

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

December 16, 2022

Anthony Hay Shop:

Cabinetmaker – Work continues to move forward in preparation for next month's woodworking conference. Bill has finished his first demonstration piece: a sample of the scallop shell found on the Rhode Island kneehole desk. John is beginning to carve a sample of the foot from the same desk. More to come on those projects as their work progresses.

Jeremy, who is stepping back from the conference this year to welcome a baby into his home, has begun shaping the legs for his drop leaf corner table. This table is a reproduction of one believed to have been made in Williamsburg during the first half of the 18th century, and the original has been well used. Around the Shop, we are all looking forward to seeing what this table may have looked like when it was new. It is a rather simple design with a few quirky elements. This will be the first time Jeremy has done offset turned legs on a table, and so far, it seems to be going well.



The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichordmaker are open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

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

Armoury:

Blacksmith – Greetings from the Anderson Blacksmith Shop. This week, Mark has begun work on some heavy shears for the Public Leather Works and has fixed a hammer for the Carpenters. Ken has been hard at work on chisels, a belt axe, and hinges. Aislinn has been working on buckles and striking knives for woodworkers. Alex has continued work on the coulter, after much conversation with Farmer Ed, and is also working on small h-l hinges. Broadus has had plentiful time at his work bench filing and finishing slide bolts, and both he and Josh have moved on to forging ladles and basting spoons.

As with much of our work, these pieces can be made by welding scrap together. This sort of recycling was much practiced in the 18th century, when the cost of materials typically outweighed the cost of a Blacksmith's labor. The fact that this sort of recycling was so common can sometimes be revealed in finished objects: incomplete welds can show a bar was made by stacking multiple pieces together, or sometimes even pieces that the bar was first made from might still be evident, like a row of depressions that used to be holes in a hinge.



A packet of iron scrap ready for welding

In our Shop, this practice continues because our principal material, wrought iron, has not been produced on a commercial scale for about one hundred years in the United States. It was also done historically because it produced a superior product. The Swedish industrial spy Reinhold Angerstein noted, when passing near Wolverhampton in England, that workers there recycled iron filings, and further observed, "This iron is considered to be the best that can be had in this district and is particularly in demand by manufacturers of watch-chains and buckles." Although our Shop has yet to make bar out of filings, it is certainly a topic of discussion, and an experiment we may pursue one day. As ever, all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.

The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

***Tinsmith* – The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

Brickmaker – This week in the Brickyard, the crew is back in full force as Apprentices Nick and Madeleine have returned from their research abroad. While visiting the Netherlands Openluchtmuseum and the Ballenberg museum in Switzerland, they gathered important information on tile. In particular, they were able to mold tile in the knowledgeable company of Ballenberg's researchers, like Jeanne Simmen! Through these interactions and continued discussion, we hope to learn more about how we may incorporate tile making into our trade.

Otherwise this week, we were able to visit New Kent to consult on the discovery of the remains of an early-19th-century brickyard. Seeing the evidence of our own Trade through the eyes of an archaeologist is always interesting, and we delight in offering any input we can. We also had a chance to stop at Saint Peters Church to take a gander at its brickwork and ponder both its enormous bricks and modified architecture.

In less architectural news, Josh received his new waistcoat! Soon after, Kenneth displayed the true meaning of friendship through helping him lace up the back.

This week's trivia question is: what is the dot over the lowercase 'j' and lowercase 'i' called? Tune in next week for the answer!



The Brickyard will be open Sunday through Thursday, weather permitting.

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Carpenter – This week, the Carpenters finished the roof on the Farm storage building. We will be moving the scaffolding and re-installing it on the other walls to continue the siding. By Tuesday, we should be back to the clapboards.



The Carpenters will be at the new Historic Farming site, Ewing Field, Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Colonial Garden–



A frosty night for the spinach

With the few days that the sun warmed up the earth, we took the opportunity to weed the garlic beds and hoe up around the collards in the Sankofa Heritage Garden. The earth in the front quarter was worked up into ridges where we will plant one of the last crops of the year, broad beans, or Fava beans. The beans will slowly germinate, and we will harvest pods full of edible beans in April or May. We were trying to beat the bad weather, which literally dumped 1.34" of rain on Thursday. With the beds formed, we can easily sow the seeds after a few sunny drying days.

A basket of vegetables made their way to the Kitchen, and three Long Island Cheese pumpkins made their way to the oxen as a snack.



A basket of vegetables for the cooks

With the ground soaking wet, we are weeding pathways and cleaning up leaves. The Garden was blanketed with a frost. This necessitated the covering of the broccoli and cauliflower and provided the early morning Guest the opportunity to see the Gentleman's expensive bell glasses cover the tender lettuce. If you didn't have that season-extending tool, there would not be lettuce for the table.



Frost on the bell glasses covering lettuce.

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – Lately, the Coopers have been making buckets to build up our stock. This picture shows one that's nearly complete. The woodwork is done, but the hoops on it are the construction hoops used to reproduce the same size container over and over. What remains is to make the permanent hoops (which we do in-shop, no Blacksmith needed) and add the rope handle.



