

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

November 10, 2022

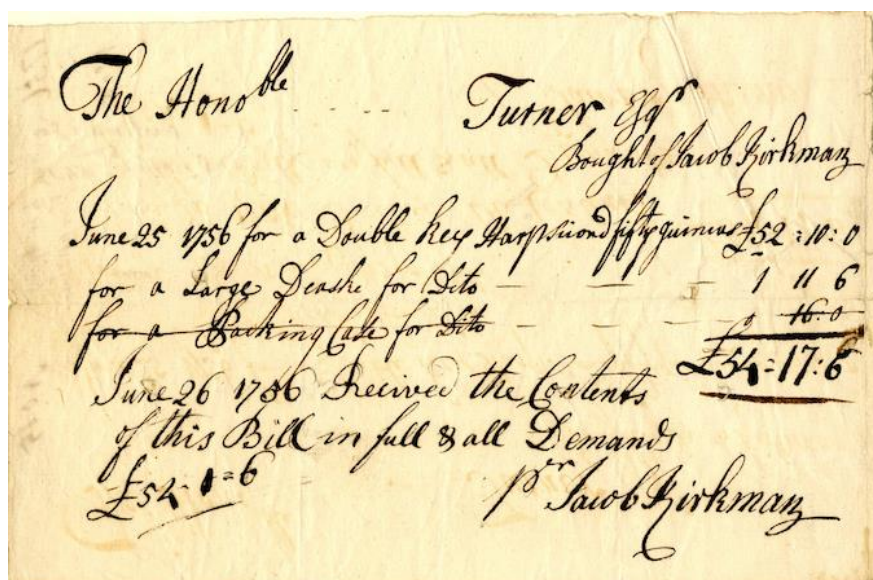
Anthony Hay Shop:

Cabinetmaker – These past weeks, all three Cabinetmakers have been putting good bench time into their projects. John has added finish to the bookcase, while Jeremy is adding finishing structural touches to the desk that goes with it. Within weeks, the assembled piece will be ready for sale, and we will happily include some glamour shots in a future *Adviser*. John has also been working on his side chairs, going through the repetition that producing a set of four brings. He hopes to have the basic structure of the chair backs together before the end of the calendar year. Bill has been processing out some pine and mahogany for the large drawer in his writing table. This section of the job is much more complicated than a typical drawer - come by the Shop, and we can tell you all about it.

Harpsichord-maker – From the Harpsichord corner ... Large full-size harpsichords were imported from England and very much known and seen in colonial Virginia. Both Robert Carter III and Governor Dunmore owned and used them in their homes and the Governor's Palace, respectively. The historic instrument now in the Palace Ballroom, made by Jacob Kirkman in London in the 1760s, is a splendid example of such a harpsichord (see photo below of our old friend Michael Monaco playing it!). We've also included a surviving bill from Kirkman in 1756 for a similar instrument (not our CW instrument, but another).

For most of the rest of us, spinets (a small, affordable, wing-shaped version with the same plucking action as a full harpsichord) were the typical domestic choice. Two are pictured being finished in the Hay Shop recently. While we have refurbished a large harpsichord last year, we have never made that type of harpsichord in the Hay Shop since 1990. However, we have that kind of harpsichord on our radar for the future. NOTE: Two instruments, a large harpsichord and a spinet, made by George Wilson, Marcus Hansen, and others in the early 1970s, remain in the collection, but no more were made until the establishment of the harpsichord-making corner around 1990.





A Bill for a Double Keyboard Harpsichord by Jacob Kirkman, 1756, Heal Collection, British Museum



Bentside spinets in production at the Hay Shop

As to our current work, we have the case of the 2022 spinet smoothed and oiled, its lid now ready for hinging. Melanie has completed the inscription of the nameboard that fits over the keys. With so much of her efforts reflected in this finished work, it is only appropriate that her name accompanies Ed's on it. We continue to refine the playing action, and it's turning into an instrument for music, at last. Come by the Shop and see the results. We will be holding on to it for a few months before we sell it.

