

News of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens



1710 HISTORIC HOUSE • GARDENS • TRAILS • CONSERVATION LAND
Weeks Ave. (off Rte. 33) • P. O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840
603-436-8147 • www.WeeksBrickHouse.org

FALL 2014

A publication of Leonard Weeks & Descendants in America, Inc., a non-profit organization formed in 1975 to preserve the historic Weeks family house and farmstead.

Annual Meeting draws descendants from near & far for house tours, genealogy talk, & panel discussion



From the Archives. The Weeks Brick House in winter, with the utilitarian horse-drawn sledge in the foreground, is the subject of this c. 1903 photo from the Weeks Brick House archives. This winter season photo affords an unobstructed view of the ell off the back of the main house, as well as the complex of attached barns. The barns and the ell were consumed by fire in 1938. Today, several charred beams remain as evidence in the attic of the 1710 brick house.

With the 40th anniversary of saving the house coming up, we seek your memories & photos

Back in 1975, when Weeks family descendants organized to purchase the 1710 Weeks Brick House and farmstead to save it from development, it was a bold preservation triumph of the highest order.

Now, as we plan for the 40th anniversary of the occasion to be celebrated at next year's **Annual Meeting on Sept. 19-20, 2015**, we seek your memories of early efforts and meetings, and any photos you may have of the earlier years of our organization. We hope to use the materials to create exhibitions or programs. Contact

the Weeks Brick House & Gardens at P. O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840, 603-436-8147, or at weeksbrickhouse@aol.com.

Of course, we also seek the presence of you and your family to celebrate those early preservation efforts. **Mark your calendar now and plan to join us on Sept. 19-20, 2015.** ■

— Renew & Contribute Today! —
2015 DUES ARE DUE
— See Page 3 —

A Saturday highlight: Chilly drizzle results in a huddle of cozy cousins inside our 1710 house

The 2014 Annual Meeting of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens on Sept. 13-14 drew Weeks descendants and friends from across New England and New York – an attendance that was heartening to all in light of the recent drop-off in family membership support.

Early arrivals on Saturday enjoyed guided tours of our 1710 brick house that imparted information about exterior and interior architectural and structural features.

Attendees also toured the gardens and the trails winding through our 30-plus acres of conservation land.

On Saturday afternoon many registrants departed for South Berwick, Maine for a tour of the 1774 Sarah Orne Jewett House, a Historic New England property.

Late Saturday afternoon and into the evening, the Wine & Cheese Social, usually held outdoors on the grounds and in the garden, was moved indoors thanks to an

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From the President:

Annual Meeting report: “Our biggest challenge continues to be the significant dropoff in membership”

This past year has been very quiet at the Weeks Brick House & Gardens. The house had tenants for the entire year, so our income was consistent for basic maintenance and for paying our bills.

Cynthia Smith continues to provide her critical role in watching over the house and grounds. As treasurer, she provides our board of directors with expert guidance to hold our expenses to a minimum. She handles requests from the tenants in addition to the routine maintenance needs. I really cannot say enough positive things about the most important role Cynthia plays and the wonderful support that she provides to our organization.

Steve Pike continues to provide his usual fine job of managing the maintenance of the house, grounds and trails. His spring report early this year provided detailed information on the trails, grounds and house clean-up and maintenance needs. Unfortunately, we have only a few members of our board of directors to handle these “sweat equity” jobs. We could really use more volunteers from the Portsmouth area to assist with these activities.

If the descendants of Leonard Weeks are no longer willing to support the Weeks Brick House, what are our alternatives?

– Tom Ayres

Reg Bacon continues to provide his excellent Weeks Brick House & Gardens newsletters and the maintenance of our website. In addition, he is our point person with Historic New England. For those of you who enjoyed our visit to the Sarah Orne Jewett House Museum, which is owned by Historic New England, you may want to thank Reg for this opportunity.

