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Salem Towne House Orchard
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Improving the Experience:
Spring Cleaning at Old Sturbridge Village

I’ve been told that spring cleaning was “invented” in nineteenth-century America because when the weather turned warm enough to open the windows and doors—but not so warm that bugs were plentiful—winds would carry the dust and soot from candles and wood-burning fireplaces out of the house. That certainly is true here at the Village, where homes were swept with corn brooms and floors cleaned with rag mops. However, I believe the tradition is also related to the “freshness” of the season—the greening of trees and plants, as well as the birthing of farm animals.

This spring the museum itself is experiencing a bit of a rebirth thanks to the generosity of some foundations and many of you loyal members. On your next visit you are likely to see refurbished buildings, improved walking paths, and rejuvenated gardens. One of the sights I encourage you to look for is the restored apple orchard adjoining the Salem Towne House. As reported elsewhere in this issue, it was planted in memory of a former Trustee of the Village and continues to be nurtured by her daughter and son-in-law, who have also included OSV in their will.

On May 2nd we will open a new exhibit featuring antiques collected by the first curator of Old Sturbridge Village, Malcolm Watkins, as well as his wife, and his parents. Combined with some artifacts from our collection that have rarely been seen, this exhibition will give you new insights into the depth of our dedication to New England history.

Later in May—Memorial Day Weekend—we not only celebrate an important part of our nation’s history, but also our annual Wool Days, where you can learn about sheep, wool, weaving, and other textile arts from our knowledgeable costumed historians.

You will learn and see a lot of what is going on at the Village by reading this magazine, but I encourage you to visit as well. Take advantage of your membership benefits, which include not only free daily admission but members-only events such as the monthly Garden Thyme and Take a Closer Look programs, as well as discounts on lodging, food, and special events.

In spring many of us are motivated to start a new project or break through a mental block keeping us from completing one. I’ve heard that is because not only does green mean “go” in our society, it also represents growth, which studies show sparks creativity. Researchers have also found that people who walk in nature—experiencing green—are better able to generate new ideas and come up with solutions to complex problems. That sounds like just one more reason to come visit Old Sturbridge Village this spring.

Discovery Adventures

Registration is now open for spring and summer Discovery Adventures (www.osv.org/adventures). Children ages 6 to 14 will make their own history, as they learn about early New England. We offer a two-, three-, or five-day option in spring, and a five-day program in summer. Both sessions offer multi-child and member discounts.

Discount lodging packages for participants and their families are also available at the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges, just outside the museum gate, on a first come, first served basis.

Spring dates: April 20–24, 2015
Summer dates: June 29–July 31, 2015
Old Sturbridge Village, a museum and learning resource of New England life, invites each visitor to find **meaning, pleasure, relevance, and inspiration** through the exploration of history.

Welcome to the **SPRING EDITION** of our VISITOR magazine. We hope that you will learn new things and come to visit the Village soon.

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- $50 for Individual
- $80 for Individual Plus One and Dual
- $90 for Family
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To join, to subscribe, or to provide a change of address, write the Membership Department, e-mail membership@osv.org, or call 800-SEE-1830.
As the twinkling lights and greenery of Christmas are put away for the year, many gardeners feel a bit of panic: the prospect of waiting for the planting season to begin in April is enough to put any green thumb on edge. Throughout history, gardeners longing for warmer days and greener foliage searched in the dead of winter to lift the spirits and harken to warmer times to come. Living in unheated homes without greenhouses, many gardeners in early New England joined this quest for cold-tolerant alternatives. Growing “immortal” flowers during the spring and summer for dried arrangements and forcing bulbs on water or in soil throughout the winter were some of the methods New Englanders used during the Village period to bring color and cheer to the cold winter months.

FLOWERS IN WINTER

The prospect of preserving a cut flower’s blooms was as much a matter of consternation as it is today; ask any gardener or florist and you will receive many suggestions. Period advice manuals contain many elaborate suggestions for prolonging flowers’ blooms into winter, ranging from preserving flowers in a “mixture of water and verjuice [an acidic juice made of sour fruits], of each equal parts, sprinkled with a small portion of bay salt” to “dipping them in alcohol, or strong spirits of wine” to keep the blooms intact through the winter. As is the case today, many gardeners undoubtedly attempted such elaborate methods of preservation; however, bouquets composed of naturally dried flowers seem to have been among the most popular decorations for the winter months.

Many dried flowers retain their shape and color for many years. Seeds for “immortal” flowers and advice for preserving them frequently appear both in seed catalogues and period literature and reminiscences. In Joseph Breck’s 1833 *The Young Florist*, two young siblings discuss using summer garden flowers for winter decorations:

1 *Every Lady Her Own Flower Gardener*, Louisa Johnson, 1840, page 85
Margaret: *The Immortal Flowers, with the Amaranthus, are desirable on account of their permanency; I shall cut the greater part of them to ornament the mantel-piece in the winter.*

Henry: *They look very well when no fresh flowers are at hand; I have understood they will retain their color for years.*

Margaret: *I shall cut some of the elegant Cockscombs, too, before the frosts.*

Henry: *The Euphorbia can be preserved so as to retain in a great measure its beauty, but being dried between paper, and pressed.*

Margaret: *That will be fine; I can make quite a gay bouquet for winter.*

While many gardeners relied on annuals to create “immortal bouquets,” others turned to nature to add interest to winter parlor decorations. According to her diary, Sarah Anna Emery, for example, added plants collected from the wild: “Another delight was assisting grandmam’ in the autumn to arrange in pretty vases of home construction the dried amaranths, which mingled with white-everlasting, milk-weed, bitter-sweet and evergreen, made pretty winter bouquets to decorate the mantle of the parlor and living room.” By growing and preparing flowers for drying throughout the year, gardeners preserved their beauty and color until the first green of spring.

