

CHEQUAQUET LOG

Newsletter of the **CENTERVILLE
HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

CHM is named #1 Hidden Gem Museum in Massachusetts.

WE REACH OUR GOAL !!!

A special thank you to all the generous supporters of Centerville Historical Museum who contributed to our GO FUND ME plea to replace two of our HVAC systems.



Murder Mystery Evening Fundraiser

Friday, September 27th or Saturday, September 28th, 7:30PM.

There will be a time to socialize, have some dessert, wine and a mystery. Arrive early. Reservation required before September 21st / \$45pp members; \$55pp nonmembers. 508/775-0331 or chsm@centervillehistoricalmuseum.org

Murder Mystery Evening it's happening again!

It's September 1908. The Centerville Station cadets of the US Life-Saving Service are gathering for their final test. They have mastered lifesaving skills and shown the courage it takes to become a surfman of the US Life-Saving Service. But wait, there's one more test. On Craigville Beach, Friday night September 27th (or Saturday, September 28th) all cadets will perform this last rigorous test. They had better be prepared because there is the possibility of a severe storm. And storms bring shipwrecks and sometimes even murder.

“Shipwreck!”

OCTOBER EVENT

4th Annual

CAR SHOW

Centerville Historical Museum



SATURDAY 12 OCT ♦ **8AM - 1PM**

50/50 RAFFLE • LOTTERY GAME • FOOD & DRINKS

CRUISE ON IN WITH YOUR CLASSIC!

CAR SHOW IS LOCATED AT THE RECREATIONAL BUILDING ON MAIN STREET
CENTERVILLE FROM 8AM-1PM

REC. PARKING LOT 524 MAIN ST, CENTERVILLE

Tropical storm Debbie caused us to cancel our annual August car show - but it's back!

Centerville Historical Museum's Main Street Walking Tour (Historic Sea Captains: their homes, lives and ghostly lore)

The tour features histories of those who lived in Main Street homes: their facts, lore, inherited tales and stories of ghostly events will include a visit to the spirited cemetery.

Saturday, October 12th.
Guided tours: 10am through 2pm, limited 6 people per tour.
\$10, pp check or cash.

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

A NEW ACQUISITION TO THE MUSEUM-A LOVELY LAWN DRESS

Centerville's museum has recently acquired a lawn dress, a type of summer wear that was popular at the turn of the twentieth century in America and in Europe. This dress is c.1910, a white cotton lawn with a lace collar and three layers of skirt. The bodice is a boxed lace pleated front with 12 fabric covered buttons. Lawn, which originated in India, is a type of cotton that is light in weight, thus allowing the wearer an alternative to heavier fabrics in warm weather. It can be plain without any decoration, or it may feature delicate lace trim, tucks and embroidery.

The Edwardian Age was named after King Edward VII, who came to the throne after the death of Queen Victoria. Lawn appeared at a very good time, the Edwardian Age, which spanned the years from 1901 through 1910. It probably was and is one of this era's most recognizable fashion statements. It was an era of elegance and sophistication in fashion. Intricate details, luxurious fabrics and graceful silhouettes were a must.



Besides being a new and comfortable material, the fabric appeared at a time of transition in fashion. Corsets were being done away with, as were bustles, allowing the wearing of clothing to be more comfortable and relaxed while maintaining the height of fashion in its elegance and refinement. The term "lawn" is derived from the French city, Laon, which produced lawn made from linen.

The upper classes favored lawn. The delicate material would not suit a working woman or housewife for daily wear, but it was what many wore during a stroll along the shore or on the boardwalk in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The design had a slim fitted bodice and a long flowing skirt. Most often sashes or ribbons decorated waistlines.

Made from a fine and thin all cotton fabric known as grass, lawn is perfect for wearing in warmer seasons. The British depended on lawn's light fabric and breathability to help keep them cool in their empire's humid climates. It is woven with a high thread count, resulting in a fine, sheer fabric that holds its shape, is durable and is semi-transparent and can be made into blouses, dresses, skirts and nightwear. Lawn is lightweight and is crisper than voile but not as crisp as organza. It can be gauzy or nearly opaque. White is its normal color, but the cloth can be dyed or printed. Using high thread count yarns, the woven cloth finish has a silky, untextured feel.

Lawn is also known as batiste, nainsook and lawn cloth. Its name was originally applied to a plain weave linen called "handkerchief linen." Today the word "lawn" can be applied to any cloth, printed or plain, that has a fine yet crisp finish. Lawn cloth has become a highly respected material and is now popular for many clothing styles such as infant wear, handkerchiefs, dresses, blouses, aprons, petticoats, curtains, undies, lingerie and collars and cuffs. It is also used for vestments such as surplices in Anglican churches.

The museum already has one lawn dress on view, a lovely white ankle length dress from 1905, part of an upper floor display on movies made on Cape Cod. There are so many exhibit on view at the museum. Come and see.

