

THE PEACHAM PATRIOT

PEACHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



LETTER FROM THE PHA PRESIDENT

Does anyone know for sure who these dancing people are? How about the names of the two women walking down the street in Peacham Corner in the snow?

I invite you to contact us if you do! In fact, anyone who was in Peacham during the period 1957-1967 is especially encouraged to visit the exhibition currently on view in the Historical House through Fall Foliage Day. It is called *Clemens Kalischer: His Peacham Photographs*, and you can read about him and his visits to Peacham elsewhere in this issue of *The Patriot*.

We have nearly 100 of his prints on view. They come from two collections. 27 are photographs on loan from the Kalischer family in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The other 69, unframed and somewhat worn, are from a group Kalischer left in 1967 to be exhibited informally in the Peacham Town Hall. He hoped the villagers would enjoy them every day, and perhaps order their own copies from him. Taken together, the photos present a marvelous window

into the Peacham Village of 60 years ago, before the upheavals of the Vietnam War and the arrival of a new population of residents seeking a different, rural life.

With your help, we may be able to gain valuable new information about that era. In many cases, we are not sure who the people in the photos are. When Kalischer died last year, most of the prints he left behind in Stockbridge were not identified except for their locale. And although some of people depicted in the prints in our own archives are identified, many are not.

Please visit the exhibition and give your identifications to the docent or contact us and we will be happy to schedule a special time to gather your information. Contact us by visiting our website <https://www.peachamhistorical.org/contact/> or call us at 802-592-3047 and leave a message.

JOHANNA BRANSON

Please join us for PHA's Annual Meeting on Wednesday, August 7 at 7 pm in the Peacham Library. The main feature is a talk by William Hosley titled "New England Impressions: Art and the Making of Regional Identity." Be sure to sample home baked "historical" pies after the talk.

(See notice on page 8.)

Two photos taken in Peacham by Clemens Kalischer.



Peacham's Forgotten "Oregon" Part 1

Sometimes a clue to forgotten history is found in just one word. Such is the story of "Oregon," the colloquial name given to the remote southwest corner of Peacham.

In 2017, PHA's summer exhibition focused on one-room schoolhouses. As part of the research for this exhibit, we analyzed the District School Records dating from 1811 to 1871. These ledgers contained faint handwritten pages with detailed financial accounting, assigned trustees for each district, and the yearly number of students.

In 1847, a new school district was formed, likely fractured off from a larger district adjacent to it. It was listed as District 13 with the word "Oregon" distinctly written next to it. In subsequent years, it was alternately spelled as "Orragon" and "Oragan." The district existed from 1847 to 1856, and the final year noted "no returns," likely meaning no returning students.

Many questions followed. Why was this school district called Oregon? Who lived there? Why did it vanish in 1856? More importantly, what part did it play in Peacham's history?

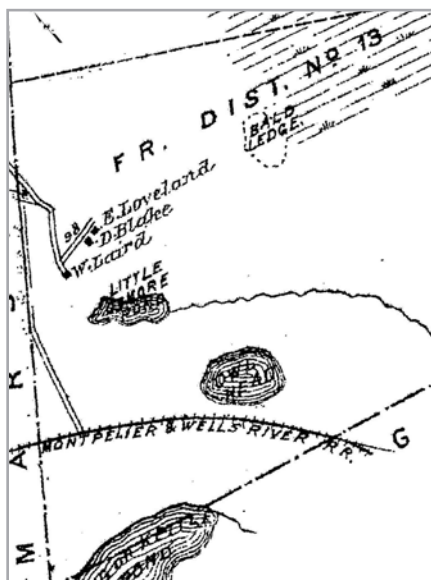
This is the first in a short series of articles which will explore the history of Oregon, now called New Discovery State Park. Today this remote area of Peacham is part of the Groton State Forest, and includes Osmore Pond, Goslant (aka Spice) Pond, Owl's Head Mountain and Devil's Hill. Access to this area is from Groton and Marshfield, and interestingly, this was also the case as early as the 18th century. Because of the difficulty in traveling directly from the village of Peacham to this area, early residents aligned themselves with Groton, Cabot and Marshfield. They often moved back and forth across town lines to these neighboring communities from this remote area. As a result, the inhabitants of Oregon were more closely associated with the neighboring towns, and their story has largely been forgotten as part of Peacham's history.

