

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

November 18, 2022

Anthony Hay Shop:

Cabinetmaker – In the Cabinet Shop, Jeremy has begun putting oil onto the Hay desk reproduction. John and Jeremy are using boiled linseed oil for the final finish of this desk and bookcase. The oil will penetrate nicely into the pores of the wood and bring out the wood's natural rich brown color. After about two to three coats of oil, the hardware will be applied, and the leather for the writing surface will be glued down. This desk and bookcase will then be ready for sale.

This week, Bill, John, and Jeremy visited the Art Museum to continue studying a couple pieces of furniture in the Collection. John and Bill took a detailed look at the Rhode Island kneehole desk on which they will be presenting in the upcoming *Working Wood in the 18th Century* Conference in January. Both of them will be talking about different decorative elements of the desk. Over the coming weeks, they will be working out detailed drawings and samples to use in their presentation.

Jeremy spent some time photographing a tall case clock from London from around 1700, which is heavily decorated in seaweed marquetry, as part of his ongoing study of marquetry.



Harpsichord-maker – With the completion of the 2022 spinet, we have exhausted much of our parts supply. So for the new instrument based on the William Harris 1764 spinet, a full restocking is in order: woods like poplar, white pine, pear, holly, yellow pine, beech, cherry, and spruce. And all that falls to us. The last few days has begun that process of gathering and manufacturing. To begin, Melanie has glued up white pine boards for the next keyboard and cut strips of pear for the jack forks. Ed is preparing a good oak board that we will re-saw into thinner boards for the case walls. Lots of re-organizing for new stocks. With all that... Here. We. Go.

Also, on Saturday, November 19th, 1:00pm to 4:30pm, Melanie and Ed, working in shifts, will be interpreting our work and Trade at the Art Museums in conjunction with the *Making Music in Early America* exhibit. Also that day, 4:00pm until 6:00pm, WHRO FM Classical Radio will host its latest Open Mic gathering

at the Hennage Auditorium, so please come visit us and stay for some splendid musicmaking from players of all ages and abilities from around our community at Open Mic. Thanks to everyone who has assisted in making all this possible.



Keyboard glue up and pear jack strips



Long oak board for case walls



Moving in new stock and re-organizing

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

Department of Historic Trades and Skills

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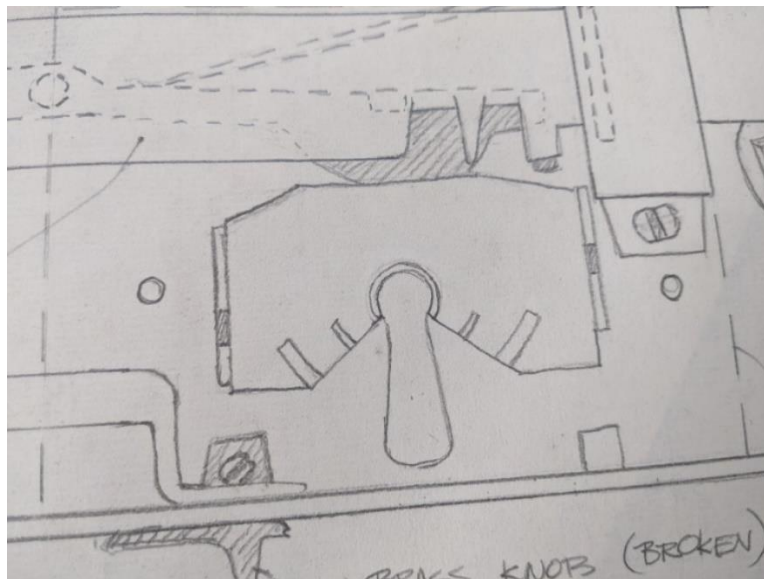
Apothecary – The Apothecary Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Armoury:

Blacksmith – Greetings from the Anderson Blacksmith Shop. This week, Mark and Aislinn have continued work on their sign bracket, with awesome advancements accumulating as they assemble the artifact. Mark has also been forging, filing, and tapping small bolts, while Aislinn has been working on pricking irons and buckles for the Public Leather Works. Alex has made a heavier forging hammer for his own use, as well as working on a coulter for Farmer Ed’s plough. Josh has continued work on slide bolts and bench hammers. Broadus has begun working on a bracket for the axle of a hand cart and has also been doing some interesting research. Through looking at a CW Historical Report (Public Gaol Historical Report, Block 27 Building 2), an excerpt from the *Virginia Gazette* caught his attention:

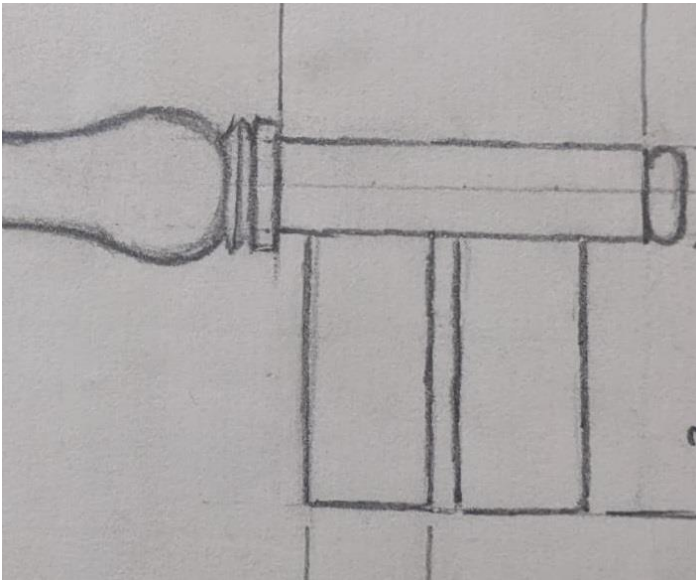
“Several smokehouses and cellars in the city having lately been robbed by means of false keys, on Monday last, upon some suspicion, the dwelling of one Thomas Arthurnot Grayland was searched, and in an outhouse was discovered a vault, covered over with earth, in which was deposited a chest containing a considerable quantity of bacon ... The outhouse itself was well fitted up with tools necessary to pick locks, alter keys, and so forth; and there was a large bunch of keys, which upon examining the wards of many of them were discovered to be filed out. In his house was found ... among a parcel of coin a key, which seemed to be a master one, as upon trial it opened all the doors of the places that had been robbed, and many more.” (Purdie & Dixon 5/26/1768, p. 2, 1)

Of particular interest to our Shop are the keys with the wards filed out and a “master key”. These terms refer to a method of thwarting the main defense mechanism of 18th-century locks, their warding. Warding is a combination of plates joined together inside the lock which are placed in the path traveled by the key as it turns.

