

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

March 10, 2023

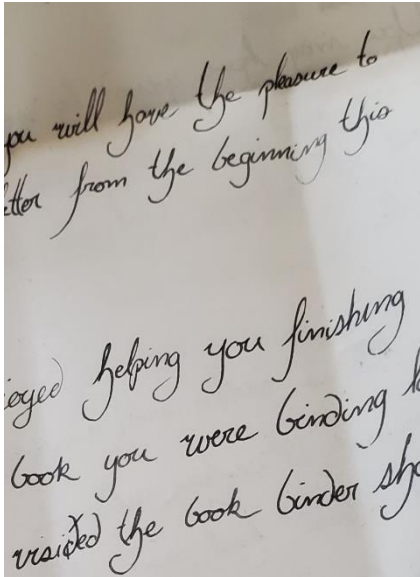
Apothecary – We're diving into school group season but still working hard behind the scenes. Sharon is hunting for Virginia references to cancer for a new Hennage program she's developing - on Wednesday, she also officially received her Masters' Papers! Mark, in addition to compounding a lovely conserve of rosemary flowers (pictured), has just completed apprenticeship level 4; feel free to either congratulate him or quickly solicit 18th-century medical services before his consultation fees go up. Margaret continues to contemplate madness (academically) and is making her way through the level 2 surgery modules. Those impacted by Mark's fee increase can see Margaret for heavily discounted trepanning & cataract couching.

The Apothecary is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.



Blacksmith – The Blacksmith is open Daily.

Bookbinder – Good day. Occasionally, the Bookbinders like to highlight some of the people who step through the doors of the Bookbindery and into our hearts. The beautiful Marie-Helaine of Canada is one such person. She visited with us several times, clad in an exquisite hand-sewn period gown, and was curious about a multitude of subjects. Recently, we received beautifully handwritten thank you notes and a precious gift. Marie sent us copies of engravings by Martin Engelbrecht of German Bookbinders and Booksellers, circa 1730. Thank you, Marie-Helaine! Where would Colonial Williamsburg be without people like you? We are grateful for your friendship.



you will have the pleasure to
letter from the beginning this

enjoyed helping you finishing
book you were binding to
visited the book binder she



The Bookbinder is open Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Cabinetmaker – For the past several weeks, we've been joined by Sarah Pelluconi, a History major at the College of William and Mary. As part of the NIAHD program (National Institute of American History and Department of Historic Trades and Skills

Democracy), Sarah will be interning in the Hay Shop a couple of days a week through the Spring Semester. In addition to learning about the history of the Trade and its practitioners, Sarah will be learning some fundamental hand skills. Our goal is to have her make a beautiful walnut candle box with dovetailed corners by the end of the semester. To reach that end, Sarah has been practicing cutting dovetail joints, sharpening tools, planing boards flat ... and cutting more dovetail joints.



This past Tuesday, Jeremy, John, and Bill had the opportunity to visit Collections and study a few chairs. Jeremy has chosen to create a set of chairs inspired by one chair in our Collection which is thought to have been in the Palace when Lord Dunmore left Williamsburg in 1775. The chair was then said to have been sold at auction in 1776 and purchased by the Galt family. Jeremy studied and measured the original chair and is considering what it might look like with different front legs. The original chair has straight legs, so what might it look like with cabriole legs instead? The idea for this change in design has been inspired by a chair in the collection at the Museum of Southern Decorative Arts which is believed to be from Annapolis, Maryland. The backs of the two chairs have similar center panels, or splats, while the rest of the chairs are noticeably different. Jeremy is approaching this project from the viewpoint of “What if a client saw these chairs in the Palace and wanted something similar but with different legs?” We’ll see in the coming weeks what comes of this little design experiment.



Chair at MESDA



Dunmore chair

The Cabinetmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Carpenter – This week in the Carpenters Yard, we’ve focused on completing a few smaller projects. Mary and Shelby have been making new sawhorses for the upcoming projects. Bobby and Matt hung the Armoury gate frames and installed the pales. We will be installing the hinges and fasteners in coming weeks.



