

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

September 8, 2023

Apothecary – The Apothecary is open Sunday through Thursday.

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith shop is open Thursday through Tuesday.

Bookbinder – I recently had the pleasure of visiting Historic Annapolis, where a group of talented interpreters brought bookbinder and stationer William Aikman's shop to life, circa 1773.

It was interesting to discover that Mr. Aikman also ran a Circulating Library, which is a fee or subscription-based library. Recently, the Bookbindery at Colonial Williamsburg has come across more and more information showing the different functions that people in the Print and Bookbinding/Bookselling Trades sometimes served. For instance, William Parks, our first Printer, wore many different hats, one of them being that he provided schoolbooks for the children at William and Mary through our shop, and also bought the books back when they were no longer needed. Though I have found no evidence yet that Parks ran a subscription Library, William and Mary did-- something I will share about more in the future.

It's fun to put all the pieces together, and it is valuable to see what a sibling museum is doing to bring history to life! Bravo, Historic Annapolis!



Historic advertisement explaining the fee system and terms for Aikman's Subscription Library.

Books that Aikman would have sold or rented out of his shop in Annapolis.

An interpreter explains how the Circulating Library works.

The Bookbinder is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Cabinetmaker –Bill has been hard at work with the finishing process on his writing table, building up layers of seedlac. It takes a lot of time to apply a finish like this, but this table has been worth it. John is in the process of gluing up the lower case for his cellaret, a big milestone in the project. Our volunteer, Sarah, has finished up her time with us, and also a carved panel-in-frame project. We will get it all finished out for her to take home soon. Well done, Sarah!



Sarah's frame and panel project

The Cabinetmaker is open Thursday through Monday.

Carpenter – The Carpenter is open, weather permitting, Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

Cooper – It is with a degree of sadness that the Coopers announce the departure of our apprentice, Jackie, for new fields of endeavor. She starts her new job within the Foundation next week as an assistant curator. We wish her well in her new position, but we will sorely miss her in the shop. Meanwhile, we continue our work to complete several orders for other museums.



These cannikins are just part of an order for the Lewes (Delaware) Historical Society.

The Cooper is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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Engraver – The Engraving shop is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Farming – The Farming Trade is open at Ewing Field Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Fifes and Drums – We are getting ready for a busy couple of weeks here at Fife and Drum. Our next big performance will be for Constitution Day on September 17th on the Art Museum Lawn. Meanwhile, the Jr. Corps is growing in numbers as more recruits join and have their first marches. Lastly, congratulations to Lance Corporal Duncan Pavlak, Lance Corporal Jude Pelletier, and Private Alex Wade for passing up to the next rank!



Recruits march behind the Jr. Corps to celebrate Private Collin Frey's first march.

The Fifes and Drums will perform 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 Founders have been busy this week continuing work on the donor gifts of the CW seals. We plan to make some molds this Friday for a private order and cast the brass for them on Saturday.



A completed cast iron CW seal; we also make them in pewter, bronze and sterling silver.

The Foundry is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Gardener – The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmiths are open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Harpsichordmaker – The Harpsichordmakers are open Sunday and Monday, Thursday through Saturday.

Joiner – The Joiner is open Sunday and Wednesday through Saturday.

Leather Breeches Maker – The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Mason – This week in the Brickyard the crew steadily lost their numbers as several of the summer crew are leaving the nest to take the gospel of brick far and wide. Otherwise, this week production of coping bricks continued and are being moved into the carpenter's saw house as they dry. This size of brick will likely be what finishes out or summer in the next few weeks.



The coping bricks fill up our drying bed quite fast.

The Brickyard is open Wednesday through Sunday, weather permitting.

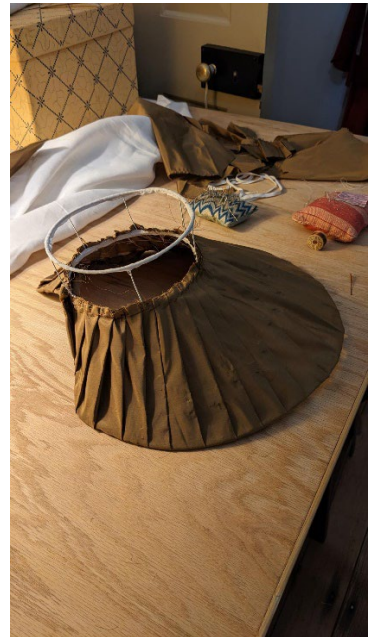
Military Programs – Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – Janea has dedicated this past week to an 1818 bonnet that will complement a brown silk pelisse in the Mary D. Doering exhibit when it opens in the new textile’s gallery later this fall. The guests have enjoyed seeing it mature from its skeleton frame to a fully-realized version of its printed source image and we can't wait to see how it looks over the beautifully dressed mannequin hair that our wigmakers have supplied.

Kate continues research and stitching for the 1793 Lanah Sawyer project. With the gown now complete, she has moved on to the stays, which are closely based on an original pair in CW's collection that she studied and patterned a couple of weeks ago. After pausing to attend to some necessary shift-mending, Rebecca also continues work on her own stays. The channels should be completed today, so the boning process will begin over the weekend.



