OSV Honors New U.S. Citizens

A Milkmaid’s Work

The Year Without a Summer

Learning to Reproduce Artifacts

5 Top Historical Myths

Repairing the Millpond Dam

The Asa Knight Store
Employee Talents Make the Difference

How can we tell in advance how someone will hold up under the pressures of hard work and unexpected challenges? As a manager, I have long favored a performance evaluation tool that uses the “Five E’s” to measure a person’s potential for success – their energy, ability to energize others, and their execution, edge, and endurance. But I never fully appreciated the tremendous importance of these qualities until coming to Old Sturbridge Village.

For our front-line staff, particularly our costumed interpreters, having energy and the ability to energize others is crucial. As soon as visitors enter the Village, our employees are “on.” They must make an instant connection with visitors, gauge their needs, answer questions, and seamlessly draw them into the historical experience. And they must do all this in costume while simultaneously demonstrating the work of the 1830s: hammering at the forge, cooking at the hearth, spinning, weaving, or driving a team of oars. Their ability to energize our visitors is what keeps them coming back, and it is what keeps the Village alive.

With a lean staff and an even leaner budget – so typical in the nonprofit world – execution against job responsibilities is an absolute must. Not only do we depend on our employees to perform their own jobs well, we often must count on them to step up and fill in where needed; whether it is in their job description or not. And our fiscal health depends on all of our “economic engines,” our income-producing activities, to deliver as budgeted.

I’ve often defined “edge” as a person’s ability to “see around corners,” to anticipate what can go wrong, and then innovate for success. And nowhere is that more important that at OSV, where we have been tested by the unexpected more than once – by tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, fires, power outages, and more. It often seems that when we take two steps forward toward financial stability, we are forced to take one step back due to an unforeseen expense. Our latest challenge? Sink holes in the Millpond dam! (You can read about the history of the Millpond and the importance of these repairs on page 14.)

Finally, I learned very quickly after coming to the Village that endurance might well be the most challenging of all the “E” attributes, because the demands of the Village stretch well beyond 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. When I am enjoying the spectacular finale of our July 4th fireworks show, I know that many of our employees already have worked a 14-hour day. When we open for business after yet another heavy snowstorm, I know that our maintenance crews have been showing, I know that many of our employees already have worked a 14-hour day. When we open for business after yet another heavy snowstorm, I know that our maintenance crews have been working for business after yet another heavy snowstorm, I know that our maintenance crews have been working a 14-hour day. When we open for business after yet another heavy snowstorm, I know that our maintenance crews have been working.

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Ceremony Adds Meaning to July 4th Celebration

By Ann Lindblad

Old Sturbridge Village has added a stirring new tradition to its popular Independence Day celebrations – hosting a naturalization ceremony in partnership with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). At the first OSV ceremony, held last year on the Fourth of July, 100 new citizens from 44 countries took the Oath of Allegiance on the Village Common, a huge hit with new citizens and OSV visitors alike. Here is a sampling of their comments:

"It was a great day for all, including these lucky people who have chosen to be Americans. An experience for all to see. My grandkids and I enjoyed the whole day" – SUZANNE LEAR

"My six-year-old was very excited and proud to be able to sing the Star Spangled Banner with the new citizens for their first time as citizens. What a wonderful day we had. Spending Independence Day at Old Sturbridge Village just might become a new tradition for us" – RACHEL MICHAEL

"You did it right, OSV Our family was so proud to have their ceremony here" – STEVE KENNEDY

Old Sturbridge Village will host its second annual citizenship ceremony on July 4, 2014. "The historical setting of the Village is the perfect place to welcome new citizens," notes President and CEO Jim Donahue. "In addition to enjoying all the food and fun that we associate with July 4th celebrations, visitors really want to get in touch with the history behind the holiday. That's why so many families make a Fourth of July visit to OSV an annual tradition."

Becoming a U.S. citizen takes time, hard work, and dedication. Immigrants must:

• Be at least 18 years of age;
• Be a lawful permanent resident (Green Card holder);
• Have resided in the United States as a lawful permanent resident for the required period of time;
• Have been physically present in the United States for the required period of time;
• Be a person of good moral character;
• Be able to speak, read, write, and understand the English language;
• Have knowledge of U.S. government and history; and
• Be willing and able to take the Oath of Allegiance.

For more details: www.uscis.gov/us-citizenship

OSV has joined a list of prestigious historic sites around the country that host new citizenship ceremonies each year as a part of the USCIS annual celebration of Independence Day. Other venues that have hosted ceremonies include Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia; George Washington’s Mount Vernon in Mount Vernon, Virginia; the Battleship Missouri Memorial at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; and the U.S.S. Constitution in Boston. The Village’s 2013 ceremony was covered by three television stations and a host of newspapers, and was a huge hit with new citizens and OSV visitors alike. Here is a sampling of their comments:

Above: Among those taking the Oath of Allegiance at OSV’s first naturalization ceremony were two new citizens already serving in the U.S. military, a U.S. Army Captain originally from India and a Senior Airman originally from Cameroon. CENTER OPPOSITE: OSV interpreter Charlie Peters welcomes new U.S. citizen Andre Silva of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, originally from Brazil.

