

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *October 22, 2021*

*Apothecary* – We want to thank Devlin for the tour of the Archeology Lab to see patent medicine bottles and artifacts from the Public Hospital. The chance to see the artifacts and gently hold them was priceless. We also wanted to thank Christina Westenberger for the very informative tour of the Public Hospital. Later in the day, Mark gave a great presentation at the Hennage on 18th-century health care. Thank you to each of you for sharing your work. ~ Robin



Left to right: Sean Devlin, Martha Poe from VCU's Pharmacy School, Margaret Perry, and Mark Henley

**The Apothecary Shop will be open on Tuesday through Saturday.**

### *Armoury:*

*Blacksmith* – These past two weeks have been busy for the Blacksmiths. The previous week, they, along with Curator Erik Goldstein, went to the *Iron to Art Festival* hosted by the Artist-Blacksmith Association of North America (ABANA) in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The city was once the center of steel production in the United States and a very suitable place for the Conference. On the way, they stopped at Fort Ligonier, a site from the French and Indian War, and saw a great variety of well-preserved iron artifacts. At the Conference, the members of the Shop got to watch many different demonstrations. The most interesting was run by the old Master of this Shop, Peter Ross, along with Bob Valentine, another experienced historic smith – the production of a historic leg vise. Here you can see them using a leg vise to make theirs! The purpose of the long post or leg is to transmit the energy from hammer blows into the ground, rather than into the bench and other components of the vise, which would damage them.



Many notes were taken, and many observations were made. We'll see if the Shop makes one of their own before the memory fades. The Shop members also toured the Center for Metal Arts' new school, a very well-equipped workshop with about a dozen forging stations and every kind of tool a blacksmith could want. Once the smiths were done wiping the drool off their chins, they had a group picture taken in front of a massive steam hammer from the late 19th or early 20th century at the forge shop of a defunct steel works.



While at the Conference, Ken Schwarz was awarded the Bealer Award. This award is the top recognition presented by the ABANA, given for outstanding contributions to the blacksmithing profession. John Allgood and Gary Brumfield were among the founding members of this organization in the early 1970's. Peter Ross received this same recognition in 2000. Colonial Williamsburg has played an important role in this profession over the past half century.



The Bealer Award plaque

Once back in the Anderson Shop, this week the smiths have worked on a variety of projects. Ken has been busy with socket chisels, Mark has continued work on cabinet locks, and Aislinn has worked on hatchets and calipers. Among the Apprentices, Alex has been forging parts for andirons and tongs for making hoes, Owen has had his hands full with hasps, and Broadus has been working on braces.

**The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.**

***Tinsmith*** – The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Tinsmiths will present “Tinware Production in the Williamsburg Publick Armoury.” The Williamsburg Publick Armoury developed as part of Virginia’s emerging military industrial complex during the Revolutionary War. Between the years 1778-1780, its Tin Shop produced a diverse array of supplies in support of Virginia’s Revolutionary military and government. Join Journeyman Tinsmith Joel Anderson, for a discussion of the ongoing research into the People, Place, and Production of the Williamsburg Publick Armoury Tin Shop.

### **Anthony Hay Shop:**

***Cabinetmaker*** – This week saw the final step for three tables in the Cabinet Shop: branding them. John, Jeremy, and Bill all completed tables this year, and we were able to take some time this week to flip all three over and leave our mark for posterity. We brand all of the pieces we make to help identify them as our work. John’s sideboard table and Jeremy’s tea table will hang out in the Shop until after the January *Working Wood Conference*, where they will be discussed as part of Jeremy’s and John’s combined presentation. After that, it will be time to find them new homes. Bill’s table will hopefully find a home much sooner, where it will be safe from the daily activity of the Shop.

John’s and Jeremy’s current project, the desk and bookcase, has progressed this week with Jeremy working on the construction of the larger drawers in the desk, and John resawing the panels for the doors on the bookcase. Resawing a large board to get two book-matching panels is a two-person job, which can occasionally be a bit stressful, particularly when there is very little extra width in the board for waste material. After several practice runs, they made a go at the final piece. John will now clean off the saw tooth marks and should be set to assemble some doors.





