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THE UPHOLSTERER IN PHILADELPHIA: 1750 - 1810.

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE (WINTERTHUR PROGRAM), M.A., 1980

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THE UPHOLSTERER IN PHILADELPHIA:

1760 - 1810

BY

Patricia Chapin O'Donnell

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 Early American Culture

May, 1980

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THE UPHOLSTERER IN PHILADELPHIA:

1760-1810

BY

Patricia Chapin O'Donnell

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University Coordinator for Graduate Studies

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to gratefully acknowledge the help of my teachers and friends in the Winterthur Program; their support and respect continue to encourage me to strive for excellence.

In particular, I would like to recognize the special support of my fellow students in the Class of '79. They were always there when I needed them, in both a spiritual and a physical sense. Their friendship went far beyond the bounds of professional courtesy. I will remain forever grateful.

Special thanks are also due to Stevie Wolf, who challenged and encouraged me, both in terms of this thesis and in terms of the Program as well.

And last, certainly not the least, I wish to acknowledge the love and patience of my husband, Chas. For two years he was a member of the Winterthur Widowers Club, but he never ceased to support my efforts.

Thank you all.
This thesis is dedicated to
my spiritual mentor
Andrea
a master upholsterer
Modern production and marketing of furniture and other objects of interior decoration in the non-elite arena is generally characterized by a number of factors. The first, and perhaps most significant, is "ready-made," namely, the manufacture of objects, largely independent of specific orders, or, in other words, on the basis of informed speculation. The products are marketed indirectly, outside of the immediate neighborhood of production, chiefly through the means of advertising. The word-of-mouth recommendation is only secondary as an incentive to purchase. Within the shop, or factory, tasks tend to be specialized; this tendency often applies to the manufactory itself, involved in producing a specific product. The artisans themselves live and work in different places. The work force is mobile; the percentage of workers who stay at one job through their entire productive life is relatively small.

One of the results of this study of the upholsterer is the discovery that these characteristics did not evolve suddenly in the 19th and 20th centuries as a response to the Industrial Revolution, as has often previously been thought.
Rather, it appears that a kind of "mercantile revolution" predated improvements in technology in Philadelphia. This "revolution" was characterized by changes in the production and marketing of products.

During the period from 1760 to 1810, Philadelphia was an urban center with a rapidly expanding market. There was a concentration of population within an accessible area. The City furnished possibilities for a growing middle class and the accumulation of a monetary surplus. As the result of a change in values and opportunities from the previous century, this surplus was increasingly expended on objects of household decoration. This consumption was made even more conspicuous with a local building boom and the growing reputation of Philadelphia as a style center.

The upholstery trade is a particularly appropriate focus for the study of the market within this context. The term "upholsterer" was applied to individuals who ranged from the journeyman who worked for a wage to the master merchant/upholsterer who directed a large upholstery workshop and dealt in textile furnishings and other related objects of interior decoration, imported and domestically produced. Most upholsterers fell somewhere between the two poles. The trade had seen tremendous growth in Europe as well as in the Colonies after the development of upholstered
seating furniture and beds in France in the 17th century. In the 18th century, the relative cost of fabrics declined greatly, and, as a result, so did the uniqueness of most upholstery products. In addition, the inherent fragility of textiles made them a particularly appropriate vehicle for a fashion statement.

The primary thesis of this paper is that what we understand as the "modern" structure of production, marketing, and distribution of commodities like upholstery existed before the introduction of technological innovation, the so-called "Industrial Revolution." This is not to say that the simple craftsman who worked alone or with one apprentice in a small, low volume shop, and produced items on the specifications of his clients, had ceased to exist; in urban Philadelphia during this period, as is true today as well, this was one choice that could be made by different individuals at some point in their career. The thesis of pre-industrial modernity concludes that a range of these choices existed. At any one point, the context of production, marketing, and distribution went far beyond the single individual. This thesis is, in fact, related to that which was first outlined by John R. Commons in his classic study, "American Shoemakers, 1648-1895: A Sketch of Industrial Revolution."\(^1\) The industrial stages of the shoe-making trade, namely "bespoke" work, "shop" work, "order"
work, and "market" work, demonstrate an adaptation to an evolving economic series roughly parallel to that of the upholstery business. This study of the upholsterer, however, reveals a more complex market or milieu, made up not only of the resident producers, but also of the other distributors, including their own wholesale customers, and purveyors of second hand and imported ready-made.

The methodology for such a study of the upholstery trade is largely determined by the variety and amount of information available. Because upholsterers' account books for this place and period have not been uncovered, it is necessary to rely heavily on other business records, however uneven. These include both public and private records, including advertisements, bills and receipts, accounts, inventories, and the products themselves. Other records, such as tax books, census lists, city directories, and wills have also been consulted. There are also several collections of letters that have been quite helpful.

Working from sources such as these has several limitations which should be recognized. The first concerns contemporary inaccuracy or deliberate deception, particularly in tax records, city directories, and inventories. The information does not become plentiful until 1785 or 1790, after which time city directories were published, the census
was taken, and tax records were more regularly preserved. Pennsylvania law did not require that an inventory be taken; those that do exist frequently reflect the declining years in a craftsman's productive life. In an urban area the size of Philadelphia names are often duplicated; if a change in occupation occurred, as it can be demonstrated in a number of cases, it becomes almost impossible to follow the former upholsterer, particularly in the light of frequent changes of residence.

The structure of this paper, therefore, is largely dictated by the results of this research. The first Chapter puts the study into its historical context. The second, then, suggests the range of individuals who called themselves upholsterers in Philadelphia from 1760 to 1810. The next treats the roles within the workshop that different individuals might take part in, simultaneously or successively. The last Chapter, on the Market, describes the overall context, or arena, within which work was done and trade effected.
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CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND

The earliest medieval upholsterers bore only a limited resemblance to their eighteenth century counterparts; the activities of the former included dealing in second hand goods, auctioneering, and pawnbroking. The first known reference to an Upholsterer in England was to "Godwyn le Upheldere" in the Letter Books of the City of London in 1294. By 1465, when the company was granted a coat of arms, the role of the upholsterer had evolved to include making bedding, furnishing funerals, and appraising goods, but it was the development of seating furniture and elaborate beds in 17th century France which largely accounted for the rise of the upholsterer as a dominant craftsman in the 18th century.

The activities of the 18th century French upholsterer were documented by Denis Diderot in his Encyclopédie in 1751. He described the upholsterer, or tapissier, as a "merchant who sells, makes, or maintains upholstery and furniture." One of Diderot's Plates illustrated the interior of an upholsterer's Boutique (Fig. 1). In addition

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Fig. 1: The Interior of an 18th Century French upholsterer's shop, from a Plate by Diderot
Courtesy, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Libraries
to the master upholsterer who was in the process of showing a potential customer a fauteuil, women were engaged in sewing hangings and curtains. The shop contained seating furniture and frames, as well as other furniture, mattresses, cushions, textiles, looking glasses, and even a dog bed.

R. Campbell, in the London Tradesman (1747), described the contemporary English upholsterer as the "Chief Agent" in fitting up a house. While "his proper craft is to fit up Beds, Window-Curtains, Hangings, and to cover Chairs that have Stuffed Bottoms," the English master-upholsterer was expected to be a contractor as well as a craftsman. He employed "Journeymen in his own proper calling, Cabinet-Makers, Glass-Grinders...and a vast many Tradesmen of the other mechanic Branches" -- all of the skills necessary to interior household decoration.

In the 18th century in England and France, upholstery was primarily an urban craft. An urban area furnished the required concentration of population and wealth needed to sustain the upholsterer. In this country, therefore, Boston was the first center capable of supporting the upholstery trade on a large scale. In fact, between 1725 and 1760, at least 224 furniture craftsmen were employed in Boston Town; these figures include at least 23 upholsterers.
Brock Jobe has described the activities of two Boston upholsterers, Thomas Fitch and his apprentice, Samuel Grant, in his thesis, *The Boston Furniture Industry, 1725-1760*, and in subsequent related publications.

Thomas Fitch was one of Boston's most successful upholsterers. In addition to his proper activities as an upholsterer, making and selling bedding, bed curtains, and furniture upholstery, Fitch had developed a large scale mercantile network. He was engaged in the import, distribution, and sale throughout the Colonies of English textiles, metalwares, and a variety of other goods. He owned shares in several ships and had invested in real estate.

