Gunsmithing Seminar

VFTH

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For the past 31 years, people from all over the world have come to WKU for a chance to learn how to make guns with some of the most talented people in the industry.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham shows us this unique “hands-on” opportunity for gun and rifle enthusiasts.

More than sixty people are attending a gunsmithing seminar this week at WKU. The session highlights the craftsmanship and old technology involved in replicating pieces of history.

Engraving is just one of several classes being taught at the 31st annual gunsmithing seminar at WKU. It’s sponsored by the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association.

“Hopefully I’m gonna be able to take this back and be able to keep practicing this skill and I’ll apply it to pieces that we make at Colonial Williamsburg.”

Across the room, some pieces that have been collecting dust are getting some long awaited attention.

“I started a rifle in 2001 at a workshop in Indiana. The title of this course is finish what you started so 11 years later I’m trying to finish what I started.”

Kim Lawlor is here all the way from Hawaii. His wife is here too, learning how to put the decorative touches on his finished product.

“I didn’t have to talk her into it at all. I’m an oral surgeon and she’s a peridontist, we both like working with our hands.”

The art and craft of gunsmithing does indeed attract people from all walks of life, like International opera and concert singer Perry Price.

“I inherited a few antique firearms as a young man from my grandfather and that whetted my whistle about antique firearms and I’ve become an enthusiastic collector.”

Wallace Gusler, a retired gunsmith from Williamsburg Virginia was called upon to help start this seminar at WKU back in 1981.

“Colonial Williamsburg was the place where forging of barrels was rediscovered and somewhat reinvented, making rifles by hand.”

“No place else in the world you can get this kind of experience.”

“We get to see old rifles, we get to reproduce old rifles and we get to handle them which you don’t get to see in museums.”

A viewing of the 1969 film the “Gunsmith of Williamsburg” featuring Wallace Gusler was held last night.

The seminar wraps up tomorrow.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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