

THE PEACHAM PATRIOT

PEACHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

A Picture Worth a Thousand Words

In 1980, Lynn Bonfield and I were hired by Ed Brown, chairman of the PHA board at the time, to organize the contents of an assortment of liquor boxes into a PHA historical collection and to train Lorna Quimby in archival practices and procedures. (Lorna went on to serve as the outstanding curator of PHA's collections for over 30 years.) There were many extraordinary finds. Chief among them was an unprotected full plate ambrotype depicting Peacham Corner in about 1865.

The ambrotype was in popular production for about 10 years from 1855–1865. The photographic process, known as collodion wet plate method, consisted of a glass plate which was coated with light-sensitive chemicals then exposed to light in a box camera with a lens. The glass plate was developed and fixed so that prints could be made from it.

The ambrotype was the first use of the wet-plate collodion negative as a positive image. The negative, a single plate of glass, was backed with black lacquer or with black cloth or paper. This allowed the negative to appear as a positive image. Like the daguerreotype, an earlier photographic process, the ambrotype, was a unique image. It would normally have been presented protected in a case with a mat and top glass and a brass preserver. However, this exceptional Peacham photograph was found as a bare negative completely unprotected, lying loose in a box of other assorted records. Fortunately, it escaped serious damage from chipping or scratching, as a result of being neglected for over a century.

The image depicts the northeast corner of Peacham village. The building at the left was at times successively a tavern



Peacham Corner about 1865.

and stable, a guest house, and a hotel. It was owned and run as a tavern and hotel by L.F. Strobridge from 1852–1860, by Josiah Morse who continued the hotel business, and then by Dr. David Merrill, who ran it as a guest house, from 1868–1870. John Atwood ran it as a hotel from 1870–1902. In 1902, it became the home of Dr. A.J. Mackay. The building to the right housed a harness shop run by Horace Frizzell. At the time of the photo this property was owned by D. W. (David Worthen) Choate. Both buildings were lost to fire in 1959.

Because of the long exposure time required, outdoor scenes in natural light were and are extremely rare and would have been the work of a skilled, experienced and well-outfitted photographer. The full-plate size, 6.5 x 8.5", is the rarest and most collectible of ambrotypes.

We don't know who the photographer was, but a photographer by the name of Franklin Benjamin Gage, based in St. Johnsbury in the 1850s to 1870s,

traveled with his equipment throughout New England. He was known for his landscape and exterior views. It's possible that Gage was the maker of this unique Peacham view.

We also do not know who is depicted in the image. Possibly it's Lafayette Strobridge in the carriage, with guests, workers or neighbors on the porch; possibly it's Dr. David Merrill.

Examine the photo closely: the shadowy figure in the left front; the open window, maybe a kitchen, at the side of the inn near the wood pile; the women's dress. Notice the number of chimneys on the inn and the little church-like building on the roof peak of the harness shop. Captured in the early days of photography and preserved in the PHA collections, this rare photograph harks back to distant times and reflects the lives, customs, and costumes of once daily life in Peacham Corner.

KAREN LEWIS

LETTER FROM THE PHA PRESIDENT

This time last year we were looking forward to *Clemens Kalischer: His Peacham Photographs*, the Historical House summer exhibition for 2019. We worked with Kalischer's family to borrow Peacham photographs from his estate and installed them next to many from the PHA archives that Kalischer had left to be exhibited in the Town Hall. Seen together, the two collections comprise a detailed picture of Peacham life in the late 1950's-1960's, mostly of scenes and activities in the Corner, all in the winter.