The Carpenters Yard is open Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cook – It’s smoking time over at the Palace Kitchen! Since the first weekend of December, three of our four hogs from the butchering program have been packed in tubs of salt in our Smoke House in the beginning stages of our next batch of Virginia Hams. As of last week, we pulled the hams out of their tubs, washed them, dried them, and strung them back up in the Smoke House. On Sunday, our order of green Hickory wood was delivered, so on Monday, Barbara filled up the ring in the Smokehouse, and the smoking of the hams has officially started! So, if anyone sees smoke coming from the Palace over the next several days, never you fear, it’s just the hams.

We are also gearing up for our busy Spring Season! Our Workshop, “Play With Your Food”, starts shortly. Guests will be able to come into the Kitchen and get hands on with creating personal and unique garnishes for plating that they will be able to bring to their own dining tables at home. Spring’s round of Chocolate Programming will also be starting before long, as well as the next Brew Season, where we will be crafting four new batches of 18th-century beer in the Scullery. We would also like to thank our friends over at the Coopers for the beautiful new wash tub Apprentice Jackie kindly made for us a few weeks back.

The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Cooper – In the Cooper's Shop, we have been working on some wash tubs and stands. In the case of the stands, we've been using some material that we would otherwise throw away as it's too knotty to be used in making containers.

The Cooper is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. On Monday, March 13th, 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Coopers will present, “Tracing Adam Waterford”. Adam Waterford was a free Black man who worked as a cooper in Williamsburg around the time of the American Revolution. This program explores how we know that, and what else we know and don’t know about him, in a discussion of the documentary evidence that allows us to glimpse who Adam Waterford was.



Engraver – The Engraver is open Sunday through Tuesday, and Thursday.

Farmer – Farmers Ed and Kevin attended the Southeast Regional Association of Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) in South Carolina last week. Plenty of good presentations, especially on interpreting sensitive issues, rice culture in Lowcountry South Carolina, and growing and processing indigo. We led a half-day workshop on understanding mules and plowing. Ed worked with the farmer at L. W. Paul Living History Farm to plow with the participants, and Kevin taught them how plows work. They were thrilled to get to plow rather than just talk about it. We wrapped it up with a plowing match. The power of hands-on learning!



Pet the Mule



Planning the workshop with the site's farmers



Plowing with a single mule

The Farmers will be at Ewing Field Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Fifes and Drums – Hello from Fifes and Drums! We are in the final push to prepare for performances starting again, and the kids have been working diligently to learn their music. We'll be out on the field again starting next Wednesday at 4:40 pm. In other exciting news, Staff conducted a round of interviews with our

highest ranking Senior Corps members and have decided to appoint them to Leadership positions within the Corps. Congratulations to Isabel Kantor as Drum Section Leader, Spencer Johnson as Bass Drum 1st Sergeant, and Jacob Hower as Fife 1st Sergeant! You can identify them during marches by their colored epaulettes (silver for Sergeant Major, red for Section Leader, and green for 1st Sergeants).



The Senior Corps drumline having class during setup for the HTS Department Party on Wednesday.

The Fifes and Drums will be performing Wednesday through Friday at 4:40 pm in Market Square, Saturday at 12:30 pm starting at the Capitol and marching to the Palace, and Saturday at 1 pm on the Play House Stage.

Founder – Here at the Foundry, we are celebrating the end of a very successful run of Winter Workshops; we sold out every week! We also delivered a pair of silver shoe buckles to the Milliner and Mantua-makers for use in their “Disaster Strikes!” Hennage program this Saturday. And of course, we’re busy producing musket balls for the Range. Research-wise, Apprentice Drew has finished writing his upcoming Hennage presentation and is starting on the slides. His first presentation will be later this month on March 29th! Apprentice Leanne has been diving into occupational diseases of working with toxic metals, so very comforting research indeed.

