Chilly New England spring warms up nicely on clean-up day for gardens, grounds, & trails

WBH board volunteers aim to make gardens & grounds presentable, but much work remains

After the relatively mild winter of 2015-2016, the spring season in New England has been unseasonably cool. But on Wednesday, May 11, Weeks Brick House volunteers enjoyed sunny and mild weather for the annual garden and grounds clean-up day.

Was it cause or effect? With all the heavy hauling, huffing-and-puffing, chain-sawing, and stoop labor, it’s possible that the crew of six themselves assisted Mother Nature in elevating the temperature.

Board president Tom Ayres, arrived in the morning from Connecticut, as did board member Skip Weeks – and his chainsaw. Reg Bacon arrived from Massachusetts with a modest arsenal of landscaping tools. From various points in New Hampshire came Amanda Nelson and Cynthia Weeks Smith, with tools to tame the garden beds; and Steve Pike, with his usual reassuring full complement of tools and supplies – enough to build a house or engineer a moon landing.

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On this day Cynthia and Amanda were determined to triumph over the weeds in the herb garden beds, which had already gained an early-spring foothold. Great progress was made in the garden bed closest to the 1710 Weeks Brick House. But identifying and carefully separating the desirable herbs from the undesirable “weeds” is meticulous, yet laborious work, and much more work is needed. (For Portsmouth-Greenland area gardening enthusiasts, this is your opportunity to work continued on page 4

Weeks descendants & history fans welcome at Annual Meeting Weekend Sept. 10 & 11

The Weeks Brick House Annual Meeting Weekend dates are set, so go ahead and mark your calendar and plan to join us now: Saturday & Sunday, September 10 & 11, 2016.

Every year at Annual Meeting Weekend, Weeks descendants, local history enthusiasts, lovers of Colonial-era architecture, and Portsmouth/Greenland area friends join us for tours of the house and grounds, walks on our conservation land trails, and special programs.

Returning again this year is the perennial favorite, the Saturday wine & cheese social; and a new hit, the silent auction coordinated by board member Cathy Wescott.

At this writing, the guest speaker(s), programs, and other activities for Annual Meeting Weekend are still in the planning stages. When plans are firm, details will be posted at www.WeeksBrickHouse.org, and members will receive a hard-copy notice and registration form. Mark your calendar now for September 10 & 11, 2016! ■
Looking ‘under the hood’ of the WBH Facebook page:
Visitor statistics are revealing … and useful for planning

Have you visited the Weeks Brick House Facebook page in the last several months? If so, you probably factor into the statistics garnered via an “under-the-hood” peek at Facebook traffic by WBH board member Cathy Wescott.

Since last September, Cathy Wescott, an Ohio resident, and board member Amanda Nelson, a New Hampshire resident, have made a special effort to enliven the WBH Facebook presence with more frequent postings. On April 25, 2016, Cathy supplied a statistical overview of Facebook traffic since the beginning of the year. The facts, figures, and observations:

**Facebook fans**. We currently have 126 fans on Facebook, an increase of +22% since January 1, 2016.

**Facebook fan gender.** The WBH Facebook fan-base gender is 70% female, and 30% male.

**Facebook fan age.** The age of WBH Facebook fans breaks down as follows:
- 13-24, 4%;
- 25-34, 10%;
- 35-44, 22%;
- 45-54, 21%;
- 55-64, 19%;
- 65+, 24%.

**Facebook fan location.** Most fans are in the U.S., but we also have one fan from Australia.

Where’s the “love” coming from? Page “likes” since the beginning of the year have come from 33 of the United States. Of these, 43% came from New England.

Are we making an “impression”? Since the beginning of the year, the WBH has made an average of 727 “impressions” each week. (i.e. the number of views of any content associated with our page.)

**An audience participation initiative.** We’re proud to be Weeks descendants! In January, we began featuring the Weeks Brick House “Wall of Fame” on our Facebook page. We asked our fans which descendant of Leonard Weeks, past or present, deserves to be recognized on our Wall of Fame based on his or her accomplishments. If you would like to recognize someone who deserves this honor, submit your recommendation to Cathy Wescott at cathy_ayres@yahoo.com.

**Throwback Thursdays? Don’t miss “Throwback Thursdays” (#TBT) when we feature old photos of the Weeks Brick House. If anyone wants to submit old photos of the house from their collection, please scan and send them to Cathy Wescott at cathy_ayres@yahoo.com. (Editor’s note: I am at ease knowing that Throwback Thursday is for pictures of the house, and not a certain old-school editor.)

