

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

December 23, 2021

Next week will be the last week of Trade Shops working in the Museum Gallery

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

Armoury:

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

Tinsmith – We've been making a lot of lighting devices lately and sending a lot of orders out the door. Steve finished a chocolate pot and sent it off to the customer and is currently installing the lead comes into the big lantern for the Palmer House. These comes create an H-shaped groove that holds the glass against the frame of the lantern. Joel has been working on raising plates and saucers while experimenting with different techniques and forms for them, as well as making a struck lantern. (Thank you to the Public Leather Works for making us two new sandbags after our old ones were pulverized.) Jenny finished a struck lantern, made a side-pouring coffeepot, and is starting another one.

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 saw the Masonry Trades staff undertaking a Herculean task: the slow removal of all of our stuff from the old Brickyard site. That's right folks: all the bricks, cooperage, structures, and assorted junk we've collected over the past twenty-some years needs to be cleared out. The bricks will be palletized and stored offsite for future and sundry projects, our tools and other useful ephemera will be stored until the new site is operational, and a whole lot of long-in-the-tooth tarps, plastic sheeting, and incriminating papers will be tossed out in our very discreet full-sized dumpster. How many bricks are onsite? We lost count at 37,943, or so. If you're looking for the Brickmakers in January, you'll know where to find us. Oh, and we found a brick someone had drawn a snail on.

In happier news, the Artificers at the Public Leather Works put the finishing touches on Apprentice Madeleine's new ax sheath, so that she can now carry her ax on all her adventures. Need something chopped in a hurry? Come find Madeleine. A successful parley was had with our colleagues at the Costume Design Center, and the wheels are rolling on the Masonry Trades staff being kitted out with a set of slightly nicer clothes to reflect our role as builder-architects. We'll be wearing these oh-so-unraggedy clothes for Donor events, walking tours, and other times when we're not actively making bricks or tar or lime or all that other messy stuff we do. A big shout-out is due to our friends, Apprentice Katie at the Milliners and Mantua-makers and Master Mark Hutter at the Tailor Shop, who helped Master Josh and Apprentice Madeleine navigate the confusing world of being fashionable. Being clean and fancy is a strange and foreign experience to us.



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

Colonial Garden – The rain this week made for some cold, dreary days, but it was sorely needed. According to the NOAA U.S. Drought Monitor program, we are experiencing a moderate drought in our part of the state, and some parts of Virginia are experiencing severe drought conditions. Planting and sowing seeds typically slows down in the winter months in the Colonial Garden, but there are always exceptions. This week, the Gardeners sowed broad beans (*Vicia faba*, also commonly known today as fava beans) directly into the soil and seeds of the herb betony (*Stachys officinalis*) into a clay pot. Broad beans can germinate at extremely low temperatures compared to other vegetable seeds, and the betony seeds need a long period of cold, wet conditions to germinate. Many Guests to our Garden are surprised to see flowers blooming in December, but, with the mild winters of Tidewater Virginia, flowers such as pot marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) can bloom all year long. The pot marigold petals would make a cheerful addition to an otherwise green salad this time of

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year. Our lettuce plants have almost outgrown the bell glasses we use to cover them from frost in the evenings. Some of them will be harvested soon, but this also gives us an opportunity to practice the technique of blanching on our romaine lettuces. We gathered the leaves up and tied a string around the top of the lettuce to hold them together. This will protect the inner leaves from sunlight and result in the plant producing more tender pale inner leaves, and, as an added bonus, the lettuce now easily fits under the bell glass. From all of us in the Colonial Garden, Happy Holidays!



Broad bean seeds, ready to plant



A new planting of broad beans in the Colonial Garden



Pot marigold blooming in December



A romaine lettuce tied up for blanching in the 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.

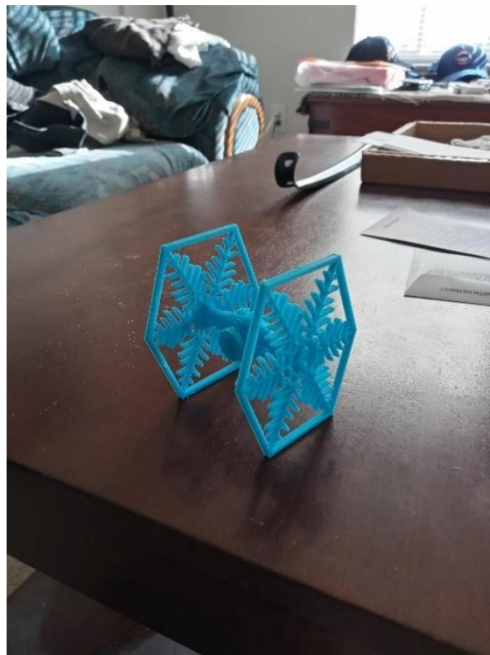
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Engraver – The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. The Engravers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Saturday.

