

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

December 10, 2021

Apothecary – The Apothecary Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Armoury:

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

Tinsmith – The Christmas rush is upon us as orders for lanterns are coming in fast. Either that, or people are realizing how dark it gets in the 18th-century buildings. Joel and Jenny are making struck lanterns to replenish the stock of the few we had, which were sold over the past couple weeks. Orders for chocolate pots have been coming in, as well, so Steve has been making a few of those. (Muddlers and handles are being turned by John Peeler at the Cabinetmaker.) Steve is also continuing to work on the gigantic lantern for the Palmer House, as well as the large order of canteens for Fifes & Drums, Military Programs, and Evening Military Programs. Jenny finished a second candle box, which is copied from one in the Philadelphia Museum of Art collections, and coffee pot #69 received a passing grade (one more to go). Joel completed the new soldering stove, which is now being employed in the Shop, and is continuing to work on researching Armoury personnel.



The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Anthony Hay Shop – The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Either the Cabinetmakers or the Harpsichord-makers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Wednesday.

Brickmaker – This week in the Carpenter's Yard, the Brickmakers aided the Carpenters in muscling some quite hefty wood into its temporary home. The feat would not have been possible without the words of Department of Historic Trades and Skills

encouragement from Carpenter Bobby Clay. In less strenuous news, the first of many fires to come was created in the skillfully crafted fire pit – and what a fire it was. We would like to think that a small flame is ignited in every Carpenter’s heart when they gaze upon it in these chilly weeks to come. The fire pit in question was created with the bricks that once stood as Apprentice Madeleine’s practice wall. Some of the bricks appear white because of the mortar left in the wake of the dismantling, not due to any aspect of the firing process. Now, she can gaze upon the fire pit fondly with the memory of what it once was. On Thursday, Madeleine participated in a meeting of all the first-year Apprentices, where she was able to socialize with other members of her Trades cohort. There were many greetings exchanged and even more discussions of what to expect in the years to come.



Carpenter – The Carpenters have finished up installing the sheathing in the Wheelwright’s Shop, spent some time shooting video in the attic of Bruton Parish Church and the Booker Tenement for the *Woodworking Conference*, and got the site all dressed up for the holidays...





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

Colonial Garden – The Colonial Garden will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cooper – The Cooper Shop is open Sunday through Thursday.

Engraver – This week in the Engraving Shop: the Apprentice was turned loose creating the Shop's wreath. And he did a wonderful job recreating a miniature Copperplate press! Along with mini copperplates and Engraving tools.

14K wedding rings from our Silversmiths are being worked on as well as silver trade jewelry and several custom orders being finished, and we just received several more in the last couple of days. Now, if we could just get the sunlight to holdout a bit longer each day, we would be set.







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

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

Foundry – Leanne for her first time did a great job with the shop's door wreath, watch out everyone for next year's competition. Plus we are finishing harpsichords brass, bronze wax seals, and bronze nutcrackers.



The Foundry will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmith Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Historic Farming – A breakthrough in the full circle of Trade's work occurred last month. About fifteen years ago, Historic Farming gave the renowned heirloom grain preservationist, Glenn Roberts, Red May wheat that we have been growing since the mid-1980's. This wheat variety was one of those preferred by 18th-
Department of Historic Trades and Skills

century farmers in the Tidewater Region. Glenn gave it to farmers to grow out, and he milled it at his mill called *Anson Mills*. He now offers it as Colonial Artisan Whole Wheat. This flour can be purchased by anyone, so it is back in the food system of America. The breakthrough is that now that it can be ground on a larger scale and made available to all – Historic Foodways is baking with it, and the CW Inn is experimenting with making a special flat bread with it. It has come full circle. It follows to the old saying of preserving rare breeds of livestock and plants: **To preserve it, you must eat it.**



A delicious little loaf of bread made by Historic Foodways. With a big bite out of it!

The Farmer will be at Prentis Field Tuesday through Saturday.

Joinery – The Joiners are hard at work preparing for the yearly conference. Brian’s round window is taking shape. He is working on shaping the inside curves for the outermost sections of the window. This work is done using a compass plane, which has a rounded sole. On the other side of the Shop, Scott has finished his frieze and is now planing up stock for the horizontal portions of his mantelpiece. This material will be used to create the backing for the crown moldings. When asked what he was up to, Peter got a strange look in his eyes and stared off into the distance, quietly mumbling to himself. Another normal winter week at the Joinery!

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

Milliner and Mantua-maker – This past Sunday, the Mantua-makers began work on their annual wedding gown. Day One saw the disassembly of our source gown, so that we could lay out the pieces of fabric to see how much we had to work with. We're going from a sack style to a fitted gown, with a remake for a completely different body type, so we've set ourselves quite the challenge to test how well we can utilize all of the fabric pieces. With the back and fronts ready to be fit together, and the trim and sleeves ready to be stitched, we're all set to begin Day Two this Sunday. Stay tuned for the progress report!

