This year the National Forest Service, Weeks State Park in Lancaster, N.H., and a dozen New Hampshire organizations, including the Weeks Brick House & Gardens are celebrating the centennial of the Weeks Act, the landmark legislation that helped create our National Forest system, and is associated with investment banker, legislator, public servant, and Leonard Weeks descendant, John Wingate Weeks (1860-1926).

Today, National Forests in 42 states have at least some land acquired under the Weeks Act, which at the time of its passage was also known as the Appalachian Bill. At that time, $9 million was appropriated to purchase six million acres, and the legislation led to the creation of 52 National Forests in 26 states, including New Hampshire’s own White Mountain National Forest. Of almost 200 million acres of our National Forests, 10.2% were acquired under the Weeks Act.

The legislation was the culmination of over five decades of ardent lobbying by conservation advocates of all stripe, from artists to ministers. Since John Wingate Weeks introduced the legislation that finally broke the resistance, his name is permanently associated with the creation of our National Forests. The story of how it happened is one that John Wingate Weeks could not have predicted.

In 1905 John Wingate Weeks, the well-to-do founder of the Hornblower & Weeks investment firm, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, after serving as alderman and mayor of Newton, Mass. In 1907 he was puzzled when he was appointed to the Committee on Agriculture by House Speaker Joe Cannon, because he had relatively few farms in his district, and had shown little interest in the topic.

Rep. “Uncle Joe” Cannon (1836-1926) of Illinois was known as “the Brakeman of the House of Representatives,” and as speaker the feisty conservative quite literally set the “rules of the House.” He had been assailed for years by conservation advocates about his opposition to a federal plan to protect forest land, which was being over-harvested by lumber interests. “Not one cent for scenery,” was the defiant position of House Speaker Cannon.

You’re invited! Join us for Greenland Day July 16 and our Annual Meeting weekend Aug. 6 & 7

Members, old friends, and new friends are invited to join us at the Weeks Brick House & Gardens this 2011 season for Greenland Day (July 16) and our Annual Meeting weekend (August 6 & 7).

Throughout the winter months, board members have brainstormed to come up with new offerings that build on the enthusiasm generated at last year’s 300th anniversary of the house. Greenland Day, the central event of which is the 5k Jason Hussey Race that raises funds for local charities, centers the activities of the annual celebration at the town green. But last year the Weeks Brick House & Gardens seized the day and drew visitors to the grounds with an antique tractor show, garden tours, and exterior house tours.

This year on Greenland Day the Weeks Brick House & Gardens will feature (12 noon - 4 p.m., with activities tentative at this writing) a spinning demonstration (with a possible guest appearance by a live sheep!), barnyard buddies in the garden (continued on page 3)
The Editor’s Two-Cents:
Community engagement and family support are essential to our long-term sustainability

By R.W. Bacon
Weeks Descendant, Board Member, & Editor

(Full disclosure: Your editor is both a Weeks descendant and a museum professional, and writes from a doubly interested point of view.)

I attended my first Weeks Brick House annual meeting in 2001. Back in the 1970s my grandfather, Alton Alonzo Weeks (1895-1982), told me about the formation of the descendants group to save the house, but decades would pass before geography and circumstance led to my first visit.

I was thrilled to see the house so well-preserved, and thrilled to “walk in the footsteps” of my ancestors. Yet I left this meeting with the uneasy feeling that I was intruding at a private club. But I kept coming back. I knew I belonged anyway!

A few years later, when I was invited to serve on the board, a colleague in the museum field was president, so I didn’t have to smuggle in my “baggage,” which included the latest theory and practice of ensuring sustainable historic properties. This board service has been an opportunity to work toward ensuring the future of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens beyond my lifetime.

The Weeks House Pizza Parlor & Mini-Mall? In my view, if we are not to see the Weeks Brick House Pizza Parlor and Mini-Mall a few decades from now, it is imperative that we continue to expand our focus beyond our core membership of descendants. (Please hold your fire and read on!) The family homestead will always be a touchstone for descendants far and wide, and Weeks family support and involvement will always be essential, valued, and nurtured.

Thanks to the genealogy boom, we are attracting folks who just recently discovered they are descendants of Leonard Weeks, and we welcome these new cousins with enthusiasm. But the future of the house will be more secure if the local and regional community comes to value the property, and feel a sense of “ownership” as well.

