

JOURNAL
of
EARLY SOUTHERN
DECORATIVE ARTS

May, 1986
Volume XII, Number 1
The Museum of Early Southern
Decorative Arts

MESDA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Benefactor	*
Patron	\$500 and up
Sustaining	\$200 to \$499
Contributing	\$100 to \$199**
Corporate or Foundation	\$100 and up
Active.	\$ 25 to \$ 99
Joint	\$ 20
Individual	\$ 15***

*Persons who contribute valuable antiquities are considered Benefactors of MESDA. Once named a Benefactor, a person remains such for life and enjoys all the privileges of a Member of MESDA.

**A contribution of \$100.00 or more entitles the member to bring guests to the museum free of charge.

***Non-profit Institutions may subscribe to the *Journal* only, receiving two issues per annum at the rate of \$8.00.

Overseas members please add \$5.00 for airmail postage.

PRIVILEGES

Members of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts receive the *Journal* twice yearly in May and November, as well as the MESDA newsletter, the *Luminary*, which is published in February and August. Other privileges include advance notification of the classes and programs and lectures offered by the Museum, an Annual Member's Weekend with reports from the MESDA Research staff, a 10% discount on bookstore purchases, and free admission to the Museum.

The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts is owned and operated by Old Salem, Inc., the non-profit corporation that is responsible for the restoration and operation of Old Salem, Moravian Congregation Town founded in 1766. MESDA is an educational institution with the established purpose of collecting, preserving, documenting and researching representative examples of southern decorative arts and craftsmanship from the 1600s to 1820. The Museum exhibits its collection for public interest and study.

For further information, please write to MESDA, Box 10310, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108. Telephone (919) 722-6148.

JOURNAL
of
EARLY SOUTHERN
DECORATIVE ARTS

May, 1986
Volume XII, Number 1
Published twice yearly in
May and November by
The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts

Copyright © 1986 Old Salem, Inc.
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108

Printed by Hall Printing Company
High Point, North Carolina

Contents

<i>Analysis of an Enigma</i>	1
------------------------------	---

JAMES R. and MARILYN S. MELCHOR

<i>A Problem of Identification: Philadelphia and Baltimore Furniture Styles in the Eighteenth Century</i>	21
---	----

LUKE BECKERDITE



Figure 1. Clothes press, walnut and yellow pine, eastern Virginia, 1690-1710. HOA: 57 $\frac{1}{8}$ ", WOA: 60 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", DOA: 20". MESDA accession 2024-1.

Editor's Note: The study of material culture, in whatever form it may occur, calls for the application of research methodology which may cross the boundaries of several disciplines, including historiography, anthropology, and archaeology. The decorative arts historian may fervently wish for supporting primary documentation and the existence of parallel traditions in style and technology in order to establish the origin of an object, but such obvious indices may be either fragmentary or even non-existent. In such instances, the object itself becomes the primary document. How well objects are used as documents depends heavily upon the perception and intuition of those who attempt to interpret the source and meaning of any unique object, using only the physical attributes of the object itself as a guide. The article which follows demonstrates the application of just this sort of intuitive study; the authors considered every aspect of a very unusual press, and even pursued their study in Britain in search of allied furniture forms.

Analysis of an Enigma

JAMES R. AND MARILYN S. MELCHOR

MESDA has in its collection an unusual walnut and yellow pine clothes press (Fig. 1). This late seventeenth or early eighteenth century press was found in eastern Virginia by the noted early dealer in southern furniture, J. K. Beard of Richmond. Little else is known about its history other than it was acquired from his estate sale in 1940.¹ Quite possibly, this piece is the earliest surviving American example of this general form, a form frequently mentioned in eighteenth century wills and inventories, and perhaps described by a variety of names such as "Dutch cupboard," "old Cupboard," "greate Dutch Cash," and "large wenscott Cupboard"² in seventeenth century Virginia documents. The primary purpose of this article is to establish the place of this press in the study of early southern material culture. Another important goal, however, is to fully document this piece through an examination of physical details which lead to sound deductions or at least useful speculation. It is hoped that this approach will stimulate other students to generate additional information about the press.

Normally, a piece of furniture is characterized by grouping it stylistically with a recognized regional form. More detailed study generally consists of refining where such a piece fits within a regional group. In this case, however, the item apparently is unique, and stylistic grouping is not feasible. Consequently, the decorative and construction details of the MESDA press must be analyzed individually and carefully in an effort to learn as much as possible about its design inspiration, the ethnological background and training of its maker, and how its details relate, if at all, to those of other pieces.

Beginning with its overall form and appearance, this piece has two asymmetrical doors enclosing two separate compartments. The right-hand compartment is fitted on three sides with a peg rail (Fig. 2) for hanging clothes. The left compartment has two shelves for flat storage (Fig. 3). Very generally, the form represents what the English and southern colonists would have called a clothes press, the term used in this article, or “hangar” press. The Germans used the term *schränk*, the Dutch, *kast* (kas),³ and the French, *armoire*, all terms known in the seventeenth century. However, this piece does not comfortably fit the familiar variations of any of these national forms.



Figure 2. Detail of the peg rail in the right interior. The details which follow are all taken from the MESDA press 2024-1.

The boldness of its proportions certainly gives the press a continental European feel; however, its restrained cornice argues strongly against pure German or Dutch influence. Instead, the press appears to be a hybrid which incorporates features from several countries as well as from other types of furniture. It is a non-academic combination of familiar features. For example, the canted corners appear to relate directly to the canted cupboard sections on numerous English court cupboards and their American counterparts. The same is true with regard to the applied split



Figure 3. Detail of the left compartment shelves and the interior surface of the door.

spindles, a predominantly English feature. The diamond-shaped lozenge, however, was a decorative feature widely used by the Romans and is found archaeologically throughout their former Empire, including France and England. This decorative feature persisted, and frequently is found adorning continental and English furniture late into the seventeenth century. The lozenge is also familiar on American examples which show various national influences well into the eighteenth century. It is interesting to note that the lozenge is frequently encountered on British furniture from the south of England and from the Yorkshire area, regions heavily populated by the Romans.

Variations of the double moldings above and below the doors (Fig. 1) of the MESDA press are occasionally incorporated in seventeenth century French architecture and furniture, but occur less frequently on English furniture of the same period. The raised

panel was widely used in France by the middle of the seventeenth century, and came into favor in England during the last half of the same century.⁴ In America, the raised panel made its appearance by the end of the seventeenth century, and by the second quarter of the eighteenth century was used extensively in both architecture and furniture. The asymmetry of the doors, case stiles, and canted corners apparently has no continental, English, or American parallel.



Figure 4. View of the bottom.



Figure 5. View of the top.

In assessing the visual impact of this piece of furniture, one cannot help wonder if it currently stands at full height. Until recently, it was sitting upon four unattached turned feet that were supplied with the piece at Mr. Beard's sale.⁵ In examining the underside of the press (Fig. 4), it is obvious that it was never fitted with feet. The case construction — that is, front stiles of radically different widths, and no rear stiles, does not lend itself to the piece having rested on extended case stiles. Therefore, it either sat directly upon the floor or was supported on a stand or base of some fashion. Figure 4 also clearly shows a relatively clean surface on the bottom without extensive wear or stains. The small

amount of such attrition evident could have been acquired during nineteenth and twentieth century use. In addition, the base molding (Fig. 1) is largely original, and does not show the heavy wear or damage that would be expected after sitting on the floor for nearly three centuries, where the base would have been subjected to sliding, brooms, liquids, shoes, chairs, and insects. Therefore, it is unlikely that this press sat directly on the floor. It is probable, though not conclusive, that it was supported on a relatively low stand similar to the chests and cabinets on stands so popular in France and England during the seventeenth century. Another reasonable possibility would have been an enclosed base fitted with one or more drawers and resting on low, turned feet or even a heavy bed molding. If this indeed were the case, the piece could have been considered a prototype of the common clothes press of the eighteenth century. The press is now $57\frac{1}{8}$ inches in height. With that dimension as a given factor, a range of base heights may be extrapolated through study of the various proportional design moduli in use during the period. The five-unit modulus that is incorporated in the Doric and Tuscan orders might yield a case-to-base ratio of 3:2, although a ratio as high as 4:1 is possible. The latter would have resulted in a base only



Figure 6. Detail of the left door, center stile, and upper rail molding.

about 15 inches in height, for a total height of 72 inches for the press. Other common proportional units such as the root two rectangle (1:42:1) and the $1\frac{1}{4}$ rectangle (1:25:1) would have yielded 24-inch and 19-inch bases respectively, with total respective heights of 81 and 76 inches. It is important to understand that French, British, and American artisans did indeed employ such classical systems in determining proportions of the



Figure 7. Overall view of the back.

elements of both architecture and furniture; such things were seldom haphazard. If the MESDA press originally was fitted with a stand, it may have consisted of a simple, molded, upper frame which accepted the press section, six turned legs similar in design to and probably incorporating elements from the large turned spindles. In this conjectural form, flat stretchers may have connected the legs; the feet would have been turned.

Construction details such as dovetails and case framing in addition to the applied decorations indicate the general approach of a cabinetmaker rather than a house joiner. However, the level of skill in execution and attention to detail is below that of a formally-trained master craftsman. The piece was sturdily built with care but has an unsophisticated or rural rather than an urban feel.



Figure 8. Detail of the left side, turned split spindle, base and cornice moldings.

