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CABINETMAKERS AND RELATED TRADESMEN IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA:
1770-1820

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Ronald L. Hurst
1989

APPROVAL SHEET


This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts



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Approved, December 1989



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ABSTRACT

Like those in other Virginia towns, the cabinetmaking community in greater Norfolk, Virginia, was a small, homogeneous group at the end of the colonial period. Men involved in the trade were almost exclusively of English or Virginia origin, and their products reflected that heritage. There was little evidence of shop specialization in this period, although it was common in larger cities.

Those conditions changed considerably in the decades immediately after the Revolution. The group tripled in size and its traditional Anglo-Virginian make-up was diluted with large influxes of immigrants from New York, Pennsylvania, New England, and continental Europe. The character of its products changed accordingly. At the same time, specialization in the furniture trade made its appearance in Norfolk, and shops dedicated to certain facets of the furniture industry were established for the first time.

While there were far more men and women making furniture in early national Norfolk than there had been before the Revolution, most of them did not experience long-term success. Disease, fire, and, most importantly, the uncertain maritime trade created conditions that were not conducive to good fortune for the majority. Only those who branched into other businesses or absorbed specialty shops were able to remain in the furniture trade for long periods of time.

CABINETMAKERS AND RELATED TRADESMEN IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA:

1770-1820

INTRODUCTION

While the study of pre-industrial cabinetmaking in the northern United States is fully developed and has even been revised a number of times, research into southern furniture making remains, in many ways, embryonic. Essays on southern furniture centers began to appear as early as the 1930s, but books and articles were sporadic and of uneven quality. Only within the last fifteen years has thoughtful and productive research like that in Wallace Gusler's The Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790, been published with any regularity. Consequently, the colonial and early national cabinet work of many southern localities, particularly that of the cities, remains to be discovered.

It was this paucity of published research that initially led the author to undertake an investigation of cabinetmaking in Norfolk, Virginia. Little studied, Norfolk was Virginia's largest colonial urban center; it stood to reason that the city's early cabinetmaking community had been productive and that its wares would constitute a cohesive and recognizable group like those already identified for Williamsburg, Charleston, and some other southern towns. Preliminary studies in the field

research facilities at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) were encouraging.

To date, the recent search for furniture made in early Norfolk has proven fruitful; products from a number of different shop groups have been identified, and research continues to uncover additional examples on a regular basis. However, study of the surviving furniture has also led to the discovery of a significant amount of written evidence concerning the men and women who produced it. Investigation has identified more than sixty cabinetmakers, turners, Windsor chairmakers, carvers, and upholsterers working in greater Norfolk between 1770 and 1820, and, as will be seen, the people who made the furniture were as varied and interesting as their handiwork. Those conditions suggested the topic for this thesis.

The present work, then, attempts to analyze the craftsmen who made and sold furniture¹ in Norfolk, rather than the furniture itself.² Among the issues to be addressed is that of origin. Where were Norfolk's furniture makers trained and what brought them the this

¹It should be noted that this study deals only with those who made furniture and related goods as a primary occupation. Carpenters, house joiners, and others who only made household furniture on occasion have not been included.

²The furniture, while not the primary focus of this study, will, nevertheless, be included in the evidence to be examined.

coastal Virginia city? What influenced the design and construction of their products? Why were some tradesmen enormously successful while others went out of business within a few months? And what enabled some cabinetmakers to operate several shops and businesses all at once?

The period on which the study is focused, 1770-1820, was initially selected because it covered an interesting phase in the history of Norfolk, spanning two wars (the Revolution and the War of 1812) and a substantial surge in population. As research into these decades progressed, the framework for addressing the overall topic emerged: change over time. It became clear from examination of the craftsmen's origins, their success rates, and their products, that conditions changed dramatically from the beginning of the period in question to its end. Thus, the furniture making community in Norfolk will be viewed first as it existed on the eve of the Revolution, and then as it changed during the thirty to forty years that followed the return of peace.

It is worth noting that one of the most useful tools for approaching and organizing the individuals in the study will be found in Appendix I, wherein a biographical sketch of each craftsman is set forth. The author was able to create these sketches, and, indeed, to pursue the topic in general, because of Norfolk's ample body of written records. The county's court records are

intact for the period in question and minutes of the city's Common Hall exist through 1796. Newspapers are abundant, as are personal property and land tax records after 1786. A few diaries, early histories, and the account books of some wealthy customers also shed light on late colonial and early national Norfolk furniture builders. Of course, the surviving works of these individuals offer important evidence as well.

In sum, it is intended that analysis of the primary sources will neatly illustrate a specific craft community that evolved over a period of fifty years from a state of relative homogeneity to one that was far more cosmopolitan in nature. It was a community that tripled in size in a relatively short period of time, and one whose members went from comparative stability to circumstances of brief tenure and frequent moves for the majority.

CHAPTER I
NORFOLK AT 1770

In 1770 the town of Norfolk, Virginia, was already nearly a century old. It had been legislated into existence in 1680, along with twenty-five other new towns, by a colonial government anxious to foster the development of urban centers. Yet in reality, Virginia had little economic or social need for towns at the end of the seventeenth century, regardless of the legislature's wishes. The colony's economy was oriented toward agriculture rather than commerce, and its numerous, easily navigated rivers made direct trans-Atlantic shipping of produce possible from docks at or near most individual plantations and farms. As one period observer put it,

the great number of Rivers and the
thinness of the Inhabitants distract
and disperse a trade. So that all
Ships in general gather each their
Loading up and down an hundred Miles
distant.¹

Consequently, nearly all of the new towns called for by

¹Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, eds., The Reverend John Clayton: A Parson with a Scientific Mind, His Scientific Writings and Other Related Papers (Charlottesville, VA: 1965), p. 53, quoted in Darrett B. and Anita H. Rutman, A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650-1750 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), p. 209.

the government in 1680 either disappeared quickly or remained mere hamlets. Some were never more than plans on paper, but Norfolk proved to be the exception.²

That the town of Norfolk continued to exist at all during the 1690s can probably be attributed to its designation as the site of a new court house in 1691. At that time Lower Norfolk County was divided into the new counties of Norfolk and Princess Anne, and "Norfolk Town" became the seat of Norfolk County. However, with the turn of the eighteenth century, the town's geographic location, together with a growing inland population and an evolving north Atlantic trade network, combined to provide it with a sure footing for new and continued growth. Norfolk was to be far more than a county seat.³

Situated in the southeastern corner of Virginia, Norfolk was immediately adjacent to Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake Bay, each an important element in the north Atlantic shipping network. Further, the town had been laid out next to a natural deep water harbor on a two-pronged peninsula in the eastern branch of the Elizabeth

²John W. Reps, Tidewater Towns: City Planning in Colonial Virginia and Maryland (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1972), pp. 65-74 (hereafter cited as Reps, Towns); Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Norfolk: Historic Southern Port, 2nd ed. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1962), pp. 3-8 (hereafter cited as Wertenbaker, Norfolk).

³Reps, Towns, pp. 75-76; Wertenbaker, Norfolk, pp. 4-5, 28-33.

River. It was a nearly perfect location for construction of docks and shipyards, and one well suited for trade. Wharves were erected at an early date and in 1705 Norfolk was designated by the colonial legislature as an official port of entry. Growth came swiftly, and by 1728 diarist William Byrd could count twenty sloops and brigantines anchored in Norfolk harbor at one time.⁴

As the technology of shipbuilding improved during the eighteenth century, ocean-going vessels of increasingly larger burden became common, and some of them had difficulty ascending the shallower creeks and rivers of the Tidewater. Furthermore, the population of Virginia was continuing its westward expansion, growing well beyond the fall line and the reach of large ships. In time, planters and farmers in such locations found that it was practical to move their produce by barge downstream to Norfolk, where the goods could be held for transshipment to the outside world.

Similar geographic and economic conditions faced farmers in the Albemarle region, the northeastern part of North Carolina. That colony had no major deep water ports north of Wilmington, and its coastline was plagued with islands and shoals dangerous to shipping. As a result, many North Carolinian planters and farmers brought their

⁴Reps, Towns, p. 76; Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 27, 38-45.

crops and other products overland to Norfolk, where they could be shipped or traded for imported goods. To service these incoming suppliers, a thriving merchant population quickly established itself in Norfolk, further boosting the town's growth. Eventually, Norfolk became the principal outlet for most of northeastern North Carolina's agricultural and commercial output.⁵

The extensive pine forests of North Carolina and those in Virginia's Great Dismal Swamp also made Norfolk a principal center for the sale of valuable naval stores. Pitch, tar, turpentine, and barrel staves were used in immense quantities by British naval vessels and by merchants and shipping concerns all along the east coast of North America. Such goods were hauled into Norfolk by rural pitch and tar burners on a regular basis and, there, sold or traded for imported and manufactured goods. This cycle, in addition to furthering trade, contributed significantly to Norfolk's development as a major shipbuilding center.⁶

Finally, Norfolk's geographic location and its fertile back country made the town a natural supply depot for the West Indies. Sugar planters in the Caribbean were

⁵Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 27-30; William Byrd II, The History of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina, Run in the Year of our Lord 1728 quoted in Reys, Towns, p. 75.

⁶Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 33, 37.

so intent on producing cash crops that they came to depend on outsiders for foodstuffs and animal fodder. Again in 1728, William Byrd recorded that the trade of the Norfolk merchants was "chiefly to the West Indies, wither they export abundance of beef, pork, flour, and lumber" in exchange for highly salable sugar and rum. Fourteen years later Governor William Gooch reported to the Board of Trade in London that Virginia (principally via Norfolk) had exported beef and pork valued at £24,000 in one year; in 1764 Governor Francis Fauquier concluded that "the town of Norfolk and the James river have almost wholly engrossed the West Indian and grain trade."⁷

In 1736 the crown acknowledged Norfolk's sustained growth and importance by issuing a borough charter, thus enabling the town to pass laws and to govern itself. Rightfully describing it as a small city in 1765, Lord Adam Gordon termed Norfolk "the Port of most traffic in Virginia" and estimated that it contained "above four hundred houses."⁸ Ten years later, it was the largest and most economically important city in the colony, with a population estimated at 6000 people, three times the

⁷Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 38-40.

⁸Lord Adam Gordon, "Journal of an Officer who Travelled in America and the West Indies in 1764 and 1765" in Newton D. Mereness, ed., Travels in the American Colonies quoted in Reys, Towns, p. 213.

number then living in Williamsburg, the colonial capital.⁹

Two other urbanized areas were immediately contiguous to late eighteenth-century Norfolk and, while neither fell within the city's boundaries, both were an integral part of its social and commercial life. One of these was the town of Portsmouth, Virginia, located directly across the Elizabeth River from Norfolk. Portsmouth was founded in 1752 by William Craford, a landowner who simply laid out and sold town lots on his own river front acreage. Portsmouth grew quickly and, to judge from a town plat drawn in the 1770s, it was completely built up by the time of the Revolution.

John Reps, an historian of urban planning, notes that during the third quarter of the eighteenth century "Portsmouth enjoyed the same locational advantages as Norfolk and became particularly important as a center of shipbuilding," yet it remained in Norfolk's shadow throughout the period in question.¹⁰ The reasons for the newer town's secondary position were summed up by Moreau de Saint-Méry during a visit in 1794, when he wrote that

Ships...can reach [Portsmouth] as easily
as they do Norfolk...But Norfolk's antiquity
and the lure its established businesses
exert over all industries on the verge of
being founded, do not give Portsmouth a

⁹Wertebaker, Norfolk, p. 47.

¹⁰Reps, Towns, pp. 218-21.

chance to become a rival.¹¹

Maps suggest that Portsmouth was about fifty percent smaller than Norfolk at the end of the colonial period.

Though Norfolk and Portsmouth remained two distinct jurisdictions and were, in fact, rivals to some extent, they nevertheless functioned as parts of the same urban area. Both cities were within Norfolk County, and residents of each conducted their judicial and legal affairs at the courthouse in Norfolk. They were within sight of one another, separated only by a quarter mile of water, and they were linked by regular ferry service at all times. Even city newspapers usually bore joint titles such as the Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald and the American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser.

Certainly there was a great deal of traffic between the two towns.

A second satellite area that functioned as a part of urban Norfolk was the point of land variously called Ferry Point, Washington Point, and Washington Town in the late eighteenth century. An unincorporated part of Norfolk County, it was neatly wedged between the town boundaries of Norfolk and Portsmouth and separated from each by narrow sub-branches of the Elizabeth River. Ferry

¹¹Fillmore Norfleet, "Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Gosport as Seen by Moreau de Saint-Méry in March, April and May 1794," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 48 (July 1940): 260.

Point was the third stop on the triangular route of the regular ferry service between Portsmouth and Norfolk, and it was home to a growing number of craftsmen who served residents in both towns.¹² It was, in practice if not in actuality, a part of Norfolk borough.¹³

In short, greater Norfolk was an expanding urban center, small by the standards of the northern colonies, but nonetheless well situated geographically and poised for growth.

¹²Though documentation on the area is scarce, a number of prominent craftsmen, including Edmond Allmond and John Collins [q.v.] maintained their large establishments in Ferry Point.

¹³It should be noted that there are no reliable population figures available for either Portsmouth or Ferry Point before 1790.

CHAPTER II

THE CABINET TRADE IN LATE COLONIAL NORFOLK

There were relatively few Norfolk area residents whose primary business was the production of furniture in 1770. In fact, only four or five of its citizens can with any certainty be described as masters of their own cabinet shops in that year. These individuals, John Scott (working in Portsmouth), Richard Brown, William Gray, John Selden, and probably Edmond Allmond, and their employees, apparently fulfilled the demand for "country made" furniture (i.e., made in this country) in greater Norfolk and certain sections of its hinterland.

By comparison, there were at least fourteen cabinetmakers working in Boston during the same year, in addition to another fifteen craftsmen who specialized in related trades like carving and upholstery. However, Boston's population was approximately two-and-one-half times larger than that of Norfolk in 1770, and Boston was also the market hub for small urban centers and rural areas stretching from Maine to northern New York, a region far larger than that served by Norfolk.¹

¹Myrna Kaye, "Eighteenth-Century Boston Furniture Craftsmen," in Boston Furniture of the Eighteenth Century, ed. Walter Muir Whitehill (Boston: The Colonial Society of

In short, given its population and the dimensions of its rural market, Norfolk's cabinetmaking community can be considered normal in size. It also compares favorably in when measured against similar groups in other Virginia cities. For instance, Williamsburg, smaller in population but with a larger rural clientele by virtue of its status as the capital, supported approximately the same number of master furniture makers as Norfolk in the year 1770.²

Neither was there anything particularly unusual about the origins of Norfolk's cabinetmakers in the years just before the Revolution.³ Like their colleagues in Williamsburg, most of them were either Virginian by birth or immigrants from Britain. Surviving records indicate that Edmond Allmond and John Selden were raised from childhood in Tidewater Virginia, while property references in William Gray's will suggest that he was originally from Great Britain. The origins of John Scott and Richard

Massachusetts, 1974), pp. 270-302; Bureau of the Census, Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, Virginia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p.11 (hereafter cited as Bureau, First Census).

²Appendix, pp. 59-63, 78, 101-02, and 127-31; Wallace B. Gusler, Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790 (Richmond, Va.: Virginia Museum, 1979), pp. 25, 75, 136, and 147 (hereafter cited as Gusler, Williamsburg).

³With regard to origin, training, and similar subjects, the size of Norfolk's pre-Revolutionary cabinetmaking community was too small to allow concrete observations. However, enough information was available to permit some logical conclusions.

Brown remain unknown, but their surnames and the general character of the population in late colonial Virginia imply an Anglo-American background for them as well.⁴

In terms of trade education, records for Norfolk area cabinetmakers in this period provide very little information, but it is likely that the city's furniture builders followed the same pattern observed and documented in other Virginia towns. Again taking Williamsburg as an example, research has shown that many of its furniture craftsmen advertised themselves as "late from London," suggesting that English training was a valued commodity in the local furniture market.⁵ Similar advertisements for Norfolk tradesmen are unknown, probably because of the paucity of newspapers there before the Revolution. Even so, an examination of surviving Norfolk furniture from the 1760s and 1770s reveals the same minutely detailed duplication of English taste and technology that is found in the furniture of Williamsburg (and possibly other Virginia cities), but is generally seen nowhere else in colonial America.

Much of the furniture that was made in Norfolk before the end of the colonial period was undoubtedly destroyed in the series of wartime fires that leveled the city early in 1776. Fortunately for modern students,

⁴Appendix, pp. 59-63, 78, 101-02, and 127-31.

⁵Gusler, Williamsburg, p. 63.

Norfolk cabinetmakers also enjoyed the patronage of citizens in northeastern North Carolina and the lower James River Valley, and late colonial Norfolk furniture surviving in these places provides a useful group of study material. When examined carefully, it repeatedly reinforces the strong reliance on British taste and technology mentioned above.

The products of John Selden's shop currently constitute the best resource for an investigation of the English influence in pre-Revolutionary Norfolk furniture, because two objects signed and dated by him survive. A clothespress (figure 1) and a chest of drawers bearing his signature and initials, respectively, remain at Shirley Plantation in Charles City County, Virginia, in possession of the Carter family. In style and construction, each of these objects would be virtually indistinguishable from their London-made counterparts were it not for the extensive use of native yellow pine in their structural framing.

Specific similarities between Selden's Norfolk work and that of London craftsmen include the use of a fully panelled back on the clothespress, horizontally grained stacked blocking behind the bracket feet on both pieces, full thickness dustboards that run the depth of



Figure 1. Clothespress, made by John Selden, Norfolk, 1775. Courtesy Shirley Plantation.

each case, and a reliance on the "neat and plain"⁶ fashion for exterior detailing. An unsigned desk and bookcase attributed to Selden and with a northeastern North Carolina history, shares all of the same structural and stylistic features, suggesting that these characteristics were not confined to Norfolk's Virginia market.⁷ In fact, almost all of the pre-war furniture attributable to Norfolk shares these distinctively English aspects of design and construction, strengthening the notion of substantial British influence in the training of local cabinetmakers.

The single known exception to Norfolk's omnipresent British-style cabinet school is represented by a very small group of dressing tables that were made in or near the city during the 1760s, but which exhibit construction techniques and exterior design elements not

⁶The term "neat and plain" was frequently used in both England and Virginia in the eighteenth century to denote a style emphasizing good proportions and minimal surface decoration. The orders of George Washington, Robert Beverley, and other prominent Virginians contain numerous references to the "neat and plain." The neat and plain appears to have emerged in England as a reaction against the extremes of the French rococo, which began to become popular in England at the middle of the eighteenth century.

⁷Williamsburg, Va., Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections. Accession file L1976-121; Gusler, Williamsburg, p.151-53; John Bivins, Jr., The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820 (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1988), pp.230-33 (hereafter cited as Bivins, North Carolina).

normally found outside the Connecticut River Valley. Like most New England furniture of the late colonial period, these tables display ornamental exteriors and cheaply built interiors, the latter employing the smallest amount of inner framing feasible and a large quantity of nails for quick execution.⁸

Several of these tables are extant, most with Norfolk area histories, but the best documented example in the group survives in the hands of the Talbot family, for whom it was probably made (figure 2). It remained in Talbot Hall, the family's late eighteenth-century Norfolk County residence, until the 1960s. Like the other pieces in the group, the Talbot table is made of black walnut and southern yellow pine, two woods commonly found in Virginia furniture but rarely used together in New England cabinetmaking.⁹

The presence of these New England-style tables in Norfolk is evidence of the American coastal furniture trade from north to south, but in this instance, the craftsman's use of southern cabinet woods indicates that he was either duplicating imported furniture for his local

⁸Brock Jobe and Myrna Kaye, New England Furniture, the Colonial Era (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984), pp. 184-85.

⁹The Talbot family table was discovered by the author in the course of field research in 1988. It is recorded and catalogued in the Virginia Furniture Research Files at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections.



Figure 2. Dressing table, Norfolk, ca. 1745-60. Private collection.

customers or, more likely, was himself an immigrant from Connecticut or western Massachusetts. In either case, the comparatively small number of surviving Norfolk tables of this kind implies that the inferior quality of the New England construction did not find favor with the furniture-buying public in Norfolk. It is likely that the craftsman (or craftsmen) in question either altered their later production to match established Virginia taste or moved on.¹⁰

Regardless of the form it took, the furniture produced in Norfolk was probably made by craftsmen who did not specialize in one particular branch of cabinetmaking, but practiced most of the related arts themselves or had employees who did so. Participants in the local furniture industry usually described themselves with the single term "cabinetmaker." There are almost no Norfolk references to trades such as carver, upholsterer, or painter-gilder before the late 1780s, whereas towns like Boston and New York abounded with them. Even Williamsburg could boast a few specialists.

Still, upholstery (and probably other specialized trades) must have been practiced in Norfolk, because Norfolk-made upholstered pieces of this period survive. In fact, the account book of Williamsburg leather worker Alexander Craig indicates that Norfolk cabinetmaker John

¹⁰Bivins, North Carolina, pp. 238-39.

Selden was a customer for leather upholstery materials.¹¹ The point, then, is that specialized, furniture-related trades were almost certainly being practiced in Norfolk, but there is no evidence that those trades were carried on in separate shops with their own masters, as was usually the case in the larger northern cities.

Outside competition for Norfolk's cabinetmakers certainly existed before the Revolution, but the degree of that competition is difficult to document. While some furniture was being imported into Virginia from England, the majority of it was custom-ordered by wealthy individuals and delivered to their own docks. There is no evidence to suggest that English furniture was imported into Norfolk, or elsewhere in Virginia, as venture cargo. Small wooden wares, including dressing glasses, tea boards, and tea chests were the exception.¹²

On the other hand, venture cargo furniture was being brought into Norfolk and other Virginia ports from New England, New York, and Pennsylvania, although these

¹¹Appendix, pp. 59-63, 78, 101-02, and 127-31; Alexander Craig Account Book, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va., cited in Gusler Williamsburg, p. 147.

¹²Typical newspaper advertisements for imported English wooden wares include "Mahogany frame and Dutch Looking Glasses, ...Mahogany Tea Chests, Tea boards and hand waitors" along with textiles and food stuffs for sale from John Dorsey at Elk Ridge Landing, Maryland in the Maryland Gazette, 9 February 1767; the English orders of Essex County, Virginia, planter Robert Beverley are typical of those that survive, as seen in Robert Beverley Letter Book, 1761-75, Library of Congress.

imports accounted for only small portions of individual shipments. A 1774 Hampton port clearance notice for the sloop Success of Philadelphia is typical. That vessel contained, among other things, rum, beer, hay, pottery, ironware, soap, candles, and one dozen Windsor chairs. Naval District Customs records for Virginia ports indicate similar numbers. In 1764, a total of 108 chairs, four tables, and eleven desks entered all of Virginia from the New England ports of Boston, Newport, and Piscataqua, Maine.¹³

Even in the face of these imports, the evidence suggests that most of the furniture used in Norfolk and its market area was made locally. While it is impossible to know the precise number of pieces produced in Norfolk, surviving furniture with histories in area families is overwhelmingly of local origin.¹⁴

The business success rate of Norfolk area furniture craftsmen in the third quarter of the eighteenth century is also hard to establish. Of those at work in 1770, only Scott, of Portsmouth, and Brown, of Norfolk proper, had been working locally for more than ten years.

