

# THE PEACHAM PATRIOT

PEACHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## Report from the Blacksmith Shop

This past summer, the Ashbel Goodenough Blacksmith Shop was reconfigured to better serve its current mission: to bring the work, methods, and skills of early Peachamites back to life.

Previously, the Blacksmith Shop was a repository for antique tools that were rapidly disappearing from Vermont barns and shops. Not all old tools are endangered; antique carpenter's and cabinet maker's tools such as chisels, planes, and saws have been lovingly collected for generations, but the larger tools used by blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and millwrights have vanished. About 50 years ago, Dick Hovey and Joe Miller mounted a rescue project. They were able to locate and acquire forges, bellows, anvils, hammers and tongs. That collection is stored and exhibited in the Shop.



Ed Schneider and Stan Fickes position large anvil on new base.



Ed and Stan lifting anvil with antique hoist.

Currently we are using the Shop to attract both young and old visitors to watch craftsmen turning raw materials into the fixtures and appliances used on 19th century farms. The older visitors are reminded of the skills and cleverness they witnessed in the previous generation of mechanics, while the youngsters are introduced to ancient skills they never knew existed. To make room for these activities, some of the larger items in the collection have been moved off-site, and the remaining ones have been re-located so they can be used as well as admired.

The largest item to be moved was the railroad maintenance shop anvil. It has stood by the large door since it arrived, but it couldn't be used there; it was too far from the forge. A hunk of steel this big doesn't get picked up by two guys and walked to its new location. So a few of us became millwrights for a day. Ed Schneider and Stan Fickes braced beams, rigged hoists and slings, and made a plywood path for the dolly while Rusty Barber, our Safety Coordinator, supervised. While we were at it, we tried out the antique two-man hoist. We discovered that it would have done the job handily if the shop ceiling were three feet higher.

With our new configuration we have room for more visitors, and more interactive exhibits. In 2019 the Blacksmith Shop will be open for Winter Carnival, Fourth of July, Peacham Acoustic Music Festival, and Fall Foliage Festival. For access at other times, please contact Steve Galinat, Stan Fickes, or Ed Schneider.

ED SCHNEIDER

*Editor's Note: The PHA Board voted to use the Joe Miller Memorial Fund to help pay for a new roof for the Blacksmith Shop and for a new sign in front. Thanks to everyone who donated to the fund.*

*PHA is starting a fundraising effort to help pay for the roof replacement. The first step is selling antique nails with a special note at Winter Carnival.*



Rusty Barber, our consulting engineer and Safety Coordinator. Photos by Jock Gill and Ed Schneider.

## LETTER FROM THE PHA PRESIDENT

February 9, 1967

*...The photographer Clemens Kalischer has been taking pictures of Peacham for two weeks now for a book to be published on New England. He selected our family to follow in particular.*

August 14, 1967

*Sunday George hayed, I served punch after another wonderful concert, at supper time the Kalischers stopped by and then stayed overnight.*

Pat Kempton's diary, cited in *An Unlikely Farmer*, by George Kempton.

Both George Kempton and Clemens Kalischer died in 2018. On the face of it, they might have seemed unlikely acquaintances. Kalischer, a refugee from Nazi Germany, settled in the Berkshires and over his long life (he died at 97) produced one of the great bodies of 20th-century photography. George Kempton and his wife Pat settled in Peacham in 1962 and became successful farmers, raising 5 children and playing many important roles in the community.

Vermont had come to hold a great attraction for Kalischer, both emotionally and as a visual artist. He published a suite of his photographs of Peacham in *Vermont Life* magazine in 1959, and returned often, including for the *Time-Life* book on New England published in 1967. This is likely the project Pat mentions in her diary.

Kalischer's photographs of the young Kempton family and their community comprise a wonderful document of Peacham in the mid-1960's. There are scenes of children in the dairy barn, playing outside in snow, at the Peacham ski tow, studying in one-room schoolhouses, and at dances at the Peacham Academy. There are also photographs of adult life, at the post office, men's club meetings, and church suppers.

