

“By Hammer and Hand all the World Does Stand”

# Old Dominion Blacksmith Association

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# ODBSA

May -June

# Newsletter



## May's Monthly Event for Old Dominion Blacksmith Association

With David Tucciarone as our educator at his Sunrise in Rustburg, VA on the 17<sup>th</sup>.



**L-R:** Bobby Ricketts, Stephen Irby, Joseph Irby, Bill Roy, Louise Tucciarone, David Tucciarone, Steve Ferguson, Tom Harrell, Val Harrell, Bobby Floyd, Jim Mizio, Norman McKenzie, and Cliff Burleigh. Gary Hatmaker left early.

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## June's Monthly Event for Old Dominion Blacksmith Association

With Jerry Darnell as our educator at LT Skinnell's Otter Hill Forge in Bedford, VA on the 11<sup>th</sup>.



**Front:** Bobby Ricketts, David Tucciarone, LT Skinnell, Wendell Wyland, Bobby Moose, and Tommy Bowyer  
**Back:** Charlie Hudson, Bobby Floyd, Cliff Burleigh, Mike McKenzie, Steve Ferguson, Jerry Darnell, Norman McKenzie, Glenn Bryant, Charlie Hanks, Gary Hatmaker, Gale Moose, James Elliot, Val Harrell, Camelia Elliott, Tom Harrell, Joseph Irby, and Stephen Irby.

## May's event with David Tucciarone

By Bill Roy



There was a very small showing at our May ODBSA event at David's Sunrise Forge, but that made it no less friendly, informative, and memorable. When I arrived, Gary Hatmaker was already there with a truckload of 12" round x 1/8" thick drops that he was passing out to any members that wanted them. Sure, I grabbed a whole bunch. (I have no idea what I'll use them for yet. But hey, they were free!)

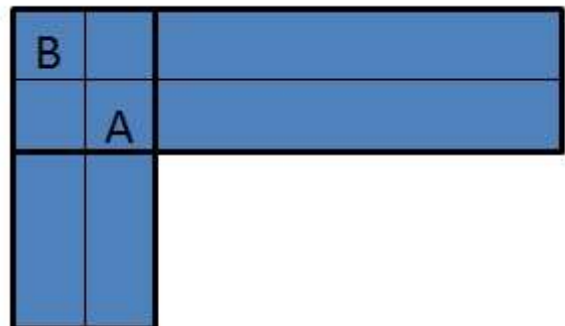
The business portion of May's meeting was pretty typical with a great deal of emphasis on the budget and the high cost of professional demonstrators. As our Education Director, David has always been very generous with his time putting on demonstrations for us. He's a top-notch blacksmithing teacher for sure. And most importantly, he allows us to meet at his professional shop frequently whether he's demonstrating for us or not. During the discussion, David jokingly asked if he would be getting mileage reimbursement \$'s for today's demo. (haha) Sincerely, David, THANK YOU from all of us.

The topic for our May event was "From the Notes of Francis Whitaker". David Tucciarone was very fortunate to have been able to study under this great blacksmith of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Francis Whitaker passed away in 1999 at the ripe old age of 92, so for those of us that have only recently taken an interest in blacksmithing, we will never have that rare opportunity. Francis Whitaker was born in 1906 and apprenticed at a young age in Samuel Yellin's shop in Philadelphia for a year and later he studied in Germany with Julius Schramm for two years. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Francis was very influential in architectural blacksmithing revival. And in the latter half of the century he was a very prominent figure in the movement to preserve the ancient craft of blacksmithing. He ran schools for blacksmiths in California, Aspen, and Carbondale, Colorado. He also served as president of ABANA in the early years of the organization. In addition to teaching blacksmithing, he wrote three books on the subject; Beautiful Iron, The Blacksmith's Cookbook: Recipes in Iron, and My Life As An Artist Blacksmith.

So, while you can no longer take a class with Francis, you could read his books which are all available at [www.BlueMoonPress.org](http://www.BlueMoonPress.org).