¹³ Virginia Gazette, or Norfolk Interlligencer, 23 June 1774, p. 3; Naval District Customs Reports, Lower District of the James River (1764), transcribed in Mary Goodwin, "Furniture from the Northern Colonies," research report for Colonial Williamsburg, 1971, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴A broad survey of the field research conducted by the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts supports this conclusion.

Gray may have been a recent immigrant from England, but his career, along with those of Scott and Brown, was terminated by death before 1775. Selden and Allmond had arrived in Norfolk from Hampton, Virginia, only a few years earlier, but each of their businesses was interrupted by the upheaval of the Revolution. Though Allmond returned to Norfolk and operated a successful cabinet business after the war, Selden died during the conflict. In any event, working dates for Norfolk cabinetmakers at this time do not exhibit the brief stays and sudden departures that will be seen in later decades.¹⁵

In sum, available evidence suggests that the cabinetmakers of late colonial Norfolk constituted a small, rather homogeneous group. They shared similar English or Virginian backgrounds and, for the most part, their products reflected that fact. Unlike their colleagues in larger cities to the north, they did not practice trade specialization in separate shops. And though evidence is scant, these men seem to have remained in Norfolk for extended periods. However, the economic and political conditions that developed in Norfolk after the Revolution altered almost all of the situations described above, making the post-war cabinet community a very different group of men and women.

¹⁵Appendix, pp. 59-63, 78, 101-02, and 127-31.

CHAPTER III

NORFOLK AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Greater Norfolk suffered more devastation during the Revolutionary War than almost any other city in Virginia. It began on 1 January 1776, when British troops, under the leadership of the colony's royal governor, John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, fired on the docks of rebellious Norfolk from its own harbor. Most of the wharves, warehouses, and shops along the waterfront were burned in the process. Other fires ensued in late January, and when American troops were forced to flee the town early the following month, they torched what was left in order to prevent its falling into enemy hands. In the end, every building within the city limits was destroyed, including the court house, market house, church, commercial buildings, and all residential structures. Some 1,300 buildings were lost, totalling £164,148 in value.¹

The combined effect of the fire and the war on the

¹Wertenbaker, Norfolk, pp. 62-64; Journal and Documents of the House of Delegates of Virginia, 1835 as cited in "Virginia in 1785." [letter of John Joyce to Robert Dickson, 24 March 1785] Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 23 (October 1915), p.409 (hereafter cited as VMHB, "Virginia").

citizens of Norfolk was almost beyond calculation. The population was completely dispersed for the duration of the conflict, and many individuals never returned. Those who did found Norfolk in the 1780s to be significantly changed. A visitor from Ireland noted in 1785 that "such a vast heap of Ruins and Devastation, are almost impossible to have any Idea of unless seen."²

Nevertheless, Norfolk began to reestablish itself shortly after the cessation of hostilities. In 1782, the mayor and aldermen re-commenced meeting and made plans for reopening the public wells, widening the narrow streets, and rebuilding the ruined bridges. They also initiated the reconstruction of the market house, the prison, and the town hall. Growth was slow at first, but it picked up speed rapidly. In 1783, there were still fewer than one dozen houses standing but, by 1796, 800 to 900 new structures had been erected.³

The quality of new construction was initially impeded because pre-war lot owners insisted on leasing their land to newcomers (for a maximum of seven years) rather than selling it outright. This resulted in the

²Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 66-69; VMHB, "Virginia," p. 407.

³Charles H. Simmons, Simmons' Norfolk Directory (Norfolk: Augustus C. Jordan, 1806), np (hereafter cited as Norfolk Directory, 1806); Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 74-75, 86.

erection by leasers of many inexpensive, impermanent structures. However, by the mid 1790s Norfolk's rejuvenated economy had demonstrated the commercial viability of land sales, thus spawning a construction boom that produced a large quantity of architecturally important buildings.⁴

Culturally, Norfolk began to take its place beside the other cities of the new Republic. Several theatres were established, including the new brick theatre on Fenchurch Street in 1793, and, by 1802, the Wigwam Public Gardens, with refreshment vendors and exotic plantings, had been opened. A public school existed for those who could afford the tuition, and two or three dancing schools regularly held public balls and assemblies. There was even a race track at Thoroughgood's in nearby Princess Anne County.⁵

Norfolk's population grew apace. Recalling that before the Revolution the city could claim approximately 6,000 citizens (not including Portsmouth and Ferry Point),

⁴VMHB, "Virginia," p. 408; buildings typical of Norfolk's high quality architecture in this period include the 1791 Patrick Parker house, Freemason and Bank Streets (demolished), the 1792 Moses Myers house, same intersection, and the ca. 1795 George Newton house, Granby Street (demolished), Carroll Walker, Norfolk, a Pictorial History (Virginia Beach, Va.: Donning Co., 1975), pp. 59, 143; Calder Loth, ed., The Virginia Landmarks Register (Richmond, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1986), p. 296.

⁵Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 118-22.

the war's effect may be seen in the population at the census of 1790, when no more than 2,959 Norfolkians could be counted. Yet by 1800 the number expanded to nearly 7,000, making Norfolk the eighth largest city in the United States. Twenty years later Norfolk citizens exceeded 8,600 in number, while Portsmouth and Ferry Point pushed the figure even higher.⁶

This surge in population and its relatively sustained growth belie the fact that greater Norfolk's economy was frequently unstable from the mid 1780s until at least 1820. One period of impressive economic prosperity was often followed by another of virtual collapse. As one writer has phrased it, "Norfolk's post-Revolutionary history vividly illustrates the instability of any community whose existence depends upon the state of its maritime commerce."⁷

The period immediately after the Revolutionary War was one of the boom times. Norfolk's harbor and its position on the Chesapeake Bay quickly drew Scots and English merchant houses, whose owners realized the

⁶Bureau of the Census, Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, Records of the State Enumerations: 1782-1785, Virginia. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 10; Chrysler Museum, A Tricentennial Celebration: Norfolk 1682-1982 (Norfolk: Chrysler Museum, 1982), p. 95 (hereafter cited as Chrysler, Tricentennial).

⁷Chrysler, Tricentennial, p. 47.

potential for commercial growth. The merchants' success in Norfolk was bolstered by the post-war growth of towns along Virginia's fall line. Because of their inland locations, these cities rarely traded directly with Europe. Instead, goods from the back country were brought to Richmond, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg, and then sent by barge down river or bay to Norfolk for shipment abroad.⁸

Despite these advantages, the economy of Norfolk, Portsmouth, and other seaports suffered somewhat in the late 1780s because of shipping restrictions enacted by the British government after the Peace of Paris (1783). Norfolk's principal shipping outlet had been the West Indies before the war, but protectionist Britain now forbade the importation of goods from any nation into the Indies on any but British ships. The Norfolk shipbuilding industry was damaged, and even though American goods were still legal imports, many British merchants refused to buy or ship them in order to eliminate foreign competition.⁹

Norfolk's economy rebounded dramatically when the aggressions of revolutionary France brought about a war in Europe late in 1792, eventually involving France, Britain, Holland, Spain, Austria, Prussia, and Sardinia. Warfare between those countries and their colonies effectively cut

⁸Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 75, 83.

⁹Wertebaker, Norfolk, p. 77.

off all European trade in the West Indies and prevented the enforcement of England's trade regulations. Norfolk and other American coastal cities stepped in to fill the void, and Norfolk's trade with the French, Dutch, and Spanish West Indian colonies prospered enormously.¹⁰

By the mid 1790s Norfolk was thriving again. A visiting Frenchman, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, observed that the city still dominated the import/export trade of North Carolina as far south as the Roanoke River and of Virginia northward to the Rappahannock and westward to Petersburg, Richmond, and beyond. A fellow countryman, Moreau de Saint-Méry noted in 1795 that

Norfolk, which is Virginia's foremost commercial port, does a considerable business with the Antilles, sending them lumber, barrel staves, shingles, flour, cattle, Indian corn, potatoes, etc.... Eighty deepwater vessels and ten coasters operate out of Norfolk, and one hundred more ply in the rivers and in the Chesapeake. Norfolk-built vessels are highly esteemed for their speed, especially the brigs and schooners.

Clearly the city's shipbuilding industry, its merchant houses, and the supporting tradesmen were healthy and productive.¹¹

¹⁰Donald Kagan, Steven Ozment, and Frank M. Turner, The Western Heritage (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 608-10; Wertenbaker, Norfolk, p. 84.

¹¹Wertenbaker, Norfolk, p. 76; Kenneth Roberts and Anna M. Roberts, eds., Moreau de Saint-Méry's American Journey, 1793-1798 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1947), p. 51 (hereafter cited as Roberts, Saint-Méry).

Exports from the port of Norfolk grew steadily, from goods valued at \$1,000,000 in 1792 to \$4,300,000 in 1804, but there was trouble on the horizon. At the turn of the nineteenth century, as American relations with England, France, and Spain continued to deteriorate, those countries' attacks on American shipping became more and more frequent. The XYZ affair in 1798 exacerbated the situation, and by 1802 the Norfolk Herald noted that "In this town claims against the French...are in all about \$2,000,000." Four years later, one in every four vessels between the United States and Jamaica was being taken by French or Spanish privateers. Many of these ships were from Norfolk, which, despite continued economic growth, was beginning to feel the effects of international interference.¹²

Finally, in the face of worsening relations with Great Britain, continuing impressment of American seamen, ongoing interference with shipping, and the refusal of European governments to make good on American claims, President Thomas Jefferson pushed through the Embargo Act. Signed in December 1807, the act forbade all American vessels from leaving the country for any foreign port. It was intended to cut off the importation of American goods into British ports, including those of her West Indian

¹²Norfolk Herald, 28 January 1802, 1; Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 84-85, 95-98.

colonies, who still depended on the United States for food.¹³

The Embargo Act was disastrous for Norfolk. With the stroke of a pen the shipping industry there was paralyzed. Shipyards and warehouses closed almost immediately, putting thousands out of work. The docks were emptied when merchant fleets were sent away to freshwater ports so that the idle ships would not be damaged by saltwater worms. Property values declined and many merchants faced ruin. Norfolk went into a severe economic depression that lasted for more than two years.¹⁴

The Embargo Act was repealed in March 1809, but non-intercourse with France and Great Britain was continued. Even so, it was hoped that recuperation could be effected by shipping American goods to West Indian ports and then selling them to someone who would, in turn, resell to the French or British. Unfortunately, the Embargo had seriously damaged some American markets in the West Indies, and a few of them never recovered. The problem was summed up by a Jamaican planter in an editorial to a Norfolk newspaper on 14 December 1808. He wrote

We consider the embargo helpful to Jamaica.

¹³Chrysler, Tricentennial, p. 47; Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 103-04.

¹⁴Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 104-05; Chrysler, Tricentennial, p.49.

We are raising our own provisions, splitting our hogshead staves and headings, while we get our puncheons from Quebec. Every day we feel ourselves more independent of you and laugh at the policy of your government.¹⁵

Shipping interests in Norfolk and other American ports struggled toward recovery after repeal of the embargo, and some progress was made. However, British ships continued to impress American seamen and interfere with trade. Partly in response to these infractions and to feelings of American nationalism, President James Madison reluctantly declared war on Great Britain in June 1812.¹⁶

For the first eight months after the declaration of war, the conflict had little effect on Norfolk or its interests, but the severity of the situation was driven home in February 1813 when British ships blockaded the Chesapeake Bay at Cape Charles and Cape Henry. Still, trade was not brought to a complete halt. Flour, meal, and other foodstuffs continued to come down the James River from Richmond and Petersburg to Norfolk, where they were loaded on shallow lighters and sent up the Elizabeth River to Kempsville in Princess Anne County. There they were hauled overland to North Landing, then sent by barge

¹⁵Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 108-09; Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 14 December 1808, 2.

¹⁶Winthrop D. Jordan, et al, The United States, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982), pp. 186-92.

down the rivers of North Carolina into Currituck and Pamlico Sounds. In this way, Virginia produce continued to go out to Europe and the West Indies. The British were aware of this traffic, but given the ragged nature of the North Carolina coast, they found it impossible to blockade the area.¹⁷

Even this outlet was cut off, however, when the Federal government enacted another embargo in December 1813. Intended to prevent valuable stores from falling into British hands, it even forbade the shipment of flour, meal, wheat, and corn from Richmond and Petersburg to Norfolk. The Norfolk economy was again brought to a standstill. When word of the Peace of Ghent arrived early in 1815 there was renewed hope, but it was short lived. Britain again closed her West Indian ports to American vessels, and though some concessions were made, the duties were high and cargo severely limited in type.

Despite these conditions, Norfolk fared better than most other American ports. Because the town offered abundant supplies of naval stores in addition to the usual foodstuffs, British ships stocking the West Indies flocked to Norfolk instead of New York, Philadelphia, or Boston. Thus, while Norfolk shippers and ship builders went bankrupt, her merchants and the craftsmen who supported

¹⁷Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 110, 113-14; Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 15 January 1815, 1.

them prospered.¹⁸

Naturally, Norfolk was content to let the situation stand, but debt-ridden northern ports soon began to pressure Congress for the passage of retaliatory measures. It did so in 1818, banning all trade between the United States and any British port closed to American ships. Norfolk's advantage was effectively ended. The next year Britain, fearing that her West Indian colonists would starve without American food, opened certain ports in Canada and Bermuda to American vessels, thus allowing the transshipment of American food into the British West Indies on British ships. The brief resurgence in trade experienced by Norfolk and other American ports was ended in 1820 when Congress enacted further restrictions aimed at punishing the British for their protectionist policies. Thus Norfolk ended the second decade of the nineteenth century with yet another depression.¹⁹

Beyond the vagaries of the maritime trade, there were other forces at work on the state of Norfolk's economy, some of them outside the control of government policies. Fire was a constant problem, often setting business back considerably. Among the major conflagrations was one in February 1804 that destroyed more than 300 warehouses, shops, and dwellings, in

¹⁸Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 114-15, 145-46.

¹⁹Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 147-48.

addition to many of the ships in the harbor. Early in 1819 a fire leveled over 100 houses and businesses along Main Street, and later the same year the slums of Bank Street were inadvertently destroyed in the same fashion.²⁰

Disease offered an even more destructive and disruptive force. Early in 1795 several hundred citizens died in the last of Norfolk's smallpox epidemics,²¹ and later that year an outbreak of yellow fever killed at least 500 more townspeople before the October frost ended the mosquito problem. In fact, Norfolk's swampy location was often responsible for epidemics of yellow fever. Hundreds of men, women, and children died of the fever in August and September of 1802, often thirty to fifty people per day, and the same thing happened in 1821 and 1826. With each of these plagues, the population fled Norfolk in droves and many families decided never to return. Of course, deaths, together with these exoduses, created shortages of skilled labor. Architect Benjamin Latrobe, visiting in 1795, noted that "this has occasioned, with the rapid increase of buildings in Norfolk, an extreme scarcity of hands, especially joiners and carpenters, and other artisans, and of course an amazing rise in their

²⁰Norfolk Beacon, 3 May 1836, 1; Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 128-29.

²¹Widespread inoculation in 1802 ended the smallpox problem in Norfolk.

demands for wages."²²

In all, the economy of Norfolk was often healthy between 1781 and 1820, and its population continued to expand. In fact, Norfolk often seemed to be on the verge of dramatic economic success. Yet the uncertainties of national politics, recurrent war, fire, and pestilence frequently resulted in a roller coaster atmosphere that made long term success in business a questionable, if not a risky, undertaking.

²²Edward C. Carter II, ed., The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1795-1798 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), vol. I, p. 78; Wertenbaker, Norfolk, pp. 188-90.

CHAPTER IV

THE CABINET TRADE IN POST-COLONIAL NORFOLK

As the population of Norfolk expanded after the Revolution, the cabinet trade grew with it. When peace treaties were being signed in Paris, Edmond Allmond and his recently freed apprentice, John Butt, appear to have been the only full-time, independent cabinetmakers working in urban Norfolk. Yet by 1790, at least five masters had established their own cabinet shops, and five years later the number had grown to eleven. In fact, though the numbers would continue to fluctuate somewhat from year to year, after 1795 there were rarely fewer than eleven or twelve separate shops producing furniture and related items in greater Norfolk at any given time.¹

Of course, Norfolk's expanding population was largely responsible for the increase in the number of the city's furniture tradesmen, but part of the growth can also be attributed to increasing diversification among local craftsmen. Norfolk's pre-war habit of conducting a variety of furniture-related trades in the same cabinet shop gave way, as it had earlier in most large cities, to

¹Appendix, pp. 56-157. Most of the individual shops employed a number of craftsmen.

the establishment of shops that specialized in single aspects of furniture production.

Among the newly independent trades in Norfolk were those of Windsor chairmaker, upholsterer, carver/gilder, and turner. Some of the men and women practicing these trades, such as the turners, also sold their services to the Norfolk and Portsmouth shipyards, but most of the others were involved primarily in the production and installation of household furnishings. Concurrently, several Norfolk cabinetmakers continued to offer the full spectrum of furniture production within their own shops, either by doing the work themselves or by hiring specialists to work on the premises, just as they had done before the city began to grow.²

As to origin, in the last decades of the colonial period almost all Norfolk furniture builders were of either Virginian or English birth, and vestiges of that pattern persisted after the Revolution. Typical of post-war Norfolk cabinetmakers born and trained in Virginia were Princess Anne County native John Collins, and Abner Cox, originally from Essex County. English craftsmen migrating to Norfolk in this period included upholsterer Parker Hawkins, turner John Jefferson, and cabinetmaker

²Appendix, pp. 65-66, 75-76, 82-83, 108-09, and 133-41.

John Lindsay, among others.³

On the other hand, a large proportion of those joining the Norfolk furniture trade after the war were from places outside the traditional Anglo-Virginian cycle. Many came from the large cities of the northeastern United States. For instance, cabinet and Windsor chairmaker Lemuel Adams was from Hartford, Connecticut, while carver and gilder Abraham DeRevere was from the city of New York, and Windsor chairmaker Michael Murphy was from Philadelphia. It is also important to note advertisements like that placed by James Woodward in 1795, wherein he notified the public that he had hired "the best Workmen from Philadelphia and New York". It is likely that many of those northern craftsmen who later set up their own shops in Norfolk originally entered the town in this way.⁴

Continental European craftsmen also began to appear in Norfolk, especially after about 1790. Italians Joseph Marzorati and Cipriane Parlasca, each a carver and gilder by trade, arrived separately during the first decade of the nineteenth century, and upholsterer John C. Fremon (also Frimon), possibly of French extraction, was at work in the city by 1815. As with Philadelphians and New Yorkers, it is also clear that some Europeans were entering Norfolk as journeymen cabinetmakers. The firm of

³Appendix, pp. 84-88, 89-92, 103, 108-09, and 113-14.

⁴Appendix, pp. 58-59, 92-95, 122-24, and 150.

Sully & Hendree advertised in 1812 that "Having engaged some workmen from Paris, those who wish their work finished in the French style can be accommodated." Other notices of a similar nature are abundant, but, unfortunately, the names of the craftsmen to whom they refer remain unknown.⁵

Women also began to participate in some of the allied furniture trades after the Revolution, as they were already doing in Europe. Among them was Rachel Atkins, a carver and gilder from London, who produced and sold her wares in Norfolk between 1802 and 1804. Fourteen years later, Mrs. A. Fremon took over the operation of her husband's upholstery shop after his death, and remained in business for several years.⁶

Of course, slaves had long worked in the furniture shops of Norfolk, but their situation began to change somewhat after the war. A slave cabinetmaker called James so impressed fellow craftsman and businessman James Woodward that the latter assisted James in buying his freedom in 1810. Another free black cabinetmaker, John Ventus, worked and owned property in Norfolk for several years before moving to Petersburg and establishing a partnership there about 1815.⁷

⁵Appendix, pp. 97-98, 117-18, 124-26, and 136.

⁶Appendix, pp. 65-67 and 96-97.

⁷Appendix, pp. 107 and 143-44.

Naturally, with the continuing arrival of craftsmen from areas other than England and Virginia, the purely English design so evident in pre-Revolutionary Norfolk furniture began to be diluted, though it never disappeared completely. In the 1790s Moreau de Saint-Méry could still observe of Norfolk work that "Tables, sideboards, mahogany bureaus and chairs are always in the English taste." Yet some notices, like that posted by cabinetmaker Joseph Gerrard, suggested that taste was changing. In 1818, Gerrard advised the public that he could provide furniture in a variety of styles, from the "plain and neat to the most elegant and ornamental."⁸

Some of the "ornamental" style to which Gerrard refers was of Continental European origin, and it began to appear in Norfolk as early as the 1790s. Reference has already been made to advertisements like that from Sully & Hendree, who offered to supply furniture "finished in the French style."⁹ Other notices in Norfolk newspapers alluded to the French taste and promoted the use of

⁸Roberts, Saint-Méry, p. 25; Appendix, p. 99. Among the most ornate pieces of late colonial American furniture is a group of Masonic masters' chairs produced in eastern Virginia, some or all of them made in Williamsburg. These, however, were for ceremonial purposes and cannot be considered in the realm of household furniture.

⁹Appendix, p. 136.

elaborate French brass mounts on furniture.¹⁰

Far more design and stylistic influence is evident from the larger cities of the northeastern United States, particularly New York. Typical of such work is a sofa (figure 3) bearing the label of Norfolk cabinetmaker Chester Sully and the date 1811. The shaping and proportions of this sofa, together with its decorative details, are nearly identical to those on many documented New York pieces. Yet the extensive use of southern yellow pine in the framing of the Sully sofa precludes a New York origin.¹¹ Other pieces of Norfolk furniture executed in the New York style include card and breakfast tables, sideboards and other case furniture, and a variety of chair forms. The Norfolk origin of these objects is confirmed, not only by their histories, but, again, by the presence of native Virginia secondary woods not normally

¹⁰The failure to discover physical evidence for goods in the French taste does not demonstrate that such were not produced. That a large percentage of Virginia and other southern antiquities were purchased and removed from the South by dealers and collectors in the northeastern United States during the 1920s and '30s is well documented. Goods in the French taste, probably few in number to begin with, may well have left the Norfolk area in this way. See Gusler, Williamsburg, pp. xvi-xvii, xxi n. 12.

¹¹Williamsburg, Virginia. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections. Accession file 1978-12. The sofa descended in the Galt family of Norfolk and Williamsburg.

