



## Home Scavenger Hunt

### Object:

- Find items around your house (inside and outside) on the list
- Learn where those items came from
- Make Village comparison--where did people get things in the 1800s?

### List of things to find:

Something made from wool  
Something made from cotton  
Sugar or sweetener  
Spices or herbs  
Nutmeg  
Something made from paper  
Eggs  
Butter  
Something made from clay or ceramics

An image of yourself  
Soap  
A writing implement  
A toy  
Coffee or tea  
A tree  
A mode of transportation  
A lamp  
Toothbrush

### Historical Background on Each Item:

**Wool:** Wool comes from sheep! Before the Industrial Revolution, all cloth was made by muscle power. At OSV, you can see costumed historians making fabric on a loom at the Fenno House. Sheep were sheared by hand with a pair of shears (they look like big scissors). Sturbridge farmers clipped between 7000 and 9000 pounds of wool in 1835! The wool was then picked and cleaned, carded, spun, and woven into cloth. OSV's sheep are bred to resemble the types of sheep you might have seen in New England during the time period.

**Cotton:** Like it still is today, a lot of clothing in the 1830s was made from cotton. Cotton comes from a plant that is grown in warm climates, like the American South. Though slavery had been abolished in Massachusetts in 1783, the system persisted in the South until 1865. Then cotton was picked by enslaved people and shipped to Northern

textile mills to be processed and turned into cloth. Many of the people who worked at those textile mills were young, unmarried women from the New England countryside.

**Sugar:** Today, we can get sugar at the store, but we can also get sugar substitutes like honey, maple syrup, agave, Splenda, Stevia, and more. Our sugar comes granulated (loose) in a plastic or paper bag. People in the 1830s got their sugar at the store, too! At the time, white sugar came in solid loaves, wrapped in blue paper. It came from sugar plantations in southern Asia and the Caribbean, bought at country stores. New Englanders also had access to maple sugar, which came from evaporating the water from maple tree sap. Molasses is also common in recipes at OSV, which is a sticky byproduct of sugar.

**Spices or herbs:** You probably have many dried herbs and spices in your spice cabinet. We use herbs and spices all the time today in cooking and baking. We can buy them pre-ground at the grocery store in bottles or from bulk bins. In the 1830s, you could purchase some spices like nutmeg, cinnamon, and cayenne at the Asa Knight Store. These herbs and spices were not pre-packaged or pre-ground! It was also common for people to grow herbs in their kitchen gardens at the time. The herbs could be used in cooking and for herbal remedies in dried or fresh form. Next time you are at the Village, check out the Herb Garden to learn more about herbs and medicine!

**Nutmeg:** Not everyone has nutmeg in their kitchen, but if you like to make pies, you might! Nutmeg is the center of the fruit of the nutmeg tree, which looks like a peach. The red coating on the outside of the nutmeg is called mace, another spice which you might also be able to find in your kitchen. Nutmeg comes from Indonesia. Today, many people buy it ground up at the supermarket. In the 1830s, you would purchase it whole and grate it for a recipe. At the Asa Knight Store, nutmeg shares a drawer with cloves, another spice.

**Something made from paper:** We have so much paper around us today that we don't really think about where it comes from. Today, it is made from wood cellulose fibers (trees!) and is processed in paper mills. We can find paper in books, cereal boxes, toilet paper, and more. In the 1830s, paper was not made from trees, but from cloth rags. Water-powered paper mills ground cotton and linen into a pulp and later molded into sheets.

**Eggs:** Where do your eggs come from? They probably came from the grocery store in a carton. Some people today still have chickens that lay eggs. In the 1830s, eggs came from your own chickens. Hens laid about 150 eggs a year, scattered about the barn. Chickens like to lay eggs when there is lots of daylight, so women would pickle eggs in brine to keep them good through the dark days of winter.

**Butter:** Is your butter in stick form? Today, we usually buy butter by the pound, with four wax-paper wrapped sticks inside a cardboard box. It's also available to us all year-round. In the 19th-century, cows only started producing milk in the springtime after having calves. Milked twice a day, the average cow produced enough milk to make 100 pounds of butter and 150 pounds of cheese. There was no way to store fresh milk. It was practical and profitable for women to leave the cream out in the cool spring weather for butter making. Cheese making came later during the summertime.

