

THE PEACHAM PATRIOT

PEACHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



The Management: Zoltan and Hertha.

The History of Twin Mount Farm

There once was a horseback riding school in Peacham. This is how it began.

In the summer of 1968, my husband Zoltan and I bought what was known as the Ben Field Farm in Peacham's South Part. Zoltan had gained his horse-riding experience in the Hungarian Cavalry and dreamed of opening an English riding school: "English" as opposed to "Western," the style preferred in the American West that used a different saddle.

We were immigrants. I came to New York through a job transfer by Lufthansa, the German airline. I had no prior experience with horses but was willing to enter this adventure.

We saved as much money as we could, and with a small mortgage from the Wells River Savings Bank we were able to buy the 30-acre farm. The barn had been twisted during the hurricane of 1938 and the foundation needed immediate attention. Jim Quimby and his son Gerry did a great job of repairing it. It was important for us to have a barn in good condition to store hay and house the (future) horses. Zoltan sometimes wondered where the horse was that would become our first, as he wanted to buy them fully grown and retrain them to his expectations.

After three years of saving and scrimping, Zoltan quit his job in New York—he had been a butler and cook for a wealthy banker—and moved to Peacham full time in 1971. He began rebuilding the house while I kept my job at Lufthansa.

We did find our first horse, Sparky, a Morgan gelding owned by Nancy Murray; she needed to sell him to get money for college. Sparky had been sired by a

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PHA's appropriation,
Art. 17 on the
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at March 2
Town Meeting.**

stallion owned by Ralph Page right here in Peacham. Of course, we also needed a saddle, bridle, saddle pad, and halter. This process was repeated four more times until we had five horses and their tack.

The name we chose for the farm was Twin Mount Farm. Its logo was two identical crossed horses' heads, an image often seen at the gables of farmhouses in Northern German, supposedly to ward off evil spirits.

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Four happy girls on a pony.

LETTER FROM THE PHA PRESIDENT

First, let me thank Johanna Branson, our past President, for her leadership and vision over the past 6 years. I hope I will be as successful. I have the greatest admiration for the work that was and is being done by our Board and other volunteers who make the Historical Association such an important organization.

As I moved into the role of PHA President, someone remarked that a good thing about Covid-19 was that it slowed down our activities and projects, making this a good time for the transition. In November, others said PHA is moving into our slow period.

The slow season never came! All winter PHA Board members and volunteers have been collating, researching, documenting, and planning this year's events and laying the groundwork for future years. We are so excited that the PHA is entering its 100th year. Our celebration will include a new book featuring 100 of the most interesting items in our collection. I greatly appreciate the time and effort spent on this effort by Johanna Branson, Jutta Scott, Beatrice Ring, Susan Chandler, and others.

This summer's exhibit will celebrate the many contributions that the Peacham Academy (CCGS) has made to the town and country over its more than 270 years. We are pleased to help the alumni celebrate their final meeting and welcome the class of 1971 for their 50th reunion. Many thanks to Frank Miller and Gary Schoolcraft for their hard work on this effort

Marilyn Magnus has been recording oral histories and Covid-19 interviews through the "slow" season and, with Rene Joly's help,

copying many interviews onto digital media. Be sure to check out the new page on our web site: Oral Histories. We are very pleased to announce Terry Miller has completed our Peacham Landings project, done in cooperation with the Peacham Library. You will see a gallery of familiar faces; these are people interviewed for that project. You can now search these oral histories by topic; the program will take you straight to the part in each oral history where the interviewees talk about the topic. We hope to convert many more of the oral histories done in the past by Marilyn and others.

Susan Chandler, our ARC Manager, has researched and located several artifacts that will assist the Peacham church as it celebrates multiple anniversaries this year (the 227th anniversary of the congregation, the 215th anniversary of the present building, the 150th anniversary of the organ). Special thanks to volunteer Diane Travis, who has been helping Susan in the ARC.

Thank you to Jutta and Johanna, who have been instrumental in researching potential grants, securing the State Fire Marshall approvals, and documenting our plans to make the Historical House ADA accessible to all visitors.

PHA is lucky to have such talented Board members. Jane Alper, has been editing and contributing to *The Patriot* for the past seven years. Beatrice Ring, our treasurer, has been preparing PHA's budgets, managing its finances, coordinating our Annual Appeal, and sharing her insights about Peacham. Karen Lewis has been organizing and curating PHA's archives and sharing knowledge about acquisitions since 1980. Dart Thalman has been organizing our annual Ghost Walks for many years. Thank you and sorry if I missed somebody.