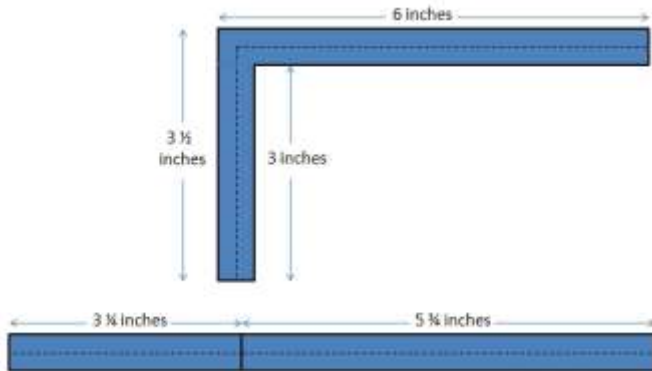
David was able to train about eight weeks in total class time with Francis Whitaker. David took these classes in the last 10 years of Francis' life. And while Francis had the reputation of being a very stern man, David's impression was not the same. Maybe age had softened him some by then. David said that Francis appreciated good work and good design. But that he did not care for arc welding. He said it cheapened the design. However, occasional tack welds to aid in holding and doing the work right was acceptable. When David was learning from him, Francis would explain to his students; "You hit it and see where the metal moved to. I know where it's going to go and hit it to make it happen." (Sure sounds like the voice of experience!) He also had a saying that the difference between a blacksmith and a 'Master' blacksmith is working to dimensions. And lastly, David said that Francis Whitaker's favorite saying was one we've often seen on T-shirts; "Get it hot, and hit it hard!"

After reminiscing about his time with Francis, David said he had a prepared several topics to demo for us from his FW class notes. The first learning he would demonstrate was the Upset Square Corner. To the uninitiated, bending a piece of iron to make a 90 degree corner seems like no big deal. But when you think more carefully about how iron moves when you bend it, and then add having to work to dimensions, it's really not so simple after all. According to Francis, "All the metal is there. You just need to put it in the right place." David explained that you need to think of the length along the center-line and move the mass of material from 'A' to 'B' as you make the right angle.



(figure 1.)

Once you have calculated the center-line dimension, center punch a mark at 3 ¼ inches and keep this to the inside while working. See figure 2. Note that there are no outside dimensions at this point.



(figure 2.)

David used a bending fork turned face up in the vise and another one held in his hands to start the bend. He made sure the mark was centered between the forks. If you bend over the anvil you get more hammer marks. And the first bend should not be too hot. Bending all the way to 90 degrees is tough when using forks, and you don't really want to. It will crack if you go all the way to 90 degrees. Stop at about 100 degrees and shape the corner over the anvil. Keep in mind that the inside upsets (thickens) while the outside draws (thins). David placed the piece in the vise sideways and did some of the upsetting there, not just on the anvil. When he did, he held the elbow with tongs to limit the vibration. When he had the corner shaped by eye to his satisfaction, he then checked it with a steel square and finessed it for true squareness. David took his time and used many heats to carefully forge his upset square corner. He stopped many times to show us the work and explain what he was doing. And by the way, he said, Francis could do this in only two heats. (Practice, practice, practice!)



The next demonstration topic David showed us from his Francis Whitaker training was Slitting & Drifting. This method of making a hole in the metal leaves the maximum amount of material in place for strength. Start by figuring out how wide a chisel you should use. Francis Whitaker worked out a formula for calculating this. Use 89% of half of the circumference of the round hole.

For a ¾" hole =  $.89 \times ((3.14 \times .75) / 2) = 1.047"$

Use a 1" chisel with sharp sides slightly tapering in so that the chisel will cut a clean slot and not punch out a slug. Mark the piece with a center punch, 2 dots to indicate each end of the slot (1" apart) and do this on both sides of the piece and as close to the center line as possible. Heat and slit about half-way through, flip over and slit from the other side. The top and bottom slits will meet in the middle and there may be a small burr to clean out. When slitting, use a cutting plate to protect the face of your anvil and cool the chisel often. Use a small opener (smoothly rounded to not make marks) over a bolster block to begin widening the hole. Repeat with a larger sized opener to get close to the ¾" diameter. Take another heat and only cool just the very end beyond the hole. Holding the piece vertically, upset the hole on the face of the anvil, hot end down, by hitting down on the longer cool end. This widens the hole without thinning the sides of the hole. You may need to straighten and realign the piece along its center line if the end should shift slightly to the left or right while upsetting. Pass the drift through as the last step.