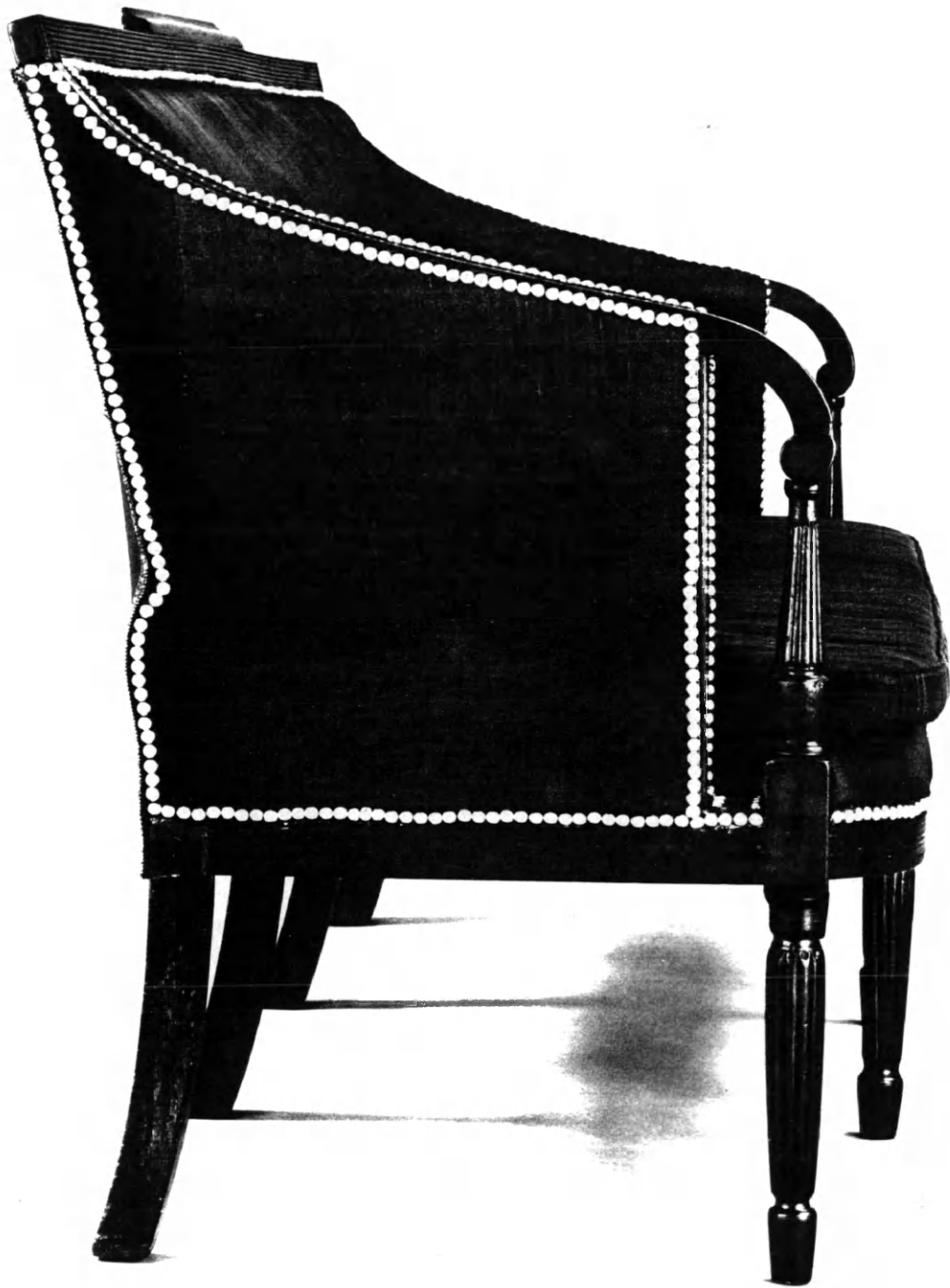


Figure 3. Sofa, made by Chester Sully, Norfolk, 1811.
Courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

found in New York furniture.¹²

Less pervasive in post-war Norfolk furniture design, but nonetheless present, was influence from the city of Philadelphia, notably in seating furniture. A Norfolk side chair (figure 4) of about 1795, carrying the same history as the Sully sofa, illustrates the point. The pattern of its back splat, with carved neoclassic drapery, is seldom encountered on furniture made beyond Philadelphia, but the chair was executed in black walnut (in both primary and secondary woods), a material infrequently used anywhere except the South at this time. Many instances of the same splat pattern appear on other Norfolk chairs.¹³

New England designs appear on a few pieces of Norfolk case furniture, as well, just as they did before the Revolution. Representative of such pieces is a desk

¹²Examples of Norfolk furniture in the New York style include a breakfast table and a card table, ca. 1790, made of mahogany and yellow pine, both still owned by the Talbot family of Norfolk and now recorded in the Virginia Furniture Research file at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections; a set of 14 side and arm chairs with their original bill of sale, made for John Hartwell Cocke of Surry County, Virginia by James Woodward of Norfolk, and now owned by the Dallas (Texas) Museum of Art; and an armchair originally owned by the Custis family of Cape Charles, Virginia and now in the Colonial Williamsburg collection, accession number 1930-154.

¹³Williamsburg, Virginia. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections. Accession file 1987-827. Wood identification by microanalysis. See also Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts research files S-3898 and S-3615.



Figure 4. Side chair, Norfolk, ca. 1795. Courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

(figure 5) originally owned by General Robert Barraud Taylor of Norfolk. It exhibits proportions and decorative details usually associated with the cabinet shops of coastal Massachusetts, but secondary wood in the desk is largely southern yellow pine.¹⁴

The source of these outside design influences was not confined to the migrating craftsmen who brought with them the stylistic peculiarities of their native cities. Probably of equal importance in the process of design transmission was the habit of importing furniture itself from other areas. Though the quantity of goods brought from northern cities into post-war Norfolk is not well documented, it is known that the practice existed. Tangible evidence survives at the Moses Myers house in Norfolk, where a set of late eighteenth-century New York-made chairs and several other northern pieces remain in the setting for which they were originally purchased in the 1790s. Furthermore, period advertisements indicate that Norfolk craftsmen were conscious of the competition they faced from outside imports. In 1793, cabinetmaker James Woodward declared that he could make furniture of a quality and price "equal to any importation," while in

¹⁴Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts research file S-5129. A chest of drawers with similar Salem detailing which descended in the family of John Hartwell Cocke of Surry County, Virginia is recorded in the Virginia Furniture Research file at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections.



Figure 5. Desk, Norfolk, ca. 1800. Courtesy Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

1806 fellow tradesman Theodorick Bland notified the public that he was prepared to make and sell furniture "at the Philadelphia and New York prices." Other Virginia craftsmen placed similar advertisements from time to time over the ensuing years.¹⁵

The business longevity of Norfolk furniture makers, both native and immigrant, varied widely after the Revolution, from as little as a few months to as much as forty years, but short careers were by far more common.¹⁶ In fact, of the 52 non-itinerant¹⁷ men and women who set up shop in Norfolk between 1785 and 1820, 31 of them (or 61 percent) remained in business locally for no more than five years. When considering all whose operations

¹⁵Appendix, p. 74 and 150.

¹⁶For the purposes of this study, the working period for each craftsman was derived from documented references to his or her business activities and tax records. It is possible that some individuals worked for longer periods than the records indicate, but it is unlikely that long periods of work for any given craftsman would have escaped the record.

¹⁷Among the 62 furniture craftsmen working in Norfolk between 1770 and 1820 were five itinerant carver/gilders. These individuals, Rachel Atkins, Samuel Dycher, David Forbes, Joseph Marzorati, and Cipriane Parlasca, moved frequently on circuits that took in cities from Philadelphia to Raleigh, North Carolina or from Baltimore to Savannah. They produced picture frames, looking glasses, bed and window cornices, and other small pieces of household furniture. All five appear sporadically in Norfolk between 1802 and 1811, but not otherwise. The reason for the sudden appearance and disappearance of this itinerant trade in the eastern United States is unclear. The itinerant craftsmen have not been counted in the examination of cabinet business longevity in Norfolk.

survived no more than ten years, the number climbs to 40 (or 78 percent). In short, only 11 of 51 furniture-related craftsmen were able to work in Norfolk for more than ten years, and only five of them for more than twenty.¹⁸

The reasons for predominantly brief sojourns by furniture makers in Norfolk are many and varied, but disease was one of the principal causes. With each epidemic, a number of the men and women involved in the trade disappeared from Norfolk records. For instance, by the end of 1795, a year in which both small pox and yellow fever struck the town, five of the eleven furniture tradesmen present earlier in the year had disappeared. Two of them, Edmond Allmond and his son John, both cabinetmakers, were dead. Joiner-cabinetmaker Robert Borland, cabinetmaker-upholsterer David Martin, and turner John Jefferson either suffered the same fate or fled the town permanently, as did a number of their neighbors. Occurrences of yellow fever in 1802 and 1821 produced similar results.¹⁹

International politics and war had much the same effect, and, while departures were not as sudden as those

¹⁸Appendix, pp. 56-157.

¹⁹Edward C. Carter II, ed., The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1795-1798 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), vol. I, p. 78; Appendix, pp. 60-61, 64, 77, 108-09, and 116; Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 188-90.

brought about by epidemics, the result was the same. As we have seen, the Norfolk economy was grounded solidly in the maritime trade, and, when that trade suffered, the rest of the town followed suit. The ongoing impressment of American seamen, the Embargo Act of 1807, and the War of 1812 each created a great deal of uncertainty for ports along the Atlantic coast. Greater Norfolk, with its advantageous geographic position, its productive hinterlands, and its unlimited supply of naval stores sometimes found itself in a position to take advantage of such situations. Even so, the precipitous economic climbs brought on by volatile political conditions were usually followed by equally rapid falls when those conditions changed.

Events surrounding the War of 1812 illustrate a typical series of economic ups and downs. Unlike other coastal cities, Norfolk suffered comparatively little at the outbreak of that conflict and was able to continue trading much as before. Eight months later British ships succeeded in blockading the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, and Norfolk's economy ground to a halt. Despite the blockade, goods eventually began to creep out of Norfolk through North Carolina, and a small economic recovery got underway, but even that slight upturn was stopped when the government, as a security measure, forbade the shipment of

goods from inland cities to ports like Norfolk.²⁰

With the maritime trade experiencing such episodic changes over a period of more than twenty years, Norfolk's other trades and its business community in general remained uncertain. Consequently, the first two decades of the nineteenth century saw dozens of false starts for cabinetmakers hoping to establish themselves in the city. Of the 32 (non-itinerant) cabinet and related shops that opened in greater Norfolk between 1800 and 1820, 22 (66 percent) were in operation for no more than three years, and many of them opened and closed within the space of twelve months.²¹

Typical of those who remained only briefly was cabinetmaker Joseph Hatch. Working in London, Hatch declared bankruptcy in 1802 and later migrated to the United States. In July 1810, he opened a cabinet "Manufactory" on Main Street in Norfolk, where his public notices declared that he was prepared to make high grade furniture. Yet he did not remain in Norfolk even long enough to be entered on the next year's tax roles.²²

The firm of John and William Cook offers a similar example. Makers of Windsor chairs and "fancy furniture," the Cooks appeared in Norfolk in 1807 and set up shop on

²⁰Wertebaker, Norfolk, pp. 110, 113-14;

²¹Appendix, pp. 56-157.

²²Appendix, pp. 102-03.

Church Street. Yet within eleven months they had abandoned the town in favor of Richmond. Arriving as they had one month before passage of the Embargo Act, the Cooks may have found Richmond, with its freedom from the uncertainties of a maritime trade, more to their liking.²³

Neither can all of those who remained in Norfolk for long periods after the turn of the nineteenth century be described as unqualified successes, though some certainly tried valiantly. Falling into this category was Chester Sully, brother of the prominent artist Thomas Sully. Cabinetmaker Sully was involved in numerous partnerships, most of short duration, for the nearly twenty years of his residence in Norfolk. Significantly, he took the highly unusual step of opening cabinet shops in other towns while maintaining the one in Norfolk. At different times, Sully operated furniture businesses in Edenton, North Carolina, Lynchburg, Virginia, and Richmond. He also branched into merchandising, lumber sales, and even the auction business. That none of these operations lasted for long suggests that his success was limited. In 1819 Sully closed the last of his operations in Virginia and moved to East Florida, where he gave up cabinetmaking and became a full time merchant.²⁴

There were success stories among this group of

²³Appendix, pp. 88-89.

²⁴Appendix, pp. 133-41.

craftsmen, but it is important to realize that many of those who remained in business for extended periods had diversified their operations. Cabinetmaker Edmond Allmond plied his trade in greater Norfolk for at least 21 years before a yellow fever epidemic ended his life prematurely in 1795. At his death, Allmond owned a substantial quantity of land, two riding chairs, a large amount of plate, and sixteen slaves. Yet Allmond was not solely a cabinetmaker: he also sold lumber, erected buildings, owned a blacksmithing operation, ran the local ferry, and operated a prominent tavern.²⁵

Perhaps more instructive is the career of James Woodward. At work in Norfolk for more than forty years, Woodward remained in the furniture business until the end of his life. His output was considerable; he even exported his wares to Richmond as venture cargo on occasion. At his death in 1839 Woodward's ware rooms and shop contained at least 125 pieces of furniture, finished and ready for sale. However, previously, profits from his furniture business had been wisely invested in real estate, providing Woodward with a substantial income above and beyond the cabinet operation. By 1820, he owned at least nine commercial and domestic properties in Norfolk, the rental of which brought him more than \$2,000 in income

²⁵Appendix, pp. 59-63.

annually, a substantial sum for that day.²⁶

Plainly, the furniture makers of Norfolk, their products, and the atmosphere in which they operated changed considerably in the decades after the American Revolution. Influxes of craftsmen from the northeastern United States and at least two countries in continental Europe had significantly altered the Anglo-Virginian character common to the group before the war. Further, they experienced a high degree of trade specialization, and the kinds of goods these men and women made were quite different from those produced earlier, in both design and construction. Finally, while the cabinet community had more than tripled in size, the majority of newcomers were unable to remain in the town for long periods, and those who did so usually diversified their business interests.

²⁶Appendix, pp. 150-55. Similar diversification can be seen in the careers of most other long-term Norfolk cabinetmakers. See biographical sketches in Appendix for: cabinetmaker Richard Bailey, who expanded his business by acquiring the staff and stock of a Windsor chairmaker, pp. 67-69; and cabinetmaker and upholsterer John Collins, who sold lumber and veneer and was active in land transactions, pp. 84-88.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, participants in the cabinetmaking community of greater Norfolk experienced significant changes over the fifty years between 1770 and 1820. In the years immediately before the American Revolution, Norfolk was a growing town with a promising future. Its natural harbor, together with its productive hinterlands and its advantageous position on major trade routes, offered opportunities for population and economic growth that would support a wide array of service trades, including cabinetmaking.

Though small when compared with that in a city such as Boston, the furniture making community of late colonial Norfolk was fully adequate in size for a city of 6000. Like their colleagues in Williamsburg and other small Virginia towns, these men and women were heavily influenced by English style and technology. In fact, most of the craftsmen themselves were either English or had been trained in Virginia by masters who were, in turn, products of the English system.

There was little diversification among the Norfolk furniture trades at this point in time. Though crafts

such as upholstery and carving were certainly being practiced, they were not undertaken in separate shops by specialist craftsmen, as was usual in larger urban areas. Norfolk furniture makers were also facing some outside competition from imports, but the numbers of such goods appear to be smaller than they had been in the first decades of the eighteenth century, before the city's furniture trade was established.

The Revolutionary War brought an enormous degree of destruction to Norfolk, and a like degree of change to its cabinetmaking community. The city had to be rebuilt from the ground up in the 1780s and 1790s, yet the same advantages that had sustained pre-war growth were still at hand, and by 1800 Norfolk was the eighth largest city in the United States. The number of cabinetmakers grew with the population, remaining at approximately three times its 1770 level for most of the period between 1795 and 1820.

Part of the growth in the Norfolk furniture trade was also due to the new presence of related but independent trade shops, including those of upholsterers, carver-gilders, Windsor chairmakers, and turners. With the expansion of the city after the war, Norfolk had finally reached a size sufficient to attract the specialization common elsewhere, even though many of the specialists did not remain in the city for extended periods.

The post-war period also brought a significant influx of outside influences previously unknown in the Norfolk furniture trades. For the first time, large numbers of craftsmen began to arrive from New York, New England, and Philadelphia. Frenchmen and Italians also joined the traditional ranks of Englishmen and Virginians. Undoubtedly, the city's growing economy, in conjunction with new wars in Europe and excess population in places like New York and Philadelphia, added to the in-migration of craftsmen to Norfolk and other southern cities after the Revolution.

Not surprisingly, the products turned out by this rapidly changing craft community were quite different from those seen previously. The almost purely English modes of furniture construction and decoration exhibited in the late colonial period gave way, in part, to methods that were otherwise peculiar to places like New York and Philadelphia. The presence of French and Italian craftsmen must have had an impact as well, though its manifestations are difficult to determine today.

Despite impressive growth in the number of those pursuing furniture trades, many of the new arrivals stayed in Norfolk for relatively short periods. Opportunities for long-term success were apparently limited by the up-and-down nature of the city's maritime trade. Political upheaval in Europe and America, wars abroad, and resulting

trade restrictions wrought havoc with Norfolk's economy. Disease, primarily yellow fever, also made the city's future uncertain at times. Consequently, many of those who migrated to Norfolk looking for new opportunities left, seeking them elsewhere. Those who did remain for long periods were frequently the same individuals who had diversified their business interests by investing in real estate or pursuing concurrent careers in fields like merchandising and construction.

In short, the cabinet trade in Norfolk was subject to far reaching changes in this period, changes that distinctly altered the make-up of the craft community, its products, and its degree of long-term success. Those who succeeded in the furniture business, like James Woodward, did so in the extreme, but they were the exceptions.

APPENDIX

This appendix lists alphabetically the cabinetmakers and related tradesmen working in the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia and in adjacent Norfolk County between 1770 and 1820. Each listing is headed by the craftsman's name, his trade or trades, and his known working dates in greater Norfolk. The working dates were determined by examining extant references to each tradesman's operation and, in some cases, were taken from tax and other records when they could be corroborated with information about the individual's business. Given the occasional gaps in original records, it is possible that some of the individuals listed were at work before or after the stated dates. The working dates do not include periods wherein the craftsman plied his or her trade in areas other than Norfolk.

Only those men and women who can be documented as professional makers of furniture and related goods are included in this list. Carpenters, wheel wrights, riding chair makers, and those in similar trades who occasionally turned out pieces furniture among their other wooden

products have been omitted. Likewise, the inclusion of cabinetmaking tools in a probate inventory has not been deemed sufficient evidence of that trade when no other references to cabinetmaking can be associated with a deceased individual.

Journeyman and apprentices have not been included in this listing unless they went on to become masters of their own shops in Norfolk

Primary and, infrequently, secondary sources that contain information pertinent to each craftsman are listed at the end of each entry.

ADAMS, LEMUEL
Windsor Chairmaker
Cabinetmaker

(July 1801)

A partnership known as Kneeland & Adams was formed in Hartford, Connecticut by Samuel Kneeland and Lemuel Adams in 1792. The pair produced a variety of case and seating furniture; a chest of drawers bearing their label survives in the H. F. du Pont Winterthur Museum. The partnership was dissolved by mutual consent in March 1795, and shortly thereafter Kneeland moved to the nearby town of Farmington. Adams remained in Hartford for several years, where he supplied furniture for the Connecticut State House in May 1796. He was listed in the Hartford Directory in 1799, but no further record of his presence in New England is known after that date.

Adams resurfaced in Norfolk in July 1801, at which time he placed a newspaper advertisement. Therein he offered new "best warrented" windsor chairs "on the shortest notice," and added that he repaired and painted old ones "on moderate terms" at his shop in Bute Street, Old Fields. He also had for sale "An excellent 8 Day CLOCK, a few articles of Cabinet Work, Looking Glasses, &c.," objects that he may have produced in Norfolk or brought with him from Connecticut.

Following his initial announcement in Norfolk, Adams is not recorded again in either Virginia or New

England. It is probable that he died or fled Norfolk during the massive yellow fever epidemic that swept the town the year after his arrival.

Bjerkoe, Ethel Hall, The Cabinetmakers of America. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1957), pp. 19-20, 139.
 Downs, Joseph, American Furniture. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1952), pl. 173.
Norfolk Herald, 11 July 1801, 2-1.

 ALLMOND, EDMOND (1774-1795)
 Cabinetmaker

Edmond Allmond was the son of John and Mary Allmon [sic], of Hampton, Virginia. The earliest record of him is his father's will, probated 1 January 1760, wherein he received a "Gunn & Sword" and all things pertaining thereto, as well as a chest and one half of the "Wearing Cloaths." One of several Allmond offspring, Edmond was still a minor. Probably in the early 1760s Allmond became apprenticed to Hampton cabinetmaker John Selden [q.v.], whom he sued in 1768 for his freedom. The court of Elizabeth City County, having examined Allmond's bible, ordered that he continue to serve Selden until 15 September 1769. He apparently did so, since records indicate that Allmond's marriage to Lucretia Braithwait on 10 August 1769 was carried out with the consent of John Selden. Allmond probably moved from Hampton to Norfolk

when his master did so in 1768 or 1769, and was clearly in business there for himself by 1774 when he accepted orphan John Butt [q.v.] as an apprentice.

Little is known of Allmond's business activities during the Revolution, but by the early 1790s he had formed a firm known as "Edmond Allmond and Son," which was located in the Ferry Point section of Norfolk County. Partners in Allmond's firm included his son-in-law Maximillian Herbert, a ship carpenter by trade, and probably Allmond's own son John, a cabinetmaker [q.v.]. Allmond's staff was large: between 1787 (the first year for which tax records survive) and 1794 he was usually taxed for five to seven white males above sixteen years and a dozen slaves of similar age. In 1792 he sought to expand his crew by the addition of two or three journeymen cabinetmakers.

Allmond was involved in a variety of business activities beyond cabinetmaking. He offered lumber for sale, and like most furniture builders, he made coffins. For many years (from as early as 1777) he operated a three-way ferry service between Norfolk proper, Portsmouth, and his business in Ferry Point. He also undertook construction of the county prison in 1790 and made alterations to other public buildings over the years. In addition to cabinetmaker's tools, his estate inventory listed "House Carpenters Tools," "Bricks ready for

immediate use," and a "Black Smith's Shop," suggesting that Edmond Allmond and Son was an operation of some diversity.

Allmond must have been fairly visible in the community, since from at least 1787 (and probably as early as 1775) he held an ordinary keeper's license. Following the great fire of 1776 he allowed the Norfolk County court to meet at his tavern (the "red house") in Ferry Point, for which he received a monthly rent, and his establishment was often the scene of public land auctions. An Episcopalian, Allmond was a trustee of St. Bride's Parish and in 1792 was mentioned as an Overseer of Roads for the county.

Allmond's land holdings were substantial for a craftsman. Between 1779 and 1794 he was involved in at least ten land transactions. At his death he owned a plantation of 245 acres, plots along the main road into Ferry Point, and four unimproved lots in Ferry Point, in addition to his house, shop, and tavern. Allmond also owned a share in the Dismal Swamp Canal Company.

Edmond Allmond died in the late summer or early autumn of 1795, probably in the wake of severe yellow fever and smallpox epidemics that killed hundreds of Norfolk residents that year. By then, Allmond's first wife, Lucretia, had been dead for at least fifteen years, and his second, Ann (Nancy) Smallwood, whom he had married

on 24 December 1781, had also been dead for two years or more. (The census of 1785 described his household as consisting of "4 white souls.") He was survived by a third wife, the former Mrs. Martha Sanford (married 27 May 1794), his daughters Crisey (wife of Maximillian Herbert) and Ann Elphey (a minor), and his sons Edmond and Harrison (also minors). His cabinetmaking son John had recently died, likely a victim of the same epidemic. John's widow, Mary, and their child, Abigail, were also listed among Edmond Allmond's survivors.