The 100 new citizens who took the Oath of Allegiance at Old Sturbridge Village’s first naturalization ceremony hailed from these 44 countries: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Belarus, Biscit, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, USSR, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Yugoslavia.

And at the time of their naturalization, they resided in the following Massachusetts cities and towns: Acton, Agawam, Andover, Arlington, Chicopee, Clinton, Dunstable, Fitchburg, Great Barrington, Greenfield, Hinsdale, Holden, Holyoke, Hudson, Lawrence, Leicester, Lenox, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Marblehead, Methuen, Millbury, North Reading, Pittsfield, Reading, Rowley, Shrewsbury, Springfield, Sturbridge, West Springfield, Westfield, Wilbraham, and Winchster.

OSV VISITOR SUMMER 2014

I n presiding over OSV’s first naturalization ceremony Judge Henry J. Boroff, who is himself the son of immigrants, gave a poignant speech. Here are excerpts from his remarks:

“...My parents were immigrants as well. They came from Poland. During World War II, they were in the Nazi concentration camps. They were freed by the American forces and met in the hospital, barely alive. When they had recovered, they were offered the opportunity to come to the United States in 1949. They were delighted. They had heard four things about the United States: first, that they would be safe from oppression; second, that they could raise a family free from oppressors; third, that they and their children could flourish (maybe even one of them could become a judge); and fourth, that the streets were lined with gold. Well... three of those four things turned out to be true! And in 1955, on one of the proudest days of their lives, they became American citizens. “Now, you are all Americans. But this does not mean that you should abandon your culture and traditions. They are part of who you are and now they become part of who you are as a family free from oppression.”
Dairying in Early New England: A Milkmaid’s Work Is Never Done

By Ryan Beckman, Assistant Coordinator of Households

As the buds and blooms of spring unfurled into the verdure of summertime, early New England farmwives were very busy in the dairy. The typical 1830s farm family regarded milk as more of a liquid food than a beverage, and milk, butter, buttermilk, cheese, and cream were made into delectable offerings for the table.

After giving birth in the spring, cows were milked until late fall and then “dried off” by milking only once a day in an effort to stop lactation by winter. This helped until late fall and then “dried off” by milking only once a day in an effort to stop lactation by winter. This helped develop a new calf. In spring, the cycle of milking began anew.

Average or “middling” farms in early New England had 4–6 cows in milk during the dairying season. The work of rural farming women usually included milking cows by hand twice daily to produce butter and cheese. They typically rose before dawn to start a fire in the kitchen to heat milk for cheese making and to heat water for the twice daily cleanup that followed dairy work.

A typical cow produced 3–5 gallons of milk daily. Most cows were of “native” or “moongot” stock, often descended from Devonshire cattle, a rust-colored breed brought to Plymouth, Massachusetts, from England in the early 17th century. This breed was known for its hardiness, its sturdy frame for draft work and meat, and its exceptionally rich milk.

Without modern refrigeration, the farm wife had to make butter in the cooler weather of the spring and fall. Taking advantage of the cold nights, she set milk in earthen or tin milk pans for the cream to rise. Twenty-four hours later, she would return to skim the cream floating atop the milk with a slotted spoon or tin skimmer, and then churn the cream into sweet, rich clumps of butter.

This butter was salted and stored for home use or packed into small wooden containers called firkins and sold to the country store. Butter in the 1830s sometimes fetched more than 15 cents a pound, a modest profit for the average 19th-century farm household.

By summer, heat and humidity turned milk set out in milk pans into “clabber,” a thick yogurt-like substance deemed fit only for the pigs. Conveniently, piglets purchased in the spring were fed the “wash of the dairy,” which included this accidental clabber, skimmed milk from gathering cream, buttermilk left over from churning butter, and the liquid whey from producing cheeses. For every one or two cows in milk, there was enough dairy wash to feed one pig.

When the heat of summer proved difficult for making butter, the household’s milkmaids made hard cheeses, a convenient way to preserve milk for the long term. Ten to twenty gallons of fresh milk were set in a tub, and rennet—an enzyme derived from a calf’s stomach known as a “maw”—was added to form curd. This curd was cut, cooked, gathered, milked, and pressed in a mold to form the cheese. Cheeses could be aged upon a shelf in the buttery and turned daily for three or four months to gain flavor and form a protective rind.

Hard cheese was considered a rich and healthy protein—the 19th-century version of “the other white meat”—and was taken with breakfast, dinner, and supper. Soft cheeses were made with rennet or with acids such as vinegar or citric acid, hung from the ceiling in a cloth to drain the whey, and then were served spread on bread or crackers.

Old Sturbridge Village visitors can tour three different settings for dairy work. The Towne House has a state-of-the-art “modern” cellar for selling butter and cheese directly to markets. The Bixby House has a simple closet in the ell for ripening cheeses for household use and trading to neighbors. And in the sunny buttery of the Freeman Farmhouse, we demonstrate butter making from time to time in the spring and fall, and we make cheese every Friday during the summer.

OSV interpreters bring the Village to life for hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Please consider supporting this vital programming with a donation to our Costumed Historians Campaign. Donate online at www.osv.org/donations, or mail your gift in the enclosed envelope today.
The Year Without a Summer

By Ann Laidlaw

In 1816, the heaviest snowstorm ever recorded in Italy produced red and yellow snow—an early sign of the strange weather to come.

