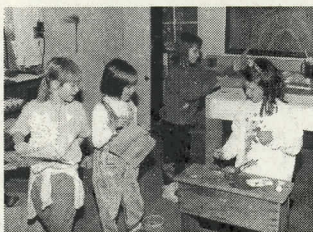
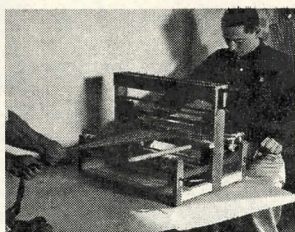




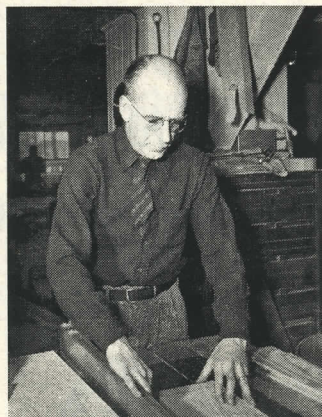
*"A creative outlet is essential to a well-balanced life
The person who does not create is poor indeed."*

- Reverend Lynwood Smith



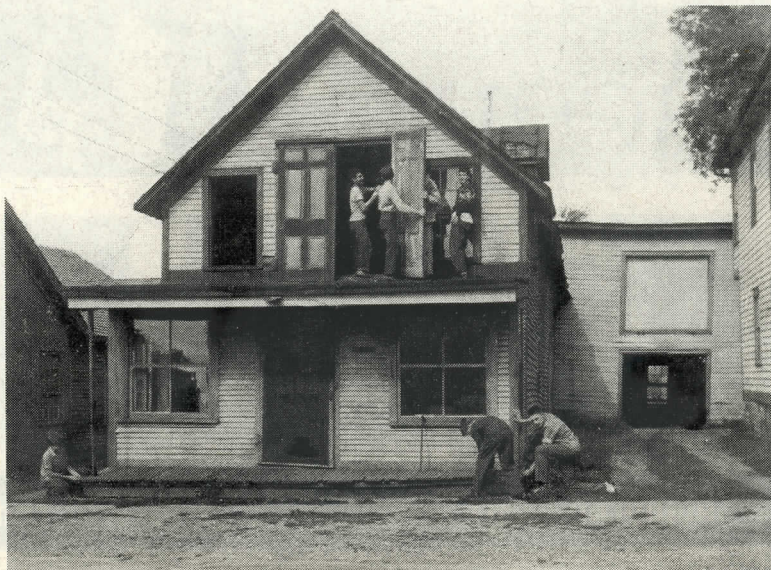
The Shelburne Craft School . . . a history of community education

In 1938, a local woodworker invited a handful of youngsters from the Shelburne Village School to learn the fundamentals of woodworking, and the joys of creating from wood, "articles both useful and pleasing to the eye." The woodworker, the Reverend J. Lynwood Smith, held the classes in the basement of Shelburne's Trinity Episcopal Church rectory with the belief that crafts, either as a vocation or an avocation, were an indispensable part of our culture. Reverend Smith stated, "education is a process of opening creative doors -and allowing those doors to open to everyone," That passion and dedication became the foundation for what is now the Shelburne Craft School, one of the oldest craft organizations in Vermont. More than six decades later, those doors still remain open to everyone.



Reverend Smith, founder

A year after the Craft School's low-key opening, a milestone was reached when the state of Vermont gave approval for Reverend Smith's program to be moved to a corner of the boys' locker room in the Shelburne Village School, and provided \$200 in funding. In 1941 a larger facility was made available for two years to see if the project was a "sound one". The larger facility, originally a harness shop and later a meat market, was purchased for one dollar from the owner. Volunteers from the community shored,



Town boys working on the Harness Shop.

*"Education is a process of opening creative doors
—and allowing those doors to open to everyone."*

shimmied,
strengthened,
re-roofed and

painted. This building, known as the Harness Shop, is still part of the Craft School and is used for administration, classes and gallery space.

With the move to the new "campus", it became possible to also offer instruction in weaving, a program begun by Sara Holbrook, of the University of Vermont. Other classes were added in pottery, art and jewelry making.

Four years later, in 1945, the Shelburne Craft School was officially incorporated as a nonprofit institution dedicated to providing a place for professional craftspeople to work at their craft and to teach that craft to the community.

