

# CHEQUAQUET LOG

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



## WE ARE OPEN AND HOPE TO SEE YOU

AND HOW HAS EVERYONE'S SPRING AND SUMMER GONE SO FAR?

It is probably fair to say that the year 2020 has gone by in a highly unforeseen way. For instance, the school systems are currently on hold. Will students return to classrooms or will at-home schooling continue to be mandated?

What to do is a giant dilemma for us all. Do we continue in isolation or do we trust our masks, rely on social distancing and keep muttering, "Keep calm" over and over mantra-like, just to get through the day, to get through the day, to get through the day.

Hmmmmmm!. What have we been doing for the past several months. Yes, cleaning out closets and wiping down woodwork has been a chore, but it did take up time and it may, secretly, have felt rather satisfying. Helping Talullah with her ABC's and her numbers has been a mental challenge, for mom or dad, not for the kid. It has taken fortitude to stay awake while helping the teacher with student monitoring. Admit it, though, sometimes it is fun to view Talullah and her emerging personality more often these days.

Long walks or jogs have become mandatory. And guess what. Walks are cheaper than that gym membership and it is great to be outdoors, plus it is good exercise. Handclaps for sticking to it. It has been pleasant to watch summer arrive and see the osprey nests occupied again, the continuation of bright blooming flowers and the green luscious leaves of

our trees once again. Long forgotten recipes have been revived. Sometimes little hands have been a big help in the doing, sometimes not, but oh, there have been laughs along with spills and the results have mostly tasted yummy.



And pooch has been in dog heaven. He gets taken out for walks all the time now because anything to get out of the house is paramount. Oh, and runs to pick up pre-ordered meals has been the new style in restaurant food. How has that worked out?

In touch with high school friends not even thought of in the last decades? Why not? The computer and cell phone are a click away. Homemade beer brewing is popular. Online cultural courses are on the uptick. Volunteers have begun sprucing up the museum's areas and new displays are smashing. Way to go, guys! People revived sewing skills by making masks. Reading a good book has been relaxing. Helping in food pantries and with those in need has taken priority in the community. Congratulations! The imagination and commitment to good works and kindness has greatly overcome sacrifices and inconveniences.

Wear a mask, keep hands clean, social distance. These requests are simple. From the community's heart, the Centerville Historical Museum will be delighted to see you.

# MEMORY LANE by Lois Lane, staff writer

## WHAT THE 50's WAS LIKE!

Yes, this is a trip down memory lane. How many of these tidbits do you remember?

Fast food places were rare. The family, except on an occasional restaurant venture, ate at home. Mom cooked dinner and the family sat down at the table when Dad came home from work. We children ate what was put on our plate and were allowed to sit there until we liked it. Then we had to ask permission to leave the table. We even had cloth napkins on our laps.

Families did not have credit cards. Sears Roebuck and some local stores came up with their own type of charge card or credit, but most payments were in cash or by check. Automobiles were made in America. Studebakers and Packards, Fords, Chevys and Plymouths were typical names. Some high school boys had second or third generation hand-me-down cars; rarely did Dad pay for them. One had to work and save for such an extravagance.

Brownie cameras or Kodaks were fine, with single shot flashbulbs, but German Leicas were well respected, brought back home after World War II's end.



Until the English tri-wheel three-speed bicycles arrived in the USA, a one-speed two-wheeled heavy bike was the mode of transportation. There were also roller skates that clamped to the shoe and had a key to tighten the clamps. Speaking of shoes, leather shoes were worn to school and church, and sneakers, Keds or Converse, were the only brand of sneakers, worn for play. Winter sledding was done on sturdy Flexible Flyers, which were wood with metal runners and movable handlebars. A piece of Mom's clothesline helped pull those sleds uphill after runs.

Television was not a household mode of entertainment until after 1950. There were three channels broadcasting in black, gray and white. Most programs were live. Remember "dead" cowboys still breathing on camera? Once a live Dennis James was extolling Pall Mall cigarettes for a commercial. Unfortunately, as he sat on a stool and took a puff, the ad was for Lucky Strikes. Oooooops!

Pizza did not become popular right away and at first it was served in Italian restaurants and eaten with a knife and fork. Other ethnic restaurants were rare. Soda came in glass bottles.

