Oxen-in-training

Keeping Cool 1830s-Style

Fife and Drum Traditions

A Is for Antique Apples

Summer Events
Celebrating the Hard Work of Summer

A message from President and CEO Jim Donahue

summer is a season of hard work for us at Old Sturbridge Village, just as it was for the real rural villagers in the 1830s. So much to do — and in such a short time! For us, it means meeting, greeting, educating, and entertaining tens of thousands of visitors in a summer season that seems all too short.

With different special events and activities happening each week, summer for us means hours and hours of planning behind the scenes to make sure everything comes off without a hitch. After all, we want our visitors to have happy and return again — with friends — in the fall, winter, and spring. And we know too well that if we don’t succeed at summer, we’ll have to work even harder for the rest of the year.

Much depended on summer, too, for early New Englanders. The work for everyone — men, women, and children — was endless. Farm wives milked cows, prepared meals, washed dishes, swept floors, tended children and gardens, made cheese, preserved food, and did the weekly washing, ironing, sewing, and baking. Children ran errands, hauled water, carded wool, filled the wood box, weeded the garden, and fed the poultry.

Farmers cultivated crops, cared for livestock, and worked at other trades in their spare time as potters, cooperers, and blacksmiths. And everyone pitched in for the hardest job of all — haying. At the peak of the summer haying season, men swung the scythe for 16 hours a day, and the entire family worked hard together to get in the crop. Imagine all that in the days before air conditioning.

Besides farming, a bit from a week’s other like that we learn something else as well — to take time to celebrate. Treasured all the hard work that summer required, early New Englanders made time for one of the year’s biggest celebrations: Independence Day. Along with Thanksgiving and George Washington’s birthday, July 4th was one of the few holidays celebrated in a big way in the 1830s.

All across New England on July 4th, people “laid aside their labor… and citizens enjoyed the day” according to one early observer. Folks waved flags, rang church bells, and fired cannons and cannon John Adams wrote to Abigail that the day “ought to be solemnized with… Pomp and Parade, with Shows, Games, Sports, Guns, Balls, Bonfires, and Illuminations…”

And that’s just what we’ve tried to do with our own Independence Day celebration at Old Sturbridge Village. Supplementing our traditional daytime festivities, our evening fireworks extravaganza is now in its fourth year of steady growth, attracting more than 4,500 visitors last year. Because July 4 falls on a Monday, we will host our fireworks celebration on the evening of July 3rd.

So, as we head into our summer of hard work at the Village, don’t forget to look in the warm temperatures while they last, remember to take time off to celebrate the season, and don’t blink — because the fall harvest is just around the corner.

Welcome

Volume LI, No. 2
Summer 2011

On the Cover: OSV Interpreter Drek Heidemann wears an authentically re-created militia uniform of the Oxford Light Infantry, founded in 1824.

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to the Summer Edition of our VISITOR magazine. We hope that you will learn new things and come to visit the Village soon. There is always something fun to do at OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE.
Just how important were oxen in early New England? Consider this: Oxen helped win the Revolutionary War. If it weren’t for the 80 teams of oxen Gen. Henry Knox used to drag cannons by sled from Fort Ticonderoga, New York, to Boston’s Dorchester Heights, the British might not have evacuated the city on March 17, 1776, an event that turned the tide of the war.

In the early 1800s, oxen were more useful than horses to New England farmers. Today, the speed-to-power ratio of draft horses may make “horsepower” a commonplace concept, but it was the power of oxen that made the difference on farms of the 1830s. Although draft horses were faster for field work, oxen could live on hay alone, had fewer medical problems, and required less tack (harnesses, bits, etc.) than horses.

“Oxen were a triple threat,” says Old Sturbridge Village Coordinator of Agriculture and Men’s Trades Rhys Simmons. “The heritage breeds of early New England were much better foragers than commercial breeds you find today, like Holsteins, which are more selective grazers. A lot of the heritage breeds eat what other breeds skip over.”

With Doc and Blue, the Village’s young heritage breed oxen-in-training, OSV farmers are demonstrating how much work goes into their training. Simmons has been working with Doc and Blue for about a year, starting when Blue was three months old and Doc was not quite six months of age. Training will last until they are age 3 or 4, weigh 1,000 pounds or more, and are ready for plowing.

Doc and Blue are Randall Lineback steers, a good example of the English all-purpose breeds brought over to a young nation. Randall Linebacks are a multipurpose breed, used for dairy, beef, and oxen, now largely lost in the 21st century through crossbreeding with Holsteins, according to the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.

Contrary to the phrase “dumb as an ox,” these animals are very bright. They learn to obey dozens of commands and are not dependent on bits, harnesses, or reins for control as teams of horses typically are. Oxen learn their names and a series of commands for direction and task that become progressively harder because some go against the natural inclination of an animal’s movements.

Oxen at Old Sturbridge Village also have to learn to accept the attentions of the museum’s visitors, many of whom have never interacted with such a large animal before.

“The Randall Lineback breed has a very calm demeanor, which is something that we always look for,” Simmons said. “We want a low-key animal. These guys are extremely personable, too — especially Doc. He likes to smell things, touch things, and he loves the kind of affection visitors give him.”

