



# The Peacham Patriot

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Peacham Historical Association

Summer 2009

## PHA Receives Vermont Humanities Council Grant

The Vermont Humanities Council has awarded PHA a grant to preserve, digitize, and publicize the memoir of Mark Wheeler, a Peacham Civil War soldier who spent several months as a prisoner of war at Andersonville. PHA holds in its collections his detailed reminiscences about his imprisonment, which he wrote in 1889 or 25 years after his capture. Mark Wheeler was a twenty-two-year-old Peacham farmer when he enlisted in November 1861. He served in the First Vermont Cavalry, fought in battles at Bull Run, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor and numerous other skirmishes. He was taken prisoner in the Richmond/Petersburg Campaign during a fight at Stony Creek on June 29, 1864. He was transported to Andersonville and confined there until October 1864.

The manuscript consists of 55 two-sided, loose, handwritten pages, measuring 7 ½ inches in length and 5 1/8 inches in width. The major portion of the manuscript describes his life inside the Confederate prison at Andersonville during the summer and fall of 1864 when more than 32,000 prisoners were held in the 26 1/2 acre stockade.

The project is supported in part by the Vermont Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant will fund needed conservation treatment by M.J. Davis, a paper conservator, to stabilize and preserve the original document. The Vermont Humanities Council will also support scanning of the manuscript by the Northeast Document Conservation Center to create a digital facsimile. For the past several months, Michelle Sherburne, a freelance writer and Vermont historian has transcribed Mark Wheeler's account on a volunteer basis. The goal is to make a searchable, digital version of this treasured document freely available on PHA's website. PHA will also work with the UVM Special Collections Department's Center for Digital Initiatives to "publish" the document on the Internet. The final phase in this project is a public program to be held in

Peacham. The featured speaker will be Vermont author and Civil War historian, Howard Coffin, who will work with PHA to host a public forum for discussing the significance of the manuscript within the context of the history of Vermont in the Civil War. The event will take place on September 17 at 7:30 p.m. with details forthcoming.

## Donation of Historic Peacham Quilts By Maxine Martin Long

Among the items left to my disposal after my mother died were a number of quilts and coverlets—the handiwork of many women from both my mother and father's side of the family.

Not all the quilt makers can be identified, but I do know four: my mother, Carolyn Martin Long (1906-1995); her paternal grandmother, Hannah Wesson Martin, (1830-1925); my paternal grandmother, Grace Hazlitt Long, (1868-1944); and her mother, Helen Marshall Hazlitt, (1829-1915).

A woven wool coverlet, made by Hannah Martin, is unusual in its red and green coloring; otherwise all the patterns and materials in the quilts and coverlets are in keeping with the time period in which they were made.

The oldest quilt in the collection was made in the 1830's by an unnamed Martin family woman and of the two newest, ("new" being a relative term) one was made by my mother in 1934, the year she was married, and the other by her mother-in-law, Grace Long, circa 1935. Two quilts can be dated in the 1850's and several others between 1880 and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

With one exception, all the quilts and coverlets were designed for a double bed; the older quilts would be called T-quilts, with the cut-out corners to accommodate the bedposts at the foot of the bed. The exception is a child's quilt, made for my father, who was born in 1905.

At the heart of the word “history,” is “story” and I do know one story from this collection. It centers on my father’s baby quilt. One summer in the early 1950’s, Peacham Academy sponsored a large community auction with Albert May as auctioneer. My mother offered the child’s quilt much to my dismay. Admittedly it was the first time I had even seen the quilt, yet my strong attachment to my father convinced me that it should not be sold. I did not win the argument and it so happened that our good friend and long time summer resident, Trudi Priester, bought it. Years later I told Trudi the story of my childhood and, perhaps misplaced, sentimentality. The following summer I was presented with the quilt, along with her insistence that it should come back to the family.

Bedcovers also have their mysteries. Included in the collection are two hand loomed woolen blankets; each has the initials, SMB. A handkerchief in the family detritus has on it the handwritten name of Sally M. Brock. Brock was the middle name of my grandfather, Will Martin. Who Sally was, I do not know. Whether she is the same SMB of the wool blankets, I cannot say for sure. Neither do I know the connection to the Martin family. Her anonymity, however, does not detract from her handwork. And I can attest to the warmth that wool blankets provide on a cold night.