Perhaps nowhere else was the economy so dependent on the weather as in New England, where most of the population depended on subsistence farming to survive. And by early summer 1816, New England farmers were being sorely tested. In Maine, newly cleared sheep starved from lack of forage on the frozen ground Vermont farmers burned the remains of their failed hay crop to keep their corn from freezing and fed their cattle potato tops and thatch from their roofs.

The economy was so dependent on the weather that in New England, where most of the population depended on subsistence farming to survive. And by early summer 1816, New England farmers were being sorely tested. In Maine, newly cleared sheep starved from lack of forage on the frozen ground Vermont farmers burned the remains of their failed hay crop to keep their corn from freezing and fed their cattle potato tops and thatch from their roofs.

Battling an August freeze, farmers wrapped rags and shawls around seedlings in a desperate attempt to save replanted fodder crops. By September, corn in New Hampshire had frozen to the center of the cob and apples froze on the trees. Realizing they couldn’t feed their livestock through the winter, farmers slaughtered pigs and cattle early, and the resulting surplus caused pork and beef prices to plummet.

Starving wolves were picking off sheep and chickens in Maine. And around the region, New Englanders ate what they could: wild turnips, boiled nettles, clover and apples froze on the trees. Realizing they couldn’t feed their livestock through the winter, farmers slaughtered pigs and cattle early, and the resulting surplus caused pork and beef prices to plummet.

The weather was so bad that New Englanders ate what they could: wild turnips, boiled nettles, clover heads, potato tops, leeks, pigeons, and hedgehogs. Vermonters used maple syrup for currency and traded for fish, causing many to remember this time of hardship as “the mackerel year.”

Many people thought the end of the world was coming; that the wild weather was evidence of God’s divine will. As a result, there was an upswelling in religious revivals in 1816 and 1817, and one Vermont dirt farmer wrote that revivals swept through towns like an “epidemic of disease.” Others thought the perversity of the weather was the result of sunspots, or that cold air from Atlantic icebergs was blowing inland, or that New England’s deforestation was allowing cold winds to blow in from Canada.

Many New England farmers, driven by the rocky soil and merciless weather, decided to head west, which at the time meant Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana. Despite rumors of roads so bad that cream would churn into butter on the way, farmers with “Ohio fever” packed up and left. In the decade ending in 1820, more than 200,000 people migrated west, which at the time meant Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana. Despite rumors of roads so bad that cream would churn into butter on the way, farmers with “Ohio fever” packed up and left. In the decade ending in 1820, more than 200,000 people migrated west.

After analyzing tree rings, climatologists have confirmed that 1816 was the second-coldest year in the Northern hemisphere since the year 1400. Only 1691 was colder, following a volcanic eruption in Peru that year. Records also show that those who endured the “year without a summer” had to wait two more years for relief—temperatures did not approach previous norms until 1818.

Red Sunsets

In the years following the Tambora eruption, observers noted the world’s prettiest red and orange sunsets. Normal sunsets appear orange, yellow, or red as light travels through the atmosphere because colors with shorter wavelengths—such as blue—have already been scattered by atmospheric gases. Volcanic ash and dust can enhance this effect, making sunsets appear redder than ever before. Many artists of the day captured the unusually brilliant sunsets in their paintings: Greek and German scientists led by Professor C.S. Zechius of the Academy of Athens analyzed the amount of red paint used in landscape paintings from the 16th through the 18th centuries. The highest amounts of red were found in paintings rendered in the years following the 1815 Tambora volcano.

Above: The Scarlet Sunset by Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851), one of many landscapes painted in the years following the Tambora eruption, when volcanic dust in the atmosphere caused more brilliant sunsets. © Tate, London 2014. All rights reserved.

A Monstrous Summer

On summer holiday in Switzerland in 1816, a group of traveling companions who were kept indoors by the nasty weather amused themselves by telling ghost stories and challenged each other to write scary tales inspired by the cold and gloomy weather. The result? Lord Byron wrote the poem, “Darkness”; Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, future wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, wrote her famous novel, Frankenstein; and Dr. John Polidori wrote The Vampyre, which became the basis for Bram Stoker’s Dracula.
Educational Partnership Benefits OSV and Killingly High School

Students Learn to Reproduce Artifacts

By Laura Chilson, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

ike other living history museums, Old Sturbridge Village faces a dilemma: how to offer an engaging hands-on historical experience without risking damage to valuable historical artifacts. One solution is to use historically accurate reproductions wherever possible.

A good example of this “please do touch” approach is OSV’s Fitch House exhibit, where scores of reproduction artifacts are used to show visitors what a typical home was like in the early 1800s. Children can play with games, dress up in 1830s-style clothing, and even lie down on the bed to gauge its comfort.

With more than 250,000 annual guests eager to see and touch as much as they can — and dozens of interpreters demonstrating the everyday work of an 1830s village and farm — OSV needs a lot of reproduction items, from toys and tinware to baskets and barrels, to enhance the visitor experience.