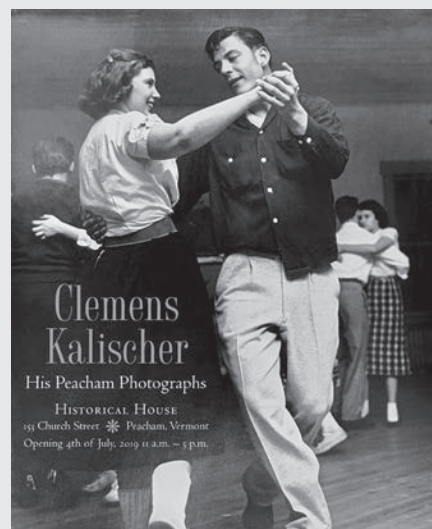
This exhibition turned out to be a complete joy. Nearly 500 visitors looked at the photographs, and many contributed to our historical record by identifying the people, locations and dates of the pictures. One group was particularly full of information: the Peacham Academy Alumnae/i Association. During their reunion weekend in July, many alums visited the exhibition. I remember holding my breath as photos were taken off the wall, passed from hand to hand, exclaimed over. The art historian in me might have been concerned about the welfare of the photographs, but in truth I was delighted to see everyone engaging with these images! We learned a great deal. To cite just one example, we satisfied much curiosity about the dancing couple pictured on our poster for the exhibition. A small group looked at it very closely, and Marjory Cassidy finally definitively identified the boy as Richard Patch, a Peacham village resident, and speculated the girl was Judi Wing, a boarder from Boston.

Many people recalled Kalischer as being a very quiet, small man who seemed to disappear when engaged in his work; villagers truly forgot he was present. In this age of constant "selfies," it was remarkable to see so many photographs of people who were not in any way posing for the photographer. The intimacy of the photographs of the Kempton family (whom Kalischer featured to represent New England in the *Time-Life* series on American regions published in 1967) is typical of his candid scenes of farm and village life. We were so happy that Jenny Kempton Harris brought her daughter Hannah to see the exhibition. Hannah took this photo of her mother in front of Kalischer's image of her as a girl in the barn feeding the calves.

We hope to install the work of another photographer this summer, Peacham resident Richard Brown. Richard's work has a large international audience, and we are very happy he has agreed to exhibit here with us. As a taste of what is to come, this fall we published a Richard Brown photo we found in our archives—his snowy, late afternoon image of Peacham taken from Charles Lindbergh's plane in 1972.

This image is on our winter greeting card, already in its second printing. The cards are available for sale at the Peacham Carriage Company, The Peacham Corner Guild (in season), and on our website (peachamhistorical.org.)

JOHANNA BRANSON



Open Sundays in July and August, 2-4 p.m.
Plus August 17 for Pinesfest and October 3 for Fall Foliage, 11-5 both days
Visit peachamhistorical.org for information



Peacham's Forgotten "Oregon" Part 2-The Heath Farm

In Part One of this series we explored the origins of Peacham School District 13, formed in 1846. It was listed as "Oregon", a word likely derived from the Algonquian words *ouragon* or *olighin*, both meaning "good and beautiful" or "beautiful river."¹ Today this forgotten and remote school district is part of New Discovery State Park in the Groton State Forest and includes Osmore Pond, Goslant (aka Spice) Pond, and Owl's Head Mountain. Access to this area today is from Groton and Marshfield, and this was also the case in the late 18th century. Because of the difficulty in traveling from the village of Peacham to this settlement, early residents aligned themselves with Groton, Cabot, and Marshfield, and their story has largely been forgotten as part of Peacham's history.

The story of the earliest settlers of Oregon, aka New Discovery, has been difficult to research due to the remote location of their settlement. These settlers were few in number, rarely counted in the US Census, and appear only sporadically in the Peacham Town Records. Many genealogical records are incorrect, incomplete, or do not list them at all. They are nevertheless an important part of Peacham's history, and their lives tell the story of perseverance in a truly rugged outpost.

There were two waves of settlers, comprised primarily of six families. Their names were Heath, Southwick, Rickard, Loveland, Blake, and Laird. Despite the lack of records, we do know that they were mainly poor Vermonters who came to New Discovery to buy land, clear the wilderness and build farms. Prior to their settlement, the area was frequented by local explorer Aaron Hosmer (aka Osmer and Hosman) who traveled and hunted with local Native American tribes near what is now known as Osmore Pond.²

The first farm listed for this region in the Peacham Town land records was that of James M. Heath. James was born in 1760 or 1761 in New Hampshire, served as a private in the Revolutionary War,



Heath Family cemetery.

and then settled in 1778 in Newbury, Vermont.³ This is also where Aaron Hosmer, a fellow NH native and former Revolutionary War soldier, also settled following the war. Hosmer's son James married a Peacham woman and would have been a close contemporary of James Heath.⁴ We know that Aaron Hosmer led hunting expeditions from Newbury to "Oregon", and it is very possible that James Heath accompanied Hosmer and his son on such an expedition. Perhaps this is why he decided to buy land adjacent to what is now Osmore Pond.