**Something made from clay or ceramics:** If you have been to the pottery shop at the Village, you have seen one of the potters busily making mugs, bowls, plates, and jugs on the wheel. Potters in the 1830s were usually farmers. The clay came from their own land. Clay made many useful vessels for families at the time. The wet clay could be baked to form durable ceramics. Today, we still use plates and bowls made from clay, but we have also found other unique uses for it! Toilets, computer chips, and some kitchen knives are all made from ceramics, too.

**An image of yourself:** You probably had no problem finding a photo of yourself around your house. Everyone has a camera or a phone that makes photography easy. Photography was not invented until 1839, so people still paid portrait artists to paint their families. Itinerant portrait painters traveled around New England and created portraits of local residents wearing their finest clothing and holding items that were important to them. What would you hold in your portrait?

**Soap:** In your house, you probably found dish soap, hand soap, and soap in your shower. Some might be liquid in a plastic bottle, and some might be in bar form. We wash our hands today because we know a lot about germs, but 19th-century people didn't have the same knowledge. Many people at the time bathed without soap and didn't use soap to clean dishes, either. Soap was used for doing laundry, though, and was made from animal fat and ash.

**A writing implement:** Many of us today use computers and phones to make notes, send messages to friends, and write papers. Did you manage to find a pen or pencil around the house? People often associate the quill pen with writing in early America. A quill pen is made from a sharpened bird feather. People at the time also wrote with steel pens or maybe lead pencils. Sturbridge had a leadmine in the 1830s, and some of the lead was sold to a pencil factory.

**A toy:** What kinds of toys did you find around the house and outside? Some of them might be things like board games or stuffed animals, or others might be electronic. Where did your toys come from? In the 1830s, many toys were homemade. If you visit the Child's

World exhibit at the Village, you will find animals carved from wood and dolls sewn from scraps of fabric. Merchants also stocked some toys for families to purchase for their children.

**Coffee or tea:** Do you drink coffee or tea? Today, many adults rely on their morning caffeine to get through the day. During the early 1800s, merchants imported lots of tea and coffee to the United States. A store like the Asa Knight Store only sold green coffee beans that people had to roast themselves over the fire. The store also sold black and green teas that could be prepared in a teapot at home. There were no tea bags yet!

**A tree:** Did you see any trees from your window or in your yard? If you live in New England, you are surrounded by trees of all kinds. In the 1830s, the landscape outside your window would have looked much different. 19th-century Americans depended on wood for fuel and housing, as well as land for farming. In 1845, 26 million feet of lumber were harvested in Worcester County alone!

**A mode of transportation:** Do you have a car or a bicycle? Maybe a bus passed by your window. In the 21st century, we have lots of transportation options that get us where we are going, fast. The 1830s was the time of a transportation revolution. The train was new and exciting, roads were better and smoother than in colonial times, there were a lot more bridges over rivers and streams, and canals and steamboats helped transport goods around the nation. Many people at the time got where they were going on foot, but you could also take a stagecoach that traveled a whopping 8 or 9 miles per hour!

**A lamp:** How many lamps did you find around your house? Besides lamps, you probably also saw lights in your ceiling. We certainly have no lack of modern electric lighting in our homes. Candle making was an important and tedious task for women in the 1830s. Dipping large quantities of candles made from tallow took a long time, but it meant that the family would have enough candles to take them through the following year. Other lighting sources of the time included lamps powered by whale oil.

**Toothbrush:** Hopefully you remembered to brush your teeth this morning! Today, we know about good dental hygiene. Dentists were pretty common in the 1830s, but that doesn't mean that people went to them to get their teeth cleaned like we do today. Many waited until it was too late and only went to them to have teeth pulled or to buy toothbrushes. Toothbrushes were not necessarily common at the time, but they were available. People were encouraged to brush their teeth regularly to remove food particles. Homemade toothpastes included ingredients like chalk, sugar, and charcoal.