



# The Peacham Patriot

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Peacham Historical Association

Summer 2014

## Building a Future for Peacham's Past

Over the past 12 months, we have accomplished much. On Saturday, June 14, 2014, the Peacham Historical Association celebrated the groundbreaking and the success of its capital campaign for its new archival and research facility.

Annette Lorraine, member of the Peacham Select Board, PHA Board members, alumni of the former Peacham Academy, and more than 50 friends of PHA watched as PHA Curator Lorna Quimby broke ground.



*Lorna Quimby lifts the first shovel of sod  
Photograph by Jock Gill*

The project is the culmination of years of planning, strong community support, and a successful capital campaign to raise the needed \$150,000 for the construction. For almost 100 years, PHA has been leading efforts to collect, preserve, and make available to the public the records of Peacham's history.

Currently, PHA stores its remarkable historical collections in the Old Town Office but that space is severely overcrowded, lacks a work area for researchers, and is in violation of access and fire codes.

The Archival and Research Facility is designed so that Peacham's historical collections can be protected in the best possible environment for their care and use by researchers. It will house Peacham's priceless historical collections in a modern, climate-controlled, fire code-compliant, and accessible environment. The new structure will not only allow PHA to safeguard Peacham's remarkable historical collections but will enhance visitor services, and make the collections wheelchair accessible for the first time. It will have a lasting benefit for the Peacham community. The new space will expand public access to the collections, better support genealogical and other research, and widen community interest in Peacham's history.



*Front elevation of the PHA Archival and Research Facility prepared by Rusty Barber*

## **New Archival and Research Facility Focus of Annual Meeting Presentation**

Under the leadership of Rusty Barber, PHA has completed the planning and design phases for the new Archival and Research Facility. He chairs the Archival and Research Facility Task Force. Appointed in June 2013, its other members are Polly Jerome, Lorna Quimby, Jutta Scott, and David Stauffer. In December 2013, the Task Force recommended to the Board the selection of Michael K. Walsh & Son, Builders as the contractor for the construction of the new facility.

All the needed permits have been obtained. Construction is scheduled to begin later in June for the 1,500-square-foot, one-story, wood-frame building that will create a safe environment for the collections, allow more efficient operations, and improve access for visitors. The new structure will allow PHA to safeguard Peacham's remarkable historical collections in two secure, climate-controlled storage rooms. It will have a lasting benefit for our community and the people of Vermont. The new building will expand public access to the collections, better support genealogical and other research, and widen community interest in Peacham's history.

In addition to the PHA space, there will be a separate display area at the entrance for storing and viewing the 8x10 replica of the 1880's Peacham Academy Building.

The building will be constructed on a 100 x 95' parcel of land leased from the Town of Peacham behind the PHA Historical House, located at 153 Church Street. Although this will be a newly constructed facility, the Yankee-barn-like design will reflect and respect the historical integrity of our 19<sup>th</sup> century village.

Construction will take approximately three months. PHA plans to celebrate the completion of the new building at a special ribbon-cutting ceremony in October. PHA will move the collections from the current spaces in the Old Town Office in late fall. Please visit PHA's website, [peachamhistorical.org](http://peachamhistorical.org) or our Facebook page for updates on the project.

The PHA Annual Meeting will be held at the Congregational Church on Wednesday, August 5th, at 7pm. We invite all members to attend.

After a brief business meeting, our speaker, PHA Board Member and architect, Rusty Barber will speak about the particular challenges of designing buildings to house archives and research functions. The PHA Board has designated Rusty as the owner's representative to the contractor. He will oversee the construction to ensure proper and timely performance of the work. Rusty will represent the interests of PHA in regard to ensuring that the quality of both materials and workmanship is in accordance with the signed agreement between the Peacham Historical Association and Michael K. Walsh & Son.

After Rusty Barber's presentation, we will adjourn downstairs in the church for coffee and dessert. Mark your calendars! We hope to see you on August 5th.