James M. Heath settled in Peacham in 1824 or 1825 and was listed in the 1825 Peacham Town Grand List on Lot 29, third division. He had 30 acres, 4 cows and 1 horse, but no house.⁵ James had a younger wife, Marcy, born circa 1775. They married in about 1795 in Newbury when he was 35, and they already had 5 or 6 children by the time they settled in Peacham. Their children ranged in age from 27 to a young toddler.⁶ Their eldest daughter, Mary, may have married Mr. Johnson Field of Peacham in 1820 when she was 22.⁷ The records are not clear; in some archives the handwriting reads as Polly Heath and in others, Mary Heath.⁸ The marriage was performed by Zenas Crossman, Justice of the Peace, formerly of Deweysburg.⁹ Mary Heath's name appeared later in many land records using just her maiden name, and no husband or children were listed. There was no recorded death or reference to her husband in town archives, census listings, or genealogical records.

There are several mysteries surrounding the Heath family. According to genealogical records, in about 1820 a son Simon was born to the Heath family at a time when Marcy Heath, Mary's mother, was 45. There was no official record of

his birth, and later genealogical records simply surmise that he was a sibling of the other Heath children.¹⁰ Given Mary Heath's possible "marriage", one might wonder if her nuptial was due to a pregnancy, and if the child was perhaps hers, then "adopted" by her parents. Simon later became a physician in Groton, and in 1852 served as a doctor in Peacham for one year.¹¹

Peacham land records indicate that the Heath family acquired multiple tracts of additional acreage. Adjacent lots were purchased, and by 1843, the eldest daughter, Mary Heath, had purchased 150 acres.¹² We do not know how she came to acquire this land as a woman living alone. Perhaps her father or brothers paid for the land; the Peacham town land records do not give us a hint. There are some indications in these land records that her property was leased to another family, perhaps as a means to provide her with an income.

James M. Heath acquired several lots. In March of 1829, the records show that he sold 100 acres of Lot 28, third division, to two of his sons, Montgomery W. Heath, born c. 1807, and James M. Heath (Jr.), born in 1810. Tragedy struck soon after.¹³ On June 7, 1831, the Peacham death records show that Montgomery Heath "Died from Wilful (sic) self murder."¹⁴ No further information was found, and one wonders what caused this unfortunate death. He was just 24 years old. The death record originally read "Died from Atrocious self murder", but it was crossed out and changed to "Wilful" (sic). A family burial ground was hastily created, and Montgomery was the first family member interred there. No record of his death was listed in newspapers, since this would have been scandalous and would have brought shame on the family.¹⁵ His half portion of Lot 28 passed back to his father, and five years later, in 1836, that portion was purchased by his surviving brother, James M. (Jr.)¹⁶

Interestingly, another child was added to the Heath family following Montgomery's suicide. In 1833, just two

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The Japanese Minister

In his chapter on the church in *Peacham: the Story of a Vermont Hill Town*, Ernest Bogart includes the following paragraph:
Yutaka Minakuchi, born in Japan . . . succeeded to the pastorate on October 29, 1929, and resigned on September 1, 1938. After his resignation he lived in Glover, Vermont, where his wife had been born and had a home, and lectured throughout the country. He was taken into custody on March 21, 1942, by FBI agents on the charge that he had received money from the Japanese consulate for distribution of pro-Japanese propaganda. After a year in a concentration camp in Maryland, he was released on parole and returned to Glover. (p. 431)

I came across this paragraph while browsing through Bogart's book to learn something about Peacham's history. The story of the Japanese minister intrigued me and I decided to try to find out more. The PHA archives have a sizeable file on Minakuchi that includes a detailed, well-researched account of his life by Joan Alexander published by the Glover Historical Society in 2003, a talk given by Minakuchi's daughter JoAnne during Peacham's bicentennial celebration, as well as letters and newspaper articles. The following is a summary of what I've learned so far.

