# FREEDOM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**November 2026 Newsletter**

## In this Issue:


- **Community and History**
- **Tornado of 2008**
- **Revolutionary Freedom Story - John Mills**
- **Our latest Acquisition**
- **Honoring our Members**
- **Celebrating the Holidays at FHS on December 12**





## Greetings from the Historical Society!

As the crisp New England autumn settles over Freedom and the busy of Freedom Old Home Week, Margie's Lunch and our summer exhibit fades into memory, our work behind the scenes continues. This time of year always brings a wonderful spirit of reflection—not just on the rich history we are dedicated to preserving, but on the incredible community of members, volunteers, and friends who make our mission possible.

We have been busy organizing our archives and special stories about Freedom, and developing plans for our Holiday Event at the Allard House on December 12,. As we look toward the close of 2026 and prepare for an ambitious 2027—including enhancing our museum exhibits at the Allard House and Works Barn, preserving local treasures, and expanding our community programming—we invite you to partner with us by responding to our November Message to our members and friends below:

## “Preserving Freedom’s History – and Keeping Our Stories Alive”

What makes a community special? It's people, it's stories, it's traditions, and the history that connects generations.

At the **Freedom Historical Society**, we work throughout the year to preserve and share the rich history of our town—the stories of the people, families, traditions, and experiences that shaped the town we know today. Through our collections, exhibits, research, programs, website, and special events, we bring these stories alive for today’s residents and for generations to come.

But preserving history takes more than memories. It takes dedicated volunteers, resources, and financial support.

Your end-of-year contribution will help us get a head start on planning for these key priorities for 2027:

- **Care for and preserve our historic collections, photographs, and documents (such as archiving fragile family papers and historic images).**
- **Maintain our museum and facilities to ensure our exhibits remain safe and welcoming.**
- **Develop exhibits and programs that bring our local history to life for students, families, and visitors.**
- **Keep our services free and accessible to everyone in our community and beyond.**

Whether your gift is $25, $50, $100, or more, every contribution makes a meaningful difference and helps us keep our shared history alive. Whatever you are able to give today, please know how deeply appreciated your support is at this important time. Just click on the Donor Button below or send your check to Freedom Historical Society, P.O. Box 548, Freedom, NH 03836.

Together, we can preserve the past, celebrate our community, and pass our stories on to the future. Freedom’s history belongs to all of us, and preserving it is a shared responsibility. Please consider making an end-of-year donation to the Freedom Historical Society.

Thank you and best wishes,

**Kyle and Roberta, Co-Presidents**
**Freedom Historical Society**

# Tornado of 2008

Do you remember the tornado of 2008? The National Weather Service concluded that Thursday's deadly tornado was on the ground for about 50 miles, making it one of the longest path lengths ever recorded in New Hampshire.

"Now that we've had a chance to look at it on the ground, it's very close to 50 miles," warning coordination meteorologiest John S. Jensenius said yesterday.
Initial reports based on aerial surveys and other outside sources indicated the tornado traveled about 40 miles after it touched down in Deerfield and traveled a discontinuous path through 10 towns, ending in Freedom near the Maine border, he said. It was on the ground for about 80 minutes.
The National Weather Service also reports the time the tornado touched down was closer to 11:33 a.m., which was the exact time a severe thunderstorm warning went into effect and included Rockingham County, Jensenius said.

A tornado warning followed at 11:46 a.m. for southeastern Belknap county and northwestern Strafford County, he said.

The weather service estimates the tornado was at least a third of a mile wide. It will take several more weeks to fully assess it's width, Jensenius said.

The tornado was rated an EF1 tornado, with winds in the 86 to 110 mpg range, in Northwood, Alton, New Durham, and Freedom.

The tornado first touched down in Freedom on Freedom Shores road and ended just over the state line in Porter at Bickford Pond.













