Making Furniture in Preindustrial America

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Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

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Notes

Abbreviations

The following source abbreviations appear in the notes, along with those used in the appendixes (see appendix A).

BHS  Bethlehem Historical Society
CHS  Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford
CSL  Connecticut State Library, Hartford
FHS  Fairfield Historical Society
FPR  Fairfield probate court records
LHS  Litchfield Historical Society
MHS  Milford Historical Society
NHHS  New Haven Colony Historical Society
NHS  Newtown Historical Society
OSV  Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Massachusetts
STHS  Stratford Historical Society
STPR  Stratford probate court records
YUL  Yale University Library, New Haven
WML  Winterthur Museum Library, Delaware

Introduction

2. Ibid., 18, 320–45. Goodrich’s phrase “articles of use” is noteworthy in its resemblance to the Marxist concept *use value*. For a historiographical review that characterizes the intense nonmarket exchanges of rural New England households, see Allan Kulikoff, “The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (1989), esp. 122–26.


demonstrates the weaknesses of Tryon's thesis. Eighteenth-century Pennsylvania communities were not totally self-sufficient. Owing to limits such as the small number of looms, local production never met the community's needs. Indeed a great variety of imported materials were purchased, ranging from inexpensive necessities to costly luxuries. Throughout the century, local economic pressures and opportunities determined how much cloth was made and how much was imported by each household. The importation of cloth freed up potentially productive time for other livelihoods and therefore played an important part in each family's decisions.


11. Auction catalogues, for example, often attribute much surviving work to the general New England region but provide very specific attributions for urban examples. On the need to look at rural furniture on its own terms, see Robert F. Trent, *Hearts and Crowns* (New Haven: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1979).


18. For the traditional view of craftwork as a form of supplemental income, discrete and separable from "real" agricultural work, or as a new strategy, see Jack-


One


4. On the growth of the Connecticut meat and pork trade, see Richard Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), 108–16; Glen Weaver,

5. WPR 7:142–43.


11. WPR 11:214; New Milford Probate District, Docket 2530.

12. NLR 32:553.


Throughout this study, bedsteads have been considered separately from furniture. Several different types of woodworkers produced bedsteads. Individual parts of bedsteads were also sold by sawmill owners, a custom that allowed anyone to assemble a bedstead. In inventories, bedsteads were listed with beds and bedding rather than with household furniture.
14. Account Book of Charles Prindle, 1801–1806 (CHS); and Account Book of Nehemiah Pray of Huntington and Brookfield, 1810–1820 (NHS). The main difference between Prindle and Pray and earlier ambidextrous craftsmen such as Joseph Brown Jr. and James Briscoe Jr. is the proportion of work devoted to different tasks. Whereas earlier craftsmen divided their time almost equally among several tasks, Prindle and Pray spent most of their time on house joinery.

15. The different spheres of the house joiner and shop joiner is best shown by an account book reference in which Elijah Booth, a shop joiner, received forty window sashes and journeyman’s work on a cupboard from Bartimeus Fabrique, a house joiner. Account Book of Bartimeus Fabrique of Southbury, 1785–1820 (YUL), I 3.


20. For a wide drawer, joiners in western Connecticut used a single board with grain parallel to the front, or two boards with a shiplap joint between them, and secured it only along the back edge. Since the bottom board or boards floated within grooves along the interior surface of the other three sides, they could easily expand and contract with climatic changes. For smaller drawers, the joiner would orient the grain of the bottom board so that it ran perpendicular to the front and then secure it with a single nail along the back, thus allowing necessary movement. This tech-
nique of bottoming drawers differed significantly from the dominant Boston tradi-

tion.

21. WPR 7:18; see also FPR 10:544-48.

22. On the different types of inlay, see Benjamin Hewitt, “Regional Characteris-
in Federal America, 1790-1820 (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), esp.
73-84.

23. DPR 1:298; Account Book of Charles Prindle of Woodbury, 1801-1806
(CHS). Other references to oil, varnish, and paints in joiners’ inventories can be
found in the FPR 14:160-63, 16:109, 19:477-81. The best discussions of eighteenth-
century finishes are Robert Mussey, “Transparent Furniture Finishes in New En-
American Painted Furniture, 1660-1880 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979). The prefer-
ence for unstained cherry and maple is in contrast with furniture made in eastern
Connecticut, eastern Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, where joiners used a
dark stain on curly maple or cherry to make the wood look like mahogany.

24. Farmer’s Journal (March 26, 1792), 4; Account Book of Samuel and Thomas
Bull of Woodbury, 1719-1790 (CSL), 132; and Account Book of George Northrop of
Newtown, 1792-1827 (CSL), 47.


26. Account Book of Samuel Beers of Newtown, 1794-1815 (privately owned),
34; Account Book of Samuel Beers of Newtown, 1776-1810 (privately owned), 40;
Danbury Probate District, Docket 866 (CSL); Account Book of Ziba Blakeslee of
Newtown, 1789-1822 (WML), 57; Account Book of Matthew Minor of Woodbury,
1800-1820 (privately owned), 38; Account Book of Nathaniel Bacon of Woodbury,
1798-1849 (CHS), 73; Receipt of Matthew Minor, Nov. 22, 1822 (privately owned);
Account Book of Caleb Baldwin of Newtown, 1800-1846 (YUL), 79, 139; Account
Book of an Anonymous Oyer/Fuller of Newtown, 1802-1808 (privately owned); and
Account Book of Philo Beardslee of Newtown, 1804-1833 (LHS), 143.

27. STPR 3:267.

Kebabian and William Lipke, eds., Tools and Technologies: America’s Wooden Age (Bur-
lington, Vt.: Robert Hull Fleming Museum, 1979), 52-53; Frank White, “The Invol-
untary Legacy of Samuel Wing, Cabinetmaker/Chairmaker,” Old Sturbridge Visitor
22, no. 3 (1982): 8-9; and Fairfield Probate Court Records, 12:452-54, 14:160,
16:109, 19:477-81. As John Light demonstrates, investigation of old shop sites might
prove important to the understanding of a craftsman’s world. “The Archeological
Investigation of Blacksmith Shops,” Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology

29. 1820 Census of Manufactures—Connecticut Schedules (National Archives Micro-
film Publications, microcopy no. 279), 146.

30. The only known account book of a joiner working in northern Fairfield
County or southern Litchfield County does not reveal seasonal rhythms. Account
Book of Elisha Hawley of Ridgefield, 1786-1800 (CHS). For examples of estates
with unfinished furniture, see the inventories of Ebenezer Bulkley and Daniel
Dimon of Fairfield, Andrew Sherwood and Hezekiah Treadwell of Stratford, Joel
Booth and Alexander Bryan of Newtown, and Simeon King of Woodbury. Fairfield Probate District, Dockets 1162 and 1963; FPR 13:177, 16:109; Danbury Probate District, Docket 866; DPR 1:222–23; and Woodbury Probate District, Docket 2612. Exceptions to this seasonal rule were the larger shops run by Daniel Hoyt of Fairfield, Brewster Dayton of Stratford, and Ebenezer Booth of Newtown. FPR 19:312–14; STPR 3:267; and Danbury Probate District, Docket 861.


