

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *February 4, 2023*

### *Anthony Hay Shop:*

*Cabinetmaker* – Life for the Cabinetmakers is slowly returning to "normal" after a long weekend hosting and presenting at the 25th annual Working Wood in the 18th Century conference. The event, which focused on a wide variety of furniture and architectural ornament, was a great success with about 200 in-person attendees (for the first time since January 2020) and approximately 150 virtual attendees. The Cabinetmakers led a variety of pre-conference activities with Jeremy Tritchler teaming up with the Harpsichordmakers to host a Hay Shop open house, John Peeler discussed furniture in the Everard House as part of a special buildings tour, and Bill Pavlak led a tour at the Art Museum of furniture made and used in Williamsburg. Our Volunteers, Chris Viewig and Steve Roberts, also stepped up and assisted with the building tours and open house.

The conference has always aimed to be a place where scholarship and craftsmanship come together or, as we often phrase it, a bridge between benchwork and book work. We lived up to that promise as a cast of in-house and guest presenters illuminated the lives and work of early craftspeople through object study, craft processes, and documentary research. Our renowned pool of guest presenters included scholar Brock Jobe, woodcarver Mary May, cabinetmaker Frank Strazza, and craftsman/interpreter Jerome Bias. Colonial Williamsburg staff contributed many programs as follows: Master Joiner Brian Weldy demonstrated fluted architectural pilasters, Journeyman Joiner Peter Hudson explored making a paneled archway, Apprentice Carpenter Harold Caldwell introduced attendees to African-Virginian carving and symbols, Conservator Chris Swan and Intern Claire Martin explored the art and science of Japanning, and Curator Tara Chicirda spoke on one of Colonial Williamsburg's most distinctive tall case clocks. In addition to playing the role of conference host, Master Cabinetmaker Bill Pavlak teamed up with Apprentice John Peeler to offer two presentations on the sculptural features of a Rhode Island block and shell bureau table from the Collection. Regular readers of the *Adviser* will be familiar with the preparations they had been making for the past couple of months. Bill focused on carving shells and shaping the drawer fronts and prospect door. John focused on shaping/decorating drawer dividers, creating curved moldings, and sculpting the swelled ogee bracket feet.

In addition to the dedicated work of presenters, the conference owes its success to the knowledge and skills of many people from across the Foundation. As we roll the credits on this year's event, we would like to extend a heartfelt "thank you" to all involved!

First, we'd like to offer a tremendous amount of gratitude to Whitney Thornberry, Manager of Educational Conferences, who works tirelessly to make all of this possible.

From Historic Trades and Skills: Ted Boscana, Brian Weldy, Peter Hudson, Laura Hollowood, Harold Caldwell, Mary Herbert, Matt Sanbury, Melanie Belongia, Ed Wright, John Peeler, Jeremy Tritchler, Bill Pavlak, Ken Schwarz, Josh Graml, Steve Roberts, and Chris Viewig.

From Museums, Preservation, and Historic Resources: Tara Chicirda, Chris Swan, Claire Martin, Dani Jurowski, Matt Webster, and Amanda Keller.

From Development: Karen Hartman and the staff of the St. George Tucker House.

From the Art Museums: Mary Cottrill, Cari Rillo, Christian Crabbs, Michelle Smith, Valerie Eppiloto, Eric App, the Museum Cafe staff.

Camera Operators: Charles Tinsley and Mike Durling.

Banquet and Hospitality Staffs at the Williamsburg Lodge and Art Museums.

Educational Conferences Team: Whitney Thornberry, Debbie Walden, Natalie Stevenson, Season Gallagher, and Tom Savage.

The conference planning committee consists of Ted Boscana, Tara Chicirda, Bill Pavlak (chair), Chris Swan, Whitney Thornberry, and Brian Weldy.



