

CHEQUAQUET LOG

Newsletter of the **CENTERVILLE
HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

CHM is named #1 Hidden Gem Museum in Massachusetts.

WHAT'S HAPPENING - COMING EVENTS thru AUGUST

Apr 2025

Lecture and Lunch with Paul Chesbro, Wednesday, April 9, 12PM

Wine and Art Night, Thursday, April 24, 6:30 – 8:30. Reservations required

May 2025

Lecture and Lunch with Helen Kolinski, Wednesday, May 14, 12PM

Spring Tea, Saturday, May 17, 2PM. Reservations required

June 2025

Lecture and Lunch with Nancy Viall Shoemaker, Wednesday, June 11, 12PM

50s Sock Hop, Saturday, June 21, 6:30 to 8:30PM. reservations required

Country & Western Cookout, Saturday, June 28. Reservations required

July 2025

Lecture and Lunch with Ed O'Toole, Wednesday, July 9, 12PM

Lecture with Anthony M. Sammarco, Friday, July 11, 3 – 5PM

Murder Mystery Evening, Fri. & Sat. July 18 & 19, 7PM. Reservations

August 2025

Annual Vintage Car Show, Saturday, August 9, 8AM – 2PM

Main Street Walking Tour, Saturday, August 9, 11am & 1:30PM

The Centerville Historical Museum presents

Eat, Chat and Learn

yummy soup, mingle with friends or make new ones, expand your horizons

Come on in for a light lunch (heartly vegetable soup), learn a bunch and laugh a lot. Our monthly speaker will regale us with stories about the Cape's past and present.

This month our special speaker is Paul Chesbro, the Osterville historian. He will talk on the interesting folks of Osterville's past. An Osterville native he has written four books on the history of the village: He knows the inside scoop on Osterville families !



Wednesday, April 9th, doors open at 12 noon.

Admission is \$5. Limited capacity, so come early to get your bowl of delicious soup and a seat at the table.

AFTERNOON SPRING TEA

* Scones,
Finger Sandwiches,
Macarons,
and of course Tea

Saturday, May 17, 2 PM
Advance reservations required by May 6
\$35m \$45nm
chsm@centervillehistoricalmuseum.org
508-775-0331

* Sorry we are unable to accommodate
any dietary restriction

Art Night with Joyce Frederick

Whether a paintbrush is a foreign object or painting a hobby or interest, this evening will be a delight. No one will judge or critique these two hours of fun with paint, brush, and palette. Come paint this *Sunny Dory* and enjoy a complimentary glass of wine with Joyce. All supplies will be provided - you leave with a finished painting.

Call or email to reserve a place. Thursday, April 24, 6:30-8:30 PM

Limited seating – reservations required. 508-775-0331

\$40. Members / \$45 nonmembers and a \$5pp materials fee.



I N T H E C O L L E C T I O N

CUP PLATES ARE PART OF THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION

What in the world are cup plates? Well, in a teacup set, for instance, the cup is what holds the liquid, the tea, and the cup plate is what the teacup sits on when not being held by the drinker. Now that you think you know, you would say, "Well, of course, everybody knows a teacup and a saucer go together." But a saucer and a cup plate are two very different things.

It is no wonder no one knows what cup plates are today, as it might be hard to find them in use anymore. At one time, however, especially in the 19th century, cup plates were a common item and at the time a tea set cup plate was most always part of sitting with friends or family, with all enjoying conversation and having a spot of tea in the late afternoon.

When one thinks of a cup plate, one should think of a coaster, for cup plates were essentially similar to today's coasters and they were also the same size, about three inches in diameter. A cup plate provided a place to rest a teacup while also providing a space for a light snack. A cup plate was also where to rest the teacup after hot tea had been poured into the saucer and was allowed to cool a little before the tea drinker sipped from the saucer.

The English invented teacup plates and they were used from about 1825 until 1870 when it was fashionable to sip tea from a saucer. They again made a brief appearance in the early 1900's before disappearing once again.

Staffordshire Pottery in England made the first ceramic cup plates for the American market in the 1820's. They were blue and white. Soon the New England Glass Company / Boston and Sandwich Glass Company began manufacturing glass cup plates and they also became quite acceptable for afternoon tea.

For a time, cup plates were used to commemorate historical figures such as George Washington. Historical personages and scenes were coveted by tea drinkers. They were called "Historicals." Today they are more valuable than regular cup plates. American cup plates were originally made in various designs from flint glass, the only American made factory glass at the time.

The original use of cup plates was to protect tablecloths from being stained from partially drunk teacups and the fad of drinking tea from saucers. It was also recommended not to have teacups with handles as they were delicate and could be easily broken. Thus, pouring tea into a saucer and drinking from it was meant to protect a teacup handle.

From the start and through to the middle of the 19th century, using cup plates was popular mostly in middle-class households, but in the 1860's, drinking from cup plates lost favor and cup plates were re-purposed for other things such as butter plates and small plates to hold preserves or pickles. The museum has 86 cup plates in its collection. Perhaps, one day soon, there will be a display featuring this historical and delightful tribute to a style of manners and etiquette that were popular in the past.



A C A P E C O D N O T A B L E

DODGE MacKNIGHT, CAPE CODDER, ARTIST



Our fourth article on Cape Cod Notables is regarded as one of America's leading American modernists in the art world. Dodge MacKnight was a significant water colorist. Today his works are prominently featured in both the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's MacKnight Room as well as Cambridge, Massachusetts' Fogg Art Museum.

A contemporary and later an equal of John Singer Sargent, MacKnight's fame rose during the years directly after the Age of Impressionism, known as Post-Impressionism.