32. FPR 19:477–81; Danbury Probate District, Dockets 861 and 866; Woodbury Probate District, Docket 2608; and WPR 7:18. Patterns used by the woodworkers of the Dominy family are illustrated in Hummel, With Hammer in Hand, 96–100. Patterns belonging to Samuel Wing, a chairmaker from Barnstable, Massachusetts, are owned by Old Sturbridge Village. White, “Involuntary Legacy of Samuel Wing.”

33. WPR 7:18; Woodbury Probate District, Docket 26; Danbury Probate District, Dockets 861 and 1854; FPR 14:160–63, 19:477–81; and STPR 3:267. For a dendrological and technological discussion of this technique, see John Alexander Jr., Make a Chair from a Tree: An Introduction to Working Green Wood (Newtown: Taunton Press, 1978), esp. 53–101. Benno Forman points out the historical implications of this technology in “Delaware Valley ‘Crook Foot’ and Slat-Back Chairs,” Winterthur Portfolio 15, no. 1 (1980): 45–46. Forman refers to this technology, and the use of patterns, as an urban-based phenomenon caused by the collaboration of several different craftsmen. The evidence from rural Connecticut suggests otherwise. The inventories of Ezekiel Hawley, Brewster Dayton, and Joel Booth, which also listed stockpiles of slats, are another indication of efficiency in the larger shops. FPR 19:477–81; STPR 3:267; and Danbury Probate District, Docket 866.


36. Woodbury Probate District, Docket 2972; Newtown Probate District, Docket 1714; NTL, 1820; Account Book of Joseph and Simeon Curtiss of Southbury, 1783–1827 (YUL); and Account Book of David Stiles of Southbury, 1789–1815.
(privately owned). Several inventories of joiners listed boards at the sawmill. Newtown Probate District, Docket 69; and FPR 14:160–63.


39. In With Hammer in Hand, Hummel illustrates tenon-cutting bits, a scraper, a turning chisel, and keyhole saws that the Dominys had made from old tools.

40. Account Book of John Hubbell of Newtown, 1792–1793 (OSV); WPR 7:37, 10:158; Account Book of Shadrach Osborn of Southbury, 1783–1792 (YUL); Miscellaneous Receipts of Shadrach Osborn of Southbury (CSL); and DPR 9:319–25.


Two


3. Apprenticeship agreement between Lazarus Prindle and Joseph Peck Jr., June 5, 1793 (privately owned).


5. Works that indicate how a craftsman broadened his performance include


9. Information on woods was drawn from a survey of FPR 4 through FPR 20. On local economic activities, see Connecticut Archives: Industry and Connecticut Archives: Trade and Maritime Affairs (CSL). On the Stratford examples, see Account Book of John Brooks Jr. of Stratford, 1784–1824 (Bridgeport Museum of Art, Science, and Industry, Conn.); and Account Book of Lewis Burritt of Stratford, 1794–1838 (STHS). In Marblehead, joiners such as Joseph Lindsey (1714–1764) and cabinet-makers such as the Boston-trained Nathan Bowen (1752–1837) worked according to the maritime seasonal cycle: they fitted furnituremaking in-between work at sea or work on board coastal schooners in the warmer months, as well as during the months when the harbor was frozen in. Local economics also affected the materials used in these shops. The accounts of Lindsey’s and Bowen’s shops reveal that they had access to imported woods such as walnut from the mid-Atlantic colonies and mahogany from the West Indies as well as white pine from New Hampshire and what is now Maine. Lacking an abundant local supply of cabinet-grade wood, these craftsmen naturally relied on their network with coastal traders and fishermen for their raw materials. Account Book of Joseph Lindsey of Marblehead, 1739–1764 (WML); Jobe, “Urban Craftsmen,” 12–13; Account Book of Nathan Bowen of Marblehead, 1775–1779 (WMIL); Philip Chadwick Smith, ed., *The Journals of Ashley Brown* (1728–1813) of Marblehead (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1973), 2:646; and Richard Randall Jr., “An Eighteenth Century Partnership,” *Art Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1960): 152–61.
10. These observations are based on readings of account books from western Connecticut in the collections of the BHS, CHS, CSL, FHS, LHS, MHS, NHHS, NHS, OSV Library, WML, and YUL. The best sources are the Account Book of John Durand of Milford, 1760–1783 (MHS) and the Account Book of Elisha Hawley of Ridgefield, 1786–1800 (CHS). Even as late as 1844, it was customary for cabinetmakers in Greenfield, Massachusetts, a community no longer dominated by farming, to work evenings from September to March. These extended winter hours allowed a shop to produce sufficient pieces and parts for much of the following year. Christopher Clark, “The Diary of an Apprentice Cabinetmaker: Edward Jenner Carpenter’s ‘Journal’ 1844–45,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 98, part 2 (1989), 325 and 359.


13. For a contemporary perspective on the efficiency and exactness possible from empirical knowledge and repetitive action, see Sam Maloof, *Sam Maloof: Woodworker* (New York: Kodansha International, 1983). Maloof maintains that he can cut dovetails for a piece of case furniture in less time than it would take him to set up and use a jig for a router or table saw.


15. See, for example, appendixes A and B.


foundland Fishing Community (St. John’s: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1970).


27. See appendixes A and B for information on the Booths, Fabriques, and Prindles. The Beardslees included Henry and Andrew of Stratford, John of Trum-


30. Hobart Family Papers (FHS).


Three

1. In this study Woodbury is defined not by strict political bounds, but by dynamic cultural relationships. Culture, as used here, refers to the behavioral system of “shared meanings, attitudes and values, and the symbolic forms in which they are expressed or embodied” within a particular social formation. Such goals and values were communicated on many related levels, including economic relations, kinship structure, and religious ideology. By this definition Woodbury refers to an area the physical bounds of which were never fixed but rather remained fluid and dependent on the people who lived there.

Before 1740, culturally cohesive Woodbury included most of the original grant except for the northwestern part that became Judea. Not only was this area separated from the First Society meetinghouse by eight miles of rugged terrain but the majority of its inhabitants had stronger ties with the more accessible town of Litchfield. Settlers in the northeastern section of the original grant, what is now Bethlehem, shared similar difficulties in traveling to the center of Woodbury. They did not, however, assume their own cultural identity until the settlement of Joseph Bellamy as minister in 1742. Under the leadership of the forceful Bellamy, Bethlehem fo-
cused its attention inward on theological and agricultural matters.

