

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Weir Farm National Historic Site
Connecticut



Junior Ranger Pond Pack



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Be a Junior Ranger

At Weir Farm National Historic Site, you can be a Junior Ranger! Learn about the only national park dedicated to American painting and have fun in the process!

In order to earn the Junior Ranger Badge, you must complete one of the two Junior Ranger activities. By completing both activities, you will earn the special Weir Farm Junior Ranger Patch. You must show both completed booklets to receive the patch. These are the activities to choose from:

1. Junior Ranger Letterboxing

Use the clues in this booklet to navigate the landscape and locate stamps in hidden locations. Five containers, or letterboxes, have been hidden at various locations throughout the park.

2. Junior Ranger Pond Pack

Take this pack with you on a hike around Weir Pond. Use the supplies inside to sketch, measure and identify trees, and search for wildlife. This activity is a combination of art and nature-related tasks.

You've Chosen Letterboxing!

What is it?

This activity is a scavenger hunt, navigation, and puzzle-solving all in one. You are a detective using clues in this booklet to search for hidden containers, called letterboxes. Along the way, you will learn about five important parts of the park: the artists who lived here, the gardens, farming, the stone walls, and the National Park Service.

How do I do it?

There are five different stamps in square plastic boxes hidden throughout the park's landscape.

- 1) Use the clues in this booklet to navigate to the hiding spots.
- 2) When you find the letterbox, stamp the space in your booklet with the stamp, sign the log book with your name and date, put everything away, and hide the letterbox back in its spot.
- 3) When you are finished finding the letterboxes, return to the visitor center and show your work to a park ranger to earn your Junior Ranger Badge.

What are the rules?

Please remember everything at a national park is protected for the enjoyment of generations to come, so please do not pick flowers, climb trees or stone walls, or take things back home with you.

Letterbox #1

Artists: Painting by Number

Weir Farm National Historic Site was home to three generations of artists, who have painted this landscape for over 125 years. In this Letterboxing activity, you will learn about these three artists, see examples of their artwork, and answer questions to crack a code.

1. *Take a left out of the visitor center and follow the visitor path to the left. When you reach the pedestrian crosswalk, stop for a moment.*

What is the road that intersects with Pelham Lane? —1— —2—^o— —3— —4— —5—ⁱ— —6— —7—



2. *Cross Pelham Lane and walk through the gate. You should now be standing in front of the Weir House.*

This is a photo of Julian Alden Weir—he's standing where you are! Mr. Weir was the first artist to live at the farm, beginning in 1882.

3. *Turn left and walk past the front porch of the Weir House. Continue walking until you are downhill from the large double tree you passed on your left. Turn and face it.*

Mr. Weir painted his wife and children here, sitting on the large rock you see before you. If you look closely at the painting you can see that there are two —8— —9— —10—^e —11—^e —12— on either side of Weir's family—they grew together to create the double Red Oak in front of you!



4. *Continue downhill until you are near the edge of the wooded area. Look back up at the house.*

On this spot, Mr. Weir painted the painting to the left.

What did he call this painting? Hint: It's what's hanging out to dry!

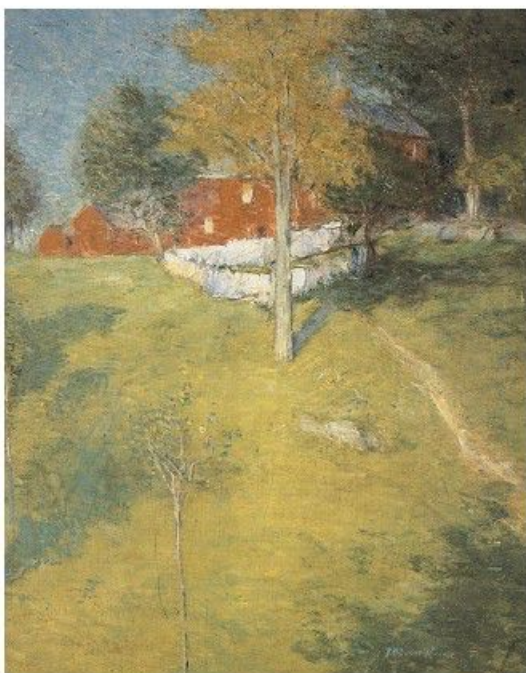
The —13— —14—^a —15—^u —16— —17— —18— —19—

