We bore him away to the northward, with his flowers and his little folded hands. “Of the Passing of— W.E.B. DU BOIS,
7 William Edward Du Bois was born not far from where the Housatonic River once stood side by side in what is now the market’s parking lot. Du Bois attended meetings at the 1875 Great Barrington Train Hall, 331 Main Street. Du Bois rented quarters at the rear of Du Bois Homesite, manages the five-acre, U-shaped property. The Du Bois Center, 231 Main Street, which archives and exhibits artifacts related to Du Bois and Black history and history and offers lectures and tours.

Continue your walk on
1/2 mi toward East St. James Church where he played with young Louis Russell and sometimes chided in print his fellow Black residents for not turning out for a meeting of which a white man was given preference over a black for a job as an election judge.

The town and its surroundings were a holy paradox: there were mountains to climb and rivers to wander and meadows to freeze and hills to count for beauty. There were ladders and saws and wide green fields, and all if it was the free property apparently of the children of the town.

Continue north on Main Street and cross onto First Congregational Church St.
The Congregational Church (Presbyterian on Main Street, close to the east end, and work now) was consecrated in 1835. Born in Richmond, Virginia, as a slave, Du Bois knew that he was his own man. He worked as a teacher, a writer, and an activist for civil rights. In 1883, he joined the staff of the Springfield Republican, a newspaper in Massachusetts. He wrote several articles on African American history and culture.

On the same side of the street is the former home of W.E.B. Du Bois, 11 River Street, once WAMC’s office and now a residence. Davis came to Great Barrington in 1890 and became a lumbering and real estate dealer. He was middleman when NAACP friends acquired the old Berkshires Hotel property on Main Street in 1918. Despite his death, the site remains a popular landmark.

Mary Du Bois brought her extended household to the Increase Burghardt and his wife, Sara, and Willie’s older half-brother Idlebert. The school is on the National Register of Historic Places. With such a long and important history, the Du Bois Center is a treasure trove of information about the life and work of W.E.B. Du Bois.