

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

March 18, 2022

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

Armoury:

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

Tinsmith – The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Anthony Hay Shop – The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker Shop will be open Daily.

Brickmaker – This week saw the Brickmakers looking over the Carpenter's Yard, returning to finish paving at Bypass, and getting fitted for fashionable undress garb! We enjoyed another week of befriending our horse neighbors, or at least trying to. Naturally, they were much interested in the work being done in their stable. There are still some small things to finish, but the paving is done, and so our time at Bypass is dwindling. Hopefully soon, we will be able to transfer our paving skills to our new home! There is much to be done in that respect, so we shall be quite busy when the time comes. Otherwise, we enjoyed visiting Costuming to procure ourselves clothing befitting of the illustrations of the period.



The Brickyard will be open Sunday through Thursday, weather permitting.

Carpenter – At the Carpenter's Yard this week, we have continued to hew the pines that we've cut during the Brickyard site work. The pines will eventually become the end joists for the Brickyard drying house. More

on that in upcoming weeks, for sure. We also have made progress on the storage building for Ed at the soon-to-be Farm site. We should be wrapping that frame up next week. The frame needed a few modifications to it. We moved the door and added bracing, as well as prepared the walls to have four shuttered windows.

We had the pleasure to visit the Custis property to talk about saw pits with our friends in Archeology. We also had the pleasure to stop in to the Bray School. The Bray's frame is a wonderful example of a center passage house. Steve Chabra took some time with us, discussing the building's stages of construction and use.

We have been researching the design of a Sankofa chest, enslaved woodworkers, and tool inventories of woodworkers.

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

Colonial Garden – This week, pruning continues on various trees and shrubs, such as the roses, vitex, and grapes. The Northwest quarter was mowed with a scythe, then raked, and the soil was turned. Many thanks to Robert Watson in helping us mow and turn the stubble in. Brandon also took a turn in turning the soil. Many thanks! All this in preparation for planting potatoes, with various other crops to follow. The peas are up with a trellis that was constructed over the two rows to give the plants support in their mad dash upwards. Rye continues to grow rapidly, and as soon as it has formed heads, it will be harvested, dried, and fashioned into straw mats. The mats are used to cover the hotbeds, when in their active warming cycle, to keep the compost as warm as possible, which aids in germination.

The fruit trees are beginning to break dormancy and will soon begin to show off their blossoms in shades of pink and white. Spring ephemerals continue to spring forth from the ground and remind us what lies below the ground, waiting to surprise and delight us in the spring. The second hotbed is nearing the day when we will fill the pit with active warm compost, but not yet. The temperature has not dropped as we recorded a temperature of 160F yesterday. When the temperature begins to drop, then the compost can be shoveled into the hotbed. The second hotbed germinates seeds of some of the tender summer plants such as tomatoes, basil, and peppers.



Rye grown to be used in making mats for the hotbeds



Robert mowing the clover



Marc removing the straw mats from the hotbed

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

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

Engraver – This week in Engraving, we have seen an uptick in Guests! It's starting to feel like summer. William has been progressing on his lettering practice. This constant repetition of drawing and cutting lettering can get a bit monotonous. More so than handwriting, there must be a consistent shape to each letter and consistent spacing. He is working on script at the moment but will need to have proficiency with Roman as well as old English. For his Research Day, William has been going through photos a Guest has sent him of copperplate printed fabrics from another museum. He is also continuing with Geddy family research.

Also this week, we did some preparing for a “Trades Tuesday” program. A sincere thank you to Jasmond Allen-King and her very sweet daughter Jamyla, as well as my own daughter Margaret Z., for being in some filming of mothers in trade households and the presence of girls in trades and helping in trade shops. We would like to also thank the folks in the Milliner Shop for getting costumes for the young ladies. We greatly appreciate helping out on such short notice.

I have been also continuing on looking into women watchmakers and digging into the Geddy family. The Silversmiths have sent down several items to be engraved this week, and I am also working on several pieces for custom orders placed by our Guests.

*We would like to also say “Happy Birthday” to Mr. P. Jones, Journeyman Silversmith! And a “Happy Birthday” to our own Apprentice Engraver W. Fleming!





