

A Sharrock-Seay Chest and Bookcase and Two Roanoke River Basin Cabinet Shops

By: Tom Newbern and Jim Melchor

Editor's note: For an enlarged view of figures, simply zoom in on your computer.

By the last decade of the eighteenth century, what has come to be known as the Roanoke River Basin School of Cabinetmaking was centered on two main cabinet shops located near the northwestern Bertie County crossroads now known as Roxobel. One was the shop of house joiner and cabinetmaker William Seay (Fig. 1). Around 1789, Seay received a commission from wealthy planter Whitmell Hill to construct a house at Hill's Ferry, located across the Roanoke River in adjoining Halifax County, and an extravagant series of case pieces for Hill and his four children.¹ As a result of this commission, over the next twenty years Seay was hired to construct houses for a number of wealthy second and third generation Roanoke River planters within a twenty-five-mile radius of Roxobel. He also built a number of pieces of furniture in keeping with the Hill pieces to fill these homes. Roxobel, a center of trade and commerce along this stretch of the Roanoke River, essentially became a woodworking industrial complex serving this section of northeastern North Carolina. Craftsmen gravitated to Roxobel to fill this need. One of these woodworkers was Thomas Sharrock, Sr., the proprietor of the second cabinet shop.



Figure 1 *William Seay Cabinet Shop.*

Thomas Sharrock, Sr., settled just north of Roxobel, called Grandbury in Fig. 2, in southern Northampton County following the completion of his apprenticeship in 1762 to prominent Norfolk, Virginia, carpenter and joiner, Richard Taylor. He married Bathsheba Daughtry, the daughter of Northampton County Quaker, Bryan Daughtry, and raised a family of twelve children, eleven boys and one girl.² At least ten of the eleven

Sharrock boys were trained by their father as cabinetmakers and joiners. Sharrock, Sr., lived near and may have worked with fellow Northampton County cabinetmaker Thomas White, who like Sharrock's father-in-law, was a Quaker. White, a native of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, had initially settled in Perquimans County, North Carolina, in 1756, before his move to Northampton in 1766.³



Figure 2 Price Strother Map of North Carolina, 1808.

Compelling evidence points to White's training in the Newport, Rhode Island, cabinet shop of John Goddard in the early 1750s, prior to his return to Isle of Wight and subsequent moves to Perquimans and then to Northampton.⁴ He married the daughter of wealthy Northampton County planter, John Duke, and built a brick-end home on the eastern end of Duke's holdings two miles east of the present-day town of Rich Square, and just five miles north of the Seay property (Fig. 3) (See Fig. 2). White's home was taken down in 1932, but its woodwork was moved to a Richmond, Virginia, house that later became a country club (Fig. 4).



Figure 3 *Thomas White House near Rich Square. Courtesy of MESDA.*



Figure 4 *Woodwork from White house currently in Richmond country club. Courtesy of MESDA.*

White constructed an elaborate built-in cupboard in his brick-end home. The cupboard's design features allowed decorative arts scholar, John Bivins, to identify White's Perquimans County cabinetry (Fig. 5).⁵ The same cupboard and White's Perquimans work offer evidence of White's likely influence on decorative elements of Seay's furniture, including the half-round drop, cove, and return seen on the feet of most Seay case pieces (Fig. 6) (Fig. 7). The concave and convex elements found in the shell-like feature on the built-in cupboard in White's Northampton County home is the likely inspiration for the articulated arches found above the top lights of the upper doors of Seay corner cupboards and

presses (Fig. 8) (Fig. 9). The center fifth foot seen on a Seay chest with butler's drawer and press and on a chest made and signed by Thomas Sharrock's son, George, may also be evidence of White's influence (Fig. 10) (Fig. 11) (Fig. 12).



Figure 5 *Cupboard originally in Thomas White House.*
Courtesy of MESDA.



