

# Freedom Historical Society Newsletter

Summer, 2022

## "Celebrating Businesses of Freedom 1880-1920": *The Towle Building*

Elias Towle constructed side-by-side buildings between the village square and the western edge of the millpond in 1845, where he operated a successful general mercantile store. At the age of twenty-one Elias Irving Towle acquired the general store from his father. In 1879 he formed the business partnership of E. I. Towle & Co. with George I. Philbrick, a young clerk at the store.

The Towle buildings were the center of commercial life in Freedom. At various times during the 1880-1920 era, businesses housed there included:

- The **harness shop** of C. E. and A. Moulton
- The **medical office** of Drs. Calvin Topliff, A. D. Merrow and Geo. W. Lougee
- An **apothecary shop** started by Dr. Merrow and later operated by Dr. Lougee

- The **Ossipee Valley Ten Cents Saving Bank**
- The **clothing manufacturing** operation of E. I. Towle & Co.
- An **undertaker** (successively J. A. Bennett, D. P. Cutting and W. A. Bennett)
- A **tailor shop** operated by Alonzo Pease
- A **barber shop** and **ice cream parlor** run by C. S. McAlister
- The Freedom **Post Office**
- **Social organizations** such as the Grange, Odd Fellows & Rebekahs



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# The Freedom Historical Society: *"Preserving the past for future generations"*

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## The Freedom Historical Society

The Freedom Historical Society was formed in 1965 and incorporated in 1968 and has sought to secure Freedom's legacy. We continue this effort because of the value we all receive in preserving Freedom's past.

## Mission Statement

The purpose of the Freedom NH Historical Society is to collect, research and display objects and records relating to the town's history for educational and cultural preservation. The Society fosters and inspires awareness and appreciation of the town's past through the records and collections in the Allard House and Works Barn Museum, and through its cultural education programs and publications.

### 2021 – 2022 Board Members

Presidents	John Shipman; Roberta MacCarthy
Vice President	Scott Cunningham
Treasurer	Jane Britton
Secretary	Jane Davidson

### Directors

Steve Thurston	Barbara McEvoy
Brandy Buttrick	Jean Marshall
John Perkins	Linda Habif
Carole Taylor	Anne Gaudette
Ed Barosky	Dann Lewis

## Letter from the Presidents

Dear Members and Supporters:

As we write this letter, the Freedom Old Home Week is in the books- what a joy to have it back! And many thanks to all on that committee who made the 123rd celebration spectacular! Remember, Freedom NH had the very first OHW in 1898.

During FOHW and up until September 17, you can view The Businesses of Freedom, 1880-1920, exhibit . Because these businesses are no longer in Freedom, save the Village Store, it is worth coming in to see what a thriving place it was then. And learn what factors turned the Town in a different direction, at least business-wise. Visitors are saying how professional and informative the exhibit is. Don't miss it!

As a gentle reminder- if you haven't sent in your 2022 membership dues, now is a good time to do it. Members are our lifeblood and we make good use of every dollar received. Thank you!

Enjoy the Newsletter!

John Shipman



Roberta MacCarthy



Co-Presidents

**Freedom Historical Society, 28 Old Portland Rd, PO Box 548, Freedom NH 03836.**

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## E.I. Towle Building 1845-1945

The Towle Building, built by Elias Towle and taken over by his son, Elias Irving Towle, was almost like a 'Mini-mall' of its day. It housed several businesses and was a gathering place for social organizations. Described below is a sample of some of the businesses.



### Clothing Manufacturing

E. I. Towle & Company, a partnership between E. I. Towle and George I. Philbrick, began manufacturing men's clothing in 1880. Boston clothing firms cut the material and shipped the pieces to Freedom where they were sewn together in the small factory space to the left of their general store. Over 40,000 pairs of men's work pants were completed annually and shipped back to Boston to be sold in retail stores.