Allmond named his son-in-law, Herbert, and friend, John Nevison, as guardians of his orphans. He provided in his will for the education of Edmond and Ann Elphey. Among the worldly possessions he left behind were a "Commodious Dwelling House, Garden and Out Houses... together with a good Watering Place for Shipping, and the Wharf for keeping the Ferry." Allmond also left a quantity of plate, two riding chairs, and sixteen slaves in addition to those owned by his wife Martha. To one of his slaves, Jenny, he gave her freedom, and requested that "his children assist her should she require aid."

"Abstracts from Norfolk County Marriage Bonds," Lower Norfolk Antiquary 5 (1906): 47-55.
American Gazette and Norfolk and Portsmouth Public Advertiser, 15 March 1796, 3-3.
 Bureau of the Census. Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, Virginia. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 95.

- Elizabeth City County, Deeds & Wills, Book E, 1 January 1760, p. 109.
- Elizabeth City County, Minutes, 1760-1769, 22 September 1768, p. 592.
- "Free and Slave, Norfolk County, 1782," Lower Norfolk Antiquary 5 (1906): 5.
- Herald and Norfolk & Portsmouth Advertiser, 1 July 1795, 3-3; 28 September 1795, 3-4; 17 October 1795, 3-3.
- Norfolk & Portsmouth Chronicle, 2 June 1792, 1-1.
- Norfolk County, Audits, No. 1, 4 January 1788, p. 187a.
- Norfolk County, Audits, No. 2, 8 November 1793, p. 62.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 29, 7 March 1785, p. 33.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 30, 20 August 1786, p. 21a; 18 December 1787, p. 187a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 32, 26 May 1790, p. 94; 18 October 1790, p. 92a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 33, 18 July 1791, p. 100.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 34, 10 October 1791, p. 99; 22 March 1793, p. 97a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 35, 17 February 1794, p. 19.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1773-75), 20 October 1774, p. 62a.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1776-79), 19 December 1776.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1782-83), 20 March 1783, p. 111.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1790-93), 20 December 1790; 21 February 1792, p. 62a; *Ibid.*, 22 October 1793, p. 178.
- Norfolk County, Will Book 3, 22 September 1795, p. 161a.
- Norfolk County, Wills & Deeds, Book J, 8 April 1779, p. 11a.
- Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1787-1795.
- Norfolk Herald, 17 March 1796, 3-4; 19 December 1795, 3-3.
- Stewart, William H. History of Norfolk County, Virginia. Chicago: By the Author, 1902.
- Virginia Chronicle & General Advertiser (Norfolk), 19 June 1794, 3-2; 14 July 1794, 4-3.
- Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser (Richmond), 12 November 1785, 3-2.
- "Virginia Militia in the Revolution," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 6 (June 1899): 278.
- Wingo, Elizabeth. Marriages of Norfolk County, Virginia 1706-1792. 2 vols. Norfolk, Va.: By the Author, 1961. 1:1 and 2:8.

ALLMOND, JOHN
Cabinetmaker

(January 1793-1795)

John Allmond, a cabinetmaker by trade, was the son of Edmond Allmond [q.v.], also a cabinetmaker. He was probably born in Norfolk in the early 1770s, and though written evidence does not survive, it is likely that Allmond apprenticed under his father at the latter's shop in Ferry Point. John Allmond was almost certainly the "Son" referred to during the early 1790s in the name of his father's firm, "Edmond Allmond and Son," but little is known of the role he played in the business. A shift their operations may be indicated by the fact that the younger Allmond's tax assessment for white males aged sixteen and older jumped significantly in 1795 from one to four, while his father's assessment dropped from four to one. Tax records also indicated that John Allmond owned one or two adult slaves.

Allmond was married by Episcopal priest Anthony Walke to Mary Murray in Lynnhaven Parish on 26 January 1793. He died in the summer of 1795 shortly before his father, probably a victim of yellow fever or smallpox. His survivors included his wife Mary and their daughter Abigail.

"A List of Marriages Solemnized by the Reverend Anthony Walke," Lower Norfolk Antiquary 2 (1897): 17-24. Herald and Norfolk & Portsmouth Advertiser, 1 July 1795,

3-3.

Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1793-1795.

Norfolk County, Will Book 3, 22 September 1795, p. 161a.

Virginia Chronicle & General Advertiser, 19 June 1794, 3-2; 14 July 1794, 4-3.

 ATKINS, RACHEL
 Carver and Gilder

(December 1802-March 1803;
 December 1803-July 1804)

Mrs. Rachel Atkins, originally from London, described herself as a "Carver, Gilder, and Picture Frame Maker" and, like others in her specialty field, moved her business frequently. In August 1802, Atkins had just arrived in Alexandria, Virginia, from Philadelphia (where she probably resupplied her stock between moves) when she advertised that "she regilds and varnishes old frames so as to make them appear like new." By September she had built up her stock and offered for sale a "large assortment of Looking Glasses in Burnished gold frames[,] Dressing-Glasses elegant and plain," and a variety of prints. Also available at Atkins' shop in Prince Street were the services of Richard Phillips, (possibly her employee), who did writing and ornamental gilding on glass. Atkins accepted only cash from her customers, as she intended to stay in Alexandria for just "a few months."

By December 1802 Atkins had moved her operation to Norfolk, where she continued her business much as before,

in a rented, two story "Dwelling House and Print Shop 26 feet long & 16 feet wide" at 117 Church Street. Perhaps as a means of promoting her wares, she advertised a lottery in the Norfolk newspaper, promising various gilt framed prints and looking glasses as prizes. However, within three months of her arrival, Atkins departed Norfolk to set up shop in Richmond. Two months later, in May 1803, she closed the Richmond operation and disposed of her stock at public auction. At the end of the year, she returned to Norfolk and opened shop at Commerce and Main Streets, but by July 1804, "Business not answering," she was preparing to leave Norfolk once again. At that time she offered all her stock for immediate sale, including girandoles and bed and window cornices, as well as her raw materials: 14,000 feet of "Irish Northern Pine" and 300 feet of 1-1/2 inch "Albany plank." Following her departure from Norfolk, nothing further is known of Rachel Atkins.

- Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer, 4
 August 1802, 3-4; 27 September 1802, 1-4; 13
 October 1802, 3-4; 29 October 1802, 3-4; 15
 November 1802, 3-4.
- Bartgis's Republican Gazette (Frederick, Maryland), 17
 September 1802, 4-2.
- Commercial Register (Norfolk), 15 December 1802, 3-4.
- Examiner (Richmond), 11 May 1803, 1-3; 21 May 1803, 3-5.
- Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, vol. 9, p. 406, 3
 February 1803.
- National Intelligencer, and Washington Advertiser
 (District of Columbia), 24 September 1802, 4-5.
- Norfolk Herald, 16 December 1802, 3-4; 4 January 1803;
 15 February 1803, 3-4; 29 March 1803, 3-4; 15

December 1803, 3-4; 3 January 1804, 4-1; 7 July 1804, 1-2.

Recorder (Richmond), 18 May 1803, 3-4; 25 May 1803, 3-4.
Virginia Argus (Richmond), 14 May 1803, 3-4; 21 May 1803, 3-5.

 BAILEY, RICHARD (1791-1811)
 Cabinetmaker
 Windsor Chairmaker
 Undertaker

The earliest reference to Richard Bailey is in the will of his uncle Richard Taylor, proved on 17 February 1785. Taylor, a Norfolk joiner and carpenter, bequeathed to this nephew the substantial sum of £200. The next record of Bailey's whereabouts dates from 1791, at which time he leased a lot on the Main Street of Norfolk from George Scuggs for £13.10 annually. The lease was held by the firm "Bailey & Butler," but the exact nature of the partnership between Bailey and Mathew Butler is not known. Bailey & Butler paid property taxes for the first time in 1793, but beyond that point nothing further is known of Butler. Later in the same year Bailey leased a lot on Main Street in his own name and immediately sublet half of it. In fact, he often took part in land transactions during the years before 1805, including the sales of a number of lots he owned on Mariners and Church Streets in Norfolk.

Bailey, who was described as a "cabinet, chair

maker, and undertaker" in 1806, maintained his shop on Church Street, moving around 1805 from number 94 to number 69. He occasionally took apprentices, two of whom ran away in 1795, and he owned a slave cabinetmaker named James [q.v.]. At times, his staff must have been large, since he was occasionally taxed for as many as five or six adult white males and a similar number of slaves.

Like most furniture makers, Bailey did a brisk business in funerals, supplying coffins and sometimes providing a hearse service as well. His operation was apparently profitable enough for him to expand it considerably in 1806, since he advertised at the time that he had "purchased the whole stock of the late Mr. Michael Murphy...Windsor-Chair Maker." Bailey also employed Murphy's "principal Workmen, and Intends carrying on the Windsor Chair Manufactory, in all its branches" in addition to continuing the cabinet business as usual.

Bailey often had dealings with other Norfolk furniture makers. He sold land to colleague John Ventres (or Ventus) [q.v.] in 1803 and, along with cabinetmaker Abner Cox [q.v.], acted as security for the debts of windsor chair maker John Staples [q.v.] the same year.

Bailey apparently died about 1811, the last year his name appears in local tax records. Though he had once advertised "A Negro Woman, Who is a good House Servant" as available for rent, his widow Elizabeth made arrangements

in 1817 to manumit the slave cabinetmaker James "in consideration of his long and faithful service." As a part of the unusual agreement, cabinetmaker James Woodward [q.v.] legally loaned the sum of \$120 to James, who in turn paid that amount to Elizabeth Bailey for his freedom. By way of repayment, James worked in Woodward's shop for one year, at the end of which time he was freed.

- Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 2, 12 August 1793, p. 127.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 3, 12 March 1793, p. 3; 27 March 1793, p. 7.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 6, 26 June 1800, p. 117.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 8, 14 April 1803, p. 220.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 9, 13 December 1803, p. 112; 10 June 1805, p. 439.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 14, 16 May 1818, pp. 306-07.
 Borough of Norfolk, Order Book, 15 July 1799, p. 202.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1793-1807, 1809-1811.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 2, 27 July 1801, p. 56.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 3, 24 September 1810, p. 7, 9; 27 April 1819, p. 419.
 Norfolk County, Audits, Number 3, 15 October 1803, p. 101.
 Norfolk County, Audits, Number 4, 28 May 1810, p. 92a.
 Norfolk County, Order Book, 15 July 1799, p. 202.
 Norfolk County, Will Book 2, 17 February 1785, p. 209a.
Norfolk Directory, 1801.
Norfolk Directory, 1806.
Norfolk Herald, 19 December, 1795, 3-3; 27 February 1796, 3-4; 28 August 1798, 3-5; 5 March 1805, 2-1.
Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 5 January 1810, 4-4.

 BARRON, WILLIAM
 Paper Hanger
 Upholsterer

(April 1818-1821)

William Barron announced the opening of his place

of business in April 1818, describing himself as "Paper-Hanger & Upholsterer." Having "some years practise in some of the first houses in London," he believed himself fully qualified to dispatch the orders of the local population. From his shop at 56 Main Street, Norfolk, he also proposed to hang house bells and trim carriages in addition to his standard trades. Most of his subsequent advertisements were taken up with describing the wide arrays of scenic wallpapers in his stock, but he still "cut, made and fixed complete" all sorts of window and bed furniture.

Many of Barron's supplies for paper hanging and upholstering were imported from London, Paris, and Philadelphia, and he occasionally stocked various paper goods for retail sale, including playing cards, prints, and band boxes. In June 1818 he subcontracted to hang wallpapers imported by another Norfolk businessman, "carver and gilder" Abraham DeRevere [q.v.].

Barron died in September 1821, probably as a result of the yellow fever epidemic in Norfolk at that time.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 27 April 1818, 3-3.

American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, 13 March 1819, 3-3; 10 September 1821.

Norfolk Herald, 10 March 1819, 3-4; 14 May 1819, 3-4; 20 September 1819, 3-4; 25 October 1819, 3-5; 5 November 1819, 3-4; 5 July 1820, 3-4; 29 September 1820, 3-1.

BEALE, CHARLES LEE
Cabinetmaker

(April 1799-1826)

Charles Lee Beale first appeared in the records of Norfolk when he was assessed for taxes in 1797. At the time, though he was a resident of the city, he owned no slaves, horses, cattle, wheeled vehicles, or real estate locally. Beale was not taxed in Norfolk again until 1803, but he must have had some contact with the area because he purchased a parcel of land in Norfolk County in 1799. One year later he sold another parcel in far off Fauquier County for £163.9 Virginia currency. The infrequent appearance of Beale's name on Norfolk tax rolls at this period may indicate that he was often transient, but in 1807 he took up residence in the city and remained there for the rest of his life. For most of that period he owned one or two buildings in Norfolk from which he earned rental income of \$100 to \$150 annually. His own residence was on Church Street by 1814 (and probably earlier), where most other Norfolk furniture makers lived and worked.

Like other cabinetmakers, Beale made coffins and conducted funerals, but he must have been especially proficient at it since he is mentioned as the source of a coffin in no fewer than thirty-two Norfolk County estate audits. The number of slaves Beale owned grew gradually from two in 1807 to at least eight in 1820, and several of them may have been involved in his business. At least one

of them, Tom [q.v.], was a skilled cabinetmaker whom Beale purchased in 1817 for \$925. Beale also had a nineteen-year old indented apprentice named George Broughton who ran away in 1813 and for whom the master sarcastically offered a reward of five cents.

In community affairs Beale apparently commanded some measure of respect, since in 1816 he agreed to provide security for another townsman's debt. In 1818 he was named as a commissioner by the Borough of Norfolk and was charged with disposing of the lands of James Spann, deceased.

At his death in the summer of 1826 (probably as a result of a yellow fever epidemic), Beale was survived by his wife Martha, at least three sons, and a daughter. Mrs. Beale and son William served as executors of the estate, which had a total value of \$3025.50. William inherited his father's shop with all of the tools and materials therein.

- Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 11, 19 January 1809, p. 196.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 13, 31 March 1817, p. 482;
 11 November 1817, p. 141.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 14, 12 September 1816, p.
 40.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 15, 18 December 1819, p.
 343.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1797, 1803, 1807,
 1809-1820.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 3, 2 March 1814, p. 111; 24
 March 1818, pp. 350-51; 29 June 1819, p. 434;
 27 June 1820, p. 504.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 4, 29 January 1821, p. 89;
 4 January 1822, p. 127; 25 March 1822, p. 139;

28 June 1822, p. 145; 30 July 1823, p. 182; 28
 October 1823, p. 188; 29 June 1824, p. 208; 25
 July 1825, p. 261; 28 February 1826, p. 284; 27
 March 1826, p. 287; 25 May 1826, pp. 303-04.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 5, 23 January 1832, p. 213.
 Norfolk County, Audits, No. 4, 17 September 1810, p. 96.
 Norfolk County, Audits, No. 5, 18 April 1814, p. 32c; 18
 April 1814, p. 32d; 16 October 1815, p. 55a; 18
 October 1819, p. 143a; 21 February 1820, p. 149a;
 17 July 1820, p. 156a; 17 February 1823, p. 190a;
 17 March 1824, p. 206; 19 July 1824, p. 217; 15
 November 1824, p. 228; 23 February 1825, p. 247;
 18 July 1825, p. 260; 19 September 1825, p. 264a;
 22 November 1825, p. 271.
 Norfolk County, Deed Book 37, 8 April 1799, p. 235a.
 Norfolk County, Deed Book 38, 4 January 1800, p. 228.
 Norfolk County, Deed Book 48, 10 November 1818, p. 116.
Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 10 April 1813, 3-3.

 BLAND, THEODORIC
 Cabinetmaker

(June 1805-1806)

Tax records indicate that by 1802, Theodoric Bland was a resident of the borough of Norfolk and that he owned a rental property there. Over the ensuing eight years, he was involved in a variety of other land transactions, including one in 1803 wherein he acquired a lot on Church Street from William Bland "for love and affection and \$1." The next year he leased another parcel on the same street from Keziah Payne, built a house on it shortly thereafter, and finally sold the house and sublet the lot in 1810. During the same period Bland was subletting other property on Church Street and buying and selling land on Proby's Lane.

By 1806 Bland was living at 86 Church Street and had moved his shop from number 89 to number 95. Listed in the city directory as a cabinetmaker, he termed his business a "CABINET MANUFACTORY," where, through "the excellence of his workmen," he was able to offer furniture "at the Philadelphia and New York prices." His repertoire included sofas, bedsteads, cases, all sorts of tables, and "Elegant strait-front, serpentine, oval, and oval-cornered Sideboards," suggesting that his workshop was well equipped and his staff large. Bland was even capable of supplying "Windsor Chairs of every description, and all kinds of Upholsterer's Work," products that were often turned out by specialty shops.

Bland married Miss Sarah C. Lawson of Lancaster County, Virginia, in November 1803. There is no further mention of Bland following the sale of his property and house in June and July 1810; he may have left Norfolk permanently at that time.

- Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 8, 28 March 1803, p. 232.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 9, 9 May 1804, p. 103; 5 June 1805, p. 485.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 10, 31 March 1806, p. 236.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 12, 1 June 1810, p. 25; 27 June 1810, p. 35.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1802-1807, 1809-1810.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 2, 23 September 1805, p. 290.
Connor's Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 2 March 1805, 3-5.
Norfolk Directory, 1806.
Norfolk Herald, 8 November 1803; 14 March 1805, 4-2.

BONNER, THOMAS
Upholsterer

(1786-September 1791)

Relatively little is known of Thomas Bonner, who first appeared in the records of Norfolk when he purchased second-hand beds, bedding, chairs, tables, looking glasses, cooking implements, and thirty-six gallons of rum from John Miller in 1786. The same year he was listed in the city tax roles as a part of the firm "Jno. Miller, T. Williamson, Thos. Bonner," but no taxes were levied against the group and nothing further is known of them.

Bonner's whereabouts are unrecorded between 1786 and 1791, when he is once again listed in the city tax register. Though he was taxed as a private citizen, by that time it is clear that he had entered into a partnership with cabinetmaker John Lindsay [q.v.]. In September the two advertised their "CABINET & UPHOLSTERY MANUFACTORY" on Church Street in Norfolk, and though the cabinet operation was not described in any detail, they did announce that they also carried on "the turning business in all its various branches."

No other references to the partnership are known, and Bonner's name does not appear in a deed concerning a lot adjoining John Lindsay's cabinet shop in 1792. Bonner was last mentioned in October 1793 when he sold the Queen Street lot he had purchased the previous year.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 1, 4 March 1786, p. 76a.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1786, 1791.
 Norfolk County, Deed Book 33, 18 August 1792, p. 319.
 Norfolk County, Deed Book 34, 21 October 1793, p. 156.
Norfolk and Portsmouth Chronicle, 10 September 1791, 3-4.

 BORLAND, ROBERT (1786-December 1795)
 Joiner
 Cabinetmaker

Robert Borland, who described himself as a "JOINER AND CABINET-MAKER," operated his business at Crawford Street and Edinburgh Square in Portsmouth. In addition to making furniture, he also produced interior woodwork and was awarded the contract for the doors, the window sash, and some other elements of Portsmouth's new hospital in about 1793. In February 1795 he advertised for two apprentices and two workmen joiners, probably for the hospital project, but by August of that year he was deeply in debt and was forced to mortgage his shop and tools, his household possessions, and all of his interest in the hospital work. Borland was already long overdue on the rent of the county-owned ferry he operated and had been sued for the same reason in 1794.

Borland also had problems with his employees. In addition to his other apprentices, the Overseers of the Poor of Portsmouth District had bound a total of five orphans to him between 1786 and 1794 (including Wilson

Williams, [q.v.]), but by 1795 at least three of his apprentices had run away from him and two of them had stolen his property as well. Yet Borland's staff must have been relatively large. In 1792 he was taxed for seven white males above the age of sixteen, and was, in some years, the owner of as many as five or six slaves.

Following one last advertisement for cabinetmakers, joiners, and apprentices in December 1795, Borland disappeared from the records of Norfolk and Portsmouth. That he was still alive and doing business in December suggests that he had not been affected by the yellow fever epidemic of 1795 (since the disease spreads only in warm weather), but he may not have escaped the smallpox epidemic that occurred the same year.

- Columbian Herald (Charleston, South Carolina), 26 May 1788.
Herald and Norfolk & Portsmouth Advertiser, 7 February 1795, 3-2.
Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal, 23 April 1788, 3-4.
 Norfolk County, Deed Book 28, 1 February 1785, p. 181.
 Norfolk County, Deed Book 36, 1 August 1795, p. 119.
 Norfolk County, Order Book (1786-87), 21 December 1786, p. 63b; 19 July 1787, p. 114a.
 Norfolk County, Order Book (1790-93), 17 January 1791, p. 6a; 16 July 1792, p. 76a.
 Norfolk County, Order Book (1794-95), 21 January 1794, p. 9a; 17 June 1794, p. 47a.
 Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1787-1795.
Norfolk Herald, 10 December 1795, 2-5.
Virginia Independent Chronicle (Richmond), 30 April 1788, 3-2.

BROWN, RICHARD
Cabinetmaker
Joiner

(1759-1772)

Richard Brown first appears in the Norfolk records in 1759 when he is described as "Joiner of the Borough of Norfolk." However, by 1767 he is consistently called a cabinetmaker in all documents mentioning his name, possibly suggesting a shift in the emphasis of his business from simple joinery to furniture making. Brown bought several parcels of land in the town of Norfolk between 1759 and 1772, but little else is known of him. He may be the same Richard Brown that died in Princess Anne County in 1774, leaving an estate that included a variety of hand tools. On the other hand, he may also be the Richard Brown listed among those who suffered substantial property losses in the great fire of 1776.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 19, 15 October 1759, pp. 65a-67a; 3 July 1761, p. 258a.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 24, 31 August 1768, p. 124.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 26, 21 August 1772, p. 4; 19 November 1772, p. 35.

Norfolk County, Will Book 1, 19 May 1768, p. 176a.

Princess Anne County, Deed Book 14, July 1774, p. 103.

"Virginia in 1785," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 23 (October 1915), pp. 407-415.

BRUCE, WILLIAM
Cabinetmaker

(October 1817-July 1818)

By 1817 William Bruce had entered into a partnership with Joseph Lestrade [q.v.], recently from Philadelphia, and the two operated under the name "LESTRADE & BRUCE, Cabinet Makers and Joiners." Their shop was located on Main Street, "5 doors above the Exchange [sic] Coffee House, Norfolk," and they advertised that they kept a supply of good quality furniture constantly on hand. Beyond this we know little of William Bruce except that he owned land in Norfolk County and that he had a wife, Ann Bruce, and three children, who lived at 9 Commerce Street. Following the death of Mrs. Bruce at age 34 in July 1818, Bruce disappeared from the Norfolk records, and within one year Lestrade was advertising his business alone.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 24 October 1817, 3-4; 9 June 1818, 3-4; 28 July 1818, 3-3.

American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, 2 June 1819, 3-1.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 47, 21 May 1818, p. 371.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 49, 19 November 1817, p. 6.