“Ox” is a title to be earned, not unlike a degree or diploma for humans, and it takes about as long as college — four years. Oxen are not a separate breed from cattle, they just know more. They start life as a male “bull calf.” Once neutered, they are called steers, and they become oxen after they are trained to learn dozens of voice and hand commands.

“Whoa,” or stop, may be the most important command for a team of working steers to learn, since a single full-grown ox can weigh in at 2,000 pounds. The command to stand still is also important, especially in a living history museum setting where visitors are naturally drawn to them.

The command to move forward is usually “up” or “giddup,” according to Rhys Simmons, coordinator of agriculture and men’s trades at Old Sturbridge Village. “Back is the hardest command to teach because it’s an unnatural motion, especially when they are hitched to a cart and can feel it behind them.”

OTHER COMMANDS INCLUDE:

- HAW: Turn left.
- GEE: Turn right.
- PUT IN: Directs the team to line up in the yoke if they drift apart at the hindquarters.
- PUT OUT: Directs them to separate to enable a drover to get between the steers to hook up, remove, or adjust the chain by which they are hooked up to a wagon.
- UP STEP: Take only a step or two forward.
Fife and Drum Traditions

Military Music Still a Crowd Pleaser

Fife and drum music was the alarm clock and dinner bell for militia units in early New England. From
Reveille and Dinner Call to the Retreat and tattoo calls signaling “lights out,” fifers and drummers provided the military’s primary communications signals, according to Peter Emerick, a leading member of the Sturbridge Martial Band. The band has provided music for signature events at Old Sturbridge Village for more than 40 years. Contrary to popular perception, fife and drum corps were rarely seen in battle. “The image of fifers and drummers marching on the battlefield was an embellishment in patriotic portraits and paintings of the period,” Emerick says. “At all times a duty musician was assigned to play signals for officers in charge. Military engagements were more civilized back then, and opposing forces would sometimes meet on the field for a ‘parley’ to discuss terms. Then, a musical signal was needed to let the other side know you wanted a parley.”

After the Revolution, fife and drum military music crossed over into popular culture because so many people had been trained to play and the instruments were very inexpensive to own. “Fifers and drummers brought the music home with them and began to play it for public holidays and ceremonial functions,” Emerick notes.

In the patriotic groundswell after the war, certain fife and drum songs took on a national identity and became known as “national airs.” Some, like Yankee Doodle, started out as British songs but became symbols of patriotic pride for the Colonists. Emerick’s personal favorite national air is On the Road to Boston, which has become a signature song for the Sturbridge Martial Band. “The version we play comes from a book captured from a Hessian soldier at the Battle of Trenton in 1776, and its title probably referred to Boston, England. This song shows up often in period dance publications and manuscripts – an indication that it was wildly popular.”

With the passage of the 1790 Militia Act, each town was required to have a regular “Muster Day” for its militia. As time went on, the military requirements for these gatherings were abandoned, and they evolved into carnival-like celebrations. But military music remained a big part of the events and continued to be a crowd-pleaser.

As printing presses became more accessible, printers and publishers began printing sheet music and music books and soon figured out they could sell more songbooks if they had their own bands to promote the music. According to Emerick, the appetite for music exploded during the time period portrayed at the Village. “The 1820s was really a renaissance for popular music, and much of it was adapted from military tunes.”

To keep the fife and drum tradition going for future generations, Emerick teaches music in addition to playing, and leads the youth division of the Sturbridge Martial Band, which consists of a dozen young musicians who also perform frequently at Old Sturbridge Village. And for both groups of fifers and drummers, the most frequently asked question is always the same: “Can you play Yankee Doodle?”

The Instrumental Assistant. By Samuel Holyoke, A.M., Printed in New Hampshire c. 1800

Photo: Steve Fratoni

Why Fife and Drum Corps Wear Red

When visitors see the bright red coats of the Sturbridge Martial Band, they often think the group is representing the British. But the tradition dates back to the Revolutionary War, when clothing was in short supply.

Soldiers in the Continental Army were so poorly clothed that they tried to make use of captured British coats by dyeing them a different color and reissuing them. But the dye jobs came out so badly that army quartermasters refused the shipments. Rather than see these coats go to waste, the decision was made to use them in the original color, but to reissue the red coats to musicians, not soldiers.

DRUMMERS’ CALL AT OSV SEPTEMBER 10

The Village will be filled with the stirring sounds of fife and drum music as scores of groups from all over New England compete for honors. Besides the competition and awards ceremony, highlights include a grand parade and group fife and drum “jam session” in the afternoon. Don’t miss it!
Beautiful, Functional Herbs
Rediscovering old-time uses for these garden gems

By Rebecca Robinson, Lead Interpreter for Household Gardens

Did you know?
ROSEMARY makes your hair shine
NASTURTIUM flowers are edible
SOUTHERNWOOD makes a pleasant-smelling moth repellant
SOAPWORT leaves produce a natural food coloring

Pot Marigold
Background:
Lemon Verbena (left)
Nasturtium (right)

ROSEMARY

But, exactly, is an herb? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines an herb as “a plant or plant part valued for its medicinal, savory, or aromatic qualities.” At Old Sturbridge Village, we grow a wonderful variety of herbs that were common in the 19th century — from the familiar to the exotic.