Fitch helped his apprentice to begin his own business in 1728 by extending credit to him on upholstery materials; the beginner also capitalized on the contacts that he had made while in the master's service. When the latter died in 1736, Samuel Grant inherited both the business and its reputation. The former apprentice, however, never developed the export trade on the scale of his predecessor, perhaps due to increased competition. Without the means of exchange in London, he was forced to frequently rely on Boston merchant-middlemen for wholesale upholstery materials and other goods.
Among his many long-distance contacts, Thomas Fitch maintained correspondence with Edward Shippen of Philadelphia. Jobe has identified Shippen as an English-born merchant-upholsterer who had moved from Boston to Philadelphia around 1688. Certainly Shippen was a merchant, but his activities as an upholsterer (namely, directing an upholstery shop) in Philadelphia are much more difficult to document. The first man who was actually identified as an upholsterer in Philadelphia was John Budd; Budd was included in the 1693 tax list, and died in 1704 during a "Journey into Maryland." Apart from small amounts of money, the only material possessions that he specifically mentioned in his will were "one Beaver hatt" and "one pair of Silk Gloves." Between 1690 and 1760 there were at least eleven upholsterers working in Philadelphia. This number includes only those persons whose primary activity was documented; undoubtably, there were others who were employed at least part of the time as upholsterers. Before 1760, however, the population of Philadelphia was apparently not large enough to support a large group of specialist craftsmen who were engaged solely in the proper work of upholstery. John Housman, for instance, announced in 1722, after between 5-9 years in this country, that he was "leaving off trade and going for England." Plunket Fleeson, on the other hand, extended the activities of his shop to include chair making, in order to compete with the
importation of Boston chairs. Before his death in 1791, he had also invested in real estate, and owned a number of properties in town.

The basic instruments needed to set up as an upholsterer did not represent a major investment. These tools described by Diderot between 1751 and 1777 (Fig. 2) changed very little over time. Diderot illustrated the needle and scissors, a variety of tack and nail drivers, turners, and keys, the upholsterer's hammer, punch, and nails. Upholstery tools were not usually itemized separately from a Philadelphia craftsman's personal effects as recorded in the inventory. In 1796, for example, William Bankson owned "1 Step lader & sundries" at 15/-; other items, specific to his trade, might have included a "shew" glass, counter, and mattress frame. James Corley owned a "Paper hangers ladder" (6/-) in 1801, along with "1 in-complete Money Scales & Weights" at 1/-. In some cases, at least, workmen owned their own tools. Richard Wevill, whose stock in his cabinetmaking and upholstery business was valued at over $4,112. In 1803, he left "1 Hand vise & bench" at $1.50, three hammers at less than 30¢, "1 bit Stone .25 1 Hand brush .05," "1 Carpet Strainer & Stool 1.00" and "1 Plane" at 30¢. Other upholsterer's inventories typically listed only a box of tools (unspecified) or "Sundries." Samuel Davies' estate is also typical; it
Fig. 2: The Tools of the Upholsterer
Courtesy, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Libraries

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included "1 Box Papers...25/1 do Tools...1.25/1 Step Ladder...50." 18

The situation of upholsterers in early Philadelphia was roughly similar to that of their colleagues in 15th and 16th century England. The Philadelphia market at the beginning of the 18th century was not sufficiently developed to support a master upholsterer until Plunket Fleeson. After 1760, in particular, Philadelphia had the population and monetary surplus to fully support the master upholsterer as well as the minor craftsman, comparable to England, France, and Boston earlier in the century.
CHAPTER TWO

THE INDIVIDUAL UPHOLSTERER

In 1765, Thomas Hewes of Philadelphia announced that he made
all Sorts of UPHOLSTERERS WORK, in the neatest and newest Fashions, at the most reasonable Prices, such as Bed and Window Curtains, Easy Chairs, Couches, Mattresses, either of Hair or Wool, Feather Beds, Sacking Bottoms, Chair Bottoms and Ship Stools & c. & c. (Fig. 3)¹

Contemporary advertisements confirm the fact that the "proper activity" of the upholsterer, as it was considered in Philadelphia, was the provision of textile furnishings. These and other sources also indicate that upholsterers easily branched into related areas, such as venetian blind making, wall papering, and umbrella making, apparently because of their close relationship to, or derivation from, textile furnishings.² Some participated in the second-hand trade, and one Philadelphia upholsterer advertised that he would furnish funerals.

A wide range of individuals called themselves upholsterers, from indentured servants and journeymen to master merchant-craftsmen. Tax records, advertisements, and city directories reveal information about relative

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Fig. 3: Advertisement of Thomas Hewes, 1765
Courtesy, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Libraries
economic status within the group, national origins and training, and patterns of mobility. Without external regulation, the individual upholsterer appears to have led a strikingly "modern" existence, but without the apparent security of either the feudal guilds or today's economic superstructure.

The relative wealth of Philadelphia craftsmen may be partially estimated through the use of tax records. Without good annual monetary equivalencies, however, it is difficult to chart the year-to-year progress of a single man. Tax information does begin to give an indication of the standing within the group in comparison with other members, particularly if it is corroborated by other kinds of evidence.

Information from tax records confirms the strong indications, derived originally from ads and other contemporary records, that economic life, for most upholsterers, was precarious. During the first part of the period, Plunket Fleeson was the only upholsterer to achieve permanent prosperity; in 1783, for instance, he was described as "Esq." and owned at least two dwellings and lots, 147 oz. of plate, one horse, one chair, and two negroes. The greatest number of upholsterers who appeared on the tax records were petty entrepreneurs, many existing on the edge of bankruptcy. Although the tax lists alone do not provide
an indicator of wealth, since they do not include most personal property, only a few upholsterers had any taxables at all, and these in very small amounts. Women, who may have made up a large proportion of the work force, were rarely taxed. Other men who worked in the upholstery trade for a wage were assessed a head tax, indicating single marital status, but their profession was rarely cited; many of their names come to light today only because they were named in the occasional estate records of a more successful craftsman. It is difficult to follow individual entrepreneurs as well as journeymen in the tax schedules: some changed professions, others had common names, and many moved frequently, both within the City and without.

Only three tax periods, 1773/74, 1782/83, and 1790/91 (Table 1), could be documented with any success: their choice was based solely on the type and amount of information available. The declining use of trade descriptions and the actual survival of tax records from ward to ward made the study of the period from 1800-10 almost impossible.

The 1774 Provincial Tax List may be complete regarding independent male upholsterers: it contains the names of all individuals who were so described in ads and other public records during the same year. Only two of six had taxable possessions, Plunket Fleeson and William Martin. Fleeson had been active in Philadelphia since 1739, but
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Province Tax</th>
<th>Tax (3p. on the L and 9/- pr. hd.)</th>
<th>Tax</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1774</td>
<td>1773</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plunket Fleeson</td>
<td>128.5.4</td>
<td>P.F. uphol. 44 59</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 acres</td>
<td>And for M.P. Est. 12.6 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 horse</td>
<td>Thos. Fleeson Pn 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 servants</td>
<td>John Linton Pn 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jonathan Draper Pn 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Mason</td>
<td>no tax</td>
<td>J.M. Upholr 8 .2-</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no poss.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Webster</td>
<td>no tax</td>
<td>J. W. Upholr Pnd .9-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no poss.</td>
<td>John Ross Pnd .9-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Marron</td>
<td>3.3.0</td>
<td>W.M. Upholr Pnd .9-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>2 servants</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Chas. Allen</td>
<td>no tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no. poss.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Ross</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Linton</td>
<td></td>
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Table 1A: Tax Information for the Years 1774 (1773), 1783 (1782) and 1793 (1790)
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<td></td>
<td>1783</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>1793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,284</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 dwelling &amp; lots</td>
<td></td>
<td>989</td>
<td>6.12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147 oz. plate</td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 horse</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 chair</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 negroes</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cow</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling &amp; lot</td>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented property</td>
<td></td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 free wht. males > 16
1 free wht. female
1 all other free
1 slave

1 free wht. male > 16
4 free wht. females

Head 2

1 free wht. male > 16
1 free wht. female
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Claypoole</td>
<td>1774: 75, 1773: 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Davis</td>
<td>1774: 75, 1773: 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odell Fennell</td>
<td>1774: 75, 1773: 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Henry</td>
<td>1774: 75, 1773: 40</td>
</tr>
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<td>James Caley</td>
<td>1774: 75, 1773: 40</td>
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Table 1B: Tax Information for the Years 1774 (1773), 1783 (1782) and 1793 (1790)
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<td></td>
<td>1783</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>1793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling &amp; lot</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>£50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and for Jos.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 free wh. males &gt; 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howell's Est.</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 free wh. females</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1 free wh. male &gt; 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 servant</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 free wh. male &lt; 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ horse</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5 free wh. females</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ chair</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 oz. Plate</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and for Thos.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 free wh. males &gt; 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willings Est.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 free wh. males &lt; 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dwelling</td>
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<td>Occupation</td>
<td>£10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2 free wh. male &gt; 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 free wh. male &lt; 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 free wh. females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pr. head</td>
<td>10/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Martin advertised as only a young beginner in 1770.

