

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

*July 23, 2021*

*Apothecary* – Tuesday was our day for a Livestream that addressed a topic in depth. Sharon and Mark chose to focus on dental care. Some of the subjects addressed included tools and materials for cleaning teeth, treating tooth aches, removing teeth, tooth transplants, dentures, braces, and the practitioners that provided services. The prerecorded section done last week on making coral sticks to clean teeth, was also featured. Thank you, Mark and Sharon. Thank you to the production team, Justin, Bill, and Lane.



Meanwhile, Robin has been busy addressing some issues related to future Shop operations, a topic that is needed but not as glamorous as a studio production.

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

## *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 open on Sunday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Either the Cabinetmakers or the Harpsichord-makers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Wednesday.

*Brickmaker* – This week, the Brickmakers have been continuing construction on the brick bread-oven at the Anderson Armoury. With only a handful of bricks left to lay, the dome portion of the oven is nearly complete! Once the last brick is laid, we will give the mortar some time to fully set, then we will remove the sand from the interior of the oven that has been serving as the frame for the dome. The final step in the oven construction will be to apply a mixture of clay, straw, and lime to the exterior of the oven to help protect it

from weathering. It won't be too much longer before delicious bread is coming out of the oven! Just be wary of eating the first loaf that comes out, it tends to be a little sandy. In addition to the ongoing oven construction, the Brickmakers spent some time with the Carpenters, where we got a lesson in hewing. Seeing as the timbers at the Carpenter's Yard will one day be used to construct the new Brickyard buildings, it seemed only fair that we help in whatever small way we can. Under the watchful tutelage of Ayinde and Matt, Nick got a taste of the work that goes in to preparing timbers for construction (and the sweet blisters to prove it). Before you know it, the Brickmakers will be the Carpenters' next-door neighbors causing all sorts of ruckus.



*Carpenter* – The Carpenters are hewing the pine and poplar timbers for the buildings in the Brickyard. Each log takes several days to hew. They will then go in the sawpit to be ripped into smaller pieces.





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

*Colonial Garden* – This was the week to dig our potatoes. We conducted the same experiment as last year where one trench is planted with the “seed” potato and covered with soil. The second trench with seed was covered with straw before covering with soil. On harvest day, we experienced the same conditions as last year. The surface of the soil was 100 degrees F, and below ground, the story was quite different. The trench that contained straw was markedly cooler than the trench that was just soil, twenty degrees cooler. The straw insulates the potatoes and keeps them cooler; this coolness allows the potatoes to grow for a longer period of time. We gained five pounds in harvest weight using straw.



Intern David harvesting potatoes



Robert unearthing potatoes



Potatoes with long straw



It's "tater" digging time

We also harvested sheep's nose peppers, okra, and many cucumbers. Geechee peas continue to form, sweet potatoes are covering the ground, and we will have hot peppers by the bowlful very soon. Sorghum is heading up nicely and at a rate of at least an inch a day. Castor beans are growing into giants that cast a shadow large enough to stand under and escape the sun's hot rays.

Thanks to the Blacksmith Shop for repairing our weeding tools this week, and many thanks to our Volunteers who brave the hot summer to greet and speak with our Guests. It is summer so we weed, weed, and weed some more.

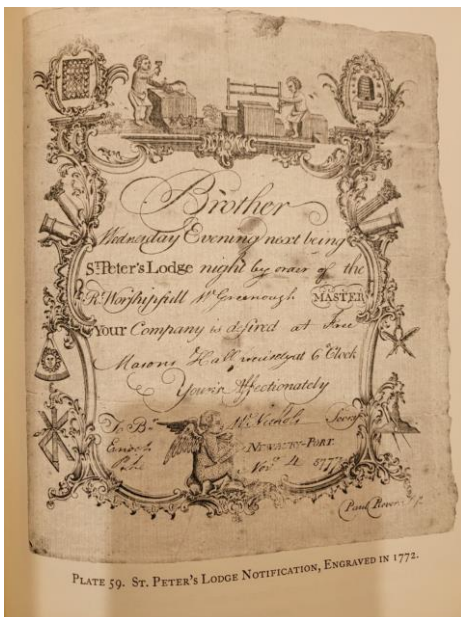
**The Colonial Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.**

