

“CONSIGNED TO THE ACCOUNT AND RISK OF JOHN INNES CLARK:”

**NETWORKS, TRADE, & A MERCHANT
IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, 1768-1808**

by

Anne C. McBride

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in American Material Culture

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ABSTRACT

Kinship shaped the material world of Providence, Rhode Island in complex ways. The city was an entrepôt for the rural hinterland of central Massachusetts, a local culture of sophisticated taste and reach, and a node in the exchanges of the Atlantic World. Consequently, local and regional habits competed and collaborated with relationships that were personal, tactical, and often circumstantial. Based on several primary sources including John Innes Clark's invoice book (1801 to 1808), his 1808 will and the probate inventory of his estate, family letters, deeds recorded in the City of Providence, newspaper articles and advertisements, and port records kept by the United States Customs House, this study reconstructs the business, social, and kinship ties that guided Clark's life between 1768 and 1808.

John Innes Clark's home and business is a reminder of the constant interactions of business, design, and decorative arts. The Clarks' house and its furnishings are an essential part of how their lives intersected with the history of Providence. The home materialized the family's influence, social reach, and knowledge of the Atlantic world. In examining a single merchant in Providence, the wider social, economic, and cultural implications of the Atlantic World are illustrated in terms of the interactions among people and the movement of objects. Although New England and the maritime trade of the region have been studied, the examination of John Innes Clark's life and business reveals a complex system of exchange and communication of goods, style, and design.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Kinship shaped the material world of Providence, Rhode Island in complex ways. The city was an entrepôt for the rural hinterland of central Massachusetts, a local culture of sophisticated taste and reach, and a node in the exchanges of the Atlantic World. Consequently, local and regional habits competed and collaborated with relationships that were personal, tactical, and often circumstantial. John Innes Clark's material world reminds us of the constant jostling of business, design, and decorative arts.

Clark's connections provided an advantage for doing business in Providence. He had moved to Providence, Rhode Island sometime before May 28, 1768 when he advertised in the *Providence Gazette* that he had a new shop and partnership with Joseph Nightingale.¹ Both had profited from slave trading in

¹ Throughout the primary and secondary source material and records, Clark's middle name is variably spelled "Innis," "Inness," and "Innes" and his last name is occasionally spelled "Clarke." For consistency, I will be using "Innes" and "Clark" as this is the spelling used in the invoice book and with the most frequency. Additionally, all newspaper sources were accessed through America's Historical Newspapers between August 2011 and January 2012. "John Innes Clark and Joseph Nightingale, In Company," *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, May 28, 1768).

Providence for much of the 1780s and 1790s.² As social and political opinions and laws changed, however, Clark shifted business practices. He continued trading in the goods produced by and for slaves in the Caribbean and South America, but gave up selling humans. Rum, sugar, cotton, jerked beef, preserved meats and fish and other provisions appeared on Clark's shipping manifests throughout the rest of his life. These goods provided the funds with which he purchased the luxury items—the gloves, shawls, fans, furniture, watches, velvets, wines and other goods—that expressed his and other's genteel aspirations. Luxury rewarded great enterprise and ambition, and it masked the corrosive effects of sugar and slaves.³

Kinship grounded his world. He was related by marriage to both the Bowens and Browns, Rhode Island families who were prominent for their legal, economic and social activities. Initially an outsider, Clark's marriage helped his rise to civic and mercantile prominence over the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first few years of the nineteenth century. He adapted to changing economic climates and practices, but he continued to conduct business the way he and his

² Jay Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 261–274.

³ John Innes Clark, "Invoice Book", 1801-1808, Doc. 714, The Winterthur Library: Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera; Bureau of Customs, "French Spoliation Claims District of Providence: Certificates of Registry, 1791 to 1801", RG36.3.1 E639, National Archives and Records Administration; Bureau of Customs, "French Spoliation Claims District of Providence: Outward Foreign Manifests, 1791-1801", RG36.3.1 E641, National Archives and Records Administration; United States Customs House (Providence, R.I.), "United States Customs House Records, Providence, Rhode Island", MSS 28 Sg 1 Series 3 Sub-series A: Registers, 1783-1864, Rhode Island Historical Society.

contemporaries had done for decades: in person and through diversification. That initial diversification was a way for Clark, as a young merchant, to utilize his resources and gain credit to become the established merchant importing luxuries for his elite neighbors. He invested in wholesale trade, shipping, retail sales, land, distilling, and lending. Clark's presence in Providence positioned him to influence how others interacted with material culture.⁴

Benefit Street—Providence's most fashionable street was home to many of the leading merchants, tradesmen and politicians in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries including the Browns, the Nightingales and the Clarks. Of these three, John Innes Clark is understudied; the records of his fashionable house, warehouse complex, ships and business activities present a compelling case study of the Providence business community. This study of the period between 1768 and 1808 presents a compelling case study of the rapidly changing consumer and mercantile culture of the early nineteenth century.⁵

⁴ *Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island: Genealogical Records and Historical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens and of Many of The Old Families*, vol. II (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1908).

⁵ "Plat of Benefit Street as Widened and Straightened May 1801", May 1801, RG120 AN20249 Box 1 Folder 11, Providence City Archives.

Providence & the Region

Founded in 1636 by groups of religious dissenters from the Massachusetts Bay colony, Rhode Island was the smallest of the British North American colonies. For much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, its main source of economic activity was through agriculture and trade. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Newport and Providence were two of the busiest ports in southern New England. Merchants had capitalized on Rhode Island's geography to make up for the colony's lack of internal resources.⁶ Although smaller than Salem, Boston, or Newport, the largest New England ports of the mid-eighteenth-century, Providence's harbor was more sheltered than Newport's, as shown in Figure 1 in the map of the Narragansett Bay. Located on the Blackstone River, it had a more direct route from inland central Massachusetts towns to New York and the Caribbean. In contrast with Newport, Providence's location on the river insulated the community from invasion during the Revolution (Figure 2). Subsequently, ample water power in the region led to the development of textile and other mills in and around Providence. The increased economic diversification in Providence during the last decades of the eighteenth century and early part of the nineteenth, led to a stronger economy than that of Newport and more opportunities for expansion.

Further, Providence's population increased over the period 1790 to 1810 from 6,380 to 10,071 while Newport's remained relatively stable with populations of

⁶ William G. McLoughlin, *Rhode Island: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), 3, 50–51.

6,716, 6,739, and 7,907 for each of the three censuses. In comparison, New York's population grew from 33,131 to 96,373 and Boston's from 18,320 to 33,787 over the same period. The latter two cities were consistently among the five most populous cities; Providence was also among the top ten.⁷

There were other practical considerations. From Boston, a ship had to sail east around Cape Cod, battle the Gulf Stream, and tack through prevailing winds to turn south. In contrast, Providence's harbor, essentially a river, was southwest of Cape Cod with a shorter distance to southern coastal routes. Newport was open to the sea, thus making it vulnerable to the occupation and attacks of the Revolutionary War. In contrast to the economic devastation wrought in Newport, Providence's merchants profited during the war through privateering, and the town was never occupied, preserving the fortunes of the shipping merchants. Further, the most densely populated portion of the town was a narrow strip to the east of the Providence River and Great Salt Cove. By the late 1790s, that area had expanded by a few blocks. Many of the wealthiest merchants and residents had smaller house lots within the center of town, what is today College Hill and Fox Point, with larger farms and retreats in the surrounding countryside.⁸

⁷ Gibson Campbell, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990" (U.S. Bureau of the Census, June 1998), Tables 2, 3, & 4.

⁸ Charles Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 222; Morrison H. Heckscher, *John Townsend: Newport Cabinetmaker* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 25; Henry R. Chace, *Owners and Occupants of the Lots, Houses and Shops in the Town of Providence, Rhode Island in 1798 Located on Maps of the Highways of That Date: Also Owners or Occupants of Houses in the Compact*

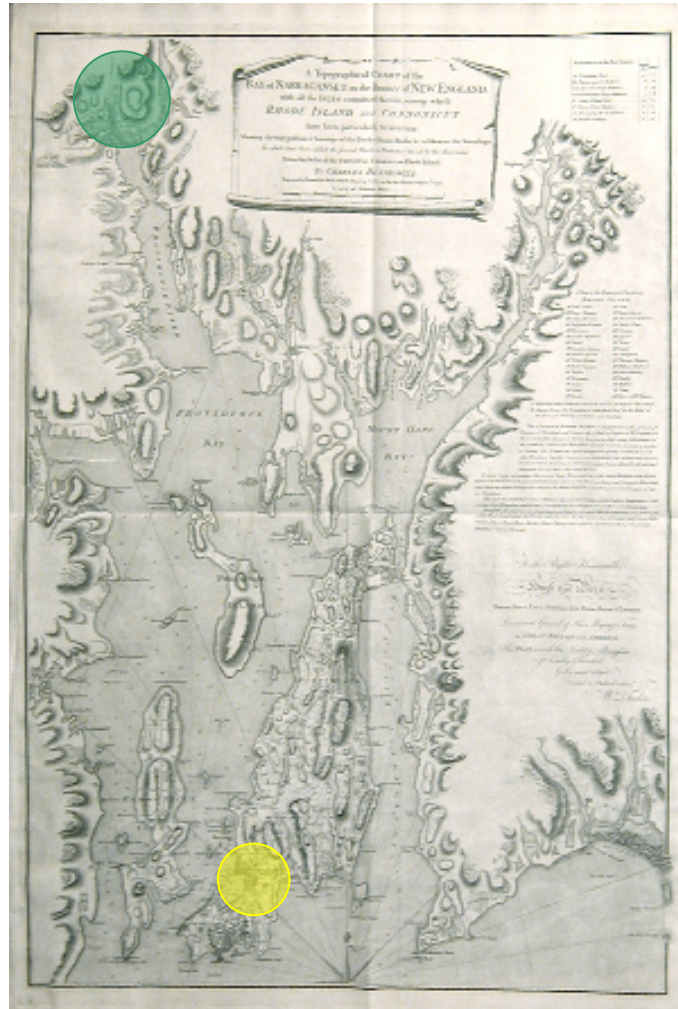


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Part of Providence in 1759 Showing the Location and in Whose Names They Are to Be Found on the Map of 1798 (Providence: H. R. Chace, 1914), 29.



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Thomas Jefferys & Mead Babcock, London, 1774, Courtesy, Winterthur Museum, 1974.169A, B. The circled portion indicates Providence.

Key Sources

There are several primary sources that guide this study. John Innes Clark's invoice book (1801 to 1808), his 1808 will and the probate inventory of his estate, family letters, deeds recorded in the City of Providence, and newspaper articles and advertisements form the bulk of the primary source material. The Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera at the Winterthur Library holds the invoice book; the Rhode Island Historical Society, the Providence, Rhode Island City Archives, and the National Archives and Records Administration hold the other documents.

The invoice book is a detailed listing of the cargoes Clark consigned to ships trading in Europe, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, and the United States; it records the items, quantities and prices, ships, captains and supercargoes, and points of origin and destination. The goods within the invoice book can be divided into four categories: provisions, naval stores, luxury goods, and textiles. Further, the majority of the goods listed can be considered "value added goods," items that are either ready for purchase by a final consumer or sufficiently processed beyond a raw state as to command a higher price and greater demand than raw materials. However, the nature of the business was such that the goods were consigned to a supercargo aboard ship and then delivered to another merchant for wholesale with the end buyer receiving goods that usually had not been ordered in advance. The invoice book, entrances and clearances recorded by United States Customs Houses, and newspaper material have been used to track the ships listed in the invoice book to add detail to the trade routes,

and the types of goods carried between different ports to connect Clark's kinship and business records with his mercantile business.

With a length of twenty-eight pages, the probate inventory provides a wealth of information about Clark's home and business activities in terms of unsold and expected inventory. Ten pages detail the household furnishings with assessed values; information that can be used in conjunction with family letters to develop an understanding of the Clarks' domestic environment. Unfortunately, the large house on the corner of Benefit and John Streets burned in 1849. While the house is no longer standing, period descriptions and a list of "Work Done on J. I. Clark's House" held by the Rhode Island Historical Society allow for a sense of size, scale and décor. Further, the Nightingale-Brown House owned by Brown University and housing the John Nicholas Brown Center was built in 1792 for Joseph Nightingale, Clark's business partner from 1772 until Nightingale's 1797 death. In its original form, that house, built on the corner of Williams and Benefit Streets, was nearly identical to Clark's house.⁹

Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Newport have all been the focus of multiple studies of the economic, social and political environments of colonial cities. With the exception of the two volume *Browns of Providence Plantations*, selected other works about the Browns, and the more recent volumes on the Rhode Island slave trade, *Sons of Providence* and *The Notorious Triangle*, Providence has not been the

⁹ Joseph K. Ott, "John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence," *Rhode Island History* 32, no. 4 (November 1973): 124; "The Late Company of Clark and Nightingale...", *United States Chronicle* (Providence, Rhode Island, December 21, 1797).

center of significant study. Additionally, examining the life and business of a merchant who was highly involved in the Providence maritime trading community and a member of a large, established network of Scottish migrants and merchants presents a unique opportunity to update scholarship on Providence and connect the city to a wider system of merchants, producers, and consumers.¹⁰

While supply and demand influenced the availability, price, and destination of items in the period, merchants and retailers were central to the flow of goods. Further, the emerging textile industry in and around Providence helped shape the changing social and economic factors to which Clark adapted late in his life. Without those inland industries and workers, producers and consumers, Clark's business would never have flourished—he needed the produce of farmers and factories to partially fund his purchases of goods he sold back to the people of the region. That same produce would fund the purchase of luxury goods produced in Europe and the East Indies that made their way into Clark's home and those of his customers in a larger world of credit, exchange, consumers, producers, and personal and kinship networks.¹¹

¹⁰ James Blaine Hedges, *The Browns of Providence Plantations: Colonial Years*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Providence: Brown University Press, 1968); Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution*; Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807*.

¹¹The following sources represent the key historiography for this work. Diane Wenger and Ann Smart Martin's works are relevant case studies of merchants and storekeepers that provide examples of how to approach similar material. Although Clark was located in a city, both Wenger and Martin's works are relevant as they illustrate contemporary networks of producers, consumers, and merchants. Morison and Dolin's works on the fur trade, especially Morison's focus on Massachusetts, provide context for Clark's shipments to Vancouver while Crossman and Fichter

continue the argument of the trade between China and Western merchants being dependant on the Chinese demand for fur, ginseng and cash. In terms of the luxury trade, specifically wine and Madeira, David Hancock's works are two of the most relevant works. Hancock's argument that the Madeira trade was a loose network of suppliers and purchasers and that the market was easily upended due to gluts when too many ships arrived in port at once agrees with Clark's activities in buying and selling what he could in the locations he knew or hoped would have a ready market.

T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807*; Carl L. Crossman, *The China Trade: Export Paintings, Furniture, Silver & Other Objects* (Princeton: Pyne Press, 1972); Eric Jay Dolin, *Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010); James A. Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010); David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of the American Trade and Taste* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Ann Smart Martin, *Buying into the World of Goods: Early Consumers in Backcountry Virginia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961); Diane E. Wenger, *A Country Storekeeper in Pennsylvania: Creating Economic Networks in Early America, 1790-1897* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).

Chapter 2

BIOGRAPHY

Without Clark's extended kinship networks, he would not have been able to build the wholesale trading business that he did. Kin and trust were essential to doing business in the late eighteenth century in a world in which transactions were completed through proxy and introductions were needed for beginning business in a new market. Clark was born into an established and wealthy family and trained as a merchant under his uncle's supervision. That, coupled with family members dispersed along the eastern seaboard and in Britain, established a network in which Clark could operate and build his own mercantile trading business and a well educated and connected family.