“A FINE APPEARANCE IN THE PARLOR DURING WINTER”¹—FORCING BULBS

For other gardeners, preserved flowers were not enough: only fresh green leaves and blooming flowers would do, making bulbs a favorite. Outdoors, they are a sign that the bitter winter days are behind us and they provide vibrant pops of color in an otherwise dull landscape. Bulbs are also highly adaptable, and able to grow inside even in the coldest time of year. Thus, the art of forced bulbs takes advantage of the bulb’s simplicity of culture and adaptability. By replicating the conditions that occur in nature and cause bulbs to grow in spring, the gardener can control the bulb’s growth indoors and encourage blooms in the winter months.
“Bulbs are of more easy culture than any other class of plants; because the germ being previously formed, and the nourishment being provided in the body of the bulb, it is only necessary to supply heat and moisture to cause these to develop.”

Most bulb varieties are well suited to forcing. Early garden writer Bernard McMahon’s advice in The American Gardener’s Calendar (1806) stands true today: “Several sorts of bulbous roots may be placed upon bulb-glasses of water, for blowing in the apartments of the house, such as hyacinths, narcissuses, jonquils, early dwarf tulips, bulbous iris.” At the Village, we force both hyacinth and crocus bulbs in several homes in the Center Village area and demonstrate forcing using both glasses of water and in decorative pots of soil.

Forcing was a favorite winter pastime, and bulbs and supplies for forcing were frequent fixtures in garden catalogues. An 1839 garden supply catalogue from Boston advertised both “Bulb Glasses, various sizes and shapes, plain, coloured, or gilt, some with feet, 50 cents to $1 per pair” and “Crocus Pots, in fanciful form, for blowing Crocus Roots in the parlor or green house.” Almost as alluring as the bulb itself are the vases for forcing. Traditionally shaped glasses for forcing bulbs on water have changed little since the nineteenth century: a small cup suspends the bulb over water and allows the root system to develop in the vase below. However, designs for forcing bulbs in soil pots could also be fanciful, featuring brightly colored glass or whimsical designs such as beehives, shot-towers, and animals—Village gardeners use a reproduction crocus-forcing pot shaped like a hedgehog!

Watching the bulb’s progress—not to mention the beautifully fragrant flowers—is enough to satisfy many gardeners until its cousins in the flower garden emerge in early spring and herald the start of the planting season.

While historic gardeners were more constrained in their options, heated homes and greenhouses offer modern gardeners many more ways to keep flowers fresh and green throughout the year.

Before forcing, bulbs must be pre-chilled for 8 to 12 weeks to simulate the winter period and complete the chemical process required to make bulbs bloom. Modern gardeners can chill their bulbs in any area of the home or garden that will be cold but not freezing: an unheated basement, garage, or attic, or even the refrigerator. (Just make sure to store bulbs away from fruits and vegetables—vegetables give off gasses that can cause bulbs to rot.) After pre-chilling, modern advice differs very little from period literature: “the glasses being previously filled with pure water, so the bottom of the bulb may just touch the water; then place them for the first ten days in a dark room, to promote the shooting of the roots, after which expose them to the light and sun as much as possible. They will blow [bloom], however, without any sun; but the colors of the flowers will be inferior; water should be changed as it becomes impure.”

2 Ellis and Bosson's Catalogue, 1839, page 4
When the trustee for the Watkins estate invited the OSV curatorial staff to the home of the late Joan and C. Malcolm Watkins to view some objects that might be of interest for the Village’s collection, none of us knew quite what to expect. Nonetheless, three staff members made the hour and a half journey to the eighteenth century home in Middleton, Massachusetts. Shortly after arriving, it became clear that this was no ordinary assemblage of antiques, and this was a fabulous opportunity for the Village and its collection. Chair of the OSV Collections Committee and decorative arts scholar Jane C. Nylander noted that, “New England objects of this quality and variety are seldom available today and OSV was fortunate to be among the first to make selections that enhance its renowned collections.”

The Watkins’ home—a spacious, white, eighteenth century house—was a veritable treasure trove of eclectic antiques. Painted boxes and trunks were stashed under antique beds and stacked in corners. Paintings and art hung on the walls. Some pieces—such as two early samplers now in the OSV collection—were still in the brown paper wrapping from a recent trip to the framer. Every nook and cranny was filled with antiques—redware lined the shelves of one corner cupboard, baskets were stacked on the shelves of another. Beautiful hand-woven blue and white coverlets were folded neatly in one painted box. Another chest held stacks of reproduction fabrics. An 1840s straw bonnet sat atop an early nineteenth century blanket chest with a handful of small bandboxes beside it. Each layer that was peeled back revealed even more antiques. The attic was crammed with chair upon chair in all manner of forms, agricultural tools, and yet more boxes; the basement was also chock-full of antiquities, including shelves crowded with stoneware and redware.

Mindful of storage concerns and wanting to make sure each piece fit with the Village’s collecting mission, on that first trip we chose only a dozen objects to be considered for the collection, including the two samplers; a circa 1830 rocking chair with original paint; a circa 1805 portrait of an unidentified woman in a gossamer white gown; a few excellent hand-woven blue and white overshot...
coverlets; and an early painted trunk we dubbed the “cheetah chest” for its whimsical design of black splashes on a tan ground. Ultimately, OSV staff made a half dozen trips to Middleton and brought back nearly 100 objects—ranging from a large feather basket and lid to a tiny pillbox labeled Dandelion Pills—to be considered for the collection.

What truly excited us, however, was the close connection between C. Malcolm Watkins and the early history of the Village. In 1936, just as plans for what would become Old Sturbridge Village were taking shape, A.B. Wells hired young Malcolm Watkins as the developing museum’s first curator. A recent Harvard graduate, enthusiastic collector, and knowledgeable early American scholar, Watkins set about advising A. B. Wells on his burgeoning collection—suggesting objects to acquire and collections to refine as the Wells family began to implement plans for what would ultimately become the museum we know today. In an early report to Wells, Watkins urged him to place “a greater emphasis on items of quality,” and a “much stronger emphasis on American antiques,” particularly “pieces whose histories are authenticated, or which bear marks or dates, or which have special artistic merit.”

