

Carpenter Museum Director's Report
2020/2021

Hello RAS Members!

It has been another busy, strange, stressful year. Thank you, members, for your continued support of Rehoboth Antiquarian Society and the Carpenter Museum. We all know this past year looked a lot different than we hoped. At our Museum, events were cancelled and public visitation was limited. However as history was being made staff and volunteers at the Carpenter Museum were still busy documenting and sharing Rehoboth stories. We learned our speaker series does well online as well as in person, researchers continue to receive assistance through phone and email, and we saw how we all could adapt to a changing world. These are just a few of the silver linings to come out of the past year.

As a reminder of the ways you can continue to learn with us, our new exhibit "Play Ball!: The Rehoboth Milkmaids" is on display at the Museum *and* online as a virtual exhibit on our website. There you will find information about the team, artifacts we've collected from their glory days, and programming for students K-12. We've also adapted our elementary Rehoboth history and geography activities to be available online and free for anyone who visits our website. Our genealogy group continues to meet monthly, and a 2021 speaker series is planned.

Stay safe, stay well.

-Danielle

Year in Review Highlights

Milk Maids Grant Project: The Milk Maids Exhibit installation is complete! Due to capacity restrictions we did not host an opening event, however the exhibit, "Play Ball!: The Rehoboth Milkmaids", is open to the public. A digital version of the exhibit as well as additional activities for students grades 3-12 are also live on our website.

Members Only "Chat with the Curator": At this year's members event I chatted about the Carpenter Museum's Girl Scout collection. As well as sharing the history of the organization in Rehoboth I used it as a case study of how a museum makes donation, storage, and exhibition decisions. Members joined me via Zoom to hear what I had to share and ask their own questions at the end.

Speaker Series: Our 2020 Series was a great success even with modified participation. We had 2 lectures in our exhibit barn with doors open for ventilation as well as 3 successful lectures via Zoom. We still had many participants and wonderful lectures. The program was such a COVID19 era success we've planned another for this summer!

TV Spot: Treasures Inside the Museum, a PBS Rhode Island show was filmed at the Museum last fall. All the museum staff were interviewed about the museum, artifacts, and what we do here at the Carpenter Museum. A big thank you is owed to Rebecca who also appeared in front of the camera doing a cooking demonstration. The episode premiered last week and an encore presentation is this Friday (5/7).

Virtual Program Partnership with Old Colony History Museum: OCHM partnered with several area museums to create a digital program series this spring. A digital “field trip” was created at participating museums. We were able to do an open hearth cooking demonstration of Hannah Glasse’s “Soop Meagre” from her 18th century cookbook *The Art of Cookery*. The program done by Rebecca and I was a huge success and not only helped us serve our mission but taught us the ins and outs of doing similar programs in the future.

Research Room Visitors: The number of persons visiting the E. Otis Dyer Jr. Research room has decreased substantially in the past year due to the pandemic. However the number of email inquiries received by Research Room Manager, Lende McMullen has nearly doubled. This tells us that people are still researching and still in need of our support even if they can’t reach us personally at this time. We’re thankful for the technology age.

Jan through April 2021= 27

Jan through April 2020= 16 May-Dec= 40

Jan through April 2019= 10 May-Dec= 22

Look Forward

Passport to History: Once again we will participate in the Old Colony House’s Passport to History program. Passports are your admission to 15 museums and historic sites throughout “the Old Colony” through September 1st. Once they reopen, stop by any participating site to get your passport and enjoy exploring the fantastic and diverse history of southeastern Massachusetts.

Speaker Series: Another speaker series is planned for this summer / fall 2021. We have confirmed 5 speakers starting with Brenda Sullivan of the Gravestone Gals June 22nd. Look for information about all our speakers and reserve your spot on our website later this month. Lectures will once again be a mix of virtual and in person.