

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

May 20, 2022

Apothecary – At the Apothecary, Margaret has been working with the minutes from the Court of Directors of the Public Hospital, 1780-1801. She has created a map indicating the place of origin for the patients in the Hospital. The patient from the farthest distance was Isaac Wiseman from Woodford, Kentucky. Just in time for the summer heat, Mark has created a Cordial Julep to raise the spirits in depressions and languor. Sharon has completed the proofreading of Galt & Barraud's Ledger A and is now going back to the daybooks to make comparisons between the entries of the daybooks and the ledger.

The Apothecary Shop will be open Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Armoury:

Blacksmith – **The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.**

Tinsmith – This week in the Shop, Steve has been working on watering cans for an outside order and continuing to experiment with paint. Joel has been making gill cups for Prentis Store and researching workers at the Publick Armoury. Jenny has been making cullenders (or colanders) as part of the 5th-Level apprenticeship projects, and she is progressing on research for her apprenticeship paper involving the pricing of tinware and the use of tin objects in the household.

The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday (11:30am-5:00pm), Friday, and Saturday.

Anthony Hay Shop – **The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker are open Sunday (11:30am-5:00pm) and Monday through Saturday.**

Brickmaker – This week saw the Brickyard crew getting a feel for how the new yard will run when we achieve full production. This amounted to filling out the drying bed, getting more clay delivered, and starting Apprentice Madeleine on her Brickmaking journey.

With the excess sand on the bed removed, it was quick work to even out the surface in preparation for the bricks to come; and with our treading pit already finished, all that was needed was a good chunk of clay. We separated a section of the pit to fill for Apprentice Madeleine to tread, her first experience in the pit. Then, we hydrated it, and she set off to work. Once that clay was well tread, we started table molding. This is a process we use to mold bricks without moving them to sun dry. This allowed the crew to become reacquainted with the task and confirmed that they are still quite proficient.

Otherwise, this week, Master Josh received his tool pouch from the Leatherworkers. A piece very nicely created by Jan. It seems Josh is quite taken by it. Apprentices Nick and Madeleine finished up the paving including a path from the treading and molding area to the drying bed. While they finished that, we had the yard seeded to prevent our walking area from getting too muddy.

We also collaborated on a project with the Wigmakers for Apprentices Madeleine and Mary (the new Carpenter). Our friends in the Trades described it as “quite becoming”, “demanding of respect”, and “well-manicured”. You can find the creation pictured below in all its majesty.



The Brickyard will be open Sunday through Thursday, weather permitting.

Carpenter – The Carpenter’s Yard will be open Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Colonial Garden – This week in the Historic Garden, we were joined by American Indian Initiative Interpreters Martin and Chris. They planted Tutelo strawberry corn, scarlet runner beans, maycock squash, and sunflowers into the American Indian Garden located within our Historic Garden site. Other work for the Historic Gardeners this week included weeding, watering, constructing wattle fence, transplanting hot peppers and basil, and planting the seeds for our castor bean plants. This week also marked the return of our cold-sensitive plants from their winter home at our Landscape Department's greenhouse. We were thrilled to see a bloom on our aloe plant when we picked it up. Thank you to Coach and Livestock for transporting our larger citrus trees back to the Garden, and to the crew at the greenhouse for taking good care of our plants over the winter. Notable blooms in the Garden this week include aloe (*Aloe vera*), scented geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.), larkspur (*Consolida ajacis*), blue star amsonia (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*), clove pinks (*Dianthus caryophyllus*), corn poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*), and foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*).



Martin and Chris planting seeds in the American Indian Garden



Corn, bean, and squash seeds for the American Indian Garden



Aloe plant in bloom



Corn poppies at the Historic Garden

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30am-5:00pm).

Engraver – In the Engraving Shop this week, Danni has been getting ready for interpreting and just starting to cut some beginning lines with a graver. We have been going over the mechanics of basic engraving, tool control, and artwork set up. We are pleased to have William back from his much needed vacation. He has been working on cutting an ornamental design for practice and beginning on the drawings needed for his next copper plate. Lettering is always a constant, so he will be back in full swing designing monograms and cyphers. Lynn is getting caught up on paperwork and catching up with several Guest inquiries. Lynn also delivered her program on engravings on 18th-century silver at the Hennage.