For information about the PHA meeting please contact Johanna Branson, Peacham Historical Association Vice President, at [branson.johanna@gmail.com](mailto:branson.johanna@gmail.com) or (802) 592-3539.

## **Peacham Historical Association Announces Success of Its Capital Campaign**

The Capital Campaign Committee, chaired by John Marshall, is pleased to report that the campaign has successfully reached its goal of raising \$150,000 to build a new facility for housing Peacham's valuable historical collections.



*John Marshall reports on the success of the campaign at the Groundbreaking ceremony  
Photograph by Jock Gill*

The Campaign for “Building a Future for Peacham’s Past” was launched in March 2013. The Capital Campaign Committee, ably led by John Marshall, was appointed by the Board to conduct PHA’s first-ever comprehensive and most ambitious campaign.

“The success of our campaign was made possible by the generosity of PHA’s members and strong support from PHA’s Board,” said John Marshall, chair of the PHA Capital Campaign Committee.

The campaign benefited from an initial \$25,000 challenge, which required raising \$50,000 in matching funds. Over the past year, the financial support of many individuals has enabled PHA not only to meet that challenge but to raise the funds for building the new collections storage and research facility. Dawn Wright, President of the PHA Board, noted “We are thrilled to have completed the campaign and to have slightly exceeded our campaign goal.”

### **Please Support the Archival and Research Facility Donations Are Still Needed!**

Although PHA has successfully raised the funds for the construction, it is the simple truth that the building project is also an opportunity to make physical improvements in the public spaces to better

serve visitors and to provide an inviting environment for researchers. In order to meet the need for bookshelves, desks for researchers, and other furnishings in the new facility, we must raise additional funds.

If you wish to provide support, we invite you to send your donation to:

Peacham Historical Association  
Att.: Larry Jensen  
P.O. Box 101  
Peacham, VT 05862

All donations are tax deductible.

### **Peacham Celebrates 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Charter**

On December 31, 1763, Peacham was chartered by Royal Governor Benning Wentworth of the province of New Hampshire.

Before Vermont became a state, Governor Wentworth began claiming territory along the Connecticut River for New Hampshire and issued 129 township charters on the west side of the river, benefiting handsomely from both the £100 fees he collected for each grant and his practice of reserving 500 acres of the best land in each grant for himself. New York contested the “New Hampshire grants” since it also laid claim to the area in the mid-1700.

On July 20, 1764 King George III issued an order declaring the Connecticut River as the boundary between the colonies. The order ended the Governor’s land claims, but it led to legal disputes over the ownership to the granted lands.

The Peacham charter granted 23,040 acres within a six-mile square to 70 proprietors and 500 acres were reserved for the Governor. None of the proprietors settled in Peacham, and the sale of their lots of 200 acres each was their main goal. During the first decade after the granting of the charter, no settlements occurred. But in 1774 the proprietors took active steps to survey the land and to lay out the township.

Gradually pioneers in the settlement of Peacham bought lots and began to clear the land. To Jonathan Elkins goes the honor of being the first permanent settler when he moved with his family in 1776. In 1791, 21 years after Governor Wentworth's death, the area that he had so highhandedly and profitably claimed became a large part of the state of Vermont.

The first event to celebrate the anniversary of the charter took place on Saturday, October 5, 2013. The Peacham Players presented Lorna Quimby's play, "Where Did Peacham Get its Name?" The play told the story of Governor Wentworth self-dealing that made him one of the richest men in New England and the possible origins of Peacham's name. The play will be repeated this fall. The Peacham Historical Association is planning other events in honor of Peacham's 250-year-old charter.

### **Historical House Summer Displays**

Peacham pioneer settlers, with photographs, letters, tools and other artifacts, will be on display at the Peacham Historical House during July, August and September. Peacham earliest settlers arrived in 1774, but retreated to Newbury during the first winters. Among the first permanent settlers was Jonathan Elkins, who brought his family to Peacham in July 1776.