Oregon was rugged; it was heavily wooded as well as rocky. There was an abundance of wildlife, including mountain lions, lynx and timber wolves. The Abenaki hunted and fished this area, and soldiers and explorers passed through as well, using it for portage between the Winooski and Connecticut Rivers. By 1704, it was documented that Native Americans and the French were using routes through Groton and southwest Peacham to reach Canada and Massachusetts.¹ Colonists settled this area of Vermont slightly earlier than the rest of the state through the accessible network of waterways.

One of the earliest adventurers in Peacham's Oregon region was Aaron Hosmer, sometimes spelled Osmore, for whom Osmore Pond and Hosmer Lake are named. Early maps record the pond as "Little Osmer Pond." Although it is believed that he did not build a permanent structure in Oregon, he led extensive hunting, trapping, and fishing expeditions which resulted in established trails with numerous pitched camps beside the lakes and streams.²

Aaron Hosmer, Sr. was born in July of 1729 in Concord, MA. He married his second wife, Caroline Chamberlain, (daughter of Thomas Chamberlain) in Newbury, VT in 1760. They had five children, including a son, James, who married Betsey Carter of Peacham in about 1792.³

School District 13, taken from the 1875 Beers Map of Peacham. The Marshfield town line is to the west, Kettle Pond in Groton is to the south.



Hosmer led a swashbuckling life. In 1740, he lived in Charlestown, NH, and at the age of 16 was with Captain Noble's Company when it was attacked by the Indians. In 1754 he was at Fort Dumner, and in 1755 he served in Captain Thomas Johnson's Company of Minutemen. He moved to Ryegate in 1773 when General James Whitelaw and David Allen came to inspect and survey local areas for the "Scotch Company," a Scottish land investment group. He served as a scout in Captain John G. Bayley's Company from 1777 to 1779.⁴ He also served with Captain Barron's Company in 1778. In 1781 he was back in Newbury, and frequently hunted with local Indians. In his hunting excursions with the Indians, he frequently explored the ponds in Groton, Cabot and Peacham.⁵ Kettle Pond near the Groton/Peacham town line was so named, according to legend, because he lost his camp kettle while attempting to cross the lake on a log.⁶

So what was the origin of the name "Oregon", and why was it used in Peacham? In a 2004 article for the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, it was noted that the name first appeared in a 1765 petition to King George III by Robert Rogers, a New England colonial military officer.⁷ He had spent many years as an officer in New Hampshire, New York and the Champlain Valley of Vermont during the French and Indian War. He certainly must have had exposure to the Algonquin language, including various Abenaki dialects, through his guides. Rogers sought money from the English king to finance an expedition in search of the Northwest Passage, and referred to the *Ouragon* River in his petition, reporting it to be the Indian name for a famed river of the west.⁸ Historian Thomas Love and noted Smithsonian linguist Ives Goddard, considered the world's foremost authority on Algonquin languages, have written extensively on the origins of the word Oregon.⁹ They postulated that Rogers chose the word based on exposure to the Algonquin words *ouragon* or *olighin*, both meaning "good and beautiful" or "beautiful river." The name could also be from the Connecticut Pidgin Mohegan word *wauregan* (wuregaun) meaning "beautiful." Mohegan was another Algonquin dialect.¹⁰ Ives Goddard extensively documented that all these variations of

Algonquin words were in common use by local Vermont and New Hampshire Abenaki tribes.⁹ Between 1778 and the 1820s, the word Oregon was increasingly used in English printed materials referring to western territories.¹¹

A possible explanation for Peacham's use of this name was that this area was considered remote and beautiful, and early colonists in Peacham simply used the local Abenaki or Connecticut-Mohegan "slang" word to describe what would eventually become an isolated school district. They may have also used the term in a derogatory manner. The Oregon Territory was officially acquired from Britain in 1846, and School District 13, formed in 1847, would have seemed just as wild and far removed from Peacham Corner as this US territory was to New Englanders. We'll never know for sure.

In our next chapter in the series, we'll explore the families who came to live in Oregon, the logging industry, and the coming of the railroad to this corner of Peacham.

SUSAN CHANDLER

- 1 Hallowell, Laura and Synderman. *Groton State Forest History Guide*. Published by Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Undated.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Hemenway, Abby Maria. *Vermont Historical Gazetteer: A Magazine*, 1877, p. 1158.
- 4 Fisher, Major General Carleton E. and Fisher, Sue G. *Soldiers, Sailors and Patriots of the Revolutionary War, Vermont*. Picton Press, Maine, 1992.
- 5 *The [Groton] Times*, Saturday, August 7, 1897, p. 1-2. From a story done on the 100th Birthday of Aaron Hosmer's granddaughter, Abigail Hosmer Welch.
- 6 Hallowell, Laura and Synderman. *Groton State Forest History Guide*. Published by Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Undated.
- 7 Love, Thomas and Goddard Ives. *Oregon, the Beautiful*, pub. By *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol.195, No.2.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.

