

The Moore Chair Co. Highchair: A Research Note

By

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In 2011, Jim Melchor and Tom Newbern published “Norfolk Common Chairs”, which evaluated known examples and histories of common chairs manufactured in Norfolk in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Among the most significant discoveries made by Melchor and Newbern is the attribution of a series of chairs to manufacturer, Joshua Moore, of Moore Chair Company. In many cases, Moore stamped his products with “M.C.Co”. At the time of Melchor and Newbern’s writing, chairs attributed to Moore Chair Company included only side chairs.

In 2015, a Richmond, Virginia, sale offered a highchair of similar significance (Fig. 1, Moore Chair Co. highchair). Its unusual form and untouched paint-decorated surface make it an exciting survivor. As with several side chairs previously attributed to Joshua Moore, this chair bears two “M.C.Co” stamps on the underside of its seat (Fig. 2, M.C.Co markings on Fig. 1). Unfortunately, the chair has been reduced in height roughly four to five inches. It now stands 29 3/8” high. The crest rail and foot rest are 13 1/8” wide. Surviving paint appears to have been dark brown

with light-colored horizontal rings painted on forward facing surfaces only.



Figure 1



Figure 2

In this example, all of the rails and stiles, with the exception of the crest rail, are fully turned. In contrast to many surviving side chairs, the highchair's crest rail extends beyond both stiles and is comparatively fairly thick. The ends of the crest rail are beveled from the rear (Fig. 3, Back of Fig. 1). The arms also extend beyond the arm supports. Four knife blade marks on the bottom of the seat are consistent with construction marks found on other surviving

chairs attributed to Joshua Moore (Fig. 4, Underside of seat of Fig. 1).



Figure 3



Figure 4

The survival of this highchair broadens the scope of work known to have been produced by the Moore Chair Company. Based on the

numerous examples of chairs attributed to Joshua Moore and the Moore Chair Company, it is clear that Moore was a prolific chair maker in early nineteenth-century Norfolk, Virginia.

For higher resolution photos of the Figures, click on:

<http://ehcnc.org/decorative-arts/furniture/highchair-pictures/>

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Reference:

Melchor, Jim and Newbern, Tom, "Norfolk Common Chairs",
www.ehcnc.org , July 4, 2012.