Watkins worked at the Village until 1948—with time off for two years spent with the Army Air Corps in World War II—when he took a position with the Smithsonian Museum of American History. He remained with the Smithsonian as Curator of Everyday Life in Early America until his retirement in 1980. During that time he met and married Joan Pearson, a noted ceramist, scholar, teacher, and collector in her own right. Their collection grew and expanded over the next five decades, and eventually spread into homes in California, Virginia, and Massachusetts. Their collecting habits were eclectic—from early American decorative arts to mid-Atlantic and Southern stoneware and redware to Asian art. But above all was their focus on everyday objects that so closely paralleled A. B. Wells’ own collecting philosophy. Indeed, Malcolm’s 2001 New York Times obituary noted that he “believed that American culture could be distilled in an earthenware teacup.” Both Joan and Malcolm remained close friends of Old Sturbridge Village and it is more than fitting that some of their antiques will find a home in the Old Sturbridge Village collection.

Malcolm’s parents, Charles and Lura Watkins, were noted collectors as well, and undoubtedly influenced Malcolm as a child, instilling in him a passion for collecting. Thus, it was another incredible opportunity for the Village to be offered a substantial redware and stoneware collection amassed by Malcolm’s mother, Lura Woodside Watkins, in addition to similar items collected by Malcolm and Joan. Charles was an avid collector of early glass and a founder of the Rushlight Club, a group devoted to collecting early lighting devices. Lura was a scholar, archeologist, and author of Early New England Potters and Their Wares—still widely regarded as an important pottery resource six decades after its first publication in 1950. As a noted collector and scholar, she participated in numerous archeological excavations—both formal and informal—of New England pottery and kiln sites, collecting and documenting pieces in the 1920s, 30s, 40s, and 50s. Her documentation of Portrait of an unidentified woman, circa 1805
Dandelion pillbox, mid-19th century
forms, glazes, and even kiln furniture for stacking wares for firing from known New England potteries added immensely to the understanding and scholarship in the field of redware.

Lura donated the bulk of her collection to the Smithsonian decades ago, but the remaining pieces will find a home here at Old Sturbridge Village. Included in this group are unusual and rare forms, documented pieces from known Massachusetts potteries such as archeological fragments and kiln furniture, and unusual glaze colors and techniques. More than 200 pieces from the Watkins’ collection will be incorporated into OSV’s permanent collection—from chamber pots and bedpans, to mugs, small mustard pots, whimsical banks, utilitarian milk pans, slip decorated plates and platters, and even, remarkably, a small unglazed pot used by potters to apply thin decorative lines of slip—liquid clay—to a variety of forms. This group not only adds a great deal to OSV’s collection, but to our understanding of early New England redware as well.

On May 2nd the Village will open Kindred Spirits, a new exhibit exploring the connection between Wells, Watkins, and the early history of the Village, and tracing the importance of the early American objects that form the core of Old Sturbridge Village and its mission. The exhibition will feature numerous items from the Watkins estate, Lura Woodside Watkins’ redware, and rarely seen objects from the Village’s collection that can be traced back to the early days of A. B. Wells’ collecting. Of particular note will be an eighteenth century six-board chest—plain and unadorned, vernacular, and everyday—with a note tacked to a compartment indicating that the chest was given to Watkins by A. B. Wells upon his departure from Old Sturbridge Village in 1948. It is as if the chest is coming home once again; an illustration of the early New England material culture that was so important to A. B. Wells and Malcolm and Joan Watkins.
Memento Mori: Demystifying 19th Century Funerary Customs
By Amy Murray, Coordinator of Horticulture

In early nineteenth century New England, death was an all-too-familiar visitor, equally affecting all walks of life with swiftness and brutality. In the face of frequent losses, New Englanders used funerals and funerary rites both to commemorate the departed and to ease the pain of their loss. While many nineteenth century mourning and funerary practices seem unusual or macabre to a modern audience, the meanings behind these rituals transcend time and stand as a testament to the love families shared with the long-since departed.
As part of the Village’s “A Pound of Cure: Health Care in the Nineteenth Century” on May 30th and 31st, historical interpreters will re-create a nineteenth century funeral to demonstrate the final acts of love and affection for the dying, and demystify some of the customs and etiquette surrounding nineteenth century mourning practices.

In the nineteenth century death—like illness—occurred in the home. The deceased’s relatives were likely to have provided both support and care to the dying during his or her final illness. In addition to providing remedies to cure illness or to help ease suffering, caretakers were encouraged to offer moral support to the dying and to help prepare them for the end of life. Lydia Maria Child writes in The Family Nurse, “Where it is a settled case that a human being is departing, I have always thought it kind to talk openly, and with serious cheerfulness, of the prospect before them.” Early New Englanders desired a "good death"—in which the dying was aware of his or her fate, accepted it, made peace with his or her family and God, and went peacefully to the hereafter. Many believed a “good death” was ultimately a reflection of the fate of the soul, and families endeavored to provide a peaceful atmosphere for the soul to depart amidst the chaos of sickness.

A flurry of activity followed a person’s death, in preparation for the burial. With the art of chemical embalming in its infancy, the time between death and burial was swift by necessity, often occurring within days or hours of death. Likewise, in the absence of professional undertakers to prepare the body for final visiting and burial, mortuary duties fell upon the deceased’s family and close friends. Most preparations were simple: the body was washed and dressed by the family before being “laid out” in a simply constructed coffin for visitation by friends and neighbors.

