

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

For March 1 – 7, 2020

Cabinetmaker – “Greetings from the Hay Shop! John’s walnut writing table has been picked up by its (very happy) new owner. The recently finished walnut tea table is now up for sale at the Prentis Store. Bill and John continue their work on the high chest. Bill is working on carving the rosettes that will be attached to the tympanum board. John is prepping drawer components and working on a few side projects. Jeremy is working on his tool chest of drawers and making a few wood tools to use at his bench.

“Ed and Melanie were happy to see Allie Cade (former Harpsichord Apprentice) here presenting at the Antiques Forum earlier in the week. They have been continuing work on stock prep for the pine keyboard and keywell for the next instrument and gluing up the walnut register guide.”

Colonial Garden - “February has brought us snow, which beautifully blanketed the Garden and, thankfully, melted quickly. We are very grateful to our tree crew, Charles Gardener and David Stull, for pollarding the sycamore trees at the corner of Nassau and Francis Streets. The Sycamore branches that are pruned off every year go towards the building of our many trellises and wattle fences in the Garden. Thanks to Ed Schultz and Steve Chabra for helping us pick up the copious amounts of sticks. Many hands made the work light.



Tree crew pollarding Sycamore trees



Yearly pile of Sycamore sticks used to make trellises and wattle fences

“Anemones and daffodils continue to bloom and brighten the days when the sun may not shine. Broccoli and cauliflower continue to bloom. A basket will make its way to the Palace Kitchen this week, filled with cauliflower, leeks, brown Dutch lettuce, black Spanish radishes, leafy greens, and a few Borage flowers to decorate a salad. All fit for the Governor’s table.



Anemone in bloom

“It is hotbed season, with the first hotbed holding at a steady 90 degrees for a week. Weeds as well as our crops have begun to sprout in the warmed soil, so we will be busy sorting out what is to be kept and what will return to the compost pile. The second hotbed has been emptied and prepared to receive the warm contents of a composting manure pile. The working above-ground pile was turned on Monday and registered the inner temperature of 120 degrees. The pile will continue to heat, and when it heats no more, into the hotbed it goes.

“Accomplished this week was the beginnings of the manufacturing of a straw mat that will be used to cover hotbeds and bell jars in cold weather. Still very experimental, but we managed to weave or tie up bundles of straw on our “machine”. So far, we only have a small amount made up, but very soon, we hope to have some yardage to use on the heated hotbed.



Straw mat

“Our Farm-to-Table initiative harvested out of our Garden collards, radishes, and bay leaves, along with black Spanish radishes from the Farm program. Another fine dinner created by Chef Matthias from what our Garden and Farm programs produce.”

Farming - “Ed recently attended the Southeast Regional Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) Conference in Dothan, Alabama. Shown here is Ed driving the horse for a workshop on Draft Horses and Plowing. Participants included a Curator, Archeologist, Historic Farm Manager, college student majoring in History, and a film student. All will use this full-day, immersive, hands-on experience to enhance the programs at their sites and to understand more fully our collective agricultural past.”



Milliner and Mantua-maker – “My friends, I have received no further alarming notes from the strange personage known as “Crow’s Toes” that I mentioned in my last missive so I shall assume that my undiscouraged response has given him pause. More interesting news is found in the Margaret Hunter Millinery, where work presses on as always. Mrs. J--- W--- has been embroidering on an underpetticoat border. Miss R--- S--- continues her work on cloaks, having recently finished one capuchin, started another, and then put it aside to now quickly stitch up a purple short cloak for Ms. B--- R--- at Signore Sidisci’s Centre. Mrs. C--- J---, who dressed Mrs. G--- W---’s hair to great acclaim for her husband’s surprise birthday party two weeks past, now stitches on a pair of hoops. Miss A--- H--- attempts laboriously to finish the trim on a striped jacket. A familiar face was seen in the shop this past week-end! Mrs. J--- A--- was visiting our city for a Forum on the Antiquities (how delightfully classical!) and stopped in the shop several times to embroider. Her concern about the letter I shared last week from the mysterious Mr. Crow’s Toes warmed my heart, but my agents assured her that I was unwavering in my conviction to stand strong in the face of his ungentlemanly threat. Thank you, madame, for your patronage!”

Public Leather Works - “In the Public Leather Works, Jay made a chisel cover for Ayinde in the Carpenters’ Yard, in between the finishing touches on his leather breeches. Jan is working on a canvas hammock, and Andrew is re-soling a pair of shoes for David in the Printing Office, as well as working on slippers for himself with the help of the Shoemakers. The Shop is also preparing for upcoming hands-on workshops with groups from Winterthur and Washington College.”

Silversmith - “Steady on at the Silversmiths this week, with not much changing. Bobbie has primarily continued working on prep for the silver trays this week, while Lynn has continued engraving orders. Chris has received her spouts from the Foundry and has started cleaning them and checking them over while working mostly on the small components. Preston is working on several small bowls, and George is finishing another batch of spoons (including a tablespoon). Parker continues practicing his saw piercing, and William continues practicing his engraving and *Centurion* research.”