Lydia Bowen and John Innes Clark married in Providence on September 26, 1773 (Figure 3 includes a brief family tree). Bowen was the daughter of Dr. Ephraim Bowen and his second wife, Lydia Mawney, an established Providence family. Ephraim Bowen had fourteen children; and his sons Jabez, Oliver, Ephraim, William and Pardon became prominent citizens of Rhode Island. Jabez Bowen, Jr., as he was referred to in the period, became a lawyer, judge, deputy governor and delegate to the 1786 Annapolis Convention. Through Jabez Bowen's marriage to John Brown's first cousin Sarah, the Bowens were connected to the most powerful families in the

state and involved in the legal, economic and social activities inherent to that connection.¹²

In contrast, John Innes Clark was a newcomer in Providence prior to his marriage; he does not appear as a grantor or grantee in the Providence City deed records before May 30, 1772. Clark most likely lived in or near Providence before 1768. The first appearance of his partnership with Joseph Nightingale is a 1768 advertisement in the *Providence Gazette* listing “English and India Piece Goods” for sale at the new shop at the “Sign of the Fish and Frying-Pan” adjoining the northwest corner of the court house. Before that time, he was part of a large, international family of Scottish merchants and planters, a network that would be an invaluable resource for Clark’s future business activities.¹³

After their 1773 marriage, the Clarks had at least four children: Thomas Murray (b. September 15, 1774), Anne Elizabeth (b.1779 and called “Eliza”), Harriet (b.1782) and John (b.1784). Wilkins Updike listed a fifth child, another John, who was buried October 9, 1776 in Providence. Since that birth is not recorded in the list

¹² George Austin Morrison, Jr., *The "Clarke Families of Rhode Island. A Compilation of the Descendants of: I, Joseph Clarke, of Westerly; II, Jeremiah Clarke, of Newport; III, John Clarke, of Newport; IV, Laurence Clarke, of Newport; V, Abraham Clarke, of Bristol; VI, John Clarke, of Westerly; VII, Ephraim and Ichabod Clarke, of Westerly; VIII, Ephraim, Ichabod and Samuel Clarke, of Cumberland; IX, Timothy Clarke, of Bristol.* (New York: The Evening Post Job Printing House, 1902), 269; *Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island: Genealogical Records and Historical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens and of Many of The Old Families*, II: 1010–11.

¹³ *City of Providence Record of Deeds*, vol. 19, 163; “John Innes Clark and Joseph Nightingale, In Company,” 1.

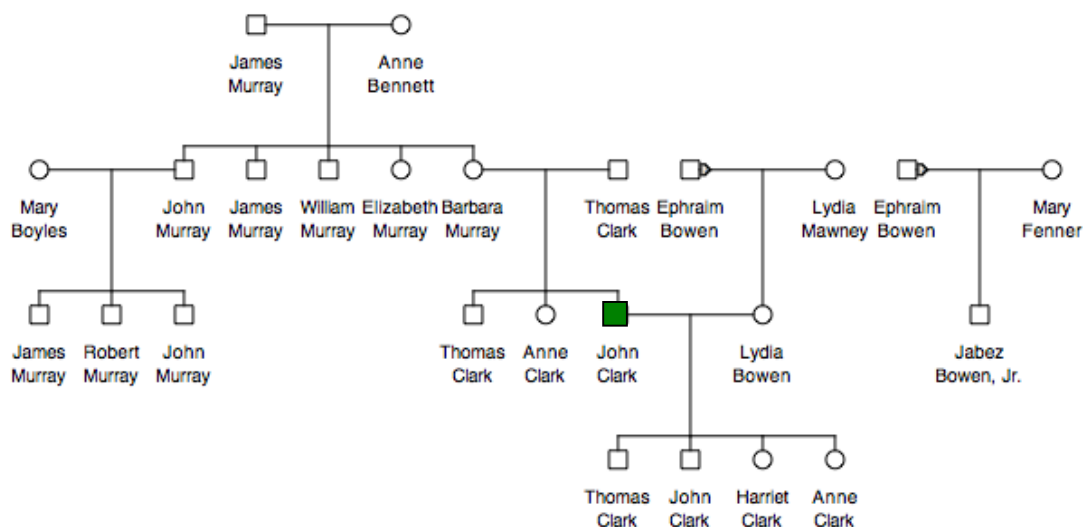


Figure 3: Family tree showing John Innes Clark’s (highlighted in green) family connections and some of the Bowen family members. The families were much larger, only the relatives most closely connected to Clark’s home and business are included.¹⁴

¹⁴ Due to limitations in pedigree software, Oliver Kane (m. Anne Elizabeth Clark, 1803), Robert Hare (m. Harriet Clark, 1811), William Hooper (m. Anne Clark, 1767), and Sarah Brown (m. Jabez Bowen, Jr., 1762) are not included in the chart. The family relationships were drawn from the following sources which include birth, marriage, and death dates: Edwin M. Snow, M. D., *Alphabetical Index of the Births, Marriages and Deaths, Recorded in Providence*, 1: From 1636 to 1850 inclusive;; Murray, *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*; Ott, “John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence”; Robert Charles Kneip, III, “William Hooper, 1742-1790: Misunderstood Patriot”; *Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island: Genealogical Records and Historical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens and of Many of The Old Families*, II;; Robert W. Dana, M.A., *Autobiography of the Late Col. James B. Murray*; John Innes Clark Papers, MSS 349, The Rhode Island Historical Society.

of births in Providence, it is likely that the child was born outside of Providence or Morrison incorrectly attributed the child to the Clarks. There is a listing for “John, s. [son] of John I., buried October 3, 1776,” making it a reasonable assumption to attribute that child to John Innes and Lydia Clark.¹⁵ Obituaries for “Master John Innes Clark, Son of John Innes Clark, Esq.” and for “Mr. Thomas M. Clark, only Son of John Innes Clark, Esq.” appeared in 1793 and 1795, respectively. Assuming that the John Innes Clark in the obituary was the son of John and Lydia born in 1784, then he was nine years old at his death. Thomas Murray Clark was twenty upon his death in New York; he was buried in Providence and the newspaper makes a note of the fact that the body was shipped home in a lead coffin. Twenty-four years later, his clothes and tools were still in his parents’ home, listed as “1 Trunk containing the wearing apparel of Thomas M. Clark \$60” and “1 Chest Tools T. M. C. \$10.”¹⁶

Eliza and Harriet married well: Eliza in 1803 to New York merchants Oliver Kane and Harriet in 1811 to Dr. Robert Hare of Philadelphia. Hare was a member of the prominent Willing family of Philadelphia and a chemistry professor at

¹⁵ George Austin Morrison, Jr., *The "Clarke Families of Rhode Island. A Compilation of the Descendants of: I, Joseph Clarke, of Westerly; II, Jeremiah Clarke, of Newport; III, John Clarke, of Newport; IV, Laurence Clarke, of Newport; V, Abraham Clarke, of Bristol; VI, John Clarke, of Westerly; VII, Ephraim and Ichabod Clarke, of Westerly; VIII, Ephraim, Ichabod and Samuel Clarke, of Cumberland; IX, Timothy Clarke, of Bristol.*, 269; Edwin M. Snow, M. D., *Alphabetical Index of the Births, Marriages and Deaths, Recorded in Providence*, vol. 1: From 1636 to 1850 inclusive (Providence: Sidney S. Rider, 1878), 424.

¹⁶ “Died,” *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, September 14, 1793), 3; Providence County Probate Court Records, “Inventory of John Innes Clark”, 1808, 13–14, A3919, Providence City Archives.

the University of Pennsylvania. After her husband's death, Lydia Clark moved among her daughters' homes and Providence, dying in Philadelphia in 1830. Through letters among the three women and Lydia's sisters, it is clear that Lydia spent much of her adult life traveling for health and family visits to such places as Charleston, South Carolina, and Saratoga Springs, New York.¹⁷

Although he was not a member of Providence's prominent families before 1773, Clark was part of a respectable family in North Carolina with Atlantic World roots. The marriage to Lydia Bowen was a strategic alliance of wealth and connections for both families. The Bowens gained a son-in-law who was part of the larger Atlantic economy and society, and Clark gained an established local connection in Providence. The Bowens were prominent in Rhode Island; but Clark was known and respected in many places, especially through his mother's family, the Murrays.

The Clarks rose to prominence in Providence, but it was the link with the Hoopers and Murrays that truly helped Clark become the merchant he was in Rhode Island. Without the network of Scottish merchants and migrants into which he was born, Clark would have had a more difficult time building his fortune and reputation. Due to these connections, a discussion of the Hoopers and Murrays is necessary.

William Hooper arrived in North Carolina in 1764, and was introduced to North Carolina society by James Murray. Murray was a friend of Hooper's father, the Reverend William Hooper of Boston, and a large landowner in North Carolina who was well connected within the Scottish communities in both colonies. Murray spent

¹⁷ John Innes Clark Papers, MSS 349, Rhode Island Historical Society.

much of his life in Boston, and Thomas Clark, Senior, acted as his agent in North Carolina. William Hooper, Junior, became friends with the Murrays in Boston, and courted Anne Clark while she was visiting the Murrays in Boston. Anne Clark was described as strong willed, well read, articulate, and the Clark sibling best at reading. The move to Wilmington, North Carolina, placed the younger Hooper in an advantageous position—good connections, fewer lawyers than in Boston, active trade in the colony’s best harbor, and distance from his father. The elder Hooper wanted his son to become a clerk or minister, and did not agree with his son’s adherence to the politics of James Otis. By moving from Boston to Wilmington, Hooper was able to rise in political and social prominence, and the Boston connections kept him in touch with New England.¹⁸

While the connection with Hooper was beneficial to Clark, his maternal relatives were even more so. Clark’s mother, Barbara Murray, was the sister of James Murray, a merchant and loyalist in North Carolina. The family had arrived from Scotland in the 1735, with James arriving first after a period of training as a merchant in London. Barbara Murray arrived with or just after her brother, and married James’ friend and fellow Scot, Thomas Clark in 1737. Of the remaining Murray siblings William joined the military, James trained as a doctor, and Elizabeth became a prominent Boston shopkeeper. During war with Spain, William Murray served under his brother’s friend, Captain James Innes. The Murrays continued to build their plantation and trading networks in the Cape Fear region and in Boston throughout the

¹⁸ Robert Charles Kneip, III, “William Hooper, 1742-1790: Misunderstood Patriot” (Dissertation, Tulane University, 1980), 20–21, 30–31.

1740s and 1750s. In the meantime, James Murray had returned to Scotland for several years, married a cousin, and left his interests in his brother-in-law's care until Thomas Clark's 1748/9 death recalled Murray to the colonies.

In 1753, Barbara Murray Clark returned to Scotland until the early 1760s and left her three children in her brothers' care. Thomas, John, and Annie were raised with their Murray cousins. In 1757 John, variably called "Jammy" and "Jacky," was considered in ill health. One letter observed that the family could not "expect that Jam will in his sickly way come any great Length, whereas Tom's genius ought to be improved to the uttermost." The plan was make Thomas a lawyer and send John off to his uncle John Murray for whatever could be made of him. Thus, Thomas and John each spent time in England. Thomas learned watchmaking, and John stayed with their uncle Dr. John Murray in Norwich before returning to the colonies by 1765. Dr. Murray had trained in Jamaica and founded the Norwich Hospital; his son would later work for John Innes Clark in Providence.¹⁹

By 1761, John was with his uncle John Murray, Annie was in Boston, and Thomas was proving to be a likely future planter. While his Uncle James did not foresee a bright future for him, young John Innes Clark would go on to make the most of the vast family and extended Scottish merchant networks in North Carolina and New England. Having spent a portion of the period 1757 to 1765 in England, Clark was in Boston by 1766 and working in James Murray's counting house and sugar

¹⁹ James Murray, *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*, ed. Nina Moore Tiffany and Susan I. Lesley (Boston: Private Publication, 1901), 19–20, 38–41, 77, 82, 98, 112, 156; Robert W. Dana, M.A., ed., *Autobiography of the Late Col. James B. Murray* (London: Private Publication, 1908), 8.

refinery. It was there that he learned the skills of being a merchant. By 1768 he had struck out on his own in Providence, but not completely adrift—the family connections were still strong.²⁰

Those connections would prove beneficial to all involved as John Clark would take in his cousins during and after the Revolution, training the boys as merchants while James Murray was exiled to Canada. The three siblings, all of whom sided with rebel forces, petitioned the North Carolina House of Commons and General Assembly in 1782 for James Murray's North Carolina estate. The estate had been seized when the colonies declared independence, and the siblings desired its return. Valued at £9,027 7s 5p specie, the large estate was an asset that the Clark siblings did not wish to lose. The siblings were given the same rights as Murray's heirs would have had on July 4, 1776.²¹

The Murray, Hooper, and Bowen family networks provided an extended geographic reach for Clark's business. With cousins and in-laws living in the Carolinas, Virginia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Florida, and New York and others who frequently traveled to Europe, the extended kin network formed a reliable source for information and financial proxies. Further, the family connections allowed Clark to mitigate some of the inherent risk in the maritime trade by relying on trusted partners and accessing credit. Clark arrived in Providence with the majority of this system in place, but trading ventures expanded in the 1790s and 1800s as his younger

²⁰ Murray, *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*, 158, 287–288.

²¹ North Carolina General Assembly, *Minutes of the North Carolina House of Commons*, vol. 24, 1782, 525–526.

cousins began their own businesses.²² The extended family acted as agents for purchasing goods for Clark's home; he in turn acted as their agent when selling the produce of their farms. In 1775, his aunt Elizabeth Murray Inman wrote to her husband that Clark "would sell or export [the crops produced on their Cambridge farm]." Whether Clark actually sold or exported the goods, he was at least considered sufficiently reliable to perform such a task. During the nonimportation period of the late 1760s, the Murray name became an obstacle. Elizabeth Murray ordered goods from England for her niece Polly, and another consigner of goods in the cargo theorized that the goods would not have made it through customs under the Murray name. Instead, a nephew with a different last name, Clark, was not under suspicion and the goods passed. Even though Clark was closely related to the Murrays, the power of a name in the period could change the course of an act of business. Clark's wide reaching kin network and his personal experiences in other cities and places meant that he had a very different perspective on business relations than his counterparts who remained in one city or place. John Innes Clark became a resident of Providence but he was a citizen of the world.²³

²² Peter Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship in Early Modern Enterprise," in *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, ed. John J. McCusker and Peter Morgan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16–17.

²³ Murray, *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*, 201; Patricia Cleary, *Elizabeth Murray: A Woman's Pursuit of Independence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 141–142.

Chapter 3

THE CLARK & NIGHTINGALE YEARS, 1768 TO 1797

John Innes Clark's business activities of the last decade of his life only make sense after examining the rest of his adult life in Providence. His business records of the period 1768 to 1797 are mostly in the form of deeds, port records, and advertisements. Clark & Nightingale began at the Sign of the Fish and Frying-Pan by advertising that they had goods to sell for cash from the last London ships. This first shipment would begin nearly thirty years of partnership and mark the start of a large economic network in and around Providence. Their shop near the courthouse and Oliver Arnold's establishment was along Main Street, the main commercial street that runs parallel to the Providence River. Main Street becomes Water Street south of the Market House, and Clark and Nightingale were ideally situated to engage in Providence's commercial and cultural activities. For the first seven years, the partners imported mostly India and English piece goods: rum, sugar, and molasses from the West Indies, tea, and other dry goods from Britain.²⁴

²⁴ "Clark And Nightingale," *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, July 9, 1768); Chace, *Owners and Occupants of the Lots, Houses and Shops in the Town of Providence, Rhode Island in 1798 Located on Maps of the Highways of That Date: Also Owners or Occupants of Houses in the Compact Part of Providence in 1759 Showing the Location and in Whose Names They Are to Be Found on the Map of 1798*.

Events in the late 1760s and early 1770s entangled the firm in a growing Imperial Crisis. The passage of the Townshend Duties in 1767 prompted Boston merchants to issue the Articles of Agreement concerning Non Importation in 1768. The non-importation agreement essentially banned all imports of the taxed goods—tea, glass, paint, and paper—as well as any other goods imported from Great Britain between January 1, 1769 and January 1, 1770. The snow *Pitt* arrived in Boston in August 1769, and Clark and Nightingale lost the majority of their portion of the cargo to the non-importation agreement and had their names posted in the newspaper as violaters of the agreement. Seven merchants shared 270 bars of lead, 38 casks of shot and 4 casks of lines.²⁵ With the restrictions imposed by the duties and the colonists' responses, Clark and Nightingale had to find alternative ways of generating income while balancing their political opinions and business interests in a rapidly changing environment. Diversification was the key to their success.

In doing so, Clark and Nightingale were able to position themselves within the Providence economy as stable and reputable merchants. They became joint landowners in 1772 when they purchased land in Providence, and they continued to buy and sell property for the rest of their partnership. That same year, a British Navy ship in Narragansett Bay seized one of their vessels because fifty-five hogsheads of molasses and twenty-six of sugar had not been declared and taxed in Newport. Clark & Nightingale offered to pay the tax, and, when the payment was refused, sued the Customs Collector. The offered tax payment and lawsuit were an effort to maintain

²⁵ "Shipping News," *The Boston Chronicle* (Boston, August 17, 1769).

relations with the colonial and British governments, although the partners would eventually side with the Patriot cause. The partners won on the argument that the Navy did not have the authority to seize a ship in the bay without the colony's approval, and, thus, the seizure was invalid. The partners' legal argument was an astute manipulation of law to protect their business interests. In winning the case, they maintained their credibility within Providence's business community and positioned themselves for a future of trade and legal manipulation for their benefit.²⁶ The time spent working as his uncle James Murray's assistant in the family counting house and sugar distillery had provided the training necessary to begin a similar operation in Providence, with a ready supply of trading partners.