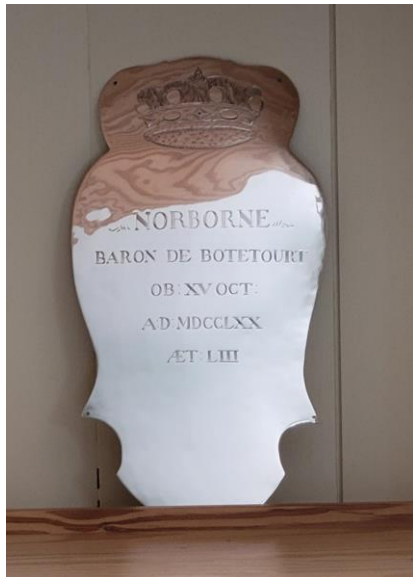
**Cooper – The Cooper Shop will be open on Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

**Engraver** – This week, the Engravers have been busy as usual. We have seen a great number of Guests. A question/comment we are getting often is if what we do is like tattooing. Interesting one. Our transfer of designs and following the patterns while engraving somehow makes folks think of this type of body adornment. One to think about.

William, this week, has completed another copper Holbein design plate. His prints are turning out great! He has been taking up a lot of the talking the last two days so I can get caught up on several custom orders we have been presented with: a large sterling bowl, a signet ring, and beginning another smaller silver bowl for the Silversmiths. We have been working on trade silver and lots of drawing, as usual.

I am looking into several engraved documents Paul Revere had engraved for Masons. Maybe we can reproduce one someday. We also have been finding some mentions of engraving charges in Revere's books. William and I have also taken on the task of cleaning up the CW-made silver items the Geddy House had been displaying. They really needed a good clean up. The Geddy House has kindly let us keep them on display here in the Shop until they open back up. It is nice to see the Waddill-engraved Botetourt coffin plate (reproduction) and have it to show our Guests. The next couple of days, we will be engraving a few more custom items, and William will continue on his quest to make strides in his experimenting with copperplate printing on fabric.



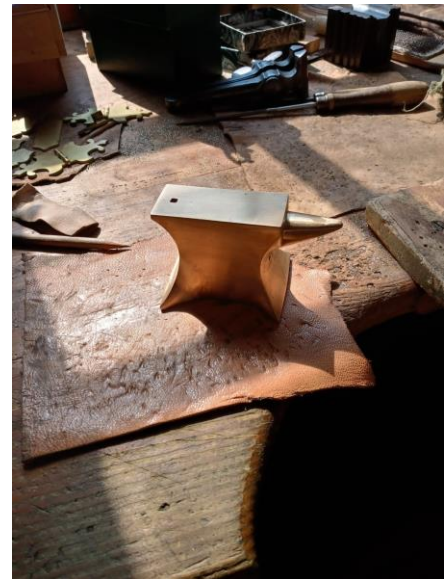




**The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday. The Engravers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Thursday.**

***Foodways*** – The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, and at the Armoury Kitchen on Friday.

***Foundry*** – At the Foundry this week, Drew cleaned up a silver star pendant that was found on the site, and Leanne has been cleaning baby spoons for engraving and casting musket balls for the Range. Also, Drew has been reading up on coin counterfeiting, and Leanne has been reading on female silversmiths. Lastly, Mike has been getting a bronze anvil polished for the Blacksmiths.



**The Foundry will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.**

***Gunsmith*** – The past two weeks, the Gunsmith Shop has been down to two people, but things still move forward. Richard has been fabricating a new muzzle piece die or swage for a muzzle piece that will be mounted to the rifle. The muzzle piece is formed from annealed sheet brass and gently peened with a light hammer into shape around a swage. The swage is made of iron and has the same profile as the muzzle of the

barrel. Darrin fit the cocks to the tumblers of the pistol locks and fit the screws to each tumbler to hold the cocks in place. Next will be to take a large cape chisel and dig out what will be the flash pan on each lock plate.