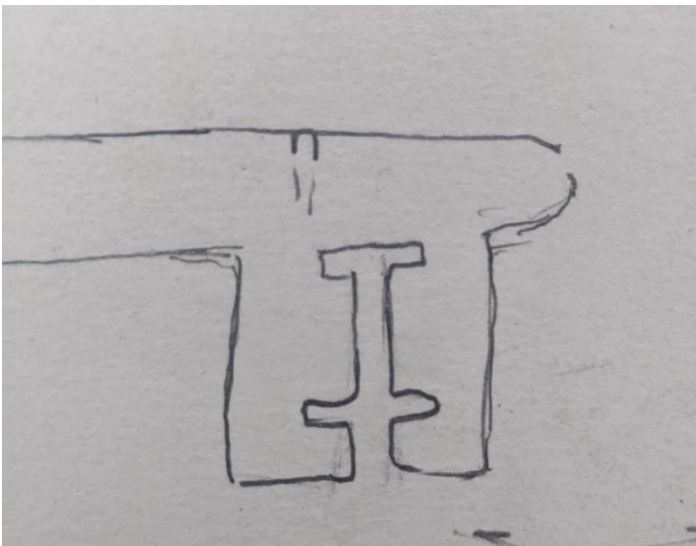


Warding

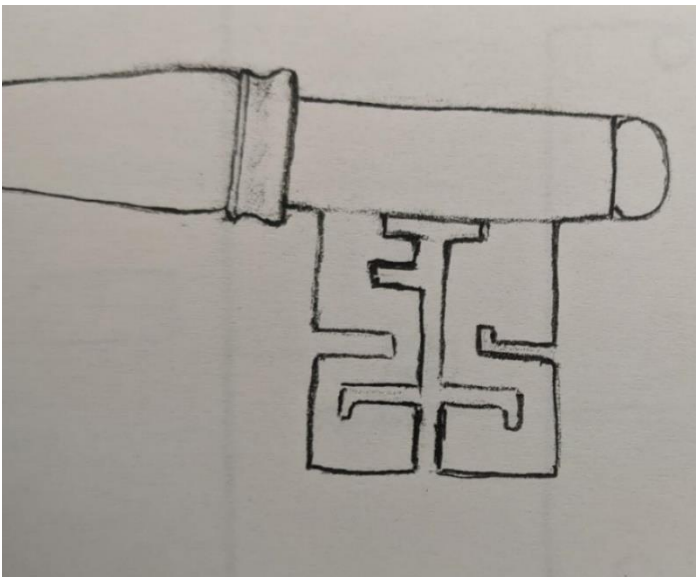
If a key does not have shapes cut out of the bit (“wards”) that match the warding, then it cannot bypass those plates. However, by filing out parts of a key, it can bypass multiple locks that have different sets of warding, and a master key has warding that can bypass multiple locks of different shaped warding. Consider the following three keys:



Key 1



Key 2



Key 3

Assuming the end of the keys are all of the same overall dimension, it would be safe to assume that the first key could only open its own lock. However, the second and third keys could both open its lock, and the third key could also open the second's lock. Thus, the third key would be the "master" to the other two. We leave it up to the Reader to think of how they would modify Keys 1 or 2 to open the lock belonging to key 3, and potentially others! As always, 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, we are firing our kiln until Saturday the 19th.



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

Carpenter – This week, we are continuing the work on the storage building for the new Farm site. We've got the door and lower windows trimmed out and are aiming to get the roof and clapboard siding up above the windows.



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

Colonial Garden – Preparation for the winter season is on our minds as frost is approaching. Our citrus and tender plants have been moved to the Landscape Nursery, but now begins the task of culling out from the remaining pots, what we protect in a hotbed and what we let nature take in a freeze. Most of our greens are winter hardy thanks to a higher level of sugar in their vascular system, but cauliflower and broccoli need to be covered when temperatures dip to 20F and below. Long pieces of willow are cut and fashioned into hoops that surround the greens and will support a tarp when needed.



Tender greens under the hoops

The last of the snapdragons have been planted along with calendula, which provide us with welcome brightness during the winter months. A row of parsley covered with hand lights will provide fresh greens to the Palace Kitchen all winter long. Another crop grown under glass is a late planting of Sickle peas in our hotbed. The pea pod provides a delicious edible pod. Lettuce continues to thrive, and once the temperature cooled down, the slugs have ceased their ravenous march through the tender, delicious leaves. The

Gardeners used two techniques to keep slugs at bay. One is to lay boards in the Garden overnight and in the morning, dispatch the slugs that cling to the bottom of the boards. The second technique is to put out dishes of beer. As the slugs are not good swimmers, they meet their end. In case you are feeling sorry for the slugs, I have enclosed an image of said slug and the damage that they caused in our Garden.



Slug



Eaten lettuce plant, the third one



Row of parsley under the hand lights for the winter

We harvested the leaves of the indigo plant that we grew behind the Weaver Shop. The leaves were stripped off and processed, but nothing came of the experiment that could be used. Next year, we will try again. Harvested this week are Black Spanish and Bier radishes, which grew to enormous size thanks to a warm fall. To the Palace Kitchen, we sent sorrel, sweet potatoes, Maycock squash, onion, the last of our Irish potatoes, lettuce, garlic, and turnips.

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – Among the recent projects at the Cooper Shop is this well bucket, completed earlier this week. It is destined for a historic house in Maryland.



The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Engraver – This week, the Engravers are continuing the several projects we each have: copper plates, lots of drawings, and a few custom orders. Busy week with Guests!