Little could be done to stave off decomposition. Instead, the family strewed strong, sweet-smelling herbs such as rosemary and tansy to help mask unpleasant odors. After the body was prepared for visitation, family, friends, and neighbors from the community paid their final respects to the deceased and the family. They offered condolences and comfort and often inquired as to the patient’s state of mind before death—to discern if the deceased had died a “good death.” Similarly, the minister and his family might visit the family to comfort and to officiate at the funeral.

After visitation, the coffin was nailed shut and placed on a bier—a large wooden brace carried on the pallbearers’ shoulders, evenly distributing the weight of the coffin. The pallbearers, traditionally close friends of the deceased, carried the coffin to the burying ground with mourners following in a procession led by the family. At the gravesite, a brief funeral sermon was read and the coffin was committed to the earth. Pallbearers and attendants often returned to the deceased’s home for a simple meal, which offered additional time to remember the dead and an opportunity for the family to thank them for their service.

Many bereaved families then entered a period of mourning in which they turned their attention from earthly matters to remembrances of the deceased, and ultimately to reflection upon their own mortality. Mourning families often withdrew from the community, shunning social events and adopting...
visible markers of their bereavement to the outside world, such as dressing in somber black mourning attire. The wearing of simple, modest, and unornamented mourning clothing was meant to turn attention away from vanity and toward introspection, as well as to help prevent the unaware from asking inopportune questions of the bereaved. The degree to which families adopted mourning clothing varied: while men may have worn a simple black arm or hat band to signify their loss, women may have adopted all-black clothing to signify a death in the family.

Similarly, the duration of the mourning period varied greatly. Because men spent more time outside the home, the duration of the mourning period for them was often shorter than for women, often lasting only several weeks or months. As the heart and moral center of the family, bereaved women were expected to mourn for a longer period of time—often prescribed as one to four years—depending upon their relation to the deceased. However, some women elected to remain in mourning for the rest of their lives to signify their eternal love and devotion to the departed.

“Where it is a settled case that a human being is departing, I have always thought it kind to talk openly, and with serious cheerfulness, of the prospect before them.”

Memento Mori: Tokens of Affection Memento mori—literally translated as “remember you must die”—served as a remembrance of loved ones and of the owner’s mortality. The tradition dates back centuries, reaching its zenith during the nineteenth century. Although often jarring or macabre to modern viewers, memento mori offered unconventional beauty and transcended time to demonstrate the owner’s lasting love and affection for the deceased. Below are a few examples from the OSV collection:

Hair Jewelry In an era before photography, friends and loved ones exchanged locks of hair as tokens of love and friendship and to commemorate the deceased. Hair was woven into elaborate designs and worn as necklaces, brooches, or bracelets, or incorporated into rings, pendants, and brooches. Hair work jewelry commemorating a deceased loved one often included a sentimental inscription. Village historians believe this brooch includes hair from both mother and child. Their hair is woven and entwined and contained under glass; an engraving on the back reads, “Our darling Susie died May 18 Aged 13 months 12 days.” The tradition of incorporating hair into jewelry as a sign of affection continued throughout the nineteenth century.

Elegiac Portraits Likewise, some families commemorated their deceased with mourning portraits. The OSV collection houses a variety of elegiac portraits, ranging from printed or sketched images to elaborately embroidered designs featuring the deceased’s name and dates of birth and death. Many scenes portray mourners standing near the deceased’s grave and relied heavily on symbolism to convey their grief. In particular, images of weeping willows and urns were incorporated into elegiac portraits to symbolize the family’s loss and eternal affection for the deceased.
Like most people, Jim Stochaj and his wife Lisa were attracted to Old Sturbridge Village because they felt the museum reflected their own core values of family and community. Thus, when they researched avenues for philanthropy and potential advertising outlets, the Village was a natural relationship to explore: Family and community are the roots of their business—it was founded by Jim’s parents and is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

Edwin J. and Ann N. Stochaj founded E.J. Stochaj Insurance Agency, Inc., of Dudley in a small two-room office in Webster, Massachusetts, in 1975, and moved the agency to Dudley, Massachusetts, in 1977. In 1982, their son Jim launched his career there, and his wife joined the business in 1998. When Edwin and Ann retired in 2002, they sold the business to their son and daughter-in-law, and the successful young couple expanded in 2008, purchasing Bouvier Insurance Agency. Renaming their new acquisition The Hometown Insurance Center, LLC, they also purchased the building at 590 Main Street in Sturbridge—on the corner of Route 20 and Church Street—to house the new entity, where you will find them today.

“Doing business in Sturbridge, and being able to service the residents of Sturbridge and surrounding towns, has been a magnificent experience.”

As Jim and Lisa have grown the business, they have clung to and nurtured those small-town family values in their staff and clients. Jim says, “Doing business in Sturbridge, and being able to service the residents of Sturbridge and surrounding towns, has been a magnificent experience. The people are friendly, and appreciate the efforts of our staff—Melissa Lotter, account executive/office manager, and client representatives Laurie Scully, Kayla Rahimi, and Kristin Dean.”

Perhaps most importantly, as the landscape of the insurance business has changed, their dedication to individuals has not. “We sell and service all types of insurance at both agencies, and still no client is too big or too small,” says Lisa. “That is why our sponsoring the KidStory exhibit and the schoolhouse in the Village is a natural fit. We want to keep what we learned about the business from Jim’s parents—preserve it—and build on that knowledge and those relationships into the future.”

“Having young families as clients is very important to us as a service business,” adds Jim. “We do a great job for them, and can continue to do so for years to come.”
Today, most people have a savings or checking account, a mortgage, auto loan, or credit card, and get cash from ATMs. Their paychecks are directly deposited into those accounts, balance and transaction statements automatically arrive via U.S. mail or email, and many people also do their banking online. In the early 1800s, most banks provided none of those services. In fact, the average person rarely—if ever—went into a bank. Yet banks touched most people’s lives, and provided a hot topic of political debate.

