

Name: _____

Colonial Perspectives: Artisans

In the mid-Atlantic colonies, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware, over half of the people were artisans. Unlike large land owners, artisans usually did not own any land. They may have owned a store in a city or a workshop but that was all. An artisan is a skilled worker who sold his or her goods to make money and to help others have supplies they needed.

There were very many skills that people would learn and become artisans in. Some very common artisans were blacksmiths, silversmiths, printers, carpenters, and milliners. A blacksmith would heat iron and steel over a fire and then shape into a tool for others to use. They made hammers, anvils, tongs, and shovels. A silversmith would do the same thing, only he would use silver and shape it into finer things like teapots, forks and spoons, and bowls. Printers in colonial times had very difficult jobs. They had to line up types, which are letters and symbols, smoothly put ink on them and seal them on to a paper like a stamp. A carpenter was very useful in colonial times because everything was made from wood! Carpenters had the job of cutting wood to the right sizes and building the homes, shops, and cities in Colonial America. Milliners were almost always owned by women. Women did not have many rights in Colonial America but they were proudly milliners. A milliner is a woman who sold cloth in her shop and made gowns, clothing, aprons, or anything else that the colonists needed sewn.

Artisans were considered middle class in the Colonies. They were not poor like indentured servants or slaves. However, they weren't rich like large land owners. Artisans worked hard for their money and were known as good people who were kind to others. The artisans and farmers made up the largest group of freed people in the Colonies. One well known artisan was Paul Revere, who was a silversmith. Paul Revere is well known in history for riding a horse to Lexington shouting "The British are coming" at the start of the Revolutionary War.



Name: _____

Colonial Perspectives: Robert

Coming to the colonies was the best decision I ever made! Everyone over here needs a blacksmith. My business is booming. The settlers need tools to build houses, I make those! They need pots and pans to cook their food with, I make those too! They need anchors for their boats, bullets for their guns, horseshoes for their horses, gates for their fences, all sorts of things, and I make it all! And I am the only blacksmith in this town. I have to work hard from sun up to sun down but I get paid to do what I love. And the people here need me. I think that's what I love about the colonies so much. The harder I work, the more money I make. I don't take money or buy slaves like the plantation owners. I do my own work and the people respect me. They have even asked me if I will be on the town council and help make decisions for our town.

I don't have a wife yet, there aren't very many women in the colonies that aren't already married. Women don't want to come to the colonies because they are not considered equals here. I keep hoping a milliner will decide to open up shop here, we could use a good dress maker in town and we could use more women in this town! Other than that, life in the colonies is more than I ever hoped it would be.

I saved up my money in England for a very long time to get a ticket here. I did not have as much business in England so it took me a few years. The plantation owners kept offering to pay for my ticket over and I considered it once or twice. They kept promising that after I worked for them for a few years they would buy me a storefront in the local town. It all sounded a little fishy to me. I wanted to come here to be free and to make my own way. And that's exactly what I'm doing!

