THE PEACHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



Picture Perfect: Front and Flip Sides

This year's summer exhibition, *Picture Perfect*, which opens on July 4 at the Historical House (11:00 a.m.-4 p.m.) will feature postcard images of Peacham from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Postcard images like these played an important role in shaping the economy of Vermont tourism and public opinion about what was picturesque in Vermont. They also provide a window into contemporary social life.

Images in the exhibition come from two sources. One is the PHA archives, which contain hundreds of donated postcards printed by many different companies.

The second source is the Penobscot Marine Museum, which holds an outstanding collection of Eastern Illustrating and Publishing Company negatives. Eastern was a major postcard producer during this period, and its postcard images were of superior visual quality. The Penobscot Museum negative collection includes more than 50 Peacham images. By using these original negatives, it is possible to make prints much larger than the original postcards; the Museum has graciously collaborated with PHA to produce such images for the exhibition. (Kevin Johnson, the Museum's photo archivist, will also be the speaker at this year's Annual Meeting. See Events Calendar.)

The exhibition will feature messages on the back, "flip" side as well as front-side images. These flip-side messages were possible because of a law enacted by the U.S. Congress on March 1, 1907, which allowed privately produced postcards to bear messages on the left side of the card's back. Previously, the entire back was reserved for the address; all messages were required to be written on the postcard front. Because the front side was typically filled with an image, messages, even when written in tiny letters, could not exceed a few words or, possibly, a sentence.

After the 1907 law's enactment, postcards quickly surged in popularity as a quick and easy way to communicate. The cards could communicate a message without the necessity of writing a page-long letter, they did not require an envelope, and they could, for travelers, show a local view as well as a message. During the postcard's "Golden Age" between 1907 and 1915, the popularity of postcards hit its peak.

Flip-side postcard messages allow us to glean details about the lives of the people who sent them. No matter how simple or mundane, these messages provide glimpses of personalities, events, personal moments, and styles of humor. Beyond the words, we can often tell if a postcard was hastily written and if the person writing was well-educated. Signatures are also revealing: Did the writer use a full name or a nickname? Did the writer sign his or her name with the word "love" or another type of closing?

In sum, postcard messages provide us with voices from the past. The following postcards are a sample of messages in the PHA archives that you will be able to see in the Exhibit.

The postcard above is a classic tourist note, with a hint of humor. It was sent to Mr. J. Vaughan Morrill of Hancock, NH.

Main Street Peacham August 11, 1911

The Colonel and I are up among the mountains in northern Vermont. If you were here you would be a thin Corporal climbing hills. Are you having a good summer? H.D.B.

continued on page 3

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The 2024 season is upon us, and we are prepping for our usual July 4 Historical House opening. We are very excited about this year's exhibition *Picture Perfect*. Read about it in the cover story on page one and plan to stop by. You won't want to miss it. Who doesn't love postcards? And I know you'll be fascinated by the technical information on creating cards from glass-plate negatives that our partnership with the Penobscot Marine Museum allows us to share with you.

While doing research for the exhibit, I often thought about the role of postcards in my own life. During my first 50 years, a vacation invariably included buying picture postcards that showed my favorite places and sending them home to my grandparents, parents, and other relatives. When I was a child, the postcards I had sent were returned to me to add to my scrapbook. It was great to get them because my skills with Brownie and Kodak Instamatic cameras were such that this method of documenting a vacation typically produced a bunch of out-of-focus, out-of-range images that couldn't possibly compete with the perfect postcard images. The postcards proved that we did go to the places shown and contributed to the memories we shared in later years.

My children, grandchildren, and friends now prefer to send e-mails or post photographic greetings on Facebook or Instagram. Some take and retake phone photos in an attempt to get just the right image in the same way that I remember hunting through the postcard rack with the same goal in mind. I guess history is repeating itself with a different technology!

I, too, have adapted to changed technology. I enjoy the speed of internet communication and the possibility of a quick reply. But I also loved the hunt for the "right" card and even the wait for the postman. The urge to share our experiences is universal, and—as my grandmother, who lived through the introduction of the automobile, telephone, and electricity during her 98 years, put it—we "roll with the times" in finding ways to do so.

