

Henry Mann Family of Virginia Cabinetmakers

By Michael L. Marshall

Possible English Origins; First Appearance in Virginia

At its November 15, 2015 Fall sale of fine art and antiques, Tremont Auctions of Newton, Massachusetts, sold lot 147, a walnut chest of drawers. (Fig. 1, Arthur Mann chest of drawers.)¹ The sale catalog described it as follows:² “18th century American Southern (Virginia, Fluvanna County) Walnut Chippendale four-drawer bracket base chest with yellow pine secondary wood. Signed Arthur Mann on base (Cabinetmaker, Louisa/Fluvanna County). (Fig. 2, Arthur Mann signature on bottom of chest.) Solid top with applied moulded edge. 39" high x 39-1/2" wide x 22-1/2" deep. Replaced brasses, 6 inches of moulding on underside of top on left-hand side is partially replaced.”



Figure 1



Figure 2

Signed pieces of southern furniture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are uncommon, so finding one with such a clear signature is especially interesting and provided the motivation for the research documented here. As will be seen, Arthur Mann was not the only cabinetmaker in his family; his father, Henry and brother, William, also followed that trade.

Unlike most early cabinetmakers, Henry Mann and his sons left behind a considerable body of evidence that can be used to gain an understanding of the kinds of objects they created during the time they were working, collectively a period of time roughly spanning the years 1763-1807. As will presently be discussed, there is some suggestion that Henry Mann may have been trained in London, England, before immigrating to Virginia. Although definite proof is lacking, it is suspected that both William and Arthur were born in Virginia and trained as cabinetmakers by their father, making it likely that much of their work followed English cabinetmaking techniques he taught them. The fact that the Arthur Mann chest is quite similar in style of construction to English-made chests of the period offers some support for this conjecture. It is regrettable that no

other pieces of cabinet work attributable to the Henry Mann family have thus far come to light. Even so, it is clear from the record that they were capable of producing a wide range of sophisticated cabinet furniture such as tea tables, including those in the Chinese taste, bedsteads with carved and fluted pillars, dining tables, library bookcases, dressing tables, card tables, sofas and couches, desks and desks with bookcases, chairs, and other items. That they executed quality work is attested to by the fact that many of their patrons came from the wealthy planter and professional classes in Virginia, both before and after the American Revolution. As the evidence reveals, Henry Mann was a frequent visitor to Virginia's courts of law, appearing both as a plaintiff and defendant. Further, it was his litigious nature that today helps provide insight into this Mann family of Virginia cabinetmakers, because the court records left behind offer a treasure trove of information about them and their work.

As alluded to earlier, widely recited Mann family tradition holds that Henry Mann was trained as a cabinetmaker in London, a claim found in a manuscript in the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville [cited hereafter as UVA manuscript]. Written by one of his descendants, it states that "Henry Mann was apprenticed as a Cabinet Maker in 1762 in London, England," and that "This was verified by the late Dr. Lloyd G. K. Carr through the College of Arms in London."³ The College of Arms, also called the College of Heralds, is more typically involved with matters such as granting coats of arms, recording family pedigrees, and similar activities. So, it is not clear how or why it would be involved with documenting when an individual was apprenticed to learn a trade such as cabinetmaking. However, that said, there is an interesting record involving a Henry Mann in London and the year 1762. It comes from an entry in a "Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices' Indentures, 1710-1811."⁴ The collection contains a list of money paid by masters of a trade to have an apprentice; in essence, it was a tax collected by the British government on apprenticeships. Until 1752 the register included sums received, name of master, address of master, trade, name of apprentice, and date of the articles of apprenticeship. Masters were not required to pay stamp duty on apprentices assigned to them by the common or public charge of any township or parish, so the register does not include those apprentices in the records, and there are doubtless other gaps in its coverage. There is a further proviso as regards the records in this collection: the dates in the records represent when the tax was paid by the master and may be

some years after the apprenticeship, not when it began or ended. Interestingly, there is a register entry indicating that a Henry Mann was apprenticed to a master named Will Hopkins, who is described as a “Cit. [Citizen] & Joyner of London.”⁵ The entry appears under a heading for 1762 with the date written “Wednesday/ 18. Augt.” This record is difficult to interpret as another column in an image of the original register page contains the date August 12, 1760. More intriguing, however, is a note written in the margin next to the information about Henry Mann that reads: “alleged to be lost.” One possible interpretation of this, especially considering that apprentices were little more than a piece of property to their masters in those days, is that Mann had gone missing or, put another way, was a “runaway.” As will be seen shortly, Mann first established himself as a cabinetmaker in Yorktown, York County, Virginia. If he were indeed a runaway from his London master, this could explain why a young man of his obvious skills might choose to locate in a small, Virginia river port town somewhat off the beaten path, rather than in a more urban environment such as nearby Norfolk. Further, as will be documented later in this paper, Mann’s ability to produce and carve varied and high-end furniture forms is in keeping with an individual trained in the type of urban British cabinet shop referenced in the apprenticeship records, offering further evidence they probably refer to this Henry Mann. Perhaps additional research will help clarify this point.

While the Henry Mann documented in this investigation invariably described himself in Virginia records as a cabinetmaker and not a joiner, there are numerous examples of individuals in early America who carried out both house joinery and cabinetmaking; in fact, it was not at all an uncommon practice. Consider, for example, William Seay and Micajah Wilkes, who worked at both trades in the lower Roanoke River Basin of northeastern North Carolina in the eighteenth century.⁶ Similarly, Virginia craftsmen Mardun and Maurice Eventon also engaged in both cabinetmaking and house joinery in the eighteenth century.⁷

Even though there is no certainty as to whether the Henry Mann apprenticed in London to Will Hopkins is the Virginia cabinetmaker, it is clear that the Henry Mann discussed here was in Virginia by May 16, 1763 when he appeared in the York County, Virginia, court records on that date and filed a claim for £12 against the estate of James Massie.⁸ At a court held July 18, 1763, a jury in the case awarded Mann £10 as well as his court costs.⁹ Later that year, Mann was a

juror in two cases tried in York County: the first brought on November 29th by Benjamin Waller, Thomas Everard, and James Tarpley, executors of the estate of William Hunter, against Randolph Holt, and the second on November 21st brought by John Norton, merchant & partners, against Joseph Watkins.¹⁰ Incidentally, the papers of the mercantile firm of John Norton & Sons are held today by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.¹¹

On December 19, 1763, Mann was in the York County Court once again when he was the defendant in a suit brought by Arthur Dickenson, Jr.¹² The same day he was also sued for a debt owed to William Nesfield, a London merchant.¹³ The former case was continued several times before finally being settled at a court held on March 19, 1764, at which time the jury awarded Dickenson £36.8.8 in addition to his costs.¹⁴ The records also show that Dickenson paid William Moody, Seymour Powel, and John Wade 75 pounds of tobacco each for their attending court three days as witnesses against Mann.¹⁵ Mann was required to pay John Richardson 265 pounds of tobacco for one day attendance at court, “coming and going 8 miles as witness.”¹⁶ The suit against Mann brought by Nesfield was also continued several times, but was concluded on May 21, 1764, when the court ordered Mann to pay Nesfield £23.5 and his costs.¹⁷ The following month, on June 18, 1764, Mann was sued for debt by John Spurlock at which time the court awarded Spurlock £4.1 due by account.¹⁸ Spurlock, a mulatto, was apprenticed in York County on August 21, 1753 to John Richardson, a carpenter/joiner, so this debt could well be for work Spurlock did for Mann.¹⁹

Henry Mann was in court several more times in 1764 and 1765. On July 16, 1764 he was sued by Mark Drake of London for a debt of £7.5 plus costs, to be paid in pounds “sterling.”²⁰ William Moss, who was Mann’s security on the debt, was a well-known and respected carpenter of Yorktown and, as will be seen, was Mann’s security in several legal cases.²¹ The case was continued by the court on August 20, 1764²², but concluded on September 17, 1764, when Mann acknowledged the plaintiff’s action and the court ordered that the plaintiff recover the amount claimed plus costs.²³ However, the court allowed that the debt owed by Mann could be discharged “in current money” at the rate of sixty percent for the difference in exchange rates. Mann was also prosecuted for debt by James Archdeacon, a Norfolk, Virginia, merchant, at a York County court held on July 16, 1764, again with William Moss named as security.²⁴ Mann

failed to make an appearance to contest the action and on the motion of the plaintiff's attorney, a judgment was entered against Mann and Moss for the amount claimed in the declaration, plus costs, unless the defendants appeared at the next court to enter a plea. At the following court, held on August 20, 1764, Moss appeared and pleaded a general defense on behalf of Mann.²⁵ Finally, at a court held on September 17, 1764, Mann and Moss relinquished their former plea and the court allowed Archdeacon to recover £250 plus costs, the amount claimed in the declaration; however, the court allowed this amount to be discharged by the payment of £55.6 with interest at 5% per annum from April 30, 1764 until all sums owing were paid in full.²⁶

On October 15, 1764 there was an order by the court that Mann be paid the sum of £1.05 by "county levy," but there is no indication in the record why the payment was made.²⁷ However, following this somewhat positive note, Henry's legal woes commenced anew when, on November 19, 1764, he and his security, William Moss, were made defendants in a suit brought by the Norfolk, Virginia, firm of [John] Chisolm & [William] Bowness; the action was for damages accruing from Mann's breach of the peace.²⁸ The case was continued on December 17, 1764²⁹ but at a court held March 18, 1765, judgment was entered against Mann for £65 plus costs.³⁰ Mann's last appearance in the York County court in 1764 took place on December 17th when he and a Matthew Hope [or, Yope] were sued for debt by Arthur Pickler, Jr.; they did not appear and the court entered judgment against them.³¹

Mann was involved in one other suit that took place in York County in 1765, when he was named as a defendant, along with his security, William Moss, in an action for breach of the peace brought by Robert Necks at a court held July 15, 1765.³² This suit was dismissed by agreement of the parties at a court held August 19, 1765, with the defendant, Mann, to pay damages and court costs.³³ Necks, who lived in Norfolk, Virginia, was a long-time ship captain and for many years made regular voyages between Virginia and the British Isles. He died in September 1774 and his obituary appeared in the September 29, 1774 issue of *The Virginia Gazette*:

"WILLIAMSBURG, September 29. Death: Captain ROBERT NECKS, at Norfolk, who lately came Passenger from London with Captain Danby, and had been very ill for some Weeks before his Arrival. He was a Commander in the Virginia Trade for many Years, and few were more generally esteemed. The many Passengers that have crossed the Atlantick with him will always

venerate his Memory, for that more than ordinary Kindness and Attention he payed to all under his care, as well as for his constant good Humour and Gaiety. All his Acquaintances know him to have been an honest and worthy man.”³⁴

Not all of Henry Mann’s appearances in the court records show him as a plaintiff or defendant in a suit. In at least one case, the deed books of York County show that he was a witness to a deed of gift made September 16, 1765 by Richard Ambler to his sons, Edward and Jaquelin, for three acres of land in Yorktown, along with an adjacent marsh.³⁵ The Ambler family was prominent in the York County area and Jaquelin Ambler, born August 9, 1742, married on May 24, 1764 to Rebecca, the daughter of Lewis Burwell, of Gloucester County, another affluent member of the Virginia tidewater planter class.³⁶ From these and other records, it is clear that Henry Mann spent his earliest years in Yorktown, a deep water port on the York River. How or exactly when Henry Mann first came to Virginia has not been discovered. However, the fact that he initially chose to establish his cabinet shop in the thriving pre-Revolutionary War seaport of Yorktown is not surprising as the town and surrounding area offered a promising market for high quality cabinet ware.

Yorktown traces its origins to the Virginia Ports Act of 1691 [*Henning’s Statutes at Large*, Laws of Virginia, Apr 1691, 3rd William & Mary] that authorized fifteen port towns to be built along several of Virginia’s tidal river in an effort to control the import and export of goods for tax collection purposes.³⁷ Fifty acres of land was purchased by colonial authorities for the town which was then divided into eighty-five lots to be sold to the public.³⁸ As tobacco exports grew so did the village called Yorktown and by 1734 when the Tobacco Inspection Act [*Henning’s Statutes at Large*, Laws of Virginia, August 1734, 8th George II] was passed, almost all of its lots had been purchased and developed, some for residential use, others for commercial and other purposes.³⁹

In 1736, an English gentleman touring the American colonies visited the town and was clearly impressed by what he observed according to an account of his travels published several years later in the July 1746 issue of *The London Magazine*: “York-Town, Capital of the County of that name, is situated on a rising Ground, gently descending every way into a Valley and tho’ but

flaggingly built, yet makes no inconsiderable figure. You perceive a Great Air of Opulence amongst the Inhabitants, who have some of them built themselves Houses, equal in magnificence to many of our superb ones at St. James's; as those of Mr. Lightfoot, Nelson, &c. Almost every considerable Man keeps an Equipage . . . The Taverns are many and much frequented.”⁴⁰

By 1750, Yorktown had some 250 to 300 buildings and a population approaching 2,000 people.⁴¹ Some thirty years later it was still a thriving port and mercantile center for the region despite the ongoing Revolution, but its fortunes were already declining. Even so, it still had numerous homes, stores, warehouses, storage buildings, public buildings, and other structures packed tightly along its main and side streets, and numerous wharves and associated buildings still stood along the river.⁴² The town's fortunes, however, came to a screeching halt following the surrender of the British Army there on October 19, 1781, to combined American and French forces under the command of General George Washington. The three-week siege that began on September 28th and ended on October 19th destroyed or heavily damaged a substantial number of the structures in the town. As a result, many of its occupants left, never to return, a situation exacerbated by the movement of the capital at Williamsburg to Richmond in 1780. A few hardy souls stayed on and repaired their homes and businesses and the town carried on, although it never regained the prominence it held prior to the Revolution.

As already noted, Henry Mann was in Yorktown, or at least York County, by May 1763, but no further documentation of his presence there prior to 1770 has been found, which seems curious. However, in that year he is mentioned again in the York County court records. At a court held June 18, 1770, upon hearing a complaint by Francis Medlicott against Mann, it was ordered that “unless the said Henry gives Security in the Penalty of One Hundred Pounds to Medlicott the father of the said Thomas [Medlicott] to perform the Covenants in the Indenture of Apprenticeship on the part of the said Henry,” that “he the said Thomas be discharged from the said Indenture.”⁴³

Henry Mann was not the only cabinetmaker in Yorktown, Virginia, at this time; another was a craftsman named Stephen Mitchell, and there may have been others as well. Interestingly enough, Mitchell appeared in court on the same day that the justices heard the complaint of

Francis Medlicott against Mann.⁴⁴ In his case, an indenture of apprenticeship from Charles Thompson and Thomas Archer [Thompson's uncle] to Stephen Mitchell was acknowledged by the parties and with the approval of court was ordered to be recorded. There is no doubt that Mann and Mitchell were well acquainted with each other as Mann provided security on the marriage bond when Mitchell married Margaret Maitland, the daughter of Alexander Maitland, on April 8, 1773.⁴⁵

On November 12, 1772, Henry Mann of "YORK Town" advertised in *The Virginia Gazette* looking for "Two Journeymen CABINET MAKERS, who understand their Business," noting that they "will meet with very good Encouragement by applying immediately to, HENRY MANN."⁴⁶ The following year he appeared again in the York County records when he became the defendant in a case entered at court on September 20, 1773 by one William Ballard.⁴⁷

It seems Mann employed at least one indentured servant in his cabinet shop in 1774 because he advertised in the September 29, 1774, issue of *The Virginia Gazette, or, The Norfolk Intelligencer* that his man, Philip Mills, had run away.⁴⁸ According to the advertisement seeking his return, Mills had been sent to a Mr. George Kelly, at Norfolk, on Tuesday, August 30th with upwards of 7 pounds on Mann's order, and as he had not returned, it was believed he had "gone off with the money." Mills was described in detail in the advertisement: "He is a Cabinet-Maker by trade, about 5 feet 5 or 6 inches high, round shouldered, has a large nose brown Hair. On the fore finger of his right-hand, is a large wart and on one of his hips, a small swelling about the size of a marble. His cloathing was a blue broad cloth coat, brown cloth vest and green cloth breeches." Mann promised anyone taking up Mills within ten miles of Norfolk and securing him to the Norfolk gaol a reward of "forty shillings and five pound" if he is apprehended "at any greater distance."

