

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

April 15, 2022

Apothecary – Mark went on field trips this past week! He visited Collections to see the eighteenth-century silver-handled toothbrush Colonial Williamsburg possesses. It is remarkable for its daintiness, measuring just 1/8-inch diameter at its narrowest. Thank you to Amanda Keller for her time and assistance. He also spent time at the Printing Office learning how to make pasteboard and paste. In our Shop, pasteboard was used to support fractured bones. Stay tuned for further information on this project. Thanks to Peter Stinely and his crew for educating and accommodating him.

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

Armoury:

Blacksmith – This week, the smiths of the Anderson Publick Armoury have been at work on a range of goods needed in town. Ken has been teaching Owen to make flesh forks with welded tines, as well as making a few paring chisels. Mark has finished a pit saw tiller and is fixing some edge tools for the Carpenters. Alex and Broadus continue their odyssey of pintle hinges with an end in sight, and Owen's rakes look rakish, and his first forks are fine. As ever, all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.

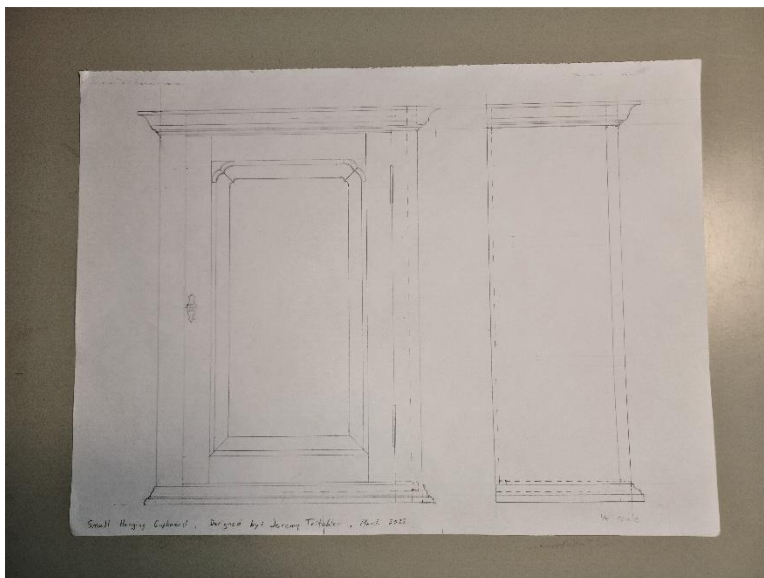
The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

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

Anthony Hay Shop:

Cabinetmaker – The Cabinetmakers continue to move along with several projects in the Shop. John's dining table now has all six legs attached, and he will soon be moving on to making the three-piece top. He has some beautiful mahogany set aside and ready for planing.

Jeremy is cutting his way through a lot of pine for the bottoms of the large drawers in the desk. For his next project, Jeremy will be designing and building a small hanging cupboard which would fit into an 18th-century collection, so he has spent a great deal of time in the last few weeks looking at existing cupboards. He has focused a lot of his research looking at proportional relationships, molding profiles, and door designs. His final design has been influenced by a cupboard he was able to examine closely during his recent trip to the MESDA furniture seminar, combined with some molding designs from 18th-century architectural design books.



Harpisichord-maker – The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker Shop will be open Sunday (11:30-5:00), and Monday through Saturday.

Brickmaker – This week in the Brickyard saw continued work on our treading pit, which allowed us to embark on a short trip with our friends Journeyman Carpenter Ayinde and Master Wheelright Paul. We were successful in our quest for boards, which were then fitted to the sides of our pit. Then Nick mastered a new tool, the barking spud! This tool was used to dislodge the bark from the locust stakes so that they could be driven into the ground to secure the boards. While Apprentices Nick and Madeleine worked on that project, Journeyman Kenneth and Master Josh left on a trip of their own. The grand voyage was made to find a vendor to supply us with sand that will help us mold our yard into something resembling the Brickyard that we need it to be. They were not only successful in finding sand but also in discovering the true meaning of friendship. We're told it's a trade secret.

Otherwise, this week, we completed another *Daub to Dough* Workshop and began undertaking the paving needed in and around the treading pit.





The Brickyard will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Wednesday (11:30-5:00), and Thursday, weather permitting.

Carpenter – We've been focusing our efforts on the Brickyard drying house. We have some layout and cutting of joints for the front and back wall to undertake, as well as more hewing on the last piece of framing we need.

We also want to remind everyone that the walking tour “Voices of Their Hands” has resumed for the spring season and is an hour in length.