Clark and his family spent much of 1777 in and near Boston with Murray relatives and took in the Loyalist Dr. John Murray's Patriot sons during and after the war. The cousins were trained as merchants while their father was in England; the Clarks were essentially doing for the cousins what had been done for John Clark as a child. In having relatives in the countinghouse and as trading partners, Clark and Nightingale were working with people perceived as trustworthy and less risky than strangers.²⁷ One of those cousins, John B. Murray, would go on to become one of Clark's trading partners in the 1790s and 1800s through his own trading partnerships

²⁶ Phebe Simpson, Guide to the Clark & Nightingale Records, 1770-1780, MSS 354, Rhode Island Historical Society.

²⁷ Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism*, 54.

in New York and Alexandria, Virginia.²⁸ In 1780, the partners advertised with John Brown for a crew for a five-month privateering journey on the *Dean*. Unlike their counterparts in Newport, who suffered from occupation, the Providence merchants made money during the war and were ready to resume trade upon the conclusion of hostilities in 1781. The benefits derived from Providence's strategic geographic location and the profits gained from privateering allowed Clark & Nightingale to reenter the maritime trade and increase their fortunes before many of their competitors in other ports could recover.

Clark and Nightingale entered into an established merchant community then dominated by the Browns, and others. In the first half of the century, the Browns had done what Clark would do in the latter part of the century—diversify. In having an interest in a candle factory, a blast furnace, and transportation projects such as bridges over the Seekonk River, the Browns were able to produce goods to send off on their ships and take on slightly more risk in shipping. The Browns were also the first Providence merchants to enter into the slave trade, a portion of the Rhode Island maritime economy that had been dominated by Newporters until January of 1735/6 when James Brown instructed his son to sail to Africa. The Browns would continue to participate in the trade through the end of the century. Clark & Nightingale functioned in a similar manner by diversifying their investments, but disengaged from the African trade well before the Browns.²⁹

²⁸ Murray, *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist*, 268, 287; Robert W. Dana, M.A., *Autobiography of the Late Col. James B. Murray*, 7–8.

²⁹ Robert G. Albion, William H. Baker, and Benjamin W. Labaree, *New England and the Sea*, The American Maritime Library Volume 5 (Mystic, Connecticut: Mystic

Coasting, the trade up and down the eastern seaboard, was an essential part of the maritime trade in the colonies, and it continued to be important through the nineteenth century. New England controlled a large portion of the coasting and export trades, and it is estimated that between 1768 and 1772 the average annual value of commodity exports from British North America overseas was £3,064,000 sterling with the most valuable exports being provisions, lumber, whale products, and rum. Of that foreign trade, New England exported £489,000. Massachusetts generated over half of that amount, and Rhode Island produced £83,000. The coasting trade has been estimated to amount to over 69% of the foreign export trade. Clark and Nightingale funneled a portion of that £83,000 per year from inland regions onto the Atlantic shipping lanes, primarily to the West Indies in the form of foodstuffs and rum. In doing so, they functioned at the intersection of local and global economic systems, a role that Clark would maintain for the rest of his life.³⁰

The items advertised in *The Providence Gazette and Country Journal* for the 1760s through the 1790s show that Clark and Nightingale not only retailed goods from the foreign trade, but also acquired goods via coastwise trade. While they advertised foreign goods for sale, they more often advertised their desire for goods

Seaport Museum, Inc., 1972), 49; Hedges, *The Browns of Providence Plantations: Colonial Years*, 1:71.

³⁰ James F. Shepherd and Gary M. Walton, *Shipping, Maritime Trade, and the Economic Development of Colonial North America* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1972), 47; Alan Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship: America's Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600-2000* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007), 78.

that could then be shipped out of Rhode Island. It is likely that they sent and received goods through coasting; especially since they advertised on a number of occasions that they had Carolina rice and Long Island beef for sale. They advertised the arrival of India and English goods from London in the 1760s and early 1770s, but after the beginning of the Revolutionary War, those notices ended. The partners did continue to sell such goods during the period, but the advertisements appeared less frequently and, in deference to the area's politics, designated the goods as "European" or gave no indication of origin. Clark & Nightingale continued to do business throughout the war by running privateers and selling at least two frigates to the new United States Navy. Conditions deteriorated while British forces were firmly established in Newport from December 1776 to October 1778 making it difficult to transport goods past the town.³¹

Clark and Nightingale published seventeen different advertisements for items they sought to purchase in *The Providence Gazette and Country Journal* between 1773 and 1797. Many of the advertisements ran for two or more weeks at a time. The items most frequently requested were flax seed and hops, barrel hoops and staves, and cider. On some occasions, they also sought horses and farming equipment to send to the Caribbean. The earliest advertisements in 1768 listed goods the partners had for sale and included the phrase "for Cash only" or "on the very lowest Terms for Cash," which indicates that they needed the cash in order to continue their business. As a new partnership and young men, they needed to build credit with European

³¹ Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution*, 223; *The Providence Gazette And Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, 1768-1830).

trading houses and other merchants before they would be able to extend credit to their customers. By 1770, the requirement to pay in cash was gone, and Clark & Nightingale were able to trade on credit in the local economy, but the larger world required specie and bills of exchange.

Throughout the 1770s, Clark & Nightingale built their business to the point that they could outfit ships to trade in the Caribbean and be partial owners of cargoes to and from Europe and the East Indies. The war years were only profitable through the privateering activities that brought in a variety of desired goods, including British manufactures. Clark & Nightingale had concerns in at least two privateers, the *Fly* and the *Dean*, during the Revolution and those vessels were part of a larger fleet of sixty-five. Additionally, the firm purchased at least seventeen cannons individually and in partnership with John Brown. By being involved with privateering and already connected to the import and West Indian trades, Clark & Nightingale were able to weather the war years as those sectors of the North American economy were less affected than exports to Europe and Great Britain.³²

The partners' business strategies surface when linking advertisements with vessel ownership and cargo manifests. Between 1791 and 1797, Clark & Nightingale were the sole owners of 12 vessels and partial owners of three more. One vessel was solely owned by the partners in 1795 and 1797, but partially owned by Clark &

³² John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 362–3; “Compleatly Fitted For...,” *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, June 3, 1780), 4; Hedges, *The Browns of Providence Plantations: Colonial Years*, 1:274, 281.

Nightingale in 1796.³³ Of the forty-six extant outward foreign cargo manifests for the same period, barrel hoops and staves and provisions such as meats and fish appear in all of the shipments. Thirty-four shipments are to the West Indies, seven to continental Europe, and five to China and the East Indies.³⁴ Clark & Nightingale had become wholesale merchants who also maintained a retail shop by the 1780s, and the investment in vessels and whole cargoes illustrates the expansion of retail and wholesale business and into new markets.

Prior to the Revolution, the trans-Atlantic slave trade of the eighteenth century was a significant part of life for Rhode Island merchants, including Clark & Nightingale. Rum gave Rhode Island prominence in the trade. Rum brought to West Africa in the small brigs averaging one hundred tons, known as “rum-men,” became a major currency in the region. Although the Rhode Island vessels were significantly smaller than their European counterparts (which averaged two hundred tons with three to four hundred ton vessels a regular occurrence), the “rum-men” had the advantage of size and maneuverability. Smaller brigs meant smaller cargoes of seventy-five to one hundred slaves, which were more easily obtained through river travel inaccessible to larger vessels. Additionally, the rum granted the Rhode Island brigs preferred trading status in Africa and the West Indies because of the high demand for the liquor. The smaller vessels’ cargoes were less likely to glut markets. It was also easier to load a

³³ Bureau of Customs, French Spoliation Claims District of Providence: Certificates of Registry, 1791 to 1801.

³⁴ Bureau of Customs, French Spoliation Claims District of Providence: Outward Foreign Manifests, 1791-1801.

brig with return cargo and balance the unit costs of the freight with the turnaround time spent in port. The Rhode Island slave trade accounted for only a small portion of the total number of slaves traded in the period 1725 to 1807, but the colony's rum and molasses trade presented a picture of how merchants used their resources to enter into the world market. Between 1709 and 1807, Rhode Island exported over ten million gallons of rum to Africa, rum that was made with molasses brought in from the West Indies. In comparison with the other colonies, Rhode Island exported 52 percent of its total available rum supply in 1770 while the other colonies exported 23 percent of their rum supplies. The Revolution forced Rhode Island merchants into other ventures including manufacturing and real estate investment.

By 1784, Rhode Island merchants were anxious to reenter the African and West Indian trades to pay off the £100,000 debt to Great Britain, and they hoped that the peace treaty would allow access to several Caribbean ports including Havana and Antigua.³⁵ Jabez Bowen, the deputy Governor and Clark's brother-in-law, replied to Thomas Jefferson's 1784 *Queries Concerning Government, Labor, Commerce, &c.* to say that the merchants wished for access to free ports. In compiling his response, Bowen surveyed four merchants, three of whom were slave traders sending cargoes from Africa to West Indian ports. While one was listed as "Clarke," it is more likely that this is either Peleg or Audley Clarke who were prominent slave traders of the period with John Clark being more involved in rum production and supplying

³⁵ Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807*, 6-7, 15-17; Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

provisions than slaves.³⁶ However, the call for open trade does correlate to Clark & Nightingale's trading activities after the Revolution in that the partners were able to continue in the West Indian markets that consistently demanded American goods.³⁷

While the earliest evidence of their direct involvement in the slave trade is a 1785 voyage of the brig *Prudence* for which Clark & Nightingale were partial owners of the vessel, the firm was already an established part of the rum trade. That 1785 voyage was one of two voyages recorded for the 1780 to 1795 period in which Clark & Nightingale held an interest. The other was a 1790 voyage of the ship *Providence* captained by Oliver Bowen, Clark's brother-in-law.³⁸ While Clark & Nightingale were owners for these two voyages, their neighbors and relatives often had more involvement in the African trade. However, the distillery the partners owned and their practices of shipping provisions to the West Indies involved them indirectly in slavery—a relationship Clark would continue for the rest of his life. Clark's family and childhood had familiarized him with slaves, the slave trade, and plantation culture in North Carolina. Census records are ambiguous about his slave ownership; the 1774 and 1790s censuses list two blacks and five "other free persons," respectively. Nightingale had five slaves in 1790, and the partners granted

³⁶ Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 7 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 338; Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807*, 17.

³⁷ Cathy D. Matson, "Introduction: The Ambiguities of Risk in the Early Republic," *The Business History Review* 78, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 597–598.

³⁸ Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807*, 241–285.

manumission to “Quam a Negro Man late a Servant to us for Life” for the sum of fifty Spanish milled dollars in 1790.³⁹ Clark appears not to have been a slave owner after this point, but he continued to benefit from the slave trade and way of life through his business activities.

Since Clark & Nightingale were more involved in the provisions and rum trades than some of their contemporaries, they were better positioned to adapt to new laws of the 1790s, specifically the 1794 Act that prohibited the outfitting of a ship in an American port for the purpose of trading in slaves. This was the first official act against the trade since the United States Constitution set an ending date to the trade, but some merchants disregarded the new law. John Brown was the first to be tried under the 1794 Act and found guilty in 1797. With shifting attitudes and new organizations, including the Providence Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, active participation in the market that had supported Rhode Island for decades was increasingly seen as immoral and illegal.⁴⁰ Clark & Nightingale had stayed away from anything that could be perceived as violating the 1794 law; instead they outfitted ships to trade in textiles, rum, provisions, and other goods.

The seventy-four extant outward foreign manifests from March 1792 to July 1801 distinctly show that Clark & Nightingale were firmly established in the

³⁹ *City of Providence Record of Deeds*, vol. 22 part 1, 290; “First Census of the United States, 1790: Rhode Island”, 1790, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives and Records Administration.

⁴⁰ Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution*, 260, 305, 310.

West Indies trade as wholesalers.⁴¹ Of the manifests, forty-five (60.8%) are to West Indian destinations with a further nine (12.2%) bound for South America. The most common destinations are the island of Hispaniola (present day Haiti and the Dominican Republic) (15), Surinam[e] (8), and St. Bartholomew's (7). While the inward manifests and invoices for those journeys do not survive, a pattern is clearly evident in what Clark & Nightingale shipped to four regions: Asia & India, Europe, South America, and the West Indies. The shipments to Europe included coffee, cotton, sugar, indigo, cochineal, feathers, staves, nankeens, hides and skins, and potash. In contrast, cargoes bound for the Caribbean and South America included barrels of dried and salted fish, beef, pork, livestock, lumber, barrel hoops and staves, New England rum, candles, and soap. Clark & Nightingale exchanged the goods for dyestuffs, textiles, china, and other items sent to Europe and sold in their store. Further, the items sent to the plantations of the Caribbean paid for the sugar Clark & Nightingale's rum distillery needed.⁴²

Trading in the West Indian markets was profitable for both the West Indian and New England merchants. Mainland North America was source of

⁴¹ For additional information and reference to the West Indian trade see: Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783*; Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785*.

⁴² United States Treasury Department, Distillery Excise Tax Records, 1791 to 1802, MSS 232, sg3, Rhode Island Historical Society; "Clark and Nightingale Have For Sale...", *Providence Gazette and Country Journal*, July 24, 1790; Bureau of Customs, French Spoliation Claims District of Providence: Outward Foreign Manifests, 1791-1801.

manufactured goods that were closer than Europe, and up to the Revolution had legitimate ports as regulated by the Navigation Acts. Additionally, North American merchants would accept a wider range of sugar products as payment than Europeans did.⁴³ By sending lumber products and processed foods to the Caribbean, the firm had to procure those items from inland New England. Those beef, pork, cheese, butter, and livestock producers in turn became Clark & Nightingale's customers, receiving goods imported from around the world and participating in the global exchange of raw materials and finished products. The West Indies trade also yielded payments in specie that the partners needed in order to procure goods to trade in other markets.⁴⁴

By the 1790s, Clark & Nightingale and their neighbors had recovered from the economic contraction after the Revolution, and the new trading system had created import opportunities on a larger scale than in the 1770s. American merchants now were free from the controls placed on trade in the colonial period. Clark & Nightingale were well informed about what would sell in and around Providence and what should be sent elsewhere. While the Revolution had increased opportunities for domestic manufactures, the partners' patrons desired the luxury goods brought in from other regions. In many ways, the Revolution had not changed their business in terms of their inventory. What did change was the scale of trade and their ability to fund voyages and purchase wholesale quantities of goods.⁴⁵

⁴³ McCusker and Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789*, 288–290.

⁴⁴ Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*, 117.

⁴⁵ David R. Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 15–18, 25, 43–46.



Figure 4: “West Indiaman” from E. W. Cooke, *Sixty-five Plates of Shipping and Craft, Drawn and Etched by E. W. Cooke*, (London, 1829). Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed Book and Periodical Collection. The West Indiaman in this etching is of the type that Clark & Nightingale owned for their trade to the Caribbean.

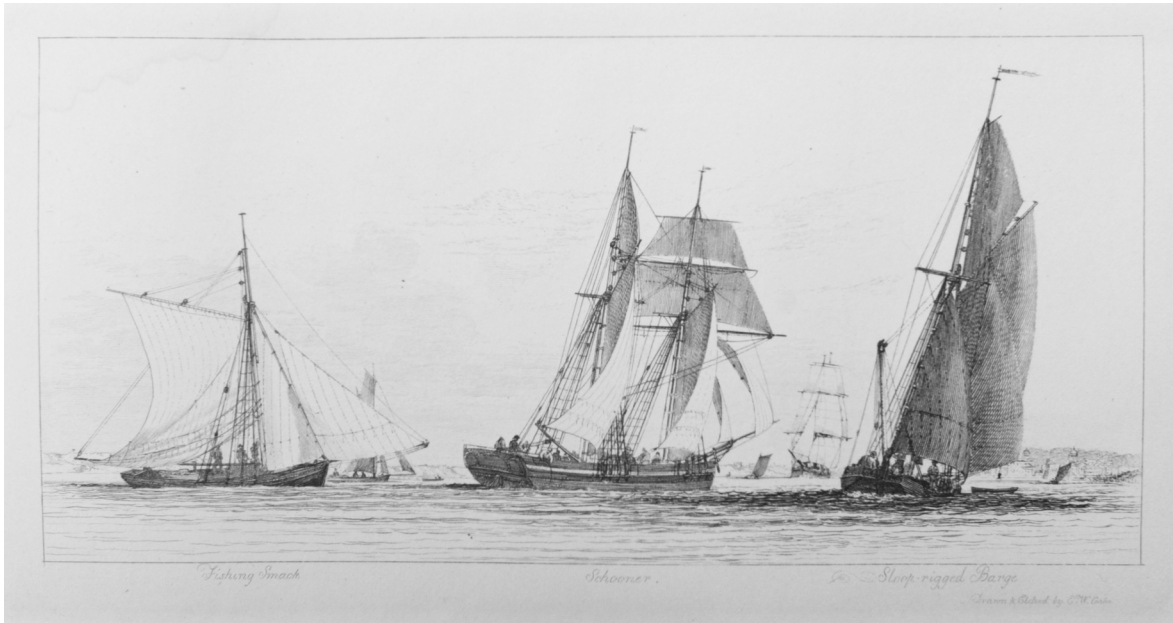


Figure 5: “Fishing Smack, Schooner, and Sloop Rigged Barge” from E. W. Cooke, *Sixty-five Plates of Shipping and Craft, Drawn and Etched by E. W. Cooke*, (London, 1829). Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed Book and Periodical Collection. The Schooner in the middle is of the type most often used in the coasting and African trade by Rhode Island merchants for its small size and maneuverability. The vessel in the background between the schooner and the barge is likely of similar size to the West Indiaman in Figure 4.