The yellow pine bottom and top boards are dovetailed into the walnut case sides with the large dovetails typical of late seventeenth century work. As Figure 4 illustrates, the canted corner boards are nailed directly to the top and bottom boards, while the top and bottom case rails and the ends of the outside case stiles are pinned with slender diamond-shaped walnut trunnels

or pins. The press is fastened throughout with a combination of wrought nails, the diamond-shaped trunnels, and round pins used for securing mortise and tenon joints (Fig. 6). Slender diamond pins do not split wood when driven. They are frequently found in furniture from areas of the South heavily settled by Germans, although such pins may be found in other southern coastal areas as well.⁶ The canted corner boards are butt-jointed at an angle to the case sides and outside stiles, while the case rails and outside stiles are lap-jointed (Fig. 4). The center stile has blind lap joints. The vertically-arranged pine backboards are splined together with thin splines about $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick by $1\frac{1}{4}$ " wide (Figs. 7 and 4) and overlap the walnut ends, leaving an unfinished exterior appearance (Fig. 8). These backboards were cut and fitted in a particular order as the evidence of assembly marks inside indicates (Fig. 9 illustrates one example). The splines are a feature occasionally seen on Shenandoah Valley furniture.⁷ The fact that this press shares such an unusual construction detail with the Germanic furniture of the Valley simply indicates a common origin, namely continental Europe. The use of splines in Tidewater Virginia is certainly an atypical feature for the region.



Figure 9. Detail of scratched assembly marks on the interior of the backboards.

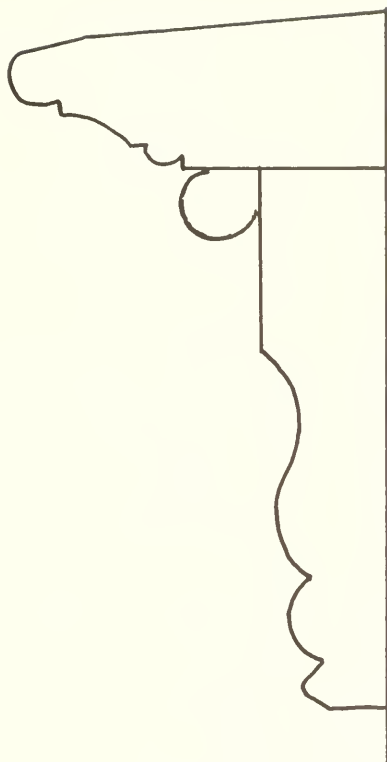


Figure 10. Profile of the cornice molding. Profiles in Figures 10 through 15 were taken by the authors; these drawings have been slightly strengthened to show the moldings in their original profiles, without wear. All of the drawings are full scale.

The cornice molding is a composite of three separate pieces (Figs. 1 and 10). The two upper elements are nailed in place while the lower facing is pinned. The double upper and lower case rail moldings (Figs. 1 and 11) are each four sections of a single molding strip mitered together and nailed in place. Each lozenge, likewise, is made from four pieces of a molding strip mitered together and nailed in place (Figs. 1 and 12). The profile of the one-piece molding is illustrated in Figure 13. The molding on the left door (Fig. 14) is original, while the right door molding is a proper replacement. Notice the rather awkward manner in which the upper and lower rail moldings are notched to accept the rounded ends of the door moldings (Fig. 1). On the center stile, the small

split spindles are single pieces. The large split spindles on the corners, however, are each composed of two turnings.



Figure 11. Profile of the upper and lower case rail molding.

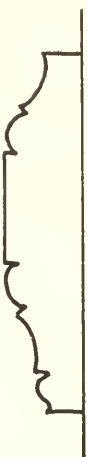


Figure 12. Profile of the lozenge molding.

The interior of the MESDA press is divided into two compartments by a yellow pine board partition positioned vertically behind the center case stile. This divider is pinned in place, front and back, through the stile and a backboard. Two pine shelves (Fig. 3) in the left compartment are fixed in position by pins driven through the case side and the vertical divider. This is an extremely weak construction technique, since the pins could have led to splitting of the shelf boards. Better methods would have been to fit the shelves into grooves or dados cut into the case side and partition, or to rest them on nailed shelf supports. The walnut peg rail (Figs. 2 and 15) nailed to the sides and back of the right

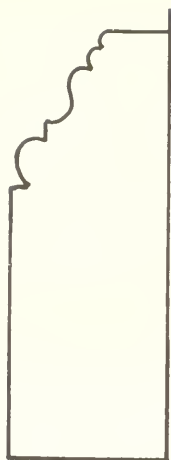


Figure 13. Profile of the base molding.



Figure 14. Profile of the vertical door stop molding.

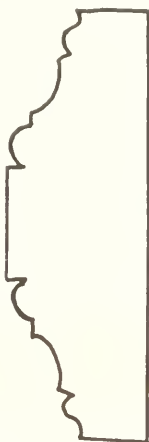


Figure 15. Profile of the peg rail molding.

compartment has 11 walnut pegs about three inches long, arranged with six across the back, two on the case side, and three on the partition wall.

In addition to the assembly scratch marks on the finished inside surface of the backboards, there is an illegible chalk mark on the underside of the top shelf. Also inside this compartment, there is chalk scribbling (Fig. 16) on the case side above the top shelf. These are probably nothing more than construction layout and cutting marks. There is one additional chalk mark in the left compartment located above the shelf on the canted corner board, an unusual script letter “M” (Fig. 17). This also could be a construction notation, but seems more likely to be the cipher of the maker.

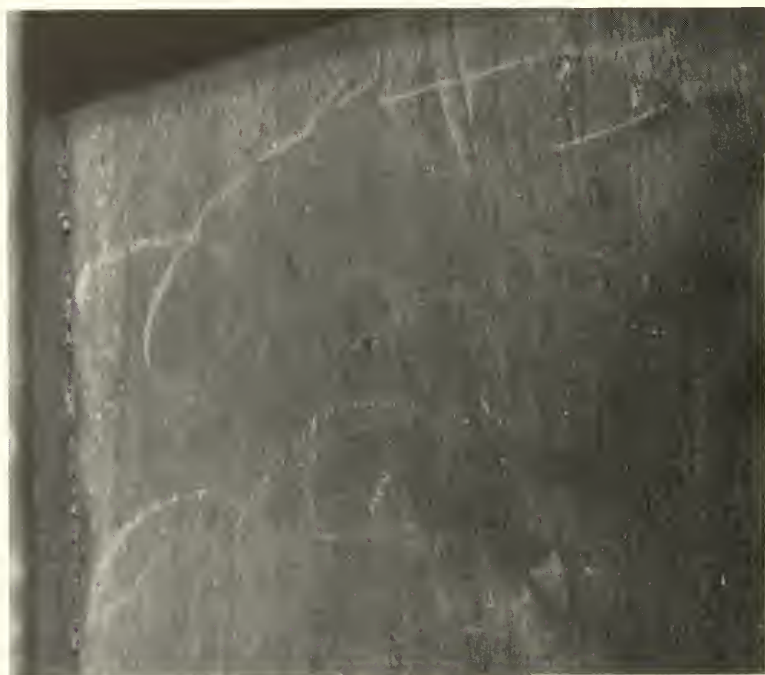


Figure 16. Detail of the indistinguishable chalk marks on the interior.

The reason for the placement of this letter “M” is not as important in this instance as is the area of origin of this unusual letter. Figure 18 illustrates the two styles of script “M” most frequently encountered in both European and American manuscripts and ciphers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Numerous early manuscripts, maps, tombstones, and books on handwriting, calligraphy, and ciphers were reviewed in research-

ing the "M" on the MESDA press. This style of script "M" is illustrated in the sixteenth century writing books of noted Italian scribes and calligraphers, Ludovico degli Arrighi, Giouanniantonio Tagliente, and Giovanbattista Palatino. Palatino even identified the form under the heading "French letters." It is interesting to note further that the various writing styles of these three scribes were derived directly from the eighth and ninth century Carolingian minuscules of Charlemagne⁸ whose Frankish Empire was centered in what is now France, Belgium, and parts of Germany and Italy.

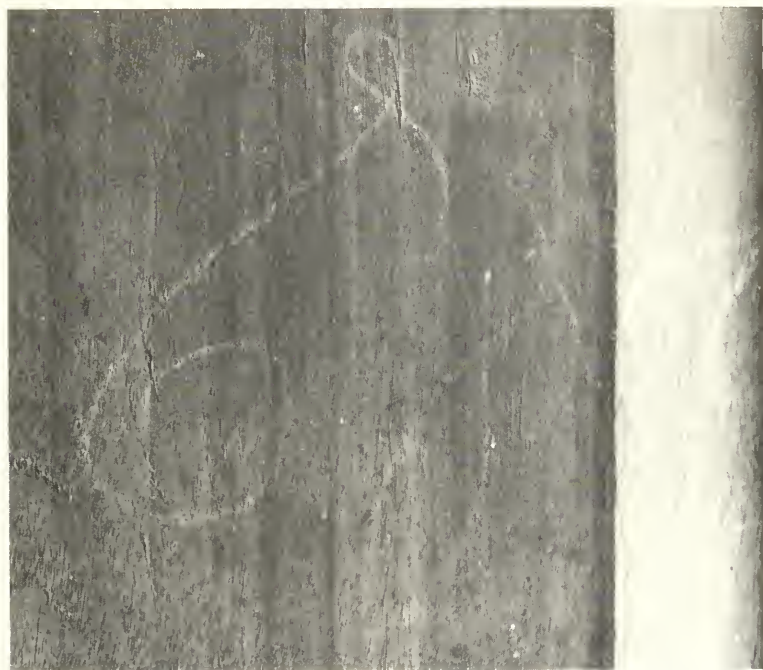


Figure 17. Detail of the script "M" marked in chalk on the interior.

