

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

For November 10 - 16, 2019

Apothecary – “Pharmacy student Dena’s last day with us was Thursday. She is going to a practice in Newport News for her next pharmacy rotation. We loved having her here. Click the link below for an article about her and another student that hopefully will bring some pharmacists and their families to Williamsburg.”

<https://www.pharmacytimes.com/news/pharmacy-student-rotation-offers-insight-into-historical-apothecary>

Armoury:

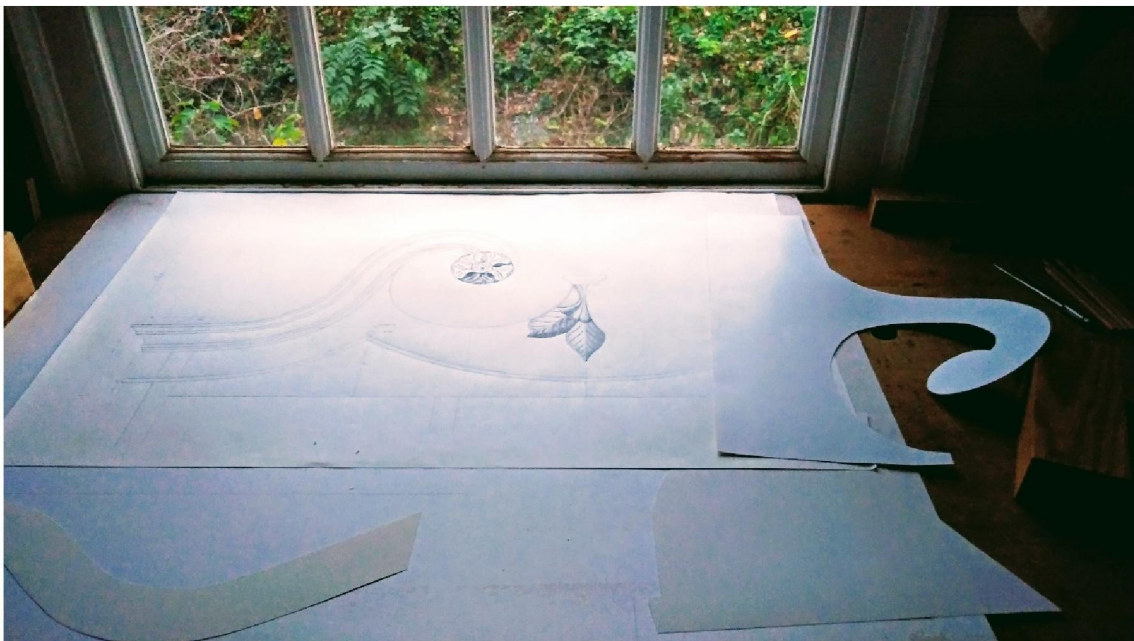
Blacksmith – “This week, the Blacksmiths return to a more normal routine. With students piling through our door, the amazing Blacksmiths have put their skills on display, silencing crowds with marvelous shows of hammer control. The weathervane is nearly complete, with most of the collars in place thanks to Mark and Aislinn, with the younger Journeyman finishing up those that remain. Ken has moved on to our next big project, 9 pair of 3’ long hinges for Gunston Hall. That’s a lot of iron to move! Alex and Owen have been recycling old projects that were not up to snuff, turning them into new material for well bucket chain and a grid iron. Tim thumbs his nose at thumb latches, though they gather in batches at his half of the workbench. Whether hardware or tool, only a fool would not know the rule that all’s well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.”

Tinsmith – “It’s been much of the same in the Tin Shop. Steve is working on the horn panes for the doors of two lanterns for a customer, as well as working on the punched work for the Joiner’s pie safe, behind the scenes. Joel is working on tea pots and porringers, as well as continuing work on his final project. Jenny is continuing with coffee pots, as well as making some gill cups to replenish the stock.”