Many reproductions are crafted in public view. OSV blacksmiths, shoemakers, tinners, and coopers demonstrate how things were made in the 19th century, and keep these crafts alive. In today’s high-tech world, however, it is increasingly difficult to find enough young people interested in history who have the proper “hand skills” to carry on these craft traditions.

One idea that is working well at Old Sturbridge Village is a partnership with students and faculty at Killingly High School to reproduce historically accurate objects, making the museum experience more engaging and educational. Many OSV visitors report that they have learned more about history at OSV than at any other museum in the country because of the “please do touch” policy. Those who visit OSV return for repeated visits and become long-term followers of the museum’s work. And they are learning that sometimes the old-fashioned way is still best.

The students’ assignment? To make tavern tables, shoe clamps, a shoemaker’s bench, stilts, a yarn winder, and an 1830s-style wheelbarrow. Deb Friedman, senior vice president for public program, and Tom Kelleher, curator of mechanical arts, explained the historical use of each item.

Students and faculty alike are impressed by the precision early craftsmen attained using only hand tools. Jim Hutson, one of the school’s technology education instructors, observed, “Everything, even tapered pins, was hand done and extremely precise.”

And they are learning that sometimes the old-fashioned way is still best. The most detailed item on the list is the yarn winder, which is also sometimes referred to as a clock reel or a clock winder. The device winds the yarn from the spindle of the spinning wheel, even out the tension of the spun yarn, and measures the amount of yarn as well. Students have found the counting mechanism on the yarn winder to be particularly challenging to reproduce because none of their tools has proved right for the job; they need to carve it by hand.

Student Ed Rahib, who took on the task of replicating the wheelbarrow, spent a day in the OSV Blacksmith Shop working with Lead Interpreters Rob Lyon and Derek Heidemann to make a tire for the wheel. Although most people think of rubber when they hear the word “tire,” it also means a metal hoop forming the tread of a wheel. Because blacksmiths don’t use glue or nails, the diameter of the tire has to be just right — in fact, a little smaller than the wheel so the tire will stay in place.

They first measured the wheel using both mathematical calculations and a tool called a “traveler” that counts revolutions. After a lot of hammering and bending and some welding, they rounded up the tire over a cast iron cone mandrel. Then the tire was evenly heated to expand it just enough to slip onto the wooden wheel. A few quick, well-aimed hammer blows got the tire into final position before it was then cooled in water to shrink it tight onto the wheel. For Ed, who had fashioned other metal components in his backyard with a homemade bellows, a fire pit, and a rock for an anvil, the experience in a real forge was “more exciting and a lot easier!”

Both Old Sturbridge Village staff and Killingly High School educators hope to expand the partnership into other areas of the school’s Career Pathways program, which helps students match their interests with career opportunities and introduces them to the real world of work. As teacher Hutson notes, “The possibilities are endless.”

1. In order to fit the tire to the wheel, the long strip of wrought iron was first heated in the forge to make it malleable. 2. The iron then had to be bent into a circular shape before the ends could be welded together. 3. Once the iron is welded, it has to be hammered into a flatter, rounder shape. The diameter of the tire has to be just right, in fact a little smaller than the wheel, so that the tire will stay, as the blacksmiths are not using glue or nails.

FUNDING FIELD TRIPS

At OSV, we believe that when children learn about our past, they discover possibilities for their futures. That’s why we train our costumed interpreters and museum teachers to deliver an experience of a lifetime.

When students visit the Village, they experience a hands-on, down-and-dirty, back-to-nature, stretch-your-legs, sensory kind of learning. They meet the animals, learn about hearth-cooking, and help with the farm chores. Our goal is to make every visit to OSV a meaningful and lasting learning experience.

The Killingly High School partnership is an example of one of our latest educational outreach efforts, the “Museum Careers Pilot Project” Funded by an anonymous donor in Connecticut, this program has the goal of inspiring high school students to consider and pursue museum careers. More than 65,000 students visit the Village each year, and two-thirds of those students come from at-risk schools that cannot afford a visit without the help of the OSV Education Fund. Our Education Fund depends on contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations to keep the Village experience accessible to students everywhere.

Donate to the OSV Education Fund online at www.osv.org/donations, or mail your gift in the enclosed envelope today.
Historical “Myths” Often Heard at History Museums

By Tom Kelleher, Curator of Mechanical Arts

Many bits of “common knowledge” are true for a particular time or place, but some get exaggerated or applied too broadly. Others are just plain wrong! Here are some frequently heard by OSV interpreters.

People in the past were a lot shorter.

On average New Englanders in the early 1800s were an inch or two shorter than today, but not everyone is “average.” If you were transported back in time, some people would still be taller than you and some shorter. Then or now, Abraham Lincoln and Clint Eastwood, at 6’4”, would be considered tall, and at 5’ Martha Washington and Paula Abdul both would be considered short. Early Americans were a couple of inches taller than their European cousins, a fact attributed to better childhood nutrition in America.

Some of the “proof” that people in the past were dramatically shorter is just not valid. Most antique beds are at least 75” long, the length of a modern full-size bed, but vintage bed hangings and puffy mattresses trick the eye into just not valid. Most antique beds are at least 75” long, the length of a modern full-size bed, but vintage bed hangings and puffy mattresses trick the eye into thinking they are shorter. Ceilings in other antique homes (like OSV’s Salem Towne house) are higher than those in most homes today.

