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FROM CARVED TO PAINTED:
CHESTS OF CENTRAL AND COASTAL CONNECTICUT, c. 1675-1725

by
Martha H. Willoughby

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

Fall 1994

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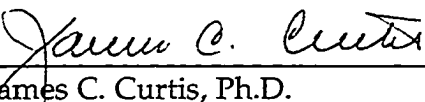
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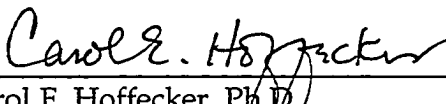
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CHESTS OF CENTRAL AND COASTAL CONNECTICUT, c. 1675-1725

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Martha H. Willoughby

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KEY TO CHESTS' NUMBERING SYSTEM

Throughout the text, figures, and tables, the following numbers are used to refer to specific chests. In figures that depict an entire chest, the owners have been noted. For figures of details, the reader should consult this guide. Also, dimensions for those chests in the following categories have been noted here (in inches). Dimensions for other chests illustrated are noted under the figures.

No.	Owner	Figure(s)
SUNFLOWER CHESTS:		
2	Yale University Art Gallery, 1930.2191 (H: 39 3/4 W: 47 1/2 D: 21 1/4, with lid)	16c
3	The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 58.530 (H: 37 7/8 W: 44 5/8 D: 20 7/8, with lid)	6a, 9a, 17b
6	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 32.283 (H: 40 W: 48 D: 21 5/8, with lid)	not illustrated
7	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 66.190.1 (H: 38 3/4 W: 45 D: 20 1/8, without lid)	15a
12	Wadsworth Atheneum (H: 39 W: 45 D: 20 1/8, without lid)	not illustrated
16	The Connecticut Historical Society, 1981-123-0 (H: 36 1/2 W: 45 13/16 D: 19 7/16, without lid)	4b, 11, 15b
17	The Connecticut Historical Society, 1849-13-0 (H: 38 1/2 W: 45 5/8 D: 19 1/4, without lid)	15c, 18a
18	Yale University Art Gallery, 1800.4 (Dimensions not available)	not illustrated
19	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 10.125.689 (H: 38 W: 44 1/2 D: 20, without lid)	4a, 14a, 15d

20	The Connecticut Historical Society, 1846-24-0 (Dimensions not available)	not illustrated
24	Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (H: 39 W: 45 1/8 D: 20 1/4, without lid)	not illustrated
25	Historic Deerfield, Inc., 63-76 (H: 39 3/4 W: 46 D: 21, with lid)	6b, 16b, 19
26	Historic Deerfield, Inc., 1380 (H: 39 3/16 W: 44 3/4 D: 19 7/8, without lid)	18b
27	The American Museum, Bath, England, DB/12490-16 (H: 38 3/8 W: 44 1/4 D: 20, without lid)	not illustrated
34	Stowe-Day Foundation, 85.3 (H: 42 W: 48 1/4 D: 21 1/2, with lid)	16a

GROUP I CHESTS:

1	The Connecticut Historical Society, 1945-1-1114 (H: 31 W: 45 D: 19 5/16, without lid)	1a, 10b, 22b
2	The Art Institute of Chicago, 46.581 (H: 37 1/4 W: 48 D: 21, with lid)	20
3	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 10.125.29 (H: 31 1/2 W: 44 13/16 D: 19 1/4, without lid)	22a
6	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 50.3786 (H: 33 W: 44 3/4 D: 19 1/2, without lid)	5b, 9b, 21b
11	East Hampton Historical Society (H: 36 3/4 W: 44 1/8 D: 18, without lid)	21a

GUILFORD CHESTS:

- 1 Wadsworth Atheneum, 1926.327
(H: 42 1/2 W: 42 1/4 D: 19 1/8, without top).....10c, 25, 27
- 2 The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum,
57.1110 (H: 54 1/2 W: 40 1/8 D: 21 1/8, with top)8d, 9c, 26
- 5 The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 58.571
(H: 19 1/8 W: 29 D: 17 5/8, with lid)24b
- 6 Private Collection
(Dimensions not available) not illustrated
- 7 Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, 1973.2
(H: 33 1/8 W: 42 7/8 D: 18 3/16).....23b
- 10 Unknown (H: 33 W: 43 1/4 D: 18 1/2, without lid).....5a, 23a
- 13 The Henry Whitfield Historical Museum, 1916
(H: 32 W: 42 1/8 D: 19 1/2, without lid).....24a

GROUP II CHESTS:

- 4 Daniel P. Brown, Jr. and Nannie W. T. Brown (H: 29 3/4
W: 43 3/8 D: 19 7/8, without lid).....1b, 30a, 33a, 38a, 39c, 43b
- 8 Dietrich American Foundation
(H: 33 5/8 W: 49 D: 20 1/2, with lid)30b, 33b, 38b
- 12 Private Collection
(H: 32 W: 46 1/2 D: 21 1/2, with lid)39a,b
- 7 Unknown (H: 31 W: 45 D: 20 1/4, with lid).....31a
- 9 Wadsworth Atheneum, 1926.310
(H: 30 W: 41 7/16 D: 19 3/8, without lid).....32, 35a, 36, 38c
- 10 Shelburne Museum, 3.4-18
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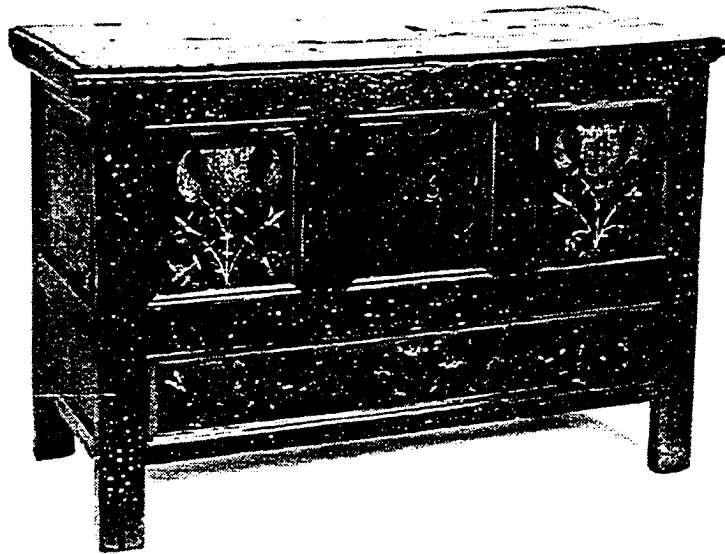
ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationships among several groups of chests made in Connecticut during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. The study focuses upon two groups of painted chests, designated into the Group I and Group II categories, from the Branford-Saybrook area along the coast. Primarily using evidence derived from the chests themselves, the study reveals two distinct patterns of production. The Group I chests, along with Sunflower chests (chests with carved and turned ornament from central Connecticut) and Guilford chests (painted chests from the Guilford-Saybrook area), form a shop tradition—one that maintained considerable continuity over time and space. In contrast, the Group II chests exemplify discontinuity in production. Both groups attest to the influence of woodworkers from Continental Europe and, more specifically, the Channel Islands—English owned islands off the coast of France—and lead to an investigation of the presence of French-speaking settlers, both Huguenots and Channel Islanders, in early Connecticut.

I. INTRODUCTION

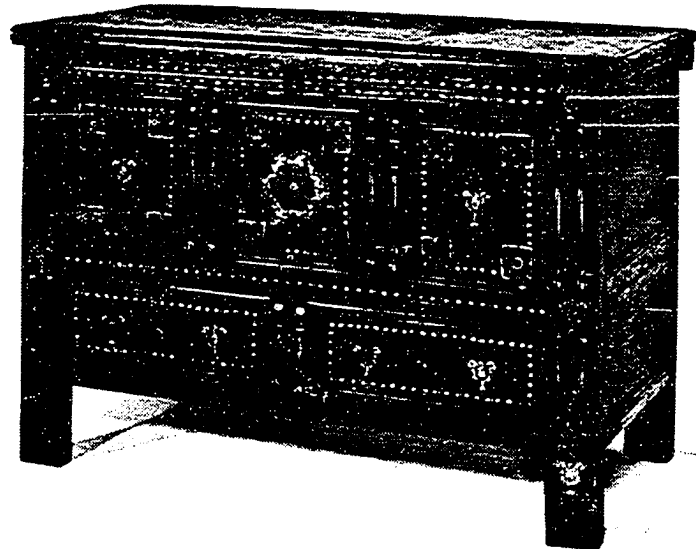
This study investigates twelve painted chests made in the early eighteenth century along the Connecticut coast. In that era, chests were widely owned and were the furniture forms listed most frequently in estate inventories. Today, their painted decoration, though considerably faded and muted from the effects of time and use, is often held as their most compelling feature, rarely escaping commentary in exhibition and auction catalogues. Yet, in the inventories and wills of the period, chests are briefly described, if at all. Unlike the more expensive textiles, the documents fail to elaborate upon the chests' colors and decorative motifs. As such, the study of painted chests from this time period must rely largely upon the objects to reveal larger patterns of production and artisanal life.

Analysis of the chests' many construction and decorative details reveals that they derive from two shop traditions. Divided into two groups, the Group I chests are marked by continuity in habits of workmanship, whereas the Group II chests contain significant variations from one object to the next (fig. 1). The chests also embody a combination of established and innovative practices. The established practices link the chests to other groups of Connecticut furniture, while the innovative practices suggest outside influences, most likely Continental European in origin. With evidence from



1a. Group I chest #1.

The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, 1945-1-1114.
(photograph, courtesy of The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT)



1b. Group IIa chest #4.

Daniel P. Brown, Jr. and Nannie W. T. Brown. (photograph, courtesy of The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, and obtained through DAPC)

Figure 1: Group I and Group II chests.

the backgrounds of the attributed makers, the chests attest to the presence of non-English woodworkers and offer insights into the extent and nature of heterogeneity in early Connecticut. The chests suggest that early Connecticut material life was marked by artisanal mobility and communication--both within Connecticut and between Connecticut and Europe.

II. THE GROUP I TRADITION

For decades, scholars of American decorative arts have separated objects into stylistic periods, characterizing things by the qualities that set them apart from their antecedents and successors. For example, the heavy and sturdy joinery of the seventeenth century was “supplanted” by the lighter construction and more fluid decoration of the William and Mary style. This approach emphasizes discontinuity and the distinctiveness of different styles. Another framework employed by decorative arts historians is the identification of specific shop traditions. Proving that a nexus of objects was made by the same person or a group of persons related by family or training emphasizes continuity in design, execution, and appearance.

Neither of these emphases is mutually exclusive. The study of one shop tradition that crossed stylistic boundaries provides an opportunity to investigate these seemingly contradictory forces in a specific context. A group of five painted chests, hereafter cited as Group I, proved to be made within a larger shop tradition that encompassed two other groups of chests, the Sunflower chests of Wethersfield and the Guilford chests of coastal Connecticut.¹ The Sunflower chests are manifestations of late mannerist or

¹Although the terms “Sunflower” and “Guilford” may inaccurately describe a group’s motifs or locale of production, they have been used for the sake of clarity.

seventeenth-century style joined furniture, while the Guilford chests suggest the influence of the Baroque or William and Mary style. Having characteristics found in both these groups, Group I chests represent “intermediary” objects that bridge the differences between the two larger bodies of chests.

Past scholarship has recognized the possibility that these chests were made by a small, closely connected group of artisans, but has relied largely upon stylistic evidence. The continuity of some construction techniques along with joiner’s marks reinforces the belief that the Group I and Guilford chests were all made within one shop tradition. That shop tradition gradually incorporated more up-to-date construction features and, more drastically, re-vamped its decorative scheme. Hence, the three groups of chests attest to persistent construction traits within a shop tradition while offering one scenario for how woodworkers crossed boundaries between stylistic periods.

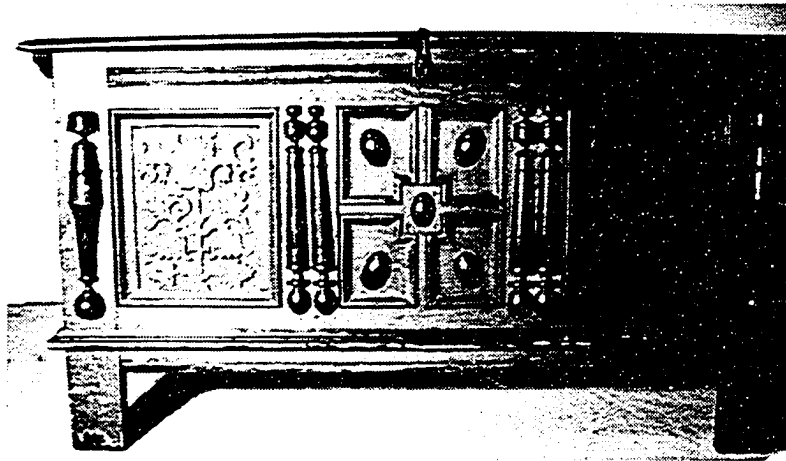
Furthermore, the particular similarities and variations among the chests allow for speculation on the sources of development for this early woodworking shop tradition, since the locale of production shifted from central to coastal Connecticut. The mobility of woodworkers, however, did not engender a severing of ties from the past. Instead, the evolution of the tradition is marked by the degree of continuity exhibited in the chests and points to larger issues of mobility and societal cohesion in New England at the turn of the eighteenth century.

*

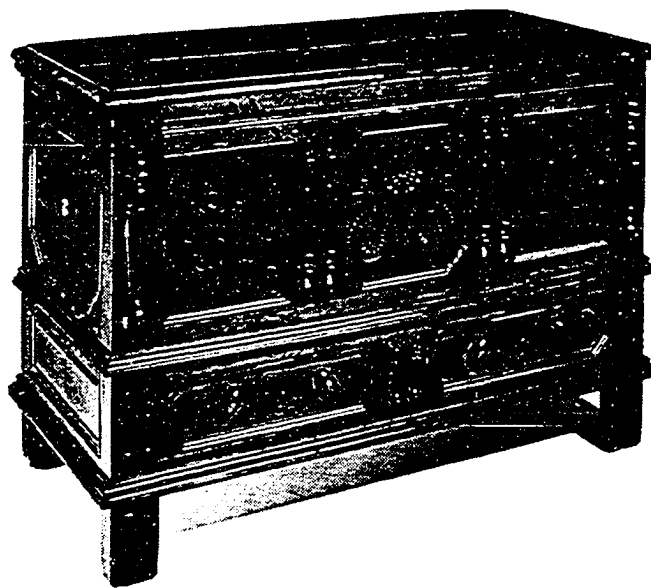
Marked by easily recognizable characteristics and surviving in large numbers, Sunflower furniture has figured prominently in the past scholarship of Connecticut furniture. The group consists of chests with no, one, or two drawers, cupboards, and related boxes (figs. 2-4). Although close inspection reveals variations, the carved panels and applied turnings on the chests and the cupboards are relatively uniform and distinct from comparable features on other groups of early New England furniture. According to the most recent estimate, over eighty-five examples survive today, making this group second in number to the approximately one hundred and seventy-five so-called "Hadley" chests in early New England furniture.² As such, they have attracted the interest of writers on Connecticut furniture for the past century. A survey of the scholarship can be broken down into three phases of concern: The area of production, the specific maker, and, most recently, both the refinement of earlier attributions and the relevance to neighboring woodworking traditions. For the most part, the survey reveals an interpretive progression from the consideration of the group as a single localized tradition to a greater awareness of the complexity of its origins and variations in the Connecticut River valley.

The earliest writers on the subject sought to pinpoint the specific town responsible for the production of Sunflower furniture, labeling the group according to its geographic origins and decorative features. In 1892, Irving Whithall Lyon offered a Hartford County origin for the group, since many of

²Susan Prendergast Schoelwer, "Connecticut Sunflower Furniture: A Familiar Form Reconsidered," Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin (Spring 1989), p. 21.



2a. Sunflower chest with no drawers.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, 10.125.700.
Dimensions not available.



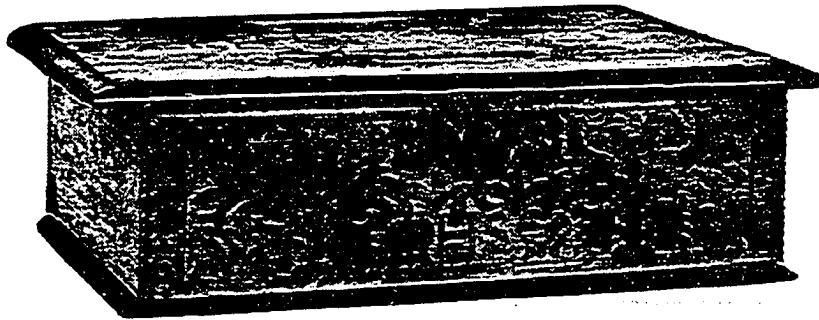
2b. Sunflower chest with one drawer.
Bernard & S. Dean Levy, Inc., New York. H: 32 W: 46 D: 20, with lid.
(photograph, courtesy of Bernard & S. Dean Levy, Inc. and obtained through
the Decorative Arts Photographic Collection, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur
Museum, hereafter cited as DAPC)

Figure 2: Sunflower chests with no drawers and one drawer.



3a. Sunflower cupboard.

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, bequest of George C. Betts, 1887.7.
Dimensions not available.



3b. Related box.

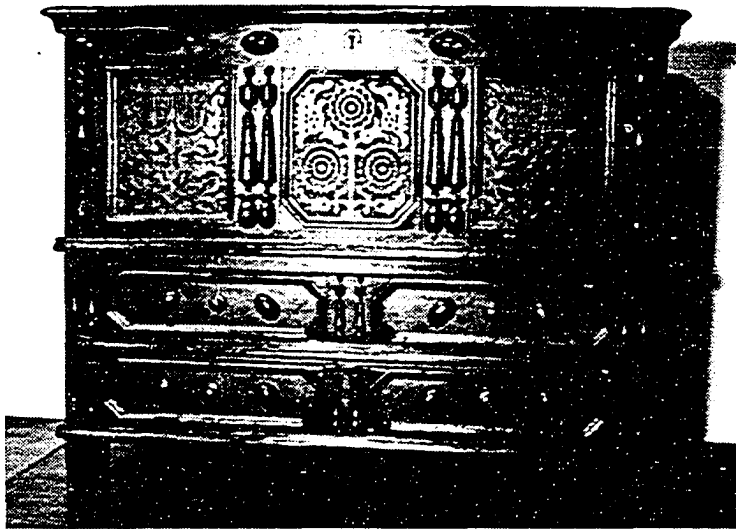
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Gift of Mrs. Russell Sage, 1909 (10.125.9).
H: 8 W: 27 D: 17, with lid. (photograph, courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
all rights reserved)

Figure 3: Sunflower cupboard and related box.



4a. Chest #19.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, 10.125.689.



4b. Chest #16.

The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, 1981-123-0.

Figure 4: Sunflower chests with two drawers.

the six cupboards and forty chests he located were from that area.³ Subsequent writers accepted this general locality and variously called the group "Connecticut" or "Hartford" chests and their design as the "Sunflower-" or "Aster-and-Tulip pattern."⁴

The group was first clearly associated with Wethersfield by Walter A. Dyer in 1935. In his article, "The Tulip-and-Sunflower Press Cupboard," Dyer recounted the movements of Joseph and Mary Rowlandson, the original owners of a surviving Sunflower cupboard. Before moving to Wethersfield, the Rowlandson's lived in Lancaster, Massachusetts. In 1676, the town was attacked by Native-Americans and Mary and her children were held captive for three months. The family then moved to Wethersfield, where Joseph died in 1678. Since they presumably had lost all their possessions in Lancaster, Dyer asserted that the Sunflower cupboard mentioned in Joseph's inventory and that descended from his family was made in Wethersfield in 1677 or 1678.⁵ Newton Case Brainard strengthened the Wethersfield association by building upon Lyon's research. Brainard found that, of twelve

³Irving Whithall Lyon, Colonial Furniture of New England (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1892), p. 15.

⁴Luke Vincent Lockwood, Colonial Furniture in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), p.25; Henry Wood Erving, "The Connecticut Chest," Old-Time New England 12: 1 (July 1921), p. 15; Malcolm A. Norton, "Chests of Our New England Grandmothers," Antiques 2: 2 (August 1922), p. 77; Wallace Nutting, Furniture of the Pilgrim Century (Framingham & Boston: Old America Company, 1921), p. 12 and Furniture Treasury (Framingham, MA: Old America Company, 1928), n.p. (under fig. 56).

⁵Walter A. Dyer, "The Tulip-and-Sunflower Press Cupboard," Antiques 27: 4 (April 1935), pp. 141-142.

chests with known provenances, all originally came from Wethersfield and none were from Hartford.⁶

Early writers also viewed the chests as purely local productions made by or under the influence of one person. Erving, Dyer, and Brainard contended that the uniformity of construction and decoration indicated the work of one person, or a master joiner and his apprentices—an assertion that has only recently been seriously questioned. Without much evidence, they also asserted that the chests' design was an American innovation. As Erving argued, "they followed no European model but were one hundred per cent American."⁷ Only Brainard investigated possible English connections. Despite the reservations of English furniture historian R. W. Symonds, Brainard noted that the carving of the Sunflower chest resembled work from the North Country, especially that near the Welsh border in Lancashire.⁸

Following the early studies, the next phase of scholarship attributed the chests to one joiner. In 1958, Houghton Bulkeley discovered a 1681 credit in the account book of his ancestor, Gershom Bulkeley, to Peter Blin of Wethersfield for a table leaf, a chest, and two dozen trenchers. Bulkeley linked the chest in the credit to a drawerless Sunflower chest, which had descended in his family. Bulkeley then identified eighteen woodworkers active in Wethersfield between 1675 and 1730, concluding that only Blin was

⁶Brainard, "Some Notes on Sunflower Chests," The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 10: 2 (January 1944), p. 10. The chests came from what today are the towns of Wethersfield, Glastonbury, Newington, and Berlin. All were part of Wethersfield in the seventeenth century.

⁷Erving, "The Connecticut Chest," p. 15.

⁸Brainard, "Some Notes on Sunflower Chests," p. 12. Symonds's suspicions are contained in a letter to Brainard, 22 August, 1941, Sunflower Chests Notebooks, Newton Case Brainard Papers, #36, The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT.

old enough and owned sufficient tools to be the maker of the chests. Bulkeley dismissed twelve carpenters because they did not own extensive tools, and three turners because they were too young. Besides Blin, two other joiners, Obadiah Dickinson and Benjamin Gilbert, remained. Dickinson was eliminated because he died in 1698 and, according to Bulkeley, Sunflower chests were made after 1700; Gilbert was not qualified because his inventory, though it listed specific tools, contained no turning tools. Although Blin's inventory only mentions "joyner's tools," Bulkeley concluded that Blin must have been a turner, for the 1681 credit mentions trenchers, which were undoubtedly turned on a lathe.⁹

Though subsequent writers noted some holes in Bulkeley's argument, the work that succeeded Bulkeley's discovery largely accepted Blin as the maker of the Sunflower chests and more generally, the early claim that the chests all were made under the supervision of one person. Patricia E. Kane observed several flaws in Bulkeley's attribution. Noting that the account book was shared by Gershom and his brother, Peter, Kane asserted that the 1681 entry was in Peter's, not Gershom's hand. If the chest was owned by Peter, it would have descended in a different family line and would not have been the chest owned in 1958 by Houghton Bulkeley. Kane also revealed that Bulkeley misread the value of Blin's joiner's tools. Blin's tools were valued at £4:18:6, considerably less than the £15:06:6 recorded by Bulkeley and the value that caused him to assert Blin's prominence as a joiner. Despite these

⁹Houghton Bulkeley, "A Discovery on the Connecticut Chest," The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 23: 1 (January 1958), p. 18. The same article was re-printed in Bulkeley, Contributions to Connecticut Cabinetmaking (Hartford, CT: The Connecticut Historical Society, 1967), pp. 24-27.

problems, Kane claimed that her findings only modified Bulkeley's claim for Blin's distinction, restating that Blin arrived in Wethersfield at the same time as the production of the Rowlandson cupboard.¹⁰

More recently, scholars have questioned the Blin attribution and delved further into European sources and regional variations. The large number of surviving Sunflower objects have caused many to doubt that only one person was responsible. In entries from four major catalogues, scholars have argued for the vertical evolution of a shop tradition, while often accepting Blin as the likely founder of the shop.¹¹ Using the carved and turned ornament, as well as the motifs, scholars have sought European precedents. Their findings, inconclusive thus far, have yielded a number of possibilities, including Northern England, London, and France.¹² Two Sunflower chests, with all-over carving and no applied turnings, provide a link to other groups of Connecticut River valley furniture (fig. 18). Scholars have noted that their trailing-vine motif is similar to that on groups of

¹⁰Patricia E. Kane, "The Seventeenth Century Case Furniture of Hartford County, Connecticut" (master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1968), pp. 55-57.

¹¹Robert F. Trent, catalogue entries, New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century, Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent, eds. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), vol. II, p. 267 and American Furniture with Related Decorative Arts, 1660-1830: The Milwaukee Art Museum and the Layton Art Collection, Gerald W. R. Ward, ed. (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1991), pp. 37, 38; Philip Zea, "Furniture," The Great River: Art and Society of the Connecticut Valley, 1635-1820 (Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1985), p. 187; Gerald W. R. Ward, American Case Furniture in the Mabel Brady Garvan and Other Collections at Yale University (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 1988), p. 93.

¹²John T. Kirk, American Furniture and the British Tradition to 1830 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 75; Trent, catalogue entries, New England Begins, vol. II, p. 267 and American Furniture with Related Decorative Arts, pp. 37, 38; Kevin M. Sweeney, "Regions and the Study of Material Culture: Explorations Along the Connecticut River" (forthcoming, American Furniture), pp. 11 and footnotes 31, 32.

furniture from Windsor, Connecticut and Hampshire County, Massachusetts.¹³

In the first study to consider the group as a whole, Susan Prendergast Schoelwer argued against several of the cornerstones of the Blin and Wethersfield attribution and proposed that Sunflower chests were produced in a number of competing shops.¹⁴ Schoelwer's conclusions were derived from a close examination of eleven chests and four cupboards in which she noted variations in decoration and construction. Concentrating on the carved panels, she noted significant conceptual discrepancies that prevented any "common attribution."¹⁵ Most recently, Kevin M. Sweeney has supported Schoelwer's assertions while examining Sunflower furniture in a regional context.¹⁶

The five chests designated here as Group I have not been considered a coherent group by past scholarship. Group I chests consist of one painted and carved chest (chest #2, fig. 20), three painted chests with minimal applied ornament (chests #6, #3, #1, figs. 21b, 22), and a re-painted example (chest #11,

¹³For the Windsor group, see William N. Hosley, Jr., catalogue entry, *The Great River*, p. 201. For the Hampshire County group, see Kane, "The Seventeenth-Century Furniture of The Connecticut Valley: The Hadley Chest Reappraised," *Arts of the Anglo-American Community in the Seventeenth Century*, Ian M. G. Quimby, ed. (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia for the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1974), pp. 89, 92; Philip Zea, catalogue entry, *The Great River*, p. 200; Trent, catalogue entry, *New England Begins*, vol. II, p. 299.

¹⁴Schoelwer, "Connecticut Sunflower Furniture," pp. 29-30.

¹⁵Schoelwer, "Connecticut Sunflower Furniture," p. 32. Others have also commented upon stylistic variations. See John T. Kirk, *Connecticut Furniture: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1967), pp. 11-13, 15, 63 and *American Furniture and the British Tradition*, p. 75; Ward, *American Case Furniture*, pp. 93-94.