Cabinetmaker – “As we adjust to the shorter days – and less light to work by – we at the Hay Cabinet Shop are making good progress on our current projects. Bill and John are continuing their work on the high chest. John has successfully finished his walnut writing table. In the Harpsichord corner of the Shop, Ed and Melanie have been working on a music rack to hold the player’s sheet music for the spinet. Our musicians have also brought in an instrument for repair - an English-style guitar that was made in the old Musical Instrument Workshop in 1973.”



John and his completed writing table



Bill's drawing for the high check



Melanie's and Ed's music rack

Colonial Garden – “The Gardeners focused much of our energy this week on preparing for cold weather. Our citrus trees and other tender plants made their annual migration to the heated greenhouse, where they will be well cared for by Scott from the Landscape Department. Thanks, Scott! We set our other more cold-hardy potted plants into an empty hot bed where they will be slightly more sheltered for the winter. The Gardeners gathered willow cuttings and built hoops that will be covered with canvas tarps on the coldest nights for our broccoli and cauliflower plants. Other plants will be mulched with rye straw or pine needles to insulate their roots, and smaller plants like lettuce and herbs can be protected with glass bells. We also constructed our fire pit with stacked bricks and lit the first fire of the season for the enjoyment of our guests and to warm our hands. Work continues in the compost yard clearing weeds and turning the piles. All the necessary ingredients for a fine salad were harvested and delivered to the Palace Kitchen this week, including lettuce, scarlet radishes, welsh onions, and the edible flowers of the Indian cress (better known as nasturtium today).”

Farming – “This delicious dish was made by Chef Matthias Mahoufer and Chef Travis Brust from the CW Inn for the recent James Beard Foundation meeting in Norfolk. It uses a variety of wheat for the flour called Red May. This is the 18th-century type grown in the Tidewater Region. CW's Historic Farmers acquired a very small quantity of this seed from the USDA Seed Bank 36 years ago. The wheat has frequently been grown ever since by the Trade. As the Food Movement in America gained momentum, a visionary named Glenn Roberts started Anson Mills to provide stone ground heirloom grain products to the country's food enthusiasts. Glenn found out that we grew it and obtained a couple of bushels from us about 15 years ago. He had a farmer grow it for him, then ground it and offered it for sale under the heading of “Colonial-Style Artisan whole grain flour” and people really liked it. From a handful of heirloom seeds comes deliciousness with a large dash of historical integrity.”



Joinery – “This past week has been an exciting time! Scott has received the rest of his material for the food safe and is busy preparing it. He made (hopefully) one last stop at the Museum to check on measurements and is getting close to having an assembled frame! Peter has figured out what the next step for his chair is and has been busy cutting and test-fitting the rungs for his chair. Amanda coordinated with the Carpenters to find a hickory tree for her chair. Together, they felled it and broke it down into useable sections. Expect to find her soon, riving and splitting the fresh-cut hickory!”



Leaning ax



Inspecting ax



Inspecting the tree

Milliner and Mantua-Maker – “Dearest Readers, gratefully, the False Mrs. Crackenthorpe has not yet had the opportunity to fill these pages with scandalous accounts of gossip, so I, the True Mrs. Crackenthorpe, will be delighted to share with you the News of our Town.