This summer, we plan to add further improvements to the Historical House and to master the software we are using to catalog the PHA collection. We will have a launch party for the second, enlarged edition of *Historic Homes of Peacham*, and we are also planning a number of programs to complement the *Picture Perfect* exhibit. Check the Events Calendar and our website peachamhistorical.org for further information, dates, and locations.

Virtually all of PHA's programs and activities rely on volunteers. I want to thank those who have made this year's exhibit possible. I also want to give a big thank you to Johanna Branson, Jutta Scott, and Susan Chandler for their extraordinary work in producing the *Historic Homes* second edition. Even if you have the first edition, you will want this new edition.

STEVE GALINAT, PHA President

EVENTS CALENDAR

July 4, 11- 4:00 p.m.

Opening of Historical House and *Picture Perfect* Exhibition

July tba*

Allen F. Davis, author of Postcards from Vermont: A Social History 1905-45

August 7, 6:30 p.m. ANNUAL MEETING

Speaker: Kevin Johnson, Penobscot Marine Museum Wish you Were Here! The Photo Postcards of the Eastern Illustrating and Publishing Co. of Belfast, Maine

BOOK LAUNCH & SUMMER GATHERING

Stay tuned for more information!

*Please check the PHA website (peachamhistorical.org) for more information about the talk by Allen Davis and other events.

> **KEEP UP WITH PHA!** peachamhistorical.org

Picture Perfect continued from page 1

The postcard above as sent to Alice C. Darrow, a great-granddaughter of the Hon. Samuel A. Chandler of Peacham. Alice was born in New York City and graduated in 1914 from Smith College. She later went on to serve as Secretary of the Women's Land Army of America (WWI). Alice had not visited Peacham but was clearly curious about her family's origins.

Peacham (from Mack Mountain Rd.) August 21, 1923

Dear Alice, A marvelous trip, and country. The Chandlers house a large fine affair, -it is to swell with pride! Hope you have recovered-Aff T.



This postcard was written by Isabell Bradley of Peacham to her mother, Maybelle, who was ill and hospitalized at Mary Fletcher Hospital in Burlington, VT. Isabell was 20 years of age when she wrote the card, just prior to her marriage later that year.

Mountain View House, Peacham, VT (Illegible) 16, 1919

Dear Mama, I was awful glad when Papa called up and said you were getting along fine. It has been awful lonesome since you and Papa went, but we are getting along aright. Hope you will get better soon. With love to you +Papa XXXXXX Isabell The postcard below was sent to Alden Clark in Fargo, ND by Harlan A. Renfrew. Alden and Harlan were classmates at the Peacham Academy. Alden married a young woman from Minnesota in 1907 and thereafter moved to Fargo, ND, later settling in Minnesota. Sadly, due to a lifetime of ill health, Harlan was unable to attend university after graduation from the Academy. He never married or left Peacham, and he died in 1919 at the age of 39. One wonders if he longed to travel beyond Peacham.

Peacham Academy, Peacham VT June 22, 1909

Hello Alden, How soon are you going to Seattle? Thot(sic) you might like to see the Academy as it is now. How is little daughter Dorothy these days? Bring her to Peacham some day. Everything is just lovely here these June days. This reads like a "daisy" (days-ee) card. H.A. Renfrew

For more messages, you'll have to visit the exhibition, which will be open, following the July 4 opening, on Sundays from 1–4 p.m. through Labor Day and on Fall Foliage Day.

Susan Chandler





Vacationing in Peacham: Where to Stay?

n my Winter 2024 Patriot article (We're Going to Camp: The Early History of Vacation Camping), I noted that vacationing, in the modern sense, first emerged during the post-Civil War period. During this early era, vacationers were typically city dwellers who sought respite in destinations that replaced the noise, grime, and turmoil of urban life with the pastoral pleasures of the countryside.

Peacham quickly emerged as a soughtafter destination. The Barnet Village railroad station offered a link to Boston and beyond. And, as a state promotional brochure made clear, Peacham offered just what the weary urbanite was seeking:

In its natural scenery alone, Peacham has advantages which, if properly appreciated and advertised by its people, would prove a great source of wealth and prosperity. There is hardly a farm-house in town that would not be a paradise so far as summer scenery is concerned, to wealthy people in our eastern cities and from the level and monotonous plains of the west.¹

Peachamites rapidly heeded the call to capitalize on the town's scenic pleasures. They opened inns and other hostelries with shuttle service to the railroad station, farm-to-table meals, and a wealth of recreational opportunities.

