

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

August 19, 2022

Anthony Hay Shop:

Cabinetmaker – This past week, John has gotten his tea table together, and the woodwork is completed. He only has to add a catch, apply the finish, and the table will be done! Another nice piece for sale in the Shop. Jeremy and Bill got some time on Wednesday to study a piece in the Collection currently on display in the Hennage Collection at the Art Museum, a bureau table we will be presenting on for our conference in January, *Working Wood in the 18th Century*.

Harpsichord-maker – From the Harpsichord corner ... Our finished spinet, which was featured a couple of *Adviser* issues back, now displayed in our wareroom, finally has a confirmed buyer. So please note that the instrument is no longer for sale.

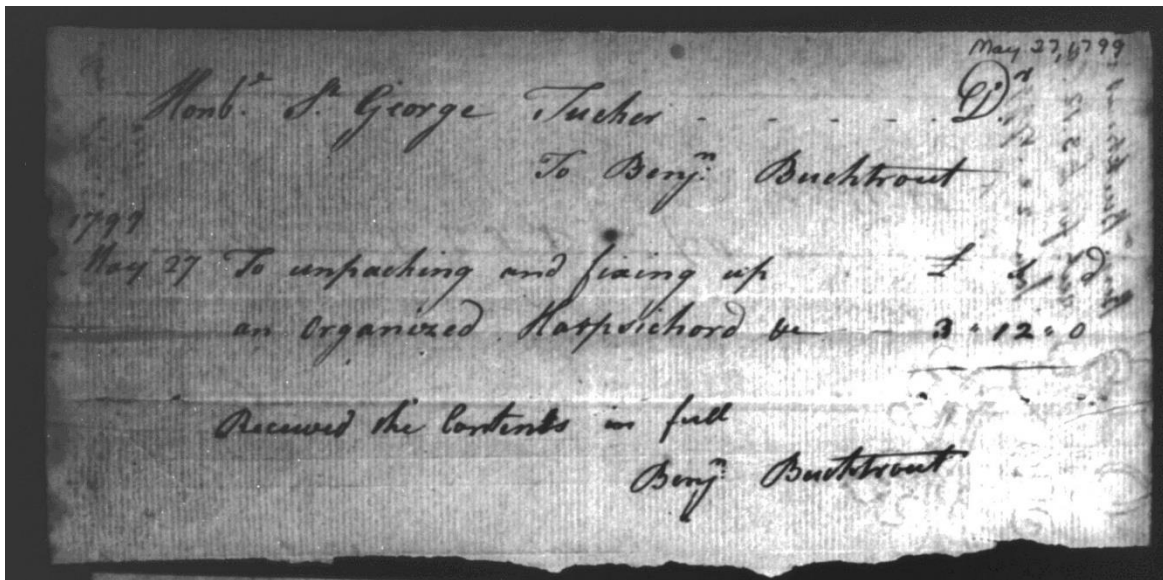
Fun historical fact: One of the spectacular pieces that will feature in the new “Music In Early America” exhibit (opening on Saturday, August 20th, at the Art Museum) is an “organized piano.” Rediscovered about ten years ago and conserved by former Conservator John Watson and assistants in our Conservation Labs, it is a combination of a chamber pipe organ and a piano built into a single structure. The instrument was ordered from London by St. George Tucker in the 1790s, and the initial unpacking and setup was performed by Benjamin Bucktrout, our local cabinetmaker who offered, at one point in his career here, the service of making and repairing harpsichords and spinets. Bucktrout’s bill for his efforts survives in the Tucker-Coleman Papers at William & Mary Special Collections. (See the photos of the receipt and the instrument itself.) The instrument has been conserved into playing condition. Recordings are featured on the webpage devoted to it on the Collections *eMuseum* website, also with more details and many photos. Short performances on it will feature as part of the new exhibition. So our man Bucktrout actually worked on instruments and must have had some familiarity about that type of work, though how and where he gained that knowledge and experience, we do not know. Come visit us at the Shop and especially go see the new exhibition beginning Saturday. So many instruments; so much beauty. Cheers all.



Organized Piano, CW, doors closed



Organized Piano CW, doors open



Bucktrout Tucker Organized Piano Receipt 27 May 1799 (Tucker Coleman Papers Accounts)

The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker are open Daily.

Apothecary – Last week, we informed you that Mark was engaged in some secretive project. Having completed that work, Mark is once again compounding Shop medicines. This week, he made Enema Domesticum, which is intended for unloading the intestines of their contents. It contains milk, olive oil, and brown sugar. In the Shop, we have an antique pewter enema syringe with which this medicine would be injected. Mark asks that anyone in need of this service to apply to Margaret during regular business hours. If the glisters doesn't suit you, he also made Gargarisma Emolliens, a decoction made from marshmallow root, figs, and water. It treats a dry, parched, rigid mouth by moistening and softening. Come by the Shop to see it before the cool fall weather arrives.

