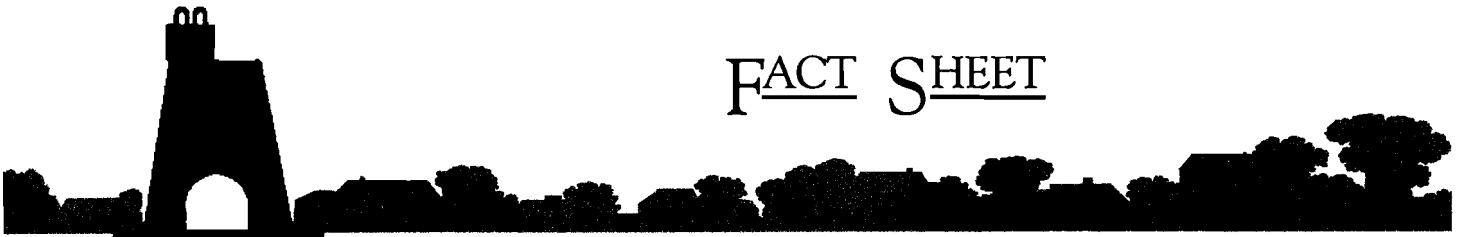


# FACT SHEET



**FURNACE  
TOWN**  
*Living Heritage Museum*

## ARTISANS AT FURNACE TOWN LIVING HERITAGE MUSEUM

Many professions were critical to Furnace Town in the early 19th century, not only to operate the iron furnace, but to support a thriving community. Each one played a unique and important role in the success of the village.

The storekeeper also served as the banker and the postmaster. Ladies in the town took their risen yeast bread to the baker, who baked it in return for a share. The wheelwright made and repaired the wheels on the many carts and wagons at Furnace Town. The potter made plates, storage jars, and jugs. There was a blacksmith, a woodworker, a broom-maker, a weaver, and possibly a printer and a metalsmith.

*Today artisans in period dress help us better understand the past as they interpret several 19th century professions which provided needed goods and services at Furnace Town.*

**W**oodworker  
As wood was the main raw material available to early communities, the talents of the woodworkers were heavily relied upon. *Carpenters* made and repaired items from wood. They built houses and made furniture, such as tables, chairs, and cabinets. *Coopers* made casks, or wooden containers, used for most storage needs. The cooper bound planks called *staves* together with wooden or metal hoops. He heated the barrel over a small stove to make the staves bend more easily. *Wheelwrights* made wheels, and *wainwrights* made wagons. These artisans were in great demand as wagons were needed for travel and for transporting goods. Both wagons and wheels were mostly wood and needed constant repairs because the roads were bumpy and rough.

**B**roommaker  
Early brooms may have been just a bundle of sticks bound together with a piece of hemp, or a broom sage, a grass which grows tall that was cut and bundled together. Broomcorn, from the sorghum family, was grown specifically for making brooms. Its stalk was used for the handle, and its tassel bound with wire for sweeping. The “Winder” and “Kicker Winder” broommaking machines demonstrate the broommaking process, traditionally a man’s job.

**M**etalsmith  
*Blacksmiths* made a variety of objects that people used every day. Iron was valuable because it was strong and durable. It could be forged, or heated and hammered, into many shapes, from cutting utensils to horseshoes and kitchen tools. He made hoops for the cooper’s barrels and wheel coverings for the wheelwright. Carpenters relied on him for nails, latches, and hinges, and farmers needed him to make farming implements. The *tinsmith* created objects for the home and for other artisans from tin—a soft, silvery-white metal. The tinsmith hammered sheets of tin into all kinds of things, such as pails, lanterns, colanders, cups, and kitchen utensils.

**W**eaver  
The act of spinning stretches and twists fibers of wool in such a way that they cannot come apart. The *spinster* kept the spinning wheel steadily moving with her foot and held the wool tightly between her fingers to twist the wool evenly. Weaving meshed together threads that run in two different directions, and was done on homemade “hand looms”. Without a loom, settlers could not weave cloth for making clothes, sheets or blankets. The *weaver* threw a shuttle, which carried the crosswise thread (*weft*) back and forth between the lengthwise threads (*warp*), then used the beater to push the crosswise thread against the already-woven material to form a flat, smooth piece of cloth. As well as weaving cloth, settlers used their looms to weave rag rugs. Some settlers brought their rags to the weaver, who wove them into rugs for a fee.

**P**rinter  
The printer printed newspapers, religious pamphlets, almanacs, schoolbooks, medical handbooks, and government papers. Printing was a long process. Each letter used in a word were handmade out of metal. These letters were called “matrixes”. Words were set up in “composition sticks”, then transferred to the galley. The *stoneman* decided what the page would look like in the finished form and laid out the type and pictures in that way. The stoneman then framed the page with an iron chaise and secured the matrixes. The finished galley was then placed into the press machine. Ink was spread over it. When a piece of paper was placed on top of the inked galley, the result was a printed page.