



Johanna Branson, PHA President; Jutta Scott, PHA Head of Buildings; and James Douglas, VHS Interim Director.  
Photo courtesy of Vermont Historical Society.

## PHA's Archives and Research Center Wins Award

The Lorna Field Quimby Archives and Research Center (ARC) won the 2015 Award of Excellence in Preservation and Collections Care from the Vermont Historical Society's League of Local Historical Societies and Museums. The Award of Excellence was presented by James Douglas, former Vermont Governor and interim Director of the Vermont Historical Society (VHS), at the October 30, 2015 League of Local Historical Societies and Museums meeting in Burlington.

Governor Douglas noted that "the construction of the Lorna Field Quimby Archives and Research Center significantly advances the long-term preservation of Peacham's historical collections." The award underscores the important accomplishment of protecting in the best possible environment

the remarkable array of manuscripts, archives, textiles, and art objects that tell Peacham's story from its settlement in 1776 to the present. The new building not only safeguards Peacham's historical collections in a modern, climate-controlled, secure, accessible and pleasant environment, but it expands access, promotes use of the collections, and enhances visitor services. During the first six months since the facility was opened on June 16, 2015, the ARC has attracted many new and familiar visitors, donors, and volunteers.

The PHA Board is thrilled to receive the Award of Excellence and is grateful for the community's support for building a future for the Town's past. As noted historian David McCulloch said: "History is who we are and why we are the way we are." The ARC ensures that Peacham's heritage is carried on and is available to everyone in the community.

JUTTA SCOTT

## LETTER FROM THE PHA PRESIDENT

It has been many years since the PHA has asked the Town of Peacham for financial support. At Town Meeting this year we are requesting \$1,000. Here is the background:

Our new building has created a good problem; the Archives and Research Center is attracting more people (34 this summer) with history and genealogy questions, more demand for our research services (we used the help of 32 volunteers), more donated items (50 objects accessioned), more interest in our oral history projects (5 subjects), and more visitors to our summer exhibition (197) and ghost walks (130).

The PHA is supported solely by donations and grants. This is fine with regards to personnel; we are all volunteers. But our buildings need more support to deliver all the programming listed above. Operation of the ARC costs us an additional \$3,000 per year. The Historical House is in need of serious repair and conservation; we are currently seeking bids for an urgently needed new roof.

The PHA is responsible for safely maintaining the artifacts and recording the stories of our town for future generations to study and enjoy. We hope the Town will recognize the contributions the PHA makes to the vibrant community life of Peacham by granting our request.

JOHANNA BRANSON, PHA President

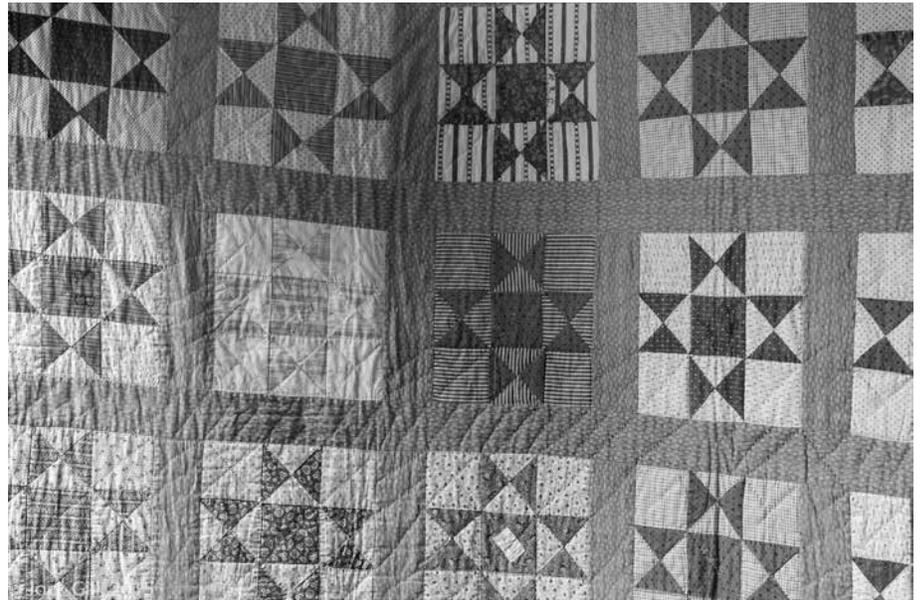
## Mystery Quilt from Our 2015 Exhibit -Update!

