

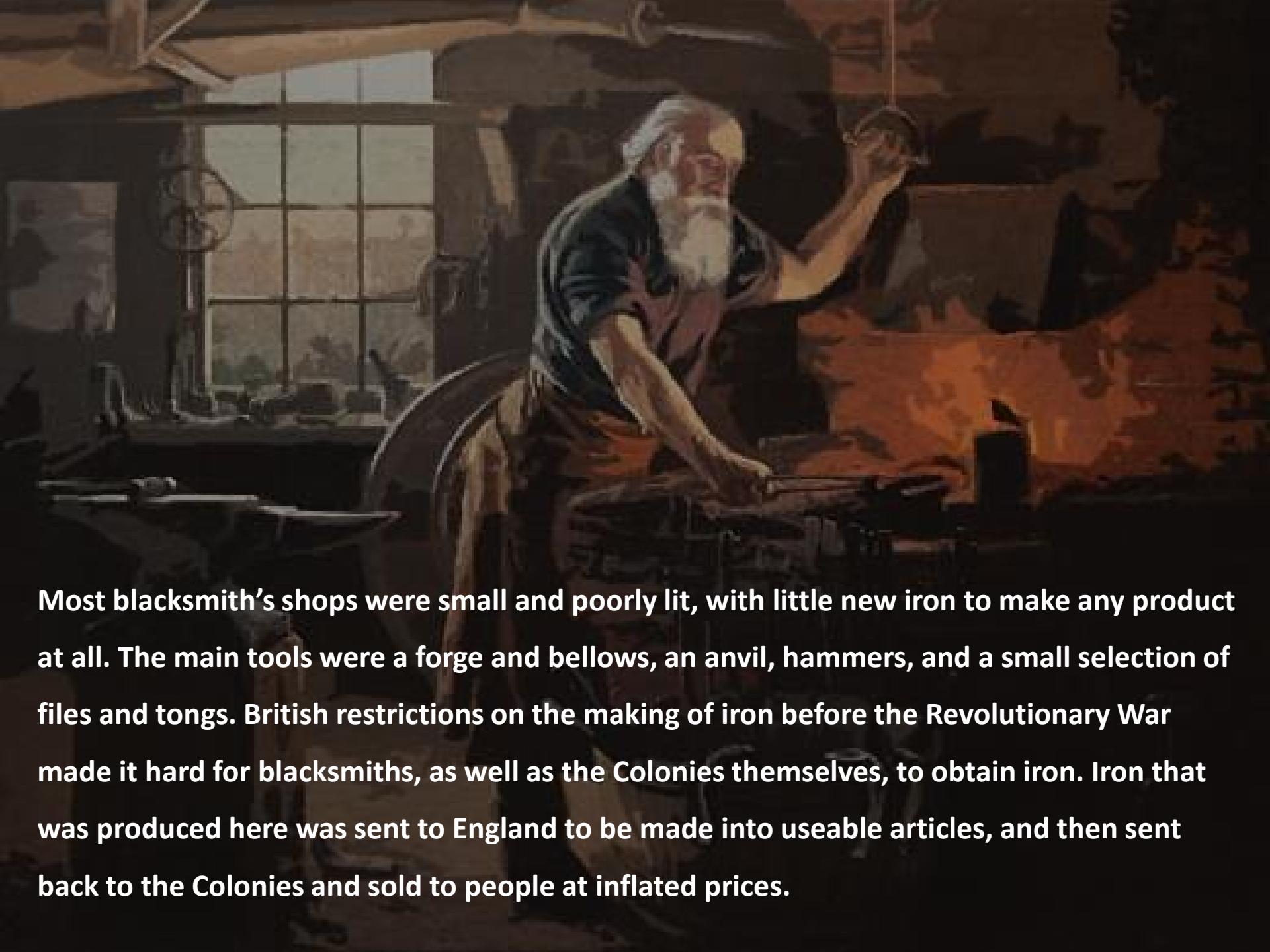
A blacksmith is shown working at an anvil in a forge. The blacksmith is wearing a dark, heavy coat and is using a hammer to shape a piece of metal. The background is filled with various tools and equipment, including a large anvil and several long, thin rods. The scene is dimly lit, with a strong light source from the right, creating a dramatic effect. The text "BLACKSMITHING IN THE 18TH CENTURY" is overlaid in the center of the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

BLACKSMITHING IN THE 18TH CENTURY

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The word “blacksmith” refers to iron, which was known as the black metal, and smith, meaning a smitter of metal (as in tinsmith or silversmith). The blacksmith was traditionally held in high esteem, because all trades known to mankind were dependent on the blacksmith. Most blacksmiths were toolmakers. They repaired things for people in the neighborhood and had to know how to work with different metals.

