

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

February 25, 2022

Apothecary – Congratulations to Mark, who finished his requirements for Level 3 at our Shop. He also finished fabricating a toothbrush from licorice root, according to an 18th-century technique. The process involved boiling the root, drying, cutting each end, dyeing with cochineal and brazilwood, and varnishing with Turlington's Balsam. The picture below shows a dyed root on the left, and a varnished root on the right, along with a tooth powder and toothpaste. Mark intends to draft a blog with further information. Stay tuned! A big thank-you goes to Karen Clancy for providing the brazilwood for this project.

Margaret completed her NAI training last week. She is interested if anyone is working on any 18th-century chemistry or related projects. Our period pharmacy books contain a variety of salts, metals, acids, and other chemicals, as well as organic materials. She is looking at the inter-disciplinary use of products. The above reference to Brazilwood that was used in dyeing textiles and for creating toothbrushes is a good example. Let us know if you are working or plan to work on a project with any chemicals, botanicals. etc.

Sharon recently found a reference to an outbreak of measles among Samuel Beale's enslaved individuals. This is listed in the site records from December 1782 to January 1783. The reference is unique because the site records do not usually list a diagnosis.

Robin has been organizing years of files and getting ready for an upcoming livestream.



The Apothecary Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Armoury:

Blacksmith – We remain busy as ever at the Blacksmith Shop. This week has been eventful with the reassembly of the blue bellows and life once again blown into the second forge. Mark forges on with the saw tiller, a piece with more welds than one might at first think. Aislinn approaches the home stretch of finishing a bench square; Alex is replating a plow, a task that would be familiar to our predecessors; Owen takes a break

from rakes to forge nails for Alex; and Broadus learns the secrets of drawknife making. As always, All's Well That Falls Well At The Anvil.



The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

Department of Historic Trades and Skills

Volume 8, Issue 7

Tinsmith – The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Wednesday, March 2nd, at 4:00pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Tinsmiths will present “Can You Make This?” Learn how 18th-century tinplate objects are reproduced at the Armoury Tin Shop when only their images exist.

Anthony Hay Shop – The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Brickmaker – This week in the Carpenter’s Yard saw the first steps in the creation of a brick plinth we will be using for our Workshops in April. Master Josh has been overseeing Apprentice Nick's work as he pays special attention to his corners. So far, so good! We've also received several small tools from Apprentice Blacksmith Broadus, which Nick quickly set to work with. Below, you can see him using said tool on one of his mortar joints. Thanks again, Broadus! In other news, we paid a solemn farewell to the brick fire pit we created for the Carpenters, as the new gravel path will take its place, although we will soon see its return once the combined yards are graded.



Carpenter – This week, we’ve disassembled and stacked the Innermost House frame. We also moved a frame that was previously cut to the Yard for assembly to become a building for the new Farm site. Tomorrow, (Friday, February 25th), the Innermost House frame will be leaving the Yard. Next week, we will be focusing on assembling the new Farm building and working up some framing for the Brickyard drying house.

The Carpenter’s Yard will be open Monday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Colonial Garden – The Historic Gardeners noted the first signs of Spring this past week - daffodils in bloom! This is something we track each season in our journal, and last year's blooms did not open until March 8th. Progress continues with the hot beds. We filled the first hot bed with the horse manure collected last month, and soon, we will cap the manure with a layer of soil to sow our seeds. This week, we also pruned our raspberry canes, harvested parsley and lettuce for Historic Foodways, and spread fully composted horse manure onto several of our Garden beds as fertilizer. Thank you to the Blacksmiths for cleaning our cast iron cook pot and outfitting it with a lid and lifter. In addition to the daffodils (*Narcissus* sp.), we also spotted some lovely purple crocuses (*Crocus* sp.) blooming in the Garden.



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

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

Engraver – The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

Foundry – The Foundry will be open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmith Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

Joinery – The Joinery will be open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – It's been another busy week at the Margaret Hunter Shop! As February moves towards its end, preparations for our two March Hennage programs are well underway. Every Monday in March, we will be presenting an illustrated lecture on the research methodology within our trade. We'll use models in reconstructed garments to discuss how we use clothing - as well as visual and textual descriptions of it - to understand both the practice of the trade and the lives and experiences of the women who wore its products. With a timeline that spans the founding of our trade in the 1680s all the way up through 1815, we've got about 75 different items that need to be made, mended, fitted, altered, and ironed for our twelve models to showcase. Most are completed or nearing completion, but we still have a couple of gowns, a silk cloak, and a hat left to be done that will keep us more than fully occupied this coming week!

