

CHEQUAQUET LOG

The Newsletter of the Centerville Historical Museum
www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.org



Recapping 2019 - a busy year at the museum.

When one looks back at the museum in 2019, it is easy to see that great effort is expended to bring this quality institution, the heart of Centerville, to all, visitor and local alike. The effort shown can be subtle, for many people never see the work and decisions, nor the little nor the large thoughts and physical labor of those who happily contribute to the museum. So, starting off, a round of applause, please, for the many who give their talents, their time and their dollars, so that history can continue to thrive. What would we do without the museum and without its story to tell?

Think about it.

Among the new displays this past year was the popular children's and women's white clothing exhibit on the second floor. Next door, and just as delightful was the change from an adult bedroom display to a 19th century little girl's room, so cleverly put together with its additional showing of dolls and toys and clothing of the day.

The candy display in the Phinney Room was an amazing put-together of the history of candy, complete with fashions of the decade and board games, all surrounded by real boxes and cellophane wrapped candy, as many as could be found to round out the candy history from past to present. Visitors laughed when they found candy, thought not produced anymore, still around and they vowed to hunt up that bar of chocolate or licorice dot box. Thanks to the 1856 Country Store in Centerville and Candy Co. in So. Yarmouth who donated the candy samples.

New also was the Weapons of Death, exquisitely presenting 18th and 19th century armaments from 1730 through 1875, along with the accessories that accompanied them, a hit especially with gentlemen visitors and wide-eyed children.

Another feature was the 150th anniversary of Centerville Library, depicting the inside of the Hallett Variety Store,

where the first library books were available to the public before the first town library was built.

Also new is the Trade Card display in the Ayling Room,



another popular result of research and items together telling the story of early advertising at its beginning.

Of course, the many events put on in 2019 was impressive. From Jane Hattemer-Stringer's one woman show, to the annual yard sale, the museum put on a varied lot of fundraisers and entertainments that were fun and worthwhile. Included was the Saturday Movie Series, well-themed with both humorous and serious films, a new and well-attended Halloween happening, with children's events during the day and haunted house walking tours after dark.

Education programs for large and small children from across the Cape were held during the week when classes came to see history for real rather than in lines in a book.

And who can forget food! There was Oktoberfest with German music, the Harvest Dinner, a the Country and Western Cookout with smooth dance moves and music.

To all, 2019, whoever you are, all you do and enjoy is appreciated. Thank you.

W H A T ' S C O M I N G

A PEAK AT WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE MUSEUM IN 2020

There are numerous ideas and event plans going through the heads of the museum's volunteers, officers and members these days. As of this writing there are already dates set for established and possible happenings. Novel displays are also in the making that will wow visitors and members alike. 2020 is going to glow!

It's going to glow due to not one but two haunted house evening walks along Main Street, complete with lanterns and tales of spirits and sightings. Last year's tour was so popular there was a waiting line outside the museum for this new venture.

Each month, beginning in February, when the museum reopens, there is at least one event, whether popularly repeated or new. Anthony Ambrogio will again present his spring series of themed movies on Saturday afternoons at 1 pm. These movies will run most Saturdays throughout the year. March will feature a Girl Scout program called Playing the Past. On the 28th will be a Murder Mystery Theatre, a first-time evening organized by actress Jane Hattemer-Stringer that will be original and certain to be enjoyed by all. April is up in the air but may feature a Wine and Art night; stay tuned as the calendar is updated frequently.

May 7th is for our lovely ladies. It will be a Ladies Night Out, with pampering in mind. June 27th is the return of the fantastic Country and Western Cookout-Yahoo! On July 16th is scheduled the first evening Ghost Tour of the year. Don't miss this. August's schedule is in preparation with some new programs and entertainment features. We'll let you know so keep in touch. September 12th is Bella Mangiare, our Italian dinner night with live music.

October will again have its Halloween Day for children on the 17th; its second Ghost Tour will be on the 22nd, again in the evening hours. Time to visit the spirit world. And in November, on the 7th, the very popular and fun Harvest Dinner will be held.

Along with all the festivities planned and still to be planned is the restaging of some of the museum rooms. There are many fantastic ideas rolling around in our volunteers' heads. Without revealing anything, there will be new displays in the Keeping Room, the Phinney Room and other areas, both upstairs and down. Research is going on so all is accurate, rooms are being redesigned, clothing and items are being decided upon; it is all so exciting that we can hardly wait for all you to come and see the changes and let us know how you like them.

We can use all the help we can get. So do come lend a hand. No experience needed. Whether moving items, painting, thinking up ideas to add to displays, further explain the time period or whether the blue dress will look better than the green, it is all so enjoyable. Everyone is welcome to feel the fun of contributing, to laugh with all sorts of friendly and helpful volunteers. We'd love to have you.

Thanks to all who do give their time and experience, whether amateur or professional, from our business contributors to our gardeners, house painters and roofers, our artists, our wonderful volunteers and especially those who come and visit a tribute to history.



