

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

December 4, 2020

Apothecary - “This past Tuesday was our first day at the Raleigh Tavern. We had just over ninety people stop and visit with us. We thought that was very good as the weather was cold and windy, and we did not see that many guests on the street.

“Sharon found an interesting entry in our site records relating to veterinary medicine. Guests ask if 18th-century apothecaries treated animals. On May 9, 1797, there is an entry for selling a medicine for a horse. The medicine listed was normally prescribed for humans. To date, this is the only reference of this type that she has found in our records.

“On May 15, 1784, there is an entry that Matthew Anderson paid part of his bill with two trusses. The value was £1. Ken Schwarz affirmed that Matthew Anderson was the head of the Public Leatherworks during the Revolution. His brother was James Anderson. This is helpful as we have been searching for documentation on where items such as this were sourced. We now have one pre-war and one post-war piece of documentation.

“Mark has been diligently working on an article for modern medical professionals and those specializing in the history of pharmacy. This is part of his career track and was written before the need for blogs became apparent. He recently had a blog posted as well. Take a few minutes to see it. Robin has been working on details for our first livestream at the Shop. It will be aired this next week on Tuesday at 2:00 pm.

“We are also attaching some pictures for those of you interested in woodworking, delft, furniture, or art. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam has a beautiful cabinet that dates to 1730 and contains a replica of a miniature apothecary. It is believed to have been made in Amsterdam, which had a prestigious reputation for cabinetmaking in the 18th century. The cabinet contains 198 miniature glass jars and bottles, 92 delft containers that were made in the same manner as the full-size jars, 30 drawers, 16 boxes, 22 barrels and pots, 10 earthenware flasks, secret drawers, a secret compartment, and at least 3 paintings from the 17th century. There are numerous drawers with dozens of materials that were used in compounding. It also features a Latin motto for apothecaries that translates: ‘Devotion, knowledge, patience, vigilance, and continual study are the virtues of the apothecary.’ Maybe we should post that somewhere. If anyone has a benefactor that can send you to Amsterdam after the pandemic, the Rijksmuseum might be worth your time to visit. They have other collector’s cabinets and at least one that features a doll house. In the meantime, our Library is purchasing a copy of the book that details the history and contents of the cabinet. Ask for: ‘Van Duin, Paul ed. *The Collector’s Cabinet with Miniature Apothecary’s Shop*. Lenoirschuring: Amsterdam, 2017.’ Our apologies that this was published three years ago, and we are just now mentioning it, but we just found out about it in one of our pharmacy history journals.”



Armoury:

Blacksmith - "The Blacksmith Shop is alight this week, with fire and hammers and things that squeak. The Christmas wreath is hung on the door so all may notice and adore; wooden smiths trade blow for blow, forging out a tiny hoe. Mark carved the figures and machine. Aislinn assembled it neat and clean. Broadus knocked the hoe to shape, and Alex brought holly to drape. Many thanks to the Shoemaker, valiant Val, who grabbed a wreath for our locale. Other projects took shape elsewhere: Mark, Broadus, and Alex too, replaced

the tuyere with one quite new. For those that might not be aware, the tuyere is the nozzle conveying air. Fires erode it degrees, eventually it starts to wheeze. If your fire will not behave: the tuyere may be on the way to the grave. Ken's hinges are in the books. Mark finished knives for cooks. Aislinn's brick hammers are polished and ground. Owen's rivets are nice and round. Alex tackles a broad hoe. Broadus has latches out to show. Whatever the reason, every season: all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil."

Brickyard - "The kiln has cooled off enough to the point that the Brickmakers were able to start pulling down the outer casing. We've exposed some underfired salmon bricks, which is normal. We've yet to get into the red stuff nearer the center. Kenneth's experimental rubbing bricks survived unscathed, and we've already learned a thing or two about how to improve them next time. We've also got some really fine brick dust if anyone's looking for some to polish up metal."

Cabinetmaker - "This past week, Bill has made major headway with his table build. The turned elements of the legs are now glued to the joined parts, which are slowly starting to coalesce into a table shape. John continues to work on the case of the apothecary chest and has started to plan the presentation he will give with Jeremy about the chest. Jeremy continues to craft the drawers for the chest - small work but needing much concentration. This year, we are taking advantage of the digital medium of our annual 'Working Wood Conference' to record and photograph our process, to better demonstrate the topics each piece has to offer. Ed and Melanie have gotten major elements of their spinet together recently, including gluing the jack rail to the wrest plank, and installing the assembly to the case of the instrument. More parts will continue to be fitted, and soon the task of sawing and installing the keyboard will be upon them."