The doors are essentially typical raised-panel frame assemblies (Figs. 1, 3, and 19). The top and bottom rails are through-tenoned into mortises cut in the door stiles, while the central rails are blind-tenoned into the stiles. The stiles separating the raised panels are blind-tenoned into the rails. All tenons are single-pinned except those of the central rails which are double-pinned. The chamfered edges of the raised panels are fitted into dadoes run



Figure 18. Two common scripts of the letter "M", used in both France and England. Drawn by the authors.

in the panel rails and stiles. The surrounding ovolo moldings at these locations, though they appear to be separate units, are, in fact, integral parts of the rails and stiles. This is a feature common to the eighteenth century. Molding surrounds of this appearance earlier in the seventeenth century were usually applied. However, the framing moldings used here are the early Greek ovolo, somewhat unlike the more common and later "thumbnail" or quarter-round form. All of these details indicate a turn-of-the-century date. Each door was fitted with an iron lock; both are now missing. The brass keyhole escutcheons are original, and are attached with brass and iron nails. All of the hinges are replaced. Door stops are located at the bottom of each door opening and are applied to the lower case rail.

In addition to the asymmetry of the doors, the raised panels themselves are unusual features of the door frame assemblies. Normally, the elevated flat portion or field of a raised panel is separated from its chamfered edges by distinct shoulders or fillets (Fig. 20). These provide shadow lines which visually divide the two areas and give the illusion of greater depth. On the MESDA press, however, the chamfered edges sweep smoothly to the field without shoulders, having been cut with a plane with a slightly radiused iron, possibly a hollow plane with a skewed iron, judging from diagonal chatter marks visible on the bevels (Fig 1, left door). This might simply represent a naive or early interpretation of the raised-panel concept, but it could nevertheless provide an important key in relating this piece to others.



Figure 19. View of the interior of the right door.

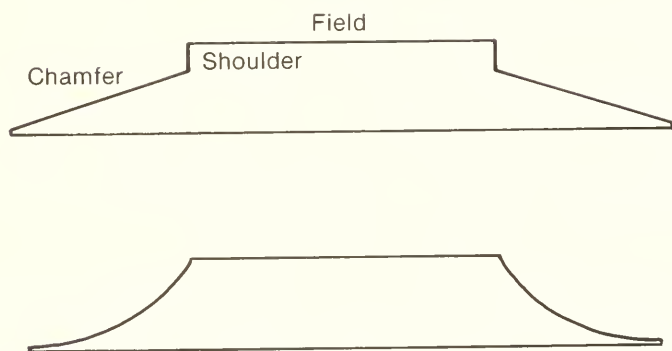


Figure 20. Drawing of sections of raised panels, showing the panel configuration of the MESDA press (below) in contrast to the normal panel configuration run with a panel plane which cuts the shoulder of the field, the bevel, and the panel tenon simultaneously.

Having analyzed the MESDA press, what can now be said about its origin and the background of its maker? It is American, constructed of materials native to the South; early in this century, it was found in eastern Virginia, where it was most likely made. The press exhibits both English and continental, mainly French, features, and bears an archaic cipher in the French style. How could such a blend of English and French influence find its way to eastern Virginia circa 1700? The answer is quite simple: the Huguenots.

French Protestants, who, by the 1560's were known as Huguenots, suffered decades of religious persecution in Catholic France's religious wars. Henry IV, a Protestant king who converted to Catholicism in an attempt to gain peace, proclaimed the Edict of Nantes in 1598. This provided some measure of freedom of worship for the beleaguered Protestants by recognizing the rights of religious minorities. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, however, began over a century of renewed persecution. Rather than accept forced Catholicism, some 250,000 French Huguenots fled France, even though it was illegal for them to do so. The agricultural workers tended to emigrate to continental countries, while approximately 50,000, who were mainly urban artisans and professionals of the middle and upper class, fled to England, a haven for refugee Huguenots as early as the late sixteenth century. Some 10,000 Huguenot refugees emigrated to the New World.⁹ It is thought that the first of these settlers arrived in Virginia in 1610. From that time until the end of the century, Huguenots arrived in Virginia either individually or in small groups, settling in Nansemond and Norfolk Counties. In 1700, however, several vessels left England for Virginia bearing substantial numbers of French refugees, representing the first organized Huguenot migration to Virginia. These immigrants settled in Manakin, about twenty miles west of the present city of Richmond, as well as in Jamestown, and on the lower peninsula formed by the James and York rivers.¹⁰

Tha Manakin settlement was exclusively composed of French Huguenots. The fact that the town was situated twenty miles above the fall line on the James forced the non-agrarian settlers to abandon their hopes for commercial success for their trades, and they adopted agriculture as a means of survival. Farming not being their vocation, the venture quickly fell onto hard times, and the settlement failed. The refugees dispersed and were

assimilated into other areas of the colony; a number moved into North Carolina.¹¹

Undoubtedly, these Huguenot artisans fashioned many objects of continental form in early eighteenth century Virginia before they became completely assimilated into the predominantly English society of their surroundings. The MESDA press with its bold blend of French and English characteristics most likely is a prime example. Other early furniture, both case pieces and chairs, from southeastern Virginia and the North Carolina Albemarle, exhibits similar continental influence.¹² It is logical to assume that there are other surviving pieces with more subtle features. It would be wise for all students of the early furniture of the lower Chesapeake to take a closer look at work which has long been considered evidence of material culture in the British tradition. The MESDA press is certainly a key piece in bringing forth the important consideration of stylistic influence from other ethnic groups much earlier than might have been expected.

Mr. and Mrs. Melchor, residents of Norfolk, have a long-standing interest in the decorative arts of eastern Virginia, and are well known for their scholarly work on the furniture of the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

FOOTNOTES

1. MESDA accession files, 2024-1.
2. Northampton County, VA., *Deeds, Wills, etc.*, Nos. 7 & 8, 1655-1668, Edward Dowglas (Douglas), 12 November 1657, p. 77; York County, Va., *Deeds, Orders, Wills, etc.*, No. 3, 1657-1662, Gyles Mode, 1 February 1657/8, p. 22a; Norfolk County, Va., *Wills & Deeds*, Book E, 1666-1675, Wm. Moseley, 10 November 1671, p. 106; Norfolk County, Va., *Deed Book 4*, 1675-1686, Robt. Hodge, 11 November 1681, p. 116.
3. James R. Melchor, N. Gordon Lohr, and Marilyn S. Melchor, *Eastern Shore of Virginia Raised-Panel Furniture 1730-1830* (Norfolk, Va.: The Chrysler Museum, 1982). The term "hangar" (hanger) in connection with presses was found repeatedly in Eastern Shore inventories. *Editor's note: In regard to the common usage of the term "kas" it is interesting to observe that in modern Dutch this word describes a small glass case, particularly a miniature greenhouse. The word "kast" is the accepted modern Dutch word for wardrobe. It is now known by the MESDA staff whether these terms were interchangeable in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.*
4. A representative example of the architectural use of raised panels in Britain is illustrated in Herbert Cescinsky, *The Gentle Art of Faking Furniture* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1931; reprint New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1967), plate 88. The panels illustrated are from St. Botolph's, Colchester, Essex, and show the earlier convention of bolection moldings covering the stile and rail joints rather than the ovolo-molded framing typical of eighteenth century work.
5. Personal communication by the authors with Frank L. Horton, Director, MESDA.
6. Personal communication by the authors with Wallace B. Gusler, Director, Conservation of Furniture and Decorative Arts, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
7. Ibid.
8. *Three Classics of Italian Calligraphy An Unabridged Reissue of the Writing Books of Arrighi, Tagliente, and Palatino With An Introduction by Oscar Ogg* (New York: Dover Publishing, Inc., 1953).
9. Robin D. Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenots in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).
10. James L. Bugg, *Manakin Town in Virginia: Its Story and Its People* (Charlottesville, Va.: MA Thesis, University of Virginia, 1950).
11. Ibid.
12. John Bivins, *The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina 1700-1820* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia and MESDA, in press).



Figure 1. Baltimore in 1752, From a sketch then made by John Moale, Esqr. deceased, corrected by the late Daniel Bowley, Esqr., 1817, aquatint. 19½" x 29". MESDA acc. 2024-154.

*A Problem of Identification:
Philadelphia and Baltimore
Furniture Styles in the Eighteenth Century*

LUKE BECKERDITE

A serious problem long encountered by American furniture historians is the identification of eighteenth-century Baltimore furniture made in the Philadelphia style. Furniture made in Baltimore before the American Revolution was generally inspired by either British or Philadelphia styles. The impact of British style appears to have been primarily the result of furniture imports and the immigration of British-trained artisans.¹ In contrast, the geographical proximity of Maryland and Pennsylvania, intermarriage between families, and the migration of cabinetmakers from Philadelphia to Baltimore were probably more influential in disseminating Philadelphia styles than furniture exported from that city. Although there is little documentary evidence in Maryland of the importation of Philadelphia furniture other than Windsor chairs, prominent Marylanders were known to have patronized Philadelphia cabinetmakers. This is particularly true of residents of Maryland's Eastern Shore, such as Thomas Ringgold of Chestertown and William Hemsley of Queen Anne's County, both of whom commissioned work from Benjamin Randolph² and owned houses with elaborate architectural carving from Philadelphia shops.³

Economics and culture were important in the development of furniture styles in Maryland. Located on the south bank of the Severn River, Annapolis was designated the colonial capital in 1694. Although the town experienced several periods of growth and decline during the first half of the eighteenth century, the

consolidation of political power and rise of the merchant class in the early 1760's promoted an era of sustained prosperity.⁴ In October, 1769, the English traveler William Eddis speculated that Annapolis would "in a few years . . . be one of the best built cities in America." Realizing that the city's inadequate harbor would prevent it from becoming an important commercial center, Eddis attributed Annapolis' recent period of prosperity to its role as the political and cultural center of the colony.⁵ The fact that Annapolis society was overwhelmingly British in its politics, culture, and taste provides a partial explanation for that city's preference for British furniture designs. Although Philadelphia details are present in certain groups of Annapolis furniture, they are more prevalent in Baltimore work.

