

THE FARMERS' MUSEUM®

The Farmers' Museum Collections

The Farmers' Museum, established in 1943 in historic Cooperstown, NY, provides visitors with an immersive experience into village and farm life of nineteenth-century New York, through authentic demonstrations and exhibitions featuring traditional rural farming and domestic practices. The Museum's location—on farmlands tilled today in the same manner as they have been for centuries past—provides visitors with a rare opportunity to gain new insight into the region's cultural heritage by viewing the Museum's comprehensive collections within the very setting in which they were created and used. In addition to exhibitions, the Museum offers visitors of all age groups an opportunity to revisit and rediscover the rich rural history and culture of New York State through a variety of educational programs.

After operating as a working farm and dairy for over a century, The Farmers' Museum opened to the public in 1943 with a collection of some 5,000 farming tools and agricultural objects from rural New York. The Museum's collections have continued to grow since its establishment, and today include over 23,000 rural artifacts that feature significant examples of 19th-century architecture, agricultural tools and farming implements, heritage breeds of farm animals and gardens, and New York State stoneware.

Agricultural Tools and Artifacts

Much of The Farmers' Museum's extensive collection of agricultural tools and machinery was acquired from the significant collections of the Otsego County Historical Society; the collection of William D. Sprague, the founder of the Early American Industries Association; and the collection of the Wyckoff family, one of Brooklyn's oldest farming families. The Farmers' Museum's wide collection of agricultural tools document farming practices used in 18th and 19th century New York, and demonstrate New York's long history as an important agricultural region. The museum's collections encompass objects used in providing the necessities of everyday life as New York State and the nation grew, including farming tools used in making food, fiber, lumber, and transportation. Included in the museum's holdings are carriages and important collections of traditional farming tools such as plows, hand planes, and other wood-working tools, domestic objects such as cooking utensils, and many other historic regional objects.

The Main Barn and 1845 Village

In addition to the specialized tools and machinery used by farmers in past centuries in raising animals and tilling land, the museum's holdings include important examples of traditional New York State architecture. One of the most significant examples is the museum's Colonial Revival stone barn, a magnificent building designed by architect Frank Whiting in 1917 for the prize dairy herd of Edward Severin Clark. Built of local stone with two symmetrical silos, the Main Barn is listed on the National

Register of Historic Places.

Spread across a green in the center of the museum's property is the recreated 1845 Village, encompassing more than 20 historic buildings, which have been relocated to the museum's property from small towns across central New York State. These buildings represent and preserve a range of architectural styles common in the mid-nineteenth century and typify the domestic and commercial composition of a small rural town in New York. The architecture preserved in the village includes:

- Middlefield Printing Office, dating back to 1829, a small stone building where newspapers and almanacs were printed and sold;
- Cornwallville Church, a mid-nineteenth century Methodist Episcopal church at the top of the village green that served a major religious and social role in rural New York;
- More House, a Federal-style house built in 1818 for Jonas More, a wealthy businessman and farmer;
- Bump Tavern, built at the end of the 18th century for travelers and livestock drovers and remodeled in the 1840s, when an elaborate two-story porch was added to the front of the building;
- Field Blacksmith shop, a large stone building where rural blacksmiths made and repaired farm equipment;
- Filer's Corner Schoolhouse, a small, rural schoolhouse built in the mid-nineteenth century for children to attend when not needed on their families' farms;
- Seneca Log House, a wooden house moved from the Seneca Reservation at Tonawanda, that illustrates the life of a Native American family in the 1840s.

Heritage Livestock and Gardens

Lippitt Farmstead, a working farm that employs 19th century agricultural techniques, is also home to several rare breeds of farm animals, including Devon cattle, Dominique chickens, Naragansett turkeys and Cayuga ducks.

In addition, many of the museum's historic buildings are complemented with heritage gardens, such as a medicinal garden outside the Village's pharmacy, a traditional vegetable and herb garden near the Seneca Log House; a Maze Garden; a Children's Garden; and Bump Garden, which is based on designs by Andrew Jackson Downing, the nation's foremost landscape architect in the 1840s.

The County Fair and the Empire State Carousel

Other highlights of The Farmers' Museum's collections include The Country Fair, a summer-long attraction recreating a late 19th-century fair and featuring three colorful tents housing interactive exhibits and activities for visitors of all ages. One of the attractions in The Country Fair is the Cardiff Giant, a giant, "fossilized" man found buried in a farm in Cardiff, New York in 1869. The giant had been planted by a cigar manufacturer from Binghamton, New York, to prove the gullibility of his fellow Americans and to challenge the prevailing beliefs in literal interpretations of the Bible. Considered to be the 19th century's greatest hoax, the Cardiff Giant was acquired by The Farmers' Museum in 1947 and has been on display for over 50 years.

In 2006, the Museum acquired The Empire State Carousel. Now part of The Country Fair, The Empire State Carousel is a beautiful, handcrafted merry-go-round created over two decades by over 1,000 volunteer carvers, quilters, painters, and woodworkers from across New York and based entirely

on the states' history and culture. It features a range of original carvings, paintings, and quilts specially designed for the carousel, including riding animals indigenous to New York; carved folklore panels representing the various regions of the state; and portraits of famous New Yorkers such as Susan B. Anthony, Irving Berlin, Alexander Hamilton, Edward R. Murrow, Jackie Robinson, and Walt Whitman.

The Frances and Douglas Faulkner Stoneware Collection

The Museum's Frances and Douglas Faulkner Stoneware Collection, the country's most comprehensive collection of identified New York State stoneware, features pottery from each stoneware producing community in New York. Unlike two other forms of pottery common in 19th-century New York—red ware and yellow ware—stoneware shops typically stamped their names on the pieces they produced. Each piece in the Frances and Douglas Faulkner Stoneware Collection is stamped with the potter's mark, illustrating the variety of pottery designs and decorations produced throughout New York State.

The Collections in Exhibitions

Many of the Museum's collections are used in its exhibition program, which includes both major ongoing and special exhibitions.

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