Since we were stopping early to have a hands-on practice session from 3:00 – 5:00pm on his two student forges, David quickly showed us once again how he makes a decorative leaf finial and adds what he calls "leaf-life". Thanks David, for following Francis Whitaker's belief and mission of sharing with us your blacksmithing knowledge.

Bill

## Class at the JAX

By Bobby Floyd



The blacksmithing classes at the Jacksonville Center for the Arts in Floyd, VA are normally scheduled for no more than six students and it was a surprise to me when I was told a week or so before the class that 10 had signed up for the Beginner's Blacksmithing class. The reason for so many is that the JAX had advertised through [www.groupon.com](http://www.groupon.com), a discount website, and the Center had a great response. So I said why not make it 12 because we have 6 forge stations and everyone could take turns. And that's exactly what they did.

May has been a very busy time for me as the maintenance man for the Buttercup Plantation. I've replaced a lot of rotten weatherboards with new ones on the Cook House and Smoke House, primed the new wood and painted both historic houses including the roofs. Besides that, I had built a new large rock garden, removed mold from the Carriage House and the basement where the winter kitchen, wine cellar and root cellars are located, and pressure washed parts of the Manor house to prepare it for painting. I'm saying all of this because I was looking forward to taking a break from my full time non-paying retirement job at our historic home and going to Floyd, VA in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains and teach a little blacksmithing. This is something that I really enjoy doing.

I arrived at the Center around 5:00 pm on Friday to check the studio out. Dillard Frazier, an ODBSA member who took a Free Beginner's blacksmithing class that I offered last year to anyone in the Floyd area that promised to maintain the Blacksmithing studio at the Center on the behalf of Old Dominion Blacksmith Association, had the studio prepared. We had four that took the class and Dillard has done more than his share of what was promised and has done an excellent job of maintaining the shop.

After that I went up to the office to meet with Marie Daniel (Educational Programming Assistant) who had invited me to be her houseguest for the next two days. After following her to a very nice restaurant in Floyd where she treated me to dinner, I followed her for about 6 more miles to her home. Oh, what a beautiful home that she had built about 7 years ago! It was sitting toward the bottom of a huge mountain that went almost straight up. Talk about being spoiled! I loved every minute of it.

The rain came down heavily Friday night and the sleeping was great. I got up early and went to the studio to prepare for the day. The temperature was in the 50's both mornings but warmed up to the high 70's during the day on Saturday and the low 80's on Sunday.

I had cut some 1/4" square stock in 3' sections that I brought with me along with many of my personal hammers, tongs, hardie cutters, CB's peanut butter (metal protector), name tags, punches, cutters, gloves, poker, rake, 6 short pieces of pine 2x4, borax, etc.

My biggest concern was what to do with 12 students and 6 forge stations so that no one would get hurt or burned. Believe it or not, it all worked out on its own. One forge station had two anvils and two students heated in the same forge at the same time. At three forge stations each student took turns, and at the other two they shared the same anvil and fire at the same time.

I knew that to better serve the students and for safety reasons, it would be a good idea to have an assistant for such a large blacksmithing class. The Center, because of the discounted price for this class, did not have the funds to provide one. I was very pleased when I asked Dillard Frazier, from Floyd to help with the class and he agreed. The reason I asked Dillard is that he caught on to this craft very, very quickly, his commitment to this craft by coming regularly to the studio to practice and has monitored/assisted in other blacksmithing classes there. He was a tremendous help to all the students and me both days, plus he cut up more metal, got water for us, etc. I offered Dillard half of what the JAX's was paying me and he said no.

You say what about the 12 people taking the class-- how did they do? We had 4 women and 8 men and all were talented and all learned quickly. Half of the people that took the class were from NC and the other half from VA. They turned out to be a really good group of people that helped each other and who hand-forged some very wonderful artistic blacksmithing pieces to take home with them.