Peacham Landings

Cultivating Connections to Our Community by Asking the Question: "How Did You Land in Peacham?"

A unique storytelling project, led by the Peacham Library and funded through a grant from the Vermont Humanities Council, launched this summer. Conversations within the community hatched the idea for the Peacham Landings project. Lively dialogue continues to carry the concept into facilitated discussions and documentation. The intent is to share stories of how residents of Peacham, past and present, came to land in our town. What draws people to our community? How have reasons for landing here changed over time?

As we collect stories from the community, we explore connections with historical information. This nurtures our sense of place by exploring our own culture through the stories of those who came before us. As a key partner on Peacham Landings, the Peacham Historical Association identifies and links themes of coming to this land over time.

Peacham Library engaged creative artist and folklorist, Jean Pitman, to coordinate story collection. Jean, with help from Kalanani Gallas, has so far completed more than twenty interviews. She also plans to gather stories at Peacham's Farmers Market. She encourages anyone interested in telling their stories to contact her by email at pitman.jean@gmail.com or by phone or text at 614-313-8051. In addition, a kiosk has been set up at the Library where people can write down the story of how they landed in Peacham. The digitally recorded stories (ranging from 3 minutes to over an hour) will be put on a portable hard drive and given the Library and the PHA.

This year's project will culminate in four public events at the Peacham Library in August. You'll be led in a series of free-wheeling Thursday night chats about how folks ended up in Peacham. Bring your own story or listen to others, have a cookie and a cold beverage, and enjoy the dialogue!



Photo: Erin Lane.

Jean Pitman and Peacham Landings display at Peacham Library.

August 1, 7 pm

Peacham Landings: Animals

Animal stories that include horses, alpaca, sheep and more as we meet and chat with the people who came to Peacham because of the terrific hill farm conditions for raising animals and fiber production. Did you come to Peacham to raise animals? Join in the conversation, we would love to hear your "tails".

August 8, 7 pm

Peacham Landings: Farming

Who comes to Peacham to farm? What are some unique challenges of farming in current times? Be among the first to see the short film premier: *Ducks on the Old Shaw Farm* by Morgan Gold. Learn about a new kind of farmer, one who uses social media as a tool on his specialty farm. Conversation to follow. Did you come here to farm? We will explore the long tradition of coming to Peacham to farm and what that may mean today.

August 22, 7pm

Peacham Landings: The 1960's/70's

Arriving from New York, San Francisco or beyond, folks came to Peacham in the 60's and 70's and have astonishing "landing" stories, from following the trail of an old buried diary to escaping uptight urban parents to following a guru. Please bring stories of your own arrival from this era.

continued on p. 4

Landings continued from p.3

August 29, 7 pm

Peacham Landings:

"Re-Peopling" Vermont

Author Paul M. Searls and his new book about the historic patterns of "re-peopling" Vermont concludes our series. Join us for an informal community dialogue that includes the author. You can check out his book at the Peacham Library earlier in August or order it online from the Vermont Historical Museum in Montpelier. The title is *Re-peopling Vermont: A Paradox of Development in the Twentieth Century*.

During the second phase of this project, Jean will be documenting stories to compile into an artistic representation of some sort: it could be a book, mural, curated portfolio, art show, podcast or another creative product. The Library will apply for another grant to support this effort. We want to preserve our collective story for future exploration and will look for your help in filling in the whole picture of the people who live here now and those who arrived long ago.

ERIN LANE

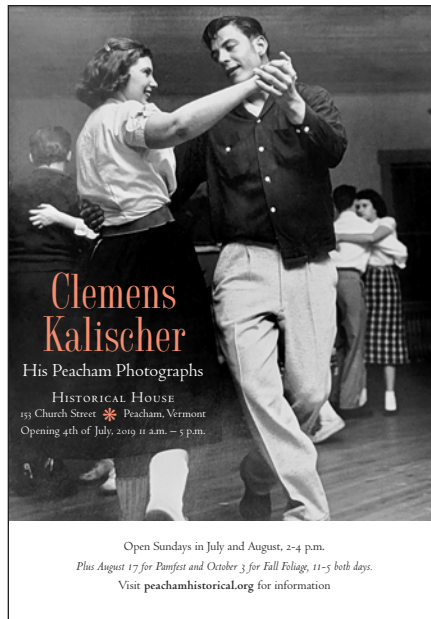
"Peacham Landings" is a storytelling and community-building project to gather and share stories, both historical and contemporary, of what draws people to the community of Peacham, Vermont. Peacham Landings is supported, in part, by the Vermont Humanities Council. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Vermont Humanities Council.

