

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CASE FURNITURE  
OF ESSEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS  
AND ITS MAKERS.

by

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An indication of [Thomas Denis's] productivity may be found in his charge for a carved box with a drawer and two locks. This was two shillings sixpence, about the price of one day's labor, as then regulated. At that rate of daily production, what must have been the production of forty years?

--Irving P. Lyon,  
April, 1938.

## PREFACE

The ghost of Thomas Denis, a carver and joiner who came to Ipswich, Massachusetts from Portsmouth, New Hampshire around the year 1667, and worked there until his death in 1706, has dominated the written history of Essex County furniture since the mid-1930's.

From November 1937 through August 1938, a series of six articles by Dr. Irving P. Lyon appeared in The Magazine Antiques entitled "The Oak Furniture of Ipswich, Massachusetts." In part meticulously researched in the manner of his father, Dr. Irving W. Lyon, and in part a wish-fulfillment fantasy of attribution without sufficient evidence, Dr. Lyon suggested that fifty-nine pieces of furniture—virtually all that survives of Essex County origin from the last four decades of the seventeenth century—were made by this one joiner.

In July and October, 1960, Helen Park published articles in the same magazine based on work she had done as a graduate student in the department of fine arts at Radcliffe College. In the July article, Mrs. Park examined what had in the years since 1938 become the "Denis Legend" and pointed out that within the permissible limits of serious scholarship, only the five pieces of carved furniture which have descended in the Denis family since the seventeenth century can be ascribed, with any degree of certainty, to the hand of Denis. Even one of these, she later suggests, might have been made by Denis' wife's first husband, William Searle.

In the second article, published in October 1960, Mrs. Park listed the names of twenty-one other joiners and turners who were working in Essex County during the lifetime of Thomas Denis. Surely some of their work has

survived too, is the conclusion of her study.

By the time that Helen Comstock published her survey of American Furniture: Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Century Styles in 1962, accuracy demanded that what had previously been attributed to the hand of ONE man must be interpreted as a regional style.

A regional interpretation in this instance is easily supported because of the almost textbook set of circumstances that occurred historically in Essex County in the seventeenth century.

First, emigration into the Massachusetts Bay Colony virtually ceased after about 1648. Second, there was little or no political influence from England exerted on their affairs for over half a century. Third, the strong cultural emphases of the society were shared by virtually all of its inhabitants and their affairs were dominated by a group of men determined against change. Fourth, the society was confined within a limited geographical area, and last, although the inhabitants of the region had come from a variety of sub-regions originally, they all participated in a common English heritage: among them the differences were less than the similarities.

The study of Essex County case furniture is, however, complicated by the fact that none of the furniture of Boston made earlier than the period 1690-1700 has been identified with sufficient authority to indicate what it was like. Yet, a page by page search of James Savage's Genealogical Dictionary of New England reveals that of the twenty-six joiners, turners, chair-makers and carvers whose occupations are listed therein and who emigrated to New England before 1692, eighteen settled in Boston and immediate environs.

That there was a large and vigorous school of furniture-making in this largest of New England towns there can be little doubt. Some of this furniture must survive.

On the basis of the axiom that nothing in civilized life remains static, Wallace Nutting in a pioneer work published in 1924, Furniture of the Pilgrim Century (Of American Origin), suggested what an evolution of styles in American furniture might have been like in the seventeenth century. He assumed first, that American furniture evolved during the century just as English furniture did. Second, he assumed that American technology in the earliest years was crude and produced heavy furniture, but that as the century progressed, the technology improved and lighter furniture resulted.

Considering that so little documentary evidence was available to him, his accomplishment was remarkable. But it is to be regretted that he and his circle did not make a greater effort to preserve family histories which may have been associated with the objects then. It must also be borne in mind that his book must be read today as a theoretical treatise, and not as an encyclopedia.

Too, it is remarkable that Nutting does not mention the name of one Essex County joiner or turner, even though the indexes of the Quarterly Court Records, published from 1911 through 1921, would have quickly led him to half a dozen.

Yet everyone who has examined seventeenth century American furniture concedes that "Nutting had an instinct" for it, and nowhere is his good sense better reflected than in the quotation on the flyleaf to Chapter I of this paper. Nutting's writings reveal that he had a far deeper knowledge of the artifacts with which he was dealing than did his more scholarly predecessor, Dr. Irving W. Lyon, whose book, The Colonial Furniture of New England, first published in 1892 is the prototype for modern scholarly research.

With very few exceptions, further attribution, in the sense of "probably made by," has not been found to be warranted on the basis of presently available documentation. Present attributions have been considered as dispassionately as possible. The object of this paper has been

stated by my advisor, Mr. Charles Montgomery, thus: "Write down what we can know for sure."

The seventeenth century offers a fertile field for the researcher. On the one hand, in museums and private collections there exists a great body of furniture whose histories, stylistic details and quirks of construction are related. Some of these pieces are known to have originated in Essex County and so the whole group is associated with that fertile creative area of the American Decorative Arts "North of Boston."

In addition, there is an immense body of documents and records, published and unpublished, books of local history, family genealogy and excellent compendia of biography. They leave virtually no seventeenth century resident of Essex County unmentioned.

The writer has investigated four main areas of seventeenth century Essex County life: craft practices (particularly ways of using apprenticeship), and the ways in which they varied from those of England; the lives and interrelationships of Essex County furniture craftsmen; the methods used by these craftsmen to convert logs into woods suitable for furniture-making; and finally, how case furniture was made in Essex County during the seventeenth century.

Limited opportunities have existed for me to examine a great deal of seventeenth century English case furniture. Most of my information has been derived from studying the examples in public museums, in a few private collections, and in the showrooms of helpful dealers. I have also relied heavily upon the excellent study Furniture Making in 17th and 18th Century England by Robert W. Symonds and The Dictionary of English Furniture by Ralph Edwards.

A wide variety of manuscript sources were consulted during the course of preparing this paper. Each had its own peculiarities of spelling, abbreviation, transcription etc. For the sake of clarity and consistency,

I have made arbitrary choices in converting them to the printed page.

In the quotation of dates, the slash "/" is used to signify the dual date represented by the fact that England did not convert to the Julian calendar until 1752. "Firstmonth" in the Puritan calendar was actually March, and thus there could be two January's and February's in any year were the ambiguity not noted. Thus "28 February 1698/99," indicates the latter year. Similarly, "21 Seventhmonth 1642" or "21:7:42" does not refer to our 7th month, July, but to theirs (add 2), September.

The hyphen "--" is used in the paper for a date of which either this author or the author of the secondary source from which the information may be quoted was unsure. Thus "born February 28, 1698-99" is conventionally used to mean born in either 1698 or 1699.

All quotations are transcribed directly and exactly from the source cited in the footnotes. Because of the uncountable variations from modern spelling, punctuation and grammar, the author has elected never to use the word "sic" to interrupt the flow of a quotation and assumes full responsibility for the faithfulness to the original of his transcription. Use of the ampersand in these quotations is also faithful to the originals.

Although present day readers rebel at the use of the printed letter "y" to represent the "th" sound of the Anglo-Saxon thorne, I have of necessity retained it in my transcriptions from all of the documents quoted, both printed and handwritten. This has been done not for archaic effect but because all of the printed documents bearing on Essex County, published in the first decades of the present century consistently do so and no point would be served in my changing them here. In arbitrarily choosing this course for the sake of consistency and accuracy, I ask my readers please to substitute mentally the "th" sound for the typed "y" where appropriate, and mentally render "July y<sup>e</sup> 4" as "July the 4th," in the same spirit as one mentally adds "th" to "4" to make that ordinarily printed numeral read cardinally.

Again for the sake of uniformity, the transcription of monetary terms is conventionalized thus: "li." = pounds; "s." = shillings; and "d." = pence. "2 li. 2 s. 3½ d." means "two pounds, two shillings, thruppence ha(y)p(e)nnny."

The modern student must be aware that the terminology of late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars was not always scrupulously selected and is sometimes positively incorrect and misleading. For example, the use of the term "cabinetmaker" in seventeenth century Essex County documents has not yet been found.<sup>2</sup> The assertion by Henry Wyckoff Belknap in Trades and Tradesmen of Essex County (Salem: 1929) that Samuel Beadle and his son, Samuel, Jr., were "cabinetmakers" (page 66) cannot be substantiated. The statement is un-footnoted there and has not been confirmed by an exhaustive search of the documents and records of Essex County. Nor did the search of Mr. Belknap's notes by Dean Fales, while he was the director of the Essex Institute, turn up a clue as to where Mr. Belknap got his information.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the facts appear to indicate that while Samuel Beadle, Jr., was a turner until 1683 when he became an inn-holder, his father probably was a "soap-boiler."<sup>4</sup>

The spelling of proper names varies greatly in written records. Sometimes the vagaries may be traced to the phonetics of a clerk of court or a court recorder. Sometimes a man will even spell his own name two ways in the same document. Wherever possible, I have used the spelling as it appeared in an original text. Thus, since an autograph of John Launder exists,<sup>5</sup> it is here spelled with the "u," in preference to the more modern "Lander." In the absence of a signature, the spelling follows first that of Savage's Genealogical Dictionary, or if it is not found there, either a family genealogy or an authoritative local history.

Footnote usage conforms to that specified in the Modern Languages Association Style Sheet (New York: 1967) paragraph 19.

Finally, rather than interrupt the flow of the reader's train of thought with additional footnotes to explain archaic words used in direct

quotations, I have included a concise definition, preceded by the abbreviation "i.e." all in brackets, thus: "...wheels, pails, trays, truggers [i.e. a container for measuring wheat], and wooden measures."

A project of original research today cannot be totally accomplished by the efforts of one person: the researcher relies on the goodwill, specialized knowledge and help of many other people.

Without the continual encouragement, practical suggestions and indication of broad directions by my advisor, Mr. Charles F. Montgomery, whose largeness of spirit, unlimited imagination, indefatiguable enthusiasm and encyclopedic knowledge are all coupled with the humility and kindness of a great teacher and true scholar, this study would never have taken its present shape or direction. His meticulous critical appraisal over a period of many weeks has resulted in a paper which can be read without embarrassment. His has been the gift which cannot be bought: time.

An immeasurable debt is owed to Mr. Gordon Saltar whose microscopic analyses of countless samples of wood add a note of assurance to present-day scholarship which previous generations of furniture historians have had to do without. His observations on woods and their uses combine the sensitivity of an artist with the precision of a scientist—both of which he is. His analyses are always provocative, sobering and authoritative. But most of all, they remove the frustration of doubt.

The Winterthur Museum's librarians and the staff of the registrar's office have provided me with assistance beyond the mere obligations of duty. Mr. Ian Quimby has listened sympathetically and without complaint to ideas, good and bad, and Mr. Charles Hummel has provided much information about tools from his special knowledge.

The director of the Essex Institute, Mr. David Little, extended to me the complete freedom of his facilities, for which I cannot express in words the degree of my indebtedness, and Mrs. Gilbert Payson, curator of

the Institute's collections was most generous of her time, knowledge and experience. Indeed, the spirit of helpfulness manifested by them is typical of the spirit that animates all of the members of the curatorial and library staffs of that institution. Particular thanks are due to Mrs. Charles Potter, the Institute's reference librarian.

Mr. and Mrs. Horton Dudley Bradstreet of Topsfield provided the sort of help which cannot be found in books. Mr. Roland Hammond and Mr. William Endicott of North Andover were also extremely helpful. Mr. S. Forbes Rockwell of North Andover had already done the scholarship necessary to make my research into ancient Andover easy. Hopefully someday he will find time to publish the true history of that Township. Mr. and Mrs. George Sherwood and Mrs. Barbara Sessions of Andover are also due thanks, as are Mr. and Mrs. Roger Bacon of Brentwood, New Hampshire.

Mrs. Daniel Giffin, curator of the Prentis Collection at the New Hampshire Historical Society; Mrs. James Newton, curator of the Whipple House in Ipswich, Mr. Ross Taggart, senior curator of the Nelson-Atkins Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri and Mr. James Armstrong of Boston were also helpful.

Also informative were Mrs. Sumner Babcock of Wellesley, Massachusetts; Mr. J. Sanger Atwill of the restored Saugus Ironworks; Mrs. Kathryn C. Buhler, Mrs. Charles H. (Lura Woodside) Watkins, Mrs. Ralf Emerson and Mr. and Mrs. Cary Carson.

Miss Eleanor Perley is a worthy daughter of a scholarly father: with her, the search still goes on.

Mrs. Bertram K. Little helped solve some of the mysteries of "the Ipswich Style," and Dr. Abbot Lowell Cummings of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities flattered me with a give and take that made me feel as if I were indeed on the proper track.

I would also like to thank Mr. Henry P. Maynard, curator of American Arts at the Wadsworth Atheneum; Mr. H. H. Schnabel, Jr., Assistant Curator, Department of Decorative Arts of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Dr. Jules D. Prown, Curator of the Garvan Collection at the Yale University Gallery of Art; and Miss Dorothy Merrick, Director of the Pilgrim Society for access to their collections and their special knowledge.

My eyes in the Connecticut River Valley belonged to Patricia E. Kane whose keen observations have saved me from a number of errors and assumptions. She has more than once saved me from the sin of thinking that an isolated fact was a universal truth.

To my wife are due special thanks. That this paper has been completed is a tribute to her patience and sense of humor.

## FOOTNOTES

## PREFACE

<sup>1</sup>"The Oak Furniture of Ipswich, Massachusetts," Antiques, XXXIII (April 1938), 202—hereafter cited as Lyon, Antiques.

<sup>2</sup>The best insight into this transitional phase of woodworking life in England following the Stuart Restoration is to be found in Robert W. Symonds, "How the Joiner Became a Cabinetmaker," Country Life Annual (no. vol.) (December 1952), 69-73—hereafter cited as Symonds, "Joiner." The earliest recorded use of the word in colonial New England occurs when John Clark, who had arrived in Boston on or very shortly before October 31, 1681, is called by that term. See Miscellaneous Papers in Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston, X (Boston, 1886), 71—hereafter cited as Boston Records.

<sup>3</sup>Information in a letter to the author from Dean A. Fales, Jr., then director of the Essex Institute, Salem Massachusetts, April 18, 1967.

<sup>4</sup>The property is described as "being late in ye tenure & occupation of Samuel Beadle, late deceased...to Stephen Haskett, soapboiler...the dwelling house with a soape house, 2 coppers sett up in ye same, with all the [sic] appurtenances thereto belonging...." in Essex County Registry of Deeds, Book 2 leaf 94—hereafter cited as "Salem Deeds."

<sup>5</sup>The autographed will of John Launder, joiner, is in the Records of the Clerk of the Probate Court, Salem Massachusetts, Docket #16282—hereafter cited as Probate Docket.

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The usual practice in the making of chests was to rive not only the rails and stiles but often the panels. This method secured greater strength, because if a stick of oak would not split smoothly it was rejected. It was also far easier to rive than to saw. Our ancestors did not always do work in the slowest and the hardest way, although such an impression has their strenuous life made, that some authors seem to presume that the fathers preferred a hard way to an easy one. The riving of wood is often apparent yet, on the unfinished interiors of the rails or stiles, and is quite frequent on the backs of the panels, and on the under side of the drawers.

--Wallace Nutting.

## CHAPTER I

### THE FURNITURE WOODS OF ESSEX COUNTY

The story of the furniture of seventeenth century Essex County, Massachusetts begins long before the first settlers set foot upon the shores of Massachusetts Bay. It begins long before there was either an economic or spiritual reason for Englishmen ever to consider leaving England.

It begins when those giant oak trees of the now long disappeared virgin forest that stretched from Boston Bay across the Merrimack River to the north and westward, where no white man had trod, began to grow.

Today, in the Museum of the restored Saugus Iron Works, a remnant of one of those giant oaks, more than four feet in diameter, can be seen. It was once the base of a six foot log set into the earth to absorb the shock of the 500 pound water-driven hammer which thumped down on the anvil set on it, once a second, all day, every day, for more than twenty years.

But that solitary stump is the only reminder of the virgin forest of Essex County, and it now requires an act of the imagination to envision a stand of red and white oak, maple, beech, birch and white pine—all of vast size—covering the entire complex of old towns, silted-up rivers, shipless seaports past their prime, suburban dwellings and cordons of super-highways crowded with commuter traffic and vacationing tourists that is present day Essex County.

Yet, without that vast hardwood forest, the economy of seventeenth century Essex County could never have gotten started.

Of all the trees in New England, the oak was most familiar to the first settlers. Their homes in England had been framed with oak, the furniture they knew was made of it, the ships that had brought them to the new world were built of it, and laws and customs governing its use were a part of the Englishman's life.

Thus, the virtually untouched forests of their New England not only offered a richness of resources beyond the exaggeration of dreams, but also permitted and even encouraged the perpetuation of a way of life and a pattern of living not unlike the one most familiar to the majority of the first settlers.<sup>2</sup>

The economy of New England could exist only by consuming wood, and the oak tree was the key ingredient in the way of life the seventeenth century New England settler quickly established. The oak tree supplied the great beams and girts with which he framed and joined his house for over a century. Oak was the favorite wood for cooking in the picturesque but inefficient fireplaces whose large size is an earmark of the early New England house: the great density of oak caused it to be consumed slowly by fire, and the heat produced was even and long-lasting.

From the oak tree's ashes came potash, the ingredient which turned animal fat into soap, much in demand for cleaning the wool his wife was to spin into yarn.

The early settlers discovered that the sawdust of the red oak tree made a yellow dye whose brilliance and permanence was superior to anything of the sort they had known at home. Charcoal burners used oak in large quantities to make that superior charcoal the blacksmiths of the colony soon learned to prefer. And friendly Indians taught the first colonists that boiled acorns were, if not appetizing, at least filling when the seasonal larder ran low. The English custom of fattening hogs by allowing them to forage among the acorns in the common woods was followed in New England, too.

The oak tree furnished the first settlers with shingles for their roofs, and clapboards for the sides of their houses when the climate of New England proved too harsh for the wattle and daub walls, and the thatched roofs they had built in the English style.

Clapboards and shingles can be quickly riven with wooden wedge and a wooden mallet from oak, a wood so hard that a seasoned "piece of stuff" required many man hours of hard sawing.

Here can be seen the first major reason for a difference between American practice and that of England: for it was man-hours that were in short supply in America. Nature was profligate in endowing New England, but skilled men to exploit the abundance were lacking throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> In England, where the population first began to exceed the work to be done in the sixteenth century, the trade of "sawyer" was protected by statute and habit well into the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> As a result, sawmills did not come into common use in England until late in the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> But in Essex County, New England, many small townships had them in operation by the 1650's. In America, the sawyer's trade persisted only in those places where there was not sufficient water power to permit the convenient setting up of sawmills—notably Salem and Boston.

As long as oak was the primary wood of which the case furniture of Essex County was made, craftsmen split it out of the clear<sup>6</sup> logs of the oak tree. Wide, thinly tapering sections were formed into panels. Thicker stiles generally squared on three sides with a plane, leaving the fourth side tapering and unfinished (Fig. 1.), were used for the framing members of cupboards and chests, and often for the fronts of drawers.

Oak, when riven along the direction of the grain, cuts across sections of the ray structure of the tree. These ray flecks, which give interest to the surface of the riven oak, add an extra note of charm to the furniture of the seventeenth century made from it. But this surface beauty, on which many furniture historians have commented, seems most



Figure 1.

Likely to be an added dividend, derived from the use of riven wood, rather than a decorative device consciously striven for.

Two kinds of American oak (Quercus, in the Linnaean vocabulary) figure in the furniture of seventeenth century Essex County: the white oaks (subgenus Lepidobalanus), and the red oaks (subgenus Erythrobalanus). Each is roughly distinguishable by the characteristic color of its heartwood, which is reflected in their common names. Within each subgenus, there are a number of varieties, but, for practical purposes, Quercus alba may be considered the most important white oak and Quercus rubra, historically, the most important red oak for furniture and house building.

Red oak never appears in English furniture of the seventeenth century. The genus was not native to England,<sup>7</sup> and none grew there until the late 1690's when Bishop Crompton of Fulham planted some in his garden for ornamental purposes.<sup>8</sup>

A quirk of history and a fact of botany kept red oak from finding its way into English furniture during the seventeenth century. As early as 1622 or 23,<sup>9</sup> mention is made of clapboards being exported to England from Plymouth. The specification of "clapboards" suggests riven planks, possibly for marine construction, perhaps of oak. But the commercial exportation of American oak logs, red or white, for shipbuilding in England was short-lived. American oak soon attained the reputation of being "rotten" and inferior to English oak for marine construction.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, red oak WAS less good than English oak for ship-building purposes. It does not possess tyloses, a mucous substance peculiar to the white oak family, which swells upon contact with moisture. It was this quality, although the woodsmen of the seventeenth century didn't know it, that made white oak the preferred shipbuilding timber until after the American Revolution.<sup>11</sup> As a result, red oak was simply not exported.

Concerning the felling of oaks, even by commoners on the common lands, prohibitions were promulgated by the town of Ipswich as early as

1634, and by Salem in 1636:<sup>12</sup> the voice of conservation was heard very soon after the attitudes of the consumer manifested themselves. Wood was not considered any one man's property: it belonged to the community.

It is no accident that the furniture makers of seventeenth century Essex County preferred the trees of the red oak family to their more highly touted cousins of the white variety. Their greater porosity made them much easier to work with. Equally important are the growing habits of the trees themselves. Their foliage and branches grow only at the top of the tree, leaving a long, strong, branch-free and hence, knot-free expanse of trunk. Since this trunk could be riven perfectly, by a technique well-known to the rural craftsmen who first settled New England, the absence of sawn oak and white oak in most of the furniture they made should surprise no one.

Oak logs dry out at the rate of only one inch per year. As they "cure," the wood hardens and toughens. Considering the level which sawing technology had attained in the early seventeenth century, pit-sawing would have put the extensive use of oak for furniture beyond the means of most of the first colonists. Mill-sawing might have diminished the cost, had not the toughness of the wood made this method of getting furniture wood as impractical as pit-sawing.

Oak saws more easily when it is green, but un-cured oak is very liable to warpage. The surviving furniture of the seventeenth century gives little indication that green oak—mill-sawn, pit-sawn, or riven—was ever used. Even today when oak is mill-sawn, it must be stacked carefully, the boards separated by pieces of another kind of wood, so that the air can circulate freely between them. It cannot be exposed to the weather, for oak is hygroscopic and highly susceptible to the fungi which are always present in the atmosphere.

Although mill-sawn oak has not been observed in the furniture of seventeenth century Essex County, it was used in house-building. The Seth

Storey house, from which the Seventeenth Century Room at the Winterthur Museum was taken, has been dated, through the researches of Charles Hummel, as having been built in 1684. The room has mill-sawn, red oak joists. The joists were undoubtedly "run" by the owner and builder of the house, Seth Storey, at the sawmill he had inherited from his father, William, four years earlier. The mill and house were located at "The Falls" of the Chebaggo River in the south parish of seventeenth century Ipswich township, then known as Chebaggo Parish (present Essex Falls).

It is important to note that the joiner's method of setting oak panels into joined frames compensates a great deal for the shortcomings of the wood as a furniture-making material.<sup>13</sup> Riven oak does not tend to warp because splitting the wood along its grain structure does not violate the natural tension within the wood,<sup>14</sup> which sawing through it does.

Considering, then, the technical difficulties that furniture-makers might encounter in using oak, the question immediately suggests itself: "Why did they use oak at all?" The answer is manifold—it was the "style"; had been the traditional furniture wood for centuries past; and it was the wood the first joiners of New England were accustomed to using. Its use was a practice which they brought with them to the New World.

By 1678, mill-sawn woods do appear in the furniture of Essex County. But the wood is not oak: it is sycamore (planus occidentalis). It appears as the bottom of two drawers in the Staniford-Heard family chest of drawers at Winterthur (#57.541), and in the Woodbury family cupboard, dated 1680 (#66.1261), in the same collection. The distinctive marks of the water-powered vertical-motion sawmill can be seen on the bottom of the middle shelf and on the undersides of the drawers.

Sycamore was a justifiably popular wood with the first sawmill operators of Essex County. It was a hardwood, yet it sawed easily. It was moderately light in weight, had a compact grain structure,<sup>15</sup> and as the English naturalist, John Josslyn remarked on his voyage to New England

in 1670, "was a stately tree growing here and there in the valleys."<sup>16</sup> It was thus convenient to the streams on which the sawmills were located. Buttonwood, as sycamore was sometimes called, lent itself admirably to turning, and retained its shape well after being steamed. It is often found in the slats of seventeenth century chairs.

Mill-sawn pine first appears in joiner-made furniture as a secondary wood (Fig. 2) sometime in the 1680's. This date is estimated on the basis of the style of surviving examples, for a dated example has not yet been found. As a primary wood, it began to be substituted for oak panels in the following decade. Pine had long been popular for the lids of chests, but because the wood is planed on both surfaces, it is virtually impossible to determine if it was mill or pit-sawn. However, there can be no doubt that many of the six-board chests of the seventeenth century were made of mill-sawn pine. These popular and inexpensive chests were undoubtedly made by both joiners and carpenters. But by the time mill-sawn lumber came into wide use for finer and more complex furniture, the age of joined furniture was rapidly drawing to a close.

Until we are able to demonstrate that some of the furniture which is now generally supposed to have been made in the eighteenth century was in fact made before 1700 in New England, there can be no accurate assessment of how widespread the use of mill-sawn native woods was in the seventeenth century. While this paper is not tyrannized by a strict definition of the "17th Century," the latest dated example of an Essex County joined oak chest bears the carved date 1700 (see discussion under Plate III, *infra*).

Around the turn of the century, two unrelated events occurred which changed the direction of the craft of furniture-making. First, the demand for a new style of furniture began to eliminate the joiner's traditional method of framing furniture in favor of board construction. About the same time, the common lands, from which many wood-workers had gotten their wood, were slowly but inevitably being divided up among the old



Figure 2.

commoners into private property. By the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the privileges of the use of the commons had become but a memory.

A new pattern for procuring wood in Essex County was beginning to take shape in Salem as early as 1669-71. The situation concerning wood had always been different there from that which the rest of the county enjoyed. Although sawmills were in use in almost every township of the county by the middle of the century, none was set up convenient to Salem proper until 1671 when one was built beside Beaver Dam Creek on the land of John Porter (near present Nichols St.).<sup>17</sup> This solitary mill could hardly supply the demand of a growing Salem. Indeed, timber for building purposes had already become scarce as early as 1669. On November 2 of that year it was noted in the Town Records that the timber for building the prison was to be brought to Salem "by water"; in consideration of the extra expense thereby entailed, the contractors were to be allowed additional money.<sup>18</sup>

Between 1679 and 1682, Salem merchant Jonathan Corwin noted in his ledger that joiner James Symonds purchased boards.<sup>19</sup> Corwin, in turn, was getting the boards from carpenter/sawyers who lived elsewhere in Essex County.<sup>20</sup> Symonds was a commoner and is recorded as having the right to fell trees on the common land to use in his work.<sup>21</sup> It is thus fascinating to note that by 1679 he is finding it more convenient to purchase wood from a merchant than to hew it himself, even with the aid of his sons and apprentices. Other furniture makers of Salem who did the same thing were joiners John Launder and John Neal, and carpenter/chairmaker John Macmillion.<sup>22</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup> Furniture of the Pilgrim Century (New York: Dover Books, 1965)  
p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See the unpublished doctoral dissertation (University of London, 1952) by Norman L. Tyack "Immigration from East Anglia to New England, 1630-1650," p. 413 et passim.

<sup>3</sup> "Broadly speaking, immigrants to New England were just as eager to be farmers as the average American now is anxious to be anything but a farmer. So the skilled artisans who in large numbers emigrated to Massachusetts Bay tended to get absorbed in the land...." Samuel Eliot Morison, Builders of the Bay Colony (Boston, 1930), p. 168—hereafter cited as Morison, Builders. See also John Winthrop's Journal, published as The History of New England from 1630 to 1649, ed. James Savage, 2 Vols. (Boston, 1853), p. 116, "The scarcity of workmen had caused them to raise their wages to an excessive rate, so as a carpenter would have three shillings a day."—hereafter cited as Winthrop, Journal.

<sup>4</sup> J. Leander Bishop, A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860 (Philadelphia, 1861), p. 93—hereafter cited as Bishop.

<sup>5</sup> Sidney Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies (New York, 1922), p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> "Clear" means free of knots or defects.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Culross Peattie, A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central North America (Boston, 1950), p. 194.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>9</sup> Bishop, p. 200 says "1622." Hugh Morrison, Early American Architecture (New York, 1952), p. 10 says "1623."

<sup>10</sup> "The dockyard officials inspecting a trial cargo at Deptford in 1696 reported that 'the wood in general is of very tender and frow substance mingled with red veins and subject to many worm holes & signs of decay.' " Robert Greenhalgh Albion, Forests and Sea Power (Cambridge,

Mass., 1926), p. 24, citing the Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1696-97, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> B. Francis Kukachka, et al. Woods, Colors and Kinds (Washington, 1956), p. 8—hereafter cited as Kukachka.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Franklin Waters, Ipswich in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 2 Vols. (Ipswich, 1905), I, 68—hereafter cited as Waters, Ipswich. For the Salem ordinance see Town Records of Salem, Massachusetts, 1659-80 (Salem, 1913) II, 116—hereafter cited as Salem, Town Records.

<sup>13</sup> Ralph Edwards, The Dictionary of English Furniture (London, 1954) II, 126—hereafter cited as Edwards, Dictionary.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Weymss Symonds, Furniture Making in 17th and 18th Century England (London, 1955), p. 29—hereafter cited as Symonds, Furniture.

<sup>15</sup> Kukachka, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> John Robinson, The Flora of Essex County, Massachusetts (Salem, 1880), pp. 95-96.

<sup>17</sup> Sidney Perley, The History of Salem, Massachusetts, 3 Vols. (Salem, 1924-28), II, 429—hereafter cited as Perley, Salem.

<sup>18</sup> Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts, 8 Vols. (Salem, 1911-21), IV, 213—hereafter cited as Court Records.

<sup>19</sup> See the unpublished MS. Ledger of Jonathan Corwin, 1679-85, II, 70, in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection—hereafter cited as Corwin Ledger.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> Salem Town Records, II, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Corwin Ledger, Unpaged items under dates May 31, 1680; January 11, 1682/3; et passim.