The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Engraver – The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Fifes & Drums – Fifes and Drums has been working hard alongside Military Programs to bring in the Holiday Season as the headliners of the Yule Log and Grand Illumination events. We've really been happy with such a large turnout from the kids, and these programs help validate all their hard work in class and practice to be able to perform for so many guests of CW.

Coming up at the end of the month, we would normally end our season and see our Corps members depart for the month of January and Recruits even longer. Not this year! A new change for the program is to keep classes rolling over the winter. This enables us especially to keep our Recruits engaged and learning instead of taking a lengthy layoff. We are hoping this helps them to develop more musical competency to not only pass up into the Junior Corps even faster, but to ultimately become better musicians over the course of their eight-year career. Starting in January then, Recruits will maintain their normal learning schedule, and Junior and Senior Corps will be in once a week, increasing to twice a week in February.

Our winter project is to overhaul the curriculum of the Corps. The curriculum is essentially the roadmap of what we expect them to learn, what ranks they attain, and ultimately, what capabilities we want them to have as they hit the Senior Corps to enable them to deliver even more stunning performances for all CW audiences. This will include changes in performance training, drill, song requirements, historical learning, and music theory. This will enable us to be the best Corps we've ever been by the time we hit CW's 100th anniversary.

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

Foundry – This week in the Foundry started off with Apprentices Drew and Leanne doing some housekeeping: melting down some scrap bronze and turning it into much easier-to-store ingots. Suddenly, our overflowing scrap piles seem manageable! Drew has also finished up one of the Courthouse keys we cast in the last couple of weeks (a marked improvement from last week!), and Leanne is continuing to file the other one smooth. Journeyman Mike has made progress on the drumhead tensioner hooks; we just have to tap out the corresponding wing nuts and polish out the file marks. We were also pleased to welcome Shelly Polansky

and her crew (including former Geddy Junior Interpreter Tyler!) for some marketing filming in the Shop. Thank goodness we're Founders, as I don't think acting would have ever worked out for us!



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

Gunsmith – This last week in the Gunsmith Shop, Richard has been fine tuning and adjusting the fit of the patch box lid to the side plates and the contour of the stock. The lid must fit snug up against the side plates without having any points protruding above or dipping below the plane while maintaining the curvature.

Darrin has started hammering the round pistol barrels into an octagonal shape, which was referred to as squared. These pistol barrels will have a shape that was referred to as part squared and round. Any barrel that is part squared and part round or all round on the exterior is an indication of style that the interior is smooth and not rifled. For example, a rifle gun or long rifle, would be "full squared tapered and flared" which was the standard shape of rifle barrels in the 18th century. Darrin has also been helping Brad get comfortable with forging cocks for the flintlocks.

Current study material is *British Gunmakers, Volume 2; Journal of Historical Armsmaking Technology*, Volume 1; and *Long Rifles of Virginia* by James B. Whisker.





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

Historic Farming – Rutabagas, called Swedes (or sometimes Swedish turnips) in the 18th century, were both human and livestock food. They are a cross between a turnip and cabbage. Yet, in period Farm Books written by agricultural innovators, they are often grouped amongst the turnips. The idea to use them for livestock is part of the agricultural revolution coming out of England that is inspiring those with means, like Washington, Jefferson, Landon Carter, and others, to try different crops. They want to know more and to understand it, so they must do it. And so must we.

We found Swedes relatively easy to grow, but much work to thin as they will not grow to any reasonable size if too close together. Farmers of the time found the same to be true. John Taylor uses terms like “extremely precarious”, “extremely troublesome”, and “great exhausters of land” when referring to “turnips” grown for livestock in the early-19th century. They just take too much work compared to corn fodder or hay. The rutabaga for us became an excellent interpretive tool to show farmer’s experimentation with different crops and their responses in both the past and present. This has relevance for today as we strive to become more sustainable in our ways of farming. They are right tasty for humans though, and ours went to the Williamsburg Inn restaurant!



Luke the horse enjoys a Swede to General Washington’s (Ron Carnegie) chagrin.



Humans love them as you can see on the grins of CW chefs (L-R) Austin Farris, Peter Mary, Executive Chef Travis Brust, and Jacki Shaddock.

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

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

Military Programs – The Military staff is working hard on practicing artillery during the middle of the week lately, practicing for our upcoming Christmas Guns program on 12/24. We're also working hard on development of ammunition for our six pounders and are on track to get these working soon. Currently, we're working with Architectural Conservation to ensure our new rounds won't create damage to our historic structures, while providing a satisfying "cannon" experience for our Guests.

This week, we are also catching up on some long-needed training, having sent Kevin and Matt to NAI CIG training. We are super happy to complete some of the basic training they've needed for some time. Military has also welcomed some of the members of the Evening Programs staff of *In Defense of Liberty* to aid us in our Saturday evening *Illuminations of the Wythe House and Governor's Palace* for Grand Illumination. Military has also been assisting Special Programs in the Yule Log program on Friday nights. We hope to see you out for our last performance this upcoming Friday, 12/16.

Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily. On Saturday, December 17, the Guardhouse will close at 4:45pm so that the staff can prepare for their part in the Grand Illumination.

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

Musket Range – The Musket Range is in the midst of our busiest time of year. The Holidays always bring out experience-seekers as well as those seeking to relieve a little stress while having some fun.

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Katie Van Duinen, who has departed to pursue her new career in the Dental Industry! Katie has been with the Musket Range since its beginning in 2016 and was promoted from Range Instructor to Range Master during that tenure. She will be greatly missed, and we wish her luck in her future pursuits! The Musket Range will be at lower capacity until we are able to hire; however, we have a posting up for a new Instructor! If you know someone who might be a good fit and enjoys history, interpretation, and firearms, please direct them to apply.

The Musket Range is open Friday through Tuesday, with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm, and 3pm. The Range will continue to be open on its normal days throughout the Holiday season, and it will not close over the winter.

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – This past Tuesday, Chad Jones’ video premiered on Colonial Williamsburg’s Facebook page. Chad shows the process of inkball assembly. Please tune in on Tuesday, December 20th, as Chad and David Wilson print pages one and four to Clementina Rind’s *Virginia Gazette* of September 2, 1773.

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

Bindery – The Bookbindery will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Public Leather Works – The Public Leather Works staff will be working Sunday through Thursday.

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers will be working at the Public Leather Works Tuesday through Saturday.

Silversmith – While the weather has been cold and dreary, the Silversmiths have been working quite hard next to their warm fireplace. Megan continues work on her bowl and hopes to have it ready to solder the base onto soon; she is nearly finished with planishing. Chris continues work on her tray and is ready to solder the feet onto it. Bobbie has been working on the rim to another tray and has been working on a number of trade silver items. Preston has been busily working on multiple bowls and has prepared more silver for the retail stores. The Engravers have sent us a huge amount of trade silver that is ready for sale. George is filing and forging out the ingots he cast, as well as forging out more spoons. Research continues on trade silver.



Megan's bowl



Chris' tray, ready for soldering

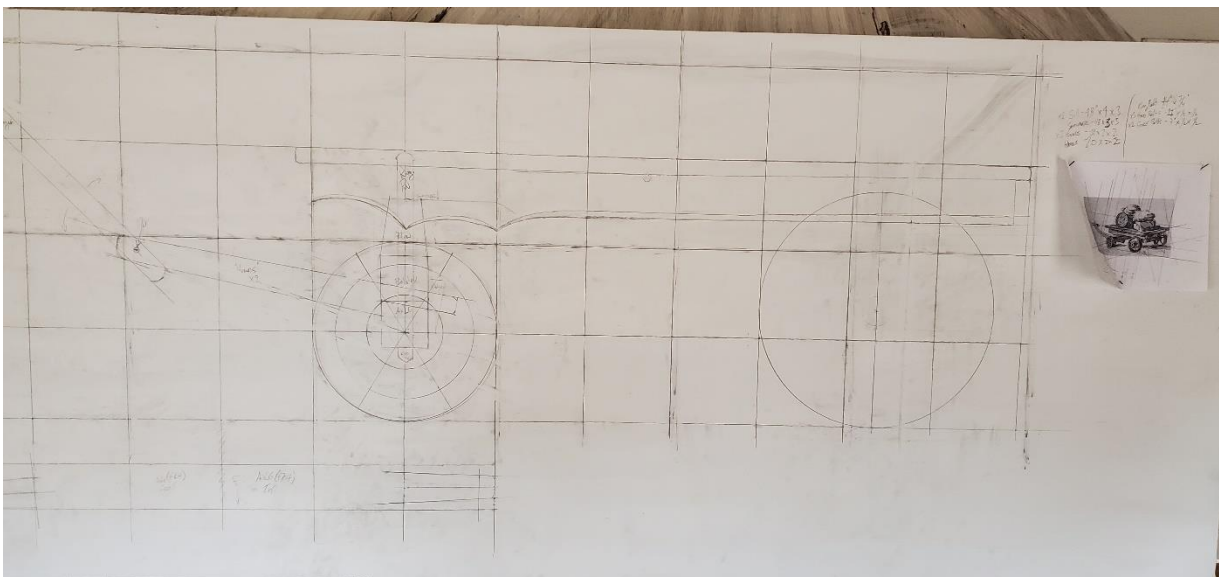
The Silversmith Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

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

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – One question we get asked very often when Guests see our machines is, "who invented that?" We really wish we could give them an answer! Spinning, weaving, and dyeing are all prehistoric, so some of the machines and techniques we still use here in the Shop are so old we have no idea who invented them. One such machine is the great wheel or walking wheel. The technology behind it dates to around 500 C.E. It might not be the latest and greatest in spinning technology in the 18th century, but it still does an excellent job in the 21st.

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

Wheelwright – The Wheelwright Shop would like to apologize for our lax performance in updates. We completed the cart for the Market House. We are forging ahead on our winter projects: a truck for the Foodways staff, a plow for the Historic Farming program (see the wooden protractor underway), and a velocipede for a private order (see patterns). Please stop by and visit!





The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

Wigmaker – The Wig Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

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

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