I come from a family of savers—this collection of textiles is partial evidence. Some of the quilts must have been saved for practical reasons; even though faded and well-worn, they were warm. Other quilts were saved – well, “just because.” During my growing up years I saw a few of them in use, but most were carefully stored in pillow cases on several closet shelves. From time to time, my mother would take them out of storage, refold them to create creases going in other directions and then return them to the dark shelves. After I brought them to my own home, I, too, followed the same patterns— unfolding, refolding and back on the shelf. While antique textiles are not for daily use, still they deserve to see the light of day from time to time, to be enjoyed by those who can admire the artistry and appreciate the piece of Americana that they represent. I felt that the Peacham Historical Association was the appropriate repository.

**Editor’s Note:** The quilts will be displayed at the Peacham Congregational Church on Saturday, July, 18, 2009 from 11a.m. - 3p.m. The exhibit will feature all 19 donated quilts as well as a selection of quilts from PHA’s collections.

## President’s Page Jutta Scott, PHA President



The last six months have been a period of hard work and gains at the Peacham Historical Association. Planning dominated much of the discussions during that period, and the PHA Board developed a five-year Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan provides a road map for strengthening and sustaining the Association in the future. It will be available in full at [www.peachamhistorical.org](http://www.peachamhistorical.org), PHA’s Web site in July 2009, and a summary will be available at the PHA Annual Meeting on August 4, 2009.

At its heart, PHA is a repository holding in trust an extraordinary collection of printed resources, archives, photographic images, textiles and costumes, and an array of artifacts. These collections document the course of Peacham’s history and serve as resources for historical research. The Strategic Plan underscores that PHA will remain a center for collecting, preserving, and making available materials and sites relating to the history of Peacham. PHA will carry out its traditional library activities of accessioning, cataloging and conserving as well as develop digital initiatives to promote local history and to serve the historical information needs of the Peacham community and the general public. PHA will also continue to offer an array of educational programs and publications to enhance the understanding of Peacham’s past. The Strategic Plan underscores the commitment to safeguard PHA’s collections in environmentally stable and secure space and to protect the historical sites that PHA holds in trust.

To realize these goals, PHA will focus its efforts on securing sufficient funds to support its operations, plan for establishing a new facility for the collections, protect and maintain its historical sites, and ensure long-term financial health. PHA’s membership has over the years demonstrated its extraordinary support through contributions of research materials, financial donations, and serving as volunteers. During the past several months, PHA made special efforts to expand its membership base and to reach out to new volunteers. PHA welcomes your support for our work and thanks all of its many friends.

As the Chinese proverb states “a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step” The PHA Executive Board took several important steps toward the long-range goal of establishing a new facility for PHA’s historic archives and collections. One important step is an in-depth analysis of PHA’s collection management

and procedures through the MAP assisted self-study. Another step is a careful review of PHA's expenses and revenues, which resulted in the recommendation to increase our annual membership dues starting in August 2009. Still another effort is to seek grant funding to assist in conserving and making available our collections. In May, the Vermont Humanities Council awarded PHA funding to preserve, digitize, and publicize Peacham Civil War soldier Mark Wheeler's Andersonville memoir, which PHA holds in its collections.

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting on August 4 and to tell you more about PHA's plans.

### **SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF A HOUSE IN PEACHAM** **Philip Dawson**

For the history of a house, we can imagine an ideal type of document. It would be a series of diaries written by people who lived in the house and their neighbors. In reality, the first source of information that we have is the building itself. Its site, structure, design, and details of workmanship convey much information to an expert. But there are additional sources. Every house appears as a secondary figure in the background of documents written to create a record of something else, notably land ownership, real estate taxation, and enumerations of the population. These documentary sources are the subject of this article. I'll use as an example the house commonly known as the Gracey place, after John Clark Gracey, who owned it from 1877 to 1901. In the revised edition of *Historic Homes of Peacham* it will be named the John Winthrop Chandler place, who was its first owner.

