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Historic Homes Of Peacham Debuts Dec. 2

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Staff Writer

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PEACHAM -- In honor of the town's architectural history, the Peacham Historical Association will be launching its newly published book called, "Historic Homes of Peacham."

The book, describing the variety of homes built during the 18th and 19th century, will make its debut Dec. 2 at the Peacham Library from 2 to 5 p.m.

"Historic Homes of Peacham" is the result of a three-year project with a goal of communicating the rich history of Peacham combined with a historic and architectural description of each house, and photographs that show each house as it was and as it appears today, according to the association's president Mary Ellen Reis.

"When the PHA Executive Committee approved this project, I had the challenge of recruiting just the right person to chair this committee, and I was thrilled to have Jutta R. Scott lead our team," Reis said. "Jutta was instrumental in keeping us focused and organized while we sifted through a vast amount of information."

Scott, a Peacham resident, research specialist, and current president of the Peacham Library, volunteered to chair the committee. As a professional librarian and research specialist, she said Scott understood the challenges.

"We had to divide Peacham into sections, so we could accurately capture the homes that fit the specific criteria for inclusion in the project," Scott said. "We chose a map from 1875 that referred to the town's 12 school districts. Each school district was assigned a committee member, and the work began."

Committee members contacted home owners and obtained permission for inclusion in the book.

"A key goal for the book was to find the oldest known existing photo of the homes," said Reis. "We went on a massive treasure hunt. The PHA collection contains a vast amount of photographs."

Some of the pictures were of groups of houses with a target house in the midst of perhaps five or six houses.

The committee's search led them from "exhausting local search" to the Landscape Change Program at the University of Vermont. There they found missing pictures and some that were more relevant than what they had, Reis said.

"The Landscape Change Program at UVM is a virtual collection of images that documents Vermont's changing history over the past 200 years," Reis said.

The result was 200 historic and current photographs of 100 homes with a description of each. Architectural styles represented range from classic New England capes to the grand style of the Greek Revival period.

Scott said the book was due from the publisher by fall foliage season, but publishing took longer than they thought it would.

"It was not an easy birth," Scott said. "At least we have it in time for Christmas gift giving this year."

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