Fall 2012 report: All OK at the 1710 house … after a whirlwind meeting, an earthquake, and a hurricane

House weathers storm, and another earthquake

This season's events at the Weeks Brick House & Gardens were supposed to be the big news for the fall 2012 newsletter, but Mother Nature's late-October drama grabbed a chunk of attention and could not be ignored.

In short, the 1710 brick house weathered the Oct. 16 earthquake and the Oct. 28-29 hurricane in fine fashion. Read more details about both in the House Report on page 2. Now that the house has one again survived the vagaries of nature, attention turns to bolstering its future by securing a new tenant. Read more about this on page 5.

Before Ma Nature hogged the headlines, the Weeks Brick House was pleased with the response to its annual meeting on September 8-9, 2012, at which Katharine C. "Kitty" Weeks was recognized for her role in establishing our Colonial-era herb gardens. Attendees at the two-day annual meeting enjoyed tours of the house, gardens, and trails; gathered for conversation at the wine & cheese social; absorbed insights of 17th-century life from our guest speaker; and voted at the Sunday business meeting.

In this issue …

- Earthquake & Hurricane?: All OK………1
- Changes on WBH Board………………1
- From the President …………………….2
- House & Property Report…………….2
- Scenes from the Annual Meeting……..3
- Genealogical Confusion:
  Years Lost on the Wrong Weeks………4
- Want to Live in a Landmark?………..5
- Membership Information……………..5

‘The only thing constant is change’: A truism that also applies to WBH Board of Directors

As anyone who has served on volunteer "working boards" of small non-profit organizations knows, sometimes while the passion for service remains, the time-squeeze of "life" makes change the inevitable eventuality.

This fall, the Descendants of Leonard Weeks in America, Inc. organization accepts with understanding the resignation of board member and Master Gardener Leslie Stevens. In spring 2009 Leslie began the process of restoring the Colonial-era reproduction herb garden first established by Kitty Weeks in 1977. For the last three seasons she not only cared for the herb beds, but also planted a replica WWII-era Victory Garden, with its harvest donated to the local food bank. This past season she arranged the placement of two beehives on the property. With her track record of productivity, it will not be surprising to readers to learn that she is also a mother of school-age children … and the elected chair continued on page 6
From the President:
In 2012 we ‘wrenched out’ invasive plants; now the goal is to ‘plant’ a new tenant

By Tom Ayres, Board President

This past year has been a very busy one at the Weeks Brick House. In September 2011, we were pleased to have Jean Eno join the Board of Directors. Jean is an active member of the Winnicut River Watershed Coalition and New Hampshire Coverts. In summer she managed two invasive plant removal operations on our conversation land, using “Weed Wrenching” tools to pull up invasive plants. Recently, she set up a Weeks Brick House account on Facebook, which we hope will give us additional exposure.

Reg Bacon guided the Weeks Brick House through the process of becoming an affiliate member of Historic New England. Amanda Nelson attended the HNE Affiliate Forum in May, at which topics included energy efficiency for historic houses and the preservation of wood windows.

Early in the summer, two beehives were installed on our grounds at no cost – donated by Kagen Weeks, who also maintains the hives. His “Hive At Your Home” program increases pollination of our gardens, and his free demonstrations, educate the public about the important role of bees in our lives.

At our Annual Meeting in September, we were honored to have Kitty Weeks join us. Leslie Stevens, our Master Gardener dedicated the gardens to Kitty. A granite monument was placed in the gardens, which reads: “Weeks Brick House Colonial Herb Gardens - Est. 1977. Dedicated September 9, 2012 to Katharine C. “Kitty” Weeks in appreciation of her efforts in collaboration with historian Ann Leighton to conceive, create, and nurture our Colonial-era herb gardens for the enjoyment and edification of present and future generations. Descendants of Leonard Weeks in America, Inc.”

We are sad to announce the retirement of two very active board members, Leslie Stevens and Adele Wick, who have provide our organization with many years of dedicated service. They will be missed.

