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The Visitor Experience: Reimagining the 21st Century Visitor
By Christina Coleman
Master of Science
Historic Preservation
School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation
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May 2016

SIGNATURES:

The Visitor Experience: Reimagining the 21st Century Visitor

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Though only my name appears on the cover of this thesis, a great many people have contributed to its production. I owe my complete gratitude to all of those people.

My deepest gratitude is given to both of my thesis advisors. My fall advisor was Dr. Jeremy Campbell. I thank him in his patience as I narrowed my topic down to something that I could actually research. My spring advisor was Dr. Catherine Zipf. I thank her for reading countless drafts and seeing to it that all my research goals were accomplished. I would also like to thank Dr. Jeremy Wells for serving as my second reader.

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ABSTRACT:

This thesis explores a challenge that living history museums currently face of being tied to a specific time and place but needing to attract and interact with changing 21st century visitors. One way that museums combat this challenge is through an engaging visitor experience. To explore this issue, Old Sturbridge Village is used as a case study. It is a living history museum, depicting the 1830s, that is located in central Massachusetts. OSV was founded in 1946. The research is coupled with literature on museum visitor experiences. This mixed methods study utilizes interviews of employees at the museum, participant observation of meetings, and content analysis of social media pages, signage, and magazines/brochures. Through these methods, the balancing act that museums undertake is examined. Finally, recommendations for continued engagement with 21st century visitors are made.

KEY WORDS:

Visitor experience, living history museum

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Figure 1: Old Sturbridge Village Map

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INTRODUCTION

Living history museums face a challenge. This type of museum is tied to a unique time and place but must attract and interact with changing 21st century visitors. It is difficult to attract visitors to a history museum because there are many other options for families to go to (water parks, amusement parks, etc). All of these other options compete for limited amounts of money. There is also a challenge that when a visitor comes to the museum once, they won't necessarily visit again. Visitors need a reason to come back. What seems like a solution to this is for the museum to construct a "good" and evolving visitor experience. This visitor experience includes interactions visitors have with museum employees, the use of signage, maps and brochures, and finally the continuation of the visitor experience through social media. Museums also alter events and offer new programs as a way to engage repeat visitors.

The concept of the visitor experience is one way of framing and defining interactions with visitors. As researchers, we can hypothesize that what museums determined to be the visitor experience has evolved and changed. This is especially true of the last 30-40 years, as museums have shifted their viewpoints towards acknowledging and enhancing the visitor experience. Then they again shifted their viewpoints on what makes a "good" visitor experience. But, what happens when a living history museum committed to a visitor experience immersive of a particular time and place begins to imagine a visitor experience beyond the museum and that time and place?

This thesis explores the concept of the visitor experience at a living history museum through the lens of the museum and its employees, not the visitor. In five

chapters, this thesis seeks to understand the balance that museums establish between immersion in their time period and the need to utilize 21st century technology that detracts from an immersive environment. Achieving this balance is difficult, but Old Sturbridge Village has proven successful over the last few years and therefore becomes the perfect case study. This thesis will analyze the institutional values and goals that have supported their success.

0.1 Literature Review

A living history museum is a type of museum which recreates historical settings to simulate past time periods. Most living history museums are set in specific time periods. They provide visitors with experiential learning. This approach differs from traditional museums that provide static exhibits. As a result, the time period for these museums plays a greater role in the experience of the visitor.

These types of museums date back to 1891, when the first recorded living history museum was opened in Stockholm, Sweden. The 19th century was a period of change for Europe. Rural life was giving way to an industrialized society. Artur Hazelius, who previously founded the Nordic Museum, decided to open an open air museum. After extensive travelling, Hazelius bought around 150 houses from all over the country and had them shipped piece by piece to the museum, where they were rebuilt to provide a unique picture of traditional Sweden.

This museum, now named Skansen, still exists today. Skansen features five centuries of Swedish history over the 75 acres. The museum attracts 1.3 million visitors each year. These visitors stroll through this history in a timeline from north to south. The buildings are supplemented with costumed interpreters interpreting a 19th century town.

These interpreters portray tanners, shoemakers, silversmiths, bakers, glass-blowers, etc. The museum has also been expanded to include a zoo.

From this museum in Stockholm, the living history museum model spread across Europe as a new and innovative type of learning experience. It then spread to the United States during the 1920s with the founding of Greenfield Village and Colonial Williamsburg. The living history museum model gained real credence in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s (“So What is Living History?”, 2015).

In recent years, there has been a shift in how the visitor experience is defined at museums, particularly living history museums. The visitor experience is a broad social term that encompasses everything that goes into making a visitor happy. When living history museums first opened, they were not thinking of their visitor experiences as a primary focus. These museums were seen primarily as centers of learning (Doering, 1999). During the 1970s, we started to see a shift in this where people, specifically museum employees, began to wonder about the visitor experience. Were people visiting and returning or only visiting once? And, what was their experience while at the museum (Hudson, 1975)? At the time, museum employees were not thinking of altering the experience, they were just discussing it. They began to realize how the visitor’s sense of identity and life experience work together to shape the visitor experience. Museum employees also made the observation that the actual time spent at the museum is only a small portion of the visitor experience (Falk and Dierking, 2013). Parallel to this, museum studies writers began writing about the visitor experience because it was established as something worthy of study (Falk, 2009).

Around the 1990s and early 2000s, another shift occurred. Museums began altering their visitor experiences with a purpose. That purpose was to attract visitors and get more people through the door. When living history museums first became popular in the 1960s and 1970s, they had less to compete against for limited dollars. People came to museums because they knew that they would learn something (Falk and Dierking, 2013). But today, we live in a world with a complicated media and entertainment landscape. This means that there are many options for what a person spends their money on. It is important to note that since museums began acknowledging that they must alter their visitor experience to compete for these limited dollars, and this notion has not changed.

In recent years, museums who compete for these limited dollars have done well. In the “1980s, approximately 40% of Americans visited some kind of museum at least once a year, by 2000 that number had risen to over 60%” (Falk, 2009, pg 182). Museums are experiencing this rise in visitation for a variety of reasons. They use social media and advertisements to target specific audiences. These marketing strategies put the specific museum in the forefront of people’s minds. Another reason that this yearly visitation percentage has risen is because visitors are returning to museums more than once. This trend can be in part attributed to special events that museums put on to attract repeat visitors (Falk, 2009).

Visitors are so at the heart of a 21st century museums’ existence that now museums are even interested in who does not visit and why. Museums are also currently studying the visitor experience and conducting experiments to see how effective different aspects of the visitor experience are. For example, the National

Museum of Natural History conducted an experiment in 2012 to evaluate the impact of volunteers on visitors. The museum surveyed 311 exiting visitors. There were three different groups surveyed: those who stopped at the information desk, those who talked with a concierge who had received a certain kind of training, and those who talked with a concierge who had not received that training. The results were that the happiest visitors had talked with a concierge who had received the special training (Museum of Natural History, 2013). The museum plans to continue the training and expand the amount of employees that are trained. Surveys such as these demonstrate how museums are changing based on visitor feedback.

Even though museum employees know the importance of the visitor experience and of making visitors want to return to the museum, not everyone agrees on how to do this. There are two ways of thinking in this debate. The first way is shared by people with the mindset that the primary goal of the museum is teaching history and staying concrete in historical context and facts. Employees of the first way of thinking are seen as having more of the “traditionalist viewpoint” (Doering, 1999). They want the museum to stay the way it is (as long as it is teaching history accurately). For these employees, although attracting visitors is important, the primary goal of the museum is to teach history (Solinger, 1990). They believe the responsibility is to the collection, not the public. They feel that historical facts are concrete. As a result, they resist varying the sense of time and place within the museum or with its programs, even if the programs produce a positive visitor experience. Many curators take this stance and place a heavy emphasis on the museum's mission statement (Doering, 1999).

The second way of thinking is shared by people with the mindset that the primary goal of the museum is developing a great visitor experience. For this group of people, straying from a historical time or place is acceptable as long as the reason for doing so is to produce a good visitor experience (Falk and Dierking, 2013). They also believe that changing the visitor experience frequently is necessary.

Employees of the second way of thinking look at many things when identifying and creating a visitor experience. They explore what memories and experiences are produced. They talk to visitors and see what the visitors think and want. They also care about demographics and attracting many different types of visitors. In his book, John Falk, a museum studies professor at Oregon State University, outlines a museum experience model. He defines five different types of visitors and how museums must work to attract and keep each of them happy. They are:

- Explorer: Seeking interesting experiences
- Facilitator: Seeking interesting experiences for others (ex. Parents)
- Experience Seeker: A combo of explorer and facilitator. They want to satisfy a personal curiosity.
- Professional/Hobbyist: They are looking for something specific and interested in the facts of the museum.
- Recharger: Just wants to enjoy themselves.

Falk believes that it is important to engage each of these visitors (Falk and Dierking, 2013).

Sometimes people from the second way of thinking see the museum as a stage and interpreters/staff as its actors (Falk, 2009). An example of this is the ethnographic study done at Plimoth Plantation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Anthropologist Steven Eddy Snow conducted a study to examine how Plimoth Plantation is treated as a stage. He found that since it is a living history museum and not gallery exhibits the site is perfect for performance. The interpreters are essentially actors pretending that they are from the 1600s. The goal of these 'actors' is to trick visitors into believing this, thus giving a truly immersive experience.

Finally, these employees see the visitor experience as constantly needing to change. The main goal for these employees is to attract visitors. They are willing to accept technology into their museums even if technology is not relevant to the museum itself. For example, although it is an established classical art museum, employees at The British Museum have incorporated ways for visitors to use their phones while in the museum to alter the visitor experience. They were able to scan QR codes under paintings to learn more information about them. Visitors were also able to download an app with a museum map on it. The app also has a function that allows the museum to poll visitors about different things. For example, the museum might set up a poll to see which painting visitors like more between a few of them (Carbonell, 2004).

At times, employees of the first way of thinking can be in tension with employees of the second way of thinking. In his book *Museums, Equality, and Social Justice*, Richard Sandell, a museum studies writer, explains that while some museums are using their museums as platforms to fight social justice, there are employees at those

museums that believe the museums should instead “stay true to their aesthetic and art historical mission” (Sandell, 2012, pg. 75). He goes on to explain that this is the case with any change to a museum (Sandell, 2012).

Today, museums face many challenges. One large challenge for living history museums is that they are rooted in a specific time and place but must attract and engage the 21st century visitor. In this discussion, there are two viewpoints to the importance of time period. The “traditionalist” find the time period essential and the second group find time period less important. It is important to study and understand how these two groups interact to create a balance because without this balance museums would not function. The following chapters explore how Old Sturbridge Village successfully balances the immersive experience of the 1830s with the expectations of the 21st century visitor. Particularly noted are what compromises museum employees make with each other to achieve this balance.

CHAPTER ONE: OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE AS A CASE STUDY

For this thesis, Old Sturbridge Village serves as the case study. Old Sturbridge Village is the largest living history museum in the Northeast. It is located in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. The museum was founded by the Wells family in 1946 and throughout its seventy years, it has grown and evolved considerably.

In the 1840s, George Washington Wells started a small eyeglass shop in Southbridge, Massachusetts. The shop became known as the American Optical Company in 1869 when George consolidated three local optical shops with his business. The business boomed and supported the town. It also quickly became a family affair. His three boys, Channing, Albert (A.B.), and Cheney, all joined the family business when they were old enough. They each spent numerous hours developing the company, and it grew to become one of the largest optical manufacturers in the world, ensuring each son a secure financial future (“Our Museum: Early History of Old Sturbridge Village”, 2015).

In 1900, Albert, the middle son, married Ethel Burnham. She was the daughter of Daniel H. Burnham, the architect, who, along with his business partner, undertook the architectural challenges and work of designing and building the World’s Fair in Chicago in 1893. Albert grew very close to his father in-law and later recounted having “the advantage of his advice—not on any specific purpose, but on his general outlook of life.” (Simmons, 2000, pg. 12) Very often he also recalled Mr. Burnham saying

“Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our sons

and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.” (Simmons, 2000, pg. 57)

Albert tried to live his life by these words. Later, he would instill this motto into the museum.

As Mr. Burnham grew closer with his son in-law, he tried to share with Albert some of his interests. He saw this as a way that they would be able to bond. One way that he shared his interests was through traveling with his daughter and Albert. On several occasions, Albert and Ethel accompanied the Burnhams on trips to Europe between 1907 and 1912. D.H. Burnham allowed Albert to see Europe’s landscapes, cityscapes, and architectural gems through his eyes. He also tried to share with Albert his love for museums. Initially, Albert did not like museums. He was a young man and felt that “there are a lot more things for a young person to do than looking at things that were used one hundred or a thousand years ago” (Simmons, 2000, pg. 16). Through his relationship with Burnham, Albert eventually developed a love for museums. Sadly, D.H. Burnham died during one of the family’s European journeys, but what he shared with Albert stayed with him the rest of his life. Albert’s brothers, Cheney and Channing, also grew close to Mr. Burnham and they were also influenced by his ideas and interests (Simmons, 2000).

Albert became interested in antiques through a friend, Ned Wheeler, whom he had met at Harvard. One year, they went on a golfing trip to Vermont. The first day was raining, so golfing was not an option. Ned and some other friends decided to take Albert antiquing. Albert enjoyed the shopping, however he did not buy anything on the trip; he just observed and learned from them. He learned the best stores to shop, how to haggle with the dealers, and what prices to pay for things. Albert’s earliest purchase of antiques

went back to his travels with the Burnhams. He was supposed to be visiting a castle in Scotland with them but he really was not interested in the castle. As he was driving up the hill to the castle, he saw a small antique shop and decided to stop at it instead of going to the castle. He told the man that he was just looking around but was particularly interested in old wrought iron and the man led him to the basement. Albert later recalled there being a surprising five or six tons of wrought iron. The man told him to make a pile of what he wanted and they would make a deal about the price. Albert ended up buying a lot of iron that day. Eventually, the iron made its way to his home in Southbridge, Massachusetts.

Between those two incidents, the antique shopping bug bit Albert hard. He began buying antiques by the thousands and spending quite a bit of money on them. Luckily, he had plenty of cash to spend from the lucrative American Optical business. At the same time, Albert's brother Channing began developing a large collection of fine furniture and his brother Cheney began collecting clocks (Simmons, 2000).

The antiques quickly began filling up Albert and Ethel's house in Southbridge. They even had to make several additions to the house to keep pace with Albert's buying. He didn't care because he was enjoying his collection. He was fascinated with how simple objects worked to make things livable one hundred to one hundred and fifty years earlier. Albert especially loved sharing his collection with guests. Albert always allowed his guests to actually pick up and handle his antiques because he figured that was the only way they would actually learn from them (Simmons, 2000).

When Ethel and Albert decided to move, they were left with the question of what to do with all of the antiques. They were downsizing and definitely would not have room for everything in their next home. They decided that a museum would be the perfect way to showcase their antiques and allow others to learn from them. A museum would also get them out of the crowded house. In 1935, Albert, his son, George, and nephews Turner, John, and Gregory, as well as many executives from the American Optical Company, formed the Wells Historical Museum. The museum was given title to various collections and given the job of caring for the artifacts (Simmons, 2000, pg. 23).

In July, 1936, the trustees of the museum met to determine its future course. They were trying to figure out how the collections could be best presented to the public. Albert proposed to use the Main Street property that his parents as well as he and his brother, Cheney, owned. He wanted to build a little street there in the shape of a horseshoe. The trustees did not like the idea much and his son, George, hated it. George said “a museum was a dead thing. There was no interest in it whatsoever except by a lot of old fogies like his father and the people of his vintage, and that nobody ever went to museums but old people” (Simmons, 2000, pg. 24). He argued that the “historical value of the things that Albert had been collecting was tremendous, provided it could be put to proper usage and used educationally to help the children who were in existence and those who would come into existence in the years to come.” (Simmons, 2000 pg. 25) In short, he wanted to do something with the collection that would be fun and make people of all ages want to come and learn about the antiques.

The idea he came up with was revolutionary at the time. George thought that “it would be necessary to have a village, a live village, one with different shops operating

with employees who would know how to use the old tools and the old methods.” He had vaguely heard of Colonial Williamsburg but never seen it. Having been influenced by his architect father-in-law, Albert loved the idea of bringing historical buildings into the picture. Cheney Wells also loved George’s idea. Cheney told Albert that if Albert accepted George’s offer, Cheney would go in fifty-fifty and help Albert in every way he could to develop the village. He would even add his clocks to the museum’s collection. Albert and the board of trustees quickly approved George’s idea (Simmons, 2000).

Many of Albert’s artifacts dated from the 1800s, so they settled on that time period. The group soon realized that it would be important, if not essential, to have water power. In 1800s, everyone took their corn to the gristmill and they took their lumber to a sawmill, both water powered. Albert and Cheney purchased a one hundred and sixty acre farmstead located along the Quinebaug River for the village. The area was perfect because it possessed wooded hills, meadows, and the water power that they had been looking for. Within the year, the men acquired another forty acres, which included the Wight House. This additional forty acres was special to Albert and Cheney because their mother had been born in the Wight House. The men concluded that both nature and history justified the Village’s location.

