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A GUIDE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND RESEARCH  
OF VICTORIAN FURNITURE IN SIX HISTORIC  
HOUSE MUSEUMS IN TEXAS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
North Texas State University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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One hundred and seventy-eight pieces of Victorian furniture in six Texas historic house museums have been photographed and researched in order to fulfill the three-part problem: (1) to research and write descriptive essays of the four major Victorian substyles--Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Eastlake; (2) to identify and choose six Texas historic houses which are open to the public and which display these Victorian substyles in period room settings; and (3) to identify, photograph, measure, and catalogue each piece of authentic Victorian furniture, and to compile a research guide which includes each of these six houses and their Victorian furnishings. This six-part guide includes brief histories of each house and a catalogue of authentic pieces which represent the major substyles of Victorian furniture. To give the study a broad base, and to make it useful for all students, teachers, and professional interior designers in Texas, two houses which represented the best collections of furniture from each geographic location were chosen. These included: (1) from North Texas, the George House and Millermore, both in Dallas; (2) in Central Texas, East Terrace and

Fort House, located in Waco; and (3) in South Texas, Fulton Mansion in Fulton Beach, and McNamara House in Victoria. All four of the most popular substyles are represented in the six houses.

A study of the museum collections and literature revealed three major factors which influenced American Victorian furniture: (1) technological innovation and mass production, (2) the family and the role of women, and (3) literature and furniture pattern books. Victorian furniture reflects the changes from handmade to machinemade products. While constantly changing and improving their machinery and techniques throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, manufacturers produced vast quantities of economically priced furniture in many styles. Although furniture of the Victorian period may be divided into more than four substyles, the most popular were the Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Eastlake. Substyles often overlap or run concurrently, and there are transitional pieces which possess characteristics of two or more styles. Furthermore, throughout the Victorian period, motifs from various sources were sometimes combined on one piece of furniture. Victorians readily accepted the products of mass production. Technological innovations allowed them to imitate the style of living of the more wealthy through the use of facsimile comforts. While women during the nineteenth century were restricted from participation in many areas, they played a prominent role in

the decoration of homes. American furniture of the early Victorian period was influenced primarily by the pattern books of English and American craftsmen. Books which described earlier historical styles, architectural revivals, and advocates of reform in design were influential in the latter half of the century.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

When the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York celebrated its centennial in 1970, it was decided to devote a major exhibition entirely to American art of the nineteenth century--both to display the museum's acquisitions and to re-examine the artistic production of that period. Hailed as a landmark exhibition, this was the first major presentation of nineteenth-century American arts held by any museum. The arts and styles of nineteenth-century American were brought together and shown chronologically. Although the Metropolitan Museum has an American wing--thirty-five rooms of decorative arts arranged in period settings--the collections at that time ended abruptly with the Federal Period (c 1790-1820). Because of this dearth of decorative works, the museum curators had to purchase or borrow three-fourths of the objects which were shown. Thomas Hoving, then the Director of the Museum, stated that the undertaking was exceptionally difficult, because so little study has been done on the American decorative arts produced after 1840.<sup>1</sup> As a

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<sup>1</sup>Berry Tracy, ed., Nineteenth-century America, Furniture and Other Decorative Arts (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1970), p. v.

consequence, the curators had to undertake extensive research in order to compile a catalogue. This lack of information concerning nineteenth-century American furniture becomes even more acute for the small museum or historic house collection which does not have the necessary budget or staff for research.

There is little doubt that the success of the Metropolitan Museum's exhibit created interest in the decorative arts of the nineteenth century and gave the period a cachet of approval. As the museum began its second hundred years, the trustees announced the intention to add to the American collection "an appropriate area to house the arts of the turbulent and fertile century that brought the museum into being."<sup>2</sup>

The definition of a genuine antique requires that an object be at least one hundred years old. The decorative arts of the late nineteenth century are just now becoming acceptable items for the serious collector. No longer is this furniture considered to be the junk stored in grandmother's attic; it is the means by which people may rediscover their past and learn to appreciate almost forgotten craftsmanship. The term Victorian furniture is often used to signify most nineteenth-century furniture built in England and America. Although England's Queen Victoria reigned for sixty-four years, from 1837 to 1901, the furniture style

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<sup>2</sup>Tracy, p. v.

named for her covers a wide range of substyles which were based upon earlier periods. Forms and motifs were borrowed, refined, discarded, and revived for over eighty years in a designer's love affair which abhorred the plain, undecorated surface. In America, the Victorian age spanned a period of great population growth, expansion of territory, and the rise of industrialism.

The growth of the state of Texas paralleled the development and evolution of the Victorian period in decorative arts. Homes built during that era usually were furnished in the most popular substyles of Victorian furniture--Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Eastlake. The parlor and other social rooms often contained not only the best and most lavish pieces of furniture but also a wider variety of items than the bedrooms. Elaborate upholstery and a multiplicity of objects characterize Victorian furnishings as demonstrated most successfully in suites of matching furniture for dining and living rooms, sofas, chairs, tables, and étagères. Since families were large, interior spaces were provided in social rooms for conducting several activities simultaneously, and numerous kinds of tables were designed for specific purposes. These interiors may seem crowded and cluttered when compared with the fashion of today, but to the Victorians, they represented comfort, high style, and good taste.

In recent years, a new concern for one's heritage has brought about the preservation, restoration, and furnishing of many historic Texas houses as museums. In 1933, Lawrence Vail Coleman wrote in Historic House Museums that this type made up the fastest-growing museum category.<sup>3</sup> His national survey listed seven historic house museums in Texas--three of which were Spanish missions. The house museum is not a new idea--England's stately homes have been open to the public for centuries, and in the United States, homes associated with famous men such as Jefferson's Monticello and Washington's Mount Vernon are widely known. During the past decades, the establishment of small house museums has occurred in increasing numbers. Many individual houses of varying historical significance have been saved from demolition by local civic groups, historical societies, and garden clubs. Ideally, an historic house museum should be furnished with items which once belonged to the owner, but in many instances, houses are furnished with donations considered suitable to the period in which the house was built. Authenticity of the furniture may not be adequately researched, because such projects are usually staffed by volunteers with little or no education in the decorative arts. Even when there are salaried directors, the docents are trained to recite the history of the houses

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<sup>3</sup>Lawrence Vail Coleman, Historic House Museums (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1933), p. 67.

and the families who lived in them. Guides at large restorations seldom mention the furniture or accessories in a particular room.

In Texas, there are more than thirty historic house museums minimally maintained by historic societies or civic groups. Due to unique circumstances, a small number of historic houses in Texas are better documented than others. Bayou Bend, which is the Ima Hogg estate in Houston, and the Governor's Mansion in Austin are two such houses which have had their furniture collections extensively researched and published. However, the houses restored and furnished by the Dallas County Heritage Society and by the Historic Waco Foundation have had little or no information published on their collections of Victorian furniture. Often, in these Texas museums, there is no professional staff or curator of furniture. Due to the lack of funding, the holdings of these museums go unrecorded, unmeasured, and unpublished. Because such museum projects are on-going for a number of years, collections are in a constant state of flux--rooms are rearranged, items acquired or discarded--thereby adding to the problem of researching and publishing data. While these restoration projects are often well-publicized within the immediate area, they are virtually unknown to interior designers in other towns and cities. As primary research centers, their worth is diminished.

The three primary purposes of a museum have been defined as (1) to preserve, (2) to exhibit, and (3) to educate. While many historic house museums admirably perform the functions of preserving and exhibiting their furniture collections, they are severely lacking in the amount of published material available to interested persons. Because of this scantily published data, historic homes and their Victorian furnishings are under utilized as educational resources. There is a need for a research guide to assist designers--students, teachers, and professionals--in the identification of Victorian furniture styles in Texas house museums.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem was threefold: (1) to research and write descriptive essays of the four major Victorian substyles--Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Eastlake; (2) to identify and choose six Texas historic houses which are open to the public and which display furniture from these Victorian substyles in period room settings; and (3) to identify, photograph, measure, and catalogue each piece of authentic Victorian furniture. A research guide which includes each of these six houses and their Victorian furnishings was to be compiled utilizing this information. The guide consists of six sections; each of these divisions includes a brief history of each of the six houses and a catalogue of authentic pieces which represent these substyles.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide for interior designers--teachers, professionals, and students--a research guide to nineteenth-century American furniture located in six historic house museums in Texas, in order to assist these designers in classifying and identifying other pieces of Victorian furniture.

### Limitations of the Study

Houses which have had extensive research published on their collections, such as Bayou Bend--the Ima Hogg Estate--in Houston and the Governor's Mansion in Austin, were excluded. Houses which are open for public tours but still inhabited by the owners were considered to be private homes and not permanent museums and therefore were outside the scope of the study. Historic houses which are open to the public less than three hours per week were not included.

### Methodology

Since the problem was threefold the data was to be collected in various ways. For the first part of the problem, a survey of the literature was made to study illustrations of the Victorian substyles. This was followed by visits to museums which have collections of Victorian furniture in order to study original pieces in detail. The decorative arts pieces in the following museums were examined during the course of research: Denver Museum of Art and the Molly Brown Mansion,



Denver, Colorado; Rosemont Mansion, Pueblo, Colorado; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Brooklyn Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Old Merchant's House, and the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site, New York City; and the Museum of New Mexico and the Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

For the second part of the problem, to locate the six historic homes open to the public, the following references were consulted: American Art Directory, Directory of World Museums, Historical Houses of America Open to the Public, and Official Museum Directory. Personal visits were made to study furniture and to determine the houses which contained the most complete collections of furniture from these Victorian periods. Six houses were chosen.

To fulfill the last part of this problem, arrangements were made to gain access to literature or archival material on the history of the individual houses and to obtain permission to photograph and measure the Victorian furniture in the social rooms. A data sheet, a sample copy of which is located in the Appendix, was completed for each item of furniture. A six-part guide which includes each house was written; each division features a specific house and consists of a brief historical introduction to the house and a catalogue of its furniture. Compiled for every authentic piece of furniture displayed, each catalogue entry includes the type of furniture, the substyle, materials, dimensions, and

any identifying characteristics which would assist in the identification of the piece. One or more photographs illustrate each entry. Where applicable, notes and bibliographic references concerning similar works are added.

The predominant characteristics of each piece determined the substyle into which it was placed. The following authoritative publications were used to establish the substyle attributions: Thomas Ormsbee's Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, 1952; Louise Ade Boger's Complete Guide to Furniture Styles, 1969; Robert Bishop's Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, 1640-1970, 1972; Berry Tracy's 19th-Century America: Furniture and Other Decorative Arts, 1970; and Jonathan Fairbanks and Elizabeth Bates' American Furniture 1620 to the Present, 1981. Because so many of the items possessed characteristics of more than one substyle, the following persons with expertise in Victorian antique furniture were consulted: Irene Whitney, A.S.I.D., retired teacher of interior design, Hillsboro, Texas; Marilyn Sammons, antique dealer, Temple Texas; Wanda Bell, Curator, Old City Park, Dallas; and Russell Hickman, antique dealer, Dallas. Photographs of items with questionable attributions were shown to these experts; after consultation with each person, and a comparison of their opinions, five of the pieces were deleted.

Chapter I consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Methodology, and

Definition of Terms. A discussion of the influences upon Victorian furniture, the evolution of the four substyles, the identifying characteristics of each period, and the principle pieces which were produced in each period is presented in Chapter II. Chapters III through VIII provide a history and a catalogue of furnishings of the six houses which comprise the guide. A summary of the findings and recommendations for the use of this material by students, teachers, and professionals is included in Chapter IX.

#### Survey of the Literature

Discovering scholarly research on American Victorian furniture is difficult. Although many books have been written on English Victoriana, few works have been devoted exclusively to furniture of this period made in America. General history surveys usually have only one chapter on this nineteenth-century style. Contemporary publications on Victoriana are primarily either field guides for collectors and dealers or encyclopedic picture books which include a variety of Victorian decorative arts. As for magazine articles, virtually the only periodical which regularly publishes scholarly research on American Victoriana is Antiques. Fortunately, during the past two decades, several museum exhibitions of Victorian decorative arts have produced catalogues of varying quality. Because of this scarcity of material, technical works rather than histories of furniture must also be consulted. In

addition, sales catalogues of manufacturers and retailers are important to the research of Victorian furniture. The following is a discussion of these references. Literature which influenced the production of American Victorian furniture is included in Chapter II.

General histories of American and European furniture include varying amounts of information concerning the Victorian style. Louise Ade Boger's Complete Guide to Furniture Styles (1969), a standard textbook used by interior design students, includes one chapter on American Victorian furniture. Her personal bias against Victorian furniture is evident, and she does not adhere strictly to Ormsbee's delineations of the principal substyles. Another college level textbook, Sherrill Whiton's Interior Design and Decoration (1974), includes a brief discussion of Victorian furniture. In 1950, Edgar Millar, Jr., begrudgingly included the Victorian style in The Standard Guide of American Antique Furniture, stating "it is so unattractive to our eyes that it should be ignored just as furniture made in the bad styles of Sheraton and Duncan Phyfe is ignored."<sup>4</sup> He further notes that the examples shown in his book are mixtures of several substyles. American Furniture by Helen Comstock (1962) treats Victorian furniture more sympathetically. Her substyle categories differ from Ormsbee and Boger. Dealing exclusively with chairs,

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<sup>4</sup>Edgar Millar, Jr., The Standard Guide of American Antique Furniture (New York: Greystone Press, 1950), p. 64.

the following three books include outstanding examples of Victorian furniture: Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, 1640-1970 (1972), Robert Bishop; The American Chair, 1630-1890 (1957), Marion Day Iverson; and The Ornamented Chair--Its Development in America, 1700-1890 (1960), Zilla Rider Lea.

There are only two historical surveys which deal exclusively with nineteenth-century American furniture. Stressing the earlier decades of the century, Celia Jackson Otto's American Furniture of the 19th Century (1965) was the only comprehensive study of the period until Mary Jean Smith Madigan published Nineteenth Century Furniture in 1982. A compilation of her many magazine articles, Madigan's book stresses the production of furniture in America during the latter third of the century.

An indispensable research tool is Thomas H. Ormsbee's Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture (1952). Ormsbee separates American Victorian furniture into eight substyles and bases his identification of pieces upon the comparison of recurring characteristics. In many cases, the simple line illustrations, which are used throughout the book, are inadequate. More recent field guides for collectors include photographs. Victorian Furniture (1981) by Robert and Harriett Swedberg is primarily a pictorial record of antique sales; the many photographs may be used to supplement the material offered by Ormsbee. However, the small black and

white pictures do not show details clearly. A similar publication--Victorian Furniture, Our American Heritage, by Kathryn McNerney (1981)--presents several hundred photographs and current market values of the pieces. The photographs and reproductions are not of high quality.

Among the most useful and reliable of the many encyclopedic works which are available, Decorative Arts of Victoria's Era (1950) by Frances Lichten and The Encyclopedia of Victoriana (1975) by Harriett Bridgeman and Elizabeth Drury are comprehensive works which include American and English decorative arts. The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides (1968) edited by Ralph Edwards and L. G. G. Ramsey explains the profusion of revival styles and the technology which influenced English and Victorian furniture.

Because the furniture made during the latter part of the nineteenth century is now legitimately considered to be antique, periodicals have increasingly shown an interest in this period. One of the first periodical articles was "Victorian Art and Victorian Taste," in Antiques (March 1933) by Fiske Kimball--the Director of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art. Kimball explains that in order to appreciate Victorian art, the taste of the period must be considered. He voices the opinion that contemporary critics confuse Victorian art with Victorian taste. Published fifty years ago, his article

predicts, "When the future scans its achievements in long perspective, the Victorian period will receive its due."<sup>5</sup>

Various and exotic styles of the late nineteenth century are outlined by Robert C. Smith in "Furniture of the Eclectic Decades, 1870-1900," Antiques (October 1959). He discusses Victorian taste and heaviness of design in "'Good Taste' in Nineteenth Century Furniture," Antiques (October 1959). "Grand Rapids Furniture at the Time of the Centennial," by Kenneth Ames, Winterthur Portfolio (1975), is a lengthy examination of three major manufacturers of Renaissance Revival furniture. Ames draws heavily upon Frank E. Ransom's The City Built on Wood: A History of the Furniture Industry in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1850-1950 (1955). Mary Jean Smith Madigan reports on the Eastlake substyle in "The Influence of Charles Locke Eastlake on American Furniture, 1870-1900," Winterthur Portfolio (1975). A similar article by Madigan appears in Connoisseur (January 1976). Wendell Garrett, editor of Antiques Magazine, has compiled The Arts in America: The Nineteenth Century (1969). Garrett examines the adolescence and coming of age of the decorative arts and architecture in America. Although only one-fourth of the book is devoted to furnishings, Garrett goes beyond mere description and discusses the reasons why Victorians desired ostentatious exhibition of their possessions and wealth. Garrett's wife,

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<sup>5</sup>Fiske Kimball, "Victorian Art and Victorian Taste," Antiques 23 (March 1933):103.

Elizabeth Donaghy Garrett, published The Antiques Book of Victorian Interiors (1981), a collection of pictorial essays which first appeared in Antiques Magazine. While much of the text concentrates on the histories of the houses, the color photographs of the interiors are superb. Relying heavily upon old photographs of Victorian interiors, William Seale has contributed two important reference works: The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors Through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917 (1981), and Recreating the Historic House Interior (1979).

A limited number of books and articles have appeared which pertain to specific substyles and designers. Marvin Swartz, Edward Stanek, and Douglas True collaborated on The Furniture of John Henry Belter and the Rococo Revival (1981). The Belter style has also been essayed by Ed Polk Douglas in "The Rococo Revival and Furniture of John Henry Belter: A Demand for Decoration," Arts and Antiques (July-August 1980); and by Robert C. Smith, "Rococo Revival Furniture," Antiques (May 1959). A specialist in nineteenth-century furnishings, David Hanks has written "Kimbel and Cabus: 19th-Century New York Cabinetmakers," Arts and Antiques (September-October 1980), and "Pottier and Stymus Mfg. Co.: Artistic Furniture Decorators," Arts and Antiques (September-October 1982). Hanks also published Innovative Furniture in America from 1800 to the Present (1981) which describes and illustrates



numerous examples of patent and multi-purpose furniture of the late nineteenth century.

Important museum exhibition catalogues of recent years include: Classical America, The Newark Museum (1963); Renaissance Revival Furniture, The Grand Rapids Museum (1976); 19th-Century America: Furniture and Other Decorative Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art (1970); and Eastlake-Influenced American Furniture, 1870-1890 (1974), Hudson River Museum. An examination of these catalogues reveals the differences in the amount of information furnished for each entry. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum of Art gives only the height of the piece while the Hudson River Museum lists height and width but not depth, seat height, or arm height. Because catalogues such as these must appeal to the eye in order to be commercially successful, they sometimes fail to meet the scholar's requirements.

General works concerning Victorian furniture present little information on the technological advances which changed furniture manufacturing during the nineteenth century. Changes from hand processes to machinemade furniture are discussed in the following works. Technological innovations in the furniture industry are reported at length by Siegfried Giedion in Mechanization Takes Command (1948). Gordon Logie provides additional information in Furniture From Machines (1947). Charles Singer's History of Technology, Vol. V., The Late 19th Century, 1850-1900 (1958), explains inventions which

revolutionized the furniture industry on both sides of the Atlantic. Edited by Ian Quimby and Polly Earl, Technological Innovation and the Decorative Arts was published in 1974. The author of A History of American Furniture (1970), N. I. Bienenstock, the publisher of Furniture World Magazine, describes American furniture production from an insider's point of view. A succinct comparison of hand turning and machine turning is presented by Wallace Nutting in Furniture Treasury, Vol. III (1933). While Nutting's book stops short of the Victorian era, his explanations of woodworking processes and comparisons of details are of considerable value.

Illustrated sales catalogues of manufacturers and retailers are important in the identification of late nineteenth-century furniture. Richard and Elizabeth Dubrow's Furniture Made in America, 1875-1905 (1982), reprints sections of illustrated trade catalogues and is a valuable contribution to the study of factory made, late nineteenth-century furniture. Rare and difficult to locate, one hundred and eighteen furniture trade catalogues are itemized in Lawrence Romaine's A Guide to American Trade Catalogues, 1744-1900 (1960). Romaine lists additional furniture makers as suppliers of hardware, ornaments, and home furnishings, and indicates the names of libraries which possess the original illustrated catalogues. Mail order catalogues of retail firms, such as Sears Roebuck and Company and Montgomery Ward, illustrate factory-made furniture of the 1890s and the early

1900s. These catalogues--many of which are available in reprint editions--are useful in dating and identifying turn-of-the-century furniture.

#### Definition of Terms

Acanthus--A leaf design, derived from a Southern European plant, which originated as antique architectural decoration.

Applied Ornament--A detail that is shaped or carved separately, and attached to the surface of a piece.

Apron--A wooden strip at the base of a seat or cabinet. Also called a skirt.

Back Splat--The upright, center support in a chair back.

Bail--A half-loop drawer pull or handle, usually made of brass.

Balloon-back--A chair back with a continuous top rail and uprights rounded into the shape of a spherical balloon.

Baluster--A turned upright support having an urn-shaped outline.

Bamboo-turned--Round sections turned with narrow rings to resemble the joints in a length of bamboo. Also called simulated bamboo.

Barley Twist--A lathe-turned piece of wood which appears to be twisted rather than ring-turned. Used on legs and candlesticks.

Bevel--A slanted edge. The cutting-away of a straight edge to reduce thickness.

Bowfront--A case piece with a convex or serpentine-curved front.

Bracket Foot--A wing-like, curved, or triangular support.

Broken Pediment--A triangular or curved architectural element surmounting case furniture.

Bun Foot--A round foot flattened at the top and the bottom.

Bureau--The French term for a desk. Also used to indicate a dresser or a low chest of drawers with a mirror during the Victorian era.

Burl--A knotty outgrowth on hardwood tree. When thinly sliced, the characteristic grain creates surface patterns.

Cabochon--A raised ornament with rounded edges.

Cabriole leg--A leg with an outward curved knee and an inward curved ankle.

Canted Leg--A leg which slants away from a chair seat or a table top at approximately a forty-five degree angle.

Carcass--The body of a case piece of furniture.

Cartouche--An ornamental form of irregular shape, usually scrolled or oval.

Case Piece--Any piece of furniture of boxlike structure but specifically denoting drawers or storage.

Caster--A small wheel of wood, brass, or porcelain, set into the feet of chairs or bases of case pieces.

Chamber Suite--A matching group of bedroom furniture consisting of a bed, dresser, chest of drawers, and washstand. Elaborate suites included commodes and chairs.

Chamfer--A beveled edge or corner cut at a forty-five degree angle.

Claw-and-Ball Foot--A carved wooden or cast metal foot representing an animal or bird claw clutching a metal or glass ball.

Coil Spring--A circular expansion spring of heavy wire, an innovation in upholstered seats.

Cornice--The projecting, crowning molding of case furniture, derived from the entablature in classic architecture.

Crest Rail--The top rail or cross member of the back section on seat furniture.

Crotch Grain--Veneer which is cut from the fork of a tree. Also known as vein graining.

Cup Turning--A type of turning resembling an inverted cup.

Curule Chair--A chair form based upon an ancient Roman seat, with leg supports constructed of inverted semicircles.

Cyma-curve--A continuous curve, half concave, half convex.

Deck--A separate case or grouping of shelves which requires a base for support. A hutch.

Dresser--A bureau or chest of drawers, with or without a mirror.

Ears--Projections at either end of the top rail of a chair back.

Ebonize--To stain or paint black to simulate ebony wood.

Entablature--The topmost section or cornice of a case piece.

Escutcheon--A decorative plate backing of a keyhole or handle.

Etagère--A tiered stand, sometimes called a whatnot, used for the display of curios.

Figure--Characteristic markings of wood.

Finger Molding--An incised, concave, continuous molding on the frame of seat furniture.

Finial--A decorative terminating ornament.

Fluting--A series of rounded channels carved vertically into the wood surface. The reverse of reeding.

Foliate Decoration--Ornamentation done in leaf-like forms.

Fret--An ornamental border, pierced or carved in relief.

Gallery--A railing of wood, or brass at the rear or sides of a flat surface.

Gondola Chair--An open back side chair with a center splat. C-curved stiles join the back to the seat frame.

Grand Rapids Furniture--A loose and sometimes derogatory term for inexpensive, mass-produced furniture made in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from c. 1850.

Hourglass Stool--A seat resembling an hourglass in form, often with sides of pleated fabric.

Incise--To cut or engrave a surface.

Keystone--A shape derived from architecture used on chair backs and seats.

Knee--An out-curved section of a cabriole leg.

Klismos Chair--A side chair derived from an ancient Greek form having a concave, curved back and saber legs.

Laminated Wood--Thin layers of wood glued together with the grain of each layer at right angles to that above and below, creating strength and plasticity.

Lyre--A decorative shape based upon antique designs, usually adapted for sofa arms and pedestals.

Marquetry--Decorative, pictorial inlay of contrasting woods set into a veneered surface.

Méridienne--Empire sofa with one arm higher than the other.

Molded Panel--A panel formed by applied molding.

Molding--A narrow, continuous band of wood which is usually applied as a decorative border.

Mounts--Decorative and functional escutcheons and handles applied to furniture.

Ottoman--Circular or octagonal upholstered seat in the Turkish style with or without backs, arms, or a decorative object in the center.

Overstuffing--Thickly padded upholstery disguising the frame of seat furniture.

Panel--A thin section of wood inserted between or framed by thicker sections of wood with the use of mortise and tenon joints.

Parquetry--Similar to marquetry, but forming a geometric pattern. It may be inlaid solid wood, as a table top or floor, or set into a veneered surface to form a pattern.

Patent Furniture--Adjustable, convertible pieces incorporating mechanical devices. Introduced as novelties stressing comfort and flexibility, patent items eventually became associated with the medical profession.

Paterae--Flat, oval or round ornaments, carved in low relief or inlaid with veneer.

Paw Foot--A foot carved to represent an animal's foot. The most common type on Victorian furniture is the lion's paw.

Pedestal Table--Having a central pedestal instead of legs.

Pediment--An ornamental arched or triangular architecturally inspired section surmounting a case piece.

Peg Foot--A short, turned foot.

Pendent Finial--A downward-projecting finial.

Pier Table--A rectangular table designed to stand between two windows. The back side is unfinished.



Pierced Carving--Wooden ornament which is carved and pierced with a fret saw to create openwork.

Pilaster--A projecting, flat-sided support or decorative element which is treated architecturally as a column, with a base, shaft, and capital.

Plinth--The base of a baluster. A base which rests flat on the floor.

Rail--A horizontal connecting member in furniture construction.

Raised Panel--An applied panel which projects from the surface.

Reeding--A series of rounded, convex, vertical lines carved into stiles or molding. The reverse of fluting.

Ring Turnings--A lathe-made element consisting of decorative rings.

Rolled-Arm--A chair or sofa arm with an outward curve.

Roundel--A circular disk or rosette.

Rudimentary Foot--A plain, uncarved foot which terminates a cabriole leg.

Rung--A stretcher or dowel which connects the legs of chairs or tables.

Saber Leg--A leg with a perpendicular curve.

Sausage Turning--An elongated ring turning which resembles a sausage link.

Scrollwork--Curvilinear wood ornamentation often cut with a jigsaw. Also called gingerbread.

Serpentine--A wavy curve that is convex at the center and ends and concave inbetween.

Settee--A small sofa with arms and a back.

Shield-back--A chair back shaped like a shield, usually with a curved or three pointed top rail.

Skirt--A cross member found at the bottom of case pieces, under seats of chairs, and on tables at tops of connecting legs. Also called Apron.

Slip Seat--A removable, upholstered seat found most often on dining room furniture. Also called a drop seat.

Slipper Chair--An armless chair with a high back and low seat.

Socket Caster--A metal socket into which fits a tapering shank with an attached roller, used on the front legs of Victorian chairs, and on legs of tables and sideboards.

Spool-turned--A turned member of spool shapes prior to cutting apart into individual units. Most used shapes are ball, bobbin, knob, spool, urn, and vase. Used on most sub-styles. Spool-turned whatnots overlap many substyles.

Spindle--An elongated, turned member used structurally and decoratively in late nineteenth-century furniture.

Stile--An upright piece of wood which may form a corner, back or frame.

Stretcher--Horizontal bracing for chairs and tables. Also called rungs or dowels.

Surround--A metal or carved wooden shape used around a keyhole.

Tester--The framework atop a four-poster bed.

Tête-à-tête--A two-seated sofa with an S-shaped arm.

Three-quarter Gallery--A railing or cornice on the top and sides of a case piece or shelf.

Top Rail--The top horizontal rail of a chair or sofa.

Trestle--Post or baluster legs mounted on bracket feet which support a rectangular table top.

Tripod--A pedestal support with three out-curved legs.

Turning--Shaping of wood on a lathe by cutting with chisels.

Vase-shaped Splat--A chair back splat with a vase outline. Also called fiddle-back or urn shape.

Veneer--Overlay of thin wood glued to the carcass for decorative effect and economic use of expensive woods.

Volute--A spiral-shaped, scrolled end.

Whorl Foot--An upturned, scroll termination of a leg.

## CHAPTER II

### AMERICAN VICTORIAN FURNITURE

The decorative arts of the last half of the nineteenth century are known collectively as Victorian, a style named for the English Queen Victoria who dominated the European political scene. During Victoria's reign, from 1837 to 1901, technological advances in industry brought about rapid and unprecedented changes in the lives of people in England and America. Manufacturers on both sides of the Atlantic, able to produce more furniture at less cost, responded to the new and changing order. Not only did the technological revolution affect almost every aspect of daily life, the arts of the period--architecture, literature, fashion, furniture, and other decorative arts--reveal changing attitudes and ambitions. The interaction of the structure of Victorian society and the industrialization of furniture making created a classic example of supply and demand. Family oriented, self-centered, class conscious, and materialistic, English and American Victorians were immediately impressed with the capabilities of mechanization, especially in how they might profit or better their lives. The desire for comfort, love of color and ornament, and a deep psychological need to display their social status motivated the Victorians to embrace unusual, novel

mass-produced articles. The home and its contents became the primary showcase in which to display success.

In the United States, the rush toward mechanization coincided with a population explosion which pushed people westward; the arrival of hordes of European immigrants provided workers who could be hired for low wages. These new Americans blended with the existing society which was young, unsophisticated, and not well-educated. As they worked and prospered in the land of opportunity, mass-produced home furnishings were readily available at prices which they could afford. These new consumers were easily influenced into accepting furniture revivals of dubious European heritage. To impress the public, manufacturers produced furniture types which were copied from pattern books and given various historical names. Consequently, furniture of the Victorian period was a series of borrowed elements and interpretations based loosely or mistakenly upon previous styles. To the public, the furniture was new, comfortable, and stylish, yet a reminder of their European heritage.

This chapter will consider four areas, three of which are the influences upon American Victorian furniture: (1) changing technology, (2) the family and the role of women, and (3) pattern books and literature. The fourth section will discuss each of the four most popular substyles--(1) Victorian Empire, (2) Rococo Revival, (3) Renaissance Revival, and (4) Eastlake.

### Technology and Furniture Production

Beginning with the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, a series of world's fairs helped to popularize and disseminate the Victorian style. Not only did these fairs display furniture, but newly perfected technological advances, such as those in woodworking machinery, were demonstrated. The Great Exhibition, which publicized to the world the advances that England had made in scientific knowledge and skill, made a profound impression upon the English Victorians. New steam-powered machinery could produce intricate, multiple carvings in minutes. When these ornaments were applied to furniture, the Victorian eye saw a creation approximating a costly, hand-made piece of fine furniture. Machine-made ornament was appreciated as a worthy achievement, because it was made in less than one hundredth of the time and appeared more perfect in execution. Substitute materials were not considered inferior--a cheap wood finished to emulate ebony was praised rather than damned. Such innovations allowed every strata of society to emulate the comforts and status of the next higher station.

When the Great Exhibition of 1851 closed in London, England was recognized as the world's most advanced industrial nation. Two years later, New York's Crystal Palace Exhibition attracted English manufacturers who hoped to sell their technology to America. To their surprise, American manufacturers had already taken English ideas and improved them.

American factory-made furniture quickly equaled English production and quality and by the 1870s surpassed it. The combination of vast natural resources, an unlimited supply of cheap labor, and improved transportation allowed this rapid expansion and superior craftsmanship.

While simple, human-powered machines had been used for centuries--Leonardo da Vinci's drawings show a foot-powered lathe of the sixteenth century--it was the application of steam to furniture making tools in the 1840s that changed the source of manufacturing. Although specialized machines replaced certain processes previously done by hand, the goal of the manufacturer was to increase production and cut costs, not to automate factories completely. Great numbers of skilled craftsmen were needed to supply wood to the machines and to hand-finish many parts; for instance, most wood joining processes remained individual hand labor. While power saws--band and circular blades--had been introduced in the 1840s, it was not until 1851 with the perfection of Bessemer steel blades that machinery could be driven easier, longer, and faster. The stronger steel prevented snapping, vibration, and metal fatigue which had been problems in earlier and still widely used machinery.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, constantly improved steam-powered, woodworking machinery performed a greater variety of functions: sawing, planing, turning, joining, and carving. Manufactured by such firms as J. A. Fay

of Cincinnati and M. T. Boult of Battle Creek, Michigan, machinery became extremely versatile and sophisticated. Machines could be adapted to produce molding, dovetailing, and incised decoration. Perfected in 1875, pantographic incising equipment introduced the use of templates and made possible the direct transfer of a pattern to wooden surfaces. This type of incised line became a signature of the mass-produced, Eastlake substyle of Victorian furniture. Other machines were used for stamping, fret-making, embossing, die-sinking, and plating. By the 1880s, numerous machines were available to perform every conceivable step in wood-working: boring, tapering, sandpapering, moulding, carving, planing, mortising, and joining. To drive these machines at optimum speeds required a swiftly moving water source, and the upper Midwest rivers and lakes proved to be ideal locations. Grand Rapids, Michigan, became the site of a number of manufacturers, and their products literally encircled the globe. While England is frequently given credit for the creation of the Victorian style, it was American-made Victorian furniture which was exported to South America, Canada, Hawaii, the Phillipines, and many European countries, including England and Scotland.

The greatest innovation in seat furniture of the period--the coil spring--met with immediate acceptance by the comfort-seeking Victorians. When combined with overstuffed, lavish upholstery, coil springs produced the ultimate in stylish



comfort for seating and lounging furniture. Technology not only introduced innovative features of comfort, but new types of furniture were created as well. Multi-purpose furniture such as reclining chairs, folding chairs, folding beds, and convertible sofas were practical for large families. Reclining chairs with adjustable backs owed much to William Morris and his ideas of comfort as well as to equipment made for barbers and dentists. Innovative furniture with adjustable mechanisms were called patent furniture--to designate that the manufacturer held a patent for the design of the furniture item or component. Cast iron was introduced as a material in the construction of patent furniture; while primarily used for legs and frames, cast iron was used decoratively to create hatracks and outdoor furniture.

#### Family Life and Women

Daily life throughout much of the Victorian era was extremely dull. Victorians believed in--and conditions usually demanded--a six-day work week. The activities for Sunday--or the day of rest--were limited to church, family dinner, and morally appropriate pastimes, such as reading, writing letters, or solitary hobbies. A walk to the cemetery to pay respects to long-dead relatives was one of the few acceptable outings for a young lady and her fiancé.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture (New York: Bonanza Books, 1952), p. 285.

The nineteenth century was the first period in America in which women influenced the decorative arts. While the husband was the undisputed head of the house, the wife wielded a great influence in the decoration of the home. Not only was she responsible for running the household efficiently, but the house had to reflect the family's social standing in the community. There were no telephones, radios, or television sets. Entertainments were limited to occasional touring dramatic groups, church socials, and perhaps an annual visit by a circus. These factors contributed to the importance of the home and the family unit during the Victorian period.

Victorians increasingly became concerned with their own comfort. This is reflected in much of their furniture, especially in chairs and sofas. Seat furniture utilized the newly-developed coil spring which was used in combination with deep, overstuffed upholstery.<sup>2</sup> Practical and pragmatic, Victorians chose furnishings for comfort and durability as well as style.

Although much Victorian Furniture was ponderous and architectural in character, many pieces were influenced by women, especially by their physical stature and the clothing which they wore. The low arms and the width of seat furniture reflected the costumes worn by women during this period.

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<sup>2</sup>Harriett Bridgeman and Elizabeth Drury, The Encyclopedia of Victoriana (New York: Macmillan, 1975), p. 16.

Dresses with wide skirts, crinolines of wire and whalebone, voluminous petticoats, and the somewhat later vogue for bustles necessarily influenced the type of chair on which a lady could safely and modestly sit.<sup>3</sup> Various names, sometimes inappropriately interchanged, were applied to innovative seat furniture: méridienne, fainting couch, bustle bench, slipper chair, and Mrs. chair. In each, the object was to allow the woman to rise from a sitting position without her clothing becoming entangled in the furniture. Low seat heights were necessary in order that the heavy skirts could rest upon the floor, thus taking the weight off the woman's waist while she was seated. When the influential ladies' magazine Harper's Bazaar illustrated an elaborately costumed woman in a seated position, she was perched on the edge of a chair.<sup>4</sup> Because her skirts and hoops might fly up if she slouched in a deep armchair, a lady never allowed her back to touch the back of a chair.

Floral patterns, upholstery fabrics, and drapery treatments of the nineteenth century suggest qualities earlier associated with dressmaking. The use of large patterns for wallcoverings and vivid reds and yellows for drapery may be interpreted as being influenced by women's fashions. Intense

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<sup>3</sup>R. Turner Wilcox, The Mode in Costume, A History of Men's and Women's Clothes and Accessories (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 283-284, 311.

<sup>4</sup>Stella Blum, Victorian Fashions from Harper's Bazaar (New York: Dover, 1974), pp. 14, 152, 184.

colors or striking patterns were not acceptable in fabrics to be worn by respectable ladies. However, rich and colorful shades were considered stylish for interior decoration. Trim-mings of ribbons, bows, fringe, ruffles, and tassels were copied from clothing and applied to furniture in heavier versions.

Since few occasions called for Victorian women to be away from home, they filled their leisure time with do-it-yourself, artistic projects. Every conceivable medium was used: canvas, paper, fabric, wood, glass, beads, butterflies, feathers, and human hair. Victorian women were great copiers; they seldom relied upon their own creativity to produce an article of originality. To be artistic, they first had to have a pattern. Magazines such as The Family Friend and Harper's Bazaar catered to the hobbyists with minutely-detailed drawings which illustrated various ways small decorative items could be designed, accompanied by instructions. Dried moss baskets, feather pictures, hair-and-bead flowers, leather-work wall pockets, and hair bracelets were executed with skill and attention to detail.<sup>5</sup> It is this aspect of the Victorian mind which permeates the decorative arts of the period: if a thing was worthy of one's time and attention, it should be done properly or not done at all. A similar

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<sup>5</sup>Frederic Gordon Roe, Victorian Corners: The Style and Taste of an Era (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1968), pp. 89-90.

standard was applied to machine-made articles: if they looked as good as hand-made items and served the same purpose, they were acceptable.

#### Pattern Books and Literature

During the formative years of the mechanization of American furniture factories, the manufacturers had limited source material upon which to base their designs. America's first pattern book--The Cabinet-Maker's Assistant, 1840, by John Hall--contained one hundred and ninety-eight line drawings. Few complete pieces of furniture were illustrated. The book had drawings of various scrolls and brackets which were suitable for application to chairs, sofas, stools, and case pieces. Manufacturers found the patterns adaptable to their machines, and the book was widely used throughout the 1850s. Furniture with elements of Hall's designs were illustrated by Andrew Jackson Downing in his 1850 edition of The Architecture of Country Houses, a book which helped to formulate an American middle-class taste during the nineteenth century.

Manufacturers were indebted to John Claudius London's Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture, published in twelve editions between 1835 and 1883. The book became the principal influence for furniture makers for almost fifty years. London's knowledge of styles and artistic development was often incorrect. While his inaccuracies probably went undetected for the most part, various

furniture revivals were in part based upon his unreliable ideas.

A pattern book which incorporated numerous designs shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851, The Victorian Cabinet-maker's Assistant was published in 1853 by Blackie and Sons of London. This pattern book had a decisive impact upon American manufacturers for over twenty years. In 1872, a book appeared which would also have a great influence upon Victorian furniture. Surprisingly, it was not a pattern book at all, a fact which led to confusion and misinterpretation of the author's original intentions. In his Hints on Household Taste, first published in England, Charles Eastlake advocated simply crafted forms based upon Medieval styles. In America, his ideas were debased into mass-produced, inexpensive furniture and became known as the Eastlake style--a style which he vehemently refuted. Another book which enjoyed a brief popularity in America was Bruce Talbert's Gothic Forms Applied to Furniture. Published in 1873, the book inspired architects of the period; however, the Gothic style was not widely accepted by furniture designers. An earlier book of Gothic designs--Robert O'Conner's The Cabinet-Maker's Assistant of 1842--had also failed to be adapted by American furniture makers in large numbers.

While English publications influenced Victorian furniture makers on both sides of the Atlantic throughout the nineteenth century, America also produced some authors whose works

concerning design were widely read. During the 1870s, Charles Wyliss Elliott's Book of American Interiors (1876), Harriet Prescott Spofford's Art Decoration Applied to Furniture (1878), and Clarence Chatham Cook's The House Beautiful (1878), propagated Eastlake's ideas.<sup>6</sup> Articles concerning household furniture, written by Spofford, appeared at intervals in Harper's Bazaar in 1876. Mrs. Spofford endorsed Eastlake's ideas and used illustrations of actual furniture made by New York firms. Not only were Mrs. Spofford's articles and book among the first to deal with American factory-made furniture, but she also wrote detailed surveys of historical styles. Her remarks and advice were avidly read by women in Victorian America.

While the writings of Eastlake, Cook, and Spofford may not have been displayed with the family Bible in a parlor tableau, they were possibly as widely read, and English-speaking young married couples accepted Hints on Household Taste as gospel truths. Near the end of the century, the novelist Edith Wharton wrote The Decoration of Houses. Appealing primarily to the wealthy through its emphasis upon exquisite decoration on a grand scale, the 1897 book popularized historic French Styles and reproductions of period rooms.

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<sup>6</sup>Robert C. Smith, "Good Taste in Nineteenth-Century Furniture," Antiques 76 (October 1959):243.