Yutaka Minakuchi (accent on second syllable) was born in Okayama, Japan in 1875. (There is some confusion about the actual dates of his birth and arrival in the U.S.) His grandparents were early converts to Christianity. He studied at mission schools in Japan and came to the U.S. in 1897 to study theology and prepare for a life in the ministry. He attended the University of North Carolina and the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, and was ordained as a Congregational minister in 1910. He continued his studies at various universities during his life, becoming fluent in a number of languages, particularly English.

During the early decades of the 20th century he was a lecturer on the Chautauqua Circuit. The Chautauqua movement began in the late 19th century and flourished during the early 20th. At its heyday it offered educational and cultural programs throughout rural America. Minakuchi was much in demand, speaking on such subjects as "Christianity in the Light of Other Religions," "American-Japanese Relation," and "The Border Lands."

In the course of his lecturing he met his future wife, Nellie Cook, a native of Glover, Vermont, a musician and dramatist who entertained at Chautauqua programs. They married in 1921. (Minakuchi had been married previously, apparently to a Kentucky socialite, and had a son, but the marriage didn't last.) The couple built a house in Glover. Minakuchi preached at the Glover Community Church when the regular minister was away and took various teaching and ministerial jobs in the area. His daughter JoAnne was born in 1925, her sister Francena (or Tina) in 1935.

In 1929 he was appointed pastor of the Peacham Congregational Church and he and his family moved into the parsonage. JoAnne, who returned to Peacham for its bicentennial, described her father's ministerial style: "Dad would dress in his cut-away suit every Sunday morning and stand in the pulpit with pride and great fortitude. His sermons were forceful, memorable, and always only twenty minutes long. He

always said, "Whatever can't be said in twenty minutes should not be said." JoAnne notes that "he loved mixing with all of the summer people who came to the Peacham area each year. He was in his glory conversing with all the different Professors and their families."

His pleasures included working in his vegetable garden and playing tennis with the professors. He also traveled, attending summer school at Yale and visiting family in Japan. The family took in teachers as boarders during the school year and enjoyed their company. "We would often sit by the pot-bellied stove in the dining room and either the teachers would correct papers and get their lessons ready for the next day, or if they were free, we would play games and eat hot gingerbread, that my mother would make, heaped with real butter."

JoAnne recalled the Church suppers and fairs held throughout the year. "It was so much fun to mingle with all of the people (all ages) and get to taste the different foods and see the wonderful handiwork that the ladies of the community had on display. On May first, or close to this date, the village always had a children's day festival. We would pass out May Day Baskets to our friends, fixing the baskets with flowers and homemade goodies. . . . There was always a Maypole to dance around."

Despite JoAnne's happy memories, there are indications that the family's experiences in Peacham were less than idyllic. In her oral history recorded for PHA, Lorna Quimby, who was at school with JoAnne, remembers her being targeted by the school bully, who would stand around yelling, "Jap, Jap." Lorna and her sister made a point of sitting with JoAnne "and at least let [her] know that not everybody was like that."

Lorna noted that although Minakuchi was appreciated by the summer people because he was educated and played tennis with them, there was a fair amount of prejudice among the locals. One family hired a minister from away for their daughter's wedding because they were not about to let a Japanese

minister perform the ceremony. PHA's records included a May, 1936, letter from a summer resident, Arthur J. Todd, responding to a letter from Minakuchi. Todd stated that Minakuchi's letter "so distressed" him that he was "unable until the present moment to recover my composure sufficiently to commit myself to writing." Todd continues: "I have felt from the beginning that it was only a matter of time when you would almost necessarily outgrow the small world of Peacham," but had hoped "that the break would not come too soon." He adds that "our whole summer colony feel that you have added an amount of strength, humaneness, genuine culture and sincere brotherhood to our community." "Much as I love the Peacham community, its surroundings and its friendly people" he concludes, "if we are going to be crushed down by narrow fundamentalism, I shall have to seek a more welcome environment."