5. *Turn to the left toward the two red buildings - these are the Weir and Young Studios. Head toward the building on the right. You are standing outside Mr. Weir's painting studio.*

What are the three colors you notice on the studio?

—20—^r —21— —22—, —23—^w —24— —25— —26— —27—, and

—28—^g —29— —30— —31— —32—

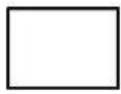


Letterbox #2

Gardens: Shaping the Landscape

This Letterboxing activity will explore the gardens at Weir Farm National Historic Site. In this activity, you will have to look for shapes you see in the garden, just as the artists here saw those same shapes and incorporated them into their paintings and sketches.

1. *From your current spot, turn and look up at the Weir House. In front of you are two stone walls—one at your feet, and one further above it. Can you see a rectangle shape in the land?*



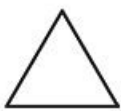
You should see it in grassy plots of land held up by the stone walls. These were the main vegetable gardens. Imagine them full of sweet peas, lima beans, tomatoes, and strawberries!

2. *Walk straight toward the Weir Studio about 20 paces. Can you see a hexagon shape? You will be able to see it from where you are standing.*



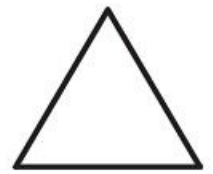
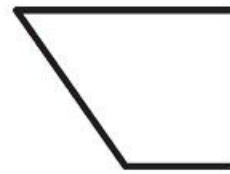
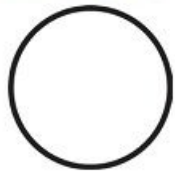
This was Dorothy Weir's Tool Shed. In here, she kept pots and garden tools for her vegetable gardens. Her sister Cora also had a Potting Shed, but it's next to the visitor center and made out of stone.

3. *Turn back and walk the path between the two studios. Can you see a triangle shape? Pass under it once you find it. Lift the latch on the left to enter.*



You should now find yourself in the Secret Garden. Mr. Weir's three daughters created this garden.

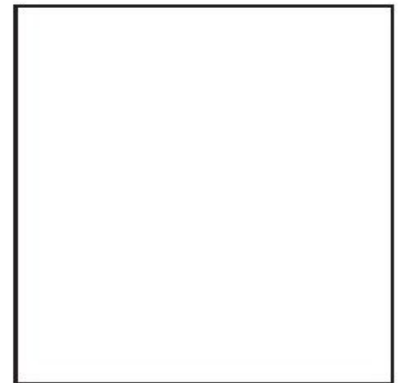
There are lots of shapes to be found in the garden. Can you find the following shapes? There are lots of possibilities!



4. *Take a look at the sketch of the garden below by Mahonri Young. Find some of shapes you just observed. When you see a shape, outline it with your pencil.*



5. *Stand directly under the triangle you see at the back of the garden and face the outside. Look down to the right to find the letterbox.*



Letterbox #3

Farming: Food-for-Thought

Weir Farm National Historic Site was a working farm for nearly 200 years! This Letterbox activity will take you to spots associated with farm life, and the information you learn will be used to figure out a word puzzle at the end of the activity.

- 1. Step out the back gate of the garden. Be sure to latch the gate when you leave. Turn right, then turn left and begin following the mown path you see before you.**

You are now passing through the Weir Orchard. Apples were used to make cider. Peaches were also grown at the farm, and used in pies and other treats.

- 2. Continue down the path and stop at the first wooden structure you see on the left.**

This is the Corn Crib, used to store corn. Its walls are open to let air in, or else the corn would get too hot and start a fire!

