

## Francis Jerdone

In 1700, a merchant of Louisa County, Francis Jerdone by name, lamented that "the Virginians have most of their shoemakers in their own families, and have no occasion for any but stuff [i.e., cloth] shoes from Britain."

He referred to members of the well-to-do planter class, who customarily maintained on their plantations one or more skilled workmen. Among these there was almost sure to be included a cordwainer to make and repair the footwear of the plantation family. The shoemaker might be a slave, indentured servant, or a journeyman receiving wages.

However, Francis Jerdone could just as well have been writing of another kind of Virginia planter, the small farmer who built his own house and barns, made his own crude furniture, coopered his own hogsheads, ground his own corn, sheared his own sheep, and made the shoes for families while his wife spun and wove their clothing. These small farmers, far outnumbering the great planters, would not have ordered cloth shoes from London, to be sure.

But neither would they have ordered very many leather ones, either from England or from Williamsburg shoemakers.

Source: The Leatherworker in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg Being an Account of the Nature of Leather and of the Crafts commonly engaged in the Making & Using of it by Thomas K. Ford. Polish Glassmakers