What's on the horizon? We are preparing our data and drawings for a new spinet based on the William Harris spinet, made in London in 1764, in the collection. New design, new dimensions, different decoration ... it will be an exciting project. Cheers.

Department of Historic Trades and Skills





Preliminary sketching in progress for Harris spinet reproduction



1764 William Harris Spinet, Full image, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



1764 William Harris Spinet, Nameboard image, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker are open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Apothecary – Big changes and exciting news this week! Firstly, we're excited to welcome Ben, our newest VCU pharmacy student intern (here pictured studiously contemplating the rosemary). He'll be with us for the next five weeks as he explores the ins and outs of 18th-century pharmacy.

Thanks also to our colleagues at I.T. for our new computer, which we had fun setting up yesterday!

After completing her Master candidacy portfolio, Sharon is getting back into working with the index for the Galt-Barraud daybook 2, spanning 1783-85. Meanwhile, Mark just completed his mega-chart of de Sequeyra's Diseases of Virginia - go ask him about it! Margaret is in Public Hospital mode, working with the 1822-1842 Directors' Minutes to try and map both patient treatment and hospital administrative data during the Alexander D. Galt presidency.

Finally, as we get into the Veterans' Day Holiday, we look to the service of the Shop's namesakes and thank Veterans past and present for their own. Have a restful weekend!

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



Armoury:

Blacksmith – **The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.**

Tinsmith – It is with heavy hearts that the Tin Shop raises a cup to our mentor and friend, William McMillen. Bill passed away Wednesday, November 9, 2022, at home in New York. He was instrumental in developing the initial interpretation and tinsmithing methods we use in the Shop every day, including donating several original 18th-century tinsmithing stakes and swedges to the Colonial Williamsburg Collections when the Tin Shop project was established. Bill loved to join us in the Shop when he wasn't manning the EAIA table at the *Working Wood in the 18th Century* Conference during the quiet winter season. He always came with an eagerness to see what we changed since his last visit and what new methods we'd figured out. His workshops at Eastfield Village kickstarted many aspiring beginner tinsmiths as well as brought new skills to seasoned tinsmiths. He was a titan for Historic Trades and truly a man of incredible talents. We will miss him greatly; his knowledge, his skills, and his passion for what we do, but most of all, his friendship.



Work is continuing in the Shop. Ironically, despite a very frustrating case of laryngitis, Jenny is working on speaking trumpets for her apprenticeship projects. (She has been switching to canteens when Steve has to interpret what she's making and why she's not talking.) Since Steve still has a voice, he's been carrying the interpretation this week as well as continuing to manufacture a set of four spice boxes copied from an original in his private collection.



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

Brickmaker – This week in the Brickyard, the crew continued smearing clay on the outside of the kiln, called a scove, and started laying the platting on top of the kiln. These tasks are part of the last few things to do before the firing of the kiln, other than crafting our necessary pep talks. Once we finish those tasks, we can consider walkways, cressets, and any waterproofing actions we need to take. We hope you all get a chance to visit us during the firing, Tuesday, November 15th until Saturday, November 19th! You can find us stoking the kiln and discussing bricks from 9am until 10pm.



The Brickyard will be open Daily. Hours during the Firing of the Kiln will be Tuesday through Friday, 9am-10pm, and Saturday, 9am-5pm.

Carpenter – This week, we have been working on the storage building at the new Farming site. We got the scaffolding up and installed the lath. We are set now to install the siding and roofing. More to come in later weeks.

The Carpenters will be at the new Historic Farming site, Ewing Field, Tuesday through Saturday. On Wednesday, November 16th, 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, Apprentice Carpenter Harold Caldwell will present the last Historic Trades Hennage Talk of the year, “Pictures of West Africa: Department of Historic Trades and Skills



Volume 8, Issue 39

Connecting the 18th-century history of Africa and Virginia.” Join Harold as he shows a pictorial of the connected 18th-century African and Virginian history, while tying it to a more modern understanding.

Colonial Garden – The Historic Garden continues its move towards winter with a garlic planting on All Saint’s Eve. The cloves sprouted quickly in the early-November warmth.