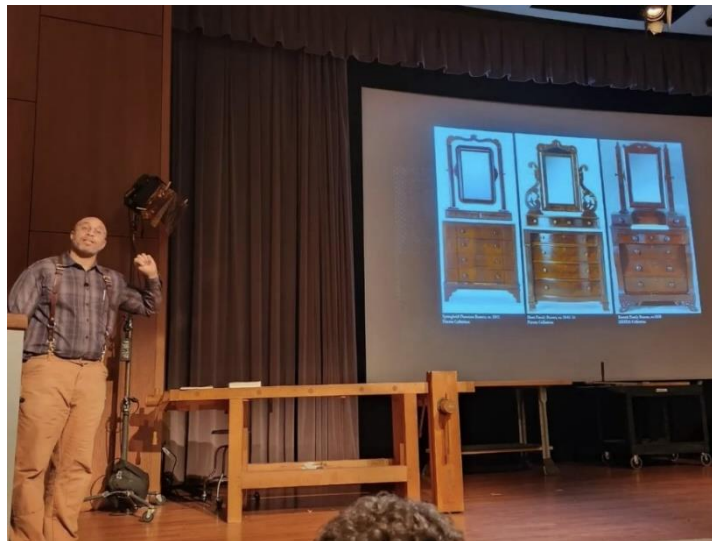
Bill Pavlak roughs out a blank for a convex shell carving



Guest lecturer Brock Jobe gives the opening keynote



Guest presenter Frank Strazza demonstrates marquetry techniques

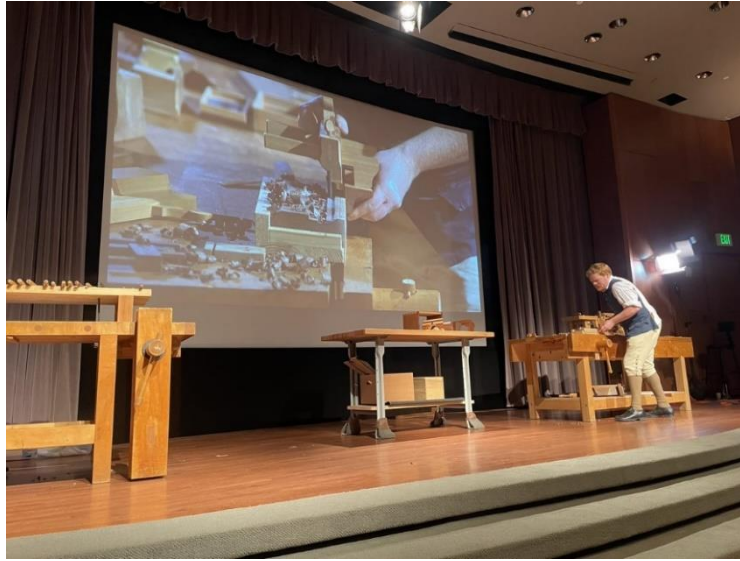


Guest presenter Jerome Bias discusses Thomas Day



Guest presenter Mary May carves Philadelphia rococo elements





John Peeler demonstrates ogee bracket feet



Some of the demonstration samples Bill and John made for the conference

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

**Apothecary** – Sharon met with Jennifer Guadagno of the Department of Historical Clothing & Dress to talk about research. Together, they focused on locating period resources about women's health concerns and stay-wearing. Mark has just completed a key research project for Level 4 of his apprenticeship: a report on 18th-century infant feeding recommendations! Come see the brand-new binder in our Shop and be sure to ask him about this exciting topic. Meanwhile, Margaret has been continuing with the Public Hospital work, putting the final touches on her part of the Winter Symposium session.

**The Apothecary Shop is open Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday.**

**Armoury:**

**Blacksmith** – The Blacksmith Shop is open Sunday. It will be closed February 6-17 for maintenance.

**Tinsmith** – The Tin Shop is closed February 6-17 for maintenance.

**Brickmaker** – This week, the Brickyard crew continued their efforts to unstack the kiln and move the fired bricks off site. While we do love unstacking and restacking bricks, we had the distinct pleasure of participating in the winter training. Master Josh was particularly inspired by Farmer Ed's jovial and informative discussion of farming throughout time; he thought fondly of his ancestors cultivating potatoes. Otherwise, this week, we paid a visit to our friends the Wheelwrights to discuss the potential of a new wheel well, quite a bit more robust compared to the original.



