Big Things Happening at the Small House
Cider, the Queen of Beverages
Fall & Winter Calendar of Events
Hop into History
Thanksgiving Preparations
Christmas by Candlelight

a member magazine that keeps you coming back

OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE
Apple and Agriculture Days returned this fall, as well as a new event all about cider.

Jim Donahue, President and CEO

This has been an exciting year at Old Sturbridge Village — from the opening of Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School last fall to the recent Summer of Charlotte’s Web. I hope you enjoy reading this issue of The Visitor and learning more about everything happening at the museum.

The Academy had a successful first year, and Village staff and Academy faculty spent time this summer planning for the new school year. As you will read in this issue, our Academy students are already leaving their mark on the Village. If you have visited in the last few months, you may have noticed a new garden by the Small House. The Academy students worked with Village experts to plan and plant this garden; it is a great way for the students and our visitors to learn more about nutrition and food.

Gardens and horticulture are a big part of the Village, and the agriculture and horticulture staff and volunteers have been hard at work improving the gardens as well as fall events. Apple and Agriculture Days are returning this fall, as well as a new Celebration of Cider and Music Festival. Our Craft Beer and Roots Music Festival has been a popular addition to the calendar, and we are excited to launch this new fall event.

Corporate support for events and programs is beneficial for both the Village and our corporate partners. Each business has different reasons for supporting the museum, and we are grateful for their support. Apple and Agriculture Days are once again sponsored by Southbridge Credit Union, and I hope you enjoy learning more about why this local business supports the Village.

We are deeply grateful for all that our volunteers, members, and supporters do to make Old Sturbridge Village the museum and educational resource we all know and treasure. The Village’s Board of Trustees has an important role leading and guiding the institution, and I am thankful for their advice, counsel, and support. This year, we welcome a new Chair of the Board of Trustees, Meg Pierce. I hope you will enjoy getting to know Meg and learning why the Village is so important to her and her hopes for the museum’s future.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of The Visitor and that you will join us in the coming months to experience all that is new at the museum.

Sincerely,

Jim Donahue
OSV President and CEO
Old Sturbridge Village, a museum and learning resource of New England life, invites each visitor to find meaning, pleasure, relevance and inspiration through the exploration of history.

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Fall & Winter 2018

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Welcome to the FALL & WINTER edition of our VISITOR magazine. We hope you will learn new things and visit the Village soon.

Jim Donahue, President and CEO
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This fall, Old Sturbridge Village once again welcomes director Brian Clowdus to bring you *The Sleepy Hollow Experience*.

Washington Irving, American writer and poet, created this thrilling tale based on Tarrytown, New York. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* draws inspiration from the real ghost stories of this time period, especially the bloody history of the Revolutionary War that had so recently ended. Irving brought the image of the Headless Horseman — used by many cultures across history in folklore and legend — and made him the ghost of a Hessian solider decapitated during the war.

The malevolent ghost rose each Halloween night to seek out his head that was left on the battlefield so many years ago.

Families of the 19th century read this haunting ghost story and felt the chills of the unknown — and you can experience the story brought to life throughout the moonlit countryside of the Village. Dance with Katrina Van Tassel, laugh with Ichabod Crane, cower from Brom Bones, and perhaps catch a glimpse of the terrifying Headless Horseman himself.

Find tickets for this show online or at the Visitor Center. More details available at [www.osv.org/sleepy-hollow](http://www.osv.org/sleepy-hollow)
The Charlotte’s Web Experience enthralled more than 7,000 visitors at the Village’s Freeman Farm this summer. With the authentic farm setting as the stage, Brian Clowdus Experiences presented the timeless story of a self-sacrificing spider and a quirky pig, based on E.B. White’s famous book, and adapted for the theater by Joseph Robinette. According to survey results, the vast majority of these guests had not attended a theatrical program at the Village previously; 95% said they would recommend such a program to others if it was offered again.

Viewers gave enthusiastic testimony about their experience:

“When I went to Old Sturbridge Village today I hadn’t planned on seeing The Charlotte’s Web Experience since I was by myself. But when I walked to the Freeman Farm and saw the set I had to get a ticket. The performance was fantastic! I thought all of the actors were great!”

“Fantastic production! Terrific actors! And you totally kept the substance of E.B. White’s book. Bravo! I would highly recommend this production to children and adults alike.”

— Dottie

E.B White’s grandniece, Lindsay Morand of Townsend, Massachusetts, saw the show with her grandchildren and declared that it was the best production of the story she’d ever seen. Morand presented the Village with a signed hardcover copy of her great-uncle’s book for the library at the Old Sturbridge Academy.

Bravo! And special thanks to Brian Clowdus and the cast and crew of The Charlotte’s Web Experience.
In April, visitors may have noticed a small plot of soil outside the Small House. This garden, about the size of the house itself, marks a new collaboration between Old Sturbridge Academy and museum horticultural staff.

