



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Weir Farm National Historic Site
735 Nod Hill Road
Wilton, CT 06897



Weir Farm Art Center
735 Nod Hill Road
Wilton, CT 06897

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Weir Farm National Historic Site
Superintendent Linda Cook

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Weir Farm NHS
735 Nod Hill Road
Wilton, CT 06897

Site Information

203 834-1896
www.nps.gov/wefa

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Field Notes

Special thanks to the volunteers who helped with the December Stone Wall Restoration Workshop, and for those of you who came back later to continue the work.

We look forward to having many of you assist in the gardens this coming year. We have set aside specific times for horticultural training and work with volunteers. Also, on June 2, 2007, we will celebrate National Trails Day. We already have a group signed up to come and help with maintenance and vegetation management along the trails. As always, we could really use your assistance that day.

If you would like to help us out on one of our work days, please contact Greg at (203) 544-9829 x 11.

Gardening
Thursdays
9:00 a.m.

Stone Wall Repair and Trail Work
Fridays
12:30 p.m.

Visitor Center Hours of Operation

May through October:

The Visitor Center is open Wednesday through Sunday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tour Schedule

Landscape / Studio Tours:

Wednesday through Saturday at 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Sunday at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Stone Wall Tours:

Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

The grounds are open daily from dawn to dusk. Admission and tours are offered to the public free of charge.



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The Land of Nod

Weir was the most human and lovable of men, and the very essence of his art – what makes it great, what will make it immortal – is its warm and glowing humanity.

Duncan Phillips
Founder of The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art

When Stephen T. Mather, first director of the National Park Service, envisioned the mission of the units of the system, he hammered home his belief that parks are national assets. A recent report released by the National Parks and Conservation Association restates this point: parks generate at least four dollars for state and local economies in return for every one tax dollar invested in the national parks' annual budget. In some parks, like Acadia NP in Maine, the annual return to cost ratio is 14 to 1. "This economic study provides hard evidence that national parks generate tremendous value for our economy, and our communities," said NPCA President Tom Kiernan. "National parks improve our economy, and our quality of life.... We need to take care of the national parks that take care of us," Kiernan said.

Weir Farm NHS is integrated into a local community that shares many of the same interests: art, landscape, natural quiet, beautiful scenery, orchards, gardens, stone walls, and historic houses. The park is proud to work with over 50 small local businesses and contributes to the state and regional goals of land conservation, cultural heritage, environmental responsibility, energy efficiency and employment. We preserve 16 historic buildings and 60 acres of local landscape with nine staff members, many cherished volunteers and an equal number of highly valued partners and stewardship organizations.

National Park Week is April 22 to April 29 this year. As always, we hope to see you in the park soon.

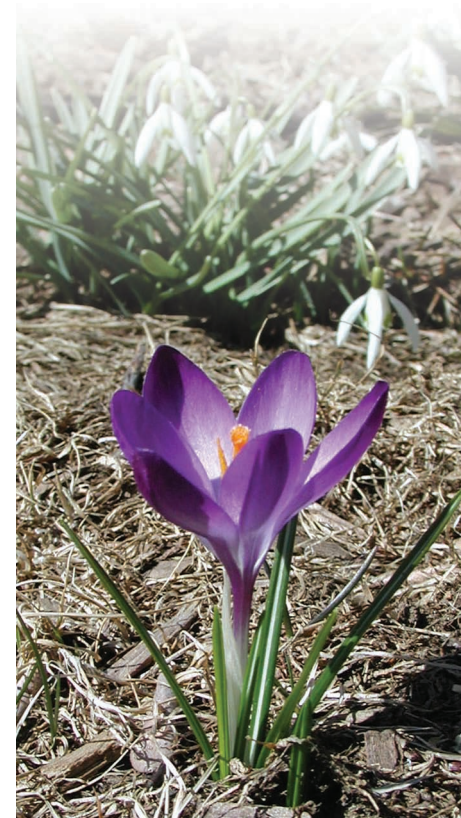
Superintendent Linda Cook

Life Among Letters

Grace Goodwin was a relatively new volunteer at Weir Farm NHS when in 1997 she joined a team of museum staff, student interns, and volunteers to transcribe (or "translate," as she likes to put it), a large collection of Weir Family letters, diaries, and notebooks that had recently come into the park's museum collection. This extensive archive was a true treasure trove of information on the lives of Julian Alden Weir and his family, including their lives here at Branchville. It came into the collection at a time when many of the park's planning documents—things like its General Management Plan, Cultural Landscape Report, Historic Structures Report, Historic

Furnishings Plan, were being researched and written. The group of transcribers was tasked with pulling important information from the letters to help guide the park in its planning and in the writing of these documents.

