

Colonial Gunsmith

 mrnussbaum.com/gunsmith/

13 Colonies Navigation

This page describes the evolution of colonial guns as well as the work of colonial gunsmiths.

[13 Colonies
Home](#)

[13 Colonies
Interactive Map](#)

[Home](#) >> [United States History](#) >> [13 Colonies](#) >> [13 Colonies Trades](#) >> [Gunsmith](#)

[Artisans &
Trades](#)

[13 Colonies
Regions](#)

[Colonial
Profiles](#)

[Colonial
Historic Events](#)

[Colonial
Williamsburg](#)

[Founders](#)

[Religion in the
Colonies](#)

[Online
Activities](#)

[Printable
Activities](#)

[Make Your
Own Map!](#)

[French and
Indian War](#)

[American
Revolution](#)

Trades

Apothecary

Wigmaker

Harness &
Saddlemaker

Blacksmith

Milliner

Hatter

Cooper

Brickmaker

Printer

Cobbler

Tavern
Keeper

Wheelwright

Candlemaker

Gunsmith

General
Store Keeper

Silversmith



Rendering of a 17th Century Gunsmith (1613)

Being a gunsmith in colonial America required several specialized skills in working with metal and wood. Apprenticeships for learning the trade could take up to seven years. Colonial gunsmiths mainly repaired guns, axes, and other metal tools because most firearms were imported from England because they were cheaper. In England, gunsmiths specialized in making one or two parts such as the barrel (the long tube through which the bullet passes), stock (the wooden part of the gun that serves as the grip and holds the firing mechanisms), or firelock (the firing mechanism). This kept production high and costs low and also marked the infancy stage of what came to be known as the assembly line system of production. In colonial America and England, most of the guns in existence were flintlocks. A flintlock was a piece of flint set in a moveable cock. When the trigger was pulled, the cock fell causing the flint to strike a piece of steel, creating sparks. The sparks would come in contact with the gunpowder which would ignite the main charge in the barrel. Guns were more important in colonial America than they are today in America. Colonists needed guns to hunt for their food, and if necessary, protect themselves from Native Americans (in frontier lands).

American gunsmiths, however, did produce the long rifle, a hunting rifle used in America's frontier lands, particularly Pennsylvania and Kentucky. The long rifle allowed hunters to kill deer from long distances.