The Small House Garden showcases how wonderfully the curriculum of Old Sturbridge Academy pairs with the educational mission of the Village. Gardening with the museum’s interpretive staff allows students to take an active approach to learning. Students have the chance to be outside, get their hands dirty, and work with knowledgeable gardeners who can demonstrate the wide array of techniques and skills required to maintain a garden. Students have the opportunity to joyfully learn first-hand about nature, science, food, collaboration, and hard work, all while building connections between the past and present.

In the first year of this program, students from grades K–2 joined costumed staff out in the Village weekly to help tend the garden. Activities included general garden chores and tool use, helping to measure and plot the garden, preparing the soil, and taking soil samples to determine the nutrient contents. Students learned and shared about how to safely and properly use various garden tools like shovels, hoes, rakes, and edgers, and took breaks for stretching to protect their bodies from strain or injury. Each grade aided in sowing seeds, picking rocks, observing bugs, watering, weeding, and monitoring for woodchuck damage (of which there was plenty!). As spring progressed the students were able to take responsibility for their work in the garden, choosing activities and tasks based on their own observations.

The students at Old Sturbridge Academy made incredible progress in their first year as gardeners, and both contributed to and learned from the garden in meaningful ways. Some of the season’s highlights include the collaborative effort to build tripods for the scarlet runner pole beans; measuring and plotting the garden using maps, measuring tape and string; and learning about herbs and how they were used in the 19th century. Often, students joined interpreters in the garden during the museum’s open hours and would continue to garden independently while interpreters interacted with museum guests. By the end of the school year, students proudly shared their gardening successes and struggles with anyone interested.
willing to listen! The pride and confidence the students developed in their skills translated to a well-tended and productive garden.

Much like the children of the 19th century, the Old Sturbridge Academy students set out to help tend a garden with the hope that it might produce a viable and hearty food source. OSA students had the opportunity to step back in time and learn about the challenges of tending one’s own food source day after day, and the importance of collaboration in creating a successful garden. In Joseph Breck’s 1833 book *The Young Florist*, one of the protagonists, Henry, remarks to his sister Margaret:

*While we are engaged in the garden, we are not confined all together to flowers; for we see a multitude of other objects which attract our attention, such as birds and insects, and we shall be led to study the history of these, which will interest us more and more at every step we take; so that while our bodies are benefitted by the healthy exercise we take, our minds will be more expanded, and our views more enlarged.*

It is with this attitude that the Old Sturbridge Academy students and museum staff set about gardening this last spring, and were able to work together using historic techniques to deepen the connection between the museum and the school, and between students and their food source.

This new garden program won’t stop with the Old Sturbridge Academy students: education staff are already thinking about how to incorporate these activities into the Village’s field trip programs. Having a space that is dedicated to hands-on-learning with students has revitalized the horticultural staff’s ideas for engaging all types of school groups. The department hopes to utilize this program to grow interest in gardening, environmental awareness, and healthy eating. This program sparked the idea to offer more hands-on programs where students can contribute to the ongoing historic interpretation at the Village.

This fall the department will play a major role in OSA’s first LTE (Learning through Experience) unit based in ecology, growing, and nature. For now, the museum horticultural staff continues to tend the garden with the same challenges any home gardener might face. Fall garden projects include a new, sturdy fence to keep woodchucks at bay, and a new, larger sowing of peas to help increase the soil fertility and improve the soil structure. The Village staff looks forward to another great season of gardening and deepening the connections that will allow the students to get the most out of their time in the garden.

*… I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.*

—Henry David Thoreau, 1860, *The Succession of Forest Trees*
At the start of each *Hop into History* overnight program at Old Sturbridge Village, participants read a letter. The missive, written by a fictitious and eccentric billionaire, directs overnight participants on a three-hour adventure filled with crafts, cooking, and time travel. Time travel, while an expensive and dangerous proposition, has been the perfect vehicle to immerse *Hop into History* overnight participants in the world of the 1830s.

*Hop into History* overnights have been a staple of Museum Education programming for scouts, schools, and other youth groups for almost 10 years. Each year during the winter and spring, groups from all around New England and New York come to the Museum Education Center and set up their sleeping bags for an overnight adventure. During the 2017/2018 overnight season, we saw 20 overnights with over 1,000 participants. Most of these participants fall between the ages of 6 and 11 years old.

In the past, the overnight program activities included a lantern tour of the Village, hearth cooking, and reverse glass painting. Despite the long-running success of the program, we knew we had to do something to set our overnights apart from the many museums, zoos, and nature centers that offer similar experiences. In keeping with Old Sturbridge Village’s mission to immerse visitors in the world of the 1830s, we began to think of the best way to plunge participants in the 19th century. Many school groups refer to the bridge between Museum Education and the Village campus as a “time bridge” that transports you back to the 1830s — so time travel became a natural theme for this overnight adventure.