Grace quickly distinguished herself in this endeavor as an amazing interpreter of Mr. Weir's handwriting – handwriting that to many of us is almost indecipherable. Starting with his diaries and notebooks, written 1873 to 1915, she went on to transcribe hundreds of letters. She has transcribed letters to and from Weir and many family members and friends, including letters written during his student years in the 1870s in Paris to his (continued on page 2)



Life Among Letters

(continued from page 1)



Volunteer Grace Goodwin at work in the curatorial office transcribing letters.

parents. She has also transcribed many letters written to and from other family members and friends during the time period 1873 to 1918.

Most recently, Grace has been working on full transcriptions of “love letters” Weir wrote in 1882 to Anna Dwight Baker, the woman who became his wife in April of 1883. On a January day in 1882, Anna had accompanied her close friend to a drawing class Weir was teaching. According to an account written many years later by their daughter Dorothy Weir Young, “when she came to Julian’s studio that winter day she was wearing deep mourning for her father, who had died the previous February. As she took off her little black bonnet, with its long crepe veil and settled down to her given task, Julian realized that he had at last met his fate.” Ernestine Fabbri, the friend who had brought Anna to class, wrote, “it was for him a coup de foudre... we at once saw that he had been hard hit.”



Excerpts from the Anna Dwight Baker Weir Papers

Since you left I feel as one cast on a barren island – although I see and talk to many persons, somehow New York is robbed of its charm and I shall busy myself in work....

J. Alden Weir writing from New York, NY, to Anna Dwight Baker Weir in Windham, CT, April 26, 1882

How I would love to be with you. Your letters are read and reread & they charm me.... what would I not give to be there to walk with you & breathe the same air and admire the same things.... Keep a large place in your heart, my dearest Anna. I am trusting soon to see your dear face. Believe me always yours, Julian

J. Alden Weir writing from New York, NY, to Anna Dwight Baker Weir in Windham, CT, April 30, 1882

“Oh! That I had the wings of a dove” I should certainly fly this evening to you & walk with you in the beautiful moonlight. I came down here to my quiet studio to write you, where none can come and disturb me – the moon is shining in my little room & I have just been in there to look at it after reading over your letter which I received this morning. If you knew how I enjoy the sight of your letter, you would allow not one day to go by without writing if even a few lines.”

J. Alden Weir writing from New York, NY, to Anna Dwight Baker Weir in Windham, CT, May 1, 1882

I am seated in my quiet studio, the rain & wind moaning against my large window & I alas! so filled with thoughts of you, that as I read Romeo & Juliet I feel that my case is akin and in his words I write my thoughts. “O blessed, blessed night all this is but a dream, too flattering – sweet to be substantial.”

I came down here to write many letters tonight but after looking long on your picture I brought down book after book, recollecting pieces written by the great poets which would apply to you....

I look forward to painting with you this summer with the greatest pleasure in the world. I only wish that the knot was tied and all my agreements broken, that we might flee to some quiet place somewhere in Europe, where we would be surrounded by the glories of art & be left alone.

J. Alden Weir writing from New York, NY, to Anna Dwight Baker Weir in Windham, CT, May 13, 1882

The Land of Nod: The name given to the Branchville property by J. Alden Weir and his artist friends. Both Weir and Childe Hassam used the phrase to title works that were inspired by the local landscape. Hildegard Cummings, in her essay Art and Nature in the Landscapes of Nod, affirms that Weir “and his friends delighted in the serendipitous allusion to the mythical land of pleasant dreams.”

Weir Farm Art Center

The Weir Farm Art Center staff and volunteers are excited about this, the 125th Anniversary year of Weir Farm. In 1882, Julian Alden Weir traded a painting for what was then known as the Beers Farm, this beautiful acreage that has been so well tended by the Weir Farm National Historic Site staff for more than fifteen years. To celebrate the anniversary and to further the Weir Farm Art Center mission, we have announced several new programs.