Visit WBH on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/WeeksBrickHouse/

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Thank you to ‘annual members’ and ‘life members’ for your support

We couldn’t last without you … and we need more of you!

A big Thank You is extended to our annual dues-paying members for 2016:

Rev. Ann Alters
Mr. Tom Ayres
Mr. Gary Bonney
Ms. Carol-Ann Breton
Mr. & Mrs. James Broadhead
Ms. Elsie Leiby Brown
Mr. & Mrs. John Burnquist
Mr. & Mrs. Frank & Karen Carnevale
Ms. Theresa Chase
Mr. Nicholas Davidge
Mr. & Mrs. James Day
Ms. Paula Doisneau
Mr. & Mrs. Peter O. Frisch
Ms. Deborah Griffin
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Guthrie
Ms. Nancy Halsall
Ms. Ethel Hamilton
Ms. Myrtle Hergemueller
Ms. Frances P. Hoel
Mr. Paul Hughes
Ms. Karen Johnsion
Mrs. George LaPointe
Ms. Bonnie Lawrence
Ms. Rita Ling
Ms. Anne Nelson
Ms. Carol Pugh
Ms. Susan F. Teich
Mr. Andrew W. Weeks

Mr. Frank E. Weeks (Santa Monica, Calif.)
Ms. Christine Weeks
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Weeks, Jr. (Marco Island, Fla.)
Mr. John W. Weeks (Rocky Hill, Conn.)
Mr. Kenneth Weeks, Jr.
Mr. Kenneth Weeks, III
Mr. & Mrs. William D. Weeks (Cohasset, Mass.)
Mr. William W. Weeks (Portland, Maine)
Mr. William W. Weeks, Jr. (Cumberland Foreside, Maine)
Ms. Cathy Wescott

An extra-special Thank You is extended to our life members:

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bast
Mrs. Nancy Jones
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Langan
Mrs. Betsy K. Smith
Mr. Patrick Smith
Mrs. Frederick Stam
Mr. Walter Thorn
Mr. & Mrs. Donald F. Weeks
Mr. Francis D. Weeks
Mr. Frank E. Weeks
Dr. & Mrs. George R. Weeks
Mr. & Mrs. John W. Weeks (Seattle, Wash.)
Mrs. John W. Weeks (Belmont, Mass.)
Miss Marcy Weeks
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen D. Weeks
Mr. & Mrs. William W. Weeks
Mr. Everett Mathias Weeks, Jr.
Mr. Kenneth W. Weeks, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Sinclair Weeks, Jr.
Mrs. Kitty Weeks White
Weeks Brick House History: Walter Weeks (1706-1774) & family

By R.W. Bacon

The Weeks family genealogist who first stumbles onto the Weeks Brick House & Gardens website strikes gold in its family history content. There is plenty of information about immigrant ancestor Leonard Weeks (1633-1707), and his son, Samuel Weeks (1670-1746), builder of the brick house in 1710.

But your editor and web content compiler did not want to spoil all the fun for the budding genealogical detective, and did not include encyclopedic information about every period of brick house occupancy. Therefore this article is the first in a series that will detail the later periods of ownership of the Weeks Brick House. This article introduces a son of Samuel Weeks, Walter Weeks (1706-1774). The content is paraphrased from 3½ Centuries in Greenland: The Weeks Brick House Farm of Greenland, N.H. by Neill DePaoli, Ph.D.

One year before his death in 1746, Samuel Weeks willed his house, property, and farmstead to his 40-year-old son Walter Weeks (1706-1774). At that time, the farm encompassed 80 acres of crop lands, grazing lands, woodlands, and salt marsh. The threat of Indian attacks had passed, and both the family and the local economy were growing. By 1746 Walter and his wife, his first cousin Comfort Weeks (1708-1786) (m. c. 1725), were parents of all but one of their 10 children.

Walter continued the family farmstead operations throughout his life. When he died at age 68 in 1774, he owned one horse, one ox, five cattle, 19 sheep, and four pigs — very likely fewer livestock assets than he owned earlier in an active life.

Records show that while Walter Weeks raised the usual range of crops found growing in most farms in the region, a major crop was hay, harvested on both sides of the present Rte. 33.

