



This cast-iron fountain has been located outside the Main Street entrance to the Town Hall since 1899. About two years ago the basin became loose and broke from the stem of the fountain. The Ayer Historical Commission became concerned about its condition, and contacted David Erickson of Erickson's Antique Stoves Inc. of Littleton, MA, who restored the fountain as you see it in the photograph with funds provided by the Historical Commission.

Research by members of the Commission uncovered the following background on this historic fountain:

Furnished to the Town of Ayer in June 1899 by the WCTU and, according to the *Public Spirit* on June 17, 1899, was placed where it stands today to the left of the path entrance to the town house. The national Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) organization was founded to support abstinence from alcohol. At its organizing convention in 1874, members were urged to erect drinking fountains in their towns so that men could get a drink of water without entering a saloon. The *Public Spirit* reported in May 1902 that the letters WCTU were added to the base and "...ice will be placed in its receptacle throughout the season." The ladies of the WCTU later thanked local business for providing funds for the ice.

Older residents of Ayer may remember a small step, no longer existing, that allowed small children to step up and take a drink of water. For many years the unused fountain was utilized as a decorative planter. The Historical Commission would like to thank the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator for their help in supporting this historic project.

*l-r: George Bacon, Gary Luca, Jannice Livingston, Chris Hillman, and Ruth Rhonemus.*