

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

June 3, 2023

This week's Trades Talks at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium:

On Monday, June 5th, Masonry Trades will present, "Who Designed This Place?" Join Master Bricklayer Josh Graml as he explores how 18th-century buildings were designed and built as gentlemen architects plied their trade in Virginia. Where did they get their design inspirations, and how did they translate English architectural forms to Virginia-born tradesmen?

On Wednesday, June 7th, the Wheelwrights will present, "The Road MORE Travelled". Williamsburg is known as a sleepy, quiet southern town, but what did it look like in its heyday? Join a Colonial Williamsburg Wheelwright as they take you onto the colonial Capitol's streets to discuss what was rolling and who was driving.

On Saturday, June 10th, Alex from Military Programs will present, "Defenses of the Delaware". A nation's capital is always of paramount importance for governance and morale of an army. Philadelphia was the De Facto capital of the United States, and as such, a prime target for the British. In 1777, General Howe set his sights on it and sailed with the British Army South. Given the power of the Royal Navy, the fear was an approach by water through the Delaware River. Come learn about American attempts to fortify the river and their fierce defense as the Royal Navy desperately tried to push its way towards Philadelphia.

Two weeks ago, Ken Burns' production company was in town and did some shooting at the Blacksmith and the Weaver. Shelly Polansky from HAPS provided the following pictures.



Master Weaver Karen and filming crew



Mistress of the Millinery Janea filming at the Weaver



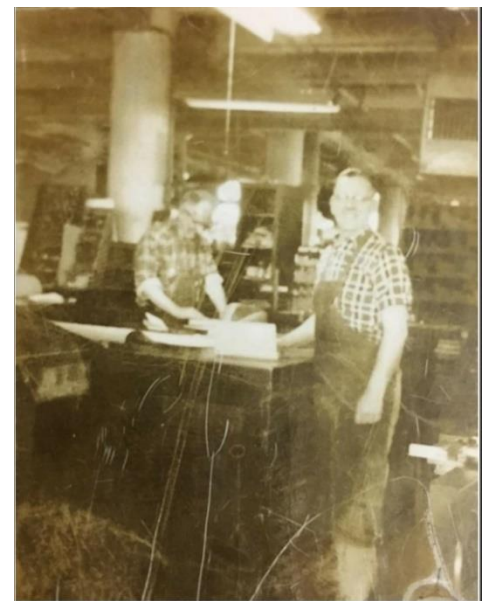
Filming at the Blacksmith. Left to right, Master Gunsmith Richard, filming crew, Journeyman Blacksmith Mark, and Master Blacksmith Ken.

Apothecary – The Apothecary is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Blacksmith – We Blacksmiths remain busy this week at the Armoury. Ken is working on several pieces, including a handrail, winged compasses, and some bolts for our gate. Aislinn works on fireplace tongs. The three Apprentices are all occupied with Kitchen implements: Alex with a salamander, for top browning high-end dishes; Broadus with flesh forks; and Josh with gridirons. As always, all's well that falls well at the base of the anvil.

The Blacksmith is open Daily.

Bookbinder – Good day from the Bookbindery. We have been busy with research. Recent findings tell that the first group of men in the Williamsburg Printing Office were generalists and performed a variety of services, to include binding books. For instance, John Stretch, who is listed as a Journeyman Printer, was also paid for binding. Other people who show up in the record as binders are Joseph Johnson Senior and Junior, and Edward Cummins. It also shows that William Hunter bought bookbinding tools from a man named Robert Stevenson. The information was found as part of a larger book, in a chapter called Scottish-American Bookbinders. I often envision them in our workspace as I seek to bring their profession and stories to life. Pictured on the right are two members of my own family. If my Grandparents were still in the world, they might have been able to tell me who these men were. My takeaway as I seek to plug the missing holes in the history of my Shop: take the time to write your family history down for that relative in the future who would love to know the story of their ancestors.



