows on south façade; second story has 5 bay on front façade w/ large entrance off ramp on west end, second entrance on east gable wall w/ exterior stairs (replacement); all window sash removed and replaced with wire mesh.	ca.1889	Building	C	FIGS. 4-6 PHOTOS 6-11
Grandstand	Wood-frame bleachers surmounting a one-story enclosed space and covered by a slate gable roof, supported by a wall at the upper edge of the stepped seating and by tall posts in the front. Walls are covered with wood novelty siding (probably replacing earlier siding) unpainted except for front wall, which was painted with red, white, and blue stripes; bleachers constructed with wood floors, and wood benches; all wood framing members sawn. New foundation constructed in 1975.	1892	Building	C	FIGS. 5 & 7 PHOTOS 1-5 & 12
Demolition Derby Area	Earthen track (part of historic racetrack) enclosed on sides by chain-link fences, board fences, and concrete Jersey barriers; steel bleachers on west side.	1997	Structure	NC	FIG 2 PHOTO 12
Information Booth	One-story wood frame open-wall building, metal gable roof, concrete floor; north end enclosed with counter-level kneewalls.	ca.2000	Building	NC	12
Picnic Pavilion	One-story wood frame open-wall recreational building, metal gable roof; posts on gable ends spaced to replicate 3-bay aisle barn façade, concrete floor.	2007	Building	NC	13
Draw Pit	One-story wood frame open-wall recreational building, metal gable roof; contains wood bleachers on south side and an earthen competition area on north side; corrals w/ wood board fences on north and west sides.	2005	Building	NC	13

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are located on the fairgrounds, sites may be present. One ancient site is located in the general area (within one mile); reflecting generally low site densities for this portion of the Connecticut River Valley. Environmental characteristics of the fairgrounds represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native sites. The fairgrounds are located on an excessively drained, level to moderately sloping glaciofluvial terrace in close proximity to wetlands. Mill Brook, a tributary of the Deerfield River, forms part of the northwest boundary of the fairgrounds. The confluence of Mill Brook and the Deerfield River is located approximately 1,500 feet to the southeast. The Deerfield River converges with the Connecticut River in the town of Greenfield, east of the fairgrounds. Given the above information, the size of the district (approximately 24.0 acres), and known patterns of Native American settlement in the Connecticut River Valley, a high potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources at the Fairgrounds. An archaeological survey is needed to determine the effects of historic land use on the integrity of potential Native American resources.

A high potential also exists for the recovery of historic archaeological resources on the fairgrounds property. Structural evidence and construction features may survive from an exhibition building (1872) and draw pit; both replaced by the existing structures. Stratigraphic evidence may also exist from the original design of the racetrack and later renovations. The racetrack was replaced or expanded in 1892 and 1911. Structural evidence of outbuildings may also survive on the fairgrounds property. Archaeological evidence of occupational-related features (trash areas, privies, wells) may also survive on the fairgrounds property.

(end)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION

Period of Significance

1871 – 1934

Significant Dates

1871 – first fair held at this site

ca. 1889 – exhibition building built

1892 – grandstand built; 1934 – last fair held

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance was established to bracket the years the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society sponsored their annual fair on the property from 1871 to 1934. After the last fair in 1934, the fairgrounds were unused and eventually sold to a private landowner. The property was later conveyed to the Town of Charlemont, which has preserved the historic landscape, buildings, and racetrack as part of a public park for passive recreation. A summer weekend community fair named Yankee Doodle Days has occurred on the property intermittently since 1962, but it is not an agricultural fair and is excluded from the period of significance.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds in Charlemont, Massachusetts, also known as the Charlemont Fair and now known as Memorial Park, is historically and architecturally significant as a rare and distinctive example of a late 19th-century farm community exhibition facility and gathering place, once common in Massachusetts. Opened in 1871, the fairgrounds contain exhibition and grandstand buildings, built ca. 1885 and 1892 respectively, that are among the oldest and least altered of any standing on a Massachusetts county or town fairground. A dirt racetrack, another defining fairgrounds feature, also is extant, as well as open space inside and outside the oval on which temporary buildings and tents, pens and corrals, and concession stands were seasonally erected. The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society was formed in 1870 to promote "the attainment and diffusion of scientific and practical knowledge of the cultivation of the soil, and all the departments pertaining thereto; and to encourage the mechanic and fine arts and domestic manufactures." The larger Franklin County Agricultural Society, formed in 1849, served similar purposes, and its fair in Greenfield had been operating continuously since 1850. A railroad connected Charlemont and Greenfield since 1852, which made the movement of passengers and light freight faster, yet with Charlemont at the western extreme of the county, transporting livestock to the Greenfield fairgrounds (NR pending, 2011) was prohibitively expensive. Alternatively, farmers in remote upland towns such as Charlemont faced the time-consuming and difficult task of driving their cattle and other livestock over the roads. Thus, as was done in other hill towns west of the Connecticut Valley, Charlemont agricultural interests formed their own society and sponsored their own fair. The Charlemont fair operated annually until 1934 and continued in intermittent and varied uses thereafter. Regular fair activities were reintroduced as "Yankee Doodle Days" in 1952. As such, it is one of very few local agricultural fairs that continue to function and one of even fewer agricultural fairs at any level to retain their original exhibition and grandstand buildings. The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairground is significant at a local level under National Register Criterion A for its association with hilltown agricultural history in Massachusetts and under Criterion C for the integrity of its buildings, site, and structures. Recently, pavilions have been added for current park and recreational activities, which although non-historic, help sustain the fair and public assembly functions of the property.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

Agriculture

The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds is significant in the history of agriculture for the role it played in the organized movement for agricultural improvement in the early 19th century, as well as the continuation of providing information and incentives to farmers to adopt progressive agricultural practices. Elkanah Watson introduced the first agricultural fair in nearby Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1810, and in 1818 the Massachusetts legislature authorized the incorporation of agricultural societies to promote agricultural improvements, and allocated funds to be provided as premiums. Local and county agricultural societies offered other forms of assistance to farmers, but their principal activity was organizing annual fairs for farmers and farm communities to assemble, share ideas, and bond together in a common effort. Fairgrounds began to proliferate soon after and would develop into a statewide agricultural network that continues to this day. The Charlemont fairgrounds opened in 1871 for the remote hill towns in western Franklin County, as an alternative to the distant county agricultural society's fairgrounds in Greenfield.

Architecture

Agricultural fairgrounds are characterized by a number of historic features. They are defined by a large, open space where farmers could display their animals in pens and, later, in permanent shelters. In addition, farm suppliers, merchants, hawkers, and other concessionaires occupied makeshift booths spread throughout the area. The fairgrounds also had to be large enough for hundreds of spectators to assemble and park their vehicles. Exhibition buildings were constructed to display farm produce, foodstuffs, and products of domestic manufacture. In the case of the first exhibition building at the Charlemont Fairgrounds, there was also a dining room, indicating that food service was an early component of the fair experience. Animals and many types of farm and home production were exhibited to be judged, and arenas with judges' stands were created for this purpose. Racetracks were introduced to provide an area for judging

animals and for parades and horse racing, which were popular forms of rural entertainment. Grandstands were constructed to provide spectators with elevated seating to observe both functions. The grandstand, built in 1892, is elevated atop a first-story enclosure that served as an exhibition and/or dining hall. Over time, other more specialized and more permanent buildings became common for exhibiting animals and other farm and home production, as well as stands for food and other concessions. In the western Massachusetts hill towns where work horse competitions were (and still are) popular, roofed draw pits with their own spectator stands were common. The demolition derby area added to the Charlemont racetrack in 1997 is a modern adaptation of this traditional activity.

Entertainment & Recreation

Nineteenth-century agricultural fairs, just as their Medieval European predecessors, were as much a form of community entertainment and recreation as they were motivators for farm improvement. It was a major late-summer event in rural society, and one of the most universal gatherings of the entire year. Community members from all walks of life convened to celebrate the seasonal harvest, farmers' hard work, and local pride of place. While exhibits were a main attraction, the fair offered a range of entertainments including food and refreshments, viewing vendors' wares, races and competitions, musical and theatrical performances, and carnival shows and rides. A merry-go-round was a popular attraction at early fairs in Charlemont, which presaged the elaborate amusement park-type rides that now dominate county fairs.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Located along the north bank of the Deerfield River in the uplands of western Franklin County, Charlemont was settled in 1742, later than most of the county's Connecticut Valley towns. Its siting along the Deerfield River and the Mohawk Trail, the major east-west corridor between Greenfield and Troy, New York, made it a commercial center for the rural western towns surrounding it. Its role as a regional hub was accentuated when the Troy and Greenfield Railroad reached the town in 1868.

From the early 1800s the beef cattle industry tied the town closely to Greenfield, the center of the region's cattle trade. According to historian J. Ritchie Garrison, farmers in Charlemont, and other upland towns in the western part of the county, sold beef cattle fed on their plentiful pasture land to farmers in the lowland Connecticut Valley towns, who fattened them in stalls and drove them to markets in Brighton (outside Boston), Springfield, and New York City. Charlemont farmers also had large herds of sheep that provided wool for the growing textile industry. In 1840 Franklin County was third among the state's fourteen counties in its sheep population, and, according to one observer, Charlemont was one of five county towns "most celebrated" for wool growing.¹ By the mid-1840s, upland farmers produced more butter and cheese than the average household consumed, suggesting that surpluses were bound for sale in more populous places.² Still, as Leander Wetherell of the *Boston Cultivator* told west-county farmers in 1873, growing grass and grazing "have ever been and still are the leading lines of rural industry in this county," and this focus gave rise to the cattle shows initiated in numerous Franklin County towns in the 1800s.³

The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society emerged at a time when the arrival of the Troy and Greenfield Railroad in Charlemont presented both a promise and a threat to upland farmers. The society grew out of the local Farmers' Club, which appears to have been founded about 1868, the same year that the railroad reached the town. The society was formed three years later in 1871.