A lost cultural connection. Sad to say, our brick house, long a Greenland icon, has lost most of its “cultural connection” to the town. In my view this is partly due to the 1960s construction of the high-speed road that separated the house from the old town center, and partly due to population shift and the transformation of Greenland into a suburb. The local history of the pre-suburban town is of limited relevance to most new arrivals. In fact, because the house is set back from a high-speed road – on a curve and near an intersection – it is quite possible to live in Greenland, pass by the house hundreds of times, and not even see it.

Another house museum? Every few years the board hears the suggestion of turning the Weeks Brick House into a full-fledged house museum as a way to attract more notice. Unfortunately, even within the museum profession today the belief is that there are already too many moribund, under-endowed house museums – buildings worthy of loving preservation, but without much in the way of distinctive collections, captivating story, budget for staffing, or prospects for visitation. Such a museum may fascinate a specialist curator or inward-looking board, but they will likely be its only visitors.

“Museum-like” programs. What is possible (i.e. achievable, manageable, and affordable) at the Weeks Brick House & Gardens are small-scale outdoor programs that serve community needs and interests.

Examples might be one-day or one-week educational/recreational programs on topics like nature, the environment, archaeology, gardening, or farm history. (Guided nature walks for all ages? A gardening “camp” for children? An introduction to archaeology for adults? You’re invited to step right up and volunteer to run these programs!)

Our founders were ahead of a trend. In my view, our founders showed vision in the 1970s when they decided to rent the house. Today this approach is seen as one of the best ways to sustain a historic house that has little potential for revenue-producing visitation. Combined with community and family support, keeping tenants in the house will keep any pizza parlor out.

Connecting with the community. To encourage that sense of ownership in our community, more emphasis is directed to our gardens, open space, and trails. Last


Welcome to our new tenants. Board efforts, serendipitous connections, and Greenland’s own Hunkins Real Estate combined to secure preservation-sensitive new tenants for the Weeks Brick House after a period of vacancy. Welcome!

Moving the archives. In fall 2010, the WWHG archives were moved – across the hall to a larger room. The former archives room reverts to tenant space.

The west chimney. With work finished on the east chimney in 2010, the board turns attention to the feasibility of repairing the west chimney this year. (Note: The Chimney Fund is still open for donations!)
Legislation crafted by John Wingate Weeks paved the way for our National Forest system

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Cannon was uncomfortable with tree-lovers … and the conservationist agenda of the leading progressive Republican, President Theodore Roosevelt. But Cannon saw, in conservative businessman J.W. Weeks, just the right person to craft a piece of legislation that even he could support. Thus the appointment to the Agriculture Committee.

Congressman Weeks found an area of interest in the forestry bill, since he had grown up in Lancaster, N.H., still spent summers there with his family, and was alarmed by the damage done to the White Mountains by lumber companies.

Speaker Cannon changed his position on federal involvement in forestry after the devastating floods of 1907, the root cause of which were the clear-cutting of timber and resultant erosion. He told J.W. Weeks that “if you can frame a forestry bill which you, as a businessman, are willing to support, I will do what I can to get an opportunity to get its consideration in the House.”

In 1908 Weeks introduced his first version of the bill, and refined it over the next two years. After final approval, the “Appalachian Bill,” or Weeks Act, authorizing federal purchase of private lands to protect watersheds, was signed by President William Howard Taft on March 1, 1911. Designation of White Mountain National Forest followed a few weeks later.

The key to surmounting a decade of stubborn “states’ rights” opposition to forestry legislation was basing its necessity on economics (i.e. the continued navigability of waterways), not on the subjective or “intrinsic value” of nature, conservation, or aesthetics. As a dollars-and-cents banker and businessman, J.W. Weeks knew how to successfully frame the argument.

As if in spite, Speaker of the House Joe Cannon abstained from voting on the final bill. By mid-1910 he had barely survived a revolt of House members, and lost the speakership in November of that year.

Shortly after the passage of the Weeks-Appalachian Bill, an editorial appeared in Forestry Magazine: “The passage of the bill is a notable triumph of enlightened public sentiment over political obstruction. … Forcefully and intelligently sustained, it may be the beginning of greater good to the people of the whole country than even its most ardent friends have claimed.”

For information on the history of the Weeks Act, and impact since its passage, visit www.foresthistory.org. For centennial year events, visit www.weekslegacy.org.

