



AXES

People have used axes for a long time. The first axes were made out of stone. They didn't have handles. The next axes were made out of copper, bronze, and iron. These axes were very heavy. Soon, they started putting handles on their axes. The handles were made out of deer or elk horns. In the 1800s people began to make axe blades out of steel. Steel is lighter.

North America has lots of forests. The axes the pioneers brought with them didn't work well for cutting down trees. They decided to make changes to the axe. They started making one end of the axe blade heavier and square. That end of the axe is called the poll. It is used like a hammer. They also made the axe blade thinner so it would cut deeper into the tree. Then, they started using steel to make axe blades. Steel makes the axe blade lighter and easier to use.

Pioneers used to make their own axe handles. It had to be made well so that the axe blade could easily cut into the tree. They used a very hard wood from the hickory tree to make the handle. Have you ever heard someone say, "You handled that well?" Or "How did you handle that?" The term "handle" comes from the importance of the axe handle.

Today, the American axe with a steel blade and hickory handle is used all over the world.