



The Land of Nod

As you drive up Nod Hill Road from Ridgefield, you can't miss the new roof and restoration of the Ice House. This whimsical little building was both ice house and chicken coop over the years and its preservation marks the beginning of a number of projects getting started this winter.

First, the rehabilitation of the Weir House and studios is finally underway! Over the next several months, new electric, plumbing, heating systems, and fire detection and suppression systems will be installed in these historic buildings. This is the first step in a comprehensive project that will restore the buildings inside and out. Once the structural work is complete, the house and studios will be refurbished with many original objects that are currently in storage. In addition, new accessible paths will make sure that all visitors can move throughout a greater portion of the park. Note though, that these buildings will be closed to the public through spring. If you are planning to visit be sure to call ahead and talk to the rangers about the tour schedule.

Across the street, the new artist-in-residence studio will soon be under way. The studio project is a combination of restoration and new construction. The design is based on the original barn that once stood there. The park is grateful to the Weir Farm Art Center for the generous donation of both the design by Faesy-Smith Architects and part of the construction funds. The studio is one of 76 Centennial Projects awarded to celebrate the National Park Service's 100th Anniversary in 2016.

Weir Farm National Historic Site is a wonderland in late fall and winter. The changing light, dustings of snow, and silhouetted trees make the farm the perfect place for winter walks or sketching the winter landscape as Weir once did. Give us a call though if you are planning a visit, we know that parts of the park will be closed and availability will change weekly.

See you soon and Happy New Year,
Superintendent Linda Cook

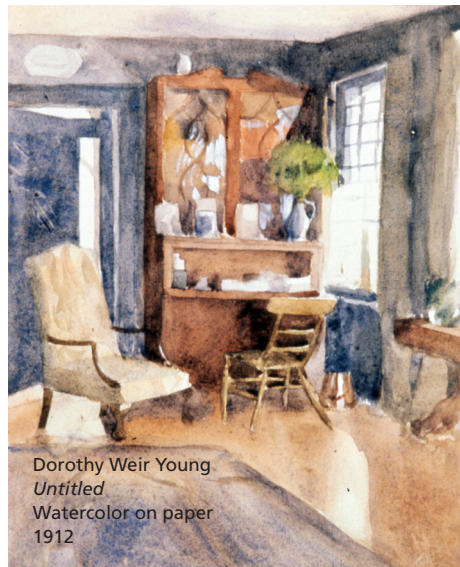


Rendering of new artist-in-residence studio under construction at Weir Farm National Historic Site.

Preservation and Protection Currently on Exhibit

From September to February, *Preservation and Protection: Conservation of Art at Weir Farm National Historic Site* will be on exhibit in the visitor center gallery. The exhibition features recently conserved, historic artwork from the Weir Farm National Historic Site

collection by J. Alden Weir, his father Robert Walter Weir, Mahonri Young (J. Alden Weir's son-in-law), and Weir's daughters Caroline Weir Ely and Dorothy Weir Young. Some of the artwork featured in the exhibit has never been on display before, including a J. Alden Weir watercolor of his Branchville, Conn. home and a large pastel drawing which served as a study for a mural Weir executed for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Also included in the exhibit is *Spring Landscape, Branchville*, a small watercolor that Weir was inspired to paint on his first visit to the Branchville farm in 1882.



Dorothy Weir Young
Untitled
Watercolor on paper
1912

Watercolor of the Weir House living room by Dorothy Weir Young.

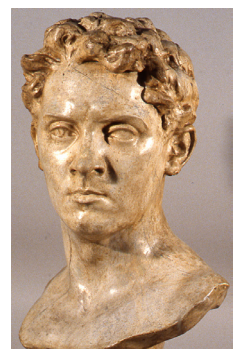
The current exhibit will be replaced by an exhibit focusing on the work of sculptor Mahonri Young, husband of Dorothy Weir Young and son-in-law of J. Alden Weir. Although Young is known primarily for his sculpture, he enjoyed painting and etching as well and the exhibit will provide a unique opportunity to view a variety of his work which is in private collections.

