

Richard Brown Photographs Featured in Summer Exhibit

The photography of Peacham's own Richard W. Brown will be featured in PHA's annual exhibit at the Peacham Historical House. The images in the exhibit are among those featured in Brown's latest book, *The Last of the Hill Farms*, designed by his wife, Susan McClellan, and published in 2018 by David Godine.

The photographs show a vanishing way of life on the small family farms that were still prevalent when Brown moved to Peacham in 1971. As Brown began to photograph the land and its people, he "sensed that Vermont, especially my hardscrabble neighborhood, wasn't quite sure about modernity";

Here, the twentieth century was stretched more thinly over its predecessor than elsewhere and, with curiosity and persistence, it was possible to catch glimpses of the nineteenth century lurking just beneath the surface.

The Northeast Kingdom was still a land of small hill farms and vast tracts of timber. It was a world of Jersey cows and Belgian work horses, wood-burning Glenwoods, and dirt-floored basements full of canned applesauce, mustard pickles, and stewed tomatoes glinting in rows on sagging wooden shelves. Autumn mornings, when the sharp fragrance of wood smoke and rotted manure laced the air, when the frost was thick on the land, and the maples began to blaze, I thought I'd died and gone to photographer's heaven.

To capture the detailed images he wanted, Brown used an 8 x 10 view camera. He set out "at first light, the VW loaded with camera, tripod, untrustworthy light meter, and a dozen sheet film holders":

No map. No plan. The idea was to get lost—to get lost and maybe wind up somewhere before 1900—or at least where it still looked that way. I might head for North Danville and eventually come out in Greensborough Bend without ever seeing a paved road or even a road with a sign. It didn't matter.

I knew what I was searching for: moments. Those unique moments that look backward not forward. For the briefest interval, a window is opened and the spirit of Vermont's past—rock-strewn hills cleared and farmed, hard lives lived and lost, struggle and endurance, a harsh land made starkly beautiful by nature and by man—is made palpable. In a sixtieth of a second, the blink of an eye, the click of a shutter, the past and the present collide, and the image that glows on the ground glass is captured forever in silver.

Brown spent a lot of time waiting for the unique moments he hoped to capture. As he put it,

Photographers spend a lifetime of waiting and looking and searching, but the moments that matter add up to less than an hour. The moment, for instance, when my 8 x 10 was set up to capture storm clouds over Barnet Center and Walter Nutter miraculously appeared stage left, driving his scattered herd of Jerseys back towards the barn for their evening milking. The moment in Kirby, at the Learmonth farm, with its Burchfield windows that look at

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The PHA Annual Meeting will be held

Wednesday, August 3 at 6:30
in the Historical House,
153 Church Street, Peacham.

A brief business meeting
will be followed by

Designer and Photographer:

Making Books Together,
a presentation by Richard Brown
and Susan McClellan.

Following the program, there will
be a drawing for historical pie.

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

One look at Lorna's Garden and the freshly mown lawn is proof we are beyond the winter doldrums!

As a flatlander transplant, I am particularly looking forward to this year's Historical House exhibit featuring photographs, from Richard W. Brown's *The Last of the Hill Farms*, that evoke memories of Northeast Kingdom farms and the people that worked them. In 1974, around the time Brown moved to Peacham, there were about 5000 Vermont dairy farms. Richard's photos capture this period. Most of these photos were produced using an 8 x 10 view camera, similar to the type used by Mathew Brady in the mid 1800's. The image appears on ground glass and one must focus while viewing the image upside down and backwards. An amazing feat, for sure! The world portrayed in Brown's photographs is largely gone. Today, the USDA reports only 562 dairy farms in Vermont. Some have diversified or moved on to other types of farming. Many have simply disappeared.

Richard and his wife, Susan McClellan, will speak following the business portion of PHA's annual meeting (August 3, 6:30 p.m. in the Historical House, 153 Church Street).

On August 13, PHA will host PAMfest musicians (see story) at the Historical House site. Please stop by, listen, and tour the Historical House if you haven't, at that point, already seen the exhibit. And please check the PHA website for additional activities this summer.

I have learned a great deal this year from assisting with research for the second edition of *Historic Homes of Peacham*, which will include some homes omitted from the first edition and additional facts about some new facts about homes in the first edition. This research was my first real opportunity to look at 200 years of Town records, grantees, grantors, town meetings, etc. The more I read, the more amazing it was to see stories come to life. It seems the early settlers of Peacham were plenty busy buying, selling, and transferring all sorts of property, water rights and Church pews. Thanks to Jutta, Beatrice, and Johanna for getting it all straight! I greatly appreciate the work the committee does putting together our publications.