At the end of September the WBH board of directors was pleased to add Sara MacCorkle as a new board member. She writes for the Greenland Grapevine and has experience in marketing, grant-writing, and rental property management, and has business contacts in Greenland area.

Our tenants moved out in September, so this year’s annual membership drive next month is more important than ever to provide the funds to pay our expenses.

– Tom Ayres

Brick House Report:
One step at a time: West chimney repairs delayed … but trim & deck painting done

This fall any report on our 1710 brick house must reference the earthquake of October 18, 2012 and Hurricane Sandy on October 28-29, 2012.

Your editor was home in Newburyport, Mass., just sitting down to dinner when the rumbling began and the overhead light fixture began to sway. At first we thought it was a big truck, maybe hauling a yacht over some giant potholes. As the rumbling increased, I said “No truck is that big!” and got up to look outside. Within minutes I checked the U.S. Geological Survey web site and learned the details of the 7:12 p.m. quake with its epicenter 21 miles west of Portland, Maine. The intensity was first reported as 4.6 on the Richter Scale, but later downgraded to 4.0. Within the hour board members were in e-mail contact, and after a later inspection of the house, Steve Pike reported no new cracks or bulges, and that the house survived yet another earthquake. (The old cracks and bulges are from earthquakes in 1727, and the “big one” in 1755 – estimated at 6.0 on the Richter Scale.)

A week after the earthquake, board members responded to early report of the hurricane brewing in the Caribbean, and the predictions that it would impact the northeast. Steve Pike and Amanda Nelson secured the house in advance and prepared for the worst eventuality. Fortunately, despite the high winds and torrential rains, there was no water penetration in the house – even the cellar

continued on page 5
because our tenants had moved out of the house the week before. Before too much wine flowed, outgoing Master Gardener Leslie Stevens was regaled (by your editor) with a hot jazz tenor banjo and vocal rendition of "I'm a Vulture for Horticulture," a Jimmy Durante comedy song from the 1930s that could serve well as Leslie's theme song.

Sunday morning activities got underway at 9 a.m., recharged by the return of our own favorite folksy raconteur and hymn-singing leader, Rev. Frank Weeks.

The dedication of the Colonial-era herb gardens followed at 10 a.m., with Kitty Weeks and her family in attendance. In the 1970s Kitty Weeks worked with garden historian and author Anne Leighton to develop the gardens, and her efforts are now noted at the gardens in finely-engraved granite. Board member Leslie Stevens coordinated the dedication ceremony.

Attendees moved across town to the Great Bay Discovery Center for the guest speaker, lunch, and business meeting. This year's guest speaker was Rebecca W.S. More, visiting scholar at Brown University and adjunct professor of History at Rhode Island School of Design – and Weeks descendant in the line of John Wingate Weeks. Since her area of scholarship is late medieval and early modern British social and economic history, she elected to frame her topic as “The Colonial Settlement of Greenland c. 1640-1707,” and provided informative context surrounding the arrival in Greenland of family progenitor Leonard Weeks (1633-1704).

The presentation was followed by a lunch prepared in-house and coordinated by board member Amanda Nelson. The climax was the Kitty Weeks dedication cake. An unexpected treat at the business meeting was the opportunity to hear in its finished form the audio tour of the hiking trails produced by board member and museum professional Nicola Astles. The audio tour was posted on the WBH web site just two days before.

Attendees departed for home Sunday afternoon, nourished not only by the fine lunch, but also by the rich experience of joining with all manner of Weeks cousins and friends at the original family farmstead.
Genealogical confusion: If you’re not careful, you might spend years chasing the wrong Weeks

By R.W. Bacon

In July 2011, among our frequent e-mail correspondence, I received notice from WBH president Tom Ayres that he had clarified the ancestry of Edgar Weeks (1839-1904) the U.S. Representative from Michigan then profiled on our web site as a “notable descendant” of our Weeks family progenitor, Leonard Weeks (1633-1707). Tom determined fairly easily that Edgar Weeks was instead a descendant of George Weeks (c.1600-1650) of Dorchester, Mass.

