Make No Little Plans
Wells Family Memories
Inn and Reeder Family Lodges
70th Anniversary: Past and Future
Slavery and the Abolition Movement
History of the Pliny Freeman Farmhouse
Reflecting on 70 Years of Living History

Jim Donahue, President and CEO

When the Wells family - founders of Old Sturbridge Village - opened the museum for business 70 years ago, they could not have imagined the millions of visitors who would come to love the Village and all that it offers families, students and tourists. Through the years, more than 20 million visitors have experienced the Village, and many left with an indelible impression of American and New England history that influenced them to pursue careers in teaching, research and preservation from which we continue to benefit.

The Village has, in many ways, stood the test of time and Mother Nature—be it hurricanes and tornadoes or tough economic times and growing competition. The museum endures because of the undying dedication of its supporters and friends and the innate desire of all human beings to know, understand and appreciate what came before us.

We know that as time marches on we face potential deterioration of historic homes and structures, and a decreasing appreciation for New England’s rich and vibrant past. The knowledge and ways of life of the 19th century hold valuable lessons from which we can all learn. The Village seeks to preserve and interpret early American history in a way that actively engages our visitors. We continue to be the vanguard of the 21st-century movement to reconnect to the past and apply its lessons to the challenges of everyday life.

I hope when you explore this issue of the Visitor that you too will gain an appreciation of the Village’s history, the people who shaped it, and those who continue to advance its important mission. Our Village Historian, Tom Kelleher, provides an excellent retrospective on the founding years of the Village. This spring and summer, I invite you to visit our new exhibit Make No Little Plans in the Visitor Center so you can experience the museum’s earliest beginnings through the many wonderful objects on display—and the stories that our curators will share about them.

In this issue, you will also enjoy the heartwarming memories of Wells family members as they recall the early years of the museum, and find humor and inspiration in the reports of the leaders who are shaping the institution today.

We have accomplished much in these 70 years, but our work is far from done. With attendance at historical sites on a three-decade decline and historical literacy in the United States at an all-time low, the Village must continue to innovate and captivate new audiences as we seek to reverse these trends. As I prepare to begin my tenth year as President, I have never felt more confident that we can do just that and more.

So please join with me in celebrating 70 years of living history at Old Sturbridge Village. I invite you to visit us in 2016 with your spouse, children, grandchildren or friends, and share your love for New England’s past with future generations. Thank you for your membership to the museum. Because of your support, we begin our next 70 years strong and energized!
Welcome to the SPRING/SUMMER edition of our VISITOR magazine. We hope that you will learn new things and visit the Village soon.

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Old Sturbridge Village began as one man’s hobby, but over the years it has evolved into a national institution that nearly 25 million people have visited. This year marks 70 years since Old Sturbridge Village opened to the public, and 80 years since its inception. A new exhibit in the Visitor Center Folk Art Gallery opened May 7 that celebrates those milestones by exploring the story of our beginnings through the early growing pains of the Village.

Industrialist Albert B. Wells of Southbridge, Massachusetts, became interested in the beauty of hand-wrought utilitarian objects in the early 1900s on annual tours of Europe with his father-in-law, the noted Chicago architect Daniel Hudson Burnham. Wells had great respect and admiration for Burnham, who famously advised, “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood… Make big plans; aim high in hope and work…” Wells took this advice to heart and kept Burnham’s words framed on his wall as a lasting source of inspiration. Working closely with his older brother Channing M. and younger brother J. Cheney, A.B. Wells built their father’s business, the American Optical Corporation, into what was once the largest and most innovative eyeglass manufacturer in the world.

A.B. Wells also thought big about his hobbies. In the mid-1920s A.B. went to Vermont with some friends for a relaxing weekend of golf. When rain prevented golfing, his friends suggested they go antiquing instead. Wells objected, asking what his friends found so appealing about “those old junk shops.” He gave in to their cajoling and in Henniker, New Hampshire, had an epiphany. A.B. Wells fell in love with what he called “primitives” and “oddities” the unique, handcrafted tools and implements of an earlier day: spinning wheels, rolling pins, baskets, butter molds, wooden bowls, apple peelers, mouse traps, wrought iron hinges, painted country furniture and more. That weekend he bought enough “primitives” to fill two station wagons. His assistant George Watson, who was dispatched along with the chauffeur to bring it all home, recalled that Wells directed him to stash it in the garage because “he did not dare tell his wife.”

Mr. Burnham on his last motor trip in Europe in 1912, with Mrs. Burnham and Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Wells.

A.B. Wells later wrote a friend, “When the collecting bug bit me, it bit me hard.” His collecting became a consuming passion. Within a few years he was manically buying truckloads of antiques scoured from the New England countryside, and his large mansion at 176 Main Street in Southbridge (designed by Daniel...
Burnham) could not contain it all. Even Wells’ private bowling alley was partitioned off to hold some of his collection. Two large barns were added to the house, and they too were soon filled to the rafters. A.B. and his wife were forced to move to another home. Conscious of his own mortality, in 1935 Wells formed the Wells Historical Museum, a not-for-profit trust to ensure the preservation of his collection. As A.B.’s son George Burnham Wells observed, the collection was “too big and too numerous to be simply one man’s hobby.”

For 25¢ admission, the curious were treated to a two-hour tour through 42 rooms packed with Wells’ collection of antiques. This was not enough for A.B. Wells, however. Still making big plans, in 1936 he hired an architect to design a series of gallery buildings to sit on an adjacent lot and better display his treasures. Wells was excited about this scheme when he presented it to family and friends in July, but his son George, “knocked it full of holes,” saying museums were “dead” and that “nobody ever went into museums but old people.” But, “the historical value” of his father’s collections “was tremendous, provided it could be put to proper usage and used educationally.” “It would be necessary to have a village, a live village, one with different shops operating.” “It was essential to have water power.”

A.B. told a friend, “this was a revolutionary idea... and I was taken off my feet.” While collections of old buildings had been assembled in a few places, none yet actively demonstrated historic crafts. A.B.’s brother Cheney, a reserved and methodical man who avidly collected early American antique clocks and paperweights, immediately said, “Albert, if you accept George’s idea, I’ll go in with you 50-50 and help in every way I can to develop a village along the lines that George suggests.”