By March of 1775, when Virginia patriot Patrick Henry gave his now-famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech, tensions between the American colonies and the British government were nearing the breaking point that led to the beginning of the American Revolution on April 19, 1775, the day the battles of Lexington and Concord were fought. However, the conflict had not yet reached Yorktown, and the demand for Henry Mann's work must have remained strong

because on October 14, 1775 he inserted another advertisement in *The Virginia Gazette* seeking help for his shop: “WANTED IMMEDIATELY, Two Journeymen CABINET-MAKERS, Who may be certain of Employment until Christmas next and have their Wages paid them Weekly, if required.”⁴⁹

Mann was still in Yorktown on June 13, 1777 when he advertised in *The Virginia Gazette* once more, this time looking for the return of a horse: “YORK TOWN, June 7, 1777. STRAYED, or stolen, from the subscriber, on Saturday Night last, a BAY HORSE about 14 Hands high, hanging Mane, short Switch Tail, with a few grey Hairs in it, several Saddle Spots on his Back, one of his hind Feet white to the Footlock, no Brand perceivable. Whoever takes up said Horse and delivers him to me, or to Mr. Southall in Williamsburg, shall receive 20s. Reward, or 5£ on Conviction of the Thief.”⁵⁰ However, a few months after placing this advertisement Mann was pressed into Revolutionary War service as an Assistant Quarter Master General for the garrison and post at Hampton, Virginia. This information comes from a petition Mann filed on December 10, 1785 with the Virginia General Assembly asking compensation for his service in settling accounts of the garrison.⁵¹ Many of these legislative petitions were filed by individuals who lost property during the Revolution, or who believed that they were entitled to compensation from the state for services rendered. They are available online today as part of the Virginia State Library’s digital collection.⁵² Mann’s petition reads in part as follows: “The Humble Petition of Henry Mann Assistant Quarter Master General for the Garrison and Post of Hampton Humbly Sheweth That your petitioner was on the 23rd day of Dec^r. 1777 by the Recommendation of Colo. William Finnie Quarter Master General of this State Appointed Quarter Master for the said Garrison; that Your Petitioner was Oblid^j^d and did enter into Bond and Security for the sum of Two Thousand pounds for the Rendering just and true Acc^ts. of all the disbursm^ts of the said Garrison from time to time as Your Petitioner might be so called on by said Finnie, That your petitioner Continued at the said Garrison untill the 20th of March 1780 when Y^r. petitioner Received information from Colo. Finnie that the whole of the Staff Officers were discontinued.”

In fact, it seems Mann was acting as Assistant Quarter Master some time prior to the date he was formally appointed by Finnie to the post. This is based on information that comes from another legislative petition filed by the well-known Williamsburg cabinetmaker Benjamin Bucktrout on

December 14, 1777.⁵³ In it, there is a certificate signed by Mann on November 20, 1777 in which he certified that on September 27, 1777, he impressed Bucktrout's wagon to haul cannon balls to Hampton for the state artillery and that "whilst there a Bay horse belonging to the wagon fell into a well and was killed." In addition to Bucktrout's cabinetmaking, undertaking, and retail businesses in Williamsburg, he also served as purveyor general of public hospitals in the State of Virginia and acted in that capacity from 1777 until the fall of 1779.⁵⁴ Mann also had difficulty with his own horse around this same time as he advertised in *The Virginia Gazette* on November 14, 1777, that around the 12th of that month his horse had strayed or been stolen from the garrison at Hampton and offered a reward of ten dollars to anyone returning the horse to him there.⁵⁵

During the period, December 1777, until January 1780, Mann performed additional duty as Purveyor of the hospital at the Hampton garrison, possibly at the behest of Bucktrout, and personally advanced his own money to pay an assistant he hired to inoculate the garrison there during a 1777 outbreak of smallpox. Mann was not paid for this expense and years later was still seeking compensation for his outlay when, on November 22, 1788, he filed a petition asking to be reimbursed.⁵⁶ In support of his claim, Mann outlined the specifics of what happened: "That at the latter end of Nov^r. 1777 the small pox broake out in the Town and Garrison of Hampton that it was thought absolutely necessary to have the Troops in Garrison Inoculated in order to prevent their taken it in the natural way which might have proved very fatal. That ye purveyor of the Hospital belonging to the Garrison not having had the small pox Resigned in order to Retire into the Country with his family. That your petitioner being apply^d to by Doctor Walter McClurg (Doctor of s^d Hospital) to take the s^d purveyors trip during the Inoculation which your petitioner did (Expecting the former purveyor to Return to his Office as soon as ye Inoculation was over). That by orders from the director Gen^l y^r petitioner was Oblidj^d to enter into Bond with two able securities to Render just and true Acc^ts of all money he might Receive from time to time for the use of the s^d Hospital. That y^r petitioner did continue in s^d Office during the Inoculation which began Dec^r 1, 1777 and the last detachment w^h. was Inoculated cleared out near the last of May following. That as troops was scarce not having enough for duty on acc^t. of having so many down under Inoculation at a time y^r petitioner could not be furnished with an Assistant from the troops. That on application to the surgeon of the Hospital he thought it absolutely necessary to

hire an Assistant during the Inoculation. That y^r petitioner did hire such a necessary person for which y^r petitioner paid the s^d Assis^t. one Dollar per day which y^r petitioner has Vouchers for the same out of his own pockett and has never charg^d the State with same, that as the former purveyor did not Return to s^d Office y^r petitioner continued in s^d Office untill the Hospitals were all Discontinued.” Despite his impassioned plea, it apparently fell on deaf ears among the legislators in Richmond as the record demonstrates that he was still looking for reimbursement when he filed yet another legislative petition on December 18, 1797.⁵⁷ Nothing has been found to show he was able to recoup his loss and it is doubtful that he ever did.

Gwathmey’s *Register of Virginians in the Revolution* has several references to Mann serving as a quartermaster in 1778 and in 1780.⁵⁸ Brumbaugh lists Mann as serving in both the state and continental lines.⁵⁹ A compilation of Virginia military records gleaned from several sources including the *William and Mary College Quarterly*, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, and others, also make reference to Mann’s Revolutionary War service.⁶⁰ In addition, H. J. Eckenrode’s *List of the Revolutionary Soldiers of Virginia* includes references to Mann culled from the Virginia Journal of the House of Delegates, Council Journals, and various Army auditor accounts.⁶¹

Mann’s duty as quartermaster for the garrison at Hampton formally ended on March 20, 1780, but it seems probable he continued in some military capacity after this date, although documentation to positively corroborate this has not been located. As will be discussed again later, Mann was married at this time and had two sons and possibly other children. His family may well have remained in Yorktown while he performed his duties as quartermaster at Hampton but, if so, they likely departed prior to the entry of the British Army under General Cornwallis into the town in August of 1781. There is no record showing that Henry and his family returned to Yorktown to live following the British surrender in October of 1781. Mann’s cabinet shop could well have suffered the same fate as many of the structures there: total destruction, or major structural damage. The records do show that cabinetmaker Stephen Mitchell had returned to Yorktown by August 10, 1782, when he placed an advertisement in *The Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* of Richmond calling himself a carpenter and looking for two “Journeyman House Carpenters that are well acquainted with their business.” There was also

another cabinetmaker in Yorktown at this same time named Alexander Montgomery. According to the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers* dated December 1, 1781, a bail bond was set for Alexander Montgomery of “York Town, Cabinetmaker” in default of “One Thousand Pounds in specie” to make his personal appearance “at the State House, in the Town of Richmond” to be tried before “the supreme Executive for Disaffection to the Commonwealth of Virginia.”⁶² Montgomery is also named in a December 2, 1781 list of returns of prisoners compiled by William Rose, keeper of the Public Jail at Richmond.⁶³ Montgomery was still languishing behind bars on December 31, 1781, when he and several others signed a petition pleading for a speedy trial, “feeling convinced they can prove their innocence.”⁶⁴ What became of him is unknown.

A Move to Newcastle, Hanover County

Henry Mann no doubt realized that with the destruction of much of Yorktown and the surrounding area during the 1781 siege, possibly including his home and/or shop, combined with the relocation of Virginia’s capital from Williamsburg to Richmond a year earlier, there were better business opportunities elsewhere for his cabinet business and he chose the town of Newcastle, located on the Pamunkey River in rural Hanover County, Virginia. A succinct account of this formerly thriving but now vanished river port town can be found in the book *Old Homes of Hanover County* and suggests why Mann made may have decided to make this place his choice for relocation.⁶⁵

Newcastle’s origins stretch back to 1682 when David Crafford patented 1,316 acres in that part of New Kent County that became Hanover when the latter was established on November 2, 1720. In 1693, Crafford deeded four hundred acres of this land to a grandson, William Meriwether, son of Nicholas Meriwether and his wife, Elizabeth Crafford. About 1730, Meriwether laid off a tract of land along the banks of the Pamunkey River for a warehouse and a town which he called Newcastle. The tract was surveyed by John Henry, father of future Virginia patriot and governor, Patrick Henry, who laid out the town in a grid pattern with three north-south streets called, from west to east, Main, Second and Water; Water may either have been below the bluff beside the river, as was a street of the same name at Yorktown, or on elevated ground, as at Port Royal, Virginia, on the Rappahannock River. The north-south streets were intersected at right angles by three others, two of them labeled on Henry’s map “Road to the

river,” and one at the north end of town, “Road to bridge.” These three streets very probably descended to riverside warehouses. Newcastle was formally incorporated by the Virginia General Assembly in 1749. Because of its growing prominence as a center of commerce and trade, several efforts were made to move the colonial capital at Williamsburg there, but none were successful. There is a map of Newcastle at the Virginia State Library copied in June 1744, from the original that was in the possession of Col. Meriwether.⁶⁶ It contains a note written in its margins that reads: “Hanover County—Mar. 17th 1738/9. This figure is ye shape of 27 ½ acres laid off for a Town on Pamunkey River by Mr. Jn.^o Henery, Survy.r for Col.o Wm. Merewether.” This map shows fifty-two numbered half-acre lots plus six lots used for warehouses.

By the 1740s, Newcastle was a thriving river port that contained homes of wealthy planters, merchants, doctors, artisans, tavern keepers, and others. That it was also a regional center of social activity in its day is illustrated by the description of an elaborate gala held there in August 1746 to celebrate the defeat in April of that year of Charles Edward Stewart, better known as “Bonnie Prince Charlie,” and his Jacobite followers by an English army led by the Duke of Cumberland during the Battle of Culloden in the Scottish Highlands. The celebration was described in detail in the August 28, 1746, issue of *The Virginia Gazette*: “. . . a long Arbor was set up, in which 50 Gentlemen and ladies dined and several other Tables were full, in the House of Mr. [Nicholas] Waters . . . A large Quantity of Punch was given to the Populace and at each health there was a Volley of small Arms Discharged and three cheerful Huzzas at each Volley. A large bonfire was made in the evening and the windows of the Loyalists in Town were illuminated.”⁶⁷ Years later, Newcastle was the scene of the town’s major political event when on May 2, 1775, Patrick Henry called the Hanover volunteers to meet there to protest Virginia Governor Dunmore’s removal of the colony’s gunpowder. The armed group marched toward Williamsburg but encountered the Governor’s representative at Doncastle’s Ordinary at Barhamsville on the old state road leading to Williamsburg, and an amicable conclusion to the episode was reached by the parties who met there.⁶⁸ In 1781, the French Army led by the Comte de Rochambeau passed through Virginia on its way to Yorktown where it would join up with American forces under General George Washington. A 1782 map of Rochambeau’s route shows that he and his men passed through Hanover County, including Hanover Courthouse, Hanover

Town, and Newcastle, where it camped before moving on to Yorktown. (Fig. 3, Map entitled *Côte de York-town à Boston: Marches de l'armée showing the route of Comte de Rochambeau's army through Virginia, 1781*. Courtesy, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.)

One of Rochambeau's officers, Baron Ludwig von Closen, kept a diary that described the stop in Newcastle during which he and other French officers attended a dinner party at the Newcastle home of a very wealthy person, Col. John Syme, about whom more will be said shortly.⁶⁹



Figure 3

As did many other Virginia counties, Hanover lost the bulk of its court records when they were transferred to Richmond during the Civil War, ostensibly for safe keeping, but were burned there in 1865 during the Union Army's assault on the city. However, a few scattered eighteenth and early nineteenth century records remain, including some deeds from the period 1733-1735 and 1783-1792, and a tax list for St. Paul's Parish covering the years 1782-1815.