The railroad opened new markets for Franklin County farm products, and made it far easier to transport both agricultural goods and livestock. "Railroads are beginning to do for Franklin County what they have long since done for more favored sections of the commonwealth," the committee formed to consider creating the Franklin County Agricultural Society observed in 1849, a year after the Troy and Greenfield was chartered. "The walls of separation between us and the great marts of trade and centers of business are being broken down and we are beginning to

¹ J. Ritchie Garrison, *Landscape and Material Life in Franklin County, Massachusetts, 1770-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 55, 65-67, 73-74, 79-80, 86; Leander Wetherell, Boston Cultivator, address to Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society, in *Third Annual Report: Transactions of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society, for 1873* (np: the Society, 1873), 24.

² Garrison, *Material Life*, 56, 59-60.

³ Wetherell in *Third Annual Report*, 14.

assume our proper position among the sisterhood of counties.”⁴ In 1857 Roger Hooker Leavitt, one of Charlemont’s leading citizens, landowners, and farmers, argued “the importance of a railroad to the farmers and urged that no one should get their votes who was opposed to this interest, so important to them.” And in 1874 in the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society’s transactions and account of its fair, the Committee on Grain and Grass Seeds stated that “every farmer should know that wheat craves lime and ashes in the soil” and that “now our railroads run into all of our lime regions. At our bidding lime in bulk could be delivered at our depots at prices we hope to show that farmers can afford to buy it.”⁵

However, the nation’s fast-growing rail system also brought to the East products from the West’s farms. Farmers feared, rightly, that western farm products would inundate the East, force down the prices their own products could command, and quite likely result in changes in what and how they farmed. Thus to farmers and those whose livelihood depended in part upon agricultural prosperity, formal organization must have seemed imperative both to prepare to meet new market demand and to counter western competition. By midcentury, fattening cattle was no longer profitable for most area farmers, but raising them remained the centerpiece of the county’s agricultural economy, and farmers no doubt sought to develop new products and processes to use this resource.

The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society was founded at least in part because the group to which many of them then belonged—the Franklin County Agricultural Society—underrepresented, and thus undervalued, the agricultural achievements of these western uplands farmers. At the 1867 Franklin County Fair in Greenfield, for example, very few of the premiums in the livestock competitions went to farmers in the seven western towns of Charlemont, Buckland, Ashfield, Hawley, Heath, Rowe, and Monroe; despite the importance of cattle to all of these towns, not a single Charlemont farmer was awarded a prize, called a premium, in the cattle classes.⁶ No one from the five westernmost towns—Charlemont, Heath, Hawley, Rowe, and Monroe—was an officer or trustee of the Franklin County society in that year. Some upland farmers continued to exhibit at the Greenfield fair, but they remained scarce among premium winners and their total premiums were among the lowest of all county towns into the 20th century. However, Franklin County Agricultural Society reports do not indicate whether the slim representation of these farmers was a function of the witting or unwitting tendency to focus on valley agriculture, or of the difficulty and expense of bringing livestock and goods to Greenfield. Driving herds from the western towns was a time-consuming and laborious process, and even after the coming of the railroad made it possible to ship livestock, the expense of doing so might well have suppressed the participation of upland farmers.

The inclination to separate from the all-county agricultural fair appeared early. In 1850, only two years after the first cattle show took place in Greenfield, Charlemont farmer Seneca Parker suggested sponsoring a cattle show in the town. At the 4 November 1850 show, farmers and farm families from Charlemont, Heath, Hawley, and other nearby towns gathered in Charlemont. One report notes that more than 125 yoke of oxen were exhibited at the fair—one team alone had 48 yoke—and competition classes existed for the heaviest ox and best-matched oxen pair, cows and heifers, steers, calves, bulls, sheep, poultry, various fruits and vegetables (including walnuts and cranberries), butter and cheese, and specimens of “women’s work”—rag carpets, quilts, linen towels, and worsted work. The 1850 show included an address to farmers and an agricultural dinner at Dalrymple’s Hotel in Charlemont.⁷

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⁴ *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, 23 October 1849.

⁵ Anonymous untitled, and unpaginated typescript (hereafter cited as Typescript) on the Charlemont Cattle Show and Fair, dated in script 30 October 1900, Charlemont Historical Society Collections. Though not indicated, the language of this typescript strongly suggests that it was excerpted from either agricultural society meeting minutes or perhaps newspaper accounts of the annual fair. The quote from the 1875 committee is in *Fifth Annual Report Transactions of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society for 1875* (Greenfield: Times Power Print, 1875).

⁶ *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society for the Year 1867* (Greenfield: Franklin Book and Job Printing Office, 1868).

⁷ Typescript.

This first Charlemont cattle show was clearly based on the so-called “Berkshire model” of agricultural fairs, which emerged at the first known such fair, in the Berkshire County town of Pittsfield, in 1810. The fair was the brainchild of Albany merchant Elkanah Watson, who had retired from commercial life to a Pittsfield farm and there established something of an experiment station for agricultural innovations. Though the roots of American agricultural fairs extend to medieval Europe, Watson’s Berkshire County fair was the first to combine in one event all the disparate features of European and earlier American fairs and markets. As Garrison has noted, the Berkshire model aimed to offer “an educational forum for progressive husbandry, a showcase for local businesses, and entertainment for thousands of rural people.”⁸ Watson’s earliest Berkshire County fairs included a cattle show, a parade including large teams of oxen, an agricultural ball, an address to farmers, and displays of livestock, fruits and vegetables, farm implements, and “domestic manufactures”—useful and often decorative goods that farm families made—with prizes awarded in these and other categories.⁹

In 1818, the Massachusetts legislature authorized the creation of agricultural societies and offered those that met its financial and demographic requirements a subsidy to be used to award premiums for outstanding agricultural and domestic achievement. By 1819, Elkanah Watson claimed, all New England counties except those in Rhode Island had formed agricultural societies. Between 1823 and 1839, however, no new societies were created—in large part, historian Wayne Neely has argued, because the connection between hinterland and markets was difficult and poorly developed, and a corresponding interest in improvement lacking.¹⁰ But the growth of urban areas and the increasing reach of the rail system, coupled with significant agricultural inventions in the 1830s—including Cyrus McCormick’s reaper and John Deere’s steel plow—began to present both the possibility and the need for increased productivity to satisfy expected market demand. It is within this framework that the Franklin County Agricultural Society was formed in 1849 and that the first Charlemont cattle show took place in 1850.

The organizers of the 1850 cattle show held a second show in 1851, and others in 1857, 1858, and 1859. At the 1857 show, area farmers formed “a permanent society under title Pocumtuck Valley Agricultural Society,” adopted a constitution, and elected officers. Roger Hooker Leavitt was elected president—he had presided over the 1850 and 1851 fairs as well—and other officers were farmers from the towns of Rowe, Heath, Hawley, Buckland, and Florida. Why the annual show ceased after 1859 is unclear. One 1870 account states, “Some years ago the Pocumtuck Valley Association held annual Fairs in Charlemont . . . for some reason the institution ran down. But the people of the vicinity have felt a growing want for the annual festival and this year mainly through the efforts of the Farmers’ Club determined to renew it.”¹¹ Both the Farmers’ Club and the Pocumtuck Valley Association organized fairs in 1870, the club’s fair evidently being the more successful. At its conclusion, Charlemont farmers, including some such as Leavitt who were members of both the Pocumtuck group and the Farmers’ Club, opted to organize a new society. The Commonwealth chartered the new Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society in the winter of 1870, and the society staged its first fair in the fall of 1871.

The new society was founded because a group of Charlemont’s prominent men perceived the need for general agricultural improvement in their region. One 1900 account states that they recognized “the importance of a well conducted cattle show and Fair, in stimulating the producers and manufacturers to strive for greater excellence in their various occupations” and that they also realized the social benefits “resulting from the kindly interchange of greetings, mutual acquaintances formed, old ones revived.” The committee established to organize the society included five Charlemont men—Leavitt, Edward C. Hawks, John Winslow, Charles Mayhew, and A. L. Tyler—and two representatives each from the towns of Hawley, Buckland, Heath, Rowe, Monroe, Colerain, Plainfield, and Savoy.¹²

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⁸ Garrison, *Landscape and Material Life*, 61.

⁹ Wayne Caldwell Neely, *The Agricultural Fair* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 62-63.

¹⁰ Neely, *Agricultural Fair*, 71.

¹¹ Typescript, with an accompanying note reading “Avis’ book.”

¹² *History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1879), 2:714-15.