Figure 6 *Foot on Thomas White desk. Courtesy of MESDA.*



Figure 7 *Foot on William Seay map press. Courtesy of MESDA.*



Figure 8 *Shell-like element in Fig. 5. Courtesy of MESDA.*



Figure 9 *Articulated arches of upper doors of William Seay cupboard. Courtesy of MESDA.*



Figure 10 *Thomas White desk with center fifth foot. Courtesy of MESDA.*



Figure 11 *William Seay chest with butler's drawer and press with center foot. Courtesy of MESDA.*



Figure 12 *George Sharrock chest of drawers with center fifth foot.*
Courtesy of MESDA.

Fluted quarter columns found on Sharrock case pieces also show a close relationship to White's earlier Perquimans work (See *W H Cabinetmaker*, pages 148-149). George Sharrock and his father made a

number of purchases of tools such as hollows and rounds, plains, chisels, gouges, and a screw auger at White's June 1, 1789, estate sale.

Sharrock, Sr., also bought "1 old chest in the Shop" and George bought 100 feet of walnut plank and "a parcel Joiners patterns".⁶

The Bertie County census of 1790 documents the Sharrock family's move from southern Northampton County across the county line to northern Bertie, where Thomas Sharrock, Sr., was listed as Thomas Sherlock. His household contained four free males 16 and older, five free males under 16, two females and four slaves.⁷ These numbers coincide with the ages of eight of his ten sons, plus his wife, Bathsheba, and his one daughter, Elizabeth. His other two sons remained across the county line in southern Northampton County, where George Sharrock and one other male 16 or older, undoubtedly George's remaining brother, were listed in the Northampton County census of 1790.⁸

Thomas White's death on Christmas day in 1788 and the closing of his well-stocked cabinet shop, in addition to Seay's rising prominence as a house joiner and cabinetmaker following the Hill commission, probably explains Sharrock, Sr.'s, move to Roxobel.

Seay constructed his cabinet shop at the time of the Hill commission on a tract of land inherited from his father, Dr. James Seay, known since the 1750s as "Saw Scaffold", indicating that woodworking on the site

predated Seay family ownership.⁹ Seay's choice of this location for his shop, a mile south of the Roxobel crossroads, was based on its accessibility to Seay and two of his siblings, Isaac and John, who were also trained as woodworkers. "Saw Scaffold" was located on a westward projection of the portion his father's land inherited by William Seay, therefore centered among the lands of the three Seay brothers.

The Sharrocks built their cabinet shop and home on a 209 1/2-acre tract adjoining the southern corner of the Roxobel crossroads.¹⁰ Their cabinet shop was located approximately thirty yards behind and to the proper left of their home (Fig. 13). Constructed of dovetailed plank like the Seay shop, it was examined by experts from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources shortly before, unfortunately, it was taken down in the 1990's. Dating to the later years of the eighteenth century, they determined that it was not a kitchen and that it was not a slave quarters. Considering its form and structural elements, that left its likely use as a workshop of some type. The examiners were not aware that the property was in the possession of the Sharrock family of cabinetmakers during the period this building was first constructed and first used.¹¹



Figure 13 *Sharrock Cabinet Shop in Bertie County.*

A detailed map of Bertie County was created in 1863 by General Jeremy Gilmer, Chief of the Engineer Bureau for the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia. The Sharrock home is shown on the map as being owned by “Mrs. Peelle”. The cabinet shop is shown the furthest southwest of the house in a line of three structures. One or both of the other two structures also may have been utilized by the Sharrocks for woodworking purposes (Fig. 14).