It is interesting and important to compare the 1774 information with that taken the previous year, recorded in the County Tax Duplicate. Plunket Fleeson was appraised at the highest level; directly under his name was listed "Mary Pitt's Estate." Following the latter, in the same section, are the names of Thomas Fleeson, John Linton, and Jonathan Draper, all assessed a head tax. The three were apparently living in Fleeson's household, probably as apprentices. Thomas was Plunket's son; in the 1775 tax list he is listed separately, and is described as an "upholsterer." It may be safely assumed that Thomas was the son described in his father's ads in 1775: "The Upholsterers Business is at present carried on by PLUNKET FLEESON and SON." After the Revolution, Thomas became a minister, and was involved in the founding of the first Primitive Baptist Church in Delaware. John Linton's history was almost as varied. In 1774, he was advertising his skills as an upholsterer in South Carolina. The young upholsterer was back in Philadelphia by 1779. He was described as an upholsterer on the 1780 list; this occupation continued to be used until at least 1783; in the tax list of the same year he was assessed only a head tax. In 1791, the City Directory described John Linton as a "shopkeeper" (this occupation was listed in the 1790 census, as well), in
1793 as a "trunk maker," and in 1809 as a "saddler." Draper did not surface independently in Philadelphia as an upholsterer after 1773.

William Martin, on the other hand, was listed alone in 1773, taxed at the lowest rate for a married man. John Mason was listed in the same Ward at the same valuation and tax. Thomas Lawrence, who does not appear in the 1774 list at all, was recorded as an upholsterer the year before, and taxed at a slightly higher rate. The appearance of Lawrence's name again underscores the difficulty of using these records. The only other references to a man of the same name in the present context (as an upholsterer of on a related occupation) were in 1756, when a Lawrence (no first name) advertised with Blanch White, "Upholsterers from London," and when the tax lists recorded Thomas Lawrence, Upholsterer; he is not readily identifiable in other lists. In 1802, a John Lawrence was listed in the City Directory as a "paperhanger."

Also in the '73 tax list, the name of John Ross was recorded under John Webster; Ross had signed a receipt for Webster in 1771. Both individuals, however, paid only the head tax. This information was difficult to coordinate with other evidence. Although no taxable possessions were recorded, Webster apparently headed a large shop, directly employing at least four men and women, including
Ross,\textsuperscript{21} during the period from 1767 to 1774, after which he disappeared. Some of this apparent discrepancy might be explained in a 1770 newspaper notice in which the assignment of his goods for the payment of his creditors was announced.\textsuperscript{22} He apparently lived very close to bankruptcy, and since a will is not recorded and no further ads appear in other cities, he may have gone back to England or left the business.

The 1782/83 tax period is best represented by an abridged tax list for the year 1783 which was published by William Hornor in his book, \textit{Philadelphia Furniture}.\textsuperscript{23} The list includes all Philadelphia furniture craftsmen who were so described or could be ascertained from other sources. Even though the source of this information was not quoted, a comparison of this with other contemporary tax lists indicates that the former is at least equal, if not superior, in completeness. This list is preferable because it is based on taxable property as well as on occupation.

The Hornor list includes four upholsterers, John Mason, John Linton, Thomas Harper, and John Claypoole; it also includes Plunket Fleeson as an "upholsterer," even though he is, at this time, described as "Esquire" in other sources. Fleeson has, again, the most taxable property and thus the highest tax. On the next level are John Mason and Thomas Harper. Linton and Claypoole own no taxable
property, but Claypoole's occupation or earning potential is taxed at a higher rate than is Linton's. As comparison, the 1782 City of Philadelphia Supply Tax schedule\textsuperscript{24} included two of the names from the following year, Fleeson and Mason, and two that did not appear on the former list, George Haughton and Hyns Taylor. The first two appear to be in the same relative position to one another vis-a-vis their valuation.\textsuperscript{25} George Haughton died before the '83 list was made; his valuation the previous year was fairly low.\textsuperscript{26} Taylor, on the other hand, seems to have disappeared from Philadelphia between 1883 and 1887; in 1782 he was taxed at a middle rate.\textsuperscript{27} John Claypoole may not have set up his upholstery business independently before 1783. There is no obvious reason why Harper and Linton were not included in the '82 schedule.

The information from the County Tax assessment of 1793\textsuperscript{28} can be collated with the first Federal Census of 1790.\textsuperscript{29} Of the ten men who were described before or after as upholsterers and whose names appear on the 1790 Census, the Census listed only five with the title of upholsterer. Plunket Fleeson was described as "Esquire," John Davis and John Mason were included without any job description, and John Linton and Samuel Benge were designated as "shopkeeper" and "umbrella maker," respectively.\textsuperscript{30} The Census numbers, in order, referred to free white males over 16, free white
males under 16, free white females, all other free persons, and slaves. It is interesting to note that only Fleeson's and Benge's households included free non-whites, probably negroes. Fleeson owned one slave, probably the "Mulattoe Girl" described in his will.

The County Tax Assessment of 1793 is uneven. Of the ten who were included in the City Directory of the same year, only four appear in the tax schedule. The large numbers of women recorded in the 1790 Census in the households of the upholsterers with the highest occupational assessments indicate that these are probably larger establishments which could generate income sufficient to support regular wage labor.

In addition to describing a small, only moderately successful group of craftsmen, the tax records also evidence a high rate of mobility. Advertisements and City Directories (after 1785) provide additional information about movement within the City as well as without. Tables 2a, b, and c list the names of upholsterers who lived in Philadelphia, and indicate the amount of time that they worked as upholsterers in the City; the numbers to the right of the graph are A, the number of years that each upholsterer appeared in the records, and B, the number of locations of the business within that period of time. If the origin or destination of each individual could be discovered, this
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Caleb Alder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Charles Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>John Baptiste Anthony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>William Bankson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M. J. Barsux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>George Bartualt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>John Batteste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Samuel Benge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Catherine Bob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Andrew Bossiere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>George Breidenhart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>James Bruce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>James Caley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>John Claypoole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>William Cocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Miss Constance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Benjamin Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>John Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Samuel Davies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Joseph Delavau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Francis De L'Orme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Margaret Fennell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2A: Dates of Upholsterer's Appearance in Philadelphia, 1760-1810

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In Philadelphia,
23. Odell Fennell
24. Francis Finley
25. Plunket Flesson
26. Thomas Flesson
27. William Fleming
28. Thomas Gill
29. Robert Hall
30. Matt Hand
31. Thomas Harper
32. Joseph Hartley
33. Elizabeth Haughton
34. George Haughton
35. Andrew Henry
36. Thomas Hewes
37. George W. Hicks
38. Valentine Hoff
39. Samuel How
40. Thomas Hurley
41. Charles Jaffrey
42. Thomas Jaquet
43. John Joad
44. Catherine Jones

Table 2B : Dates of Upholsterer's Appearance in Philadelphia, 1760-1810

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Arrance in Philadelphia,
Table 2C: Dates of Upholsterer's Appearance in Philadelphia, 1760-1810
Appearance in Philadelphia,
Table 2D: Dates of Upholsterer's Appearance in Philadelphia, 1760-1810
Appearance in Philadelphia,
information is indicated at the beginning or the end of the line.

Even though the results of this inquiry must be viewed as tentative, it is significant that the average residence in Philadelphia was 5.0 years for a working upholsterer; the average number of business locations within the City was 1.9. Given the number of craftsmen who worked for one year in only one location, the second figure is quite important. The rate of mobility was quite high within the City as well as without. This characteristic is strikingly "modern."