New exhibit in development which will open in March, 'Speakeasy' a look into 1920s prohibition.

V O L U N T E E R I N G

A BOARD MEMBER WHO HAS FAITHFULLY FOLLOWED LONG FAMILY TRADITIONS

Bebe Brock, who has been on the Board of Trustees for several years, delights in using the past to benefit the present. For instance, her first name is Melvina, the fifth in her family to bear that moniker. Secondly, both her parents had been volunteers at the museum; Bebe has volunteered for the last ten years. Thirdly, Bebe resides in a home on Centerville's Main Street, the fifth generation in her family to do so.

As a board member, Bebe is its historian. She is perfect for that role. "I love history and genealogy," she states. "If an inquiry comes in on a person or a building or an area, I look it up and find the answer." Recently a man stopped by the museum to ask a question about his home, one of the oldest in Centerville. She found information in just a few minutes and wrote it down for the visitor. Only once was she stumped when a woman asked her about a small street in Hyannis where the woman had grown up and the street could not be located.

At the museum Bebe is master of many things. She is an artist at needlework. Clothing at the museum, though carefully packed away from the elements, is subject to the replacement of missing hooks and eyes or needy buttons. Tiny splits or tears appear that need careful mending with miniscule stitches almost invisible to the eye or even a backing put in place to keep delicate cloth such as silk and muslin from further damage. The work can be tedious, but Bebe has the skill to make any repair almost invisible.

Bebe is also adept at knitting. For a Civil War exhibit, she knit an example of socks for soldiers and for a WW I display she crafted handwarmers for those overseas. She makes sweaters, caps and gloves for Christmas fairs. "I learned to knit and do counter cross-stitch from my mother. I made my own clothes in high school; my mother did all but crocheting."

History plays a large part in her life. She is also a board member of the Marstons Mills Historical Society. Her main interest, however, is genealogy. For sixty years she has searched for her own family connections and for others, especially those from Centerville. Her family dates back to the Mayflower and names such as John and Priscilla Alden, John and Elizabeth Howland, Miles Standish, Rachel Warren and James Chiltern and his daughter Mary are part of her family tree.

"I like genealogy," explains Bebe. "It's learning about your ancestors. In some cases the husband worked and his wife stayed home with the children. Then you find a woman in your past who was captured by Indians, along with a boy and a nurse, as the woman had just given birth. She ended up scalping her captives and turned the scalps in for bounty money in Boston." This true story was found in Bebe's genealogical research.

As a citizen of Centerville, as a volunteer, as a board member and as a skilled asset in so many ways, Bebe Brock is appreciated and admired for the expertise she gives to us all.



I N T E R E S T I N G H I S T O R Y

THE ZIPPER

How can people in today's world live without zippers? All of us have at least one zipper on a piece of clothing and probably one on a handbag or a wallet as well.

Yet the zipper is a fairly new invention. This appliance, known also as a zip, dinky, zip fastener and clasp locker is a device to bind edges of some sort of flexible material together.

Elias Howe, best known for his invention of the sewing machine in 1851, was the first person to think of a tool for binding clothing other than thread, leather or wool. However, he put his idea aside when he found he was more interested in his sewing machine invention.

Then, in 1891, Whitcomb Judson came up with a metal closure which he called a "clasp locker", a sort of hook and eye shoe fastener. He introduced his new product at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Alas, his ingenious closure idea did not go over well, though it did catch the eye of fellow inventors.

Several years passed before a machine was introduced that would pull metal pieces together in order to fasten or close something. Its inventor, in 1913, was a Swedish-American engineer, one Gideon Sundbach. Sundbach worked at the Universal Fastener Company in Hoboken, New Jersey, and his patent was granted for the fastener in 1917.

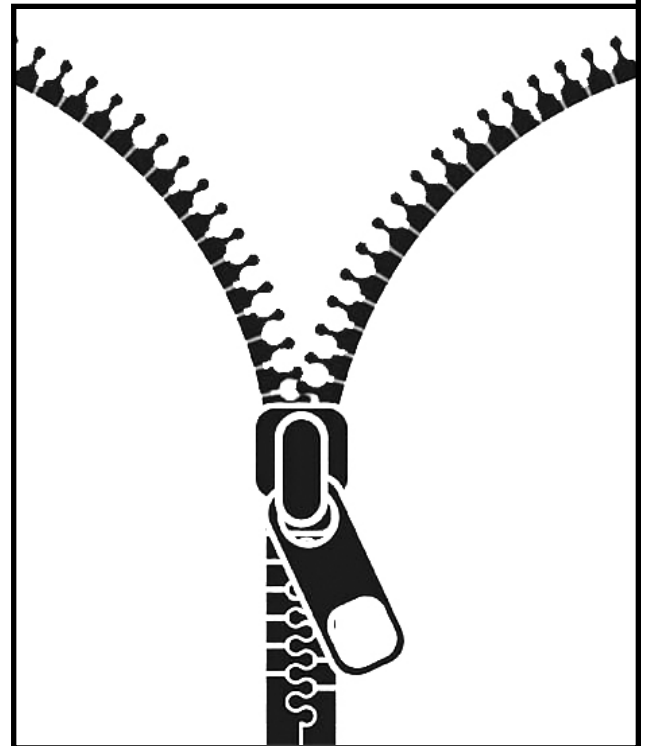
The B.F. Goodrich Company used Sundbach's invention for galoshes and tobacco pouches and coined the word "zipper" for its easier closing than buckles or endless buttons and holes.