According to church records discovered by Joan Alexander of the Glover Historical Society, Minakuchi offered his resignation in May, 1936, but the church rejected his offer by a vote of 31 to 21. Two years later a second vote was held and this time his resignation was accepted. He resigned in September, 1938, and the family ("with some regret" according to his daughter) returned to Glover.

After leaving Peacham, Minakuchi traveled in Japan, China, and Manchuria before rejoining his family in Glover. He worked intermittently as a lecturer and part-time pastor. At some point he applied for and was granted a stipend of \$250 per month from the Japanese consulate, likely to compensate him for his inability to find work during the tense prewar years.

Throughout his career, Minakuchi spoke and wrote about US-Japanese relations. He defended Japan's incursions in China as an effort to address the instability and growing influence of communism in that country. At the same time he condemned the excesses of Japan's militaristic government and always expressed his wish for universal tolerance and peace. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941,

he was outspoken in his condemnation. An article in the *Burlington Free Press* in Jan. 1942, quotes him as saying "I felt humiliated that Japan would do such a thing." He blamed the attack on the actions of a few "young hotheads" in "the military machine" and predicted that Japan would lose the war and suffer greatly as a result.

As a Japanese national, Minakuchi was questioned by the FBI at the beginning of the war and placed under parole of the county sheriff for the duration of the war. In February, 1942, President Roosevelt issued an executive order removing people deemed a threat to the war effort in certain areas on the West Coast. In the following month he created the War Relocation Authority establishing internment camps for people of Japanese ancestry. Approximately 120,000 people, the majority American-born U.S. citizens, were interned. With the exception of a few Japanese diplomatic personnel, none of those interned was ever convicted of any crime.

In March, 1942, FBI agents came to the house in Glover and arrested Minakuchi on the charge of being an enemy agent. He was handcuffed and taken away at gunpoint. The FBI agents searched the house and confiscated a short-wave radio, a camera and film, diaries, and other documents. None of these items was found to be incriminating. The FBI investigator claimed that the stipend from the Japanese consulate was to compensate Minakuchi for disseminating pro-Japanese propaganda. Minakuchi was detained for a year, first in Newport, VT, and later at Ellis Island, NY, and



Minakuchi family from *Burlington Free Press*, Jan. 8, 1942.

**Please come to
Town Meeting on
March 3
to support PHA's
appropriation.**

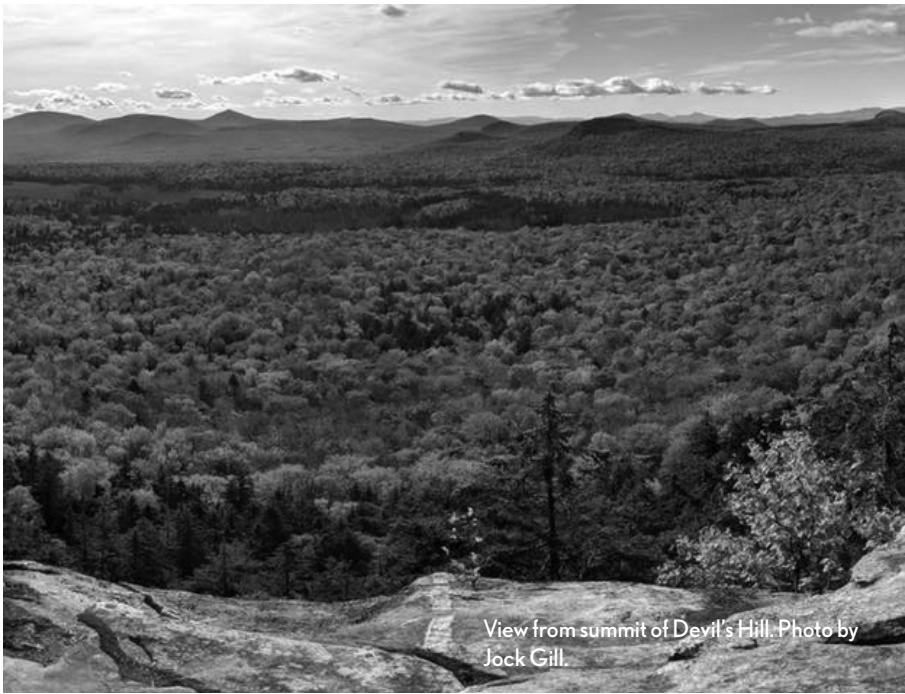
Fort Meade in Maryland, where he worked as a liaison between the detainees and the government. In his absence, the family struggled to make ends meet. Nellie, his wife, helped her brother raise chickens and did book-keeping for the town. His daughter JoAnne had a government job at her high school.

