

---

# Apprenticeship In Craft

---



edited by Gerry Williams

---

# Apprenticeship in China

---

# **Apprenticeship In Craft**

edited by Gerry Williams

Daniel Clark Books

---

This is a joint project of the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Office of Education.

---

Copyright © 1981 by Daniel Clark Books

Daniel Clark Books  
Box 65, Goffstown, New Hampshire 03045

ISBN 0-930640-02-0  
Library of Congress Catalog Number  
81-68940

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means — graphic electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or information storage and retrieval systems — without written permission of the publisher.

Manufactured in U.S.A.

First printing 1981

Designed by Jane Martell

Photographs by Gerry Williams page 9,  
Doug Ward page 23, Harvey Henningsen  
page 63, David Klopfenstein page 107,  
and Geoff Manasse page 147.

---

# Table of Content

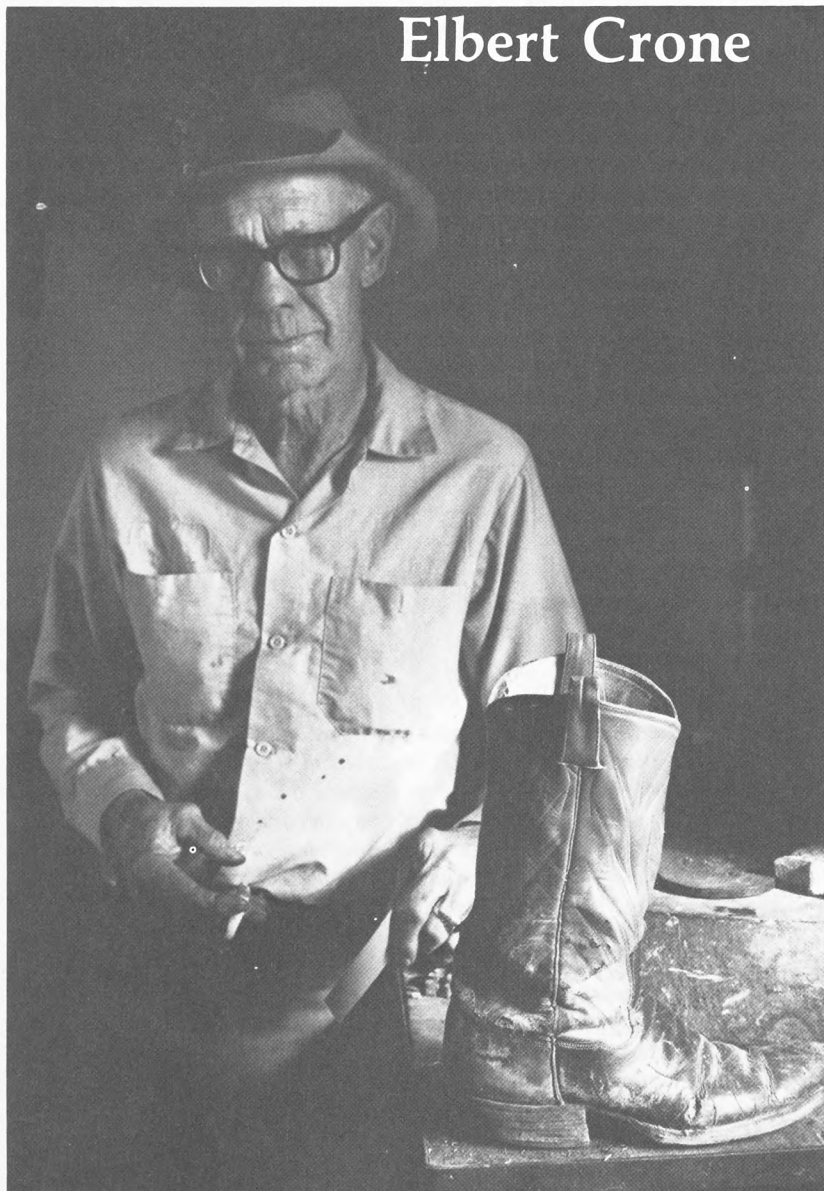
Elbert Crone	9		
Introduction	13		
Acknowledgements	17		
<hr/>			
FINDING	19		
Warren MacKenzie	21	Clotilde Barrett	43
John Glick	25	Barbro Hettling	46
Marylyn Dintenfass	31	Richard Minsky	51
James Gagnon	39	Gary Brumfield	53
Tage Frid	41		
<hr/>			
KEEPING	59		
Linda Gilbert	61	Robert H. Gray	82
Lolli Jacobsen	65	Neil Hoffman	85
Ruth Kelly Gaynes	71	Arline Fisch	87
David and Dale		Malcolm Wright	91
Zheutlin Sachs	73	Ronald Pearson	92
Carolyn M. Bloomer	76	Simon Watts	97
Walter Hyleck	80		
<hr/>			
NURTURING	103		
Ronald Pearson	105	Otto Dingeldein	124
Nancy Sweezy	108	Harold Helwig	128
Gerry Williams	112	Wendell Castle	130
Charles Counts	119	George Kokis	131
<hr/>			
RELEASING	143		
Sam Maloof	145	Lois Moran	162
Kenneth E. Tyler	148	Peter Sabin	166
John Reeve	152	William R. Adams	171
Charles Kirk	155	Jonathan Williams	188
<hr/>			
Appendix	193		
The National Endowment for the Arts	193		
Selected Bibliography on Apprenticeship and Related Topics	196		
Index	209		