Figure 14 *Detail of 1863 Gilmer Map showing site of Sharrock House and Cabinet Shop.*

The home the Sharrocks constructed on their Bertie tract was a story-and-a-half structure with Seay decorative features that originally contained a center chimney, which was removed and replaced with gable-end chimneys in 1814, based on a date brick in one of the chimneys (Fig. 15). Center-chimney houses were very unusual in this region of North Carolina but were a staple of Seay's work. Two two-story examples built by Seay across the Roanoke River in Halifax County that originally contained center chimneys survive, the 1783 William R. Davie house in the town of Halifax and Woodstock, built in 1788, based on its date brick, for Scotland Neck planter, John Drew, (See *W H Cabinetmaker*, Figs. 360 and 369). Thomas Sharrock, Sr., was on site and undoubtedly involved in the construction of Woodstock, where he witnessed two December 10, 1788, deeds from Drew to Norfleet Harris.¹² The center-chimney form lived on after Seay's death in 1812 through the work of his brother-in-law, Micajah Wilkes. After Seay's death, Wilkes returned to land inherited from his father just north of the Seay shop, and there he constructed his own story-and-a-half center-chimney house (Fig. 16). This house also contained Seay decorative features, including a second story loft balustrade with balusters matching the original porch columns of the circa 1798 Cader Powell house constructed by Seay four miles north of the Seay shop. One of the original porch columns was preserved when the column was

cut in half and reused as diagonal supports in the addition added to the Powell house in 1852 by J. J. Horton (Fig. 17) (Fig. 18).



Figure 15 *Sharrock House in Bertie County.*



Figure 16 *Micajah Wilkes House in Bertie County.*



Figure 17 *Loft balustrade in Fig. 16.*



Figure 18 *Porch column of Cader Powell House built by William Seay.*

Logic would dictate that the Sharrocks would build their home and cabinet shop as close to the Roxobel crossroads as possible, which would give them convenient access to Roxobel merchants and especially to the road leading southwest from the crossroads to the Roanoke River landing. Instead, the Sharrocks chose to build as far to the south of, and therefore away from, the Roxobel crossroads as their tract would allow. This selection did, however, place the Sharrock cabinet shop as close to the Seay shop as the Sharrock tract would allow, offering evidence of Seay's importance to the regional trade. A 1918 North Carolina Department of Agriculture map of this area, created before the overlay of our modern highway system, illustrates the roads that connected the homes and shops of the Seays and Sharrocks much as they probably existed during the time of these two shops (Fig. 19). Only primary structures are shown on this map, so the Seay shop, which stood some distance from William Seay's home, is illustrated. The Sharrock shop, which stood in the curtilage of the Sharrock home, therefore is not illustrated.



Figure 19 1918 North Carolina Dept. of Agriculture map showing Seay and Sharrock properties: 1. Roxobel, 2. William Seay Cabinet Shop, 3. Sharrock House and Cabinet Shop, 4. Issac Seay House site, 5. William Seay House site, 6. John Seay House site.

A few of the woodworkers who were drawn to the Roxobel crossroads based on Seay's rising prominence as a house joiner and cabinetmaker were John Murdaugh and his brother Lemuel Murdaugh, later Seay's son-in-law and plantation manager, Jonathan Bishop, Micajah Wilkes, who became Seay's brother-in-law, James Wilkes, Micajah's brother, Jesse Haskett, John and Leonard Acree, William Mason, Charles

Rhodes, Joel Bird, William Britain, and Thomas Sharrock and his sons. These men and others would have spent time in both the Seay and Sharrock shops as work demanded. Some also would have traveled to the sites of houses being constructed by Seay, where they undoubtedly were joined by other craftsmen living near the construction sites. Thomas Sharrock, Sr., can be documented on two of these construction sites, Woodstock in December 1788, as mentioned earlier, and Hope Plantation in Bertie County in October 1801, where he and his son, Stephen, witnessed the will of fellow craftsmen, Jonathan Bishop.¹³ Sharrock, Sr., probably was serving in a supervisory capacity on both sites.

William Seay and Thomas Sharrock, Sr., learned their trades along very different paths that eventually led to their respective neighboring cabinet shops. Seay's training as a house joiner, probably by his father, Dr. James Seay, is evident in his cabinetry work. He employed thick heavy stock in his furniture, probably the same stock used to construct his houses. An original drawer bottom in one of only two known chest of drawers by Seay contains beaded shiplap normally used in house construction (Fig. 20) (Fig. 21).