The Foundry is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Gardener – This week, the Historic Garden experienced slightly cooler temperatures and even the threat of frost. Despite the warmer spring, we still have a danger of freezing temperatures here in our part of Virginia until mid-April, so the Gardeners are patiently adhering to our usual planting schedule. Many Guests to our site over the last few weeks have posed the question, "Is this warm weather normal?" The answer to that is "no." According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, February 2023 in Virginia was the warmest observed in the 129 years that NOAA has been keeping climate records. For those interested in how an early spring can affect plant and animal activity, the USA National Phenology Network (usapn.org) has some very interesting graphs and information. As the weather warms and the days lengthen, many of the vegetables we planted in the fall to overwinter will start to mature. The broccoli plants have started to produce, and we were able to send our harvest to the Cooks at the Governor's Palace Kitchen along with lettuce, Welsh onions, and a variety of herbs. The seeds we sowed in the hotbed last week have begun to germinate, and our second pile of horse manure measured at a whopping 155 degrees at its peak and is now ready to be turned. This week, the Gardeners finished pruning the muscadine grape vines, sowed a row of

crown peas, and pulled several wheelbarrow-loads of weeds from the Garden. New blooms in the Garden this week include peach (*Prunus persica*), leucojum (*Leucojum aestivum*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), and heart's-ease (*Viola tricolor*).



Purple broccoli in the Historic Garden



Seeds beginning to germinate in the hotbed



Muscadine grape vine after a pruning in the Historic Garden



Heart's-ease (*Viola tricolor*) in bloom

The Colonial Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmith Shop is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Harpsichordmaker – From the Harpsichord corner ...

Forgive our silence lately ... but we have been really busy. As you can see from the photos, the baseboard is close to shape. We have attached the risers that will support the wrest plank (that big thick piece of pinkish beech). It will be the heaviest assembly in the spinet since this will hold the tuning pins and part of the string band, so everything must fit well with the best, freshest hide glue we have. Thanks to Broadus, Mark, and Ken at the Armoury for making small nails for this assembly on very short notice. We really appreciate it.

Melanie has been working on the blocks that will cover the chromatic, or accidental, keys. On the original Harris Spinnet that serves as our model, the blocks are not ebony but an unidentified wood that was stained black quite thoroughly. We are making our blocks from pear wood with a topping of ebony for durability, and so there is no concern about stain wearing away from the player's fingers touching them. It is a regular way of saving on precious materials (yes, they were concerned about that back in the 1760s). The pear section of the block will be painted black, so unless you look really hard, you can't tell the difference. You can find historical mirror frames made from pear stained black for an ebony imitation effect. The wealthy buy the real ebony, the rest of us buy the imitation so we can also participate in the same fashion. Lots of parts, lots of different woods ... come see how it is all starting to come together.



Armoury sprig nails



Chromatic key covers in progress



Chromatic keys in progress



Lots of different woods in all this!



William Harris 1764 keyboard closeup

The Harpsichordmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Joiner – Extra! Extra! Read all about it! The Joiner Shop has exciting news! Three of our staff have been elevated to new titles. Brian Weldy is now Master Joiner of the Shop. Peter Hudson and Scott Krogh are now Journeyman Joiners. They received their papers from Colonial Williamsburg this week in a special ceremony attended by colleagues, family, and friends. Congratulations to Brian, Peter, and Scott!



The Joiner is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Leather Breeches Maker – **The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.**

Masonry – This week in the Brickyard, the crew continued work on unstacking the kiln, where they found some rather glorious glazes. This glazing can be found as part of the reconstructed and original buildings in the Historic Area, like the Ludwell-Paradise House. This unique look is caused by the buildup of potash on the face of the brick over the five-day firing. This potash is produced from the hardwoods, like oak and hickory, that we burn throughout the kiln, which is why you see glazed bricks in the fire tunnels.

Otherwise, this week, you may have missed the crew paving and laying piers in the Yard but fear not! You will be able to see them do it all over again very soon.

In more fashionable news, Master Josh had his second fitting for leather breeches. Soon, he will be able to compete with Journeyman Carpenter Matt for the title of most fashionable Tradesperson in the Building Trades Yard.