We have received several additions to our collections that Susan, Frank, and Karen have researched and accessioned with proper descriptions. PHA has also received many genealogical inquiries, including an Oregon family looking for their Peacham roots.

Hoping to see you soon!

STEVE GALINAT, *PHA President*

(*Hill Farms* continued from page 1)

you, when the housekeeper came to the fence, pressed her bare arms against the barbed wire, and asked if I'd like to have some supper. Or the cryptic moment when the clock chimed in Theron Boyd's lantern-like Federal homestead and he asked, "It's six o'clock. I wonder if it's your time or mine?" Moments that reveal the nature of what has come before.

Brown's patience paid off. Tom Slayton, former editor of *Vermont Life*, has urged that "every one of these remarkable photographs begs for close and careful looking."

The exhibit opened on July 4, and it will be open thereafter every Sunday from 1-4 pm through September 4. The exhibit will also be open on Saturday, August 13 (11 a.m.-5 p.m.), for the Peacham Acoustic Music Festival, and on Thursday, September 29 (11 a.m.-5 p.m.) for Fall Foliage Day.

JOHANNA BRANSON



Parlor Stove, Walden, 1974 (detail)



Barns

Barns are an enduring legacy of Peacham's hill farms and are a vital feature of its rural landscape. Although many old barns have disappeared, fortunately some still stand today because the early settlers built their barns to withstand weather and time. There are many barn types found in Peacham ranging from the simple one-story Hobart English barn in Peacham Corner to complex New England connecting barns.

The oldest barn in Peacham is an English barn, built around 1799 for Peacham's first minister, the Rev. Leonard Worcester. Hay was stored in the large right bay; animals were housed on the left. Changes in agriculture and the transition to dairy farming impacted the construction of barns. By 1830, New England-type barns with a full basement for manure storage became the most popular type. There are still several large New England-type barns in Peacham. The Vermont State-funded Barn Preservation Grant program has provided funds for the restoration of some of Peacham's large New England-type barns as well as smaller barns. Barns continue to play a crucial role in defining Peacham's rural landscape.

▲ Hooker Barn, ca. 1870s

The barn belonged to Orman Parker Hooker (1818-1885). The photograph shows the New England-type barn after it was enlarged to house Hooker's growing number of dairy cows. By 1875, Hooker had increased his herd to 17 cows. The ability to enlarge the size of New England-type barns was one of their advantages.

▼ Mark Wheeler Barn

Mark Wheeler, a survivor of Andersonville Prison during the Civil War bought the barn in 1879 and farmed the land for many years. The barn was originally built in 1858 and today still remains on the farmstead.

The builders of this typical New England-type barn took advantage of the hillside to establish a basement under the stable. The track carried hay from outside the barn to the upper level. There are large wheels that carry the barn door on its track.



Peacham Farm Life in the 1950s: An Interview with Donald Moore

On June 22, 2022, Marilyn Magnus interviewed Donald Moore, a third-generation Peacham farmer. In 1921, at age eighteen, Moore's father took over the East Peacham farm that Moore's grandfather started after working as a farmhand for the Bickford family on Penny Street. Moore grew up in East Peacham, where he continues to run the family farm.

Moore started doing chores when he was seven or eight years old:

I remember every morning, he [Moore's father] would get us up—or my mother would actually get us up because he'd, he'd be over here at 5:30 in the morning. We used to live across the field. My grandmother lived in this house. And we'd get up every morning, I would, and I'd come over, and I remember I worked downstairs first. These are school days, too, and I'd water the horses, two horses, put them back in the stall. And then we had a bunch of heifers downstairs, probably six, six or eight heifers, and I'd clean them out and bed them down. Then I'd go up upstairs and feed the calves, the day-old calves, or week-old calves. And then I'd go back home about 7:30, I guess, and get ready and go to school. Probably didn't take a bath before I went to school. So, I smelled a little barny. . . . But I wasn't the only kid that did.

In addition to the daily work, every season brought special jobs. Early spring brought sugaring, each stage involving back-breaking labor. First came "road breaking":

Father, . . . , he'd take just the horses in a sled, the front part of the sled that pulled the tank, and make tracks up through the woods where the horses could. . . . go a little ways. He'd unhook one horse and lead it up through, oh, 50 yards, maybe 30 yards, turn around, lead it back the other side, hook him back on to the horse and go up through with the two horses and do the same thing again till he got all those roads broke out.