The Peacham Historical Association owns many of Kalischer's photographs. We are working with his family to gather more, and to exhibit them this summer at the Historical House. These photographs enjoy a reputation far outside Peacham; indeed, they collectively formed many people's image of New England life and values. We look forward to exhibiting them while some of the subjects are still here to tell us more about the circumstances in which they were made, and to let us know what Clemens Kalischer captured, and also, perhaps, what he chose to leave out.

JOHANNA BRANSON



Lion-headed pipe bowl found by Isabel Magnus.  
Photo by Jock Gill.

## A New Addition to the PHA Collections

In July, 2018, I found a meerschaum pipe with my grandmother at Peacham Hollow Brook. We were looking for shards of old pottery and china for fun in the brook. I was looking in the water and I saw what looked to be a very weird-shaped rock. It turned out to be a 100-or-more-year-old pipe, so I donated it to the Historical Association.

ISABEL MAGNUS

*Isabel is 10 years old and a 4th grade student at the Peacham School. She loves to read and snowboard. Her grandmother is PHA Board Member Marilyn Magnus.*



Isabel Magnus. Photo courtesy of Katherine Skahan.

## Weather Woes and Final Thoughts: A Short History of Deweyburg, Part V

In a recent podcast, author Brad Meltzer talked about his upcoming non-fiction book which tells the story of a secret plot to kill George Washington. Meltzer noted that his book began with the realization that the most interesting parts of history are often discovered in footnotes. This, too, is how my research into Deweyburg began. My articles were inspired by cryptic notations about Deweyburg on an old Peacham map and obscure genealogical footnotes related to Abenaki lineage and Deweyburg family histories. What emerged is an interesting but sad tale of a vanished township, detailing socio-economic pressures, political and religious intrigue, Indian lore and the greed of land speculators.

To briefly recap, Deweyburg was a land tract, known as “Deweyburg Gore,” established in 1782 and situated between Peacham and Danville to the north and Peacham and Cabot to the west. It was shaped like a boot and functioned as a self-governing township. In 1810, the land was divided and annexed to the neighboring towns of Peacham and Danville. The first four articles of this series dealt with the history and events that led to this annexation. In this last installment, we will take a look at how the weather contributed to the demise of Deweyburg and sum up the series with final thoughts.

The time period between 1782 and 1810 falls into the latter part of a climate pattern often referred to as the “Little Ice Age.” This was a long-term colder temperature curve for eastern North America. In Vermont, daily temperatures averaged as much as 8 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than 20th century levels.<sup>1</sup> There were only very brief intervals of warming during this period. While paleo-climatologists have tracked the overall weather patterns for this period, very few local Vermont records exist which provide specific weather events during this time. These scant records come from a handful of



Image courtesy of georgiainfolgalieo.org

Vermonters who recorded daily and weekly observations, often described in their diaries. We are fortunate that early 19th century weather data for north-eastern Vermont was recorded by David Johnson of Newbury, by Hiram Cutting of Lunenburg, and most importantly for us, by Ebenezer Eaton, who published his weather observations in the *Danville North Star*.<sup>2</sup>

There are many famous accounts of 1816 as the “Year without a Summer,” but the 20 years prior were also extremely harsh. During the 19th century, a common colloquial expression was “eighteen hundred and froze to death.” The late spring was called “the scarce season” or “the starving time,” when provisions were at their lowest.<sup>3</sup> There were many severe weather events from 1780 to 1810, and although these conditions adversely affected all local communities, they were especially difficult for an isolated and economically depressed community like Deweyburg.