The Brickyard is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Military Programs – Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – On Saturday, March the 4th, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of our "Gown in a Day" program by ... you guessed it ... making another gown in a day. Armed with reproduction fabric made by the Weavers and 5.5 pairs of very willing hands (the three of us plus our two Interns, Rachel and Ishbel, plus a borrowed Apothecary (Margaret) for part of the day), we set to work at 9:00 am. Our inspiration for the gown's style is a 1769 print of "A Lady's Maid Soaping Linen": it's a simple stomacher-front gown with robings and single flounces at the elbows. The pressure was on, since the gown had a very firm deadline: not only were we working to get it done in the day because of the parameters of this specific program, but also because it's going to be featured in this Saturday's "Disaster Strikes!" program at the Hennage.

Kate performed the role of "customer" to much acclaim. Janea did the cutting of the sleeves and bodice while Rebecca pleated and stitched the back, Ishbel worked on the sleeve flounces, and Rachel focused on the petticoat. By mid-day, we were ready for the first fitting, which joined the fronts to the back. Sewing during the afternoon slowed a bit as our eager visitors kept returning to check on the progress and ask for updates. By 4:00 pm, the bodice had been stitched, and it was time for the shoulder straps and sleeves to be set. We kept the needles flying until 5:00 pm, when the gown was mostly done; by the end, all that remained was to stitch the hem and attach the flounces to the sleeves. In the final reveal at the conclusion of the program, Kate modeled the nearly complete gown with a handwoven reproduction kerchief made by the Weavers, which will also appear in this Saturday's program. As soon as the door was closed and locked, it was time to take advantage of our lovely, wide, flat countertops to allow our weary fingers (and the rest of ourselves) the briefest of respites.

We're going to resist sharing a photo of the completed gown...because you have four chances to come and see it in person at the Hennage over the next four Saturday afternoons! In the meantime, many thanks to Rachel and Ishbel for being with us for the day, to Margaret for sacrificing part of hers (and to Sharon for permission for her to be a temporary runaway Apprentice), and to Ed for being our official photographer and for keeping us supplied with necessary quantities of donuts and pizza. We appreciate you all and couldn't have done it without you!

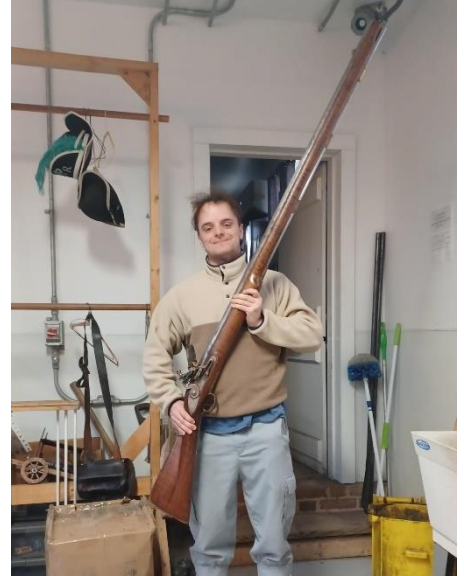


The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (9:30-3:00). On Saturday, March 18th, 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Milliners will present, "Disaster Strikes! The Cost of Dressing in 1769." It's 1:00 am, and you've just escaped your burning house with only the nightclothes on your back and the slippers on your feet. What would it take to rebuild the "average" woman's wardrobe? How many pieces might that include? What would those pieces cost? Using a 1769-70 merchant's account book from Louisa County, Virginia, the Milliners and Mantua-makers will demonstrate the layers of a woman's everyday outfit and discuss the number of garments and other pieces that might comprise her full wardrobe.

Music – On Friday, March 17th, 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, member of the Music staff will present, “Phillis Wheatley and the Music of Freedom”. Join the Governor’s Musick in an exploration of the inconsistencies of the Age of Enlightenment ideal of freedom, as seen through the life and poetry of Phillis Wheatley and the music of George Frederic Handel.