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

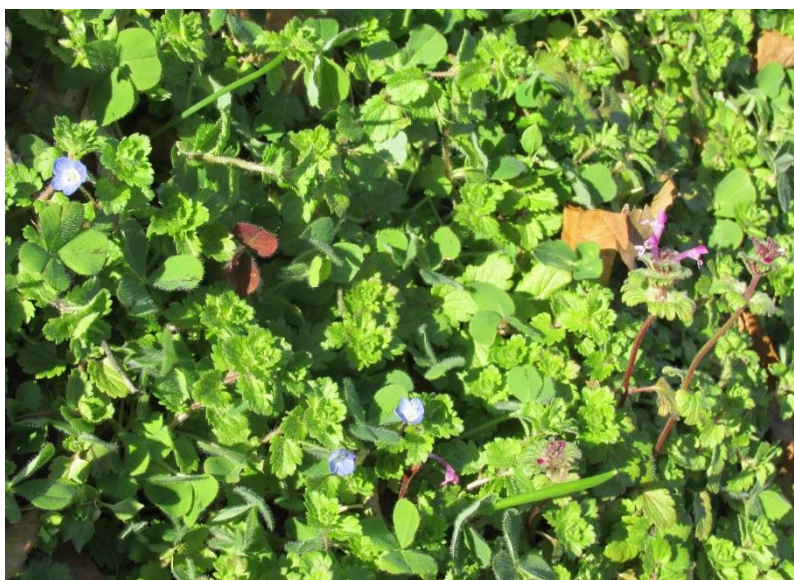
**Carpenter** – This week, the Carpenters are continuing to install the last of the siding on the Farm storage building. We also are running half laps to build four shuttered windows. The Blacksmiths did a great job making the hardware for the door! We are re-using one of the front doors of the old Blacksmith Shop on this building. Unfortunately, only the strap hinges were left on the door. The smiths made the rest of the hardware for us to hang the door.



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



*Colonial Garden* – Beyond the winter planting of leafy greens, visitors to the Historic Garden will note the presence of cover crops. Cover crops are, as the name suggests, planted to cover the soil rather than to be harvested. While preventing ground erosion during wet weather, cover crops also enrich the beds – notably adding nitrogen to soil. Crimson clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*) was promoted as a cover crop in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and currently can be found in the bed designated for the American Indian Garden. Our crimson clover is a bit lower to the ground than we may like due to the presence of hungry rabbits (*Sylvilagus floridanus*). Two naturally occurring covers share the bed with the clover. Henbit deadnettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*) and speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*) are early spring weeds that many lawn owners are familiar with. These Eurasian herbs are naturalized in Virginia, edible, and have some medicinal history. Speedwell, in particular, was used as a tea substitute by France during the 18th and 19th centuries when British maritime blockades cut Europe off from sources of *Camellia sinensis*.



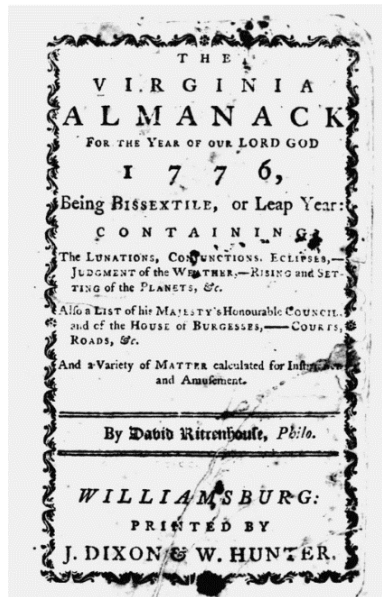
Henbit (pink blooms) and speedwell (blue blooms) among crimson clover

The broad beans (*Vicia faba*) continue sprouting out of the ground, promising an impressive number of plants for the spring.



Shells and gravel kicked in from the pathways accumulate in the soil

This week's research centered around searching 18th-century editions of *The Virginia Almanack*, many of which were published in Williamsburg, for references to "monthly observations on gardening". These fruitful efforts will be the subject of a future article or lecture. Of note, however, was the discovery of an early use of the term *lima bean* in Virginia.



Title page from 1776 almanac in New York Public Library

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

**Cooper** – The Coopers attended the first sessions of Winter Training this week. Production in the Shop is currently focused on buckets and tubs for use in the Historic Area.