Margaret would like our colleagues to know that Mark wrote that first part. She's making saffron wine, a cordial to lift the spirits, and has discovered on her first try that alcohol evaporates. She has since added the phrase "put in closed container" to the patch notes for Saffron Wine 2.0. Sharon is working hard on cross-referencing our list of antiques with multiple dispensatory sources!



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

Armoury:

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

Tin Smith – This week, the Tin Shop has been finishing several orders, including a glazed and planished tin lantern for a Guest. The punch work in this type of lantern shows a variety of designs, from crescents to crosses and dots. The punching deforms the tinplate and requires planishing, an operation that flattens the material but also produces a raised or slightly curved surface. This model also included “repoussé” work. This would be a high-end lantern due to the amount of work necessary to produce it and the added materials used in its fabrication, such as glass and paint. The plain struck (punched) ones, by contrast, would be entry level as they are neither glazed nor painted, and the struck design is not planished.



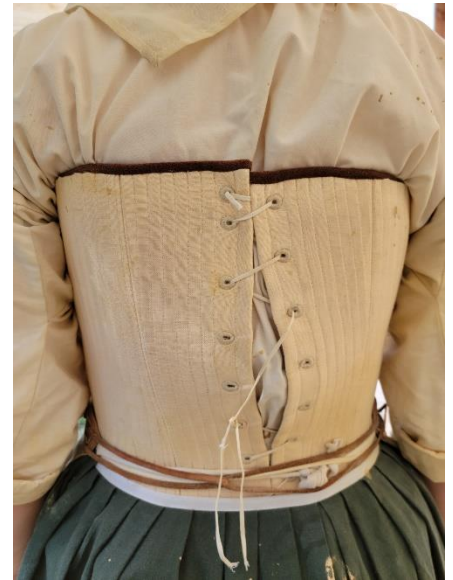
The lantern on the left was made a few years ago, and the newly finished one on the right is to be painted.

We are wrapping up the order for the First State Historic Park with small personal boxes and spice boxes, both items to be japanned. We are painting the Gardeners’ hand-lights, which were made in the Shop a few years ago. We are also making a match case for the Tailors - to be japanned, also. Jenny can finally work at her bench again having cleared a great number of coffeepots and has finished a struck lantern.

The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Tuesday, August 23rd, 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Tinsmiths will present, "An Assemblage of Wares: Tinware in the Virginia Home." What was the cost of tinware in the 18th century? Who used it? These are common questions about the everyday items made out of tin. This talk will cover those questions as well as compare tin to other metalware products offered by late-18th-century Virginia merchants and used in the homes of most Virginians.

Brickmaker – This week in the Yard, Brickmaking continues with some minor changes, namely the arrival of our tool shed from the old Yard! Also, we had to say goodbye to another mold as the stress of brickmaking has affected its functionality. We hope to get it back soon, but in the meantime, we switched to a smaller mold to keep ourselves busy. As for the state of our production, we have nearly thirteen-thousand bricks stacked neatly under our shelters! While our bounty is robust, there are still a few weeks left in our season to either keep with the same size or stock up on others.

In other Brickyard news, Apprentice Madeleine had a curious mishap involving the integrity of her stays versus the strain of wielding a pickaxe. Needless to say, the pickaxe won that round.



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

Carpenter – This week at the Carpenters Yard, we have installed more flooring and should finish the floor by August 20th. After the floor is finished, we should shift our efforts to shingling the roof. That work will begin August 23rd-24th.



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

Colonial Garden – Rain and cooler temperatures have graced the Historic Garden and Colonial Williamsburg. Not only has this brought an increase in weed growth, it has moved the Gardeners’ thoughts towards the fall planting. Really! Fall vegetables have been sown in pots for later transplant, and it took a mere two days before visible germination.



Sprouting Red Russian Kale (*Brassica oleracea*)

This is not to say that the Garden is without summer vegetables. Indeed, a basket containing turnips (*Brassica rapa*), tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*), onions (*Allium cepa*), carrots (*Daucus carota sativus*), okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*), squash (*Cucurbita pepo*), and potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) was provided to Historic Foodways as they cooked in the James Anderson Armoury Kitchen. A variety of melons (*Cucumis melo*) are also being collected from the Garden.



The makings of a fine stew, perhaps?



Sliced Ananas melon (green flesh) and Zatta cantaloupe (orange flesh)

Intern Andrew and Apprentice Marc completed the construction of two straw mats. The mats are primarily used for covering the glass panes of the hot beds during the winter as well as providing shade for more sun-sensitive greenery during the summer.