Within a week they bought the old farm in Sturbridge, then known as the Ballard place, on which their mother had been born. The Quinebaug River ran through the rolling property, providing the requisite waterpower, developed in the late 1700s by an earlier owner, David Wight. Trusted assistant George Watson was sent out to find and move old houses, barns and mills to create the village and to help design new buildings constructed from new and reused materials to resemble early structures. The museum’s first curator, Malcolm Watkins, was hired later that same summer to begin cataloging and classifying the collection of tens of thousands of objects, from muskets to glassware.

The two Wells brothers hired the Boston architectural firm of Perry, Shaw and Hepburn to help design what was then called Old Quinabaug Village (subtly substituting an “a” for the more commonly
accepted central “e” in the river’s name). Perry, Shaw and Hepburn had directed all the work that John D. Rockefeller II had earlier undertaken at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. Hefty bills and the firm’s stubborn proclivity for Georgian brick architecture, essentially just another Williamsburg, instead of the look and feel of early rural New England, quickly ended that relationship. Instead, respected landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff helped the Wells lay out a rural landscape that matched their vision of early New England. A.B. Wells recalled that he never argued with anyone as much as he did Shurcliff, or knew anyone whom he respected more for his knowledge and ability.

That first decade was fraught with setbacks for the new museum. The Great Depression continued to be a drag on the nation’s economy throughout the 1930s. Only months after buying the farm, a waning hurricane washed away the old mill dam. Rebuilding the dam cost many times more than they had paid for the entire property. Another storm in 1938 caused more damage and blew down acres of trees. Making lemonade from lemons, however, they set up a sawmill and made mountains of lumber both to sell and use in building the new Village. Some of those boards still cover the Grist Mill today. Before the decade was out, the Grist Mill became operational and began grinding flour and meal for sale to regional stores, restaurants and bakeries.

As A.B. Wells’ health declined in the 1940s, his beloved daughter-in-law Ruth Dyer Wells, George’s wife, began to oversee more and more projects in the emerging Village. As an early OSV employee recalled, Ruth Wells “had the tenacity and the drive and the administrative sense to get the Village rolling.” World War II brought restrictions on fuel and building materials and a reduction of manpower, forcing construction to halt. Most of the war years were devoted to moving much of the huge collection from Southbridge to Sturbridge. In 1945, a heart attack forced A.B. Wells to move to California for his health. George Wells quietly supported his wife’s hectic pace as director of the Village. J. Cheney Wells provided help as he could, as did his son and nephews, and A.B. kept up a diligent correspondence with Ruth, providing copious advice and encouragement.

After the war, work on the Village quickly resumed. Curator Malcolm Watkins and other veterans returned from their service. Partially constructed buildings were completed and others brought in. Word of the Village got out, and curious people began to come by to see what was going on. Many of these uninvited guests complained that they had mistakenly searched in vain for the Village in nearby Quinebaug, Connecticut. With permission of the Selectmen of the town of Sturbridge, in 1946 the fledgling museum changed its name to Old Sturbridge Village in hopes of thwarting any further geographic confusion.

Ruth Wells was happy to show off the work being done, but realized that people frequently dropping by was impeding work on the museum. So, ready or not, she decided to print maps and open the Village. June 8, 1946 was appointed as opening day. Ruth’s mother, Frances Dyer, served as costume mistress, distributing an eclectic mix of antique old clothing to a handful of family and friends who would serve as hostesses to welcome guests in the Village buildings. That first day, 81 people paid a dollar apiece to tour the grounds and see displays of antiques arranged in the new

Ruth Dyer Wells.
and restored old buildings, including the Fitch House, Grist Mill, Richardson House and Gebhardt barn (now called the Parsonage and Parsonage Barn), the Miner Grant Store, Dennison Schoolhouse (now the Child’s World exhibit), Firearms exhibit, Shoe Shop and more, including a sawmill and blacksmith shop (but not the ones standing today). The Village Inn (now the Bullard Tavern) was under construction, but many now-familiar exhibits, including the Center Meetinghouse, Towne and Fennno houses, Freeman Farm, Thompson Bank and Covered Bridge were not yet here. Over 5,000 more guests visited that first summer and fall.

Almost constant growth marked the Village’s early years, as more exhibits were added and more visitors came to see them. The Village Inn (now the Bullard Tavern) was completed in 1947. That same year, the Center Meetinghouse (formerly the long-disused Fiskdale Baptist Church) was acquired in exchange for a new Hammond electric organ to the congregation. Restoration was completed the following year. Active craft demonstrations began by 1948, and guests were soon no longer permitted to tour the Village in their cars. As the years went by, Earle Newton was hired as director, and Ruth Wells transitioned to managing the growing crafts program. The Fenno House arrived in 1949. The first incarnation of the Lodges was opened the following year. The Freeman house and covered bridge were moved in 1951, and programming especially designed for school groups debuted. The next year the Salem Towne house was moved, and the Miner Grant store began selling freshly baked cookies. Then came the Friends’ meetinghouse and town pound, as restoration of the Towne house continued.

The tenth year of operation saw perhaps the Village’s greatest test. In 1955 two hurricanes, Connie and Diane, hit New England back to back. Raging floodwaters damaged several exhibits and washed the covered bridge off its footings. Curator Frank Spinney got to it by boat as it floated downstream and saved it by tying it to a large tree on shore. Several staff were stranded at the Village; supplies were flown to them by helicopter. But the water receded, and the clean-up began. The bridge was moved to its present, more sheltered location and was chained securely in place. Several buildings, including the Freeman farmhouse, were moved to higher ground. Craft demonstrations were refined to better place them into historical context. The Salem Towne house restoration, based on innovative historical research techniques, was completed.

Most important, more and more people kept coming to see history brought to life at the Village, which welcomed its one millionth visitor in 1957. Since then, many more programs, exhibits and special events have been added and refined in an effort to constantly improve the visitor experience. Through the decades, we have grown well beyond a collection of antiques in a bucolic setting, or even an assemblage of historic craft demonstrations. The “living village” envisioned by George, A.B. and J. Cheney Wells has taken on a vibrant life of its own as a leader in the fields of museum education and living history interpretation.

This year of our 70th anniversary, the Village will see its 25 millionth visitor. As we celebrate our own past as well as New England’s early history, we continue to “make no little plans,” as we look ahead to a long and bright future.
1926 A.B. Wells' antiquing trip to Henniker, NH starts his collecting of “primitives” in earnest.

