

# THE PEACHAM PATRIOT

FALL 2017 | VOLUME 33, NUMBER 2

PEACHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



Green Bay School 1940–41. Lois Field is in the back row, third from left. Photo courtesy of Lois Field White and Jock Gill.

## Peacham's One-Room Schoolhouses

Traveling around the back roads of Peacham, you occasionally see smallish, square wooden buildings standing near a road all by themselves—no barns or other outbuildings nearby, except for a small attachment at the back. They each have a row of several windows, side by side (unlike dwelling houses), and are all very old, some more than 100 years old. You are looking at Peacham's one-room schoolhouses, where most Peacham Academy students received their early education.

Peacham's early settlers realized the need for education for their children. The first school was probably held in an upstairs room in Moody Morse's house where Bernard and Joan Churchill live now. Moody Morse was Bernard's ancestor; he came to Peacham in 1779. His daughter Becky taught school at the log schoolhouse built near the site of the later South Peacham School. The first schoolhouses were built in Peacham Corner, near South Peacham (the Centre School House), across from the cemetery, in Green Bay, in East Peacham,

in Ewell's Hollow, then further out in the South Part, the North Part, Penny Street, on Mack's Mountain Road, and by Foster's Pond. These wood-framed, uninsulated buildings were equipped sparsely with box stoves for heat, candles or oil lamps for light, wooden benches or desks, the kids' own books, a water bucket and common dipper, and a strap for teachers to use on miscreants. Slates, chalk, and pens came along later.

These schoolhouses were built of cheap materials on small scraps of land, each in the middle of a district which was established as the need arose. Each district had three school directors who maintained the buildings, hired the teachers, arranged for their board and room, and provided firewood. They also decided on the tuition for each "scholar." This arrangement lasted until 1893 when Vermont abolished the district system in favor of town management, with accompanying taxation to support the schools.

The years went on with not many changes to the old schoolhouses. Families became smaller; kids grew up and moved away: they went to the cities for work; marched off to war; went west

seeking gold or larger tracts of cheap, more fertile land. By the 1920's, just seven or eight schools were used, and in the 1930's only five or six were occupied, depending on the school population of each area. In 1943 there were seven pupils in East Peacham, 12 in Ewell's Hollow, 13 in South Peacham, 12 in Green Bay, and 15 in the Grammar Room in Peacham Academy. This was before the days of school buses. Three teachers could have instructed these 59 kids in three buildings if there had been better transportation. The school population kept declining.

Miss Mabel Watson was our teacher at the Green Bay School when I started the first grade there in September of 1937. She was a petite woman with shingled red hair and tiny feet encased in bright leather pumps (very stylish). She wore colorful sweater sets and had a raspy voice that she often raised. There were ten of us in the eight grades that fall. I felt lucky to have two other girls in my grade: Rowena Watson (Miss Watson's niece) and Catherine (Cappy) Payette. Some grades had no kids or only one.

(continued on pg. 3)

### PHA ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 9, at the Peacham Library's Community Center at 6:30 pm. There will be a short business meeting followed by a talk by School Preservationist Susan Fineman titled "The Rocky Road to the Schoolhouse Door: Creating Our Common Schools." The evening will wind up with a selection of hand-baked "historical" pies and coffee.

**Mark your calendars!**

## LETTER FROM THE PHA PRESIDENT

Summer programming this year—including the Ghost Walk, the Historical House exhibition, and annual meeting talk—is centered around the theme, “One-Room Wonders: The Common Schools of Peacham”. We know that education has been greatly valued here since the first European settlers arrived. Both the Vermont constitution and the town charter provide for schools, and Peacham negotiated successfully to be the home of the county grammar school. As part of our preparation for the summer, we also wanted to learn how our own history compares with that of other places. Two of us attended the annual conference of the Country School Association of America, held in June in New London, New Hampshire. Our eyes were opened to how unusual Peacham is in a couple of surprising ways.

First, even neighboring New Hampshire did not authorize counties to establish centralized grammar schools. That single action created a devotion to learning in our town that persisted through generations. People here speak not only about the exceptional individuals—Thaddeus Stevens is always mentioned—educated here but also about the broad base of learning. Peacham is noted for the remarkable farm wives who taught, tutored and inspired our children. Thelma White, Eloise Miller, Frank Randall—these are the names of just a few from recent history still remembered and revered by their former pupils.