At the Weeks Brick House & Gardens annual meeting, the spirit of the Weeks Act will be reflected in guided walks through our own conservation lands. The guest speaker on Sunday, Aug. 7 is David Govatski, secretary of the Weeks Act Centennial Coordinating Committee. For the latest, visit www.WeeksBrickHouse.org.
Why we grow vegetables at the Weeks Brick House & Gardens

By Leslie Stevens, Master Gardener

When I first came to the Weeks House as the gardener in 2009, I suggested that, along with nurturing our well-known herb gardens, we create two Victory gardens in place of two large, well-established weed plots. We had resounding support for that plan and many board members spent an entire Saturday getting these gardens off to a good start.

From these gardens we have donated many pounds of tomatoes, zucchini, and yellow squash to the local food pantry during the last two growing seasons. Without a doubt the Victory Gardens have been a success, and as we enter our third year, I find myself more excited than ever that we are growing food along with our beautiful herb gardens.

So what is a Victory Garden? As many of you know, during World War I and II, the United States government asked its citizens to plant vegetable gardens in order to support the war effort and lead our country to “victory.” People listened, and in 1943 alone, Americans planted over 20 million Victory Gardens. The harvest, estimated to be 9-10 million tons, accounted for nearly one-third of all vegetables consumed in the country that year, an amount equal to all commercial production of fresh vegetables.

The message in these numbers is that, as small gardeners, we can make a huge difference. I am proud to say that the Weeks Brick House Victory Gardens have been doing this for several years already. Today our country is again facing a food crisis, but one of a different nature. Large scale agriculture and monoculture (growing only one thing) has created a lack of biodiversity, a rise in genetically-modified seed use, overuse of pesticides, pests immunity to pesticides, soil depletion, and many other long term problems. Foodborne illnesses are widespread. Fresh fruits and vegetables are unavailable to large portions of our inner cities. The process of planting, fertilizing, processing, packaging, and transporting our food uses a great deal of energy and contributes to our country’s

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“As small gardeners, we can make a big difference.”

– Leslie Stevens

Collections News:

Family donates a relic of 19th-century mourning: The ‘death mask’ of Dr. Cyrus Weeks (1806-1875)

By R.W. Bacon

In the fall of 2010 a descendant of Leonard Weeks, Ken McKenzie of Newtown, Conn., contacted the Weeks Brick House to arrange the donation of a family artifact that represents a 19th-century mourning practice that faded with advances in photography: the “death mask” casting.

The brothers Ken and David McKenzie personally delivered the life-size casting, and enjoyed a tour of the house and grounds. The casting is of Dr. Cyrus Weeks (1806-1875), a New York physician who was killed when he fell while trying to board a moving train at the Morris & Essex R.R. depot when he fell under the wheels.

Before the advent of photography, the death mask casting was a way that the living could preserve the image of their loved ones, and the practice extends back to antiquity. Possibly the most viewed death mask in the U.S. is that of President Abraham Lincoln on display at the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Other notable surviving death masks: Oliver Cromwell, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Peter the Great.

Dr. Cyrus Weeks was born in 1806 in Sanbornton, N.H., a son of Capt. Cole Weeks, who served in the War of 1812. He graduated from the Massachusetts Medical College of Harvard University in 1829, and the following year established his practice in New York City. One of his specialties was obstetric care, and his obituary in the Medical Record of October 1875 reported that although he attended more cases of labor than any other physician in the city, he was compensated for less than half due to his personal philosophy of benevolence. In the 1840s he was appointed to investigate the causes of the city’s typhus epidemics, and twice contracted cholera while working to stem epidemics of that disease.

Cyrus Weeks was also a writer, and contributed to the Knickerbocker Magazine and the New York Tribune – among his friends was the publisher, Horace Greeley.

Dr. Weeks died on September 20, 1875 on his way to his country house in Bloomfield, N.J. He was hurrying to board a moving train at the Morris & Essex R.R. depot when he fell under the wheels.

Dr. Weeks had three children with his first wife, Maria Child (1810-1849), including Dr. Grenville Weeks (1837-1919) the surgeon and Civil War veteran profiled on the Notable Ancestors section of the WBH web site. With his second wife, Caroline Coles, he had Caroline Maria Weeks (b. 1857), who married Kenneth McKenzie – leading forward in time to our descendant donors.

The Weeks Brick House & Gardens extends its thanks to the McKenzie family for the generous donation of this cultural and family artifact.
Why we grow vegetables at the WBH gardens …

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grown some fruits and vegetables that were demonstration items not designed to produce large yields. This year I plan to grow only popular, high-yielding vegetables that will be easy to store and desirable by those who visit the food pantry. I plan to keep track of the pounds of food donated and will report that number for our late fall newsletter. All vegetables are grown from organic seed either in my greenhouse or planted directly into the organically amended soil. No chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides are used. I also use farming methods that are sustainable, organic, good for the environment, and good for the structure of the soil, our most valuable resource.

