

# THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

## March 25, 2023

*Apothecary* – While the Apothecary is closed for maintenance, Mark and Margaret are spending some time in London. Thanks to gift money, they will be visiting several medical museums to gain insight into the workings of the medical profession during the 18th century. They will also be going to the National Archives to search for information about Dr. Galt when he was in London in 1767. I'm sure they will have plenty to share upon their return. Sharon is spending time in the office catching up on paperwork to prepare for our Pharmacy Student Intern this summer. Even though Mark and Margaret are not here, she does have company. He doesn't say much, but he is amusing none-the-less. She is also spending time in the Library, working on the Galt-Barraud Daybooks. She has recently found some intriguing entries that Samuel Beall may have been treated for cancer.



From Margaret in London:

Mark and Margaret headed for London to visit sites related to the history of medicine. Among other exciting encounters, they ran into RCP Fellow Dr. Henry Oakeley at the Royal College of Physicians Museum, who gave a brief tour of some personal favorite apothecary jars there.



The Apothecary is closed March 26-31 for maintenance. It is open Saturday.

*Blacksmith* – Over the winter break, the Blacksmiths had the opportunity to tour some wonderful museums in the Philadelphia area. I have always admired Pennsylvanian ironwork; but being from Houston, Department of Historic Trades and Skills

Texas, I had never had the opportunity to see any in person. Over the last several years, one type of handle ornament for cooking utensils has caught my eye. It is a pierced heart handle that shows up from that area. My favorite version was a spatula that is seen in the *Iron at Winterthur* book. While touring Winterthur, we were able to see and hold the original one. It is always such a treat to see original work in person and to garner information about this work that is just not possible through a photograph. I've included a photo of the original at Winterthur and another of my attempt at the same style, while in progress. The trip to Pennsylvania was a great opportunity for me personally, as the newest Apprentice in the Shop, to get close and personal with so much original work in a small amount of time. I really feel like I understand the nature and habits in the work of our historical predecessors much more now.



**The Blacksmith is open Daily.**

***Bookbinder*** – Good day from the Bookbinders. Research, research, research. I was recently asked for some examples of literacy among 18<sup>th</sup>-century people other than the gentry. This is just a small portion of the research I have been accumulating over six years, with Bookbinder Intern Mary Hannah Grier greatly adding to this body of work during her tenure here. Thank you, Mary Hannah!

-In 1723, a group of anonymous enslaved people wrote to the Bishop of London asking that they be released from bondage and that their children be educated.

-Between the years of 1748 and 1759, Presbyterian Minister Samuel Davies recorded that he instructed enslaved men and women from each of his eight parishes to read. They in turn taught members of their family and community; after which, it spread throughout Virginia.

-Across all colonies, there are over 5,000 runaway ads that list the enslaved person as being able to read, write, or both.

-There were three other schools, besides William and Mary, in our town at various times:

- Started by Mary Page Whaley in 1696 in her backyard and named for her son, the Matthew Whaley School served the poor children of Williamsburg.
- The Brafferton School was established to teach indigenous boys to read, write, practice arithmetic, catechism, and the principles of Christian religion. Many later became ambassadors and translators.
- The Bray School for African Children taught both free and enslaved children from around Williamsburg and was a part of a greater network of schools. The curriculum

included reading, writing, arithmetic, and catechism. Some of these children were attached to trade shops in town.

-Trades people were often taught to read, write, and perform simple math.

-There are many examples of the enslaved conducting business on their master's behalf, keeping the books, and participating in the trade itself. Many people who were enslaved were adept at multiple trades. There are many examples of women and daughters conducting business in the shops, as well as participating in the trade itself.

-We also have evidence of indentured tradesmen being brought into plantations to train the enslaved in a trade or skill; and sometimes, the instruction included reading and writing.

