

## Windham County celebrates its past at History Fair

By Nell Curley/*The Commons*

NEWFANE—The Windham County Historical Society will host its second annual Windham County History Fair on Saturday, Aug. 14, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on the Newfane common in front of the courthouse.

Many historical societies and organizations will be represented, including the Vermont Historical Society, the Estey Organ Museum, the Brookline Round School House, Brookline Church Preservation Association and Vermont Cemetery Association, as well as eight historical societies in Windham County, including those from Brattleboro, Dover, Dummerston, Grafton, Guilford, Jamaica, Townshend, and Whitingham.

In addition to their exhibits, many of the towns will have their published town histories for sale as well as other historic memorabilia such as prints, cards and photographs of the area.

There will also be a chance to talk to authors, and visitors to the fair can have any personal antiques appraised (for a small fee), buy reproduction furniture and crafts, or bring maps of family trees for genealogical advice.

There will be walking tours of the Newfane Village historic district, highlighting residences and buildings removed early in the 19th Century from the old Town Common on Newfane Hill down to their current location in the Shire Village.

Fairgoers can take lessons in wool spinning, birchbark canoe making, weaving, colonial wood working, and old cemeteries of Vermont. Food, raffles and live music by the band Blind Roosters and the Estey Organ Museum will be featured.

The Museum of The Historical Society of Windham County will be open all day with regularly scheduled tours of its collection of Windham County artifacts.

According to the organization's website, its holdings are kept in a brick Federal-style building constructed in 1936 that "houses a collection that reflects the history of the county from the late 18th to early 20th century."

### Books by local authors

Ten local authors whose work is grounded in Windham County will be on hand to talk informally about the role of Vermont history and landscape in their work. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Participating authors include Wayne Carhart, Charles Fish and Joyce Marcel in non-fiction; Jessie Haas, Karen Hesse and Johanna Hurwitz with children's and young adult books; Deborah Lee Luskin, Archer Mayor and Laura C. Stevenson, adult fiction; and F. D. Reeve, poetry.

The author's tent is hosted by Olde & New England Books of Newfane.

### Like a jigsaw puzzle

There will also be an opportunity for people who want to know more about their roots in Windham County to learn more, courtesy of Joann Nichols of the Brattleboro Historical Society, who has worked as a genealogist for 40 years.

"I have been asked to have a genealogy consulting booth, possibly at the Windham County Historical Society building, which is quite near the place the exhibits are set up," she said. "So bring your questions about your family history, and I'll see if I can help you!"

Nichols said that she most enjoys "finding links to former generations [and] finding information on a person who has vanished from the rest of the family. I have been doing [genealogy] for other people as well as myself for much of that time. It's similar to doing a jigsaw puzzle; you need to find a missing piece!"

She believes that the fair benefits Windham County in general by raising people's awareness of what they can find in the towns. She hopes that this year's event will be as successful as last year's.

"If the weather is good, and the publicity is good," she said. "I would expect that there would be a good crowd this year."

*Originally published in The Commons issue #61 (Wednesday, August 4)*

<http://www.commonnews.org/site/site02/story.php?article=2004&page=1>

*The Windham County History Fair will take place rain or shine. There is no admission charge. For more information, call the Historical Society of Windham County at 802-365-4148 or visit [www.historicalocietyofwindhamcounty.org](http://www.historicalocietyofwindhamcounty.org). The museum is also open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5 p.m., through Oct. 24.*