By the 1930's zippers were becoming common in children's clothing as a way for little ones to dress themselves. Also, men's button flies were slowly being replaced with the quicker and easier metal fasteners.

Eventually the two-way zipper appeared as did the plastic zipper. As the decades have passed, this lowly but important new creation has claimed its place universally in clothing, luggage and other bags, shoes, sporting goods and camping gear. It has also gained wide acceptance for use by people with certain disabilities who, for instance, have trouble using buttons due to problematic hands and arms.

Even so, in its early days, the clergy largely condemned the zipper because it was thought taking off clothes more quickly due to zipper efficiency would lead to promiscuity.

Next time a zipper is used, think of the handiness this invention has bestowed. Zip up or zip down, it's a modern convenience made almost trivial for its widespread use. Even the word "zip" has entered our vocabulary as one "zips lips" to keep a secret.



MUSEUM MATINEE MOVIES

The Centerville Historical Museum's first movie series of 2020 explores three different themes/periods: Courtroom Dramas, Makes/Remakes, and Films of the 1950s.

All shows are at 1:00 p.m., Saturdays. Admission, popcorn and candy are free. (Donations gladly accepted.) After-film discussion with Anthony Ambrogio, for anyone who cares to stay.

Courtroom dramas have been a staple of the cinema, especially once the movies learned to talk. You can find a lot of talking in the courtroom (and a lot of drama—especially in the movies, which leave out all the boring bits of a real trial). This sample of courtroom films gives us a pair of pre-Code examples, a couple of classic 1930s pictures, a courtroom drama that shows up in the middle of a medical movie series, and a couple of classic 1960s pictures on the subject.

Double Feature:

Saturday, February 22, 1PM: *The Trial of Vivienne Ware* (1932) 56 m. Released 05/01/32

Leonard Maltin and others have praised this movie for how fast it moves. Joan Bennett is the title character, on trial for the murder of her unfaithful fiancé. She is defended by her ex-beau (Donald Cook).

Saturday, February 22, 2PM: *Ann Carver's Profession* (1933) 71 m. Released 06/09/33

Fresh-out-of-law-school Ann Carver (Fay Wray) weds Bill Graham (Gene Raymond) and begins their married life as a housewife. Circumstances allow her to become a high-powered attorney, making more money than her husband, which puts a strain on the marriage. When Bill is accused of murder, Ann defends him.

Saturday, February 29, 1PM: *Fury* (1936) 92 m. Released 06/06/36

Spencer Tracy is a drifter, wrongly accused of a crime. When a lynch mob burns down the jail in which he's being held, he's thought to be dead. A courtroom case against the vigilantes gives him his chance for revenge... Sylvia Sidney, Walter Brennan, and Bruce Cabot co-star in this first American feature film of the great German director Fritz Lang.

Saturday, March 7, 1PM: *They Won't Forget* (1937) 95 m. Released 10/09/37

Lana Turner, as Mary Clay, makes a splash in her first feature-film role (this is why they called her "the sweater girl"). When she's murdered, an ambitious attorney (Claude Rains) sees his chance to make a name for himself by railroading the girl's from-up-North teacher (Edward Norris) for the crime.

Saturday, March 14, 1PM: *The People vs. Dr. Kildare* (1941) 78 m. Released 05/02/41

Dr. Kildare (Lew Ayres) saves the life of an ice skater (Bonita Granville), but, even though her leg heals, she still can't walk and sues him for malpractice. This seventh entry in the popular MGM series also features series regulars Lionel Barrymore as Dr. Gillespie, Laraine Day as Nurse Mary Lamont, Alma Kruger as Nurse Molly Byrd, and Red Skelton as orderly Vernon Briggs.

March 21: No Movie

Saturday, March 28, 1PM: *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961) 179 m. Released 12/19/61

1948: Spencer Tracy heads a three-judge panel considering the guilt of four Nazi judges (including Burt Lancaster). Richard Widmark is the prosecuting attorney; Maximilian Schell (who won an Oscar) is the defense attorney; Montgomery Clift and Judy Garland are two of the witnesses. The picture also won a Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar.

Saturday, April 4, 1PM: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) 129 m. Released 12/25/62

Alabama, 1932: Gregory Peck is small-town lawyer Atticus Finch, a widower raising two small children. (He won a Best Actor Oscar for his performance.) He is called upon to defend a black man (Brock Peters) accused of raping a white woman.

April 11 No Movie

The remainder of April to June schedule (Makes/Remakes and 1950s Films) will be posted in our next Chequaquet Log or go to our website for the full schedule www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.com

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