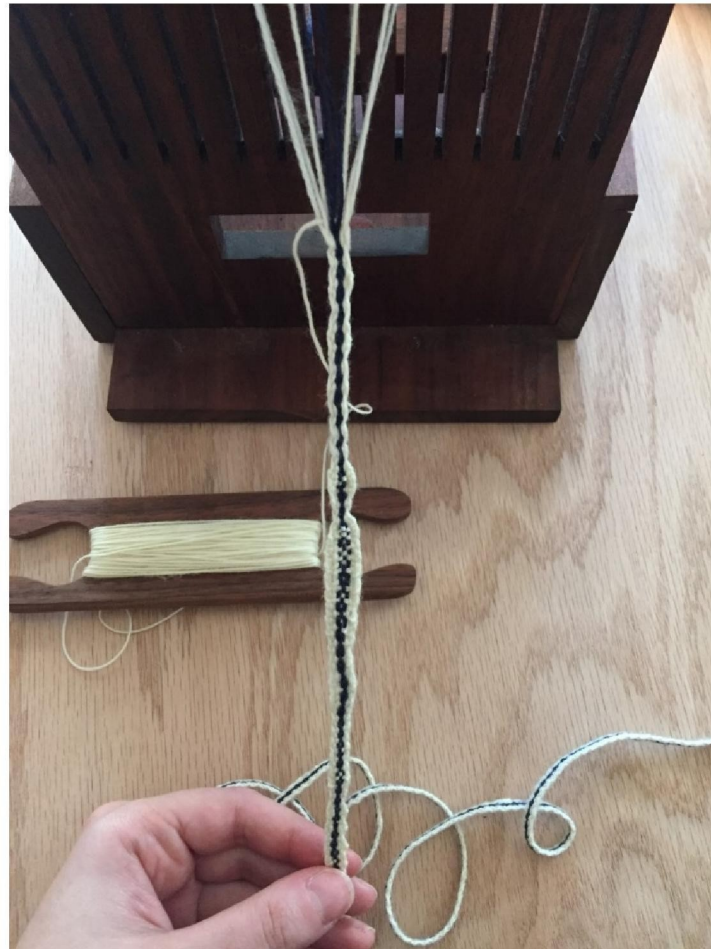
“I hear thanks to the sudden decrease in banging noises coming from their Shop that the Milliners and Mantua-makers have completed a Yellow Gown to be installed at the Everard House in mid-November. The gown is ornamented in pink’d trim, hence the noisy additions to the Millinery shop as Mistress W--- was tasked with hammering the pinking tool into the fabric to decoratively cut the edge of the trim, as you see in the depiction below, courtesy of a well-loved Friend of the Shop, Mr. Fred B---. As the Mistress noisily pinked the trim, her quieter apprentices put their quiet hands to quietly constructing the gown and petticoat.



“Mrs. J--- has returned from her séjour in London and has been loudly exclaiming the Sights! and Stays! and Study! that fair city has to offer. One imagines that one who travels to England supposedly for reasons of one's Health would be more circumspect in her conversation on the matter. Nevertheless, the fairer denizens of our fair city will doubtless benefit bigly from the results of her Voyage.

“Mrs. J—and Miss S--- this past week-end were seen to be Weaving tape on box looms as the Shop turned its Focus to a Branch of its Trade. Miss H--- promptly ruined Miss S---’s toilsome work, as seen in the depiction below that Opportunely I had the Forethought to document for Posterity. Miss H--- has evidently been a source of Frustration in equal measures for both of her fellow Apprentices. I recently overheard Mrs. J--- complaining of a certain Cookie Caper. Someone, she decried, had eaten all the Biscuits graciously gifted by a guest to the shop. Given that both Mistress W--- and Miss S--- were out of the shop on business and leisure, respectively, at the time, the blame for the Caper, reasoned Mrs. J---,

could only rest at one Apprentice's crumb covered feet. Alas, the true Culprit may never be caught. If any of my dear Subscribers have information that could lead to the Cookie Caper's whereabouts, I ask that they Discreetly leave word with one of my trusted agents about town."



Public Leather Works – "The Public Leather Works have begun cleaning and packing up their shops for their move to the former Bindery space across from the Printers."

Shoemaker – "At the end of October, the Shoemakers hosted the 35th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Honorable Cordwainer's Company. It was well attended, and the participants enjoyed tours of our Collections and Shop as well as a trip to Historic Jamestowne. Rob presented a research paper, "...the service they could render would be momentary": French Contract Shoes of the American Revolution, in fulfillment of his apprenticeship requirements. He will give the presentation again on Tuesday, November 26th at 9am in the Roscow Cole House Conference Room. Special thanks to Journeyman Blacksmith Aislinn Lewis for her presentation on 18th-century pattens.