Our biggest challenge continues to be the significant dropoff in membership, as I reported last year. We depend heavily on membership dues to support our historic brick house and grounds. Once again, we have postponed a chimney repair, at an estimated cost of \$12,000, due to a lack of funds. We are hoping that this year’s panel discussion on “Looking Back to 1975” will stimulate additional interest and financial support for our organization. If the descendants of Leonard Weeks are no longer willing to support the Weeks Brick House, what are our alternatives? Your thoughts and comments would be appreciated. ■

**Respectfully submitted,
Thomas D. Ayres, President
Weeks Brick House & Gardens**

Weeks Brick House rolls out the red (brick) carpet to welcome new tenants to Greenland’s 1710 icon

In late fall 2014 the Weeks Brick House & Gardens welcomed new tenants to its 1710 house at Greenland’s earliest center.

The family of four, with background and familiarity in Greenland, includes two children – the first time in several years that children have been able to enjoy the year-round stimulating surroundings of the original Leonard Weeks homestead acreage.

When the Descendants of Leonard Weeks, Inc. acquired the house in 1975, the idea of renting a historic “museum artifact” house as a residence was a forward thinking

– and in some circles “revolutionary” – idea. Since that time, and especially in recent years, renting to tenants willing to embrace the role of unofficial onsite stewards has become accepted as a legitimate way to financially sustain a historic property for the benefit of future generations. In 1975 the Weeks Brick House was among those organizations leading the way with this strategy, which has proven itself thus far.

As we have since 1975, we welcome our newest tenants as partners-in-preservation at the Weeks Brick House. ■

Annual Meeting summary ...

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inhospitable chilly September drizzle. This proved to be a bonus in facilitating social interaction, as board members, friends, and Weeks descendants were packed into the historic house elbow-to-elbow – a veritable convention of cozy cousins.

On Sunday, meeting activities shifted to the Great Bay Discovery Center. Featured this year was a panel discussion about the formative years of Leonard Weeks and Descendants in America, Inc., the organization that saved the house from

development in 1975. This conjured up visions of the days when 200-400 people from across the U.S. attended our annual meetings. The well-received program was a preview of next year’s 40th anniversary.

Following a lunch prepared by Mary Groebner, Cynthia Weeks, and Amanda Nelson, WBH president Tom Ayres opened the business meeting, which included the treasurer’s report (fortunately holding even with rental income, but with an anemic bank balance), president’s report (see above), the re-election of directors and officers, and adjournment ... to look to the year ahead. ■

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Please send articles, letters, news items, and corrections to the editor:
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The Weeks Mine of Wakefield, N.H.: Is there gold in them thar hills?!??

By R.W. Bacon, Editor

Recent issues of the *News of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens* have reminded all of us about the decline in support experienced by small non-profit history, museum, and preservation organizations everywhere.

So when your editor came across a reference to the Weeks Mine in Wakefield, N.H., I wondered if I should get out my hammer and chisel and go a-mining. Maybe I could “strike it rich” for our organization, help support our “gem” of a historic house, and still have enough left over for the \$2.00 highway toll to get home. I decided to further investigate the Weeks Mine for possibilities, and of course go “mining” for its background and origins.

But upon devoting some time to the investigation, I concluded that I would not be hitting a vein of gold *in the mine*, and *outside of the mine*, I wouldn’t be able to excavate rock-solid information, either.

The Weeks Mine, also known as the Ham & Weeks Mine, and the Province Lake Quarry, is located off Pickpocket Road in Wakefield, N.H. Wakefield is bounded on the east by Newfield, Maine, and is about 50 miles northeast of the capital city of Concord, N.H. The Weeks Mine opened as a commercial entity in 1877, with about three acres devoted to extracting mica for use in stove windows and lamp chimneys. As the depth of the

mining increased, flooding from an underground spring outpaced water-pumping capacity, which brought an end to mining at the site. After a period of inactivity, the mine supplied mica for gas masks during World War One. In the 1930s the mine opened again, this time to supply mica for crystal radio sets. During WWII the U.S. Bureau of Mines conducted

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an extensive sampling of the site, riddling the area with pits, trenches, and deep jackhammer holes. Subsequently they pumped water from one of the flooded pits and quarried a quantity of beryl.