During the period from 1760 to 1810, the locations of these workshops tended to shift from the north, along the waterfront, to the south, and then, at the end of the period, to the west; this movement roughly followed that of the general population, suggesting that the craftsmen followed their clients. In addition, workshops did not appear to cluster in any of these areas, unlike furniture makers or other crafts groups. The maps in Fig. 4 and 5 show the extent of the distribution of the upholsterers' workshops in 1770 and 1790.35

A very high proportion of Philadelphia upholsterers were recent immigrants who had been trained abroad. This fact was frequently noted in their advertisements. Indeed,
Fig. 4: Location of Upholsterers in Philadelphia, 1770-75
Upolsterers in Philadelphia, 1770–75

1. Plunket Fleeson
2. Wm. Martin
3. John Mason
4. John Webster
5. Charles Allen
6. George Richey
7. J. Ross
8. Thos. Harper
9. Hyns Taylor
10. Geo. Haughton

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Fig. 5: Location of Upholsterers in Philadelphia, 1790-91

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
1. Samuel Benge  
2. John Claypoole  
3. F. De L'Orme  
4. Plunket Fleeson  
5. Thos. Hurley  
6. John Mason  
7. Odell Fennell  
8. Andrew Henry  
10. John Linton  
11. John Davis  

List of Upholsterers in Philadelphia, 1790-91
some craftsmen continued this claim long after they had established themselves in this country. Recent experience abroad apparently implied the craftsman's familiarity with the latest European styles.

Of 33 craftsmen who advertised their upholstery business in Philadelphia between 1760 and 1810, 16 listed some kind of experience in England, France, Scotland or Ireland. It is impossible to verify all of these claims. George Richey, for example, came to Philadelphia from New York after 1765. In New York, he had advertised that he "lately worked in the best upholsterers shop in London;"36 in 1771, on the eve of the Revolution, Richey claimed to be "from Edinburgh,"37 in his Philadelphia ad, revealing an opportunistic desire to take advantage of European background while disassociating himself from English antecedents.

A very few of the upholsterers who practiced their trade in Philadelphia had even been admitted to the Worshipful Company of Upholders of the City of London. An Appendix to Karin Walton's article on the same subject38 lists the craftsmen by name, date, and method of admission, with subsequent information. John Mears and John Joad were both admitted in 1779, the former by Paternity, and the latter, Servitude. Hyns Taylor entered in 1754 by Servitude; his addresses and dates of residence in London39 are concurrent with those of Hyns Taylor of Philadelphia,
suggesting a father-son relationship.

Surviving evidence concerning individual Philadelphia upholsterers at the end of the 18th century indicates that their economic existence was moderately successful but precarious all the same. Among these individuals there was a high rate of horizontal mobility, a tendency to change professions, and a significant number of foreign-born craftsmen. The following Chapter deals primarily with the roles that those individuals might undertake, successively or simultaneously, within the context of the workshop.
CHAPTER THREE
THE WORKSHOP

Traditionally, the term, "workshop," has been most broadly defined as the physical location where work is done. Contemporary misunderstanding of Colonial craft practices has led to a general assumption that an 18th century workshop was the place where a product was turned out by hand, by a master craftsman who, at the least, directly supervised each stage of its manufacture. Even Sam Bass Warner, in his book, The Private City, concluded as part of his theory of "privatism" that craftsmen in Philadelphia during this period worked alone in a workshop, with only one or two apprentices.\(^1\) John R. Commons, in his 1901 article, "American Shoemakers, 1648-1895: A Sketch of Industrial Evolution," was closer to the urban truth in his description of the industrial evolution of the shoemakers' trade. However, even though he documented changing relationships within the workshops, his insistence on an evolutionary progression is misleading.\(^2\)

Recent research on the upholsterer has suggested that the model of the solitary craftsman working within his own shop was occasionally a literal reality, and that labor
generally occurred within a larger, more flexible context. Determined to a large degree by the nature of the market, the organization of labor to produce a product could include journeymen and "contract," craftsmen, as well as apprentices and other low level or unskilled employees, under the direction of a master upholsterer/entrepreneur. Independent upholsterers and other furniture craftsmen, for example, frequently did "piece" or contract work for other shops, in addition to patrons of their own. It seems to be more valuable, then, at least for the purposes of this paper, to broaden the definition of the word, "workshop," to indicate the flexible organization of labor to produce a product under the direction of a single individual or partnership--master upholsterers--rather than simply as a physical location. The latter can and has been misleading in this context.

The size and extent of the workshop over time was variable, probably depending, to a large degree, on economic and personal factors. Technically, at least, it could be composed of one man (or woman) who took on a complete job alone, literally contracting the work to himself. A description of this individual might be similar to that of Common's early settled craftsman, engaged primarily in "bespoke" or custom order work; this stage, however, was not directly related to chronology or evolution in the
Philadelphia upholstery trade. More typically, upholstery work was divided or subcontracted, as in Common's "shop," "order," or "market" stages.\(^3\) The balance of this Chapter will describe an individual workshop in the second category, and then explore the roles that the individual upholsterer participated in at different points in his career, as well as in the context of separate jobs at the same time.

In the absence of upholsterers' account books, the only Philadelphia workshop that can yet be sufficiently documented is that of Richard Wevill, who had a relatively successful business, and died in 1803 at the height of his entrepreneurial career. Wevill himself was described in an 1802 letter of reference from Williamina Cadwalader to Ann Ridgely as "a good Workman and an honest Man."\(^4\) When he first advertised his services in 1799,\(^5\) he claimed to have had near twenty years experience in London, supervising the work in two of its principal upholstery houses; when he arrived in Philadelphia, he set up business immediately, taking over the house and stock-in-trade of the late Samuel Benge.

A later advertisement in the same year described his inventory:

he continues to carry on the Upholstery Business in all its branches...Bed and Window Cornices manufactured in the newest taste, gilt or painted, to suit
the furniture; brass and iron rods and staples for stairs, carpeting, Venetian blinds, &c....Just imported in the Active, from London...a quantity of Hair Seating, Gold leaf, Composition, Glass Paper, Sattin-Wood, and Mahogany Knife Cases, Portable Desks fitted up complete....Also for sale, a quantity of Elegant Prints, fine Sattin-wood, tulip wood, and purple wood Veneers, and an assortment of Stringing &c for Cabinet makers. An Apprentice wanted.6

In the 1800 Census, Wevill's household consisted of one male between 16 and 26 years, one between 26 and 45, one female between 10 and 16, and four females between 16 and 26.7 This information is somewhat difficult to interpret because his will (Fig. 6, A and B), written only three years later, mentions a wife, Ann, one daughter, and two sons.8 One son, Nicholas, was apparently close to being of age, as he continued the business with a partner the year after his father's decease. The other son may, in fact, have been apprenticed elsewhere. Three of the adult females were probably employed at "women's work" in the business. As discussed previously, Denis Diderot had pictured women engaged in sewing materials for hangings and curtains in his illustration of the upholsterer's shop (Fig. 4).

The City Directory of 1801 listed three addresses next to Wevill's name: 193 Chestnut ("upholsterer"), corner of Fifth Street ("Wevill & Hall, cabinetmakers"), and corner of 7th (Wevill & Hall, Mahogany Merchants).9 In
Fig. 6A: Will, Richard Wevill, 10 August 1803
Fig. 6B: Will, Richard Wevill, 10 August 1803
1802, one of these locations was damaged by a fire, and Wevill advertised a sale of the remaining stock for ready money to meet immediate debts; in the same ad, he assured a continuance of the business at the "Ware-Room" at the Corner of Fifth and Chestnut.  

In her letter to Mrs. Ridgely enclosing Wevill's reference, Mrs. Cadwalader also sent a note from the upholsterer himself (Fig. 7). In it, Wevill described Canopy, Field, and Strait highpost bedsteads and their prices according to the manner of finishing and size." In her cover letter, Williamina Cadwalader advised:

you will observe these prices are without curtains--should you be obliged to have new bedsteads I can purchase white muslin very low which will look neat at present and hereafter serve to line better.

Apparently Mrs. Ridgely purchased goods from Wevill, as a receipt (Fig. 8) for $141.50 was signed in 1803.

When Richard Wevill died in 1803, an inventory of the remaining cabinet ware and upholstery goods and materials was conducted by John and Henry Connelly at the "Ware-Room" at 5th and Chestnut, and was appraised at $3,142.77; additional mahogany and other woods, probably at the 7th Street location, came to $969.56 (Fig. 9 A through F). The ready-made upholstered furniture included chairs (and frames), settees, easy chairs (and frames), and a sofa; also listed were bedsteads (large French, Mahogany Field, varnished
Fig. 7: Letter from Richard Wevill to Ann Ridgely, 17 July 1802
Ridgely Collection, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

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Fig. 8: Receipt from Richard Wevill to Williamina Cadwalader, 15 January 1803
Ridgely Collection, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
Fig. 9A: Inventory, Richard Wevill, 20 September 1803
Fig. 9C: Inventory, Richard Wevill, 20 September 1803
Fig. 9D: Inventory, Richard Wevill, 20 September 1803
Fig. 9E: Inventory, Richard Wevill, 20 September 1803
Fig. 9F: Inventory, Richard Wevill, 20 September 1803
Field, other field beds, low post, and four post) and mattresses. The appraisers also found considerable yardage of Chintz, Dimity, and Hair Seating, as well as lace, gimp, tassells, and line.

