

[HAMMERING]

[MUSIC  
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- We're at Middleton Place outside of Charleston with Ron Vido, who is the interpretive blacksmith here. Ron, tell me what your day would be like.

- Oh, your day starts out early every single day, usually before sunrise, to get a lot done because you've done a lot to do out here. Everybody thinks that the blacksmith's horseshoes, horseshoes, horseshoes. I have nothing to do with horseshoes. Think more on the lines of Home Depot and Lowes. I'm doing hardware and lighting fixtures and hinges and latches and nails and tools, that's what I do.

- You have a great phrase for blacksmiths. And it's the king of--

- It's the king of trades.

- And why do you say that?

- Because no one can do their job until I make the tools first.

- So someone who is in the field working with the rice, if the head of their hoe is broken, you have to fix that.

- You're going to fix that or any other blacksmith. That's it. If it's metal, if it's iron and steel, you're the man to come to for it.

- The spinning wheel would have metal parts.

- Metal parts, metal parts on every single thing, every single building, every single ship, every single carriage, every single tool.

- Were you allowed to express your creativity?

- Oh, sure, ma'am, back then or today. You can see historical pieces in the museums downtown. And even a blacksmith who's just knocking out nails, let's say, a nail smith, in free time, he's going to express himself in any scraps of metal he's got left around. It's just in the blood.

- Would you have had people training under you?

- Yes, ma'am. If you're in an original shop, even in some shops today, you're going to have an apprentice working for you. And that's even in parts of the country today, it's a 6 to 7-year apprenticeship to become a journeyman and then you go onto another 5 to 10 years of training to become a master.

- You showed me this incredible bellows, is that what it's called?

- Yes, ma'am.

- And you found it on the property. Tell me that story.

- That was on the property. And it was in good shape, the bones of the piece were good. So I got permission to restore it. And I spent a year of my free time making all the parts and all the nails and finding the leather that would fit it. And now she's in the shop and she gets my fire up to 2,000 plus degrees.

- And I think we're going to see you make a piece that would have been important. And that would have been--

- Oh, yes, ma'am, especially this time of year. I get a lot of call for fireplace tools this time of year. So right now, we're working on fireplace tools.

- And so you start off with just a very simple.

- We start off with a very simple rod and then we'll fold it over, weld that together, cut that piece in half, and then work on it. And there's your beginning parts of your poker and then we'll work on the other end for the handle.

- So the creativity comes towards the end. And perhaps someone would have done the early parts for it and then handed it.

- Oh, yes, ma'am. And then you can do the simple things because your apprentice is going to learn slowly over the time and then you hand off to him.

- Well, I'm amazed. I don't think I would be able to do anything more than pull that string to keep the bellows going. But thank you for letting us have a glimpse into what life was like.

- Thank you, ma'am.

[HAMMERING]

[MUSIC  
PLAYING]