After the roads were made,

Then we could get the buckets on the sled, and then we'd carry them on snowshoes, of course, to the trees. And, yeah, it was back then, you'd get a lot of snow. There'd be three feet of snow, I guess.

Next came drilling, without an automatic drill:

Father used to do most of the drilling. Gee, that was quite a lot of work, especially the first time around each tree with two buckets in your hand and trying to hold them up in the snow. The horses helped. You "could just cluck to them and holler to them and they'd come ahead and stop or start.

But then came the endless jobs of gathering sap and boiling. The Moores typically put out around 1500 buckets, but,

One year, we had 2200 buckets out. And we'd do it all by hand. Every day, we'd be gathering stuff.

Father used to boil a lot. After he'd get done milking, he'd go up and boil some till ten o'clock with a, just a, he'd have a lantern, two lanterns in there, burning off a wick, you know, and it give about as much light as a 20-watt bulb did,

Wally Powers used to help us a lot doing boiling. He liked to boil early in the morning. I can remember him because he chewed "Day's Work." He had a chew come in a package like that, about that thick. And he . . . didn't have many teeth, I guess, because I remember him putting it in the side of his mouth and trying to break off a piece to chew.

The Moores typically made 300-400 gallons of syrup. "That'd be a great year if we made 400 gallons."

Spring also brought chicks, some 600 chicks. The chicks started in the barn:

In about maybe May, June, they'd be getting bigger. They hadn't started to lay. We'd

put them out in a range house, they'd call it, out in the field, that whole field over there. The chickens used to have it while they was growing up.

To protect the chicks, the field was fenced. And,

every night, they'd go into these brooder houses, chicken houses, which was made out of wire, mainly. And we'd shut the gates so nobody could get in there, foxes and stuff.

By August, the young hens were laying:

We'd find eggs over there, everywhere. We used to have some pretty good egg fights. We weren't supposed to throw eggs at each other, but we did.

By September, the new hens came back to the barn:

We'd catch them at night in the brooder houses, bring them over here and burn the bills off, the top bill. . . . We had a thing probably stuck out about that much. And . . . what it did just seared the beak over. It would take off, oh, maybe a quarter of an inch. No, wouldn't be a quarter of an inch, would be less than that. It prevents them from pecking each other. And then, of course, we always had everything disinfected up there and all cleaned out and put them in here and then they had boxes where they would lay on the wall.

But before the young hens returned to the barn, the old hens were retired and the hen house was cleaned. Around the feeders, chicken manure lay eight to ten inches deep.

We'd park a spreader out here and had a long plank that come out through the barn and up onto the spreader. And we'd wheel it out with the wheelbarrow. And I can remember that the guy that got to drive the tractor and spread the manure, that was the best job.

Yeah, that was quite a job, clean that manure out. Usually, we'd have the haying done by then. That would be the big project for the week, you see.



Donald Moore

At all seasons, someone needed to gather the eggs and grade them:

Father'd do most of the picking up eggs. We used to pick them up three times a day.

We had a grader. You had to roll each one onto this grader, and it rolled down and, depending on the weight, it would go to the different places. And then you had to pack them, and they would be 30 dozen to a to a case of eggs then. And that's the way we took them up to Danville Grain Store.

And Father would say: "Well, hens took care of the cows this year. The cows have to take care of the hens next year."

In addition to chicken work, summer brought haying:

You'd have to have a good, sunny day to get it dry. You used to pitch it up. Didn't have a hay tedder then. We had pitchforks, and we'd go out in the field and pitchforks, and pick it up in the field.

We had an old truck that we put the hay onto, and we'd hook the hay loader in back of it and straddle the windrow. And that hay loader, the way it was designed, it

would pick up the hay and bring it out around back, and it would . . . bring the hay right up over the backside of it and drop it into the wagon. And that big old thing would just keep going around.

We had what they call a hay fork in the barn. And when we come in with a load of loose hay, we'd back it in. My brother would put these four big tines into the load of hay and pick up a bunch of it. They'd go up to a trolley and click into that trolley and go down the barn, the length of the barn. Father would be in there to mow it away. And my job was to lead the horse outside the barn which attached to this rope that pulled the hay up. And I would, I would lead that horse out through to the daylight out there.

Haying lasted "all summer."