Evidence from the accounts (Fig. 10 A through F) of Wevill’s estate indicates that, at the time of his decease, Wevill directly employed four workers, Mary and Rosanna Ourt, Lewis Nicholas, and John Ackland. Lewis Nicholas was the employee who later joined with Wevill’s son to form a partnership. The estate accounts also recorded payment to a carpenter, joiners, and other independent upholsterers.

An inventory of the debts (Fig. 11, A and B) to the estate of Richard Wevill included the following upholsterers: Samuel Benge ($16.40), John Rea ($29.40), Oliphant & Wilson ($4.00), Mr. Anthony ($3.41), and Mr. Laforgue ($11.78). It also paid the claims of “Peter Dubsiel...for a sacking bottom” ($2.50), John Joad, “amot of decedents note & protest” ($117.75), “Oliphant and Wilson the account in full” ($31.55), and “Philip James -- do -- do” ($31.24). Richard Wevill did not own land himself, but leased the business properties; the firm of Wevill and Nicholas later paid rent to the leasehole of the Estate.

The concept of role, as a socially expected behavior pattern, enables one to order the surviving information
Fig. 10A: Accounts of Estate of Richard Wevill, September 1803-January 1810
Fig. 10B: Accounts of Estate of Richard Wevill, September 1803-January 1810

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Fig. 10C: Accounts of Estate of Richard Wevill, September 1803-January 1810
Fig. 10D: Accounts of Estate of Richard Wevill, September 1803-January 1810

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Fig. 10E: Accounts of Estate of Richard Wevill, September 1803-January 1810
Fig. 10F : Accounts of Estate of Richard Wevill, September 1803-January 1810

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Fig. 11A: Inventory of Debts to Estate of Richard Wevill, September 1803-January 1810

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>1/1/1803</td>
<td>John Doe</td>
<td>£100</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/1/1803</td>
<td>Jane Smith</td>
<td>£75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/1/1803</td>
<td>Robert Brown</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/1/1810</td>
<td>Edward Jones</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note: The table continues with more entries.

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Fig. 11B: Inventory of Debts to Estate of Richard Wevill, September 1803-January 1810

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information about the 18th century upholsterer at work. Apparently, many upholsterers did different kinds of jobs, requiring different behavior patterns, successively and simultaneously. In Wevill's workshop, for instance, the different work roles or behavior patterns might be described as master upholsterer, apprentice, woman, journeyman, and the independent "contract" worker. Evidence from other sources supports the possibility of at least two other roles, the indentured servant and the slave. The use of the role concept in this context is primarily a device for understanding these different sorts of behavior patterns; at this time, it is impossible to determine the contemporary status associated with a particular role.

The Master Upholsterer was the conductor or the contractor of his own workshop. The same individual might also function as a contract worker in the shop of another. Depending upon the size of his workshop, the master may have been integrally involved in the production, or may simply have supervised that activity. Another job/activity that was considered to be part of the managerial role was that of sales, or dealing directly with the customer; the Diderot plate of the upholsterer's boutique pictures the master in the process of showing his wares to a potential customer (Fig. 1). The trade card of Christopher Gilbert, an English upholsterer, shows him in the same activity. It
is almost impossible to document this activity among Philadelphia upholsterers, due to the lack of specific evidence. However, the inferential evidence in this case is the "personal" nature of the ads; the craftsman stressed himself indicating that he was probably the one to meet the public.

Formal partnerships between master upholsterers were relatively rare, and were generally for short periods of time, when they did exist. The chart in Table 4 lists the formal relationships which could be documented to date; the mean duration was about three years. Some upholsterers advertised their union or its dissolution in the newspapers; others appear together in Directories or in contemporary bills and receipts. Of the recorded partnerships between 1760 and 1810, over half of this small sample were related by blood, marriage, or previous working relationship.

There are few surviving apprenticeship documents for upholsterers. Without this evidence, it is difficult to differentiate an apprentice from a journeyman in workshop receipts or inventory accounts. Table 4 includes all of the employee relationships which could be determined as well as the degree of that relationship, if it could be differentiated.

Those apprenticeship documents which do survive list
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st name</th>
<th>2nd name</th>
<th>Previous relationship (if any spec.)</th>
<th>Approx. dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plunket Fleeson &amp; Son (Thomas?)</td>
<td>Paternal</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendell</td>
<td>&amp; Jaquett</td>
<td></td>
<td>1785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hyns)</td>
<td>&amp; Amelia Taylor</td>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>1787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Mathison</td>
<td></td>
<td>1794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang</td>
<td>Davies</td>
<td></td>
<td>1796-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocks</td>
<td>&amp; Co. (Aitken?)</td>
<td>employee</td>
<td>1797-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliphant</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td>1801-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wevill</td>
<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>Son &amp; former employee of R. Wevill</td>
<td>1804-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaquett</td>
<td>&amp; Hicks</td>
<td>Former employee</td>
<td>1806-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wevill</td>
<td>Hall</td>
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<td>1801</td>
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Table 3: Partnerships, 1760-1810
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<tr>
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<td>advertisement</td>
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<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>Bill, 1785 (P.B.-nd Rec. Bk.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>directory, 1794</td>
<td>Aitkin handles Cock's estate 1799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796-97</td>
<td>directory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-99</td>
<td>advertisement '97-99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-06</td>
<td>bill (Graval) 1802</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804-10</td>
<td>directory</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1806-08</td>
<td>directory</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>directory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Relationship, if Special</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Webster</td>
<td>Ann King (Eliz. Claypoole)*</td>
<td>&quot;had care of women's wk&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Ross</td>
<td>(apprentice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theob. Ent</td>
<td>apprentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wm. Fleming</td>
<td>(apprentice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geo. Haughton</td>
<td>&quot;done the principal wk&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Davis</td>
<td>J. Richey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Joad</td>
<td>Geo. Bridenpart</td>
<td>(apprentice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thos. Jaquett</td>
<td>G. Hicks</td>
<td>&quot;my master&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. McLeod</td>
<td>(apprentice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Mortin</td>
<td>Hugh Fegan</td>
<td>apprentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Jaffrey</td>
<td>(journeyman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Wilson</td>
<td>John Pickin</td>
<td>apprentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Sturges</td>
<td>apprentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rea</td>
<td>Wm. Christy</td>
<td>apprentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plunket Fleeson</td>
<td>Jn. Linton</td>
<td>(apprentice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wevill &amp; Nicholas N. Hewings</td>
<td></td>
<td>apprentice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Parentheses () indicates doubt

Table 4A: Employee Relationships, 1760-1810
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>App. Dates</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1769)-75</td>
<td>advertisement, 1775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1772</td>
<td>legend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1772</td>
<td>signed for W., 1772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Cadwalader)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772-(1778)</td>
<td>Phila. City Archives: Recs. of Indentures</td>
<td>reassigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1773</td>
<td>signed for W, 1773</td>
<td>term 6:1:0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Cadwalader)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1774</td>
<td>advertisement, 1775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1785</td>
<td>signed for D, 1785</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Cadwalader)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1795</td>
<td>signed for J, 1795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-(1807)</td>
<td>(Trotter)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1801</td>
<td>signed for J (Read Fam. Papers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1802</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1800-(1810)</td>
<td>Phila. City Archives: Recs. of Indentures</td>
<td>aged 11:3:19</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>term 9:8:11</td>
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<tr>
<td>1773-(1783)</td>
<td>Phila. City Archives: Recs. of Indentures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1775</td>
<td>signed for M, 1775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adv. &quot;successor to&quot;, 1775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804-(1809)</td>
<td>Phila. City Archives: Rec. of Indentures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>term 5:0:0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1804-1809</td>
<td>Phila. City Archives: Guardians of Poor</td>
<td>age 16:6</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>term 4:6</td>
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<td>1805-(1811)</td>
<td>Phila. City Archives: Rec. of Indentures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>age 15:1:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>term 5:10:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1774</td>
<td>circumstantial, cited in Will (1791)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-(1816)</td>
<td>Phila. City Archives: Guardians of Poor</td>
<td>age 14:1:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>term 6:11:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Relationship, if special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam'l Benge</td>
<td>John Rea</td>
<td>&quot;formerly with S.B.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Eden</td>
<td>J. Birmingham</td>
<td>indentured servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Henry</td>
<td>Alexr. McConnell</td>
<td>(apprentice)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thos. Jaquett</td>
<td>David Thomson</td>
<td>&quot;my Master&quot; (apprentice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Ort</td>
<td>(women's work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosina Ort</td>
<td>(women's work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lewis Nicholas</td>
<td>journeyman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Ackland</td>
<td>journeyman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Parentheses () indicates doubt

