



The Sewing Academy Planner 2020

Presented by Elizabeth Stewart Clark

Why Host a Sewing Academy Series?

Learn without leaving town.

Save your budget! We come to you with a customized weekend of hands-on presentations and take-homes. Everyone goes home exhausted, exhilarated, and ready (and able) to jump into historic pursuits!

Why + How = Success!

Each participant learns to look at their own interpretive needs, and apply top-notch research and logical thought to their decisions. Tapping into our shared national “family history” is where the magic moments happen—and to do that, we need to explore the Why and the How!

Everyone is welcome!

Anyone with desire and determination can become a competent historic sewist! Whether you choose to make everything at home or not, you’ll come away a far more educated customer. We welcome all, from newest of Newbs, to hatter of Old Hats.

We’ll help tame Sticky Situations.

We provide the impartial outside voice regarding clothing standards and workable techniques, and give a positive boost to demystifying research and application that suits your unique area and era. We specialize in Befriending the Crabby. Let us be The Bad Guy if needed!

Hands-On Help.

We know research, application, fitting, and construction can be intimidating. We focus on “the good stuff” in simple ways, with plenty of personal attention. No matter where the individual is on their historic journey, we will encourage and challenge them!

Enlarge your Living History circles.

Open the series to regional living history enthusiasts, past-dressing hobbyists, and sister-sites: multiply the community long-term! We call it cross-contamination—it’s wonderful!

A Quick Host Checklist

☐ **Select a Date**

Plan a 6-month window, with a close of registration 30 days before the series date. Participants appreciate the planning time! Weekends are usually best for everyone, with a combination of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday workshops, but week-long or mid-week series are an option.

☐ **Make the Wish List**

Take a survey with your favorite locals or a sister-site: what does your area need most? If you’re not quite sure, we can help design the right mix.

☐ **Choose Formats**

Most weekends go best with a mix of seated presentations, demonstrations, and longer work sessions with a short focus presentation at the beginning of each. We can easily customize to suit your area’s needs.

☐ **Open Or Closed?**

Limit the registration pool for specific workshops, or have each open to the general public.

☐ **Reserve Some Spots**

Registration typically books fully rather quickly, and we don’t want your people to miss their spot! Groups and sites can reserve specific numbers of seats in each workshop, or for a full weekend to give locals first chance, with those seats releasing to general registration closer to the deadline. We can also arrange scholarships codes for pre-paid options.

☐ **Consider the Details**

Classroom space needs to have good lighting, ventilation, climate control, and electricity. Seating (tables are nice) and a few extra tables for Mrs Clark up front, plus a blank white wall or projection screen and nearby restrooms are a must. Add optional catered-in meals, a social potluck, or other fun activities for a great get-away experience

☐ **Plan Promos**

Once we have the details set, we’ll help get the word out, so be thinking of distribution lists, on-line promos, and other great options! Talk to local business about area coupons, lodging specials and other cross-promotions.

A Sewing Academy weekend is just what you need!

Questions? Reach Mrs. Clark by email at: Elizabeth@TheSewingAcademy.org or by phone at 208-523-3673

How Registration Works

We handle it! Participants register and pay on-line with a secure shopping cart and individualized e-invoices.

Classes are usually a la carte—individuals may choose single workshops tailored to their needs, or sign on for the full event. We're glad to field questions and help everyone maximize their time and budget. A full weekend generally runs between \$150 and \$300, with individual workshops in the \$30-\$50 range.

At registration, a \$50 fee holds the spots. This is non-refundable, but is transferable.

The balance of each fee is processed at the close of registration 30 days before the series date. We send an email reminder a few days before processing to allow for last-minute updates. Final fees are non-refundable, but are transferable.

Walk-on registrations are generally not possible, as each class involves handout sets and/or kits that must be cut and prepared ahead of the series.

Sign-up for extra amenities, such as catering packages or on-site lodging, is done directly through the hosts. We will refer participants to your designated contact person.

