



CONNECT ING WITH HISTORY



A Guide to Visiting Museum Village

Welcome to Museum Village!

Thank you for booking your school trip with us. On the following pages you will find brief histories of many of the buildings at Museum Village.

Museum Village interprets 19th century and early 20th century history (1850-1910) of the Hudson Valley region. It has a huge collection of historic artifacts dating from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries, but the buildings around the green were built in the 1940s and 1950s to house this extensive collection and (with the exception of the log cabin) are not historic buildings. We at Museum Village believe in participatory education, so we encourage you to share the following histories with your class, get them thinking about how life in the 19th century was different from today, and encourage them to ask questions during their visit of our interpreters and each other. We also encourage you to have your students look up terms with which they might be unfamiliar (such as “apprentice” or “wheelwright”), read portions of this booklet aloud, and talk about what they think things might look, feel, and even smell like at Museum Village. With each building, we have included a few questions to think about and discuss before your visit. We hope this booklet helps enrich your field trip and your curriculum.

Thank you again for choosing to visit Museum Village and we hope you enjoy your trip.

The Staff at Museum Village

How to visit Museum Village with Students

We at Museum Village understand that it can sometimes be difficult to get the most out of a school visit to a museum. Students are excited to be out of class and often have a hard time paying attention to interpreters and exhibits.

The following are suggestions to help make your visit a more meaningful learning experience and involve your students in history.

For exhibits:

Have your students take turns reading labels and exhibit panel text aloud. This is especially helpful with introductory panels, which can sometimes be quite long. Have older students read a paragraph each and younger students a sentence or two.

When your students run across a word they don't know, have them try to figure out what it means from the context of the sentence or have them write it down to look up when you get back to school.

Have your students guess what an object or artifact may have been used for before you read the label.

Use the questions following the history of each building in this booklet to help jumpstart discussions.

With interpreters:

Ask the interpreter before s/he begins if students can ask questions throughout the talk or if they should save them until the end. Then, encourage your students to ask questions they are curious about.

Ask if the interpreter has objects or artifacts that students can touch or pass around during the talk.

If students are curious about something that the interpreter cannot answer or if you run out of time, have the students write it down to look up when you get back to class.

Museum Vocabulary:

ARTIFACT: A historical or period object used by people in the past. It can be an everyday item, something valuable, or even a piece of trash!

EXHIBIT: A collection of objects or artifacts and images with written text explaining what they are and why they are important. Exhibits can also use lights, sounds, and even smells to help understand the subject.

INTERPRETER: Sometimes called *docents*, interpreters are the people who help you understand history.

PRIMARY SOURCE: A document, letter, newspaper, magazine, or diary/journal from a historical time period used to interpret and understand that time period. Photographs, film, paintings, music, and other objects can also be considered primary sources.

We hope this information is helpful to you in engaging your students in **Connecting with History**.

The Vernon Drug Store



The Vernon Drug store features the authentic artifacts, fixtures, and furnishings of a 19th century drug store originally located in Florida, NY.

The original store was owned by John C. Griddley. In 1883, at the age of 17, Charles Vernon became Griddley's apprentice. In 1886, he passed the New York State Pharmacy Board exam and was given his pharmacist's license. He was the youngest licensed pharmacist ever in New York.

Unfortunately, he was considered too young, being 10 months shy of his 21st birthday, and inexperienced, not having completed the needed 3 year apprenticeship, to practice. However, Griddley retired and sold his store to Vernon; the State of New York disregarded the age requirement and allowed him to practice. The longest practicing pharmacist in New York, Vernon retired at the age of 77 in 1943. He was, at the time, the oldest licensed pharmacist in NY.

What kinds of things were sold in drug stores?

How do you think they might be different from drug stores and pharmacies today?

The Log Cabin

This log cabin originally stood just beyond the forest of Dean's Mine, halfway between Central Valley and Highland Falls, New York. It was built sometime in the late 18th century, probably after the Revolutionary War. Like most log cabins, additions and siding were added later. During World War II, the U.S. government purchased much of the forest the log cabin stood in for training purposes and sold it to civilians after the war.

A former West Point employee purchased the land it stood on and after taking apart the siding on it to build a chicken house, discovered the log cabin underneath. It was purchased by the museum and dismantled, each piece labeled, and reassembled at its current location.