As in previous years, I plan to have regular hours in the garden each week. Starting Friday, May 27, I will be in the gardens every Friday morning from 9-11 a.m. Also, I am always available by e-mail to answer any gardening questions. If you have any questions about your vegetables, perennials, fruits or trees, please feel free to send me your questions: marcarvan@comcast.net.

If I don’t know the answer I will know where to find it. As a certified Master Gardener, my job is to pass along research-based information to help people take care of their gardens, yards, and trees. As always thank you for your support. I look forward to seeing people at the Annual Meeting this year.

Leslie Stevens, Master Gardener

Calling all history buffs, old house enthusiasts, …

& Weeks descendants: Join us! We need all of you!

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 reproduction Colonial-era herb garden designed by noted author & garden historian Anne Leighton.
• A historic 17th-century farmstead at the gateway to the Town Landing, integral to the town’s early growth.
• … 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 you … to hike the trails … to work in the gardens … to tour the house and explore the farmstead’s history.

Fill out the form below, and send it with your payment. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that your support is helping to ensure preservation of the Weeks Brick House, and you’ll get our informative newsletter. Then we’ll see you at WBH!

Leslie Stevens, Master Gardener

www.WeeksBrickHouse.org

Weeks Brick House & Gardens Membership Form
(For Renewals and New Membership)

Name: _____________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________
City/Town: ___________________________ State: ______ Zip: ______
Phone: ____________________ E-mail: ______________________

Please indicate your preference:
Do you prefer e-mail newsletters? Y N  Do you wish to be listed in any future member directory? Y N

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: $ __________
Join us for this year’s events: Greenland Day July 16 & Annual Meeting Aug. 6 & 7

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calf & chickens … and possibly an encore by the sheep), an “Ask a Master Gardener” table with our own Master Gardener Leslie Stevens, a Weeks family genealogy table, Art-in-the Garden with a group of plein air artists in action, and a representative from the Winnicut River Watershed Association. We will have a table at the town green at which our volunteers will court attendees and direct interested folks to the activities at the Weeks Brick House.

For the most up-to-date information and schedule, visit the “events” page at www.WeeksBrickHouse.org.

This year’s Annual Meeting weekend, set for Saturday & Sunday, August 6 & 7, provides opportunities on both days to renew ties to family & friends, enjoy informative guided tours of both the 1710 house, and take a nature and wildlife walk along the hiking trails on our conservation land. And of course, all weekend you will enjoy the special experience of walking in the very footsteps of Weeks family progenitors.

This year, as part of our own recognition of the 1911 Weeks Act championed by John Wingate Weeks (an accomplished descendant of Leonard Weeks), the featured speaker on Sunday at Great Bay Discovery Center is David Govatski, the secretary of the Weeks Act Centennial Coordinating Committee, who has made it his mission leading up to the centennial to create public awareness of the legislation which has had such far-reaching impact.

David Govatski, retired from the U.S. Forest Service, has a B.S. in Forest Management from Unity College. Currently an independent forestry and natural resources consultant, he is on the board of WhiteMountainHistory.org and numerous environmental organizations. He lives in Jefferson, N.H.

Once again, for additional information as the date draws near, consult the “events” page at www.WeeksBrickHouse.org.

The Editor’s Two-Cents: Community engagement essential for sustainability

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year we were the venue for the Winnicut River Watershed Association festival, we were on the Portsmouth Garden Tour, and we had an antique tractor show on the grounds. This year’s events are noted elsewhere. Today if someone says “Weeks House, 1710. Who cares! What’s in it for me?”, we are ready with an answer: “Over 30 acres of open space, hiking trails, bird-watching in the summer, and snowshoeing in the winter. It’s the best-kept secret in Greenland! Here’s a trail map! Enjoy!”

Let’s look outward. Instead of looking inward and preaching to the already-converted, let’s look outward and help the local/regional community find something of value on our 33 acres, whether it be hiking or history. It may take time, but with aggressive follow-up and commitment to building local relationships, I believe it will result in new long-term local support for the Weeks Brick House & Gardens that will augment our descendant support.

So when I meet a newcomer at one of our events, it won’t be with the stone face of my beloved-but-taciturn Vermont Yankee mountain-man grandfather. I will be greeting that newcomer with a smile, a cold drink, … and a membership form.

I invite you to join with me and do the same every chance you get.

Note: The editor invites your two cents on the subject at rwbacon@comcast.net.