Local reaction to Minakuchi's arrest and detention was mixed. Some of his neighbors rallied to his support, but others shunned the family. Radio and newspaper reports were largely fair and balanced, condemning the "race prejudice" exhibited by many Vermont citizens. One commentator scoffed at the notion that Minakuchi used his radio for nefarious purposes: "What was there to say? How many cows were being milked in Glover?"

Minakuchi was paroled in Feb. 1943 and returned home. During his later years, he worked as a butler for several wealthy families in New York and Pennsylvania while Nellie worked as a cook. In 1955 Nellie died suddenly of a brain tumor at the age of 58. After her death, her husband returned to Vermont and for much of the time lived with his daughter JoAnne. At some point he became a US citizen, a source of great pride for the family. He died on Nov. 25, 1975, three weeks before his 100th birthday.

A year after his death, President Ford rescinded Roosevelt's executive order, stating that, "We now know what we should have known then—not only was that evacuation wrong, but Japanese-Americans were and are loyal Americans."

JANE ALPER



View from summit of Devil's Hill. Photo by Jock Gill.

How Did Devil's Hill Get Its Name?

I've often wondered how this lovely little hill, with its spectacular view of Peacham Pond and the northern Greens, got its sinister name. So far, I've uncovered some theories and one good story, but no hard facts.

Ernest Bogart offers the following explanation:

Devil Hill is so named, according to local tradition, because a man on his return home one night saw a great bird flying over it and swore it was the devil. *Peacham Story of a Vermont Hill Town* (1948), p. 38n.

The *Groton State Forest History Guide*, published by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, p. 12, repeats this explanation. I'm skeptical: although Peacham's early settlers were staunch Calvinists who likely saw the devil under every bush, it's hard to believe they mistook an eagle for the Prince of Darkness.

Esther M. Swift, in *Vermont Place-Names: Footprints of History* (1977), has a different explanation:

Devils Hill originally was named just Devil Hill, and that name makes its meaning clear—it was a "devil" of a hill for the first

settlers (and for generations of latter-day mountain climbers). (p. 139).

Pat Swartz, Fairbanks Museum archivist who directed me to Swift's book, noted that it would have been a steep climb for oxen pulling a heavy cart and too steep and rocky for settlement. But I'm not convinced by this explanation either. Swift gives no sources for it; all the hiking guides I've seen rate the climb easy and so do I.

The earliest reference to Devil's Hill I've come across is an article from the October 11, 1867 *Calendonian*. (Thanks to Lynn Bonfield who found the article and transcribed it; her transcription was reprinted in the Fall/Winter, 2006 issue of *The Peacham Patriot*.) It begins:

There is situated in the south-west part of Peacham, a very high hill which has always been known by the name of "Devil Hill." ... How the hill came by this peculiar name is uncertain; some of the older people say that in the early days of the country some of the settlers one night saw bright lights around and upon it, and thinking some evil spirit was hovering o'er it, called it the "Devil's Hill."

The author, who signs the article "HAM.," describes two unsuccessful attempts to rename the hill:

In June 1860, there was a meeting held there, Rev. David Packer delivering a discourse. ... There being quite a number of

good and religious people present, it was thought that the hill afforded too convenient accommodations and beautiful scenery to bear such a name, so Mr. Packer proposed and the rest assented, that it would be called "Mount Carmel." A few days later quite a collection of the good people of Peacham, accompanied by the Peacham Band, took another stroll up to the hill, and after having a good time generally left it bearing the name of "Eagle Mountain." But we fear this name will share the same fate as "Mount Carmel": for it has always been known by no other than Devil Hill.