The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Fifes & Drums – The entire Fifes & Drums staff departed this weekend for a special engagement at the Sandra Day O'Connor Institute in Arizona. This has been months in planning, and we are happy and humbled to be in demand for such a special request. While there, they are also enjoying a little professional development with a special tour of the Musical Instrument Museum.

Fifes & Drums is also gearing up, along with Military Programs, to support a plethora of Holiday programming. This will include the Yule Log programs, Grand Illuminations, the Christmas Tree lighting, and Christmas Guns on December 24th. In addition, we will still be doing our program "18th-century Field Music" on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings throughout December, so please come out and cheer the kids on as they bring the Holiday soundscape to Colonial Williamsburg!

We are also in the midst of planning for after the Holiday season. For the first time in many, many years, we are going to continue classes over the winter. This is geared to keep our new Recruits engaged with what they've just started learning and keep our Junior and Senior Corps on their paths of learning leading up to President's Day programming in February.

Foodways – What a week over at the Palace Kitchen!! This past weekend, Foodways, along with our fellow CW Hospitality and Events teams, hosted *Ales Through the Ages*, a weekend-long conference celebrating the history, archaeology, science, and enjoyment of beer. On Friday, we teamed up with fellow Food Historian Marc Meltonville in the Scullery for a brew session, while Barbara was in our 18th-century Kitchen with Historic Maltster Andrea Stanley, giving a demonstration on marling barley. After a lovely opening reception hosted by Shields Tavern, Saturday was full of lectures given by some of the world's foremost voices in the study of historic drink. Lunch saw the conference taken over to the Palace Green to watch a jolly excellent version of "A Three Penny Opera," written by our friends with the Jug Broke Players, centered around songs and tunes celebrating ale from the 18th century. Sunday followed with final talks and the final reception over at Virginia Beer Company, where the three collaborations Frank has been tirelessly working on with VBC, Precarious, and Ale Works, as well as exclusive samples from other breweries and conference attendees, were all out for "research purposes."

We genuinely believe that after being derailed for two years because of Covid, this year's reignition of *Ales* could not have been more successful. With 115 in-person attendees, and an additional 30 attending virtually, our Guests from across the country and across the pond seemed to all leave this weekend thoroughly saturated with the joys of finding that truly perfect ale.

We give a massive Thank You to our beyond-generous donor, Jeff Guenther, for his continued support of all our hopes and dreams here at Historic Foodways. Also, Thank You, Thank You, Thank You to Whitney Thornberry and her entire staff for their amazing organization of this past weekend and all their hard work to making sure everything went smoothly. Now that we have made it to the end of the week, Foodways will be going home to collapse on our couches.

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

Foundry – This week, the Foundry welcomed Kyle Spears, Historic Trades Supervisor, and Rachel Spears, Living History Specialist, from Carillon Historical Park in Dayton, Ohio. In preparation for them to start up their circa-1930s foundry, they came to learn a bit about pewter casting, which they plan on implementing at the historical park. In addition to answering questions they had about the process, we also made sure to get them involved in every step: casting some spoons *and* cleaning them up. We're looking forward to seeing them get their foundry up and running!

In Shop news, we've been continuing lots of pewter work in the Shop for the Holiday season. Apprentice Leanne has also started the finishing on some silver (which may be the inspiration for our wreath this year...). Senior Journeyman Mike wrapped up some research on quoits for his upcoming Hennage talk, and the Apprentices spent the better part of Tuesday gathering stacks of books at the Rockefeller Library for their own talks.



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

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

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

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

Military Programs – Military Programs has resumed firing cannons! You may have heard recently the noises getting a little louder this week. We are working diligently to bring artillery back as staffing allows and will be working to tackle use of the six-pounder guns.

The Military staff is also working diligently on the reorganization of the Guardhouse, Greenhow Tenement Stable, and Magazine Yard facilities. We have worked with Evening Programs to move the ash pile for the cresset crew to the back of the Guardhouse and would like to extend a special thanks to Preston Jones for helping to make this happen.

Alex Arnold has recently returned from a cooperative outreach program with Fort Mifflin, bringing further exploration of siege equipment and fortifications to that site.