## Class at the JAX (cont'd)

Saturday, I pushed hard because I was not sure that we could cover my program in the time allotted. We started a little after 9:00 am with me talking for about 10 minutes and they were fired up in more ways than one. Hooks and more hooks, curly cues, drawing out, punching, cutting, different kinds of twists, upsetting, leaves, a flux spoon and nail making were on the agenda for the day. Marie took our orders for lunch (Subway) about 11:00 am and by 12:00 it was there and we ate the lunch at the main building on the outside tables and were back at the forges working again within about 25 minutes. By 5:00 pm everyone was worn out. I asked if anyone wanted to stay overtime -- we had no volunteers. The day went extremely well; everyone caught on and made some nice stuff that they took home or to the hotel that night. I was very pleased at what everyone had done and the feedback that I got from them was they were pleased also with their hand-forged pieces. This day was truly packed "full" of things to learn and do and we all made it through it. Everyone even left with a lot of free blacksmithing make-up on his or her face.

By the time that I got to Marie's house about 6:15 pm, showered, had a glass of wine with her on the wrap-around porch of her beautiful home, we ate a delicious meal that she had prepared and I was in bed by 9:30 pm. Yep, I'm spoiled.

Sunday, I got up early again to get down to the studio to cut up some more metal for the day. The Sunday agenda or schedule was to go at a slower pace and make a poker, fire rake with alternating twists and for those interested, do a little forge welding and besides that, I had scheduled some free time in the afternoon for everyone to become more artistic (doing whatever they wanted to do) or review whatever they wanted such as nail making. The second day was mainly geared toward utilizing what they had learned the day before.

When everyone arrived Sunday, some had blisters, a couple got burned a little, some had sore muscles but all seemed to be pleased with what they had learned so far and were ready to get started again. Because much of what is taught in my classes to start with is what I call "monkey see-monkey do" which is simple and easy, my concern is how much is really retained from the earlier sessions using this process. All the students passed with flying colors the second day and retained what they had learned

previously. I noticed that everyone this morning had improved "so much" over the day before because in most cases things were becoming natural to them and they did not have to think about every move needed to forge. The main thing that I have observed from all beginners is they work too hard by pounding metal not hot enough and wear themselves out. This class did very well the second day with getting the high yellow heat in the metal to make their task much easier when upsetting and/or drawing out.

Marie again took our orders for lunch at Subway and this time we took nearly an hour for lunch for I could tell everyone was getting tired again. Dillard took some time and made his very first nail header from a railroad spike. By three thirty everyone had called it day, gathered their wonderfully hand-forged poker, fire rake, etc and headed home.

We were able to fully complete the beginner blacksmithing program that I have been working with everyone over the last couple of years. I have now, including this class, taught 48 people the basics or fundamentals of this historic craft. Bob Maple, a student in this class, e-mailed me and said the class was a good foundation to build upon.

Thank you Marie for your hospitality and everything, Dillard for your assistance, the Jacksonville Center for the Arts for providing this opportunity to learn this craft, along with other crafts at a very reasonable price and Amy Avery-Grubel (Educational Program Coordinator) for putting this class together. Oh yea, thanks for paying me to teach this craft that I enjoy. Oh what fun this was, I had a ball!

Congratulations to everyone that took the class, you all did great. You are now an Artist Blacksmith and know more about this craft than 99.9 % of the population. If you get a chance, how about sharing what you learned with others and let's keep this historic craft perpetuating.

I also learned a lot from you guys and gals too, thanks ever so much!

Bobby



## Remembering the Fallen

By Wendell Wyland



The Blacksmith's laughter trails away in the fading light of late afternoon. He leaves the calming sound of the flowing water behind as he walks the rest of the way home. On his left under the boughs of a massive oak tree is the cemetery for the Militiamen, who died fighting the British Redcoats. The last rays of the setting sun shine upon the grave markers giving them a luster that commands one's complete attention.