In order to fold the whole overnight plot into a more complete experience, we created a mock journal, kept by the billionaire’s great-great-grandfather and damaged over time. We read through journal entries in the museum’s collections, composed by young children in the 1830s and 1840s, to inspire the fictitious “letter” given to participants. Your mission has two parts.

**One:** Conduct experiments based on findings in the journal, both this evening and tomorrow morning.

**Two:** I will need you to travel back in time to the 1830s. You must try and find the missing information from my great-great-grandfather’s journal so that my life’s research can be complete.

However, the portal to the 1830s is only open for a short period of time. You need to finish your journey within that small window, or... YOU COULD GET STUCK IN THE PAST!!!

With the help of a museum educator, the journal guides each group on a nighttime lantern tour of the Village, stopping at different houses and trade shops to explore new parts of the story. One child from each group is elected the scribe, and another the keeper of the village map. Each journal entry has missing information, obscured by water damage or mold. The time travelers must find the missing pieces in order to complete their mission. The entry at the Freeman Farm, for example, directs them to look through a copy of Lydia Maria Child’s *The Frugal Housewife* for specific information about candle making and home remedies. After the successful completion of each task, the group receives a rhyming clue instructing them where to go next.

At the Asa Knight Store, a costumed museum educator peeks out of the darkened room to ask the group what they are doing in her husband’s store so late at night.
I am a very, very rich man, but I am also very old. As a child, I listened to stories from my grandmother and grandfather about people from long ago. Since then, I have wanted to learn more about what life was like during the 1830s. I have in my possession a diary, left by my great-great-grandfather. He was a boy in the 1830s. Unfortunately, the journal has been ravaged by time and is missing important information that I must know.

She then assists them in locating items on a shopping list found written inside the old journal, using only the light of their flashlights. Having a staff member in the store at night has proven to be a great addition to the program. It allows the participants to engage with someone in costume, and provides a (sometimes spooky!) surprise for the group as they explore the past.

Once their mission in the Village is complete, the groups return to Museum Education for the second half of the evening. Two more journal entries lead them through a hearth cooking and pottery activity. The participants complete an analysis of both of these activities to help the billionaire gain more of a sense of the tastes, smells, and sensations of life in the 1830s. The new overnight experience allows our young guests to flex their detective skills while activating their imaginations.

Please prepare this recipe for me as it would have been made in the 1830s. I will need you to take notes on how the jumbles are made, then report back to me about their taste, as well. When you are done, please have an adult take a photo of your jumbles and send to me. Your leader has my phone number.

The new tour was greatly enhanced by the Village’s graphic designer, Shawn Vallee, who designed the journal, billionaire letter, and a special certificate that the participants receive in the morning.

By working with food services, we are now able to offer a hot buffet breakfast in the Bullard Café — these collaborations within the Village help to make this overnight program special. We hope that Hop into History continues to grow and evolve, while sparking an enthusiasm for history in this unique setting.
The Village’s Board of Trustees is a group of dedicated volunteer leaders with experience as corporate executives, museum curators and administrators, lawyers, bankers, and community volunteers, who guide the museum and set the course for the future. This past June, the Board voted on a new group of officers, including the Chair. During the Annual Meeting, outgoing Chair Bob Reeder turned the gavel over to fellow Trustee and incoming Chair Margaret “Meg” Pierce. She recently sat down for an interview about why the Village is important and her hopes for its future.

How did you first come to know Old Sturbridge Village?

My great-grandfather was a doctor in Waterford, Maine, and I spent summers there, all the way through college. When I was a little kid, my father would take us to South Waterford to watch a team of people from the Village dismantling the carding mill. Several years later, we learned that the carding mill was up and running at OSV so we stopped by on our way back to our home in New Jersey.

Shortly after my husband and I moved our family to Weston, Massachusetts, in 1993, I joined the Country Garden Club of Weston. My friend, Jean Weaver, and her contemporary, Bobby Bradley, organized a field trip for the Garden Club to tour the gardens at the Village with Christie Higginbottom. Both Jean and Bobby had long affiliations with the Village; their husbands were Trustees and Jean later became a Trustee as well. I remember Jean asking me about my knowledge of the Village, so I told her the story above! She pounced on me as a potential Board member!

Why is the Village important to you?

I find it amazing that I can turn off Route 20 and in a quarter mile I am transported to such a different time and way of life! The pace, the variety of activities, the costumes, and the rural space all come together to give a sense of a tight community that relies on the industry of everyone to thrive. This is in comparison to our typical lives, where we have much less of a connection to where our ‘daily bread’ comes from.

Would you speak a bit about what it means to be a Trustee and why it is important?

