

**The Springfield Historical Society**  
**proudly presents**  
**"Poor Houses and Town Farms: The Hard Row for Paupers"**  
**Steve Taylor, speaker**

On Thursday evening, April 7, the Springfield Historical Society will welcome back Steve Taylor as our guest speaker. Steve is an independent scholar, farmer, journalist and longtime public official who, with his sons, operates a dairy, maple syrup and cheese making enterprise in Meriden Village. A newspaper reporter and editor, Steve served for 25 years as commissioner of agriculture for the state of NH.

From its earliest settlements, New Hampshire has struggled with issues surrounding the treatment of its poor. The early Northeastern colonies followed the lead of England's 1601 Poor Law which imposed compulsory taxes for maintenance of the poor but made no distinction between the "vagrant, vicious poor" and the helpless and honest poor. This confusion persisted for generations and led directly to the establishment in most of the state's towns of alm houses and poor farms and, later, of county institutions which would collectively come to form a dark chapter in NH history. Steve Taylor will examine how paupers were treated in these facilities and how reformers eventually succeeded in closing them down. Our meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Town Meetinghouse, 23 Four Corners Rd., in Springfield, NH. The program will begin at 7:15 and is free and open to the public. The Meetinghouse is handicapped accessible and refreshments will be served. Call Donna Denniston at (603)496-5462 for further information.