We are now gearing up to assist Special Events with the Yule Log and Grand Illumination programs over the Holiday season. Come out and see us at the Magazine on Friday nights and helping to illuminate the Capital and Palace on Saturday nights!

Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – On Monday and Tuesday, we welcomed a team from First State Heritage Park in Delaware to begin work on two projects that will recreate gowns from portraits in their collection. The first, a blue silk round gown, was worn in 1758 by Anna Dorothea Finney. It's a relatively simple "common" gown with minimal trim and a delicate gauze tucker and set of ruffles. By the end of

Tuesday, we had the gown cut, the back pleated, and the bodice fronts and sleeves completely fit. Typically, it takes three fittings to progress to this point, but because our ladies had very limited time to spend with us, we experimented with a new approach, and it seems to have worked! Rather than completing the stitching on each individual piece of the gown before moving on to the next stage of fitting, we instead basted to temporarily hold everything in place. This allowed us to move more quickly through each stage of the process, which successfully eliminated the need for our Delaware ladies to return to do additional fittings. The downside, though, is that because everything is now pinned into place and consolidated into the single garment, we've lost the ability to have multiple hands working on it at the same time to get the sewing done faster when we go back to do the final construction stitching. Which method did our 18th-century counterparts use? It could be either, since they'll produce identical end results; only the production time will change.

The second gown, which is from a 1798 portrait, is much simpler in construction. The long sleeves were cut on the body, as was standard for the entirety of the century, but the bodice of the gown has relaxed enough by this point that a handful of simple measurements was all we needed to be able to continue to move forward without requiring our customer's body for fittings. This will be a white muslin gown, fit under the bust with drawstrings and worn over a fitted undergown. The cap in the portrait will be the most fun part of this ensemble. It has a fairly unusual shape that looks half turban and half cap, with some slightly structured elements and lots of big silk bows. Rebecca and Kate think they'll happily take charge of the gown if Mistress Janea is willing to tackle that crazy cap!



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

Musket Range – The Musket Range and Military Programs are undergoing their annual ATF inspection to renew our explosives license. Fortunately, due to recently improved facilities, and the ongoing diligence of both staffs, we expect to pass with flying colors. The Range is also hoping to see a new position posted in the near future to hire an Instructor to bring our staff up to four again, so if you know anyone who might be a good fit, please tell them to be on the lookout!

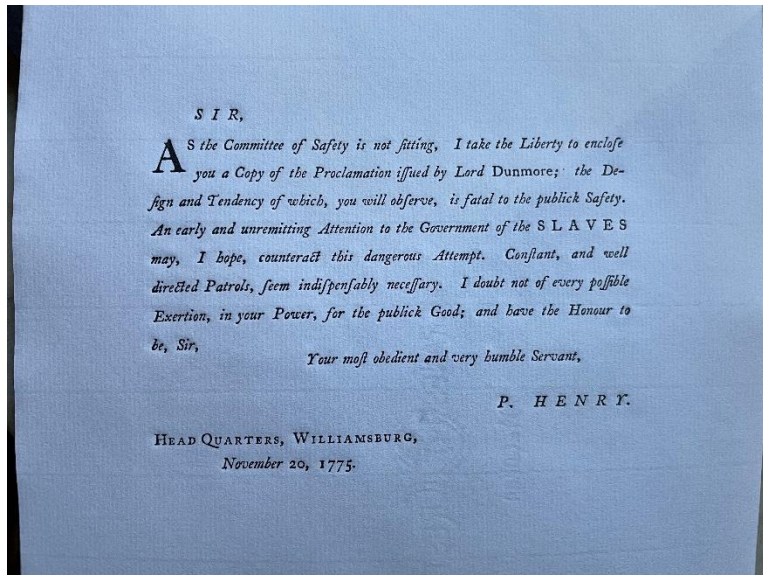
The Musket Range is open Friday through Tuesday, with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm, and 3pm. The Range will continue to be open on its normal days throughout the Holiday season coming up, and it will not close over the winter.

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – This week saw the return of Lord Dunmore's Proclamation of November 7th, 1775, which was printed aboard a ship of Lord Dunmore's squadron with a press and types taken from *The Virginia Gazette, or, Norfolk Intelligencer*.



