Reaffirming Our Commitment to Living History: Meet Our Talented Trade Fellows and Their Mentors

Jim Donahue, President and CEO

As the days slowly become longer and warmer, everyone here at Old Sturbridge Village is looking forward to spring and summer. Winter was a very busy time at the museum, and the change of season promises to bring new and exciting programs to the Village.

In this issue, you will find how our past informs both our present and future here at Old Sturbridge Village. We are very excited to have received a significant National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) planning grant, which will allow us to provide the best possible visitor experience for everybody. We will be testing new and innovative approaches to visitor orientation, while keeping an eye on our history as an institution. Look for our new pilot Orientation Video to be launched in the summer.

In a previous issue, we introduced the exciting new Straker Internship in Historic Trades program, made possible by a generous contribution from Mr. and Mrs. Edward Straker. In this issue, you will meet those talented people who are being mentored by our costumed historians in their respective trades. The Fellows come to us from all around the country and share our passion and commitment for learning the historic trades. We are happy to have them, and hope to see programs like this grow at the Village in the future.

Many of our visitors in the spring come for our landscapes and horticultural offerings. Mark your calendars for the weekends of July 13th and 27th as our very popular OSV Garden Weekends will be returning! These weekends are a wonderful opportunity for visitors to attend hands-on workshops, demonstrations, lectures, tours of our heirloom gardens, and to connect with the New England horticultural community. These weekends are a must for anyone passionate about gardens and history.

Thank you for all of your contributions to our museum. In this issue you will see how our past connects to our present and future, and how passionate individuals contribute to Old Sturbridge Village. I hope you enjoy this issue, and I am looking forward to seeing you in these warmer months.

Sincerely,

Jim Donahue
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.

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

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- $65 for Individual
- $90 for Individual Plus One and Dual
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- $130 for Family Plus One

Family membership benefits are extended to two adults living at the same address and any children or grandchildren under the age of 18. Individual Plus One includes a complimentary guest admission with each visit. Dual membership is for two adults living at the same address. Family Plus One includes two adults, one guest, and any children/grandchildren under 18.

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- Periodic emails, newsletters and updates on Village happenings
- Members-only Dog Days
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Spring & Summer 2019
Many first-time visitors to Old Sturbridge Village are not quite sure what they are about to experience. Is it the real town of Sturbridge, somehow frozen in time? What time period does it represent? Will the costumed staff speak in archaic language or make fun of me if I ask about something too modern? Do they live here? Is everything “real”?

Last year, the museum received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to plan the development of a new Interpretation and Education Plan. Visitor-experience studies conducted over the past several years discovered that while most guests enjoyed their time at the Village, they were often confused about what we are all about. We are working with scholars, consultants, and partnering institutions to develop meaningful visitor experiences for modern audiences, and better reflect the diversity of our community both past and present. The primary themes we are examining are race, gender, civic engagement, agriculture and food, and industry and economy.

One of our first steps in this process is to pilot an orientation video in the Visitor Center this spring and summer. In 1976, the orientation film was called “Working in Early New England.” It was made for us by a young Hampshire College student whom you have since heard of—Ken Burns. One of our earliest attempts at orienting visitors was a 1952 black and white movie called “Dear Nancy,” in which a fictional uncle reminisced about life in the early 1800s. Most attempts through all those years focused more on history, though, than what Old Sturbridge Village is and how to get the most out of a visit.

Old Sturbridge Village began almost a hundred years ago with the historical collection of local industrialist Albert B. Wells. One August in the mid-1920s Wells went to Vermont for a relaxing weekend of golf with friends. Unfortunately for them, it rained. No golf. Some of the group suggested going antique-hunting instead. Wells grumbled that he did not want to waste his time “in a bunch of old junk shops.” He was persuaded, however, and fell in love with what he called “primitives.” That weekend he bought four station-wagon-loads of antiques. His assistant George Watson later recalled that they “had to stash it in the garage because he did not want to tell his wife.”

That secret did not last for long. As he said, “When the collecting bug bit me, it bit me hard.” The family had to move to another home to make room for his burgeoning collection. In 1935 he incorporated a not-for-profit trust, the “Wells Historical Museum…to establish and maintain a museum and collection open to the public, of articles of historic or artistic interest…” For 25 cents, visitors got a two-hour tour of 42 rooms filled floor to ceiling with tens of thousands of lovingly acquired antiques.

The following summer Wells presented plans to build a series of museum galleries on his land in Southbridge, Massachusetts to the Wells Historical Museum board, made up of his family and friends. He later recalled that while he “thought the idea was pretty hot,” his son George “shot it full of holes,” declaring that, “a museum was a dead thing. There was no interest in it whatsoever except by a lot of old fogies like myself and … nobody ever went into museums but old people.” “He suggested that to make this material valuable, it would be necessary to have a village, a live village, one with different shops operating...” That suggestion evolved into Old Sturbridge Village.

Albert’s younger brother J. Cheney Wells
immediately loved the scheme. He offered to “go in 50-50” to build such a Village, and contributed his extensive collection of early New England clocks to the project as well. Many of those timepieces now form the core of the exhibition in the J. Cheney Wells Clock Gallery. Within a week Albert and Cheney bought the Ballard Farm, the land where Old Sturbridge Village is now located, and went to work. The land was reshaped to make a level central common, and buildings from all six New England states (and one from New York: the Parsonage Barn) were moved here and restored, with modern replicas of other original buildings added to flesh out the Village landscape. Initially they called it Old Quinebaug Village, after the river that ran through it, but later changed the name to Old Sturbridge Village to avoid geographic confusion among the visiting public (with nearby Quinebaug, Connecticut).

Hurricanes, floods, the Great Depression, Albert’s declining health and shortages dictated by World War II all impeded progress, but on June 8, 1946 Old Sturbridge Village officially opened to the public. Like today, it offered a variety of exhibitions from the collections, encounters with costumed staff members, and craft demonstrations.

