

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *May 20, 2023*

*This week's Trades Talks at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium:*

On Monday, May 22nd, Masonry Trades will present, "Who Designed This Place?" Join Master Bricklayer Josh Graml as he explores how 18th-century buildings were designed and built as gentlemen architects plied their trade in Virginia. Where did they get their design inspirations, and how did they translate English architectural forms to Virginia-born tradesmen?

On Wednesday, May 24th, the Wheelwrights will present, "The Road MORE Travelled". Williamsburg is known as a sleepy, quiet southern town, but what did it look like in its heyday? Join a Colonial Williamsburg Wheelwright as they take you onto the colonial Capitol's streets to discuss what was rolling and who was driving.

On Saturday, May 27th, Alex from Military Programs will present, "Defenses of the Delaware". A nation's capital is always of paramount importance for governance and morale of an army. Philadelphia was the De Facto capital of the United States, and as such, a prime target for the British. In 1777, General Howe set his sights on it and sailed with the British Army South. Given the power of the Royal Navy, the fear was an approach by water through the Delaware River. Come learn about American attempts to fortify the river and their fierce defense as the Royal Navy desperately tried to push its way towards Philadelphia.

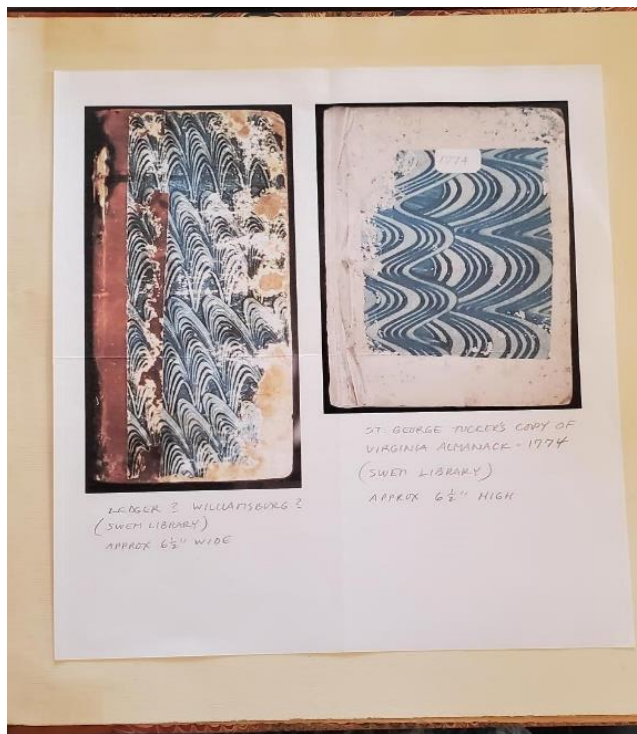
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*Apothecary* – The Apothecary is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

*Blacksmith* – This week, the Blacksmiths of the James Anderson Public Armoury have been active on many projects. Ken has been making winged compasses for the Carpenters, Mark continues work on the locks for the Bray School, and Aislinn is working on fire tongs for the School, as well. In the Apprentice corner, the large order for Mount Vernon continues. Josh is locking horns with grid irons, Broadus has been making forks and spatulas, and Alex has finished up a skimmer, as well as some hoes for Williamsburg's Farmer and Brickmakers. It's simple to say and true every day, that all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.

**The Blacksmith is open Daily.**

*Bookbinder* – Good day from the Bookbinders. The Bookbinders have been examining 18th-century examples of books and paste paper with a particular focus on the items related to Williamsburg under the tutelage of former Colonial Williamsburg Bookbinder Bob Lyon. Both examples feature paste paper of the time and are associated with Williamsburg. We will be attempting to re-create.



**The Bookbinder is open Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

***Cabinetmaker*** – This week, Bill and John got John's chairs glued together, bringing the whole project closer to completion. Next up will be applying a finish and making the slip seat frames. Bill has found success with the brazilwood dye he has cooked up, and he applied the stuff to the parts of his writing table that needed a little color. Check the picture of his drawer bottom that shows, from right to left, the bare white oak, a single coat of dye, a second coat, and then the seedlac topcoat that gives the finished color.



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

***Carpenter*** – This week in the Carpenters Yard, we’ve finished the framing for the wagon shed at the Ewing Field Farm site. We’ve moved the frame and shingles to the job site, as well as prepped for the raising. We are aiming to raise the frame on Saturday, May 20th.



**The Carpenters will be working at Ewing Field Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday, weather permitting.**

***Cook*** – Another week has come and gone over at the Palace Kitchen! As the temperatures warm up in the Kitchen, Dom and Abbey have been making attempts to get some of the last puff pastry and pies we will see for a few months out on to the table for their apprenticeship. Unfortunately for an 18th-century cook in Virginia, the weather in the summer is too hot and too humid to attempt successful pastries that are temperamental to the weather. These delicate sweets will literally melt into a pile of goo in the summer heat, so we have seen the last round of those for the season.