The blacksmith thinks back to the funerals for each of the Militiamen, their families gathered to bid a final farewell to their loved ones. It was the look on their faces that stayed with him. There was an obvious grief for the loss of a husband, a father, a son or a brother, but there was also a calm resolve that they had sacrificed their lives and their futures for something far greater than themselves. The families would long suffer the absence of their loved ones and in that moment the village craftsmen came together and made a pledge that the families of these fallen patriots would not suffer for a lack of a husband, a father, a brother or a son.

No parent, sibling, wife or child of a fallen patriot would suffer for the lack of their loved one so long as the craftsmen of the village lived. These families of the fallen would be invited on every picnic, family excursion, and celebration that took place in the community. The craftsmen began to set aside a portion of their wages to pay the taxes for these families. It would be the responsibility of the teenage boys in the village to see to everyday chores of cutting firewood and tending gardens and household repairs. The teenage girls would help with mending and sewing and other household chores.

The families of the fallen would be honored each year on a Day of Remembrance to ensure the memory of these fallen patriots, their families and their most noble of sacrifices would never be forgotten. The blacksmith labored in secret to forge a wrought iron fence to surround the perimeter of the Militiamen's cemetery. Unknown to him each craftsmen in the village had a secret project under way to honor the fallen.

The night before the Day of Remembrance the blacksmith enlisted the help of the craftsmen of the village to erect the wrought iron fence. For weeks he had been digging the post holes after dark and covering the holes with iron plate and sod. When they arrived at the cemetery they found their wives scrubbing and cleaning the grave markers and planting flowers from their own gardens. The men worked swiftly as the blacksmith had taken care to have each section of fence prepared for installation and the work went quickly.

The next morning was damp and rainy. The villagers were determined to allow nothing to interfere with the planned ceremony. As they topped the hill where the cemetery was sited below the boughs of the great oak tree the rain stopped, the clouds parted and a rainbow arched high above the great oak tree. The villagers took it as a sign from above that they could mourn the loss of their friends and loved ones, but they could also celebrate the gift of liberty that had been purchased by the brave men, who gave their all to bring an end to tyranny in their new nation.

One speaker was heard to say, "It is better to die a patriot's death than to grow old and live to see our children oppressed and exploited by tyrants, we failed to oppose." Another said, "We must never forget their service and sacrifice upon our behalf. We must revere and cherish the liberty bestowed upon us and never allow the arrogance, indifference and greed of any man or association of men to ever plant the seeds of tyranny upon our hallowed ground." The last speaker said, "We must never allow the pursuit of material things to distract us from the duty of defending the Liberty, our countrymen secured with the sacrifice of their lives. If ever such a day should come to pass, we deserve to have the shackles of tyranny firmly clasped about our wrists and ankles for our crimes of cowardice and complacency."

Honor the fallen and their families in the living of our lives, so that our children shall inherit the birthright secured for them by fallen patriots and their families. It is far nobler to serve others, than to be served by others.

Wendell

# Trying to earn a living as a blacksmith or “Different ways to bang your head against the wall” (Part One)

By Gerald Boggs

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My point of view and path to earning a living is little different than Dale Morse's. I started out doing commission work and after several years of it, am now moving toward craft shows. While there's a lot of money in commission work, there's also a great amount of stress and headache.

If I was to offer advice to someone interested in blacksmithing as a career, here's what I'd tell them:

Start slow and keep your day job. Reasons for doing this are several:

1. The process of building up a business is long and you still need to eat.
2. You might find, while you enjoy blacksmithing, doing it every day, all day long, isn't quite what you thought it would be.
3. Starting slow lets you gain the experience of running a business without it becoming overwhelming, before you know what you need to be doing.

It takes time, money and lots of work to get your name out. And a lot of success is as much lucky breaks as hard work, so be ready for some disappointments, because you can do everything right and still the phone stays quiet.

On that note, my experience and knowledge has taught me, luck plays a big part in whether you become successful. Most metalsmiths I know who are doing well had a lucky break. For example, one of the richest men in America decided to have you do the ironwork for his home and now everyone wants you. Or, the cleaning lady of a multi-millionaire tells him about a blacksmith friend she has and without even looking at a portfolio, hands you \$50,000 dollars to do a railing job. A lot of success comes from being in the right place at the

right time. A lot of success isn't so much skill of craft, but skill of marketing.