Why does the Village reflect life in the the 1830s? One reason is that, like today, the 1830’s was a time of challenging social, political, and technological changes. Racial tensions, more rapid means of communication, widespread substance abuse, a widening disparity of wealth, rapid technological development, rising consumerism, growing political divisions, public violence, changing employment challenges, and disturbing economic fluctuations were but some of the hallmarks of that eventful decade. Sound familiar?

Old Sturbridge Village is a special place with a great deal to offer. Visitors to Old Sturbridge Village can escape the hectic pace of modern life, unplug, and immerse themselves in the sights, sounds, and smells of New England’s past and the natural world. They can also have lively encounters with the past to better inform their lives today, to make better sense of where our society is going by seeing where we have been. The stories we tell here are not just about history, but about today and tomorrow. Finding ever better ways to tell those stories is the challenge we face as the Village moves ahead.
Fellowships play a key role here at Old Sturbridge Village. The Straker Fellowship Program allows the Village’s professional costumed historians to pass their knowledge along to young professionals eager to learn about historic trades.

A generous gift from Edward Straker allowed the Village to create four interpretation fellowships. Passionate about American history and craft trades, Mr. Straker was attracted to the Village’s unique hands-on approach to teaching history. Seeing the benefits of this approach, Mr. Straker funded the mentorship program in which the Fellows study under their mentors of various trades over the course of a year. From dairy production and textiles to tin-smithing and cobbling, these fellowships are tailored to anyone passionate about early 19th-century New England history.

**A Year of Learning Textiles**

Ellen Watterson was more than excited to have Debra Knight mentor her in textiles, as the two worked closely together during Ellen’s summer internships dying yarn. “Having the one-on-one mentorship with Deb equips me with the knowledge and skills I need, while allowing me to experiment and learn at my own pace. This experience is invaluable.”

Throughout the course of the year, Ellen has been learning the intricate steps related to processing wool. After the wool is shorn, the first step in the process is “picking,” which involves pulling apart the wool fibers to make them easier to clean. Next, is “scouring” where the wool is degreased prior to carding. This is done with hot water and ammonia, or sig (as it was called in the 19th century), which is the fermented liquid contents of a chamber pot. “Carding” is when the wool is brushed, detangled, and the fibers are aligned, distributing them evenly to make smooth spun yarn. The yarn is then “spun” using a wheel. Next, the yarn is plied, spun into two singles together to make a stronger, thicker yarn for Ellen’s final projects. After the yarn is plied, it is dyed using plant or insect based dyestuffs. Finally, Ellen will be knitting a sampler demonstrating different stitches she has been practicing over the course of last year. She will also create a pair of armlets, and a tippet, which is a knitted collar similar to a small shawl. “This project proves how valuable learning through hands-on experience truly is. It is one thing to read about how textiles were created, but to actually be a part of every stage of the process allows me to fully understand and appreciate something that is overlooked and taken for granted today: clothing.”

**Profiles of the Straker Fellows**

Growing up in Fort Collins, Colorado, Ellen Watterson loved spending time around nature, especially while riding her horse. It was her love of the outdoors and history that encouraged her to become involved with the Village. After graduating from the University of Montana with a degree in History and Creative Writing, and a minor in Irish studies, and completing her second summer internship at the Village, Ellen applied for the fellowship. “I wanted to learn historical and traditional skills connected to everyday life in the 19th century.” For Ellen, learning practical hands-on historical skills is more than just learning about the past. “Basic skills like sewing, cooking, and preservation allows us to survive without the modern conveniences we take for granted today. These skills enable us to be self-sufficient, not reliant on technology.”Working as a milkmaid and with textiles for her fellowship, Ellen noted that the work “empowers me to approach difficult tasks in life, giving me confidence.”

For Robert Peacock, coopering is a centuries-
old family tradition. Originally from Harwich, Massachusetts, Robert studied Eastern European History at the University of Vermont and Military History at King’s College, London. Teaching both high school History and English on his native Cape Cod, Robert decided to pursue opportunities in public history, leading him to the Straker Fellowship. “I wanted to follow in the footsteps of my ancestor, John Alden, the cooper for the colony at Plimoth.” Robert is also working in the printing office, where he is learning to compose type. The fellowship allows Robert to relive a family tradition through hands-on trades and to grow as a museum professional.

**Jadon Rivard** is easily recognizable walking into the Village every morning carrying his historical handmade tin lunch box and black leather shoes he made for himself in the museum. “What gets me really excited about the Village, aside from all the other great opportunities,” says Jadon of the fellowship, “is the period clothing.” Working in the tin shop, the shoe shop, and the printing office, Jadon applies the hands-on skills he learns to his everyday life and wardrobe. Originally from Jewett City, Connecticut, Jadon was introduced to the Village by his friends. “As soon as I visited, I was hooked.” At nineteen years old, Jadon is comfortable working with the public, as the fellowship teaches him to engage with visitors. His passion for the trades of the past is infectious. “I just finished a pair of shoes for Senator Stephen Brewer (whose gift funded Jadon’s previous internship) as a thank you.” Indeed, Senator Brewer was happy to fund an internship position after meeting and interacting with the interpreters. Jadon’s next addition to his historical wardrobe holds a special place in the museum’s history: “I’m hoping to find a pair of early American Optical glasses, and replace them with prescription lenses.”

Originally from Washington, D.C., **Caleb Ward** grew up influenced by the Capital’s museums. As a student at the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) working on a degree in European history with a minor in French, Caleb applied to the fellowship because “I’m interested in the museum field and am seeking practical experience.” In addition, Caleb sees the importance of costumed interpretation and wants “to learn how to interpret different objects and historical practices to the public.” Working in both pottery and printmaking, Caleb sees himself as a bridge between history and visitor, allowing them to cross and experience the 19th century. One of his favorite activities is “walking throughout the Village and observing the buildings. In a way, I’m transported back in time. I enjoy thinking about how people lived in and interacted with these structures.”
July 13-14 and 27-28 mark the return of the Village’s Garden Weekends! Each weekend will be filled with hands-on workshops, demonstrations, and tours of the Village’s heirloom gardens. Visit the gardens and chat with our expert horticulturalists to learn about a few of the more than 400 heirloom varieties cultivated at the museum. Saturdays will be dedicated to all things kitchen garden, and Sundays will center on topics related to ornamentals, herbs, and native species. Learn about the 19th-century perspectives on gardening and ways to implement techniques of the past at home. On July 13th and 14th we will host Judith Sumner, botanist and award winning author of *American Household Botany: A History of Useful Plants, 1620-1900* and *The Natural History of Medicinal Plants* for two special lectures.

