



Colonial Trades:  
The Cooper

The cooper made buckets, barrels, and tubs out of wood and metal. Being a cooper required skill, intelligence, and strength.

The tools of the trade often were handed down for generations. Some of the tools coopers used were:

- rivet hammer: a hand tool made of steel used for pounding rivets
- staves: metal hoops that went around the wood to hold it together
- wood ax: a wooden-handled tool with a steel blade used for chopping wood
- plane: a tool used to shave and shape wood
- drawknife: a woodcutting tool with two handles at right angles to the blade; used to shave wood

The colonists put practically everything in these wooden containers because there weren't any rubber, metal, or plastic storage containers. Some of the items kept in barrels were apples, tobacco, liquids (such as wine), and nails. Barrels were also used to ship and store items such as flour and gunpowder so they wouldn't get damaged or wet.