Today, herbs are making a comeback in modern gardens, as both ornamental and functional plants. You don’t even need a garden to enjoy growing herbs, as many varieties grow very well in pots on a balcony, or even in a sunny window.

Notably diverse and versatile, herbs provide ingredients for cooking teas, medicines, household products, dyes, and cosmetics. Beautiful additions to your flower or vegetable garden, herbs act as natural guardians and companions to other plants. And they delight the senses with their beauty, fragrance, flavor, and charm.

A lot of people grow herbs for cooking, but let’s take a look at some of the uses we grow at the Village and discover some uses for these plants that you may not be familiar with!

Rosemary is an herb most of us have used in our kitchens. It combines deliciously with various cuts of meat, baked fish, rice, salads, tomato sauces, and casseroles. These uses are common knowledge, but did you know that rosemary is also used in hair preparations, such as herbal shampoo?

In fact, rosemary has an old reputation as a hair tonic — especially for those with dark hair. Use an infusion of rosemary in the final rinse of a hair wash to make your hair shine! Or, to promote healthy skin, try adding a handful of rosemary (boiled in 2 cups of water for about 10 minutes) to your bath. Enjoy the smell of rosemary! Throw a few twigs into your wood-burning stove or place them on the barbecue grill to produce a lovely scent to enjoy.

Although native to South America, nasturtiums were brought to New England by European settlers. These beautiful annuals are grown mostly as ornamentals now, but in 1833, Lydia Maria Child noted in her book The American Frugal Housewife that “Some people prefer pickled nasturtium-seed to capers.”

Not only are the seeds edible (when they are young and green, or pickled), the entire flower and the leaves are edible as well. With a distinctive pungent taste, they make a colorful addition to any salad. The beautiful nasturtium is also a wonderful garden companion, as it repels whitefly, wooly aphids, and ants.

The versatile calendula, or pot marigold, was once a stove or place them on the barbecue grill to produce a much more pleasant odor than camphor mothballs! Southernwood makes a good insect repellant, too — hang bunches on the porch to repel flies, or rub it on your skin to deter mosquitoes.

Soapwort, also known as Bouncing Bet, is a beautiful addition to your flower garden and will help you to keep your linens nice and bright as well! As the name implies, soapwort can be used to make a good, mild soap ideal for delicate fibers like silk or wool. The plant contains saponins, that cause lathering, and can be used to clean your hands without leaving the garden. Just pick a leaf or two, add water, and stir.

The yellow calendula, or pot marigold, was once a widely grown herb considered essential in most well-rounded kitchen gardens. It is a great companion plant, attracting beneficial insects and repelling “bad” bugs. In flowers can be eaten fresh, along with its leaves, to add a slightly spicy flavor to your salad. (Eat the greens when young, as they get bitter when full grown.)

In addition to brightening up a salad, this plant is a natural flower coloring, long used in the dairy industry to color butter and cheese. It is an inexpensive substitute for saffron to make yellow rice, and it gives a beautiful golden hue to soups and stews. Next time you make chicken soup, drop in a handful of calendula petals and you will be rewarded with a delicious, golden broth.

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Above: Calendula (pot marigold) Background:
Lemon Verbena (left) Nasturtium (right)

Calendula (Pot Marigold) Cookies

6 to 8 fresh calendula blossoms
1/2 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
Zest of 2 oranges
2 tablespoons orange juice concentrate
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 eggs
2 cups flour
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
8 ounces almond halves

Rinse calendulas and pull off petals. Cream butter, sugar, and orange zest until fluffy. Add concentrate and vanilla. Add eggs and mix until blended.

Salt together flour, baking powder, and salt. Blend calendula petals into dry ingredients and add to creamed mixture. Mix well. Drop dough by teaspoonsfuls onto greased cookie sheets. Preheat to 350°F for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden.
**Why Are New Englanders Called Yankees?**

**By Tom Kelleher, Curator of Historic Trades, Mills, and Mechanical Arts**

“Yankee” usually refers to a resident of New England or, more loosely, of any northern state. Overseas, it means any American, as in “Yankee go home!” or “the Yanks are coming.” In 1758 British General James Wolfe referred to his New England troops as “Yankees.” The word also can mean the New England (or sometimes entire American) dialect. As a mixed drink, “a Yankee” is whiskey sweetened with molasses, perhaps an English attempt to mimic the rum preferred by New Englanders.

As an adjective, it can mean of or from New England, such as the “Yankee notions” of New England manufacture that peddlers sold far and wide. With many of its settlers coming from New England, Ohio is known as the “Yankee State.” The use of “Yankee” as a verb is somewhat rare, but it means to cheat, or deal cunningly like the archetypal Yankee peddler, as in “to Yankee someone out of her money.”

Finally, of course, there is the ever-popular song Yankee Doodle, written by a Dr. Richard Shuckburgh, a surgeon in Lord Amherst’s army in the French and Indian War. One story goes that the daughter of Colonel Thomas Fitch of Norwalk, Connecticut, put feathers in the hats of her father’s militia unit as they marched off to fight. Hence the lyric, “Stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni.” To the professional English soldiers, these provincials looked ridiculously pretentious, since “macaroni” was a nickname for an 18th-century Italian dandy.