We're also working with Deirdre, Hope, Zakiyyah, and Katrinah from the Actor-Interpreter Department to revive "She Had on When She Went Away," which will be presented every Saturday in March. Forty-two items are included in the three "runaway" advertisements featured in the program; these were all made last year for the first run but had to be collected, mended, ironed, and brought to the freezer this week in preparation for the program's return. We're thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to share the stories of Lucy, Betty, and Sarah again, and always enjoy the chance to work with our amazing actresses!

In other news...Janea is working on a new 1792 printed cotton jacket and petticoat for another March program, which will involve a conversation between Martha Washington and Charlotte, an enslaved seamstress and intimate member of Martha's personal household. Janea also spent some time working on some new boxes, which, once papered over, will fill our shelves as millinery storage space after our drawers are removed at the end of next month. With her NAI course successfully completed, Kate is also now back in the Shop and finishing up the last of the CDC bedgowns. We look forward to welcoming Miss Jeanne back to volunteer with us for some embroidery this weekend, as well!



The Milliner will be open Sunday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Music – Greetings from The Governor's Musick! We are in high gear with our upcoming performances. Right now, rehearsals and repertory meetings are taking up much of our time; however, we are still in the Museums once a week (Saturdays until April 13th). We begin our *Women in Early Music* series in the Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern at 1:00pm and 3:00pm on March 16, March 23, March 26, and March 30. In April, we begin our first *Spring Palace* concert series, with performances on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We will be

moving our time in the Art Galleries to Fridays. Playing in the Levanti Gallery has been a treat for us, and we are so glad that we are continuing to appear there.

Brady has an upcoming Hennage program, April 6th, on the last of the virtuoso viola da gamba players, including Ann Ford Thickness, whose father went so far as to have her arrested twice for trying to perform in public. Unfortunately, none of her music survives, but the music of one of her biggest champions, Carl Friedrich Abel, does. Also in April, we begin 30-minute interpretations in the Apollo Room on Wednesdays and Saturdays. On another note, Brady and Karol are celebrating the successful completion of their NAI training. Huzzah! Heady times—

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – The Printing Office will be open Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Bindery – The Bookbindery will be open Tuesday, Thursday, 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 Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

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

Tailor – The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday.

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – As Spring draws ever closer, we at the Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing Shop are preparing for future Dye Days and upcoming projects. The Hamborough Check that has been on our counterbalance loom will soon be done, so the math for a run of bed rug samplers is being checked and rechecked before the warp is wrapped around our warping mill. Before that can happen, though, the new Elastic Cord on the countermarch loom needs to be threaded so that Weaving can begin. As always, there is plenty of work to be done and lots of new projects for you to see next time you stop by.

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

Wheelwright – The word of the week at the Deane Shop has been "Joints." Joinery is the skill of making two wooden pieces fit together. There are two main factors that go into making a joint: a hole called a mortice, and the tenon that fits snugly inside. Fresh from Interpretive training for the National Association of Interpretation last week, Apprentice Joel is wrapping up the last of the mortices for the body of his wheelbarrow repair. Apprentice Murphy is cleaning up the mallet handles for the Brickyard. The handle acts as the tenons in the morticed head of the mallet. Finally, having successfully installed the spokes in his cannon wheel hubs, Master Paul is cleaning up the tenons on the end of each spoke for their fellies. Whether vehicle, mallets, or wheels, joints are crucial to the work of any wheelwright shop.

The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

Wigmaker – The Wig Shop powered through President's Day weekend with minimal scarring. We're beginning to gear up for the Spring season now. Everyone has been diligently working on Robert's new wig, and we're still hoping to get it done in the next week or so. Shop cleaning/decluttering continued this week. Benton cleaned out many of our powder and pomade jars, and the John Coke Office smelled heavily of Grandma's house, or a perfume counter if all the bottles exploded at the same time. We continue to sift through the Shop files from as far back as the 1950s, and some of them have been – interesting –

reads. Never-ending maintenance goes on as usual. Please reach out to us with any hair-related needs or questions, whether wig or natural hair. We hope everyone has a good week!

The Wig Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

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

Editor: Shari Monaco

Contributors: Apothecary – Robin Kipps, Armoury – Broadus Thompson (Blacksmith), Brickmaker – Madeleine Bolton, Carpenter – Matt Sanbury, Colonial Garden – Teal Brooks, Milliner and Mantua-maker – Rebecca Godzik, Music – Karol Steadman, Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Joseph Wixted, Wheelwright – Joel Morris, Wigmaker – Debbie Turpin