

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

August 13, 2021

Apothecary – Sharon found a 1790 reference in our site records about a charge to visit a woman at a "madhouse". Sounded interesting as usually the entries refer to the "Lunatic Hospital".

Mark discovered that today, people in Peru refer to cinchona bark as quarango. (In 1820, quinine for malaria was found in cinchona). It is always interesting to learn a few terms in another language when talking to international travelers

Robin found a reference in a primary source textbook regarding shaving the heads of mental patients. Print sources illustrating this are easier to find.

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

Armoury:

Blacksmith – This week in the Blacksmith Shop, a variety of objects can be seen. Ken has focused his work on a large chisel, with a blade 3 ½-inches wide, along with instructing the Apprentices. Mark has done plentiful work for the Wheelwrights, including banding hubs and working on the boxes inside the wheels. Aislinn has continued work on her key swivel and made tacks for the Harpsichord-makers. Alex has worked on andirons and on the banding of wheel hubs. Owen has worked on forks, Broadus on fireplace shovels and some punches, and Josh on dividers and slices. For whatever reason, this fine august season, 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, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Thursday, August 19th, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Tinsmiths will present "Can you make this (pointing at an image)?" Learn how 18th-Century tinplate objects are reproduced at the Armoury Tin Shop when only their image exists or is available.**

Anthony Hay Shop:

Cabinetmaker – Tea tables are nearing completion in the Cabinet Shop. Bill has applied several coats of seed lac to his tilting top tea table, and it is really beginning to shine. The process of applying shellac can be somewhat time intensive. After applying a handful of light coats of shellac, the table is lightly sanded to even everything out, then more shellac is applied. This is repeated multiple times until the maker is satisfied with the final appearance and evenness of the varnish. Jeremy's tea table has been oiled and burnished and awaits the same shellac finishing once the oil has had sufficient time to dry. John has the bookcase glued up for the desk and bookcase being built for the upcoming January Conference.

The Cabinetmakers also had a chance this week to move their stacks of walnut lumber resting, from the field next to the Shop into a more secure storage location. After spending a day sorting and treating the lumber for possible insect activity, they were able to call upon the Carpenters to assist in carrying and neatly stacking the boards indoors. This walnut all came from trees grown in the Historic Area, which came down years ago in a storm, and now await a time when it will become fine furniture such as the desk and bookcase which John and Jeremy are currently building.



Harpsichord-maker – Greetings from the Harpsichord corner of the Hay Shop! Today, we are sad to say farewell to our intern Jay – he is heading back to Florida and school in a few days. We wish him all the best and have tremendously enjoyed having him in the corner with us this summer. This morning, we welcomed a new project into the Shop. A double manual harpsichord made by Peter Redstone (1989) that the Musicians use for practice has fallen into disrepair, and, along with John Watson, we are looking forward to returning it to good working order. While we focus on repairs to the Redstone, we will still continue to make progress with the spinet underway.

We glued in the bentside liner on the case earlier this week. Many thanks to Aislinn for making up a batch of the tiniest rosehead tacks for the over-rail on the keyboard rack. Our keyboard assembly is now complete! Next up is some internal case-work, and then the soundboard can begin.



Redstone harpsichord



Bent side liner



Completed keyboard

The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker Shop will open on Sunday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Either the Cabinetmakers or the Harpsichord-makers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Wednesday.

Carpenter – The Carpenter's Yard will be open Daily, weather permitting. On Monday, August 16th, the Carpenters will present "Slaves and Goods: The Transatlantic Slave Trade." Historic Trades Carpenter Harold Caldwell describes his travels to the UK and West Africa to better understand the British slave trade.

Colonial Garden – The summer Garden is producing a large amount of cantaloupes, peppers, okra, white eggplant, and tomatoes, and Pawpaw season is in full swing! Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) trees are native to North America and produce a small mango-sized fruit from August through September. These trees grow wild as an understory tree in the forest, especially abundant near rivers and other bodies of water, and produce a delicious edible fruit. When the fruit is ripe, it will fall off the tree. However, it has a very short shelf life and

often lasts only three to five days before it rots. The fruit itself has a thin green skin and a few large seeds incased in a cream- to orange-colored flesh. The fruit is very custard-like in texture and has a very tropical taste. Many people liken it to a mango mixed with banana in flavor. If you haven't had the chance to try one, we definitely recommend you do so. They are a wonderfully delicious fruit.