I joined the Board in 1999, and over the years, both the roster and the roles of the Trustees have changed. It has become very much a working board, with Trustees and staff working closely to investigate and resolve the opportunities and challenges for our multifaceted non-profit. The Village has evolved from a delightful outdoor living history museum to a broader educational institution. Our investment has been in not just our campus, but also the extension of our educational capability beyond the visitors and school groups who come to the Village. The work that our Interpretation and Education staff is doing, developing and delivering curriculum components to Old Sturbridge Academy, is very exciting.
Great Scout Camp Out

On June 9, 155 Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and family members carted their belongings into the Village for the second annual Great Scout Camp Out. Setting up tents, sleeping bags, and camping chairs in the fields near the Bixby House and the blacksmith shop, participants settled in for an evening of games and activities. Campers enjoyed a cook out, followed by a few hours of activities of their choice. The evening’s itinerary included lantern tours of the Village, hearth cooking at the Museum Education Center, historic stories by the campfire, capture the flag, and sketching in the Towne garden.

After their night under the stars, campers and their families had the Village to themselves. They ate a hot, buffet breakfast at the Bullard Café, played historic games on the Common, and watched a special performance at the Meetinghouse.

Check out our website details on the next Great Scout Camp Out, which will take place on Saturday, June 8, 2019! Registration will open in early spring, 2019.

Why is the Village meaningful to you and what do you hope for the museum’s future?

As we approach our 75th anniversary, I do hope we can continue to extend ourselves beyond the campus and the local region and find innovative ways to engage our visitors on campus and closer to their own homes. With our much more connected and reachable public, how can we optimally deliver the Village and all it has to offer? It will be with the Board’s collective vision and interpretation of our mission, while optimizing for stable and diversified revenue growth, that the Village will move well beyond its 75th anniversary.

What do you hope to see happen or be accomplished during your term as Chair?

An important goal is to diligently work to stabilize our financial position by increasing the portion of our income that is derived from attractive and valuable experiences that are also weather independent. The recent addition of theatrical experiences has been a step in this direction. The opening of the Academy has been a brilliant move on several fronts. The school is providing a unique learning experience and hopefully creating life-long enthusiasts. At the same time, the Village has been able to more fully utilize our resources — the staff, our collections, our land and our educational capabilities. Our partnership with the Academy provides broader visibility within the education sector. I look forward to the partnership between the Academy and the Museum maturing and becoming an example for other institutions!
**Apple & Agriculture Days** | October 6 – 8 (Columbus Day Weekend) and October 13

Ripe and redolent apples are a favorite sign of fall in New England. Come tour our orchards, help pick apples, and taste some nearly-forgotten heirloom apple varieties. Celebrate the harvest and the beautiful New England autumn at the height of fall color. See a display of flowers, fruits, and vegetables grown by local gardeners. Visitors can even make their own sachet of mulling spices to take home.

**Celebration of Cider & Music** | October 14

Hard cider was the drink of choice, or necessity, in early 19th-century New England. At this special event, guests of legal age may sample hard ciders from regional producers and enjoy musical entertainment. Sweet cider and other fall favorites will also be available. Tour the historic Village, learn about the importance of cider, and see our working 19th-century cider mill in operation.

**Village Trick-or-Treat** | October 28

Visit the Village after hours for a family-friendly evening of trick or treating on the Common. Show off your best Halloween costume in the Costume Parade, hear spooky tales, enjoy a bonfire, take a hayride around the Common, and more! Throughout the evening, children can trick-or-treat at nine stops on the Village Common. This is an evening event and is not included in daytime admission. Visit www.osv.org for more details.
Events are subject to change; please confirm dates before you visit at www.osv.org.

**Historic Craft Classes**

October 27 – 28, November 24 – 25

Spend some time at the Village learning a historical craft. These adult workshops vary from blacksmithing to textiles, coopering, foodways, and more. Workshops are held in the Museum Education Center. All class registrations close three days prior to the event. Register online at www.osv.org, or call 508-347-0290.

**Bounty: An Early New England Thanksgiving**

November 1 – 4, 7 – 11, 14 – 18, 21 – 22

Experience the traditions of an early 19th-century New England Thanksgiving! Smell the scents of roasted turkey and pies warming by the fire. Hear the minister talk about the true meaning of Thanksgiving. Learn how families prepared for this holiday, the most important annual celebration among early New Englanders.

**Veterans Day | November 11**

All active, veteran and retired members of the military and their families (up to 6 people) receive free admission on Veterans Day. See how lead musket balls were cast in the Small House, and get your initials stamped on your own musket ball at the Blacksmith Shop. Observe changes to American military uniforms and weapons over the past 300 years and watch weapons demonstrations.

**Christmas by Candlelight**

November 30 and December 1 – 2, 7 – 9, 14 – 16, 20 – 23

Our highly anticipated holiday event returns this December, with new features! Escape the frenzy of a modern Christmas with an enchanted evening of gingerbread, roasted chestnuts, music, dance, and a sleigh ride (weather permitting). Meet Santa, and be sure to bring your camera! Tickets will be on sale at www.osv.org/CBC.