**Special Guest Lectures:**

**Saturday, July 13th** at 11:00 am: Ecology for Gardeners, with Judith Sumner  
**Sunday, July 14th** at 11:00 am: Garden Herb: Their Cultivation, Cookery, Cures and Caveats with Judith Sumner

**Talks offered throughout both weekends by OSV horticulturalists:**

- Vegetable Seed Saving  
- Garden Tools of the Past  
- IPM: Tips and Techniques for Utilizing Integrated Pest Management in Your Garden  
- Growing Your Soil: 19th Century Techniques to Improve Soil Health  
- Preparing a Bed for Planting  
- Cooking Up Compost at Home, with Christie Higginbottom  
- Tips from the Past for the Modern Kitchen Gardener, with Christie Higginbottom  
- Ornamental Seed Saving  
- Ten Great Herbs for the Home Garden and How to Grow and Use Them, with Christie Higginbottom  
- Edible Flowers  
- Remedies and Herbal Gifts  
- Wild Edible Plants  
- Dye Plants  
- Small Fruits and Berries Hops  

Ruth DiBuono, *Coordinator of Horticulture*
Woods and Fields: Outdoor Education

By the 1830s, many New Englanders may have considered themselves at the very least to be amateur naturalists, taking joy in and finding spiritual fulfillment through observing, recording, and experiencing nature. While not all New Englanders would reach the fame of naturalists such as Henry David Thoreau, John James Audubon, or Charles Darwin, many were captivated by the specimens they collected and sought to enhance their own connection with nature. Children were often taught about natural history—learning to identify birds, plants, and insects from a young age.

Specimen cabinets full of curiosities existed well before the Village’s period, and many people used these cabinets to display their collections at home. Aspiring and wealthy households even sought to have living specimens of curious plants within their garden beds, and some of these species can still be found in the Fitch and Towne gardens at Old Sturbridge Village.

Become a Village naturalist, and accompany Village staff and environmental experts once a season for a two-hour workshop delving into different topics surrounding environmental stewardship, ecology, and natural history. Classes will take place throughout museum grounds, giving members a chance to closely explore the habitats, animals, fungi, plants, and landscapes that create the many diverse ecosystems at the Village. Each class will meet at the Visitor Center, and we ask that you please come prepared to be outside for the duration of the workshop. Visit www.osv.org for information on dates, times, and locations of each talk.

SUMMER 2019: Birdwatching: Birds are excellent indicators of the health of an ecosystem and provide valuable information about what plants and insects may also be present. Join us in taking to the Village pastures and pathways in search of the many birds that call the museum home. Learn about species of birds once present but now gone from New England, and how bird populations have changed over the centuries.

FALL 2019: Tree and Mushroom Walk: Autumn is not just a wonderful time to take in the foliage and crisp air, but it is also when forests are teeming with a diverse population of mushrooms. Trees and fungi have an intricate relationship, and together they create the foundation for a healthy forest. Join us in learning about modern mycology, 19th-century forest management, and tree and mushroom identification techniques.

WINTER 2020: Snowshoeing and Animal Tracking: Not always intended as recreation, snowshoes can make winter walking much easier when the snow is too deep to traverse. Snow also serves as an excellent medium for beginners in animal tracking, an important skill that can be used to understand the animal populations that are present in an ecosystem. Join us on a snowy day in the winter of 2020 to learn about modern animal tracking techniques, including identifying prints and looking for signs of wildlife in the winter.

SPRING 2020: Non-Native Plants and Diseases of New England Flora: Many New England plant species are at risk! Viral, fungal, and insecticidal pressures, as well as habitat competition from invasive plants, are causing harm to a multitude of New England species and ecosystems. Learn methods of identifying invasive species that pose a threat as a means of conserving key foundational species of the New England landscape.
It’s getting to be that time of year! With summer fast approaching, it is finally time to start cleaning off rakes and shovels, looking though old seeds, and plotting out the garden for spring planting. Help Old Sturbridge Village continue our tradition of stewarding heirloom varieties by growing these unique plants at home. You, too, can keep history alive by cultivating the many beloved varieties that have shaped New England food culture for generations.

Join us on October 5th and 6th as we celebrate the harvest with our annual Home Gardener’s Exhibit. A longstanding tradition at Old Sturbridge Village, the Home Gardener’s Exhibit has been running for over twenty years, bringing together both horticulturalists and home gardeners. This meaningful event gives visitors and museum gardeners the chance to show off our successes from the season, build community, and take an active role in the Village’s mission to protect these heirlooms from extinction.

Enter to display your crop of 19th-century New England herbs, flowers, and vegetables! Adults and youth gardeners are encouraged to join us with the very best of their garden harvest, and are welcome to participate in our garden discussions after the winning entries are announced. Talk with Village horticulturalists about the season, taste some heirloom apple varieties, enjoy the beauty of fall in New England, and get the chance to win a prize for your entry. Each exhibitor earns a Certificate of Exhibition, and is entered into the judging in the following categories: Best in Show of Vegetables, Best in Show of Flowers, Largest Number of Entries Overall, and Vegetable of Distinction. Youth and adult categories are judged and awarded separately. Winning entries receive Village-made goods as prizes. Past prizes include gardening tools such as watering cans, flower pots, hand forks, garden reels and more! Blue ribbons are also awarded to the first place entry in each individual class.