¹⁶Sweeney, "Regions and the Study of Material Culture," p. 12.

fig. 21a). Previous work has discussed the chests in two groups--chest #2 and chests #1, #3, and #6. Though the re-painted chest, #11, has been attributed to the Wethersfield area, it has not been connected to the other chests.¹⁷

Chest #2 shares decorative similarities with the Sunflower chests and was the first to be considered a relation of the larger group. While grouping this example with Sunflower chests, scholars attributed the chest to a different hand, often considering it as a painted version of the carved style.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the chest's strong resemblance to Sunflower chests caused writers to postulate a close relationship among their makers. As early as 1922, Malcolm A. Norton, then the owner of the chest, believed his chest and Sunflower chests were the work of a father and son.¹⁹

Early on, scholars also noted a relationship between chests #1, #3, and #6 and Sunflower chests. As such, the painted examples were often attributed to the Wethersfield area.²⁰ After Bulkeley's discovery of the Blin credit, William L. Warren proposed Blin's son, Peter Blin, Jr., as a likely maker of the painted examples. Observing a "close affinity" between the Sunflower and three painted chests and Group I chest #1's coastal Connecticut provenance, Warren noted the significance of Peter Blin, Jr.'s move to East

¹⁷Frances Safford noted the connection in a personal conversation. The author is grateful for her reference to the chest. The chest is illustrated in Jay A. Graybeal and Peter M. Kenny, "The William Efner Wheelock Collection at the East Hampton Historical Society," *Antiques* 125: 8 (August 1987), pp. 328-339.

¹⁸Nutting, *Furniture of the Pilgrim Century* (1921 ed.), p. 15; Kane, "The Seventeenth Century Case Furniture of Hartford County," plate V; Kirk, *Connecticut Furniture*, p. 14, fig. 18.

¹⁹Norton, "Chests of Our New England Grandmothers," p. 77.

²⁰Richard H. Randall, Jr., *American Furniture in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1965), p. 17; Kirk, *Connecticut Furniture*, p. 27. Chest #11 is attributed to Wethersfield in its object label, East Hampton Historical Society, East Hampton, NY.

Guilford in 1698.²¹ More recently, Robert F. Trent proposed that the three chests were variants within the Blin tradition. Though considering chest #2 in a separate category, Trent asserted the one dovetail used in their drawer construction as an index feature linking the three chests together.²² In the museum label for chest #1, Trent further noted that Peter Blin, Jr. inherited his father's joining tools, suggesting that the son continued his father's trade along the Connecticut shoreline.²³

Guilford chests constitute a loose grouping of a number of forms with elaborate painted decoration. The forms include joined chests with one drawer (figs. 23, 24a), board chests with one drawer (fig. 24b), joined chests-of-drawers (fig. 25), a high chest (fig. 26), and a chest-on-frame. Past scholarship on the Guilford chests has paralleled the concerns of scholars of the Sunflower chests. Early collectors and writers focused their attention on the chests' provenances, while later investigators identified a specific maker.²⁴ Most recent work has refined the attribution and recognized the numerous European features of the chests.

The striking painted decoration of the Guilford chests led scholars to unite them as a group. Wallace Nutting further noted that they all are made

²¹William L. Warren, "Some Remarks on Connecticut Chests," The Connecticut Antiquarian 16: 1 (June 1964), p. 16.

²²Trent, catalogue entry, New England Begins, vol. II, pp. 300-1.

²³Trent, museum label, The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT and conversations.

²⁴The historiography of Guilford chests is well-examined by Robert F. Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel for the Early Eighteenth-Century Connecticut Chests Attributed to Charles Guillam," Studies in the Decorative Arts 2: 1 (Fall 1994), pp. 75-80.

of tulip and originated from the Connecticut coast, near New Haven.²⁵ While some noted the influence of Continental European practices, many writers viewed the painted motifs as symbolic of the English crown. With the rose and thistle indicating England and Scotland, the design was frequently held as a reference to the unification of England and Scotland in 1603.²⁶ More recently, the decorative appeal of the motifs has been emphasized over their political significance.²⁷ Speculative sources for the Guilford chest's design encompass a variety of media, including book plates, textiles, and inlaid furniture.²⁸

In 1957 and 1958, Ethel Hall Bjercoe and William L. Warren identified Charles Guillam as a likely maker of the Guilford chests. Using Guillam's 1727 probate inventory, Bjercoe and Warren showed that Guillam owned finished and unfinished furniture, woodworking tools, and, most

²⁵Lockwood, Colonial Furniture in America, p. 344; Norton, "Chests of Our New England Grandmothers," p. 78; Nutting, Furniture of the Pilgrim Century (1921 ed.), p. 52 and (1924 ed.), p. 102.

²⁶Norton, "Chests of Our New England Grandmothers," p. 78; Nutting, Furniture of the Pilgrim Century, (1924 ed.), p. 129; Muriel L. Baker (Mrs. Frederick), "Charles Gillam and the Guilford Chests," The Connecticut Antiquarian 11: 2 (December 1959), p. 22; Dean A. Fales, American Painted Furniture, 1660-1880 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), p. 24.

²⁷William L. Warren, "Were the Guilford Painted Chests Made in Saybrook?," The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 23: 1 (January 1958), p. 6; Catherine Jacobs, catalogue entry, A Place For Everything: Chests and Boxes in Early Colonial America, Barbara McClean Ward, ed. (Winterthur, DE: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1986), p. 36.

²⁸Lockwood, Colonial Furniture in America, p. 344; Warren, "Were the Guilford Painted Chests Made in Saybrook?," p. 5; Muriel L. Baker, "Decorated Furniture and Furnishings," The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 25: 3 (July 1960), p. 60; Fales, American Painted Furniture, p. 24; Kirk, Connecticut Furniture, pp. xi, xii and American Furniture and the British Tradition, p. 74.

significantly, materials for painting.²⁹ Guillam's ownership of French books also indicated a French-speaking heritage. While he alluded to similarities in construction between the Sunflower and Guilford chests in the 1958 article, Warren expanded upon this assertion in 1964. Illustrating Group I, Guilford, and Sunflower chests, Warren argued that they all were made within one tradition. He even argued for the probability that Group I and Guilford chests were made by the same person, or same two people-- one as builder, the other as decorator.³⁰

In 1977, Benno M. Forman discovered more information on Guillam's background. Through correspondence with a local historian, Mrs. Joan Stevens, Forman learned that Charles Guillam and his brother, Carteret, were born on the Channel Island of Jersey in 1671 and 1668 respectively. With Guillam's background identified, Trent has most recently expanded upon Guilford-chests scholarship by evaluating the evidence from a Guernsey paint-decorated chest (fig. 40). Although dated 1754, several decades after the production of Guilford chests, the Guernsey example points to established woodworking patterns from the area and, in its similarities to Guilford chests, reinforces the Guillam attribution.³¹

Although previous scholars have detected similarities among the three groups of chests, these connections have been based largely upon stylistic evidence. In addition to various catalogue entries, Schoelwer's research

²⁹Ethel Hall Bjerkoe, *The Cabinetmakers of America* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1957), pp. 102-104; Warren, "Were the Guilford Painted Chests Made in Saybrook?," pp. 8-10.

³⁰Warren, "Some Remarks on Connecticut Chests," p. 15.

³¹Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," pp. 84-87. Forman's findings are cited in Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," p. 75 and footnote 13.

provided construction details for the Sunflower chests.³² With few exceptions, specific construction features of Group I and Guilford chests have been absent from previous studies. Nor have scholars undertaken a comparative study of the three groups. A systematic investigation of the chests' construction features confirms earlier suspicions that there are relationships among the three groups and reveals that all were made within one shop tradition.

*

The following discussion draws on a representative sample of chests to indicate general patterns in construction. While Sunflower furniture consists of chests, cupboards, and boxes, this study focuses on the evidence from fifteen chests with two drawers.³³ For the Group I chests, all five known examples were examined. The Guilford chests appear in a variety of forms. In this study, two joined chests with one drawer, a chest of drawers, two board chests with one drawer, and the high chest were examined. Additionally, construction photographs for a third joined chest with one drawer were available. While the woods and drawers from all these objects were used as evidence, the determination of practices unique to the joined chests with one drawer naturally have been limited to the three such examples. Also, the

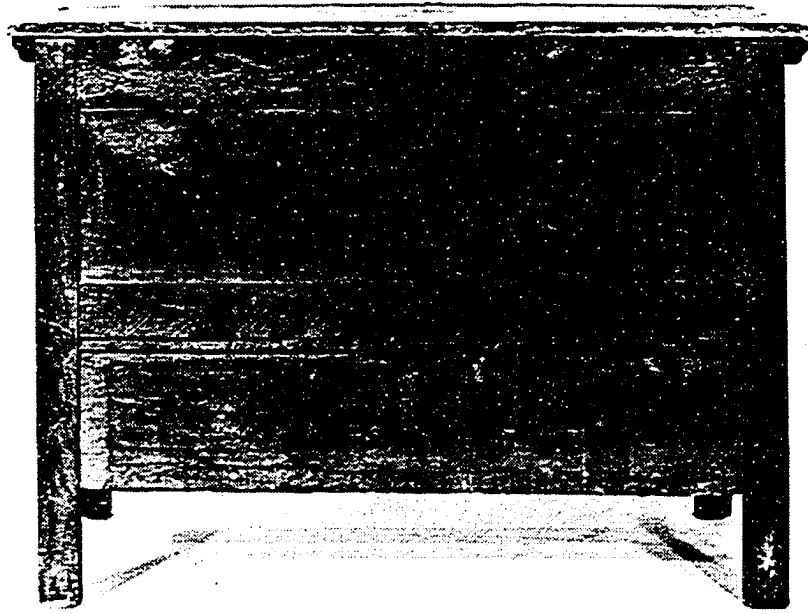
³²For construction notes, see especially, Ward, American Case Furniture, pp. 90-95. Schoelwer's unpublished paper, "Sunflower Chests and Cupboards: Refractions on the Seventeenth Century," (1988) contains more information on construction than her published article. The author is grateful for Ms. Schoelwer's providing a copy.

³³With different construction needs, cupboards and boxes have been excluded from the core group as they are less comparable to the Group I and Guilford chests. The drawerless chest also has been excluded because the absence of a drawer precludes a comparison on several key features. One-drawer chests, though comparable, are rare and the only example examined was extensively re-worked.

textual discussion emphasizes general patterns found among the chests. Some variations are noted, but for a complete listing, the reader should refer to the tables at the end of the text.

The construction techniques employed in the Sunflower, Group I, and Guilford chests represent a continuum of workmanship that evolved over time. In the most hidden areas, the joinery remains consistent, establishing that the chests' makers trained in a common tradition. The evolution of the tradition is evident in the more visible areas. Although most noticeable in the decorative treatments, change occurs in the woods used and in the joinery of the drawers. While all the chests are manifestations of the Sunflower tradition, the Group I and Guilford chests also point to the influence of another tradition. Peculiar scratch marks, used as woodworking devices, are found on the Group I and Guilford chests as well as one chest from another tradition. These scratch marks attest to the work of one joiner, or one joiner and his apprentices, who trained in two traditions.

The two areas where the joinery techniques are consistent among the chests are the backboards and the bottoms of the chest section (tables 1 and 2). The backboards consist of two boards. The top backboard was beveled on all four edges and framed between the rear stiles, the top rear rail, and the medial rear rail. The bottom backboard was beveled on the side edges only and slid underneath the protruding ends of the boards used for the bottom of the chest section and the medial rail (fig. 5a). The grooves holding the bottom backboard extend through the ends of the feet; none of the chests have a bottom rail. This joining practice rendered the bottom panel susceptible to



5a. Backboards, usual method. Image of Guilford chest #10.
(photograph, courtesy of The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, and
obtained through DAPC)



5b. Backboards, variation. Image of Group I chest #6.

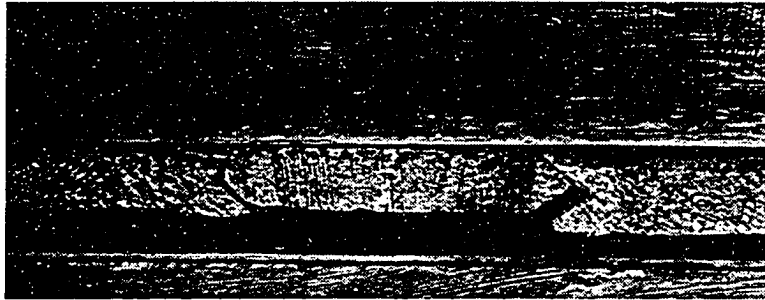
Figure 5: Backboards in the Group I tradition.

slipping--a weakness in construction most evident in those chests that have bottom backboards near the ground.

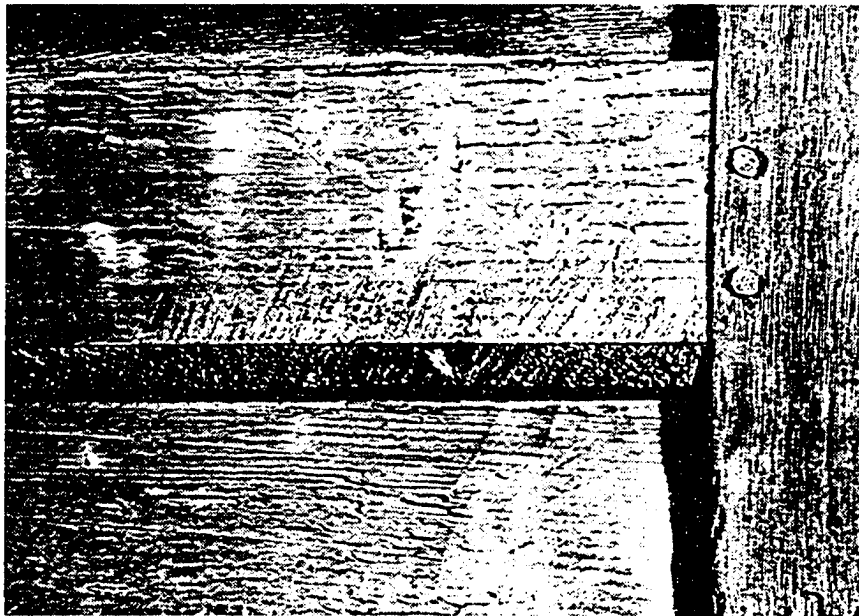
One Sunflower chest and two Group I chests have bottom backboards joined in a different manner. Sunflower chest #19 and Group I chests #6 and #11 have bottom boards nailed over the stiles and rear medial rails (fig. 5b).³⁴ While this practice could indicate a slight variation within the tradition, it is likely that the bottom boards originally were joined in the typical manner. These chests also have grooves running the entire length of their rear stiles, suggesting that these exceptions are later repairs. Because of the weak construction, the lower backboards may have slipped completely out from under the chests and required replacements.

The bottom of the chest section typically consists of three boards placed with their grain running from front to rear, beveled on the front and extreme sides, and fitted into grooves in the rails of the front and sides (tables 1 and 2). The boards are joined to each other by V-joints that are most easily discerned from the rear (fig. 6a). The Sunflower chests usually display the following configuration: two wider boards on the sides and a slightly narrower board in the middle. Group I and Guilford chests tend to have three boards of equal length. Group I chest #1 has four boards, a practice found on only one Sunflower chest--chest #19. The use of five narrow boards in Group I chest #6 is undoubtedly linked to its use of oak in this section as wide boards of knot-free oak were less plentiful than pine equivalents.

³⁴The rear of four Sunflower chests were inaccessible, so there may be more than one exception from this group (see table 1).



6a. V-joints in boards of the bottom of the chest section.
Image of Sunflower chest #3.



6b. Corresponding saw-marks on the rear medial rail and end grain
of the bottom of the chest section. Image of Sunflower chest #25.

Figure 6: Bottom of the chest section in the Group I tradition.

The boards for the bottom of the chest sections protrude through the back and frequently were sawn flush with the rear after being placed in the carcass of the chest. Corresponding saw-marks on the end grain of the boards for the bottom of the chest section and the rear medial rail indicate this practice (fig. 6b).³⁵ The presence of this feature allows for some insight into the mentality of the joiner. Rather than carefully measuring each board, a time-consuming practice, the maker or makers of these chests chose to approximate the board size and, when necessary, made adjustments. These approximations reveal a concern for efficiency in early production. The saw-marks are present on nine Sunflower chests, two Group I chests, and two joined Guilford chests with one drawer (tables 1 and 2).

The woods used in the chests exhibit a gradual incorporation of lighter woods. Excepting applied decoration, the Sunflower and Group I chests are made exclusively of oak and pine (table 3). The oak was riven and the pine members mill-sawn. In the Sunflower chests, oak was used for the most visible areas, namely the stiles, rails, muntins, front and side panels, and drawer fronts. The drawer sides, too, are oak; because the drawers are side-hung, the thickness and strength of oak were needed to accommodate the groove and support the drawer. Pine was used in less visible areas: the backboards, bottom of chest section, drawer bottom, and drawer back. The lid, in some cases, is the only highly visible board made of pine.³⁶

For the most part, Group I chests use oak and pine in the same places as the Sunflower chests and the variations that occur are most likely a result of

³⁵The author is grateful to Kevin M. Sweeney for pointing out this feature.

³⁶Some chests have oak lids.

the painted decoration or the availability of woods. As indicated by table 3, variation occurs in the woods used for the front and side panels, with the Sunflower chests and Group I chests #2 and #6 using oak boards and the others using pine. With its smoother grain, pine is the more suitable wood for painted decoration. Chest #2's carved decoration, found on its two outer front panels, accounts for its use of oak. Chest #6, in addition to using oak on its front and side panels, is also the only chest to use oak in its boards for the bottom of the chest section. This choice may reflect the preferences of a particular shop or the availability of wood in a certain region, in which case one would have to conclude that chest #6 was made by a different shop. It is possible, however, that the choice was determined by simple day-to-day variations in wood availability. With this reasoning, chest #6 could have been made in the same shop, or even by the same maker, who happened to have more oak or less pine in stock on the days on which chest #6 was made. The same conclusions can be drawn for the use of pine in the drawer front and drawer sides in chest #1.

A trend toward greater emphasis on painted decoration is evident in the choice of woods used in the joined Guilford chests with one drawer (table 3). Apart from Guilford chest #7's use of oak in its drawer sides, the only members made of oak are the rails and stiles, which, as the structural framework of the chest, needed that wood's strength and durability. The most visible areas, and those receiving the greatest painted decoration, were made of tulip. The frontal plane, consisting of a panel and drawer front, are also tulip. The paint-decorated side panels, however, are pine. Just as pine

was better suited than oak to receive paint, so tulip has a finer grain and smooth surface preferred for the highly visible, frontal planes.

It is possible that the use of tulip reflects a response to local conditions. Tulip, or whitewood as it was called during the period, grew in abundance along the Connecticut shore.³⁷ That several Guilford and two Group I chests have coastal provenances, yet only the Guilford chests use tulip, indicates a development of the shop tradition not wholly related to local circumstances. Furthermore, tulip's consistent presence in the frontal planes and absence in the sides of the Guilford chests, indicates that deliberate choices were being made--and that for the primary presentation surfaces, tulip was consistently chosen over pine.

The Guilford chests made with board construction go so far as to eliminate oak completely. Not dependent upon stiles and rails for their framework, the board examples did not need to use such a heavy and cumbersome wood as oak. Made entirely of tulip and pine boards, they are held together by rabbet joints and nails (table 3).

The change of woods used in the drawers is directly connected to the evolution of the drawers' support system (table 4). The Sunflower and Group I chests have side-hung drawers. That is, their drawers run on supports nailed to the interior of the chest that fit into channels in the drawer sides. To accept the weight of the drawer and contain a sufficient channel, the drawer sides are made of thickly riven oak.³⁸ Although the widths of the boards for the drawer sides from each group are similar, the Sunflower chests

³⁷Trent, catalogue entry, *New England Begins*, vol. II, p. 301.

³⁸Except Group I chest #1, which has pine drawer sides.

tend to have drawer sides within 1/16" of 1" or wider whereas those of the Group I chests are within 1/16" of 1" or narrower. The drawer bottoms are beveled on the front and sides, fitting into grooves in the drawer front and are nailed to the underside of the sides and back. The drawer bottoms and backs are made of pine (figs. 7, 8a,b).

A slight change in the joined Guilford chests paved the way for greater change in the board chests. The joined one-drawer Guilford chests' drawer bottoms fit into grooves in the sides, as well as the front (fig. 8c). While this practice would have allowed the drawer to run smoothly on the underside of the sides, the drawers still are side-hung and run on drawer supports contained inside the chest. The joined Guilford chest-of-drawers also is side-hung and its drawer bottom fits into grooves in the sides. However, in its two larger drawers, the bottoms fit into rabbets, not grooves, in the drawer front. Despite their drawers being side-hung, the joined Guilford chests tend to have drawer sides made of tulip. As such, the makers reveal a preference for a lighter wood, sacrificing the strength of oak. This change is not clear-cut between the Group I and Guilford chests. Group I chest #1 has pine drawer sides and Guilford chest #7 has oak drawer sides. Possibly explained by day-to-day variations in the availability of wood, these exceptions suggest that the progression toward lighter construction was uneven. The move toward lighter drawer construction also is evident in the support system of the Guilford board chests. Like the joined Guilford chests, the board examples have their drawer bottoms grooved into its sides, but, unlike the joined examples, their drawers run along the underside of their sides (fig. 8d). This type of support system allowed for the utilization of thinner boards for the

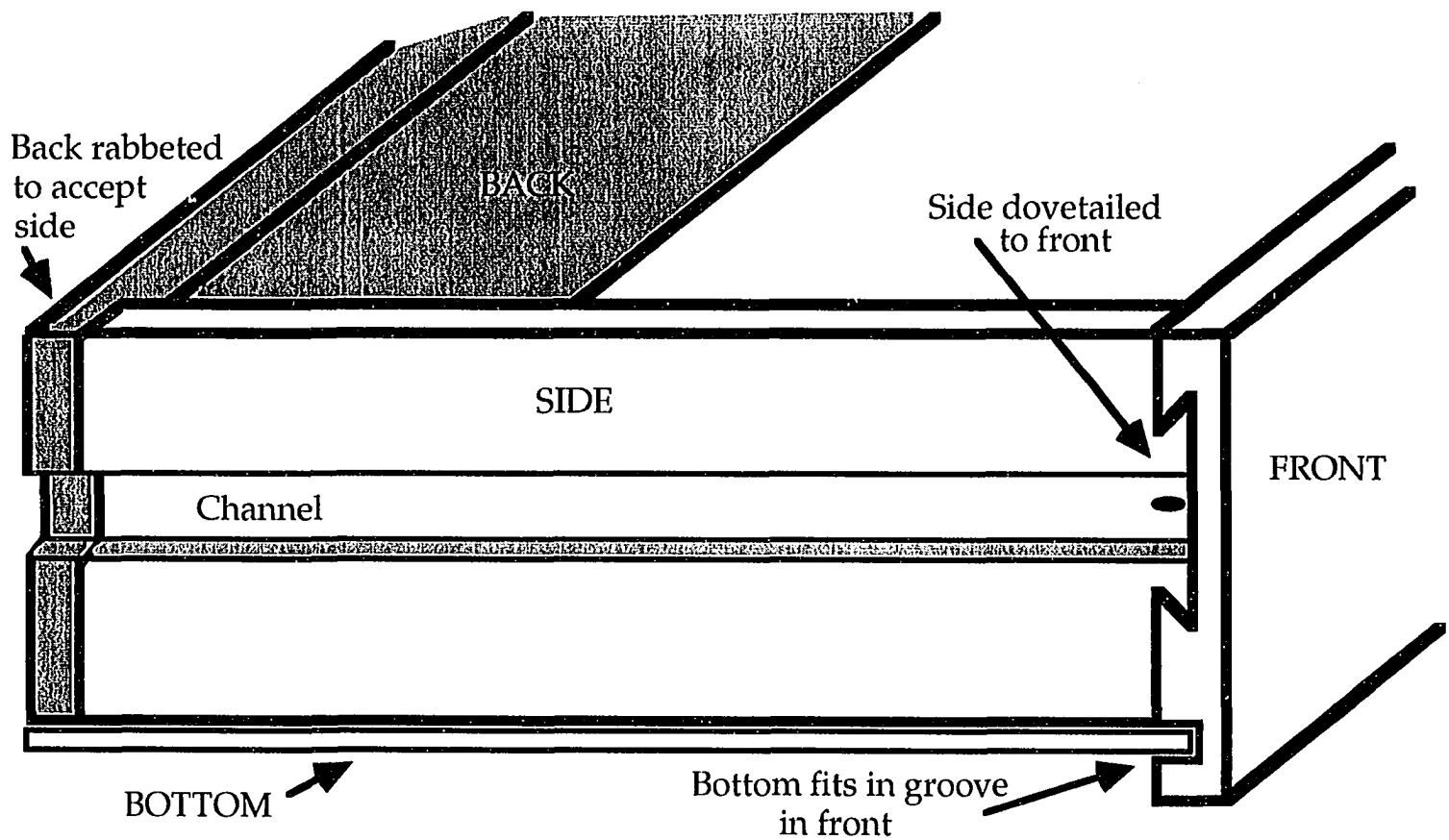
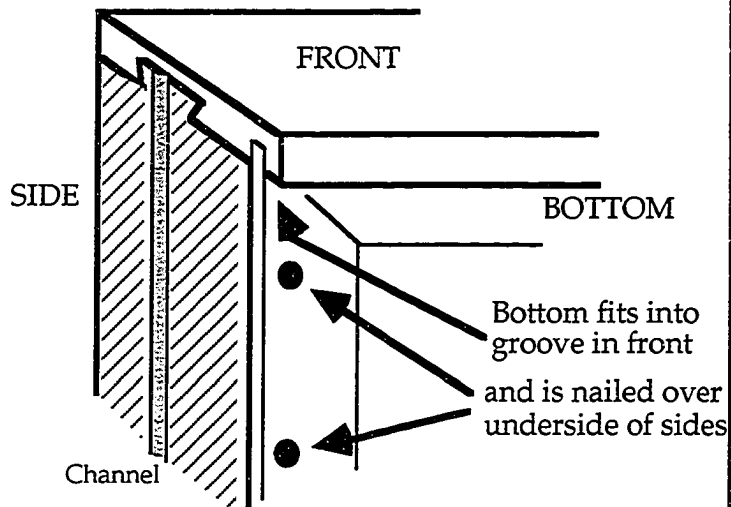


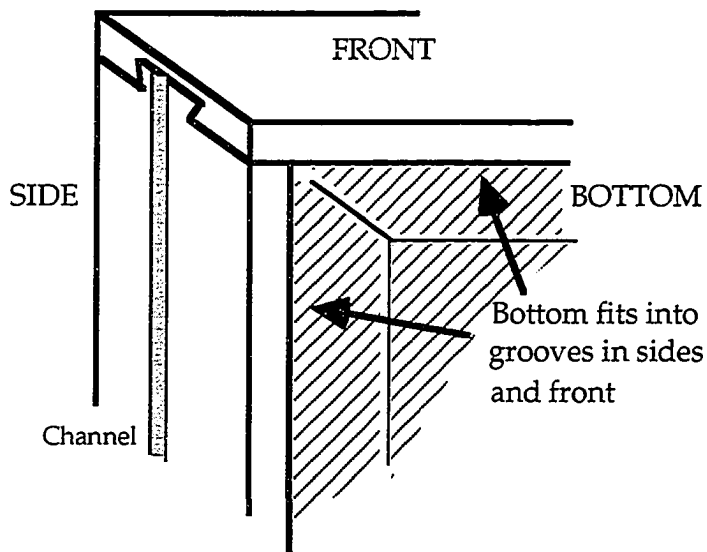
Figure 7: Drawer construction of Group I chests.



8a. Sunflower and Group I chests (dovetail appears only on Group I chests).



8b. Image of Sunflower chest #3.



8c. Guilford chests (channel appears only on Guilford joined chests).



8d. Image of Guilford chest #2.

Figure 8: Joining of drawer bottoms in the Group I tradition.

drawer sides, an advantage when cutting dovetails because it is much quicker to chisel out the dovetails on thin boards than on thick ones.

The incorporation of dovetails in the drawers is the most significant feature in the development of the shop tradition (table 4). The use of the more complex joints in the drawers suggests the awareness of cosmopolitan woodworking techniques. In Sunflower chests, the drawer sides are joined to the drawer fronts and backs with simple rabbet joints held in place with nails (fig. 9a). Both T-nails, or brads, and rosehead nails were used, with the latter often countersunk. Group I chests, however, use one dovetail in the drawer side and drawer front (figs. 7, 9b). Scholars have ascribed the use of dovetails in seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century American furniture to the influence of London-trained craftsmen.³⁹ The presence of dovetails on Group I chests shows that their maker, in contrast to the maker or makers of the Sunflower chests, either were more influenced by the London practices in New Haven or came from an area with recent immigrant woodworkers. While immigrants in New England were largely from England, the dovetails could also point to the influence of non-English joiners who arrived in America either via London or directly from Continental Europe.