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

**Engraver** – This week, goals were entered. Lynn is updating William's progress for the year, and together, they are coming up with ideas to meet apprenticeship requirements this year. And like for everyone else, winter training has begun. William's copperplate work continues as the sunlight allows, as well as some drawing exercises. Lynn is continuing work on Wheelwright Murphy's protractor. William also fit in a sterling silver ladle the Silversmiths made.





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

***Fifes and Drums*** – It's been a quiet month at Fife and Drum, but there's been a flurry of activity behind-the-scenes. The adult staff are preparing for the Annual Meeting with all Corps-members and their families. There, we will talk about the year we've had, give some reminders to the group, do most of our annual trainings, look to the year ahead, and give awards to those who have been truly outstanding. Among these awards are three scholarships for graduating seniors. We will proudly announce the winners in next week's edition! In addition to all that prep, we have been using this time to work on the fundamentals with both Corps and prepare for the upcoming year of performances. To help with this process, we appointed David Degaraff as Sergeant Major. This leadership position is the highest a Corps member can rise in our program. Congratulations, Sergeant Major Degaraff! We'd also like to welcome Morgan Shimp, Darian Guillory, Dominic Le Gouellec, AJ Harvey, and William Mason to the Junior Corps as new Privates. Lastly, a big thank you to the Foundry for making new J-hooks for the drums! We'll get going on replacing the old ones and start our year sounding our best!

***Foodways*** – Foodways has had quite the busy few weeks! We successfully made it to England and back again, having seen and learned much. Over the course of the trip, we delved into the kitchens of two Royal Palaces, a fellow living history site, The British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, a walking tour of London, and the Mill at Winchester. The fellow historians and interpreters that we worked with and met along the way were all wonderfully accommodating and invaluable in their knowledge on historic foodways during the 18th century and the surrounding periods. Since being back in our newly painted Kitchen at the Governor's Palace, we have started the projects that will follow us into 2023. Dom has been diligently putting together a presentation for future talks and trainings on the operations of the Governor's Kitchen in relation to the household. Abbey put together a full report on the research trip to England (complete with pictures), Barbara will be looking to add new 18th-century cookbooks to our collection, and Frank has been guiding us while we gear up for the spring Workshops and programs. This coming week, we will be traveling to Richmond for the 20th annual Historical Chocolate Society Convention, hosted by MARS, INC.

**The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday, Monday, Friday, and Saturday.**

***Foundry*** – Another week has passed, and another Workshop has sold-out. We were also able to attend the beginning of the Winter Symposium. Journeyman Mike has continued to work on the silver shoe buckles



for the Millinery Shop, while Apprentice Leanne finished up her Courthouse Key, and Drew finished another order of 500 musket balls for the Musket Range.



Leanne & Drew's Courthouse Keys

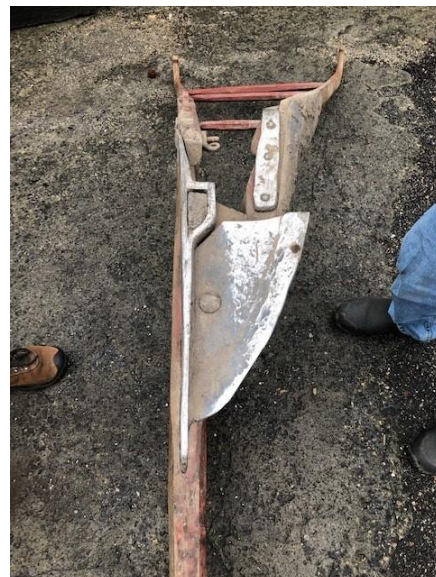
**The Foundry is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30-4:30).**

**Gunsmith – The Gunsmith Shop is open Tuesday and Thursday through Saturday.**

**Historic Farming** – Retired Historic Farmer Wayne Randolph, who farmed at Colonial Williamsburg for thirty-seven years, visited us to talk about our barshare plow. Wayne pioneered the research of the “Pennsylvania type” barshare, and it is the only known reproduction of one in North American museums. In 2007, we went to the Landis Valley Farm and Museum in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to select an original on which the replica was based. Historic Trades Carpenter (at the time) Steve Chabra did the woodwork, and Master Blacksmith Ken Schwarz did the metal work. We have used this plow for fifteen years and know the dynamics of plowing with it very well.



