

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

December 3, 2021

Apothecary – Margaret recreated a chemistry experiment that was featured in the 1771 text, *A Plan Of A Course of Chemical Lectures*. The experiment was used in the 18th century to test products to determine if they were acidic or alkaline [a base]. In the center of the picture below is syrup of violets that Mark compounded this past spring. On the left is a sample of the blue-colored syrup of violets mixed with ammonia carbonate. The latter historically was referred to as salt of hartshorn because it would have been made from deer antler also known as harts horn. This end product turned green, proving that it tested positive as a base. The product on the right is a combination of syrup of violets and lemon juice and tested positive as an acid as proved by the red color. Margaret also discovered from contemporary references that the reason this experiment was successful is because violets contain a pH sensitive pigment called anthocyanins.

Sharon has been busy helping Margarette Joyner with her first person character portrayal of Charity. This individual was the first African-American that was admitted to the Public Hospital in the 18th century. Mark has been working on creating what was referred to as a common toothbrush. A number of primary sources reference the use of licorice sticks for this purpose. We anticipate using these as part of our summer workshop.

Robin participated in the Livestream on engraving that was broadcasted earlier this week. We really appreciate the engravings of a skull and a jaw that Lynn made for us. Perfect interpretive topics for history of dentistry.



The Apothecary Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Armoury:

Blacksmith – The Anderson forge has been very lively these past few weeks, with bumps and thumps and snaps and creaks. A holiday wreath has emerged from the flame, with Apprentices and Journeymen sharing the blame. Ken, we've seen, was so very keen: his chisels are filed quite bright and quite clean. He's

also made a pivot to a very nice trivet, with a fine fleur-de-lis for hearing your tea. New framing squares take up the Journeymen's cares, while Aislinn's been bashin' out fire steels for sale. Mark's had to scarper to make his drawknife sharper and has been filing away at a pinking iron for Janae. The Apprentices each have been working to reach the peak of their chic manufactures this week: Hinges like straps were making their laps around Alex and Broadus's benches. The elder of these fellows pulled hard on the bellows to beat out broad farmer hoes. Andirons and a bit, for drilling befit, were also worked out by this fellow. Owen, meanwhile, with his jolly old smile, had hasps and staples at his attention. And Broadus, of course, with verve and with force, finished a froe for the Tailors. A new brace, at last, is nearly gone past, and he will move on to a second. Whatever the work, be it railing or dirk, all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.



The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

***Tinsmith* – The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

***Anthony Hay Shop* – 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.**

Brickmaker – This week, the Brickmakers are still in the Carpenters Yard, dreaming of the wondrous pasture that is just beyond reach. Recently, our very own Josh once again dazzled Facebook live with discussion of engravings used and researched with his pals, the Supervisors for the Wheelwright, Engraver, and Apothecary Shops. Make sure to check it out if you have the time! Otherwise, we have turned our considerable talents, and Carpenter Bobby Clay's notable gumption, to the Carpenters' derelict fire pit. So far, none have mourned its dismantling amidst the process, but there will be much merriment when it is finished. In other news, Apprentice Madeleine had the opportunity to witness the creation of the 'Rake 2000', a very important tool in the Carpenters Yard, used to tackle the growing number of pine needles resting upon their roof. Thusly, it was time to teach her the way in order to pass on the tradition.



Thankfully, Master Carpenter Garland Wood rose to the occasion, and under his tutelage, Madeleine was able to tackle the task.

Carpenter – The Carpenters have been helping the Wheelwrights complete the repairs to their Shop, installing interior sheathing to the walls of the lower Shop. Then, we, along with other Trades folk, helped them load up their workbenches, tools, etc., for the move from the Armoury back to their Shop for the winter.