While the records of what they received in Providence do not survive, their advertisements of items for sale and entrance and clearance records for the Port of Providence detailed at least some of those items. The majority of the imports were English and European goods with some foodstuffs. During the 1790s, Clark & Nightingale sent their vessels, with an average tonnage of ninety-four tons to the West Indies with greater frequency than to Europe. Their return on capital was better via

these routes because the distances were shorter; the turnaround quicker; and the vessels encountered less danger from the combatant British and French navies during the French Wars of 1793 to 1815 and the United States, Britain, and France's economic policies and blockades of the period.⁴⁶ In order to keep a current supply of goods, they consigned cargoes on others' ships and acquired imported from other merchants. The investment in smaller vessels, such as the West Indiaman in Figure 4 and the Schooner in Figure 5, that cost less to purchase and man meant that Clark & Nightingale could access shallower ports and better match their volume of trade than larger several hundred-ton ships. Additionally, the vessels had a shorter turnaround time, took less time to load, and were a smaller loss if captured or sunk. This strategy enabled Clark & Nightingale to better maintain their supplies of retail and wholesale inventory, spread the risk of their investments across several cargoes, and manage overhead costs.⁴⁷

The partners kept their store in the same location from 1768 to the end of 1780 before moving a few blocks south on Main Street to a shop "nearly opposite the

⁴⁶ Kevin H. O'Rourke, "The Worldwide Economic Impact of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815," *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 1 (2006): 124-125.

⁴⁷ *The Providence Gazette And Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, 1768-1825). In addition to voyages to Europe, the partners consigned a shipment in 1794 to Botany Bay and Canton, the former being the British penal colony. The voyage may have been speculative and a way to determine if entering into trade with the colony would be profitable. Part of the attraction for trade with Botany Bay was the "she-oak" or Botany Bay Oak, a wood similar to mahogany used as veneers in furniture. See: Robert Mussey, Jr., *The Furniture Masterworks of John & Thomas Seymour* (Salem, MA: Peabody Essex Museum, 2003), 87.; Bureau of Customs, "French Spoliation Claims District of Providence: Outward Foreign Manifests, 1791-1801."

Baptist Meeting house,” shown in Figure 6. By 1794, they had moved to a shop “at the South End of Town,” presumably to the lot on Water Street purchased on April 3, 1794, shown in Figure 7 in relation to the other shop locations and the Clark, Nightingale, and John Brown houses.⁴⁸ In locating their store along what was then Main Street and Water Street (Water Street is now South Main Street), Clark & Nightingale and later Clark & Co. were well positioned to receive goods directly from ships at the wharves behind or near the shops at the center of Providence’s business district.

Proximity shortened turnaround time. Using the entrance and clearance records of vessels owned by Clark & Nightingale recorded in local newspapers for the period 1792 to 1799, the average turn around time was forty-seven days in port for an average of one hundred sixty days at sea for forty-six voyages. Each vessel could make approximately two trips per year. For each of these years, Clark & Nightingale owned or were partial owners of three to five vessels. Their main warehouse and wharf block was within a short walk of their homes and distillery. The central location along the water with wharf space meant their men could easily load and unload cargo and minimize time in port.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ “John Innes Clark and Joseph Nightingale, In Company”; “To Be Sold by Clark and Nightingale,” *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, November 9, 1782); “Crockery Store,” *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, December 8, 1792); “To Be Sold by Clark and Nightingale, By Wholesale,” *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, June 29, 1783); *City of Providence Record of Deeds*, vol. 23 part 1, 345.

⁴⁹ *The Providence Gazette And Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, 1768-1825); *United States Chronicle* (Providence, Rhode Island, 1790-1804); *Newport Mercury* (Newport, Rhode Island, 1790-1800).



Figure 6: Detail from Plate II of Henry R. Chace, *Owners and Occupants of the Lots, Houses and Shops in the Town of Providence, Rhode Island in 1798 Located on Maps of the Highways of That Date: Also Owners or Occupants of Houses in the Compact Part of Providence in 1759 Showing the Location and in Whose Names They Are to Be Found on the Map of 1798* (Providence: H. R. Chace, 1914). Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed book and Periodical Collection. The highlighted areas show the approximate locations of the store 1768-1780 (blue) and 1780-1794 (green).

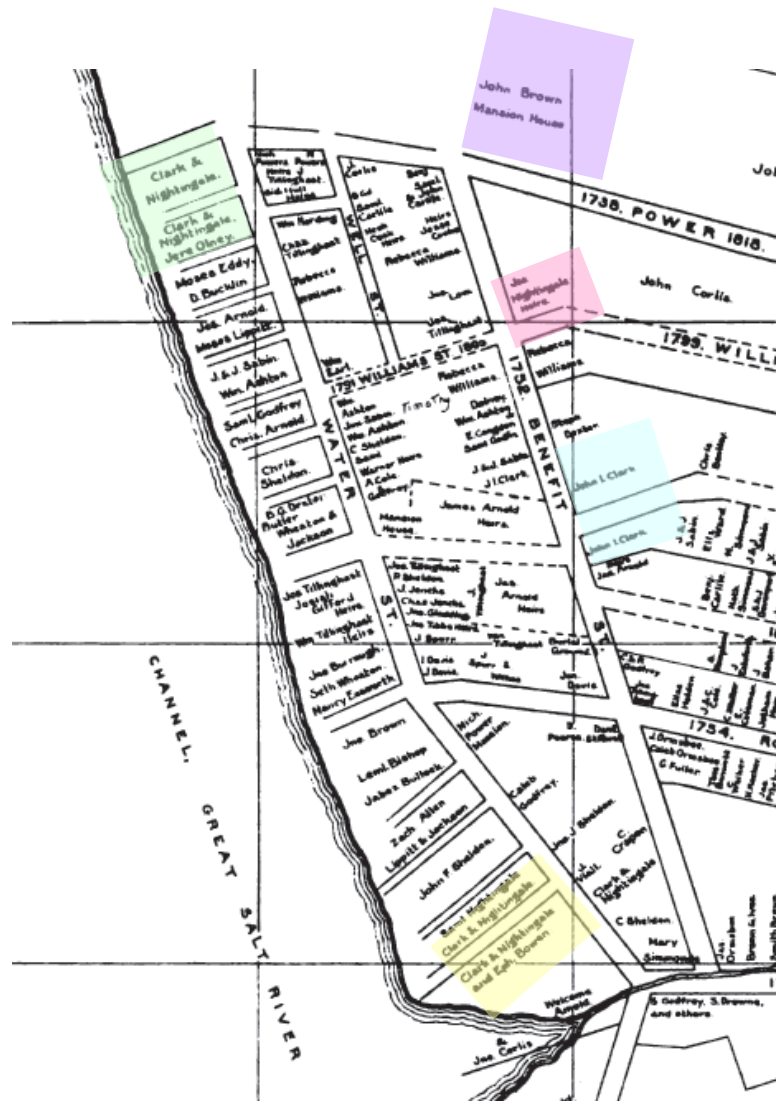


Figure 7: Detail from Plate III in Henry R. Chace, *Owners and Occupants of the Lots, Houses and Shops in the Town of Providence, Rhode Island in 1798 Located on Maps of the Highways of That Date: Also Owners or Occupants of Houses in the Compact Part of Providence in 1759 Showing the Location and in Whose Names They Are to Be Found on the Map of 1798* (Providence: H. R. Chace, 1914). Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed book and Periodical Collection. The highlighted portions show the store/warehouse of the late 1790s-1808 (green), the distillery (yellow), and the houses of Clark (blue), Nightingale (pink), and John Brown (purple).

While Clark & Nightingale operated under the same methods of maritime trade as many of their contemporaries, they also expanded their business interests beyond the basic import and export trade—they became landlords.⁵⁰ Throughout the 1770s, 1780s, and 1790s, John Innes Clark bought and sold land, acted as a mortgage lender, and leased property on his own and as part of Clark & Nightingale. As partners, the men purchased land on thirty occasions and sold parcels ten times between 1773 and 1797. Aside from the purchase of the lots for his mansion house, Clark was the grantor in twenty deeds and the grantee in thirty-three between 1773 and 1808. The partners mostly acquired house lots in the western part of town and stores along Main and Water Streets. As an individual landholder, Clark owned parcels throughout the town's limits. In renting houses and shops, the firm maintained a steady rental income. Clark also earned interest on the mortgages he held.⁵¹ The men deliberately arranged to have alternate income sources in case their shipping business collapsed during an era of high volatility and war. Additionally, as one of the few wholesale merchants in town, Clark & Nightingale supplied the tenants of their rented shops with inventory while also directly competing in the Providence market for imported goods.

Yellow Fever arrived in Providence in 1797. It was the same disease that had ravaged Philadelphia a few years earlier, and Joseph Nightingale was among the

⁵⁰ United States Customs House (Providence, R.I.), United States Customs House Records, Providence, Rhode Island; Bureau of Customs, French Spoliation Claims District of Providence: Certificates of Registry, 1791 to 1801.

⁵¹ *City of Providence Record of Deeds*, vol. 19–36.

victims. His death on November 3 forced Clark to consider the fate of his business. Fifty-two and with no surviving sons, he decided to close the trading firm and turn the delinquent accounts over to an attorney.⁵² In closing the firm, Clark did what many merchants who found themselves to be the surviving partners of trading firms did. Assets tied up in trade were relatively easily liquidated and reinvested in land and other forms of capital. Without another partner or a son to take over, Clark needed to ensure that the family fortune would be preserved should he also die or be incapacitated.⁵³ Although he closed the Clark & Nightingale business, Clark did not retire. Instead, he continued investing in land and acting as a lender and mortgage holder. Shipping continued to be a part of Clark's business portfolio, but he maintained other interests in order to diversify and preserve his fortune. The timing of these changes coincided with the opportunity to expand his family networks as his elder daughter married and political and economic environment changed for American shipping.

⁵² "Died"; Ott, "John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence," 126–127.

⁵³ Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kinship in Early Modern Enterprise," 20.

Chapter 4

CHANGE & CONSISTENCY, 1797-1808

John Innes Clark's business activities after 1797 reflected a changing Atlantic economy and the United States' entry into global commerce. Those years brought many changes to Clark's life, both private and professional. Eliza, the elder daughter, married Oliver Delancey Kane in 1803, a New York merchant and relative of the powerful Van Rensselaers.⁵⁴ The newlyweds moved to New York and began a family, and Lydia and Harriet kept traveling to visit new grandchildren and other relatives. Eliza's marriage brought a new business connection as old connections failed—Robert Murray & Co. of New York and Alexandria had gone bankrupt in 1798 and their affairs took years to settle.⁵⁵

Other things continued with modifications. Clark stayed in the shipping business, but he also expanded his involvement in public affairs. The ships kept going in and out, and the goods were bought and sold. However, shipping patterns began to shift. Clark kept his foundation as a West Indian trader, but he began to branch out

⁵⁴ "Marriages," *United States Chronicle* (Providence, Rhode Island, May 26, 1803); Cuyler Reynolds, *History of the Families of Southern New York and the Hudson River Valley: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of a Commonwealth and the Building of Nation*, vol. 3 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1914), 1151–1153.

⁵⁵ Oliver Ellsworth, *Clarke V. Russell*, 3 Dallas 415 (United States Supreme Court 1799).

into the China trade more than he had done in the 1790s. The distillery was still going, and for the five quarters ending June 30, 1801 through Jun 30, 1802 he distilled 46,240 gallons and removed 43,033 gallons of rum. Others made more rum, but for comparison, John Brown produced 22,695 gallons and removed 22,952.75 gallons. The distillery operated through the end of Clark's life, and it is probable that the figures presented here were within the average range of production for the distillery through the period 1800 to 1808.⁵⁶ Clark's continued involvement in the West Indian trade maintained the steady income from the provisions trade, which in turn allowed him to invest in the East Indies trade.

With the Napoleonic and French Revolutionary wars keeping France and Britain preoccupied for much of the period, American merchants were able to enter the East Indian trade and quickly gain prominence and some control. The already established connections with British merchants in London and India aided some American merchants' progress in increasing trade with India, but it was the rapidly increasing and more sustained American influence in the East Indies from which Clark benefited. Clark entered the trade with an established income source from the West Indies, and he was able to reinvest some of these profits in the East Indian trade.⁵⁷ Additionally, Clark appears to have kept his cargoes at sea for long periods of time with several stops before the proceeds reached Providence. For example, the

⁵⁶ United States Treasury Department, Distillery Excise Tax Records.

⁵⁷ Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism*, 1–6, 111–114.

Favourite traveled from North America to the East Indies then to Brazil and London before returning to Providence and continuing on to New York.⁵⁸

Examining the invoice book reveals a pattern of investment in cargoes being sent from Europe to North America and elsewhere without stopping off in Providence, and the *Patterson* provides an example. The ship cleared Providence for Norfolk on April 12, 1800, returning once before being sold in 1803. The ship continued on to Rio de Janeiro where it cleared for Martinique in December. It was in Argentina by the end of January 1801 and went on to Buenos Aires and then to Cowes, Isle of Wight. The ship returned to Providence to sail for Bordeaux in October 1801; from there it went to New Orleans, to Liverpool, and to New York where it arrived on December 6, 1802. In keeping the *Patterson* at sea carrying goods across the Atlantic, Clark was able to use several agents in the different cities to facilitate his trading. Jonathan Aborn was the ship's master for the entire period, and the continuity of a trusted master who also functioned as consignee provided stability. However, Clark was still taking an enormous risk, as he solely owned the vessel and the cargoes. The *Patterson's* voyages to and from New Orleans included contact with the firm of Winter and Harman, and Clark continued to use the firm on other ventures to the city. Items leaving New Orleans included sugar, dyestuffs, and cotton; the inbound freight included textiles, furniture, dry goods, china, wine, other luxury goods, specifically, French wines and furniture sent from Bordeaux in 1802 to appeal to the city's French

⁵⁸ John Innes Clark. Letter to Lydia Bowen Clark, April 29 1807, in John Innes Clark Papers, Box 6.

population.⁵⁹ The *Patterson*'s voyage and the trade with New Orleans demonstrates Clark's participation in the global trade of the early nineteenth century as he adapted to the changing political boundaries and economic tactics that arose as American shipping gained ground. Markets ruled, and he ordered what he could sell as in the case of the French goods sent to New Orleans.⁶⁰

In addition to the French goods, Clark frequently shipped goods that targeted to a particular market, often bypassing an American port. The *Cumberland* sailed from Boston to London on June 6, 1801 carrying 11,318 gallons of molasses, flour, boards, and hides. From London in September, the brig headed to the Río de la Plata on the southeastern coast of South America carrying a cargo of British textiles

⁵⁹ Clark, "Invoice Book"; "Port of New York," *Mercantile Advertiser* (New York, New York, May 13, 1801); "Port of New York," *New York Evening Post* (New York, New York, December 6, 1802); "Crockery, &c.," *Commercial Advertiser* (New York, New York, December 9, 1802); "District of Providence," *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, April 12, 1800); United States Customs House, Registers in 1800 & 1801, 15, RG36.3.1 E639, National Archives and Records Administration.