People were a lot thinner.

Most people in early America, or even 50 years ago, were indeed leaner than most modern Americans. More than two-thirds of us today are overweight, due to poor diet and inactive lifestyles. While there were certainly corpulent people in early America, they were the exception, not the norm. Most 19th-century people lived physically active lives, and living in colder homes also helped them burn more calories than does the average well-fed, inactive, and climate-controlled person today. But the number of new vintage garments surviving today tends to exaggerate the perceived difference, since clothes that survive for centuries were often just too small to have been worn – and worn out – by other people. The OSV collection contains historical garments from heavy people too.

Everyone died young.

While average life expectancy was shorter in 19th-century New England than it is today, many people then lived into old age, and some even lived beyond 100 years. The Bible says the expected lifespan 3,000 years ago was “70 years; 80 for those who are strong” (Psalm 90:10). But before the mid-20th century, people regularly died in all stages of life, not just in old age. Life expectancy at birth in early 19th-century New England was only in the mid-40s.

But as the old saying goes, “there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.” Statistics in the 19th century were skewed by high childhood mortality rates – especially in urban areas – largely due to infectious diseases such as pertussis, measles, scarlet fever, and diphtheria. (Thanks to vaccination, these diseases are rare today!) By the time a person reached age 30, his life expectancy jumped to 67, and the average 50-year-old could expect to live until age 73.

Tuberculosis, acute infections (e.g., typhoid and cholera), accidents for men, and postpartum infections for women were the biggest killers of adults in the early 1800s. Modern sanitation and health care have extended average lifespans. Today heart disease, cancer, stroke, lung disease, and automobile accidents are the leading causes of death in America.

Women tending fires in long skirts frequently burned to death “back then.”

This is just not borne out by historical records. Although a few spectacular instances were occasionally reported in newspapers, they appeared because they were unusual and horrific, and thus newsworthy. Often the victims were intoxicated. Practically speaking, long skirts tend to move away from the fire as one bends forward. Aprons also pull skirts closer to the body, making contact with fire even less likely. Of course, long skirts sometimes did get singed, but natural fibers, especially wool, are flame resistant, and cotton and linen tend to smolder rather than erupt into flame. Women simply did not tend to cook wearing flimsy, sheer fabrics that might easily catch fire.

“They” never wasted anything.

Early Americans were far less wealthy than we are today and could not afford to be as wasteful with some things. There was less “stuff” and little packaging to waste. What had value was reused, but what did not yield a worthwhile return (like sawdust) was not.

By Tom Kelleher, Curator of Mechanical Arts

© American Antiquarian Society

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In 1748, Benjamin Franklin wrote, “Time is money” – and they certainly did not want to waste their time! But they blatantly wasted many things. “Used up” farmland was regularly replaced by “new,” western lands; native animals and plants were thoughtlessly killed off; and whole forests were burned or clear cut. Early Americans definitely degraded their environment, but they just did not have the population, technology, and wealth to do as much harm as did later generations.
Time and Water Erode OSV Millpond Dam:
Extensive and Expensive Repairs Underway

By Brad King, Senior Vice President of Museum Operations and Tom Kelleher, Curator of Mechanical Arts

With 68 historic and reproduction buildings requiring care, the OSV operations budget is constantly challenged by a seemingly never-ending list of “deferred maintenance” projects. But while we might choose to delay a painting project, or put off buying a new boiler to ease budget constraints, some repairs just can’t wait.

Last year, the OSV operations staff discovered that internal erosion in the dam had reached a critical level, necessitating immediate repairs to save the Millpond and the dam, and to ensure continued safe visitor access to the Mill area. The cost of these unexpected but crucial repairs is estimated to be more than $200,000.

Prior to 1795, David Wight Jr. (1760–1813) built a sawmill roughly where the OSV sawmill is today. Archaeology in the early 1980s uncovered how he modified the landscape to develop the waterpower potential of his mill site. First, Wight harvested the trees from the cedar swamp and built an earthen dam “across the door or place of outflow” on the downhill side of the swamp. He did this by moving vast quantities of sand and gravel from an adjacent drumlin, or small hill, that had been left there by a receding glacier 10,000 years before.

The porous nature of Wight’s more than 200-year-old earthen mill dam has long allowed subterranean streams to erode it from within. Recently, this gradual erosion has become very evident with the sporadic development of dangerous sinkholes in the road area near the Carding Mill and Gristmill sluiceways. OSV maintenance crews intercepted and filled the sinkholes as they occurred, but it soon became evident that a more comprehensive approach was required.

Maintenance staff members built a temporary boardwalk to allow guests to safely visit the mills, and the Village hired a geotechnical engineer to begin the complicated process of analyzing the area with ground-penetrating radar and soil profiling. To address the subterranean erosion, the engineer developed a comprehensive multiphase remediation plan. Because the Millpond is located in the critical Quinebaug River wetland resource area and the dam is regulated, the Village had to follow a complicated process of filing expansive reports, site reconnaissance, and public hearings with multiple regulatory agencies – each requiring additional processes and delays before the granting of any permit.