The popularity of the program necessitated the search for even larger quarters that became available in the form of two wooden frame buildings built in the early 1800's and originally used as



Craft fair demonstr

dormitories for workers on the Rutland railroad. These "bunkhouses" were purchased for \$2,500 with a gift from an anonymous donor.

Through the efforts of Aileen Osborn Webb, a dynamic force in the American Craft movement, the

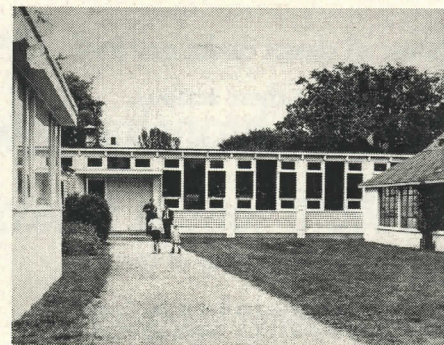
Shelburne Craft School expanded programs to encourage the development of professional craftspeople. She brought graduates from The School for American Craftsmen, a school that she had founded at the Rochester Institute of Technology, to the Shelburne Craft School to begin their careers as craftspeople and to teach. In 1948 the School built a new

structure to house a pottery kiln with the proceeds from a gift from Aileen Webb. In addition to her contributions, annual membership fees sustained operations. Children paid one dollar a year, while adults paid five dollars plus a fee of ten cents an hour for use of the studios.

A gift from the family of Lila Webb Wilmerding made possible construction of the new and much

larger woodworking studio, which was built in 1962 and dedicated to her memory. At that time an additional small, windowed studio was designed and placed between the long buildings known as the Bunkhouse, and these were joined into one building. All of these facilities were constructed or renovated through an outpouring of community support that included the money, labor, skills, and commitment of young and old alike.

In the decades that followed, the Craft School offered Shelburne an arts/crafts program and provided art instruction for all public school students within the community and surrounding areas. With the construction of the Shelburne Middle School in 1967, the town began to pay its own instructors and to rent the Craft School facility for classes. Industrial art classes continued to be taught daily at the Craft School until 1987. At that time, the Middle School created its own woodshop facilities so they could



The courtyard and path to the wood studio.



tion, circa 1957.



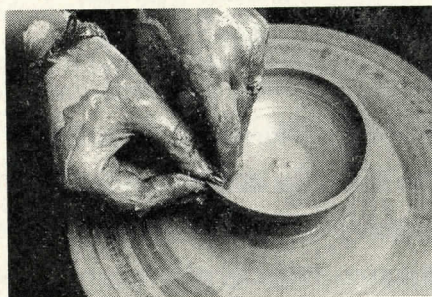
Early painting class with Stan Marc Wright.

"When a man's productive labor is only a means of livelihood, he has lost the great return that should be his - the joy of creation - the satisfaction that comes from producing an article of superlative quality."

house all classes under one roof. As a result of these actions, programs at the Craft School were reduced.



In 1988, a group of former students formed a new Board of Directors to restore the Craft School to full operation. A director was hired, and a new residency program began in 1991. In the 1990s the School continued and expanded its artist residency programs and classes. Trinity College and the Craft School partnered to offer a bachelors degree in Arts Entrepreneurship. The School also began to offer classes collaboratively with St. Michael's College and Burlington College for graduate and undergraduate credit. The School celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1995 with a gala dinner and benefit art auction at



Shelburne Farms. This festive spring event has become a Craft School tradition and an

important fundraising effort, now in its eighth year.

Today, the Shelburne Craft School has studios for ceramics, woodworking, stained glass, jewelry, fiber, and fine art. Artists-in-residence and a core group of visiting instructors teach a variety of classes and workshops throughout the year. The school's children's programs include vacation workshops and an after school and summer program. By collaborating with other local institutions and organizations such as the Shelburne Museum and Shelburne Farms, the Craft School is able to provide specialized courses such as

blacksmithing and American folk art pottery. The School has embarked on a revitalization program, including upgrading the facility at 64 Harbor Road and expanding to a historic building on the town green in 2002. Plans for the new building include a gallery of fine crafts and art, studios, and classroom, as well as a reading and meeting area and the administrative offices.



Enjoying an outdoor painting class.

With its history of active community participation and a committed board of directors and staff, the Shelburne Craft School will continue to carry out its mission of enhancing lives through creative experiences, including classes, artist talks, art and craft exhibits, and other programs.

"We are not trying to establish merely a hobby shop here: we hope to train real craftsmen by encouraging the talents which are latent in all of us."



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