Table 4B: Employee Relationships, 1760-1810

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>App. Dates</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before 1799</td>
<td>advertisement, 1799</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1773</td>
<td>adv.: ran away from Golden-Hill</td>
<td>owner, brewer, &quot;upholsterer by trade&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1796</td>
<td>bill: Trotter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1803</td>
<td>Wevill accts.</td>
<td>See Fig. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1803</td>
<td>Wevill accts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1803</td>
<td>Wevill accts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the usual conditions, including the art and mystery to be conveyed, length of service, and the conditions of termination. In all cases, the length of service was set relative to the attainment of the age of 21. With few exceptions, actual advertisements for potential apprentices clustered in two periods, the 1770's and the 1790's, affirming a shortage of available labor in the two periods. In these ads, some upholsterers further specified that prospective "boys" be genteel and come well-recommended. While indentured servants may have worked in the upholstery trade, there is one surviving reference to an indentured servant who was an "Upholsterer by Trade;" in 1773, James Birmingham ran away from a Mr. Eden, brewer, on "Golden Hill."21

There is no certain evidence which confirms that black slaves were actually employed in the manufacture of upholstery in Philadelphia. Two upholsterers, however, did own negroes. The census of 1790 recorded one slave in the household of Plunket Fleeson, Esq.22 In 1794, St. Victor Tranquille, an "Upholsterer of this City,"23 made a public protest against a group of Quakers who had freed a slave man whom he had brought with him from St. Domingo.

Within the workshop, female upholsterers were employed at "Women's work." In Philadelphia, in 1775, Ann King, "who had the care of the Women's work, in the Upholstery, at Mr. John Webster's, for near seven years,"24
advertised that she was the "first American tossel maker that ever brought that branch of business to any degree of perfection;" she also made fringes, cord, and mattrasses "of every sort." In 1787, Amelia Taylor, who had formerly advertised as a "milaner and mantua maker," published an ad with her husband: "H. & Amelia Taylor, Upholsterers from St. James, London."25 The same solicitation continued, "Wanted, a Young Woman, as an Apprentice." In 1794, Samuel Benge, in an advertisement featuring military equipage, sought "Several women...to work at the above branch."26 Many female upholsterers appeared in the city directories only upon the death of their husbands; others who were listed as seamstresses may have done piece work. Female upholsterers apparently played an important role in the business but the numbers of women employed in this branch cannot be easily estimated, due to the scarcity of records and the manner of recording other information.

The role of the journeyman in the Philadelphia upholstery trade is also difficult to define. Traditionally, journeymen were day laborers who had completed their apprenticeship and worked for a wage in the shop of another. In 1802, for instance, William Stables of Baltimore advertised in the Philadelphia Gazette and Daily Advertiser for "One or two Journeymen Upholsterers, good workmen, to whom liberal encouragement and constant employment will be given."27

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Some of the employee relationships listed in Table 5 may actually have been between a master and a journeyman. It is also difficult to separate journeymen from those independent upholsterers who maintained a shop of their own but did piece work, unless they advertised or a separate bill survives. True journeymen probably never surfaced in the records.

When he published his intention to leave Philadelphia in 1775, William Martin begged "leave to recommend Charles Jaffrey, who continues in the house, as a person fit and capable to succeed him in the business." A receipt dated earlier the same year suggests that Jaffrey was formerly in the employ of Martin, as a journeyman or possibly an apprentice. In 1775, George Haughton announced that while he had served a regular apprenticeship in London, he had "done the principal work some time in this city for Mr. Webster." The question as to whether the role of the journeyman might ever have been a permanent one is unresolved.

Because there apparently was no contemporary term for the role of the independent "contract" upholsterer, this phrase is used to emphasize its participant's independent status. Although it is possible that the upholsterer debtors to the estate of Richard Wevill only bought materials from him, the amounts involved make it more likely that he
did work for them in his own shop. Other records support this conclusion. There is direct evidence that upholsterers did independent work in cabinetmakers' workshops; this practice will be covered in the following section, in the overall context of the market.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE MARKET

In his book, Marketing Management, Philip Kotler defined "market" as "an arena for potential exchanges."¹ In the 18th century, the core roles within that arena--suppliers, producers, marketing intermediaries, and final customers--were just in the process of becoming institutionalized. The upholstery workshop, for instance, was an intermediary as well as a producer. Upholsterer/entrepreneurs imported and made ready-made, as well as contracted for custom upholstery. Cabinet workshops could function in a similar manner by employing upholsterers; merchants, auctioneers, and others competed as intermediaries in the upholstery trade.

The suppliers of upholstery materials were varied. Production materials, like fabric, trim, tacks, etc., were obtained directly from the manufacturer and indirectly from other intermediaries.

Some production materials were manufactured locally. Plunket Fleeson advertised "American Paper Hangings, Manufactured in Philadelphia, not inferior to those generally

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imported, and as low in Price." In 1797, Thomas Jaquett sold "American Manufactured Cotton Bedtickings."

Upholsterers ordered many goods directly from abroad; these materials were probably obtained through European intermediaries, rather than directly from the manufacturers. In 1775, Thomas Harper announced that he had "imported by the London Packet, Captain Cook, a neat assortment of Upholstery Goods and Paper Hangings."

Upholsterers also purchased production materials from dry goods merchants and other middlemen in Philadelphia and in the other Colonies. When these were scarce, they were often at the mercy of the indirect suppliers. A 1776 letter from Edward Shippen to his brother-in-law, Jasper Yeates, informed the latter that the price of the upholstery that he had ordered would be higher than previously quoted by the craftsman, Plunket Fleeson; Fleeson excused himself, saying "every material that he has occasion to buy is raised in its price from its scarcity and the prevailing Exorbitance of the shopkeepers." In 1779, John Mason expressed a desire soon to see "such a variety of goods arrive at this free port, as that he may dispatch business on much easier terms than at present."

In times of scarcity, some upholsterers advertised for available materials. In 1784, Thomas Harper submitted...
such an advertisement for wall paper: "Wanted, a quantity of Paper Hangings for rooms."  

Goods were also provided by the upholsterers' customers themselves, either because they had a particular fabric they wanted used, or because the upholsterer did not have the cash or credit to invest in the stock.

Although he had purchased copper plate fabric through Plunket Fleeson the previous year, John Cadwalader ordered silk directly from Rushton and Beachcroft, London, in 1771:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\ldots 119 \text{ yds Rich Blue Silk Damask...} 12/6 & 74:7:6 \\
50\frac{1}{2} \text{ yds Blue \( \frac{3}{4} \) Ell Sarcenet...} 3/ & 7:11:6 \\
55 \text{ yds Blue Deep Silk Fringe...} 3/10 & 10:10:10 \\
50 \text{ yds Narrow...do...} 2/ & 5:-- \\
15 \text{ Blue Large Silk Tossells...} 2/3 & 1:13:9 \\
12 \text{ Small...do...} 1/9 & 1:1:-- \\
45 \text{ Yds Blue Line...} 4d & 1:15:-- \\
58 \text{ Yds Rich Silk Damask...} 12/6 & 36:5:-- \\
38 \text{ Yds Yellow \( \frac{1}{2} \) yard Sarcenet...} 2/4 & 4:8:8 \\
36 \text{ yds Yellow Deep Silk Fringe...} 3/10 & 6:18:-- \\
24 \text{ yds Narrow...do...} 2/ & 2:8:-- \\
30 \text{ Yds Yellow Silk Line...} 4d & 1:10:-- \\
10 -- Yellow Large Silk Tossells...} 2/3 & 1:14:-- \\
\end{array}
\]

John Webster used this material to make four window curtains "lined and fringed," for the front and back parlors, with "3 Sofas D°" and "20 Chairs D°."  

In 1784, John Mason advertised that he wished "to be employed in his business as an Upholsterer by those Ladies and Gentlemen that find it convenient to buy the
materials themselves, or advance the money for the same." Five years later, Mason's property was sold on the demands of his creditors, and shortly thereafter he moved to Baltimore.