The greater use of dovetails in the Guilford chests and Group I chest #2, suggests a greater familiarity with dovetailed construction. The joined chest-of-drawers and the high chest have drawers of greater height than the one-drawer examples and for these drawers, two dovetails were used (fig. 9c).

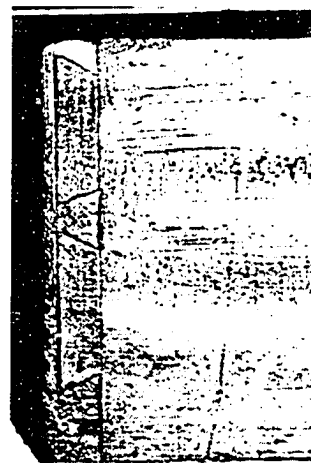
³⁹Trent, "Furniture in the New World: The Seventeenth Century," American Furniture with Related Decorative Arts, p. 34 and Benno M. Forman, "Urban Aspects of Massachusetts Furniture in the Late Seventeenth Century," Country Cabinetwork and Simple City Furniture, John D. Morse, ed. (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia for the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1970), p. 16.



9a. Rabbit joint in Sunflower chests.
Image of Sunflower chest #3.



9b. One-dovetail joint in Group I chests. Image of Group I chest #6.



9c. Two-dovetails joint in some Guilford chests. Image of Guilford chest #2.

Figure 9: Drawer joints in the Group I tradition.

Additionally, all Guilford examples have dovetails joining not only the drawer sides to the fronts, but also the drawer sides to the backs.

Group I chest #2's use of dovetails to join the bottom drawer back to the sides is the single instance of this practice amongst the Group I chests. Its top drawer is joined in this location with a rabbet joint and the discrepancy between the two drawers also includes the top drawer's use of oak and the bottom drawer's use of pine for the drawer backs. These differences could suggest that one drawer is a "fake."⁴⁰ Countering these differences, however, is the presence of identical woodworking marks, or scratches, on all four exterior drawer sides, as discussed below. If the drawers were made simultaneously, their differences point to the unsteady process of evolution. Alternatively, if the drawers were made at different times, one may have been a slightly later replacement or they may have originally been made for different objects, but by the same maker or same shop.

A further instance of greater, or more time-consuming, workmanship in the Guilford chests is the construction of the drawer bottoms and their placement within the drawer (table 4). The board Guilford chests' drawer bottoms are composed of two boards, instead of one, set with their grain running from side to side (fig. 8d). The two boards, a wider board in front with a narrower board in back, are joined together with a lap joint. With their bottoms in grooves in the front and sides and nailed only to the underside of the backs, the drawers of both the joined and board Guilford examples were less susceptible to cracking during the shrinkage process than

⁴⁰As discussed, the variation in woods may simply indicate circumstances contingent upon the availability of certain woods.

the Sunflower and Group I chests, which have drawer bottoms nailed to the sides and backs. The board examples use of two boards fitted without nails was an additional measure ensuring against this cracking.⁴¹ The cutting down of an extra board and adding lap joints, again, is evidence of the higher level of complexity seen in the Guilford board examples.

The patterns in construction demonstrate both continuity and adaptation within a single shop tradition. However, another shop tradition influenced the makers of the Group I and Guilford chests. On the exterior of the drawer sides of four of the five Group I and all the examined Guilford chests are scratch marks. These incised scratches assume the form of a vertical line near the drawer front and an arc extending from the top of the vertical line to the lower back corner (fig. 10). In all likelihood, the scratches were devices used by the maker to identify the outside of the drawer sides and their front, back, top, and bottom edges. In a shop with possibly multiple workers, this system ensured against construction errors. Such devices often are found on early American furniture, but distinctive marks such as these clearly indicate the practice of one maker, or more likely in this case, one shop in which a master's peculiar habit was emulated by his apprentices. None of the fifteen Sunflower chests with two drawers possessed these particular scratches, although several had a "v" shaped scratch on the middle top edge of the drawer side (table 1 and fig. 11). Thus, the scratches were learned outside of the Sunflower tradition.

⁴¹Philip Zea, "The Fruits of Oligarchy: Patronage and Joinery in Western Massachusetts, 1630-1730" (master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1984), pp. 63, 74.

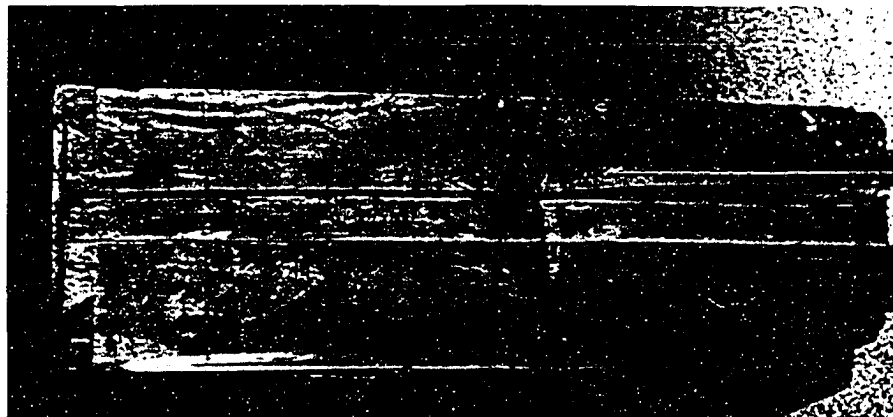
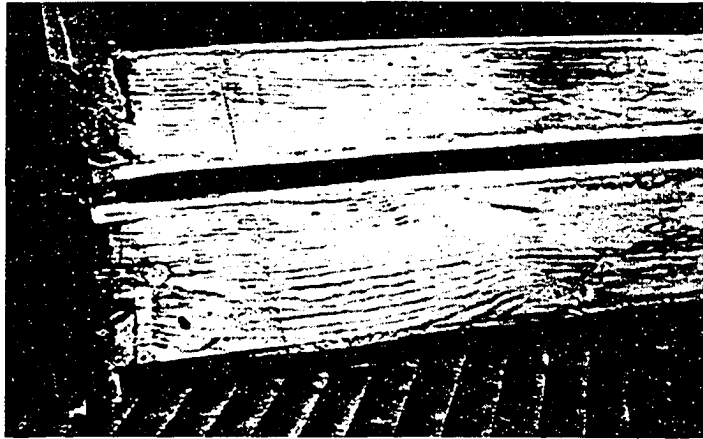
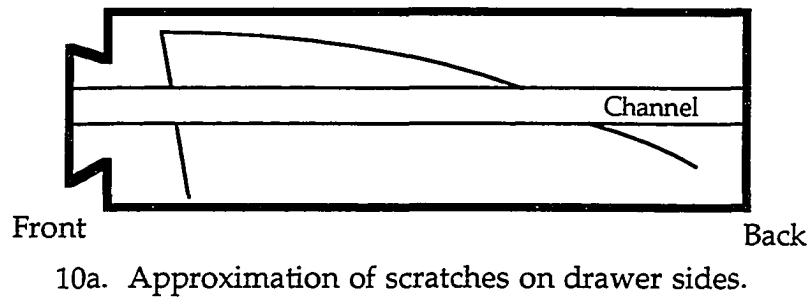


Figure 10: Scratch marks on drawer sides in Group I and Guilford chests.

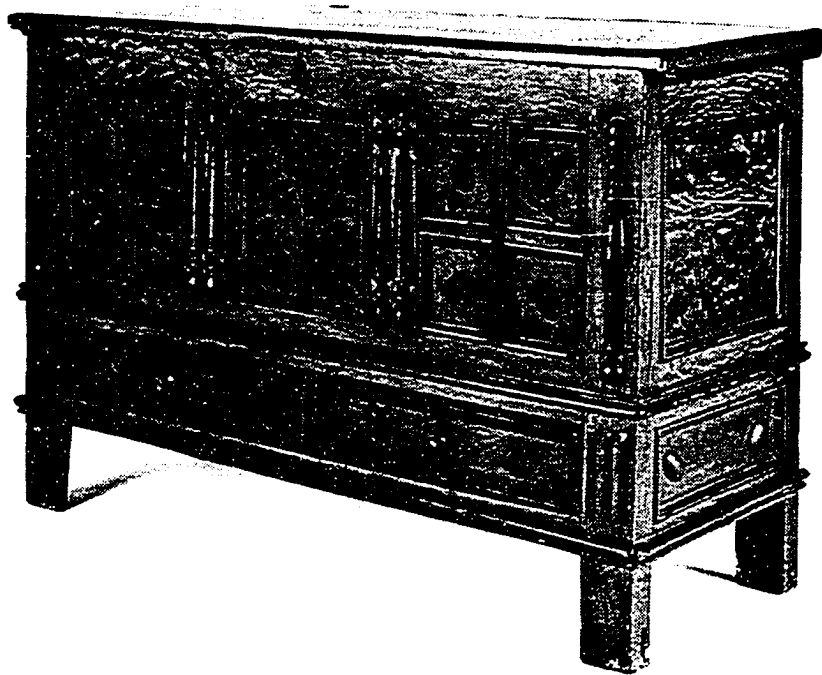


Image of Sunflower chest #16.

Figure 11: "V" scratch marks on drawer sides in Sunflower chests.

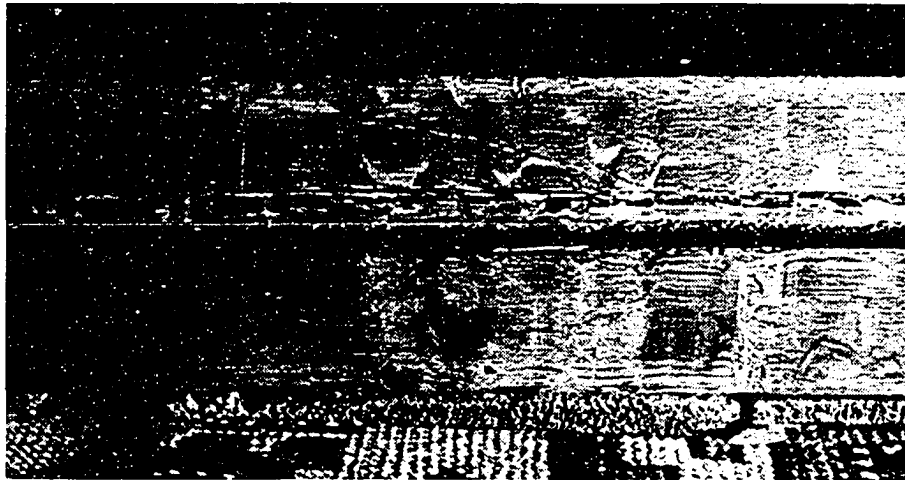
Their presence on a one-drawer chest related to, but clearly separate from, the Sunflower tradition offers a possible source for the particular scratches (fig. 12). The central carved panel is related only vaguely to the tulip panels seen on the Sunflower chests. Moreover, the side panels and triglyphs on the drawer are features not found on Sunflower chests, although they are similar to those found on Sunflower cupboards. Perhaps more indicative of a separate shop tradition are its deviations in construction from the uniform practices discussed above. Instead of two backboards, it only has a top backboard with no evidence of it ever having a lower backboard. The bottom of the chest section, although joined with V-joints, is made of oak and has five boards. Finally, although the drawer is otherwise joined in the Sunflower manner, the drawer bottom is composed of two boards connected with a spline joint, a feature not present on any of the groups already discussed.

The variations suggest that the makers of the Group I and Guilford chests learned their trade in two different shop traditions. Following the Sunflower chests' normative pattern of construction, the Group I and Guilford chests contain particular scratch marks that, based upon one example, appear to derive from a different tradition. In terms of construction, the only chest having more in common than the scratches with the variant Sunflower chest is Group I chest #6. Like the variant, its bottom of the chest section is made of five oak boards joined with V-joints. Also, the applied turnings on the stiles are closely related to those on Group I chest #2. Generally shaped like Sunflower examples, they are more attenuated (figs.



12a. View of front and side.

Private Collection. H: 31 1/2 W: 46 3/4 D: 17 9/16, without lid.
(photograph, courtesy of owner)



12b. Detail of drawer side, showing scratch marks.

Figure 12: Variant Sunflower chest and detail.

12b, 20).⁴² A possible explanation for the seemingly contradictory paths taken by the Group I and Guilford chests' makers may lie in the mobility of woodworkers. Perhaps trained in both shops, a particular joiner chose to follow the construction practices of one, and the woodworking devices of the other and passed this combination of learned practices on to his apprentices.

These marks are a form of artisanal shorthand and their retention represents the tenacity of workmanship. Their presence on the variant Sunflower, Group I, and Guilford chests shows that they remained fixed while other aspects of construction and decoration evolved. A key to understanding why certain features changed and others remained constant lies in the degree of their visibility. Features that were readily perceived by the larger society were more likely to undergo change as they were essential to representing an object's style. Barely discernible, the scratches played a role in the construction of the chests that was probably evident to the maker only. Similarly, derived from the Sunflower tradition, the backboards and the bottoms of the chest sections were also less likely to be observed by the chests' owners and users. As these features were not integral to a chest's fashionability, they were less influenced by the demands of the client. More visible construction features, such as the drawers, however, were subjected to the latest innovations. In turn, the area most apparent to the non-woodworker was the decoration and, hence, underwent the most dramatic change.

⁴²A third chest has similar turnings, but does not have either the Group I/ Guilford or "v" shaped scratch marks. Its construction deviates from both the Sunflower tradition and the variant example. See Kane, "The Seventeenth Century Case Furniture of Hartford County, Connecticut," p. 151 and Kirk, Connecticut Furniture, fig. 46, p. 28.

Decoratively, the chests exhibit greater variation, showing a faster rate of evolution than the construction. The Sunflower chest adheres to the seventeenth-century mannerist aesthetic, with carved and applied decoration tightly controlling its spacial organization. The Guilford chest, with bold paintwork, more closely resembles the baroque style. It is only through the Group I chests that their connection becomes apparent. A chronological survey of the Group I chests reveals a steady rejection of wooden decoration--that is, decoration created by the addition of wooden elements or by the carving or planing of existing members. In turn, the color palette and the vocabulary of motifs become more varied. These trends bridge the gap between the seventeenth-century and William and Mary styles and show the progression from compartmentalized space and three-dimensional decoration to open space and flat surfaces.

With its panels and turnings, the Sunflower tradition bears testimony to the strain of mannerism that combined carved and applied decoration (fig. 13). Trent identifies the origins of three separate waves of mannerism and their approximate times of arrival in England. The first, embodying all-over carving, originated in Italy and was introduced to England via Flanders by the 1520s. The second incorporated carved and applied ornament, had Flemish and French antecedents, and was present in England by the 1540s. The last strain, that of applied ornament only, had Hispanic origins and was transmitted to England by immigrant Dutch craftsmen in the 1580s-1590s.⁴³

⁴³Trent, "The Emery Attributions," Essex Institute Historical Collections 121: 3 (July 1985), p. 215.

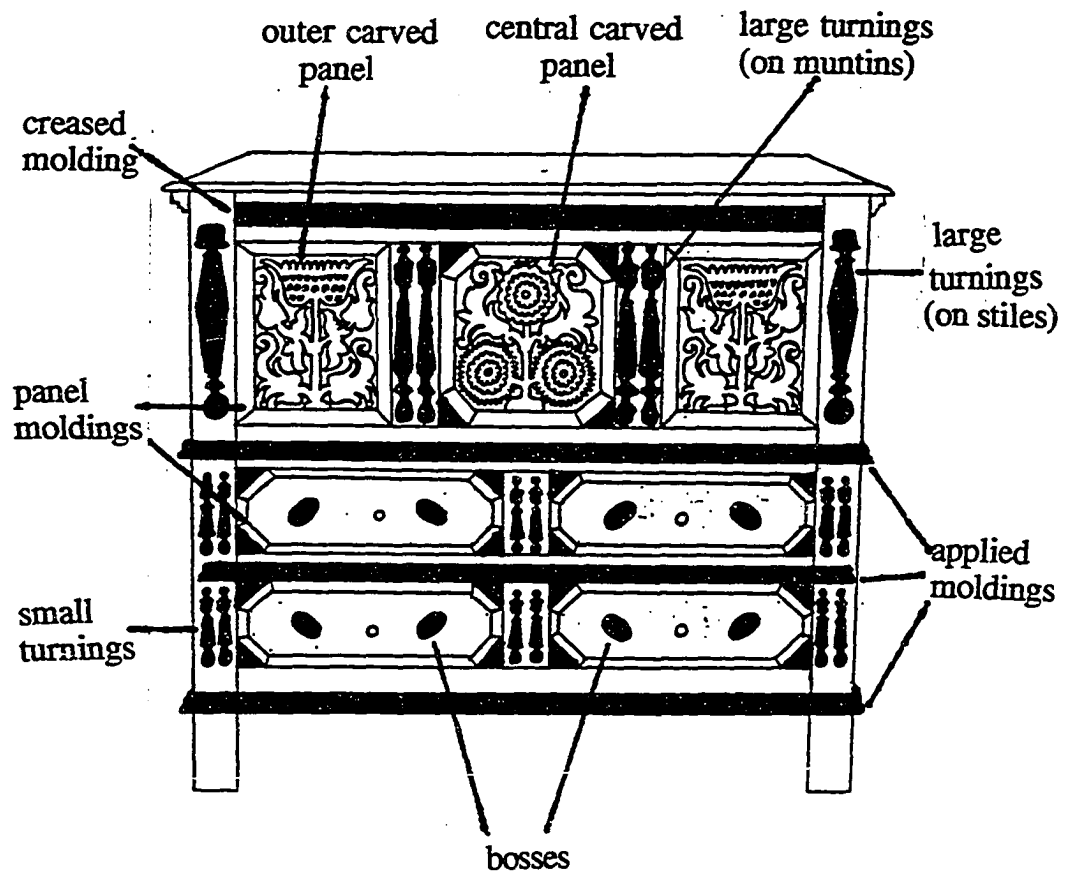


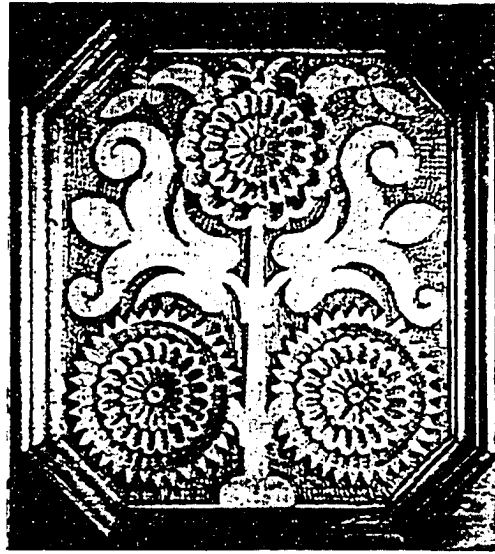
Figure 13: Placement of wooden ornament on Sunflower chests.

The Sunflower tradition, then, was a late manifestation of the second strain of mannerism, which, by the late seventeenth century, had been known in England for over a century.

Confined within three frontal panels, the floral carving manifests the tenets of mannerism. Typically, the central panel consists of three flowers, one atop a central stem, the other two projecting below on either side (fig. 14a). These flowers have been called sunflowers or asters, and, more recently, roses or marigolds. Secondary tulip-like flowers branch off the stem above and below the lower flowers. Some Sunflower chests contain initials in their central panels. These central panels consist of a circular spray of eight tulips encompassing usually two, but in one case, three initials (fig. 14b).⁴⁴ The outer panels, excepting minor variations caused by errors in workmanship, are identical within the same object. Generally, a large tulip surmounts a central stem, with secondary tulips, leaves, and occasionally thistles, branching off on either side. Variations among the chests include the form of the main tulip, the number of secondary branches, and the use of varying punches and gouges to highlight the motifs (fig. 15). Similar panels are found on the lower section of Sunflower cupboards, although they are more rectangular in shape. In each panel, the carving fills the entire spaces and is, save errors in execution, symmetrical. Thus, "tightly compressed, restricted, and balanced," the panels illustrate the mannerist penchant for exuberant, yet ordered decoration.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Three of the fifteen Sunflower chests examined have initials. They are: Chest #25 ("H W," fig. 19), Chest #7 ("D C"), and Chest #27 ("W/S R").

⁴⁵Kirk, *American Furniture and the British Tradition*, p. 75.

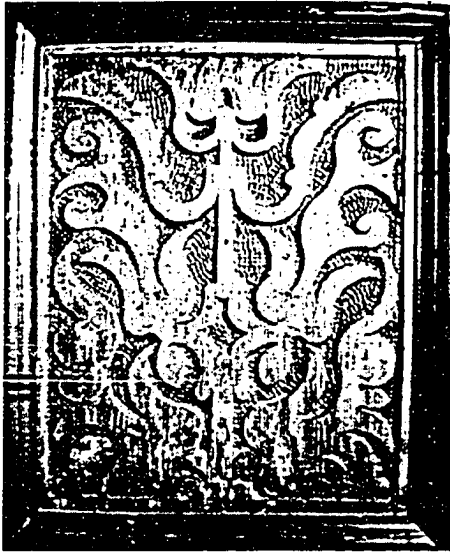


14a. Normal Pattern. Image of Sunflower chest #19.

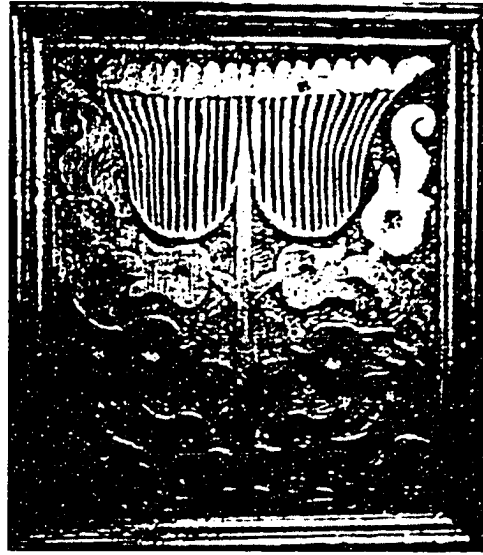


14b. Initialed Pattern. Image of Sunflower chest #25.

Figure 14: Central carved panels on Sunflower chests.



15a. Image of Sunflower chest #7.



15b. Image of Sunflower chest #16.



15c. Image of Sunflower chest #17.



15d. Image of Sunflower chest #19.

Figure 15: Outer carved panels on Sunflower chests.

The compartmentalization of space, somewhat defined by the rails, stiles, and muntins, was reinforced by applied turnings and applied and creased molding. Three types of applied turnings on the stiles and muntins emphasized the vertical divisions. The first type is composed of a ball under a column, which bulges sharply at its center, surmounted by an inverted cup, two of which appear on the upper front stiles of each chest (fig. 16a). The second has an ovoid base, over which a reel and tapering column support an urn and ball finial (fig. 16b). This type is applied to the front muntins, two pairs on each muntin. The last type is a smaller version of the second, placed in pairs on the lower front stiles next to each drawer, and on applied panels in the center of each drawer (fig. 16c). On chests with two drawers, twelve such turnings are found on each chest. Enhancing horizontal divisions, applied and creased molding run along the front and side rails. Applied molding is found on the front three lower rails and on the side medial and bottom rails. Usually, on the bottom rail and rail under the panels, the applied molding “wraps around” the side onto side rails, while the molding on the rail between the drawers is only frontal. Creased molding usually runs along the top front and side rails and down the side muntins (fig. 17).⁴⁶

Further division of space was created by the addition of panel moldings, panel inserts, and bosses. Applied to form octagonal shapes, panel moldings and inserts visually divided the drawers into smaller spaces, giving the illusion of four small drawers. Each apparent drawer had two bosses punctuating its center. Panel moldings were also applied around all the front

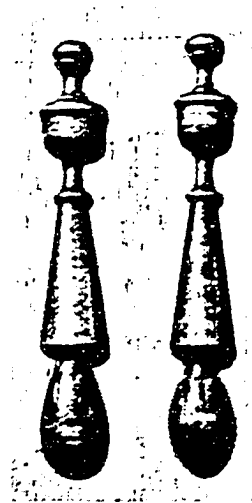
⁴⁶Exceptions to these patterns are as follows: Chest #34 has moldings applied to the front only, chest #16 has bosses on its front top rail, and chest #6 has applied moldings with semi-circular profiles.



16a. Large turnings on stiles. Image of Sunflower chest #34.



16b. Large turnings on muntins. Image of Sunflower chest #25.



16c. Small turnings. Image of Sunflower chest #2.

Figure 16: Applied turnings on Sunflower chests.



17a. Image of Sunflower chest #19.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Gift of Mrs. Russell Sage, 1909.
(photograph, courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, all rights reserved)



17b. Profile of applied molding. Image of Sunflower chest #3.

Figure 17: View of Sunflower chest showing ornament on front and sides and detail of applied molding.

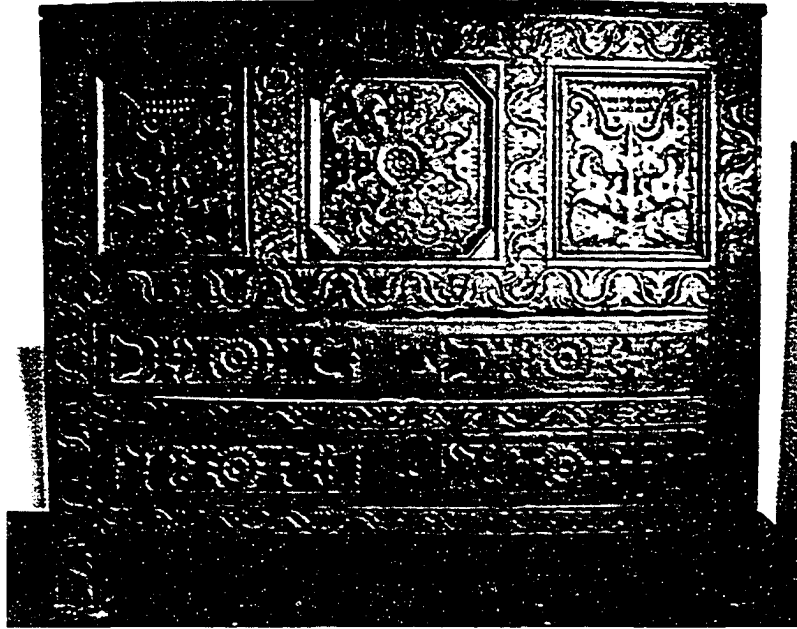
and side panels, with the central front panel and upper side panels in octagonal formation. Finally, two bosses punctuated the center of each upper side panel, occasionally surrounded by four small round, or “satellite,” bosses (figs. 13, 17).

Two Sunflower chests differ considerably from these practices (fig. 18). The surfaces of their stiles, rails, and drawer facades are carved, instead of receiving applied and turned ornament. The carving, consisting of vines with tulips and leaves, “trails” or “meanders” from one framing member to the next. In terms of construction, these chests are similar to each other and distinct from the others by having evidence for locking mechanisms for the drawers. Otherwise, the chests conform to standard Sunflower joinery.⁴⁷

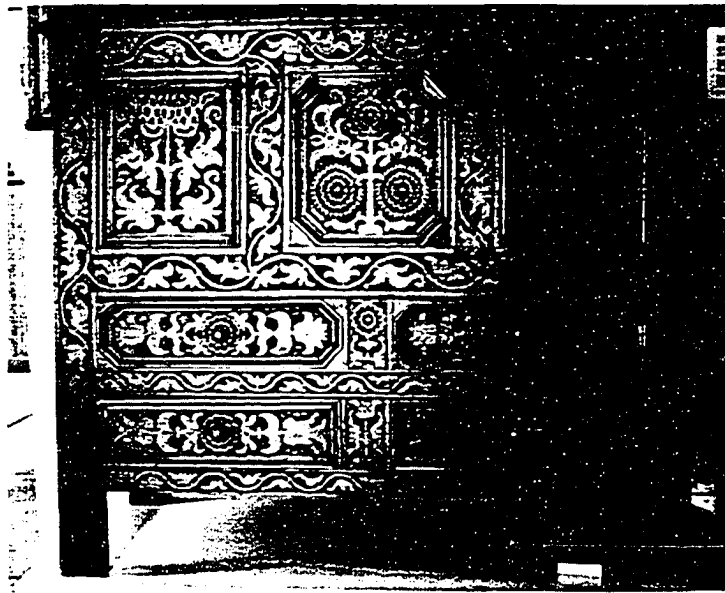
The use of contrasting paint colors made the decorative elements clearly stand out from the rest of the chest. Due to the fragility of paint and the frequent stripping by early restorers, only a few Sunflower chests retain their original paint today.⁴⁸ Paint analysis of one of these chests, chest #25, reveals much about the chest’s original appearance (fig. 19). Painted black in imitation of ebony, the turnings, moldings, and bosses once contrasted vividly with their red backgrounds. Black paint also was used on the bosses, panel inserts, and panel moldings. The panel moldings were painted an orange-red with black squiggly lines, possibly in emulation of snakewood or rosewood (fig. 19b). Paint analysis of the black pigments reveals that both lamp black and carbon black were used. Samples also stained positively for

⁴⁷See footnote 13.