Last year's exhibit at the Historic House, "By Peacham Hands:150 Years of Quilts with Stories," included many colorful and unusual quilts, but one of the most intriguing was a simple quilt we dubbed the "Mystery Quilt," since we did not have any history or information about who donated it.

This simple quilt in drab Victorian colors was designed with 42 panels and embroidered with initials on many of the squares. It was hand stitched in a traditional 19th century pattern called "Ohio Star." Our only clue to the origin of the quilt was a 20th century hand-written list of names attached to the back of the quilt. These names corresponded to most of the embroidered initials centered in each of the quilt squares. We originally surmised that that the local women who created this quilt were part of a church group or organization, and we were correct!

One quilt square held a vital missed clue. It was a simple square with the initials "W.R.C.", and these initials mysteriously did not correspond to any of the names listed on the back of the quilt. Lynne Bassett, the national quilt authority who spoke at last year's PHA Annual Meeting, advised us that our mystery quilt was almost certainly a fundraiser done by the Women's Relief Corps (WRC) for the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic), a national fraternity of Civil War veterans.

The WRC was founded in 1883 and quickly became a national organization. It served as the woman's auxiliary to the GAR. Unlike other organizations surrounding the GAR, this one did not have the requirement of a family connection to a Civil War veteran. Instead, the requirements were a "patriotic spirit and belief in the values of the Union and the soldiers and sailors who had defended it." Since this made women who were not directly related to a veteran eligible to join, the organization was a popular choice, and it could



A detail of the Mystery Quilt. Photo by Jock Gill.

include a wide range of ages. This was certainly the case with the women who created our quilt, with ages ranging from 18 to 60 years.

The first chapter in Vermont was formed in 1885, and Mina G. Hooker of Brattleboro, wife of famed VT Civil War veteran and GAR Commander George W. Hooker, became the first Vermont president. By 1892, the Vermont membership numbered more than two thousand, and in 1902, Calista Robinson Jones of Bradford, VT became the national WRC president.

The WRC was an active club and held patriotic activities for the benefit of aging Civil War veterans. Across the country, the WRC assumed the position of social organizer for veterans and their families. In some communities, the WRC even bought funeral plots for Civil War veterans and others (such as nurses) associated with the war. They hosted dinners, raised money through dues, and held social events and parades. One of their most popular fundraisers was to make quilts. This was done in a variety of ways, but the simplest was to request a donation for each square of the quilt. The final product would be stitched and assembled by a group of WRC women.

We dated our WRC quilt to circa 1890, based on genealogical research done

using the quilt makers' names. Lynne Bassett also dated it to the 1880s-90s based on the fabric patterns and colors utilized in the squares. Each of our WRC quilt makers lived in Peacham, and many had family members who served during the Civil War.

Some of the original proceeds from our quilt likely went to the coffers of the WRC Vermont state chapter, and these state funds were used to establish, build and maintain the Vermont Soldiers' Home and Cemetery in Bennington (now called the Vermont Veterans' Home). The WRC of Vermont also promoted putting a Declaration of Independence Chart into every classroom, as well as the Pledge of Allegiance, and an American flag with a manual on how to salute it properly. On a national level, with the GAR, they urged the "observance of all patriotic anniversaries," and created a yearly spring observance to "perpetuate the memory of their heroic dead" with prayer, parades, flowers and speeches commemorating fallen veterans. By 1889, May 30th had become the official day of observance, originally called "Decoration Day" and now known as Memorial Day. Who would have guessed that our simple country quilt had ties to such notable national events?