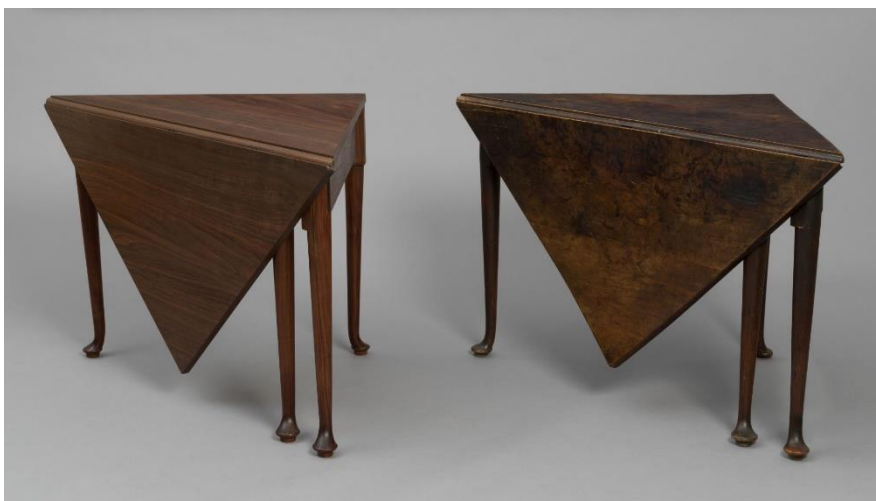
-There is archaeological evidence of over 200 writing slates under slave quarters at Monticello, with some also being found in the fields.

-There is also the fact that many of the enslaved men, women, and children who were brought here, already knew a trade or skill, and many were literate. Phillis Wheatley, a young poet who was enslaved, already knew her Arabic letters before she came here. For many of the enslaved in the early years, English is their 2nd or even 3rd language.

-And among most people, by this time, there is some knowledge that reading and writing are valuable skills. There is great evidence to suggest that when someone learned to read and write, they did not keep the information to themselves.

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

*Cabinetmaker* – Jeremy's corner table is back in the Shop this week after having several photos taken for archival purposes. Here are a few shots of it side by side with the original table. The reproduction is on the left in each photo with the original on the right. This reproduction is now living in the Shop and is available for sale out of the Shop. Photography by Jason Copes, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.





**The Cabinetmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.**

**Carpenter** – This week in the Carpenters Yard, we’ve focused our efforts on finishing new sawhorses for the upcoming projects and getting some interrupted sills and studs installed on the Brickyard drying house. The goal here is to install some exterior walls to help protect the staircase we will be installing later.



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

**Cook** – The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

**Cooper** – The Cooper is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. On Monday, March 27th, 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Coopers will present, “Tracing Adam Waterford”. Adam Waterford was a free Black man who worked as a cooper in Williamsburg around the time of the American Revolution. This program explores how we know that, and what else we know and don’t know about him, in a discussion of the documentary evidence that allows us to glimpse who Adam Waterford was.

**Engraver** – For the past two weeks in the Engraving Shop, William has been engraving on his ships copper plate and lots of trade silver that the Silversmiths have sent down. He even tried his hand at watercoloring one of his sea horses that he recently had a chance to finally print. Lynn has finished cleaning up a large pewter model that the Foundry has cast in pewter and will be using to cast in several other metals. She is also working on badges for the Fifes and Drums Corps’ up-and-coming “Drummers Call”. She has completed a request for a copper printing plate of a CW seal.



Test prints have been done, and a CW mark will be engraved next, and the printing continued. She is also finishing up recuts on the Boston Massacre plate.







**The Engraver is open Sunday through Tuesday, and Thursday.**

***Farmer*** – It’s the end of the second week in Farming’s new location, Ewing Field. Plowing has commenced to get the soil ready for a portfolio of crops grown in the 18th century. This year at Ewing, it will be tobacco, corn, cotton, barley, pumpkins, turnips, cowpeas, and we are even going to try indigo. A couple of days ago, Guest Earline Green visited us, and she was so impressed by what was happening. She told us that she saw her grandfather plowing with mules when she was growing up in Mississippi in the 1960’s. She said he never believed in this new tractor thing, and even when he was old, he kept a mule for plowing his garden. Amazing how the connective tissue of 200-plus years ago extends into the present! Earline saw us doing what her grandfather did - a window through time.