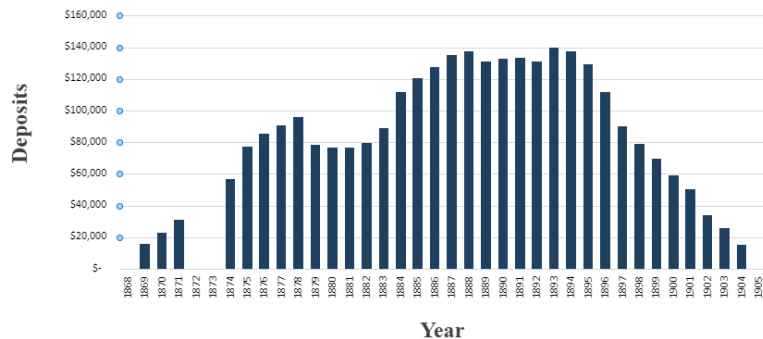


*Advertisement for E. I. Towle & Company,  
from the 1903 Old Home Week program.*

### Ossipee Valley Ten Cent Savings Bank

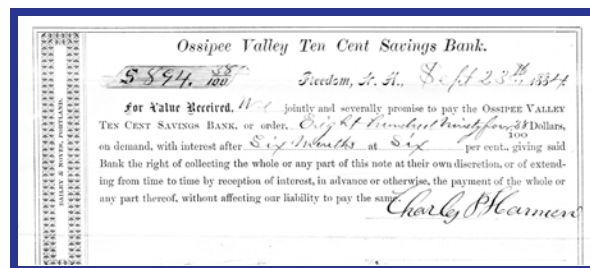
The Bank was chartered in 1868 by Josiah Thurston, Elias Towle, John Demeritt, Ransellar Towle, John Parsons, John L. Demeritt, Stephen J. Keneson, and William Harmon.. The bank opened for business in Elias Towle's building on August 31, 1868. By 1893 its deposits peaked at \$139,575 (~ \$4.5MM today).

However, a court-ordered liquidation began October 1, 1901, and by May 11, 1905 the liquidation of assets was completed. The payout to depositors was 74% of their pre-liquidation balance.



Annual bank receipts 1868- 1905, Ossipee Valley Ten Cents Savings Bank

*Receipt from the Ossipee Valley Ten Cent Savings Bank,  
dated September 23, 1884, for the sum of \$894.38.  
That amount is equivalent to \$26,385 today!*



## Medical Practices

As early as 1860 the E. I. Towle & Company building housed the medical practice of the town's first physician. His office was later occupied by his son-in-law, Dr. Augustus Davis Merrow, a Bowdoin-trained physician who moved to Freedom in 1867 and practiced here until his death in 1900. A prominent member of his profession, Dr. Merrow served for a time as President of the Carroll County Medical Society. In 1886 he opened an apothecary shop in the Towle building with his son, Edward. This establishment provided area residents with medicine and medical supplies.

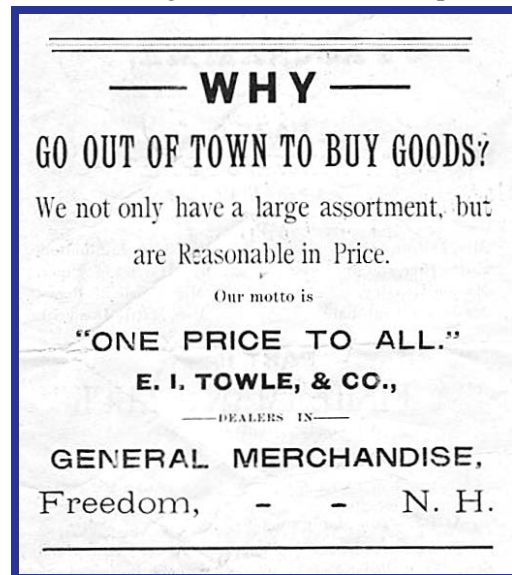


***Dr. Augustus D. Merrow***

Dr. Merrow was succeeded by his son-in-law, Dr. George Woodworth Lougee, who also operated the apothecary after Edward Merrow died in 1901. Both a physician and surgeon, Dr. Lougee graduated from the Bowdoin Medical School in 1883. He was a member of the New Hampshire Medical Society, served as the Coroner for Carroll County, and was even the local agent for the Travelers Insurance Company in the early 1890s.