SUSAN CHANDLER

## Refurbished Cupola Crowns Historic Barn

As part of the ongoing restoration of his beautiful barn on the Green Bay Loop, Omri Parsons had the cupola refurbished and repainted last fall. Bill Dufresne of South Peacham did the work. The barn was built in about 1890 by Benjamin Darling, a well-known carpenter and past owner of the historic David Martin, Jr. house across the road. It replaced a smaller barn used for oxen; its hand-hewn timbers were incorporated into the new structure.

The 26 by 90-foot post-and-beam barn is remarkable for its size, graceful proportions, and wealth of detail, including corner pilasters, molded cornice, and, notably, the cupola. The main floor originally housed livestock, with a substantial hayloft above and a below-ground level for storing manure. A stone ramp at the gable end leads to the central entry.

The barn houses a remarkable collection of handmade farm implements and provides a living history of Vermont farm life over the past century. It was featured in a documentary film, "Barns: Legacy of Wood and Stone," aired on Vermont Public Television in 2002. Omri has been working on the barn's restoration for the past 40 years and has received several state grants for that purpose.

The barn is definitely worth a visit. It's located about two miles from the intersection of Green Bay Loop and Maple Tree Lane. Omri is looking for new ways to allow people to experience this remarkable relic of Vermont's past.

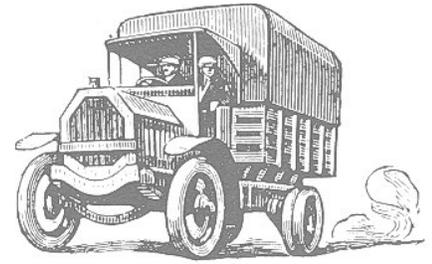
JANE ALPER



The newly restored cupola on Omri Parson's barn. Photo by Omri Parsons.

### **DON'T FORGET!**

Please come to town meeting on March 1 to support Peacham Historical Association's appropriation.



## **Spirited Peacham: Still, Temperance, and Rum Running!**

For the Summer, 2016 Historical House Exhibition, the PHA is planning to present objects and documents associated with the town's rich history with spirits—the liquid kind! We know that most early citizens drank beverages of a wide range of potency, from small beer to ardent spirits, and that these were produced locally. At one time it was said there was a still on every farm producing drink for private consumption. William Chamberlain, one of Peacham's most distinguished founding fathers, was famous for his improvements to the commercial still. So it is perhaps not surprising that other citizens of Peacham were leaders in the Temperance Movement. In more recent times during Prohibition Peacham was a stop on the route from Canada to southern markets. Living citizens remember their parents telling stories of the cars racing through East Peacham at night with their illegal cargo.

The Ghost Walk for 2016 will feature townspeople representing various aspects of the subject, including General Chamberlain, a local farmer who mended his ways after a visit from the parson, and a South Peacham woman who watched the rumrunners during Prohibition.

We are gathering material on this topic now and enthusiastically welcome your contributions. Do you have artifacts related to Temperance or Prohibition? Would you like to reconstruct a still? Have you heard stories that we might be interested in hearing? Would you like to portray a character in the Ghost Walk or act as a docent? Please contact us!

JOHANNA BRANSON

## Growing Up on a Peacham Dairy Farm | Part 1



Benny Field's girls. Left to right Sylvia, Mildred, Patty, June, Lorna. Photo courtesy of Lorna Quimby.

*Editor's Note: During the past year, Lorna Quimby met with Marilyn Magnus on five occasions to record the memories of her life in Peacham. I have transcribed the first of the interviews, dealing with her childhood, and offer the following excerpts. I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I did hearing and recording them. Thanks to Lorna for editing and amplifying the draft and for sharing her wonderful experiences with us.*

JANE ALPER

This is **Marilyn Magnus**, today is the 16th of December 2014, and I'm talking right now with **Lorna Quimby**. Lorna, I'll ask you first, what's your birthday and where were you born?