**The chain of ownership.** Generally in European and American culture, every house has an owner. Lawyers and real estate professionals routinely establish warrantable title by searching the land records backward from the current owner. The Peacham Land Records are in chronological order from 1763 to the present. They contain the texts of several types of legal instruments. For instance, in a quit-claim deed, the seller transfers his rights without specifying them in detail and the buyer takes on trust the seller's assertion of ownership and description of the property. More common is the warranty deed, in which the grantor certifies that on the date of the deed s/he is the owner of the deeded property. Typically it describes the boundaries of the land, states that the grantor acquired it from a previous owner, and names the previous owner. Often the location is specified in relation to the first survey of land in Peacham. The Gracey farm, for instance, is in Lot 8 in

the Ranges. Once a transfer of ownership is found, the searcher's next step is to locate the previous transaction in the land records. It will ordinarily be found in two indexes: the index of grantors and the index of grantees.

For the years 1763 to 1958, an alphabetical list of grantors and an alphabetical list of grantees were drawn up by Roger E. Case, town clerk from 1950 to 1958. For the years 1959 through 2004, subsequent town clerks maintained an alphabetical index on 3x5 cards (eleven file drawers). Beginning in January 2005 (Book 56, page 270 of the Peacham Land Records), alphabetical indexes are in the form of computer print-outs.

Proceeding from each owner to the previous owner, one establishes a chain of ownership reaching back to the original proprietor. This operation is not always perfectly straight-forward. For instance, I found that in 1814 Henry Blake signed a quit-claim deed conveying his farm in Lot 8 in the Ranges to John Winthrop Chandler, from whom he had bought it on some earlier date not specified. Looking for Blake's name in the index of grantees, I found – nothing. Chandler was a wealthy man who carried out many transactions. Under his name in the index of grantors, there are many entries: which of them refers to the conveyance to Blake? The only recourse was to read every deed in which Chandler was the grantor, from 1814 backward until Blake appeared as the grantee. (It was in 1804.) The experience taught two lessons: no index is complete; and the existence of two separate indexes (grantors and grantees) for the one series of transactions is a major advantage.

The chain of ownership includes the Bickford sisters, Flora and Mary, to whom John Clark Gracey sold his farm in January 1901. Soon after that, a photograph of the farm was made which was later discovered in the Bickford family papers.



**The social and historical context.** Establishing the chain of ownership is the fundamental documentary starting point. Once that has been completed, it is well to take advantage of the work that other researchers have done. Some of the owners of the house figure in Ernest L. Bogart, *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town* (1948), and Jennie Chamberlain Watts and Elsie A. Choate, *People of Peacham* (1965).

Since those books, additional sources have become available. The original manuscripts of the Federal census for 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 have been made public. The first six Federal census lists of Peacham residents, 1790-1840, are available electronically at the research collections of the Peacham Historical Association, where staff members are transcribing the later census records. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has led the way in creating every-name indexes of all the census manuscripts. The indexes, and photocopies of the census manuscripts themselves, are available on-line at Ancestry.com and other internet sources, and in many libraries, among them the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. It is possible to list all the inhabitants of a community with their names, ages, and occupations, at 10-year intervals from 1850 to 1880 and 1900 to 1930. Presumably, in accordance with the 72-year rule, soon after January 1, 20120, the 1940 manuscript census, too, will become public.

Another development of the last several decades is the growth of genealogy. Research has revealed more sources, and electronic access has made them widely available. So, for example, the Connecticut Town Birth Records (collection of Lucius Barnes Barbour), on line at Ancestry.com, enable us to piece together some of the Chandler family history. According to those records, John Chandler, former colonel of the 8<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Continental line regiment, apparently John Winthrop Chandler's father, died in Peacham on March 15, 1795. Repair work on the foundations of the farmhouse in about 1990 revealed a flat stone incised "J.C. 1795", seemingly the colonel's grave marker.