Be sure to stop by the Old Sturbridge Village Museum Store this summer to select from a wide selection of heirloom seeds that are eligible for entry into the Home Gardener’s Exhibit. Please review the registration at www.osv.org/event/home-gardeners-exhibit/ to learn the varieties and classes in which entries are accepted, as well as all the details of this event! Preregistration for this event is due October 1, 2019, with entries also being accepted on site October 4th and 5th during specified times.
AT OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE
WEDDINGS & HISTORY GO HAND & HAND

This February, an Ashburnham couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary by returning to the site of their memorable honeymoon. Still in college in 1969, Robert and Carolyn Johnson were escorted by their parents to the lodges outside Old Sturbridge Village following their wedding ceremony. That evening, a blizzard swept through the area, leaving the Village covered in a blanket of snow. The next day, the newlyweds had the Village essentially to themselves. They enjoyed a ride from the horse-drawn sleigh, took in the snow-covered scenery, interacted with the costumed historians, and dined on a farmhouse meal of chicken and cornbread at the Freeman Farmhouse.

Their magical honeymoon at Old Sturbridge Village left a lasting impression, and the Johnsons have been members since that very day. For their 50th anniversary, instead of traveling to a tropical location, or taking a cruise, the couple’s daughter, Annika E. McKenna, assisted in recreating that romantic evening in 1969.

Like that fateful evening, their celebration at the Village was a night they will never forget. The Johnsons enjoyed a private meal, once again in the Freeman Farmhouse served by costumed historians after the Village was closed to the public. They dined on filet mignon, mashed potatoes, fresh asparagus, a salad with cranberry vinaigrette, and warm gingerbread with vanilla ice cream—all prepared by the Village’s kitchen staff. Like that memorable evening fifty years ago, the Johnsons’ once again had the Village to themselves.

Though weddings are not traditionally hosted at the Freeman Farmhouse, modern memories like those of the Johnsons’ are being made at the Village every day. Each year, with overnight accommodations available at the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges, the Village hosts dozens of weddings. If you are interested in creating your own family history by having your wedding at the Village, any remaining dates through January 2020 will receive your choice of a complimentary hors d’oeuvre station during cocktail hour!

Interested in a wedding or private event at Old Sturbridge Village?
Contact our Sales Team
Denise Gugliotti 508-347-0207
Lise Soper 508-347-0306
Independence Day | July 3-4
Come join the Village on the most patriotic day of the year—in the 1830s and today. Visitors during this holiday will get to march in the Citizens’ Parade, play 19th-century baseball, sign a copy of the Declaration of Independence, and watch cannon and musket demonstrations! On July 4th only, the Village will host the most beautiful of ceremonies: the US Citizenship and Immigration Services will present candidates at the Citizen Naturalization Ceremony, where they will pledge their Oath of Allegiance for the first time on the Village’s Common.

Village Prime Rib Feast | Every Thursday 5:00 - 7:30 pm
Join us for a day of fun, and then finish it off with an even better meal! Every Thursday 5:00-7:30 pm, the Oliver Wight Tavern holds a four-course Prime Rib Feast—complete with a full bar! Reservations are highly recommended; please call 508-347-0397. Don’t forget—members get a 10% discount when their card is shown, and equal discounts are being offered with proof of Speaker Series ticket purchases as a preamble to the Series’ cocktail hour!
Craft Beer & Roots Music Festival | July 20
Open for special hours, Old Sturbridge Village welcomes in contemporary music and spirits in our Craft Beer & Roots Music Festival 12:00 - 8:00 pm on July 20th. With nine musical acts playing four indoor and outdoor stages, the Village will be filled with the sounds of Americana, folk, and roots and the merriment of visitors. Admission includes a limited number of complimentary 2-ounce beer sample cards, which can be used at any of the twelve New England-based craft breweries serving throughout the Village!

Redcoats and Rebels | August 3-4
Come see more than 1,000 soldiers in the largest military re-enactment in New England! The Village Common will be transformed into a military camp during the War for Independence. Between musket drilling, cannon demonstrations, and mock battles, visitors get to walk through a battlefield hospital, camp laundry, encampments and more! On August 3rd only, there will be extended hours that allow visitors to speak with the soldiers into the evening.

Textile Weekend | August 17-18
This year’s Textile Weekend theme is “Useful Employment: Textiles and Other Home Manufactures.” See costumed historians demonstrating spinning, dyeing woolen yarn, weaving, straw braiding, and sewing shoe uppers. Learn how these hand skills allowed families to use their spare time to earn extra money. Try your hand at working a mitten or help to knit scarves for soldiers! Join a tour to make connections between each of these skills, and how they were part of the economy of a rural New England village.

Free Fun Friday | August 30
It’s that time of year again! Thanks to The Highland Street Foundation, Old Sturbridge Village will be participating in Free Fun Friday this year on August 31st. There will be free general admission for all OSV visitors, so make sure to mark your calendars and come visit!

Muster Day | August 31
As you read in this issue of the Visitor, Muster Days were the time for local militias to come together and train in times of war. This August, come watch two uniformed militia companies for yourself. There will be martial music, cannon and musket demonstrations, a ‘sham fight’ between the companies, and the ‘striped pig’!
Tom and Sid, Old Sturbridge Village’s young team of steers, are close to maturity and officially earning the title of Ox. Oxen largely describe cattle used as draught animals. To the folks who raise, train, and work them, it also implies animals that are fully mature, indicated by a complete set of adult teeth. For most cattle this occurs around four years of age, a milestone Tom and Sid passed on June 3rd this year.

This transition marks the point when all of the investment into feeding, training, and conditioning a team begins to pay off. The coordination of a team’s training with their physical maturity is a reflection of the necessary strength to do an Ox’s traditional work. The years leading up to adulthood are necessary for them to learn how to use their strength, as well as imbue the stamina and discipline to do things like ploughing or hauling heavy carts while working efficiently and safely for themselves and those around them.

