

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

April 22, 2023

After three weeks of successful and nearly all sold-out Family Workshops, the schedule will change, beginning on Sunday, April 23rd. There will now be three Beginner Workshops and one Family Workshop. Please note that there will now be Workshops four days a week for the rest of the Spring Season.

Sunday, Beginner Workshop: Tailor – Participants will learn that simple materials and skills produced a broad range of useful buttons and a very large industry in the 18th century. Join the Tailors and make two types of historic thread-covered buttons. *Limit of 10 participants. The minimum age is 12. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.*

Monday, Family Workshop: Cook – (This is a continuation of the Cook Workshop that has been held the last three weeks.) Learn basic garnishing and food decoration skills to create an appealing dessert. Participants will sculpt and decorate their marzipan creations and learn other decorating techniques from the 18th century to brighten up their dessert tables. *Limit of 8 participants.*

Historic Trades and Skills Family workshops are designed for participants ages seven and older. Kids 7-13 must be accompanied by a ticketed adult. Kids 14-17 must be accompanied by an adult, either participating (purchase a workshop ticket) or non-participating (with a free Chaperone ticket).

Friday, Beginner Workshop: Tin Plate Worker – Join the Publick Armoury Tin Plate Worker in exploring the unique properties of tin-plated iron by creating a practical lighting device. Commonly known as a cellar-stick, this simple candle holder offers a useful beginner's project to develop the fundamental skills and knowledge that all tin plate workers, both historical and modern, need to learn to be competent. Bending, cutting, and soldering are performed in this quick project, providing the maker with a functional candleholder and invaluable life skills to take home and enjoy. *Limit of 9 participants. Minimum age is 10.*

Saturday, Beginner Workshop: Gunsmith – Join the Gunsmiths for the layout of sheet brass to make three pieces of a rifle. Participants will make a barrel loop, a ramrod thimble, and the finial of a patchbox with attached hinge. *The minimum age is 13. Limit of four participants.*

The Workshops will begin at 10:00 am. Their shops will be closed 9-10 am. The Cook, Tin Plate Worker, and Gunsmith Workshops will end at 11:00 am. These shops will open to the public at 11:30. The Tailor Workshop will end at 11:30, and the site will open at Noon.

For the Cook Family Workshop, Kids 7-14 will need to have a participating adult with their own ticket. Children 14-17 need to have an adult present. The adults will need to have their own ticket if they want to participate. Otherwise, the adult may just observe. In this case, they will have a free "Chaperone" ticket. Please be aware that the "Chaperones" cannot participate. All participating tickets are \$20.

Tickets for the Beginner Workshops are \$60 for youth and adults.

Apothecary – The Apothecary was the site of some filming on Monday! Sharon talked about all things apothecary-surgeon, Mark demonstrated basics of dentistry, and Margaret made a conserve of orange peel on camera. In addition, we had our last Spring Family Workshop Wednesday morning, with participants making that same conserve and learning how to apply bandages to each other! Mark is deep in rheumatology research for the upcoming professionals' conference - please come to the Shop and ask him about gout. Margaret continues to wade through A.D. Galt's Public Hospital notes in preparation for May and October. Sharon, in her exploration of the Galt-Barraud books, is beginning to track statistical data like frequency of dispensation for certain medicinal ingredients.



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

Blacksmith – We Blacksmiths remain busy! We have found ourselves on the theme of cooking utensils this last week, we smiths always appreciate the use of such things. Ken has made a "salamander", not the creek-dwelling critter, but a heavy plate on a handle that, when heated well, is used to brown the tops of special dishes. Alex makes small ladles or dippers, carefully copying an example from Collections. Broadus likewise works on "egg slices", or more modernly called, spatulas. Aislinn works on a roasting spit. And finally, to quench your thirst, Josh works on the hardware for well buckets. As always, all's well that falls well at the base of the anvil!

The Blacksmith is open Daily.

Bookbinder – The Bookbinder is open Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Cabinetmaker – This past week, John has been continuing with the seat assembly of his set of chairs, bringing together the front legs, seat rails, and stretchers. Bill has been working on the writing surface that sits in the drawer of his writing table, a complicated works within some tight tolerances. He and our Intern, Sarah, went Monday morning to study furniture at the Art Museum, getting hands-on with some pieces as Sarah nears the end of her internship.

The Shop also successfully finished up its last round of the hands-on Family Workshop, "Plane Talk", for this Spring Break season. We will be continuing the sessions this summer, as well. Additionally, late last week,

the Shop said goodbye to another sold piece of furniture, a sideboard that John finished in 2021. The Shop inventory is a little low right now, but Jeremy's walnut corner table is still looking for a home. Stop by the Shop to check it out before it's taken!

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

Carpenter – This week in the Carpenters Yard, we've cut and installed the joists for the wagon shed. We started to work up the tilted false plates to find the material too bowed to use. To solve the issue, we're pit sawing a pair of new tilted false plates. We've also installed locust posts for the Brickyard molding shed. With help from the Brickyard staff, we'll install the rest of the molding shed on Saturday.



