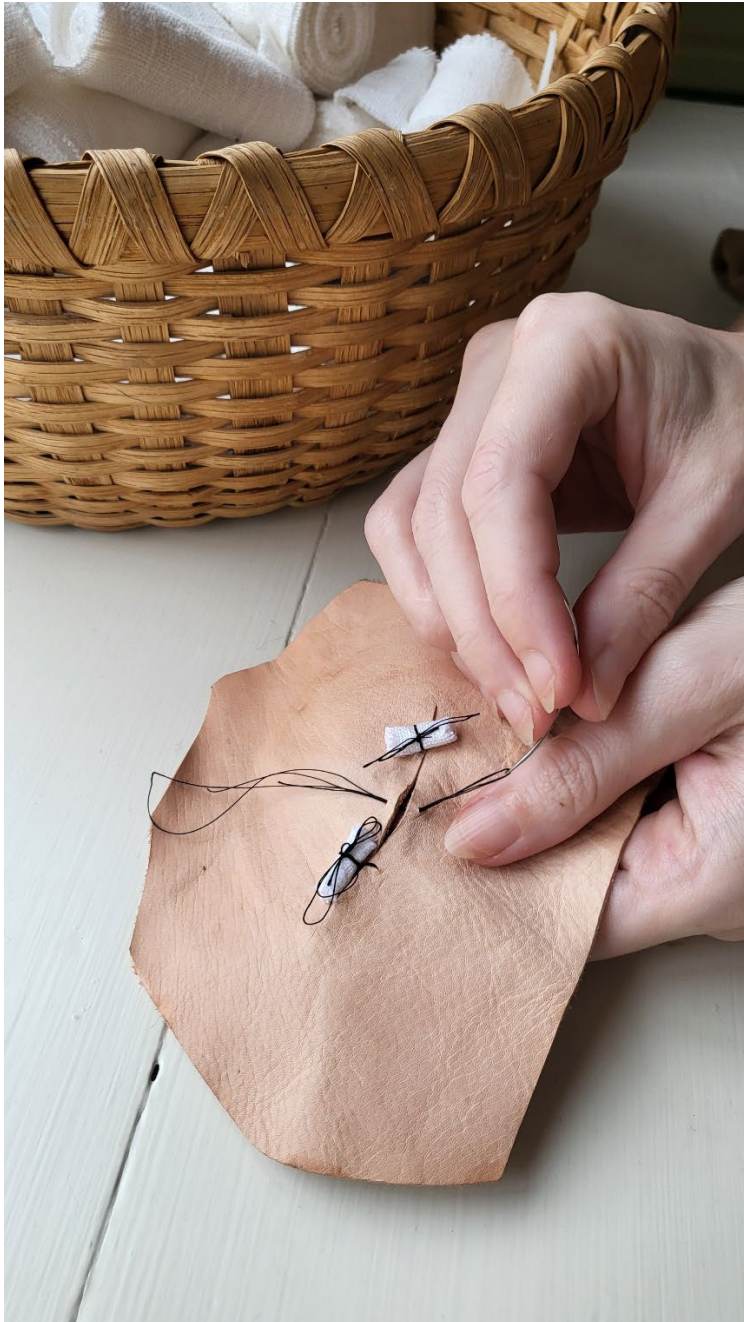


THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

September 29, 2023



Apothecary – Stephannie and Margaret have been busy this week reading, compiling papers, and prepping for future programs. Margaret continues to prepare work for the two hospital-related conferences in October: she'll be at the commemorative events on Oct. 12-14, as well as the Omohundro Institute "Contested Freedoms" conference on the 27th. Stephannie has been reading and revising our 'shop files' folders, evaluating currently held research on subjects like hygiene, occupational health, and currency with the aim of updating our shop's knowledge for the future. We also rustled up a simple line of interrupted sutures for a sewing-themed photoshoot!

Suturing a piece of leather with a curved needle, linen bolsters provide support for the skin between knots.

The Apothecary is open Sunday through Thursday.

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith shop is open Thursday through Tuesday.

Bookbinder – The Bookbinder is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Cabinetmaker – The Cabinetmaker is open Thursday through Monday.

Carpenter – The carpenters have been working on clapboards for the drying house walls. Mary has undertaken the building of her draw bench, and Harold is practicing brace layout/cut and test fitting.

We would also like to welcome our newest apprentice, McKinley Groves. Stop by and say hi.



Clapboards installed on wagon shed.

