

A Short History of Deweyburg Gore, aka "Paradise Alley" PART 1

Last year, PHA held its annual summer fundraiser at the residence of Rusty and Kathleen Barber located in a part of Peacham originally known as "Deweyburg Gore." This area historically had many colorful and intriguing names, including Paradise Alley, Rouser Town, The Way-Phillips Gypsy Camp and Stovepipe Alley. Following our fundraiser, PHA had numerous inquiries about the history of this district. While there are only limited official historical records for this area, there are additional online sources that help to tell the story of this short-lived land charter and its inhabitants.

To begin, what is a gore? According to *Webster's Dictionary*, a gore is "a triangular tract of land lying between larger divisions." Historically, gores were found primarily in New England, and were usually the result of errors when land was first surveyed and the towns laid out. A gore would lie in an area between two abutting towns but technically would be in neither. Gores originally were unincorporated since they were not part of a town and had

Map showing Deweyburg highlighted in light gray.



Photo: Julie Lang

Board President Johanna Branson welcomes guests at PHA's annual fundraiser in August at Rusty and Kathleen Barber's barn in Deweyburg, transformed into a 1920's speakeasy for the occasion.

limited self-government. Vermont had numerous small gores in the 18th century, but only four remain intact today.¹

Deweyburg Gore was a tract of land with 52 lots, bordered by Peacham and Danville to the north and Peacham and Cabot to the west. Because of its shape, it was colloquially referred to as "The Boot" (see map, left). On February 28, 1782, the Vermont General Assembly resolved that the tract of land be "granted unto Capt. Elijah Dewey and company fifteen in number so much of the Gore joining east on Cabot as will make each of them sixty-fifth part of a square mile township."² The Assembly subsequently requested that the Governor and Council create a charter for the area with such restrictions and fees as they deemed best. The township was named Dewey's Gore, also referred to as Deweyburg Gore or simply Deweyburg.

In September, 1806 at Town Meeting, Peacham voted to divide and annex

Deweyburg Gore. The proposal met with considerable protest and resistance by the inhabitants of Deweyburg. According to Ernest Bogart's history of Peacham, the matter was reconsidered three years later in October of 1809, when the inhabitants of Deweyburg changed their minds and petitioned Peacham to be annexed. The following year, a portion of "The Boot" was annexed, and Peacham's acreage was increased from 22,040 to 22,434 acres.³ The Northeastern corner (the top of the boot) was annexed to Danville.

These are the facts generally reported about Deweyburg. However, we do have three census records for Deweyburg and a wealth of information from on-line genealogical records. The first US Census was taken in 1790. These records indicate that Deweyburg had seven families, with the surnames of Hunt, Leavenworth, Morris (possibly Norris), Page, Peasley, and Woodward.

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LETTER FROM THE PHA PRESIDENT

Peacham has attracted more than her fair share of historians, from those interested in the history of the town to those who love the peace and quiet to write about other places and times. The PHA has benefitted from this rich culture of historical interest and speculation—questions come from every part of town, and townspeople are openly interested in making connections and seeing patterns across time. I wanted to take a moment to appreciate three very different people.

Our great local historian, of course, is **Lorna Quimby**. After a very long life writing books and publishing countless essays about every imaginable aspect of Peacham life in years past, she has more recently become a one-woman bridge to the earlier twentieth century. In her articles for the *North Star Monthly* and her story-telling at Friday morning Peacham Library Coffee Hours, she uses the current moment—the season, the weather, the state of the roads, schools, farm life—as a starting point to draw our imaginations to a time a few decades ago when human practices were often different in fascinating, telling ways. She is invaluable.

Ernest Bogart was one of many professional historians who were summer visitors.. The town was especially blessed when he landed on Church Street during his breaks from teaching because he decided to write a history of the town. *Peacham: A Vermont Hill Town* was published in 1947. Bogart was an economic historian who grounded his work in diligent archival research, and who clearly loved facts and numbers. The result is a book that to this day is a treasury of information about the town. How many taverns do we know existed based on application for licenses in 1806? How did a farmer survive in the transition from sheep to dairy farming? What were the myriad industries necessary for the functioning of life in a small town in the 19th century? How much money did the Town Clerk make? We turn to Bogart again and again with our questions. The answers are usually there and they appear to be almost always right.