If I was starting out as a smith and didn't have a family to support, I would find a shop to work and learn. Surf the internet, from time to time you'll see shops looking for workers. Be forewarned, few shops pay anything approaching living wages, most are the same as Wal-Mart, but without any benefits. And as most shops do a bit of everything, with forge work being but a small part, if you want to get your foot in the door, you need to offer them something. Good welding and machine shop skills are always needed. So enroll in welding and machine shop classes at your local vo-tech college. Some community colleges offer a degree program in welding, with that and a welding certification; you can earn a good living.

However, many of us come late into blacksmithing and already have a family or a good job, but still feel the bite. Doing craft shows is a good way to earn some coin and do something with the stuff you've made. Start with the small local craft shows. The entrance fees are low and if you're trying to attract commission work, what better way of letting folks know you're around than being out in the public. The small shows normally won't earn the big bucks, but they let you get your feet wet and give you much needed experience. If you find you like the shows, you can start to build up your stock and give the larger shows a try. Or, you can stay with the local shows and start to put examples of commission work in the display; fireplace screens, door hardware, hand rails, etc.

In my mind, the advantage of craft shows over trying to do commissions as a beginning professional blacksmith:

1. They give you time to develop your style and skills.
2. Allow you an easy venue to sell your work.
3. Don't require special equipment. The amount of equipment you'll need to install a railing is going to make you take a deep breath at the cost.

All in all, shows are a good way to get your feet wet without having to jump in the deep end.

Gerald

## June's event with Jerry Darnell

By Bobby Ricketts



The drive to LT's home and forge near Bedford, Virginia from my home in Forest was very nice. The view of the Peaks of Otter and Blue Ridge Mountains is beautiful this time of year from that area. Being my first time at LT's forge I didn't know quite what to expect, but as I arrived I could see it was much better than my small setup.

Mrs. Skinnell had a great assortment of breakfast foods for us when we arrived; which included coffee of course. At 10:00 Bobby Floyd asked everyone to come in and be seated. Bobby talked some about the July '11 event in Floyd with demonstrator Gerald Boggs and then introduced master blacksmith Jerry Darnell from Seagrove, NC.

Jerry opened up his demonstration with a very kind invitation to everyone to visit his commercial blacksmith shop, Millcreek Forge, in Seagrove, which is near Asheboro. He said he has been blacksmithing for over 40 years. Jerry teaches his skills at John C Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC every 4<sup>th</sup> of July week. Although he produces all types of ironwork from traditional gates and railing to contemporary art pieces, Jerry favors 18<sup>th</sup> century ironwork.



His morning demonstration was to forge a two-tine log fork, or pitch fork. There are three pieces to this project; which consists of the staff, tines, and handle.

To forge the tines, Jerry started with a piece of ½" square metal 20" long. After heating he draws out 2" on both ends to a blunt taper. He folds the tine in the center and pinches it down, upsets it, and scarfs it to accept the staff by a forge weld.

To begin forging the staff he heats a piece of ½" square metal 30" long and upsets one end and scarfs it to accept the tines. After fluxing and heating he welds the tines and staff to each other.

Jerry mentioned that making a three tine fork would be a totally different process.

To open the forks heat and clamp them in a vice right at the taper point, about ½" below the base of the weld.

Hammer forks out and down before losing heat. Use tongs on end of fork to pull up on it while hammering it down to give it the traditional fork look.

Then, heating each tine separately, place tine on horn of anvil to bend each out away from center.

Jerry mentioned that in order to see how much metal (length) you would need for the tines, take a piece of 14-2 electrical wire and bend it in the shape of the tine to see how much length it takes.

Jerry then demonstrated how to put the 'pitch' in the fork. *The word 'pitch' is not for "pitching the log", it is actually the 'bend' or 'pitch' it has in it.* After heating tines, use a block of wood that will fit in one hand and with the tines hanging over the edge of the anvil, Jerry evenly strikes the tines bending them 30-40 degrees down. After another heat, he then places the tines on the anvil face and strikes the tines evenly to put the correct pitch in the fork. It took him several



minutes to tweak the pitch in the fork and to get them symmetrical. This is extremely difficult to describe accurately so all interested persons should obtain the ODBSA video of Jerry Darnell's demonstration to see him at the forge making the log fork.