Early Peacham vacationers "didn't feel pressure to do things."² But, if they chose to do so, they made day trips by horse-drawn carriage (and, later, by car) to the White Mountains, Lake Willoughby, Craftsbury Common, Lake Champlain, Mt. Mansfield, Caspian Lake, Lake Memphramagog, Montpelier, Franconia, and the Old Man of the Mountain. For those who preferred less strenuous outings, Fosters Pond and Harvey Lake were popular destinations that offered fishing, swimming, and boating; in later years, the Lake also sponsored both an annual regatta that regularly drew a thousand onlookers and a seaplane landing site. Even closer, the Peacham Academy offered a tennis court, and the various Peacham hostelries themselves provided croquet and evening board games. The Peacham Library also offered a wealth of reading materials. As Peachamite Margaret Alzina Lamb Pollard put it in one hotel brochure, "If reading's a hobby, there's our Library near, With five thousand volumes affording much cheer."

WHERE TO STAY?

By 1910, Peacham offered at least six housing options for vacationers. Most were located in or near Peacham Village, and they provided room and board to locals, particularly Peacham Academy students and staff, as well as vacationers.

Traveler's Home was located at about 656 Bayley Hazen Road, the current site of the Peacham Library. Initially operated under a different name by various proprietors, the a "genial and obliging

landlord,"³ who provided "sumptuous dinners"⁴ and made the Home so inviting that visitors "sometimes made extra long journeys to reach it."⁵ Guests came from as far away as Chicago, Iowa, and even Vernon, British Columbia.

Mountain View House, in the former home of William Mattocks at 555 Bayley-Hazen Road, was opened by Walter Holmes Bayley in 1887. Bayley, a Peacham Academy graduate who had recently abandoned his Hardwick farm to take up innkeeping, invited prospective guests to enjoy a spot "Two thousand feet above the sea [with] beautiful drives, walks and scenery."6 In a later Vermont Bureau of Publicity tourist-accommodation booklet, Bayley promised prospective guests fishing and hunting opportunities, easy accessibility to the post office and library, and freedom from "mosquitoes, black flies, extreme heat, hay fever or malaria." All these delights, plus room and board featuring local farm products, cost \$2 per day or \$7-\$10 weekly.⁷ What luxury! And what a bargain! Mountain View continued to host guests until 1918, when the Bayley family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts.

The Home Place, located at 154 Macks Mountain Road, was purchased (for \$2630) from the Bradlee family in 1870 by Clara Whitehill Bailey, a widowed mother of three, and her bachelor brother-in-law, Alex Bailey. Both Baileys were former employees of the Bradlees. Clara and Alex promoted their hilly location as a "picturesque, healthy destination."8 This pitch seems to have been successful. In 1879, the St. Johnsbury Caledonian reported that the Bailey house was full of city boarders. Alex operated a stagecoach that entertained guests by driving them "around the ponds and over the hills so numerous in this vicinity."9 After Clara died in 1911, Mary Bailey, her daughter, and Alex continued to operate the business until his death and her marriage to John Gracey in 1921.

John Varnum's summer boarding house at 604 Bayley Hazen Rd. catered to "the city boarder." The Varnum family purchased the property from John Hand Skeele in 1876 and occupied the site until 1955. It is unclear how long the boarding house operated. The **Guthrie House**, at 282 South Main Street, offered, for \$4 per week, room and board with plenty of fresh cream and milk plus "a splendid view of the mountains" and proximity to Harvey Lake resorts offering boating, fishing, swimming, and croquet. Proprietor Joseph C. Guthrie, a farmer who owned a cider mill and a commercial fertilizer business, operated the business with his wife from 1909-1932. Their guests came from places such as the Catskills, Springfield and Lynn, Massachusetts, Hartford, Connecticut, and New York City.