**The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Either the Cabinetmakers or the Harpsichord-makers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Wednesday.**  
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**Brickmaker** – This week has found the Masonry Trades staff donning their modern restoration hats and working on the wall around the Capitol. Those pesky oaks in the yard have been playing havoc with the masonry and are responsible for all sorts of cracks. Working with Matt Webster, we've planned out the cure: a process known as stitching. We'll chisel out some of the mid-century mortar around the cracks, insert some threaded rods to help stabilize the wall, then repoint with a similar modern mortar. Chipping out the old mortar takes time, and we want to be careful about it. Expect to see us there next week, too!



**Carpenter** – The Carpenter's Yard will be open Daily, weather permitting.

**Colonial Garden** – Progress continues with our fall planting in the Colonial Garden. This week, we sowed a variety of lettuces; these will survive the cooler weather ahead with the aid of glass bells. Last week's storm caused some damage to the bean trellis in the Sankofa Heritage Garden, so we took apart the trellis and shelled some of the dry beans. The beans we planted this year were an old heirloom variety called "case-knife" that closely matches descriptions of pole beans in the eighteenth century. We will save some of the beans to be used as seed for future seasons, and the rest can be cooked as dried beans. With the bean trellis removed, we had plenty of space to plant out collards into the Sankofa Heritage Garden. This week, we gave our prize-worthy, forty-pound cushaw squash to the chefs at the Williamsburg Inn and gave the last of our scarlet runner beans to the Historic Foodways Kitchen. We also dug up one of our plantings of sweet potatoes and will leave the other in the ground until closer to frost. Upcoming projects in the Garden include covering hooped wooden frames with paper to protect plants in the Garden over the winter and rebuilding our brick fire pit to provide warmth for the Gardeners.



Newly planted lettuces with glass bells at the Colonial Garden



Dried and shelled pole beans grown in the Sankofa Heritage Garden

**The Colonial Garden will be open Friday through Tuesday, weather permitting.**



**Cooper** – The Cooper Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

**Engraver** – This week, the Engravers have been checking off a few items from their list. The tray that the Silversmiths made is now complete and has been picked up for its box fitting. This will be going to a Colonial Williamsburg retiring Board Member at the end of November.



Lynn also finished another small printing plate and will begin another that will be useful to our Brickmakers and Wheelwrights.



The custom orders are streaming in now, so the art of interpreting, engraving, preparing for programs, and instructing is being put into practice.



William is preparing for a closer-to-the-original re-do print of his ships. The copper has come in, so the quest may begin. And he is as always making great progress in his drawing assignments.



**The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. The Engravers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Saturday.**

**Foodways** – The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen Sunday through Wednesday and at the Armoury Kitchen on Thursday.

**Foundry** – The Foundry has great news: Leanne Bellouny and Drew Godzic are the two newest Apprentices in Trades this week. Congratulations to them both on a new journey in life. Come on by and say hi. Also, we are using the new molding bags that Rebecca from the Millinery made for the Shop.



**The Foundry will be open on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.**

**Gunsmith** – The Gunsmith Shop will be open on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

**Historic Farming** - Canada Crookneck winter squash were harvested this week. We picked about forty of them this year. They are headed to the CW Lodge and will show up on the menu at Sweet Tea and Barley or Traditions Restaurants. Plowing the field will commence soon.

Sweet Potato Pumpkins were given to a “foodie test group” including Historic Foodways and the CW Inn chefs to determine its qualities as well as the big question: *Does it taste similar to sweet potato as Thomas Jefferson claimed?* Let’s see...



Ed with Canada Crookneck squash



Barbara Sherer with Sweet Potato pumpkin

**The Farmer will be at Prentis Field Tuesday through Saturday.**

**Joinery** – The cool, crisp air of autumn is a welcome guest here at the Joinery. There is no task at the Shop that cannot be improved by the addition of a pleasant breeze carrying the promise of changing leaves, mulled cider, and the return of the Hunter’s Moon. The Apprentices are all too happy to labor under these changes, though they are harbingers all of the coming *Working Wood Conference*. Scott has made incredible progress on the fret-work for his mantelpiece. The intricate diamond pattern is delicate, but the piece of walnut that he has selected is proving robust for its purpose. Peter has side-tracked himself once again by building a carving bench, to ease the stress on his back. Once this bench is finished, he will return to preparing and carving the waterleaf molding that he has been studying. Brian has made progress on his curved molding plane and is prepared to begin construction out of a pretty chunk of beech. Not least of all, Amanda has prepared the material for the sides of her coffin and will be cutting and joining them over the weekend.