⁴⁸Sunflower chests with original paint on their panel moldings are noted by Trent, catalogue entry, *American Furniture with Related Decorative Arts*, p. 39, footnote 7.

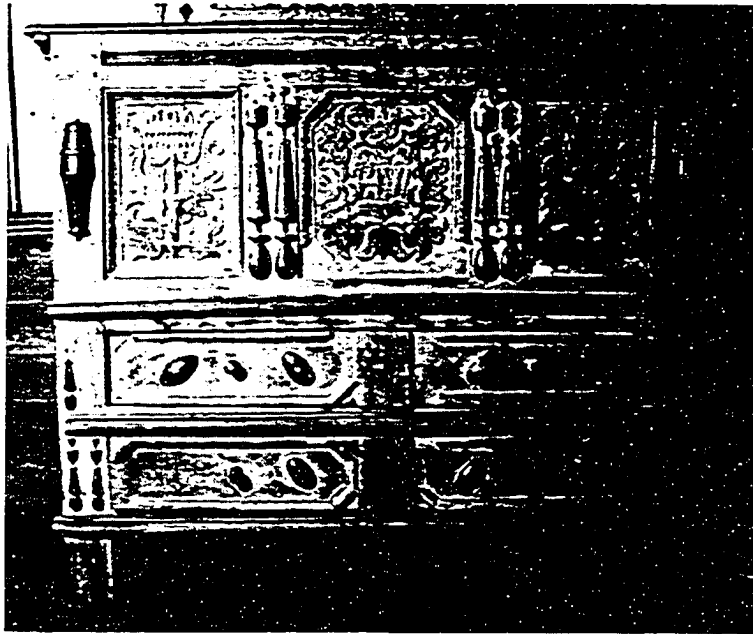


18a. Sunflower chest #17.
The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, 1849-13-0.

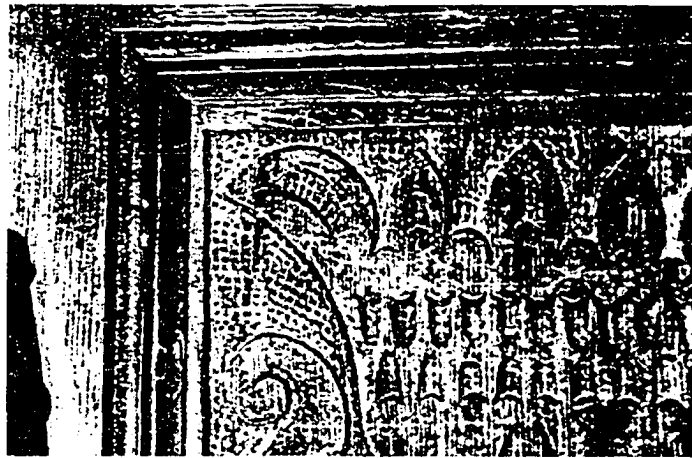


18b. Sunflower chest #26.
Historic Deerfield, Inc., Deerfield, MA, 1380.

Figure 18: Sunflower chests with all-over carving.



19a. Image of Sunflower chest #25.
Historic Deerfield, Inc., Deerfield, MA, 63-76.



19b. Detail, black "squiggly" lines on panel molding.

Figure 19: Sunflower chest #25 and detail of panel molding.

lipids, indicating the presence of an oil and plant resin binder, which, during the period, gave the chest a glossy, refractive appearance.⁴⁹

Hence, the paintwork essentially emphasized the wooden ornament. As such, the paint played an important yet secondary role in the Sunflower chests' decorative scheme. It is the shift toward paintwork providing the primary means of decoration that indicates the emergence of the William and Mary style. The shop tradition's move toward the new style did not comprise a severe break with the past. Instead, Group I chests show a gradual shift from wooden to painted decoration. One by one, the wooden devices used to exaggerate divisions in the Sunflower chests were discarded and greater emphasis was placed on open spaces with variegated color and motifs. All the Group I chests are dated, ranging from 1704 to 1706. Hence, it is possible to organize them chronologically and examine changes in decoration over two years.

The earliest Group I chest, #2, has wooden and painted decoration (fig. 20). Like the Sunflower chests, its outer front panels consist of carved tulips. However, the carving is less crisp, and the motifs do not fill the entire space, making the panels more "open" than the tightly compressed Sunflower examples. The chest has three types of applied decoration: turnings, panel moldings, and applied horizontal moldings. The central panel is painted with the date "APRIL 15th 1704" and the initials "A S" set between two stems of flowers. Although the age of the painted and carved panels has been

⁴⁹Paint analysis performed by Nancy McRaney Rosebrock as part of a project sponsored by the Kress Foundation at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities Conservation Center, Waltham, MA, 1993-4.

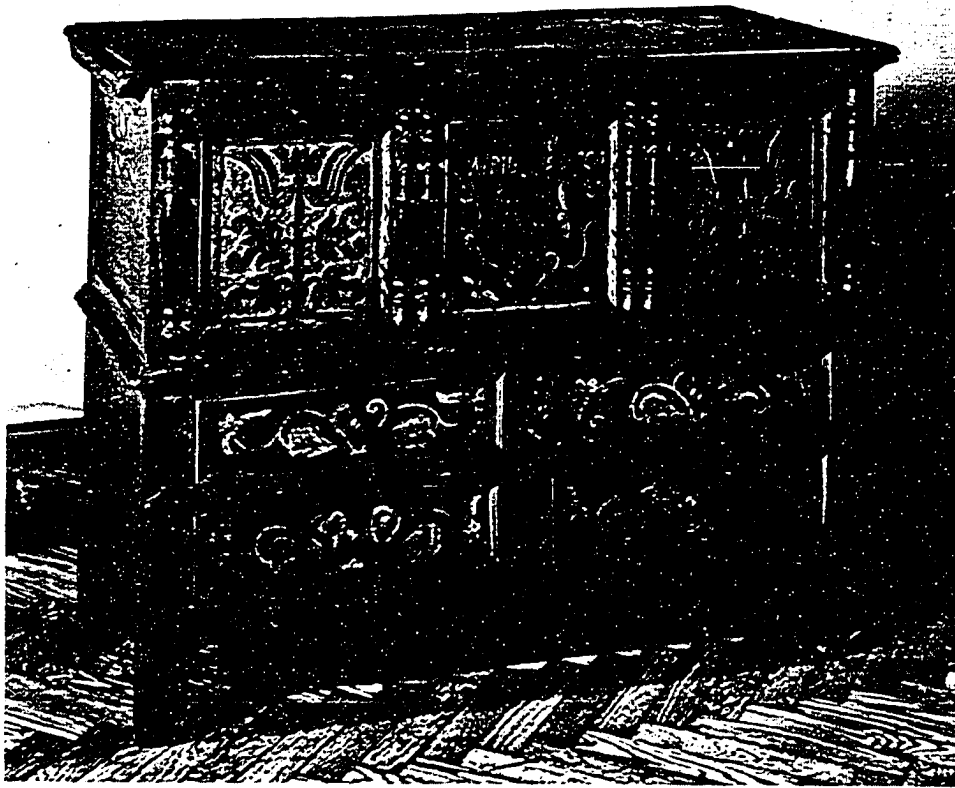


Figure 20: Group I chest #2.

The Art Institute of Chicago, Wirt D. Walker Fund, 1946.581.
(photograph ©1994, The Art Institute of Chicago. All Rights Reserved)

questioned, they should not be dismissed.⁵⁰ The carved panels are reminiscent of the open, less-surely executed panel on the variant Sunflower chest (fig. 12a), suggesting that rather than representing a “later hand” the panels on both chests were the work of a less-competent carver who worked in a less restricted style. Though the painted decoration on the drawers is clearly later, the central panel’s lettering is sufficiently similar to that on the other Group I chests to warrant its early date.⁵¹

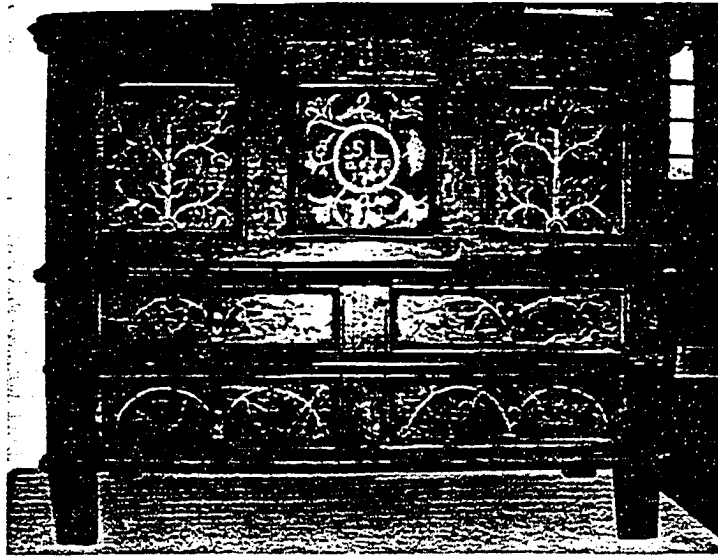
Without any carving or applied turnings, Group I chests #11 and #6 reveal the trend toward rejection of wooden ornament (fig. 21). They retain applied panel and horizontal moldings only, while making more use of painted decoration. Though the paint on chest #11 is clearly from the twentieth century, the modern decorator appears to have painted over an earlier design. The center panels contain initials and dates surrounded by a circular band and floral motifs: “S L/1704” (chest #11) and “E S/1704” (chest #6).⁵² The eight tulips on chest #6’s central panel are similar to the carved examples on those Sunflower chests with initials (fig. 14b).⁵³ Decoratively, the chests are further linked to the Sunflower tradition by the profiles of their horizontal moldings, which are similar to those on one Sunflower

⁵⁰Benno M. Forman questioned the age of the painted decoration; cited in Kirk, American Furniture and the British Tradition, p. 379, footnote 78.

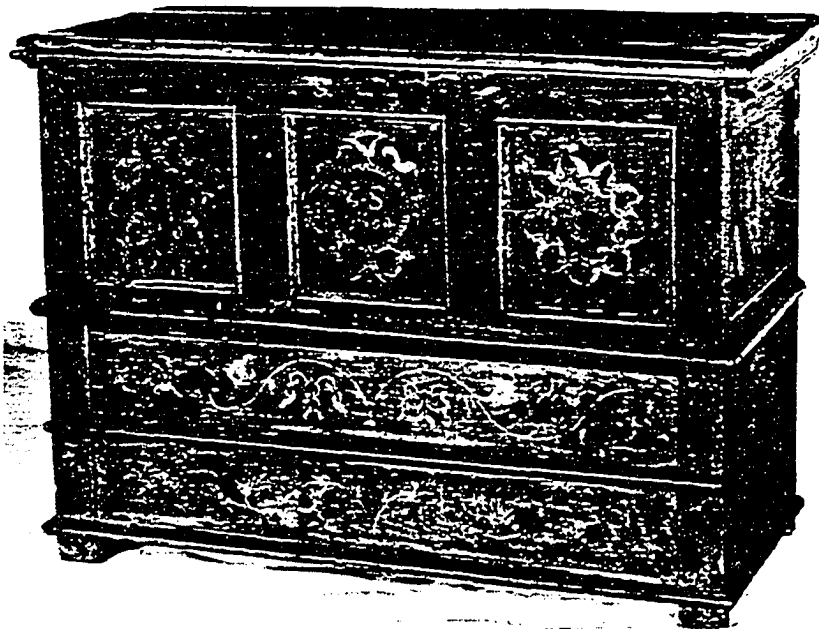
⁵¹The painted decoration on the drawers of chest #2 is similar to that on the side panels of chest #3, which may suggest the work of the same decorator in perhaps the nineteenth century.

⁵²Chest #11 also has the numbers 12 and 10 and indecipherable lettering between the initials and date.

⁵³Kirk, American Furniture and the British Tradition, p. 77.



21a. Group I chest #11.
East Hampton Historical Society, Long Island, NY.



21b. Group I chest #6.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA. Gift of Philip Spalding, Oakes Ames Spalding, and
Hobart Ames Spalding, 50.3786. (photograph, courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

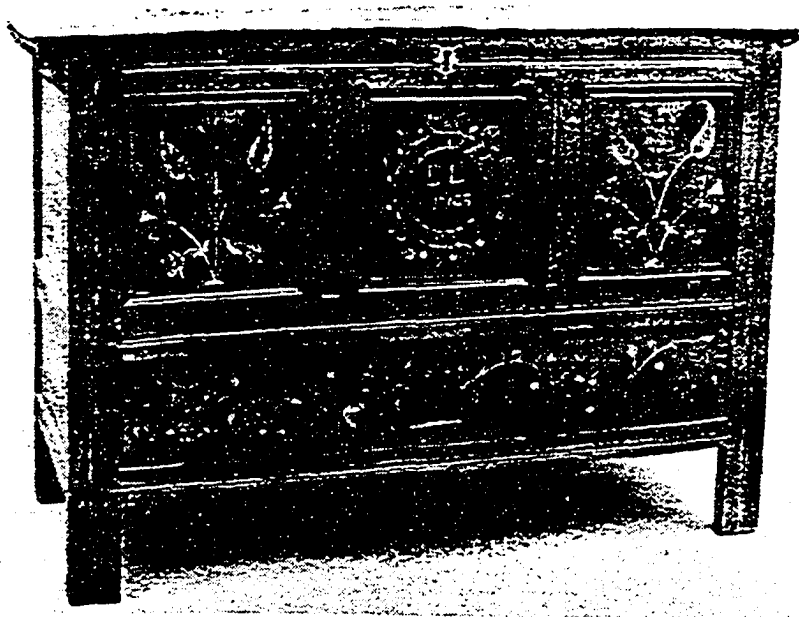
Figure 21: Group I chests #11 and #6.

example.⁵⁴ Chest #11 also conforms to the Sunflower tradition by dividing its two drawers vertically, giving the appearance of two pairs set side by side. Each “drawer” is painted with a central mound from which flow two symmetrical vines with flowers. Chest #6, like the later Group I chests and the Guilford chests, however, discards these divisions, and its floral decoration flows more openly across each drawer facade.

The final two chests exhibit further rejection of wooden ornament. Chest #3 has panel molding and, maybe partially as a replacement for applied turnings and horizontal molding, has creased molding on its stiles, rails, and muntins (fig. 22a). Chest #1 has only applied panel moldings for its wooden decoration (fig. 22b). Instead of linear decoration, such as turnings, the stiles and rails are covered uniformly in painted dots. Both chests have their original paint. The central panels consist of circular patterns enclosing initials and dates: “E L/ 1705” (chest #3) and “R S/ 1705/6” (chest #1). The outer panels of the chests contain a central thistle with secondary flowers and leaves, and resemble the tulip panels on Sunflower chests in their composition. These panels are almost identical and indicate the work of the same decorator.

The joined Guilford chests with one drawer continue the trend (figs. 23, 24a). They have no applied decoration and the only decorative features dependent upon the wood itself are the raised or fielded panels. Their frontal planes are composed of one panel, instead of three, enhancing the potential for open, less rigid, decoration. Though probably made concurrently with the joined chests, the board Guilford chests demonstrate the final stage in the

⁵⁴On Sunflower chest #6.



22a. Group I chest #3.

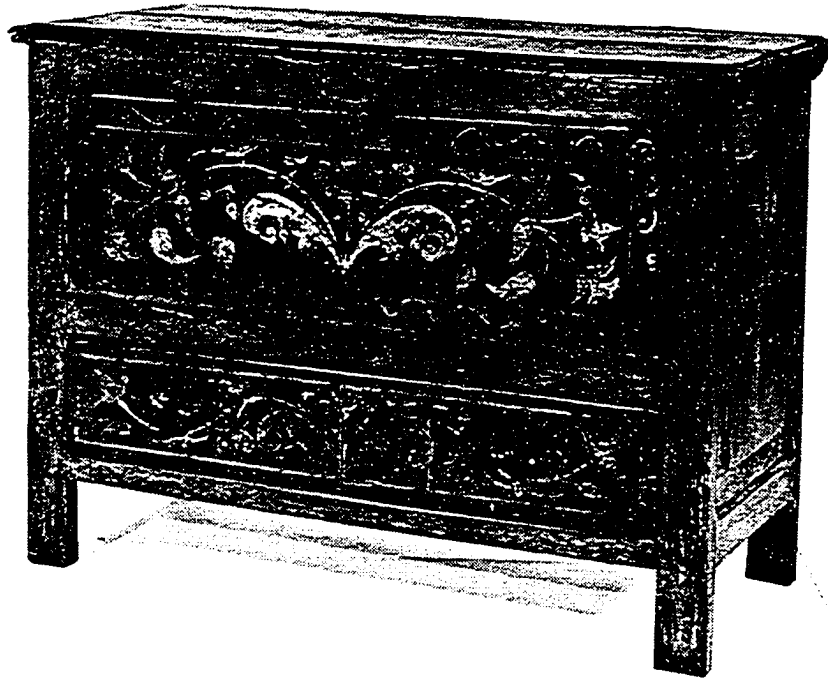
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Gift of Mrs. Russell Sage, 1909.
(photograph, courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, all rights reserved)



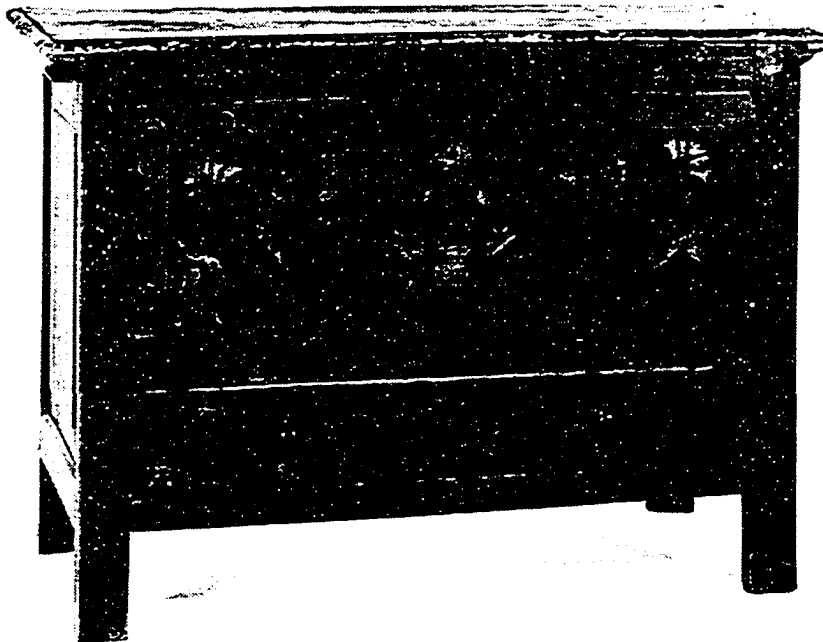
22b. Group I chest #1.

The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, 1945-1-1114. (photograph, courtesy of The
Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT)

Figure 22: Group I chests #3 and #1.

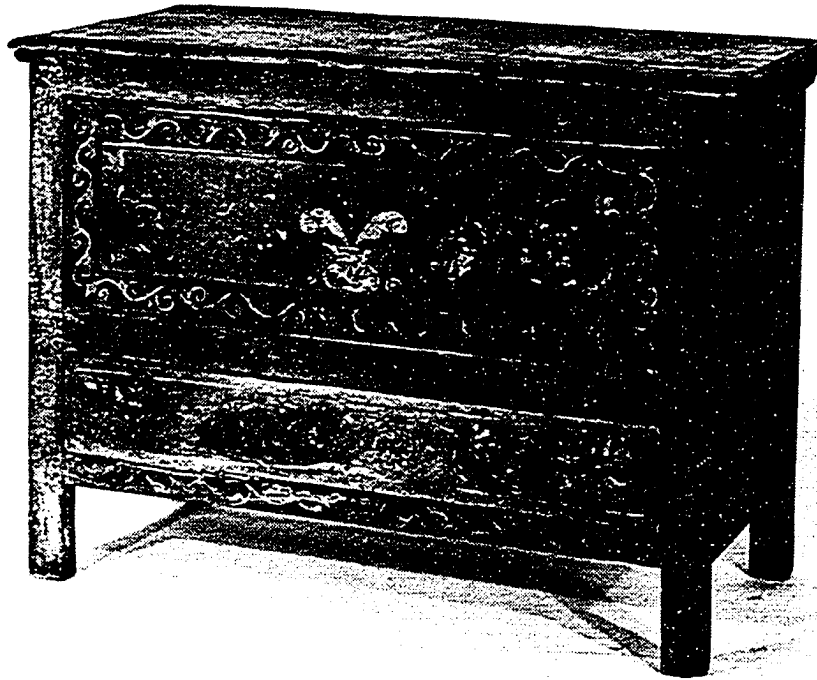


23a. Guilford chest #10. Owner unknown. (photograph, courtesy of The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT and obtained through DAPC)

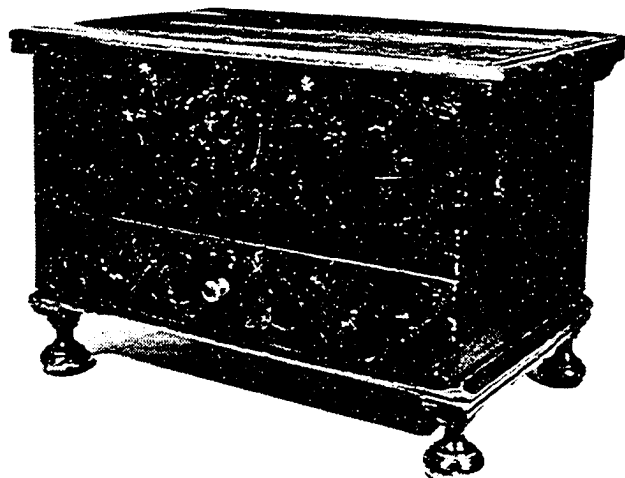


23b. Guilford chest #7. Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, Wethersfield, CT, 1973.2. (photograph, courtesy of The Connecticut Historical Society and obtained through DAPC)

Figure 23: Guilford joined chests with one drawer.



24a. Guilford joined chest #13. The Henry Whitfield Historical Society, Guilford, CT, 1916. (photograph, courtesy of The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, and obtained through DAPC)



24b. Guilford board chest #5. The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, DE, 58.571. (photograph, obtained through DAPC)

Figure 24: Guilford joined and board chests with one drawer.



Figure 25: Guilford joined chest of drawers, #1.
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT. The Wallace Nutting Collection,
gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1926.327.
(photograph, courtesy of the Wadsworth Atheneum)



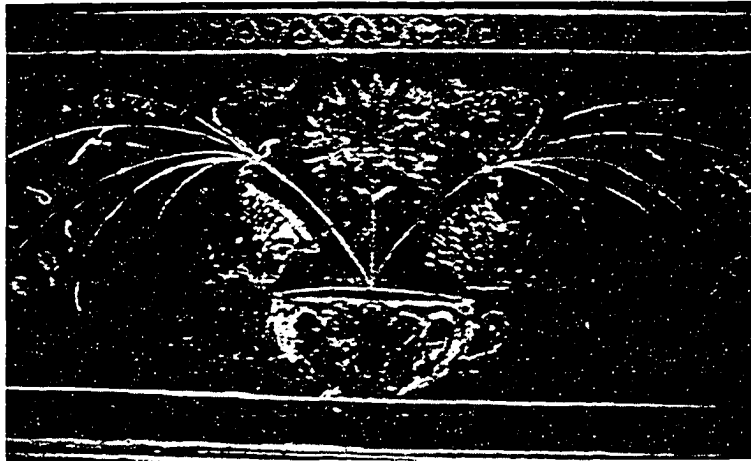
Figure 26: Guilford high chest, #2.
The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, DE, 57.1110.
(photograph obtained through DAPC)

development of the shop tradition (figs. 24b, 26). Because of their construction, there are no longer any stiles or rails to accentuate vertical and horizontal divisions. Variety in decoration is achieved entirely through the painted surfaces.

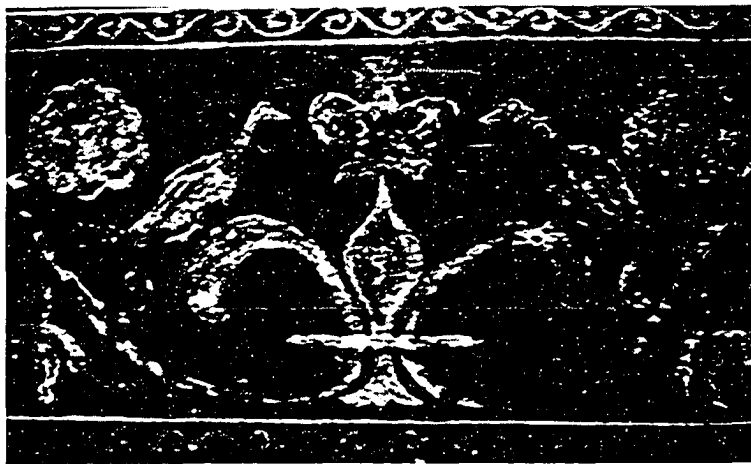
Together, the Guilford chests combine a variety of motifs, including tea tables or candlestands, birds, thistles, tulips, crowns, roses, caudle cups and, on the two chests of drawers, heads in profile spewing vines (fig. 27). At the same time, the color palette included a number of colors--expanding significantly beyond the contrast of red and black seen in the Sunflower chests. Paint analysis of two of the Guilford chests reveals that their original appearances were bright and colorful (Guilford chests #2 and #5). Both chests contained white lead, vermilion (red), copper green, while the high chest also had orpiment (yellow) and possibly Prussian blue. All the pigments were suspended in oil binders, enhancing the pigments' already vivid colors. Additional information obtained through such examination revealed that the decorator of Guilford chest #5 laid out the design in a charcoal or bone-black pigment, before adding the colors.⁵⁵

The painted style of the Guilford chests varies, with the style evident in figs. 23, 24a, 25, and 26 predominating. The board chest with one drawer (fig. 24b), with more delicate work, represents another style (see Appendix B for a listing of variations). The presence of the same scratch marks on chests with different stylistic decoration indicates that, for the six examples examined, one

⁵⁵Paint analysis for Guilford chest #5 was performed by Richard Wolbers, "Compositional Analysis: Report No. 1854," Unpublished report, Conservation files, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1986. That for Guilford chest #2 was performed by Wendy Samet, Richard Wolbers, and Janice Carlson, "Compositional Analysis: Report No. 3337," Unpublished report, Conservation files, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1994.



27a. Center of third drawer.



27b. Center of fourth drawer.

Figure 27: Decorative details of Guilford chests.
Images of Guilford chest of drawers, #1.

shop or maker constructed the chests while at least two separate people decorated them. Further investigation of the presence of the scratch marks on the other Guilford chests could assist in ascertaining the numbers of workmen involved.

The discontinuity in decoration between the Sunflower chests and Guilford chests did not involve a sharp break in decoration methods. Instead, the Group I chests attest to a process whereby change was gradually introduced. Though the Group I chests reveal a linear progression, the process of decorative change probably was more irregular. In addition to two of the chests' having questionable painted decoration and hence, possibly inaccurate dates, it is highly likely that other chests existed in this group, but have not survived or are not known today. These chests may or may not have adhered to the consistent replacement of wooden ornament with painted decoration. Also, the production of Sunflower chests may have overlapped that of the Guilford chests. With the participation of multiple woodworkers, the shop tradition flourished in different shops at the same time, the master joiner possibly continuing to produce chests in the older style while his apprentices incorporated and substituted elements of the latest.

