

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

April 1, 2023

Sunday, April 2nd begins our second year of offering Trades and Skills Workshops. For the next three weeks (through April 22nd), we will be offering Workshops as follows:

Sunday, Family Workshop: Tailor – In the 18th century, most people learned to sew in childhood. It was a necessary skill at home and in all trades working with cloth or leather. Learn a variety of stitches and how they were used. *Limit of 10 participants.*

Monday, Family Workshop: Cook – Learn basic garnishing and food decoration skills to create an appealing dessert. Participants will sculpt and decorate their marzipan creations and learn other decorating techniques from the 18th century to brighten up their dessert tables. *Limit of 8 participants.*

Tuesday, Family Workshop: Cabinetmaker – Join us for an in-depth, hands-on tour and demonstration of hand planes—one of the traditional woodworker's most indispensable tools. When Williamsburg cabinetmaker Edmund Dickinson died in 1778, he was inventoried as having "81 planes of various sorts." Such a variety of tools would be suited for many tasks like making boards flat and smooth, creating precise structural joinery, and making shapely moldings. We will demonstrate the breadth of work done with these tools and give guests a chance to plane away some shavings themselves. *Limit of 16 participants.*

Wednesday, Family Workshop: Apothecary – Do you have what it takes to be an Apprentice Apothecary? Participants will compound a medicine, identify medicinal ingredients, learn their uses, and practice applying bandages. *Limit of 8 participants.*

Thursday, Family Workshop: Weaver – Local fabric production was very important in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War. In this immersive workshop, we will use hands-on activities to understand the great lengths Virginians went to in order to participate in the War – from organizing spinning bees to wartime weaving. *Limit of 12 participants.*

Friday, Family Workshop: Masonry – Families will have the opportunity to build a small earthen oven with the help of Masonry Trades staff. The necessary components are all around you and can likely be found in your backyard! It's dirty work building an oven from clay and sticks, but the result will let you bake bread, cakes, or even a pizza. We'll also explore how to safely light a fire with flint and steel, a survival skill that'll help you cook dinner! *Limit of 8 participants.*

Saturday, Family Workshop: Joiner – Throughout recorded history, craftspeople have used math to create works of art. With a simple straight edge and compass, we will demonstrate exercises used to create simple geometric forms that, when combined, can be the basis for the fashionable design and our tools. *Limit of 8 participants.*

The Workshops will begin at 10:00 am. Their shops will be closed 9-10 am. All except the Masonry and Cabinetmaker ones will end at 11:00, and the shops will open to the public at 11:30. The Masonry Workshop will end at 11:30, and the site will open at Noon, while the Cabinetmaker will remain closed for the rest of that day.

For all Family Workshops, Kids 7-14 will need to have a participating adult with their own ticket. Children 14-17 need to have an adult present. The adults will need to have their own ticket if they

want to participate. Otherwise, the adult may just observe. In this case, they will have a free “Chaperone” ticket. Please be aware that the “Chaperones” cannot participate.

All participating tickets are \$20.

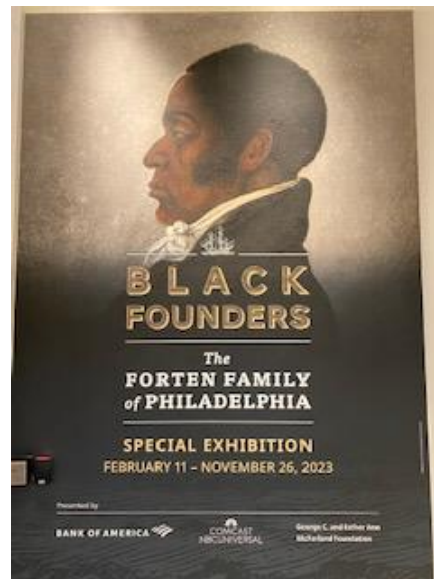


Apothecary – The Apothecary is open Sunday through Tuesday, Wednesday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.

Blacksmith – Over the winter, the Shop took a trip up north to Pennsylvania. The Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia was one of our stops. They had just opened a new exhibit on a man named James Forten. Forten was a free black sailmaker who was born in 1766. Throughout his life, he became a very successful and wealthy business owner. Through his abilities as a business owner and his influence in the Philadelphia community, Forten and his descendants were leaders in the Abolitionist movement and the Philadelphia community as a whole.