Macknight was born in 1860 in Providence, Rhode Island. After leaving school, he became an apprentice scene painter for theater

productions. With that occupation going nowhere, he opted to travel to France. He studied art in Paris from 1883 - 1886 under Fernand Cormon. A fellow student at the time was Toulouse-Lautrec. At one point he was close to Van Gogh, who suggested that MacKnight should move into the Yellow House in Arles with him. During his years in France, MacKnight became friends with many Impressionists and Post-Impressionists.

It took MacKnight many years to find his true artistic abilities and it wasn't until 1890 that he found success in painting "dazzling daylight and natural beauty" by using rich jewel-toned pigments on a wetted canvas to bring depth and dimension to that watered canvas. When he worked in watercolors, he favored landscapes. His name recognition never quite reached those of other Impression and Post-Impression artists, but his art has always been respected and admired by collectors and artists.



After working in Paris for many years, MacKnight and his family moved to Spain. However, growing tensions between America and Spain, which eventually led to the Spanish-American War, led the MacKnight family to move to East Sandwich, Massachusetts. Over the years, MacKnight's colorful views of New England led him to further fame. By 1923, MacKnight's talent appreciation was at its height. However, it did not last. In 1928 Isabella Stewart Gardner, one of his ardent patrons and MacKnight's only son passed away. He never again picked up a paint brush.

Unfortunately, very little has appeared in print regarding MacKnight and only two exhibitions of his works have been shown in the last seventy years. One was in 1950 at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and the other, in 1980, at the Heritage Plantation in Sandwich, Massachusetts.

One of Dodge MacKnight's paintings hangs in the Centerville Museum's Ayling Room. A serene winter landscape in which the only bright color is that of a small red sleigh, shows the artist's ability to create a tranquil winter scene elegantly. It is a perfect example of why Dodge MacKnight's name is considered to be up there with other Post-Impression artists of their day.

Duck Hunter, Cape Cod. c.1910
Scorton Marsh, Cape Cod. c.1900
Photographic Portrait Dodge MacKnight

THOUGHTS FROM OUR WRITER

A PIECE OF CLAY HELPED MANKIND TO ADVANCE

What would our lives be like without writing-any writing at all? There would be no literature, no science, no history, nothing, except what could be passed on from human voice to human voice. The written word has become so normal, as it states phonetically every aspect of human life, that we do not think about how recording what is said or thought came to be.



The above paragraph brings up the question; where and when did the written word begin? Most research cannot specifically agree on one location. There are a few places currently in the running. One is China. Another is Mesopotamia, known today as Iraq. Central America is also a possible contender, as is Egypt.

If China was the first country to record words, there is little left to prove it. China chose bamboo to write on about five thousand years ago. That surface did not suffice as bamboo rots quickly. Experts, though not entirely sure, believe that Mesopotamia may be the first to communicate by what now is defined as writing. Mesopotamia and its two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, are significant, as both waterways have banks of a unique composition of clay. This clay became exceedingly useful as it was the main ingredient in building the area's great cities as well as its utilitarian clay pots. The clay's finish was so smooth its surface could be written on. And clay, unlike paper

or bamboo, lasts. By re-baking the clay periodically to keep away any damp, this river clay can last for eons. Numerous clay tablets exist today that are thousands of years old.

The ancient clay tablets, freshly formed, were soft and yielding. They could be marked with a reed with a pointed tip called a stylus. After the writer finished his task, the clay was baked in order to harden and preserve it.

At first, writing on clay tablets was not writing. Instead of letters, which had not yet been thought of, pictographs, or drawings, were the means of communication. For example, the pictograph for beer was a tallish jar. Through time, due to limited space on clay tablets, letters replaced the pictograph and shared information through reading and writing became the norm.

Money, laws, trading and government helped make clay tablets inevitably important.

With leaders using their armies to keep control of the populace, official decrees on clay tablets from those leaders helped maintain their power. Eventually, poetry and literature were inscribed on clay, which was a radical change, for all of that had been retold again and again orally. A new occupation gained notice, that of the scribe. The largely illiterate slowly gained knowledge as the scribe and his numerous copies were filtered down to them. As letters made words, another innovation arrived; the dictionary, a list of spellings and meanings to coincide with the new sound signs, categorizing them and normalizing them into standard communication tools.

It can be said that the written word, formed ages ago by a reed stylus on a chunk of river clay, may have turned out to be mightier than the sword.



The CHM newsletter writer.

NEW EXHIBITS

Trains and Trains

The exhibit *Trains and Trains* presents two types of trains; trains on dresses and toy trains, specifically Lionel Trains. These trains have two things in common. Both these types of trains are non-functional. They really serve no purpose. Dresses with trains are not practical, except to clean the floor! Toy trains have no function either. They are toys and can be played with, but they don't really have a purpose. So, these are two things that are impractical and sometimes excessive.

The other thing they have in common is Nostalgia! A lovely dress with a train conjures images of a wedding or a beloved historical figure: someone to admire, even if the outfit is hard to walk in. Toy trains can remind us of our childhood; perhaps playing with a toy train with family members or admiring a fabulous display seen during the holidays.



F. G. Kelley's Centerville

Ferdinand Kelley was one of the instrumental citizens in the development of 19th century Centerville. This exhibit examines his contributions to Monument Square, Beechwood Cemetery, Howard Hall and the Main Street trees. Born in Centerville, son of Jonathan Kelley, he went to work at 17 as a clerk in a general store on Nantucket. A year later in 1835 he returned to Centerville and worked at the Centerville Trading Co., a general store, located where the site of the Civil War Monument and park are located. In 1841, Ferdinand and his father bought out the site, the store and the business of the Trading Co, where he remained until 1891.



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do you have a talent or interest we have a place for you

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