**L:** My birthday is July 30 1928, I was born in Brightlook Hospital in St. J, and I was the first one in my family who was born in the hospital. My three older sisters were born at home in Peacham. We lived on the farm where the alpacas are. That was the Benjamin and Helen Field farm.

**M:** Why were you born in the hospital and your sisters weren't?

**L:** Because my mother was always up to date. She spaced her children. My oldest sister June was born 12 years before me,

then there were three years and my sister Mildred, six years and my sister Sylvia, 3 years and I was born, and then 6 years and the youngest, Patricia. So my mother had a spread of 18 years between the youngest and the oldest.

**M:** Wow! Were they all girls?

**L:** All girls. My poor father!

**M:** What was he doing?

**L:** He was a dairy farmer.

**M:** What is your earliest memory of when you were living there at the farm?

**L:** Well, one of my most vivid memories is—my father was sitting in a chair; he had a dime in one hand and ten pennies in the other hand; he asked me to make a choice, and I chose the pennies. Everyone was laughing and I didn't have a clue.

**M:** Where would you have gone to school and when did you start?

**L:** You started school when you were 6 years old. We walked up to the school-house right where the roads fork. It was a quarter of a mile walk. I was eager to go because the spring before I started I ran away from Mother and went to visit

school. I walked up and I crept in the door. Everyone looked at me, and the teacher said, "Does your mother know you're here?" I said, "Oh yes, yes." So I stayed. When I came home Mother combed me out because she'd hunted all over for me. She was pregnant with my younger sister at the time; I didn't have a clue. No one told me she was pregnant, and I didn't see very well so her growing bulk escaped me entirely.

**M:** How old were you when you got glasses? And how did somebody finally figure out something wasn't right?

**L:** Well, it's a long story. I went to the South Part School. When I started there were quite a few there because the teacher brought all the children from Green Bay over. The School Board combined the two schools for at least half the year, so I had a fellow classmate. Then it thinned out so that when I was in the third grade there were only four of us—my older sister, James Brock who was my sister's age, and a little first grader, Malcolm Johnson. So the Board closed the school.

Dad had to drive us down to the South Peacham School. The first year I went there the teacher was Mrs. Welch. She prided herself that her eighth graders started the Academy better prepared than all the other teachers in the town so she really zeroed in on the older kids; and we younger kids sort of drifted along. Then she retired. Bernice Main was the new teacher and it was she—this is the fourth grade—who discovered that when I was sitting in the front seat I could not see anything on the blackboard. When I had my eyes tested, and got my glasses, it was the first time I realized that there are blades of grass, leaves on trees, and I could see people's faces. If you can't see people's faces clearly you can't read their responses. So when someone said, do you remember Carrie Somers, her sparkling eyes? I wouldn't have seen them. What I saw were her hands with these generous cookies in them. I was an omnivorous reader, and no one ever realized that I had my nose in the book so I could see. The first day was traumatic because I was used to four children and I knew my sister and I knew James, and here's

maybe between 12 and 15 children. I was scared to death. I shriveled up and my stomach hurt, so I told Dee-dee [Sylvia's nickname] I was sick. The Milligans were neighbors and I went there, and they called Dad. I lay on the fainting couch in their living room waiting for Dad to come. When I got home my nerves eased, my stomach felt better, and I was ready to go out and play. Of course everybody noticed this, so the next day I had to go back again. Mother gave Sylvia some milk of magnesia pills that she could give me if my stomach hurt me again. But I learned to cope; slowly the mass dissolved into individuals. But it was quite a memorable experience.

**M:** As far as what you did for outside activities, was there anything noticeable in that, for instance in the South Part School?

**L:** It didn't matter that there were just four of us, we tore out and we played Andy Over; you throw the ball over the roof. We swung on the swings and teetered on the teeters. We had a cousin in Montpelier who was in the Girl Scouts and she sent her manual over to Sylvia. So Sylvia with three other kids, all ages, tried to form a Girl Scout troop. At Christmas time, we dramatized *We Three Kings of Orient Are*. There were only four kids so my sister Sylvia had to play two of the kings. But it was fun.