Our Shop found this exhibit interesting on many levels. The first was the fact that Forten was a sailmaker. In the exhibit space, they recreated a section of a sailmaker’s workshop and stocked it full of materials and tools of the sail-making trade. Guests had the opportunity to pick up the tools, cut fabric with shears, and learn about Forten's work. They were able to bring some of the feel of a trade shop into a traditional museum setting, and guests seemed to really enjoy the ability to interact with the items. Ken mentioned to us how he observed the interpreters encouraging guests to interact with these objects, which is something I've been mimicking now back in the Anderson Forge.

We were also impressed by MOAR's ability to bring in objects from many sources to tell a comprehensive story. The exhibit was material culture heavy and featured a large array in type. They exhibited objects like a prisoner-of-war record which included Forten from his time serving in the Navy during the Revolution to a drop leaf table that the Forten family still owned. I enjoyed how they were able to take seemingly unrelated objects and patch them into the story of Forten's life and use examples related specifically to Forten.



Shears made for MOAR by former CW Blacksmith Chris Henkels

The Blacksmith is open Daily.

Bookbinder – Good day from the Bookbindery. It is with great sadness I write about a friend of the Bookbindery named Nolan. Nolan loved to visit Colonial Williamsburg with his family. His two favorite shops were the Gunsmith and the Bookbinder. His family visited this past week, without Nolan. I am sorry to say that Nolan passed away two months ago from complications brought on by Covid. They wanted to let us know. I had gotten to know them a little bit and felt comfortable telling his parents about my grandson, Julian, who has autism.

There are so many children who visit us here at Colonial Williamsburg who are on the Spectrum. In fact, quite a few families who homeschool have children on the spectrum. The first children diagnosed with what was termed Aspergers at the time, and is now ASD, were often noted to have a deep interest in History. If that is true, it's no wonder they find their way to us!

Small hands-on activities, tiny gifts, taking the time to smile and engage, warning folks before making a loud noise like hammering (in case they have noise sensitivity), offering a seat to someone who looks like it may be a help, these are all simple ways to create a welcoming space and engage with people on the spectrum.



We are so very lucky to be able to engage in people's lives like we do! If you are feeling discouraged, please know that the work you are doing is affecting lives in positive ways; ways you may never even know. My fellow Interpreters, you are making memories for people that matter.

From Nolan's Sister: *"Hey, thank you so much for your help with my brother. His eyes really lit up when we walked into your shop and he saw all of the paper, and it means a lot that you not only talked to him about bookbinding, but also shared some of the paper. Gestures like yours and the memories you helped us make mean so much."*

Our Best to You All.

The Bookbinder is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Cabinetmaker – The Cabinetmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday. Their Workshop will be held on Tuesday.

Carpenter – The Carpenters Yard is open Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cook – The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Monday, their Workshop will be held 10:00-11:00 followed by "Secrets of the Chocolate Maker" 11:30-2:30.

Cooper – One of the recent projects in the Cooper Shop has been the manufacture of several Artillery Buckets, or Sponge Buckets, for use by Military Programs. These buckets are part of the equipment that go along with a cannon, and hold the water used for swabbing out the barrel of the cannon between rounds



The Cooper is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Engraver – As usual, it has been a busy week for the Engravers. William is finishing up trade silver for the Silversmiths, cutting his copperplate, and cutting "Drummers Call" badges. Lynn is printing up some CW seals and will be testing out some watercoloring on them. She is also working on mugs for graduating Fifes and Drums members, repairing engraving, printing, and working with the Foundry on a few items.



The Engraver is open Sunday through Thursday.

Farmer – The Farmers will be at Ewing Field Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Fifes and Drums – The Fifes and Drums will be performing Wednesday through Friday at 4:40 pm in Market Square, Saturday at 12:30 pm starting at the Capitol and marching to the Palace, and Saturday at 1 pm on the Play House Stage.

Founder – This week at the Foundry saw Apprentice Drew give his first solo Hennage presentation; congrats and well done! If you missed it, and you're interested in the casting process of artillery mortars, make sure to catch one of his future presentations on alternate Saturday afternoons beginning April 22nd. We also opened the molds for our bronze and pewter Colonial Williamsburg seals. They came out great, and we're excited to see them all cleaned up.