The following is a brief chronological recap of some local conditions that were recorded. From 1764 to 1791, heavy October snows were unusually frequent.<sup>4</sup> On October 17th of 1780, there were reports of local Indian raids, and it was noted that there was already 8 inches of snow on the ground.<sup>5</sup> On October 18th of 1783 a 12-inch snowfall was followed by a heavy rainstorm on October 23rd, and there was “much flooding.”<sup>6</sup> In

October of 1785, 9 inches of rain fell in 3 days, causing severe flooding.<sup>7</sup> August of 1788 saw a mini-hurricane ravage the state from southwest to northeast, killing many cattle, blowing off roofs, and leveling large areas of forests.<sup>8</sup> In May of 1789, a heavy snowstorm hit Deweyburg, with snowdrifts still intact on May 20th. May 19th, 1790 became known as the famous “Dark Day.” It was so dark midday that candles were needed to read, and “an eerie brass-hued color was seen on emerging spring foliage.” The darkness was believed to have come from forest fires in the west.<sup>9</sup> In May 1806, a unique “dry blow” occurred, with such high southwest winds all day that leaves were scorched as though they had been frosted. On June 16th of 1806, a total solar eclipse was observed in north-eastern Vermont at noon, and accounts of the event speculated about God’s role in darkness and returning light.<sup>10</sup> On April 1st of 1807, 30 inches of new snow fell in Danville making a total of 60 inches, and by late April of that year, the “great snowmelt” occurred, undermining local mills and taking out many bridges by the first week of May. Even the large bridges in Bath, NH and in Newbury, VT were washed away.<sup>11</sup> On May 4th of 1809, 12 inches of snow fell, and by June 9th of that same year, large snowbanks remained. January 19th of 1810 became known as “Cold Friday”, when temperatures unexpectedly

*continued on pg. 5*



## A Remarkable Woman Biography of Clara Whitehill Bailey, 1838-1911

The Peacham Historical Association was asked to supply information about Clara Bailey to a history project on women's suffrage sponsored by the State University of New York, Binghamton. This project focuses on local history and on people at the grassroots level who aided this cause. The leaders are well-known, but it took an upsurge of support and a change of beliefs across the nation about the rights of women to pass the 19th Amendment in 1920. A brief record from the Vermont Senate led the SUNY historians to Peacham, and to Clara Bailey.

Researching Clara Bailey was at first frustrating—there appeared to be little information—but rapidly became a very rewarding treasure hunt. Among the clues we discovered were: a photograph, a quilt, and an insurance record in our own archives; deeds of property in the Peacham Town Clerk's Office; tourism brochures and one crucial scrap of paper from a prominent suffragist in the Vermont Historical Society archives; many accounts in the social notices of the Caledonian Republican; and, finally, Lorna Quimby's memory of "Grandma Bailey." This woman, who at first appeared to be unremarkable, emerged as having been remarkable indeed.

Clara Whitehill was born in Ryegate, Vermont on June 15, 1838, the daughter of William and Lucinda (Craig) Whitehill. She attended district schools, and then the Caledonia County Grammar School in Peacham. On October 5, 1857 she married Joseph Bailor (later Bailey). They had three children: George Herbert, born August 24, 1858; Nessie Louise, born April 28, 1861; and Mary Elizabeth, born October 8, 1864.

Joseph was one of four brothers who enlisted to fight for the Union in the Civil War. In May of 1864, Joseph substituted for another man, and enlisted in Company G, 5th Vermont Infantry. At that time, men who substituted for others were paid \$300; the town paid an additional \$300 bounty to any man who enlisted. Joseph fought in four battles and was wounded at Petersburg, Virginia on March 25, 1865. He died in a Washington, DC hospital and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Clara was reported to have supported Joseph's decision to enlist, but his death left her with three very young children and limited means.

Clara applied for a widow's pension, and is reported to have worked for the Bradley family in Peacham. In 1870, she bought the house known as The Home Place from the estate of Louisa Bradley for \$2630. Along with the house, she acquired the deed to Pew No. 94 in the Peacham Congregational Church.

At some point, Clara began to take in boarders. One was her husband's older brother, Alexander, who had survived the war. Eventually she developed a steady business with one of the earliest summer boarding houses, in Peacham, continuing well into the 20th century. The Caledonian Republican of St. Johnsbury often listed her boarders' comings, goings, and excursions in its local news columns, and her name is listed in several of the earliest publications promoting the hills of the Northeast Kingdom as a picturesque, healthy destination.