1930s

1935 What would become Old Sturbridge Village founded when the Wells Historical Museum was incorporated.

1936 George Wells proposed a “live village.” J. Cheney Wells, A.B.’s younger brother, agreed to go in 50/50 with A.B. and contributed his clock and paperweight collections. Within a week, they bought the Charles Ballard Farm in Sturbridge because it had water power. They name it “Old Quinabaug Village.” Also this year, Malcolm Watkins was hired as museum curator and the Wells Historical Museum was opened to the public, displaying Wells’ antiques.

1937 The Cheney Sawmill from Gilead, CT, and the Gebhardt Barn, now the Parsonage Barn, from Schoharie, NY, added to the Village.

1938 Quinabaug Village incorporated, “To establish, maintain, and operate a model village wherein shall be exhibited and carried on for the educational benefit of the public specimens and reproductions of New England architecture and antiques.”

1939 Fitch house from Willimantic, CT, and Shoe Shop from behind the Oliver Wight House added to the Village. Work to move Grant Store from Stafford, CT, begun, completed in 1941.

1940 Grist Mill began operation. Richardson House, now referred to as the Parsonage, added from East Brookfield, MA.


1961 District School from Candia, NH, restored, Bakeshop built. First “Crafts at Close Range” workshops offered; Rural Visitor (now Old Sturbridge Visitor) published.

1966 Law Office from Woodstock, CT, added. Administration Building built.


1972-3 Asa Knight Store moved from Dummerston, VT.
1941 The Gun Shop, a Firearms and Textiles exhibit, built.

1942 The Spectacle Shop, a Glass Exhibit, and Miller’s House, which is now New England’s Changing Landscape, and The Blacksmith’s House—the old Tin & Broom Shop /Craft Services Building, the Blacksmith’s shed, and the George Stone Blacksmith Shop all built.

1943-1945 Work suspended for the remainder of WWII. Wells collections moved from Southbridge to Sturbridge.

1946 Name changed from Old Quinabaug Village to Old Sturbridge Village. On June 8, the Village officially opened to the public. Eighty-one people paid $1 each to tour the grounds.

1947 Village Inn, now known as Bullard Tavern, completed.

1948 Friends of Old Sturbridge Village, a membership organization, established, and craft demonstrations began.

1949 Fenno House from Canton, MA added. George B. Wells succeeds A.B. Wells as museum president, with Earle Newton as Director.

1950 Motel opens along with Oliver Wight House.

1951 Freeman house and various farm buildings assembled from elsewhere added. Printing Office from Worcester, MA, added. Covered Bridge from Dummerston, VT, added. First programming for school groups offered.

1952 Salem Towne House from Charlton, MA added. Research Department established. Freshly baked cookies first sold at Miner Grant Store.

1953 Friends Meetinghouse from Bolton, MA, added.

1954-55 Visitor Center built.

1955 Yearly attendance reaches 604,722 people, an all-time high.

1956 A.B. Wells retired to California; Ruth D. Wells became museum’s Director.

1957 Village Inn, now known as Bullard Tavern, completed.

1958 Stagecoach begins operation.

1959-60 Small House built; opened in 2007.

1961 Oliver Wight Tavern built.

1962 Clock and Folk Art galleries opened; Dinner in a Country Village program began.

1963-64 Sawmill built.

1965 Friends of Old Sturbridge Village now known as Old Sturbridge Village Organization.


1967 Covered Bridge from Dummerston, VT, added. First programming for school groups offered.

1968 Fenno Barn built.

1969 Quinebaug River Ride opens.

1970-71 Visitor Center updated.

1971 The Gun Shop from Southbridge, MA added.

1972-73 Visitor Center built.

1973 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

1974 The Gun Shop from Southbridge, MA added.

1975 Yearly attendance reaches 604,722 people, an all-time high.

1974-75 Visitor Center built.

1975-76 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

1976 Meetinghouse from Bolton, MA, added.

1977-78 Meetinghouse from Bolton, MA, moved to the Village common.

1978 Meetinghouse from Madison, CT, moved to the Village common.

1979 Working pottery kiln built.

1980 Yearly attendance reaches 604,722 people, an all-time high.

1981-82 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

1982 Clock and Folk Art galleries opened; Dinner in a Country Village program began.

1983-84 Sawmill built.

1985 Cider Mill from Brookfield, NH erected; it had been in storage since 1973.


1987 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

1988 Meetinghouse from Bolton, MA, added.

1989 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

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1995 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

1996 Quinebaug River Ride opens.

1997 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

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2011 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2012 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2013 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2014 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2015 OSV acquires historic piggery.

2016 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2017 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2018 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2019 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2020 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

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2023 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

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2034 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2035 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.

2036 Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, MA, moved to the Village common.
Slavery was the greatest and most divisive political and social issue in the United States from its inception until it finally tore the republic apart in 1861. Before the Thirteenth Amendment completed its abolition in 1865, slavery was a persistently glaring contradiction to the ideals of freedom and liberty so vaunted in the early republic, a shameful injustice in “the land of the free.”

Slavery was deeply entwined in the social, political and economic fabric of the nation. After the Revolution, many Americans hoped it would fade away as it became less economically viable. Yet even southerners like George Washington were at a loss as to how to end it, or even how to liberate their own slaves in a humane and practical manner. An unintended consequence of New England native Eli Whitney’s invention of the cotton gin in 1793 was that it breathed new profitability into southern plantation slavery. Slave markets, even in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol, did a brisk business in high-demand human chattel.

By the 1830s, the time we portray at Old Sturbridge Village, slavery had either been abolished or was being gradually eliminated in New England, where it had never been a very important institution. It ended in Massachusetts, for example, as a result of a series of court rulings from 1781 to 1783. The courts declared that slavery was inconsistent with the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution, which states, “All men are born free and equal.” It is the oldest written constitution still in use anywhere in the world.

Slavery was geographically distant from early New Englanders, which made it easier for most to accept its continuing existence in other places. Opposing southern slavery threatened the existence of the country. Furthermore, no one could identify any practical, peaceful plan for transforming millions of uneducated, property-less enslaved people into free citizens. Northerners also had a strong economic self-interest in maintaining the south’s “peculiar institution.” Northern textile mills relied upon slave-grown cotton. The south was a huge market for the textiles, shoes, tools, vehicles and other products of northern factories. Northern consumers demanded not only cotton cloth, but slave-grown sugar, rice and dye-stuffs. While most northerners were glad slavery no longer existed where they lived, few worked to end it elsewhere.