Banks did not exist in America when we declared independence in 1776, though the national and state governments minted coins as the limited supply of precious metals allowed. The government paid for the war by printing paper money with little to back it up, resulting in run-away inflation and debased currency. Thus, in 1780 some Philadelphia merchants set up the Bank of Pennsylvania to help the government pay for the war, and the following year Congress superseded it with the Bank of North America, in the hope of bringing some order to the government’s finances. That bank lasted for only five years, and the national government only slightly longer.

Under the Constitution of 1789, the federal government stopped printing paper money—until the emergence of the Civil War—and forbid the states from doing so, allowing only specie—precious metal coins from any country—as legal tender. In 1791, a new federal bank was chartered for 20 years to regulate the money supply and handle federal finances, and a second Bank of the United States followed from 1816 to 1836. After President Jackson withdrew federal funds from the bank in 1833, he vetoed a bill to renew its charter, allowing states to regulate banks until well into the twentieth century. In fact, after 1836, banks could not operate in more than one state until 1975.

In the early republic, booming business required a larger and more fluid money supply than the insufficient amount of coins—or personal records of debt and credit—could allow. For better or worse—and often both—banks
During times of financial panic, even well-run banks closed their doors and refused to redeem their notes. And despite efforts to prevent it, counterfeiting was widespread. Peddlers and merchants routinely subscribed to monthly “counterfeit detector” magazines that reported failed or shaky banks, and described any fake notes known to be in circulation. Buying, selling, or just payday could indeed be risky business. The fear of a computer hacker stealing your credit card information today pales in comparison to the monetary perils of the 1830s!

Filled this need, and by the 1830s hundreds of privately owned, state-chartered banks were operating throughout the country.

Merchants, prosperous farmers, manufacturers, and others with money sometimes found themselves in need of short-term business loans, and also recognized that need in others. These politically connected men organized banks almost as private investment clubs, buying shares in the corporation and convincing state legislatures to charter them. They profited by printing and loaning bank notes at interest in sums greater than the bank’s assets, literally making money!

Most country towns did not have any banks, but big cities had many, where a business might ask for a short-term loan. For example, a country printer with a contract from an urban publisher to print 2,000 copies of a book would need to buy paper, ink, and new type, as well as pay a journeyman. The printer would explain this to the cashier of a bank, who forwarded the request to the bank president and board of directors. Using the printing press and other assets as collateral, the bank would give the printer a three-month loan—called a discount—of $1,000 at 6%, the norm and the legal maximum. The printer would use the $985 ($1,000 less the interest) in paper notes issued by the bank to pay expenses, and in three months pay back the full $1,000.

It was in the best interest of the bank if the people who were paid with those borrowed notes passed them along again and again, keeping them in circulation. Only when someone brought a note back to the issuing bank did that bank have to redeem it for specie. Otherwise—like a check today that is not cashed—it was free money for the bank.

New England banks were the most carefully regulated—both by themselves and by state governments—in the country, and their notes were fairly well trusted. Many southern and western banks were loosely run and frequently went out of business. Thus, anyone accepting their notes might do so for less than their full face value, though many people had no choice but to accept their pay in whatever money was offered them.

When a bank failed, its notes were instantly worthless.
Thanks to a generous donation by old friends, the Salem Towne Orchard will soon return to its former glory, just as it was nearly 45 years ago.

Like most stories at Old Sturbridge Village, this one is about long-term relationships. Elizabeth Gay Reddig, an Overseer for the Village for a number of years, had just been elected as a Trustee before she suddenly became ill, rendering her unable to serve. Her daughter Gay Mayl stepped up in her stead, and actively guided the Village for 20 years. When Director Ruth Wells suggested Gay and her husband Jack donate an apple orchard in memory of Gay’s mother, she loved the idea. “It seemed like a nice place to commemorate Mother,” Gay remembers. “My parents enjoyed apple trees at their homes in Hudson and Gates Mills, Ohio, and my mother loved her visits to Old Sturbridge Village.”

With assistance from the Worcester County Horticultural Society, 31 heirloom varieties were planted, with preservation stock planted elsewhere around the Village to ensure continuity by providing grafts for replacement trees. Then, a 120-foot-long stone wall with a post and rail fence along the top was built to enclose the orchard, and a handsome plaque dedicating the orchard to Elizabeth Gay Reddig’s memory was affixed to a central boulder. The trees grew and apples were in abundance.

About ten years later, the Mayls made an additional donation to spruce up the orchard, moving the back tree line forward, away from the Millpond—thwarting persistent beaver attacks—and expanding the orchard to the left, toward where the Lyford-Hutchins Cider Mill from Brookfield, New Hampshire, was dedicated the following year.

Today visitors to Old Sturbridge Village still enjoy seasonal demonstrations celebrating harvest time. Heirloom apple tastings and cider preservation—including cider molasses, drying apples, and applesauce—depend on the Reddig apples. However, Gay recently noticed that the stone wall was deteriorating and the orchard had lost a number of trees. Once again, she stepped in to rejuvenate the orchard.

Arborists will not only nurture the 30- to 40-year-old apple trees back to health, but will plant new heirloom variety trees to fill in the orchard. The stone wall has been rebuilt, and instead of replacing the post-and-rail fence that was originally atop it—which was difficult to maintain—farm staff will complete the fence with a single wooden rail mounted on crossed diagonal stakes above that stone base. Thus, when the orchard is re-dedicated it will not only be a memorial
befitting Elizabeth Gay Reddig and her heirs, it will also be a valuable teaching tool for the Village.

“In the early 1800s period that OSV presents, many of the orchards in a village like ours would have been about this age,” notes Tom Kelleher, OSV Historian and Curator of Mechanical Arts. Kelleher goes on to explain why the new style fence was chosen, referencing early 1800s town sketches in J.W. Barber’s *1840 Massachusetts Geography.* “This type of fence seems to have become increasingly common in rural New England as fields aged. The ground yielded new stones every year, as wood supplies for maintaining fences shrank.”