Clara was active in several women's organizations. The Woman's Relief Corps raised funds to benefit Civil War veterans and their families. Clara served as president of the Peacham

chapter, and her name is on one block of a signature quilt made for a raffle to raise money for this cause. Brought up a strict Presbyterian in Ryegate, she joined the Peacham Congregational Church in 1865. Her house was a short distance up the hill from the church, and she often served as hostess for church-related social gatherings. Later in life, she was an active member of the Sixty Club, a women's social club for women over the age of 60.

Clara was also active in the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She was listed in the Vermont Directory and attended the 11th annual Vermont meeting in Brattleboro in 1885 where she served as a local superintendent of the department "Young Woman's Work and Drawing Room." In Peacham, she served as treasurer, presenting in its 1901 programs on the topic of "Sabbath."

Perhaps most relevant for the history of suffrage, the Peacham WCTU was credited with being the first Union in Vermont to have a department supporting women's right to vote and to pass franchise resolutions. Caledonia County is believed to be the first county in Vermont to support women voting, and both Caledonia County and the Peacham WCTU took this stand before the Vermont state WCTU gave its support to it.

Clara Bailey played a role in the movement to gain suffrage for women at the municipal level. From 1884 to 1900, bills were regularly filed in the Vermont legislature to give municipal suffrage to taxpaying women, only to be defeated. The Journal of the State of Vermont for October 24, 1900 included the petition of Clara Bailey and 81 others, residents of the town of Peacham, proposing passage of a bill granting municipal suffrage to women who were taxpayers. It was referred to the Committee on Judiciary, where, as happened every year, it languished.

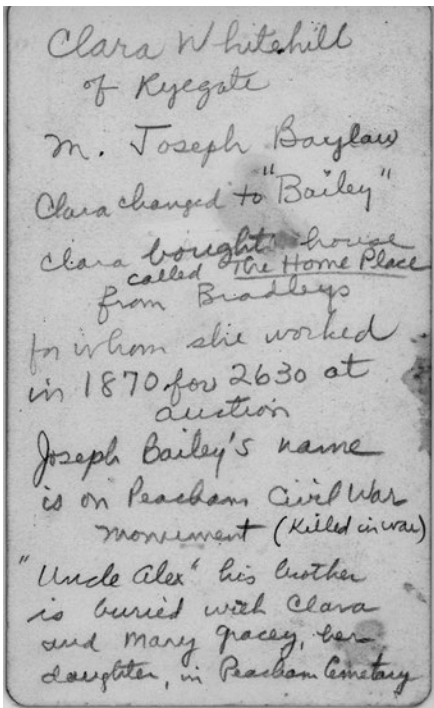
Clara Bailey died on February 15, 1911 and is buried in the Peacham Cemetery alongside her brother-in-law Alexander Bailey and her daughter Mary Bailey Gracey.

These are the facts of her life. Out of them emerges a portrait of a very resourceful person. Her husband enlisted in the Civil War when she was pregnant with their third child, and he died far away from home. She worked for a local family, and over the next five years she marshalled the resources to buy a home spacious enough to host visitors and provide additional income for her family. Like many women of her generation, she gained organizational skills through her work with the Women's Relief Corps, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and her church.

One can understand why she believed that, as a taxpayer for so many years in her town, she should have the right, at the very least, to vote on municipal issues.

JOHANNA BRANSON

*Note: We would like to thank Rebecca Washington, Peacham Assistant Town Clerk, for her skill and enthusiasm in tracing the deeds of the house called The Home Place. It made it possible for us to identify Clara Bailey's house as the Nehemiah Bradley House on Mack's Mountain Road just uphill from the village.*



Front (opposite page) and reverse of photo of Clara Bailey from PHA archives.