Although embodying drastic stylistic change, the shop tradition proceeded from one style to the next without the involvement of a completely new set of artisans. Those who introduced change in decoration did so gradually, and, as the construction section demonstrates, relied greatly upon the habits of the past. This shop tradition thus supports the contention that the William and Mary style was not alienated from its predecessor and

points to considerable continuity over time.⁵⁶ Rather than indicating upheaval, the move toward a new style grew out of an established tradition.

*

In America, Sunflower-furniture production flourished in central Connecticut under a group of artisans in close communication with one another; the Group I and Guilford chests represent an off-shoot of this tradition along the coast. The maintenance of fundamental construction techniques and, for the Group I and Guilford chests, scratch marks, indicates that individuals transported the habits of one region to another and provides a framework from which to re-evaluate the attributed makers and postulate additional possibilities. Additionally, beyond offering clues for identifying specific makers, the shop tradition's preservation of certain habits in the face of change over space attests to its strength as well as to the forces of continuity in early society.

Taken as a group, the Sunflower chests exhibit a remarkable degree of consistency; a discussion of one feature exemplifies this uniformity. Not fully discussed in the above section is the pattern in which the grooves extended through the ends of the stiles. Requiring grooves in the rear for the backboards and in the sides and front for the panels, the joiner had the option of planing a groove through the end of the stile or of stopping it immediately after the final board or rail. The former practice required less work, as the joiner could simply plane through the entire stile, instead of finishing it

⁵⁶For a similar argument, see Trent, "The Early Baroque in Colonial America: The William and Mary Style," American Furniture with Related Decorative Arts, p. 63. Trent specifically contests Forman's assertion that the William and Mary style was a "major stylistic, formal, and technological watershed."

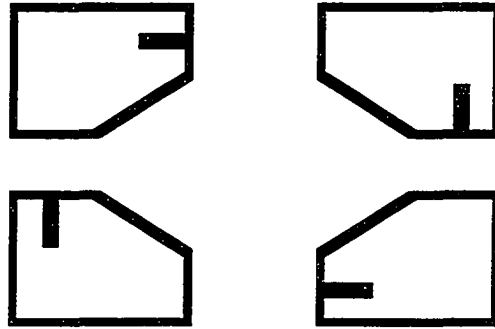
neatly at a certain point. With four stiles chamfered into a pentagonal shape, the grooves holding the backboards and the mortises containing the tenons of the side and front rails could have extended in as many as eight locations.

As mentioned, the rear stiles have grooves extending through their bottom ends on the edges facing the back; also, the rear proper right stile and the front proper left stile have extended grooves on the edges facing the sides. With a few minor exceptions, this particular pattern is found on all the Sunflower chests examined. Additionally, the grooves extended through the top of the stiles in a “clockwork” pattern that facilitated the placing of the top rails on all four sides (fig. 28). The consistency in the top, therefore, can be explained by ease of joining. The particular pattern at the bottom ends of the stiles, however, has no obvious advantages over other options. Such uniformity in construction, also evident in the measurements of stiles, rails, and drawer boards, appears, in Schoelwer’s words, “almost eerily consistent.”⁵⁷

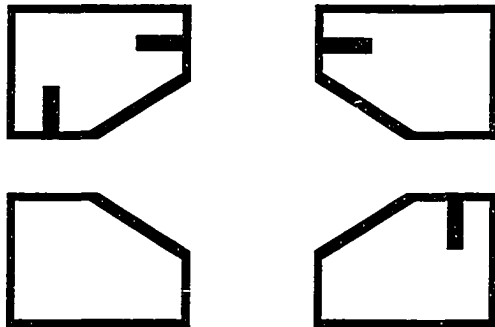
Though appearing to support the early attribution to one person, the consistency exhibited among separate objects attests to the presence of a tightly regulated shop tradition. The level of output and the variations noted in table 1 indicate that many craftsmen were involved in Sunflower production. In catalogue entries for Sunflower chests and cupboards, scholars have argued for the vertical evolution of a shop tradition in which the practices of one master joiner were emulated by his apprentices.⁵⁸ In such a scenario, certain

⁵⁷Schoelwer, “Connecticut Sunflower Furniture,” p. 30. The only firm exceptions to the pattern are chests #25 and #27, both of which lack an extended groove at the bottom of the front proper left stile. The only other exceptions occur in those chests that have undergone extensive restoration in the stiles (chests #7, #16, and #18).

⁵⁸See footnote 11.



28a. Pattern at top ends of stiles.



28b. Pattern at bottom ends of stiles.

Figure 28: Pattern of extended grooves in Sunflower chests.

habits, such as the groove patterns, were carefully repeated. Another view argues for a "horizontal dispersion of production" with competing shops simultaneously producing similar products.⁵⁹ While similarities in general construction techniques and decorative methods support this view, it is less convincing in light of the consistency seen in the groove patterns. However, as postulated by Schoelwer, the tradition could have involved specialized workers.⁶⁰ In other words, various persons could have contributed specific parts to competing shops where the chests were assembled. Such an argument would account for a high degree of consistency in certain features, such as the groove patterns. The Sunflower chest tradition thus points to a group of shops in close contact with each other, either through a vertical transmission of practices or shared contributors.

The makers of the Group I and Guilford chests followed a less tightly bound system. The extended grooves of the five Group I chests and the two examined Guilford chests with one drawer do not adhere to the same consistent pattern seen in the Sunflower chests; nor are they consistent within their groupings.⁶¹ The shop tradition's move from central to coastal Connecticut thus did involve, to a certain extent, the dissipation of practices. If mass-production explains the similarity in groove patterns among the

⁵⁹Schoelwer, "Connecticut Sunflower Furniture," pp. 28-9. For a similar argument, see Sweeney, "Regions and the Study of Material Culture," p. 12.

⁶⁰Schoelwer, "Connecticut Sunflower Furniture," p. 29.

⁶¹There are some instances of consistency. Group I chests # 11 and #6 follow the Sunflower pattern at the bottom of the stiles; as do the extended grooves at the top of the stiles in Guilford chest #7. Also, Group I chests #2, #3, and #1 have an identical bottom pattern and Group I chest #6 and Guilford #13 an identical top pattern.

Sunflower chests, the lack of such output for the Group I and Guilford chests may account for their variations.⁶²

Although groove patterns were not maintained when the shop tradition moved to the coast, fundamental joinery methods were upheld in the chests' backboards and the bottoms of the chest section. Thus, it is worthwhile to evaluate the standard attributions in light of geographic mobility (fig. 29). Peter Blin (1640/1-1725), the maker associated with the Sunflower chests, can be placed in Wethersfield as early as 1675, when the birth of his son, William, is recorded in the town records. His origin of birth and movements before arriving in Wethersfield are unknown, but in Wethersfield, he held minor official positions such as fence viewer, constable, and juryman. Evidence for his occupation as a joiner includes the 1681 credit in the Bulkeley account book and a credit for mending a cradle. Furthermore, he was hired by the town of Farmington to make a pulpit for the meetinghouse in 1710.⁶³ Pertinent to the evolution of the shop tradition, Blin had ties to coastal Connecticut; his son, Peter Blin, Jr. pursued a woodworking career in East Guilford.

Peter Blin, Jr. (c. 1670-after 1741) moved before 1698 when he acquired a tract of land in East Guilford from Robert Welles of Wethersfield. His exact birthdate is unknown, but since he was of age to buy land in 1698 and is not listed among the birth records of Peter Blin, Sr.'s children from 1675 onwards,

⁶²Although it is unreliable to depend upon today's survivals as representing original output, the discrepancy between about 85 Sunflower chests and 5 Group I chests together with about 5 Guilford joined chests with one drawer suggests that Sunflower chests were made in far greater numbers.

⁶³The written evidence for Peter Blin is well-documented by Schoelwer, "Connecticut Sunflower Furniture," pp. 28-29.

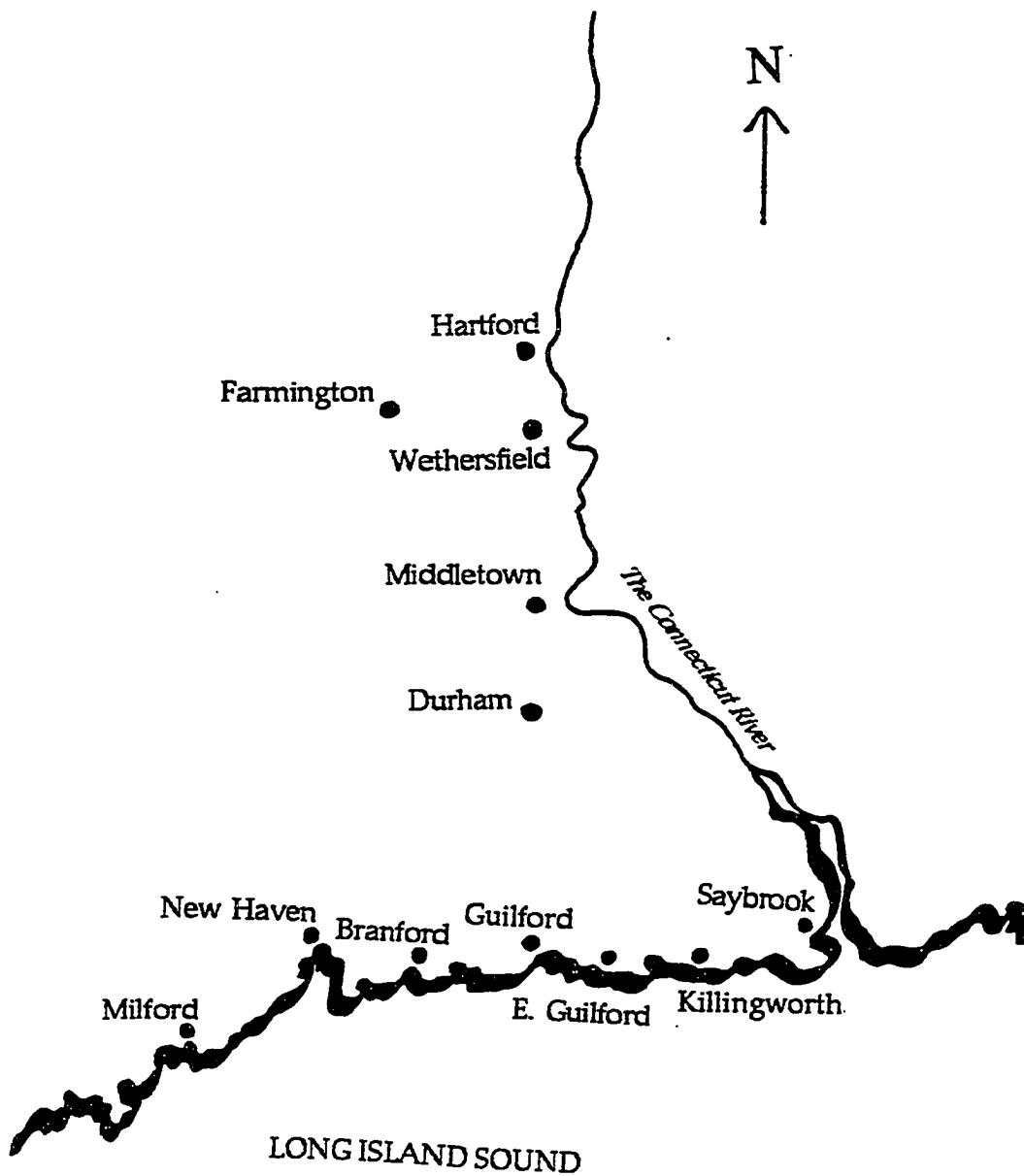


Figure 29: Map of central and coastal Connecticut.

he presumably was born before 1675, perhaps before his father's arrival in Wethersfield.⁶⁴ Blin, Jr. may have been the first settler in East Guilford's north section. An 1829 account describes his initial settlement:

The first dwelling house was built by a man of the name of Blin, near the southwest corner of the parish. There were then no settlements nearer than the seashore, and during a severe winter storm he came near perishing from want of food. The settlers after two days of labor succeeded in beating a path to his house, and took him with them to the older settlements.⁶⁵

After his precarious beginnings, he bought and sold land in East Guilford until 1741.⁶⁶ He may have moved back to Wethersfield in 1739, when he appraised an inventory; he had certainly moved back by 1741 when, in his last known land transaction, he was identified as "of Wethersfield." While he inherited his father's joining tools in 1725 and was identified as a joiner in a 1707/8 land transaction, no furniture can be documented to him. Most likely trained by his father, he stands as a possible transmitter of joinery practices between Wethersfield and coastal Connecticut. His daughters, Hannah and Margaret, married into the Bishop family of Guilford, of which several members were woodworkers.

Charles Guillam (1671-1727), the attributed maker of the Guilford chests, is less conspicuous in the documentary records. Born on the Channel

⁶⁴Donald Lynes Jacobus, letter to Paul Chipman, 19 June, 1954, Blin Family Folder, The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, p. 3.

⁶⁵Cited in Bernard Christian Steiner, A History of the Plantation of Menunkatuck and the Original Town of Guilford, Connecticut (Baltimore, MD: Published by the author, 1897), p. 196.

⁶⁶Details of Peter Blin, Jr.'s land transactions are noted by Jacobus, letter to Paul Chipman, pp. 1-3.

Island of Jersey in 1671, he emigrated to America before 1709.⁶⁷ As his date of arrival in America and movements before 1709 are unknown, it is difficult to determine where he trained. His brother, Carteret, was an active mariner who had dealings in Wethersfield, Saybrook, and Southold, Long Island and his nephew, James, resided in Southold and Hebron, Connecticut.⁶⁸ Their ties to central Connecticut could indicate that Guillam had similar connections and was familiar with the area's woodworking practices. While in Saybrook, he acted as surety for his sister-in-law and witnessed a will in Providence.⁶⁹ He is mentioned in several debt lists attached to Saybrook inventories, which, due to the equipment listed in his inventory, may refer to furniture production.⁷⁰ The inventory, which includes extensive joinery tools, unfinished furniture and painting supplies, establishes Guillam as a maker of painted furniture.⁷¹

⁶⁷See footnotes 31 and 116.

⁶⁸For Carteret see Warren, "Were the Guilford Painted Chests Made in Saybrook?," pp. 8-9; Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," p. 80; Wayland Jefferson, Cutchogue: Southold's First Colony (New York: Published by the author, 1940), pp. 8-9, 13-14; Jeanette Edwards Rattray, East Hampton History and Genealogies (East Hampton, NY: Published by the author, 1953), p. 133. For James see Charles William Manwaring, A Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records (Hartford, CT: R. S. Peck & Co., 1904), vol. II, p. 574 and vol. III, p. 51.

⁶⁹Warren, "Were the Guilford Painted Chests Made in Saybrook?," pp. 9-10.

⁷⁰Charles Guillam appears in the following probate papers: John Parker, 1709, Samuel Chalker, 1711, John Kirtland, 1717 (all in Saybrook), and Edward Ratty, 1715 (in Killingworth), New London Probate District, Archives, History, and Genealogy Unit, The Connecticut State Library, Hartford, CT.

⁷¹The inventory is printed in full in Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," pp. 89-90. The inventory contains references to three specific materials—glue, gum, and umber. Interestingly, the high chest, Guilford chest #2 (fig. 26), tested positively for proteins, which would include animal glue, but negatively for carbohydrates, which would include gum. Such information does not refute or validate the Guillam attribution, but, with analysis of other objects, could assist in a typology for the group. See footnote 55.

Another paint decorator deserves attention. Also a woodworker with connections to central Connecticut, Thomas Stanley (1684-1723) of Durham and Guilford may have participated in the shop tradition. His 1723 inventory contains "carpenter's tools," "painted papers," "colouring stuff," and a "jarr of linseed oyle," as well as two chests with drawers.⁷² The son of a joiner, he was born in Farmington and probably was familiar with Sunflower furniture. Neighboring Wethersfield, Farmington was one of the core centers of Sunflower-furniture production. Additionally, provenance research has traced a Sunflower chest to Abigail Stanley, Thomas's aunt.⁷³ The Farmington Stanley's descended from three brothers, most likely from Kent, England, who settled in Hartford in the 1630s.⁷⁴ In Durham, Thomas did not pursue the woodworking trade exclusively. He operated a public house and prospered financially, leaving an estate worth £1233:08:9.⁷⁵ After his death, his wife, Deborah, married David Bishop, later to become a sister-in-law to Peter Blin, Jr.'s daughters. Like the younger Blin, he could have played a role in the transmission of joinery practices from central to coastal Connecticut.

As none of the above woodworkers are firmly linked to the chests, research was undertaken to locate other woodworkers active in the towns tied

⁷²Stanl[e]y, Thomas, Inventory, Guilford Probate District, vol. I, p. 149.

⁷³Chest #34. Joseph S. Van Why, provenance research notes, object file, Harriet Beecher Stowe House, Hartford, CT.

⁷⁴Israel P. Warren, The Stanley Families of America (Portland, Maine: B. Thurston & Co., 1887), pp. 19, 23.

⁷⁵William Chauncey Fowler, History of Durham, Connecticut (Hartford, CT: Published by the author, 1866), p. 97.

to the painted chests' provenances, namely Branford, Guilford, East Guilford (now Madison), Killingworth (now Clinton), and Saybrook. Of the 135 c. 1700-1720 inventories that survive, 20 contain sufficient tools to indicate persons practicing woodworking trades. The ten persons labeled as "joiners," owning more specialized and expensive tools, are the most likely candidates for the production of the painted chests (see Appendix A). Although transient woodworkers who died outside of the area, including Peter Blin, Jr., and those whose estates were never inventoried are not included, the list of woodworkers combined with Kane's pre-1698 and Trent's post-1720 research provides a useful compilation of possible makers for the Group I and Guilford chests.⁷⁶ Like the attributed makers, these woodworkers need to be considered in light of the evidence from the chests--those with ties to central Connecticut being the most likely participants in the shop tradition.

*

A further look at mobility in early New England parallels the evolution of the chests. Just as new woodworking ideas were incorporated into a previous tradition, forces implying change, such as geographic movement, were molded into earlier ways of life. Along with other issues such as religious strife, economic growth, and demographic changes, mobility is one of the key features examined by historians of early New England in their determination of the region's degree of social cohesion. Often presented

⁷⁶Kane, Furniture of the New Haven Colony: The Seventeenth-Century Style (New Haven, CT: The New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1973), pp. 78-93. Kane's list contains extensive notes and includes the towns of Milford, New Haven, Branford, and Guilford. Trent, Hearts and Crowns: Folk Chairs of the Connecticut Coast 1720-1840 (New Haven, CT: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1977), p. 97. Trent used inventories from the New Haven Probate District (1712-1762) and Guilford Probate District (1720-1756).

as “community studies,” previous histories can be divided into two opposing schools of thought. One view, the “declension model,” argues for a gradual breakdown of community harmony from settlement to the Revolution. Characterizing the seventeenth century as a time of stability, insularity, and concord, the “declension model” advocates contend that an expanding economy and religious discord weakened the Puritan leaders’ control over their community by engendering capitalistic and individualistic impulses.⁷⁷ More recent scholarship has refuted this model, generally arguing for continuity, rather than disjunction between the two centuries. Along with stipulating that the seventeenth century was far from harmonious, these works have questioned the extent of change at the end of the seventeenth century and its effect on underlying structures.⁷⁸

In “Fathers, Sons, and Identity: Woodworking Artisans in Southeastern New England, 1620-1700,” Robert B. St. George contends that mobility among woodworkers, rather than increasing, decreased toward the

⁷⁷“Declension model” studies include Kenneth A. Lockridge, A New England Town: The First Hundred Years (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970), John Demos, A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), Richard L. Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), and, most recently, Jack P. Greene, “A Declension Model: New England, 1660-1760,” Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early British Modern America and the Formation of American Culture (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 55-75.

⁷⁸Such arguments are made by Paul Lucas, Valley of Discord: Church and Society Along the Connecticut River, 1636-1725 (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1976), Stephen Innes, Labor in a New Land: Economy and Society in Seventeenth-Century Springfield (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), Christine Leigh Heyrman, Commerce and Culture: The Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690-1750 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984), and John Frederick Martin, Profits in the Wilderness: Entrepreneurship and the Founding of New England Towns in the Seventeenth Century. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1991.

end of the century and occurred within a larger context of preserving familial cohesion. Characterizing the period of second- and third-generation artisans as one of "either complete nonmigration or limited migration within a fifteen-mile radius," St. George contends that by the late seventeenth century, familial ties had strengthened rather than weakened. Faced by paternal competition and their fathers' "firm ownership of land and trade," sons of artisans chose to establish their trade nearby or remain in town and diversify their occupation rather than emigrate further away.⁷⁹

Although Wethersfield and coastal Connecticut are separated by considerably more than fifteen miles, the movement indicated by the chests was probably similar to St. George's description of movement to a nearby town. The river provided relatively convenient transportation, thus enabling communication. Also, Wethersfield residents had many familial ties to the coast. Religious dissent in the seventeenth century had caused several group migrations from Wethersfield to the coastal towns.⁸⁰ Thus, if they chose to move to the coast, Wethersfield natives would have had a network of connections that diminished the effects of dislocation. Peter Blin, Jr., for example, bought his first tract of land in East Guilford from a Wethersfield inhabitant and was joined in the area, albeit probably briefly, by his brother, James.⁸¹ Thus, although involving geographic distance,

⁷⁹Robert B. St. George, "Fathers, Sons, and Identity: Woodworking Artisans in Southeastern New England, 1620-1700," The Craftsman in Early America, Ian M. G. Quimby, ed., (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984), pp. 113-15.

⁸⁰Sweeney, "From Wilderness to Arcadian Vale: Material Life in the Connecticut River Valley," The Great River, pp. 17-18; John P. Demos, Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 344-45.

⁸¹James Blin was a witness to a dispute in Branford in 1704, Branford Town Records, Branford Town Hall, Branford, CT, vol. II, p. 432.

movement from central to coastal Connecticut allowed for the preservation of established ties.

With its retention of certain joinery techniques, the shop tradition manifests one instance in which continuity prevailed in the face of change. That its coastal makers chose to continue working in habits learned in central Connecticut attests to the presence of ties between the region as well as conscious efforts to maintain these ties. This argument parallels Heyrman's study of commercialism in Marblehead and Gloucester, Massachusetts. Rather than disrupting the established social order, commercialism, Heyrman argues, developed within previous structures: "Rather than being at odds with the ideals of Puritanism or the ends of communitarianism, commercial capitalism coexisted with and was molded by the cultural patterns of the past."⁸² Like developing commercialism, mobility can give the appearance of a disjunctive force, but operate within the confines of the past. If woodworkers could and chose to carry their fundamental knowledge of joinery from one place to the next, they could also transport other aspects of their cultural baggage.

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Thus, in addition to the change between style periods, the shop tradition survived change over space. As represented by the groups in the shop tradition, three stages are evident and reveal its evolutionary framework: 1. The contemporaneous production of Sunflower chests and the variant example. 2. The combination of these traditions, addition of dovetails, and gradual change to painted decoration as exhibited by the Group

⁸²Heyrman, Commerce and Culture, p. 17.

I chests. 3. Further changes in the forms, painted decoration, and drawer construction, yet retention of the scratch marks, as exhibited by the Guilford chests. These stages may not indicate separate individuals, or groups, nor a linear progression, but a general picture emerges in which a craftsman (or craftsmen) learned the practices of the established tradition in central Connecticut, as well as the scratch marks from another, and pursued his own career along the coast (stages 1 and 3). The variations between the Group I and Guilford groups suggest that a third craftsman transmitted the joinery practices between central and coastal Connecticut (stage 2). Though significant changes occurred, gradual accommodation, rather than upheaval characterized the habits of a particular group of woodworkers and suggests that similar strategies operated in the larger society. The degree of consistency seen in the Group I shop tradition becomes more marked when compared to another group of chests produced in the same time period, and, in all likelihood, the same area.

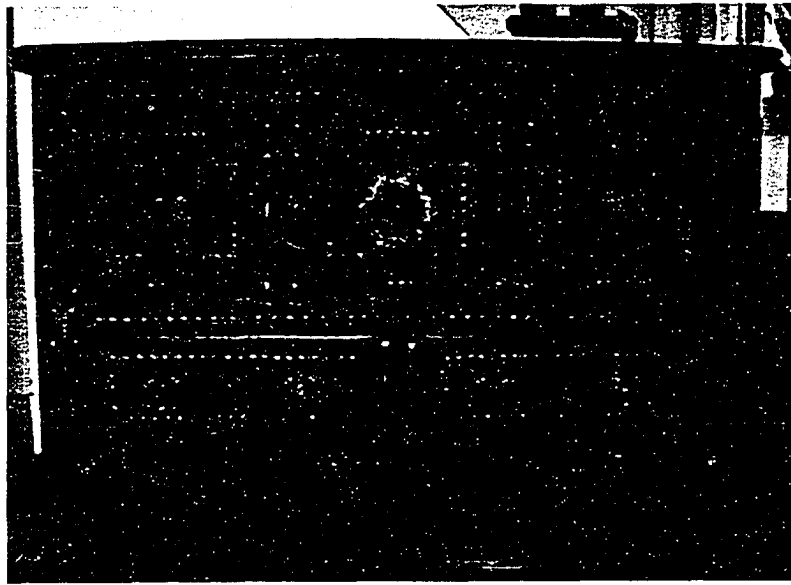
III. THE GROUP II SHOPS

Group II chests consist of six chests that are united only by general decorative and joinery methods. The group's division into two subgroups, IIa (figs. 30, 39) and IIb (figs. 31, 32), provides a useful breakdown, indicating two separate shops of production. Particular similarities between IIa and IIb suggest that these shops were visually familiar with each other's practices and operated in the same locale. Like the Group I chests, evidence suggests that the Group II chests were made along the Connecticut coast between Branford and the Guilford area. However, even within the smaller groupings, there are significant discrepancies among the Group II chests, indicating shops in which several habitual practices were not transmitted from the production of one object to the next. Such inconsistencies contrast sharply with the uniformity seen in the Group I chests, showing that considerable discontinuity was an element of Connecticut's woodworking traditions.

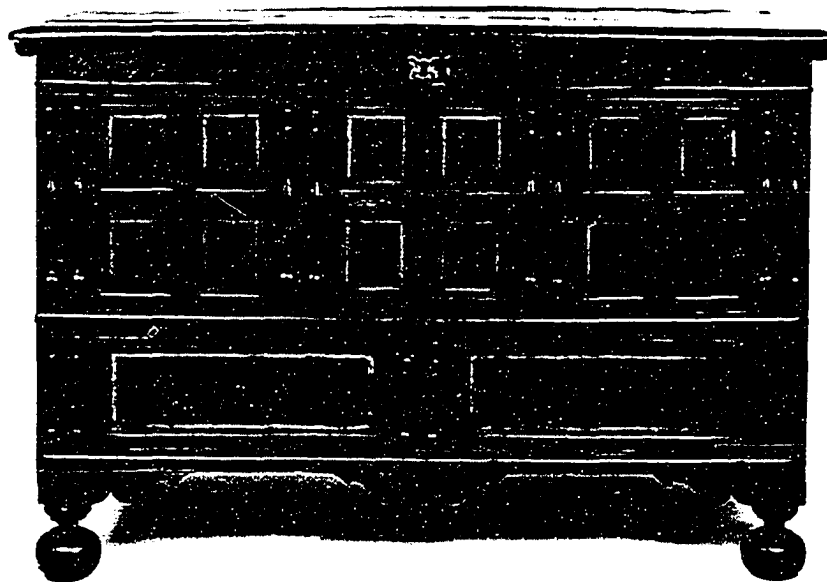
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Three of the Group II chests have been illustrated in past furniture studies. Wallace Nutting illustrated Group IIb chest #9 in the 1920s, commenting only upon its restoration and the rarity of its carved skirt.⁸³ In

⁸³Nutting, Furniture of the Pilgrim Century (1924 ed.), fig. 47, p. 92 and Furniture Treasury, fig. 40, n.p.



30a. Group IIa chest #4.
Daniel P. Brown, Jr. and Nannie W. T. Brown.