The Bookbinder is open Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Cabinetmaker – It was another week of small victories in the Cabinet Shop as both Bill and John made some progress on their respective projects. John got his seat frames joined up and sized, so he'll turn his attention to upholstery in the days ahead. These chair seats will be stuffed with curled horse hair and finished out with black leather – both common materials for finer chairs like this in the period. Bill got the adjustable writing surface made and working well for his table's writing drawer. That gave him a chance to get a glimpse of how the whole complex table will look upon completion. Next, he'll make three small drawers for the larger writing drawer. Two of them will be secret, so we'll say no more for now...



John's Chairs



The writing table with all of its adjustable surfaces in place



The adjustable writing surface for the drawer

The Cabinetmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Carpenter – These last couple of weeks at Ewing Field, we raised the wagon shed frame and started to get the roof installed. The lath should be up soon for the shingles to be installed. The rain in the recent days has slowed our progress, but it'll get done soon enough.



The Carpenters will be working at Ewing Field Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cook – The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Monday, their Workshop will be held 10:00-11:00 followed by “Secrets of the Chocolate Maker”, 11:30-2:30.

Cooper – The Cooper is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Engraver – The Engraver is open Sunday through Tuesday, and Thursday.

Farmer – Farming is so close to all of us. It could be our parents or grandparents or further back, but it’s part of who we are. The Guest in this picture shared this with me through a gift of the tobacco variety that his grandfather grew in Maryland. This type, called “Maryland 609”, is not grown any more. As Historic Farmers, we focus on the 18th century, but we need to know the cultural traditions that came out of it. I will grow

some of this tobacco off site, so that I **know** it. Then I can share a broader spectrum of understanding to our Guests – because I know it.



The Farmer will be at Ewing Field Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Fifes and Drums – Another *Drummer's Call* is in the books! Despite the brief rain scares, the weather was near perfect for every event. We started out with the “Successful Campaign” Concert on Friday, with our Senior Corps and Grand Republic Fife and Drum Corps performing music showcasing the evolution of fife and drum from military to folk traditions. It was especially fun to hear Grand Republic, an 1890's-themed group, play music that we don't get to hear much of at Colonial Williamsburg. The next day was the Grand March and Review with all seven of our visiting Corps. This year, we had Grand Republic, Mountain Fifes and Drums, our wonderful Alumni, The Old Guard, the Fifes and Drums of York Town, Field Musick Virginia, and William Diamond Jr. Every group showcased all their hard work and did a fantastic job! That evening, we hosted the torchlit march and jam session, the favorite event of the weekend for many. It was great to see some of our colleagues join in the jollification and make music with us! Our Senior Corps also took that opportunity to play “Black Bear” in honor of our (soon-to-be) departing Fife Instructor, Emily Luck. On Sunday, we had an open house for the visiting Corps, and then all went home to collapse after the busy weekend! Thank you to everyone who helped make this event possible! We can now step back, take a deep breath, and work on music for the Williamsburg/James City County graduations at the Hampton Coliseum, Independence Day, and graduation marches for our seniors starting the week after. Last but not least, congratulations to James Reynolds for passing up to Lance Corporal during all this craziness!



Both the Junior and Senior Corps warming up before the torchlit march



The Senior Corps about to step off for the torchlit march on Saturday night



Grand Republic and the Senior Corps waiting to start the Friday night concert

The Fifes and Drums will be performing 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 – Since our last update, Apprentice Founders Drew and Leanne have been busy working on orders while seeing increased visitation by Guests. We finished and delivered a pair of ears/brackets and a handle in bronze for our Coopers, who are making a water bucket for the Cannon Crew. Before drilling the holes in the ears, we made a mold with them and cast it in pewter so we can have patterns in case more are needed in the future. We also made molds and cast a pair of bronze seals for the Development Team for use as Donor gifts. We don't know how many they will need this fall, but thought we'd best get a head start on making them anyway. Some progress has been made on an order of 48 tray feet for the Silversmiths, as we made molds

and poured silver, too. Andrew from the Musket Range came by and picked up an order of 500 musket balls and placed an order for 500 more. They have been cast already, and we are now in the process of getting them all cut off and filed. We also made a couple of pattern molds and cast them in pewter for our Engravers.