We had yet another successful Workshop this week; and on Sunday, we will take on the last Brew of the spring season over in the Scullery. This last beer will be a porter, rich in color and in flavor. This past Tuesday morning, Frank was in the Shop early with our friends from Trend and Tradition, doing a photoshoot for making raspberry jam, which will be included in an upcoming issue. The Colonial Gardens have continued to grace us with their seasonal goodies, and our gardening staff over at the Palace has done a lovely job this season of getting crops in the ground that can be brought over to the Kitchen and be used in recipes. Frank was particularly excited this week to look out the window and see that our artichoke plant produced fruit this year! Artichokes do well in this climate, but they take a couple of years from being planted to grow a viable product. This time and effort that it would take to receive the fruits of your labor makes the artichoke an 18th-century gentry plant, with your average family most likely dedicating their garden space to food sources that do not require years to mature. Last year, we were still waiting for the artichokes to mature, and it was a wonderful surprise to see so many little “suckers,” as they are called, sprouting from the top of the plant. With so many small chokes popping up, you can bet we will have a slew of artichoke dishes out on the table this month.

**The Palace Kitchen is open Monday (11:30-5:00), Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Sunday, the “Arts and Mysteries of Brewing” will be held in the Palace Scullery, 10:00-3:45.**



**Cooper** – The Cooper is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

**Engraver** – This week in the Engraving Shop, we welcome William back from vacation. He jumped right in on finishing the ships of his copperplate! All that is left to do is to design the cartouche and cut it around the lettering on the bottom. He also finished up three bottle tickets for the Silversmiths.

We had a nice visit from a very happy Customer/Guest. She wanted to show off the ring Lynn engraved. Chris from the Silversmith did a wonderful job on its construction. The Guest was overjoyed!

With the Fifes and Drums cups finished, Lynn moved back to the Bodleian Plate, then the Silversmiths arrived with a beautiful sterling silver salver. Lynn has begun and is about halfway through the map engraving. We will be welcoming our Intern, Emma, next week, so photos of her drawing will show up soon.





The Engraver is open Sunday through Tuesday, and Thursday.

*Farmer* – The Farmer will be at Ewing Field Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

*Fifes and Drums* – 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* – The Foundry has been keeping very busy over the last couple of weeks. Apprentice Drew finished up an order of pewter buttons for the Tailors and has gotten 2/3 of the water bucket hardware finished for the Coopers. Apprentice Leanne is well on the way to finishing up the last bracket for the full set.



Buttons



Water bucket hardware

This week also had the ED Strategy Production Service (Media Department) in our Shop for filming. To prep for their arrival, Leanne and Drew deep cleaned the Shop, and what a difference it made (the light color isn't actually a grout but sand, both from mold making and Guests' shoes). The film crew was hoping to see a Department of Historic Trades and Skills



high-temperature pour and some mold making, so we definitely weren't going to waste the opportunity to get some other projects done. Drew cast a couple more bronze seals, and Leanne made some tray feet molds. Research-wise, Drew is continuing with some required reading for our apprenticeships, and Leanne began compiling a digital inventory of the objects we make, along with how they've been referenced from our Collections.



Filming



Shop hallway before and after

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

***Gardener*** – The Historic Gardeners undertook two notable harvests this week. The first broad beans (*Vicia faba*) and garlic (*Allium sativum*) scapes of the season were sent to the Cooks at the Governor's Palace. Both plants overwintered, having been planted in December and October, respectively. The garlic, in particular, benefited from the exceptionally warm winter, and bulbs will no doubt be harvested in the near future.



Broad beans and garlic scapes along with endive (*Cichorium endivia*) and spring onions (*Allium cepa*) before being sent to the Cooks



Grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) have gained some notoriety in Williamsburg gardens for carrying away immature fruit. The Gardeners are experimenting with a potential solution by the judicious wrapping of thin cloth about a tree branch to guard the fruit as described in John Abercrombie's Every Man His Own Gardener (London, 1767).



Despite this nectarine (*Prunus persica*) branch being partially covered in cheesecloth, the open weave allows sunlight to still reach the leaves.

Apprentice Marc spent time transplanting this year's sole tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*) and then building a trellis about it. The trellis of sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) is oriented horizontally in hopes the plant will spread across the branches and the fruit will hang decoratively below. Last year's attempt with two tomato plants may have been too ambitious with the prolific stems intermixing. Here's hoping with a single plant, the project will turn out more pleasing.



An Amazonian tomato in its singular glory





The trellis, or tomato table, in place around the plant.