### Popular Victorian Substyles

Throughout the nineteenth century, American furniture makers adapted earlier styles and created composite designs which became popular with the public for varying periods of time. These designs may be grouped and approximately dated by comparing stylistic characteristics. As many as eight separate American Victorian substyles are differentiated by Thomas Ormsbee,<sup>7</sup> while Louise Ade Boger applies a broader criteria to establish three substyles prior to 1850 and one after that date.<sup>8</sup> Substyles sometimes overlapped or were contemporaneous.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, subsidiary, transitional designs bridge these substyles and possess characteristics of two or more periods. Furniture representing four substyles--Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Eastlake--had a mass appeal and was manufactured for extended periods. The majority of extant pieces of American Victorian furniture represent these four substyles.

#### The Victorian Empire Substyle

In Colonial America, the decorative arts had been directly influenced by the mother country, England. During the American Revolution, the colonists looked to France for aid, and

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<sup>7</sup>Thomas Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture (New York: Bonanza Books, 1952), pp. 15-29.

<sup>8</sup>Louise Ade Boger, The Complete Guide to Furniture Styles (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), pp. 409-416.

<sup>9</sup>Ormsbee, p. 15.



consequently, through trade, travel, and the exchange of ideas, aspects of French art and design entered into the mainstream of American life. A strong resentment against England culminated in the War of 1812, and in America, French cultural influence again dominated in fashion and furnishings. At the apex of Napoleon's glory and the Empire style in France, Americans were looking for new decorative and architectural styles to reflect the democratic ideals of their new country. The severe neo-classicism of the French Empire, after considerable modification, interpretation, and blending with previous English-inspired designs, became known as the American Empire style. Consequently, American furniture during the first four decades of the nineteenth century displays characteristics of the French Empire style.<sup>10</sup> The early years, to the 1820s, are usually called American Empire; from the 1820s to the mid-nineteenth century, this classical-influenced furniture is generally known as Victorian Empire. In an article in Antiques Magazine, Robert Smith noted that after 1820, American furniture remained under French influence; he called the period 1820 to 1850 decadent classicism.<sup>11</sup> Helen Comstock also tied early Victorian design to French classicism and noted in American Furniture: "The first

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<sup>10</sup> Sherrill Whiton, Elements of Interior Design and Decoration (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1963), pp. 319-320.

<sup>11</sup> Robert C. Smith, "Late Classical Furniture in the United States," Antiques 74 (December 1958):519, 523.

indications of a Victorian style in America, as in England, can be seen in the mid-1830s as a modification of long-lived classical designs."<sup>12</sup>

The primary difference between the furniture of the 1820s--American Empire--and the furniture of the 1830s--Victorian Empire--was a more excessive use of ornament and a heavier appearance. This style was the first in America in which the circular saw was used extensively.<sup>13</sup> Thin sheets of veneer could be cut precisely and economically by circular saws. The sometimes massive proportions and plain surfaces of Victorian Empire furniture can be partly attributed to the capabilities of machinery, early mass production techniques, and a liberal rather than literal adaptation of designs from furniture pattern books.<sup>14</sup> An 1833 advertisement by Joseph Meeks & Sons of New York pictured forty-four pieces of furniture, twenty of which were derived from George Smith's 1828 edition of The Cabinet-Maker and Upholster's Guide.<sup>15</sup> Smith's patterns had been inspired by Thomas Hope's Household Furniture and Interior Design, an influential book first published in England in

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<sup>12</sup>Helen Comstock, American Furniture (New York: Viking Press, 1962), p. 278.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>14</sup>Bridgeman and Drury, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup>Boger, p. 499.

1807. The pillar and scroll style was promoted by John Hall in his 1840 book, The Cabinet-Maker's Assistant, Embracing the Most Modern Style of Cabinet Furniture, which offered one hundred and ninety-eight designs. A common feature of his patterns was a repetition of massive scrolled supports in a great variety of sizes.<sup>16</sup> The style was still in demand in 1850 when Andrew Jackson Downing published The Architecture of Country Houses. Downing illustrated groups of archaeological-inspired Greek chairs and other furniture which emphasized pillar and scroll elements.<sup>17</sup>

Classical elements and motifs employed in the design of Victorian Empire furniture make it one of the more easily recognizable substyles. While the style on the whole was plain and massive in scale, many pieces possess graceful qualities which reflect their classical inspiration. Mahogany, the favored wood, was polished to a high gloss, which emphasized the grain of the unembellished surfaces. Lines of case furniture were severely straight, often with plain, undecorated pillars set into the corners. Graceful curves were featured primarily on chair legs--a modified klismos or saber curve became known as a splayed leg.

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<sup>16</sup>Boger, p. 410.

<sup>17</sup>Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses (New York: 1850; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), pp. 421-422, 425, 428.

Sofas of the Victorian Empire style, inspired by Greek couches, were usually symmetrical with S-shaped, curved arms slightly lower than the straight back, and supported by winged, animal paw feet. Asymmetrical sofas were popular, with a rolled-under, upholstered frame replacing one of the curved arms. The use of casters under the carved animal feet gave the illusion that the sofa was floating an inch or more above the floor. In the early nineteenth century, the French painter Jacques Louis David painted a portrait of Mme. Juliette Recamier in which she was pictured reclining on a Grecian couch. This type of sofa became known as a récamier or méridienne.<sup>18</sup> The récamier, with an added back, became the prototype for the American Empire sofa and evolved into the Victorian Empire sofa; doubled in width, the récamier became the sleigh bed.

The bed underwent several design changes in the early nineteenth century. Four poster beds with curved canopies or flat testers, which were preferred in colonial America, became more massive in scale. When the height of the tester almost touched the ceiling, the tester was removed, leaving a four poster bed. Sleigh beds and beds with high headboards and lower footboards came into fashion. Another favored style had a low headboard and an even lower footboard made up of an open frame rather than a solid panel. The frame was filled with

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<sup>18</sup>Alvar Gonzalez-Palacios, The French Empire Style (London: Hamlyn, 1970), p. 123.

ring-turned or spool-turned members, and was possibly inspired by the French provincial lit à barreaux--a bed of chair stretchers.<sup>19</sup> This type of bed was made in many localities in America by local craftsmen and small woodworking shops. Around 1820, the sleigh bed was introduced. A heavy, ponderous piece of furniture, it featured a panelled rolled-over headboard and footboard which curved outward or inward. It was derived from the French Empire lit en bateau or boat bed and remained in vogue into the Rococo period where it was adapted by John Belter.

Suites of matching bedroom furniture were manufactured in considerable quantities. In addition to the bed, a suite had a chest of drawers, a dresser with attached mirror, a wash stand, and perhaps a round table. Chairs were offered in great variety but seldom matched bedroom suites. Armoires or wardrobes were indispensable pieces of furniture because closets were not normally built into houses. Bedroom furniture was usually plainer in appearance than pieces designed for the social rooms, and featured broad expanses of undecorated wood. Brass hardware sometimes enriched the reddish mahogany surfaces but more often plain, round, wooden knobs were used. Mirrors were framed in matching veneered wood and attached to wash stands and dressers with simple, scroll cut pieces.

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<sup>19</sup>Boger, p. 377.

Round and octagonal tables of French Empire influence were supported by single, center pedestals and three or four paw and claw feet or a similar number of scroll brackets. Pillar and scroll, a term used to describe many Empire pieces, probably evolved from descriptions of this type of table. The pedestal was either plain or fluted, and sometimes squared instead of rounded when four feet were used. Small rectangular-topped tables featured similar supports. When tables had drawers, they were designated consoles and sometimes referred to as cabinets. The fronts of the drawers usually had a slight convex curve and a keyhole outlined in brass. Carving was confined to paw and claw feet.

The rocking chair--a unique Victorian contribution to comfort and childcare--came into vogue during this period. Victorian Empire rocking chairs often had plain, curved supports which incorporated the arm and the rocker into one, scroll-cut piece. Carved ornaments of the same wood were applied to the top back of the chair. Seat height averaged about twelve inches while the backs were contoured to the human body. The term Lincoln Rocker is loosely given to some rocking chairs of this style because of similarities to the rocking chair in which Lincoln was sitting when he was shot at Ford's Theater.<sup>20</sup> However, the name is also used for some rocking chairs of the Rococo Revival style.

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<sup>20</sup>Robert Bishop, Centuries and Styles of the American Chair (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1972), p. 318.

Dining room furniture was massive in scale and undoubtedly suited for large Victorian families. Supported by single or double pedestals, broad table tops of polished mahogany were ideal for multi-course meals. While some of the single pedestal dining tables appear precarious when loaded with heavy silver and china, they were quite substantial. Constructed with traditional wood joinery methods, screws, and glue, dining room furniture imparted a feeling of family stability and prosperity. Sideboards and side tables were large and plain; curved lines occurred only on drawer fronts, scrolled feet, and sometimes on projecting end frames. White marble tops often added to the generally heavy effect. Smaller side tables, with characteristic scrolled legs, are improperly called pier tables in the mistaken belief that they were meant to be placed between two windows. Pier tables and pier mirrors in the American Empire style were meant to be decorative and not for food service in dining rooms.<sup>21</sup>

#### The Rococo Revival Substyle

The Rococo Revival substyle is the best known of all the Victorian types of furniture and considered by the general public to represent the best of the period.<sup>22</sup> More than the other nineteenth-century revival styles, the Rococo Revival

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<sup>21</sup>Boger, p. 380.

<sup>22</sup>Ormsbee, p. 21.

expressed the expansive, optimistic, and ostentatious prosperity of mid-century America.<sup>23</sup> Harold Osborne stated that Rococo furniture led the way to an era which banished good taste in furnishing the American home but begrudgingly admitted "...some types of furniture produced during this period are worthy of reproduction, and have an appeal that is hard to find in any other period."<sup>24</sup> Louise Ade Boger agreed that this style--which she called the French Rococo or Louis XV style--was the most popular substyle.<sup>25</sup> She cited that its charm and durability were based upon structure rather than obvious surface decoration; the actual supporting members of the chairs and tables were created in Baroque scrolls and Rococo curves.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the style is characterized by the gracefully curved cabriole leg on which the English painter William Hogarth partly based his theory of the beauty of a serpentine line, The Analysis of Beauty in 1753.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Bridgeman and Drury, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup>Harold Philip Osborne, An Outline of the Home Furnishing Periods (Long Beach, California: Outline Publishing Company, 1941), p. 152.

<sup>25</sup>Boger, p. 411.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 411-412.

<sup>27</sup>Katherine Everett Gilbert and Helmut Kuhn, A History of Esthetics (New York: Dover Publications, 1972), pp. 258-263.



Sometimes called the antique-French style because of its eighteenth-century origins, the Rococo Revival style was based upon Louis XV curvilinear furniture forms, and was popularized in France when Louis Philippe came to power in 1830. Many characteristics of the Louis XV style appeared in the Rococo Revival substyle: cabriole legs, C- and S-shaped scrolls, naturalistic carving, exposed wooden frames, and comfortable upholstery. Rose, grape, and garland motifs were often used in connection with leaves and tendrils done in medium to high relief. Variations of this type of ornament were used on top rails and cresting of chairs and sofas. Because they possessed a fine grain suitable for intricate carving, walnut and rosewood were used almost exclusively in the construction of Rococo Revival furniture. The knees of chair and table legs afforded spaces for scroll carving and sometimes the decoration extended the length of the leg to the whorl feet. Casters inserted into legs of tables and seat furniture enabled the heavier pieces to be moved to accommodate changing functions within the social rooms.

During the Rococo Revival era, new furniture types became prominent. The étagère, which comprised a table or cabinet base with shelves and a mirror to reflect a display of objets d'art, became an obligatory item in the Victorian household. The étagères made in New York by French-born Alexander Roux and Charles A. Baudouine in the 1850s are considered among the finest pieces representative of the style.

Less elaborate display shelves were created in the whatnot shelf, an item which became popular for the remainder of the century.

Among the new shapes of seat furniture was a small sofa patterned upon the English sociable.<sup>28</sup> With a low center back section flanked by two chair backs, it was designed for the purpose of polite conversation between two seated people in a social room--the center, uncomfortable section was left unoccupied to allow room for full skirts or to insure that no accidental touching could occur. Small sofas were known as demi-sofas or love seats. The latter term was probably an American phrase of the late 1850s and does not properly apply to all examples of the small sofa. A prominent feature on sofas of the period was a triple or serpentine-curved back. The back could be divided in various ways: (1) a center medallion with flanking curved sections, (2) a triple-back arrangement in which three sections were encircled by wood molding, (3) a triple arch with the upholstery extending in an unbroken expanse across the entire back, or (4) a scroll-curved back with very slight curves flanking a central, ornamented cresting. There were more innovations in the sofa during the Rococo Revival period than during any previous style. Parlor suites--a sofa with two or more matching chairs--became standard groupings.

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<sup>28</sup>Ralph Edwards and L. G. G. Ramsey, eds., The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides (New York: Bonanza Books, 1968), p. 1305.

A favorite chair of women, the balloon-back chair was manufactured in many versions and great numbers following its acceptance at the Great Exhibition of 1851.<sup>29</sup> The rounded back with a pronounced waistline continued unbroken into tapered back legs; front legs were invariably of the graceful cabriole shape. Constructed of walnut or rosewood, with an open back of finger molding, the chairs were lightweight and practical. For over twenty years, this design remained the standard chair for the dining room, drawing room, hall, and library.<sup>30</sup> Balloon-back chairs with short legs were called slipper chairs. Pairs of balloon-back chairs with arms were designed for use in the parlor and designated Mr. and Mrs. chairs.

An unusual piece adopted from the French, the tête-à-tête was an S-shaped form consisting of two armchairs attached so they faced in opposite directions. Often called a gossip's bench, two ladies could be seated, with fashionable fans held to their faces, and engage in conversation without being observed.

Tables were produced in great varieties, usually for specific purposes--work tables, plant stands, and lamp tables. Center tables were so-named because of their placement in a

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<sup>29</sup>Art Journal, The Great Exhibition, London, 1851: The Art Journal Catalogue (London: Art Journal, 1851; reprint ed., New York: Bounty Books, 1970), p. 119.

<sup>30</sup>Edwards and Ramsey, p. 1326.

room. Also called a parlor table, the center table, with an oil lamp as the only source of light in the room, became the gathering place for the leisure activities of reading, needlework, or conversation. William Seale compared the center table of the Rococo Revival period to an altar which held awesome books--Pilgrim's Progress and The Bible--a bowl of waxed fruit, and small family heirlooms.<sup>31</sup> The taste of the lady of the house was judged by the tabletop display. Center tables featured wooden or marble tops in round, oval, or turtle-back shapes; legs were elaborately curved in cyma-shaped scrolls. Finials were attached to the aprons and stretchers while naturalistically carved fruits and flowers formed pendant swags.

Introduced at the Great Exhibition of 1851, papier mâché furniture was novel and decorative--two pre-requisites for Victorian acceptance. Although not a structurally sound material for furniture construction, papier mâché could be mounted on a wooden or metal frame in the manner of wood veneer. The firm of Jennens and Bettridge in Birmingham, England, patented a process of mother-of-pearl inlay in 1825 and manufactured articles ranging from trays and boxes to chairs and tilt-top tables.<sup>32</sup> Few papier mâché items appear

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<sup>31</sup>William Seale, Recreating the Historic House Interior (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979), p. 201.

<sup>32</sup>Bridgeman and Drury, p. 39.

to have been made in America; the demand for the uniquely Victorian decorative wares was satisfied with imports from England.<sup>33</sup> Interest in the material waned toward the end of the Rococo Revival period.

Foremost among the designers during the Rococo Revival was John Henry Belter. A German immigrant cabinetmaker in New York, Belter introduced a new, patented process for curving laminated wood at New York's Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1853.<sup>34</sup> His process involved the gluing of three to eight layers of rosewood together at right angles, with alternating layers of woodgrain placed in cross directions to give strength. The layers could then be shaped by steam, carved, and pierced with intricate designs. Laminating was not new--ancient Egyptians had used it in 2700 BC.<sup>35</sup> The utilization of steam-powered machinery made curving of the sandwiched wood panels possible. One of the greatest applications was the fact that it could be molded into chair backs and seats to conform to the human body--a certain attraction for comfort-conscious Victorians.

Constructed of walnut, black walnut, and rosewood, Belter's furniture was characterized by sensuous curves on the entire

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<sup>33</sup>Boger, p. 416.

<sup>34</sup>Laszlo Katz, The Art of Woodworking and Furniture Appreciation (New York: P. F. C. Publishing Company, 1970), p. 180.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

frame, curved and oval chair backs, and intricately carved grapes, garlands, flowers, and scrolls. The backs of Belter's furniture were made in one seamless piece of curved laminated wood. Baudouine circumvented Belter's patented process by introducing a center joint to his chair backs, thereby inadvertently making the authentication of Belter furniture much easier one hundred years later. Rococo furniture of the Belter-type was created in matching parlour suites, exuberant center tables, étagères, hall furniture, and bedroom suites. President Abraham Lincoln owned furniture of this style in his Springfield, Illinois, home. The White House was partially furnished with Belter furniture during Lincoln's administration.

#### The Renaissance Revival Substyle

The Renaissance Revival substyle began in England about mid-century and was manufactured in America by 1860. Early examples of this florid style were exhibited in London's Great Exhibition of 1851 and two years later at New York's Crystal Palace Exhibition. Furniture in this style continued to be popular until after the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876.

The Centennial Exhibition, the popularity of the Renaissance Revival substyle, the expansion of midwestern manufacturers, and a population explosion occurred about the same time--the 1870s. Consequently, the Renaissance Revival

substyle was disseminated over a wider area and at a more accelerated pace than the previous styles. What the furniture makers lacked in originality of design, they gained in promotion and marketing. Among the solid business practices employed were (1) carefully planned and attractive displays at exhibitions, (2) the institution of semi-annual markets for out-of-town dealers, (3) the establishment of impressive showrooms in Grand Rapids and New York City, and (4) the creation of tour de force exhibition pieces in the traditional manner of European craftsmen--designed to illustrate the versatility of their production facilities.<sup>36</sup>

The Renaissance Revival style was partly a creation of big business to supply the demands of a newly-affluent and upwardly mobile society. That this style was really what the public wanted, or that they even understood exactly what the word Renaissance implied, perhaps can never be satisfactorily answered. While Ormsbee states that the Renaissance Revival was based upon Renaissance architecture and not upon any previous furniture form,<sup>37</sup> Boger more realistically points out easy-to-recognize features from the Louis XIV and Louis XVI styles, and hesitates to separate the Louis XVI Revival into a separate substyle.<sup>38</sup> Ormsbee dates the Renaissance

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<sup>36</sup>Kenneth L. Ames, "Grand Rapids Furniture at the Time of the Centennial," Winterthur Portfolio 10 (1975):23.

<sup>37</sup>Ormsbee, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup>Boger, p. 413.

Revival as beginning in 1865 and ending in 1875. Because such precise dating of mass-produced furniture is arbitrary, historians seldom agree when assigning exact dates to particular pieces. Contrary to the popularly-held opinion of antique dealers, Renaissance Revival furniture is as difficult to attribute to a particular company or year as any previous style. Trade catalogues of the period, along with trade cards and photographs which were used by salesmen, illustrate a manufacturer's product at a specific time, but similarities between existing items of furniture and the drawings do not guarantee accuracy when attempting attributions. The primary reason for these difficulties arises from the fact that the factories which produced Renaissance Revival furniture used the same woodworking machines.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, manufacturers freely copied and borrowed from one another, resulting in repetitiousness unparalleled in previous periods.

Comparison of furniture made in America between 1860 and 1875 has shown that designers were undoubtedly inspired by classical architecture and ornament, particularly from the sixteenth-century Italian and French Renaissance, the seventeenth-century Baroque style of Louis XIV, and the eighteenth-century Neo-Classic style of Louis XVI. Examples of the architectural details which decorated the furniture

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<sup>39</sup>Ames, p. 23.



were arched and broken pediments, baluster-turned legs, capitals, moldings, finials, cartouches, and scrolled brackets. There was nothing radically new--it was a composite style created by mid-nineteenth-century manufacturers in the same way as the Mediterranean style in the mid-twentieth century.

Renaissance Revival furniture was noteworthy for its heroic, massive proportions and rectilinear shapes--dual characteristics which made the style more suitable for dining room and bedroom suites than for seat furniture. This was probably the reason for combining the Renaissance forms with those of the Louis XVI style in the early 1860s to create parlor furniture on a more human-sized scale. While the primary motifs used on Renaissance Revival furniture were architectural in origin, the general appearance was due to the machinery involved in its production. Elaborate contours were achieved with the band saw or jig saw; the latter was also used for piercing, perforating, and scalloping--three variations which produced an impression of complex construction. A tool called a molder was used to round contour edges while narrow, projecting contours and incised lines were cut by rotary powered burr machines and chisels.<sup>40</sup> The last step in construction, before the final finishing, was the application of ornament. On the majority of Renaissance Revival

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<sup>40</sup>Elizabeth Bidwell Bates and Jonathan L. Fairbanks, American Furniture, 1620 to the Present (New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1981), p. 421.

furniture types, three basic units of ornament were used in various combinations: roundels, panels, and spindles. Roundels were flat, circular ornaments which were carved with rosettes or incised with lines and applied to flat surfaces. Panels were either sunken, raised, or applied; the most often used type was a thin piece of burl veneer which was glued to a drawer or door. Spindles were seldom used in a completely turned manner; they were split in half and glued to surfaces or edges.

Appearing on practically all Renaissance Revival furniture, these easily mass-produced types of ornament were equally important to the subsequent Eastlake style. The major decorative feature was paneling, which should not be confused with true panel construction in which a thin wooden panel is interspaced between two upright members with a tongue and groove joint--the actual type used in Italian Renaissance furniture. This Victorian paneling consisted of pieces applied to frontal surfaces. Popular on drawer fronts and headboards, the thin pieces of wood, no more than one-half inch thick, were shaped as desired and then covered with a burl veneer shaved to a thinness of less than one-fortieth of an inch.<sup>41</sup> When additional decoration was desired, delicate linear patterns could be incised and filled with gold paint which imparted a touch of opulence. A basic requirement

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<sup>41</sup>Ames, p. 34.

was that furniture had to look expensive but in reality be cheap to make. Therefore, the more work done by machine, with a minimum of hand labor, the more modest the price, and consequently, more units could be produced in less time.

Bedroom furniture--often described as chamber suites to impress a gullible public, because Downing had always referred to bedrooms on the second floors of his house plans as chamber floors--represented the epitome of Renaissance Revival style. The bronze medal winner at the Centennial Exhibition, a bedroom suite by Berkey and Gay, has been placed in the Grand Rapids Public Museum.<sup>42</sup> Because such pieces as these had hand carved elements, exact replicas of the Berkey and Gay suite may not have been produced extensively--furniture for the masses was influenced by exhibition pieces but seldom recreated their high style. A headboard of a Renaissance Revival bed was two to three times the height of the footboard. Typically the tall headboard was more ornate than the other pieces in the suite, with paneling glued to the wide, flat, walnut surface. Helena Hayward succinctly described these prominent articles of furniture, "Grand Rapids bedroom suites are characterized by a particularly gloomy grandeur."<sup>43</sup> A chest with three or four drawers usually had similar but not always identical ornamentation, and

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<sup>42</sup>Helena Hayward, World Furniture (London: Hamlyn, 1970), p. 253.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

was surmounted by a mirror. Framed by wood in eclectic architectural shapes, the mirror, often the same height as the headboard, was possibly an attempt to balance the bulkiness of the bed. While these pieces measured around eight feet in height, it should be observed that ceilings averaged twelve feet and sometimes higher. Bracket shelves were frequently attached to either side of a mirror, ostensibly to hold flower vases or the ever-present souvenirs of exhibitions. Dresser tops were usually of marble and featured two small boxes with drawers or hinged tops, or one central raised section with one drawer. Designed to hold small articles such as cufflinks, collarbuttons, and combs, they were more often called handkerchief boxes. Completing the chamber suite was the washstand, the least decorative piece. Varying little throughout the second half of the century, it had two doors, one drawer, and a plain top with a backsplash. More expensive pieces had marble tops and bracket shelves.

The Victorian eye continued to rejoice in complex decorations, agitated lines, and tactile surfaces; Renaissance Revival furniture demanded attention with its aggressive outlines and massive proportions. It could be said that the style created a partnership with the individual and helped him express his aspirations, achievements, and accomplishments in the same symbolic manner as an automobile in the twentieth century. Kenneth Ames comments on the success of the

furniture of the period: "To be appealing, it [furniture] had to be carefully designed to meet the tastes of the time. And because it was well designed, it satisfied."<sup>44</sup>

#### The Eastlake Substyle

Late nineteenth-century mass-produced, rectilinear furniture, ornamented with spindles and incised carving, has been given many labels--art furniture, medieval, modern Gothic, Queen Anne, Tudor, and Eastlake. In order to characterize the profusion of eclectic offshoots which occurred between 1870 and 1890, the furniture produced during this period may be designated as American-made Eastlake-inspired.

Reform in furniture design had been suggested--at times, passionately--by English philosophers and designers for nearly thirty years before Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition in 1876. John Ruskin, William Morris, and Bruce J. Talbert and their disciples had introduced the Arts and Crafts movement to counteract the decline of quality of furnishings brought about by mass-production.<sup>45</sup> Two books--Bruce J. Talbert's Gothic Forms Applied to Gothic Furniture, 1867, and Charles Locke Eastlake's Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery, and Other Details, 1868 (with eight subsequent American editions)--were primarily responsible

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<sup>44</sup>Ames, p. 34.

<sup>45</sup>Berry Tracy, ed., 19th-Century America, Furniture and Other Decorative Arts (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970), p. xxv.

for the birth of the substyle known as Eastlake. Not a book for designers but rather a book of theory, Eastlake's ideas were illustrated by line drawings of individual pieces of his own imagination and furniture from stately homes. American manufacturers were quick to realize that the type of furniture advocated by Eastlake was readily adaptable to the geometric limitations and capabilities of their machines.<sup>46</sup>

Eastlake spoke against what he called "a dangerous labyrinth of rococo ornament" and blamed fashion magazines for describing articles of furniture and carpets as elegant, striking, or unique.<sup>47</sup> While not advocating a return to specific types of ancient furniture--that was impractical and unrealistic in view of modern innovations in comfort--he wanted to revive the principles of early, simple design. One sentence from his book sounded the death knell for Rococo and Renaissance curvilinear design: "In an age of debased design at least, the simplest style will be the best. Choose a pure outlined form rather than that which is defined by a dozen varying curves."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>William Seale, The Tasteful Interlude, America's Interiors Through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 17.

<sup>47</sup>Charles Locke Eastlake, Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery, and Other Details (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1878; reprint ed.: New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. 11.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 287.

The fact that he spoke of a silver tray not a piece of furniture did nothing to deter American manufacturers. Eastlake's book must have been considered heaven-sent by furniture-makers who indiscriminately labeled various forms with the author's name. The taste-maker's plea for straight, simple lines was applied to massive, rectangular pieces decorated with machine-made carving, incised lines, and turned spools and spindles.<sup>49</sup> A style vaguely based upon misunderstood medievalism evolved, without the complexities of the earlier use of Gothic Revival architectural ornament.<sup>50</sup> The emphasis quickly became the profitable machine-cut straight line, and the more costly elements disappeared. In the preface of the revised London edition of his book in 1878, Eastlake chastized American manufacturers,

I would, however, caution my readers against supposing that any of my designs represented on such a small scale as in the following woodcuts, can serve as correct models for reproduction by upholsterers and cabinetmakers, without the working drawings necessary for their proper execution; and I think it the more necessary to state this, as I find American tradesmen continually advertising what they are pleased to call 'Eastlake' furniture, with the production of which I have had nothing whatever to do, and for the taste of which I should be very sorry to be considered responsible.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Robert Bishop and Patricia Coblentz, The World of Antiques, Art, and Architecture in Victorian America (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979), p. 136.

<sup>50</sup>Tracy, p. xxv.

<sup>51</sup>Eastlake, p. xxiv.

According to Harriet Spofford, part of the blame for the ugliness of the Eastlake style should be placed upon upholsterers.<sup>52</sup> Since straight, angular seat furniture presented problems concerning comfort, upholsterers added bulk and obliterated the lines with excessive, overstuffing of upholstery. She comments

Today, Eastlake chairs, ugly beyond belief, but invariably strong; Eastlake bedsteads, clean-shaped and charming; Eastlake washstands, dressing-cases, drawers, and cabinets, are to be seen everywhere. . . although not altogether so 'high-toned,' as the lately revived Tudor.<sup>53</sup>

Her bias was revealed in her love of the Tudor style which Eastlake had criticized in his book, and she suggested that his remarks were more suited to the uglier examples which bore his own name--bizarre, picturesque bastardizations which held appeal only for the uneducated and tasteless masses. In conclusion, she agrees with Eastlake's basic premise that the best furniture of all ages had been simple in its general form, and praised him thus:

[Eastlake] represents a movement seldom if ever effected by a single person; and it succeeded in augmenting a new regime, which bears the same relationship to the loose and wanton Quatorze and Quinze regimes that virtue bears to vice.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Harriet Prescott Spofford, "The Eastlake," Harper's Bazaar, September 23, 1876, p. 610.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 610.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 611.



The transition from the Renaissance Revival to the Eastlake style was realized within the space of a few years. Hints on Household Taste appeared in America in 1872, four years before the Centennial Exhibition, and allowed manufacturers ample time to glean self-aggrandizing features from Eastlake's general precepts. One New York firm, Kimbel and Cabus, exhibited examples described as the Eastlake manner, which showed marked differences from the Renaissance Revival style. David Hanks, in a contribution to Nineteenth Century Furniture, notes close similarities between the furniture of Kimbel and Cabus and the illustrations in Talbert's Gothic Forms Applied to Furniture and Examples of Ancient and Modern Furniture.<sup>55</sup> Manufacturers probably relied upon Talbert's works as much as Eastlake's book, but it was the name of the latter with which the public associated the emerging style. The Kimbel and Cabus display at the exhibition sparked the serious production of competitive examples which shortly appeared on the market.<sup>56</sup>

In the exhibition catalogue of the first show ever devoted to Eastlake-influenced furniture in 1974, Mary Jean Smith Madigan, Curator of the Hudson River Museum, commented on the transitional period:

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<sup>55</sup>David Hanks, "Kimbel and Cabus" in Nineteenth Century Furniture, ed. Mary Jean Smith Madigan (New York: Arts and Antiques Books, 1982), p. 66.

<sup>56</sup>Mary Jean Smith Madigan, Eastlake-Influenced American Furniture, 1870-1890 (Yonkers, New York: Hudson River Museum, Publishers, 1974), p. 3.

In America (1872) there appeared a transitional style of furniture characterized by Eastlakerian decorative devices--incised gilded geometric design, stylized marquetry, medieval-looking pierced work--superimposed on basically Renaissance Revival forms. Within a decade, the raised central pediments, heavy molded cornices, and pendant aprons and finials of these pieces gave way to simple, more rectangular shapes more closely allied to Eastlake's ideal.<sup>57</sup>

A great deal of furniture made between the mid-1870s and 1880s combined elements of Renaissance Revival and Eastlake. Today, these hybrid examples are highly confusing to design students when studying this period. Indeed, the accurate dating of these pieces is a hazard, even for professionals, in spite of the fact that trade catalogues, often the only source available for establishing the year in which a piece was made, were usually well-illustrated. Peter Rippe, former Director of the Harris County Heritage Society, Houston, said,

However, just how useful these catalogues will be in the process of dating known examples is somewhat questionable. I am afraid that after you leave 'high-style' Eastlake, you will find that commercial 'Eastlake' is so eclectic and so watered down that it can only be dated in broad circa terms, despite the catalogues. . . Actually, one usually finds it very difficult to prove even a ten year span for any piece of Eastlake furniture. The problem, in most cases, is to actually confine a piece to ten years--any ten years from 1870-1900! With true high style pieces it is somewhat easier, but any commercially made piece of Eastlake that is not actually labeled. . . is usually so 'wandering' in its style that even the most serious dating is still only guessing.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Madigan, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup>Peter Rippe to Ralph Rice, personal letter, December 6, 1977.

Eastlake-influenced furniture was rectilinear in shape and featured stile and rail construction with mortise and tenon joinery. The general appearance has been compared derogatorily to the packing crates in which it was shipped. Beds and case pieces were of stile and rail members with expanses of sunken panels. Undoubtedly the pieces would have presented a rather bland appearance if decorative moldings and incised lines had not been added. The problem occurred when the designers did not seem to know when a piece was sufficiently embellished. A layered cornice of machine-cut, pierced fretwork became the hallmark of the style; these crestings and cornices were created with saw-tooth and reeded edges. Made of walnut, oak, cherry, maple, and ash, the pieces were often made of one type of cheaper wood--the carcass wood--and faced with a more costly burl veneer. Nonetheless, a great many pieces were entirely of oak, and were varnished to display the grain.<sup>59</sup> Drawer fronts, frame members, and paneling were decorated with fine incised lines in geometric patterns which accentuated the rectilinear shapes. Mass-produced components, sometimes called gingerbread, were variations of spool-turnings created by steam-powered lathes; spindles, ball and vase, pistons, bobbins, ball and dowel, and nautical wheels were commonly used. When quartered, the nautical wheels became fan shapes which are sometimes

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<sup>59</sup>Madigan, p. 61.

described as radiating wheel segments. Finials and pendants took the shapes of urns, vases, balls or steeples. Furniture finishes were not adventuresome or time consuming in their application, and were confined to fruit stains, varnishes, and black lacquer.

Among the standard, staple items produced were straight-back side chairs and folding chairs, with simply turned legs and shallowly incised rails and aprons. Parlor suites were constructed along simple, straight lines with incised decoration and carving in low relief. Sofas with multiple chair backs and settees with asymmetrically arranged backs and arms were matched with two or more chairs to become the basic parlor grouping. The Victorian passion for displaying potted palms, ferns, and other greenery, especially during the winter months, led to the production of plant stands and pedestals in numerous repetitious designs. Although not usually created in suites in the manner of parlor and bedroom furniture, a variety of tables were designed in a similar fashion. Side tables, center tables, lamp tables, and chair-side, work tables were available. The bases of these tables invariably had four scroll saw-cut sections connected to form pierced pedestals which were decorated with spool turnings.

Panel beds--named for distinctive rectangular panels on the head and footboards--usually had a spindle or lattice treatment which pierced the top of the headboard, and smaller rectangular panels of carved floral design. Side rails

featured brackets at either end for added support, and the favored decoration was the radiating segment, which took the appearance of a rising sun, spokes of a wheel, or flower petals.<sup>60</sup> Bureaus and étagères often had surmounting features executed in a fashion similar to the panel beds--pierced fretwork, shallow carving, saw-toothed molding, chamfered edges, and burl veneers on drawer fronts.

Library bookcases, consisting of tall case pieces with glazed doors which rested upon separate, projecting bases, were plain and practical; displayed behind the glass doors, books were protected from dust. Combination drop-front desks and bookcases--arranged side by side rather than one mounted above the other--were introduced near the end of the century. Constructed of solid oak, the asymmetrically designed pieces often featured mirrors and drawers.

All furniture types were produced in the Eastlake style: sofas, chairs, tables, desks, bookcases, sideboards, étagères, wardrobes, pedestals, and even pianos. Although few new types were introduced, some items from previous substyles gained in popularity. The halltree--a combination of hatrack, umbrella stand, and sometimes a bench--became an indispensable piece of furniture for the modest or affluent home. Tall, narrow, and requiring very little floor space, typical Eastlake halltrees incorporated a narrow mirror in the central,

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<sup>60</sup>Madigan, p. 48.

upper part of the composition. The halltree became the butler and the maid in a servantless home--always stationed just within the front door to receive hats, coats, wet umbrellas, and walking sticks.

In the late 1800s, Oriental motifs were added to Eastlake furniture. Pseudo-bamboo and fake lacquer became available on chairs, tables, beds, cupboards, and washstands.<sup>61</sup> Labeled Japonisme and shown at the Chicago World Columbian Exposition in 1893, manufacturers orientalized furniture types which had essentially the same characteristics as the Eastlake style. The orientalizing aspects of cheap furniture consisted mainly in faking ebony by applying a black finish to cherry and other native American woods--called ebonizing--to approximate a lacquer finish. To these pieces were added the already prevalent incised lines which were invariably picked-out in gilt. Virtually the only American furniture created in this style to possess any artistic merit was that made in New York by such firms as Herter Brothers, Charles Tisch, and George Hunzinger. In varying degrees, their furniture followed Eastlakian principles, but replaced the spindle turnings with Oriental-inspired fretwork or pseudo-bamboo.<sup>62</sup> At the end of the century, a style of

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<sup>61</sup> Oliver Impey, Chinoiserie, The Impact of Oriental Styles Upon Western Art and Decoration (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977), p. 185.

<sup>62</sup> Madigan, p. 5.

furniture with simple lines and undecorated surfaces--  
designated Golden Oak--was introduced.

## CHAPTER III

### EAST TERRACE

#### History of House

Located on the east bank of the Brazos River at Waco, East Terrace was built between 1872 and 1874 by John Wesley Mann. A terrace of clay and sand, surrounded by a brick wall, was constructed for the site of the house in 1872--a precaution which undoubtedly aided in flood protection, but due to the changing course of the river was not always successful. This foundation has disappeared beneath silt and sand, and the river which once flowed a few yards from the front door is now about one hundred yards away. Fired on the property in Mann's own kilns, the exterior brick for East Terrace was made of the distinctive pink and coral colored sand of the Brazos. The mellow brick is pierced by numerous tall, narrow, floor-length windows set into arched openings. The white woodwork of the porches, doors, windows, shutters, and bracketed eaves accents the verticality of the design.

Each floor contains six rooms and two halls. The original kitchen was detached to keep cooking odors from permeating the upholstery and drapery fabrics as well as for fire prevention. The present kitchen and the cook's bedroom above were later additions. Larger in scale than the rest of the



house, and of a slightly later date than the original structure, the double parlors of the first floor and corresponding ballroom above attest to the social position and affluency of the owner. This addition constitutes a separate wing for the purpose of entertaining. Never having been modernized, the Galveston-milled woodwork--sliding doors, shutters, floors, and staircases--are original to the house.

A floor plan for an Italianate villa was shown in Andrew Jackson Downing's 1851 publication, The Architecture of Country Houses. Suited for the climate of the Southern and Central sections of the United States, Downing's plan featured a broad, low-pitched roof, numerous tall and narrow windows, wide verandahs, and a tower. The irregular composition of the floor plan, which allowed for the addition of wings, was deemed practical for large, nineteenth-century families. Pictured as one story higher than the rest of the house, the tower was derived from the Italian campanile and was designed to provide picturesque unity and to aid ventilation.<sup>1</sup>

Downing's plan for a villa shows kinship to East Terrace, in its low-pitched roof--he advocated a metal covering--with projecting brackets to support the eaves, and the floor-length windows for easy access to the porches.<sup>2</sup> Other than the

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses (New York: Dover, 1970), pp. 285-86.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 284.

placement of the entry hall in the base of the tower, there is little evidence that East Terrace follows the villa plan from Downing's book. However, East Terrace does bear out Downing's opinion that additional wings would create interesting visual effects. Prompted by a desire for an alternative to the box-like Greek Revival plan, East Terrace is one of the few outstanding examples of the Italianate style with an off-center tower in Texas.<sup>3</sup>

Born in Lebanon, Tennessee, on November 9, 1838, John Wesley Mann was in Waco by 1861 when he joined the Army of the Confederacy. In 1868, he married Cemira Twaddle, a native of New York. Their two sons, Howard, born in 1869, and J. W., Jr., 1878, were active in the family businesses which included flour mills, railroads, ice and refrigeration, lumber, real estate and banking. On the banks of the river, the Manns lived a life comparable to the plantation tradition of the Old South for some decades after that era had ended. Along with the usual Victorian requirements for exhibiting the owner's comfort and success, East Terrace boasted extensive rose gardens, a fruit orchard, terraces of flowering columbine, a sunken garden with a goldfish pond, tame peacocks, and--unusual even for Texas--a private deer park in which the family members could hunt their own game. After the elder Mann died in 1909, his wife continued to live at East Terrace

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<sup>3</sup>Drury Blakely Alexander, Texas Homes of the Nineteenth Century (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), p. 167.

until 1927. She then moved to live with her son, J. W., Jr., until her death seven years later. Ownership of the house changed several times until in 1960 it was given to the Heritage Society of Waco. Recorded as a Texas Historic Landmark in 1962, the house was entered in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. These two plaques were placed on the outside of the house near one of the side entrances. In addition, in 1967, the house was awarded an official restoration citation by the Texas State Historical Survey Committee. East Terrace was the fifth project to be honored.



Figure 1. East Terrace exterior.

## Catalogue of Furniture

East Terrace: Upholstered Balloon-back Side Chair

Figures 2 and 3

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1860-1975.

Dimensions: Height--38", Width--118", Depth--11", Seat  
Height--17½".

Material: Walnut, velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: Basically a Louis XV side chair, this elegant little chair features an upholstered back surrounded by a finger molded frame surmounted by a carved scroll cresting with a central cartouche of nuts. True to this type of chair, the motif is repeated on a smaller centered cartouche on the seat rail. Legs and rail form one continuous undulating curve with either end terminating in a rudimentary foot. Rear legs are square and slightly canted.



Figure 2. Upholstered Balloon-back Side Chair.



Figure 3. Upholstered Balloon-back Side Chair, detail.

## East Terrace: Side Chair (pair)

## Figure 4

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--40", Width--18½", Depth--18", Seat  
Height--17½".

Material: Rosewood, contemporary velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good; left front leg of one chair has a broken  
caster.

Description: The tufted and channeled upholstered back is framed by finger molding and surmounted with a carved crest of flowers and leaves which surround a center finger hole. At the bottom of the back, scroll carving creates an interesting open space between the back and seat while the frame terminates with outwardly flowing scrolls at seat level. The seat has a straight front, rounded corners, and tapers toward the rear. Carving appears on the knees of the finger molded cabriole legs and at the center of the skirt. Front legs terminate in whorl feet with attached casters while the rear legs are canted and slightly curved. Although the East Terrace docent manual describes the serpentine-back sofa and this pair of chairs as a matched parlor set, they do not appear to have been created as a suite. However, they do possess similarities in decoration and are as compatible as many Rococo Revival parlor suites.



Figure 4. Side Chair.



## East Terrace: Rococo Revival Side Chair

## Figure 5

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1860.