Hillcrest Lodge, at 320 Macks Mountain Road, opened in 1910. Its proprietor, Ella Genevieve ("Jenny" or "Prentie") Prentiss (1860-1932), was a Danville native who bought the fiveacre building site with a "million dollar view" in 1906 after visiting Peacham in her earlier career as a nurse to wealthy Massachusetts convalescents. Hillcrest provided a summer camp for "convalescents, children, or those desiring restful out-of-door living and home cooking."¹⁰ Hillcrest also offered indoor plumbing, although it was an "open system," with exposed pipes mounted on the walls serving the lodge's single toilet and bath. Despite this limitation, during the April-October season Prentiss hosted numerous wealthy guests who sought a healthy, rustic experience. She also served elaborate dinners that appealed to Peacham Academy trustees, faculty, and guests. Prentiss operated Hillcrest until 1930. In 1931, she sold the property to Harvard Professor Edwin C. Kemble, whose family still owns the property.¹¹

THE SECOND PHASE: 1920s-1940s Although early Peacham hostelries typically closed after their proprietors died or lost interest, new inns and boarding houses sprung up to fill the void.

Shawmead, at 168 Peacham-Groton Road, accommodated eight to twelve guests from 1925–1947. Frank G. and Nellie M. Shaw's offer of a "large comfortable farm home, with modern conveniences, good beds, pleasant rooms, a large porch, and nice lawn" for \$2.75 per night or \$14–17 per week"¹² produced a steady stream of guests. In later years, the couple's daughter Marion Shaw, a nurse, took in recuperating patients referred by hospitals. Nellie Shaw continued to serve the ever-popular Sunday chicken dinner into the early 1950s. She sold the farm in 1976.

Maple Drive Farm, at 267 Peacham-Groton Road, was owned and operated by Walter G. Darling and his wife, Alice, from 1930 to 1952. In 1956, the farm was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Dale (Laura) Berard and Francis and Gracia Berwick.

The Elms, at 819 Bayley-Hazen Road, was operated by Clarence and Mary Kinerson Esden from 1937-1948. It, too, offered a special Sunday "chicken" dinner. But Mary's dinners featured baked ham or fried salt pork in addition to the chicken, all for 65 cents per plate.¹³ The Elms was popular among the women of the Peacham Bridge Club as a destination for a delicious lunch followed by several hands of bridge. The Elms was sold in 1950 to the Yankaurers, who tore down the barn and moved the building farther up the hill. From



1957–1963, the property served as the Academy headmaster's house.

Choate Inn, at 614 Bayley Hazen Road, was built in 1802 as a law office for Governor John Mattocks and later served as a millinery and shoe shop. From 1931 to 1958, Elsie Choate operated the property as the Choate Inn. After her mother's death at age three, Elsie was brought up by her widowed aunt, Elsie Choate Merrill. (Elsie's aunt was the widow of Dr. David Merrill, a Civil War surgeon who briefly operated "Hillside Inn," later the "Traveler's Home," before his death from tuberculosis in 1872.) The younger Elsie, a teacher, returned to Peacham to care for her aunt by 1920; she inherited the Merrill property in 1926. Initially, Elsie operated the business with a partner, Mrs. Alzina E. Esden. The pair described their business as a "hostelry of Early American Charm."14 The partnership lasted until 1938, after which Elsie operated the Inn, accommodating eighteen guests in the main house and adjoining cottage, alone. Elsie's advertising urged that,

For a quiet, restful spot, cool nights, and mountain atmosphere, Choate Inn in Peacham Village is unsurpassed ... From a hill just above the Inn, one can see picturesque Mount Pisgah and Mount Hor at Willoughby Lake. Also included *in the panorama viewed from this height* of land are Burke Mountain, the Presidential Range of the White Mountains, Twin Mountains, the Franconia Range, Mount Moosilauke, and many peaks of Vermont's own Green Mountains. The rooms are unusually comfortable and pleasant ... Both cottage and Inn are constructed along the lines of quaint, old, Vermont architecture ... Meals are as delightful as the place itself."15

Like her competition at Shawmead and The Elms, Elsie served a Sunday chicken dinner and catered parties and receptions. The Inn's meals and comforts attracted summer residents of Peacham, such as Alger Hiss and writer Dorothy Canfield Fisher, as well as residential guests.

