

BAYLEY-HAZEN MILITARY ROAD BIKE RIDE

The **Bayley-Hazen Military Road** was one of the most ambitious engineering projects undertaken during the American Revolutionary War. Conceived by Colonel Thomas Johnson and Jacob Bayley, it received approval from the Continental Congress in May 1776. The road was intended to create a direct route from Newbury, Vermont, to St. John's (Saint-Jean), Quebec, enabling American troops and supplies to move quickly in support of a planned invasion of British Canada.

Construction began in late spring of 1776 under Colonel Jacob Bayley, who extended the road roughly six miles into what is now Peacham. General George Washington, in a letter dated June 25, 1776, questioned the strategic value of the project, leading to a temporary halt. Work resumed in 1779 under Colonel Moses Hazen and continued northward to Hazen's Notch.

For **Peacham**, the Bayley-Hazen Military Road proved far more consequential than its limited military use. The road opened this heavily forested land to the colonists, and Peacham's first permanent settlement in 1776 was directly tied to its construction. It became the town's earliest major transportation corridor, carrying pioneers, livestock, supplies, mail, and commerce into the region. The route helped establish Peacham as an important crossroads in northern Vermont, encouraging the growth of farms, mills, and small businesses and shaping the eventual location of the village center.

Although the Bayley-Hazen Military Road never fulfilled its original military purpose, its lasting legacy was the settlement and economic development of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. In Peacham, it transformed an isolated frontier into a thriving agricultural community and remains one of the town's most important links to its Revolutionary War past.