In order to focus on the evening holiday events, Old Sturbridge Village will be closed during the day from:

November 26 – December 26, 2018
Apples abound more in New England ... than in any other country. Cider is the common drink of all its inhabitants, the rich and poor alike,” observed former president of Yale Timothy Dwight in 1821. In early America, most apples were grown for drinking, not eating. Hard cider reigned as the queen of beverages (alongside “King Rum”). Cider (the naturally fermented juice of apples) was considerably tastier and safer to drink at that time than water. It was cheaper, simpler, and easier to make than beer, requiring less work, skill, or specialized equipment. Before pasteurization, most beers kept for only a few days to weeks, while cider could keep for years, although it only had to last until next year’s apple crop came in. Unlike wine, tea, or coffee, it was grown locally. (It has only been in the past few decades that New England grew grapes worthy of making anything more than jelly.) Good Yankee that he was, John Adams, our second President, began each day of his long life with a glass of hard cider. Most farm families put down ten or more 32-gallon barrels of cider each fall, or well over a barrel for every man, woman, and child.

Although familiar with cider, most of the English women and men who came to settle New England in the early 1600s were beer drinkers. Unfortunately, English yeasts and brewing techniques did not adapt well to their new land. Settlers found only native crab apples growing wild here, but soon domesticated apple trees were introduced from the old world. Once those trees matured, hard apple cider, long popular in parts of rural England and northwestern Europe, was made in abundance and enjoyed year-round. Unlike the laboriously cultivated grain and hops required to brew beer, for most farmers cider apples were virtually free for the picking. Each farm had an orchard, and most 19th-century New England towns had at least four or five cider mills. Some mills were permanent structures with a massive wooden press and “nut mill” (a horse-powered apple crusher). Others were just the equipment, which
the owner stored in the corner of his barn most of the year and erected every fall. While Massachusetts had over a thousand cider mills, in the 1830s it only had a single small brewery, the Boston Beer Company, catering to urban and maritime markets. (It should not to be confused with the modern company of the same name that today makes Samuel Adams beer…and Angry Orchard hard cider.)

Cider mill owners typically had large orchards, making cider for themselves and considerably more for sale. They then rented use of their mill to neighbors, who paid a per-barrel-made user’s fee to crush and press their own apples. Barrels of juice were allowed to ferment in home root cellars, a relatively quick and simple process that yielded a tangy apple wine of about 5% or 6% alcohol. A fair amount of that cider was distilled into more potent brandy, and more still was made into applejack by allowing hard cider to freeze and thereby concentrate the alcohol content.

“If orchards with the ruddy apples glow,
Now with the juice let cider presses flow…”

Hard cider is making a big comeback in 21st-century America. Production more than tripled from 2011 to 2013, from 9.4 million gallons to 32 million gallons. Hard cider continues to grow in popularity, with over a billion dollars in sales by 2015 and 800 commercial cider makers in the United States today. We also import cider, especially from Britain, France, and Spain. Hard ciders vary considerably, from dry to sweet, tart or rich, still or fizzy, and clear to cloudy, with one or more sure to please most palates. Made from fresh juice, most with few additives and naturally gluten-free, hard cider also is a good source of Vitamin C and other antioxidants.

The recent boom in hard cider, yoked to its deep historic roots in New England, has inspired our first Celebration of Cider and Music Festival. On Sunday, October 14, we will showcase hard cider as part of our fall Apple and Agriculture Days. Along with tastings of several hard and sweet ciders, we will feature musical acts to enjoy at multiple stages throughout the Village. Our Lyford-Hutchins cider mill will also be in operation on that and other October weekends.
Special Event
Sunday, October 14
The Village will be open for special hours on this day: 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. Tastings and several musical acts at multiple stages will be featured. See page 12 or visit www.osv.org to learn more.

Cider Fast Facts

1. The most common fruit on 19th-century New England farms was the apple. Many farms had orchards of 100–300 trees or more; the apples were mostly turned into hard cider or dried for cooking.

2. While hard cider is made from apples, beverages can be made from different fruits, including pears, plums, and honey. Fermentation produces alcohol, which prevents spoilage.

3. New England families produced an average of 10 barrels of cider per household every fall.

4. Johnny Appleseed, a figure popularized by folklore, was named after a real American pioneer — the apple advocate John Chapman, born in 1774 in Leominster, Massachusetts.

5. President John Adams was a proponent of hard cider, and is said to have started each day with a glass of the stuff!

6. Cider also played a role in the election of 1840, when Whig candidate William Henry Harrison ran under the guise of a “log cabin and hard cider” man of the people, portraying incumbent Democratic presidential candidate Martin Van Buren as an elitist who only drank fancy “White House champagne.”

7. The Village grows over 100 named apple varieties, replicating those found in 19th-century orchards including Winter Banana, Porter, Blue Pearmain, and Sops of Wine.

8. Cider apples have great names — such as Hagloe Crab, Granniwinkle, and Red Streak — and you can see these varieties at our newly planted Cider Apple Orchard, just behind the cider mill!