BUSTIN, CARL
Cabinetmaker

(1795-1810)

Records regarding Carl Bustin (or Buskin) are few. A 1796 insurance plat makes reference to his "Cabinet makers Shop" on High Street in Portsmouth, and he supplied coffins for several estates between 1796 and 1810. He may be the same "Bustin" who was paid by the estate of George Dyson for repairing a house in 1797. Bustin's operation must have been small, since tax records indicate that he was the only adult white male in his household, and he owned only one slave. Beyond this, nothing further is known of him.

Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, vol. 6, 10 May 1796,
p. 158.
Norfolk County, Audits No. 2, 15 February 1796, p. 86.
Norfolk County, Audits No. 4, 8 December 1810, p. 102a.
Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1803-1807.

BUTT, JOHN
Cabinetmaker

(ca. 1780-April 1793)

On 20 August 1772 the church wardens of Elizabeth River Parish, Norfolk County, bound John Butt to Hardress Waller, a local carpenter. At the same time the county court asked Butt, who was probably an orphan, to choose a guardian. Butt selected Henry Wilson who, having given bond and security, agreed to take over the administration

of Butt's inheritance. For reasons that are unclear, Butt left Waller's service by October 1774, and was then bound out to Norfolk cabinetmaker Edmond Allmond [q.v.]. By 1782, a St. Brides Parish census indicated that John Butt was head of a household wherein three whites and one black resided.

Of Butt's later career we know only that he occasionally supplied coffins, including one for former guardian Henry Wilson in January 1793. When Butt himself died three months later, he probably still owned the forty-acre parcel of land he had purchased in Norfolk County a few years earlier, and his personal effects included one lot of tools, a work bench, and a glue pot.

"A List of Families in Norfolk County St. Brides Parish Taken by William Hall the 26th September 1782," Lower Norfolk Antiquary 5 (1906): 67.
 Norfolk County, Appraisements, No. 2, 27 April 1793, p. 174.
 Norfolk County, Audits, No. 2, 16 March 1798, p. 115; 23 December 1794, p. 77.
 Norfolk County, Deed Book 32, 15 November 1790, p. 128a.
 Norfolk County, Order Book (1771-73), 20 August 1772, p. 103a.
 Norfolk County, Order Book (1773-75), 20 October 1774, p.62a.
 Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1787-1794.

CAMPBELL, JOHN
Windsor Chairmaker

(October 1804-1806)

John Campbell, a windsor chair maker by trade, had entered into a partnership known as "CAMPBELL AND JOHNSON" by October 1804. Little is known of Johnson, but in that year the two advertised that they carried on the business of "Windsor Chair Making & Painting" and that they not only took orders from the country but maintained a supply of ready made chairs as well. On forming their partnership, the two men purchased the stock of the late John Staples [q.v.], another windsor chair maker, and took over his shop "a few doors below the Vendue Store, of Mr. Marks, in Main-Street," Norfolk.

Campbell was a slave owner, once advertising that his man Edmund had run away. He also took apprentices to his trade, though they were bound out by their parents and not by the church wardens or the overseers of the poor. By 1806 Campbell lived at 56 Main Street and appears to have conducted his operation from a shop at 44 Fenchurch Street without the aid of partner Johnson. In 1807 Campbell conveyed to his son John M. Campbell, by deed of gift, all his interest in the estate of James Murden, after which nothing further is known of Campbell senior. He may have been one of the many individuals who fled Norfolk in the face of economic disaster brought on by the Embargo Act of 1807.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 10, 19 January 1807, p. 343;
 10 June 1806, p. 344.
Norfolk Directory, 1806.
Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 23 October 1804, 3-4.
Norfolk Herald, 11 July 1801, 2-1.
 Princess Anne County, Deed Book 29, 5 September 1807, p.
 176.

 CARTER, JAMES (April 1806)
 Cabinetmaker

Almost nothing is known of James Carter, except that he opened a new "CABINET BUSINESS at No. 1, Talbot's Row," Norfolk, in February 1806. There he advertised that he "employed Workmen equal to any in the United States." Carter's name and trade did not appear in the Norfolk Directory for 1806, and no further record of his activities or whereabouts has been located. His tenure in Norfolk may have been cut short by the fiscal difficulties that overtook the city with the passage of the Embargo Act the year after his arrival.

Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 19 April 1806, 1-5.

 CLARK, CHARLES (January 1816-1822)
 Cabinetmaker

Very little is known of Charles Clark, who was

described in a Norfolk newspaper as a "Cabinet Maker" in 1816. In January of that year Charles and George Clark leased a lot (and probably a house) on the east side of Church Street from Samuel Vickery for the sum of \$100 annually. Two months later Charles married a "Miss Whitehurst, of Princess Ann county." Probably widowed, he married again in January 1818, this time to a Miss Diana Tatem of Norfolk. In 1817 Clark lived on Fenchurch Street; three years later his residence was on Church Street.

The only known references to Clark's business consist of two estate audits, wherein he is paid for supplying coffins in 1822.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary, 27 January 1818, 3-1.
 Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 13, 13 January 1816, p. 261.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1817-1820.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 4, 18 June 1822, p. 145; 1 June 1825, p. 254.
Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 29 March 1816, 3-4; 26 January 1818, 3-5.
Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 30 March 1816, 2-1.

 COLLINS, JOHN
 Cabinetmaker
 Upholsterer

(1795-June 1831)**

John Collins, originally from Princess Anne County, was the son of John and Frances Collins. One of

at least five children, he was the only male and probably the oldest. Collins inherited several slaves at his father's death in 1793 and, after taking over his mother's property, assumed all her debts.

In 1795 Collins rented "the shop of the late Edmund Allmond at Ferry Point," a rapidly growing part of Norfolk, and advertised that he had opened a "Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterers Manufactory," where he hoped to take orders from the inhabitants of both Norfolk and Portsmouth. By the next year he was seeking two or three journeymen cabinetmakers to supplement his staff, and at least eight orphans were bound to him by local parishes between 1796 and 1813. It is likely that some of the three to five adult white males and five to fourteen slaves who regularly lived in his household between 1800 and 1820 were also employed in his shop.

By 1815 (and possibly as early as 1806) Collins had moved his prospering business from Ferry Point to Main Street in Portsmouth. There, in what he described as a "Cabinet Ware-Room," he kept on hand a wide array of ready-made furniture, including bedsteads, sideboards, bureaus, secretaries, and breakfast, dining, and card tables. Collins also sold mahogany plank and veneer to other cabinetmakers and was paid for coffins by at least forty-seven estates between 1808 and 1823.

Between the years 1801 and 1819, Collins was

involved in a minimum of fifteen land transactions in Norfolk County, most of them purchases. His largest accumulations were in the city of Portsmouth and in rural areas of the county, but he also owned one or two town lots in the city of Norfolk that he rented out for income. Collins was mentioned as a trustee or executor in several legal documents, and was elected one of twelve Trustees for the city of Portsmouth in 1806 and again in 1812.

At the time of his death in 1831, Collins' estate was appraised at \$5,287.50, of which his sixteen slaves accounted for \$4,145.00. His first wife, Mary Ann Edwards (whom he had married on 1 February 1780) pre-deceased him, but he was survived by his second wife Sarah (Sally) Wiles (married 10 October 1798), his sons John and William, and his daughters Annis (wife of Lewis Cowper), Nancy (wife of physician A. B. Woodley), and Sarah Frances. Collins left his "shop and tools with the materials" to his eldest son, John.

"Abstracts from Norfolk County Marriage Bonds," Lower Norfolk Antiquary 5 (1906): 51.
American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 18 October 1816, 3-4; 22 February 1817, 3-4; 5 November 1817, 3-4.
American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, 19 May 1820, 3-4.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1807, 1809-1820.
Herald and Norfolk & Portsmouth Advertiser, 15 October 1795, 3-3.
 Norfolk County, Appraisements No. 6, 6 December 1831, p. 25a; 18 January 1832, p. 21; 18 June 1832, p. 36a.
 Norfolk County, Audits, No. 4, 15 July 1811, p. 114.
 Norfolk County, Audits, No. 5, 18 July 1814, p. 45; 19

- June 1815, p. 54; 20 November 1815, p. 57a; 19 February 1816, p. 90; 19 August 1816, p. 108a; 17 March 1817, p. 116a; 15 September 1817, p. 124; 19 January 1818, p. 125a; 16 February 1818, p. 127a; 17 August 1818, p. 135a; 19 November 1818, p. 141a; 18 January 1819, p. 145a; 17 July 1820, p. 155a; 16 October 1820, p. 160; 18 December 1820, p. 158a; 19 February 1822, p. 170a; 18 March 1822, p. 171a; 20 May 1822, p. 176a; 20 August 1823, p. 196a; 20 October 1823, p. 199; 17 December 1823, pp. 202, 202a; 17 March 1824, p. 207; 17 May 1824, p. 212; 22 June 1824, p. 213a; 17 August 1824, p. 224; 20 December 1824, p. 59; 21 December 1824, p. 238; 17 January 1825, pp. 239a., 241, 243; 23 February 1825, p. 245; 16 May 1825, p. 258; 21 November 1825, p. 270; 23 February 1826, p. 276a; 20 March 1826, p. 281; 15 May 1826, p. 284a; 16 August 1826, p. 221.
- Norfolk County, Audits, No. 6, 18 June 1827, p. 20; 20 August 1827, p. 27; 20 April 1830, p. 127a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 34, 16 September 1793, p. 141; 16 September 1793, p. 141a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 39, 12 January 1801, p. 16; 20 April 1801, p. 196.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 40, 19 April 1803, p. 119.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 41, 8 April 1803, p. 225a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 42, 28 December 1805, p. 237; 9 May 1806, p. 355.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 43, 9 October 1807, p. 245.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 44, 1 September 1808, p. 142; 20 April 1809, p. 170a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 46, 19 September 1814, p. 143.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 47, 23 December 1816, p. 177; 8 November 1817, p. 226a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 48, 28 July 1819, p. 257; 25 August 1819, p. 285.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 49, 10 August 1820, p. 57a.
- Norfolk County, Minute Book 12, 16 August 1813, p. 59.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1796-97), 18 July 1796, p. 55a; 19 September 1796, p. 80; 20 December 1796, p. 105.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1797-99), 20 June 1798, p. 76a; 20 May 1799, p. 180.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1799-1801), 21 October 1799, p. 41.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1801-03), 20 September 1802, p. 191.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1806), 20 January 1806, p. 4a.
- Norfolk County, Will Book No. 5, 20 June 1831, p. 282.
- Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1796-1807, 1809-1820.
- Norfolk Directory, 1806.
- Norfolk Herald, 13 October 1796, 3-2.

Records of the Town and City of Portsmouth, vol. 1, 3rd
 Tuesday in April, 1812 [sic], p. 132.
 Wingo, Elizabeth. Marriages of Norfolk County, Virginia
1706-1792. 2 vols. Norfolk, Va.: By the Author,
 1961. 2:29.

 COOK, J[ohn] & W[illiam] (November 1807-October 1808)
 Windsor Chairmakers
 Fancy Chairmakers
 Painters and Gilders

John and William Cook were relatives, possibly brothers or father and son. Working in the city of Norfolk, they advertised themselves in 1807 as makers of "FANCY FURNITURE," who were also capable of executing all sorts of surface decoration, including japanning, gilding, and "Coach, Sign, and Ornamental Painting." They offered their services as painters of "Freemason and Military flags" as well.

The Cooks' furniture making was likely limited to turned and joined work, since they advertised forms like "Cain Seat, Rush and Windsor Chairs; Recess Seats; Settees and Window Stools; Card, Pier, and Tea Tables; Work, Wash, and Candle Stands," but never mentioned case pieces. Someone in the firm probably had carving skills as well, because the Cooks were ready to produce bed and window cornices and also frame looking glasses and pictures.

The Cooks' first appeared in Norfolk records in November 1807, and within a short time they were operating

from a shop at 69 Church Street. By October of the following year they had moved inland to Richmond, where they continued to operate until at least September 1809. Their decision to leave Norfolk in mid 1808 may have been prompted by the economic depression experienced by the port city as a result of the Embargo Act passed late in 1807.

Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 25 November 1807, 3-4;
 12 September 1808, 3-4.
Virginia Argus (Richmond), 7 October 1808, 3-5; 28 April
 1809, 3-5; 1 September 1809, 3-5.

 COX, ABNER (1794-1811)
 Cabinetmaker
 Undertaker

Abner Cox, a native of Essex County, Virginia, was still living there at the time of the 1783 census, when his household consisted of ten white persons and six blacks. By 1794 he had moved Norfolk and established a new business. Early the next year, he described himself as a "Cabinet Maker and Undertaker," and informed the public that his shop was located in Church Street "next door to Mr. William Vaughan." There he not only took custom orders "from Town and country," but maintained "a capital assortment of Ready made FURNITURE." Cox also supplied himself with quantities of mahogany in log and

plank form which he was willing to sell. Like most cabinetmakers, he built and sold coffins.

It is probable that some of the six adult white males and seven slaves for whom Cox was taxed in 1794 worked in his shop, but thereafter the number of individuals in his household was considerably smaller. An orphan was bound out to Cox by the overseers of the poor for Elizabeth River Parish in 1801, but there is no further evidence regarding the nature of his crew. Cox occasionally interacted with other members of the cabinetmaking community, once serving as a trustee with Richard Bailey [q.v.] in the settlement of a debt owed by the widow of John Staples [q.v.].

Between 1792 and 1796 Cox married the widow Gordon, nee Mary (also called Molly and Polly) Goodchild. Their marriage was a turbulent one. Cox was involved in many land transactions in the ensuing years, a number of which involved the leasing out of houses and lots in the city of Norfolk. His income from these leases often amounted to more than \$400 per year. However, several of the lots and tracts seem to have come to him through his wife, who had, in turn, inherited them from her father and her first husband. By 1805 Cox had signed two deeds of trust, one relinquishing his interest in certain land, slaves, and plate owned by Mary Cox, and another assigning her the profits from the sale of a second parcel of land

that had come to him by way of their marriage. As a part of the latter arrangement, Mary then bought a third parcel of land in her own right.

After 1805 Cox is no longer listed in the city tax rolls; the next year his wife appears there under her own name. Evidence in the tax records suggests that Cox alone moved at that time from the city into Norfolk County, where he lived and worked until 1811. Sometime before 1818 he returned to his native Essex County, having for some years lived "separate and a part" from his wife, who was still in Norfolk. In that year she was involved in a dispute over the ownership of a parcel of land in the city, insisting that the sale of the plot in 1796 was invalid since it had been executed by her husband at a time when she was still a minor and "incapable of executing any such Deed." The last known reference to Abner Cox is in 1819 when he and his estranged wife deeded a parcel of land to their daughter Elizabeth Goodchild Cox, which she in turn deeded back to her mother the next year.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 6, 22 September 1800, p. 237.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 7, 1 July 1801, p. 58; 27 July 1801, pp. 21, 58; 9 October 1801, p. 134; 3 October 1801, pp. 148, 152; 13 August 1801, p. 154.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 8, 8 December 1803, p. 349.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 9, 15 May 1804, p. 157; 3 April 1805, p. 387.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 14, 20 August 1818, p. 399.

- Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 15, 29 May 1819, p. 424; 6 April 1820, p. 425.
- Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1794-1806.
- Bureau of the Census. Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, Virginia. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 52.
- Herald and Norfolk & Portsmouth Advertiser, 31 January 1795, 3-1.
- Norfolk County, Audits, No. 4, 18 May 1805, p. 18.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 36, 1 June 1796, p. 166a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 42, 3 April 1805, pp. 97a, 98a; 28 November 1805, pp. 199, 201.
- Norfolk County, Order Book (1799-1801), 20 April 1801, p. 223.
- Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1803-1807, 1809-1811.

 DeREVERE, ABRAHAM (October 1816-October 1820)
 Carver and Gilder
 Paper Hanger

In the autumn of 1816 Abraham DeRevere, who had recently arrived from New York, opened a "Looking-Glass Manufactory AND PRINT STORE" on Main Street in Norfolk, a few doors from the Market Square. He later called the same business a "Looking-Glass and Fancy Furniture Factory," a "Looking Glass Store," and a "Fancy Furniture Store." DeRevere sometimes described himself as a "Carver and Gilder," and he maintained a ready made stock of looking glasses, cornices, and picture frames at his shop. He was also willing to "Repair, Regild and Glaze old Pictures or Looking Glasses," in addition to taking special orders from the country.

Among DeRevere's clients were artists Raphaelle

Peale and William Dunlap. In fact, Peale recommended DeRevere to the general public as the best source for framing Peale's art work. Norfolk resident Humberston Skipwith, son of Sir Peyton Skipwith, also purchased goods and services from DeRevere in 1819 and 1820, including bed and window cornices, new swing glasses, looking glass repair, and curtain installation.

In addition to his work as a craftsman, DeRevere was also an active merchant. He imported goods from Marseilles and London, among other places, and offered a wide variety of merchandise for sale, including fire tools, lighting devices, cooking implements, perfumes and toiletries, toys, window glass, and musical instruments. DeRevere contracted with Norfolk upholsterer William Barron [q.v.] to hang the latter's imported wallpapers for his customers, and was even named sole Norfolk agent for Lee's Patent Medicine Warehouse from New York.

DeRevere owned one slave and maintained a residence on Main Street. In October 1820 he announced the relocation of his business to "the Store between the entrance to Mr. Woodward's Cabinet Warehouse and Mrs. Hastle's Boarding House," after which his name does not appear again in the Norfolk records.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 9 October 1816, 3-4; 20 November 1816, 3-3; 30 August 1817, 3-3; 19 December 1817, 3-3; 12 May 1818, 3-2; 29 June 1818, 3-2.

American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser,
 15 March 1819, 3-4; 31 July 1819, 4-4.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1818-1820.
 New York Historical Society, Diary of William Dunlap, 3
 vols. (New York: New York Historical Society,
 1930), 2:534.
Norfolk Herald, 11 October 1820, 3-4.
Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 9 October 1816, 3-4.
 Williamsburg, VA. College of William and Mary. Skipwith
 Papers, box 9, folders 61, 83. I am grateful to
 Alicia Tucker for supplying this information.

 DYCHER, SAMUEL J. (August 1808-January 1809)
 Carver and Gilder

Samuel J. Dycher, a carver and gilder by trade, opened his shop at 2 Washington Street, Norfolk, in August 1808, where he was prepared to fill orders "from any part of the Borough or Country." Originally from London, he made looking glass and picture frames "to any pattern," and noted that repair and regilding of such objects could be done in his shop without the "risk of sending [them] to the northward." Dycher, who had at least one employee, was also willing to frame drawings and needlework pieces and was capable of making bed and window cornices of all sorts. He made "PROFILES," or silhouettes, and even cleaned old prints and paintings.

In addition to his woodworking business, Dycher sold "Patent Perpetual Almanacks," which he could also supply wholesale to "Country Merchants or traders...upon liberal terms." Dabbling in medicine, he twice advertised

his command of "a Recipe for finally eradicating that dreadful Malady, the GRAVEL" [or kidney stones], once noting "The Poor cured gratis."

Local records contain nothing further about Dycher after January 1809. It is likely that he relocated his business to another town, since most carvers and gilders moved frequently.

Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 23 January 1809, 1-1.
Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 22 August 1808, 3-4;
 12 September 1808, 3-4.

 FORBES, DAVID (1806)
 Carver and Gilder

Carver and gilder David Forbes appears to have had a relatively brief stay in Norfolk. Though he is listed in the 1806 Norfolk Directory, the only other known reference to him is found in a newspaper advertisement for October of the same year wherein he proposed a lottery scheme "to dispose of his whole stock of Looking Glasses and Fine Prints," valued at \$1,445. Forbes, whose shop was located at 24 Church Street, may have been following a pattern of frequent relocation common to carvers and gilders. Rachel Atkins [q.v.], another transient carver and gilder, also used the lottery method to dispose of her stock on occasion.

Norfolk Directory, 1806
Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 30 October 1806, 1-3.

 FORD, WILLIAM (1801)
 Cabinetmaker

William Ford first appears in Norfolk records in 1800 when he is taxed as a resident of the city for two adult white males and one slave under sixteen years of age. The next year he is listed in the Norfolk Directory as a "cabinet maker" with a shop located at 2 Willock's Wharf. The yellow fever epidemic that swept Norfolk in 1802 may account for the absence of further references to Ford or his business.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1800.
 Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1805-1807, 1809.
Norfolk Directory, 1801.

 FREMON, A. (January 1818-April 1819)
 Upholsterer

A. Fremon (also Frimon) was probably the wife or daughter of John C. Fremon, a Norfolk upholsterer who died late in 1817. On 5 January 1818, less than two weeks after the contents of the latter's Church Street residence

were auctioned to pay debts, A. Fremon advertised "that she continues to carry on the business of making MATTRASSES of every description, FEATHER BEDS, CUSHIONS, and many other articles in the UPHOLSTERER's Line." Her shop was also on Church Street, probably where John Fremon had done business, but by November 1818 she had moved to new quarters at Church and Main Streets. There she promised to "pay prompt attention to the orders of those who may be disposed to patronize her." Following a reward she offered for "a country made WHITE TICK" and some other goods stolen from her cellar on 11 April 1819, A. Fremon is not mentioned again in the Norfolk records.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 22

December 1817, 3-4.

American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser,

18 November 1818, 3-4; 13 April 1819, 3-4.

Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, 5 January 1818, 3-5.

 FREMON, JOHN C.
 Upholsterer

(August 1815-December 1817)

John C. Fremon (also Frimon and Freeman) opened his Norfolk shop at the corner of Church Street and "the lane leading to the Bathing House" in August 1815. An upholsterer by trade, Fremon's customers could have "Rooms papered...; Bed and Window Cornices and Curtains fitted

up; Beds, Mattresses and Sofas stuffed, and Screens of every size prepared." Following his removal to another shop on Church Street in January 1817, he advertised that in addition to taking custom orders, he would keep on hand "a constant supply of MOSS & CURL'D HAIR MATTRESSES, FEATHER BEDS, &c. And every other article in the Upholstery line." He imported the moss that he used for stuffing furniture and mattresses from Charleston, South Carolina.

Fremon died sometime before 26 December 1817, at which time all of the household and kitchen furniture in his Church Street residence and "Some Upholstering Materials" (but probably not his two slaves) were sold at auction in order to satisfy an execution levied against him by Edward Seymour. A woman called A. Fremon [q.v.], likely Fremon's widow, apparently succeeded him in business, since the first advertisement for her upholstery shop appeared eleven days after the auction.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 29 August 1815, 3-3; 6 January 1817, 3-4; 22 December 1817, 3-4.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1816-1817.

Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, 5 January 1818, 3-5.

Norfolk Herald, 28 August 1815, 3-3.

GERRARD, JOSEPH
Cabinetmaker

(May 1818)

Joseph Gerrard advertised the opening of his new cabinetmaking establishment at 119 Main Street, Norfolk, in May 1818. Noting that "he has had several years experience in one of the first manufactories in England," he was confident that "his connections" there would "enable him to get all the new fashions as they come out." Gerrard offered to take special orders, and was willing to provide furniture of all styles, from the "plain and neat to the most elegant and ornamental." He was capable of making a variety of forms, including dining, card, pembroke, dressing, work, breakfast, loo, nesting, sofa, and library tables; bookcases, secretary and bookcases, sideboards, and wardrobes; shaving stands, basin stands, and bidets; and tea, knife, and butler's trays. He even imported "fashionable and elegant Brass Mountings" from England.