Figure 20 *William Seay chest of drawers.*



Figure 21 *Beaded shiplap board used as drawer bottom in Fig. 20.*

Each end of the top of this chest contains triple through-tenoned battens, mitered at the front, a feature found on Seay blanket chest tops. Seay nailed and joined furniture elements rather than use glue. His drawer supports were essentially mortise and tenon window frames inserted horizontally into his furniture cases, and the feet of his case pieces were supported by large, triangular blocks attached to the case bottoms with counter-sunk wrought nails. Seay's extravagant case decorative elements are apparently reflective of an imaginative mind and appear to have been derived from illustrations in William Pain's *The Practical House Carpenter*, the book Seay used as a guide while constructing houses.¹⁴

Thomas Sharrock, Sr., on the other hand, constructed "neat and plain" case pieces reflective of his urban training in Norfolk. He imparted these construction traits to his sons, including deeply beveled drawer bottoms supported by wooden strips mitered in the corners and sometimes in the back, wide drawer dividers backed by drawer supports, and shaped vertical foot blocks flanked by shaped horizontal foot blocks.

A recently discovered walnut chest of drawers with bookcase appears to be a prime example of the interchange of ideas and workmen that flowed between these two shops located approximately three-quarters of a mile apart in rural Bertie County (Fig. 22) (Fig. 23).



Figure 22 *Sharrock-Seay chest of drawers with bookcase.*



Figure 23 *Fig. 22 with bookcase doors open.*

Everything about the construction of the chest section of this piece is reflective of Sharrock traditions passed from Norfolk trained Thomas

Sharrock, Sr., to his sons. The drawer bottoms of the chest are deeply beveled along the front and side edges and are supported by wooden strips set in those bevels, mitered in the front corners (Fig. 24).



Figure 24 *Drawer bottom of Fig. 22.*

The lower-case molding is attached to strips of wood that support the case bottom. The feet are supported by shaped vertical blocks flanked by shaped horizontal blocks, with angled rear foot supports indicative of Sharrock work, rather than the coved rear foot supports as seen on work from Seay's nearby shop (Fig. 25).



Figure 25 Foot blocking of Fig. 22.

Drawer dovetails are consistent with those found on Sharrock work dating to the late 18th and first years of the 19th centuries (Fig. 26). The drawers are supported by deep drawer blades without dust boards, which are typical of Sharrock pieces of the period. The drawer runners, however, are morticed into rear rails, which is not a standard Sharrock feature, but is more in keeping with Seay shop work (Fig. 27).



Figure 26 *Drawer dovetails of Fig. 22.*



Figure 27 *Drawer supports of Fig. 22.*

The rear portion of the top of the chest covered by the bookcase is constructed of poplar, a favored wood found in Sharrock shop pieces. The exposed front section of the chest top is walnut (Fig. 28).



Figure 28 *Top of chest portion of Fig. 22 (White dots are the screw holes for securing the bookcase.).*

The bookcase is secured to the chest with screws, and the holes that house the screws in the bookcase bottom board line up exactly with the corresponding holes in the poplar portion of the chest top. There is no

evidence of the attachment of any other bookcase to the chest, and the fact that the chest top contains a rear poplar portion offers evidence a bookcase was always intended. Nor is there any evidence that the bookcase ever sat on a different base. Both sections are consistent in the use of cut nails rather than wrought nails found on the earlier work of both shops. Therefore, based on the general time of the appearance of cut nails in the Roanoke River Basin, the earliest the two sections could have been constructed is within a year or two of 1800, and the latest they could have been constructed is the 1802 date of the Thomas Sharrock, Sr., estate sale, which will be discussed later in this article. So, this is not the situation where one of the two sections was constructed at a substantially earlier time and the second section was constructed later to match it. The evidence points to the contemporaneous construction of the two sections of this chest of drawers with bookcase.

