

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

April 8, 2022

Apothecary – We are currently transitioning from Robin as Supervisor to Sharon running the Shop. We want to thank Robin for all of her years of service and wish her well. Sharon has spent her time going through files that Robin has kept over the years to become familiar with information she will need to fulfill her new Shop duties.

We are also preparing for our first practice Workshop. Mark is finalizing an outline for all of us to follow. Margaret has been compounding medicines. This week, she was able to make Syrup of Violets, which can only be made at this time of the year when the violets are in bloom. As you will see in the pictures, it makes a beautiful color. Margaret wants to thank Madeleine Bolton, Apprentice Brickmaker, for helping her collect the violets.



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

Armoury:

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

Tinsmith – In the Tin Shop, Joel is currently producing gill cups for Prentis Store, and Jenny has been constructing small boxes for one of the Cabinetmakers and working on chocolate pots as part of her apprenticeship. Steve has been working on stainless steel canteens for CW in his home shop. We have not been performing any research because of our Spring Break upstaffing schedule taking up our Research Days.

The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Anthony Hay Shop:

Harpsichord-maker – From the harpsichord corner ... We haven't published for a while, so here's what we've been up to. We have about half of the 61 strings mounted into the new spinet. It now makes sounds and shows some real potential, but it's still a long way from being musical. Sara prepared the many, many sets of strings needed, making loops in the wire ends that hook to the hitchpins on the bentside wall. She also has gotten much technical practice wrapping strings to tuning pins, and drilling with brace and bow drills for the positioning pins. In addition, she is researching the clients and instruments noted in an 18th-century harpsichord tuners notebook from Hertfordshire, England, as well as gaining more knowledge of the historical Williamsburg business and economy. She has accomplished so much in such a short time.

Melanie finished the polishing and oiling of the inner rim decoration, all of it worked to a burnished finish and a light coat of linseed oil. It really pops out to the eye, and it marks her fulfilling the various levels of the veneer curriculum for her apprenticeship. She is not stopping. Now comes the decoration of the nameboard that will go above the keyboard, and the final finishing of the case exterior. Her research is bringing together more information about women in the historical instrument trades, and the cabinetmakers who also doubled as organ makers, in both England and America.

Last month, the *Journal of the Galpin Society*, an international annual publication devoted to the study and history of musical instruments, published an article by Ed that presents some of his research on a father and son who were harpsichord makers in 1600s London, with two instruments by the son surviving in museums at Yale and Oxford. He has pieced together their history into a compelling narrative placing these instruments with people and events, large and small. Rockefeller Library subscribes to this journal.

Later this April, while the Hay Shop is closed for maintenance, we will gather around another spinet in the Collection, a 1764 spinet by William Harris, and gather as much information from it as we can. It will be the exemplar for our next instrument.

Also, while the Shop is closed, Sara will join Cabinetmakers Bill Pavlak and Jeremy Tritchler for a trip to Winterthur Museum in Delaware for a conference on historical decorative inlay, veneer work, and marquetry on furniture and musical instruments. Former Harpsichord Apprentice Alexandra Cade, now a doctoral candidate at University of Delaware, will deliver a lecture on the decoration of harpsichords by 18th-century London maker Jacob Kirkman. CW has two of his instruments in the Collection, one of which stands in the Governor's Palace Ballroom.

It's all a team effort. Come see how it all is shaping up.





The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker Shop will be open Sunday (11:30-5:00), and Monday through Saturday.

Brickmaker – This week saw the Brickyard and Carpenters Yard transitioning into a proper dual Trades site! After much anticipation, we are relieved to finally have a place to make our own. That process began this week with the creation of our clay treading pit. This square pit was fashioned with the help of some very enthusiastic Guests who put shovel to ground with vim and vigor. We eventually got the pit down to the ideal depth, so now we can plan a course towards making it a bit more permanent. This necessitated the cutting of locust posts for stakes which will secure wooden planks to the side walls. Once we finish this work, we can set to paving the area.

Otherwise, this week, we were joined by our esteemed friend Claire, a Junior Interpreter, who jumped right in to help us with our tasks. These included the exciting first run of our Family Workshop, *Daub to Dough*. Safe to say, it was a success!

In the next few weeks, we hope to add more things to the new Yard, like our cisterns, so that we may start to feel at home in the space we have.



The Brickyard will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Wednesday (11:30-5:00), and Thursday, weather permitting.

Carpenter – In the Carpenter's Yard this week, we've seen a big increase in our Guest numbers. The new site layout has drawn Guests to places in our Yard that haven't been accessible to them since 2019. We've been focusing our efforts on the Brickyard drying house. We have some layout and cutting of joints for the front and back wall to undertake, as well as more hewing on the last piece of framing we need.