*Deweysburg continued from pg. 3*

plummeted to likely -18 degrees Fahrenheit, and schools had to be suddenly dismissed.<sup>12</sup>

As described in earlier articles, Deweysburg was economically depressed, and successive early winters, late-occurring spring warmth, and general harsh weather conditions most certainly took a toll on the struggling community. Census data indicated that the town had higher than average numbers of children and elderly, non-working adults. This made commerce and farming more difficult, with fewer able-bodied adults to farm, and large numbers of young and old to feed. Add to these difficulties severe weather events that killed off livestock and damaged crops and one can see how weather contributed to the economic collapse of the town. Town Meeting records show that by the early 19th century, road maintenance became an issue, and roads were nearly impassable at times due to weather damage.

Numerous factors led to Deweysburg's demise. The land tract was long and narrow and lacked a passable and unified road system. One had to cross into Peacham, Danville or Cabot to get from one end of the township to the other. The land was particularly hilly and had limited broad fields for farming. The original land lots cost less than those in surrounding towns, and so the original settlers tended to be poorer, less educated and often illiterate. They brought fewer resources for farming and commerce with them. Most came from disparate places, and unlike settlers in neighboring towns they arrived with fewer established family and military connections. Deweysburg had high costs for schooling their large population of children. Tax revenue fell behind, resources were thin, and the town fell on hard times. Land speculators in adjacent towns took advantage of their neighbors' poverty, and investors swooped in to buy land when farmers were in trouble. In both Peacham and Danville town, we now know that the select boards issued orders to the Deweysburg sheriff to "warn" poverty stricken families off their land. Many sold to the speculators and moved to other towns or headed west.

There were also political and religious divisions within Deweysburg's population that prevented a cohesive community bond. The final annexation in 1810 allowed Congregationalists to align with Peacham and Baptists to align with Danville.

Deweysburg ceased to exist after 1810, but its legacy and history continued on with a few families who remained on their land, and it can still be found in our town records. It has been my goal to remember the story of Deweysburg so that we can all pay tribute to the courage and determination of these brave first settlers.

SUSAN CHANDLER

#### NOTES

- 1 Ludlum, David M. *The Vermont Weather Book*, 1985, pg. 20. While the overall temperature during the Little Ice Age averaged 1.5 to 2 degrees Fahrenheit cooler, local records show that some areas experienced much greater dips in temperature. Northern Vermont in particular was 8 to 10 degrees cooler on an average daily basis.
- 2 Ibid, page 86.
- 3 Ibid, pg. 179.
- 4 Following the 1810 annexation of Deweysburg, weather patterns continued to be severe. "Cold years" with severe winters that produced early and late snows continued from 1810 to 1817.
- 5 Ludlum, David M. *The Vermont Weather Book*, 1985, pg. 74-75.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid, pg. 66
- 9 Ibid, pg. 51
- 10 Ibid, pg. 105 and *Vermont Gazette*, Bennington, June 23, 1806.
- 11 Ibid, pg. 52 and 224-225 and *Connecticut Courant*, Hartford, May 6, 1807.
- 12 Ibid, pg. 28

#### Author's Note about David Ludlum, the primary source for weather information in this article.

Dr. David M. Ludlum (1910-1997) was an American historian, meteorologist, entrepreneur, and author. He was the founder of the only magazine in the U.S. about weather, *Weatherwise*, and was noted for his prominence in the fields of history and meteorology. He received degrees in history from the University of California and Princeton. While serving in the US Army during WWII, Ludlum became a battlefield weather forecaster. While researching his doctoral dissertation, Ludlum had become fascinated with accounts of weather conditions in old Vermont newspapers. After the war he resumed this research, poring over old letters and crumbling diaries and turning out a series of books with names like "Early American Winters," "Early American Hurricanes," and "The Vermont Weather Book". His chief interest was early American weather prior to 1870, when the National Weather Service was established. He was especially interested in the study of harsh conditions, including the Northeast's harshest and longest 18th-century winter, 1780, when ships were locked in more than a foot of ice in the harbor in New London, CT until May 10th.