---

# Table of Contents

1	Introduction
2	Methodology
3	Results
4	Discussion
5	Conclusion
6	References
7	Appendix A
8	Appendix B
9	Appendix C
10	Appendix D
11	Appendix E
12	Appendix F
13	Appendix G
14	Appendix H
15	Appendix I
16	Appendix J
17	Appendix K
18	Appendix L
19	Appendix M
20	Appendix N
21	Appendix O
22	Appendix P
23	Appendix Q
24	Appendix R
25	Appendix S
26	Appendix T
27	Appendix U
28	Appendix V
29	Appendix W
30	Appendix X
31	Appendix Y
32	Appendix Z

## Elbert Crone



*Elbert Crone, bootmaker*

*There are some boys that you can take to a master, or to a saddle shop, and all you have to do is show them one time what to do and how to do it. A week later they remember. I was that way when I was an apprentice.*

*I was eighteen years of age when I first went to work with Ted Rushing in Childress, Texas. He didn't pay me anything, as I had inherited some money when my mother died. I room-and-boarded my*

---

own self and worked with him. That man never did have to show me but one time how to do a job, and the next time it came up I could do it. That is the kind of apprentice that I always wanted, but I never did find one.

I have been in this town for twenty-six years. First we had a house trailer, and took clothes and boots out of the store and sold them. Then I bought an old sewing machine, and some saddle leather and stuff like that, and began to repair saddles. I would go to ranches, park under a tree in the vicinity, and stay until I got all the work done. Then I bought several pair of boot lasts, and an old pulling machine, and started making boots. That is all I had to have.

I am seventy-two years old and have retired. Now I do mostly saddle repair work. I don't know whether I enjoy making saddles or boots more. I know how to make saddles. Good saddles cost \$500. People still buy saddles. Good boots cost \$150 at least, with all the fancy work on them. When I could make a pair of boots years ago, and they fit my customer, and they satisfied, and he was bragging on them—well, I got a big kick out of that! There is a big bunch of people here in this town and part of the country that used to wear my boots. Some of them still have a pair.

I was down in Texas most of the time when I decided I would go into this apprentice business. In Fort Davis, Texas, I had an apprentice who would have made a real good bootmaker. He had rheumatic fever, and sometimes he would miss a day or two, or a week, because he would be sick. In four months he learned how to operate the sewing machine and do shoe repair work, and a lot of other little things that I would let him do. (It is essential to learn how to repair a pair of shoes when you are going to become a bootmaker.) He got sick one day in the shop and I called the doctor, who took him to the hospital. Two or three days later they operated on him for appendicitis. I don't think he had appendicitis, but anyway, he didn't make it and died. So I lost a good man.

I usually start the apprentice out cutting a pair of boot tops, cutting all the pieces that go into a pair of boot tops. Then I put them together. In the meantime, I have him practice on the sewing machine, doing the stitching on the boot top. We go right on through that pair of boots, get them ready for the bottoms. I show him everything. Then we start all over again.

The apprentices have to have determination to learn, and they have to want to learn in this particular business. Most of them said: "Well, I am not making any money." Well, when they are going to school, they are not making any money either. This is exactly the same thing as going to school. I give them everything I know. A lot of people will come in here and say: "How do you do that?" and I wouldn't tell them because it wasn't none of their business; they weren't apprentices.

I always treated my apprentices like I would like to be treated. I didn't ask them to do anything that I didn't want to do. I would tell them when they first come in to watch what I did, pay close attention,



*stay close to my elbow all the time, and ask questions. If they watched and asked questions, most of them would learn. Some of them wouldn't because they were not interested. You can't tell if a person is going to make a good apprentice when he starts out, because you don't know if he is really interested, even if you had interviewed him for two or three days.*

*Often the first thing an apprentice of mine wanted to do after they had seen two or three pairs of boots made was to stop all production in the shop and make themselves a pair of boots. That was a "no-no" as far as I was concerned. One of my rules was I wouldn't furnish or sell the materials to make a pair of boots until a whole year after they started.*