Allium sativum peeking out from a raised bed

Adjacent to the garlic, snapdragons have also been transplanted into the Garden. We hope that we might see blooms should the winter prove mild.



Beta vulgaris and *Brassica oleracea* planted in mounds

Department of Historic Trades and Skills



Eve watering the *Antirrhinum majus*

Now that most of the summer plantings from the *Sankofa* Heritage Garden have been harvested, additional cold-hardy collard and chard have been added to the bed.

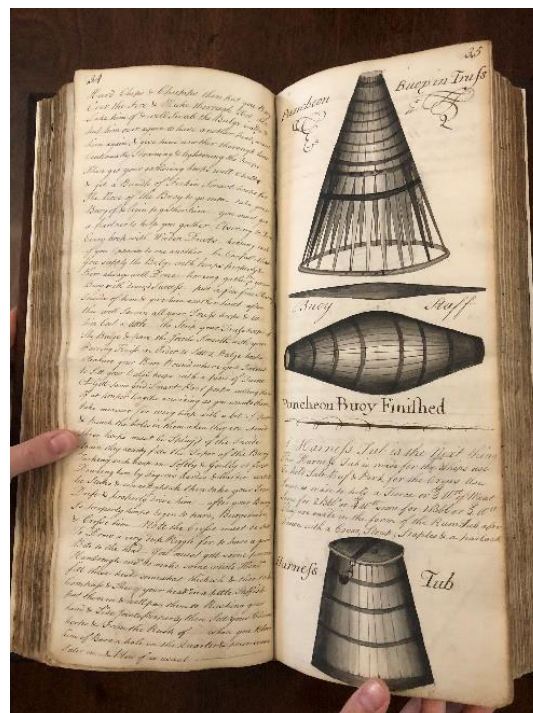
And finally, the Garden enjoyed another visit from Historic Foodways. The cooks left with an impressive basket of pumpkin, sorrel, lettuce, turnips, and radishes.



Cucurbits moschata, *Rumex acetosa*, *Lactuca sativa*, *Brassica rapa*, and *Raphanus raphanistrum* before being taken away and interpreted in a Kitchen

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – One of the interesting items that we've run across in the course of transcribing the mid-18th-century treatise on cooperage is a buoy cask. In more recent times, buoys have been made out of metal or plastic, but they were once coopered objects. Harry has started a separate line of research trying to track down information about the manufacture and use of wooden buoy casks in Virginia.



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

Engraver – This week, as we prepare for the up-and-coming holiday weekend, William and I have been continuing on our current projects of the Ship copper plate inscription work, setting up the Bodleian Plate, and continued work on the Mezzotint. We have also made adjustments to our entrance at the front door with the absence of the Orientation Interpreters. We have seen, as predicted, an uptick in Guests. All-in-all, it's been a nice and steady week.



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

Fifes & Drums – Like the rest of our colleagues, we are preparing for the busy Holiday season ahead! Both the Junior and Senior Corps are working on their various Christmas medleys. We are continuing to bolster our ranks and have invited a new Recruit fifer, Luke Bessingpas, who started Thursday. Meanwhile, the adult staff are all rehearsing for our trip to Phoenix, Arizona, next week. We will be performing for the Sandra Day O'Connor Institute for American Democracy on Friday evening at a famous hotel inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright. We'll report back when we've returned!

Foodways – **The Historic Foodways staff will be in the Palace Kitchen Sunday through Thursday.**

Foundry – The Foundry enjoyed participating in the Raleigh Tavern Society event at the Robert Carter House this past Saturday. Journeyman Mike and Apprentice Drew were able to speak to the Donors about the house furnishings that would have been in the Carter House as well as demonstrate some finishing work on pewter spoons. They also met the President of the Carillon Historical Park in Ohio, who will be sending one of their staff to the Foundry to learn about pouring pewter this upcoming Monday. Apprentices Leanne and Drew also made molds this week for a future brass pour for drumhead tensioners that we are making for the Fifes & Drums Corps. They also completed an order of three hundred musket balls for Military Programs to be used during their Saturday Workshops.