A five-lined skink (*Plestiodon fasciatus*) about the broken pots, or crock, and brick rubble in the Garden.

**The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.**

**Gunsmith** – The Gunsmith is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).

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

**Joiner** – 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, the Brickyard crew laid the last few bricks to complete the paving for the drying shed and secured tarps to protect the sundried bricks from the anticipated summer storms. We are also around a week out from the arrival of our Summer Casual hires, who will learn the ins and outs of Brickmaking, Department of Historic Trades and Skills



Virginia's summer heat, and how much a human can sweat in a day. They will also likely be involved in the building of the burn over kiln.

In other news, Master Josh got his 31st splinter of 2023, which is 5 less than last year at this time. We'll need more data to see if this is significant.



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

***Military Programs*** – The Military Staff is in the final stage of hiring for the new Supervisor and hoping to have finalized hiring of the candidate this week. Now that the Guardhouse work has been completed, the site has returned to normal operating. Interpretations are currently outside most of the time to accommodate more Guests and for increased visibility. We are still doing drill at 11 am, Tuesday through Saturday, and “The Necessity of Order in Battle” on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. We would like to congratulate Kevin Fowler, Matthew Luca, and Ren Tolson on achieving Level Two in the Military Curriculum. Chris Grieb is preparing to depart for the NMLRA Gunsmithing Seminar along with Andy Prochnow of the Musket Range. He is taking a gunstock-carving class to increase his woodworking skills with the goal of being able to repair stock damage that occasionally happens to reproductions being used for demonstrations.

**Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.**

***Milliner and Mantua-maker*** – At long last, the promised pictures of Kate's completed linen jacket and petticoat! She's already moved on to the next stage in the project, which involves making a second version of this ensemble with some slight variations. A more expensive printed cotton has been chosen for the new version, which requires the addition of some fashionable trim on the jacket and a deep flounce on the matching petticoat. Janea has yet to decide whether she's going to strictly enforce the 40" of fabric parameter on the jacket's trim, or whether she'll be kind and offer an allowance of an additional few inches to accomplish the embellishments. Kate continues to stitch away while anxiously awaiting the verdict.

While we're on the subject of long-awaited photographic evidence...Edith is now in possession of her newly finished "goose turd green" cloak; for her sake, we're hoping for a few more cooler days to give her a chance to enjoy it before summer arrives. Rebecca and Kate spent some time in Collections on Thursday documenting two recently-acquired figured silk short cloaks, which are next on Rebecca's list of cloak



reproductions. These won't be issued out to our fellow Tradeswomen to wear, alas, but we are definitely prepared to entertain petitions for the position of model once they're each finished!

Utilitarian sewing has also been much in demand this week. Rebecca has finished several linen drawstring bags; if anyone is in need of one to conceal a water bottle or to carry personal items across the Historic Area, please stop by. She also made two work caps out of handwoven fabric for Joe and Benton, which shall be delivered next week. Again, should anyone else desire to have one, just let us know, and we're happy to make more. Janea continues to work on her experimental jacket, but has paused temporarily to make another pocket, determined that not even the tiniest of scraps should go to waste.

Finally, here's our offering for your weekend amusement: In London's Public Advertiser of 21 November 1776, the birth of triplets was announced to a bricklayer's family in Petticoat Lane. The parents proudly named their bundles of joy Hancock, Adams, and Washington. Sadly, Hancock died the day of his birth, but the paper reports that both Adams and Washington are in excellent health.



**The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.**



**Musket Range** – The Musket Range is currently working towards finalizing a contract to abate the lead in the berm of the Musket Range site. This will not only facilitate Colonial Williamsburg's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship but will also give us the chance to “reset” the slope of the shooting berm back to its original angle for the first time since 2015, when it was constructed. We anticipate removal of nearly 5,000 lbs. of lead captured in the hillside! Fortunately, this site was well designed to capture any runoff and should be a very easy cleanup project for our contractor who specializes in range lead removal. We anticipate this happening in late August, and it should shut down the Musket Range for about a week.

The Range is also preparing for Andy Prochnow to depart in early June, along with Chris Grieb of the Military Programs unit, to attend the NMLRA Gunsmithing Seminar in Bowling Green, KY. Andy is endeavoring to complete a 6-day class in building a colonial rifle kit, which will develop his skills in building and repairing Musket Range equipment. We wish him good luck!

**The Musket Range is open Sunday through 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 are working at the Leather Breeches Maker Tuesday through Saturday.