Many people were concerned about slavery, however. From 1816 into the early 1840s, some thought they saw a respectable, socially responsible solution in the American Colonization Society, which sought to voluntarily settle free people of color in West Africa. Slave owners as well as non-slave owners were supporters, including slave-holding presidents Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and Jackson, and notable figures Francis Scott Key, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Chief Justice John Marshall and thousands more in 218 chapters across the country. The American Colonization Society eventually relocated 13,000 emigrants to what is now the nation of Liberia before going bankrupt in 1847 and fading away. The whole scheme was ultimately discredited as wildly impractical, blatantly racist and unjust.

By 1830 a small but growing minority of New Englanders began to call for slavery’s abolition nationwide. Among the most outspoken was William Lloyd Garrison, a Massachusetts printer and editor, who in 1831 began to publish the The Liberator, a newspaper that became the primary vehicle in
New England for radical, militant abolitionism. The following year he helped organize the New England Anti-Slavery Society, dedicated to securing the immediate abolition of slavery regardless of consequences. In 1838, the American Anti-Slavery Society was formed to unify abolitionists from the West, New York and New England. Women such as Abigail Kelley, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, Lydia Maria Child and others broke contemporary social conventions by speaking out publicly for the cause.

While 21st-century Americans may admire the courage and conviction of these abolitionists, most of their neighbors saw them as reckless fanatics: dangerous radicals who threatened national prosperity and political unity. As a group of concerned citizens in Hartford, Connecticut, declared in 1835, the radical abolitionist agenda would “result in no good, but much evil; that [abolitionist rhetoric would] agitate and alarm the people of the slave States; endanger their peace and security, if not expose them to the evils and horrors of insurrection, massacre and a servile war.”

While Garrison and most of his followers were strict pacifists, many of their more numerous northern opponents were not. Abolitionists were often attacked by mobs led by “gentlemen of property and standing” armed with clubs and stones. Neighbors of Canterbury, Connecticut, schoolteacher Prudence Crandall objected when she admitted free black girls to her private school. Townspeople terrorized Crandall and the little girls in her care, pelting them with stones and manure, shouting threats, breaking windows and poisoning their well. Ultimately Crandall was arrested and jailed, and her school closed.

Although never a majority, abolitionism in New England and other northern states grew in the 1840s and 1850s as many came to admire the determined conviction of the abolitionists, were swayed by their moral message and recoiled at the violence used against them.

When New England abolitionists petitioned Congress to end slavery in Washington, D.C., legislators ignored them and adopted a gag rule that automatically tabled any discussion of slavery. U.S. Marshalls aided “slave catchers,” and the court system returned runaway slaves in northern communities, especially after the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. In 1854 Garrison publicly burned a copy of the Constitution to protest Federal collusion in slavery. Other anti-slavery forces increasingly turned to politics, fatally splitting more than one political party and forming the anti-slavery Republican Party that same year. The election in 1860 of the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, to the presidency served as the catalyst for southern secession. The ensuing Civil War ultimately brought an end to slavery, but not its terrible legacy.
Lodging with a Mission

Nestled quaintly near Old Sturbridge Village, the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges offers first-class accommodations while helping to support the year-round operation of the museum. Not only are the rooms large and (unofficially) have the most comfortable beds in town, your stay supports the important programs and experiences that museum visitors from all over the region come to enjoy. Conveniently located among what is fast becoming known as a dining destination in Sturbridge, the Lodges offer access to foodie options that are critically acclaimed and easy to get to.

Two years into their new life, the Lodges are growing. This year a conference facility and fitness room were opened. Along with an outdoor pool, playground, games and Adirondack chairs, a fire pit was added to the outdoor common area in 2015, and is already a favorite. A new spa experience is on the horizon this year!

Beyond the accommodations and ability to support the museum’s mission, the Lodges have an interesting history. First opened as the Liberty Cap Motel, the property now known as the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges has gone through many changes in its lifetime. Into the 1970s, the property hosted guests in a traditional “motor lodge” style, with innkeepers living on site to maintain and manage the facility.

In the late 1970s the historic Oliver Wight House (c. 1789), one of a few historic buildings original to the Old Sturbridge Village property, underwent renovations to incorporate it into the lodging complex.

While the house would not open to guests until 1985, two important events occurred before then. First, in 1979, the motel was renamed the Old Sturbridge Village Lodges, which helped to recast the facility, giving it a central role in the museum, and directly linking it, by name, to the institution it helps to sustain. Second, in 1982, the Oliver Wight house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, ensuring its place in history and at the Old Sturbridge Village Lodges.

By 2006, the Lodges needed maintenance and renovations and were temporarily closed. In 2012, Old Sturbridge Village Trustee Robert “Bob” Reeder and his wife, Lorraine, took an interest in the lodging property. Reminiscing about relaxing and enjoyable stays during previous visits to the museum, Bob and Lorraine missed the convenient location and unique experience of staying at the Lodges. Wishing for generations of new Village visitors to have the same experience, the Reeders funded a full renovation of the Lodges.

“We are grateful to the Reeders,” states President and CEO Jim Donahue. “They had a
The Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges were refurbished and reopened in 2013 because of the generosity of Trustee Robert Reeder and his wife Lorraine Reeder.

Now consisting of 39 rooms, including ten in the historic Oliver Wight House, “The Lodges has built a sterling reputation among wedding parties,” Amedy explains. “In the beginning, it was critical that we attract transient clientele as well.” He explained an interaction he had with a patron before the Lodges had officially opened. “A woman who frequents the Brimfield Flea Markets stopped in as we were finishing renovations. She was excited to learn the Lodges were reopening as she had fond memories of staying here. By September, she had spread the word about the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges, and many Brimfield Flea Marketers were choosing to stay at the Lodges. It was an important first step in growing our transient business.”

