



## *Eighteenth-Century Apprenticeships*

### INTRODUCTION

While there were many different eighteenth-century trades, the same training system applied to each one. Boys (and occasionally girls) were apprenticed to a master tradesperson. The age at which they were apprenticed varied widely, but the average was about fourteen. At age twenty-one, after years of work in exchange for the master's providing instruction and room and board, an apprentice received his **freedom dues** (clothes, tools, or money) and became a journeyman. Having acquired a level of skill that enabled them to work on their own and even supervise other apprentices, journeymen were paid day wages. A journeyman could continue working for his current master, find work with another employer, or become a master tradesperson by starting his own business.

Apprentices and journeymen were an integral part of the eighteenth-century workforce. This lesson will help students understand the necessary role fulfilled by skilled workers in the eighteenth century and the system of training that produced them.

### OBJECTIVES

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define the terms *apprentice*, *journeyman*, and *master*.
2. Explore the skill sets of eighteenth-century tradespeople.
3. Explain the training process for colonial tradespeople.
4. Create a "help wanted" advertisement for an eighteenth-century trade shop.

### STANDARDS OF LEARNING

This lesson meets the National Standards of Learning in the areas of historical comprehension, analysis, and decision making.

### MATERIALS

Eighteenth-Century Help Wanted Advertisements  
 Graphic Organizer 1: Help Wanted  
 Francis Moss Indenture Contract  
 Graphic Organizer 2: Indenture Contract  
 "Advice to Apprentices" (for Lesson Extension Two)

### STRATEGY

1. On the board, write the words *apprentice*, *journeyman*, and *master*. Facilitate a class discussion about the meaning of each term and how it applied to trades in the 1700s. [**Note:** Refer to the definitions in the Glossary.] Write a description for each term, and have students copy each into their notebooks. The descriptions should include the process and procedures that were involved in becoming an apprentice, journeyman, or master.

2. Divide the class into teams of three or four students. Give each group a copy of the Eighteenth-Century Help Wanted Advertisements and a copy of Graphic Organizer 1: Help Wanted. Ask them to list the trades identified in the advertisements and compile a list of the skills and/or personal traits that are mentioned. Provide time for each group to share its findings with the class. Discuss any differences, and arrive at a common list. Be sure to allow time to answer any questions students may have.
3. Give each group a copy of the Francis Moss Indenture Contract and a copy of Graphic Organizer 2: Indenture Contract. Have students read the indenture contract and make a list of the obligations the contract required of Francis Moss and his master, John Draper.
4. Have each group share its findings with the class. Strive for a common list, and have students make any necessary corrections to their lists.
5. Review the content of the Eighteenth-Century Help Wanted Advertisements with students and answer any questions. Ask students to use what they've learned about colonial apprenticeships to place themselves in the shoes of a master who needs help in his shop. Have them use the information from the advertisements and their completed Indenture Contract graphic organizers to write "help wanted" advertisements for trades of their choosing. Each advertisement should:
  - Identify the trade.
  - Identify the skills or personal traits required.
  - Mention what will be expected of the employee.
  - Include a small drawing at the top of the advertisement illustrating a tool of the trade. (For example, an advertisement for a tailor might show a needle and a spool of thread; for a blacksmith, a sledgehammer or anvil; for a carpenter, a hammer, saw, or ruler.)
6. Conduct a class discussion in which students summarize what they have learned and respond to the following questions:
  - Why were these advertisements placed in the newspaper?
  - Many of the advertisements mention personal traits, using words such as "**sober**," "**industrious**," and "good moral character." Why were such traits important enough to list in the advertisements?
  - Do "help wanted" advertisements still exist today? If so, where? (Students' answers may include, but are not limited to, newspapers, trade magazines, and the Internet.)

### LESSON EXTENSION ONE

Review the Francis Moss Indenture Contract with students. Facilitate a class discussion in which students summarize what they learned about eighteenth-century apprenticeships. Divide students into groups of three or four, and give each group a blank sheet of paper. Have each group formulate two questions to ask Francis Moss (apprentice) and two questions to ask John Draper (master). After the groups have written their questions, select a student to portray Francis Moss in a "hot seat" at the front of the room. [**Note:** You may wish to have several students take turns in the hot seat, allowing each student to answer several questions.] After the groups have finished asking Francis Moss questions, select another student (or have several students take turns) to portray John Draper in the hot seat.

### LESSON EXTENSION TWO

Divide students into groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of "Advice to Apprentices" and two sheets of blank paper. On one sheet of paper, have them write, in their own words, the author's

various bits of advice to apprentices. (For example, students might sum up the last paragraph as “Keep good company” or “Stay away from friends who are bad influences.”) On the other sheet of paper, have students use their paraphrased advice as a guide to write a letter titled “Advice to Students,” in which they advise their peers on the proper means to achieve success at school.