**The Historical House will be open on July Fourth all day and on Sundays from July 6 – September 28. Hours are from 2 to 4 on Sundays.**



### **Fourth of July Ghost Walk (held on Village Green this year)**

This year, the annual Peacham Ghost Walk will feature Peacham's pioneer settlers.

The Ghost Walk will begin at 2 pm. and will meet on the green across the drive from the Post Office (**NOT** the cemetery as in past years!). Tickets will be \$4.00 for those 12 and older.

### **Peacham Patriot Available Electronically**

PHA now offers our members the option of receiving the *Peacham Patriot* electronically. For our small organization, email distribution saves printing and mailing costs. Many members already receive renewal notices for their PHA membership in their email box, and we hope that you will consider taking advantage of the electronic

distribution of our newsletter. If you are interested in switching to email distribution, please send a message to [scottjutta2@gmail.com](mailto:scottjutta2@gmail.com). Future issues of the newsletter will then be sent to your email inbox as an attachment in the Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. Thank you for supporting PHA.

## Book Reviews

Two Peacham residents have published books describing their activities living in the village. Both books are available at the Peacham Library and on Amazon.

*When Kids Were Allowed To Be Kids*, by Gary Schoolcraft, Railroad Street Press, St. Johnsbury, VT, 2012.

If you stop at the West Barnet gas station, you know that the owner, Gary Schoolcraft, tells a good story while the gas tank is being filled. At last some of these stories of Gary's "growing up in the small Vermont town of Peacham" in the 1940s and 50s are published, so whenever you want a smile, or indeed, a good laugh, reach for this book. It tells of life "before electronic games took over kids lives," a time when Peacham kids lived on farm schedules, "when kids were not only allowed to make up games they wanted to play but also the rules," when there were three one-room school houses located in different parts of town, when a ski tow north of town had young people going downhill with "long pieces of wood strapped to their feet," and, best of all, a time when what was important were "good times with family and good friends."

Among other topics explored by this native Peachamite are organizing local ball games, playing cops and robbers, getting to know girls, and descriptions of recess activities not always applauded by the teachers. On the book cover is a photograph of Gary with his mother and one of his brothers. Under the photograph is a quote from his father: "I think Mom is going to run away from home and the way you two act I can't blame her."

Reviewer Josette Lyders calls Gary the "Garrison Keillor" of Peacham, an apt description. This book

is listed on the cover as "Volume I," and all of Peacham is looking forward to Volume 2.

*Gone But Not Forgotten: A Childhood in the Northeast Kingdom*, by Joshua Brown. Published by Good Read Press, 450 College Avenue, Richmond, IN 47374. Price \$15.00.

Josh Brown in a folksy manner describes summers and at least one school year in Peacham in the last half of the twentieth century. In the foreword, he writes that these stories are "about a place that hardly exists any more, the world of my childhood in the hills of northern Vermont. The people, the places, the traditions, the songs, are almost gone now, except in my memory."

He describes "a different world -- simpler, rougher, kinder, wilder, more free, less anxious and above everything else, timeless and eternal." Foremost in the book are his reminiscences of the village center with the store and passing west to the Congregational Church, the Post Office, the Town Office, the cemetery, the Civil War monument, and the volunteer firehouse. The first home the Brown family owned was out Mountain Road which is described in detail as well as activities in the house such as cooking, gardening, and sleeping arrangements.