Wayne Randolph



Underside of plow



Wayne plowing in 2012

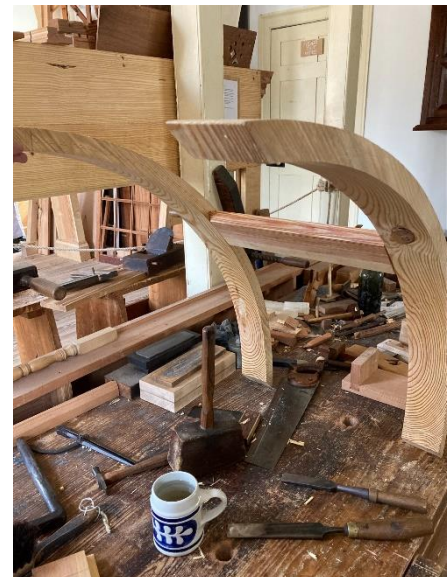
*Joinery* – The Joiners are finally loosening their cravats and letting down their hair now that the 25th Woodworking Conference is behind them. The presentations were top-notch, and everyone has taken a bit of inspiration back to the Shop with them.

Scott has been dimensioning and dressing the stock he'll be using for his corner cupboard's paneled door. He's been using a combination of hatchets, draw knives, and planes to do that work.

Laura is planing material for her first dove-tailed drawer that will give her much needed storage space on her workbench. The drawer will be built of pine, so she's getting a better feel for the predominant material used in the Shop.

Brian has been hard at work finishing the pilaster that was part of his presentation at the conference and is now eyeing the lathe that he started back in 2020.

Peter is going to be menacing for a Maker's Fellowship with the Winterthur Institute for the next two weeks, but before leaving, he has managed to test-fit the first section of his paneled arch! There's a lot going on, and everyone is excited to keep working on their projects!







The Joinery is open Tuesday through Saturday.

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

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

*Milliner and Mantua-maker* – On Sunday, we relocated to the Education Studio at the Museum to teach a workshop for the companions of attendees at the Working Wood Symposium. We’ve done workshops for the conference for years, and it’s always fun to catch up with the familiar, friendly faces that return again and again. Since the conference was virtual the past two years, and we all missed the opportunity to congregate and sew together, we decided to make this “return to in-person” workshop extra special. Instead of offering a single project, we decided to host a pincushion-making extravaganza and offered six different pincushion shapes, both 18th- and 19th-century in origin, from which our participants could choose. These included a bunny, a mouse, a carrot, a heart, a square, or a slipper. From the smiles at the end of the day, we think we can safely say that fun was had by all, and we look forward to seeing everyone back again next year.



In other news this week, the revival of “She Had On When She Went Away” premiered on Thursday. We’re thrilled to be reunited with Hope, Dierdre, and Zakiyyah to continue to share the self-liberation stories of Betty, Sarah, and Lucy for a new group of Guests this winter. Preparations continue for our March Hennage program as well. Our needles have been flying through garment after garment to put together four different 1769 outfits, and we’re starting to feel the pressure with only a few more weeks to go. In between winter training, we also spent some time in Collections this week studying and measuring some



extant pieces that require some reproduction millinery items for the new textiles exhibit that will be opening in July.



The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Tuesday (12:00-4:30) and Thursday through Saturday.

*Musket Range* – 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, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

*Bindery* – The Bookbindery is open Tuesday through Thursday and Saturday.

*Shoemaker* – The Shoe Shop's production continues along the lines of last week. Nicole has one more lift to add to finish shoes for Teal Brooks, and she is currently building an instep leather for Mark Hutter. On

Thursday, all three of us attended the “People, Land, and Seasons” training at the Hennage. Val renewed his certificate for the Historic Area Building Use Agreement and continues reading *Trust & Inspire* for next Monday’s meeting. Victoria, alongside Ren Tolson of Military Programs, was contacted as a member of the Gender and Sexual Diversity Research Committee to give advice and edit a script for PBS focused on Thomas/Thomasine Hall. This request was based on previous research and programs made about the Hall case that we have done for June’s Pride and October’s LGBTQIA History Month Programing. She was excited to be consulted and can’t wait to see the future content!