During the week, we also undertook a last-minute, Shop-wide project to outfit two of our young friends in children's clothing for a film shoot on Thursday. Young Master Jacky Custis was in desperate need of a fashionable alternative to the white frock his younger sister, Miss Patsy, was going to wear. We put together a silk wrapping gown, sash, and matching turban-style cap, all copied from a portrait. It seems to have earned his approval!



The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Music – Greetings from The Governor’s Musick! We are halfway through our sold-out Christmas Concert Series at the Governor’s Palace. The music is festive, the audiences are wonderful, and performing again, all together, has been incredibly gratifying. Our theme of good fellowship couldn’t be more apropos.

The work on a series doesn’t stop at opening night. Like other Trades and Skills, we have meetings to discuss the flow, the timing, the interpretations that introduce the sets, and make adjustments continuously to ensure that what the Guests experience is the best we can offer. In this case, we have had some challenges with rehearsal time, and so our first concert ran a little longer than we thought it would. It was ok this year, but if we’d had two shows, that would put some serious strain on the attendants who must clear the room and bring in the next crowd. We have spent the past week moving things, cutting things, and re-arranging things; and last Tuesday, we came in at exactly the right length of time. (We were helped by the fact that the audience doesn’t receive programs right now.)

Christmas season is followed, of course, by January, when the Governor’s Palace is closed for a period for renovations, and we spend our time preparing for the Spring season, for President’s Day, for our Women’s Month Series in March, and any other programs we may have in the offing. We have already picked tentative themes and are beginning to explore repertoire and research to be pursued.

Brady and Karol are finally scheduled to receive NAI certification training! First, there was a conflict with concert scheduling, and then, of course, the pandemic prevented in-person classes, so they have not been able to participate previously. That will change in February. Huzzah!

This time of the year
Is spent in good cheer
And neighbors together do meet
To sit by the fire
With friendly desire
Each other in love to greet.

Old grudges forgot

Are put in the pot,
All sorrows aside they lay,
The old and the young
Doth carol this song,
To drive the cold winter away.

The Musicians will be in the Art Museum on Friday mornings and afternoons as advertised and on Saturdays, unadvertised and subject to change.

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – The Printing Office will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Bindery – Happy Holidays from the Bookbindery!

For the second year, the Bookbindery and Printing Office have chosen to highlight lesser-known authors of the 18th century. The decorations had many helpers, including Apprentice Joiner Peter Hudson, who built the boards; Amy Sudduth, who demonstrated the art of cutting quills; Tracy Gulden and Marianne Williamson, who helped with the portrait work, and the Landscape Department under Joanne Chapman, who supplied the fruit, garlands, and answers to many questions! Thank you all for making a dream become reality!

Apprentice Barbara Swanson researched and wrote an abbreviated biography about the chosen author, and perhaps the most impressive of all, Journeyman Printer David Wilson *painstakingly* typeset the pages, putting in over twenty-four hours of work on the project.



This year, we decided to focus specifically on Phillis Wheatley, highlighting a short biography of her exceptional life and an excerpt of her poem, "To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for North America, &c." For the biography, I chose to focus on Miss Wheatley's accomplishments outside of the lens of what George Washington and Thomas Jefferson said of her and her work. Phillis Wheatley's work stands on its own without the need to qualify it with others' praise or criticism.

I dislike the titles inscribed around her portrait and chose to instead list some of the many titles and qualities that can be attributed to her throughout her life, found underneath her name on the biography page. Phillis Wheatley more than prospered in a time when it was nearly impossible to do so, due to her circumstances. She went on to keep correspondence with national and international religious leaders, speaking out against slavery at a time when doing so was dangerous. She is fabulous!

As we move forward together, may we all strive to be that beautiful light shining in the darkness, just as she is. Still.



Michals, Debra. "Phillis Wheatley." National Women's History Museum. 2015. www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/phillis-wheatley. Accessed 11/11/2021

O'Neale, Sondra, A. "Phillis Wheatley: 1753-1784". Poetry Foundation. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/phillis-wheatley> Accessed 11/11/2021

Winkler, Elizabeth. "How Phillis Wheatley Was Recovered Through History: For decades, a white woman's memoir shaped our understanding of America's first Black poet. Does a new book change the story?" The New Yorker, July 30, 2020. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/how-phillis-wheatley-was-recovered-through-history> . Accessed 11/11/2021

The Bookbindery will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

***Public Leather Works* – The Public Leather Works will be open Sunday through Thursday.**

***Shoemaker* – The Shoemakers are open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday at the Armoury.**

Silversmith – Silver and Gold, Silver and Gold ... but this week, we're working copper so bold! Chris Custalow of the American Indian Initiative has teamed up with the Silversmiths to learn how to work copper, which was North America's precious metal before colonization. It's been open-pit mined around the Great Lakes for over 7,000 years, and Chris has brought some of this straight from the earth to work from scratch. Chris and Chris cast it into ingots and have been drawing the long ingot into wire to replicate a copper trade bracelet found along the Dan River in North Carolina. Copper comes in third as the most workable

metal, and so we become very well acquainted with it in our Trade as a practice material. As we need about ten feet of continuous wire, Chris (Custalow) has been hand-pulling this through the steel draw plate rather than continuing to use the draw bench!

