

# h e a d l i n e s

## 22 reflections for 2022

By all accounts, 2021 was one of the most transformative years in the history of Heritage Hall Museum and Archives. A series of major developments during the year combined to help position our organization on a course that strengthens our mission of preserving, educating and fostering appreciation for the rich history of the greater Freeman community in years to come.

Here is a list of 22 aspects of museum/archive life:

**1.** In 2021 we took the final steps to become an independent organization. We gained non-profit status from the state of South Dakota and 501(c)(3) status, which means donors can deduct contributions made to us. This opens new doors for grant and funding opportunities. We also signed the lease with Freeman Academy for use of the property that is home to our museum. We appreciate our shared history with FJC/FA over the years, but we are



Linden Graber, Marnette (Ortman) D. Hofer, Cheryl Koch and Nathan Epp watch as Donovan Friesen and Lee Brockmueller sign the lease between HHM&A and Freeman Academy in May.



*This view of our museum at the end of 2021 featuring a bold new look reflects the wide range of improvements at our museum, made possible with strong support from members, involvement of volunteers and a dedicated board and staff.*

excited about our new beginning and all the possibilities before us.

**2.** There is no bigger symbol of this “new beginning” than the exterior facelift that emerged this summer with support from a handful of individuals and a grant from the Freeman Community Foundation. The transformation included new paint, rain gutters, new carpet for our exterior entrance and a large metal sign mounted between stone pillars.

**3.** Transformation was also apparent inside. An early 2021 project included rearranging the transportation and agricultural exhibits in the Unruh-Tieszen Wing. We created the “Graber Service Station,” modeled after the 1930-40s Freeman College Service Station. And we converted lighting in the wing to LEDs that offer truer and brighter colors and energy efficiency.

**4.** Restoration, cleaning and painting began at the historic Deckert House, which was moved to its new location in 2020. Staff and

volunteers repaired/replaced portions of the exterior and began painting the exterior. Plans are to complete the exterior and totally refresh the interior in 2022. That will include an interactive kiosk which will share history of this house.

**5.** We completed major renovations at the Bethel Church – including lighting and wiring. We plan to complete a similar project at the Johannesthal Church and begin work at the Diamond Valley School this year.

**6.** In early 2021, South Dakota Public Broadcasting photographed some of our historical exhibits and artifacts as part of an upcoming segment of Dakota Life. Freeman was featured as the “host city” in the program that aired in February. We were thrilled to help them tell Freeman’s story.

**7.** One of the most visible interior changes began with painting the walls in the front area of the museum that

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### Heritage Hall Museum & Archives

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## The Director's Perspective

Since coming to Heritage Hall Museum & Archives in 2015, I've been gathering the history of this museum and its collection. It has not been easy. Apparently, those intent on preserving the history of this community didn't bother to record their efforts. I have hunted through a hodge-podge of meeting minutes, letters, reports, financials, newspaper articles, photographs, and anything else I can think of to piece together our fascinating history.

From the 1912-13 Freeman College catalogue: "A Museum of Geology and Minerology was begun by a friend of the college last winter, and very freely the donations came flowing in, so that now we have a helpful collection of specimens along that line."

In the late 1930s, Freeman native Charles Kauffman's decision to take his home museum to Bethel College in Kansas spurred a renewed interest in a Freeman community museum. From the "Freeman Junior College Bulletin," Nov. 27, 1940: "When the Kauffman Museum was taken to Kansas last spring, Mr. Kauffman donated a number of articles and specimens [to us]. This donation is the nucleus around which we are building our collection."

From a 1968 "Freeman Courier" article: "The major source of the collection is twofold. On the one hand is the material given by the late Chas J. Kauffman. The other major source comes from the late Jona P. L. Graber, whose entire collection of mounted specimens was given."

From a Sept. 26, 1974 letter from Delbert Kaufman, FJC Alumni Assoc. President: "One of the best ways we can promote our heritage is through an adequate Museum and Historical Library. The local Historical Society is working with us in making [this new facility] authentically serve the larger community as well as our constituency."

From a grant application dated January 8, 1975, for a new museum building: "Currently both the School Museum and the Historical Society storage space are filled to capacity. Community people are holding preserved machinery and other artifacts for the day when display space will be available." The grant was awarded and the building now known as Heritage Hall Museum was built.