There are several others who need thanks for donating their talents, time and many items to our collection. Their generosity and thoughtfulness make our job of collecting, preserving, and sharing Peacham's history easier.

We are excited about the coming season and hope we will see all our friends during this summer's events in whatever form we may be allowed to get together. Stay Healthy, Stay Safe.

STEVE GALINAT, *PHA President*



Peacham Landscape by Julian Walbridge Rix

This article and the article on CarpetBags on page 6 are excerpted from the forthcoming book highlighting 100 notable items from PHLA's collections.

We are preparing a book to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Peacham Historical Association. Our concept is to feature the 100 most compelling things we have in our collections. As we look carefully through the Archives and Research Center, however, this list of 100 has become a moving target. We are discovering and re-discovering more and more marvelous things. One of the most noteworthy so far is an oil painting, just 14" high by 20" wide, signed by Julian Rix, and donated by the Leavitt family.

Rix was a prominent 19th century artist especially noted for his depiction of California landscapes. He was born in Peacham on December 30, 1850 to Alfred and Chastina Walbridge Rix. We have an unusually detailed, vivid account of his early childhood thanks to the journal his mother and father kept jointly, recounting their courtship and marriage. A richly annotated version of the journal has been published by Lynn Bonfield.

Julian's father was one of 200 men from Peacham who went west to try their luck in the California gold mines. Alfred left in the fall of 1851; Chastina and Julian joined him in February, 1852. By that time, Alfred had given up on the goldmines and established himself as a teacher, and then later, a successful lawyer and judge.

After Chastina's early death in 1857, 6-year-old Julian traveled with his uncle Dustan Walbridge back to Peacham and grew up on the family farm. He attended his district school and then the Peacham Academy. When he was 18, he rejoined his father and stepmother in San Francisco. He tried working in his father's law office, but this being unsuccessful, his father apprenticed him to a sign and decorative painting business. Julian soon began creating original



Photo by Joet Gill

works, starting with etchings, then expanding to watercolor, oil, and pastels. By the mid 1870's, he was an active member of the San Francisco art scene, joining The Bohemian Club at age 26. He became a well-recognized artist, exhibiting in San Francisco and making illustrations for national magazines, including *Harper's*.

Struggling to support himself after the financial slump of 1880, he was fortunate to find a patron, William T. Ryle of Paterson, New Jersey. Julian became close to Ryle's family and established a studio on their estate. As he became more and more successful, he opened a second studio in New York City. He continued to travel to California, and scenes of that country became his most famous and well-regarded works. Julian Rix died after emergency kidney surgery at the age of 53.

When the Leavitt family donated this painting to Lorna Quimby for the PHA collections, they identified the subject as a landscape in Peacham, perhaps near the family farm on East Hill. It is undated, and we are not certain when or how often Rix visited Peacham as an adult. The winter scene depicts birch trees in snowy fields being reclaimed by new growth. A pastel sky—either early morning or late afternoon—is reflected on a frozen pool in the foreground. There are dabs of

white that might depict buildings in the distance. It is tempting to think this is an evening scene looking west from East Hill towards the village. Before the trees grew, people could stand on this hill and see Peacham Corner. The Rix/Walbridge family stood there to watch the coffin of Dustin Walbridge carried down the road from the Corner and then up the long hill to his family farm. The uncle who had escorted the 6-year-old Julian Rix home to Peacham died 7 years later from injuries sustained fighting in the Civil War.

JOHANNA BRANSON

Sources

New England to Gold Rush California: The Journal of Alfred and Chastina W. Rix, 1849-1854. Edited and with a commentary by Lynn A. Bonfield. Norman, Oklahoma: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 2011.

The Society of California Pioneers: Julian Walbridge Rix. <https://www.californiapioneers.org/collections/art/artists/julian-walbridge-rix/>

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Riding in formations on the back meadow.

Twin Mount Farm continued from page 1

Hungarian friends of ours in Washington, D.C. had a business engagement in Italy and needed a place to send their four children, aged 6 to 13. I used my vacation from Lufthansa to take care of them, and they loved it. Not only did they come back the following year, but they told other families about it—and the riding camp was born. Local children started coming for hourly riding lessons, including families staying at the campground in Groton State Forest who heard about us from Warren Farrington, the warden there. Some came back the following year and enjoyed the horses and Zoltan's teaching. Some signed up their children for next year's camp. It was all through word of mouth.

