

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

For February 9 - 15, 2020

Apothecary – Zack Pinsent, the Revolutionary in Residence, dropped by the Shop to discuss some items that a fashionable young gentleman of the 18th century might purchase while in Williamsburg. The interaction was filmed. Sharon shared some of her research work relating to health and cosmetics, such as tooth powder, face wash, and sweet breaths for freshening the breath. The latter is always a good idea when invited to the Palace to mingle with the gentle folk of the city. In support of Fashion Week, Sharon found the display that she had created on cosmetics, and it will be on view in the Shop this weekend. She and Mark recreated a few products. The lesson here is to never throw out program notes and display items. Anna from Public Relations sent over the link for an interview that was done by Robin and our last pharmacy student. See the link if curious:

Drug Topics

[Apothecary Offers Historical Internship for Pharmacy Students](#)

Armoury:

Tinsmith – “Last week, Joel presented his final apprenticeship paper, “Tinware Production within the Anderson Publick Armoury”, to colleagues at the Roscow Cole House. He will go on to present the paper at a conference later in the year. Preparations are also being made for the annual Washington College immersive visit in March. Contact Joel with any questions. This past week, Steve has been experimenting with ways of creating a bent spout for coffeepots. So far, he has been using various materials in an attempt to avoid using lead as a supportive material within the spout. Experiments are ongoing. If you spot what looks like a giant peashooter in the possession of the Brickyard staff, Steve did make it at their request. It is for adding oxygen to the curing fires when they can’t reach. Jenny is working on coffeepots and picking up tidbits of research. Also, an article Jenny wrote about the Tin Shop apprenticeship will be appearing soon in an inaugural online publication, “Tinsmith”, for the tinsmithing and metalworking community.”

Cabinetmaker – “In the Hay Shop, we’ve been taking advantage of low visitation to do some much-needed cleaning and organization in the workshop, cleaning away the dust bunnies and sorting through a large volume of wood scraps. We’re resolved to maintain the Shop in its cleaner shape this year but check back with us in a few months to see how that goes. Bill and John are turning their attention to the pediment and face frame of the high chest, and Jeremy is continuing rough dimensioning work for his first project. Ed and Melanie are trying to coax the top of the spinet harpsichord they finished in 2019 back to flat after some extreme warpage caused by humidity change. Hopefully, it will stay that way with the addition of hinges from the Foundry.”

Colonial Garden – “The Gardeners have been quite busy emptying compost from the hot beds onto the artichoke and cardoon bed, breaking old sycamore sticks for the fire, weeding Garden beds and paths, and trimming up the catnip and blue-eyed grass. Pruning continues with the willow hedges getting a much-needed haircut, and the oakleaf hydrangea and elderberry being tamed back as well. The manure pile reached a temperature of 150 degrees on Tuesday and was promptly turned over to encourage even composting in the outer layers. The first crocus has bloomed and so has a large swath of daffodils underneath the cherry laurel.”

Farming – “**Weeds! Sometimes--- it’s what’s for dinner.** Expanding the Farm-to-Table initiative includes looking at all kinds of things that grow as food. One of the most vigorous weeds in the late winter and early spring is chickweed. Its fate is certain, and all eventually succumb to the blade of a hoe. Recently, Chef Matthias Maihoefer wanted some. I chopped it out of the field and took it over to the Inn. But, of course, I had to try it first! To my surprise, it had a crisp

and clean taste. See below what fabulous things have become of it. The Chefs create magnificent dishes out of cushaws, pumpkins, turnips, and all kinds of other vegetables that we share with them. Most weeds are doomed, but some wind up on plates of delicious food. So, are they still weeds?"



Fish sauce caramel glazed halibut, celeriac, fermented celery and sultana raisin relish, crispy hazelnuts-- **and Chickweed!**

Joinery – “This week, the weather suffuses the Joinery. The skies are grey, the shop is grey. Our hearts are grey. Everything is wet and cold and miserable. The resident New Englander revels in it. Visitors to the Shop will find him raising panels for his door. ‘Why is it always doors?’, you might ask. Perhaps he fears a window, so that people can see his true self. Scott is also working on doors, albeit for his food safe. They do not need raised panels (who really does?); instead, they will house tin panels made by our friends down the street at the Tinsmith. Amanda is shaping the back splats for her chair. She gazes out the window at grey people walking on grey streets beneath a grey clouded sky. Brian continues to carve the claw and ball feet for the high chest of drawers. Are they all identical, or has the grey stain of winter simply reduced all projects to a parade of indistinguishable clones? The answer is ennui.”