The Carpenter is open, weather permitting, Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Cook – Over the last couple of weeks, we have been busy over in the kitchen getting our fall intern from William and Mary, Aubry, accustomed to the foods of the 18th century. Aubry spent about four days with us as a part of her coursework, and it was a fun and educational experience for all! Aubry has made bread, cheese on toast, a salad for summer, and stewed shrimp thus far. Since she has been enjoying herself so much, she has come to spend extra time working with us outside of her required 10 hours a week. This Wednesday, the team also had the pleasure of heading over to Christiana Campbell's for a tasting with the Chefs from Hospitality. They have a new menu launching as a part of a special program bringing Native and African flavors to the dishes created by Campbell's, and we were all thrilled with the selections we sampled, as well as the opportunity to be included in the tasting.



Aubry with her Manchette bread dough.

Aubry preparing the bake oven for bread.

The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Cooper – The Cooper is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Engraver – The Engravers have been working hard on many presentation pieces. Emma has been working on her apprenticeship drawings. William has also worked on trade silver from the silversmiths and bottle tickets. Lynn has recently finished the print for the Wheelwrights and has been watercoloring them and capitol seal prints. Also assisting in polishing the Gifts the Founders made.



*Clockwise from top left:
Emma's drawing.
Watercolored seal.
Bronze seal.*

The Engraving shop is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Farming – The Farming Trade is open at Ewing Field Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Fifes and Drums – The Fifes and Drums will perform 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 – The Foundry is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Gardener – Scarlet runner beans (*Phaseolus coccineus*) in the American Indian Garden continue to bloom as we move into fall with even some late Nanticoke squash (*Cucurbita maxima*) blossoms in evidence. Corn (*Zea mays*) and sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) have been harvested with select stalks left in place for the beans to climb. The crowd favorite castor plants (*Ricinus communis*) have been removed from the north quarter in order to turn, hoe, and raise beds for the fall planting. The apprentice's favorite flowers have prolifically bloomed over the last two weeks: *Colchicum autumnale* and *Mirabilis jalapa*.



Clockwise from top left:

The American Indian Garden will be allowed to go fallow this winter rather than be cleared and planted with a cover crop.

A bed cleared and (mostly) turned awaits the fall planting.

All the flowers of genus Colchicum are toxic.

This yellow mirabilis flower displays magenta spots, the plant can have variously colored blossoms on the same plant.

The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmiths are open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Harpichordmaker – Greetings from the harpsichord corner....

Melanie has begun joining the spruce pieces that will form the soundboard. Spruce trees do not grow large enough to make one or even two-piece spinet soundboards. She must glue several pieces together to accommodate the size of the soundboard. It means really accurate planing of the edges of each piece. This one, based on the Harris original, is big, so some long joins are necessary!

Ed has begun making bone arcades that will decorate the front ends of the natural keys. The end grain of the wooden levers was considered ugly, so mouldings or ivory/bone decorations masked that part. He soaks the bone pieces in vinegar overnight to soften them, then cuts a circular decoration with a profiled drill bit. Then he saws the circles in half and thus gains two half-moon decorations. Later he will glue the arcades one by one to each of the keys. The effect will be beautiful. Come see how we are doing all this. Cheers.



Clockwise from top left:
Melanie Jointing Soundboard Pieces by Planing.
Soundboard Pieces Beigh Glued.
Ed Drill Arcade Profiles
Finished Arcades for Natural Keys

The Harpsichordmakers are open Sunday and Monday, Thursday through Saturday.

Joiner – It's been a busy time in the Joiner shop! Laura has been cutting dovetails for the engraver's toolbox case, which will form the main body of the box, and then will have more joints to cut later for a drawer and shallow tray. Peter has made himself a new mallet- the head is dogwood, and the handle is hickory- an indispensable tool at the joiner's bench. Brian had the opportunity while on a much-deserved vacation to visit the American College of Building Arts in Charleston, SC, which specializes in teaching trades important to historical preservation like architectural carpentry and stonework, plasterwork, and blacksmithing.

All hands have also been working on creating a set of over 40 cherry gift boxes for donors, to be presented in October with pieces produced by other Trade shops.



Peter's new dogwood mallet.



Laura's toolbox dovetails in progress.

The Joiner is open Sunday and Wednesday through Saturday.