Host Group Expenses

We try to keep any costs associated with hosting a *Sewing Academy* series to a minimum. Our traveling and production costs are covered by individual workshop fees; **there is no "reservation fee" or other hosting fee charged the site or organizer.**

The hosts may incur costs related to the series:

- ☐ Classroom space and equipment
- ☐ Room & board for Mrs. Clark (pet-free, smoke-free, climate control, showers)
- ☐ Optional hospitality arrangements such as beverages and snacks
- ☐ Scholarships or pre-paid staff registrations

Meet Your Instructor

Elizabeth Stewart Clark is an historic clothing enthusiast, designer, author, and instructor, specializing in American clothing for women and children in the mid-19th century.

Mrs. Clark takes an "engineering" view of period clothing: it is a functional system, designed for maximum comfort and practicality; once the system is understood, it is easy to apply! She firmly believes that if a person can drive a car, they can construct and wear accurate historic clothing.

Mrs. Clark's fascination with history began in childhood, and led to coursework in History at Portland State University. Discovering the living history hobby clarified her focus on the mid-19th century, and she quickly incorporated a skill for design, research, sewing, and teaching in the study of women's and children's clothing and lives.

"Experiential Archaeology" is now a passion and vocation... and she delights in passing her discoveries along. She is quick to reassure the beginner, and add depth to the knowledge of experienced students, and enjoys working with sewists and enthusiasts of all ages.

Mrs. Clark encourages an attitude of Progression and Accuracy regarding historic clothing and impressions. Every person has the capability to progress to a higher level of accuracy; all that is needed is good mentoring, good resource availability, and a determination to do their personal best.

In classes, Mrs. Clark encourages questions and participation, prefers to focus on the positive, and strives to create an enjoyable atmosphere through good humor and good research

Mrs. Clark has a fondness for Victorian novelists and overblown Victorian poetry; she also possesses a nearly-terminal Penchant for Terrible Puns.

*Do you need a unique topic?
Ask us about it!
Unique requests help us add to
our workshop variety!*

The Sewing Academy Checklist

Planning

- ✓ What are the interpretive goals we need to accomplish? Era of focus?
- ✓ What mix of involvement can I anticipate? Will participants be more likely to be regularly involved in living history, or involved once or twice a year public events?
- ✓ Are there more beginners than veterans, or the reverse? Are overviews a primary need, or is the area/group ready for some in-depth information? (*We recommend a mix of overview and in-depth workshops for maximum appeal.*)
- ✓ What are the current challenges facing those around me? Are there particularly “sticky” topics that need to be addressed?
- ✓ What historic sewing level presently exists within the site’s staff?
- ✓ Are the needs of families with children and teens being met? (*We have special workshops geared to the needs of mothers and teens.*)
- ✓ Are there on-site meal options? Would the site like to offer a meals package?
- ✓ Are there on-site lodging options? Local lodging options? (*Some sites find local hotels are willing to offer group rates to participants, and when booking numbers reach a pre-determined level, some hotels will “comp” the instructor’s room!*)

Potential dates

Potential classrooms (seating for 20-35, good lighting, climate control, electricity, bathrooms close)

Promoting

The best series happen when the site staff is excited about the opportunities. Don’t forget:

- ☐ Ask staff members about their workshop wish list.
- ☐ Promote the series with site volunteers.
- ☐ Include announcements and reminders in site newsletters or e-lists.
- ☐ Feature the series on your website and calendar (placing a link to on-line registration is a great idea!)
- ☐ Promote the series to site patrons.
- ☐ Contact regional “sister sites” that have similar interpretive focus.
- ☐ Get the word out in site-to-site newsletters and networks.
- ☐ Contact local history societies and historic reenactment clubs.
- ☐ Let local home-education associations know (many teens are involved in living history and make ideal volunteers!)
- ☐ List the series with local media community calendars (well in advance of the registration deadlines!)
- ☐ Contact local talk radio stations to see about setting up a phone interview with Mrs. Clark as a “community interest” segment, with the site coordinator in person at the studio.
- ☐ Make registration materials available to area fabric stores (they’ll be seeing business after the series!)
- ☐ Contact local or regional craft guilds (many historic crafters like to demonstrate in historic clothing!)
- ☐ Talk to local restaurants and hotels about meal and lodging arrangements, special discount packages. (We’ll recommend these establishments to series participants.)
- ☐ Let us know what you need help with!