Chad Jones shows the type form to go in the press.



A note from Patrick Henry sent with copies of the Proclamation

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

Bindery – Good day from the Bookbindery. This week found Don hard at work making a beautiful, fully bound, gold-tooled quarto for our colleague and friend, Jan Tilley. As Don so eloquently expressed during the presentation of Jan's well-deserved Journeyman papers, "Jan is family." That is a sentiment that is shared by many who work here at Colonial Williamsburg. Cheers, Jan! We love you!



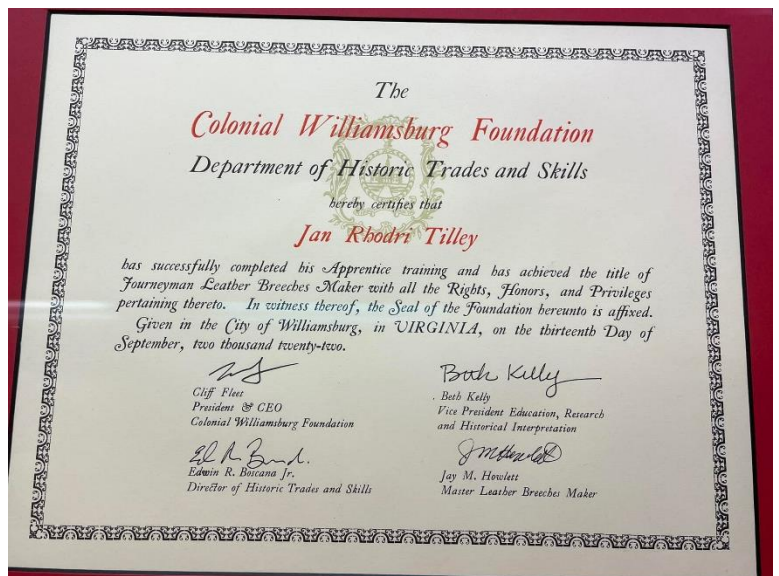
The Bookbindery will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Public Leather Works – The Public Leather Works held an Open House at their Shop yesterday, during which Jan Tilley was presented with his Journeyman papers as a Journeyman Leather Breeches Maker. The Department of Historic Trades & Skills wants to congratulate Jan and sends him our best wishes!!

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

Photo credit: Jan Tilley

Department of Historic Trades and Skills



Volume 8, Issue 40

Shoemaker – The Shop continues with our baby shoe project. Victoria, Nicole, and Val are each halfway through with making their first pair of baby shoes. Nicole is working on her second (of a pair) Brafferton shoe and finished some repairs for Robert Weathers. Val is finishing repairs on shoes for Victoria, and Victoria continues with her slippers.

The staff was pleased to attend the presentation of Journeyman papers to Jan Tilley as a Journeyman Leather Breeches Maker on Thursday. The Shoe Shop would like to congratulate Jan on a job well done.



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

Silversmith – Work continues as always at the Silversmith Shop. Megan's bowl is coming along nicely, and she is working on laying out the pattern for a mote spoon. Chris continues work on her tray and has finished her two gold hearts. Bobbie is filing and fitting the wire for the rim of another large silver tray. Preston is planishing his five-inch bowl and is raising more small, fluted bowls. George has drawn more wire for spoons and has given Megan one of his completed mote spoons to pierce. Megan and Bobbie are both transcribing the will of Ann Craig in order to see if James Craig is mentioned.