As with most working farm animals, their training starts with the basic commands: slowly building upon the command, introducing work at a gentle pace, and then steadily increasing the challenge as their ability increases. Tom and Sid have worked with me most of the days they can remember. They know when I expect them to work hard, when I am pleased or unhappy, or if my attention is elsewhere. I have learned their subtle cues in how they hold their heads, eyes, and ears that tell me when they are eager, tired, curious, nervous, or frustrated, to name a few. I have to distinguish when they are saying that the load is truly too heavy, from the mischief in their faces before they suddenly swerve to the side to grab a bite of grass.

Sid is well-recognized among our members because of his penchant for pushing limits and causing trouble. His notoriety comes largely from the amount of breath I spend reminding him to keep up, to pay attention, or to get his head up and out of the grass. Tom is not free from vices but is much more aware of where my attention is and better at choosing his moment to misbehave. As a team, we have developed a shared understanding, cultivated over long hours spent with each other. This relationship accounts for the traditionally low resale value for trained teams of oxen compared to other draught animals. This understanding cannot be sold with a team. A new teamster will be tested and unable to get the full potential out of the team until he or she has invested time to learn each animal individually.

What I can share, is a story highlighting some of the trickier situations a driver and his team will invariably encounter. These stories are not just fun to share but are essential to building a robust toolbox of skills. Every single steer is an individual, with a unique personality. There is no “best way” for every team, and the best Ox drivers have a range of solutions for any problem. I have done many things to inure Tom and Sid to the various stimuli around the museum: attended musket demonstrations, stepped in every building they would need to enter in the Village, and even walked up and down stairs.

During the first run of Midwinter Mischief, Tom and
Sid had a part to play, and I found myself running late. Visitors were already working their way towards the farm, and I had yet to put them in yoke. Since I was supposed to greet each group as they walked from the Blacksmith Shop, and Tom and Sid always attract attention, I did not want to delay the carefully-timed scenes.

After yoking the team, I took them down the lane and through the fields, intending to cross the small bridge over the tailrace, loop around behind the mills, and be in position without upsetting the performance. As a team, we crossed this bridge many times, so; it caught me off guard when, almost across the bridge, Sid decided he was no longer interested in crossing it and tried to turn around. Yoked together in the front, he could only turn out by swinging his rear in. This pushed Tom’s rear off the side of the bridge, quickly followed by Tom’s front. Being in yoke, Sid was pulled in immediately after, and they crashed through the ice. After a few attempts to climb out, only to have their hooves break through the two-inch-thick ice cover, they gave up and lay down in the freezing cold tailrace.

I jumped into the water and broke enough ice to clear a path to shore. Acting as quickly as I could, I got them on their feet and back onto land. We were soaked, but leaving to change my clothes would have been a bad idea, as I wanted to keep them moving. Not only did we have a part to play in Midwinter Mischief, but it would have been a terrible mistake to put them right away after a scare like that. That is how they would remember the day, damaging their trust in me. So we kept moving, jogging a bit in between groups to keep the blood flowing, and finished the day.

We now had another problem with the bridge. If we never went back and faced it, they would never cross it again. Worse, they may begin to fear and refuse to go over any bridge or into any of the barns with a wooden floor that would feel or sound like the bridge. We had to cross it again, and they had to do it safely and in good order. Despite a few creative attempts, Sid still resisted crossing the bridge. We worked right up to afternoon chore time. We walked past the mills and up to the bridge; they did not want to cross, but they knew it was time. They could see the other farmers going about chores. They saw the calves come in from pasture and the cows go into the barn for milking. I would occasionally tell them to “get up.” Tom wanted to go, but Sid resisted. I made it clear we were not turning around. So, we waited.

It takes a lot of patience to be a good Ox driver. Steers have a well-deserved reputation for stubbornness, which is probably why the historical record credits their drivers with unimaginably foul mouths. That day did not require any cursing but rather forty minutes of waiting before Sid was hungry enough to cross on his own volition. The next time it was only twenty minutes, then about a week span of ten minute waits. Now, they go without hesitation.

This was not the first time one of our teams had found itself unexpectedly in the mill tailrace. The other stories belong to my predecessors, but without them I would not have had the tools to extricate us from the problem. Because of my predecessors’ knowledge and willingness to share what they know, Tom and Sid still trust me. I am looking forward to another decade of work from Tom and Sid. I expect to love every minute of it.
For early 19th century Americans, the first Tuesday in May was one that they either loved or dreaded. If you were to be transported back to that time, rather than seeing farmers working in their fields, mechanics working in their shops, or any of the other sights so common to the work of everyday life, you would have witnessed a far more martial scene. Nearly all work was put on hold as the town’s militia shouldered their muskets and took part in the annual training day. For every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and forty-five living in New England in the early 19th century, mandatory militia service was a fact of life…that is unless you were one of the “…lunatics, common drunkards…and persons convicted of infamous crimes” that were exempt from militia service. Apart from men that society simply felt were too dangerous to give a firearm, others that held exemptions were public officials, judges, members of volunteer fire companies, ferry-men, ministers, pacifists and more. The role of the militia was to defend the young nation with ordinary citizens as opposed to a large standing army that might threaten the rights of the people.

Although not official holidays in early 19th century New England, militia training days were occasions for towns to turn out to watch the militia drill while enjoying picnics and other entertainments. Dr. Thomas Low Nichols of New Hampshire recalled that “The company-trainings on the green before the meeting-house were great days. The spectators gathered in crowds, drank sweet cider and New England rum, and ate molasses gingerbread. Emulous pedlars sold tin-ware and Yankee notions at auction with stentorian lungs, and jokes that made the crowd snicker…” He went on to describe the motley appearance and armaments of the town’s militia: “Our citizen soldiers were dressed in every kind of homespun fashion, and as variously armed, with old Queen’s arms which had come down from the colony days of Queen Anne, or been captured with the army of Burgoyne; with fowling-pieces, ducking guns, or rifles.”