Father would say, I remember, he'd say, "We get this haying done, boys, and we can go Lyndonville Fair." . . . I remember we used to hay the Hobart field. . . We'd start up at the old barn, I can remember, and mow down through. Still had only a five-foot mower. I think Father was using the horses then to mow with. But, anyway, it'd take us all week to do that one field.

Although haying did not take place on rainy days, there were other chores to fill the time. One was gathering wood for next year's sugaring:

We'd go up to the, up to Perley's mill and we'd get slabs, all his slabs. We used to burn, basically, that's what we burned was all slab. Slab, we'd bring those down, pile them up, pile them in the sugar place.

The woodpile also needed replenishing, and there was coal to put in the cellar:

We'd burn wood 'til about the first part of January when it got cold, and then Father would burn coal. He'd get, I don't know, two, three ton of coal every year. We'd put it down cellar. And he burned coal until spring came. It was steadier heat, he said. But, yeah, we burned wood beforehand.

Although Don and his brothers typically played sports after school, their father's work never ended. The elder Mr. Moore was "up at 5:30 in the morning." Even after the family's six o'clock dinner, "Father would do chores. . . , the milking," until eight o'clock. Perhaps unsurprisingly, at the family's midday meal, "Oh, a lot of times he'd go right to sleep at the dinner table."

There were no vacations:

I don't ever remember him taking much of a day off. Yeah. One year, we did. They rented a camp down Harveys Lake. It was one of the Goslant's camp. We rented that for a week, but we used to come up and do the chores and everything that needed to be done and go back down there during the day.

Moore nonetheless remembers his childhood fondly: "It was a good time growing up. We had a lot of fun."

PAMFest Performers to Play at the PHA Historical House

PHA has always opened its wonderful summer exhibit at the Historical House and the Ashbel Goodenough Blacksmith Shop during PAMFest. This year, there will be a stronger connection between PAMfest and PHA: Two premier PAMfest musicians will perform, under a tent, at the Historical House on Saturday, August 13.

Pete Sutherland will play at 2:30 pm. Pete's most enduring musical outlet has come through traditional folk music. The old-timey dance music of the southern mountains, New England, and the Celtic isles are all resurrected in his music. Pete joins ballads and folk songs from the past with new, original songs and tunes that carry on these rich musical traditions.

Pete will be joined by Martha Burns, who sings old-time American folk songs the old-time way. Martha sings songs from the mountains and from the range, songs from the earliest period of recorded country music and songs never sung in a studio. She has been singing and playing American folk music since Hoover was in the White House—well, almost—and has performed throughout North America and abroad.

Don't be surprised if Tim Cummings drops in to play a few tunes with Pete, too. Tim is a renowned piper and multi-instrumentalist who has recently completed a collaboration, with Pete and Baltimore banjoist Brad Kolodner, of traditional and not-so-traditional pipe tunes. The result is a wonderful new collection, *The Birds' Flight*.

At 3:30 PM, Keith Murphy will take the Historical House stage. A native of Newfoundland, Keith's traditional song repertoire is based in eastern Canada and his current home, Vermont. His direct and intimate style of singing, in English and French, infuses old ballads and songs with a powerful immediacy while his rhythmic and percussive finger style of guitar playing brings new shape and color to his songs. Keith's 2005 album, *Bound for Canaan*, showcased his refined sense of balance between



(top left) Keith Murphy, (top right) Kate Burns, (bottom left) Pete Sutherland, and (bottom right) Tim Cummings.

innovation and tradition while the beautifully spare *Suffer No Loss* (2014) is in the style of early, classic recordings of the English and Celtic traditional music revival. Keith was a founding member of Nightingale, a trio that broke new ground in its sophisticated approach to traditional music. He has also worked extensively with the late Tony Barrand on the early 20th century song repertoire of the Atwood family from Dover, Vermont. Keith is an accomplished composer/arranger of traditional music, and he has also composed for theater and film. Several of his compositions were featured in the recent Ken Burns' documentary on the Roosevelts. Keith is a faculty member of the Brattleboro Music Center (BMC) and the artistic director of the BMC's Northern Roots Traditional Music Festival in Brattleboro, VT, which he founded in 2008.

You should not miss this packed, two-hour event at the Historical House featuring two of Vermont's finest musicians, both of whom have a deep understanding of music traditions. They and their guests are sure to please!