The Carpenter's Yard will be open Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Colonial Garden – This week, the Historic Gardeners did some much needed spring cleaning and maintenance around the Garden. Pathways and Garden beds were weeded, we replaced many of the faded plant labels and signs, and the pots of herbs that overwintered in one of our hotbeds were exhumed and placed around the Garden. We have about one week to go before we are out of the danger of freezing temperatures, so we will patiently wait before planting more of our warm season vegetables and flowers. This week, we also harvested a lovely basket of produce for use by Historic Foodways, containing cabbage, lettuce, black Spanish radishes, parsley, onions, and even a few edible "johnny jump up" flowers (*Viola tricolor*). New blooms in the Garden this week include silverbell (*Halesia caroliniana*), *Leucojum* (*Leucojum aestivum*),

eastern red columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), honesty (*Lunaria annua*), Spanish bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), and John Clayton honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*).



John Clayton honeysuckle blooming at the Historic Garden



Vegetables harvested for use at the Palace Kitchen

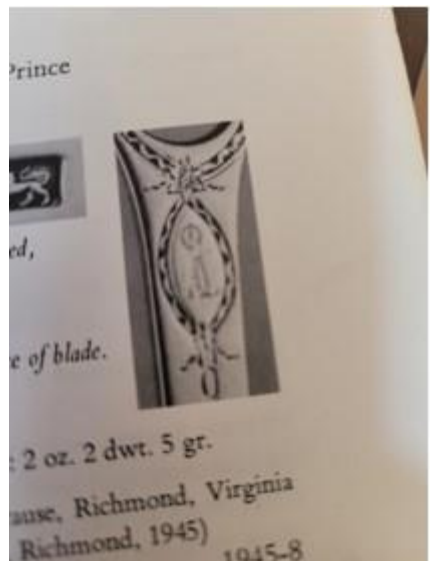


Eastern red columbine blooming in the Historic Garden

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday through Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00)

Engraver – This week in Engraving, we have been engraving items for the Fifes and Drums – awards and items for *Drummers Call*, retirement items, and the drafting tools the Foundry has made. Finishing up several retirement gifts and custom orders. William has also been plugging away at on apprenticeship work and Lettering engraving practice in copper. With our Research Day on hold for a few weeks, we will be concentrating on work orders we have to engrave and practice. We have seen great Guest numbers in the last few weeks!





Also, Erica our NIHAD Intern has made progress on her lettering practice and has come up with a monogram she will begin setting up Friday for one of her final projects. We have also begun interviewing for our Summer Intern position.

The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Foodways – The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Foundry – We have produced some retirement gifts for Tom Redd and Robin Kipps. We also are casting more musket balls for the Musket Range.



The Foundry will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Gunsmith – Good day from the Gunsmiths. Darrin forged, filed, and fit the last two parts to the pair of pistol locks: the steel (frizzen) springs. He still needs to adjust the amount of pressure on the springs against the bottom of the steel so that they feel the same, as well as polishing and engraving.

Richard has filed the patchbox release catch spring and inlet it under the butt piece. The push rod is next, and it will protrude out the top of the butt piece as the button to release the lid. The kick open spring, which will be anchored underneath a finial, is being filed up now.



Research material has included *Rifles of Colonial America*; *Great British Gun Makers*, Volume 2; and *Journal of American Armsmaking Technology*.

The Gunsmith Shop will be open Sunday, Wednesday through Saturday.

Historic Farming – The folks who visited us from Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation greatly benefited from a sheep handling workshop given by Thomas Stover of the Coach and Livestock Department. Other workshop-like activities occurred this week, teaching some CW staff how to plow. Also, flax was sown at Prentis Field.



Thomas Stover teaching sheep handling



Al Lovelace learns how to plow.

Prentis Field will be open Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Joinery – The Joinery will be open Tuesday (10:00-11:00am for the Workshop only), and Wednesday through Saturday. On Wednesday, April 13th, 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Joiners will present “Sash Windows: History and Construction.” In this presentation, the Joiners will discuss the evolution of windows, the tools used in their construction, and their indication of status.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – The Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Thursday (12:00-5:00pm), Friday, and Saturday.

Music – Greetings from The Governor’s Musick! We began our evening concert series in the Palace Ballroom on Tuesday night. After all the events of the past two years, we decided to celebrate life and loveliness with concerts celebrating Spring. The first, “Spring-time, Fresh and Greene,” seems especially apt right now, with the cool rain, the lambs in the fields, and the birdsongs, which are everywhere right now. This April, we have concerts two nights per week, which coincide with another celebration of Spring, *CW Lights*, which begins just as our concerts end. In May, we look at the more tempestuous side of Spring—storms, unrequited love, and folly—as well as its softer side. Concerts in this series will only be on Tuesdays.

All of our research this past week has been geared to rehearsing and finalizing this second concert: finding and arranging repertoire, researching composers’ lives and works, and doing all those little things that need to be done to put a concert together. We’re excited with the way the project is going, and we hope you can join us.

*If Musick be the food of Love,
Sing on, till I am fill’d with joy;
For then my listning Soul you move,
To pleasures that can never cloy.*

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – We had a welcome break from the press this week, as Mark Henley paid us a visit. Mark is an Apothecary Apprentice, and he had questions about pasteboard for use in providing cast-like support for a broken forearm. Mark made a paste board, laminating five sheets of wastepaper, one to another, with a wheat paste. It is likely more layers of pasted paper will have to be added, but this is for Mark to explore.