As long as they were unaware that John Winthrop Chandler owned the house, and knew nothing of the Chandler family history, the current owners were unable to hazard a guess as to the stone's meaning.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the activities in a house were reflected in the chattel and personal property listed in the annual Grand List of Peacham taxpayers. From 1800 to 1852, it included a variety of taxable resources for each resident. In 1800, for example, John Winthrop Chandler was listed with 45 acres of cleared land, three horses, two oxen, five cows older than 3 years, two cattle 2 years old, a house, a watch, and \$223.75 in cash. In 1804, Henry Blake's first year in the house, he was listed with 26 acres of cleared land, two oxen, two cows 2 years old, one horse, and 20 sheep. After 1853, the array of detail was eliminated, and the Grand List recorded simply land and houses.

**The succession of residents.** Few of the original proprietors resided in Peacham. Most of them sold their property there to other non-residents. Eventually a new owner settled in Peacham and started clearing land. He may have lived at first in a log cabin. He may have built a house. He may have leased the land to a tenant and allowed the tenant to build a house. The text of the land deed may answer these questions. When John Winthrop Chandler sold a 210-acre farm to Henry Blake in 1804, he described it as "part of the farm whereon I have formerly lived." But when Blake sold the farm back to Chandler in 1814, there is no indication that Chandler came back to reside there. Presumably it was rented until 1828 when Chandler sold it to Ebenezer Wells. The documents found do not identify the residents in the intervening years.

Using documentary sources to discover who lived in a house in Peacham is difficult if the resident was a renter. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Federal census manuscript list specifies whether the head of each household was an owner or a renter. According to the census, 20 per cent of the houses in Peacham were occupied by renters, and it would be possible to draw up a list of them. In a city, the manuscript census lists dwellings in geographic order with street addresses. Not necessarily so in Peacham. John Collins and his wife and sons lived in the John Winthrop Chandler house before my parents bought it in 1937. They are listed in the 1930 census in geographic order: the census enumerator traveling up Slack Street stopped at the Butson household, then the Collins' and then the Threshers'. But I already knew that the Collinses lived there because I remember my father, who had grown up in Detroit and was a law professor, struggling to assemble a wheelbarrow that he

had bought from Montgomery Ward, and the eldest Collins son, Henry, a teen-ager, coming to his aid and putting it together. In the end, the history of a house cannot do without information passed along by word of mouth.

## **Mark Your Calendar for Annual Meeting**

The PHA will hold its Annual Meeting on Tuesday, August 4, 2009 at the Congregational Church starting at 6:30p.m. Our featured speaker will be Giovanna Peebles, the Vermont State Archaeologist. Her talk, "An Archaeologist Looks at Peacham," will highlight Peacham's cellar holes: what they signify and how to care for them. Prior to the meeting, she will conduct a tour of several cellar holes along Penny Street.

## **PHA 2009 Calendar of Events**

### **PHA Historical House Opens for the Season**

June 28, 2009 through Foliage Day (Oct.1)

Blacksmith Shop open July 4<sup>th</sup> and Fall Foliage Day

### **Exhibits at the Historical House**

Sundays 2 to 4p.m.

The theme for the displays for summer 2009 is:

**Peacham's Changing Landscape** and the farmers who caused the change.

Exhibits will honor Donald Davis.

Historic Farm Photographs: June 28 - July 31, 2009

A Look at Peacham's Farming Past: Photographs by Jock Gill: August 2-31, 2009

Nature Photographs by Gay Bumgarner: September 6-27, 2009

### **Peacham July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration**

Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup>

Historical House and Blacksmith will be open

The PHA Ghost Walk will be held at the Peacham Cemetery at 2p.m.

### **Quilt Show at the Congregational Church**

July 18, 2009 from 11a.m. - 3p.m.

### **PHA Annual Meeting**

Tuesday, August 4, 2009

Peacham Congregational Church

6:30 p.m. Program begins upstairs

7:30 p.m. Business meeting

8:15p.m. dessert and conversation downstairs

### **Peacham Hollow Schoolhouse Yard Sale**

September 5, 2009 from 9a.m. - 1p.m.

### **Mark Wheeler's Andersonville Memoir**

September 17 at 7:30 p.m. Details forthcoming.