It is required of the selectmen that they see that all youth under family Government be taught to read perfectly the english tongue, have knowledge in the capital laws, and be taught some orthodox eatechism, and that they be brought up in some honest imployment, profitable to themselves and the commonwealth...the prevalency of the former neglect notwithstanding....and you are required to take a list of the names of those young persons...who doe not serve their parents or masters as...apprentices, hired servants or journeymen ought to do, and usually did in our native country....

--Order of the Salem Court to  
the Constable of Topsfield,  
March 2, 1668.

## CHAPTER II

### APPRENTICESHIP AND THE INFLUENCE OF GUILDS IN 17TH CENTURY ENGLAND AND NEW ENGLAND

Some craft guilds existed in every incorporated town in Medieval England, but all crafts were not represented by guilds in all towns. London, York and Chester appear to be the only cities, for example, which had joiners guilds in seventeenth century England.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, many historians feel that the Guild System was weakening by the end of the sixteenth century.

The wood-working guilds of London existed for three reasons: first, to maintain control over the quality of work produced by its members; second, to keep the price for the work they did as high as possible; and third, to limit the number of men working in the trade within the town and thus control "foreign," i.e. non-member competition.<sup>3</sup>

An important law affecting all of the crafts was passed by Parliament in the fifth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1562/3). It was called "The Statute of Artificers," and is sometimes erroneously referred to as "The Statute of Apprentices." Ostensibly it was concerned with maintaining high standards of quality in the goods made by the craftsmen of England. Actually, the statute had a far different aim. It was a device for discouraging further migration to London by farm workers who had no urban skills. In effect it denied them the prospect of attractive employment in the city and, in the broader context of history, tacitly admitted that the very expansion of the population of London had made it impossible for the medieval guilds to deal effectively with the new urban situation.

The guilds had laid the foundations for a municipal life far

different from that of the feudal centuries of the middle ages, by a carefully husbanding the powers and concessions—sometimes purchased, sometimes wheedled—from Kings and Lords during the several preceding centuries. But, by the end of the sixteenth century, the growing population of the cities, particularly London, and the increased demand for goods at low prices was outstripping the guild's powers to prevent encroachment on their privileges.

It had been to the advantage of the Monarchy to maintain the guilds. The crown had been paid for the issuance of charters. In addition, part of the rationale behind granting of the chartered monopolies of the guilds was a responsibility for inspection of the goods sold in the cities. If the guilds did this—out of self-interest—the crown did not have to.

Short of Revolution, social institutions are not abandoned. The ascent of James I to the throne of England was not a revolution and it is therefore not surprising that on June 12, 1604, in the first year of his reign, a new charter was issued to The Worshipful Company of Turners of London. In the ordinances drawn up pursuant to that charter, the limits of the Company's authority and responsibilities are set forth. It is this remarkable document which furnishes the student of seventeenth century craft practices the most complete insight into the "misterie" or "trade" of the Turner.

Upon the lathe, the turners of London made "bushel measures [and] Wood Wares," specifically, "shovels, scoops, bushelltrees, washing bowls, chairs, [spinning] wheels, pails, trays, truggers [i.e. containers for measuring wheat] and wooden measures."<sup>4</sup>

In paragraph 39 of the company's ordinances, the turners are given the right to "view" (i.e. inspect) items for the Royal Navy, to insure the proper construction of blocks, deadeyes, etc. The kinds of wood used by turners are specified here, as "ash, Elm, Beech, Maple or Hornebeam... Lignum Vitae, Brazil, Box Holly...Whitethorn...[and] Oak."<sup>5</sup>

But it is paragraph 43 that reveals the gravest problem faced by the Turner's Company. "...Faulty commodities from divers places in the Realm and other Countries [are coming in] to the City of London to be sold to the great slander of the Mysterie."<sup>6</sup> Here is acknowledgment that sufficient turner's work was done outside of London, for sale in the city, to give competition to the Guild.

This document is of extreme importance to the student of American craft practices in the seventeenth century. The men who were to make furniture in the new world worked as apprentices and journeymen in England during the early years of the reign of King James I.

Provincial and foreign work, however, was not the only source of competition that infringed upon the chartered rights of the Worshipful Company of Turners. By 1632, the joiner's company of London was also encroaching on the turner's bailiwick, as a Report to the Court of Aldermen of London dated March 11, of the following year amply demonstrates.

Difference between the Turners & Joyners.... We have called before us as well the Master and Warden of Compy of Turners as also the Master & Warden of Compy of Joyners. It appeareth that the Compy of Turners be grieved that the Compy of Joyners assume unto themselves the art of turning to the wrong of the Turners. It appeareth to us that the arts of turning & joyning are two several & distinct trades and we conceive it very inconvenient that either of these trades should encroach upon the other and we find that the Turners have constantly for the most part turned bed posts & feet of joyned stooles for the Joyners and of late some Joyners who never used to turn their own bedposts and stool feet have set on work in their houses some poor decayed Turners & of them have learned the feate & arte of turning which they could not do before. And it appeareth unto us by custom that the turning of Bedposts Feet of tables joyned stools do properly belong to the trade of a Turner and not to the art of a Joyner and whatsoever is done with the foot as have treddle or wheele for turning of any wood we are of opinion and do not find that it properly belongs to the Joyners and we find that the Turners ought not to use the gage or gages grouffe [i.e. groove] plaine or plough plaine and mortising chisells or any of them for the same do belong to the Joyners trade.<sup>7</sup>

If the infringement of one craft's prerogatives by another had reached this state by 1632 in London, where the guilds were the strongest in England, what must have been the situation in the smaller towns where guilds were neither so numerous nor so firmly established! And what, by extension, could have been the nature of duplication of crafts by rural joiner-turners or turner-joiners where guilds—a phenomenon of town life—did not exist at all?

Since America was settled during the age when guilds still influenced craft practices in England, the question naturally arises as to what effect the guild system may have had on craft practices in New England.

The assumption that most of the furniture craftsmen of New England came from rural areas has heretofore been based on a comparison of American seventeenth century furniture with contemporary English rural furniture. This assumption is supported by a demographic study of the places of origin of 2885 adult male emigrants from England to New England by C. E. Banks, published in 1957. Banks shows that 67 parishes of the City of London furnished 203 emigrants between 1630 and 1650.<sup>8</sup> Although this is the third largest number who emigrated from any one area, it is only 7% of the total. Inasmuch as only 7% of the settlers of New England came from London, then it seems likely that only 7% of the craftsmen who emigrated came from there. Hence we immediately see that a very small percentage of the craftsmen coming to New England were directly influenced by London craft practices. Indeed, as will be seen in chapters IV. and V. below, NONE of the craftsmen who settled in Essex County can yet be demonstrated to have come from London.

It is therefore not surprising that the influence of the guild system on the life of an Essex County craftsman was very slight. This idea is further substantiated by the fact that joiners' and turners' guilds were not established in New England.

Lest this be interpreted to suggest that the settlers of the

Massachusetts Bay had so far overcome the practices of the Middle Ages as never to have tried the guild system, it should be noted that indeed two guilds WERE established there.

On October 18, 1648, the cordwainers (shoemakers) and the coopers of Boston each felt themselves numerous enough to petition the General Court for permission to "become a company." Their petitions were granted "For a period of three years and no longer."<sup>9</sup> But the charters of the two companies were not renewed at the expiration of their terms, and when the hatmakers applied for a similar privilege in 1672, they were told to re-apply when they "shall make as good hats and sell them as cheape as are affoorded from other parts."<sup>10</sup> They never reapplied.

Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that the leaders of the colonial experiment in Massachusetts were determined to retain the outward forms of English life, insofar as possible. They knew that their society could not survive in the void of no institutions, but they were cautious as to what institutions would prove most viable in the young colony. As Samuel Eliot Morison summed up this problem, "It would be better to let customs be formed and gradually grow into laws."<sup>11</sup>

With typical ingenuity, the leaders of the Colony modified the customs of English life to suit the way of life they established in the New World. In the absence of a turners' company to "view" weights and measures, the constable of each town was required to do the job.<sup>12</sup> In the absence of Guild Courts, the General Court adjudicated disputes between craftsmen. As early as October 1, 1633, the General Court gave notice that it had assumed jurisdiction, when they ordered that "master carpenters, sawyers, masons, clapboard rivers, bricklayers, joiners, etc., should not receive more than 2 shillings a day without meals or 14 pence a day with board."<sup>13</sup>

Although the restrictions on wages in New England were repealed two years later, the court records of Essex County—throughout the rest of

the century—record numerous fines meted out to craftsmen who demanded excessive wages.<sup>14</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

While the guild system, which depended on a large group of urban craftsmen, did not find fertile ground on which to grow in New England, one aspect of the craftsman's traditional way of life—apprenticeship—continued with little change throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Apprenticeship, with its traditional seven-year term of service, had been a part of Western Civilization, in one form or another, since Old Testament times.<sup>15</sup> Acceptance of the principle of apprenticeship in New England can be noted as early as June 14, 1642 when the General Court felt compelled to legislate on the matter of:

...the great neglect in many parents and masters in training up their children in learning, labor and other imployments which may bee profitable to the commonwealth.<sup>16</sup>

The Court set up the machinery by which the selectmen of each town, with the aid of the local courts and magistrates, should oversee the proper education of the young. Apprenticeship was the method by which this was accomplished.

Concern for the proper training of the young was reiterated in the law of 1648 which, in addition, elaborated on the need of parents and masters to attend to matters of literacy and religious education as well. The sense of this law was embodied, virtually without change, in the revision of 1658, published as The Code of 1660. But these subsidiary aims of the system must have been neglected by the masters of Essex County, for in 1668, the court published an enforcing act.<sup>17</sup>

Ironically, as if this manifestation of the Court's intention to enforce the statute had served as a signal, mentions of apprenticeship and

apprentices, which had been commonplace matters of record since the 1640's all but disappeared from the records after 1670.<sup>18</sup>

At least two joiners—Hugh March and Moses Cleveland—were apprentices when they arrived in New England in the mid-1630's. References to the apprentice system find their way into the court records as early as 1640, and from that time onward, it was an accepted part of the life of Essex County.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to being the vehicle by which craft techniques were passed on from one generation to the next, the settlers of Essex County used the apprentice system to attain four other social ends. First, it was used by the courts to prevent a child from becoming a burden on the community by apprenticing to fit masters the children of either destitute or deceased parents. Second, the courts would apprentice to a person of good character a child who had an "unfit" (i.e. immoral) parent or parents. Third, apprenticeship was used to assure supervised religious instruction and to encourage literacy. Finally, the system was obviously considered an approved method of acquiring cheap and reasonably reliable labor.

As to the quality of workmanship expected from both mature craftsmen and apprentices, the statement recorded at the Boston Town Meeting of July 20, 1660 is the most complete.

Whereas itt is found by sad experience that many youthes in this Towne, being put forth Apprentices to severall manufactures and sciences, but for 3 or 4 years time, contrary to the Customs of all well governed places, whence they are uncapable of being Artists in their trades, besides their unmeetenes att the expiration of their Apprentice-ship to take charge of others for government and manuall instruction in their occupations which, if nott timely amended, threatens the welfare of this Towne.

Itt is therefore ordered that no person shall henceforth open a shop in this Towne nor occupy any manufacture or science, till hee hath compleated 21 years of age, nor except hee hath served 7 years Apprentice-ship, by testimony under the hands of sufficient witnesses. And that all Indentures made betweenes any master and servant shall bee brought in and enrolled in the Towne's Records within one month after the contract made, on

penalty of ten shillings to bee paid by the master att the time  
of the Apprentices being made free.<sup>20</sup>

Two practices outlined in this statement emphasize how New England's methods varied from urban English habits. First, the requirement that an apprentice must be 21 years of age before he could open a shop had been a rural English specification at least from the promulgation of the Statute of Artificers in 1562/3. This requirement for rural England varied from that specified for incorporated towns and cities, where the minimum age for a master workman was 24 years.<sup>21</sup>

Second, the Town of Boston indicates that desirability and necessity of exercising control over the trades which required apprenticeship, and says that the Town will regulate this aspect of its life through the civil courts. Thus New England practice is again similar to rural English practice, where such control was supervised by the civil government—justices of the peace and town magistrates—and not like London, where guild courts functioned virtually without interference.

When considering the Boston statement of 1660, it is important to remember that in 1651, the General Court of Massachusetts—composed of representatives from all of the townships—had rejected the guild system, with its medieval overtones.<sup>22</sup> But the alternative system, with which they replaced the function of the guilds, placed a great burden upon the supervisory powers of their courts: a responsibility which they were not properly prepared to administer. In skill-shy, labor-short Massachusetts, unrealistic apprenticeship standards could not be supervised, or enforced. In consequence, those standards were cavalierly ignored.

For a period of 12½ years following 1670, apprenticeship is mentioned only twice in the court records: the first in November 1671, and the second in June 1676.<sup>23</sup> What a dynamic contrast to the years prior to the passage of the enforcement act, when scarcely a session of the courts did not deal with some apprentice matter! The apprentice system continued,

but the indentures that represented the agreements between master and apprentice were not recorded. Possible interference from the courts was thus forestalled by both parties.

#### CONCLUSION

Puritan Piety is often cited as the motivation for keeping the hands of the populace of seventeenth century Essex County busy. But the tiny colony in the seventeenth century suffered from what we call today "an adverse balance of payments"—it simply imported goods of greater value than it could export. Everything that could be made in the colony represented value for which the community would not have to compensate English "merchant venturers." The role which the apprentice system played in helping to balance New England's economy has been virtually ignored by historians.

Although the statutes designed to enforce what must have seemed to the first Americans an unrealistically long apprenticeship period failed, the apprentice system itself became an important part of the life of American craftsmen through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. New England statutes failed for the same reason that the English Statute of Artificers failed, and no where is the reason better summarized than in an opinion recorded in the English Privy Council Register on October 29, 1669, 106 years after the Elizabethan apprenticeship law was passed. The opinion of the judge states that the Statute of Artificers, "though not repealed yet has been by most of the Judges looked upon as inconvenient to trade and to the increase of inventions."<sup>24</sup>

Few documents detailing the specific relationship between wood-workers and their apprentices in Essex County have survived from the seventeenth century, but ample evidence will be introduced in the next two chapters to demonstrate that apprenticeship was an extremely important ingredient in their lives. Indeed, it was the single most important vehicle by which working techniques and shop practices were spread throughout Essex County, throughout New England, and to whatever places New England craftsmen migrated.

## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup> Court Records, IV, 213-214.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Edwards, The Shorter Dictionary of English Furniture (London, 1964), p. 331—hereafter cited as Edwards, Shorter Dictionary. Randle Holme, Academy of Armory (London, 1701) also discusses the guilds of Chester.

<sup>3</sup> A. C. Stanley-Stone, The Worshipful Company of Turners of London (London, 1925), pp. 50-59—hereafter cited as Stanley-Stone.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 278. It also specifies that the "seat lifts [sic] shall be made of ash."

<sup>7</sup> Henry Laverock Phillips, Annals of the Worshipful Company of Joiners of the City of London (London, 1915), pp. 27-28.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Edward Banks, Topographical Dictionary of 2885 English Emigrants to New England 1620-1650 (Baltimore, 1957), p. xii—hereafter cited as Banks.

<sup>9</sup> Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, ed. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, 4 Vols. (Boston, 1854), III, 132—hereafter cited as Shurtleff.

<sup>10</sup> Shurtleff, IV, 526.

<sup>11</sup> Morison, Builders, 227.

<sup>12</sup> Court Records, I, 1. Later in the century, this activity became the responsibility of the Clerk of the Market, a job which often fell to a turner, less often a joiner. This may be mere coincidence rather than

design as such offices were appointive, unpaid, unpopular and perhaps the obligation of all freeman, who could not avoid them, at one time or another.

<sup>13</sup> Henry Wyckoff Belknap, Trades and Tradesmen of Essex County, Massachusetts (Salem, 1929), p. 10—hereafter cited as Belknap, Trades. A strikingly similar statement, governing the wages of craftsmen in rural Wiltshire, England is reported in the Records of the Quarter Sessions in the County of Wiltshire, which specified in 1604 that, "wages for task work [shall be] ...For a master Joiner, for a Master Carpenter, Plasterer, Wheelwright... [from] Michaelmas to Annunciation of our Lady, Vd with meat and drink, Xd without; from Annunciation of our Lady to Michaelmas, VII d with meat and drink, XIIId without." Quoted in A. E. Bland, et al., English Economic History: Select Documents (New York, 1919), p. 348—hereafter cited as Bland. N. B. "Michaelmas" is September 29; "Annunciation" is March 25. Wages were also adjusted for the non-farming season in New England. see William B. Weeden, Economic and Social History of New England (Boston, 1890) p. 884—hereafter cited as Weeden.

<sup>14</sup> Court Records, V, 37. Lawrence Clenton was fined "for taking 16 s. for 3½ days work at Mr. Bakers...with his dinner every day;" VI. 72. "Thomas Dennis presented in Court for oppression [i.e. overcharging] in his trade...for a chest and table." etc.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis, 29:18.

<sup>16</sup> Shurtleff, II, 87.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>18</sup> Marcus W. Jernigan's classic study Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America (New York, 1960), first published in 1918, curiously does not refer to the court records at all, but is written as if the statutory aspects of apprenticeship told the whole story. While statutes express the intention of the legislators, the court records show what actually happened. Surely the silence of those records after 1670 is just as significant as all of the legislation of the previous 30 years.

<sup>19</sup> See Court Records, I, 18, 27, 48, 72, 118 et passim.

<sup>20</sup> Boston Records, II, 156-157.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret Gay Davies, The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship 1563-1642 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956), p. 2. A complete discussion of the effects of the Statute of Artificers is to be found in this book pp. 1-14. It is this source which dates the act 1562; all others say 1563!

<sup>22</sup>The franchise of the coopers and the cordwainers was not renewed.  
See Weeden, p. 184.

<sup>23</sup>The Probate Records of Essex County, Massachusetts, 3 Vols.  
(Salem, 1916-20) II, 249—hereafter cited as Probate Records. See also  
Court Records, VI, 223.

<sup>24</sup>Bland, pp. 361-362.

Contract made, Sept. 27, 1659, with William Averell, carpenter, by Richard Jacob, both of Ipswich: Said Averell was to erect a building 18 feet square and 13 feet stud, to provide clapboards and shingles for the said building and to lay them; to lay three floors with joist and board; to make "4 windows too stolē windows of 5 Lights apeece and to Claristory windows of 4 Lights apeece also a garret window to Casements betwene studs pertitions and dors to Close the Roms Compleat as also to Remoue A Little Rome and Close it to his house and mak it tite betwene allso to make a table and frame of 12 to 14 foot Long and a joyned forme of 4 foot Long and a binch Behind the table." The amount paid was twelve pounds, and Averell agreed to have the work completed by the last of August.<sup>1</sup>

--Ipswich Court Record,  
March 26, 1661.

## CHAPTER III

### CARPENTER AND JOINER; TURNER AND CHAIRMAKER

Before the Puritans began their systematic migration to Essex County, skilled woodworkers had already labored on the shores of the Massachusetts Bay.

Governor Bradford of Plymouth records that on the day after the landfall at Provincetown in 1620, the "carpenters fitted out a shallop" to enable further exploration.<sup>2</sup> Bradford later mentions a carpenter who "reare[ed] a great frame of a house for the salt [works]" at the Dorchester fishing settlement on Cape Anne in 1624.<sup>3</sup>

There is no question that the varied skills of the woodworker were those first required in the colony. From the very beginnings of their written records the various specific trades of "carpenter," "ship-carpen-ter," and "joiner" are carefully differentiated.

But, evidence exists that some carpenters, in addition to their traditional occupations of sawing lumber and boards, hewing beams and framing houses, also made furniture. The contract between William Averell, Jr., and Richard Jacob, of Ipswich, which is quoted at the head of this chapter, and which came into contention in the court session held at Ipswich March 26, 1661, reveals the sort of furniture a carpenter might make. Averell, who was to build Jacobs house, was "allso to make a table and frame of 12 to 14 foot Long and joyned forme and a binch Behind the table."

In this instance, Averell was functioning as considerably more than

just a carpenter: he was a "contractor" in the modern sense of the word, for he was not going to do all of the work himself. He had made arrangements with other men to supply the shingles, the clapboarding and with Jacobs himself to supply the door frames. The testimony about this contract also reveals the extent to which specialists were employed, even in a rural area like Ipswich, in the building of a house. Thomas Withred was hired to "hew a 'groun[d] sill' and mortice it," and Thomas Clarke was hired by Averell to cleave "out about 1200 of clapboards and shingles," for the building.<sup>4</sup>

Curiously enough, despite the fact that he was to make some furniture for Jacobs in the joined manner, Averell is never referred to in the court records or deeds as a "joiner." The inventory taken at the time of his death in 1691, however, does mention "joyners tools."<sup>5</sup>

Uzell Wardwell, a carpenter who lived variously in Ipswich, Boston and Salem, performed another of the traditional tasks of the carpenter by sawing boards. He paid many of his obligations to Merchant Jonathan Corwin of Salem over the years with "boards" and "wood," which Corwin later retailed to the carpenters and joiners of the town.<sup>6</sup>

Many carpenters were working in New England before the first joiners are known to have been there. William Allen settled at Dorchester in 1626, but when that plantation failed, he moved to Salem in 1628,<sup>7</sup> and was still living there in 1664.<sup>8</sup> Other carpenters of Salem during the first years of settlement were John Barber (1637-1642), George Norton (1629-1641), John Pickering (1637-1657), and Thomas Robbins (1641-1681).

"Ipswich," says Joseph Felt in his History of Ipswich,<sup>9</sup> "has been known for its many and skillful carpenters." Among those of the earliest period were Michael Carthrick (1635-1647), Arthur Abbott (1659-1716), John Pickering (1634-1637), William Storey (1648-1693), Walter Roper (1658-1680), and perhaps most important of all, Thomas Howlett, Jr. (1633-1667) (see Appendix I ).

These carpenters may have all made some furniture, in the English tradition, but it is the "joiner" who had the extra skill required to make those cupboards and chests of superior workmanship which are now acknowledged to be monuments of early American craftsmanship.

The first men called "joiners" working in Essex County appear in Salem: the most important town in Essex County throughout its history—the largest in population from the 1630's and the "port of entry" for many hundreds of the first settlers. Recorded at the first session of the Salem Quarterly Court held in 1636, is a civil suit between two joiners—John Symonds and Richard Lambert.<sup>10</sup> The nature of their disagreement is not specified, but Symonds was the plaintiff. Nothing is known of Lambert or his work, except that he died before 1659.

John Symonds, who eventually settled on the north bank of the North River, can be demonstrated to have had a widespread influence on the furniture-making practices of southern Essex County and Salem town. The inventory of his shop, taken at the time of his death in 1671, demonstrates that he was a joiner who knew turning also. (see Chapter IV.). Through his sons, James (born 1633, died 1714) and Samuel (1638-1722), their known apprentices, and James' sons, the influence of John Symonds can be traced in a line of remarkable continuity that extends through the eighteenth century.

What sort of work did these joiners do, and how did it vary from the work that carpenters were doing at the same time?

The work done by the seventeenth century joiner has been given its classic definition by Joseph Moxon in his Mechanic Exercise (first published in 1677) as "an act manual whereby several pieces of wood are fitted together by straight-line, squares, mitres, or any bevel that they may seem one entire piece."<sup>11</sup>

But an earlier and more detailed statement exists from the year

1632, a date that almost coincides with the immigration of the first English joiners to Essex County. According to a decision reached by the London Court of Aldermen of that year, joiners were entitled to the exclusive manufacture of:

1. All sorts of Bedsteads whatsoever (only except Boarded Bedsteads and nayled together).
2. All sorts of Chayres and stooles which are made with mortesses or tennants.
3. All tables of wainscotte wallnutt or other stuffe glewed with fframes mortesses or tennants.
4. All sorts of formes framed made of boards with the sides pinned or glewed. [i.e. mortised, as above]
5. All sorts of chests being framed duftalled pynned or glued.
6. All sorts of Cabinets or Boxes duftalled pynned or glued.<sup>12</sup>

While this London statement is very precise in defining the work of the joiners, the differentiation in provincial England between them and carpenters was not so rigid. At York, for example, as early as 1530, the carpenter's guild had combined with that of the joiners, and 33 years later, both carvers and sawyers were admitted to membership.<sup>13</sup>

The niceties of distinction between joiners and carpenters as classes of workers must have disappeared in the earliest days of settlement in Essex County, but joiners retained their personal individuality and clientele on the basis of their ability. The evidence of the account books that survive from a slightly later period demonstrates that wood-workers, regardless of what name they were called by, turned their hands to whatever sort of work would provide a livelihood.<sup>14</sup>

A joiner also did finish work on houses and public buildings, as is recorded of George Booth, a joiner of Salem, who undoubtedly derived a large portion of his income for the years 1678 and 79 from doing "work about ye Towne House," for which he was paid a total of 6 li. 7 s. 6 d.<sup>15</sup>

A good example of a rural joiner's miscellaneous activities occurs in the records concerning Nathaniel Griffin, of Salisbury, who is called a joiner as early as April, 1674,<sup>16</sup> but paid one debt in 1676 in "sawn boards,"<sup>17</sup> and another in 1681 in "merchantible white oak pipestaves... and red oak hogshead staves,"<sup>18</sup> thus indicating that Griffin was familiar with the art of the cooper, too.

Despite the verbal distinctions made between "joiner's tools" and "carpenter's tools" in the inventories of Essex County, the actual differences may not have been so much in the tools themselves as in the fact that the recorders of the inventories had personal knowledge of what the deceased craftsman's trade had been.

However, it is the joiner as furniture-maker with which this paper is concerned, for while the single instance of a carpenter who made furniture can be found, the records abound with evidence that it was the joiner in the community who was primarily engaged in that task.

George Cole, a joiner of Lynn, who died in the campaign against the Narragansetts in 1675, had work in his shop valued at 1 li. 10 s.<sup>19</sup> In 1682, Thomas Denis deposed in Ipswich Court that Grace Stout had "bought a carved box with a drawer in it of him in 1679, and it had two locks."<sup>20</sup> In 1675, Stephen Cross of Ipswich had bought a chest and table from him.<sup>21</sup>

When the inventory of John Symonds' shop was taken in 1671, there were listed "2 Bedsteads almost finished, 3 li.; 3 stooles and one half of a Box, 12 s. 6 d."<sup>22</sup>

Samuel Symonds, his son, had a long career, much of which can be documented. In 1682 he built the "wainshot pulpit with stairs leading to it"<sup>23</sup> for the meeting house in Topsfield, for which Nathaniel Capan, also a joiner, received 5 shillings in 1725 for "culloring."<sup>24</sup> Symonds, was paid the equivalent of 10 pounds for this job, but like most craftsmen of his time, it was in goods, "one half in Corne and one half in Neat cattle."<sup>25</sup>

Between 1710 and 1716, Symonds, his name now receiving the honorific prefix of "Mr.," made rakes, chests, tables, bedsteads, a "joynt stool and leafe to it... three-quarter temples [i.e. devices used by a weaver] ... and one half bushell" for John Gould of Topsfield. He also made "fathers cofin and Johns wifes cofin" in 1713.<sup>26</sup>

Nathaniel Griffin apparently performed a similar service for Thomas Nelson when the latter noted in his account book that he had paid to, "Nathaniell Grifен 1.00 06 00,"<sup>27</sup> towards the cost of the funeral for his father-in-law, Samuel French of Salisbury. In Salem, the joiner John Launder received credit on his account with merchant John Higginson, Jr., when on September 29, 1681, the Town of Salem paid him 3 s. for "a cofin for the Harman Child."<sup>28</sup>

But for the most part, the work of a joiner removed from the commercial activity of urban areas like Salem and Boston, must have been more like that done by Skipper Lunt of Newbury (born 1679), who noted in the account book he began to keep in 1730, items ranging from "...making A yoak, 2 s."<sup>29</sup> to installing a "puttision, 1 li. 10 s."<sup>30</sup>

In addition to selling pork, making hay and plowing, Lunt also made "cartwells," tables, looking-glass frames, installed casements, operated a ferry service, sold rum, molasses, sugar and cord wood, and hewed beams and "mantletree shelfs."<sup>31</sup> He repaired wagons, sleds and chairs. In 1730, he billed Durwood Woodman for "2 cofens for your Children, 15 s."<sup>32</sup> and a few days later billed Petter Sargent for "a cradl, a chest lock, a case of Draws."<sup>33</sup> On occasion, Lunt and his son, Joshua (who in later years also worked in the shop with Skipper), would receive an expensive commission, such as the "case of draws with Locke and Brases for your Daughter" for which Captain John Sargent was billed 3 li. 14 s. 8 d. in May, 1752.<sup>34</sup> Items such as these indicate that the Lunts were not merely back-woods handymen.

Another important woodworking craftsman of the seventeenth century

was the "turner," who made pieces of wood (which were square in section) round by turning them on a lathe and cutting away the undesired portion by holding a chisel against it as it revolved.

By the end of the century the designation "turner" had almost disappeared—especially in the larger towns—when the turner's work had become sufficiently specialized for him to call himself by a name taken from the most popular object he produced: he became a "chairmaker."