Records suggest that Walter Weeks responded to the market demands of his time in the production of apple cider, a much in-demand mild alcoholic beverage. Among his many land transactions in the region was the 1751 purchase of a 42-acre farmstead in Newmarket, N.H. which included a large apple orchard. In 1773, records indicate that two acres of the Weeks farmstead were devoted to an apple orchard, and that apple cider was produced on the site.

In addition to agricultural pursuits, Walter Weeks also owned a share of a sawmill on the Winnicut River, which he purchased from his uncle (and father-in-law), Joshua Weeks (1674-1758) in 1742. Walter Weeks was also active in local politics. He was elected as a Greenland selectmen in 1749 and 1750-1752, and served as the town clerk in 1749.

Dr. DePaoli gained further insight into Walter Weeks through the possessions of his wife upon her decease: She owned a number of silk, bombazine, chintz, and crepe gowns; and silk petticoats. Silver spoons, a silver cup, and silver snuff box were among her possessions.

Upon the death of Walter Weeks in 1774, the brick house and farmstead passed to his son, William Weeks (1743-1813).

Children of Walter Weeks (1706-1744) and Comfort (Weeks) Weeks (1708-1786) (Verify, verify, verify!):

(1) Sarah Weeks (1727-1795)
(2) Samuel Weeks (1728-c.1790)
(3) Walter Weeks (1730-1758)
(4) Richard Weeks (1732-1736)
(5) Comfort Weeks (1734-1741)
(6) Elinor Weeks (c.1735-aft. 1760?)
(7) Ichabod Weeks (1738-1807)
(8) William Weeks (1743-1813)
(9) Martha Weeks (1744-1812)
(10) Thankful Weeks (1748-aft. 1768?)

Spring clean-up report …
continued from page 1
in a garden conceived by Anne Leighton (Isadore Smith, 1902-1985), America’s foremost garden historian. Your efforts will further her legacy … and your own! Contact us at weeksbrickhouse@aol.com.

In the morning Steve Pike and Tom Ayres fanned out from the gardens to selectively prune branches from the surrounding fruit trees, while Skip Weeks used his chainsaw to cut fallen limbs around the grounds down to size. Later Skip cut down a tall, spindly, dead tree along the driveway, as almost every spring some thinning in this area is required.

Reg Bacon, unchained from his computer and liberated from his desk for the first time in weeks, was eager for the change-of-pace of invigorating manual labor, so he was glad to serve in his perfectly-suited role as designated donkey-worker – the tree, brush, and log hauler for-a-day.

As the sun moved higher in the sky, Steve Pike turned attention to the split-rail fence that surrounds the garden. This fence is weathered to the extreme – its rails are progressing steadily to toothpick status. Steve’s ingenuity will yield another year of use out of the existing rails and posts.

After a solid aerobic warm-up hauling tree limbs with gusto, Reg Bacon was drafted to turn his snarling tenacity loose on a thorny and wildly out-of-control rosebush in the middle of a garden bed. This was the bloodiest work of the day, as the half-inch long thorns penetrated his leather gloves and even snatched the hat from his head. Answering for that indignity, the rosebush now stands as just a stubby, woody, thornless mass. But to be sure, the bush will return with a show of life’s force, and likely draw blood again next year.

More garden work remains! For garden enthusiasts, this is an opportunity to work in a garden conceived by Anne Leighton, America’s foremost garden historian. Your efforts will further her legacy … and your own! Interested? Contact us at weeksbrickhouse@aol.com.

In the photo at left, the weeds don’t stand a chance against the efforts of Amanda Nelson and Cynthia Weeks Smith.

At right, longtime Weeks Brick House board member Steve Pike leans in for some brush cutting along the walking trails on our 30 acres of conservation land.

While much work remains in the garden and on the grounds, the walking trails on our 30 acres of permanent conservation land also required attention. In the afternoon Steve Pike and Reg Bacon lugged a chainsaw, brush-cutter, and other tools along all the trails, stopping to cut and clear away fallen trees and other obstacles from the path. Steve cut the trees down to manageable-sized logs with his chainsaw, and Reg heaved them off the trail and into the woods as if training for the Scottish Highland Games (… senior division).

Once again, the annual spring clean-up was a day of accomplishment, but more work remains. Interested garden and grounds volunteers are welcome to contact us at weeksbrickhouse@aol.com. For those admirers of the grounds from farther afield, come visit the old homestead and see the result of our labors on Annual Meeting Weekend, Saturday & Sunday, September 10 & 11, 2016.