Brad forged a small hatchet in the fashion of an original antique he saw at the Kentucky Rifle Association Show we went to in June. Some of the study material we have been researching is *The Practical Blacksmith*, *The Gunsmith in Colonial Virginia*, *Rifles of Colonial America*, and *JHAT vol. 1*.

**The Gunsmith Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. On Sunday, July 25th, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Gunsmiths will present “Virginia Rifles Made Along the Great Wagon Road: A Photographic Study of Three Important Virginia Rifles.” The earliest in the group was made at the headwaters of the James River in the 1750’s. The second is the earliest with a brass box and dated 1771. The third rifle is the earliest with a signature.**

***Historic Farming*** – Corn is the focal point of Guests’ interests at Prentis Field lately. People are amazed at how tall it is. This corn variety, called Gourdseed, is from the 18th century. The American Indians did not care about its height, but they certainly liked that it has two ears on it. It is a soft, white dent corn that is easily ground and makes excellent meal, and even more amazing grits. The Europeans liked it for the grain, but the height was another advantage in that it is good forage to feed livestock. Once the ears are fully mature, the tops and the blades can be pulled off and cured. I assure you that cattle and horses love it. More about the fodder-making process later, as we get closer to that time. Check out the picture below of Intern Anna Lynn and the corn!



Anna Lynn and twelve-foot-high corn

**The Farmer will be at Prentis Field Tuesday through Saturday.**

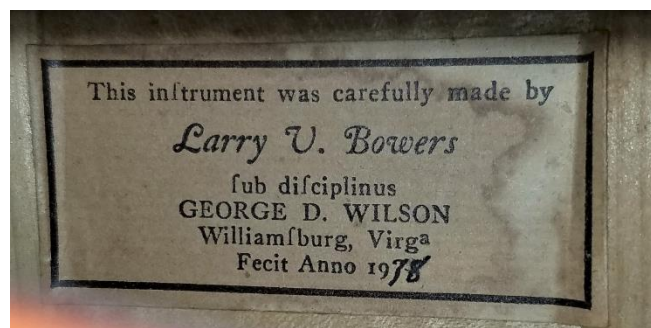


*Joinery* – The Joiners have several jobs that they’ve been asked to do. Brian is working on a sign board for the Engravers and a work surface for the Tailors. The Apprentices are still finishing up their final window sashes. These will all be installed in the Saunders House sometime later this Fall. In the meantime, the carefully shaped muntins must be coped and joined. This is a delicate process, but one that the Apprentices have been performing for a few years now.

**The Joinery will be open on Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday. The Joiners will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Saturday.**

*Milliner and Mantua-maker* – The Millinery will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

*Music* – Greetings from the Governor’s Musick! Our summer projects continue apace. We have settled into a comfortable rhythm in our Friday all-day residency at the Raleigh, mixing solo and duo fifteen-minute presentations and rotating performers every hour. Some Guests have come back multiple times during the day to see different performers! We have changed locations at the Art Museum for our appearances there – you will now find us on the lower level in the South Zadarlick-Sogoloff Gallery. Next week, Brady will be pursuing a professional development opportunity – attending the annual Summer Conclave of the Viola da Gamba Society of America (online this year, sadly). In preparation, he has given the tenor viol owned by the Foundation a little TLC. This dear instrument, made by Larry Bowers in 1978 here in Williamsburg, had been sitting on a shelf for some time in unplayable condition. Last year, Jenny took it to a luthier in Richmond, who glued together its open seams and re-set the soundpost, a wooden dowel that lives inside the instrument providing structure. It is held between the belly and back of the instrument using solely the tension supplied by the strings. Brady put on a new set of strings and used its (very) old strings to replace some of the frets that had become worn and broken. (Did you know that the viol’s frets, as well as its strings, are made of animal intestine?). Now this darling tenor viol, a little piece of CW institutional history, is in perfect condition and raring to go!



The Musicians will be in the Art Museum on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays (unadvertised and subject to change) and on Wednesdays as advertised, and at the Raleigh Tavern Apollo Room throughout the summer on Fridays, 9:00am to 5:00pm for tours every 15 minutes.

