

Nails (Historical)

The size, form of head, nature of point and special uses all give names to different classes of nails. Thus we have **tacks**, **sprigs** and **brads** for very small nails; **rose**, **clasp** and **clout**, according to the form of head; and flat points or sharp points according to the taper of the spike. According to the method of manufacture, nails fall into four principal classes: **1.** Hand-wrought nails; **2.** Machine-wrought and cut nails; **3.** Wire, or French nails; and **4.** Cast nails.

The nails are forged from nailrods heated in a small smith's hearth, hammered on an anvil, the nail lengths cut off on a chisel and the head formed by dropping the spike into a hole in a "bolster" of steel, from which enough of the spike is left projecting to form the head. In the case of the **clasp nails** the head is formed with two strokes of the hammer, while **rose nails** require four. The heads of large-sized nails are made with an "oliver", or mechanical hammer, and for ornamental or stamped heads "swages" or dies are employed.

Machine-wrought and cut nails have supplanted most corresponding kinds of hand-made nails. **Horse nails** are still (1911) made by hand labor. These are made from the finest Swedish charcoal iron, hammered out to a sharp point. They must be tough and homogeneous throughout, so that there may be no danger of their breaking over and leaving portions in the hoof.

An American, Ezekiel Reed, patented the first nail making machine in 1786.

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