⁶⁰ John G. Clark, *New Orleans, 1718-1812: An Economic History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 221–249. Trade with Louisiana was hazardous and often illicit for American merchants in the second half of the eighteenth century. The French and Spanish controlled New Orleans at different times in the period. During the 1790s through 1805, American ships were often seized as prizes by French privateers; however, they were treated as Spanish ships in New Orleans and accounted for over half of the imports brought into the colony. New Orleans residents demanded French and British goods, and the colony produced the sugar and cotton that were valuable exports to the United States and Great Britain. Thus, sending French goods to New Orleans was meeting the demand of the population and opening a different avenue for trade. The United States gained control of the city in 1805. Several of the important officials and merchants in New Orleans were Clarks, but it is unclear if they were related to John Innes Clark.

with a value of £25,749 16s 11d (approximately \$113,000). Ranging from velvets, velveteens, quiltings, and cassimeres to flannels, chintzes, dimities, the invoice reflects the range of textiles available from the most fashionable to the most utilitarian in a variety of colors, stripes, figures, and designs. This strategy facilitated faster turnaround times and not only avoided extra customs duties and paperwork costs but also brought the cargoes to Brazil more quickly. Competition in South America was heavy among American merchants, and the faster a cargo reached the ports, the more quickly it could be sold and possibly at a better price than cargoes that arrived later.

In the same way as Clark shipped provisions to the West Indian islands, he also supplied the South American plantations. Textile cargoes were part of a larger system of British imports. Brazil and its neighbors had been receiving British goods since the sixteenth century, and textiles were one of the largest imports. The ultimate uses of the *Cumberland's* cargo are unknown, but the wholesale quantities were likely distributed among several merchants for retail sales. Textile shipments in South America presented an appealing financial opportunity for Clark, and a destination other than Rio de Janeiro allowed his investment to reach other markets. Rio de Janeiro was heavily controlled by British officials and merchants, which made it challenging for American merchants to trade in Brazil. Further, the importation of British goods to South America directly and indirectly supplied the plantation and mining economies that had developed over centuries of Portuguese and Spanish

colonization in the same way that meat and fish sent to the Caribbean supported the sugar plantations.⁶¹

Like other merchants trading in the Far East, Clark found ways of managing its high barrier to entry, the need for capital. Asian merchants demanded specie in payment, and would accept few goods, thus placing smaller Western merchants at a disadvantage, especially those from North America where specie was scarce.⁶² The need for specie to enter the East Indian trade could be satisfied through the payment of rents and by selling cargoes in other ports and using the proceeds to purchase East Indian luxury goods. Invoices to and from Canton and Calcutta list a variety of textiles and related articles, including bulk orders of bolts of cloth as well as finished goods such as pantaloons and other pieces of clothing. The invoices to Canton reflect goods that could be used to supply Western merchants working at the hong, seen in Figure 8, complexes of stores and warehouses used by nations trading with Chinese merchants. The two invoices for the *Egeria* dated December 8, 1804 are

⁶¹ “Marine Register,” *New-York Price-Current* (New York, New York, June 6, 1801); Clark, “Invoice Book”; Sarah Ballou Parks, “Britain, Brazil, and the Trade in Printed Cottons, 1827-1841” (University of Delaware, 2010), 14–21, 63–66. Sarah Park’s thesis, while focused on the 1820s and 1830s, serves as a later example of the trading network of which Clark’s cargo of textiles was a part. British textiles imported to Brazil were, at times, exported to Africa as part of the Portuguese slave trade. The *Cumberland* went to what is now Argentina and Uruguay, but the slave economy was present in that region as well. Included in the invoice are “quiltings” of various colors. A type of textile in which the weave imitates quilted material, quiltings were fashionable in the period. For more, see: Linda Eaton, *Quilts in a Material World: Selections from the Winterthur Collection* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 2007), 134.

⁶² Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism*, 111–114, 120–121.

the largest and most detailed invoices for items sent to Canton with a total of \$120,978.48 including freight charges and customs duties paid in Boston. The voyage was a new vessel registered on December 7 with joint ownership among Clark, Jonathan Russell, and John B. and Robert Murray. The invoices do not state how much each man had invested in the cargo, but the items listed do show a wide range of goods from provisions to tools to textiles and clothing to sundry merchandise. The merchandise would have been sold at Canton with the proceeds used to purchase Asian goods before continuing on to Batavia (Jakarta) and arriving back in Providence in March of 1807.⁶³ A voyage of this length was common for an East Indian journey, and the investment in such an undertaking could only be achieved through the acquisition of capital from other income sources and ventures including Clark's activities as landlord.

Owning a ship and financing a voyage with John and Robert Murray and Jonathan Russell indicates that Clark's trust in his cousins and their business partner had improved by 1804 following legal and financial trouble in the late 1790s. In 1796, Clark wrote to Nathaniel Russell of Charleston to introduce the firm of Robert Murray & Co. and ask that Russell assist the Murrays in entering the trade from Charleston. That letter would reappear in the first of several cases involving Clark and various trading partners to reach the United States Supreme Court. *Clarke v. Russell* was decided in 1799 to be a mistrial in the District Court, but the case and its later version *Russell v. Clark's Executors* are examples of how a merchant's public reputation

⁶³ Clark, "Invoice Book"; "Marine Department, Port of Providence," *Providence Phoenix* (Providence, Rhode Island, March 28, 1807).

influenced the perceptions of others in trading with unknown individuals. Since Nathaniel Russell had done business with Clark & Nightingale in the past; he trusted their letter of introduction and agreed to work with Robert Murray & Co. However, when the firm declared bankruptcy a few months later, Russell wanted to be paid. Murray & Co. had appeared solvent in the early months of 1796, and the letter of introduction from Clark & Nightingale augmented their appearance of solvency and legitimacy. When this was discovered to be in error (although Murray & Co. were technically solvent when Clark wrote the letter), Nathaniel Russell went to the closest solvent person he could find to satisfy the debts owed to him. In response, Clark stated that he had not written the letter of introduction as a guarantee and refused to pay the debt. In all, the cases were still undecided in 1812, but the legal liabilities of how one's words and the weight placed upon one's reputation are readily evident.⁶⁴ Further, Murray & Co. had contracted other debts with Clark, and their unpaid loan in 1808 totaled \$71,543.76.⁶⁵ The voyage of the *Egeria* in 1804 to 1807 may have been an attempt to recover some of those funds and reestablish the Murray's in business, but it is apparent that they were at least partially unsuccessful.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ellsworth, *Clarke V. Russell*, 3; John Marshall, *Russell V. Clark's Executors*, 7 Cranch 69 (United States Supreme Court 1812).

⁶⁵ Providence County Probate Court Records, "Inventory of John Innes Clark," 24.

⁶⁶ The other two cases are: John Marshall, *Clark's Executors V. Carrington*, 7 Cranch 308 (United States Supreme Court 1813); John Marshall, *Clark's Executors V. Van Riemsdyk*, 9 Cranch 153 (United States Supreme Court 1815). Both deal with letters as written contracts and responsibilities of supercargoes and business partners. United States contract law and the power of government was still being worked out in the early part of the nineteenth century, and these cases are examples of how reputation and agreements can be construed differently by the parties involved.



Figure 8: *View of Canton, China, c.1803-1810*, Courtesy, Winterthur Museum, 1959.1871.2A

The European goods sent to the East Indies also indicate that there was at least some market for such items, and that, while necessary, specie was not the only way of managing exchange. Included in those alternate systems of exchange in the East Indian markets was the trade in sea otter pelts from the Northwest Coast of North America; the fur was highly valued by Chinese consumers. Clark sent two cargoes of English goods, tools, and provisions to Nootka Sound in what is now Vancouver. At least one of those vessels continued on to Canton in late 1807 and had likely been loaded with pelts to trade. Although the pelts were valuable in Canton, acquiring them in Nootka Sound was dangerous. The area underwent a series of transfers of power

and was still a frontier, placing merchant exchanges outside of the control of most law of the time. Clark, therefore, took on an additional risk in attempting to acquire goods that could fetch a good price in China.⁶⁷

Success bought more leisure and social responsibility. Clark had been a church warden of St. John's Episcopal Church, and he added to that public position the presidency of the Providence Bank and the prestige of becoming a member of the Society of Cincinnati. The public positions increased his visibility within Providence and his involvement in the local economy.⁶⁸ Responsibilities for the bank and the insurance company were positions gained through connections and reputation; Clark's public involvement brought him greater visibility and esteem. Like his brother, John Innes Clark had served in the Continental Army for at least a portion of the Revolutionary War. He was listed as a Major of the 1st Providence Regiment in 1775 and was later involved in meeting with the French commanders when they arrived in Rhode Island in 1780.⁶⁹ As further record of his wartime service, he was granted a bounty of 500 acres of land on February 23, 1795.⁷⁰ Clark, his brother, brother-in-law, and cousin, John B. Murray, all chose the rebel side in the Revolution, while the

⁶⁷ Clark, "Invoice Book"; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts*; Eric Jay Dolin, *Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America*.

⁶⁸ "Died," *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, October 8, 1808).

⁶⁹ Morrison, 297.

⁷⁰ "Warrant Number 477", 1800, Ancestry Library Edition.

majority of the Murray family remained Loyalist. The complex relationships altered how the segments of the family interacted, and events at the end of the 1790s would impact Clark's business as shipping became increasingly subject to the effects of international conflict.

As war between Britain and France escalated and the naval Quasi War, which involved the United States, continued, Clark and his fellow Providence merchants suffered from losses incurred by the conflict.⁷¹ Two ships owned in whole and in part by Clark were captured or confiscated: the brigantine *Sukey* in 1798, just months after she had been registered, and the schooner *Pilgrim*. The invoice for the *Pilgrim's* confiscated voyage survives in Clark's invoice book. With a total value of \$16,039.36 the lost cargo represented a significant investment, in addition to Clark's sole ownership in the vessel. Samuel Staples, the vessel's master was also sent to Portugal as a prisoner. The schooner had sailed for Brazil in December 1801 and Staples did not arrive home in New England until August 1802. Whether news of the confiscation had reached John Clark before then is unknown, but unlikely since the vessel's registration was not cancelled until after Staples returned from Portugal.⁷²

⁷¹ For more on the political and economic events of the early nineteenth century see: Walter R. Borneman, *1812: The War That Forged a Nation* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004); Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

⁷² Clark, "Invoice Book"; United States Customs House, "Registers in 1800 & 1801," 23; "Evening Post Marine List," *The New-York Evening Post* (New York, New York, June 27, 1807), 3; Bureau of Customs, French Spoliation Claims District of Providence: Outward Foreign Manifests, 1791-1801. A cargo manifest for the voyage also survives, but gives a total value of \$19,424.58, suggesting that crewmembers or other merchants also shipped goods on the *Pilgrim*.

The loss could be financially devastating, especially when one was as heavily invested as Clark, but the ship and its cargo was likely insured with either the Providence or Warren Insurance Companies. Even so, insurance policies were not a guaranteed way to cover losses; the total value of the ship and cargo was unlikely to be recovered. Proceeds from the *Pilgrim*'s cargo were needed to continue Clark's business and pay creditors, the merchants from whom Clark had purchased the cargo. Without those funds, Clark had to adjust his strategy to compensate for the *Pilgrim*.

Evidence of Clark's use of insurance exists in several cases, and he was one of the first directors of the Providence Insurance Company in the 1790s. The *St. Fortunata*, a Spanish vessel on which Clark had shipped goods from Buenos Aires, was captured en route to Boston in the summer of 1801. Clark had insured his investment for \$1,800 and the ship itself was underwritten for \$12,000. Included in the correspondence for the *St. Fortunata*, Clark also negotiated a policy for the *Ceres*. In insuring his vessels and cargoes, he protected his investment as much as possible in a risky world. Further, his involvement as a director of Rhode Island's new insurance company and as President of the Providence Bank demonstrates his involvement in the changing structures of Rhode Island's shipping and capital markets. This involvement probably also allowed Clark to manipulate insurance rates to his benefit, a common practice in the 1790s among merchant controlled insurance companies.⁷³

⁷³ "Died," *The Newport Mercury* (Newport, Rhode Island, November 7, 1797); John Innes Clark, Letter to Nathaniel Phillips, 11 June 1801, in the Warren Insurance Company Records, MSS 159, Rhode Island Historical Society.

Rhode Island's insurance market emerged in 1784 with an agreement in Newport to form a marine insurance society with formal incorporation in 1799. Other American insurance companies existed during the colonial period, and competed with European insurance markets throughout the century, but Rhode Island did not have a formal insurance market until 1784. Providence's merchants had their own insurance company, and the development of the company and the bank were just two steps in Providence's development as a port city in the 1790s.⁷⁴

The risks required careful management by everyone involved. Bundles, barrels, casks, boxes, and chests are all made of either wood or cloth and were to some degree porous. The images in Figures 9 and 10 give perspective on size and type of packing material, including the cloth wrapped bundles. Nothing was completely waterproof, and water damage was common. So was loss due to being washed overboard and rot in the ship and the cargo. A five to ten percent loss of rum on a voyage to Africa was considered standard. Insurance, swift voyages, and a skilled captain were the only hope. Loss was a constant and most merchants tried to prepare for it with every voyage.⁷⁵ However, Clark's total investment in the *Pilgrim* did present an extraordinary risk on his part. Insurance would have mitigated some of the risk, but the fact that Clark was so heavily invested in this voyage, as well as others,

⁷⁴ Rick Stattler, Guide to the Warren Insurance Company Records; A. Glenn Crothers, "Commerical Risk and Capital Formation in Early America: Virginia Merchants and the Rise of American Marine Insurance, 1750-1815," *The Business History Review* 78, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 607–610.

⁷⁵ Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807*, 90–93.

illustrates how secure he considered his business to be by the 1800s. Even with an established reputation, secure finances, and experience, Clark needed legal help. Throughout the late 1790s, Stephen Tillinghast served as Clark's attorney in several cases, and the two became business partners in 1806.

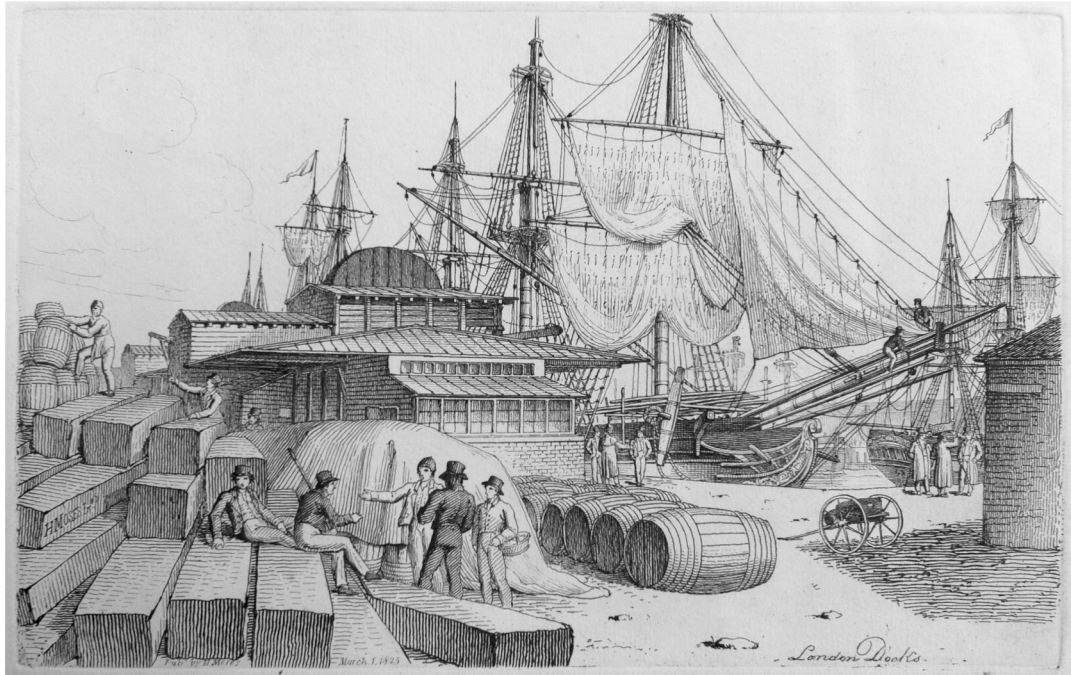


Figure 9: “London Docks” from Henry Moses, *Sketches of Shipping Drawn and Etched by Henry Moses*, (Portland Place, London, 1824), Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed Book and Periodical Collection. The casks, bundles and other shipping containers in this print are examples of the types and sizes of shipping containers in the period.



Figure 10: W. Birch & Son, “Arch Street Ferry, Philadelphia,” 1875-1940, Photolithograph, Courtesy, Winterthur Museum, Gift of John W. Batdorf, 1980.125A. This is a reprint of the original image issued in 1800-1801.