As early as 1656 the inventory of turner Thomas Wickes' shop in Salem contained among the "made ware...green Chayres," valued at almost five pounds. That these chairs were destined to have "rush seats" is made plain by the 2 pounds 10 shillings worth of "flagges" the inventory also mentioned.<sup>35</sup> How little the craft had changed by the time John Corning, a chairmaker of Beverly, died in 1734! Then in his shop were "...11 two backed New Chairs at 2 s. 6 d...9 two backed new Chairs without bottoms at 18 d... 36 bundels of flags for Chairs at 10 s."<sup>36</sup>

In Ipswich by 1637, Edward Browne was following the trade of Turner, which he had learned in England. At the time of his death in 1659, he had in his shop "...work done toward chaires, 3 s.; 6 trayes, dishes, trenchers, & payles...."<sup>37</sup> In addition he also had 11 chairs in his household inventory—a great number for this early date. John Burr may also have been a turner in Ipswich from about the time of Browne's death until his own in 1673.<sup>38</sup>

That turners did architectural work too, is revealed by the accounts of expenditures for the Salem Town House in March, 1679, when Samuel Beadle, Jr., a turner of Salem, was paid 2 li. 1 s. "p[er] 41 balester...."<sup>39</sup>

John and Stephen Jaques of Newbury, whose account book begins in 1712, however, spent most of their careers as turners repairing chairs and making handles for tools.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the turner's art in Essex County had its specialized branches from the very earliest years. Thomas Browne,

who was working in Lynn by 1653,<sup>41</sup> was known as a dish-turner. Richard Sibley (working Salisbury 1639-56, Salem 1656-75) was a tray-maker.<sup>42</sup> So were Christopher Waller, who worked in Salem for the most part from 1637 through 1676 (although he may have lived in Ipswich for a few years),<sup>43</sup> and Nicholas Holt, who was practicing that trade in Andover in 1682.<sup>44</sup>

It has also been asserted that turners made case furniture in Essex County in the seventeenth century, although no documentary evidence has been offered to demonstrate that they actually did.<sup>45</sup> It is admittedly a very attractive theory because of the high quality of turned ornamentation which survives on some of the furniture of the last quarter of the century. In some cases it is a quality relatively superior to that of the joinery.

In a community where no joiner worked, a turner might make chests, just as a joiner might probably try his hand at turning, if no turner were working in the neighborhood. But there were practically no communities in seventeenth century Essex County where this situation existed: virtually every township had at least one turner and one joiner working there from the middle of the century on. Only Ipswich did not support a joiner prior to 1663.

#### CONCLUSION

While the furniture historian often pays an admiring tribute to the abilities of the craftsmen who produced fine furniture with simple tools, there is much evidence that the craftsmen themselves had no such sentimental feeling of attachment to their trades.

Early in his Journal, John Winthrop writes that although craftsmen of all sorts are sorely needed in New England, they soon leave the crafts, dazzled by the prospect of plentiful land for the taking. The tendency which Winthrop noticed in 1638 continued throughout the century as craftsmen turned to professions which offered greater rewards. And why, logic

asks, should a man labor long at a difficult trade when wages were limited, if he could enter a profession which offered greater rewards? <sup>46</sup>

Samuel Beadle, Jr., who practiced turning from 1667 until 1683, became an inn-keeper, at which profession he labored until his death in 1706. <sup>47</sup> Walter Fairfield was a turner from 1661 until 1681 when he too, at the age of 40, was licensed to keep an ordinary in Wenham. <sup>48</sup> He lived 42 more years.

John Croade, who was trained as a joiner, became a merchant at the time of his father's death, and was something of a politician, too: he was Town Clerk of Salem from 1695 through 1698. <sup>49</sup> Miles Ward, who started his adult life as a turner and chairmaker soon became an important merchant in Salem. <sup>50</sup> Benjamin Felton, who was a turner in Salem from 1636 until the 1660's, began to supplement his income in 1651 with the additional job of "caretaker of the Meeting House." In 1655 he became "Keeper of the Prison," an office he held until his death 33 years later. <sup>51</sup>

But, as is attested by the relatively large quantity of furniture which survives from the last decades of the century, such defections from the crafts were not the general trend. The greater demand caused by a naturally increasing population; the urban trend, established by the early settlement pattern; a loosening of the strict regulation of prices and wages, accompanied by a more secure economic life under the new Charter all gave craftsmen a better opportunity of developing a successful and wholesome life for himself—and many of them did.

## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Court Records, II, 266.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, ed. Thomas Robbins (Hartford, 1853), p. 52.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in James R. Newhall, The Essex Memorial for 1836 (Salem, 1836), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup>Court Records, II, 266. But see also fn. 69 Chapter V, infra.

<sup>5</sup>Information in a letter to the author from Mrs. Charles Hadley (Lura Woodside) Watkins dated December 3, 1967.

<sup>6</sup>Corwin Ledger, pp. 70, 74.

<sup>7</sup>John Price, "Genealogy of the Allen Family of Manchester, Mass." Essex Institute Historical Collections, XXIV (July 1898), 223—hereafter cited as Historical Collections.

<sup>8</sup>James Savage, A Genealogical Dictionary of The First Settlers of New England, 4 Vols. (Baltimore, 1965) I, 37—hereafter cited as Savage.

<sup>9</sup>(Ipswich, 1966), p. 98.

<sup>10</sup>Court Records, I, 3.

<sup>11</sup>Edwards, Dictionary II, p. 272.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>See the unpublished account book of John and Stephen Jaques, 1712-

1794, in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection—hereafter cited as Jaques Account Book.

<sup>15</sup> Salem Town Records, II, 281.

<sup>16</sup> Court Records, V, 298.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., VI, 142.

<sup>18</sup> Court Records, VIII, 126.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., VI, p. 109.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., IV, 444.

<sup>23</sup> George Francis Dow, The History of Topsfield, Massachusetts (Topsfield, 1940), p. 248—hereafter cited as Dow, Topsfield.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Historical Manual of the Congregational Church of Topsfield (Topsfield, 1907), p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Gould Account Book, pp. 30-33.

<sup>27</sup> See the unpublished manuscript, Account Book of Thomas Nelson, 1692-1712, in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection, leaf 4—hereafter cited as Nelson Account Book.

<sup>28</sup> See the unpublished manuscript, Account Book of John Higginson, Jr., 1678-1689, in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection, leaf 96—hereafter cited as Higginson Account Book.

<sup>29</sup> See the unpublished manuscript, Account Book of Skipper Lunt, 1736-1772, in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection, leaf 1—hereafter cited as Lunt Account Book.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., leaf 2.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., leaf 6.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., leaf 21.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., leaf 60.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., leaf 8.

<sup>35</sup>Court Records, I, 427.

<sup>36</sup>Probate Docket #6372.

<sup>37</sup>Probate Records, I, 308.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., II, 374.

<sup>39</sup>Salem Town Records, II, 279.

<sup>40</sup>Jaques Account Book, pp. 1-22.

<sup>41</sup>"Descendents of Thomas Brown of Lynn," (anon. article), The Essex Antiquarian, XIII (1909), 102.

<sup>42</sup>Savage IV, 94.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 399.

<sup>44</sup>Essex County Deeds, Book VI, p. 129.

<sup>45</sup>Helen Park, "The Seventeenth Century Furniture of Essex County and its Makers," Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 350 et passim—hereafter cited as Park, Antiques.

<sup>46</sup>See footnote 3, Chapter I.

<sup>47</sup>Court Records, VIII, 318; Probate Docket #2178.

<sup>48</sup>Court Records, VIII, 93.

<sup>49</sup>Perley, Salem, III, p. 252.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., II, p. 101.

<sup>51</sup>"Copy From Original Book of Grants of Salem," (transcribed Derby Perley), Historical Collections, V (1863), 265; Court Records, V, 84; Savage II, 151.

Feb. 5 (1796) This day was buried M<sup>r</sup> John Symonds, a Batchelor, from his House near the ferry. With the loss of this man the appearance of the last & the beginning of this Century is lost. His father died a few years since at 100, & John died at 74. The children all lived in single life till they were advanced, & only one ever entered into married life & she after 70. The windows of this house are of the small glass with lead in diamonds & open upon hinges. The Doors open with wooden latches. The Chairs are the upright high arm chairs, & the common chairs are the short backed. The tables small & oval, the chest of drawers with knobs, & short swelled legs. The large fire place, & the iron for the lamp. The blocks of wood in the corner. The Press for pewter plates with round holes over the door of it. Large stones rolled before the door for steps. Old Dutch maps and map mondes highly colored above a Century old. The beds very low, & the curtains hung upon the walls. The woolen caps worn by the men, & the small linen caps tied under the chin by the women."<sup>1</sup>

--William Bentley, Diary.

## CHAPTER IV

### LOCAL JOINERS IN ESSEX COUNTY: 1636 - 1716

#### PART I THE SALEM SCHOOL

By the middle of the seventeenth century, Salem was second in size only to Boston among New England's towns, and was the largest town in Essex County. In 1678, the population of Salem, Danvers, Peabody and Beverly Farms was somewhere between 1200 and 1500 people.<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that the shire town of Essex County, Salem, was the most important and vigorous center for the manufacture of furniture throughout the century. Indeed, the total number of joiners and turners working there between 1636 and 1700 is almost equal to the number of furniture craftsmen who worked throughout the rest of the county during those same years.

The most important furniture-maker in Salem was John Symonds. He was born in Great Yarmouth, County Norfolk, England sometime between 1585 and 1595, and emigrated to Salem with his wife, Elizabeth, and infant son, James, prior to 1636.<sup>3</sup> The craft methods and practices which he perpetuated in training his sons and apprentices, and which they in turn passed on to their sons and apprentices, are the keys which will someday unlock the mystery of the identity of the makers of the surviving furniture of Salem and southern Essex County. Because of the similarities of construction and iconography which this furniture possesses, it does not seem inappropriate to refer to it as "The Salem School."

Symonds was made a freeman of the town in 1638, and lived at what is now the western corner of St. Peter's and Bridge Streets. Before 1652

he was granted about 40 acres of land in the "North Fields," which included the promontory known for the following two centuries as "Symonds' Point." His house was located on the site of 111 North Street, presently occupied by a Shell gasoline station.<sup>4</sup> No evidence has been found to indicate that he was a relative of Deputy Governor Samuel Symonds of Ipswich.

Besides being the only joiner on the north side of the North River, Symonds is also important in another respect: he was a joiner who could do his own turning. In the inventory of his shop, taken in September, 1671, the now archaic word "lare" occurs. "Lara" or "laras" was used in the seventeenth century to denote "any round pieces of wood turned by the turners."<sup>5</sup> In addition the inventory contained "Joyners Tools [and] benches," valued at 5 li. 5 s. 6d., and "2 bedsteads almost finished, 3 li.; 3 stooles and one half of a Box 12 s. 6 d."<sup>6</sup>

James, John Symonds' eldest son, who was born in 1633, learned the joiner's trade from his father. He was the primary heir to his father's estate and served as the administrator of his father's will. It was to James that John Symonds left his dwelling house, his "out housing," his orchard and all his land. He also left James, "all my working tooles belonginge to my trade."<sup>7</sup>

James Symonds moved from the North Fields to a new house on present Essex St. in "The Town," about a year after his father died.<sup>8</sup> Although he still retained the right to and interest in the lands he had inherited in the North Fields, he occupied the house on Essex Street, between present Hawthorne Boulevard and Pleasant Street, until his death in the Spring of 1714. It is doubtful that he was active as a joiner in the last years of his life as his inventory shows his "tooles, grindstone and Bench" were worth only 15 shillings.<sup>9</sup> Undoubtedly James had long since passed his shop and tools on to the two sons, among his twelve children, who followed the joiner's trade: John II (1666-1728/9) and Thomas (1677-1758).<sup>10</sup>

John Symonds had a "servant boy" whose unexpired term he willed to

James. This servant, John Pease, appears in the elder Symonds' inventory as "an apprentice of 17 years old who hath 3 year and 9 moneths and two weeks to serve."<sup>11</sup> Upon the expiration of his apprenticeship in 1675, he may have worked in Salem as a joiner until he removed to Enfield, Connecticut in 1681, where he died in 1734.<sup>12</sup>

Another apprentice of John Symonds was Nathaniel Silsbee, who was born in Ipswich ca. 1650. In 1658, after having lived in Lynn for a while, the Silsbee family moved to Salem, and Nathaniel must have begun his apprenticeship with Symonds very soon thereafter.<sup>13</sup> Silsbee completed his apprenticeship before 1671, the year of his marriage. The next year he bought a lot on Essex Street, south of the training field common (present Washington Square), next door to the lot of James Symonds,<sup>14</sup> where he died in 1717/18.<sup>15</sup> He was still working at his trade in 1707.

Silsbee may have trained Benjamin Marsh, a joiner who worked in the present Peabody area of Salem in the decade of the 1680's. Marsh, the eleventh-born child of John Marsh, a cordwainer of Peabody, was born in 1661. His eldest brother, Zachariah, was married to Silsbee's sister, Mary, which suggests Marsh's working relationship with the older joiner. By 1690, Marsh had left Salem/Peabody and was living in Rappahannock,<sup>16</sup> Virginia.

Samuel, the second son of John Symonds, was born in November, 1638 at Salem. Samuel worked with his father and brother until 1662-3 when he moved to the southernmost part of Rowley Village, about a mile and a half due west of Topsfield—and the same distance south of present Boxford—and married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Andrews, a prominent carpenter of Topsfield.<sup>17</sup> He lived there until "he departed this life, aged 84 years and seven months, August the 14<sup>th</sup> 1722."<sup>18</sup>

In 1682, Samuel Symonds was commissioned by the selectmen of Topsfield to build a ten foot long "wainscot pulpit"<sup>19</sup> for the meeting house, among whose members he and his wife were numbered in a list made by the

new minister, "Parson" Joseph Capen in 1684.<sup>20</sup> That the pulpit was a handsome one is attested by the supreme compliment paid to it by the Selectmen of Boxford in 1700. When a pulpit was ordered for their own new meeting house, they specified that it was to have "a pulpit as good as Topsfield's."<sup>21</sup>

Samuel Symonds' career as a furniture-maker is documented for the period 1674 to 1716. In 1674 he made a cupboard for his sister's brother-in-law,<sup>22</sup> Edmund Bridges of Salem Village (present Danvers). A series of entries in the account book of John Gould, a weaver of Topsfield, show that he was still working in July, 1716.<sup>23</sup> During the 1670's, Symonds had at least two other joiners working for him. The first, William Brown (born ca. 1655) was his apprentice in 1674.<sup>24</sup> Brown had his own shop in Rowley in 1682,<sup>25</sup> and is probably the William Brown "killed in y<sup>e</sup> voyage against Quebec," in 1690 for whose estate administration papers were granted April 22, 1691.<sup>26</sup>

Another joiner associated with Symonds as a journeyman or apprentice at Rowley Village in 1675 was Joshua Bisson (born Trinity Parish, Island of Jersey; died Beverly, Massachusetts, 1750).<sup>27</sup> The record does not reveal when Bisson came to New England, and because he was 23 years old in 1675—an advanced age for an apprentice—"journeyman" might more accurately describe his status.

Whatever the reason for Bisson's being in Rowley Village in 1675, he was definitely working in Beverly 10 years later when he was paid for work in the erection of the Meeting House.<sup>28</sup> His third son, Joshua, followed the joinery trade for a while, but at the time of his own death in 1778, he was known as a yeoman.<sup>29</sup>

Nathaniel Capen, only son of the Topsfield minister, was a joiner and may well have been apprenticed to Samuel Symonds. Capen was born in 1695 and died in 1749. Among the "Joyners tooles...and Benches," valued at 5 li. 15 s. 9 d. in his inventory, the word "Laire" also occurs,

indicating that Capen did turning.<sup>30</sup>

#### OTHER SALEM JOINERS

Richard Lambert, a joiner, was living at Mackerell Cove (present Manchester by the Sea), a few miles to the east of Salem, in 1636.<sup>31</sup> By 1650, he had moved into the town proper and was living between Orange and English Streets, south of present Essex Street, near the South River.<sup>32</sup> Lambert seems to have been one of the less substantial members of the community: he appeared in Salem Court fifteen times between 1636 and 1656, generally charged with "being overtaken with drink." On one occasion, in 1649, he was the plaintiff. Although the exact date of his death is unknown, he was deceased in 1659. Lambert founded no dynasty of furniture-makers like his contemporary, John Symonds. He may have had a son, Richard, who was killed at the battle of Bloody Brook in September, 1675,<sup>33</sup> but the record is silent as to whether he was a joiner.

Ryce Edwards is the only joiner besides Lambert and John Symonds who came to Salem prior to 1670.<sup>34</sup> He was granted ten acres of land in 1642 "nere to Mr. Blackleech his farme to be laid out by the town."<sup>35</sup> This land was not in Salem proper, but to the northeast, within the bounds of present Beverly Farms.<sup>36</sup> There is some evidence that Edwards lived in Boston for a few years around 1646-7.<sup>37</sup> However, in 1652, he received another grant of twenty acres in Beverly,<sup>38</sup> and lived there until his death thirty years later.

As far as the record reveals, he was the only joiner living in the Beverly area during this period. Little is known about his long career except that he was engaged in a number of ventures involving wood with Walter Fairfield, a turner of Wenham, and John Dodge, who operated a saw-mill in Beverly.<sup>39</sup> Dodge's farm and sawmill were located on the property immediately adjacent to the property of Edwards<sup>40</sup> (See Plate V and text, infra.). Edwards was living in 1682, when he owed Jacob Pudeator, a Salem blacksmith, 2 li. for tools and shoeing, but was deceased by 1683,

when a division of his unwilled personal property was made by his children.<sup>41</sup>

Samuel Belknap worked in Salem between 1655 and 1670.<sup>42</sup> His family migrated to Lynn when he was ten years old, and his apprenticeship years were probably spent with Jenkyn Davis or William Craft. Belknap is an important figure because three of his sons were engaged in the wood-working crafts in Haverhill later in the century. His eldest son, Abraham (born Salem, 1660) became a turner; Samuel (born Salem, 1662) and Ebenezer (born Malden, 1673) became joiners. The elder Belknap, after living in Malden from 1671 to 1675, removed to Haverhill where he and his sons worked for the remainder of their lives.<sup>43</sup>

Thomas Praser spent the winter of 1664/5 in Salem working (for James Browne the glazer ?),<sup>44</sup> as did John Crabtree, the son of a joiner of the same name who died in Boston in 1656.<sup>45</sup> Although neither was "received an inhabitant" of Salem, Crabtree was permitted to "work vpp som timber he hath bought" so long as he "should depart the town next springe."<sup>46</sup> As yet, nothing more is known of Praser.

John Launder, who may have been born in Lynn between 1643 and 1651, was in Salem by 1671 and was married by 1674.<sup>47</sup> He died early in 1699/1700, and willed to his son, John II, "my shop wherein I used to work and all the tooles that I have belonging to the Joy[n]ery Trade."<sup>48</sup>

Joseph Neale (born 1649/50), was the youngest brother of Jeremiah Neale, a prominent carpenter of the town.<sup>49</sup> Neale left Salem sometime before 1710, and was living in Pennsylvania at the time of his death in 1717/18.<sup>50</sup>

John Taylor, a joiner, was admitted an inhabitant of Salem in March, 1671,<sup>51</sup> but returned to Boston (where he had served his apprenticeship), late in 1673, when his father died.<sup>52</sup> He never returned to Salem.

George Booth, who may have come from Horsemanden, County Kent, arrived at Boston with his wife, Alice, on December 1, 1673.<sup>53</sup> He moved to Lynn almost immediately, where the birth of his daughter is recorded in 1674. By March 1676, the Booths were living in Salem, where Booth died, unexpectedly, in 1682.<sup>54</sup> He is the only joiner known to have come to Salem from England between the time Ryce Edwards arrived in 1642, and the end of the seventeenth century.

As the first joiner to have emigrated to Salem from post-Restoration England, he may someday prove to be a more important figure in Essex County furniture history than we can presently presume. What influence the new style of furniture then coming into popularity in England may have had on Booth, or if he brought sketches of the new style with him, can only be a matter for speculation. We can infer, however, from the record that if Booth was working in the new style, the residents of Salem were either not ready to have furniture in that style by 1682, or were unwilling to buy it from George Booth. At the time of his death, his estate was valued at only 16 pounds, and his debts amounted to 9.<sup>55</sup> One item among his personal effects was unusual: a "small chest of drawers" which had the unusually high evaluation of 1 pound placed upon it.<sup>56</sup> No evidence can be gleaned from his inventory to indicate that he had a shop, and the two times that he is mentioned as working as a joiner occur in reference to "worke upon the Town House."<sup>57</sup> It is probably a coincidence that the earliest surviving example of Salem case furniture with applied geometrical molding dates from the time that Booth was working in Salem (see Plate IV, infra).

Edward Norris (baptized August 18, 1657; died December 1700) was a joiner, the grandson of that Edward Norris who had been the fourth minister of Salem's first church. Norris may well have served his apprenticeship with James Symonds, whose daughter, Mary, he married December 3, 1685.<sup>58</sup> At the time of his death, Norris was living in the family home on present Washington Street, not far from the site of the Town House.<sup>59</sup> His son, Edward, the fourth of that name, (baptized 1690, died 1759) was a turner

and chairmaker. His aunt, Mary, had married James Mackmallin, and it was possibly from this uncle that Edward IV learned his trade.

John Croade (born 1663) is called a joiner in a deed of 1695, the year in which he became the Town Clerk of Salem. It seems doubtful that he did much joinery after 1695, as he is later referred to as an "inn-holder."<sup>60</sup>

A joiner who may have had a more lasting influence on Salem furniture was Joseph Allen (baptized January 6, 1677/8, died ca. 1740). Allen's son, Benjamin (born 1699, died 1755) followed his father's trade, as did another son Robert (died between 1770 and 1784), although Robert may have specialized in house construction. Robert's son, Joseph (born 1755, died 1784), was a cabinetmaker.<sup>61</sup>

George Herrick, an upholsterer, was admitted an inhabitant of Salem February 22, 1685/6.<sup>62</sup> Although his work had nothing to do with case furniture, his presence in Salem at this date demands that he be mentioned if we are to understand the direction of the furniture crafts in Essex County during the closing years of the seventeenth century. Herrick, whose name suggests that he might have come from Wales, came to New England on the same ship that brought the famous correspondent, John Dunton. Dunton praises Herrick's character in the book of his travels, Letters from New England.<sup>63</sup> Herrick was killed in the freak explosion of a cannon May 3, 1695.<sup>64</sup> He was apparently not related to the Herrick family who had settled in Beverly many years before George emigrated.

One of the curiosities that seems to occur repeatedly in the early records of Essex County is the tendency of men engaged in the same trade to buy each other's houses. An early practice in the granting of land was to give to the practitioner of a certain trade land once held by another practitioner of that trade who had moved on.<sup>65</sup> In some cases, the house itself or the property in some way may have lent itself to use by a specific type of trade.<sup>66</sup>

An even more fascinating phenomenon, unique to Salem, occurred in 1672, when three of the town's four joiners built houses within two doors of each other. The houses were constructed on lots set off by the selectmen of Salem, from the southerly margin of the training-field common (present Washington Square) in 1660. At the selectman's meeting of April 5, 1672, lot number four was granted to John Launder, joiner. Lot number five was granted to Joseph Gray, whose son, Benjamin was working in the house built on it by 1699, at the trade of "turner alias chair-maker."<sup>67</sup> Lot number six was granted to James Symonds, joiner, and lot number seven was granted to Nathaniel Silsbee, joiner.<sup>68</sup>

These lots, on the northern side of present Essex Street between Hawthorne Boulevard and Washington Square East were the center of the furniture-making trade in Salem until after the middle of the eighteenth century.

At first glance, it would seem that a lingering vestige of medieval town life—where certain neighborhoods were noted for certain products—had reasserted itself in New England. The difficulty with this explanation occurs when one realizes that these were woodworkers whose father's had all come from rural backgrounds, and thus had little knowledge of urban English life, and that the craftsmen themselves were all either born in America or had come as infants. An equally good explanation, therefore, seems to be that in developing a system of coöperation in the trade rather than competition, the joiners of Salem were creating, what was for them, a new urban institution to suit a new situation. That this did not occur more often in Essex County may be traced to the fact that no other town boasted more than two joiners working in it at the same time.

## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup> The Diary of William Bentley, 4 Vols. (Salem: The Essex Institute, 1907), II, 172—hereafter cited as Bentley, Diary. John Symonds IV was a "yeoman," and the grandson of John Symonds II, who was the son of James, the son of John I. According to Sidney Perley, John Symonds IV was not a bachelor, but by wife Elizabeth (Cavis) had three daughters and two sons, Samuel (baptized 1758) and John V (baptized 1756, died 1839). See Perley, Salem I, 393-395. "...his House near the ferry," was the house on present Bridge St. to which John III moved at the time of his marriage. See E. B. Symonds, Old North-Fields (Salem: The Salem Observer, 1916), leaf 4 obversa.

<sup>2</sup> James Duncan Phillips, Salem in the 17th Century (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1933), p. 250. The estimate is probably based on the statement in the Salem Town Records, II, p. 271, that there were 300 heads of households in Salem on August 23, 1678.

<sup>3</sup> Banks, p. 123; Savage IV, 245; Court Records, I, 3; Perley, Salem, I, 198.

<sup>4</sup> Salem Deeds, II, 132. See also E. B. Symonds, Old North-Fields, leaf 1, reversa.

<sup>5</sup> James O. Halliwell, Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words (London, 1901), p. 505.

<sup>6</sup> Court Records, IV, 444.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., II, 248.

<sup>8</sup> Perley, Salem, II, 321.

<sup>9</sup> Probate Docket #27083.

<sup>10</sup> The continuity of craftsmen engaged in the woodworking trades in the Symonds family can be followed into the nineteenth century. Thomas Symonds had two sons, Benjamin (1719-after 1783), a turner and chairmaker; and Joseph (1721-1769) a joiner and cabinetmaker. Joseph had three

sons, Joseph (ca. 1745-1809) and Jonathan (died 1779) both called "housewrights"; and James (died 1801), a shipwright. Later generations counted among their number several carpenters and a "chaise body maker." Perley, Salem, I, 393-401.

<sup>11</sup> Probate Records, II, 249. The services of this apprentice were valued by Symonds at 10 pounds per year. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>12</sup> Perley, Salem, I, 371. A Hadley Chest in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts is said by Richard Randall (American Furniture in the Museum of Fine Arts [Boston, 1965], p. 18), to have been made by this same John Pease. When one considers the construction of this chest, the assertion seems curiously inappropriate, for the chest betrays no detail characteristic of Salem joinery whatsoever. The chest may very well have been made for Mary, the daughter of John Pease, but it almost certainly was not made by Pease.

<sup>13</sup> James A. Emmerton, A Genealogical Account of Henry Silsbee and His Descendants (Salem, 1880), p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Perley, Salem II, 383-384.

<sup>15</sup> Probate Records III, 428; Perley, Salem II, 383.

<sup>16</sup> Perley, Salem, I, 252.

<sup>17</sup> Sidney Perley, The Dwellings of Boxford (Salem, 1893), p. 130—hereafter cited as Perley, Boxford. See also Savage, IV, 98.

<sup>18</sup> See the MS. "Record of Births and Baptisms, Publishments, Marriages and Deaths in the Town of Boxford from 1685 to 1844," in the Town Hall, Boxford Massachusetts, Book I, 341. Park, Antiques, LXXVII (October 1960), 354, mentions "Samuel Simons" [sic], but because the name was not spelled "Symonds," in the primary source to which she was referring, she missed the fact that this joiner was related to John and James Symonds of Salem.

<sup>19</sup> Dow, Topsfield, p. 248.

<sup>20</sup> H. G. Dunnell (compiler), "List of Members of the Old Church, Topsfield," The New England Historical and Genealogical Register XVI (July 1862), 213—hereafter cited as N E G R.

<sup>21</sup> Perley, Boxford, p. 127.

<sup>22</sup> Court Records, V, 421-422, 443.

<sup>23</sup> Gould Account Book, p. 33.

<sup>24</sup> Court Records, V, 422; IV, 34.

<sup>25</sup> Court Records, VIII, 279.

<sup>26</sup> "Descendants of Charles Brown of Rowley," (anon. arts), The Essex Antiquarian, XIII (January 1909), 26.

<sup>27</sup> "Bisson Genealogy," (anon. arts), The Essex Antiquarian, VIII (July 1904), 132. Bisson witnessed the burning of the Rowley Village iron forge in March, 1675. Court Records, VI, 34.

<sup>28</sup> "Notes," (anon. arts), The Essex Antiquarian, XI (January 1907), 11.

<sup>29</sup> Probate Docket #2492. In an estate valued at over 500 pounds, Bisson, Jr., had "Sundry old joiners tools...7 s."

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., #4583.

<sup>31</sup> Perley, Salem, I, 313-314.

<sup>32</sup> Phillips, Salem, p. 181.

<sup>33</sup> Savage, III, 48.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., II, 103.

<sup>35</sup> "The Town Records of Salem, Massachusetts, 1634-1659," Historical Collections, 2nd Series, I (1868), 116—hereafter cited as "Salem Town Records, I."

<sup>36</sup> Perley, Salem, I, 140.

<sup>37</sup> The idea that Edwards may have lived in Boston is supported by the mention in Records of the First Church of Boston, 1630-1666 in Proceedings of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, XXXIX (Boston, 1961), 47, of the admission to that church on May 15, 1647, of "Joan the wyfe of Ryce Edwards, joyner." The published Suffolk County Deeds, 8 Vols.

(Boston: 1880-1905), make no mention of Ryce Edwards' owning land in Boston.

<sup>38</sup>"Salem Town Records, I," 160.

<sup>39</sup>Court Records, V, 275, 373; VIII, 410.

<sup>40</sup>"Salem Town Records, I," 160 specifies that Edwards' grant of 20 acres shall be laid out "adjoining the land of Richard Dodge," the father of John Dodge and Sarah Dodge (who married Peter) Woodbury.

<sup>41</sup>Court Records, VIII, 423; Probate Docket #8629.

<sup>42</sup>Banks, p. 48; Court Records, II, 270.

<sup>43</sup>"Notes," (anon. arts), The Essex Antiquarian, VIII (1904), 144.

<sup>44</sup>Salem Town Records, II, 50.

<sup>45</sup>Savage, II, 486.

<sup>46</sup>Salem Town Records, II, 50.

<sup>47</sup>Court Records, VI, 53.

<sup>48</sup>Probate Docket #16282.

<sup>49</sup>Perley, Salem, II, 122.

<sup>50</sup>Savage, III, 264.

<sup>51</sup>Salem Town Records, II, 127.

<sup>52</sup>Suffolk Deeds, IX, 271; Savage, III, 262.

<sup>53</sup>Court Records, VI, 81.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., VIII, 364. He left five small children and no will.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Salem Town Records, II, 281.

58 Perley, Salem, II, 82.

59 Phillips, Salem, p. 367.

60 Perley, Salem, II, 235.

61 Ibid., II, pp. 96-97.

62 Belknap, Trades, p. 85. Perley, Salem, III, 200, gives the month as January instead of February.

63 (Boston: The Prince Society, 1867), pp. 45, 248, 253, 255.