Second, we listened to speaker after speaker describing the effort their town, county, or state had made to preserve the last remaining schoolhouse in their area. They wrote grants, held fundraisers, made films, did everything they could to keep this part of their history from disappearing completely. We in Peacham have been luckier. Although we have not been able to save all the old schoolhouses—some burned down, deteriorated beyond rescue, or simply vanished—we have eight schoolhouses remaining from the original 14 districts, even though none has been used as a school for nearly 50 years. One is built into the firehouse; you can see its outline as the west part of the building. Another, the present Historical House, serves as our museum. Most are privately owned; the large windows, which provided light for children’s studies, illuminate living rooms today.

We are indeed fortunate to live in a place where history—both physical and intellectual—is still so much a part of everyday life.

JOHANNA BRANSON

(continued from pg. 1)

I lived on the farm by the turn onto the Devil’s Hill road, and Rowena lived on the farm down the hill below us, so we walked to school together. We first-graders had little chairs made from up-ended orange crates (made by a father), and we learned our letters from charts attached to the school wall. A globe hung from a piece of clothesline above our heads. I still remember Miss Watson saying, “First Grade, come up and read!” We had to save paper by using both sides. We were issued two pencils and a box of eight crayons at the beginning of each school year. As the crayons got broken, the small pieces were put in an old chocolate box on the shelf. Some of the kids never had store-bought chewing gum, so they chewed the bits of broken crayon when the teacher wasn’t looking. Albert Petrie, a second-grader, carried a pail of drinking water to school from his farm home next door each day. We each had a drinking cup, and there was a wash basin on a table near the door. Our outhouse was not connected to the schoolhouse so the trip out there was FREEZING in the winter. The schoolroom was very drafty in the winter so we pulled our seats up around the box stove and listened to the wind howling around the corners while we read.

One diversion from our studies was an occasional visit from a religious lady who brought a flannel-board and felt Biblical figures and told us Bible stories while she attached the figures to the board. Another diversion was our music teacher, Mr. Emerson Lang, who brought his wind-up phonograph (no electricity then) and square-dance records and taught us to dance. He helped us produce an historical pageant in a nearby birch grove. Our playground had a set of wooden swings and tee-terboards. We played our version of baseball (one base) and fox-and-geese on the snow in the winter. We decorated our schoolroom for holidays, presented programs for our parents, and made Valentines for our schoolmates. Mothers put on card parties and oyster stew suppers in the schoolhouse; a local electrician strung electric lights for these events. Miss Watson had a square

black Plymouth automobile, and she sometimes packed us all into it for an excursion to another part of town.

I continued on through the grades until I had completed the 6th grade. That summer my parents purchased the big farm just north of Peacham Corner; we moved on July 4, and that September I walked up to Peacham Academy to begin the 7th grade in the Grammar Room. I was the only one in the 7th grade. There were about 20 kids in grades 5-8 from that area. There was no playground at the Academy, and we were “second-class” citizens there. We didn’t interact with the high school kids. It was different from our little one-room schools.

There was a mini “baby boom” in Peacham after the war, and three schools were used up through the 1950’s and 1960’s. A new central school was built in the late 1960’s, and the last little one-room schools closed then and are now private residences. Another era ended.

LOIS FIELD WHITE

I thank my friends Edward (Tim) and Anna Somers, P.A. 1948 and Richard (P.A.1944) and Lorna Field Quimby for their tales of school days. Information from *Peacham, the Story of a Vermont Hill Town*; *Historic Homes of Peacham*; Peacham Town Reports, and the Record Book of District No. 5 (Penny Street School), 1805-1892.

## Historical House Gets a New Roof

As we reported in the last issue of *The Peacham Patriot*, the Historical House urgently needed a new roof. The existing 60-year-old roof showed serious deterioration, and there was a critical need to replace it. Not only was the metal roof failing, but several of the upper boards were rotten, and the corroded gutter on the northeast corner was in danger of falling off.