Like many log cabins, it has low ceilings, low doorways and small rooms, all of which helped in the effort to conserve heat. The furniture was designed to be multi-functional. One of the tabletops can flip to become a

bench or storage area. Because things were designed so much smaller than they are today, many visitors assume that people were shorter 150 years ago. That is not true. People were roughly the same height as today.

A cabin like this would have been built in a rural area by hand, probably by middle- to lower-middle class farmers. The logs likely came from the trees around it. A cabin like this may have housed a single couple, a family of four, or a family of thirteen.



*How much time do you think people spent inside? How much privacy did they have?
Do you think you could fit all of your things in a log cabin? Your family's things?*



The Monroe Journal and Print Shop

In the 19th century, the printer was a valued member of the community. He printed everything from news announcements to postcards to invitations to a local party. His office quickly became the place for debates and discussions, including the latest gossip. Private citizens and private shop owners paid him to design and print pamphlets, stationary, tickets, contracts, and advertisements.

The printer used letters and numbers of various sizes, called type. These were carved from wood or made of metal. Printers ink was a mixture of boiled

linseed oil and lampblack, the fine soot that results from the incomplete combustion of oil. Paper and the printing press were other important tools of the printer's trade.

Some printers also printed newspapers, books, and/or were postmasters, meaning they distributed local mail. Newspapers brought national and international news to rural areas and small towns

How do you get your news?

How long do you think it took to print an entire book by hand?

Broom Shop

Broom making was an important craft in the early years of the United States. Many families made their own brooms, but some were manufactured and sold through a general store, like our Merritt Store.

The tools in this shop come from Orange and Ulster counties. Most of them were made in the late 19th century, and were used by professional broom makers.



Other pieces of equipment came from 19th century prisons (such as Sing Sing in Westchester County) and insane asylums. It was common practice for inmates to work making brooms to be sold by their institutions, just as prisoners make products today.

Before the invention of plastic, brooms were made out of a plant called broom corn that had long, thin, stiff bristles that was perfect for sweeping wooden or stone floors. Outdoor brooms were also made of twigs and branches to keep the yard clear or for early homes with dirt floors.

Do you have a broom at home? What is it made out of?

How do you keep your floors clean?

Schoolhouse

The Museum Village Schoolhouse is based on an early one-room schoolhouse built out of stone that was located in Orange County. Students from grades 1-8 sat together and learned many of the same subjects students learn today. Our school year today (with summers off) is that way because of schools like the Monroe Schoolhouse. Students spent their summer months working in the fields and at home with their parents. When the harvest was completed, students would head off to school. Many boys did not graduate till they were in their upper teens. Many were pulled out of school to continue to assist their father on the farm, making them perhaps about 18 when they finished 8th grade.

Up until the Civil War, school teachers were men because they were usually better educated and were thought to be better able to discipline rowdy boys than women. But starting in the 1860s, women were chosen because they were thought to be

better at caring for children, were cheaper to employ, and more readily obeyed school boards. They were required to stay single during their term. Once they did get married, they were terminated and no longer allowed to teach. Many teachers started teaching directly out of 8th grade, and were not too much older than their students.

How do you think teachers managed to teach all eight grades in one room?

How many of your teachers are women? Why do you think that is?



Candle Shop

Autumn was butchering time on the farm and in the 19th century waste was not an option, so farmers used every part of the animal. The tallow (melted down fat of an animal, such as a sheep or cow) was used to create the wax of the candle, while cotton or linen string were used for the candle wicks. By late 19th century, however few non-farmers were making their own candles.

The candle shop at Museum Village is named for the Belknap and McCann Candle and Soap Company that existed in Newburgh from 1783-

1912. The names are the same, but similarity ends there. The three story building in Newburgh was one of Orange County's major suppliers of candles and soap, producing five thousand candles a day. Our small shop is more typical of a tradesman's shop, where a few hundred candles would be produced each week.

Do you use candles for light? If not, what are they used for?

Blacksmith

The blacksmith was the man to go to if you needed anything made out of metal. Farmers came from miles around to get horse shoes made, tools fixed, and other things that only a blacksmith could do.



