

# “THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

## for July 30 – August 5

**Apothecary** – Hank Kozek, a pharmacist and volunteer at the Apothecary, with the help of a former professor, helped another museum figure out what the pills were in a pill box owned by Mamie Eisenhower. The request for help in identifying these pills came from the Medical Museums Association. It was determined that the pills were a laxative called Natures Remedy and are no longer in production. Sharon continues work on the Galt accounts. She has started 1784.

### **Armoury:**

**Blacksmith** – They have been continuing to work on dividers for various tradesman, compass curtain rods for Mt. Vernon, thumb latches for a historic property near Fredericksburg, nails for the Raleigh porch, a hole punch for the Tinsmiths, scissors, tongs, cooking utensils, nail headers, small axes, and pliers.

**Tinsmith** – They are working on priming tubes, artillery canisters, watering cans, clouches, cups, and a kettle.

**Cabinetmaker** – A wide assortment of pieces are underway in the Cabinetmaker Shop. Brian (with Cooper Jonathan) recently completed a pair of coopered mahogany wine coolers (now on sale at Prentis Store). Brian is currently finishing work on a small, ornately carved, oval tea chest out of Caribbean mahogany. Bill is fitting a large, walnut paneled door to the case of a replica 1707 Philadelphia scriptor (writing cabinet) on chest. Kaare is applying finish to a walnut corner chair based on chairs made by the mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century shop of Robert Walker in King George County, Virginia. Harpsichord maker Edward and his Apprentice, Robin, have assembled the case of a spinet (based on a 1726 instrument by London-maker Cawton Aston). Their work on this instrument presently concerns the plucking action, keyboard, and soundboard.

**Carpenter** – They are cutting the joints for rafters and joists as well as splitting plaster lath for the Raleigh Tavern Porch.

**Colonial Garden** – With increasing heat this week, the Gardeners took the opportunity to do a little maintenance. All tools with wooden handles were coated with a fresh coat of linseed oil. The melon frame was covered with new paper from the Bindery, glued on with hide glue, and then coated with linseed oil. With approaching rain, the rejuvenated frame sits in one of the melon beds protecting the vines from excess water which would dilute the sweet flavor of the ripening fruit.

Loss of plants to the heat was minimal with replanting taking place to fill the gaps. Basil and parsley were planted when the radishes were removed, and corn was planted when they lost some of the tomatoes. The sunflowers continue to tower over the Garden; and not to be out done, the castor beans are casting an ever-wider shadow as the summer goes on.

Flowers in bloom are scabiosa, celosia, gomphrena, and marigolds, to name a few. The one bloom that is a must see, stop by, and experience is the tuberose (*Polianthes tuberosa*). Tuberose is much used in the perfume industry. If you come by in the evening, when the perfume is at its best, you will see why this is such a sought-after plant. And don't forget that plants are still for sale at the Nursery. Come pick out your plants and pay the good folks in the Greenhow Store.

**Cooper** – They recently completed a large tub for the Brickyard and are making piggins and gunpowder kegs.



**Farming** - The tobacco harvest has commenced. They will be cutting tobacco for the next two weeks and hanging some of it to cure in the stall section of the brick building next to the field. They leave the door open when they are there so that guests can see it curing. Pumpkins have been planted. The variety is called Connecticut Field and has early Native American origins. Mr. Jefferson was convinced that he could feed his cattle and horses with pumpkins.

**Gunsmith** – Darrin finished the belt ax he was making. Eric packed two molds and poured some brass. Richard demonstrated barrel welding over the weekend for guests in the shop.

**Joinery** – The Joiners are very excited because they are currently in the process of reinstalling all of the paneling that they have spent many long, sweaty hours preparing. Be warned: They will be in and out of their shop this week, as the process of installation requires them to be inside the Raleigh. Since even someone as skilled as a Joiner cannot be in two places at once, they will be closing the shop periodically while they strive to complete their work.

**Military Programs** – They continue to conduct activities in the Magazine Yard, interpret the Magazine, and present “The Necessity of Order in Battle” at the end of the day. Additionally, they are sending staff to help out at the Musket Range and crew the new Ax-Throwing Range on the corner of Nicholson and Botetourt. Finally, Military Programs would like to wish Niall Farley the best of luck as this has been his last week with the department. He is going to school for watch making in Pennsylvania.

**Printing Shop and Bookbinding** – The Printers will soon take the first Gazette form out of the press. Typesetting is still incomplete for pages two and three. The Pressmen await some critical types from their type founder in Massachusetts. Chad has the form for “The Sentiments of an American Woman” corrected and ready for the press. They are reprinting this handbill and others due to increased sales to the Post Office.

**Bookbinding** – Don continues to work on a book for a donor, and work on Washington Dispatch Cases continues. Dale and Barbara continue to work on folders for the Music Department. All Binders are working on various blank books for use in the Historic Area. The part-time Binder, Bill, continues to work on paste books.

**Public Leather Works** – They continue to stay busy with a variety of jobs: upholstery work, fire buckets for Collections, and a pair of buckskin breeches.

**Silversmith** – Preston is working on several small fluted bowls. Chris has begun work on a small silver patch box. George has been making spoons and working on the Monteith. William has started raising his first bowl in copper and fixing some copper templates for trade silver. Bobbie is working on trade silver and preparing to make a salver. Parker is working on raising a gurney bowl as he waits for the handle for his thistle cup to be cast.



William's Copper work and trade silver



The design and beginnings of Chris' patch box

**Wheelwright** – They are working on wheelbarrows, cart wheels (both new and repair), carriage wheels, and the carriage running gear.

**Wigmaker** – Maintenance continues on wigs and hairpieces. Sara has dismantled a gray Yak hair wig in order to utilize the hair, along with some new hair, for Gowan Pamphlet's new wig. Regina has begun weaving hair for the new child's display wig. The staff are still awaiting arrival of a new shipment of human hair in order to begin construction of the wigs for Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Mason. Perhaps disruptive seas have delayed the shipment! The Peruke Makers are also beginning to incorporate a "Term of the Week" that they are going to challenge themselves to use in their discussions with guests. This week's term is Fantasy Shades: Any color applied to the hair that does not occur naturally (blue, pink, green... nothing new about that!).