

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

February 18, 2023

Anthony Hay Shop:

Cabinetmaker – This past week in the Cabinet Shop, John has been devoting hours to the shaping of elements of his side chairs. He recently finished the work on the shoes that hold the splats in the center of the chair back and has gotten most of the piercing work done on the splats themselves. Jeremy has gotten his tabletop and drop leaf attached to the frame and now only has finishing touches left to do. Bill is cutting the joinery on the drawer to his writing table, which is only the beginning to this elaborate work.



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

Apothecary – The Apothecary Shop is open Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday.

Armoury:

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith Shop is open Sunday through Tuesday and Thursday through Saturday.

Tinsmith – The Tin Shop is open Sunday, Tuesday through Thursday, and Saturday.

Brickmaker – This week in the Brickyard, the crew continued their work unstacking the kiln while also preparing to build piers for our tool shed. With the bricks staged, the next steps are to raise the building up, dig below grade, and to prepare the mortar. Once that is completed, the tool shed, a structure moved from our old Yard, will sit on bricks once again.

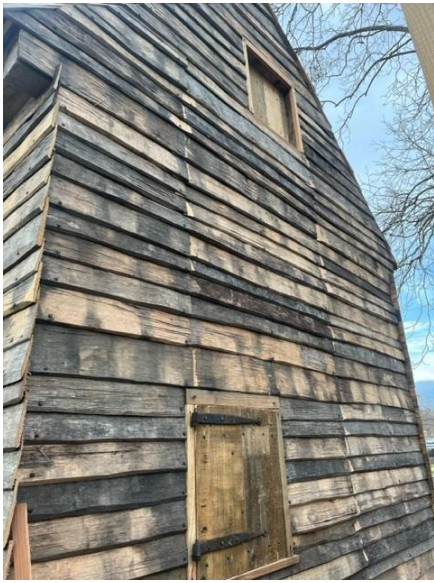
Otherwise, this week, we received two deliveries of wood, out of a total of eight, which will be used in future kiln burns. With such an abundance of wood comes an abundance of stacking. If there is only one thing more exciting than stacking bricks, it has to be stacking cord wood. It's as good as done with the combined powers of Apprentice Nick's gumption and Journeyman Kenneth's strength and agility.



The Brickyard is open Sunday through Thursday, weather permitting.

Carpenter – This week, the Carpenters continued work on the Farm storage building at the Windmill site. We will have it completed on Saturday, February 18th. The siding is completed, and the shuttered windows are almost all installed. Just one remains to be fit. The Gunsmiths might recognize the boards that make up the shuttered windows as the salvaged boards from your old forge roof that we replaced last year. By early next week, we will be back at our Yard focusing on the next project. Finishing a building project is a fun feeling, but now we have to try and forget all of the numbers we've been storing in our head and reset for a new set of numbers.





The Carpenters will primarily be at the Carpenter's Yard Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Colonial Garden – Signs of an early spring are beginning to appear all around the Historic Area. Daffodils, crocus, and Roman hyacinth are all in full bloom in the Historic Garden. As is tradition, the Gardeners planted a row of pease on Saint Valentine's day. The variety we chose this year is marrowfat, a lovely English shelling pea. This week, we also transplanted lettuce seedlings into individual pots and harvested lettuce and turnips for the Historic Cooks at the Governor's Palace Kitchen. The pile of horse manure we collected last week is heating up quite nicely, and we will soon be filling our first hotbed of the season. Last Friday, the Gardeners were able to witness the relocation of the Bray School building. We were delighted to realize how visible the new site is from our Garden, and we look forward to watching its transformation over the coming year.



Spring crocuses in bloom at the Historic Garden



Apprentice Historic Gardener Marc planting peas



The Bray School viewed from behind the Historic Garden

The Colonial Garden is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cooper – In the 18th century, a cooper in need of material to make iron hoops could simply walk into a store like John Greenhow's and purchase hoop iron. It was material produced specifically to meet the demand for such stock in coopers shops. Today, getting material to make our iron hoops is a little more involved, and it requires the help of our behind-the-scenes staff here at Colonial Williamsburg. The metal arrives at CW in large sheets which we cut down into the strips we need to make the hoops, as we did this week.