In the eighteenth century, milliners were nearly always women. Milliners made and sold a variety of clothing accessories and other retail items.

## *Eighteenth-Century Help Wanted Advertisements*

A JOURNEYMAN CARPENTER, that understands his Business perfectly, and comes well recommended, will meet with good Encouragement by applying to me, in *Newcastle*.

WILLIAM MARROW.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), November 21, 1771.

PRINCE EDWARD, *June 10, 1774.*

I WANT to hire for one, two, or three Years, a BLACKSMITH who understands the Business in all its Branches. If any One that can come well recommended, as an industrious, sober, obliging Man, will apply before the 1st of *September*; I will give him Wages sufficient to encourage him to **persevere** in his Business.

HENRY B. LIGHTFOOT.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), June 16, 1774.

*York Town, October 9, 1751.*

I WILL give a Man that understands the Taylor's Business Ten Shillings a Week, Diet, Washing and Lodging; and others in Proportion, according as they deserve.

ROBERT MOSS.

*Virginia Gazette* (Hunter), October 11, 1751.

WANTED *immediately,*

SIX good HOUSE CARPENTERS, to whom **competent** wages will be given. None need apply unless they are well recommended, by gentlemen where they reside. Any person willing to engage in sawing a quantity of plank may likewise be employed by applying to me near the camp at *Gwyn's* island, or in my absence to mr. *James Bentley*.

JOHN FOX.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), July 19, 1776.

WILLIAMSBURG, *Sept. 25, 1777.*

GREAT wages will be given by the subscriber to journeymen GUNSMITHS, BLACKSMITHS, and NAILORS, that are good workmen. None others need apply. Six or eight boys are wanting, as APPRENTICES.

JAMES ANDERSON.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), October 3, 1777.

[Blandford, May 2, 1768.]

A YOUNG Gentleman capable of conducting the business of an **APOTHECARY**, who has a good moral character, will be employed by

W. STARK.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), May 5, 1768.

BERKELEY, *November 15, 1773.*

A good COOPER, who can be well recommended, will meet with Encouragement by applying to  
BENJAMIN HARRISON, Junior.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), November 18, 1773.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY,

A JOURNEYMAN BARBER who understands HAIR DRESSING. Such a One will meet with good Encouragement by applying to me, in *Williamsburg*.

GEORGE LAFONG.

*Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), December 10, 1772.

SLAVES

*To be SOLD for ready money, to the highest bidder, on Monday the 17th of September, at Alexandria, being Fairfax court day,*

SEVENTEEN valuable SLAVES, consisting of men, women, boys and girls; among the number are three valuable **forgemen**, a sawyer, a **collier**, a blacksmith, a carpenter, a miller, and a baker. . . . The above slaves . . . are part of the estate of John Ballendine, and sold to satisfy a debt due to the subscriber.

HECTOR ROSS.

*Virginia Gazette* (Rind), August 23, 1770.

Graphic Organizer 1: Help Wanted

Directions: Use this chart to list the skills required for each trade.

ADVERTISEMENT	TRADE	SKILLS NEEDED
WILLIAM MARROW		
HENRY B. LIGHTFOOT		
ROBERT MOSS		
JOHN FOX		
JAMES ANDERSON		
W. STARK		
BENJAMIN HARRISON		
GEORGE LAFONG		
HECTOR ROSS		





When Williamsburg printer William Rind died, his widow, Clementina, operated his business. Clementina Rind was very unusual; nearly all tradespeople were men.

## *Francis Moss Indenture Contract*

This Indenture Witnesseth That Francis Moss of the County of York by **approbation** of the Court of the County aforesaid and his own Consent hath put himself, and by these presents doth **voluntarily** and of his own free will and accord put himself apprentice to John Draper of the City of Williamsburg to learn his Art Trade and Mystery and after the Manner of an Apprentice to serve the said John Draper from the Day of the Date hereof for and During and unto the full one and Term of Six Years during all which Term the said Apprentice his said Master faithfully shall serve his Secrets keep his Lawfull Commands at all Times readily Obey: He shall do no Damage to his said Master, nor see it be done by others without giving Notice thereof to his said Master. He shall not waste his said Masters Goods nor lend them unlawfully to any. He shall not . . . contract Matrimony within the said Term. At Cards Dice or any other unlawfull Game he shall not play whereby his said Master may have Damage With his own Goods nor the Goods of others without License from his said Master he shall not buy nor sell. He shall not absent himself Day or Night from his said Masters Service without his Leave nor haunt Alehouses Taverns or playhouses but in all Things, behave himself as a faithful apprentice ought to do during the said Term. And the said Master shall use the utmost of his Endeavours to teach or Cause to be taught or instructed the said Apprentice in the Trade or Mystery of a Blacksmith and **procure** or provide for him sufficient Meat Drink Cloathes Washing and Lodging fitting for an apprentice during the said Term of Six Years also teach him to read and write with freedom Dues. And for the true performance of all and singular the Covenants and Agreements aforesaid the parties bind themselves each unto the other firmly by these presents. In Witness whereof the said Parties have interchangeably set their Hands and Seals hereunto Dated the Twentieth day of May in the Eleventh Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third King of Great Britain &c. Anno Domini One Thousand Seven hundred and seventy one.