9. It takes approximately one bushel of fruit (approximately 120 apples) to make three gallons of cider.

10. National Cider day is November 18th — celebrate with a glass of local New England cider!
Southbridge Credit Union

Southbridge Credit Union is certainly an integral member of our community having provided annual support to Old Sturbridge Village for over 40 years. This year Southbridge Credit Union is sponsoring the family friendly Apple and Agricultural Days here at OSV. Apple and Agricultural Days celebrates the harvest and beautiful New England autumn at the peak of fall color. Visitors will learn how food makes its way from the farm to the dining room table. They will meet oxen and see multiple teams demonstrate plowing and field preparations.

In New England, apples are a highlight of the fall harvest. However, 19th-century farmers would not recognize the sweet cider we enjoy from farm stands today. Cider in the 1800s was not merely the apple juice, but was fermented “squeezings” from apples, which meant the cider would keep through the spring planting, summer heat, and into the harvesting of the next apple season. Throughout the day, our interpreters will be cooking and preserving this special fall fruit and operating the ox-powered Cider Mill.

Southbridge Credit Union has been a loyal supporter for over half the lifespan of the museum. Their dedication to South Central Massachusetts represents the very best in corporate and community citizenship. Thank you to Southbridge Credit Union for their dedicated support!

James Dyer, Interim Director of Development; Kate Alexander, President and CEO of Southbridge Credit Union; and James Donahue, President and CEO of Old Sturbridge Village
Compared to today, early New Englanders had few holidays on their calendars. True to their Puritan roots, few Yankees “kept” Christmas, or celebrated Easter, Halloween, or any Saint’s days. Memorial Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day had yet to be invented. A few “holidays” did exist — March 17 was somewhat special in Boston, not because of Saint Patrick, but because that was the date when British troops evacuated Boston in 1776. Most New England governors declared days of solemn prayer and fasting in the spring, and milestones like New Year’s Day were noted but rarely honored. After Independence was declared in 1776, the 4th of July was increasingly celebrated by some, but remained another work day for most. Perhaps the most festive event was on George Washington’s birthday, February 22, which was a convenient excuse for mid-winter dinners or dances.

One day, however, stood apart from the rest as “the great festival of New England ... the Farmer’s Jubilee.” That was Thanksgiving.

At first, before Thanksgiving was a national holiday, the Governors in New England would decide which day their state would celebrate. Young and old waited with anticipation for the annual reading of the Governor’s Proclamation by the minister from his pulpit on the preceding Sunday, “unfolding the large paper sheet…” and reading “words so inspiring, pronounced with such a clarion voice…” that they “fill[ed] high the cup of wild, intoxicating joy.”

Like today, Thanksgiving was a day when families gathered to celebrate with an elaborate meal. It was a busy time for travel, as families took to carriages, horseback, or on foot to come together and celebrate. You might be familiar with one song written about Thanksgiving Day travel:

*Over the river, and through the wood,*  
*To grandfather’s house we go;*  
*The horse knows the way,*  
*To carry the sleigh,*  
*Through the white and drifted snow.*

This song was written in 1844 by Lydia Maria Child as “A New England Boy’s Thanksgiving Day,” although it is popularly used as a Christmas song in the 21st century. Ironically, in Child’s time the snow was helpful for travel, enabling families to use sleighs rather than carriages or wagons.

Some families saw as many as twenty or thirty people come together for the holiday. Even apprentices might go home to spend time with their parents and relatives. Eighteen-year-old cabinetmaker’s apprentice Edward Jenner Carpenter recorded in his diary, “Wednesday Nov. 27th [1844] A pleasant day for me to go home in. I finished a couple of butternut tables about 3 o’clock, and now I am ready to go home to spend Thanksgiving.
I shall not write any more till I get back.”

When he got back to Greenfield from his parents’ house in Bernardston, Massachusetts, Edward recorded two Thanksgiving weddings, among other items. With families gathered and the busy agricultural year at an end, it was a popular time for tying the knot. Indeed, Sarah Anna Emery recalled, “Thanksgiving brought a social season. There was much visiting and distribution of good cheer for a week or two after that holiday…”

**Baking Preparations**

Even more than today, the days leading up to the feast were filled with cooking. Edward writes that “for as much as a week beforehand, we children were employed in chopping mince for pies to a most wearisome fineness, and in pounding cinnamon, allspice, and cloves in a great lignum-vitae mortar … ” Baking was among the most labor intensive of the holiday’s many preparations. Both sweet and savory pies as well as puddings and cakes were — and are — essential adornments of the Thanksgiving table. Here at the Village the costumed interpreters also spend much of November cooking and baking as part of the Bounty: Thanksgiving program.

**Over the river, and through the wood —**

**now Grandmother’s cap I spy!**

**Hurrah for the fun! Is the pudding done?**

**Hurrah for the pumpkin pie!**

As John Abbott noted in 1835 in New England and Her Institutions, at Thanksgiving, “the art of cookery is tasked to its utmost. The oven groans with puddings and pies, and excepting in the poultry-yard, there is universal glee.” He elaborates that “Pies were made by forties and fifties and hundreds, and made of everything on the earth and under the earth.”

