



Cooper

A cooper was a very skilled craftsman that made wooden barrels. In the Indiana wilderness a man skilled at making barrels was an important person. Up until the early 1900s, almost everything was stored or shipped in wooden barrels (also called casks, tuns, kegs or hogsheads depending on the size of the barrel). Barrels are tough, easy to maneuver, can hold liquids as well as dry powders, don't break like ceramic containers, and can be stacked to utilize storage space effectively.

All sorts of foods were stored in barrels. Fish, meats and some vegetables were dried and salted then stored and transported in them. Most any item that could be stored for a length of time would be stored in a barrel to keep out vermin. Fragile items such as eggs would be packed in them among layers of straw to keep them cooler as well as to keep them from breaking.