Colonial Garden - "This week, the Gardeners completed the job of turning the first compost pile, a job best saved for the cooler time of year. This new pile will become the potting soil that is used next season to cap off our composting manure in the hotbeds, pot up tulips, tuberose, and anything that we desire to show off in a flowerpot. A second pile awaits to be turned that contains materials that need another year to compost and break down. All this turning makes space for another pile that we will begin to build over the winter and next year. Our compost piles are made up of leaves, straw, hay, manure from Coach & Livestock, and any Garden debris that is not a noxious weed, etc. This activity attracts birds that come to feed on the copious amounts of earthworms that are unearthed."



The turning of the compost pile

The front fence of the Garden was festooned with pine roping, and the first wreath of this festive season was hung on our storage shed. We wait in anticipation for the second wreath that will hang on the tool shed as it is promised to be a fine creation emanating from the hands of the Apprentice Gardeners.



Teal hangs her wreath that she decorated.

Warmer than usual temperatures were pushed out by a downpour on Friday. A powerful cold front cooled the air following a mighty rain. The downpour caught many off guard. Our Volunteer, Chip, retreated to a dry and socially distanced tool shed during the deluge. Huge puddles were left in the wake of the storm.



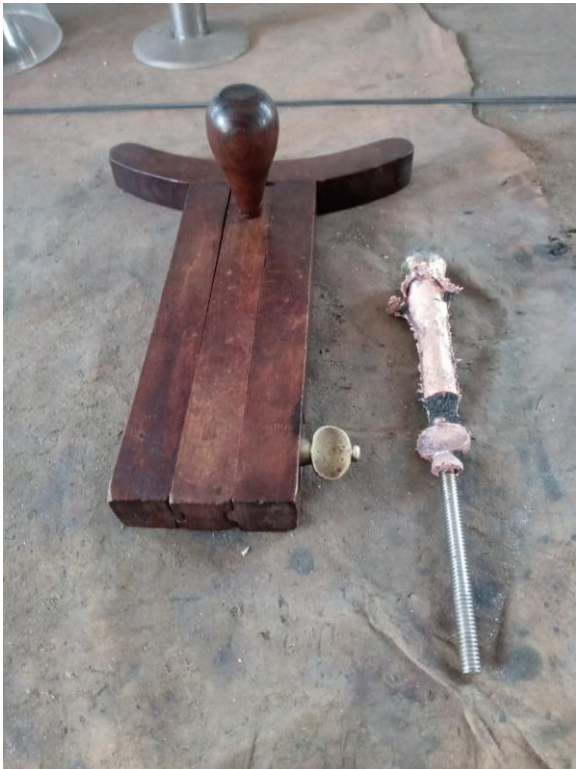
Chip peeking out to see if he can cross the river



The calm after the storm

Our major occupation continues to be weeding and tidying up. We planted the last of our flowers to replace the ones that a rabbit consumed overnight. Netting has now become a necessity to keep any kind of Garden."

Foundry - *"We are casting brass hardware for a tool for the Tailors, and we are continuing to work on harpsichord hinges and Brickyard tools."*



Historic Farming - *"Prentis Field has been plowed using Eli the Horse. It will be plowed again so that guests can see this interesting process. The Wheelwrights have moved into the front part of the Ludwell-Paradise Stable, and Farming's equipment is now in the back of the building. Ed can use the area up front when the Wheelwrights are not working there, but most of his work is outdoors in the Field."*

Milliner and Mantua-maker - “The Milliners and Mantua-makers offer their most sincere apologies for their absence from this publication over the past few weeks. We have been most industriously engaged in a variety of projects, many of which you have already glimpsed through the reporting of some of the Trades with whom we have partnered for them!

“The week prior to Thanksgiving, we were preparing the wardrobe for a new ‘dressing’ video that was filmed the Tuesday before last. With the assistance of the indomitable team that brought us the wildly popular gentleman's dressing video - Mike McCarty and Justin Chapman - we created a lady's companion version that showcased the pieces that contribute to an everyday ‘middling’ woman's fashionable ensemble. A shift and silk quilted petticoat were altered to fit our taller model, Brooklyn. Rebecca supplied a new cloak and a gown cut for her, and Janea covered and trimmed a new hat. We'd especially like to thank Apprentice Wigmaker Edith for creating the beautiful hairstyle that completed the look!

