

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

for the week of November 22 - 28

Apothecary – Several Hampton University pharmacy students visited the shop to earn extra credit for their history of pharmacy class. Sharon continues to work on winter training. Robin and the survey team met to critique the survey after it had been tested. Robin and Janea are collaborating on a “How We Know What We Know” program on Tues. Nov. 24th. It will be an interdisciplinary look at research on Dress History and Medical History.

Armoury:

Blacksmith – They are working on an iron rim lock for an apprenticeship project, They are making chain for Great hopes, forging shears, making two hand railings for an Historic Area building, working on fireplace tools for use in town, and making items for Prentis Store. Work continues on the iron rim lock as an apprenticeship project.

Tin Shop – Work continues on soldiers camp cups. They are making a horn-paned tin lanthorn for Fort Ticonderoga, and creating a pattern for a tin watering can.

Artificer's Shop – At present, they are caught up with all outstanding projects. Now would be a good time to let them know of any upcoming needs for your work units, so that they can be budgeted and prioritized. Any images or citations that you are able to provide are most helpful as research time is at a premium for them.

Basketmaker – They are making baskets for Prentis Store for Christmas sales.

Bindery – They continue to work on a custom order (a full-bound ledger), a music book, and books for Prentis Store.

Brickmaker – The last day of “Firing the Brick Kiln” is Sunday, Nov 22nd, 9:00am-5:00pm. The brickyard will close for the season on Monday, Nov 23rd.

Cabinetmaker – They are in the initial stages of work on two pedestal music stands and a decorated tea caddy. Work continues on the wing chair and spinet.

Candlemaker – The Maintenance Blacksmith Carl Hirner reports that he has completed repairs to a large, copper pot. Tom Redd intends to pick it up next week and deliver it to the Taliaferro-Cole site. Work continues on finalizing job descriptions and meeting other HR requirements. Tom has also started work on Safety documentation for the new shop.

Carpenters – They are building a shed and making shingles.

Coopers – They are making casks for the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and buckets for the Prentis Store.

Foodways – They are preparing for the next “Secrets of the Chocolate Maker” program on Tuesday, Dec 1st, and for the butchering program on Saturday, Dec 12th.

Great Hopes Plantation –

They continue to daub between the logs of the Slave House. Thank you to the Brickyard staff for a period recipe for the daub and for getting them started!

They have welcomed Victoria Tolsen to the Domestic Arts staff. Intern Nicole Justice will be leaving soon to return to the OI department. Thanks Justice!

Farming: They “cross-plowed” the land where they will put in flax. Cross-plowing is a second plowing in the opposite direction of the first to break up the ground more finely. A 100-yard rail fence has been finished; and they are starting the movement of rails, which will allow the expansion of the apple orchard. Various woodworking projects continue.

Domestic Arts: They are making soap for the first time at Great Hopes, and for the first time in quite a long time at CW. They continue to experiment with seasonal mid-day cooking using their vegetables.

Windmill: The site grading is complete, and the area has been seeded. Leftover straw from Halloween hay bales has been used as a cover for the freshly-seeded ground. Ben Hasset, the millwright, will be on site starting Monday.

Gun Shop/Foundry –The Founders are polishing pewter candlesticks and setting molds to cast coins for Prentis Store. The Gunsmiths have almost finished engraving a gun lock and are also making springs for a pair of flintlocks.

Historic Garden – This week, the paper frames have been covered, and broad beans are planted. They have finally been able to put in their second crop of endive and transplant the lettuce which will stay in the cold frame all winter. With the cold weather coming up, they are needing to rebuild their fireplace. They will start to have fires next week with the accompaniment of frost. Starting Tuesday, the nursery shop will be in high gear for all Christmas sales with the fresh wreaths and arrangements made by volunteers and the Landscaping staff.

Joiners – They will be making a table for the Weaver's new shop and a table for the Candlemakers.

Millinery – They are making an ermine muff and continue working on the repair of two pairs of stays and a gown for customers.

Printers – They are printing The Beggar’s Opera theatre bill in red.

Shoemaker – Yesterday, Rob presented a very successful program on blackball making at the Armoury. Photos are now posted on their shop’s Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10153684406315132.1073741880.265271515131&type=3>. Some of the balls have already been given out to staff with handmade shoes to help keep them in good condition. Work is progressing on several pairs of common shoes, and there are a number of cobbling jobs being done as time allows.

Silversmith – They are working on various sorts of spoons (including mote spoons), salt shovels, Gurney Bowls and a fluted bowl, a pair of patty pans, a small dram cup, a pair of raised beakers, a small punch cup, trade silver jewelry, rings, and letter charms, a 12-inch Montieth, 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 patterning and constructing knit fabric breeches and working with visiting fellow Anne Bissonnette on new research regarding Macaroni dress.

Weaver – They entertained the Williamsburg Co-op preschool kids, who were so adorable. They provided a dye workshop and “Fleece to Fabric” program this past weekend for the Leicester Longwool Association. They have started a linsey Woolsey project to get them to the end of the year, and they may be dyeing on Monday if Mother Nature cooperates.

Wheelwright – They continue to repair the 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).

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO EVERYONE!

Making Black Ball At The Armoury

Taken at The Anderson Blacksmith Shop and Public Armoury

Rob spent Thursday afternoon at the Armoury making black ball, which is used for maintaining the black coloring on a man's leather shoe. The blacking formula comes from a period recipe found in the journal of a Presbyterian minister, who was preaching to Native Americans in Pennsylvania during the 1760's. The blacking recipe consists of two parts tallow, one part beeswax and one part bone or ivory blacking.



Three sets of double boilers, one of tallow, one of beeswax and one a combination of both.



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Tallow and bone black, along with beeswax, make up the blacking formula.



Rob getting ready to pour the blacking into ceramic cups to set



Rob pouring the blacking into ceramic cups to set.



The blacking will set for twelve hours, then it will slide out and be wrapped in paper.



A pair of shoe to be blacked.



The blacking is applied.



After the blacking is applied, the shoe is then brushed.



The blacksmiths were kind enough to share their shop with us.



The end result, a cake of black ball ready for use.