The Carpenters Yard is open Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cook – Another fun week over at the Palace Kitchen as the temperatures start to have us feeling like summer is just around the corner. We had a successful installment of our Spring Workshop on Monday and will have the third brewing of the spring season this coming Sunday. We will be making a wheat beer this time around, which will be ready just in time for summer. Frank also had an interview with *Atlas Obscura* this week, and Barbara and Dom were in the Kitchen on Wednesday with a class from Randolph-Macon College. The students were from a food and politics course; and they spent several hours on Wednesday working alongside Barbara and Dom, who taught them how to make several of our 18th-century dishes, while discussing food in relation to politics at the Governor's Palace. From what we've heard, the students had a great time and enjoyed not only what they learned but also getting to try the end results of their efforts. Because of Health Regulations, we cannot typically feed the public from our Kitchen, but since they were able to come in and make the dishes themselves while we were closed to the public, they were allowed to sample their own creations. We always joke, "We've made it, we can poison ourselves; we can't poison the public." We look forward to continuing our partnership with The College of William and Mary as we gear up for having a NIAHD Intern with us this fall.

The Palace Kitchen is open Monday (11:30-5:00), Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Sunday, April 23rd, "The Arts and Mysteries of Brewing" will be held in the Palace Scullery, 10:00 am to 3:45 pm.

Cooper – In the Cooper's Shop this week, I have been working on a tub for use by the Farmers at their new site at Ewing Field.



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

Engraver – In the Engravers Shop this week, William has been making great strides on his Ships copper plate as well as filling some custom order work. He is drawing out several Foundry-made pewter plates on which he will be engraving a Masonic compass and square. One will include a dedication inscription.

Lynn has begun interviews for the Intern position. She has also been working through the pewter mugs for the Fifes and Drums graduates, custom orders, and has worked on some of the presentation pieces for the Raleigh Tavern Society. The Engravers and the Founders want to thank the Tin Plate Workers for making the most perfect containers for our chasing tools! This is such a great help. We are working on cleaning up and polishing all of them so that we can make cleaning up the castings more efficient. The containers are going to be such a big help in maintaining those tools.





The Engraver is open Sunday through Tuesday, and Thursday.

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

Fifes and Drums – 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 – Over the past couple weeks, the Founders completed the Colonial Williamsburg seals in pewter, bronze, and iron. Many thanks to the Engravers for their assistance with getting them finished! Journeyman Mike is continuing with some finishing work on shoe buckles, and Apprentices Leanne and Drew have been tackling those silver salt spoons we'd mentioned previously. Leanne and Drew have also prepped for our next casting by making some molds for handles and brackets which the Coopers will be using for artillery buckets. If all goes according to plan, those will be cast on Sunday. We had a very exciting delivery this week, as well, with Apprentice Blacksmith Broadus dropping off our new pouring shank in anticipation of Apprentice Wheelwright Murphy's plow project. Also out of the Blacksmiths' forge, Master Blacksmith Ken repaired our iron skimmer, which we'll be needing for the plow project, too. Thanks to all for your help!

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

Gardener – This is a vine that William Beverly writes about after visiting Westover Plantation and enjoying the shade of the summerhouse “set round with the Indian Honey-Suckle, which all the Summer is continually full of sweet Flowers, in which these Birds (hummingbirds) delight exceedingly.”



Native honeysuckle (*Lonicera*) in bloom

Our Guests this week are garden enthusiasts as it is Garden Week in Virginia. They enjoyed the calendula which is in full bloom as well as the seedlings potted up in the hotbed ready for the summer season. Carrots have begun to bloom as well as the Welsh onions. The cabbage is done, and all heads went to the Kitchen, but the broccoli continues. Rye will be harvested soon for Garden mats. Soil was turned, and sweet fennel, lima beans, and melons were planted. Today, we began to build the trellis for cucumber and beans. With every spade full of soil turned, summer gets closer.



Persian lilac fading blooms.

The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

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

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

Joiner – This week at the Joiners' Shop, Scott completed the frame-and-panel door for his corner cupboard, which can be found in our Museum Collection as object 1987-718. This is one of two doors (as seen in the photo of the original cupboard), so his next task will be to make the sash door, which will have glass panes and decorative shaping at the top of the door.





Laura finished up the supports for her new drawer, and installation of this on the underside of the workbench is in progress as this report is written!



We have just one last Family Workshop this Saturday. It's been fun to work with Guests on the basics of using a compass to draw shapes and make wooden squares that participants could take home and use in their own woodworking endeavors.

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

Leather Breeches Maker – The Leather Breeches Makers tender their most sincere thanks for all the kind words and actions towards us these last couple of weeks upon the loss of our friend and Shop-mate, Mr. Tilley. But the work goes on. Jay completed a pair of breeches for Shop stock to add to the pair Emma produced for Mr. Graml. Those who wish to be considered for leather breeches will meet good encouragement by applying to Mr. Howlett.

The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Masonry – This week, the Brickyard crew finished off one part of Yard maintenance, the piers for the tool shed. The next big thing will be our shade shelter over the molding and treading area, with construction overseen by the Carpenters. Soon, we will enjoy some much-anticipated shade! You'll also find us painting our tool shed this week, a refined Spanish brown.