Jere (Hugh Jeremy) Packard, a long-time resident on Penny Street, was not really a summer person. Deeply involved in his old farm, he would make the drive from Kingston, Pennsylvania on weekends throughout the year to work on the place. A school headmaster by profession, he was a teacher and historian at heart; after he retired, he continued to teach, especially the history of World War II. One of his last projects was a novel about the mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions during the 1780's, with protagonists from both Native and European backgrounds. His historical imagination was alive and contagious. He was a quiet, steady supporter of the Peacham Historical Association, deeply interested in anything we were up to. Jere died this past Christmas and we will miss him. To us, he was a perfect example of the historically engaged people we have in Peacham: he was rooted in this place, genuinely curious about its history, loved teasing out connections and patterns, and possessed of a mind at once open and skeptical.

JOHANNA BRANSON



A detail from a 1902 photo of Peacham Corner School.

Info Wanted on Peacham's Schoolhouses

This summer's programming for both the Historical House exhibit and the Ghost Walks is going to focus on Peacham's one-room schoolhouses. We are interested in learning anything we can about the schools, including information on charters, school districts, teachers curricula, students, schedules, and the buildings themselves.

- Did you attend a one-room school in Peacham?
- Do you have stories in your family about these schools?
- Do you own one of the existing buildings?
- Do you know the locations of one that has disappeared?
- Do you have any documents or objects from to your school days that we could use in the exhibit?

Please get in touch with us! Our buildings are closed for the winter, but you can email us at historic@peacham.net, drop us a note at PO Box 101, Peacham, or after April 15 give us a call at the Archives and Research Center, 592-3049. If you'd like to share information right away feel free to call Jane Alper at 592-3161.

Thanks for helping.

JOHANNA BRANSON

(Deweysburg continued from page 1)

There were a total of 48 people in the tract; 12 free white men over the age of 16, 18 free white women over age 16, 18 young boys, and no indentured servants within the community. The absence of young girls is notable. As later revealed by genealogical research, these settlers were exceedingly poor, and the young girls may have been sent out to other settlements as indentured servants or else they were simply not counted.

The original grantees, Captain Dewey and his officers, never lived in Deweysburg. Elijah Dewey was born in Westfield, Massachusetts in 1744 and served in the American Revolutionary War under Col. Moses Robinson of Bennington, Vermont. Captain Dewey died in Bennington in 1818 and was buried there. Following his death, a handwritten list of his company's payroll was discovered in his papers, listing the names of his officers and privates. None of these names appear in the 1790 census for Deweysburg. The lots assigned to the grantees were surveyed and sold for profit to the families listed in the 1790 census.

The second US census was taken in 1800. This census contained more data, with age groups further broken down into 11 categories. Overall, Deweysburg had 154 free white individuals (all ages, both men and women). A census category was added for "all other free individuals except Indians not taxed,"

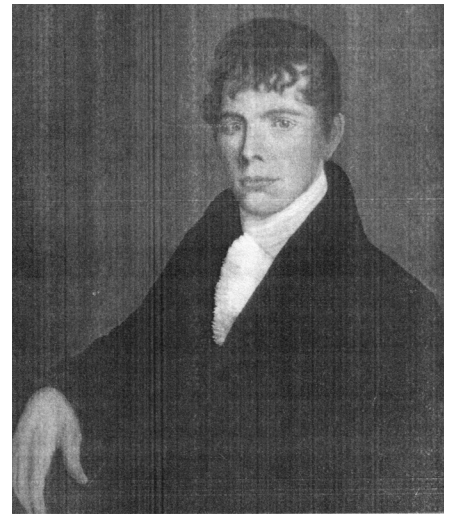
of which Deweysburg had none. The Gore now had 27 official families, and the surnames of Barker, Bayley, Carter, Crofsman, Dockam, Laughton, Norris, Plaisted, Porter, Sanborn, Tice, and Whittier were added to the original group. The names of Leavenworth and Page were no longer listed. Significant numbers of children and young people under the age of 16 were recorded. We do not know how many Indians were in the settlement since they were not counted. However, we do know from genealogical records that there was a significant Abenaki community present.