Musket Range – We at the Musket Range welcome our other new Firearms Instructor, Alex Smith. Alex comes to us from Montana. Alex has done Civil War reenactment and worked at the recreation center at Cal State at East Bay. Alex has experience with match locks because of his participation in Baskerville's Company of Shot and Hampden's Green Coats. Attendance at the Range has been picking up steadily as the warmer weather has arrived.

The Musket Range is open Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm, and 3pm.



Printer – The Printer is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers will be working at the Leather Breeches Maker Tuesday through Saturday.

Silversmith – The Silversmith Shop is as busy as ever. Megan is continuing to work on her bowl, letter charms, and sleeve buttons. Bobbie is working on her tray and has started to make a reproduction of an 18th-century sweet meat basket. Chris is also working on her tray. The early stages of polishing can take quite a lot of time, and it is necessary when making something as smooth and reflective as a tray. Preston has been working on more silver bowls and helping Megan with hers, along with polishing a number of jewelry items for the store. George has been hammering out another ingot that will eventually become silver sheet.



Megan’s letter charms



This is the 18th-century sweet meat basket Bobbie is starting to reproduce (left). The start of Bobbie's sweet meat basket (right).



Chris' silver tray



Preston's trade silver ready for the store



George's ingot

The Silversmith is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Tailor – The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Tin Plate Worker – The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – As mentioned last week, Dye Day fast approaches! We have finally selected the four colors we will be dyeing with: cochineal, turmeric, logwood, and indigo. We will be able to get red, yellow, purple, and blue. As we often say, "some of our dyes are expensive, some of them are complex, and some of them are gross." These four dyes are no exception. Stop by the Dye Yard on March 22nd to see what colors we cook up!

The Weaving Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Wheelwright – Pictures of the completed repair of a wheelbarrow.



The Wheelwright Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Wednesday, March 15th, 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Wheelwrights will present, "A Primer on Paint". Long before humanity created villages and towns, there was paint. Paint serves not only as an aesthetic enhancer but as a means of preservation of wood and metal objects. Come join a Colonial Williamsburg Wheelwright on a journey following the science and history of this often-ignored part of our lives.

Wigmaker – Hello from your favorite Wigmakers! This week, we finished up all of the Full Bottom wigs for Evening Programs and turned our combs to the upcoming "CW Lights". We have also continued to work on our respective projects. Edith's fingers have been flying over her tressing frame to produce row after row of human hair wefts for her Journeyman project. Benton has one or two more batches of horsehair left to frizz for his Brigadier. Debbie put aside her netting to start working on a new hairpiece for one of our Dancers. She has taken a piece from our inventory apart and will blend in a lighter shade for a better color match, then begin weaving the hair. We had a very sweet Guest this past Sunday with her daughter, and they commented that they needed to head home but kept going to "one more site" before they left. The mother said our Shop had to be their very last stop as they should have headed out one and a half hours before, but as she exited, she turned around and said, "Thank you all for all your hard work because without you, there would only be empty buildings to look at." I do not believe she meant any slight to our amazing Building and Masonry

colleagues, by the way, but it was nice to hear the appreciation in her voice for the people that bring this place to life. This past week, we also had a mini hair dressing session with Alex and Ren from Military Programs. They were learning simple styling techniques to incorporate into their interpretations at the Guardhouse.

On Wednesday night, Debbie was presented her Master's Certificate and would like to thank Ted and Justin for believing in her, and Edith and Benton for helping her get to this point. Reminder: starting with the Spring schedule, the John Coke Office will be open Friday through Tuesday, so please plan accordingly if you need our services.



The Wig Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, and Friday.

Women's History Month Tour – On Saturday, March 18th, 11 am-12 pm, departing from the William Pitt Store, join us for “Women at Work!” We have all heard that a woman’s place was in the home during the 18th century, but it was far from the only place. Join us for a walking tour discussing the often-surprising realities of women’s labor, skills, and rights in 18th-century Williamsburg and the Colonial Atlantic World. We will explore roughly half a mile of sites, stories, and continuing research into hidden history. Limit of 25 guests.

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

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