

CHEQUAQUET LOG

The Newsletter of the

CENTERVILLE

HISTORICAL MUSEUM

www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.org

THE MUSEUM TAKES A FIELD TRIP

On the 9th day of October, the Centerville Historical Museum represented itself quite well at HSSC, or rather The Historical Society of Santuit and Cotuit, located on Main Street in Cotuit. The day had been forecast to be cloudy and chilly. However, the sun succeeded in showing through the clouds every once in a while and except for a burst of a stiff breeze occasionally, the afternoon was quite bearable.

The HSSC is located in a lovely spot. Two miles down



Cotuit's beautiful main street from Route 28, the location was well shaded. The grounds featured a small but well-tended lawn,

which included a cluster of square flower beds to one side of the main dwelling. On the property were three buildings, the main house, the William Morris Fire House and an icehouse. The original four room home was built by Cotuit's first settler, Samuel Dotridge and his wife, Abigail, in 1808. On this day the kitchen's Rumford fireplace was ablaze and the heat pleasantly warmed the room.

Volunteers dressed in period costume were busy roasting chicken in the fireplace, cooking squash, churning butter by hand and making a cranberry relish. In the firehouse, a carriage and several other articles were displayed in a separate room. The other half of the firehouse was taken up by an extensive gift shop, with clothing, T-shirts, lotions and soaps galore, glassware and other items, all displayed nicely around all sides of the room. The store, which is open only on weekends, was a go to spot for visitors.

Invited participants had tables on the grounds. Centerville Museum was one of several other museums to participate and a good number of strollers came over to see the display and hear about our museum. Memberships and a photo album, coupons for visitors and brochures highlighting some of the exhibits now being shown plus the upcoming one on Hollywood were found to be a big surprise to

visitors. Most were astonished to discover how many and varied were the ongoing exhibits offered. The museum's table featured one segment of its present exhibit "What's Underneath." A mannequin clad in 1840 undergarments was used to demonstrate how women at that time dressed and how laborious the whole process was. The display also featured three lovely petticoats that showed off their beautiful laces and tucking. Also on hand was a bustle and its bustle cover, both important pieces worn later in the 19th century fashion styles for women. To top all off, one of the museum's beautiful 1860s gowns added the finishing touch to what and how a woman looked when all the layers underneath were in place. Along with new faces were also some known ones, and the afternoon went quickly.

The HSSC has an ambitious building proposal in play these days, so visiting and learning about the project was thoroughly interesting, especially since little will change in the outward structures already in place. At the end of the day, Centerville's museum had shown and demonstrated well just a tiny smidgen of all it has to offer and that is always a good feeling.

Holiday Silent Auction

Nov 30 - Dec 4 during open hours and the Christmas Stroll Sat., 3:00 to 6:00PM

Up to eighty retail and service donated items will be on display and ready for the Christmas season. This is a great place to holiday shop. Come in and place a bid.



EVENTS AT THE MUSEUM

TWO EVENINGS AT THE MUSEUM

Art and Wine Evening



in seven or eight colors were used for the paintings. Frederick observed and guided each participant in his or her skills. She also provided some tricks, such as Q-tips, to create certain effects along with canvases, paint and brushes. Frederick's choice for the evening was defined by her as an "abstract impression" style. Looking at the drying canvases was enlightening. Each of the amateur talents had an individualistic interpretation of the Frederick's painting example. Some brushed on quite a bit of paint, others were rather spare. Some decided on more trees or less, a variety of greens for their bushes and whether the rain streaks came from one direction or the other. The evening was deemed a success for our budding artists and altogether enjoyed by all. The consensus was to have another venture in the art world soon.

Ghost Night at the Museum

Another sold out museum evening took place on October 15th when the audience was enchanted by the tales of ghost happenings in Centerville and around Cape Cod. The histories of ghost stories, gossip and sightings had the entire room abuzz. It is known that Centerville has many alleged and rumored ghost stories, all of which have surely been passed on from former to new owners of perceived ghost occupied properties throughout the village. A few sighs of disbelief and nervous laughter could be heard from the audience as the stories were unfolded by the three speakers. One focused on ghosties and ghoulies purported in Centerville homes, one recounted being part of a paranormal experience at the museum a few years ago and one was known for his and his team's efforts in working with paranormal situations. Previously, he had participated in a happening at an evening that brought guests as witnesses to his discovering and expelling a possible presence in an upstairs room at the museum.