The Sewing Academy “Wish List”

These are some of the popular workshops we have prepared. If you don't see a topic your site needs to have addressed, please let me know; we increase our course options when people request new topics.

Take-Home Information and Supplements in Every Workshop
Choose to span the era 1830-1865, or focus on a specific decade or half-decade.

Clothing Overview Presentations

Visuals, lecture, and discussion; allow 1.5 hours for each. Session cost begins at \$20 per person, including take-homes.

Presentation	What It Covers	Notes
Your Historic Wardrobe <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	We'll discuss the functional historic wardrobe plan, how to assemble a wardrobe within any budget framework, and how to tailor the era's styles for a more personalized (yet wholly accurate) look. This workshop also teaches fundamental research techniques in an open, accessible format that anyone can follow easily.	
This Old Thing <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Fashion doesn't just suddenly arrive—it evolves! A careful blend of older and newer styles gives each woman options and individuality, while remaining true to her era and impression. This workshop expands on one aspect of <i>Your Historic Wardrobe</i> , showing how fashionable styles evolve over time, and how to adapt a base wardrobe as needed. We'll discuss second-hand clothing, mending, remaking, and extending wardrobes, as well. <i>Ideal for multiple-era impressions, and sites with a wide mix of older and younger living history presenters.</i>	
Under It All <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	What goes under that dress? We'll detail the layers skin out. Chemise styles, drawers, petticoats, skirt supports, and other “hidden” clothing is discussed, with details specific to economic levels, changing fashions, and regional variations when defined. <i>Can be used as a stand-alone overview, or as an intro presentation to an open work session creating undergarments.</i>	
Firm Foundations I: Corsets Overview <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Getting into deeper detail, we'll look at the importance of corsets and stays to the era's silhouette. Discuss the many style and comfort options available in the past, common construction techniques, modern supply equivalents, fitting techniques, and individual questions. Every figure can be helped by appropriate historic support! <i>Can be expanded with live corset-fit evaluations.</i>	

Regarding Young Ladies

These workshops address unique strategies for young ladies 12-18, and can be a useful addition if you have a thriving youth staff program. Allow 1.5-2 hours each.
Session costs begin at \$20 per person, including take-homes.

Firm Foundations IV: Teen Corsets <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Teens (age 12-18) have unique and ever-changing figure needs in corsets and stays. You'll learn the different stages of corsetry, age-appropriate strategies for support, and safe support use.	
Your Historic Wardrobe Junior <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Designed for teens and those who dress them, or anyone needing to dress children, the Junior workshop covers clothing styles from infancy through the transitional teen years, with helps for research, peculiarities of construction, and suggestions for stretching the clothing investments.	

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Clothing Overview Presentations

Visuals, lecture, and discussion; allow 1.5 hours for each. Session cost begins at \$20 per person, including take-homes.

Presentation	What It Covers	Notes
Flexible Fitting <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Whether you need to accommodate a changing figure, or dress multiple women in the same wardrobe pieces, learning the tricks and techniques used by the Original Cast to make their clothing easily multi-sized gives you tremendous flexibility to meet the needs of modern bodies with period panache. <i>Especially useful for historic site wardrobe staff, and those who organize "loaner boxes" for living history groups. Can be expanded to a 3.5-4 hour work session with hands-on alteration suggestions for existing clothing.</i>	
Textiles for Historic Clothing <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	The cloth for your wardrobe ranges far beyond the quilting cottons! We'll discuss the wide variety of natural fiber textiles appropriate for historic clothing, the common styles used with each, and the safety considerations that make natural fibers the best option (and include a helpful source list for fabrics!) Learn the how and why of textile selection, with climate-control tips, budget strategies, and care instructions, too.	
Deconstructing Fashion <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Take a look at original photographic images, and analyze how to achieve the look and copy stylistic details in reproduction clothing. You'll learn to break complex styles into their simplest forms, and reproduce them for your wardrobe.	
Frozen Fashions <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Are you weary of freezing in cold or damp settings? Learn about the historic ways of coping with inclement weather from the skin out, and how you can use them to stay comfortable, enhance your presentation, and expand your unique look. <i>Regional focus as well as national context; can be combined with Glistening very easily. Can be expanded to a 3.5-4 hour work session with hands-on technique sampler for warm clothing.</i>	
Glistening Like a Pig <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Warm weather is wonderful, but there can easily be too much of a good thing. Learn historic ways of coping with hot weather, and use them to stay as cool and comfortable as possible at hot, muggy, and otherwise perspiration-inducing events. <i>Regional focus as well as national context; can be combined with Frozen Fashions very easily. Can be expanded to a 3.5-4 hour work session with hands-on technique sampler for cool strategies.</i>	
My Work Dress <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	What you wear to work depends on who you are. Through vignettes, images, and question/answer dialogue, we'll explore the many options in "working clothing". It's a great spur to persona development and individual research. <i>Very helpful to get into the period "individual" mindset!</i>	