The final US census record for Deweysburg was made in 1810, just prior to the Gore being annexed by the towns of Peacham and Danville. This census now included the category "slaves," of which none were recorded. The population was now at 200, and of this number, 113 were under the age of 16 and 22 were over the age of 45. This indicates that almost 70% of the inhabitants were either children or well past their work prime, creating social pressures that likely created the need to join with the larger established towns of Peacham and Danville. Genealogical records also indicate that the "community didn't grow," but this referred to the lack of industry growth and wealth, not the lack of inhabitants.

In part 2, we will look at the controversy surrounding the intermarriage of some Deweysburg residents with Abenaki Indians (known in the early days as "gypsies"), the organizing of a Free Will Baptist Church in Deweysburg, and the 1807 Governor's election results which reveal the political divide of Republicans v. Federalists in Deweysburg, Peacham and Danville. We will also look at the role of the town "poor farm," and the legacy of Deweysburg's poverty, which lasted well into the 19th century.

SUSAN CHANDLER

- 1 Current remaining VT Gores are Avery's Gore, Buel's Gore, Warren's Gore and Warner's Grant.
- 2 Bogart, Ernest, *Peacham, The Story of a Vermont Hill Town* (1948), p. 228.
- 3 Ibid.



Mellen Chamberlain. Location of original portrait is unknown. Image courtesy of Vermont Historical Society.

VHS Awards Grant to Study Peacham Native Mellen Chamberlain

The Vermont Historical Society recently awarded its 2016 Weston A. Cate Fellowship to Vermont writer and historian Joe Sherman for a study titled: *Mellen Chamberlain's Five Years of Great Good Fortune: 1832-1837*.

Sherman's grant proposal promises to be a fascinating exploration of five years in the life and work of a Peacham native who deserves to be much better known.

Mellen Chamberlain, born in Peacham in about 1795, was the son of William Chamberlain, the Revolutionary War general, legislator, and inventor, whose patented still was featured in last summer's PHA exhibit: *Spirited Peacham*. Mellen graduated from Dartmouth and spent his next years teaching at Peacham Academy and then practicing law. In 1832 he applied to the brothers Thaddeus and Erasmus Fairbanks for the exclusive rights to sell the Fairbanks platform scale west of the Allegheny Mountains. For the next five years he traveled throughout a vast territory encompassing Pittsburgh, New Orleans, and the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys. He left the employ of the Fairbanks brothers a rich man in 1837.

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Photo: Julie Lang



The Galinat family enjoying PHA's annual fundraiser in Deweysburg.

Lorna Quimby Memories: Years of Public Service



Lorna Quimby

Editor's Note: In 2014–2015 Marilyn Magnus met several times with Lorna Quimby to record her memories of life in Peacham. The following excerpts cover her years on the Peacham School Board and in the Town Clerk's Office.

Lorna: I've always felt that you need to give to the community where you live. When the girls were in school and I wasn't fully occupied at home babysitting, I would volunteer. I got known in the community and I'd been helping at the school. I was in PTG [Parent-Teacher Group] and then I was on the school board. Bob [Llewellyn] Roberts was the superintendent and he was excellent. He and Marge Greaves did everything. He was very good at explaining things that came down from the state: what we could do, what we couldn't do. I served three terms.

Marilyn: That would be nine years?

L: Yes. My philosophy has always been that your first term you learn what you should be doing, the second term you polish it off, and the third term it's time to step down and let somebody else have that experience. One of my chores was to go around and take the school census. I drove to every house and listed the children and their birthdays. That way I would see where the children came from. It's an eye opener when you

drive out to a place and you think, "My God, the kid has to get to school from here!" We had one experience that is not repeatable these days. Kathy who was a very eager learner and—

M: This is one of your daughters?

L: My older daughter. We had always exposed her to various things, to music and so on. We parents had been talking because not only were the children indifferent to music; they disliked music lessons.

M: We're talking about how many schoolhouses at that time?

L: Oh, we were modern then. We started out in the South Peacham School with the first and second grade, third and fourth went to Ewell's Hollow, and [fifth and sixth went to] East Peacham. So there were three schools. Junior high was in a room they rented at the high school [Peacham Academy].

M: They didn't have kindergarten?

L: No. We parents who wanted kindergarten for our children paid for it and transported them to a woman who taught them in Barnet. She was very good.