The Lodges exceeded its revenue goal for 2015, generating a profit that will help support programs at the museum. Advertising and inventive sales strategies will help the facility grow and prosper. 2015 was also an important year for the Lodges on a different front: along with receiving a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence, which the Lodges has held since 2014, the facility was also awarded both the Booking.com 2015 Guest Review Award and the coveted Expedia.com Certificate of Excellence, an award granted to only 650 lodging facilities worldwide!
Old Sturbridge Village began as a family affair with brothers Albert B., Joel Cheney and Channing McGregory Wells and their children establishing a living museum of shops, homes and farms to display their collection of early New England objects. Today, Cheney’s granddaughter, Lisa Wells Markham, and A.B.’s great-granddaughter, Susan “Susie” Collins, serve as Trustees. Lisa and Susie have fond memories of their family and the Village, and their affection and dedication are central to their commitment to the museum.

Susie spent summers as a child with her grandmother, Ruth Dyer Wells, who was instrumental in getting the Village up and running, and then served in a variety of capacities, including Crafts Director, Trustee and Honorary Trustee. Ruth would visit the Village nearly every day, and she brought Susie and her brother Steven along on her errands. Ruth knew everyone and visits were never short, so Susie and Steven would slip away and explore all of the nooks and crannies of the Village. Ruth often put her grandchildren to work when they visited—she wanted them to have a part in the family’s efforts to build and maintain the incredible resource that is Old Sturbridge Village. Breaking into laughter, Susie recently recalled one day when Ruth, who insisted on paying the admission price for her grandchildren, forgot that Susie had recently turned 11 and paid the “under 10” rate. The proud eleven-year-old reminded her grandmother of that mistake, and they all trooped back to the ticket desk to correct the error!

A shared love for history and each other forged a strong tie between Susie and her grandmother. Describing her grandmother as a “hot ticket” who received a red Mazda convertible for her 70th birthday, Susie speaks fondly of her time traveling with her grandmother and her love for the Village. That inspiration and dedication are the driving force behind Susie’s involvement as a Trustee. Her service on the Collections Committee has helped to steward the collection begun by her great-grandfather and his brothers into the 21st century and make Old Sturbridge Village a repository for New England history.

Lisa Wells Markham has a similar story. Although Lisa spent her early years in Southbridge, Massachusetts, the family moved to California in 1949 when she was a young girl. However, the family made frequent visits “back east” and always made trips to the OSV Through the Years: Wells Family Perspective

Remembrance with Lisa Markham & Susan Collins

In the Wells Family 1920 the little girl front and center is Cheney’s youngest, Gertrude Alice Wells Markham Brennan, Lisa Wells Markham’s mother.
Village. She remembers parties and Sunday dinners at the family’s homes at Mashapaug, and Walker Pond in Sturbridge, as well as enjoying the crisp New England apples they would harvest in the fall. She also recalls how her grandparents Cheney and Marion were instrumental in bringing the Salem Towne House to the Village in 1952. Lisa’s mother, Gertrude Wells Brennan, was devoted to the Towne House and made it possible for the Village to restore the house’s interior, as well as the outdoor formal gardens.

Gertrude’s love of the Village and the family’s legacy were passed down to her daughter, and Lisa has been an avid supporter and advocate of the museum. As a Trustee, Lisa is introducing the newest generation of the Wells family to their heritage and encouraging them to visit, become Overseers and honor the legacy of A.B., Cheney and Channing. Lisa is an active Trustee, calling in for committee meetings and spending weeks at the Village throughout the year. In 2015, Lisa and other Wells cousins brought together a group of family and friends in California to hear about the Village and everything that is happening here. That event grew into this year’s Wells Family Reunion, which Lisa has been spearheading. More than fifty Wells descendants will celebrate being together as a family for the Village’s 70th anniversary in June.

Both Lisa and Susan are thrilled to continue their family’s tradition by serving on the OSV Board of Trustees. Lisa notes that she is “amazed by the love and care that people in the community give to the Village, and it is a true joy to be a part of it.” Similarly, Susie says, “There is real dedication here, and it is an honor to be a part of this heritage.” Both cousins expressed how they are deeply touched by how many people truly love the Village and give so much of their time, talent and effort.

In looking to the future, both Lisa and Susie credit CEO and President Jim Donahue’s leadership with setting the Village on a path for success. “The Village as it stands today is beyond the wildest dreams of what my forebears could have imagined,” notes Susie. “It is one of the most well-loved institutions in New England and continues to inspire people today.” Lisa added that “Jim’s leadership has been a real springboard for development and innovation at the Village.”
Looking Back and Going Forward: Village Staff Share Memories and Hopes for the Future

Michael Arnum, Director of Marketing & Public Relations

**Tom Kelleher, Historian and Curator of Mechanical Arts**

Having been employed at Old Sturbridge Village for 32 years, Tom Kelleher is one of the Village’s longest serving employees. During his tenure he has seen many developments at the living history museum.

Kelleher recalls that one such development, the addition of new structures in the Village, was the catalyst of both visitor interest and fulfillment of the Village’s educational mission. After an archeological excavation at a site near Old Sturbridge Village and research on historical records, work was begun on the Small House in 2003. By Memorial Day weekend in 2005, the crew raised the frame for the House, and Kelleher remembers this moment for the juxtaposition of old and new. Once a frame was erected, modern OSHA laws stated that all workers had to wear plastic construction hats, so here they were dressed in 19th-century costume but wearing 21st-century hard hats! The Small House opened in the spring of 2007 and has since been an engaging site where visitors experience first-hand what life was like for ordinary citizens of early New England.

In looking to the future, Kelleher notes that, “For a long time, the Village was focused on history for history’s sake; we are more visitor-focused now, though we’ve certainly not abandoned our commitment to telling the history of New England. But the new emphasis allows us to meet young and growing audiences ‘where they are’ and engage them in new ways with the enthralling story we have to tell.”

**Jean Contino, Coordinator of Households and Domestic Crafts**

Since Jean Contino is so knowledgeable about 19th-century traditions, it surprises many to learn that her career at Old Sturbridge Village began in the accounting office, not in interpretation. In 1984 Contino responded to a newspaper advertisement for a staff accountant and was hired, but she was entranced by what she described as “the magical place” that is Old Sturbridge Village. Thus she requested a transfer to the interpretation department, and has loved it there ever since.

Contino recalled an especially memorable experience with an immigrant family from Africa. When the mother of this family entered the Freeman Farm household and saw all the earthenware pots and the foods prepared over an open flame, she was moved to tears as it reminded her of her African homeland where such practices are commonplace even today. She was thrilled to be able to relay this to her children in a way that she had not been able to before, because now she could show them how things were done. Contino says that it is the museum’s role to provide safe environments such as this where people can explore and reconnect with the past and relate it to future generations.

