

Blacksmith Shops

Blacksmiths were the crucial link in a countrywide production chain that turned iron sand and charcoal into metal tools and weapons. Although some of the earliest independent blacksmith workshops specialized in making swords, there were also workshops dedicated to matchlock firearms or everyday tools such as farming equipment, knives, and scissors.

Given the limited quantity and steep cost of high-grade steel, blacksmiths developed ways to use the scarce material more efficiently. One method was to take a small piece of steel and join it to the end of an iron tool. Once finished, the tool's edge had the sharpness and durability of steel at a fraction of the cost of full-steel construction. This method was frequently used to create farming implements, such as the blades for hoes and sickles (displayed below).