

Rutland Historical Society

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"Fanatics in Grand Conclave": Rutland VT Free or Reform Convention of 1858

“The Fanatics in Grand Conclave” written by Dr. Thomas L. Altherr describes the Rutland Reform Convention of 1858, bringing together individuals in search of moral perfection.

Key members of the convention, pictured on the cover of this issue, considered such topics as Spiritualism, Marriage and Maternity, Scripture and Church Authority, Slavery, Free Trade, Education, Labor, and Land reform. A heady combination of a full range of controversial topics.

John Langdon was the local organizer of the event which met at the Baxter Estate, Grove Hall. A respected merchant and insurance agent, his interests in the convention grew from a belief in Spiritualism.

An interesting account of “the prejudices and passions that simmered in those years””before the Civil War made their causes irrelevant”.

- **See also [Proceedings of the Free Convention Held at Rutland](#)**