Otherwise, this week, we had our last “Daub to Dough” Workshop, which yielded a very sturdy Cobb oven. Our studious Workshop attendees put in some good work which we will attempt to preserve.

In other Brickyard news, Apprentice Josh from the Blacksmith Shop dropped off a very nice clay roof tile mold which we will use this summer.



The Brickyard is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday, weather permitting. On Monday, April 24th, at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, 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?

Military Programs – The Guardhouse is closed for annual maintenance April 23-29. In addition, all Military Programming is cancelled for these dates (“Military Interpretation”, “Musket Demonstration”, “Necessity of Order in Battle”, “Shoulder Your Firelocks”).

On Wednesday, April 26th, at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, 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.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – This has been the Week of Petticoats for the Mantua-makers. Janea completed her pieced brown linen petticoat and, true to form, immediately turned around and devoted herself to another one. The red linen remnant she wanted to use was about seven inches too short, however, so she found a similar fabric to supplement. In the 18th century, it was very common to find the upper part of the back panel of petticoats made in a different fabric; because that area was always covered with the skirt of the gown or jacket, it was a convenient place to make adjustments or to harvest fabric for alterations. Ishbel, our NIAHD Intern, continues to work on a silk petticoat for the new clothing exhibit at the Museum and has also finished a linen petticoat of her own. She'll be staying on as our Brickman Intern, so her next project will be starting a gown or jacket out of matching striped linen so that she has a comfortable ensemble to wear over the summer months. Rebecca's contribution to the Petticoat Party was an alteration of the ruffle on the bottom of a cotton printed petticoat. A fashionable milliner in 1774 surely wouldn't want to be caught sporting a flounce that looked like it just walked out of 1769!

Piecing, it seems, is the other theme for the week, as Kate continues to work on her pieced blue linen "Forty-Inch Fabric" jacket. Janea takes the piecing prize, however, for the mending she did on a bedgown for Bookbinder Barbie, which is made with a spotted cotton that reproduces a swatch from the Foundling Museum. Lacking any scraps of the same fabric, she rescued some tiny turned-back bits from under the neck piece. Two tiny scraps later, the 3/8" hole was mended and the jacket ready for work once more.



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

Musket Range – Good news at the Musket Range. Both Andy and Alex have completed their Instructor Training and have begun instructing Guests. They both did excellently during their training period and cannot wait to interpret what they have learned. We will be advertising to hire one more Instructor position in the next few weeks. Tell all your friends to apply for this unique position and join our Cadre.



The Musket Range is open Sunday, 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 Shoemakers are working at the Leather Breeches Maker Tuesday through Saturday.

Silversmith – The Silversmiths are as busy as ever working on commissions and items for the retail stores.



Megan has finished her first silver bowl, and there was much rejoicing (left)! In addition to polishing her tray, Chris has been making another batch of Mourning Rings (right).



Bobbie has been working on her new tray, and the new sheet silver that will make the body of the tray is ready to go (left). Preston has a whole host of bowls polished and in progress (right).



George has been working on seamed cups and drawing out silver wire.

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 – The 26th of this month will be our next Dye Day! We are hard at work on our behind-the-scenes preparations. In the last month, we have built up four skeins of our handspun Leicester Longwool. These will need to undergo a chemical bath called a mordant to ensure that our dye binds to the fiber's molecules. There are special mordants for each fiber type and for desired color outcomes.

If you would like us to dye anything for you, please ensure it is brought to us this week or early next week at the latest!

In other news, we have a new project underway on our counterbalance loom. This bright blue upholstery fabric is one-hundred-percent wool and is very densely woven. The fabric has 1,724 warp yarns and will be made up of over 80,000 yards of yarn when the piece is completed.



The Weaver is open Sunday through Thursday.

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

Wigmaker – Hello from the world of hair! We have been busy working on pieces for the Doering Exhibit for the DeWitt Wallace Museum and finishing up Shop projects. Edith has completed her Journeyman Project! She implemented a waxing technique to help seal the wefts of hair by rubbing a beeswax candle along the woven portion of the hair, then sealing it with a warm iron. The waxing will seal the wefts of hair so they will last longer. Mons. De Garsault states, "Next, having put the pressing irons on the brazier to heat moderately, take the end of a candle and rub it lightly back and forth along the roots of the rows. At each row, moisten your finger and dampen the area which has been waxed. Then at once apply the irons to the moistened area. Carry out this operation on all tresses where you find it practicable. It fixes the roots of the tresses." Benton is working on styling his Brigadier wig and is finding that long buckles are really not much fun. Debbie continues to work on a hairpiece for dancer Anna R. and will be producing a small base to make a set of lady's buckles. Research continues into men's wig and hair designs and Marie Antoinette's hairstyles. As always, feel free to reach out to us for any hair-related needs.

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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Masonry – Madeleine Bolton; Milliner and Mantua-maker – Rebecca Godzik; Musket Range – Jeffrey Thomas; Silversmith – Megan Cantwell; Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – Pamela Russo; Wigmaker – Debbie Turpin