William Gordon, in his *History of the American War for Independence* (also published in 1789) traces “Yankee” instead to farmer Jonathan Hastings of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Hastings was said to have used the word as early as 1713 as a synonym for “excellent;” e.g., “that’s a Yankee horse.”

Thomas Aubrey, an English officer under General John Burgoyne in the American Revolution, reported in a book about his travels in the New World that “Yankee” came from “eankke;” a Cherokee word meaning slave or coward. Aubrey claimed that the Virginians derisively used “Yankee” to refer to New Englanders who refused to assist Southerners in their wars against the Cherokee and other Indian tribes.

Several theories ascribe “Yankee” one way or another to Indians. In 1775, the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* said that “Yankee” came from an American Indian tribe called the “Yankos, or invincible ones.” The problem is that there is no evidence of such a tribe ever having existed! This, however, is a good illustration of a hazard in searching for word origins. Often explanations are imagined or invented rather than rooted in real research. These plausible and often authoritative-sounding explanations can be really seductive traps of error. Some say, again without evidence, that “Yankee” means “silent men” in some unknown Indian language.

In the 1820s an explanation was advanced by such literary luminaries as Noah Webster of dictionary fame and James Fenimore Cooper (author of *The Leatherstocking Tales*, including *The Last of the Mohicans*). It held that “Yankee” was a North American Indian corruption of the word “English” or the French “Indien,” perhaps passing through the intermediary pronunciation “Yengers.” This seems to have been the most widely believed theory of the 19th century, although most modern sources now discount it.

Many sources state that “Yankee,” like so many sobriquets, was originally a pejorative, and intended to disparage. The authoritative *Oxford English Dictionary*, admittedly British in its perspective, cites published use of the word “Yankee” to at least 1789, with manuscript references going back earlier into the 18th century.

“Yankee” may also derive from “Jan Kees,” literally “John Cheese,” a name used derisively in Flanders for the Dutch. In America, the New Amsterdam Dutch may then have flung the insult back toward Englishmen in Connecticut. Or it may be from the Low German “jakhern,” to nervously keep walking about; or the Norwegian “janka;” to totter; or the Dutch and German “jaggen,” to move quickly, or to jerk. In any case, “Yankee” is a name used derisively in Flanders for the Dutch. In America, the New Amsterdam Dutch may then have flung the insult back toward Englishmen in Connecticut. In that year a baseball team called the Highlanders was ironically renamed the New York Yankees.

In Massachusetts the pejorative nature of “Yankee” began to return in 1903, this time thrown back at New York. In that year a baseball team called the Highlanders was ironically renamed the New York Yankees. Ever since, the word “Yankee” has lost some appeal, at least to Red Sox fans!

British officers used “Yank” as an insult directed at Colonial troops.
“Aren’t you hot?” In the summertime this is one of the most frequently asked questions of Old Sturbridge Village historians in costume. But, ironically, on a hot day interpreters wearing 1830s-style clothing are often cooler and better-prepared for the heat than some visitors wearing tight jeans or shorts and synthetic fabrics.

“Of course, if it’s 95 degrees, we’re all going to be warm,” says Joan Contino, OSV coordinator of households, horticulture, and women’s crafts. “But in the Village time period, the design of the clothing let air circulate—men wore loose-fitting shirts, and ladies wore gowns with wide skirts. And some visitors wearing tight jeans or shorts and synthetic fabrics. 1830s-style clothing are often cooler and better-prepared for the heat than going out in public in their underwear.”

Men, appearing just in shirtsleeves without all the proper layers would be like partly to absorb sweat, but also due to the proper dress code of the day. For sticking to them when they are hot and sweaty. They wear a neck handkerchief way up, but this keeps scratchy shards of hay from getting inside their shirts and protect them from the sun. Many bonnets even had “curtains” in the back to keep women’s necks from getting sunburned. Cotton and linen were favorite fabrics in the summer. “Cotton absorbs perspiration and actually helps keep you cool, especially in a breeze,” Contino notes.

Even building styles helped people cope with the heat, according to Contino. “Most of the houses in the Village have windows on all four sides, providing great cross-ventilation. Even though there is no air conditioning, there is wonderful air.”

Both men and women still had hot, heavy work to do in the summer. Ladies had to work by the fireplace, and their long sleeves, layers of petticoats, gowns, and “tyre,” or apron, helped protect them from the intense heat of the fire. For men, summer brought the most physically exhausting chore of the year—haying, which often lasted as long as 16 hours a day from July to September, depending on the weather.

Visitors often wonder why OSV farmers are so “dressed up,” wearing waistcoats, neck handkerchiefs, and tall hats even when doing the hard, hot work of haying. Contino says the reason is due both fashion and practicality. For example, hats protect from the sun, but the height of the hats is pure fashion.

“Men might see the men with sleeves down and shirts buttoned all the way up, but this keeps scratchy shards of hay from getting inside their shirts and sticking to them when they are hot and sweaty. They wear a neck handkerchief partly to absorb sweat, but also due to the proper dress code of the day. For men, appearing just in short-sleeves without all the proper layers would be like going out in public in their underwear.”

Thirst-quenching remedies

Whether in the farmhouse or the field, one way to beat the heat in early New England was with a refreshing beverage. Here are period recipes from the Old Sturbridge Village Cookbook.

