

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER
for the week of October 4 - 10

Apothecary – They edited and updated the teacher's guide for their electronic field trip, "Potions, Ails, and Smallpox Tales". The curators hung their large reproduction anatomical prints in the office. They continue to work on dentistry, and there is a significant amount of primary sources that have been added. They are working on information on domestic medicine for Great Hopes.

Armoury:

Blacksmith – They are making repairs to the ox cart for Coach and Livestock, completing parts for the Cabinetmaker lathe, forging a fireplace crane for the Museum of the Confederacy log building in Appomattox, working on a coin press for the Curator of Numismatics, making andirons for Collections for Raleigh Tavern, forging smoker's tongs for Anderson display, forging a froe for a customer, and repairing a door lock spindle for a customer.

Tin Shop – They are fabricating two saucepans for Foodways, fabricating a set of kettles for the Shoe Shop, and making gill cups.

Artificer's Shop – They will be finishing leather stays for the Armory apprentices and completing a run of cartridge pouches for Military Programs. Depending on light and progress, they may commence work on a pair of officer's field cases. They will continue with the usual odd jobs and repairs.

Basketmaker – They will be splitting white oak and/or working on a long overdue wheelbarrow basket. They have moved back into the Wythe Laundry.

Bindery – They are working on two quarto bindings in calf skin, a full binding, and a half binding, all for Prentis Store. They are also starting a fifth music book in folio to be sold, and continuing the rebinding of A Complete Housewife for Great Hopes.

Brickmaker – They are busy constructing their clamp, or kiln, where the bricks made this summer will be fired Nov 18-22. Work will include stacking the 27,000 or so bricks, encasing the green bricks first with previously fired bricks and then a layer of clay, and of course, stacking firewood.

Cabinetmaker – They continue work on the replication of two case pieces and an easy chair, as well as the upholstery for a half set of side chairs. The harpsichord makers are preparing materials for two new spinets and their presentation to the 2016 Working Wood Symposium. The treadle lathe will hopefully be completed this week.

Carpenters – They have finished building hinged and lockable crates for the Market House. They are now working down the final punch list for the buildings there and preparing to return the Carpentry program to Great Hopes, opening to the public on October 13th.

Coopers – They have started making a larger-size cask for the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation. They are making some inroads into the restoration of casks (mentioned last week). They are also making a few buckets.

Foodways – They are working with Aleworks on a test batch of porter. They are also working on a series of pre-made punch mixes based on 18th-century recipes and practicing on some sugar work for next year's confections program. "Secrets of the Chocolate Maker" will be held on Tuesday, Oct 6th.

Great Hopes Plantation –

Farming: They have struck the curing tobacco and stripped all the leaves off the stalks. It is now bulked into a pile to sweat. This process often improves the color of the leaf and will result in better tobacco. They are grubbing out the corn stalks in the bottom field in preparation for plowing, and they continue to plow according to soil conditions.

Domestic: The greens are doing well in the garden; and sometime this month, they will make a delivery of them to the Williamsburg Lodge restaurant. As the garden slows down, other domestic work will include drop spinning, making yeast, etc... They let a hen brood, and they now have some freshly-hatched chicks. The mother hen and the chicks are a big treat for the guests.

They now have a Facebook page: “Colonial Williamsburg's Great Hopes Plantation”. Check them out!



“Checking the tobacco to see if it is ‘in case’.”

Gun Shop/Foundry – They are busy altering a bell pattern and casting a bell for a neat gift for an important donor of the Market House Project. They also continue to make flintlocks, spoons, candle sticks, and other items.

Historic Garden – The broccoli is transplanted, and the spinach and corn salad has just sprouted. They are digging sweet potatoes this week, and the late asters and goldenrods are colliding in a cacophony of color in the flower border.

Joiners – They will finish the last of the crates for the Market House. They are also fitting collars on the Washington Dining tent poles, building a box for the reproduction of Washington’s folding camp bed, and working up a sign board for the William Pitt Store.

Millinery – They continue to work on a petticoat and jacket, a silk Sultanna robe, and a reproduction of a late 18th-century cap, worn by a Quaker lady, which is in our CW collection.

Printers – The pressmen are working off copies of “The Articles of Confederation,” and they are in the bindery gathering and stitching “A Pretty Story.”

Shoemaker – They wanted to share some pictures of one of their recently-completed projects: a pair of French-style riding boots to be used by Mark Schneider as Lafayette. This was the shop’s first attempt at a boot like this, and they presented Journeyman Brett Walker with a number of design and fitting challenges. Unlike English style boots, these have no “rearward inclination.” The usual challenges of the foot dropping past the long heel and short heel measure points were exacerbated by the ramrod-straight vertical leg of the boot. However, after some careful stretching an ideal fit was achieved. Please see the picture below:



Silversmith – They are working on various sorts of spoons and salt shovels, Gurney Bowls and a fluted bowl, a “skittle ball” teapot, a pair of patty pans, a small dram cup, Revere Beakers and raised beakers, a thistle cup, trade silver jewelry, rings and letter charms, a 12-inch Montieth, 2 copper vessels (one being raised by the intern, the other by an apprentice), and ladles.

Please note that at any given time, not all of these items will be being worked on, but all will be available to be seen and discussed with anyone who is interested.

Tailors – They are working on the mattresses and curtains for Washington’s camp bed and finishing details on the Marquees.

Weaver – They just completed a blue and white overshot throw for Prentis. In addition, they have completed a test of double cloth: woven at 30 inches but unfolds to 60 inches. This is in practice for Mt. Vernon and for us here to create an 80+ wide, no seam blanket for sewing medallions in the corners. They are also producing towels for Prentis.

Wheelwright – They are currently repairing the ox cart, finishing a hand cart for the Market House, repairing an ox wagon, and starting a new ox cart.

Wigmaker – They are constructing a Bob Wig, comprised of human and horse hair, which Debbie saw in Germany, a wiglet for one of the AI’s, and a hand-knotted base for a new wig for Richard Schuman (Patrick Henry). They also continue to do daily maintenance on wigs used by CW staff to support various programming (plays, Ghost Tours, Rev City, and commercials).