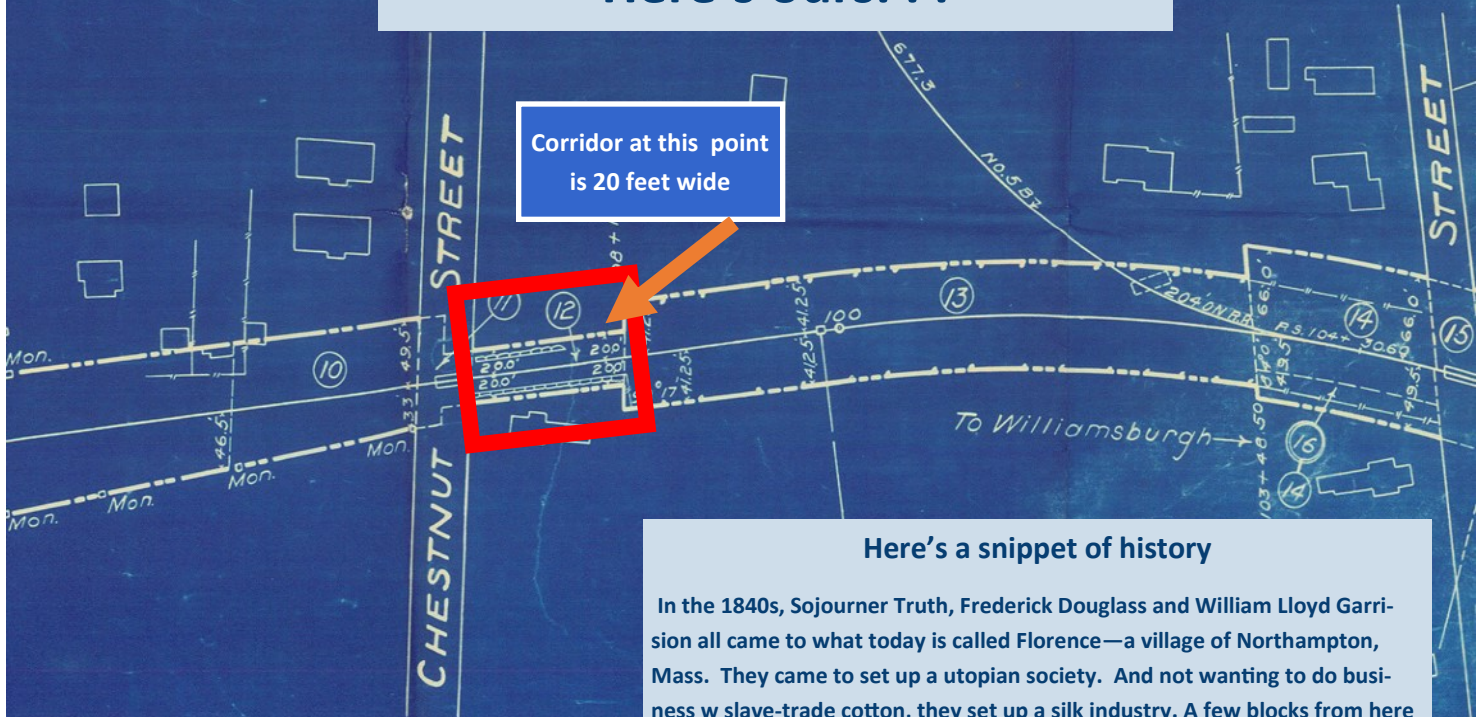


# Houses close to RR corridors? Here's ours. . .

Corridor at this point  
is 20 feet wide



## Here's a snippet of history

In the 1840s, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison all came to what today is called Florence—a village of Northampton, Mass. They came to set up a utopian society. And not wanting to do business w slave-trade cotton, they set up a silk industry. A few blocks from here they set up a huge Mulberry tree plantation. Silk worms only eat Mulberry tree leaves. Then they obtained from the Chinese, a way to spin Silk into thread. If you have thread; you need to be setting up a sewing machine factory.

Thus the Florence Sewing Machine factory was built a short distance away. In the 1850s Sojourner Truth and her friends sold the factory and they scattered away. During the Civil War the factory was running on overtime and of course the army was recruiting soldiers. The management of the factory went to the nine department heads and said, "Stay with the factory, don't go off to war, and we'll give all nine of you, a free house." "We'll build nine houses for your nine families on nearby Chestnut St." That was in 1865.

In 1868, the railroad came to Florence and the railroad officials did a mitigation effort here. They knew that the train being only 8 feet away was going to shake the house and likely crack the ceilings. So, as a mitigation against that happening they came in and nailed up from below, lath strips or furring strips to reinforce the plaster ceilings. Since that wasn't attractive, they hung below that, canvas ceilings. So taut that you can't see them drooping, but none the less the reinforced ceiling will hold and the canvas ceiling will flex.

The RR ran for 101 years till 1969. Then the idea of a trail conversion was broached in 1976. The family who lived here back then were leaders in the effort to nix that. The pro-trail forces prevailed and the Ryan Bikeway opened in 1982. One of the earliest muni-built rail trails in the northeast. The renovation was so dramatic that HGTV contacted us have it featured on the one of their fixer shows. Go to this site to see the short video. [https://youtu.be/e\\_ceVsDI7M](https://youtu.be/e_ceVsDI7M)

*(photo top shows the house in 1999, two years before we bought it. While the lower photo shows it around 2003, after the renovation.)*



THE NE

AND HARTFORD R.R.

60

SCALE: 1" = 100 FT.

DATE JUNE 30, 1915



# 1879 Birds Eye view of Florence, MA

Our house at  
62 Chestnut St.