Princeton, Massachusetts teenager Elizabeth Fuller recorded in her diary in 1790:

Nov. 24 — We baked two ovensfull of pyes [sic]… Nov. 25 — Thanksgiving to-day we baked three ovensfull of pyes. There was no preaching so we had nothing to do but eat them. The pyes were a great deal better than they were last Thanksgiving for I made them all myself, and part of them were made of flour which we got of Mr. H. Hastings therefore we had plenty of spice.

More eloquently, Harriet Beecher Stowe, who grew up in Litchfield, Connecticut, in the 1810s and ’20s, described how, “in the corner of the great kitchen… the jolly old oven roared and crackled … and then, his great heart being once warmed up, he brooded over successive generations of pies and cakes, … till butteries and dressers and shelves and pantries were literally crowded with a jostling abundance.” Indeed, some families baked more pies than could be consumed at Thanksgiving, and stored them in, “a great cold northern chamber, where the sun never shone … . There, frozen solid, … the pies baked at Thanksgiving often came out fresh and good with the violets of April.”

No other day in the cycle of early New England’s year matched the excitement, the elaborate preparations, or the sense of sheer celebration of Thanksgiving, “the king and high priest of all festivals.”

We hope you will come in November to see us prepare; and come again on Thanksgiving itself to enjoy the culmination of all those preparations! 🦃

Imagine life without Christmas traditions and family celebrations, a bitter cold time of year when daily life was no different than any other New England winter day. This was the reality that faced many rural New England communities in the early 19th century. While the Grinch in Dr. Seuss’s classic tale (written in nearby Springfield, Massachusetts) would embrace this scenario, we here at Old Sturbridge Village choose to celebrate the season and embrace all its history and traditions. Come and join us as we explore the beginnings of the New England Christmas heritage and transform our village into a magical winter wonderland with something for everyone to enjoy.

For thirteen nights this November and December, step back in time to snowy, rural New England. Travel through the historic Village twinkling with lights and adorned in festive decorations. Enter our Gingerbread House competition and vote on the winning design, or taste historic treats such as gingerbread cake cooked over a hearth fire. Enjoy holiday carols sung in the center common, where you
can also view a magnificent Christmas tree, representing the first tree brought to New England by German immigrant and Harvard Professor Charles Follen to Cambridge, Massachusetts. Warm up inside the Center Meetinghouse with a variety of musical groups, or catch a magic show next door in the Friends’ Meetinghouse. Be sure to keep an eye out for characters from Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* throughout the historic homes. And of course, you must leave time to visit with the man of the season in his workshop! Santa will be surrounded by his elves and ready to hear your holiday wishes, so bring your camera to capture these moments to remember for years to come.

For more information and to purchase tickets please visit our website at www.osv.org. Tickets will be on sale online and at the Visitor Center this fall.
Early New England Quilts: Repurposed, Refashioned, and Reused

Rebecca Beall, Collections Manager and Curator of Textiles

The old adages “waste not, want not” and “make do or do without” are ingrained deep in the Yankee psyche. From turning broken bits into clever, functional “make-do” items to meticulous repairs and mends, frugal early 19th-century New Englanders economized and let nothing go to waste. Popular advice books of the time, like Lydia Maria Child’s *American Frugal Housewife* (1828) touted the wisdom of household thrift. “Dedicated to those not ashamed of economy,” Child wrote in her frontispiece. Early New England quilts are no exception: the Old Sturbridge Village quilt collection contains numerous examples of ingenious reuse and repurposing of old fabrics and textiles into warm, colorful bed quilts. Some 19th-century women went a step further and reworked old, worn bed quilts, turning them into new and practical objects like cushions and backings. The thought of simply throwing something away while some use could be made of the material would have horrified many thrifty New England housewives.

Quilts, a household necessity for enduring long, bitter New England winters, have long been connected with the idea of Yankee frugality. Early 20th-century author Alice Morse Earle and her contemporaries envisioned hardworking rural women stitching away at their quilts using the tiniest scraps of old gowns and shirts to piece together their warm but humble creations — a truly Colonial Revival notion. In truth, many quilts incorporated purchased fabric intended specifically for the project, sometimes including expensive imported fabrics such as glazed chintzes and calamancos from England and France, or boldly printed cottons from exotic India.

Here in America, the Industrial Revolution was gaining momentum and the textile industry was burgeoning throughout New England. Domestically produced cottons were widely available and increasingly affordable.

Despite purchasing new fabrics, women continued to economize in ingenious ways, often reusing large swathes of fabric from earlier textiles like gowns, petticoats, or even bedhangings.

For example, an out-of-fashion, heavy quilted petticoat was easily transformed into a bed quilt with some additional fabric. The skirts of gowns, too, had yards of fabric usable after the bodice, hem, and cuffs were too worn to mend.