**M:** It sounds like a good time. Who would have gotten the fire going in the morning? The teacher, or who would have done that?

**L:** Well, no. You got paid money for that, so James Brock got there before the others and started the fire and swept the floor, and he got paid. My sisters had done that because they had the shortest distance to walk. We'd go over to the neighbors and fill a pail of drinking water. There was a little room off the main schoolroom where we kept the pail of water when it wasn't freezing cold. Otherwise we had to move it into the school room because it would freeze in that little room.

That is the room where when they had an oyster supper the mothers

prepared the oyster soup on those smelly kerosene stoves, with no running water and no real kitchen. They would borrow ironstone china soup dishes from the church. South Part women prided themselves on their oyster stew because it was made with whole Jersey milk, not skim milk like they used over in the Green Bay school.

**M:** Where did the oysters come from?

**L:** The oysters probably came by train packed in ice. They were left at the Barnet depot and the stage would bring them up to the [South Peacham] store.

**M:** [At] South Part, since you were so close to home, did you go home for lunch or did you bring your lunch there?

**L:** We took our lunches to school. Earlier, when I was in the first grade we were let out earlier than the big kids, so I would walk home. The road crew had just cleared the right of way, cut out the brush, and blackberries had come in. I would wander home eating blackberries all the way, and I'd even put them in my pocket.

**M:** Can you imagine a child being allowed to do that today?

**L:** Well, this was at the time when the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped, and we were told you never accept a ride from a stranger. There was a salesman, Tony Corri; he was an Italian. Dad and Mother first remembered him coming around with his pack on his back, selling Levis and that sort of thing. When I was six or seven he had got enough ahead so he had a truck and it was all full of dry goods in the back. He drove around from farm to farm. He stopped and offered me a ride, and I headed for the bushes; I was going to run up in the woods and lose him. So I got back to the farm and here was Tony telling Dad and Mother about it and laughing about the little girl who was afraid of old Tony. I felt so bad; I'd been so proud of myself that I knew what to do, and they were laughing at me.

*Part two will appear in the next issue.*

### MAP CASE WANTED

The PHA is in need of a map case to store historical town maps, posters, and other broadside material. PHA's collected and preserved oversize material documents the physical growth, changes, and evolution of the town from the early 1800s. The collection also documents town activities and events from the early days to the present.

Currently, PHA has the use of one drawer in the town clerk's office vault but the collection has significantly outgrown the one drawer. Now that we have a new temperature and humidity controlled facility with ample security, we would like to have the appropriate container for these historically important oversize materials and to make them more easily accessible to researchers and visitors.

We are hoping to raise approximately \$700 to purchase a 36" x 24" steel archival safe paint-coated, 5-drawer flat file cabinet. We would be grateful for all donations that would help us with this purchase.

KAREN LEWIS

## Peacham: Post-Civil War to the Present

*The conclusion to the History of Peacham by Johanna Branson, the first two parts of which appeared in the Spring, and Winter 2015 editions of the Patriot.*

After the Civil War ended, the exodus of Peacham residents to the West continued; some soldiers left directly from their battlefields and only returned home for occasional visits. The farmers who stayed continued to sell their sheep and turn to dairy farming. The hill farms, with less fertile land and less stable footing for cattle, were abandoned, and trees began to reclaim the higher lands of town. Today there are vast networks of cellar holes and stone walls in the woods, traces of a time when these forests were cleared for sheep grazing and the views were open. The lower pastures became a mix of summer pastures for cows and fields of hay and grain to feed them during the winter months. Large, handsome barns were built on many farms, and the configuration of big house, little house, back house, barn we now think of as “typical Vermont” became a familiar sight.