The first tax assessment under the new Commonwealth of Virginia was made in 1782 when a poll tax was imposed on all free males above the age of twenty-one and a personal property tax on the number of studs (and jacks), riding vehicles, slaves of all ages, horses (mares, colts and mules), and cattle.⁷⁰ Henry Mann is included in this list for the years 1782, 1783, and 1784; for some reason his name is missing from the 1785 list, but it appears again for the last time on the 1786 list.⁷¹ Mann is also listed among the Revolutionary War Public Service Claims, which

record that at a court held in Hanover on May 6, 1784, his claim for the use of a horse and saddle for forty-three days and for one horse cart valued at £10 was recognized.⁷²

The deeds for the years 1783-1785 reveal that on May 2, 1785, Henry Mann sold lot 19 in Newcastle to David Cochran, a merchant, for the sum of £30, described as “one lott or half acre in New Castle Town, St. Pauls Par.”⁷³ It was standard practice for the wife to execute a release of dower in the property in order to convey a clean title. However, it seems Mann’s wife was not living in Newcastle at the time the deed was executed because an order was issued to William Reynolds and Corbin Griffin, Gentlemen of York County, to examine Mann’s wife who was residing there at the time.⁷⁴ The record states: “Henry Mann & Jane His wife have by Indent. [blank] day of [blank] 1785 conveyed one lott in Town of New Castle. Sd. Jane cannot conveniently travel to the Ct. of Hanover to make her acknowledgement. We authorize you to examine her privily [privately].”⁷⁵ The order was dated December 22, 1785, and signed by William Pollard, Jr. There is a further entry among the Hanover deeds that includes a statement from Reynolds and Griffin certifying that “We did go this day to Jane Mann wife of Henry Mann and she did freely ack. sd. Indent.” This affirmation was dated January 3, 1786, and returned to Hanover Court on March 2, 1786, completing the sale to Cochran.⁷⁶ Incidentally, lot 19 was a corner lot in Newcastle fronting on Main Street. Henry Mann made one other appearance among the extant deeds of Hanover County in which he, along with John and Thomas Tinsley, witnessed a deed executed by Mann Page, executor of Mann Page, deceased, of Spotsylvania County, to Nathaniel Anderson of Hanover; the deed was dated December 14, 1785.⁷⁷

From the foregoing, it seems most likely that Henry Mann and family moved to Newcastle some time in 1782 and left in 1786 after the sale of his property there was finalized by the return of Jane Mann’s release of dower to the Hanover County Court. In fact, there is evidence that Henry Mann was working in Newcastle by June of 1782. It comes from papers found in a Judgments suit called Mann vs. Warden filed in Henrico County in 1789, several years after Mann had departed Newcastle.⁷⁸ The papers discuss his dealings with a customer named John Warden. Warden was a prominent member of the Virginia bar, both before and after the Revolutionary War. Samuel Mordecai’s reminisces of early Richmond state that he was a Scotsman, locally known as “Jock” Warden, and “one of the best read and worst featured, most good tempered and

most ill formed but among the most well informed members of the Richmond bar.”⁷⁹ Hobson, in discussing the papers of the imminent Virginia jurist, St. George Tucker, described Warden as “a canny veteran of the Virginia bar whose legal acumen more than compensated for his homely appearance,” adding that he was a “notorious user, or abuser” of the legal maneuver of filing a bill of exceptions when his objections in court were overruled.⁸⁰ Kennedy, writing about William Wirt, Attorney General of the United States, described Warden thusly: “This gentleman, Mr. John Warden, is still affectionately remembered at the Richmond bar. He was a man of high accomplishment in general literature and science, as well as in his profession. He had collected a fine library of rare and valuable books, which, being put up at sale after his death, were eagerly sought after and purchased. He was said to be the most-homely man, both in face and figure, to be found in the society with which he lived and his speech was marked by a broad Scotch accent.”⁸¹ That Warden did indeed have a high reputation among his legal kinsmen is further demonstrated by the fact that Spencer Roane, who held many important political and legal positions in Virginia, including that of a justice of the Virginia Court of Appeals, was a student of Warden’s during his early years.⁸²

Henry Mann’s known dealings with Warden began in June of 1782 when a sheet from Mann’s cabinet shop ledger shows that he charged “John Warden Esq^r” £10 for a walnut writing desk completed as per agreement. In June of 1784, Mann charged Warden £0.15 for repairing a mahogany desk and cleaning it, and the same month, he billed Warden for “fixing up 2 Stock Locks on [a] door;” the charge was £0.2. A stock lock is simply a door lock that is enclosed in a wooden case instead of brass or iron. Warden called on Mann’s shop twice more in June of 1784: on June 26th, Mann billed him £5.0 for a “Neat folding Bedstead Compleat,” and on June 30th, £0.6 for “mending 2 chairs.” The following day, July 1, 1784, Mann again noted in his ledger that he had mended two chairs for Warden but whether these were the same two chairs is not disclosed. It has been noted that Warden had a large library of books some of which may have been housed on the shelves of a “large Library Bookcase” mentioned in a July 11, 1784, entry in Mann’s ledger for which he billed Warden £4.0. On September 26, 1784, Mann’s ledger recorded that he charged Warden £1.16 for a “Wall Cupboard” and £0.4 for “fixing a New Bottom to a Chest.” Warden must have remained satisfied with Mann’s cabinet work because on October 8, 1785, Mann charged him £4.0 for another large library bookcase. Mann also fitted a

lock to a chain box for Warden for which there was no charge. The last entry in Mann's ledger pertaining to work he did for Warden appears under the date October 9, 1785, when he charged Warden £5.0 for a pair of "4 feet Wallt dining Tables"; £6.10 for "a large foulding Bedstead compleat made of Best heart of Birch," and £0.7.6 for "fitting up [a] Shaving Box." The total shown in Mann's ledger for all this work was £30.11.6. The same ledger also records several credits allowed Warden that totaled £25.2.8, leaving a balance due Mann of £13.8.0. They included one for legal advice provided to Mann in his suit against Dr. Colin Reddick, who will be discussed shortly; cash paid directly to Mann by Warden, as well as cash paid Henry Mann on Warden's behalf by William Mann, Henry's son; "Mr. Webb's horse", "5 yds duck" and "4 yds duck for sacking Bottom."

Mann sued Warden for this £13.8.0 balance; however, a document in the Judgments suit file indicates that Mann's first attempt to collect was dismissed by the court with costs, but that Mann had the case reinstated: "Richmond Aug 19th 1788 Mr. John Warden Sir you will perceive by the above Order that the Court of Henrico County have reinstated the Suit which I instituted against you in the said Court and which was dismissed by your Attorney at my Costs." In Mann's second effort he was successful as the jury that heard the case awarded him the full £13.8.0 as well as £2.0 in damages.

In October of 1782, Mann purchased a number of tools and other items presumably needed for his work. They are described in a Judgments suit called Earnest's Executor vs. Mann filed in Henrico County in March of 1788.⁸³ This was an action by George Earnest's executor, Samuel Earnest, to collect money owed the estate by Mann. Incidentally, George Earnest may have been a carpenter since the vestry of St. Paul's Parish ordered at its November 21, 1764, meeting that he be paid £0.15 for making a coffin for John Waller.⁸⁴ During the trial Samuel Earnest produced two sheets from a ledger showing the items sold to Mann and their values. The first itemized a "Joynter best London made," [£1.0], a "Joynter Strike Block Do." [£0.18], a smoothing plane of the best sort [£0.8], a parcel of mortise chisels and carving gouges [£0.10], and a half gallon of train oil [oil made from whale blubber] [£0.6]. The following statement was written at the bottom of this page of the ledger: "William Mann proved the delivery of the tools & Earnest's Order for the Oyl." The second ledger page shows a charge in November of 1782 of £1.0 for 500

brass nails to be used in making a coffin for a member of the Tinsley family and a charge in January of 1783 of £1.4 for 600 brass nails for a coffin for a Mr. Daingerfield. There is also an entry under the date December of 1783, for two days carting with a cart and driver, £1.6. That Mann's shop was making coffins is not at all surprising given the fact that many eighteenth-century cabinetmakers made coffins and provided funeral services of various kinds in addition to tending to their regular cabinet business; the example of Benjamin Bucktrout has already been mentioned. Mann's involvement in the funeral business will be noted again later on during a discussion of his Richmond years.

Besides John Warden and George Earnest, Henry Mann also had dealings during his Newcastle years with other customers and business associates, including Col. John Syme, Col. Zachariah Burnley, and Dr. Colin Reddick. Each of these men was a prominent member of society who undoubtedly recognized Mann as a skilled and respected craftsman and sought out his cabinetmaking skills. Syme and Burnley are both referenced in a chancery suit called Mann vs. Syme commenced by Mann in Henrico County in 1793, several years after he had left Newcastle and moved to the city of Richmond.⁸⁵ The case was still open in 1805 when a notice among the court papers dated June 11, 1805, stated that the suit had been abated by Mann's death. As an introduction to a discussion of this chancery suit, short biographical sketches of Col. John Syme and Col. Zachariah Burnley will be given next as they suggest the sort of accoutrements to the lifestyle these men and their families were accustomed to living.

John Syme was born at Studley, Hanover County, on December 25, 1729, and died in November 1805, at his plantation on the South Anna River called Rocky Mills.⁸⁶ His first wife was Mildred, daughter of Nicholas and Mildred (Thornton) Meriwether.⁸⁷ Col. Syme's father, also named John Syme, married Sarah Winston, the daughter of Isaac Winston and his wife, Sarah Dabney.⁸⁸ Following the death of her first husband, Sarah (Winston) Syme married as her second husband Col. John Henry, the father of Virginia governor, patriot, and orator, Patrick Henry. Therefore, John Syme and Patrick Henry were half-brothers. Syme, a politician and businessman of considerable means and with important connections, represented Hanover County in the Virginia House of Burgesses and later served as a delegate to the Virginia Conventions, which declared independence from Britain and created a state government.⁸⁹

Syme's extensive landholdings included a home in the town of Newcastle, the house and plantation called Rocky Mills, as well as stores and flour mills at both locations.⁹⁰ It is disclosed by papers in the suit that Henry Mann both built and repaired some of the furniture used by Syme and his family in both houses. Evidence of Syme's wealth is reflected by the spectacular house he built called Rocky Mills. (Fig. 4, Front view of Rocky Mills. Courtesy, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division.) (Fig. 5, Interior view of Rocky Mills showing center hallway. Courtesy, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division.) It was the only great brick eighteenth century house in Hanover County and survived *in situ* until 1929 when it was dismantled and rebuilt in the city of Richmond, where it still stands today under the name, Fairfield. The architectural historian Thomas Waterman pointed out that Rocky Mills has affinities with two other great Virginia houses, Carter's Grove [James City County] and Cleve [King George County]; its exterior is similar to Cleve in the use of stone quoining with brick walls and there are other parallels.⁹¹ It is believed Syme built the house in the mid-eighteenth century, about the time he married his first wife, as there is an invoice of goods he ordered for the house from his Bristol merchants, Lidderdale, Harmer & Farrell, dated June 9, 1753, and an accompanying letter stating that the order was occasioned "by my beginning housekeeping."⁹² The list of items Syme ordered was extensive and included "300 yds. cotton, 15 lbs. brown thread, Dutch blanketts 9 doz. plaid stockings, nails, pots, broadaxes, assorted pewter tableware and China dishes, ivory handled knives, 8 silver forks, silver spoons, brass candlesticks and 1 oild cloth 11 ft. wide and 15 long." Perhaps the most unusual was 15 yds.' Green Cloth for liveries with trimmings, 11 yds. Green plush, 40 Yds. Green plain, [and] 1 doz. pr. Green Stockings."



Figure 4



Figure 5

Mildred (Meriwether) Syme died in 1763 and in April of 1768, John Syme married Sarah Hoops of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. According to an obituary published in the December 6, 1805, issue of the *Petersburg Intelligencer*, Syme died on November 24, 1805: “Died - At Rocky Mills, in Hanover County, on the 24th ult. Col. John Syme, aged 77 years—for some time a member of the General Assembly.”⁹³ However, an obituary published in the December 4, 1805, *Virginia Argus* of Richmond gave his date of death as December 25th: “Died - At Rocky Mills, in Hanover County on Monday the 25th inst. Col. John Syme, age 77 years, 11 months. He had represented his district in the Senate from which he resigned in 1794. He was an officer in the French and Indian War in 1755 and in the Revolutionary war.”⁹⁴

Sarah (Hoops) Syme outlived her husband by several years, according to an extended notice of her death published in the November 23, 1810, *Virginia Patriot*: “DIED-At Rocky Mills very suddenly of an apoplexy, on Tuesday the 20th inst. Mrs. SARAH SYME; her heath had been as

good, perhaps better than common and her spirits on that day more than usually cheerful, but on the evening and without a moments warning, she was hurried from the house and affections of her children, to that country 'from whose bourne no traveler returns.' She possessed a mind highly endowed, but her active virtues were entitled to much higher claims. She was pious and when able punctual in her religious duties. The poor around her residence will long lament that that heart which once sympathized with their suffering, is now cold and those hands ever ready to relieve them are closed forever."⁹⁵ A sale of her personal property was conducted at Rocky Mills not long after her passing, as recorded by an auction notice in the December 18, 1810, *Virginia Argus*: "On Friday the 28th of this month (December) will be sold on the premises all the personal estate of Mrs. Sarah Syme consisting of a large stock of horses, horned cattle, Sheep and Hogs. a CHARIOT complete for two horses, a pair of young weil [well] broke horses, several wagons, carts and gigs, some of which are entirely new, a large quantity of Household & Kitchen Furniture, Of superior quality; sets of Cooper's, Carpenters and Black smiths and about 260 barrels of CORN, TO ORDER &c. At the same time will be hired for the ensuing year about 40 NEGROES, among whom are a good black smith, several carpenters & coopers and some young crop hands. The estate with all its valuable improvements will he leased or rented; there are about 140 bushels of wheat sewed this fall in good order and gotten in in good time. Bonds and approved security will be required of purchasers for all sums over \$10; all sums under, cash. All persons having claims, against the estate are desired to make them know on or before the day of sale: those indebted thereto, will be pleased to adjust their account speedily with the adm^r."

Another of Henry Mann's Newcastle patrons was Col. Zachariah Burnley of Orange County. A detailed account of this family can be found in Emma Dicken's *Our Burnley Ancestors And Allied Families* from which the following sketch is taken.⁹⁶ His father was Capt. Hardin Burnley, who patented some sixteen hundred acres of land in Hanover County in 1734, adjoining the land of John Aylette, Col. Nicholas Meriwether, and Col. John Syme. Zachariah was born about 1730. The name of his first wife has not been discovered, but his second wife was Mrs. Mary (Bell) Jones, a widow whom he married in 1759. While still a young man, Burnley purchased land in Albemarle and Fluvanna counties, but decided to settle in Bedford County, Virginia, where he gained his initial prominence. Around 1763, he moved to Orange County and became one of its most illustrious citizens. Among other things, he represented Orange in the Virginia House of

Burgesses, the Virginia Assembly, and a sheriff. After his wife's death, Burnley left Orange and moved to Hanover to reside with his son, Hardin. Dicken states that when he moved he sold "his large, comfortable home which was beautifully furnished with elegant mahogany and walnut furniture." *The Virginia Herald*, a Fredericksburg newspaper, carried an advertisement for the sale of his Orange County land in its October 12, 1798, issue: "For sale, the plantation whereon I now live, containing about 1600 acres, lying 7 miles above the courthouse, on the main road leading to Swift-Run-Gap and adjoining the land of Robert and Arch^d Wilson. This land is exceedingly well to be divided by the road leading from Wilson's blacksmith's shop to the Baptist Meeting house and is thought to be as good a land as any in the upper part of the county. It is a most elegant situation and there are at present sown on the land upwards of 300 bushels of wheat, which is now so well up as to afford a promising prospect of a good crop. There is a considerable quantity of this land well calculated for meadow. The first payment can be but short; but for the others a considerable time will be given. Possession will be given the first day of January next."⁹⁷ Burnley died in Hanover County in May of 1800.

The Mann vs. Syme chancery suit first came to light as the result of the discovery of an article written by Jim Hollins and published in the November 1995, issue of the newsletter of the Richmond, Virginia, Antique Tool Society.⁹⁸ It pointed out that the suit was filed by Mann because he claimed he had not been paid for work he had done, both in making and repairing furniture for Syme. The chancery papers included account ledgers, letters, depositions, and general court papers. Collectively, they shed additional light on the sorts of cabinet work Mann did while in Newcastle, the prices his work commanded, and the names of other cabinetmakers and associates with whom he interacted.