Despite the confidence expressed in his advertisement, Gerrard's name does not appear in the Norfolk records again after his initial announcement.

Norfolk Herald, 13 May 1818, 3-3.

GHISELIN, JOHN D.
Cabinetmaker

(June 1814-1835)

The earliest record of cabinetmaker John D. Ghiselin in Norfolk is found in the city tax list for 1814, at which time he resided on Cumberland Street and was the owner of one slave. Two years later his marriage on 13 June 1816 to Miss Mary T. Dyson was announced in the local newspapers. Ghiselin was probably a native of the Norfolk area, since his unusual surname appears frequently in the records of Norfolk and Princess Anne counties as early as the 1770s.

Of Ghiselin's professional affairs, it is known that he was a partner in the firm Smith & Ghiselin, but the duration of the partnership is unclear and Smith disappears from the Norfolk records by 1819. However Ghiselin continued to practice his trade there after Smith's departure, supplying coffins and household furniture to the community for well over twenty years. Among his customers in Norfolk was Humberston Skipwith, the son of a baronet. In 1819, while still working with Smith, Ghiselin supplied Skipwith with a cupboard, a wash stand, a trussel bedstead, a clothes horse, and a small toilet table. Two years later he made a table costing \$2.00 for the local school.

Despite the lack of advertisements for Ghiselin after 1818, the location of his shop is known from the

inscription he left on a surviving three-part dining table: "John D. Ghiselin / Main Street near the market Norfolk Va." That he purchased substantial amounts of equipment and unfinished furniture from the estates of other Norfolk cabinetmakers in 1826 and 1835, suggests that he was still in business at the latter date, though further mention of him has not been found beyond that time.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 14 June 1816, 3-3; 28 February 1818, 3-1.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 18-14, 1817-1820.

Borough of Norfolk, Will book 4, 2 December 1825, p. 278; 23 June 1828, p. 438.

Norfolk County, Appraisements, No. 5, 2 November 1826, p. 150a.

Norfolk County, Audits, No. 5, 12 May 1818, p. 131.

Williamsburg, VA. College of William and Mary. Skipwith Papers, box 9, folders 61, 83. I am grateful to Alicia Tucker for supplying this information.

Williamsburg, VA. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Department of Collections, Virginia Furniture file.

 GRAY, WILLIAM
 Cabinetmaker

(1768-September 1771)

William Gray is often called a cabinetmaker in the Norfolk records, but nothing is known about the nature of his particular operation. His only recorded associate in business is Samuel Hollowell, an apprentice to whom he taught the "Trade of a Joiner and Cabinet maker."

Gray was probably originally from England, since his will contains reference to all his "worldly Estate...either real or personal in Great Britain or North America." He married Elizabeth Moseley on 23 June 1765 in Princess Anne County, and named her executrix of his estate shortly before his death in October 1771.

Norfolk County, Order Book, 17 October 1771, p. 36.
 Norfolk County, Will Book 1, October 1771 and January 1772, p. 213.
 Princess Anne County, Deed Book 10, 5 October 1768, p. 489.
 "Princess Anne County, Marriage Bonds," William and Mary Quarterly (1) 2 (date): 73.
 Princess Anne County, Minute Book 8, 1 September 1768, p. 489.

 HATCH, JOSEPH (July 1810)
 Cabinetmaker

The earliest known reference to Joseph Hatch is a notice in Billinge's Liverpool Advertiser dated 21 June 1802 outlining his bankruptcy proceedings. At the time, Hatch was a failing cabinetmaker whose shop was located in Robert Street, Bedford Row, London. Eight years later, Hatch migrated to the United States and advertised the opening of a cabinet "Manufactory" at 56 Main Street, Norfolk. Describing himself as "late from London," he claimed "long experience in the business," and promised to make furniture of the highest quality. Hatch did custom

work, and noted that "Orders from the Country [would be] particularly attended to." He also sought "One or two Boys of respectable connections" as apprentices, and advertised work for two or three journeymen cabinetmakers a few weeks later. Yet, following these encouraging announcements, no further record of Hatch is known, either in Virginia or England.

Beard, Geoffrey, and Gilbert, Christopher, ed. Dictionary of English Furniture Makers. London: The Furniture History Society, 1986, p. 410.
Billinge's Liverpool Advertiser, 21 June 1802.
Norfolk Herald, 6 July 1810, 1-1; 27 July 1810, 1-4.

 HAWKINS, PARKER (March 1801)
 Upholsterer

The poll books for Norwich, England, indicate that upholsterer Parker Hawkins lived and worked in that city between 1794 and 1798. By March 1801 he had moved to Virginia, at which time he opened an "Upholstering Business" at 12 Commerce Street, Norfolk. However, Hawkins's stay in the United States was brief; he had made the return trip to England and was working in London by 1802. Nothing further is known of him after that time.

Beard, Geoffrey, and Gilbert, Christopher, ed. Dictionary of English Furniture Makers. London: The Furniture History Society, 1986, p. 410.
Norfolk Herald, 21 March 1801, 3-5.

HAZEN & CHAMBERLIN
Cabinetmaker
Chairmaker

(August 1793)

The firm of Hazen & Chamberlin announced the opening of its new business in Portsmouth in August 1793. Describing themselves as "Cabinet and Chair-Makers," the partners promised work of the first quality, both "having practiced in the first shops in Philadelphia and New York." They were ready "to employ a number of Journeymen," as well as "an active Boy about 14 or 15 years of age." Yet, following their first advertisement, they do not again appear in the area records; even the partners' first names are unknown.

American Gazette (Norfolk), 14 August 1793, 3-3.

HENDREE, GEORGE
Cabinetmaker

(June 1811-1813)

The earliest record of George Hendree is in 1811 when the new firm of "C. SULLY & G. HENDREE CABINET-MAKERS From Norfolk" announced to "the inhabitants of Edenton [North Carolina]...that they have opened a SHOP nearly on the corner of Market and King Streets...where they carry on the Cabinet-Making and Upholstering Business." The next year cabinetmaker Chester Sully [q.v.] informed his

longstanding customers in Norfolk that he had moved his shop in that city to the corner of Main and Commerce Streets and had taken Hendree as a partner there. By 1813 Sully and Hendree termed themselves "Cabinet-Makers, Upholsterers and Undertakers," and had opened yet another shop, this one in Richmond. There, "in the Brick Row, opposite the Globe Tavern," they produced a great variety of furniture forms.

Hendree was probably related to Sully's wife, Ann Hendree, who was born in Portsmouth in 1787. However, like several of Sully's other partners, Hendree's tenure with the company was brief. He was last mentioned in connection with the firm in November 1814, and by 1815 Sully had taken William Smith as his new partner. Yet Hendree did not drop out of sight as most of his predecessors with Sully had. He stayed in Richmond, where he had married Miss Sarah Tinsley in February 1814, and by April 1815 had gone into business for himself "opposite the Merchants Coffee House, main street."

Hendree's Richmond business apparently flourished, judging from the frequency of his advertisements over the ensuing years, and by 1820 his shop crew numbered seven. He carried in stock everything from cabinet work to fancy chairs, mattresses to floor cloths, and venetian blinds to looking glasses. He regularly imported piano fortes from New York and London, and he sometimes sold household

furniture from New York and Philadelphia as well. Hendree not only stocked his own work, but that which he had purchased from local competitors. He even ran a saw mill, and when he was unable to get enough raw lumber in the normal fashion, he advertised his need for it in the newspaper. All the while he continued to make coffins and kept a hearse to rent.

The last known reference to Hendree's business is in 1828 when he supplied funereal services for a Richmonder; his own will was probated in the Richmond Hustings Court in 1834.

- American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 28 April 1817, 4-1.
- Borough of Richmond, Hustings Court Order Book 12, 17 November 1815, p. 177.
- Borough of Richmond, Hustings, Wills No. 4, 1 January 1822, p. 85; 20 June 1822, p. 260.
- Borough of Richmond, Hustings, Wills No. 5, 7 February 1828, p. 90; 4 December 1828, p. 251.
- Borough of Richmond, Hustings, Wills No. 6, p. 305.
- Daily Compiler (Richmond), 11 February 1814; 1 November 1814; 25 March 1815, 3-4; 29 April 1815, 3-3; 15 June 1818, 3-4; 17 June 1818, 3-3.
- Daily National Intelligencer (Washington, DC), 25 April 1817, 2-5.
- Edenton (N.C.) Gazette, 25 June 1811.
- Enquirer (Richmond), 9 July 1813, 1-1; 12 August 1811; 7 September 1816, 3-4; 12 September 1817, 3-5; 28 October 1817, 3-6; 14 February 1818, 3-6; 7 January 1819, 3-5; 20 February 1819, 3-5; 12 February 1820, 3-6.
- Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 24 February 1813, 1-4.
- Norfolk Herald, 3 June 1812, 3-5; 5 February 1813, 3-4.
- Richmond City Census, 1820.
- Richmond Commercial Compiler, 5 May 1817, 3-4; 13 May 1817, 2-4; 27 June 1817, 3-4; 29 August 1817, 3-3; 27 October 1817, 3-2; 1 December 1817, 4-3; 6 December 1817, 4-3; 13 November 1818, 3-4; 6 January 1819, 3-2; 23 March 1819, 1-5; 30 April

1819, 3-1; 7 June 1819, 3-5; 10 February 1820, 3-3; 17 June 1820, 3-4; 6 November 1820, 3-4.
Richmond Directory, 1819.

 JAMES
 Cabinetmaker

(1817-May 1818)

James, a slave born about 1780, was "by trade a Cabinet Maker," as was his master Richard Bailey [q.v.]. The latter died in Norfolk about 1811, and in 1817 his widow Elizabeth, "in consideration of the long and faithful services of her Negro man James," arranged for his manumission through an unusual series of events. James Woodward [q.v.], another Norfolk cabinetmaker, made a legal loan of \$120 to James, who in turn purchased his freedom from Mrs. Bailey. By way of repayment, James was bound to work in Woodward's cabinet shop for a period of twelve months. Joshua Moore [q.v.], a local windsor chair maker, acted as trustee for the arrangement. In due course James was manumitted on 10 May 1818, after which nothing further is known of him.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 14, 16 May 1818, pp. 306-07.

JEFFERSON, JOHN
Turner

(February-August 1795)

John Jefferson, probably an Englishman by birth, was a turner by trade. In February 1795 he entered a partnership with David Martin [q.v.], and the two advertised their new business as "MARTIN & JEFFERSON, Cabinet-Makers, Turners, Upholsterers, and Windsor Chair Makers." Partner Martin was a cabinetmaker and upholsterer, and he and Jefferson apparently combined their different professional skills in order to offer their customers the full spectrum of household furniture without having to sub-contract the specialty work.

The pair took a large shop on Main Street in Norfolk and were prepared "to receive the commands of their Friends," promising that "All orders will be punctually executed...and on short notice." They sought to hire one or two journeymen cabinetmakers to assist with their operation, and in August 1795, six months after opening, Martin & Jefferson were paid by the borough for making a finial for the magazine. However, beyond that date neither man's name is mentioned again in Norfolk documents. Four years later Jefferson appeared alone in Charleston, South Carolina, describing himself as "lately from England," and offering to do all sorts of turned work but no cabinetwork.

Jefferson's disappearance from the Norfolk records

in the late summer of 1795 coincides with a severe yellow fever epidemic that killed hundreds of the town's residents and caused many others to emigrate permanently.

Charleston City Gazette and Advertiser, 5 April 1799.
Herald and Norfolk & Portsmouth Advertiser, 29 November
 1794, 3-4; 7 February 1795, 3-1; 8 August 1795, 3-1.

 JOHNSON, _____ (1806)
 Windsor Chairmaker

Relatively little is known about Johnson, including his first name. In 1806 he was a part of the windsor chair making firm of Johnson & Moore, whose Norfolk shop was located at 1 Taylor's Lane. Partner Joshua Moore [q.v.] continued to make windsor chairs in Norfolk until 1818, but after 1806 Johnson's name is not recorded in local documents.

Norfolk Directory, 1806.

 LATTEMOR, JOHN (1787-1813)
 Cabinetmaker

Information about John Lattemor (also Latimore,

Lattimore, and Lattemore) and his activities in Norfolk is scarce. In 1775 he and carpenter Daniel Munrow were arrested in Alexandria, Virginia, on suspicion of being runaway servants. According the Alexandria sheriff, the pair matched the description of two "S[c]otchmen" who had fled their master in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Lattemor, who "professes the cabinet business" was "22 or 23 years of age" at the time. The men claimed to be partners in business from the Pennsylvania town of "Juncato," and they carried references from their neighbors there.

The outcome of the Alexandria incident is unknown, but by 1787 Lattemor and his wife Elizabeth were living in Norfolk County, at which time they deeded 38 acres of land to Edward Valentine. In 1813 Lattemor supplied two coffins to a Norfolk County estate, but he was dead himself before July 1815, at which time the Norfolk Herald advertised the auction of a negro house servant "Belonging to the estate of John Lattimore dec'd."

Lattemor's presence in the Norfolk area between 1787 and 1813, and his continuation in the cabinet trade, are strongly suggested by the survival of a secretary bookcase with the words "John Lattemor, Esq" scratched into the bottom of one of the large drawers. The piece, which descended in the Southgate and Leigh families of Norfolk, was made ca. 1795 to 1805. The peculiar profile

of its bracket feet, the pattern of its inlay, and the cabinetmaker's choice of southern yellow pine and poplar for secondary woods place this object, and John Lattemor, firmly within the Norfolk school.

Maryland Gazette, 25 May 1775, 3-1.

Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts research file S-5216.

Norfolk County, Audits, No. 5, 16 April 1816, p. 97.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 30, 17 February 1787, p. 153.

Norfolk Herald, 17 July 1815, 3-5.

LESTRADE, JOSEPH
Cabinetmaker

(1817-June 1819)

Joseph Lestrade (also L'Estrade) was listed in the Philadelphia city directories of 1817 as a cabinetmaker, but by October of that year he had moved to Norfolk and was operating as a part of the firm Lestrade & Bruce. Lestrade and William Bruce [q.v.] advertised that they would "Have constantly on hand a supply of [ready made] FURNITURE" at their shop in Main Street. They were also willing to act as agents for shipping, and would take consignments for the sloop Rachel and Betsey of Philadelphia. However, partner Bruce is not mentioned again in the city's records after the death of his wife in June 1818, and it is possible that he left Norfolk at that time or died himself.

By June 1819 Lestrade had ceased to do business as

well, probably due to ill health, and had authorized F. D. Latour to "dispose of a few articles of NEW FURNITURE, And a parcel of Mahogany, Cedar and Cherry Plank, and Mahogany Veneering...for cash." Lestrade's empty shop was offered for rent at the same time. Eight months later, in February 1820, the local newspaper reported the death of "Mr. JOSEPH LESTRADE, Cabinet Maker, of this Borough--an upright and respectable citizen, leaving a wife and three children." Lestrade died of "a lingering illness, of a Pulmonary complaint."

The unsold stock remaining in Lestrade's shop at the time of his death gives some indication of the various forms he produced. Among the new mahogany furniture offered for sale were "Dining & Breakfast Tables, Secretaries, Bureaux with Marble tops, Bedsteads, Cradles, Chairs, &c." His cabinet tools, bench screws, cramps, and veneer saws were offered in the same auction.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 24 October 1817, 3-4; 9 June 1818, 3-4.
American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, 2 June 1819, 3-1; 14 February 1820, 3-3; 19 February 1820, 3-5.
Paxton's Philadelphia Directory, 1818.
Robinson's Philadelphia Directory, 1817.

LINDSAY, JOHN
Cabinetmaker
Chairmaker

(November 1785-December 1792)

John Lindsay arrived in the United States from London in the autumn of 1785 and within eighteen months had become a citizen of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Shortly after his immigration, he proceeded to Norfolk where he set up a "CABINET and CHAIR MAKING Business." He advertised for journeymen cabinet and chair makers in newspapers as far away as Maryland, promising them "generous Wages and constant Work." In 1786, Norfolk tax records indicate that Lindsay was in partnership with one William Rudkins, but neither Rudkins' trade nor the nature of their business together is known. By September 1791 Lindsay had entered into a new partnership with Thomas Bonner [q.v.], and the two were operating a "CABINET & UPHOLSTERY MANUFACTORY" at a rented shop in Church Street. Yet that association must have been short lived as well, since neither man ever is mentioned in connection with the other's business after their initial advertisement.

Following a payment made to him for coffins he supplied in December 1792 there are no further records of Lindsay in Norfolk. By March 1796 he was practicing his trade in Philadelphia, where he had become secretary of the Federal Society of Philadelphia Cabinet Makers.

Argus (New York), 4 March 1796.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 2, 28 November 1792, p. 304.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1786-1787, 1789-1792.
Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser, 18 November 1785, 3-3; 6 December 1785, 3-3.
Norfolk and Portsmouth Chronicle, 10 September 1791, 3-4.
 Norfolk County, Audits, No. 2, 10 February 1796, p. 89.
 Norfolk County, Order Book, 16 February 1787, p. 74b.

 MARTIN, ALEXANDER (October 1798-November 1826)
 Cabinetmaker

On 17 October 1798 Alexander Martin married Mrs. Elizabeth Archer, a widow from the Norfolk area. Three days earlier he had announced the opening of his "Cabinet-maker's shop" at 93 Main Street. Martin's advertisement sought custom orders from townspeople as well as those in the country and indicated that he was prepared to hire two or three journeymen cabinetmakers to assist with the new business.

Martin was still listed as a cabinetmaker in the city directories of 1801 and 1806, but his name does not appear in the borough's tax rolls between 1807 and 1813. The economic hardships suffered by the port of Norfolk after the passage of Thomas Jefferson's Embargo Act in 1807 may have driven the cabinetmaker to leave the area temporarily. Martin was again living in Norfolk by 1814, but in September 1817, failure to pay his rent resulted in the forced sale of his household and kitchen furniture.

After that date Martin is no longer listed as a city tax payer.

The absence of Martin's name from city tax rolls beyond 1817 corresponds with his purchase (with Lewis Decormis, Jr.) of 125 acres in Norfolk County the next year, and suggests that he moved from the city into the county following his financial difficulties. Yet Martin must have continued to practice his trade, since he supplied a coffin to a local family in 1818 and purchased tools and supplies from the estate of Thomas Peed, another Norfolk cabinetmaker, in 1826. After the latter date, nothing further is known of him.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 14, 22 September 1817, p. 238.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 15, 26 May 1819, p. 164.

Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 3, 22 June 1818, p. 369.

Norfolk County, Appraisements, No. 5, 2 November 1826, p. 150a.

Norfolk Directory, 1801.

Norfolk Directory, 1806.

Norfolk Herald, 13 October 1798, 3-5.

Wingo, Elizabeth. Marriages of Norfolk County, Virginia 1706-1792. 2 vols. Norfolk, Va.: By the Author, 1961. 2:76.

MARTIN, DAVID
Cabinetmaker
Upholsterer
Undertaker

(November 1794-August 1795)

David Martin announced in November 1794 that he had "commenced Business" as a "Cabinet Maker, Upholsterer,

and Undertaker...next door to White's Grocery Store, in Church Street, Norfolk." He was willing to barter for his services, noting that "PRODUCE will be received in payment for the orders of such country Gentlemen, as may be pleased to encourage him."

Within three months of his initial advertisement, Martin entered into partnership with John Jefferson [q.v.], a turner by trade. Together they took a larger house on Main Street and called themselves "MARTIN & JEFFERSON, Cabinet-Makers, Turners, Upholsterers, and Windsor Chair Makers." By August 1795 they were advertising for journeymen cabinetmakers, and at about the same time were paid by the city "the Sum of thirty Shillings for making a Ball [finial] for the Magazine."

Martin's name is not mentioned in the Norfolk records again after August 1795; he may have fled the city or died during the intense yellow fever epidemic in the autumn of that year.

Borough of Norfolk, Order Book of the Common Hall, 8 August 1795.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1799-1806, 1814-1817.

Herald and Norfolk & Portsmouth Advertiser, 29 November 1794, 3-4; 7 February 1795, 3-1; 8 August 1795, 3-1.

MARZORATI, JOSEPH
Carver and Gilder

(December 1805-1806)

Joseph Marzorati (also Marzoratti, Margoratte, and Margorati) was probably of Italian extraction, judging from his surname and the fact that he sometimes sold imported Italian goods. A carver and gilder by trade, the earliest references to him place him in Baltimore, where by August 1805 he was the proprietor of "Joseph Marzoratti & Co.," successor to John Grigo & Co. Marzorati advertised frequently and, like most other carvers and gilders, he moved often. After some initial problems in disposing of his stock, he closed his South Street shop in Baltimore and relocated to 117 Church Street, Norfolk, in late December 1805. Sometime in 1806 he moved on, probably to Charleston, South Carolina, whence he had just come when he announced his arrival in Savannah, Georgia in March 1808.

Marzorati advertised during his stay in Norfolk that customers could have "Carving, gilding, and Re-Gilding done [as well as] Fancy Cornices, and all kinds of Frames made." Among his employees was artist John Conachy who would cut sitters' profiles that could, in turn, be framed in the shop. Marzorati sold a great variety of finished goods, including looking glasses, paintings, and prints; barometers, thermometers, and mathematical instruments; spy glasses and spectacles; "and Maps of all

kinds." He imported a wide array of materials for use in his business, among them moldings and prints from England and paintings from Italy.

Following Marzorati's arrival in Savannah in the spring of 1808, nothing further is known of him.

Baltimore Evening Post, 29 October 1805, 2-1; 22 November 1805, 3-4; 25 November 1805, 3-5; 3 December 1805, 2-2.

Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser, 22 March 1808, 3-5.

Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser, 21 August 1805, 3-5; 23 August 1805, 3-5.

Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 19 April 1806, 1-3.

Norfolk Gazette and Public Ledger, 27 December 1805, 3-3.

McCORMICK, JAMES
Cabinetmaker

(November 1787-ca. 1790)

James McCormick (also M'Cormick), probably newly arrived from Britain, set up his cabinet shop in Baltimore in February 1786. Advertising himself as a "Cabinet-maker," he noted that he had "for some Years past worked in the first Shops in Dublin," and was now ready to receive the "Commands" of those who were in need of furniture. Among his specialties were counting house desks, and he accepted either cash or "Country Produce" in payment.

McCormick remained in Baltimore until April, but by May he had moved his business south to Alexandria,

Virginia. There he set up "in the shop where Doctor Brown formerly lived, on Cameron-street," and promised "Cabinet and Chair work in the newest and neatest manner."

Amending the self description he used in Maryland, he now cited "his long experience in some of the first shops in England and Ireland" among his qualifications. McCormick had in stock "a large quantity of the best mahogany and walnut," and was ready to do business.

Eighteen months after his initial advertisement in Alexandria, McCormick moved his operation to Norfolk and opened shop in the former printing office. He had on hand there "Ready made Furniture" and assured customers that new work would be done with "care and assiduity." "Funerals," he added, could be "supplied on the shortest notice."