Earline Green with Historic Farmers Kevin Tobias and Ed Schultz

**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 time in Foundry news ... Journeyman Mike has completed work on the second pair of sterling silver shoe buckles for the ladies down in the Millinery Shop. These, too, are copies of buckles that were found on the Geddy site during the archaeology of the property. The pewter pattern for the Colonial Williamsburg seal has been completed, and we will be making molds and pouring one each in pewter, bronze, and sterling silver. Apprentice Leanne did some pattern modification/repair on a new project that came in this week. We will be making handles and brackets for an artillery bucket that the Coopers are making. For some reason, the originals were made in iron, which does not hold up well to water and gunpowder, so we will be casting these ones in bronze. Apprentice Drew finished up another order of 500 musket balls for the Musket Range. He also finished creating the PowerPoint slides for his upcoming Hennage Talk next week. Wish him luck as this is his first solo presentation. All three of us have been continuing the finishing work on the salt spoons, as well.



**The Foundry is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Wednesday, April 29th, 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Founders will present, “Casting a Bronze Mortar.” Join Apprentice Founder Drew to learn about the production of an 18th-century artillery mortar.**

***Gardener*** – As the weather warms up, lettuce is beginning to be harvested and removed from the Garden. Two rows were replaced with onion transplants (sowed in January in our coldframe), one yellow and the other red. A third row was sown with seed to compare to the transplants.

Trellises begin to make their appearance, which changes the Garden by adding elements of height. The peas are sown in February, and as they are now about four inches tall, it is time to give them something to climb on. The second hotbed has been filled with active hot compost and then covered with a layer of topsoil. Sowed into the Department of Historic Trades and Skills





hotbed were two types of dwarf French marigolds, hot peppers, tomato, basil, clove pinks, and Stokes Aster. Plants from the first hotbed are already being 'pricked' out of the hotbed and potted up to live in the cold frame until a space opens for them in the Garden.

We were visited this week by Darrin and the ox team, who delivered a load of hay with the leavings of sheep. All this contributes to our compost pile, which we depend on for all sorts of uses.

Fruit trees continue to bloom, and even though we have had three nights of very cold weather, they seem to be unscathed. We hope to see fruit on the pear trees this year, even though the squirrels make off with all the fruit. Spring is finally here!



PAUL SANDBY (1731-1809)

## Bob Nunn, one of the Duke's gardeners at the Great Lodge

c. 1752 - c. 1765

Pencil and watercolour | 23.6 x 15.3 cm (sheet of paper) | RCIN 914318

©Royal Collection Trust



Our Gardener is looking very much the part as a gardener. Note the blue apron!

**The Colonial Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.**



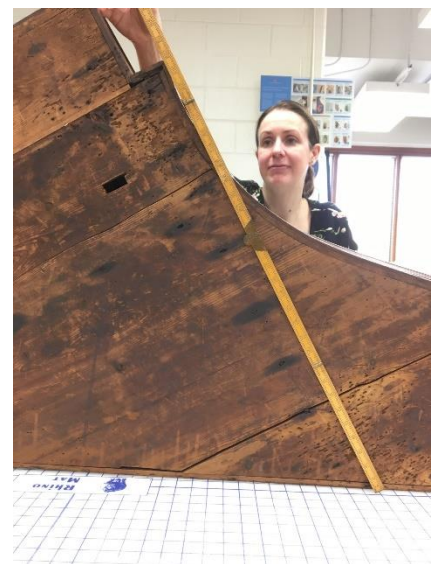
***Gunsmith*** – The Gunsmiths have continued with the reaming of Darrin's pistol barrels after being put on hold for a couple of weeks. We have put through eleven reaming bits so far, with possibly another six to go. Since Darrin is shaping these to be tapered octagon to round on the exterior, the tubes were necked down during the forging to help refine the taper. That produced a fairly small starting hole in which to start reaming. Pistols are usually larger in bore size than rifles, so these need to be enlarged to approximately .55 cal. The final bore size is yet to be determined.

Study material this week has been *Great British Gunmakers*, volumes 1 and 2, and *The Complete Handbook of Sandcasting* by C.W. Ammen.



**The Gunsmith Shop is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

***Harpsichordmaker*** – Ed and Melanie had the opportunity to visit the William Harris spinet in Collections earlier this week. Thank you to Amanda for making it happen! We did our preliminary study almost a year ago (hard to believe!). It was nice to revisit the instrument since we've started working on our new one. We took additional measurements, photos, looked at the old work and compared our plan of attack for the new spinet. We continue research on the Harris Family of harpsichordmakers, as well. Stop by anytime!