### **Tailor Shop**

Alonzo Pease operated a tailoring business on the second floor of E. I. Towle & Company's building. His sign is visible in the photo of the building's exterior seen in the photo below.



***"Buy Local" encouragement from E. I. Towle & Co.,  
circa 1904***



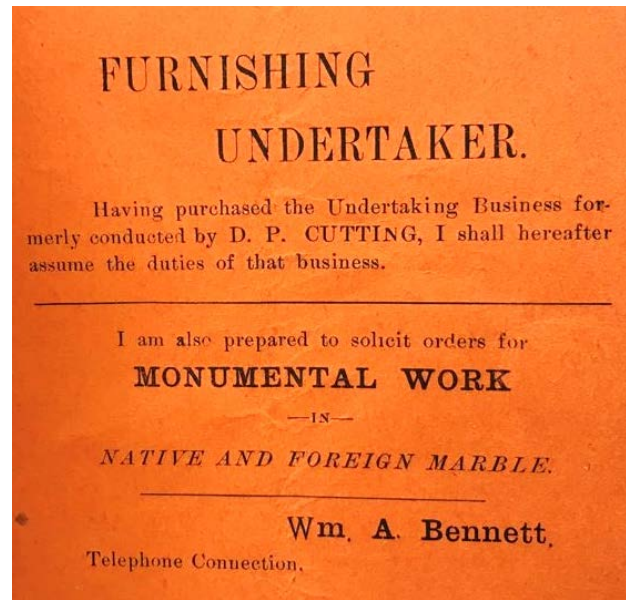


*The E. I. Towle & Co. building in the late 1800s, before alterations to the roofline.  
The sign of E. I. Towle & Co. marks the entrance to the general store; the other  
signs are for the tailor (A. Pease) and casket business (J. A. Bennett).*

### **The Traveling Post Office**

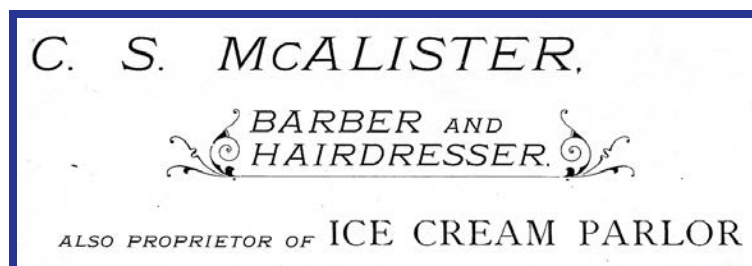
The Freedom Post Office was located in the Towle building throughout the latter half of the 1800s, and all of the Postmasters in that era had a connection to the Towle family. Ransellaer Towle (cousin of E. I. Towle) held the position from 1862 to 1885. George I. Philbrick (business partner of E. I. Towle) was appointed in 1886 and held the position until 1890. Frank Towle (son of Ransellaer Towle) was appointed in 1891 and held the position until 1894. George I. Philbrick was appointed again in 1895 and held the position for two more years.

In 1897 Lillian B. Merrow secured the Postmaster appointment with assistance from her older brother, Frank Black, who just happened to be the Governor of New York and a summer resident of Freedom. She then moved the Post Office across the square to the ell of the building that housed Frank and Mary Ferren's stores, now the Federal House (hence its name that is carried on to today)..



*Business announcement by W. A. Bennett,  
from the 1902 Annual Report of the Town of Freedom.  
(Bennett printed the town's Annual Reports for many years)*