The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Foodways – The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Foundry – We may have officially entered “You must be hot in that” season, but that doesn’t stop the Foundry from firing away. Journeyman Mike has been finishing some pewter punch ladles that have not been seen coming out of this Shop for some time, all while challenging himself to match his Apprentices’ polishing skills. These are being passed to Master Engraver Lynn, who seems excited to use the large expanse of handle for cutting designs seen in some Collection silver. In apprenticeship news, Apprentices Drew and Leanne have both been casting and doing preliminary finishing work on some pewter candlestick bases. Soon, they’ll be casting the stems and doing *lots* of soldering practice on scrap before assembling these in order to avoid putting holes in their hard work. They’ve also made their first sand molds for some brass work—hinges for the Harpsicord-makers’ new spinet. Drew has also been working on drilling out a second set of bronze dividers and has started pinning over the rod to assemble them. Leanne has been compiling a handout for our summer Workshop, including 18th-century depictions of pewterers as well as some information regarding the care and finishing of a pewter spoon for our participants to take home so they can continue the process if they so choose! Out of the forge this week came those brass hinges, some pewter spoons for summer Workshop prep, and, as always, musket balls for the Musket Range.





The Foundry will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Gunsmith – Darrin has managed to get some engraving done on the pistol locks, though it has been tough with the dark, gloomy days we had. Like we say, you must know when to put the tool down and wait for better conditions. Richard has been forging out some tomahawks that will have hammer poles on the back instead of a pipe bowl. Since a hammer is designed to strike something, you must weld a piece of steel on the end of the hammer pole itself since wrought iron isn't hard enough to withstand impacts. The hammer could then be either threaded to the tomahawk or welded. Research material has been, *The Birmingham Gun Trade*, firearms in the Dewitt Wallace Museum, and *Great British Gunmakers*.
Department of Historic Trades and Skills



Volume 8, Issue 19



The Gunsmith Shop will be open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Wednesday, May 25th, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Gunsmiths will present, "Virginia Rifles Made Along the Great Wagon Road." A photographic study of three important Virginia rifles. The earliest in the group was made at the headwaters of the James River in the 1750's. The second is the earliest with a brass box and dated 1771. The third rifle is the earliest with a signature.

Historic Farming – The tobacco has stabilized and is doing well. It will really get going with this heat! Mike Parrish with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service was out this week to take more videos of the tobacco growing process. This time, he filmed the removal of plants from the seedbed and pitching into hills and the cultivation of weeds between the hills by Eli the horse and Ed.



Tobacco plant at Prentis Field

Prentis Field will be open Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Joinery – The Joinery will be open Tuesday (11:30am-5:00pm), and Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – The badges for *Drummer's Call* are finished! Between the Founders' stellar metalwork, the Engravers' beautiful decoration, and our colorful bit of silk, we've completed another year's commemorative medal to thank all of our visiting corps for their participation! They'll be delivered this afternoon, and we look forward to seeing everyone perform during the march tomorrow!

Program planning continues for the summer *Gown in a Day* program and for our fall and winter offerings. Janea continues her research with the Louisa County account book and is conjuring up creative ways to incorporate her discoveries about the cost of clothing into a new program for Women's History Month next March. She's also begun a petticoat for the new Carpenter's Apprentice Mary. Kate continues stitching on her shift, and Rebecca has nearly finished the trim on the sack jacket, with just the sleeve cuffs left to go.



The Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Thursday (12:00-5:00pm), and Saturday.

Music – The Governor's Musick is busy planning for summer concerts, which will happen all season both at the Capitol building and outside in the Palace Gardens. Also, Kyle has been doing research in Special Collections at the library, looking through English composer James Nares' collections of harpsichord lessons and his later sonatas. Doug Mayo and his team are working with him to have the music digitized for ease of use in programming that Kyle is working on, which explores music associated with Cuthbert Ogle. Ogle was a London musician who traveled to Williamsburg in 1755, died that same year, and under these unfortunate circumstances had the substantial collection of music which he had with him catalogued and presumably sold here in town. He placed an ad in the *Virginia Gazette* shortly before his untimely death, announcing that he could, "teach young Gentlemen and Ladies to play on the Organ, Harpsichord or Spinett, and to instruct those Gentlemen that play on other instruments so as to enable them to play in Concert."