Haymaker’s Switchel

In the early 1800s farmers often gave hired hands half a pint of rum or other spirits each day to keep up their strength while moving hay. Others thought nonalcoholic drinks were cheaper, less debilitating, and just as thirst-quenching. Many New England farmers made switchel, sort of an early version of a sports drink, and carried it to the hay fields in redware switchel rings designed to hang over a fence post or fit over the arm at the shoulder, leaving the hands free.

This recipe for switchel was influenced by the growing Temperance movement, and no longer included rum as a vital ingredient. Switchel was viewed as “highly invigorating” and “healthful,” with the ingredients designed not only to stop dehydration but also to satisfy thirst.

1/4 gallon water 1/4 cup cider vinegar 1 1/2 cups molasses 2 teaspoons powdered ginger

Mix ingredients together. May be chilled, but is refreshing at room temperature as well. Yield: 6 servings.

Raspberry Shrub

The summer harvest brought an abundance of fresh fruits that could be preserved in a syrup for beverages called shrubs, derived from the Arabic word “shrub,” meaning drink, and related to “sharab,” meaning syrup. Shrubs in the 18th century were made with orange or lemon juice and rum, but after the 19th-century Temperance movement, sugar was substituted for rum. Lydia Maria Child offered a simple “receipt,” for Raspberry Shrub in The American Frugal Housewife (1832), calling it “a pure, delicious drink for the summer.” Here is a modern version, which can be adapted for other fruits like strawberries, blackberries, and apples.

1. Cover fruit in cider vinegar.
2. Summer until fruit is soft.
3. Strain through fine sieve or cheesecloth.
4. Add one cup of sugar for each cup of juice.
5. Bring mixture to a boil to dissolve sugar.
6. Cool and refrigerate until use.
7. To serve, mix shrub with water to taste.
Is for Antique Apples

With its “living collection” of heirloom apples, Old Sturbridge Village is one of the best places in the country to learn everything there is to know about historic apples, according to Christie Higginbottom, former OSV horticulture coordinator and antique apple historian.

Pruned in February and in bloom by May, the hundreds of heirloom apple trees at OSV are now well on their way to bearing a bumper crop of historic apple varieties just in time for the annual Apple Days celebration, set for October 1–2.

“The Village has it all — a preservation orchard for old varieties, a seedling orchard, and an authentic horse-powered Cider Mill. We grow heirloom apples the way they used to grow. We cook with them, preserve them, store them in our root cellar, and make apple cider,” Higginbottom notes. “People can see the whole story of antique apples by coming to this one place.”

In the 1830s, apples were an important food source all year long, and some varieties, like Baldwins and Roxbury Russets, could keep for months. Children had the important job of checking the apples stored in barrels in the root cellar, making sure that “one bad apple” did not “spoil the bunch.”

According to Higginbottom, there were once thousands of apple varieties in North America, and by the early 1800s, local farmers developed hundreds of unique varieties especially suited to the New England climate. By contrast, today’s supermarkets carry only a few apple varieties, and they are chosen less for taste, but because they ship well, have a long shelf life, and have dependable harvests.

Although not open to the public, the OSV preservation orchard serves an important role in keeping antique apple varieties alive. It was planted in 1973 as a joint effort with the Worcester County Horticultural Society. Today, the orchard has two trees each of nearly 100 types of vintage trees, and scion wood for grafting is shared with other groups.

Guide to OSV Heirloom Apples

Antique apples trees abound in a variety of locations around the Village.

Here are a few to look for:

In the Salem Towne House orchard:
BLUE PEARMAIN
An American variety dating to about 1800, this apple has a mild aromatic flavor and a beautifully colored, crisp fruit with blush bloom.

GRIMES GOLDEN
Found by Thomas Grimes in Brooke County, West Virginia, in 1804, this apple is flavorful, aromatic, and excellent for cooking or dessert.

HUBBARDSTON NONESUCH
Discovered in Hubbardston, Massachusetts, circa 1832, this crisp apple has a spicily, almost nutty flavor and is excellent for dessert.

In the Freeman Farm Road:
BALDWIN
Probably the most widely grown commercial variety during the Village period, this tart, all-purpose apple dates to around 1750, keeps well, and is good for cooking, dessert, and cider. Wilmington, Massachusetts, has a monument to Colonel Loammi Baldwin, who grafted hundreds of the trees.

ESOPUS SPITZENBURG
Discovered growing in Esopus, New York, in the late 1700s, this variety was favored by Thomas Jefferson as a wonderful dessert apple. “The Spitz” will keep for a few months and is good for cooking.

ROXBURY RUSSET
Believed to be the oldest named apple of American origin, originating in the early 1600s in Roxbury, Massachusetts, it is a good winter keeper and an excellent cider apple.

SHEEPNOSE
Also known as Black Giffower, this apple originated in Connecticut in the early 1600s. It is used more in cooking than fresh eating and is valued as a variety for preserving as dried apples.

At the Cider Mill:
RHODE ISLAND GREENING
Known by 1650 and probably originating at Green’s End, Newport, Rhode Island, this apple’s acidic flavor makes it great for cooking, especially for pies and applesauce.