The good news is that the Historical House now has a beautiful new roof, and all the needed repairs were completed this spring. PHA is grateful for the generous contributions from the many donors who supported the installation of the new roof. PHA also appreciates the Town Meeting appropriations of \$1,000 in 2016 and 2017.

In early spring, 2017, PHA contracted with Graves Builders to replace the worn-out roofing and make needed repairs. During April, the crew from Graves Builders undertook the initial repairs, including replacing the upper boards, leveling the annex on the east side and relocating the vent pipe. The crew removed the old metal roof and layers of worn-out shingles down to the roof deck. Fortunately, the roof deck was in good condition, and the crew finished the preparations for the new

roof at the end of April. Graves Builders had subcontracted with Kendall Standing Seam to install a 24-gauge Hartford Green double-locked standing seam metal roof. The wet weather in early May delayed the installation of the new roof. Canvas temporarily protected the Historical House until dry weather finally allowed Nicholas Kendall and his crew to install the new roof in mid-May. After the central work was finished, the Graves Builders crew returned to install a new gutter and downspout leader at the west eave of the main house. Graves Builders also re-sided the West gable of the original schoolhouse. Rusty Barber assisted in the inspection of the completed work, and the project ended in early June.

Replacing the roof was the first and most critical step in dealing with a long list of repair needs at the Historical House. The next priority is repainting the building. Paint maintenance is the first line of defense against incessant weather deterioration. A look at the failing paint on all sides of the Historical House underscores the need for paint repairs to protect the historic fabric of the building. We hope that PHA’s members will continue to support the important repairs at the Historical House.

JUTTA SCOTT

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### Note on Volume Numbers

Some readers have pointed out an inconsistency in the volume numbers of the *Peacham Patriot*. The problem seems to have arisen because the *Patriot* was not always published consistently in the past. We apologize for the confusion. This issue will be vol. 33, number 2, and we will move forward from here.



Photo: Jack Gill

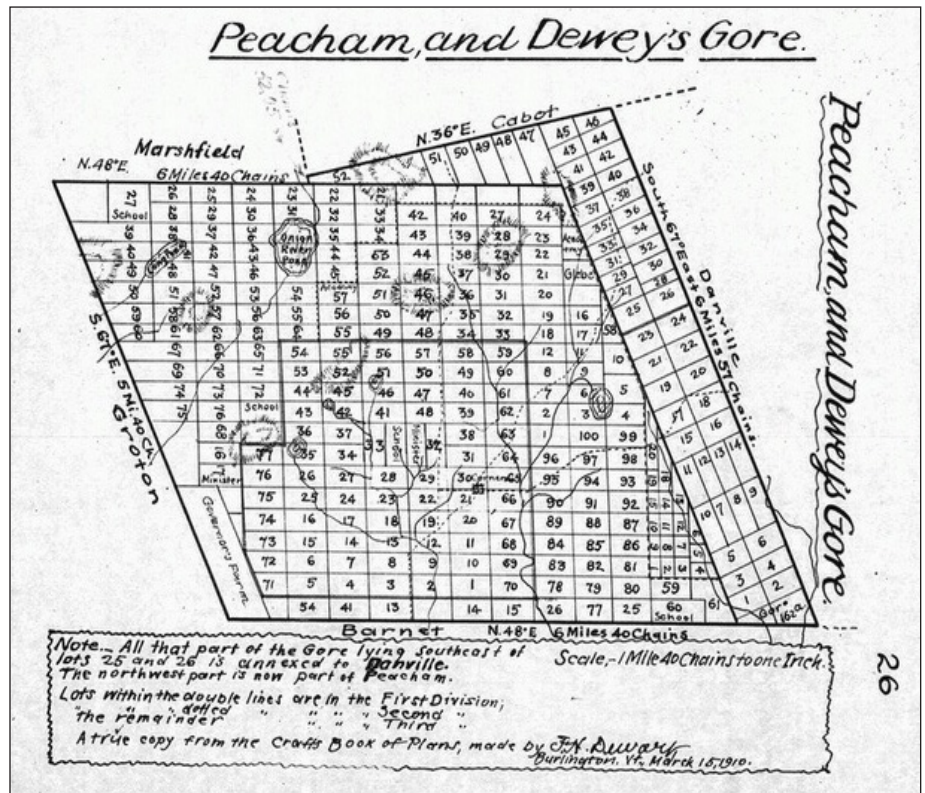
## A Short History of Deweyburg Gore, Part 2 "Warnings to Leave Town"