64 Perley, Salem, III, 334.

65 Thomas Denis bought the house of William Searle (Ipswich Deeds, Book VIII, leaf 69); Ryce Edwards was granted the land formerly belonging to Richard Lambert ("Salem Town Records, I" 168; John Croade bought Joseph Neale's house and lot (Sidney Perley, "Part of Salem in 1700, #5," The Essex Antiquarian, IV [1900], 168.) All the parties were joiners.

66 Stephen Haskett, soapboiler, bought "the dwelling house with a soape house, 2 coppers sett up in ye same, with all the appurtenances thereto belonging..." in 1664. Salem Deeds, II, leaf 94.

67 Perley, Salem, III, 9.

68 Ibid., II, 321. "Granted" in each instance means "purchased" for 5 li.

## CHAPTER V

### LOCAL JOINERS IN ESSEX COUNTY: 1634 - 1739

#### PART TWO: LYNN, IPSWICH, AND NEWBURY

When John Humfrey, an early and respected deputy governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company, after some hesitation, emigrated to Lynn in July, 1634,<sup>1</sup> he brought with him as a "servant," one Jenkyn Davis. Davis was a joiner, and his presence in the colony in 1634 gives him the distinction of being the earliest joiner known to be working in Essex County. It is evident from the fact that he was sworn a freeman in Lynn three years later that he had already been trained in his craft before emigrating to New England.<sup>2</sup> Although the place of Davis' birth is not recorded, Humfrey came from Sandwich, County Kent.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly before the birth of his son, John, in 1641, Davis was disfranchised and heavily fined for molesting a young child,<sup>4</sup> but his contrite spirit following this famous incident, and his otherwise unblemished character prompted his neighbors to petition the General Court for his pardon on November 13, 1644.<sup>5</sup> This plea was granted prior to June 1650, when he was serving his turn as a constable in Lynn. At his death in 1662, the twenty year old fine remained unpaid, which explains the cryptic sentence in his will: "...I do bestow [my Joyners tooles] vpon my son John when he has wrought with [them] and for his mother till my debts be paid...."<sup>6</sup>

John Davis—not yet twenty-one years of age—commenced his career upon his own account at this time with the tools, valued at 8 pounds, that he had inherited. He had evidently paid enough of his father's debt by 1664 to see his way clear to get married.<sup>7</sup> On June 28, 1681, Davis received judgment against John Tolley (Tawley) of Salem, a mariner, for four chests

which he had made. These chests were made in Lynn and delivered to Tawley in Salem, one of the few documented instances of furniture being made in one township and delivered to another.<sup>8</sup> The chests must have been fine ones, as they were appraised at 30 shillings each.

At the time of his death in 1702, his estate was valued at 102 li. 12 s. Listed in his inventory were: "Item: Joiners tools 5 li. 10 s.; Item: bords timber for ye Joyners trade 2 li."<sup>9</sup> This final item makes it clear that he was still actively engaged in the practice of his craft at the age of sixty-one.

Despite his repeatedly having been summoned before the court for "intemperance" and "uncivil carriages" to women,<sup>10</sup> Davis was a good enough craftsman to have had the respect of his apprentice, George Cole. Insofar as can be determined from internal evidence in Cole's will, he was the son of Isaac Cole of Charlestown, a Kentishman (like John Davis' father) who had also immigrated from Sandwich.<sup>11</sup>

Cole is first mentioned in the records of Essex County in 1674 when John Tarbox died, owing him 6 s. 8 d.<sup>12</sup> The item is important only in that it reveals that Cole was working on his own account, for in his will, written in the winter of 1675 when he was on his way to "The Swamp Fight" in the Narragansett Country, he calls John Davis "my master." Further evidence that Davis was his former master, is to be found in Cole's inventory, proved on December 21, 1675, which mentioned, "work he has done in his shop," valued at 1 li. 10 s.<sup>13</sup>

Cole is far more important than the few biographical details that can be found would indicate. For one thing, the presence in his inventory of "6 tourning tooles," valued at 9 shillings indicates that he was a turner in addition to being a joiner. The implication is that his master, John Davis and Davis' master, Jenkyn Davis, were also joiners who were capable of doing their own turning. Secondly, the inventory of Cole's

tools is the only itemized inventory of a joiner to be found in the seventeenth century Probate Records of Essex County (see Appendix II).

William Craft (variously spelled Craift, Crofts, Croft and Craufuts in the records) was living in Lynn by 1650.<sup>14</sup> He was born in 1612,<sup>15</sup> and probably received his training as a joiner in England. He died in 1689 and left all of his estate to the children and grandchildren of his wife Ann, previously the widow of Thomas Ivory.<sup>16</sup> One of his wife's sons, Thomas, had married Mary, the daughter of Jenkyn Davis in 1660.<sup>17</sup>

A careful search has failed to disclose any furniture which has a history of ownership in the Lynn area which may have been made by any of these joiners.

Thomas Browne, a dish-turner, born in 1628, was in Lynn by 1653 and married Mary Newhall within the next two years.<sup>18</sup> He served as a constable in 1665, and died before October 25, 1693, the date his inventory was taken, in which "two old guns beetle weges and turnin tools 2 li." are listed.<sup>19</sup>

"Jonathan Johnson was born about 1683, and died May 8, 1741 in Lynn where he was a chairmaker," says Henry W. Belknap in Trades and Tradesmen of Essex County.<sup>20</sup> The only Jonathan Johnson born in or near the year 1683 was the son of John Johnson of Rehoboth,<sup>21</sup> of whom nothing more can be determined. He could not have worked significantly in the seventeenth century.

The evidence of turning in the inventory of George Cole indicates that the joiners of Lynn whose practices descended from Jenkyn Davis were well-equipped to do turning.

#### THE JOINERS AND TURNERS OF IPSWICH

William Searle, described as a "joiner from Boston," arrived in

Ipswich in May 1663,<sup>22</sup> when he purchased a house-lot. He is the first joiner as yet known to have worked in the town. Searle had married Grace Cole in the town of his birth, Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, on April 12, 1659,<sup>23</sup> and probably emigrated shortly thereafter. The house-lot he had bought in May, he sold the following September to Thomas Denis,<sup>24</sup> the most famous seventeenth century Essex County joiner. The deed record is not clear as to where Searle and his family lived between this date and the time of his death in 1667, but the inventory of his estate does mention a house, valued at 26 pounds.<sup>25</sup>

Denis did not immediately occupy the property he bought from Searle. He was serving as a constable of Portsmouth, New Hampshire in October 1665, and was mentioned in the Town Records of that town in March, 1666, as one of those who had come to Portsmouth after 1658.<sup>26</sup>

Exactly when he came or where he had come from is not recorded. It is also uncertain exactly when he removed to Ipswich. He may have been there in the Spring of 1667,<sup>27</sup> but the earliest we can be certain that he was there is October 1668, for in that month he married William Searle's widow, Grace.<sup>28</sup>

The evidence of the Ipswich Court Records suggests that Denis had economic difficulties during his first years in Ipswich. Between 1671 and 1675 he was called before the court four times for various petty crimes. First, in April 1671, he was fined for having denied cutting down eighteen trees on the Ipswich common lands when he had permission to cut only six;<sup>29</sup> second, he was sued by Josiah Lyndon for non-payment of wages;<sup>30</sup> third, he was presented in the Spring of 1674 for stealing some nails;<sup>31</sup> and finally, in the Fall of 1675, he was complained of for overcharging Steven Cross for a chest and table.<sup>32</sup>

It must remain, for the present, one of the enigmas of the history of the American decorative arts why a craftsman of great abilities, who had led a life sufficiently respectable for him to have served as a

constable in Portsmouth, began to commit petty crimes when he moved to Ipswich. Nevertheless, by June 1677, Denis was admitted a freeman of the town, and by February 1680/1 was making some pretense of leading a fashionable life (see infra, Chapter VI).

Denis died in 1706. His son had been a joiner, but had died two years before him. His grandson was destined to become the most important figure in the furniture trade of Ipswich in the eighteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

Sometime before October 1669, Denis had an apprentice or journeyman, Josiah Lyndon, working for him.<sup>34</sup> The records of the September, 1671 Ipswich Court reveal that Denis owed Lyndon 5 pounds—which could either represent the final pay for an apprentice, or almost a year's wages for a journeyman. Journeyman status, however, is suggested by Lyndon's being called a "joiner" at that time, even though Denis is referred to as Lyndon's "master." Had Lyndon been an apprentice, he undoubtedly would have been called a "servant."

Between September 1671, and September, 1672, Lyndon married, had a child, and left Ipswich (and probably Massachusetts), for he failed to appear in Court at that time to answer a charge of "fornicating with his wife before marriage."<sup>35</sup> He is never mentioned again in the Records of Essex County.

A joiner who was born in Ipswich and may conceivably have had his training with Thomas Denis was Nathaniel Griffin, son of Humphrey Griffin, the butcher of Ipswich, and his wife Elizabeth.<sup>36</sup> An Ipswich apprenticeship seems most likely for young Griffin, because no joiner is presently known to have been working in Haverhill, where his mother moved sometime between the death of her husband (1661) and her remarriage to Hugh Sherratt, prior to 1665.<sup>37</sup>

Nathaniel Griffin spent the first few years of his working life in Andover, where he was married in 1671 and where his first child's

birth is recorded the following year. But by 1673, he was in Salisbury,<sup>38</sup> and was still working there twenty years later.<sup>39</sup> When he died is not recorded.

In 1659-60, when Griffin was nine or ten years old, his sister, Elizabeth married Edmond Deare,<sup>40</sup> who may have taught Griffin something of the Turner's art. Deare was a turner by trade, and may have come to Ipswich from Salem. He is thought to have been the son of Phillip Deare, who had settled in Salem as early as 1638.<sup>41</sup>

Deare may not have been a greatly successful practitioner of the Turner's art, for in 1678 he received a 10 li. bequest from the estate of Robert Dorton, as beneficiary of an agreement made between four men that "that perty of the four that was in the most need...was to have ye biggest share," of 25 li. upon Dorton's decease.<sup>42</sup> Deare himself died in 1693.<sup>43</sup>

Deare had come to Ipswich at about the time of the death of another turner, Edward Browne (born 1610, working in Ipswich 1637-1658). Browne's son, Joseph, was also a turner. He was born around 1639, had trained with his father and was working in 1660, when he inherited his father's "shop tooles wch amounted to 3 li. 7s."<sup>44</sup>

The Browne's were undoubtedly the more respected and prosperous of the Ipswich turners. Joseph held a number of local offices during his lifetime. In the "rate" (i.e. tax or assessment) for the elder's salary made in November 1679, Joseph Browne's share was 7 s. 4 d., Thomas Denis' was 7 s. 6 d., and Edward Deare was not taxed at all.<sup>45</sup> Browne's son, John (born 1674, died 1758) was also a turner.<sup>46</sup>

Another Joseph Brown, a joiner, appears late in the seventeenth century in that part of Ipswich township known as Chebago Parish (present Essex). He may possibly have been the son (born April 12, 1683) of a Joseph Brown who lived in Lynn, married Sarah Jones, and was made a free-man of Ipswich in 1683.<sup>47</sup> This joiner, hereafter called Joseph Brown of

Chebago, to avoid confusion with the Ipswich turner, died in 1730.<sup>48</sup>

#### THE JOINERS AND TURNERS OF NEWBURY

A discussion of the joiners and turners of Newbury must begin with Hugh March, Sr., about whom all of the published information is either incorrect or misleading.<sup>49</sup>

Hugh March came to New England as the servant of Stephen Kent, a carpenter, on the ship Confidence, out of Southampton, in 1638.<sup>50</sup> Although his age is given as twenty,<sup>51</sup> he was more likely sixteen or eighteen years old, his age being variously given in later court records to suggest a birth-date of 1620 or 1622.<sup>52</sup>

Whatever his working relationship with Stephen Kent was, it was at an end by 1646 when March is known to have been married and the father of a son, George.<sup>53</sup>

Although he is called a "joiner" in five deeds recorded between 1672 and 1679, and it has been implied that his joining career might have continued until his death in 1693,<sup>54</sup> his own statement, recorded in the files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County reads that "I drew off from my former means of subsistanc; and with great Expence and difficulty took upon mee the burden of the ordinary in newbery."<sup>55</sup> He was granted the licence for his ordinary on March 29, 1670,<sup>56</sup> and an additional licence to sell liquors was issued him three months later.<sup>57</sup> Whatever "joining" he may have engaged in must have been done in the years prior to that event. Indeed, in the very years 1670 and 71, March contracted with Robert Downter to build a house for him in Newbury, even specifying that Downter should do the "finishing."<sup>58</sup>

The use of the phrase "former means of subsistanc[e]" above may ring somewhat strange, as an active craftsman might be expected to have used the words "trade" or "calling." An amplifying statement, dated

September 26, 1682 and filed with the court records of that year states that he had no need to become an ordinary-keeper "being well seted upon a farme of my owne, wch was sufficient to maintaine me...."<sup>59</sup>

This information is quoted here only to suggest reliable working dates for Hugh March, and it suggests circa 1638-1670 as a wide span.

A second name which has caused some printed confusion is Stephen Jaques, who is called by one writer a "master-workman and cabinetmaker,"<sup>60</sup> and by another a "cabinetmaker of Newburyport."<sup>61</sup>

Some of this confusion can be dispelled by the realization that there were two men named Stephen Jaques who were both woodworkers in Newbury. Stephen Jaques I (born 1661, died after 1719), was the son of Henry Jaques who first settled in Newbury in 1640.<sup>62</sup> Stephen Jaques II (born 1686, died ca. 1741),<sup>63</sup> the son of Stephen I, was a turner in Newbury. He graduated from Harvard College (1707), and kept an account book, now in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection—the earliest known account book pertaining to the turner's craft in America. The information it yields, however, is meager.

Stephen Jaques I seems to have followed his father's trade of carpenter, as is recorded in an agreement dated December 21, 1698, "with Serj. [i.e. Sergeant of the Newbury militia company] Stephen Jaques to furnish the labor and materials for the new [meeting house], to be constructed according to plans and specification for the sum of 520 li.: 'Sixty foote in length & fifty foote in breadth and twenty foot in the stud, or post.' "<sup>64</sup>

Additional evidence of his working as a master carpenter exists, but the record does not suggest that he made furniture.<sup>65</sup>

That Stephen Jaques II was a turner is amply evidenced by the account book he kept beginning in 1712, to which his son John made

additions after his father's death, until 1794.<sup>66</sup> The majority of the entries indicate that these men did a great variety of miscellaneous wood-working and husbandry tasks, as would be expected of turners in a small town, distant from a commercial center. The most frequently mentioned items which they made were tool handles, followed by repairs to chairs. As the years go by, they began making chairs themselves, although no clue to the kinds of chairs they made is given.

Other turners working in Newbury were Thomas Moody (born 1668, died after 1699), Samuel Poor, Jr. (born 1653, died 1727), and Stephen Boulton (perhaps born 1669). Helen Park suggests that these latter two turners may have been the apprentices of a John Smith of Newbury, born in 1647.<sup>67</sup> Of three John Smiths cited in the Newbury vital records and quoted by Mrs. Park, there is no evidence that indicates that the "John Smith, turner" mentioned in a deed of 1699, was the John Smith who was born in 1647. Subsequent research suggests that the John Smith, who was a turner, was a somewhat younger man, perhaps the John Smith, turner, who took an apprentice in nearby Byfield on March 25, 1712.<sup>68</sup>

A final late seventeenth century joiner of Newbury, who worked through more than half of the eighteenth century, is also represented by an account book in the Essex Institute manuscript collection. An inscription on the flyleaf reads, "Skipper Lunt [was] Born 29: November 1679 A Ssaturday 7 of the clock in the Morning."<sup>69</sup> He was the son of Henry Lunt, Jr., a carpenter of Newbury.<sup>70</sup> The activities of Skipper Lunt and his son, Joshua (born October 13, 1707), from 1730 until 1771 provide the earliest documented insight into the joiner's trade as practiced in rural Essex County.

The tasks listed in the first entry (1730) are those which would be expected of a joiner whose working life was spent in the West Parish of Newbury,<sup>71</sup> a farming community where the tempo of life was very different from that of more cosmopolitan Salem.

To making A yoak	2 00
to making Table	16 00
to cobard lok	2 06
to 9 days work on your barn	2 05 00.... <sup>72</sup>

In 1739, Lunt referred to his work as "joined" when he billed "Deakin Thomas Steven" for "making Shelves—Joynten."<sup>73</sup> Characteristic items that Skipper and Joshua Lunt made include, "a looking glass fram, 12 s. (1741/2); two cofins, 15 s. (1730/31); chest [of] drawer [s], 2 li. 10 s. (1738); a cradl, 1 li. (1744);" and on May 2, 1739, the most expensive item the Lunts ever made: "Orlando Colby, Debr to Clockcase, 5 li. 5 s."<sup>74</sup>

"A tee table, 12 s." appears in 1762,<sup>75</sup> —an entry indicative of the changing fashions that had penetrated even to the West Parish of Newbury. That entry, made in the year that Skipper Lunt died, brings him in a direct line from the seventeenth century to within a decade of the era when the furniture of Newbury was to mature: the Federal period.

## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>Savage, II, 495.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 496. Patrick McGrath (ed.), The Merchant Venturers of Bristol (Bristol, England, 1952), p. 84 mentions a Jenkyn Davis who lived at Haverfordwest (Wales) in 1584. It is not a common name.

<sup>4</sup>Winthrop, Journal, II, 45-47.

<sup>5</sup>Charles H. Pope, Pioneers of Massachusetts (Boston, 1900), p. 132 --hereafter cited as Pope, Pioneers.

<sup>6</sup>Probate Records, I, 357.

<sup>7</sup>Savage, II, 19. Court Records IV, 46 indicate that 18 of 20 remaining pounds of the debt had been paid by 1668.

<sup>8</sup>Court Records, VIII, 123-124; V, 421-422, 443 detail an instance of Samuel Symonds' sending a cupboard from Rowley Village to Salem Village (present Danvers).

<sup>9</sup>Probate Docket #7282.

<sup>10</sup>Court Records, VII, 158, 400.

<sup>11</sup>Savage, II, 427.

<sup>12</sup>Court Records, V, 370.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., VI, 109.

<sup>14</sup>Savage, I, 475. Pope, Pioneers, p. 123 says that he was a

proprietor at Lynn. The anonymous author of The Craft Family (Northampton, 1893), p. 36 takes notice of William Craft but does not find him related to the progenitor of the family in America, Griffin Crafts, a proprietor at Roxbury in 1630.

<sup>15</sup> Court Records, V, 290.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Savage, III, 526.

<sup>18</sup> "The Descendants of Thomas Browne of Lynn," (anon. art.) The Essex Antiquarian, XIII (1908), 102.

<sup>19</sup> Probate Docket #3860.

<sup>20</sup> (Salem, 1929), p. 50. Ethel Hall Bjerke, Cabinetmakers of America (Garden City, N.Y., 1957), p. 135 calls him a "chaimaker." This book is hereafter cited as Bjerke, Cabinetmakers.

<sup>21</sup> Savage, II, 555.

<sup>22</sup> Ipswich Deeds, III, 133.

<sup>23</sup> Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 42.

<sup>24</sup> Ipswich Deeds VIII, 69.

<sup>25</sup> Court Records, III, 449.

<sup>26</sup> Documents and Records Relating to the Province of New Hampshire, 4 Vols. (Condord, N.H., 1867), I, 280. See also The New Hampshire Genealogical Record (Dover, Maine, 1904), I, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Court Records, III, 464.

<sup>28</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXII (November 1937), 231.

<sup>29</sup> Court Records, IV, 349.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 422-423.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., V, 316.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., VI, 72.

<sup>33</sup>Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 350.

<sup>34</sup>Court Records, IV, 349. Lyndon's deposition, dated April 6, 1670, refers to a series of events which had occurred the previous October.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 422; V, 93. It is possible that he removed to Newport, Rhode Island. See Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies (New York, 1966), p. 56, fig. 32.

<sup>36</sup>Savage, II, 313.

<sup>37</sup>Court Records, III, 237.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., V, 298.

<sup>39</sup>Nelson Account Book, leaf 4.

<sup>40</sup>Court Records, II, 242; Waters, Ipswich, I, 42. Although consistently called "Edward" by Helen Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (July 1960), 44 and Ibid. (October 1960), 350, Deare clearly signed his name "Edmond" on his will. See Probate Docket #7465.

<sup>41</sup>Savage, II, 31.

<sup>42</sup>Court Records VII, 37.

<sup>43</sup>Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (July 1960), 44.

<sup>44</sup>Probate Records, III, 360.

<sup>45</sup>Court Records, VIII, 310.

<sup>46</sup>"Descendants of Edward Browne of Ipswich," (anon. art.), The Essex Antiquarian, XII (July 1908), 125.

<sup>47</sup>Savage, I, 273.

<sup>48</sup>Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 350.

<sup>49</sup> Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 353.

<sup>50</sup> Savage, III, 151.

<sup>51</sup> The Abridged Compendium of American Genealogy (Chicago, 1936), II, 407.

<sup>52</sup> Court Records, VI, 164; VIII, 283.

<sup>53</sup> Savage, II, 151.

<sup>54</sup> Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 353.

<sup>55</sup> Court Records, V, 154.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., IV, 229.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>58</sup> Court Records, V, 339; VII, 192.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., VIII, 380.

<sup>60</sup> Mabel M. Swan, "Newburyport Furniture Makers," Antiques, XLVII (April 1945), 223--hereafter cited as Swan, "Newburyport."

<sup>61</sup> Bjerkoe, Cabinetmakers, p. 133.

<sup>62</sup> Savage, II, 538.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. Also, the Jaques Account Book ends in 1741.

<sup>64</sup> John J. Currier, History of Newbury, Massachusetts (Boston, 1902), p. 333, quoting Newbury Town Records III, 50--hereafter cited as Currier, Newbury.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 260, 334. A cradle in the collection of the Newburyport Historical Society is attributed to him. See also Paul H. Burroughs, "Furniture Widely Made in New Hampshire," American Collector, VI (September 1937), 6. He is there called a "joiner," and is said to have been working in 1698. See also Swan, "Newburyport," p. 223.

<sup>66</sup> See Jaques Account Book, unpaged, whose final entries, in the handwriting of Stephen Jaques II, occur in 1641.

<sup>67</sup> Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 352.

<sup>68</sup> See the unpublished folio "Apprenticeships and Indentures," a compilation of indentures 1649-1839, in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection. Unpaged, the items are filed in approximately chronological order. Under date of March 25, 1712, John Smith of Byfield, turner, took as an apprentice one "Simon \_\_\_\_\_, of Ipswich...to teach and cause to be taught & instructed aforesaid apprentice in the art & trade of a turner."

<sup>69</sup> See the unpublished manuscript "Joshua and Abraham Lunt Account Book, 1736-1772," in the Essex Institute Manuscript collection--hereafter cited as Lunt Account Book. Please note that the catalog card, as cited above, incorrectly describes the manuscript. This item is more correctly described as the Account Book of Skipper Lunt, the father of the two men mentioned above. The Skipper Lunt entries begin around 1730 (not 1736), and continue until 1762-3, the year of his death. Entries were made in the book from 1763 until 1771 by Skipper's son, Joshua, who followed his father in the joiner's trade. (see Essex Deeds, book 92, leaf 226). Another son, Abraham (born 1704), Joshua's elder brother, was a cordwainer (see Probate Docket #17396). He was named executor of Joshua's estate in 1771 (Probate Docket #17416), and made entries in that year and the next closing out open balance's due to his brother's estate.

Some confusion arises concerning an Abraham Lunt (born 1683, died 1760), whom Ethel Hall Bjerkoe call a "cabinetmaker of Newburyport." (See Bjerkoe, Cabinetmakers, p. 148) This Abraham was the brother of Skipper Lunt, and may have been a joiner, although I have not been able to verify that possibility during the course of intensive research. From Mrs. Bjerkoe's awareness of the Skipper Lunt Ms., I assume that she inferred that the earlier Abraham was the same Abraham referred to in the account book, which is unsubstantiated by the facts. I am much indebted to Miss Eleanor Spofford Perley for helping to unravel this problem. See letters to the author from Miss Perley dated August 3 and 5, 1967.

<sup>70</sup> Savage, III, 131.

<sup>71</sup> Currier, Newbury, p. 370.

<sup>72</sup> Lunt Account Book, leaf 2.

<sup>73</sup> Henry Swell is called a joiner in 1795. See Henry W. Belknap, Artists and Craftsmen of Essex County (Salem, 1927), p. 50.

<sup>74</sup>Lunt Account Book, leaves 21, 7, 60, 64.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., leaf 62.

It is not much that I haue to say to the honnourable court in this busseness for which my wife is now presented which is as i understand for wearing of a scarfe....i humbly concieue the end of the law is to [prevent] that sinne of prid and excess in aparel [that is contrary to] modesty and comelyness but i conceive that my [wife in the] wearing of a scarfe is not guilty of prid....[The] Reassons are thess First becaus when she doth weare a scarfe it is not becaus she would be in the fashon or that she would be as fine as another

becaus it is for necessity and presseruing of health and this appears to be thus becaus she ordinarily weares a scarfe but at two seasons the first is in winter when it is very colde the other sseasson is when it is very wett weather nowe i conceive if she did weare her scarfe for prid she would be as proud in summer as she is in winter and in dry weather as in wett....<sup>1</sup>

--Edward Browne, in Ipswich Court,  
September 27, 1653.

## CHAPTER VI

### FASHION AND THE PURITAN

Economic and social historians have seen the motivations for the migration to New England through different colored glasses. James Truslow Adams saw it in terms of the desire for economic betterment, and Samuel Eliot Morison as a search for religious freedom.<sup>2</sup> The furniture historian would have to be bold indeed to make any statement that could not comprehend both of these interpretations. Whatever the initial reasons that impelled the first settlers of Essex County to emigrate, the New World worked its magic on them and their way of life and added a measure of unanticipated changes to their lives and way of living in addition to the natural ones that arise as generation succeeds generation.

The first generation of Puritans, who came as adults, were undoubtedly pleased with the relative spiritual freedom they enjoyed in New England. There is some question in the modern mind as to how free activity could really be in a society where an agonizing appraisal of conscience was necessary before you were admitted to the (only) church, where you could present anyone in court for a misdemeanor (real or imaginary) and receive a part of the fine, where if you were the parent of a premature child it was prima facie evidence of "intimacy before marriage," and where you could only wear a silk kerchief if you could prove that your personal estate was in excess of 200 pounds, or that you had an education that was "above the average."

To the second generation, who had come as infants or were the first-born in America and reached maturity around the time of the Restoration of Charles II, the freedom of New England was a commonplace: they

could not remember any other life. It was for this age that the "half-way covenant" was devised, which permitted church membership to those who were less than the "visible Saints" the first generation had been. Although the Indians were still a menace, the spiritual travail that partially impelled their parents to migrate from the corrupt life of Jacobean England, was unknown to them.

But even in the first generation, taste had never allowed fashion to stand still. It had been considered important among the ladies of Ipswich "to enquire what dress the Queen is in this week," though such worldly men as Nathaniel Ward might consider them "the very gizzard of a trifle."<sup>3</sup> Mister Ward also vented his indignation on the tailors who used their art to clothe women in French fashions, and Governor Endicott, Deputy Governor Dudley, and seven others of the Court of Assistants issued a strong proclamation on May 10, 1649 deplored the appearance of men who wore long hair "after the manner of ruffians [which] has begun to invade New England."<sup>4</sup>

Legislate as the Assistants might, and bewail as many sermons did against these and other fripperies, fashion could not be put down. Even "King" Phillip, the Indian Sachem of Mount Hope stocked up on English-style finery three years before he began the war that bears his name. He ordered "a good Holland shirt, redy made; and a pr of good Indian briches, and silke & buttons & 7 yards Gallownes for trimming...[and] five yards of White light collered serge" from Captain Hopstill Foster of Dorchester.<sup>5</sup>

A subtle means of insinuating ones worldly success (success being to the Puritan mind God's reward for virtue), can be seen in the early appearance of that rare, expensive and virtually useless piece of vanity furniture, the Court Cupboard, traditionally designed for the display of plate.<sup>6</sup>

Another vanity fad appeared in that place which—theoretically—should be least susceptible to the considerations of this world: the

Meeting House. It had always been important to be seated there according to one's rank and social standing, of course, but in 1675, some Ipswich families began to enclose their benches in the manner of pews, and by 1681, an even newer fashion—that of elevating ones seats—was indulged in by Thomas Denis, Thomas Hart and several others.<sup>7</sup>

The numerous Mercantile Acts of the seventeenth century tied colonial trade ever closer to the affairs of England, and the inventory books of shop-keepers George and Jonathan Corwin literally fill pages with expensive textiles of unbelievable variety,<sup>8</sup> for which there were apparently many customers: both Corwin's died wealthy men.

Other people of means imported furniture and fine goods directly from England, and "the small Japan trunk"<sup>9</sup> which Elizabeth Corwin of Salem, daughter of Governor Edward Winslow of Plymouth, asked to have separated in 1684 as "her own" from the effects of her lately deceased husband, Captain George Corwin, should not be considered atypical of the fashionable and sometimes exotic items such people possessed.

Intercommunication between the towns was much greater than one would commonly think, and the ledger books of the Salem merchants are filled with the records of purchases of people from all over the county who looked to Salem as the place to shop. "Mr. Walter Ffayrefield," a turner of Wenham, bought "1 Neckcloth 2 s.; 1 yd  $\frac{1}{2}$  Gould Dyaper 2 s." from Jonathan Corwin,<sup>10</sup> and Humphrey Griffin, a butcher of Ipswich, was a regular customer, shopping on the average of once a month. Skipper Lunt, a joiner of Newbury, made regular trips to Boston and carried parcels back to Stephen Sewall of Newbury from his more celebrated brother, Samuel, on more than one occasion.<sup>11</sup> John Davis of Lynn had at least one customer in Salem, John Tolly,<sup>12</sup> and was often there, at "Charletown," and at Marblehead, where he was once "distempered with drink" and "fined for affronting 2 sober & chaste women" at Mr. Redding's ordinary.<sup>13</sup>

There can be no question that ideas, once arrived at the major

seaports of Boston or Salem, could soon be known throughout Essex County. Fashion was available for him who wanted it, at a price, of course, but as it might be currently found in London.