Baltimore was described by Eddis as "the most wealthy and populous town in the province . . . arising from a well conducted and universal commercial connexion." This "commercial connexion" not only referred to the city's ideal location at the junction of the Patapsco River and the Chesapeake Bay, but also to the advantages arising from "the neighboring country being fertile, well settled, and abounding in grain" According to Eddis, trade with the Piedmont region was so lucrative that it "became an object of universal attention" drawing people of a "commercial and enterprising spirit . . . from all quarters to this new and promising scene of industry."⁶ The acquaintance *Baltimore in 1752* provides an excellent benchmark for measuring the city's growth during the third quarter of the eighteenth century (Fig. 1). When the artist, John Moale, sketched the town in 1752, it had less than thirty houses; by 1776 there were 564 houses and 6,755 inhabitants.⁷ In comparison, Philadelphia had over 13,000 inhabitants in 1751, and 24,000 in 1775.⁸ The widespread influence of Philadelphia style on furniture made in eastern Maryland is understandable when one considers the phenomenal scope of that city's maritime trade, the short portage from the Delaware River across the Head of Elk to the Chesapeake Bay, and the relative wealth of Philadelphia's artisan community. One scholar has concluded that between 1700 and 1745, nearly one out of every six Philadelphia tradesmen attained a personal wealth in excess of £ 300 sterling compared with Boston's rate of one in twenty.⁹ All of these factors worked to insure Philadelphia's dominance over the upper region of the Chesapeake until the rise of Baltimore during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Philadelphia-trained cabinetmakers such as Gerrard Hopkins



Figure 2. High chest with the label of Gerrard Hopkins, 1767-1775, Baltimore, Maryland, mahogany with Atlantic coast white cedar, poplar, and white pine. HOA: 89", W'OA: 44 $\frac{3}{8}$ ", DOA: 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Private collection, photograph Breger & Associates, courtesy the Baltimore Museum of Art.

were among those of a “commercial and enterprising spirit” who moved to Baltimore during this period. We are extremely fortunate in having documented examples made by such artisans to serve as an index for understanding any possible developments of “Baltimore” style. Hopkins, who was actually a native of Maryland, was born in Anne Arundel County in 1742. His parents, Samuel and Sarah Hopkins, were members of a prosperous Quaker family with ties to both eastern Maryland and Pennsylvania. At the age of twelve, Hopkins moved to Philadelphia, where he was apprenticed to the cabinetmaker Jonathan Shoemaker in 1757.¹⁰ Assuming that Hopkins was bound until the age of twenty-one, he probably became a journeyman in 1764. The receipt book of the Philadelphia merchant Samuel Preston Moore documents business dealings with Hopkins in September of that year.¹¹

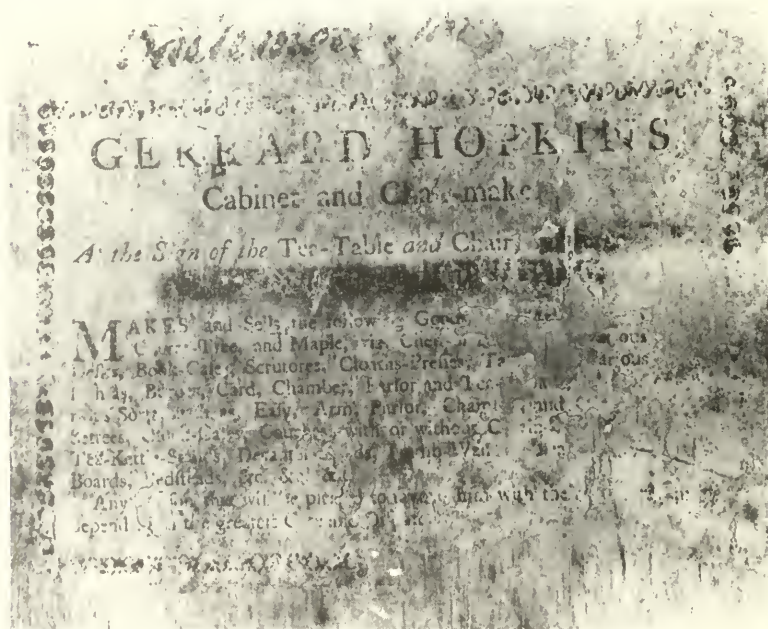


Figure 2a. Detail of the label on the high chest. The word “Philadelphia” has been marked out and “Baltimore” has been added at the top.

Hopkins also maintained an account with a Philadelphia Quaker merchant named Stephen Collins. On 24 April 1765, twenty-five yards of linen was charged to Hopkins’ account by the Philadelphia carver, William Crisp.¹² This may have been

payment for furniture carving commissioned by Hopkins. Like most eighteenth century artisans, Hopkins traded work for goods and staples of various sorts. His account with Collins shows a credit for "Two Chamber Tables" in May, 1766. Although Hopkins reputedly worked as a journeyman in the shop of the Philadelphia cabinetmaker Robert Moore, his bartering with cabinetwork and direct involvement with tradesmen like Crisp suggests that he was working independently prior to moving to Maryland. The fact that Hopkins' Philadelphia label is glued to the drawer of a high chest made in Maryland (Fig.2a) also supports this conclusion. Only one other Maryland piece of the colonial period labeled by a Philadelphia-trained cabinetmaker is known; a tall-case clock bears the label of John Janvier, who at one point in his career worked in Cecil County "at the head of Elk."¹³

Hopkins evidently moved to Maryland early in 1767. On 9 April 1767, the *Maryland Gazette* reported:

GERRARD HOPKINS, Son of Samuel, Cabinet and Chair-Maker, from Philadelphia, at the Sign of the Tea Table and Chair, in Gay Street, Baltimore-Town, Makes and sells the following Goods, in the best Manner, and in the newest Fashions, in Mahogany, Walnut, Cherry-Tree, and Maple, viz. Chests of Drawers . . . Desks, Book-Cases, Scruitores, Cloth-Presses, Tables of various Sorts, such as Bureaus, Card, Chamber, Parlour, and Tea-Tables; Chairs of various Sorts, such as Easy, Arm, Parlour, Chamber and Corner Chairs, Settees, Clock-Cases, Couches, Candle-Stands, Decanter-Stands, Tea Kettle-Stands, Dumb-Waiters, Tea-Boards, Bottle-Boards, Bedsteads, &c., &c. N.B. Any of the above Articles to be done with or without carved Work.

Subsequent advertisements indicate that Hopkins also operated a sawmill where he sold logs and boards "sawed to suit every branch of cabinet and chair work."¹⁴ The considerable scope of Hopkins' enterprise at the end of the eighteenth century is revealed by one notice in 1798, offering 40,000 feet of "first quality" Honduras mahogany and 10,000 feet of St. Domingo mahogany.¹⁵

Hopkins was associated with several Baltimore artisans during his career. Although the precise nature of most of these business relationships is not known, one such association was certainly

related to Hopkins' trade. From 1771 to 1776, Hopkins maintained an account with the clockmaker Thomas Morgan. Morgan's ledger records charge Hopkins for clock repairs, hardware, and movements. From June, 1773, to March, 1776, Hopkins purchased four eight-day clocks and one "New Moon Clock" at prices ranging from £ 14 to £ 16.¹⁶ Although these movements could have been acquired for his customers, it is also possible that Hopkins offered clock cases complete with movements.

One of the most informative documents regarding cabinet-makers working in Hopkins' shop is a 1780 advertisement by William Askew which informed the public and "his old Customers in particular, that he [had] removed his shop from Mr. Gerard Hopkins's over to his own house" Unfortunately, it is not known whether Askew was a journeyman or a partner. Hopkins may have moved his cabinet shop prior to the advertisement, since Askew's new location was at the sign of the "Tea Table and Chair"¹⁷ and subsequent advertisements by Hopkins described his shop as being at the sign of the "BUREAU and COFFIN."¹⁸

Hopkins entered into a partnership with another cabinet-maker, William Harris, sometime before 1793. On 29 April 1793 the *Maryland Gazette* reported:

HOPKINS AND HARRIS, CABINET and CHAIR-MAKERS, *At their Manufactory, in Gay-Street, near the Upper Bridge*, Respectfully inform the Public, that they have, and intend at all Times to keep, a constant Supply of GOOD MATERIALS, and WORMEN [workmen] to make all Kinds of CABINET and CHAIR-FURNITURE, in the neatest and newest Taste

The partnership evidently lasted only two years, since Harris advertised independently in February, 1795.¹⁹

Although there are no known examples of Neoclassical furniture made by Hopkins, pieces listed in bills and later advertisements document the fact that he worked in that style. In the 8 September 1797, *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, he offered "ready manufactured" cylinder desks, "circular and straight front Bureaux," sideboards, pier tables, "Northumberland dining and night Tables . . . oval, urn, heart, and fan back Chairs."²⁰ Hopkins' ability to stock ready-made furniture, as well as the extensive debts owed his estate,²¹ attests to

the success of his business. He died “after a lingering illness” on 18 April 1800.²²

A high chest with Hopkins’ label (Fig. 2) provides a basis for attributing other pieces to his shop. Considering his background, it is no surprise that the form of the high chest and many of its decorative details are derived from Philadelphia examples. Typical of such pieces, it has a high, broken scroll pediment, cabriole legs with claw-and-ball feet, shell and acanthus carving on the central drawer of the lower case, and narrow fluted quarter-columns. The quarter-columns of the upper case have unusual base moldings (Fig. 2b) that differ from the classical turnings normally encountered in Philadelphia case work (see Fig. 10b).



