

Colonial Trades:
The Blacksmith

The blacksmith made and fixed tools, pots, and other useful items. These items were made out of iron. Blacksmiths needed many tools in order to hold and mold the hot metal they worked with. The blacksmith would work in a large room with a forge. A forge was a special big oven that forced air into the fire to make it hotter than a normal fireplace in a home. In the middle of the room stood a heavy, solid block of metal called an anvil. The blacksmith would rest the hot metal on the anvil while he shaped it into a tool or a cooking utensil. Every settlement had a blacksmith because he made tools for the other trades. The blacksmith was also a dentist, and he had only one cure for a toothache. He pulled out the tooth that hurt.

Some tools they used were:

- anvil: heavy iron block the blacksmith rested the hot metal on to hammer it flat or form it into a shape
- forge: a big oven (also called a furnace) for heating or melting metal
- fuller: tool for pounding grooves into iron
- hammer: tool used to bend hot metal into a shape
- mandrel: a round horn-like tool used to shape iron
- tongs: a tool used to grab metal to put it in and take it out of the forge

If it was built out of metal (nails, swords, ax heads, anchors, anchor chains, hooks, iron hoops, horse shoes, hinges, hammer heads, gates, gate locks, and wheelbarrows), then a blacksmith made it. Blacksmiths also repaired tools used by other tradesmen. Many other craftsmen needed the blacksmith to make things for them to use in their trades. For example, the carpenters would buy a hammerhead or saw blade for building things, wheelwrights would buy the iron tire to go around the outside of their wheels, and coopers needed metal rings to hold their barrels together, to name just a few.