The mats are made from rye straw (*Secale cereale*).

And finally, Volunteer Chip's decade of service was honored by CW and the Garden this week. The Gardeners beg that you give Chip a hearty *Huzzah* when next you see him in the Garden or perambulating about town. His twice weekly contribution makes our work easier.



Volunteer Chip and Master Eve upon presentation of his ten year pin.

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – In addition to carrying on with our usual work, the Coopers delivered six piggins, six buckets, and three cannikins to the Prentis Store this week.

The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Engraver – In the Engraving Shop this week, we have been wrapping up several projects by Erica and Danni, our Interns. We will be seeing them leave the Engraving Nest in the next week and a half. William and I will miss them greatly. There has been great conversation about art, 18th-century art, styles, and

technique. There also has been great strides made in learning the basics of intaglio engraving and interpretation. They should be very pleased in the hard work they have put in. Danni is finishing up a special project for some of our Actor/Interpreters. There is some good stuff here. Virginia's seal and a rethinking of other options.



Here are two of the nine versions the guests might see.

Erica is becoming quite a copperplate printer. She has been printing as much as possible before she exits and drawing up some well-crafted monograms. I will say she has done a marvelous job while she has been here.

William has been putting the finishing touches on his program on sundials (Hennage, August 30th). He has been working on his script inscription. He has also finished a bundle of trade silver and letter charms from our Silversmiths.

I have been trying to grasp goal writing ... and when I can, I have been working on the second Brickyard plate and finishing a small rural image, both for printing. The Bodleian Plate project is getting started this week. The copper has been measured out and will be cut to size soon. I am hopeful to have it laid out by end of September.

One last thing, we are in talks with the Apothecary! We will be starting a new copper plate of surgical instruments! Good Stuff! Have a great week.

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

Foodways – We have had a busy couple of weeks in the Kitchen! Barbara has been down at the Anderson Armoury several times with her Junior Interpreter, Anne, as well as with our friends from Military Programs and the Colonial Garden, as we share knowledge with each other and bring Trades together. She has also partnered with fellow CW staff on a butter churning project that took place last week. Frank has been busy with *Ales Through the Ages*, continuing his work with our fellow English food historian on his book for the *London Art of Cookery*, and getting plans in line for some upcoming 2023 projects. Abbey has officially moved into the second level of her apprenticeship, and both she and Dom are continuing to plug along diligently on recipes. For National Oyster Day, we had the privilege of joining our friends in the Native American Initiative for an oyster roast down at their Encampment, where we brought along some Johnny Cakes and enjoyed an afternoon of good spirits together with Guests.

The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen Sunday through Thursday.

Foundry – As they have all summer, our Saturday morning Workshops are continuing to go very well! We've been keeping busy with a bunch of finishing work and getting projects completed. Journeyman Mike has been cleaning up some extra harpsicord hinge castings (which will eventually come in handy) along with a

couple of pipe tampers and a Masonic pin. Apprentice Leanne has finished up a wax seal, and Apprentice Drew is well on his way through his own. Speaking of apprenticeships, Leanne and Drew made a little headway this week by casting stems for pewter taper candlesticks. Once the stems are cleaned up a little, they'll be doing plenty of soldering practice before assembling the stems with the awaiting bases. Master Engraver Lynn stopped by with her preliminary drawing of the sundial engraving, so we were able to get the basic shape scribed out onto the bronze sheet which Mike will be cutting out over the next while. The hope is to have it at the Hennage talk on August 30th. Speaking of the Hennage Talk, Leanne and Drew have been busy continuing research of sundial construction and made some exciting progress this week (it turns out that people write far more about the timekeeping aspect than the construction of the object itself). And, as ever, we are churning out plenty of musket balls for the Range.



The Foundry will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).

***Gunsmith* – The Gunsmith Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.**

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

Joinery – The Joinery will be open Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Military Programs – Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily. Our “Military Activities” at 10 a.m. will consist of either a public drill or our new recruiting program. At 2 p.m. each day, we will have our “Discussion of Military Topics”, where one of our staff members will be discussing a subject of military history and answer questions from the Guests. Musket demonstrations are generally dependent on staff numbers of that day, but typically between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, we will be doing an infantry demonstration at 4:20 p.m. for our “Necessity of Order in Battle” program. We are not doing cannon demonstration at the present time.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – This week, the Milliner's Shop has been a flurry of behind-the-scenes activity on a number of different ongoing projects. We're working with Justin Chapman to put together a social media segment on our summer "Gown in a Day" program. This stand-alone video will not only provide an overview of the program itself but will also offer a glimpse into the extensive preparatory research and study that goes into its planning and presentation. Although Justin captured the interpretation on the day of the program, we'll be creating some supplementary footage that will provide close-ups of the gown-fitting process and some construction details. We're spending the week prepping all of the pieces to ensure we'll have a clear "narrative" for the day of filming.

