



Colonial Trades - Tradesmen in a tavern

This article on Colonial Trades provides facts and information about:

- The different trades and occupations in the colonies
- Colonial Trades and tradesmen
- Types of jobs and Colonial trades
- Interesting facts and information about Colonial trades and occupations
- Educational resource for teachers and kids

[Colonial Times - Industries](#)

[Trade in the Colonies](#)

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History of trade, plantations, colonialism and colonization in the 13 Colonies

Colonial Trades: Colonialism, Triangular Trade, Mercantilism, Trade, Industries and Plantations

Colonial Trades


Colonial America was an exciting place. Raw materials and natural resources were being used to create trade and commerce in the new colonies. The 13 original colonies of the colonial times were classified by their their locations - the New England colonies, the Middle colonies and the Southern colonies. The natural resources and climate determined the most lucrative resources for trade. The Colonial Trades developed in each of the colonies and trades thrived. There were many different trades and occupations in the colonies. Many of these trades and occupations are detailed in this article with a short description of what each one of these trades entailed for the tradesmen and the workers in the colonies. The following chart provides a brief overview of the industries and trade in each of the regions.



New England Colonies	Fish, ships, timber products, furs, whale products, maple syrup, copper, livestock products, horses, rum, whiskey and beer
Middle Colonies	Corn and wheat and livestock including beef and pork. Other industries included the production of iron ore, lumber, shipbuilding, coal, textiles and the fur trade
Southern Colonies	Tobacco, sugar, rice, indigo, cotton, via the Slave Plantations , lumber, furs, farm products

Fast Facts about the Colonial Trades and Occupations

There were many trades and occupations that were required in all the colonies but the above chart provides a good indication where specialized trades might choose to work. This fact file on Colonial Trades and Occupations provides fast access to facts and information about each of the different types of trades and occupations in the colonies. The Colonial Trades and Occupations are listed in alphabetical order.

Colonial Trades, Occupations and Jobs

Colonial Trades & Occupations The Apothecary	The Apothecary prepared and sold drugs to the colonists, making up compounds into medicines. He was recognised as a man of some standing in the community and often acted as a kind of physician when qualified doctors or surgeons were not available.
Colonial Trades & Occupations The Architect	The Architect was recognised as a man of standing in the colonies and would be employed by the wealthy colonists requiring a house to be built, or was consulted in the public buildings. The architect was skilled in the art of building and architecture. His job was to prepare designs and plans for the building and supervise the workers.
Colonial Trades & Occupations The Blacksmith	The Blacksmith was extremely important in the colonies. The blacksmith worked to create iron utensils such as horseshoes using a forge. 
Colonial Trades & Occupations The Brewers	The Brewers were in demand in America. Colonists believed that it was safer to drink beer in preference to water. Distilleries are the names of the places where liquor is manufactured and the brewers and distillers worked. Rum became a major export from the colonies.
Colonial Trades & Occupations The Brick Maker	The Brick Maker used kilns to make bricks. Unskilled workers, servants or slaves did the work of a brick maker. The brick makers worked with clay and moulds to make the bricks.
Colonial Trades & Occupations The Carpenter	The Carpenter was responsible for the structural parts of a building. The items included roofs, partitions and floors. Carpenters also made basic furniture for the colonists.

<p>Colonial Trades & Occupations</p> <p>The Caulkers</p>	<p>The caulkers worked in the ship building industries. The caulkers they sealed joints making ships water-tight.</p>
<p>Colonial Trades & Occupations</p> <p>The Chandler</p>	<p>The Chandler was a maker and seller of candles, soap, oils and paints.</p>
<p>Colonial Trades & Occupations</p> <p>The Cooper (Barrel Maker)</p>	<p>The Cooper (Barrel Maker) was an important worker. Barrels were used for transporting products such as rum, flour, fruit, salted meat and fish during Colonial Times. These products were all essential for trade and commerce. The cooper made barrels, hogsheads, casks, etc.</p> 
<p>Colonial Trades & Occupations</p> <p>The Gunsmith</p>	<p>The Gunsmith made or repaired small firearms. A gunsmith was a highly skilled craftsman. Creating a firearm could take up to 400 hours of labor which included forging pieces, carving stocks, and engraving metal.</p>
<p>Colonial Trades & Occupations</p> <p>The Farmers</p>	<p>The Farmer was an essential trade and occupation in all of the colonies, but especially in the Middle Colonies where the soil was fertile and weather was mild. New England farmers raised corn, pumpkins, rye, squash and beans. The Middle colonies raised so many types of crops, especially wheat, they were called the 'breadbasket'. The Southern colonies and their massive plantations raised tobacco, cotton, corn, vegetables, grain and fruit.</p>
<p>Colonial Trades & Occupations</p> <p>The Fur Traders</p>	<p>The fur traders traded with the Native Indians for furs and skins. The fur trade was highly lucrative and the French and English fought to monopolize the fur trade which led to the Beaver Wars.</p>
<p>Colonial Trades & Occupations</p> <p>The Hatter</p>	<p>The Hatter was a tradesman who made hats. Hats were made of beavers skins during the colonial period, however the colonists were not allowed to make hats. They had to export the beaver skins to England who would make the hats - refer to the Hat Act for full details</p> 



*D'Orsay
Beaver Hat*



*Continental
Beaver Hat*

Colonial
Trades &
Occupations

The early colonists discovered that iron ore was in great abundance in Colonial America. The manufacture of iron was one of their most valuable natural resources. The iron makers worked in ironworks. Iron was used to make barrel hoops, anchors, chains, wagon wheels, plows, tools, spikes, kettles and nails.