As a producer, the upholstery workshop sold materials, goods, and services to other intermediaries as well as to their final customers. The intermediary then further processed or simply re-marketed the product. Although it is difficult to determine whether a discount was offered only for bulk purchases, there is some evidence that merchandizers differentiated between the wholesale and retail markets. In 1797, when Thomas Jaquett advertised the American Manufactured Cotton Bedtickings, mentioned above, he also announced that "storekeepers may be supplied with the above ticking at the usual credit. Sold also by retail." There is considerable evidence to indicate that cabinetmakers and furniture craftsmen were the upholsterers' frequent customers, particularly of their services, but also of materials and finished goods. John Mason advertised that "Joiners will find in their interest to employ him." In 1775, George Haughton published his intention to upholster furniture "on very low terms for Cabinet-makers, in exchange for cabinet goods." David Evans' second day book (1782-95) documents his relationships with at least three
upholsterers, Jaquett, Davis, and Hurley. In 1786, Evans made bed rails and venetian blinds for John Davis; the upholsterer paid him in cash and with a sacking bottom and cord. Evans' accounts with Thomas Hurley are dated from 1786 to 1790. Most of the work involved the repair of upholstered furniture. Evans also bought two bureau tables which Hurley had put up for sale at the City Vendue in 1787. Their account was settled in cash and services: Hurley "was to paper (his) front Room" and Evans "was to mend two tables for him which did steele all accounts." 14

The papers of Daniel Trotter also illustrate this type of exchange. One of the earliest surviving bills, dated 1786-89, summarizes the debt of Daniel Trotter to the Estate of John Davis: 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td></td>
<td>£ 7.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb^ 6th</td>
<td>To Stuffing a Settee in Canvas for Mr. James Bayard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 11</td>
<td>To -- d^0 a small Settee in Canvas</td>
<td>6.10.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>To -- d^0 6 chair Bottoms in d^0 &amp; cover'ed with Hair Cloth</td>
<td>0.9.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Aug. 26 To 6½ yds hair Cloth 9/6</td>
<td>3.1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>To Stuffing an Elbow Chair in Canvas &amp; covering it with hair Cloth</td>
<td>0.13.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Apr. 18 To 4 yds Striped hair Cloth 8/6</td>
<td>1.14.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2¼ yds hair Cloth</td>
<td>10/ 1.2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-3/4 yds -- d^0 -- d^0</td>
<td>10/ 2.7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 20</td>
<td>4¼ yds -- d^0 -- d^0</td>
<td>10/ 2.5.--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Philadelphia---
Errors Excepted

£ 27.10.9
Daniel Trotter's receipt book (1794-1800) debits work done by at least three upholsterers, Henry (E65), Joad (E7), and Jaquett (E110) in the period 1794 to 1798. Jaquett frequently advertised his own business during this period; all three were occasionally credited with payment to the hands of their employees, probably apprentices, indicating at least a limited independent shop organization. In this case, there was no readily apparent pattern of patronage. The book also records the fact that two upholsterers, Bankson and Claypoole, bought ten and five yards, respectively, of hair cloth directly from Trotter, although they do not appear to have done any work for him.

On the basis of this interrelationship, several upholsterers extended their inventories to include non-upholstery finishing items that might be used by furniture craftsmen. In 1797, Cocks & Co. advertised that they carried

Mahogany and Veneers of all sorts, wholesale and retail - Cabinetmaker, house and ship joiners may be supplied with a quantity suitable for any piece of work. Carpenters can be supplied with hand tail stuff, cut to any pattern.

Upholstery workshops also appear to have been engaged in the export trade. In 1775, Plunket Fleeson published his intent to "endeavor to execute any distant orders with the utmost dispatch." Other upholsterers
advertised upholstery "for shipping." C. Alder included "Cotts, Mattrasses, and curtain furniture" in this category in 1795. Cocks and Co. advertised that they would "exchange furniture for...any article suitable for the South Carolina trade" in 1799. Two years earlier they had supplied "Gentlemen, merchants, and masters of vessels ...with all sorts of (cabinet and upholsterer) goods for exportation."

The ultimate market for upholstery products included both ready-made and custom upholstery. Most surviving bills and receipts describe quite elaborate custom upholstery; the high-style nature of the merchandise is dependent on the fact that actual survival of the evidence is due, largely, to the prominence of the client. The papers of General John Cadwalader in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania certainly fall into this category. During the period that he was furnishing his house, from 1770 to 1776, Cadwalader patronized at least three Philadelphia upholsterers, Fleeson, Webster, and Davis. He also purchased a number of canvas, leather, and rush bottom chairs directly from William Savery.

Webster's labor on the silks which were purchased by Cadwalader in London has already been noted. He also made Venetian window blinds and "2 Sofa-Cushions 4 Bolsters and Cases" of canvas, covered in furniture check."
John Cadwalader's furnishing account with Plunket Fleeson, dated from 1770-71, was far more extensive, totalling £163. It included at least 82 chairs, one Easy chair, and five large and small sofas, all finished in canvas, and covered in cases of red and white copperplate, "Fine Saxon blue Fr. Ch\(^k\)," or "Fine blue cotton Check;" in addition, he was also charged for making a "dark Chince bed," altering a "Check" bed, and making a "phestoone bed full trimd, with plumes, bases, and head board, fringes... Mking 2 Ven\(^n\) Curt\(^s\) D\(^0\)," of 56 yards fine red and white copperplate. Cadwalader and Fleeson maintained a color scheme in each room, sometimes matching the curtains and chair cases.

Later that year, Cadwalader paid Fleeson for removing and putting up bed and window curtains, and for a "new stuff'd head board covering...& making a Drapery head Vall\(^n\)." There are no bills which survive for the "6 mahogany carpet bottom chairs" that are listed in an "Inventory of Contents Remaining in Cadwalader House/Philadelphia, April 1, 1786" after John Cadwalader's death.

Stephen Girard's patronage of the upholsterer was a bit different than that of Cadwalader. Despite the fact that Girard used eight upholsterers in the period from 1787 to 1810, the surviving bills indicate that there was only
one temporal overlap between the craftsmen: 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Matt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>1790-95</td>
<td>Upholstery, repair, carpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benge</td>
<td>1796-98</td>
<td>Upholstery, carpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurley</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rea</td>
<td>1801-06</td>
<td>Upholstery, carpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wevill</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Carpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliphant &amp; Wilson</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Upholstery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridenhart (Haines)</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Upholstery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although a few of these craftsmen were related through the Trotter/Haines shop, or among themselves, there were others between whom no connection can be discovered.

Both Cadwalader and Girard dealt with upholsterers directly, as well as through a cabinet shop.

In addition to having their custom work done at the upholsterer's location, a customer might enjoy service at home. In 1766, John Platt offered that

for the better encouragement of his business (he) will work in the house of his employer or at his lodgings as above mentioned, at any branch of his trade that may be wanted. 27

Charles Allen, among others, repeated this offer in later years. This may have been a viable alternative for the craftsman without a large establishment of his own.

Some advertisements also claimed that the upholsterer would undertake "country" work, making custom upholstery more available to the rural resident. Ann King, lately at John Webster's, had "no objection to serve any
lady or gentleman at a small distance in the country which she (would) engage to do at the most reasonable terms."28 In his first year of business, Thomas Hurley advertised that he would "attend any work belonging to his business in the country, any distance from town, at the lowest city prices."29 In 1793, Thomas Jaquett submitted that orders from the country "would be duly attended to."30 One Philadelphia upholsterer went so far afield as to seek business in Baltimore through newspaper advertisements. In 1783, Hyns Taylor offered to "make up all sorts of bed and window curtains in the newest fashion," and other upholstery work, from his Philadelphia address.31

Wealthy residents of distant towns in the region might also have the opportunity of having their upholstery made-to-order if they had relatives or friends in Philadelphia who were willing to act as their agents. As mentioned previously, the interaction between the Ridgely family of Dover, Delaware, and Jasper Yeates of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Wevill and Fleeson respectively, document this practice.

There is no direct documentation of the extent--width or depth--of the market for ready-made upholstery goods, new or used, in Philadelphia during this period. However, evidence from advertisements indicates that ready-made provided an important option for a growing segment of
the market on all levels.

While the sources of new ready-made were the same as those for production materials, the second-hand stock was obtained in a variety of ways. Some of it may have come from re-possession due to non-payment of debts incurred. In 1776, for instance, William Martin advertised a bedsted and furniture with matching window curtains. He vouched for their quality:

As he made them, therefore can give an exact account of their first cost. The above articles have been in use but a short time, and will be sold as reasonable as when materials were at the former lowest rates.32

Upholsterers also obtained second-hand goods for sale on commission. In 1767, John Webster added a note to his general advertisement: "Furniture bought and sold by commission."33 Ten years later, George Haughton announced that he intended to "open his house as a General Repository, or Store, for all kinds of Furniture, Wares, and Merchandize, by commission."34 In 1798, Cocks & Co. publicized that they would always keep a large assortment of Household Furniture, New and Second Hand. They...take Second Hand Furniture in exchange for New; most money given for Furniture, Beds and Bedding.