"In the Shop, we have been completing Costume Design Center orders, working through apprenticeship projects and levels, doing repair work, and we just completed two pairs of shoes for Mt. Vernon for their display on the work of enslaved shoemaker William Lee."

Silversmith – "Bobbie has finished the coffeepot ornament and continues working on the bell. She is also planishing the tankard lid. Chris is working on her teapot and a set of rings for the Golden Ball Store. Lynn has finished removing the engraving from the two pewter teapots and continues plugging away at the pewter trays, with the occasional custom order in between. Preston has made his triumphant Department of Historic Trades and Skills

return and immediately set to work on the tankard body and several small bowls. George is working on two small mugs and a batch of spoons, while still working through the multitude of chasing tools. He is also spearheading some upgrades to the Shop, namely our polishing setup. Parker is working on his beaker and some trade silver. William's base is ready to be fit to his Gurney bowl and will hopefully be soldered by the end of the week."



A few items recently engraved



Two pewter pots looking nearly brand new

Pharmacy Student Rotation Offers Insight Into Historical Apothecary

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Aislinn Antrim, Assistant Editor

Some fourth-year pharmacy students have brought new meaning to the phrase “back to basics,” by participating in an elective rotation at the Colonial Williamsburg apothecary.

The students dress in historically accurate colonial clothing and educate visitors about the role of pharmacists in colonial Virginia, all while enhancing their own pharmacy educations. Not only do they learn about 18th century medicine, but many of the skills actually translate into the modern pharmacy.

Dena Kota, a current pharmacy intern, and Chenoa Shelton, who previously interned, both said they had some interest in history before beginning the rotation. Kota grew up in Williamsburg and even attended elementary school in Colonial Williamsburg, whereas Shelton has participated in Revolutionary War reenactments in North Carolina.

Kota, now in her fourth year of pharmacy school at Virginia Commonwealth University, said the experience was unique.

“It’s a great immersive experience...you’re immersed in every aspect, even down to your dressing,” Kota said.

To prepare for the internship, Kota read primary sources and allowed those to influence her interpretation. She added that speaking with visitors has improved her communication and presentation skills, which are very relevant to modern pharmacy.

Robin Kipps, who has been running the apothecary since 1983, said there are more similarities between 18th century and modern pharmacy than most people would think. Many professional ethics and responsibilities at the core of the profession are still the same, Kipps said, as well as issues such as access to medical care and addiction.

Surprisingly, some remedies are still useful today, Kipps added. Colonial pharmacists used ingredients such as chalk for heartburn, calamine for skin irritations, and cinchona bark for fevers. The bark was later discovered to contain quinine, which is still used for malaria, and quinidine, which is used for some cardiac conditions.¹

Shelton, a fourth-year pharmacy student at Campbell University, said the internship gave her a new appreciation for modern conveniences.

“I actually hand-rolled the pills,” Shelton said. “You just appreciate how much work came into your profession hundreds of years before you came along.”

Shelton added that she also realized the important role pharmacists played in their community and how that respect is still important today.

“They were involved in all aspects of the community, not just prescribing medications,” she said.

Both students agreed that the rotation had its challenges, namely dealing with the 18th century English. Kota said she had been working on transcribing some of the historical ledgers with patient and medical information, but added that it takes time.

“You can have a recipe, you can have directions, but there is an art to it as well,” she said.

For her part, Kipps said she enjoys seeing the students expand their understanding of what a pharmacist can mean to their community. Although there is an official syllabus, she said they try to work with students’ interests.

“People tend to learn more when they’re having fun,” Kipps said.

Reference

1. Colonial Williamsburg. Trades: Apothecary. Colonial Williamsburg website. <https://www.history.org/almanack/life/trades/tradeapo.cfm>. Accessed November 5, 2019.