The Carpenter’s Yard will be open Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Colonial Garden – The pace of activity in the Historic Garden has slowed just a bit in order to allow the Gardeners to interact with all the Guests who enter the gate. Our Guests have many questions about the trade and Garden as well as their own planting and the myriad of plants they see around Colonial Williamsburg. The arrival of hot and sunny weather means more time is being dedicated to watering the plants. A few eager young Guests have even assisted with this chore! A welcome sight is the first appearance of fruit on our fruit trees. Just plums so far, but there should be several more in the coming weeks. The ground of the Sankofa Heritage Garden has been turned and hoed in anticipation of the second year cultivating our representational plot of vegetables and grains the enslaved may have grown for themselves in the 18th century. Finally, the Gardeners spent part of a morning tying up some of the endive (*Cichorium endivia*) so that it may blanch. Blanching deprives leaves of sunlight and slows the production of chlorophyll which causes a bitter flavor. One endive has also been placed under a terra cotta pot to see if this 18th-century technique is more effective.



Plums on the *Prunus domestica*



The Sankofa Heritage Garden will soon be planted with West African grains and vegetables.



Blanching endive using two techniques: first, by tying up the leaves and second, both tying and covering.

The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday through Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00)

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

Foodways – The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Foundry – The Foundry will be open Sunday through Thursday.

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

Historic Farming – The third tobacco seed bed was planted this week to spread out the availability of plants during May and June. In the 18th century, planters relied on what they called a “season” to transplant their tobacco out of the seed bed into hills. This season was when a rain soaked the hills enough to provide the water that the transplants need to survive. Of course, we can water in the museum context, but their fields might have been miles from a water source. And what if it did not rain? The plants in the seed bed keep getting bigger and will not transplant well, thus the reason for multiple seed beds. We want to find out how late a tobacco plant can be transplanted and survive and the leaves cure. This is another experiment in which the results can be shared with our Guests as we re-discover the past together.



Tobacco seed bed at Prentis Field



Tobacco seed pod and seeds

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

Joinery – The Joiners are continuing their various projects. Peter has been researching classical design principles while also attending lectures by Dr. Vincent Brown and Dr. Ana Lucia Araujo. In the Shop, he has nearly finished the drawers he’s been building for the Anderson Armoury. Scott has been reading up on the Department of Historic Trades and Skills

construction of Mount Vernon, while he completes the last few moldings for his mantel. The mantelpiece is nearly finished and, in our humble chronicler's opinion, looks absolutely incredible. Brian is busy working on the last few sashes for the Saunders House and the round window he began constructing for the yearly conference.

The Joinery will be open Tuesday (11:30am-5:00pm), and Wednesday through Saturday.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – It's time to catch up! With our Shop closed for maintenance the last week of March and the first week of April, we were able to indulge in some uninterrupted research time in the library. Several of those days were spent in Special Collections and Archives, exploring folders full of documentation and correspondence about the opening of the Margaret Hunter Shop in 1954. It's astonishing just how many people from outside Colonial Williamsburg - curators from museums and archives, famous Hollywood hat and costume designers, historians of dress, vendors of antique clothing and textiles, even private individuals with connections to dealers in European decorative arts - were called upon to lend their expertise to the project of creating an entirely new interpretive space. Multiple blog posts on our discoveries are forthcoming because these stories need to be shared!

We also poured over maps and architectural reports to continue to puzzle out some of the missing details about Margaret Hunter and the various locations she occupied while in the city. Janea spent a couple of days working through a Louisa County account book in search of more information about pricing of textiles, clothing, and wardrobe ornaments. Rebecca has been continuing her research into current scholarship on the clothing of enslaved people, and Kate is investigating the different types of jewelry worn and sold here before the Revolution. A project on the clothing worn by the Bray School scholars is also well underway now. Rachel, our current NIAHD Intern, also volunteers transcribing Bray School records and will be a great addition to the team when she joins us as a full-time Intern over the summer.

The past two Thursdays, we've also hosted the first of our Workshops for this season, which leads participants through the stitching of a sewing roll. Both of the classes were sold out. We've ended up with a nice mix of adults and kids each time and have enjoyed the chance to get to know them and hear their stories about what drew them to visit CW.



With the arrival of (very!) warm weather, we've also been busy making summer clothes for some of our fellow Tradeswomen and Actor/Interpreters. With the help of Rebecca, Rachel created two new bedgowns for our Silversmiths. Now Megan, Chris, and Bobbie all have linen jackets to help keep them cool and comfortable! Janea and Rebecca have also begun a new cotton bedgown for Lynn. Kate and Rebecca are

also beginning to stitch new pairs of stays for themselves...one of those long, laborious, but necessary projects that inevitably comes around every few years or so!

