

# Colonial Williamsburg

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation  
P.O. Box 1776  
Williamsburg, Va. 23187-1776  
[colonialwilliamsburg.org](http://colonialwilliamsburg.org)

## 2023 Working Wood in the 18th Century Conference Welcomes Attendees In-Person and Virtually Jan. 26-29

*In its 25th year, conference explores ornamentation in woodwork with special guest presenters Brock Jobe, Mary May, Frank Strazza and Jerome Bias*

Colonial Williamsburg's 25th Annual  
WORKING WOOD  
IN THE 18TH CENTURY

A VERY GOOD EFFECT:  
ORNAMENTING  
18TH CENTURY WOODWORK  
January 26 - 29, 2023

Colonial Williamsburg

Both virtual & in-person registrations available  
Registration launching fall, 2022!

Image courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Nov. 18, 2022) – Colonial Williamsburg invites woodworking enthusiasts, craftspeople and scholars to delve into the world of ornamentation with a special 25th anniversary edition of the annual [Working Wood in the 18th Century Conference](#), Jan. 26 – 29, 2023. Offered both virtually and in-person, this year's conference will explore the techniques, people, and stories behind ornamentation in woodwork. Guest presenters include professor and author Brock Jobe, professional woodcarver Mary May, nationally recognized furniture maker Frank Strazza, and author and woodworker Jerome Bias. Additional

information, including agenda and pricing information, are available at [colonialwilliamsburg.org/working-wood](http://colonialwilliamsburg.org/working-wood).

“Much like today, ornament is what really gives a piece of 18th-century woodwork its personality,” said Bill Pavlak, master cabinetmaker at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, “Details like inlay or carving provide a great deal of insight into the material culture of the era by teaching us not only about the tools and techniques of the time, but also about what the people using and creating these pieces valued and enjoyed.”

Presentation highlights include:

- Opening Keynote by professor and author **Brock Jobe** on 18th-century cabinet shops in London, Boston & Philadelphia, generously sponsored by the *Early American Industries Association*.
- Professional woodcarver **Mary May** demonstrating techniques using the carved details on the pediment of a Philadelphia high chest, as well as delivering the banquet keynote address on Saturday evening
- Furniture maker **Frank Strazza** on 18th-century marquetry.
- Author and woodworker **Jerome Bias** exploring furniture design by Thomas Day, an antebellum free black man who is often regarded as the most successful cabinetmaker in North Carolina; generously underwritten by *Society of American Period Furniture Makers*.
- Colonial Williamsburg’s Anthony Hay Shop Cabinetmakers Bill Pavlak (Master Cabinetmaker) and John Peeler (Apprentice Cabinetmaker) on sculpting a Rhode Island bureau table.
- Brian Weldy, journeyman-supervisor joiner at The Colonial Williamsburg Joiner Shop, on fluted pilasters, generously underwritten by *North Bennet Street School*.
- Peter Hudson, apprentice joiner at The Colonial Williamsburg Joiner Shop, on reconstructing a paneled portico.
- Furniture Conservator at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Chris Swan on japanning.
- Colonial Williamsburg Apprentice Carpenter Harold Caldwell on African-inspired carvings.
- Tara Chicirda, curator of furniture at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, on the inlay and marquetry of a southwest Virginia maker.

Scholarships, special pre-conference programs, a woodworking showcase, and a tool swap [are available](#) for in-person attendees only, as are [special room rates](#) at Colonial Williamsburg hotels for conference registrants. [Guest and companion programs](#) are available for specific activities and should be registered for in advance.

In-person registration is \$395 per person and includes presentations, evening receptions, conference dinner, continental breakfasts, and coffee breaks. Virtual-only registration is \$150 per person and includes access to all general session presentations through the conference streaming platform. Both in-person and virtual-only registration include a seven-day ticket voucher to Colonial Williamsburg’s Art Museums and Historic Area, valid for redemption through Dec. 31, 2023. Registration and payment in full are required by Jan. 1, 2023.

The 2023 Working Wood in the 18th Century Conference is made possible thanks to the generosity of lead sponsors the Early American Industries Association and the Society of

American Period Furniture Makers with additional support provided by North Bennet Street School and Lie-Nielson Toolworks Inc.

Additional information and registration is available at [colonialwilliamsburg.org](http://colonialwilliamsburg.org) by visiting the “Learn” section and clicking “Conferences,” and by calling 1-800-603-0948 toll-free or via email at [educationalconferences@cwf.org](mailto:educationalconferences@cwf.org). Follow Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and @colonialwmsburg on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Media contact: Ellen Morgan Peltz  
757-220-7287  
[epeltz@cwf.org](mailto:epeltz@cwf.org)

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*The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia’s 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization; philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and operations sustain its educational programs and preservation initiatives.*

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