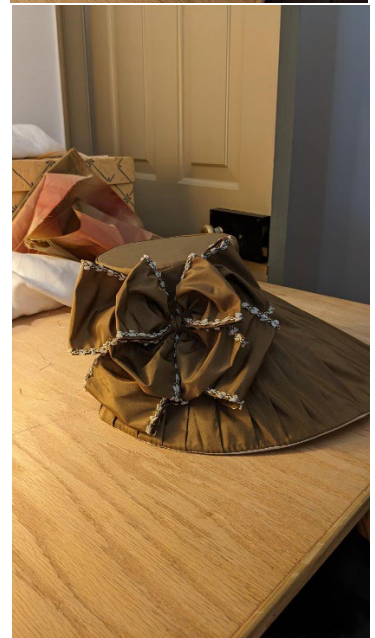
On the left: The bonnet's main components: the wire frame and its pleated silk cover.



On the right: The pleated brim covering in place.



On the left: Covering the back is one of the trickiest parts...



On the right: Nearing completion! Just some trim to the brim and the ties to go...

The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

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Musket Range –While we were closed for reclamation our staff got to explore the Historic Area and the Yorktown Battlefield. We all visited The American Revolution Museum at Yorktown where we found Doug's relatives. We will reopen on Friday September 8th.



Mann Page 1st Doug's Great Uncle 8 times removed.



Col John Page Doug's Great X10 Grandfather

The Musket Range is open (Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday)

The Printing Office – The Printer is open Sundays through Thursdays.

Shoemaker – Val has almost completed a new pair of common shoes for himself, as his present ones are falling apart. Nicole has nearly finished the first of a pair of channel pumps for Mark Hutter. Victoria is wrapping up a pair of slippers for Josh Graml and will soon begin a pair of turn shoe pumps for herself.



We wish the best for our summer intern Tyler Swartz as he resumes his studies in New England.

Completed shoes waiting to be issued out to staff.

The Shoemaker is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Silversmith –Megan is planishing her matching set of mugs and working on her tray. Chris is continuing to work on her tray and the silver skewers. Bobbie is polishing the medallions and soldering buttons. Preston is raising his large and small bowls and polishing the medallions. George is forging out ingots and gave the forge an overdue cleaning.



Chris' Tray

Megan's Tray

The cleaning of the forge

The Silversmith Shop is open Sunday through Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Tailor – The Tailor is open Sunday through Thursday.

Tin Plate Worker – This week, Steve and Jenny have been working on patterns and prototypes for a few items in the Mount Vernon kitchen order. Both items are based off of originals in the Mount Vernon collection, which Steve was able to visit earlier this summer. From his measurements and photographs, Jenny has been working on a very, very large canister for storing dry goods. It's been quite tricky due to a lot of sections that have to be pieced due to the dimensions of 18th century tin sheets. Steve is working on a spice box with a deep domed lid and sections inside the box for the various spices. The trick with the lid is stretching the material evenly without hammering it to the point that it tears.



Steve starting to raise the shape of the lid in the morning.



Smoothing out the domed lid at the end of the day.

The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – This week in the shop Annie completed their third overshot coverlet. This blanket was in black and white and the fourth and final blanket will be woven with a cochineal dyed wool weft. Be sure to wish Annie luck during this home stretch! While the coverlets have been Annie's alone to work on, we have all been setting up the second run of government set tartan. This marks the halfway point for this project.



Pictured is Annie's third overshot and partially built tartan warp

The Weaver is open Sunday through Wednesday and Saturday.

Wheelwright – This week at the Wheelwrights has Paul finishing the repair of the new (ish) Stage Wagon wheel, Ayinde continuing his alterations of the seating for the Wagon, and Murphy continuing his work on the Velocipede and Lathe.



Repaired front wheel and fore undercarriage.

The Wheelwright is open Sunday through Friday.

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Wigmaker – Maintenance continues, as usual, especially as the summer season is winding down and Fall programming gets started. Debbie is building a new dark brown human hair wig for Apprentice Leather Breeches Maker Wilson, while Edith practices different outlines for wigs. Benton is now working on a new hand knotted base. We will be welcoming NIAHD Intern Elias to the shop this week as well. Please stop by and say hello to him. As always, please reach out with any related needs or questions.



Debbie is adding a support tape to Wilson's wig



Edith's practice outline

The Wigmakers are open Sunday through Thursday.

Director – Ted will have open office hours: Monday 3-4, Tuesday 9-11, Thursday 9-11, and Friday 12-1:30. As a reminder, my office is above the Weaver's Shop.

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

Editor: Ted Boscana

Contributors: Bookbinder – Barbara Swanson; Cabinetmaker – John Peeler; Cooper – Jonathan Hallman; Fife and Drum – Rebecca Sterner; Founder – Andrew Godzik; Masonry – Madeleine Bolton; Shoemaker – Val Povenelli; Silversmith – Megan Cantwell; Tin Plate Worker – Jenny Lynn; Wheelwright – Paul Zelesnikar; Wigmaker – Debbie Turpin