After acquiring the land, Albert and his brother were not sure where to begin with the project, so they wrote to John D. Rockefeller III for advice (the letter is now in the OSV archival library). His father was the man who had restored Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. John’s response was an endorsement of the firm that had worked on Williamsburg. It was Perry, Shaw and Hepburn and they were located in Boston. The firm’s three partners visited Southbridge in 1936 and after some early skepticism agreed

to help with the Village. Channing was also now on board with the project (Simmons, 2000).

On September 23, 1936, Albert, Channing, Cheney, Albert's three nephews, George, and some other business partners met to begin planning the process of transforming the two hundred acre farm into a living village. In addition to looking at Colonial Williamsburg as a plan for the Village, the Wellses looked at Henry Ford's Greenfield Village and Henry DuPont's Winterthur. They even sent a few men to the various places. When the men came back, the consensus was that they were not overly impressed with the way that the exhibits were presented. Several of the men claimed it was the landscape that was lacking. This observation excited Albert because landscape was something that was important to him for the village because of his days traveling in Europe with D.H. Burnham. Although studying the works of Rockefeller and Ford helped, it also presented a problem. The Wells' needed the architects to understand that they did not have the elaborate budget of the previous men, so their project would need to take longer (Simmons, 2000).

By January, 1937, Perry, Shaw and Hepburn had prepared rough plans of what the Common would look like. In late March, ideas were presented by Shaw to Albert and the others of what several buildings would look like. George did not like the drawings. He believed that they were too extravagant and Albert agreed with him. Albert tried to make Shaw understand that they were too elaborate by driving him around Sturbridge and neighboring towns. Mr. Shaw did not change his plans, so eventually the men amicably parted ways. Boston based landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff was hired as a replacement (Simmons, 2000).

The first summer, Albert and Cheney spent most of their time at the farm approving and supervising construction and landscaping. The work included grading the area where the Common would be and building the barn. One of the biggest and costliest projects of the summer was rebuilding the dam on the Quinebaug River. The project of rebuilding the dam was so costly that they almost abandoned it, but Albert insisted on it because of the importance of steadily flowing water for a mill (Parks, 1980).

In June, 1938, Albert Wells was a speaker at the Bicentennial Celebration of the town of Sturbridge. There, he unveiled his vision for the Village to the crowd. He noted that “before the end of the summer, the pond will be full of water again and we hope that the gristmill may be ready to operate.” (Simmons, 2000, pg. 34) In 1939, the gristmill became the museum’s first operating exhibit, validating Albert’s statement. In 1938, the Village also took an institutional form. On July 15, 1938, the Quinebaug Village Corporation was formed in order “to establish, maintain, and operate a model village wherein shall be exhibited and carried on for the educational benefit of the public specimens and reproductions of New England architecture and antiquities, the arts, crafts, trades, and callings prior to the period of industrial expansion in New England.” This statement essentially holds true today (“Our Museum: Early History of Old Sturbridge Village”, 2015).

The Village progressed, but very slowly. In 1939, the sawmill was completed, some roads were laid out, and the Fitch House became the first dwelling to join the Village. The Fitch House was originally located in Willimantic and was re-erected on the common. The Wells brothers enjoyed furnishing the home with the period antiques that

they owned. Trees were also planted in the common. Many of the trees were transplanted from other places so that they would look like they had been there for years.

In 1940, the Salt Box House, known as the Parsonage, and the Grant Store joined the Village common. WWII slowed the construction to a halt in 1942. When the war ended in August of 1945, Albert was excited to resume work on the Village but tragedy struck. Albert began having heart problems, so he and Ethel decided to move to California to live out the rest of their lives. Albert, however, was still consumed by the Village, so in 1946 he sent letters to his son, George, about things that he wanted done with the Village. George was busy with work at American Optical so he sent his wife, Ruth, to take care of the matters. After a few months, and in the process of adding a Tavern, Ruth fell as in love with the Village as Albert had. Ruth and George decided to spend all of their free time working on completing the Village. They even kept a 'day book' that Albert could read to alleviate his stress about the Village. Channing was thrilled that Ruth had become so involved (Simmons, 2000).

With the completion of the Village imminent, Ruth did not like the name of Old Quinabaug Village. She thought that visitors might think it was in Quinabaug, Connecticut, so she proposed changing the name to either Wells Village or Old Sturbridge Village. Cheney, Channing, and Albert agreed unanimously upon Old Sturbridge Village and the name change was approved by the Sturbridge selectmen. Opening day of Old Sturbridge Village was set for Saturday, June 8, 1946. The admission price was set at \$1 per person. Eighty-one visitors toured the Village. They were even allowed to drive their cars around the grounds (visitors can no longer drive

into the Village). By the end of the season, the new museum had welcomed 5,170 visitors. Albert was very proud of the Village and Ruth's job with it. He made it clear to her that he wanted her to make sure that people enjoyed coming to the Village to learn and that it was a positive amenity to the Sturbridge community (Simmons, 2000). This may be the first indication of a concern for the visitor experience.

During the early years, Ruth helped to ensure three important additions to the Old Sturbridge Village landscape. She helped the Village acquire the Center Meetinghouse from Fiskdale, Massachusetts, the Freeman Farm from a different location in Sturbridge, and the Salem Towne House from Charlton, Massachusetts. She also oversaw the restoration of these buildings (McCallun, 1996). Today, there are more than forty original buildings, each carefully researched and restored ("Our Museum: Early History of Old Sturbridge Village", 2015). Early on, these buildings were rearranged as new buildings were acquired, but it has been years since this has happened. Ruth stepped down as Director of the Village after a few years but she never truly retired from the Village. She devoted the rest of her life to helping Old Sturbridge Village make progress. Attendance grew quickly through word of mouth at first then eventually through advertising and having the Village featured in magazines and on television.

July 13, 1953, was a special day for Massachusetts citizens. On that day, Governor Christian Herter spoke at a ceremony marking the transfer of ownership of Old Sturbridge Village to the people of New England. In his speech, he predicted a bright future for Old Sturbridge Village because of the unique opportunities that it offered visitors. Just four years later, Old Sturbridge Village welcomed its one-millionth

visitor (Simmons, 2000). To date, more than twenty-one million adults and children have visited the village and it welcomes over half a million visitors annually (“Our Museum: Early History of Old Sturbridge Village”, 2015). In further developing Albert’s and his brother’s wishes to have the Village be a place of learning, Old Sturbridge Village added a new education building in 1974 (Hoffman, 1982).

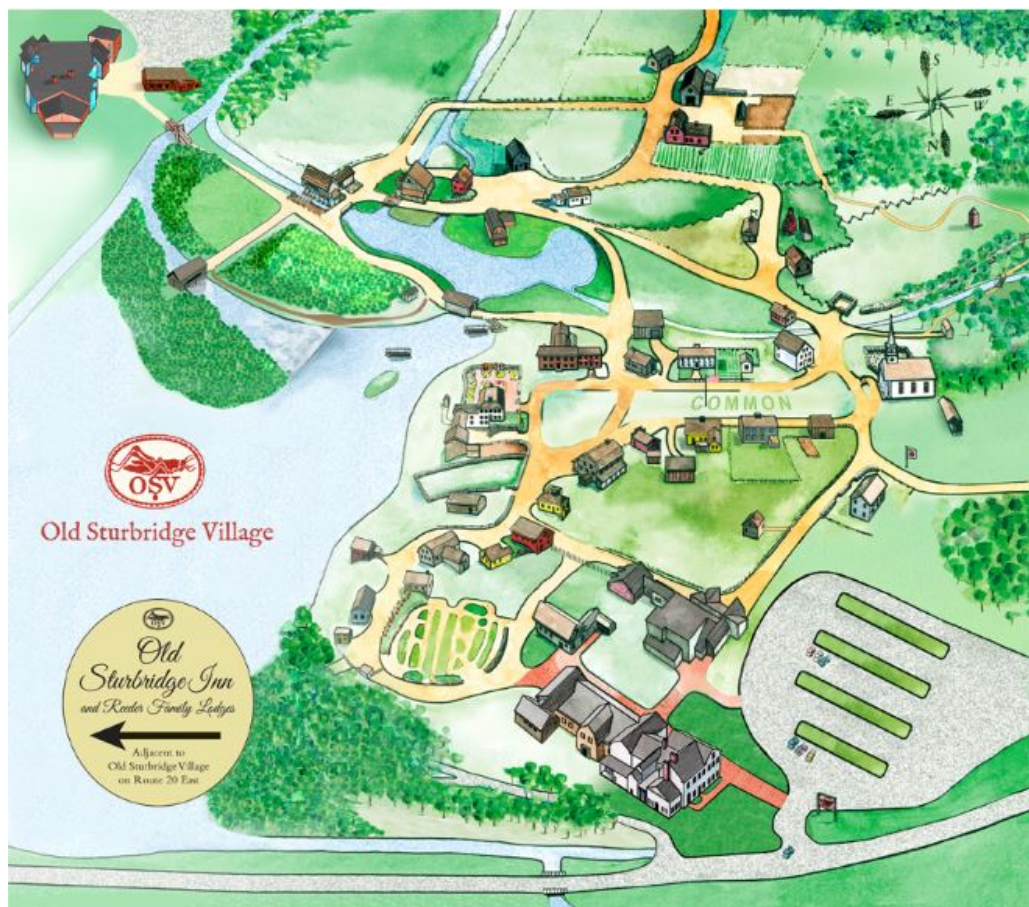


Figure 1: Old Sturbridge Village Map, 2016. (OSV Website)

Throughout its seventy years, Old Sturbridge Village has grown and made changes both to how it is run and what it does. Currently, Old Sturbridge Village is structured hierarchically with a Board of Trustees and management staff (Appendix A). The Board of Trustees has nineteen members and three officers. The officers are

currently: Richard Schulze, Chairman, Robert Reeder, Vice Chairman, and Margaret Pierce, Treasurer. This board of trustees oversees the museum. The board makes large decisions but does not oversee day to day decisions. The level of trustee involvement depends upon the board member. Some board members only come to the Village for required meetings, while others are seen throughout the museum. Most notably, Chairman Richard Schulze often volunteers as a banker. This dynamic is interesting because he works week to week with staff and visitors.

Below the board are the overseers. These people donate large sums of money to Old Sturbridge Village but generally are not as involved as members of the Board of Trustees. Both trustees and overseers work together on special projects for the museum.

The Village is run by President and CEO Jim Donahue. Donahue communicates directly with the Board of Trustees. He is also very involved in communicating with donors and corporate sponsors. Next is the chief of staff, who serves as the assistant to the President. Below that, Old Sturbridge Village has four Vice Presidents. Each of these oversees a different section of the museum. The sections are museum operations, charter school development, finance, and visitor services. There are five directors who report either to the vice presidents or directly to Donahue. The next level down in the Old Sturbridge Village structure is the level of coordinator. The coordinators report either to a vice president or a director. There are coordinators for many aspects of the museum (i.e. volunteers, mens' crafts, agriculture). The coordinators spend some time in costume but they spend a majority of their time working on administrative tasks. The coordinators oversee the leads. Each specific building has a lead. The lead

manages the day to day operations of that building. These buildings are staffed by general, costumed interpreters. The interpreters can be year round, seasonal, college interns, high school interns, or volunteers. There are also the lodges department and food services department which are run separately from the museum. Museum gift shop operations are contracted out to Event Networks, a company that works with many museums.

It is important to note that Old Sturbridge Village functions as a team. You can be a college intern and your voice and opinion is still heard during decision making. This is a testament to the quality of leadership of the museum. It is a model of operating that comes directly from Jim Donahue. Each year in the fall, he meets with every staff member in either small groups or individual meetings to gather their feedback on the operation of the museum and what it is like to work there. He works to make improvements based on the feedback he receives. For example, employees were very frustrated when free coffee was no longer an option in the morning. Donahue listened to this feedback and figured out a way to bring back coffee. Another example is that museum interpreters kept saying that they did not feel like they had enough staff training. Donahue remedied this by figuring out a way for the museum to close a portion of January. During this time, he worked with Rhys Simmons, the Director of Interpretation, to offer more staff trainings. Actions like these are important in boosting morale of the staff and making them feel like they are heard and valued.

The staff all work together to achieve the mission of Old Sturbridge Village. Today, that mission is to be a “learning resource of New England life, and invite each visitor to find meaning, pleasure, relevance, and inspiration through the exploration of

history” (“Our Mission”, 2015). Even after 70 years, Old Sturbridge Village continues to engage visitors of all ages from the community through many ways. The current admission price is set at \$28 for adults, \$26 for seniors, and \$14 for youths (3-17). Visitors can get their receipts stamped in any of the museum gift shops for a free return visit within ten days. This is a strategy encourages repeat business. Many visitors take advantage of this opportunity. Throughout the year, several promotional discounted rates can be applied. The Village does its best to encourage visitors to not only come to Old Sturbridge Village to learn about the history of the time period, but to come to the Village to enjoy its many events because they are seen as a cornerstone to getting repeat visitors.

Old Sturbridge Village offers special events throughout the entire year as a way of giving back to the Sturbridge area community and getting community members involved with the Village. The list of special events and activities is lengthy, and it continues to grow each year. Every year, some events are added, some are removed, and others are altered. Sometimes events are put to rest for a few years and then brought back. Special events connect both the Advancement and Museum Program departments. Events are tiered to be daily events, small events, and “tent pull” events (large ones).

The Director of Interpretation, Rhys Simmons, oversees the daily events. This includes the schedule, or mapguide, that is handed out to every visitor each day. Daily events include interactions with farm animals, crafts, and cooking in certain houses. Often, Simmons delegates tasks out to coordinators and leads to oversee the planning and execution of these daily events.

The Director of Public Events, Jim O'Brien, oversees the planning and execution of both small and large events. Small events occur about once a month. They are classified as small because they generally require less planning, cost less, include fewer outside people, and attract fewer visitors. Most of the time, less advertising money is spent on small events. These events often rely heavily on internal programming. Internal programming is organized and put on by Old Sturbridge staff. As a result, O'Brien works very closely with Simmons and other museum staff to ensure that a full schedule of events happens.

O'Brien also oversees the large "tent pull" events. These occur about every six weeks. O'Brien dedicates most of his time to the planning of these events. These are the type of events that usually attract members and other repeat visitors. The aim is to attract a high number of visitors with these events. As a result, more money is spent both on the events themselves and on the advertising of the events. Outside people are often hired to supplement internal programming. An example of a "tent pull" event is Redcoats to Rebels. This event occurs the first weekend in August each year. During the weekend, 1,000 re-enactors camp out in the Village for the weekend. They interpret the Revolutionary War time period. The weekend draws a crowd of around 10,000 visitors. Each year, the attendance proves to be the highest two days of the year.

As during the Wells era, the Village continues to portray a small rural town from the 1830s. It represents a generation after the Revolutionary War ended and thirty years before the Civil War. The Sturbridge area was not very diverse in terms of race. It mostly consisted of white Americans. Interestingly, even now this holds true. Old Sturbridge Village is located next to Southbridge, Massachusetts, a town of overall low

socio-economic status. It is populated by many immigrants (mostly of Latino decent). The area is 27 % Hispanic. This demographic highlights the fact that the museum must use its visitor experience to attract visitors of a different time and place. All of this makes Old Sturbridge Village an interesting place to study. As a living history museum, it is rooted in a time and place so deeply but we live in a world that is constantly changing. Arguably, the visitor experience is one of the most important aspects of a museum. Without visitors, museums cannot complete their purposes.

1.0 Introduction to Methods

Research was conducted in a variety of methods as a way of triangulating results. The first method used was interviews of museum staff members. Interviews provided individual perspectives. A variety of staff members from different departments were interviewed. A total of eight interviews were conducted. People that were interviewed held different social positions at the museum. They have varying amounts of experience working at Old Sturbridge Village. Some people were specifically targeted because they are a driving force behind visitor experience changes. Others were interviewed because they are the ones who see these changes through. Before anyone was interviewed, CEO Donohue, approved all of the questions and agreed to have his staff interviewed, if they wished. These interviewees included:

1. One representative of upper management. This representative was from the museum advancement department. This is because most museum changes come from the upper management. Often, the museum advancement department is the driving force behind changes to the visitor experience.

2. Director of Public Events because he plans large scale events that draw visitors in. He also serves as the mediator between interpretation and the advancement department. Events are one of the main ways that the museum interacts with visitors. This is particularly true of repeat visitors.
3. Two representatives of the curatorial department because they are most knowledgeable with the history. They understand how the museum is rooted in a time and place. One of these representatives was fairly new to the museum while the other has worked at Old Sturbridge Village for thirty-two years.
4. One representative from the museum education department. They work closely with visitors but from a behind the scenes perspective. They also work with a unique group: children. The number one goal of the museum education department has to be education.
5. One museum interpreter who has worked at the museum for several years because they have seen changes. They also interact with visitors on a daily basis while in costume.
6. One intern or newer employee to provide fresh eyes. They also interact with visitors on a daily basis.
7. One representative from the marketing department. They work to attract visitors and interact with them through social media postings.