Dimensions: Height-- $36\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width-- $24\frac{1}{2}$ ", Depth-- $22\frac{1}{2}$ ", Seat  
Height--18".

Material: Walnut; contemporary velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: This shield-back, side chair has a curved top rail with an elaborately carved cresting of flowers and the three-plumed symbol of the Prince of Wales. Finger molding curves upward to frame the back and terminate in swirls at either side of the top rail. The domed seat is overstuffed and attached to a curved, exposed apron which is incorporated with the finger molded cabriole legs. Rudimentary whorls terminate the legs.



Figure 5. Rococo Revival Side Chair.

East Terrace: Transitional Side Chair

Figure 6

Substyle: Transitional (Victorian Empire/Rococo Revival).

Date: 1840-1870.

Dimensions: Height--36", Width--17½", Depth--16½", Seat  
Height--17".

Materials: Mahogany solids and veneers; silk upholstery.

Condition: Portions of veneer are missing from seat rail and  
legs.

Description: The open back is properly called an elongated  
U-shape; it is not yet fully developed into the balloon-  
back of the Rococo Revival. Centered on the arched and  
rounded top rail is a conventionalized flower and leaf  
carved in medium relief. Repeated on the completely  
carved horizontal back splat is a similar motif. The  
slip seat is a flat upholstered board, with the front  
shaped in a serpentine curve which corresponds to the  
seat rail. A small projecting molding follows the lower  
edge of the seat rail. Flat-sided front legs are rounded  
at the edges and shaped in reverse ogee curves which ter-  
minate in scroll feet. Canted, saber-curved rear legs  
are continuations of the back frame. These types of  
saber-curved legs could not easily be pushed backwards  
from a dining table. Originally sold in sets of four or  
six, chairs of this type were usually used in the parlor  
or hall rather than the dining room.



Figure 6. Transitional Side Chair.

## East Terrace: Parlor Chair

## Figure 7

Style: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1880.

Dimensions: Height--42", Width--22½", Depth--21", Seat  
Height--16".

Materials: Walnut, wool needlepoint.

Condition: Structurally sound; needs refinishing; some damage  
on seat apron.

Description: Inspiration for this chair is clearly the Louis  
XVI style, especially in the shape of the upholstered  
back. The top rail is centered with a stylized fleur-  
de-lys cresting while each end of the curve is punctuated  
with an applied rosette. Back frame stiles extend down-  
ward to form the rear legs. The lower back rail and the  
front apron are centered with identical saw-cut orna-  
ments. Scroll brackets connect the back to the exposed  
wooden seat frame. Front legs are cup-turned and tapered  
into spool-and-peg feet into which white porcelain cast-  
ers are inserted.

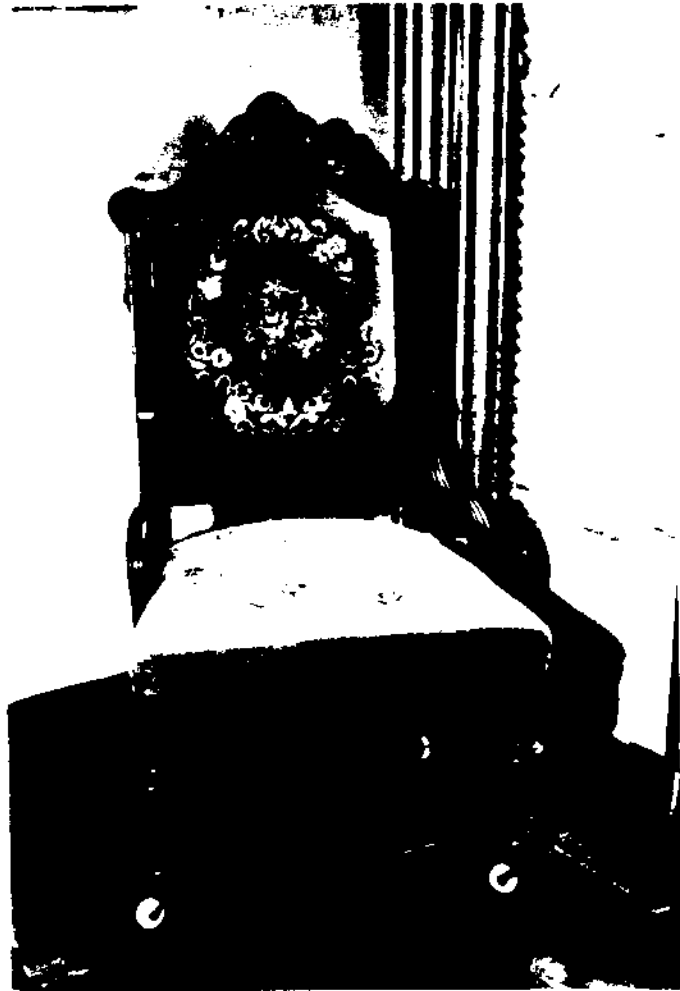


Figure 7. Parlor Chair.

East Terrace: Renaissance Revival Side Chair (pair)

Figure 8

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1880.

Dimensions: Height--40", Width--19", Depth--17", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut, brocade upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: This Renaissance Revival side chair has a straight canted back with a curved top rail. The channeled and tufted upholstery is framed by oblong, burl-veneer, raised panels and topped by a shaped, applied molding. A carved rosette is applied to the top of either stile. An incised, lower-back rail touches the seat. Short, curved demi-arms connect the back uprights to the seat frame. Brass nailheads border the upholstery on the back and seat while self-covered buttons are used in the folds. Turned and tapered front legs with cup turnings terminate in plain peg feet with casters. Rear legs are square and canted.



Figure 8. Renaissance Revival Side Chair.



## East Terrace: Balloon-back Armchair

## Figure 9

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1855-1870.

Dimensions: Height--42", Width--24½", Depth--22½", Arm  
Height--23½", Seat Height--15".

Material: Walnut, contemporary velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: Wide ringer molding forms the distinctive balloon-back and appears on the serpentine-curved seat rail. Arms flow out of the back frame, break at the molded handgrip, and bend into a cyma curve before joining the seat frame. Rudimentary carved shapes appear on the knees of the front cabriole legs; the rear legs are plain and canted. The deep seat is U-shaped with a serpentine front. Chairs of this type were often part of a matching parlor set; unfortunately, East Terrace has no matching pieces.



Figure 9. Balloon-back Armchair.

East Terrace: Balloon-back Lincoln Rocking Chair

Figure 10

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1840-1865.

Dimensions: Height--43", Width--23½", Depth 22½", Arm  
Height--21", Seat Height--16".

Materials: Walnut, modern velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good; wooden armrests are loose.

Description: The high balloon-back shape and contour back molded to the human anatomy are characteristics which designate this piece a Lincoln Rocker. The narrow gooseneck and scroll arms have shaped, wider wooden armrests attached to the top edges. Projecting molding at top and bottom of the seat rail is repeated around the inner edge of the back. On the crest of the back is a raised sausage shape which inexplicably appears on many balloon-back chairs. The short, stumpy, flat-sided legs terminate in rakishly curved rockers.



Figure 10. Balloon-back Lincoln Rocking Chair.

East Terrace: Cane-back Rocking Chair with Demi-arms

Figure 11

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1840-1865.

Dimensions: Height--33", Width--18", Depth--18", Seat  
Height--15½".

Materials: Walnut, cane.

Condition: Good

Description: The rectangular back with caned insert flares toward the top rail which is curved and scalloped. Back rails are continuous to the square, tapered rockers. The front legs are turned and ringed. The round seat has a caned insert and is attached to the back with curved, flared brackets which form demi-arms.



Figure 11. Cane-back Rocking Chair with Demi-arms.

East Terrace: Cane-back Rocking Chair with Arms

Figure 12

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1840-1865.

Dimensions: Height--40", Width--20½", Depth--19", Arm  
Height--21", Seat Height--15½".

Condition: Good; rear of seat needs re-caning.

Materials: Walnut, cane.

Description: The contoured back is caned with a top curved frame repeating the curve of the back rail. Six short spindles connect the two cross rails. The stiles are continuous from the top to the rockers. Front legs and stretcher are turned and ringed while the side and rear stretchers are plain and rounded. Gooseneck arms are attached to the outer sides of the back stiles and to the top of the saddle-shaped seat. The seating area is caned and rounded at the front.



Figure 12. Cane-back Rocking Chair with Arms.



## East Terrace: Platform Rocking Chair

## Figure 13

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1880.

Dimensions: Height--39", Width--23½", Depth--22½", Arm  
Height--20", Seat Height--13".

Material: Walnut, contemporary velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good; cresting is slightly separated from the top  
rail.

Description: Machine-cut flat board elements are evident in  
all parts of this mechanical rocking chair. Instead of  
the usual seat rails, the frame sides are cut in bold  
convex curves so that it rocks on a low, shaped base or  
platform. The body of the chair is attached to the  
base by a pair of yoke springs. Eastlake ornament  
includes pierced and incised cresting on the top rail  
and seat rail. Narrow padded arms are the same thick-  
ness as all of the components of the chair, which imparts  
an undesirable thinness to the design. This type of  
patent or mechanical rocker came into fashion after 1870.



Figure 13. Platform Rocking Chair.

## East Terrace: Rocking Chair

## Figure 14

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--39", Width--22", Depth--22", Arm Height--  
21", Seat Height--16".

Material: Walnut, modern velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: Shaped to conform to the human anatomy, the upholstered back is curved and follows the shape of the back stiles which continue to form the legs. Gooseneck arms are slightly rounded at the edges and partly upholstered. The front seat rail has a barely perceptible serpentine curve. Short saw-cut legs are curved at the knee and smoothed to remove saw marks. The plain rockers are tapered. An upholstered slip seat fits flush with the frame. The legs and general curves of this chair resemble the gondola chair of the Victorian Empire substyle.

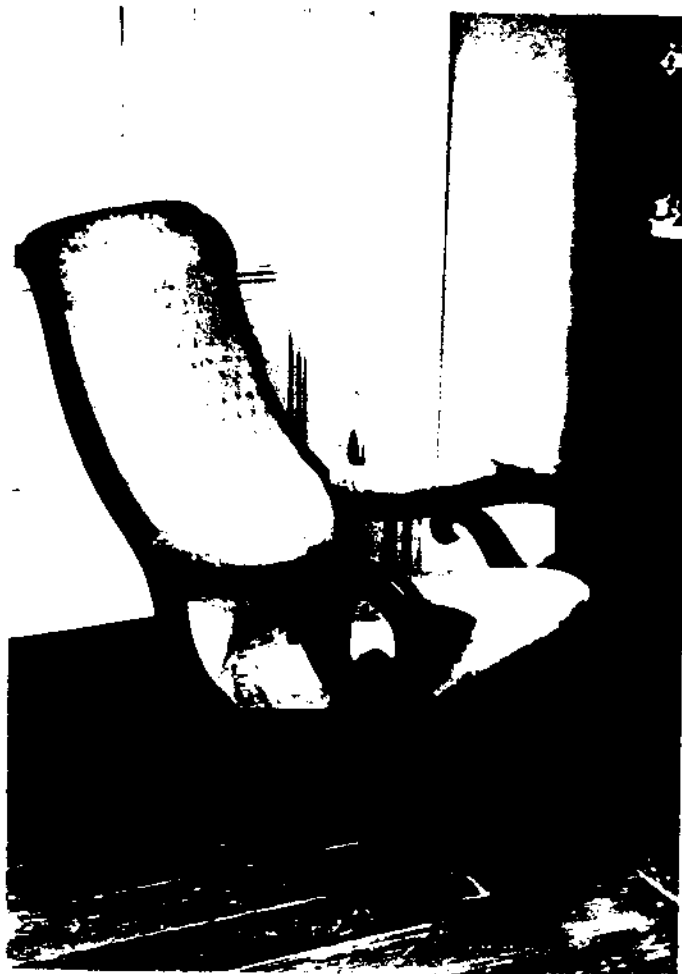


Figure 14. Rocking Chair.

## East Terrace: High-back Rocking Chair

## Figure 15

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--36", Width--17", Depth--15½", Arm  
Height--26½", Seat Height--16".

Materials: Walnut, modern velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: The curved back stiles of this rocker correspond with the high, serpentine-curved back. Gooseneck arms curve downward from the back, attach to the seat frame, and then form opposing scrolls within the open sides. A molded, serpentine seat rail echoes the shape of the deep upholstered cushion. Short cyma-curved legs are rounded and flow into square tapered rockers.

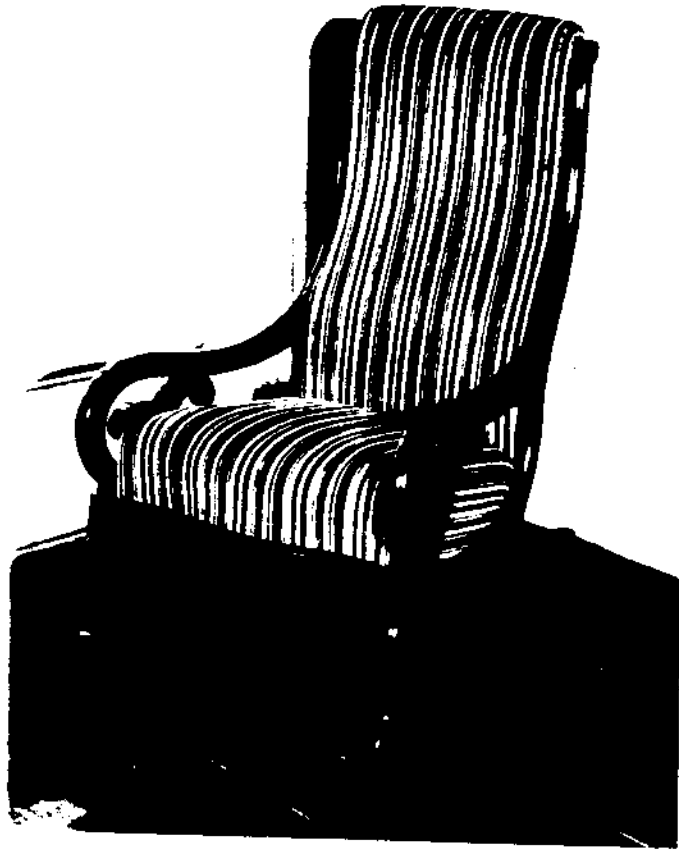


Figure 15. High-back Rocking Chair.

East Terrace: Simulated Bamboo Rocking Chair

Figure 16

Style: Oriental influence, Eastlake period.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height-- $31\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width--17", Depth-- $15\frac{1}{2}$ ", Arm  
Height-- $19\frac{1}{2}$ ", Seat Height--14".

Material: Beech, black lacquer finish.

Condition: Fair; poorly repaired at junction of seat and  
back.

Description: Similar in construction to the popular straight-back simulated bamboo chair, the back of this rocking chair is composed of ring-turned spindles set into turned cross rails. Rear stiles and front legs are ring-turned and tapered in opposing directions. The lower rear legs, side, and rear stretchers are turned but not ringed. Arms and arm supports are both tapered and ring-turned. Canted rockers are squared. Originally rush-bottomed, the chair is presently upholstered with exposed brass nails and velvet fabric. This piece and the companion straight chair are original to the house.

## East Terrace: Parlor Side Chair

## Figure 17

Substyle: Oriental influence, Eastlake period.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--32", Width--16", Depth--14 3/4", Seat Height--16 1/2".

Material: Beech, black lacquer.

Condition: Good; most of the finish has rubbed off.

Description: Constructed almost entirely of ring-turned parts, the back is made up of a row of short spindles and two pairs of equispaced cross rails. The ring-turned front legs are tapered. Rear legs are ring-turned and tapered from the seat upward to terminating button finials. Ring-turnings do not occur on the rear legs from the seat downward nor on side or rear stretchers. The rectangular seat is flared with a slightly bowed front and probably originally had a woven rush bottom. An upholstered cover is now attached to the top of the frame with brass tacks. The turnings on this popular chair, later called an opera chair, simulate bamboo. Many pieces of the Eastlake period incorporated simulated bamboo elements--a reflection of the interest in Oriental handicrafts which were being imported.





Figure 17. Parlor side chair.

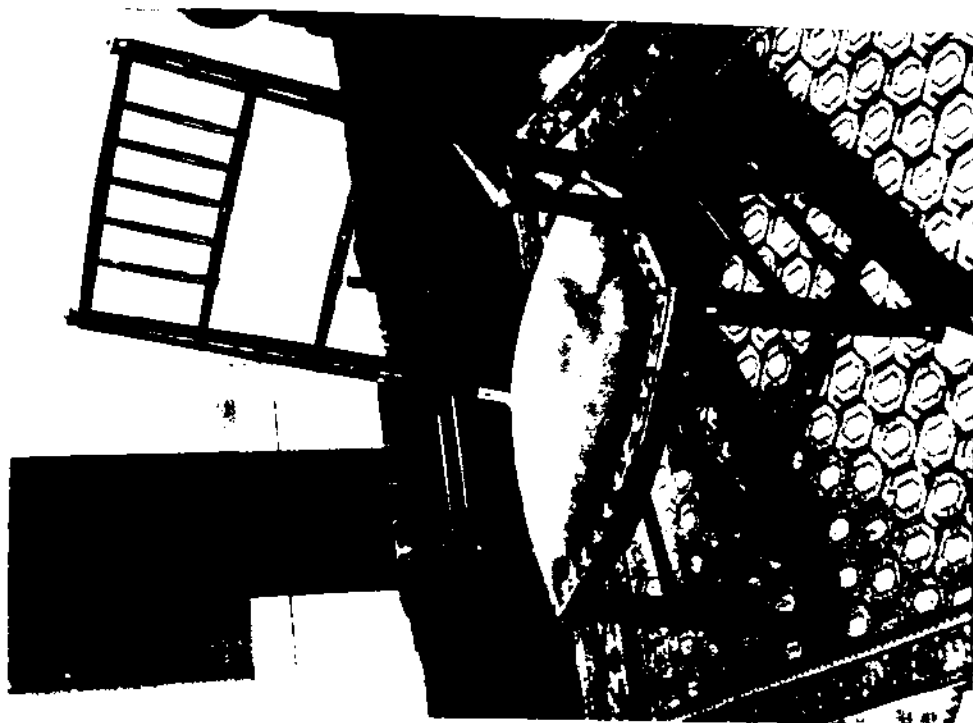


Figure 16. Slatted bamboo rocking chair.

East Terrace: Dining Room Chair (Set of Eight)

Figure 18

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--32", Width--19", Depth--17", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Mahogany, silk brocade upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: One of a set of eight, this chair has an arched back which curves downward to meet the rail and front leg. The silhouette resembles the klismos chair, with a sweeping, canted rear leg and simple curved front leg. Cut from flat planks, the front legs are ogee-curved, which create a high knee just below the seat rail. The upholstered slip seat is deeply curved at the back and surrounded by a simple frame. A curved, scalloped panel is set into the top back frame and is connected by a plain vase-shaped splat. There is no carving or incising; surface interest is achieved by the natural wood grain. This is an elegant example of the gondola chair which was popular before mid-century. Similar examples may be seen at Millermore, Old City Park, Dallas.



Figure 18. Dining Room Chair.

East Terrace: Square-back Chair  
(Three-piece Parlor Set)

Figure 19

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1885.

Dimensions: Height--36", Width--20", Depth--29", Seat  
Height--18".

Material: Oak; machine-made tapestry upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: The square upholstered back is framed by two upright extensions of the square rear legs. The upper terminations are rounded, with incised lines corresponding to the curved extensions. A plain crest molding surmounts the top rail which is incised with a fret of X's. The slightly curved front legs with incised knees end in square block feet with inserted casters. Curved brackets connect and brace the back with the upholstered seat.



Figure 19. Square-back Chair.

East Terrace: Shield-splat Chair  
(Three-piece Parlor Set)

Figure 20

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1885.

Dimensions: Height--36", Width--20", Depth--29", Seat  
Height--18".

Material: Oak; machine-made tapestry upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rear legs continue up the back and terminate in round ears which are incised with a single line. The top rail is upholstered above one of two straight rails, between which is inserted a pierced shield motif. Around the central shield is an incised pattern. Low, curved brackets attach the back to the upholstered seat. Front legs are slightly curved and terminate in square feet with casters. The knees of the front legs are incised with short, curved lines.

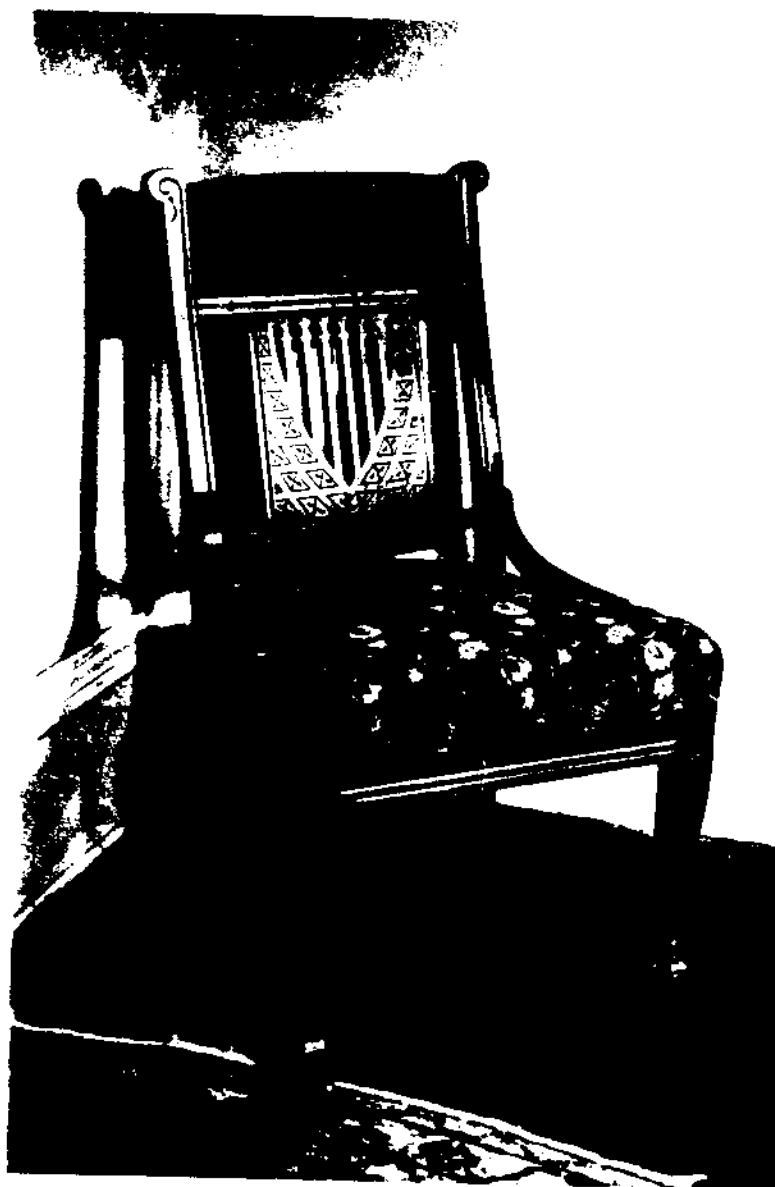


Figure 20. Shield-splat Chair.

East Terrace: Asymmetrical-back Settee  
(Three-piece Parlor Set)

Figure 21

Style: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1885.

Dimensions: Height--34", Width--38½", Depth--22", Arm  
Height--24", Seat Height--16".

Material: Oak; machine-made tapestry upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: Sometimes called a bustle bench or fainting couch, this small settee has an asymmetrical, upholstered back and deep upholstered seat. The rear legs extend up the back to form the outer frame and terminate in rounded, incised ears. Typical Eastlake ornaments, seven spool and dowel spindles form a small abacus-like motif set into the narrowest portion of the back. The arm is padded and upholstered with a slight upward curve at the rear and a downward curved handgrip. The connecting leg is curved to the seat and then forms a squared curved section which flow into a square foot. All four legs are fitted with casters.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Similar parlor sets are illustrated in Specimen Book of One Hundred Architectural Designs (New York: A. J. Bickens and Company, 1878).



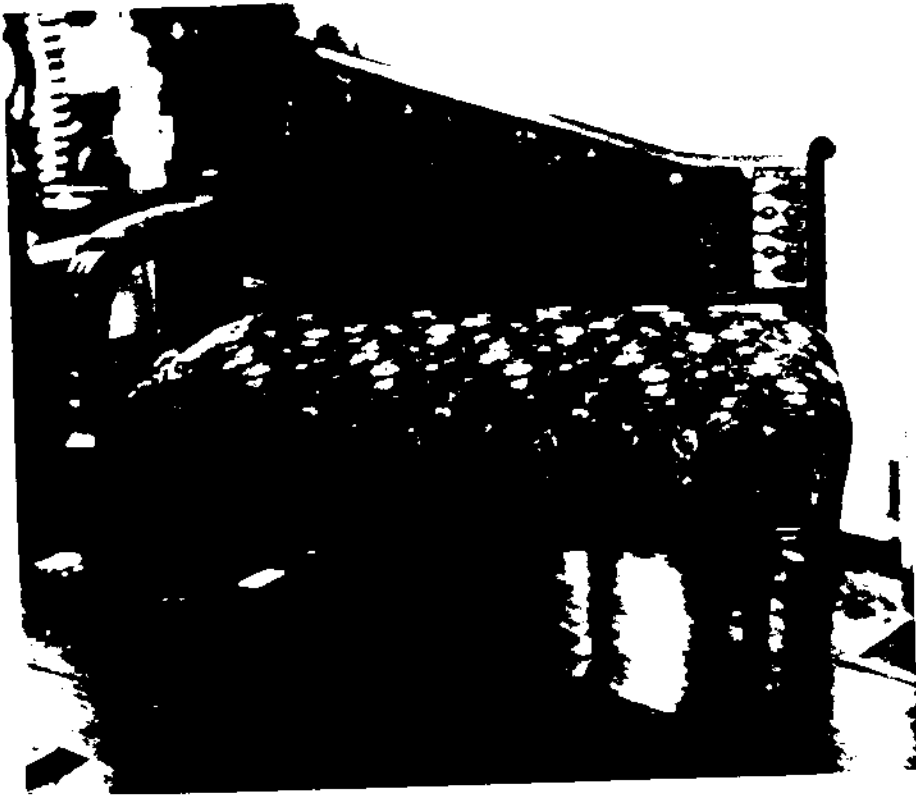


Figure 21. Asymmetrical-back Settee.

## East Terrace: Triple-back Sofa

## Figure 22

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1855-1875.

Dimensions: Height--39", Width--54", Depth--26", Arm Height--28", Seat Height--17½".

Material: Rosewood, modern silk brocade upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: The distinctive back has three curvilinear upholstered panels set in chair-back frames. Plain finger molding surrounds each oval. A cresting of carved flowers surmounts each chair-back section. Similar carved pieces connect the horizontal oval with the two vertical canted chair backs. The curved, padded, open arms attach to an outward flowing cyma curve which is actually an extension of the cabriole leg. A slightly restrained serpentine curve forms the front seat rail and flows into the legs, terminating in carved whorl feet fitted with casters. Carving on the rail consists of a central cartouche flanked by trailing foliage. Rear legs are plain and canted.

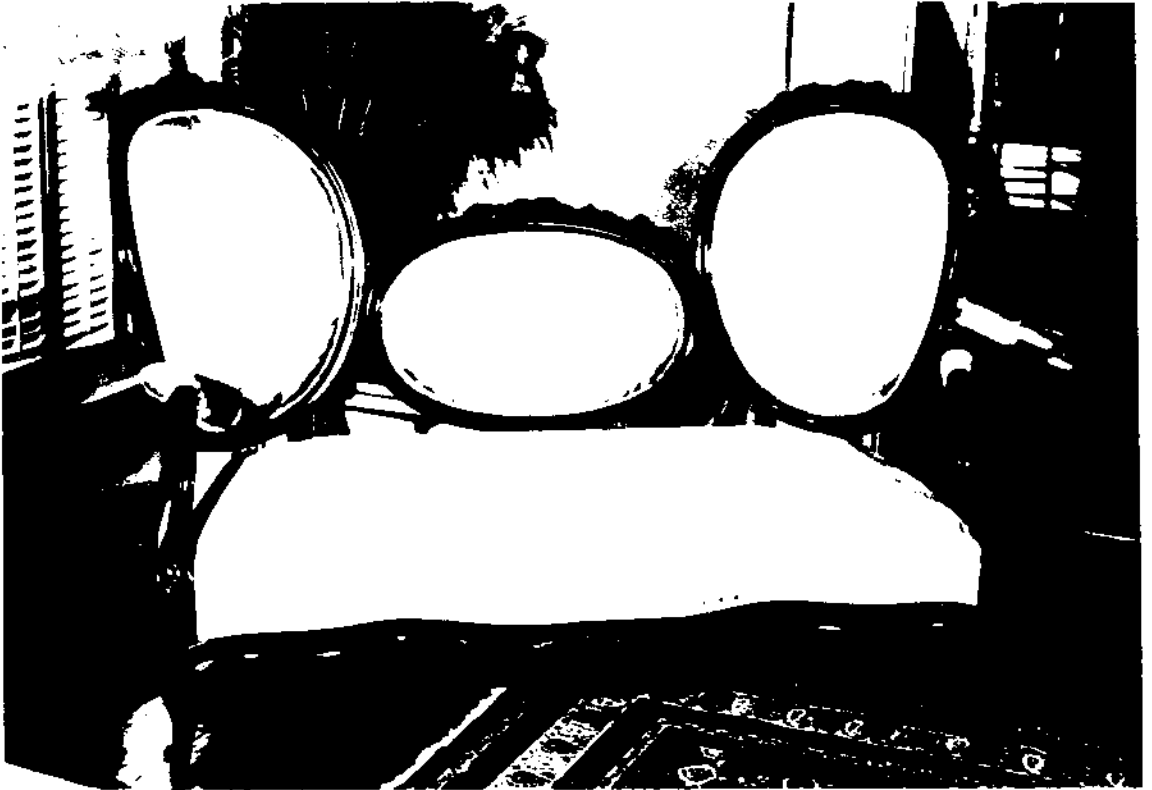


Figure 22. Triple-back Sofa.

## East Terrace: Serpentine-back Sofa

Figures 23 and 24

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--42", Width--77", Depth--20", Arm Height--  
22", Seat Height--14½".

Material: Walnut, modern velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: A late transitional piece--between Victorian Empire and Rococo Revival--the last elements of Empire can be seen in the rolled and scrolled arms. A serpentine curve flows in a triple arch across the back, crested with a pierced carving of fruit. Arms are rolled, canted, and curve into the back. Fronts of the arms are faced with carved pendants of fruit, and flow into short cabriole legs with rudimentary feet. A floral motif appears on the knees of the front legs. The center of the serpentine-curved seat rail repeats the grape and foliate motif. The short rear legs are square and canted.



Figure 23. Serpentine-back Sofa.



Figure 24. Serpentine-back Sofa, detail.

## East Terrace: Serpentine-back Sofa

Figures 25 and 26

Style: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--34", Width--73", Depth--22", Arm Height--25", Seat Height--19 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Material: Rosewood, contemporary velvet upholstery.

Condition: Good; loose cresting, due to re-upholstery, and repairs to cresting are visible.

Description: A typical Rococo Revival piece, this sofa has a partially exposed carved frame. The continuous top rail is serpentine-arched, and although part of it is unseen from the front, it curves in an unbroken line from art to arm. Surmounting the center back, and carved in deep relief, is a cresting of naturalistic roses, other flowers, and a variety of leafage. It is attached with pegs to the top finger molding. The back and arms are upholstered as a unit. While the inner back is deeply tufted, the tight seat is plain and rounded to meet the carved, serpentine seat rail. Rounded hand grips are supported by cyma-curved extensions of the front cabriole legs which terminate in rudimentary feet. Rear legs are plain, square, and canted.



Figure 25. Serpentine-back Sofa.



Figure 26. Serpentine-back Sofa, detail.

East Terrace: Sofa

Figures 27 and 28

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--35½", Width--89", Depth--22½", Arm  
Height--31", Seat Height--20".

Material: Mahogany solids and burl veneers; wool upholstery.

Condition: Good.

Description: This Victorian Empire sofa exhibits the usual characteristics of the style: heavy, squat base and feet with gracefully curved back and arms. The cyma-curved exposed frame flares out on either side of a central straight piece of figured mahogany. The same horizontal line is repeated in the seat rail. Arms--of the same height as the back--are formed with cyma-curved sections, sometimes called half-lyres, and feature an abbreviated, reverse curve at seat level. A decorative border extends the arm curve into the seat frame, terminating above a rectangular block which forms an extension of the skirt rail. Monumental paw feet are incorporated with carved foliate and scroll legs which flare out from beneath the plain skirt. Button-end, round bolsters provide additional reverse curves at each arm. There is little doubt that the craftsman who created this elegant sofa was familiar with John Hall's The Cabinet-Maker's Assistant of 1840. The arms are derived from Hall's figures 129 through 130.





Figure 27. Sofa.



Figure 28. Sofa, detail.

## East Terrace: Drop-leaf Dining Table

## Figure 29

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1820-1850.

Dimensions: Height--29", Length--66" (with center leaf),  
Width--53".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The drop-leaf oval table has six tapered legs carved in a twist manner reminiscent of Jacobean furniture. A foot is created by the use of a round turning a few inches from the floor. Each leg is fitted with a caster. This table does not correspond in characteristics to any of the Victorian substyles. Scanty information in the files of Historic Waco Foundation describe this table as a refectory table made of European mahogany. Since it is not a refectory table, and there is no such thing as European mahogany, it is probably of English origin and made of African mahogany.

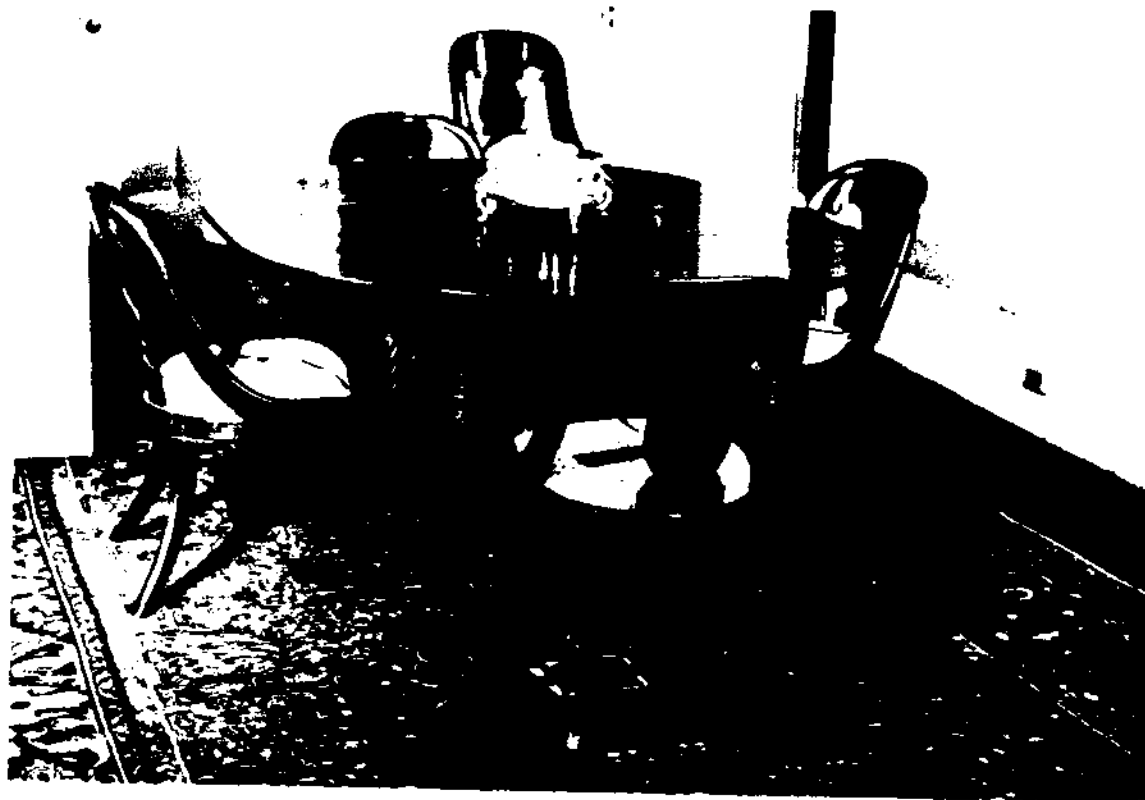


Figure 29. Drop-leaf Dining Table.

## East Terrace: Parlor Center Table

## Figure 30

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1865.

Dimensions: Height--27½", Width--33", Depth--23".

Material: Rosewood, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The white marble cartouche or turtleback-shaped top rests on a slightly smaller in diameter rosewood frame. Carved foliate decorations are centered at the lower edge of the serpentine valance skirt on all four sides. An unusual leg treatment extends from the top of the frame, dissecting the skirt into four separate pieces, and develops into a double cyma-curved leg which terminates on top of the X-shaped stretcher. Surmounted by a turned finial, in a scale too small for the piece, the stretcher is carved from one solid piece of wood. It forms a base for four cyma-curved feet which terminate in upturned scrolls.



Figure 30. Parlor Center Table.

## East Terrace: Round Top Lamp Table

## Figure 31

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--28½", Diameter--20".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: This simple round top table is of the pillar-and-scroll type. The turned central support features intricate ring turnings and terminates in a small ball finial. Three legs are scroll-cut with flat sides and are attached to the central turning. The plain round top has a beveled, turned edge.

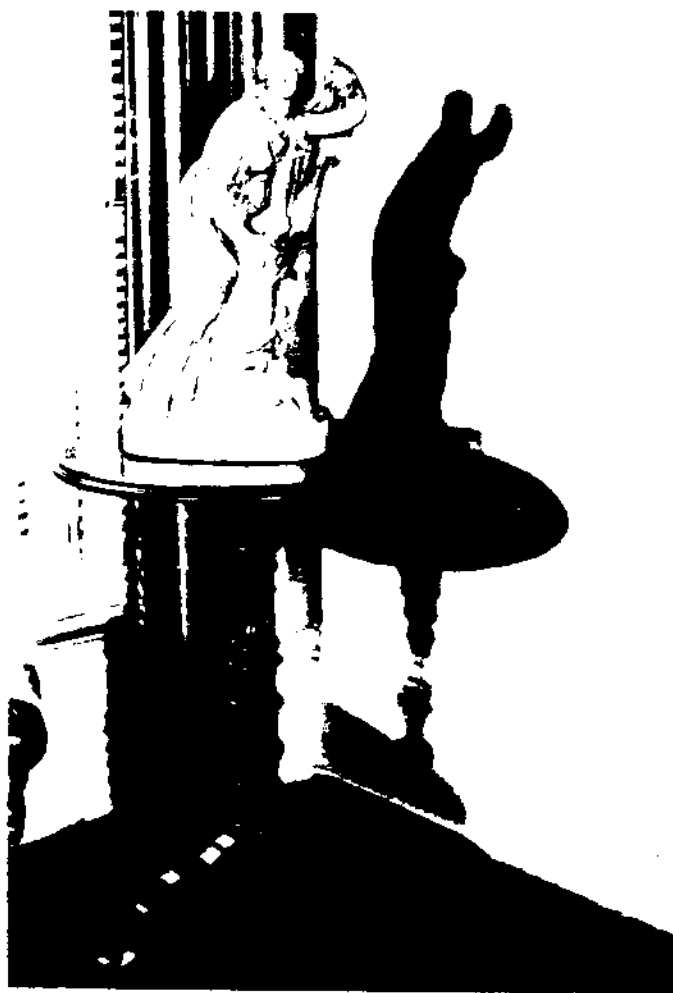


Figure 31. Round Top Lamp Table.



## East Terrace: Whatnot Stand

## Figure 32

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--67", Width--24", Depth--17".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Fair; pieces are missing from many of the scroll-cut gallery pieces.

Description: Five graduated corner shelves of the same design have shaped and concave molded edges. They are supported by pierced and scroll-cut cyma-curved brackets at their front edges, and by a plain, straight upright that is continuous from the floor to the top shelf. The two upper shelves have a rinceau scroll-cut motif at the rear while the next two shelves have a more elaborate scroll-cut motif. At the rear of the bottom shelf is a low gallery without a pierced ornament--a common occurrence on whatnot stands. The top is further enhanced by three finials.

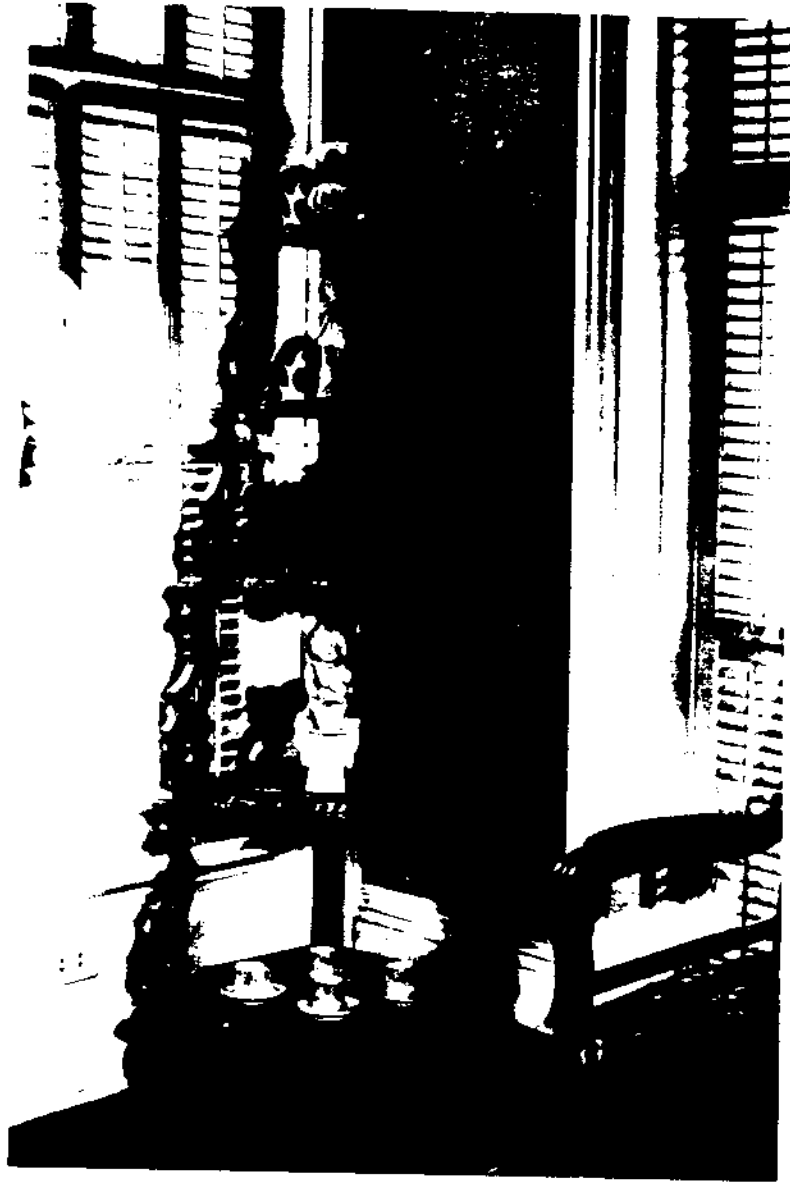


Figure 32. Whatnot Stand.

