



Freedom Historical Society
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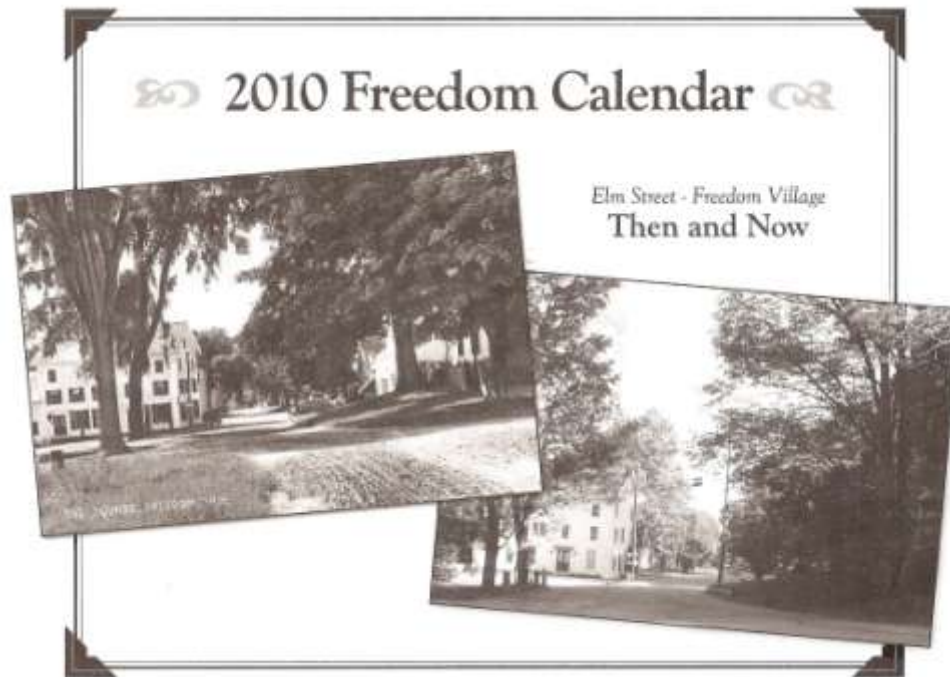
Summer 2009 Newsletter

This summer the Old Home Week theme is “Celebrating Our Heritage”, and those words create a fine launch into the Historical Society's seasonal report.

We thank the OHW Committee for supporting so much of what we do, with publicity for the museum collection and programs, with financial donations (their check for half the proceeds of last spring's Barbershop Quartet Concert was a terrific help), and with the wonderful theme they have selected for Freedom's week of festivities, July 31st – August 9th. The library kindly hosts one of our display cabinets filled with souvenirs from “old Freedom” days. Everyone who loves life as it was, is and shall be in Freedom can relate to such an embrace of our history together. And with the genesis of the Heritage Commission, the town has yet another group committed to preserving the character of this beautiful place.

What better time to celebrate and make plans than the warm sunny months ahead? Be sure to mark your calendars for the several programs scheduled at the Allard House Museum and Works Barn on Old Portland Road. The third Tuesday of each month except August will find us gathered to hear a variety of presentations. In May we were introduced to the various ways to research family roots as Frank Fisher of Ossipee told us about the basics of genealogical study. Our own Vice-President, Dick Many, shared the “tree” charts he has made to illustrate the formation of his family's history. Thanks to both these men for a great evening. June 16th at 7 pm, Carol Foord portrayed Dolly Copp who was the first innkeeper in Pinkham Notch; July 21st at 6:30 pm (note the time change from 7 pm) Dick Plusch will do Antiques Appraisals – 2 items for \$10; September 15th at 7 pm, Natalie Peterson will speak on “The Disappearance of Sarah Walker”; and October 21st at 7 pm, Mike Serpa (our Mike-the-Mailman) will offer “Irish Music in America”. Note that the August program will be on Saturday, August 8th, from 10 am to 3 pm at the Museum as we welcome back “Artisans at Work Demonstration Day”, part of celebrating our heritage during Old Home Week! If you have a craft that you would be willing to demonstrate (and not a duplication), we would love to have you join us. Please call Bonnie Burroughs at 539-3665 for details. Also during OHW, on Wednesday morning, August 5th, Carol Foord will meet people at 9:30 am at the Effingham Falls bridge to lead a walk that will examine stoneworks of the various mills, followed by a car pool side-trip to Ironworks Falls to see those stoneworks.

And as a follow-up to “marking your calendars”, remember that the 2010 Freedom calendars will be on sale. This year the photos also reflect a celebration of heritage, then and now. Bonnie Burroughs worked with Lisa Wheeler to capture the contrast between various buildings in the village as they once were and as they appear to us “today”. The calendars cost \$10 each and are treasures that we all seek to preserve over the years. We still have commemorative coins for sale at \$10 each as well as various books and the print Sam Warren did of the “square”. Check out both the program schedule and the goods for sale online at our website: freedomhistoricalsociety.com



So many Freedom folk have stepped up to offer time, talent and true energy this year to our Society. Thanks to all the zealous “cleaners” who showed up before the opening Saturday to wash, neaten and smarten up the inside for a summer of visitors. We were helped as well by Ray Dahlstrom's keeping on top of our plumbing problems; and Kurt Mason came speedily when we had major leaking down walls with electrical wires nearby, and we remain grateful for his expertise. Gratitude goes to the program presenters; and those who may volunteer labor if we provide materials for fixing the porch roof and column rot; to people on the Old Home Week Committee who have so generously rallied round; Nancy Ferry who offered terrific advice about healthy lush perennials for our heritage garden ; the neighboring Ogren family who help keep the grounds clear (along with Ed Boyer) and who donated beautiful pansies for the window boxes. We moved these flowers to porch containers because their blooms of sky blue look so pretty in the shade where we like to sit in chairs and watch folks stroll by, much as Margie and George Allard probably did so long ago when it was their home! Pass the lemonade, please.