“Our wedding gown program at the Museum is now in full swing! Progress has been steady and satisfying! On our first Saturday, we completed the back of the sack gown, the stomacher (with covered buttons), half of the sleeves, and much of the petticoat. Rebecca also finished cutting the gown lining from the ‘pattern’ gown, so that this Saturday can be devoted to cutting and finishing the front of the gown bodice and skirts. On our non-Museum days, we've been working on all of the millinery for the outfit, including the treble lace elbow ruffles, the figured silk cloak, and the elaborate lace ‘collar.’ We caught a teaser of the hairstyle the Wigmakers have conjured as well. It's thrilling to see the entire portrait coming together. If you're in the area of the Museum, please do stop by to see our progress and compare it with the ‘source’ portrait, which the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts has generously permitted us to have reproduced to the original size to display while we work. Stay tuned for pictures next week!”

Printer and Bookbinder - “Good day to one and all! And now, a brief introduction to the Bookbindery Wreath, 2020 Edition!

We are proud of the many hands which created this display. This year was all-hands-on-deck to include the staff of both the Printing Office and Bookbindery, with special guest star Felicity Meza-Luna of the Library rounding out the team. Thank you to everyone!!

William Hunter, Jr., son of William Hunter, Sr., followed in his father's footsteps and became a Printer of the Virginia Gazette. He worked alongside John Dixon in a thriving business on the spot where we now work. He hid his Loyalism throughout most of the war, and served in the Continental Army, before fighting for Cornwallis at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781. We chose to honor his decision to fight for his convictions, alongside many other Virginians, by proudly displaying King George III and his wife, Charlotte, surrounded by a colonial version of Tudor Roses.

They are overseeing a sampling of authors and writers throughout the lands they ruled, men and women both, black and white, free and enslaved, and Native American. We have included one book with the title, Anonymous. We dedicate this book to a great multitude of people who could have and should have been writers and authors themselves, had they been born into a different time, or monetary circumstances, or had a different skin color.

The authors we chose to highlight on our little books are as follows:

Benjamin Banneker: Free African American Almanac author, surveyor, landowner, and farmer

Aphra Behn: Playwright, poet, translator, and fiction writer

Olaudah Equino: English-Nigerian writer and abolitionist, who purchased his freedom.

Hannah Glasse: English cookery writer, wrote the best-selling cookbook of the 18th-century, The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy

Samson Occam: Presbyterian cleric, Author, and member of the Mohegan Nation in Connecticut

Catherine Parr: Author, and wife of Henry VIII

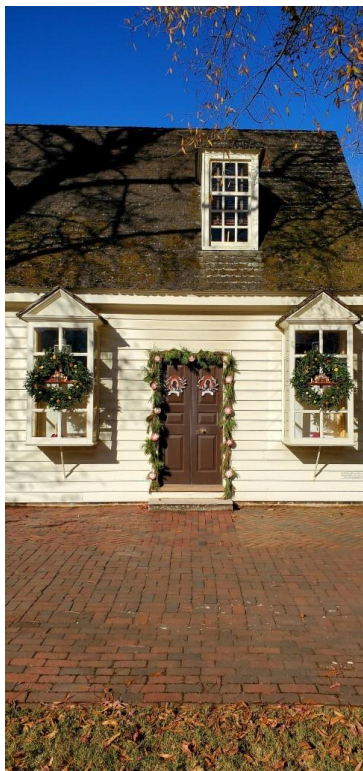
Joseph Plumb Martin: Soldier of the Revolutionary War who wrote his memoirs

Susanna Rowson: British-American novelist, poet, playwright, religious writer, stage actress, educator, first woman geographer, supporter of female education, wrote against slavery

Ignatius Sancho: Born into enslavement, Ignatius became the first black man to vote in a British election. He was a writer of essays, an author, an abolitionist, and a composer.

Phillis Wheatley: Enslaved African American female poet, who later became free.

Mary Wollstonecraft: English writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights





These remarkable people will remain on my mind as I research their lives, read their works, and really seek to hear what they have to teach me.

Finally, good day to you all, and Happy Holidays from the Printing Office and Bookbindery!"