## East Terrace: Ladies Drop-front Desk

Figures 33 and 34

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1875-1885.

Dimensions: Height--55½", Width--36", Depth--15½".

Material: Walnut, brass.

Condition: Good; finish needs restoration.

Description: This small-scale ladies drop-front desk displays primarily Eastlake influence, with touches of Oriental and Gothic. A top gallery is incised and dog-toothed, with corner circular projections to which are affixed identical brass plaques with a bird motif. Beneath the gallery is one full-width drawer with a concave surface and a brass bail handle. The pigeon-hole area features two central drawers with recessed button knobs, flanked by upright compartments divided with scalloped partitions. On either side are curved bins formed by pierced fretwork. They are supported at the rear by pierced, Oriental-inspired, saw-cut frets. A Gothic influence may be seen in the true panel joinery of the sides and doors. The central drawer and lower doors are horizontally grooved, possibly in imitation of linenfold, and the doors are further enhanced by four carved floral patterns. The bottom drawer has an ogee molded front and bail handles while the skirt and leg portion reverse the curve outward. Porcelain casters

are partly concealed. Original to the house, the desk belonged to Mrs. Mann.

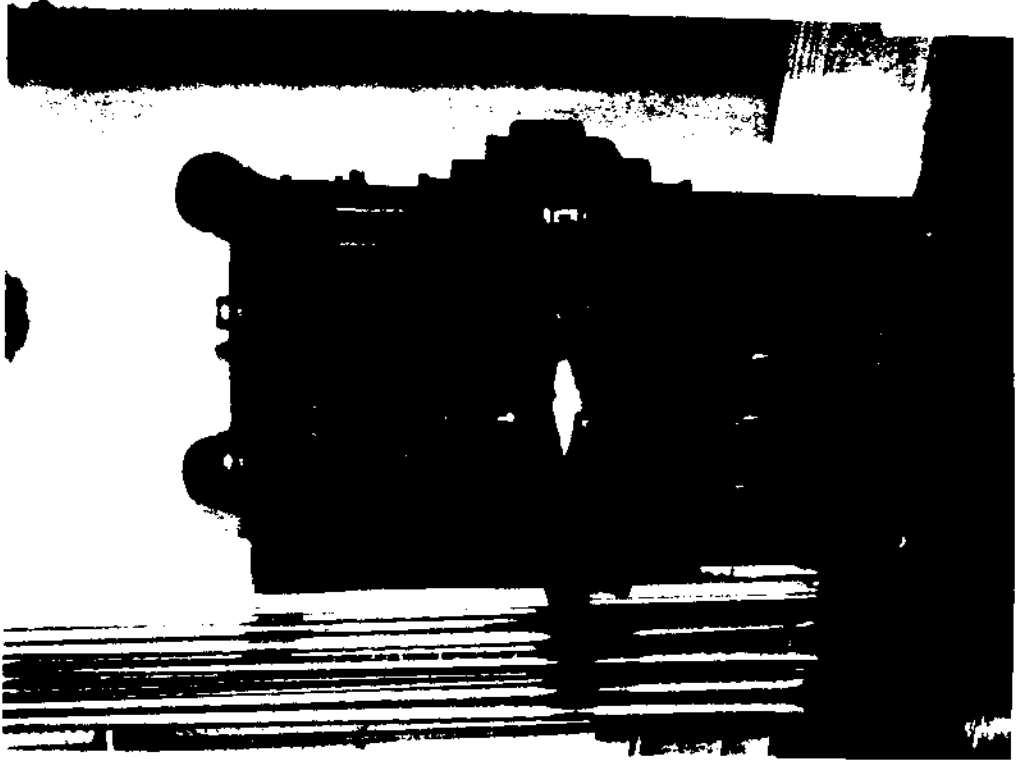


Figure 34. Ladies Drop-front Desk, detail.



Figure 33. Ladies Drop-front Desk.

## East Terrace: Bookcase

## Figure 35

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: circa 1875.

Dimensions: Height--77", Width--40½", Depth--16".

Materials: Walnut, glass, brass.

Condition: Generally good; doors badly warped; top cresting missing.

Description: This simple, mass-produced library bookcase has a flat top with a three-quarter gallery which is decorated with an incised leaf pattern and applied wooden roundels. The top of each door repeats this motif in a larger scale on projecting molding. Twin glazed doors with chamfered inner frames are divided by single mullions. One veneered drawer with brass bail handles provides storage space in the projecting base. Decoration on the base is limited to incised lines of the type used on factory-milled interior woodwork. Bookcases such as this were usually constructed in two units--the shelf section rests upon the storage base--for easier shipping and moving. Although not original to the house, this piece is appropriate for Mr. Mann's office which he maintained in his home. Many of the books belonged to Howard Mann. An identical bookcase may be seen in the George House, Dallas, and a similar piece is shown by McNerney.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Kathryn McNerney, Victorian Furniture (Paducah, Kentucky: Collector Books, 1981), p. 43.

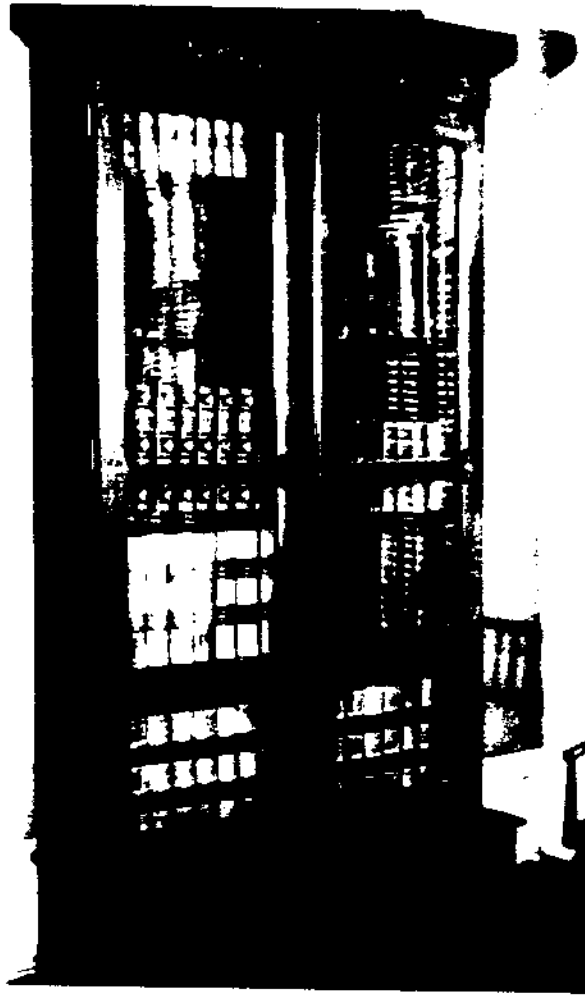


Figure 35. Bookcase.

## East Terrace: Three-drawer Chest

## Figure 36

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height-- $35\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width--42", Depth-- $19\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Materials: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good; pieces of drawer molding are missing.

Description: A white serpentine-curved marble top overhangs the wooden carcass which contains three burl veneered recessed drawers. Front upright stiles are chamfered with applied pendant finials forming projections under the top corners. Finials applied in upright positions at the bottom surmount short, turned and ringed feet. Handles are carved wooden fruit and leafage decorations with hollowed finger grips on the undersides. Carved in pairs with a definite left and right orientation, the alternate placement of the handles creates an illusion of multiple styles. Narrow beveled and mitered molding borders the recessed drawers and the projecting base.





Figure 36. Three-drawer Chest.

East Terrace: Three-drawer Bureau with Mirror  
Figures 37 and 38

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1855-1875.

Dimensions: Height--71", Width--41", Depth--19½".

Material: Walnut, marble, glass.

Condition: Good, with some veneer split and separated from  
the drawer fronts.

Description: The carcass with three drawers has chamfered  
stiles with applied split spindles at top and bottom.  
Burl-front drawers have applied beaded borders, mushroom  
knobs, and applied wooden keyhole escutcheons.  
The full-width drawers rest on flat, flush bearer strips.  
A white beveled-edge marble top overhangs the front of  
the carcass and two small wooden decks with drawers  
flank an hourglass-shaped tilting mirror in a wishbone  
support. Applied foliate decoration masks the joints  
of the frame.

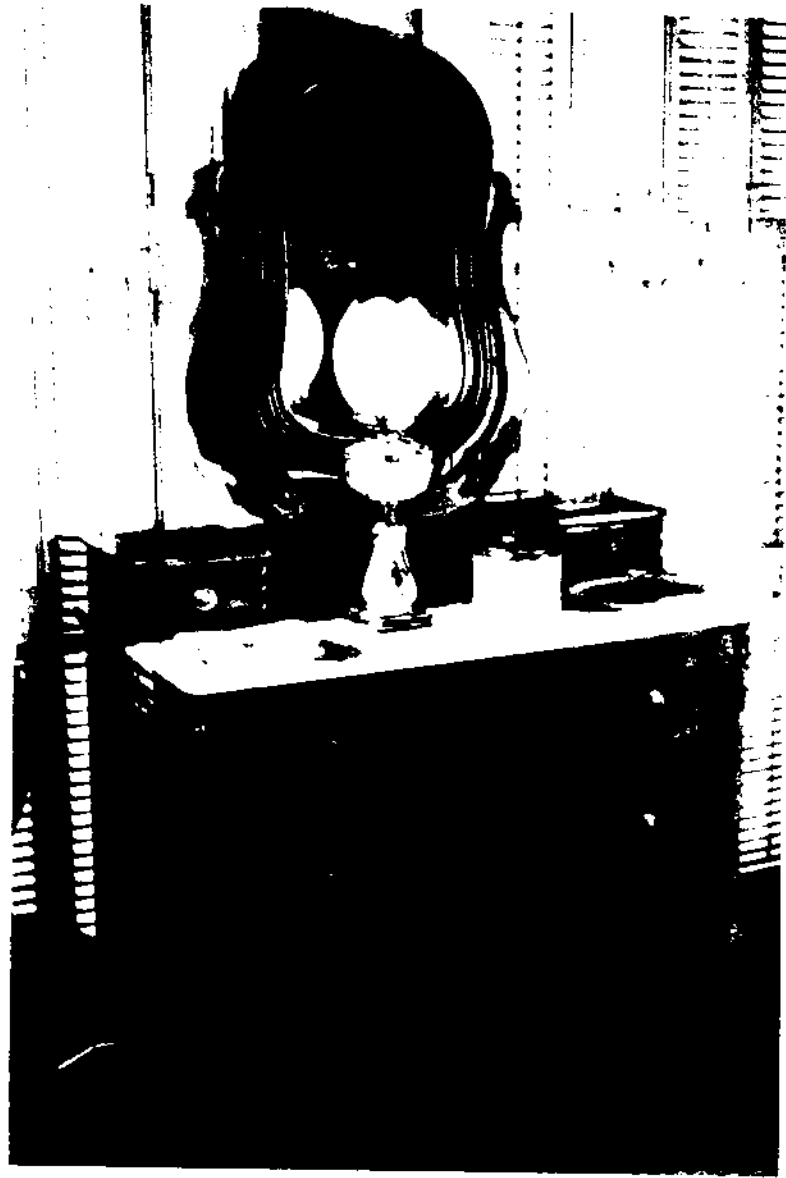


Figure 37. Three-drawer Bureau with Mirror.



Figure 38. Three-drawer Bureau with Mirror,  
detail.

## East Terrace: Bureau Dresser

Figures 39 and 40

Substyle: Renaissance-Eastlake.

Date: 1879-1890.

Dimensions: Height--108", Width--52", Depth--20".

Materials: Walnut solids, burl veneer, marble, glass, brass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The companion piece to Figure 41, this bureau complements the bed and repeats the overall silhouette--the architectural mirror frame of this piece is a smaller, compressed version of the headboard. Semi-circular shelves supported by scrolled brackets flank the vertical mirror. Shelves are decorative and functional--used for candlesticks, bric-a-brac, or flowers. The low, rectangular base encases two large drawers with applied panels of burl veneer. Two decks, each with two drawers, rise on either side of an inset white marble surface. Sometimes called handkerchief boxes, the drawer decks are also topped with white marble. Round brass casters allow the heavy piece to be moved. Stamped hardware is of the shaped bail handle type. Probably from a Midwest steam-powered factory of the 1870's, a similar suite is shown by Seale.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Seale, p. 119.



Figure 39. Bureau Dresser.



Figure 40. Bureau Dresser, detail.

## East Terrace: Bed

Figures 41 and 42

Substyle: Renaissance Revival-Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--108", Width--66", Length--83".

Material: Walnut solids and burl veneer.

Condition: Structurally sound with good finish.

Description: The massive headboard is characterized by an intricate, sharp silhouette which broadcasts the machine-made origins of its components. Surmounted by a heavily molded and paneled pediment, and capped by a central cartouche, the headboard also features a sunken framed panel of figured veneer. Antique motifs--urn-shaped finials, leaf, and baluster forms--heighten the dramatic effect while the footboard echoes the architectural symmetry with sunken and applied burl panels. Undoubtedly a transitional piece, this bed displays the exuberance of late Renaissance Revival in its curved pediment, and the framed, rectangular panels are typical of Eastlake. The urn-shaped finials and the richness of carefully matched veneered panels create a visual delight which is all too often lacking in bedroom furniture of this period.





Figure 11. Bed.



Figure 42. Bed, detail.

## East Terrace: Spool-turned Day Bed

## Figure 43

Substyle: Cottage.

Date: 1840-1880.

Dimensions: Height--24", Width--24", Length--66".

Material: Oak.

Condition: Good.

Description: Day beds such as this were not fitted with springs--the mattress rests upon wooden boards. The identical ends have spool-turned posts attached to quarter-circle, bead-molded segments that join the spool-turned top rail. The posts are connected by plain cross rails. Four spool-turned spindles run vertically between the cross rails and top rails. Side rails are solid boards of the same height. The posts taper slightly near the terminal button foot. Sometimes called a hired man's bed or a youth bed, an almost identical piece is illustrated by Ormsbee.<sup>7</sup> Because of its narrow width, beds such as this were used in hallways for extra sleeping space. In the nursery, it was called a nanny's bed, and was used by an adult while tending a sick child.

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<sup>7</sup>Ormsbee, p. 129.

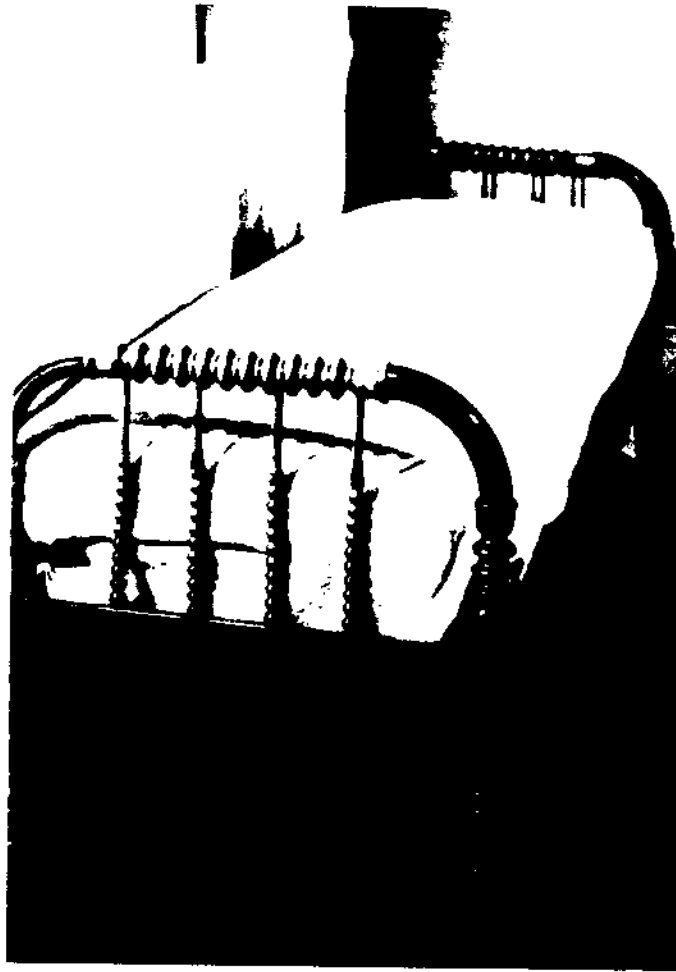


Figure 43. Spool-turned Day Bed.

## East Terrace: Folding Bed

Figures 44 and 45

Style: Unclassified; late nineteenth century patent model.

Date: 1890-1900.

Dimensions: Height--80", Width--57", Depth--21".

Material: Oak, wire springs, iron hinges and springs.

Condition: The footboard is split at the top left corner, and the iron pins to secure the legs are missing.

Description: Constructed of solid oak, the front has two rectangular mitered panels on each side of a vertical beveled mirror. One large rectangular mitered panel occupies the base beneath the mirror. Projecting from the front, and acting as a frame for the upper half of the mirror, is a U-shape or horsecollar form of oak, with crocket-like carved forms on its inner edge. On the outer frame near the base are two applied carvings of foliate shapes. The two small knobs at the top corners are the feet of the legs which retract into the case. When opened, the top of the case forms a paneled footboard and the back becomes a paneled headboard. Although the mattress is modern, the bed retains the original, now rusted, coil springs. In their 1890 catalog, the Boston firm of Sidney Squires and Company, illustrated beds with similar ornament and a choice of German or French beveled mirrors. Described as cabinet beds, the prices ranged from sixty-five to ninety dollars,

which was a considerable amount for that time. In 1897, Sears, Roebuck and Company sold similar beds for twenty-five dollars.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Eileen and Richard Dubrow, p. 121.



Figure 45. Folding Bed, detail.



Figure 44. Folding Bed.

## East Terrace: Baby's Bed with Tester

## Figure 46

Substyle: Spool-turned.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--64", Width--52½", Depth--31½".

Materials: Walnut, cotton.

Condition: Good.

Description: The design for this child's bed probably derives from the high-post spool bed of about 1850 to 1860. In this miniature version, the four posts are spool-turned in graduated turnings from the tester to the top of the fenced mattress. Legs are turned in consistently sized shapes. The simple ogee-curved molding is mitered at the corners of the tester, and conceals the rod which supports the encircling cotton ruffle. Turned spindles and flat rails create the protective enclosure for the mattress. One side is hinged at the lower rail.



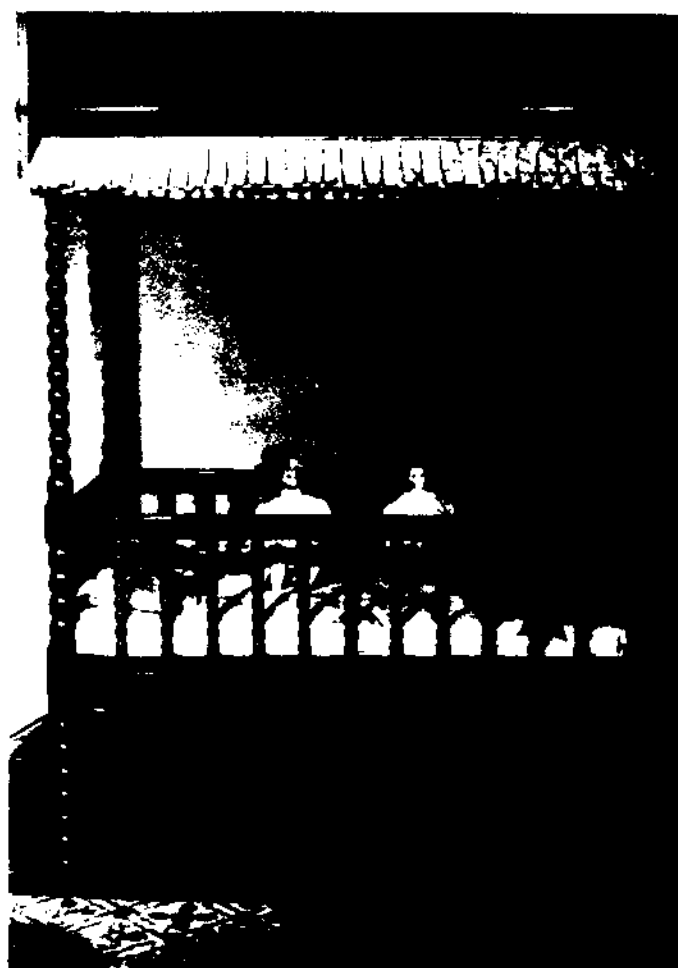


Figure 46. Baby's Bed with Tester.

## East Terrace: Child's Patented Folding Chair

Figures 47 and 48

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: circa 1881.

Dimensions: Height--36", Width--14", Depth--16"; Folded:

Height--18", Rocker Length--34".

Materials: Walnut, cane, iron mechanism.

Condition: Good; iron wheels have been removed.

Description: The distinctive back is formed of joined pieces of curved saw-cut walnut with an attached cresting of shaped molding. Shield-shaped cane inserts form the back and seat. Four identically-shaped pierced, curved sections create the legs and rockers. The ends of the legs retain small holes where iron wheels were once attached. Rungs and stretchers have a center sausage-shaped turning. Although unlabeled, this charming piece appears to have been made by Thomson, Perley and White, of Boston. Their patent was for the distinctive back, not for the folding mechanism, as shown in their advertisement in the Trade Bureau, January 1, 1881. Similar folding chairs were made by E. F. Pierce of Boston, and Hale and Kilbrun of Boston, who called their version a child's chariot chair.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Eileen and Richard Dubrow, Furniture Made in America, 1875-1905 (Eaton, Pennsylvania: Schieffer Publishing Company, 1982, pp. 212-13.



Figure 47. Child's Patented Folding Chair.



Figure 48. Child's Patented Folding Chair, detail.

## East Terrace: Wardrobe

## Figure 49

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1885.

Dimensions: Height--93", Width--53", Depth--18½".

Material: Walnut solids and burl veneer.

Condition: Good.

Description: The severe rectilinear shape is topped by a projecting pediment of machine-made ornament. A three-quarter gallery forms a base for the pediment, its width stretched by the use of mitered molding. Plain panels are inset in the sides while burl-veneer panels create two tall rectangular doors. The separate base has two burl-front paneled drawers with brass bail handles, and is raised on four casters. Because Victorian homes seldom had closets--East Terrace was no exception--wardrobes were essential pieces of furniture. In the French manner, this wardrobe breaks down for moving.



Figure 29. Narrow.

## East Terrace: Sideboard

## Figure 50

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--83", Width--48", Depth--21".

Material: Walnut solids and burl veneer, brass, glass, marble.

Condition: Good; mirror backing is streaked; two joint blocks or carvings are missing from the deck.

Description: The base has a straight front, curved end panels, a pair of half-width drawers, and one full-width drawer. Below the drawers is a pair of doors with asymmetrical sunken and applied panels. Drawer fronts and applied panels are burl veneer with stamped brass bail handles. The deck features a pediment with applied acanthus and scroll decorations, and incised lines. A border of dog-tooth machine carving is inset above a framed carved panel flanked by two square beveled mirrors. The shelf has scrolled bracket ends and rests on slender turned baluster posts. A large beveled mirror set into a chamfered frame, designed to reflect a display of silver, is typical of Victorian sideboards. The rectangular top is beige figured marble.

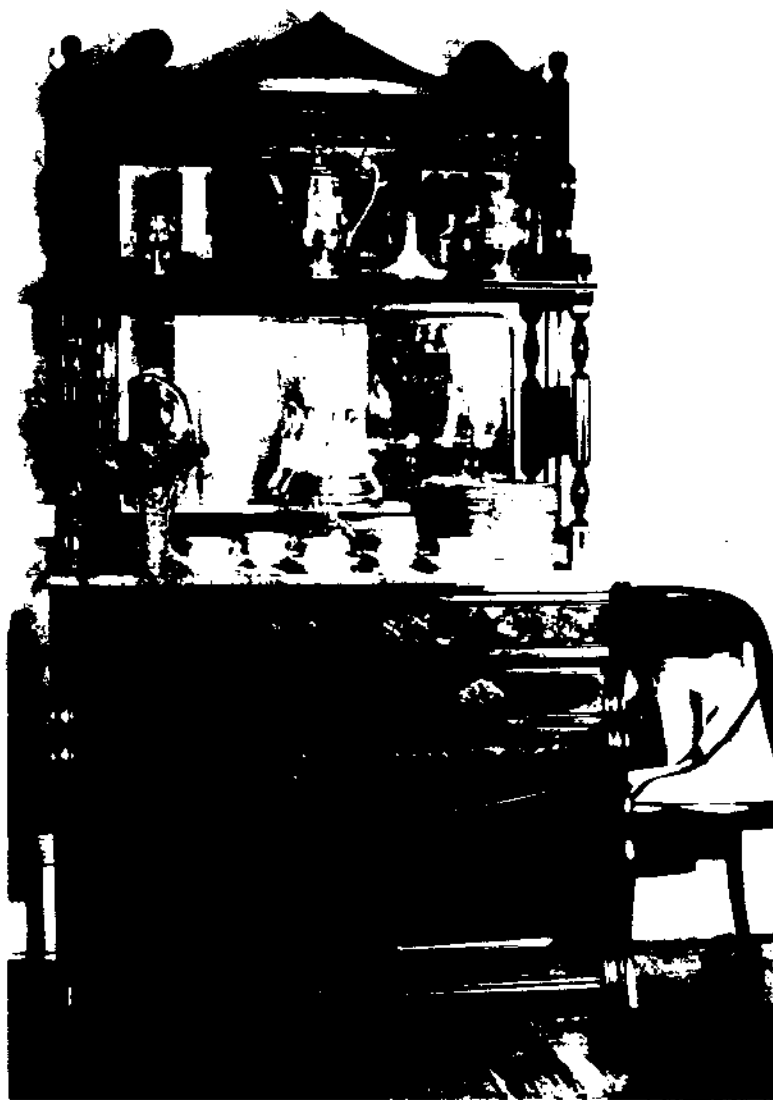


Figure 50. Sideboard.

## East Terrace: Spinet Piano

## Figure 51

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--38½", Width--63", Depth--33".

Material: Rosewood solids and veneer.

Condition: Good; the instrument is not playable because of minor interior damage.

Description: The rectangular case is sheathed with rosewood veneer and features a scalloped apron and a curved molded lower border. Massive cabriole legs with carved cartouches on the knees terminate in flared, octagonal pads with concealed casters. The lacy, pierced music support and the recessed lyre-shaped pedal frame provide exuberant decorative details to the ponderous rectilinearity of the case. The word spinet distinguishes a piano of about five feet in length from later square or grand pianos of larger dimensions such as those at Fort House, McNamara House, and Millermore. However, pianos with Rococo Revival cabinets and cabriole legs were popular from the 1850's through the 1890's, and unless the manufacturer incised the year of manufacture into the inner metal frame, they are difficult to date with accuracy. This beautiful example was made by Calcuberg and Naupel and Company in New York in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.



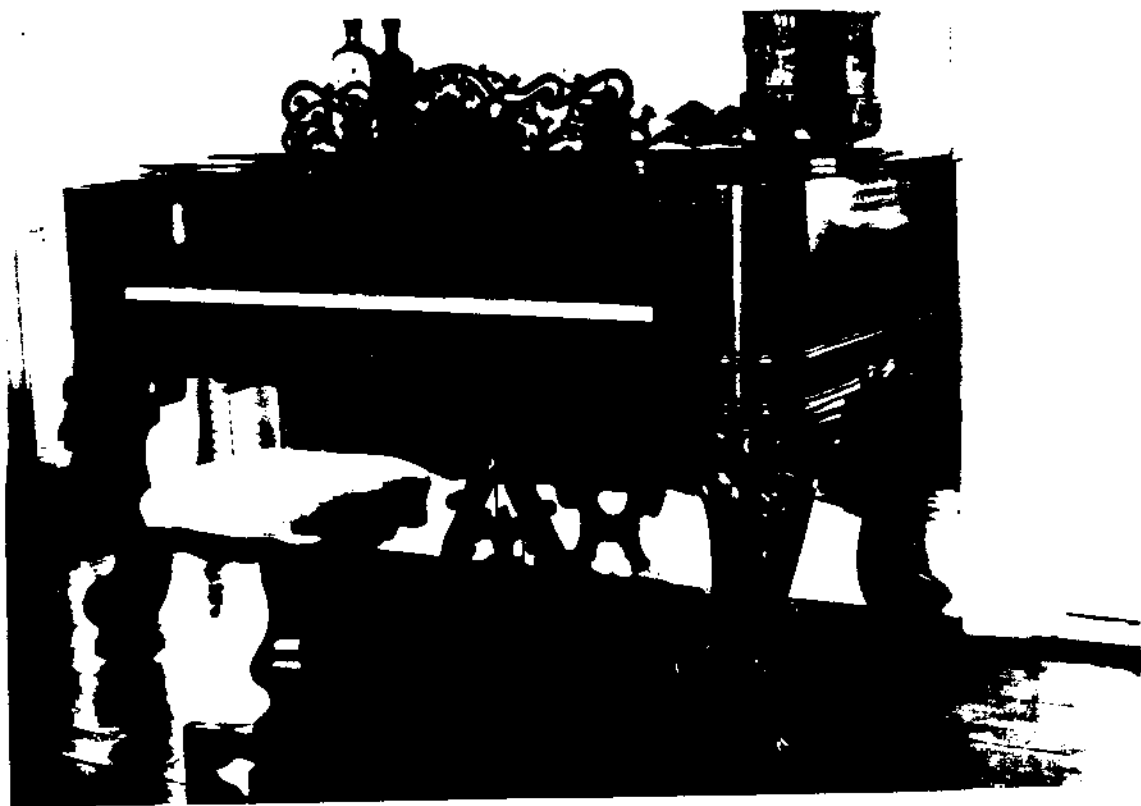


Figure 51. Spinet Piano.

## East Terrace: Pedestal

## Figure 52

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: circa 1875.

Dimensions: Height--43", Diameter--11".

Material: Verdi-gris marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: Probably inspired by a Tuscan spiraled column, this substantial pedestal could have supported a marble or bronze sculpture. A round top surmounts a scalloped pseudo-capital. The shaft is spiraled, tapering at the top, and flaring at the bottom into an urn shape which is shallowly carved. The three-part banded base culminates in a hexagonal shape. It is believed that the pedestal belonged to Mrs. Mann, but its origin is unknown.

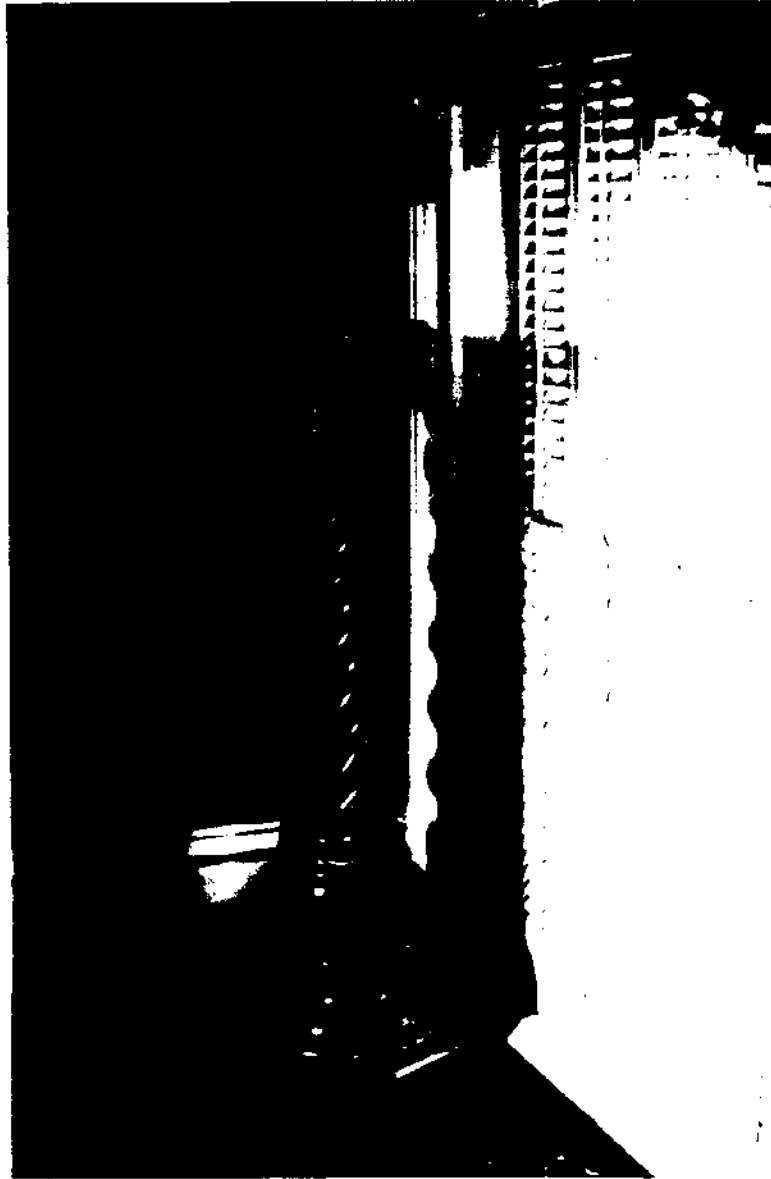


Figure 52. Pedestal.

East Terrace: Papier-mâché Sewing Cabinet

## Figure 53

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1853-1865.

Dimensions: Height--28", Width--16½", Depth--12½".

Materials: Papier-mâché, ebonized wood, mother-of-pearl, gilt, velvet, ivory.

Condition: Generally good; the velvet-lined interior compartments show wear and deterioration; some fittings are missing; faulty repair of the base has caused a noticeable tilt.

Description: The hinged tilt-top is scalloped and inlaid with mother-of-pearl to form a naturalistic floral design. Intricate incised patterns filled with gilt create a border around the top. Similar motifs appear on the box, baluster-turned pedestal, and the base with four projecting scroll feet. Lined with crimson velvet, the interior compartments hold spools of thread with elegantly carved ivory rosettes on either end. This piece is probably of English origin, since few papier-mâché items were made in America. Ormsbee illustrates an almost identical piece and comments on its rarity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ormsbee, p. 256.

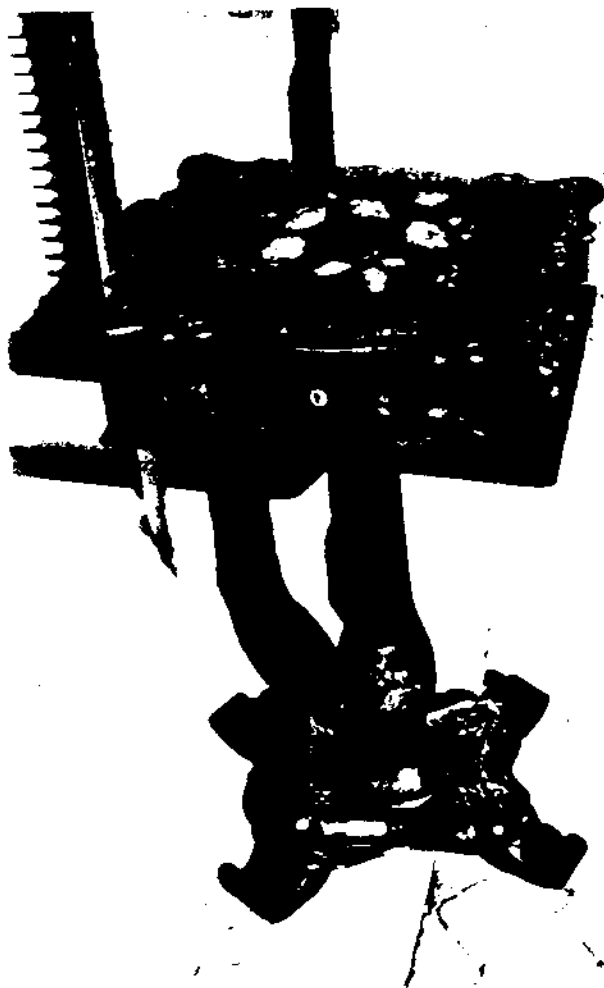


Figure 53. Papier-mâché Sewing Cabinet.

## CHAPTER IV

### FORT HOUSE

#### History of House

In 1868, Colonel William Aldredge Fort, the prosperous head of a large Victorian family, built a large, six-room house in the growing town of Waco. Constructed of locally made pink brick, the two-story Greek Revival style house has a classic facade with fluted Ionic columns. A small balcony projects above the double doors of the main entrance. Arched windows are placed at regular intervals on either side of the central portico; evidence of restoration may be seen above each window. The cypress wood which was used for the columns of the porch and for the shutters of the windows was transported from New Orleans by ox cart and flatboat. The additional exterior trim is Texas pine.

The original plan of the two-storied house consisted of three rooms and a central hall on each floor. Both halls ran from the front of the house to a door which opened onto the L-shaped, double-decked back porch. On the ground floor, one bedroom was located to the left of the hall, while the parlor and dining room occupied the right side. The second floor repeats the plan with three bedrooms of identical size. Beneath the stairs, there is a small closet, which was an innovation for the period.

In 1872, the house was enlarged by the addition of a larger dining room and two bedrooms. The doors of the bedrooms opened onto the upstairs veranda; outside stairs led to the back porch, bath house, and privy. There were extensive out-buildings on the original six-acre site: smoke house, woodshed, servants' quarters, and various barns.

Born in Alabama in 1826, William Fort organized a group of Southerners and traveled with them by wagon train to Texas in 1854. He established a large plantation on the banks of the Brazos River, south of Waco. In 1856, Fort married Diorita Elizabeth Wilson. During the Civil War, Fort rose to the military rank of colonel in the Army of the Confederacy. His wife managed the plantation and cared for their four children. In the aftermath of the war and Reconstruction, Fort could not profitably run the plantation. The family, which now included an additional three children--the orphans of a relative--was moved into the town of Waco. Fort built a large, comfortable, and stylish house to reflect his new role as a businessman and civic leader. After organizing the Waco National Bank, later renamed the First National Bank, Fort served as the president. In addition, he was the president of Waco Female College and the owner of Waco's first public transit company--a horse-drawn streetcar which stopped at his front door.

Falling into disrepair as a derelict rooming house, Fort House was rescued and restored in the early 1970s. The board

of directors of the newly formed museum was instrumental in reviving the Cotton Palace Festival. A Waco tradition between 1894 and the 1930s, this two-week event celebrates the importance of the cotton industry in the South. A museum devoted to the history of this event is maintained on the second floor of Fort House.



Figure 54. Fort House, exterior.



## Catalogue of Furniture

Fort House: Balloon-back Open-arm Chair

Figure 55

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--42", Width--23½", Depth--21", Arm  
Height--21", Seat Height--15".

Material: Walnut, damask.

Condition: Good.

Description: The upholstered back is surrounded by a continuous, curvilinear wooden frame with an elaborate cresting of foliage and scrolls. The padded arms flare from the back frame and form flowing lines which continue through the legs. Thickly padded, the upholstered seat rolls over a concealed frame to join the serpentine-curved front apron. Stylized finger molding occurs on all exposed wood areas; carved motifs are evident at the juncture of the legs and the arm supports. While the front legs have rudimentary feet and swivel wheel casters, the rear legs are canted and have ball casters.



Figure 55. Balloon-back Open-arm Chair.

## Fort House: Cabriole-leg Parlor Chair

## Figure 56

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--33", Width--17", Depth--17", Seat  
Height--16".

Material: Walnut, wool needlepoint.

Condition: Good.

Description: The two curved and shaped back rails create an interesting negative space on the chair back; a central cresting is flanked by opposing cyma-curves. The rear stiles follow a cyma-curve to the seat rail and terminate in square, canted back legs. An upholstered seat is shaped with curved sides, rounded corners, and a serpentine front. The graceful, cabriole front legs are carved in low relief with volutes at the tops and rudimentary whorls at the ends. Needlepoint fabric has been used to reupholster this pair of chairs; each seat has a different colored background.



Figure 56. Cabriole-Leg Parlor Chair.

## Fort House: Open U-back Side Chair

Figures 57 and 58

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--33", Width--18", Depth--16", Seat  
Height--16".

Material: Walnut, wool needlepoint.

Condition: Good.

Description: An arched crest is carved into the continuous curve of the back frame. The rounded face is decorated with carved flower and leafage motifs while the horizontal back splat has a scrolled outline and carved details. The rounded back frame connects to the seat rail and continues downward to form the squared, rear legs. Covered with needlepoint, the padded seat is rolled over the partially exposed, serpentine apron. Carved with acanthus leaf motifs at the knees, the slender cabriole legs terminate in whorl feet. One of a set of four, chairs such as these were sold as dining room chairs in groups of four or six.



Figure 57. Open U-back Side Chair.



Figure 58. Open U-back Side Chair, detail.

## Fort House: Lincoln Rocking Chair

## Figure 59

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--42", Width--23", Depth--21", Arm  
Height--21", Seat Height--15".

Material: Walnut, velvet.

Condition: Good.

Description: The upholstered back and wooden frame are contoured to the human anatomy. Carved as part of the top rail is a pierced motif which consists of scrolls, leaves, and a rose. The curved arms with flat arm rests flow into scrolled and pierced, round supports. While the sides of the seat frame have scalloped edges, the front apron is plain and serpentine. Short front legs with scrolled projections taper at the bottoms and are attached to flat-sided rockers.



Figure 59. Lincoln Rocking Chair.



## Fort House: Side Chair

## Figure 60

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--35", Width--17", Depth--15", Seat Height--  
17".