The first step in the repair project was to lower the water level of the Millpond so that the OSV operations crew could grout the sluiceways to both the Carding Mill and Grist Mill with a specialty mortar – a time-consuming and tedious process.

The second phase is the installation of a subterranean 70’ long x 2’ wide x 14’ deep concrete curtain wall in the area of the reoccurring sinkholes. The curtain wall will serve to eliminate any future erosion of below-grade earthen material. The completion of this phase has been hampered due to flooding conditions throughout the winter months. Several deep dewatering wells have been installed to aid in lowering water table levels. The final phase is the rebuilding of the Carding Mill east stone foundation wall that has been compromised as a result of the long-standing, below-grade material erosion.

Each time, hundreds of OSV supporters stepped up to help, donating thousands to make these much-needed repairs. May we count on you to help with our Millpond Appeal? We need to complete repairs to the dam before the busy summer season’s high attendance. Call 508-347-0210 now to donate with a credit card, or donate online at www.osv.org/donations.
Not only was New England in the midst of an industrial revolution in the early 19th century; it was experiencing a commercial revolution as well. International trade was nothing new; people had traded goods from far away for thousands of years. What was new was the abundance and variety of imported luxuries-turned-necessities readily available in just about every rural community.

With wealth and standards of living rising, common folks now expected fashionable clothing, prettier houses, better tools, and a more varied diet. And no longer did country people have to travel to ports such as Boston or New York to find this growing bounty; it was nearby, in local “country stores” like Asa Knight’s.

A astonishing variety of goods was available: Caribbean sugar and coffee, Chinese tea and silk, Jamaican rum, Asian spices, English and Asian ceramics, Irish linen, French brandy and lace, Indian and Italian fabrics, Cuban cigars, German chemicals and cloth, Spanish wine and oranges, Mediterranean raisins and figs, Holland gin, Sicilian lemons, South American chocolate, and British tools, textiles, pans, cutlery, and hardware. Products of the United States included white flour, glass, cottons, woolens, salt fish, hats, household ceramics, wallpaper, paint pigments, gunpowder, tobacco, oil, salt, scythes, axes, and much more.

How did Yankee farm families pay for all these store-bought goods? Storekeepers like Asa Knight bought locally made butter and cheese from their customers, which they then resold, hopefully at a profit, when they went to Boston to buy more store stock. And with commerce growing, farm families began to produce other goods for distant markets.

Country merchants also served as middlemen in several cottage industries such as the manufacture of palm leaf hats and braided straw; paying rural women for such items made at home. There was little cash in circulation, so most transactions were carefully recorded in store ledgers as debits and credits. Accouncts typically ran for years.

No one had a “credit score” in the 1830s, except informally among neighbors who shrewdly estimated a man’s means and trustworthiness. Sometimes storekeepers even served as petty bankers, “selling” good customers small sums of cash as needed. These were not loans and did not accrue interest, but were just a service provided to neighbors who were also valued customers. Cotton was the king of U.S. exports, accounting for 40 percent of the total. Cotton cloth was the largest manufactured export; distantly followed by soap, candles, shoes, and hats. Other exports included wheat, flour, rice, corn, tobacco, livestock, lumber, tar, turpentine, furs, and skins. As it is today, the U.S. in the 1830s was a net importer nation, buying more from abroad than it sold.

With remarkable luck, the store had been unused for a century. Some counters, shelving, and drawers with their labels survived intact, and where shelves and counters were missing, marks on the walls and floors betrayed exactly where they once were. Some of the original pink wallpaper remained and was copied. OSV curators meticulously studied country store inventories and account books from the early 1800s to discover not just what was sold but what quantities of goods were kept in stock. They sought out original packaging from the early 1800s to find just how vintage labels and packages looked, and had copies made. Finally, thousands of fresh new reproductions were made of the merchandise so that the store looked as it probably did in the 1830s. Bulk goods such coffee beans and spices were again placed in the drawers, ensuring accuracy even in places hidden from public view.

In some cases, it made sense to fill shelves with actual artifacts. Glassware and imported ceramics were important parts of early store inventories. Prolonged exposure to light and dust don’t do them much harm, so unlike most antiques, these items often still look brand new after almost two centuries. Some antique bottles and dishes were placed behind Plexiglas for protection from breakage, but scores of other fill open shelves, just as they did in the early 1800s.

OSV’s Adopt-a-Building Program
Many OSV members have joined Trustee Norm Abram in the new Preservation Society, which supports ongoing maintenance of our 68 historic and reproduction buildings. Other individuals and businesses fund the care of specific buildings for three years through our Adopt-a-Building program. The Asa Knight Store is one of OSV’s important buildings still available for adoption. Contact Karen Hoke for more information: khoke@osv.org; 508-347-0250.
A Conversation with Clif Stone

By Brad King, Senior Vice President of Museum Operations Department

Clif Stone, a carpenter and manager at Old Sturbridge Village, reflects on the history of the Village and the challenges of maintaining its mechanical systems.

Clif Stone is the “go-to-guy” to coordinate special events and logistics such as parking lot planning for July 4th and support needs for the OSV Gala. He is also responsible for the hundreds of mechanical systems throughout the Village property. This is a daunting task, because we do not have a centralized physical plant, and we have so many old buildings with dated mechanical apparatuses needing regular service, repair, or replacement.