Megan's bowl



Chris' gold hearts



Bobbie's wire rim



Preston's five-inch bowl



George's mote spoon with the pattern Megan is laying out on it

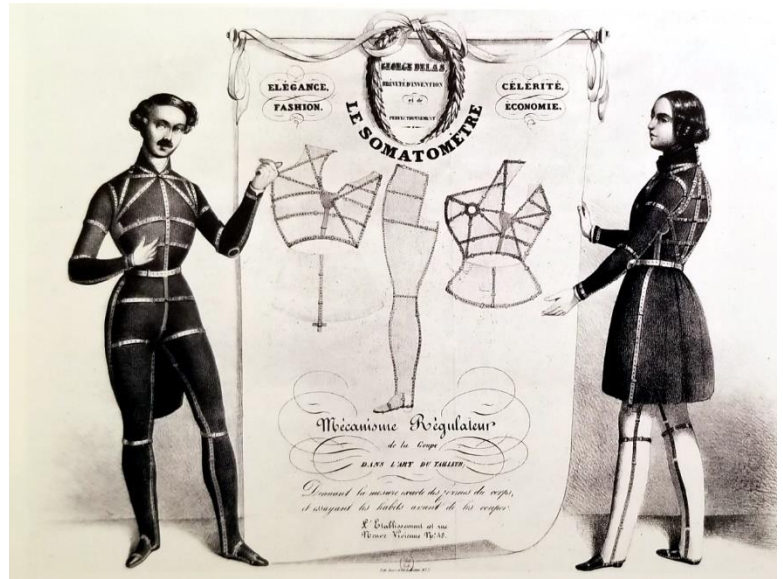
The Silversmith Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Tailor – In the Tailor Shop, Journeyman McCarty has been working on a coat of a much-later date than usual: the late 1830s. It will be very similar to what Robert Cornelius is wearing in this first-ever “selfie” from 1839.



In the 19th century, the development of new techniques for measuring the body and methods of patterning lead to publication of novel patterning methodologies and systems. French, English, and American tailors left off the old method of “rock of eye” patterning for these new “scientific” patterning systems, all while continuing to only sew by hand until the availability of the first commercial sewing machine in 1845.

Journeyman McCarty studied various manuals from the 1830s and 1840s in order to pattern the coat.



The construction and sewing is informed through the study of several coats in both the CW and private collections.

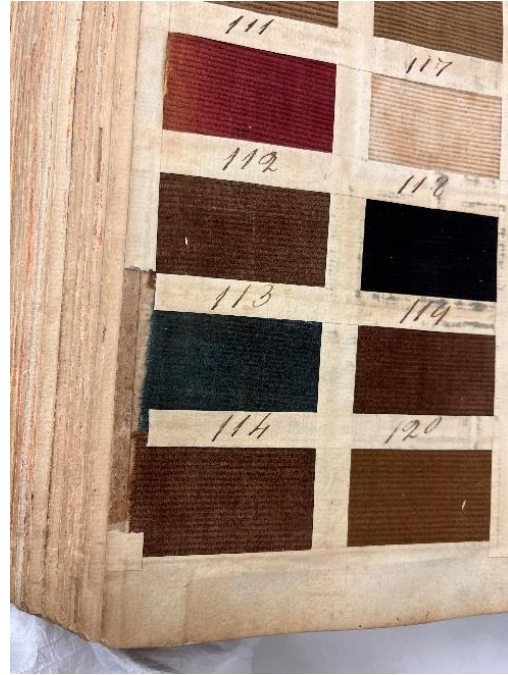


Detail of interior cuff stitching

McCarty's goal is to have it finished by the end of the month. Familiarity of cut and construction of clothing in the eras before and after the 18th century is important to our study of 18th-century tailoring.

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

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – This week, Pamela and Joe travelled to New York City to study a 1771 fabric sample book in the Met's collection. The book was so much more than we thought!



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

Wheelwright – The cart for the Market House is nearing completion as the flooring and paneling has been primed and installed. We anticipate delivery within a few weeks. The next few months will include a plough for the Historic Farming program, a Velocipede for private order, and many other projects. Please stop by!



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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Contributors: Anthony Hay Shop – Jeremy Tritchler (Cabinetmaker) and Edward Wright (Harpsichord-maker); Armoury – Alex Hinman (Blacksmith); Brickmaker – Madeleine Bolton; Carpenter – Matt Sanbury; Colonial Garden – Eve Otmar; Cooper – Jon Hallman; Engraver – Lynn Zelesnikar; Fifes and Drums – Justin Chapman; Foodways – Abbey Shoaf; Foundry – Leanne Bellouny; 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 – Shari Monaco; Shoemaker – Val Povinelli; Silversmith – Megan Cantwell; Tailor – Michael McCarty; Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Pamela Russo; Wheelwright – Paul Zelesnikar