While an examination of the structure of the chest section of this piece shows it to be consistent with the products of the Sharrock cabinet shop, decorative features of the bookcase section are based on Seay shop designs. The articulated arches above the top lights of the bookcase doors are a definitive Seay decorative feature and are found on known bookcases, presses, and corner cupboards constructed in Seay's shop (See Fig. 22) (See *W H Cabinetmaker*, Figs. 3, 5, 30, 84, 85, and 98). Their execution is neither as robust nor as deep as earlier Seay examples (Compare the articulated arches in Fig. 22 with the articulated arches in

Figs. 9 and 11). The reeding at the bottom of the cornice, another standard Seay rather than Sharrock decorative feature, again differs in execution and is more rounded than on earlier Seay examples (Fig. 29).



Figure 29 *Reeding on cornice of Fig. 22.*

While the chest portion is constructed with poplar secondary wood, again a favored wood in Sharrock shop construction, the bookcase section is constructed of thick yellow pine stock consistent with that found on other Seay shop examples. Rather than the bookcase section being constructed with Seay decorative features in the nearby Sharrock cabinet shop along with the chest section, this evidence points to the likelihood that the bookcase was actually constructed in the Seay cabinet shop. The bookcase section is noticeably narrower than other known Seay shop examples, again pointing to the intent that it was to be joined to the Sharrock shop chest. During conservation work by Andrew

Ownbey, a well-respected furniture and architectural restoration expert, evidence, including the original sweep of the backboards of the bookcase section, now cut off, and nail holes consistent with those that would secure wooden slats as found on Seay shop enclosed pediments, was discovered that is consistent with the bookcase section beginning life with an enclosed scrolled pediment (Fig. 30) (Fig. 31).



Figure 30 *Evidence of removal of scrolled pediment on Fig. 22.*



Figure 31 *Back of earlier period William Seay bookcase with intact scrolled pediment.*

Incised marks were also discovered by Ownbey on this piece's tympanum that are in the location and of the shape of marks created by letting-in the design of the large, relief-carved leaves which, along with vines, are a standard feature of many of the known Seay shop corner cupboards and presses with enclosed scrolled pediments (Fig. 32) (Fig. 33).



Figure 32 *Marks on Fig. 22 consistent with letting-in relief carved leaves.*



Figure 33 *Relief carved leaves on William Seay bookcase.*

This additional evidence, considered along with that discussed earlier, points to the likelihood that the upper bookcase section was actually constructed in the Seay shop to fit on the chest base being constructed contemporaneously in the nearby Sharrock shop. In other words, this evidence points to what was known in the trade as piecework, or a furniture element created in one cabinet shop specifically for use in a second shop. The construction of and the relationship between the two sections of this chest of drawers with bookcase will be discussed in more depth in a future article to appear on this website.

As important as this chest of drawers with bookcase is as an example of the interplay and exchange between two neighboring rural Southern cabinet shops, an even more important feature would be missed without close examination. Written on the outside of the proper left upper drawer of the chest, is “L 8.8.6 price 1802 March 10” (Fig. 34).