The partnership would be beneficial to both men, as John wrote to Lydia:

“I have agreed with Mr. Tillinghast to commence our business together on the 1st of November when I am to turn in twenty thousand dollars he is to take the whole charge of the business & have half the proffits & to be engaged principally in the commission line under the firm of John Innes Clark & Co. When this plan gets once into well operation, I shall then have some leisure time as he is also to take the charge of all my private business, it will be a very great accommodation to me & I think a very fortunate connection for Mr. Tillinghast as it will put sufficient capital into his hands to embark in the commission line, and also bring him into all my commission business which added to the character of an old Commercial house, will be such an Introduction as will place him in an easy Situation & bring his commercial talents into operation.”⁷⁶

Clark was sixty and able to help the younger man establish himself in business under the aegis of a respected trading company, but he was ready to retire. He again wrote his wife the following March “...at present I have not much to do, as Mr. Tillinghast has the principal trouble & is continually employed in examining & setting up all the old accounts - so soon as the weather permits I shall devote much of my attention to the gardens & farms.”⁷⁷ The new partnership enabled Clark to semi-retire by gaining the expertise of a lawyer to help resolve increasingly complex legal needs and in turn train Tillinghast in the business of maritime trade.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ John Innes Clark, Letter to Lydia Bowen Clark, 29 October 1806, John Innes Clark Papers, Box 6.

⁷⁷ John Innes Clark, Letter to Lydia Bowen Clark, 13 March 1807, John Innes Clark Papers, Box 6.

⁷⁸ Brian P. Luskey, “‘What Is My Prospects?’: The Contours of Mercantile Apprenticeship, Ambition, and Advancement in the Early American Economy,” *The Business History Review* 78, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 668–669.

The shop they advertised was “detached” and “fireproof” as assurances to their clientele following an 1801 fire that ripped through a block at Water and Powers streets and destroyed “the very large and commodious store occupied by John Innes Clark Esq.” Presumably, the existing warehouse block at 257-259 South Main Street (Figure 11) is the location of the store from 1794 through 1808.⁷⁹ After the 1801 fire, Clark remained in the maritime wholesale trade, but he increased his local investment in real estate, rental properties, and lending, building a more stable financial portfolio that could withstand changes in the local and international economy, typical of aging merchants who were removing themselves from commerce.

The goods remained the same in many respects, but the overall volume appears to have declined after 1806. This decline may be due to Clark’s lessened involvement in the business or, since invoices he did not sign were not included in the invoice book, a skewed perception of his involvement or lack thereof. It may also be that Tillinghast decided that this form of maritime trade was not for him. He seems to have quickly closed the trading house after Clark’s death, and by 1810, he was the Providence agent for the Phoenix Company of London, an insurance firm. Oliver Kane, one of Clark’s sons-in-law and executors, was also a merchant who moved

⁷⁹ “By Yesterday’s Mail,” *Columbian Courier* (New Bedford, Massachusetts, January 30, 1801); “John Innes Clark Having This Day...,” *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, November 15, 1806); “HABS RI-253: Clark & Nightingale Block, 247-259 South Main Street, Providence, Providence, RI”, May 1963, Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.ri0172>. The Clark & Nightingale Block of warehouses has been significantly altered over time. The building was repurposed in 1836-7 as four townhouses, and the structure is now a series of restaurants and shops.



A.



B.

Figure 11: The photographs show the street (A) and river (B) sides of the extant Clark & Nightingale Warehouse Block. The building has been significantly altered and was converted to townhouses in the mid-nineteenth century. Photographs by J. Ritchie Garrison

between New York and Providence and may have bought out Tillinghast after Clark's death. Tillinghast did at least purchase the distillery from the estate in 1809 for \$3,974.54.⁸⁰

Whatever investment Tillinghast might have had in maritime trade would have been greatly altered shortly after Clark's death. The 1807 Embargo and the beginnings of hostilities with Britain devastated the New England merchant economy as ships rotted in ports. Clark died in Bradford, Vermont at the home of Captain William Trotter, a sea captain with whom Clark had worked in Providence.⁸¹ The Embargo Act prohibited trade via water, but made no mention of overland trade. Clark's trip to Vermont was likely undertaken to explore the possibility of importing goods through Canada and overland to Rhode Island as a way to circumvent the Embargo and maintain his business. Even with the possibility of overland trade, legitimate or otherwise, the Embargo was economically devastating for New England merchants in terms of legitimate trans-Atlantic trade. Clark's trip to Vermont illustrates the expansion of trade overland through illicit means into new markets.⁸²

⁸⁰ "Proposals from the Phoenix Company of London," *The Rhode Island American, and General Advertiser* (Providence, Rhode Island, March 9, 1810); *City of Providence Record of Deeds*, vol. 33, 71–72.

⁸¹ John Innes Clark, "Will A3919", September 17, 1808, Providence City Archives.

⁸² J. Van Fenstermaker and John E. Filer, "The U.S. Embargo Act of 1807: Its Impact on New England Money, Banking, and Economic Activity," *Economic Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (January 1990): 163-184; Kevin H. O'Rourke, "War and Welfare: Britain, France, and the United States, 1807-14," *Oxford Economic Papers* 59, no. 1 (2007): i8-i30.

Eliza Clark Kane wrote to her mother in 1811, referencing an earlier letter, of the many merchants whose businesses had recently failed: “I wrote to you of Blodget and Powers failure since then Edward Dexter has gone—and Corlis to a very large amount injuring a great many...” Dexter was also one of the family’s tenants and had moved out of his rented house because he had not paid the rent in six months.⁸³ Clark’s death ended the trading business he had begun forty years earlier, and the family continued on with the fortune he had left, including \$50,000 and the house to his wife.⁸⁴

Contracts, debts, and reputation were essential parts of doing business in the Atlantic World, and Clark experienced several legal problems dealing with contracts and debts in the last decade of his life. He made choices with the intent of maintaining financial stability while accepting the risks inherent to the business of shipping. In doing so Clark adjusted to the economics and politics of the time. As did others, he made investments based on reputations, some of which ended badly. As a lender and investor, he was part of the system of transatlantic trade and commerce. By diversifying his investments and trade routes, Clark took advantage of new opportunities for American merchants in the post-Revolutionary period and restructured his personal wealth to support his family as he aged. His transfer of assets from increasingly risky shipping to more stable real estate and land investments added to his established financial portfolio and supported his family’s needs and wants.

⁸³ Ott, “John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence,” 127.

⁸⁴ John Innes Clark, “Will A3919.”

Clark's involvement in the Atlantic World of the late eighteenth century through family and business connections influenced not only his commercial activities, but also his home and family life. As a member of a large, geographically dispersed family, Clark had access to and knowledge of the current economic and consumer climate. His home is, therefore, an important standard for gauging the consumer markets and material culture of the larger Atlantic economy.

Chapter 5

THE MANSION HOUSE

Many scholars of decorative arts have written about Newport, Rhode Island-made furniture and its popularity in the period, including the pieces purchased by the Brown family. By contrast, Clark had only a few pieces that were probably similar to what the Browns had purchased from John Townsend. While John Brown's furnishing choices were likely influenced by his son's travels and by what others around him purchased, Clark's inventory suggests that he acquired items for style, comfort, convenience, emotion, and business purposes.⁸⁵ The complexity of Clark's domestic material culture complicates notions of domestic consumption as mostly a strategy for marking rank or for presuming that the Brown's led other tastemakers in Rhode Island.

Connecting people and their goods with later advertisements for the items Clark was storing in his warehouses and home upon his death demonstrates that he knew in general what he could and could not sell in different places and what had to be stored in his home rather than his warehouse. The furnishings within the Clark home, while similar in some ways to those owned by Joseph Nightingale and John

⁸⁵ Wendy A. Cooper, "The Furniture and Furnishings of John Brown, Merchant of Providence, 1736-1803" (University of Delaware, 1971); Heckscher, *John Townsend: Newport Cabinetmaker*; Providence County Probate Court Records, "Inventory of John Innes Clark," 10-19.

Brown, complicate scholars' interpretation of consumer habits. Clark's home was filled with both fashionable and older furnishings including Windsor chairs, large amounts of textiles and merchandise. He had several pieces of carved, "swell'd front," and other mahogany furniture that were presumably similar to the furniture owned by John Brown. However, Clark also incorporated items brought back to Providence by the ships he sent to China and elsewhere, including lacquered trays and Chinese paintings.⁸⁶

Clark was sufficiently successful to physically remove his family and their private quarters from the business. The house, a ten-minute walk from the warehouses on South Main Street was his primary residence. Later in life, Clark purchased a farm at Kettle Point, and he owned another farm, the Pinkey Farm, but he does not appear to have used either as a country seat. Judging from his letter to his wife, Kettle Point, "a farm containing about 55 acres for which I give four thousand dollars." was to be the place for the Clarks' retirement. He added that "This you know has always been a favourite spot of mine" The items held at the farms upon Clark's death; however were mostly agricultural in nature, including tools and livestock, especially at Kettle Point. The Pinkey Farm had a house on the land, but the house was likely small and sparsely furnished.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Providence County Probate Court Records, "Inventory of John Innes Clark."

⁸⁷ John Innes Clark, Letter to Lydia Bowen Clark, 17 October 1806, John Innes Clark Papers, Box 6; Providence County Probate Court Records, "Inventory of John Innes Clark," 19–20. While John Brown's estate does not have a recorded probate inventory, he did list his possessions before his death (although Brown may have omitted some of the less valuable items similar to what is seen in the detailed inventory taken after Clark's death).

In contrast to his country properties, the house in town was large and commanded attention. Clark purchased the lot on Benefit Street for a “generous price” of \$650 Spanish dollars on April 25, 1787, and the deed was recorded on July 5, 1787.⁸⁸ Sometime after July 5, 1787, Clark’s contractors began building a house that would later be described as his “Mansion House.” It would be the second of three impressive Georgian style houses built on Benefit Street between 1788 and 1791. John Brown’s brick house that went up in 1788 (Figure 12) while larger than Clark’s house, provides a sense of the interiors that might have been found at the corner of Benefit and John Streets.

Joseph Nightingale’s 1791 frame house (Figure 13) more closely resembled Clark’s home, but later changes by John Nicholas Brown greatly altered the interiors. The 1791 block of the Nightingale house was advertised in 1814 by Elizabeth Nightingale to be fifty-two feet “front and back” and three stories. Elaborately carved moldings, door surrounds with pitched pediments, and mantelpieces were fixtures in the main rooms. Additionally, the purported builder of the Nightingale house was Caleb Ormsbee, the architect of the First Congregational Church in Providence and the inheritor of Brown’s copy of James Gibb’s *A Book of Architecture, containing designs of buildings and ornaments*. The book, published in

⁸⁸ *City of Providence Record of Deeds*, vol. 21 part 2, 506. On the first Wednesday of May in 1787, William Ashton petitioned the Rhode Island Assembly for permission to grant the deed for a lot on Benefit Street to his sons twenty-one year old William Ashton, Jr. and nineteen year old Stephen along with John and Jesse. John Innes Clark had offered a “generous Price” and wished to build on the lot. The four men then sold the lot to Clark.

1728, is one of the most notable books of Georgian architecture.⁸⁹ The existing brick wall at street level was a later addition as the grade level of the street changed, but the façades are for the most part unchanged. Although the Georgian style was surpassed in the early nineteenth century by the neoclassical, the three families built houses that were currently fashionable between 1788 and 1791. The interiors differentiated the families.

While the builder of the Clark house is unknown, he did leave a detailed bill for the construction, which notes that the house had three floors and that he laid “364 do [feet] Belt round do [the house].”⁹⁰ Additionally, the 1798 Federal Direct Tax records measure the house as forty-five by forty-nine feet and three stories. The house was therefore 6,215 square feet.⁹¹ This would make the Clark house the smallest of the three with the Brown house being 8,100 square feet, and the

⁸⁹ “HABS RI-164: Colonel Joseph Nightingale House, 357 Benefit Street, Providence, Providence, RI”, August 1961, 2, Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.ri0229>; “HABS RI-75: John Brown House, 52 Power Street, Providence, Providence, RI”, December 1941, Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.ri0153>.

⁹⁰ Amount of Work Done on Mr. John I. Clark’s House, John Innes Clark Papers, Box 1 Folder 1.

⁹¹ Direct Tax Records, 1798 and 1815, List A, 117, 120, 132, MSS 232, Sub Group 4, Rhode Island Historical Society. Additionally, the Clark house, land, and outbuilding was assessed a value of \$6,000. Nightingale’s house, land, and three outbuildings were \$8,000. Brown’s brick house, land, and two outbuildings were \$10,000

Nightingale house 8,112 square feet.⁹² A surviving letter describes the Clark house while under construction:

“We went to see a large house that Mr. Clark is building, and next to Mr. J. Brown’s [,] is the most elegant in this state. It is built three stories high and has five large rooms on a floor with an elegant hall all through it.”⁹³

By the time the Clarks had finished the interiors, they represented the most fashionable style of the time in Providence.

The years between 1788 and 1791 were generally successful for Providence, and Clark & Nightingale’s business. Both partners could afford to build in a grand style. Clark may have chosen to build a smaller house for a variety of reasons, including personal preference and convenience. Records survive for all three households in the 1790 Federal census. The Nightingale household was the largest with nineteen people: three free white males under sixteen and two over sixteen, five free white females, four other free persons, and five slaves. The Clarks were next with thirteen: one free white male under sixteen and three over sixteen, four free white females, and five other free persons. One male under sixteen and one over would have been Clark’s sons, and the other two under sixteen may have been kin or apprentices.

⁹² “HABS RI-164 Colonel Joseph Nightingale House”, August 1961, Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/RI0229/>; “HABS RI-75: John Brown House, 52 Power Street, Providence, Providence, RI.”

⁹³ Cooper, “The Furniture and Furnishings of John Brown, Merchant of Providence, 1736-1803,” 142.



Figure 12: The John Brown House, 1787. Photograph by J. Ritchie Garrison



Figure 13: The Colonel Joseph Nightingale House, 1791, now the John Nicholas Brown Center. Photograph by J. Ritchie Garrison

The Browns' had the smallest household, with two free white males over sixteen, four free white females, and two other free persons. The Brown family was a decade ahead of the Clarks and the Nightingales. John Brown had married in 1761. He was slightly older with a smaller household in 1790.⁹⁴ Beyond the bill and the deeds, nothing relating to the construction of Clark's house survives, but letters discussing interior decoration and Clark's detailed probate inventory list the types of objects found in the house. From these sources, a picture of how the family lived and entertained emerges, as does a record of how Clark's business and family connections influenced the choices made in furnishing the mansion.

Although Clark's home was the smallest of the three, it was furnished with the latest fashions. Exact colors, patterns, dates and other information are not clear as many of the letters relating to the house are not consistently dated. The same family network that supported Clark's business helped furnish the house. Letters back and forth between Lydia Clark and her daughters, with Murray cousins, and Lydia's siblings, revealed a family network that brought fashionable furnishings to the house through a series of orders, sample swatches, and other requests. Lydia and her daughters were the parties responsible for the house's interiors. John Innes Clark provided the funds, access to inventory, and some of the contacts needed to procure the furnishings. The house was furnished over time; throughout the 1790s, letters and goods crossed the Atlantic. Through kin, Lydia ordered and procured wallpapers, looking glasses, carpets, and other furnishings. Her brother-in-law, John Ward, wrote

⁹⁴ "First Census of the United States, 1790: Rhode Island," 186, 190.

from London in 1795 to say that he had purchased the desired decanters, looking glasses, and tablecloths. From Paris, he “ordered the border for a room and as I thot [thought] handsome paper, to give you a choice.”

Four years later, they were still working on the interiors, and Lydia’s brother Ephraim Bowen, Junior, wrote from London that he had ordered more looking glasses, a carpet “made the full size of the room and for you to have the place for the hearth cut out at the proper place,” four hearth rugs, wallpaper, and lining paper to be hung under the final paper. Further, he wrote of procuring “fashionable chintz for the drawing room and bed chamber” because the requested orange damask would take three months to finish.⁹⁵ The Clarks received fifty-five yards of damask in 1800, at which point the chintz was probably removed or relocated.⁹⁶ The family preferred wall-to-wall Brussels carpets in many of the rooms, including the bedchambers, and that preference is reflected in the number and size of carpets in the house in 1808. Eliza wrote to Harriett just after the former’s marriage “...dont forget to send the parlor carpet by the first packet for since I find how very much handsome is a room looks entirely covered I am anxious you should get a new one.” In the same letter, Eliza referenced carpets in the bedchambers, including those occupied by her sister.⁹⁷ The imported carpets, papers, and drapery textiles illustrates a preference for European, most often English, design and manufacture. However, with the exception

⁹⁵ Ott, “John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence,” 124, 129.

⁹⁶ Reuben Willoby, Letter to John Innes Clark, 2 April 1800, John Innes Clark Collection Box 6.