The western region of the original grant, which became Roxbury, experienced mixed cultural ties with the First Society. Separated from the Woodbury center by several ridges running northerly and southerly and distinguished by the largest concentration of Anglicans within the area of the original land grant, this region achieved some cultural autonomy. At the same time, familial and economic connections made it part, albeit limited, of the Woodbury cultural region. For the purposes of this study, the Woodbury cultural region is not considered to include Roxbury.

Although the area to the south of Woodbury had become the separate religious society of Southbury in 1732, it remained a part of cultural Woodbury through the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. The bulk of this society's population lived in the Pomeraug Valley and thus enjoyed easy interchange with the First Society. Such communicative connections were underpinned by familial ties, convivial relations between ministers of similar theological perspectives, and deference to an interrelated social and economic elite. The Masonic Lodge, whose members tended to live in either the First Society or in Southbury, best symbolized such cultural cohesion.

Only when the Kettletown district developed in the early nineteenth century did part of Southbury begin to establish its own orientation, and this was limited to that southeastern district. The northern part of Southbury remained united with Woodbury center. Woodbury, as used in this study, refers to the area most easily described in geographic terms as the Pomeraug Valley. Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1978), prologue; and William Cothren, *History of Ancient Woodbury* (Waterbury, Conn.: Bronson Brothers, 1854), 1:219–83, 292, 331–34.


3. Although other undetected joiners, particularly journeymen and apprentices, surely worked in the two towns, the existing list of sixty-one joiners in Newtown and fifty-two in Woodbury are a valid sample derived from similar sources. The technique of collective biographies is derived from such works as Philip Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970); and Barbara Ward, “The Craftsman in a Changing Society: Boston Goldsmiths, 1690–1730” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1983).

4. Appendixes A and B provide additional information and pertinent sources for all specific life histories.


6. In the eighteen years after 1756, Newtown's population grew from 1,253 to


9. Occupational and genealogical information on the Fairchilds is drawn from the Newtown tax assessments for 1797 and 1798 (privately owned); and BC.

10. Several joiners possessed no farmland at death because they had already deeded it or because it had been confiscated during the Revolution. Land records and detailed tax lists from the 1790s, which distinguish between different types of land, provided a means to circumvent this problem of landless inventories.


12. Donald Jacobus, *The Genealogy of the Booth Family* (Pleasant Hill, Mo.: Eden Booth, 1952), 18. A fourth son, Asahel, may have also been a woodworker. He bought a tenon saw from Shadrach Osborn and provided Osborn with twenty-four days of work. Account Book of Shadrach Osborn of Southbury, 1796–1806 (WML), 1.

13. Thomas Tousey drew up an indenture contract for Amos Sanford in March 1758, the time when Ebenezer IV would have begun his seven-year apprenticeship. Some connection between the two is suggested by Amos’s departure from Newtown in 1765 when Ebenezer IV had finished his training. Account Book of Thomas Tousey of Newtown, 1716–1761 (NHS), 85; and NTL.


15. NLR 8:266; WLR 16:78, 24:87; and Jacobus, *Genealogy*, 49–50.

16. The only account book reference to the work of Ebenezer Booth IV occurs in the ledger of Samuel Beers, a Newtown hatmaker for whom Ebenezer stocked and mended guns in 1788. Account Book of Samuel Beers of Newtown, 1776–1810 (privately owned), 40. For the location and valuation of Booth’s shop, see NLR 8:380; and NTL.


18. Danbury Probate District, Docket 861 (CSL). It is unclear who did the actual weaving. Some joiners such as Thomas Stilson also wove, while for others like John Boyer their wives carded, spun, and wove.


21. Danbury Probate District, Docket 861; Jacobus, *Genealogy*, 47; Jane Eliza
Johnson, ed., *Newtown’s History and Historian, Ezra Levan Johnson* (Newtown: Jane Johnson, 1917), 125; and Account Book of Dr. Samuel Orton of Woodbury, 1788–1798 (Woodbury Town Hall).

22. Danbury Probate District, Dockets 861 and 866.

23. Danbury Probate District, Docket 866; and NTL, 1790. Biographical information on the various creditors for Joel Booth’s estate was gleaned from BC; HC; and *Heads of Families 1790.*


1810 (YUL), 13; and Account Book of Shadrach Osborn of Southbury, 1796–1806 (WML).


33. SLR 2:126, 137, 190, 252, 264, 4:193, 195, 212; and Southbury Probate District, Docket 537.

Four


2. Bruce Daniels, The Connecticut Town (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), 125; Jane Eliza Johnson, ed., Newtown’s History and Historian, Ezra Lecan Johnson (Newtown: Jane Johnson, 1917), 14–34, 215–16. In the gross persistence rate, the denominator is the number of taxpayers listed in the first time period, and the numerator is the number of taxpayers who continued to the following time period. I made an informed decision based on familiarity with the inhabitants to resolve any cases of name ambiguity. This crude rate is merely an indicator of patterns, not a measure of absolute mobility. If the immense task of reconstituting the families of the two towns for the sixty-year period were to be accomplished, it would be possible to determine the influence of mortality, the differences between native sons and immigrants, and the frequency of migration. But such analysis is not the purpose of this particular study. For the interpretation of the craftsmen and their products, simple persistence rates should suffice.

This methodology and comparative data have been drawn from Douglas Jones, Village and Seaport (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1981), esp. 104–13. Newtown’s low persistence rate of 50 percent for the 1780s is an aberration. This low rate can be attributed directly to the unusually large number of Loyalists in Newtown during the Revolution, who either fled to New York or Nova Scotia or merely relocated until after the war. Loyalists were not reindoctrinated into town affairs until 1784. Stephen McGrath, “Connecticut’s Tory Towns: The Loyalty Struggle in Newtown, Redding, and Ridgefield, 1774–1783,” Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 44, no. 3 (1979): 88–96.


5. On Danbury’s increasing importance, see Daniels, *Connecticut Town*, 155-56. For a fuller explanation of the derivation and validity of the commercial index, see Cook, *Fathers of the Towns*, 78-80, 801-2; and Jones, *Village and Seaport*, 4-10.

6. The quotation is taken from the February 27, 1798, apprenticeship agreement between Zachariah Clark and his nephew Daniel (privately owned). Christopher Jedrey notes the same effects of communal values on the inhabitants of Chebacco Parish, Massachusetts, in *The World of John Cleaveland* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 74-97.


10. On the advantages of corn, the shortcomings of wheat, and the importance of meat exports to New York and the West Indies, see Bidwell, “Rural Economy,” 294-95, 304, 322-24.

11. These percentages are much higher than in eastern Massachusetts, where cider production and cloth production were specialized tasks undertaken by a restricted number of people. For the Massachusetts figures and additional details about the implications of these figures, see Carole Shammas, “How Self-Sufficient Was Early America?” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13, no. 2 (1982): 255-60.