Michael Twitty visited the site and helped interpret and tend the Sankofa Garden, much to everyone's delight, especially the Guests! The Sankofa Garden is filling in rapidly and has produced a large amount of okra and Geechee Peas, and the peanut plants are continuing to send tendrils into the ground to form the peanut down below the soil. Weeding continues as always, along with deadheading spent flower blossoms. Hurricane Lilies (*Lycoris radiata*) have begun to bloom, and the first squash, a pattypan, was harvested. Baskets of tomatoes, peppers, melons, cucumbers, and onions have been sent to our friends at the Palace Kitchen.



Pawpaw fruit

The Colonial Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – The Cooper Shop will be open on Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Engraver – This week, the Engravers are getting back into a normal routine, welcoming William back from a much-needed vacation. He has jumped right back into interpretation and drawing. Lynn is talking this week at the Gallery on copperplate engraving at Colonial Williamsburg, sharing our beginnings and where we want to go with it. A few custom orders have been completed this week and are getting ready to be returned to the owners. We have been looking into possible Shop signs and reading on the Geddy and Waddill families.

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

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

Foundry – The Foundry will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmith Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

Historic Farming – The corn has been completely taken by the squirrels, with 360 ears totally lost. The stalks, though, remain, as well as all the blades, so they will soon be harvested for livestock fodder. A fifteen-pound sack of potatoes was recently delivered to the Historic Foodways staff to be made into deliciousness. Seventeen big cushaws are hiding amongst the vines and are the largest I have ever grown. Hope remains for the Sweet Potato pumpkins, which Thomas Jefferson enjoyed as well as the enslaved persons on his plantation. Various filming projects have been occurring over the last month or so, as well. Shown is Robison Imagery's interview of Ed for a documentary on Sturbridge Village. The writings of an early Director of the site, Darwin Kelsey, had a great influence on my beliefs on Historic Farming. They wanted to capture that as part of a series of interviews of people on how Sturbridge Village has influenced their thoughts on Living History.



Christian Robison interviewing Ed



Barbara Scherer delighting in new potatoes!

The Farmer will be at Prentis Field Tuesday through Saturday.

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

Milliner and Mantua-maker – This week has seen the completion of two lovely gowns made by our Interns in a collaborative project. Rebecca gave instruction for the cutting out and fittings. Janea added a little instruction on setting sleeves to create balance and symmetry. Rachel Sheffield (on the left) cut and made the gown for Kate Hargrove (on the right), and Kate made the sacque jacket and petticoat for Rachel. Thanks to the Tinman Steve, we have nice sharp scissors for more cutting out of fabrics. Our next project will be to make a gown out of checked linen that the Weavers dyed a beautiful green for us.



The Millinery will be open on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

Music – The Governor’s Musick enters a time of transition this week, as we say goodbye to both our Harpsichord Intern, Jay Forsythe, and our full-time Harpsichordist, Daniel Corneliussen. Jay has been a pleasure to work with this summer and rose cheerfully to the tasks of learning new skills and interpreting and performing for our Guests. We wish him the best of luck as he finishes his college degree in Florida. Danny has been a member of the Governor’s Musick for over six years and has played a big role in shaping the direction and setting the tone of the group. We will feel his absence keenly. As we wait for our Soprano, Karol, to regain her full strength and rejoin us, Amy, Brady, and Jenny will carry on as a trio for the time being. Plenty of great music can still be made with three people! We are continuing our weekly presentations at the Raleigh Tavern on Fridays and are preparing to transition to a daytime short concert format there for the fall season (on a different day of the week). We expect our Palace Concerts to resume in the fall; and in the meantime, we can still be seen at the Museum on our scheduled dates below!

The Musicians will be in the Art Museum on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays (unadvertised and subject to change) and on Wednesdays as advertised, and at the Raleigh Tavern Apollo Room throughout the summer on Fridays, 9:00am to 5:00pm for tours every 15 minutes.

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – We had a part of our most recent reproduction press fail after 25 years of use. An iron frisket frame made by the Anderson Blacksmith Shop in the 1990's has been sent to the Blacksmiths at the Armoury for repair.



A frisket frame broken due to metal fatigue where the ear was riveted on



Spare frisket newly covered with paper.

The Printing Office will be open on Sunday, Monday, and Thursday. The Printers will be at the Art Museum Gallery on Tuesday.