### **Peacham Fall Foliage Celebration**

Thursday, October 1, 2009

Historical House and Blacksmith will be open

The PHA Ghost Walk will be held at the Peacham Cemetery at 2p.m.

## **Collections Management Assessment**

Peacham Historical Association has been selected to participate in the Museum Assessment Program (MAP). Special thanks are due to Diana Senturia who prepared the application. The Program requires an in-depth self-study and includes a peer review. It is administered and funded by the American Association of Museums with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. PHA will undertake the Collections Management Assessment, which is designed to review all aspects of PHA's collection management and identify needs and priorities. The goal of this intensive, one-year effort is to strengthen PHA's care and management of its collections. The study is comprised of three phases: The first phase, using a workbook with an extensive set of questions, focuses on a comprehensive review of collections policies, financial resources, and institutional planning. The second is a site visit by a consultant or MAP surveyor, who will examine PHA's collections operations and will work with PHA to identify changes and make recommendations. The final phase is centered on implementation and integration of priorities into PHA's Strategic Plan. PHA's assessment team started the self study in April and will complete the first phase by July 15, 2009.

## **2009-2010 Membership Dues Increase Proposed**

Your membership in PHA helps to support our programs, to care for our collections, and to protect PHA's buildings. PHA has maintained the same dues structure since 1994, but our operating expenses, including costs to print *The Peacham Patriot* and mailing costs have increased substantially since then. For example, postage for mailing our newsletter was 29 cents then compared to 44 cents today. During the spring, PHA evaluated its dues levels, collected comparative information from neighboring historical

societies, and analyzed the costs of its membership benefits. In these troubled economic times, PHA faced the difficult decision of having to increase revenues for its membership levels in order to meet increased costs. The PHA Board determined at its April meeting the annual dues shown in the table below. The Board also proposed a new Life Membership. We will be asking members to ratify the revised dues at the Annual Meeting on August 4, 2009.

Category	Benefits	Annual Dues
Individual and institutional Membership	Your membership includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Peacham Patriot</i>, our newsletter, which will come to you two times a year</li> </ul>	\$10/year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitation to and participation in Annual Meeting and right to vote</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitations to all programs and exhibits sponsored by PHA</li> </ul>	
Family Membership	All the above benefits	\$15/year
Senior and Student Membership	All the above benefits	\$5/year
Life Membership	All the above benefits for life and discounted admissions at Vermont cultural sites, courtesy of the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance	\$250 one-time payment per family

### Sharon Fuehrer appointed to PHA Board

In December 2008, PHA Trustee Karin Van Orman resigned from the PHA Board since she and her family have moved to New Jersey. Karin has been responsible for setting up the new Web site for PHA. She also served as Membership Chair and coordinated the docent schedule. The PHA Board expressed thanks to Karin for her many contributions to PHA. At its December 12, 2008 meeting, the PHA Board voted unanimously to invite Sharon Fuehrer to fill the vacancy. We welcome Sharon, and PHA is fortunate to have Sharon join the board. Sharon has been an active supporter and volunteer for a long time. Most recently, she worked with Lorna Quimby at the Peacham Hollow Schoolhouse

and helped to identify yard-sale “treasures” among the many bags and boxes filled with the miscellaneous items left by the previous owner. In addition to helping with the planned yard sale at the Peacham Schoolhouse, Sharon will be responsible for coordinating the docent schedule at the Historical House for the coming summer and early fall.

**With help from PHA’s Friends**, we will be able to upgrade the electrical wiring in the Historical House. In June much-needed additional outlets will be installed, and existing outlets will be rewired to bring them up to code. The Historical House will also have a new exterior light. The PHA extends a special thank you to all those who contributed.