In 1785, Burnley ordered a mahogany couch from Mann for which he was to pay £25. It was to be covered in leather, stuffed with curled hair, and have a pine bottom. Mann began work on the couch but before it was completed, Burnley wanted changes made to the specifications, more specifically, he wanted to alter its dimensions and have it covered in brown sheeting linen instead of leather. Mann made the alterations at no additional cost to Burnley and even allowed a refund for the difference in cost between leather and linen. Due to a shortage of ready money at that time, many craftsmen operated partly on the basis of a barter system, exchanging goods and

services for other goods and services, in return. In Burnley's case, Mann agreed to accept corn as partial compensation and paid to have a man and wagon go to Burnley's plantation to retrieve it. The driver returned empty handed and Mann later accepted six hogs as partial payment. According to the court proceedings, the couch ordered by Burnley ended up in the Syme household, and Mann assigned his account with Burnley to Syme on August 24, 1785; the assignment was signed and dated by Mann at Newcastle. (Fig. 6, Henry Mann's account with Col. John Syme. Courtesy, Virginia State Library.)

| Colo ^t John Syme | | D ^r To Henry Mann | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------|---------|
| | | L | S D |
| 1785 | To a Mahog ^y couch which was made for m ^r John Burnley which he which you received in payment of a sum of money | 25 | ~ ~ |
| | To a Chincas tea table - - Mahog ^y - - | 5 | ~ ~ |
| 1787 | To 2 Pleasant Bedsteads - - d ^o - - | 30 | ~ ~ |
| Nov ^r 14 | To Repairing 2 Mahog ^y Chairs with 2 new Open Backs top rails & Sticks - - | 1 | 19 6 |
| Dec ^r 3 | To d ^o 2 Mahog ^y tea waiters & a Shaving box - | ~ | 7 6 |
| | To d ^o a Clockcase - - - - | ~ | 7 6 |
| 88 Jan ^y 23 | To d ^o a card Table with a new set of brass hinges &c - - - - | ~ | 5 ~ |
| | Contra - - - - | £ | 62 19 6 |
| 1785 | By my Bond - - - - | | |

Figure 6

The same year that Burnley ordered the couch, Syme ordered two mahogany bedsteads at £15 each and a mahogany “Chineas” tea table costing £5. Tables in the Chinese taste, typically characterized by fretwork forming a gallery around the edge of tables and on the backs and legs of chairs, were popularized in England by the London cabinetmaker Thomas Chippendale in his 1754 edition of *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker’s Director*. (Fig. 7, Chippendale chair in the Chinese taste. Courtesy, Wikimedia Commons.)

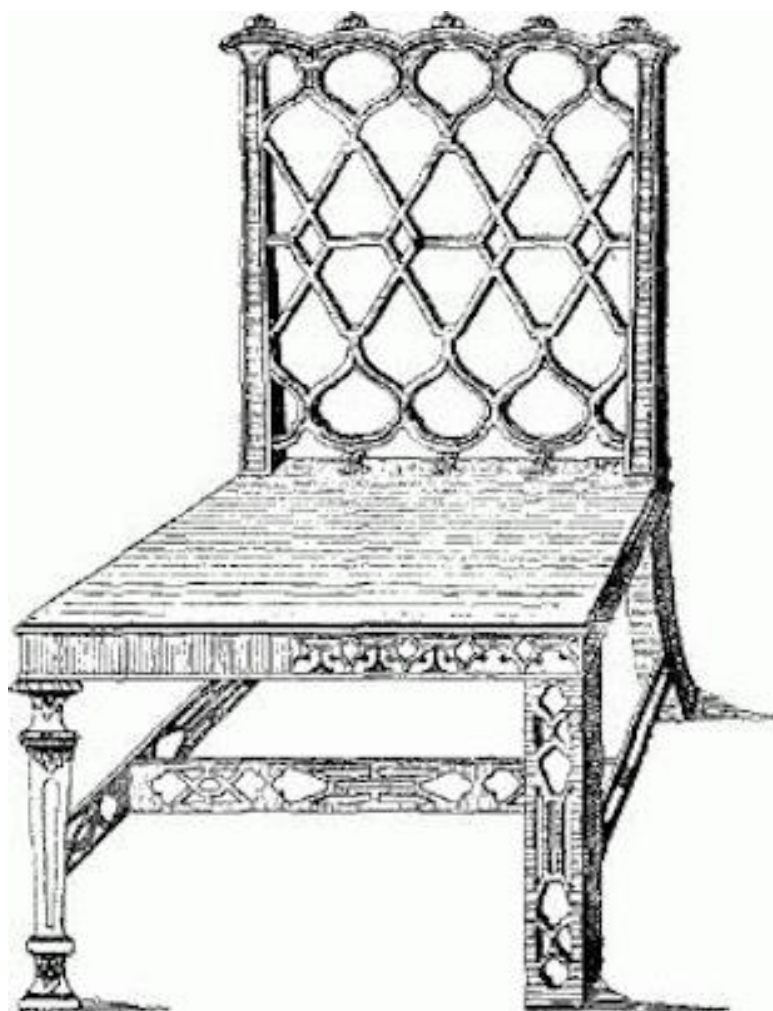


Figure 7

In addition to using Mann to construct new items of cabinet ware for his household, Syme also utilized Mann’s skills to make repairs to several pieces of existing furniture that included two mahogany chairs, two mahogany tea waiters [trays for passing around tea], a shaving box, a clock case, and a card table. The work Mann did on the chairs included replacing the splats with

new open back top rails and stretchers. The effort on the card table included fitting them with a new set of brass hinges.

However, before Mann could finish and deliver the bedsteads, he was informed by Mrs. Sarah Syme that she thought the agreed price for them was too high. In response, Mann, who was too ill at the time to visit her in person, sent her a letter dated Newcastle, Saturday evening, August 20, 1785, along with a key to his shop, and invited her to visit it and inspect the nearly completed bedsteads. Mann wrote that the bedsteads were still lacking some screws, a tacking bottom, and a duck bottom, but added that he had the screws and tacking bottom on hand and only needed to make a duck bottom to complete the job. Mann's note also offered that she could borrow the bedsteads until two new ones more suitable to her liking could be made: "I will lend them to You and You may send for them up to Rocky Mill and use Them until I am able to make You such Furniture as possibly You are more in want of." Hollins suggested in his article that Mann may have hoped that once she got the bedsteads in her own home, she might grow to like them and pay him the original agreed price for them. Whatever the case, his offer was accepted and his son, Arthur was dispatched to Rocky Mills to deliver and erect the beds for her.

There was a disagreement in the suit against Syme over the value of the goods and services involved and several depositions related to this issue were taken, including those of William and Arthur Mann and other cabinetmakers, some of whom were called as witnesses by Syme. The controversy centered upon the value of the goods and services at the time they were rendered versus their value at the time the suit was commenced some years later.

In William Mann's testimony taken at Richmond on May 7, 1793, he stated that "some time in or about the year 1785 he lived with his father Henry Mann and was present when Mrs. Syme the wife of Colo. John Syme purchased of his father two elegant Mahogany Bedsteads the Pillars of which were fluted and richly carved. That she agreed to give for each of them the Sum of fifteen pounds. That articles of that kind were higher than at Present & that he is perfectly satisfied that they could not be purchased for less than twelve pounds each. That about the same time his father made for Colo. Burnley a sofa stuffed with curled hair for which he was to pay £25. That

it was sent to Colo. Symes to be delivered to Burnley on his application who was to pay Colo. Syme the money.”

William’s brother, Arthur, was deposed twice in the case. His first statement was also taken on May 7, 1793, and his second on December 2, 1793, both in Richmond. In his first deposition, Arthur testified that “in the year 1785 he lived with his father when Mrs. Syme sent for two elegant Mahogany Bedsteads which she had purchased of his father. That the Deponent went with the Bedsteads [to] set them up in Col. Syme’s House. That about the same time a couch which was made for Col. Burnley was sent to Col. Syme’s House. That he has since frequently seen it at Col. Symes and knows that it was made use of by him. That about the same time he carried to Col. Symes a mahogany Chinese Tea Table. That he believing the price of such Tables at that Time was £5. That afterwards his father repaired sundry articles of furniture for Col. Syme particularly two mahogany chairs, two mahogany Tea Waiters, a shaving Box, a Clock Case and a Table.” Arthur Mann’s second deposition was worded as follows: “The Deposition of Arthur Mann of Lawful age being first sworn on the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God Deposeth and Sayeth that some time in the year 1784 or 1785 his father Henry Mann sold Mrs. Syme wife to Col John Syme of Newcastle two Elegant mahogany bedsteads finished in the best manner for the price of fifteen pounds each to best of his recollection that about the time aforesaid Henry Mann made a Mahogany couch for Col. Zacharia Burnley the price of which was twenty five pounds as per agreement which was left in the care of Mrs. Syme with an Order to receive the amount of Col. Burnley. This deponent further saith that he lately has seen the before mentioned couch at Col. Symes at Rocky Mill very much worn, this deponent recollects his father Henry Mann selling a mahogany Chinese tea table which this deponent has heard Mrs. Syme since acknowledge was agreed for at the price of five pounds and sundry jobs in repairing furniture amounting to [illeg.] shillings and six pence.”

During the proceedings, Syme called three cabinetmakers to testify to the value of couch, bedsteads, and tea table made by Mann: Josias Bingham, Moses Harris, and Thomas Johnson. Both Bingham and Harris were mentioned at a vestry meeting of St. Paul’s Parish in Hanover County held November 7, 1775, at which it was ordered that Bingham be paid £0.10.0 for “making John Mitchell a coffin,”⁹⁹ and that Harris be paid £1.4.0; there is no explanation as to

why the payment to Harris was made.¹⁰⁰ Bingham, who testified first, stated that he valued the couch at £6, the two bedsteads at £15, and the tea table at £5. In rebuttal, Mann asked Bingham whether he was a cabinetmaker, to which Bingham replied that he was, and then Mann queried him as to whether he was acquainted with “the Prices of Cabinet Work in or about the year 1784,” to which Bingham replied, “I did not follow it [the cabinetmaking trade] at that time.” Mann also asked Harris whether he was a cabinetmaker and he responded that he “followed that branch of business.” Mann then wanted to know whether he was acquainted with the price of cabinet work in or about the year 1784, to which Harris replied, “I don’t recall that I was in particular.” These answers apparently did not satisfy Syme because he offered another question to Harris: “Do you not look upon yourself to be a judge of Cabinet Work,” and Harris replied, “I have been a good deal acquainted with the value of Cabinet Work.” Mann also queried Thomas Johnson as to whether he was a cabinetmaker and, after he replied that he was, Mann asked him the same question, whether was acquainted with “the Prices of Cabinet work in or about the year 1784,” to which Johnson replied, “no.” It appears from the testimony that Henry Mann believed cabinet work was more highly priced at the time he made the pieces for Burnley and Syme than at the time the suit was filed in 1793; Mann argued it was and Syme clearly tried to show that it was not. This most likely had to do with changed economic conditions in Virginia and elsewhere after the American Revolution was concluded.

Besides Bingham, Harris, and Johnson, Syme also called a cabinetmaker named Hugh Hayes to testify. Hayes was working in Richmond by August 1790 when he ran advertisements with identical wording in *The Virginia Independent Chronicle and General Advertiser* and in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*.¹⁰¹ “Hugh Hayes, CABINET-MAKER, Near the BRIDGE, RICHMOND, BEGS leave to inform his FRIENDS and the PUBLIC in general, that he carries on his business in all its various branches, in the neatest manner and on the most reasonable terms. He will take country produce, cash, or warrants at a reasonable discount; or goods, if best suits the purchaser. The work shall be Warranted to be sound and good when delivered.” In his statement to the court, Hayes valued the couch at £6, the two bedsteads at £13, and the tea table at £4. As he did with the other cabinetmakers called by Syme, Mann also asked Hayes whether he was acquainted with the “Prices of Cabinet Work in or about the year 1784,” to which Hayes responded in the negative. Following Hayes’ testimony, Mann called a witness

named John Bentis who, after being sworn, was asked what he supposed a mahogany bedstead “Compleat agreeable to the description & reputation of the witness William Mann worth at this day.” Bentis answered that he could not afford to make such a bedstead for less than £15 or £16. Mann then asked: “It has been asserted a Mr. Hugh Hayes of Hanover has been called on to value the bedstead as above stated. Do you think him Capable to execute such work or Can he be a proper judge of the same?” Bentis’ answer with regard to Hayes was that “He cannot execute such work nor can he be a proper Judge having never had any experience in work of that kind.” As stated earlier, this case languished in the courts for many years with continuation after continuation, and there is no evidence in the chancery file that Mann ever collected the money he was seeking from Syme.

Another of Mann’s Newcastle customers was Dr. Colin Riddick, a doctor of medicine who immigrated to Virginia from Scotland in the mid-eighteenth century. He first appeared in Port Royal, a small river port town on the Rappahannock River in Caroline County, where, on April 12, 1754, he and several other men formed a Masonic lodge called the Kilwinning Crosse Masonic Lodge #2.¹⁰² He is identified as a surgeon in Port Royal in two legal cases tried in the Scottish Court of Session: Riddick vs. Gilbert Laurie, chemist & druggist in Edinburgh, July 7, 1756 and Riddick vs. The Virginia Company of Aberdeen, January 13, 1762.¹⁰³ David Dobson, who has authored numerous books about Scottish immigration to North America, documents that Riddick was in Hanover County by 1774.¹⁰⁴ Riddick is mentioned in *The Virginia Gazette* on December 9, 1775, when an anonymous individual known only by the name “M_n” inserted a poem in the paper dedicated to “Dr. Colin Riddick, of Newcastle.”¹⁰⁵ As will be discussed shortly, Henry Mann had dealings with Riddick as early as 1776 and placed several items of furniture in Riddick’s hands on January 1, 1777, so there is some chance the mysterious “M_n” could be Henry Mann himself.