PHA Membership

Please don't forget to renew your membership or to sign up if you're not currently a member. Membership dues are only \$15 per year (or \$250 for a lifetime membership). PHA members receive two free issues of *The Peacham Patriot* each year, filled with news about PHA activities and Peacham history. High membership numbers showing broad public support help PHA when it applies for grants to fund its programs.

Send your dues to
PHA, PO Box 101, Peacham VT
05862

PHA Events on July 4



Kalischer exhibit

The Historical House opened for the season with the first-ever exhibit devoted to the Peacham photographs of Clemens Kalischer. Kalischer came to the US as a refugee from Nazi Germany in 1942, studied art and photography in New York City, and became one of the leading American photojournalists of his day. His work has been displayed in museums and galleries throughout the world, including in the renowned 1955 exhibit, *The Family of Man*, at the Museum of Modern Art in NY. He died in 2018.

Kalischer made at least two visits to Peacham in the late 1950s and 1960s. His photos from that time vividly recapture a way of life that was already vanishing and portray their human subjects with tenderness and humor. Children playing in the snow, a boy and his pet goat, a couple whirling joyously at a school dance; older people playing cards, chatting in the post office, focused intently at their work—it's impossible to convey in words the vast breadth of the exhibit. During his visit in 1967, Kalischer spent time with George Kempton and his family; his photos of the young farm family are a highlight of the exhibit.

Some of the Peacham photos appeared in *Vermont Life* magazine in 1959 and in the Time-Life series' *New England* volume published in 1967. Twenty-

seven of the photos on exhibit were loaned to PHA by the Kalischer family and 69 others are proof prints from PHA's collections. They have never before been exhibited together.

The Historical House will be open for viewers Sunday afternoons from 2-4 through August and from 11-5 during the Peacham Acoustic Music Festival on Saturday, August 17 and Fall Foliage Festival on Thursday, October 3. The exhibit can also be seen by appointment at other times. Don't miss it!

Ghost Walk

In keeping with the summer's theme, this year's Ghost Walk featured people portrayed in Kalischer's photos on display at the Historical House.

Three different scenes were presented. One portrayed three friends—Warren Farrington, Howard Hebblethwaite, and Ned Somers—engaged in a lively conversation in 1958. Ned Somers (played by Jim Minichiello), proprietor of the Peacham village store, spoke about the changing nature of his business with the arrival of chain stores in St. Johnsbury. The store, which also housed the post office where his wife was postmistress, was open 7 days a week. Since they lived upstairs, they were available to pump gas at all hours. Warren Farrington (played by Frank Miller), a WW I veteran, had a busy career as town moderator, selectman, and road crew chief, and served the town in many other ways. He talked about his experiences in the trenches in France during WW I. Howard Hebblethwaite (played by John Mackenzie) was the town librarian, where he also sold notions, including candy and cigarettes. Ned Somers and he cooperated by selling different items: Howard sold ice cream, Ned soda. Howard spoke about the best sellers currently flying off the library shelves: *Marjorie Morningstar*, Anne Lindbergh's memoir *Gift from the Sea*, and (gasp!) *Lolita*.

In another vignette, fifth grade teacher Thelma Schoolcraft White (played by Jenny Mackenzie) and four of her pupils (played by Lila and Kate Mackenzie, Beatrice and Julian Garvin) identified items gathered in their morning walk—wildflowers, a crow's feather, a bird's nest. Thelma spoke about her own

education, teaching career, and love of nature. Mackenzie played the role with warmth, humor and gentle sternness (when one of pupil showed up without his shoes). I wish she had been my teacher.

Finally, six present-day Peachamites who were children at the time of Kalischer's visits, reminisced about their childhood, the one-room schools they attended, their games and pranks, and unforgettable incidents. David Field recalled carrying his shotguns on the school bus so that he and his friend could hunt on the way home. Pete Randall remembers skinny dipping at a local pool under the gaze of his goat, Wobbles. His older brother Don recalled the fire that destroyed the Mackay farm and the town library. Mary Daly spoke of sledding down the hill to East Peacham into the road. Brothers Daniel and Shain O'Brien shared vivid memories of Sunday afternoon skiing at the rope tow built by the Men's Club. Panelists shared memories of tying a parachute to a Flying Saucer and flying down Mack's Mountain Road, hay wagon rides, the Caledonia County Fair, and square dances enlivened with contraband Boone's Farm wine.