The milkman delivered milk in glass bottles with cream on top and cheese and eggs to the door, supermarkets had not appeared yet and in many communities, Mom had her local grocer. She would call or go to a small market, put in her order and the order was delivered by the end of the day. Paperboys flung folded papers on the lawn, routinely missing the front porch, and knocked on doors to collect payment on Saturdays.



There were ice cube trays made of aluminium with a pull handle to get the ice cubes out, mimeograph paper, S & H green stamps, 45 RPM records, Howdy Doody and Hopalong Cassidy, butch wax, and diners with tableside jukeboxes. Soccer and Lacrosse were unheard of, but Friday night football and farm team baseball were hugely popular. Yep, time appeared slower in the 50's, it moves on, but fond memories remain.

# INTERESTING HISTORY

## MAGICAL PRODUCTS OF THE 19TH CENTURY - SOME WORKED, MORE WERE BOGUS.

When Madam C. J. Walker began selling her own treatments for hair problems, she had no idea how successful she would become. Born in Louisiana in 1867 to freed slaves, and known as Sarah Breedlove, it was not until she was in her thirties and was herself suffering from baldness, that she concocted a formula using beeswax, copper sulfate and sulfur to ease her plight.

So effective was her product that she sold it door to door to other black customers. By 1908, and married to journalist Charles J. Walker, this woman entrepreneur launched a beauty school to train other women to sell and earn income from Mrs. Walker's Wonderful Hair Grower and other healthful inventions of her own.

The effects of her endeavors were well respected and when Madame Walker died in 1919, she was known as one who endeavored to give opportunities to black women to thrive monetarily through their sales of her valued goods. Her fortune would be worth over \$10 million today.



Not all home-grown cures were successful. Others tried, with some failing and some succeeding in their efforts. Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup was an over the counter teething mixture from 1849 to 1930. Thousands of children died after taking this morphine laced syrup.

Thomas W. Dyatt, from 1807 to 1837, was the first patent medicine purveyor of items such as lozenges and elixirs to the public from his wholesale drug and medicine warehouse. He amassed a fortune from his ventures during a quarter century of business.

By 1862, advertiser Benjamin Brandreth started investing over \$100,000 a year for the next twenty years, mostly on his Vegetable Universal Pills, marketed primarily as a laxative. His income zoomed to today's value of \$10 million a year in that time period.

A version of a product introduced in 1875, still on the market today and manufactured by Numark Brands, is Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made with root and seed extracts and alcohol for "female complaints."

By 1899, F. J. Cheney had figured out that newspapers made \$20 million a year in advertising revenue from selling patent medicine ads, including his own. He was finally investigated in 1911, when the government successfully accused him of "misbranding products."

Then there was Madame Yale, who figured out that beautiful women were treated better than ordinary ones. She was either a visionary or a consummate scam artist. Known for her beauty, Madame Yale, born Mayberg, pushed multiple creams in the late 1800's, using her own visage. Ultimately her sales pitch and goopy creams were proved bogus and after two decades of fame, her name and face goods disappeared quickly into obscurity.

Helpful or bunk, the tonic boom industry thrived in the 19th century until health and safety standards were eventually regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and more healthful products prevailed.



Trade card illustrations are from the current museum exhibit *History of the Trade Card*

# P R O H I B I T I O N

The museum exhibit *Speakeasy* covers many aspects of the 100th anniversary of Prohibition, this feature is -

## SMUGGLERS, BOOTLEGGERS AND RUM RUNNING ON CAPE COD

The major destination of liquor bound for Cape Cod during Prohibition was RUM ROW. Liquor was also smuggled from Boston and New Bedford to the Cape by highway and boats. Rum Running was a big business and Cape Cod, with its coves and waterways, became a popular bootlegging area. Ships with liquor would anchor 12 miles off the coast just outside of federal jurisdiction on what was called rum row. Cape Cod fishermen would sail up, transact with the rumrunners and then take the liquor to waiting trucks on land.

The following are some of the transactions and stories of the rum running involving Cape Cod:

A Nova Scotia sea captain sailed his ship near Provincetown's Highland Light. The ship was seized and towed to Boston. Its captain tried to bribe the Coast Guard with free champagne to let him go. When the bribe failed, he tried to cut the tow rope with a knife before being subdued.