Along the Freeman Farm Road:
AMERICAN MOTHER
Developed in Bolton, Massachusetts, c. 1844, this juicy eating apple’s flavor is excellent — sweet, aromatic, and distinctive. It’s also good for desserts.

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Photos: (top) David Burk, (left) Webb Chappell

New England Apple Association
Orangepippin.com
By the Fireside: Decorating the New England Parlor Hearth

By Tom Kelleher, Curator of Historic Trades, Mills, and Mechanical Arts

Old Sturbridge Village historians and curators are hard at work on a new exhibit, By the Fireside: Decorating the New England Parlor Hearth, 1790–1840, set to open September 10, 2011. Part of an ongoing effort to bring more of the OSV collection out on view, the exhibit will display the best of the Village’s extensive collection of artifacts used to furnish parlor hearths in rural homes.

The parlor was the public face of an early-19th-century home, a place where families entertained guests and spent many of their leisure hours. In an age before television sets came to dominate Americans’ living rooms, the hearth – a source of warmth and light – was the focal point of the parlor, and as the heart of the room, its appearance mattered to early New Englanders.

Changing styles in furnishing and architecture were reflected in how people furnished their parlor hearths, and their tastes were fueled by technological improvements, rising wealth, aspirations of gentility, and the consumer revolution.

For a fire to burn effectively, air needs to circulate under the logs. Fire dogs, or andirons, elevated burning logs, and they were also objects that allowed a homeowner to display style, taste and, to a certain extent, wealth.

Materials used ranged from locally forged wrought iron to city-manufactured brass andirons, along with combinations of the two materials. Cast iron was a medium that allowed easy and affordable duplication of sometimes simple, but often intricate, designs. Dxeven of andirons from the OSV collection will be on display in the By the Fireside exhibit.

To kindle a cozy fire from a few glowing embers of the last blaze, no well-appointed hearth was complete without a set of bellows. For the parlor, these were often decoratively painted or stenciled, or had a raised turtle-back or other attractive carving. Once the fire was going, a pair of tongs, often with gleaming turned brass finials, was essential for hearth management. Typically a matching shovel allowed the user to remove hot coals to fill a foot stove or clean out accumulated ashes. Smokers often kept a pair of delicate pipe tongs handy to grab a burning coal to light their tobacco. Interestingly, fire poker were not common fireplace accessories in early America, as they are today.

Since the hearth was a focal point of the room, what better place to display art? Many homes boasted brightly painted panels over their hearths, called overmantel paintings. While the painters of overmantel paintings have sometimes been identified, most were created by itinerant artists whose identities are now lost. Subjects of these images range from peaceful landscapes to patriotic eagles.

In summer, parlor hearths were typically swept clean, and were sometimes decorated with vases of flowers or greenery. To keep dirt, insects, and wayward birds and squirrels out of the house, some homeowners often covered the fireplace opening with tight-fitting decorated fireboards. Some had a low-maintenance trompe l’oeil image of an empty hearth with decorative fireboards. Others were stenciled or wallpapered to match the room’s walls, or boasted other images. A few had decorative moldings or even carvings. One fireboard in the OSV collection is decorated with medieval-themed decoupage paper cutouts.

Part of the exhibit will explore the tools used to build and decorate hearths. Even a wood-paneled wall that once furnished a fireplace in a long-gone tavern in Pomfret, Connecticut, will be on display. Hearth rugs, fire curbs, and other parlor furnishings will complete the look at decorating styles for the early-19th-century New England parlor hearth.
Orienteering

By Kate Brandt, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Using a map and compass to find locations and plan a route has been a survival skill for hundreds of years. Today, thousands enjoy “orienteering,” and it is often called a “thinking sport” because to chart their course, participants must concentrate, make decisions, and keep track of the distance they have covered.

This spring, Old Sturbridge Village added orienteering to its Boy Scout Day activities, giving more than 100 Scouts the chance to earn requirements toward the Boy Scout Orienteering Merit Badge. The theme for the day was “Man vs. Nature,” and other activities included tales from the Lewis & Clark expedition, hands-on studios, and presentations by the U.S. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife and Springfield’s Forest Park Zoo. OSV has hosted special events for Scouts for nearly 20 years.

“OSV is a perfect setting for orienteering because its varied terrain, landmarks, open land, forests, roads, and pathways can all be incorporated into the course,” notes Kathy Kime, OSV family program coordinator. “I also like to connect orienteering to early American history and tell the story of the naturalist Henry David Thoreau and the explorers Lewis and Clark. These men appreciated nature and a good adventure.”

Scouts Learn Map and Compass Navigation at OSV

The OSV orienteering course was designed and run by Sturbridge Boy Scout Troop #161 under the supervision of Garrett Schopper, the troop’s orienteering merit badge counselor. Scouts from Troop #161 spent time at the Village for several weekends, getting to know the land and planning the course. Scouts from the Sturbridge troop also assisted Schopper and other adult leaders on the day of the event.

After registering, Scouts learned basic orienteering skills like how to take a three-point bearing and how to read a map. Next, at the pacing station, they learned how to measure their walking and running pace at a 100-meter pace course. Knowing how many steps they take over 100 meters at different speeds helps them navigate the course. Start times were staggered so the Scouts could learn to follow their maps and not each other.

