

The newest coin from the America the Beautiful Quarters program will feature Weir Farm

Mike Wollschlager Mar 18, 2020

Weir Farm was officially designated Connecticut's first national park in 1990, and this month people all across the country will start carrying a little piece of our state's history in their pockets. April 6 is the release date for the newest coin in the United States Mint's America the Beautiful Quarters program, and it will feature Weir Farm on the reverse. All of the 56 quarters (states and territories) in the series will have an image of an iconic national park or site on the tails side.



Time to shine: The Weir studio at Weir Farm National Historic Site, the only national park dedicated to painting, is ready for its moment in the national spotlight.

Burwell and Burwell Photography

An image depicting an artist wearing a smock painting outside Julian Alden Weir's studio at the national historic site nestled in Wilton and Ridgefield is accompanied by the words "A National Park For Art." Weir Farm is one of only two national parks in the system dedicated to the arts, the other being [Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park](#) in New Hampshire. The design of the quarter is inspired by various images of the studio and Weir's paintings created on the property.

"When people think of the national parks, they usually think of parks like Arches or Grand Canyon or Yosemite," says Xiomáro, Weir Farm's visiting artist and a former artist-in-residence. "A lot of folks don't know that there are parks that are smaller in the Northeast and they're not about the visual part of a park experience, but it's more about the intellectual one. A lot of the parks in the Northeast like Weir Farm, like [Sagamore Hill](#) [in New York], these are parks that tell the story of how the country began, as a political country, a creative one as well, a cultural one."

According to Xiomáro, there was an artist still living in the house when it became part of the park. A deal was worked out so the artist and his wife could stay there for the remainder of their lives. When they died the house was cleaned out, renovated and restored to how it was in Weir's day. Xiomáro was the artist-in-residence at the time. "The rooms were actually emptied. That's when they asked me to photograph it that way because it's not going to be empty again for any reason that one can foresee," Xiomáro says. "This was a very rare opportunity to see it in that condition." That collection of photographs became part of Xiomáro's book *Weir Farm National Historic Site* that was published last year in anticipation of the quarter being released.



The Weir studio, Weir Farm National Historic Site and home of American Impressionism.
John Greim/LightRocket via Getty Images

But long before the quarter and the book, Weir Farm was destined to become a residential development. A plan was approved, trees were cleared and a road was paved into the area by Weir Pond, which almost became Thunder Lake. Xiomáro says the environmental movement was aggressive and there was a swell of grass-roots opposition, which proved to be successful. One of Joe Lieberman's first acts after being elected to the Senate in 1988 was to introduce legislation to establish the property as a national park.

Xiomáro reached out to Lieberman and asked if he would like to write the foreword to the book. Lieberman agreed. "You can tell that he's very proud of this achievement in his career," Xiomáro says. "He's really supportive of the park and the community."

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