Figure 2b. Detail of the base turning of a quarter column on the high chest.

Hopkins’ Philadelphia background is also reflected in the construction of the high chest. The large drawers have rived white cedar bottoms that are beveled on three edges, dadoed to the front and sides, and reinforced with segmented glue blocks. Like most Philadelphia examples, the grain direction of the bottom boards is perpendicular to the drawer fronts. The small drawers differ from the large ones in having continuous glue strips rather than blocks. Similar methods of drawer construction are found on other Baltimore pieces in the Philadelphia style.

The small drawers run on dustboards that are lapped and nailed to the front rail and rest on blocks nailed to the back of the case. Unlike many Philadelphia high chests which have dustboards in the upper case, the Hopkins chest has drawer supports that are tongue-and-grooved to the drawer blades and

dadoed to the case sides (Fig. 2c). A shallow rabbet cut on the underside of the supports also forms a narrow shoulder that butts against the sides.

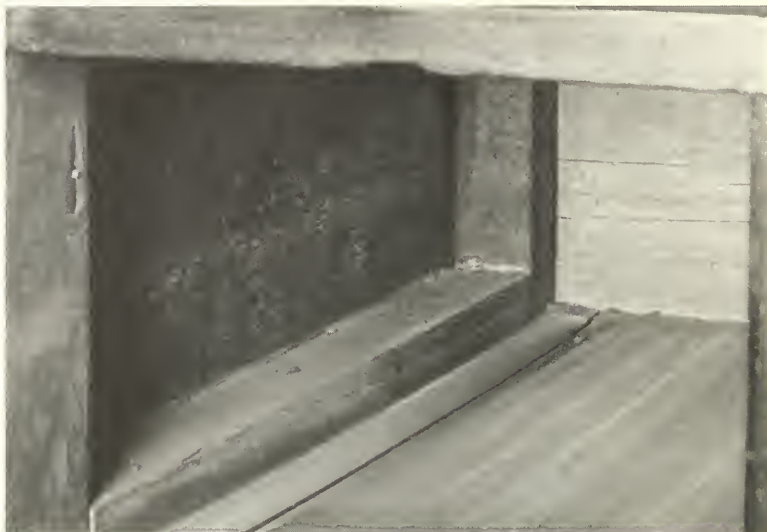


Figure 2c. Detail of the case construction of the high chest.

The carved shells on the high chest (Fig. 2d) are virtually identical to that on the chimneypiece in the large northwest room of the James Brice House in Annapolis (Figs. 3, 3a).²³ James Brice's father, John, died in 1766, leaving his son land in Cecil and Kent Counties and two town lots in Annapolis with building materials "for the purpose of building a dwelling house and out houses." According to James Brice's ledger, construction of the house began in 1767, and continued through 1774. The only carver who was identified in the ledger was William Bampton, who was credited £ 40:0:1 for "finishing largest Room in my House the Carpenters and Joiners work & carving Chimney Piece" in March, 1770. Additional expenditures under the undated heading "Carver" include £ 9:15:0 for Chimney pieces and £ 8:1:0 for twenty-three stair brackets. Bampton, who was described as a runaway, received his last payment on 5 October 1772.²⁴

Although the chimneypiece in the northwest room could have been purchased from Hopkins and shipped from Baltimore to Annapolis, it is also possible that Bampton was employed by Hopkins either before or after his work in the Brice House. This



Figure 2d. Detail of a carved shell on the high chest.



Figure 2e. Detail of the knee on the high chest.

is suggested by Brice's ledger credits to Bampton and subsequent entries regarding alterations made to the chimneypiece in the northwest room. In 1771, Brice paid a joiner named George Forster (or Foster) for altering the chimneypiece in the "parlor."²⁵



Figure 3. James Brice House, 1767-1775, Annapolis, Maryland. MESDA research file S-11401.



Figure 3a. Detail of the carved shell on the chimneypiece in the northwest room of the Brice House.



Figure 3b. Detail of a carved console on the chimneypiece in the northwest room of the Brice House.

The chimneypiece in the northwest room, which appears to have had its consoles shortened at an early date, is the only original example in the Brice House that shows evidence of significant alteration. In some respects, the acanthus carving on the consoles is related to work from Hopkins' shop (Fig. 3b). The leaves that curl on either side of the crescent-shaped element at the bottom have convex surfaces indented with a small punch and those flowing from the crescent have wide lobes modeled with chip cuts like the acanthus on the knees of the high chest and the chairs illustrated in Figures 2e, 4, 5b, and 6. These parallels may reflect Forster's attempt at copying Bampton's carving style.

Two arm chairs and a side chair (Figs. 4-6) are also attributed to Hopkins on the basis of their carving. Like the high chest and chimneypiece, they have carved shells with broad convex and



Figure 4. Armchair attributed to Gerrard Hopkins, 1767-1775, Baltimore, Maryland, mahogany with yellow pine secondary. HOA: 39¾", width at knees: 25". Baltimore Museum of Art, acc. 77.59.2. MESDA research file S-9870.

concave segments (Fig. 5a). The concave segments are veined with widely-spaced flutes made with a small gouge, and the convex

areas are decorated with a single circular punch (or a circle made with two vertical gouge cuts) and a series of lenticular cuts. The latter were executed by making angled, converging cuts with a small quarter-round gouge. Although carved shells are occasionally encountered on the seat rails of Philadelphia chairs in the late Baroque or "Queen Anne" style, they are generally glued to the rail on Rococo examples.



Figure 4a. Detail of the molded arm support and arm of the armchair.

These chairs conform in both style and construction to Philadelphia work of the period. This is particularly evident in the shape of the crest rail, arms, arm supports, and rear legs (Figs. 4a, 4c, 5c). Like some Philadelphia examples, the seat rails are not through-tenoned (Fig. 4c), and the mortise and tenon joints at the front corners and sides were originally secured with glue.²⁶ Large quarter-round blocks, cut to fit around the stiles, are used

to reinforce the rear leg and rail joint (Fig. 4b). The arm supports are lapped over the side rails and attached with screws from the inside. Screws were also used to attach the arms to notches cut in the stiles (Fig. 4c). All of these details, or variations of them, can be associated with Philadelphia work.

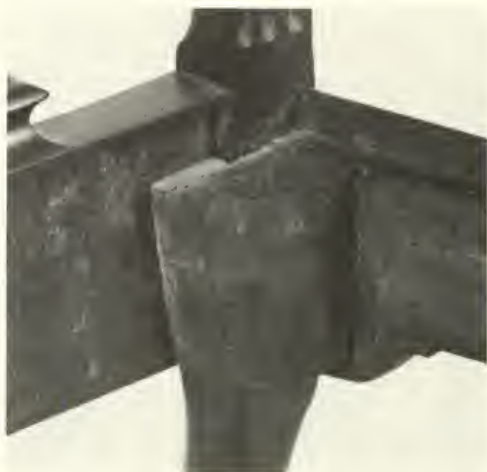


Figure 4b. Detail of a glueblock on the armchair.



Figure 4c. Detail of the back of the armchair.

The direct influence of Philadelphia on Baltimore is also reflected in the career of Robert Moore. Moore was in partnership with the renowned Philadelphia cabinetmaker William Wayne until 1768. On 20 February 1769, the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* carried a notice of the dissolution of their partnership, coupled with an advertisement by Moore that he intended to continue the business at his shop on Front Street.

Moore had moved to Baltimore before 30 April 1771, when he posted a notice for a missing horse in the *Maryland Gazette*.²⁷ Unlike Gerrard Hopkins, who promoted his business in Maryland newspapers, Moore's advertisements were primarily for runaway



Figure 5. Armchair attributed to Gerrard Hopkins, 1767-1775, Baltimore, Maryland, mahogany with yellow pine secondary. HOA: $39\frac{7}{8}$ ", W"OA: $23\frac{3}{4}$ ". MESDA research file S-5924.



Figure 5a. Detail of the carved shell on the armchair.



Figure 5b. Detail of the knee carving on the armchair.



Figure 5c. Detail of the crest rail and back of the armchair.



Figure 6. Side chair attributed to Gerrard Hopkins, 1767-1775, Baltimore, Maryland, mahogany, secondary wood not examined. HOA: 39 $\frac{5}{8}$ ", W'OA: 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", DOA: 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Photograph courtesy the U.S. Diplomatic Reception Rooms, Department of State.

apprentices, indentured servants, and slaves.²⁸ On 19 December 1774, the *Pennsylvania Packet* reported:

Went off from the subscriber yesterday, a servant man named William Finley, about 26 years of age; came from London . . . about 12 months ago; was bred in London by trade a looking glass frame maker, but since his arrival in Baltimore has been chiefly employed at cabinet work, particularly in making desks and dining tables . . . Whoever apprehends said servant . . . shall receive . . . [a] reward, paid by Robert Moore, cabinet maker in Baltimore.²⁹

The only other artisan who is known to have worked for Moore was Isaac Johns. In his own advertisement, Johns stated that he had apprenticed to Moore, whom he described as an artisan “whose Abilities are well known in the Line of his Profession.”³⁰ Moore retired from the cabinetmaking trade in 1784. By 18 May



Figure 7. Dressing table, 1765-1775, possibly Baltimore, Maryland, walnut and walnut veneer with Atlantic coast white cedar and poplar secondary. HOA: 30 $\frac{3}{16}$ ", WOA: 34 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", DOA: 21 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Maryland Historical Society acc. 79.31.1. MESDA research file S-10047.