The atmosphere was certainly enhanced by telling and relating the stories of the area's ghostly stories. Halloween decorations covered every available spot. The thumps and strange footsteps, plus a mysterious phantom claimed to be a woman who whisked here and there in the shadows with a baby in her arms, both dressed from long ago, added to the mood of the get-together. Light refreshments were served at this October event, just in time for all to celebrate whispered stories of the past right before Halloween.

On September 24th, an imaginative evening was had by all as professional artist Joyce Frederick led a group of fledgling painters in an exercise in acrylic painting. Everyone, most of them amateurs in skill but willing to take the chance to create a personal masterpiece, had an enjoyable and interesting two hours. Joyce is a Centerville resident who helps design or lend a hand at the museum in developing backgrounds for displays and her artistic eye is always spot on.

The evening of the painting class was advertised as an Art and Wine evening, but the new painters were almost too busy having fun to even think about their wine glasses. The scene, created by Frederick, was an outdoor one, featuring a silhouetted couple strolling in the rain along a lane surrounded by lush trees and plants. Acrylic paints



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

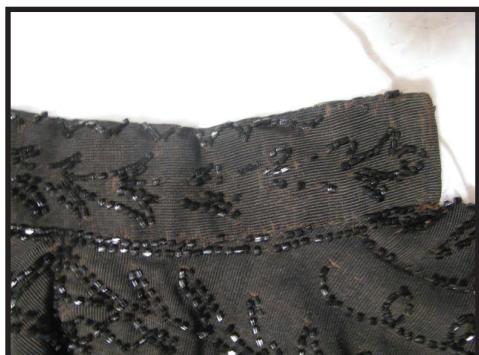
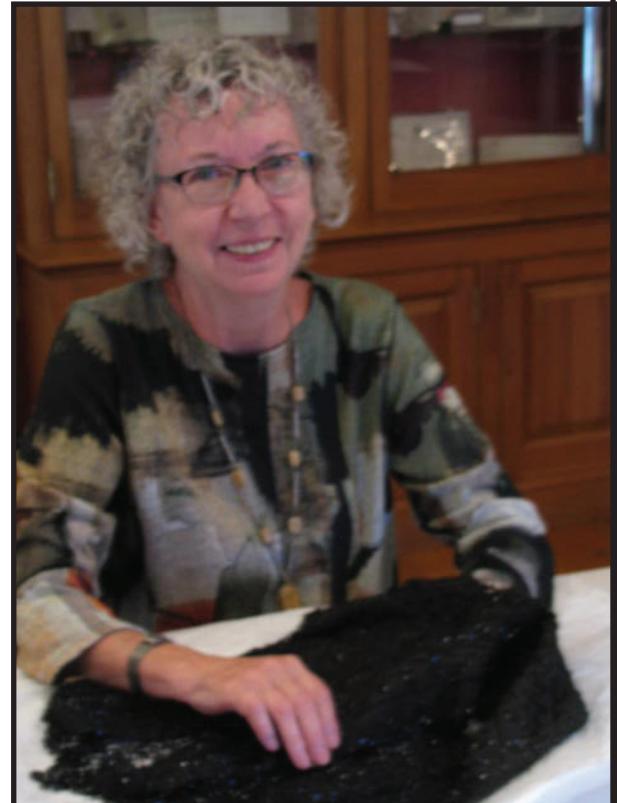
IT'S LIKE A TREASURE HERE

On the table is white tissue paper. Inside is a black piece of cloth, a black lump until it is spread open. What was once a gorgeous small capelet for a woman's evening outing is instead a disintegrating pile of black silk and beads. The silk splits if moved about and tiny black beads that so far have not been reattached fall to the tissue paper. Never fear. Robin Maguire is remedying all and in time this lovely item will look spectacular.

The museum is thrilled to have those well-versed in restoration of its clothing collection. Tuesdays and Wednesdays bring quilt and clothing mavens and surely the results are worth the efforts of this group of volunteers. Expert Robin Maguire is restoring her lady's capelet and soon this lovely item will be as good as new. Her skills are perfect for this project. Presently, she is resewing every bead. From the age of two, Robin has been involved in clothing, the making of which she has done for herself and others ever since she was given a present of a child's toy sewing machine.