- 3. Turn toward the road and walk 10 paces. Turn right and walk straight. You are now near two more farm buildings.**

To your right is the is a brown building - the Chicken Coop. Chickens roosted here, providing fresh eggs daily. In front of you is the Ice House - a red building. Before refrigerators, ice was used to keep food cold. The ice at the farm came from the nearby pond in winter, when workers cut the frozen ice into large pieces and hauled them back here to the Ice House to be packed in sawdust and stored.

- 4. Facing the Weir House, walk straight. Continue on the worn path alongside the Weir Barn you see in front of you. When you reach the end of the barn, turn left and enter the barnyard. Stop at the entrance and look at the barn in front of you.**

The octagonal building to the right is the Tack House. This is where the equipment for the horses was kept.

- 5. Walk straight into the barnyard. On the right side is where many of the farm's work animals were housed.**

Oxen pulled plows, wagons, and sleighs. They also helped in moving large rocks. Besides riding, horses were used to pull carriages and operate farm machinery.

- 6. Find the little door with the white border in the corner of the barn.**

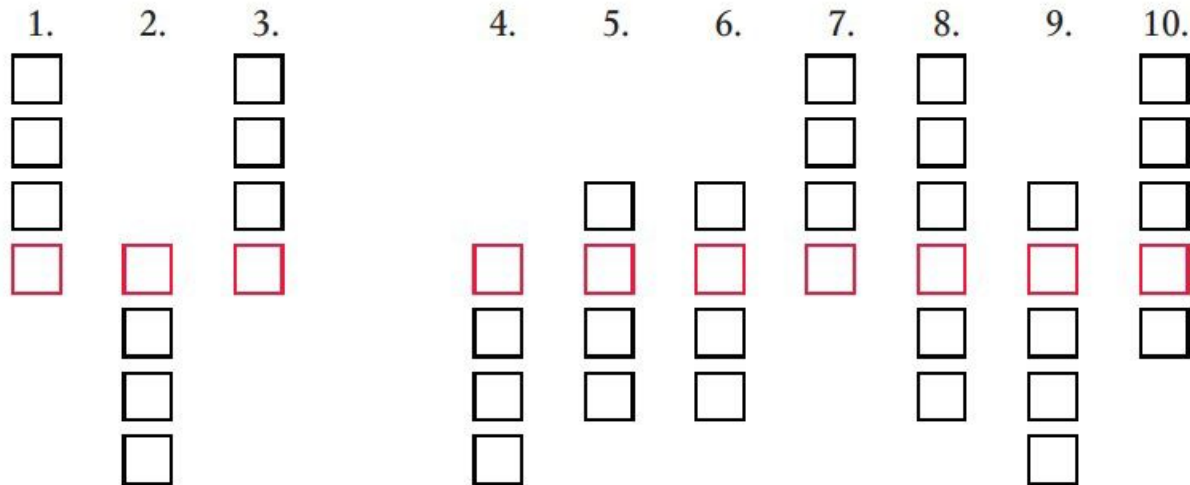
In here are the cows' milking stalls. Cows provided milk to make dairy products.

- 7. Find the open part of the barn with the dirt floor. This is the wagon shed. Farmers would keep their wagons in this spot while they were not being used.**

Look carefully in the wagon shed. List three things you see that are evidence of farm life:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

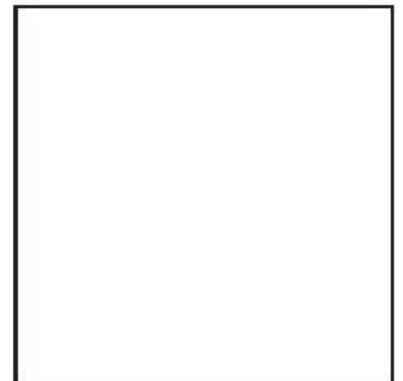
The Weir daughters kept their favorite black pony in this barn. What was his name? Use your farm knowledge to fill out the puzzle for the answer:



1. These work animals were used to plow fields and move heavy rocks.
2. This food item came from the chickens in the coop.
3. The ice stored in the Ice House was taken from here.
4. The ____ House is the building where horse equipment was kept.
5. These animals had their own stalls in the barn to provide milk.
6. This food crop was stored in an airy crib so it did not get too hot.
7. Wagons in the barnyard were parked in the wagon ____.
8. These grew in the Weir Orchard and were used in cider-making.
9. This fruit also grew on the farm; it was used in baking goods.
10. This animal was used for riding, and also helped to pull farm machinery.

So, what did Caroline, Dorothy, and Cora Weir name their favorite black pony?

8. *To the left of the wagon shed, look for what helped ponies step up into the barn. Under there, you will find the letterbox.*
9. *Walk out of the barnyard area. Continue straight ahead past the Weir House and cross the street at the pedestrian crosswalk and walk toward the visitor center on the visitor path. Walk past the visitor center and take a right. Walk down the gravel path towards the red Burlingham Barn where the restrooms are located.*



Letterbox #5

Weir Farm National Historic Site: One of Many

You are in one of the country's many national parks. These parks are for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of the people. This final Letterboxing activity will teach you about the National Park Service.

1. *Walk across the grassy lawn through the green gate toward the visitor center. Face the main visitor center door—the one between the two large bushes and two large windows.*

2. *Look at the sign to the left of the door.*

This sign is the symbol of the National Park Service (NPS). The job of the NPS is to protect the resources found in national parks, so that visitors can enjoy them year after year. National parks protect animals, plants, water, and geological formations. In the sign, there are four symbols that represent these resources. Fill in the blanks with the symbol that represents the following resources:

Animals: ___ i ___ ___ n

Water: ___ a ___ ___

Geology: ___ o ___ ___ ___ i ___

Plants: ___ ___ e ___

The NPS also protects cultural resources. This is represented by the shape of the sign. It is an object used by the Native Americans to hunt. This tool is called an ___ r ___ ___ ___ ___ d.

3. *Study the sign.*

How many trees does it have? Record the number here: ___

4. *Walk through the green door into the visitor center. Most national parks have a visitor center where you can get maps and ask a park ranger questions.*

5. *At Weir Farm National Historic Site, the visitor center is filled with art! Choose a work of art and have a conversation about it with your family and friends.*

What is going on in the work of art? What type of art is it? What do you like or not like about it? Why? How is it different from the other artwork in the visitor center?

6. *Step outside the visitor center and turn left. Turn left again and walk toward the Weir Farm National Historic Site sign. Look in the stone wall to your right to find the letterbox.*

7. *In the box, there is a map showing all of the national parks.*

Weir Farm National Historic Site is just one of our country's many national parks! Did you know there are over 400?

How many of these have you been to? ___

List a few national parks you have visited (use the map if you need help remembering!)

Junior Rangers: Explore - Learn - Protect

Now that you have completed the Letterboxing activity, you are ready to take the Junior Ranger Pledge! Stop by the Burlingham House Visitor Center to pick up your special Weir Farm National Historic Site Junior Ranger badge. Congratulations on joining the ranks of the National Park Service Junior Rangers! Any time you visit a national park, be sure to ask if there is a Junior Ranger program available - earn as many badges and patches as you can!

I, _____, promise to appreciate, respect, and protect all national park areas so they can be enjoyed by future generations. I also promise to continue learning about the landscape, plants, animals, and history of these special places.



Junior Ranger Motto

The National Park Service Junior Ranger program connects kids to their national parks. The Junior Ranger motto is “Explore, Learn, Protect.” These three words explain what it means to be a Junior Ranger:

Explore

You can discover new places and things that spark your curiosity.

Learn

Families learning together about the national parks have an experience they can share and remember.

Protect

By exploring and learning about our national parks, you will understand what you can do to help protect them for future visitors.