The seventeenth century was an age of dynamic change for the Englishman, an age when an ancient insularity of ways and outlook was being overcome by world-wide trade. It is natural that the Massachusetts Bay Colony, whose economy was so closely tied to England's, must participate in that change, regardless of the degree of its willingness to do so.

Thomas Wiggan described Governor John Winthrop in a letter written in November, 1632, as a "discreet and sober man, giving a good example to all the planters....He wears plain apparel such as may beseem a mean man."<sup>14</sup> Would this "discreet man" have been able to recognize his grandson, Waitstill Winthrop, as we see him in the fashionable, Knelleresque portrait that hangs today in the Massachusetts Historical Society, with his long, flowing curls, his up-to-minute London lace and almost foppish clothes?

Three distinct generations grew up in the years between 1630 and 1710, and the changes which occurred in that period are reflected in their furniture. Carved chests and cupboards, the first generation's idea of the ultimate in elegance, waned in popularity as the second generation acquired case furniture whose panels were set off with geometrical, applied moldings, and whose stiles were ornamented with complex, ebonized turnings. Their children in turn chose a less ornate style whose effect was gained by simpler shapes and surface detail: painted patterns, lustrous hardwoods other than oak, and sometimes even light-reflecting veneers!

The first change of style, under way by the mid-1670's, had progressed to even richer productions by the middle of the 1690's. But the changes in furniture did not occur in isolation, for many other events, dynamic in character, were taking place in eastern Massachusetts during the same period.

Sixteen sixty-nine was the year of the half-way covenant; 1684 the year in which the original charter was revoked; 1687 saw the beginning of the tyrannical reign of Sir Edmond Androes, which showed the men of Essex County what was in store for them when John Wise, the minister of Chebago, Major Samuel Appleton and five others were imprisoned and fined for refusing to pay an outrageous tax.

But, a brighter day was ahead. 1689 was the happy year in which William and Mary came to the throne and Androes went back to England. A new charter, almost as liberal as the former one had been, gave cause for rejoicing. The economic life of the community began to flourish.

What of the spiritual life of the community? The half-way covenant had been a concession to the idea that the second generation might not have been capable of the same religious austerity and discipline the first generation welcomed. But this concession was the last the church made, and the very bounty which nature had bestowed upon the "Bible Commonwealth" gave many of the ministers of Essex County a cause for alarm. It was not difficult to connect increasing prosperity with the half-empty Meeting Houses they faced on lecture day. It was for the second generation that the fire and brimstone sermons were concocted, and The Day of Doom was written.

Many authors have suggested that the suspicion that witchcraft was being practiced in Salem Village gave the divines of New England one final chance to reaffirm their importance in the community. But as the witchcraft hysteria mounted, and reasoned investigation turned into absurd excess, the persecution became repugnant. Instead of intensifying their hold on the life of the community, the ministers of the Puritan Inquisition destroyed it.

When Thomas Maule, a Quaker, published a book called Truth Set Forth and Maintained, containing—so the indictment against him read—"diverse slanders against the churches and government of this province,"

he was brought to trial. But a jury of Salem men refused to find him guilty, saying that they were "not a jury of divines, which this case required."<sup>15</sup> In that brief sentence, uttered in the year 1696, the New England Men ended the marriage of Church and State and set the stage for the growth of a freer American society.

In a sense, from the last quarter of the seventeenth century, two "Essex Counties" exist: the one still conservative, rural, meeting-house oriented, looking inward and a little toward the past, and the other speculative, sea-going, urban, looking toward Virginia, the West Indies and England, and subject to the ideas and temptations of all those "foreign" ports of call, but not afraid of them.

To some degree, the differences had long existed in Essex County. The traveller, soldier, gentleman farmer and investor, Robert Gray of Salem died possessed of a "case of drawers" in 1661,<sup>16</sup> virtually contemporary with the beginning of popularity of this form in England.<sup>17</sup> But when John Symonds IV died there one hundred and thirty-five years later, Reverend Bentley observed that he was still using the "upright high arm chairs...the Press for pewter plates...and a chest of drawers with knobs, & short swelled legs."<sup>18</sup>

Like the very generations which form new households and acquire new furniture for them (the changes in fashion being almost imperceptible at the time), generations and furniture styles do not replace one another abruptly. While one generation lives on and its attitudes still persist, another generation, with new ideas and new fashions is ripening at the same time and in the same place.

By the 1680's, a new style—that amalgamation of early Baroque motifs which we call the "William and Mary Style" in America—had become common throughout much of London. Furniture, destroyed by the great fire of London in 1666, was being replaced by newer, less ornate and much more lightly constructed chairs, cupboards and chests of drawers. Their

appearance was alike influenced by the Dutch furniture popular in royal circles since the Restoration, and the disappearance of oak in the forests of England.<sup>19</sup>

In the country districts of England, however, the story is different. Oak furniture was made there well into the eighteenth century,<sup>20</sup> just as it undoubtedly was in rural America.

In the account book of John Gould, a weaver of Topsfield, are detailed a number of transactions between himself and his neighbor, Samuel Symonds, a joiner, who lived but a half a mile up Lockwood Lane from him, on the way to Boxford. In June 1709, Symonds bought from Gould the "wainscot work of the old [Topsfield] meeting house" for 12 shillings. There can be no question but that Symonds could reuse this wood-work profitably. In 1713, Gould bought a "joynt stool" from Symonds.<sup>21</sup>

Merely because the calendar said that it was the eighteenth century, a rural New England joiner, advanced in age, trained during the first half of the previous century, would not suddenly change his style of working or the style of furniture he was making. Unquestionably furniture in the William and Mary style—was finding its way, before 1700, into the homes of those wealthy Boston and Salem merchants most closely in contact with current trends in London.

It is not yet possible to say exactly when such full-blown examples of the "William and Mary Style" as the high chest of drawers were first made in Essex County. The general trend toward the more planar appearance of cabinetmaker's board-constructed work is foreshadowed in much of the late seventeenth century case furniture made there.

The transition from joiner's construction—that is, panels set into frames—to board construction, may not have been such a wrenching change for the joiner as has often been assumed. Craftsmen who had made as many coffins as they had, would find no problems in working with

boards. It was merely a question of deciding to do it.

The persistence of the traditional methods of the joiner, which can be observed in the newer looking furniture they made toward the end of the seventeenth century, suggests that their skills were sufficiently different from those of the cabinetmaker to prevent an immediate change in their techniques. In addition, the craftsman population in Essex County was growing more by reproduction than by immigration,<sup>22</sup> and lack of contact with changing craft techniques and ideas tended to mitigate against rapid changes of style. Lastly, the conservative tastes of the essentially agrarian community—a great proportion of Essex County—tended to prefer the older ways in all aspects of its life, including religion, politics and furniture.

Nevertheless, the new style was exerting some influence on the joiners of the county, but often their solution was an age-old one: to attain the appearance of the new look on the outside of their furniture, while they continued to make the furniture itself by the old, tried, proven and familiar way.

## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup> Court Records, I, 304. The lady was discharged "upon proof of [her] education and bringing up."

<sup>2</sup> James Truslow Adams' The Founding of New England (New York, 1921), which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1922, follows in a direct line the inescapable conclusions suggested in Weeden's Economic History of New England (1890), often cited in this paper. The difference is that Adams has chosen England as the point from which to view America. See New England Quarterly, III, (October 1930), 741, for Adams' own statement. As an additional corrective for the reader who may object to my liberal quotation of Samuel Eliot Morison's Builders of the Bay Colony, I can equally recommend Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker's The Puritan Oligarchy, whose title explains the book. Among many brilliant observations, can be found the statement: "They could not flee from human nature: they could not flee from themselves..." p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> Waters, Ipswich, I, 40.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 40, 41.

<sup>5</sup> Weeden, I, 288.

<sup>6</sup> See Robert W. Symonds, "The 'Dyning Parlor' and its Furniture," The Connoisseur, CXIII (January 1944), 16-18, for identification and evolution of the Court Cupboard.

<sup>7</sup> Waters, Ipswich, I, 114; Weeden, I, 279-281.

<sup>8</sup> Captain George Corwin's account book, in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection, begins with entries in the year 1653. Captain Corwin died in 1684/5 and entries in another hand continue through 1704. George Corwin II may have written these later items, as a memo in Jonathan Corwin's ledger notes: "Rev. George Corwin died November 23, 1717," (unpaged). Enclosed in the Jonathan Corwin Account Book, II, is an un-paged "Day Book" which is not catalogued. The Jonathan Corwin Account

Book, II, begins in Boston, and page 60 begins the Salem entries, with the date of November 26, 1679. They end in 1685. A Jonathan Corwin Ledger book also exists.

<sup>9</sup> Perley, Salem, III, 192. The date of possession, which is five years prior to the publication of Stalker and Parker's Treatise on Japaning, suggests an imported item, possibly English, Continental or most likely, Oriental.

<sup>10</sup> See unpublished manuscript "Day of Jonathan Corwin," in Essex Institute Manuscript Collection, unpaged, filed with same author's Account Book II. Date of the item in the Day book is August 21, 1685.

<sup>11</sup> Letter, unfiled and uncatalogued in Bundle II of "Miles Ward Papers," bearing date of April 27, 1719.

<sup>12</sup> Court Records, VIII, 123.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., VII, 400, 420.

<sup>14</sup> Savage, IV, 611. Wiggin reinforces his judgment by pointing out that Winthrop drinks "ordinary water."

<sup>15</sup> Perley, Salem, III, 343.

<sup>16</sup> Court Records II, 424-425. The first time this form is mentioned in the Essex County Records. The first mention of a "chest with drawers" occurs in the inventory of Mr. John Cotton of Boston, who died in 1652. See Irving W. Lyon, The Colonial Furniture of New England (Boston, 1892) p. 11. "John Cotton," says Savage (I, 462), "was the most disting. divine that came from Eng. in the first age."

<sup>17</sup> Edwards, Dictionary II, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Bentley, Diary, II, 172.

<sup>19</sup> For the relationship between the "great fire" and subsequent furniture making practices in London, see Symonds, "Joiner," 69-73.

<sup>20</sup> An excellent example, a joined, white oak chest with one drawer and the date "1727" carved on it is displayed in the Ironmaster's House at the Saugus Ironworks restoration. See also, however, Edwards, Shorter Dictionary, p. 403.

<sup>21</sup>Gould Account Book, pp. 30-31.

<sup>22</sup>Clarence L. ver Steeg, The Formative Years, 1607-1763 (New York, 1966), pp. 45-46, 107.

Beauty lyeth in three things met together.  
1. The integrity of all the parts, none lacking  
or superflous... 2. The symmetry or fit propor-  
tion of al the members to one another... 3. The  
good complexion, or colours of them al.<sup>1</sup>

--Mr. Jonathan Mitchell.

## PART II

### STYLES OF ESSEX COUNTY CASE FURNITURE 1655-1710

#### INTRODUCTION

Underlying the statements of the furniture historian is a basic assumption: the styles and forms of furniture vary through a period of time according to the place in which they were made. But this does not say enough. It is incumbent upon the furniture historian to burrow deeper into social history. A society has come and gone and knowledge is enriched only if the economic and social position of the customer, his taste, his attitudes toward fashion and his selection of a furniture maker, with special capacities, can be suggested.

Obviously when one considers a culture so far removed from contemporary life as that of seventeenth century Essex County, documentable evidence is difficult to find, and even more difficult to interpret. Even simple questions, such as what a form of furniture was called, requires all of the ingenuity and insight a dedicated student can bring to bear.

For the present, we must be content to infer, probably imperfectly, some of the elements we know only from analogous situations. The object of this catalog is to offer as specific an analysis as possible of a group of related objects about which something is knowable, in order to establish the permissible limits of inference about that large group of Essex County furniture of which nothing is known.

In this study, documentable facts and probabilities are cemented together with the glue of logic.

Certain popular styles of ornamentation and certain usable forms of furniture can be seen to appear and disappear in Essex County, during even so short a period as the eighty years following 1630, in which oak furniture was in fashion.

It is generally believed that carving was the means used to ornament the earliest chests and cupboards made in New England, following a tradition already old in England when the first settlers left for the Massachusetts Bay.

The first mention of carved furniture in Essex County occurs in the will of Thomas Emerson, the baker of Ipswich, dated May 31, 1653.<sup>2</sup> Emerson had settled there prior to 1638,<sup>3</sup> and devised to his daughter, Elizabeth Fuller, "the great carued chest & the carued box...with all yt is in it and a small carued chest with what is in it."<sup>4</sup>

Although history has supplied us with this tantalizing information, it has not recorded the name of an Ipswich carver who could have made and carved these pieces of furniture between 1638 and 1653. Nor has history given us any insight into what this carving may have looked like. Was it the rich, complex, polychromed, three-dimensional relief carving of floral patterns such as we associate with the Medieval churches of Gothic England? Or was it the more abstract, sunk-carving, consisting of only two planes—the surface of the design and the ground—attained by chiselling away parts of a pattern? Or were the chests even made in Ipswich?

There are excellent reasons to believe that sunk carving and "scratch carving" were the prevailing methods of ornamenting furniture in New England prior to the period of change which begins with the death of Governor John Winthrop in 1649 and culminates in the adoption of the "Half-way Covenant" in 1662. When used, sunk and scratch carving were within the capabilities of the English joiners who came in the first decade. But in the English craft tradition, richer, ornamental carving was the province of professional carvers. Despite the blurring of craft lines from the

earliest years of settlement in New England, the fact that a joiner would not be prosecuted for doing carving does not automatically endow him with the ability to accomplish magnificent carving.

That "career opportunities" for the ornamental carver were limited in Essex County prior to the decade of the 1660's is implied by the fact that the names of men known to have been carvers have not been found in the records prior to that date. Indeed, ornamental carving was apparently not considered an important occupation. Thomas Denis, known to have been a carver of great skill, judging from the furniture surviving in the hands of direct descendants,<sup>5</sup> preferred to be called a "joiner." Denis is not known to have been living in New England prior to 1663.<sup>6</sup> Edward Budd, a carver, emigrated to Boston around 1665.<sup>7</sup> Richard Knight, who was "bred a carver,"<sup>8</sup> probably was the son of that Richard Knight who was a "slater" or stone-mason of Weymouth, from whom he may have learned carving. However, Knight, who was a resident of Charlestown by 1673, listed his occupation as "brick-layer" when he returned from Philip's War in 1676. There is no evidence that Budd or Knight carved any furniture.

To characterize the carved furniture of Essex County as "in the earliest style" may be true. It may have been that considerations of Puritan simplicity were not sufficient to override the continuation of the medieval tradition of carved furniture. Perhaps carved chests and cupboards were so common throughout the county that inventory-takers would have felt it redundant to mention that they were carved. But it ought to be suggested that the society which was so aware of monetary values as to itemize a piece of broken iron worth a penny, would not be insensitive to the value of a chest or cupboard with carving on it.

Even if "the carved style" may not be totally equated with "the earliest style" of Essex County case furniture, it most certainly represents the first "high style": owned by the exceptional few who were distinguished by wealth, position or birth.

But more to the point is that this high style was probably not attained in furniture made in Essex County before the decade of the 1660's, after which most of the chests and chairs which define it are thought to have been made.<sup>9</sup>

The implications of this probability are enormous, for it would seem to indicate that the "evolutionary" or rather "devolutionary" theory of carving on American furniture is incorrect. Such a theory states that fine carving was the early norm, transplanted here from Medieval England, and throughout the century it gradually declined and coarsened. But this theory does not take into account that there were two strains of craftsmen who ornamented our early furniture, and they were quite separate:<sup>10</sup> the carver's craft did relief carving, and the joiner's craft did the best it could—relief and sunk carving. Moreover, since the finely carved chests and chairs which survive seem to date from the 1660's and 70's, and since joiners came to America in the 1630's, it is probable that some of the surviving sunk and scratch carved pieces pre-date the high-relief examples: possibly by twenty or twenty-five years.

This theory is addressed to a general rule, and not an exception about which little is known. A chest, illustrated as Figure 1 in Nutting's Pilgrim Century (1924 edition) which probably pre-dates the death of Winthrop, would seem to violate this rule. However, this chest undoubtedly originated in New Haven, and not in Lynn, as Nutting infers.<sup>11</sup>

The earliest authenticated piece of American furniture with a believable date (1676) carved upon it is the Spice Box illustrated in Plate IV of the following catalog. Applied moldings and spindles comprise the primary decorative vocabulary on the façade, and carving is confined to the side panels. The highly skilled manner in which the decoration is accomplished leaves little doubt that the maker was well-versed in the technique of using applied ornamentation by this date. The de-emphasis of carving suggests that it was already on the wane as a popular method

of ornamentation by 1676, at least in Salem, where this box was probably made. Of course, carving in New England never really died, but its popularity as a means of enriching a high style can definitely be seen to run in cycles throughout the two following centuries.

The lessening importance of carved ornamentation can be observed through the fifteen years following 1676 in examples from all over Essex County: through its appearance on the Staniford-Heard chest of drawers in 1678 (Plate V, *infra*), probably made in Ipswich; to a cupboard in the characteristic style of the 1680's, possibly from Newbury (see Randall, *American Furniture*, Figure 20); finally to a chest with the carved date "[16] 92," in the Essex Institute, thought to have been owned originally in Rowley. Salem examples have not been found after 1679 (see figure 4, *infra*), and the implication is that carving persisted in the less cosmopolitan areas of the county after tastes in Salem had changed. Curiously enough, a close examination of the 1692 chest reveals that it could have been produced by the same hand, shop or the apprentice of the maker who created the Boston Museum carved chest,<sup>12</sup> perhaps thirty years earlier, when the carved style may have been the highest style. And since none of the finely carved chests which compose the group that defines the "style"<sup>13</sup> have been traced to Salem ownership, perhaps it never was a high-style there.

Since, as has been shown in Chapter IV above, Salem was able to support more joiners than any other town in the county, there must have been a reason. The presence there of a growing commercial and mercantile group, would enable and perhaps even encourage the joiners of the town to keep more nearly abreast of the fashions in England. It is thus a likely assumption that, in response to demand, advanced styles appeared there before they did elsewhere in the county. Certainly for the last quarter of the century, it is more demonstrable fact than assumption.

Furniture in the "applied molding style" reached great heights of elegance there in the 1690's (see Plate IX, *infra*) while contemporary dated

productions from elsewhere in the county still betray the bulbous ornament of the previous decade.<sup>14</sup>

Exactly when the fashion for ornamenting furniture with applied geometrical patterns of moldings and split-spindles came into use cannot be determined from the Probate Records. No stylistic changes can be inferred from the wording of the inventories, nor do variations in values offer any clues.

Applied spindles and moldings were used to ornament English furniture from the beginning of the seventeenth century,<sup>15</sup> although they probably did not come into wide use until nearly the middle of the century.<sup>16</sup>

The precedent for that type of ornamentation can be identified in New England as early as 1655 when the "look" of the applied-spindle style, complete with triglyphs and moldings, was used on a fireplace "iron back," probably cast at the Saugus Ironworks in that year (Plate II, *infra*). Its use on furniture made in Salem may date from a few years prior to the death of Captain William Trask, the miller, in 1666, for whom the chest illustrated in Plate III, below, is thought to have been made.<sup>17</sup> This chest appears to be the prototype for a group of chests, four of which still survive, and two of which were very likely made in Salem during the last quarter of the century. One of the group can be firmly dated as late as 1700 or 1701.

A further evolution of the "applied molding style," accompanied by a flattening of the profiles of the moldings themselves, can be dated from the Dressing Chest made for Henry Short of Newbury, which has the date "1694" carved on it.<sup>18</sup> The new variation, perhaps influenced by Restoration motifs, long established in England, consists of sharply pointed patterns of moldings accented by an inset of contrasting wood, and was most probably in use in Essex County before this surviving, dated example was made.

The tendency to make a decorative feature of the transition of plane to plane (Figure 10, *infra*), rather than the almost compulsive tendency to leave no area unornamented, as had been the aesthetic for the previous sixty years, is foreshadowed by the small chest on stand in the Winterthur Collection bearing the date and initials "P 1690 B" carved on end-grain, inlaid plaques.<sup>19</sup> This chest still relies on the small, stopped-panels characteristic of the joiner's method of attaining surface interest in the case furniture of the preceding decade. The over-all effect of lightness, accentuated by the reel-turned legs, is quite different from the bulbous turnings and ornamentation of the previous years.

This chest, while it may not have been made in Essex County serves to date the beginning of the final period of seventeenth century furniture styling, which, for want of a better term, we may call "The Transitional Style." Its ideals are reflected in the lightening of the balusters which support the tops of a number of press cupboards made in Salem during this decade,<sup>20</sup> and probably elsewhere North of Boston by 1699, as considered in the text following Plate XI, below.

The forms which this body of furniture took are discussed in the following catalog of representative examples.

## FOOTNOTES

## PART II

## INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jonathan Mitchell, minister of Charlestown, 1650-68 (see Savage, III, 220) quoted in Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The 17th Century (Boston, 1954), p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Probate Records, II, 35. This reference predates by four years the Bradford carved chest mentioned in Irving W. Lyon, Colonial Furniture of New England, (Boston, 1892), p. 5—hereafter cited as Lyon, Colonial Furniture. See also fn. 11, infra.

<sup>3</sup> Waters, Ipswich I, 491.

<sup>4</sup> Probate Records, II, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (July 1960), 40-44.

<sup>6</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXII (November 1930), 230.

<sup>7</sup> Savage, I, 287.

<sup>8</sup> Lyon, Colonial Furniture, p. 29. Savage, III, 38, says he was "of Boston."

<sup>9</sup> Lyon, Antiques, LXXII (November 1937), 230-232, figs. 1-4, and *Ibid.*, (December 1937), 298-301, figs. 5-12, 16.

<sup>10</sup> The distinction between ornamentation done by a carver and that done by a joiner is discussed in R. W. Symonds, Furniture Making in 17th and 18th Century England (London, 1945) pp. 46-47, 52-56.

<sup>11</sup> Nutting's claim that the Chest came from Lynn, however, does not seem to be correct (Pilgrim Century, p. 31). According to information in a letter to the author from E. M. B. Strong, curator of The Home Sweet Home House, dated November 10, 1967, the chest was brought to East Hampton

by Thomas Osborne. Osborne came to East Hampton from New Haven, and not from Lynn (Savage, III, 319). A joiner and carver known to be working in New Haven at least during the years 1639-48 was Thomas Mulliner, who had emigrated there from Ipswich, Suffolk, England before 1639. See Henry F. Waters, "Genealogical Gleanings In England," NEGR, LI (July 1897), 421.

<sup>12</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXII (December 1937), 300, fig. 10; 298, fig. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., figs. 5-16.

<sup>14</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXIII (April 1938), 202, fig. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Edwards, Dictionary, II, 135, fig. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ralph Fastnedge, English Furniture Styles, 1500-1830 (Harmondsworth, England, 1964), pp. 37, 288.

<sup>17</sup> Perley, Salem, I, 322, says that the chest was "without doubt brought over by Captain William Trask who came with Endicott in 1628." The Registrar's card at the Museum of Fine Arts merely says that it was "said to have been owned by Captain William Trask." Captain Trask died in 1666, and his inventory is published in Probate Records, II, 49. It lists "2 Chestes & other Lumber, 3 li." Although it is impossible to say that the present chest is one of the two listed, his will specified that the estate and movables not be divided. Half of the house went to his widow, Sarah, and the balance was to be administered by his sons, William and John. William, the direct ancestor of the last family owner, had the other half of the house, and if the chest were his, instead of his father's, it would still pre-date 1690, the date of his death. See Savage, IV, 323-324.

<sup>18</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXIII (April 1938), 200, 203.

<sup>19</sup> Accession #57.543. See illustration, Lyon, ibid., p. 200, fig. 32. The SAH chest on stand pictured loc. cit. figure 31 is undoubtedly an Essex County example. Samuel Archer was a carpenter of Salem, and had married Hannah Osgood of Andover in 1660. Although undated, it would appear to be roughly contemporary with the "P 1690 B" chest, and is quite similar in character.

<sup>20</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXIV (August 1938), 79, figs. 54, 55.

The less necessary the detail in question is  
for purposes of obvious expression, the less  
consciously will it be executed, the more by  
rote, the more likely to become stereotyped,  
and therefore characteristic....

--Bernhard Berenson.

EXPLANATIONS

Following techniques first set forth in American Furniture, Federal Period (New York: Viking Press, 1966) by Charles F. Montgomery, an attempt has been made in the following pages to define the regional character of a body of furniture related by histories of ownership and structural similarities.

The over-all similarity may be attributed to the two factors already outlined in Part I of this paper: first, the continuity of English rural furniture-making traditions, modified by the differences of materials available in New England, and second, the apprentice system, which encouraged the handing down of craft techniques from master to apprentice through several generations with little change.

A closer examination of many examples of furniture suggests that even within the general region, local variations appear. These are noted when they appear in the catalog.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOOD USAGES

Red oak was the most popular wood used in the seventeenth century throughout Essex County in the construction of case furniture. White oak was also used, but to a lesser extent. An exact date for the first appearance of saw-mill sawn pine has not yet been determined, but it appears in joined furniture of the style of the 1680's. It was undoubtedly used in "six-board" chests, sea chests and boxes at an earlier date. Its availability varied greatly from town to town. It was apparently always popular for chest tops, but rarely appears in cupboard shelves. It is probable that it was consistently used in the northern part of the county first, although practice seems to have varied from shop to shop.

Sycamore is the first mill-sawn hardwood which was used in case furniture. Mill-sawn sycamore appears in the Staniford family chest of drawers, believed to have been made in Ipswich in 1678, and is used again

in the Woodbury cupboard, probably made in Beverly in 1680. It has not yet been found in Salem work.

#### CONSTRUCTION

The rear stiles of many chests and cupboards, riven from an oak log, are often squared on three sides with the fourth side left unfinished. This fourth side, which has a slight canted effect when viewed in section (see Figure 1, infra), faces to the outside rear on much Essex County joined furniture coming from localities other than Salem. In Salem, the stiles were generally planed to a rectangular section or, possibly, sawn "stuff" was used.

#### DRAWER CONSTRUCTION

Analysis of drawer construction may someday unlock the mysteries of the differences between the many shops working in the county. Within a general framework which relates all of the following examples generally, there are differences which suggest that the over-all group may be divided into smaller, closely related groups. The planks of the bottoms are almost invariably oriented perpendicularly to the front of the drawer. They are almost invariably nailed into a rabbet on the back of the drawer-front, and into the bottoms of the sides and back. The greatest variation among them comes in the methods used to join the planks laterally to each other. They are sketched below (Figure 3), and for convenience, are referred to by type. Type 1 is a tongue and groove (most common); Type 2, a "V" groove and a "V" shaped tongue (next most common); Type 3, flush butting (a variation which appears most commonly in Rowley-owned chests, is rare elsewhere in Essex County, but quite common in Plymouth-style chests and cupboards); and Type 4, a ship-lap (uncommon).

The dovetail does not appear in the seventeenth century oak furniture of Essex County.

#### CHEST BOTTOMS

An excellent indicator of original work in chests with drawers

is that the construction of the bottom of the chest portion should be constructed in the same manner as the drawer bottom. This practice has been observed in sufficient examples to constitute an almost absolute rule. In chests which do not have a drawer, analysis of the bottom of the chest will often confirm its relationship to other chests with the same type of construction visible on the bottoms of their drawers.

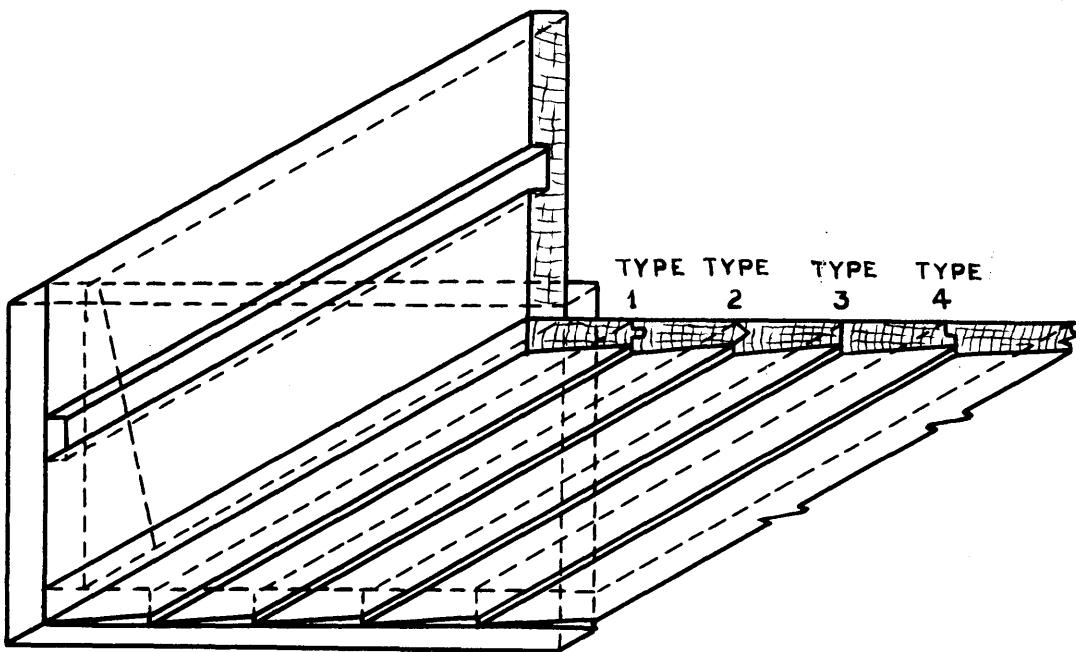


Figure 3.



PLATE I.

I Carved Chest with a Drawer  
Red oak, hard pine  
1660-1680  
Essex County, possibly Rowley Village-Topsfield area

To the two early carved blanket chests, thought to be among the earliest carved chests to have been made in New England—the first in the Winterthur Collection, initialed "I.S." (#57.539), and the second in the Nutting Collection at the Wadsworth Atheneum (#26.300)—can now be added this third chest, in the hands of a private collector. It is unpublished.

The earliest mention of "a chest with a drawer" in Essex County occurs in the inventory of John Knowlton, a cordwainer who was a freeman of Ipswich in 1641<sup>2</sup> and died in the Spring of 1653. The chest, which stood in the Hall of the Knowlton house, must have been exceptional as it was valued at 1 pound, roughly  $\frac{1}{2}$  more than an ordinary wainscot or joined chest.<sup>3</sup> It may even have been carved, although that is not specified.