If you missed the July 4 production, you can catch it again on Fall Foliage Day, Thursday, October 3, from 2-4.

JANE ALPER



(top) Thelma White (Jenny Mackenzie) and four pupils.

(above) Ghost Walk panel (left to right): Shain O'Brien, Daniel O'Brien, Mary Daly, Don Randall, Peter Randall, Dart Thalman.

(left) Ned Somers (Jim Minichiello), Warren Farrington (Frank Miller), Howard Hebblethwaite (John Mackenzie)

Photos: Julie Lang



A Peacham Dairy Farmer: George Kempton's Memories (continued)

Editor's Note: The first part of Marilyn Magnus's interview of George Kempton appeared in last fall's issue of The Patriot. In it George described his early life, his marriage, and his purchase of the farm in Peacham in 1962. The following section focuses on George's life as a Peacham dairy farmer, including important changes in dairy farming during the later years of the 20th century.

Marilyn: When you came here and started farming, can you tell me something more about going from being a hired man to running the show?

George: Well, it was certainly very difficult because we didn't have any money and we didn't have any credit, and we had to keep the old equipment running.

M: Who did you have working for you?

G: Glen Marceau. He was working for Craig, and he just moved down into the cellar room in the village. After he worked for us a year or two maybe, he was drafted. In the meanwhile, Mackey Hall had burned down and they had to find a home for dorm students, so we provided homes for three boys.

M: How long did you have dorm students living with you?

G: I think it was a little more than a year. Then they build Kinerson Hall and that took them away. They loved the family and the family life and Patty's cooking and the kids.

M: So they were helping you on the farm too?

G: They were helping like a son of a gun. I trucked hay for Claude Field. We'd load it out of the Fickes's barn. We'd be outside the barn and we'd throw them out the window down into the truck.

M: So then when did your kids start to help you?

G: Well, pretty early. Sam had done chores alone a couple of times while I was boiling, and then Jenny had filled in for Patty and gotten the meals for everybody, and she was just 12.

M: And then Patty during all of this, she was mainly running the household?

G: She did everything. It got to be a very popular place for other people's kids. One day when [there] was one of the fires at Randall's they brought Mike Wright to the door, and he wanted to know if Patty thought his arm was broken. She said, yes, it was broken. "Get him to the damn hospital, you jerks." And she would go to places and give people shots and talk with the doctors.

M: When you think about it, very few people lead such busy, hard-working lives in these times. The farm people don't even work as hard as you did.

G: It's a different kind of work, a lot of tractor and truck operating, a lot of hours in the parlor. There's a lot of pressure.

M: Is it harder now in farming or easier than when you started?

G: Well it seems like it got to be harder now. We know an awful lot more than we did then. There've been some amazing breakthroughs in dairy cow nutrition. There was a group coming into town that was going to offer a lecture for \$75 a farm on dairy cow nutrition and cow comfort, and that sort of thing. Our vets thought it was really vital that the farmers had this. They said that [for] anybody that wanted to do that they would take the \$75 off of their bill.

M: When was this? How recent?

G: I would say it was sometime in the '80s.

M: But it did have a big effect on your herd?

G: Oh, unbelievable. A dairy cow had traditionally been fed grain before milking. We would feed like 10 or 15 pounds of grain at once. We were feeding them twice a day, so it would be about 12 pounds at a time.

M: Wow, that's a lot!

G: Well, but they're making a lot of milk. However, that much grain would change the acidity level to neutral or nearly neutral in the rumen, and then you wouldn't get the utilization of the grain that you were feeding. They discovered that. What they said you needed to do was feed what they called a total milk ration (TMR). It's ground corn, a soybean-mineral mix, and hay.

M: And when would they get that?

G: The feeder man comes at 4 in the morning and he starts in. The milkers are here to start milking at 5. It takes quite a while to feed them and each group gets its own ration. They get fed according to their milk production. That way you don't overfeed them. Nowadays, they check the manure to make sure that you're not overfeeding the cows.

M: OK, how many cows do you have altogether?

G: About 330. And we have a nutritionist, Mike Thresher. He tests our forage once or twice a week.