⁹⁷ Ott, “John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence,” 129.

of the looking glasses and possibly some chairs, the majority of the furniture appears to have come from New England. The family was well informed about fashion and had formulated their own opinions about their household textiles.

There were some changes ordered. The most common complaint was of drafts and a parlor chimney so smoky that eyes watered. In August 1802, John was “Rumfordising the mode of Cookery for the Summer,” and he hoped that the work would soon be finished since “the masons make a dirty house.”⁹⁸ Upon the completion of this work, the family had the most up to date kitchen possible. Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford had begun experimenting with methods of cooking and kitchen design in 1794, and his enclosed range and roaster were designed to cook efficiently with a minimum loss of heat and a maximum amount of temperature and airflow control.⁹⁹ In installing the Rumford system in their home, the Clarks demonstrated their knowledge of current technology and their desire to have the best and the most current equipment. However, the changes to the kitchen fireplaces did not extend to changes in other fireplaces and chimneys and the house continued to be smoky and drafty.

At least one item similar to one the girls encountered while at school in Salem in 1798 made its way into the Clark household: a tambour desk Harriet described as “the handsomest thing of the kind I ever saw and the most beautifully

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Watters, Letter to Lydia Bowen Clark, 21 February 1803, John Innes Clark Papers, Box 6; Ott, “John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence,” 128.

⁹⁹ Sanborn C. Brown, *Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979), 150–151, 157–158.

varnished.” Harriet clearly had done her research before writing to her mother about the desk; she knew that a new desk for herself would be “almost twelve pounds” and “if [she had] it [her] old desk might be sold as that would be of no use and [she thought] ‘twould sell for six or eight pounds.” In the classic strategy of a child wishing for something, Harriet began the letter with “Dr. Prince [their teacher] has a new kind of desk made and I wish Papa would permit me to have one like it.” Having enlisted her mother’s help, it would appear that “Papa” bought the desk. It may have looked something like the one in Figure 14.¹⁰⁰

The probate inventory does not identify rooms within the house, but the dining room is easily determined through the constellation of items on pages 15 and 16 of the inventory. Furnished for elegant meals, the dining room included a mahogany sideboard (\$40), a set of mahogany dining tables (\$24), and one dozen hair bottom mahogany chairs (\$30). The seven prints (\$35), a large Brussels carpet (\$45), oval mahogany Pembroke table (\$5), two hair cloth covered sophettes (\$30), and a gilt framed looking glass (\$36) listed with the tableware were probably in the room as well. The total value of the furniture, tableware, and other accoutrements attributed to the dining room is \$674.75, about twice the cost of the carpentry to build a large house in many New England towns. While the serving dishes were plated, the Clarks did have 151 ounces of silverware with a total value of \$196.30. Furniture and silver were the high value items in the dining room. While the total value of the seating

¹⁰⁰ Ott, “John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence,” 126, 131; Providence County Probate Court Records, “Inventory of John Innes Clark,” 15.



Figure 14: Tambour Desk, John Seymour, Boston, Massachusetts, 1793-1796, Courtesy, Winterthur Museum, 1957.802

furniture in the dining room was significant (\$60), it was less than that of the items that can be placed in the best parlor: twelve “carved back mahogany damask’d bottom Chairs” (\$72), one “Sopha with silk covering” (\$30), and two “sophetts do [silk upholstery]” (\$30). The attribution of the haircloth upholstered chairs and sophettes to the dining room was based on their placement among the tableware and serving pieces. There are other mahogany chairs listed in the inventory. They were enumerated at various points in the inventory and are given values ranging from \$1.50

to \$6 each. The chairs were listed in odd lots with only one other set of “12 mahogany old fram’d chairs” with a value of \$1.50 per chair, probably the old dining room or parlor set. The difference in value can most likely be attributed to the relative cost of haircloth versus silk damask. Additionally, haircloth is more durable and easily cleaned, a useful feature for dining room furniture.

The gilt bamboo chairs were likely an additional set for entertaining and made to imitate Chinese bamboo furniture, as they were included in items linked to the parlor and dining room. Further, the similarly upholstered sophettes suggests a room furnished fashionably and en suite.¹⁰¹ The four sophettes were likely small settees, perhaps placed in window recesses similar to the surviving features in the Nightingale house’s ground floor northwest parlor. Although the house contained older furniture that was still in use, the family favored bright, new fashions in line with neoclassical and exotic styles. The en suite furnishings also supported evening entertaining on a large scale.

Since the Nightingale and Clark houses, as described, were sufficiently similar, the parlor in the Clark house likely was situated in the northwest room with the dining room across the central passage on the southwest corner of the structure. In the case of the Nightingale house, each room has two windows on the western exterior

¹⁰¹ Providence County Probate Court Records, “Inventory of John Innes Clark,” 13–17.



A.



B.

Figure 15: A. Settee, John or Thomas Seymour, Boston, Massachusetts, 1805-1810, Courtesy, Winterthur Museum, 1957.682. B. Settee, Langley Boardman, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1805-1813, Courtesy, Winterthur Museum, 1952.133.1 Something of this size and form or that of a diminutive upholstered sofa is likely what was termed “sophette” in the inventory.

walls, the front of the house. As both houses have been described with varying terms to connote similarity, the Clark house probably had a similar arrangement of rooms.¹⁰² Therefore, the four sophettes in the Clark house would have been in the parlor and dining room window wells along the front of the house.

Since none of the furniture is presently known, it is difficult to determine what it may have looked like. However, the house was being furnished in the 1790s, and the elder daughter Eliza was married in 1803. In writing to her sister when furnishing her new home, Eliza mentioned her “Salem furniture,” possibly of the neoclassical style seen in Figure 15. She also referenced procuring new carpets for her own home of the same type used in the family home.¹⁰³ Therefore, since the Clark house was furnished just before Eliza’s marriage, the same types of carpets were used in both the Clark and Kane homes, and the family had acquired Salem type furniture (perhaps including the tambour desk), then it is likely that the parlor furniture represented fashionable neoclassical styles, but made in different New England shops. Clearly, New England’s furniture makers had developed distinct competitive niches

¹⁰² “HABS RI-164 Colonel Joseph Nightingale House,” 5; Dean T. Lahikainen, *Samuel McIntire: Carving an American Style* (Salem, MA: Peabody Essex Museum, 2007), 252–258. A surviving in situ example of similar furniture is in the Pierce-Nichols house in Salem, Massachusetts. The east parlor includes two upholstered, diminutive sofas in the recesses next to the fireplace with window benches in the window recesses. While the Nightingale house does not have fireplace recesses, and the Clark house likely did not, the arrangement of furniture and the forms are probably comparable. However, the carved back settees illustrated here are also possibilities as “sophettes” as they have less upholstery and would be less susceptible to light damage and less likely to block the windows.

¹⁰³ Ott, “John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence,” 129–130.

for regional rather than local consumers in response to the growing consumer trend of acquiring furnishings from domestic and foreign sources.

In comparing John Brown, John Innes Clark, Joseph Nightingale, and Welcome Arnold, Wendy Cooper concluded that Clark was Brown's nearest peer in Providence in terms of fashion and household furnishings. Cooper's analysis of the types of items owned by the four men yields comparative information about some of the most valuable items in the four houses. Many of the pieces from the Brown house survive in family homes or institutions. Brown bought new pieces during the last decade of his life, and mixed them with older pieces often associated with Rhode Island furniture, namely pieces by the Goddards and Townsend in the block and shell style. Brown's choice of desk and bookcase (Figure 16) reflects his preference for local designs of the best quality.¹⁰⁴

The Clark household furnishings also included some pieces marked "old," such as an "old mahogany desk & bookcase \$15," but the majority of the larger pieces in the inventory (i.e. those given a value of \$10 or more) suggest that the Clarks furnished their new home according to the emerging fashions of the time. The surviving Brown family pieces represent a mixture of furniture styles, but he apparently never completely redecorated his home. With his children already leading independent lives, he and his wife appear to have concentrated their decorating on the rooms for polite sociability. Brown also appears to have purchased furnishings for his

¹⁰⁴ Cooper, "The Furniture and Furnishings of John Brown, Merchant of Providence, 1736-1803," 141-153.

new home over a short period of time while the Clark family spent the better part of a decade furnishing and decorating.

By contrast, the women of the Clark family seemingly dominated decisions about the design and decoration of their home, at a time when their daughters were in their adolescence.¹⁰⁵ Lydia Clark was part of a large, established Providence family; her husband was not, and the house on the hill would have made a statement about the family's social position, connections, and future aspirations. In furnishing with the latest styles in America and in Europe, the family was creating a new and different home at a point when the Clark daughters were approaching marriageable age.

The Clarks decorating and design decisions were informed by what their neighbors, the Browns were doing, but their furnishing decisions were more modern and extra local. Informal shopping networks and proxies in the form of family and friends connected Lydia Clark with the fashion centers of the Atlantic World. Letters and objects exchanged with her sisters and her husband's cousins in Charleston and Boston linked the women to the growing consumer culture of the late eighteenth century. These women shopped for each other and freely communicated information on style, price, and quality. Although they were wealthy, they, like most of their contemporaries, took pride in hunting for the most fashionable goods of good quality for a good price. Further, the women of the family communicated in a similar manner to their male relatives. They relied on detailed written descriptions and knowledge

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 141. Evidence of Sarah Smith Brown's involvement in household decisions is not well documented.



Figure 16: Desk and Bookcase, Newport or Providence, Rhode Island, 1760-1790, mahogany, cherry, chestnut, pine, Courtesy: Yale University Art Gallery, Mabel Brady Garvan Collection, 1940.320

of an international consumer language to indicate what they desired.

The women's correspondence and exchange of information shaped what their husbands (in this case Clark) selected for import.¹⁰⁶ John Brown was aware of the current styles in Philadelphia, and his son-in-law, John Francis, traveled to Europe on business, but neither he nor Clark seems to have taken much of a role as a tastemaker.¹⁰⁷ By contrast, the Clarks' had connections in Boston, New York, and London, and their furnishings reflected the styles current in those cities. The daughters' connections at school in Medford and Salem, Massachusetts influenced the decorating habits of their parents. Thus, the timing of individual life courses also shaped consumer decisions.

Additionally, the Clarks' made conscious decisions about their daughters' futures and the relationships they developed at school. Refined tastes and connections were important for marriage into the best families. Eliza and Harriet had been educated away from home and in subjects that prepared them to be the future wives of merchants and educated men. Included in the household contents in 1808 were: A telescope (\$75), Franklin stove (\$15), and magic lantern with apparatus (\$3). In having these items, it is clear that the Clarks had sufficient disposable income to pay

¹⁰⁶ Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 132–135, 145, 172.

¹⁰⁷ Cooper, "The Furniture and Furnishings of John Brown, Merchant of Providence, 1736-1803," 158–163.

for quality goods.¹⁰⁸ John Clark and his daughters in particular would have used the telescope.

Educated at Bristol and Providence, Rhode Island, William Woodbridge's school in Medford, Massachusetts, and subsequently at Mehetabel Higginson's academy in Salem, Massachusetts, the girls wrote of studying astronomy, electricity, and other sciences; the telescope may have been a gift from a doting father. While the girls spent more time away at school than many of their peers due to Lydia's prolonged health problems, their education was of the best available at the time. Eliza wrote of studying ciphering because she knew it was "extremely necessary to be acquainted with accounts." The Clarks provided their daughters with educations in keeping with evolving ideas of female education and their role in the home. The woman as virtuous mother, knowledgeable wife and household manager had emerged during and after the Revolution, and the young women of the time needed an education to enable them to fulfill those roles. John and Lydia Clark had the means to provide such an education, but they also made the choice not to send their daughters to the Moravian boarding schools in Pennsylvania, schools that were widely considered to be the best in the country. However, Eliza and Harriet received training in subjects and skills that would enable them to fulfill their future roles as wives and mothers in the early nineteenth century. A telling example of their family's expectations was the line from John to Lydia in 1792 regarding a visit to the Hoopers in North Carolina. The family was expecting "to hear of their being something extraordinary" based on

¹⁰⁸ Providence County Probate Court Records, "Inventory of John Innes Clark," 15, 18.

the girls' educational experiences.¹⁰⁹ The Clarks made the conscious choice to create a home that displayed the current fashion *and* their intellectual pursuits. Refined manners and education equipped their daughters to become decision makers and domestic partners.

In addition to the refined tastes important for a wealthy, merchant family, the Clark home demonstrated the influence of the items brought in on Clark's ships. Merchants' homes were more than social stages. Clark also stored valuable inventory in the house amongst the family's possessions.¹¹⁰ Although he had \$35,182.52 in inventory and ship's supplies in and around his warehouse at his death, he had an additional \$2,219.01 of inventory in his home. The majority of these items were high value alcohols in small quantities and older, mismatched goods that probably had not sold. The warehouse inventory included the cargo of the (in transit) *Egeria* and large quantities of alcohol, sundries, and clothing. The total value of alcohol stored in the house was \$1,518.18 with an additional \$1,789.25 at the warehouse or aboard ship. Although the two values are close, the warehouse and ship inventory is in the form of

¹⁰⁹ Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1980), 256, 281–283. Norton includes as long description of Eliza and Harriet's school years pulled from letters in the Clark and related collections at the Rhode Island Historical Society. This description is used as a contrast to the education of Anne Clark Hooper and her relatives in 1750s and 1760s Boston.

¹¹⁰ Amy Hudson Henderson, "Furnishing the Republican Court: Building and Decorating Philadelphia Homes, 1790-1800" (University of Delaware, 2008), 216–277; Bernard L. Herman, *Town House: Architecture, and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 36–39.

pipes of wine while the inventory at the house is in demijohns and bottles, small volumes that were easy to steal. Five pipes and 86 demijohns holding a total of 748 gallons of Madeira were part of the *Egeria*'s cargo, which would not arrive in New York until November 15, 1808. Formerly owned by Clark, the ship had been sold to John B. Murray, Clark's cousin and former apprentice. Deducting the wine on the *Egeria* reveals that the total value of alcohol at the warehouse was \$293.25. Thus the true distribution of valuable, easily stolen wares shows that Clark kept high value items in his home. Further, the small amount held in the warehouse and store would have been sufficient for rapid, local sales, replenished as needed from the stores at the house.¹¹¹

Thus, Clark was part of the larger tradition of merchants storing such merchandise in protected places. Wine merchants frequently had cellars built under their homes for the sole purpose of storing inventory and then portioning it out into smaller quantities. Having such a cellar was an essential part of a wine merchant's business in the 1780s and beyond. Although Clark was not a wine merchant, he did utilize such architectural conveniences to his advantage. Additionally, the family participated in the established practice of proxy shopping and ordering that furnished many homes in the period.¹¹² Similarly, Clark's habit of storing valuable inventory

¹¹¹ Providence County Probate Court Records, "Inventory of John Innes Clark," 1–10; United States Customs House, "Registers in 1804", 1804, 77, MSS 28 Sg 1, Rhode Island Historical Society; "Evening Post Marine List"; "Port of New York," *Mercantile Advertiser* (New York, New York, November 15, 1808).

¹¹² Hancock, *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of the American Trade and Taste*, 228–232; Henderson, "Furnishing the Republican Court: Building and Decorating Philadelphia Homes, 1790–1800."

and the presence of old and odd lots suggests that the house and its outbuildings functioned as a secondary storage facility apart from the large warehouse complex on the waterfront. His family, therefore, lived with some of the luxury items that generated the income from which they benefited.

Included in those luxuries were portraits of the family members by Edward Greene Malbone and John Trumbull. Harriet and Eliza's miniatures were done in 1798 and Lydia's was done in 1802; all three were done in New York. Lydia's miniature cost \$50, and the girls' were probably of about the same cost.¹¹³ John Trumbull painted Clark's portrait in 1793 (Figure 17), and it has remained in the family, descending through Eliza's family line. The portrait was likely one of the several in the house in 1808. Others would have included the likenesses of Eliza and Harriet referenced in Harriet's 1798 letter to her mother about the miniatures. In addition to the Clark women's miniatures, Malbone also painted a miniature of John Brown in 1794. It (Figure 18) depicts an older man with an outdated hairstyle and clothes that are a hybrid of old and current fashions. In contrast, Clark is shown at the height of fashion in well fitting clothes and elegantly posed. Brown's attire and appearance in contrast to Clark's reinforces the impression of the differences in the two men's life stages and connections.

By living with commercial inventory and staying connected via interstate and international letter writing, the Clark family was never entirely separated from the

¹¹³ Ott, "John Innes Clark and His Family - Beautiful People in Providence," 126; Ruel Pardee Tolman, *The Life and Works of Edward Greene Malbone, 1777-1807* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1958), 155.