The Foundry is open Sunday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Gardener – With the danger of a light frost still a possibility for another week or two, the Historic Gardeners must be careful not to plant out any seeds directly in the ground that would be harmed by sub-freezing temperatures. This gives us an opportunity to catch up on weeding, pruning, and other chores for which it will be difficult to find time once we are busy planting for summer. This week, we pruned the bay laurel, privet, and paw paw trees, and we cleared many weeds from the pathways. We harvested broccoli, lettuce, leeks, asparagus, parsley, and Welsh onions for the Historic Cooks at the Governor's Palace Kitchen. Several of the plants we started in the first hot bed were large enough this week to be moved into bigger pots and placed in the cold frame. In their place, we started seeds for the early frame melon, a historic melon variety that was developed for early season production in a protected hot bed or wooden frame. Many new blooms can be seen in the Historic Garden this week, including a number of ornamental flowers: eastern columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), English bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Spanish bluebells (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*), and calendula (*Calendula officinalis*), as well as many of our trees including pear (*Pyrus communis*), silverbell (*Halesia sp.*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), and paw paw (*Asimina triloba*).



Freshly weeded paths in the Historic Garden



Apprentice Historic Gardener Marc harvesting purple broccoli



A bountiful spring harvest from the Historic Garden



Eastern columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) in bloom

The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmith is open Sunday, Wednesday through Saturday.

Harpsichordmaker – We have the main action parts aligned for the new spinet. Now, we will begin some assembly, then prepare the oak walls. Come see it coming together.

And if you run into Ed, be sure to offer Congratulations! Ed Wright, Master Harpsichord Maker, began his work at CW in the Musical Instrument Shop on April 1, 1983, and is celebrating 40 years of working here! We are all so proud of all he has done and all of the accomplishments to come. Congratulations, Ed!



The Harpsichordmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Joiner – The Joiner is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).

Leather Breeches Maker – The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Masonry – This week, the Brickyard crew started preparing the site for the upcoming brickmaking season. This means the highly sought after task of shoveling out the old clay and leaves from the treading pit must be completed, and no-one was more excited for the task than Master Josh. We also received a visit from our friends in Coach and Livestock, who brought us two 3-week-old lambs. The spunky pair explored the Brickyard to their hearts content, with only a few escape attempts.

In other news, we also received our Brickyard t-shirts order, which will allow us to remain spiffy and identifiable out in town for restoration work.



The Brickyard is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Friday (12:00-5:00), and Saturday, weather permitting. On Saturday, April 8th, at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Masonry staff will present, “Who

Designed This Place?" Join Master Bricklayer Josh Graml as he explores how 18th-century buildings were designed and built as gentlemen architects plied their trade in Virginia. Where did they get their design inspirations, and how did they translate English architectural forms to Virginia-born tradesmen?

Military Programs – Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – March for the Milliners roared in like a lion ... and out like a thunderously deafening tiger! On Tuesday, we hosted the final "Trades Tuesday" Livestream, which saw our Shop transformed into a forest of cameras, screens, and wires monitored by six technicians. Quite a difference from our first go-round broadcasting from the Shop in April 2020, with Justin alone with his phone and tripod. We shared some stories from the 30 years of our "Gown in a Day" program and chatted with viewers about everything from 18th-century workdays to sewing quality expectations to sustainability in clothing to research methodology to the individualization of fashion. We've heard that viewership numbers topped the charts, so we're glad to know we helped send "Trades Tuesdays" out with a bang.

In other news, Kate's suit of ruffles and her new blue petticoat are nearly complete, and she's eagerly anticipating work to begin on her matching jacket next week. She's also continuing her research into the visual representation of Jewish dress and cultural traditions in the 18th century. Our NIAHD Intern, Ishbel, has been lending her hands to the child's silk petticoat for the new clothing exhibit, and has also accepted our offer to stay on as our Brickman Intern this summer. Rebecca continues work on her blue version of the Connecticut Historical Society cloak, in between keeping up with NAI homework and polishing the final versions of the training materials.

Janea has been pouring her energy into the early planning stages of the November 2024 CW "Symposium on Historical Dress: Collectors, Collecting, and Collaborations." Held in conjunction with our curatorial department, the conference will highlight the opening of the new textiles gallery and celebrate a number of key anniversaries in historical clothing at CW: the 90th year of "costumed" interpretation at our Museum, the 70th anniversary of the Margaret Hunter Millinery Shop, and the 40th anniversary of the practice of the trade of Mantua-making. In addition to two days of juried papers, the conference will also include a day of workshops and some special evening programming (like we would ever let an opportunity for a fashion show pass us by...). Stay tuned for more details as plans continue to progress.