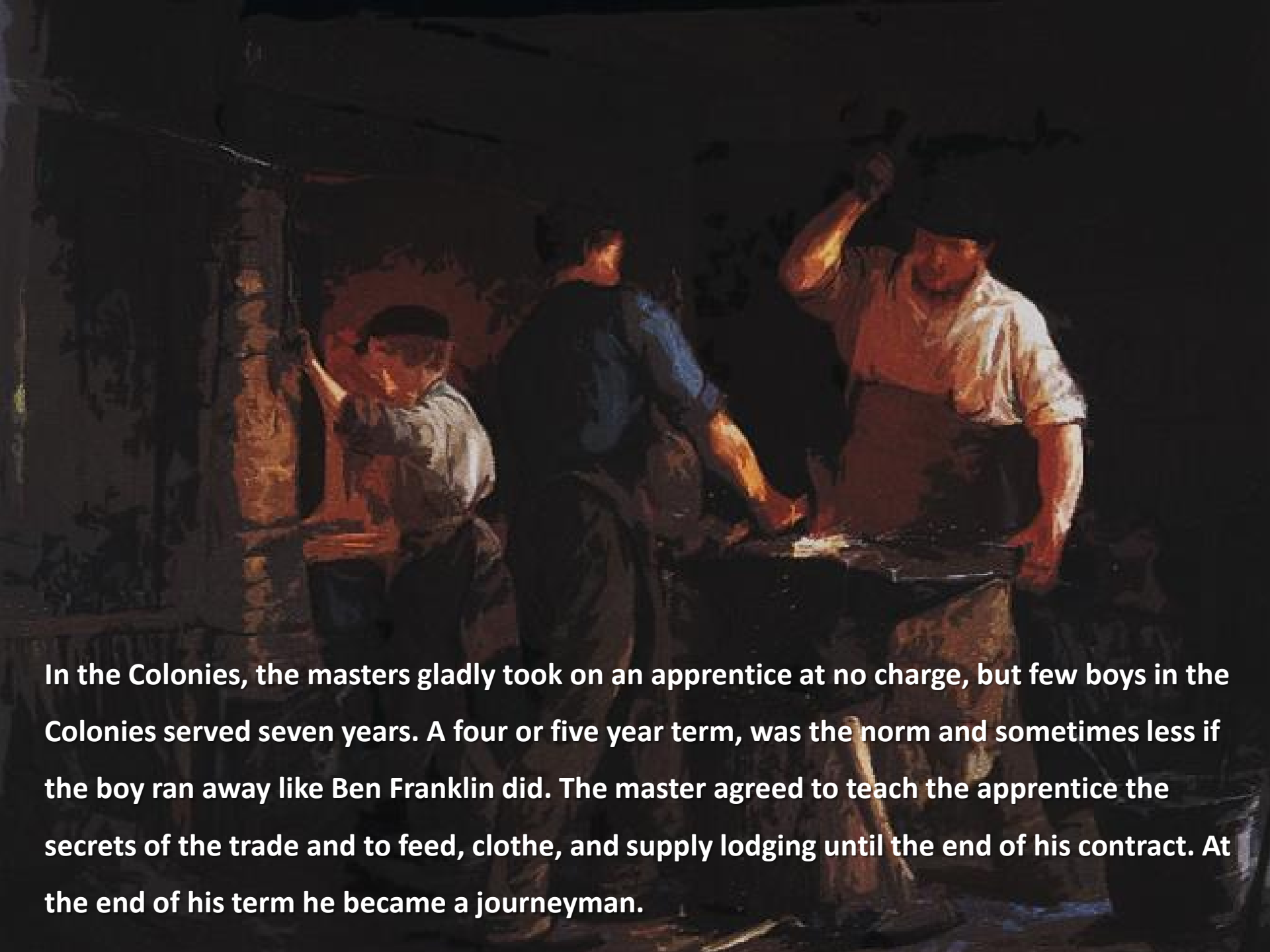


Most blacksmith's shops were small and poorly lit, with little new iron to make any product at all. The main tools were a forge and bellows, an anvil, hammers, and a small selection of files and tongs. British restrictions on the making of iron before the Revolutionary War made it hard for blacksmiths, as well as the Colonies themselves, to obtain iron. Iron that was produced here was sent to England to be made into useable articles, and then sent back to the Colonies and sold to people at inflated prices.

Apprenticeship

A painting depicting a young boy, likely an apprentice, in a workshop. The boy is seen from the back, wearing a light blue shirt and dark trousers, standing next to a large, rusted metal barrel or pot. The workshop is filled with various tools, including hammers, wrenches, and other equipment, hanging on the walls and scattered on the floor. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of a busy, industrial environment.

Apprenticeships were used in all trades in the Colonies. In Europe, a master could demand a cash payment from the parent and the apprentice was bound by a legal document to serve seven years. This was also called “being indentured.” After seven years, a boy in Europe would be a journeyman and would go from place to place and work for other masters until he became a master himself.



In the Colonies, the masters gladly took on an apprentice at no charge, but few boys in the Colonies served seven years. A four or five year term, was the norm and sometimes less if the boy ran away like Ben Franklin did. The master agreed to teach the apprentice the secrets of the trade and to feed, clothe, and supply lodging until the end of his contract. At the end of his term he became a journeyman.

Tool Making

A blacksmith is shown in a dark, cluttered forge. He is wearing a light blue shirt and dark overalls. He is holding a glowing piece of metal high in his right hand, likely having just finished forging it. The forge is filled with various tools, including hammers, anvils, and long rods. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a stone or brick wall. The overall atmosphere is one of traditional craftsmanship.

In the 18th century, there were four types of tools. Tools for the farmer were axes, plow points, hoes, shovels, etc. Tools for women included cooking, sewing, and household tools. Tools for hunting and warfare were knives, tomahawks, gun parts, etc. Tools for industry and other trades were needed, including those for the blacksmith himself. Very few blacksmiths made things like railing or iron balconies or gates, except in bigger cities like Williamsburg, Boston, and Philadelphia.