The militia company that Nichols described was known as a “standing company” in the early 19th century. These companies consisted of sixty-four men and made up the bulk of the nation’s militia, which numbered a little over 1.3 million overall in the 1830s. For these men, militia service was an obligation and often not something that they enjoyed. Training days took them away from a day’s work and the pay that came with it. It also required that they furnish all of their own equipment and weaponry, which often amounted to a cost of approximately $16.00 or more. This was no small expense for men making .50 cents to $1.50 a day on average. As a result, the standing companies lacked the desire or the experienced officers to make themselves into capable military units. In an appeal written to the Massachusetts legislature in 1820, Salem Towne Jr. described the standing companies as “mere empty pageantry, a show of force, without the ability to be useful.” To protest this broken system of defense, citizens nationwide took part in caricature military parades. Worcester County attorney Christopher Columbus Baldwin saw such a parade in 1834 and remarked that “There were about one hundred, horse and foot, with musick, baggage cart and everything to throw ridicule upon the military system. Some of the soldiers, for knapsacks, had common tin-kitchens, strapped upon their backs, others small churns, and one was tarred and feathered.”

Along with the spring musters, there were also regimental musters or reviews each autumn. These were much larger events and drew militia companies from various towns within a region to one central location that changed year-to-year. Aside from the standing companies, volunteer militia companies also came together from all over to take part in the day’s events. The volunteers were uniformed in a vast and colorful array of the latest military fashions and drilled far more frequently: sometimes as often as once a week! They
The Winslow Blues of Boston, MA
(Boston: John Ashton & Co., 1836)

A depiction of a standing company
(Broadgrins; or Fun for the New Year.
Boston: Arthur Ainsworth, 1832.)

Various recreated militia companies returning from the “sham fight.”

Also embodied the spirit of the volunteer that was so essential to American society at the time. The volunteer companies were far better soldiers than their counterparts and made up about one quarter of the militia in the 1830s. Sturbridge had volunteer companies of its own with the best documented being the Sturbridge Artillery.

Aside from all of the drill and festivities, the main event of a regimental muster was the “sham fight.” These mock battles pitted the various militia companies present against each other in the field to show off their martial prowess. The record book of the Danvers Light Infantry, a volunteer militia company formed in 1818 in Danvers, Massachusetts, told of such a “sham fight” in 1826:

“Immediately after dinner the sham action commenced & was kept up with spirit until near sunset. The D[anvers], L[ight], Infantry was divided into small parties & the ground in the rear of the line being favorable for the execution of their plans; the opposite party would frequently be taken by surprise by seeing the shining helmets of their adversary rising from the fern & briar bushes at their feet & pouring a tremendous volley directly into their front which would cause a precipitate retreat. To conclude, it was one of the best trainings & sham actions that we ever witnessed & gave general satisfaction to all who were spectators as well as those engaged therein.”

To try to capture these large events that were so commonplace in early New England, Old Sturbridge Village will be holding a training day on Saturday, August 31st. It will take the form of a regimental review with members of two recreated volunteer militia companies joining in for the day’s events. The afternoon will feature a “sham fight” between one volunteer company and the standing company of Sturbridge. There will also be early 19th-century fife and drum music, cannon demonstrations, target practice with muskets, an opportunity for kids to learn how to march, and much more. Make sure to stop in to the Miner Grant Store and get your gingerbread too while supplies last! ✨

ENDNOTES
It’s been a big year for projects to improve storage for our collections. Between October and December, 2018, local contractors installed a new HVAC system in the Village’s primary collections storage building. The new HVAC system is a multi-zone electric system that relies on evaporators to effectively circulate and distribute air throughout the building and the many shelving units where objects are stored. It allows Curatorial and Maintenance staff to customize temperature and humidity settings in separate parts of the building, creating multiple different storage environments under one roof. The collections storage building is home to a variety of materials, including wood, textiles, paper, and various metals, all of which require unique temperature and humidity settings (which vary seasonally) for safe storage. Thermostats in each of the buildings’ new zones display temperature data, and they feed this information into a central command panel which enables more efficient monitoring of the building’s climates.

2019 is set to be another big year of improvements, as the Curatorial staff prepares for compact shelving installation in the lower east wing of the collections storage building. The new units will optimize storage capabilities, taking maximum advantage of available space. They will also enable easier access to objects and create ADA accessible aisles between shelves. These new shelves are custom-designed to hold small, medium, or large-sized objects and can move back and forth on tracks in the floor. Staff will also gain additional storage space for hanging objects, allowing for centralized artwork storage in one wing of the collections building. In preparation for shelf installation, the Curatorial Department is at work emptying the lower east wing of approximately 16,000 objects. Smaller objects are packed in boxes, while larger and bulkier objects are moved to temporary shelving erected in other parts of the building. The process is being carefully documented to track object movement in interim storage locations.

The Curatorial Department recently welcomed two new (Maine-born) members. Katherine Fecteau was hired as a Curatorial Fellow in September 2018 before becoming Assistant Curator in late November. Katherine attended Colby College in Waterville, Maine, before earning her Master’s Degree in history and Public History from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2017. Before coming to the Village, she worked for Historic Deerfield, the Boston Furniture Archive, and the Kneeland & Adams Research Project. She also assisted Historic Northampton, the Springfield Museums, and the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead with various projects.

In February, Brittany Guerrette joined the department as the new Curatorial Fellow. Brittany attended the University of Evansville, Indiana, before earning her Master’s Degree in Museum Studies from the University of New Hampshire in December 2018. During the summer of 2018, Brittany interned in the Curatorial Department and also worked as a costumed interpreter. Before coming to the Village, she also interned at the Warner House in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a circa-1716 structure that was home to successive generations of the family of sea captain Archibald Macpheadris.
The Research Library had an exciting 2018: it hosted tours, invited Village summer programs to visit, increased the number of volunteers and interns, and added Collections content to the website. All this was in addition to processing collections and new acquisitions, conserving historical documents, and accommodating researchers. Information about the library and how to make an appointment to visit can now be found on the Village website under the “Explore” tab. Researchers can discover the types of resources that are available, look at a selection of finding aids (detailed listings of the materials that are included in a collection), and view a listing of the manuscripts collections that the library contains.

