

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

for August 12 - 18

Colonial Garden – This week, the Gardeners have had quite a busy few days despite the large amount of rain followed by intense heat. The paw paw trees have had their first ripe fruit, much to our delight. When a paw paw fruit is ripe it falls right off the tree and is only good for a few days before it turns, so collecting them as soon as possible is a must. They taste halfway between a mango and a banana and are quite delicious, both to us and the squirrels, so we’ve been sure to collect them every morning before the critters get to them. The celery was ready to be blanched. Blanching is done to make the plant sweeter. Today, many modern varieties of celery are self-blanching, however, ours is not. In order to blanch our celery, we uprooted several of the plants, trimmed off most of their leaves, tied the stems tightly together, dug trenches about 8 inches down, and buried everything but the very top of the leaves in long mounds. They will remain in the ground for a number of days. This will prevent light from reaching the stems, resulting in a lighter color and less bitterness. We also harvested elderberries, tomatoes, beans, beets, basil, and a citron melon for the Kitchens. Plans are being made for the fall Garden, and plans to catch a rogue groundhog are also in the works. The groundhog has eluded our first trap, but it did catch a squirrel. Hopefully, this scenario with the groundhog will not repeat itself over and over. If we see Bill Murray, we will let you know.

Joinery – This week in the Joinery, the Apprentices have taken to their newest assignment with determination! Each of them is going to construct a hanging cupboard based only upon photographs. To this end, they are busy creating scale drawings, which will help them put together lists for the materials required. The drawings are coming together, and the Apprentices are hoping to have their cutting lists prepared by the end of the week.

Military Programs – Military Programs continues musket training, interpretive training, and conducting drill to both train new staff members and hone our existing skills. Also, we are beginning a new iteration of the "Necessity of Order in Battle" program by modifying our artillery portion to include moving the artillery forward in the field as well as providing matross support. A matross is a low-ranking member of the artillery who assists in moving the artillery, and protects the gun and gunners with musket fire.

Wigmaker – This week at the Wig Shop is all about continuing progress on our current projects. Betty has blended the hair for the Jefferson wig and will soon be outlining the base of the Boston wig. Once that base is outlined, Debbie will be able to finish hand knotting the caul material. Sara has completed the main part of the base of her judicial wig and should have the flaps done as well, within a week. Regina has nearly completed her hairpiece project. The entire shop continues to pitch in with maintenance, something that has increased with the heat and humidity levels.