## Three Gossiping Women, Revised

This summer, a painting by Louis Lamoureux (Peacham Town Clerk from 1969-1980) entitled *Titillating Tidbit* was displayed in the exhibition at the Historical House, and the three gossiping women he depicted appeared in the Ghost Walks. The painting was mysterious to us, and our aim in showcasing it was to learn more about it. Who were the women? What are they gossiping about? Why are they wearing nice coats and hats while holding cocktails? The back of the painting is inscribed with Louis' name and the title; that's all we had to go on.

We checked the PHA computer files and read that the painting was found by Hertha Forrai in the town dump. We recently checked this information with Hertha, and we learned much more about the painting, including that she did not find it in the dump.

Hertha and Louis were among the many local students in Helen and Horace Gilmore's painting classes. Hertha recalled that one day Horace, who was commonly called "Gil," shared a black and white photo of three women wearing coats and hats, holding

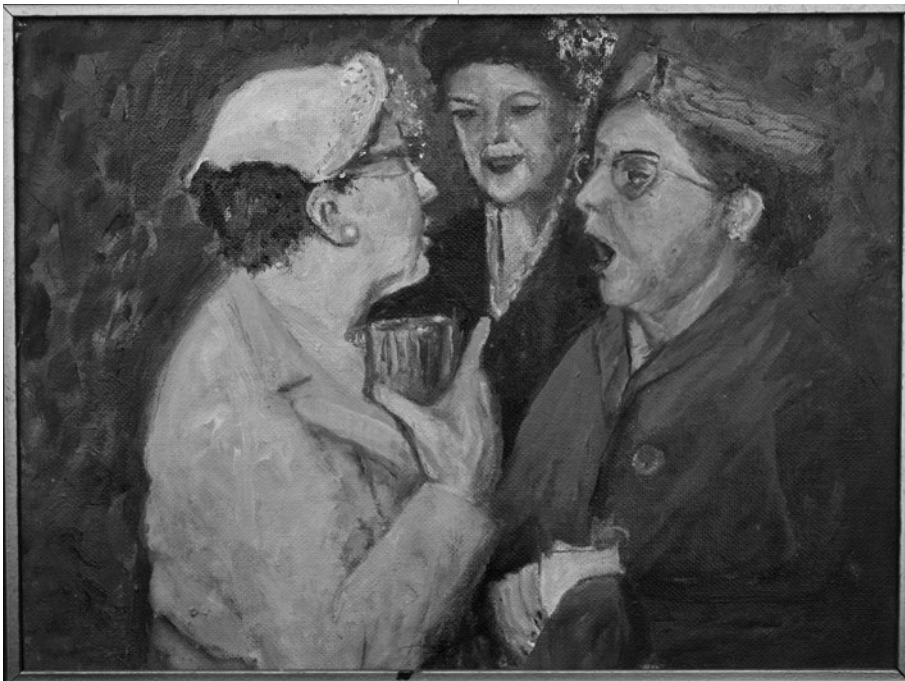
highballs, one talking, one reacting with shock, and one eavesdropping. Gil explained that it was an image of a "sail-away," a party held onboard a cruise ship just prior to departure from New York; friends of the passengers gathered to wish them a happy trip, and then were hustled off at departure time.

Louis was taken with the image. Hertha recalls him choosing colors as he worked, turning a black and white documentary photo into a vibrant painting. She has no idea who took the photograph, where the photo is now, what happened to the painting after art class, or who donated it to the PHA.

We were delighted with Hertha's information. We had been stumped, not by local women socializing, but that they did so wearing 1950's-era dress coats and matching hats while holding highballs. None of the Peacham women's clubs seemed to have held such events, but New Yorkers? Much more plausible.

We are constantly revising our understanding of the "facts" as more evidence comes in, and are grateful to people who contribute to the process. Does anyone know where that photograph is?