Saturday (April 1st) marks our final presentation of "Disaster Strikes!" for Women's History Month.



The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Musket Range – We are preparing Alex and Andy for National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association training later this month. They are practicing their skeet shooting skills. To qualify as Instructors at the Musket Range, we learn to fire the rifle, shotgun, and pistol. The class is four days, where we also learn teaching and classroom development. We will also go through the National Rifle Association's Range Safety Officer class to be taught by Jeff, who is a Chief Range Safety Officer. We can't wait to finish this and have Andy and Alex join our Instructor Cadre.



The Musket Range is open Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm, and 3pm.

Printer – The Printer is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers will be working at the Leather Breeches Maker Tuesday through Saturday.

Silversmith – All of the Silversmiths have been busy working on the list of projects, both commissions and apprenticeship pieces. Megan is polishing her bowl, and it is coming along nicely. Chris' salver is also being polished and is shining up beautifully.



Bobbie is working on the wire rim for another salver. We have twelve more we need to make for a client.



Preston has been polishing more jewelry and a mote spoon for the retail shop, as well as making more small bowls.



George has been working on hammering out multiple ingots that will become small holloware pieces.



The Silversmith is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

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

Tin Plate Worker – The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – On the counterbalance loom, we have been working on a run of hand towels. The fabric is referred to as fustian because it's a combination of a linen warp and cotton weft. The combination of fibers provides durability and absorbency, which is ideal for toweling. The cotton weft is handspun by us, which is unusual. Typically, we do not weave with what we spin because we couldn't keep

ourselves busy. A weaver in the 18th century would have been supplied with yarn from many, many spinsters.

The Weaving Shop will be open Sunday through Wednesday, and Thursday (11:30-5:00).

Wheelwright – The Wheelwrights on Prince George Street have been working on a "market cart" for Coach and Livestock. This vehicle will be used in lieu of the golf cart to move feed to the various lots and to transport critters in style!



The Wheelwright Shop is closed April 2-14 for annual maintenance. On Monday, April 3rd, at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Wheelwrights will present, "A Primer on Paint". Long before humanity created villages and towns, there was paint. Paint serves not only as an aesthetic enhancer but as a means of preservation of wood and metal objects. Come join a Colonial Williamsburg Wheelwright on a journey following the science and history of this often-ignored part of our lives.

On Wednesday, April 5th, at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Wheelwrights will present, "The Road MORE Travelled". Williamsburg is known as a sleepy, quiet southern town, but what did it look like in its heyday? Join a Colonial Williamsburg Wheelwright as they take you onto the colonial Capitol's streets to discuss what was rolling and who was driving.

Wigmaker – Hello from the Wigmakers! We have nearly completed the items needed for "CW Lights", and we look forward to seeing everyone in their finery. We will soon turn our combs to the Doering Exhibition wigs. Benton has completed his Brigadier wig and will try it on someone's head soon to see how it looks. After it's completely styled, it will be on display in the Shop if you'd like to come by to see it. This is Benton's first full-size wig for his apprenticeship. Edith has started a new netted caul while she awaits delivery of the woven tape from our amazing Weavers for her Journeyman wig. Work also continues on the hairpiece for Anna R. We will soon be doing interviews for both a possible Junior Interpreter position and Summer Intern, so be on the lookout for new faces soon. As always, please feel free to reach out to us for any hair-related needs or questions.

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

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

Editor: Shari Monaco

Department of Historic Trades and Skills

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Contributors: Blacksmith – Joshua Rachita; Bookbinder – Barbara Swanson; Cooper – Jon Hallman; Engraver – Lynn Zelesnikar; Founder – Leanne Bellouny; Gardener – Teal Brooks; Harpsichordmaker – Ed Wright and Melanie Belongia; Masonry – Madeleine Bolton; Milliner and Mantua-maker – Rebecca Godzik; Musket Range – Jeffrey Thomas; Silversmith – Megan Cantwell; Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – Pamela Russo; Wheelwright – Paul Zelesnikar; Wigmaker – Debbie Turpin