

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

April 29, 2022

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

Armoury:

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

Tinsmith – This week in the Tin Shop, Steve has been continuing work on outside orders of two sets of watering cans (see image) and participated in a STEM-based Livestream on Wednesday. Joel has been working on cups for Prentis Store and completed a first attempt at making a tea kettle. Joel has been researching the workers in the Publick Armoury with a hope to share their history more broadly soon. Jenny has been working on domed-top coffee pots and continues her examination of merchant records in order to discern prices and tinware availability as part of her apprenticeship.



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

Anthony Hay Shop – The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker are open Sunday (11:30am-5:00pm) and Monday through Saturday.

Brickmaker – This week in the Brickyard saw further work on our molding and treading area as Apprentices Nick and Madeleine continue to pave. We've extended the brick pad out to a good distance in front of the pit, so work has begun to pave behind it. Brick by brick, we can see our new Yard coming together, especially after our recent delivery of sand! With sand piled high in the middle of the Yard, we set to use the power of math, or the Pythagorean theorem, to ensure we could establish a bed that is square. With our minds at ease, we set to secure several boards which will allow us to take out the sand to fill the bed.

In other news this week, Master Josh was able to debut his fancy clothes for his Hennage talk, “Who Designed this Place?” Armed with a carved compass and other tools of the craft, he dazzled the crowd; if you missed it, fear not, for he will be returning in July. In the meantime, the reviews are in!

"The stark black suit really brought out his eyes, also those front row seats are exceptionally close" - Marcus Wiffen

"What's the deal with bricks in Virginia?" - Thomas Jefferson



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

Carpenter – At the Carpenters Yard, we are still working up braces for the Brickyard drying house. By the end of this week, we should be on to the back wall. The good news is that we’ve completed the hard parts of the front wall. The center post and its surrounding joinery looks great.

We’ve also been researching tool inventories of woodworkers.
Department of Historic Trades and Skills



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

Colonial Garden – This past week brought warm weather and a frenzy of activity to the Historic Garden. Now that we are past the danger of frost, most of our warm season seeds can be planted directly in the Garden. The Gardeners sowed pole beans, lima beans, nigella, safflower, carrots, parsnips, and beets, and continued moving plants started in the hotbeds into larger pots. A significant portion of our time this week was spent keeping the newly planted seeds watered as the temperatures started to climb. The Gardeners harvested the last of our endive to send to Historic Foodways at the Palace Kitchen, along with asparagus, parsley, and chive blossoms. We also harvested our rye straw, which will be used to make insulating straw mats later this year. Thank you to the Blacksmiths at the Anderson Armoury for their emergency repair of our sickle handle. With the rye harvested, the soil in that bed will soon be turned in preparation for planting a demonstration of an American Indian Garden. Currently blooming in the Historic Garden are blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*), cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), chive (*Allium schoenoprasum*), crimson clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*), Welsh onion (*Allium fistulosum*), coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), and musk strawberries (*Fragaria moschata*).



Newly seeded beds in the Historic Garden



Edible chive blossoms



Apprentice Historic Gardener Marc cutting rye straw



Rye straw drying at the Historic Garden

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – This week, the Coopers welcomed a group of students from the University of Delaware/Winterthur Museum Graduate Program for a hands-on workshop. We also trussed a gunpowder half-barrel - the first of fifteen we will be making between now and 2025 as part of the furnishings for the Magazine restoration.

The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30am-5:00pm).

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

Foodways – The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen Sunday, 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 – We have been raising hills for corn and tobacco plants this week. George Washington (Daniel Cross) stopped by to help us line up the hills correctly. This was an excellent interpretive opportunity to talk about GW’s approach as a progressive farmer and his demand for preciseness. This was certainly honed by his experience in the military!



Washington instructs children on adjusting hills

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

Joinery – The Joinery will be open Tuesday (11:30am-5:00pm), and Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

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

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – This past Thursday, we hosted students from the University of Delaware/Winterthur Museum. Each student had an opportunity to set type and pull a copy of *Virginia’s Declaration of Rights* as it appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* of Alexander Purdie.



Chad printing pages of a book, as copies of *The Declaration of Rights* dries on line

The Printing Office will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Wednesday, May 4th, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Printers will present “An overview of the Printing Office.” Join Peter Stinely as he shares his 40 years at the Letter Press through pictures and recollections.

Bindery – Good day to all from the Bookbindery! This morning saw Journeyman Supervisor Dale Dippre and Apprentice Barbara Swanson conducting a preview class of a summer program entitled “The Arts and Mysteries of the Stitch Book and Paste Paper Basics.” A big thank you to our amazing colleagues for making it fun! We are extremely excited about this new path that Historic Trades is taking.

Pictured below is Bill Dell, Volunteer Extraordinaire, sitting next to Journeyman Bookbinder Donald Mason. Bill is sewing pages to cords - typically the fourth step of the bookbinding process. The preceding three steps include folding the sections to be sewn, pressing them flat under heavy weight, and setting up the sewing frame as pictured. This is the process we intend to teach in an Intermediate Bookbinding Basics course, to be offered through the Foundation soon. Be on the lookout! Cheers!