*I would always tell my apprentice that if work wasn't "A-1," I didn't want it done. I would rather they just tell me that they didn't want to do that, and get out of here and go about their business. I had a goal I went by: when I turned out a pair of boots, they were mates and were perfect. There wasn't no scratches, no cut places, no anything-the-matter with them. Good workmanship is something like a good carpenter. You can teach that to a good carpenter.*

*Bootmaking is dying out. I don't know of any like myself. Well, there is one in Albuquerque, one or two in Phoenix, and two or three in the South. But I don't know if they take apprentices. Bootmaking now will turn into this factory stuff. The difference is machines. In quality, machine work is nothing to compare with handwork. Handwork is the best by far. It has to be so that you could wade in water and that water won't get in!*

*Elbert Crone, Quemado, New Mexico*

*[Faint, illegible text covering the majority of the page, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]*



---

## Introduction

In the past decade craftsmen have begun to take a new look at an old institution—apprenticeship. Rooted in the codes of man's historical past, apprenticeship in the crafts has flourished for thousands of years. With the coming of the industrial revolution apprenticeship began to die—machines created a larger need for unskilled workers. However, there is now evidence to cause us to suspect that apprenticeship is not dead after all, but is alive and well and commencing to grow, nourished by new influences.

Lately the craft movement has come to appreciate apprenticeship because of events thrust upon the movement from both within and without. During the last twenty years there has been a rise statistically in the number of professional craftsmen in America. The rapid growth of their economic base has resulted in an increasing concern over the quality of their crafts, and in subsequent anxiety over the direction of their professional training. In addition, there has been a decline in enrollment within academic art departments—long the center of craft education—and this condition has been exacerbated by rising administrative costs and an inflationary economy. Finally, there have been far-reaching global changes caused by environmental and demographic dislocations, worldwide food and energy shortages, and political upheaval and war. Many craftsmen have moved toward adopting alternate and more socially responsible lifestyles.

Why should we in the twentieth century be concerned with apprenticeship? Apprenticeship is important because our crafts are rooted in its very existence. Apprenticeship is the birth of a new craftsman. Apprenticeship is a work conscience that says this is right and that is wrong. Apprenticeship is the fulfillment of the master. Apprenticeship is the beginning of spirit and love in the crafts. That so ancient a concept could find application in these modern times is a measure of its continuing rightness and strength.

A more relevant question is whether in the twentieth century apprenticeship can be made economically viable as well as socially useful. Evidence indicates that the need for alternative modes of entry into the crafts will continue to increase in the next ten to fifteen years. Dramatic changes will occur in the age and sex compositions of our labor force. Statistics indicate that the number of workers in the prime productivity brackets will double in the next ten years, causing far-reaching consequences in the job market. This increasingly dense labor market environment will have a profound effect on the crafts in the near future. The increasing fallout of workers from conventional jobs will have to be met in an innovative way—not by large-scale, impersonal programs but by programs which maximize personal relationships, freedom of choice, and the development of stable, self-sufficient livelihoods. Apprenticeship can point the way.

If we examine apprenticeship closely, in a more personal way, we will find that the master/apprentice relationship lies at the core of our daily lives. From birth to death we are constantly enveloped in a state of graceful apprenticeship. Every moment in our lives we are learning, teaching, sharing, finding, keeping, nurturing, and releasing—elements inherent in the concept of apprenticeship. Each one of us is a conscious apprentice to his beliefs; each the unconscious master of his destiny.

Viewed from this perspective, apprenticeship takes on a new meaning. Apprenticeship, to be viable today, must be transformed from a medieval concept which is tied to the past to a twentieth century concept which looks toward the future. Apprenticeship must be pragmatic in its outlook, yet spiritual in its nature. Apprenticeship must be ruled by the mind, yet it must also be guided by the heart. Apprenticeship is much more than a document or a government regulation. To fulfill its true purpose, apprenticeship should be: a learning situation; a study concerned with one's life's work; the transmission of experiential knowledge; authority with free will; synergy; obligation and fulfillment; and, most of all, a positive, forward-moving energy.

The goal of a successful craft apprenticeship should be twofold: to provide the master with assistance in the working environment, and to train the apprentice in professional practices. Furthermore, a good apprenticeship must be economically viable in order to justify the time a master devotes to training the apprentice. The apprentice must also receive sufficient challenge from the master to develop professionally, while also receiving emotional encouragement to survive such training. Basic standards for a good apprenticeship may be said also to include the determining of qualifications for apprenticeship; the search and the interview; the probationary period; the agreements and contracts; the work processes; the wages and payments; safety and insurance; the related instruction and enrichment; the formal recognition; the termination; and the future development of the apprentice.