Printer and Bookbinder:

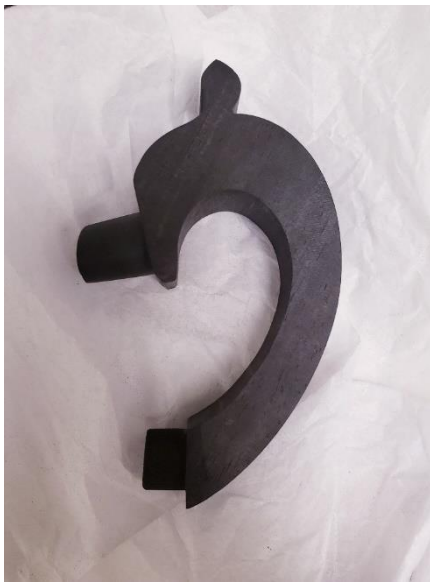
Printing Office – The Printing Office will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Bindery – The Bookbindery will be open Sunday through Tuesday, and Friday.

Public Leather Works – The Public Leather Works will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers will be at the Armoury on Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Silversmith – As always, the Silversmiths are very busy with their list of projects. Megan went down to the Engravers for a few days and brought back a large amount of finished trade silver for the retail store. She is learning much from the Master Engraver, as well as continuing work on her ingot, and taking notes on tray making. Chris is working on the ebony handle for her teapot. Bobbie's tray is taking shape as she chases in the design. Preston is raising on his small bowls and cutting in the decorative rims. George continues his work on forging out the long ingot for spoon blanks. Research on trade silver is also being conducted.



Chris' handle for her teapot



Some of the trade silver, engraved, polished, and ready to go to retail

The Silversmith Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Tailor – The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, and Friday (11:30-5:00).

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Pamela's log cabin check is up and running! It's a plain weave, with a stunning pattern coming from the use of alternating colors rather than the weave structure itself. We can't wait to see what it will become.

Annie has been researching heavily and found a new technique for carding yarn (brushing it to prepare it for spinning). Speaking of brushing, they also found an interesting note from John Wily's "Treatise on the Propagation of Sheep," which suggests taking a brush and rubbing oil on your sheep after shearing to help the wool grow faster and protect them from the rain. Ah, the things one finds when studying first-hand sources!

And of course, we can't forget our new addition, Caroline Brown! Caroline is a senior at Crambrook Kingwood in Michigan, where students may undertake a three-week internship in lieu of finals. We're excited to have her with us. She'll only be here for a limited time, so stop by and say hello!

The Weaving Shop will be open on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Wheelwright – This week, the Wheelwrights finished the carry log cart for the Carpenters. The wheels and axle already complete, the only component left for this project was the instillation of a tongue: a long wooden

beam to allow for levering of timbers and logs. Master Wheelwright Paul morticed the axle and made a tapered cylindrical tenon to match. Apprentice Joel morticed one end of the cart's tongue and installed an oak handle. In addition to dimensioning out pieces for his hand cart body, Apprentice Murphy used a file to work on the metal sheathing for the cart's axle arms. This would allow the metal bushings wedged inside the hub to ride smoothly on the arms when greased. After hammering in the tongue into the axle (pictured below), a metal pin was installed to lock the tenon in place. Finally, Murphy installed some metal braces to add to the structure of the piece (pictured below). Other projects of note: Paul is beginning work on a plow mould board going to Farmer Ed. Both Murphy and Joel are in the process of researching some wheel constructing equipment for future Shop use. Murphy is working on designing a pit frame to hold the wheel to allow the spokes to be driven into the hub vertically. Joel is working on a wheel stand to hold the wheel horizontally to allow for the cleaning of spokes and felly installation.



The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Wigmaker – As the temperatures rise, so does the need for wig bathing. We've had an influx of wigs and hairpieces looking for some TLC, and we're working our fingers and curling sticks to their limits. Edith has continued to dress our Military Programs folks on Thursday mornings and has been working on her hand knotting when she's not combing, washing, combing, and styling. Benton has been practicing his styling techniques and has tackled the restyling of a reproduction wig to put it back into its original design. He is also elbow deep in combing, washing, combing, and styling. Debbie has started a new hand knotted base after abandoning her latest attempt. Even after twelve years of practice, some of those knots just don't want to sit where they're supposed to. She also continues to comb, wash, comb, and style. Looking at future projects, Debbie and Benton will be working on a new horsehair wig soon, and Edith will be meeting with Mr. Thomas Jefferson himself to discuss the particulars of a new wig to replace one of his older ones. Research continues into the hair market and colored ribbons. As usual, don't hesitate to reach out with any tonsorial needs.

The Wig Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

The Mechanick's Adviser is a publication of the Colonial Williamsburg Department of Historic Trades & Skills.

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