The same ad also assured their potential customers that they would advance money "upon the deposit of any sort of Goods,"
and furnish houses "by the week, month, or year."\textsuperscript{35}

The most important development during the period, however, was the availability of new ready-made and the growth of the upholstery warehouse.

The first use of the term, "ware" house or room, associated with upholstery, was by Blanch White in 1760. At the "Upholstry and Ironmongery ware house" he offered "bed side and table carpets" and "blankets" along with metal wares and fabrics, directly imported from Bristol and London. He also added "Drums, colours, and all sorts of field equipage for the army as usual, also sea beding &c."\textsuperscript{36}

Other simple ready-made upholstery goods continued to be available from upholsterers throughout the period from 1760 to 1810. In 1771, Caleb Allen advised the public that he had just imported from Bristol, England, Wilton carpeting, Flanders tickens, stained bed quilts, and cotton counter-pains, "with several other articles in the upholstery way."\textsuperscript{37}

As might be anticipated, the Revolution encouraged a market for ready-made military "software," not only on a large scale for army clothiers, but for individual gentlemen as well. In 1777, for instance, George Haughton could supply any number of gentlemen with drums, camp stools, cot bedsteads to fold up, camp tables, mattresses of all kinds on the shortest notice, having always a large quantity by him.\textsuperscript{38}
The development of the true warehouse was a gradual one. By 1777, George Haughton had opened his shop as the "General Repository or Store." In 1783, John Mason advertised "John Mason's and Comp. Upholstery Store;" he offered a wide variety of ready-made items along with his services in custom upholstery. An examination of the inventory of Richard Wevill in 1803 indicates the extent to which ready-made had developed from the beginning of the period.

The shift in the goals of advertisements, from the simple announcement of availability to a competitive tool is another indication of growing "modernity." Over 37% of the individuals who were recorded as upholsterers in Philadelphia from 1760 to 1810, used the newspapers to advertise the advantages of their business.

Facilitated through the development of the upholstery warehouse, speed was, in fact, an important element in the competition for customers as revealed through contemporary advertisements. Besides speed, other consumer incentives included newest fashion, product satisfaction, and price. The advertisements of John Mason could serve as a model for all these claims.

Mason originally came to Philadelphia from South Carolina, and was active from 1767 to 1774, and from 1778
to 1790. Toward the end of this period, he had several problems with Philadelphia creditors, and he or his son removed the upholstery business to Baltimore. In his first advertisement, in 1767, he published a price list, with rates which were considerably lower than those charged by Plunket Fleeson only two years earlier:

THAT considering the stagnation of business and scarcity of cash, he finds it necessary to reduce the several prices of his work one third part lower than formerly, and in the following manner, viz.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>L.</th>
<th>S.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For making a Harrateen Bed,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Cornices,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venetian Curtains for Windows,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calico Bed, with Cornice,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto without Cornice,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making an easy Chair,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a Cover for Ditto,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a Settee,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting up a Bed,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Sacking Bottoms,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papering rooms at Two-pence per yard,</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>and will engage it to stand good; all other work in proportion.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the same advertisement, the upholsterer also stressed his own industriousness, the potential for complete customer satisfaction, and the "greatest dispatch" in providing the desired article. In 1768, in a post script to a notice of an attempted theft at his home, Mason added: "It's very odd that they should attempt to take from me, when there are others who get twice as much money for the same kind of WORK." Later that same year, he added "modern taste" to his appeal to "those gentlemen and ladies who have employed
him," and, in 1771, "as much to satisfaction as if he had been a Londonner or Parisian." 43

Mason, like most other upholsterers who advertised, directed his appeal to ladies and gentlemen, a clear implication that it was the "genteel"--or those that envisioned themselves so--who could be expected to have particular need of their services. In the lack of clearly defined class criteria in this country, upholstery may have been an appropriate statement of position, real or claimed. In addition, the inclusion of ladies in the appeal indicates at least a shared responsibility in the interior decoration.

In imitation of English "genteel" manners, American customers frequently delayed payment to tradesmen. This may, at least in part, have been conscious practice. In a letter from Williamina Cadwalader to Ann Ridgely in 1795, the writer reproved Mrs. Ridgely for settling her accounts in such haste; she assured her that statements were sent with the goods only to avoid errors. 44

This practice naturally contributed to the precarious position of the upholsterer. John Mason confirmed this concern in one of his advertisements:

he would by no means forget the ladies and gentlemen who pay the cash as soon as the work is done, which, with the continuance of their favors, will be extremely agreeable to their humble servant. 45
"Ready money" was preferred in payment, and some upholsterers offered a discount for cash. In 1770, for instance, William Martin announced that he would "do business considerably under the usual prices in this city for ready money." Hyns Taylor offered a similar reduction in 1787: "at the lowest prices for ready money."

The use of credit was most common, due, at least in part, to the shortage of specie. In 1799, Cocks and Co. advertised that

Ladies and Gentlemen, merchants and captains of vessels, who want furniture, will find it much to their advantage by applying as above, as they are determined to sell low, and likewise give a liberal credit if requested.

Nevertheless, some upholsterers found it necessary to limit the length of credit, for obvious reasons. Thomas Jaquett, announced that items in his line would be "made and sold at very reasonable prices, for cash, or a short credit."

Letters of credit were also passed in exchange to third parties. In 1779, a debt of £33, due to John Ross, merchant, was paid "By An Order from George Haughton on Benjamin Randolph to pay what he owes Said Geo: Haughton." To protect himself from an unjust loss, John Mason published the details of a disagreement that he had had with a Mr. Richard Skellorn; the latter had threatened to pass a note that Mason had given him in security, but the dispute was
The upholstery market at the end of the 18th century was in a state of transition. Although the roles of interaction had not yet become institutionalized, its structure was already in place. The master upholsterer was an intermediary as well as a producer; however, the former activity was based on those products which could be produced in the workshop. The precarious position of the craftsman, due in part to the lack of institutionalization, problems of credit, and competition from other intermediaries, increased the advantages of related specialization and supported the growth of ready-made.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The importance of the upholstery trade grew out of the development of seating furniture and elaborate beds in 17th century France. Upholstery was basically an urban craft, supported in cities and large towns where some proportion of the inhabitants could accumulate a surplus to spend on decorative commodities. In early 18th century Boston, and perhaps in contemporary Philadelphia as well, entrepreneurs like John Fitch had the opportunity to develop large scale commercial networks and to accumulate considerable wealth, based on the business of upholstery. However, with increased competition and the relative decline in textile values, the possibilities for significant vertical mobility in this profession decreased.

Individuals who called themselves upholsterers ranged from journeymen to merchant/craftsmen. The average Philadelphia upholsterer at the end of the 18th century was generally of a middling sort, a petty entrepreneur, precariously facing the ever-present possibility of business failure. Horizontal mobility was high, and there was
competition from the constant influx of immigrant craftsmen. Many upholsterers appear to have left their trade altogether.

In general, the structure of the upholstery workshop was extremely flexible. The same individual might simultaneously direct a workshop and take on the business of another. Women—wives as well as independent laborers—were an important part of a large shop.

The market, as the "arena for potential exchanges," formed the overall context of production and distribution of upholstery. Within that context, the upholstery workshop was both a producer and a marketing intermediary. The suppliers or sources of materials were varied, ranging from the domestic producer, to other intermediaries, to the customer himself. Many workshops and their upholsterer/entrepreneurs extended their activities into areas that were related to the craft. They imported and made ready-made, as well as contracted for custom upholstery. Several also dealt in second-hand goods. The customers for materials, goods, and services included other producers and intermediaries as well as the final consumer. The growth of ready made in this case may have increased the possibilities for steady employment, but also added to competition.

In any case, the direct effect of these developments on the products themselves is quite difficult to assess.
without well-documented examples. Elaborate, custom upholstery was probably a very effective status symbol. On the other hand, increasing standardization may have had an effect, as well. As the use of upholstery increased, it may have become even more important for those in elevated positions to differentiate their interiors. It is quite obvious then that we need to seek out and find surviving examples and to preserve what little we have. If it is possible, we must begin to describe the relationships between price and/or social standing, and "the manner of finishing and the size." Upholstery was an essential, even overriding, element in the 18th century interior; its significance cannot be overestimated.
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