Figure 7a. Detail of the shell drawer of the dressing table.

of that year, his shop was occupied by cabinetmakers John Bankson and William Gordon.³¹ Moore died at the age of sixty-four on 14 November 1787. His obituary stated that he was "an honest, benevolent, and useful Citizen . . . an ancient venerable Brother . . . [and] a most honourable Master of several Lodges."³²

Although no documented examples of his work are known, the dressing tables shown in Figures 7-9 represent the type of furniture a Philadelphia shop master like Moore might have produced in Maryland. The dressing table illustrated in Figure 8 was originally owned by Henry Didier, a merchant who emigrated from France to Baltimore in the eighteenth century.³³ Although the precise history of the dressing table in Figure 7 is unknown, it, too, has a possible Baltimore origin.³⁴ Because several examples related to this group also have Philadelphia histories, the dressing tables are tentatively attributed to Baltimore.³⁵ Comparisons between these examples and a high chest (Fig. 10) attributed to Moore's Philadelphia partner, William Wayne, and the carving firm of Nicholas Bernard and Martin Jugiez³⁶ illustrate the acute problem of separating the work of the two cities. Furniture historians such as William MacPherson Horner have long considered the high chest to be the one mentioned in an 18 February 1770 bill of sale from Wayne to Samuel Wallis of Philadelphia specifying "a case of mahogany drawers and table [£] 25:0:0."³⁷



Figure 8. Dressing table, 1765-1775, possibly Baltimore, Maryland, walnut and walnut veneer with Atlantic coast white cedar and poplar secondary. HOA: 30½", W"OA: 35", DOA: 20 ¾". MESDA research file S-10971.



Figure 8a. Detail of the shell drawer of the dressing table. This example originally had applied acanthus like the dressing tables illustrated in Figures 7 and 9.



Figure 9. Dressing table, 1765-1775, possibly Baltimore, Maryland, walnut primary, secondary woods not recorded. HOA: 29", W"OA: 34", DOA: 21½". Photograph courtesy Israel Sack, Inc., N.Y.C.

The carved shells on the dressing tables are stylistically related to the shell on the high chest. All have five stop-fluted hollow lobes that are outlined with a small veiner (a U-shaped gouge), convex surfaces indented with a four-point punch, and a central five-petaled flower with two naturalistic leaves on either side (Figs. 7a, 8a, 9, and 10a). The central flower with flanking leafage was once considered a hallmark of Maryland design; however, it is frequently encountered on Philadelphia pieces in the Rococo style.³⁸ Although there are a number of intriguing parallels between the carving on the high chest and dressing tables, the shells and acanthus leaves were both drawn and executed in a different manner. The outlining, deep fluting, and veining of the shell and the adept modeling of the floral elements on the drawer of the high chest contrast with the more abstract carving on the dressing tables. Similar comparisons can be made between



Figure 10. High chest attributed to William Wayne with carving attributed to Bernard and Jugiez, c. 1770, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, mahogany primary, secondary woods not recorded. HOA: 97½", WOA: 44½", DOA: 21¾". Photograph courtesy Israel Sack, Inc.



Figure 10a. Detail of the shell drawer of the high chest.



Figure 10b. Detail of the quarter-column turning of the high chest.

the acanthus leaves flanking the shell. On the dressing tables which have these leaves, the appliqués taper abruptly and end where the flat scroll volutes on the shell meet the drawer front (Fig. 7a). Philadelphia pieces generally have rounded volutes that join the acanthus appliqués inside the perimeter of the shell, a technique which allows for a smoother design transition. Similarly, Philadelphia work often has appliqués with carved volutes that are glued to the flat volutes on the shell. Although the carving techniques differ, the design of the knee carving on the dressing table illustrated in Figure 9 is closer to that of the high chest than the other examples. Like the high chest, it features a half-flower at the top of the knees and acanthus that flows from scroll volutes on the knee blocks (Figs. 9, 10). This was one of the most common designs employed by Philadelphia carvers during the eighteenth century.

Two of these dressing tables are distinguished by having three lower drawers of approximately equal size, and walnut drawer fronts faced with walnut veneer (Figs. 7, 8). The veneers are glued to the molded drawer fronts and form the fillets of the lipped edges. Philadelphia pieces in the late Baroque style often have veneers applied in this manner. The lower drawers are separated by deep, vertical dividers that are attached to the upper drawer blade with two large tenons. Most Philadelphia examples employ

a single tenon that is wedged on either side or through the middle. In other respects, the construction is related to Philadelphia work. The supports for the center drawer are nailed to partitions that are tongue-and-grooved to the dividers and mortised into the back of the case. The outer drawer supports are nailed to the legs and supported by glueblocks at the corners and center of the case. The top is also supported by blocks at the center of each side and by two large braces that are mortised through the back of the case.

The preceeding pieces serve well to illustrate the problem of separating Philadelphia furniture from Baltimore work in the Philadelphia style. For several decades, scholars have attempted to overcome this obstacle by identifying regional characteristics of Maryland case work. These details include closed ogee heads (often referred to as “bonnet tops”), fluted chamfers that end in a point or cusp, elaborately shaped skirts with applied shell carving, deeply molded tops, and, on high chests and dressing tables, lower drawers of equal width. However, an examination of Philadelphia pieces in museum collections and in publications like Horner’s *Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture* reveals that all of the details which have been considered hallmarks of Maryland work occur with equal frequency on Philadelphia pieces in the late Baroque and Rococo styles.

A high chest (Fig. 11) with a probable history of ownership by Joshua Skinner of Perquimans County, North Carolina, illustrates this point particularly well.³⁹ The chest has a closed ogee head, fluted chamfers ending in cusps and “lamb’s tongues,” and lower drawers of approximately equal size — all details associated with eighteenth-century Maryland furniture. However, this piece is part of a large group of furniture made in Philadelphia between 1730 and 1765 (see Figs. 12-19).⁴⁰ The fact that most of these pieces pre-date Baltimore’s age of affluence makes it highly improbable that they were made in that city.

While the furniture in this Philadelphia group spans a period of approximately thirty-five years and reflects the work of at least two cabinetmakers and two carvers, stylistic relationships and construction reveal a remarkable degree of continuity. The carving on the knees of the Skinner high chest (Fig. 11a) is related to that of the dressing table illustrated in Figure 12, as well as several other examples in the group (Figs. 14-16). The V-shaped area between the halves of the acanthus leaves is modeled with three deep flutes, the center of which is terminated with a quarter-



Figure 11. High chest, 1740-1755, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, walnut and walnut veneer with Atlantic coast white cedar, poplar, and yellow pine. HOA: 85 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (minus center finial), W'OA: 43", DOA: 24". MESDA research file S-2373.

round gouge cut (Figs. 11a, 12a, 14a, 15, 16). Other similarities occur in the outlining and veining of the lobes and the short parallel gouge cuts used to shade the tips of the leaves.



Figure 11a. Detail of the knee carving on the high chest.



Figure 11b. Detail of the shell drawer of the upper case of the high chest.



Figure 12. Dressing table, 1750-1760, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, mahogany primary, secondary woods not recorded. HOA: 31", W'OA: 33½", DOA: 21½". Photograph courtesy Israel Sack, Inc.



Figure 12a. Detail of the knee carving on the dressing table.



Figure 12b. Detail of the shell drawer of the dressing table.



Figure 13. Dressing table, 1745-1760, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, mahogany primary, secondary woods not recorded. HOA: 29¾", WOA: 33¾", DOA: 21¼". Photograph courtesy Israel Sack, Inc.

An exceptional dressing table (Figs. 13, 13a) that descended in the Bush and Snader families of Wilmington, Delaware ⁴¹ has shell and acanthus carving related to the preceding pieces (Figs.

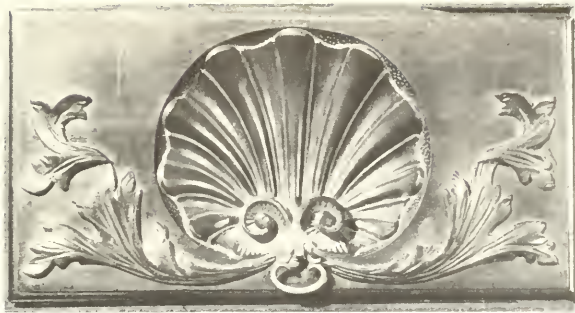


Figure 13a. Detail of the shell drawer of the dressing table.



Figure 14. Side chair, 1735-1755, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, walnut throughout. HOA: 42½". Photograph courtesy Israel Sack, Inc.

11b, 12b). The acanthus appliqués flanking the shells have broad lobes which were roughly modeled and veined with a small gouge (Figs. 12b, 13a). In certain areas, the random application of the veining flutes interrupts the flow of the leaves. Additional relationships can be seen in the shading of the leaf ends and the design and execution of the shells. The broad convex and concave segments emanate from retracted scroll volutes like those of the chairs illustrated in Figures 14 and 15.⁴²



Figure 14a. Detail of the knee and rail carving of the side chair.

The side chair illustrated in Figure 14 may represent the finest expression of the late Baroque style in Philadelphia. Part of a set of at least eighteen chairs, this example is distinguished by having a solid, crotch walnut splat, claw-and-ball feet, and carving on the crest rail, shoe, seat rail, and knees. In both design and execution, the knee carving on the chairs (Figs. 14a, 15) is related to that of the high chest (Fig. 11a) and dressing table illustrated in Figure 12a. This is most clearly seen in the deep fluting between the raised central veins and outlining, veining, and shading of the leaves. The knee blocks of Figures 12-15 are also similar in having a relieved area just above the deeply modeled scroll volutes.