Pocket watch early 1800 made by Eliza Andrews



Women and young girls in a watch making factory around 1900, Coventry

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

Fifes and Drums – On Wednesday, March 23rd, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the staff of Fifes & Drums will present “From Manuscript to the Street: Bringing Early Music to a Modern Audience.” Get a behind-the-scenes look at how the Fifes and Drums of Colonial Williamsburg take a musical manuscript from the 18th century and bring it back to life. This program will include discussions of music history and music theory as well as performances on a field snare drum.

Foodways – The Foodways Staff will be at the Scullery on Sunday for “The Arts and Mysteries of Brewing”. They will be at the Palace Kitchen Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

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

Gunsmith – The Gunsmith Shop will be open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

Joinery – The Joinery will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – The Milliner will be open Sunday, Monday (**closes at 3:00pm**), Thursday, and Saturday. On Monday, March 21st, at 4:00pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Milliners will present “Re-animating 18th-century Fashion.” Through study and making, we bring 18th-century pictures to three-dimensional reality, give replicas of extant garments movement and sound, and realize clothing from 18th-century descriptions. This illustrated talk (fashion show) explores how we recapture 18th-century life and work with clothing.

Music – Greetings from The Governor’s Musick! We opened our *Women in Early Musick* Concert Series at the Raleigh Tavern on Wednesday, which was well attended and very well received. Our new Harpsichordist, Kyle Collins, jumped right in like he’d been with us for a much longer time. In April, we will stay in the Raleigh on Wednesdays, switching back over to the 1/2-hour interpretive format which we started last year. The Apollo Room is a wonderful place to play and sing in, and we are very happy to be able to continue our performances there. Also, starting April 5th, we are back in the Palace for our first concert series of the year, celebrating Spring, “The Season Fair.” This year, our April series will have two performances a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Our research time has mostly been spent supporting our new programming. Karol, Amy, and Brady are focusing on the more-immediate research needs of our April and May concerts. Newcomer Kyle has jumped right in to research American music, reading *Cultivated by Hand: Amateur Musicians in the Early American Republic*, by Glenda Goodman, for an idea of what manuscripts we have in the United States and what music was circulating. He is learning of the "economies of accomplishments", a young woman's education through their music studies and conduct books. Kyle is also familiarizing himself with music available in Williamsburg and the extensive inventory of musical instruments held by the Foundation.

Jenny is researching music for an upcoming outdoor concert series this summer, on the popular outdoor venue for concerts in the 18th century dubbed the "Pleasure Garden," developed in the 1730's with London's Vauxhall Gardens and popularized all over Europe and here in America. This was the forerunner of our modern-day amusement parks.

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – Chad is putting the finishing touches to the latest Journeyman’s Certificate. 2022 has been a busy season with Chad producing several Master’s and Journeyman’s papers. Congratulations to the new Masters and Journeymen!

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

Bindery – Good day from the Bookbindery!

As Historic Tradespeople, we are responsible not only for preserving the skills of the 18th-century worker, but also for telling the story of who these skilled people were. The fact of the matter is that you would find free white men, enslaved and indentured people, both males and females, family members, and orphans who worked to produce product at that time.

Growing up, I was taught that white men were almost exclusively working in these shops, without mention of the other people who contributed their time, labor, skills, and lives to their various crafts. Over my almost-10-year career at Colonial Williamsburg, I find that many of our Guests were taught the same thing.

Going through the *Virginia Gazette* between the years of 1736 and 1780 alone, I was able to find records of some of the many enslaved 18th-century tradesmen and women, through runaway ads and lotteries, which listed their multiple skills. In fact, I found nearly 150 Trades listed that they participated in. My long-term goal is to create a living, stand-alone document that can be used as a reference for all who work here. We at the Bookbindery work every day to abolish the myth of the unskilled enslaved laborer. The following excerpt is a sample of this list. When complete, you will be able to click on the link and it will pull up the exact ad from the *Virginia Gazette*.