Construction Workshops

Visuals, lecture, vignettes, discussion, and hands-on samplers (kits included); allow 2-4 hours for each.

Presentation	What It Covers	Notes
Firm Foundations II: Corsets from Patterns <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Using volunteers from the class, you'll observe the fitting process for historic support garments starting from commercially available patterns. We'll discuss your unique figure challenges, and the multiple options open to everyone. <i>Volunteers take their adjusted mock-up home.</i> Ideal for those who feel nervous about from-scratch corsets. Great combined in a longer 3.5-4 hour work session with Firm Foundation I.	
Firm Foundations III: Draping Custom Support <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Would you like to learn to make your own custom corset pattern? We'll discuss and demonstrate ways to create a base corset pattern, starting from scratch and using volunteers from the class. If you've struggled to resolve commercial patterns and your own body shape, this workshop can help. <i>Volunteers take their adjusted mock-up home.</i> Perfect for those with challenging figures. Great combined in a longer 3.5-4 hour work session with Firm Foundation I.	
Having a Fit I: Fitting from Patterns <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Learn to get a good fit with any basic bodice pattern, on any figure. Includes recommendations on high-quality patterns to start with, and which you might want to avoid. It really does make a difference! You'll observe a fitting session using class participants, with plenty of question and answer time to address your unique concerns. <i>Volunteers take their adjusted mock-up home.</i> 2 or 4 hour sessions.	
Having a Fit II: Draping a Custom Pattern <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Start with a piece of muslin, and watch as we build a base bodice right on someone's figure! Learn the traditional draping methods, as well as some modern tricks to produce excellent period results. With your new base, you may never need to buy another pattern—ever! <i>Volunteers take their adjusted mock-up home.</i> Ideal for those with figure challenges, as well as those who help in the wardrobe department. 2 or 4 hour sessions.	
Having a Fit III: One Pattern, All Fashion <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	With your base bodice nicely fitted, you can learn to alter that base for virtually every bodice type, from everyday to evening, and copy original styles you encounter in your research. Learn methods to test your pattern ideas before you even unfold the fashion fabric, and expand your dressing options beyond any published pattern. 1.5-2 hours. <i>Kit Included.</i>	
Bodice Engineering: <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Create a sampler of sewing techniques to use in period bodice construction, including seams and seam finishes, miniscule piping, hooks & eyes, and beautiful hand-worked buttonholes, with sampler bodice pieces scaled to fit our 18" china doll. 3.5-4 hours. <i>Kit Included.</i>	
Skirting the Issue <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Starting with a presentation on skirts and skirt supports for the era, this sampler class teaches you to set skirts in gauging or pleating, apply flounces, work tucks, and apply hem braid—all the little tricks you need to take your skirts from "costume" to clothing, and practiced on a delightfully small scale. 3.5-4 hours. <i>Kit Included.</i>	
Captivating Collars & Cuffs <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Explore the styles and functions of white accessories, learn how to draft your own without a purchased pattern or using provided dated original templates, plus the techniques and materials you'll want to use to reproduce accessories well, including plain and fancy edge finishes, and how to use your accessories to best advantage. 3.5-4 hours. <i>Kit Included.</i>	
SPF 1855: Sunbonnets <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	We'll start with an overview of style and construction typical to mid-19th century sunbonnets, then go hands-on with sampling techniques in a compact half-scale size. 3.5-4 hours. <i>Kit Included.</i>	