In March, we inaugurated the *Adair Burlingham Memorial Lectures*. Each year we will invite three noted art historians to speak about historical and contemporary subjects. The first series included Joan Kaskell, our hometown art historian and Lecturer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, on *Food in Art*; Robin Jaffe Frank, Senior Associate Curator of American Art at the Yale University Art Gallery, on *American Portrait Miniatures*; and Liza Kirwin, Curator of Manuscripts at the Archives of American Art in Washington, DC, on *Illustrated Artists’ Letters*.

On June 10, the Art Center will present the *Ridgefield Roadshow* at the Lounsbury House of the Ridgefield Community Center. Independent appraisers, some of whom are known from their appearances on PBS’s Antiques Roadshow, will be present to assess furniture, Asian art, jewelry, painting and decorative art. While adults are busy inside the mansion, children will be entertained with games, crafts, clowns, jugglers, ice cream, hot dogs and popcorn on the sprawling lawn. In conjunction with this biennial fundraising event, the winner of the playhouse raffle will be announced, and many merchants in downtown Ridgefield will donate a percentage of their sales on June 8, 9, and 10 to the Weir Farm Art Center.

In April, the Weir Farm Art Center will launch its first website. This important addition to the Art Center’s operations will allow us to consolidate information about our programs, membership, residencies, classes, gift shop and donations. Look for us soon at www.weirfarmartcenter.org.

The first annual *Weir Award* winner will be named this year. This monetary award will be given to an established artist. In return, each award winner will be asked to donate a work for auction at the Art Center’s biennial gala. The 2007 Weir Award winner will be announced later this year.

On Sight, our new exhibition series, comprises three exhibitions per year. The 125th Anniversary year is devoted to J. Alden Weir, with *Weir on Paper*, from March 1 to June 17, *Weir Women*, June 27 to September 16, and watercolors by Truman Seymour (Weir’s brother-in-law), September 27 to January 6. Almost all the works seen in these shows are drawn from the personal collections of extended Weir family members.

Beginning in March, Weir Farm Art Center members are invited to the Artist in Residence *Open Studios*. Each month, the resident artist will informally discuss the work they have created at Weir Farm NHS. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about contemporary art, and how the Artist in Residence program fulfills our mission of sustaining the creative legacy of J. Alden Weir.

We hope that our growing Weir Farm Art Center audience will participate in all these new programs, enroll children in Art Explorer classes, attend *Jazz in the Garden* – a twelve-year-old tradition scheduled for September 9, and our Gift Shop Sale and Holiday Family Party in December. These are exciting times at Weir Farm NHS!

Executive Director Daphne A. Deeds



125th Anniversary Celebration:

Exhibitions:

ON SIGHT: Weir on Paper

March 1, 2007 to June 17, 2007

Featuring watercolors, etchings and drawings by J. Alden Weir

ON SIGHT: Weir Women

June 27, 2007 to September 16, 2007

Featuring artwork of the women in J. Alden Weir’s life

ON SIGHT: Truman Seymour

September 26, 2007 to January 6, 2008

Featuring artwork by Weir’s brother-in-law and civil war veteran

The 2007 ON SIGHT Exhibitions are held in the Burlingham House Visitor Center at Weir Farm NHS. They are sponsored by William and Marianne Buchanan.

Events:

National Trails Day

Saturday, June 2, 2007

Weir Farm NHS

Come and join the National Park Service as we repair and restore our trails

Weir Days

June 8-10, 2007

Downtown Ridgefield, CT

Support the Weir Farm Art Center by shopping at downtown Ridgefield stores

Ridgefield Roadshow

Sunday, June 10, 2007

Lounsbury House, Ridgefield, CT

Art appraisals and children’s activities

Art Explorer Program for Children

July 5, 2007 to August 17, 2007

Weir Farm NHS

Kids ages 6 to 12 explore the landscape of the farm through painting and sculpture

Jazz in the Garden

Sunday, September 9, 2007

Weir Farm NHS

Outdoor jazz concert among the gardens