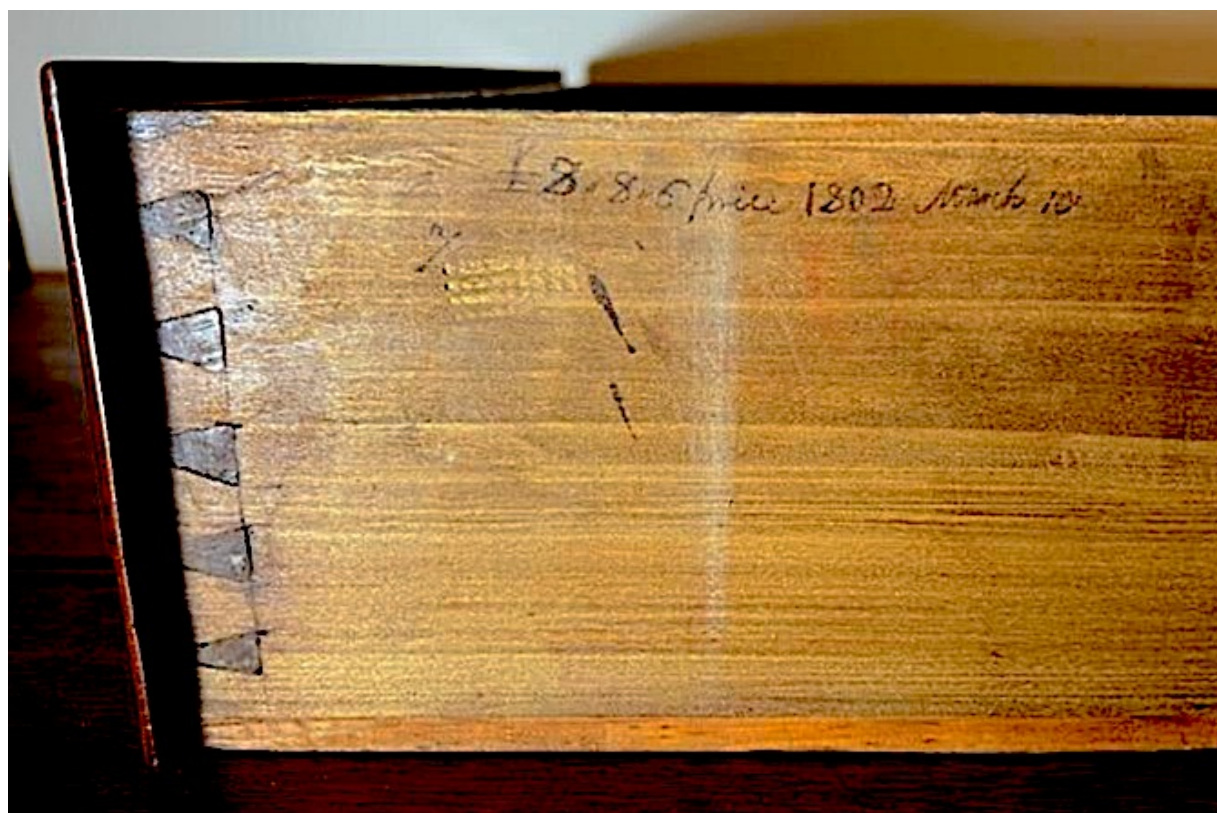


Figure 34 *Writing on side of proper left upper drawer of chest portion of Fig. 22.*

March 10, 1802, was in fact the date of the estate sale of Thomas Sharrock, Sr., that took place at the Sharrock cabinet shop in Roxobel following his death just before February 15, 1802.¹⁵ The handwriting on the drawer appears to match that of Sharrock’s widow, Bathsheba

Sharrock, who recorded the results of the estate sale that day. Her signature on the account of the sale is consistent with all other writing on the document, and is also consistent with her signature and all handwriting on a second document, the February 15, 1802, estate inventory she prepared after her husband's death.¹⁶ She likely made the inscription on the chest drawer as the piece sold, noting its sales price. The prominence of the piece may have earned it the written date in addition to the sales price.

The account of the sale lists this piece as “one chest of drawers” rather than a chest of drawers with bookcase, reflective of the fact that evidence points to the construction of only the chest section in the Sharrock cabinet shop (Fig. 35).

one More	70	margin equal	6	15
one Walnut table	70	Samuel Sharrock	7	8
one ditto	70	Stephen Sharrock	2	5
one Chest of drawers	70	Wm. Dugan	4	5
one bed & furniture	70	Ralph Aptham	8	8
one ditto	70	Wm. Johnston	1	1
one ditto	70	Wm. Walford	2	1

Figure 35 Notation in Account of Sale of Thomas Sharrock, Sr., Estate Sale reflecting sale of Fig. 22 ([Familysearch.org/ncestates](https://familysearch.org/ncestates))