Although the illustrated chest can be traced in the family of the present owner to the earliest years of the nineteenth century, it is not definitely known to have been in the family in the seventeenth century.

The three chests of this type are as closely related by construction methods as they are by appearance. Most notably the bottoms of the present chest and the Winterthur example are of Type II construction. It is a technique that has not been observed in the documented furniture of Salem and Ipswich. The bottom of the Atheneum example has been replaced. However, in all three chests, the front edge of the bottom planks were fitted into a mortised groove on the back side of the front bottom rail. In the two examples with their original bottoms, the front edge of the planks is slightly feathered on the underside. These are rare techniques in Essex

County work and further emphasize the relationship of the three chests.

In addition, the side view of the drawer (Figure 4) shows the Type II tongue as it was used to fit the bottom of the drawer into a mortised groove on the back side of the drawer front. The use of the groove here parallels the technique of affixing the bottom of the chest itself.

The suggestion that the bottom is a replacement because it does not conform to the expected Essex County practice, is not borne out by a close examination of the bottom itself. A comparison of the angle of the "V" with those of the bottom of the chest reveals an exact match, suggesting that both were cut by the same grooved plane. This angle also matches exactly the tongue and groove of the bottom of the Winterthur example.<sup>4</sup>

Slight differences in the designs of the motifs on the front panels, the treatment of the modeling of the rails and muntins surrounding the panels and the differences in the ornamental grooves on the stiles and rails suggest natural variations over the period of time separating the construction of the chests rather than differences of origin. The basic structural techniques are identical.

The present chest and the Atheneum example are further related by a small series of holes, visible near the margins on the carved panels—revealed by the shrinkage of the rails—which show where the panels were nailed down to the bench for carving prior to the chest's assembly. The compass marks where the design was scribed can still be seen on these two chests and answers negatively, at least in these specific instances, the question of whether or not patterns were used to lay out designs.

While the tradition from which the designs of the chests flow iconographically—they are but elaborated, opposed "S" scrolls—can be found in the English tradition from the early sixteenth century, the technique of construction and the general conception of this group seem to indicate a date range of 1650 to 1680.

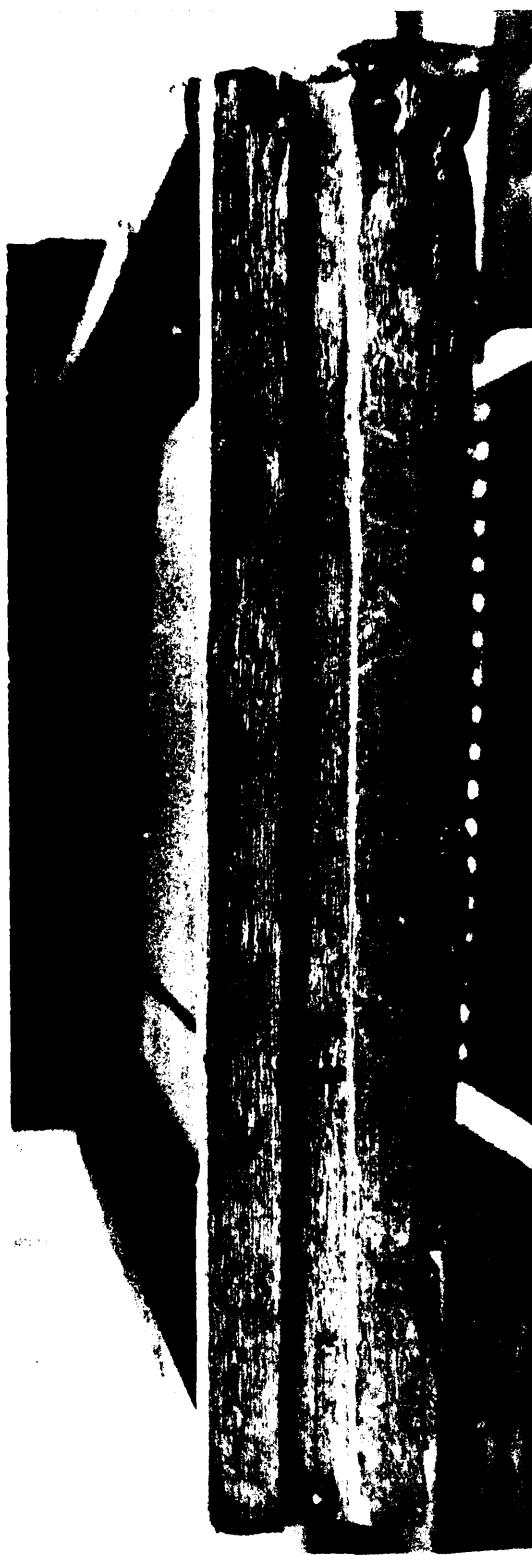


Figure 4.

The present owner is a direct descendent of Governor John Endicott of Massachusetts. Governor Endicott's grandson, Zerubabel (II) married Grace Symonds, the third child of Samuel Symonds, the joiner of Rowley Village, in 1689.<sup>5</sup> The couple had no children. After the death of the widow, who outlived her husband by a number of years, his possessions were divided among the children of his only brother, Samuel Endicott, from whom all subsequent Endicott's are descended.<sup>6</sup>

Dimensions; 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high, 47 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep.

Materials: the red oak has been microanalysed. The bottom and the drawer bottoms are of hard pine. The top is replaced.

Owner: Private.



PLATE II.

## II Back Iron, or Iron Back

Iron

1655

Probably Saugus, possibly cast by Joseph Jenks

The term "fire-back," as we are accustomed to call this object in contemporary parlance, cannot be found in the records of seventeenth century Essex County. It is variously called an "iron back,"<sup>7</sup> a "cast back,"<sup>8</sup> and, in the earliest reference,—an inventory of September 1656—it is listed as a "back iron," and valued among pots, kettles, and hooks at 4 li.<sup>9</sup>

Used to provide additional warmth and to retard the burning out of the bricks in the back of the fireplace, the iron back, judging from the infrequency of references to it, was an uncommon item prior to 1680. William Woodcock of Salem, who died in the Summer of 1669 possessed an "iron back" valued at 15 shillings. This valuation was one-third greater than that placed on a pair of andirons in the same inventory, whose total value was 107 pounds sterling.<sup>10</sup> Another group of "cast Backs" were listed in the "iron house" of Mr. William Paine of Boston, who owned " $\frac{3}{4}$  of ye iron works at hamersmith [i.e. Saugus] & Brantree," when he died in 1660.<sup>11</sup> The inventory listing reads: "5 $\frac{3}{4}$  li. [?] cast backs at 15 s., 4 li. 6 s. 3 d."<sup>12</sup>

Personalized backs such as the present example, may have sold for somewhat more. It weighs around seventy-five pounds,<sup>13</sup> and at 15 shillings would have been priced at about the retail worth of the iron alone.<sup>14</sup>

The fascination for the student of the decorative arts, however, lies in the motifs which ornament the face of this piece of chimney furniture: turned spindles and bosses of two sizes, the carved escutcheon-like device with a "jewel boss" in its center, and three pair of those elongated, pyramidal prisms which, when occurring in groups of three, are called "triglyphs." The appearance of these motifs on an object made in

New England so near the middle of the century suggests a practice not long removed in time from contemporary English usage.

It is believed that this back was probably cast by Joseph Jenks, who was operating a forge at the Saugus works in the year which appears on the face of this back. Much of Jenks' business at this time was transacted in Salem and Lynn, as is attested by contemporary court records and merchant's account books.<sup>15</sup> He could have procured the ornaments used in making the mold for this casting in either place. The closest turner to Saugus at this time, however, was Thomas Browne, who worked in Lynn from 1653 until his death forty years later. A joiner who also did turning, and may have assisted in the construction of the iron works itself, was Jenkyn Davis of Lynn, and his name ought to be suggested as another possible source for these ornaments.<sup>16</sup> Turnings exactly like these have not yet been found on any case furniture surviving from seventeenth century New England.

\* \* \* \* \*

This back is smaller than the 144 pound Essex Institute example,<sup>17</sup> which came to the Institute from the descendants of John Pickering II of Salem. The Pickering back is 22½" high by 27½" wide and bears the cast date "1660." Its hexagonal shape does not seem so appealing as the present example with its rounded upper corners and finely molded perimeter. A third back, similar to the Pickering example, is in the collection of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in Boston. Original ownership of this example, which bears the initials "B<sup>H</sup>D" and the date "1660" has not been discovered. It was found in Salem.<sup>18</sup> The turnings and escutcheons on all three examples are identical.

The initials "E.H." on the Saugus-owned back have not been identified by the Restoration's curatorial staff. However, the possibility exists that they may have been the initials of Ezekiel Hamlin, a mariner of Boston, whose son, Ezekiel Hamlin II, was born on November 2, 1655.<sup>19</sup> This suggestion of original ownership is based upon the fact that the best documented example, the Pickering back, was acquired in the same year that John Pickering III was born.

Dimensions: 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ " high, 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep at perimeter

Provenance: found in Kittery, Maine in the 20th Century

Owner: The Saugus Ironworks Restoration.

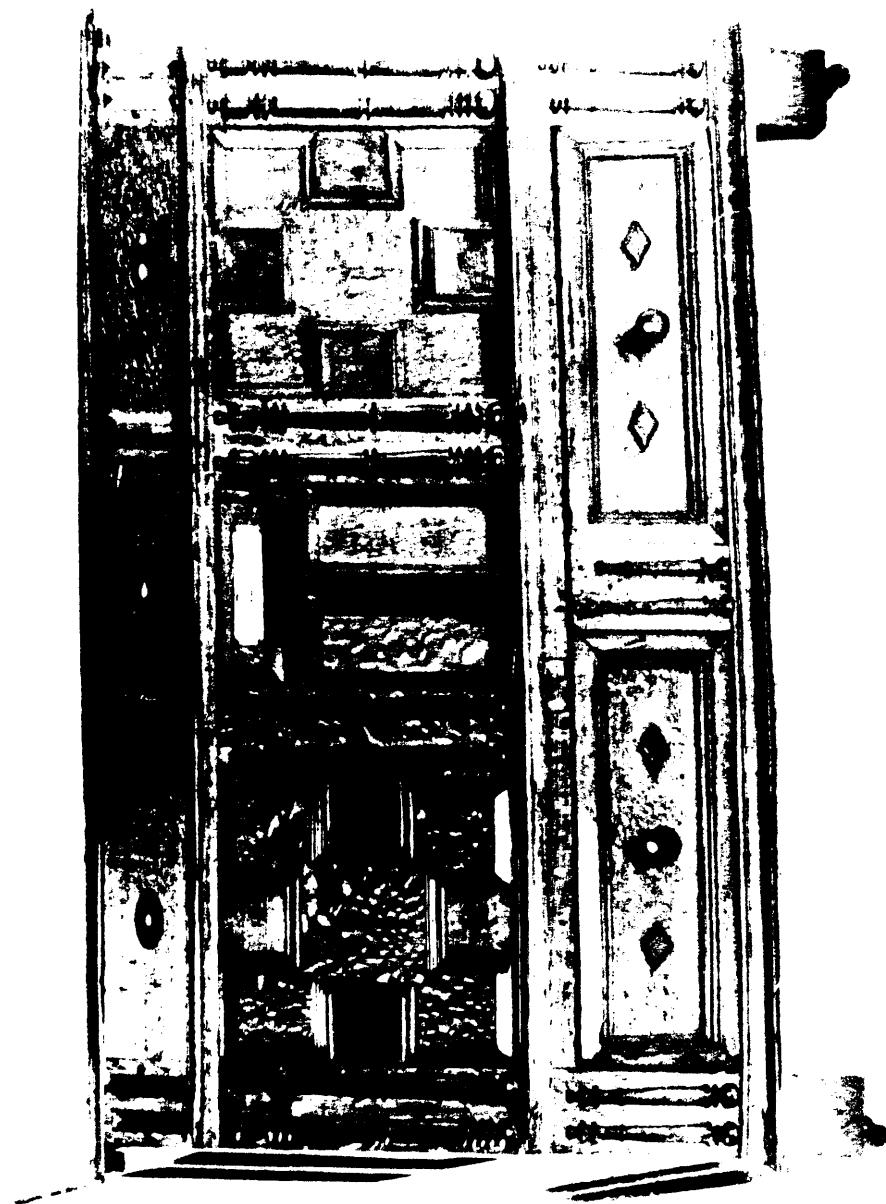


PLATE III

III Wainscot Chest  
Red oak  
1665-85  
Salem

An entire family of chests, not heretofore published as having originated in Salem, may be attributed to that location on the basis of the chest illustrated in Plate III, probably the oldest of the group.

Said to have been owned by Captain William Trask, who died in 1666, the chest descended in the Trask family of Salem, until it was presented to the New England Historical Society in 1902 by William Blake Trask. It was slightly restored and refinished at that time and has been on loan to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts since 1912 (see also footnote 17 of the Introduction, *supra*).

This chest varies in construction from the related group only in possessing a tongue and grooved bottom and drawer bottom (Type I) while the remainder of the group possess a ship lap jointure (Type IV). It varies in design only in the vertical division of the lower section of the center panel and the applied spindles, which have characteristic Salem multi-turned collars (see text following Plate IV). It is similar to the group in the squaring of the fourth side of the rear stiles; the attenuated, elliptical bosses on the top front rail; the narrow grooves for the drawer slide supports, which in all examples is unusually low; and the squarish, gouged countersinking of the nail-heads in the drawer sides.

The inventory of the estate of the first William Trask, who died between mid-May and mid-June 1666, lists "2 chests & other Lumber," valued at 3 pounds.<sup>20</sup> The high valuation placed on this lot suggests that the chests might have been unusually fine or new items, the usual valuation

for a chest at the time being around 15 shillings. It is possible that the illustrated chest might have been in this lot of goods. The earliest example of the multiple collar turnings, which form such a striking feature on the Trask chest, is 1676—a full decade later. While applied ornamentation may have come into use in Salem by 1666, an equally likely owner might well have been either of the sons of Captain Trask, William II, or John. The most likely candidate for ownership, however was William II, who died in 1690, having continued to live in the family home following his father's death. He was the direct ancestor of William Blake Trask, the last family owner.<sup>21</sup>

A second chest, more like the remainder of the group, is illustrated in Sidney Perley's History of Salem I, 323. It had descended in the Osborne family of Salem and until 1930, was owned by Lyman Perley Osborn of Peabody.<sup>22</sup> The chest is now in the collection of the New Hampshire Historical Society.<sup>23</sup>

Another chest, closely related to these two, bearing the initials and date "M.T. 1701," on an inset mahogany panel (with the initials "A.H." and the carved date "1700" on the reverse side), is in the collection of the Antiquarian Society, Concord, Massachusetts,<sup>24</sup> and is probably the most recently made of the group. It is discussed in some detail by Russell Hawes Kettell in the Walpole Society Notebook for 1943, wherein its ownership is ingeniously traced to Ipswich.<sup>25</sup> However, it is highly likely that the chest was made in Salem.

A similar chest is to be found in the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum.<sup>26</sup>

The stylistic evolution of this group of chests, implied by some slight variation in ornamentation but little in construction, could well encompass more than a quarter of a century and suggests the output of a shop rather than necessarily the work of an individual joiner. During this period, three shops are known to have been able to produce such

pieces in Salem: James Symonds, Nathaniel Silsbee and John Launder were all working by 1675 and all had sons who followed the joiner's trade. Of the three, only Launder was deceased by 1701.

Dimensions: 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high, 43" wide, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep.

Owner: The New England Historical and Genealogical Society

Accession: 931.12 (being the loan number assigned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where the chest is presently located).

IV Spice Box(?) or  
Chest of boxes(?)  
Red oak  
1676  
Salem



Assigning the exact name to a form of furniture used in the seventeenth century is fraught with complications. While there is ample evidence that spices were kept in boxes, the valuation placed upon such boxes in the surviving inventories virtually precludes the present example from that category.

#### PLATE IV

In the 1654 inventory of George Burrill of Lynn are mentioned:

"two sifffs & a little box with spice, 3 s."<sup>27</sup> John Cutting of Newbury kept his "spice boxes, &c." valued at 15 shillings in his parlor,<sup>28</sup> and in 1668/9, Richard Langhorne of Rowley had "spice, conserves, honey wth ye pot & boxes," valued at 14 shillings.<sup>29</sup>

Regardless of what the illustrated box was used for, however, the phrase "Spice Chest," commonly associated with it, does not appear in the published inventories of the period.

The phrases "case of boxes" and "chest of boxes" in the early inventories of John Lowell of Newbury (1647) and Thomas Firman of Ipswich

(1648) might well refer to items like the illustrated example whose eleven tiny interior drawers well illustrate why drawers were called "boxes" when they first came into widespread use in England and America in the seventeenth century.<sup>30</sup>

Whatever the contemporary name for the illustrated example was, this small chest from the Winterthur Collection is the earliest datable example of Essex County furniture with applied spindles and geometrical moldings used for decorative effect.

The chest bears the initials "T<sup>B</sup>S" and the date "[16] 76" carved within a block of oak, centered in the door panel. The uppermost molding, applied to the door, has been incised with a saw and the kerf marks give the effect of architectural dentilling. The profile of the molding itself is that of an architectural bracket, of the medieval style.<sup>31</sup> But the remainder of the facade suggests classical architectural forms: the two pair of split spindles, which extend between bases and capitals, function as columns, in the manner of English cabinet work of the decade immediately preceding the Stuart Restoration.<sup>32</sup>

A search of the Vital Records of Salem, Beverly and Ipswich reveals the record of only one couple who were married and both living in the year 1676, and they lived in Salem. Thomas Buffington or Boenton married Sarah Southwick on December 30, 1671.<sup>33</sup> He died in 1728 and she survived him by five years.<sup>34</sup>

The leading joiner of Salem in 1676 was James Symonds, who was a fellow member of the First Church of Salem, with Buffington.<sup>35</sup> Other joiners working in Salem at this date were George Booth, newly arrived from England via Boston and Lynn; John Pease whose apprenticeship to Symonds had recently been completed; Nathaniel Silsbee who also apprenticed with Symonds; and John Launder, who probably had apprenticed in Lynn. That any of them did carving is not recorded, but that Symonds and his apprentices did turning is documented.

\* \* \* \*

Two chests of similar form, but slightly smaller, are known. Each has the date "1679" carved on an octagonal medallion in the center of its door. The first, #57.540 in the Winterthur Collection, with the carved initials "T.H." is well documented as having belonged to Thomas Hart II of Ipswich.<sup>36</sup> Another, so similar in every respect that it must have come from the hand of the same maker, with the initials "E<sup>H</sup>M" is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.<sup>37</sup>

The Vital Records of Ipswich, Beverly and Salem reveal only one couple married and living in 1679 to whom it might have belonged: Ephriam and Mary Herrick of Beverly.<sup>38</sup> The inventories of neither are on file in the Essex Registry of Probate. With one chest owned in Ipswich and its mate possibly owned in Beverly, an attribution to place of origin cannot be indisputably suggested. While the Hart chest has been attributed to Thomas Denis of Ipswich, it should be noted that the carving of the side panels of the chest does not correspond to the known work of this famous maker.<sup>39</sup> It is also appropriate to note here that the octagonal medallion that forms a prominent motif in the decorative vocabulary of the 1679 chests can be demonstrated to have been used in Salem, but has not been documented as occurring elsewhere

in Essex County work  
(see text following  
Plate IX and Fig-  
ure 8).

Outside Dimen-  
sions: 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ "  
high, 17" wide,  
9 $\frac{7}{8}$ " deep.

Owner: The Henry  
Francis duPont  
Winterthur  
Museum

Accession:  
58.526.

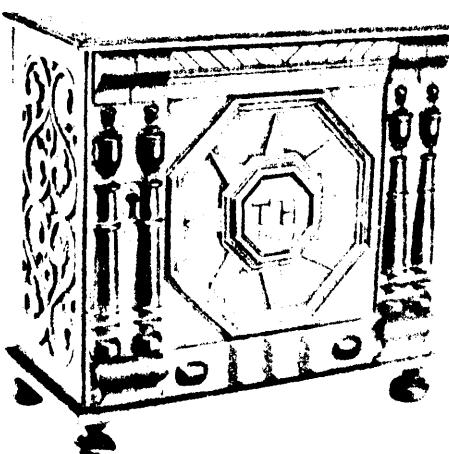


Figure 5.

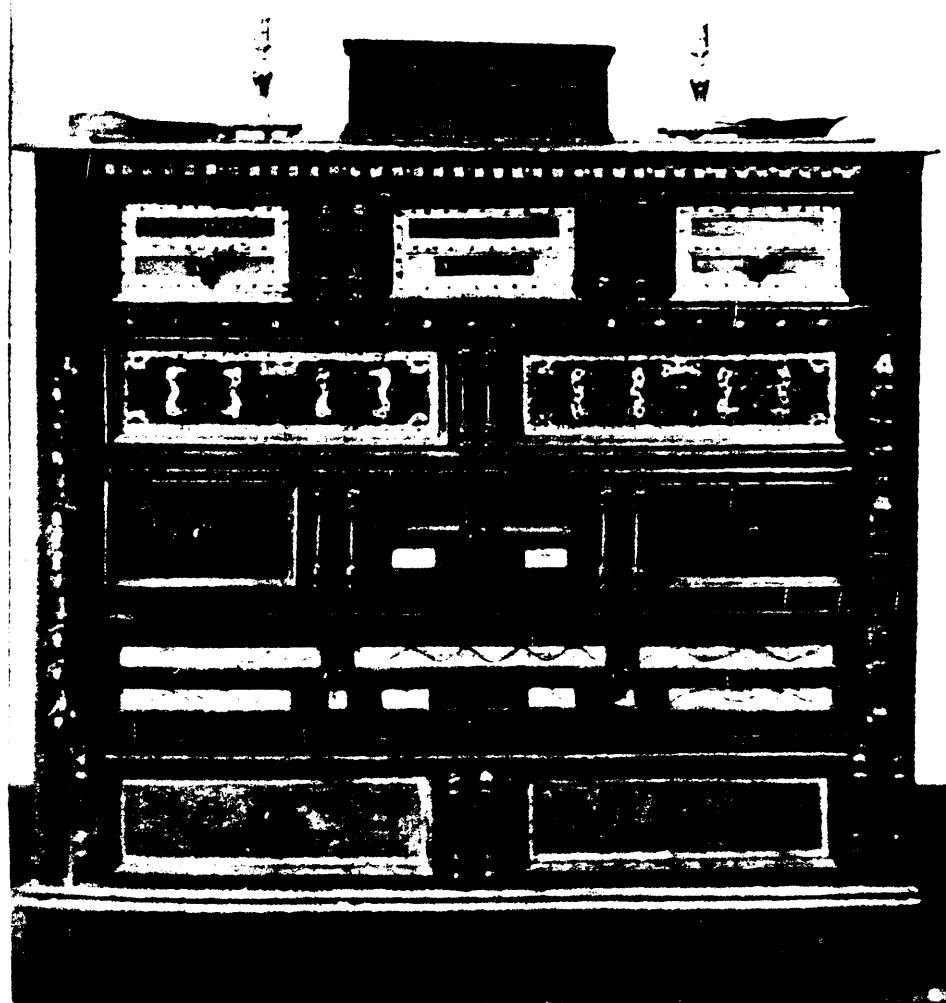


PLATE V.

V Chest of drawers  
 Red oak; secondary wood: sycamore  
 1678  
 Ipswich, probably by Thomas Denis

The chest of drawers bearing the carved date "1678" and the initials "I M" in the Winterthur Collection is the earliest example of that form which can be accurately dated (see text following Plate XI, *infra*, for a further discussion of the form itself).

The chest has an impeccable history of descent from its first owners, John and Margaret Staniford of Ipswich who were married in 1678. Upon the death of John Staniford, the widow lived with Staniford's sister, who had married John Heard in 1677. The chest came down in the Heard family from the time of the death of Margaret Staniford in 1740 to the great grand-daughter of John Heard, Alice, from whom it was acquired by Henry Francis duPont for the Winterthur Collection in 1930.<sup>40</sup>

Dr. Irving P. Lyon attributes this chest to the hand of Thomas Denis, the only joiner known to have been working in Ipswich in the year the chest was made. Additional weight is given to the attribution, however, by the fact that Denis was the next-door neighbor of the Harris family, who were the parents of Margaret Staniford, and the fact that a friendship between Denis and the Staniford's was objectified in the witnessing of Denis' will by both John and Margaret the day before his death in 1706.<sup>41</sup>

Of the many attributions made by Dr. Lyon to Denis, this one seems most logically sound of all. Yet, in compensation for Dr. Lyon's perhaps excessive enthusiasm in attributing works to this maker, Helen Park suggests that "its vigorous folk quality is quite foreign to the declining

tradition of close and repetitious carving of the known Dennis [sic] furniture," and nominates as alternative makers either of the Ipswich turners Edward [sic] Dear or Joseph Brown.<sup>42</sup>

Research prompted by this suggestion however has failed to disclose a single documentable instance of a man in Essex County who is called a "turner" doing joinery work on a professional basis. While it is indeed logical that turners would have done joinery in skill-short New England, efforts to document the assertion have been unsuccessful.<sup>43</sup>

If indeed this chest were made by a turner, then he must have had most of the important case-furniture-making trade in Ipswich, for detailed examination of two other extraordinary examples of Ipswich cupboards reveals that they were probably made by the same hand as the present example. The 1681 overhung cupboard base, now in the President's office at Harvard College, originally owned by John and Elizabeth Appleton of Ipswich, and the overhung "Cupboard of Drawers," dated 1683, presently in the collection of Mrs. Frank Cogan of Farmington, Connecticut—originally thought to have been owned by Abraham and Hannah Perkins of Ipswich—are the two pieces. The sole variation (and one of little diagnostic value) occurs in the use of "rose-headed" nails in the drawer construction of the 1681 example and "T-headed" or flooring nails in the other two examples.<sup>44</sup>

It must be noted that the carving on the Staniford chest does not correspond in style or quality to the documented Denis examples. The same pattern of intersecting scrolls appears on the 1683 cupboard and on a Press cupboard (#51.53) in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, tentatively attributed to the Newbury area.<sup>45</sup>

Dimensions: 40" high, 45" wide, 20" deep.  
The woods have been identified by microanalysis.  
Owner: The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum  
Accession: 57.541.

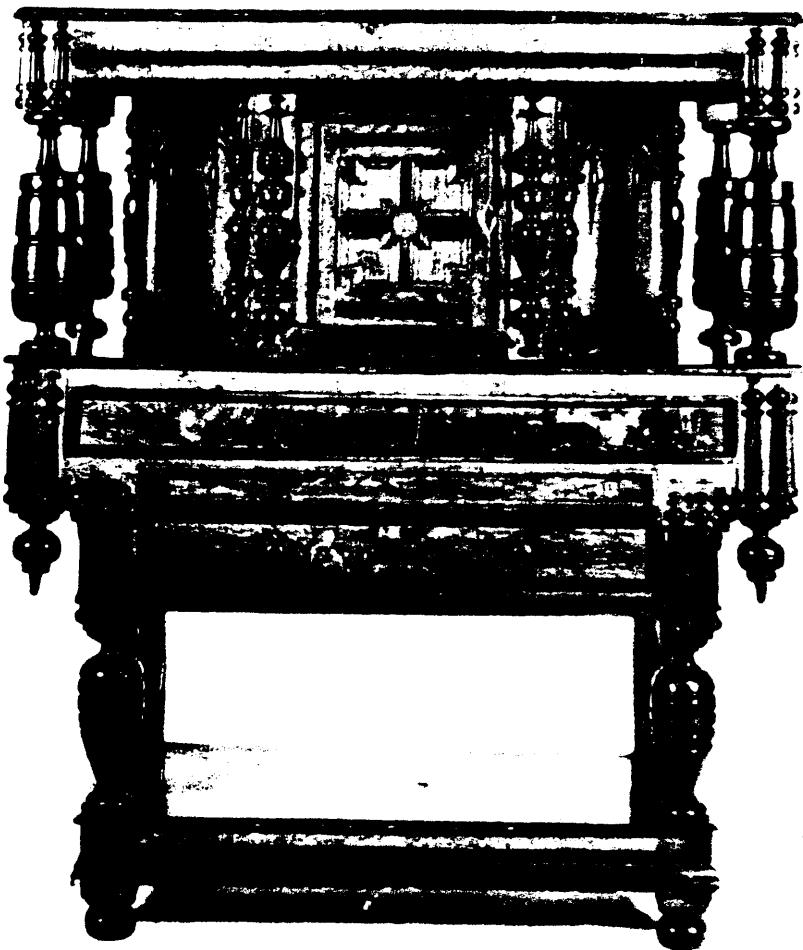


PLATE VI.

VI Wainscot cupboard  
Red oak and sycamore  
1680  
Possibly Beverly

While the phrase "court cupboard" is generally accepted in American usage to denote a cupboard of three tiers with the top section enclosing a storage space and the bottom open, the phrase does not appear in the published inventories of estates of Essex County after 1664. Yet the examples which survive in American museums and private collections all seem to indicate that they were made during and even after the last quarter of the seventeenth century. This seeming contradiction can be explained in two ways: either we are misusing the phrase or they were.

The issue, however, may be begged in the case of this illustrated example, for it is described in the 1704 inventory of the estate of its original owner, Peter Woodbury, yeoman of Beverly, as "one Winscut Cubard." It was valued, along with "one long Table one bench and two gines [i.e. joined] stooles" at 4 pounds.<sup>46</sup> The cupboard remained in the direct line of descent from Peter Woodbury until the last family owner, Mrs. Charles Haddock of Beverly, died in 1902.<sup>47</sup>

There is something of an ironic note that this sole cupboard of Essex County origin which can be directly traced to its original owner should be described in the only document which mentions a piece of case furniture which survives as a "winscut" cupboard. For "wainscot" in the seventeenth century was a synonym for "oak" and much of the interest of this work, for the student of the craft of joinery, derives from the fact that its two remaining original shelves, the moldings applied to the front, the bottoms of its drawers and the back of the enclosed section are made of sycamore! Of particular interest is the fact that (with the exception

of the moldings which cannot be examined without removal) all of this sycamore was sawn in a vertical sawmill and, where they serve as secondary woods—in the drawer bottoms and the cupboard back—they are integrated into the structure with a Type I tongue and groove, as if they were riven oak.