## Freedom's Revolutionary History with John Mills

### John Mills (1752-1828)

John Mills married Sarah “Sally” Libby on 1 August 1777 in Portsmouth just before he shipped out on the USS Raleigh. John Mills’ widow, Sarah Libbey Mills, testified that her husband was probably born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire about 1752.

According to his testimony in front of the Pension board, John Mills enlisted in the Continental Navy for service on the USS Raleigh berthed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on 4 February 1777. The USS Raleigh, built in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, is the ship that appears on the current New Hampshire state flag.

According to John Mills’ testimony, the Raleigh carried 36 guns and was commanded by Captain Thomas Thompson. The ship sailed from Portsmouth, New Hampshire to cruise into the West Indies, then to the coast of Africa, and to France. Mills testified that during this cruise, the Raliegh captured a British sloop of war, and several ships of the British Jamaica fleet.

By the early 1820s, the family had moved to Effingham, New Hampshire. Testifying before the pension board in January 1821 at age 64, Mills detailed a picture of severe financial and personal distress. He worked as a joiner (a woodworking craftsman specializing in fine carpentry), but chronic health issues left him unable to work. His wife, Sarah, was also in poor health, and their daughter Sarah was handicapped and unable to work. They had two healthy daughters, Mehitable and Clarissa, but the family was living in heavily reduced circumstances, prompting Mills to petition the government for assistance under the Pension Act of 1818 for impoverished veterans.

John Mills died on 12 May 1828. At John Mills death, his pension stopped. However, due to two Pension Acts in 1836 and 1838, Sarah became eligible for a widow’s pension under the Act of 1836 due to John and Sarah being married before he finished his service. Sarah was eligible for a five-year pension because she and John were married before 1 January 1794. Sarah was eligible for a widow's pension, and Sarah ultimately received **$443.84** in retroactive arrears payments.

Despite his service and pension proceedings, no formal probate records have been located for John Mills following his passing in 1828.

Note: FHS Collection Coordinator Moira Epps identified & researched 10 veterans who lived in, settled, or had ties to Freedom. The following profiles were highlighted in our newsletters over the past 10 months: David Allard (1726–1831), John Andrews (1761– 1840), Daniel Brooks (1761–1836), Moses Harmon (1759–1836), Pelatiah Harmon (1762–1841), Thomas Lord (1757–1843), John Mills (1752–1828), Redman Moulton (1746–1823), Robert Sargent (1762–1836) & Richard Taylor (1753–1842). We will be putting these profiles on our website soon. Please send us any new information you may have about these early Freedom settlers.

## Highlights from our Annual Meeting on November 5th

We elected new officers starting in January 2027 and amended the Bylaws by adding a Vice-President position to the Executive Committee so the total Board can be up to 21 members. New elected officers are: Belinda Madsen, Darcey Gulvin , Kevin Jensen, and Patty Haywood. Returning Board Members are: Kareen Briggs, Jayne Britton, Brandy Butttrick, Jane Davidon, Moira Epps, Nancy Essex, Anne Gaudette, Michael Gaudette, Linda Habif, Pam Keith, Roberta MacCarthy, Anne Packard, Lauren Stoddard, Steve Thurston, Carole Taylor, Kyle Thomas, and Marcia Trook.

Welcome to the new officers and many thanks to our Nominating Committee: Pam Keith, Steve Thurston, Moira Epps.

We have posted our Annual Meeting presentation on our FHS website . Please check the photos and Annual Meeting news out at:

**https://freedomhistoricalsociety.org/news-reports/annual-reports**

## Check out our latest Acquisition!

This antique grandfather clock used to reside in the home of Avis Goss, Freedom's beloved librarian. Avis raised her son Fred at 36 Elm Street. Fred's daughter Jacqueline donated the clock to the Freedom Historical Society after Fred's death in 2026.  Thank you Jacqueline!



## Our Online Collection

You can see our collection of items, articles, and photos without leaving home! Log on to **www.freedomhistoricalsociety.org**, and click on the link on the front page under "What's happening?" Once you are in, be sure to click on Random Images, a trip down memory lane!!