The second method was participant observation. Participant observation was internal, of the Village, as opposed to observing visitors. Staff members' reactions and comments were observed during meetings and conversations. The reactions and thoughts of visitors were not however observed. This approach provided group thoughts

of the consensus when decisions were made. Group thoughts were not always unanimous. As an employee of the museum, I attended many planning meetings and took notes during and after these meetings. Existing notes were also analyzed. Particular attention was placed on how events were being changed from the previous year.

The third method used was content analysis. This method examined the output of the museum. For this method, social media plans, brochures and signage were all analyzed to see if the balance between time and the 21st century changes with these outputs.

Old Sturbridge Village provides a case study to use when examining the theories that other museum studies experts have provided on the evolving visitor experience. Triangulating three methods provides the most detailed and holistic picture of the balancing act that occurs at museums. If any of these methods are removed, it becomes more difficult to understand what happens at Old Sturbridge Village as they evolve their visitor experience to meet the needs of the 21st century visitor.

CHAPTER TWO: INTERVIEWS

The first method used for this thesis was interviews of employees at Old Sturbridge Village. Interviews provide an individual analysis of the museum. Eight employees were interviewed. The interviews were of employees from varying departments to gain a broader perspective of thoughts on the visitor experience at the museum. There were eight preset questions, but the interviews were conducted in a flexible format. In this way, discussions were led by the researcher but could vary based on the subject's interests.

The main goals of the interviews were to establish what the employees thought were the most important parts of the visitor experiences and what direction they see the visitor experience going. The question of whether they wanted the visitor experience changed or not was very important aspect of the interviews. It was also important to establish if there are any themes in how individual employees look at the visitor experience. The interviewees were asked the following questions:

1. How are you involved in this museum? (volunteer or employee)
2. How long have you been working at or volunteering at this museum?
3. Describe your role in the museum?
4. What do you feel like the duty of the museum is to the visitor?
5. In your opinion, what is the most important part of the visitor experience?
6. What do you think is most important to the visitors? (most appealing)
7. Should the museum change its visitor experience? Why or why not?
8. How important is it to keep to the time period of the museum?

People that were interviewed hold different positions at the museum, which gives them different amounts of power in decision making. They also have varying amounts of experience working at Old Sturbridge Village. Some people were specifically targeted because they are a driving force behind visitor experience changes. Others were interviewed because they are the ones who see these changes through. Before anyone was interviewed, CEO Jim Donohue, approved all of the questions and agreed to have his staff interviewed, if they wished. The interviews will be discussed in a top down order in an effort to remain objective. These interviewees included:

1. One representative of upper management.
2. The Director of Public Events
3. Two representatives of the curatorial department.
4. One representative from the museum education department.
5. One museum interpreter who has worked at the museum for several years.
6. One intern or newer employee.
7. One representative from the marketing department.

The first interview was with the representative from upper management (UMR). UMR is currently a consultant for Old Sturbridge Village. He works on various special projects for the museum. Right now, he is working on projects to help improve and advance the visitor experience at Old Sturbridge Village. Prior to his current position, UMR served as the Vice President of Advancement at Old Sturbridge for a little over a year.

UMR clearly believes that the visitor experience should be changed. He is currently working on researching how that change should happen. The feeling that the visitor experience should be changed was evident throughout the interview. He said in general that museums should constantly be changing what they are doing. In particular, he believes that Old Sturbridge Village should “add to what it is currently doing. It should up interpretation. It should blow it out.” UMR believes that the duty of the museum is to “give visitors a greater appreciation of American history.” He noted that a problem for museums that creates tension is that currently in schools there is less emphasis on history. UMR believes that because of this, history may not be a big enough hook for visitors to come to the museum. The museum must balance finding that “hook” with staying within the time period, which is important because “it is our [Old Sturbridge Village’s] heritage.”

Throughout the interview, UMR emphasized that Old Sturbridge Village gets “hung up” on trying to identify the most important part of the visitor experience. Instead, it should be looked at as a continuum. The visitor experience starts with the website (in his opinion the Old Sturbridge Village website needs improvements) and marketing. It continues with everything that the visitor experiences while at the museum. This includes signs, exhibits, food and beverages, interpretation, the nature trails, etc. Finally, it ends with continued interactions on social media. Every piece of this experience needs to connect. UMR believes that of any place, Disney does the best job connecting everything and that is why they are so successful.

As Old Sturbridge Village looks to the future, UMR believes that there are many ways the museum can improve its visitor experience. The first is a major shift from

“making staff centric decisions to making visitor centric decisions.” UMR has read a lot of literature on the visitor experience, including Faulk. He believes that Old Sturbridge Village needs to find more ways to add excitement and “wow” factors to the experience in order to create relevant experiences for the 21st century visitor. Adding more costumed interpreters is important to this. They help to make an active, busy looking village. Each event should be done to a bigger scale to create the effect that events such as ‘Redcoats and Rebels’ and ‘Christmas by Candlelight’ do. Finally, activities that happen in the Village should have relevance to now. For example, if visitors are interested in pottery, they should be able to have a pottery experience where they will actually get to try using a wheel. UMR thinks the area of the Village called gallery row may be the right area for these types of teaching experiences. The area is currently static exhibit space. Finally, he believes that by creating these experiences visitors will feel more invested in the experience of the past. UMR thinks that this will help convince people to extend their interactions with Old Sturbridge Village beyond the day they visit through tagging the Old Sturbridge Village social media accounts.

The second interview was with the Director of Public Events (DPE). DPE works in the advancement department. He has worked at Old Sturbridge Village for thirty six years and has served in various roles throughout that time. In his role as DPE, he serves as the bridge between the museum advancement department and the museum program department.

DPE believes that the duty of the museum is multi-tiered. Old Sturbridge Village must be “factual in what it teaches but must also meet the demands of the visitor.” Overall, he believes that Old Sturbridge Village’s duty is to bridge the past and present.

The DPE emphasized the importance of “emotionally reaching the visitor with their experience.” He believes that if you create a moment or experience that they will remember, the visitor will look at the past differently. On the flip side, the DPE believes that the most important aspect of the museum to the visitor is the immersion. The museum is experiential, and visitors love that.

When asked about changing the visitor experience, the DPE felt that the experience “should always be changing,” because the visitor expectations are constantly changing. He noted that having worked at the museum for a long time, he has seen several changes. He believes that visitor experience changes are necessary or Old Sturbridge Village will become a static museum. The DPE looks forward to seeing what changes the new generation of museum employees bring to the museum because he believes that “changes, when done with a good purpose, create better experiences for both the visitor and employee.” He also finds it very relevant that Old Sturbridge Village is now using social media networks. Although they do not have anything to do with the 1830s, he believes that they are necessary to attract the next generation of museum visitors.

Finally, the DPE believes the time period is important to staying “true to the mission but it is also okay to step out of the time period slightly with proper framing.” If the museum is going to step out of the 1830s time period, he believes that the sole purpose cannot be for entertainment. He stated that “the bigger picture of the museum is not the 1830s but a museum of New England culture.” The DPE stated that the 1830s are not even mentioned in the Old Sturbridge Village mission statement. Overall, he feels that if the Village is going to step out of the 1830s time period, a balance must be

created between stepping out and staying true, so that visitors learn the most that they can.

The third interview was with Curatorial Representative #1 (CR1). CR1 works in both the curatorial and museum program departments. CR1 is the Historian and Curator of Mechanical Arts. CR1 has worked at Old Sturbridge Village for thirty two years. During meetings, he is often one of the staff members to initiate conversations about historical accuracy.

CR1 believes that the duty of the museum is to be a history museum but at the same time to be relevant to the modern visitors life. He believes that “after visiting the museum, they [the visitor] should have a greater understanding of how the modern world came to be.” Although CR1 has a strong history background, he stated that the most important part of the visitor experience is “for the visitor to have a good time and hopefully learn a little while doing that. Sometimes we, as staff, have to make compromises with what we want to happen, at the museum in order for this to happen but it is okay because the visitor is the most important person at the museum.” CR1 stated that visitors come to Old Sturbridge Village for a variety of reasons. They are each driven to the museum with different motivations. These motivations include being outdoors, interacting with the interpreters, and exploring a curiosity or passion for history.

When asked if the museum should change the visitor experience, CR1 replied “yeah, if it does not change it’s dead. A museum must constantly adapt.” But, CR1 noted that he often opposes change because he believes that “change must be done

with a purpose while keeping true to the museum.” CR1 thinks that when making changes, it is important for Old Sturbridge Village to form goals of what the Village believes that the visitors need. The visitors often “do not know what they do not know” and enjoy pleasant surprises during their visits.

Finally, CR1 finds the Old Sturbridge Village time period important. He sees a set of challenges in the time period. The true time period in terms of collections and buildings is 1790-1840. According to CR1, this is too broad for interpretation. To ease this challenge, CR1 feels that it is important for Old Sturbridge Village to be transparent about the time period and what it is teaching. He stated that it is “okay to leave the time period slightly but with reason.” If the reason is visitor draw, that is not good enough. He gave the examples of ‘Redcoats and Rebels’ and the ‘Antique Car Rally’ as leaving the time period but not for good purpose. One solution he thought of to remedy this tension between events is to close off one outside field and still require a ticket but do the events that deviate from the 1830s time period there. He said “that would be much better than having antique cars on the Village Common. How it is currently done can be confusing to visitors. This is especially true when we do things like take pictures of our interpreters next to the antique cars, etc.” Finally, CR1 emphasized that a balance between attracting visitors and the time period is very important to everyone at Old Sturbridge Village functioning as a team.

The fourth interview was with Curatorial Representative #2 (CR2). CR2 works in the curatorial department. She is the curatorial fellow. CR2 has been working at Old Sturbridge Village for one year. Whether it be cataloging objects, moving objects, or

creating exhibits, CR2 works closely with the historic artifacts in the Old Sturbridge Village collection.

CR2 believes that the duty of the museum is to communicate to the visitor how people lived in the 1830s. She said “this is done through interpretation, use of the objects from collections, and with education programs.” The importance of the visitor experience is to achieve this goal of communication on every level. CR2 believes that the visitors come to Old Sturbridge Village for a variety of reasons. These are the interpretation, the cute animals, and the crafts and trades. It is interesting that being from the curatorial department, she did not initially mention the historic collection, but this was clarified later on. CR2 stated that the collection is tied closely with everything that happens in the Village because the collection includes buildings and all of the objects that the interpreters use within the buildings. CR2 stated that “employees at Old Sturbridge Village must work together to create a pleasant visitor experience.”

When asked if the museum should change the visitor experience, CR2 immediately answered yes. She said that the answer may be different for different types of museums but for a living history museum, it is always yes, because the museum is driven by the experience. Specific to Old Sturbridge Village, she believes that the Village needs to adapt to attract the culture of now. She stated that “with recent survey findings, it is evident that we [Old Sturbridge Village] are not attracting young people.” She feels that social media is important to connecting to the young crowd. She said “social media may seem contradictory to our time period, but with it we can bring information and relevance to the lives of young adults.” CR2 also discussed changing exhibits in the buildings and feeling that most of them need to be “uplifted.” Specifically,

she mentioned that gallery row needs to be re-imagined. The current static exhibits are not working and need to be changed to exhibits that would better interest the modern visitor.

Finally, CR2 felt strongly that the 1830s time period is important. She stated that “we were founded to be a living history museum of the 1800s and so it is still our job to educate the public on the 1830s.” CR2 feels that those were formative years for America, so there is no real to divert from that period. She is also not sure that people such as A.B Wells, Cheney Wells, and Ruth Wells would be happy that Old Sturbridge Village is diverting. Finally, CR2 emphasized staying relevant to today but also staying true to the mission of Old Sturbridge Village and the intentions of the founders.

The fifth interview was with the Museum Education Representative (MER). MER is the Director of Education. She oversees the museum education department. The emphasis of her job is on school groups and creating relevant experiences for children. MER has been working at Old Sturbridge Village for a little over a year. She also serves as a team member of the campus planning committee. This committee is led by Johnson and is working on evaluating the current visitor experience.

MER believes that the duty of the museum is to educate people. She stated that “museums in general are fundamentally learning places.” She believes that this is achieved through social experiences. These social experiences are either with people visiting together or between people and the museum. MER believes that visitors visit the museum because they want a connection to the past. They love the immersive environment and the “feeling of stepping back in time.” She stated that “Old Sturbridge

Village does a good job at this. Even the landscape of the museum feels immersive.” Through creating immersive experiences, Old Sturbridge Village can be used by the visitor as an escape from everyday modern life.

When asked if the museum should change the visitor experience, MER also answered yes. She stated that “all museums must constantly be adapting.” MER listed several changes that she feels are necessary for Old Sturbridge Village. These had an overall theme of livening up the Village. More interpreters are needed so that more action can be happening throughout the museum. MER would also like visitors to be provided with a better orientation to Old Sturbridge Village and what they are about immersed into. She would like more “opportunities for people to do things while visiting” and stated that “while we are hands on already, that can always be expanded.” Finally, MER believes that Old Sturbridge Village needs more food experiences.

MER does not believe that staying within the time period was very important. She feels that “the 1830s story is not clear to the visitor.” Old Sturbridge Village needs to improve this. It is not clear whether “we [Old Sturbridge Village] are teaching New England history, Sturbridge History, the 1830s or specifically 1838.” She believes that any of those are fine as long as Old Sturbridge Village picks one of them. Otherwise, it can be confusing to both staff and the visitors. Finally, she believes that in the gallery areas, it is less important to stick to a set time period.

The sixth interview was with Costumed Interpreter #1 (CI1). CI1 is the Domestic Crafts Lead and a costumed interpreter. She initially came to work at Old Sturbridge

Village as a summer intern but was hired when her internship ended. She has been working at the museum for three years.

CI1 believes that the duty of the museum is “to provide the most accurate information about the subject material as possible and to do so in an engaging and thought provoking manner.” The most important part of the visitor experience is the customer service that they are given. An amazing experience can be ruined by one rude comment or slightly off-putting interaction with staff. CI1 stated that “it is important to stress customer service in every aspect of the museum. You never know when a visitor is paying attention.” In terms of what Old Sturbridge Village offers to the visitor, she believes that the “most attractive is the costumed interpretation.” CI1 stated that “being able to interact with someone doing the work of a 19th century person is a great learning experience and the visitors often take full advantage of the ability to ask questions.”

CI1 thinks that “every museum would change pieces of the visitor experience if they could.” Personally, she would like to “see some first person interpretation creep in to some of the buildings.” She has had, on several occasions, visitors push for first person interpretation and thinks that it adds a depth to the setting that cannot be explored with the current third person strategy. That being said, she believes that “there can be too much of a good thing. The first person should still be customer service based and related to pertinent topics.”

Finally, CI1 feels that the time period of the museum is a very important aspect of the museum itself. She stated that “staff needs to use the period as much as possible to

provide context for the visitors. Without the time frame, in this case 1790-1840, it can be extremely hard to understand the information staff is giving them.” The exception is to make a task relevant to the visitors’ lives. She provided the example of making comparisons to food preparation.

The seventh interview was with Costumed Interpreter 2 (CI2). CI2 is not currently working at the museum. She has been the curatorial intern and a costumed interpreter for the last two summers; she has worked both in the curatorial department and the museum program department. In collections, she has worked on cataloging objects, research for exhibitions, inventory projects, etc. As an interpretation intern, she worked in both the School House and the Small House. CI2 provides the perspective of a seasonal employee.

CI2 believes that “museums should be hybrid places of education, entertainment, preservation, and community outreach. Museums should strive to be third spaces, informal gathering places between work and home that provide a degree of community cohesion and a location for creative and intellectual exchange.” Society as a whole could obtain much more from museums if it better understood how to use them. She stated that it “is our job as public historians to help the public rediscover what museums can offer them. A goal of museums is to contribute positively to the quality of life and to enhance the well-being of human communities.” While we, as museum employees, want visitors to learn something from their experiences, the most important part of the museum experience is for visitors to have a fun time. CI2 believes that “visitors are drawn to the atmosphere and the hands on learning at Old Sturbridge Village and of course the animals.” The village creates the sense of traveling back in time and the

visitors can experience history and feel as if they are living it. She stated that “many people are visual or tactile learners and OSV provides a space for both.”

When asked if the museum should change the visitor experience, CI2 answered that she thinks that “Old Sturbridge Village should try to attract a more diverse audience.” The current interpretation lacks discussion of the more problematic history of New England such as relations with Native and African Americans, economic discrepancy, and alcohol. CI2 stated that “from interpretation to exhibitions and public programming, the museum should push boundaries and encourage the visitors to discover and engage with the much larger narrative (currently hidden) at the site. I would love to see more performance pieces, like Katie Hill’s Mary Culligan, that engages with a more difficult history.” Unfortunately, with limited funds as a non-profit, this approach would require more support and initiative from administration to make this a priority and hire more staff.