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

Colonial Garden – Since the last issue of the *Adviser*, the Colonial Garden has experienced several nights of below-freezing temperatures. Our work this week included removing the last of the summer flowers and vegetables killed by the frost, including peppers, globe amaranth, and the castor beans. Removing the stalks of the castor bean plants is always quite a chore; thank you, Robert Watson, for your help! This week, the Gardeners also built hoops over our broccoli and cauliflower plants, using branches of willow. These hoops can be covered with canvas tarps or straw mats at night to protect the plants from winter weather. Work
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outside in the Garden may begin to slow down this time of year, but the Gardeners are still busy behind the scenes. We took advantage of a recent cold and rainy day to take a yearly inventory of our seeds. Culinary Historian Michael Twitty stopped by the Garden this week to interpret cooking at our outdoor fire, along with Historic Trades Carpenter Harold Caldwell. Our colleagues from Historic Foodways were also able to join us and lend a hand throughout the day. Michael prepared a meal using several vegetables grown as part of the Sankofa Heritage Garden this season, including collards, hot peppers, sweet potatoes, and squash.



A demonstration of cooking at the Colonial Garden



A meal prepared by Michael Twitty using vegetables from the Sankofa Heritage Garden

The Colonial Garden will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cooper – The Cooper Shop is open Sunday through Thursday.

Engraver – The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday (**closes at Noon**), 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, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and at the Armoury Kitchen on Thursday.

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

Gunsmith – Here's what's been happening lately in the Gunsmith Shop: Richard finished welding a rifle barrel and then welded an extension onto it to lengthen it by about eleven inches or so. It now sits in the Shop next to the blue desk to serve as an example piece until it's needed for a rifle. Richard also forged, filed, and installed the trigger plate and trigger into the rifle. Darrin has been forging, filing, and drilling springs for the pistol locks. They are ready to be bent into shape, but that won't happen until mid-January when Darrin returns to work. Brad has been off a few weeks and now returns to making flintlock components and tomahawks.

The Gunsmith Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Historic Farming – The final plowing of Prentis Field was completed last month, and clover was planted. CW President Cliff Fleet plowed with Ed and Eli the horse. This was Mr. Fleet's second time plowing, with the last being in the Spring of 2020. He plows a straight furrow and took right to it. He joins hundreds of Guests, from children to older adults, who have plowed with Historic Farmers over the past 20 years. Through the plow handles can flow a deeper understanding of the past.



Cliff Fleet and Ed Schultz plow at Prentis Field

The Farmer will be at Prentis Field Tuesday through Saturday.

Joinery – 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 Sunday, we embark on our annual wedding gown program. We are remembering that Margaret and Jane Hunter would have been helping their niece, Betsy, get ready for her early-January 1775 wedding. We had three fabrics available for this gown but couldn't make up our minds, so

we asked our Guests. They chose the green and crème silk. In keeping with the Non-Importation Agreements of 1774, it's a remake of a gown, so the Committees of Safety won't be coming after us, for using British goods. Added to the fun of this project, we are going to make it from a pair of stays alone, not cutting out on a person as is our favorite way of making a gown, and that's so our Security and Safety Department doesn't come after us for not keeping six feet of distance. How's that for complying in two centuries? Come visit us for the next three Sundays and share in our adventure.



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

Music – 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, Friday, and Saturday.

Bindery – The Bookbindery will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Public Leather Works – The Public Leather Works will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers are open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday at the Armoury.

Silversmith – The Silversmiths are busy with custom orders for the Holidays. We were having trouble casting a good gold ingot in the forge, so we decided to use the torch to melt the gold. It looks like success! The gold is for some wedding bands. Megan finished the winning wreath! She did a fantastic job!