**The Joinery will be open on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The Joiners will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Sunday.**

**Milliner and Mantua-maker** – This week's focus has been on our four different filming/Livestream/ social media projects that are taking place this week and next. On Wednesday, we filmed a segment on shopping in the 18th century that will appear as part of a Kids Ask Livestream next Wednesday, which Rebecca will be participating in as one of the panelists. Thursday afternoon was devoted to another Kids Ask program; Janea did a pre-filmed segment about children's clothing that will be featured in November as part of a program that will focus on a child's life in the 18th century. Work also continues on preparations for the outfit we're creating for our visiting social media influencer, who will arrive next week for a two-day experience. We're re-making a striped cotton jacket and petticoat for her, in addition to creating some new millinery, so that she can be properly dressed whilst in town.

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**The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open on Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday.**

*Music* – Greetings from The Governor's Musick! Due to maintenance at the Raleigh, our next two Wednesdays there will have to be replaced by appearances in the Museum Galleries, but we hope to make it worth the while of those hardy souls who trek over to the Gallery, and they won't be limited in their time with us!

We are working on our two concert series at the Governor's Palace--one beginning in a week and a half, and our Christmas programming begins just after Thanksgiving--and are busy figuring basses, figuring out our arrangements, and figuring out our concert orders. We are excited to be back!

And we are still in the Museum Levanti Gallery on Fridays, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm and 2 – 4 pm. Health and happiness to all--

**The Musicians will be in the Art Museum on Friday mornings and afternoons as advertised and on Saturdays, unadvertised and subject to change.**

*Printer and Bookbinder:*

*Printing Office* – The Printing Office will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. On Monday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Printers will present “An Overview of the Printing Office.” Join Peter Stinely as he shares his 40 years at the Letter Press through pictures and recollections.

*Bindery* – The Bookbindery will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

*Public Leather Works* – Greetings one and all, from The Public Leather Works. The big news this week is that we have determined that, while jellyfish do in fact have skins, those skins cannot be turned into leather. Dismay and disappointment abounded in the Shop as a great many potential projects had to be scrapped.

A bitter rivalry seems to be developing between our Apprentice and our Intern as they both race to complete their respective pairs of leather breeches. Following a brief vacation from the Shop, the Intern returned to discover what they described as “a scene of utter chaos” with “stitches ripped from their seams” in a most inhumane fashion. Sabotage is suspected, but the Apprentice denies any knowledge of, or involvement in, the alleged attack. We will continue to monitor this situation and report as more information comes to light.

In happier news, the Journeyman has nearly completed his buckskin waistcoat and is now eagerly awaiting weather cold enough to warrant wearing it. The Master of the Shop continues to make and assemble parts to a new saddle valise.

As per usual, if you or your Shop are in need of manufacture or repair of leather goods, we are at your disposal.

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

**Shoemaker** – The Shoemakers will not be at the Armoury on Saturday, October 23rd. They will, however, be there on Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

**Silversmith** – Good day from the Silversmiths. We're enjoying the beautiful fall weather, while keeping busy and out of trouble! Chris is working on the wooden parts of her teapot. The handle and finial are made from ebony. Preston is working on three-inch Gurney bowls. George is drawing wire for rings. Megan is learning the arts and mysteries of the polishing machine. We just picked up the wonderfully engraved tray from Lynn, and Bobbie is putting the finishing touches inside the box to hold it in place.



**The Silversmith Shop will be open on Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The Silversmiths will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Friday.**

**Tailor** – Apprentice Logue finished constructing the woman's quilted waistcoat, and it has been delivered to its user, Gardener's Apprentice Teal. This project is the culmination of a year's worth of research, study, and several months of quilting and construction. While the garment may be finished and delivered, the project is not. Final step in the project is to wait and see how the garment fits and functions in use. The Tailors may yet have more to share in regards to this garment in the future, so stay tuned for future updates.





The Tailor Shop will be open on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. The Tailors will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Thursday.

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – The Weaver Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Wheelwright – The Wheelwrights will be at the Armoury on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Wigmaker – This week has been a productive week for the Wig “smiths”. Edith has finished the first flaxen wig and is outlining the second. She continues work on making hair padding for an upcoming filming. Benton is weaving hair and has discovered why certain types of hair are better suited for different projects. As always, if you require our services, please don't hesitate to reach out!



The Wig Shop will be open on Sunday, Thursday, and Friday. The Wigmakers will be in the Art Museum Gallery on Monday.



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