Material: Walnut, wool needlepoint.

Condition: Good.

Description: The top rail and the two back rails are incised; the irregularly spaced lines of the top rail are off-center. Flat-sided stiles form the back frame and the rear legs. While the front legs and front stretchers are ring-turned and tapered, the side stretchers are simple dowels. Originally cane-bottomed, a needlepoint covering is attached to a beveled and chamfered seat frame. Many Mid-west manufacturers--known as chair factories--specialized in basic chairs of this type; their designs offered little variety over a span of twenty years.



Figure 60. Side Chair.

## Fort House: Dining Armchair

## Figure 61

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--35", Width--19", Depth--17", Arm Height--  
24", Seat Height--18".

Material: Walnut, leather.

Condition: Good.

Description: The arched top rail is incised with a floral motif and features a dogtoothed bottom edge. Upholstered with green leather, the back and seat are attached with large, green-headed tacks. Side rails, arms, and arm supports are incised; the arm supports are bolted to the outside of the frame. The exposed, wooden seat frame is beveled with chamfered corners. Ringed and turned, the front legs terminate in peg feet. The stretchers--arranged in an H-shaped configuration--are turned with square, central sections. All six chairs of this set are armchairs.

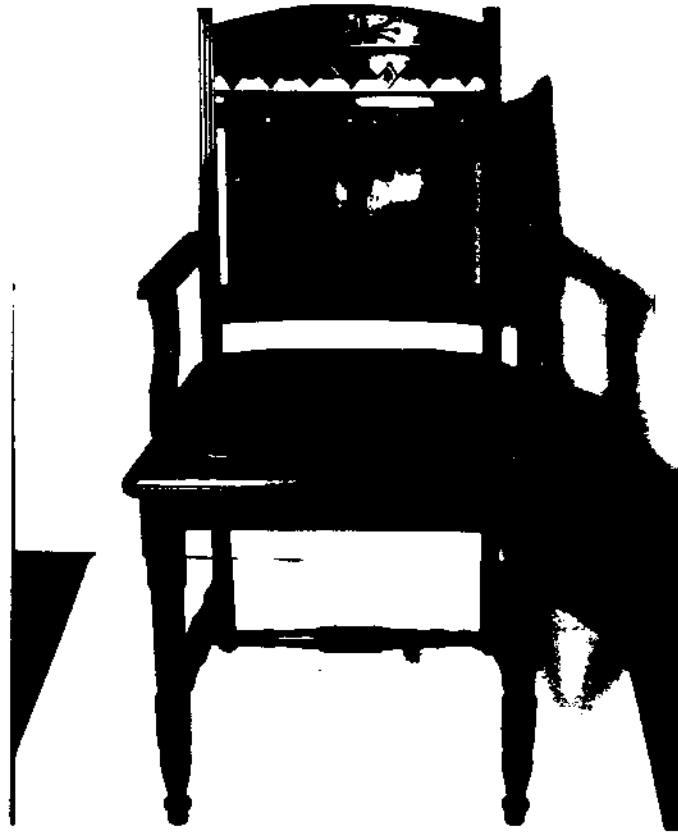


Figure 61. Pinia Armchair.

## Fort House: Side Chair

## Figure 62

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--33½", Width--16", Depth--15", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut, silk.

Condition: Good.

Description: Composed of flat members, this chair back has an incised top rail and rounded-top stiles. Grooved brackets connect the back to the seat rail; the seat apron has a saw-cut ornament attached to the underside. The front legs and front stretchers are plain dowels. Striped silk fabric covers a thinly-padded seat; a matching chair retains its original cane seat.



Figure 62. Side Chair.

## Fort House: Folding Chair

## Figure 63

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--31", Width--15", Depth--15", Seat  
Height--11".

Material: Ebonized gumwood, wool.

Condition: Good.

Description: With an upholstered back and a sling seat, this folding chair features a wooden frame which is finished to emulate ebony. The top edge of the arched backrail is decorated with applied wooden buttons. The curved side members--which form the back stiles and the front legs--are topped with finials. The rear legs spring from the front corners of the seat; a ring-turned stretcher braces the front legs. Created by narrow strips of upholstery, the arm rests are attached with brass clips to the back and the seat.

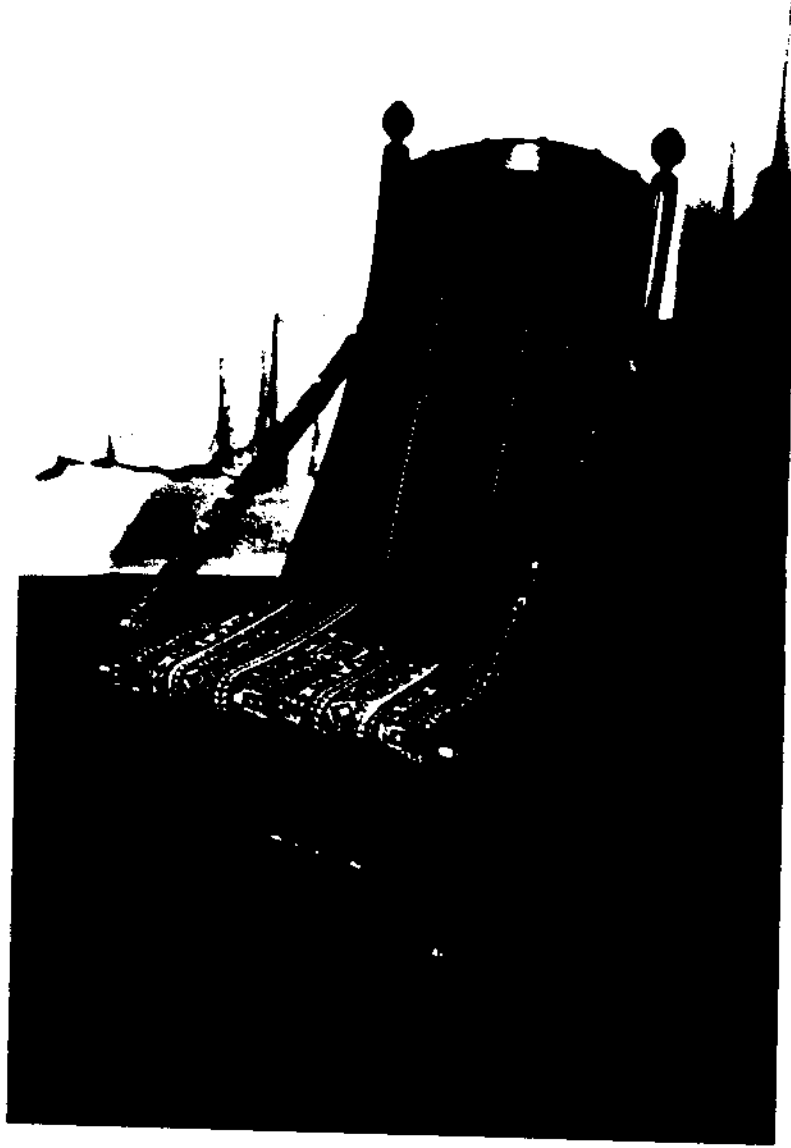


Figure 63. Folding Chair.



## Fort House: Cornucopia-arm Sofa

Figures 64 and 65

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--79", Depth--25", Arm Height--  
32", Seat Height--17".

Material: Mahogany, Velvet.

Condition: Good.

Description: The plain top rail has a slight backward curve which drops into a cyma-curve on either end. Rolled and upholstered arms--the same height as the back curves--have deeply carved cornucopia motifs which echo the end curves. The upholstered seat meets the plain, convex-shaped seat rail while carved, winged brackets terminate in large paw feet.

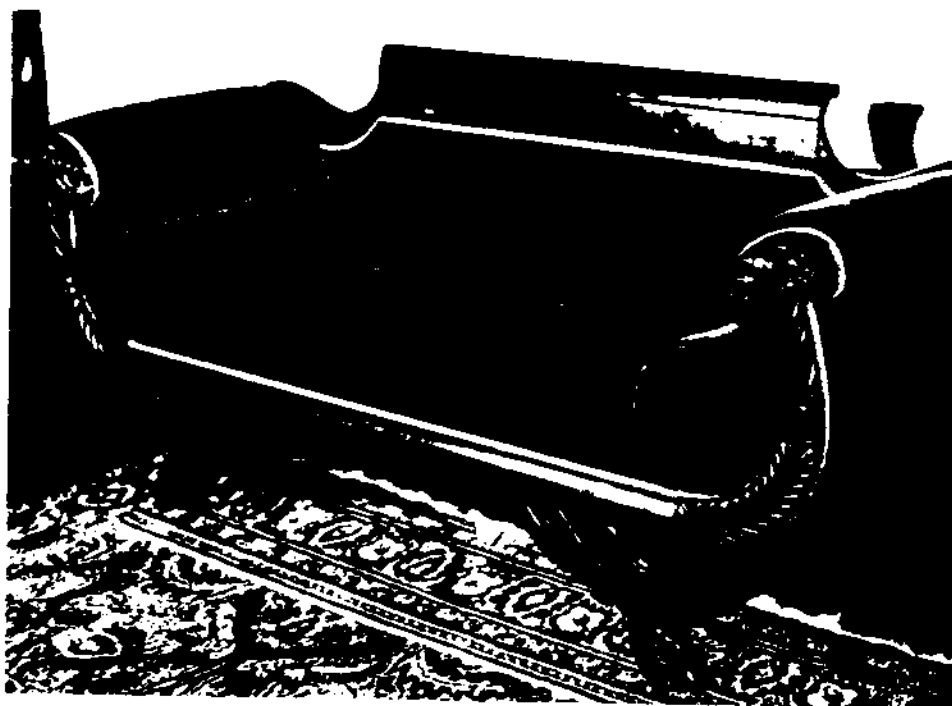


Figure 64. Cornucopia-arm Sofa.



Figure 65. Cornucopia-arm Sofa, detail.

## Fort House: Scroll-arm Sofa

Figures 66 and 67

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--35", Width--93", Depth--23", Arm Height--32", Seat Height--19".

Material: Mahogany, velvet.

Condition: Good.

Description: The long, low profile of this sofa is accented with carved scrolls and winged, paw feet. Capping both ends of the half-round back rail are downward-curved scrolls. Carved, cyma-curved arms feature rolled-over upholstery and loose, bolster pillows. A plain, convex-curved seat rail terminates in rectangular sections with embossed gold patterns. Supporting the long, tightly upholstered seat are four lion's paw feet; each of the front legs is deeply carved with an eagle's head and an attached wing. All four of the legs have white porcelain casters.

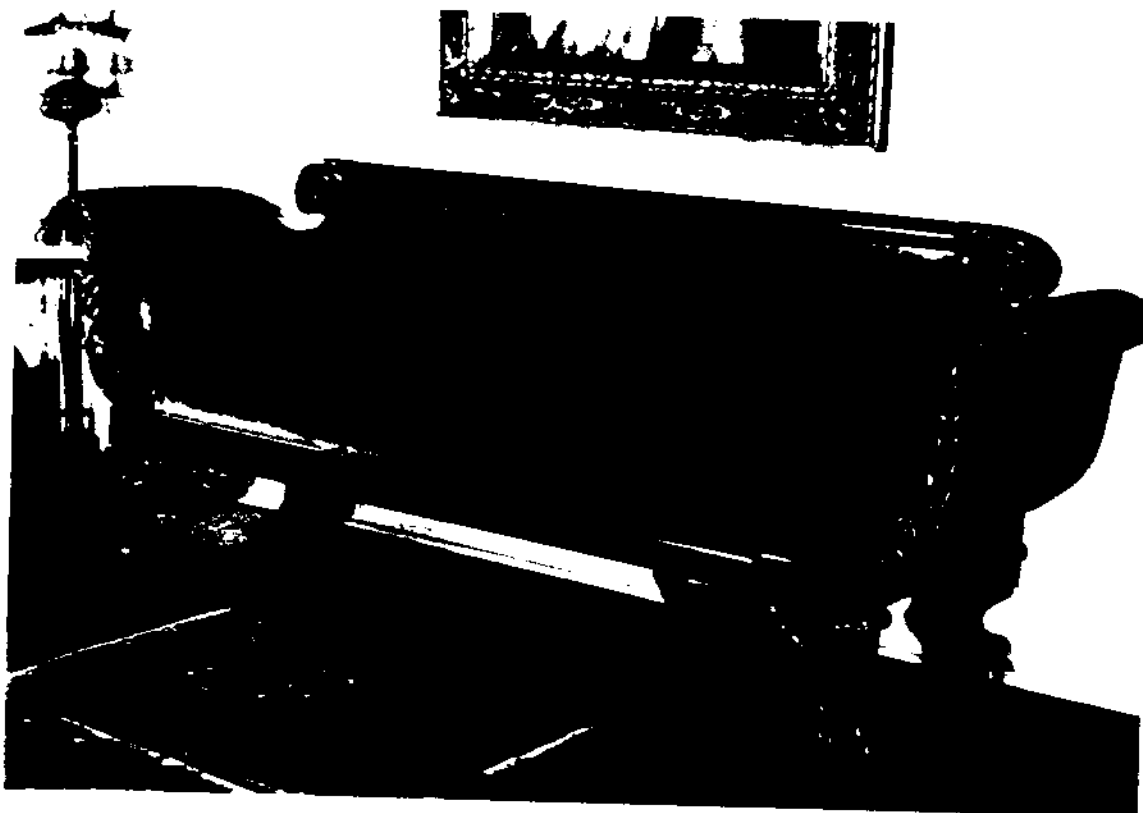


Figure 66. Scroll-arm Sofa.



Figure 67. Scroll-arm Sofa, detail.

Fort House: Duchesse à deux

Figures 68 and 69

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1860.

Dimensions: Height--42", Width--56", Depth--22", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Rosewood, silk damask.

Condition: Good; feet are loose.

Description: Ostensibly designed for two people, this unusual settee probably accommodated one woman wearing the wide, full fashions of the period. Although the piece was created with absolute symmetry, the high rise of the identical, cyma-curved arms, the low seat, and closely placed legs create an awkwardness. The low back with an exposed frame of rope-carved rosewood curves upward to meet the cyma-curved arms. Carving on the wooden arm surfaces is of an abstracted foliage pattern; incised lines create diamond-shaped patterns at the junction of the arm and the convex-molded apron. Three definite surface treatments divide the short legs: a winged section is carved with a confused leaf motif; a diamond-shaped pattern is incised on the center portion; and, swirled, carved lines highlight the knee above an animal paw foot.

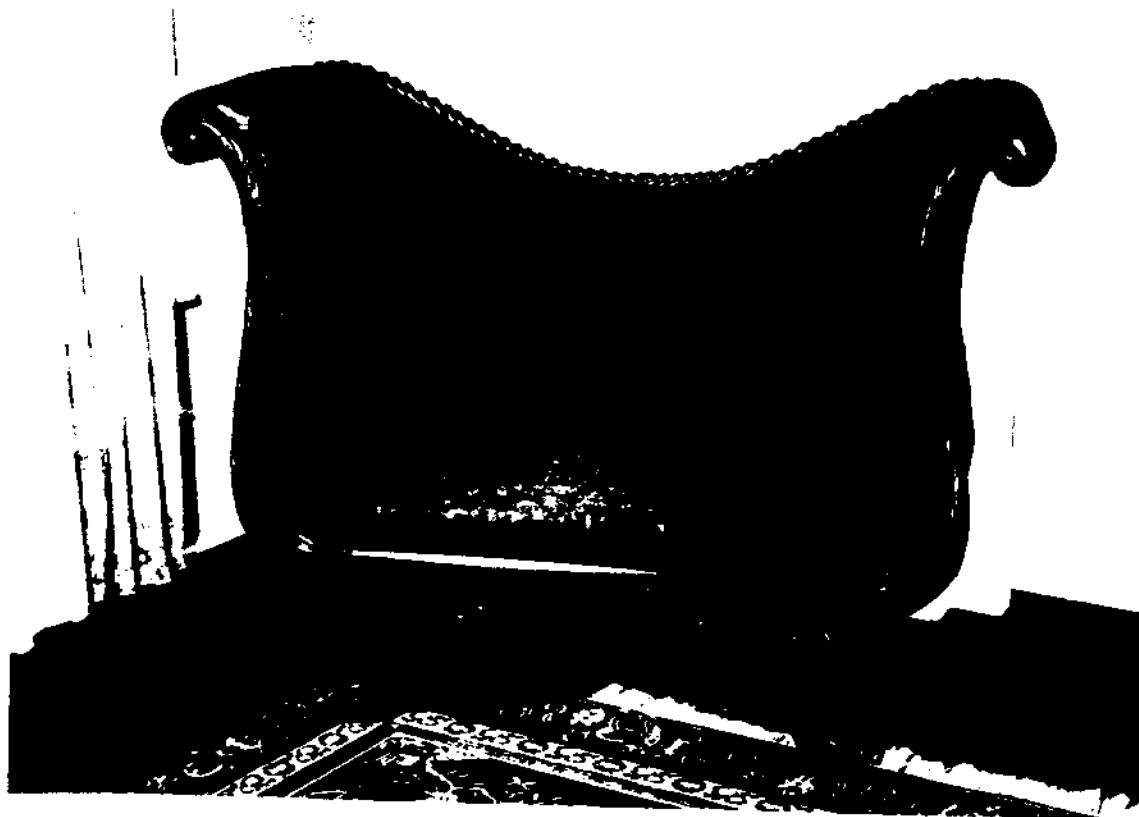


Figure 68. Duchesse à deux.



Figure 69. Duchesse à deux, detail.

Fort House: Settee

Figure 70

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--29", Width--42", Depth--19", Arm Height--  
21", Seat Height--12".

Material: Walnut, velvet.

Condition: Fair; back poorly repaired.

Description: The ball-and-spindle ornament of the back reveals an affinity with gingerbread decoration which was used about the same time as exterior trim on Queen Anne style houses. An arched, upholstered section is topped with a row of ball spindles; on either side, three tapered spindles with ball finials are inserted in arched cross rails. Flattened arm rests terminate in scrolled hand grips while the sides are enclosed by ball-and-dowel ornaments. The upholstered seat curves downward to meet an incised apron. Short, baluster-turned legs have squared tops with simulated peg decorations.





Figure 70. Settee.

## Fort House: Pillar-and-Scroll Table

## Figure 71

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--30", Diameter--33".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: Decagonal in shape, the wooden top is beveled and has a plain apron with a beaded border. Raised upon three cyma-curved legs, the center pillar has deep fluting and a scalloped, drum base. The bold silhouette and the pillar-and-scroll base reflect the styles of furniture which were illustrated by Andrew Jackson Downing in The Architecture of Country Houses (1850) and by John Hall in The Cabinet-maker's Assistant (1840).



Figure 71. Pillar-and-Scroll Table.

## Fort House: Pillar Lamp Table

## Figure 72

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height-- $28\frac{1}{2}$ ", Diameter--23".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The round, wooden top has a simple molded edge.

The top is supported by a turned, pillar support which terminates in a round finial a few inches above the floor level; three winged, flat-sided scrolls serve as legs and feet. Often called misfits because they do not possess the characteristics of other Renaissance Revival pieces, simple tables, such as this, were made from the late 1850s through the 1890s.

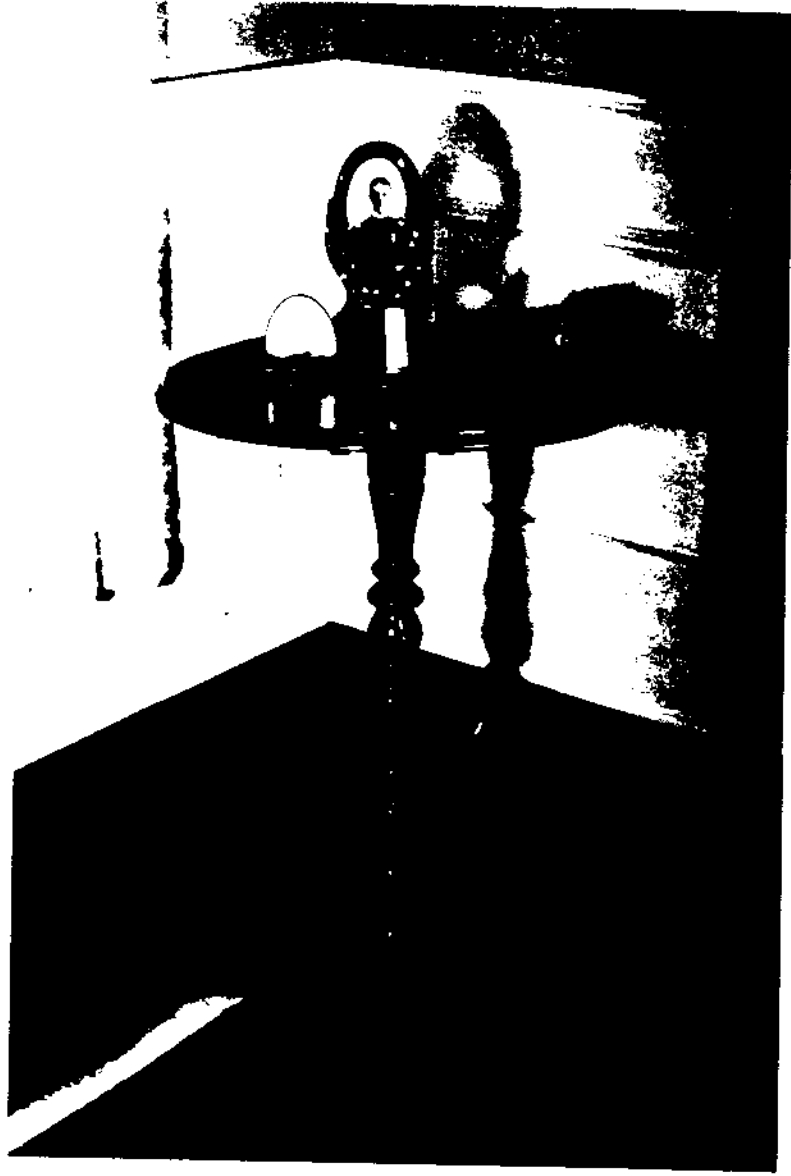


Figure 72. Pillar Lamp Table.

## Fort House: Marble-top Lamp Table

## Figure 73

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1850-1875.

Dimensions: Height--29", Width--29", Depth--21".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The oval, marble top is beveled and overhangs a correspondingly-shaped oval frame. At the center of the molded apron is an incised, downward-projecting, scrolled crest. Four cyma-curved legs--flat sided and molded along the outer edges--flow into bracket feet. Reverse curves connect the feet to a short, central, turned element with a double, spinning-top-shaped finial. The flat-sided legs are molded along the outer edges.



Figure 73. Marble-top Lazy Table.

## Fort House: Oval-top Lamp Table

## Figure 74

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--28", Width--25 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", Depth--18".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The oval, wooden top is beveled and has a deeply molded, convex apron. A center pillar is tapered and ring-turned, terminating in a ball finial. The four curved and winged, flat-sided legs attach to the top and to the center baluster. The lathe-turned pillar and scroll-cut legs are illustrative of mass-produced components while the oval top and apron display hand finishing.





Figure 74. Oval-top Lamp Table.

## Fort House: Parlor Table

## Figure 75

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--29", Width--29", Depth--21".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The shaped, white, marble top has molded, beveled edges; the top overhangs the wooden frame. All four sides of the apron feature convex curves, incised lines, and centrally placed, scrolled ornaments. The top of each leg has a block with a projecting, molded pattern. Ring-turned and tapered, each leg is interrupted by a plain, square block inserted between the leg and a tapered foot. The curved, flat-topped stretchers connect two legs at either end of the table while an elaborate, vase-shaped finial and block are centered on the turned, cross stretcher.



Figure 75. Parlor Table.

## Fort House: Lamp Table

## Figure 76

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--30", Width--29", Depth--21".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular, wooden top has chamfered corners and beveled edges. The front apron is incised with straight lines and has a downward-projecting, unevenly-balanced crest; chamfered corners correspond to the overhanging top. Five tapered and ring-turned balusters are attached to the bell-shaped base. The legs and feet of the base are flat-sided with partially molded edges.

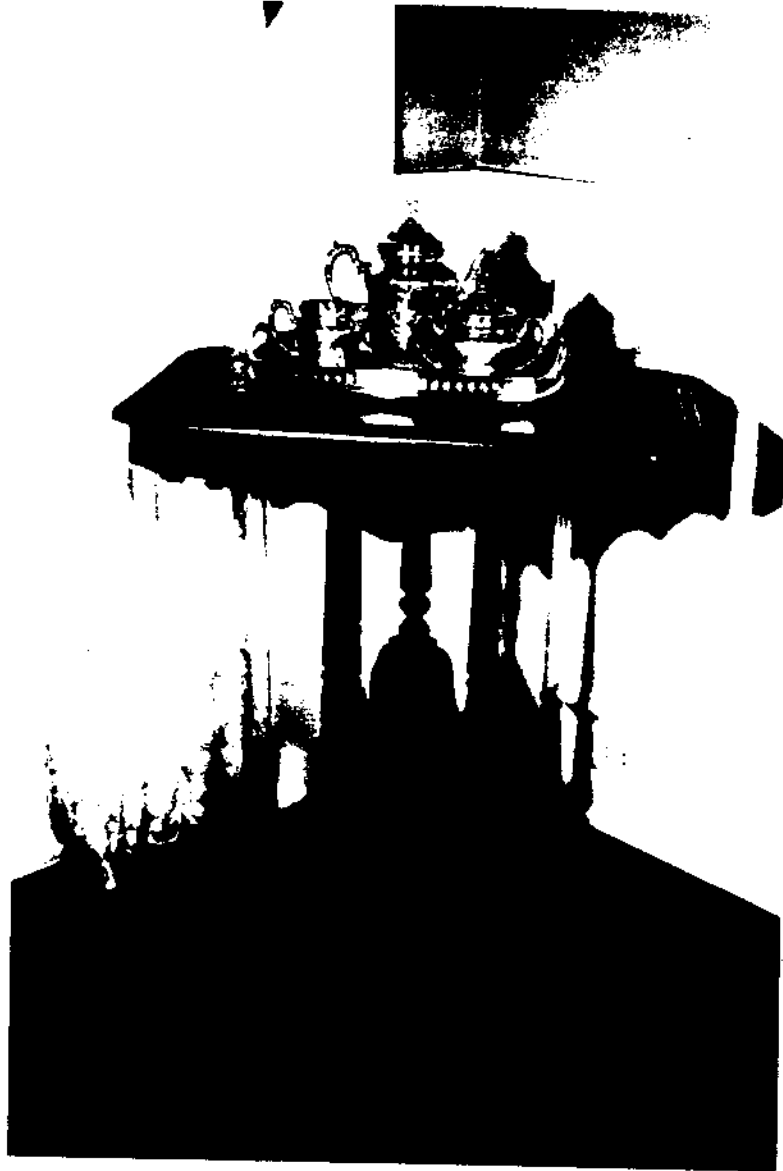


Figure 76. Lamp Table.

## Fort House: Lamp Table

## Figure 77

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--28", Width--27", Depth--19".

Material: Walnut, gumwood.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular, wooden top has an applied, molded edge with mitered corners. Made of flat-sided boards, the four legs feature dogleg curves at the tops and the bottoms. A square piece of wood with a pierced, abstract, floral motif connects each leg to a central, ball-shaped finial. This simple design of timid curves and wide-set legs betray the limited tools which were available to the craftsman.

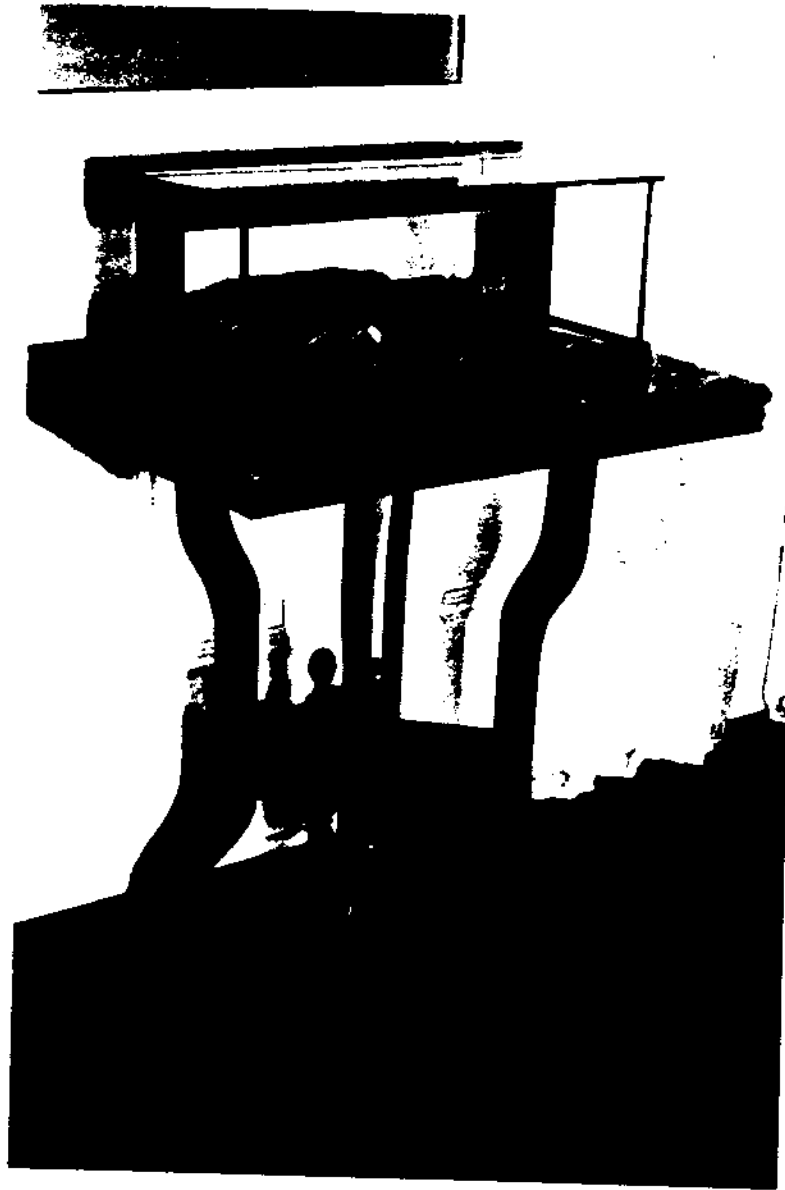


Figure 77. Large Table.

## Fort House: Drop-leaf Dining Table

## Figure 78

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--30", Width--70", Depth--49½".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: Supported by a single, octagonal pillar and base, the top has one stationary, center section and two round-cornered, hinged, drop-leaves. The veneered base is shaped like an octagonal dome with beaded trim and mitered molding. While pedestal tables are common to the Victorian Empire substyle, this unique table base is probably a custom design. The chairs which are currently exhibited with this table are not of the same period.



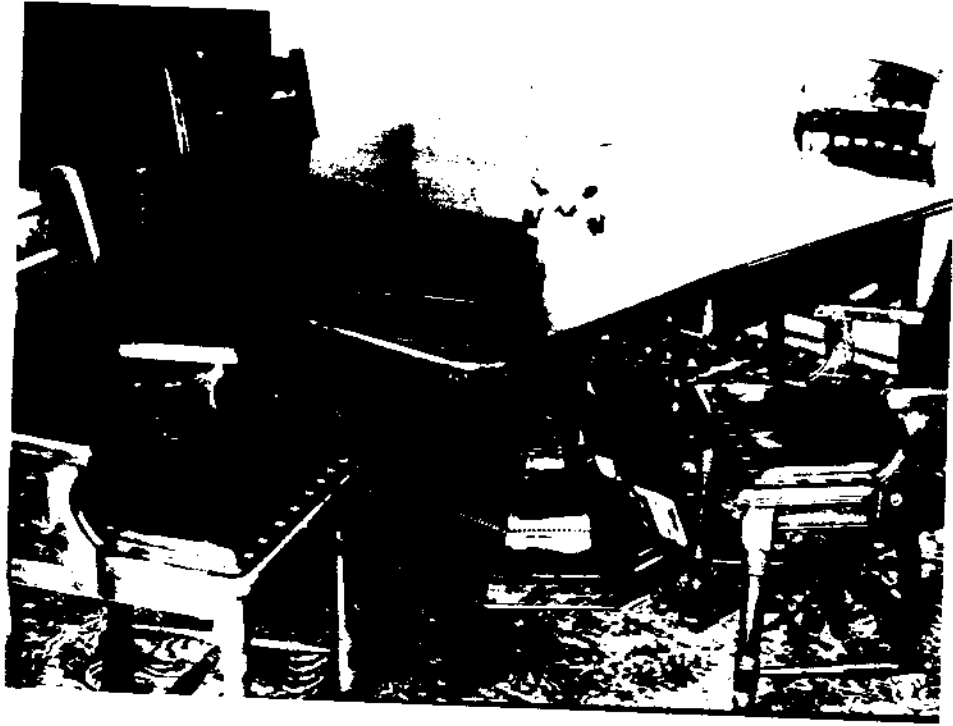


Figure 93. Drop-leaf Dining Table.

## Fort House: Spool-turned Whatnot

## Figure 79

Substyle: Spool-turned.

Date: 1855-1880.

Dimensions: Height--56", Width--22", Depth--15".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The five triangular, graduated shelves are serpentine and molded at the front edges; the bottom shelf is thicker and has a double, convex-molded edge. The upper shelves are each supported by three slender, turned spindles. Finials, placed at the corners of the shelves, create the illusion of the spindles penetrating the shelves. Spindles are recessed to correspond to each shelf size. Low, pierced galleries are attached to the rear sides of each shelf; the bottom shelf is raised on three spool-turned legs. Although spool-turned pieces were made during periods when specific substyles were dominant, they do not reflect the current style. Spool-turned whatnots show little variety in design over a twenty-five year period.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture (New York): Bonanza Books, 1952), pp. 286-287.

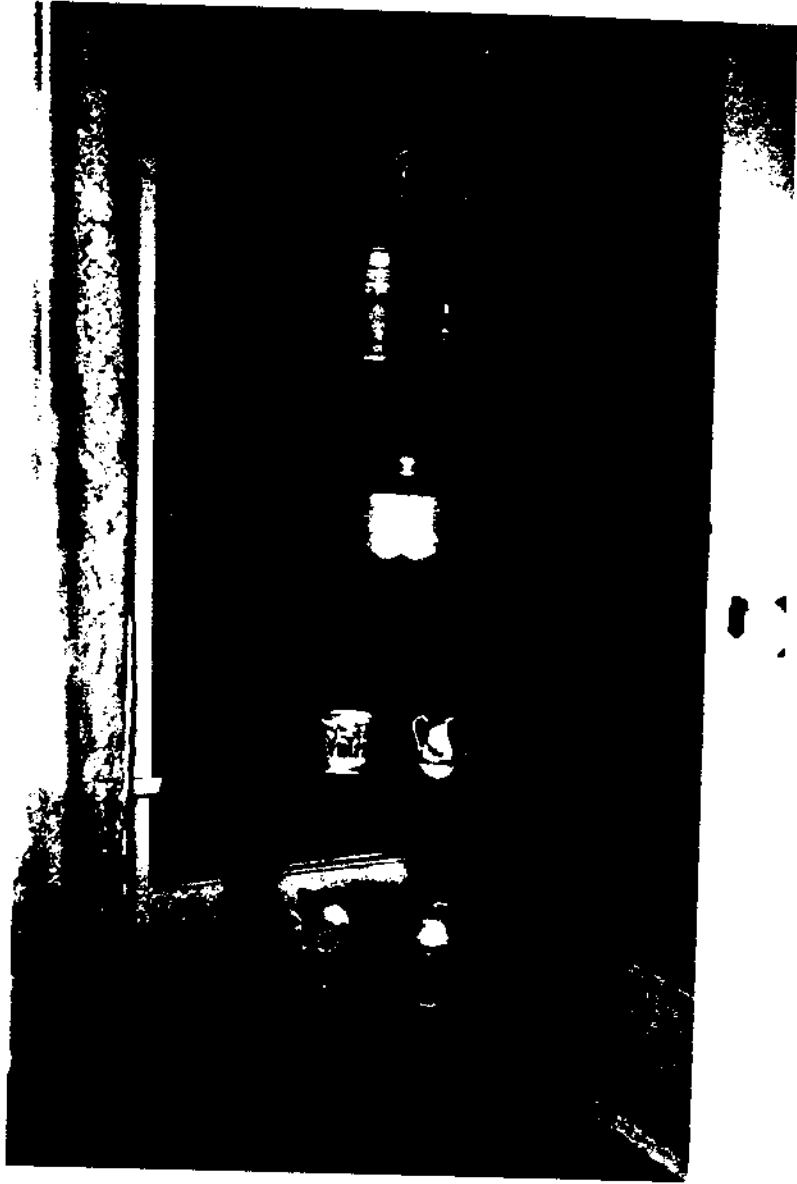


Figure 79. Spool-turned Whatnot.

## Fort House: Scroll-bracket Whatnot

## Figure 80

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1885.

Dimensions: Height--59", Width--29", Depth--19".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The four triangular, graduated shelves have serpentine fronts with concave-molded edges. Two identically patterned side pieces are scroll-cut and provide the support and back for each shelf. There is no continuous back corner stile--the scrolled frame terminates in bracket feet at the three corners. This piece is one of a matching pair; although they were manufactured in great numbers, matching pairs of whatnots are seldom found in historical collections.

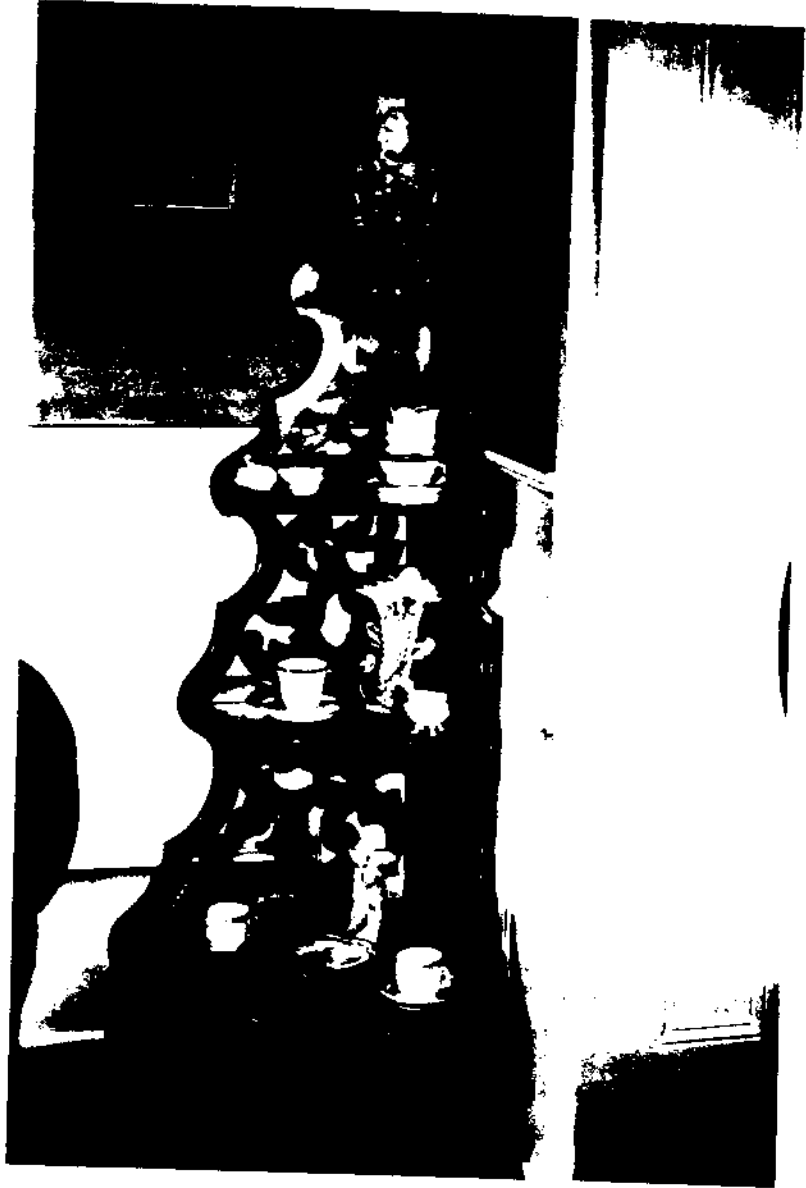


Figure 80. Scroll-cracket Whatnot.

## Fort House: Drop-front Secretary

Figures 81 and 82

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1875.

Dimensions: Height--66", Width--37", Depth--19".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: Beautiful applications of burl veneer impart a richness to the surface of this drop-front desk. A gallery with a central crest and cartouche tops a bracketed shelf; a full-width, beveled mirror fits between the shelf and the top of the desk section. A hinged, drop-front features an incised, panel of burl veneer applied to a sunken panel of solid walnut; this panel is bordered by incised, mitered molding and a broad frame of veneer. One full-width drawer and a pair of paneled doors occupy the base. Carved wooden pulls with concealed finger grips flank a wooden keyhole escutcheon on the veneered front of the drawer. Two carved brackets with acanthus leaf decorations embellish the side stiles while the projecting base is unadorned. When opened, the drop-front provides a felt-covered writing surface; the interior storage space features plain drawers and scalloped-topped pigeonholes.



Figure 82. Drop-front Secretary, detail.



Figure 81. Drop-front Secretary.

## Fort House: Bookcase

Figures 83 and 84

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--96", Width--40", Depth--21".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The entablature of the tall case has a three-quarter, projecting gallery of molded wood; three mitered sections project beyond the gallery which breaks the carved frieze into two equal sections. Carved leaves and berries decorate the frieze and the upper parts of the three pilasters. A pair of glazed doors with arched tops enclose two adjustable shelves. The projecting base--which is wider and deeper than the deck--has two rectangular doors with diamond-shaped, molded panels. On the base, the carved foliage of the pilasters repeats the decoration of the upper section. A deep, projecting plinth corresponds to the articulation of the top gallery.