Today, the museum has doubled in size and is overflowing with bits and pieces that tell the story of this community. We are humbled by the history. We are honored to have your support. We are inspired by the future that awaits.



Marnette D. (Ortman) Hofer  
Executive Director/  
Archivist

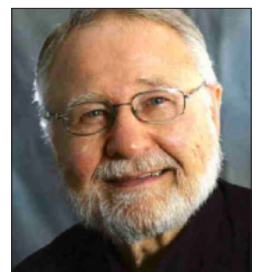
## Voices of Conscience exhibit on display here

Our museum is hosting a touring exhibit at the historic Bethel Church through April 24. "Voices of Conscience: Peace Witness in the Great War" was developed by the Kauffman Museum in North Newton, Kan. It documents the struggles and challenges for people of German ancestry who felt they could not support World War I. Stories include the deaths of the two South Dakota Hutterite men from Rockport Colony in 1918. The exhibit is included with the regular museum admission.

We're planning a related program at Pioneer Hall at 7:30 p.m. both Friday and Saturday, March 25-26. Dora Maendel of the Fairholme Hutterite Colony in Manitoba and Dr. Duane Stolfus, professor of communication at Goshen (Ind.) College and author of "Pacifists in Chains: The Persecution of Hutterites during the Great War" will present "On the Front Line of Conscience: An Account of Four Hutterites Imprisoned at Alcatraz." No admission will be charged for the evening program; donations will be accepted.

## Remembering Duane Schrag

We want to recognize the contributions of Duane C. Schrag, who died Nov. 10, 2021. He was 89. Duane spent most of his career teaching



high school English and German at Tripp. After his retirement, he began donating his time as archivist at our archives, and he was a part of the HHM&A staff until 2015. Duane enjoyed researching and writing about a variety of local stories and personalities, and his contributions to our archives have been and will continue to be very much appreciated.

### Our Mission

is to preserve, educate and foster appreciation for the diverse natural and cultural history of the greater Freeman area, settled largely by Germans from Russia in the 1870s.

**HERITAGE HALL**  
*Museum*  
& ARCHIVES

PO Box 693 • 880 S Cedar St.  
Freeman, SD 57029 • (605) 925-7545

### HHM&A Board of Directors

Donovan Friesen, chair  
Jeri Butkus, vice chair  
Jeanne Carter, secretary  
Cheryl Koch, treasurer  
Jeff Buechler, Chantel Hofer, Norma Hofer, Marlan Kaufman, Kevin Waltner, Mary Waltner, Terry Waterman

### Staff

Marnette D. (Ortman) Hofer, executive director/archivist  
Terry Quam, curator  
Brian Skinner, facilities manager  
Tim L. Waltner, communication/education coordinator  
Monica Hofer, volunteer mercantile mgr.





*Workers install a beam as part of the renovation of the lobby/mercantile.*

formerly included the “Fine Arts Gallery.” In fall, the block wall on the east side of the lobby was removed, dramatically opening up the entire area. That enabled the mercantile to expand and created a more welcoming space for guests. We replaced an outdated furnace with a new, more efficient model. Work continued in January with installing a firewall above the archives and Arrival on the Prairie Gallery. That offers safety, energy efficiency and is more welcoming for guests. LED track lighting will replace the current fluorescent lighting.

**8.** Less visible to most has been the ongoing activity in the archives. Projects have included identifying and indexing the Willard Waltner negative collection, identifying old photos, cataloguing books and documents, and organizing our impressive collection of obituaries.

**9.** Last spring, Dr. Nathan Bates, a University of South Dakota professor, began a year-long exploration of our archives, researching the local use of German in the early decades of the community. He plans to incorporate use of our archives for students studying German at USD, highlighting the history of the early German population in South Dakota.

**10.** We participated in the South Dakota Chislic Festival in July, including a presentation about the history of chislic by executive director Marnette D. (Ortman) Hofer. We offered premier parking and enjoyed a steady stream of visitors all day.

**11.** Last year was a big year for expansion of our mercantile – in our display area, our inventory

and the growing number of local artisans we feature. In fall, Monica Hofer assumed the position of our volunteer mercantile manager. Her expertise, talents and skills are helping strengthen this important aspect of our museum.