JOHANNA BRANSON



Louis Lamoureux's painting, *Titillating Tidbit*. Photo by Jock Gill.

## THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

PHA thanks all the people who gave their time and energy to helping out in a variety of ways: as docents at the summer exhibit at the Historical House, as docents or ghosts at the two Ghost Walks, as helpers at the ARC, making donuts, taking photos, and in many other important ways. If you were left off the list please let us know so we can include you next time.

Kathy Galinat  
Tom Galinat  
Patty Gardner  
Marsha Garrison  
Jock Gill  
Morgan Gold  
Cecelia Kane  
Julie Lang  
Lynne Lawson  
Josette Lyders  
Jim Minichiello  
Marilyn Petrie  
Robert Ring  
Ed Schneider  
Wendy Stavseth  
Hattie Thresher

### Volunteer for Craft Guild Needed

We are looking for a volunteer to represent PHA at the Peacham Craft Guild. The Guild sells PHA books and note cards; in return for this important revenue source we need to designate a representative to attend seasonal monthly meetings and take turns working at the Guild when it's open. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Susan Chandler at [pchandler@vtlink.net](mailto:pchandler@vtlink.net).



## A Peacham Dairy Farmer: George Kempton's Memories

*Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from an hour-long interview Marilyn Magnus conducted with George Kempton in October, 2017. To learn more about George's life and memories check out his book, The Unlikely Farmer, described in the note at the end of the article.*

This is **Marilyn Magnus** and I'm talking with **George Kempton** on October 19th, 2017. So George, tell us when you moved to Peacham and why and how old you were at the time.

**G:** Patty and I moved to Peacham and bought the Craig farm in the village, right next to the church. We moved here on the first day of January in 1962. We had five children, all of them preschool.

**M:** When you took over the farm from the Craig's did you take over all the cows that were there at the time?

**G:** Cattle and equipment, the whole thing, lock stock and barrel.

**M:** What actually brought you here?

**G:** Patty's father wanted his daughter to be a farmer's wife and not a farmhand's wife. I'd been working on farms all my life. The last job I had was in Dummerston, Vermont, where I worked for five years for Fred Knapp. I had been working for David Claghorn in Perkinsville on the Black River. The Army Corps of Engineers had decided that the machine tool industry in Springfield was being threatened by floods, and so

they wanted to put a flood control dam in the Black River. And they did, and they flooded David Claghorn and Fred Knapp out of business.

I had worked for Claghorn a number of different times. When I came back from Alaska I worked for Claghorn from February till September, when I went to UConn [the University of Connecticut], which he helped me get into. My folks at that time were living in Farmington, Connecticut, so I was a resident there. And then, after UConn I was drafted into the Korean War, and I worked for Claghorn after UConn and before the Korean War. When I got out of the army in '54 I went to work for Claghorn a third time. Claghorn had a farm that he was going to buy in Hudson, NY, and Knapp was going to rent this place from Ellsworth Bunker. It's called the Bunker Farm now. There was a little hard feeling there with Claghorns and I was sorry about that, but he didn't pay very much, and I had a good offer from Knapp. I was going to get the same pay I was getting from Claghorn plus five percent of the milk check, and I'd be running the herd. That was a big boost for me. The Claghorns visited us here in Peacham when we came here, and then our friendship renewed. He had been like a father to me.

I was born in Springfield, VT on May 31, 1931. Dad thought he'd like to try to farm, but he was working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, as a gear shaper in Springfield, and he bought this farm in Windham, Vermont, which is about a 30-mile trip.

The first farm that I hired out on was in Windham for George Dutton; that was in 1945. I was fourteen that year. I had been asked by the headmaster, David Newton, to go to his prep school. My education had not been in the front seat of what was important. I remember being in four different fourth grades.