30b. Group IIa chest #8.
Dietrich American Foundation, Philadelphia, PA.
(photograph by Will Brown, Philadelphia, PA)

Figure 30: Group IIa chests #4 and #8.



31a. Group IIb chest #7.

Owner unknown. (photograph, copyright holder unknown and obtained through DAPC)



31b. Group IIb chest #10.

Shelburne Museum, Burlington, VT, 3.4-18.

(photograph, copyright holder unknown and obtained through DAPC)

Figure 31: Group IIb chests #7 and #10.

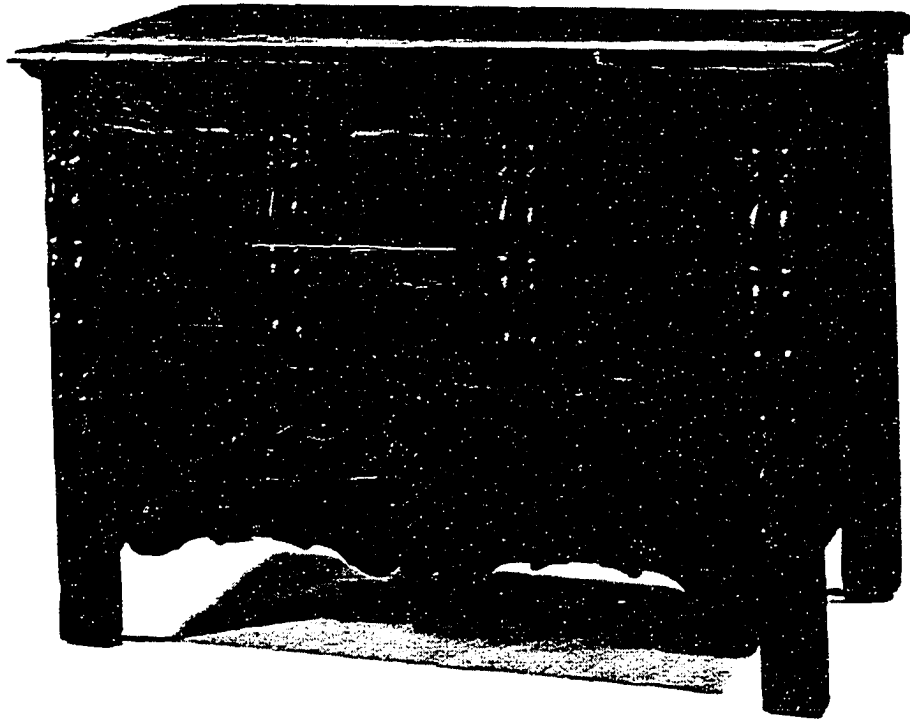


Figure 32: Group IIb chest #9.
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT. The Wallace Nutting Collection,
gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1926.310.
(photograph, courtesy of the Wadsworth Atheneum)

catalogue entries, Group IIa chest #4 was noted to have been found near Branford.⁸⁴ Most recently, Trent asserted that Group IIa chest #8 was one of six in a group, citing Group II chests #4, #9, and three others that, although unexamined, are probably unrelated.⁸⁵ Of the three unpublished examples, only one has been examined (IIb #10); the other two have been classified into IIa and IIb by features discerned from photographs (IIa #12, IIb #7).⁸⁶

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In terms of construction, Group II chests are united as a whole and separated from Group I chests by their reliance on oak and tulip woods and by their drawer construction. With one exception, the drawers are joined at the front and sides with two dovetails, instead of one. The drawer sides and backs are joined—either rabbeted, butted, or in channels—with the drawer back fitting in between the sides, instead of over the sides like the Group I chests (figs. 34, 37, compare with fig. 7). Also, like the Group I chests, the drawers are side-hung, but the drawer bottom consists of several boards with their grain running from front to rear, instead of one board with its grain running from side to side. These general features represent the points of commonalty among the six chests. Further subdivision is defined by the backboards, bottom of the chest section, and details of wood use and drawer construction.

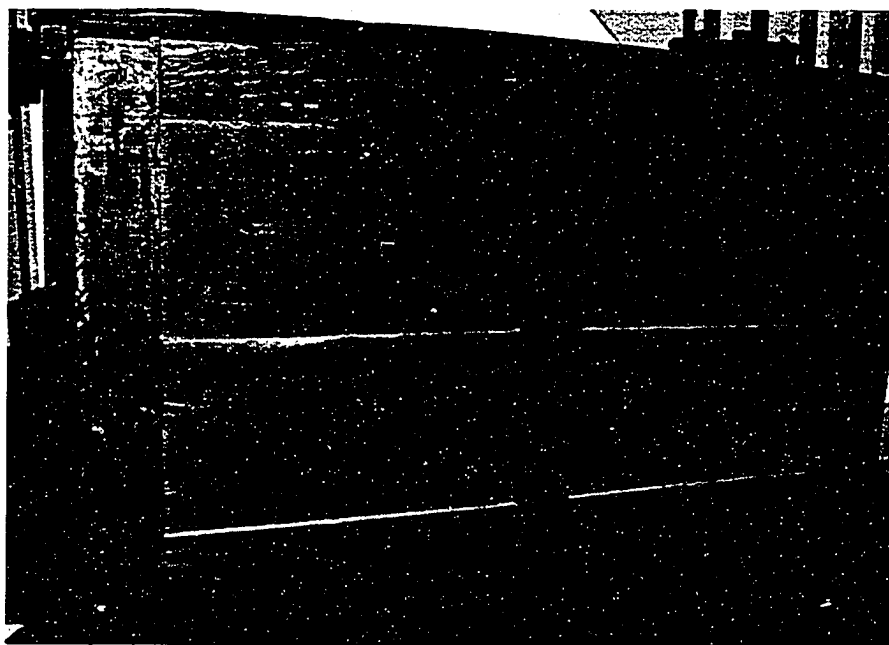
⁸⁴Lockwood, Colonial Furniture in America (1901 ed.), fig. 16, p. 32 and (1926 ed.), fig. 37, p. 47; Kirk, Connecticut Furniture, fig. 47, p. 29.

⁸⁵Trent, catalogue entry, New England Begins, vol. II, pp. 300-1. Two of the three other chests were deaccessioned by Connecticut Historical Society as they were believed to be modern constructions. The third was examined and deviates from Group II practices. See footnote 42.

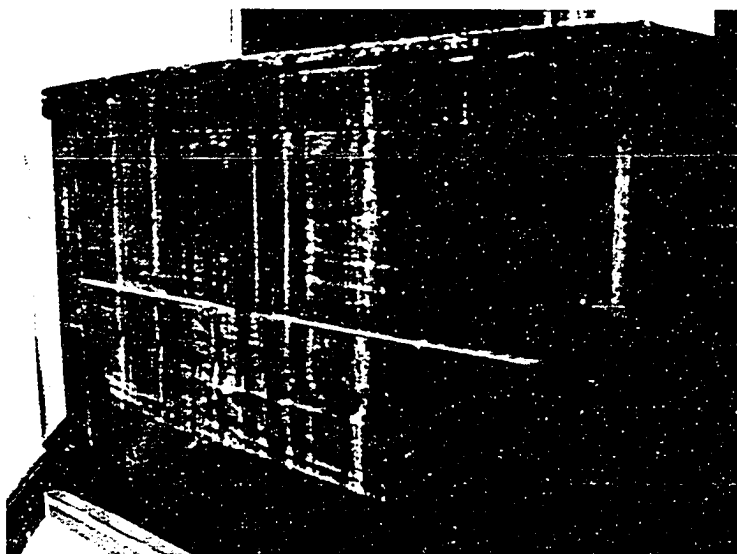
⁸⁶The author is grateful to Kevin M. Sweeney for providing photographs and information on Group IIa chest #12.

Group IIa chests' backboards and bottom of the chest section share common joining features (table 5). The backboards consist of three or four panels, with the upper two framed by the rear top and medial rails, the rear stiles, and a central muntin. The lower backboards of chest #4 are also framed in this manner and the chest has a bottom rear rail (fig. 33a). Chest #8, however, only has one lower backboard, which, like the Sunflower, Group I, and Guilford chests, fits into grooves in the stiles and with no bottom rear rail (fig. 33b). The chests have five boards with their grain running from front to rear for the bottom of the chest section. They are fitted into grooves in the front, side, and rear medial rails and, due to the tightness of their fit and lack of exposure at the rear, their connecting joints are not apparent.

The drawer fronts and sides are joined with two dovetails, with two full keys exposed on the sides. The drawer bottoms are composed of four and five boards joined to each other with lap joints. Unlike Group I and Group IIb chests, the drawer bottoms are unbeveled and they are butted against a rabbet and nailed from the front (table 6 and fig. 34). For the primary woods, Group IIa uses tulip for its most visible presentation surfaces--the front panels and drawer front. In addition to the rails and stiles, oak is used for the side panels. For the secondary woods, Group IIa uses tulip and oak interchangeably. Both chests #4 and #8 have interior marking systems, used to distinguish right and left side members. On the inside of rails, stiles, and muntins, chest #8 has two different marks, one slash for the proper left side, and two slashes for the proper right side. Chest #4 has a similar system, but with a curved gouge indicating the proper left side and a straight gouge indicating the proper right side.



33a. Group IIa chest #4.



33b. Group IIa chest #8.

Figure 33: Backboards of Group IIa chests.

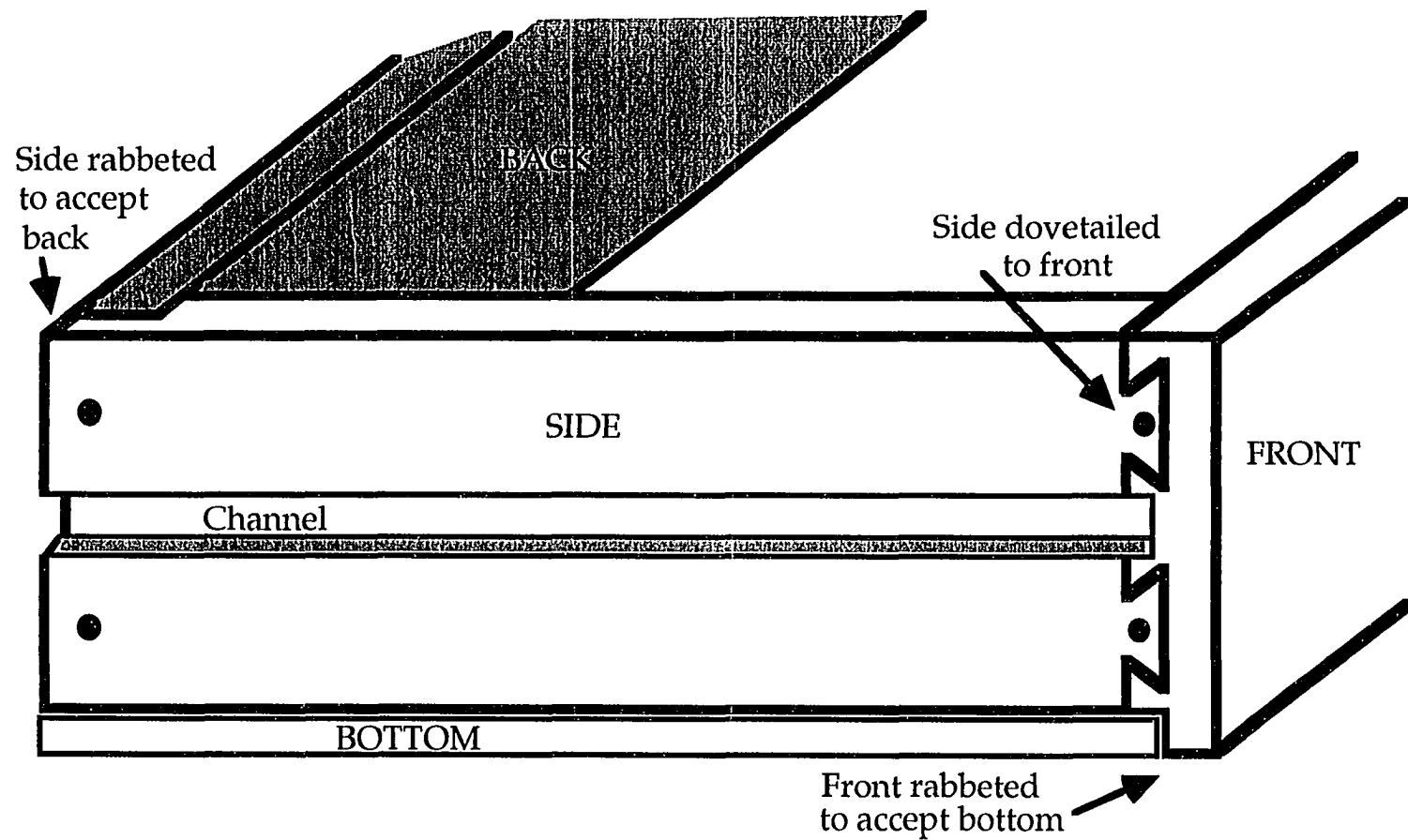


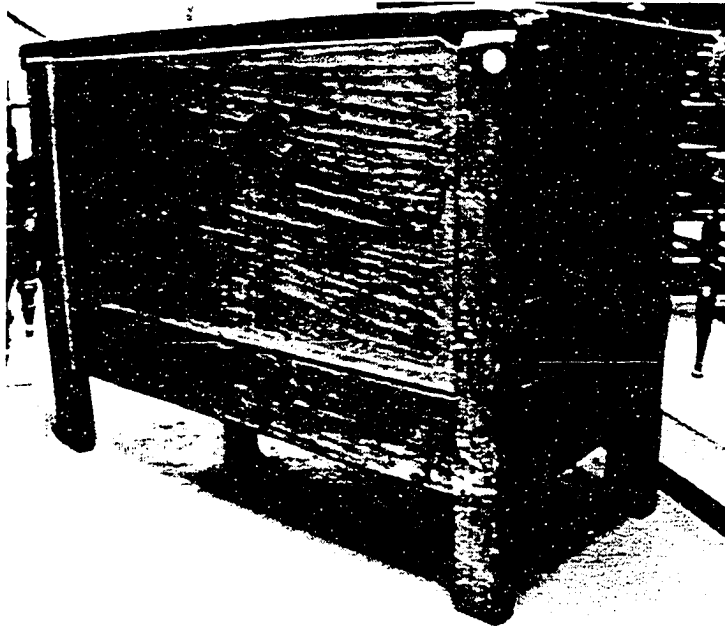
Figure 34: Drawer construction of Group IIa chests.

Group IIb is marked by its variations from the above practices.

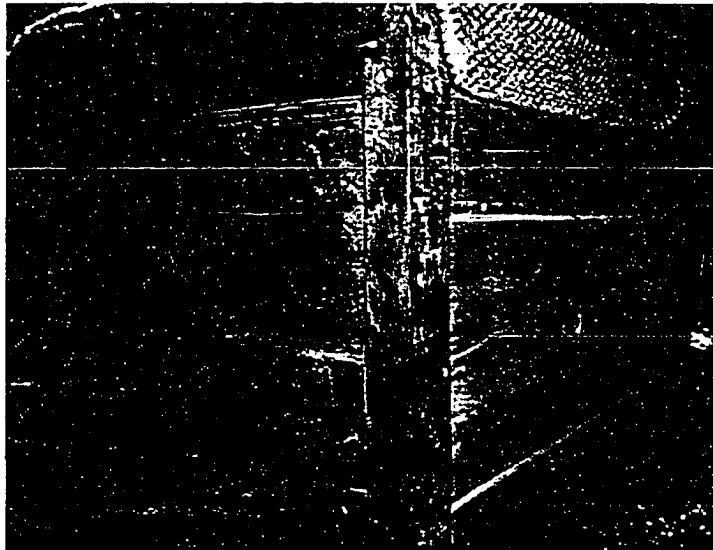
Although Group IIb chests also use oak and tulip, oak is used for the rails and stiles only. All presentation surfaces are made from tulip, as are chest #9's secondary woods. Chest #10, however, has its drawer sides and bottom of the chest section made from pine. The most peculiar feature of IIb is its simulation of joined construction in the backboards and side panels (table 5). The side panels of both chests examined fit into grooves in the side and are pegged, but are not bounded by top, medial or bottom rails. With creased molding running along the areas where rails are typically found, the makers imitated joined construction.⁸⁷ The backboards are constructed in the same manner; chest #9 has two boards with no molding whereas chest #10 has one board with molding (fig. 35). The bottom of the chest section consists of three boards in a wide-very narrow-wide configuration and, where apparent, attached to each other with tongue-and-groove joints.

A significant discrepancy between the two IIb chests examined, #9 and #10, is the former's use of dovetails and the latter's use of rabbet joints in the joining of the drawer sides and fronts. As the two chests are clearly united by a number of common features, this discrepancy shows that the use of dovetails was incorporated into previous habits. Additionally, the dovetails on chest #9 indicate the work of someone unfamiliar with the new practice. While the chest displays two full keys on each side of the drawer, one side has the two keys extending from the drawer side and the other side has the two keys extending from the drawer front (fig. 36). Such a break in symmetry and habitual work suggests tentative workmanship. The two or three boards of

⁸⁷Trent, catalogue entry, *New England Begins*, vol. II, p. 300.



35a. Group IIb chest #9.



35b. Group IIb chest #10.

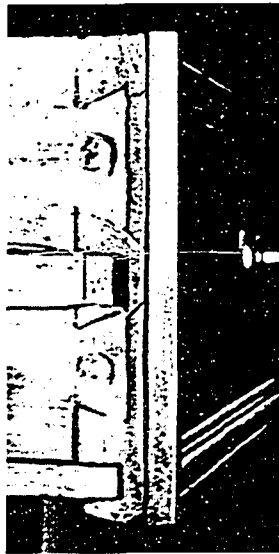
Figure 35: Backboards of Group IIb chests.

the drawer bottom are connected differently in each chest--tongue and groove joints in chest #9 and a spline joint in chest #10. Group IIb chests have beveled drawer bottoms--chest #9's is only slightly beveled--and the front edge fits into a groove, rather than butted against a rabbet, in the drawer front (fig. 37). Both chests have evidence for an interior locking mechanism. Against the front rail, a hole in the bottom of the chest section corresponds to holes in the front medial rail and top of the drawer front. Originally, a bolt fitted into this area, locking the drawer. Both chests had locks for their chest sections; thus, when this section was locked and the bolt was in place, the entire interior of the chests would have been inaccessible without a key.

*

The chests in Group II display decorative features that both unite the group as a whole and further substantiate its subdivisions. Both IIa and IIb contain wooden and painted decoration. In their appearances, the wooden elements are sufficiently similar to warrant some level of communication between the makers of the two subdivisions. Yet, the execution of these elements indicates different shops of production. Although two of the IIb chests have been stripped, the evidence suggests that the painted decoration varied greatly between the two groups, and even within the smaller groupings. Generally, however, Group IIa's decoration is more tightly controlled and restricted, whereas that of IIb is more fluid and open. Thus, with both wooden and polychrome painted decoration, Group II chests contain elements of the Mannerist and William and Mary styles.

Like the Sunflower chests, Group II chests have applied turnings accentuating the vertical divisions provided by the stiles. On the Group IIa

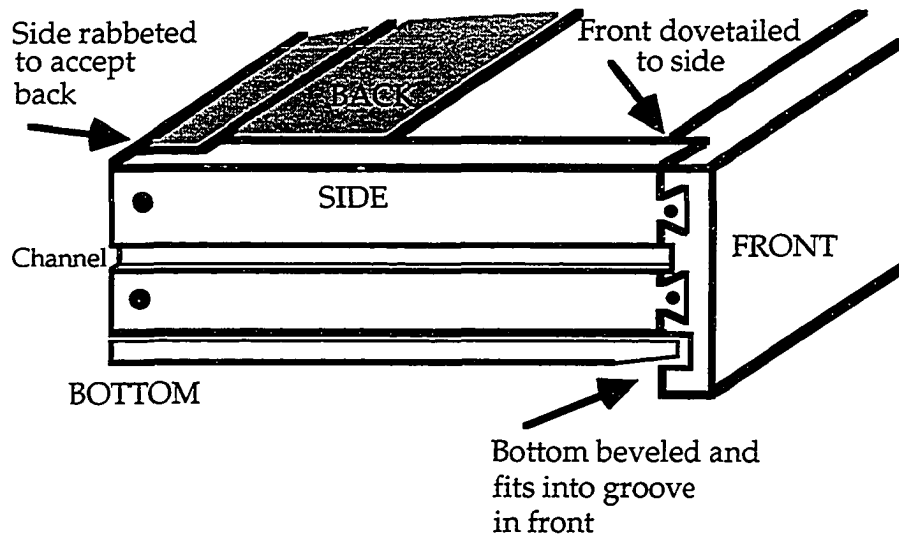


36a. Proper right side.

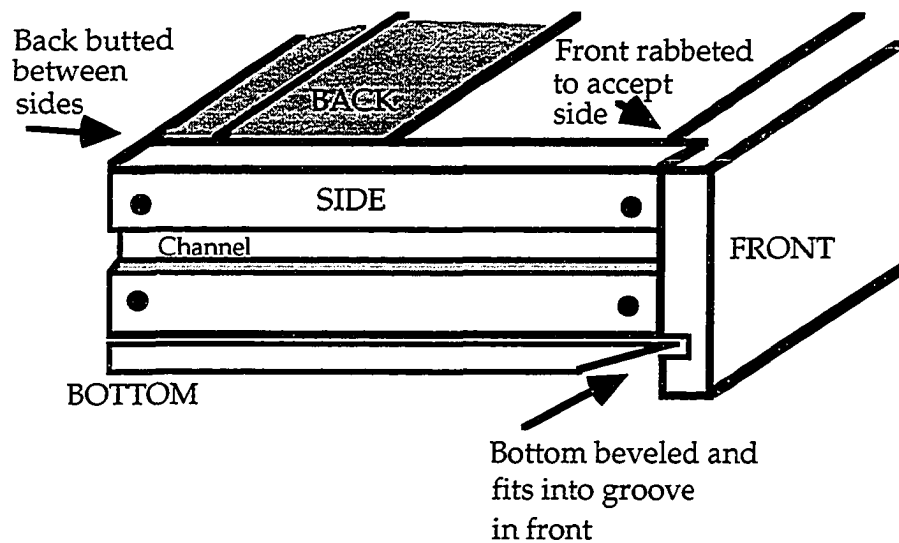


36b. Proper left side.

Figure 36: Dovetail joints in drawer of Group IIb chest #9.



37a. Group IIb chest #9.



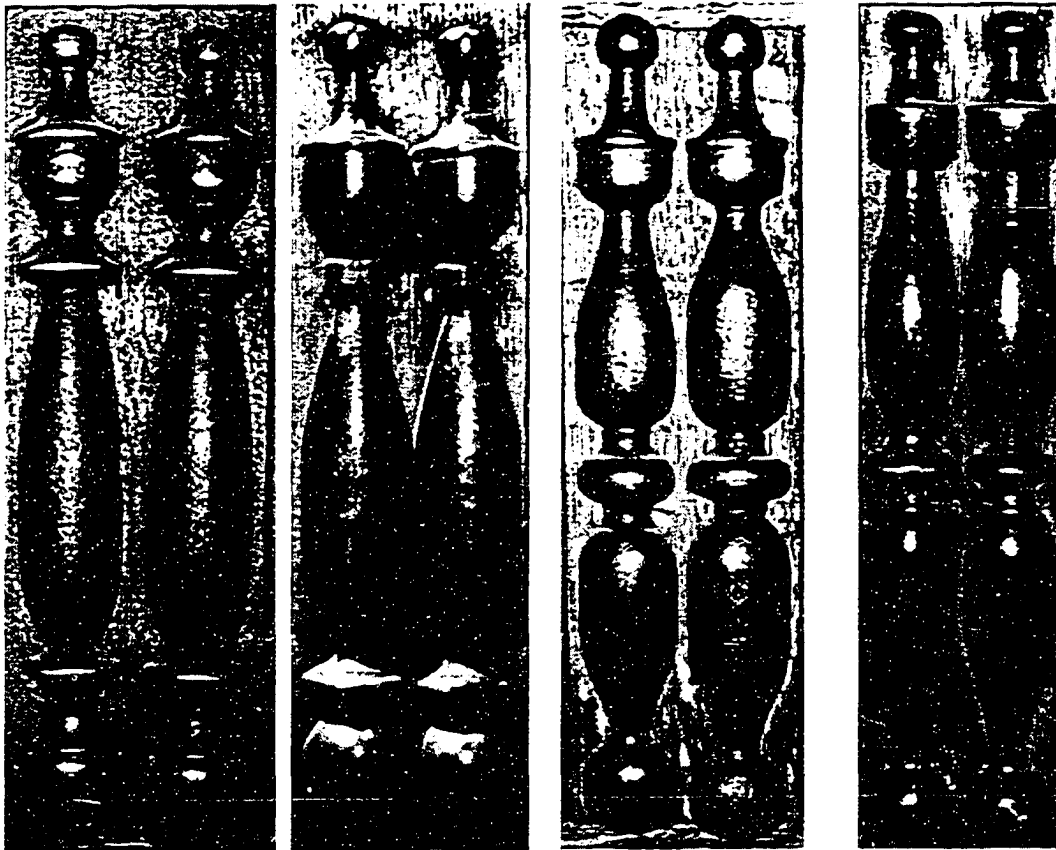
37b. Group IIb chest #10.

Figure 37: Drawer construction of Group IIb chests.

chests, the large turnings comprise, from bottom to top, of a rounded base, a reel, a bulbous column, another reel, and a cup and ball finial (figs. 38a,b). Minor differences between chest #4 and #8 include fillets on the base and cup of chest #4's turnings; chest #8's upper reels, although probably originally like those on chest #4, have been cut down. Smaller versions of these turnings are located on either side and in the middle of the drawer fronts, with those on chest #4 having no cups in the finial section.⁸⁸ Horizontal divisions were created by either applied or creased moldings. Chest #4 has creased molding running along the top and medial front rails, whereas chest #8 has applied moldings on the top, medial, and bottom front rails. Both chests have creased molding along their side medial rails. Panel moldings on the front panels, drawer front, and side panels further divided the sections of the chest. The moldings could tightly control a decorative scheme, as is exemplified by the division into quadrants of the frontal panels of chest #8.

The paint decoration on Group IIa chests, though polychrome, reinforces the confining aesthetic established by the wooden ornament. On chest #8, the turnings are painted black, as are the abstracted fleur-de-lys motifs stamped within each quadrant of the front panels. Framed by orange borders within the panel moldings, the motifs are clearly separated from one another, and indicate a rejection of the more fluid decoration of the William and Mary style. The simulation of two drawers on the drawer front is likewise reinforced with orange borders. Although chest #4's frontal panels are free of extensive subdivision, the paint decoration adheres to, rather than

⁸⁸Chest #12 has creased molding along the front stiles and muntins. The molding's plain profile and crisp edges suggest that it may not be original; it is possible that it replaced applied turnings.



38a. Chest #4

38b. Chest #8

38c. Chest #9

38d. Chest #10

Group IIa

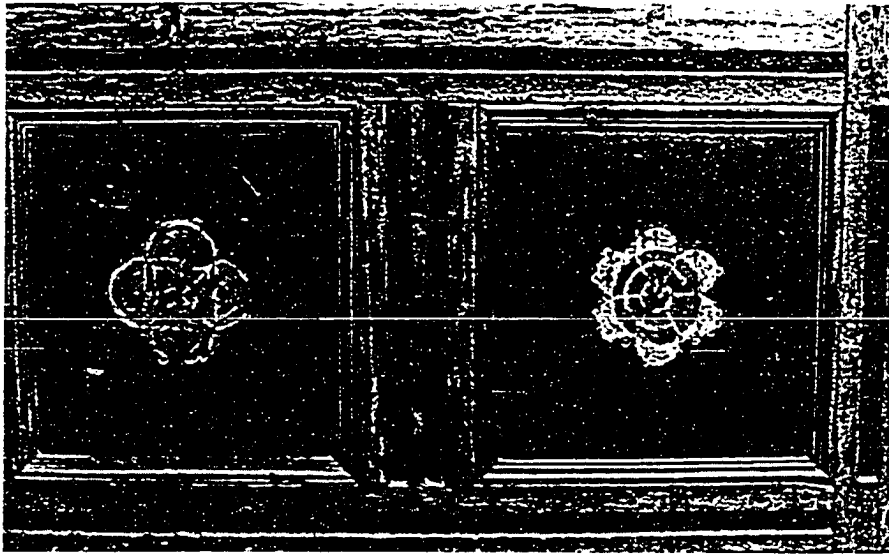
Group IIb

Fig. 38: Large turnings on Group II chests.