We've also been deep in an ongoing conversation about the most effective and efficient way to organize our Shop space to facilitate the Guest experience while still ensuring space and opportunity to stitch and work. Several different Shop layouts have been tested with mixed results, so the trials continue. Rebecca has also been finalizing training materials on the importance of costume to CW's visual interpretation. This is part of a larger, long-term collaborative project with CDC, the Costume Review Committee, and the Training Department, that we hope to see implemented soon.

In sewing news, Janea has been working on a new suit of millinery out of a summery white checked linen. Rebecca is making a new apron (brought on by a tragic encounter with a drawer pull on Tuesday...) and has started work on a new bedgown for Barbara at the Bindery. Last but certainly not least, Kate continues work on her stays, with just a couple more channels to go!

The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – The Printing Office will be open Tuesday (10:00-5:00), Wednesday, Friday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.

Bindery – The Bookbindery will be open Sunday (11:30-5:00), Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

Public Leather Works – Well, it's been a quiet week at The Public Leather Works. Leather breeches have been the order of the week. Mr. Howlett repaired a pair for Master Paul of Wheelwright fame as well as for "Marquis" Mark (Lafayette). Ms. Cross has cut out and begun the assembly of a pair for Apprentice Joel over in Wheelie World. Intern Italia has been assisting Ms. Cross with various parts. Mr. Tilley has also been working on a pair, along with conducting several research projects on the history of the leather breeches industry. Other than that, we've all been enjoying the cooler weather and each other's invigorating company. Stop by and say howdy and, as always, if there's anything you need from us, let us know.

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

Shoemaker – Shop work continues much as the previous week. Victoria continues to prepare for her Hennage talk on September 14th, research on baby booties, and her Safety Training. Val is preparing for the shop's next Family Workshop, doing some ordering, organizing the office, and continuing the embroidery on his baby bootie project.

The Shoemakers will be at the Armoury on Sunday, Monday (11:30-5:00), Thursday, and Saturday.

Silversmith – Work continues in the Silversmith Shop as we work our way through projects. Megan is continuing to raise her silver bowls, and George is teaching her how to make teaspoons. She is also starting to scribe the design for a fish trowel. Chris is working on chasing in the silver tray body, filing the cast feet from the Foundry, and making mourning rings. Bobbie has soldered the feet onto her tray and is working on making the tray itself flat and level. Preston is instructing Megan on how to raise her bowls as well as working on his chased bowls and polishing a mountain of jewelry for the shop. George is making tumblers and has created a mountain of silver spoon blanks from the wire he drew. Layne stopped by to film some footage for a future program. We were happy to see him, and we look forward to working with him again! Preparation for the research trip in September continues as does research into the people enslaved at the Craig property.



Preston's polished jewelry and bottle tickets



George's spoon blanks



Bobbie's tray with soldered feet



The fish trowel Megan is scribing in preparation for piercing.



Layne filming George scraping an ingot

The Silversmith Shop will be open Sunday through Wednesday, Thursday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.

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

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – The Weaving Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Wheelwright – Another productive week for the Wheelwrights: Master Wheelwright Paul has finished repairing the Powder Magazine's handcart body! Over the next week, he will be painting the vehicle. Fortunately, the Shop has quite the surplus of Spanish brown paint, so bid farewell to the Prussian blue body. The Magazine handcart has also been removed for some adjustment and shall be reinstalled in the coming weeks before painting. Headway is being made on the Apprentice handcart wheels, too! Its mortices complete, the second hub has been sent to the Blacksmiths for its metal bands. A round of huzzahs for Blacksmith Intern Josh for the banding on the first hub! With the banding installed, the end of the spokes will

be shaped with drawknife and spokeshave before being driven into the hub with a sledgehammer. Research continues regarding 18th-century paint and plough designs.



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

Wigmaker – This past week, Edith has been practicing her hand knotting while we wait for our shipment of thread. Benton has now attached the first few rows of his horse- and human-hair blend to the nape of the Brigadier wig. Debbie has been working on styling a wig that will be re-homed to a museum in the Hudson Valley, while Lexie continues work on her second hair piece. The beautiful weather as of late has helped slow the influx of wigs needing some TLC, but maintenance continues. We would like to take this opportunity to let our colleagues know we will be out of the office for the first two weeks of October. If you have wigs in need of service, or new requests, we ask that they come in by the 18th of September. We will strive to get wigs done and back out in time, but we cannot guarantee the return of your wig if it's brought in after the 18th. Service will return after the 16th of October. Research continues into Marie Antoinette's hair and men's hair styles.



Benton working on his Brigadier wig

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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