Conservation Corner

After being cleaned, filled, and toned, the plaster bust of J. Alden Weir has been returned to Weir Farm National Historic Site! The bust, created in 1880 by Weir's friend, sculptor Olin Levi Warner, was a preliminary study for a bronze bust which won a Paris Salon Award for Sculpture in 1881. A critic for the *New York Times* wrote in 1880 that the bust was "...the finest, most virile piece of work yet exhibited in New York." National Park Service conservators at the Collections Conservation Branch in Lowell, Mass. performed the work.



Bust of J. Alden Weir before conservation.



Bust of J. Alden Weir after conservation.

Happy 300th Ridgefield, Connecticut!



Marc Chabot, Weir Farm volunteer and artist, posing as J. Alden Weir on the Weir Farm float.

The town of Ridgefield, Conn. celebrated its 300th Anniversary this year and Weir Farm National Historic Site was excited about getting involved in the celebration! We really enjoyed participating in the Anniversary Parade on July 5th. The float we created showed an artist of the past and an artist in the present, painting from the same Weir Farm landscape. It illustrated the enduring connection between the landscape of the farm and the art that it has inspired. The float was made of natural plant material that was reused after the parade to further enhance the beautiful landscape of the farm. Over 3,000 residents attended the parade and we even won an award for the most creative float! We also participated in the town's Tercentennial Letterboxing Event. Twenty-one locations

were chosen throughout the town of Ridgefield. Weir Farm National Historic Site was the tenth location in the letterboxing booklet and hosted a letterbox from April to September. Over 2,500 people participated in the very successful event. Furthermore, the women of Weir Farm were featured in a publication highlighting the contributions that women have made to the town of Ridgefield since 1708. In *Remember the Ladies: Notable Women of Ridgefield*, J. Alden Weir's three daughters, Caroline, Dorothy, and Cora were featured along with painter and preservationist Doris Andrews, who, along with her husband painter Sperry Andrews, were the last artists to live at the farm. The "Women of Weir Farm" was written by Weir Farm volunteer Darla Shaw.

Take Part in Art

Since May, over 500 people have participated in the new Take Part in Art program at Weir Farm National Historic Site. The exciting new program gives visitors the chance to paint *en plein air* using watercolor supplies provided by the National Park Service.

During the colder off-season, November through April, sketching supplies, including graphite pencils, colored pencils, and pastels will be available in the Burlingham House Visitor Center from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Thursday through Sunday.

What can exceed the loveliness of this place? The freshness of the air. The calm. The quiet and repose? This time I shall enjoy it quietly, reading, musing, keeping still. Communing with the trees, the fowls, the stock. Getting all I can out of our short stay.

John Ferguson Weir
Writing to his brother J. Alden Weir while enjoying a stay at the Branchville farm



Andrew Ricci
Untitled
Watercolor on paper
2008

Watercolor painted while taking part in art at Weir Farm National Historic Site.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Site Information
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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.

Visitor Center Hours of Operation

November through April

The Visitor Center is open
Thursday through Sunday
from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tour Schedule

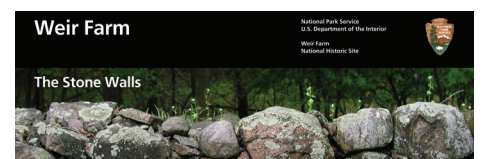
November through April

Tour of Weir Farm NHS:
Thursday through Sunday
at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
Friday and Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

Stone Wall Program:
Thursday and Saturday at 1:00 p.m.

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

Stone Walls Brochure Now Available!



If you have always been fascinated with stone walls, pick up the new Stone Walls brochure in the visitor center to learn about the history of stone walls in New England and at Weir Farm National Historic Site. Don't forget that the Gardens brochure, which focuses on the historic Sunken and Secret Gardens, is also available. Both brochures were produced by the National Park Service and are available free of charge.

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.