We have made pasteboard in the past as a Shop-made substitute for the imported milled boards that would have to be imported into 18th-century Williamsburg.



The Printing Office will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Bindery – The Bookbindery will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers will be at the Armoury Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Silversmith – The Silversmiths are making quite a dent in their list of projects. Megan continues working on her ingot and saw piercing a mote spoon, along with filing a mountain of trade silver for the store. Chris has conquered the hinges on the teapot and is now finished with all of the hotwork. She is now working on filing the teapot and carving the wooden handle. Bobbie's tray rim is coming along quite nicely. Preston continues work on his small bowls and on polishing jewelry for the retail store, two things in constant demand. George continues his work on cups and filing castings, as well as rolling out silver sheet from our cast ingots. He has also begun work on a miniature mote spoon. As for research, we have acquired more books on American Indian trade silver, and Megan has been reading through *Jewelry in America* by Martha Gandy Fales.



Chris's teapot with finished hinges



Preston's bowls



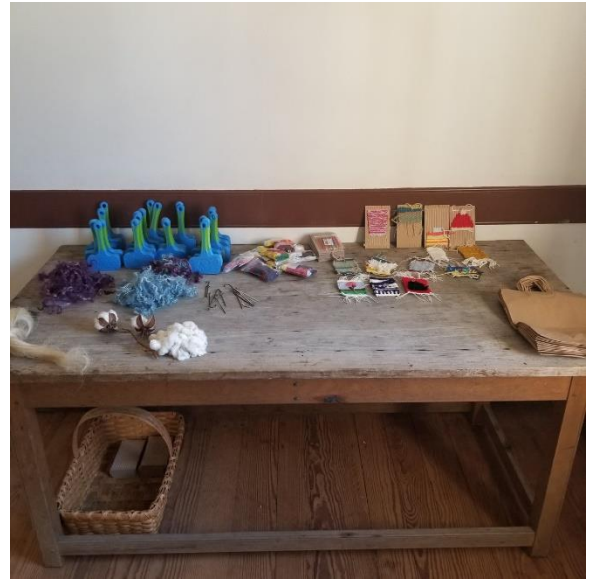
George's miniature mote spoon blank next to the regular sized mote spoon blank

The Silversmith Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Tailor – This last week, the Tailor Shop changed schedule and will be open Friday through Tuesday until April 24th. Starting this week, the Tailors will be leading a new Workshop on Friday mornings (10:00am-11:00am) called “Every Child Taught to Sew.” What better way to learn a necessary life skill than to take up sharp steel and try it! We will instruct the Workshop participants in the stitches most commonly used by the trade, as well as walk them through the finer points of making covered buttons. The new Stitchers will leave the Workshop with a stitch book full of samples, covered button, and materials to continue practicing on their own. The program is open to ten participants each morning and requires an event ticket.

The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – This week, we had our first Weaving Workshop! A dozen Guests joined us to learn about spinning, weaving, and dyeing, and took home a bit of their own carded and spun wool, as well as a reusable cardboard loom, large needle, and thread to weave their own small items. There were a lot of creative ideas on display, and we can't wait to see what Guests in the next two classes do! In apprenticeship news, Joe is expecting to be finished with his second bed rug by the end of our work week, and Pamela's spinning and plying is coming along beautifully.



The Weaving Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday (11:30-5:00), Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Wheelwright – A warmer week for the Deane Shop. The Wheelwright hooped a pair of smaller handcart wheels for the Market House. Apprentices Murphy and Joel are cleaning and "boxing" the wheels before they get painted. Under the guidance of Master Wheelwright Paul, both Apprentices used a rasp to chamfer the corners of the fellies between the spokes. This will not only make the wheels look aesthetically cleaner, but also reduce their overall weight. The hubs of these wheels will be riding on a metal axle, so on to "boxing". This process involves a cone-shaped metal sleeve known as the box, and boring tools such as the auger and tapered reamer. Using the combination of the two boring tools, the center of the hub is cored out and the box is installed tight using a sledgehammer. The Wheelwrights have surplus yellow ochre paint left from painting the Garden wheelbarrow a few weeks prior, so these wheels will be painted at the beginning of next week.

The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Wigmaker – Hello from the Wig Shop! Benton's "secret" project is complete! Inventory Clerk Mr. Bones needed some hair, so Benton made a proper wig, but in miniature. He followed the techniques for making a full-size wig but scaled it down considerably. Now, Mr. Bones will be a great representative of the Shop... as soon as he gets some clothes. Edith has completed Robert's wig, as well; and as we type this, we're just waiting for him to come in for a fitting to make sure everything is going to fit just perfectly. This past Thursday, she was finally able to style Alex's hair for our Military hair program. They went with a traditional military wrapped queue with a single buckle at the temple, and it looks great on Alex! As usual, don't hesitate to reach out for any tonsorial needs.



The Wig Shop will be open on Sunday through Thursday.

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

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