Finally, CI2 believes that “100% historical accuracy is not an achievable goal, even at first person interpretation sites.” She prefers that the interpretation reflects the culture and history of the chosen time period, but recognizes that this does not always happen. Since the interpreters at Old Sturbridge Village are third person, the time period is more flexible in conversations and, oftentimes, even appearance. CI2 stated that “even though it would not be “accurate,” I think the site should want ethnically diverse staff interpret in costume and allow women to participate and demonstrate in historically dominated male crafts, possibly in men’s clothing.” She feels slightly conflicted about the strictness of time period. She personally has been uncomfortable with the Halloween special events and the idea of a camel during Christmas time, but sees the

point of this event as a fundraiser, which is necessary for the museum to thrive. CI2 thinks “that for some events, the site can suspend the time period for the sake of community outreach.” There can be two different uses of the site, one of education and education through the structures and exhibits, and another of the use of the physical site itself (for weddings and events).

The eighth interview was with the Marketing Representative (MR). MR worked in the marketing department. At the time of the interview she was the digital content producer. She has since left the museum. As digital content producer, she was responsible for coordinating the different social media posts. At the time of the interview, MR had worked at the museum for two months.

MR believes that the duty of the museum is to “provide a place for visitors to come and have a good time while learning history.” Her specific duty to the visitors is to attract them to Old Sturbridge Village in the first place and to continue their interactions with the museum beyond their visits by utilizing social media. The most important part of the visitor experience is to “achieve a balance between having a good time and providing the guest with historical knowledge.” MR believes that visitors come to Old Sturbridge Village for the immersion in history with the interpreters. She also stated that “events are a huge draw. I get to see the excitement that they generate on social media.”

When answering about changing the visitor experience, MR expressed that because of her limited time at the museum, she may not be the best person to evaluate this. She does however believe “every place and museum needs to constantly be

adapting because our world is constantly adapting.” For her, that means trying new initiatives on social media and seeing which ones generate the most positive visitor engagement.

Finally, MR thinks that the time period is important for inside Old Sturbridge Village but does not matter as much with social media. She stated “the act of using social media in the first place is not 19th century.” Old Sturbridge Village must continue to use social media as a way of connecting with what 21st century visitors expect.

These interviews provide an individual analysis of the museum. Each employee had a different take on the duty of the museum, the important parts of the visitor experience, and the emphasis on the time period of the 1830s for Old Sturbridge Village. But, several key themes are seen throughout all of the interviews. At the heart of these interviews is that the employees care about the visitor and find the visitors’ desires and needs to be the most important. For example, CR1 expressed that it bothers him that sometimes the Village steps outside of the time period of Old Sturbridge Village, but he understands that sometimes this period is what the visitor wants, and that is important.

Throughout the interviews, many of the employees talked about the importance of having several aspects of the museum overlap. This overlap includes experiences that are offered to visitors and the need to offer many of them. It also includes many departments working together. The prime example of this is that curatorial and events may not always align but representatives from both departments see the importance of compromising with each other.

Several employees discussed bridging the past with the present and making what is learned at Old Sturbridge Village relevant to the 21st century visitor. Most employees expressed that this was key to hooking the visitor on the importance of the museum and making them truly learn something. They suggested a variety of ways to achieve this. Most often the suggestions included explaining something in terms of the 1830s but then comparing it to what the visitor does in the present. All the employees also mentioned constantly changing the visitor experience to stay relevant to the visitor.

Where the employees were most in tension with each other through interview answers was in how important the time period of the museum is. Each employee gave some importance to this time period but they had varying answers for how important it is. These thoughts directly correlated with Doerings' two groups of museum employees. Some of the employees interviewed felt that Old Sturbridge Village must stay strict to the 1830s time period. Doering would say that these employees have the "traditionalist" mindset. Most of the employees in this group came from either the curatorial or interpretation departments. Other employees felt that the museum can be flexible if the museum is still teaching history. Doering would categorize these in his second group. This second group of employees emphasized that Old Sturbridge Village's mission does not mention the 1830s directly but instead states the importance of teaching history. Most of the employees in this group came from the marketing and events departments. Interestingly, both groups felt that it is important to balance the visitor experience and a strict 1830s time period.

CHAPTER THREE: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The second method for examining Old Sturbridge Village's visitor experience was participant observation. This method is important because it examines the group thoughts, amongst museum employees, on the visitor experience. These group thoughts are expressed during meetings as employees come to conclusions on events with each other. The Old Sturbridge Village meeting minutes provide documentation of these thoughts¹. The meeting minutes examined were from January 2016- April 2016. The data produced can be subdivided into three parts. The first part is what issues in general were raised. The second part is what happened when employees discussed current events. The third part is what happened when employees planned for future events. The minutes are also supplemented with my own thoughts on the discussions that happened during the meetings that I attended.

Throughout my research, changing the visitor experience in general was discussed. The first time that the visitor experience was brought up was at the January full staff meeting. CEO Jim Donahue described the importance of gaining constant feedback from visitors and he explained that a survey was going to be sent out asking for feedback from visitors. Employees seemed excited to gather this feedback. One employee even noted that this survey seemed "crucial to the success of the museum." The incentive for completing the survey was a voucher for one time adult, daytime admission to the Village. This demonstrates that Old Sturbridge Village cares deeply about feedback from visitors.

¹ The researcher had access to the meeting minutes as an employee of Old Sturbridge Village.

The importance of positive visitor experiences continued to be a theme at a large planning meeting held on January 14, 2016. This meeting was a large, special events meeting. It was run by the Director of Public Events, Jim O'Brien, and the Director of Interpretation, Rhys Simmons. In attendance were all of the coordinators and all of the leads. It was held on a day that Old Sturbridge Village was closed so that everyone would be able to attend the meeting. The goal of the meeting was to plan for the 2016 year of events. According to O'Brien, the goals were to evaluate what worked and what did not work during last year's events, to decide how to revamp each event, and to put everyone on the same page logistically for the year. This way, staff would work as a cohesive unit and the best visitor experience could be accomplished. As researchers, it is important to understand the discussion that ensued about each event because it demonstrates the balance that museum employees are constantly making between the time period of the museum and offering unique events for visitors.

The meeting began with everyone in one large group. First on the agenda was an update from the Coordinator of Volunteers and Interns, Kim Adams. She reminded everyone that requests for volunteers for event days needs to be at least one month in advance. This procedure is important in ensuring that the Village is well staffed.

Next was a marketing update from the Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Michael Arnum. Arnum described the marketing department's goal as a variety of initiatives "to get people to come to Old Sturbridge Village over other places." His plan for the year is to advertise in a variety of ways. This strategy includes print ads, digital ads, broadcast media, and Pandora radio.

After the marketing department update, O'Brien and Simmons divided staff into two groups. They also divided the calendar of events so that each group was given half of the events for the year to look at. Each group met for several hours reviewing the events. They worked to develop a plan for each one. Finally, the two groups came back together for a large group discussion on the events. During the large group discussion, a brief summary was given of how each event would run and what the group felt did and did not work during the previous year. They went in a chronological order of the events. Since it was early in the year, some events did not yet have many parts of them planned.

The first event discussed was Winter Work and Play. This small scale event is held during the end of January. The overall theme of the discussion was that not enough activity had occurred for the visitors during the 2015 event. Plans were made to remedy this. Additional staff were requested for the Parsonage parlor and kitchen. A hog butchering was planned for the farm. Ice cutting is always popular, so that would happen again for 2016. One staff member suggested bringing Dennis Picard, the ice cutter, in for additional weekends. This idea was tabled until 2017. Due to its popularity with the visitors, it was decided that staffing the School House should be made a priority. There would also be knitting for soldiers in Parsonage, Fitch, or Towne House. Visitors appreciate giveaways, so it was decided that gingerbread would be the weekend's giveaway. A suggestion was made to have a members' only portion of the weekend. After some discussion, a new "Logging in the 19th Century" member program was planned. The group felt that it is important to have members' only events as an

incentive for families to become members. Also, they are an important tool to use to thank members for being members.

The second event discussed was Martin Luther King Day. Again, additions were made from the programming of the previous year. These additions were to bring in Tammy Denease to portray Sojourner Truth and to have one of the Old Sturbridge Village interpreters portray William Lloyd Garrison. Staff felt that it was important to have these two additions because the two people they were portraying were essential to the overall theme of African Americans. They also felt that during Martin Luther King Day, Old Sturbridge Village often experiences the regular group of visitors and that it is good to change things for this group from year to year.

The third event planned for was Be Mine: Chocolate and Valentines. The plan for this was very similar to that of 2015. Bullard Tavern would feature stone ground chocolate and Parsonage would feature baking with chocolate. They also planned to read love poetry in Parsonage. In 2015, the only visitor giveaway was a heart ornament craft in Bullard Tavern. Simmons' group planned the addition of a hot chocolate giveaway at Freeman Farmhouse. Additionally, one staff member volunteered to portray Esther Howland. It was decided that the Howland portrayal would occur in the Fitch House in order to add more action throughout the Village. In most cases, positive visitor experience feedback goes hand and hand with action.

The next event discussed was WinterFest, a very large event with several components. WinterFest is a weeklong event held during February school vacation for the area schools. It was divided into three parts. These parts are President's Day programming, school vacation events, and the sleigh rally.

President's Day activities were kept largely the same as President's Day 2015. O'Brien reported that the dancers were already scheduled to be there for the Washington's Birthday Ball. One coordinator noted "Great! I love that visitors can get involved in that and learn the dance." Readings and a program on hairstyle etiquette would also be included. Visitors would be given the chance to toast Washington and the founding fathers. A giveaway of tri-corner hats was decided for the visitor center.

A new element suggested by the Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Michael Arnum, was to advertise the event via social media, with the addition this year of advertising that if your name was either Martha or George you would get free admission to Old Sturbridge Village for the day. He believed that this offer would increase the excitement and buzz on social media. Later, this proved not to be true. Very few people visited the museum that day named Martha or George.

A long discussion took place on whether the cannon team would fire the cannon. The cannon was only restored in August, 2015, so it had not been present during the 2015 event. On one side of the argument, interpreters felt that the cannon was popular with guests so, it should be fired during the event. On the other side of the argument, interpreters thought it was logistically a lot of work to move the cannon and therefore not worth it. Ultimately, it was decided that since there were other additions for 2016, the cannon was not necessary but it would be kept in mind for the future. During this discussion, O'Brien reminded the group that they are always looking to change aspects of yearly events to keep visitors both surprised and entertained, so the cannon may be the perfect component to save for 2017.

Finally, the group discussed other ideas for 2017 additions. O'Brien again noted that "new additions each year are needed to keep repeat visitors coming." It was decided that he would look into having John Koopman portray George Washington on site. One staff member was not happy about this because Washington died in 1799, which is thirty years before the time period of Old Sturbridge Village. He believed that having a Washington portrayal would be inappropriate. This viewpoint was acknowledged but a counter argument was presented. This argument was that having a George Washington would attract visitors. As tensions rose, O'Brien tabled the discussion. It has not since been brought up and probably will not be until Old Sturbridge Village is closer to the 2017 event.

Most of the second part of WinterFest, school vacation activities, were kept the same as they had been for 2015. One reason for this was that people will visit during school vacation no matter what is happening. The consensus was that valuable planning time should be spent on other events.

The third and final part of WinterFest, the sleigh rally, was also kept mostly the same as previous years. The one change discussed was not for the general visitor experience but instead for the sleigh rally participants. Each year, they request a shelter to house the judges because it gets cold when they are outside all day. Each year, Old Sturbridge Village tries to put up a tent but it falls down partway through the day. The group brainstormed new ideas for this shelter. The only idea produced was to string canvas across trees. O'Brien urged the group to keep thinking because it is "important not to disappoint the participants. Without them the event cannot exist." Since that

meeting, it has been decided that a new wooden booth will be used so that the shelter will no longer fall down on the judges.

After WinterFest, the group moved on to discussing the events for the month of March. Maple Days and Celtic Celebrations were discussed as staying largely the same as previous years. The goal of Maple Days is to teach visitors about maple sugaring. This task was essential to 1830s living. They planned cooking with maple sugar in Parsonage and at Freeman Farm. They also decided to have a maple leaf craft in the Fitch House. The giveaway planned was maple sugar in the Small House. This event would be run by a volunteer. It was noted that someone needed to make sure that tongs were left in the Small House. In 2015, tongs were forgotten and visitors were forced to wait while someone went to get tongs. This made visitors unhappy, so no one wanted to repeat that mistake. Finally, there were new taps acquired by curatorial this year. These would be displayed so that visitors could learn about the different style taps.

Overlapping Maple Days, a Celtic Celebration was planned for the second weekend in March. O'Brien reported that Full Gael, a celtic band, was already signed on for the weekend, including a special show Sunday night. The rest of the programming planned was all internal programming with no changes from the previous year. It included book signings, bagpipes, and Irish stories.

Next, a new event for 2016 was discussed. The new event was a garden symposium planned for April. The Coordinator of Horticulture, Amy Murray, explained the event. Visitors will have the opportunity to come and learn about heritage gardening. The symposium will be set up much like a conference. The reason that this new event is being implemented is "because many visitors ask questions about the OSV gardens

and note them as one of the highlights of their visits.” The staff seemed excited by this addition to the calendar of events.

Then, the large event for April, Family Farm Fest, was discussed. This event is a weeklong event during April school vacation for the area schools. Due to its size, there was a lot of discussion and collaborating between staff members on the event. The event first occurred in 2015. The week featured baby animals and farm activities. Instantly, it was a hit drawing in large numbers of visitors. Immediately, it was decided that it would occur again in 2016.

For 2016, several plans had already been made. Teams of visiting oxen were set up for the first and second weekend of the event. OSV baby animals would be featured in special areas where visitors could interact with them. This aspect derived out of constant requests from visitors to get closer to the animals. The group decided that this year, the week would take on an egg theme. It did not seem like there was a particular reason for this theme, but giving a new theme each year allows the event to be slightly different for repeat visitors. They also planned for Billings Farm to bring antique tractors during the first weekend.

Finally, at the time of the meeting, Melanie Stringer was already booked for Tuesday through Sunday to portray Laura Ingalls Wilder. This was a larger period than she had worked at the event in 2015. The same staff member that was unhappy about George Washington was also unhappy about her. Again, he believed that having a portrayal outside of the Old Sturbridge Village time period would be inappropriate. He stated that “this may confuse visitors who will probably think that Laura Ingalls Wilder and Little House on the Prairie are the same as OSV.” In this case, the staff member

gained zero ground. Simply stated, Melanie would be here because she drew in large crowds. During the discussion, O'Brien noted "A majority of my calls from visitors before the event come from people asking about Laura Ingalls Wilder." The visitors have watched Little House on the Prairie with their families and want to experience 'meeting' Laura.

Next, the group discussed the importance of Mother's Day. Old Sturbridge Village sees Mother's Day as an occasion to give back to mothers. When planning Mother's Day activities, employees work on developing programming that highlights families and things that mothers generally enjoy when they are visiting. For a game, they planned a mother vs. daughter tug of war contest. They also planned a traditional family dinner for Freeman Farm. Finally, it was decided that mothers would get in free for the day. This is an incentive for families to come visit on a day that they might not normally.

Another new addition to the 2016 event calendar was Spring Gardens, a garden weekend. It will take place May 14th and 15th. Since it was an early stage meeting, not much was planned yet. It was only discussed that the weekend will feature special garden-driven programming. Amy Murray, the Coordinator for Horticulture, explained that the event was happening because "visitors are fascinated by the gardens. They think that they [the gardens] are different from 21st gardens but are always pleasantly surprised that they are not." With this event, Murray hopes to reach more audiences in teaching about the gardens.

The May events were capped off with Wool Days. Wool Days is an interesting event because it is something that the Old Sturbridge Village farmers have to do no

matter what. It is the weekend when the sheep are sheared. Although the event is not until May 27-30, Joe Scott, a local shearer, was already scheduled to be there. Joe Grady, a dog herder, was also scheduled to make demonstrations all three days. Finally, there will be wool dying at Freeman Farm.

The next event discussed was the Antique Car Rally, which takes place each June. Visitors with cars dating back pre-1946 are invited to park their cars on the Common for the day. The year 1946 was chosen because that is the year that Old Sturbridge Village opened and allowed cars in. Interestingly, cars do not fit the 1830s time period, but this fact did not bring up any points of contention amongst staff members. The usual number of cars is expected for 2016. Each participant will receive a mug, made in the Old Sturbridge Village Pottery Shop, as a giveaway/thank you. O'Brien reported that this year there would be new forms. Previously, each participant had to fill out a registration form, model release, and liability form. They were required to sign and put their addresses on each of these forms. This became confusing and caused frustration for participants. To ease this, the new form combines the model release and liability. It removed the space for putting their addresses because the addresses are already on the registration form. The two forms can now be printed double sided. Since then, initial feedback on the new forms has been positive. Also, more than other years, the forms are arriving to O'Brien filled out correctly.

The large event planned for June was Freedom Week. This event first began in 2015. It is a week to celebrate African American history. As soon as it was mentioned that it was on the schedule for 2016, some of the staff began to grumble. They believed too many elements of the weeklong event fall outside of the Old Sturbridge Village time

period. For example, a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued by Lincoln in 1863, is thirty years after the time period of Old Sturbridge Village. However, visitor feedback for Freedom Week 2015 was overwhelmingly positive. A compromise was reached for the event. All aspects will remain but some will be altered slightly. In the example of the Emancipation Proclamation reading, a portion of the program will be dedicated to talking about the events from the 1830s that led to and set the foundation for the proclamation to be issued.