In the Spring 2017 issue of *The Peacham Patriot*, we took a look at the early history of Deweyburg Gore, chartered in 1782 as an independent gore (land area) located between Peacham and Danville to the north, and Peacham and Cabot to the west. It was shaped like a "boot," functioned as a township, and was colloquially referred to as "The Gore." In the fall of 1810, the Gore was annexed and divided between the Towns of Peacham and Danville. Today the original Gore area of Peacham spans an area running along the Danville/West Danville town line, to the west beyond Cow Hill and along the Cabot line down to Peacham Pond.

There were three censuses taken in Deweyburg between 1790 and 1810. As we stated in the first part of this series, the records show that by 1810, just prior to the Gore being annexed, almost half of the residents were under the age of 16, and another 20 percent were over the age of 45. This certainly put economic pressure on the population, since there were fewer able-bodied adults to sustain the community.

In April of 2017, through the efforts of Tom Galinat, Town Clerk, copies of the Deweyburg Land Records were returned to the Peacham Town Offices. These records had been missing from Peacham records since the 1810 division. While we still do not have Vital Records, these early handwritten ledgers reveal much about the history and lives of the "Gore" residents.

Despite officially being classified as a "Gore," Deweyburg functioned as a separate town. Each year residents were warned to attend Town Meeting, held on the last day of March in the early 19th century. Since there was no public meeting house, the meeting was held at the home of the Town Clerk, a position held for many years by Stephen Crossman, Esq. Elections were held for various positions. There was a town moderator, and the number of selectmen grew from four in 1806 to nine in 1810. There was a town treasurer, three constables, highway surveyors, listers, grand jurymen, a keeper of pounds, an overseer of "scales of waits (sic) and measures," field drivers, three positions



(illegible) concerning "hogs" and three elected "sessions." According to the *Oxford Dictionary* of 1828, sessions were elected county court positions consisting of justices of the peace, whose duties included inquiring into trespasses, larcenies, forestalling, etc.<sup>2</sup> Each year the town also voted on taxes to fund the schools, for surveying and repair of roads, and to renew the rent of the Minister's Lot. It is interesting to note that schools were listed in the plural, indicating that more than one existed.

Evidence that Deweyburg grew poorer is reflected in the 1808-1809 Town Meeting Minutes which state "no funds to repair the highways", and "voted not to rais(e) no money to support schools."<sup>3</sup>

Between 1809 and 1810, there are numerous records of Deweyburg residents being "warned out of town." This Elizabethan practice was common in New England communities to pressure or coerce "outsiders" or the poor to settle elsewhere. It consisted of a notice ordered by the Board of Selectmen and served by the head constable upon any newcomer or poor resident who might become a town charge. The right of a municipality to "warn out" one of its inhabitants was based on the theory that the town had a common law duty to care for its inhabitants when they could

not support themselves. It was reasoned that the town had the right to "exclude from inhabitancy persons for whose conduct or support they did not desire to be responsible."<sup>4</sup> This practice was followed by Vermont Law from 1787 to 1817.<sup>5</sup>

By December of 1809, the Deweyburg records are filled with dozens of warnings issued at the onset of winter.<sup>6</sup> The Selectmen at that time were Zenas Crossman, Esq., Isaac Williams and Elijah Porter, Sr. This period must have been very difficult, with warnings even issued to previous town officials and their extended families, who had now fallen on hard times. The warnings list families such as "James Cumings and Betsy Cumings and children," "Joab Kimball and Eliza and family", "James Harvey Lenord and Eliza R. Elinor and his children to depart said town." A very sad entry is "Daniel Plaisted, Betsy Plaisted his wife, Anna Plaisted, Poly (sic) Plaisted, John Plaisted and Maria Plaisted and their children are to depart according to law, given under our contract at Deweyburgh this 16th day of December 1809." Foard (aka Ford) Plaisted, Daniel's father, had been the Town Treasurer just 3 years earlier.<sup>7</sup> The head constable, Jonas Crossman (son of the Town Clerk), was required to personally deliver each warning and then

legally date and sign his name in the town record as proof of the notice being served. It appears that the town took pity on these poor families, and warnings issued in December show that they were not delivered until the spring of 1810. The Plaisted warning was delivered April 12th, 1810.

