

## Freedom Historical Society Survey, Summer 2013

- **37 surveys were received, but not all questions were answered by everyone.** The Society has 115 paid members in 2013; some survey respondents were not members.
- **76% of the respondents live in Freedom 9 months or more; only 1 was occasional.**
- **65% of the respondents are 65 years old or older; only 1 person was less than 45**
- **Of the responses received:**

1. I know where the Freedom Historical Society building is located:

**Result:** 100% know where the museum is

2. I have been to the Freedom Historical Society building:

**Result:** 74% had been to the museum more than 3 times; only 1 person had never been there.

3. Rank what **interests you the most (1) to least (5)** about our Historical Society:

**Result:**

The Allard house and Works Barn ranked of highest interest overall (median rank= 2),

Adult education programs & archival materials were ranked next an were equal in interest (median rank=3.5)

Children’s education program ranked last in interest (median rank=5)

4. The Society’s **top 3 offerings** most valuable to respondents were (in many cases more than 3 were indicated, but all responses were included here):

Period displays of Freedom artifacts	28	24%
Freedom historical records	26	22%
Educational programs	13	11%
Family histories	10	9%
Oral histories	12	10%
Ephemera/memorabilia	7	6%
Old news articles	7	6%
Newsletters	4	3%
Books and reference materials	4	3%
Other: Photos	2	2%
None	2	2%
Children’s programs	1	1%
	116	100%

5. Having a 3-5 year strategic plan is important: A total of **94% agreed strongly or agreed somewhat** (70% & 24%, respectively)

6. Maintaining a museum of Freedom artifacts and records is important: A total of **97% strongly agreed**.

7. The Society is effective in preserving and presenting the history and artifacts of Freedom: A total of **98% agreed strongly or agreed somewhat** (68% & 30%, respectively).

8. The Society's displays should stick to the period the museum was established to represent, the decades from 1850 to 1900. **Results were mixed:**

- 43% disagreed strongly or somewhat
- 36% agreed strongly or somewhat
- 21% did not know
- (50% responded in the somewhat categories)

9. The museum's displays need improvement.

**Result:** 59% of respondents agreed that improvements were needed; 26% did not know

10. The Society's collection should be limited to Freedom materials only (versus any "period" pieces).

**Result:** 78% of the respondents felt that collection should be limited to Freedom materials; 14% did not know. That said, the majority (47%) only agreed somewhat.

11. The main reason I don't visit the Society's museum is:

**Result:** The largest percentage of respondents (43%) felt that this question was not applicable, primarily because they do visit the museum (remember, 75% of the respondents had visited more than 3 times). The next two levels of response were equal at 20%: 1) no time and 2) not open enough (essential 1 in 5 people responded this way). Only one respondent felt there wasn't enough information about the museum.

12. The thing that would most likely cause you to visit/re-visit the museum.

**Results:** were diverse. One in 5 respondents felt "**nothing**" would cause them to visit/revisit; the same response level indicated that "**being open more**" would make a difference as did "**better signage & explanations**".

1. Open more frequently/more hours	20%
2. Nothing	17%
2. A tour guide to explain things	17%
2. Better signage and explanations	17%
5. More interesting displays	12%
6. Other (explain):	10%
7. More focused displays	7%

11. What do you think the Society should do with the following resources?

a. Freedom artifacts: <b>Result: maintain &amp; display (80%);</b> maintain (20%)
b. Freedom Historical records: <b>Result: mixed: maintain &amp; display (54%); maintain (46%)</b>
c. Ephemera : <b>Result: Mixed: Maintain &amp; display (41%); maintain (31%); not sure (28%)</b>
d. Old news articles: <b>Results: Mixed: Maintain (52%); maintain &amp; display (42%)</b>
e. Family histories: <b>Results: Maintain (64%);</b> maintain & display (37%)
f. Books and reference materials: <b>Results: Maintain (64%);</b> maintain & display (30%)
g. Oral histories: <b>Result: Put on website (59%);</b> maintain (35%)
h. Educational programs: <b>Result: OK as is (68%);</b> more (16%)
i. # Children's programs: <b>Results: Don't know/care (34%); OK as is (38%);</b> more (24%);
j. # Newsletters: <b>Results: Ok as is (68%);</b> don't know or care (19%)

12. Please name historical subjects or objects that interest you the most:

15 people responded to this request, some with multiple suggestions:

- Educational programs
- Crafts, period clothing, canning/Kitchen demos
- News clippings & artifacts
- History of buildings in town; then and now photos and stories
- Key figures in Freedom history- names you hear about
- Genealogy
- Farming, crafts, ways of life, old tales of Freedom
- Antique tools
- Old photos
- Collection notebooks- keep doing
- Summer camps
- Military, farming, industrial
- Church items
- How the town has changed, decade by decade, since its founding
- Doll house
- Local history
- Photos, Kitchen
- Buildings; roads & bridges; lake & rivers
- Freedom objects
- Oral histories

13. **Comments/Suggestions (use additional sheets as needed):** 8 responses to this request:

- Can someone do a presentation on early settlements in Freedom?
- Really enjoy programs at town hall but sometimes hard to hear speaker
- I am interested in the 'big picture' of the museum's activities.
- Signage is important
- Fabulous museum for a small town
- Watch for mold due to drawn shades; balance needs
- Make a thorough inventory of tools in the Works barn. Arrange the most important or interesting in attractive displays, appropriately labeled. Eliminate, but maintain in storage, those items which are duplicates and do not contribute to the display. They could be rotated though changes in the displays if desired.
- A considerable amount of fine art of Freedom subjects is and will be available in the near future. Though should be given as to how these paintings might be acquired and preserved.
- Three mothers of older children (min. age of 15) have summered here in Freedom since the kids were babies or since we were young. Our teenagers feel that the Society's building needs to actually be of more interest to them! "Haunted Freedom" was a great success. Living history actors in costume with explanations of dress, food and life [in Freedom].
- Great survey- congratulations.
- Could the school give extra credit and/or awards to spark more interest [in the Society]? Also, pairs or small group projects that are publicized are great incentives.
- Knowing that space is an issue would like to see possible expansion into another location that would house the books, reference materials, etc. ("resource center").
- Will discuss suggestions [with the president of the Society].