**The Iron
Makers**

Colonial
Trades &
Occupations

The Joiner was a woodworker who made products by joining pieces of wood. The joiner was responsible for the wood work on items such as stairs, doors, shutters, mantelpieces, cupboards, and other parts necessary to finishing a building. The work of a joiner and carpenter was often done by the same workman.

The Joiner

Colonial
Trades &
Occupations

The Milliner was the occupation undertaken by women. The female milliners created hats and small fancy items for sale to the colonists. The milliners imported and dealt in other small articles of a miscellaneous kind.

The Milliner

Colonial
Trades &
Occupations

The Overseers were men hired by planters to manage and direct the work of slaves on the massive [Plantations in the Southern colonies](#). Overseers were usually from the white, badly educated lower classes.

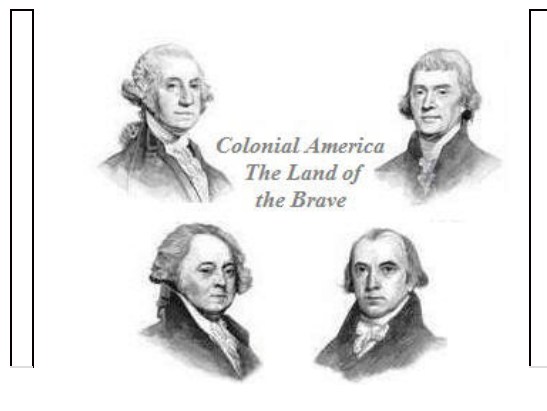
**The
Overseer**



Colonial
Trades &
Occupations

The Publican (Tavern owner) were the men who owned and ran the taverns which sprang up in the colonial towns. The picture at the top of the page shows tradesmen in a tavern and the type of clothes worn by tradesmen and workers in the Colonial times.

**The
Publican
(Taverns)**



Fast Facts about the Colonial Trades and Occupations

This fact file on Colonial Trades and Occupations provides fast access to facts and information about each of the different types of trades and occupations in the colonies.

Colonial Trades, Occupations and Jobs

Colonial Trades & Occupations

The Printer printed books, newspapers, engravings, pamphlets, almanacs and calendars. Printers encompassed the jobs of a compositor, a typesetter and a pressman.

The Printer

Colonial Trades & Occupations

The Sawmill Workers were extremely important to the lumber trade and industry especially in New England. The sawmills produced lumber of timber to produce wooden planks for export to England, which were then manufactured into finished goods.

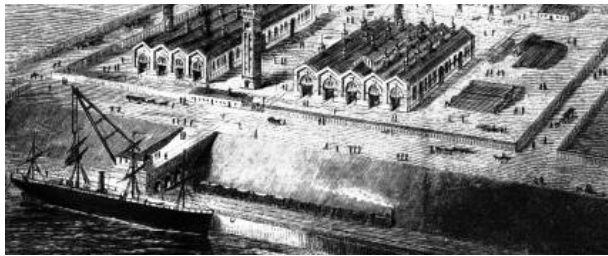
The Sawmill Workers

Colonial Trades & Occupations

The Shipbuilders constructed ships and was also known as naval architects or as shipwrights. The work of a shipbuilder was extremely important to New England industries as the shipyards and warehouses played a prominent role in these colonies. The ship building industry including carpenters, joiners, sail makers, coopers aka barrel makers, painters, caulkers (they sealed joints making ships water-tight) and blacksmiths. The following picture is of a colonial ship building yard.

The Shipbuilders





Colonial Trades & Occupations

The Shoemaker was also referred to as a Bootmaker and Cobbler. A necessary and valued trade in the colonies. The shoemaker carved a foot-shaped piece of wood, called a 'last', to the size of the customer's foot. Softened leather was stretched over the 'last' and then nailed to the sole of the boot or shoe.

The Shoemaker (Bootmaker, Cobbler)

Colonial Trades & Occupations

The tanners might operate as a small business but most worked in tanneries, to tan the skins and hides of animals, converting them into leather. The leather was used primarily for making boots and shoes but doublets and jerkins were also made of leather.

The Tanner

Colonial Trades & Occupations

The trappers set traps for animals to obtain their skins and furs. Beaver skins were used in hat making by the hatters.

The Trappers

Colonial Trades & Occupations

The Warehouse workers worked in large storehouses where raw materials and other goods were stored until they were shipped out to England. Warehouse played a prominent role in the industrialised colonies of New England.

The Warehouse Worker

▪ Interesting Facts and information about the Colonial Trades

▪ Significance of Colonial Trades

▪ Fast Facts and info about the Colonial Trades

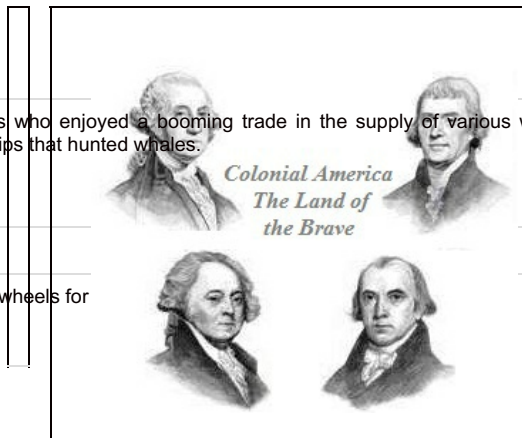
▪ Colonial Trades - a great history resource for kids

▪ Social Studies Homework help for kids on the significance of Colonial Trades

Colonial Trades & Occupations

The Wheelwright was a man whose occupation was to make or repair wheels for vehicles such as carts and wagons.

The Wheelwright





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