1810 also saw a change in the Minister's Lot (listed as No. 50 in the Lotting Record.) At the March Town Meeting, it was voted "to lease the minister lot for 30 years with such restrictions as shall prevent damaging the land" and to "grantes (sic) that the selectmen shall get what they shall think good bones (sic) for the rent of the Minister lot." By October a deal had been struck between the selectmen and Reuben Lamb, Esq., Daniel Brown and Aaron Thompson of Peacham County and their heirs. The agreement provided them with "tenentship (sic) and benefit as long as wood grows and water runs in the following land in Deweysburgh in the lot laid out by James Whitelaw and Reuben Blanchard, Esq. for use and benefit of the first settled minister in said Deweysburg by estimation 100 acres." Many lots were sold as families were warned off, and local land speculators took advantage of the hardships facing Deweysburg residents. Wm. A. Griswold of Danville purchased eight of the 52 lots in just one year.<sup>8</sup> So ends a sad chapter in the dissolution of a once hoped-for thriving town.

In Part 3 we will look at the role of Abenaki Indians in Deweysburg.

## SUSAN CHANDLER

1 These town positions likely referenced the word "hoggerel", a two year old ewe, not hogs. Sheep were an important part of Vermont's early economy. Source: Websters Dictionary, 1828.

2 Oxford Dictionary 1828, online source.

3 Town Records of Deweysburgh, available in the Peacham Town Clerk's Office.

4 Benton, Josiah Henry (1911), *Warning Out in New England*, Boston: W.B. Clarke.

5 *ibid.*

6 Author's note: Families in Peacham were also warned out during the early 19th century.

7 Most of Plaisted family eventually relocated to upstate New York near the Town of Clay (Syracuse).

8 Wikipedia Online Website: William A. Griswold (1775 -1846) was an American lawyer and politician in Danville. He served as the 22nd and 24th Speaker of the Vermont House of Representatives and had a thriving law practice in Danville village. Author's note: His ownership of multiple Deweysburg lots may have been a factor in the division of the Gore in 1810.

## 21st Annual Ghost Walk

This year's July 4 celebration was marked by perfect summer weather, multitudes of visitors, and a spectacular program. The Ghost Walk was one of the highlights.

The theme of all PHA activities this summer, including the Ghost Walk, was *One-Room Wonders: The Common Schools of Peacham*.

The two ghosts, Ruth Skeele and Elsie Choate, taught in Peacham schoolhouses. Ruth Skeele, the first female child born in Peacham in 1778, ran the "Dames" School for young children during the summer in the early years of the 19th century. Jenny captured perfectly the gentle kindness of the young teacher, emphasizing her tenderness toward her charge (wonderfully portrayed by Lila and Kate Mackenzie) and her hopes for their futures. Elsie Choate taught at the Peacham Corner School from 1933-34 (and maybe longer). She led a rich, varied life, attending Wellesley College, running the Choate Inn in the village for many years and co-writing *People of Peacham* with Jennie Chamberlain Watts. Ellen Bartlett brought her character to vivid life, dramatically morphing from a stereotypical old maid into a dynamic, very appealing woman.

Elsie Choate, portrayed by Ellen Bartlett.  
Photo: Julie Lang



Panel of one-room school alumni. Left to right, Paul Chandler, Lois White, Allen Thresher, Sr., Lorna Quimby, and Dart Thalman. Photo: Julie Lang

Perhaps the highlight of the event was a panel comprised of four alumni of Peacham's one-room schools: Paul Chandler, Lorna Quimby, Allen Thresher, Sr., and Lois White. The discussion, moderated by Dart Thalman, focused on panel members' recollections of their school years over a period of more than 30 years. Games played during recess, memorable teachers, pranks, friendships, were among the many topics touched on in the discussion. All the speakers emphasized the richness and value of their educational experience—a revelation to those of us who attended large urban graded schools.