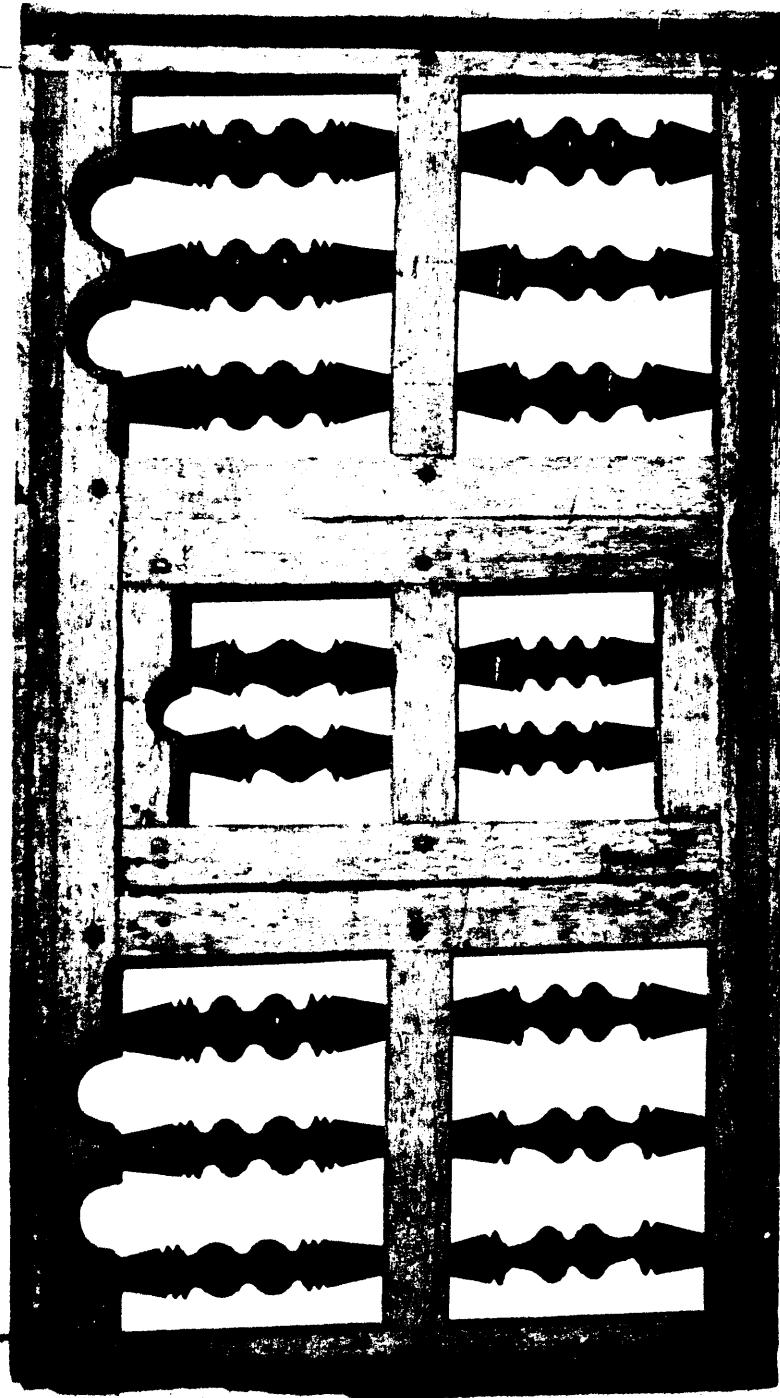
This extensive use of mill-sawn sycamore indicates not only an obvious and convenient source for the material itself, but displays a boldness on the part of the maker and the customer in using and accepting a material that breaks away from the tradition of oak-panels-set-in-oak-frames that was the norm for case furniture in the English tradition for almost three centuries preceding 1680.

While Salem might be the most obvious place to look for the maker of this cupboard, no such boldness has yet been found in the construction techniques of known Salem furniture by this early date. In addition, sycamore has not yet been discovered in a piece of seventeenth century furniture with a history of ownership on that peninsula.

Of the many inland joiners working in Essex County in 1680 who could have made this cupboard, the presence of Ryce Edwards in Beverly, a life-long neighbor of Peter Woodbury's wife, Sarah (Dodge),<sup>48</sup> and a former business associate of her brother, sawmill owner John Dodge,<sup>49</sup> immediately suggests him as the nearest potential maker. That Edwards, who first came to Beverly in 1642, was still pursuing an active career is evidenced by his buying "A hammer" and "a Drawing knife" from Jacob Pudeator, a blacksmith of Salem, as late as February 1679.<sup>50</sup>

Dimensions: 57 $\frac{3}{4}$ " high, 50" wide, 21 $\frac{5}{8}$ " deep.  
 The woods have been identified by microanalysis.  
 Owner: The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum.  
 Accession: 66.1261.

## PLATE VII.



## VII Livery cupboard front(?)

Red oak and an unidentified hardwood  
1680-1700, possibly July, 1683  
Rowley Village (Boxford), possibly by Samuel Symonds

For want of a better name, the object illustrated in Plate VII is referred to as a "livery cupboard front." This was the sole surviving American example of the form when Wallace Nutting published Furniture of the Pilgrim Century in 1926,<sup>51</sup> and to date no additional example has been uncovered.

In English practice, the livery cupboard was not a piece of furniture associated with the dining parlor. It was traditionally found in the bedroom, where rations of food were kept.<sup>52</sup>

The term "livery cupboard" appears only eight times in the published Probate Records of Essex County, between 1655 and 1678, and the article referred to in each instance was a distinct piece of furniture, either free-standing or wall-hung. A curiosity concerning even these few notices is that the object is not found consistently in any one room. Twice it was in the parlor, once in a parlor chamber, once in the hall and once in the lean-to "kitchen." An additional curiosity is that of the eight cupboards mentioned, three were in the possession of one man, John Hathorne of Lynn in 1676.<sup>53</sup>

The present example was found serving as the top part of the "buttery" or storage closet in the parlor of the Capen House in Topsfield at the time of its acquisition by the Topsfield Historical Society in 1913, see Figure 4, below. It was not left there when the Society undertook the restoration of the house because the historical consultant in charge, George Francis Dow, did not believe that it could have been there originally.

However, a close examination of the frame gives no indication that it was ever joined in any way to a piece of furniture by mortise, tenon or dowel. The grooving of the frame is of a type that often defines a finished perimeter in other Essex County furniture of the 1680's. While framed oak construction in this part of Essex County continued to be used well into the eighteenth century,<sup>54</sup> the arrow shaped spindles that provide the main decorative interest in this example, have been associated generally with earlier styles, although this exact form with its unique double, bulbous knob has not been found in any surviving chairs.

In addition, the original hinges on the little door were of the wooden pintle type, a common method of joiner's hinging, used on a number of Essex County cupboards in the last quarter of the century. Figure 4 clearly shows later repairs in the form of added hinges. The top replacement hinge is of the horizontal strap type, often found in eighteenth century work, and the bottom is a leaf hinge, probably installed in the nineteenth century.

Although no New England examples of a ventilated storage closet have survived, the idea is expressed in an early eighteenth century example: the Vauxhall Room in the Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum. The house from which the fireplace wall of this installation comes was built in Greenwich Township, New Jersey around 1725.<sup>55</sup>

While it cannot be documented on the basis of surviving evidence that Figure 4 illustrates the frame in its original location, its presence there and the suggestion that such use might have been a rather common practice would partially explain the relative rarity of references to food cupboards and the fact that American examples of the "livery cupboard" are unknown.

If the frame were made at the same time that the house was built (1683), a likely maker might be found in Samuel Symonds of Rowley Village, a member of "Parson" Capen's Church and the leading joiner in the Rowley-

Topsfield area. He had built the famous wainscot pulpit for the Topsfield Meeting House two years before. If the frame, however, was a subsequent addition and survives from the period 1720-1749, an alternative maker could be Nathaniel Capen, the son of the first owner of the house, and a resident in it from his birth in 1692 until his death in 1749. Capen was a joiner, may have apprenticed with Symonds, who was still working in 1717, and whose inventory reveals that he did turning.<sup>56</sup>

Dimensions: 18" high, 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, 1" deep.

The red oak of the frame has been identified by microanalysis

Owner: The Topsfield Historical Society, Topsfield, Massachusetts.



Figure 6.

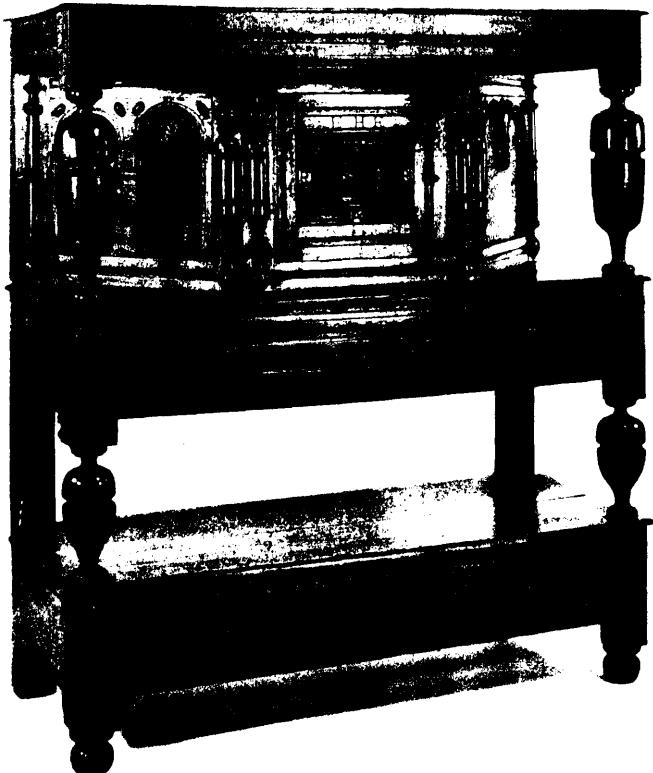


PLATE VIII

## VIII Court Cupboard(?)

Red Oak

1684

Essex County

The Foster family cupboard in the Winterthur collection has been attributed to Thomas Dennis [sic] of Ipswich,<sup>57</sup> and to Joseph Parker, Jr., of (North) Andover.<sup>58</sup> The first attribution was made on grounds of style and the second, apparently, on the "fact" that Joseph Parker, Jr. and the probable original owner, Ephriam Foster, both lived in (North) Andover.

Since no evidence is introduced to support the first attribution, it is impossible to assess it. However, in the case of the second attribution, two basic errors in research make it somewhat easier to evaluate. Considering the present state of documentable knowledge, however, neither attribution can be considered probable.

Joseph Parker, Jr., who died April 6, 1684,<sup>59</sup>—the year which is carved on the illustrated cupboard's drawer—is not called a joiner in any record surviving from the seventeenth century. That he was a carpenter is

well substantiated in Helen Loving Bailey's Historical Sketches of Andover,<sup>60</sup> and the inventory of his estate, made July 29, 1684, which refers to "Carpentry tooles, 1 li. 05 s."<sup>61</sup> It can only be concluded that the idea he was a joiner was based upon the mis-reading of the published Probate Records of Essex County (II, 280) which mentions a "Joseph Parker, Jr., of Andover, joiner," in an item dated 1708. This Joseph Parker was in reality Joseph III, the son of Joseph Jr., and was born in 1682.<sup>62</sup> This does not preclude the carpenter father from making the cupboard, but also suggests that any of the other Andover carpenters listed in Appendix I below might be an equally likely candidate.

A second reason for the attribution to one of the Parker's is that he (they) and the original owner, Ephriam Foster, both were residents of Andover. It must be pointed out that Andover, even today, is the largest township in Essex County. Joseph Parker, Jr., lived either on the original Parker lot, near the site of present Kittridge school on Osgood Street, or on one of the "mill lots" granted to his father sometime prior to 1679, which were located near the head of Cochikewick Brook about three quarters of a mile north of (North) Andover Center.<sup>63</sup>

Ephriam Foster, however, did not live in Andover Center in 1684, but rather in an area still known as "Foster's Hill" about six miles to the East of Parker's house lots "near Ipswich way" (i.e. road).<sup>64</sup> The property abutted the Ipswich township line, and had Foster lived forty feet further East, he could properly have been said to have lived "in Ipswich" which was, in reality, twelve miles away.

It must be noted that the genealogical study tracing the cupboard back to Ephriam and Hannah Foster is a brilliant piece of work by Dr. Lyon, and is much more logical than the one printed by Wallace Nutting.<sup>65</sup>

The cupboard, with the exception of the turnings, is made entirely of riven oak. The drawer bottoms and the cupboard back are joined together by a Type I tongue and groove. The rear stiles are unfinished on

the back side and are canted inward, a practice not observed in Salem work, but the diagnostic value of this quirk has not been determined. It also appears on a chest (Figure 7, below) which was found in Andover and is believed to have always been there.<sup>66</sup>

On the basis of present knowledge, an attribution to a maker or a place of origin for this cupboard seems unwarranted.

Dimensions: 53 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high, 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep.

Materials: The woods have been identified by microanalysis.

Owner: The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum

Accession: 57.542



Figure 7.

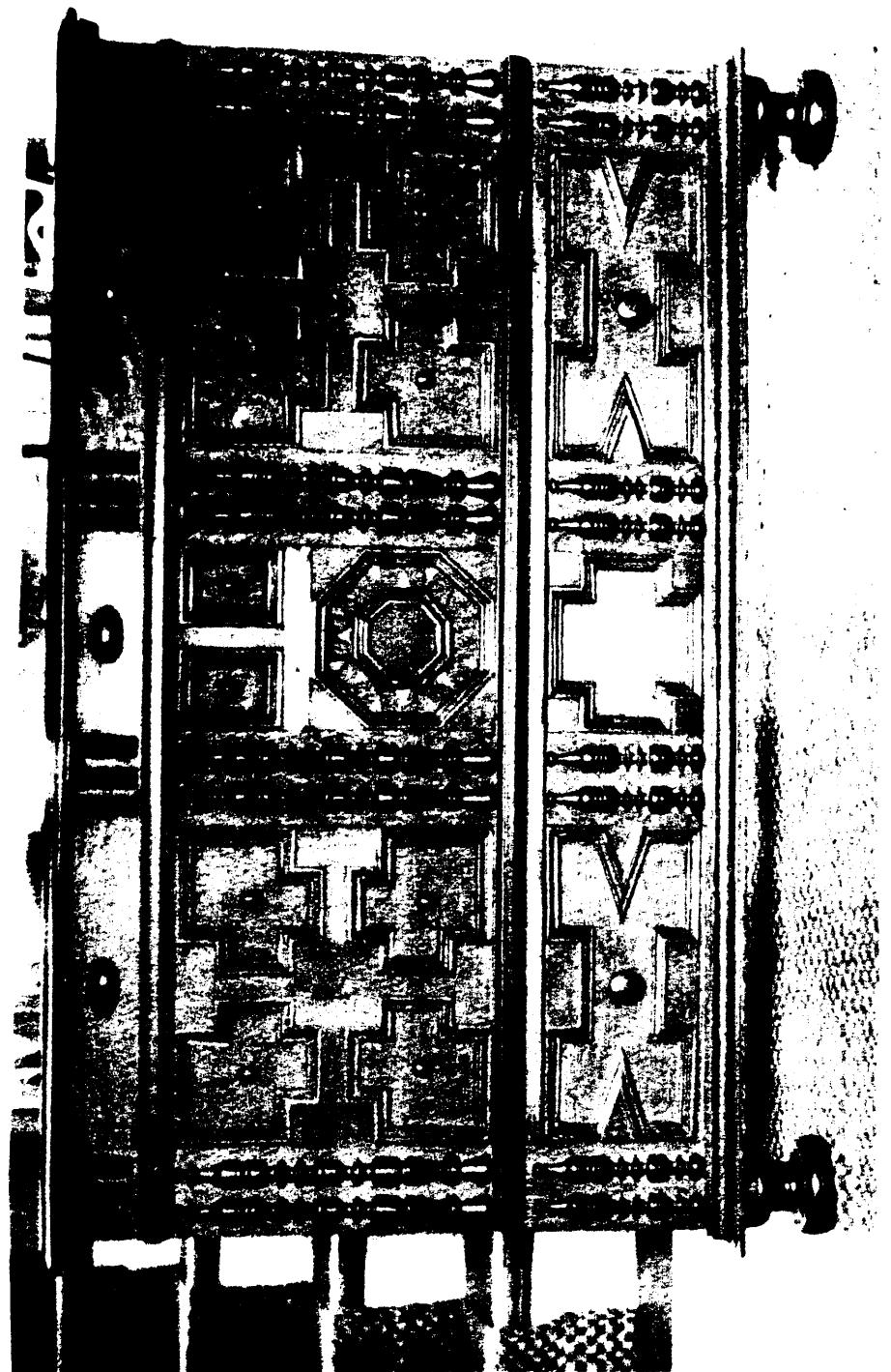


PLATE IX

## IX Joined Chest or Wainscot Chest

Red oak

1685-95

Salem

While the phrase "Blanket Chest" does not occur in the published inventories of seventeenth century Essex County, there can be no doubt that chests were the favorite receptacles for the storage of household linens. The "great carved chest" in the inventory of Thomas Emerson (1666) contained "nine payer of sheets, 3 tabel cloths, 4 pillow bears [and a] peace [of] cloth." The chest and contents were valued at 16 li.<sup>67</sup>

"A chest with a drawer," is listed as early as March 1653 in an Ipswich inventory,<sup>68</sup> and the fabrication of a new one in a style representative of the taste of thirty to thirty-five years later indicates that the usefulness of this form was not immediately superseded in New England by the chest of drawers, common in England within a decade after the Stuart Restoration.

The present chest is owned by a private collector in whose family it has been since the early nineteenth century, although it is not thought to have been made for a member of that family. The initials carved in the center of each flanking panel cannot be identified among the ancestors of the present owner, but members of the direct line have lived in Beverly since the middle of the eighteenth century, and it is believed that the chest was acquired there.<sup>69</sup>

Another chest in the Winterthur Collection, also believed to have been made in Beverly, virtually identical in concept, iconography and construction, varies only in being three eighths of an inch taller and several inches wider. It descended from Rebecca Conant of Beverly to the last family owner, Miss Emily Patch of Ipswich,

A third closely related but slightly smaller chest which has no history, formerly the property of Phillip Flayderman, is also in the Winterthur collection, #58.688. The style of the drawer in this example suggests that it may have been made at a later date. It bears the initials "R.L." on the top front rail, but the incising does not appear to have been done by the same hand which initialed the illustrated chest.

The possibility that two virtually identical chests might have been originally owned in Beverly seems to lend weight to the attribution to Joshua Bisson made by Helen Park. Bisson was a joiner known to have been working in Beverly as early as 1683.<sup>71</sup>

But it must also be pointed out that the confined tension of the geometrical ornamentation of the flanking panels—suggestive of a simplified version of the emblem of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher<sup>72</sup>—is reminiscent of the spice box pictured above in Plate IV. The applied turnings are virtually identical to those on the Putnam Cupboard (Figure 8, *infra*), which has a Salem history. In addition, the drawer construction of this chest and the Putnam cupboard are identical in every respect. While it is possible that this chest was made in Beverly, it is extremely unlikely that the Putnam Cupboard was.

Because of the proximity of Beverly to Salem and the extreme vigor of the furniture-making activities there in the last decades of the seventeenth century, further evidence must be adduced before an attribution to Beverly's sole, known joiner can be acknowledged as probable.

An additional motif, which may someday be demonstrated to appear throughout Essex County, but so far can be traced only to furniture which originated in Salem, is the octagonal "sunburst" which appears on the chest's center panel, and may have been in Puritan Massachusetts, a stylized symbolization of "Christian Light" as suggested in the Nova Iconologia of Cesare Ripa.<sup>73</sup>

The vestige of such a design appears on the Putnam Cupboard (Figure 9), although the moldings around it were not replaced when the cupboard was restored in 1869.<sup>74</sup> A similar design now incorrectly restored, once appeared on the Waters chest of drawers in the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum.<sup>75</sup> The motif also appears on the two spice boxes discussed in the entry for Plate IV, above, one of which is illustrated in Figure 5.

Dimensions: 29 $\frac{1}{4}$ " high, 43 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep.  
The wood has been identified by microanalysis.  
Owner: private.

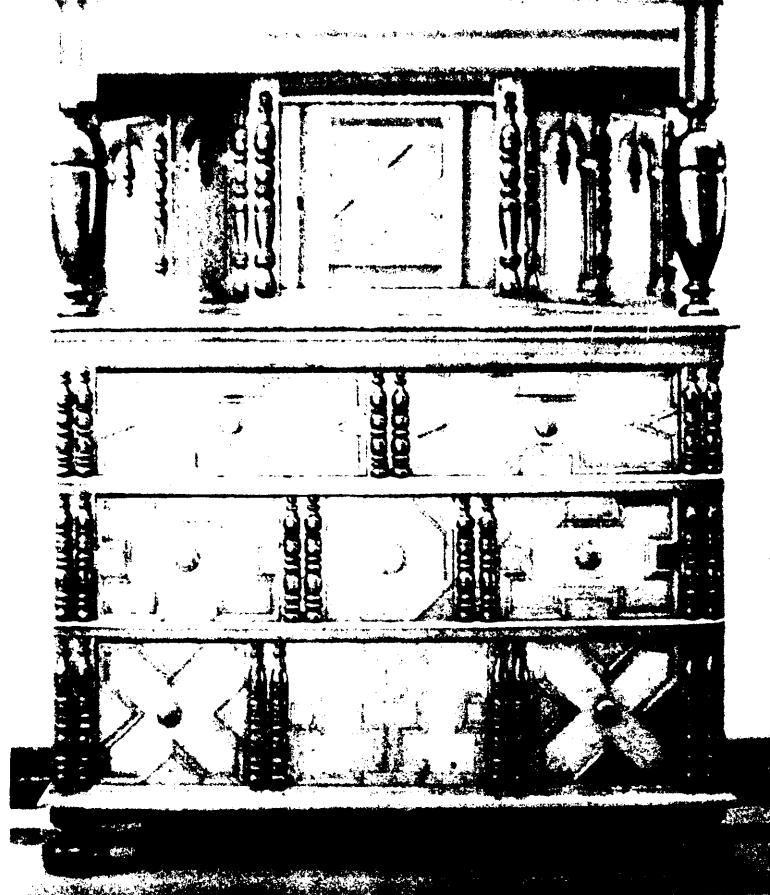
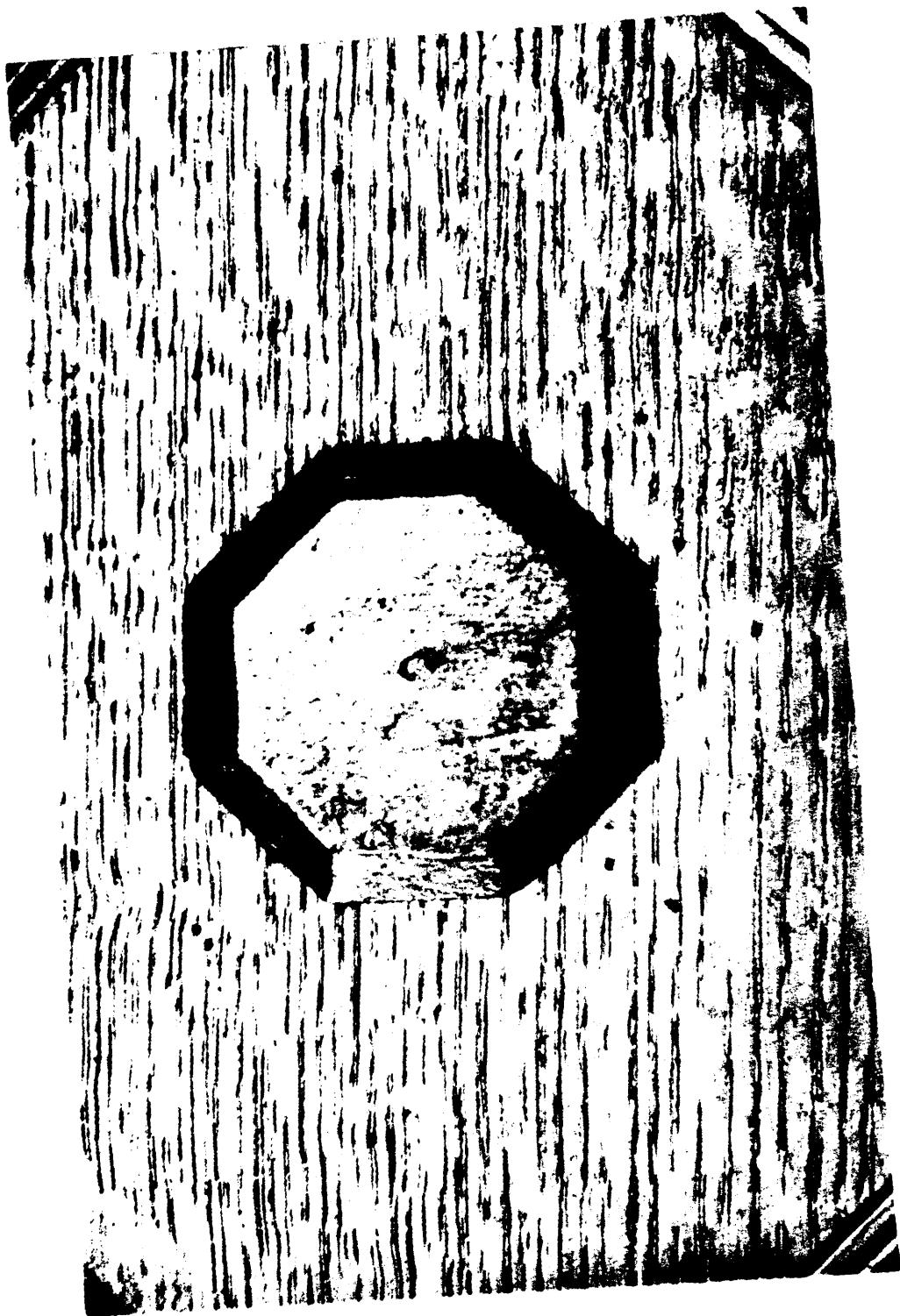


Figure 8.

Figure 9.



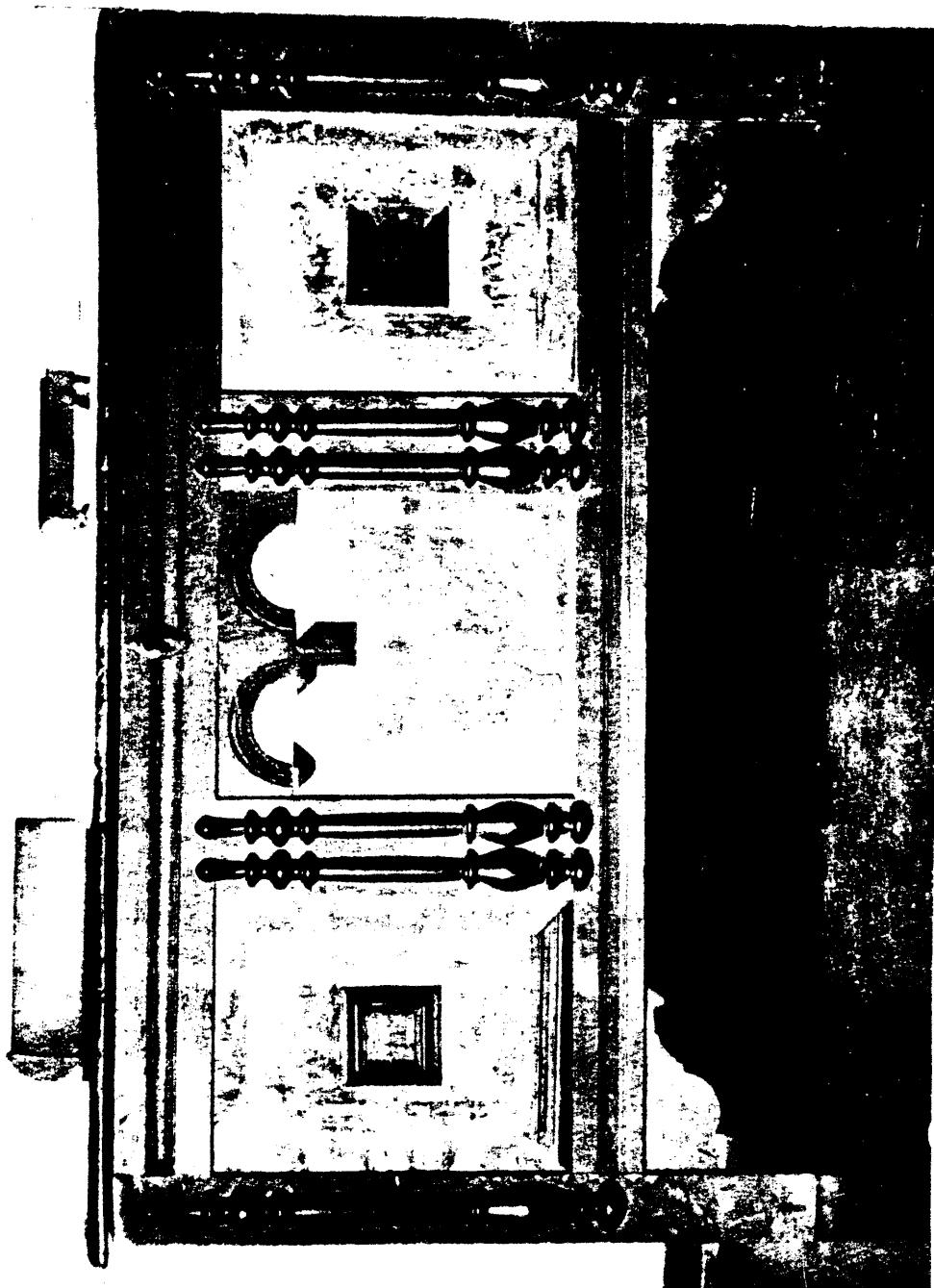


PLATE X.