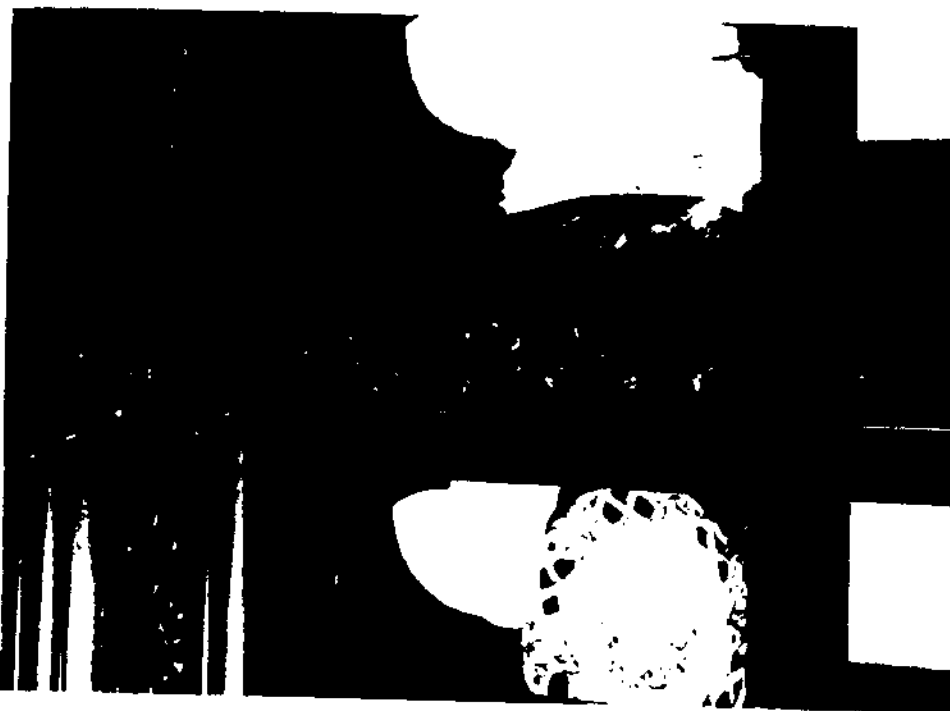


Figure 84. Bookcase, detail.



Figure 83. Bookcase.

Fort House: Chest of Drawers with Recessed Top

Figure 85

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--55½", Width--46", Depth--22".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular top is surmounted by a recessed case with two half-width drawers and a plain back gallery. The base contains one drawer with a convex-curved front and three drawers with flat, burl-veneered fronts. Baluster-turned pillars with square posts are flush with the overhanging top and upper projecting drawer; each pillar is tapered and ring-turned at the top and the bottom, ending with turned legs and peg feet. Partly concealed, the rear legs are identical to the front. The brass hardware is not original.



Figure 85. Chest of Drawers with Recessed Top.

## Fort House: Chest of Drawers with Mirror

## Figure 86

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--70", Width--43", Depth--19½".

Material: Mahogany, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular top is surmounted by a case which contains three small drawers; an adjustable mirror is framed by wide, mitered molding and supported by curved brackets. Containing four full-width drawers, the base has a projecting top with tapered, octagonal pillars on either side. The top drawer is emphasized by an arched line cut into the veneered surface; without hardware, it is opened by gripping the underedge. Wooden, mushroom-shaped knobs of two sizes are used on the other drawers. The bottom cross rail and the small, center drawer front feature cyma-curved molding. Wide, boldly-curved feet support the front while short, baluster-turned legs are used at the rear.

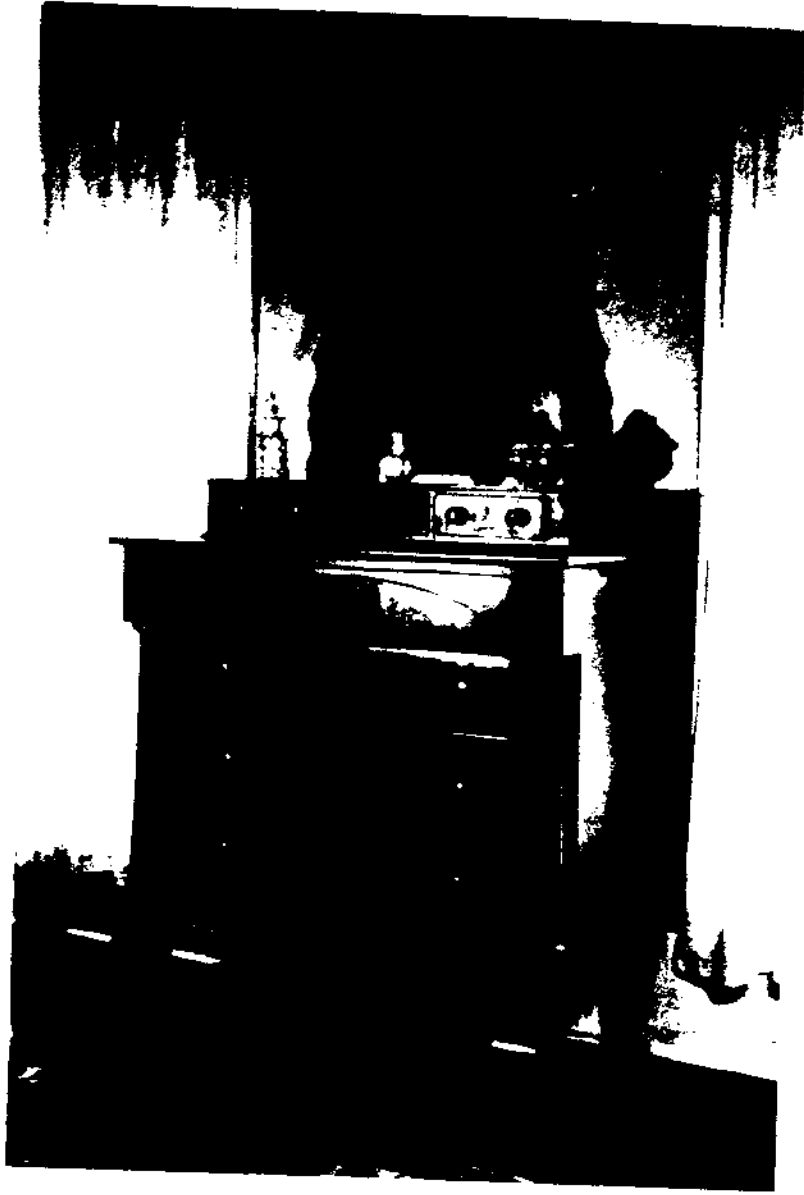


Figure 86. Chest of Drawers with Mirror.

## Fort House: Chest of Drawers with Mirror

## Figure 87

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1840-1865.

Dimensions: Height--76", Width--43", Depth--21".

Material: Mahogany, marble, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The adjustable, hourglass-shaped mirror has a molded frame with an arched top and a carved, pierced ornament; a wishbone-shaped mirror support is attached to the top. Molded with rounded corners, the white marble top rests upon the wooden surface of the case. The top drawer is curved outward at the top, corresponding to curved brackets at either side. Three additional full-width drawers are flush with the case and surfaced with matching, figured veneer. Bail handles are brass while the keyhole escutcheon patterns are incised into the wood. A scalloped apron terminates in bracket feet.

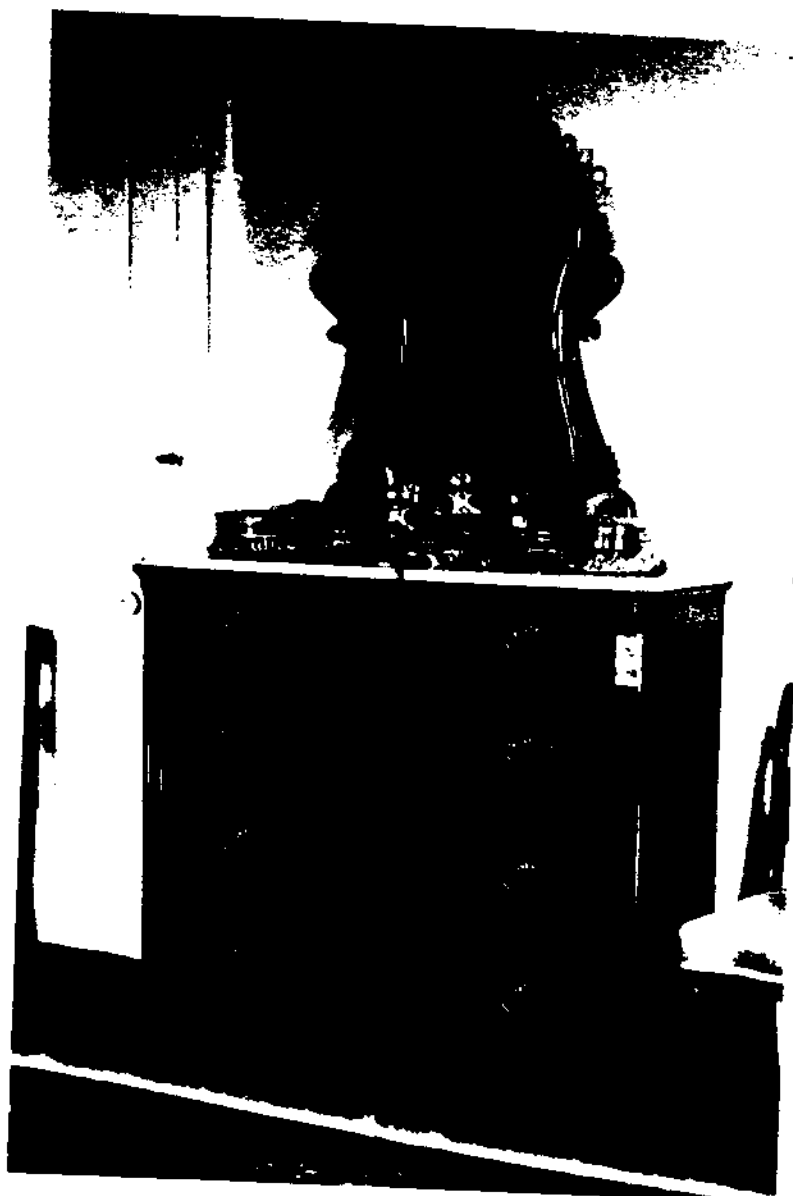


Figure 87. Chest of Drawers with Mirror.

## Fort House: Enclosed Washstand

## Figure 88

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--30", Depth--16".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The white, gray-veined, marble top has molded edges and a plain backsplash. Containing three full-width drawers of equal size, the case has paneled sides with split spindles applied to the corners. On the drawer fronts, raised panels of veneer are subdivided into intricate shapes. Wooden roundels and keyhole plates repeat the shape of the mushroom knobs. The slightly projecting plinth, with a molded baseboard, is raised on bun-shaped feet.





Figure 38. Enclosed Washstand.

## Fort House: Sleigh Bed

## Figure 89

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--59½".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Several pieces of applied ornaments are missing.

Description: Originally designed to be placed with one side to the wall, the decorative elements are applied to the sides rather than to the ends of this sleigh bed. In the French manner, the headboard and the footboard are of the same height; each end consists of broad, rectangular panels framed by plain, wide borders. The top rails are half-round with terminal caps of carved scrolls. Ornamented with applied wooden scrolls, the end stiles are made of flat-sided boards with lyre-shaped feet. The deep side rails have scroll outlines and applied ornaments; each rail has a carved cartouche at the lower center. Recently donated to Fort House, the bed was made in the 1840s in New York City; it is not typical of Texas homes of this period.



Figure 89. Sleigh Bed.

## Fort House: Wardrobe

## Figure 90

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1875-1890.

Dimensions: Height-- $87\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width--48", Depth--17".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: At the top of the case, a three-quarter, molded gallery projects above a dogtoothed border. The side and center stiles are deeply incised with straight lines. Constructed of wide, walnut boards, the two doors have sunken, arched-top panels of figured veneer. Incised with a geometric pattern of lines, two drawers fit flush with the front of the projecting base. A simply cut apron features bracket ends which act as legs and feet. Large casters at each corner are partly concealed.



Figure 90. Mariroce.

## Fort House: Sideboard

## Figure 91

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--39½", Width--72", Depth--23".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good; veneer chipped on legs.

Description: The heavy, rectangular shape is relieved by a variety of bold, opposing curves. The straight top overhangs thick, curved, and projecting end sections. Two full-width drawers with curved fronts--one convex and one cyma-curved--occupy the upper section of the case. Centered in the lower half of the chest are two drawers with bowed fronts and two square doors. The front legs are curved with an incised line which emphasizes the spiral while the rear legs are bracket-shaped. Three sizes of wooden mushroom knobs are used as hardware.

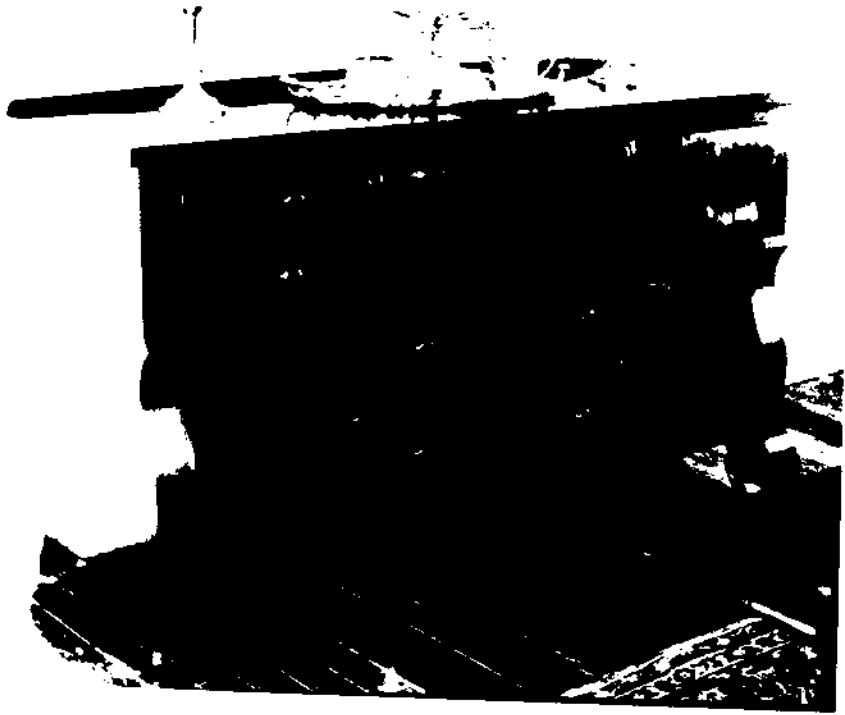


Figure 91. Sideboard.

## Fort House: Sideboard

## Figure 92

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--77½", Width--48", Depth--18½".

Material: Walnut, marble, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The upper deck has a flat cornice of molding with a machine-cut fret of walnut veneer. A central panel of burl veneer is flanked by two small, square shelves which are supported by brackets. A full-width, bracketed shelf above a beveled mirror has a molded edge and chamfered corners. Topped with white marble, the base contains two half-width drawers and a pair of paneled doors; drawers and doors are faced with veneer.



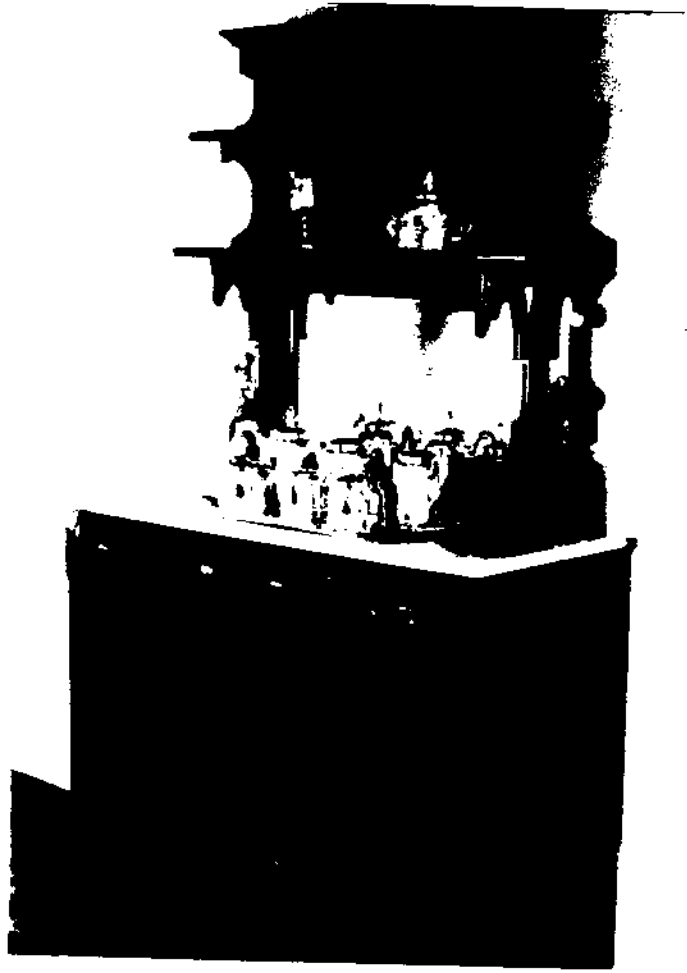


Figure 92. Sideboard.

## Fort House: Square Grand Piano

Figures 93 and 94

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1875.

Dimensions: Height--38", Width--81", Depth--40".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular case has rounded corners and a projecting molding around the base. The four massive cabriole legs have raised carvings of acanthus leaves and scrolls with central cabochon shapes on the knee sections; whorl feet are raised on octagonal-shaped pads. A pierced, curvilinear music rack and a lyre-shaped pedal support repeat the curves of the legs. Patented on May 4, 1875, this Kranich and Bach piano may be compared with pianos at East Terrace, Figure 51, and McNamara House, Figure 195.

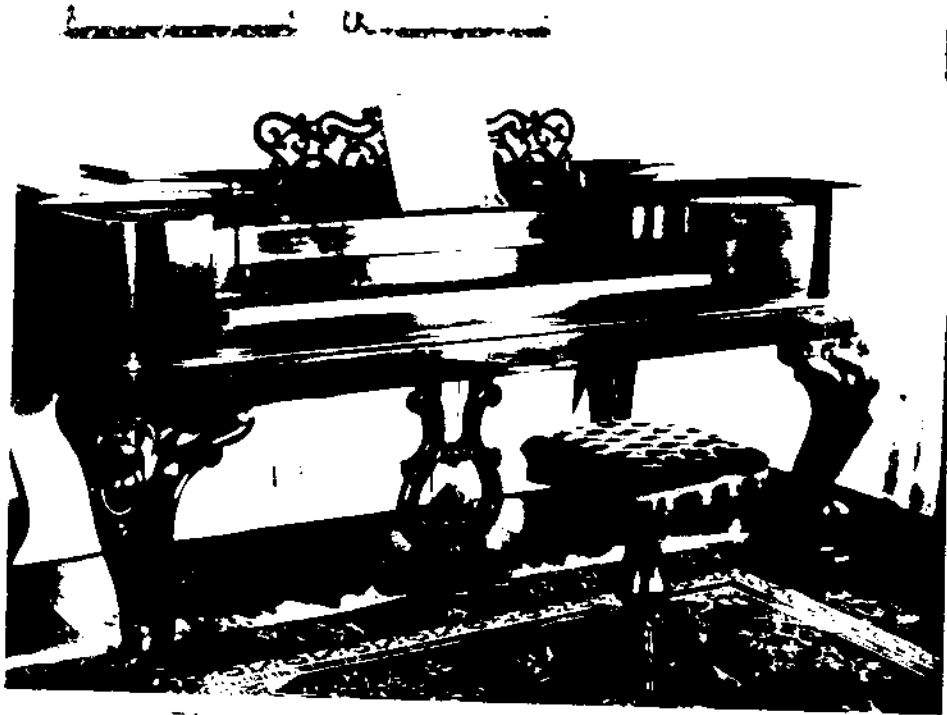


Figure 93. Square Grand Piano.



Figure 94. Square Grand Piano, detail.

## Fort House: Hatrack and Umbrella Stand

## Figure 95

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--89", Width--31½", Depth--15".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The solid walnut back is pierced and topped with a pointed arch, scrolls, and a fleur-de-lis motif. An arched mirror is flanked by curved projections and spindled garnet pegs. The low shelf is pierced by two square openings which correspond with two iron drip pans set into the base; tapered balusters with tear-shaped finials support this umbrella rack. The bottom shelf features a recessed center--designed so that the shelf would not be stepped on when a person stood in front of the mirror.

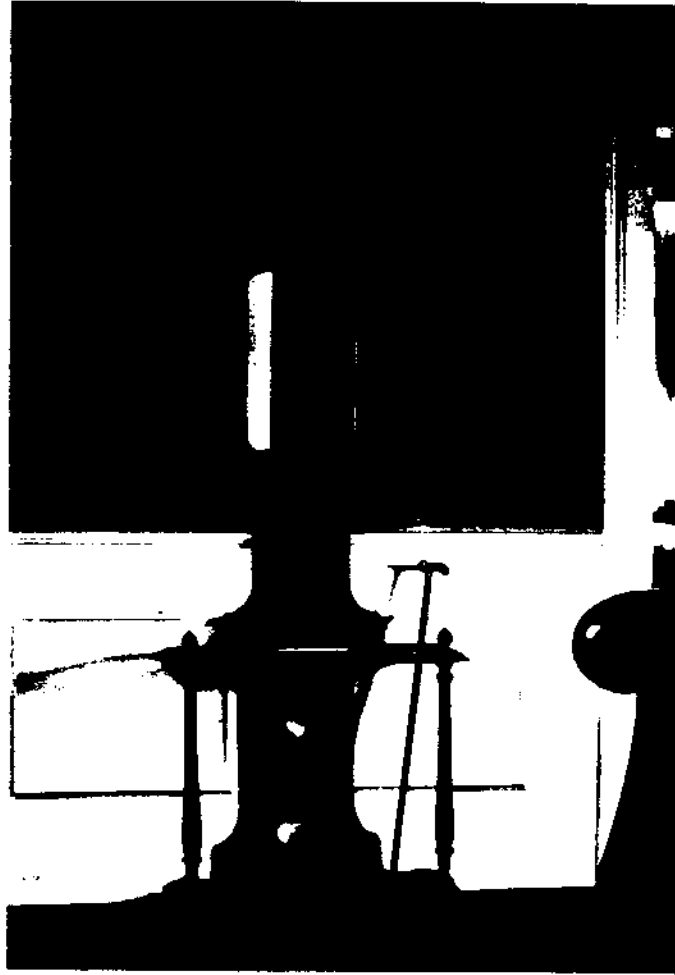


Figure 95. Hatrack and Umbrella Stand.

## CHAPTER V

### FULTON MANSION

#### History of the House

Begun by George Ware Fulton in 1874, Fulton Mansion is an outstanding example of the French Second Empire style of architecture. When completed in 1877, the house was considered to be the finest home of the South Texas Coast.<sup>1</sup> While the exterior design of the house is not unusual--houses similar in appearance were built elsewhere--the techniques of construction were adapted to the climactic conditions of the Gulf coast. The basement walls of concrete and precast concrete blocks were strengthened with native seashells which were used as aggregate. These walls, which elevate the first floor six feet above ground level, create a deep basement which contains the kitchen and laundry rooms. Since hurricanes are seasonal threats to this geographic area, the upper walls are constructed in a unique manner. Pine planks--one inch thick and five inches wide--are stacked on top of each other and secured with spikes to create a solid wood wall. All of the floors in the house are of similar construction--the solid wood is laid with edges upright instead of a normal

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<sup>1</sup>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Fulton Mansion State Historic Structure: Developmental Study (Austin: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 1976), p. 9.

flat installation. The distinctive mansard roof, which is pierced by dormer windows, was originally of tin with slate shingles. A three-and-one-half story tower dominates the exterior while three-story bay windows accent three of the four elevations. Cypress planks sheath the exterior walls which have been repainted in the original tri-color scheme.

The Fulton Mansion incorporated the newest technological innovations of the 1870s: chandeliers fueled by carbide gas, basement cisterns for water storage, bathrooms with running water and flush toilets, central heating with ducts and flues which entered the rooms through false fireplaces, and dumb-waiters to bring food from the basement kitchen to the dining room.

Designed with impressive exterior proportions, each of the three upper floors of the interior contains four rooms, two bathrooms, and a central hall. Bedrooms without adjacent bathrooms have built-in corner wash basins. The smallest room on each floor corresponds to the tower; the fourth level of the tower, reached by a narrow stairway from the third floor landing, provides a panoramic view of the Gulf of Mexico.

The interior has been restored to its original elegance. Outstanding features include intricately molded plaster cornices, plaster ceiling medallions, wood and patterned tile floors, porcelain and marble lavatories, marbelized slate mantles, and ornate brass hardware. Milled in New Orleans,

the original interior woodwork is of cypress, black walnut, and Florida pine. The present museum administrator is planning not to restore one small room on the second floor but to leave the crumbling plaster walls and watermarked woodwork to assume the status of a permanent exhibit to illustrate the condition of the entire house before restoration.

Born in Philadelphia in 1810, George Fulton came to Texas at the age of twenty-seven. He became a draftsman in the land office of the newly formed Republic of Texas. Forming a partnership with Henry Smith, the former Provisional Governor of Texas, Fulton incorporated the town of Aransas City on land which he owned. The venture ended in failure and Fulton moved to Brazoria in 1840; the same year, Harriet Smith--the eldest daughter of his former partner--became his wife. The Fultons left Texas for an extended period; during these years, George held a variety of interesting jobs. As a reporter, he worked for the Baltimore Sun--a newspaper which was owned by his brother Charles; he also served as an engineer for John Roebling, who later built the Brooklyn Bridge. There is no evidence that he worked for his cousin, Robert Fulton, the creator of the steam boat; however, George did share his cousin's interest in technology and later built a carbide gas plant for Fulton Mansion. Returning to Texas in 1868 to oversee Mrs. Fulton's recently inherited, vast land holdings, Fulton became a wealthy rancher and meat packer. The town of Fulton Beach--founded after the construction



of Fulton Mansion--became the center of Fulton's little empire but never developed into the boom town which George envisioned.

After George Fulton's death in 1883, his widow moved to Cincinnati to live with a daughter. The house passed through a number of owners and suffered severe damage due to neglect and age. The mansion and site served as a restaurant and trailer park before being purchased by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1976. Developed under the Historic Sites and Restoration Program which was instituted by the State of Texas in 1973, the million-dollar restoration has been funded by the cigarette tax revenue. Opened to the public in November, 1983, the museum director has projected attendance figures for 1984 in excess of 80,000.



Figure 96. Fulton Mansion Exterior.

## Catalogue of Furniture

Fulton Mansion: Balloon-back Chair with Demi-arms

Figure 97

Substyle: Transitional (Rococo Revival-Renaissance Revival).

Date: 1850-1875.

Dimensions: Height--24", Width--18", Depth--18", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut, velvet.

Condition: Good.

Description: The carved cartouche and flanking ornaments are illustrative of Renaissance Revival motifs applied to a Rococo Revival chair shape. The muddled design of the cartouche appears to be a shell with a superimposed, abstract ribbon and scroll; the raised, flat carvings on the looped frame are similar to the type of panels which were applied to Renaissance Revival pieces. The balloon-shaped back curves into the rear legs and also forms curved demi-arms. A round, upholstered seat is attached to the serpentine, finger-molded apron. Shaped in timid cyma curves, the grooved legs are not true cabrioles; they terminate in round peg feet.



Figure 97. Balloon-back Chair with Demi-arms.

## Fulton Mansion: Curule-leg Armchair

Figures 98 and 99

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1875.

Dimensions: Height--38", Width--28", Depth--18", Arm  
Height--21", Seat Height--16".

Material: Ebonized hardwood, silk.

Condition: Under restoration.

Description: The shaped, deeply upholstered back is surrounded by an exposed wooden frame; the top cresting has a central, pierced cartouche mounted upon a geometrically-incised rail. Swag pendants project from the corner roundels. Filling the space between the back and the seat is an incised, horizontal splat with a center roundel. The upholstered cushion is rolled over the flared frame to create low arms. Decorated with gilt-filled incised lines, the apron features a central carving with a dogtooth pattern. Constructed with flat sides in opposing curved shapes, the curule legs have hooded feet with casters.



Figure 98. Curule-leg Armchair.



Figure 99. Curule-leg Armchair, detail.

## Fulton Mansion: Perforated-seat Rocking Chair

## Figure 100

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1880.

Dimensions: Height--28", Width--14", Depth--14", Seat  
Height--14".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The arched top rail is connected to ring-turned back stiles which terminate in button finials. Lacking a complete seat frame, one sheet of curved, laminated wood is attached with brass tacks to the top rail, rear stiles, and front apron. Decorated with punched holes of various diameters, the back features a pattern of pointed arches; the seat resembles a Chinese checkerboard--a star surrounded by a circle. The front legs are round, ringed, and tapered; rear legs are round and canted. While the side stretchers are simply turned, the front rung is tapered at both ends with a center, ringed section. The rockers are plain, flat-sided, and tapered.



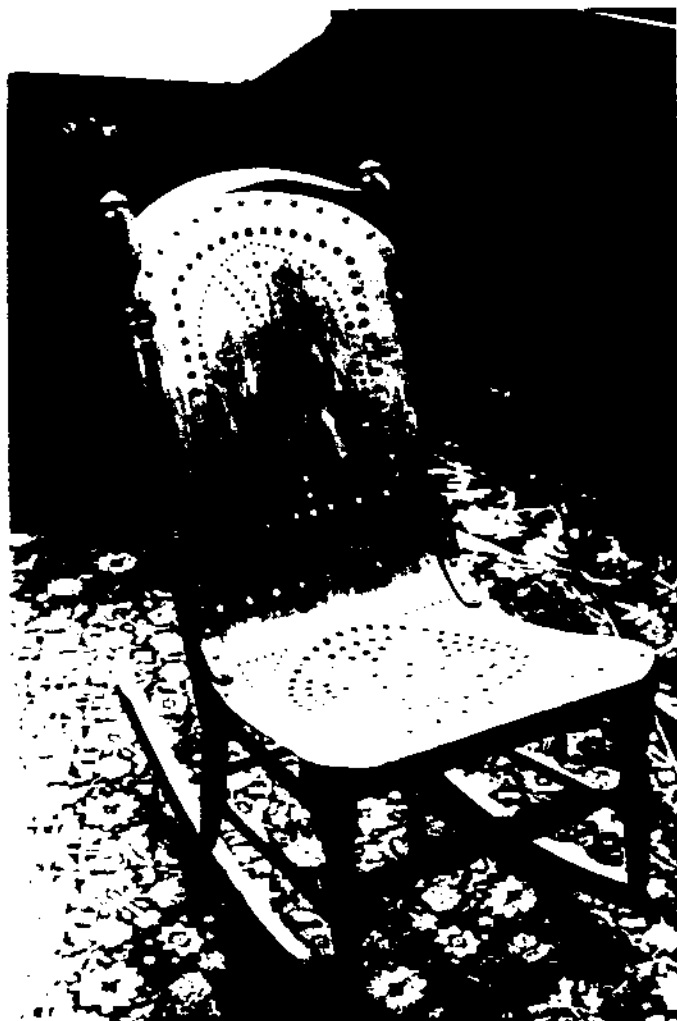


Figure 100. Perforated-seat Rocking Chair.

Fulton Mansion: Perforated-seat Rocking Chair  
with Demi-arms

Figure 101

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1880.

Dimensions: Height--31", Width--18", Depth--14", Arm  
Height--18", Seat Height--15".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: Identical in details to the chair shown in

Figure 100, this chair has low, curved arms. Attached to the lower back and to the front seat rail, the arms are ring-turned with rounded, bracket ends. The Gardner Company of New York advertised Eastlake chairs with perforated seats and backs in the 1870s. This company exhibited similar perforated chairs at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Bishop and Patricia Coblentz, The World of Antiques, Art, and Architecture in Victorian America (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979), p. 381.



Figure 101. Perforated-seat Rocking Chair  
with Semi-arms.

## Fulton Mansion: Side Chair with Demi-arms

## Figure 102

Substyle: Renaissance Revival-Eastlake.

Date: 1865-1880.

Dimensions: Height--33", Width--18", Depth--18", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut, wool needlepoint.

Condition: Good.

Description: The arched top rail has irregular-shaped inset sections of burlled-veneer. A vase-shaped splat with a center medallion of veneer is attached to a scrolled back rail. Rear stiles are flat-sided and serpentine-curved. The round, wooden seat frame is connected to the back by curved demi-arms. Turned and ringed front legs are braced with similarly turned stretchers while the other stretchers are simple dowels. The needlepoint-covered seat is probably a replacement for a woven cane bottom.

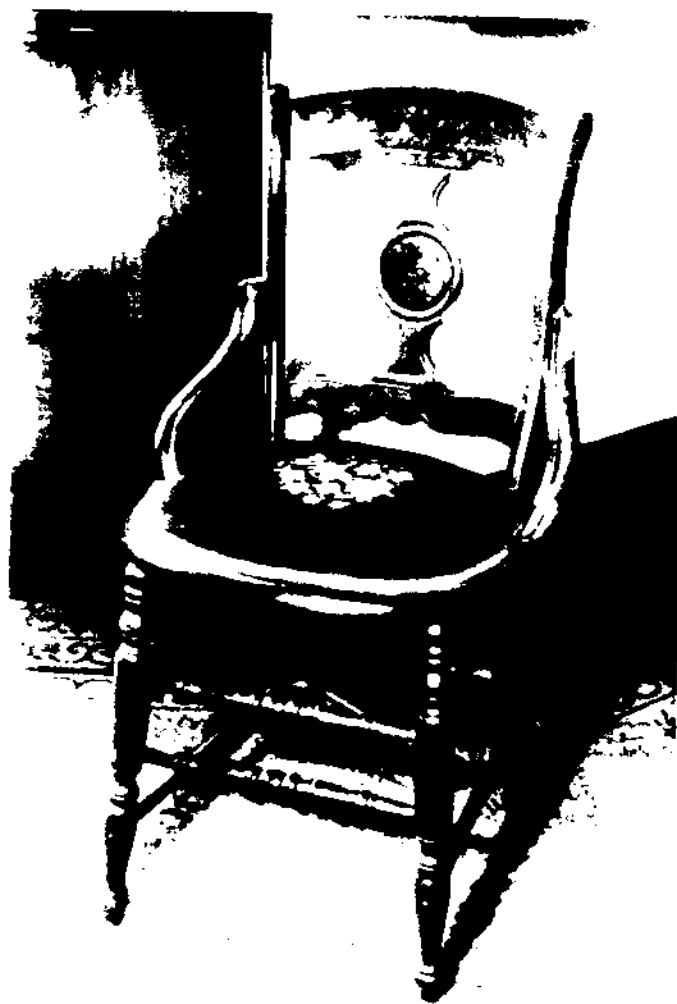


Figure 102. Side Chair with Semi-arms.

## Fulton Mansion: Child's Cane-bottom Armchair

## Figure 103

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1880.

Dimensions: Height--24", Width--14", Depth--12", Arm  
Height--16", Seat Height--10".

Material: Walnut, cane.

Condition: Good.

Description: This sturdy little chair has a square back composed of incised rails and stiles. An applied crest, a central cartouche, and four ball elements decorate the two back rails. Flat-sided with bracketed ends, the arms have rounded hand grips; curved supports attach the arms to the seat frame. The seat is tapered at the rear and has an insert of factory-made, woven cane. Baluster-turned and tapered, the legs terminate in peg feet. One turned rung braces the front legs while other stretchers are plain dowels. Probably made by the Pierce Company of Boston, an identical chair--with rockers--is shown in their 1875 catalogue.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Eileen and Richard Dubrow, Furniture Made in America, 1876-1905 (Exton, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing Company, 1982), p. 214.



Figure 103. Child's Cane-bottom Armchair.

## Fulton Mansion: Carpet-back Folding Chair

Figures 104 and 105

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1875-1885.

Dimensions: Height--31", Width--16", Depth--16", Seat  
Height--15".

Material: Ebonized hardwood, wool.

Condition: Fair.

Description: The top rail is plain and curved, and is connected on either end to rounded stiles which also form the rear legs. Loosely bolted so that they may be folded, the front legs are attached to the rear stiles, and they are braced by two stretchers. The sling seat of wool fabric is stretched on two rounded rails and collapses when the chair is folded flat; the fabric-covered back panel is set into the frame. The machine-made upholstery is copied from Brussels and Wilton carpet patterns. A strip of long fringe was originally tacked to the front rail of the seat. Folding chairs such as these were made by many New England factories during the 1880s. In an 1879 trade catalogue of the Vail Company in Worcester, Massachusetts, this type of chair is illustrated and priced at twenty-six dollars per dozen. Less elaborate chairs were described: "They are specially adapted to the 'Undertaking Trade'; for use on



Boats, Halls, Verandahs, and wherever economy in space needs to be considered."<sup>4</sup> This pair of chairs at Fulton Mansion illustrates two variations of designs and background colors.

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<sup>4</sup>Eileen and Richard Dubrow, p. 275.



Figure 105. Carpet-back Folding Chair.

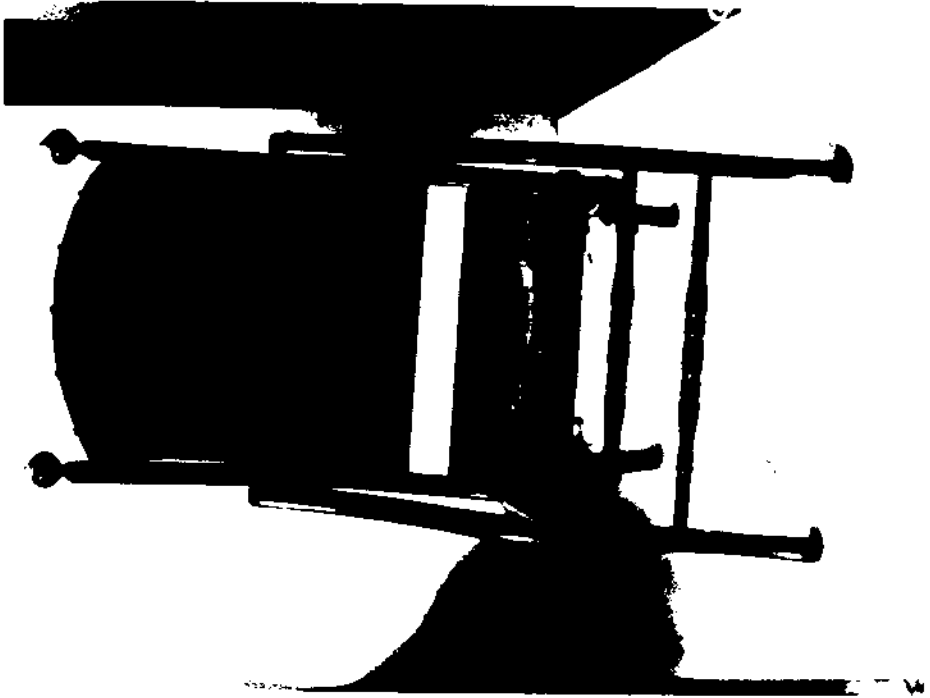


Figure 104. Carpet-back Folding Chair.

## Fulton Mansion: Parlor Side Chair

Figures 106 and 107

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1875.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--21", Depth--20", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut, silk.

Condition: Under restoration.

Description: The keystone-shaped, upholstered back is attached to an incised and veneered wooden frame. A pierced cartouche tops the back rail; rounded, projecting corners of the rail are incised and feature molded brackets. Continuing past the seat frame, the back stiles form the square rear legs. The deep, upholstered seat has a shirred and welted box edge with rounded corners; curved and incised brackets attach the back to the seat frame. Curved and incised, the narrow apron has an applied pendant ornament at the center. With blocks at the upper terminations, the turned legs feature bulb and ring shapes with peg feet. Part of a parlor suite, four side chairs of this design match a sofa and a pair of arm chairs, Figures 108, 109, and 110.



Figure 106. Parlor Side Chair.

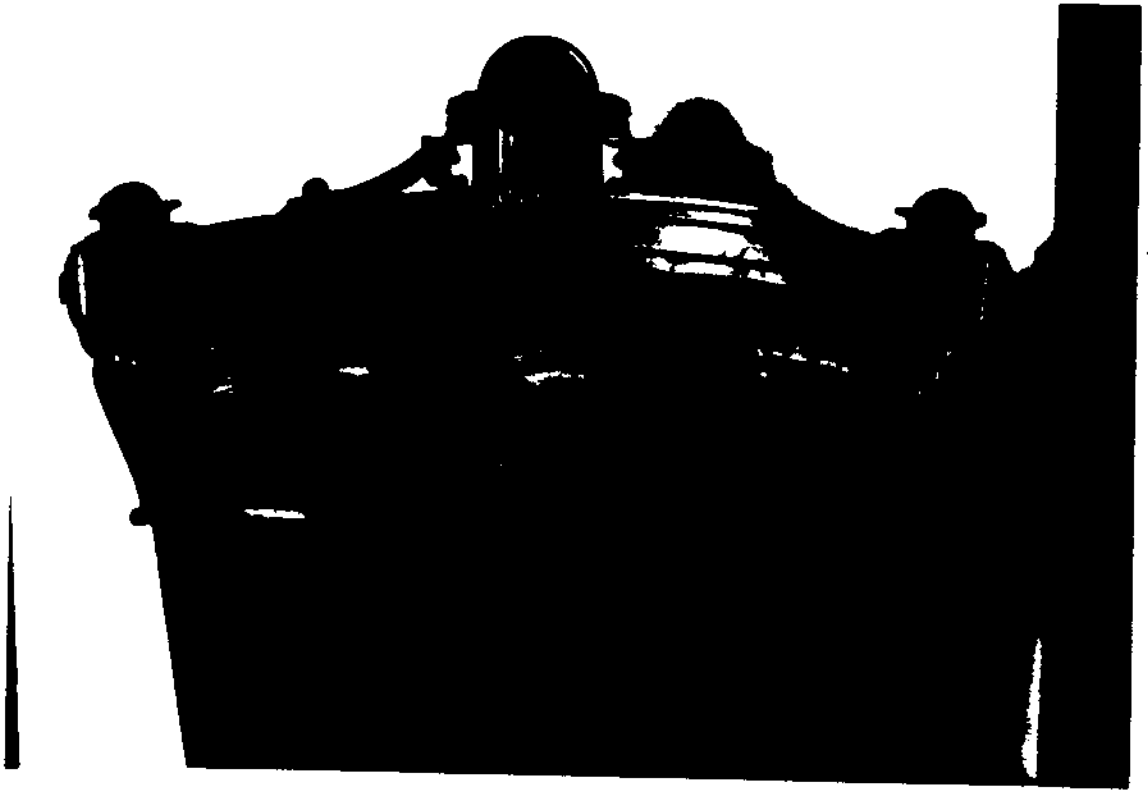


Figure 107. Parlor Side Chair, detail.