Sealed and Delivered  
In the Presence of

John Draper  
Francis Moss

York County Deed Book 8, 1769–1777, pp. 111–112.



## *Graphic Organizer 2: Indenture Contract*

Directions: In each column, list the obligations the indenture contract required Francis Moss and John Draper to fulfill.

**APPRENTICE**

**MASTER**

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## *Advice to Apprentices*

### CHAP. LXXIV.

*ADVICE to the Young APPRENTICE, how to behave during his Apprenticeship, in order to acquire his Business, obtain the Good-Will of his Master, and avoid the many Temptations to which Youth are liable in this great City.*

I Shall now suppose the Youth has made Choice of his Education, has signed his Indentures, taken Leave of his Mother, and is fairly settled with his Master; who I shall presume to be a Man of Good-Nature . . . and Knowledge of his Business. . . . If Hopes of Bread, Prospect of Wealth, and a Settlement for Life in the World, can have any Weight upon the Mind, they ought to take place now.

As we suppose he has fixed upon his Business from a natural Liking . . . we must believe he at first takes Delight in his Business; this Liking he must keep up, by often reflecting what an Advantage it will be to become Master of it: The greater Affection he discovers to it, the greater Application he gives to it, the sooner his Labour will be over; for a Tradesman no sooner becomes possessed of the Mystery of the Craft, than the uneasy laborious Part of it vanishes: The ready and expert Workman does his Business with Pleasure; he scarce feels the Instruments he uses; every thing goes on smoothly. . . .

To obtain his Master's Good-Will, he must be **diligent** in his Business, and consider that it is a Crime against Moral Honesty to **trifle away** his Time, when he should be employed in his Master's Work; he ought to be diligent, and apply closer in his Absence than in his Presence . . . [and] must be faithful in every thing that is entrusted to his Care or Management: He should look upon his Master as his Parent, and be as watchful over his Interest as that of his Father and Mother. The Character of Honesty and Integrity, which this is the Time to acquire, will contribute more to his Success in Business and his real Peace of Mind, than every other Qualification: Art and Ingenuity without Honesty can be of no Use . . . Honesty is a Stock, sets up the Tradesman without Money, procures him Respect even in **Poverty**, and a Friend in a Country where he has no Relations.

The Apprentice, who would live in Peace with his Master and Family, must interfere as little as possible in the domestic Concerns of his House: He must keep close to his Business, and mind nothing else; he must avoid tattling between Servants, or carrying Stories between Husband and Wife. He ought to be ready to do his Mistress all the good **Offices** in his Power, and if he has any Complaints to make of her, let him endeavour to have them taken notice of by the Master himself, without making the Complaint. He must keep his Master's Secrets, both in relation to his Craft and Dealings, and to the private Affairs of his Family: He must carry no Tales to his Neighbor's House, or entertain his Friends at the Expence of his Master and Mistress's Reputation.

He ought to take his Master's Advice and reasonable Correction, with the same Submission as if he was his Father: He must consider him in the Place of a Parent, and that what he says must be for his Good and Advantage. . . .

Great Care ought to be taken in the Choice of Company: Idle . . . Fellows ought to be shunned: We soon partake of the Manners of those we converse with: Their **Vices**, by being frequent, become familiar to us, and by Degrees steal insensibly upon our Minds and convert us into one of themselves.

R. Campbell, Esq. *The London Tradesman. Being a Compendious View of All the Trades, Professions, Arts, both Liberal and Mechanical, now Practised in the Cities of London and Westminster* (London, 1747), 312–317.



A master cabinetmaker watches his apprentice sketch a design.





"Cabinetmaker," plate I in "Menuisier en Meubles" in volume 7 of Denis Diderot's *Recueil de Planches, sur les Sciences, les Arts Liberaux, et les Arts Mecaniques, avec leur Explication*, Paris, France, ca. 1762–1772.

We would enjoy receiving copies of some of your students' work from any of the lesson plans in this teacher guide. If you would care to share examples, please send them to:

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