Of the Charlemont founders, one, Ansel L. Tyler, was a merchant, and the others were farmers. Compared to Leavitt, Hawks, and Mayhew, Winslow farmed on a relatively small scale. Leavitt and Hawks had deep roots in the town. Leavitt (1805-85) was the grandson of Charlemont's first minister, Rev. Jonathan Leavitt (1731-1802) and of Sarah Hooker, the great-granddaughter of famed Connecticut Puritan Rev. Thomas Hooker. He and his brother Hart (1809-81) were among Charlemont's leading farmers.¹³ The 1860 federal agricultural census shows Hart Leavitt's 250-acre farm as the second most valuable in the town at \$6,700; R. H. Leavitt's farm was then worth \$5,500, but his herd of 110 sheep and his wool production were the highest in Charlemont. In 1880, Hart Leavitt's farm was 250 acres and worth \$9,000; his flock of 96 sheep was then the town's largest, and his output of fleeces and wool the greatest. The Hawks family was one of the first to settle in Charlemont in the early 1740s. In the 1800s the brothers Horace and James Hawks, and James's son Edward Clinton Hawks, were among the most profitable of Charlemont farmers. In 1850 James Hawks owned the most land, had the farm with the highest estimated value, had the largest sheep flock, and produced more wool and maple sugar than any other of the 122 farmers counted in the Charlemont agricultural census. In 1860 his farm was 350 acres and he owned eight horses—more than any other farmer in town—and four oxen; fully 70 of the town's 128 farmers owned no oxen at all. James's brother Horace's 400-acre farm was the most valuable in town at \$7,000, and, in 1880, Edward C. Hawks's 900-acre farm was worth \$12,000, more than any other in town. Mayhew's farm, though much smaller than the three Hawks properties, produced a higher value of farm goods than any other in town in 1880.¹⁴

The Charlemont Cattle Show and Fair aimed to achieve the same goals as other Berkshire-model agricultural fairs. The constitution of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society laid out four "objects" for the group. Its first purpose was "the attainment and diffusion of scientific and practical knowledge in the cultivation of the soil, and the raising of its various useful productions, as comprehended in the departments of Agriculture, Horticulture, and Pomology." The group also aimed to encourage "the introduction and raising of improved breeds of stock," the "mechanic and fine arts," and "domestic manufactures," in that order.¹⁵ According to one 1879 history, the society met "statedly for the discussion of all questions of interest pertaining to the farmers and mechanics of this part of the county, and much benefit has been derived from the knowledge disseminated by this means."¹⁶ As the society saw it, the goals of agricultural improvement were primarily to save labor and to increase profits: Section 12 of its bylaws stated that crop premiums at the annual fair would be awarded on basis of both the product and the "mode of production—it being a prime object of the Society to encourage the most economical culture"; for sheep, premiums aimed to encourage breeds "as will best remunerate the farmer."¹⁷

The emphasis on improvement is evident in the society's annual reports, which, in addition to featuring a complete listing of premiums, often included reports from the committees in charge of each broad category of entry that called out particularly notable entries. At the earliest Charlemont fair in 1850, "specimens of the rarest and most valuable varieties of fowls in the world have been exhibited," one contemporary account noted, including the first "pure white Dorking fowls" the judges had ever seen in the county. The committee on stock noted that livestock exhibited at the third annual fair in 1873 "far exceeded that of last year" in quantity and quality, and included "some of the best blooded stock in the State." Cattle herds from Charlemont and nearby towns were shown, but there were also entries from the valley towns of Deerfield and Greenfield and from Shelburne, the leaders in county cattle raising, entered by men who also won premiums at the county fair in Greenfield.¹⁸ The 1873 and later society reports also featured statements from individual farmers on notable field crops, with information on how they had earlier used the land, how and when they plowed, planted, fertilized, and harvested, and what their yields and costs were. The 1880 report featured six "Butter Statements" describing the size and type of cows milked, and how these farmers gathered and processed the product. By 1890, the society also began to sponsor "farmer's institutes" at other parts of the year that covered such subjects as small fruits and "the ideal home."¹⁹

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¹³ Another brother, Joshua Leavitt (1794-1873), the well-known antislavery advocate and journalist. For more on him see *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (1887-89), s.v. "Leavitt, Joshua."

¹⁴ Mayhew at that time had 34 cattle but had bought 40 and sold 55 within the year; he also had only nine sheep but had sold 600 in 1879; thus his profits seem to have derived largely from livestock trading.

¹⁵ *Third Annual Report: Transactions of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society, for 1873* (Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society, 1873), 3-5.

¹⁶ *History of the Connecticut Valley*, 2:714-15.

¹⁷ The bylaws appear in *Third Annual Report*.

¹⁸ Typescript; *Third Annual Report*, 44.

¹⁹ *Twentieth Annual Report: Transactions of the Deerfield Agricultural Society for 1890* (North Adams: Walden and Crawley's Book and Job Print, 1890).

The society's founders recognized that the fair, not its reports and institutes, was the primary means of disseminating useful information, for it was there that exemplary livestock, fruits and vegetables, agricultural implements, domestic machinery, and homecraft were exhibited to a wide audience. Though some area farmers might have read about new methods and innovations in society reports and farm journals, they were much more influenced by seeing firsthand and talking with other farmers about a new livestock breed or implement that would make their work easier and more productive. Machinery for both the farm and the home was regularly exhibited at the fair toward that end. In 1873 a flexible harrow, "Woods' 'One-Horse Mower," a Warren hoe, and a cider press—the last exhibited by a Boston agent—were entered, and the society's secretary called for the entry of "a larger variety of improved Agricultural Machinery" in coming years. For the farm home, cooking stoves, sewing machines, and washing machines were regularly displayed. In 1873, the annual report remarked upon the number of sewing machine entries in this category of "mechanic arts," but judges awarded only three premiums to those that showed clear technical advance, were simpler to use, required less power, and could produce more. In 1874 Harvey Polly, representing the mechanic arts committee, made special mention of Elijah Carpenter of Zoar for entering his "Eureka" washing machine, which incorporated boiler, washtub, and wringer in one machine. Polly expressed disappointment that only twelve machines were entered in the mechanic arts category that year and stated, "We earnestly wish and recommend that at our next annual Fair, all who feel an interest in advancement should put in an appearance, and show to the world that they are real 'live Yankees,' and are bound to maintain their reputation. Let all remember that whoever brings into existence any invention for mitigating the toils of life, that is of real intrinsic merit, shall thereby immortalize his name."²⁰

The number of entries and list of premium winners—400 people received premiums at the 1880 fair, for example—indicates that these cash awards were shared rather broadly, though more prominent and profitable farmers often earned more than most. In 1874, 336 cattle were entered as "neat stock," and the livestock show also included 216 sheep, 69 swine and poultry, and 127 horses and colts. The hall exhibits that year featured abundant examples of produce, spinning, knitting, weaving, painting, embroidering, and crocheting. The distribution of premiums was so broad at this fair that the organizers cautioned against the rumored tendency among some committees to grant them to everyone who entered, rather than use them to "reward true merit and encourage the production of *good* articles, that the highest state of culture and improvement may be reached."²¹

The hall exhibits demonstrated the often unheralded achievements of rural women; they in fact offered the only forum for such a display. The Greenfield newspaper wrote extensively about one entry after the 1847 fair:

The article of all others deserving praise was Mrs. C. P. C. Miner's wreath. It was made of 100 different grains and seeds in their natural color, formed into delicate blossoms and foliage, while beautiful little birds and insects were sporting among the flowers. Some idea of the amount of labor and patience required for the construction of the wreath is formed when we are told that a single lily, made principally, by the way, of rice, took the lady a whole day. The same lady, who is a newcomer in Charlemont, is evidently quite an architect. She had on exhibition a little cottage made of perforated paper that was a model of neat proportions and workmanlike skill.²²

Entries of "domestic manufacture" and "fancy articles" rose over time even as entries in most other classes declined. Eighty-four such articles were entered in 1880, 172 in 1901, 227 in 1910, and 258 in 1917. Only entries of needlework and embroidery fell between 1910 and 1917.

After the turn of the century, the fairs were also more likely to highlight the skills of young people. With the founding of 4-H in 1902, entries from area clubs and other formal youth organizations increased, and they symbolized the society's persistent effort to keep young people in agriculture while better western lands and urban and industrial opportunity beckoned. In 1876, one fair speaker urged rural boys "to marry farmer's daughters as he did rather than take the city girls,

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²⁰ *Fourth Annual Report: Transactions of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society for 1874* (Greenfield, MA: Field and Hall, 1874), 32.

²¹ *Fourth Annual Report*, 44.

²² "The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Fair Tues.," *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, 5 October 1874.

with all their 'flummydiddles' whatever those may be."²³ Three years earlier Leander Wetherell asserted that ever-improving technology had instilled a distaste for manual labor, "Domestic labor of all kinds is looked upon by too many, alas! even of our rural population, as disreputable drudgery, and no longer to be engaged in," he stated. "In too many cases this time, being turned to no account, is squandered in idleness, gossip and dissipation."²⁴ By displaying the best that the area's farm economy had to offer, the fair was the venue in which young people might recognize the honor and importance the society attached to farming and thus take a role in sustaining it.

In addition to its celebration of improvement in all phases of rural life, the agricultural fair in general was a social venue, for many one of the most important holidays of the year. "The Charlemont Fair has become a time for family reunion," one 1886 report stated, "and absent sons and daughters of Deerfield Valley and its neighboring hills plan their visits home so as to take in the autumn festival. Such a happy scene of hand-shaking and such cordiality of greeting is never witnessed elsewhere. It is this feature that has made the attendance so large each year and has lifted the debt and promises such success in the future." Former Charlemont resident Philip Spear noted that schools closed for a part of each fair day during the 1920s and 1930s, which surely heightened the fair's importance among young people. "Since school began on Tuesday of that week and was let out early on the days of the Fair, little was accomplished, or expected by the teachers," he wrote. "... As soon as school was dismissed, everyone dashed up to the Fairgrounds. Admission was free for school children on at least one of the afternoons."²⁵

The fair's holiday-like atmosphere derived not only from the large numbers of people it attracted—fully 8,000, for example, at the second annual fair in 1872—but also from the entertainment it offered. Some grounds and hall displays were themselves entertaining because of their rarity and spectacle. At the 1858 fair, one farmer exhibited a stalk of corn twelve feet tall; another displayed thirteen bushels of potatoes raised from a single plant of the Jenny Lind variety. The "town teams" of oxen were popular sights in the early fairs: at the 1857 show Charlemont's team was 67 yoke, Heath's 64, and Hawley's 59. The teams paraded to the grounds accompanied by marching bands and sometimes pulling floats: in 1857 the Heath team "drew a huge wagon decorated in evergreens and the autumn-painted boughs and bore aloft a handsome flag that waved over a carload of ladies of Heath that came to the show in this romantic—though not rapid—style." The same occurred in 1858, when the Hawley team of 69 yoke toted a decorated wagon "filled with a precious load—being nothing less than 60 of wives and daughters of Hawley."²⁶ As oxen ceased to be the draft animal of choice, horses pulled the wagons, which in turn yielded to motorized floats. Spear recalled the parades of the 1920s and 1930s:

The opening event of the Fair was the Livestock Parade in which farm herds were led or driven onto the track and past the Grandstand. This event took a lot of personnel as each herd might exhibit a dozen or more animals and a mature bull, in that strange environment, might require more than one handler. The audience watched to see if animals got loose, much as people now-a-days go to automobile races to see accidents.²⁷

The fair from the beginning also functioned as a history and natural history museum of sorts, the only venue offering such displays to rural people at the time. In the 1850s, the cattle show and fair exhibits included century-old embroidery and a 1744 diary that listed settlers who had been killed by Indians in the French and Indian War. In 1857 one woman exhibited "some luxurious stocking yarn, such as people used to see but only hear of now" and "a curiosity, which was a piece of bark of the celebrated monster tree of California—it was 8 inches thick." In 1874 the display of "antiquities, and relics of ancient days" featured a 217-year-old pewter teapot, an old tinder box, a 95-year-old calico "go to meeting" gown, a 100-year-old teaspoon, and a Bible printed in 1680.²⁸ Fair reports took a wistful tone as they described some of these objects and what they symbolized about the passing of an era of handmade work. Mrs. Julia A. Crittenden of Hawley wrote for the 1880 Committee on Miscellaneous Articles that the "most wondrous" of all entries in that category was "the linen

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²³ Typescript. A long obsolete term, flummydiddle signifies a thing viewed as trivial, nonsensical, or silly.