Construction Workshops Continued

Presentation	What It Covers	Notes
Appliqué <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Take a look at the gorgeous ways appliqué is used for accessory items, then try your hand at applique techniques with a trio of optional templates for small functional accessories like needlebooks & spectacle cases, infant items, or gents' smoking caps. <i>Sample supply kit and your choice of template packs included.</i>	
Braiding <input type="checkbox"/> Span the Era <input type="checkbox"/> Focus: _____	Braidwork is a spectacular addition to your wardrobe bag of tricks! We'll look at clothing and accessories featuring braidwork, then go hands-on with sampler materials to try out different techniques and styles with a trio of optional templates for small functional accessories like needlebooks & spectacle cases, infant items, or gents' smoking caps. <i>Sample supply kit and your choice of template packs included.</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Looking for something else?</i> <i>Let us know what hands-on construction you'd like to introduce in your area! We'll work up something new just for you!</i></p>		

History & Interpretive Workshops

Visuals, lecture, and discussion; allow 1.5-2 hours for each. Request one or more for your existing living history conference or training event, or draw new patrons to your site by hosting a public evening!

Presentation	What It Covers	Notes
Sharing the Frontier	The reality of western expansion includes thousands of stories; we'll explore several, and see how our national "family history" is formed of everyday lives. No need to turn to fiction! Reality is so very fascinating. You'll be surprised by how many common themes and connections you find in the real lives of our historic counterparts.	
Setting Up Housekeeping	We know how the launch into independent living goes these days, but what did that process look like in the mid-century? For the single adult, newlywed couple, or retirement-minded soul, what options were available, and what did each entail? Go beyond the wardrobe and put your interpretive life in context!	
Living Citizen History	There are so many interpretive techniques we can use to engage the public, and enhance the way we share history with others. This fast-paced, fun workshop explores interpretation with a focus on how we can use our individual strengths and passions to communicate effectively with others. You'll be inspired by examples of current living history enthusiasts who are "doing it right"!	
Creative Interpretation	Expanded information on how to develop interpretive programs, provide better context to patrons and event visitors, engage more effectively in cooperative history work between sites and living history groups, stay relevant for school visits in the Common Core era, and put your own creative muscles to work in the task of creating connections to the past! This fast-paced workshop will send you out inspired and encouraged.	
Truths Not Mine to Tell	How can we design multi-cultural interpretation that is appreciative, without appropriation? We'll look at the dilemma of cultural appropriation, and discuss ways to respectfully and inclusively share important history from all cultures, even if we ourselves are "outside" of a particular cultural paradigm. Developing positively-framed appreciative interpretation is not as tough as you might think!	

Questions? Reach Mrs. Clark by email at: Elizabeth@TheSewingAcademy.org or by phone at 208-523-3673

Unique to Historic Sites & Museum Staff

While any of the preceding workshops can be ideal for your historic site or museum staff, these workshops are highly site-focused. Sessions may be scheduled before the full series begins. Each session is \$15 per student, including take-home materials.

Presentation	What It Covers
Defining Costuming Strategies	How do your site's interpretive goals affect the wardrobe closet? In this workshop, you'll learn about the different levels of historic costume you might pursue, and the most effective ways to share the vision. Full of specifics for clothing techs.
The Functional Closet	Practical strategies for managing the site's wardrobe inventory, with organization, upkeep, repair, and research ideas that every stressed clothing administrator can use! Get a hands-on evaluation and suggestions for improving the level of accuracy, using what you already have in stock, with minimal budget requirements.
Docent's Workshop	Get your volunteers and staff involved in the goal of excellent interpretation! This fast-paced workshop gives an overview of the mid-19th century, with specific suggestions for multi-era clothing for men and women, as well as hints on avoiding the top "impression breakers", coping with modern medical needs, and supporting the interpretive goals of each site.
Curating The Shop	Break free of the generic by learning to develop unique resources in context for your unique site, and make them profitable in the gift shop. We'll explore the resources you may not realize you have, how lean inventory practices can boost your bottom line, and how to build engaged relationships with the surrounding community to increase the value of your souvenirs. Your site gift shop can be a fully-integrated aspect of the larger interpretive plan!