FRANK MILLER
Founder of the Peacham Acoustic Music Festival (PAMFest) and PHA Board member

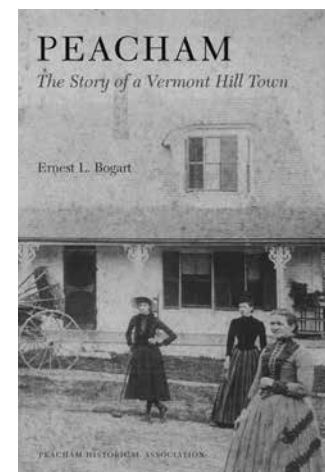
PHA Republishes Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town

In July, PHA is republishing Ernest L. Bogart's *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town*. First published in 1948 and reprinted in 1982, this comprehensive history of Peacham had been out of print for decades before PHA reissued the book in 2010 using a digital file scanned under the auspices of the Google Books program. Although the best option at that time, the quality of the Google-digitized file was poor, and the reproductions of images were especially disappointing.

Advancements in scanning technology have enabled PHA to order a new reprint with vastly improved image and text quality. This spring, PHA contracted with Bookmobile, a digital publisher in Minneapolis, MN, to scan the original 1948 edition and print new copies. The publisher has promised that there will be no noticeable differences in the quality of the scanned and the original printed edition.

Bogart's history has remained the most reliable source of information about Peacham history, and PHA is delighted to issue this new, high-quality printing. The new reprint is softbound, and the cover features a depiction of the village farm in a ca. 1890 photograph.

The price of the new Bogart reprint is \$35. You can order a copy from PHA online (Peachamhistorical.org). Copies are also available at the Peacham Library, the Craft Guild, and the Historical House.



PHA Receives Historic Wedding Clothes

In May 2022, Maxine Martin Long, a Martin descendant, donated the wedding clothes of Ashbel and Hannah (Wesson) Martin to PHA. Ashbel, the son of Peacham pioneer Moses Martin, was born in Peacham in 1830. He was a Peacham Academy graduate, dairy farmer, and State Representative. Ashbel was also a participant in the California gold rush and purchased his large Peacham farm with money made in the gold fields.

On November 5, 1857, Ashbel married Hannah Wesson, daughter of Moses and Phoebe (Brock) Wesson, in Danville. Hannah's wedding dress and Ashbel's wedding suit are remarkable additions to PHA's collection.

Hannah's white dress, entirely hand-sewn and likely crafted at home, is made of cotton batiste, a lightweight, semi-transparent fabric that was produced primarily in France during the mid-19th century. Although less expensive than silk, it was still considered a luxury good. The dress has a simple, straight neckline. The bodice, also very simple, has sewn-in stays made of fine wood splints. The sleeves are set off-shoulder, gathered, and have a wide wrist profile, a popular style during this period. The attached skirt, designed to be worn over a decorated petticoat, is very sheer and was gathered beneath an attached waist band. The petticoat is made of finely hand-woven linen and decorated with beautifully hand-embroidered hem work, known as *broderie anglais*, in a stylized vine and floral design. The dress has a finely stitched hook-and-eye back closure with a concealed placket, and it is lined with linen muslin accented with delicate lace.

Hannah's dress was worn by her granddaughter, Carolyn Martin Long, as a wedding dress on August 23, 1934.



Ashbel's wedding suit is a classic black silk frock coat worn over a silk vest with matching wool pants. Traditionally, the suit would have been worn with an ascot tie and white shirt. This style was fashionable before and during the Civil War era. Ashbel's suit has exceptional details, including silk-covered and decorated brass buttons, pockets edged with bias-cut trim, and a jacket with an extravagant machine stitched pattern on the inside. All of the pieces are lined with polished cotton. The outfit would have been quite costly, and it was likely ordered from a professional tailor.

It is intriguing that Ashbel, in this ca. 1860 photograph, is wearing a coat almost identical to the donated wedding coat. The wedding coat was altered in 1959, and these alterations may be the source of the minor differences between it and the coat in the photograph. Ashbel, a successful dairy farmer, would likely choose to wear his most fashionable coat for his photograph.



You can read more about Ashbel and Hannah in PHA's award-winning publication *Preserving Peacham's Past*. Two entries feature brief biographies, their portraits, and a description of a woven coverlet owned by Hannah.

SUSAN CHANDLER and JUTTA SCOTT

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Annual Wine and Cheese Party

Sunday, August 28, 4–6 p.m.

Gary Newman Home, Peacham Village

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