Within a few years McCormick moved his business again, this time to Petersburg, Virginia. He died there in June 1791, and Susanna McCormick, probably his widow, announced the sale of part of his estate. Among the goods offered were "a quantity of mahogany, oak, pine, and poplar PLANK, mahogany scantling; twelve very handsome mahogany CHAIRS, nearly finished; a chest of Cabinet-maker's TOOLS, a WORK-BENCH, and a mahogany DESK."

In August 1793, the overseers of the poor for Alexandria bound another James McCormack [sic], age fourteen, "apprentice to Joseph Ingle who is to learn him

the trade of a Cabinet maker." This younger McCormack may well have been the orphan of James McCormick.

Borough of Alexandria, Hustings Court Order Book, 28 August 1793, p. 146.
Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser, 21 February 1786, 1-1; 7 April 1786, 3-2.
Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal, 21 November 1787, 4-4.
Virginia Gazette, and Petersburg Intelligencer, 23 June 1791, 3-2.
Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser, 11 May 1786, 3-2.

 MOORE, JOSHUA (1806-1820)
 Windsor Chairmaker

The earliest reference to Joshua Moore, dated 1806, associates him with the partnership of Johnson & Moore, "windsor chair makers," who maintained their shop at 1 Taylor's Lane, Norfolk. Nothing else is known of Johnson [q.v.], but Moore continued to practice his trade for at least another fourteen years. Though he was again described as a "Windsor Chair Maker" in 1811, he apparently made other kinds of chairs as well. For example, in 1819 he supplied chairs to Norfolk resident Humberston Skipwith on three separate occasions, including a rocking chair and "12 Broad Top Chairs." Little is known of the individuals who worked in Moore's shop, but the number of slaves for whom he was taxed continued to grow over the years (from two in 1811 to eight in 1819),

and it seems likely that some of them were members of his staff.

Moore was active in his community. As early as 1816 he was elected to the standing committee of the Norfolk Benevolent Mechanic Society and was re-elected annually for several years, becoming vice-president in 1819. He served as a legal trustee in several situations, including the manumission of the slave cabinetmaker James [q.v.]. in 1818.

Of Moore's family, it is known that his first wife, Mary Cornick Moore, died in April 1811. Their six year old daughter, Mary Ann, followed in September 1816. (Moore was called "Joshua Moore, Esq.," in his daughter's death announcement.) In December 1811, eight months after his first wife's death, Moore married the widow Mary Archer of Princess Anne County. He took a third wife, Miss Mary A. James, also of Princess Anne County, in August 1818.

Moore continues to appear in city tax records until at least 1820, after which nothing further is known of him.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 13
December 1816, 3-4; 17 August 1818, 3-3.
American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser,
17 December 1818, 3-2; 17 December 1819, 3-2.
Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 14, 16 May 1818, pp. 306-07.
Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 15, 29 December 1818, p. 22.
Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1810-1820.
Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 12 April 1811, 3-4; 6

December 1811; 9 October 1816, 3-3.
Norfolk Directory, 1806.
 Princess Anne County, Deed Book 30, 3 January 1812, p.
 281.
 Williamsburg, VA. College of William and Mary. Skipwith
 Papers, box 9, folders 61, 83. I am grateful to
 Alicia Tucker for supplying this information.

 MURPHY, MICHAEL (1799-May 1804)
 Windsor Chairmaker

Directories for the city of Philadelphia list Michael Murphy as a "windsor chairmaker" each year between 1793 and 1800, but Murphy had actually moved his business to Norfolk by the autumn of 1799. At that time, he advertised that he had established a "Windsor Chair Manufactory" on Church Street (lot number 97 by 1801), where he waited to receive orders large or small. He also noted that he was willing to repair or repaint old chairs. It is clear that Murphy became part of the firm known as Woodworth & Murphy shortly after his arrival in Norfolk, but the arrangement was brief. In August 1800 the partnership was dissolved and Dudley Woodworth [q.v.] was authorized to collect outstanding debts for the firm.

Little is known of Murphy's business practices. He sought two apprentices in 1799 and accepted an orphan as an apprentice from the overseers of the poor on at least one occasion. At his death, he had more than one employee; shortly afterward Richard Bailey [q.v.]

advertised that he had hired Murphy's "principal Workman," in addition to buying his remaining stock. Some of the four white males above age sixteen and the two slaves on whom Murphy paid taxes in 1803 may have worked in the shop as well.

Murphy died in April or May 1804 and was survived by his wife Rosanna, his sons Thomas and Michael, and his daughter Catherine. Rosanna was probably Murphy's second wife, the "Mrs. White...of Princess Anne County" whom he married in September 1803, just seven months before his death. Murphy bequeathed the sum of \$310 to his youngest son Michael "for his Education," and instructed that Thomas, "who has had his Education...be sent to my friend Michael Magrath [a tallow chandler] in Philadelphia in order to be bound to a trade." To daughter Catherine, for whom no educational plans were noted, Murphy left a woman named Phoebe, the only slave mentioned in his will. (Shortly before his death he had transferred his ten shares in the Marine Insurance Company of Norfolk to Catherine by deed of gift.) Aside from sums of money, the only goods devised in Murphy's will were one dozen silver teaspoons, a pair of silver sugar tongs, a pair of silver pitchers, and "two Beads and furniture." Murphy may have had limited writing skills, since he signed his will with a mark.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 9, 22 April 1804, p. 128.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 2, 28 May 1804, p. 201.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1800-1803.
Epitome of the Times (Norfolk), 21 November 1799, 1-4.
 Hardie, James. Philadelphia Directory, 1793; 1794.
 Hogan, Edmund. Philadelphia Directory, 1795; 1796.
 Norfolk County, Order Book, 20 September 1802, p. 185a.
Norfolk Directory, 1801.
Norfolk Herald, 29 October 1799, 3-4; 2 August 1800, 3-5;
 17 September 1803; 5 March 1805, 2-1.
 Robinson, James. Philadelphia Directory, 1799.
 Stafford, Cornelius. Philadelphia Directory, 1797; 1798;
 1799; 1800.
 Stephens, Thomas. Philadelphia Directory, 1796.
 Way & Groff. Philadelphia Directory, 1800.

PARLASCA, CIPRIANE	(July 1807-August 1807;
Carver and Gilder	January 1810-1811)

Cipriane Parlasca [also Parlasco] was a carver and gilder and, like most practitioners of his trade, he moved his business often. The earliest known references to Parlasca, who operated as "C. PARLASCA & CO.," place him in Norfolk in July 1807. At that time he advertised his shop at 22 Church Street, where he maintained a ready made stock of looking glasses and frames. He was also prepared to custom make all sorts of "Looking Glass and Picture Frames, Window and Bed Cornices, on the most reasonable terms." Among his employees was one John M'Conachy, a cutter of profile portraits who had earlier worked in the shop of Joseph Marzorati [q.v.], another carver and gilder. Parlasca, who was issued a retail licence by the

city of Norfolk in 1807, also sold pictures, prints, barometers, thermometers, microscopes, and telescopes.

Parlasca ended his first Norfolk advertisement with the notice that he and his associates "intend leaving this place in a short time." By August 1807 the firm moved to Richmond, where it carried on much as it had before, though under the new name "C. Parlasca & John M'Conachy, CARVERS & GILDERS." L. Remouit, a painter of miniature portraits, was also advertised as a member of the staff.

After 1807, Parlasca, apparently without M'Conachy, continued to relocate his business periodically. In November 1808 he was working in Raleigh, North Carolina, and by February of the next year he had moved east to the town of New Bern, where he disposed of most of his stock by lottery. In January 1810 Parlasca and at least two other workmen were back in Norfolk at 109 Main Street, but eighteen months later they were again working in Raleigh. In August 1811 Parlasca, then in Richmond, advertised his stock with the warning that he intended to "tarry but a short time." By the end of the year he had returned to Raleigh, after which nothing further is known of him.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1807.
Carolina Federal Republican (New Bern, North Carolina), 9
February 1809.
Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 17 July 1807, 1-5; 5 January

1810, 1-5.

Raleigh Register (North Carolina), 24 November 1808; 21
June 1811; 20 December 1811.

Virginia Argus (Richmond), 1 August 1807, 3-5; 12 August
1811, 3-2; 19 August 1811, 4-4.

ROSSIN, WILLIS
Cabinetmaker

(April 1818-February 1821)

On Thursday evening, February 13, 1817, Willis Rossin [also Rosson] married "the truly amiable Miss Martha Willie" in Norfolk. A cabinetmaker by trade, Rossin rented a shop in Norfolk "ON THE WEST SIDE OF CHURCH-ST. three doors from the corner of...Main-St." Of his business little is known except that he, like other cabinetmakers, supplied coffins. Rossin is not mentioned in the Norfolk records again after 1821 and may have been driven away or killed by the severe yellow fever epidemic that occurred in the summer and fall of that year.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 29 April
1818, 3-4.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1819.

Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 17 February 1817, 3-3.

Norfolk County, Audits, No. 5, 19 September 1825, p. 264.

SCOTT, JOHN
Cabinetmaker

(ca. 1754-1773)

Cabinetmaker John Scott was practicing his trade in the town of Suffolk, Virginia as early as 1754, when he bought a lot on Glasgow square in Portsmouth and relocated his business there. It was the first of several land purchases Scott would make in that relatively new town.

Like most of his colleagues, Scott made and sold coffins. He also built household furniture, including tables and desks, and once advertised that he used Jamaica mahogany in his work. Scott's house and shop were located in the same building and described as "well situate for the publick way of trade, &c." The story and one half building measured 31 feet by 20 feet with an attached shed of 31 feet by 11 feet.

Scott announced that he intended to leave off cabinetmaking in October 1767 and offered his house and shop for sale at the same time. The buildings and lot were finally sold in 1770, but Scott was paid for a coffin as late as 1773, suggesting that he did not stop practicing his trade as planned. Scott and his wife Sarah purchased another Portsmouth lot on Church Square in 1768 and may have moved the business to that location. Scott's will was written in October 1773 and proved at the April court in 1775. He named his wife and a friend as executors of his estate, but Sarah Scott survived her

husband by less than one month. The couple appeared to have no living children and left their belongings to brothers, sisters, and god-children.

Norfolk County, Audits, No. 1, 20 April 1763, unpaginated; 15 October 1767, unpaginated; 20 May 1773, pp. 151-51a.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 19, 20 November 1760, p. 153.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 23, 10 October 1765, p. 9.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 24, 16 March 1768, p. 55a.

Norfolk County, Will Book 2, April 1775, p. 43; May 1775, p. 43a.

Virginia Gazette (Purdie & Dixon, Williamsburg), 24 September 1767, 2-2.

SELDEN, JOHN
Cabinetmaker

(September 1769-January 1776)

John Selden was likely the son of John and Grace Selden of Elizabeth City County, Virginia. The elder Selden was an attorney who served as a justice of Elizabeth City in 1725, sheriff of Lancaster County in 1732, and deputy king's attorney in his home county in 1752. He died in Elizabeth City in 1754 and two years later a boy named John Selden (probably his orphan) was apprenticed in the town of Norfolk (where the deceased and his wife had land dealings) to carpenter John Brown. By 1768 the younger John Selden, now a cabinetmaker, was practicing his craft in Elizabeth City County and taking his own apprentices.

Selden remained in Elizabeth City for several years and was sued there in September 1768 by his apprentice Edmond Allmond [q.v.], who was seeking his freedom. Allmond lost the suit and was ordered to serve Selden until 15 September 1769, but apparently both men had moved to Norfolk by that time, since Selden bought a house and lot there on 22 September and was described as "of the said Borough." (Beyond Edmond Allmond, the only other recorded workman in Selden's shop is John McCloud, an apprentice bound to him by the church wardens in 1773.)

Relatively little is known of Selden's business practices, but signed and dated examples of his furniture survive at Shirley, the Charles City County seat of the Carter family. State records also indicate that he made furniture for the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg shortly after the sale of Lord Dunmore's household effects in 1776. Selden's known work is typical of that made in eastern Virginia's urban centers during the late colonial period, with "neat and plain" exteriors and extraordinarily well built interiors.

Of his other affairs in Norfolk, it is known that Selden was commissioned lieutenant of the borough's militia by Governor Botetourt, an office which he accepted on 21 July 1770. At about the same time Selden's signature appeared on the list of the 145 men (he being the only cabinetmaker) who had affixed their names to the

Association in Norfolk, thus pledging to boycott certain British goods in opposition to the Revenue Acts. County records also show that Selden was fined for failure to appear when summoned for jury duty in 1773, but that Governor Dunmore waived the fine a few months later.

Like most of its other citizens, Selden fled Norfolk when Lord Dunmore's troops burned part of the city on 1 January 1776. His losses in that fire and those that followed amounted to £815. However, within six months he had set up shop at the village of Blandford near Petersburg, where he carried on "the CABINET-MAKING business, as formerly, in all its branches." He had on hand "ready made, several dozen of neat mahogany, cherry, and walnut chairs, tables, desks, tea boards, &c." and was seeking new commissions. In January 1777, Selden acted as the administrator of a relative's estate in Lancaster County, but was dead himself within twelve months. He was survived by his widow, Elizabeth Wallace Selden, and his son John.

Elizabeth City County, Minutes, 1760-1769, 22 September 1768, p. 592.

Elizabeth City County, Order Book, 7 June 1749, p. 94.

McIlwaine, H. R., ed., Journal of the Council of the State of Virginia, (Richmond, 1931), I:148.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 12, 15 November 1734, p. 17.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 24, 22 September 1769, p. 204.

Norfolk County, Deed Book 26, 21 October 1773, p. 150a.

Norfolk County, Order Book, 21 July 1770, p. 185; 19 March 1773, p. 163a; 21 May 1773, p. 175; 16 July 1773, p. 192.

Norfolk County, Wills & Orders, 1724-1734, 15 November

1734, p. 210 (section 2).
 "Selden Family," William & Mary Quarterly (1) 5 (July 1896): 60-62, 264-67.
Virginia Gazette (Dixon & Hunter, Williamsburg), 3 January 1777, 3-1.
Virginia Gazette (Purdie, Williamsburg), 26 July 1776, 4-1. Ibid., 3 January 1777, 2-3; 12 December 1777, 2-3; 12 June 1778, 1-2.
Virginia Gazette (Rind, Williamsburg), 26 July 1770, 2-1, 2-2.
Virginia Gazette or Independent Chronicle (Richmond), 12 June 1784, 4-1.
 Williamsburg, Virginia. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections. Accession file L1976-121.

 SMITH, _____ (March 1816-February 1818)
 Cabinetmaker

The only known references to Smith, whose first name is not recorded, are in connection with the firm of Smith & Ghiselin, a cabinetmaking concern in Norfolk. They maintained a shop at an unknown location in the city, and coffins were among their products. Though John D. Ghiselin [q.v.] continued to work and reside in Norfolk until 1835, Smith is not mentioned in local records after February 1818. [This Smith, first mentioned in connection with Ghiselin in March 1816, is not the William Smith who was in partnership with Chester Sully as late as May of the same year.]

American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 28
 February 1818, 3-1.
 Norfolk County, Audits, No. 5, 12 May 1818, p. 131.

 SMITH, WILLIAM (May 1816)
 Cabinetmaker

Almost nothing is known of William Smith beyond the fact that he was in partnership with cabinetmaker Chester Sully [q.v.] under the firm name of "C. Sully & Co." The partnership, based in Norfolk, was of uncertain duration and was dissolved by mutual agreement in May 1816.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary, 11 may 1816, 3-4.

 STAPLES, JOHN (October 1803-October 1804)
 Windsor Chairmaker

John Staples was probably a windsor chair maker, since the windsor chair concern of Campbell and Johnson bought out the former's stock in trade and occupied his quarters following his death in the autumn of 1804. Staples first appeared in the city tax lists in 1804, but his dealings in 1803 with cabinetmakers Richard Bailey [q.v.] and Abner Cox [q.v.] suggest that he had been in

business somewhat earlier. Staples had married Grace Wright, the widow of Jeremiah Wright sometime prior to October 1803. Bailey and Cox agreed at that time to serve as security for certain legal responsibilities that Staples acquired via his wife's role as administratrix of her late husband's estate. Nothing more is known of Staples, except that his shop was located "a few doors below the Vendue Store, of Mr. Marks, in Main-Street," Norfolk.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 8, 8 december 1803, p. 349.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1804, 1807, 1809.
Norfolk Gazette and Public Ledger, 23 October 1804, 3-4

 SULLY, CHESTER
 Cabinetmaker

(April 1805-1819)

Chester Sully was born in Worcester, England, in 1781. The third of nine children, he was the son of Matthew (1769-1815) and Sarah Chester Sully (d. 1794), both actors. Because of their profession, Mr. and Mrs. Sully moved their family frequently, living at times in Worcestershire, Lincolnshire, Edinburgh, and probably elsewhere in Britain. In 1792, at the suggestion of an American relative, the Sullys and their children emigrated to the United States, landing first at Norfolk, but moving soon afterwards to Charleston, South Carolina. There most

of the family earned their livings in various theatrical and acrobatic performances, including one on 9 June 1794, wherein thirteen-year-old Chester turned cartwheels or somersaults "twelve times with FIRE WORKS Fastened to different parts of his Body."

A number of Chester Sully's three brothers and five sisters went on to pursue careers in music and the arts, including brother Thomas, who became nationally known as a portrait painter. However, Chester took a different career direction. In the words of a contemporary, the younger Sully "tried the Stage, but it would not do--he then shipt himself as a sailor & went two voyages but was disgusted with his companions & on arriving at Norfolk left the ship & at the age of 19 [ca. 1800] bound himself to a Cabinet maker at Gosport" [in suburban Norfolk].

The identity of Sully's master is unknown, but Sully must have been an adept student. Though his training began comparatively late in life, within five years he was in the cabinet business. In fact, in April 1805, he advertised the dissolution of "SULLY and DORSEY, CABINET-MAKERS" in Norfolk, and added that "the business will hereafter be carried on at the work-shop in Loyall's Lane by Chester Sully." How long Sully had been in business with Dorsey (of whom nothing else is known) cannot be determined, but clearly the twenty-four year old

Sully had advanced rapidly.

On 4 May 1805, Sully married Ann Hendree (1787-1836) of Portsmouth. Shortly afterward, he must have taken a new business partner, since by 1806 he had relocated his operation to 87 Church Street, where the firm was listed as "Chester Sully & Co., cabinet makers." The next year, 1807, he was admitted as a citizen of the United States and, apparently prospering, he placed a notice in the newspaper wherein he

RESPECTFULLY informs his friends and the public, that he has removed from Church-street to his new house in Main-street.... Having now a spacious place to carry on his business, he is enabled to execute orders from his friends in town, as well as in the country....

Sully received enough orders during that year to cause him to seek additional employees on two occasions.

In 1811 Sully began to expand his business to other cities, a very unusual practice. Retaining his Norfolk establishment, he opened another cabinet shop in Edenton, North Carolina, at the same time taking George Hendree [q.v.], probably an in-law, as a partner. Billing themselves as "C. SULLY & G. HENDREE CABINET-MAKERS-From Norfolk," they promised satisfaction not only in the cabinet line, but in the upholstery business as well. The Edenton operation is not mentioned in the records again after 1811 and may have been open only a short time, but the move established a pattern of branching out that Sully

would continue.

In 1812, under the banner of "Sully & Hendree," the Norfolk shop relocated again, this time to "the large Fire Proof Tenement" at Main and Commerce Streets. There the proprietors advertised that "Having engaged some workmen from Paris, those [customers] who wish their work finished in the French style can be accommodated." In addition to making furniture, upholsterers in the shop were prepared to cut out and hang window and bed curtains, wallpaper rooms, and make mattresses. The owners were even willing to accept second-hand furniture and country produce as payment. Sully and partner Hendree were clearly seeking new business and were no longer running a traditional, small cabinet shop. Furthermore, city tax records indicate that a retail merchant's license was issued to the firm of Sully & Frost (whose specialty is unknown) at the same time that Sully & Hendree was expanding the cabinet operation.

In July 1813 Sully & Hendree extended their operation into Richmond, opening a shop "in the Brick Row, opposite the Globe Tavern." There they kept on hand (as they likely did in their other shops) a supply of ready-made furniture, including sideboards, a variety of table forms, cabinets, bookcases, sofas, and bedsteads. They even sold unworked mahogany plank. However, the partnership was nearing an end, and by the first part of

1814 Hendree was operating his own highly successful cabinetmaking firm in Richmond.

After Hendree's departure from the business, Sully, who retained ownership of the Norfolk shop, apparently continued some sort of furniture business in Richmond as well, later advertising in the Norfolk newspaper for "8 or 10 Journeymen Cabinet-Makers, TO GO TO RICHMOND." He also opened a large lumber yard in the capital city on Young's Wharf, where he bought and sold flooring, "2 inch Northern Boards," all sorts of scantling, fence posts and rails, "1/2 inch poplar for coach and Cabinet Makers use," and mahogany in log and board form. He notified Richmond's cabinetmakers that he intended to maintain a supply of mahogany for them, which he would saw to any size. Though the entire lumber yard was washed away during a flood in August 1814, Sully eventually reestablished it.

Late in 1814 Sully continued the expansion of his business by opening a cabinet shop in Lynchburg, Virginia. There his employees produced all the usual sorts of furniture and sold mahogany to other craftsmen. As in the past, Sully continued to accept either cash or "Merchantable Produce" as payment, but his success in Lynchburg may have been limited, since there are no records of the shop after the summer of 1815.

At about the same time, Sully took William Smith

as yet another partner in Norfolk. Little is known either of Smith or the role he played in the firm, which was sometimes billed as "Smith & Sully" (holders of an auction license) and sometimes as simply "C. Sully & Co." Plainly, by this time Sully had added merchant to his list of trades. He occasionally offered for sale such goods as "50 crates of Queen's ware," "1000 bushels of COAL," "10,000 wt. of Smithfield Bacon," and "Manufactured COTTON WARP and FILLING" at his Norfolk shop, now in Newton's Wharf. He even owned a lighter (a small sailing vessel), and in 1816 offered the public the chance to buy or charter the schooner Hannah, which his firm had probably taken from a creditor for non-payment of debts. Yet C. Sully & Co. still made furniture and was advertising for as many as five to seven journeymen cabinetmakers at a time.

In May 1816 Sully once again dissolved his partnership "by mutual consent," and, as usual, was the only party authorized to collect the former firm's debts. Shortly afterward he offered a store in Newton's Wharf for rent (probably the quarters of the defunct C. Sully & Co.) and relocated to "the end of Jennings' Wharf." The next year a disastrous fire destroyed his Norfolk lumber yard. Whether or not it was reestablished is unknown, but in June 1818 he announced, along with J. Potts, the opening of a new lumber yard and general merchandise outlet in

Richmond. That firm, known as "Potts and Sully," was located next to the Penitentiary Store, but following its final advertisement in November 1818, nothing else is known of Sully's business practices in Richmond.

Similarly, after the issue of a retail license in Norfolk in 1819, Sully's name disappears from that city as well.