12. NPR 1:259-65; Account Book of Samuel Beers of Newtown, 1776-1810 (privately owned); Account Book of Samuel Beers of Newtown, 1794-1815 (privately owned); and Account Book of Samuel Beers of Newtown, 1782-1805 (privately owned). The economic advantages of outwork were noted in the 1820 manufacturing census. Phineas Miller, the Fairfield County reporter, wrote that the cordwainers of Norwalk, Wilton, and New Canaan “receive the Leather from New York cut out, make the Shoes for a stipulated price by the pair, and return them when
so made to the shoe-manufacturers in N. York without being at all interested in the
purchase of Leather or the sale of the Shoes.” 1820 Census of Manufactures—


14. On the shift toward dairy production, see Bidwell, “Rural Economy,” 304; and Russel, Long, Deep Furrow, 249, 272, 283-85. The contemporary observation
about the sporadic marketing of agricultural surpluses in Fairfield County can be
found in the 1820 Census—Connecticut, 148.


16. Account Book of John Hubbell of Newtown, 1792-1793 (OSV); Account
Book of John Hubbell of Newtown, 1805-1823 (OSV); NPR 1:187-89.

17. Account Book of Eden Burchard of Newtown, 1799-1801 (privately owned);
Account Book of Eden Burchard of Newtown, 1809-1815 (privately owned); and
House, 1896), 216, 241, 525-26. The importance of outwork to the shoemaking
industry during the period of protoindustrialization was emphasized by Alan Daw­
ley in his study of Lynn, Massachusetts, Class and Community (Cambridge: Harvard
University Press, 1976), esp. 11-58.

18. Daniels, Connecticut Town, 14-20, 119-27; and William Cothren, History of
Ancient Woodbury (Waterbury, Conn.: Bronson Brothers, 1854), 1:32-42, 46-57, 65-

19. This sketch of Woodbury’s socioeconomic structure in the 1730s and 1740s is
drawn from James Walsh’s “The Great Awakening in the First Congregational
Church of Woodbury, Connecticut,” William and Mary Quarterly 28, no. 4 (1971):
543-62. On the settlement of northwestern Connecticut, see Daniels, Connecticut
Town, 28-34; and Charles Grant, Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent

20. WPR 11:22, 18:75, 7:27, 9:166-71, 155. See also the Account Book of Mat­
thew Minor of Woodbury, 1802-1826 (privately owned). Land rental in Newtown
was noted in inventories only after 1810.

21. WPR; WTL; and STL. See WPR 7:28 (Dulivan estate), 8:82 (Wilmot estate),
6:250-51 (Ferry estate), 7:37 (Moody estate). WPR 9:155, 10:75; Account Book of
Matthew Minor of Woodbury, 1801-1810 (privately owned), 8, 34, 39.

22. Boston’s gross persistence rate was 53 percent from 1687 to 1695 and 56
percent from 1780 to 1790. Windsor, Connecticut, on the edge of the seventeenth-
century frontier had a 57 percent rate from 1676 to 1686. Rates never dropped below

23. Cook, Fathers of the Towns, 37-42, 51-60, 96-98; and Daniels, Connecticut
Town, 200-201.

24. The General Assembly had appointed Litchfield as shire town more for its
geographic centrality than its regional prominence. Woodbury petitioned in 1768
and in 1791 to establish Woodbury County, but each time the petition was dis­

25. Bidwell discusses the relationship between large area, early settlement, and
market opportunities in “Rural Economy,” 271. Gary Nash, The Urban Crucible
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 236, 317; Account Book of Truman


32. For comparative information, see Geib, “Changing Works,” 41–52, 61–85; and Gross, “Culture and Cultivation,” tables 2 and 4. Observations on the surviving architecture are based only on the author’s familiarity with surviving structures; a systematic survey and analysis of the two towns’ houses should be undertaken.

33. Account Book of Shadrach Osborn of Southbury, 1796–1806 (WML); and Account Book of Shadrach Osborn, 1801–1803 (LHS). The Osborn family papers at NHHS reveal that Erastus Osborn was the New Haven agent for Shadrach Osborn. The Account Book of Matthew Minor of Woodbury, 1802–1826 (privately owned) shows frequent trips to New Haven to take Matthew’s ward, Josiah, to Yale. On the market orientation of farmers, see Azel Backus, Bethlehem in 1812 (1813; reprint, Hartford: Acorn Club of Connecticut, 1961), 9–11. A similar shift to market ex-


Five

1. Although only about two-thirds of Connecticut’s probated estates contained inventories, and these principally represent the wealthier or older members of society, this does not invalidate inventory analysis. Rather we must remember that the documents provide information only for that particular segment of the population whose estates were appraised. The literature on probate inventories as a source for the study of historical material culture is extensive, but a good introduction is Peter Benes, ed., *Early American Probate Inventories* (Boston: Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 1987).

2. Many original probate dockets and microfilms of the original probate court record books are on file at the CSL. The following data were collected for each inventory in the seven groups: name, date, gross wealth, description and value of real estate, and description, value, and frequency of personal estate. Personal estate was divided into agricultural assets (livestock, crops, farm tools and implements, agricultural produce), secondary assets (agricultural storage equipment, agricultural processing equipment, artisanal equipment and materials, fishing equipment, store inventory, labor, cloth), financial assets, and consumer assets. Consumer assets were subdivided into furniture, bedding (including bedsteads), personal goods (clothing, books, weapons, watches, grooming aids), and household goods (cookware, eating equipment, table linens and towels, lighting and heating equipment, silver, clocks, looking glasses, carpets, pictures, and so on).

These categories and divisions were derived from Jack Michel, “‘In a Manner and Fashion Suitable to Their Degree’: A Preliminary Investigation of the Material Culture of Early Rural Pennsylvania,” *Working Papers from the Regional Economic History Research Center* 5, no. 1 (Wilmington, Del.: Eleutherian Mills–Hagley Foundation, 1981); and from Alice Hanson Jones, *American Colonial Wealth* (New York: Arno Press, 1977).

To counter bias from the nature of the elderly’s consumer assets—marked by possession of only land and financial assets or of only household goods—inventories were not included in the quantified analysis when consumer goods were less than 8 percent or more than 70 percent of the personal assets of that particular estate. Values of all the inventories were compared for the effects of inflation. Weighting by personal possessions or by real estate altered values in each period only minimally, so actual recorded values were left intact. To convert dollars into pounds, the consistent rate was one dollar to six shillings.