**12.** We welcomed tour groups in 2021, including class reunions, the Freeman Fire Department, the Freeman Lions Club, residents of the Salem Home and Oakview Terrace, motorcycle and tractor groups. We look forward to more this year.

**13.** The rediscovery of a mosasaur fossil in our collection has sparked a total renovation of our Natural World Gallery. Board member Terry Waterman helped generate financial support from the Freeman Lions Club to create a model of this creature’s skull. In preparation for the refreshed gallery, curator Terry Quam has been cleaning the mounted birds and animals in our collection. We plan to unveil the new gallery later this spring.

**14.** Last year marked a return to a more “normal” year following the devastating impact of Covid-19 on museum activities. That included a gradual return of guests, the introduction of our summer “Family-Friendly Final Fridays” and extended hours for various community events. We also resumed programming with a look at the Blizzard of 1888 and presentations by Phyllis Schrag and Nathan Bates. We look forward to expanding programming in 2022.



*Tim L. Waltner shares details about the 1888 Blizzard in a program offered in September.*



*Brian Skinner moves a pulpit from the Kauffman Wing to its location in the new Faith Traditions Gallery.*

**15.** In fall we moved the fine arts exhibit to the Kauffman Wing and gathered the major elements for our new Faith Traditions Gallery. Located in this transformed area, the Faith Traditions Gallery will represent the stories of churches in the greater Freeman community and the faith central to the lives of those who arrived in the Dakota Territory nearly 150 years ago.

**16.** Last spring, we concluded that our plan to move a barn to the east side of the museum is not feasible at this time. We are now exploring other options for developing our farmstead in that space.

**17.** Our plans for the Kauffman Wing this year include replacing the fluorescent lights with LED lighting. We are also developing a major renovation of the entire exhibit area that we hope to begin in 2022.

**18.** In addition to increased visitor traffic last year, we saw a significant increase in broader community support of our museum; that includes involvement, memberships and business sponsorships.

**19.** We are increasing our promotional efforts this year, including reaching out to folks in the Lewis & Clark Campground area and expanding contacts with area schools as a resource and for field trips.

**20.** We’re expanding the technology elements in our museum. We have extended wi-fi throughout the museum, enabling the use of QR codes in our exhibits with plans to build our YouTube library to help tell our story.

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**21.** We are currently seeking a college intern to help with staffing this summer and to bring their expertise in specific areas that can bolster our

efforts.

**22.** We're thrilled that the national Voices of Conscience exhibit originally scheduled for 2020 is arriving in

February and will be at the Bethel Church through April. You can learn more on page 2 of this issue of "Headlines."

## Thank You

### To Our 2022 Heritage Hall Museum & Archives Members

Your support enables us to continue developing our museum.

**November 2021-January 2022**

**Ruby**

Duane Schrag, Freeman

**Platinum**

Dennis Epp, Freeman  
Charles & Diana Graber, Newton, Kan.  
Rachael Nealis Grant, Los Angeles, Calif.  
Steve & Janie Hofer, Energy, Texas  
Vernon J & Norma Hofer, Freeman  
Dawn Stahl, Freeman

**Gold**

Donovan & Sherryl Friesen, Freeman

**Silver**

Bill & Coleen Black, Elkhorn, Neb.  
Jim & Teresa Dick, Marion  
Johnny Graber, Freeman  
Bruce & Monica Hofer, Freeman  
Paul Jr. & Priscilla Hofer, Freeman  
Orville & Janelle Ortman, Marion  
Nathan Schrag, Marion  
Jorgiann Waltner, Minneapolis, Minn.

**Bronze**

Anonymous (2)  
Marlow & Lorriane Deckert, Freeman

Freeman Shopping Center, Freeman  
Harriet Haggett, Wickenburg, Ariz.  
Velda Krengel, Phoenix, Ariz.  
Cheryl Lehmann, Sioux Falls  
William & Sally Little, Mililani, Hawaii  
Ellen Ortman, Marion  
Leron & Carol Peters, Omaha, Neb.  
Larry & Edie Tschetter, Freeman  
Keith & Sharon Waltner, Freeman

**Conductor**

Anonymous  
Bud & Delores Arbeiter, Marion  
Geraldine Berg, Marion  
Arden & Marilyn Dewald, Freeman  
Phil & Judy Glanzer, Sioux Falls  
Glenn Roth Law Office, Freeman  
Cecil & Susan Graber, Denver, Colo.  
Cordell & Clara Graber, Freeman  
Darryll & Linda Graber, Renton, Wash.