A blacksmith kept a small shop, and often had an apprentice as well. Blacksmiths were men and it was truly uncommon to see a woman blacksmith, but some did exist. Blacksmiths forged iron into whatever was needed, from nails to plows to skillets. In order to create the different pieces, the blacksmith needed to soften the metal with intense heat and used a forge in order to do so. A forge is an open fireplace equipped with a fan or bellows, which controlled a stream of air going to the fire. The combination of the charcoal or coal and draft made the fire hot enough to melt iron.

Are there any blacksmiths left today?

J.C. Merritt General Store

Our Merritt Store is named after a similar store, owned and operated by John Carlton Merritt from 1875 to 1924 in Marlboro, NY. Many of the items you see in the store are from the original Merritt Store.

The store was open for business Monday through Saturday and occasionally Sunday morning. Mr. Merritt, along with his wife Ann, and brother Philip, worked in the store stocking, displaying, and selling merchandise. The store would open early in the morning and in some cases stayed open later for customers who could not make it in during the day.

The Merritt Store served a 10-12 mile radius and deliveries were made twice a week to outlying farms. This service was provided year round, by either wagon or sleigh. Mr. Merritt sold a variety of goods including pants, shirts, corsets, gloves,

bolts of fabric, gunpowder, hardware supplies, school supplies, and an assortment of food and kitchen tools. Small general stores like the Merritt Store were important in rural areas as they were often the only place to buy machine- and factory-made goods. Many stores used the barter system or traded goods, but by the end of the 19th century, purchasing was done almost entirely in cash or credit.



*Where do you buy groceries, clothes, and hardware today?
Do you use cash? credit? trade?*

Firehouse

The sounds of the fire bell and men shouting through town reminded everyone of the dangers of fire in the 18th and 19th century. The first firefighters were everyday citizens in town with a simple bucket by the door. They lined up and passed buckets of water to the burning building until the fire was extinguished. This line was simply known as a bucket brigade.

As buildings grew taller, the bucket brigade became obsolete and a new method of firefighting was needed. The hand pumper, the forerunner to the fire engine, was created to give firefighters the ability to bring large amounts of water to a fire, shoot it where it was needed, and extinguish the fire quickly.



The steam pumper was developed in the 1840s, and used the power of a steam engine to pump water from its source to a fire. The powerful engine soon replaced the hand pumper, was much heavier and required horses to bring it to the fire.

The Fire House at Museum Village also has a ladder carriage which followed wherever the pumper would go. It had several free-standing ladders which, when hooked together, allowed firemen to climb up several stories.

Hooking those ladders together, however, could be dangerously unsteady. In the 1850s, many fire houses acquired trucks with the ladder permanently mounted to the truck for stability and safety. The Fire House at Museum Village shows a variety of hand and steam pumps, along with hose reels and ladder trucks utilized in the 19th century.

Do you know any firefighters?

What kind of equipment is used to fight fires today?

Natural History Building



The Natural History building is a great example of how museums were arranged in the 19th century. If it was part of the natural world, it was collected: from butterflies to fossils, from rare orchids to (perhaps the most famous piece in our collection) the mastodon. Harry, named after Harriman, NY where he was discovered, is one of the 3 most complete mastodon skeletons in the world!

Between 1820 and 1860 and again from 1890 to 1920, Americans had a love affair with natural history. The upper and middle classes ventured outside and looked for

interesting objects such as rocks, shells, and even fungi! They attended lectures, seminars, and read books to learn more about the natural world around them. The Natural History Building presents a variety of objects typical to a 19th century Cabinet of Curiosities. It is arranged for visitors to enjoy the wonders of the natural world.

Scientists were still learning about the natural world throughout the 19th century and in Orange County, mastodons were among the most common fossils. In the early 1800s, some people thought that mastodons were still alive somewhere in the interior of the continent! Thomas Jefferson even asked Lewis and Clark to bring back evidence of living mastodons on their exploratory expedition. But by the end of the century, paleontology (the study of ancient animals) had become a science.

What do you think 19th century scientists thought when they found the bones of animals like mastodons?



Saltbox House

Although the buildings at Museum Village are not original, many features are copies of early American architectural styles. The saltbox house, with two stories in front, and one behind and long sloping roof derives its name from the slant-lid boxes used to store salt in homes.