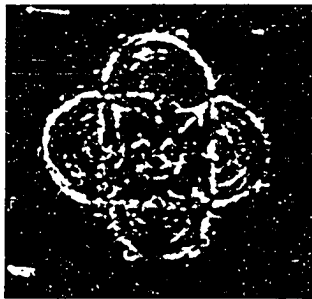
masks, the boundaries established by the wooden ornament. The panels have four painted squares in the corners, each with a measured design of concentric circles and crosses. The center panel has a stylized flower, while the outer panels have small tulips punctuating the centers. The same tulips are found on the drawer front and surrounding the turnings on the stiles. The overall effect is much like that of chest #8. As Kirk notes, "each unit of decoration is carefully isolated rather than being part of a flowing design."⁸⁹ Painted dots surround the frontal panels and each "simulated" drawer. Also running along the creased molding of the front top and medial rails, the dots are carefully applied in a linear formation and contrast with the less controlled dots on Group I chests #1 and #3 (fig. 22). Chest #12 makes less use of paint. With three small floral designs punctuating each frontal panel, its painted decoration is similarly composed of separate units. The geometric pattern in the center panel resembles those in the corners of the frontal panels of chest #4 (fig. 39). The idiosyncrasy of the design indicates a common paint-decorator.

Although Group IIb chests have turnings to accentuate vertical division of space, their decorative features tend to be more fluid than those seen on Group IIa. Group IIb chests' large turnings are similar to Group IIa's, although there is no upper reel and, more distinctively, the turner has added an inverted column between the lower reel and rounded base (figs. 38c,d). While chest #10's columns are shaped like Group IIa's, chest #9 has markedly squarish equivalents. Like Group IIa, panel moldings further delineate the frontal panels and drawer fronts. All Group IIb chests have a carved skirt

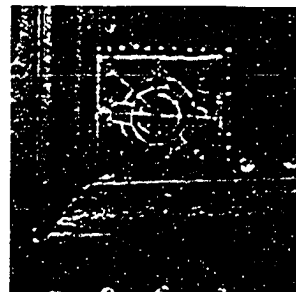
⁸⁹Kirk, Connecticut Furniture, fig. 47, p. 29.



39a. Central and outer (proper left) panels of Group IIa chest #12.
Private Collection. (photograph, courtesy of owner)



39b. Detail of central panel of
Group IIa chest #12.



39c. Detail of outer (proper right)
panel of Group IIa chest #4.

Figure 39: Painted designs on Group IIa chests #4 and #12.

along the bottom rail, as does Group IIa chest #8. The profiles are similar indicating that the makers of Group IIb and Group IIa had seen each other's productions. However, they were made differently, suggesting that the connections between makers of the two subdivisions were limited to such visual communication. Group IIb chests' skirts are all carved out of the same stock of wood as the bottom rail. Group IIa chest #8, however, is formed from two separate stocks, the carved skirt attached from below with nails. Furthermore, although similar, the curved elements of the skirts on Group IIb are wider than those of Group IIa chest #8, creating a looser, less restricted effect.

The paint decoration on Group IIb is also less restrictive than that on Group IIa. Although Group IIb chests #9 and #7 have been stripped, the original paint on chest #10 indicates a more fluid aesthetic. The central panel has a tree on top of a mound, with branches and floral elements, and the side panels contain designs composed of geometric forms. Connected to one another and united into larger patterns, the motifs on chest #10 contrast with the separation of parts seen in Group IIa chests. The palette consists of white, red, and black pigments, identified through paint analysis as white lead, iron earth red, and carbon black. The red and white pigments are suspended in a natural resin with a small amount of oil. More oil was discovered in the black paint applied to the turnings.⁹⁰ Like the Sunflower and Guilford chests, Group IIb chest #10 had originally a glossy appearance.

⁹⁰Paint analysis performed by Nancy McRaney Rosebrock, as part of a project sponsored by the Kress Foundation at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities Conservation Center, Waltham, MA, 1993-4.

That the Group II chests display common features indicates that their makers were, on some level, familiar with one another's work. While it is possible that they were made in different locales, it is more likely that they were made in the same vicinity. The transmission of visually apparent characteristics, such as the turnings and the carved skirts, would have been difficult across space. It is also possible that one group was a slightly later "copy" of the other--perhaps, as the stylistic evidence suggests, the IIb chests were made by someone re-interpreting the IIa examples.

Unlike the Group I chests, the Group II chests cannot be linked conclusively to larger shop traditions. The drawer construction of Group II chests, however, is similar to that of a group of case furniture from the Guilford/ New Haven area attributed to the last decades of the seventeenth century.⁹¹ Decoratively, the chests vary considerably. The Guilford/ New Haven group includes objects with inlaid, carved, and applied decoration--with paint sometimes enhancing the applied ornament. Along with the evidence from other chests discussed below, the similarities are noted in table 7 and support the argument for Group II's coastal Connecticut origin.

At the same time, certain features indicate the influence of northern Connecticut or Massachusetts practices. The interior locking mechanism found in Group IIb chests is also present in at least five other chests, which

⁹¹The Guilford/ New Haven group is discussed in Kane, Furniture of the New Haven Colony, plates XXI-XXIV, pp. 50-57; Trent, catalogue entries, New England Begins, vol. III, pp. 524-527 and "The Chest of Drawers in America, 1635-1730: A Postscript," Winterthur Portfolio 20: 1 (January 1985), pp. 34-40; Ward, American Case Furniture, pp. 101-102, 377-378. Construction details for this group were taken from Ward's descriptions. The cupboard illustrated by Kane in plate XXII, the Andrews Cupboard, has turnings similar, though more bulbous in the columnar section, to those on the Group IIa chests.

have been attributed to localities up the Connecticut River and eastern Massachusetts.⁹² Additionally, the abstracted fleur-de-lys motif on Ila chest #8 is related to carved equivalents on a group of six “Hadley” chests traced to Northampton, Massachusetts.⁹³

These features merely indicate a northern Connecticut or Massachusetts influence rather than origin for the Group II chests as more concrete features argue for a coastal Connecticut origin. The predominant wood used in the Group II chests, tulip, grew in abundance along the Connecticut shoreline. Also, as mentioned, Group Ila chest #4 was found near Branford. Furthermore, the initials, ‘E Y,’ on Group Ila chest #12 were uncommon and only correspond to two women in Connecticut from 1690-1720. Both were named Elizabeth Yale and lived along the coast between New Haven and Guilford.⁹⁴ The evidence thus indicates that Group II chests were made along the coast, but by a maker who had trained in northern Connecticut or Massachusetts. Finally, although specific makers cannot be identified, the list in Appendix A, with Kane’s and Trent’s previous compilations, provides possible individuals.⁹⁵

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⁹²Sunflower chests #17 and #26 have this feature. For other examples, see Ward, American Case Furniture, pp.103-105 and Brock Jobe and Myrna Kaye, New England Furniture: The Colonial Era (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), p. 105.

⁹³Trent, catalogue entry, New England Begins, vol. II, pp. 209-210.

⁹⁴Research provided by Kevin M. Sweeney. The two Elizabeth Yale’s are as follows:
1. Elizabeth Yale (b. 1673 in Wallingford), dau. of Thomas Yale (1648?-1736) and Rebecca Gibbard Yale (1650-1687/8), who married William Chittenden of Guilford. 2. Elizabeth Yale (1667-1702), dau. of Thomas Yale (1616-1683) and Mary Turner Yale (d. 1704), who married Joseph Pardee of East Haven in 1688/9.

⁹⁵See footnote 76.

Group IIa and IIb chests, along with the Group I and Guilford chests, thus attest to the presence of at least three distinct workshops producing painted furniture in the Branford-Saybrook area during the early eighteenth century. The Group IIa and IIb shops operated with some degree of contact and, as the construction and decoration features demonstrate, separate from the Group I and Guilford shop or shops. The evidence also suggests that the Group I and II chests were made in dramatically different kinds of shops. The inconsistencies within the IIa and IIb groupings indicate that habits of workmanship were not upheld from one object to the next. Whereas the Sunflower, Group I, and Guilford chests attest to a prolific, well-established, and relatively tightly organized shop tradition, the Group II chests appear to have been the products of a group of loosely bound artisans. Nevertheless, their painted exteriors point to a shared source. In addition to certain construction details, the dependence upon paint for the primary mode of decoration indicates the influence of Continental European woodworkers.

IV. EUROPEAN SOURCES

Further investigation of the chests' construction and decorative features yields insights into their European sources. The painted chests in particular indicate Continental European aesthetics and craftsmanship. At the same time, the attributed makers of the Sunflower and Guilford chests both had heritages tied to France. Their backgrounds, coupled with significant similarities between the painted chests and three chests from the Channel Islands, lead to an exploration into the extent and nature of the presence of French-speaking settlers in early Connecticut.

*

Although scholarship has yet to locate a direct European antecedent for the decoration of Sunflower chests, previous studies have argued for English North Country, London, and possibly French origins. John T. Kirk published a table from Lancashire, in the north of England, whose rails and turned legs contain carved tulips with gouged markings similar to those on the outer panels of Sunflower chests.⁹⁶ The legs also contain flowers with rings of petals similar to those on the central panels of Sunflower chests. Trent supports this attribution by noting that similar turnings are found on furniture from those regions in America where North Country influences

⁹⁶Kirk, American Furniture and the British Tradition, figs. 295, 296, p. 116.

predominated.⁹⁷ As noted by Sweeney, however, and, in regard to those deemed “more normatively proportioned” by Trent, the turnings resemble London examples.⁹⁸ A third possibility is France. Benno M. Forman first argued that the central flowers were marigolds, emblems of the Huguenots.⁹⁹ Attempting to reconcile these various strains of evidence, scholars have posited that the maker who introduced these concepts to the Wethersfield area had moved at least once before arriving in America, either from the North Country or France, possibly via the Netherlands, to London.

Painted furniture in America has long been associated with Continental influences. The chests of the Pennsylvania Germans probably stand as the most widely-known examples of painted furniture in the American colonies. Their clear Germanic origins led early writers to connect painted decoration with Continental practices. In 1924, Wallace Nutting’s discussion of a Guilford chest of drawers (Guilford chest #1) included an association with German traditions.¹⁰⁰ Stating that painted furniture in seventeenth-century England was uncommon, R. W. Symonds claimed that its presence in America at the time was probably influenced by German or Netherlandish work.¹⁰¹ More recently, although Kirk has shown that

⁹⁷Trent, catalogue entry, New England Begins, vol. II, p. 267.

⁹⁸Sweeney, “Regions and the Study of Material Culture,” p. 11 and Trent, catalogue entry, American Furniture with Related Decorative Arts, p. 39.

⁹⁹Cited in Trent, catalogue entry, American Furniture with Related Decorative Arts, pp. 37, 39, footnotes 5, 6.

¹⁰⁰Nutting, Furniture of the Pilgrim Century (1924 ed.), p. 124; cited in Trent, “A Channel Islands Parallel,” p. 76.

¹⁰¹R. W. Symonds, letter to Newton Case Brainard, 22 August, 1941.

England produced paint-decorated furniture since the medieval era, English furniture historians have upheld Symonds's claim, asserting that painted decoration, as a primary versus secondary mode of ornament, was not prevalent in England until the mid-nineteenth century and was principally the work of itinerant craftsmen, such as gypsies.¹⁰²

Specific features found on the Guilford and Group II chests also suggest Continental origins. Instead of using nails to join the drawer bottom to the underside of the drawer sides and back, the maker of Group IIa chest #4 used wooden pegs--a feature associated with German craftsmanship.¹⁰³ Additionally, the top and bottom moldings on the same chest's drawer front are created from the same stock as the drawer front. The four side moldings are applied, but the maker plowed the drawer front to create the top and bottom projections, simulating applied panel moldings. Entailing extra work in the additional planing required, this method is indicative of Continental workmanship.¹⁰⁴ Finally, Trent asserts that raised panels have "strong Continental baroque overtones;" such panels are found on the joined Guilford chests and on the drawer facades of Group II chests #7 and #12. They

¹⁰²Kirk, American Furniture and the British Tradition, pp. 44-82; Christopher Gilbert, "Two Guernsey Painted Chests," Regional Furniture Society Newsletter no. 2 (Summer 1994), p. 10.

¹⁰³Forman, "German Influences on Pennsylvania Furniture," Arts of the Pennsylvania Germans, Catherine Hutchins, ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1983), pp. 115, 123, 125, 126, 128; Edward S. Cooke Jr., "New Netherlands' Influence on Furniture of the Housatonic Valley," The Impact of New Netherlands upon the Colonial Long Island Basin, Joshua W. Lane, ed. (New Haven, CT: The Yale-Smithsonian Seminar on Material Culture, 1993), pp. 41-42.

¹⁰⁴Roger Gonzales, conversation with author, 10 January, 1994.

also appear on two early Connecticut chairs and, as Kirk notes, were uncommon in England before 1700.¹⁰⁵

Trent has made similar connections between construction features and Continental practices in a discussion of other groups of painted furniture from Connecticut. One group reveals such influences by the manner in which the feet were attached to the carcass of the chest. Now lost, the feet were in all likelihood attached to separate cleats, a practice found in Dutch-American examples.¹⁰⁶ At least one other painted chest attributed to Connecticut also uses this type of construction. It is painted in white, blue, and orange, and its backboards, moldings, and drawers are held together with wooden pegs, a method which, as noted, suggests Continental practices.¹⁰⁷ More specifically, Trent has recently argued that French or French-speaking immigrants may have been responsible for the presence of Continental influences. Lewis Lyron, a Huguenot who emigrated to Milford and died in 1746, left an estate that included a variety of pigments and equipment for their mixing. Trent speculates that Lyron may have decorated a group of chests from the Milford area.¹⁰⁸

Other individuals with French heritages and associated with furniture production or decoration include Peter Blin and Charles Guillam, the

¹⁰⁵Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," p. 83; Kirk, American Furniture and the British Tradition, figs. 228, 648, pp. 93-94, 216.

¹⁰⁶Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," pp. 81, 82, 87.

¹⁰⁷Christie, Manson and Woods International, Inc., Important American Furniture, Silver, Folk Art and Decorative Arts, auction catalogue, sale 7710, 23 June, 1993 (New York: Christie, Manson and Woods International, Inc., 1993), lot 139.

¹⁰⁸Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," p. 82.

attributed makers of the Sunflower and Guilford chests. In 1904, Henry Stiles, the antiquarian historian of Wethersfield and Windsor, identified Blin as of "French (prob. Huguenot) origin."¹⁰⁹ Citing Jon Butler, Schoelwer points out that Blin's arrival before 1685 indicates that he was not a Huguenot, but, if of French extraction, was most likely from the Channel Islands or northern France. Schoelwer provides additional evidence for Blin's non-English background. In the 1690s, Blin acted as attorney for two Huguenots in Wethersfield in the 1690s. Unlike other Wethersfield residents whose wills contained real estate, Blin distributed all of his property to his sons before he died, suggesting a divergent heritage.¹¹⁰ Charles Guillam's ties to French origins are more evident; he was born on the Channel Island of Jersey in 1671.¹¹¹

Guillam's, and possibly Blin's, ties to the Channel Islands warrant an investigation of Channel Islands furniture. The evidence from three Guernsey chests reveals general similarities in decoration to the Guilford chests. In "A Channel Islands Parallel for the Eighteenth-Century Connecticut Chests Attributed to Charles Guillam," Trent discusses the chest dated 1754 in fig. 40. Though noting divergences in decoration and construction, Trent offers the chest as a "cognate" for the Guilford chests.¹¹² Two other examples reveal that the penchant for floral painted decoration

¹⁰⁹Sherman W. Adams and Henry R. Stiles, The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut (New York: Grafton Press, 1904), vol. I, p. 104.

¹¹⁰Schoelwer, "Connecticut Sunflower Furniture," p. 27.

¹¹¹See footnote 31.

¹¹²Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," pp. 85, 87.

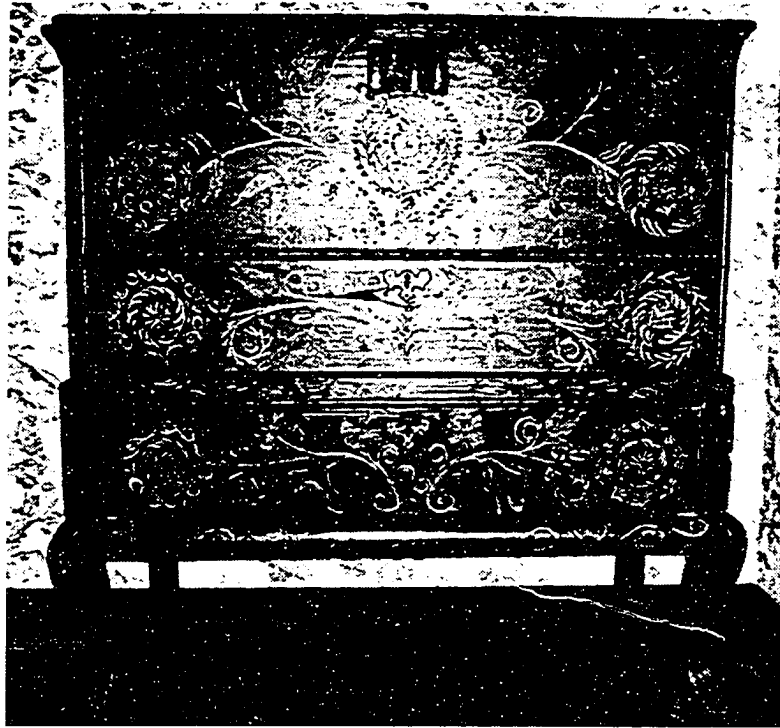
was well-established on Guernsey. One is almost identical in form to the 1754 example (fig. 41) and the other, a chest with one drawer is from the late seventeenth-century (fig. 42). All three chests are similarly painted with floral motifs that include medallions, roses, carnations, and tulips or possibly lilies.¹¹³ Interestingly, all three have their sides daubed with red and white dots. The feature that bears closest resemblance to the Guilford chests is the scroll work found on the bottom rail of the two later chests (figs. 40b, 41b). Similar scrolls are found surrounding the drawers, and front and side panels of several Guilford chests. These Channel Islands chests do not provide a direct link to the Guilford chests, but may indicate one of the sources for floral painted furniture in early New England.

The construction of these chests, however, bears little resemblance to the Guilford chests. Nevertheless, their drawer construction is remarkably similar to the Group II chests (fig. 43). Mapped in table 7, most of these shared features are commonly found in early New England joinery and may be coincidental, but one feature in particular--the drawer back fitting in between the sides, either with butted, rabbeted joints or in channels--is rare, suggesting a possible relationship.¹¹⁴ Table 7 includes the evidence from another chest with Channel Islands associations. Under the heading "Jersey," this chest of drawers has been attributed to a Jersey woodworker, working in Boston in the early eighteenth century.¹¹⁵ Although painted, it lacks floral decoration; its

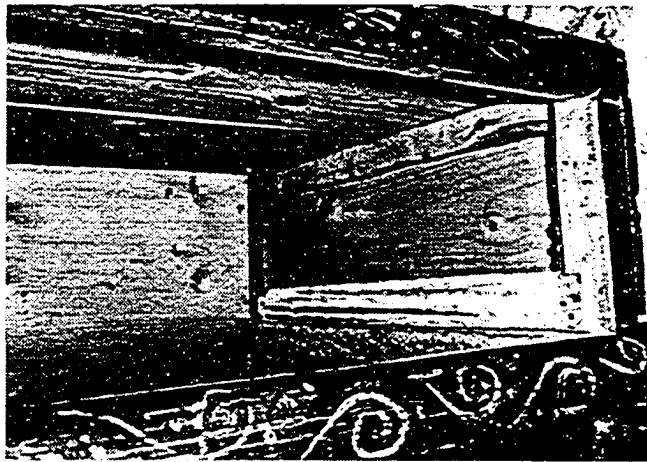
¹¹³The two later chests are illustrated and discussed in Christopher Gilbert, "Two Guernsey Painted Chests," cover and pp. 10-11.

¹¹⁴Kane, Furniture of the New Haven Colony, p. 57.

¹¹⁵The attribution was made by Benno M. Forman, cited by Trent, conversation with author, 8 November, 1994. Forman's speculation is supported by the chest of drawers' similarities (in drawer construction) to the Guernsey chests.

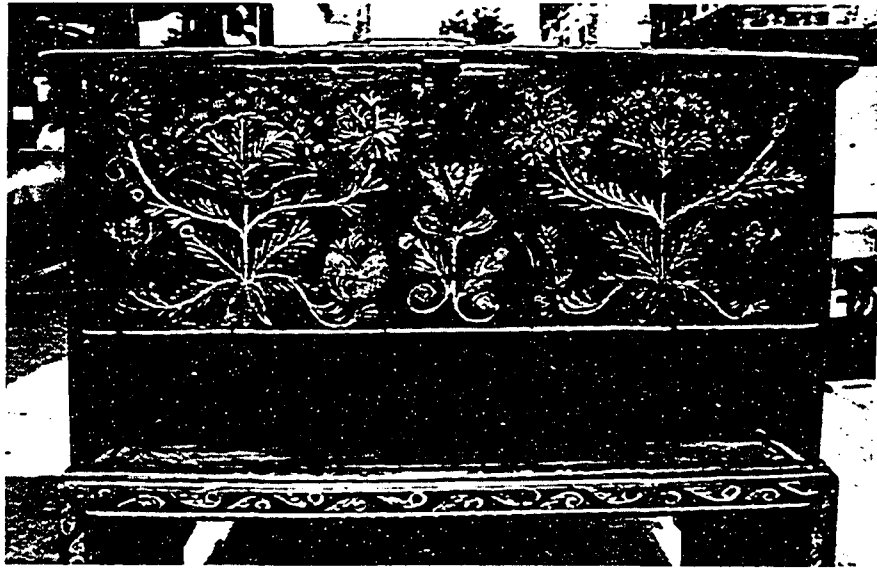


40a. Chest-on-stand, "RBH 1754," Guernsey.
Guernsey Museums and Galleries, Guernsey, Great Britain.
H: 41 W: 40 D: 21.



40b. Detail of rails.

Figure 40: Guernsey chest-on-stand, 1754.



41a. Chest-on-stand, mid-eighteenth century, Guernsey.
James McWhirter Antiques Ltd., London, Great Britain. Dimensions not available.



41b. Detail of rails.

Figure 41: Guernsey chest-on-stand, mid-eighteenth century.

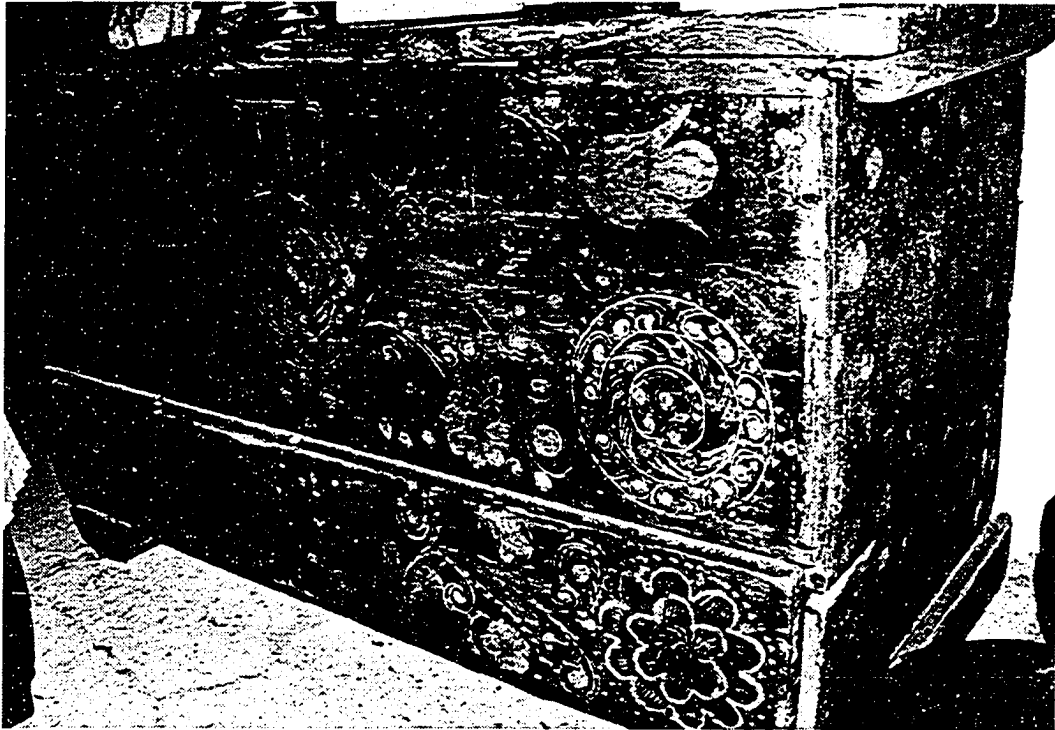
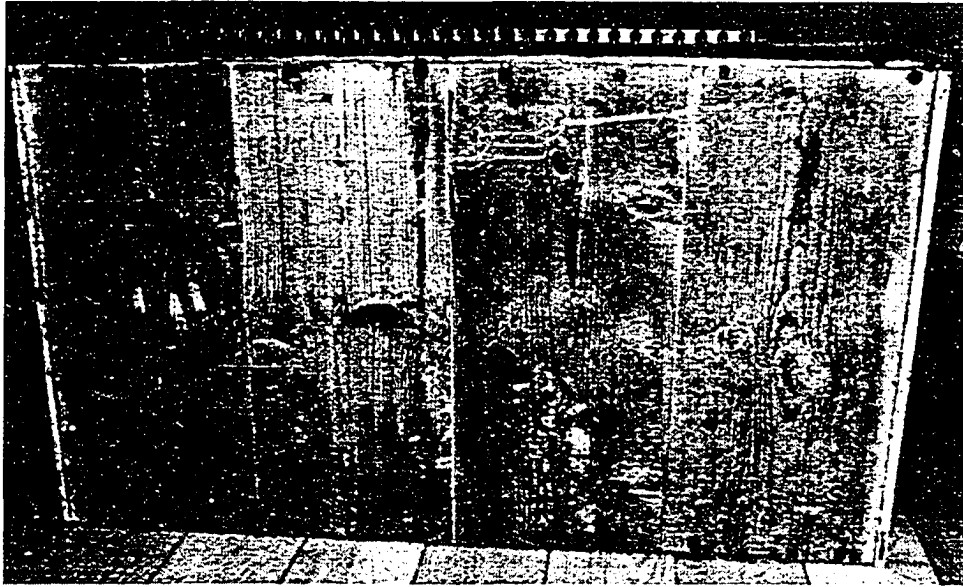
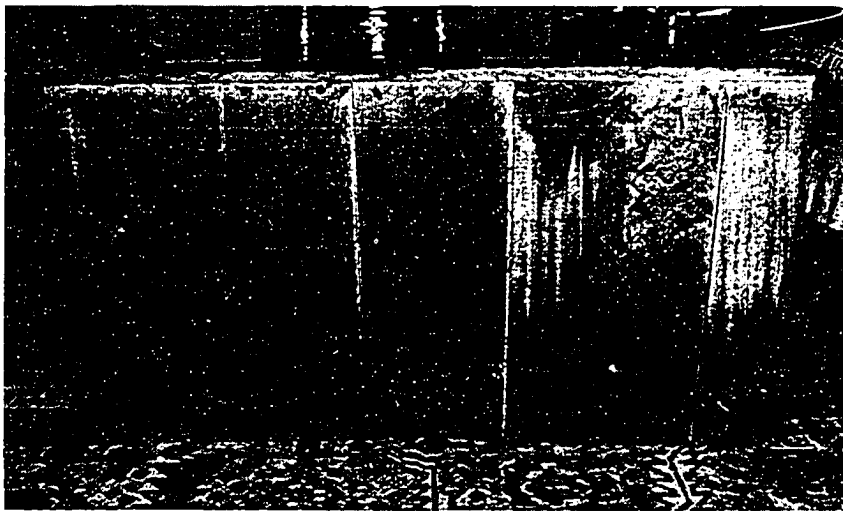


Figure 42: Guernsey chest with drawer, late-seventeenth century.
Saumarez Park Folk Museum, Guernsey, Great Britain. Dimensions not available.



