

## BLACKSMITH SHOP

Our blacksmith shop was built in 1860 by a Swiss immigrant by the name of Matti.

It was originally located on the corner of Dix Road and Lawrence St., in the little town of Dix, now part of Westmoreland, NY.

A blacksmith was primarily a worker of iron. Rural blacksmiths kept farm equipment in repair, and made tools for farmers, laborers, and other craftsmen. He also did buggy and carriage work such as iron tires and things necessary for domestic comfort, such as fireplace tools. Some of his work consisted of making horseshoes and shoeing horses.

He is called a blacksmith because he specializes in working with iron. Because he works with iron that is comparatively dull and dark in appearance, he is aptly called a "blacksmith". This term differentiates him from the "white-smith" or "tinsmith", who work with tin plated iron. Also from smiths who work with "bright metals" such as gold and silver.

The blacksmith heats metal (iron and steel are the most commonly forged) on a forge, with soft coal or charcoal and hammers it into shape on a steel block called an anvil. He may then harden the metal by heating it and then dipping it into a water bath.

Hammer forging is shaping metal by repeated blows with a heavy object. The simplest form is that used by a blacksmith who uses tongs to hold the hot metal against the anvil and pounds it into shape.

A bellows is used to raise the temperature of the forge. A bellows is a closed bag with a nozzle at one end. When the sides of the bellows are pushed together, air is squeezed out through the nozzle. When the sides are pulled apart, air is drawn in through valves on sides.

The blacksmith was a respected and needed craftsman. To see a smithy recreate and recapture a time almost lost will charm and spellbind you. You will be entranced with the sound of his double action bellows, the smell of coal and the rhythmic ring of his hammer as it strikes the hot metal and anvil.