Some new officers were voted in as well. Dick Many is the Vice-President, while Ginger Brownell has assumed the Treasurer's job, and Peg Scully and Sylvia Carney are now serving as Directors. Bonnie Burroughs continues as our President and Nathan Ainsworth is Secretary for the group with Gale Morris as Acting Curator. Dotty Brooks, Carol Foord, and Ray Dahlstrom continue as Directors. We will have elections in the autumn for the next round of officers and directorships as well as full-time Curator, and we hope others will join us in the work to preserve the museum, the barn, and the history of our Freedom. So: if you have information on anyone holding the Boston Post Cane between the years of 1943 and 1963, could you contact Dotty Brooks? She is completing her extensive research on this subject and would like to hear from anyone who knows names to connect with the dates. And the Heritage Commission's subcommittee on “Inventory of buildings and sites” is working on compiling photos and facts about any of the district schools, including the two right in the village. If you have photos or documents to share, it would help this effort tremendously. Alan Fall, Bonnie Burroughs, Peg Scully, Ray Dahlstrom or Gale Morris would be happy to hear from you.

Touching on this theme of fulfilling our mission statement to maintain the collection and our center of operations, we report that Maggie Stier, a field representative and preservation expert for the NH State Preservation Alliance, visited us on May 13th to look at our pieces of the past and the buildings in which we house them. She continues to be thrilled by this village that is virtually untouched by time. Her support for our work and for the Heritage Commission's objectives is invaluable. Maggie goes all over the state and works with large as well as small historical societies and preservation

groups, ones that are in more urban communities and ones that are in rural villages. She had several objective comments that were both pleasing and alarming.

Maggie observed that we have a grand assembly of materials and objects that reflect the different eras in Freedom's development as a community. Not only do we have a barn filled with sleighs and carriages, recreational artifacts, agricultural implements, and animal tethers (thanks to Jerry Brooks for telling us that the leather "sling" in the barn basement was used when oxen needed attention to their legs: they can't stand on three legs the way a horse can when it is re-shoed or treated, so these slings were formed to help the farmer or farrier or veterinarian to attend to the animal); but we also have a room replete with tools used by various artisans and craftspeople, a house that is a "living" museum to daily family life in the late 19th and early to mid 20th centuries, as well as documents, military pieces, clothing, uniforms, toys, musical and boarding house objects, ephemera and many other bits that show us how our predecessors spent their days and evenings in other decades. David Buswell discovered an old Harper's newsprint drawing of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln from April of 1865. Intriguingly, John Wilkes Booth is depicted as shooting the president with a gun, then in another frame running off with a dagger in his hand! Not many of us knew this fiendish detail of that awful event. What a find. This will be stored in more of the acid proof covers we have used all this winter while putting newspaper clippings and photographs into file folders. Researchers or browsers have efficient access to topical materials that should last a long time. If anyone has photos of Freedom people, buildings, events or sites, we would value the chance to scan them into our records, and return them promptly. We have a jewel of a museum indeed. But there are structural as well as ongoing financial difficulties that set off warning lights that must be heeded.

The nation is experiencing a dearth of support for historical preservation. The economic times dictate that situation, but it is also because younger generations do not seem to relate to the past in the way that most of us do: with warm nostalgia, pride and concern for preservation of such history in collections and in buildings and sites. Our new Heritage Commission will be helpful, but we at the Historical Society have tough times ahead and we must find creative solutions to many current and forthcoming problems. Maggie stated that some societies close down completely for lack of support. Many are selling buildings, storing collections, and trotting out pieces once or twice a year at town halls or meeting rooms for exhibit to the public. Others are auctioning off their treasures from the past and ending the tradition of keeping track of local history. The country is losing its evidence of heritage in dribs and drabs; it isn't just Freedom's problem.

But we do need to be making some thoughtful plans on how WE are to carry on in Freedom. With the recent article on town warrant passing the request for \$10,000 to help with our building's most critical repairs, we have taken one very positive step. We have received bids, chosen a builder, and will get on with this work that needs to be done to our barn roof and sill and the problem of water diversion from the base of the buildings. At this writing in early June, our Fire Chief Gene Doe is looking at our facility and seeing what needs to be done to bring it into safety and fire compliance. Gene has been most helpful in assisting with our concerns. We will examine grants that we find for ourselves or funding opportunities suggested by the Heritage Commission. We will continue to rely on membership fees from all of you, as well as the kind donations that often accompany annual dues. Some people have suggested that they would like to include the Society in their wills: a true testament to love of Freedom would be such an Endowment Fund. There are ideas afloat about fundraising and some on a future capital campaign. But this year we need to hear from our members and friends. We have to identify direction, assess how we mean to go on; and that will be a primary task of the officers and directors as they seek consensus from the whole membership. What do people want to see happen, and how will they offer to help us?

Please make time this summer to visit the museum, any Saturday morning from 10 to noon through Labor Day Weekend. Stroll through the house and barn, upstairs and down. Stop and smell the flowers. Sit a spell and reconnect with days gone by. Join us in "celebrating our heritage", the true American character that is Freedom, during Old Home Week and ever after!