A dressing table (Fig. 16) that descended in the Saunders family of Philadelphia and Alexandria, Virginia,⁴³ has carved details that were derived from the preceding examples. The shell



Figure 15. Side chair, 1735-1755, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, walnut throughout. HOA: 42 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Photograph courtesy Israel Sack, Inc.

has broad convex and concave segments, sharply retracted volutes, and flanking acanthus appliques. At first glance, the appliques appear different; however they are based on the same general formula as the acanthus on the shell drawer of the Bush-Snader dressing table (Fig. 13a). Similarities are also evident in the fluting and veining of the knee acanthus.



Figure 16. Dressing table, 1750-1760, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, walnut with Atlantic coast white cedar and poplar secondary. HOA: 28 $\frac{3}{8}$ " , WOA: 34 $\frac{3}{4}$ " , DOA: 20 $\frac{1}{16}$ ". Courtesy the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

While the carving on the dressing table is stylistically related to the preceding group, the execution is more closely associated with the high chest and dressing tables illustrated in Figures 17-19. The appliqués flanking the shell of the dressing table are virtually identical to those of the high chest (Fig. 17).⁴⁴ The high chest and dressing table illustrated in Figure 18 have oval shells with a large convex element in the center (Fig. 18a). Although by a different carver, the shells are stylistically related to those on a group of early Philadelphia desks-and-bookcases.⁴⁵ Another dressing table in the group (Fig. 19) has knee carving associated with the high chest and dressing table. The leaves on all of these examples have stippled backgrounds and broad surfaces that were deeply veined with a small gouge (Figs. 18b, 19a).



Figure 17. High chest, 1750-1760, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, walnut with Atlantic coast white cedar and poplar secondary. HOA: 96 $\frac{1}{4}$ " , WOA: 43 $\frac{3}{4}$ " , DOA: 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Courtesy the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.



Figure 18. Dressing table, 1755-1765, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, walnut with poplar, red cedar, and yellow pine secondary. HOA: 29", WOA: 34", DOA: 21 1/4". MESDA research file S-5352.



Figure 18a. Detail of the shell drawer of the dressing table.



Figure 18b. Detail of the knee carving of the dressing table.

There is also a remarkable degree of consistency in the case construction of this Philadelphia group (Figs. 17-19). The vertical dividers between the lower drawers are shiplapped and nailed to partitions that are mortised into the back of the case (Fig. 19b). The central drawers run on strips of wood that are nailed to the bottom of the partitions and supported at each end by a small glue block (Fig. 19c). Strips are also attached to the top of each partition just below the upper drawer (Fig. 19d). The outer supports for the upper and lower drawers are nailed to the stiles and reinforced with glue blocks. On the dressing table illustrated in Figure 19c, the blocks are shaped to the contour of the skirt. The skirt shaping on several of these pieces is also related (Figs. 16-18).⁴⁶



Figure 19. Dressing table, 1760-1770, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, mahogany with Atlantic coast white cedar and poplar. HOA: 28 $\frac{3}{8}$ " , W/OA: 33 $\frac{7}{8}$ " , DOA: 21". Loaned by the Kaufman Americana Foundation. MESDA acc. 3018-1.



Figure 19a. Detail of the knee carving of the dressing table.

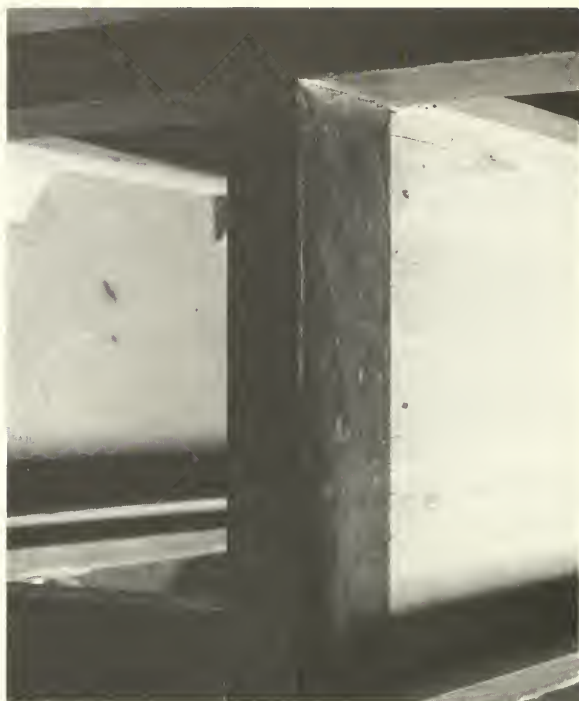


Figure 19b. Detail of the case construction of the dressing table.

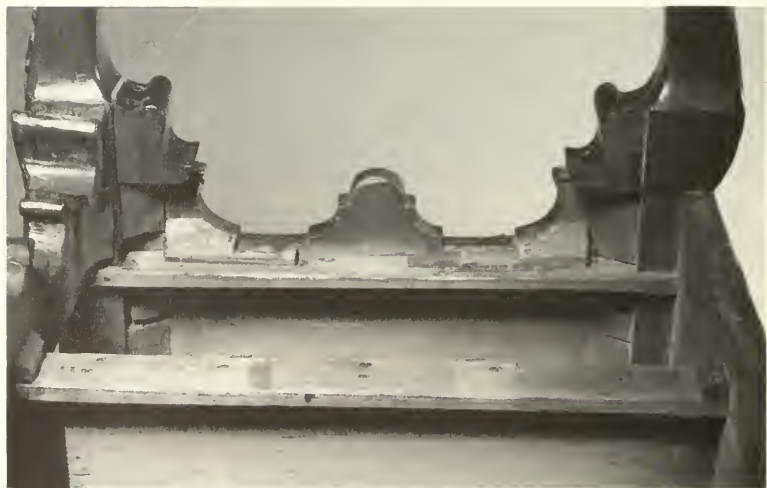


Figure 19c. Detail of the case construction of the dressing table.



Figure 19d. Detail of the case construction of the dressing table.

The case pieces and chairs illustrated in Figures 11-19 document the stylistic and technological evolution of an important group of Philadelphia furniture. The fact that several of these examples have been attributed to Maryland accounts for much of the confusion regarding regional characteristics. Documentary research and more thorough studies of style and construction are needed to separate the furniture of Philadelphia and Baltimore, since it is apparent that virtually all of these "Maryland" details are common to Philadelphia design.

Mr. Beckerdite is Research Associate for MESDA.

FOOTNOTES

1. For example, the Annapolis cabinetmaking firm, Shaw & Chisholm supplemented their own wares with imported furniture and accessories. In the 11 December 1783, issue of the *Maryland Gazette*, they advertised a piano forte, looking glasses with mahogany frames, backgammon tables, tea chests and boxes, cribbage boards and boxes, decanter stands, knife boxes, and "spare sets" of backgammon boxes and men, all of British manufacture. British pieces with strong Maryland histories and Marylanders' accounts with their factors also document the importation of British furniture. For an excellent discussion of the importation of British furniture into Maryland and the influence of British style on local furniture production see Gregory R. Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland, 1740-1940: The Collection of the Maryland Historical Society* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1984), pp. 42-47.
2. Benjamin Randolph Account Book, which is cataloged as Pennsylvania-Philadelphia Account Book, 1768-1787, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library, New York, New York, pp. 77, 144. This ledger was identified as Randolph's by comparison with his receipt book owned by the H. F. du Pont Winterthur Museum (Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art* [Philadelphia, 1976], p. 111).
3. Luke Beckerdite, "William Buckland Reconsidered: Architectural Carving in Chesapeake Maryland, 1771-1774," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (November, 1982), pp. 71-88.
4. For a discussion of the growth of Annapolis see Edward C. Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit: The Annapolis Merchant in the Era of the American Revolution: 1763-1805* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 1-34.
5. William Eddis, *Letters from America*, Aubrey C. Land, ed., (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1969), p. 13.
6. Eddis, *Letters*, pp. 49-50. Carville W. Earle and Ronald Hoffman's article "Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South" examines the influence of staple crops on urban development (*Perspectives in American History*, Vol. 10 [1976], pp. 7-78).
7. Wilbur H. Hunter, "Baltimore in the Revolutionary Generation" in *Maryland Heritage: Five Baltimore Institutions Celebrate the American Bicentennial*, John B. Boles, ed., (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1976), p. 189.
8. Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 408.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
10. Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, p. 46.
11. Receipt Book of Samuel Preston Moore, The Library Company of Philadelphia, Mss/Yi2/7418/F17. Cited in Nancy Anne Goyne, *Furniture Craftsmen in Philadelphia, 1760-1780: Their Role in a Mercantile Society*, Master's Thesis, University of Delaware, 1963, pp. 22, 151.