X Joined Chest  
 Red Oak, White Pine  
 1690-1700  
 Probably Ipswich Township, possibly South (Chebaggo) Parish

The fine chest illustrated in Plate X, in unrestored condition—as it is displayed in the Ipswich Historical Society's Whipple House, has a long history of ownership in the Patch family.

The initials "E.S." carved on the central blocks of the flanking panels are thought to be those of Elizabeth Story, of the Essex Falls area of Ipswich, and wife of Seth Story, a sawmill owner and carpenter of that place, then known merely as "The Falls."<sup>76</sup>

The probability of an inland origin is heightened by the inwardly canted rear stiles (illustrated in Figure 1) and the fact that the pine bottom is sawmill sawn (Figure 2), feathered on the front edge and fitted into a mortised groove on the back of the front rail. Neither of these practices have been observed in chests with Salem histories, but have been noted in chests with previous histories of ownership in Rowley<sup>77</sup> and Andover<sup>78</sup> (Figure 7).

The use of pine boards for the side panels of this chest, arranged to attain a "fielded" effect (Figure 10), and of sawmill sawn bottoms are both evidences of practices coming into wider usage during the decade of 1685-95.<sup>79</sup>

Although the double arch of the center panel suggests the lirering style most common in the 1680's, the transformation of supporting columns into a decorative molding, and the fact that the moldings, too, are applied rather than being carved from the rails and muntins, further

suggests the influence of post-Restoration styles, not in widespread use in Essex County until the 1690's.<sup>80</sup> This is only one detail of a number not to be found elsewhere. The unusually deep and elaborate channelled groove on the front rails, the small fillet or notch which breaks the flow of the reverse curve of the brackets, and the unusually severe turnings of the half-balusters applied to the stiles and muntins are all anomalous. These, combined with the missing cartouche below the central arches and the transformation of columnar support for the arches into pure molding,<sup>81</sup> suggest not only the idea that knowledge of classical architectural principles had not reached this maker, but further that this particular craftsman was using the vernacular tradition from which this type of decoration derived in a somewhat misunderstood way. He was, in the musical sense, playing "by ear."

If this chest can someday be shown to have originated in the South Parish of Ipswich Township, where sawmill sawn pine was available in abundance, it might well prove to be the work of the joiner Joseph Brown, who died in Chebaggo in 1730.<sup>82</sup>

Dimensions: 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high, 43 $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide, 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep.

Materials: The stiles and front panels are red oak; the remainder of the chest, including the original top, is pine.

Owner: The Ipswich Historical Society

Provenance: acquired from the Patch family of Ipswich



Figure 10.



Figure 11.

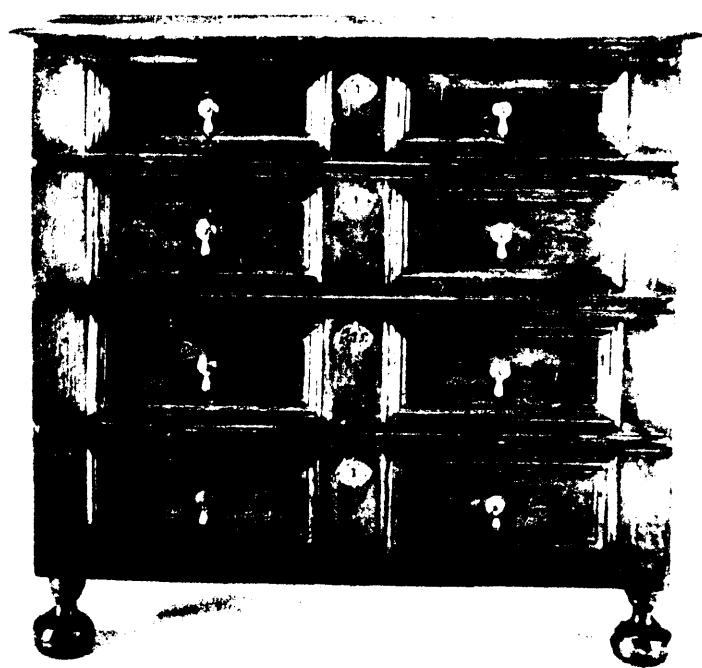


PLATE XI.

XI Chest of drawers  
 Pine, oak, cedar and ash  
 1685-1700  
 Essex County

The phrase "chest of drawers" occurs in the Probate Records of Essex County as early as August 16, 1655, when one valued at 2 li. 10 s. was listed in the inventory of the minister of Ipswich, Nathaniel Rogers. Mr. Rogers' estate amounted to more than 1,497 pounds.<sup>83</sup> The rarity of the form in the early records is not unusual because this is one of the few forms in use by 1700 that was not in use in 1630.

Indeed, it is probable that the chest of drawers mentioned in 1655 was little like the one illustrated in Plate X, for in its earliest form, the "chest of drawers" was very likely an enclosed cupboard with drawers behind the doors.

The chest of drawers, as we know it today, began to attain popularity in England in the years following the great fire of London. A famous American example, bearing the carved date "1678" (Plate V), places the form in America shortly after the beginning of the fourth quarter of the seventeenth century. It was undoubtedly a chest of this type, though not of this elaboration, that was referred to as a "chest of drawers" and valued at only 12 shillings in the inventory of Philip Veren's estate in 1680.<sup>84</sup> The low valuation indicates not only simplicity of its design, but the popularity which the form was attaining in New England.

It is not inconceivable that this chest, with its deceptively simple lines, could have come from any one of a dozen Essex County joiner's workshops by 1685. Chests of drawers are mentioned with ever-increasing frequency as the century wears on, and they are generally valued between

1 and 2 pounds. Although an original owner and a firm date of manufacture cannot be ascribed to the chest in Plate XI, it is fitting that this catalogue should include such a piece of furniture: it embodies the main currents of thought and craftsmanship that sum up the techniques of and influences upon the Essex County joiner as the seventeenth century drew to a close.

The framing members of the chest and the supports on which the side-hung drawers slide are of red oak. The rest of the body is of pine, including the sides of the drawers, which are normally of oak in joined furniture. The tear-drop pulls replace originals of the same type. It is possible that turned half-spindles were once glued to the stiles.

While the chest is made in the joined fashion—a technique which would hang on in Essex County so long as there were men who had been trained as joiners during the "Age of Oak"—it was clearly intended by the maker to look like a cabinetmaker's chest of drawers. One need only look at the single arch molding, applied to a pine divider between the drawers, to see a motif of the new style. It is functional in English chests of drawers because it is the molded front edge of the dust board which divides the drawers and upon which cabinetmaker's drawers slide. But in the present example, the drawers are side-hung, and the single arch molding is applied for visual effect only.

The side panels (Figure 11), are fitted into grooves in the riven oak stiles and rails in typical joiner style. The striving for the flat look of cabinetmaker's work is again apparent when the inside of the case is examined and the feathered edge of the thick pine boards is seen there. A positive effort to avoid a "fielded effect" has been made, and a comparison of this illustration with Figure 10, illustrates two pieces of furniture, probably made in the same decade, which strive for completely different ends. The applied low-relief molding around the panels is not structural. The drawer-front molding also strives for a flat look, although its cross-section reveals one of the most complex patterns to

be found on any piece of late seventeenth century New England furniture.

The manner in which the drawers themselves are constructed offers the most suggestive clue to the date of construction: they are made in exactly the same fashion as the earliest drawers considered in this text. The drawer fronts, although sawn, are almost an inch thick, exclusive of the applied moldings. The bottom inside edge is rabbeted to accept the bottom planks—two pieces of sawn pine, joined with a Type IV ship-lap, nailed to the front, back and sides from the bottom. The side edges of the drawer fronts are rabbeted to accept the sides; the back is set inside of the sides, and rose-head nails are driven through the sides to fasten it to the back and to the front.

Despite the attempt to look like a cabinetmaker's chest of drawers, the construction is typical of the Essex County joiner's method, and the drawer itself could have been made by any one of fifty hands in Essex County any year from 1650 onward.

By 1700, very few of the Essex County joiners who had been trained by the first generation were still working. With the exception of Samuel, James and John Symonds II, Thomas Denis and his sons John and Thomas, Joseph Neale, George Norris and Nathaniel Sileby, all of the other joiners who were working in 1700 were born in the last quarter of the century. They were young enough to be influenced by the new tastes and new styles, first suggested during the Stuart Restoration, but a matter of absolute fact following the accession of William and Mary to the English throne in 1689.

Dimensions: 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ " high, 41 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide, 19-7/16" deep.  
Owner: The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum  
Accession: 58.544.

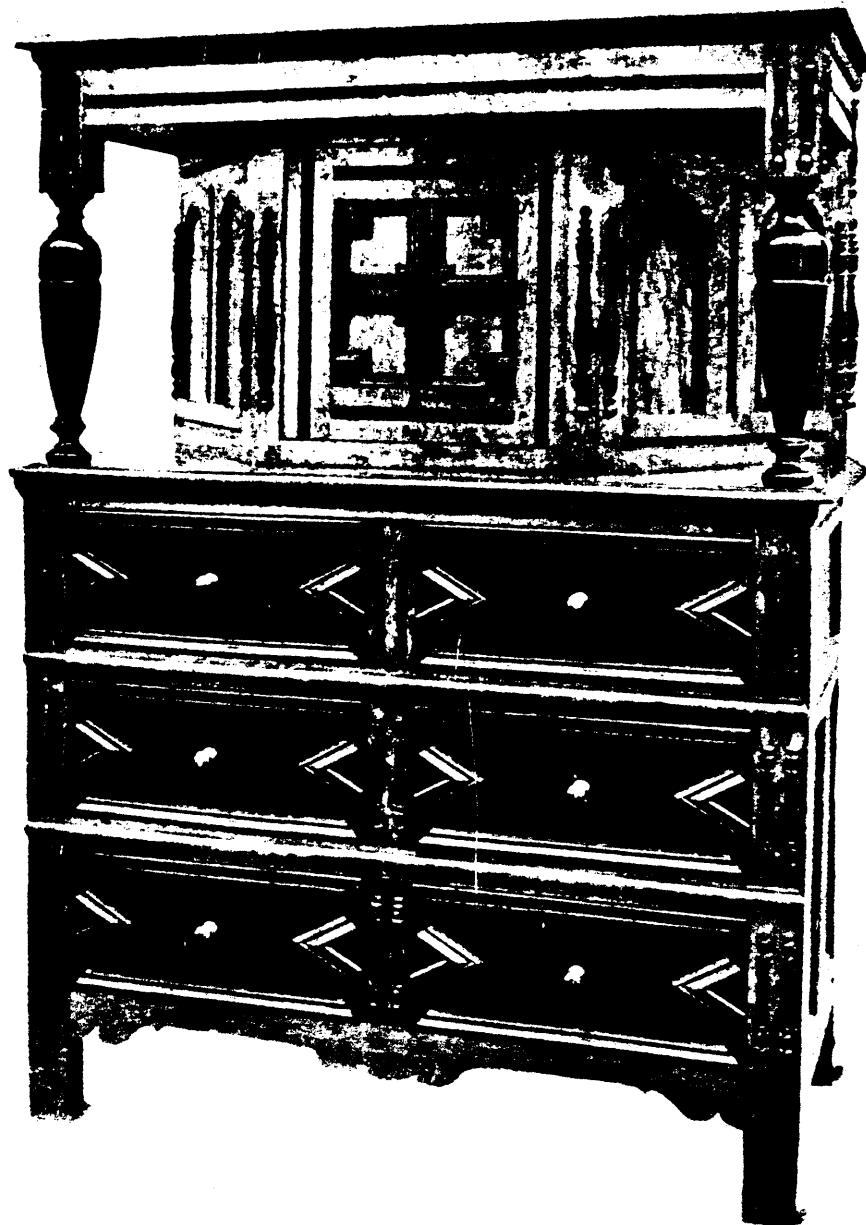


PLATE XII.

## XII Cupboard with drawers

Oak, maple; secondary wood: chestnut

1699

Probably Salem area

The cupboard illustrated in Plate XII has been published as Figure 170 in Lockwood's, Colonial Furniture in America. It is a part of the Bolles Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and is presently on loan to the Moses Pierce Hichborne House in Boston.

While it has no history to tie it to Essex County, the cupboard portion is strikingly similar to the Putnam cupboard (Figure 8), and the pattern of applied moldings on the door relates it to the door of the Woodbury cupboard (Plate VI). In addition, the vase-shaped balusters are of a design found in known Salem work and not yet demonstrated to have been used elsewhere. The same may be said for the multiple-collared spindles, although ones exactly like them have not been observed.

Although considerably restored, the restorer has carefully maintained the original character of the cupboard, except for the introduction of dovetails at the junction of the front and the sides. This of course necessitated new drawer fronts, although they are made of quartered oak, similar to what was originally there. The middle shelf and the drawer backs are also replacements, made of tulip wood, which although it occurs<sup>85</sup> in Essex County was extremely rare in furniture made in the seventeenth century. Each panel of the lower section is numbered in chiselled, Roman numerals to correspond with the framing rails adjacent to it--a technique only rarely observed in Essex County joinery.

The bottoms of the drawers are riven chestnut, the planks which compose each drawer bottom are perpendicular to the front and are joined laterally with a Type IV ship lap joint. The riven oak sides were originally fitted to the sides of the front with three countersunk, rose-headed nails.

Normally, there would be a strong temptation to consider this cupboard a very clever forgery, and indeed, the degree of restoration makes it of little value in discovering the practices of the joiner who made it. Yet, as far as style is concerned, it is not inconsistent with the kind of furniture being made in Essex County at the end of the seventeenth century. If it were indeed a forgery, the forger could have selected a date twenty years earlier to carve on the bottom rail, without causing a potential collector to raise an eyebrow. Indeed, an earlier date would have materially enhanced the cupboard's value.

Despite the extensive restoration, this cupboard is important as a illustration that there was still demand in New England, as the seventeenth century waned, for new furniture made in the form and style of earlier decades, and again suggests that the factors which cause the evolution of styles are personal ones involving the customer and the maker in a specific solution to a specific problem.

Dimensions: 69" high, 41 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide, 20 $\frac{3}{8}$ " deep.

The woods have been identified by microanalysis.

Owner: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (on display at the Hichborne House, Boston).

## FOOTNOTES

## CATALOG

PLATE I

<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Berenson, The Study and Criticism of Italian Art, 2nd Ser. (London, 1914), p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Savage, III, 42.

<sup>3</sup> Probate Records, I, 163.

<sup>4</sup> The construction of these three chests does not suggest the same hand as the two chests in the Essex Institute Collection with Rowley Histories: the one initialed "M.N. 92," #112,979 and the Palmer-Stickney Chest with the carved initials "M.P.," #119,844.

<sup>5</sup> Perley, Salem, I, 91.

<sup>6</sup> Information in a letter to the author from the present owner who insists on remaining anonymous, dated July 7, 1967.

PLATE II

<sup>7</sup> Probate Records, II, 164, 364, 367; III, 323.

<sup>8</sup> Court Records, II, 272.

<sup>9</sup> Probate Records, I, 245.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., II, 164.

<sup>11</sup> Court Records, II, 273.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 272.

<sup>13</sup> Information in a letter to the author from Mrs. Helena C. Schmidt, assistant to the curator of the Saugus Ironworks Restoration, dated September 15, 1967.

<sup>14</sup>The per ton (of 2240 Avoirdupois pounds) price of iron in Massachusetts at this time is practically impossible to determine. However, Court Records, I, 259-260 reveals that English iron was imported at 18 li. per ton in 1652. E. N. Hartley, Ironworks on the Saugus (Norman, Oklahoma, 1957), 256 quotes Massachusetts Archives LIX, 181-182 that iron from the Braintree foundry was valued at 21 li. per ton in 1659.

<sup>15</sup>References to Joseph Jenks are too numerous to be cited here. He is well indexed by name in all volumes of Court Records. While little has been done to separate the fact from the fancy about Jenks' colorful and important career, even less has been done to demonstrate what connection Henry, James and others bearing the surname Leonard or Lennard had to the numerous ironworks in seventeenth century New England. These two men, sons of Thomas Leonard of Pontypool, Monmouthshire (see Savage, III, 78-79) lived in Rowley Village, Lynn, Braintree, Taunton and Providence, and moved on from forge to forge, as each failed in turn. What relationship did they bear to "Richard Leonard Founder at Brede Fournis" whose inscription appears on an iron back cast in England in 1636? (Edwards, Dictionary, II, 62.)

<sup>16</sup>See supra, Chapter V, for biographical notes on Browne and Davis. The moldings were more likely produced by a joiner. Davis did joining and turning.

<sup>17</sup>Information contained in a letter to the author from Mrs. Martha Hassell, registrar of the Essex Institute dated September 19, 1967. It is their accession #1,808.

<sup>18</sup>Information contained in a letter to the author from Mrs. Cary Carson, curatorial assistant at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, dated August 23, 1967.

<sup>19</sup>Savage, II, 345.

### PLATE III

<sup>20</sup>Probate Records, II, 49

<sup>21</sup>Savage, IV, 323. See also William Blake Trask, "The Descendants of William Trask," N E G R LV (July 1901), 321 ff.

<sup>22</sup>Lyman Perley Osborn, a Salem banker, died in 1933. His wife survived him by twenty-seven years. They had no children. The estate was broken up through sale at the time of Mrs. Osborn's death (information in a letter to the author from Miss Eleanor Perley, dated February 14, 1968).

Lyman Perley Osborn's father (Lyman, born Peabody, 1835) married Maria Taylor Perley, his cousin, whose mother was an Osborne. It is thus possible that he could have inherited the chest from his mother or his father's side of the Osborn family. See also the unpublished ms., John O. Burton, "The Osborne Family of Peabody," (n.d.) in the Manuscript Collection of the Essex Institute.

<sup>23</sup> Accession #1957.65.25, illustrated in Philip M. Guyol, "The Prentis Collection," Historical New Hampshire, XIV (December 1958), (unpaged), Figure 4.

<sup>24</sup> Accession #K-326. It is illustrated Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 355, Figure 14.

<sup>25</sup> (Portland, Maine; 1944) "An Oak Chest and an Early Use of Mahogany," pp. 29-34.

<sup>26</sup> Accession #26.304, illustrated Nutting, Pilgrim Century, p. 69, Figure 63.

#### PLATE IV.

<sup>27</sup> Probate Records, I, 280.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., II, 149.

<sup>30</sup> Edwards, Dictionary II, 26.

<sup>31</sup> Basil Oliver, Old Houses and Village Buildings in East Anglia (London: 1912), p. 55, Figure 44. This form is the prototype for the bracket which appears on furniture of the seventeenth century in New England, is often integrated into the bracket foot of furniture from there in the mid-eighteenth century (see Chest on Chest in Garvan Collection), and even persists into the mid-nineteenth century. See photograph of a desk and bookcase belonging to Julia Symonds Pattee in the author's collection.

<sup>32</sup> Edwards, Dictionary, II, 27-28, Figures 2-4.

<sup>33</sup> Savage, I, 289.

<sup>34</sup> Perley, Salem, III, 49.

<sup>35</sup> See ms. Account Book of Captain George Corwin, II, unpaged, entry for August 31, 1673, in Manuscript Collection of Essex Institute.

<sup>36</sup> See object file for item #57.540 in Office of Registrar, The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum—hereafter cited as Winterthur Object File.

<sup>37</sup> Park, Antiques LXXVIII (October 1960), 354, Figure 12.

<sup>38</sup> Court Records, VII, 151.

<sup>39</sup> Park, Antiques LXXVIII (July 1960), 40-44.

#### PLATE V

<sup>40</sup> Winterthur Object File for #57.541.

<sup>41</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXIII (April 1938), 202.

<sup>42</sup> Park, Antiques LXXVIII (July 1960), 43-44.

<sup>43</sup> See letters to the author from Mrs. Kathryn C. Buhler, dated September 5, 1967 and Richard Randall, dated September 13, 1967. No evidence can be adduced from the Court or Probate Records and only an account book, which has not yet appeared, can demonstrate the utilization in America of the services of a turner by a joiner, or the reverse. It is an important point, and except in the cases of those joiners who can be demonstrated to have done turning, it must be assumed that some joiners continued to rely on the services of a turner, from time to time, following customary English practice.

<sup>44</sup> See tabulation of drawer sheets #'s 10, 158 and 159 in the files of the author.

<sup>45</sup> See, Richard Randall, American Furniture in the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, 1965), p. 27, Figure 20.

#### PLATE VI

<sup>46</sup> Probate Docket #A-30481.

<sup>47</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXIII (June 1938), 325.

<sup>48</sup> Derby Perley, "Copy from Original Book of Grants of Salem," Historical Collections, V (December 1863), 265.

<sup>49</sup> Court Records, V, 373.

<sup>50</sup> See ms. account book of Jacob Pudeator, leaf 9, in the Essex Institute Manuscript Collection.

PLATE VII

<sup>51</sup> p. 244.

<sup>52</sup> Edwards, Dictionary, II, 198.

<sup>53</sup> Probate Records, III, 147-148.

<sup>54</sup> Gould Account Book, pp. 30-33 gives instances of joined furniture being made between June 1709 and sometime in 1717.

<sup>55</sup> John A. H. Sweeney, Winterthur Illustrated, (New York: 1963) p. 42. The same technique is used in the Brinton-Ffew House, built ca. 1704, at Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania.

<sup>56</sup> Probate Docket #4583.

PLATE VIII

<sup>57</sup> Lyon, Antiques, XXXIII (April 1938), 199-203.

<sup>58</sup> Park, Antiques, LXXXVIII (October 1960), 353.

<sup>59</sup> Savage, III, 354.

<sup>60</sup> (Boston: 1880), pp. 102-103.

<sup>61</sup> Probate Docket #A-20521.

<sup>62</sup> See "Early Records of the Parker Family," annotated by Charlotte Helen Abbott, p. 4., unpubl. ms. at Andover Historical Society.

<sup>63</sup> Near the present J. P. Stevens Co. mill. See also E. Forbes Rockwell, unpublished "Maps of [North] Andover," in collection of North Andover Historical Society. I am indebted to Mr. Rockwell for much assistance in untangling the numerous Ephriam Foster's mentioned in the Probate Files and Deed Books of Essex County and the Town Records of (North) Andover.

<sup>64</sup> See microfilm, "The Town Records of Andover, Massachusetts 1656-1708," frame 351 in North Andover Historical Society files, recording deed of March 5, 1676/7.

<sup>65</sup> Wallace Nutting, Furniture Treasury (Framingham, Massachusetts; 1928), unpaged, Figure 446. See also fn. 57, supra.

<sup>66</sup> Information contained in a letter to the author from Roland Hammond of Andover dated August 7, 1967. The chest is #57.1 in the Andover Historical Society.

#### PLATE IX

<sup>67</sup> Probate Records, II, 37.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., I, 164.

<sup>69</sup> Information given to the author in an interview with the present owner, June 24, 1967.

<sup>70</sup> See object file on Accession #58.525 in the office of the Registrar, Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum. The birth date of Rebecca Conant is not known, however she is mentioned in the will of her grandfather, Roger Conant, in 1677, Probate Records, III, 336.

<sup>71</sup> Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 353.

<sup>72</sup> Randall Holme, Academy of Armory...and Blazon (London, 1701) p. 395.

<sup>73</sup> Cesare Ripa, Nova Iconologia...(Padua, 1618), p. 589.

<sup>74</sup> #108,889 in the Essex Institute Collection. Information from the files of the registrar of that institution.

<sup>75</sup> #26.323. See also Lyon, Antiques, XXXIV (August 1938), 80,  
Figure 57.

PLATE X

<sup>76</sup> Information given the author in an interview with Mrs. James Newton, curator of the Whipple House, Ipswich, July 18, 1967. The research of this matter was done by Miss Carrie Ladd.

<sup>77</sup> Essex Institute Collection #112,979, and #119,844.

<sup>78</sup> North Andover Historical Society #57.1, on display in the Parson Bernard House.

<sup>79</sup> An exact date has not been determined for the use of sawmill sawn pine chest bottoms in Ipswich, South Parish. This estimate is based on stylistic grounds. Fielded panels in Essex County architecture have not been found to pre-date 1690.

<sup>80</sup> Estimation based on stylistic appearance of surviving examples.

<sup>81</sup> See also Nutting, Pilgrim Century, p. 126, Figure 116, and text p. 148, for a chest on frame found in York, Maine, on which moldings are treated in an identical way. The chest bears many characteristics of Salem joinery.

<sup>82</sup> Park, Antiques, LXXVIII (October 1960), 350, quoting Ipswich Vital Records.

PLATE XI

<sup>83</sup> Probate Records, I, 224.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., III, 365.

PLATE XII

<sup>85</sup> Robinson, Flora, pp. 31, 169.

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## APPENDIX I

## ESSEX COUNTY CARPENTERS

1. Arthur Abbott, Ipswich b. 1639, d. ca. 1716.
2. Benjamin Abbott, Andover, w. 1694.
3. William Allen, Salem 1628 ff., b. 1602.
4. William Allen, Salisbury 1639-50, Newbury 1650-86; d. 1686.
5. Henry Ambrose, Hampton, w. 1641, d. 1658.
6. Robert Andrews, Topsfield, before 1660.
7. Samuel Archer, Salem, before 1669.
8. - 12. Elijah, Jacob, Jeremiah, John, Nathaniel Averill, Topsfield 1661 ff.
13. John Balch (probably II.), Beverly, 1677 ff.
14. John Barber, Salem, 1637-42.
15. Anthony Bennett, Beverly, w. 1677.
16. Samuel Bennett, Lynn, w. 1635.
17. John Bishop, Newbury, w. 1647.
18. Joseph Boardman, Rowley/Topsfield.
19. Nathaniel Boardman, Rowley/Topsfield.
20. George Brown, Newbury, 1633/4 ff.
21. Joshua Buffum, Salem, w. 1669-1700.
22. John Burton, Topsfield.
23. Michael Carthrick, Ipswich, 1635 ff.
24. Thomas and William Chubb, Thomas, Salem 1636, ff.; William, Beverly, 1677.
25. Daniel Clark, Topsfield.
26. Edward Clark, Haverhill, w. 1646 ff.
27. William Curtis, Sawyer, b. 1662, d. 1741. Salem.
28. Robert Downer, Newbury, w. 1670/1.
29. John Fiske, Wenham, 1670 ff.
30. John Grainger, Andover.
31. Joseph Hale, Newbury.

32. Mark Hascole, Beverly, 1677.
33. Roger Hascole, Beverly, 1677.
34. William Hough, Gloucester, 1640 ff.
35. Nathaniel Howard, Beverly, 1677.
36. Thomas Howlett, Ipswich, 1640 ff.
37. George Ingerson or Ingersoll, Salem, w. 1677/8.
38. Joseph and John Ingerson, Salem, w. 1677/8.
39. Henry Jaques, Newbury, 1640 ff.; Andover 1646 - ?; Newbury again.
40. Thomas Johnson, Andover, w. 1663.
41. Stephen Kent, Newbury 1638; Haverhill 1668.
42. John Marston, Salem 1665 ff.
43. Thomas Miller, Rowley.
44. John Nichols, Middleton.
45. George Norton, Salem 1629; Gloucester 1642; Wenham 1647; d. 1659.
46. John Norton, Salem 1660; d. 1693.
47. Stephen Osgood, Andover.
48. Joseph Parker, Jr. Andover, d. 1684.
49. John Pearson, Rowley, d. 1687.
50. Thomas Perley, Rowley/Topsfield.
51. John Pickard, Rowley.
52. John Pickering I., Ipswich 1634-37; Salem 1637-57. b. 1615(?), d. 1657.
53. Richard Pierce, Permaquid, w. 1642-74.
54. Nathaniel Pitman or Pickman, Salem.
55. John Poole, Beverly 1694-1701; Gloucester 1701-27; d. 1727.
56. John Remington, Rowley.
57. John Ring, Salisbury, 1638 ff.
58. Thomas Robbins, Salem, b. 1618, w. 1641-81. living after 1681.
59. Walter Roper, Ipswich, 1658 ff.
60. Valentine Rowell, Ipswich, 1643-62.
61. William Smith, Topsfield.
62. William Smith, Sawyer, Salem 1665.
63. John Stickney, Rowley.
64. William Storey, Ipswich, w. 1648; d. 1693.
65. Mathew Taylor, Beverly, w. 1677.

66. Samuel Wardwell or Wardell, Andover.
67. Uzell Wardwell or Usewell Werdall, b. 1639, w. Ipswich 1673; Salem 1679; perhaps Boston 1664-73.
68. James Wall, Hampton, 1654.
69. John Welles, Newbury, w. 1669.
70. Joseph Whipple, Ipswich.
71. Daniel Wicom, Rowley.
72. William Wild, Rowley.
73. William Wildes, Ipswich, 1661.
74. John Wildes, Topsfield.
75. Thomas Wood, Rowley.
76. Ezekiel Woodward, b. 1622; perhaps early Boston; Ipswich 1661; Wenham 1682.

## APPENDIX II.

Inventory of the estate of George Coall, taken by Samuell  
Hartt and Eleazer Linse:

3 saues, 8s.  
2 goynters & foreplaine, 6s.  
3 smoothing plains & a draing knife, 3s. 6d.  
2 plans and 2 revolving plains, 10s.  
4 round plains, 5s.  
3 rabet plains, 4s.  
3 holou plains, 3s. 6d.  
9 Cresing plains, 10 s. 6d.  
6 torning tools, 9.  
3 plaine irons & 3 bits, 1s. 6d.  
1 brase stok, 2 squares and gorges, 1s. 6d.  
1 brod ax and 1 fro, 2s.  
holfast, 1s. 6d.  
hamer. 1s. 6d.  
6 gouges, 2s.  
9 Chisels, 5s.  
2 ogers & 1 draing knife, 3s.  
1 bench hooks [sic], 2 yoyet irons [sic], 1s.  
a gluepot, 1s. 6d.  
1 bible, 3s.  
5 yards and a halfe of cloth, 1 li. 13 s.  
clothing, 2 li 5 s.  
for what work he has done in his shop, 1 li. 10 s.  
1 cow, 3 li.  
1 horse 2 li.  
2 calfe, 10 s. total, 15 li. 16 s.

Attested 30:9:1675 by John Davis.

--from Essex County Quarterly Court Files,  
Volume 24, leaf 74.