The Cooper Shop is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Engraver – The Engraving Shop is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Fifes and Drums – It's been a quiet week so far at Fife and Drum. We are fine-tuning our music and marching for our President's Day performances this Sunday and Monday. Come out and see us at the 1:00 pm ceremonies! In other news, I'd like to welcome Private Parker McHugh to the Junior Corps! He is the sixth

member of the 2020-2021 Recruit class to pass up and join the Junior Corps. That's all for now. Wish us luck at President's Day...s!

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

Foundry – The Foundry is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30-4:30).

Gunsmith – In the Gunsmith Shop, Darrin has been getting some help reaming his pistol barrels, which takes two people to operate. Each reaming bit cannot be any larger than 1/64" bit-to-bit, or else it is much too tough on the person cranking the wheel. After running five bits through the barrel, Darrin had to stop and repair one bit and make another one in order to continue.

The Gunsmiths also had a welcome visitor for a few days. Broadus from the Anderson Blacksmith Shop worked with them while their Shop received some well-deserved maintenance.

Study material is from various issues of the *Virginia Gazette* and the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as well as the book *The Gunsmith in Colonial Virginia* by Harold Gill, Jr.



The Gunsmith Shop is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Historic Farming – The soil amendment project has begun at Ewing Field! One half was removed to one foot deep due to quarry rock the size of walnuts every four inches. The rest was spread out, and now 455 cubic yards of a soil/compost mix is being applied. Farmer Ed learned a lot about soil amendments at Great Hopes Plantation, where he turned two acres of ground-up parking lot into fertile fields. This project will take multiple years, and this is a great start!

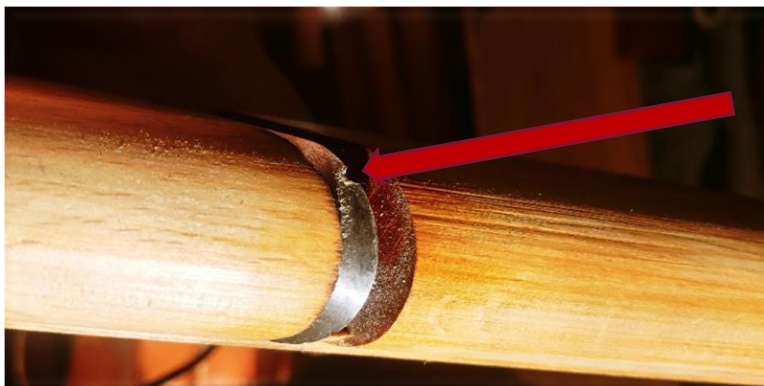




Joinery – Hello from the Joiner Shop. Peter is in his last week at Winterthur, and we hope to see him back on Monday. Scott has moved on from planning and dimensioning stock to chopping out mortises for the lower door frame on the Corner Cupboard. (So maybe not so quiet.) In addition, Scott presented a program on Thomas Jefferson and John Hemmings for the Joiner Shop’s Hennage Program. Brian finished attaching the last moulding on the pedestal from the Warren House pilaster and will move back to working on the fluting.



He had a little trouble with the blade for his fluting plane chipping. He’ll take it over to the Blacksmiths to see if something can be done with it. Perhaps the metal was too hard and brittle, or the bevel was too fragile and thin.





The Joinery is open Sunday and Wednesday through Saturday.

Leather Breeches Maker – The Leather Breeches Maker is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Military Programs – Military Programs staff continue to make use of their winter to attend trainings and prepare for the spring season. Staff also continue to work on their goals and projects. Kevin and Matthew are researching bat and ball games and recreational games that soldiers played, and anyone who sees Military staff playing Cat on the Market Square or by the Magazine are encouraged to come and join in! Alex continues to prepare for his Hennage Talk on defending the Delaware River and other research pertaining to fortification and military engineering. Ren is working to finish their project with Michael Ramsey on the 71st Highlanders and will be going to the Archives to work on transcribing the pocketbook of a member of the 71st, John Lysle, which includes his account of the battle of Yorktown. Chris continues to learn the skills necessary to become an armorer and is working on critically needed maintenance to the muskets in our collection to get them looking ready for our main season!

Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – In between training sessions, preparations for our three March programs continue. Rebecca has completed alterations on a cotton gown and petticoat for "Disaster Strikes!". Without time to make something completely new, we decided to channel our 18th-century mantua-making foremothers and update (except that we back-dated in this case!) an already existing gown to the fashion of the year required. In this case, we took a gown and petticoat cut for 1775 and have time-traveled it back to 1769 with some alterations to the sleeves, the neckline, and the petticoat trim. With that done, she's now trimming a reproduction of a cloak that will also be featured in the program.