While many Scots in Virginia remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution, others such as Colin Riddick rallied to the American side. Gwathmey has two references to his military service, one of which names him as a surgeon in 1776-77 and a second that calls him a “Doctor serving in September 1776 in the “2nd Battalion of Minute Men.”¹⁰⁶ The second reference pertains to an entry in the *Journal of the Council of State of Virginia* which

notes that at a meeting of the Council held in Williamsburg on September 17, 1776 it was “Ordered, that a warrant issue to Doctor Collin Reddick, for thirty nine pounds eighteen shillings for medicines and attendance to the second Battalion of Minute men at New Castle.”¹⁰⁷ Riddick was still in Newcastle in 1779 when his name appeared in the vestry minutes of St. Paul’s parish in an entry mentioning the processioning of his land and that of several others.¹⁰⁸ In 1781, Riddick signed a petition asking the legislature to reestablish a warehouse on the Pamunkey River at Newcastle, called Meriwethers.¹⁰⁹ On July 5, 1785, he conveyed by mortgage deed several lots in Newcastle to Isaac Brown, a resident of the same town.¹¹⁰ This transaction may have been in anticipation of Riddick’s marriage later that same year to Jane Wyley Beverley, a widow of King William County, Virginia.¹¹¹ The October 8, 1785 marriage agreement calls him “Collin Reddock of the County of Hanover Doctor of Medicine,” and she is called “Mrs. Jane Wiley Beverley.” In fact, she was Jane Wyley (Roy) Beverley, daughter of Richard Roy of Caroline County.¹¹² Riddick must have moved to King William County following his marriage where he resided on land that most likely came into his possession through this marriage. He appeared in King William on the 1787 land and personal property tax lists, which show that he had four hundred and thirty acres.¹¹³ He was still there in 1797¹¹⁴ with the same acreage as in 1810.¹¹⁵ He must have died before the 1820 land tax list was compiled because it shows “Mrs. Jane Wyley Reddock,” charged with four hundred and thirty acres.¹¹⁶

The information regarding Henry’s Mann’s dealings with Colin Riddick can be found in a Judgments case filed by Mann in Henrico County, Virginia, in May of 1789.¹¹⁷ This was a case for trover, a suit in common law in which the plaintiff is seeking recovery of damages for the wrongful taking of personal property and not the recovery of the property itself. In his pleading to the court, Mann stated that on January 1, 1777, he was in possession of certain personal property that included one large mahogany dining table, two mahogany chamber dressing tables with three drawers in each, four Windsor chairs, one double headed couch, one mahogany library bookcase, one japanned tea board, one grind stone, six pieces of mahogany timber and one box containing two thousand ten penny nails. It was this property that Mann claimed Riddick had unlawfully converted to his own use and for which Mann was seeking damages amounting to £100. Exactly how these items came into Riddick’s possession is unclear from the fragmentary information in the file although one of the exhibits is a document titled “List of Furniture left

with Collin Riddick by Henry Mann.” It enumerates the items themselves and their valuations: one large mahogany dining table [£12], two mahogany chamber dressing tables with three drawers in each [£16], four Windsor chairs [£illeg.], one large double headed couch [£15], one japanned tea board [£1.10], three pieces of mahogany timber used for steps by R [Riddick?], at ten shillings each [£1.10], three pieces of mahogany timber, at three pounds each [£9], and one box containing two thousand ten penny nails [no value listed]. The large mahogany library bookcase mentioned in the court pleading case is not included on this list, but was valued in another exhibit at £20.

Not enough information can be gleaned from the few loose papers that comprise this Judgments case to fully understand the context of the suit, but there are other items in the file that suggest Mann either sold or leased various items to Riddick, presumably while Riddick was residing in Newcastle. Whatever the case might be, there are three items in the suit papers that appear to be different versions of Mann’s account ledger with Riddick. They include the items mentioned in the pleading and in the list of furniture Mann left with Riddick, but contain several others as well. These three lists are not entirely consistent in content as regards the descriptions although the valuations appear to be consistent. For example, one list itemizes what it calls a tin lamp, while another describes it as a neat tin lamp for burning splints; splints were nothing more than slivers of wood cut from the heartwood of certain pine trees. Today this wood is more commonly referred to as fatwood and is sold as fire starters. Items mentioned in these ledgers included the following along with the valuations assigned to them [the descriptions in the following are not exact quotes]:¹¹⁸ two walnut tree mantle shelves [£1.10.1], leather for a pair of shoes [£0.3.6], a large glass tumbler [£0.5.0], a large pewter spoon [£0.6.0], a side bedstead for a child [£3.0.0], a neat China bowl & a [?] stand “compleat” [£2.8.0], a neat tin lamp to burn splints [£0.18.0], a quart of linseed oil [£0.6.0], a China tea pot [£0.6.0], a 3 feet mahogany table [presumably meaning a tripod table of some sort] [£6.0.0], a charge for mending a table belonging to William Claibourn [£0.6.0], a charge for the “use and damage done my grind stone which you took out of a chest without leave or license” [£0.6.0], three pieces of mahogany “which you used as steps to your house” [£1.10.0]; a charge for the use and breakage of my furniture 5 ½ years @ 45s./year “which you had in your possession being entirely new when received contrary to my desires” [£12.7.6], a large mahogany dining table [£12.0.0], two neat mahogany chamber dressing tables

with three drawers in each [£16.0.0], four best Windsor chairs @ 40s. each [£8.0.0], three pieces of mahogany @ 60s. each [£9.0.0], a” large double headed couch left with you which you broke to pieces when in your possession which I could have sold for £15” [£15.0.0], and a large mahogany library bookcase [£20.0.0]. There are only three dates in these ledgers. The earliest is September 12, 1776, while the others are July 31, 1777 and May 1782. Their significance cannot be gleaned from the available context and is it unclear how they might relate to the January 1, 1777, date mentioned in the pleading of the case for trover. No testimony was taken from witnesses in this case so far as the papers in the Judgments file reveal and in the end the case did not yield Mann’s hoped for result as there is one item that contains the following words: “we of the jury find for the Defendant.”

It is likely Mann made much of the furniture enumerated in his pleading. He may also have also constructed the other cabinet ware items mentioned among the entries in his ledger account with Riddick such as the double headed couch and chamber dressing tables. If so, these items, combined with those he constructed for John Warden, John Syme, and Zachariah Burnley, illustrate that Mann was capable of making a large variety of high end items of sufficient quality to attract wealthy patrons, so he must have had a substantial reputation as an artisan with an extensive repertoire of cabinetmaking skills.

Henry Mann’s Richmond Years

Following his departure from Newcastle early in 1786, Henry Mann moved himself and his family to Richmond, Virginia’s capital city. There is evidence which will be discussed shortly that he located his shop there on one of the lots that had belonged to Jacob Ege, Sr., one of the city’s earliest residents and builder of “The Old Stone House” on East Main Street, a structure that is today part of the Edgar Allan Poe Museum.

Many of the early German settlers of Richmond were solicited to come and settle in Richmond by its founder, William Byrd II of Westover Plantation in Charles City County, who sent Dr. Samuel Tschiffele, an agent for the Helvetia Society, to both Germany and Philadelphia to recruit settlers for his new town.¹¹⁹ One of those who heeded the call was Jacob Edge, Sr., a German immigrant from the province of Württemberg, who arrived in Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania, on September 20, 1738 in the ship *Nancy and Friendship*, along with other family members.¹²⁰ Soon after landing, Ege moved with the Scherer and other German families to Byrd's settlement where he acquired several town lots on the North side of present-day Main Street, extending through to present-day Franklin.¹²¹ These lots are numbered 27-36 and 41-50 on a map drawn ca. 1809 by Richard Young.¹²² (Fig. 8, Detail from a map entitled *Plan of the city of Richmond: to the citizens of Richmond this plan is respectfully inscribed / by their obedient servant, Richard Young*. Courtesy, Virginia State Library.) (Fig. 9, Sketch showing lots owned by Jacob Ege Sr., taken from a *History and Genealogy of the Ege Family in the United States, 1738-1911*.) Jacob Ege Sr., and his wife, Maria Dorothea Scherer, whom he married ca. 1740, had several children including Samuel, Elizabeth, Sarah, Anne, and Jacob Ege, Jr.¹²³ Of these, Samuel married Elizabeth Stubblefield, Elizabeth married Gabriel Galt, Sarah married David Lambert, and Anne remained a spinster.¹²⁴ The first record of any transfer of property by Jacob Ege, Sr., was a half acre sold to George Scherer, possibly his wife's brother, on June 5, 1749, comprised of one-half of lots 32 and 46, between Main and Franklin and on the west side of 20th Street. In this deed, Ege is called a cooper and Scherer a joiner. Jacob Ege Sr., died in 1782 and his property descended to his wife and children. Subsequently, on July 10, 1785, Jacob Ege Jr., and wife deeded the eastern half of lots 33 and 47 to David Lambert¹²⁵ and on the same day deeded the western half of lots 33 and 47, between Main and Franklin and bordering on the east side of 20th Street, to Anne Ege.¹²⁶



Figure 8

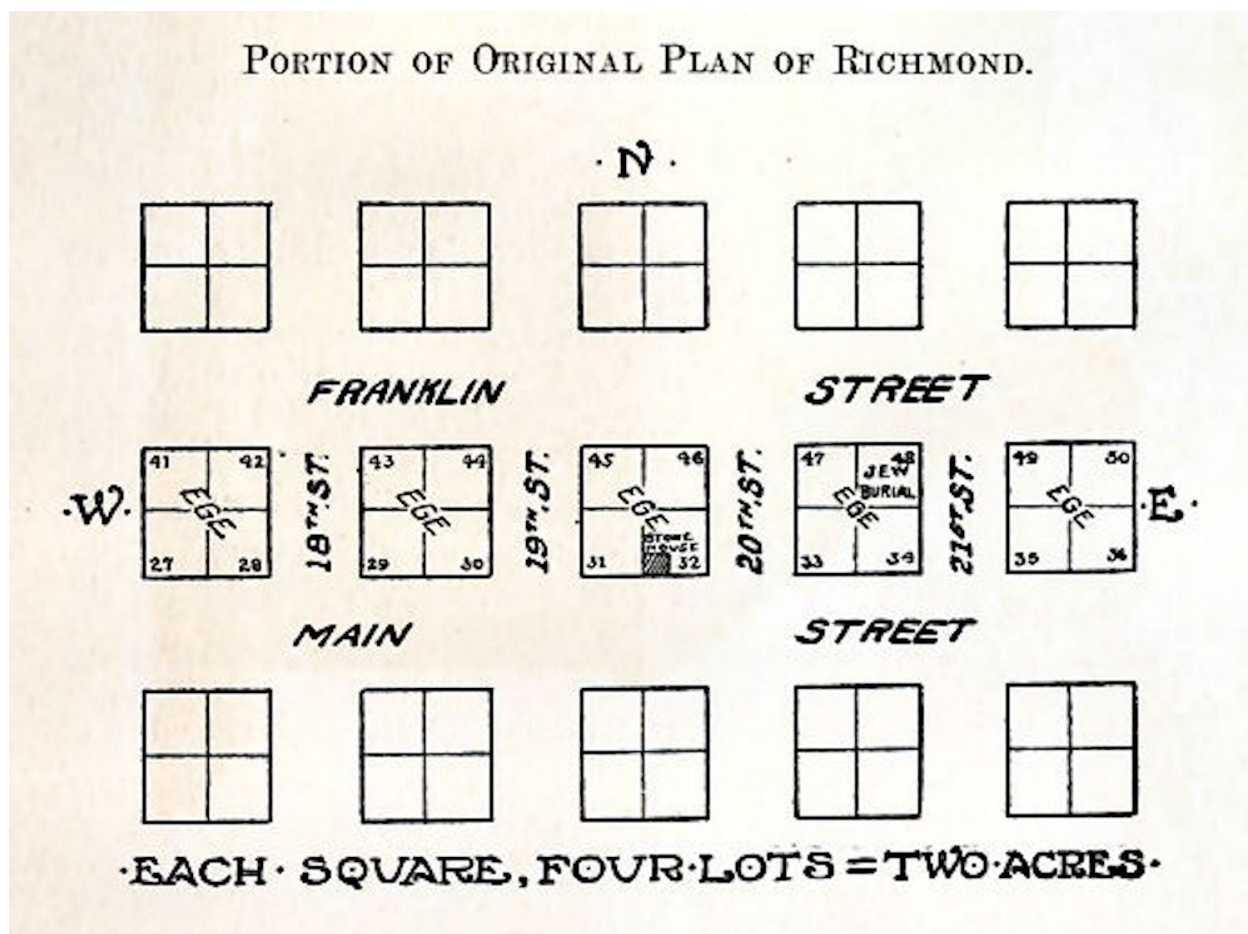


Figure 9

As stated earlier, there is evidence indicating Henry Mann's cabinet shop was located on one of the lots originally belonging to Jacob Ege, Sr. The clue comes from a proceeding held in the Richmond Hustings Court on July 29, 1790, by which Mann mortgaged certain property, including a lot he was then occupying, which he had leased from "Nancy Ege," undoubtedly Jacob Ege Sr.'s spinster daughter, Anne.¹²⁷ This court action will be mentioned again later on, but for now it is useful to note that this places Mann's shop on either part of lot 33 or lot 47.

That Henry Mann had business connections with this Scherer family is evidenced by a Henrico County conveyance made by Samuel Scherer and Hanna his wife of Richmond of one acre to John Spurlock on March 6, 1786, "where John Spurlock now lives."¹²⁸ The deed was witnessed by Gabriel Galt, John Miller, and Henry Mann, and proved July 2, 1787, by Galt. Samuel

Scherer, a chairmaker of Richmond, who later resided in Hanover County, was the son of Richmond joiner, George Scherer and his wife, Ruth.¹²⁹

After setting up his cabinet shop in Richmond, one of Henry Mann's first orders of business was to acquire lumber for his various cabinetmaking needs and for this he turned to a Hanover County merchant named David Crenshaw. Information about their dealings with each other comes from two Henrico County legal proceedings: a Judgments suit, Crenshaw vs. Mann¹³⁰ and a Chancery cause, Henry Mann vs. David Crenshaw.¹³¹ From one of Mann's ledger sheets produced during these proceedings it appears that on August 31, 1786, Crenshaw delivered 664 feet 2 inches of walnut plank to Mann @4 p./ft., for which he charged a total of £11.1.4. On the 19th of the following month, Crenshaw delivered 171 feet of walnut plank and 72 feet of pine plank, charging Mann £2.17.0 for the walnut and £0.8.4 for the pine. On October 19th Crenshaw made a final delivery of 317 feet 8 inches of walnut, also @4p./ft. for which he charged £5.6.0. The total for all the plank delivered to Mann came to £19.12.8 (Fig. 10, Henry Mann's ledger showing account with David Crenshaw. Courtesy, Virginia State Library.) According to Mann's ledger, these costs were offset by several items provided by Mann to Crenshaw that included a walnut desk valued at £8.0, a "4 feet Wall. Ding Table" valued at £3.0, and various other items, including orders drawn on the firm of Messrs. Duncan & Hicks, "1 Sweet Chocolate," and Mann's personal note for the balance; what Mann was doing supplying chocolate to Crenshaw is a mystery. According to Mann these items totaled £19.12.8, suggesting Mann had made full payment to Crenshaw for the plank. Unfortunately, matters did not end there because in November 1792, Crenshaw filed a Judgments suit against Mann for claimed damages and was awarded the sum of £15.4.9 by the jury that heard the case. This amount indicates that Crenshaw had not allowed credit for the £4.9.3 claimed by Mann for a note made to Crenshaw's order and taken in [paid] by Mann. It is clear that Mann was unsatisfied with the outcome of Crenshaw's Judgements suit because he took the case to the Henrico County Court of Chancery, which was not an uncommon practice in those days for losing parties to do.¹³² The gist of his complaint was laid out in his pleading to the court of November 8, 1792. It stated that he had commenced dealing with Crenshaw in August of 1786 and that in the course of the year had purchased what Crenshaw had warranted to be well seasoned walnut plank to the amount of £19.12.8. Some time after Mann took delivery of the plank, he said he made a trial with it and found it, in his opinion,

far inferior to the quality the defendant had represented at the time of purchase. Mann further stated that before two months had expired from the time he had received all of the plank, he made various payments to Crenshaw amounting to £15.3.5, leaving a balance due of £4.9.3, which he covered by executing his personal note. Mann added in his pleading that at the time he made the desk, “work of every kind was much higher than at present,” a claim also heard in Mann’s suit against John Syme. Mann further stated in his pleading that Crenshaw kept the desk for about twelve months without making any complaint about it, but then came to him in Richmond and asked to return it, which he refused to do because he said the desk had been very much abused causing it significant damage. Some time later, while Henry Mann was out of his shop on business, Crenshaw came by while Arthur Mann was there and left the desk with him. In his pleading, Henry Mann stated that he never intended to accept Crenshaw’s return of the desk as he in no way considered himself accountable for any problems the desk might have had. Later on in his statement, Mann mentioned that he was “obliged to go to York [Yorktown] for the benefit of his health and being without money requested his Son to collect some money and forward it to him and if he could not make the collection then to raise the money necessary from the sale of some of the furniture from the Shop,” and that “his said Son not being enabled to make a collection was compelled to make sale of furniture and in so doing by a mistake sold the aforesaid Desk for the highest price that could be obtained [which] was £2.15.0 owing to the hard usage [the desk] had met with.” Mann further alleged that the note he had given to Crenshaw as partial payment for the lumber had been fully discharged by Crenshaw by taking its full value out of goods at the store operated by a Mr. John Hicks, “which your Orator [Mann] has since accounted with the Said Hicks,” so that all he owed Crenshaw was the sum of £2.15.0, for which amount the desk had been sold. Mann finished his pleading by stating that Crenshaw had instituted the Judgements suit against him without giving him credit for the various payments and had received a judgment against him in that case.