Independence Day is celebrated in what staff call the “Norman Rockwell” fashion, or traditional all-American 4th of July. Each year it features a giant Declaration of Independence for visitors to sign, hat making, a parade, and a reading of the Declaration of Independence. During discussions, Arnum suggested trying to get a celebrity or radio personality to read the Declaration of Independence. This idea was mentioned for 2015 but never fully pursued. Arnum suggested that if it was achieved, it could be advertised and draw in more visitors. A large part of the 4th of July celebration is the naturalization ceremony. This portion was introduced in 2013. It takes time to coordinate with homeland security each year, but is very popular with visitors, so staff continues to do the work. Finally, an increase in historic militia presence was planned for, including firing the cannon. It was noted that additional wooden muskets needed to be purchased for the “learn the militia” program, because children have been left out previously due to the current number of muskets.

The final summer event that was planned for was Redcoats and Rebels. It is the largest Revolutionary War reenactment in New England. For 2016, the dates set are for August 2-4. Sunday morning features a street battle. The group discussed moving the

street battle location this year. They decided it will be by the covered bridge. The reasoning for this is two-fold. One, it will provide better viewing, which will make visitors happy. Two, it will be easier to block off, making it safer.

Finally, the group also began planning for the 2017 Redcoats and Rebels event. The main goal of 2017 is to provide better camping fields. The re-enactors camp in the Village and a frequent complaint is that they need better camping grounds. In particular, they request the use of the Sawmill field. During the planning meeting, it was decided that the agriculture department would start preparing the sawmill field for special events and the re-enactors would gain use of it during 2017. This decision will hopefully make the re-enactors feel like their feedback is valued, because without them Redcoats and Rebels would not exist.

Not much was reported for Textile Weekend. Jean Contino, the Coordinator Households and Women's Crafts, said that they are still figuring out this year based on what buildings can be open for collections. The theme for 2017 has already been decided as linen and flax.

The group planned for Craft: Artisan Beers + Trades to occur during September. This event took place for the first time in 2015. As a result several changes were planned for 2016. The hope is that these changes will help the event run smoother and allow it to become more successful. Last year, the crafters were all placed in one tent at one end of the Common. They were given the option to either be paid a lower rate and also sell at the event or be paid a higher rate and not sell. For 2016, they will be spread out to different areas of the Common and everyone will be paid the same rate with no option to sell. O'Brien hopes to obtain a glass blower for the weekend, because that is a

constant visitor request. Also the kiln firing will be moved from Friday/Saturday to Saturday/Sunday allowing more visitors to see it while attending the event.

For the beer portion of the event, an ice distributor will be on site. O'Brien explained that during the 2015 event, the beer vendors needed much more ice than Old Sturbridge Village had anticipated and someone had to drive and get ice. He believes the beer vendors were forgiving last year because it was the first time, but does not want to frustrate them for a second year. They are going to reduce the number of bands from two to one because it will be easier logistically. This way, time slots will not need to be scheduled and equipment moved. Instead, one band will play continuously through for the day. Also, it was suggested that a kids food option be available by the beer tent. This suggestion was based on visitor feedback from the previous year. Many visitors had to walk back to the tavern to purchase food for their children and then return to the beer tent to eat the more adult food that was being served. Finally, more tables will be ordered next year so that it is not as crowded.

Next, the group summarized what was planned for Apple Days which will take place through several weekends of September and early October. Old Sturbridge Village has its own heritage apples that are harvested during this time. The event teaches visitors what 1830s farmers would have been doing during fall apple harvesting. Generally, there are many visitors of Old Sturbridge Village because of the fall foliage. For 2016, the Cider Mill will be operating every weekend from September 10 through October 15. This is the only time during the year that this mill runs. Having something special gives a reason for visitors to come during that particular time of the year. Throughout the Village, houses will be preserving apples in different ways and

cooking with apples. Generally, OSV staff also mulls cider. It was decided that they would take a break for 2016. This gives visitors variety from year to year. Also, there will be no baking contest because for the last few years, there have not been many participants.

Next, they planned a fall harvesting event, Dig In: Field-to-Table. For 2016, Dig In: Field- to- Table is being moved to a weekend earlier to Columbus Day weekend. This decision was made because Columbus Day weekend is still during the peak fall foliage visitation period. It also allows the event to take place for three days instead of two. Dig In allows visitors to experience how people would have harvested and preserved food for the winter during October in the 1830s. It was difficult for the farmers to report on the details of the weekend because planting had not even started. They guessed that they would be harvesting potatoes, corn, and other garden vegetables. The Coordinator of Agriculture, Dave Hruska, will also invite visiting teams of oxen to help with the harvesting.

Old Sturbridge Village plans to end October with a Halloween event. OSV used to have a Halloween event, but several years ago they ended it. There were several reasons for ending it, but towards the top of that list was how stressful the event was for staff. As soon as Halloween was brought up during the planning meeting the staff became worried. O'Brien tried to ease their concerns by saying that this time, the event will have a low impact on staff. They plan to hire an outside company to put on a Legend of Sleepy Hollow show. The plan is that the show will be an immersive experience for visitors, as if they are living and walking through the town of Sleepy Hollow. More details will be coming at a later date.

Next, the group discussed November events. The first was Evening of Illumination. This event is an opportunity for visitors to experience Old Sturbridge Village lit only by candlelight. Due to this, visitors are given a guided tour. The group discussion talked about keeping the tours on schedule, which was something they felt they struggled with during 2015.

Next in November was Bounty: Thanksgiving which occurs every weekend before Thanksgiving in November and Thanksgiving Day. Early plans include a Native presence, a target shoot, a wedding recreation, and Thanksgiving themed food. Several staff members expressed to Arnum that every weekend will be Thanksgiving themed but only on Thanksgiving Day will a Thanksgiving meal be served and that this needs to be clear in the advertising of the event. Last year, visitors arrived expecting a Thanksgiving meal on other days and were frustrated when that was not what they were seeing. O'Brien stated that Old Sturbridge Village is working on developing a stronger partnership with the Pequot Museum. Each museum feels that this will benefit visitors overall. Management from both museums will be meeting at Old Sturbridge Village on April 28, 2016, to further foster the partnership. O'Brien believes that this partnership is essential to being able to offer a Native American experience to visitors.

Winter Market was the next event that the group planned for. This high end craft fair was introduced in 2015. It was held in the Museum Education building. At the time of the meeting, it was unknown whether the event would be held in that building again. Use of the building is dependent on whether the charter school gets approved by the state of Massachusetts. Initially, the group was going to brainstorm alternative spaces

but then it was decided that they would wait until they found out a definite answer on the Museum Education building.

Finally, the group planned for Christmas by Candlelight in December. This is the largest event of the year and the entire museum is dedicated to the success of this program during December. Christmas by Candlelight takes place during the December weekends before Christmas. It is an evening event that occurs on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. It is advertised as an escape from the modern frenzy of Christmas. The evening includes gingerbread houses, roasted chestnuts, music, dancers, and sleigh rides (weather permitting). Visitors also have the opportunity to meet Father Christmas and chat with Santa Claus. In 2015, the event saw an overwhelming increase in visitation. It is expected that in 2016, Christmas by Candlelight will see the same amount of visitors. An adjustment made last year was to open at 3 pm instead of 4 pm. This will continue in 2016. A new feature of 2015 was a giant 52 ft Christmas tree. It drew a lot of media attention and will be present again in 2016.

The two parts of the event that upper management wanted changed were opening the countryside portion of the Village (currently visitors can only access the Common and gallery row) and changing the Santa's Village experience. During discussions, the group adamantly did not want the countryside opened. They felt that it overstretch them and they would not be able to provide what the visitors have come to expect during Christmas by Candlelight. A compromise was made that three new spaces will be opened. They are Shoes, the School House, and Pottery. The expansion will allow the high number of visitors to spread out more but will be manageable for staff. Santa's Village was not discussed at length. O'Brien mentioned there will be

changes to it and that the effort will be to really “pump up that section of the Christmas experience.” Staff had mixed feelings about putting more emphasis on Santa’s Village. Many people felt that the Santa’s Village experience wasn’t really historical and they were skeptical about expanding it. At the same time, the staff understands that children love all things Santa during Christmas time. Finally, the staff expressed that more people should be involved in the set up and take down of all of the Christmas decorations. Also, a plan was made to have the same people that set up a space be the ones to take it down.

It is important to analyze and understand meetings such as this one because they demonstrate what the group mentality is at Old Sturbridge Village. For employees, the visitor experience is key to planning events at the museum. They are constantly looking to improve this and provide visitors with new, safe, and enjoyable experiences. During meetings like this one, they ask each other several questions about events. They ask: What worked in the past? What didn’t? How are we going to improve from last year? Is this completely new? Who is the target audience and what does that audience want? In almost every instance that changes were made to existing events, the changes were due to visitor feedback. For example, additions were made to several events because visitors like giveaways. In instances when staff disagreed, compromises were made in favor of what the employees perceived that visitors would want. For example, there were several discussions of aspects of events that do not keep in 1830s time period of Old Sturbridge Village (Laura Ingalls Wilder, George Washington, etc). Employees in opposition of these aspects allowed them to stay in the plans because

these aspects were important to visitors. It is clear that a positive visitor experience is most important to the group mentality at Old Sturbridge Village.

3.0 Case Study Events

To further examine the importance of the visitor experience in discussions and event planning, three events were analyzed. These events all took place during the research period so both the planning and wrap processes could be observed. The three events used were Valentine's Day, the Antique Sleigh Rally, and one day of Maple Days. Continued meeting minutes were used to examine these events. O'Brien meets with all of the coordinators once a month for a special events meeting. During these meetings, the successes and failures of previous events is always discussed.

The first event analyzed was Be Mine: Chocolate and Valentines. It was a weekend event held on the weekend of February 13 and 14. This weekend was the first weekend of February school vacation for most of the area schools. The weekend consisted of mostly internal programming. Due to this, the Director of Public Events played an indirect role in the planning process of the event. He oversaw that the event was being planned but details for the event were arranged by costumed interpreters working in the museum program department.

The Be Mine: Chocolate and Valentines event contained two parts. The first was chocolate. The goal of the chocolate part was for visitors to learn the history of chocolate. OSV interpreters demonstrated the grinding of cocoa beans. Throughout the many houses, interpreters put on cooking demonstrations using chocolate. The second part focused on valentines. Visitors learned the history of valentines and how they are tied to Worcester, MA. Children were able to make their own valentines to take home. A

take home activity is often provided during such events. Also exhibited were several examples of valentine's throughout the years. These came from the Old Sturbridge Village collection and the personal collection of a museum employee. The valentines were only displayed during that weekend.

Unfortunately, the weather was not good for the weekend. It was a cold rainy weekend. On Saturday February 13, there were 164 visitors. On Sunday February 14, there were 99 visitors. After the event, O'Brien discussed it briefly at the March 3rd Coordinators meeting. Although it was low in attendance, most of the Coordinators felt that the event was successful in its programming. They felt that the visitors that were in attendance enjoyed the event. There were no immediate thoughts on changes that need happen for 2017.

The second event was the Antique Sleigh Rally. The sleigh rally is an annual event that features over twenty horse-drawn sleighs. Each year, this event is planned directly by the Director of Public events. He invites people, from a list that he has compiled over the year, to come to Old Sturbridge Village to compete in sleigh racing competitions. Visitors come to watch the competition but can also take sleigh rides around the common and see interpreters as they would on every other day.

This year's event was scheduled for February 20, 2016. This day would have been during the last weekend of February school vacation for most area schools. Unfortunately, there was not enough snow to hold the event. As a result, Old Sturbridge Village had to cancel the sleigh rally. The discussion surrounding this decision was centered on how to cancel the event without making visitors angry. Another concern was not upsetting the actual sleigh rally participants because Old Sturbridge Village

needs them to participate again next year in order for the event to be successful. About a week before the event, there was a cold spell in the negative degrees. This actually presented a problem. The ground was still not frozen and there was not enough snow on the ground but the cold made it harder for visitors to understand that the event was canceled.

Discussion ensued on how to break the news to visitors. Ultimately, when it was decided to cancel the event, announcements about it went everywhere. Visitors to the website, Facebook, and Twitter all saw messages that the event would not happen due to lack of snow. Two days before the event date, many employees voiced concern that potential visitors were not aware that the event was cancelled despite such efforts. To remedy this, a message was also added to the phone line for when visitors called. Luckily, the museum did not experience much negative feedback on cancelling the event. The sleigh participants were upset but understood why the event was cancelled. Since this event did not happen, it was not discussed at the following Coordinators meeting.

The third and final event analyzed was Maple Days. Maple Days took place every weekend of March. They consisted mostly of internal programming. Similar to Be Mine: Chocolate and Valentines, the Director of Public Events played an indirect role in the planning process of the event. He oversaw that the event was being planned but details for the event were arranged by costumed interpreters working in the museum program department.

For early 19th century rural New Englanders, the first sign of spring was the sign of wood smoke and maple syrup. The goal of these weekends is to immerse modern

visitors in this experience. Thus, visitors were able to see the entire sugar making process. There were programs discussing the importance of maple sugar in New England. Also throughout the Village, interpreters used maple in their cooking.

Spanning several days, the weather for Maple Days varied. The event took place March 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, and 27. It should be noted that March 12 and 13 also focused on Celtic traditions. The total attendance for all of the Maple Days was 5,921. It can be broken down as follows:

Date	Number of Visitors in Attendance
Saturday, March 5, 2016	491
Sunday, March 6, 2016	604
Saturday, March 12, 2016	1,433
Sunday, March 13, 2016	1,101
Saturday, March 19, 2016	603
Sunday, March 20, 2016	411
Saturday, March 26, 2016	822
Sunday, March 27, 2016	456

Figure 2: Event Attendance Maple Days

Maple Days was briefly discussed during the April 7th Coordinators meeting. Overall, the staff was in agreement that the event was successful. There were fluctuations in the number of visitors per day but the overall numbers were similar to the numbers from 2015. They believed that issues that happened in 2015 were fixed for 2016. The staff was extremely excited about the high number of visitors during the

overlapping Celtic Celebration. They discussed possibly adding more elements to that next year.

Through all of the meetings and discussions analyzed in this chapter, we can see how these individual feelings of the staff members are blended together to create a group plan of action on how the museum functions. It is clear that museum finds events important to the visitor experience and to encouraging repeat visitors. For this reason, events are constantly changing. It is important to note that changes are visitor experience driven. The Old Sturbridge Village staff is constantly striving to improve things for visitors. During discussions they ask each other what worked and what did not the previous year in an effort to understand the best ways to improve the events. Although the group of employees does not always agree on every event detail, compromises are made and balances are achieved. The group consensus is that the overall goal of everyone is to have successful events that draw people in and leave visitors with a new appreciation of the past. This is essential to the success of Old Sturbridge Village.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONTENT ANALYSIS

Old Sturbridge Village's visitor experience includes interactions that visitors have with the museum when they are not at the museum. The content analysis portion of this study focuses on the output of the museum. At the museum, this output includes signage, how many signs there are, and what content is on them. Signage can give people certain feelings. In addition to signage, Old Sturbridge Village's output includes brochures, rack cards, and other publications. These are displayed at Old Sturbridge Village but mostly used off site to convince people to visit the museum. Today, museums also interact through social media. Old Sturbridge Village has several social media accounts. All of these outputs of the museum were analyzed to gain a broad understanding of the visitor interactions that happen but are not face-to-face.

4.0 Signage

Old Sturbridge Village has multiple types of signage. The first type of signs are signs within the actual exhibits or directly outside of exhibit spaces. The signs located directly outside of exhibit spaces label what is inside the buildings. They include the names of buildings, such as "A Child's World" or "Early Lighting" (Appendix B). The signs inside the buildings are more closely related to the exhibits. They describe what the exhibits are (Appendix B). Many of these signs are coupled together within exhibits showing information from then (1830s) and now (Appendix B). Exhibit space signs vary in size. They include labels, short descriptions, and longer explanations of the exhibit. For the most part, these exhibit signs are used in spaces where interpreters are not present. They are also used in special exhibit spaces. These signs are important

because they teach visitors where interpreters are not present. In exhibit spaces, these signs are the only interactions that visitors have with the museum.

The second type of signs are signs that are aimed at orienting visitors to their location within Old Sturbridge Village. Their purposes are to point visitors in the right direction and give them context for their locations within Old Sturbridge Village. Throughout Old Sturbridge Village, there are signs that contain maps of the Village on them (Appendix C). They have arrows pointing to main attractions within the Old Sturbridge Village. These signs are located at heavy traffic crossroads. There are also signs that give directions but do not have maps on them (Appendix C). These signs still point arrows to direct visitors. Both of these types of signs that orient visitors to their location within Old Sturbridge Village are important in achieving a positive visitor experience. They help to prevent visitors from being frustrated by something as simple as being lost.

The third type of signs at Old Sturbridge Village are signs that orient visitors to the time period of Old Sturbridge Village. These signs explain the social and historical context of the 1830s (Appendix D). These signs are seen as a series that are located directly outside of the Visitor Center. An example of this is a sign visitor's see when they first enter Old Sturbridge Village. It reads "The American Revolution ended over 50 years ago. The Civil War is still a generation away." These signs help to set the background story for what visitors will experience.

