

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

For November 24 - 30, 2019

Apothecary – “All of us have been busy. Sharon started working on the site records from 1785. Mark is compounding a fresh bottle of digitalis and the additive to make sure that it does not mold. Eighteenth-century apothecaries have absolutely no use for mold. If customers saw it in a medication, it would be a perfect excuse to go shop at the competition. Robin has been checking some sources to find pictures of spatulas for apothecaries and did another interview.”

Armoury:

Blacksmith – “The weathervane took on its final restraints this week, with the Journeyman Smiths collaring the scrolls in place, ensuring they cannot escape. Hopefully, it will not darken our doorstep again! The Shop’s focus has now fully turned to the herculean hinges for Gunston Hall. Finishing projects is a theme this week. Ken has finished up his sign bracket, Aislinn will shortly be done with a rotating broiler, Mark has fixed lathe components for the Wheelwrights, and Owen has finished his well bucket chain. At Ken’s bench, there remain locks for door and gun, while Aislinn perseveres on the Garden scoops, waiting for handles to be turned out by the Joiners. On the subject of Joiners, Alex resized the shank of one of Peter’s holdfasts, and is making small nails for hinges to complete a cabinet in their Shop. Owen still works on curtain rod and now the hooks to go with it, and Tim recycles old thumb latches into new. There’s plenty to pick from this week, at the foot of the anvil.”

Brickyard – This year’s ‘Firing the Brick Kiln’ concludes on Sunday, November 24th at 5:00pm.

Cabinetmaker – “The massive piles of wood shavings keep coming from John’s bench as he and Bill continue work on the cherry high chest. Ed and Melanie are excited to start working on plans and parts for the next spinet harpsichord.”



John at his workbench in the Cabinetmaker

Colonial Garden – “Last week, the Garden made it through the first frost and the freezing rain and snow without a single problem. The pine mulch, glass bells, and hoops have perfectly protected the more delicate lettuce, endive, and young carrots in addition to other delights. Weeding and turning of the compost pile continues as does our removal of old glazing from two of the hot bed windows. The pathways are being replenished with wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow of shell from the work yard as the wet weather reveals low areas. More pine straw has been placed around the large holly tree and the elderberry tree for added protection from the cold. Multiple heads of lettuce and bunches of long scarlet radishes have been sent to the Palace Kitchen and to the Williamsburg Inn. We also stopped by Prentis Field to pick cotton and to send turnips off to the Williamsburg Inn. Our fire pit is roaring away in this chilly weather and is a delight to guests and Gardeners alike.

“This week, with most of our winter Garden in, we turn to projects that sit idle until we have time and comfortable temperatures. This week, the compost piles were turned. We make space for the manured hay that comes from the sheep that are kept behind the Garden and loads of horse manure from the street delivered by ox cart. Thanks to all this wonderful raw material, we are able to manure our Garden and make potting soil. The Jerusalem artichokes still need to be unearthed and the fava beans planted. The last of the scarlet radishes were harvested.”

Joinery – “Dark are the woods through which the Joiners journey. Any less-prepared apprentice might falter in this world of grim twilit forests and rock-strewn wastes, but the Joiners are a stalwart company, tempered by struggle and renewed by faith in one another. This past week, they have fought with feral food safes, and with hickory possessed of so twisted a heart, that only the sharpest of blades could pierce it. Rumors even persist that one among their number risked their immortal soul by venturing deep into the heart of the Brickyard. What dread tasks and waking nightmares he faced there, he has not said. The Joiners chose a difficult path, beset by beasts and lurking horrors and the inhumanity of man to fellow

man, but rest assured dear readers, that their hearts are pure, their arms are strong, and no fell horror can break them. March on!”

Public Leather Works – Due to continuing maintenance work on their new home, the Public Leather Works remains closed for now. The re-opening date has yet to be determined.

Silversmith – “Bobbie continues working on the small copper bell ornament and the tankard lid. Chris is working on her teapot. The incoming Holiday season means an increased demand for engraving, so Lynn has been swamped with orders as she continues the trays. Preston is working on several small bowls. George continues upgrading the polishing area, while making two mugs and cleaning chasing tools. Parker has been working on trade silver and has started a practice copper strainer. William has returned from a week in the warmth of the Bahamas, determined to finish his bowl.”