D^r David Crenshaw in Acc^t with Henry Mann - C^t

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>1786</p> <p>Nov. 5 To 1. Sweet Chocolate ~ ~ ~ 0^u 3^u 6</p> <p>To a Wall. dish ~ ~ ~ 0^u 0^u 0</p> <p>Dec. To an Order on Mess^r. Duncan & Hitho for 85th of Iron ~ ~ ~ 1^u 8^u 4</p> <p>1787 To d^r. 6³/₄ y^ds lin m. ~ ~ ~ 1^u 4^u 1¹/₂</p> <p>To a fixed Wall. dining Table ~ ~ ~ 3^u 0^u 0</p> <p>To an Order on Duncan & Hitho for sundries Am^t 1^u 5^u 1¹/₂</p> <p>To my Note for Wall. dish here payable on dem. for ~ ~ ~ 4^u 9^u 3</p> <p>wh^{ch} was sp^d. and taken in</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">£ 19^u 12^u 0</p> | <p>1786</p> <p>Aug. 31 By 664 feet 2 In of Wall. plank 2 1/2 feet 11 u 1 1/4</p> <p>Sept. 19 By 72 feet pine plank ~ ~ ~ 0^u 8^u 4</p> <p>By 71 feet Wall. plank 2 1/2 feet 2 u 17^u 0</p> <p>Oct. 19 By 317 feet 8 In 2 1/2 feet 3 u 6^u 0</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">19^u 12^u 0</p> |
|---|---|

Figure 10

Arthur Mann was called on during the court proceedings to provide a deposition, which he did on January 5, 1793. His testimony largely reflected what his father had stated, including comments about the walnut desk having been brought to the shop by Crenshaw and left there while he was present. His statement also noted that after his father returned home and saw the desk in the shop, he “blamed me very Much by telling me that he met Crenshaw with the desk in his Cart and that Crenshaw had applied to him to take the desk back wh my Father Said he totally Refused Seeing by the ends giving way the [walnut] was not Seasond as he bought it for and that he did not think himself liable.” Arthur Mann also reiterated that his father had gone down to York for the “Recovery of his Sight &c,” but had expended the money he had taken with him and therefore asked him to try and make collections on debts owed the shop, but he was unable to do so. Consequently, he stated that he did some repair work on the desk and then sold it and a piece of mahogany furniture from the shop for as much as he could obtain. He further deposed that after his father returned from York in [a] “Considerable time,” his father offered to make Crenshaw another desk, but upon what terms Arthur stated he did not know. Arthur also testified that he was sent by his father to Hanover County to inform Crenshaw that he [Arthur] would be deposed on January 5, 1793. While he was there Crenshaw asked him into his house to show him another desk that he had bought which, according to Mann, appeared to be a very good one, “equally as good or Better than what my father and other Cabinet makers made at that

time,” for £10, although he added in his statement that his father had only charged £8 for the one he had made for Crenshaw. Whether Mann prevailed in this second suit is unknown.

Henry Mann and his sons must have cultivated a substantial clientele in the new capital city after their arrival there in 1786 because Henry advertised in the November 30, 1786, issue of *The Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* looking for journeymen cabinetmakers “who have regularly been brought up in that branch of business.”¹³³ (Fig. 11, Henry Mann notice in the November 30, 1786, *The Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*.) The notice promised that “they may meet with employment by applying to the subscriber in this city.” It was about this same time that Mann’s name appeared among the records of the Auditor of Public Accounts of Virginia, which show that he made a chair and bookcase for the Senate chamber in the Capitol building.¹³⁴ The account for this job was audited on December 14, 1786, and Mann was given a warrant to collect sixteen pounds two shillings and a half-penny for his work.

J O U R N E Y M E N
C A B I N E T M A K E R S,
WHO have been regularly brought up to
that branch of business, may meet with
employment by applying to the subscriber in
this city. **H E N R Y M A N N.**
Richmond, September 21, 1786.

Figure 11

In July of 1787, an orphan of “Archiball Diddep decd ” named James Diddep was bound to Henry Mann until the age of twenty-one.¹³⁵ James’ likely father was the Archibald Diddep who had been a well-known and highly respected tailor in the colonial capital of Williamsburg with a shop on Francis Street.¹³⁶ Archibald Diddep was in Williamsburg in July of 1767, when he gave a deposition about a duel that appeared in the July 23, 1767, issue of *The Virginia Gazette*.¹³⁷ In this same issue it was stated that Diddep was “above” twenty years old, so he was probably born some time before 1747. Archibald may have been the son of another Williamsburg tailor named “John Didip,” who advertised in *The Virginia Gazette* on March 5, 1752, that he was a “Taylor,

from Edinburgh, living at Mr. Wheatley's, opposite to the Church in Williamsburg."¹³⁸ An "Archie" Diddep is also mentioned in the York County records when he provided security for the marriage of an Elizabeth Diddep to James Moir on December 2, 1773.¹³⁹ In addition to James Diddep, Archibald had another son named Archibald, who was apprenticed to Richmond silversmiths George and William Richardson; he is mentioned in the Richmond Common Council Records as Archibald "Didde," a fourteen year old apprentice in Richardson's household in 1782.¹⁴⁰

There is another Henrico Judgements case called Roberts vs. Mann that provides some of Henry Mann's dealings with one Charles Roberts that began in May of 1787. From the handful of documents in the suit file, there is a suggestion Roberts may have been a house carpenter because Mann's ledger shows that on July 21, 1787, Mann paid him for the following items: laying two floors, running a partition and running a pair of stairs [£5.0], making sixteen lights of sashes @ 9p./sash [£0.12], glazing sixteen lights [£0.2], and making a pine cupboard door [£0.3.0]. The total came to £5.17.0. The other side of the ledger showed that Mann provided Roberts with several items in May and June of 1787 that included a pair of blankets, a bushel of meal [£0.4.12], an "Iron pott" [£0.6.5], three walnut planks, pine planks, "Cash at sundry times," [£1.16.1], and nails. These items totaled £2.9.11, leaving a balance due to Roberts that was the subject of the suit. There is a document in the case noting that Arthur Mann and Charles Turner would be summoned to provide a deposition during the proceedings, but none are on record. In 1788, the Richmond Common Council recorded the name Henry Mann in that year's return of taxable property in the city in which he claimed two white males over the age of sixteen and one tithable slave for a total tax of eighteen shillings.¹⁴¹

On April 24, 1788, Henry Mann placed an extended notice in *The Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* thanking his patrons and informing them he was also in the second-hand furniture and funeral business: "HENRY MANN, CABINET-MAKER AND UPHOLSTERER, RICHMOND. BEGS leave to return his sincere thanks to those ladies and gentlemen who have been pleased to favour him with their custom and informs them that he still carries on his business in all its branches, at the sign of the walnut tree, on the opposite corner to the brick store occupied by Mr. George Fleming; where may be had on very short notice, all sorts of Cabinet and Upholster

furniture at a much cheaper rate than formerly, either for cash, country produce, or public securities at their current value; he has been lately furnished with a quantity of good mahogany and will be answerable for the goodness of his work; he will sell on commission any second hand furniture, (repair and fit up the same at a moderate price) to the greatest advantage agreeable to instruction. He likewise informs the public that he has completed his HEARSE and intends it for the use of the citizens of this place only; those who employ him in the funeral way will be accommodated with the hearse or carriage, suitable to the interment.”¹⁴² It is worth noting that there is a trade card advertising Henry Mann’s cabinetmaking business that has descended in the Mann family. (Fig. 12, Henry Mann trade card, probably from ca. 1788. Courtesy, Jacob Cress.) The card, which also carries the image of an elaborate piece of case furniture, reads as follows: “Henry Mann/CABINETMAKER/Makes and Sells all sorts of Household/Furniture in the Newest Fashion at the/most Reasonable Rates/Likewise Funerals Decently Furnished/and Goods Appraised.” While there is no address shown on the card, it seems reasonable to believe it was most likely printed in Richmond about the time Mann announced that he had a hearse and was in the funeral business there.



Figure 12

Whether Henry Mann was more litigious than other cabinetmakers of his day cannot be positively stated, although as noted before he was certainly a frequent visitor to the halls of justice, and he was there in May 1788, when he was called to the Richmond Hustings Court by John Beale, an assignee of Henry Banks, who sued Mann claiming he had sustained damages caused by the defendant “in the amount of seventy-eight pounds seven shillings besides his cost.”¹⁴³ What this suit involved is not stated, but Henry was again on the losing end as the court ordered that the plaintiff recover his damages against him. Despite this setback, Mann’s cabinetmaking business must have remained substantial because he advertised in October of 1788 for two journeymen cabinetmakers, one of whom he wanted to employ as a chair maker: “WANTED IMMEDIATELY, TWO JOURNEYMEN Cabinet-Makers, ONE of which I should be glad to employ, who has chiefly worked at the Chair making branch of the business. HENRY MANN; Cabinet-Maker & Upholsterer. Who has on hand an ASSORTMENT of NEAT Mahogany Furniture Which he will dispose of on very reasonable terms ... ” [the rest of this advertisement is missing].¹⁴⁴

In August of 1789, Mann again advertised for journeymen cabinetmakers for his shop: “JOURNEYMEN Cabinet makers who are masters of their trade, will meet with employment by applying to the subscriber. HENRY MANN. Who would be glad to purchase a few old hair mattresses.”¹⁴⁵ Mann placed the same notice the following month in *The Virginia Independent Chronicle and General Advertiser*.¹⁴⁶ Later that year he billed a Mr. Alexander McDougale for a field bed for which Mann charged £5.¹⁴⁷ (Fig. 13, Henry Mann receipt for making a field bedstead for Alexander McDougale, dated December 2, 1789. Courtesy, Virginia State Library.) There are several definitions for a field bed of that day one of which refers to it as “A small scaled, arched canopy bed originally intended to be moved from place to place [sometimes] used by army officers on campaigns,” while another simply states that in eighteenth century design, it was a bed with a small tester and less imposing bedposts.”¹⁴⁸ Exactly what Mann meant by his usage of the term is unclear from the available evidence.

A handwritten note on aged, slightly stained paper. The text is written in a cursive script. At the top, it says "M^r. Alex^r. M^r. Dougle". Below that, in a larger, more ornate script, it says "Bought of Henry Mann". To the left of this, it says "1789" and "Dec. 2^d". Below "Bought of Henry Mann", it says "A Field Bedsted" and "£5.00". The paper has some vertical creases and a small dark mark near the bottom right.

Figure 13

In February of 1790, Henry Mann was paid £1.8.0 by the Auditor of Public Accounts for the State of Virginia for framing a map of the Potomac River.¹⁴⁹ He sent his apprentice James Diddep to receive the payment on his behalf. (Fig. 14, Henry Mann note to Auditor of Public Accounts of Virginia pertaining to payment for framing a print of the Potomac River for the Council Chambers. Courtesy, Virginia State Library.) It has already been seen that Henry Mann repaired a clock case belonging to Col. John Syme of Hanover County, but that is not the only recorded instance of his clock repair work. In an article in *American Furniture* by Nancy Goyne Evans, it is noted that on March 8, 1790, Mann billed Maj. Thomas Jones of Northumberland County, Virginia, ten shillings for "Repairing ye head of a Clockcase."¹⁵⁰ This undoubtedly refers to a repair to the hood (or bonnet) of a longcase clock belonging to Jones. Mann did other repair work for Jones as well that included putting "a Handle to a Silver Coffee pott," for which he billed Jones six shillings on January 6, 1790.¹⁵¹

Sir please Issue a Warrant as I enclose
 Order sh^d be very much Oblidg^d to You
 To direct y^r Bearens Iat^d didd^e where to
 apply for the Money
 Richmond } I am Sir Your^{ble} hum. Serv^t
 Feb 10. 1790 }
 John Pendleton Esq^r
 Auditor of publick Acc^t
 Henry Mann

Figure 14

There is some indication Mann may have encountered a financial setback in 1790 because on July 29th of that year he appeared yet again in the Richmond Hustings Court and executed an indenture by which he assigned a lease to a lot he was then occupying under a lease from one Nancy Ege, to Robert Campbell in exchange for Campbell's agreement to assume Mann's indebtedness to Richmond merchant, John Hicks, to whom Mann owed £150 current money of Virginia, with interest.¹⁵² At the same time, Mann also mortgaged several items to Campbell that included "One Hearse, one Mahogany Beaufet, one pair mahogany tables, one ditto Card table, one painted Cupboard, one wall desk, one Mahogany Desk and book-case, one ditto Desk, twelve ditto Chairs, five hundred feet Mahogany, one thousand feet Walnut and one thousand feet Poplar plank." Under the terms of the agreement Mann could redeem both the lease and his personal property by paying his indebtedness to Hicks; otherwise, Campbell was authorized to sell them at public auction after the publication of due notice in the local papers. Since no notice of the sale has been discovered, it is more likely than not that Mann was able to repay his debt and retain his property.

The following year Henry Mann's name appeared in a Richmond city personal property tax list dated March 16, 1791, that showed both his name and that of William Mann written adjacent to each other; both were listed under the same date.¹⁵³ Although research discloses that there were other men named William Mann in the city of Richmond around this same time, it seems reasonable to believe that the one listed adjacent to Henry is his son of that name. On this list, Henry Mann is shown with three free tithable males and William with only one.

The next information we have about Henry Mann comes from another legal proceeding, specifically a Judgments case called Turner's Adms. vs. Mann filed in Henrico County in March of 1799.¹⁵⁴ This was an effort by the administrators of the estate of Matthew Turner to recover a debt owed the estate by Mann. According to information contained in the suit papers, on April 8, 1791, Turner delivered a load of lumber to Mann that consisted of 8 planks of black walnut, 10 feet long and 15 inches wide, 12 planks of black walnut 13 feet long and 14 inches wide, and 3 pine planks 16 feet long and 10 inches wide. The total bill for the material came to £8.18.6, and it was still unpaid at the time of Turner's death. The trial was commenced in May of 1798 but continued until March 6, 1799, at which time the jury hearing the case awarded the plaintiff the total amount claimed.