Elsie employed cooks Bertha Darling and Anna Bayley and waitresses Alma "Frank" Bayley Randall, Mildred Fields

Historic Homes of Peacham: Expanded Edition Available This Summer

he second, expanded edition of *Historic Homes of Peacham* will be available later this summer. PHA will host a launch party, likely in August.

Revising this popular book has been a long journey. We added a wealth of new information to existing entries as well as 28 houses not included in the first (2007) edition. There were many discoveries and surprises along the way.

One discovery is the untold story of Scottish immigrant Archibald McLaughlin and his family. McLaughlin was one of the first three settlers in Peacham. Bogart's history of Peacham tells the stories of the other two pioneer settlers (Jonathan Elkins and John Skeel) in detail but contains only two brief references to McLaughlin.¹

The expanded edition of *Historic Homes* includes two new house entries that tell the story of the McLaughlin family. Both houses are in South Peacham: one, now the Berwick farm, was the home of Archibald's son John; the other, the last Peacham house on the Peacham-Groton Road, was the home of Archibald's grandson (also Archibald).

Archibald's story begins in Perthshire, in central Scotland, where he was born in 1743. Nothing is known about Archibald's early life. But, at the time Archibald emigrated from Scotland in 1775, he was married with two small children. Like most of his fellow countrymen, Archibald was also a farmer, almost certainly a tenant farmer who did not own the land he worked. During this period, agricultural improvements, driven by the need for landlords to increase their incomes, led to the eviction of hundreds of thousands of Scottish tenant farmers off the land that they and their ancestors had occupied for hundreds of years. Many, like the McLaughlins, immigrated to North America.



Former home of John McLaughlin.

The McLaughlin family immigrated with the Scotch American Company of Farmers, organized in Inchinnan, Scotland in 1773 for the purpose of "purchasing lands in any of His Majesty's Dominions in America." That same year, agents of the Company toured the colonies from Ryegate (in what would become Vermont) to North Carolina. After "carefully weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the various areas offered for sale," they decided in favor of Ryegate and, on behalf of the Company, purchased the south half of the town from its owner, Dr. John Witherspoon, himself a Scotsman and the Presbyterian President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University).² Each of the 400 shares in the Company entitled its owner to one lot of land in the south division of Ryegate, a house in the "town spot," and an undivided share in the common land.3

The McLaughlin family probably came, at first, to Ryegate, but there is no record of their residence there. The McLaughlins did live briefly in Barnet before Archibald, in 1776, purchased 100 acres in South Peacham from Jacob Bayley. Archibald and his family likely moved to Peacham at that time, along with the Skeel and Elkins families. It is unclear why Archibald chose Peacham over Barnet or Ryegate, both of which were largely settled by Scots like him. It is not now possible to precisely locate Archibald's Peacham home, which no longer exists. But the 1875 Beers County Atlas of Caledonia, Vermont shows the farm's location as a hillside southwest of the Peacham-Groton Road.⁴

Archibald and his family rapidly expanded and improved their acreage. Archibald purchased another 100 acres from Thomas Johnson in 1783 and made additional land purchases in later years. By 1790, census records show that Archibald had "15 acres of improved land, 195 acres of unimproved land, 35 pounds of wool, 100 yards of linen cloth, and a pew in the Barnet Church". At that time, his household consisted of Archibald, his wife, and six children, four of whom were born in Peacham.

During the eighteenth century, the production of linen was Scotland's leading industry. Wool production was also an important source of income for Scottish farmers. It is likely that Archibald brought considerable skill in both activities with him to Peacham. Such skill was particularly important in linen production, which involved retting (separating the flax fibers from the stem), drying, breaking, "scutching" (separating fibers by crushing between rollers), "heckling" (separating short and long fibers) and, finally, spinning.⁵ In 1797, about a year before Archibald's death, his eldest son, John (1771–1845), bought the homestead from his father. After this sale, in several subsequent land transactions, the property is referred to as the Old McLaughlin Farm. In 1801, John married another Scottish immigrant, Mary Mitchell Whitehill, and they had 11 children. Like his father, John was a farmer. Like many of his Peacham neighbors during this period, he appears to have specialized in raising sheep; in 1840, during the height of the Merino sheep boom, he had a flock of fifty.⁶

In 1848, John deeded one undivided half of the farm to his son Archibald, born in Peacham in 1810, and the other to his son William. Son Archibald married Mary Ann Thorn the same year, and they eventually had six children. It is unclear when the younger Archibald built a house below his father's farmstead on the Peacham-Groton Road, but the house is recorded in the 1858 Walling Map of Caledonia County. Archibald's farm eventually included 250 acres. In 1886, Archibald sold the farm to his son Lewis (McLachlin), Lewis, born in Peacham in 1853, farmed the land until 1896 when he sold part of the land to Elijah Lyford.