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

***Joiner*** – Greetings from the Joiner Shop! The tulips have bloomed in the garden behind the Shop, and Spring has arrived. The Joiners are busy with a variety of projects as we move into the Spring season. Brian is finishing up his copy of the pilaster from Smith's Fort in Surry County, Virginia. Peter is carving and coping the moldings on his arched framing pieces for his reproduction arched doorway from Menokin. Scott has been fitting tenons and coping moldings on his raised-panel door parts for his reproduction Eastern Shore corner cupboard. The door frame is assembled, and the next step is to raise the panels and fit them into the openings. Laura is focused on laying out, cutting, and fitting dovetails for a drawer for her workbench.



**The Joiner is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

***Leather Breeches Maker*** – Greetings from the Leather Breeches Makers! The past several weeks have been busy settling into a routine with our newly opened trade. We are enjoying the company of our tenants, the Shoemakers, greatly. Workwise, Master Jay is making a pair of deerskin breeches for Shop display, and Apprentice Emma is making a pair for a co-worker in the Masonry Trade. This pair of breeches, made from Department of Historic Trades and Skills



deerskin, will help get her even closer to her Journeyman papers. Behind the Shop, the crabapple tree has bloomed, and spring has come to the little stream with visits by ducks and songbirds.



Apprentice Emma doing a final fitting, making sure the knees lay right and double checking where the garter will sit.



Crabapple tree in bloom beside our Shop

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

***Masonry*** – This week in the Brickyard, the crew continued their work on unstacking the kiln, while the Apprentices delved deeper into the prep work for tile making this summer. Apprentice Nick uncovered more information from the 18th century, which was in the original French text. Master Steve of the Tin Plate Worker Shop was gracious enough to help us out, for which we are grateful. Apprentice Madeleine measured the existing tile fragments from the Archaeology Collection to create a mold size. These measurements were taken to the Blacksmith Shop, where Apprentice Josh will undertake the task of creating the mold. With the measurements and a reference from the Ballenberg Museum in Switzerland, which the Apprentices visited last December, it should be quite a task indeed.



**The Brickyard is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday, weather permitting.**

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

**Milliner and Mantua-maker** – The Milliner/Mantua-makers have been quite busy in the last few weeks! As a Shop, we have been interviewing candidates for the Brickman Summer Internship as well as continuing to present our Hennage programs – “Disaster Strikes!” (Saturdays at 4:30 pm) and “She Had on When She Went Away” (Thursdays at 1:30 pm).

Apprentice Kate has made progress on a suit of ruffles for a jacket and petticoat, the latter of which is nearly finished being hemmed. She’s particularly excited to get started on the jacket, which will be a project that calls for the entirety to be pieced from 40” of fabric. Wish her luck! Journeywoman Rebecca has been keeping the rest of the Shop well-informed of the things she is learning in her 16-week NAI course as well as overseeing the work of our Junior Interpreter and making a short cloak out of a beautiful blue wool. Mistress Janea has been working on a yellow silk petticoat for the upcoming Mary D. Doering Exhibit at the Art Museum. The petticoat will go on display with a child’s yellow silk damask gown, for which the Shop will also be making a bibbed apron and ruffles.

This Friday, we had the pleasure of welcoming a Guest to the Shop who brought with her a beautiful antique fan, which we believe to date from the 1780s. We spent a delightful morning trading time spent in front of the rest of the Guests and behind the scenes examining the fan and trying to uncover its secrets. We hope to be able to tell you more soon!

**The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (9:30-3:00). On Saturday, April 1st, 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Milliners will present, “Disaster Strikes! The Cost of Dressing in 1769.” It’s 1:00 am, and you’ve just escaped your burning house with only the nightclothes on your back and the slippers on your feet. What would it take to rebuild the “average” woman’s wardrobe? How many pieces might that include? What would those pieces cost? Using a 1769-70 merchant’s account book from Louisa County, Virginia, the Milliners and Mantua-makers will demonstrate the layers of a woman’s everyday outfit and discuss the number of garments and other pieces that might comprise her full wardrobe.**

