



Colonial Trades:
The Shoemaker

The shoemaker, sometimes referred to as a cobbler in modern times, always had work to do. Colonial people did a lot of walking, so they would wear out their shoes pretty quickly. The shoemaker would make new shoes, and the cobbler would mend old shoes. The cobbler wasn't considered as skilled, so a shoemaker didn't like to be called a cobbler.

Some of the tools they used were:

- awl: a pointy-tipped metal tool for punching holes in leather
- burnisher: heated tool used to finish the edge of the soles and heels
- marking wheel: tool that marks the points to stitch the sole to the upper part of the shoe
- size stick: device with a sliding bracket to measure the person's foot
- sole knife: half-moon-shaped knife used to cut out the leather for the sole
- stretching pliers: tool for stretching the leather on the upper part of the shoe

The shoemakers didn't make the leather they used to make the shoes. People called tanners actually made the leather clean and ready. Fine, strong leather could be made from the skins of cattle, elk, or deer.