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

Foundry – At the Foundry this week, we finished some harpsichord hinges for Ed, pewter buttons for the Tailor, and some bronze nutcrackers for the Engravers. And from the Foundry gang, we wish everyone a happy and safe Holiday Season.



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

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

Historic Farming – Corn was the Giver of Life for 18th-century Virginians. It provided grits and meal to nourish humans and blades and tops to feed the horses and cattle in the winter. Without it, Virginia would have starved. The Historic Farming Trade grows the 18th-century variety called Gourdseed. Below are some photos from this year on our adventures with corn. Unfortunately, missing in these photos are the amazing Johnny Cakes made by Foodways staff. Delicious!



Summer Intern Anna Lynne Thornsberry stands next to 12-foot-high stalks



Corn blades drying on the stalk



Mature ears ready to be gathered



An excellent ear



Megan Sirak from Foodways processing corn with a mortar and pestle

The Farmer will be at Prentis Field Tuesday through Saturday.

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 – We finished our silk gown! Three weeks ago, it was a lovely 1770 style, but in December of 1774, who would want to be seen in such an antique style? The new style is based on the undress gown from a 1774 fashion picture. The fashion up to the minute.



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

Printer and Bookbinder:

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

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

Tailor – The Tailor Shop has been busy with festive Guests! Many small projects that had been put on the back burner were pulled out and completed this last week: new hot pads or “saddles” for handling hot irons, three new green baize (an inexpensive woolen fabric) aprons for the Tinsmiths, and a few other small things.

This is the time of year where we pull out two tiny red coats and tell the story of apprentice tailor, James Potter Collins, who made a suit for his shop cat in 1775. Read up on it for yourself here:

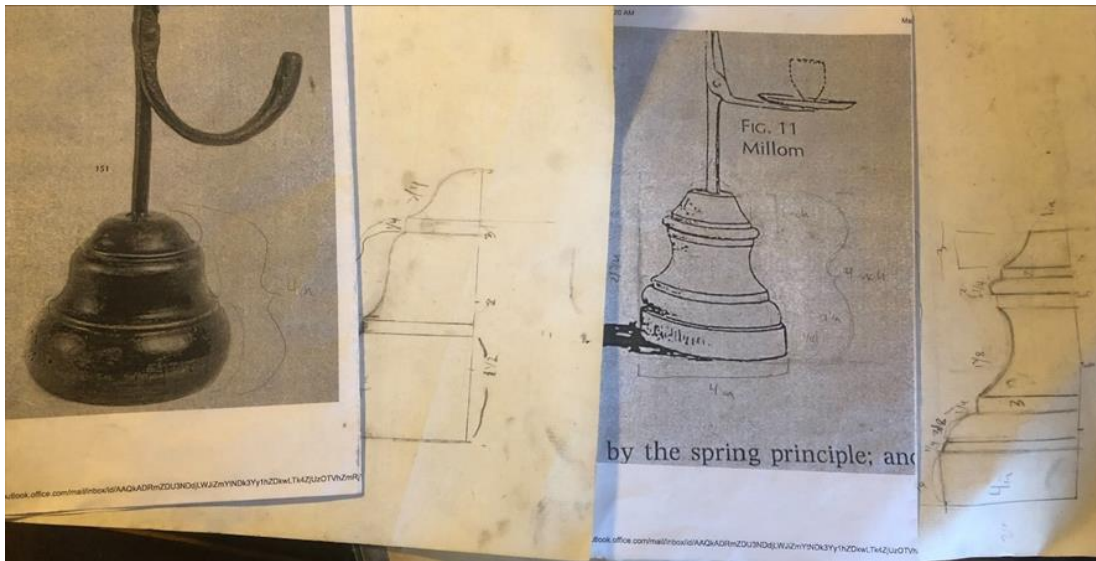
<https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/living-history/suit-clothes-puss/>



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

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – The Weaver Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Wheelwright – The Wheelwrights took a detour from vehicular projects last week. Apprentice Joel turned rush lamp bases for the Anderson Blacksmiths on the lathe, under the guidance of Master Wheelwright Paul. This is excellent turning practice for when he has to turn his first hubs for his handcart wheels. Joel is currently working on fixing the siding on his previous horse cart. Then, it's on to paint making! Paul continues work on his cannon wheels commission and has begun turning his hubs.



The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Wigmaker – This week, the Wigmakers are continuing maintenance as usual and would like to extend warm Holiday greetings to everyone! Debbie and Benton have completed Dave Catanese's wig, all that remains is for it to be styled. Edith continues practicing her hand knotting and is gradually progressing to smaller gauges each week. The hand knotted textile is the mesh base of the wig and is found in over 95 percent of originals. As always, if you require tonsorial assistance, please don't hesitate in contacting us!

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.

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