12. Stephen Collins Papers, Container #73, Accounts 1 January 1765-31 December 1765, Library of Congress. Cited in Goynes, *Furniture Craftsmen*, pp. 22, 34, 151, 154-155. William Crisp was working in Philadelphia before 10 February 1763. On that date, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported that he had moved his carving shop from Race Street to Vine Street.
13. Stephen Collins Papers, Accounts Container #74, 1 January 1766-31 December 1766; the Janvier label is illustrated on p. 113 of William Voss Elder, III, *Maryland Queen Anne and Chippendale Furniture of the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1968).
14. For references to Hopkins' sawmill and lumber yard see the *Maryland Gazette*, 19 January 1775, *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 28 December 1787, 26 March 1790, 29 April 1793, *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, 20 April 1796, 7 March 1798, and 19 May 1798.
15. *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, 19 May 1798.
16. Ledger of Thomas Morgan, 1771-1803. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
17. *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 22 February 1780.
18. *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 28 December 1787.
19. *Maryland Journal*, 12 February 1795, in Alfred Coxe Prime, *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland, and South Carolina, 1786-1800* (Walpole Society, 1932), Vol. 2, p. 181.
20. From 24 August 1798, to 15 March 1800, the Baltimore merchant Hugh Thompson purchased a variety of Neoclassical pieces from Hopkins. Among the forms listed were a "Large Oval Breakfast Table . . . 2 Do. [large] oval back Chairs . . . 2 Do. [large] Side Bords . . ." and two "Circular Toilet Tables" (Bill from Gerrard Hopkins to Hugh Thompson, Hugh Thompson Papers, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore Maryland).
21. Weidman, *Maryland Furniture*, p. 46.
22. *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, 19 April 1800.
23. Although the central shell is original, the applied carving on the frieze of the chimneypiece reflects the work of two other carvers, both twentieth century. Judging from the context of the shell carving and that on the central drawer of the labeled high chest, it is highly probable that the mantle shell originally had stylized leafage in imitation of Philadelphia drawer carving.
24. James Brice Account Book, reel M1207, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland, loose sheet and pp. 29, 32. For more on the Brice House and architectural carving in Maryland see Luke Beckerdite, "William Buckland Reconsidered: Architectural Carving in Chesapeake Maryland, 1771-1774," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (November, 1982), pp. 42-88 and Luke Beckerdite, "William Buckland Reconsidered: Architectural Carving in Virginia and Maryland, 1755-1774," Master's Thesis, Wake Forest University, 1985.
25. Brice Account Book, p. 28.
26. The pins on the chair illustrated in Figure 4 appear to have been added. Two chairs, nearly identical to this example do not have pinned rails (MESDA research files S-5924 and Israel Sack, Inc., *Opportunities in American Antiques*, Vol. 21 (May, 1972), p. 12.

27. *Maryland Gazette*, 16 May 1771.
28. *Maryland Gazette*, 27 May 1773, and *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 16 September 1783. In the 3 July 1775, issue of *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette; or the Baltimore General Advertiser*, Moore advertised paper hangings and "MOCK INDIA PICTURES, all . . . the Manufacture of this Country"
29. This reference is cited in Henry J. Berkley, "A Register of Cabinet Makers and Allied Trades in Maryland, as Shown by the Newspapers and Directories, 1746 to 1820," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 25 (March, 1930), p. 12.
30. *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 30 November 1790.
31. *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 18 May 1784.
32. *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 16 November 1787.
33. Elder, *Maryland Queen Anne and Chippendale Furniture*, p. 69.
34. The probable histories for the dressing table are outlined in Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, p. 67:

The dressing table was owned in this century by Mrs. Lillian Stevenson Meyers (b. 1886) of Hereford, Baltimore County, and probably before that by her mother Mrs. Sallie Stevenson (b. 1845-d.?). Mrs. Meyers and possibly her mother also worked in this century for Arnold Elezy Waters (1860-1932) of Baltimore and Somerset County. If Mrs. Stevenson received the dressing table from Mrs. Waters, it is possible that the piece may have originally come from "Almodington," the Elzey family estate in Somerset County. This is uncertain, however, and the table may have come into the Stevenson family from any one of a number of affluent neighbors in that area of northern Baltimore County. Mrs. Meyer's paternal grandfather, Henry Stevenson (b. 1814), was a free black laborer who lived near the estates of several old Maryland families. It may be significant that Stevenson's nearest neighbor, George Austen, was a retired Baltimore cabinetmaker who was a direct "descendant" of Robert Moore. Austen was apprenticed to Thomas Lambert, who apprenticed to Isaac Johns, who worked for Moore.
35. See William MacPherson Horner, *Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture* (Philadelphia, 1935), pl. 76, and *The Magazine Antiques*, Vol. 35, (May, 1939), p. 222 and Vol. 99 (January, 1981), p. 15. The author would like to thank Mr. Albert Sack of Israel Sack, Inc. for the *Antiques* references.
36. The partnership of Moore and Wayne was dissolved by 16 February 1769 (*Pennsylvania Gazette*, 16 February 1769, in *Prime, Arts and Crafts*, p. 177). Luke Beckerdite, "Philadelphia Carving Shops, Part II: Bernard and Jugiez," *The Magazine Antiques*, Vol. 128 (September, 1985), pp. 498-513.
37. Horner, *Blue Book*, pl. 121, p. 102.
38. For example see Joseph Downs, *American Furniture* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1952), pp. 184-185; Oswaldo Rodriguez Roque, *American Furniture at Chipstone* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 42-43; and *The Magazine Antiques*, Vol. 35 (May, 1939), p. 222 and Vol. 99 (January, 1971), p. 15.

39. MESDA research file S-2373. Skinner was a prominent Quaker planter who moved from Isle of Wight County, Virginia, to Perquimans County, North Carolina, sometime before 1729 (Ellen Goode Winslow, *History of Perquimans County* [1931, reprinted Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1974], p. 23). The high chest probably belonged to Skinner and his first wife, Sarah Cresey (Creecy). Their marriage was approved by the Perquimans Monthly Meeting in 1745 (William Wade Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia of Quaker Genealogy* [1936, reprinted Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., 1978], Vol. 1, p. 73). A nearly identical example is in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society. It was purchased at a 1978 auction of the estate of Mrs. H. Clifford Bangs of Smithfield, Isle of Wight County, Virginia (Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, p. 56). The Skinner high chest and the example in the Maryland Historical Society have white cedar drawer bottoms that are beveled on all four edges, rabbeted to the sides and front, and nailed to the back. The bevels are almost entirely covered by thin glue strips that are mitered at the front corners and sawn off at a 45-degree angle at the back. Unlike the MHS chest, which has solid mahogany drawer fronts, the drawers of the Skinner example are walnut veneered on walnut. The tympanum is also veneered, but on a core of yellow pine. The construction of the back of the upper case of the Skinner chest is also unusual. The horizontal back boards are set flush with the case sides, nailed in place, and the joint covered at the sides by an astragal molding. The upper sections of both chests have full dustboards with rabbeted edges that engage the dadoes in a manner similar to the drawer supports on the Hopkins high chest and the lower cases are fitted with linen slides. The slides are unusual in having wide battens with cock-beaded edges that extend above the work surface to form a rim.

The construction of the lower case of the MHS chest differs from the dressing table illustrated in Figure 16. The supports for the shell drawer are lapped onto the front rail and mortised into the back. The drawer dividers are approximately 1½" thick, and there are no partitions. The drawer supports for the upper drawer of the high chest also differ in having a central support dovetailed into the drawer blade.

40. Related examples are illustrated in Albert Sack, *Fine Points of Furniture* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc. 1950), p. 201; Israel Sack, Inc., *Opportunities*, Vol. 4, pp. 982-983, Vol. 5, pp. 1218-1221 and Brochure No. 31, pp. 40-41; and Charles F. Hummel, *A Winterthur Guide to American Chippendale Furniture* (New York: Rutledge Books, 1976), pp. 86, 117. Several pieces in this group were brought to the author's attention by Mr. Allen Miller, Furniture Conservator, Quakertown, Pennsylvania. Mr. Miller's incisive observations on early Philadelphia construction and carving were also of great assistance.
41. Sack, *Opportunities*, Brochure No. 31, pp. 40-41.
42. The author would like to thank Mr. Alan Miller for calling these chairs to his attention. The chairs are illustrated in Sack, *Opportunities*, Vol. 6, pp. 1218-1221.
43. Winterthur Acc. File G.53.68.

44. A dressing table with a shell drawer and skirt shaping like that of Figure 16 is illustrated in Elder, *Maryland Queen Anne and Chippendale Furniture*, pp. 70-71.
45. See Albert Sack, *Fine Points*, p. 165. Although by a different hand, the carved shell on the desk-and-bookcase in the lower left corner has a large convex element in the center. The shell and acanthus on this example is attributed by the author to the Philadelphia carver Samuel Harding.
46. A dressing table in the collection of the Dietrich Americana Foundation has a front skirt shaped like that of the dressing table in Figure 19. See Alexandra W. Rollins, "Furniture in the Collection of the Dietrich Americana Foundation," *The Magazine Antiques*, Vol. 125 (May, 1984), p. 1116.

For assistance with this article, the author would like to thank Mr. William Voss Elder, III, Mr. Joe Kindig, III, Mr. Allan Miller, Mr. Albert Sack, and Ms. Gregory R. Weidman. Special thanks are due Mr. Elder and Ms. Weidman. Their research and observations on eighteenth century furniture were essential to this study.

MESDA seeks manuscripts which treat virtually any facet of southern decorative art for publication in the JOURNAL. The MESDA staff would also like to examine any privately-held primary research material (documents and manuscripts) from the South, and southern newspapers published in 1820 and earlier.

some Back issues of *The Journal*
are available.

The preparation of the *Journal* was made possible (in part) by a grant from the Research Tools and Reference Works Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent Federal Agency.

Photographs in this issue by the staff of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts except where noted.

MUSEUM OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

FRANK L. HORTON, *Director*

BRADFORD L. RAUSCHENBERG, *Research Fellow*

FORSYTH M. ALEXANDER, *Research Assistant*

LUKE BECKERDITE, *Research Associate*

SALLY GANT, *Education Coordinator*

ELIZABETH PUTNEY, *Associate in Education*

PAULA YOUNG, *Education Assistant*

ROSEMARY ESTES, *Research Archivist*

JOHN BIVINS, JR., *Editor*

SARA LEE BARNES, *Editorial Associate*

CAROLYN HEAD, *Secretary/Receptionist*

WESLEY STEWART, *Photographer*

