

# “THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

## for June 17 - 23

### Armoury:

**Tinsmith** – What could be less humdrum than the humming and drumming of the Tinsmiths, whose new speaking trumpets have announced that the bellows next door are winded, needing replacement conductor pipes and elbows? All the while, more important work continues on teapots and cups.

**Blacksmith** – A shift in seismic activity was measured in the area when hammers stopped for twenty minutes, not for tea mind you, but for those ready and able Tinmen who came prancing in with shiny new bellows pipes. Guests stood in awe at the sight of clean workmen in our shop, and aghast at the idle anvils. Nonetheless, we were quickly back to work on handrail for the Wren Building, chisels for the Carpenters, two wheeler’s axes for the Wheelwrights, a froe for the Kitchen, spits for reflecting ovens, a fire poker, a pair of angle vise jaws, and several hundred anxious nails. We extend a warm welcome to our Summer Intern, Jiahan Liu, who has courageously worked alongside us this past week to produce pot hooks and trivets. Great to have you on board, Jiahan!

**Brickyard** – The Brickyard has a new Apprentice – Hunter Cridlin! He started on June 13. Hunter comes to us from the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, Virginia, and has lots of interesting boatbuilding and carpentry experience under his belt. How will a carpenter fit in working with a couple of Bricklayers? We’ll see if we can put aside hundreds of years of animosity between our trades! He’s a graduate of the University of Virginia and has been doing the trades/living history lifestyle for about four years now, and seems like an enthusiastic interpreter. We’re looking forward to putting him to work!

**Carpenter** – The Carpenters have been hewing timbers for the Gallows, working on the hotbed for the Garden, and have built and delivered a see-saw to the Patriots at Play program.

**Colonial Garden** – With recent heat and rain, the Garden plants are rapidly filling in trellises and beginning their sprawl to conquer ground as quickly as possible. Squash has been harvested in spite of a bunny who has made the Garden his home. The first cucumbers were harvested as well as turnips, onions, and garlic. Spent flowers are being pulled up to make room for the next wave of plants. The fruit trees that we have espaliered have exceeded our expectations and are doing well. Marigolds and cleome are beginning to bloom as a sure sign that summer is here. Paw paw fruit is filling out nicely, and we should have a nice crop. Strawberries are ongoing, thanks to the Alpine Ever-bearing variety; and the raspberries are ripening, if you can beat the birds! Peas are done, and we wait patiently for the vines to die down so that we can save seeds for next year.

We are happy to report that house wrens have moved into our bird bottle and are busy with their new family. Rescued from the middle of the street were three fledgling robins that were moved to our Garden for safety. Thanks to the very loud calls of the birds, the parents easily found their relocated babies and followed them into the Garden. Guests enjoyed watching this scene unfold.

**Farming** – The war on tobacco pests continues with the arrival of the hornworm, budworm, mosaic virus, crickets, flea beetle, and tomato spotted wilt virus. The wet weather continues the effects of “Frenching”; yet, we are holding our own, and the crop looks good with large leaves. The corn has been re-hilled and whippoorwill cowpeas planted in the hill. Cotton is finally coming on with warmer weather.

**Foundry** – This week, we're hard at work turning our bronze bell on the lathe. We're also finishing up the clapper and other associated bell parts. We're still in the tray foot business, too. Brass bass drum harnesses are on the way for Fifes & Drums, as well.



**Gunsmith** – The Gunsmiths have been having barrels of fun, welding and working on barrels. Eric finished welding a rifle barrel earlier today and will now refine the shape of the rough tube using swage blocks and jumping material into thin sections. We've also been hammering a skelp into shape, roughly 3" x .5" x 36" long. Darrin is working on his rifle lock, and Richard is nearly finished with his pistol locks.

**Milliner and Mantua-maker** – This week, we have finished Mrs. Washington's brown wool gown and the hand-woven diaper petticoat for Karen at the Weaver. In celebration of the first day of summer, Thursday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, we will be making our Gown-in-a-Day. This year's gown and petticoat is of white linen with narrow gold and brown stripes for Amanda, Apprentice Joiner. This project will start at 7:00am, and we will be open to guests until 6:00pm. Come see us!

**Tailor** – Michael is beginning a Dragoon uniform based on the 1776 orders from Colonel Bland, one of his final apprenticeship projects, which will be used for Historic Area programming. The intern, Elizabeth Narney, is altering a pair of stays for her use. Work on the Blair Suit continues.

**Wigmaker** – Exciting news from the Wig Shop! While our primary focus is helping all of our interpreters look their best from the neck up, we do, on occasion, help out other museums with a project. The Smithsonian has requested a handmade Department of Historic Trades and Skills

wig for a new traveling exhibit, and we're thrilled to take on the task! This is going to be a shop project, with Betty designing the wig and supervising, Sara building the base, and everyone, from the Master of the shop down to our Junior Interpreters, weaving the blond human hair that we'll be using. With an end-of-summer deadline, this is going to be the primary focus of the entire shop for the next few months. We will, of course, also continue with all of our regular maintenance, as well as ongoing projects as time allows. Stay tuned for updates!