

# “THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

## for May 27 – June 2

**Apothecary** – Sharon and Robin took Jim Magill, their long-time volunteer, out to lunch this week. He has officially retired after working with them for almost nineteen years as a volunteer. He will be missed. Progress continues on site records. Robin has been in touch with the pharmacy student who is coming at the end of next month, as well as with their school. The latter wanted three oral presentations added to the official list of assignments. No problem!

### **Armoury:**

**Blacksmith** – “During the long May days, the Blacksmiths reverently observe Labor Day with bowed heads at 9, and tipped caps at 5. The eight hearty hours in between have recently brought forth shears for the Tinsmiths, lathe hardware for the Wheelwrights, curtain rods for Mt. Vernon, small furniture hinges for the Joiners, kitchen knives, trivets, fire steels, axes, and if it wasn’t for time clocks on the horizon, we would make nails into the wee hours of tomorrow, for pure enjoyment. May the sun never set on nails.”

**Tinsmith** – “Speaking of pure joy, the Tinsmiths continue their merry tunes, hammering and raising their silver sheet into vessels for all good things yet to come – eating, drinking, merriment, and some accoutrements of labor. This week, see the melodies yield tool holders for the Silversmiths, teapots, map cases, and tea canisters for the Cabinetmaker.”

**Brickyard** – The site is open rain or shine for treading clay. Soon, Kenneth and Josh will begin constructing an oyster rick over at Great Hopes.

**Cabinetmaker** – During this week, they expect to conclude the construction of a walnut corner chair, the carved decoration of a mahogany tea chest, and the final coat of paint on a Philadelphia-style Windsor chair. Work will continue on the interior of two cabinetmaker’s tool chests and a replica spinet harpsichord.

**Carpenter** – The Carpenters are making cedar shingles, hewing timbers to rebuild the Gallows, sawing framing out of yellow pine, priming timbers and planks for the Randolph Well, and building a new hotbed for the Garden.

**Colonial Garden** – The propagation bed has been nailed together, and the Gardeners will be filling it with soil and compost so that they can begin to use it. The red poppies, blue larkspur, and white nigella have come together to form a nice red, white, and blue field of blooms. Beans planted last week are coming up, peas are done in the hotbed, and the cucumbers and melons are fast filling up the hotbeds. The Carpenters are working on the new hotbed, while the paint shop is repairing and repainting the hotbed windows. By fall, the Gardeners hope to have the pit dug and ready to receive the new hotbed.

Harvested for the Kitchens are strawberries, garlic scapes (the flower bud of garlic), red cabbage, sorrel, radishes, and radish pods. The cardoon is beginning to send up flowers, which is always a great show. With the heat and rain, the Garden is filling up nicely. All of the birds that built nests have pushed out their first young and are busy sitting on a second round of eggs. The staff welcome the birds, as they harvest bugs from the Garden to feed their young.

**Farming** – The corn is growing great because of the wet weather, and the tobacco transplants have rooted well. Cotton will come on once we get consistently hot weather. Long Island Cheese squash, cushaws, and watermelons have been planted along the edges for Historic Foodways, the Williamsburg Inn, and the Lodge.

**Gunsmith** – The Gunsmiths have just rebuilt their forge after the tuyere (cast iron block where the air feeds into the fire) burned out from years of service. It will take a few days to fully set the clay before they can get back to barrel welding.

Eric has welded up part of his rifle barrel, with a few inches left on the breech end. Darrin has forged some springs for his lock and is filing them to fit. Richard continues filing his pistol springs, as well.

**Historic Foodways** – Historic Foodways is proud to announce their next conference: “Ales Through the Ages 2018” will be held October 19-21, 2018. The event offers a journey through the history of beer, with some of the world’s top beer scholars. They will explore ancient ales and indigenous beers of the past, examine the origins of brewing, and discover the ingredients brewers have used through time. Tickets are on sale now.

**Joinery** – “The Joiners are progressing nicely this week. If anyone should inquire about the racket resonating from within the shop, please inform them that the cutting of a mortise is a traumatic process involving a mallet, a chisel, and a healthy dose of pent-up aggression. The Joiners believe that there is something deeply cathartic in the act of separating chips of wood from a table leg or door stile. Each time the mallet falls, the chisel deepens the rupture. Any maniacal laughter that is heard during this process is likewise not cause for alarm. If an Apprentice is seen gritting their teeth and smiling without blinking, we can certainly guarantee that they have NOT, I repeat NOT, made any mistake on their project that will be extremely difficult to fix. Because Apprentices do not make mistakes; they make firewood.”

**Military Programs** – In addition to the normal programming, Military Programs is preparing for the Memorial Day ceremony on Palace Green and Duke of Gloucester Street this Monday.

**Public Leather Works** – The Public Leather Works has been a very busy place these last few weeks: loads of small internal jobs like aprons and folios, as well as ongoing jobs for a couple of outside customers. They are starting to see new Junior Interpreters coming on board, and their summer Intern joins them this week, too.



Jan Tilley at work in the Public Leather Works (photo by Fred Blystone)

**Silversmith** – George has been working on several dozen spoons for orders and for the Golden Ball. Bobbie and Chris continue working on the silver trays, the first of which is polished and ready for engraving. Preston and Megan have been polishing the trays as they are completed. In addition, Preston has been working on two ladles and several small fluted bowls, while Megan has been working on trade silver. Parker is working on several seamed cups. William is polishing trade silver, working on a small silver bowl, and working on his first small batch of spoons.

**Wigmaker** – Having recovered from Mr. Jefferson’s Garden Party and all the work that the Party entailed, the Wig Shop staff took a brief moment to breathe and then jumped right back into regular maintenance and their current projects! Betty is making progress on the base for the wig for Young Thomas Jefferson, and Debbie is almost completed with her wig for George Mason. Regina recently completed her child’s wig, and it is on display in the shop for all to see! Sara is preparing to travel to Oklahoma to attend the National ALHFAM Conference and has been working on a judicial wig, as well. They have several exciting projects coming up in the next few weeks, so stay tuned!