We've also made up a couple of linen bags. If any Tradesperson is in need of one to carry lunch or materials (modern or historical!), please stop by the Shop or send us an email to claim one!



The Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Thursday (12:00-5:00pm), Friday, and Saturday.

Printer and Bookbinder:

Printing Office – The Printing Office will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Bindery – Good day from the Bookbindery. Dale Dippre, Donald Mason, and Barbara Swanson are extremely pleased to announce that we have chosen the lovely and talented Mary Hannah Grier of Rockville, Virginia, in Hanover County, to serve as our Summer 2022 Intern! We had the pleasure of first working with Mary Hannah while she was serving a NIAHD Internship for the Printing Office and Bookbindery. For those of you who may be wondering, NIAHD stands for the National Institute of American History & Democracy, and the program is a partnership between William & Mary and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. While here, Mary Hannah helped set the type for the Phillis Wheatley biography used in the making of the Printing Office/Bindery Christmas decoration, as well as producing a beautiful book plate for the Bindery. She also



made a nice sturdy book and interpreted both Shops beautifully for the public. I personally love to observe her interactions with the many children who visit our Shop and think she will be the perfect candidate to help run our Summer Family Workshop. Mary Hannah will be graduating from William & Mary in May of this year with a Bachelor's Degree in History, a minor in English, and a NIAHD Certificate.

Welcome, Mary Hannah! We are so happy to be able to call you a Colleague, and hope this will be the beginning of a long and happy collaboration of ideas!

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

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

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers will be at the Armoury on Monday and working with the Artificers at the Public Leather Works on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Silversmith – The Silversmiths are very busy working on their long list of projects. Megan continues working on her ingot and has finished saw piercing her mote spoon. She will now start the polishing process, and if all goes well, it will be ready for sale in the coming days. Chris is continuing her work filing the teapot and carving the wooden handle. Bobbie's tray rim has been soldered together, and work will now begin on soldering it to the sheet silver that will make up the body of the tray. Preston continues work on his small bowls and on polishing jewelry for the retail store, two things in constant demand. George has been hammering out a long silver ingot that was cast a few months back. This ingot will eventually be thin enough to draw through our draw plate and make rectangular wire for spoon blanks. Research continues on trade silver.



Megan's Mote Spoon



Bobbie's tray will be the much larger version of the small one above.



George forging out the long ingot



Pictured on the right, from bottom to top: the cast ingot; the ingot George is currently working on forging out; the draw plate; spoon blanks cut from a drawn ingot; and the many forged out spoons created from our blanks.

The Silversmith Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday. On Wednesday, April 20th, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Silversmiths will present, "My 46 Years as a Silversmith." Join Master Silversmith George Cloyed as he gives a candid discussion about his 46 years as a Colonial Williamsburg Silversmith. Hear about how he got here, the people he learned from, the changes in interpretation he has seen, and his thoughts on the future of the trade here. Find out who some of his famous customers were, and some of his biggest orders.

Tailor – The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.

Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Only a small update this week, as the Shop has been rolling along preparing for upcoming projects. Two looms are already warped for the next round of Workshops, and we've already begun scouring material for our Dye Day on the 23rd. The bed rugs are going to be coming to an end for now as the days get warmer, as they're made to trap body heat (and that includes the Weavers'!), and the rest of the warp will be turned into some lovely Dutch blankets. Now as in the past, as little goes to waste as possible.

The Weaving Shop will be open on Sunday, Monday (11:30-5:00), Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Wheelwright – The focus for the Deane Shop this week has been handcarts. Specifically, handcarts for the Market House. Following last week's tiring and boxing, Master Wheelwright Paul guided Apprentice Joel to the finer art of wheel painting (pictured below). Two thin coats of yellow ochre later, both Paul and Joel installed the freshly painted wheels onto the older handcart body. The Wheelwrights continue to do work for the Market House: Paul was able to salvage an older pair of handcart wheels with the help of the Blacksmiths. Both Joel and Apprentice Murphy are currently working in tandem on a new handcart.



The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

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

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

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Contributors: Apothecary – Mark Henley, Armoury – Alex Hinman (Blacksmith), Anthony Hay Shop – Jeremy Tritchler (Cabinetmaker), Brickmaker – Madeleine Bolton, Carpenter – Matt Sanbury, Colonial Garden – Eve Otmar, Historic Farming – Ed Schultz, Joiner – Peter Hudson, Milliner and Mantua-maker – Rebecca Godzik, Printer and Bookbinder – Barbara Swanson (Bindery), Silversmith – Megan Cantwell, Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing – Annie Buss, Wheelwright – Joel Morris