Credit goes to Hattie Thresher who sold tickets and offered hard candy; to docents Jane Alper, Marilyn Magus, Jutta Scott, and Brad Toney; and especially to coordinators Dart Thalman and Johanna Branson.

In addition to sponsoring the Ghost Walk, PHA created an exhibit at the Historical House featuring photos, text books, and other items relating to Peacham's one-room schools. Jointly with the Peacham Library PHA also sponsored the first public reading in Peacham of excerpts from Frederick Douglass's 1852 speech: "The Meaning of July 4th for the Negro." Following Tim McKay's reading of the Declaration of Independence, audience members took turns reading sections of the talk. All present were moved by the power of the speech in contrasting the lofty ideals expressed by the Declaration with the realities of slavery.

JANE ALPER

## Modern Peacham's Spiritual Roots

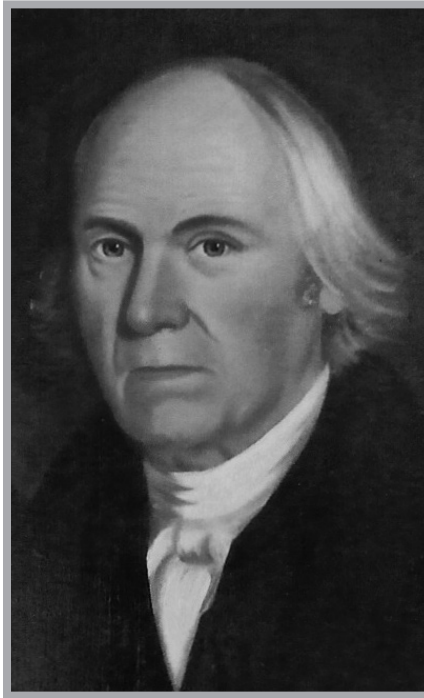
An enlightening book called *American Nations* by Colin Woodard (2011) explains how the peculiarities of each American region inevitably grew out of that region's unique settlement. In a similar way, one could make the same exploration into Peacham's history and discover in its original settlement the roots of many of the town's current principles, attitudes, and institutions. At least the flavor, maybe more, of those principles survives in the descendants of Peacham's original settlers and in its current-day institutions. These attitudes may be said to attract—via reputation if not personal ties—likeminded newcomers to the town.

Peacham's spiritual roots reach back to the Pilgrims arriving in Massachusetts in 1620. Those determined refugees famously left their home countries in England and Europe to escape persecution and to freely practice their religion on fresh soil. A century and a half later, descendants of those adventurers had moved north and were founding Peacham.

The Pilgrims were Calvinists—their theology derived from John Calvin, who, like Martin Luther before him, set out to reform not only the corrupt practices of the Catholic Church of the day, but also its very theology, its narrative about God and God's relation to humanity.

Calvin based his theory of God and humanity on three main points. First, he preached the "total depravity of humanity," that in their original condition humans are destitute of all moral goodness. Second, he preached "unconditional election," that God has chosen some people to be saved from this depravity and others to be damned. "Atonement," Calvin's third doctrine, maintains that those whom God elected to save are saved through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, his death on the cross.

In Vermont, many Congregational churches adopted modified versions of Calvin's theology, but in Peacham the congregation was orthodox. A sermon by Reverend Leonard Worcester, first minister of the Peacham Congregational Church, who served the church



Leonard Worcester (detail) c. 1825. Courtesy of Thetford Historical Society. Photo: Jock Gill.

for 40 years—and by whom the spiritual foundations of that church were effectively laid—shows strong traces of Calvinist language. Peppered in this 1839 sermon are phrases such as "our ruined race," "the redemption and salvation of our fallen race," "the greatness of [our] obligations to [our] infinite Creator."<sup>1</sup>

An anecdote involving Reverend Worcester illustrates how strict the religious convictions of the early Peacham settlers could be. At that time (early 1800's) members of the church wanted to introduce a new hymnal, Isaac Watt's *Select Psalms and Hymns*. One of their best singers, a man named Flavel Bailey, adamantly opposed the new hymnal on grounds that it violated the Bible. The congregation asked Reverend Worcester to intervene.

