



GWEN GRIFFIN
Executive Director,
Old World Foundation

PRESERVING THE PAST AND BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

What's Your Story?

- Everyone has a story.
- Who you are...
- Where you came from...
- What dreams you have for the future...

Each story is as unique as the individual telling it. Old World Wisconsin is a collection of beautiful stories. There are stories of hope and freedom, injustice and hardship, loss and achievement, and courage and triumph. Why did immigrants choose to leave the homes they knew and come to America? Were they pushed to escape famine, religious persecution and disease or did opportunity pull them here? The opportunity to satisfy their hunger for land, work, freedom. Why did they settle in the unforgiving Wisconsin wilderness?

Nestled in the beautiful Kettle Moraine and located in Eagle, just 17 miles from Waukesha, Old World Wisconsin is a collection of these stories. Owned and operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society, Old World Wisconsin creates amazing, immersive experiences for guests that allow them to explore these stories and make connections to their own past. Over 60 historic buildings are located on this 600-acre site, along with 100+ animals and 20 heirloom gardens. Costumed facilitators bring history to life for nearly 50,000 visitors each year.

In 1984, a small group of dedicated people formed a "friends" group to raise money and awareness about this unique local treasure. This small group grew into an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization known as Old World Foundation. The foundation is guided by a group of 11 dedicated trustees and three staff members who

continue to raise funds for projects and programs at Old World Wisconsin to keep these stories alive for future generations.

Through the support of our Friends partners and supporters, Old World Foundation was instrumental in providing the needed funding to relocate many of the historic buildings to Old World Wisconsin from around the state. These buildings are not just cold, rigid structures that dot the landscape of Old World, they are portals that transport guests back in time. They set the stage and create a space for historic exploration to begin. These buildings assist facilitators in telling the stories of our ancestors. Old World Foundation has long recognized the need to preserve these buildings and has continuously provided funds for their upkeep. In fact, during the past year, two of these buildings, the Clousing Barn and 1880s Yankee

Farmhouse, each received a new coat of exterior paint, thanks to donations from supporters made through Old World Foundation. This coming year, another building, the Shoe Shop, will also receive a much-needed fresh coat of paint.

The animals and gardens also tell stories. They tell the stories of how the settlers survived by growing vegetables and how they preserved food for the winter. Animals were not only another source of food, but also a source of clothing and power to plow fields and clear the land.

But perhaps the best way to explore the stories of these immigrants is through interactive, engaging activities such as leather-working or rope-making. Children (and adults) enjoy the magical memories that are created when they can roll up their sleeves and immerse themselves in activities that are as fun as they are educational. Children's programming is forefront at Old World Wisconsin.

Over 25,000 children visited Old World Wisconsin last year either with their class on a school field trip or with their families. Children not only learn about history when they visit, they learn about geography, economics, physics, and the arts. In addition, science, technology, engineering,



and math (STEM) principles are explored through the lens of history. Recognizing the importance of children's programming, Old World Foundation has chosen this initiative to highlight in 2020. Proceeds from our 2nd annual Sunset Soiree fundraiser that will be held the evening of Saturday, August 8 at Old World Wisconsin are designated for this initiative.

As you can see, Old World Wisconsin is a dynamic, historic site that is alive with the stories of the courageous immigrants who came to this country in search of a better life. Old World Foundation has been proud to support all aspects of these stories at Old World Wisconsin with stewardship and integrity since 1984. For more information, visit oldworldfoundation.org or call 262-594-2922. •

PROUD TO BE
**WISCONSIN'S BANK
FOR BUSINESS®**

As Wisconsin's Bank for Business®, we're proud to serve this area's companies and organizations that actively work to make our county the best it can be. Why? Because this isn't just home to us; it's home to all of us. And, as Waukesha County has grown, so have we. That's why we're committed to offering the expertise, resources, and services our business leaders need to succeed. And when you combine the best local knowledge with the security of a strong bank, it's a winning combination.

TOWN BANK
N.A.
WISCONSIN'S BANK FOR BUSINESS®

262-367-1900 | www.townbank.us