²⁴ *Third Annual Report*, 32.

²⁵ Typescript; Philip J. Spear, Gainesville, FL, to Friends of Charlemont Fairgrounds, 21 June 1997.

²⁶ Typescript.

²⁷ Spear letter.

²⁸ "The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Fair Tues."

made in our grandmother's days." She added, "I shall never cease to regret that the raising of flax and the making of linen is a thing of the past. All honor to those exhibitors who stow away in oaken chests these previous relics of ancient days."²⁹

Other entertainments had slight if any connection to rural life. Performing animal acts were part of the fairs from the 1850s, and vaudeville acts were often on the 20th-century slate. By far the most popular was horse (and later automobile) racing, though some society members objected to its association with gambling and pleasure, as opposed to working horses. The first Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society fair in 1871 included a "horse trot"—as well as "the usual side shows."³⁰ The 1886 society transactions stated that trotting "has not yet obtained a foothold here" and declared it to be "the bane and will prove the virtual ruin of the many of our agricultural societies," but it seems clear that some level of racing occurred at every fair. The 1901 fair featured a "county race" and two trotting races. Winners of the trotting races received premiums of \$50 and \$75, by far the largest premiums awarded in any class. The fairs charged admission to the grounds and separate admission to the grandstand for races; they also charged race entry fees. In 1901, race-related income was nearly \$1,000.³¹ In 1917 earnings from the grandstand totaled \$922.25, while fair admissions brought \$1,325.60 in income.³² Over time, premium records make clear that a circuit had developed among racers in the region. In 1910 three men from Athol won eight of twelve racing premiums. Though he never took first premium, one Athol man, A. H. Drury, won premiums totaling \$150 in each of the four Charlemont races at the 1917 fair, and trotting association records show that he raced at other New England fairs, including ones in Northampton and Suffield, Connecticut.³³

As improved transportation and communication systems shortened distances and reduced rural isolation, historians have noted, the agricultural fair ceased to be the exposition of novelty and wonder that it once was. But Spear, for his part, recalled no such decline in enthusiasm about the Charlemont fairs of the 1920s and 1930s.

To a boy growing up in the limited environment of Charlemont, the fair opened a number of vistas to the wider world. There were many breeds of animals and poultry different from those common to our small town. Games and food stands brought strange people and customs. Sulky races showed the beauty and speed of horses and the weakness of humans for betting illicit or not. Competition among teams of horses and oxen was a source of great excitement but, for me at least, nothing compared with the baseball games between an augmented Charlemont team and one of the barnstorming semi-professional teams. . . . The very best of the barnstorming teams were remnants of the negro leagues that had failed about that time. Their players were superb, intimidated the 'home' team and greatly elevated my understanding of what could be done with a baseball.³⁴

Development of the Fairgrounds

In 1871, the *Greenfield Gazette* called the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society a "fixed fact" and noted that its newly acquired seventeen acres for the fairgrounds "have been fitted up at great expense on a bluff just east of Maxwell's Grove, a location which for beauty and magnificence of its surroundings can hardly be surpassed in the country. Mountains in front of it . . . the only visible outlet being the valley of the Pocumtuck . . . as far as the eye can see."³⁵ The society described the tract as "high table land just north east of and overlooking the village . . .

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²⁹ *Tenth Annual Report and Transactions of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society for 1880* (North Adams: J. C. Angell, 1880), 23-24.

³⁰ "The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Fair Tues."

³¹ *Thirty-First Annual Report and Transactions of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society 1901* (N.p., n.d.).

³² *Annual Report of the Forty-Seventh Annual Fair of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Held at Charlemont, Mass. September 13 and 14, '17* (Shelburne Falls, MA: 'Bully,' the printer, 1917).

³³ *Fortieth Annual Report of the Transactions of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society 1910* (Shelburne Falls, MA: Messenger Print, 1910); *Wallace's Year Book of Trotting and Pacing in 1909* (Chicago: American Trotting Register Assn., 1910), 329, 333.

³⁴ Spear letter.

³⁵ *Greenfield Gazette*, clipping showing no month or day, 1871, quoted in *Friends of the Charlemont Fairgrounds, "The Restoration of the Charlemont Fairgrounds and Grandstand"* (Typescript, 1998).

providing ample space for exhibition of cattle and a nice half mile track," though the track was under construction at the time the first fair was held on October 10-11, 1871. The society spent \$1,600 to buy the land, and another \$3,181 to develop the grounds and build a fence, cattle pens, and a judges' stand.³⁶ The fairgrounds' physical plant was supplemented by temporary structures put up for the occasion, as the Greenfield newspaper noted of the 1874 fair:

This is truly the paradise of oyster booths, for the white tents of the enterprising proprietors of these establishments were pitched in long rows, like those of an encamped army. A 'burnt cork' performance was soon in full blast, and the revolving horses, propelled to the tune of a grinding hand organ, found juvenile riders in waiting, and the improvised dance hall, with cotton canvas to protect the organ, to protect the Terpsichorean fellows and lasses who were going through 'eight hands round' and 'balance all' was crowded to its fullest capacity, and all the sights and sounds of the most approved Cattle Show were soon in lively operation. There is no place in the Commonwealth where a Cattle Show, and all that should belong to it, is better appreciated than here in Western Franklin.³⁷

The 1876 and 1878 fair reports both mention the oyster tents and the "wood horses and dancing pavilions," as well as peanut vendors who had set up for the fair.

After the first fair, the agricultural society graded and finished a race track, built a barn 30 x 42 feet to house up to 50 horses, and constructed an exhibit hall 60 x 40 feet with a basement that was to be used as a dining hall. (None of these features are extant.) Only two years later, the fair report stated that the hall was cramped and that "there is a call for more room and better accommodations, which will, undoubtedly, be heeded." By 1879, the fairgrounds were valued at \$8,000, a nearly 60% increase over the cost of buying the land and developing it eight years earlier. At this time, it appears that no grandstand seating was available at the fairgrounds. By 1885 a "speaker's stand" had been built, but audiences sat on "the grassy slope" for these talks. "Nature has formed here a delightful spot," the fair organizers noted in 1887, "but would it not be wise to appropriate a portion of this year's earnings to the construction of a few seats on the hillside? A speaker deserves to have his audience as comfortably seated as could be, to say nothing of the danger of colds and rheumatism sitting on damp ground."³⁸

In 1887, the agricultural society bought half an acre of land north of the fairgrounds to make a second entrance leading from the Bissell Bridge for people coming from towns to the north.³⁹ It was around this time a new exhibition building was constructed. A photograph dated 1889 shows a substantial crowd, probably agricultural society members and some of their children, standing in front of the building and filling the ramp leading to its first floor, and it is pictured on a bird's-eye view of Charlemont published in the following year. By 1890, as a bird's-eye view shows, neither the road from Bissell Bridge nor the grandstand had yet been built. In two winter 1892 meetings, the society resolved to channel "good running water" to the dining room (in the new exhibition building?) and "to buy what it should have long ago"—a 5.5-acre tract abutting the east end of the fairground to which it would move the trotting track. The tract, bought of Charlemont farmer Calvin E. Cooley, was actually 5.25 acres, and in 1911 the society bought another tract of unstated dimension from Cooley's son Charles.⁴⁰ These additions evidently brought the total area of the fairgrounds up to its current size of approximately 24 acres.

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³⁶ *History of the Connecticut Valley*, 2: 714.

³⁷ "Deerfield Valley Agricultural Fair Tues." The "burnt cork performance" refers to a minstrel show.

³⁸ Typescript.

³⁹ *History of the Connecticut Valley*, 714-15.

⁴⁰ Philip A. Hart, Conway, to inhabitants of Charlemont, 8 June 1940, Franklin County Registry of Deeds 839:133, describes both parcels and all earlier society acquisitions. Calvin E. Cooley (shown as Colley in this deed) was a frequent exhibitor at the fair. In 1880, for example, he won nine premiums totaling \$16.25 for his one-year-old heifer, his cattle herd, his eleven head of fine-wool sheep, his flock of ten middle-wool sheep, his overall flock of thirty, his fourteen varieties of apples, his grass and grass seed, his honey, and his entry of the Woods' One-Horse Mower. His son Abbott won in the youth department for barnyard fowls in the same year.