Leather Breeches Maker – Greetings! Last week, apprentices Emma and Wilson had the opportunity to attend a workshop held at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, VA. The workshop focused on brain tanning, a method used by Eastern woodland tribes during the 18th century to process deer and other skins. The workshop also examined the political, economic, and cultural significance and impacts of the skin trade. The workshop was taught by Talon Silverhorn, and both apprentices learned a great deal of hands-on skills as well as amazing historical knowledge and research. This trip was made possible because of gifts to our shop, and we are very grateful to donors who give to historic trades to enable us to access such opportunities. While on the topic of thanks, A huge thank you to FCM for hosting this amazing workshop. We also thank the Tailor and Shoe shops for helping interpret the LBM shop while the apprentices were away.



As a reminder, we are doing inventory at this time and ask anyone with leather breeches to bring them in for review during the times listed below:

A-L last names, between Sept. 26th- 30th. M-Z last names, between Oct. 10th- 14th.

Supervisors, please check that your current (and any former) reports bring their breeches in to be inventoried.

Clockwise from top left:

Emma attaching the skin to frame, preparing to scrape the epidermis off.

Wilson breaking the skin after tanning.

Dry scraping the hair off a deer skin.

Talon, Emma, and Wilson with a finished brain-tanned and smoked deerskin.

The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Mason – The Brickyard is open Wednesday through Sunday, weather permitting.

Military Programs – With the weather changing to cooler Autumn temperatures, Military Programs has moved core programming indoors while continuing outside drill and musket demonstrations. Staff have been at work preparing equipment for the first "In Defense Of Our Liberty!" programs by giving the muskets a good, quarterly deep clean.

Additionally, Military Programs sent a group to the Frontier Culture Museum's "Global Tempest: Revolutionary War Weekend." CW Staff focused on the 80th Regiment of Foot's presence in Edinburgh, Scotland prior to sailing for New York. The CW contingent was joined by living history groups from around the region, including the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

In tandem with our collaboration with the Frontier Culture Museum, Military Programs also completed its second Homeschool Group Workshop. We look forward to working with the Homeschool groups again in the Spring!



Left: "The 80th Regiment encamped, prior to Guest arrival, at the Frontier Culture Museum's "Global Tempest: A Revolutionary War Weekend." "

Right: Looking into the Guardhouse from the north porch windows.

Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Musket Range –The Musket Range is open (Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday)

The Printing Office – The Press continues to work off 5,000 copies of pages two and three of the main body of the current gazette. David Wilson has a column and a half remaining of typesetting to complete his news supplement. David has also printed additional labels for the cabinetmakers.



Cecelia Weaver has completed the typesetting for “An American Parody on the old song Rule Britannia.” Next, Cecelia will set a colophon, proof, correct, then print this item. Copies will likely be given to our guests as a keepsake for visiting The Printing Office.



The Printer is open Sundays through Thursdays.

Shoemaker – The Shoemaker is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Silversmith – The Silversmith Shop is open Sunday through Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Tailor – Despite grey skies this week, the tailors have been busy in the shop. Mr. Logue, apprentice, is working on a coat out of worsted wool. Mr. Hutter and Mr. McCarty have been assisting him in the making of the 28 "deathhead" buttons for the coat. These buttons are made by covering wooden button molds with silk twist (thread). In the 18th century, they would have been made in a cottage industry in and around London, employing women and children.



Deathshead buttons look complicated, but the technique can be learned quite quickly.

The Tailor is open Sunday through Thursday.

Tin Plate Worker – The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – This past Tuesday was Dye Day! We spent the month leading up to the big day spinning as much yarn as we possibly could. We were able to put together ten skeins of our Leicester Longwool, and we cannot wait to see these go off to a good home. With indigo blue, logwood purple, cochineal red, and fustic yellow, our handspun yarn is now a veritable rainbow. If anyone ever has fabric in need of dyeing, please ensure the following: all fabric has finished hems, all fabric is labeled with your name and desired color, and all fabric is brought to us no less than one week prior to dye day.



Handspun yarn dyed with indigo, logwood, and fustic

The Weaver is open Sunday through Wednesday and Saturday.

Department of Historic Trades and Skills

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Wheelwright –As September nearly closes, this week at the Wheelwright finds Journeyman Carpenter Ayinde nearly finishing a sandbox for Masonry Trades, Journeyman Wheelwright Murphy nearly finishing the Velocipede and Master Paul nearly finishing the undercarriage of the wagon.



Above: A Carpenter admiring his work.

Below: A wagon fore-undercarriage assembly.



The Wheelwright is open Sunday through Friday.

Wigmaker – The Wigmakers are open Sunday through Thursday.

Director – Ted will have open office hours: Tuesday 11-12, Thursday 1-3, Friday 12-2
As a reminder, my office is above the Weaver's Shop.

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