Master George has been forging a silver ingot out long and thin in preparation for drawing it also into wire, and you can see the difference from the 8 ½-inch ingot to the 24 ½-inch bar stock. Bobbie is cutting out large trade crosses in silver from a copper template, which is used in the production of high-demand trade silver for the fur trade west of the Treaty line. They're popular this time of year in the modern day as Christmas decorations and gifts. Megan is almost done with the most grueling part of Year-one Apprentice work: sanding and polishing ten stakes (anvils) and hammers! A clean, smooth shine on our tools yields a clean, smooth surface on the silver; and in addition to catching the tools up on much-needed maintenance, it teaches you why you never want to let them get to that point in the first place!

Come by and see us at work during this second installment of Grand Illumination.





The Silversmith Shop will be open on Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The Silversmiths will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Friday.

Tailor – This last week, our customer picked up his new suit! The entire Shop worked together to outfit him with a new shirt, neckstock, breeches, waistcoat, and coat. Journeyman Mike made his hat.



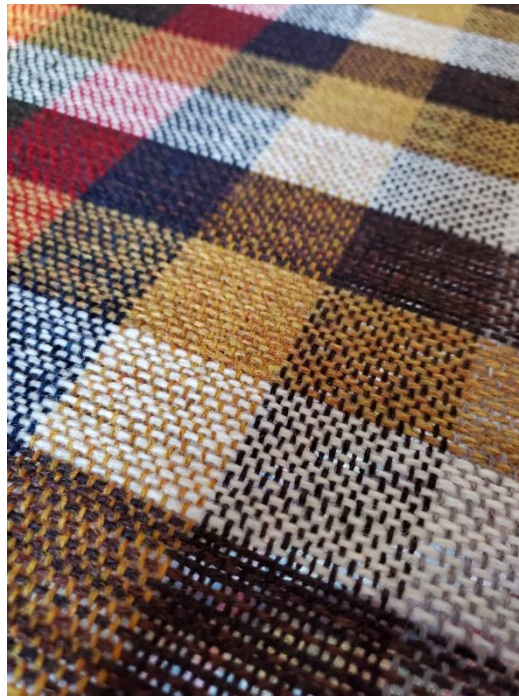
Mr. Arland is all set for the balls this Christmas season! A suit of contrasting, but coordinated, pieces were very trendy and fashionable in the 1770s. Much like the modern suit, 18th-century business suits would consist of the three pieces in the same fabric (also known as a ditto suit or suit in ditto). More formal suits for fashionable occasions often had matching coat and breeches with a contrasting waistcoat.

We very much hope Mr. Arland enjoys the suit. Now, onto the next project: a coat and waistcoat in a sporting style out of corduroy.

The Tailor Shop will be open on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. They will be closed on Tuesday. The Tailors will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Thursday.

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – The days keep getting shorter, and the nights keep getting colder. It is high time we put something made of wool on our looms! If you come and visit our Shop, you will see an exceptionally heavy project on our countermarch loom. This has found its way onto the loom as the last of over sixty yards of Edinburgh Check has finally come off! HUZDAH! This yarn is thicker, and this warp is wider than anything else we have worked on in a while, so it has been a nice change of pace.

Please come visit as we dive into the winter season head first. We can't wait to see you soon.



The Weaver Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Wheelwright – **The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.**

Wigmaker – Last week, Edith finished her second flax wig and delivered it to a very ecstatic Joe at the Weaver. She could not have done it without the support of Debbie, Benton, and Ed in Historic Farming. Pictured below is the flax that was grown by Ed, processed by the Wigmakers, and made into a wig to be worn by Joe while he is weaving. Talk about farm to table! While we have plenty of evidence of these tow/flax wigs being produced in England, sadly, there is no documentation of them being produced in Virginia. However, it is a marvelous interpretive piece, and Joe looks great as a blonde! The work continues on Dave Cat's wig. As always, if you get stuck in a hairy situation, please reach out to us! And as a friendly reminder, if you find that your modern hair elastic is visible, please stop by the Shop, and we can get you some plain black ribbon to cover it!



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

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

Editor: Shari Monaco

Contributors: Armoury – Jenny Lynn (Tinsmith), Brickmaker – Madeleine Bolton, Carpenter – Garland Wood, Engraver – Lynn Zelesnikar, Foundry – Mike Noftsgar, Historic Farming – Ed Schultz, Joiner – Peter Hudson, Milliner and Mantua-maker – Rebecca Godzik, Music – Karol Steadman, Silversmith – Chris Strum, Tailor – Michael McCarty, Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Joe Wixted, Wigmaker – Edith Broward Edds