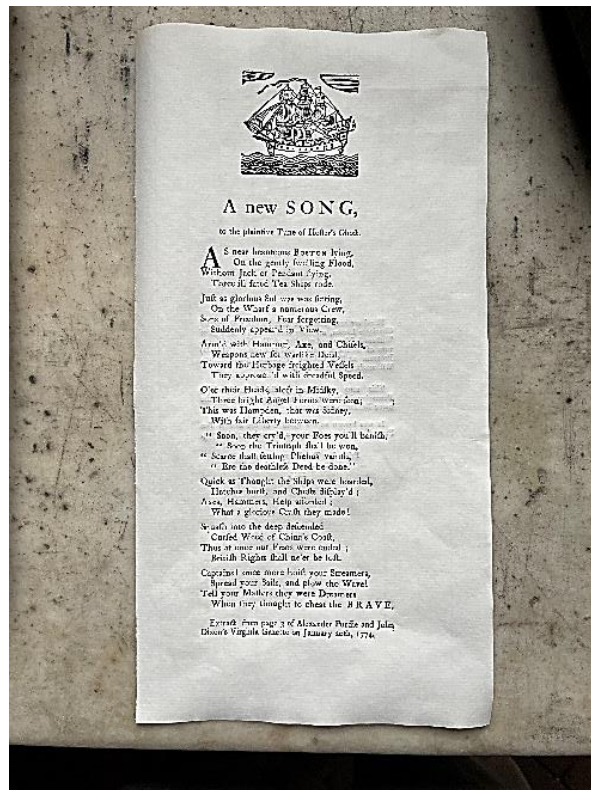
**Music – On Friday, March 31st, 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, members of the Music staff will present, “Phillis Wheatley and the Music of Freedom”. Join the Governor’s Musick in an exploration of the**



inconsistencies of the Age of Enlightenment ideal of freedom, as seen through the life and poetry of Phillis Wheatley and the music of George Frederic Handel.

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

*Printer* – Charlotte Larsen making the press ready for a run of the song she has set.



The Printer is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

*Silversmith* – Spring is here, and the Silversmiths are very happy to have the nice weather, and most importantly, sunlight to work by. Megan has filed the excess solder off of her small bowl and has begun to polish it. Bobbie is working on the rim for another salver, her bread basket, and letter charms. Chris is polishing her tray with fine abrasive powder. Preston has been working on his bowls and polishing more trade silver, as well as fitting handles to the wooden lids of our water and pickle tubs. George has been working on camp cups and has poured a new spoon tin for sinking the bowls of our teaspoons.



An ingot of this size is more than enough to make this style of bowl that Preston and Megan are each creating.



Bobbie's trade silver



Chris sprinkling abrasive powder on her tray for polishing.





George secured the spoon punch with tongs and wire over a copper bowl then poured liquid tin in to cast a new spoon tin (left). The new spoon tin with the perfectly matched spoon punch (right)

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

*Tailor* – Mr. Logue, Apprentice, has been quilting fabric for a waistcoat for Mrs. Harris, Journeyman Blacksmith. Mr. McCarty, Journeyman, has begun a pair of white silk satin breeches that will be used in the upcoming Mary D. Doering Exhibit at the Art Museum.

Mr. Logue and Mr. McCarty spent Thursday morning collecting firewood for the Shop with some help. While the weather will continue to get warmer, we will still need hot coals to heat our irons all summer long!



**The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.**

*Tin Plate Worker* – The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

*Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer* – Our first Dye Day of the year couldn't have been better! The dyes gave us beautiful, bold colors and allowed us to interpret the complexity and importance of dyes in the 18th

century. We got a wide variety of shades that truly dazzled! With the colors we had, we were able to get greens, reds, pinks, oranges, and blues.



**The Weaving Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.**

**Wheelwright – The Wheelwright Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

**Wigmaker** – Hello from the Wigmakers! These last couple of weeks, we have welcomed many, many Guests as the weather has improved. Edith has woven several rows of hair for her Journeyman wig. Benton has removed his Brigadier wig from the block and is currently applying the last row to the outside edge, to cover up the last of the binding. Debbie continues to weave human hair for a set of lady's curls for colleague Anna R. Work on wigs for "CW Lights" also continues. Once those wigs and hairpieces are completed, we will turn our combs and curling sticks toward the display pieces needed for the upcoming Mary D. Doering Exhibit at the Art Museum. As always, please feel free to reach out to us with any hair care needs or questions.



Benton's wig, off the blockhead



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

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

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