"There be a word in them Psalms that ain't in the Bible," Bailey told the minister. "What word?" asked Worcester. "Pause," said Bailey. Worcester reflected. "Brother Bailey," he said, "don't you remember how the Lord delivered David out of the paws of the lion? And how David delivered the lamb out of the paws of the bear?"

Presumably the pious (and unlettered) Bailey was persuaded; the new hymnals were ordered.<sup>2</sup>

Given the Calvinist influence on its beliefs, the early Peacham community

(the vast majority of whom belonged to the Congregational Church) would likely have been concerned to reassure themselves and show others that they were worthy of salvation. They demonstrated their righteousness in their demeanor—by a proper sense of gratitude, humility, and awe towards God. Solemnity, Reverence, Soberness: these words popped up frequently in ministers' sermons.

Ostentation, silliness, and irreverence were likewise prevalent themes.

One honored the Sabbath—no travel, work, play, or business on Sunday. No playing cards, horseracing, profanity, skepticism, or tavern-haunting at any time. Attendance at church was a given. Such was the moral rectitude of the community that it was the members themselves who brought reports of their neighbors' infractions to the notice of the minister. The sinner would have to make a humiliating public confession and ask for forgiveness—or, if the offense were more serious, s/he would be suspended or even expelled.

Reverend Leonard Worcester was a strict disciplinarian. Though by today's standards he didn't have much formal religious preparation, he knew the Bible by heart and had a bent for ministry. He was a natural leader and a good businessman. His outsized personality appealed to the Peacham congregation immediately. They had rejected 79 ministers before him, and their unanimous choice of Leonard Worcester in 1799 was to prove an inspired one. For 40 foundational years, the affection between minister and congregation was strong and mutual.

Worcester's ability to temper sternness with humor, and his sincere affection for his people, perhaps rounded off the hard edges of Calvin's doctrines. Maybe the people sensed this when they elected him. He, too, must have sensed in the folks of Peacham a population he could work with. It was a good fit. When in 1839, at age 72, Father Worcester made his last appearance at the Peacham church, the townspeople probably realized that it was more than the end of one man's ministry. It was the closing of an important era in the town's history, the establishment of the church. The occasion is movingly described by historian Ernest Bogart:

Supported by two men, one under each arm, [Worcester] was led up the aisle to the pulpit, where turning around he was only able to repeat that 11th verse of the 13th chapter of second Corinthians beginning, 'Finally, Brethren, farewell...' The whole audience was in tears.<sup>3</sup>

On the face of it, Peacham society and culture today may not look much like the sober society of those early Calvinists. In fact, though, there is a profound resemblance. In many respects, the early Calvinists were progressive. They were reformers. They were passionate about human liberty, equality, and self-government. They left their home countries and came to an unknown land, not with the ambition of wealth, but of freedom to practice their chosen lifestyle. Most adhered to a democratic (Congregational) rather than hierarchical form of church government, and they were active in political affairs. They were strong backers of education.

Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Williams, Bowdoin, Middlebury, and Amherst colleges were started by Calvinists. Such a commitment to education reflects a readiness to look outward, extending the mind beyond one's limited native sphere. In the early days of

Peacham one of the ways this wide outlook manifested itself was in charitable and missionary outreach.

While he led the Peacham church, Leonard Worcester served in the Vermont Missionary Society, and during his tenure and after, missionaries from Peacham—women and men—bravely journeyed into the field to spread the gospel in America and abroad.

Also during Worcester's tenure the Peacham Charitable Society was organized (1831), from which "[m]oney, clothing, and boxes of supplies poured out in a constant stream."