### With Grateful Thanks Lorna Quimby

The following is a partial list of gifts received during 2008. A complete list will be available at the annual meeting:

Donor and Gift:

- Phyllis Craig Graves:** photos, Orange Taylor, 1900; Janet Craig Whiting, 1860’s; Amanda Blake Taylor, 1900; Matthew Craig, 1860 (scanned images)
- Diana and Jerry Senturia:** *Roster of Vermont Volunteers – 1861-66* (duplicate copy); various historic postcards; Rowe Brothers Calendar, 1932
- Nelson Whitehill Estate:** Thirteen almanacs for the years 1842-1875 with advertisements for Peacham Corner Storekeepers on back page (delivered by David Warden)
- Edward and Anna Somers:** Images: Peacham Academy Girls’ Basketball team, 1943; East Peacham School ca 1898 and ca 1901
- Mary K. Quimby:** Four photos ca 1890: Corner Store; Blacksmith shop and Methodist Church; East Part Hills
- Laura B. Johnson:** Images: House 314a (Wilson) ca 1896 with Wilson brothers identified; Wilson reunion 1935-36, people identified\*
- Ernest Milligan Estate:** GAR token, 1892, owned by Robert Nelson Bailey (delivered by David Warden)
- Marie Foreham:** Items from Richter’s Store: “Beauty spots” and “court plaster”
- Stephen and Marcia White:** Peacham Academy photos; basketball memorabilia; girls basketball shorts
- Lynn Bonfield:** photo of “Hidden” chair; photocopies of letters of Nellie Bunker to Ella Watts 1885; *Vermont* magazine with article re Corner Store; photos of July 4, 2007; photocopy Charles Dubois’ memoirs; current calendars with Peacham photos

**Debbie Graves Pipes:** Five Christmas cards painted by J. Moody Quimby with greetings written by Daphne Craig Quimby

**Jean Berwick:** Peacham Academy basketball uniform (complete), 1955/56, worn by Frank White

\*Although the Wilson families were numerous in South Peacham, PHA did not have any photographs of them until Laura's gift. We were glad to receive such an addition to our photograph collection. One of the Wilson brothers, Bert kept the South Peacham store for many years.

## In Memoriam

The PHA extends our sympathy to the family and friends of Donald N. Davis 1957 – 2009.

## 2008-2009 PHA Officers and Trustees

(as of the August 5, 2008 PHA Annual Meeting):

### Officers:

President: Jutta Scott  
Vice President: Dart Thalman  
Secretary: Karen Gallas  
Treasurer: Larry Jensen

### Trustees:

Class of 2010- Anna Rubin  
Class of 2010- Diana Senturia  
Class of 2009- Sharon Fuehrer  
Class of 2009- Mel Reis  
Class of 2011- Karen Lewis

**The Peacham Historical Association Office and  
Reference Library  
Summer Hours**

**Tuesdays: 9-11:30 a.m.**

**Thursdays: 2-4 p.m.**

(or by appointment)

Call 802-592-3571

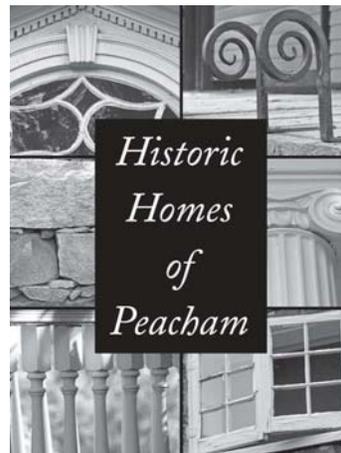
## Extended Hours for Archives and Collections

As part of our efforts to provide greater access to PHA's holdings of manuscripts, photographs and numerous other categories of material, we are extending the open hours to PHA's Historic Archives and Collections.

The collections are now available to researchers for an additional two hours each week. In addition to the regular hours of Monday mornings from 9:00am to 11:30am, the Research Room will now be open on Thursday afternoon from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Research Room is located above the antique shop in the Peacham Store building in the center of town.

## Peacham Historical Association Mission

*The PHA collects, preserves, and makes available materials and sites relating to the history of the town of Peacham for educational purposes so that future generations as well as the present one might benefit.*



Order your copy of the award-winning *Historic Homes of Peacham!*

Visit the PHA website and obtain a soft cover for \$30 or hard cover for \$40 plus \$5 shipping

## **Peacham Patriot • Summer 2009**

Peacham Historical Association  
P.O. Box 101  
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