Mercer Museum Vocabulary

Colonial- Of or relating to the 13 British colonies that became the original United States of America

Tile- a thin slab or bent piece of baked clay, sometimes painted or glazed, used for various purposes, including roofing and architectural decoration

General Store- store, usually in a rural area, that sells a wide variety of merchandise, as clothing, food, or hardware, but is not divided into departments.

Whale oil- oil rendered from whale blubber, formerly widely used as a fuel for lamps and for making soap and candles, and a machine lubricant.

Blacksmith- a person who forges objects of iron.

Lenape- A group of closely related Native American peoples formerly inhabiting the Delaware and Hudson River Valley and the land in between. The Delaware formed a variety of political alliances in their westward migration after losing their lands to white settlement in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Cooper- a person who makes or repairs casks, barrels, etc.

Gallows- wooden frame, consisting of a crossbeam on two uprights, on which condemned persons are executed by hanging.

Canal- a long narrow arm of the sea penetrating far inland.

Concrete- an artificial, stone like material used for various structural purposes, made by mixing cement and various aggregates, as sand, pebbles, gravel, or shale, with water and allowing the mixture to harden.

Archaeology- the scientific study of historic or prehistoric peoples and their cultures by analysis of their artifacts, inscriptions, monuments, and other such remains, especially those that have been excavated.

Chronology- the sequential order in which past events occur.

Industrial Revolution- The social and economic changes brought about with the shift from handmade and hand-powered tools to large-scale factory production, occurring in America from the late 1700s through the mid-1800s.

Game- wild animals, including birds and fishes

Curing- the act or a method of preserving meat, fish, etc., by smoking, salting, or the like.

Salting- To cure or preserve by treating with salt or a salt solution.

Potting- A method of preserving meat. It is cooked, then placed in a crock and covered with a deep layer of melted fat or lard. Meat preserved in this manner was often used on long voyages.

Drying- Meat preserved by cutting into thin strips and drying it in the sun.
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**Smoking** - preserving meat by hanging it in the smokehouse. The smoke from the hickory completed the process. Then it was hung in the cellar and used throughout the year.

**Spider Pot** - an iron pot with a long handle and legs used to cook items in Colonial times

**Flint** - a hard, fine-grained quartz that sparks when struck

**Wool Cards** - wire-toothed brush used to detangle and straighten wool fibers before spinning

**Drop Spindle** - a wooden spike weighted at one end with a wheel and an optional hook at the other end. A primitive device used for spinning wool and other fibers into thread; precursor of the spinning wheel.

**Chamber Pot** - a bowl-shaped container kept in the bedroom under a bed and used as a toilet at night

**Bellows** - a device for producing a current of air/oxygen to keep a fire going

**Butter Mold** - a device used to form and mark butter to distinguish one farm’s butter

**Jacob's Ladder** - A child’s toy made out of six square wooden blocks and ribbon.

**Barter** - To trade goods or services without the exchange of money

**Fleece** - the wool that is shorn from a sheep at shearing time

**Churn** - a vessel that agitates milk or cream to make butter

**Broadside** - large sheet of paper usually printed on one side

**Anvil** - heavy iron block with a smooth face, frequently of steel, on which metals, usually heated until soft, are hammered into desired shapes

**Loom** - hand-operated or power-driven apparatus for weaving fabrics

**Nippers** - device for nipping, as pincers or forceps