

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

For April 14 - 21

Apothecary – “Sharon has been continuing to diligently work on the site records. Robin has been working on paperwork for our next pharmacy student, such as updating the course outline, mailing a map, and answering emails from her and her University. She will be arriving on May 2. We did receive another request from the Dean at VCU for some info for his exhibit on the History of Pharmacy at the school. A big Thank-You goes to Marianne Martin, Doug Mayo, Joe Straw, and Anna Cordle for their help.”

Armoury:

Blacksmith – “With the heat turning up, the Blacksmiths are turning out iron faster than ever in an attempt to enjoy the last of the mild spring. All manner of wrought iron and steel here: swords, pattens, punches, pliers, stamps, slide bolts, spoons, button hole chisels, clouts, locks, rakes, and nails.”

Tin Shop – “Shimmering in their spring glory, the Tinsmiths are buzzing around their benches at tinderboxes, coffee pots, and struck lanterns!”

Colonial Garden – “Many spring flowers are in bloom at the Colonial Garden; but this week, we are most excited about the Crown Imperial Lily, *Fritillaria imperialis*. This showy flower was very popular in the 18th century but is a rare sight in modern gardens.

“The Gardeners spent much of this week carefully moving many of our seedlings into larger pots, as well as weeding, planting lettuce into the Garden, and sowing seeds for carrots, parsnips, and salsify. We mowed the rye cover crop in the front bed of the Garden with our scythe, and will be continuing to turn the roots under into the soil. Lettuce, endive, onions, broccoli, and edible borage flowers were harvested for both the Palace Kitchen and the Williamsburg Inn. As we move into the middle of April, we no longer face the threat of frost, and the Gardeners will be busy fearlessly planting our warmer-season vegetables and flowers directly into the Garden.”

****UPDATE**** “Our Crown Imperial is blooming among the anemones. The *Fritillaria* or Crown Imperial originated in the Middle East, and there it may have remained were it not for Carolus Clusius and his collection of beautiful and unusual plants. Midway through the 16th century, Clusius planted the first Crown Imperial bulbs in his Hortus botanicus gardens at Leiden. Clusius remains one of the most influential botanists of all time. It was he who started the Dutch tulip breeding industry, and many plants have been named in his honour.”



Farming – “Plowing is finished at Prentis Field, and hilling will commence soon for corn.”



Expert plower Rachel West finishes the last furrow for spring of 2019.

Foundry – “The Foundry is busy filing and fitting the door hinges for Carter's Grove. Only a few finials remain to be poured. We've also started casting bandoleers and cartridge box badges for the 80th Regiment of Foot, and soon we'll be casting badges for Drummer's Call Weekend.”

Gunsmith – “This last week in the Gunsmith was a little bit hectic with Richard on vacation; but luckily, we have some terrific Volunteers and Jeff Geyer who definitely entertained and informed the guests. Darrin, on the other hand, forged and filed a cherry, which is like a rotary Burr to make the cavity for a bullet mold. He is continuing work on the two halves of the bullet mold itself in addition to the flintlock he's been working on. Stop in and say hi if you get a chance.”

Joinery – “This week, the Joiners will be working on several projects, all in one of the prettiest materials: black walnut. Scott will be fitting tenons for his walnut door, Peter will be cutting half-blind dovetails for his hanging cupboard, and Amanda will be making shelves for her dumbwaiter.”

Milliner and Mantua-Maker – The shop is closed two weeks for annual preventative maintenance.

Silversmith – “Bobbi's casters are coming along well, as the first of the pair is being assembled via soldering this week. The weroan printing plate is nearly completed, and Lynn has been watercoloring several of the fan prints. Chris continues drawing tea pot components. Preston has been chasing the flutes in a small bowl, as well as polishing trade silver. Amongst his work on the never-ending chasing tools, George is still raising a mug and working on spoons. Parker has been focusing on two small Jefferson cups. William has completed his chatelaine, and, after rolling out base wire with George, has been able to resume work on a 5-inch gurney bowl, in addition to preparing a dozen pieces of trade silver for polishing.”



William's chatelaine

Wigmaker – “The Wigmakers have been celebrating spring as they often do: sneezing due to pollen, interpreting to school groups every five minutes, and styling elaborate wigs for the Garden Party coming up in May! We have a list of approximately two dozen performers and interpreters that will be either having existing wigs touched up or getting new wigs in the next few weeks. While some of these are fairly typical of what we do the rest of the year (for example, the footmen), we are also going to enjoy dressing some more elaborate fashions, including some French-

inspired looks, lady's wigs with fruit or birds, and possibly even a colored powdered wig! Meanwhile, work still continues on the Bromfield wig, which should be done well before the Garden Party arrives.”