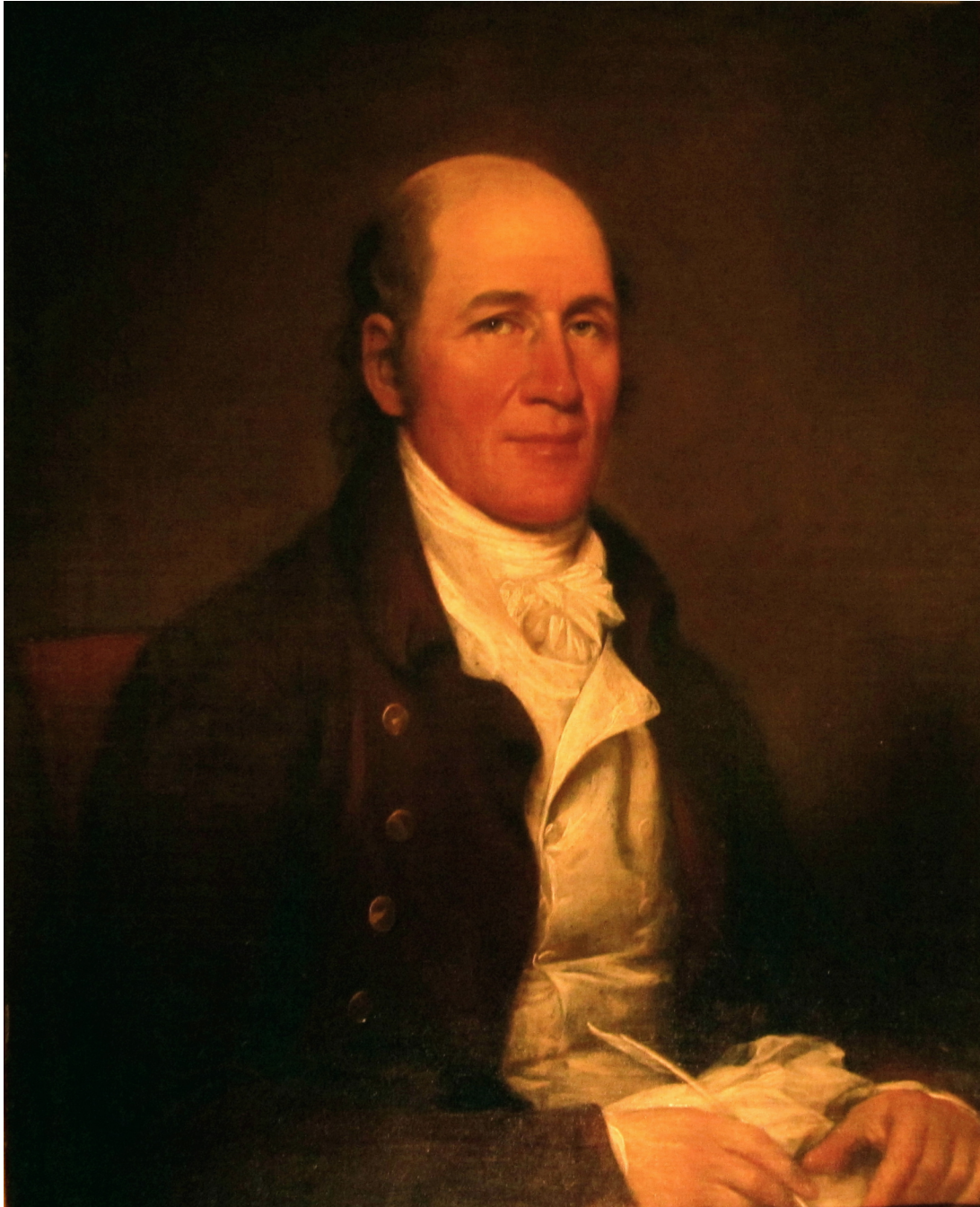
world of business. The Clark women may not have kept the books, but they contributed to the available information on fashion, design, and price. That exposure created a home that took advantage of Clark's business and family connections in its décor and modeled the intertwined relationship of design and commerce. The Chinese silks and Indian textiles brought to Providence in 1803 on the *Rolla* and *Palmyra* joined items imported to Providence in the 1790s from the same regions. While Clark typically ordered in wholesale quantities, some of the textiles, handkerchiefs, parasols, lacquer ware, and other goods entered the mansion house as personal possessions. John wrote to Lydia on April 29, 1807 to relate that the *Favourite* had returned from Canton via London and the Brazil coast:

“...he [ship's master Jonathan Russell] has brought with him above half of his Canton goods with him being unable to find a market for them in the Brazil Coast. Harriet has looked over the invoice & marked such things as she thinks she shall want...”¹¹⁴

The unsold cargo was auctioned, but the family had first choice of a cargo that was filled with fine goods from Asia. Included in the auction listing were tea, nankeens, silks, satins, taffetas, muslins, sarcenets, lutestrings, lacquered ware, ceramics, and clothing accessories.¹¹⁵ The exact reasons for the auction can only be hypothesized about, but Captain Russell's difficulty selling his cargo in Brazil resulted in dumping inventory in Providence; hence, the quick sale of the goods.

¹¹⁴ John Innes Clark, Letter to Lydia Bowen Clark, 29 April 1807, John Innes Clark Papers, Box 6.

¹¹⁵ “Sales at Auction,” *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island, May 23, 1807). The invoice of what the ship brought into Providence does not survive, but the goods are detailed in the advertisement for the auction of the cargo and ship.



**Figure 17: *Portrait of John Innes Clark, Merchant*, John Trumbull, circa 1793.
Courtesy: Private Collection.**



Figure 18: *John Brown*, Edward Greene Malbone, 1794, Courtesy: Collection of New York Historical Society, object number 1948.469

An invoice dated March 4, 1807 from Providence sending goods matching those listed on the auction list to New York on the *Favourite* suggests that Clark and his partners for the voyage—Russell and John B. and Robert Murray—had originally planned on trying to find a market in New York.¹¹⁶ That not being the case, the consigners attempted to earn some return at auction instead of realizing nothing for the cost of storage.

The note that Harriet Clark had examined the invoice to choose items for herself reminds scholars that the Clark women shaped the business through their selections. The case of the *Favourite* illustrates that some merchants' houses were not just furnished with fashionable things, but they might also include detritus—things that would not sell but remained useful or acceptable. Fashion and status are often suggested as the controlling factor in choosing goods, but that influence may be overestimated. The wealthy were not immune to the effects of markets in pursuing luxury, and gluts could rapidly disseminate fashion through social and economic ranks. Although merchants attempted to gauge their customers' preferences, they did not always choose wisely when ordering. Commerce is speculative, and decision making was distributed among many people. Clark was in control of ordering at wholesale quantities. His customers purchased from among the goods he ordered, but they also had the option of shopping with Clark's competitors if stock ran low, the quality was bad, or designs were unsuitable. In turn, communicating their personal

¹¹⁶ Clark, "Invoice Book."

preference for goods.¹¹⁷ Clark's family, like the Browns and Nightingales, were not only exposed to Asian and European goods without the intervening opinions and selections of another merchant, but they also shared opinions on what they fancied or needed.

Nonetheless, all consumers were at the mercy of their agents, including the relatives and friends who made furnishing decisions on their behalf. Siblings and cousins had only limited knowledge of what the Clarks, especially Lydia (who seems to have been the most involved with assembling the interiors) wanted. Her brothers bought what they thought would be appropriate based on guidelines provided by their sister. The Clark house was therefore a statement of the family's position within Providence and in the maritime trading world of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but it was also the collective work of many hands.

Although the total extent of Lydia, Eliza, and Harriet's involvement in creating the interiors of the house is unknowable, the surviving documents indicate that it was significant. As the furnishing history of the Clarks' home demonstrates, the current understanding of women's involvement in marketplace and style decisions has probably been underestimated. Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor does address the subject of women as consumers in terms of clothing, but the idea of women as the primary decision makers for furnishing homes at the end of the eighteenth century is

¹¹⁷ George L. Miller and Amy C. Earls, "War and Pots: The Impact of Economics and Politics on Ceramic Consumption Patterns," ed. Robert Hunter, *Ceramics in America*, 2008 (2008): 67-108.

comparatively new.¹¹⁸ Additionally, the extensive family networks involved in the acquisition of goods for commercial sale and private use is in need of closer examination. Lydia Clark and her daughters had valuable opinions. John Innes Clark handed at least one invoice over to his twenty-four year old daughter, and it is reasonable to assume that he was in the habit of doing so with his wife and elder daughter. If Clark allowed his wife and daughters to choose items from invoices and regularly wrote to Lydia about business matters, then he likely asked for their opinions about what to order. Moreover, they wore clothing and bought things that customers could find at the family store, modeling possibilities and promoting the business.

The Clarks, rather than the Browns, were the fashionable trendsetters of Providence in the late 1790s and early 1800s. Their importance to the history of decorative arts in Providence has faded because the family moved away. The Browns stayed put, and their history and influence on design and consumption has lasted. Further, the influence of the Clark women on Providence's history has been overshadowed by the passage of time, the practice of taking a husband's surname, and the difficulty of tracking surviving family objects. The Clarks' house and its furnishings are an essential part of how their lives intersected with the history of Providence. The home materialized the family's influence, social reach, and knowledge of the Atlantic World.

¹¹⁸ Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America*.

Chapter 6:

CONCLUSION

This study of the Clarks shows how choice and contingency shaped the material life of a merchant family between 1768 and 1808. Although a number of historians have studied New England's maritime trade and material culture, John Innes Clark's life and business reveals a complex system of exchange and communication of goods, style, and design outside of the better known cities of Boston, New York, or Philadelphia. Providence, Rhode Island, has attracted comparatively little scholarly attention, and the research that is published tends to focus on the development of textile mills and industrialization under the auspices of Samuel Slater and John Brown.

The strategic placement of Providence provided opportunities for Clark in the world of Atlantic trade. As did other city's merchants, he took advantage of inland waterways and a protected harbor during the Revolution. After the war, Providence grew as its geographic location provided easier access to inland regions than the rival city of Newport that had suffered under British occupation during the conflict. Providence remained a small city, but through family networks, the Clarks maintained connections to the wider world of people and things.

Kinship and business networks were an essential part of market transactions and the acquisition of goods in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Clark's business activities provided the funds to build a large house on the

hill and furnish it to Atlantic World standards. Slightly younger than John Brown, John and Lydia Clark's extended family boasted ties with Boston, London, New York, Philadelphia and Charleston. Consequently, Clark's business and home evolved in a somewhat different manner than those of the Browns and many other Providence families, demonstrating the variety rather than the congruity of social experiences in provincial cities. Connections with these Atlantic World perspectives influenced their daughters' educations and their daughters' travels in turn shaped their parents' knowledge of fashion and taste.

Women were responsible for many consumer decisions. Lydia, Eliza, and Harriet maintained their own networks of information and decision-making that shaped John Clark's decisions. The Clark women consulted with other women and respected their opinions. They acquired and exchanged goods from around the globe to furnish their homes and build their wardrobes. As proxies, they made choices for others based on personal knowledge and correspondence, limited by what is available or desired. Thus, far-flung personal relations, accident, opportunity, ideology, and emulation shaped local sociability and taste.

Although Clark maintained the accounts and had more influence over what was available than other family members, his patriarchal control was limited. Clark's choices were defined by his experiences and the social, political, and economic events of the last decades of the eighteenth century. Ships were confiscated or lost at sea, cargoes sometimes failed to sell in saturated markets, and partnerships sometimes ended in legal trouble. Clark adapted to current market conditions and the demands of his patrons and associates. Design and aesthetics influenced price, but not

always in easily perceived and understood ways. The Clark women's systems of information and design exchange were different from men's, but their networks provided essential information. Without that information, one could be left with unsold merchandize.

While family needs often trumped individual control over authority and time, certain business practices and preferences became stabilized habits that mitigated risk through formal systems of liability and exchange. In formalizing trade relationships and fiduciary management through law, banks, and insurance, people became less dependent on kin networks. Clark actively worked to create and maintain these relationships and mitigate risks of the maritime trade through his involvement with insurance companies, the Providence Bank, and formal trade agreements. However, he still experienced difficulties and disputes that ended in lawsuits when working with other merchants.

Trade grounds cultural politics, economics, and theoretical ideas and beliefs, because the world of goods materializes theories and abstractions. Merchants' homes were not separate gendered spheres set apart from the family business; they were tools to be used in trade. Homes secured high-value goods under family surveillance. They showcased emerging trends. They mediated the personal relationships that helped to determine new styles. The Clarks mansion house demonstrated how trade and exchange cannot be generalized into grand theories of consumption based on class or status. People like the Clarks acquired goods by choice and by chance. Their homes included the elite wallpapers and looking glasses under the same roof as the odd lots and remnants from unsold cargoes. John Innes Clark's

business, family and home show the fluid relationships of people and their things in the Atlantic World during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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Appendix

Permission for use of image of “John Innes Clark, Merchant,” John Trumbull, c. 1793.
Owner’s name redacted for purposes of anonymity.

Anne McBride

642 Montgomery Woods Drive
Hockessin, DE 19707-9654

T 302 598 8724

annecmb@gmail.com

January 23, 2012



Dear [REDACTED]:

Thank you for your letter regarding the portrait of John Innes Clark. I have been traveling on a school trip, and I apologize for the delayed response. It was wonderful to hear that the painting is still in the family.

As he is the subject of my thesis, would it be possible to obtain a color photograph of the portrait for inclusion in the final product? The theses are bound and held by the Winterthur and University of Delaware Libraries, and abstracts are accessible through the ProQuest database of thesis and dissertation abstracts. All images are given proper citation, for example “Image Courtesy: Private Collection” or in whichever manner you would prefer. If possible, I would greatly appreciate being able to include an image of the portrait and information about and images of other objects or papers that may have remained in the family. I do hope that my work will be a valuable contribution to the study of your ancestor and the economic and social world he inhabited.

Sincerely yours,

Anne McBride

On 1 Jan, 2012, at 6:18 AM [REDACTED] wrote:
Yes

On Thu, Mar 29, 2012 at 5:39 PM, Anne McBride <annecmb@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you again for the image and permission to use it in my thesis. In addition to being bound and held in the Winterthur Library, all theses are uploaded to the ProQuest database and published by request on microfilm by University Microfilms (UMI). With your permission, UMI can include the image of the portrait in its published version. If not, then the image is deleted. The decision is entirely up to you, but I do need to include a yes or no response when I submit my thesis to the Dean.

Thank you,

Anne McBride

On Mar 10, 2012, at 1:18 PM, [REDACTED] wrote:

Here's an amateur snapshot taken this a.m. with my little pocket Canon camera.
"Private collection" citation is fine.
Good luck on your thesis.
No other images or objects in my possession.

--

<John Innes Clark.JPG>

Permission for Object 1948.469, Miniature of John Brown by Edward Greene
Malbone

Dear Anne,

Yes, please accept this email as permission to use the image as you have outlined below.

If a credit line is possible, we prefer: "Collection of the New-York Historical Society, object number 1948.469."

Take care,
Eleanor

Eleanor Gillers, Supervisor

Department of Rights and Reproductions
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Phone: (212) 873-3400 ext. 282, 322
Fax: (212) 579-8794
170 Central Park West
New York, NY 10024

On Thu, Mar 29, 2012 at 5:27 PM, Anne McBride <amcbride@udel.edu>
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Thank you for the image. In terms of publication, the thesis is published through University Microfilms's dissertation program. May I have permission to include the image in what UMI uploads and microfilms?

Thank you,

Anne McBride

On Mar 21, 2012, at 1:58 PM, NYHS Rights & Repro wrote:

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Take care,
Eleanor

Eleanor Gillers, Supervisor

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Fax: [\(212\) 579-8794](tel:(212)579-8794)
170 Central Park West
New York, NY 10024

On Tue, Mar 20, 2012 at 7:10 PM, Anne McBride <amcbride@udel.edu>
wrote:

To Whom It May Concern:

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Thank you,

Anne McBride

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Title of object _____

Mahogany, cherry, chestnut, pine _____

Medium _____

1940.320 _____

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Anne McBride
Winterthur Program in American Material Culture
5105 Kennett Pike
Winterthur, Delaware 19735

April 5, 2012
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Sara Azam
Visual Resources Assistant
Yale University Art Gallery
yuagrights@yale.edu

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut 06520

1940.320

Maker Unknown

Desk and Bookcase

1760-1790

Mahogany, American black cherry, chestnut, eastern white pine,
and southern yellow pine

272.4 x 113.5 x 64.0 cm (107 1/4 x 44 11/16 x 25 3/16 in.)

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