Throughout the 19th century butter was an important product, along with cheese. Early on, farm women were usually in charge of production; later it moved off the farm to creameries. The surplus was sent to cities like Boston and New York, at first by wagon and after the railroad came to Barnet in 1851 by train. With better transportation and, later, refrigeration, farm production underwent a further shift to milk itself. Over the course of the 20th century, dairy farming consolidated. Production evolved from small herds, hand-milked, with milk transported in cans by wagon, then by truck, to market. This was replaced by mechanical milking of much larger herds, with bulk tanks and refrigerated trucking to distant creameries. Small family farms were abandoned. Today, just a few active dairy farms—and a couple of small sheep and one alpaca farm—have a large influence over the landscape, maintaining traditional field patterns and uses.



An early butter mold made in Peacham.

Although the population declined, and most small business vanished, Peacham’s cultural institutions continued well into the 20th century and beyond. The Academy continued to educate young people well, and hosted constant activities. One distinguished alumnus of these years was George Harvey, born in 1864. He actually never graduated—it is said the advanced Greek was difficult for him—but he had went on to have a distinguished career in journalism; he edited the *North American Review* and *Harper’s Weekly*. He was politically active and served as Ambassador to Great Britain from 1921-23. He always came back to Peacham—he and his wife are buried in the cemetery—and emphasized his gratitude for the Academy. He was one of the founders of the Academy’s extremely active Alumni Association. The Academy continued into the 20th century, but enrollments declined as other kinds of schools opened. It closed in 1971. Another school opened on site, but the school building was lost to fire in 1976. A scale model of the last academy building was commissioned by the Alumni Association and is on display in the PHA Archives building.

The large dairy and hay barns built in the 19th century marked the end of widespread new construction. Peacham’s residential and institutional building

had largely stopped even earlier. Part of what gives the town its present visual unity is the limited range of styles; the built parts of the town were largely frozen by the mid-19th century. This architectural uniformity together with the rural landscape could be seen as evidence of economic stagnation and abandonment. In fact, it was to usher in a new era in the economy of the town.

The things that had not happened in the town—large-scale industry, tracts of residential housing, commercial shopping—had preserved open landscape, clean air and water, and, it could be argued, a peaceful pace of life. By the end of the 19th century, this proved to be just what many people were looking for. The arrival of out-of-state summer residents and the growth of tourism gradually transformed the earlier patterns of community development in Peacham. The Mountain View Inn and later boarding houses such as the Choate Inn and The Elms played a role in attracting newcomers to Peacham. The revolution in transportation and the advent of the automobile accelerated the growth of summer visits by tourists from urban areas. Some of them later settled in Peacham and bought rural homes or farms, and a few built new summer residences on the outskirts of the village. The first summer residence in the village was built in 1908 and a second in 1912. During the Depression, several academics from Columbia University, Harvard University, and other academic institutions purchased abandoned or over-mortgaged farm properties. This gradual “in-migration” from academic communities transformed Peacham, and slowly economic conditions improved because of additional tax receipts. Although many of the newcomers lived in Peacham only part of the year, these families had the financial resources to repair and preserve houses that might otherwise have fallen into disrepair.

Although fire destroyed the first library, Peacham Academy, and several taverns and houses, many structures have been preserved. Peacham's well-built homes have retained their architectural history. Peacham remains a remarkably intact 19th century village with over ninety houses built before 1860, and much of the physical history dating from its beginnings to 1900 is preserved. The landscape, having escaped rapid development, is conserved with care by farmers and foresters as a genuine working landscape; the open pastures and fields, the stands of woods, are seen as town treasures.

One could argue that many of the cultural values established in its first decades have been preserved as well. Town Meeting continues to be the form of local governance; every calendar is marked with the first Tuesday in March. A love of learning is widespread and persists. Lorna Quimby, local historian and author, recalls growing up on a farm, and walking with her sisters three miles to the Ryegate library to check out as many books as they could carry home. This is not an unusual story; today the library serves as a kind of community center.

There is a strong sense of the history of the place. The new PHA archives, supported entirely by donations by members and other friends of Peacham, attests to the town's commitment to the preservation of its records and artifacts for future generations.