INTERESTING HISTORY

A Cape Cod Notable

THORNTON BURGESS, CAPE CODDER, CONSERVATIONIST, CHILDREN'S STORYTELLER

Thornton Burgess is barely remembered for his Cape Cod roots and his efforts to conserve the environment. Along with his love for nature, he is also known for his story-telling abilities, for his books and for being known as "The Bedtime Story Man."

Burgess was born in 1874 in Sandwich, Massachusetts. His father, Thornton Burgess, Sr., was a direct descendant of Thomas Burgess, one of the first settlers in Sandwich in 1637. Burgess's father died the same year his son, Thornton, Jr., was born. Growing up poor, Burgess had to add to the family income and he held different jobs throughout his young life. One job was trapping muskrats in nearby woodlands and wetlands. Those years were remembered by Burgess and he used those memories in many later story settings that he called "Smiling Pool" and "Old Briar Patch."

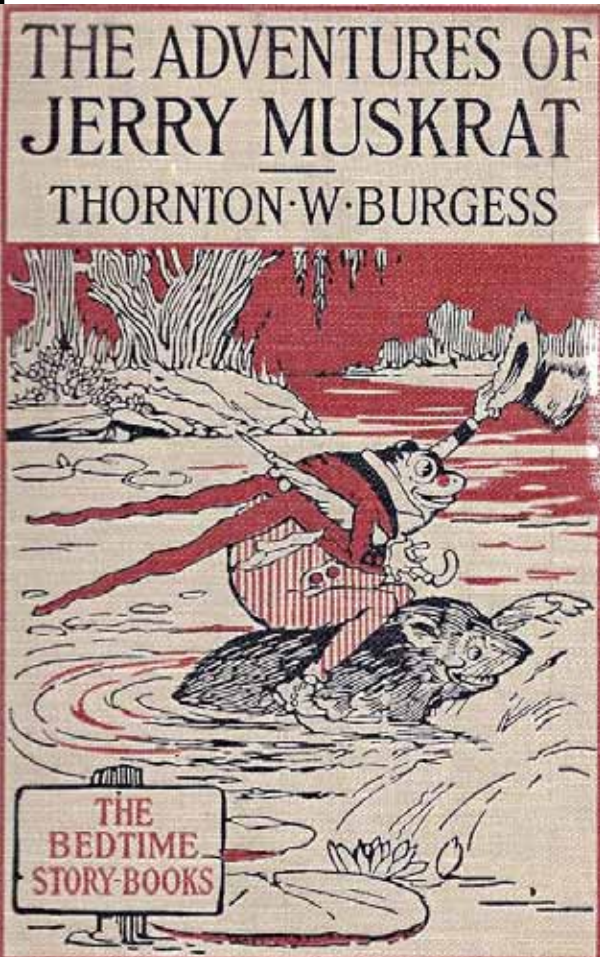
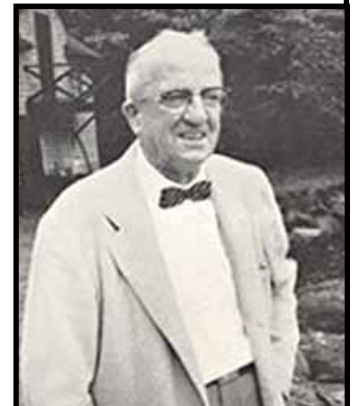
His mother urged him to further his education and Burgess enrolled in a business college. Disliking his studies, he decided he wanted to be an author. He soon found an editorial assistant's position at a publishing company. He wrote his first stories under the pen name, "W.B. Thornton." Tragedy struck when his wife of a year died giving birth to a son. He began to write bedtime stories for his son, Thornton III. After a second marriage, he moved away from Sandwich, to Hampden, Massachusetts, but returned to Sandwich frequently to revisit old haunts and friends who also were interested in saving wildlife and the wild habitat of the area.

Relying on his own observations, Burgess penned his first book, "Old Mother West Wind." He introduced readers to characters such as Peter Rabbit (which was also the name of English author Beatrix Potter's main character in her famous books), Jimmy Skunk, Sammy Jay, Jerry Jay, Bobby Raccoon, Little Joe Otter, Grandfather Frog, Billy Mink, Old Mother West Wind and Her Merry Little Breezes. For over fifty years, Burgess wrote books that were so popular they were published around the world and in many languages. His illustrator and friend, Harrison Cady, was also from Massachusetts, namely Gardner.

Burgess wrote nearly nine hundred stories in sixty years, plus natural science articles and poems for magazines. Of those nine hundred stores, over two hundred were written for children. He also wrote his daily newspaper column, "Bedtime Stories." He broadcast his "Radio Nature League" series on the radio for fifty years, a program highly praised by listeners, educators and parents. This program was heard across the country.

In 1960, Burgess published his last book, "Now I Remember, Autobiography of an Amateur Naturalist." Burgess was eighty-six years old and had just written and published his 15,000th newspaper column. Thornton Burgess died in 1965, aged ninety-one. Tragically, his son, Thornton III, had died the year before.