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

**Tailor** – The Tailor Shop has been busy this spring. The Shop has been closed on Sunday mornings for all but a few lucky individuals that joined us for hands-on Workshops. The first set of Workshops introduced common stitches and sewing techniques to young and more mature participants. The current Workshop offered is a bit more challenging: Death’s-head and other thread buttons. Participants learn how to make up gorgeous, unique, and useful buttons from silk and linen threads, metal rings, and wooden forms. The button-making Workshop will be offered for the next four weeks. Tickets are required and can be purchased on the ColonialWilliamsburg.org website or by calling 1-800-HISTORY.

Mr. McCarty, Journeyman, finished a pair of off-white silk satin breeches this week for a mannequin that will also be dressed with an original coat and waistcoat that will be featured in the new costume gallery in the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Mr. Logue, Apprentice, has begun a mohair velvet waistcoat for Mr. Zelesnikar, Master Wheelwright.

**The Tailor is open Sunday (12:00-5:00), Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.**

**Tin Plate Worker** – The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.

**Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer** – The bed rug is off the loom!! The last of the warp yardage was woven in green and brown stripes and will likely be sold at Prentis Store as some form of blanket. The twill weave structure that the blankets are woven with lends itself well to flexible draping, meaning a twill blanket will nicely conform to your body to trap heat and keep you cozy.



**The Weaver is open Monday through Thursday.**

*Wheelwright* – We've been busy, busy at the Wheel and Wagon Works! The velocipede progresses at a rapid rate. Stay tuned.





The Market Cart is not far behind, with hubs freshly banded by the Blacksmiths (thanks again). We have received other goodies from our friends at the Anderson Forge.

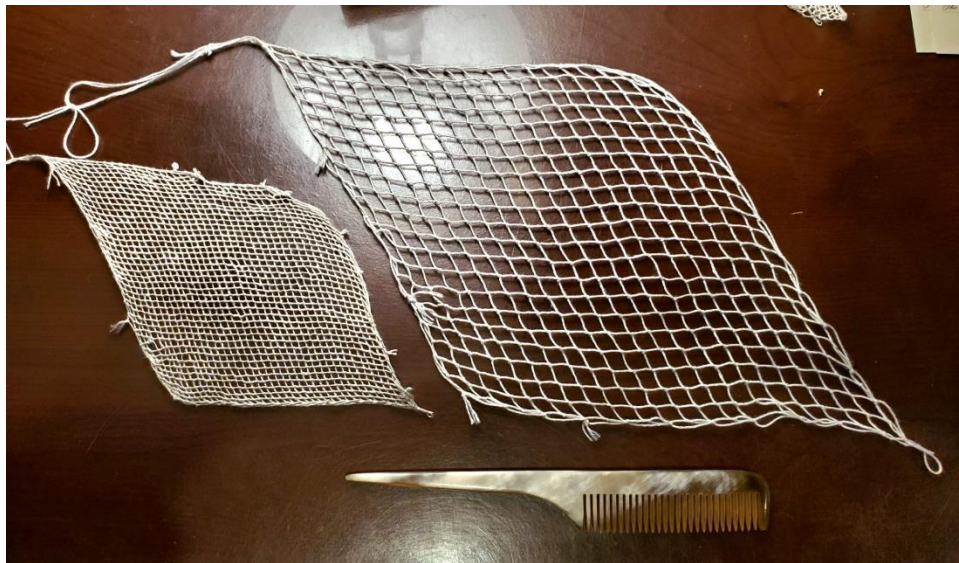


Welcome, Ralph Flanders, to our Shop! Ralph will be our Intern for the summer. He is in the midst of making a wheelbarrow for the Carpenters.



**The Wheelwright Shop is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

*Wigmaker* – Greetings and salutations! Everyone in the Shop is currently working on their hand knotting skills. Benton has completed a couple square bases and will be moving on to the more complicated round bases soon. Debbie and Edith have been working on netting for future projects. Edith has also been fine-tuning her comb-making skills by practicing with different types of wood and horn. The curls that Debbie has been working on for Anna R. are ready for styling and should be out of the Shop soon. We also continue to work our way through maintenance needs and would like to remind our colleagues to bring in their items more regularly during the warmer spring and summer months. As always, feel free to reach out to us with any hair-related needs or questions.



Examples of Benton's netting, with good progress

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

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

**Editor:** Shari Monaco



**Contributors:** Blacksmith – Alex Hinman; Bookbinder – Barbara Swanson; Cabinetmaker – John Peeler; Carpenter – Matt Sanbury; Cook – Abbey Shoaf; Engraver – Lynn Zelesnikar; Founder – Leanne Bellouny; Gardener – Marc Nucup; Masonry – Madeleine Bolton; Military Programs – Justin Chapman; Milliner and Mantua-maker – Rebecca Godzik; Musket Range – Justin Chapman; Tailor – Michael McCarty; Wheelwright – Paul Zelesnikar; Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – Pamela Russo; Wigmaker – Debbie Turpin