Milliner and Mantua-maker – “Dear readers, I shall remain brief on the understanding that a picture is worth a thousand words. Peruse at your leisure these excellent etchings of Margaret Hunter’s Millinery taking part in a film’d segment depicting Mr. M--- M---, a local Tailor, showing around Mr. Z--- P---, a gentleman recently arrived from England.”





Silversmith - “Bobbie continues working on a few mote spoons and trade silver this week. Lynn and William took a break from cutting to spend a good chunk of the week printing with several plates, including Lynn’s canoe and Queen Elizabeth plates and William’s naval battle plate from over the summer. Lynn also began coloring several prints with watercolors. Chris is working on the small components of her teapot as well as rings. Preston has been working on the tankard body and several small bowls. George has been polishing spoons. Parker is again practicing the punch strainer piercing on a small copper disk.”



Three of the prints run this week



Lynn coloring one of the previous fan prints

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By [Drew Boxler](#)

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[The Latest](#)



Reconstructed Apothecary Shop at Colonial Williamsburg; [Click to View](#)



Sharon Cotner (right) and Robin Kipps (left) weigh orange peels for medicinal preparation; [Click to View](#)



Pharmacy students looking for a unique internship experience should look no further than Colonial Williamsburg living history museum in Virginia.

In 2018, Colonial Williamsburg's apothecary store launched its first ever official internship for fourth-year pharmacy students. Having relied on history graduate students for years, this was the first time the museum opened an opportunity for pharmacists.

Typically, pharmacy students might choose a professional internship in places one might reasonably expect to find a pharmacist (ie hospitals, community retail settings, etc); however, at Colonial Williamsburg, pharmacy students don 18th century attire and interact with and educate tour guests.

The apothecary shop in which pharmacy students are stationed, according to [Colonial Williamsburg](#), stands as a reconstructed version of the original shop owned by 2 Virginian apothecaries, Dr William Pasteur and Dr John Minson Gault.

In the 1770s, the 2 competing apothecaries decided to partner up. Colonial Williamsburg posits that the move was to simultaneously increase each other's revenue while decreasing overhead costs. The partnership lasted until Pasteur's retirement in 1778, but the shop remained open until Gault's death in 1808.

Today, the reconstructed shop is staffed by 2 full-time interpreters, Sharon Cotner and Robin Kipps.

"We actually compound drugs from the original pharmacy books," said Kipps. "When you walk into the shop, it's like stepping back in time."

Throughout any given day, Kipps said tours can include anyone from lay public individuals to medical specialists like orthopedic surgeons and pharmacists.

"We try to customize the presentation to what [the guests] are interested in," she said. "If we have pharmacists come in, we can talk about some of the medicines from the 18th century that are still in use today."

In fact, discussing 18th century medicinal treatments with tour guests was one of the core experiences of the apothecary's latest intern, Dena Kota. As a fourth-year student at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Kona chose to fulfill her experiential requirements to grow closer to her roots at Colonial Williamsburg.

"I've grown up in Williamsburg most of my life," she said, "and went to elementary school down the street from Colonial Williamsburg. The community is a part of something I've grown up in and [the internship] sounded like a unique way to gain a further appreciation of pharmacy history and how far the profession

has come.”

According to an [article](#) published by VCU, Kota had to learn things like archaic measurements (drams and grains), interpret old textbook instructions for medicinal production, and build her public contact and speaking skills by describing her work to the tours that passed through the shop.

VCU also describes how Kota dried foxglove flowers from the apothecary’s garden to make a treatment for edema, as well as her preparation of concoctions like a “tincture of Peruvian bark” that was used to treat malaria.

Beyond the apothecary, Kipps says that the Colonial Williamsburg program specializes in other areas as well. “We have retired physicians, two retired pharmacists, and one naval officer who specialized in public health issues in the navy,” she said.

The wide range of historical and medical experiences gives participating students the opportunity to interact with and learn from modern professionals as well as historians, Kipps said.

“It’s cool to put yourself in [the apothecaries’] shoes, see the things they thought were important to document and how that compares to our approach today,” said Kota.

Feature and sidebar images courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg and Bill Munroe.

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