

# “THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

## for February 3 - 9

### Armoury:

**Blacksmith** – “At the forge, the coal is piled high against the polar vortex, and the anvil has been in a tepid mood. Nonetheless, bench dogs, shutter dogs, spoons, slide bolts, spits, door pulls, hammers, and punches have manifested.”

**Tin Shop** – “Hardly able to see their frozen work for clouds of exhalation, they have yet produced arm bands and camp kettles. Also this week, Joel visited the Pluckemin Artillery Cantonment in Chestertown, MD, to study the archeological collection.”

**Cabinetmaker** – “Hello from the Cabinetmakers! Bill and Brian continue to work on the two tea tables while also reorganizing the shop and finishing up outstanding projects. We’re going to display more carving and moulding samples. John continues to gather tools, making a shooting board and a box for his sharpening stones. Melanie is sawing out holly parts for some harpsichord jacks.”

**Colonial Garden** – “The week began with the ever-important task of collecting fresh horse manure for our hotbed. Borrowing the Trades’ truck, the Gardeners, with the aid of Ed Schultz, visited both the Bypass and Patrick Henry pastures to collect the leavings that will heat our first hotbed of the season. To aid in the heating, we mix the fresh horse manure with hay from the sheep, which contain urine and manure that help start the compost process. That was on Monday; today the pile is 95F, and it is Thursday. We expect the pile to reach over 130F. Once the temperature starts declining, we will turn the pile. Once there is a decline again, we will shovel the pile into the awaiting hotbed. The frame will be insulated with baled straw covered in Rye long straw. We wait for another heat, and when the temperature comes down to 90F, we open the frame and cover the compost with 4” of soil. That layer slows the heat down and preserves it, we hope, for four weeks. During that four weeks, we plant our seeds in the hotbed to germinate.

“No doubt we have had some cold temperatures this week but nothing abnormal. As long as we don’t get single digits, we will be fine. The Garden is still green, stop by for a look at what is growing. And in another week or so, we go for another haul of brown gold for our second hotbed. Spring is coming ever closer. Stay warm.”

**Foundry** – “The Foundry is right in the middle of casting our door hinges for Carter's Grove. We've also begun the finishing work. Brass castings come out best with large gates/sprues, which can take a while to file down. Casting brass is exciting to watch and we're doing it quite a bit this winter, so come by some time, and we'll let you know when we're doing the next one.”







**Gunsmith** – “Here in the Gunsmith Shop, it's been a pretty productive week for us. Richard is making silver mounts for a set of pistols and filing them up to get them ready to be stocked. The big news this week is that Eric's rifle barrel was finished then strapped to a large proofing block of wood and proof tested - twice. It passed the proof test. A huge milestone from forging the barrel, reaming it to proper bore size, rifling it, finish shaping and filing the exterior, and then forging and fitting the breech plug. It's a solid 100-man hours of labor into a barrel tube. Darrin made a set of wood patterns and then set the sand mold, followed by casting the brass mounts for a rifle. They're now being cleaned up and filed.”

**Joiner** – “The Joinery is a flurry of activity this week. The Apprentices are working on a number of projects: finishing a revolving table; planing moldings into rails and stiles for a door; planing and fitting molding for a cupboard; and repairing a drawer for their colleagues at the Blacksmith.”

**Silversmith** – “Bobbie has been working primarily on the bell this week. Chris has been working on a batch of mourning rings. Lynn has been engraving trade silver for transfer to the Golden Ball. George is raising a silver mug and working through a multitude of spoons, while Preston has several small bowls in various stages of production. Parker continues raising his two silver beakers. William continues to practice his chatelaine engraving.”