One final possibility: the state archaeologists have their eyes on Peacham as a repository of an earlier history. Precisely because the land was not developed, they hope to find undisturbed traces of the paths of those who were here before the first European settlers, traces which were erased elsewhere. There is still much to be learned about this beautiful place.

JOHANNA BRANSON

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

August, 2015

I read with interest the fall edition of the *Patriot*. Congratulations to you all! I have a couple of comments to make regarding Nancy Budgus's memoir. Firstly, although she's an amazing character, I don't think she can levitate! I refer to her using a "pitchfork" to ride to the top of the barn. She meant a "hay fork." There were two kinds: the harpoon and the grapple. When I first helped him hay, my father used the harpoon type. Later we had a grapple.

Nancy's mother made scuppernong wine. *Scuppernong* is the popular name for the muscadine grape. Grown in the southern United States, it has a large sweet fruit often used to make ... wine. The name derives from the Scuppernong River in Tyrell County, North Carolina, where the grape was discovered in the 18th century." [*The Facts on File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*, third edition, by Robert Hendrickson, 2004.]

Lorna Quimby

December, 2015

Your "Early Years of Peacham, Part One" was of especial interest to me because you mentioned that the Congregational Church sent missionaries "abroad as far as Ceylon, India and Hawaii."

I am originally from Hawaii, and I have done some research on missionaries who went to Kauai, where I was born. Who were the Peacham missionaries who went to Hawaii?

My memories of visiting William Lederer on East Hill include seeing his bank of irises next to his pond, getting mail at the old post office (an old red barn), having homemade root beer at a gathering at the Congregational Church, and visiting Julie and Sam Kempton at their farm.

Betty Meltzer

*Editor's Note: I sent Ms. Meltzer the passage from Bogart's History of Peacham about the first Peacham missionary, Ephraim Clark, who was the pastor of a church in Honolulu from 1827-62 and translated the Bible and other religious and secular works into Hawaiian. If anyone has additional information about Peacham missionaries in Hawaii, I'll be happy to pass it along to Ms. Meltzer.*

## A Peacham Mystery

Jock Gill has been researching mysteries relating to Peacham's early history and is looking for readers' help in solving them.

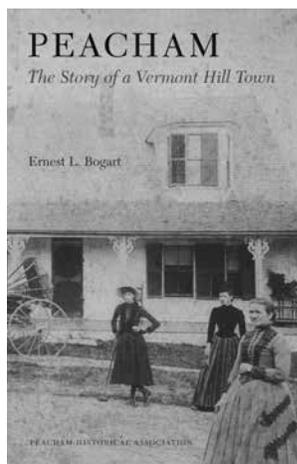
The first mystery is the route taken by the Bayley Hazen Road from the west side of Harvey's Mountain to the present junction of the road with Elkin's Way near the Wes Davis farm. Jock notes that the road's route from Wells River to the Shields place and on to the Kinerson farm in Peacham is well documented. His questions are:

- How did the road reach the brook in the gully below and west of Farrow Farm Road? The apparent remains of a bridge abutment in the gully suggest that the road may have crossed the brook at this point.
- What route did the road take after crossing the brook? Did it run past the west end of the Farrow farm house or uphill toward the possible site of the Jas. Bayley house?
- How did the road get from the Farrow farm to the South Peacham Brook? Where did it cross the brook? Was the Mill Trace built on the old road at the crossing point?

## PHA Republishes Peacham's Town History

Ernest L. Bogart's *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town* is now available in a new reprint with a beautifully designed cover. First published in 1948 and reprinted in 1982, this comprehensive history of Peacham has just been printed by Bookmobile, a digital publisher in Minneapolis. PHA provided the digital file of scanned images for the text. Joanna Bodenweber designed the cover using a photograph from the PHA collections.

You can order a copy of Peacham's town history from PHA at a purchase price of \$35. Copies are also be available for purchase at the Peacham Library, the Craft Guild during the summer, or by ordering via PHA's web site [peachamhistorical.org](http://peachamhistorical.org).



The cover photograph shows the James Craig Farm ca.1890.

## PHA Board 2015

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