Before the 17-18 September 1892 fair, the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society spent \$2,800 to build the grandstand, move and prepare the track, and build a judges' tower, stock pens, and fences.⁴¹ On the tract it acquired of Charles Cooley's land in 1911, the society added 112 feet to the track to make it a "full half mile." A 1915 photograph of the town from Bald Mountain shows the grandstand, the exhibit hall, the track, what was probably the judges' stand, and no other permanent structures; the barns known to have stood on the grounds must have been outside the view. Philip Spear described the fairgrounds he knew in the 1920s and 1930s:

In those days there were a number of barns on the Fairgrounds property. Those for race horses for sulky races, draft horses for pulling contests and ponies for rides were located northeast of the track. Northwest of the track were barns for dairy herds and one barn for sheep goats and swine. Also, there were two poultry buildings equipped with cages to house individual birds. The larger Fair buildings were the grandstand at the southwest end of the track straitaway and the Exhibition Hall at the southwest corner of the property.

The exhibition hall (ca. 1895), grandstand (1892), and racetrack (1892, 1911) all survive essentially intact, as distinctive examples of late 19th-century fairgrounds features. In addition, the open setting remains from the time that fair activities took place there, as well as a pine grove through which the back stretch of the race track was routed.

The Fair and Agricultural Change

The annual reports for the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Fair reveal, sometimes only by the list of premium classes, changes in the agricultural economy of the western Franklin County towns. At midcentury, farmers in this area focused on raising beef cattle and producing butter, cheese, and wool. One observer stated that though some farmers and towns as a whole marketed substantial quantities of these farm products, cows produced four times less milk in the 1840s than they did in the 1870s; thus by midcentury, Leander Wetherell noted in 1873, dairy products "did not amount to much" in Franklin County. By 1873, fattening cattle was a "doubtful" proposition, Wetherell stated, and had been for decades. Franklin County farmers, he advised, should instead found their own butter factories and keep milk cows "instead of stall feeding oxen at a loss."⁴²

In 1860, all of Charlemont's 128 farmers made butter, and 54 of them made cheese, but before the arrival of the railroad, their markets had to have been local for such perishable goods. By 1880, 132 of the 142 Charlemont farmers listed in the agricultural census made butter, but only three continued to make cheese. Still, 1881 fair organizers continued to see profit in raising cattle for the market. "Our hill farmers are learning the fact that there is no way in which they can more easily turn the fruits of their labor into cash than in raising young cattle," the society noted in 1881. "There are no better pastures to be found than those in Shelburne, Colrain, Charlemont, Rowe, Buckland, Hawley, Heath and a farmer who can sell his three-year-old steers which have cost him nothing but a little trouble and such feed as his own farm produces for \$100 and \$150 in clean cash is in a fair way to be in comfortable circumstances." The society cited the instance of Franklin Legate, who "carried off the palm" in this endeavor. "His steers were 11 months old, weighed 1690 pounds. The steers so filled the eye of a Shelburne farmer that he bought them before they left the grounds at a good round price."⁴³

But seven years later, in 1888, the society pointed out that cattle entries were few at that year's fair, a puzzling circumstance given the fact that "pastures have been remarkably good." The fair report noted the suggestion of one observer that "since the cooperative creameries," Franklin County farmers had turned away from raising livestock and instead had "devoted themselves to keeping cows for milking purposes." The 1880 agricultural census shows seven Charlemont farmers producing milk; none appear to have been doing so in 1860. The society noted in 1888 that there was "no money" for beef at the prices it then fetched, nor was there "likely to be with the facilities for supplying the market

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⁴¹ *Twenty-Second Annual Report Of Transactions Of The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society For The Year 1892* (N.p., n.d.)

⁴² Leander Wetherell in *Third Annual Report*, 20-24.

⁴³ Typescript. Legate owned a 225-acre farm in 1860 and produced more cheese than any other Charlemont farmer that year; his oxen won premiums in 1851, 1872, and 1873.

from the West.” Jersey cows, known as excellent milkers, had their own class at the fair by 1890, and all other cows were judged in a single category. In 1901 there were no more than nine entries in any livestock class—and usually far fewer—compared to 488 in all cattle classes in 1873. By 1917 the only livestock class in which entries increased over 1910 was Guernseys, which had first been imported to the United States in 1840, and were known for producing milk high in butterfat and protein. Entries for dairy herds and stock cows also increased between 1910 and 1917, and poultry entries rose from 117 to 151 over those seven years. Only three farmers entered butter or cheese in 1917; grain and grass seed entries fell from twenty-two in 1910 to six in 1917. Overall these changes suggest growing specialization among Charlemont farmers now that eggs and milk could be transported quickly and safely by an ever more efficient rail system.

The Charlemont fairgrounds was intermittently used for other town events, perhaps the largest being the 1915 sesquicentennial of the town’s incorporation. During the celebration the fairgrounds was used for a children’s outdoor sports event, a sermon and choral music, a dinner, a major address and “five-minute speeches by men of note,” and band performances.⁴⁴ The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society frequently operated with a deficit from its earliest years, and by the depth of the Depression the annual fair was no longer viable. Statewide, four of the twenty-three largest fairs were canceled in 1932; the Charlemont fair ended in 1934. By 1937, the society either sold the fairgrounds or the property was foreclosed. The Franklin County sheriff sold it—seven distinct tracts and a water privilege—to James R. Turner, who in 1937 sold it to Philip A. Hart of Conway. In 1940, Hart sold the land to the town of Charlemont.⁴⁵

Soon after, one local historian has noted, ““Charlemont missed the fair despite the growing sophistication of its people,” who expressed “a desire to have some sort of occasion to draw the townspeople together in fun and attract outsiders.”⁴⁶ Accordingly the Charlemont Lions Club, with the aid of fifteen other local groups including the Charlemont High School junior class, founded Yankee Doodle Days in 1952. The three-day event used many town venues. On the first day a parade featuring “Queen of the Mohawk Trail” candidates marched to the fairgrounds, where the contestants were judged; on the third day the Lions Club held a chicken barbecue followed by a “grand parade,” “free-for-all horse drawing,” and equestrian time trials. The club also placed stocks on the fairground to hold anyone who attended and did not wear a feather.⁴⁷ Later Yankee Doodle Days included horse and oxen draws.⁴⁸ The event continued through 1981, was revived in 1997, and has continued as an annual event into the current day.⁴⁹

Since the Town of Charlemont acquired the property in 1940, the fairgrounds has been under the jurisdiction of the town’s Parks and Recreation Commission. The Friends of the Charlemont Fairgrounds was created to contribute to the preservation of the property, with volunteers contributing funds, materials, and labor to construct new features, such as the picnic pavilion and draw pit.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement and subsistence in Charlemont are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Ancient sites in this area can be important by contributing information that increases our understanding of Native American adaptations to temperate forest riverine environments in non-coastal areas. Potential sites in this area may contribute important details related to the importance of settlement and subsistence in the vicinity of upland tributaries, and their relationship to site distributions and subsistence activities along the main course of the Connecticut River and its tributaries including the Deerfield River and Mill Brook. Native sites in this area may represent a specialized adaptation to upland environments or, they may be part of an overall riverine adaptation based in the Connecticut River Valley. Native sites in this area may also contain important information that identifies the associations within tool assemblages and cultural sequences in the local area and region. Information may be present

(continued)

⁴⁴ *Souvenir Programme 1765-1915 Anniversary of the Incorporation of Charlemont, Mass.* (Springfield, MA: Loring-Axtell Co., 1915), unpaginated.

⁴⁵ James R. Turner to Philip A. Hart, 6 November 1937, FCD 825:162; Hart to inhabitants of Charlemont, 8 June 1840, FCD 839:133.

⁴⁶ Allan Healy, *History of Charlemont, Massachusetts: Frontier Village and Hill Town*, 2d ed. (Paideia Publishing, 1986).

⁴⁷ *Yankee Doodle Days: The Mohawk Trail, Charlemont, Massachusetts, Friday, Saturday & Sunday, August, 8th, 9th & 10th 1952* (N.p., n.d.).

⁴⁸ *Yankee Doodle Days The Mohawk Trail Charlemont, Massachusetts Friday, Saturday and Sunday August 6th, 7th and 8th 1954* (N.p., n.d.).

⁴⁹ “Restoration of the Charlemont Fairgrounds and Grandstand.”

from sites in the area to help analyze patterns of Native American exchange in the region. One interpretation for the region identifies the Connecticut River as an important north-south corridor for transportation and exchange. Secondary drainages of the Connecticut River, such as the Deerfield River and its tributaries including Mill Brook, are hypothesized to have served as east-west corridors enabling wider movement of people and goods. Ancient period Native American sites in the district locale may contain information that helps test these models and/or offer alternative hypotheses.

The significance of potential historic archaeological resources described above remains to be demonstrated. Structural evidence of buildings and landscape features may contribute important information related to architectural features and construction techniques used for specific and groups of buildings; however, this information may also be available from documentary sources. Careful mapping of potential archaeological resources identified above may contribute important information related to the layout of facilities located at the fairgrounds, and how these buildings and facilities changed from those present at the start of the fairgrounds in 1876 and the structures present today. Functional interpretation of structural remains combined with detailed

analysis of the contents of occupational-related features may contribute important information related to changing agricultural methods, techniques, and equipment during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and their influence on Connecticut Valley and hilltown agricultural history.

(end)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

Anonymous typescript. Dated in script 30 October 1900. Charlemont Historical Society.

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society. Annual Reports. 1873-1917.

Franklin County Agricultural Society. Transactions and Annual Reports. 1867-1960.

Friends of the Charlemont Fairgrounds. "The Restoration of the Charlemont Fairgrounds and Grandstand." Typescript, 1998.

Garrison, J. Ritchie. *Landscape and Material Life in Franklin County, Massachusetts, 1770-1860*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Gildea, James M. *The Franklin County Fair: "As American as Apple Pie."* Greenfield, MA: by the author, 2008.

Greenfield Gazette and Courier, 4 September 1871, 30 September 1872.

Healy, Allan. *Charlemont, Massachusetts: Frontier Village and Hilltown*. 2nd ed. Ashfield, MA: Paideia Publishers, 1986.

History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1879.

Kaldenbach, Robert. *Franklin County Fair: The First 150 Years*. Greenfield: Franklin County Agricultural Society, 1998.

