

Eloise Bayley Miller (1917-2013)

Played by Jean Dedam



Eloise Miller was born to a family of farmers, engineers and scholars who had lived for generations in Peacham. The middle of five children, she divided her childhood between Massachusetts and Peacham Hollow. These were the years of Prohibition, and Eloise saw big black cars racing through town at night; Peacham Hollow (today called East Peacham) was off the main road running through from Danville to Barnet, and bootleggers drove through at high speeds to avoid revenue officers on the main roads. Apparently they didn't always succeed; Eloise reported one car spun off the road, plowed through a hayrick, regained control and raced on down the road. In later years, Eloise attended Peacham Academy, worked as a nanny, and then attended the University of Vermont, majoring in home economics. In 1942, she married Richard Cupithorn Miller. The family had a dairy farm on the same site as William Chamberlain's home. Like Chamberlain, Richard was active in public office, both as a selectman and as Vermont state representative. Soon after retiring, Richard was killed in an accident in the woods; Eloise continued to live in Peacham until she died at age 95.

Images

Photo of painting of General Chamberlain courtesy of Vermont Historical Society

Photo of Orman Parker Hooker courtesy of Peacham Historical Association

Title Page of *The Ox* from Merrill's Sermons courtesy of Peacham Historical Association

Photo of Eloise Bayley Miller courtesy of Peacham Historical Association

Ghost Walk Volunteers

Coordinator: Dart Thalman

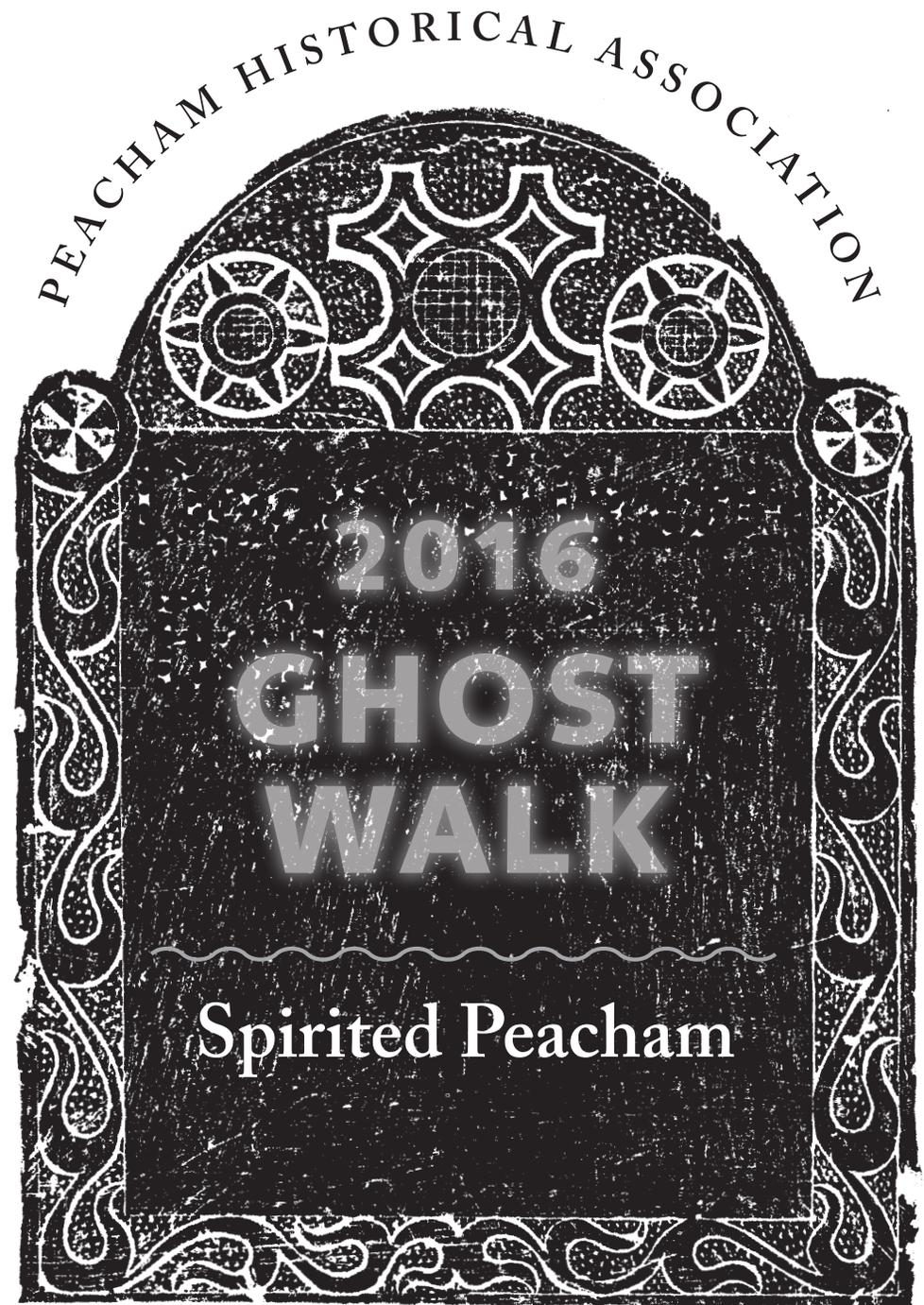
Historical advisor: Lorna Quimby

Docents: Marilyn Magnus, Jutta Scott, Brad Toney, Jock Gill

Tickets: Hattie Thresher

With special thanks to the Peacham Cemetery Association

Ghost Walks are produced by the Peacham Historical Association. For more information, please visit our web site at peachamhistorical.org. Your interest and support are most welcome.



Peacham Cemetery, 2:00 P.M.

In case of rain, the event will be held upstairs in the Town Hall gym

Spirited Peacham

19th Annual Ghost Walk • July 4 and September 29, 2016

"There was a still on every farm"

Early settlers of Peacham brought barrels of rum with them, and soon filled their cellars with cider made from the many apple trees they planted. Always concerned about the safety of drinking water and needing extra calories to do the extreme hard work of clearing the land, men, women and children drank pitchers of cider—cider that grew steadily stronger as it fermented in its barrels. Farmers also built stills and made whiskey, often from potatoes that grew well here; they drank it themselves, but it also became a lucrative cash crop. The adverse effect of daily drinking "ardent spirits" soon gave rise, however, to an equally ardent temperance movement. Peacham passed its first temperance pledge in 1830 and became a center of writing and preaching against consumption of alcohol. Boys and girls held "Cold Water Rallies," and supported the growing national political temperance movement. By the 1920s, Peacham found itself an unintended witness to national Prohibition; current residents still remember their parents peeking through curtains at night to watch big black cars carrying bootleg whiskey bound from Montreal to speakeasies in the south, tearing through back roads to avoid federal agents.