The Foundry will be open Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmiths have been enjoying a beautiful Autumn and wonderful Guests. Richard has finished the fit, shape, and polish to all the patchbox screws and has moved on to the butt piece polishing. All the screws are forged, filed, and threaded. Wood screws have hand-filed threads making each one unique. Darrin has case-hardened the parts to the pistol locks, which entails packing the lock parts in a crucible with a mixture of charcoal and heating it in the forge for hours before quickly dumping it into water. Today, you hear it referred to as "color case hardening". Our study material includes *The Birmingham Gun Trade*, Revolutionary War pension applications, and firearms in the Colonial Williamsburg Collection.



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

Historic Farming – Last week was a big one for the Historic Farming Trade! New Apprentice Kevin Tobias did the first period work on our new site, Ewing Field, harrowing it off with Eli the Horse. Meanwhile, the Historic Trades Carpenters raised the storage shed for the site! Later that week, the Raleigh Tavern Society visited the site with around a hundred people joined by CW President Fleet.



Kevin Tobias harrows at Ewing Field.



Raising of the storage shed by Historic Trades Carpenters

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

Joinery – This week, you can find the Joiners continuing to work on their individual projects. Brian has assembled the basic frame for his pilaster. Now he needs to gather the tools needed to produce the flutes for it. Scott has made a ton of progress on his corner cupboard. The entire back has been attached with nails, and he will now begin working on the returns and face of the cupboard. Peter has found material to begin laying out a pattern for his arched panel stiles and will begin cutting the actual joinery for the piece shortly. Laura will be cutting and fitting the joints on her peg rail over the weekend.

The Joinery will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Military Programs – Military Programs has recently said goodbye to our departing Supervisor, Thomas DeRose. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

The staff is working diligently to restructure and organize the Guard House library, transferring some of it to the Greenhow Repiton. This not only frees up needed break room space, but also gives us the excuse to reevaluate and renew our sources and research.

You might notice a new flag flying out front by the Guard House during the day. The stunning purple, black and white flag belongs to the Regiment Gatinois, a French regiment that passed through this area and fought at the battle of Yorktown. This is part of our ongoing effort to discuss the many regiments that served in this area during the Revolution. Hopefully, this could be the beginning of a new impression at some point! Finally, you might hear some new noises in the future as we begin to work out procedures and ammunition for our new six-pounder cannons. This battery was made possible through the extreme generosity of a group of our Donors and gives us more capability to provide an exciting Guest experience as we move into the many upcoming anniversaries in the coming years.



Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily, Sunday to Friday is 9:00-5:00, and Saturday is 11:30-5:00. Although specific Military programming will no longer be advertised, there will still be programming. Musket demonstrations are generally dependent on staff numbers for that day, but typically occur between 11am and 4pm. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, we will be doing an infantry demonstration at 4:10pm for our “Necessity of Order in Battle” program.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – These past two weeks have been characterized by project endings and beginnings. Our Hennage presentation last Wednesday went well. We enjoyed the opportunity to share some of the research we've been doing into the various branches of the millinery trade and the community of women, enslaved and free, who practiced those skills with Margaret Hunter. Back in the Shop, Rebecca has completed one of the cloaks for CDC. It's a reproduction of an original in the CW Collection, the only difference being that black silk trim was substituted for the red trim on the original. While this decision was made because of a difficulty in sourcing the appropriate material, it reflects a popular color combination found on several extant cloaks in other museum collections. Since our stash of cap ribbons has been dwindling, Rebecca also produced some new bows and trimmed a hat to coordinate with one of them. Julia, our NIAHD intern, finished a girl's gown made of a natural "osnaburg" linen. The style is common to children's dress, with a back-closing fitted bodice and attached skirt with tucks parallel to the hem. This is part of a project we're

working on in tandem with the Bray School to recreate some of the material culture that defined the daily lives of the School's young students. Kate's stays are so close to being finished that she'll probably just miss the *Adviser* deadline and have them done by Friday afternoon, so check this space next week for the final photos.