*Musket Range* – The Musket Range continues to have some of the strongest sales ever. Currently, we are working on arranging re-Certification classes for our staff and some of Military Programs staff as Muzzle loading Instructors, which is something we have to do every two years. This will be completed in September and January. We are also working with Educational Conferences, Forums and Symposiums on bringing a Firearms Safety Seminar to Colonial Williamsburg. Aimed at museum professionals and living historians, this seminar will be geared to give other professionals best practices in demonstrating, maintaining, and storing arms and ammunition.

### *Printer and Bookbinder:*

*Printing Office* – The Printing Office will be open on Sunday, Monday, and Thursday. The Printers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Tuesday.

*Bindery* – The Bookbindery will be open on Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. On Monday, July 26th, the Bookbinders will present “A Visit with the Bookbinder.” This is a brief talk about the Bookbinding Trade in 18th-Century Williamsburg.

*Public Leather Works* – Greetings from The Public Leather Works, Headquarters of The Agents of Leather. To begin with, we are very excited to announce that we have successfully completed our 27th month of NOT making shoes! We would like to thank Master Valentine Povinelli and the staff of the Shoemakers Shop for their unknowing support in this mission.

In other news, the Agents currently find themselves in the throes of another run of knapsacks for the use of the Public Magazine staff. Apprentice Agent Andrew (Winceworthy) has been acting as straw boss on this project, and it is proceeding apace. Special thanks for this project go out to Aislinn at the Blacksmith for helping with hardware.

Master Agent Jay (Hannibal) recently finished repairing a riding saddle and cart saddle for our colleagues in Coach and Livestock, along with lending his expertise to the knapsack project.

Intern Agent Victoria (Faceman) has been nose-to-the-grindstone on the knapsack project along with pursuing her research on key baskets.

Journeyman Agent Jan (Mad Dog Murdoch) has gone rogue and has not been working on any knapsacks. Instead, he has made some modifications to a sword belt for the Marquis de Lafayette (actually for Mark Schneider. The actual Marquis has no use for a new sword belt and is currently too skinny to fit one).



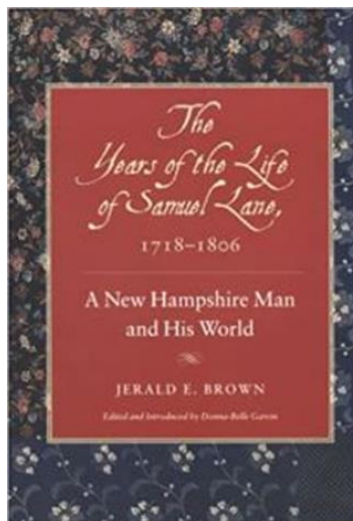
Finally, the Agents are bidding farewell to Apprentice Agent Andrew (Winceworthy) as he ends his time in our Shop on the 22nd of this month and prepares to return to the land of Sites, Ol's and School & Groups. We wish him Godspeed, fair winds, and following seas.



Thank you all for your kind attention and, as always, if you have a leather emergency, contact the Agents of Leather!

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

*Shoemaker* – Katie continues to work on her hand skills, and she will soon start working on a pair of slippers for herself. She is reading *The Years of the Life of Samuel Lane, 1718-1806: A New Hampshire Man and His World*, by Jerald E. Brown.



Rob is building up a last for a pair of pumps and has completed the patterning for his shoe-boots. Based on the pattern, a try-on was made, and based on its fit, Rob made a slight pattern alteration and is now getting ready to click out the parts of the boot. The try-on is essentially our version of the muslin, made out of interior leather to guarantee the fit before cutting into the good leather.



Rob's last build up



Rob's try-on

Nicole continues her instruction with Katie regarding handwork. Nicole is also finishing a pair of Morocco goatskin slippers for Janea Whitacre, as well as re-soleing a pair of shoes for herself.



Nicole's slipper for Janea



Nicole's half-sole

Rob and Nicole are preparing for their Livestream in August on the making and using of blackball. Yesterday, they did a practice run in the Armoury Kitchen, while fielding questions from Guests. Rob and Nicole are also developing presentations for their upcoming Hennage Trades Talks.



