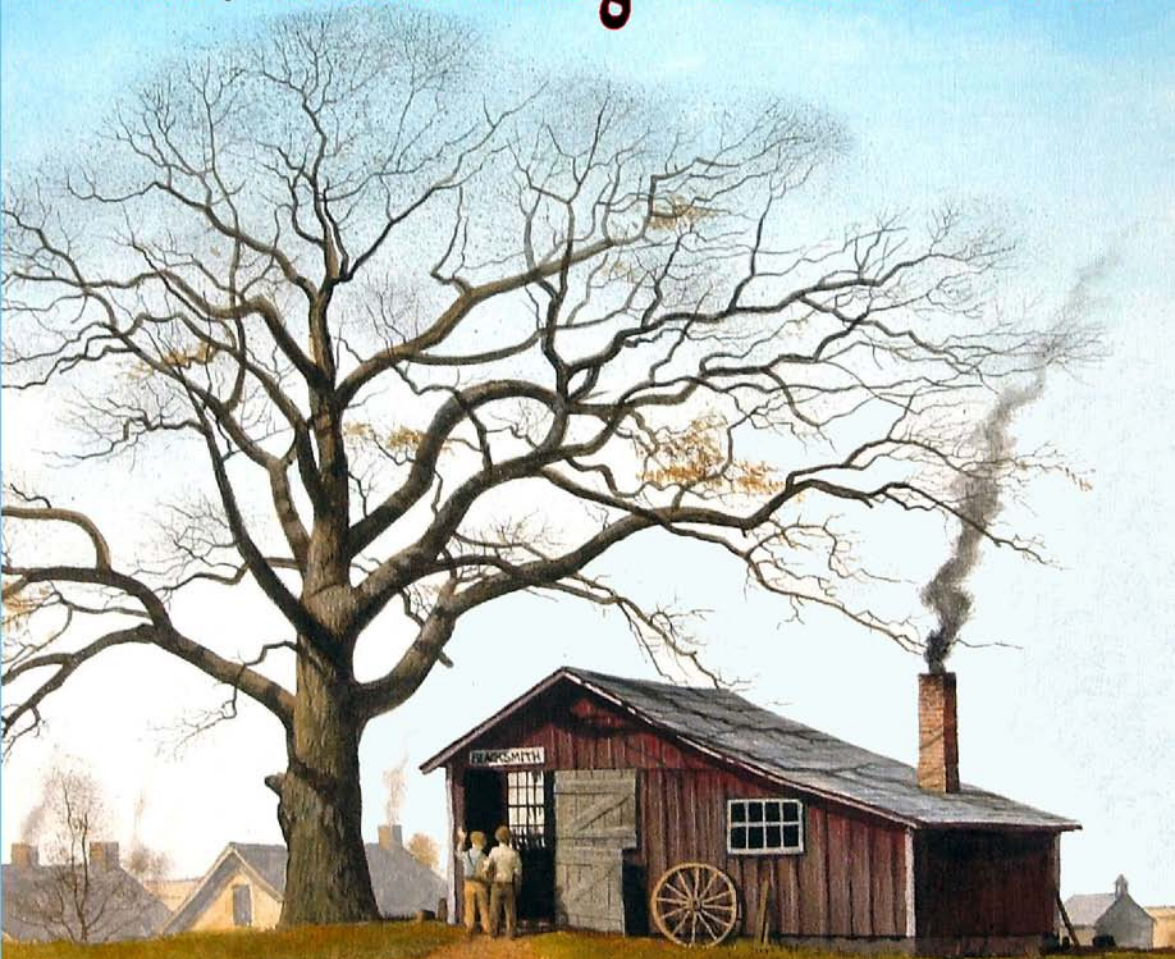


*Under the Spreading  
Chestnut Tree . . .*  
**Blacksmithing in America**



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## The Blacksmith and America's Development (back cover text)

As America celebrates the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its beginnings at Jamestown, it is appropriate to herald the contributions of the largely forgotten blacksmiths. For it was there in the spring of 1607 the first one hundred and five all-male settlers arrived, including one barely remembered smith, James Read. He and the many other blacksmiths that followed played a crucial role in the survival of the struggling settlement and in the eventual success of the British coast-wide colonization of America.

Without the smith's services, the farmer would have resorted to wooden plows and shovels, sawmills and gristmills would have not been possible, and every industry that subsequently developed would have been forestalled. America's physical infrastructure has a backbone of iron and steel and it was the smith that first fashioned the metal into sturdy products that allowed the country to grow and prosper.

The blacksmith was America's first mechanical engineer, repairing all broken iron objects and making new ones to satisfy his customers. Also, he was a noteworthy and respected member of the community and an essential contributor to the residents, allowing them to gradually improve their quality of life.

For the first time, this book examines the important domestic contributions by the blacksmith and does so by drawing on primary sources from a predominantly rural agrarian county along the upper Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. Harford County has a rich farming, milling, wheelwrighting, and carriage-building heritage – all of which were collocated with or very near the blacksmith and his smithy. These county technological roots serve as microcosms from which to extrapolate the blacksmith's rich and crucial story of America's growth.

This book should be read by every aspiring and practicing smith and by those who desire a better understanding of how the blacksmith and his technology played a pivotal role in the country's embryonic beginnings.