Public Leather Works - "December. The home stretch of 2020 is upon us and The Agents of Leather are embracing the final weeks of the year with an unrivaled enthusiasm. Having emerged from the traditional turkey coma of last week, the Agents have thrown themselves into several new projects. Apprentice Agent Andrew has almost completed the first of the valises for the Tin Shop and will soon have the second underway. He also greets you all with his usual enthusiasm. Journeyman Agent Jan has completed the patterning of his leather breeches and is now underway with the construction. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the goal is to have them finished before Christmas. Master Agent Jay is working on a run of pocketbooks and overseeing the controlled chaos that is The Public Leather Works. In addition to their various bench work, the Agents are also brainstorming ideas for future digital content as well as opportunities for virtual programming and distance education.

"Finally, we at the Public Leather Works would ask that you all take a moment on Monday, December 7th to remember the men and women who died during the attack on Pearl Harbor."



Shoemaker - “After six months in the Armoury, the Shoemakers have returned to our little Shop. We’d like to thank the Armoury staff for sharing their space with us, and we look forward to returning in the spring. We’d also like to thank Paul for replacing the broken leg on the shoe bench we’ll be using at the Raleigh!

“We’ll be interpreting to the public inside the Raleigh Tavern on Saturdays, but we have plenty of projects to keep us busy behind the scenes. There are currently fourteen people on our list to get new shoes, slippers, and boots. If you have handmade shoes that need to be repaired, you can drop them off at the Shoe Shop office (basement of the Greenhow Brick Office) Tuesday-Saturday. Please tie them together and put a piece of paper inside with your name and contact information.

“Since several of our colleagues will be receiving their first pair of handmade shoes this winter, we thought we’d share a few tips for caring for your shoes in the upcoming ‘Mechanick’s Advisers.’

Breaking in your new shoes: The bark tanned leather we use typically breaks in within a day just by wearing and sweating into them. However, since our feet don’t sweat nearly as much in the winter, the break-in process will take a bit longer. If you wish to speed up that process, we suggest taking a walk in the rain, or pouring a small amount of water in each shoe and swish it around before putting them on and going on a walk. DON’T dry your shoes next to a fire or modern heat source! This can cause the leather to dry out and crack. Instead, stuff them with rags or newspaper and let them dry slowly. While it doesn’t take too long for the shoes to be broken in, sometimes it’s our feet that need a little time to adjust to leather shoes. This is especially true if the wearer tends to wear cushy or padded shoes, or lots of memory foam in their modern shoes. Those modern materials weaken our foot muscles over time because they can prevent the muscles from getting the exercise they need to build and maintain strength. Real leather shoes aren’t cushy, but they conform to the wearer’s foot making them very comfortable and healthy for our feet. Next edition we’ll talk about cleaning and conditioning your shoes.

Our Shop wreath, ‘The Shoemaker and the Elves,’ depicts the traditional division of labor employed by shoemakers. First a Clicker cuts out the parts, then a Closer sews the uppers. The shoemaker builds the shoe around a wooden last, and a Ragger does the cleaning and finishing work. As in the fairy tale, our elf is making the shoe. He’s wearing a shoemaker’s apron and a hand leather (used for pulling stitches tight). He has a stirrup strap to hold the shoe on his knee, an awl for the sewing, and shoemaker’s thread tipped with boar’s bristles. If our guests aren’t here on Saturdays, they can at least see our trade in miniature!”



Silversmith – “Winter has arrived, and the Silversmiths opened up their first interpretation to the public in the new Trades space at the Raleigh Tavern. Our first day was on Monday the 30th of November, and it was a success. While the post-Thanksgiving Day attendance was customarily slow, we still had enough guests to gauge a successful implementation of our new interpretive mode.

“Work continues at the Golden Ball Building and Kitchen. Journeyman Chris and Apprentice Parker continue exhibiting chasing and repousseé at the Art Museum on Wednesdays, featuring the creation of new bottle tags based on examples from the Museum’s Collection, as well as a small tumbler in the model of the infamous Jefferson Cups at Monticello, chased with an acanthus leaf motif at the base. Meanwhile, the new chasing and enameling workspace in the Golden Ball Kitchen continues to take shape.”



The Trades space in the Raleigh Tavern – the Trade shown is the Tinsmith.

Weaver – “We have just finished both runs of sampling on our student looms behind the scenes. This sampling has been very informative for our future overshot project! We hope

to have the overshot project on our counterbalance loom within just a few short weeks, so you should be able to see it if you come to visit the Shop soon. As for our sampling fabric itself, we have begun sewing them into ornaments that you should shortly see down at the Prentis Store and in our own Shop.”



[Wheelwright](#) - “The Wheelwrights have moved! Please visit us at the Ludwell-Paradise Stable on Nicholson Street, Sunday through Wednesday.”