If you haven't heard, our office will be moving from the back room of our Shop to the Levingston Kitchen, which will allow us to open a second interpretive space from which we plan to do our mold making and lathe work. We've made a dent in the move, but we still have more work to do on that front. We've also just begun looking into new research sources for buckle and chape making. If you have some research you'd like to share, please don't be shy.

We also have an update from Journeyman Mike. He would like to tell you all that he is doing fine and his physical therapy is coming along. He has achieved all the goals they have set for him, and he should be coming home soon with continued physical therapy at home. So far, he has lost 100 pounds and he's not planning on stopping there. He's looking forward to coming back and seeing everyone again. We all wish him well and can't wait for him to return.



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

Gardener – The month of May was extremely dry in our area, and the Historic Gardeners were very thankful for the rain showers over the weekend. All of our tender warm-season plants have returned to the Garden from their winter home with the Landscape Department. Thank you to the Quarterpath Greenhouse staff for taking care of them all winter, and to Coach and Livestock for delivering our largest potted citrus trees. This week we were joined by Will, our second Intern of the season. Welcome aboard! The cooler weather of the last few weeks was great for both our flowering plants and our spring vegetables. We harvested shelling peas, broad beans, garlic scapes, herbs, and edible flowers for the Historic Cooks at the Governor's Palace Kitchen. The corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers sown in the American Indian Garden are off to a great start for the season. The vegetables sown in the Sankofa Heritage Garden all prefer a hot climate and are noticeably smaller, but, as the season warms up, they will grow to cover the entire space with lush greenery. Flowers in bloom this week in the Historic Garden include several of our North American native species: common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), Carolina lupine (*Thermopsis villosa*), and spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*), as well as a number of ornamental flowers introduced by English gardeners: Maltese cross (*Silene chalcadonica*), day lily (*Hemerocallis fulva*), and London flag leek (*Allium ampeloprasum*).



A basket of peas, edible flowers, and broad beans on their way to the Governor's Palace Kitchen (left). Young vegetable plants growing in the American Indian Garden (center). The bloom of a common milkweed plant growing in the Historic Garden (right).
The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Gunsmith – **The Gunsmith is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).**

Harpsichordmaker – We are at last getting past the manufacturing of parts and beginning the assembly of the new spinet case. The tuning wrest plank, register, and front soundboard support liner have been glued up, now attached to the front riser supports. We began with a small, veneered wall to the left of the keyboard area and will proceed shortly with attaching the case walls around this new inner frame.

The gods are not favoring us when making bentside walls. A new oak board soaked and bent still suffered some cracking (we see this in original instruments, amazingly!), but not nearly as bad as the first one. We may be able to salvage this one. We are learning from our mistakes ... that's what we do in Historic Trades.

Beginning the week of June 11th, Melanie and Ed will be interpreting their work at the "Making Music" exhibition at the Art Museum every other Tuesday afternoon through the summer. We hope to make that exhibit come alive. Come visit and see how we are faring.



First veneered piece installed and finished (left). Full front mechanical assembly complete (center). Gluing jack guide to tuning wrist plank (right).



Gluing soundboard support liner to jack guide



Parts placed *in situ* simulating case assembly



Re-sawn oak for new bentside



Second bentside on form



Trimming veneer back for later fittings

The Harpsichordmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Joiner – The Joiner is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Leather Breeches Maker – Friends, please help us welcome our Summer Intern, Ever Brooks. Ever comes to us from Arizona. They are jumping right in with both feet. I think it's going to be a great summer. Please stop on by the Shop and say Hello.