Burgess is remembered for helping pass laws protecting migrant wildlife, land conservation programs, wildlife protection programs, a book for War Savings Stamps and Bonds and his radio broadcasts. He also received several prestigious honors. After his death, the Massachusetts Audubon Society purchased Burgess's Hampden home and established the Laughing Brook wildlife Sanctuary there, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



V O L U N T E E R P R O F I L E

KATHRYN COLE HAS BEEN HELPFUL AS A SUMMER INTERN AT THE MUSEUM

When Kathryn Cole sent an inquiry to the museum about working as a summer intern, her credentials and motivation made for an easy decision. Yes, The Centerville Historical Museum was interested.

Kathryn, who likes to be called Kat, will have finished her internship by the time this article is printed, for she will be continuing her college education at Salve Regina University with a major in Cultural and Historic Preservation and Art History, with a minor in Sociology and Anthropology. Quite a mouthful, one would say, but one that she hopes will lead her to work in the field of history of art and artwork.



Kat, before asking to be an intern at the museum, was curious to see if Centerville's museum would concentrate on local history or was it more diverse. She was happy to discover the museum is diverse as it caters to local themes with internationally related themes thrown in. She feels she has found what she wanted at the museum.

Kat and volunteer Dianne Potter have been working on Phinney family documents, from the oldest to the present. All these documents have been handwritten, so the reading, deciphering and describing what is in the documents is the main objective.

Another collection of papers she has worked on are Augustus Ayling's Civil War letters and diaries. Among them is a sweet love letter from a young

woman to her beau. It was never received as he had deserted his unit during the battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia. Augustus Ayling, as the commanding officer of his unit, kept the letter. That letter is part of the museum's archives.

Augustus Ayling signed up as a private in the Civil War. By 1863 his rank had risen to First Lieutenant. The museum has several Ayling military orders on file. There is also a detailed personal diary. There were probably others, which Kat Cole thinks may have been passed on to Augustus's son, Charles.

Kat Cole says she has enjoyed working at the museum. Eventually, her focus will likely be on the Renaissance Period, how history influenced art of the time and how the artistic talents such as Da Vinci and Michelangelo impacted art then and today. The study of cultures, anthropology, is also an important part of bringing the past into today's world. Kat Cole has found help and friendship at the museum as she strives toward her study of the past.

Centerville's museum is a perfect fit for Kat these days as she studies the artifacts and letters from long ago. She feels she is learning more about how to become a curator of that past, but also how that past affects today as well as the future. The Phinney and Ayling family papers are only one aspect to study. Having eager and skilled young people to assist the museum in archiving its large paper collection is a wonderful benefit for the museum and for student volunteers like Kat. History is fascinating and interesting. Kat Cole appreciates its input in society as a whole. Her next step is here now as she begins another college year.

THOUGHTS FROM OUR WRITER

THE MUSEUM'S 1780 ROOM HAS A TALE TO TELL

There is a story connected to the Centerville Museum's 1780 room. Recently the room has been transformed into what living and performing daily tasks in that room looked like.

This room is a good example of a kitchen at that time. The home's outer walls may have been made from post and beam, its open spaces between the logs filled with a wattle and daub compound. There was one door and perhaps a window. A separate small building or attachment to the home, also with a door, held tools and other stored items and was used for keeping fireplace logs dry.



The main rooms were the living room, sleeping room, work room and kitchen. Furniture was scarce, with a handmade table and a chair or two. A spinning wheel sat in a corner. A wooden cradle was usually close by. A large fireplace was the most important thing. It took up a large part of one wall. The museum's fireplace is made from brick, a good source for retaining heat. There was a reason for this. A fireplace was a necessity to all who lived in that room. Warmth in cold weather called for a constant fire. There may have been several small fires in that one fireplace, each for a different purpose. Long iron rods crossed the open space so that cooking pots could be hung from them. Other heavy iron pots had legs for sitting in the coals. Most pots had handles for hanging and easy maneuvering. Food was cooked, water was heated for tea, for bathing, for cleaning. A separate area, complete with door, was

used for baking bread, its heat coming from hot coals from the fireplace. There were few mantles in late 1700's fireplaces. There was really no need for them. Only the wealthy could afford to have a beautiful fireplace.

The farmer or fisherman or dairy farmer relied on his well-built barn to keep his stock alive in the cold. The woman sat close to the fire to spin her own sheep's wool into yarn and homegrown flax into linen yarn. Most of the family clothing and blankets was made from these two items.

Women depended on the fireplace for cooking, preserving, making soap from lye, melting wax for candle making, coals from the fireplace for keeping their young ones warm, for drying items of clothing, for heating water for cleaning, for keeping the family comfortable and away from illness.

There are several mannequins posed in the 1780 room. All are women. Each is doing a task such as weaving a rug, ironing clothes, making candles, churning butter. In real life, all those tasks were completed by the woman, possibly a servant and her female children, every day. It was a hard life, but all these tasks had to be done so that they and their families survived. Little attention has been paid to these chores in history. The 1780 room's display highlights a time when physical work was unending and demanding.



The CHM newsletter writer.

S U P P O R T E R S

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and ask you, our members, to support these businesses that support us.**

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