“The Mayls’ gift also allows us to enhance the interpretation of progressive farmers, such as Salem Towne, and integrate with other programs, as well,” opines Debra Friedman, Senior Vice President for Visitor Experience. “The active beehives in the orchard support the new beekeeping exhibit, for example.”

Interim Director of Interpretation Rhys Simmons adds, “We currently do not showcase this style fence in the Village—except tucked away up on the pasture walk—so it will provide us more interpretive talking points.”

Gay Mayl’s support of Old Sturbridge Village continues beyond the orchard as well. As a Trustee she was devoted to planning and development at OSV, and she recently informed us that Old Sturbridge Village is a beneficiary in her will. “Old Sturbridge Village is a place that means a great deal to me, and I trust you to use this inheritance wisely.”

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**Put Your Signature on Old Sturbridge Village**

As a nonprofit educational institution, Old Sturbridge Village is dependent on the generosity of individuals such as the Mayls to maintain almost 200 acres of land plus buildings, many of which are antique. If you have a favorite place in the Village that you feel needs some TLC and would like to contribute to make that work happen expeditiously, please contact the development department at 508-347-0250. As the above article indicates, we are happy to acknowledge your donation, whether it is as small as a few plants in one of our gardens or as large as one of our period homes, with a plaque. Bequests are also appreciated, and will help secure Old Sturbridge Village for future generations.
With the frigid New England winter behind us, we look forward to putting away our warm woolies. We pack up our hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and jackets, and put the blankets at the end of the bed or tuck them away in a chest for safekeeping. When the ground thawed in 1830s New England, fields were plowed, gardens were planted, and the birth of lambs, calves, baby pigs, and chicks filled the barnyard with new sounds. But wool was still on everyone’s minds.

Some nineteenth century farmers raised mixed-blood sheep or “New England native,” because their meat or mutton had high market value. Other farmers chose to raise sheep for their fleece; fleece from sheep with Spanish merino blood fetched a higher price at the textile mills than fleece from Wiltshire and Dorset breeds.

Not all farm families in the early nineteenth century raised sheep, but some who did still used their own equipment and skills for turning the wool into yarn or woven cloth. With textile mills in Massachusetts thriving in the 1830s, however, it was possible to find a wide selection of affordable fabrics of various printed patterns and colors at the local country store. Prices of factory-made textiles declined significantly: in 1790, good quality imported calicos had sold for $1.10 per yard, but by 1840, domestic calicos could sell for as little as four or five cents per yard. This made the time and effort required to prepare wool at home—shearing, scouring, carding, spinning, and weaving—seem less necessary.

In households where the hum of the spinning wheel and the thwack of the loom were still present, the spun yarn and woven fabric could be used in many different ways. Spinning and knitting might earn a little extra money, as Sally Brown of Plymouth Notch, Vermont, indicated in her diary. In October 1833 she wrote: “… finished doubling and twisting the yarn,” and in December “Father went to Ludlow … Sold my stocking yarn for 5 shillings (17 cents) a pound. There was four pounds and five ounces. It amounted to three dollars and sixty-five cents.” She also noted, “Dr. Carter paid me fifty cents for a pair of stockings.” Sally and her sister Pamela frequently recorded spinning in their diaries, though apparently most of it was for their own use.

Yarn spun on the great wheel was often used for the knitting of personal items such as stockings, hats, and mittens, but the 1828 diary entries of Julia E. Smith of Glastonbury, Connecticut, indicate she had several neighbors who helped her create a carpet.

Textiles: Woven or Spun at Home

By Debra Knight, Lead Interpreter of Textiles

1840s visitor SPRING 2015
Oct. 14 – “I carried 9 skeins of yarn to Sophie’s and she will dye it black – I proceeded to Mr. Talcott’s mill for my carded wool and for my wool yarn now dyed green – It is a good color.”

Oct. 23 – “I went out this morning to carry my spun yarn to Mrs. Chapman who will make a carpet.”

Nov. 6 – “I went out to get my carpet and brought it home. It was very beautiful.”

Unmarried sisters Zeloda and Samantha Barrett of New Hartford, Connecticut, used their weaving skills to help support their 81-year-old mother on the 85-acre family farm they shared after their father passed away in 1821. In August and September of 1828, Samantha writes: “… finished spooling and warpd and got in Mrs. Riders piece – wove some” and “… part of the day wove – Edward Woodruff bought me a piece to weave.” In December of that year, a Mr. Hotchkiss did work on the Barretts’ chimney and the sisters “… paid him thirteen yards of flannel, seven dollars money, one dollar worth fowls, one pair shag mittens.”

Home looms also allowed for custom-made patterns. Sara Snell Bryant of Cummington, Massachusetts, wrote in her diary in 1831 about working on yardage for towels.

Aug 31st – “warpt a piece 84 yds for towels – double diamonds”

Sept 3rd – “wove one yd on double diamond”

Oct 1st – “got out my piece of double diamonds for towels”

Sara’s double diamond pattern is one that might not have been available at the store. Sara also recorded weaving “flannel shirting” and “plaid.”

Learn more about textiles during Wool Days at the Village Memorial Day weekend, May 23–25. In addition to the annual sheep shearing, you will see scouring (degreasing) of the fleece; wool being dyed; yarn being spun and woven; sheep dogs herding; and wool felting. Other wool-producing animals, such as llamas and alpacas, will be on display. Visitors can knit a few rows on scarves in progress for deployed soldiers, and for a small fee can dye their own skeins of yarn at the Craft Center.
The idiom, “earn your stripes” applies to many life situations, and here at the Village folks need to earn the privilege of dressing in costume and interpreting buildings and artifacts. Pauline Borden earned her stripes a few years ago, and continues to impress co-workers and visitors with her dedication.