Shoe for Teal Brooks



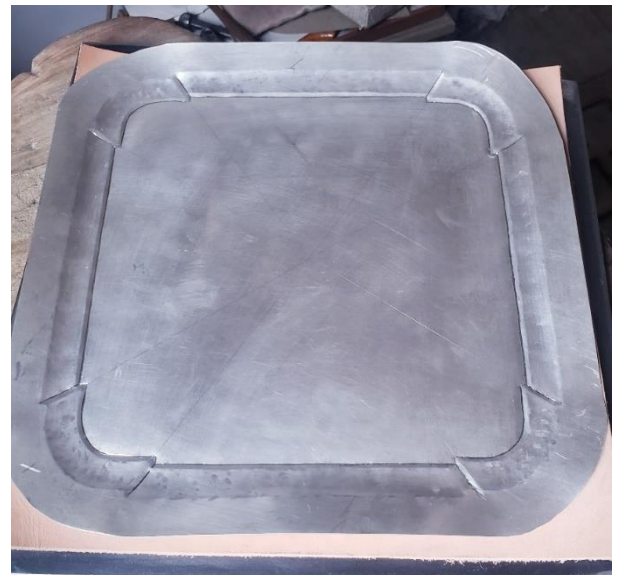
Instep leather for Mark Hutter

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

**Silversmith** – The Silversmiths are trudging through the gloomy weather with hopes of spring. Megan continues to work on the tray rim, rings, and her bowl. Chris almost finished the repair work on silver arm bands for our colleagues at the American Indian Initiative. Bobbie has been chasing and setting the well of her tray. Preston has been polishing his finished bowl as well as a ladle. George has rolled out more ingots and has gathered up pieces of a silver tankard that has been on the to-do list. Megan has been reading *Women Silversmiths 1685 – 1845*.



The arm bands Chris has been repairing

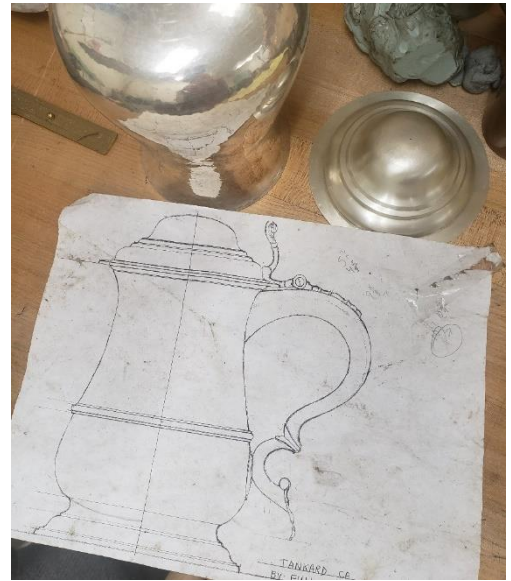


Bobbie's tray is more defined after chasing the lines





Preston's finished projects



The silver tankard in progress

**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** – Our green and red cotton stripe has been up and running for over a week now, and it's looking lovely. While it may appear like a very fine fabric, in the 18th century, this quality of fabric wasn't particularly expensive. Our looms are not the latest and greatest 18th-century technology. Therefore, we cannot hope to produce the nicest things that were being worn and used. The loom this fabric is on is 11th-century technology at the very minimum!



**The Weaving Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.**

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



**Wigmaker** – Hello from your favorite Wigmakers! This past week, we continued to plow through maintenance work and progress on our projects. Edith did a filming at the Powell House with colleague Mem for an upcoming exhibit in the DeWitt Wallace. She dressed Mem's hair on camera, and it came out beautifully. She has completed the netting for her Journeyman wig, as well. Benton has been doing some preliminary diving into a new transcription of Edward Charlton's Account Book in coordination with Librarian Doug Mayo at the Rockefeller Library and Historian Cathy Hellier. Debbie has been reading materials for an upcoming training and sifting through old documents that pre-date her time with CW to determine what can be kept and what can possibly be archived at the Library. We have received new requests for Evening Programs and will begin to style those soon. As always, please feel free to reach out with any tonsorial needs, large or small.



Photo credit: Neal Hurst



**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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