### Barber Shop

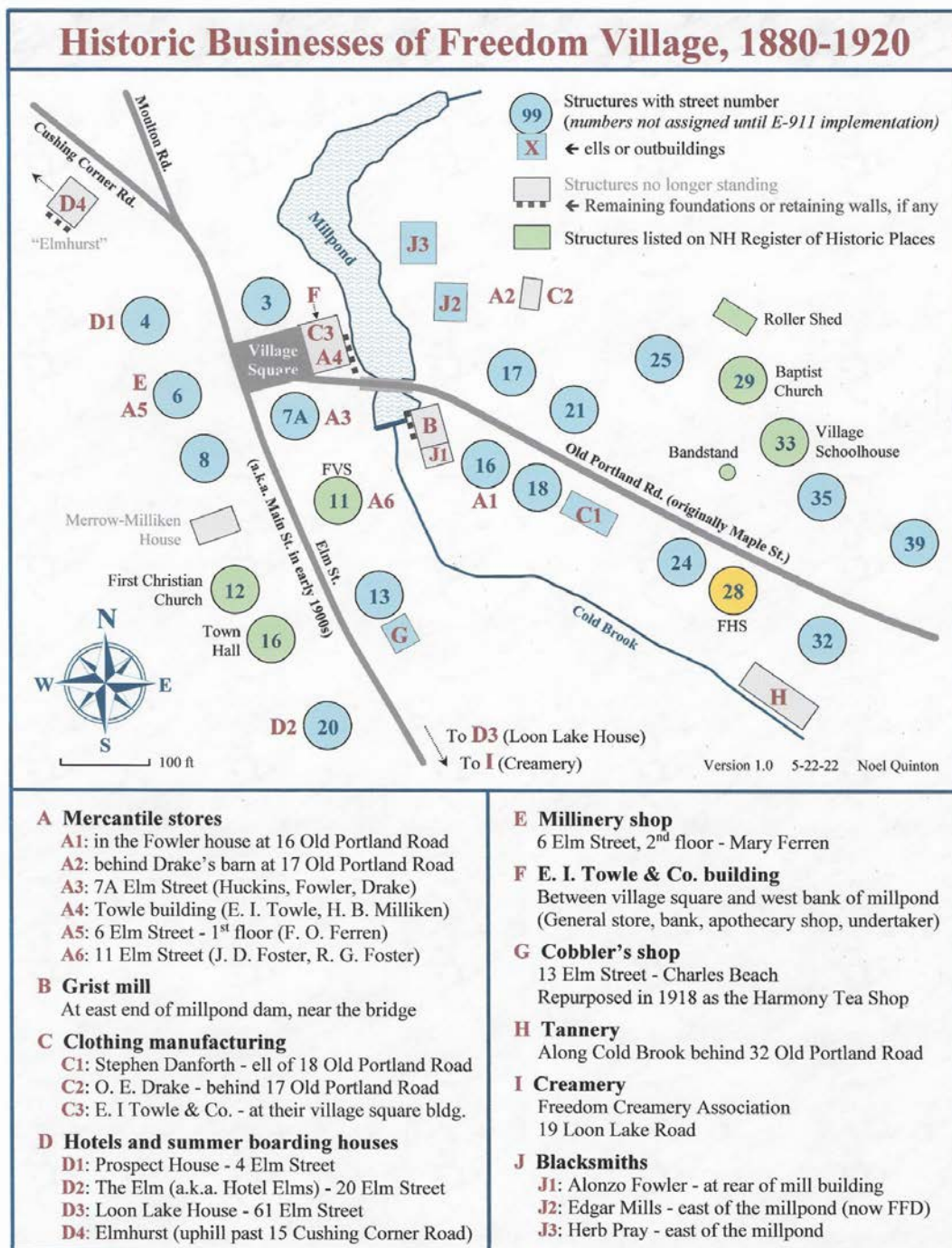


*C. S. McAlister not only cut and styled hair in the Towle building, but he also operated an ice cream parlor. This ad appeared in the Old Home Week program for 1903.*

### Telephone Service

The first public telephone in Freedom was installed at the E. I. Towle & Co. general store by 1901. In those days, a conversation made through the Bell System's long-distance service must have seemed both miraculous and exorbitantly expensive. Interested in how early telephones worked? There's a display in the Allard House that will show you.







# The Freedom Historical Society: *"Preserving the past for future generations"*

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## **Membership and donation info for the August newsletter:**

Memberships in the Freedom Historical Society are the lifeblood of the organization. Many thanks to all our members!!