## Fulton Mansion: Parlor Armchair

## Figure 108

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1875.

Dimensions: Height--39", Width--27", Depth--23", Arm  
Height--25", Seat Height--17".

Material: Walnut, silk.

Condition: Under restoration.

Description: The buttoned, upholstered back is keystone-shaped and surrounded by an exposed, incised, wooden frame. Pierced and incised, the cartouche cresting is flanked by projecting ears with curved finials. Curved at the bottom of the back, the frame creates an open space above the cushion. Rolled arms are button-tufted on the top and the sides; wooden hand grips are curved and terminate in carved rosette motifs. Deeply upholstered with a shirred edge, the seat is attached to a curved apron. The short, ring-turned legs are fitted with wooden casters. This chair is part of a parlor suite which consists of a sofa, Figure 109; four side chairs, Figure 106; and an additional armchair.



Figure 108. Parlor Armchair.

## Fulton Mansion: Sofa

Figures 109 and 110

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1875.

Dimensions: Height--42", Width--64", Depth--26", Arm  
Height--24", Seat Height--18".

Material: Walnut, silk.

Condition: Under restoration.

Description: The central, chair back section with an exposed, wooden frame is flanked by low, rounded, upholstered ends. Incised and veneered, the frame features curved stile terminations with cap finials and a shield-shaped, pierced cartouche. Open at the lower back, the frame is curved, molded, and incised. The upholstery of the end sections is rolled over the back sides to create arms. Incised lines decorate the hand grips and the curved apron. Bulb shapes and ring turnings are used on the short, tapered legs. This piece--part of a seven-piece parlor suite--illustrates the eclecticism of the transitional phase between the late Renaissance Revival and Eastlake substyles.





Figure 109. Sofa.

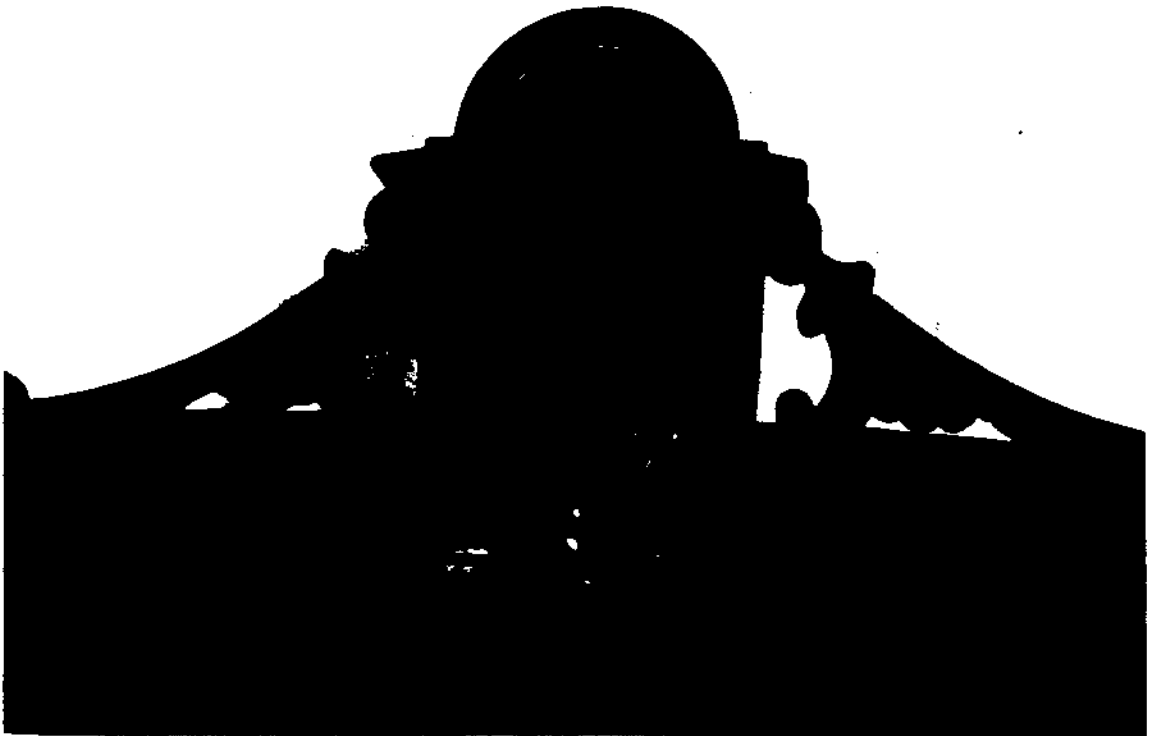


Figure 110. Sofa, detail.

## Fulton Mansion: Medallion-back Sofa

## Figure 111

Substyle: Transitional (Rococo Revival-Renaissance Revival).

Date: 1865-1875.

Dimensions: Height--35", Width--59", Depth--19", Arm  
Height--19", Seat Height--14".

Material: Walnut, brocade.

Condition: Under restoration.

Description: This basic medallion-back sofa has three identical Renaissance Revival-style crestings; each cresting features a shield-shaped cartouche between molded, pierced, and scrolled carvings. These machine-made carvings have flat surfaces of burl-veneer. The triple back has a centered, upholstered medallion which is framed by wide finger-molding and flanked by canted, arched wings. Short, padded arms with wooden hand grips are joined to low-rising supports. The serpentine apron is incised and continues the curve of the legs; the legs do not have feet or casters.

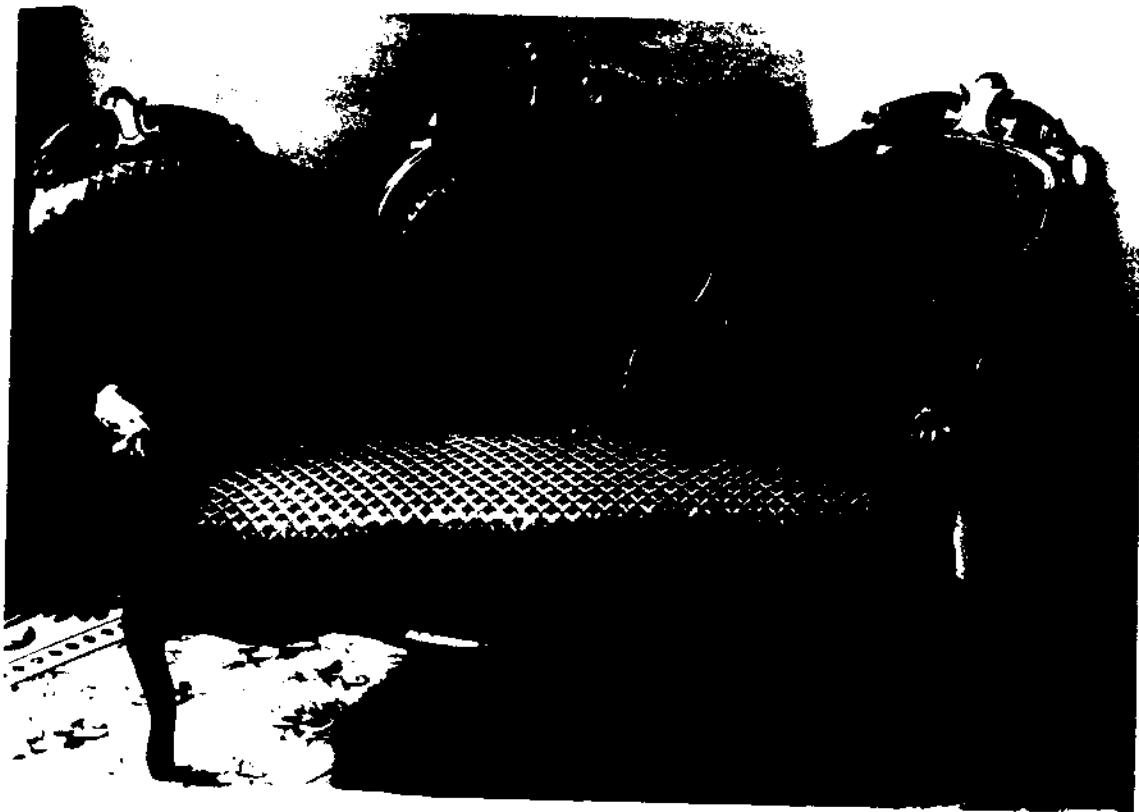


Figure 111. Medallion-back Sofa.

## Fulton Mansion: Oval Parlor Table

## Figure 112

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--28", Width--23", Depth--17".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The wooden top has a deep, molded apron and is supported by a base of closely grouped, curved legs. Curved projections join each leg to a baluster-turned finial. Scrolled feet are raised on small wooden casters.



Figure 112. Oval Parlor Table.

## Fulton Mansion: Round Parlor Table

## Figure 113

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--29", Diameter--35".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The round top with a molded edge is supported by a vase-shaped baluster and four ornately curved, flat-sided legs. The molded edges of the thick legs feature curved and pierced fin-like projections. A wooden caster is fitted into the flat, bottom edge of each leg.



Figure 113. Round Parlor Table.

## Fulton Mansion: Folding Card Table

## Figure 114

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--30", Diameter--33".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The half-round, deeply-molded top unfolds to form a complete circle. Scrolled brackets with knob projections attach the top to carved and turned pillars. A center support is formed by a thick, vase-shaped baluster and flat-sided posts. Four curved bracket feet are incised and carved with foliage ornaments.





Figure 114. Folding Card Table.

## Fulton Mansion: Library Table

## Figure 115

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--30", Width--48", Depth--24".

Material: Walnut, leather.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular surface has two inlaid squares of leather with gold-embossed borders; the projecting edges of the top are beveled and mitered. Two shallow drawers with burl-veneer panels are recessed in the side of the case. Inverted, arched panels are applied to the outside corners. The trestle legs, with scrolled brackets at the top and the bottom, rest upon molded bases. A thick rail with beveled edges provide support between the legs.

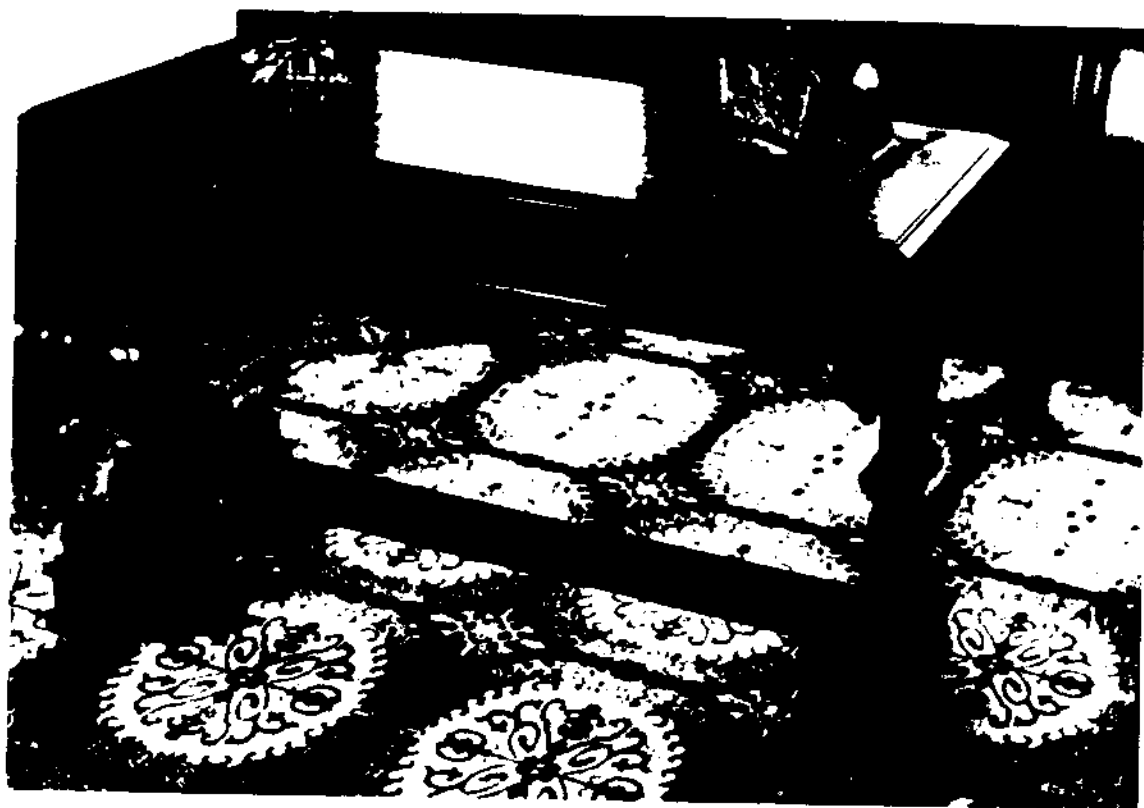


Figure 115. Library Table.

## Fulton Mansion: Inlaid Chess Table

Figures 116 and 117

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1885.

Dimensions: Height--27", Width--20", Depth--16".

Material: Twelve varieties of wood.

Condition: Good; some separations.

Description: Contrasting tones of varnished wood are inlaid in geometric patterns to create a chess board with a decorative border. A personalized dedication within the design--"From Will to Ella"--flanks either end of the game board. The simple, repetitive border is composed of squares, triangles, and chevron patterns. Constructed of figured walnut, the plain frame has square corner sections with pendant knobs. Octagonal and turned, the center pillar has a pendant finial and four scrolled, flat-sided legs. The piece is signed on the underside: "William Piles made by hand in 1885. Has 285 pieces in table and 12 different kinds of wood."

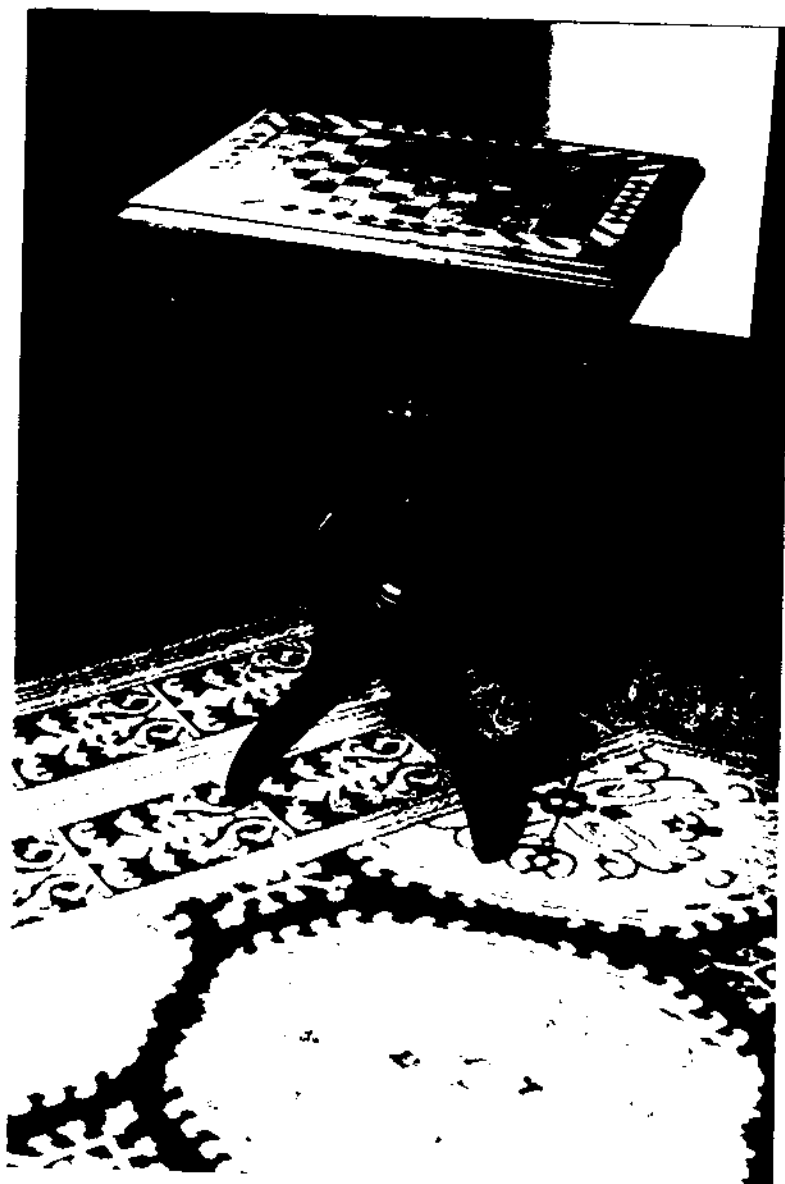


Figure 116. Inlaid Chess Table.

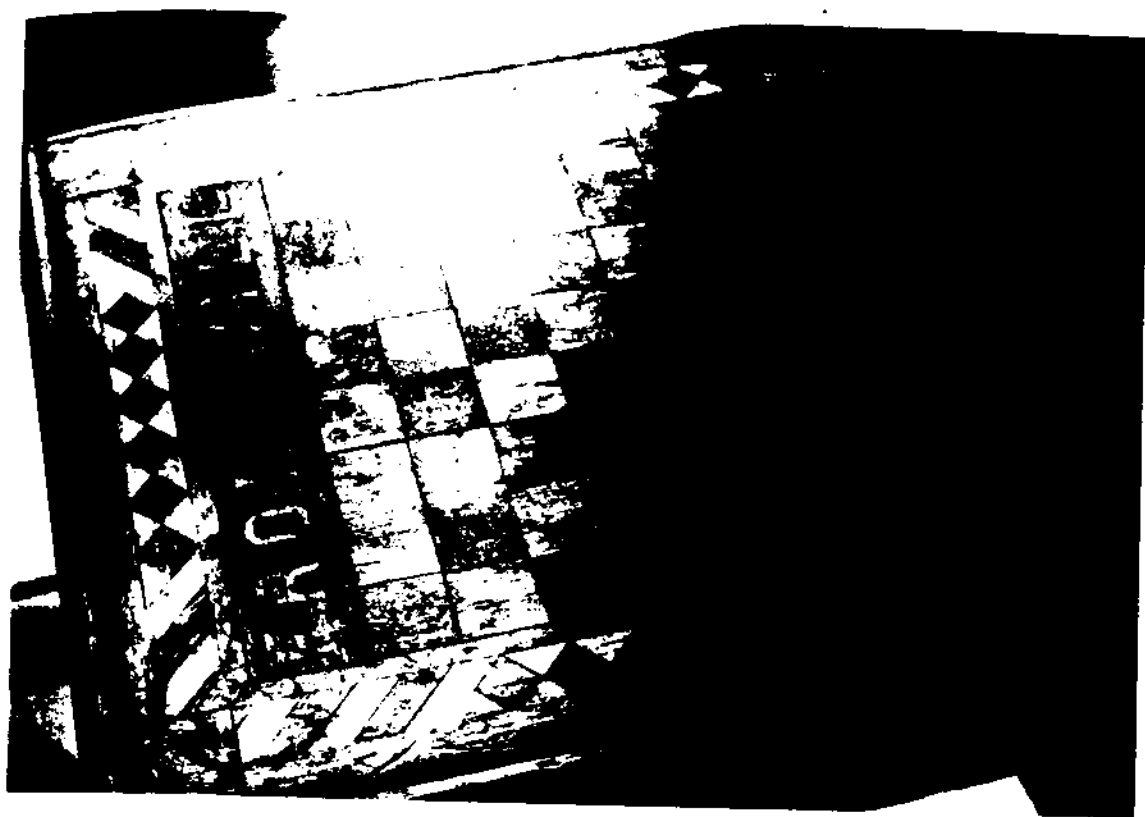


Figure 117. Inlaid Chess Table, detail.

## Fulton Mansion: Marble-top Parlor Table

## Figure 118

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1880.

Dimensions: Height--29", Width--28½", Depth--20".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: A rectangular, white, marble top overhangs the incised wooden apron; a pendant cresting with a geometrically notched edge is attached to each side. The pedestal base is composed of four straight, incised uprights which attach to rounded wings and bracket feet. All four legs are attached to a central, baluster-turned finial.



Figure 118. Marble-top Parlor Table.



## Fulton Mansion: Tripod Plant Stand

## Figure 119

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--30", Diameter--11".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The round wooden top has a concave and convex molded edge. Terminating in a pendant finial, the baluster-turned center pillar attaches to a tripod base. Small finials surmount the upper projections of the curved, flat-sided legs.

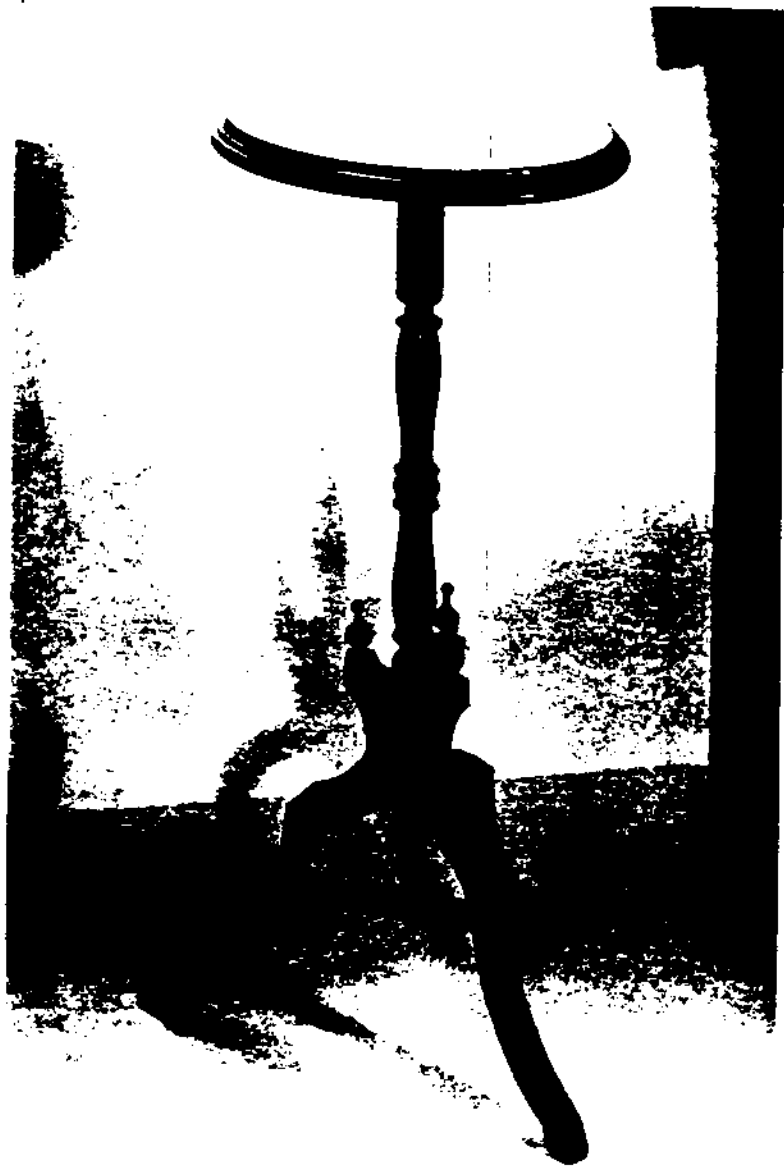


Figure 119. Tripod Plant Stand.

Fulton Mansion: Painted-top Occasional Table

Figures 120 and 121

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--31", Diameter--14".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The round top consists of four concentric circles which are alternately painted or varnished; the center roundel has a painted floral motif upon a black background while a circular band has a continuous, abstract vine and leaf pattern. The wood grain of the varnished areas adds additional surface interest. A baluster-turned pillar terminates in a pendant finial. Flat-sided legs with wing-like projections at the tops and on the knees create a footless, tripod base.

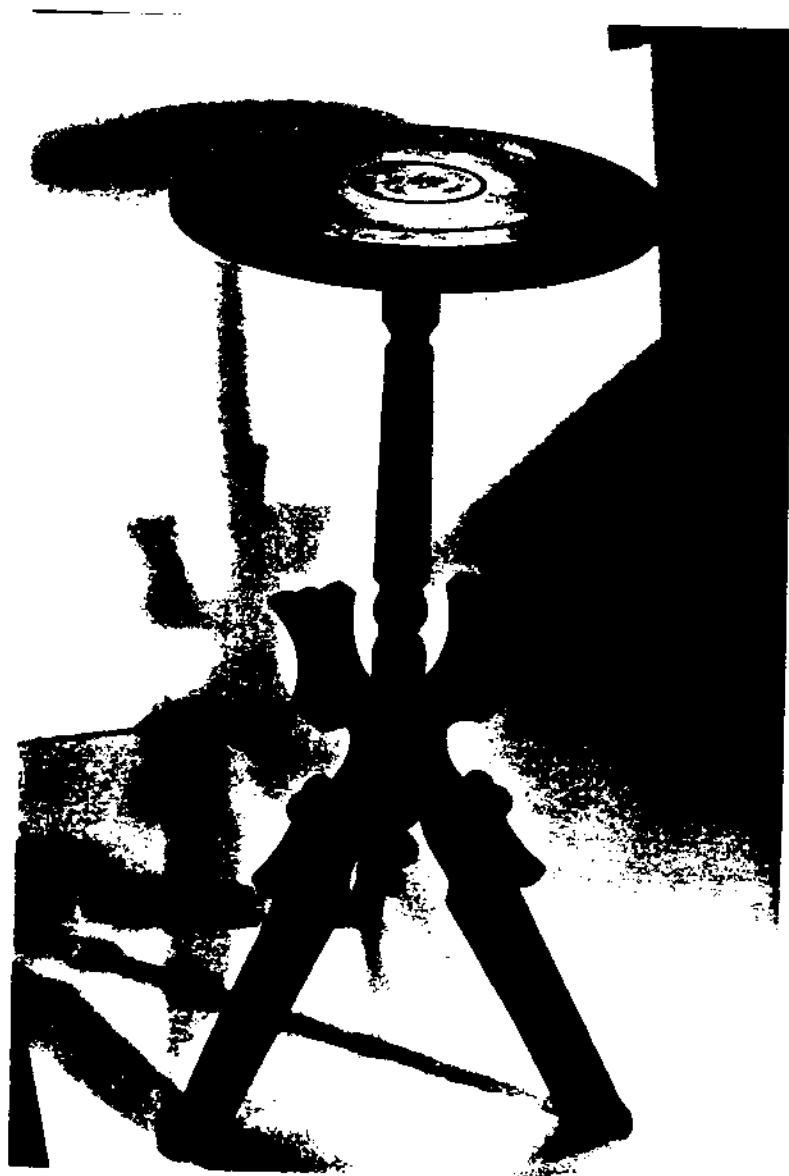


Figure 120. Painted-top Occasional Table.

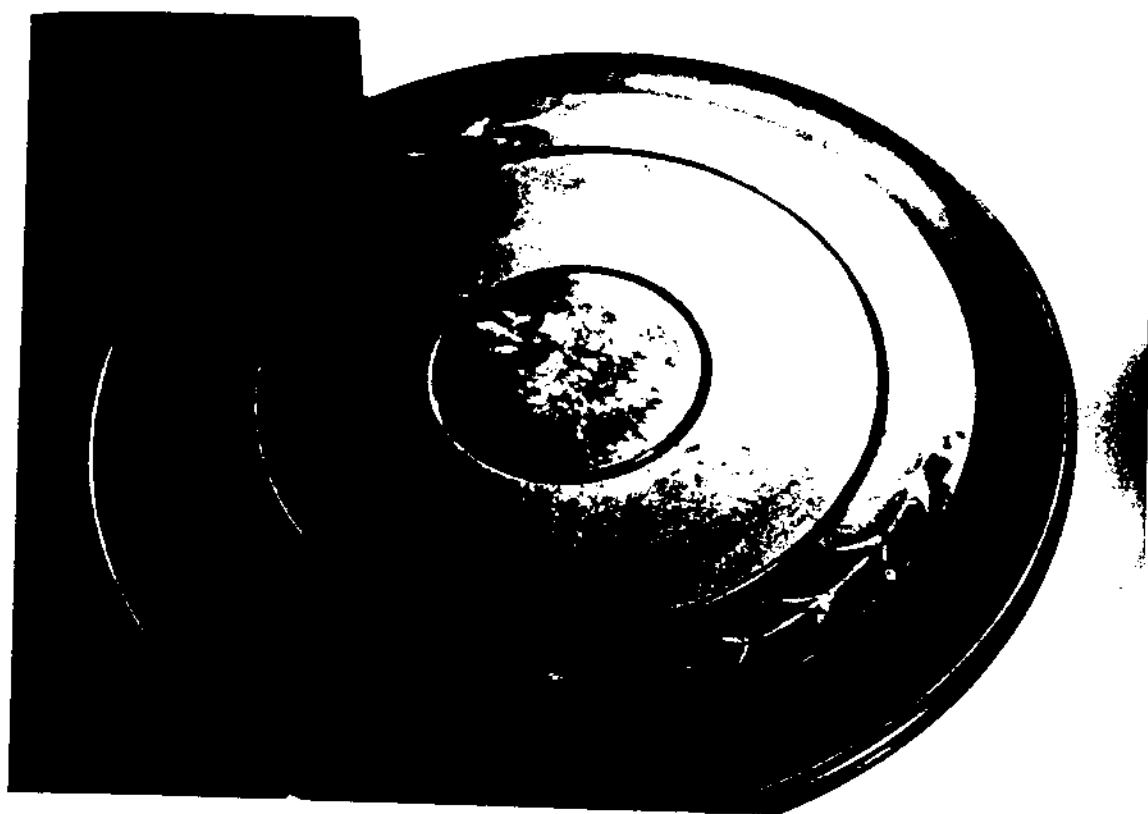


Figure 121. Painted-top Occasional Table, detail.

Fulton Mansion: Plant Stand with Macramé Skirt

## Figure 122

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1880.

Dimensions: Height--33", Diameter--13½".

Material: Walnut, ebonized hardwood, twine.

Condition: Good.

Description: The round top has a molded collar of ebonized wood. A baluster-turned center support terminates in a small round finial; the tripod base has flat-sided legs and block feet. The macramé skirt has four rows of intricately tied knots and a border of long fringe. Finely knotted ecru twine was used by Victorian women to create lambrequins for fireplace mantles and wall shelves; this plant stand is a rare example of macramé attached to a table. Although similarly decorated piano stools exist, the primary purpose of this type of work was to hide a straight edge.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Frances Lichten, Decorative Art of Victoria's Era (New York: Bonanza, 1950), p. 146.

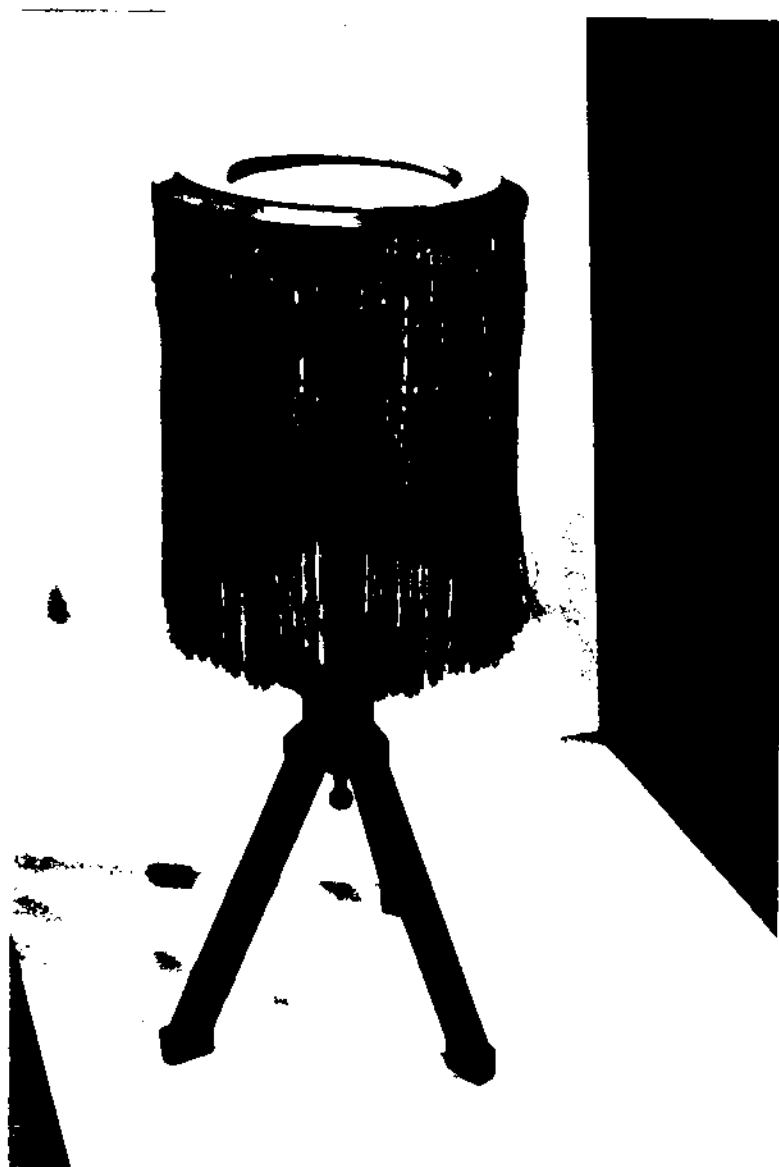


Figure 122. Plant Stand with Macramé Skirt.

## Fulton Mansion: Sewing Cabinet

## Figure 123

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--30", Width--34", Depth--20".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The overhanging top has an inset, fabric-covered panel; a wide, beveled border corresponds to the case which has concave-shaped ends. A centrally placed keyhole is flanked by beveled, applied panels and diamond-shaped decorations. Attached to the front apron is an incised pendant crest. Baluster-turned legs taper into rounded peg feet.



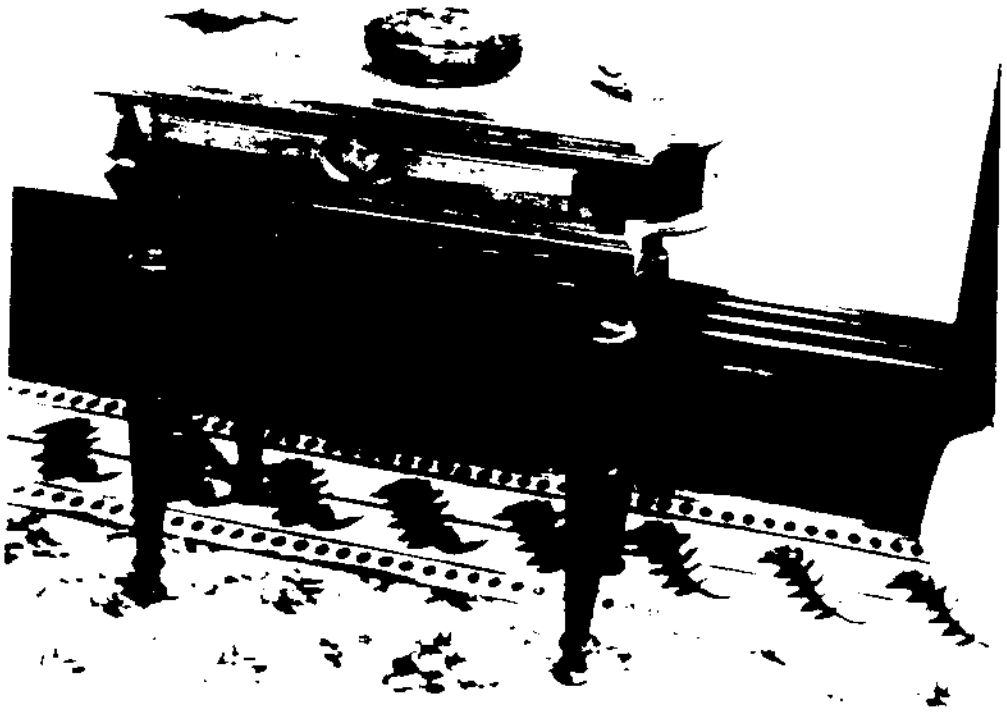


Figure 123. Sewing Cabinet.

## Fulton Mansion: Spool-turned Whatnot

## Figure 124

Substyle: Spool-turned.

Date: 1860-1880.

Dimensions: Height--60", Width--22", Depth--14".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: Three types of components were used to create corner whatnots of this type: (1) triangular shelves in graduated sizes, (2) baluster-turned spindles with finials, and (3) pierced and scrolled brackets. Each serpentine-curved shelf is recessed a few inches above the next and is supported by turned spindles. A finial is placed on the corner of the shelf immediately above each spindle. Low, pierced galleries are attached to the rear sections of each shelf except the bottom; the bottom shelf is raised on short, turned legs. The spool-turned whatnot shelf was one of the first items to be consistently factory-made and mass-produced; the design changed very little during a twenty-five year period.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Thomas Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture (New York: Bonanza, 1952), pp. 19, 287.

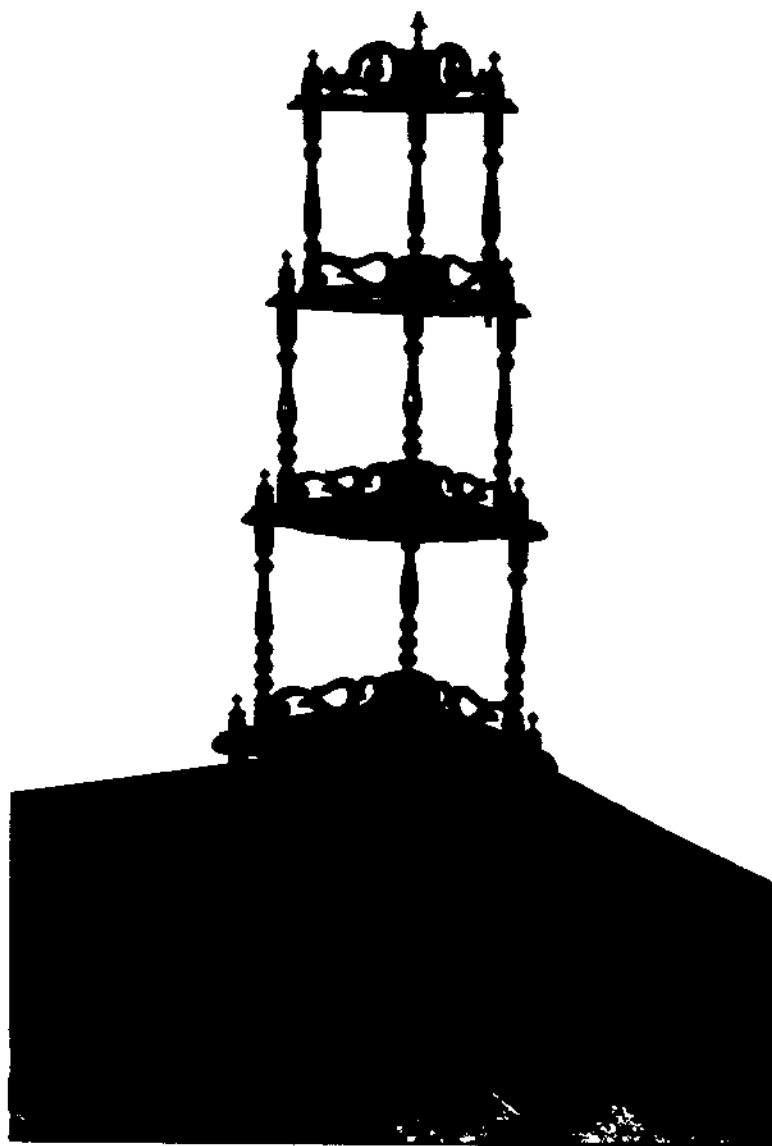


Figure 124. Spool-turned Whatnot.

## Fulton Mansion: Drop-front Desk

## Figure 125

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--57", Width--29", Depth--18".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: A canted, drop-front cabinet is mounted on a base with trestle legs. Applied to the hinged front is a rectangular panel with convex, rounded corners; the keyhole has a round, wooden escutcheon. The overhanging top of the base has chamfered corners and corresponds to the shape of the apron. One full-width drawer with carved fruit and foliage handles fits flush with the front apron. Four baluster-turned legs and scrolled brackets are combined to create the supporting trestle; a tapered, turned stretcher braces the legs.



Figure 125. Drop-front Desk.

## Fulton Mansion: Bookcase

Figures 126 and 127

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--96", Width--75", Depth--18".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Under restoration.

Description: Divided into three vertical sections, the center case is taller and has a projecting front. Crested with a central cartouche and arched-top corner finials, the center section features a glazed door with a curved and molded frame; the side doors have arched tops. The three drawers in the base are paneled with burl-veneer which has been cut into complex geometric shapes. Brass hardware with ring handles provide additional visual interest to the drawer fronts. The projecting base is plain with mitered molding. Photographed during restoration, some of the finials have not been replaced.



Figure 126. Bookcase.

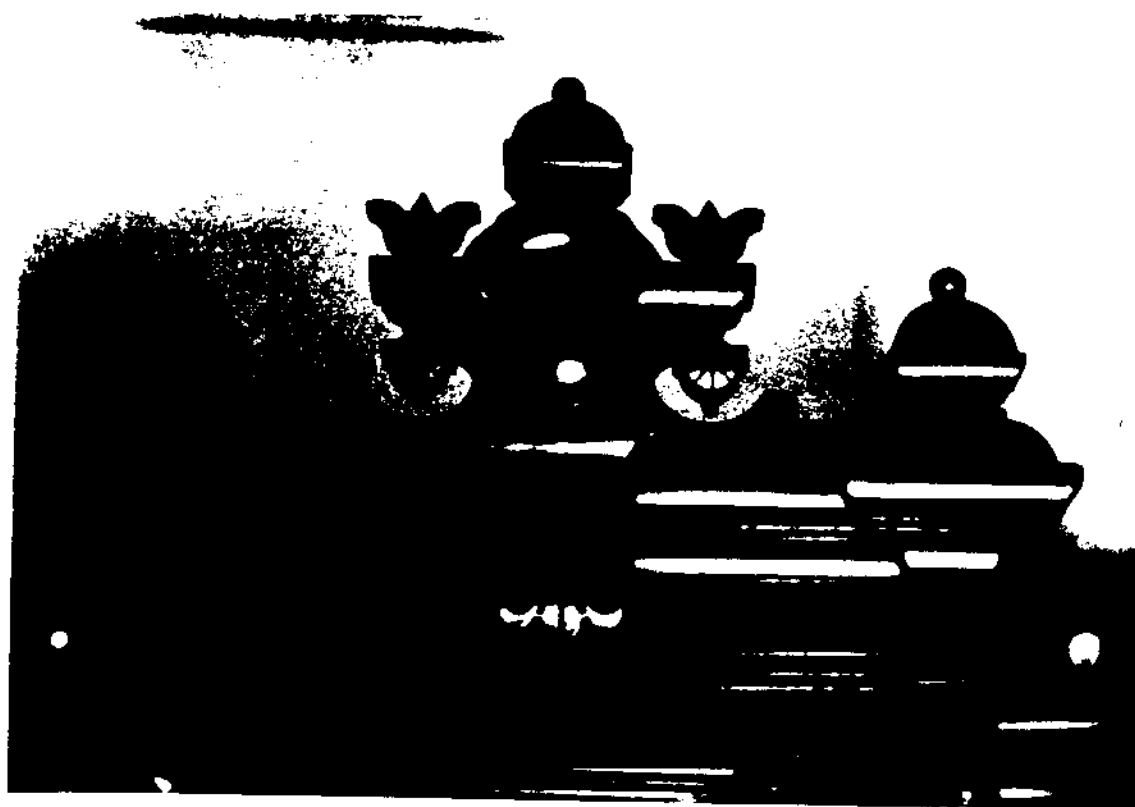


Figure 127. Bookcase, detail.



