

## Freeman's Oath

*"You solemnly swear (or affirm) that whenever you give your vote or suffrage, touching any matter that concerns the State of Vermont, you will do so as in your conscience you shall judge will most conduce to the best good of the same, as established by the Constitution, without fear or favor of any person."*

Watch the video: A Town Solves a Problem

This scripted film from 1947 focuses on Pittsford's town meeting and the discussion of the school budget.

<https://archive.org/details/ATownSolvesAProblem>

inspected taverns, and kept a careful eye on traveling strangers who were passing through town. He was the one to scold you if you were found somewhere other than in church on Sunday.



Hog-reaves, poundkeepers, field-drivers, and deer-reaves enforced laws that governed stray livestock and deer hunting. The job of the hog-reave consisted of catching and putting stray pigs in pounds.

Both the poundkeeper and field-driver did similar work. Since most property was not fenced, livestock frequently got loose. It was up to one or both of these officials to herd the animals into pounds. Here they stayed until the proper owners came to claim them and paid the fines that they owned. Deer-reaves were similar to our modern day game wardens. It was their job to report anyone who killed a deer out of season.

A fence viewer is a position that one still finds in Vermont towns today. It is the fence viewer's responsibility to settle disputes over the care and maintenance of fences between adjoining properties.

If you think government regulation is something new, think again. Inspectors of flour, leather, and salt were just a few of the officials elected to check the quality of various products. They were usually paid for their work, although very little by today's standards. For example, the official whose job it was to inspect and measure salt was paid half a cent each for the first 500 bushels, and a quarter of a cent for all over that!

Even barrels were inspected. It was the job of the culler of hoop poles, staves, and headings to make sure that the barrel parts met certain standards. But if you think size was all that had to be checked, you are wrong. The inspector had to count the number of worm holes that existed in each piece of wood. If there were too many a new piece was selected to replace it.

## Tything Men, Hog-Reaves, and Fence Viewers

Most of us are familiar with tax collectors, policemen, and other modern day officials. However, if you had lived in Vermont two centuries ago you would have known a whole array of town officials whose titles seem strange to us today.

The equivalent of today's policeman was a tything man. His tasks were many. He punished misbehaving children at town meetings and religious services,