



Raynes Barn



**61 Newfields Road
Exeter, NH**



<https://www.exeternh.gov/cc/raynes-farm-stewardship-committee-cc-subcommittee>



Story Map



Photo courtesy of Joe Drapeau

What's Special About This Site

The massive Raynes Barn is part of a beautiful property that is open to the public for hiking, bird watching and the like. The site includes grassland,

woods, and river frontage, and much of the land is still farmed today.

Barn History and Use

The Raynes Barn is also known as the Raynes-Wiggin Barn and dates to the 1860s. Chase Wiggin built the barn across the road from his house and subsequently developed a substantial cattle

market on the property. From that point on, this very large barn was a part of the Exeter cattle market, and it became a stopping place for drovers from northern New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont

on their way to the Brighton (Boston) Market. The barn became essential to the Northern cattle trade, and was renowned among those transporting large herds down to Massachusetts.

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The barn stayed in Wiggin's family for some time, and was eventually sold around 1902 to George Sanborn and Lyford Connor. In 1946 it was purchased by John C. Raynes, who used it to run a modest dairy farm. Around 1958 dairy operations were moved to the basement to comply with the demands of dairy

regulations. It continued to operate as a dairy until 1970. It was purchased by the town of Exeter in 2002 with the help of the State of New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program funds. In 2017 the site was added to the state's historic register.

Architectural Features

The barn is a Yankee-style barn which is typical of that era, but is unique in that it is a gable front bank barn, which is a barn built on a bank to provide enough space for a larger basement level. The structure is 95 feet and 8 inches long by 42 feet wide, making it much more massive than the typical New England barn. It features mortise and tenon construction. The timbers are sawn and the beams were certainly cut with a circular saw as is evident on close inspection. The outside of the barn is covered entirely in clapboards over horizontal pine sheathing. The foundation mainly consists of natural and dressed dry-laid stone, but due to changing farming standards, the foundation beneath that is poured concrete and mortar, with cement blocks

added in the mid-20th century. The interior of the barn features 6x6 inch supports, midspan roof purlins running the length of the barn on each side, and 2x7 inch rafters which are 28 feet long and are notched to rest on the purlins. Both ends of the barn feature rolling doors as well as a hay pitch above. A hayfork with a track was used to hoist hay up and move it along the length of the barn to the loft. Also above the rolling doors are transom windows and the left side, where cows were tied up, is entirely whitewashed. The basement shows off the change in farming standards as this type of construction dates back to the mid-20th century

and features poured concrete, stone beams, and concrete and mortar under the foundation. The barn also has stanchions, a milking parlor, and an automatic gutter cleaning system, and the basement is whitewashed.



Photo courtesy of the town of Exeter

What You Can Do Here Now

The property is accessible to the public all year round, though access to the fields is limited to outside of the growing season. Workshops and educational events are held on the property on a

regular basis. Visitors can enjoy the property and walking trails while taking in nature on this beautiful land. Pets are welcome but must be leashed.



Photo courtesy of the Kathy (Raynes) Norton