3. Recent historical works that examine inventories quantitatively or quali-
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4. For evidence on importation of ceramics, see the accounts of the Southbury merchant Shadrach Osborn. Although Ziba Blakeslee worked as a silversmith in Newtown beginning in 1791 and Elias Smith worked in Woodbury in 1794, the presence of silver in many inventories and the dearth of manuscript references to local silversmiths implies a dependence on imported plate, especially before 1790. For information on the towns’ silversmiths, see Henry Flynt and Martha Fales, The Heritage Foundation Collection of Silver (Old Deerfield, Mass.: Heritage Foundation, 1968), 159, 161, 194, 325; Account Book of Ziba Blakeslee of Newtown, 1789–1822 (WML); and Account Book of Shadrach Osborn and Nathan Preston of Southbury, 1790–1796 (WML).


11. “Black chairs” and “red chairs” were ubiquitous throughout the inventories. Although Trent stated that red chair meant a specific type of chair, in the Newtown and Woodbury inventories the term was used more often in a generic sense to describe a chair’s color rather than its form. Newtown inventories included “red
fiddleback chairs” (1774), “red straight back chairs” (1801), “black crown chairs” (1772), “black slat back chairs” (1801), “black fluted back chairs” (1806), and “black bannister chairs” (1811). Unfortunately the lack of room-by-room inventories from Newtown prevents an understanding of where the painted furniture was used and what other types of furniture appeared in the same room.


13. Jane Eliza Johnson, ed., Newtown’s History and Historian, Ezra Levan Johnson (Newtown: Jane Johnson, 1917), 43. The 1811 inventory of David Baldwin proves that an inhabitant of Newtown could purchase the most fashionable furniture. It also shows that through such furniture’s local ownership, other townspeople could see it easily. The uniqueness of this furniture, however, attests to its conscious rejection by most. Baldwin’s estate included “inlead tea table 3. cherry secretary and escrutoir 21. dining table inlaid 7. candlestand .60 tea stand 1.25.” DPR 10:569-73.

14. The value categories were chosen after the accumulation of data and represent one arbitrary way to organize the inventories for analysis. These groupings were picked because they are the same ones used by Michel (see note 2) and thus allow comparison between earlier Pennsylvania and later Connecticut data.

15. DPR 7:468, 525.

16. Ibid., 5:102-3; NPR 1:191-93.

17. DPR 5:103-4, 292; NPR 1:77-8.


23. Ibid., 13:31-33.


35. The causes and characteristics of domesticity are well explained by Nancy
Six


3. Danbury Probate District, Docket 861 (CSL). *Horn chair* may refer to a flag-seated turned chair with pointed ears that flow up and out. Chairs with such horned crest rails have been found in Monroe, the town immediately to the east of Newtown. Robert Trent, *Hearts and Crowns* (New Haven: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1977), figs. 76, 77. Another possibility may be flag-seated turned chairs with yoke-shaped crest rails pinned between the rear posts. Ibid., figs. 55-59.

4. Michael Ettema examines the economics of design, that is, the relationship between labor-intensive technology and stylistic design, in “Technological Innovation and Design Economics in Furniture Manufacture,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, nos. 2/3 (1981): 197-223. Ettema states that the York chair was “the most chair for the price,” but his argument can also be applied to the plain chair. In producing a plain chair, the craftsman gave more weight to cost and technology than to design.


6. For similar Milford chairs, see Trent, *Hearts and Crowns*, 65, 72-73.

7. DPR 3:318-23. “Round backed chairs” were usually valued at two or three shillings each. “Round backt chairs” in Stratford inventories were valued at six or seven shillings each and probably referred to cherry crookedback chairs with yoke-shaped crest rails and flag seats. Cooke, “Selective Conservative Taste,” 31.

8. This discussion of the traditional craftsman who breaks down old ideas into parts and then reorders them into a new structure is derived from Henry Glassie, “Folk Art,” in Richard Dorson, ed., *Folklore and Folklife* (Chicago: University of


10. Many past studies have identified any turned chair with a baluster-shaped banister as a fiddleback chair. Therefore York chairs and other different types have also been referred to as fiddlebacks. But eighteenth-century documents from the Housatonic River Valley region explicitly distinguish between York chairs and fiddleback chairs. Abner Curtiss of Stratford owned “6 York chairs £1.4.0” and “6 fiddle Backd Chairs £1.10.0” at his death in 1780. Furthermore, fiddlebacks did not appear in inventories or joiners’ account books until the last three decades of the eighteenth century, well after the baluster-shaped banister had gained common acceptance. Thus it seems likely that the crest rail rather than the banister was the more important delimiting feature of a fiddleback chair. The swept crest rail would have gained some popularity in the Housatonic River Valley at about the time when fiddlebacks appear in the inventories. Cooke, “Selective Conservative Taste,” 33–34; Account Book of Elisha Hawley of Ridgefield, 1786–1800 (CHS).


12. Another explanation for the elimination of the decorative termini may be the desire to make the juncture of the crest more like a joiner’s chair, but that would be inconsistent with the other features of the chair.

13. The turned vocabulary on the front round, the double baluster turnings at the top of the front post, the ring on the front post just under the joint where the front round fastens to the post, chamfered bottoms on the rear posts, and the long quarter-round profile on the base of the splat link the Blackman chair with several other local chairs. Trent, *Hearts and Crowns*, figs. 34, 38–41, 44; Kirk, *Connecticut Furniture*, 116–17.

14. On Stratford examples, see Cooke, “Selective Conservative Taste,” figs. 4–6; Trent, *Hearts and Crowns*, figs. 31–33. Stratford fiddlebacks have been identified with two types of crest rails: one with a central yoke and pointed ears and one with a three-bowed crest and rounded ears.


16. An example of a Stratford crookedback chair is illustrated in Cooke, “Selective Conservative Taste,” fig. 10.

17. Examples of related Connecticut desks-on-frames can be seen in Kirk, *Connecticut Furniture*, 68, 70. In a November 1994 conversation with me, the British
furniture historian Bill Cotton remarked that the Newtown desk type relates to examples found in the West Midlands of England.

18. On the drawers of the desk and the dressing cable, the joiner laid out the dovetails in the following manner: each corner has a half pin at the upper edge, several thick pins below it, and a half pin at the lower edge. For similar Stratford case furniture, see Cooke, "Selective Conservative Taste," figs. 25–27, 30. The dressing table bears the chalk signature “E B” on the back of the backboard of the central carved drawer, which may refer to Ebenezer Booth IV (1743–1790).

19. The case of drawers was examined just prior to auction at a Richard W. Withington, Inc., Auction in Andover, Massachusetts, on January 9, 1982. The history of its ownership was typed on a piece of paper tacked to its backboards.