M: So your daughter came home and—

L: And groused about music. Talking with other parents I realized that whatever the teacher was doing, she was turning off at least all the boys and some of the girls. I thought, we're paying her and she's not doing her job, so when it came time to sign her contract, I said, "I won't do that, Bob; she's not a good teacher; she's turning them off." I didn't sign the contract and she didn't get the job. We got a music teacher that the children liked, and all of a sudden they were enjoying music.

M: Did you have any major crisis during the time you were on the school board?

L: No, [I don't remember]. It's like childbirth; it's all a merciful blur.

M: Was there a school nurse that came around?

L: Yes, we had a wonderful school nurse, Mary Jane Choate. She had worked in the cities as a public health nurse. There wasn't anything she hadn't seen, and she was very effective. She set up free vaccination clinics. This was shortly after the polio epidemics. There wasn't anybody who didn't show up with their children; if they didn't show up, Mary Jane did at their homes. We had two families who had children with great speech problems and no one dealt with it until they got to school. As soon as Mary Jane tested them, she visited the parents and convinced them to drive the children to the speech therapist in Rutland for therapy.

M: A very common problem right now, as soon as school starts in the fall, is the problem of lice.

L: It's interesting to me because when we were going to school during the depression everybody was dirt poor but they were clean. I never even heard of lice.

L: If you want my background on being town clerk, it's a long history. In 1946 after I graduated from Lyndon Institute, the following fall I went to Burlington Business College, taking their general course because it was the cheapest one. The first semester I took bookkeeping. I love to remember that because we had to keep records in ink.

M: Ink! So you couldn't make a mistake.

L: You had to bleach it with Clorox if you made a mistake. I had one page that was practically yellow with Clorox. We had no adding machine, so all the addition of long columns was done as they'd done it for centuries. My first job at Peerless Casualty Insurance Company [in Keene, New Hampshire] was very complicated. They gave part of their liabilities to other insurance companies. I typed the bordereaux that went to Lloyds of London.

M: How do you spell that name; what is that?

L: Bordereaux are French. Do you know about the Dreyfus scandal?

M: Yes, I remember hearing about that.

L: Well, the evidence against him were bordereaux. It was a French name for these lists. It was a lot of numbers. I had learned about thin carbon paper at Burlington Business College. We had no copiers then, so I had to make ten copies; when I made a mistake, I had to make ten erasures. And we had an adding machine that would only add; it wouldn't do multiplication. If you did ten times something, you had to put it in ten times. The only time we used a calculator was at the end of the fiscal year when the whole department were doing the final figures for the Board. The calculator was about three feet long and it clanked. There were no chips, no electronics at all. Anyway, that was my first job.

Finally, I got totally fed up. My eyes continued to get worse all my life, so I had to stop doing this detail work. I came home, and the next thing I knew the office manager for Luce Manufacturing in Groton came [to the farm]. She'd heard about me and wondered if I'd come to work for them and help on their accounts receivable. I got married in '53, and I worked there until they moved. Then I went to work at Fairbanks. At Fairbanks, I had another role because I had learned shorthand: I was secretary to the chief of the engineers. When my girls were born and went to school I joined PTG. I was secretary there, and I was treasurer of the [Peacham Congregational] church for 20 years.

Then [the selectboard] hired me to be Louis Lamoureux's assistant in the town office. When he decided to retire, I ran for the office and was elected. When they hired me to do the books, I realized that I needed more knowledge about accounting, so I went to Lyndon State and took bookkeeping—well, it was accounting then. At the same time, I took an English course. When I was elected town clerk in 1981 I was also completing my last semester and got my Bachelors in English.

So [when I was elected] I was familiar with the town clerk's job. I was town clerk and treasurer, which means you do everything. The salary that they paid was not commensurate with the huge responsibility, the skills you needed, and

what a so-called professional would get in another job doing the same thing.

M: People might not know this but the town clerk's office was not where it is today in 2015.

L: Oh, no. [There were] three buildings that were built by [John] Mattocks as an investment, and where the craft shop is now was my office. Before it was the town office, that was Richter's store. There was an upstairs. That was where everything you didn't know where to file and anything else was put; it was a mess. They'd taken out a chimney and replaced it with another one, so there was a hole between a big open room and what had been Richter's bedroom. And there was a hole up into the attic. When Louis and I were working there, especially in the fall, you could hear the squirrels running around.