Much more recently, in January, 1988, a note in *The Peacham Patriot* reported that "Margaret," a noted folk singer from Marlboro, had performed in Peacham and Charlie Brown of the Fairbanks Museum had given her a story about the origin of the name Devil's Hill as a subject for a ballad. I learned from Charlie that the story concerned an alchemist named Miers who came to Peacham in the early days and disappeared under mysterious circumstances. He thought the article dated from the late 19th century, possibly from a Midwestern newspaper, and suggested that it might be found in the Fairbanks Museum archives. Museum archivist Pat Swartz and history curator Peggy Pearl were unable to track it down.

Fortunately, the typewritten text of *The Ballad of Devil's Hill* is preserved in the PHA archives. A note at the bottom states that it was "created by Margaret MacArthur with the 5th and 6th Grade students of Peacham." Here it is.

The Ballad of Devil's Hill

*All ye who live in Peacham
I'll have you listen well
Concerning the story
That all the old folks tell
Of the flash of lightning
And of the thunder's roar
When yonder green mountain
Burned into Devil's Hill.*

*Up from the Connecticut
The early settlers came
From Newbury to Peacham
They followed the spotted line
Along an early Indian trail
To make their "pitch" they strode.
In later days the path they trod
Became Bayley-Hazen Road.*

*Up the Bayley-Hazen
As the old century turned
Wandered a wild and haggard man.
All company he spurned.
Simeon Walker gave him leave
To build upon his land
A shop, where he could live, his work
No one could understand.*

*From whence he came, nobody knows
Nor what he does at night,
For five years, from his chimney
Glowed a mysterious light.
Are you an inventor? Counterfeiter?
Alchemist? Silver into gold?
Old Miers, are you a wizard?
Or have you sold your soul?*

*There were eight stills in Peacham
One near Walker's Farm.
From seventy pounds potatoes
Comes 5 gallons potato rum.
At David Elkins' Tavern
A-drinking one night in the fall,
Jonathan Elkins, Simeon Walker,
Joel Blanchard, Captain Bailey and all.*

*A clap of violent thunder
And then a blaze of light.
Stupefied by the shock or the whiskey
These men saw a fearsome sight.
.A strange figure holding a fiery brand
Went flying through the air
To sink in the bog with a terrible hiss
Then nothing more was there.*

*And nothing but ashes could ever be found
Where old Miers and his cabin had been,
Naught but a pile of mossy stones
In the forest can be seen.
An eminence above the bog that night
Was scarred by heat and by flame.
Since that time so long ago,
Devil's Hill has been its name.*

JANE ALPER

NOTE

Margaret MacArthur (1926–2006) was a well-known musician and song writer who spent most of her life in Vermont. She played the lap dulcimer and harp zither and produced a number of recordings of folk songs and ballads. *The Ballad of Devil's Hill* appears on her 1989 album *Vermont Ballads and Broad-sides*.

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years later, another son was listed in the records. He was recorded as a child of James Sr. and Marcy, and was again named Montgomery, in memory of their deceased son.¹⁷ Marcy would have been 58 and James Sr. would have been 73, so it is unlikely that he was born to them. Perhaps they adopted the boy or were given the child by someone else. One has to wonder if this was to ease the sorrow of their older son's death. The records remain a mystery with no further information, and no exact date of birth has shown up. However, this second Montgomery was listed in multiple archives as their youngest son.

In November of 1838, when the second Montgomery Heath boy was just 5 years old, James Heath (Sr.) died.¹⁸ Soon after, in May of 1841, Marcy also passed.¹⁹ There are some indications that young Montgomery was taken in by either Mary or her brother James (Jr.) Both parents were buried next to their son Montgomery in the small Heath family cemetery adjacent to the 1820s homestead house.