Tom’s investigation was prompted by the increased attention in 2011 to U.S. Senator John Wingate Weeks (a true descendant of Leonard) during the centennial year of the Weeks Act. Just as I did when assembling the “notable descendants” for the web site, Tom came across the bio sketches in the Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress online, which identifies Edgar as “a cousin of U.S. Senator John Wingate Weeks.”

Within a just a couple hours of online research, Tom located several Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) applications, census records, and the entry in the Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England by James Savage (1860-1862), all pointing to George Weeks as Edgar’s immigrant ancestor. Rev. Frank Weeks contributed a reference to the Genealogy of the Family of George Weeks of Dorchester, Mass. by Robert D. Weeks (1885).

Within days I removed the Edgar Weeks bio sketch from our web site, all the while blithely hopping around the Internet, seeing what I could find about other notable folks with the Weeks surname. I thought it would be a worthy service to clarify the origins of a few of these notables, even if they don’t descend from our man Leonard.


Levi Weeks (1776-1819), builder, architect, and defendant in the “Manhattan Well Murder” trial. Levi Weeks was accused of murdering Elma Sands in 1799. Despite overwhelming evidence of his guilt, he was acquitted – the O.J. Simpson of his day. To escape public harassment, he moved to Natchez, Miss. where he gained notoriety as an architect. He descended from Leonard Weeks (1600-1650) of Dorchester, Mass. Close cousin? Nope.

William Henry Weeks (1864-1936), architect of schools, banks, and libraries, mostly in the West. He was born on Prince Edward Island, Canada, where his father was a builder. His grandfather, Stephen Weeks (1795-1869) and his great-grandfather; also Stephen (b. 1765), arrived at P.E.I. from Ireland in 1822. Close cousin? Nope.

Anson Weeks (1896-1969), musician, bandleader, recording artist. Based in northern California, Anson Weeks led a dance band from the 1920s to the 1960s that earned a national following. His father...
Want to live in a landmark? Weeks Brick House rental is an opportunity to live in a 1710 National Register house

Know a history enthusiast or old house lover? Pass it on!

Our tenants at the Weeks Brick House moved in September, and we’re enlisting readers’ help in finding a tenant who will appreciate living in the 1710 house. Even if you’re happily situated, if you know someone in the N.H. seacoast region who would value the opportunity to live in a historic house, please pass this information on to them.

The house has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1975, when it was saved from development. Since then, the house has been occupied by tenants as a way to secure the house and provide a small income for continuing preservation and maintenance. The house sits on 33 acres of the original Leonard Weeks farmstead between Rte. 33 and the Winnicutt River. Conservation land with hiking trails comprises 31 acres of the property. On the 3-acre house lot, and directly next to the house, are the gardens and orchard designed by garden designer, author, and historian Ann Leighton. For comprehensive information about the Weeks Brick House & Gardens, visit our web site at www.WeeksBrickHouse.org.

Note that the house is not open for regularly-scheduled tours. The grounds, gardens, and hiking trails, however, are open dawn-to-dusk for interested visitors. For infrequent special tours or meetings, tenants receive ample advance notice.

Features include three bedrooms, 1.5 baths, an updated kitchen, wood floors throughout, and a beautiful private setting minutes from C&J bus terminal and Rtes. 95 & 101. Rent is $1200 per month, plus electricity. (Heat is included.) No smoking; no pets.

Prospective tenants will pass credit check and a museum-standard background check. The selected tenant will sign a historic house museum-standard lease agreement. Prospective tenants should e-mail Sara MacCorkle (Sara_MacCorkle@yahoo.com) or Cynthia Smith (CSmith_nh@myfairpoint.net). Please list “Weeks Brick House” in the subject line and include your name and contact information.

Not a Weeks descendant? Not to worry! Join us!

Did you know that the Weeks Brick House ... is more than just a house?
- Over 30 acres of conservation land laced with marked hiking trails.
- A Colonial herb garden designed by garden historian Anne Leighton.
- A historic 17th-century farmstead at the gateway to the Town Landing.
- ... And of course, one of the earliest brick houses in New England!