At the Weeks Mine, just as at many small mining sites in New Hampshire with granitic pegmatite deposits, dozens of useful, attractive, and valuable minerals abound. Minerologists who have explored the mine in recent years especially note the feldspar and beryl, although many other minerals can be found – too many multi-syllabic tongue-twisters to list. [A fine reference on the Weeks Mine for interested minerologists is *Rockhounding New England: A Guide to 100 of the Region’s Best Rockhounding Sites*, by Peter Christofono (Globe Pequot Press, 2014).] The effort to get to the minerals that remain, however, is considerable. Today

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Above is a photo looking down through the trees of minerologists from the Maine Mineralogical and Geological Society exploring the open pit of the Weeks Mine in Wakefield, N.H. The site is also known as the Ham & Weeks Mine, and the Province Lake Quarry.

www.WeeksBrickHouse.org

Weeks Brick House & Gardens Membership Form

(For Renewals and New Membership)

— Renew & Contribute Today! —
2015 DUES ARE DUE

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

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: \$ _____

The Weeks Mine ...

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the long-inactive mine is privately owned and leased to the Maine Mineralogical and Geological Society. Access is restricted to members and guests, who can use hand tools only to extract minerals from the open pit, from May to October.

The burning curiosity about the Weeks Mine, of course, is "Who is the Weeks family member whose name is attached to it?" An Internet search reveals many posts about the mine from minerology enthusiasts, but little in the way of origins or history. *The History of Carroll County, New Hampshire*, by Georgia Drew Merrill (1889), touches on various mill-related industries, but mentions no mining enterprises. Writing of Wakefield's history, Ms. Merrill did offer this example of Yankee understatement: "The records of Wakefield are in spots quite bare."

A search of the U.S. census throughout the 19th century identifies numerous Weeks family households in the town through the decades, with all identified simply, and predictably, as farmers. It is likely that one of these farmers also discovered what would become geological assets, but that cannot be derived from the census records. It is the land records that are most likely to eventually tell the tale.

The scant history of the mine presented by the the Maine Mineralogical and Geological Society states that "after a trip to the mining regions of Colorado, Samuel

B. Ames, who was his grandfather's namesake, formed the Mineral Hill Mining Corporation on August 7, 1877 to explore for minerals on his grandfather's farm. Shares were sold to buy equipment and mining rights in the area. Shortly after formation of the corporation, a shaft to 118 feet and possibly two other shafts plus an adit were opened (Maine Mining Journal, 1880)."

This information put your editor on the hunt for Samuel B. Ames – and his grandfather of the same name. It is likely that the grandfather was Samuel B. Ames of Brookfield, N.H. (1811-1900), who was born in Parsonfield, Maine and died in Wakefield, N.H. It is possible that this "grandfather's farm" was in some Weeks family at one time, another question for further inquiry.

The Weeks family was numerous in Wakefield, N.H. through the 19th-century

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period of the Weeks Mine. The first of the family in Wakefield, John Weeks (1747-1832), was on the town's tax list in 1795. He was born in Greenland in 1747, descended from his father Leonard Weeks (1725-1761), grandfather Joseph Weeks (1671-1735), and great-grandfather Leonard Weeks (1633-1707). This first John Weeks in Wakefield married Deborah Allen (1752-1831), with whom he had eight children. It is possible that any one of these children, or someone from the next generations – likely a male carrying the surname – may be the individual associated with the Weeks Mine in Wakefield, N.H.:

- Levi Weeks (1773-1811)
- Deborah Weeks (1776-?)
- John Weeks (1778-1842)
- Margaret Weeks (1781-?)
- Elizabeth Weeks (1783-1841)
- Phineas Weeks (1786-1859)
- Nathan Weeks (1788-1872)
- Caleb Weeks (1793-1844)

(*Leonard Weeks of Greenland, N.H. and Descendants*, by Jacob Chapman, 1889).

Unfortunately this investigative exercise will lead to no vein of gold at the Weeks Mine or elsewhere. But certainly if any readers can provide further information on the connection of the Weeks family name to the mine, don't hesitate to pass it on to us at the Weeks Brick House so we might share a more complete story of the mine's origins in a future issue. Send any information about the Weeks Mine to your editor: rwbacon@comcast.net. ■

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