The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Masonry – This week in the Brickyard, the newly employed and nearly fitted Summer Crew joined us for another highly anticipated summer of production. This spry group of youths will keep us young while learning the ins and outs of brickmaking. With our Crew at full strength, our production can start to increase and eventually reach twenty to twenty-five thousand by the end of summer.

Otherwise, this week, the Apprentices visited a Ceramics professor, Mike Jabbur, at William & Mary to hand off some roof tiles to test fire. This will help us understand where the tiles should go in this fall's kiln firing.



The Brickyard is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday, weather permitting.

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

Milliner and Mantua-maker – The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Musket Range – This week, Andy has been preparing for the upcoming National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association/Western Kentucky University Gunsmithing/Longrifle Seminar. He will be working to assemble and finish a "1760's Colonial Rifle." He has been working on developing a basic skillset in wood- and metalworking that will help him be successful. A big thank you goes out to Bill and everyone at the Cabinetmaker who took the time out of their busy days to teach him how to properly sharpen chisels, gouges, and other tools he will need.



The Musket Range is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm, and 3pm.

Printer – The Printer is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Shoemaker – The Shoe Shop has started preparing the Armoury shed for our summer move. We thank the Leather Breeches Makers for hosting us this past winter. Nicole is working on a pair of fine stitched pumps to further her apprenticeship. Victoria is working on two pairs of slippers and once finished, she will begin work on dancing pumps. Val is working on a pair of common shoes for Madeline Bolton (Masonry) and another pair for Tim Logue (Tailor).

The Shoemakers are working at the Leather Breeches Maker Tuesday through Saturday.

Silversmith – The Silversmiths have been quite busy with a multitude of projects these past weeks. Megan is still raising her mugs and has soldered the rim of her first tray together, and Bobbie is continuing to raise her sweetmeat basket and working on trade silver.



Chris has made a batch of mourning rings, resized a number of older rings brought in by customers, and chased the detail of her tray.



Preston has been raising a large bowl for a client, while George continues to hammer out spoons, seamed cups, and ingots.



We would also like to thank the Blacksmiths for repairing our andirons! They're fantastic!



The Silversmith is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Tailor – The Tailor is open Sunday (12:00-5:00), Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Tin Plate Worker – The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.

Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – This week, we've been very busy behind the scenes and in our public spaces. Annie has gotten their overshot up and running on the countermarch (pictured). This is a particularly complex textile, so be sure to wish Annie good luck if you see them! Behind the scenes, we have been

working on setting up six modern looms for our Summer Workshops. This class is a great introduction to weaving, and we can't wait to meet all the participants!



The Weaver is open Monday through Thursday.

Wheelwright – Busy, busy! Our yard is beginning to look like a proper Wheelwright Shop with various jobs, both new and those with repairs underway! Speaking of items underway, the velocipede is finishing up within a few weeks; Murphy is moving along with the front fork and now working on the wheel well on the rear. We hooped wheels for the velocipede and Carpenters cart last week!

Ralph is almost done with his wheelbarrow and is halfway through the wheel. This is destined for the Carpenters Yard. Speaking of Carpenters, their cart has arrived and is going to receive a new running gear.

Thanks for bearing with a wordier-than-normal post. Please come by our little corner of Prince George Street and say hey!





The Wheelwright Shop is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Wigmaker – Hello from the world of 18th-century hair! These past couple of weeks, we have caught up on maintenance needs and are looking forward to starting new projects soon. Hand knotting is the name of the game these days, as each one of us is working on perfecting our skills with the needle and gauge. While we have a bit of "down time" between projects, we're working on stocking up on some netting to be utilized in the future.

Benton has just begun to practice with silk thread, as well. Speaking of Benton, he would like to extend his appreciation for his new workman's cap from our Milliners across the street. We have learned that the fabric used was woven by Mistress Janea herself some time ago. As always, please feel free to reach out to us with any related needs or questions, and please remember to bring in your hair more often during the upcoming increase in warmer weather.



Benton in his new cap

The Wig Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, and Friday.

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

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