20. Characteristics of this second Newtown shop include drawer backs dovetailed to the drawer sides, half pins cut at both the top and bottom edges of the drawer front, use of a wide quarter-round and shallow fillet molding along the drawer edges, cornice moldings made entirely of cherry, a distinctive two-piece midmolding (part of which was nailed to the upper section and part to the lower section), a central support for the full-width drawer in the lower section and the central drawer underneath it (dovetailed into the drawer divider and tenoned into the backboard), a double-thickness skirt in the lower section (a 7/8-inch-thick piece of cherry with a 1-inch-thick yellow poplar board behind it), the consistent method of pegging tenons in the lower section, and use of an odd number of ribs in the decorative fan.

The midmolding consisted of two parts: a tall cyma with fillets at each end fastened along the base of the upper section and an overhanging cyma with rounded lower edge fastened along the upper part of the lower section. The second part of the midmolding is the important constructional feature. The uppermost front rail was tenoned into the front legs, and then a side rail was secured along the inside of each sideboard. Each side rail was lapped to the back edge of the front rail and was notched to fit around the upper part of the rear leg. A rose-headed nail, driven horizontally, fastened the back end of the side rail to the rear leg. On top of these rails the joiner nailed moldings that were mitred at the corners and featured shallow rabbets cut along the inside. The upper section of the case of drawers fit within the rabbet but still rested on the rabbeted surface of the molding. Another consistent constructional convention was the joiner’s use of three tenons to secure the yellow poplar backboard to the rear legs. The craftsman secured the upper mortise and tenon joint with two pegs, the middle one with a single peg, and the lower one with two pegs.

The use of the same quarter-round molding plane accounts for the same moldings along the edges of the drawer fronts, while workmanship of habit explains the consistent use of an odd number of ribs. The joiner continued to lay out his design in the same manner regardless of the size of the piece. For a more decorative effect or for a customer willing to pay more money, he added a perimeter of lobes.


22. Kirk, Connecticut Furniture, 56, 58–60; Minor Myers Jr. and Edgar Mayhew,


25. The yellow poplar back of the dressing table in figure 23 is tenoned to the rear legs with three tenons, which are pegged with a sequence of two pins at the top, one in the middle tenon, and two at the bottom; the outer drawer supports are tenoned into the back and slant-tenoned to the back edge of the drawer blade or skirt; the central drawer supports for the full-width drawer and carved central drawer are tenoned into the back and dovetailed to the skirt; and the drawer sides are dovetailed to the fronts and the drawer backs to the sides.

26. The joiner responsible for the case furniture and tables in figures 18–21 always oriented the grain of the bottom boards in a consistent fashion. In full-width drawers, he placed the bottom so that its grain paralleled the drawer front. When fitting together narrower drawers, he placed the bottom so that its grain ran perpendicular to the drawer front. On all the drawer bottoms, the joiner used a panel plane to chamfer the underside of their fronts and sides. The chamfering allowed the bottoms to fit into grooves cut into the inside surfaces of the drawer fronts and sides. To secure the bottoms, this joiner then drove two or three rose-headed nails through the bottoms into the underside of the drawer backs.

The joiner who made the dressing table in figure 23 made his drawers in a significantly different way. Regardless of the drawer size, he oriented the bottom boards so that their grain paralleled the drawer front. Rather than chamfering the edges of the bottom, he ran a rabbeting plane along the side and front edges. The rabbeting plane produced tabs that fit into grooves cut into the fronts and sides (see fig. 5). The result was a better-fitting and stronger drawer bottom. This second joiner also secured drawer bottoms differently. He toed in the bottom by hammering a single nail on each side, approximately halfway between the front and the back, a convention that allowed the bottom board to expand and contract equally in either direction and limiting the amount of potential shrinkage.


27. The top of a case of drawers from the Sherman family is owned by the NHS. A privately owned example descended in the Glover family.

28. For a discussion of proportions on Housatonic Valley furniture, see Edward

29. The antique dealer Ken Hammitt advertised two related tables that he found in the Newtown area: a rectangular-top table with a drawer that featured a scalloped skirt and a round-top version with a drawer that featured splayed legs. Both examples have a similar flattened ball with flanking rings that flow into flaring transition, as seen on the base and capital of the table in figure 25, but the tripartite turned vocabulary consists of a central flattened ball with flanking balusters. For illustrations of these tables, see Antiques 67, no. 2 (1955): 113; no. 6 (1955): 469.

30. In the desk shown in figure 27, instead of pinning the base molding to the outside of the carcass as in figure 26, the joiner nailed a frame-like structure to the bottom of the carcass and ran a molding plane along its protruding edge. The drawer construction of the Beers desk, which features half pins at the bottom of each corner of the drawer linings and a rabbeted edge on the drawer bottom, and the use of chalk half circles to mark the orientation of several boards used in the construction of the carcass and drawers suggest that the desk may have been made in the shop that also made the pieces shown in figures 23 and 24.

31. Trent, Hearts and Crowns.


33. Visible grooves for drawer blades, long and deep saw kerf in dovetail joints, and use of second-rate, knotty wood in an inconsistent fashion can be found on much Boston furniture, even the expensive bombe forms. Boston joiners also used mahogany and other primary woods in a very wasteful manner. In Newtown, joiners concealed the grooves, cut precise joints, and used yellow poplar or red oak consistently. Wallace Gusler was the first scholar to point out the relatively poor quality of the interior workmanship found on Boston-area case furniture. Gusler, “Variations in 18th-Century Casework,” Fine Woodworking 23 (July 1980): 52.

Seven


3. WPR 5:243–45, 260–61. Only in the last decade of the century did an increasing number of other forms such as desks, desk-and-bookcases, other types of cases of drawers, and bureaus challenge the dominance of the case of drawers.

4. The case of drawers in figure 31 descended in the Sherman family of Woodbury. Visible constructional similarities between this chest and the one shown in figure 30 include contrasting carved fans in the lower and upper sections, single-piece midmoldings fitted flush with the perimeter of the lower section, exposed dovetail grooves where the drawer blades fit into the sides, and moldings along the drawer front edges which have a thin quarter-round and a high fillet. Interior structural features provide additional proof that the two cases of drawers in figures 30–31 were made in the same shop. All have vertical backboards in the upper section; a two-piece composite cornice molding assembled by nailing the uppermost, projecting sequence of moldings to the cove molding already attached to the carcass; and a full-depth top board in the lower section. Along the inside of the back, the joiner nailed a full-width rail of yellow poplar, which provides horizontal stability in the upper section and occasionally carries the back end of the drawer supports for the uppermost tier of drawers. Another example with a five-drawer cluster in the upper tier of drawers descended in the Warner family of Woodbury. Edward S. Cooke Jr., *Fiddlebacks and Crooked-backs: Elijah Booth and Other Joiners in Newtown and Woodbury, Connecticut, 1750–1820* (Waterbury, Conn.: Mattatuck Historical Society, 1982), fig. 27.