# Celebrating the Holidays at FHS



Celebrating the Holidays at the Allard House on Saturday, December 12: Traditions, Memories & Community

Holidays have always brought people together, creating traditions and memories that become part of a community's story. From Christmas celebrations and holiday gatherings to seasonal festivities, families and neighbors in Freedom celebrated throughout the years. We hope to rediscover the traditions of yesterday from you. We need your help. Please send FHS your photographs, historical records, personal stories, and treasured memories. Fhsociety28@gmail.com

Here are some possible stories you can share:

- Christmas traditions in early Effingham and Freedom.
- How families decorated their homes and celebrated Christmas.
- Church celebrations, pageants, and community gatherings.
- Holiday family traditions.
- School Christmas programs and children's activities.
- Community celebrations and holiday events through the decades.

Please share your favorite holiday memories in Freedom. FHS would like to create a Freedom Holiday Memory Board where you can contribute a favorite tradition, a special memory, or a photograph. Please send your favorite holiday memory or photo to fhsociety28@gmail.com.  History is all about the traditions, celebrations, and everyday moments that bring generations together.

Join us in this celebration,

Kyle and Roberta

## Thank you to these members who have joined, renewed and donated in 2026

Jayne Britton, Bonnie Burroughs, G. W. Brooks, Pauline Brooks, Brandy Buttrick, Karrie Buttrick, Dianne Cahill, William Carney, Robert Carter, Nadine Chapman, Eugene Corbett, Martine Culbertson, Anne Cunningham, Alice Custard, Jane Davidson, Rick Davidson, Maureen Elliot, Beth Earle, Peter Earle, Lauie Eisener, Kevin Eisener, Moira Epps, Nancy Essex, Bill Essex, Heidi Field, Anne Furtado, Norman Furtado, Michael Gaudette, Anne Gaudette, Charles Gibbs, William Grimm, Patricia Goos, Robert Goos, Michael Gormick, John Habif, Mary Habif, Linda Habif, Karen Hatch, Rob Hatch, Pat Hatfield, Holly Haynes, Maggie Hoople, Bruce Howlett, June Howlett, Sue Hoople, Linda Iselborn, Charles Iselborn, Jane Johnson, Don Johnson, Janet Johnson, Gale Johnsen, Jane Johnson, Pam Keith, Barry Keith, David Kemper, Lucy Kendall, Heather Kiley, Christine Koehler, George Koehler, Melissa Labonte, Kathie Lange, Felicia Ledgard, Dann Lewis, Jane Luke, Roberta MacCarthy, Linda Mailhot, Ellen Many, Richard Many, Sylvia Manley, John Manley, Susan Marks, Ramon Marks, Hope McGowan, Caroline Marston, Greg Marston, Maureen McCracken, Barbara McEvoy, Karen Merriam, Sharon Meyer, Nettie Nason, Nils Nordberg, Jane Nylander, Richard Nylander, Paul Olzerowicz, Carolyn Olzerowics, CMS R.A. Oram, Anne Packard, Emily Phillips. Nancy Phinney, Robert Phinney, Arthur Poor, Anne Quinton, Noel Quinton, Kim Reis, Laura Robinson, Marcia Santner, Nancy Seabury, Jody Shallene, Deborah Shadd, John Shipman, Jan Smith, Carol Stokes, Lauren Stoddard, Caroline Stone, Kerri St.Jean, Sarah Tabor, Carole Taylor, Brian Taylor, William Taylor, Kyle Thomas, Diana Thurston, Steve Thurston, Laura Thomson, Maynard Thomson, Marcia Trook, David Trook, Paul Wheeler, Lisa Wheeler, David Smith, Jan Smith, Joanne Vienneau, Gary Ward, Rachel Ward, Charles Watts, Katherine Watts, Laurie Wells, Lucy Works, Marjorie Works, Edward Logan, Janice Zecher