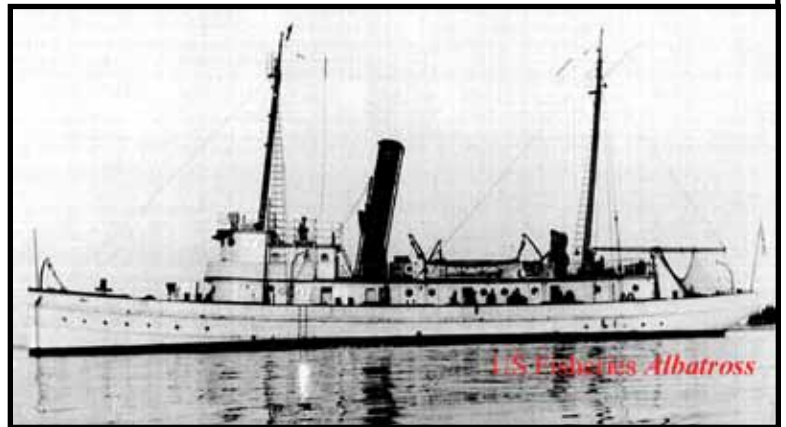
A nautical chart, found on a rum runner belonging to a smuggler named Reardon, listed liquor "drops" at Waquoit, Popponessett Beach, Cotuit, Point Isabella, East Bay, Centerville, Hyannis, Hyannisport, Parket's Neck and Harwichport.

On one occasion 2 small boats, with skiffs attached, waited outside Cotuit harbor one night for a rum boat from Boston. Before the rum boat arrived, the Coast Guard arrived. The smugglers in the smaller boats hailed the arriving boat thinking it was the Boston delivery. Their boats and skiffs were seized and the men arrested. Their error in the dark was understandable, since the Coast Guard boat was a former rum runner which had been seized and converted to government use.

Liquor was stored on an estate in Craigsville during the winter. One winter, a Portuguese couple, a cook and chauffeur, decided to not leave their summer cottage on the estate. Smugglers scared them by firing guns outside the cottage and beating chains against the windows in order to get at the stored cache of liquor.

The US Fisheries in Woods Hole had a research ship named the Albatross. That was the same name as a known rum running ship. When the Coast Guard at sea came upon the well-marked Fisheries ship, guardsmen fired on it.

Cape fishermen often smuggled liquor ashore from Rum Row. This was done in winter when fish were not biting. Local people always knew when one of their own was engaged in smuggling. They knew because his tab at the grocery store was always paid up all winter long.



Smugglers used Provincetown as a base of operations. They had short-wave radios there to contact Boston and ships. Once, the Coast Guard rescued the crew of a ship wrecked off Race Point. The agency knew it was a rum ship, but their mission was also to save lives at sea.

Vineyard Sound witnessed a famed rum chase. This was when 3 Coast Guard boats finally caught the NOLA. It was a rum runner with armored plate, bullet-proof port-holes, and 3 motors which could give it a speed of 40 knots even while carrying 800 cases of liquor. Three smugglers were wounded in the gunfire before the NOLA was captured.

Prohibition ended with the repeal of the 18th Amendment in 1933. A black market continued for several years, as smugglers could still make a profit by not charging the new liquor excise taxes.

# A C T I V I T I E S



Special thanks goes to the Osterville Garden Club for flower plantings around the museum sign and the walk way urns.