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

Public Leather Works – Greetings all. The Public Leather Works has emerged from its jelly bean-induced coma and is ready to announce the results of the contest. After exhaustive research and data crunching, we have determined that:

THERE IS NO BEST JELLY BEAN.

I know, shocking. But there it is. We do have several honorable mention submissions. The first is from Kristie Hammond who sent us this:



And from Felicity Meza-Luna:



Thank you for your creative responses.

In the meantime, work continues for real with several projects being taken on in the Shop. Emma is seeing the light at the end of the tunnel of stitching a seven-inch strap. Jay has cut out and begun the assembly of a bag. And Jan has completed an exercise in scaling down a leather breeches pattern.



Until next time, The Public Leather Works is at your service for any of your leather needs.

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

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

Silversmith – As always, the Silversmiths are working on their lengthy list of projects. Megan continues to work on her ingot, a large amount of trade silver items for the store, and she is polishing her mote spoon. Chris' teapot is nearing its completion. She is working diligently on the ebony handle and has been polishing the body. Bobbie's tray is coming along, and she resoldered the handle of her fish trowel. Preston continues work on his small bowls and on polishing jewelry for the retail store. George continues his work on forging out the long ingot for spoon blanks. Research continues on trade silver.



Bobbie's completed and polished Fish Trowel



Preston's small chased bowl



The same bowl, now polished

The Silversmith Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Tailor – Things have quieted down a bit in the Tailor Shop after last week’s record-setting visitation. This lull has allowed the Tailors to refocus on finishing current projects and starting new ones. Journeyman McCarty finished a second pair of black satin breeches, and Apprentice Logue is speeding along on the inked waistcoat with the help of Master Hutter and Intern Patten.

Every Friday morning, the Shop is closed until 11:30am to host a Workshop entitled “Every Child Taught to Sew”. The Tailors introduce the participants (ages 7 and up) to the basic stitches (fore and back, serge, felling, and cross stitches, along with others) that were commonly taught to young girls and boys within the home in the 18th century.

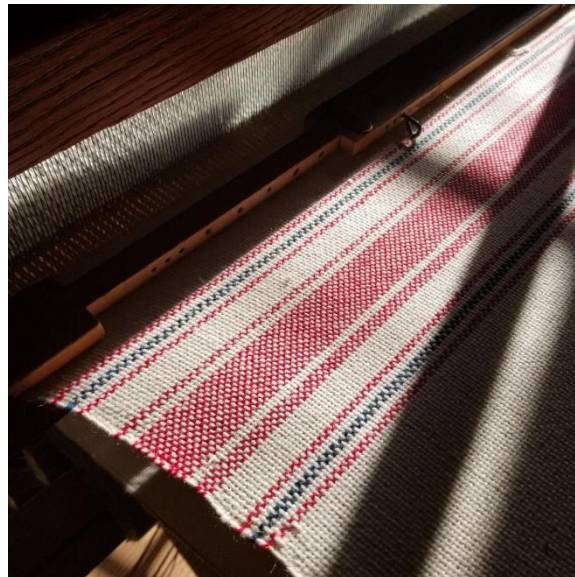


The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, and Friday (11:30-5:00).

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – We've had an incredibly busy week! On Saturday, we held a Dye Day and used brazilwood for corals and peaches, indigo for blues, turmeric for yellows, and cochineal for reds, along with dyeing one color over another for an even wider variety. Look for much of the lovely locks, skeins, and quilt squares to be in Prentis Store soon!

In project news, the Dutch blankets are well under way, with a second panel already complete. Why panels? Woven fabric in this era was generally only able to be as wide as the weaver could reach comfortably, so a blanket fabric might be woven twice as long as required, then cut in half and those two halves sewn together side by side to create the width needed to cover a bed.

Saving the best for last, our Intern has arrived! Pam Howard is a Master Weaver and was the weaver in residence at the John C. Campbell Folk School for 21 years. We're all looking forward to learning from her!



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

Wheelwright – The Wheelwrights are almost done with a carry log cart for the Carpenters Yard. After hooping the wheels near the end of this week, Apprentice Joel is cleaning and painting the wheels. He is also

working in tandem with fellow Apprentice Murphy to turn his hubs for his handcart wheels, with Murphy acting as the engine for powering the lathe. Murphy continues to use Axe, hand plane, and saw to dimensioning white oak for his handcart body. Master Wheelwright Paul is working on an interesting project for the Public Leather Works, by making some small mannequin legs for an equally small pair of leather breeches. A very productive week for the Deane Shop.

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

Wigmaker – This week has been quite busy for the Wigmakers. Debbie is up at Historic Deerfield in Massachusetts, presenting at a hybrid event! Check it out! <https://www.historic-deerfield.org/events/styling-historic-hair-and-beauty-practices>.

Edith and Benton have been diligently holding the fort down. Benton continues to work on styling, while Edith continues the collaboration with Military Programs on hair styling practices on Thursdays. Research and maintenance continues. As always, if you require any tonsorial assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us!

The Wig Shop will be open 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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