### **Life Members**

Edward Barosky, William S. Barret, Barbara Birnie, Peter Birnie, G. W. Brooks & Sons, Karrie and Brandy Buttrick, Anne and Scott Cunningham, Beth and Peter Earle, Nancy and Bill Essex, Linda Habif, Pat Hatfield, Carolyn and James Holmes, David & Kerri Kemper, Lucy Kendall, Jane Luke, Susan and Ramon Marks, Barbara McEvoy, CMS Robert S. Oram, Nancy and Robert Phinney, Anne and Noel Quinton, Jody Shellene and Tim Hartsfield, Elizabeth Seabury, John Shipman, Sara Owen Tabor, Carole and Brian Taylor, Laura and Maynard Thomson, Ellen and Richard Many, Emily Philips, Elizabeth Coddington and Gary Ward, Charles Watts and Helen Hayes, Katherine Watts, Lucy Works, Marjorie Works,  
In memorium: Nancy Seabury, Edwin Boyer

### **Annual Membership Giving**

Angel: Jane and Richard Nyander

Sponsor: Randy Greenstein, Siobhan Murphy, Gerard Constantino, Marcia & David Trook, John & Carolyn Woodard, David A. Meserve

Contributor: Kathleen Hirsch and Frank Morrow, Janet & Don Johnson, Lee Allison, Alice Custard, Linda Walls, Dann Lewis, Maureen & Bill Elliot Jr., Tim Ostendorf and Robert Barker, George Winters, Aila and George Clausen, Pat Crane, Carol Stokes, Maureen & David Cheever, Chuck and Terri Brooks

Family: June and Bruce Howlett, Janice Zecher, Robert Smart, Lorraine and George Martin, Diane and Lawrence Claveau, Jane and Rick Davidson, Joyce and Fred Watson, Kimberly and Gerald Hastings, James W. Brown, Dianna and Gary Wagner, Karen & Robert Hatch, Dianne and Peter Cahill, Anne & Michael Gaudette, Jean Marshall, Lisa & Paul Wheeler, James & Betsey Bradt, Carl A. Bloomquest, Beverly & Howard Glynn, Janice Zecher, Mitch & Marie Hanson, Ingrid & Ray Hemphill, Larry Meserve, Deborah Shield & William Grimm, Patti & Warren Manhard, Jane McKenzie

Individual: Nettie Nason, Elizabeth Hentz, Gale Johnson, Gail Bizer, Patrick Miele, Alan Grant, Jayne Britton, Russell Jackson, Ruth Paul, Shana Eisenberg, Laura Robinson

### **Heritage Circle Donors in 2022**

The Heritage Circle is the new top 2022 donor level honoring generous annual donors of \$1,000 or more. Heritage Circle Members take the lead in shaping the present and future of the Freedom Historical Society. We welcome the following new Heritage Circle Members for 2022:  
CMS Robert Oram, Anne and Scott Cunningham, Susan & Ramon Marks, and Roberta MacCarthy

**Freedom Historical Society, 28 Old Portland Rd, PO Box 548, Freedom NH 03836.**

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2022 Donors Giving to Memorial Funds, the Snow Roller Project, the Climate Control Room, Archival, and Operating Funds. These donations are separate from Membership Dues. Thank you.