Additionally, 2018 saw the creation of the Library Sub-Committee. Under the heading of the Collections Committee, a dedicated group of committee members have joined together to identify what the library encompasses, how to provide better access, and how to improve the library. This began last October with an invitation to three library professionals who came out for an in-depth tour and discussion about the roles of libraries and research within bigger organizations. The consultants then produced reports on what they found along with suggestions for funding opportunities. The Sub-Committee met for the first time in February and came up with a list of priorities to address and how to begin the process.

In 2019, the Research Library continues to grow its online presence by adding more finding aids and an online database to view information on manuscripts or published volumes that are housed at the Village. We are also planning to add pop-up sessions with library collections to show the link between historic resources and what the visitors see inside the Village.

**Big and Little Happenings in Our Research Library**

Amy Hietala, Librarian

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Under the ‘Explore tab at osv.org, one can learn about current exhibits, search our library holdings, and watch our progress as we grow our digital collections via our ‘CollectionsOnline’ portal!

Volunteer, Bobbie Williams, works at the computer while Interpreter Rich Eckhart sits at the table researching and Librarian Amy Hietala thumbs through the card catalog.

Samantha Frost, Library Volunteer.
Mike and Stephanie Villano have been part of the Village community for years. Like many New England children, Mike first visited the Village as part of a school field trip from Connecticut. Later, he introduced Stephanie to the museum, bringing her to see the fireworks show at the Village’s Independence Day celebrations.

Living in Connecticut does not stop Mike and Stephanie from coming to Sturbridge on a regular basis. They enjoy attending events and wandering the Village campus to see what New England used to be like, while drawing connections to their own lives. One of their biggest hopes for the Village is to continue adding more immersive experiences, like Boarding with the Bixbys or the Historical Crafts Classes. We definitely agree—and we hope to continue adding to our hands-on history for generations to come. The Villanos also love the Christmas season, and count *Christmas by Candlelight* as a yearly favorite, “especially if the Village has a light snow covering; it looks wonderful.”

Speaking on the significance of the Village in their lives, they said, “We believe the village is an important part of our area’s culture and history…We’ve had a lot of happy memories at the Village!” They can be found supporting the Village in a variety of ways—as loyal members, active members of the Gala Committee and regular attendees, and (Mike serves on the Board of Trustees as well as the Audit Committee.) Mike is especially excited to add his “voice in brainstorming ideas to help generate new, exciting ideas to attract more people to visit the Village.”

Mike and Stephanie Villano have even more memories to create at the museum as they welcome their son, Thomas, to the world. “I think we will give him a few months, but soon we are looking forward to sharing the Village with the newest member of our family.” For Mike, it is essential to help support the Village because it “preserves local history in a truly relatable way. Children come here and make key connections between 1830s technology, and technology today. By learning about our past, we can make better our future.”

For Mike and Stephanie, supporting Old Sturbridge Village as volunteers, members, and donors is an important part of their lives, and we are continually grateful to have them as part of our community.
Remembering Dr. Barnes Riznik

Dr. Barnes Riznik (July 21, 1931—April 29, 2019)

It is with a heavy heart that I report the loss of a dear friend and colleague of Old Sturbridge Village. Dr. Barnes Riznik passed away from natural causes on Cape Cod. A pioneer in the museum field, he was instrumental in developing not only our interpretive and educational programs, but Old Sturbridge Village itself into the museum it is today.

His career at the Village began in 1962 as a researcher, where he met his wife of more than 55 years, Helen (Ba) Corry, who worked as Switchboard Operator and the Adult Program Registrar for the Village. One of his earliest projects, documenting and analyzing the wool Carding Mill, set new standards in the museum field for the reconstruction and interpretation of historical technology. In 1967, he accepted the position of Vice President for Museum Administration and Interpretation. Over the course of the next eight years, he actively hired young, talented students and transformed the institution into one of the country’s premier outdoor history museums.

Believing that museums are vital extensions of the classroom for all learners, Barnes oversaw the creation of the Village’s Museum Education Center. A revolutionary architectural achievement, the Museum Education Center allows students to work in an open space to spin, weave, work with period tools, tend a hearth, and immerse themselves in history—all in one location. The building is still utilized today and serves as a case study for other architects and cultural institutions designing educational spaces.

Barnes also oversaw the design and construction of the Visitor Center. Recognizing the importance of individual decision making and personalized educational experiences, the Center orients guests to the different choices they can make on their visit. This revolutionary building provided space for live demonstrations and incorporated modern technology. Inspired by his vision, the Village is piloting a new orientation video—look for it this summer in the Visitor Center.

Barnes’ dedication to history and education was a lifelong pursuit. His protégés continue to impact the museum field and historical studies today, such as documentary filmmaker, Ken Burns, and former OSV President, Alberta Sebolt George. He was gracious and welcoming to all—Trustees, Overseers, and enthusiastic collectors as well as fellow scholars and students. He was a magnet that drew people to the Village and transformed them into ambassadors for both the institution and the ideas that it inspired. Perhaps Dr. Riznik’s greatest legacy is the dissemination of his love for museums and education to countless others.

After leaving the Village, he moved to Hawaii and became Director of Grove Farm Homestead and the Waioli Mission House Museum, where he collaborated with the Village to develop a narrative of 19th-century New England missionaries. He moved back to the continental United States for retirement, settling in Osterville on Cape Cod, and occasionally traveling to Boston University to lecture. Barnes became a trustee at the Cahoon Museum of American Art in Cotuit, where he helped curate exhibits until as recently as 2018.

Dr. Riznik’s work set a new standard for excellence in both public history and museum studies. He led by example and inspired countless others. About his leadership, Philip Zea, Director of Historic Deerfield says, “He set standards with clarity, that was a reality rather than a concept. I have thought a lot about that over the years.”