Saltbox construction began as an inexpensive addition to a barn. Essentially a lean-to, it required less time and fewer materials than a conventional gabled roof, but allowed just as much space. It eventually became a style of architectural design for houses, too.



Situated to take advantage of natural heating and cooling elements in nature, the long roof faced north protecting against the winter winds, while the windowed two story portion of the house faced the sunnier south, absorbing heat. In cold New England winters, it proved to be a great design.

The Saltbox House is currently is currently the home of the Mid-Hudson Woodcarvers Guild.

Another architectural style you'll find on site is Greek Revival. The Firehouse, Vernon Drug and Broomshop all have Greek Revival Elements. Greek Revival was particularly popular in the 1820's and 30's for two reasons. The early republic was looking back to ancient Greece as a model for governance and the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire in the 1820's echoed America's revolution against the British and rallied a sense of patriotism.

Are there other saltbox buildings at Museum Village?



Farm Tools Exhibit

Walking into the farm tools building, you may get a feeling of walking among large trees. The columns and pillars of this building were once living American Chestnut trees. These trees all died from an infestation of *Endothia Parasitica*, a fungal blight from Asia which swept through the forests of the Eastern United States in the early 20th century, obliterating the American Chestnut.

In the 1930's, Roscoe Smith collected these specimens from Orange, Rockland, and Westchester Counties to create a memorial to them and a reminder that they were the wood

used to build many American barns and trim windows and doors of farmhouses. He planned a large room using 24 trees as interior columns, and another 24 as outdoor pillars. As he was making his plans, the world erupted in war, and America joined in the fight of World War II. Mr. Smith put the construction of his "tree house" on hold. After the war ended, he discovered that many of the trunks of the chestnut trees were too decomposed to be used. The Farm Tools building now stands as a small version of what Roscoe Smith originally imagined.

The Farm Tools exhibit showcases a variety of tools used by late 18th and 19th century farmers. Planting started in early spring and the work did not stop until the last field was harvested and the last animal butchered in late fall. Horses and oxen, along with every single family member and sometimes hired farm hands were needed to make a good harvest. Innovations in farming tools have helped make the work easier. For example, the invention of the steel-bladed plow made spring planting much easier and faster than when working with a wooden blade. Machines that could plant many seeds or harvest many plants at once also helped the farmer.

Planting and harvest tools were not the only ones a farmer needed. Farmers also had other skills in woodworking and other trades. For example, many farmers worked on roofs repairing shingles, patching holes, and ensuring the family was safe and sound.

Tools used for this were a two man saw, a *froe* to spilt shingles, and an *adze* to make smooth wooden surfaces.

How do farmers work today? What tools do they use to help grow crops?

These American Chestnut Trees are the columns and pillars in the Farm Tools Building.

Read the signage to learn about the blight of these amazing trees.



Wheelwright and Wagon Shop

The wagon maker was an essential part of any community. Travel increased dramatically in the 19th century as immigrants came to the country and with others headed west. For many people, the easiest way to get from place to place was by wagon. The wagon maker was part carpenter and part wheelwright. He also depended upon the services of the blacksmith in town, and the two usually became quick friends as well as business partners.



Wheelwrighting was a specialized trade, demanding the use of different types of woods based on their strength.

The Wagon Shop at Museum Village is named after a local shop in Orange County. William Gaunt was a wagon and carriage maker of the late 1800's. The trade was passed on from his father, Delaplain Gaunt, from whom William learned all he knew about wagon making. William had several different shops in Orange County including shops in Oxford Depot, Chester, and Monroe. The Gaunts made wagon making a family affair with Delaplain's wife assisting in making the lining for the wagons, sleighs, and coffins constructed by Delaplain. In 1884, William went to work in a wagon factory with the skills he learned from his father. There he worked with Rowland Cocks until 1898, when William and his family moved to the town of Monroe and opened a small shop of their own.

The Wagon Shop, together with the Livery shows the progression of public transportation in the United States. With citizens constantly on the move and wanting to explore new places, the wagon maker was one of the most valued members of the community until the turn of the 20th century.

Where do your parents get their vehicles fixed?