M: When was the vault put in there?

L: I think it was the '60s. Between [what is now] the café and Jean Clark's house there was a hedge that was supposed to protect the people in the house from having to look into where the town stored the fire department jeep. The trees [planted for a hedge] had grown up, and they shed [their needles]. The town put a flat roof on top of the vault. So you have this stuff that falls year

after year; it collects moisture and acts like a sponge. One day I was pulling out the land records to dust, and I picked up a sheet that had been de-acidified but hadn't been properly bound in the volume; it was dripping wet. I climbed through an upstairs window and shoveled off all that wet stuff until I got down to the tar roof. [After that] Cliff Schoolcraft and his son built a slanting roof.

M: How long were you the town clerk by yourself?

L: I don't think it was six months. [Then] Ann Cochran came in and said, "I'd like to be your assistant." And so she came. I had her do the school accounts because that was part of our job then. Ann Cochran made the first little phone book. We did that on the typewriter, so we had to redo it every year—

M: That's a lot of work! What would you say was the thing that you liked most about being the town clerk?

L: Well, mostly it was meeting people, but that was also—with a few people—the drawback. I started keeping notes at all the meetings. I simply wrote who was there, the decisions that were made; I refused to transcribe obscenities.

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Lorna Quimby and Harry Goodchild, Chief Engineer, Fairbanks Scales, 1956.

(*Lorna Quimby* continued from page 5)

The first event in the town clerk's year [after] you've closed the books at the end of the fiscal year, [is when] the auditors come in. They are your friends because they will pick up on things that you might have missed. It was a small office; they worked at one big table; I was at the wonderful oak roll top desk, and then a lawyer would come in to do a title search.

M: And where do you put him?

L: At one end of the table. I kept a closed vault. I went to one meeting and these people told us [the following story]. This was down in a Massachusetts town, and they had deeds with signatures of historic people. It was a wonderful collection and they were very proud of it. Well, this kindly old gentleman came in to the office and wanted to do research. And he'd sit down and he had this whole pile of stuff around him so you really didn't see what he was doing. [Later] the head of the department went to a sale and realized that some of the documents that were bringing fabulous prices were from their collection. He had been taking them right out of the books and stealing right in front of them. So the point was, you keep your researchers under your eye. I took it to heart.

Our next crisis in the town clerk's year is the dog licenses. [Under] Vermont law, by a certain date your dogs have to be licensed. Part of that is rabies control. As far as I was concerned, the due date was the due date. After that there was a penalty. What I like to remember is the old fellow that wanted his dog to have dog tag number one. In December from Florida he would send me the proper papers; I'd have to hold them.

M: This would have been in April, right? And the listers come in after that?

L: Well, they're in before, but because of the roads they really can't get busy until then. Any property that's been bought or improved they have to visit and analyze. The richer people are, the more they grieve. When they change the value on your property, you have to get a notice because you have a legal right

to grieve it. You have to do it within so many days. So we had grievance day. There was this couple that had a fabulous house built, and they were grieving because they wanted to reduce their taxes as much as possible. Because my office was so crowded, the listers moved up to the church where people could have privacy while they were doing their grieving. And this couple came in (I use humor to lighten moods if I can), and they were loaded for bear. And I said, "You go up to the church and you take a number and get in line." And they went up to the church. Ten minutes later they came in, boiling mad: "There aren't any numbers and there isn't a line!" Oh boy. I've made it worse instead of better, so I took them up to the church, apologizing all the way, and got them in. After they'd left, the listers came in. Harry Jamieson was a wonderful old gentleman with a lively sense of humor. He said, "Lorna, somehow I don't think they shop at Sears & Roebuck."

Then the grand list is all set and the selectmen set the tax rate. We had to figure every single tax amount in the grand list book, type up all the tax bills, and mail them by a certain date. Taxes bring out the worst in people. And when you're a public figure, they feel they can take it out on you. But I have one good memory. There was a woman; she was very poor. She came in and paid in cash in dollars that had evidently been piled up for quite a time. She loved to come and visit with me. She didn't wait for the last minute. She knew my girls and asked about them and told me about hers. Opposed to her was the fellow that waited too long to get interest on a CD and was delinquent. He came in and chewed me up one side and down the other. He thought I should sympathize with him and ignore the fact that he was late.