His work on mechanical systems is behind-the-scenes, but when those systems fail, Clif and his crew are called to task. Believing “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” he oversees OSV’s preventative maintenance agenda to minimize future mechanical failures.

Among Clif’s most significant accomplishments is his work on the renovation of the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges. In tandem with his crew, he pulled together all the mechanical needs for this endeavor, ensuring a successful and cost-effective completion.

When asked about his tenure at the Village, Clif speaks about his strong connection to this special place so deeply rooted in his childhood. “I have such fond memories of growing up in Sturbridge and the Village is a big part of those memories.”

Country Bank Sponsors New Educational App for Museum Guests

By Julie Horrigan, Director of Development, Corporate and Foundation Relations

Old Sturbridge Village visitors will soon be able to navigate an authentic 19th-century economics experience from their smartphones. The new “Dollars and Sense” TaleBlazer Augmented Reality App, sponsored by Country Bank, allows museum visitors to participate in a self-guided tour across the Village by accessing the free app on their cell phones.

Old Sturbridge Village is one of only three museums nationwide selected to develop this technology with the MIT Scheller Teacher Education Program (STEP) lab. “Dollars and Sense” is built on the TaleBlazer platform, which allows the app to take place in the real world, in this case at Old Sturbridge Village. Players interact with virtual characters, objects, and data as they move around the Village exchanging debits and credits and making financial decisions that would have impacted their economic security in the 19th century.

Country Bank, through its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, is committed to supporting educational programs that enrich the communities where they do business. Last year, the bank invested more than $750,000 in deserving nonprofit organizations — including Old Sturbridge Village.

Accordin...
Plan Ahead for these Memorable Village Experiences

Discovery Adventures
Select dates are still available for OSV’s summer Discovery Adventures program for children ages 6–17. Five-day programs are offered through August 15, and two-day Discovery Adventures will be offered during December School Vacation Week. Learn more at www.osv.org/adventures.

Corporate Outings and Events
It’s not too late to arrange a summer or fall corporate outing at OSV. Your staff will love the historic ambiance and time together at the Village. And now is the time to plan for fall, winter, and holiday events – openings are limited and space is filling up fast. Contact the OSV Sales Office at 508-347-0306 to book your corporate outing or event today.

Old Sturbridge Village Gala
Considered one of the area’s premier social events, the OSV Gala is also the museum’s largest single fundraising event. Join Gala Chairs Ron and Kathy Vairo for the 2014 Old Sturbridge Village Gala at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, September 13. Tickets are on sale now for this fun and festive evening.

Overnight Programs
Hop into history at OSV! The Village offers overnight adventures designed for scouts, schools, and other youth groups of up to 80 participants on select nights throughout the year. A favorite highlight is a Lantern Tour of the Village after dark. Call 508-347-0306 to plan your overnight experience.

Birthday Parties
For The Best Birthday Party in History, leave the party planning to us! Choose from a variety of themed packages for ages 5–15, including Traditional Tea Party, Farm Fun, and a 19th-Century Magic Party. Every party includes dressing up in 1830s costumes, snacks, activities, and village admission for all guests. For information, visit www.osv.org/youth or call 508-347-0285.

Lodging Packages
A variety of lodging packages are now available at the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges, including Romantic Weekend Escapes and Family Stay and Play Packages. Fall and winter packages feature popular Village programs such as An Evening of Illumination, Hearthside Bounty, and Dinner in a Country Village. Visit www.osv.org/inn for more information.

Thanksgiving Day Celebrations
Reservations for the ever-popular Thanksgiving Day Dinner at the Oliver Wight Tavern will be taken beginning July 1. These events sell out quickly each year, so mark your calendar today to reserve your space on July 1.

New “Bucket Town” Exhibit Opens in June
Celebrates Toymaking and Coopering
By Christie Jackson, Senior Curator of Decorative Arts

As we move into summer, the curatorial department will be busy de-installing our exhibit on cabinetmaker Nathan Lombard and mounting our new show, Bucket Town – Four Centuries of Toymaking and Coopering in Hingham, set to open June 21. While both of these exhibits highlight the extraordinary craftsmanship of woodworking in Massachusetts, their content is very different. With Lombard, we had 15 important furniture pieces on loan, including an 8 1/2’-tall desk-and-bookcase. With Bucket Town, we will have 180 objects on display, the smallest being a tiny Hingham box barely 3/4” high!

This new exhibit centers on the recently rediscovered Hersey Farm workshop in Hingham, covered with vines and untouched for the last 100 years. Entering this time capsule, one is met with handcrafted toys, personal artifacts, and tools left as if the artisan had just stepped away from his workbench. Hingham first began producing buckets, boxes, and then canteens as early as the mid-1600s. By the 1820s, tourists began arriving in Hingham from Boston, and the town’s cooperers began making miniature buckets and boxes as souvenirs. From these roots would emerge the nation’s first professional toymaking industry.

A parade of toys, boxes, buckets, canteens, and other woodenwares will be on display in the exhibit. Artifacts from the recently discovered Hersey workshop will also be on view, helping to tell the personal story of the men and women who created these utilitarian woodenwares and enchanting toys. We hope you will join us!