It will be recalled that when Henry Mann sold his lot in the town of Newcastle in Hanover County, the associated release of dower in the property named his wife as "Jane." Despite an extensive search no record of her surname has been found, nor has any information come to light that would prove her origins. Some Mann descendants believe she and Henry were married in England, but if that is the case nothing to substantiate this claim has been discovered. It may be worth recalling that when Jane Mann signed the release of dower to the land in Newcastle she did so in York County. As has been already seen, Henry Mann went to York for his health. In fact, there is at least one other known instance of his going to York for health reasons and the information comes from yet another Henrico County chancery cause, Henry Mann vs. Robert Hill.¹⁵⁵ According to information in the suit papers, in February of 1787 Henry Mann became security for the previously-mentioned Samuel Scherer on a replevy bond granted by him to Messrs. Stewart & Hill, merchants and partners, conditioned on the payment of £30.17.5 at the expiration of three months from the date of the bond; Robert Hill was the surviving partner of the

firm. A replevin is a legal term for an action to recover personal property wrongfully taken and a replevy bond is posted to protect against the loss of property sought to be returned to the petitioner. In this instance, Mann gave a certificate for £100 as security which was to be returned to him when Scherer's debt to the firm was repaid. However, even when the debt was satisfied by Scherer, Hill would not release Mann's certificate and this led to the chancery action commenced by Mann in 1793. The details of the case are not especially informative other than the fact that they contain an affidavit by James Diddep in which he stated that Henry Mann once again traveled to York for his health and that he accompanied him there. As already discussed the Diddep family was resident in Williamsburg by the 1750s and there was an Elizabeth Diddep that married in York in 1773. Considering Henry's continuing relationship with James Diddep and York, could Henry's wife have been a member of that family? While this may be interesting conjecture, nothing has been found to prove it.

The UVA manuscript contains the image of the cover of a book called *Sermons on Several Important Subjects* by James Bryson, A.M. This volume was published in Dublin in 1778, where Bryson was a minister of the Belfast Presbyterian congregation. As will be discussed more fully later on, this book could have come into the Mann family through their connection with the family of the Virginia itinerant artist, John Toole, who painted a portrait of Henry's son, Arthur Mann. Toole came to Virginia from Dublin and became the brother-in-law of John Powhatan Mann, one of Arthur Mann's sons. The point of mentioning this here is that the page shown in the UVA manuscript has a pencil inscription on it indicating that Henry's son, Arthur, was born in February 1768, and this claim is repeated in a family group sheet in the manuscript.

Discussions with the manuscripts author indicate that her information came from several sources, including research by her mother, and others, but she could not recall specific documentation that would confirm this date.¹⁵⁶ In any case it has been seen that Henry Mann was in York County, Virginia, by May 1763, so if the 1768 date of birth for Arthur Mann is accepted as accurate, he was most likely born in York County and possibly in Yorktown.

Henry's wife, Jane Mann, died in Richmond, Virginia, in March of 1793. The first notice of her death was published March 18th of that year in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*: "MANN, Mrs., spouse of Henry MANN, cabinetmaker, of Richmond, on Mon. the 18th inst."¹⁵⁷

A subsequent notice was carried in the same paper on March 20th: “DIED . . . on Monday the 18th instant, Mrs. Mann, wife of Mr. Henry Mann, cabinet-maker of this city. Her remains were interred yesterday afternoon attended by a large and respectable number of citizens.”¹⁵⁸ Efforts to identify her place of interment have been unsuccessful.

Henry Mann was still working in Richmond in March of 1799 when he was made the defendant in another Judgements suit called *Turner’s Adms. vs. Mann* and he was still there in August of 1801, according to an advertisement placed in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser* on August 11th of that year on behalf of his son, Arthur: “WANTED IMMEDIATELY TWO or three Journeymen CABINET-MAKERS and 2 Journeymen HOUSE-JOINERS . . . Arthur Mann, Louisa county, near the Court-House. August 10th, 1801. N. B. The terms will be made known by applying to Mr. Henry Mann, Cabinet-Maker, near Henrico Court-House.”¹⁵⁹ The original location of the Henrico County Courthouse, which was completed in 1752, was in the middle of what is now 22nd Street just south of Main and it remained in that location until the 1840s when it was removed to the corner of 22nd and Main.¹⁶⁰ The courthouse is shown at its original location on the Richard Young map. It may be that by this date Henry was living in a rental property belonging to Samuel Scherer, because his name appears on one of the dwellings depicted in a Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia insurance policy taken out by Scherer on November 5, 1801; Mann’s name appears in this document as “H. Mann.”¹⁶¹ The policy describes these rental properties belonging to Scherer as “Seven Buildings on the Main Street (South) at Richmond now occupied by Sundry Persons.” When Mann may have moved into one of Scherer’s dwellings is not known.

A search of the Richmond city personal property tax lists show that Henry Mann was taxed in 1799 (75¢), 1800 (44¢), and 1801 (44¢) on one black male over the age of twelve years; however, his name does not appear on the 1802 tax list.¹⁶² It may be recalled that there was a note among the papers in the *Henry Mann vs. John Syme* chancery cause stating that the suit was abated on June 11, 1805, by Mann’s death, so he died some time between November 1801, and June 11, 1805. The UVA manuscript states that he died ca. 1804 in Louisa County, Virginia. If so, he most likely moved there to live with or near his son, Arthur, who had moved there from Richmond prior to 1800.

William Mann

Henry Mann's sons first appear in records that placed them in Newcastle, Hanover County, where they almost certainly lived with their father and worked in his shop. As stated earlier, there was more than one William Mann in Richmond while Henry was living and working there, and this makes it difficult or, in some cases, impossible to be certain which one is actually being discussed in many of the records. Two of the earliest Richmond references to a William Mann who could be Henry's son connect him with the Gabriel Galt that married Elizabeth Ege, daughter of Jacob Ege Sr. Galt was a well-known Richmond silversmith and also operated one of the city's early taverns, variously called Galt's Tavern and The Old City Tavern, that stood at the corner of 19th and Main Streets, only one block from Henry Mann's cabinet shop.¹⁶³ Anthony Singleton, a gentleman who patronized this tavern, recorded in his memorandum account book various payments he made there including one on May 14, 1787, for £2.8 to "Mr. Mann."¹⁶⁴ The 1787 Richmond city personal property tax listed the names of the adult males living in Gabriel Galt's household and they included William Mann, "Con." Fogarty, and Hugh McCurrey.¹⁶⁵ The following year at a meeting of the Richmond Hustings Court held on February 25, 1788, William Mann was granted a license "to keep a Tavern at the house of Gabriel Galt in this City."¹⁶⁶ Galt died on October 25, 1788, and his wife Elizabeth relinquished the administration of his estate to David Lambert and Jacob Ege, Jr.¹⁶⁷ This same William Mann is listed in the 1788 return of taxable property in the city of Richmond in which he is shown with two white males over the age of sixteen, five tithable slaves, and an ordinary license for a total tax of £4.12.¹⁶⁸ It is the close proximity of Galt's tavern to Henry Mann's shop and the connections between the Mann and Ege families that suggest the possibility that it was Henry's son, William, who was assisting Galt with the operation of his tavern. There is also a record of a marriage for a William Mann in 1787 that could possibly pertain to Henry's son, but efforts to definitively prove this have been unsuccessful. The bond, dated October 17, 1787, is for the marriage of a William Mann to Dorathea Hutchins; the surety, John V. Kautz, attested to Dorathea's age and residence.¹⁶⁹ The records of Henrico Parish, which included the city of Richmond, show this marriage took place in St. John's Church in Richmond, but the published transcription of the parish record gives the date as October 13, 1787.¹⁷⁰ St. John's is located in what is today called the Church Hill section

of Richmond on East Broad Street, only a few blocks from where it is believed Henry and William Mann lived and worked.

William was most likely living and working near his father by 1791 when his name and that of his father both appeared on the Richmond city personal property tax list for that year; on this list William is charged with only one taxable male.¹⁷¹ On the 1792 tax list his name is written “William Mann (cabt maker).” The following year he placed a notice in *The Virginia Gazette and Richmond and Manchester Advertiser* published on June 27, 1793: “WILLIAM MANN, BEGS leave to inform his Friends and the Public, that he carries on the business of a CABINET MAKER in all its branches, at his shop on the North side of the Main-street, between the Bridge and the Court-house. He will diligently and faithfully execute all orders which may be given, in their due turn; and as he knows that not only his credit as a workman, but his dependence for support depends on his conduct; these will be additional motives to exert himself, both to serve and to please.”¹⁷² The bridge mentioned in the advertisement is undoubtedly the one shown on the Richard Young map where Main (E street on the map) and 17th Streets meet. This would place William Mann’s shop on one of the lots belonging to the Jacob Ege, Sr., heirs between 17th and 22nd Streets and quite possibly on the western half of lot 33 owned by Anne Ege. The following year the name “Wm. Mann” appeared in the Common Council records of the city of Richmond that show an order for the payment of £1.4.0 “for a Coffin furnished by him for a poor Stranger who died in the City.”¹⁷³

An advertisement that ran in *The Virginia Gazette and Richmond and Manchester Advertiser* on January 22, 1795, could relate to either William or Henry: “For Sale by E. POTTER, At the house lately occupied by Mr. J. Moody, next door to Mr. Mann, Cabinet Maker; JAMAICA Spirits, by the Hhd. or smaller quantity.”¹⁷⁴ The next notice of William Mann and his cabinetmaking business comes from *The Richmond and Manchester Advertiser* on November 7, 1796: “Wanted Immediately, Two Journeyman Cabinet Makers. ALSO A QUANTITY OF GOOD WALNUT PLANK. Apply to WILLIAM MANN. Richmond, Nov. 7, 1796.”¹⁷⁵

It has already been stated that a search of the Richmond city personal property tax lists revealed that Henry Mann was taxed in 1799, 1800, and 1801 for one black male over the age of twelve

years.¹⁷⁶ William Mann's name appeared on these same lists and he is also credited with one black male over the age of twelve years. However, as was the case with his father, William's name is not included on the 1802 list although it seems likely he remained in Richmond, as he is probably the William Mann named as surety on a Henrico County marriage bond on February 26, 1807, for the marriage of Francis Howard to Margaret Scheere [sic].¹⁷⁷ Consent was given by her guardian, John Adams, while "Ph." Rogers and Samuel Adams witnessed the consent. Margaret Scherer was a daughter of Samuel Scherer and his wife, Hannah, according to a notice of a proceeding in the Superior Court of Chancery published in the February 9, 1808, issue of *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*.¹⁷⁸ She is identified as Margaret Howard, wife of Francis, in a Richmond Hustings Court order dividing the real property of Samuel Scherer in the city in August of 1809.¹⁷⁹ What became of William after his appearance in Richmond in February 1807 cannot be said. He may have remained in the city, or moved on to some other place in Virginia, or elsewhere.

Arthur Mann

Only a few records have been found that pertain to Arthur Mann during the time he resided in Richmond. The earliest is the 1787 personal property tax list that included his name as residing in the same household as that of his father, together with several black males; however, only one white male over the age of twenty-one is recorded, and this suggests that Arthur had not yet attained that age.¹⁸⁰ He is not listed individually on either the 1788 or the 1789 tax list, but his father Henry is shown on both with two free white tithable males, so Arthur was most likely still residing in his father's household during this period of time.¹⁸¹

On September 9, 1793, Arthur signed a Henrico County bond for the marriage of John McIntire to Susannah Talley, who gave her own consent with William Todd as surety and Mann as witness to the consent.¹⁸² It was also in 1793 that he provided depositions during his father's chancery suits against David Crenshaw and John Syme. From his statement in the suit against Crenshaw, it is clear Arthur was working in his father's Richmond shop at that time. Interestingly, he was listed under his own name in the 1794 Richmond personal property tax list as were Henry and William Mann; the returns to the tax commissioner were all dated the same day: March 12, 1794.¹⁸³

Some time after his name appeared in the 1794 personal property tax list for Richmond, Arthur Mann decided to leave the city and move to Louisa County, Virginia, and he was living there by March 12, 1798 when his name appeared as “Artor” Mann on the Louisa County personal property tax list for that year; the listing shows one male over the age of sixteen.¹⁸⁴ The same year, the Orange County, Virginia, will books recorded an audit of the estate of Dabney Minor and it noted that on April 1, 1798, Arthur Mann was paid £0.12.0 “for Brickmolds as pr Rect.”¹⁸⁵ Minor, a prosperous carpenter who lived at Woodlawn plantation in Orange County, Virginia, was appointed by the Virginia Director of Public Buildings to work on Virginia’s new Capitol building.¹⁸⁶ To facilitate his work, Minor began living in Richmond when construction commenced on the Capitol, and he did not return to his home in Orange until 1796. Minor’s Orange County will, dated July 23, 1797 and proved February 26, 1798, contained the following provision: “From the debts due to me when collected it is my will and desire that my executors shall apply as much as may be needful Towards finishing and compleating my dwelling house now building . . .”¹⁸⁷ From this it would seem that the brick molds made by Arthur Mann were intended for use in the construction of the dwelling house Minor was erecting at Woodlawn. It seems quite likely that Arthur Mann and Dabney Minor met in Richmond during the latter’s tenure there and that they were acquainted with each other.

Why Arthur Mann chose to abandon the state’s capital city and move to rural Louisa County, Virginia is unknown. While his decision may have been based on purely personal considerations, such as an intended marriage, it is also possible it was a response to evolving trends that took place during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when furniture making in parts of the state underwent both considerable expansion and diversification. These changes have been documented and discussed by furniture scholar, Jonathan Prown, in his 1992 cultural analysis of furniture-making in Petersburg, Virginia, a city on the Appomattox River, just south of Richmond.”¹⁸⁸ As noted by Prown, although growth continued after 1800, it did so in a cultural context in which artisans of all sorts increasingly “faced competition from the ever-growing importation of fashionable and affordable furniture from northern manufacturing centers,” such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and elsewhere.¹⁸⁹ Furniture styles also began to change as more stylish northern imports found a receptive market in the south and this helped

open the door “for large quantities of fashionable and competitively-priced northern furniture to move southward.”¹⁹⁰ Imported furniture became readily available in port towns such as Richmond and Petersburg and the competition it created was simply too much for some of the smaller, less diversified cabinet shops. This too may have been a factor in Arthur Mann’s decision to move to Louisa County.

