Many historical skills, techniques, and crafts would be lost to time were it not for those who continue to practice them to this day. Try your own hand at an exciting sampling of skills and cultural arts that have endured through the centuries or have been re-created through research and experimentation.

Norwegian Spoon Chip Carving
Watch as a wooden spoon is turned into an intricately-decorated piece of Scandinavian folk art. Try it yourself on a sweet potato.
Presenter: Ken Larson

Rag Rug Making
A rug made of rags? Yip! Adults can try out the techniques. Children can make their own potholders on small looms.
Presenter: Amanda Becker

American Fancy Découpage
A trend in the early 1800s was for Americans to exuberantly decorate everyday household items. Make your own “American Fancy” creation with découpage.
Presenter: Natalie Hamm

Wool Carding & Spinning
Card wool & spin it into yarn on a Doctora spinning wheel. (porch)
Presenter: Jenny Novey

Blacksmithing
Let the blacksmith know that you’d like to give it a try yourself! (The blacksmiths reserve the right to determine how you may participate with safety being the first consideration.)
Requirements: Closed toe shoes & long pants preferred; safety glasses, gloves, and leather aprons provided
Presenter: Jon Thieszen

Junior Blacksmithing
Use blacksmithing tools to create something out of modeling clay, which mimics the feel of heated metal. Give the mini forge and bellows a try, too.
Presenter: N/A—Please supervise your children

Historic Outdoor Games
Play the game of graces and try hoop rolling. Equipment at station G; play on gravel driveway (G).
Presidents: Dustylee Gray and Elizabeth Nowey

Fire-Wrought Dugout Canoe
Create a fire-wrought dugout canoe using ancient methods.
Day & Time: SATURDAY ONLY (rain date SUNDAY)
Requirements: Hair should be pulled back if long; closed-toed shoes and jeans are recommended
Presenter: Mike Nowey

Paper Marbling Demonstration
+ Make an Origami Book or Sewn Pamphlet
Have you ever noticed the beautifully marbled endpapers in old books? Watch the art of floating pigments on water and transferring the patterns onto paper. Examine 18th/19th century books & 1800s bookbinding tools. Younger kids make a simple origami book using marbled & other papers. Older kids can try a sewn pamphlet.
Presenter: Cary Suneja of Tea Cup Bindery

Victorian-Era Games and Toys
Make a popular 1800s game and take it home with you to play! Geared toward children, but open to adults, too.
Presenter: Andrea Marsh

Make a Thaumatrope
Thaumatropes were 19th century homemade “perception of vision” spinning toys. Make one for yourself!
Presenter: Debbie Miswala

Hand Sewing
Learn to sew by hand, and take home what you make
Presenter: Jenna Thieszen

Songs of the Civil War
(Front porch) Mr. Alexander performs a variety of songs that were popular in the 1860s. Learn about their history, too.
Presenter: Gary Alexander

Spencerian Cursive - Dip Pens & Slates
Try writing the old-fashioned way!
Presenter: Karen Alexander

Civil War Military Camp Life
What was daily life in an 1860s military encampment like? What were some of the leisure-time activities? Participate in camp games with the soldiers, and learn all about soldiering in the 19th century.
Ages 5 through Adult
Presenter: Butler Light Infantry

Live Musical Performance @ 1pm SUNDAY
Check out all the details on the back page!
Presenters: Sally Strings Music Ministry

Flintknapping
Try your hand at the techniques involved in making stone tools.
Requirements: Gloves and safety glasses will be available for use, or bring your own
Presenter: Jack Larson

Char Cloth Making
Have you ever tried starting a fire with Flint & steel? Learn how to make the char cloth that was a necessary part of this process.
Day & Time: SATURDAY ONLY
Requirements: Hair should be pulled back if long; closed-toed shoes and jeans are recommended
Presenter: Joel Barthe

Butter Making
Make your own butter!
Presenter: Valerie Marek

19th Century Tavern Games
Learn & play 19th century games such as Shut the Box, Going to Boston, Quince, and a variety of other card and dice games.
Day & Time: SATURDAY ONLY
Note: Mark Tully’s book, A Brief Discourse on Eighteenth Century Games, is available in our gift shop (B)
Presenter: Mark Tully

Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Location (see map on front page)
Age range
Specific time(s) and/or day
New station this year

* Begin at the visitor center *
You must complete a liability waiver and receive a wristband in order to be admitted to this event. Admission is FREE, but the wristband and waiver are required whether participating or spectating.

Enduring Skills Stations: Cultural Arts Edition!

Native American-Style Flute Making
(East porch) The two-chambered duct flute, commonly referred to as the Native American flute, is an easy-to-play instrument made from a wild reed. It produces beautiful, mellow music. Make one!
Presenter: Adam Nowey

1830s Millinery & Haberdashery
Millinery sold women’s fancy hats, and haberdasheries sold men’s clothing and accessories. Hats were very important pieces of fashion in the 1800s. Wear your new hat or accessories to the ball at 3:30 on Saturday and you’ll get a free lemonade afterwards!
Girls: Come “shop” at the millinery! Decorate your own hat with flowers, ribbons, and feathers. Select a pretty hand fan, too. Boys: Come “shop” at the haberdashery! Get a top hat and choose your favorite cravat (tie). Decorate your own handkerchief.
Presenter: Elizabeth Nowey and Dustylee Gray

Make Your Own Marbles
The game of marbles was popular in the 1800s! Decorate your own handmade marbles.
Presenter: Elizabeth Nowey and Dustylee Gray

Make a Yarn Doll or Animal
In the 19th century, kids made toys with whatever they had on hand. Make a boy or girl doll, or make an octopus. Or make all 3!
Presenter: Dustylee Gray and Elizabeth Nowey

“Common Threads” Special Exhibit
Check out this season’s special thematic exhibit entitled “Common Threads. It may be viewed admission free in the visitor center.

Guided Tours of the Agency House
Regular admission fees apply for tours. Begin in the visitor center (B). Check at the front desk for tour times today.
Docent: Emery Draper
During the cultural creative sounds at the Fox-Wisconsin portage in 1832 were the afternoon "musicals" held at the Agency House, home of Indian sub-agent John Kinzie and his wife Juliette. Music was such an important part of Juliette's life that she had her Nunn's & Clark piano hauled by boat/canoe—even over rapids—all the way from the East coast to her new home in frontier Wisconsin. John Kinzie himself played the fiddle. Euro-American style folk music, social dance tunes, and hymns would have been in their repertoire.

Mrs. Kinzie's faith was central to her life. She wrote about the lack of a preacher on the frontier and was thrilled when finally in 1833 the first travelling Protestant preacher—the Rev. Kent from Galena—visited the portage. "The large parlor of the [fort] hospital was fitted up for the service, and gladly did we say to each other, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!' The hymns they sang may have been some that will be performed by Salty Strings. Itinerant preachers faced hardship traveling on the frontier. What is the message they risked life and limb to deliver? Find out here."

2023 THEME: CULTURAL CREATIVE ARTS

Creative arts are powerful tools of expression within cultures, offering insights into the hearts and minds of people groups. Unique styles of music, fine and decorative arts, storytelling, and dance flowed into the Fox-Wisconsin portage in 1832 as people from widely dissimilar backgrounds endeavored to live their daily lives in close quarters. In the midst of a history which is otherwise saturated with conflict and turmoil, cultural creative arts flourished, combining to form a rich tapestry of creative traditions while also serving as a reminder of our shared human experience.