Kelly, Catherine E. "The Consummation of Rural Prosperity and Happiness:" New England Agricultural Fairs and the Construction of Class and Gender, 1810-1860," *American Quarterly* 49, 3 (1997): 574-602.

Mastommarino, Mark A. *Cattle Aplenty and Other Things in Proportion: the Agricultural Fair in Franklin County, 1810-1860*. Deerfield, MA: Historic Deerfield, 1982. Also published under the same title in

UCLA Historical Journal (1984): 51-75.

Report of the Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture. 1851-1909. [see below under Transactions]

Russell, Howard. *A Long, Deep Furrow*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1976.
Transactions of the Agricultural Societies in the State of Massachusetts. 1849-1850.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of Individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # N/A
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # N/A

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other
Name of repository: Charlemont Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): CRL.908 (grandstand)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx 24
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>675080</u> Easting	<u>4721860</u> Northing	3	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>674675</u> Easting	<u>4721640</u> Northing
2	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>674900</u> Easting	<u>4721520</u> Northing	4	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>674840</u> Easting	<u>4721000</u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The 24-acre property is bounded on the west by N. Heath Road (State Rt. 8A) and on the other sides by surveyed lines. See attached assessor's map for a more detailed description.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries of the nominated property contain the land historically associated with the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds in Charlemont.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Neil Larson & Kathryn Grover for Betsy Friedberg, MHC, NR Director
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date March 2011
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125
e-mail nlarson@hvc.rr.com; kgrover@kgrover.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
City or Vicinity: Charlemont
County: Franklin **State:** Massachusetts

Photographer: Neil Larson

Date Photographed: 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

PHOTO 1 of 14: View of Grandstand from northeast. Note all but three sash windows replaced with top-hinged solid shutters opening on food concession counters.

PHOTO 2 of 14: View of Grandstand from northwest; rear ell original but renovated in 2005 for comfort station. Exhibition Building in background, Picnic Pavilion in partial view on left, Transformer Building on right.

PHOTO 3 of 14: View of Grandstand from southwest, rear ell refurbished 2005.

PHOTO 4 of 14: View of Grandstand interior looking south. Framing for food service windows and counters visible on left. Note chamfered posts.

PHOTO 5 of 14: View of Grandstand interior looking north.

PHOTO 6 of 14: View of Exhibition Building from northeast.

PHOTO 7 of 14: View of Exhibition Building from northwest.

PHOTO 8 of 14: View of upper level of Exhibition Building interior looking west. Note roof trusses.

PHOTO 9 of 14: Exhibition Building interior, detail of junction of truss, rafters and wall frame.

PHOTO 10 of 14: Exhibition Building interior, detail of sawn framing members.

PHOTO 11 of 14: View of ground floor of Exhibition Building from northeast.

PHOTO 12 of 14: View of Grandstand, Information Booth (ca. 2000) and Racetrack from southwest.

PHOTO 13 of 14: View of Picnic Pavilion (2007, left) and Draw Pit (2005, right) from west.

PHOTO 14 of 14: View of east side of Racetrack from south as it enters pine grove past Draw Pit.

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name	Town of Charlemont		
street & number	P.O. Box 337	telephone	413-339-0320
city or town	Charlemont	state	MA zip code 01339

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DEERFIELD VALLEY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FAIRGROUNDS

Charlemont, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: Figures page: 1



FIG.1: Aerial view of Charlemont, Massachusetts. The heavy line demarcates the boundary of the nominated property. Source: <http://www.bing.com/maps>.



FIG.2: Site plan of fairgrounds. Source: <http://www.bing.com/maps>.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DEERFIELD VALLEY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FAIRGROUNDS

Charlemont, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: Figures page: 2

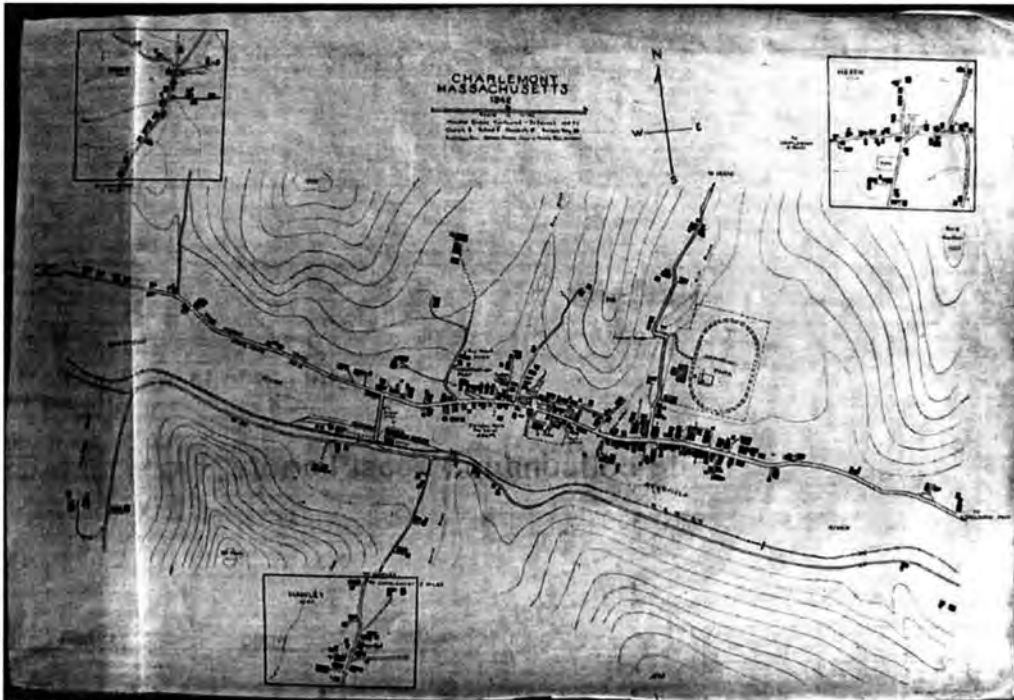


FIG.3: Map of Charlemont, 1942. Fairgrounds depicted with race track, grandstand & exhibition bldg.
Source: http://www.vhist.com/roberge/FDA_Files/fda_files/3000s/3000s_25-dpi/3099_1200_wb.jpg.

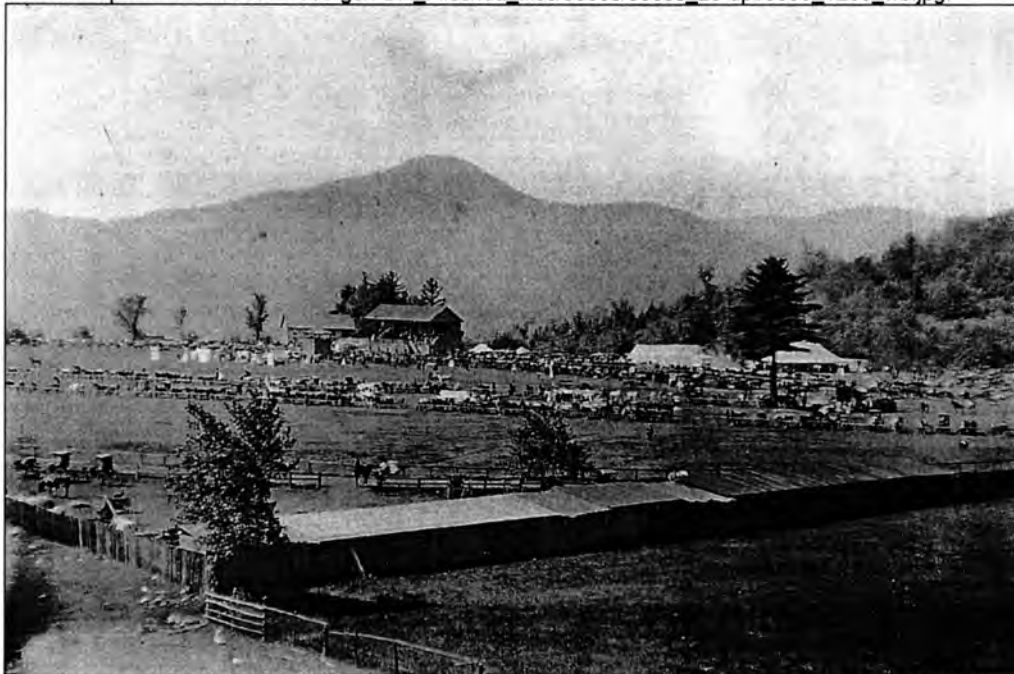


FIG.4: Historic view of fairgrounds from northeast, ca. 1895, with fair in operation; Grandstand, Judges' Stand and Exhibition Building in background. Source: Charlemont Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DEERFIELD VALLEY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FAIRGROUNDS

Charlemont, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: Figures page: 3



FIG.5: Detail of ca. 1895 photograph showing Grandstand, Judges' Stand and Exhibition Building.



