

# THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

## for the week of December 28 – January 3



**Apothecary** – Sharon finished the curriculum for the winter training class on health.

One of the Apothecary's volunteers, Dr. Bob Jaffe, designed and created a rough draft audio podcast for PPLV, which was proposed by Colleen in PPLV. When it is completed, the podcast will feature an analysis of a medical condition that is described in both 18th-century and modern medical text books. During the podcast, an 18th-century doctor and a modern doctor will discuss symptoms and treatment with a patient. Listeners will be invited to diagnose the medical problem.



**Artificer's Shop** – They are finishing a number of pieces that are bound for Collections and organizing the work load for 2016. They are bidding a fond adieu to Emma, who will complete her bond Dec. 31st. However, we expect her to continue to be a presence in the Historic Area.



**Basketmaker** – As the week between Christmas and New Year's tends to be fairly busy, they just hope to get ANY work done. They will be doing general basket work (possibly splitting or weaving).



**Bindery** – They continue to work on a music book and binding law books for the Capitol.



**Brickmaker** – 2015 in review: This year, the Brickyard produced 27,000 bricks. This culminated in the firing of the clamp just before Thanksgiving. This past summer, they also introduced a new interactive program called "Level and Plumb" where guests, mostly kids, got their chance to lay bricks and build a wall. They also began construction of a lime kiln which is right next to the Windmill across from the Visitor's Center. Work on this will continue in 2016. Currently, the site is closed for the season; but when the weather allows, they will open up for folks to come see them dismantle the clamp and sort the bricks for storage.



**Cabinetmaker** – Work continues on two pedestal music stands, a decorated tea caddy, a wing chair, and a spinet.



**Candlemaker** – Wesley Greene shared much information on the elements of a proposed Candlemaking Materials walking tour. Materials came from the animal, plant, and insect worlds. He suggested that they set up an authentic display of bee hives near the shop. They intend to coordinate with existing walking tours to avoid conflicts.

As the shop is outdoors and some equipment will be kept outside, they contacted Security for advice on securing the shop when it is not attended.

At the request of Group Services, Tom Redd will give classes or lectures on the new shop for Group Interpreters in January. This is for leaders with school groups. Tom also offered to share information with Christine Detwiler, who is collecting information on STEM use in interpretation. The Candlemaking Shop formerly used a bit of modern science in the standard interpretation.



**Carpenters** – They are building a shed and making shingles.



**Coopers** – Bonnie Roane, who has been an occasional casual at the Cooper for a few years, is now their new Apprentice. Welcome, Bonnie!



**Foodways** – They will be working on some more decorative foods to represent the kinds of things found at a holiday ball.



**Great Hopes Plantation** –

**Farming:** Much of the small-farm maintenance work takes a back seat when the crops are in the field. So these small tasks end up on the “to-do list”. That’s the list that they have been working off of for the past month or so. Jobs such as small woodworking projects, fixing gates, building fences, hauling dirt and manure, moving firewood, ditching, picking seeds out of cotton, and so forth. These are pretty mundane tasks compared to plowing with oxen and hoeing weeds out of the cotton field, but it all must be done. All of it is real, and the guests are invited to help whenever possible. They have heard some of the loudest squeals of delight from children hauling manure into the garden!!

**Domestic Arts:** The warm weather has caused the worms to eat the red cabbage in a more vigorous manner. The staff is eating the cabbage as fast as they can to get it before the worms do. The soap made last month is cured enough and has been removed from the mold. They continue to card wool, darn socks, and patch shifts.



**Gun Shop/Foundry** – The Gunsmiths are in-letting a barrel into a maple stock for the rifle they are making. Work on the cased pair of pistols continues. The Founders are making pewter stuffing spoons for the Prentis Store.



**Historic Garden** – With the warm and rainy weather, they are able to relax and take their time getting ready for when the cold weather eventually comes. Everything is mulched, and frames have been made over the artichokes. They are starting to think about the hotbeds that they will start in January.



**Joiners** – Work will continue on the gazebo for the Woodworking Conference presentation. The cutting bench for the Artificer’s Shop should be wrapping up, as well.



**Printers** – The pressmen are printing off blank Tobacco Crop notes and Transfer notes that will eventually be sold in the Post Office.



**Silversmith** – They are working on various sorts of spoons (including mote spoons), salt shovels, Gurney Bowls and a fluted bowl, a pair of patty pans, a pair of raised beakers, trade silver jewelry, rings, and letter charms, a 12-inch Montieth (particularly, raising the body and the base), and ladles.

Please note that at any given time, not all of these items will be being worked on, but all will be available to be seen and discussed with anyone who is interested.



**Tailors** – They will be sewing on breeches.



**Wheelwright** – They continue to repair the ox cart.



**Wigmaker** – Debbie is still working on her reproduction of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century bob wig that she had studied while she was in Germany. Terry is still working on a handmade wig to be worn by Richard Schumann (Patrick Henry). She has completed the base and the outlining. Betty will be creating a “half wig” for Katherine Pittman, who will be portraying a “young Martha Washington.”

**Note from the Editor:** “The Mechanick’s Adviser” will be going on hiatus during the January pause in programming and will return for January 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Have a Happy and Healthy New  
Year!!**