

## Introduction

The Weeks Brick House in Greenland, N.H., built in 1710 by Samuel Weeks (1670-1746) and subsequently occupied by nine generations of the family, is among the earliest brick houses in New England. The farmstead established in 1656 by Leonard Weeks (1633-1707) remained in the family for over 300 years. Today the 33-acre farmstead includes conservation land laced with walking trails for public enjoyment.

The simple red brick house is set back from busy Rte. 33 in Greenland, N.H., about five miles southwest of downtown Portsmouth. When the house and farmstead were rescued from commercial development in 1975, the solution for economic stability and responsible preservation was to rent the home to residential tenants, a strategy that proved successful and continues today.

Although the Weeks Brick House is on the National Register of Historic Places, it is not a museum house open for public visitation. Therefore *The Visitor's Guide to the Weeks Brick House & Gardens* aims to help history, architecture, and genealogy enthusiasts make the most of their visit to *the grounds around the house*, which is accessible to all. (The following reminder will be repeated many times throughout this guide: "Please respect tenant privacy. Thank you!")

*The Visitor's Guide to the Weeks Brick House & Gardens* will help you experience the house and farmstead property in multiple ways. On your visit, the self-guided exterior architectural tour will give you an up-close look at early-18th-century

brick construction. You'll learn how the house survived two earthquakes and a fire. You'll see the "bones" of a re-created colonial-era garden and orchard designed by noted garden historian and author Ann Leighton (Isadore Smith). You'll walk in the footsteps of generations of Weeks family farmers. When you hike the trails north toward the Winnicut River, you'll imagine an era when the Town Landing at the end of Tide Mill Road was the town's gateway to Portsmouth, Boston, New York, and the world beyond.

After all that, then you'll wonder how the farmstead and the brick house, which today sit less than 100 yards from Rte. 33 and its bustling ambiance of 20th-century suburbia, survived in their present form for our continued enjoyment and edification. In brief, after the property was sold out of the family in 1968, it was ultimately preserved by the proactive efforts of a core of Weeks family descendants. In 1975 a non-profit foundation was formed, and after nationwide fundraising, the organization purchased the house and farmstead, averting its development into a housing subdivision.

Since that time, Leonard Weeks and Descendants in America, Inc., primarily an organization of far-flung descendants, and its board of directors, an evolving, revolving, all-volunteer assemblage of descendants, local history enthusiasts, community members, preservationists, and museum professionals, has maintained its attentive stewardship.

Just a few highlights from the last 40 years of preservation and care include:

- **1975.** The Weeks Brick House was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **1977.** The house was distinguished by the design and planting of a re-created Colonial-era herb garden.
- **1992.** A conservation easement was conveyed to the Town of Greenland and State of New Hampshire, permanently preserving 31 acres of meadow and woodland behind the 3-acre lot of the Weeks Brick House.

- **2001.** Volunteers cleared walking trails and built foot-bridges on our conservation lands for public use.
- **2003-2007.** A archaeologist was engaged for research, an on-site dig, and follow-up interpretation.
- **1975-present.** The board maintains relationships with first-class preservation carpenters and masons to identify and prioritize building maintenance and conservation.
- **Annually since 1975.** The Weeks Brick House & Gardens welcomes descendants, history enthusiasts, and community members alike to its annual meetings in late summer to enjoy tours, guest speakers, and social events.

Additional details about stewardship – *and about how you can help secure the future of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens* – will be found throughout the ensuing pages, particularly on page 60.

Meanwhile, enjoy your visit to this venerable architectural, historical, and family history treasure.

– Reginald W. Bacon  
Newburyport, Mass.  
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