

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

For October 27 – November 2, 2019

Armoury:

Blacksmith –

“Out in the Anderson Shop
The hammers never stop
They’re forging away
Until judgement day
Or at least til 5 o’clock.”

“The Blacksmiths send greetings to their friends among the other Trades, in our first missive of this hallowed month. Our greatest recent success came on Sunday the 13th, when attendees from the conference on ‘Military Arms in Revolutionary America’ came to our yard. Ken made a forging progression and forged a bayonet during their visit, while Alex took questions, and Tim made nails. Mark showed a forging progression for the Hunter sword guard and began polishing the sword blade while Owen powered the great wheel. The Journeymen and Master continue to wrestle with the weathervane components as we reach the end of this mighty project. The individual components of banner, directionals, and scrolls are now complete and need to be assembled on the finished spindle. Ken has also worked on plane irons, musket parts, and a tool for the Tinsmiths. In addition to directionals, Mark also worked on musket parts and sharpened some tools for the Artificers. Aislinn made pattens (and filmed it) for a presentation to the Honorable Cordwainers’ Company, and made a gun tool. Owen has been working on a double caliper for the Carpenters, Alex recently finished his first grid iron, and Tim worked on thumb latches. Iron and steel are piled high at the foot of the anvil.”

Tinsmith – “The Tin Shop has been busy with a number of items over the past few weeks. Jenny and Steve have made struck lanterns for a private order. Joel has been making cups, canisters, and teapots, as well as continuing his research. Jenny has continued her work on coffee pots, and they continue to improve. Steve is starting behind-the-scenes work on the struck panels for the 19th-century pie safe being constructed by the Joiners for the ‘Woodworkers’ Conference’ this winter.”

Colonial Garden – “The Garden has been transformed from the lush summer Garden to the fall and winter Garden. All the quarters were turned, and soil amended, if needed. Our cover crops are in and growing nicely thanks to the recent rains that broke the drought. The winter hardy crops have been planted, and some have outgrown their bell jars already. The lettuce has gotten large enough that we will sow a second round to replace the heads that can be harvested. We harvested lima beans and long-rooted radishes and sent them to the Palace Kitchen. The bean poles came down, and a crop of red crimson was sowed in its place.

“Our new hotbed will soon protect our beloved plants that need a little protection from the winter. Hot peppers, marigold, herbs, and flowers will continue to flourish under glass. Peas are blooming in the first hotbed and will continue well into the new year.

“We continue to prepare for frost, which eventually will come for everything tender.”

Farming – “The cotton bolls are finally opening at Prentis Field and will be picked mostly by school groups. Cotton in the Tidewater region during the Revolutionary War was for domestic use. The war devastated the economy because tobacco exports and manufactured goods imports were severely curtailed by a powerful British Navy. If you wanted clothes, you had to grow them!”



Foundry – “The Foundry is picking up production of military brass, and the end is in sight for the hinges. A silver bell is on deck and will be poured soon as Grand Illumination approaches. And lastly, let's not forget the spinet brass for the Harpsichord Makers. Spinet brass is a different brass alloy than usual because it involves nickel as well as a quick stir with an old cleaned-off file. It's hard stuff.”





Public Leather Works – "The Public Leather Works has been busy, continuing their twice-weekly 'Less Talking, More Doing' program, as well as having hosted a hands-on workshop making hammer stalls for attendees of the 'Weapons of War' conference. In the meantime, they have undertaken miscellaneous projects, most notably a squared valise Jan made for the Tin Shop based on a period image of a tinker. Andrew just finished a chisel cover for Ayinde of the Carpenters, and Jay is working on a pair of leather breeches."

Credit for the following three photos: Fred Blystone





Milliner and Mantua-maker – “Dearest Readers, I regret to inform you that you have been duped by a False Mrs. Crackenthorpe! Indeed, though she has written eloquently on the News of this City, her “informants” are in fact a single informant. I, however, the Real Mrs. Crackenthorpe, have cultivated close relationships with the denizens of our Fair City, and my Agents bring to me only the Most Worthwhile information, such as the presence of a new face in the Mgt. Hunter Millinery. My sources tell me that their new volunteer Mrs. L--- M--- is already quite an accomplished Milliner and Mantua-maker, and she is most welcoming to visitors in the shop.

“The Millinery shop has been oddly empty of apprentices this last fortnight. Mrs. J--- claimed to be returning to England for her health, though I understand from a trustworthy source that Mrs. J--- in fact had business with a renown Italian Staymaker at the School of Historical Dress in London. Miss R--- S--- journeyed North to New England to make an in-depth study of that region’s particular Cloaks, and to visit family, as she is originally from the colonie of Connecticut. During their absences, Miss H--- and Mrs. W--- kept shop together with help from Mrs. A--- W---, journeyman Weaver, and Ms. E--- O---, Gardener. Master Taylor M--- H--- also lent his time when Miss H--- herself left for Staunton, Va., in pursuit of grueling physical activity using a most peculiar two-wheeled Vehicle, which she enjoys recreationally. I very much doubt that one can find grueling physical activity Enjoyable, but my agents tell me this is a Pastime for many individuals, and indeed, my agents have never mislead me. Despite the Mistress’s sudden departure of Apprentices, the Millinery is still abuzz with Industry and Enterprise. Mr. N--- H---, formerly Journeyman Taylor and currently an illustrious Curator, has tasked the Mistress and her Apprentices with the remaking of a Gown fit for a Wedding to be staged at the Everard House.”

Silversmith – " When last we left our intrepid adventu... Silversmiths, Bobbie was putting the final touches on her casters. They have since been finished and are working their way to the customer. She has since been working on several ideas for miniatures that may make their way into our production rotation in the near future, including spoons and a monteith. Chris finished the bottle tickets and has finished the raising necessary for her teapot. She now is planishing the surface of the teapot’s body. Lynn is plugging away at the multitude of engraving orders we have received, including multiple orders for the President’s Office and for service awards. George continues to work on refurbishing the chasing tools and has been producing spoons. Parker’s copper sphere is still awaiting the final solder joint, and he has been working on his silver beaker in the meantime. William has put his copper tumblers aside for the time being in order to complete an order for a 5-inch Gurney bowl as soon as possible.”



Bobbie's miniature spoons in William's giant hand



George and Chris working in the shop