The fourth and final type of signs are signs that are designed specifically for events. These signs are each branded with a similarly themed logo (although the logo

changes for the specific event). If an event is sponsored, the logo of the event sponsor also goes on each sign (Appendix E). Each event has at least two of these signs. The first sign is located outside of the Visitor's Center as people walk towards the entrance. It is 4' x 4' in size. If it is not right before an event, this gets switched out for a general Old Sturbridge Village sign (Appendix E). The second is hung inside the Visitor's Center. This one is 2' x 8' in size. If it is not right before an event, no sign gets hung here. Certain events also get other signs directing people to 'special event exhibits' within the Village. All of the signs for events are done with the same font. For this research, a variety of these signs were photographed. Signs are an important component to the visitor experience because they allow Old Sturbridge Village to continue interacting with visitors even when there is not an interpreter present.

4.1 Brochures and Rack Cards

Brochures and rack cards are at sites outside the museum. Both give information to people in hopes of convincing them to visit the museum. Brochures are longer, multi-paged, and folded. They are handed out at trade shows and placed in hotels and rest areas. Rack cards are double sided. They are generally 4" x 9" and contain high impact graphic design. They are also generally placed in hotels and rest areas. One advantage of rack cards is that they are cheaper to print. Old Sturbridge Village has a variety of topics that brochures and rack cards target. Some are general. Others are for specific events or aspects of the museum. These brochures and rack cards are also located in the museum visitor center.

For this research, two brochures were collected and analyzed (Appendix F). Both featured the OSV grasshopper logo within the brochure and were clearly marked Old Sturbridge Village on the front covers. Each one clearly displays the website, phone number, and address on the back of the brochure.

The first brochure is geared toward the monthly donor program (Appendix F). The front page of it says “Who knew history could be so easy” and features several photographs of the Village. When it is flipped open, on the right side is a letter from CEO Jim Donahue explaining the importance of donations. The left side is divided into sections of text. They are “How monthly giving works”, “Become a monthly donor”, and “Become a Federalist” (this is a monthly donation of \$85 or more). Opening the brochure once more, the text is divided into sections of how you can direct your donation. The options are “Where it’s needed most”, “Historic Crafts and Trades”, “Historic Preservation”, “Collections and Exhibits”, “Horticulture and Agriculture”, and “Youth Education.” Finally, one of the flaps provides a form to fill out to send in with your donation.

For 21st century museums, having regular donations is almost as important financially as getting people through the doors. Without money, museums cannot put on the educational programs that they aim to. The importance of donations to Old Sturbridge Village is evident in the fact that there is a brochure solely dedicated to the monthly donation program. Becoming a monthly donor is a way that visitors continue to interact with the museum when they are not physically on site. Through the different options, visitors can choose how their money is used. This choice allows them to have a

specific connection to Old Sturbridge Village. It also helps the visitor to feel that what they value at Old Sturbridge Village will continue to exist.

The second brochure is entitled “Who knew history could be so awesome” (Appendix F). The front features pictures and bold colors. The back is divided into three sections. They are “Location”, “Admission”, and “Connect with Us.” When the brochure is opened, the right hand flap is a calendar of events. When the brochure is completely opened, the top title is “Who Knew History Could Be So....” It is then broken into six sections. These sections each have distinct colors and a title. The titles are “Inspiring”, “Fun”, “Romantic”, “Amazing”, “Relaxing”, and “Delicious”. Under “Inspiring” a brief explanation of the immersive experience you will have when visiting is given. Under “Fun” the activities that occur day to day are explained. These include carding wool, dipping candles, and harvesting vegetables. The “Romantic” section invites couples to visit Old Sturbridge Village as an escape from the rigors of everyday life or to use the Village as a wedding venue. Under “Amazing” the shopping opportunities are described. The “Relaxing” section highlights the Old Sturbridge Village Inn and Reeder Family Lodges. Finally, under “Delicious,” the multitude of food options are provided.

The visitor experience truly starts before the visitor even steps foot on museum grounds. The visitors’ first interaction with Old Sturbridge Village is this general brochure. The brochure has to convince the visitor to spend their money at Old Sturbridge Village. This brochure does a good job at achieving this because it appeals to multiple interests.

A parallel tool to using brochures to attract visitors are rack cards. For this research project, four rack cards were analyzed (Appendix G). All of the rack cards feature the OSV grasshopper logo and are clearly marked Old Sturbridge Village at the top. Each one clearly displayed the website and phone number at the bottom of the card.

The first rack card is for the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges (Appendix G). There are pictures of the rooms and hotel buildings on both sides of the card. One side of the card describes the “historic ambiance of the 10-room circa 1789 Oliver Wight House.” It also explains that there are 29 other modern units. The other side of the card is broken up into four clearly defined sections. These sections are “amenities”, “make the most of your stay with event packages”, “special rates for”, and “OSV event highlights.” Under amenities, what you get for staying there is described. Included in this is discounted admission to Old Sturbridge Village. There are four event packages listed. Special rates include members, weddings, tour groups, etc. Finally, all of the major events are listed. The colors used for this card are neutral and relaxing.

The second rack card focuses on two different aspects of the museum on the front and back of the card (Appendix G). The first side of the card highlights the Boy Scout program. This is a program where boys can sign up for hands-on studies in order to earn their merit badges. It features a bright yellow background that draws the eye to it on a display rack. A majority of its space is taken up by photographs of boy scouts. The other side of the rack card is dark colored. Its bold headline is “Hop Into History Overnights.” This side features photographs of children sleeping over. There is a brief

amount of text which directs you to the museum website for more information about booking overnights.

The third rack card targets programs that kids would be interested in (Appendix G). Both sides are bright yellow with many photographs. The first side is titled learning adventures. It is broken up into four sections. These are “birthday parties”, “hop into history overnights”, “home schoolers”, and “scouts”. Each of these sections has a brief explanation under it. The second side is titled “discovery adventures.” It describes the camp options for children that are available for winter, spring, and summer school vacations. These are both costumed and non-costumed choices. They are open to children ages six-seventeen.

The final rack card is an advertisement for the app Tale Blazer (Appendix G). Tale Blazer is described as “an education initiative between Old Sturbridge Village and MIT’s Scheller Teacher Education Program” and an “augmented reality experience.” The front side is blue with a giant magnifying glass on it. The other side of the card is white with two small screenshots of the app. A majority of the space is taken up by a numbered list of how to play. Although this app is advertised by the museum, it is highly underused.

Both brochures and rack cards are the first impression that potential visitors get of Old Sturbridge Village. They set the mood for what the visitor experience is going to be. For these reasons, museums have continued to put time and effort into designing attractive brochures and rack cards.

4.2 Mapguides

Another output of Old Sturbridge Village is mapguides. Mapguides are papers given to visitors every day. They are printed on 11 x 17" paper. The front side of the paper shows a map of Old Sturbridge Village. This gives the visitor context of where they are when walking through the Village. The second side of the mapguide contains a list of daily activities. These activities are listed in chronological order. This ensures that visitors know what activities are happening for the day.

4.3 Social Media

Old Sturbridge Village uses a variety of social media platforms. They are an important aspect of the museum's visitor experience because social media is a way that Old Sturbridge Village chooses to extend its' visitor interactions beyond the museum. As accounts on each social media platform were made, a discussion occurred in the museum of whether they were important enough to make and dedicate someone to managing. This discussion is especially interesting because of the time period of the museum. Visitors go to the museum to escape the 21st century and immerse themselves into a world of the 1830s. But these same visitors leave the museum and continue their visitor experience by interacting with the museum using a very 21st century outlet.

The museum currently uses Facebook, Twitter, Google +, Instagram, Pinterest, and Tumblr. The Old Sturbridge Village Facebook account has almost 35,000 likes. Its Twitter handle has 1,700 followers. Old Sturbridge Village started its Instagram account in 2015 and it has been growing in popularity since then. It currently has 3,200 followers. Pinterest has about 1,000 monthly viewers. Finally, Tumblr has ten followers. These statistics are all as of March 31, 2016. Each month, the digital content producer

lays out a flexible plan about what will be posted each day and to which social media outlet. Hootsuite, a digital content managing site, is used to keep track of posts.

4.4 Facebook

Facebook was analyzed in a variety of ways. The general plan for the month of February was looked at. Trends in what kinds of things were posted were examined. Using Facebook insights, the top five posts for February and March were examined to learn what kinds of posts were made and how many people were reached by them.² Also examined were the event specific posts leading up to the three events that were analyzed in chapter three.

For the month of February, there were a total of sixteen posts on Facebook. They were about a wide variety of topics. Facebook reports the number of reaches based on how many people see the post, like the post, share the post, and comment on the post. The top reaching post was on February 20, 2016. It had 6,553 people engaged. It read “Happy National Love Your Pet Day! We love our furry friends here at the Village! #NationalPetDay” and featured a picture collage of Old Sturbridge Village pets. The second highest reaching post was on February 15, 2016. It had 5,444 people engaged. It was a BuzzFeed-style recipe video for Washington Cake. This post combined the use of an 1830s recipe with a very 21st century way of presenting it. The third highest reaching post was on February 16, 2016. It had 4,219 people engaged. The post read “The Thompson Bank stood in the common of Thompson, Connecticut as a bank from

² Facebook has changed its insights so that you can no longer quickly see the top five posts in one place. As a result the researcher went through each post from February and March to identify which ten were the top five posts for each month.

1835 to 1893. Can you guess how many years it remained in Thompson before being moved to Old Sturbridge Village?” and featured a picture of the bank. The fourth highest reaching post was on February 27, 2016. It had 1,655 people engaged. The post read “Are you interested in hearth cooking, blacksmithing, making a blanket chest, or planning a heirloom garden? If so, join us for March 5 & 6 for Historic Craft Classes!” and featured a picture of someone cooking over a hearth. Finally, the fifth highest reaching post was on February 29, 2016. It had 1,061 people engaged. It read “Hey members! Don’t forget Dog Days is this weekend! Learn how to become a member here: <https://www.osv.org/members> #MembershipMonday”

For the month of March, there were a total of twenty five posts. The highest reaching post was on March 5, 2016. It had 10,623 people engaged. It read “Did you know Maples can continue to be tapped for sap until they are over 100 years old? See the full process this weekend at Maple Days!...” and featured a picture of an interpreter making maple syrup. The second highest reaching post was on March 27, 2016. It had 6,584 people engaged. It read “Did you know, Chocolate Easter eggs were first made in the early 19th century?” and featured a picture of a chocolate egg. The third highest reaching post was on March 18, 2016. It was a BuzzFeed-style recipe video for Tunbridge Cakes. This post combined the use of an 1830s recipe with a very 21st century way of presenting it. The fourth highest post was on March 28, 2016. It had 4,560 people engaged. The post showed pictures of Family Farm Fest 2015 as a way of advertising for Family Farm Fest 2016. Finally, the fifth highest reaching post was on March 12, 2016. It had 2,704 people engaged. It was a photo album of pictures from the Full Gael Concert event.

Compiling these posts shows the wide range of how Old Sturbridge Village is attempting to interact with the 21st century visitor. Old Sturbridge Village uses Facebook as a way to break from the 1830s. The most engaging posts are questions or ones that make connections to the visitors everyday life in the 21st century. It is interesting to note that two of the top posts for the two months are videos. Videos are a style that is fairly new to Facebook. They are interesting because they balance the 1830s with 2016 perfectly. They both engage with the visitor and teach them about the 1830s.

4.5 Twitter

Old Sturbridge Village uses Twitter to tweet multiple times in one week. This creates too many tweets to look at from our time period. Instead the general plan for Twitter was looked at. Using Twitter analytics, the top five tweets from February and March were examined. Again, important aspects examined were what kind of tweets were made and how many people were reached by them.

For the month of February, Twitter earned Old Sturbridge Village 16.3 thousand impressions (Appendix H). There were a total of twenty three original tweets and many more retweets and replies. The top tweet was “Happy National Love Your Pet Day! We love our furry friends here at the Village! #NationalPetDay.” The tweet included a picture of several animals at Old Sturbridge Village. The second highest engaged tweet was “What will you be doing with the kids during February Vacation? Come join us for February Adventures!” The third highest engaged tweet was “The Old Sturbridge Inn & Reeder Family Lodges offers romantic packages for couples and fun activities for families.” Both of those tweets contained links to the Old Sturbridge Village website. The

fourth highest engaged tweet was “From 1828 on, Brooks made and fired how many kiln loads each year? #timelinetuesday.” This tweet featured a picture of the pottery shop. Finally, the fifth highest tweet was “Kids may participate in costumed adventures during winter school vacation week, with a focus on arts and crafts.” This also contained a link to the website.

For the month of March, Twitter earned Old Sturbridge Village 14.1 thousand impressions (Appendix H). There were a total of twenty two original tweets and many more retweets and replies. The top tweet was “The Vermont Covered Bridge is one of only 12 left in Massachusetts. #architectureMF.” The second highest engaged tweet was “Join us this weekend for Irish music, food, step dancing, and stories at Celtic Celebrations!” The third highest engaged tweet was “Did you know, Chocolate Easter eggs were first made in the early 19th century?” This tweet featured a photograph of a chocolate egg. The fourth highest engaged tweet was “Join us next Thursday for The History Girls- ideal for anyone interested not only in history, but also in the process of writing about it.” Finally, the fifth highest engaged tweet was “Can you guess where the Bixby house originated from? #timelinetuesday.”

These tweets show the wide range of how Old Sturbridge Village is attempting to interact with the 21st century visitor. With what Old Sturbridge Village tweets, they are able to leave the 1830s time zone. It is interesting to note that many of the tweets that fell into the highest engaged tweets were tweets that asked questions. Within each month, none of the tweets overlap on topics. In this case, Old Sturbridge Village is encouraging the visitor to interact with them using 21st century technology.

4.6 Google +, Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr

Google +, Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr all need to be noted because they are social media accounts that Old Sturbridge Village has but they were not analyzed. Most were not analyzed because they do not have analytic features. Anything posted on Google + is also simultaneously posted to Facebook. The museum uses Google + because the more they post from it, the more likely their posts will be on top when people Google-search things. This is how Google works.

Instagram was added in 2015 and as Old Sturbridge Village has quickly gained followers, it has utilized the account more. Photos that are posted to Instagram link to be posted to Facebook. General photos are posted and also advertisements for upcoming events. Advertisements may be slightly different than the ones seen on Facebook. For example, the ones on Facebook may be longer. Instagram does not have an analytic feature.

Pinterest is used to highlight pictures of each of their major events. There is also a board that highlights historic recipes. Finally, there is a board titled “love from our fans,” which consists of repins from visitors. Pinterest also does not have a large following and therefore was not analyzed for this project.

Old Sturbridge Village currently has 10 Tumblr followers. The museum generally uses Tumblr as a method for reblogging posts. These are primarily photographs posted on Tumblr by visitors. Tumblr does not offer a way of easily tracking activity and interactions. Also, it can be argued that with only 10 followers, Tumblr does not play a

huge role in the visitor experience. For these reasons, it was decided that Tumblr would not be a focus of this thesis.

Social media is a unique output of Old Sturbridge Village. Although each social media account is associated with Old Sturbridge Village, the online setting gives the Village more flexibility with their emphasis on the 1830s time period. The existence of the social media account in itself is breaking the time period. Social media allows Old Sturbridge Village to extend its' visitor experience beyond the day that the visitor comes to the museum. Through the Facebook and Twitter posts it can be seen that Old Sturbridge Village uses social media to bridge the past and present for the modern visitor.

This chapter examined the visitor experience on the non face-to-face front. Old Sturbridge Village uses signage, brochures, rack cards, mapguides, and social media to convey messages to the visitor. These messages help to enhance the visitor experience and relay what information Old Sturbridge Village finds important to the visitor. Finally, these 'outputs' of the museum are direct results of the group consensus during discussions.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Old Sturbridge Village is the largest living history museum in the Northeast. It is located in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. The museum was founded by the Wells family in 1946. Currently, the mission of Old Sturbridge Village is to be a “learning resource of New England life, and invite each visitor to find meaning, pleasure, relevance, and inspiration through the exploration of history.” Even after 70 years, Old Sturbridge Village continues to engage visitors of all ages from the community through many ways. To achieve this positive visitor experience engagement, constant balancing is necessary for Old Sturbridge Village. The museum must stay rooted in the 1830s but also attract the ever changing 21st century visitor. The ideas of how to best balance this tension have been explored through interviews of employees, participant observation of meetings, and content analysis of signs, Old Sturbridge Village produced literature, and social media. Several key themes are evident.

The main goal of all of the employees at Old Sturbridge Village is to create a positive visitor experience. This is done through the interactions that visitors have with the museum, including signs, interpreters, social media, etc, and the experiences that are created. Through the interviews, it is evident that each employee has a different opinion of how to accomplish this. Again, a balance must be achieved. And, at Old Sturbridge Village, it is achieved through staff discussions and consensus. Finally, the importance of changes for a purpose related to the visitor experience was emphasized throughout.