Jerry then begins forging the handle by using a piece of metal 6" long by 1 ¼" x ¼". After finding the center of the length of the metal, fuller halfway down, ½" from center on both sides of centerline. Then draw out and taper ends from fuller, leaving 1" of metal in center. Fold tines back, but not sharply. Hammer 1" tab on both sides, squeezing it down, and then scarf it to weld to the shaft. After flux and heat Jerry welds together the handle and shaft. After heating the tines of the handle he straightens the ends away from each other.

He then shapes and bends the ends of the handle back to the shaft, creating an interesting and functional handle.



Jerry then strikes the shaft its entire length in random patterns to *break the edges* and to make it look better. It also breaks off the *mill scale*, which can prevent the metal from accepting the finish.

Jerry and LT had a discussion about the ingredients for a good metal finish. LT's uses a recipe that he learned from well-known North Carolina smith Doug Merkel. Jerry said worrying about the ingredients for a finish is immaterial. He said you can use burnt motor oil, peanut oil, vegetable oil, etc. They will all blacken the metal up and a smith should focus his main attention on forging the metal. Jerry did talk about the method of applying the finish using green coal. When blackening metal for a finish, use green coal that gives off a *lamp black* and slowly expose the metal to this smoke. An acetylene torch or kerosene burner can also accomplish this. When coal is *coking up* it gives off carbon, which blackens the metal. If the fire is too hot it will not

work. You're looking for a dull, satin finish after it has been done correctly.

Jerry also explained how forge welding doesn't always require scarfs to get a strong bond. He said he's seen old plow points that were just heated and lapped on. These points had worn down after hitting rocks, roots, etc and were still firmly bonded onto their host. He has a lot of antique hinges that have no scarfs, yet remain strong. Scarfs for welds have only been used for the past 20-25 years he said. He also has a wagon tire that has seven welds around it when it was built from scraps. Every available scrap was used to build it and it's still together. He further explained how an old blacksmith he once knew welded with low heat, but his welds were very strong.

Just before lunch ODBSA President Bobby Floyd auctioned off the beautiful fork Jerry made to Cliff Burleigh for \$80. This fork sells for about \$120 in Jerry's shop in Seagrove, NC.

LT Skinnell asked the Lord to bless our food, and then we went to eat under the trees behind his house. His wife had prepared a delicious meal for us.

After lunch Jerry began forging a Colonial *Standing Cruise Lamp* (pronounced – *Cruisee*). Jerry first saw this lamp in the collection of James C. Sorber of West Chester, Pennsylvania. The book '*Colonial Wrought Iron: The Sorber Collection*' by blacksmith Donald Plummer illustrated the lifelong collection of Sorber. On May 13, 2005 James C. Sorber's entire collection, with exception of a few prized pieces, was sold at auction; which fetched over \$700,000 in 694 lots. This lamp differs in design from the more widely known '*Betty Lamp*'; which originated in Germany. The Cruise Lamp was used primarily as a 'match'. An early '*match*' was a constant source of fire kept before the invention of stick striking matches. In order to easily light fireplaces, lamps, and stoves, the Cruise Lamp burned oil in the cup and also had a holder for a candle.

It is impossible to capture the entire detailed process of replicating this beautiful work of art here in this article. Interested parties should consider purchasing the ODBSA video of Jerry Darnell creating this lamp at Otter Hill Forge.



Jerry begins forging the base of the lamp using a 14" length of metal  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $\frac{3}{16}$ " and a piece 7" long and  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $\frac{3}{16}$ ". After heating he hacked down on the edge of the anvil at the halfway point to about 120 degrees. The inside bend must be preserved sharp. The outside of the bend needs to be pinched and scarfed to weld on the third leg.

Using the 7" piece, heat and scarf the end. This procedure is very difficult to explain here in this article. After welding the third leg on, using a compass Jerry measured each leg to find the longest. After finding the longest leg he marked the leg cold using a hardy cutoff. After heating he cut the extra length off.