**Phil Eckert, Tin Production Lead**

For Tin Production Lead Manager Phil Eckert, working at Old Sturbridge Village has been a family affair; not only did he meet his wife here, but his daughter also worked at the Village when she was growing up. Eckert has worked in a variety of roles, including firearms, the bank and law office.

After receiving his bachelor’s degree in Communication Arts and Broadcast Theater at the University of Dayton, Ohio, he began managing theaters in the Sturbridge area. However, once he visited Old Sturbridge Village, he fell in love with the concept of presenting living history to the public.

It was an early childhood experience, however, that gave Eckert the “living history bug.” When he was a young teenager, he had the opportunity to visit a
living history museum in Ohio, where an interpreter held up a rifle that was used in the Civil War. As the interpreter told the story of the general to whom the rifle belonged, a wide-eyed Eckert was wrapped in attention. Then, to Phil’s surprise, the interpreter turned to him and said, “Would you like to hold the rifle?” That opportunity to “taste and feel the past” in such visceral way was what got him hooked, and it is his hope that interpreters at the Village can continue to give new generations of children and youth that same kind of formative experience.

**Emily Dunnack, Director of Education**

Emily Dunnack began her career at the Village just last June, but she has had an abiding love for it since she grew up just over the border in Connecticut and has been visiting since she was a child. In fact, her childhood memories of the Village as a “fairy-tale place” are what inspired her to make educating visitors through living history programs her life’s mission.

Dunnack expresses optimism in noting that the museum is feeling more alive with updated programming and a focus on making connections from the past to trends happening today, such as urban farming and the makers movement. Sustainability and self-reliance are as fashionable today as they were in the 1830s. She also notes that new studies have revealed the importance of “pretending” and immersive learning for children.

However, Dunnack sees an opportunity for museums to be a catalyst for social awareness and change. “By exploring the past,” she says, “people today can better understand the choices that people made in times earlier, and what motivated them. Fostering a sense of empathy stimulates dialogue, and that can open connections to today’s social movements.”

It is Dunnack’s hope that visitors come away from their experience at Old Sturbridge Village not only with a renewed sense of the past, but also inspired to implement an idea at home, such as beekeeping, building a community garden, making a pie or expressing their views about a social issue.

**Rhys Simmons, Director of Interpretation**

When Rhys Simmons was in college studying to earn a teaching degree, there were no internships available at Old Sturbridge Village, so he began his career at the museum in 2005 as a seasonal employee, leading games for children. It was not long though before he became a year-round, full-time staff member, and now leads the museum’s interpretive programs.

“T’ve never felt that there was a limit to what we can do,” he says, “and we’re always willing to try new things to introduce new generations of families to the Village.” He cites as examples newly reimagined events such as “Dig-In: A Field-to-Table Festival” and “Craft: Beers + Trades” as well as enhancements of the wildly popular “Christmas by Candlelight” program.

Simmons would like to see the museum “dive deep” into specific topics and provide a personalized experience for individual visitors, going beyond mere observation to providing guests with an active role in selecting and applying what they learn.

**Derek Heidemann, Coordinator of Men’s Crafts**

For Derek Heidemann, crafting and blacksmithing are a way of life. He began his career at Old Sturbridge Village with a Junior Internship while in high school. He has become an expert blacksmith, having practiced that trade since 2001, and he operates his own blacksmith business. He also later earned a B.A. and Master’s in History from Clark University.

He would like to see trades take center stage at the Village, and he envisions the museum becoming a destination for people to view and learn the crafting skills that are fast disappearing. As Heidemann says, “We want to be able to do more than just talk about what we’re doing, but also give instruction and inspire people to learn these crafts for themselves.” In turn, he hopes that with more staff producing hand-made products, the Village can spin off branded products that would generate substantial revenue to support the mission.
A History of the Pliny Freeman Farmhouse

Tom Kelleher, Historian & Curator of Mechanical Arts

The Pliny Freeman farmhouse and farm is arguably the flagship of all the living history exhibits here at Old Sturbridge Village and a favorite stop of many visitors. It has been the Pliny Freeman house at the Village, however, almost three times longer than it really was Pliny Freeman’s house. From the time it was built in 1815 until today, it has been home to several families, extensively remodeled by Pliny himself, moved twice and undergone many repairs and restorations, the most recent being a new wood-shingle roof this past winter. It is certainly a building with a full story to tell.

The house was built in the southerly part of Sturbridge on land that is now between Interstate Highway 84 eastbound and Old Route 15, just across from the end of Kelly Road. The first legal title to the land was as part of 10,240-acre tract given by the Massachusetts General Court in 1643 to John Winthrop, Jr., who later helped found Connecticut. John Winthrop, Sr. was the Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony at that time. After a few generations in that distinguished family, that portion of land later containing the original Freeman Farm passed through many hands, including for a time those of Pliny Freeman’s own father Comfort, and through him Pliny’s older brother Samuel. In 1808 Samuel Freeman sold that land to his 33-year-old brother-in-law, Chester Belknap.

Like the vast majority of his neighbors, Belknap was a farmer. He also was a housewright and owned a sawmill, which put him in an ideal position to develop that real estate. He first built another house and barn to the east of the road and sold it along with enough land for a farm in 1811. Belknap next built a small gambrel-roofed house, with two rooms on either side of a central chimney. He economized where he could by reusing old timbers from earlier buildings for part of the frame, and the chestnut sheathing boards were only half an inch thick. This modest dwelling would one day become the Pliny Freeman house. Either at that time or soon thereafter a low, lean-to kitchen ell was built off the back. After he completed it by 1815, Belknap rented the home to unlucky ne’er-do-well farmer Erasmus Clark, his wife Rhoda, their five children and an elderly relative. Three years later Belknap sold it and over 35 acres of land to his cousin William Hamant.