As young parents living in Charlton, Pauline and her husband Lee enjoyed bringing their two children to Old Sturbridge Village, so they became members and visited often. When the children went off to college, the Bordens changed their family membership to an “individual plus one” so that their daughter, Rebecca, could still visit when she was home on break. Rebecca’s love for the Village continued to grow, and in 1996 she was hired to work in the Office Services department. As a staff member, she was allowed to have a family member join in the Fourth of July festivities at the Village, and she invited her mother. “After that,” says Pauline, “I was hooked!”

Pauline was one of the first volunteer OSV Dancers, a group whose numbers have waxed and waned but which continues to periodically entertain Village guests. She is no longer a part of that group, but she has proven adept at other things—many other things.

After retiring from the registrar’s office at Nichols College, Pauline officially became an unpaid member of the OSV staff, working one day a week. “I started on July 1, 2005, as a greeter and way finder, but I’ve always been happy to do whatever they need me to do,” she says.

“For Christmas by Candlelight I put together Christmas song books; sometimes I pick up the time sheets from the other volunteers and total up the hours; I help with mailings; whatever needs to be done, I’m happy to help.”

Pauline has also invested time in training to be a costumed interpreter, qualifying her to work as a docent in the Asa Knight Store, the Parsonage, the Fitch House, and at the Freeman Farm. She also participated in a staff workshop and made her own silk bonnet.

“The Freeman Farm is my favorite place to work,” she shares. “I guess it’s because it’s the one house that really feels like a home to me. I also love animals, so I enjoy feeding the chickens and the pigs. While working there I also get to learn crafts … I learned yarn sewing and knitting. I learn something new every day.” One of the unique skills demonstrated at the Freeman Farm is also Pauline’s favorite: butchering a pig. “This will be my third year doing it,” she reports. “I’ve also learned to butcher turkeys and sheep. I think it’s interesting learning the different cuts [of meat] and how they decide the size of each cut.”

One day a week is not enough time in the Village for Pauline, though. “My husband and I walk there every day. It is so peaceful and beautiful and there is always something going on,” she says. “I’d move in if they would let me!”

Although Pauline has worn—and continues to wear—many hats around Old Sturbridge Village, she really cherishes her silk bonnet.
Old Sturbridge Village Is the Ideal Venue for Your Corporate Event

By Lorraine Reeder, Marketing Associate

This winter SCHOTT North America, Inc., of Southbridge, hosted a “Cooking a Nineteenth Century Meal” program for its staff and customers, the most recent of many events they have held at OSV. “Each event is very unique and I get only positive feedback—not only from SCHOTT staff, but also from clients and visitors we take along. The personalized tours and events give us the feeling we are treated ‘special’ as a corporate client, especially the evening catering events inside the Village. They are definitely a different and better experience than just sitting in a restaurant,” reports SCHOTT Marketing Specialist Brigitte Esposito.

SCHOTT—like other corporate clients—also appreciates the convenient location of the Village, which makes it easy for employees and clients to attend events. Now, participants—who come from as far away as California—can stay onsite at the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges.

As you can imagine, the Village offers a unique venue for any kind of social or business-related event, and during her 12 years working at OSV, Alexis Conte, Director of Sales for Old Sturbridge Village, has seen many memorable functions.

“In total we own more than 200 acres, and our multiple conference facilities, combined with the unique backdrop of the museum, provide a wide spectrum of opportunities—including great food and overnight accommodations—at a great price,” she explains. Conte has seen businesses host appreciation days, conferences, holiday parties, and corporate outings on the museum property. “The ‘Cooking a Nineteenth Century Meal’ program offered by our education staff is an excellent team building opportunity as well,” she opines.

A new option for corporate clients is the recently opened conference space in the lodging complex. Lynn Minderman, President of Qhalqho Mountain Connections, was the first person to book the space, along with lodging accommodations for her group. “This was a central location for our annual board meeting,” she says. “The room was well equipped, beautifully decorated, and very comfortable. It made our three-day task so much easier. We will definitely return next year!”

The various dining facilities at OSV accommodate up to 250 guests and feature exclusive menus including the Hearthside Bounty, which is offered to the public November through March. And with shuttle service to the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges—and discounted room rates included in the event package—there’s no reason why everyone can’t eat, drink, and be merry, even on a weekday.

NEW CONFERENCE SPACE AT THE LODGES Old Sturbridge Village recently opened a conference room on the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges portion of the property. Boasting a racetrack conference table with seating for 10, an overhead projector, 40” flat screen TV, and an ensuite bath, the sunny space lends itself to small group meetings as well as luncheons and private events for overnight guests. Call the Old Sturbridge Village Sales Department at 508-347-0306 for private tours and more information.
Maple Days
March 7–8, 14–15, 21–22, 28–29
The smell of wood smoke and maple syrup are a sure sign that the sap is rising and spring is on its way. Join us for any or all of these four weekends, and see maple sugaring as it was done in early 19th century rural New England.

Crafts at Close Range
March 7–8
Full and half-day adult historical craft workshops, on topics ranging from blacksmithing to textiles, coopering, foodways, and more. Try your hand at a craft and take home your finished masterpiece! Fees vary.

Take a Closer Look: Tour the Research Library
March 14—10:00 AM
The Old Sturbridge Village Research Library houses a large collection of manuscripts, 19th century books and periodicals, and other historic print materials. Join OSV staff for a closer look at some of the highlights of the Library collection.

Celtic Celebration
March 14–15
Irish heritage is celebrated in stories, songs, and more during this weekend event. Learn about the role of the Irish in 1830s New England and their lasting impact on our culture today.

Home School Day
March 18
Historic Writings: exploring 19th century life through journals, letters, advice books, and account books.