Lerace Graber, Freeman  
Jake Jr. & Irene Gross, Freeman  
Perry Gross, Huntley, Ill.  
Dallas L. & Cindy Hofer, Sioux Falls  
Kerry & Lori Hofer, Freeman  
Ron & Kathy Lehman Hofer, Sioux Falls  
Amos B. Hoover, Ephrata, Pa.  
Leslie Kehn, Savage, Minn.

Sharon Kleinsasser, Freeman  
Donna Lehmann, Freeman  
Brian & Wendy Miller, Hurley  
Larry & Barb Olesen, Hurley  
Will & Sherilyn Ortman, Marion  
Ted & Marlene Pidde, Freeman  
Mary Schmidt, Freeman  
Flora & Bill Skillern, Boise, Idaho  
Leo & Blanche Tschetter, Arlington  
Loren & Carolyn Waltner, Freeman  
Rachel Winters, Tulsa, Okla.

**Shopkeeper**

Evelyn Blum, Aberdeen  
Harris Haar, Wagner  
Todd & Marnette Hofer, Dolton  
Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman

S. Roy Kaufman, Freeman  
Cheryl Koch, Sioux Falls  
Rozella Pearson, Rochester, MN  
Kelsey & Brett Pidde, Freeman  
Lyle & Lois Preheim, Freeman  
Terry Quam, Menno  
Reed & Susan Schrag, Freeman  
Dennis Shaltanis, Ankeny, Iowa  
Maynard & Barb Yoder, Freeman

**Homesteader**













Steve & Linda Graber, Freeman  
Myron Koerner, Freeman  
Dennis Lehmann, Freeman

Leann Schulz-Thomas, Marion  
Ruby Waltner, Freeman  
Shirley Waltner, Freeman  
Glen Wollman, Freeman

*We have received several honor and memorial gifts in recent months.*

**Gifts in Memory/Honor of:**

*Raymond & Frances Becker*  
by Bill & Coleen Black  
*Eldon Berg*  
by Geraldine Berg  
*Jacob B. & Barbara Hofer*  
by Ron & Kathy Lehman Hofer  
*Melvin & Emma Hofer*  
by Dallas L. & Cindy Hofer and Lyndon & Barbie Hofer  
*Jerome E. Kleinsasser*  
by Leo & Blanche Tschetter  
*Otto & Sieglinda Preheim and Samuel & Lila Mae Janzen*  
by Lyle & Lois Janzen Preheim  
*Allen Schmidt*  
by Mary Schmidt  
*Duane Schrag*  
by Brian & Wendy Miller  
by Ellen Ortman  
by Will & Sherilyn Ortman  
by Flora & Bill Skillern

											
<b>HOMESTEADER</b>	<b>SHOPKEEPER</b>	<b>CONDUCTOR</b>	<b>BRONZE</b>	<b>SILVER</b>	<b>GOLD</b>	<b>PLATINUM</b>	<b>EMERALD</b>	<b>RUBY</b>	<b>SAPPHIRE</b>	<b>DIAMOND</b>	<b>FOUNDER</b>
\$30	\$50	\$100	\$250	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$75,000+

*All members receive annual admission to the museum and archives, our quarterly newsletter and special pricing for museum events.*  
**Shopkeepers:** 2 annual patron passes; **Conductors:** 4 annual patron passes; **Bronze:** 6 annual patron passes;  
**Silver & above:** Additional passes and personal tours for six guests upon request. **Recognition for sponsoring businesses.**

*"A visit to a museum is a search for beauty, truth, and meaning in our lives. Go to museums as often as you can."*  
Maira Kalman

We value your ongoing support through your memberships, donations and volunteer time. Your contributions enable us to continue and to expand our mission of sharing our community's history.

### 2022 Heritage Hall Museum & Archives Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Preference:  Paper edition  Digital edition  Both Digital/Paper editions

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