After four years of commuting every weekend from Long Island to Peacham (I-91 ended in White River Junction back then) in my little VW Beetle, I was exhausted and quit my Lufthansa job in 1975.

The beginning was hard at times. We needed more horses, plus tack and more horse food. The farrier had to come every six weeks to trim their hooves. But we had a goal and we persevered. In the end we had 12 horses, and 12 children could stay with us at a time. Most summers we had three two-week sessions for children in different age groups.

There was a daily routine. We woke the children at 7. They had to make their beds as well as they could and come downstairs to bring in their horses from the field at 7:30. Each child had an assigned horse. They fed their horses and started grooming them. At 8 we had breakfast: cornflakes, milk, orange juice, and toast—lots of toast. Some groups decided to have a toast-eating contest, and I tried to keep up with my four-slice toaster.

After breakfast, tooth-brushing, and a bathroom visit, the children saddled their horses. Zoltan always had wonderful, reliable local kids helping in the barn to assist the younger children.

Lessons took place in the riding ring. The children learned to control their horse, first in slower gaits—walk, sitting trot, and trot, and later also canter. He made it fun by having them balance a raw egg on a spoon in all the gaits or having them grab a towel that was hanging over the fence and toss it into the middle. Sometimes they rode in formation, with a polka or march sounding from a boombox.

On the last evening of their stay, the children did bareback riding, without a saddle, singing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm,” and other favorites.

All the children became good riders. Many came back summer after summer, which was wonderful for us because we saw them grow up.

With the older ones, Zoltan led trail rides on our dirt roads. We only used the more trail-safe horses. The children rode in two groups, switching riders halfway. The other group rode with me in the van.

After riding all morning, the horses were led back to pasture and the children had lunch, always a warm lunch because they were hungry after so much activity, with no time to munch in between.

In the afternoon. Zoltan had riding students from nearby who had been coming regularly since May and were disappointed that “their” horses were now being handled and ridden by other children.

While Zoltan and the horses worked in the hot and dusty ring, I took the camp children to Harvey's Lake. First, we had to stop at the post office, very important! There were all these anxious faces: “Did I get a letter?” Next stop was the South Peacham Store with shelves and shelves of candy which they bought with their own money. I made sure everybody took only one candy bar. Now we were ready for the lake. The children swam, rested, had their sugar ration for the day and were content.

One by one, the younger children would come out of the water, and we played “I Doubt It” on my large towel. More and more joined us, and the circle grew larger and larger.



Limbo game.



Smiling birthday girl.

After supper there were more activities. On a nice summer evening, we might have sack races with used grain bags or limbo to the accompaniment of Bob Marley, with the horses looking on across the fence.

On a clear evening I might take the children to Devil's Hill to watch the sunset. After taking care of the dishes, Zoltan drove to the parking lot and waited for us to come back down. The first time we did this, the girls were frightened by the strange man in the dark, but when he started speaking to them with his Hungarian accent, they were relieved: "It's Zoltan!" and then they all wanted to ride with him in his car.

What if it rained? We might drive to the Fairbanks Museum one afternoon or, if the rain persisted, we might have a horse shampooing contest. The horses were happy to stay in the stable munching their hay while the children lathered them with horse shampoo, a sponge, and lots and lots of warm water. In the end, I was the judge of whose horse was the cleanest; the prize was usually a candy bar.

There were always card games like Uno around. I told them about games we used to play when I grew up, like "Cities, Countries, Rivers," where you take a letter of the alphabet and write down all the places in a category you can think of beginning with that letter. These games

were new to the children and they were quite intrigued.

"The Chocolate Game" was a favorite. We wrapped a large Hershey bar, still in its original wrapper, first in a paper towel and then in layers and layers of newspaper. We had a wool hat, scarf, and mittens, plus a spoon and knife. The children took turns rolling a die (one of a pair of dice). When someone rolled a six, she put on the hat, scarf, and mittens and started to unwrap the bar using the spoon and knife. In the meantime, the dice kept going around. Someone else would yell "six!" take the hat, scarf, and mittens and continue unwrapping. The excitement grew with each "six!" In the end, the chocolate was free, cut into neat squares, and enjoyed.