**M:** Oh, my goodness. The family moved around?

**G:** Yes. Mother was working for a wealthy family and lived with them. Oftentimes, I was with my grandparents and sometimes I was with my father. We lived in a lot of different places. I remember we were in Concord, NH; dad had a job there. When we left to go to that farm I was in the sixth grade and we left before school was done. The Newtons had children my age and there

were faculty members at the school that had children that were my age, and so they had a separate teacher for elementary school. I had five years of Latin while I was at Newton.

**M:** Where was this, in Wyndham or in Connecticut?

**G:** It was in Jamaica, but you couldn't get there without going through Wyndham. It was the most important thing in my life, that school. The second was Dave Claghorn, and then some other families, men mostly, played important roles in nurturing me along. I never lived at home after I was 14. I was going to school, boarding there at the Newton's expense.

I had a lot of very fortunate things happen. I was lucky to keep this farm going. Patty's father Ivan lent us the money for a down payment but it wasn't enough, so we had to come up with the rest. We were nearly five years getting a down payment. We were paying 25% of the milk check and we did a lot of other stuff; we did a lot of custom trucking.

**M:** Did you get maple syrup at that point?

**G:** Oh yeah, we had syrup. Patty did a good job with her Summit [NJ] friends and developed quite a mail order business for the syrup. And then, over the years, we expanded the sugaring operation.

**M:** Now, just to go back a little, where did you meet Patty?

**G:** Well, that's the best damn part of the story. Patty graduated from Colby and went to Columbia-Presbyterian for nursing, and Mary Newton was there. She was a third year student. She was Patty's "big sister." In Patty's class was Jane Sprague, [who] got pregnant with Johnny Newton and ended up having to leave school. John was at Princeton. He had a Model A Ford, and Patty's father had given her a new Chevy when she graduated from nursing school and was working at Summit Hospital. And so, when John and Jane wanted to go up to Windham they'd drive up to Summit with the Model A and trade cars with Patty. Patty would toot around Summit with a Model A, and Johnny would run her new car up to Windham. I always went back to the Newton school for the

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### PHA Board 2019

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### The Peacham Patriot

Editor: Jane Alper

Contributors: Susan Chandler, Johanna Branson, Isabel Magnus, Ed Schneider, Jane Alper, Jock Gill.

Design: Joanna Bodenweber

*Kempton continued from page 7*

end of deer season. Johnny sent me a card [saying] that he wanted to make sure I was coming to squire around this gal that they were bringing up to a dance. So I arrived and, boy, here's this gorgeous girl; she was just something else, and she thought that I was OK too. We decided to get married that weekend.

**M:** That weekend? Well, that was little quick.

**G:** Well, actually, I thought it was too quick, and so I said that I'd send her a letter, and I did and proposed, and she accepted. And the soonest we could arrange it was the third of March in '56.

**M:** Where did you start your married life?

**G:** Well, I was working for Claghorn, and [he] rented me a house in North Springfield. The following April, I went down to the Bunker farm a month before Freddy [Knapp] moved the cows down, and set the place up. We worked there for five years. We went to work for Fred in April of '57 and we bought up here January 1, '62,

**M:** How did you find out about this farm here?

**G:** Ivan wanted to have his daughter be a farmer's wife and he saw the ad in the old New York Herald Tribune. And so we went up, Patty and I. We made three trips up here and on the last trip when we were going down Route 5 through Norwich we decided that we'd buy it. And we always called [Norwich] after that our decision town.

To be continued in the next issue of  
*The Peacham Patriot*

**Note:** Those who want to know more about George Kempton should get hold of his book, *The Unlikely Farmer, Biography of a Vermont Hill Farmer*, published last April. It tells his story and that of his family beginning with the birth of his mother in 1887 through 1985 and includes Patty's journal entries and photos that bring the story to life. The book is on sale for \$20 at the Peacham Library, the Peacham Café, Boxcar & Caboose in St. J, and Green Mountain Books in Lyndonville. It is also sold on Amazon.

Please come to  
Town Meeting on  
March 5  
to support PHA's  
appropriation.

KEEP UP WITH PHA!  
[peachamhistorical.org](http://peachamhistorical.org)