The Livery

Public transportation has always been important in people's lives. Before buses, cars, and taxis, many had to rely on carriages, horses, and other methods to get around. The Livery at Museum Village houses a wide variety of carriages used for public transport from the 18th century on.

The style and structure of carriages changed throughout the years from an enclosed coach used by royalty in the Middle Ages to the simple wagons of rural America in the 18th century to the fancy factory-made buggies of the late 19th century.

Many early roads were made from logs or just plain dirt and city streets were paved with cobblestones and bricks. In the 1820s a new type of road material called *macadam* - made of crushed stone cemented together with water and stone dust - was invented in England and soon the idea was exported to America. By the 1870s, graded roads were common and asphalt was just being introduced.

Public transportation also expanded and diversified with the development of cabs, omnibuses, firefighting equipment, hearses, and many other different types of transportation. The end of the carriage age was ushered in with the mass production of the automobile in the early 1900s. Today, carriages are still used in sport and recreational driving, but many can be seen preserved and on display at museums like Museum Village.

*How do you get from place to place?
What is your street made out of?*

J. Alexander Fancy Weaving

This exhibit is full of artifacts used during the early 19th Century. Looms set up for weaving, spinning wheels ready to make your thread.



The center of the room has a hands-on exhibit for part of your experience. There are samples of raw cotton, a table loom to try out and a niddy noddy to try. A niddy noddy was used to make skeins of yarn.



Changing Exhibits Building

This building is used to exhibit different displays and changes during the year.

One of the exhibits that is currently part of this building is a 19th Century Bathroom.

(Please note that the exhibits are updated often and this may not be part of the showcase when you visit)



The Pottery

Pottery and ceramics were an important part of everyday life in the 19th century. Primarily used for cooking, food storage, and as dishes, glazed pottery was waterproof and a good conductor of heat. Ceramics were also used as commercial containers for things such as medicine or even liquid batteries.

Stoneware, made from clay with a high silica and flint content, was very popular in the 19th century. The Pottery contains a display of stoneware, including redware, which uses red clay slip as decoration. It also features salt glazed pottery, which was made by throwing salt into the kiln when the pots were almost done. The salt vaporizes instantly in the extreme heat and forms a thin, hard, pebbled glaze on the pottery.

Potteries were often located near streams, rivers, or other places with large clay deposits. This made each potter's work different, simply because of all the different local clays. Fine white clay in particular was valued and even mined to be sent to factories. By the end of the century, most pottery and other ceramics were made in factories both large and small.

What are your dishes made out of?

(Please confirm that the potter will be available on site.)

The Energy Building

The Energy Building contains some of the largest and most unusual artifacts in the Museum Village collection. Here you can see the evolution of technology that forever changed the 19th century.

Beginning in the 1830s and '40s, the industrial revolution transformed America. Over the next 60 years, Americans experienced incredible change. The creation of canals in the Northeast allowed for easier travel and shipment of goods. This meant that those who lived far from port cities and manufacturing areas could purchase luxury goods for cheaper and they were more readily available. Steam technology, particularly with steamboats and steam railroad engines, also made movement of goods and people around the country easier.

The invention of the telegraph and the expansion of the U.S. Postal Service helped make communication that once took weeks a matter of seconds or days.

Artificial lighting, first gas and then electricity, lengthened the American day, allowing work and recreational activities to continue long into the night. But it was machines that changed the lives of Americans the most. From Corliss engines that powered manufacturing to gasoline engines that made farm work easier, to the simple electric fan, by the end of the century, there was not a single American whose life had not been touched in some way by a machine.

Technological advancement was generally regarded as a good thing in the 19th century, regardless of some of the environmental and social costs. Coal, coal gas, wood, and gasoline technologies were dirty and polluted the air and waterways. Pollution like London's "pea soup" fog actually came from smog due to burning coal.

Modern sanitation and the environmental movement grew out of a desire to clean up America's heavily polluted waterways and air.

What are some new technologies that didn't exist in the 19th century?

What are some technologies invented in the 19th century that we still use today?

Can you think of anything in your life that was NOT made by a machine or in a factory?

What were and still are some of the environmental impacts of using coal as a fuel? Other fossil fuels?

What are the alternatives and do you think they too have unintended consequences like pollution?

(This Building is currently closed. Updated exhibit is scheduled to be opened in 2014.)

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