

Bear Brook's Marvelous Museums!

By Ella Selden, SCA Interpretive Ranger

Did you know that Bear Brook State Park is home to two museums? Ranging from meeting houses to the New Deal, Bear Brook has many places worth a stop. Let's take a virtual tour of Bear Brook's marvelous museums!

Our first stop is the Old Allenstown Meeting House. Conveniently sitting directly off Deerfield Rd, the Old Allenstown Meeting House was the center of life in Allenstown starting 1813. The Old Allenstown Meeting House is the only single storied slant floored building in the United States. To construct the meeting house, the Church of Christ sold box pews for \$20 (roughly \$400 today). Today, you can still see the original signatures of the owners of the pews. When in the building, you can see the little touches that people added over the years: signatures, grease stains from hair pomade, carvings, and more. This is truly a special place to see what the daily lives of Allenstown residents have been like for decades and learn about the families that loved Allenstown.

The Old Allenstown Meeting House is located at 150 Deerfield Rd, Allenstown, NH, 3 minutes away from the Podunk Road entrance of Bear Brook State Park. It is open most Sundays from 12:00 to 2:00 PM in July and August. If you would like to visit another time, please contact the president of the Allenstown Historic Society, Armand Verville at 603-485-4437.



Old Allenstown Meeting House (Photo by Ella Selden, SCA Interpretive Ranger).

Right across the road from the meeting house is the CCC Depot. In the midst of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps, a government agency that recruited young men to build recreation infrastructure to boost the economy. The 1123rd Co. and 1107th Veteran Co. was assigned to Bear Brook to build campgrounds, cabins, and park infrastructure along with various conservation projects. The Richard Diehl Civilian Conservation Corps Museum tells the story of what it was like to be a CCC member at Bear Brook featuring genuine tools and personal items from members. Visitors can step foot into an old CCC building when they visit the museum, because the museum used to be a mess hall! The CCC camp at Bear Brook is one of the most complete and intact CCC camps remaining in the country today. Stop by to learn about the service and dedication of the men that built Bear Brook!

The CCC Museum is located on the left side of Depot Rd in Allenstown, NH. The museum is open for tours on most Sundays 10:00-4:00 in July and August or by appointment by calling the Bear Brook Park Office at 603-485-1031.



Richard Diehl Civilian Conservation Corps Museum (Photo by Ella Selden, SCA Interpretive Ranger).

Bear Brook has a rich past that has led to two unique museums with first person accounts and artifacts. Open Sundays throughout the summer or by appointment, the Old Allenstown Meeting House and the CCC Museum are great spots to learn about the history of Bear Brook and the Merrimack Valley! Stop in and say hi!

Reference

Martel, C. A. (2003). *The History of East Allenstown and Bear Brook State Park*.