Diarist Sally Brown of Plymouth Notch, Vermont, wrote in October 1833 that she “began to piece a bed quilt out of two old calico gowns.” Old fashioned bedhangings with elaborate embroidery could be cut apart and pieced anew to preserve the carefully stitched designs. Lightweight summer shawls, with vibrant colors and bold patterns, were just the right size to turn into small cradle quilts for infants.

Even the smallest scraps of fabric from household
textiles and garments could be refashioned into attractive blocks for bed quilts. Eight-pointed stars, four-patches and nine-patches, hexagons and mosaics, and even more elaborate blocks like the "Orange Peel" and "Mariner’s Compass" are among some of the popular patterns found in early 19th-century quilts. Looking closely, many of these early block quilts demonstrate a clever technique for utilizing even the smallest scraps of fabric. Remarkably, many of the pieces within the quilt blocks have themselves been pieced together from smaller scraps to create enough fabric to make the full square, triangle, or rectangular pieces that constitute the quilt block. While some of these pieced sections are cleverly disguised and made up of fabrics in similar colors, some are pieced together with fabrics of completely different colors and patterns! Thus, even the smallest of saved scraps could be suitable for such a purpose.

Economizing by turning old materials into new quilts was just one way early 19th-century women recycled household textiles. Often, worn quilts were mended and repaired to extend their lives, or cut down and rebound at the edges to fit a smaller bed. But after a quilt had long outlived its usefulness on the bed, refashioning the quilt into an altogether different item was another practical way for a New England housewife to use resources wisely and not wastefully. Old quilts could be cut down and stitched up to form cushions or comfortable hassocks, to be covered with more fashionable and decorative covers of fabric or needlework. A sturdy, but worn, quilt could be cut and used as a backing for something entirely different, such as a decorative hearth rug.

While thrift dictated much of the reuse seen in early 19th-century quilts, some women chose to incorporate reused materials for a much different reason. Much like saving memorabilia and special objects in a scrapbook today, sentimental and commemorative pieces found their way into some early 19th-century quilts as well. Scraps of gowns belonging to loved ones; an embroidered pocket perhaps belonging to a mother, grandmother, sister or aunt; or other commemorative items like silk ribbons and printed handkerchiefs were sometimes pieced into bed quilts.

One such remarkable quilt is an elegant embroidered quilt made by Nancy Newton (b. 1801) of Marlborough, New Hampshire. Included in the top center of the quilt is a beautifully embroidered linen pocket, cut down and re-pieced to create a discreet rectangular piece. Nancy then embroidered the rest of the center panel to match the embroidery of the pocket, creating a seamless and stunning design drawing on the original embroidery motifs. Clearly, the inclusion of the pocket and the meticulous embroidery speaks to the sentimental importance of the pocket to Nancy.

Another enterprising lady incorporated a printed handkerchief into the center of her own boldly pieced quilt. The handkerchief, printed with the complete Declaration of Independence, thirteen colonies, and founding fathers, sends a message of patriotism, civic pride, and pro-American sentiment. This is not surprising when, according to family history, the quilt descended in the Arnold family of Rhode Island, a family connected to the notorious Revolutionary War traitor Benedict Arnold. The trend for including sentimental or commemorative textiles became even more popular with the late 19th-century fad for crazy quilts. Made up of luxurious fabrics like silks and velvets, often elaborately embroidered, many of these decorative throws and quilts included silk commemorative ribbons and other sentimental scraps pieced among the crazy shapes. Today, scrapbook quilts continue the tradition of including special items as a remembrance.

As author Lydia Maria Child wrote in *The American Frugal Housewife*, “the true economy of housekeeping is simply the art of gathering up all the fragments, so that nothing be lost.” Thrifty and practical New England women took this advice to heart and found resourceful ways to “gather up the fragments” of old household textiles and garments to fashion them into striking and ingenious bed quilts. Nearly 200 years later, these quilts still delight and intrigue us with their vibrant colors, bold patterns, and creative repurposing of recycled materials.
2018
HOURS OF OPERATION

September 4 – November 25
Open Wed. – Sun. | 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

Also Open | Monday, October 8
Columbus Day | 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

Special Hours
Celebration of Cider & Music Festival
Sunday, October 14 | 11:00 am – 6:00 pm

November 26 – December 23
Open select evenings for
Christmas by Candlelight
November 30 and
December 1 – 2, 7 – 9, 14 – 16, 20 – 23
3:00 – 8:00 pm

December 24 – 26
CLOSED

December 27 – 30
Open 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

Member SHOPPING NIGHTS | December 7 – 9

Take advantage of your special member’s discount this December 7 – 9 for Member Shopping Nights at the Old Sturbridge Village Museum Store. Receive increased discounts on Village-made items as well as fudge, housewares, toys, and apparel.* Explore Christmas by Candlelight and then pick up gifts for your loved ones to remember the special times at Old Sturbridge Village.

Remember to bring your Membership card when you visit!

*Discounts do not apply to sale, markdown, or promotional items. All purchases of sale and markdown items are as is and final.