Once on the course, Scouts used their map and compass to navigate to 10 control markers. On average, it took Scouts a little over one hour to complete the 1.33 mile course, which was more challenging than last year’s and included markers located outside of the Village. Scouts had to choose between taking trails and creating their own paths through the woods.

All Scouts who successfully completed the course received a patch and earned two of the 10 requirements for the Orienteering Merit Badge. Cub Scouts earned requirements toward the Map & Compass Belt Loop. Scouts who were involved in the entire process, including the planning stages, earned four requirements toward their merit badge.

Don’t miss the fall Scout Day set for November 5 and designed for both Boy and Girl Scouts.

In addition, first, second and third place prizes were awarded to the top teams in each age group, based on the time it took to successfully complete the course. Awards were presented at a ceremony in the Center Meetinghouse at the end of the day.

Summer Camps

Summer at OSV: Happy Campers

This summer, Old Sturbridge Village is offering 15 different day camps for kids between the ages of 6 and 17 looking for a history lesson and summer adventure they will never forget! Families can choose between the traditional Discovery Camps, where children dress in 1830s costumes, and the new non-costumed Exploration Camps.

Among the most popular newer offerings are I Dig History and Militia Camp. Designed especially for ages 11–17, I Dig History is a non-costumed Exploration Camp. Campers become archaeologists for a week and have their own representational dig site where they unearth “artifacts” that tell the story of a 19th-century family.

Militia Camp is a costumed Discovery Camp for ages 11-14. Campers get an introduction to the 19th-century militia, including drilling, camping, and cooking. They learn about weapons, uniforms, and fife music. Participants take on the roles of real 18th- and 19th-century Sturbridge Militia or retired Revolutionary War veterans.

Camps are offered each week from June 27 through August 19. The youngest campers learn about life on a farm and storytelling, and the oldest campers learn trades and how to cook a meal over the hearth from start to finish. Box lunches, extended care hours, and Sturbridge hotel discounts are offered. For details on all OSV summer camp sessions, visit www.osv.org or call 508-347-0285.
McGrath Insurance Group

Richard McGrath’s earliest memory of Old Sturbridge Village is an Independence Day trip with his parents at age 8, highlighted by fife and drum music, militia in uniform, meeting the farm animals, and a visit with the blacksmith. But when asked about the one strongest impression of that visit, he answers without hesitation: “The rock candy! Everybody still talks about the rock candy…”

McGrath has maintained a connection with the Village since those early days, and now, as president and CEO of McGrath Insurance Group, he is one of the museum’s most active corporate sponsors. “We’ve been supporting the Village in some way, shape, or form for 25 years. As a partner in this community, we feel it’s important to support OSV to help the economic vitality of the local area. Our futures are tied together – OSV is definitely an economic engine for the region.”

A third-generation family-owned business, McGrath Insurance is one of the largest independent insurance agencies in the region. Founded by McGrath’s grandfather in Southbridge, Massachusetts, in 1927, the agency helped people get their lives back together after the Great Depression, after the devastating 1955 floods, and after counties other challenges in the years since.

Now with 20 employees in three offices, McGrath serves clients throughout New England and is licensed in 15 states. As an independent agent, McGrath is able to pick the best policies from the carriers they represent to give clients comprehensive insurance plans tailored to their specific needs.

“The company’s motto is ‘Freedom from Worry,’ and they have a 95 percent satisfaction rate for responding to claims. ‘Claims management is our opportunity to shine,’” McGrath says, “and it’s where the rubber hits the road. People buy insurance for that sigh of relief. When disaster strikes, they want to know ‘when can I get my house fixed, my car fixed, or my roof fixed?’ It’s our job to respond quickly.”

McGrath’s connection to the Village isn’t just a corporate one. His wife, Joan, is chair of this year’s Old Sturbridge Village Gala, and their younger daughter, Lauren, is an OSV summer camp veteran. Older daughter Erin reports that when her college friends learned she was from Sturbridge, they thought she lived 1830s-style and had to milk the cow before school. They learned the difference on a fun-filled visit to OSV last fall, when among other things, a highlight was the rock candy!

“Do your givin’ while you are a livin’ and you’ll be a knowin’ where it’s goin’!”

Longtime OSV Supporter
Ralph Bloom
Collector’s gifts help preserve the future

Thirty-year OSV Member and Overseer Ralph Bloom laughs as he cites his favorite quote from an old “Dear Abby” column as his guide for living – and giving – during his retirement years: “Do your givin’ while you are a livin’ and you’ll be a knowin’ where it’s goin’!” But this former museum curator and avid Americana collector is indeed following those quaint words of wisdom, and he is having a lot of fun along the way.

A self-described “young senior citizen,” Bloom set a goal for himself to “donate collections, auction off surplus, and finalize my will before the age of 70.” And OSV curators and historians are deeply grateful that he has chosen the museum as the new home for important pieces from his Norwalk’s Smith & Day redware and stoneware pottery collection.

“Most people think they are going to live for eternity – but they aren’t! I’m enjoying letting my collection go and seeing other people enjoy them, too,” Bloom says. “I’m getting so much satisfaction by investing in the future – I’m putting money into people rather than worrying about things!”