Through his groundbreaking work, he will be long remembered here at the Village.

Jim Donahue
OSV President and CEO
Stay & Play! New Packages at the Old Sturbridge Inn & Reeder Family Lodges

Extending Your Visit to Old Sturbridge Village

We are excited to offer exciting new overnight packages at the Village’s very own Old Sturbridge Inn & Reeder Family Lodges. Recipient of Expedia’s prestigious Insiders Award, and Trip Advisor’s Certificate of Excellence for five consecutive years, the Old Sturbridge Inn & Reeder Family Lodges offers premium 21st century amenities with 19th-century charm. Amenities include a fire pit and seating area for those nice summer nights, free wireless internet, air conditioning in every room, and a playground, swimming pool, and 19th-century toys and games baskets to continue the kids’ entertainment after you leave the Village for the day! Overnight accommodations can be bundled with value-added packages to offer substantial savings compared to reserving a room and buying event tickets separately. Members also receive a discount on rates and packages!

Packages include:

The Romantic Escape Package
One night stay at the Old Sturbridge Inn or Reeder Family Lodges with admission for 2 adults for 2 days, a bottle of champagne, and a $75 gift card to a Sturbridge area restaurant of your choice.

Stay & Play Summer Packages
Stay and play at two great attractions this summer! Our two-night Stay & Play packages offer Old Sturbridge Village admission as well as tickets to one of the following: Six Flags New England, EcoTarium, or Southwick’s Zoo. These fun-filled summer packages will be enjoyed by the entire family!

The Big Day: Beauty, Luxury & Joy
If you are planning your wedding at the Village or simply looking for a relaxing and rejuvenating time, make an appointment at the Signature Touch Spa. Offering massage, hair, nails, and esthetics, the Signature Touch Spa is the premier destination for our wedding parties and all their spa and grooming needs. They also offer discounts and specials to Village members!

For more information on pricing, packages, and reservations, call The Old Sturbridge Inn & Reeder Family Lodges at 508-347-5056 or visit www.osv.org/stay-dine-shop/inn/.

OSV VISITOR SPRING & SUMMER 2019
Three Generations Sharing Our Love for History and Nature

An Interview with Trustees Dr. Lynn Eckhert of OSV, and Dr. Louis Fazen of OSA

For Drs. Louis Fazen and Lynn Eckhert, their decades of support to Old Sturbridge Village began as a family outing. After their first visit, their relationship with the museum blossomed into decades of service, creative projects, and family stories. A very active Trustee, Dr. Eckhert serves on the Village Board and is the Chair of the Governance Committee. Dr. Fazen serves as a Trustee on the Old Sturbridge Academy Board and is a member of the Academy’s Development Committee. Both recognize the Village as an important cultural resource, and understand that stewardship is essential to keep the museum thriving.

Do you remember your first visit to the Village?

Louis: “I grew up in Wisconsin, and we came to the area for the medical school at UMass. We heard about this local outdoor history museum and wanted to take the children out for an enjoyable afternoon.”

Lynn: “Back then...the Village offered late afternoon walks around the Village and countryside. The children absolutely loved being outside away from modern distractions...Not only were they fascinated by living history, they were so enthusiastic to engage with the animals.”

Louis: “We were totally amazed by this incredible cultural resource right in our backyard. That very visit, we became members, even though as Sturbridge residents, we receive free admission. We wanted to support the Village.”

As active members of the Old Sturbridge Academy and Old Sturbridge Village Boards, what compels you to serve?

Louis: “Sturbridge is our home. Both the Village and the Academy are essential to our community.”

Lynn: “Old Sturbridge Village is a treasure. But with all cultural treasures, it requires our help and stewardship. Without the community, institutions like the Village would cease to exist. We also want to set the example for future generations to continue the tradition of stewardship.”

Where would you like to see the Village and the Academy in five years respectively?

Lynn: “I’d like to see further partnerships with the Village and our fantastic area colleges and universities. There is so much talent that we can bring to the Village through higher educational partnerships. We have tremendous resources, like our Research Library that we can offer students and faculty.”

Louis: “I’d like to see the Academy at least double the size of its student body. The Academy provides so many terrific opportunities to our community’s young people; I want that to only increase.”

Do you have any particularly fond memories of the Village?

Louis: “I remember how much our children loved rides in the carryall with George King driving us. Now we bring our grandchildren who have the same excitement for the carryall and George—three generations of our family sharing our love for history and nature.”

Lynn: “Several years ago...I became fascinated by Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States. I reached out to the Library of Congress, which sent pertinent documents about her to the Village’s library. I even found documents about her in the Village’s collection. I ultimately wrote a play about Blackwell, which was a one actor production. The play was performed around the country. With the help of the Costume Department at the Village, I performed the play once. If it was not for the resources here at the Village, I would not have undergone such an amazing undertaking.”
2019 HOURS OF OPERATION

May 25 – September 2
Open Wed. – Sun.  |  9:30 am – 5:00 pm
Open Special Hours Sat., July 20
Craft Beer & Roots Music Festival
12:00 – 8:00 pm
Open Mon., Sept. 2 Labor Day
9:30 am – 5:00 pm

September 3 – November 30
Open Wed. – Sun.  |  9:30 am – 4:00 pm
Also Open Mon., Oct. 14 Columbus Day
9:30 am – 4:00 pm
Open Special Hours Sun., Oct. 20
Celebration of Cider Festival
11:00 am – 7:00 pm
Open Mon., Nov. 11 Veterans Day
9:30 am – 4:00 pm

December 2019
Dec. 1 – 5 CLOSED
Open select evenings for
Christmas by Candlelight
Dec. 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, and 29
Dec. 24 – 26 CLOSED
Dec. 31 & Jan. 1, 2020 CLOSED

2019 12th Annual Gala
Autumn in the Village
Save the Date: September 14, 2019