She became so interested in textiles and design that she studied art and science in college, describing that combination laughingly as "using my right brain and my left brain." Today her interests have expanded to create her own designs in wall art. She also makes period costumes for the Cotuit Center for the Arts and theater costumes for the Harwich Junior Theater. Upon reading the museum's advertisement in a local newspaper asking for volunteers to help in its efforts to restore some of its antique clothing collection, Robin thought to lend a hand. "It's fascinating work," she says. "It's like a treasure here to have this collection." A friend of hers has also brought her skills and is working with the museum's hat collection. As she lifts her black cape from the tissue, she points out where she has resewn beads, of which 790 alone are on the back of the piece. In order to keep the cape from again losing its beads, Robin is using silk thread instead of the cotton thread sewn by the original maker. "Silk thread is much better," she comments. "Cotton thread disintegrates much more quickly." After resewing each of the remaining beads, Robin will turn to the capelet's main material, black silk. At present, this original outer layer is falling apart, disintegrating into what could only be described as fluff. Unfortunately, back in the 19th century, Robin explains, silk was treated with chemicals, which is the reason why much of that era's silk is so fragile today. The chemicals were used to stiffen the silk for the fashions of the time.

Patience and knowledge are needed to do this painstaking work, but the results are worth the effort. Sometimes a lovely piece cannot be renewed to near perfect condition. Any buttons or trim such as beads are removed from that garment and saved in the hopes they can be used elsewhere. If new material must replace the old, color and type are matched as closely as possible to the original. Robin Maguire and her husband retired to the Cape about 10 years ago. The museum and she are happy to work in tandem to restore what would be almost impossible to replace.



Before

After



INTERESTING HISTORY

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WAS A LOVABLE GUY-BUT

Every American has probably heard of kindly Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790). He was a proponent of separation from the British Empire's rule. He invented a stove, established an efficient postal system, started a still existing Philosophical Society and was considered wise. He traveled for years in France and England on diplomatic missions. He wrote "Poor Richard's Almanack" and was a printer by trade. He took no salary as an ambassador for the colonies, but like George Washington, padded his expense account liberally and lived very well.

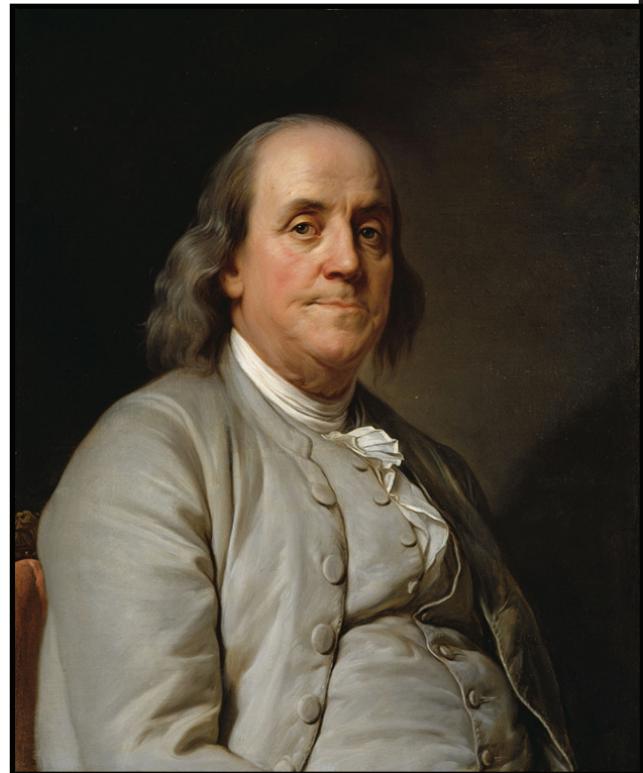
That was the public Franklin. Unknown was his "other self," a tightwad, a manipulator, a schemer, a vengeful father, a heartless husband and a caretaker of a grandson. In 1730, Ben fathered an illegitimate son, whom he named William. No one knows who William's mother was. Ben eventually took a common-law wife, Deborah, who bore him a daughter, Sally. Although the marital relationship was amiable when he was home, Ben left Deborah in charge of both the domestic and business side for years at a time, while he traveled on his diplomatic ventures. Deborah never saw her husband after 1763, though he wrote her several times before she died of poor health in 1774.

William Franklin (1730-1813) and his father had a loving relationship at first. He was bright and eagerly helped his father in his many inventions and experiments (it was he who really went out in the rain holding the kite for electrical experiments, not Ben). Ben, happy to see William's young years being spent in Philadelphia's upper society circles, sent him to London's Temple Bar to learn law, which William accomplished successfully.