Old Sturbridge Village extends sincere thanks to the donors who made the Bucket Town exhibit possible: Peter W. Hersey of Hingham, Massachusetts, and Skinner, Inc. of Boston and Marlborough, Massachusetts.

Remembering the Past and the Future at Old Sturbridge Village
The George Washington Wells Society

The George Washington Wells Society honors donors who have included Old Sturbridge Village in their estate plans. Our legacy society is named for George Washington Wells, who started a modest “spectacle shop” in Southbridge, Massachusetts, in the 1840s, which became the American Optical Company, a world leader in the manufacture and sale of eyeglasses. George’s three sons followed him into the business and became successful owner-executives with a passion for collecting. They founded Old Sturbridge Village and bequeathed to the museum their collection of artifacts of material culture documenting everyday life of early nineteenth-century New Englanders.

One of the simplest ways to support the preservation of history long after you’re gone is to include a provision in your will that a share of your estate will be distributed to Old Sturbridge Village. With just a sentence or two, your attorney can arrange for a gift of cash or percentage to support OSV. The time to think about the future is right now. Please call 508-347-0250.
Upcoming Events

Summer Comes Alive at Old Sturbridge Village

Discovery Adventures Through August 17
(Formally called Discovery Camps)
Give your kids a summer adventure they won’t forget. Children ages 6–17 wear 1830s costumes and learn what it was like to live in the early 19th century.

Music & Art Weekend June 14–15
This weekend highlights 19th-century popular music and art, with more than 50 singers, dancers, musicians, and artists showcasing their talents at OSV. Dads get free admission on Father’s Day (June 15).

Black History Weekend June 21–22
Learn some of the most inspiring stories in African-American history during Black History Weekend – including the movement to abolish slavery in the early 19th century – and also enjoy activities and crafts with African-American themes.

Independence Day Celebration Evening Fireworks, July 4
Celebrate the nation’s birth with a full day of festivities, including a patriotic citizens’ procession, a reading of the Declaration of Independence, and the opportunity to witness U.S. citizens take their Oath of Allegiance. After daytime celebrations conclude, the Village reopens for an evening of music, magic, juggling, and family-friendly games, concluding with a spectacular fireworks display over the countryside. Tickets are on sale now.

Family Fun Days Labor Day Weekend August 30–September 1
Celebrate an old-fashioned Labor Day Weekend with vintage games, crafts, singing, dancing, and a 19th-century magic show.

Fire & Ice Day, July 19
Firefighters get half-price admission for this old-time fireman’s muster. See demonstrations of vintage hand-pumpers and watch antique fire trucks parade around the Common. To help you cool off, costumed historians will make ice cream from 19th-century recipes. The weekend also includes OSV’s fifth annual chili contest, giving visitors a chance to sample chili from local restaurants and OSV’s own Oliver Wight Tavern.

Redcoats & Rebels, August 2–3
Don’t miss one of OSV’s most popular and dramatic events – the largest Revolutionary War reenactment in New England, with more than 1,000 “soldiers” portraying British and American Colonial troops. Watch mock battles and musket and cannon demonstrations. Mingle with the troops around their campfires on Saturday, August 3, when the Village stays open until 8:00 p.m.

Agricultural Exhibition September 3–14
Try your hand at plowing behind the Village oxcart, threshing grain, pressing apples, and shelling corn. Meet heritage breed animals and see an old-time exhibition of heirloom vegetables and flowers.

OSV Overseers’ Distinguished Speaker Series: Dan Kenary September 25
Harpoon Brewery President and Cofounder Dan Kenary will host a beer tasting at 7:00 p.m. and share the story of how Harpoon introduced craft beer to Boston in 1986, becoming the first brewery to commercially brew and bottle beer in Boston in more than 25 years. Cost is $45 per person ($40 for OSV Members), which includes food samples paired with beer tastings. Attendees must be over 21. Sponsored by SpencerBANK.

Friends’ Day, September 27
OSV honors Members and thanks them for their support. Members enjoy special, members-only programs throughout the day and will receive two admission passes to share with friends on future visits.

Apple Days, October 4–5
Learn about nearly forgotten heirloom apple varieties, help pick apples 1830s style, and see how apple cider was made in the early 19th century at the ox-powered cider mill.

Drummers’ Call, September 6
See fife and drum corps from around the country drill, compete, and perform military music from the 17th and 18th centuries and learn about the role music played in the early New England military. Don’t miss the day’s highlight: the corps’ parade around the Village Common!

Harvest Party, September 27
Enjoy the brisk fall weather with an evening of live music, horse-drawn hayrides, bonfires, and dancing. Watch sparks fly into the night sky as OSV potters light up the massive brick kiln to fire a year’s worth of redware pottery.

Mark your calendar for the OSV Gala September 13.
For times and details of upcoming events, call 800-SEE-1830 or visit www.osv.org.
Summer Discovery Adventures at OSV June 23 - August 15

1 Old Sturbridge Village Road
Sturbridge, MA 01566

MUSEUM
OPEN YEAR-ROUND
hours vary seasonally

Open daily,
April through October

Open Tuesday – Sunday,
November through March

Open select evenings only
in December

Open all Monday holidays

800-SEE-1830

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