*But even more important was the spiritual and psychological impact [of missionary and charitable activity] on the home community. Peacham's horizon was broadened, it became a conscious part of a larger world, and its interests reached out far beyond the hills that surrounded it. There was no provincialism in the atmosphere of this little Vermont village. The influence of the [Peacham] Academy and of the church widened the point of view of every inhabitant and kept them in touch with the expanding interests of the country and the new currents of thought and activity that were transforming the nation.<sup>4</sup>*

Many Peacham residents today would recognize in this passage qual-

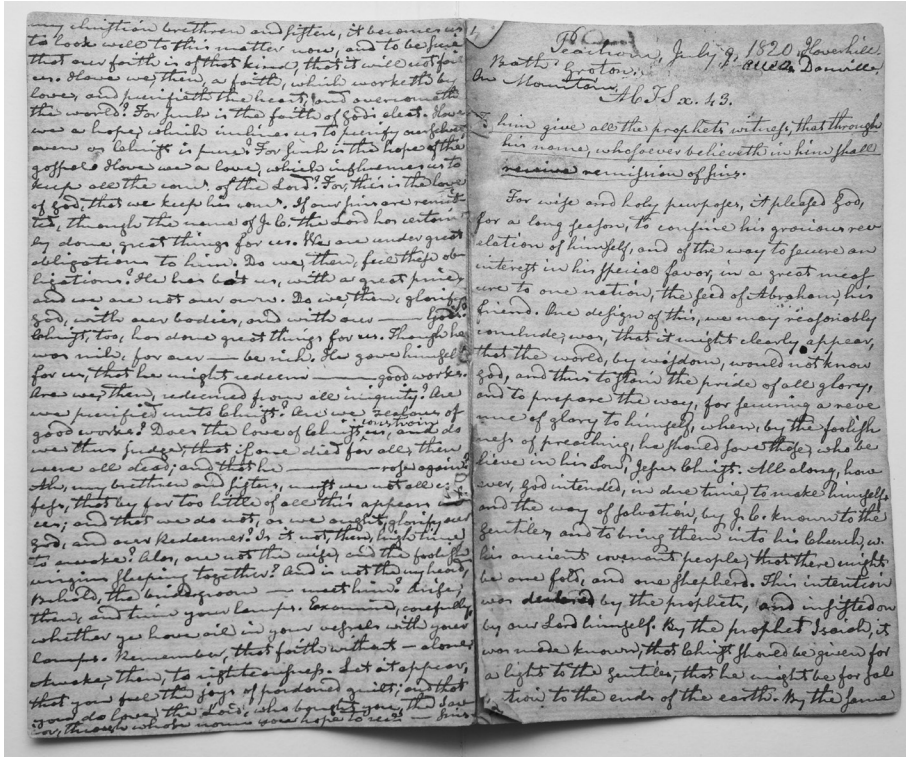
ities that characterize modern-day Peacham: broad interests and outlook, philanthropy, political engagement. They would recognize the historical and current prevalence in its population of graduates from the colleges mentioned above and a general passion for learning. The mind-broadening Peacham Academy (1797) and Peacham Library (1810) come to mind. Through its monthly charitable missions, the Peacham Congregational Church (1794) carries on the historical missionary tradition.

What of Peacham's farmers and their famous spirit of independence? You might say it also comes straight from the Pilgrim Calvinists, who risked their lives to be free in a wilderness land and whose descendants came to Peacham to be independent. The town's early settlers, Bogart writes, developed "ideas of liberty which often involved impatience of control."<sup>5</sup>

Peacham preserves those rural characteristics of independence, and with them a culture of humanitarianism and outward engagement with ideas, with politics, with the world. These spiritual mores, nourished and passed down by the town's religious forebears, create a rich soil for growing the thriving community that is Peacham today.

LYNNE LAWSON

- 1 Worcester, Leonard. 1839. Sermon delivered in Peacham, Vermont. Peacham Historical Association archives.
- 2 Bogart, Ernest L. 1948. *Peacham: the Story of a Vermont Hill Town*. Reprinted in St. Johnsbury, Vermont by Railroad Street Press in 2010, p. 178.
- 3 Bogart, p. 179.
- 4 Bogart, p. 186-187
- 5 Bogart, p. 57-58



One of Leonard Worcester's sermons in the PHA archive. Photo: Peter Scott.

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AT PHA's 21st Ghost Walk Ruth Skeele and two pupils, portrayed by Jenny Mackenzie and Lila and Kate Mackenzie. Photo: Julie Lang