Jerry then rounded and drew out each leg to a blunt point, making sure the lengths were equal. He then bent each leg individually, putting a gentle curve in each to have the blunt tip of each reaching the floor evenly to support the lamp.

To build the upright Jerry uses a 36" piece of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " round metal. He upsets 3" of the rod to about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter. He sets off about  $\frac{3}{8}$ "-1'2" over a sharp edge on the anvil and forges a tenon. He blocks the tenon in a bolster plate to set the edge shooting for a  $\frac{5}{16}$ " diameter. He then draws out the last 6" on the other end and forges a ball, then chamfers the upright.

Just after chamfering the entire length of the upright using the power-hammer and hammer, Jerry said that this also helps to break the 'mill scale' off of the metal.

The sliding bracket and cruise cup were forged by Jerry, but the details are too much for this article. It is important to point out that Jerry shaped the entire cup using only a ball peen hammer and the hardy hole of the anvil. The assembly of the Standing Cruise Lamp using rivets is also very detailed, but the video and your blacksmith skills will help in this endeavor.

Once the lamp was completed Bobby auctioned it off. The auction took several minutes and several people were competing against each other, but it finally sold for \$140 to Cliff Burleigh. Cliff is the proud owner of both of Jerry Darnell's works of art on this day. Several people took advantage of the opportunity to meet with LT Skinnell and his lovely wife and to peruse his collection of blacksmith items in the back room of his shop. LT has very reasonable prices on his items; which obviously took a lot of time to forge.

Jerry Darnell is by far one of the best living blacksmiths in the world. He works and talks at the same time. Most of us would only be able to do one or the other and if we tried to do as Jerry does, we would most certainly be headed to the emergency room with burns and bruises. He transforms simple-looking metal into works of art with relative ease. The only indication to me that he was working hard was the sweat and dirt on his shirt. It was truly a memorable experience.



Bobby

## ODBSA's July Blacksmithing Event

Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup>, the Old Dominion Blacksmith Association will gather at the Jacksonville Center for the Arts in Floyd, VA.

**Subject of the demonstration:** Master Blacksmith Gerald Boggs will be our Teacher/Demonstrator.

### **The Wizard Headed Bottle Opener**

During this workshop, we will learn the making of a bottle opener with a Wizard's head (Mark Aspery style) as its handle. We'll start the day with a brief description of the process and then without further ado, we'll get forging!

**Location:** The Workshop will be at the Jacksonville Center for the Arts in Floyd, VA

**What you need to bring:** All tooling and material will be provided, so nothing but a bit of gratuity for the cause. ☺

**Time:** Start time is 9:00 AM and we'll go throughout the day. As folks come, we'll try to work them in.

That's about it. With skill and a wee bit of luck, we'll all go home with bottle openers.

Although, for ye drinkers of cheap beer, I don't know what you'll do with it?

Fair Winds  
Gerald



## ODBSA's August Blacksmithing Event

Saturday August 13<sup>th</sup>, the Old Dominion Blacksmith Association will gather at the Jacksonville Center for the Arts in Floyd, VA.

**Subject of the demonstration:** Master Blacksmith Gerald Boggs will be our Teacher/Demonstrator.

### **The Forging of a Strap Hinge**

In this workshop we will explore the forging of a strap hinge which can be broken down into two parts, the eye and the strap itself. The first part we'll forge is the eye. There are two styles of eyes, the forged welded eye and the rolled eye. We'll be forging the rolled style of eye. After we've forged the eye, the rest of the hinge will go in this order:

1) Drift the eye, 2) Draw out and shape the strap, 3) Punch the bolt holes, 4) Then do the same with the butt side, and 5) finally, we'll hacksaw to fit the eyes.

**Location:** The Workshop will be at the Jacksonville Center for the Arts in Floyd, VA

**What you need to bring:** All tooling and material will be provided, so nothing but a bit of gratuity for the cause. ☺

**Time:** Start time is 9:00 AM and we'll go throughout the day.

More Fair Winds  
Gerald