New projects have now replaced the old. Janea and Rebecca have begun work on a couple of gowns that have been commissioned by Delaware State Parks. Both ensembles will reproduce the clothing worn in two Delaware portraits, one from the late 1740s and another from 1798. The 1740s portrait features a style that is often assumed to be "portrait dress," but Janea has been experimenting and discovered a way to create it that perfectly reproduces the lines and seams found in the image. As we await the arrival of our Delaware customers for a first fitting on Monday, Janea has begun the delicate ruffled shift sleeves that will ornament the gown; the fineness of the linen demands some pretty tiny gathers and sixteen stitches per inch in the seams. Planning has also begun for our annual December wedding gown program, which begins in just over two weeks and will run for the four Sundays between Thanksgiving and Christmas.





The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Musket Range – The Musket Range has been in the process of slowly working with the folks of Military Programs, where possible, to clear them to act as Instructors. We'd like to congratulate Matthew Luca, our newest cleared Military staffer. The Range is also working diligently on restocking ammunition after the busiest summer of its history! Finally, we are working on development of a new potential workshop involving long rifles.

The Musket Range is open Friday through Tuesday, with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm and 3pm.

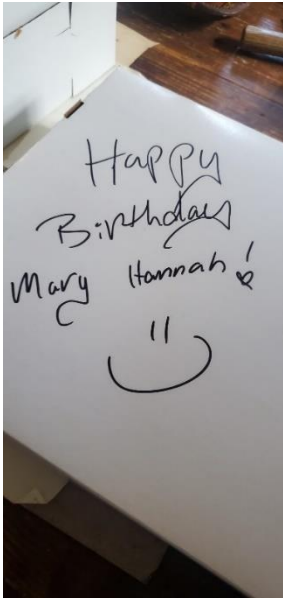
Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – Can your ink be too tacky for 18th-century Letterpress printing? Yes, your ink can be too strong. We had that happen this week. This was a common problem with our 18th-century brethren. We started out on Tuesday morning mixing a varnish of our own manufacture with lampblack. As we were printing, we found the ink so sticky and our paper so damp that as the paper came off the type, fibers of the paper were left adhering to the larger letters. Our solution was to add additional linseed oil to the ink and let the paper dry a bit before continuing. The Printers would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Historic Trades and Skills Blacksmiths in producing a varnish-making pot to us to use.



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

Bindery – What do you do when you have the best Intern in the entire world and it's her birthday? Emily's Donuts, of course! Mary Hannah, we wish you joy and continued success in everything you do. You have added so much to our Shop, and we are grateful to you. You are simply fabulous! Cheers!
P.S. Thanks Dale!



The Bookbindery will be open Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Public Leather Works – It's been a pretty quiet week in the Public Leather Works. Our friends the Shoemakers are getting settled in, and their company has been most welcome. Apprentice Cross continues to make progress on the valise she has been working on. Mr. Howlett continues with the preparation for our conversion to a Leather Breeches Shop, and Mr. Tilley is starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel of the breeches he has been working on. We wish everyone a safe and pleasant Veteran's Day.





The Public Leather Works staff will be working on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Shoemaker – Nicole continues with the Brafferton shoe and is closing uppers with leather we dressed last year. She is also working on a pair of baby shoes for our Shop's group project. Victoria has provided ample research into baby shoes which our Shop is using for the work. Victoria is also working on a pair of infant shoes. Val is almost halfway done with a pair of circa-1763 baby shoes, which first required him to carve a last, before the construction could start. A former Shop member, Gail Bittinger, stopped by and gave us a child's last for study. We are very grateful for her generous gift.



Nicole's Brafferton shoe



Nicole's uppers



Val's last



Val's baby shoe in progress



Gail Bittinger's last

The Shoemakers will be working at the Public Leather Works Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Silversmith – The Silversmiths are steadily working through their lists of projects. Megan has been working on filing the last of her batch of rings and planishing her silver bowl. Chris continues work on her tray and her gold hearts. Bobbie is piercing another mote spoon and has been filing up castings from the Foundry. These will become the feet for her small salver. She has also been filing and cutting wire for another large silver tray. Preston has returned from afar and has been working on planishing a five-inch bowl and raising another small, fluted bowl. George is nearly ready to sink the bowls into his batch of mote spoons. Megan and Bobbie are both transcribing the will of Ann Craig in order to see if James Craig is mentioned.