Actually, Hamant’s guardians handled the sale for 40-year-old Hamant, as he was mentally incompetent, or as Hamant’s cousin William Weld told the court, “disordered in his mind.” The plan was to continue renting to Clark, with the rent money intended to pay for Hamant’s care. It seems that plan did not work out. The Clarks moved on in 1822, but the house was soon rented to newlywed horse-breeder Joseph Cheney Allen and his bride Charlotte for four years. In 1826 the Allens moved out, and William and Maria Eddy moved in. That same year title passed to Hamant’s brother-in-law, Thomas P. Wallis, who in exchange (along with a lump-sum payment from the town) agreed to care for poor Mr. Hamant for the rest of
his life. Unfortunately Wallis died the next year, and his wife, Kezia Hamant Wallis, died in 1828. In April the Eddys moved out and the house became vacant. That July all of the late Mr. Wallis’s property was auctioned off to pay his substantial debts. Pliny Freeman proved the highest bidder on what was then called the “Clark Place.” He paid only $381, about half of what it had cost Hamant. When 48-year-old Pliny Freeman and his wife, Delia, moved in with their family in the summer of 1828, they became the first owner-occupants that the 13-year-old house and surrounding farm had ever known. It was Pliny’s third and final farm.

The Freeman household changed through the years. In 1839, Delia died after suffering from scrofula for several years, and son Dwight and daughter Augusta returned home to help their widowed father. In 1840 Pliny married Mary Pease, who had previously worked for the family. In 1841 Augusta left to get married, and in 1844 Dwight too left home for good. At that point oldest son Silas moved back, along with his wife and three children, for two years. In 1850 Mary died. The next year, Pliny sold the farm and moved in with his daughter Delia and her family in Webster, where he died in 1855 of typhus.

Over the years, the farm was bought and sold by several families, but by the 1930s, it was a “mom and pop” gas station and was known as the Herbert Heck house. The Wells family and their staff liked the look of it so much that in the 1940s they had two copies built in the museum for housing staff. These copies now house the Costume Department and the New England’s Changing Landscape exhibit.

By 1951 the house was owned by the Massachusetts Highway Department, which planned to demolish it before construction of what is now Interstate 84. Instead, they gave it to Old Sturbridge Village.

Despite the warnings of Village staff member Helen Holley, the house was moved to the low land along the Quinebaug River, below the Sawmill on the way to the present Country Bank Learning Center. One entered the museum over the lower covered bridge, and the intention was to have the Freeman farm be the first exhibit visitors to the Village saw. In August of 1955, Miss Holley’s fears proved well founded. Back-to-back hurricanes flooded the museum, and water reached to the Freeman house’s second-floor windows. The following year the home and surviving outbuildings were relocated to their present location on higher ground.

Like any older home, the Freeman house has undergone several modifications and restorations in its long existence, including those made by Pliny himself. We do not know who added the current woodshed or a now gone lower, narrower extension that may have connected the house to the original barn.

Many modifications were made when the house was moved to its current location in 1956. The door from the kitchen to the passageway had swung into the kitchen; it now swings out. The cellar bulkhead was moved from the north to the south side. The window sashes were originally 9 panes over 6; they are now 6 over 9. The house seems to have always been white from when Pliny first painted it in 1840, but in 1956 it was changed to red, also a common color in the early 1800s.

The house has had several repairs, including the recent new roof. Major
Restorations were done in 1982 to repair extensive decay, and a fire in 2007 necessitated extensive interior repairs to the kitchen and front rooms. At that time restorers discovered Pliny Freeman’s initials cut into a piece of lath in the kitchen ceiling. A small window in the ceiling still allows one to view them.

The interior finishes have also been changed through the years. Early attempts by the museum to determine original paint colors proved fruitless due to extensive stripping of surfaces. Appropriate shades were chosen, including for a repainting in 1971. Further investigation revealed a few undisturbed surfaces, and new paint analysis in 2001 allowed for the present, better documented interior colors. New wallpaper was hung in 2002 and the house made more “hands-on” by the addition of more reproduction furniture. The fire of 2007 allowed for new wallpaper again in 2008.

As far as we know, none of the outbuildings on the Freeman farm were ever actually owned by Pliny Freeman, but come from other southern New England farms.

The “Freeman” barn was built in neighboring Charlton, Massachusetts, and probably dates to about 1840. It was moved to OSV in 1951 from property then owned by Village founder J. Cheney Wells to become part of a recreated Pliny Freeman farmstead. Along with the Freeman house, it was relocated to its current location in 1956. A lean-to ox shed was added in 1967. In 1988 the barn underwent extensive reconstruction, and the ox shed was replaced. The corn barn was moved from a farm in Thompson, Connecticut, where it was likely built around 1830. Old Sturbridge Village acquired it and moved it into storage in 1962. In 1973 it was finally restored and moved behind the Fitch house. It was moved to the Freeman farm in 1979, and another early 19th-century corn barn from North Scituate, Rhode Island, was restored and moved behind the Fitch house.

Very little is now known about the origins of the sheep and cart shed, except that it has been part of the Freeman farm exhibit for more than 60 years. Its frame probably dates to the early 1800s and was referred to on early Village maps as “the yoke shop,” because for a time Pliny Freeman made and sold ox yokes. Suffering from considerable decay, it was extensively rebuilt and remodeled into its current configuration in 1996.

The smokehouse is small but has an interesting story of its own. It was built in Goshen, Connecticut, in 1806 by farmer Isaac Wadhams. The bricks were made by his neighbor, potter Hervey Brooks, whose shop was moved to the Village in 1961-62. The smokehouse was moved intact to Old Sturbridge Village in 1963. It is fitting that the two buildings now sit in sight of each other. In relation to the house, the smokehouse is about where the Freemans had their well.

The Freeman house and farm might not be exactly as Pliny left them in 1851, but they are one of our most powerful means to teach about everyday life on a farm in early New England.
Tribute to Dick Schulze’s leadership as Chairman of the Board

Jim Donahue, President and CEO

A Conversation with Dick Schulze

Richard “Dick” Schulze, whom many people know as one of Old Sturbridge Village’s costumed interpreters at the Thompson Bank, ends his term as Chairman of the Village’s Board of Trustees this June. 2016 also marks Dick’s 50th year as an Old Sturbridge Village member. Dick recently sat down with Village President and CEO, Jim Donahue, to talk about his time as a Trustee and volunteer and why this is a special place.

Jim: You are known for your love of being in costume as an 1830s banker. When did you first start volunteering as an interpreter?

Dick: I brought my nephews, Will and Clay, to the Village for summer camps when they were younger. It’s hard to believe they are in their mid-twenties! I first put on a costume during one of those summer weeks, and it’s been something I’ve thoroughly enjoyed ever since.