**The Enslaved and Free-Black Tradesmen and Tradeswomen of Virginia
As Recorded in *The Virginia Gazette*, multiple papers spanning the years 1736-1780**

Artisans:

- Rind: Sept. 22, 1768 – pg. 3, col. 2

Axe-men:

- Purdie and Dixon: Mar. 7, 1771 – pg. 3, col. 2
- Rind: Mar. 7, 1771 – pg. 3, col. 2
- Rind: Oct. 29, 1772 – pg. 3, col. 2
- Purdie and Dixon: Nov. 5, 1772 – pg. 3, col. 3
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If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact bswanson@cwf.org.

Good day to all, from your friendly neighborhood Bookbinders Dale Dippre, Donald Mason, and Barbara Swanson.

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

Public Leather Works – Greetings once again from the Public Leather Works. As we all adjust to the time change and our new schedules, new projects are coming in and going out at a steady pace.

But what all this really means is that we are now smack in the middle of Jelly Bean Season. One can hardly help but be amazed at the huge variety of Jelly Beans available. It seems that everyone has jumped on the Jelly Bean wagon. Starburst, Jolly Rancher, Skittles, and Jelly Belly have joined the old standbys in the Jelly Bean Wars. So, The Public Leather Works is officially throwing down the gauntlet!

Over the next three weeks, we challenge you all to determine who makes the best Jelly Bean. Blind taste test, direct comparison, overall best, best color flavors, whatever method you deem to be the best. Submit your findings to jtilley@cwf.org. Findings will be made available, and a winner declared here. Bonus points will be awarded to any Shop who can manufacture a facsimile of a Jelly Bean.

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

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

Silversmith – **The Silversmith Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

Tailor – **The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, and Friday.**

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – The warmer weather brought a pop-up Dye Day on Wednesday. We used indigo to create blues for future bed rugs and experimented with overdyeing using the corals and Department of Historic Trades and Skills

reds of brazilwood to give us gorgeous purples. (Did you know that the country of Brazil is named for the wood, not the other way around!) Speaking of bed rugs, Joe's first has been completed, solid white and very plush, and Annie has started their first in solid green with a dark brown border. If they can match his pace, we'll have them all turned out in no time!



The Weaving Shop will be open on Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday.

Wheelwright – Hooping or tiring is on the docket for the Deane Shop. The front Stage Wagon wheels have been delivered to the Wheelwrights with thin tires, as to be expected from these abrasive asphalt streets. Here's hoping that warmer weather will prevail for the following week. Apprentice Murphy has taken it upon himself to repair the foot treadle for the lathe for a future project: turned chisel handles. Between the repairs, he has drawn out his design and is prepping out the material with axe, froe, and plane. Murphy has also measured out an existing Brickyard wheelbarrow for his wheelbarrow project, and has some Oak boards on standby ready for prep. Apprentice Joel has knocked his wheelbarrow repair together for the final time, after painting up some hard-to-reach components of the project separately. Both Joel and Master Wheelwright Paul are currently cleaning fellies for their respective projects: Paul's cannon wheels, and Joel's hand cart wheels.

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

Wigmaker – This past week, the Shop finished up weaving hair for Robert's new wig, and Edith began applying the last wefts. Once all the wefts are applied it will get a wash and then style. Maybe by the end of the coming week, it will be on Mr. Wythe's head. Wig maintenance has increased as the spring season gears up, and we're continuing to work on the wigs requested for "CW Lights". Benton has begun construction on a "secret" project in which he's utilizing some of the basic techniques needed in wig construction. Maybe more on that later. Edith has begun an unadvertised Military Hair program on Thursdays in the Shop, 9:00-10:00am. Each week, she will dress one or two of our Military colleagues' hair while interpreting in the Shop. Finally, we would like to introduce our newest Shop member, Mr. Bones, who is attempting to help with our Inventory, but even with his booster seat, he's finding it hard to reach the keyboard. We're working with him on it. We're slightly concerned about the hammer he's somehow acquired, though. Focused research has taken a

back seat to maintenance for now, but we're always on the lookout for new styles to attempt in the future. As always, don't hesitate to reach out to us for any tonsorial needs. The John Coke Office is open Sunday through Thursday.



Mr. Bones starting his new job



The peak of Robert's wig, waiting for hair



Side view, look at all those lovely layers



Edith combing out Alex Arnold's hair

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.

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