After this excitement it was hard to get them to go to bed at 9. They had to take a shower; many insisted on washing and blow-drying their hair, and as our hot water tank would run low after a while, the girls worked out among themselves who would be first, second, etc. in the shower. Zoltan quietly retired and I coaxed the girls to go to bed. We aimed for 9:30-10, but sometimes we could still hear boom-boom-boom and hee-hee-hee during a pillow fight at 11. That's when my patience usually ran out and I had to tell the girls in that room that they would not be riding the next morning. And they didn't. With tears and apologies, they cleaned the stables

the next day while the others rode. In the afternoon, all was forgotten, and they rode again like everyone else, and the evenings were quieter for a while.

They were all great children with lots of spirit and humor, and it was wonderful for us to watch them grow and mature.

From the registration forms we could see if someone had a birthday while at the camp. That morning, while they were feeding the horses, I quickly picked a few wildflowers to put at their place at the table. After supper we had a chocolate cream torte for dessert, adorned with candles, and everyone sang "Happy Birthday."

How did we manage to get all that food prepared? We started cooking ahead in January. We had two upright freezers, and the shelves filled up as we cooked. Zoltan was the expert chef, and I was in charge of all the baking. We had a weekly menu for lunch and dinner that repeated itself, which meant that during the two-week session every meal would be served twice. The children didn't mind; they liked the predictability, and would comment, "Thursday is my favorite day." Some children had diet requirements for religious reasons, which we respected of course by serving them something else. Some were just plain picky eaters, but they usually

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The chocolate game.



Carpet Bags in the PHA Collections

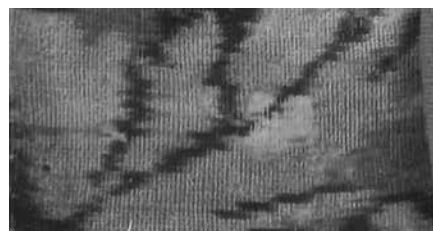
The PHA has two carpet bags dating from the Civil War era.

Carpet bags first came into use in the 1840s when railroads greatly expanded across the American continent. As travel increased, a widespread demand developed for inexpensive luggage that could be carried by ordinary people. This demand led to the creation of carpet bags, originally made by local saddle makers, using carpet scraps that were not worn out. Carpet bags sold in dry goods stores for \$1 to \$2 each and were made in many shapes and sizes.

During the Civil War, small carpet bags were used by soldiers to carry personal items, documents, letters and sometimes provisions. Soldiers brought the bags with them when they first enlisted, or sometimes brought one back to the field after they had been away on furlough. Most of these carpet bags were small, and some were used as saddlebags while on horseback. The smaller bag was considered ideal to carry a shirt, a change of underwear, a pair of socks, and perhaps a few personal hygiene items. Carpet bags were especially popular among officers, who were not issued a haversack or backpack.

Some carpet bags were well constructed, lined and even fitted with a small brass face plate lock. Other bags that originated in poor, rural areas were quite primitive. The materials also varied, with some made from fine English carpet and others from rough and somewhat worn carpet remnants.

During the post-Reconstruction Period (1865–1870), people from all walks of life in the Northern States moved to the South in search of inexpensive land and to take advantage of the economic and political climate. The most infamous were corrupt profiteers and politicians who sought elective office despite having no local connections. These Northerners came to be known as “carpet baggers,” a derogatory term based on the type of luggage that they carried.

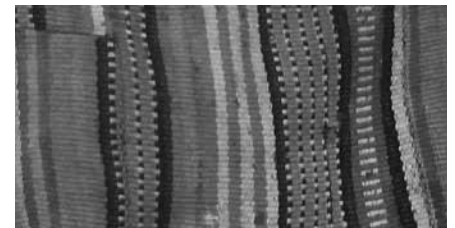


No. 142 a Luther Fletcher Parker Saddlebag

According to PHA records, this bag was carried by Dr. Luther Fletcher Parker as a saddlebag during the Civil War. Dr. Parker first served on the United States Sanitary Commission, which coordinated efforts of women to contribute to the Union Army efforts. In 1864, Dr.

Parker was sent to the Union front lines to deliver money collected from Peacham residents. He arrived shortly after the Battle of the Wilderness and stayed to treat the wounded soldiers.