Preston's five-inch bowl on the left, Megan's on the right



Tray feet cast at the Foundry, in various states of filing



Bobbie's wire trimmed and filed. These will form the rim of another large tray.



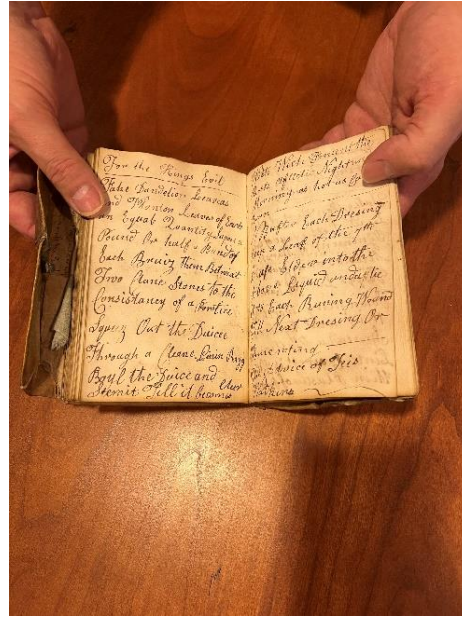
George's mote spoons in progress

The Silversmith Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Tailor – The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Several weeks ago, a few of us from the Weavers Shop visited CW's archives to see what we had that related to our Trade. One of the things I found most interesting was an 18th-century weaver's apprentice notebook. The document shed some light on what it would have truly been like to be an apprentice in this Trade. We were able to see the kinds of things this young man was learning and how an apprentice was taught. It even told us a bit about the loom he was working with, as some patterns can only be woven on certain looms. In the back were several scraps of fabric that were very well preserved. We don't know why he had these, but we are always excited to see 18th-century cloth.

Interestingly, he also had some recipes for medicines in the final pages. Perhaps he was often sick, or perhaps the apothecary was his true passion. If only we had a time machine!



The Weaving Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Wheelwright – We are in the home stretch with the Market House cart. The body is near completion, with paneling ready for nails. Next week comes the paint! Small cart wheels are nearly ready for their tires, and another pair are almost repaired. We are trying to clear the bench for the next six months' work: a plough and a velocipede...stay tuned and come by!





The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday (11:30-5:00).

Wigmaker – Greetings from the Wig Shop! This week, the Shop has concentrated on the usual maintenance and Holiday dance program wigs and hairpieces. Benton continues to sort horsehair for his Brigadier wig while Edith works on her hand knotted base. Edith has also begun to put feelers out for the best source of materials for an important wig, but more to come on that in the future. Debbie has begun a new piece for the American Indian Initiative as well. With the Holidays coming up, please let us know if you have any need of hair adornments for programs or are in need of a wig or hairpiece. We're always happy to offer advice for hairstyling as well.

The Wig Shop will be open Sunday (11:30-5:00), Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

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

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Contributors: Anthony Hay Shop – John Peeler (Cabinetmaker) and Edward Wright (Harpsichord-maker); Apothecary – Margaret Perry; Armoury – Jenny Lynn (Tinsmith); Brickmaker – Madeleine Bolton; Carpenter – Matt Sanbury; Colonial Garden – Marc Nucup; Cooper – Jon Hallman; Engraver – Lynn Zelesnikar; Fifes and Department of Historic Trades and Skills

Volume 8, Issue 39

Drums – Rebecca Sterner; Foundry – Drew Godzik; Gunsmith – Darrin McDonal; Historic Farming – Ed Schultz; Joinery – Peter Hudson; Military Programs – Justin Chapman; Milliner and Mantua-maker – Rebecca Godzik; Musket Range – Justin Chapman; Printing Office and Bindery – Peter Stinely (Printer) and Barbara Swanson (Bookbinder) ; Public Leather Works – Jan Tilley; Shoemaker – Val Povinelli; Silversmith – Megan Cantwell; Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Pamela Russo; Wheelwright – Paul Zelesnikar; Wigmaker – Debbie Turpin