And then of course we had elections every other year. There is a calendar we had to follow. There are rules that apply to absentee ballots; we had to get the ballots and register people to vote. One of the nicest things in Vermont is that we take the Freeman's Oath. I love it because you swear that you are going to cast your vote without fear or favor of any person. Isn't that wonderful?

So, yes, it was a busy life but it was a good life.

(*Chamberlain* continued from page 3)

In 1838, he began the Grand Tour of Europe with his wife and daughter. In Paris he met Samuel Morse, inventor of the telegraph. Morse was pitching a rough version of his invention—a contraption of clock parts, wires, cannon balls, and rolling tables—to the French Academy of Sciences. Chamberlain may, or may not, have already met Morse. But now he proposed to Morse that he market the telegraph in all territories to the east: Europe, Africa, and the Ottoman Empire. Morse agreed. A prototype was hastily assembled and Chamberlain set out.

Six months later, returning from an attempted meeting with the Sultan in Constantinople, the packet boat carrying Chamberlain capsized in rapids of the Danube River near Vienna, and he drowned. Two of his companions also drowned, and the prototype, records and contracts were lost. It took Morse five more years to find supporters as committed as Chamberlain to help him bring his project to fruition.

Sherman's focus is on Chamberlain's career before he went to Europe, on the assumption that his years successfully selling Fairbanks Scales prepared him to pitch an even bigger project to Samuel Morse. Sherman describes his purpose in the following words: "My goal is to write an essay about Chamberlain's rise as a Vermont entrepreneur way ahead of his time..., a seemingly brilliant young man drawn by either an ideal or a hunger for adventure which, based on five years of huge success in America, may have felt fated, whatever the outcome would be."

We look forward to reading the finished work.

JANE ALPER

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The current metal roofing on the Historic House is ragged at the eaves edge where it has corroded and rusted, and rust is evident on much of the roofing.

Photo: Jack Gill

Historical House Needs New Roof

With the completion of the Lorna Field Quimby Archive and Research Center in 2015, the PHA Board is now focusing attention on the deteriorating conditions at the Historical House.

To prioritize repairs, PHA successfully applied to the Preservation Trust of Vermont, Inc. in 2015 for a Robert Sincerbeaux Fund matching grant for a general building assessment. Thomas F. Keefe, of Keefe & Wesner Architects, P.C., came for a site visit in June 2015 and prepared a diagnostic report on conditions at the Historical House. He rated the condition of the roof as poor and recommended the replacement of the roof as the highest priority.

The building currently has utility corrugated painted steel Channel Drain roofing installed more than 60 years ago

over the older, worn-out wood shingle roof. The existing roof shows serious deterioration, and there is a critical need to replace it because of imminent danger of leaks and potential failure in a rain or winter storm. The roof was painted in 2002, but the protective layers of paint have worn away. The current metal roofing is ragged at the eaves edge where it has corroded and rusted, and rust is evident on much of the roofing. The roofing is not well-fastened and is vulnerable to wind damage. The gutter on the northeast corner is corroded and in danger of falling off.

PHA' Board is committed to preserving the Historical House, which is today PHA's museum with permanent exhibits of furniture, paintings, tools, household items, and other artifacts that illustrate Peacham's history. The building is Peacham Corner's second and oldest remaining schoolhouse, built circa 1825. Sited just below the Town Green on Church Street, it is an important symbol of Peacham's early

19th century past and contributes to the Town's enduring sense of place. As any owner of a historic building knows, maintaining such a structure requires constant vigilance and ongoing repairs

The challenge for PHA is the to raise the approximately \$24,000 needed to replace the roof and to repair the gutter and upper boards. The fundraising effort is already underway. At the 2016 Town Meeting, voters approved a \$1000 appropriation. PHA hopes that the voters will also approve this year's request. During the Fall Annual Appeal, several PHA members responded with generous contributions for the roof replacement. We invite all members to make a special contribution, designated for "roof replacement" to:
Peacham Historical Association
P.O. Box 101
Peacham, VT 05862

Thank you.

JUTTA SCOTT

DON'T FORGET!

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

PHA Board 2015

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