The Congress of the United States established the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938, which set regulations for minimum wage to workers, overtime pay, equal pay, recordkeeping, and child labor. In attempting to determine the amount and nature of payment to the apprentice in a small craft shop, all readings of the Fair Labor Standards Act indicate that the master/apprentice relationship can only be construed as an employer/employee relationship. The law states that if an apprentice works on any aspect of the for-profit product with intended interstate sale, in the eyes of the law that apprentice is then entitled to minimum wage and all other employee benefits. For most masters, payment of wages to the apprentice is done willingly and cheerfully. However, for those masters who may have philosophical or other tangible objections to payment of wages to the apprentice, the law is seen to be obstructive. Several crafts-men have been prosecuted by the government for violations of the minimum wage law, as have some craft cooperatives set up as cottage industries.

Repressive regulations, nevertheless, should be clearly separated from those of a beneficial nature. Craft apprenticeship has often benefited from supportive governmental laws, especially when apprenticeship is seen within the context of employment training, minority

labor support, or urban resuscitation. Laws supporting payment to the apprentice during initial training periods, relieving the master of burdensome probationary support, are also of a beneficial nature. Training programs initiated under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in conjunction with the private sector have had a positive effect. In Canada, the Manpower Industrial Training Program (CMITP) is supportive of apprenticeship. Other such programs, both in this country and abroad, include tax rebates to masters for apprentices, apprenticeships in endangered traditional crafts, and grants of private and public funds to apprenticeship under arts endowment programs.

Governmental activity in support of apprenticeships has been reserved primarily for the industrial trades in America. The National Apprenticeship Act was established in 1937. It included a Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, whose mandate was to formulate and promote labor standards for industrial apprenticeship training programs. While the National Apprenticeship Act was not written with the intention of excluding the handcraftsman, it has done just that. This exclusion of the craft community has been as much by its own default as by anything else, with the result being that the crafts community in America has become, in effect, a politically disenfranchised minority.

The craft movement in America has recently, however, assumed a more vertical posture of advocacy in regard to its social concerns. A manifestation of this was a national Conference on Apprenticeship, held at Purchase, New York, in 1978. Sponsored by the American Craft Council, the State University of New York, Purchase, New York, and the Daniel Clark Foundation, and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, this conference brought together craftsmen, teachers, and representatives of the government from all parts of the nation to discuss issues and problems of apprenticeship in crafts. (Papers presented at the conference constitute the major portion of this volume.) Three central areas of concern emerged from the conference:

1. Lack of cohesive standards for craft apprenticeship
2. Disparity between academic and apprenticeship training, and
3. Minimum comprehension regarding governmental regulations of apprenticeship.

While these concerns were not intended to be resolved at the conference, a strong edict was delivered by the participants for continuing the search for solutions.

As a result of the apprenticeship conference, the National Council for Apprenticeship in Art and Craft was founded. The National Council for Apprenticeship is a coalition of craftsmen, educators, arts administrators, and representatives of government dedicated to furthering the understanding and viability of apprenticeship in crafts. The council is involved in liaison with governmental agencies, collecting archival material on apprenticeship and conducting field workshops in apprenticeship. The council is also engaged in a significant pilot research project designed to study the effective (and ineffective) behavior existing between master and apprentice. The goal of this research is to develop training manuals and to formulate curricula for educational centers.

---

Now apprenticeship is of global concern. The International Council for Apprenticeship in Craft was founded in 1980 at the World Crafts Council's general assembly in Vienna, Austria. The International Council will make common cause with craftsmen in all nations who are concerned with the important task of preserving traditional cultures throughout the world, and who recognize the need to bring new dignity and identity to craftsmen by strengthening apprenticeship concepts.

Gerry Williams  
Box 65  
Goffstown, NH 03045  
USA  
April 30, 1981

---

## Acknowledgements

I extend my warmest appreciation to those participants of the apprenticeship conference who generously made their papers available for inclusion in this volume, as well as to those others who provided tapes and photographs. Among those whom I would especially like to thank are Elena Karina, who first conceived the idea for this book while she was Crafts Coordinator at the National Endowment for the Arts; Charles Kirk, who was also most supportive of this project while he was at the National Endowment for the Arts; Margaret Hutchison, who labored long and cheerfully over editorial tasks; Gilbert Donahue, who gave unstintingly of his advice and good offices; Robert Gray, formerly dean of visual arts at the State University of New York, Purchase, New York, who enthusiastically supported the apprenticeship conference; Endora Moore, formerly Crafts Coordinator for the National Endowment for the Arts, whose support and guidance were greatly needed; Peter Sabin and Sarah Bodine, who helped with editorial and production assistance; Charles Counts, who favored us with literate quotations; Charles Gailis, who kindly allowed us to use the cover motif; Ann Doak, who nurtured the vineyard; and Julie Williams, who provided essential sustenance and support. Thank you all!