Bindery – The Bookbindery will be open on Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Public Leather Works – The Public Leather Works will be open on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Shoemaker – Nicole has finished her try-on for Edith Broward Edds (Wigmaker) and is also working on an instep leather for Michael McCarty (Tailor). Nicole has started reading *The Years of the Life of Samuel Lane, 1718-1806: A New Hampshire Man and His World*, by Jerald E. Brown. Rob is lasting/in-seaming the first of his shoe-boots and is photocopying knife sharpening guides to share with Nicole. Rob and Nicole have recently completed their Livestream on black ball and have cakes for staff use. The Blacksmiths have already gotten some for their shoes, and there are plenty of cakes for those who would like one. Katie has just about finished her practice slipper with the help of Rob and Nicole and will now start on making a pair for herself to take back to the Gateway Arch. She continues reading *The Gifts of Interpretation: Fifteen Guiding Principles for Interpreting Nature and Culture*, by Larry Beck and Ted T. Cable and Brown's work on Samuel Lane. Val is about halfway through the first of a pair of common shoes for Dave Wilson (Printer). Val is also doing last minute prep for the Shop leather dressing day in the Armoury yard on Saturday. The Carpenters were kind enough to lend us saw horses and an old door to act as a dressing table. He and Nicole are also wiping down the shoes in the Shop, which show evidence of the heat and humidity.



Katie's practice slipper



Dave Wilson's common shoe



Try-on for Edith Broward Edds



Rob and Nicole's black ball



Saw horses and door for the Shop's leather dressing project on Saturday



The Shoemakers will be at the Armoury on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

Tailor – The Tailor Shop will be open on Sunday, Thursday, and Saturday. The Tailors will be in the Art Museum Gallery on Monday. On Sunday, August 15th, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, Apprentice Tailor Tim Logue will present "Clothing Enslaved People in Eighteenth-century Virginia." This lecture will explore some of the complex relationships between apparel, labor, identity, and enslavement.

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Wasn't it just Dye Day? Oh well, the life of a dyer. This weekend is yet another Dye Day on yet another sweltering summer day. We will be drinking water just as fast as we can, and hope that you are all doing the same, especially if you come by to visit our little experiment. This time around, we are experimenting with Madder, the root of a plant that our 18th-century counterparts were importing from places in modern-day Turkey and throughout the Middle East. The root of this plant is ground and cooked down into a dye bath to give you a wide range of colors, and those colors are what we are hoping to experiment on. Madder usually gives a color anywhere from peach to orange, even a brick red in high-enough concentration. Dyers must be careful though, as Madder can be sensitive to pH. By adjusting the dye pot to be either more acidic or more alkaline throughout the day, we hope to add pinks, purples, and browns to the repertoire of colors we can achieve from just one dye. Soda ash, baking soda, citric acid, and vinegar will all be enlisted to alter the dye pot.

On top of the pH-based color experiment, we are also using a range of mordants that we don't usually employ. Avid readers of *The Mechanick's Advisor* will know that our mordant of choice is Alum. This metallic-based salt is incredibly safe, unlike some 18th-century recipes and receipts that call for such things as sulfur, sugar of lead, and arsenic. That alone makes it a clear favorite. However, the clear nature of the mordant means we always start with the brightest whites on our Leicester Longwool skeins. In a bid to get the widest possible range of colors from our single source, we are using mordants such as Tannic Acid, Copper Sulphate, and Iron. Each of these imparts its own slight color to the wool but will also have a marked effect on how the dye will bind to the fiber and how the dye will react to the pH. There has been a lot of preparation already, and there is still more to do, but we hope that you come by and see our experiment in action. We are excited to share the results with all of you!



Madder



Tannic Acid



Copper Sulphate



Iron

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

Wheelwright – Work continues to roll smoothly at the Wheelwright Shop. Apprentice Joel has finished the chamfering for his horse cart project. With Journeyman Paul’s assistance, both Tradesmen were able to knock the parts together and place the body onto its pairs of wheels for the final time. Joel continues to shape out the shafts with spoke shave and drawknife to make it as light as possible for the horse and shall be finished with the project in the next few weeks. Paul continues work on the wheels for the Carpenter timber cart and is waiting for the return of the cannon wheel hubs from the Blacksmith Shop. Thank you in advance to Apprentice Blacksmith Alex, who is working on the iron bands for that project. Because the spokes of the hubs require driving them in with a sledgehammer, the hubs’ iron bands are an added precaution against splitting the material. Without the ironwork of a Smith, a wheel would not be as sturdy an object as it is. Be sure to mark your calendars for August 24th at 2:00pm, for the Wheelwright Shop will be featured on Colonial Williamsburg’s “Trades Tuesday” Livestream. Just two more weeks to go!

The Wheelwrights will be at the Armoury on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Wigmaker – This week, we say goodbye to Sydney. It is a sad occasion for us, but many college memories will begin in a few weeks for them. We wish Sydney all the best and look forward to seeing them when they come to visit us over holiday weekends. Maintenance continues as the temperatures soar, and if you need us, try looking under the huge pile of hair! Stay safe out there, everyone!

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

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

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