

**Thompson-Ames Historical Society
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Travel in History with the Fourth Grade

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Take a walk back in time to the Colonial Time Period like the fourth grade students at Gilford Elementary School did during the month of February. Students researched the tradesmen and recreated an authentic village market to present their knowledge. In addition, the students composed a non-fiction book which included a collection of their informational writing and poems about these trades. As you learn about a few of the colonial trades from excerpts from this book, enjoy the students' creativity and "way with words".

Dimitri Kafanelis showcased his knowledge of colonial glassblowers with this detailed poem on the process used to make a glass product.

While the forge burns hot,
the assistant adds more wood,
like feeding a giant dragon.
Carefully the gatherer collects
the ingredients for glass,
and prepares them in the crucible,
like mixing a cake in a bowl.
From sand to glass,
then on to the blowpipe,
roll the parison on the marver.
Now slowly blowing until a bubble starts,
at last my piece takes its shape.
Flatten the bottom with the battledore.
Tap carefully!
Do not break it.



We really flipped our wigs at Village Market Day! On February 22, 2008, Hailey Nugent, our colonial wigmaker, displayed some of her products and tools.

Nathan Boutwell researched the colonial trade of the silversmith and learned about the intricate process of creating silver products. "I am the best silversmith in all of Belknap county. A silversmith with my awesome skill would make silver bowls, cups, plates, trays, candlesticks, knives, and spoons. I didn't use my own silver, though. I made objects from the silver my customers brought me. I would be able to make intricate patterns on my wares. For example, to make a plate, I would pour some molten silver [HOT!] into the mold of the right shape. If the fancy piece was made of copper, gold, or brass, I work with those metals too. The tool I would use to cut the circular edge for my awesome plate would be sharp scissors, or shears. I would then flatten the center of the plate with something called a flattening hammer. If I didn't finish before the silver cooled down, I would have to place it back in the forge for reheating. When the plate was finally finished, I was paid for my labors."

Tessa Schrupp created a poem that will bring her readers back to the schoolhouse during colonial times.

Welcome to my classroom, sit down on the bench.
Girls on one side, boys on the other.
Practice handwriting, do arithmetic, learn to read.
Lots of noise from fellow students.
Grades 1 through 8.
See the day's lesson tacked on your hornbook,
the wooden paddle,
with clear animal horn protects the lesson well.
Behave yourself for fear of receiving a whipping or other nasty punishments.
Open up your bible and read the day's passage.
Practice the alphabet on your slate.
Write neatly and carefully, do not make a mistake.
At the end of the day wait quietly until you are dismissed.
Shuffle out the door, youngest first.
Wave goodbye to your teacher, get ready to meet again tomorrow.

When visiting the cutler's shop, William Crowell was able to open visitors' eyes to incredible aspects that went along with his trade. "Come to my shop if you want something sharp. I'm the cutler in the town. I would be the person who made sharp items. Some things were so sharp that they could cut off your arm. A cutler was a special type of blacksmith. Blacksmithing was a job that could not be done at the other townspeople's houses. It couldn't be done at a regular house because it involved heating metal in a hot fire. I would use many different tools including tongs, hammers, an anvil, and a forge. Some of the other tools I used were chisels, sledges, a grinding wheel and a flatter.

Here is how I would make a scythe. First I would take a thick flat piece of metal and shape it into a blade. After that I would put it into the burning hot forge and with my tongs I pulled it out as fast as a fox. Then I put it onto my anvil and hammer fiercely until it was flat. Finally I would politely ask the carpenter to make a handle for it. Some of the sharpest products that I made were axes, dress swords, scythes, sickles and knives. They were almost as sharp as shark teeth. I also make almost all my tools, except for the anvil. The anvil was made at a foundry. A few of the duller products I made were scissors and razors. If you walked into my shop you would feel a sudden heat wave. You'd wish you never walked in. It would smell very smoky and you would see a sweating cutler working on his anvil."

Throughout this extensive research project, the fourth grade students were able to experience life in colonial times and gain a good understanding of making a living as a tradesman. Gilford's Thompson-Ames Historical Society was a valuable resource, providing us with primary sources of information to launch our trade research. We thank the Thompson-Ames Historical Society for extending this great opportunity to our classes and school.

For information concerning Gilford's Historical Society, go to www.gilfordhistoricalsociety.org or email at thoames@worldpath.net or call at 527-9009.