Dr. Parker’s bag is an example of a rough and primitive carpet bag. It was coarsely stitched together using scraps of a machine-made woolen Brussels carpet with a dark floral pattern. The wool was tufted on a linen warp. The bag is missing its single button closure, but the loop remains. The bag has a small top flap, and features bottom and side gussets with no interior reinforcement. The bag is edged with an inexpensive cotton twill tape and is unlined and heavily worn. The handle was constructed using carpet scraps stitched around a heavy cord. This bag appears to have been hastily put together. The interior of the bag shows substantial staining from a dark maroon liquid, perhaps a blood stain or from the bag’s use as a makeshift medical supply bag. Given Dr. Parker’s professional stature, it is likely that this rudimentary carpet bag was acquired while on the battlefield.



No. 142 b Abbott-Blanchard Carpet Bag

This brown-and-red-striped carpet bag is listed in the PHA records as having been donated by Lewis Everett Abbott in 1959. His wife was Susie Alice Blanchard, and the record simply states that the bag was attributed to the Abbott-Blanchard family. There were Civil War soldiers on both sides of the family, so we don’t know for sure who carried this bag.

The Abbott-Blanchard carpet bag was finely crafted and is quite unusual. This carpet bag was not stitched from a manufactured carpet, but rather a hand-woven rug. The unique banded pattern and distinctive red, brown and black colors are indicative of traditional Navajo saddle blankets/rugs in use during the 19th century. Prior to and

during the Civil War, U.S. Army troops were sent west to “Indian Territories,” where they forcibly removed Native Americans from their land. Navajo rugs and blankets came into military hands at this time.

The Abbott-Blanchard carpet bag was lined with calico-like brown striped chintz cotton, and was carefully designed to have expanding side and bottom gussets. It was secured with a top flap, and had three buttons for closure. The bag’s top flap and bottom contain thinly-shaped wooden panels for reinforcement, and the handle was carefully constructed and reinforced with interior caning (rattan), heavily wrapped with brown twill and covered with hand-stitched carpet strips.

Of special note are the three buttons that secure the bag. These buttons were signed Ives Kendrick & Co. Superfine. Ives Kendrick & Company, a mercantile firm, sold premium clothing and buttons during the 19th century. The buttons on this carpet bag were made in the 1830s, and were gold gilt, covered in heavy gold plating. They were likely re-used after a fine dress was no longer fashionable.

These two bags represent examples, respectively, of the most primitive and the most highly crafted carpet bags in use during the Civil War.

SUSAN CHANDLER

Sources

1. *A Vermont Hill Town in the Civil War*, by Jutta R. Scott and Michele Arnosky Sherburne. Peacham, VT: Peacham Historical Assoc., 2018.
2. *Civil War Soldier’s Encyclopedia*, by Francis Lord. Edison, New Jersey: Blue and Grey Press, 1995.
3. *The Button Sampler*, by Lillian Smith Albert and Jane Ford Adams. New York: Gramercy Publishing Company, 1961.
4. Texas State Historical Association Online Blog “Carpetbaggers” by Carl H. Moneyhon, undated.

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forgot some of that when they saw the other children eating; besides, they were hungry after a day filled with activities.

Did some of the children get sick? Yes, they did. One summer a child arrived with a stomach flu that quickly went around. We had lots of ginger ale and Premium saltines on hand, and after a few days we were back to normal. No one felt that they had missed any of their camp experience.

The only sickness we could not do anything about was homesickness. It was so sad to watch; we tried, and the other children tried to cheer them up, to no avail. Perhaps during the riding lessons they would be distracted for a while, but then the misery returned. They called home, crying. Some mothers came the next day to pick up their child. Others agreed to give theirs a week, and many times that worked; things looked brighter during the second week.

We had great respect for those children who fought against it and succeeded.

We ran the camp for 25 years. In the end, reservations were rolling in by themselves, all through word of mouth. Younger siblings could hardly wait for it to be their turn. We were sorry to disappoint them, but we had to end it, mainly due to Zoltan’s age. He was still galloping with the children at 75! I don’t know how he did it. Ending camp and riding school also meant ending 25 years of our way of life, and that took a while to get used to. Many of the former camp children still keep in touch. It’s wonderful to hear from them through Facebook or Christmas cards; they have children of their own now.

We found homes for the horses, sold the farm, and built a small house nearby. Ron and Terry Miller are living at the farm now and run it as a successful alpaca farm called Snowshoe Farm.

HERTHA FORRAI



Zoltan leading a trail ride.

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