5.0 Interviews

For this thesis, eight employees from Old Sturbridge were interviewed. Interviews provide an individual analysis of the museum. The interviews were taken of employees from varying departments to gain a broader perspective of thoughts on the visitor experience at the museum. The individual analysis of the employees at Old Sturbridge Village revealed that the number one goal for Old Sturbridge Village, in the opinion of employees, is to establish a positive and fun visitor experience.

But, what is necessary for a positive and fun visitor experience is debated. Each employee has a different opinion of what the most important part of the visitor experience is. They do, however, agree that a well rounded mixture of experiences at Old Sturbridge Village is necessary. The thoughts of what portion of the visitor experience is most important can be summed up into three categories: interpretation, creating experiences, and utilizing the Old Sturbridge Village collection. Many employees would like to see more interpreters throughout Old Sturbridge Village. This would add more action to the Village and give visitors more chances to talk to historians. Creating experiences includes opportunities for the visitor to try an activity. Most employees who were interviewed felt that Old Sturbridge Village already does a good job at being hands on, but it could be improved to include even more experiences, such as chances to try activities within the Village, workshops that visitors can sign up for, and big events. Finally, utilizing the collection includes using more of the historic collection to have teaching experiences with visitors.

Although the employees agree that establishing a positive and fun visitor experience is the most important goal of Old Sturbridge Village, they do not agree on

how essential the time period is to that goal. Old Sturbridge Village is rooted in the 1830s, but some employees feel that this date is loose and the experience that visitors have is more important. Other employees believe in keeping strictly within the time period. These employees argue that the time period is the foundation of the museum and that diverting from the time period may be confusing to visitors. Ideally, these employees would not like to alter the time period at all, but they know that it must happen under certain circumstances. In conclusion, the individual analysis of Old Sturbridge Village showed that the most important goal of the museum is a positive and fun visitor experience. Employees acknowledge that to achieve this they must compromise their individual goals for the museum.

5.1 Participant observation

The second method for examining Old Sturbridge Village as a case study was participant observation. This method is important because it examines the group thoughts, amongst museum employees, on the visitor experience. These group thoughts are expressed during meetings as employees come to conclusions as a group on events.

All of the meetings and discussions analyzed showed how the individual feelings of employees get blended together to create a group plan of action on how the museum functions. It is clear that the museum finds events important to the visitor experience and that repeat visitors are especially valued. One example of this is that Old Sturbridge Village is surveying visitors to gather their feedback on changes. Also, for each event discussed during the large planning meeting, most of the changes made from the previous year were made in order to improve the experience for visitors. For this

reason, events are constantly changing. It is important to note that changes are visitor experience driven. The Old Sturbridge Village staff is constantly striving to improve things for visitors. During discussions, they ask each other what worked and what did not from the previous year in an effort to understand the best ways to improve the events. Although the group of employees does not always agree on every event detail, compromises are made and balances are achieved. The group consensus is that the overall goal of everyone is to have successful events that draw people in and leave visitors with a new appreciation of the past. This is essential to the success of Old Sturbridge Village.

5.2 Signs, Brochures, Rack Cards, Maps

Signs, brochures, rack cards, and maps are the output of Old Sturbridge Village. All of these outputs are used to convey messages to the visitor. Signs are seen by visitors during their visits. Brochures and rack cards are displayed at Old Sturbridge Village but mostly used off site to convince people to visit the museum.

Signs are an important element to the visitor experience because they allow Old Sturbridge Village to continue interacting with visitors even when there is not an interpreter present. During this research, it was found that signage is not consistent throughout Old Sturbridge Village. There are many types of styles and fonts used. Many of the signs at Old Sturbridge Village are also outdated and look worn. This may seem inane but matters because consistent signage would help to provide one clear message to the visitor.

Brochures and rack cards are the first impression that potential visitors get of Old Sturbridge Village. They set the mood for what the visitor experience could be and help

potential visitors determine whether they are interested in visiting the museum. Several messages can be observed from the brochures and rack cards. Events are important. They are highlighted throughout the brochures and rack cards. Also, through donations, visitors can ensure the same visitor experience for future visitors.

5.3 From the Social Media

Old Sturbridge Village uses a variety of social media platforms. They are an important aspect of the museum's visitor experience because social media is a way that Old Sturbridge Village chooses to extend its' visitor interactions beyond the museum. Social media shows the most interesting balance between the 1830s time period and the 21st century. It is a 21st tool used to teach about the 1830s.

In general, social media shows the wide range of ways that Old Sturbridge Village attempts to reach visitors before and after their visits. The pure number of social media outlets used shows that Old Sturbridge Village is attempting to connect in every way possible. The range of types of social media posts shows the Old Sturbridge Village is able to deviate from the 1830s time period without negative backlash. Knowing this, Old Sturbridge Village can use social media as a place to bring relevance to 21st century visitors and make posts that bridge the past with the present.

5.4 Recommendations

Throughout its seventy years, Old Sturbridge Village has changed its' visitor experience many times. This change is necessary for the museum to continue to thrive. Research for this thesis explored how the museum successfully balances the immersive experience of the 1830s with the expectations of the 21st century visitor. From this study, several recommendations emerged for how Old Sturbridge Village can better

engage the 21st century visitor. These are all given without looking at costs. It would be beneficial to Old Sturbridge Village to have someone dedicated to researching the visitor experience and compiling data on it.

Since the visitor experience begins before the visitor sets foot on Old Sturbridge Village grounds, the first recommendation is to update the Old Sturbridge Village Website. Currently, it is not very user friendly. A website that is clear to use and appealing will help attract visitors to the museum. Also, the social media coordinator should continue to use social media to bridge the past and present. Additional social media outlets, such as Snapchat, should be explored. Snapchat is a way that many museums are advertising events. It is also a way that museums are connecting to the young adult generation. Old Sturbridge Village should continue its efforts to create ways that visitors can use social media to connect with the museum after their visits. This effort may include photo-posting challenges or creating hash tags for visitors to use during specific events.

Another recommendation is to update signage. Signs should give a clear cohesive message. Currently, they do not. Many of the signs need to be updated simply because they need to be repainted. Old Sturbridge Village should also provide better orientation to the Village to its visitors. Currently, the visitors are thrown into the Village without any orientation. No background is given to the immersive 1830s experience that they are about to have. A short video could be provided at the visitor center and used to orient the visitors to what they are about to experience.

Currently, Old Sturbridge Village visitors are given a paper mapguide with a map on one side of the paper and a daily listing of events on the other side. The museum

should work to develop an Old Sturbridge Village app. Apps are something that 21st century guests have come to expect. Included in the app should be a map, the daily listing of events, and information about each building.

Finally, Old Sturbridge Village should continue to make efforts to have a thriving, living, breathing Village. Adding costumed interpreters is essential to this effort. Additional interpreters will add action to the Village. Also, more of the large scale events that draw in visitors are necessary. To do this, there needs to be a full team dedicated to events, not just one person.

5.5 Conclusion

Old Sturbridge Village works hard at balancing the 1830s, a time period in which the museum is rooted, with the 21st century, a time period in which the visitor is rooted. The museum achieves this balance through its emphasis on group consensus and a continual process of self assessment, particularly regarding its special events. The number one goal for Old Sturbridge Village is to provide a positive and fun visitor experience. The interviews of chapter two and the group discussions of chapter three revealed this. Sometimes, individual employees must make compromises to achieve this goal. How these compromises come about were outlined in chapter three, the participant observation section. Employees voiced objections to certain time period deviations and weighed whether the deviations were important for the visitor experience. Other ways that Old Sturbridge Village balances the 1830s time period with the 21st century visitor are outlined in chapter four. Social media provides an outlet for Old Sturbridge Village to step outside of the 1830s time period and make connections to the 21st century visitor. There are several ways that Old Sturbridge Village can continue

to re-imagine the 21st century visitor and improve the visitor experience. These ways include orienting the visitor better to the 1830s, utilizing more technology (both social media channels and an app), updated signs, and adding more costumed interpreters to the Village to add action. Through continued balancing, teaching, and adapting, the future looks bright for Old Sturbridge Village and the museum can continue to model best practices in the field of visitor's experience. In the next seventy years, there is little doubt that the museum will continue to find relevance with modern visitors and give them an appreciation of the stories that shape our history.

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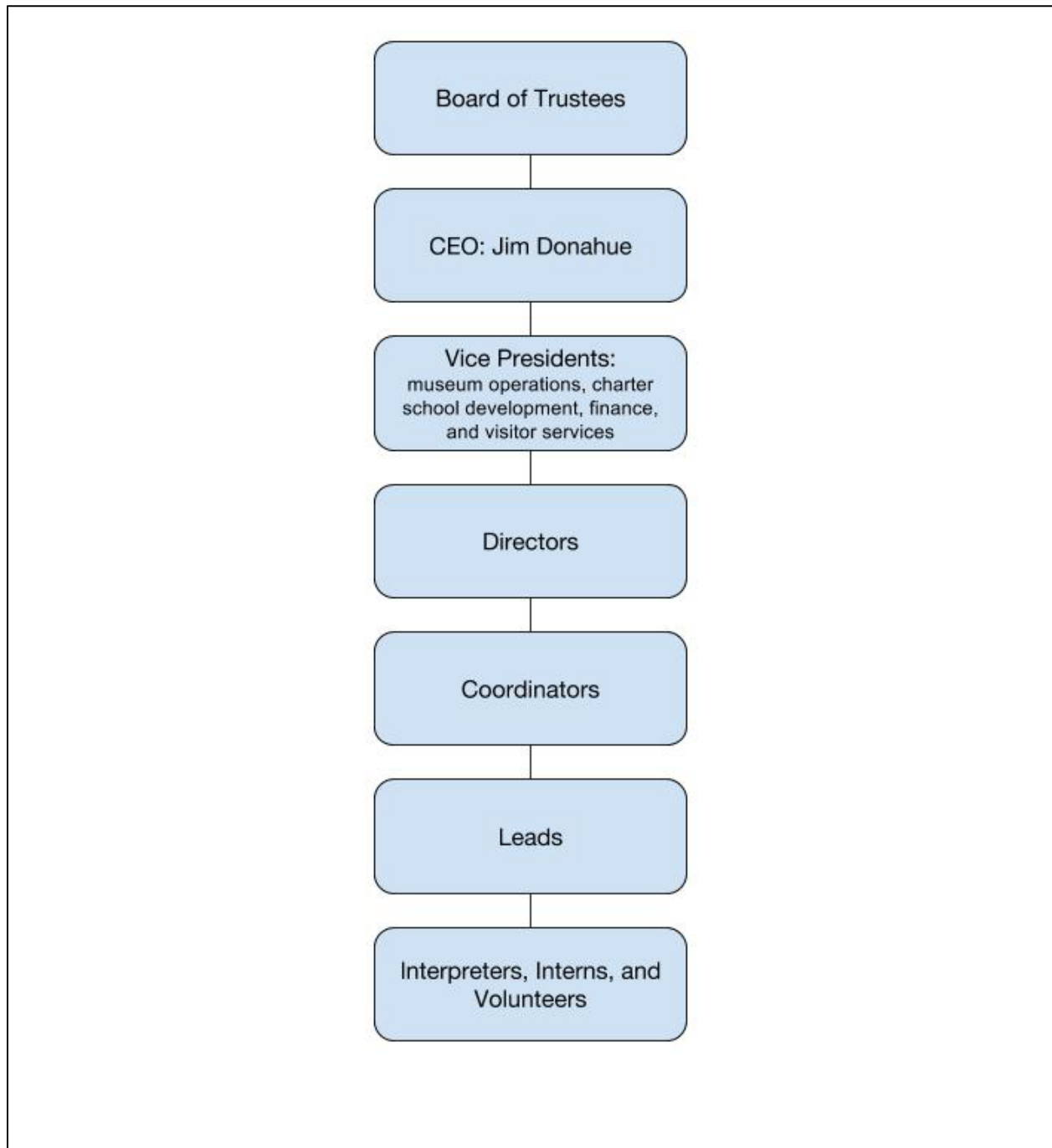
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APPENDIX A: OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE STRUCTURE



APPENDIX B: SIGNAGE IN THE EXHIBIT SPACE



B1: Child's World Sign, 2016.



B2: Early Lighting Sign, 2016.



B3: Bullard's Tavern Sign, 2016.



B 5: Exhibit Signs Relating the 1830s to 2000s, 2016.

APPENDIX C: SIGNAGE ORIENTING VISITORS TO THEIR LOCATION WITHIN OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE



C 1: Outdoor Map, 2016.



C 2: Sign to River Walk, 2016.

APPENDIX D: SIGNAGE ORIENTING VISITORS TO THE TIME PERIOD OF OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE



D 1: Sign Orienting the Visitor to the Village, 2016.



D 2: Sign Orienting the Visitor to the Time Period of the Village, 2016.



D 3: Sign Orienting the Visitor to the Time Period of the Village, 2016.



D 4: Sign Orienting the Visitor to the Time Period of the Village, 2016.



D 5: Sign Orienting the Visitor to the Time Period of the Village, 2016.



D 6: Sign Orienting the Visitor to the Time Period of the Village, 2016.

APPENDIX E: SIGNAGE FOR EVENTS

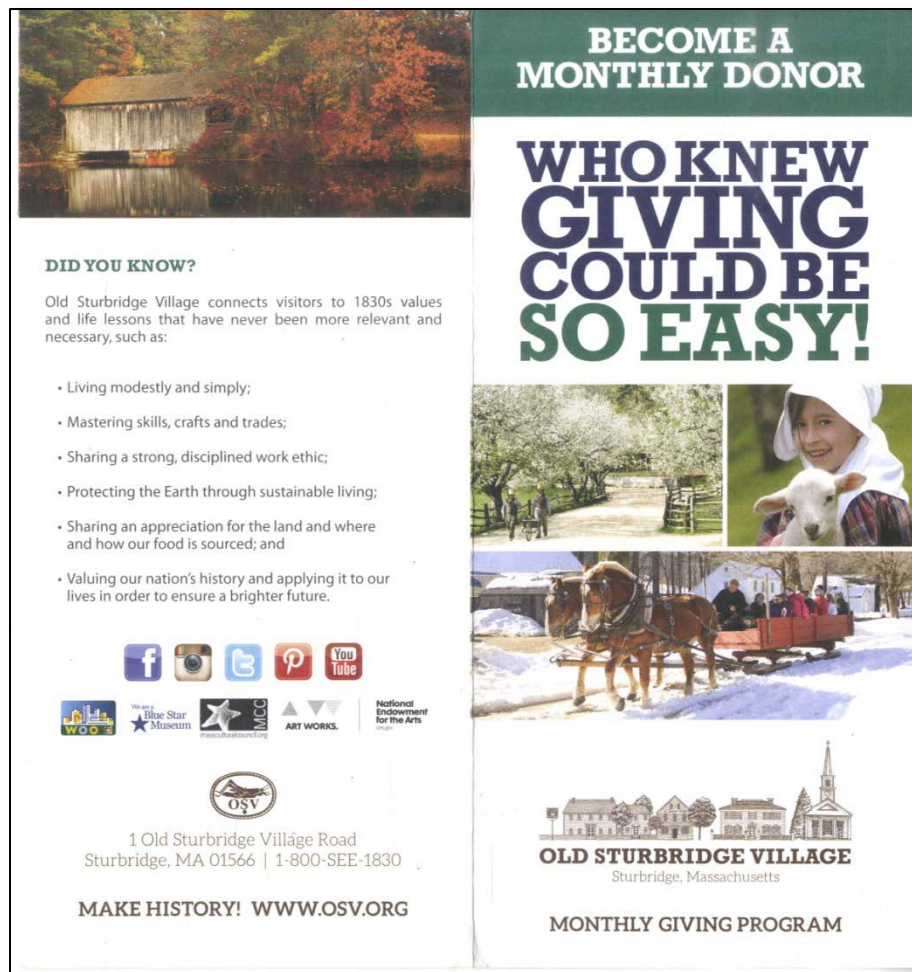


E 1: 4' x 4' Outdoor Sign, 2016.



E 2: Small Event Signs, 2016.

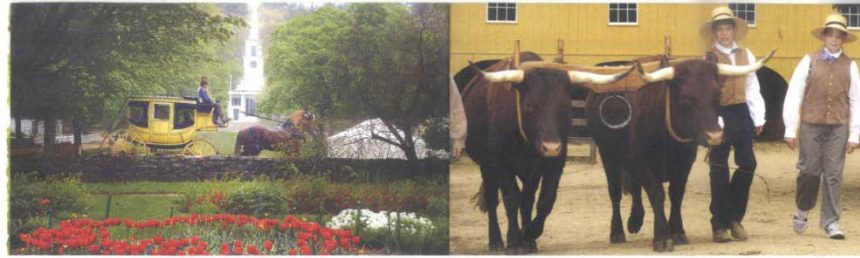
APPENDIX F: Brochures



F 1: Back and Brochure of Donor Brochure, scan 2016.



F 2: Inner Flaps of Donor Brochure, scan 2016.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION



replace roofs, clean chimneys and upgrade interiors.