CMS Robert Oram, Anne and Scott Cunningham, John Shipman, Susan & Ramon Marks, Betty Fuller, Roberta MacCarthy, Mary & John Habif, Susan Hoople, Mary Lee Allison, Susan and Ramon Marks, Caroline & Gregg Marston, Katharine Watts, Emily Phillips, Pietie Birnie, Karrie & Brandy Buttrick, Jane Davidson, Holly Haynes, and Charlie Watts, Timothy Allison, Drs Anne Thomas & David Wilkins, Bruce Howlett, Karen Merriam, Peg Scully, Elisabeth Seabury, Jane & Richard Nylander, Janice Zecher, Ed Barosky & Gillian Frost, Diane Claveau, Ed Wogman & Susan Zampell, Lisa Sloan, Elizabeth Hentz, Joanna Mera-Krinsky, Beverly & Fred Trail, Linda Habif, Joyce Watson, Bonnie & Paul Elie, Anne & Michael Gaudette, Scott Freeto, James E. Brown, Heidi Miksch, Scott Gleason, Jayne Britton, Jean Marshall, John Perkins, Lucy Kendall, Anne & Noel Quinton, Martin Bygrave, Scott Gleason Pat Hatfield, Diana & Stephen Thurston, Gerald Hastings, Lucy Works, Jackson Russell, Gary Quint, Tyler Freeto, Rochelle Brooks, Laura & Maynard Thomson, Marcia Santner, Lucy Howland, Jayne Britton, Rochelle and Scott Brooks, James W. Brown, Martin Bygrave, Bonnie and Paul Ellie, Scott Freeto, Taylor Freeto, Anne and Michael Gaudette, Scott Gleason, Linda Habif, Gerald Hastings, Elizabeth Hentz, Russell Jackson, Lucy Kendall, Joanna Mera-Krinsky, Barbara McEvoy, Inn at Crystal Lake, Gary Quint, Anne and Noel Quinton, Lisa Sloan, Dianna and Stephen Thurston, Beverly and Fred Trail, Joyce and Fred Watson.

**Memorial and Tribute Gifts** to the Freedom Historical Society are established to recognize that special person who appreciates the special nature and history of the Town of Freedom, New Hampshire. The following people have been honored by Memorial & Tribute Gifts in 2022:

Elizabeth Acton, Dick Birnie, Edwin Boyer, Sylvia Carney, Robert Huckins Fowler, Ned Hatfield, Patricia Godfrey Hodge, Ian Marshall, Terry Miller, Frank & Nancy Seabury, Bill Stoops, Margaret & Henry Trail, Patricia & Charles Watts, David A. Works

### **Local Business Support your Historical Society in 2022**

We thank our local businesses that have made a significant contribution to our operating costs by advertising their businesses in our Remarkable People of Freedom Calendar. We encourage you to do business with them.

G. W. Brooks and Son, Inc  
Terri Brooks Watercolors & Pastels  
Calumet Lutheran Camp & Conference Center  
Gerard Constantino – Constantino Real Estate  
Beth Day, LMT – Massage Therapy  
Exit Realty Leaders – Grace Brooks  
James Farinella & Sons: Building and  
Remodeling  
Freedom House Antiques  
Freedom Village Store  
Green Mountain Furniture, Inc.  
Hatfield's B & B – Pat Hatfield  
Inn at Crystal Lake

Max's Restaurant & Pub at the Snowvillage Inn  
McConkey & Associates  
Barbara McEvoy, Freedom Gallery  
Minuteman Press  
REMAX Presidential – Paul Wheeler, Realtor  
Sentinel Financial – Paul Olzerowicz  
The Spot – A Pizza – Deli – Convenience Store  
Thrivent Financial - Sarah Willey Groleau  
Waddell & Reed Financial Advisers – Majorie L.  
Amico

**Freedom Historical Society, 28 Old Portland Rd, PO Box 548, Freedom NH 03836.**

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Margie's Lunch 2022



Freedom Historical Society Float, FOHW 2022  
Old Signs of Freedom

Freedom Historical Society, 28 Old Portland Rd, PO Box 548, Freedom NH 03836.

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### HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AND DONATIONS: "Preserving Freedom's Past for Future Generations"

#### **Membership:**

☐ Leadership \$250 ☐ Sponsoring \$150 ☐ Contributor \$75 ☐ Family \$35 ☐ Individual \$15  
☐ Senior/Student. \$10 ☐ Patron/Lifetime. \$500 ☐ Heritage Circle \$1,000 ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Donations:**

I'd like to make an addition donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Please specify project if you wish:

☐ General Operating ☐ Building Renovation. ☐ Preservation Supplies ☐ Programs ☐ Museum Collection ☐ Exhibits ☐

Memorial/Tribute Gift in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes, I'd like to know more about volunteering! ☐ Yes, you may publish my name as a member in the newsletter

Please make check payable to Freedom Historical Society & mail to: Freedom Historical Society, P.O. Box 528, Freedom, NH 03836

Freedom Historical Society  
P.O. Box 548  
Freedom NH 03836

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