7th Annual Garden Symposium
March 21
Welcome spring by honing your garden skills and learning new techniques to try in this summer’s garden. Learn about the history of gardening in New England and how to incorporate traditional methods into your home garden. No experience necessary. $55 per person, including local harvest lunch (OSV Members $45)

Hearthside Bounty
March 21—6:00 PM
Enjoy a 19th century tavern supper prepared in part at the hearth, and beverages fashionable in early New England; hear music and stories from an earlier time; and explore period games and entertainment. $54.95 per person, including tax and gratuity (OSV Members $49.95)

Garden Thyme: Heirloom Seed Swap
March 28—10:00 AM
Looking for new and interesting varieties to incorporate into your garden this season? Bring samples of your favorite heirloom seeds to swap, and share why these varieties are your favorites.

Dog Days
April 4–5
Bring your canine friends to enjoy the sights and smells of Old Sturbridge Village. This is your final opportunity to parade your pup around our 19th century village until November. Please visit www.osv.org/event/dog-days/dog-days-3 for Dog Days Policies or call 508-347-0290.

Take a Closer Look: Behind the Scenes in the OSV Costume Shop
April 11—10:00 AM
Join OSV staff for an intimate tour of our costume shop where the Village’s reproduction costumes are made, fitted, and stored, and learn the steps and detail involved in building period costumes for historians. Space is limited to eight—first come, first serve.

Scout Day
April 11
For every one scout in uniform, one parent gets in for the child rate ($8). Special programs and hands-on studios help scouts earn requirements toward badges.

Family Farm Fest
April 18–26
Celebrate spring with the arrival of baby animals and the prepping of our fields. Meet heritage-breed newborns at the Freeman Farm; learn about 19th century agriculture practices and tools and how they apply to today; and try your hand at seasonal chores.

Garden Thyme: Attracting Pollinators to Your Garden
April 18—10:00 AM
Learn what will attract helpful birds and bees to your garden, as well as which plants add beneficial blooms and beautiful colors.

OSV membership allows you to attend most events at a reduced price, and some events—highlighted in red—can be enjoyed for FREE!
Patriots’ Day
April 20
Explore how the start of the Revolutionary War affected small New England towns; witness the making of musket balls; listen to Fife and Drum music; and watch the town militia muster.

Corporate Appreciation Weekend
May 2–3
Complimentary admission for employees of our Business Partners and their immediate families (up to six per employee).

Take a Closer Look: Elegance and Ornament
May 9—10:00 AM
Needlework was an important element in the lives of women and girls in 19th century New England. Explore the various types of needlework that were popular in the period with an OSV women’s craft expert.

Mother’s Day
May 10
Mothers receive free admission and a special gift—while supplies last—as well as entries in giveaways. Events include a mom vs. kids tug o’ war, and a garden tour on early 19th century medicinal plants.

Home School Day
May 13
Healthy Living: learn about options for medical care in the 19th century.

Garden Thyme: Getting the Bugs Out—Garden Pests and Problems
May 16—10:00 AM
Receive tips and solutions for ridding your garden of bugs and pests, inspired by 19th-century horticulture practices and garden writers.

Wool Days
May 23–25
Join us as we go through the entire wool process—from shearing and scouring to knitting and weaving. Try carding wool, and help us knit a few rows of a scarf for deployed soldiers. Dye your own skein of OSV wool or make felted jewelry at the Craft Center for a small fee.

A Pound of Cure
May 30–31
This healthy living fair bridges 19th century medicine with present-day health and wellness programs. Meet a 19th century travelling dentist, learn about home remedies and medicinal plants, and see antique medical implements. Local healthcare partners will offer health screenings such as cholesterol and blood pressure testing, as well as information, demonstrations, and tips on nutrition, fitness, and healthy living.

Freedom Week
June 15–21
Costumed historians, musicians, actors, and others join forces to celebrate Emancipation Day, when President Lincoln announced in 1865 that slavery would be abolished in America. Learn about the lives of African-Americans—both free and slave—living in New England. Listen to public readings of the Emancipation Proclamation; performances of traditional slave songs; and readings of noted African-American writers such as Ralph Waldo Ellison and Massachusetts native W.E.B. Du Bois.

Garden Thyme: Oddball Fruits
June 20—10:00 AM
Think exotic fruits such as kiwis, figs, and passion fruit can’t grow in New England’s climate? Think again! Learn how to grow these unique fruits in your home garden.

For more details on all events, call 800-SEE-1830 or visit www.osv.org

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Brunch at the Oliver Wight Tavern
Join us every Sunday for a delicious all-you-can eat feast. Special menus and pricing on Easter (April 4) and Mother’s Day (May 10).

Reservations highly recommended. Call 508-347-0333.
MUSEUM
OPEN YEAR-ROUND
hours vary seasonally
Open daily 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM
May through October
Open Wednesday–Sunday
9:30 AM to 4:00 PM
November, January through April*
Open Monday holidays
*Open MA school vacation week
April 18–26
9:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Take Advantage of Your Membership Benefits

We value you as a member and want to ensure you take advantage of all the privileges associated with OSV membership.

You may have noticed changes in the Visitor magazine … we are doing more in-depth articles to encourage new insights during your next visit. We are also highlighting the free events in our calendar (pages 22 and 23 of this issue). Whether you are a home gardener or just like to walk through gardens, our monthly Garden Thyme workshops cover a wide variety of topics and are accessible to novices yet informative to professionals.

Many of the more than 50,000 artifacts in our collection circulate through the appropriate exhibits, but unless you come frequently you probably have only seen a fraction of them, and some items are just too delicate to display. That’s why we offer members our monthly Take a Closer Look program, where you can not only see more of our collection but will learn more about the individual artifacts as well.

Your unlimited daytime admission benefits are accompanied by discounts on food, lodging, gift shop items, gift memberships, and fee-based programs. Why not take advantage of them all … soon?

Dog Days, April 4–5