Nicole and Rob's shoe blacking trial

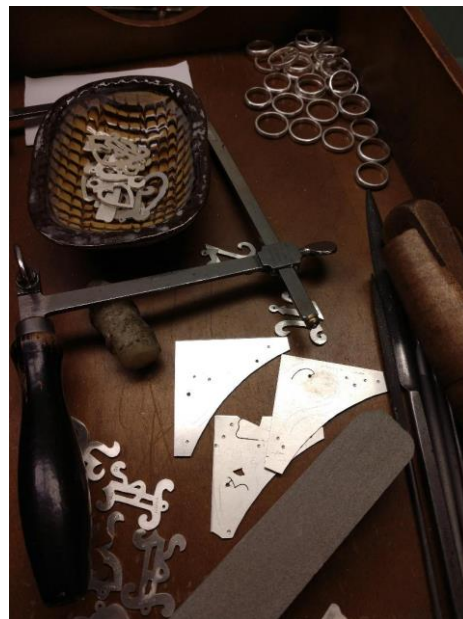
Val is almost done with repairing (half-soles and heels) a pair of shoes for Jan Tilley. Val continues reading *American Lucifers: The Dark History of Artificial Light, 1750-1865*, by Jeremy Zallen. He is also continuing correspondence with Noah Burns, a young man who has taken up shoemaking after visiting the Shoe Shop, and he is making preparations for the Shop's leather dressing project.



Val's half-sole and heels for Jan Tilley

**The Shoemakers will be at the Armoury on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday**

***Silversmith*** – The Silversmiths are keeping out of trouble! We received some wonderful castings from Mike down at the Foundry. Bobbie was able to finish up a salt cellar with the feet from Mike. Chris has been getting a lot done on the teapot. She's about to clean up the finials from Mike. She finished piercing the fancy design where the spout will go, which is no easy task! Aisha is honing her piercing skills, making trade silver. She is also making rings! Preston and Bobbie are working on parts of a large bell.





**The Silversmith Shop will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday. The Silversmiths will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Friday. On Thursday, July 29th, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Silversmiths will present “Brandishing your Wealth.” Learn about the art of silversmithing and discover some of the outlandish ways some people would store their wealth in the 18th century.**

***Tailor* – The Tailor Shop will be open on Sunday, Thursday, and Saturday. The Tailors will be in the Art Museum Gallery on Monday.**

***Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing*** – It may not look like much now, but this is a future project in the making. This linen yarn has already been wrapped into skeins and washed before being mordanted to prepare it for the dye bath. Next, it was hand dyed the three distinct colors you can see here. After dyeing, it was washed again to knock any excess dye off and ensure the colors won't bleed or run. After, the yarn was taken out of the skein form in order to be measured and wrapped around the tubes you see here.

Still to go is setting up the creels to pass the yarn through the warping mill and using that to build a warp, then beaming, threading, sleying, and lashing. We have talked about all of those before, but there is always another step hiding just around the corner! An incredible amount of work before the shuttle is picked up for the first time, but all of this means there will soon be a new project on the loom. We hope you can come visit soon and get a chance to see it.



**The Weaver Shop will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.**

Wheelwright – Business as usual for the Wheelwrights this week. Joel has marked out his chamfers on his hay cart body and is nearing completion on the project. Having finished the mortises on his first wheel hub with chisel and mallet, Michael is preparing the second hub for the Carpenter’s Yard log cart. Paul continues work on a pair of signal cannon wheels for an outside commission and is currently driving the metal bushings out of the Randolph carriage hubs. The Shop also played host to a horse cart in need of a new linchpin on Wednesday, which the Blacksmiths were happy to provide.

**The Wheelwrights will be at the Armoury on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

Wigmaker – We've been hard at work with the usual maintenance. Intern Sydney successfully completed the first “Soap and Hygiene” program outside of the Shop this past week and is looking forward to presenting it again this Thursday, July 29th. Stop by if you can, to chat with Sydney or gather new information for your interpretation. Apprentice Edith has begun the process of making powders and pomades for upcoming projects and presentations and has found that a Virginia Summer may not be the best time to dive into this type of project, since the needed lard keeps melting. Journeyman Debbie will be attempting to get the Marquis's wig completed in the next week or two.

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

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

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