M: So it has become a much more scientific and specific in a way that you never even probably anticipated back when you first started.

G: Oh, it's a joke to look at my old textbooks. We had a herd average of like 17 or 18 thousand pounds [of milk]. And there are farms right now in Caledonian County that have a herd average of 17 or 18 thousand pounds, and those cows are being fed the same way they were before TMRs were devised, because they aren't going to change. We went up to 23-24 thousand pounds of milk a day from 17. And that's where we are now.

M: Well, George, you have done very well, and I appreciate hearing all this. It's really important information.

G: You know, I am recording this. I'm visualizing some sort of a book with maybe occasionally a page that has pictures on both sides. I've got pictures, old pictures way back, and I've got a ton of newer pictures.

Note: George went on to write his book. Titled *The Unlikely Farmer, Biography of a Vermont Hill Farmer*, it tells his story and that of his family chronologically from 1887, the date of his mother's birth, through 1985, supplemented by entries from Patty's diaries and many photos. The book is on sale for \$20 at Boxcar & Caboose in St. J, and Green Mountain Books in Lyndonville. It is also sold on Amazon.

Editor's Query: Devil's Hill

I'm exploring the question of how this lovely little hill got its sinister name. I hope some readers can help. I've come across some legends, including a wonderful poem, *The Ballad of Devil's Hill*, created by Margaret MacArthur and her 5th and 6th grade Peacham students in around 1993. If any of you were involved in this effort I'd love to hear from you.

Give me a call at 802-592-3161 or send me an email at janealper@gmail.com.

JANE ALPER

KEEP UP WITH PHA!
peachamhistorical.org

New Roof for the Blacksmith Shop

This August, new cedar shingles will be installed to replace the failing roof on the Blacksmith Shop. The Ashbel Goodenough Blacksmith Shop is one of the few surviving structures from Peacham's industrial past. Ashbel Goodenough, a blacksmith and farrier, built the Brick Blacksmith Shop, as he called it, in 1820. It remained a blacksmith shop for almost one hundred years until 1912. In 1998 it was purchased by the Peacham Historical Association (PHA). Since then, volunteers have worked hard to restore it and to offer blacksmithing demonstrations. During last summer's work to reconfigure the spacing of the interior of the Blacksmith Shop, it became obvious that the roof was failing: the shingles were worn out and the roof leaked during rain storms. PHA has recently contracted with Raymond Young, owner of Young Guns Construction, to install a new roof on the Blacksmith Shop. The work will include:

- Removing all old wooden shakes;
- Pulling all the nails in the roof decking boards and replacing boards as needed;
- Cleaning up all the area around the building;

- Installing new grade A cedar shakes with stainless nails; and
- Installing a new cedar board ridge cap and zinc strips.

PHA has started a fundraising effort to help pay for the new roof. One step is selling antique nails with a special note during open days. Visitors to the Blacksmith Shop during Winter Carnival and Fourth of July have bought nails and made generous contributions. This fundraising will continue during the Peacham Acoustic Music Festival and Fall Foliage Day.

The work for the new roof is scheduled to begin in mid-August. The estimated cost is almost \$7,000, a large sum for our all-volunteer organization. PHA is committed to preserving the Blacksmith Shop and offering demonstrations by local blacksmiths. Please consider making a donation for the new roof of this important relic of Peacham's industrial history. Donations may be mailed to Peacham Historical Association, PO Box 101, Peacham VT 05862.

JUTTA SCOTT



The Ashbel Goodenough Blacksmith Shop

Photo: Jock Gill

PHA Board 2019

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The Peacham Patriot

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William Hosley:
New England Impressions
Art and the Making of Regional Identity, 1885-1950

**Peacham Historical Association
Annual Meeting
Wednesday, August 7, 7:00 pm
Business Meeting followed by
Lecture
Historical Pies!
Peacham Community Center at
Library**



For several generations, aspiring New England artists used our history, landscape, environment, and traditional industries as subject matter and muse—drawing inspiration from their environment and helping to shape New England's image at home and abroad. William Hosley tells the story of the painters, printmakers and photographers who pictured our world "New Englandly."

Free, accessible to people with disabilities, and open to the public. For more information contact the Peacham Historical Association at (802) 592-3000 or branson.johanna@gmail.com.

**A Vermont Humanities Council Speakers Bureau event
Hosted by Peacham Historical Association.**

Under grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the NEH or the Vermont Humanities Council.

**Please join us for PHA's Annual Meeting
Wednesday, August 7, 7 p.m.**