Meanwhile, Kate diligently pushes forward with her stays. She also spent some time researching imagery of pregnant women who are actively working, so that we can study more closely how clothing styles and choices changed to reflect a woman's lifecycle and the demands of her everyday reality. Kate has come up with a collection of very intriguing depictions that we're all looking forward to examining in greater detail soon.

Janea has been focused on the second of our Delaware gowns, this one a 1798 white muslin with long sleeves and a drawstring bodice. As fabric decreased in weight and increased in fineness towards the end of Department of Historic Trades and Skills

the century, the quality of stitching in the garment construction had to increase as well. This gown is thus being stitched at 16-18 stitches per inch; to give you a comparison, many gowns from earlier in the century were stitched at only 8-10 stitches per inch.

We also received news that the Weavers have finished the fabric for our March 4th "Gown in a Day". The plotting of the gown's style can now begin in earnest. There's never any rest for our needles!



The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Musket Range – The Musket Range is finalizing its interviews this week. We've already hired one new staff member and hope to have the other within the next week.

In between training and operating the range, Scott has been learning more about inletting this week. The process of carving out the necessary wood to insert a metal part. Used in the process of creating stocks for firearms, Scott will use this in the future to help repair Musket Range stocks as the wood erodes in certain places or in the event of accidental breakage. The Range would also like to thank our Landscaping folks for helping us with a fresh coating of Marl on the shooting pavilion and pathway areas on the site. This not only helps get rid of low spots that pool water when it rains, but also provides a fresh and tidy look for guests coming out to see us.

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

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – **The Printing Office is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

Bindery – Good day from the Bookbindery. The month of February has been good busy. We would like to acknowledge and thank all the people who made the Winter Training Symposium possible. I am constantly reminded of the talent throughout this Foundation, and this is no exception.

The Bookbinders each have personal research projects to keep us busy over the coming year. Our Supervisor, Dale Dippre, is reading an interesting book called *Trust and Inspire* by Stephen M.R. Covey. Donald Mason is looking at the effects that Committees of Public Safety and the shadow government had on Loyalist Virginians, with a more in-depth look at Printers and Bookbinders.

Barbie Swanson is researching the history of an interesting book that was bound here in 1744 for the Byrd family of Charles City County. *The New York Conspiracy* is an account of the trial surrounding the Revolt of 1741 by both enslaved and indentured people. We will keep you posted on our progress. Cheers!

The Bookbindery is open Sunday, Tuesday through Thursday, and Saturday.

Shoemaker – Val and Nicole have just finished their Library and Brafferton training. The Shop went through internship applications and will start the interviews in March. Nicole resumes work on her Hennage Talk, and Val continues with the book, *Trust & Inspire*. Victoria is getting ready to start another pair of slippers with mock round closing, and then she will be on to dancing pumps. Nicole is working on a pair of strong shoes for herself, and Val is fixing a pair of pumps for Robert Weathers.

The Shoemakers will be working at the Leather Breeches Maker Monday through Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Silversmith – Work never stops at the Silversmith Shop. Megan has soldered the base for her bowl, and Preston is teaching her how to round out the base and angle in the top. Megan and Bobbie continue to work on sleeve buttons for the Milliner and Mantua-maker’s upcoming March program, Bobbie has soldered the wire backs to the octagonal sleeve buttons made with the Blacksmith’s punch. Chris has started the process of stoning her tray, a very time consuming but necessary rough polish. Bobbie continues chasing and setting the well of her tray. Preston has polished a number of jewelry pieces for the retail store. George continues work on his mote spoons and ingots. The whole Shop has been attending the Winter Symposium training sessions at the Hennage.



The base for Megan’s bowl



Chris stoning her tray with a Water of Ayr stone (left). Bobbie’s sleeve buttons (middle). Preston’s jewelry and bottle tickets (right).

The Silversmith Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

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

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – The Weaving Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

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

Wigmaker – Wig maintenance continues as usual. Edith is blending and separating hair in preparation for weaving. Benton continues frizzing and weaving, and Debbie's net continues to grow. As always, if you have any tonsorial needs, please reach out to us.

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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