Judging from the public response following the disasters which beset some of his businesses, Sully must have been liked and respected in the community. When his first Richmond lumber yard was washed away by a "freshet" in the James River, several citizens of that city expressed their sympathy in the newspaper and encouraged him to rebuild. Following the fire that destroyed his Norfolk lumber yard, Sully placed a public notice that expressed his

grateful acknowledgments to the Citizens of this Borough, for their united efforts to save my property....To those sympathizing friends of humanity, I have not language to express my sentiments--suffice it to say that while I decline their pecuniary assistance, my heart will ever appreciate their worth.

Sully's positive image may well have been fostered by his regular participation in organizations like the Norfolk Benevolent Mechanic Society, of which he was a member as early as 1812. He was frequently elected secretary of that association.

Sully, with his wife and children, moved to Florida in the early 1820s. On 5 July 1834, at the age of

55, Sully, by then described as a merchant, died in Columbus, Georgia. His widow Ann then moved, with her several minor children, to New Orleans, where she died two years later. The reasons for the Sully family's move south are unknown.

- American Beacon and Commercial Diary (Norfolk), 7 September 1815, 3-4; 12 September 1815, 3-4; 23 September 1815, 3-4; 18 March 1816, 3-4; 11 May 1816, 3-4; 7 June 1816, 1-3; 20 June 1816, 1-1; 14 August 1816, 1-1; 13 December 1816, 3-4; 8 January 1817, 3-4; 28 February 1817, 3-3; 1 March 1817, 3-4.
- Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1807, 1809-1812, 1815-1816, 1819.
- Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 2, 24 January 1809, p. 413.
- Daily Compiler (Richmond), 8 July 1814, 3-4; 2 August 1814, 3-4; 1 November 1814, 1-1; 27 June 1818, 3-4.
- Edenton Gazette (North Carolina), 25 June 1811; 13 August 1811.
- Ellsworth, Linda V. "George Washington Sully." Magazine Antiques 123 (March 1983): 600-05.
- Enquirer (Richmond), 5 December 1812, 3-5; 9 July 1813, 1-1; 30 June 1818, 3-6.
- Lynchburg Press, 3 November 1814, 3-4; 8 December 1814, 2-5; 9 February 1815, 2-5.
- New Orleans, LA. New Orleans Museum of Art. Thomas Sully File. George Washington Sully, "Letter to Thomas Sully, II" and "A Record of Births," ca. 1890.
- New York Historical Society, Diary of William Dunlap 3 vols. (New York: New York Historical Society, 1930), 3:699.
- Newlin, Jeanne T. "A Charleston, South Carolina, Playbill of 1794." Magazine Antiques 131 (February 1987): 432-33.
- Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 2 March 1805, 3-3; 27 June 1805, 4-3; 7 July 1807, 4-2; 11 August 1807, 4-5; 27 April 1812; 24 February 1813, 1-4.
- Norfolk County, Order Book, 20 July 1807, p. 182a.
- Norfolk Directory, 1806.
- Norfolk Herald, 2 April 1805, 3-3; 3 June 1812, 3-5; 30 December 1812, 3-3; 5 February 1813, 3-4; 12 July 1815, 3-3; 8 September 1815, 3-4.
- Piorkowski, Patricia A. Piedmont Virginia Furniture. (Lynchburg, VA: Lynchburg Museum System, 1982),

np.

Richmond Commercial Compiler, 12 November 1818, 3-4.
 Roeber, A. G. "A New England Woman's Perspective on
 Norfolk, Virginia, 1801-1802: Excerpts from the
 Diary of Ruth Henshaw Bascom." Proceedings of the
 American Antiquarian Society 88 (1978): 277-325.

 THOMPSON, JAMES (1796-October 1812)
 Cabinetmaker
 Undertaker

The earliest reference to James Thompson [also Thomson], described in local documents as "cabinet maker and undertaker," places him in Norfolk by 1796. Little is known of the furniture he made, but among his customers was St. George Tucker of Williamsburg, to whom he sold a gilt picture frame in 1806. Thompson did a brisk business in funerals, not only supplying coffins but renting out his hearse as well. By 1801 his shop was located at 8 Main Street; within five years he had moved up the lane to number 30. His residence appears to have been at 3 Rothery's Lane.

Thompson advertised his business several times and sought "2 or 3 good Journeymen" and "A stout Boy...as Apprentice" on at least one occasion. The single slave he owned may or may not have been a part of his cabinetmaking staff. Thompson was still actively practicing his trade when he died in October 1812 at 65 years of age. Shortly afterward, his estate was auctioned from "the shop lately

occupied by him on Main-Street." Thompson's wife, Mary, had died in 1808, and his only recorded survivor was his son, James, who was either a joiner or a cabinetmaker.

- Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 5, 24 August 1799, p. 287.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1796-1797, 1799-1801, 1803-1807, 1809-1816.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 2, 23 February 1801, p. 16; 24 June 1804, p. 204; 27 May 1805, p. 276; 24 February 1806, p. 301; 28 July 1807, p. 349; 23 February 1808, p. 366; 23 January 1809, p. 405; 24 July 1809, p.425; 26 February 1810, p. 462; 29 May 1810, p. 471.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 3, 27 August 1810, p. 2; 26 July 1819, p. 440.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 4, 13 May 1824, p. 203; 29 July 1824, p. 208.
Norfolk Directory, 1801.
Norfolk Directory, 1806.
Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 24 October 1808, 2-4; 2 October 1812, 2-1; 6 November 1812, 3-3.
Norfolk Herald, 9 April 1801, 3-4; 8 September 1801, 4-4.
 Williamsburg, VA. College of William and Mary. Tucker-Coleman Papers, box 93. This reference supplied by Linda Hildreth.

 TOM
 Cabinetmaker

(March 1817-March 1828)

Tom, a slave, was described as a cabinetmaker when he was sold by Benjamin Frost to Charles L. Beale [q.v.] of Norfolk in 1817. Beale, also a cabinetmaker, paid Frost the sum of \$800 in March, and the latter retained the right to buy Tom back for the same amount at the end of three years. By November 1817 Beale paid Frost the additional sum of \$125, thereby cancelling Frost's

remaining interest in Tom. When Beale died in 1826, Tom was still listed among his property and was appraised at \$600.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 13, 31 March 1817, p. 482.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 14, 11 November 1817, p. 141.

Borough of Norfolk, Will book 4, 24 March 1828, p. 414.

 VENTUS, JOHN (1801-1806)
 Cabinetmaker

John Ventus [also Vintus], a cabinetmaker by trade, was described as a "free black" in the Norfolk Directory of 1801. City tax records for the same year indicate that he was a "freeman" who had also been issued a retail license. He may have been the same John Ventris [sic] who was apprenticed to Norfolk joiner William Boushell in 1787, but the evidence is inconclusive.

Ventus did not advertise during his years in Norfolk, and little is known of his affairs there. He owned a parcel of land on Mariners Street, which he sold in 1816, and his shop was located first at 70 Church Street (1801) and later at 74 Church Street (1806). By 1815 Ventus had moved to Petersburg, where he joined John Raymond in the partnership "Raymond & Ventus." The two operated a "Cabinet Makers Shop & ware room" in rented

quarters on Old Street, and advertised that they had on hand an assortment of work and were also willing to take orders from town and country.

After August 1816, nothing further is known of John Ventus.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 13, 15 June 1815, p. 414.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1801.
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, vol. 53, 14 November 1815, p. 511; vol. 53, 9 March 1816, p. 573.
 Norfolk County, Order Book, 1787. (complete listing)
Norfolk Directory, 1801.
Norfolk Directory, 1806.
Petersburg (Va.) Republican, 13 August 1816, 3-6.

 WALKER, HENRY B. (October 1818-December 1832)
 Cabinetmaker

In October 1818, Henry B. Walker, a resident of Norfolk County, accepted orphan Allen Butt as an apprentice on the authority of the overseers of the poor for St. Brides Parish. Walker was to teach Butt "the business of a cabinet maker." Fourteen years later, in December 1832, Walker supplied a coffin to a Norfolk estate. Beyond this, nothing is known of his life or career.

Norfolk County, Appraisements, No. 6, 13 September 1834, p. 154.
 Norfolk County, Minute Book 15, 19 October 1818, p. 202.

WELLS, HENRY
Carver

(1796-November 1814)

Henry Wells [also Wills] was born in 1750 and, though no record of his training survives, by 1796 was described as "Carver of Norfolk." In that year he was named in the will of brick layer George Shore, wherein he inherited "my Plantation lying in Princess Anne County... my houses and land in Norfolk County also...all my Negroes and personal estate in general." Census records place Wells in Norfolk County in 1785 and tax records indicate that he lived there from at least 1787 (the earliest year for which records exist) until 1806, even though he appears to be working in the city by the 1790s. In 1807 Wells moved into the borough of Norfolk and lived there for the rest of his life. His city dwelling was located on Washington Street.

Wells did not advertise his business, but the Norfolk Directory for 1801 listed his shop location as 8 Loyall's Lane. Five years later he had moved to 22 Union Street, but nothing further is known of his business practices, except that he was "industrious." Wells died in mid November 1814, at the age of 64, and was survived by his wife Sarah Hall Wells, who was his sole heir and executrix. Among the instructions laid out in his will was a request that his "new dwelling House" and lot be sold to pay his just debts.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1807, 1809-1810, 1812-1814.
 Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 3, 28 November 1814, p. 148.
 Bureau of the Census. Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, Virginia. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 95.
 Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1787-1806.
 Norfolk County, Will Book No. 3, 17 December 1798, p. 208.
Norfolk Directory, 1801.
Norfolk Directory, 1806.
Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 26 November 1814, 2-2.
Norfolk Herald, 25 November 1814, 3-4.

 WIDGEN, JOHN (1812-1815)
 Windsor Chairmaker

The first known reference to John Widgen [also Widgeon] dates from September 1802 when he was bound by the overseers of the poor for the Eastern Shore precinct of Princess Anne County to Richard Raley, of whom almost nothing else is known. Raley was to teach Widgen, an orphan, "the occupation of a Cabinet Maker," but by 1812 Widgen had become a windsor chair maker instead. Further information concerning Widgen's business affairs is scarce, but it is known that he accepted apprentices from the overseers of the poor for Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties and that one of his apprentices ran away in 1815. For most years after 1814 he owned two or three slaves, some of whom were probably involved in his trade. In 1816 and 1819 Widgen was licensed as a retail merchant.

Widgen resided on Fenchurch Street until 1819.

The following year he married Miss Ann E. Breshwood in Norfolk, at which time he moved to a house on Church Street. Nothing further is known of him beyond that time.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary, 17 October 1815, 3-3.

American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, 24 November 1820, 3-4.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1814-1820.

Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 2, 27 July 1801, p. 56.

Norfolk County, Minute Book 12, 20 June 1812, p. 11.

Princess Anne County, Minute Book 19, 6 September 1802, p. 96.

Princess Anne County, Minute Book 23, 3 July 1815, p. 199.

WILLIAMS, WILSON
Cabinetmaker

(1789-1811)

In 1786 the overseers of the poor apprenticed orphan Wilson Williams to Portsmouth joiner and cabinetmaker Robert Borland [q.v.], but the apprenticeship must have been brief: county tax records show that Williams was the head of his own household by 1789. Two years later, on 21 May 1791, he married Mary Avery.

After gaining his freedom Williams continued to reside in Portsmouth, where he was described as a "Cabinet maker" in contemporary documents. Little is known of his business practices, but Williams was typical of those in his trade in that he built and sold coffins. Over the years he was assisted in such work by several apprentices

that he accepted from the overseers of the poor for Portsmouth Parish. In fact, during the first decade of the nineteenth century, he was often taxed for three or four adult white males, and two or three slaves, some of whom probably worked in his shop.

The last known reference to Williams' business dates from June 1808, at which time he was paid for a coffin. His name disappears from county tax roles after 1811.

Norfolk County, Audits, No. 2, 18 July 1797, p. 109; 15 April 1799, p. 134.

Norfolk County, Audits, No. 4, 10 June 1808, p. 65.

Norfolk County, Order Book, 21 December 1786, p. 63b; 16 February 1795, p. 130a; 19 February 1799, p. 148.

Norfolk County, Personal Property, 1789-1807, 1809-1811. Records of the Town & City of Portsmouth vol. 1, pp. 26-28.

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WINSLOW, JOSEPH
Cabinetmaker

(1806-April 1815)

The earliest reference to Joseph Winslow is found in the Norfolk Directory for 1806, at which time he is described as a "cabinet maker" whose shop is located at 37 Church Street. Among his staff may have been some of the two to three slaves for whom he was usually taxed after 1810. Further notations regarding his business affairs

are confined to estate records wherein he is paid for coffins in 1813 and 1815.

In June 1810, Winslow purchased a house from Theodorick Bland [q.v.], another Norfolk cabinetmaker, and took over Bland's lease for the land on which the house sat. The house and lot, which may have included a shop as well, were located on Church Street. Two months later Winslow leased out another lot with buildings, also on Church Street, to James Gilbert. As a part of the arrangement, Winslow retained the use of a loft in one of the buildings "as a store room." Winslow's shop may have remained on Church Street, but by 1814 his residence was on Fenchurch Street.

Following an accounting for payment in April 1815, there are no further references to Winslow's business, but his name continues to appear on city tax lists until 1820 and beyond.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 12, 1 June 1810, p. 25; 1 December 1810, p. 112.
 Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1809-1816, 1818-1820.
 Norfolk County, Audits, No. 5, 19 August 1816, p. 106; 17 August 1818, p. 134a.
Norfolk Directory, 1806.

WOODWARD, JAMES
Cabinetmaker
Undertaker

(March 1793-March 1839)

James Woodward was one of Norfolk's most successful cabinetmakers during the early National period. It is not known where he was born or trained, but tax records for Norfolk indicate the he was a resident of the city by 1792. The first known reference to Woodward's Norfolk operation is an advertisement placed in March 1793 for a recently opened cabinet shop. Describing himself as a "Cabinet Maker," Woodward informed the public that his workmen could produce furniture "equal to any importation, and upon as reasonable terms." He concluded the notice with a request for two or three journeymen cabinetmakers, offering "generous wages."

Woodward apparently prospered. Two years after his initial advertisement he placed another, now calling himself a "Cabinet maker and Undertaker," and announcing that he "has launched into a more extensive line than formerly." He called his shop a "MANUFACTORY," and advised customers that he had added "the best Workmen from Philadelphia and New York, and from Europe" to his crew. Among the "elegantly finished Cabinet Work" he was prepared to supply were "Chairs, Sideboards, sets of Card, Pier, Pembroke, Tea and Dining Tables, elegant Sophas, Secretaries and Book Cases, Ladies Dressing Tables, mahogany 4 post Bedsteads, Clock Cases, with clocks or

without, and a number of other articles." Woodward was also anxious to receive orders from the country, "however extensive."

Woodward continued in the cabinet business for more than forty years, certainly until 1833 and probably until his death in 1839. During that time, in addition to making furniture, he sold raw materials, including as much as 33,000 board feet of mahogany plank in 1810 alone. Like others in his trade Woodward made coffins, conducted funerals, and rented out a hearse on occasion: records of his participation in funeral arrangements survive in the accounts of at least twenty-six Norfolk estates. Woodward promoted his firm often, and actually ran the same announcement in a local newspaper over one hundred times between January 1795 and April 1796.

Among Woodward's customers were several prominent Virginians, including St. George Tucker, John Hartwell Cocke, and members of the Skipwith family. Existing bills indicate that Woodward produced and acquired household furniture for Humberston Skipwith's Norfolk residence in the late 1810s, and that he was paid to install looking glasses and a ceiling lamp in the same building. Woodward also shipped custom orders inland to destinations such as Williamsburg and Surry County, evidence of the "orders from the country" to which his advertisements referred. On at least one occasion, he even took the unusual step of

sending a large quantity of his product to Richmond where it was offered for public sale.

Woodward's work force was probably substantial. When he first appeared in Norfolk in 1792 he owned no slaves, but was taxed for five white males above the age of sixteen. Over the ensuing years the number of white males in Woodward's household climbed to as many as nine, while slaves of both sexes eventually totalled seven. Woodward also played a part in the emancipation of at least one black. The slave cabinetmaker James [q.v.] was owned in 1817 by the widow of another Norfolk cabinetmaker, Richard Bailey [q.v.]. Mrs. Bailey wished to free James as a reward for his long service, but she was also in need of funds. Consequently she sold him to Woodward for \$120 on the condition that the slave be freed at the end of twelve months. Woodward complied on 10 May 1818.

Some idea of the size of Woodward's establishment can be gained from the inventory taken after his death. His shop complex contained a workshop, a joiner's shop, a counting room, a lower ware room, an upper ware room, a cellar, and two lumber yards. Among the finished goods on hand at the time were 25 bureaus, 16 sideboards, 12 dining tables, three sofas, seven bedsteads, five secretaries, and a wide array of other forms totalling, in all, over 125 pieces of furniture.

Records suggest that Woodward was well known in his community and active in its affairs. His place of business was often cited as a landmark by those giving directions in newspaper announcements to other Norfolk addresses. In 1801 Woodward served as one of ten city fire wardens with such local notables as Moses Myers and Thomas Newton. Woodward was a member of the Common Council several times after 1800 and was once appointed to oversee the city's elections. He was a stockholder in the Bank of Virginia and was several times elected one of its directors during the 1810s.

At a time when most Norfolk cabinetmakers lived on highly commercial Church Street, Woodward's home was located on more fashionable Bermuda Street. His business operated at several addresses on Main Street for most of the period under consideration, but Woodward continued to buy, sell, and lease out commercial and residential property all over the city. By 1801 his annual income from rental properties in Norfolk amounted to \$1,000; it exceeded \$2,000 by 1820, at which time he owned nine houses and shops and two vacant lots in the city.

Little is known of Woodward's family. He was the father of at least three children, including daughters Mary and Sarah who were wed to a physician and a merchant, respectively. Woodward appointed his wife Sarah as sole executrix of his estate, which was probated shortly after

his death in March 1839 and valued at \$11,843.

American Beacon and Commercial Diary, 20 August 1816, 3-4;
25 June 1817, 3-2.

American Beacon and Norfolk & Portsmouth Daily Advertiser,
1 March 1819, 3-5; 26 April 1820, 3-3; 17 May
1820, 3-2; 22 June 1820, 3-3.

American Gazette (Norfolk), 27 March 1812, 3-2; 21 April
1795, 4-2.

American Gazette, And Norfolk and Portsmouth Public
Advertiser, 1 September 1795, 1-3 through 26 April
1796.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 5, 11 June 1799, p. 366.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 11, July 1810, p. 363.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 12, 16 December 1812, p.
407.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 13, 12 July 1815, p. 224; 26
February 1816, p. 172.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 14, 13 April 1818, p. 275;
16 May 1818, pp. 306-07; 6 August 1818, p. 384; 7
August 1818, p. 385.

Borough of Norfolk, Deed Book 15, 27 January 1819, p. 136;
20 June 1819, p. 335.

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1792-1807, 1809-
1820.

Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 1, 18 April 1800, p. 209a.

Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 2, 26 July 1802, p. 122; 27
February 1804, p. 192; 22 October 1804, p. 220; 28
October 1805, p. 292; 27 December 1805, p. 297; 24
July 1809, p. 431; 26 May 1810, p. 363.

Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 3, 28 August 1816, p. 267;
22 June 1818, p. 375; 27 April 1819, p. 416.

Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 4, 26 March 1821, p. 91; 30
April 1823, p. 177; 23 June 1823, p. 179; 13 May
1824, p. 203; 1 March 1825, p. 230; 25 May 1825,
pp. 49-50; 1 June 1825, p. 253; 1 May 1828, p.
433; 26 June 1828, p. 446; 30 July 1828, p. 448.

Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 5, 25 September 1828, p. 19.

Borough of Norfolk, Will Book 6, 25 March 1839, p. 222; 28
April 1839, p. 230.

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Enquirer (Richmond), 27 July 1813, 3-3.

Herald and Norfolk and Portsmouth Advertiser, 28 January
1795, 3-4.

Norfolk & Portsmouth Herald, 13 August 1807, 3-4; 14 June
1816, 3-3.

Norfolk County, Appraisements, No. 5, 2 November 1826, p.
150a.

- Norfolk County, Appraisements, No. 6, 2 January 1833, p. 131.
- Norfolk County, Audits No. 2, 11 February 1796, p. 89.
- Norfolk County, Audits No. 3, 11 September 1800, p. 22; 21 February 1804, p. 108.
- Norfolk County, Audits No. 5, 20 January 1812, p. 5; 17 July 1815, p. 54a; 21 September 1818, p. 136a; 17 January 1826, p. 275a.
- Norfolk County, Deed Book 38, 1 February 1799, p. 115a.
- Norfolk County, Surveyor's Record, No. 1, 27 July 1819, p. 10.
- Norfolk Directory, 1801.
- Norfolk Directory, 1806.
- Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, 11 August 1806, 4-3; 3 December 1810, 3-4; 7 February 1812, 3-4; 8 January 1813, 1-4; 11 June 1814, 3-4; 7 January 1815, 2-2; 28 January 1815, 2-3.
- Norfolk Herald, 27 October 1793, 3-2; 26 June 1800, 3-2; 6 September 1811, 3-4; 6 January 1815, 3-2.
- Norfolk, VA. Kirn Library. mss file, Robert B. Taylor accounts.
- Princess Anne County, Minute Book 19, 5 September 1803, p. 214.
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- Virginia Patriot (Richmond), 27 July 1813, 3-5.
- Williamsburg, VA. College of William and Mary. Skipwith Papers, box 9, folders 61, 83. I am grateful to Alicia Tucker for supplying this information.
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 WOODWORTH, DUDLEY (1799-August 1800)
 Windsor Chairmaker

Relatively little is known of Dudley Woodworth, who, according to tax records, was living in Norfolk by 1799. He was briefly in partnership with windsor chair maker Michael Murphy [q.v.], who arrived in Norfolk the same year, but an announcement of August 1800 notified the public that the "Copartnership of Woodworth & Murphy" was

dissolved. Given Murphy's trade and the fact that Woodworth once offered for sale a large quantity of lignumvitae, a wood primarily used by turners, it seems likely that Woodworth was also a turner or windsor chair maker.

Following the termination of his partnership with Michael Murphy, there are no further records of Woodworth as a wood worker. Instead, tax registers show that he purchased a retail merchant's licence every year from 1801 until his death, and the city Directory for 1801 lists him as a grocer. The only other documented fact concerning Woodworth's business is its location, at the "lower end of Campbell's wharf." Woodworth either abandoned his earlier trade in favor of a retail career, or had simply acted as a financial backer for Michael Murphy without actually working in the shop himself.

Woodworth owned several pieces of property in Norfolk, including houses on Queen Street and at the corner of Main Street and Market Square. The inventory of his belongings taken at the time of his death in July 1806 indicates that his home was well furnished and that he owned at least one slave, but there were no tools listed in the estate. Woodworth was survived by his wife Lucretia, his daughter Harriet, his father Jasper Woodworth, and one sister. Among those who witnessed his will was cabinetmaker James Woodward [q.v.].

Borough of Norfolk, Personal Property, 1799-1806.
Borough of Norfolk, Wills, 28 July 1806, p. 314; 26
October 1807, p. 358.
Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, 13 December 1806, 4-5.
Norfolk Herald, 2 August 1800, 3-5; 12 August 1800, 3-3.

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