The Ghost Walk presents Peacham residents from all parts of this history.

William Chamberlain (1755-1828)

Played by Steve Galinat



One of early Peacham's most distinguished settlers, General Chamberlain served in several major battles of the Revolutionary War and then built a considerable personal fortune trading land in and around Peacham. He served in nearly every possible public office, from Town Clerk to Justice of the Peace to chief Judge of Caledonia Court. Throughout it all, he continued his business activities. While serving in the U.S. Congress, he corresponded with local residents about his design improvements to the stills he manufactured. He

probably improved the column still for making whiskey in larger amounts; the foundation stones of "General's Still" can still be seen south of his farmhouse on Green Bay Loop.

Orman Parker Hooker (1818-1885)

Played by Alfred Dedam

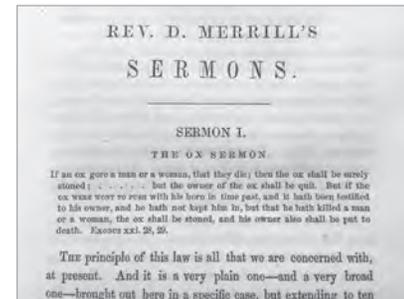


Orman Hooker was reputed to be the last person who persisted in having a still on his farm in the late 1830s, despite a growing and fervent sentiment in town against the production and consumption of "ardent spirits." The new minister of the Methodist Church, Reverend J.N. Hume, was himself known to be a "rouser," a fervent speaker for the temperance cause. A story recorded a few years later recounts that Hume heard that Hooker, one of his parishioners, was running a potato still,

and paid him a visit, asking at first just to see the barns. Farmer Hooker tried to keep him away from the still, but to no avail. Rev. Hume feigned ignorance of distilling and drew from Hooker a detailed description of his still and its workings. Rev. Hume then raised his hand and pronounced the curse of God upon it; the story goes that Farmer Hooker was converted on the spot and so the last of the Peacham distilleries was destroyed.

Mary Grandin Hunt Merrill (1806-1861)

Played by Ariel Zevon



Born in New Jersey, Mary Grandin Hunt lived with her parents in Urbana, Ohio where she met the minister David Merrill (1798-1850). Reverend Merrill's first wife had died in 1836; he married Mary Hunt the next year—the couple had six children. While in Urbana, Merrill wrote two of the most famous and influential temperance sermons, *The Ox Sermon*, and *The Mate to the Ox*.

It is estimated that between 2.5 and 3 million copies of *The Ox Sermon* were printed and distributed nationally. In 1841, Rev. Merrill answered a call to return to his native Peacham to assume the post as the second minister of the Congregational Church. Peacham was still growing, nearing its peak population of near 1500 people. The Merrills worked together to further the temperance movement, supporting the Peacham Temperance Society and organizing Cold Water Rallies. After her husband's early death at age 51, Mary was an eloquent advocate for the cause.

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