FIG.6: Historic view of Exhibition Building, ca. 1889. Source: Charlemont Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DEERFIELD VALLEY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FAIRGROUNDS

Charlemont, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: Figures page: 4

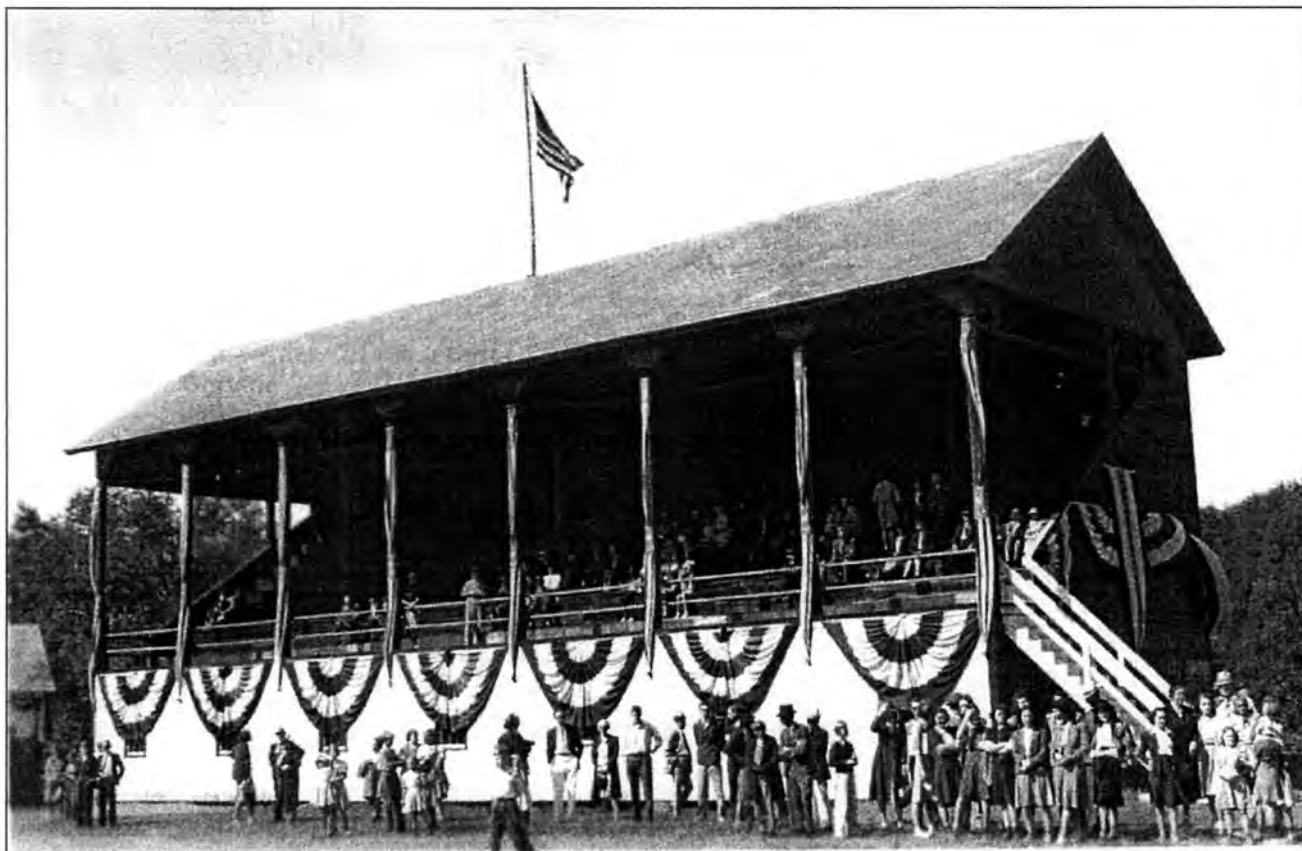
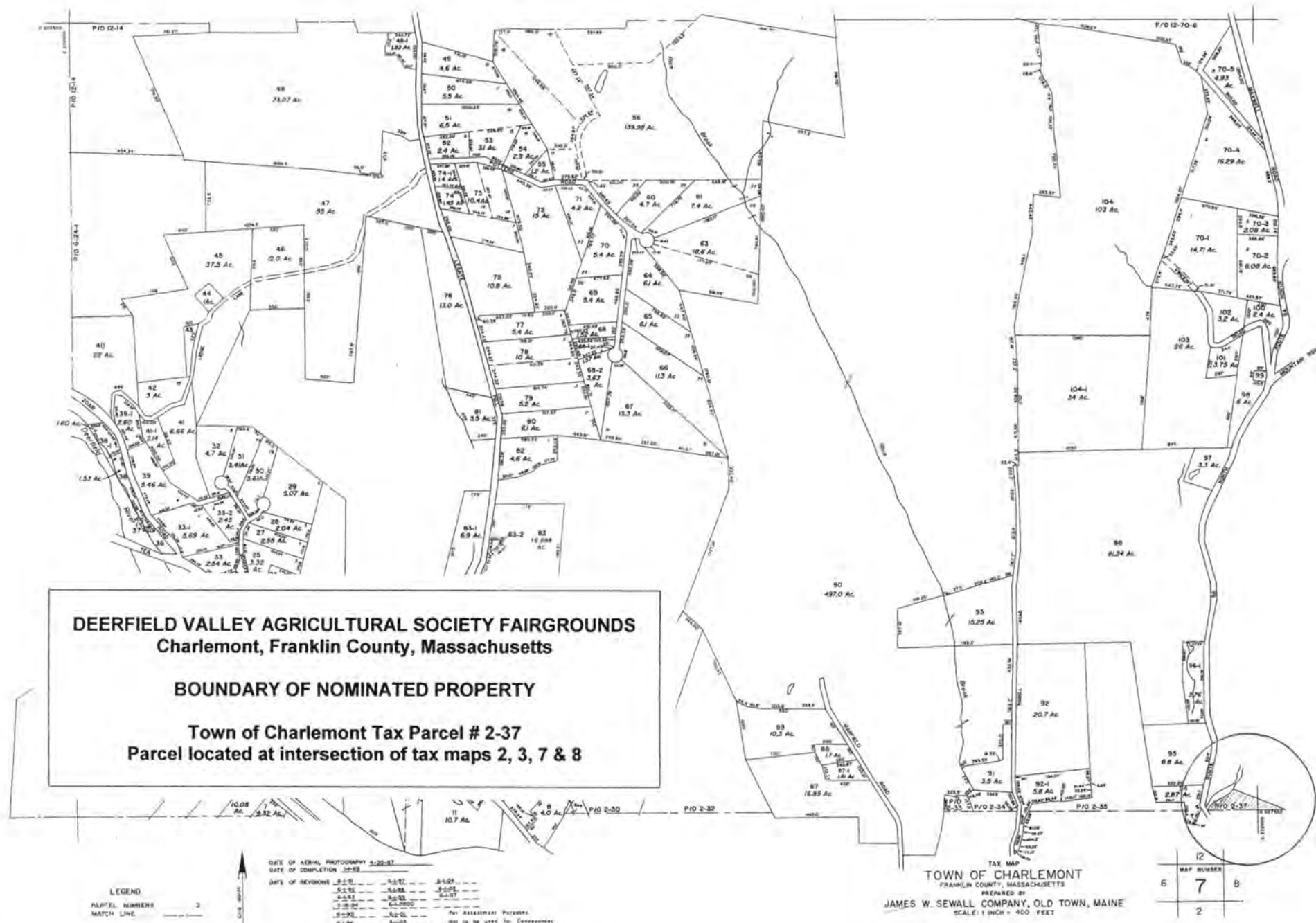


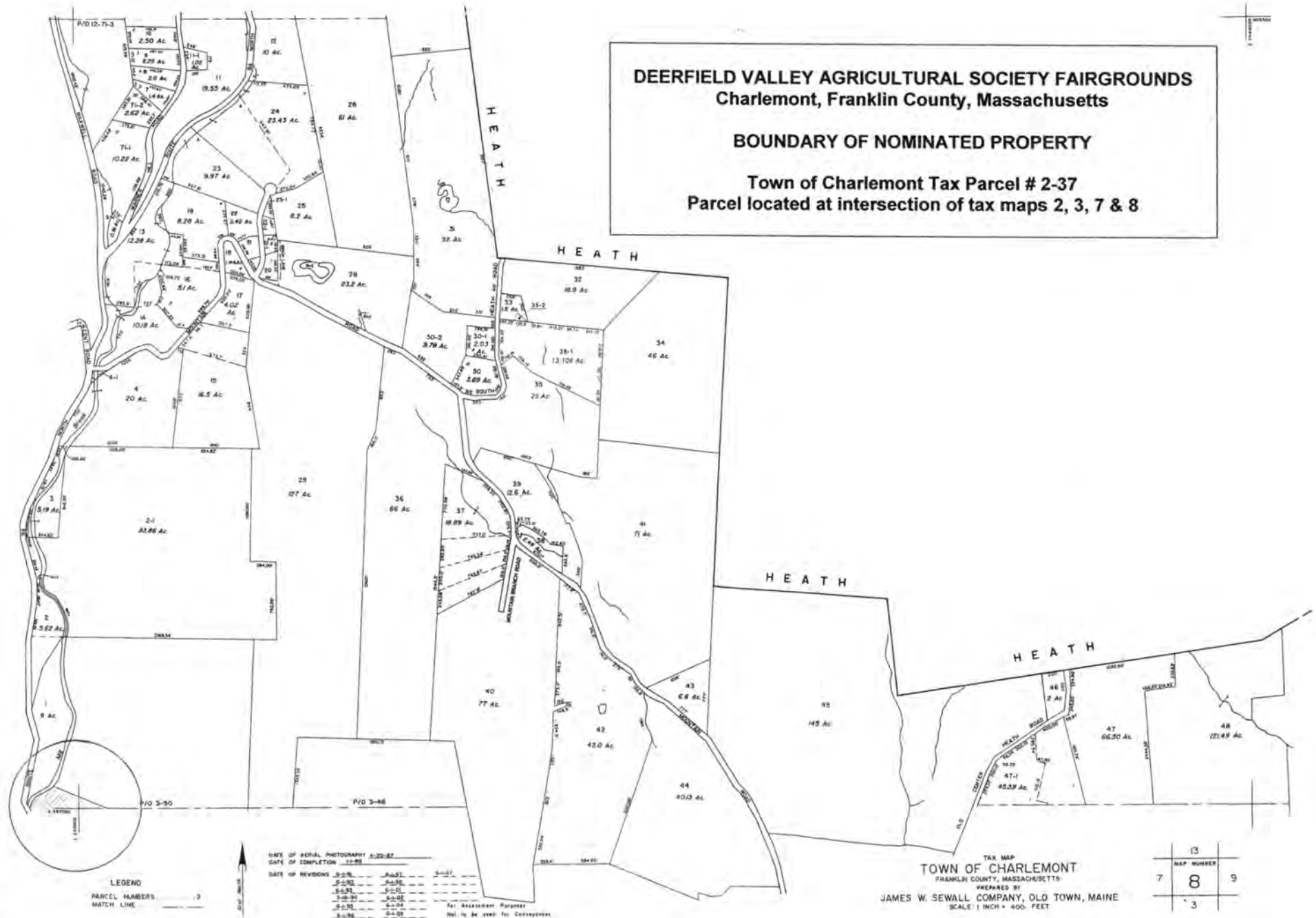
FIG.7: Historic view of Grandstand, ca. 1940. Source: Charlemont Historical Society.