But the seeds of discontent were starting to grow between countries as well as father and son. William returned home to practice law and in 1762 the king appointed him governor of New Jersey. He too had sired an illegitimate son, Temple, in 1760, and had married in 1762 a wealthy Caribbean planter's daughter. His Tory leanings soon became unacceptable to his father.

For the next decade father and son communicated but did not visit. Ben considered himself an American, while William, doing well as governor, said he was an American born under British rule. In the ensuing years father and son, growing ever more distant in word and in deed, saw each other only once. When the rebellion broke out, New Jersey sided with the rebels. Franklin, when he heard his son was arrested and put in jail, exacted his revenge by refusing him freedom or parole. Instead, he insisted William be placed in solitary confinement.

William's wife died in 1777. Meanwhile, Ben refused his grandson Temple any visitations to his father. Instead, now as Minister Plenipotentiary, he took Temple with him to France. In 1778, William was paroled. He moved to New York City, but after involving himself in a Tory plot, was forced to leave America for England in 1782. He lived there the rest of his life, married well and gained a small fortune, all the while being touted for his loyalty to England. His father died in 1790 and is buried in Philadelphia. Ben's daughter Sally and her husband had no children. Temple stayed in Paris, fathered three illegitimate children and died in 1824. The Benjamin Franklin line ended without legitimate issue.



NEW TO THE COLLECTION

19th Century Neoclassical Sculpture

This 1881 marble portrait bust by 19th and 20th century neoclassical sculptor Truman Howe Bartlett (1835 – 1923) was recently given to the museum. Truman Howe Bartlett was born in Dorset, Vermont in 1835. He studied under Robert Eberhard Launitz in New York City and later in Paris, Rome and Perugia, Italy. He spent twenty-two years as an instructor in the architecture department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology while also operating a free art school for poor children. One of his best known works is the Horace Wells Monument in Bushnell Park in Hartford, Connecticut.



1935 Dress

This recent addition to the costume collection is a pale pink overdress of sheer chiffon silk, floor length, short sleeves, V neck. Embroidered floral design on bodice, with a light pink taffeta slip, fitted waist, thin shoulder straps.

1940s Souvenir Doll

As international travel expanded the souvenir doll or travel doll market grew as well. This is a Spanish flamingo dancer in traditional costume (Andalusian culture flamenca dress aka sevillana dress or gypsy dress) of red satin and white lace; with cloth arms, painted ceramic face and hair, black lace mantilla veil with fabric floral hair ornament. Wooden stand. Articulated fan.



1953 Half Cap

Joining our hat collection is this woman's half cap of synthetic chiffon, satin and velveteen, covered in fabric petals in shades of purple and green. Purple velvet-covered wire structure and purple net interior.



PHILANTHROPY

2021 ANNUAL APPEAL

Dear Friend,

The museum has had yet another interesting year. We are gradually catching up to our 2019 numbers for activities, visitors and membership. Due to state requirements we had a late start for our fundraising events which did impact our income. What we've learned from this past year is that there is a core of people who ardently support our efforts. We are asking you as a museum friend, to assist us in fulfilling our mission to the community by contributing to the Annual Appeal.

What is the Annual Appeal?

The Annual Appeal is the yearly effort to raise unrestricted funds to help bridge the gap between the total operating expense and the admission, event and membership incomes. The Annual Appeal supports areas that are fundamentally important to the mission of the museum. For example the preservation and protection of an 18,000 object collection; maintenance of 14 exhibit spaces and 6 collection conservation spaces.

Why you should support CHM?

The simple answer is that you value the contribution this museum offers to your community. Dollars raised through the Annual Appeal provide CHM the ability to share our mutual history with the community and other museums. Your gift creates a partnership and the satisfaction that you support your community's cultural institutions.

How much should you give?

You determine the size of your gift according to your own interests and personal willingness to give. The cumulative effects of all our supporters giving will make it possible for the museum to support its mission. Every gift size does matter, and the money you give is important. Remember your gift is 100% tax-deductible. We are very grateful for your support to the 2021 Annual Appeal. Our excellence doesn't just happen; people like you have to make it happen.

Thank you for having an interest in this museum.

Sincerely,



Randall Hoel
Executive Director

Centerville Historical Museum Annual Appeal 2021

History makes a difference to all of us.

\$250 \$125 \$100

\$75 \$50 Other

or online at www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.org (donate)

or make check payable to: Centerville Historical Museum
513 Main Street, Centerville, MA 02632

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