6. Examples of New Haven cases of drawers can be found at the NHHS and at the parish house of the Center Church in New Haven. For Hartford area examples, see John Kirk, *Connecticut Furniture: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hartford, Conn.: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1967), figs. 81, 94, 179.
7. For information on Silas Butler and the case of drawers he built, I am indebted to Frederick Chesson and William Hosley, Jr. See appendix B.

8. The following ratios apply to the lower sections of all the examples shown in figures 30–31: HW 7:8; WD 2:1; HD 7:4.


10. Another crookedback, which descended in the Bacon family, features a back splat pierced in a manner that resembles a popular Boston pattern, as is also seen on the great chair in figure 36. The rear stiles of the Woodbury crookedback chairs possess a very distinctive chamfered plane along the front edge between the bottom of the shoe rail and the feet. This sawn faceting gives the legs a bowed profile without modeling from files or spoke shaves.

11. A pair of chairs similar to that shown in figure 37, part of a set of at least eight chairs owned in the Tomlinson family, are now owned by Christ Episcopal Church in Quaker Farms.


14. On three different occasions between 1802 and 1807, Josiah’s father, Matthew Minor (1753–1835), purchased a set of six green chairs from Jebine. Since Matthew also had Jebine make a desk for Josiah in 1802, one of the three sets of Windsors may have been intended for Josiah. Account Book of Matthew Minor of Woodbury, 1800–1820 (privately owned), 11–12; appendix B.

15. For information on the regional characteristics of Windsor chairs, I am in-
debted to Nancy Goyne Evans, formerly of the Winterthur Museum, who is preparing a book on American Windsors. Triple-beaded bows can be seen in Fales, *Furniture of Historic Deerfield*, figs. 167, 172.

16. A chair from the Masonic Lodge is currently in the collection of the Museum of Our National Heritage and illustrated in their 1991 annual report. The Bellamy example is illustrated in *Litchfield County Furniture* (Litchfield, Conn.: Litchfield Historical Society, 1969), 104–5. According to Nancy Goyne Evans (see note 15), the turned vocabulary and seat shape of these examples resemble those features in documented New Haven work.


19. Examples of fall leaf tables identical to that in figure 41 have descended in the Hinman, Strong, and Stiles families.

20. On the case of drawers in figure 42, the joiner laid out the fan with an even number of ribs rather than an odd number (and carved a pair of contrasting fans in a manner reversed from that seen on figures 30–31). He ran a different molding plane for the drawer edges, producing a small quarter-round and pronounced fillet that contrasted with the wider quarter-round and shallower fillet on Newtown drawer edges (see fig. 5 detail). Structurally, the joiner used a series of horizontal boards for the back of the upper section rather than vertical boards and dovetailed the drawer sides to the fronts and backs rather than dovetailing the sides to the front and the back to the sides (see fig. 5).

21. Several constructional features define figures 42 and 43. The drawer edge moldings are characterized by a relatively thin and high quarter-round profile with a pronounced fillet. Drawer backs from this shop tended to measure $\frac{1}{4}" - \frac{1}{8}"$. Drawer sides were considerably thinner, approximately $\frac{1}{16}" - \frac{1}{2}"$. The joiner attached wide drawer supports in two ways. In one technique, which he favored in the case sections with quarter-columns or pilasters, he fit drawer supports into housed dovetail dados on the inside of carcass sides and tenoned them into the back of the drawer blades. In the sections with plain fronts, he simply nailed the supports to the sides. Often
the back ends of these supports were cut diagonally. Drawer guides to keep the
drawers sliding smoothly without binding or sliding off square were nailed on top of
the supports. In some cases the guides were notched where the nails were driven.

22. A related desk, from another branch of the Stiles family, has plain unmod­
eled legs without beading and a simpler sort of desk interior with stringing around
the central prospect door. Cooke, *Fiddlebacks and Crooked-backs*, fig. 31. Wallace
Gusler points out that Williamsburg cabinetmakers often planed an ogee shape into
a long board, then sawed up pieces for bracket feet. Gusler, *Furniture of Williamsburg
and Eastern Virginia, 1710–1790* (Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1979),
53.

23. The Woodbury feet and knees are more modeled than those on Dayton
examples. For illustrations of related Stratford feet, see Cooke, “Craftsman-Client
Relations”; Cooke, “Selective Conservative Taste.” At least four other types of
related carved feet have been found on furniture associated with the Woodbury area.
Cooke, *Fiddlebacks and Crooked-backs*, figs. 26–29. The combination of similar
scrolled, bulbous knees and carved feet can also be seen on a desk-and-bookcase
from the Danbury area. That desk-and-bookcase, advertised as the work of E. Booth
of Woodbury by Israel Sack in 1935, was still attributed to Booth in a 1969 exhibition
of Litchfield County furniture; however, a Danbury origin is more likely. Before
1935, it was part of the collection of Dr. J. Milton Coburn, who lived in Danbury at
one time in his life, and an ink inscription on the back of a small drawer in the lower
section reads, “George F. Ives Danbury, Conn. 1893–1896 / If this is for sale let me
know.” All the drawers feature a large half pin on the upper edge of each corner, a
rabbet rather than a groove along the inside of the drawer front into which the drawer
bottom is set and nailed, and drawer backs nailed to the sides. Another distinctive
characteristic is the series of paired pins along the front corners of the drawer with
the carved fan. Construction of the base also differs from Woodbury work. The
Danbury joiner tenoned the feet into a notch cut into the bottom corner and then
pinned a molding along the lower part of the case. Between the rear feet he ran a
thin, white pine board, which was tenoned into both legs. For illustrations and
discussion of this desk-and-bookcase, see *Antiques* 28, no. 1 (1935): frontispiece;
*Litchfield County Furniture*, 68–69; and Ethel Bjerkoe, “The Booth Family of New­

Social Economy of the Preindustrial Joiner in Western Connecticut, 1750–1800,” in
1995).

25. In crafting the chest of drawers in figure 44, the joiner turned the base, rope­
twist column, and capital from a single timber rather than piecing together three
different parts. To secure the quarter-columns in place, he glued and pinned them
into a corner framed by sawing a notch along the front edge of the side and ten­
oning the ends of the drawer blades into a vertical stile. For an example of a ma­
ture craftsman’s awkward attempt at quarter-columns, see Cooke, *Fiddlebacks and
Crooked-backs*, fig. 26.

ture Collection in the Connecticut Historical Society* (Hartford: Connecticut Historical


28. Barry Greenlaw attributed this case of drawers to the Booth family and speculated that work by two members of the family could explain the slight differences in dovetail size and dimension of drawer linings between the upper and lower sections. Such an attribution to the Booths is unfounded because no documented furniture by any member of the family is presently known. Furthermore, the constructional differences are relatively minor and are more likely the result of a journeyman’s or apprentice’s work in the shop. A more cautious attribution would consider this case of drawers and other furniture related to it by construction and decoration to be the work of one Woodbury shop whose master is still unknown. New England Furniture at Williamsburg (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1974), 94–96.