DEERFIELD VALLEY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FAIRGROUNDS
Charlemont, Franklin County, Massachusetts

BOUNDARY OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

Town of Charlemont Tax Parcel # 2-37
Parcel located at intersection of tax maps 2, 3, 7 & 8



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Franklin

DATE RECEIVED: 4/01/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/20/11
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/05/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/17/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000267

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 5.11.11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



MA - CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDSOL. k:f

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlemont, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

Photo 1: View of grandstand from NE



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 02. tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlmont, Franklin Co., MA
Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 2: View of grandstand from NW



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 03. hf

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlmont, Franklin Co., MA
Photo by Neil Larsen, 2009

PHOTO 3: View of grandstand from SW



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY)-FAIRGROUNDS04.tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlton, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 4: View of grandstand interior looking north



MA - CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS OS..tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlemont, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 5: View of grandstand interior looking SW



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY)-FAIRGROUNDS06.tif

Dearfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlemont, Franklin Co., MA
Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO6: View of exhibition hall from NE



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY)-FAIRGROUNDS 07.tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlemont, Franklin Co., MA
Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 7: View of exhibition building from NW



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 08. tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds

Charlmont, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 8: View of upper level of exhibition building
interior looking west



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY)-FAIRGROUNDS09.tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlément, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 9: Exhibition building interior, framing detail



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 10. hf

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlemont, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 10: Exhibition building interior, framing detail



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 11.tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlemont, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 11: View of ground floor of exhibition building
from NE



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY)- FAIRGROUND S12.tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlmont, Franklin Co., MA
Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 12: View of grandstand, information booth
and race track from SW



MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 13.tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlément, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 13: View of picnic pavilion and draw pit
from west

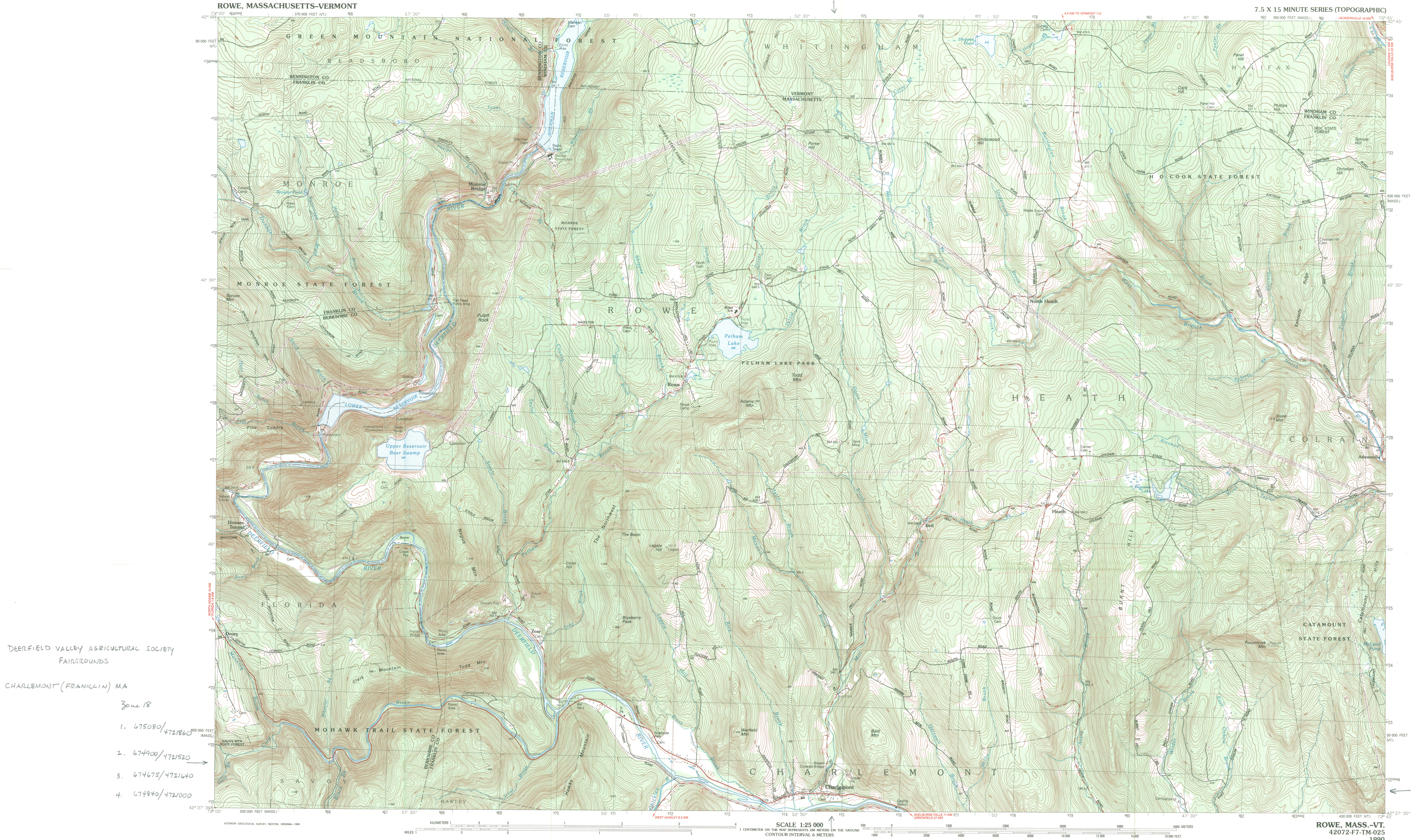


MA-CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS14.tif

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds
Charlmont, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 14: View of east side of race track from south
as it enters pine grove past draw pit



DEERFIELD VALLEY AGRIC. SOC. FAIRGROUNDS

42072-F7-TM-025

Rowe

CHARLEMONT (FRANKLIN) MA

MASSACHUSETTS-VERMONT

1:25 000-scale metric topographic map

7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1990

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1981-82. Field checked 1984. Map edited 1990.
Supersedes Rowe and Heath 1:25 000-scale maps dated 1973 and 1974. This area also covered by 7.5 minute, 1:24 000-scale maps: Rowe and Heath dated 1973 and 1974.
Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 18
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 5 meters south and 37 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 6 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTOUR ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 6 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS	
Meters	Feet			1	A ² B 3
2	6.5617			4	5
3	9.8425			6	7 8
4	13.1234				
5	16.4042				
6	19.6850				
7	22.9659				
8	26.2467				
9	29.5275				
10	32.8084				

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

UTM grid convergence (80°N) and 10° magnetic declination (1980) at center of map
Diagram is approximate

1. Standard (7.5)
2. Bennington (7.5)
3. Bennington (7.5)
4. North Adams
5. Bennington
6. Bennington
7. Ashfield
8. Greenfield

ISBN 0-607-09010-2

9 780607 009010

Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface	.....
Secondary highway, hard surface	.....
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	.....
Unimproved road, trail	.....
Route marker: Interstate; U. S. State	.....
Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage	.....
Bridge: drawbridge	.....
Footbridge; overpass; underpass	.....
Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	.....
House; barn; church; school; large structure	.....
Boundary	.....
National, with monument	.....
State	.....
County, parish	.....
Civil township, precinct, district	.....
Incorporated city, village, town	.....
National or State reservation; small park	.....
Land grant with monument; land section corner	.....
U. S. public lands survey: range, township, section	.....
Range, township; section line: location approximate	.....
Fence or field line	.....
Power transmission line, isolated tower	.....
Dam; dam with lock	.....
Cemetery; grave	.....
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	.....
Windmill; water well; spring	.....
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave	.....
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	.....
Contour: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	.....
Distorted surface: strip mine, lava; sand	.....
Sounding; depth curve	.....
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	.....
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	.....
Sewage; marsh	.....
Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation	.....
Woodland; scattered trees	.....
Scrub; mangrove	.....
Orchard; vineyard	.....

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

Town

NR JBF
C H A R L E M O N T
M A S S A C H U S E T T S



INCORPORATED 1765

01339

Office of the
Board of Selectmen

Ms. Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125.

RECEIVED

SEP 11 2008

MASS. HIST. COMM

September 9, 2008

Dear Ms. Friedberg,

We have been informed by Ms. Norma Coli, Charlemont Historical Commission Chair, that your agency has expressed a willingness to fund development of a National Register nomination for the Charlemont Fairgrounds. Given its age and unique aspects (e.g., half mile track, 1880's Grandstand and Exhibition Hall) as well as its proximity to the NR Bissell Covered Bridge and the NR Village Historic District, we are excited about the prospects of the site also being considered for the National Register. Consequently, we are unanimous in offering our thanks to you for the offer of assistance, and are pleased to support development of the nomination as proposed.

Other Boards and citizen groups, including the Charlemont Historical Commission, the Charlemont Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Friends of the Charlemont Fairgrounds are also supportive of this process, and remain willing to assist with site research and documentation needed to flesh out the eventual nomination paperwork.

The photographs and tax map/parcel ID information you requested are being sent to you under separate cover by Ms. Coli.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely yours,

Went/He/

John M. Brown
Paul James

Charlemont Board of Selectmen



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

March 29, 2011

Mr. J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds, Charlemont (Franklin), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

One letter of support has been received.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Jean Brisson, Chair, Charlemont Board of Selectmen
Norma Coli, Charlemont Historical Commission
Neil Larson, Kathryn Grover, Consultants
Gisela Walker, Charlemont Planning Board