The price recorded at the sale and written on the chest of drawers with bookcase itself, 8 pounds, 8 shillings, and 6 pence, however, reflects a value greater than that expected for a simple chest of drawers and is

more in keeping with a more substantial piece, such as a chest of drawers with a bookcase. A review of estate sales in the Roxobel area around the time of Thomas Sharrock, Sr.'s estate sale verifies that the price is consistent with a more prominent piece than just a chest of drawers. The average prices of items listed as a "chest" ranged from seven shillings to one pound, twelve shillings, and probably represent blanket chests. One was noted as "blue". A truer comparable value is found on items listed as a "desk", which ranged in value from four pounds twelve shillings to seven pounds.¹⁷ A desk interior, with the addition of its interior drawers and interior drawer support system, would obviously take longer to construct than a chest of drawers, so would be more expensive. The price of this piece at eight pounds, eight shillings, and six pence demonstrates that the item sold likely was not simply a chest of drawers. It sold for a price more in keeping with an object like a chest of drawers surmounted by a bookcase.

The contents of the Sharrock dwelling house were sold during a second sale that took place on October 16, 1802. The March 10 sale, which seems to have involved only the Sharrock cabinet shop and contents, plus some livestock, netted 266 pounds, 19 shillings, and 10 pence. Sharrock's surviving sons purchased a number of items during the shop sale. Samuel Sharrock purchased "one turners bench & tools", two workbenches, "twelve lights of sash & some patterns", and numerous tools. His brother, Stephen, also purchased a workbench in addition to

numerous tools, perhaps pointing to the two brothers' intent to keep the cabinet shop functioning on site.¹⁸ The 209 1/2-acre tract on which the cabinet shop stood remained in family ownership and was not divided among the remaining Sharrocks until 1815.¹⁹ Stephen moved to Halifax County by 1811.²⁰ Samuel moved to a 1000-acre grant of land, courtesy of Governor David Stone of Hope Plantation, three miles outside of nearby Lewiston, then Turner's Crossroad, between 1809 and 1817.²¹

James Ruffin purchased "timber for cart wheels" and the remaining workbench at the March 10 sale, for a total of four workbenches and a turning bench in the Sharrock cabinet shop at the time of the death of Thomas Sharrock, Sr.²² Interestingly, physical evidence in the Seay cabinet shop, which originally stood only three-quarters of a mile from the Sharrock cabinet shop, also points to the presence of four workbenches and a turning bench.

Seay's work as a cabinetmaker, in addition to his primary trade as a house joiner, was also well represented by his purchases at the estate sale of Thomas Sharrock, Sr. Seay acquired "one set of drawer locks", "one square & moldings", and "one set of drawer locks and hinges". He also purchased "one set of plains" and "one hand saw". Seay outbid all of the Sharrock sons and other cabinetmakers attending the sale to purchase "379 feet of walnut plank", "153 feet 11 inches of ditto", so

also walnut plank, and “253 feet 9 inches of ash & poplar”, which was all the cabinet timber sold at the Sharrock cabinet shop at that time.²³

At the time of his death, Thomas Sharrock, Sr., was indebted to a number of individuals for close to 670 pounds. He was indebted to John D. White, the crossroad’s leading merchant and the son of cabinetmaker Thomas White, for over 125 pounds. Sharrock owed substantial amounts to three of his sons, probably for work done in the cabinet shop. He owed Stephen over 42 pounds, Dempsey over 46 pounds, and Zadock over 33 pounds. William Seay was owed 12 pounds, 4 shillings, and 11 pence, which total may include the value of the bookcase section found on the Sharrock chest of drawers. Sharrock owed Ralph Outlaw, the purchaser of the chest of drawers with bookcase in question, 8 pounds, 7 shillings, and 11 pence, almost the exact amount Outlaw paid for the piece.²⁴ While the significance of the close correlation between the prices cannot be definitively shown at this time, perhaps Outlaw was the catalyst for the construction and combining of the purpose-built bookcase from the Seay shop with the purpose-built chest base from the Sharrock shop. Sharrock, Sr.’s death may have frozen the piece in Sharrock’s estate and necessitated that its sale be completed through his estate sale.