In addition to donating pieces from his pottery collection, Bloom has helped create and fund a new curatorial internship at Old Sturbridge Village, and he was instrumental in helping the museum to acquire the historic table made by cabinetmaker John Smith circa 1795. Not only did Bloom donate a substantial amount, he urged fellow overseers to “pass the hat” at their annual meeting, netting more donations toward the table’s purchase.

A native of Norwalk, Connecticut, Bloom was the director and curator for many years of the Lockwood House museum, now the Norwalk Museum, and is an expert on the many potteries operating in the Norwalk area between 1780 and 1887. He compiled the important reference book Norwalk Pottery, which is available in the Old Sturbridge Village Museum Gift Shop.

These days, Bloom is traveling around New England and is exploring his family’s history and genealogy. He has discovered the Bloom name is actually Dutch (Bloom), not English as thought, and that an ancestor built a house very similar to OSV’s Salem Towne House in the “Bloomdale” National Historic District in Pleasant Valley, New York.

And even though he has sworn to divest after a lifetime of collecting antiques, Bloom admits there are still furniture pads and bungee cords at the ready in the back of his station wagon. “You never can tell; I might find that grand treasure somewhere!”

Five Tips on Collecting from Ralph Bloom:

1. Go to estate and tag sales – you never know what you will find.
2. Buy only what you love – don’t buy for investment.
3. Take time to find the right piece - and be willing to negotiate.
4. Choose affordable things - don’t cause a tear in your pocketbook!
5. Live with your collection – don’t buy collectibles only to box them up.

“Collector’s gifts help preserve the future”

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For times and details on all upcoming events at OSV, please call 800-SEE-1830 or visit www.osv.org.

**Fireworks**

*July 3*

In preparation for Independence Day celebrations, our countryside will light up with an awe-inspiring fireworks display preceded by music, magic, family games, and a Patriotic Fashion Show. Enjoy sambuches, beer, wine, and soft drinks from the Village, or bring your own picnic.

**Independence Day Celebration**

*July 4*

Only a few generations removed from the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Old Sturbridge Village is the perfect place to celebrate Independence Day. Hear a live reading of the document, take part in a Citizens’ Procession and enjoy old-fashioned patriotic family fun. 

**Music & Art Weekend**

*June 18–19*

The Village comes alive with 19th-century music, art, entertainments and to see antique instruments.

**Redcoats & Rebels**

*August 6–7*

More than 900 soldiers will gather at OSV for New England’s largest Revolutionary War reenactment. See mock battles, marching, and musket and cannon firing. Mingle with the soldiers around the campfire during Twilight Encampment on August 6.

Sponsor: NRA Foundation

**Drummers’ Call**

*September 10*

When life and drum corps all gather for competitions and demonstrations, the result is a moving day of milita music. Fascinating to watch and inspiring to hear!

**An Evening of Illumination**

*November 12*

Enjoy this once-a-year chance to see the quiet serenity of the Village lit only by candles, firelight, and oil lamps.

**Stagecoach**

*Daily*

Experience this classic form of early 19th-century transportation. Rides offered daily through the summer and fall season. ($3 fee)

**Family Fun Weekend**

*September 3–5*

Spend the final days of summer with your family at the Village – enjoy a day of hands-on activities and games. Which side of French & English (tug of war) will your family be on? Who in your group will be the star of the hoop relay races?

**Day Camps**

*June 27–August 19*

Ages 6–17

Choose from 15 different camps and 2- and 5-day sessions. Discovery Campers wear 1830s costumes. Read more on page 19.

**Textile Weekend**

*August 13–14*

Learn which textiles women still made themselves in the 1830s, and which factory-made items they bought. See spinning and weaving demonstrations and learn about the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

Sponsor: Marcus Fabrics

**Agricultural Exhibition**

*September 24–25*

See which mangel wurtzel wins first prize – and find out what a mangel wurtzel is! Flowers, fruits, and vegetables of all kinds will be on display at this old-fashioned Agricultural Fair that also includes displays of quilts, farm machinery, and plowing demonstrations.

Sponsor: Southbridge Savings Bank

**Things That Go Bump in the Night & Trail of Terror**

*October 29*

The Center Village is transformed at Halloween into a “spooky-but-safe” place for trick-or-treating, while the Countryside becomes a more terrifying place for brave souls age 11 and up.

Sponsor: Country Bank

**Harvest Days**

*October 15–16*

The cool, crisp days signal the time for the harvest after a long summer tending crops. Help with the harvest and join us for special activities to celebrate this very important time of year.

Sponsor: Southbridge Savings Bank

**Apple Days**

*October 1–2*

Friends Day October 1

Learn about all of the heirloom variety apples that you can’t find in the local grocery store and see the Cider Mill in full action.

Sponsor: Cabot Creamery Cooperative

**Fire & Ice**

*July 16*

Check out antique hand pump fire engines and vintage motorized fire trucks. Join in pumping contests and bucket brigades. Enjoy the chili contest, and learn about ice cream in the 1830s, when ginger and asparagus were popular flavors.

(Sponsor: Veolia Water)

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Day Camps at Old Sturbridge Village
June 27-August 19

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Choose from 2- and 5-day adventures. Box lunches, extended care hours, and Sturbridge hotel discounts are available. For details: 508-347-0285; www.osv.org.

Creating exploring cooking fun learning