The 1800 federal census records for all Virginia counties other than Accomack and Louisa were lost when the British burned Washington, D. C. in 1814 during the War of 1812. However, a copy of the Louisa return was retained locally and it has been published in *The Louisa County Historical Magazine*.¹⁹¹ This tax list recorded the name Arthur Mann with three free white males under the age of ten; one free white male of age twenty-six, but under forty-five [Arthur Mann]; and one free white female of age sixteen or older and under twenty-six years of age [most likely his wife]. From this, it would appear that by the time this census was taken, Arthur Mann was married; however, no record of this marriage has been found. The UVA manuscript mentioned earlier contains a family group sheet that names Nancy Banks Thompson as Arthur Mann’s first wife, but no source for this claim is given. This same group sheet also listed the following children and suggested dates of birth for Arthur’s children: Henry Glover Mann (ca. 1792/93); Walter Windsor Mann (ca. 1794/95); Oliver Thom(p)son Mann (ca. 1801); Louisa Ann Mann (ca. 1804); James Thom(p)son Mann (1800); William Willis Mann (August 16, 1810); Arthur Avington Mann (1811); and John Powhatan Mann (May 2, 1813). It should be added that in this manuscript Arthur’s name is written as “Arthur Avington ? Mann,” where the question mark following the suggested middle name indicated uncertainty among Mann family members about this being his actual middle name if, indeed, he had one. Nothing found during the research documented here indicates he had a middle name. Arthur’s son, who was called Arthur Avington Mann, ended up in Butte County, California, where he died. An image of his gravestone can be found in the Find A Grave online database, and it gives his date of birth as October 12, 1818, not 1811, as does the UVA manuscript.¹⁹²

On April 28, 1801, Arthur Mann took Miles S. Biggers of Louisa County, son of David Biggers, as an apprentice.¹⁹³ The record indicates Biggers became a voluntary apprentice to Arthur Mann, cabinetmaker, “to learn his art and trade.” The agreement, which was to begin on April 28, 1801,

and run for three years, specified that Biggers was to be paid £10 pounds a year to buy clothes and added that “he shall not commit fornication nor contract matrimony within the said term.” It will be recalled that this is the same year Arthur Mann advertised in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser* of Richmond looking for two or three journeymen cabinetmakers and two journeymen house carpenters, so he must have been engaged in both cabinetmaking and house joinery at that time. The newspaper notice indicated that Arthur was located near the courthouse in Louisa, the seat of the county of that name. He was still living in Louisa County on October 24, 1812, when he was listed as surety on a bond for the marriage of John Almond and Patsey Tudor, who were married the following day by the Reverend Claibourn Walton.¹⁹⁴

It is probable that Arthur Mann’s first wife died some time prior to April 27, 1815, because on that date he was married in Louisa to a lady called “Marthey Brown” on the marriage bond.¹⁹⁵ The surety was Thomas Gunther, the witness was Wilson Ware, and the Baptist minister who performed the service was W. Y. [William Young] Hiter.¹⁹⁶ The same year the name Arthur Mann was recorded among those who owned land in Louisa County.¹⁹⁷ He was still living in Louisa when the 1820 federal census was taken.¹⁹⁸ His name also appeared in the Louisa County records about this same time in a conveyance made by David P. Cocke and his wife, Elizabeth, and Samuel C. Mitchell to John Gunther of Louisa; the land description stated that the tract adjoined that of Arthur Mann.¹⁹⁹

The 1830 census of Virginia shows two men by the name Arthur Mann, one in the northern district of Augusta County [spelled “Arther” in this record] and the other in Chesterfield County.²⁰⁰ However, only the Augusta record contains a male between the ages of sixty and seventy years, which would be consistent with someone born ca. 1768. The UVA manuscript stated that two of Arthur’s sons, Walter Windsor Mann and Oliver Thom(p)son Mann, moved to Augusta County, so Arthur may have been living with one of them at the time the 1830 census was enumerated.

No further mention of the name, Arthur Mann, has been found in the census records, and the family group sheet in the UVA manuscript claims that he died ca. 1846 in North Garden, Albemarle County, Virginia. If this is correct, it is likely he moved there to live with his son,

John Powhatan Mann, who was a resident of North Garden. The likelihood of this is bolstered by the fact that the Virginia itinerant artist John Toole painted not only Arthur Mann's portrait, but that of his son, John Powhatan Mann, and his wife, Martha, as well. These three portraits are now part of a large collection of John Toole paintings housed at the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia.²⁰¹ (Fig. 15, Portrait of Arthur Abingdon Mann. Courtesy, Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, Gift of the Family of Woodruff Weaver, 1956.1.16.) The portrait is identified in the Fralin Museum's files as "Arthur Abingdon Mann."²⁰² However, in the UVA manuscript this same portrait is called "Arthur A. Mann, Sr.," presumably meaning Arthur Avington Mann, Sr., but it is almost without doubt that of Arthur Mann, Henry's son.

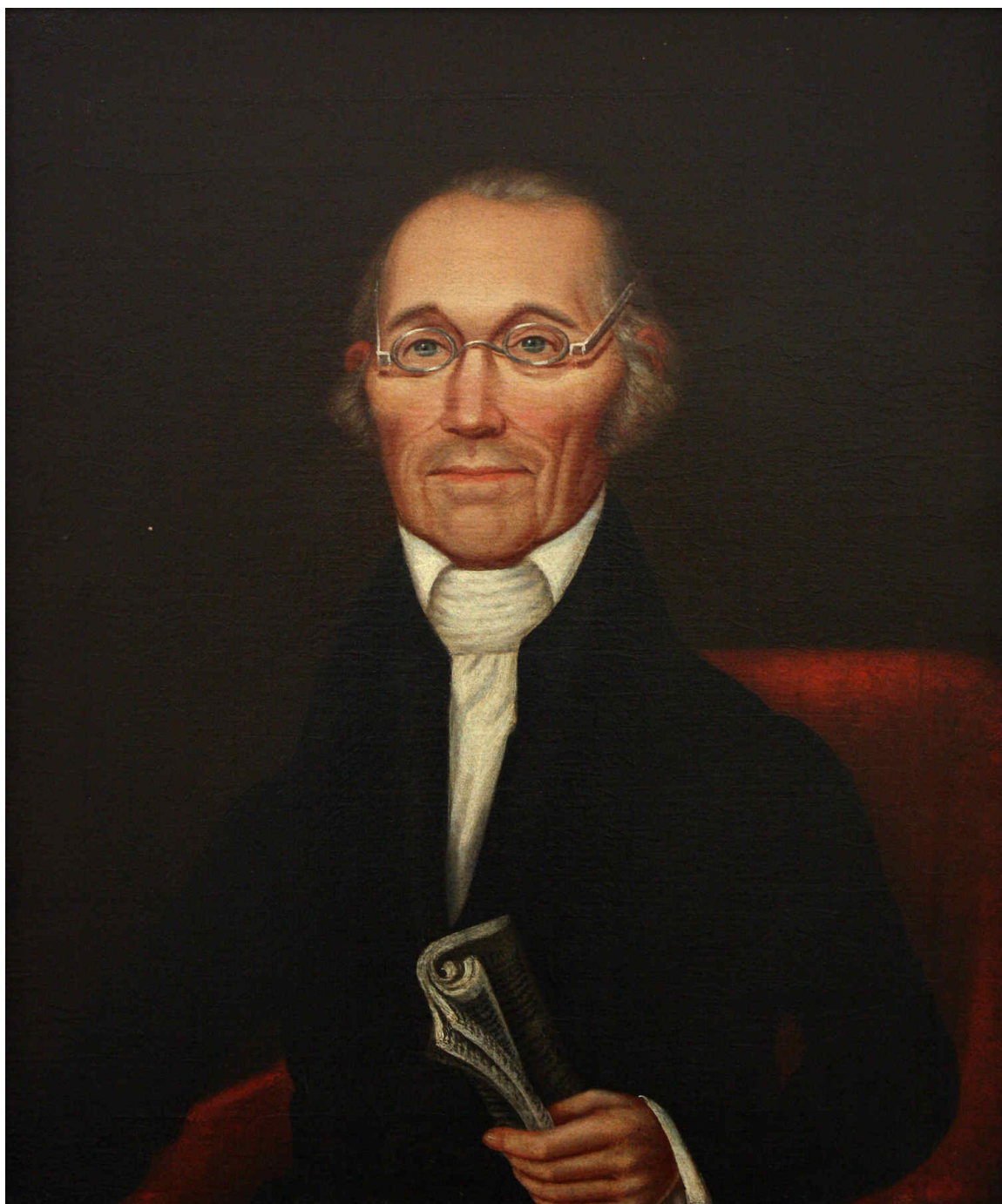


Figure 15

According to a biographical sketch of John Toole [originally, O'Toole] published by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C., the artist was born in Dublin, Ireland, on November 26, 1815, the son of Michael O'Toole, a chemistry teacher.²⁰³ After his father's death, there as the result of an experiment that went wrong, John was sent to the United States in 1827

along with a brother and sister to live with an aunt and uncle in Charlottesville, Virginia. Although facts concerning John Toole's early education and artistic training are sketchy, it is known that he was already painting by 1832 or 1833, during a stay in Harper's Ferry, Virginia. In 1836, Toole married Mary Jane Suddarth, and they settled in North Garden, near Charlottesville. Although John may have been a druggist or tavern keep for a short time following his marriage, he was painting again by 1838 and this remained his sole source of livelihood from that time until his death in Charlottesville on March 11, 1860. It was Mary Jane Suddarth's sister, Martha Ann Suddarth, that married John Powhatan Mann; both were daughters of Richard Pleasants Suddarth whose portrait was also painted by Toole and is in the Fralin collection. It is probable that Toole painted Arthur Mann's portrait while he was living in North Garden with his son.

Arthur Mann Chest of Drawers²⁰⁴

The Arthur Mann chest of drawers is in keeping with furniture of the period that was termed "neat and plain" and is almost square in proportions (Fig. 16, Mann chest of drawers). Its top case molding is distinctive and consists of a cove surmounting an astragal (Fig. 17, Top molding of Fig. 16). Rails, onto which the base molding is run, are set under case front and sides. Bracket feet, supported by beveled vertical corner blocks, flanked by beveled horizontal blocks, are set under these rails (Fig. 18, Foot and rail construction of Fig. 16). The case's rear foot supports are set under short rails placed under each end of the rear of the case. The lower section of each of the chest's feet has a pronounced, even exaggerated, swelled element (Fig. 19, Foot of Fig. 16). This feature is indicative of casework of the period in and around Richmond.²⁰⁵



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19

The back of the chest's case consists of three vertical boards, beveled at the top and sides and set in dadoes run along the rear of the case top and sides (Fig. 20, Back of Fig. 16). The bottoms of these boards are flush nailed to the rear of the case bottom. The case sides are blind dovetailed to the case top and half-blind dovetailed to the case bottom. Its drawers are supported by full-thickness, half-depth dustboards set in dadoes run in the case sides (Fig. 21, Interior of Fig. 16). Short drawer runners, mitered in the rear, are set behind the dustboards. Walnut strips are attached to the front corners of the case to hide these dadoes.



Figure 20



Figure 21

The case drawer bottoms are beveled on the front and sides and set in dadoes run along the lower sections of the drawer fronts and sides (Fig. 22, Drawer bottom of Fig. 16). The rear of the drawer bottoms is face nailed to the drawer backs. No glue blocks are present. Well-formed dovetails, narrower in the front than in the rear, secure the drawer sides to the drawer fronts and backs (Fig. 23, Drawer dovetails of Fig. 16). The top most dovetails on the front and rear of the

drawer sides are much thicker than other drawer dovetails. This feature will most likely prove diagnostic in identifying unsigned examples of Arthur Mann's work.



Figure 22



Figure 23

A number of construction and assembly marks remain on the Mann chest of drawers. The number 5 inside a triangular-shaped assembly mark is written in chalk on the back of the uppermost case drawer (Fig. 24, Drawer back of Fig. 16). The back of the second drawer from the top has the number 6 in a triangular-shaped assembly mark, the third drawer from the top a 7, and the bottom drawer an 8. These do not represent drawer numbers, but are the heights of the drawer fronts, which are slightly taller than the drawer sides and backs. The drawers are numbered on their bottoms with a circle containing one to four slash marks corresponding to the first through fourth drawer from top to bottom (See Fig. 22). The bottom case drawer therefore is marked 8 in a triangular-shaped assembly mark on its backboard to signify the height of the drawer front and with a circle containing four slash marks signifying it is the fourth drawer from the top of the case. The second and fourth drawers from the top of the case retain their drawer numbers, while the first and third drawers have lost their marks through wear. The top case drawer is also marked “No 1 Top” in pencil on the upper surface of the drawer bottom (Fig. 25, Top drawer markings of Fig. 16). This mark identifies the show, or visible, surface of the drawer bottom in drawer number one, the top drawer, of the case. Mann also numbered the back of each rear foot support in chalk 1 and 2 respectively to aid in assembly (Fig. 26, Rear foot support of Fig. 16) (Fig. 27, Rear foot support of Fig. 16).



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27

A final question remains concerning the markings on this chest of drawers. Is the signature “Arthur Mann” written under the case in Mann’s hand, or was it written by a journeyman or an apprentice? Two examples of Arthur Mann’s signature are preserved in depositions taken in May, 1793 (Top signature of Fig. 28) and December, 1793 (Bottom signature of Fig. 28). While the “As” differ, the rest of the letters in these two signatures match. The signature under the chest of drawers (Middle signature of Fig. 28) exactly matches Mann’s signature on the May, 1793 deposition except for the formation of the “Ms”. Corresponding features include a distinctive flourish used in the formation of the “As”, the unusual treatment of both “Rs” in Arthur, and the trait of not creating a break between the “Ns” in Mann. These and other similarities of letter formation among these signatures, offer compelling evidence that the signature under the chest of drawers is in Arthur Mann’s hand.



Figure 28

Endnotes

1. Figures 1, 2, and 16-27, Courtesy, Tom Newbern.
2. Tremont Auctions, November 15, 2015, lot 147. Accessed at <https://new.liveauctioneers.com/item/42386659>.
3. Stevens, Evelyn Mann. "The Mann family of Virginia (1768-1986) featuring the antecedents and descendants of John Powhatan Mann of North Garden in Albemarle County [manuscript]"

n.d." Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, MSS 10695.

4. Ancestry.com. UK, Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices' Indentures, 1710-1811 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. This collection, indexed by Ancestry World Archives Project contributors, is derived from original data contained in Board of Stamps: Apprenticeship Books, Series IR 1; The National Archives of the UK (TNA), Kew, Surrey, England.

5. This may be the William Hopkins of Wanstead, citizen and joiner of London, whose will was probated December 29, 1777 (PROB 11/1037/333 Collier Quite Number: 489-539, Accessed at <http://www.ahopkinsfamily.org/eastend.htm>).

6. Newbern, Thomas R. J., and James R. Melchor. *WH Cabinetmaker: A Southern Mystery Solved*. Benton, KY: Legacy Ink Publishing, 2009.

7. Gusler, Wallace B. *Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790*. Reprint edition, Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1993, p. 162. Also see, Beckerdite, Luke. "A Virginia Cabinetmaker: The Eventon Shop and Related Work." *Journal of Early American Southern Decorative Arts*, vol. 10, no. 2, November 1984, pp. 4-5.

8. York County, Virginia, Judgments & Orders, Book 4, p. 14.

9. Ibid., p. 40.

10. Ibid., p. 97.

11. John Norton & Sons papers, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia. Accessed at http://www.nortonfamily.net/images/Norton_Sons_Papers.pdf.

12. York County, Virginia, Judgments & Orders, Book 4, p. 122.

13. Ibid., p. 128.

14. Ibid., p. 170.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 176.

17. Ibid., p. 190.

18. Ibid., p. 226.

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