Jim: You seem to find so much joy in interacting with visitors and have many great stories about your time spent in costume. What is a favorite moment?

Dick: It is always nice to have someone leave the Bank after spending 15 or 20 minutes learning about 1830s banking and say, “I had no idea how banks and money worked back then, and now I’m interested.” Truly the best moment was during one of the Halloween events with the child in the photo. She made a face at me and I made one right back at her!

Jim: Of all of the decisions you have been a part of, what stands out?

Dick: Clearly the best and most important decision during my time on the Board was hiring you, Jim, as our President and fearless leader. The second was helping find a donor during our darkest hours, financially, to contribute $1 million to the Village. It became clear that we needed someone to make a “Challenge” gift to the Village. Luckily, I was able to find someone who realized the importance of Old Sturbridge Village to understanding our New England heritage and who could not imagine New England without the Village. That challenge helped doubters to agree and to contribute significant funds.

Jim: You have visited many museums around the world, but you have a passion for the Village. Why?

Dick: I hated history as a kid—it was nothing more than a lot of names and dates to memorize and not about how and why things happened and how people and communities were impacted. I first visited the Village when I was about 16, and that changed everything. I could see, touch and try how things were done. The Village made history fun and hands-on then, and it still does today.

Jim: Is there an aspiration for the Village that has not quite happened yet but that you would like to see come to fruition in the near future?

Dick: We have made progress on increasing the interpretive, costumed staff as well as their compensation, but I would like to see a full complement of equitably compensated interpreters. I imagine a Village that has 40 or 50 or even 60 costumed artisans, historians, farmers and performers working in the Village every day.

Jim: What are you going to do now?

Dick: Good news is that you will likely see more of me in the Village. Now that I won’t be spending so much of my time with Trustee duties, I can focus on expanding my volunteer role in the Bank! I’ll also keep traveling. I have visited 67 countries and lived and worked abroad for 13 years, so traveling and experiencing new places is something I really love.
Exhibitions and Curatorial  
Preserving and interpreting New England’s past are the core of the Village’s mission, and the Village’s curators are devoted to caring for and exhibiting the museum’s collections of historic objects and buildings. The collections and library are valuable resources for the Village’s interpretive staff as well as scholars and researchers, and your support will help ensure that the past is preserved for the future. Donations of any size are welcome.

Current Needs:
- Archival boxes and supplies $2,000
- Exhibit cases and mannequins $5,000
- Research Library Roof Replacement $55,000

Foodways and Households  
Cooking, dairying, cheese making and preserving are highlights of many visits to the Freeman Farm and the Parsonage. Centerpieces of 19th-century life in rural New England, these activities ensured that families had nutritious food throughout the year.

Today, the scent of fresh bread and pies and the sharp aroma of aging cheese bring visitors to the Farm again and again. Your support today will help keep the fires burning and enable the interpreters to develop new programs.

Current Needs:
- Barrels for soap making $600
- Cheesecloth, cheese press, baskets, and tubs $1,600
- Refrigerators and sinks for foodways program $2,000
- Kettles for cooking and laundry $2,200
- Cooking supplies and food $4,000
- Firewood $8,000

For more information on how you can support Old Sturbridge Village, contact us at 508-347-0294 or development@osv.org. Donations of any size are welcome.
Special Events at Old Sturbridge Village

Village Membership allows you to attend most events for free or at a reduced cost.

Saturday, June 11
Antique Car Rally
When Old Sturbridge Village first opened in 1946, it was not just a walking Village — it was a driving Village. On June 11, 2016, the Village salutes its early heritage with an annual Antique Car Rally featuring more than 100 automobiles from 1946 and earlier. The Rally will climax at 3:30 pm with a procession of antique autos through the Village.

June 13-19
Freedom Week
During Freedom Week, Old Sturbridge Village celebrates Juneteenth with a variety of special performances and activities. Learn about the abolition efforts in early 19th-century New England and “meet” important early abolitionists.

July 2-4
Independence Day Celebration
Come celebrate the best July 4th in history with old-fashioned, patriotic family fun! Take part in the citizens’ parade, march with the militia, or play 19th-century baseball or Farm Yard Games. See costumed historians fire a reproduction cannon. Guests may purchase a barbeque meal or bring their own picnic.

July 8-10
Historic Craft Classes
Spend some time at the Village learning a historical craft. These adult workshops vary from blacksmithing to textiles, coopering, foodways, and more. Try your hand at a craft and take home your finished masterpiece! Register on our website, or call 508-347-0290. Fee based.

August 6-7
Redcoats and Rebels
Do not miss the largest military re-enactment in New England, with nearly 1,000 soldiers portraying British, Irish, Spanish, Scottish, French and Colonial troops. This annual event transforms the Village into a military camp from the time of the War for Independence, as it was known in early New England. Come see what it was really like for those who fought to win America’s freedoms. On Saturday evening, take advantage of extended hours to stroll through the military outposts at Twilight Encampments.

August 20-21
Textile Weekend
Join our costumed historians for quilt-themed tours, visit with our ladies as they demonstrate piecing and quilting, or try your hand at starting a pieced project of your own! See a timeline of New England’s early quilts highlighting rarely seen artifact quilts from the Village’s collection.

September 10-11
Craft: Beers + Trades
This wildly popular event returns for a second time this fall! See demonstrations of 19th-century crafts, along with dozens of craft brewers who will serve their finest small-batch beers and hard ciders, while tradespeople demonstrate their exquisite work and sell their wares.

This June be on the lookout for some big news from Old Sturbridge Village. In October a new theatrical experience will descend upon the Village! Advance tickets for OSV members go on sale June 23rd!

Visit our website for full details. www.osv.org
2016 HOURS OF OPERATION

Through October 31
Open Daily | 9:30 am - 5:00 pm

November 1 - 27
Open Wednesday through Sunday
9:30 am - 4:00 pm

December 2 - 4, 9 - 11, 16 - 18 and 23
Christmas by Candlelight
3:00 - 9:00 pm, Fri/Sat/Sun
CLOSED during daytime hours

CLOSED December 24 and 25

December 28 - 31
Open Daily | 9:30 am – 4:00 pm
With Special Holiday Performances

Submit your photos and win prizes! Selected photos will be featured in the 2017 OSV Calendar.

Visit our Facebook page to enter.