Ralph Outlaw was born in 1774 and died November 16, 1836. He was the son of David Outlaw and his wife, Martha Standley. David was a

large landowner in Bertie County and at his death on May 27, 1789, left Ralph 1755 acres. Ralph Outlaw married Elizabeth Cherry before 1806. She was the daughter of Solomon Cherry, who served as a Captain in the American Revolution and later served as Sheriff and Clerk of Court for Bertie County.²⁵

Ralph and Elizabeth lived on their 725-acre “dwelling tract” which was located approximately six miles north of Windsor, Bertie’s county seat, near the headwaters of Loosing Swamp.²⁶ On September 10, 1825, Ralph deeded two acres of land to nearby Holly Grove Baptist Church.²⁷ Organized in 1804 as Outlaw’s Chapel and named for Ralph Outlaw, the name was changed to Holly Grove in the early 1820s.²⁸

Ralph Outlaw’s purchase of the chest of drawers with bookcase further demonstrates the geographic range served by the Seay and Sharrock cabinet shops. These two neighboring cabinet shops in northwestern Bertie County, the core of what came to be called the Roanoke River Basin School of Cabinetmaking, served a wealthy and socially prominent client base along both sides of the Roanoke River, who were related to each other by blood, marriage, or business ties. Ralph Outlaw and Governor David Stone of Hope Plantation, which was built for Stone by Seay and the Sharrocks in 1802, owned and exchanged adjoining tracts of land in and around Roquist Swamp in Bertie County. Ralph Outlaw traveled over 20 miles to attend the estate sale of Thomas

Sharrock, Sr., and purchased this piece of furniture. A close examination now offers evidence that the chest was constructed in the Sharrock shop and was intended to be joined with the companion bookcase being constructed in the Seay shop, demonstrating an even closer relationship between the shops than previously known.

The authors thank Andrew Ownbey for his contributions to this article.

Endnotes:

1. Newbern, Thomas R.J. and James R. Melchor, *WH Cabinetmaker, A Southern Mystery Solved*, Legacy Ink Publishing, 2009, pp. 43-48 and 74-81.
2. Ibid., pp. 143-145.
3. Bivins, John, Jr., *The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina 1700-1820*, The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, NC, 1988, pp. 502-503 and 510-512.
4. Bivins, John, Jr., "Rhode Island Influence in the Work of Two North Carolina Cabinetmakers", *American Furniture*, Chipstone Foundation, Hanover and London, 1999, pp. 88-90.
5. Bivins, *Furniture*, pp. 51-53 and 198-201.

6. Newbern, pp. 148-149 and Bivins, *Furniture*, pp. 198-201 and 511-512.
7. Bertie County Census, 1790.
8. Northampton County Census, 1790.
9. Newbern, pp. 10 and 14.
10. Ibid., p. 167.
11. Personal conversation with property owner, John Pegram, 2008.
12. Ibid., pp. 236 and 238-239.
13. Ibid., p. 173.
14. Newbern, pp. 100-104.
15. Bivins, *Furniture*, p. 502.
16. North Carolina State Archives, Loose Estate Records, Bertie County, Thomas Sharrock, Sr.
17. Archives, Loose Estate Records, Bertie County.
18. Ibid., Thomas Sharrock, Sr.
19. Ibid., Griffin Sharrock.
20. Halifax County Deed Book 21, p. 544.
21. Bertie County Deed Book V, p. 257.
22. Archives, Loose Records, Bertie County, Thomas Sharrock, Sr.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Archives, Loose Records, Bertie County, David Outlaw and Sallysfamilyplace.com, Ralph Outlaw and Anne.
26. Archives, Loose Records, Bertie County, Ralph Outlaw.

27. Bertie County Deed Book BB, p. 409.

28. Sallysfamilyplace.com, Holley Grove Baptist Church.