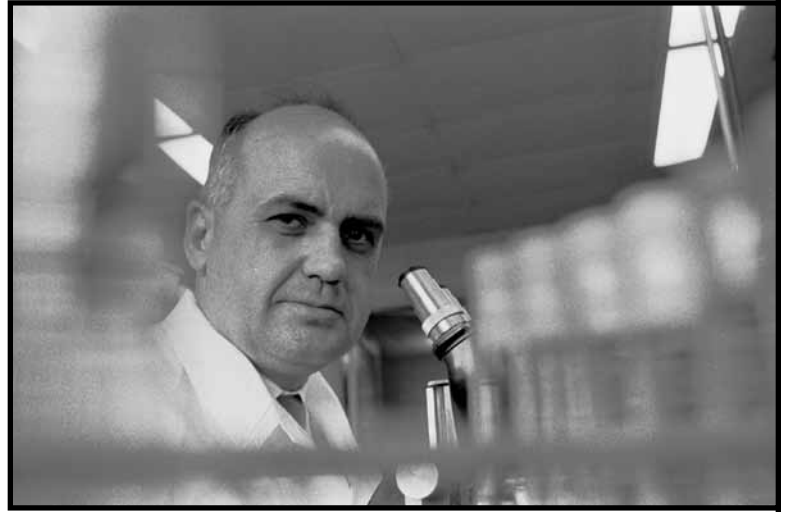
In late June we had several volunteers come over to spruce up the outside of the museum, which included a fair amount of touch up painting.

# E V E N T S F R O M O U R P A S T

## THE FLU PANDEMIC OF 1957-58: ONE MAN'S QUEST TO HALT ITS FURY

It is likely that many remember the flu bug that sickened us from the fall of 1957 to the spring of 1958. Most who contracted the virus were flattened completely by its effects. Many died, but many survived, only to see history repeating itself with covid-19 this year. Both diseases raged quickly while World Health Organization experts attempted to assess the magnitude in order to control their deadly effects.

In April of 1957, Maurice Hilleman, an American microbiologist, was monitoring possible influenza illnesses at Walter Reed Army Hospital's Institute of Research. News came to him that a new strain of a deadly virus from East Asia had popped up. Immediately realizing a huge medical problem that could affect the world, he asked the U.S. military to ship samples of the pathogen from Hong Kong to his laboratory in Washington, D.C. After days of testing, Hillman's team realized this new strain, H2N2, was unlike any flu humans had encountered before and when it reached the USA no one would be immune.



After the 1918 flu pandemic, health officials had become slack in their monitoring of aggressive strains of influenza and the Public Health Service ignored Hilleman's warnings and told him he was crazy for bringing his team's findings to them. Undeterred, Hilleman sent samples of H2N2 to six pharmaceutical companies, asking each to produce a vaccine for this new threat. Fortunately, out of respect for Hilleman and his team, the companies did just that. Producing the inoculations required hundreds of thousands of fertilized chicken eggs per day. Worldwide H2N2 affected millions of people and caused over a million deaths. In the U.S. 20 million people were infected, with 116,000 deaths, thus making this outbreak the second largest in American history after 1918's flu epidemic.

Researchers estimate at least a million more Americans would have died if not for the efforts of the pharmaceutical companies that distributed 40 million doses of the vaccine and inoculated over 30 million in that 1957-58 time period. Hilleman and his team were lauded for their efforts, with newspapers declaring that Americans could look forward to a day when common diseases were preventable, treatable and curable.

Maurice Hilleman eventually joined Merck & Co., and amazingly, developed vaccines for 40 diseases, including mumps, measles and meningitis. He died in 2005 at age 85. Curiously, one irony is the effect of the public's memory as diseases fade away. It is said that with the success of experts in their victories over disease, the more the public forgets about it.

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website: [www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.org](http://www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.org)

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## **SUSTAINING SUPPORTER: How you can help us!**

Please consider becoming a Sustaining Supporter. Someone who sustains is one who stands, endures and nourishes another. Our museum needs more people who will do just that and stand with us as we preserve and interpret our shared history. Become a Sustaining Supporter of the museum for as little as \$20 per month. Relying on predictable monthly support will enable us to plan with much greater certainty how to provide a place where the past and present meet the future.

We encourage you to make monthly contributions as a Sustaining Supporter. Please use the donor cut-out below. As a Sustaining Supporter you receive all the benefits of Sponsor membership and more.

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After providing for their families and loved ones, museum members and others may want to put the Centerville Historical Museum in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this museum. Such bequests are free of estate tax and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government. You can give needed support for the Centerville Historical Museum by simply including the following words in your will: *"I give, devise and bequeath to The Centerville Historical Museum, 513 Main Street, Centerville MA 02632 (insert amount being given) to be used to support the programs of the Museum."*

It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will. For other bequeathing options, call us and we will send our brochure that covers all the various options available. Thank you.

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