

## The Blacksmith's Shop

By Sharon Fabian

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Look at that building. It has six chimneys! Let's go see what kind of building it is.

It isn't a house. Even though today is a hot day, smoke is coming out of the chimneys. It must be some kind of shop.

The door is wide open; let's look inside.

It looks like some kind of workshop. There are lots of people hard at work here. Some are working by the hot fireplaces, and some are working at small iron workbenches. I know what this is - it's the blacksmith's shop!

Those iron workbenches are called anvils. An anvil is small, but it is heavy.

It can weigh 200 pounds or more. A blacksmith uses an anvil to shape iron. He pounds iron on the flat surface of the anvil. This way he can bend it to any shape. An anvil might have attachments for pounding out round shapes too. You can hear the blacksmith's hammer ring out as he pounds the iron into shape.



The fireplaces in a blacksmith's shop are called forges. Each forge has a bellows. A bellows is made of leather. It pumps air. The blacksmith pulls a cord to pump air onto the fire. This makes the fire burn hotter.

A blacksmith needs a hot fire. He needs a fire hot enough to soften iron.

When a blacksmith wants to make something, he puts on his leather apron and chooses an iron bar. He puts the end of the iron bar into the fire. The fire starts to soften the iron. It turns the iron bright red, orange, or yellow.

When it is hot enough, the blacksmith takes the iron bar to his anvil. He begins to pound it into shape. Soon, it starts to cool. Then he puts it back into the fire until it is glowing hot again. Then he can shape it some more.

Sometimes a blacksmith uses a metal file to help shape a piece of work. Sometimes he needs to weld two or more pieces of iron together.

To cool a finished piece of ironwork, the blacksmith can dip it in a bucket of water.

Blacksmiths in colonial times made a large variety of items. They made household items and tools used by farmers. They also made tools and parts used by many other craftsmen. They did repair work too.

Many of the blacksmith's creations can be seen in a colonial kitchen. Look at the fireplace. The heavy racks and hooks were all made by a blacksmith. So were the kettles and the cooking utensils.

Blacksmiths made the nails and hinges used in building colonial houses.

Blacksmiths made many tools. Farmers used plows, knives, axes, nails, and horseshoes made by a blacksmith. Other craftsmen used these tools too.

Blacksmiths also made metal hoops used by the cooper to make barrels.

Blacksmiths made most of their items of iron, but they also sometimes used steel for a special item like an axe blade.

Other craftsmen made objects from other metals. The silversmith made silver household items such as decorative, polished silver plates. The pewterer made sturdy pewter mugs. The tinsmith made shiny candle lanterns. All of

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these craftsmen made many other items too.

Blacksmiths, and other smiths, worked hard every day in colonial times. The smoke from their forges and the sounds of clanging metal let the colonists know that useful and beautiful things were being made.

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## Questions

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A fireplace in a blacksmith's shop is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. anvil
  - B. forge
  - C. bellows
  - D. none of the above
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. This tool is used to add more air to a fire.
- A. anvil
  - B. forge
  - C. bellows
  - D. none of the above
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A blacksmith pounds metal on this.
- A. anvil
  - B. forge
  - C. bellows
  - D. none of the above
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Blacksmiths used \_\_\_\_\_ most of the time.
- A. tin
  - B. silver
  - C. iron
  - D. steel
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. These are craftsmen who made things from metal.
- A. blacksmith
  - B. pewterer
  - C. silversmith
  - D. all of the above
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Before a blacksmith can shape iron, he has to \_\_\_\_\_ it.
- A. dry
  - B. soften
  - C. paint
  - D. all of the above
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Blacksmiths made \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. horseshoes
  - B. kettles
  - C. hoops
  - D. all of the above