43a. Underside of drawer, Guernsey chest-on-stand, 1754.



43b. Underside of drawer, Group IIa chest #4.

Figure 43: Comparison of drawer construction of Guernsey and Group IIa chests.

drawer facades are painted all-over in red or blue and the same red and blue pigments were used for the circles that haphazardly cover its top.

These disparate connections to the Channel Islands complicate the Guillam attribution. As the only Channel Islander known to have made furniture in Connecticut in the early eighteenth century, Guillam may have been responsible for either the Guilford or Group II chests. Supporting the standard attribution to the Guilford chests are their provenances in Guilford, nearby Saybrook, and the mention of an unfinished case of drawers in Guillam's inventory, a form represented by Guilford chest #1. Group II chests' provenances are further from Saybrook—in Branford and East Haven, though possibly Guilford—and no case of drawers can be linked to the Group II shops. The lack of survivals or future discoveries, however, may discount the latter assertion. But the greatest supporting evidence for attributing Guillam to the Group II chests is the similarity in drawer construction, a more habitual and thus, more reliable index for attribution than decoration. Born in 1671, Guillam can be documented in Saybrook only as early as 1709.¹¹⁶ Guillam's movements and exact date of arrival in the New World are unknown, but, even if he traveled with his brother, Carteret in the 1690s, he was at least in his twenties when he arrived. With apprenticeships usually running from ages fourteen to twenty-one, Guillam was most likely trained before arriving in Saybrook, probably on the Channel Islands.

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¹¹⁶Others have noted that Guillam was in Saybrook in 1703. This date, however, corresponds to his brother, Carteret's, first purchase of land in Saybrook. Charles is listed on a debt list attached to John Parker's inventory from Saybrook in 1709. See footnote 70.

Whichever, if either, group was made by Guillam, his and the chests' connections to the Channel Islands lead to an investigation of French-speaking settlers in early New England.¹¹⁷ As a result of the Huguenot migration after 1685 and earlier migrations from the Channel Islands and present-day Belgium and northern France, there was a small, yet significant, number of French-speaking settlers in early New England. Their presence deserves attention as they appear to have included woodworkers who played an important role in the appearance of early eighteenth-century interiors, possibly introducing the concept of bright, polychrome furniture to the area.

In 1685, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, a decree of 1598 that permitted Protestant worship in France. Its revocation spurred one of the largest refugee movements in modern history. Facing extreme persecution in their native land, approximately 160,000 Huguenots fled to Protestant nations and enclaves, notably Holland and England. Most of the Huguenot refugees who arrived in America came through England, where they had largely settled in London.¹¹⁸ Once in America, the main group of Huguenots settled in Boston, rural and urban New York, and South Carolina.¹¹⁹ Closest to Connecticut were two brief settlements in Oxford, Massachusetts and Narragansett Country, Rhode Island. Established in the 1680s, both were

¹¹⁷The Dutch, settling in Connecticut and having considerable contact through trading networks, including those via the Channel Islands, could also be responsible for Continental influences. For Dutch influence in Connecticut furniture, see Cooke, "New Netherlands' Influence on Furniture of the Housatonic Valley."

¹¹⁸Jon Butler, The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 2, 26.

¹¹⁹Butler, The Huguenots in America, p. 6.

dispersed in the 1690s.¹²⁰ From these settlements as well as from groups in New Rochelle and Staten Island in New York, a few Huguenots settled in Connecticut. Although some concentrated in Hartford and Milford, the Connecticut settlers appear to have arrived in Connecticut separately, as individuals or in families.¹²¹ Their numbers were not extensive. Butler contends that in 1700 no more than two hundred Huguenots were present in New England, with less than twenty-five in Connecticut.¹²²

Though the greatest influx of French-speaking immigrants occurred after 1685, pockets of settlers came to America before the 1680s. Protestants had fled from France since the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572. The early refugees fled to England and to the Channel Islands. Though these Protestants, or their descendants, were not necessarily those who later came to America, inhabitants of the Channel Islands were closely allied with France. In their "language, laws and customs," they were "separated from Englishmen by broad cultural differences" and as such, were only "nominally subjects of the English crown."¹²³ In addition to some Walloons, residents of

¹²⁰For the Oxford Settlement see Butler, The Huguenots in America, pp. 63-64; Charles W. Baird, History of the Huguenot Emigration to America (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1885), vol. II, pp. 255-289; Bolton, C. W. History of Westchester County, vol. I, (New York: Chas. F. Roger, 1881), pp. 607-9; Mary de Witt Freeland, The Records of Oxford, Mass. (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1894), pp. 134-215. For the Narragansett Country settlement see Butler, The Huguenots in America, pp. 48, 55, 60-63; Baird, History of the Huguenot Emigration to America, vol. II, pp. 292-318.

¹²¹Baird, The History of the Huguenot Emigration to America, vol. I, pp. 171, 304 and vol. II, pp. 60, 103, 132, 144-46, 269, 330-36.

¹²²Butler, The Huguenots in America, p. 48.

¹²³David T. Konig, "A New Look at the Essex 'French': Ethnic Frictions and Community Tensions in Seventeenth-Century Essex County, Massachusetts," Essex Institute Historical Collections, 110: 3 (July 1974), p. 168.

present-day Belgium and northern France, Channel Islanders largely comprise the group of French-speaking settlers in British North America before 1685.¹²⁴

The Channel Islands had strong connections to the New World. Seafaring communities with special taxation privileges, the Channel Islands participated in the fishing trade in Newfoundland.¹²⁵ From the Newfoundland ports, as well as directly from the islands, they settled in New England. Channel Islanders were among the initial settlers of Marblehead, Massachusetts and later immigrants in the late seventeenth century.¹²⁶ In the 1670s, a group of Jerseyans settled in nearby Salem and prospered from their trade with Jersey.¹²⁷

Besides the Guillam's and possibly the elder Blin, other Channel Islanders migrated to Connecticut. Marion G. Turk compiled a list of Channel Island surnames that are found in American records. Several of these appear on Guilford and East Guilford's tax lists of 1714/15. Of the 205 heads of households, 17 had Channel Island names.¹²⁸ Furthermore, two

¹²⁴Butler, The Huguenots in America, p. 43.

¹²⁵In 1204, the King of England was forced to cede Normandy to the French monarch. As part of an agreement, the Channel Islands remained subjects of the British crown and were granted tax-free trading privileges, which are largely still in effect today.

¹²⁶Heyrman, Commerce and Culture, pp. 214, 245.

¹²⁷Konig, "A New Look at the Essex 'French'," *passim*.

¹²⁸"Guilford Town Rat[e]," Unpublished tax list, 1714/15, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT. Marion G. Turk, The Quiet Adventurers in North America (Detroit, MI: Harlo Press, 1983), p. 45. The number 17 is a conservative estimate. Not included are the 7 Bishop families, as some were from England. There may also have been Channel Islands women who, unless widowed, would not be included on the tax lists.

families associated with the Group I tradition had roots in the Channel Islands. One of the Guilford chests, #13 (fig. 24a) descended in the Munger family of Guilford. Turk suggests that "Munger" is a corruption of "Mauger," a family from the Islands. Furthermore, two of Peter Blin, Jr.'s daughters and Deborah Stanley, widow of Thomas, married into the Bishop family of woodworkers. Although several Bishop families in New England came from England, one strand hailed from Guernsey.¹²⁹

Once in America, French-speaking immigrants appear to have assimilated rapidly into the larger English society. The traditional and most-accepted view today is that the early French settlers adapted quickly to English society in New England and, as such, did not form ethnically cohesive groups. With regard to the Huguenots, Jon Butler argues for this perspective:

By 1750 only two weak French Protestant congregations still existed in the colonies, the vast majority of Huguenots were taking non-Huguenot spouses in marriage, and no discernible Huguenot strand existed anywhere in colonial political or economic life.¹³⁰

Though the Oxford and Narragansett settlements comprised cohesive groups of French settlers, their small numbers and short duration have led historians to regard them as relatively insignificant and of limited influence upon the larger society. The Oxford settlement was "simply a homogeneous French enclave in an otherwise homogeneous English society" and "did not endanger the purity of other places" in Massachusetts.¹³¹ Having fled

¹²⁹Turk, *The Quiet Adventurers in North America*, pp. 104-5, 472.

¹³⁰Butler, *The Huguenots in America*, p. 5.

¹³¹Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 107-108.

prosecution from a repressive regime, the Calvinistic Huguenots encountered sympathy from the New England Puritans who may have been reminded of their own experiences. Soon after the Huguenots' initial arrival, the government, then the Dominion of New England, proclaimed that they be given full rights.¹³²

The chests and Guillam's evident success as a furniture maker attest to acceptance of French-speaking woodworkers by their English neighbors. Taken separately, the chests and Guillam's inventory suggest that products made, or influenced, by those of French associations were readily accepted into the larger society. Comprising at least thirty objects, the Guilford, related Guilford, Group I, and Group II chests--in addition to the other groups of painted furniture with evidence of Continental craftsmanship--form a substantial group of surviving furniture from early New England. Whether made by Continental European or English woodworkers influenced by their methods, the painted chests of early Connecticut reveal that certain Continental-inspired products were popular among a largely English population.

Although Guillam may not have made the chests under discussion, he was a successful woodworker. The long list of tools in Guillam's inventory contains some of the most elaborate and functionally-specific tools found in pre-1730 inventories. With particular profiles, Guillam's molding planes, such as ogee and astragal planes, could only have been used for specialized tasks.¹³³ The relative expense of such items indicates that Guillam prospered

¹³²Konig, "A New Look at the Essex 'French'," p. 177.

¹³³Guillam's tools are discussed by Trent, "A Channel Islands Parallel," p. 83.

in his trade. His success naturally depended upon the patronage of his English neighbors and implies his acceptance and participation in at least one aspect of community life.

However, Guillam's acceptance as a provider of interior furnishings may not have extended to full integration into his English community. Evidence suggests that although the Puritans and French-speaking settlers may have shared Protestant religions and persecution experiences, Puritan intolerance for those unlike themselves engendered discrimination toward their "French" neighbors. The frequent raids upon frontier New England towns by Native-Americans and French Catholics certainly led to suspicions against those with French associations. Passed in 1692, a law required French settlers to pledge their allegiance to William and Mary and subjected them to searches for arms. The law's enactment predicated frequent raids by the English upon the Huguenot settlement in Narragansett, eventually leading to its disbandment.¹³⁴

The experiences of Channel Islanders in Marblehead and Salem, Massachusetts also indicate hostility toward French-speaking settlers. David T. Konig contends that by living in the south side of Salem, importing indentured servants from Jersey, resisting the authority of the Puritan church, and having a propensity for litigation, the Jerseyans were antagonistic toward the English community and, beyond their "French" background, formed a visibly identifiable group.¹³⁵ Channel Islands solidarity is evident in a Marblehead woman's choice of a moderator for a dispute; Mary Tucker

¹³⁴Baird, The Huguenot Emigration to America, vol. II, pp. 304-5.

¹³⁵Konig, "A New Look at the Essex 'French'," p. 177.

asserted that she would accept anyone in this role "'except a Jerseyman,' who would favor his countryman."¹³⁶ The comment also suggests that, though ruled by the same monarch, English persons and Channel Islanders did not consider themselves compatriots.

Though largely pointing to an assimilation interpretation, evidence from the chests and the attributed makers also offers possible evidence of ethnic cohesion. With its connections to foreign, possibly "French" sources, painted furniture from the Connecticut coast may have symbolized an ethnic heritage to its makers or users. Furthermore, the Blin's and Guillam may have sought contact with those with French associations. Peter Blin, Sr.'s participation in court affairs was limited to three cases in which he acted as attorney for two Huguenots, Nicholas Ayrault and Abraham Tourtelot of Massachusetts.¹³⁷ If the Blin, Guillam, and possibly Blin, Jr. attributions could be affirmed, the chests themselves would point most significantly to the contact between those of "French"--or possibly Channel Islands--extraction. Since such identification is, at best, only highly suggestive, the similarities among the chests merely represent possible evidence for ethnic cohesion.

¹³⁶Cited in Heyrman, Commerce and Culture, p. 214.

¹³⁷Tourtelot, who was denied inhabitancy in Wethersfield, also had dealings with Philip English, a merchant from Jersey in Salem, Massachusetts. See Schoelwer, "Connecticut Sunflower Furniture," p. 27.

V. CONCLUSION

Twelve painted chests from coastal Connecticut thus offer considerable information not only about their immediate contexts of production, but also about the larger community. In different ways, they suggest patterns of both continuity and change that are most evident, not in documentary sources, but in the plethora of details that combine to form a piece of furniture.

With one chest significantly different from the next, the Group II shops are marked by variation and change in both appearance and methods of fabrication. Change is also evident in the Group I shop tradition--yet the change occurs within a larger context of continuity. The makers who participated in the tradition moved from central to coastal Connecticut, crossed stylistic boundaries, and interacted with, or incorporated, culturally divergent woodworkers. At any one of these junctures, they could have discarded old habits and taken on the ways of new peoples and ideas. Yet, features such as the joining of the backboards and the bottom of the chest sections and the scratch marks underwent no modification. Furthermore, those changes that did occur--in the drawer construction and decoration--were adopted gradually and subsumed within past practices. This study has focused on those details of the chests that best reveal the sources of production, whether places or people. Other details, such as the initials and

dates on the Group I chests, could similarly tell much about who owned and used the chests and the significance of their ownership in a particular region.

Both groups of painted chests--the Group I/Guilford and Group II examples--document the presence of non-English craftsmen in early eighteenth-century Connecticut. Continental Europeans, well accounted for in other colonies such as New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, do not figure prominently in New England's past histories. Though the English certainly predominated in the region, the status of "foreign" settlers deserves refinement. Not simply a homogeneous society unaffected by the presence of a few "foreigners," early New England society confronted those unlike themselves. French-speaking settlers left few records describing their experiences, but an array of painted furniture stands as testimony to their presence and influence within early communities along the Connecticut shoreline.

APPENDIX A: WOODWORKERS IN BRANFORD, GUILFORD,
KILLINGWORTH, AND SAYBROOK
(as discerned from c. 1700-1720 probate inventories)

The following list consists of those persons whose probate inventories contained sufficient tools for pursuing woodworking trades. All the inventories are contained on microfilm in the Archives, History, and Genealogy Unit at the Connecticut State Library in Hartford, CT. For the years prior to 1720, those for Branford and Guilford are listed alphabetically under the "New Haven Probate District," while those for Killingworth and Saybrook are under the "New London Probate District." For additional sources, the following abbreviations are used:

FNHC: Kane, Patricia E. Furniture of the New Haven Colony: The Seventeenth-Century Style. New Haven, CT: The New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1973.

H&C: Trent, Robert F. Hearts and Crowns: Folk Chairs of the Connecticut Coast, 1720-1840. New Haven, CT: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1977.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Additional Sources</u>
Branford			
Ebenezer Stent	d. 1706	Cooper	
Ebenezer Frisbe	d. 1714	Cooper?	
Guilford			
Lt. Nathaniel Stone	1648-1709	Carpenter, joiner	<i>H&C, p. 97; FNHC, p. 90.</i>
Sgt. Joseph Dudley	1643-1712	Cooper, joiner	<i>H&C, p. 97.</i>
Killingworth			
Peter Farnum	d. 1704	Joiner	
Daniel Clarke	d. 1704	Woodworker?	

John Kelcy	d. 1709	Carpenter, joiner, wheelwright
Timothy Stevens	d. 1712	Carpenter
John Griswold	d. 1717	Woodworker?
William Kelcy	d. 1718	Joiner
Samuel Buell	1641-1720	Carpenter, turner <i>H&C, p. 97.</i>
Saybrook		
Samuel Bushnell	d. 1689	Turner, joiner
Thomas Spencer	d. 1699	Carpenter
Samuel Bates	d. 1699	Cooper
John Bull	d. 1700	Carpenter
John Fenner	d. 1709	Joiner
William Bushnell	d. 1711	Joiner, cooper
Zachariah Sanford	d. 1711	Joiner
Robert Chapman	d. 1712	Carpenter
Joseph Lees	d. 1716	Joiner
John Shipman	d. 1718	Cooper

APPENDIX B: GUILFORD CHESTS
LISTED ACCORDING TO DESIGN TYPES

<u>Form</u>	<u>Construction</u>	<u>Owner (if known) and Sources</u>
Type 1 (thick vines, crowns, fleur-de-lys, and floral motifs): 12 examples		
Chest of drawers (Chest #1)	Joined	Wadsworth Atheneum. <i>Jacobs, fig. 15; Kirk I, cat. 35;</i> <i>Kirk II, fig. 165; Fales I, fig. 22;</i> <i>Warren I, cover and fig. 5;</i> <i>DAPC, 87.209.</i>
Chest of drawers	Joined	Historic Deerfield, Inc. <i>Fales II, fig. 368; DAPC, 66.2114.</i>
Chest with one drawer (Chest #7)	Joined	Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum. <i>Warren I, fig. 1; Kirk I, cat. 40;</i> <i>DAPC, 64.991.</i>
Chest with missing drawer(s)	Joined	Acton Library. <i>Warren I, fig. 4;</i> <i>DAPC, 64.986.</i>
Chest with one drawer (Chest #10)	Joined	<i>Warren I, fig. 2; Kirk I, cat. 39;</i> <i>DAPC, 64.982.</i>
Chest with one drawer (Chest #13)	Joined	Henry Whitfield Historical Museum. <i>Warren I, fig. 3;</i> <i>DAPC, 64.984.</i>
Chest with one drawer	Joined	The Henry Ford Museum. <i>Fales I, fig. 28.</i>
Chest with no drawers	Board	<i>Fales I, fig. 27.</i>
Chest with one drawer (Chest #6)	Board	Private Collection.

Chest with no drawers	Board	<i>Warren I, fig. 6; Kirk I, cat. 37; DAPC, 64.981.</i>
High Chest (Chest #2)	Board	Winterthur Museum. <i>Kirk II, fig. 168; Fales I, fig. 29; Bjerkoe, p. 24; DAPC, 64.971.</i>
Chest-on-frame	Board	Metropolitan Museum of Art. <i>Fales I, fig. 26; Kirk I, cat. 36; DAPC, 69.338.</i>

Type 2 (small and delicate motifs): 2 examples

Chest with one drawer (Chest #5)	Board	Winterthur Museum. <i>Jacobs, cat. 9; DAPC, 64.968.</i>
Chest with one drawer	Board	Metropolitan Museum of Art. <i>DAPC, 70.160.</i>

Type 3 (larger and more uniform motifs): 2 examples

Chest with no drawers	Board	Winterthur Museum. <i>Fales I, fig. 33; Bjerkoe, p. 24; DAPC, 64.972.</i>
Chest with two drawers	Board	<i>Warren II, fig. 8; DAPC, 64.988.</i>

Individual types (each has different style): 5 examples

Chest with one drawer	Board	Metropolitan Museum of Art. <i>Kirk I, cat. 42; DAPC, 69.337.</i>
Chest with missing drawer(s)	Joined	Yale University Art Gallery. <i>Ward, cat. 32; Kirk I, cat. 41.</i>
Chest with no drawers	Board	<i>Warren II, fig. 12; DAPC, 64.978.</i>
Chest with one drawer	Joined	New York State Historical Association. <i>Baker, p. 66;</i> <i>DAPC, 70.762.</i>
Miniature chest	Board	<i>Fales I, fig. 31; Kirk I, cat. 38.</i>

Abbreviations

- Baker: Baker, Muriel L. "Decorated Furniture and Furnishings." The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 25: 3 (July 1960): 65-73.
- Bjerkoe: Bjerkoe, Ethel Hall. "Charles Gillam -Cabinetmaker." Spinning Wheel 29: 4 (May 1973): 24-25.
- DAPC: Decorative Arts Photographic Collection, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.
- Fales I: Fales, Dean A., Jr. American Painted Furniture, 1660-1880. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972.
- Fales II: _____. The Furniture of Historic Deerfield. Deerfield, MA: Historic Deerfield, Inc., 1981.
- Jacobs: Jacobs, Catherine. Catalogue entry. In: A Place for Everything: Chests and Boxes in Early Colonial America. Barbara McClean Ward, ed. Winterthur, DE: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1986: 35-37.
- Kirk I: Kirk, John T. Connecticut Furniture: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1967.
- Kirk II: _____. American Furniture and the British Tradition to 1830. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982.
- Ward: Ward, Gerald W. R. American Case Furniture in the Mabel Brady Garvan and Other Collections at Yale University. New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 1988.
- Warren I: Warren, William L. "Were the Guilford Painted Chests Made in Saybrook?" The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 23: 1 (January 1958): 1-10.
- Warren II: _____. "More About Painted Chests." The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 23: 2 (April 1958): 50-60.

TABLE 1: Variation among Sunflower chests

	2	3	6	7	12	16	18	19	20	24	25	27	34	17	26
BACKBOARDS (All top backboards are framed):															
Bottom: In grooves in stiles	X	X	X	X	X	X ¹	* ²		*	X	X	*	X	*	X
Bottom: Nailed over stiles								X							
BOTTOM OF CHEST SECTION (All are joined to each other with V-joints):															
3 Boards: wide-narrow-wide	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
3 boards: wide-very narrow-wide		X													
3 boards of equal width			X								X				
4 boards															X
Sawn <u>in situ</u>	X	X	X	X	X		*		*	X	X	*	X	*	X

¹Although the bottom backboard is missing, evidence suggests that it ran in grooves in the stiles.

² The symbol * indicates those chests whose backboards were inaccessible.

TABLE 1 (continued)

	2	3	6	7	12	16	18	19	20	24	25	27	34	17	26
BOTTOM OF CHEST:															
None	X			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Butted into rails			X												
Rabbeted into rails															X
Nailed to underside of rails		X						X ¹							
DRAWERS:															
Bottom: 3 boards set parallel to front						X									
Bottom sawn <u>in situ</u>						X								X	
"V" scratches on drawer sides			X			X		X	X	X		X	X	X	

¹ The bottom board is missing, but nail holes indicate that the chest originally had one.

TABLE 2: Joining methods: Backboards and bottom of the chest sections in Sunflower, Group I, and Guilford joined chests with one drawer

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Sun.</u>	<u>Group I</u>					<u>Guilford</u>		
	S	2	6	11	3	1	7	10 ¹	13
BACKBOARDS:									
Top framed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bottom slides into grooves in stiles	X	X			X	X	X ²	X	X
Bottom nailed over stiles			X	X					
BOTTOM OF CHEST SECTION:									
3 boards: wide-narrow-wide	X	X							
3 boards of equal width				X	X		X	X	X
4-5 boards			X			X			
Sawn <u>in situ</u>	X			X	X			X	X
Joined with V-joints	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

¹Information for this chest is derived from photographs only.

²This bottom backboard is missing, but the absence of nail holes indicate that it was fitted in the usual manner.

TABLE 3: Wood use in Sunflower, Group I, and Guilford chests
(O = Oak, P = Pine, and T = Tulip)

<u>Boards</u>	<u>Sun.</u>	<u>Group I</u>					<u>Guilford:Joined</u>			<u>Guilford:Board</u>		
	S	2	6	11	3	1	7	13	1	5	6	2
Rails/Stiles	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	N/A	N/A	N/A
Front Panels	O	O	O	P	P	P	T	T	N/A	T	T	N/A
Side Panels	O	O	O	P	P	P	P	P	P	T	T	T
Backboards	P	P	P	P	P	P	T	T	P	T	P	P
Bottom of chest section	P	P	O	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	P	P	N/A
Drawer front	O	O	O	O	O	P	T	T	T	T	T	T
Drawer sides	O	O	O	O	O	P	O	T	T	T	P/T	T
Drawer back	P	O/P	P	P	P	P	T	P	T	T	T	P
Drawer bottom	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P/T

TABLE 4: Drawer construction in Sunflower, Group I, and Guilford chests

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Sun.</u>	<u>Group I</u>					<u>Guilford: Joined</u>			<u>Guilford: Board</u>		
	S	2	6	11	3	1	7	13	1	5	6	2
SUPPORT SYSTEM:												
Side-hung	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Runs on sides										X	X	X
DRAWER BOTTOM (all are set parallel to drawer front):												
One board	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			
Two boards: joined with lap- joints						X ¹				X	X	X
Fits into groove in drawer front	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Fits into rabbet in drawer front									X ²			
Fits into grooves in drawer front and sides							X	X	X	X	X	X

¹ This chest has two bottom boards, but they are butted rather than joined with a lap-joint.

² In the top three drawers, the drawer bottoms fit into grooves in the fronts and in the bottom two drawers, they fit into rabbets.

TABLE 4 (continued)

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Sun.</u>	<u>Group I</u>					<u>Guilford: Joined</u>			<u>Guilford: Board</u>		
	S	2	6	11	3	1	7	13	1	5	6	2
JOINTS:												
Front rabbeted to accept sides	X											
Front/Sides: Dovetailed		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1-2	1	1	1-2
Back rabbeted to accept sides	X	X ¹	X	X	X	X						
Back/Sides: Dovetailed		1					1	1	1-2	1	1	1-2
SCRATCHES ON DRAWER SIDES:												
"V" scratch	X											
" \" scratch		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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¹For the joining of the drawer sides to back, this chest has its top drawer rabbeted and its bottom drawer dovetailed.

TABLE 5: Joining methods: Backboards and bottom of the chest sections in Group II chests

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Group IIa</u>		<u>Group IIb</u>	
	4	8	9	10
BACKBOARDS:				
Top: Two framed panels	X	X		
Top: In grooves in stiles			X	X ¹
Bottom: Two framed panels with bottom rail	X			
Bottom: In grooves in stiles with no bottom rail		X	X	
BOTTOM OF THE CHEST SECTION:				
Three transverse boards			X	X
Five transverse boards	X	X		
Possibly tongue & groove			X	

¹This chest only has one backboard; it is fitted into grooves in the rear stiles with no bottom rail.

TABLE 6: Drawer construction in Group II chests¹

Feature	Group IIa		Group IIb	
	4	8	9	10
JOINTS--Front/Sides:				
2 Dovetails	X	X	X	
Front rabbeted				X
Back/Sides:				
Side rabbeted	X ²	X	X	
Back in channels	X			
Back butted inside sides				X
DRAWER BOTTOM:				
4-5 transverse boards with no bevels	X	X		
2-3 transverse boards, front beveled			X	X
Joined with lap joints	X	X		
Joined with tongue & groove joints			X	
Joined with spline joint				X
Fits into rabbet in front	X	X		
Fits into groove in front			X	X
Drawer locking mechanism			X	X

¹Photographs for Group IIa chest #12 indicate that the drawer sides and front are joined with two dovetails and that the bottom fits into a rabbet, or wide groove, in the drawer front.

²Proper left side fits into a rabbet, proper right side fits into a channel.

TABLE 7: Comparison of drawer construction in Group II, Channel Islands, and Guilford/ New Haven case furniture¹

<u>Feature</u>	<u>IIa</u>	<u>IIb</u>	<u>Ch. Is.</u>	<u>Jersey</u>	<u>G/ NH</u>
JOINTS--Front/Sides:					
Dovetails	X	X			X
Front rabbeted		X	X	X	X
Back/Sides:					
Side rabbeted	X				X
Back in channels	X				
Back butted inside sides		X	X	X	
DRAWER BOTTOM:					
4-5 transverse boards with no bevels	X		X		X
2-3 transverse boards, front beveled		X		X ²	
Joined with lap joints	X		X		X
Joined with tongue & groove joints		X		X	X
Joined with spline joint		X			
Fits into rabbet in front	X		X	X	X
Fits into groove in front	X	X			

¹For the IIa/IIb and "G/ NH" categories, a feature is marked if it is found in any of the examples (see Table 6 for variations for IIa/IIb). The categories "Ch. Is." (Channel Islands), "Jersey," and "G/ NH" (Guilford/ New Haven) refer to the chests discussed on pp. 95, 103, 108.

²The front edge is not beveled, although the sides have gradual bevels.

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