In 1846, the Oregon school district was established.²⁰ James M. Heath (Jr.) was made payee for the school district from 1846 to 1848. By this time there were several other families living in the district, mostly on lots leased or sold off by the Heath family. Oregon now had an officially designated and town-funded school with a total of 7 or 8 students.²¹ Young Montgomery Heath would have been one of those first students. The surviving Heath family members gradually sold off their lots and moved away from Oregon. Some came to reside closer to Peacham village and others left the town for good. Mary Heath remained in Peacham where she died in 1868. Moody Heath, a brother, also stayed in Peacham where he married, was listed as a house painter, and later died in 1872. Orrin Heath remained in Newbury until his death in 1888. James M. Heath (Jr.) eventually went to Groton and died there in 1891. Simon Heath went to Groton, with an unknown date of death, and the youngest, the second Montgomery Heath, married and lived in both Marshfield and Peacham.²²

The original Heath homestead is gone, but the farm apple trees and cellar hole still remain, not far from the Heath family cemetery. If you visit New Discovery State Park, take the trail that runs along Osmore Pond and you will come to the little burial ground and cellar hole. It is a poignant reminder of the first family that settled in Oregon.

In the next installment of this series, we will take a look at the other five families that homesteaded in Oregon. Despite lives of hardship, these family histories tell an interesting tale with some curious twists of fate.

SUSAN CHANDLER

- 1 Love, Thomas and Goddard Ives. *Oregon, the Beautiful*, pub. By *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol.195, No.2.
- 2 Hollowell, Laura and Synderman. *Groton State Forest History Guide*. Published by Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Undated.
- 3 Fisher, *Major General Carleton E. and Fisher, Sue G. Soldiers, Sailors and Patriots of the Revolutionary War*, Vermont. Picton Press, Maine, 1992.
- 4 Early Settlers of Groton, *Groton Historical Society Newsletter*, Winter, 2008
- 5 According to Groton Historical Society records, early log cabins were not taxable and so were not listed on a town's grand list.
- 6 Genealogy of James M. Heath family, Rootsweb.com.(A division of Ancestry.com) 7Ibid.
- 8 *Danville North Star*, 1820 Marriages online NEK Genweb.com
- 9 Genealogy of James M. Heath family, Roots web.com. (A division of Ancestry.com)
- 10 Genealogy of James M. Heath family, Rootsweb.com. (A division of Ancestry.com) and NEK Genweb online. Listed in the Peacham vital statistics with no further information.
- 11 Peacham and Groton Census Data, also Bogart, Ernest L. *Peacham, History of a Vermont Hill Town*, 1948.
- 12 Peacham Town Records, Grand Lists and Deeds from 1825-1850.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Peacham Vital Statistics, Town Clerks Office, Deaths, Book 98-38, Record 526, Folder 40..
- 15 No record appears in the *Danville North Star*, the *St. Johnsbury Farmers Herald* or the *Montpelier Watchman and State Journal*.
- 16 Peacham Town Land Records, Deeds and Mortgages, 1825-1850.

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 Lorna Quimby, *Curator Emeritus*
 Stan Fickes, *Archives and Research Center Manager*

The Peacham Patriot

- Editor: Jane Alper
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 Design: Joanna Bodenweber

- 17 Genealogy of James M. Heath family, Roots web.com. (A division of Ancestry.com). Additional listing found in the 1840 US Census Records for Peacham, also NEK Genweb online.
- 18 Date taken from the actual grave stone of James M. Heath in the Heath Cemetery, New Discovery State Park in Peacham. The date is erroneously listed as the same date of death for Marcy Heath on many genealogical websites.
- 19 Genealogy of James M. Heath family, Roots web.com. (A division of Ancestry.com). Confirmed by date on actual grave stone.
- 20 Peacham District School Records, Volumes C and D, 1811 to 1871. Archives of the Peacham Historical Association.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Information regarding the movement of the Heath family was taken from US Census Records for Peacham, Groton and Marshfield. Additional information was found on the genealogy page for James M. Heath family, Roots web.com. (A division of Ancestry.com), and in People of Peacham, Watts and Choate, 1965.



Photo by Jock Gill.

On September 20 a group of fourth, fifth and sixth graders from the Peacham School visited the Kalischer exhibit at the Historical House and the Roller Barn. PHA board members Susan Chandler and Jane Alper gave the tour.

KEEP UP WITH PHA!
peachamhistorical.org