Built from the ground up in 1946, Old Sturbridge Village is the steward and caretaker of more than 40 of New England's prized historic buildings. However, our collection of New England buildings comes with the care and upkeep associated with 200 year old structures. Help us repair and paint clapboards and window sashes,

COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITS



rotate our collection through the Village's permanent exhibits.

Our staff of curators is charged with the care and cataloging of the Village's collection of more than 60,000 historic artifacts and furniture, as well as the 40,000 volumes housed in our Research Library. Our curatorial staff needs the resources to research, plan and build our engaging and informative exhibitions, as well as

HORTICULTURE AND AGRICULTURE

Visitor favorites at the Village are our agriculture and horticulture programs, especially our heritage breed animals. Supporting their 24/7 feeding, animal husbandry and veterinary check-ups requires an enormous investment of staff time and resources. Our agriculture staff is also responsible for caring for the Village's 80 acres of fields, gardens and apple orchards, as well as miles of wooden fences.



YOUTH EDUCATION

Each year, Old Sturbridge Village hosts more than 55,000 school children through field trip experiences and hands-on workshops. The museum's team of educators works every day to connect students with early American practicalities, values and their relevance to modern-day life. From hiring engaging educators to introducing innovative curricula, the Village is working to make our interactive, immersive museum more accessible to students of all ages.



0095580-1115

F3: Inner Flaps of Donor Brochure, scan 2016.

YES! I want to provide sustained support to Old Sturbridge Village through a monthly contribution!

☐ I authorize an automatic monthly payment of:

Become a Villager ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50
 Become a Federalist ☐ \$85 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250
☐ Other \$ _____

☐ I authorize a one-time payment of:
\$ _____

Choose the program you would like to support:

☐ Where It's Needed Most
☐ Historic Crafts and Trades
☐ Historic Preservation
☐ Collections and Exhibits
☐ Horticulture and Agriculture
☐ Youth Education

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

☐ Check payable to Old Sturbridge Village enclosed
☐ Please charge the total amount of \$ _____
 on the following credit card:
☐ AMEX ☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ DISCOVER
 Card # _____
 Expiration _____
 Signature _____

MAIL TO:

Development Office
 1 Old Sturbridge Village Road
 Sturbridge, MA 01566

For more information contact us at
 development@osv.org or 508-347-0294



Old Sturbridge Village

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Jim Donahue, President and CEO

Dear Friend,

Old Sturbridge Village is not just a museum, but a living, breathing village with needs that must be addressed 365 days of the year. Every day we are responsible for preserving our historic buildings and collections, feeding and caring for our heritage breed animals and maintaining our more than 200 acres of fields, gardens and forest. Running a village is as much of a challenge today as it was in the 19th century.

The museum's earned income, generated through ticket sales, food service and lodging, makes up less than half of the revenue the Village requires to maintain our museum campus and education programs. As a nonprofit organization, we rely on our donors to generously invest in the work we do every day.

Old Sturbridge Village's new monthly giving program now allows donors to give year-round, which assists the museum's daily operations and helps to address unexpected needs. For as little as \$25 a month, you can help the Village remain vibrant and viable every day of the year.

Become a monthly donor today! The certainty of your support will help Old Sturbridge Village make history for our visitors 365 days a year.

Many thanks,


 Jim Donahue, President and CEO

F 4: Inner Flaps of Donor Brochure, scan 2016.





OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE
Sturbridge, Massachusetts

LOCATION

Find us at the junction of I-90 (Mass Pike) and I-84 on Route 20 in Sturbridge, MA. From I-90 take exit 9 and from I-84 take exit 2.

Using GPS, enter 29 Stallion Hill Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566.






ADMISSION

Adults	\$28
Seniors (55 and over)	\$26
Youth (3 to 17)	\$14
Children (2 and under)	Free
OSV Members	Free
Active-Duty Military Families	Free

- Open year-round | Hours change seasonally
- Free return visit within 10 days
- Free parking
- Group rates available

CONNECT WITH US




1 Old Sturbridge Village Road
Sturbridge, MA 01566 | 1-800-SEE-1830

MAKE HISTORY! WWW.OSV.ORG



WHO KNEW HISTORY COULD BE SO AWESOME!

New England's Premier Living History Museum
40 Historic Buildings | Working Farm and Mills | 200 Forested Acres

MAKE HISTORY! WWW.OSV.ORG

F 5: Back and Front of General Brochure, scan 2016.

WHO KNEW HISTORY CO





INSPIRING!

Step back into 1830s New England at one of the nation's largest outdoor living history museums. Experience a simpler time when the rhythm of life mirrored the seasons of the year, and survival depended on living off the land. Discover early American traditions, practicalities, values and their relevance to modern-day life. From sustainable living and homesteading to field-to-table farming and cooking, New England history will amaze and inspire you and your entire family!



It is no surprise that couples find Old Sturbridge Village to be the perfect destination for a first date, romantic getaway or New England vacation.

Romantic

Whether you are touring the Village on a horse-drawn stagecoach, taking in the new *Kindred Spirits* exhibit, or hiking through our picturesque native woodlands, there is no better place for couples to escape the rigors of everyday life. The Village is even one of New England's most popular and celebrated wedding venues!





FUN

Learn, laugh and explore as costumed historians, farmers and artisans invite you to card wool, dip candles, harvest vegetables, plow with oxen, and more. Meet the Village's extraordinary heritage breed animals, make something spectacular in the Hands-on Craft Center, and create family memories in the KidStory play area or outdoor playground.




Amazing



Looking for that perfect reminder of your amazing trip to New England or shopping for that special someone? Old Sturbridge Village's Museum Gift Shop and New England Bookstore, as well as the Miner Grant Store, have been carefully curated with thousands of gift items to meet your shopping needs. Village-made redware pottery, tinware and fudge are must-haves!


F 6: Inner Flaps of General Brochure, scan 2016.

OULD BE SO...




Relaxing


Spend the night at the Old Sturbridge Inn and Reeder Family Lodges located adjacent to Old Sturbridge Village. Stay in our historic 10-room Oliver Wight House or in the comfort of 29 modern rooms, each with a private entrance and curbside parking. Inn and Lodges guests enjoy complimentary continental breakfast, an outdoor pool and playground, and discount admission to the Village.



DELICIOUS

Savor the wholesome flavors of field-to-table inspired sandwiches and salads at the Village Café. In the Bullard Tavern Cafeteria, guests can dine on seasonal selections that reflect the recipes and flavors of early American cuisine. Each Sunday, the Oliver Wight Tavern serves a scrumptious brunch featuring made-to-order omelets and waffles, a carving station, seasonal entrées and homemade desserts.





2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 16	Heirloom Plant Sale
May 23 – 25	Wool Days
May 30 – 31	Pound of Cure: A Health Fair
June 13	Antique Car Rally
June 15 – 21	Freedom Week
July 3 – 5	Independence: 4th of July
July 18 – 19	Summer Work and Play
August 1 – 2	Redcoats and Rebels
August 1	Twilight Encampment
August 15 – 16	Textile Weekend
September 5 – 7	Family Fun Days
September 16	Homeschool Day
September 19 – 20	Craft: Beers and Trades
September 26 – 27	Crafts at Close Range
October 17 – 18	Dig In: A Field-to-Table Festival
October 24	Collectors Forum
November 4	Homeschool Day
November 7 – 8,	Bounty: A New England
14 – 15, 21 – 22, 26	Thanksgiving
November 11	Veterans Day
November 14	Scout Day
November 27 – 29	Winter Market
December 4 – 6,	Christmas by Candlelight
11 – 13, 18 – 20	
Dec. 26 – Jan. 3	Winter School Vacation Week

Please confirm dates before your visit at www.osv.org

F 7 and F 8: Inner Flaps of General Brochure, scan 2016.

APPENDIX G: RACK CARDS



G 1 and G 2: Front and Back OSV Lodges Rack Card, scan 2016.



Old Sturbridge Village

Boy Scout Program




Immerse yourself in America's proud past. OSV provides year-round programs that help Scouts fulfill Badge requirements.

HANDS-ON STUDIOS

- Tiger
- Bear
- Wolf
- Webelos

MERIT BADGE WORKSHOPS

- Metalwork (Tin or Blacksmith)
- Pottery

Attend one of our annual Scout Days in early spring & Scout Day in the fall. Online registration begins a month in advance of the event dates.

orienteering



Scan this code with your mobile device to watch an OSV Boy Scout slideshow.



To learn more and register:
www.osv.org/youth
 508-347-0285



Old Sturbridge Village

Hop Into History Overnights



★ Please visit our website for more information about our Traditional Overnight Program schedule and availability.

★ Contact us to discuss customization to meet your Scout's interests and needs.



www.osv.org/youth
 1-508-347-0285

Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA 01566

G 3 and G 4: Front and Back Boy Scouts Rack Card, scan 2016.

 Old Sturbridge Village

vacation

Discovery Adventures

Costumed and non-costumed adventures provide hands-on history for children ages 6-17. Join us during winter, spring, and summer school vacations.







cooking

games

crafts

DURING WINTER, SPRING, AND SUMMER SCHOOL VACATIONS

- **DISCOVERY ADVENTURES**
Children dress in 1830s costumes and learn historic hearth cooking, farm, and garden tasks, and 19th-century crafts and games.
- **EXPLORATION ADVENTURES**
Non-costumed adventures in Native American traditions, farm life, seasonal foods, and more. Fanciful cooking, creative crafts, and hands-on lessons in history.
- **AGES 6-17**
1-day, 2-day, and 5-day sessions, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
- **DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCES**
Filled with interactive adventure—a unique school vacation alternative.

Scan this code with your mobile device to watch a Discovery Adventures video. Get the free mobile app at <http://gettag.mobi>.



www.osv.org
800-SEE-1830

Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA 01566

 Old Sturbridge Village

for kids!

Learning Adventures







games

fun

memorable

BIRTHDAY PARTIES
Traditional tea party, 19th-century magic, and more. Includes admission, \$10 gift certificate, and a hands-on activity.

HOP INTO HISTORY OVERNIGHTS
Join us for a night of fun, frolic, and adventure. Scouts, schools, and other youth groups are welcome. Cook on an open hearth, play games, and take a lantern tour.

HOME SCHOOLERS
Learn while doing. Old Sturbridge Village provides active learning opportunities for children of all ages year-round. Attend one of our four annual Home School Days.

SCOUTS
Immerse yourself in America's proud past. We provide year-round programs that help Scouts fulfill Badge requirements. Attend one of our three annual Scout Days.

To learn more and register:
www.osv.org/youth
508-347-0285

©2018 OSV 0211


G 5 and G 6: Front and Back Kids Rack Card, scan 2016.

Old Sturbridge Village

Explore
Old Sturbridge Village
in a brand new way!

TaleBlazer
An education
initiative between
Old Sturbridge
Village and MIT's
Scheller Teacher
Education
Program

The TaleBlazer mobile phone app:
an OSV augmented reality experience.

 **countrybank**
A proud sponsor of Old Sturbridge Village
www.countrybank.com

Old Sturbridge Village
Sturbridge, MA 01566 **www.osv.org**
800-SEE-1830

Old Sturbridge Village

TaleBlazer is a decision based
game that integrates modern technology
(our smartphones) with the setting of 1830s
rural New England. **It is your goal** to
successfully lead your family through the
choices faced by a New England farming
family in the 1830s – while avoiding debtors'
prison.

How to Play

1. Download TaleBlazer
from either the App Store
or Google Play
2. Press PLAY under
Old Sturbridge Village
3. Press PLAY under
Dollars and Sense
4. Starting at the Visitor Center
walk to meet the characters
5. Tap  to see your home page
6. Tap  to see your family
7. Tap  to see your choices
8. Tap  to revisit characters

Need HELP? Ask Visitor Center staff.






Specifications

- Mobile devices must be equipped with enabled GPS positioning technology.
- Sufficient storage to cache game images and videos must be available. At least 50MB is recommended.
- **iOS** version 6.0 or higher is required.
- **Android** version 2.3.3 or higher is required.
- Google Maps API must be bundled with OS






Old Sturbridge Village
Sturbridge, MA 01566 **www.osv.org**
800-SEE-1830

G 7 and G 8: Front and Back Tale Blazer Rack Card, scan 2016.

H: SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMPLES

Tweets	Top Tweets	Tweets and replies	Promoted	Impressions	Engagements	Engagement rate
	Old Sturbridge Village @oldsturbridge · Feb 20 Happy National Love Your Pet Day! We love our furry friends here at the Village! #NationalLoveYourPetDay pic.twitter.com/Kde4hxegMI View Tweet activity			1,395	21	1.5%
			Promote			
	Old Sturbridge Village @oldsturbridge · Feb 5 What will you be doing with the kids during February Vacation? Come join us for February Adventures! ow.ly/XNoCD View Tweet activity			881	3	0.3%
			Promote			
	Old Sturbridge Village @oldsturbridge · Feb 10 The Old Sturbridge Inn & Reeder Family Lodges offers romantic packages for couples and fun activities for families ow.ly/Y81az View Tweet activity			817	8	1.0%
			Promote			
	Old Sturbridge Village @oldsturbridge · Feb 2 From 1828 on, Brooks made and fired how many kiln loads each year? #TimelineTuesday #OldSturbridgeVillage ow.ly/XNj0D View Tweet activity			811	6	0.7%
			Promote			
	Old Sturbridge Village @oldsturbridge · Feb 10 Kids may participate in costumed adventures during winter school vacation week, with a focus on arts and crafts. ow.ly/Y80lc View Tweet activity			760	4	0.5%
			Promote			

H 1: Top Tweets February, 2016.

	OldSturbridgeVillage @oldsturbridge · Mar 30 The Vermont Covered Bridge is one of only 12 left in Massachusetts. #architectureMW pic.twitter.com/3y26fn3XBj View Tweet activity	1,770	43	2.4%	Promote
	OldSturbridgeVillage @oldsturbridge · Mar 9 Join us this weekend for Irish music, food, step dancing, and stories at Celtic Celebrations! View Tweet activity	1,547	9	0.6%	Promote
	OldSturbridgeVillage @oldsturbridge · Mar 27 Did you know, Chocolate Easter eggs were first made in the early 19th century? pic.twitter.com/zm3SiumnuY View Tweet activity	1,094	27	2.5%	Promote
	OldSturbridgeVillage @oldsturbridge · Mar 23 Join us next Thursday for The History Girls- ideal for anyone interested not only in history, but also in the process of writing about it. View Tweet activity	851	7	0.8%	Promote
	OldSturbridgeVillage @oldsturbridge · Mar 29 Can you guess where the Bixby house originated from? #TimelineTuesday #OldSturbridgeVillage osv.org/bixby-house View Tweet activity	747	5	0.7%	Promote

H 2: Top Tweets March, 2016.

APPENDIX I: ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

BOARD APPROVAL

ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD

COVER SHEET FOR RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSALS

Primary Investigator/Faculty Advisor: Catherine W. Zipt
Date of Submission: 1/21/2016
School/Department: SAHP / Historic Preservation
Names of Additional Researchers: Christina Coleman
Title of Research Project: The Visitor Experience: Reimagining the 21st Century Visitor
Grant Funding Supporting this Research: N/A

[Check one] Academic level for this project:

☐ Faculty/Administration ☒ Graduate ☐ Undergraduate

[Check one] Review sought by principal investigator: Refer to the HSRB handbook guidelines. Note that the HSRB may change the review type.

☐ EXEMPT ☒ EXPEDITED ☐ FULL

Researcher Code of Ethics: I declare that I have read the Roger Williams University Statement of Researchers' Ethical Principles for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research and am familiar with my obligations thereunder. Furthermore, I agree to abide by that Statement of Ethical Principles adopted by Roger Williams University as part of the Human Subjects Review Board policy.

Catherine W. Zipt
Investigator's signature

For HSRB Board use only:

Tracking #: GS-16-01-28

[Check one] Committee decision regarding review:

☐ EXEMPT ☒ EXPEDITED ☐ FULL

[Check one] Approval status:

☒ Approved
☐ Resubmit

Jason Patel

Signature of Chairperson

02/17/16

Date

All on-going projects must be renewed one year after the approval date.

APPENDIX J: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Graduate Thesis Project: The Visitor Experience: Reimagining the 21st Century Visitor

Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a study on the *visitor experience*. This is a graduate thesis research project. This study is for the college course *Graduate Thesis* taught by Professor Catherine Zipf, Historic Preservation Department, Roger Williams University. Professor Zipf can be contacted at czipf@rwu.edu

You must be at least 18 years of age. If you agree to be in this study, you will be interviewed by Christina Coleman, a student researcher. The student will ask you questions about the changing visitor experience in your museum and how that is balanced with the museums' sense of time and place. You may be recorded but all recordings will be deleted after they are transcribed. Your information will only be used for class assignments. You will not be compensated for this interview. It is expected to last approximately 15-25 min.

Your participation in this study is *voluntary*. You may refuse to answer any question, you may refuse to participate, and you can withdraw at any time. All your answers are *anonymous*. You will not be asked for nor do you need to provide your name. Information will be shared with the academic world (professor, other students) and the museum that is used as a case study.

The student researcher can answer any questions you have regarding this study. If you have any additional questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Professor Zipf.

Thank you for your participation.

Name

Date