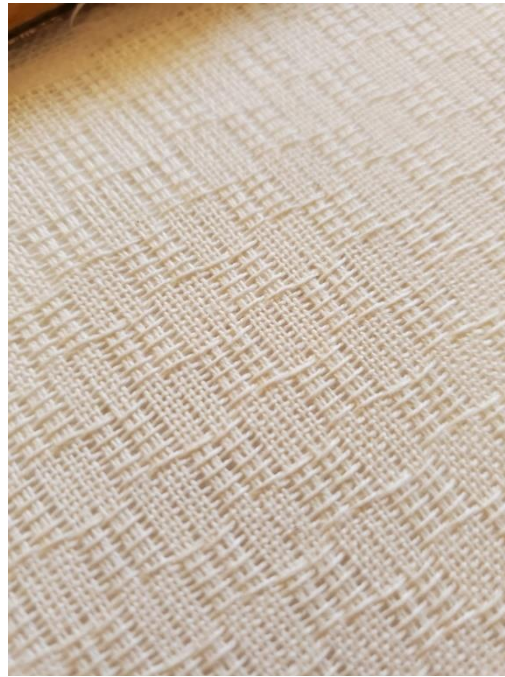


The Silversmith Shop will be open on Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The Silversmiths will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Friday.

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

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – We've been busy over in the Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing Shop over the last few weeks. Dye Day was a rousing success, with our Madder dye pot giving us some beautifully bright oranges. We will be keeping an eye out on the weather to see when our next Dye Day will be, as the ice in our buckets in the mornings makes it difficult to reach and maintain the temperatures we need to ensure we achieve the desired colors.

Our looms have been churning out fabric just as fast as the Weavers can, and we will have new projects up very soon. We have already begun winding tubes for the wool project that will be replacing the last of the Edinburgh Check that we have been working on. We hope you can all stop by to see what new and exciting things we have in store for you.



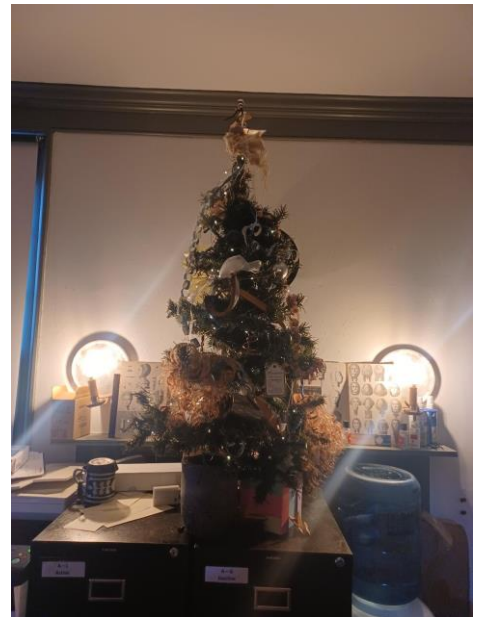
The Weaver Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Wheelwright – Watch out Prince George Street! As of November 27th, the Wheelwrights have successfully moved back into their former location at the Deane Shop from the Anderson Armoury. The Shop would like to express thanks to the Carpenters, Coach & Livestock, and the Brickmakers for their support during the exodus, as well as to the Anderson Armoury Trades for being wonderful neighbors for the past year-and-a-half (“Especially foodways!” - Apprentice Joel). The weeks prior to the move, Journeyman Paul and Apprentice Joel worked in conjunction with the Carpenters to put up the last of the sheathing in the inner walls to make it presentable to the public. Benches are below in the forge room, with the great wheel-powered lathe in the upper half of the Shop. Paul is currently working on felly patterns for his cannon wheels project, and Joel continues work on his handcart fellys. Again, endless gratitude to all Trades involved in the move!



The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Wigmaker – The Wigmakers have been industriously working on maintenance for the Holiday Season. Benton and Debbie continue work on Dave Catanese’s new wig. Edith has just finished her second flax wig, huzzah! Now to see how glamorous Joe in the Weaver Shop looks in the finished product! Since it is the Holiday Season, the Wi makers have cleverly decorated their office tree, made entirely of Historic Trades trash and treasure! As always, please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any tonsorial needs!



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

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

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