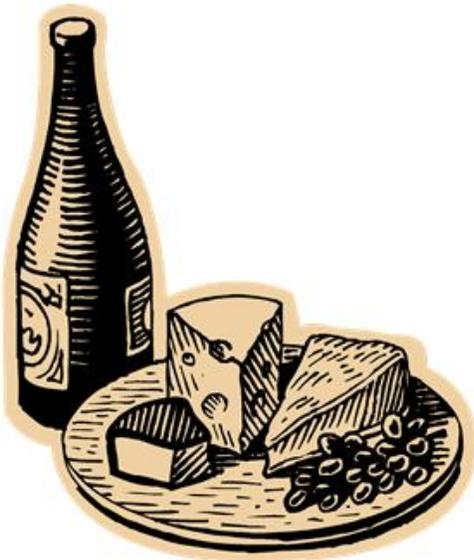
Brown's great-grandfather visited Peacham in the 1940s and his post cards back to New Jersey reached Josh's great-aunt Marion who had traveled around Vermont looking for a place to buy. She found what she was looking for in a little cottage in Peacham out Mountain Road. She bought it and four acres of land for \$5,000. Brown wrote that everyone in town agreed "she'd been took." This phrase is one of many the author uses to describe people, places and incidents, all in the language used by common folks in northern Vermont.

The author focuses on family life to describe village life, local characters like Bob Bean, trips to St. Johnsbury, Memorial Day celebrations, the Danville Fair, maple sugaring, and working as a farm hand at the Miller's farm out Green Bay (farm now owned by the Kemptons). Many of the events described are no longer although some like the Danville fair,

square dances, and Memorial Day parade continue.

This family history will be a detailed resource for those interested in mid to late 19th century Peacham, and into the twentieth century.

[Reviews by Lynn A. Bonfield, author of *New England to Gold Rush California, The Journal of Alfred and Chastina W. Rix, 1849-1854, the story of a Peacham couple who settled in San Francisco.*]



## Mark Your Calendars for Our Annual Wine and Cheese Benefit: Saturday, August 30th

We are delighted to announce that Ken Kraus and Guy Lawrence have offered to host this year's Wine and Cheese Party. It will be held from 4-6pm on Saturday, August 30th at their home at 510 Ha'Penny Road. Tickets will be \$25. Watch for your invitation in the mail!

## PHA Publications

***A Vermont Hill Town in the Civil War: Peacham's Story.*** Jutta R. Scott and Michelle Arnosky Sherburne, eds. With an essay by Lynn A. Bonfield. May 2012. Winner of the 2012 Vermont Local Historical Societies Achievement Award of Excellence in Publications and 2013 American Association for State and Local History Award of Merit.

**Hardcover \$35.00 and Softcover \$25.00**

### ***Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town.***

By Ernest L. Bogart

A comprehensive history of Peacham from its first settlement in 1776 to the 1940s. First published in 1948, it was digitized and reissued in 2010.

**\$35.00**

### ***Historic Homes of Peacham.***

Compiled and edited by Jutta R. Scott.

In words and pictures the book surveys the rich legacy of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century houses in Peacham and documents with descriptions and photographs over 100 houses built before 1900. 2007. Winner of the 2008 Vermont Local Historical Societies Achievement Award of Excellence in Publications.

**50%-off Sale: Hardcover \$20.00 and Softcover \$15.00**

### ***The Peacham Anthology***

Compiled by Lynn A. Bonfield. 2003.

**\$25.00**

A compilation of 40 articles and documents about the history of Peacham.

## PHA Board 2013-2014

### **President**

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## Mark Twain and George B. Harvey

At a PHA event, Francena Goodine mentioned that she had a photograph of Mark Twain with George Brinton Harvey. She generously sent a copy to PHA, which has been added to the collections.



*Courtesy Francena Goodine*

The photograph was taken around 1909 and shows Mark Twain with George Harvey and his adopted daughter Dorothy in Deal, New Jersey.

George Harvey, born in East Peacham in 1864, attended Peacham Academy though he did not graduate. He started his newspaper career at the *St. Johnsbury Republican*, and then worked at several national newspapers, including as managing editor for the *New York World*. In 1899, he purchased the *North American Review* and was its editor until 1921 as well as serving as an editor of *Harper's Weekly*. Many famous writers of the period were his friends, and he entertained them at his home in Deal, NJ. George and his wife Alma (Parker) Harvey had a special friendship with Mark Twain, and the above photograph records one of the writer's visits.

## More Pictures of the Groundbreaking for the New PHA Archival and Research Facility



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