The McLaughlin family (who later spelled their name McLachlin) played an active role in Peacham. Lewis served as Postmaster in South Peacham; his son Peter purchased the South Peacham store in 1884; members of the extended McLachlin family owned the Elkins Tavern, with one four-year exception, from 1857 to 1936; and the family farmed in various Peacham locations well into the 20th century.

Although Peacham, unlike Ryegate and Barnet, was not predominantly settled by Scots, several other Scottish families did settle in Peacham during the 19th century, including the Robert McColl and John Hendry families. Archibald McLaughlin's story illuminates the contributions of these Scottish immigrants and their role in shaping early Peacham farming practices.

JUTTA SCOTT

- 1 Ernest L. Bogart, *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town* 41, 56 (Vt. Historical Society, 1948)
- 2 Waldo F. Glover, "Old Scotland in Vermont," 23 *Vermont History* 92, 93 (1955).
- 3 History of Ryegate ch. 7, https://electricscotland.com/history/ryegate/7. htm.
- 4 Beers County Atlas of Caledonia, Vermont. 1875.
- 5 The History of Linen, https://www.asket.com/ us/stories/products/the-history-of-linen
- 6 [Lorna Field Quimby], "When Sheep Ruled Vermont: Peacham Sheep in 1840 just before the 'bust." Undated pamphlet.



Former home of Archibald McLachlin.

Vacationing continued from page 5

Twombly, and Eloise Bayley Miller. She owned and operated the Inn until her death, when the building was sold to the Wallace family. Reflecting on Elsie's demise, Eloise Miller wrote that, "It was very hard to imagine how Peacham could carry on without Choate Inn ... and a large piece of the heart was removed ... and has never been replaced."

Peacham's last hostelry, the **Peacham Inn**, at 613 Bayley Hazen Road, was also well loved. I will save its story for another issue of the *Patriot*.

Kathleen Monroe

Elsie Choate's Griddle Cakes

1 cup sour milk

Salt

1 tsp. baking soda

A scant ½ tsp. baking powder, but I don't always use it

Flour added gradually to the right thickness

If quite thick, add an egg

Try the batter, and if it doesn't stay up use more flour.

(Experience counts for more than the receipt.)

- 1 "Peacham–Retrospective View," *St. Johnsbury Caledonian*, July 20, 1883.
- 2 Lorna Quimby, "Tourists Accommodated." *Peacham Patriot*, April 1997.
- 3 "Death of John Atwell." *St. Johnsbury Republican*, February 21, 1900, p. 2.
- 4. St. Johnsbury Times, June 10, 187, p. 1.
- 5 Id.
- 6 Boston Evening Transcript, June 14, 1887, p.3.
- 7 Lorna Quimby, "Tourists Accommodated." *Peacham Patriot*, April 1997
- 8 Johanna Branson. "A Remarkable Woman Biography of Clara Whitehill Bailey 1838-1911." *Peacham Patriot*, Spring 2019.
- 9 St. Johnsbury Caledonian, August 8, 1879, p. 3.
- 10 PHA Archives, unattributed quotation from former guest.
- 11 Barre Daily Times, October 8, 1931, p. 3.
- 12 1938 advertisement.
- 13 Undated advertisement.
- 14 Booklet published by Elsie Choate & Alzina Esden, 1933, penned by Mary Sylvia Hunter; PHA archives.
- 15 "Choate Inn Is Good Place To Sleep or Eat: Peacham Resort Has Many Natural Attractions To Offer Tourists." *Caledonian-Record*, July 3, 1931.



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Travelers Home



Mountain View House



Guthrie House



The Elms



The Home Place

GALLERY

Where to Stay?

Vacationing in Peacham:



Shawmead



Choate Inn