Remember, you don’t have to be a descendant to be a member! We need all of you. Join today!

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**Weeks Brick House & Gardens Membership Form**

(For Renewals and New Membership)

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Please indicate your preference:  
- [ ] E-mail newsletter in PDF format  
- [ ] Hard-copy postal mail newsletter

Please return this form with payment to: Weeks Brick House & Gardens, P. O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840. Thank You!

Make check payable in U.S. currency to “Weeks Brick House.” All gifts are tax deductible. Thank You!

**Membership Dues Categories:**

- [ ] $15 Student/Senior
- [ ] $25 Individual
- [ ] $50 Family
- [ ] $100 Contributing
- [ ] $250 Sustaining
- [ ] $500 Leader
- [ ] $_______ to the Chimney Fund
- [ ] $_______ to the Garden Fund

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** $_______
and several prior generations were from Uxbridge, North Ontario, Canada. He descended from Francis Weeks (1618-1689) of Oyster Bay, N.Y. Close cousin? Nope.

**Ricky Weeks** (b. 1982 in Altamonte Springs, Fla.), professional baseball player. His father was also a second-baseman in college, and his grandfather, Victor, (b. N.C.), played during the last years of the Negro League in the 1940s. Close cousin? Nope.

**Edwin Lord Weeks** (1849-1903), artist. The son of well-to-do spice and tea merchants from Newton, Mass., he was a descendant of . . . (drum roll here) Leonard Weeks (1633-1707) of Greenland, N.H. He’s a “Yup”!

**Larry Weeks** (b. 1919 in Salem, Mass.), professional juggler, magician, inventor of stage props. The story of Lester Fulton Weeks is of personal significance to your editor. Early in my showbusiness career as an acrobatic juggler I learned that Larry Weeks was born in Salem, Mass. – where I was living at the time. I was tickled that Larry Weeks, a “big deal” in the 1940s, was (1) born in Salem, (2) shared my mother’s Weeks surname, and (3) might actually be a distant cousin! This was in the early 1970s, decades before the entire 1790-1940 census became available at the click of a mouse. Years later, I was able to get to the facts:

Larry Weeks was the son of Aron Weeks (b. 1887 in Sweden) and Sarah (Goodman) Weeks (b. 1890 in Lithuania). Aron Weeks was in the import/export business and arrived in the U.S. in 1909. Descendant of Leonard? A close cousin? Nope.

The lesson? Don’t spend years presuming connections to the wrong Weeks!”

**Changes on WBH board …** continued from page 1

of the Portsmouth, N.H. School Board. So while Leslie will not be caring for the WBH gardens next season, we know that her energies will bring comparable nurture to the Portsmouth school system.

Fortunately WBH has recently welcomed to its board of directors an equally energetic individual, Sara MacCorkle, a resident of Greenland, N.H. who is active in local organizations and writes for the Greenland Grapevine publication.

The current board: Tom Ayres, president; Skip Weeks, vice president; Cynthia Weeks, treasurer; Nicola Astles, secretary; Reg Bacon, Jean Eno, Sara MacCorkle, Amanda Nelson, and Steve Pike.

**Larry Weeks? Jugglin’ Cousin?**

Nope.

**House report …** continued from page 2

was dry. Jean Eno and Cynthia Weeks, both in Greenland, reported that the power never went out, and that other than a few small branches down, the property came through the storm unscathed.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the storm on the Weeks Brick House has been the delay of this publication. In between two out-of-town professional conferences, your editor’s work on this newsletter was deferred in favor of essential storm preparations – two days working on a shed roof, getting everything weather-tight just before the storm hit.

Earlier in the season, Steve Pike engaged the painting crew that worked on the house in prior years, a duo that specializes in the painting of historic and antique homes. The window trim received much-needed attention – preparation and painting – and the more contemporary pressure-treated rear deck was stained in a brick-red color to better blend in with the bricks of the house.

Repair of the west chimney this season was deferred for two reasons: (1) the backed-up schedule of the historic house masonry contractor, and (2) our dwindling finances. Donations to the chimney fund are still being accepted.

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