29. As on figure 44, the drawer supports in the upper section of figure 46 are glued into housed dovetail grooves in the sides, nailed at the rear, and tenoned into the backside of the drawer blades. The drawer blades of the upper section are tenoned into the fluted pilasters, just as those on figure 44 are tenoned into a support stile for the rope-twist quarter-column. Drawer supports in the lower section were simply nailed to the side and bevel-tenoned to the backside of the drawer blade or skirt. Figure 46’s ten-ribbed fan, use of a single piece of cherry cornice molding with triangular-sectioned scrap wood behind, horizontal backboards, and deep, unfinished front rail in the lower section link it to figure 42. A second crown top example—in which the joiner altered the skirt profile, added a second ten-ribbed fan to the lowermost drawer, eliminated the rosettes and stop-fluted pilasters in the upper section, removed the plain pilasters from the lower section, and carved plain pilasters in the upper section only—represents a slightly less expensive example, but still reveals a link with southeastern Connecticut work. The maker carved shell-like intaglio ribs in the plinth, which was an interpretation of the relief-carved shells applied to the plinths of crown case furniture from Colchester. New England, Philadelphia and New York Cabinetwork (New York: Park-Bernet Galleries, 1960), cat. no. 252. A similar crown top example, with a skirt profile exactly like the Williamsburg example, descended in the Stiles-Burpee family. Maine Antique Digest (Aug. 1992), 18D. The upper section of a case of drawers from this shop, complete with a crown top, carved plinth, carved fan with eight ribs, and fluted pilasters, can be seen on the married case of drawers—in which the top and lower sections, although both old, are not original to one another—illustrated in Dean Failey, Long Island Is My Nation.
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31. The career of William H. Peabody provides later evidence of the introduction of the Norwich-Colchester tradition to Woodbury. Although he moved to Woodbury from Stratford in 1804, he was originally from Norwich. See appendix B.

32. A desk-and-bookcase probably made in Derby and presently on display at the Tapping Reeve House in Litchfield provides another possible influence. The desk-and-bookcase has rope-twist quarter-columns like those on figure 47 on its lower section and a rope-twist quarter-round molding under its dentil and cornice. A related Woodbury example with a slightly different skirt profile was photographed by William Lamson Warren. The shop also made a flat-top version that stood upon a frame rather than having integral legs. Sotheby’s Sale #6350 (Oct. 25, 1992), lot no. 388.

33. At least three related desk-and-bookcases have been identified: the illustrated example, which features a mariner’s compass inlay on the front of the fielded panel doors and the fall-front writing surface, a plainer version without inlay, and an example from the Stiles-Burpee family that had glazed doors in the upper section. *Antiques* 90, no. 3 (1966): 275; *Maine Antique Digest* (Aug. 1992), 18D.

34. WPR 8:169, 174. The base of figure 49, in some respects, is simply an extension of the joiner’s framed base without an applied base molding. In a manner more characteristic of the late eighteenth century, the joiner nailed a five-piece frame, mitred at the corners, to the bottom of the carcass; planed the protruding edge of the frame to make the base molding; and then glued and nailed three-piece corner blocks under each corner of the frame. Similar splayed bracket feet can be seen on documented furniture by Oliver Demming of New Haven, George Belden of Hartford, Erastus Grant, who trained in Hartford and worked in Westfield, Massachusetts, and Daniel Clay, who trained in Windham or Middletown, Connecticut, and worked in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Fales, *Furniture of Historic Deerfield*, 196; Kirk, *Connecticut Furniture*, 77; Decorative Arts Photographic Collection (Winterthur Museum); Phyllis Kihn, “Connecticut Cabinetmakers,” *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin* 32, no. 4 (1967): 97–144; 33, no. 1 (1968): 1–40.


36. The dimensions of the drawer backs and sides, drawer construction, mortising of drawer blades to the pilasters in both sections, molding profiles, and wedge-shaped core of the cornice molding all combine to document this chest-on-chest as the work of the same joiner. For examples of similar pattern inlays, see Montgomery, *American Furniture*. A second related chest-on-chest descended in the Stiles-Burpee family. *Maine Antique Digest* (Aug. 1992), 18D.

37. In terms of structural differences, the second joiner assembled his drawers
with more and thicker pins in the dovetailed corners, used a regular composite cornice molding without a wedge-shaped core, favored a heavier and more intricate cornice and midmolding, nailed vertical boards along the back of the upper case, inserted a full-depth dustboard under the first tier of drawers, tenoned all drawer supports through the backboards, and dovetailed the central drawer supports to the back side of the drawer blades. The maker carved his flutes with five channels rather than four and compressed six carved ribs into the plinth instead of four.

38. The ratios for the lower section in figure 51 were HW 9:11, WD 11:5, HD 9:5; for the upper section, 11:8, 20:9, and 3:1. By contrast the ratios for the lower section of figure 45 were HW 9:10, WD 2:1, HD 9:5; and for the upper section, 11:9, 2:1, and 22:9. An excellent discussion of proportions is Timothy Philbrick’s “Tall Chests: The Art of Proportioning,” in Fine Woodworking 9 (Winter 1977): 39–43.


40. On the importance of consistent layout and work when carving claw feet, see Gusler, Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 103–5.


42. Burnham and Chapin trained in Philadelphia and then set up shop in the important inland towns of Colchester and East Windsor. Kihn, “Connecticut Cabinetmakers,” 111, 113–14. On Munson, see appendix B.

43. The joiner used the skew rabbet plane along the lower inside edges of the front and sides of a small desk drawer. By running a matching rabbet along three edges of the bottom board and sliding this bottom into place, he achieved a more easily made, stronger bottom construction than that used in earlier work. The older technique involved running a normal rabbet along the inside edges of the drawer front and sides and pegging the bottom within this rabbet.

44. For related studies that link stylistic and technical fluctuations to periods of significant market involvement and artisanal migration, see Barbara Ward, “The Craftsman in a Changing Society: Boston Goldsmiths, 1690–1730” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1983); Robert Trent, “The Colchester School of Cabinetmaking, 1750–1800,” in Francis J. Puig and Michael Conforti, eds., The American Craftsman and the European Tradition, 1620–1820 (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1989), 112–35.

Conclusion


12. For the standard literature on transportation and technological revolutions,
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15. It is noteworthy that Hosley and Ward’s Great River contains few pieces of furniture made in gentry towns after 1800. Most of the post-1800 furniture was made in Hartford, new commercial centers, or yeoman hill towns. For one perspective on the demise of the gentry leaders, see Robert St. George, “Artifacts of Regional Consciousness in the Connecticut River Valley, 1700–1780,” in Great River, 29–40.


