

A Look at Coggeshall Farm,

OSV's New Partner Museum

Coggeshall Farm Museum • 1 Colt Drive • Bristol, RI 02809
www.coggeshallfarm.org



At the beginning of 2020, Old Sturbridge Village partnered with another museum called Coggeshall Farm. Coggeshall Farm is located along a salt marsh in Bristol, Rhode Island. Both museums tell visitors about New England life in the past, but the stories and settings are a little different. Let's learn more about Coggeshall Farm!

Old Sturbridge Village shows a whole community from the 1830s. Coggeshall Farm shows what life was like for people on a **tenant farm** in the 1790s. A tenant farmer lives on land owned by someone else. They work the land for the owner and pay

them rent in the form of crops, dairy, and wool from sheep. Coggeshall Farm sits on a salt marsh, and Bristol was an important shipping port at the time. The town was known for **exporting** onions, horses, and dairy products. It was also involved in the trade of enslaved peoples during the late 1700s. Before the arrival of British immigrants, the Wampanoag people most likely occupied this land. How do you think life was different for people living near the water in Rhode Island compared to people in the rural town like Sturbridge?

The farm's land is big, but there are only seven buildings on the property. The buildings include two barns, blacksmith's forge, and a house. Let's go inside the house and learn more!

The house has three fireplaces, or hearths. One of them is in the kitchen. Just like at OSV, the hearth is for cooking food over the fire. Off the kitchen is a pantry full of cooking implements and vessels made from wood, clay, and iron. What kinds of foods do you think they made in this kitchen?

As a child living in a house like this one during the 1790s, you might have helped with chores like washing dishes, sweeping, and gathering firewood. What do you do to help around your house today?

One of the rooms off the kitchen is the front parlor and sleeping quarters. This room has a bed in it, but the family also used the room to entertain guests. The bed has a mattress stuffed with straw! In the 1790s, the bed was often the nicest piece of furniture the family owned. The family placed the bed in view of their visitors to show off their wealth and success. Off this room is the back parlor. The back parlor

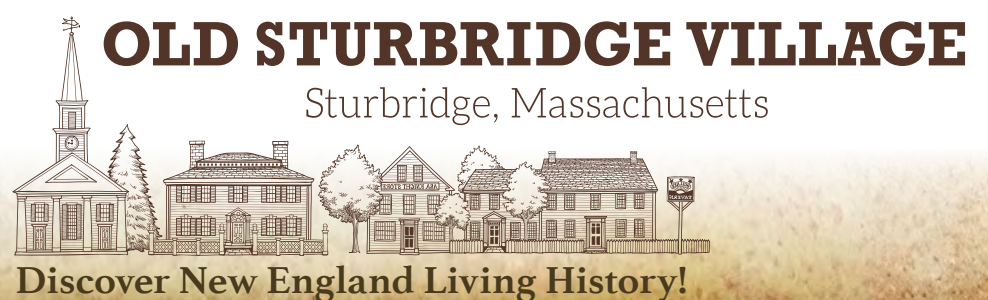


also had many uses. The family would eat meals here, as well as do other chores like spinning wool into yarn. Only the wealthy families at this time had a room meant only for dining.

Outside of the home, the tenant farmer and his family would tend to the gardens, animals, and lots of land. By the 1790s, the forests around Coggeshall Farm were cleared of trees to make room for pastures. Farmers raised livestock for food, clothing, and their labor. The farm animals raised at the farm here included dunghill chickens, Narragansett turkeys, Devon cows, and Gulf Coast sheep. Just like at OSV, Coggeshall Farm's animals are **heritage breeds**. This means the animals are the same types that raised by people in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are very hardy animals, meaning they are stronger and more adaptable than modern-day farm animals. Children helped around the farm by feeding and cleaning up after the animals. Collecting eggs was one of their main jobs. Do you have animals that you help take care of?

Old Sturbridge Village and Coggeshall Farm display what everyday life was like for New England farm families in the 18th and 19th centuries. Despite the years and miles between the two museums, there are many similarities between the two sites. Visit both museums yourself someday and see what you can uncover!

Learn more about Coggeshall Farm museum at <https://www.coggeshallfarm.org/>.



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