## Fulton Mansion: Dresser

Figures 128 and 129

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--96", Width--47", Depth--26".

Material: Walnut, glass, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The architecturally framed mirror is topped with a projecting pediment and cartouche. Flat and curved molding is used to create layers of ornament on a flat background with a geometric outline. Above the beveled mirror, an incised motif is applied beneath an arched frame. Dogtooth fretwork and incised pilasters flank the mirror above small, bracket-supported shelves. Topped with a white marble slab, the base contains three full-width drawers. The projecting top drawer has a molded border while the lower drawers have applied panels of burl veneer. The shaped, corner stiles create short, square feet. The companion pieces of this chamber suite are pictured in Figures 130 and 133.

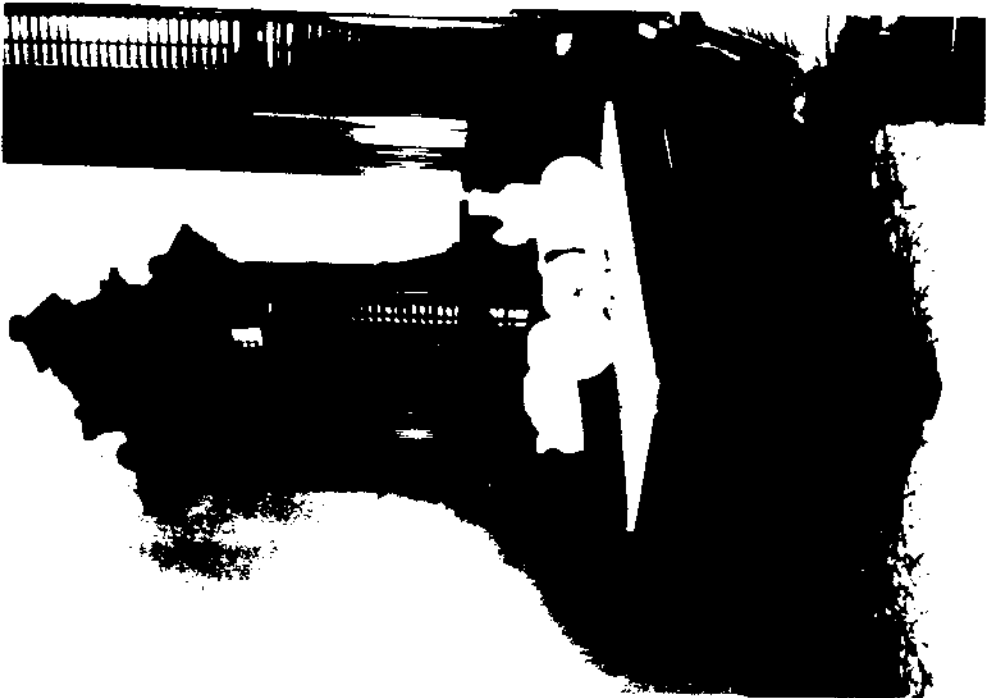


Figure 128. Dresser.

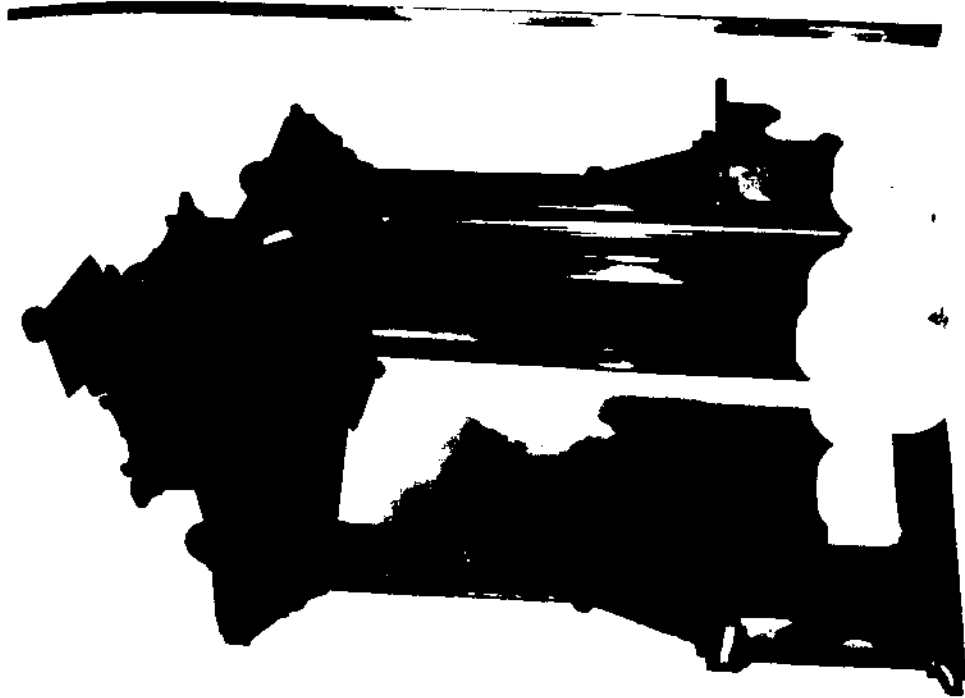


Figure 129. Dresser, detail.

## Fulton Mansion: Bed

Figures 130, 131, and 132

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Headboard Height--96", Footboard Height--31",  
Width--60".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The bold, architectural silhouette of the headboard is topped by a triangular pediment and a projecting cartouche. Two additional pediment shapes are divided by a broken arch, applied molding, and dogtooth fretwork. Flat and incised pilasters are centered with beveled ornaments and flank a burl-veneer, raised panel. Headboard stiles with abstract, scalloped, floral finials are embellished with small rectangular panels of veneer and incised brackets. Flat and curved molding caps the pediment of the footboard; rectangular and shaped panels of veneer are applied in a symmetrical arrangement. Incised lines are used sparingly. Side rails with bracket ends feature rectangular panels and applied roundels. Part of a three piece chamber suite, the matching pieces are shown in Figures 128 and 133.

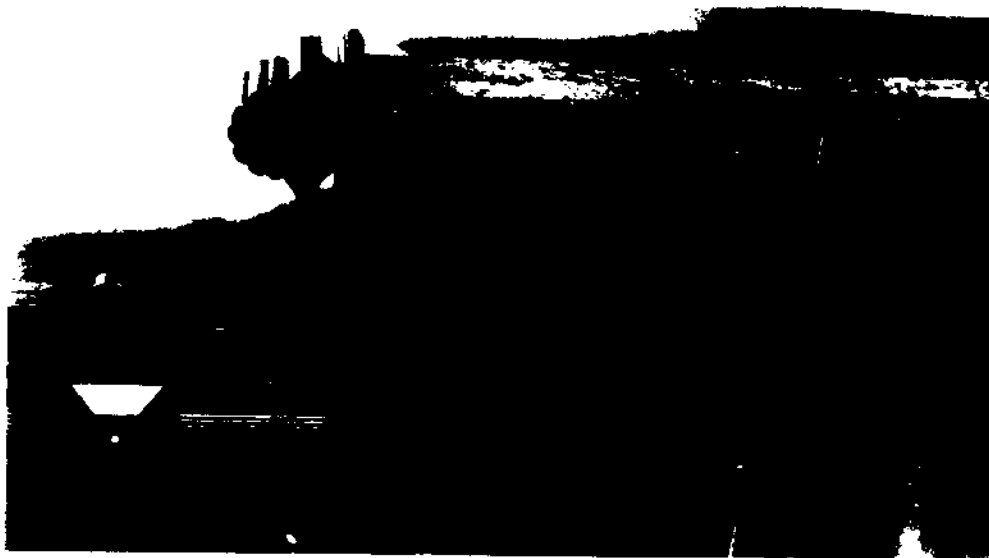


Figure 131. Bed, detail.



Figure 130. Bed.

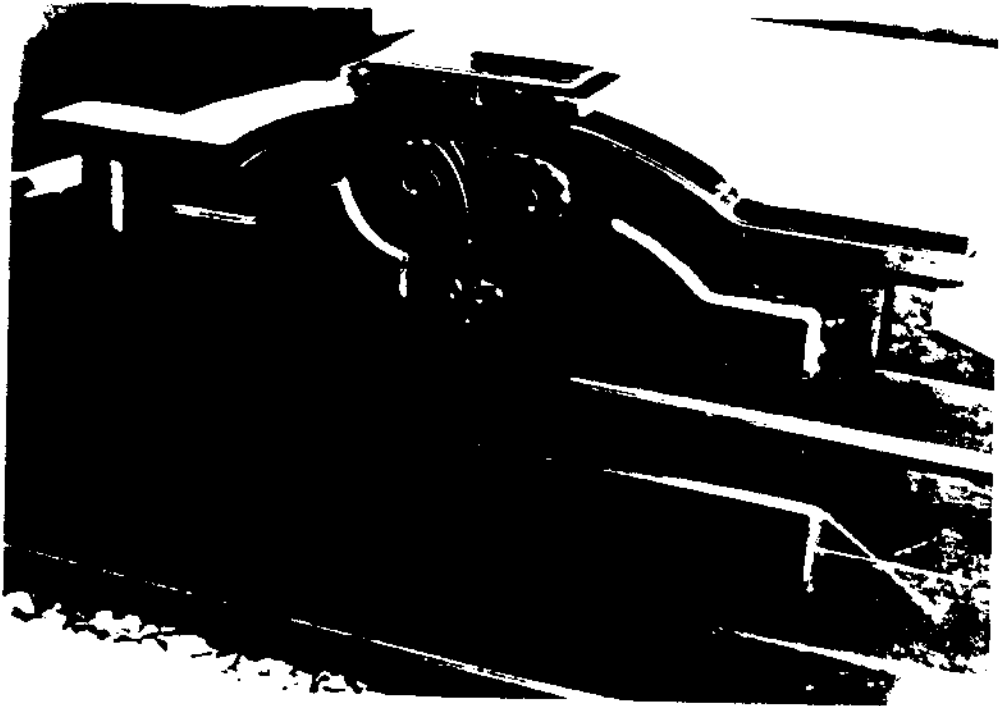


Figure 132. Bed, detail.

## Fulton Mansion: Enclosed Washstand

## Figure 133

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--38", Width--34", Depth--14".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The white marble top features an overhanging edge, a tall backsplash, and scrolled bracket ends. An enclosed base has one full-width drawer--paneled to simulate two small drawers--and two half-width doors. Sunken and applied panels decorate the doors. Shaped and incised, the corner stiles terminate in projecting, bracket feet; the lower rail has a central, saw-cut pendant. Part of a chamber suite, the matching pieces are shown in Figures 128 and 130. Since the bedrooms in Fulton Mansion have built-in, corner washstands with running water, this article of furniture may not have been considered necessary when the house was constructed.

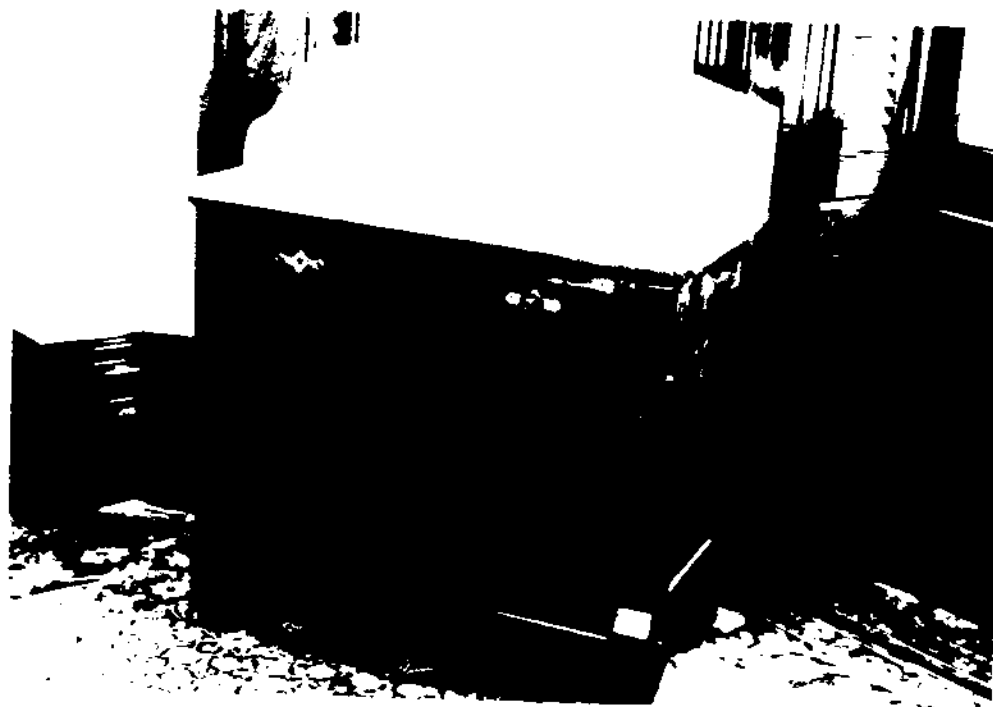


Figure 133. Enclosed Washstand.

Fulton Mansion: Armoire

Figures 134 and 135

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--104", Width--49", Depth--22".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The architectural top has an arched pediment with a molded edge and applied panels of burl-veneer. A central, projecting cartouche is topped with a molded edge and a shell motif. Bulbous finials surmount the rounded corners of an overhanging cornice. The completely veneered front has a wide door which is faced with a beveled mirror; the molded frame features convex upper corners with carved bell shapes. Slender, three-quarter round corner stiles are ring-turned. A projecting base with rounded corners contains one drawer with a molded border and pendant, pear-shaped knobs.





Figure 134. Armoire.



Figure 135. Armoire, detail.

## Fulton Mansion: Halltree

Figures 136 and 137

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--86", Width--41", Depth--14".

Material: Walnut, glass, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular, vertical mirror is topped by a pierced fret and cornice; this overhanging top section is supported by two slender, turned columns which rest upon the base. Wooden, beveled brackets and iron drip pans for umbrellas project on either side of a low, marble-topped base. The full-width glove drawer has a brass pendant handle; the deep apron is pierced and incised. Square legs terminate in square feet with molded edges while the attached bottom shelf is recessed.



Figure 136. Halltree.

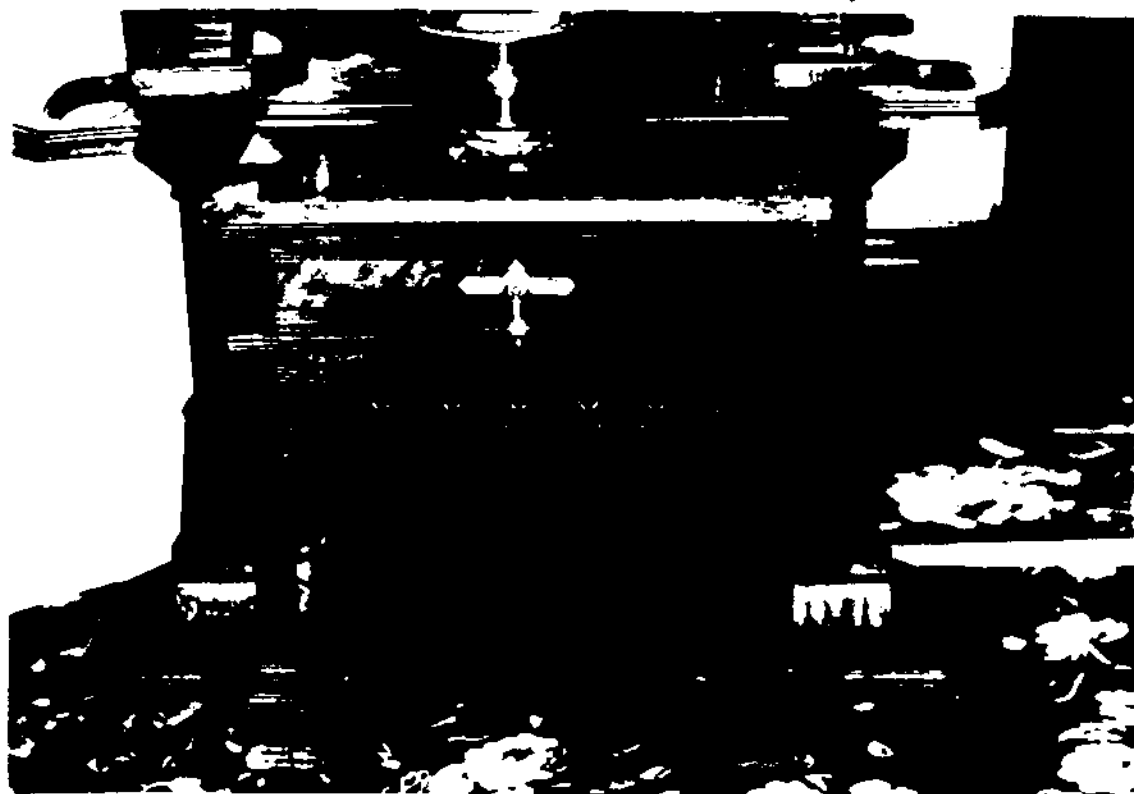


Figure 137. Halltree, detail.

## Fulton Mansion: Over-mantle Mirror

## Figure 138

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: Circa 1877.

Dimensions: Height--90", Width--48".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The curved, segmental pediment has a central cartouche with incised, half-circle shapes and a surmounting finial. Fan-shaped brackets are connected to each of the top corners. Arched at the top, the mirror is flanked by pilasters with raised panels of burl-veneer; gilt-filled, incised lines appear at the top and the bottom. Flat, saw-cut projections occur at intervals on the edges of the supporting frame. This mirror, and a companion piece, Figure 139, are original to the house.



Figure 138. Over-mantle Mirror.

## Fulton Mansion: Over-mantle Mirror

## Figure 139

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: Circa 1877.

Dimensions: Height--96", Width--56".

Material: Walnut, glass

Condition: Good.

Description: The architectural frame is surmounted by a broken pediment and a projecting cartouche with a triangular top. Keystone-shaped, the cartouche has incised and cut petal shapes, scrolls, and mitered molding. Flanking the center ornament are irregular-shaped panels of burl-veneer with gilt-filled, incised lines. Pilasters are topped with incised blocks and scrolled projections; attached brackets and raised panels embellish the narrow, vertical surfaces. Bordered by a molded frame, the beveled mirror features convex, curved upper corners and plain, square lower corners. Original to the house, the mirror has been restored and again occupies the space above the marbleized slate mantle of the formal parlor. A companion mirror is shown in Figure 138.





Figure 139. Over-mantle Mirror.

## Fulton Mansion: Pedestal

Figures 140 and 141

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1875.

Dimensions: Height--39", Width--20", Depth--14".

Material: Ebonized walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular top has beveled edges and an arched, pendant cresting. Scrolled brackets with fleur-di-lis projections connect to the top and to the pedestal. An articulated, elaborately turned pillar presents several distinctive shapes: vase, block, tapered column, and tulip. The molded, round base rises from an octagonal, wooden plinth with scrolled, bracket feet. Decorative, incised lines are gilt-filled. This piece matches a pair of chairs, Figure 98. Pedestals became popular in Victorian homes after the Civil War and were used to display reproductions of famous sculpture. Reminiscent of pieces designed in the 1880s by Herter and Marcotte of New York, a similar pedestal is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nineteenth-century America, Furniture and Other Decorative Arts (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1970), p. 213.

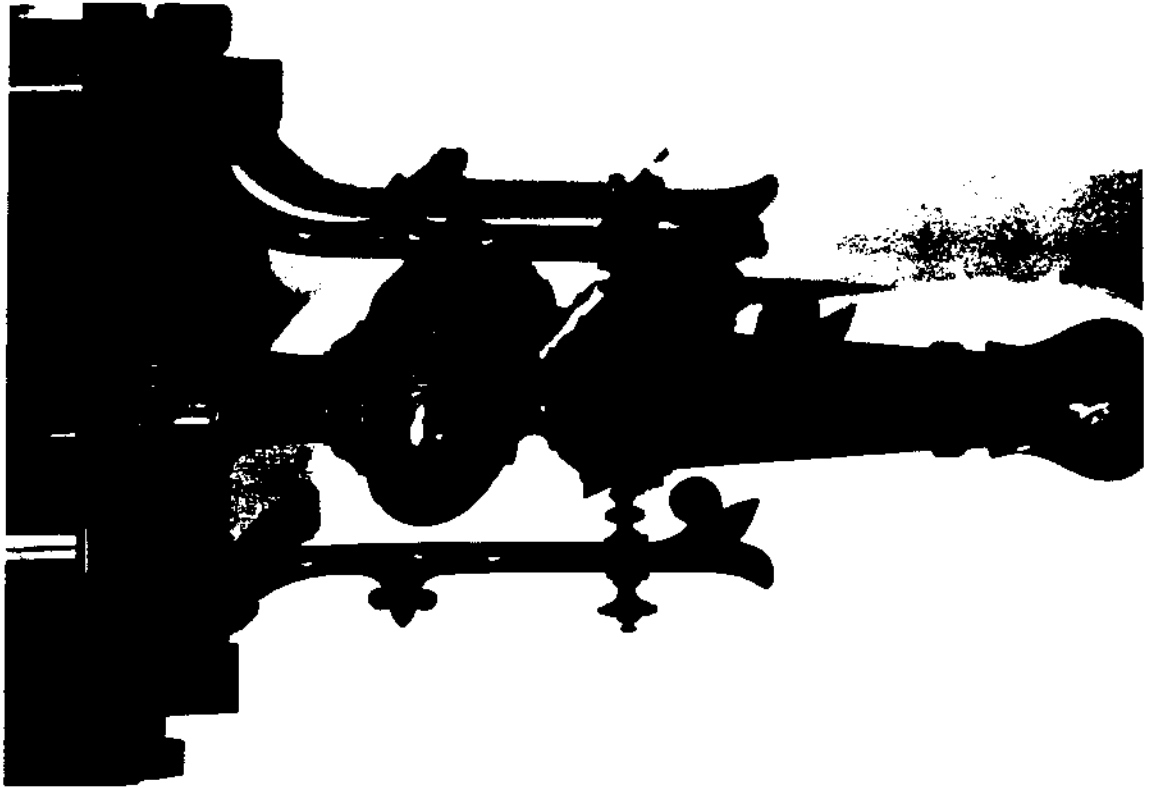


Figure 141. Pedestal, detail.

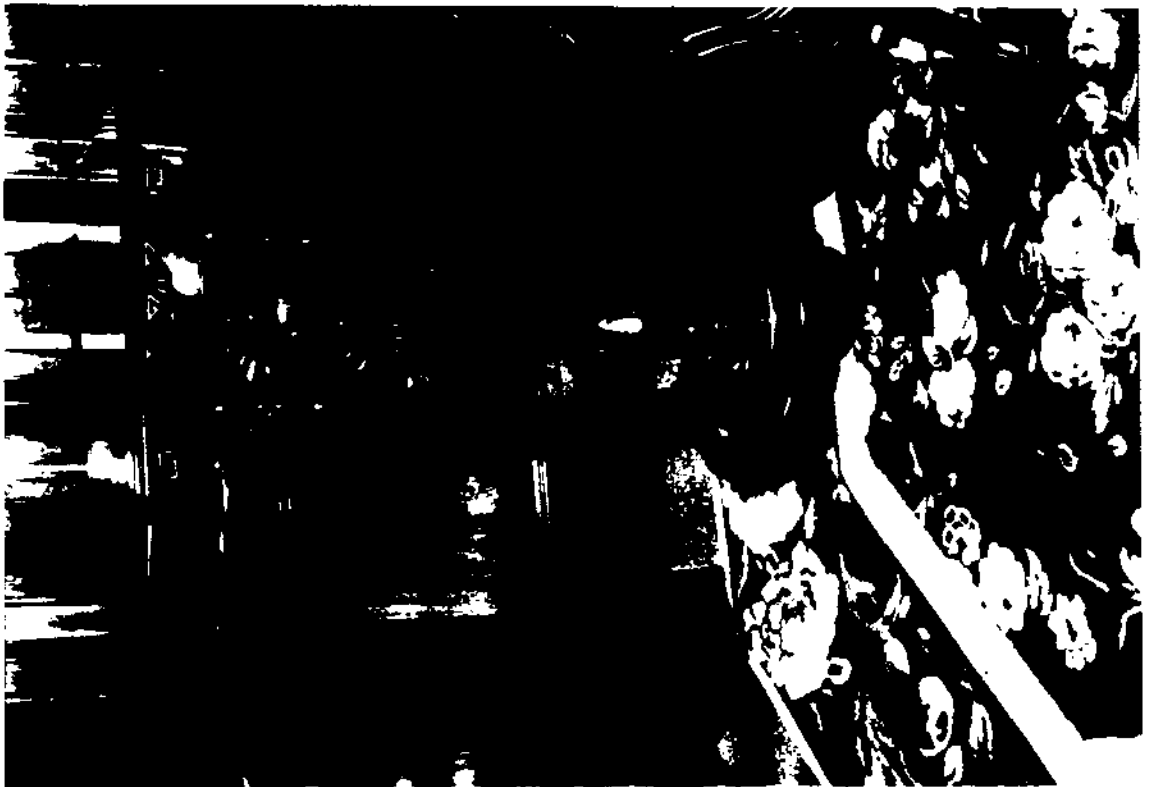


Figure 140. Pedestal.

## CHAPTER VI

### GEORGE HOUSE

#### History of the House

Built in Plano in 1900, the house was presented to Verner McPherson as a wedding gift from her husband David Colonel George. Originally standing at the corner of Division and Residence Streets, the house was moved in 1979 to Old City Park in Dallas. Designed in the Queen Anne style of architecture, houses of this type were popular in Texas during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Mass-produced plans for Queen Anne houses could be purchased through mail-order catalogues or copied from builder's manuals and magazines. Building materials were obtained locally; interior woodwork, doors, windows, brackets, and decorative gingerbread were available by mail-order from Montgomery Ward and Sears & Roebuck. Some of the millwork used in the George House may have been acquired from these sources; the wooden mantles were manufactured in Tell City, Indiana, and shipped to Texas by railway.

The floor plan and exterior elevations of the George House are characteristic of the Queen Anne style; irregular and asymmetrical, the houses of this style appear to have been designed from the inside out. The configuration of interior

spaces in the George House has created facades which are broken and punctuated by gables, a turret, and a broad, covered porch. The wrap-around porch provides cooling shade to two sides of the house; fan-shaped spandrels, constructed of jig-sawed pieces and turned spindles, serve as capitals for the porch columns. Similarly designed segments and scroll-edged trim are featured on the many gables. A second story turret has an octagonal, pointed roof and is pierced by three multi-paned stained glass windows; other windows in the house have one upper and one lower pane of clear glass. The exterior has been painted in a late Victorian color scheme of lilac, white, and deep red.

The ground floor contains five rooms which open onto a central hallway; the furnishings of each room reflect the family life of a middle-class Texas home of the late nineteenth century. Of the five upstairs rooms, the present curator has scheduled three to be furnished as bedrooms while the remaining two will serve as storage for rare textiles. The walls and ceilings of all rooms have been papered with designs appropriate to the turn of the century; while the carpets are antiques, the curtains are reproductions. The kitchen has been furnished with period pieces which include a cast iron stove and a wooden ice box. Originally the house had no indoor plumbing although it was wired for electricity. When the house was relocated to Old City Park, the outdoor

privy, storage shed, and underground storm cellar were also moved.

When David George, the proprietor of a small hardware store, built his home in 1900, the house reflected his prosperity and social status in the community. The George family retained ownership of the home until the death of Mack George in 1974; the town of Plano acquired the title to the property. Sold to the Dallas County Heritage Society in 1979, the house was cut into several sections and moved to its present location. After five years of restoration, the house was furnished and opened to the public in the Spring of 1984.



Figure 142. George House Exterior.

## Catalogue of Furniture

George House: Upholstered Armchair

Figure 143

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height-- $35\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width-- $24\frac{1}{2}$ ", Depth--21", Arm  
Height-- $23\frac{1}{2}$ ", Seat Height--16".

Material: Walnut, brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: The T-shaped upholstered back section is enclosed by grooved stiles and inserts of pierced carvings. Projecting from the top sides of both rear stiles are incised brackets. The flat, partially upholstered arms are attached to the canted back. The arms terminate in incised, wooden hand grips atop dog-leg curves which meet the seat rail. A slightly curved apron has a saw-cut decoration attached to the underside. The front legs are lathe-turned, baluster shapes with peg feet and white porcelain casters.





Figure 143. Upholstered Armchair.

## George House: Child's Adjustable-back Chair

## Figure 144

Substyle: Spool-turned.

Date: 1850-1880.

Dimensions: Height--31", Width--19", Depth--15", Arm

Height--18", Seat Height--10".

Material: Walnut, cotton.

Condition: Good.

Description: Constructed of flat-sided stiles, turned cross rails, and spindles, this small chair features an adjustable back. The flat, curved arms have three slots at the rear; a metal dowel fits into these grooves and supports the wooden back frame. The chair sides are enclosed with three upright spindles which connect the arms with ring-turned side rails. The front and the back legs are flat-sided and curved; the stretchers are simple dowels. Attached to the frame with fabric ties, the back and the seat cushions are made of cotton.



Figure 144. Child's Adjustable-Back Chair.

## George House: Simulated Bamboo Rocking Chair

## Figure 145

Substyle: Spool-turned.

Date: 1860-1880.

Dimensions: Height-- $32\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width--17", Depth--15", Arm  
Height--20", Seat Height--14".

Material: Walnut, cane.

Condition: Good.

Description: Constructed of turned stiles, rails, and  
spindles, the ring-turnings of this rocking chair simu-  
late bamboo. Five short spindles and four cross rails  
form the back. The rear stiles, arm rests, and arm  
supports are turned and tapered. While the front  
stretcher is ring-turned, the other stretchers are  
simple dowels. Square, tapered rockers are attached  
to four turned legs. A cane seat is set into the  
rounded frame. Almost identical to the ebonized chair  
at East Terrace, Figure 16, this rocking chair has the  
original woven cane seat.



Figure 145. Simulated Bamboo Rocking Chair.

## George House: Platform Rocking Chair

## Figure 146

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height--39", Width--24", Depth--21", Arm  
Height--20", Seat Height--15".

Material: Ebonized walnut, silk brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: The upholstered back is rolled over the top of the frame. The rear stiles are straight and incised, terminating in rounded projections. Low, padded arms are attached to the back with small, scrolled brackets; the arms are supported by short, turned sections. The chair frame is constructed on curved, saw-cut rockers which are connected to the base with steel springs. Raised on angled, square feet, the sides of the platform are pierced with scroll decorations. The ebonized finish, typical of the period, shows signs of wear; the right arm has been repaired with a steel bracket. Similar chairs were illustrated by Colie and Son of Buffalo, New York, in an 1884 catalogue of patent furniture.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eileen and Richard Dubrow, Furniture Made in America, 1875-1905 (Exton, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing Company, 1982), p. 245.



Figure 146. Platform Rocking Chair.

## George House: Demi-arm Straight-back Chair

Figures 147 and 148

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--21", Depth--19", Seat  
Height--16".

Material: Ebonized walnut, silk brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: The square, upholstered back is bordered with an incised wooden frame; a cresting with a square framing creates three open sections with incised flowers and dogtooth edges. Small brackets project from the top sides of the stiles. Demi-arm brackets attach the canted back to the front legs and seat frame. Incised lines decorate the apron while ring turnings add interest to the tapered legs; the rear legs are square. A companion to the platform rocking chair, Figure 146, the two chairs have similar decorations.



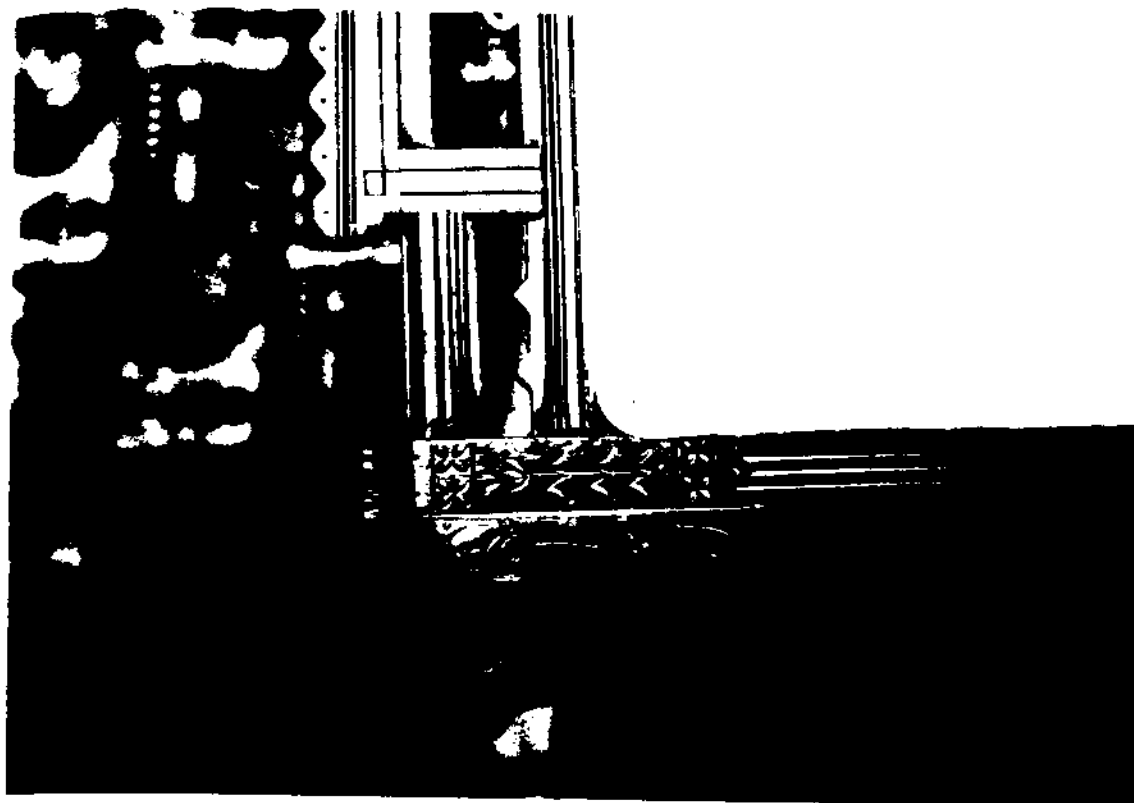


Figure 148. Demi-arm Straight-back Chair, detail.



Figure 147. Demi-arm Straight-back Chair.

## George House: Side Chair

## Figure 149

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--19", Depth--19", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut, brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: The square, upholstered back is surrounded by an incised, wooden frame and surmounted by a pediment shape. A carved, floral motif flanked by pierced carving occupies the center of the pediment. Square, incised ornaments project from either end and the top of the rail. Demi-arm brackets connect the canted back with the seat frame. The front legs are ring-turned and tapered with peg feet and wooden casters. The rear legs are square and canted. This set of eight dining room chairs matches the parlor suite, Figures 152 and 155.



Figure 149. Side Chair.

## George House: Parlor Armchair

## Figure 150

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height-- $39\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width-- $23\frac{1}{2}$ ", Depth--23", Arm  
Height--23", Seat Height--16".

Material: Walnut, brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: The square, upholstered back is set into an incised wooden frame and topped with a carved and pierced pediment; the decoration of the pediment consists of a central flower and leaves with squared-off, projecting pieces at either end, and seven dogtooth elements along the top rail. Flared, upholstered arms terminate in flat, wooden members which join the seat frame. The incised seat rail connects to the upper square blocks of the ring-turned legs. Wooden casters are inserted into the peg feet.



Figure 150. Parlor Armchair.

## George House: Asymmetrical-back Settee

## Figure 151

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height--32", Width--34", Depth--21½", Arm  
Height--23", Seat Height--15".

Material: Walnut, brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: Two rows of machine-carved fretwork decorate the rectangular, upholstered back section. The rear stiles and cross rails are incised. Attached to the right side of the back is a small plaque with a carved, floral motif. The one arm has a padded upholstered section while the front wooden member is incised and curved to meet the seat rail. All four legs are squared and tapered with block sections at either end. Casters are inserted into small, square feet.

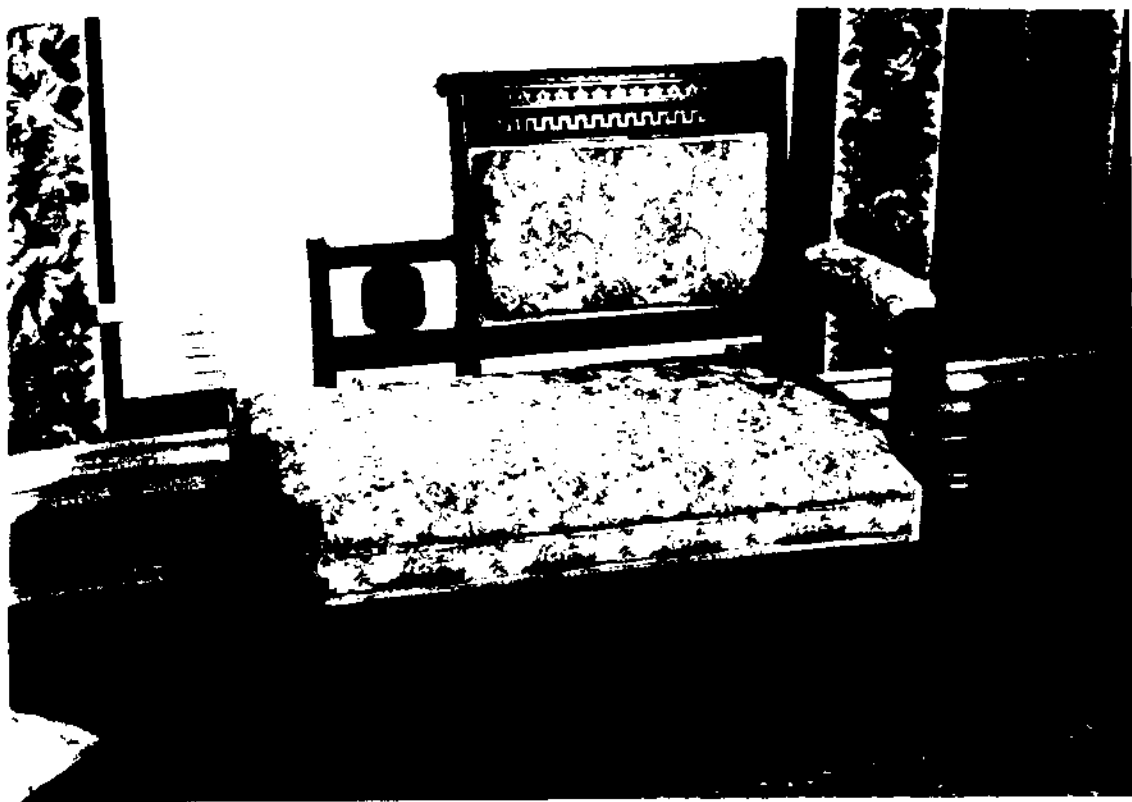


Figure 151. Asymmetrical-back Settee.

## George House: Triple-back Sofa

## Figure 152

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height--40", Width--57", Depth--22", Arm

Height--23½", Seat Height--16".

Material: Walnut, brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: Two square, upholstered chair backs with pedimental crestings are joined by an upholstered section with a rolled backrest. Ornaments on the cresting consist of a central flower flanked by leaves and squared end projections. Flared, upholstered arms have flat-sided supports which connect to the seat frame. The upholstered seat and back are separated by the flat, incised wooden frame and an open space. Incised lines decorate the otherwise plain seat rail. The front legs feature square blocks above turned and ringed sections which terminate in peg feet and casters. Rear legs are square and canted.





Figure 152. Triple-back Sofa.

## George House: Round Parlor Table

## Figure 153

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height--29", Diameter--28½".

Material: Black walnut, glass, iron.

Condition: Top scorched.

Description: The round wooden top has a molded edge. The four canted legs are ring-turned and reeded; they terminate in metal and glass claw-and-ball feet. A butterfly-shaped shelf provides bracing between the legs. Large numbers of tables such as this were manufactured in Mid-west factories and sold through mail-order catalogues. A 1902 trade catalogue of the Stickley-Brandt Company illustrates forty variations of this type of table.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Dubrow, p. 77.



Figure 153. Round Parlor Table.

## George House: Library Table

Figures 154 and 155

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height-- $30\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width--47", Depth-- $45\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: Also called an occasional table, this library table is of the trestle type; the legs form two end units which are braced by a decorative stretcher. The rectangular top has chamfered corners and a beveled edge. The top surface--perhaps originally leather--is covered by a piece of fabric and topped with beveled glass. The deep apron conceals one full-width drawer. Rectangular sections of burl veneer are applied to the apron and incised motifs decorate the flattened corners. The legs are formed by upright pieces and brackets which are joined by a doughnut-shaped horizontal member. Scrolled bracket feet are incised with geometric lines and terminate in porcelain casters. Joining the legs is a saw-cut stretcher with a pierced and molded central cartouche. The Tyler Desk Company of St. Louis, Missouri, produced desks of this type.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Dubrow, p. 63.



Figure 161. Library Table.

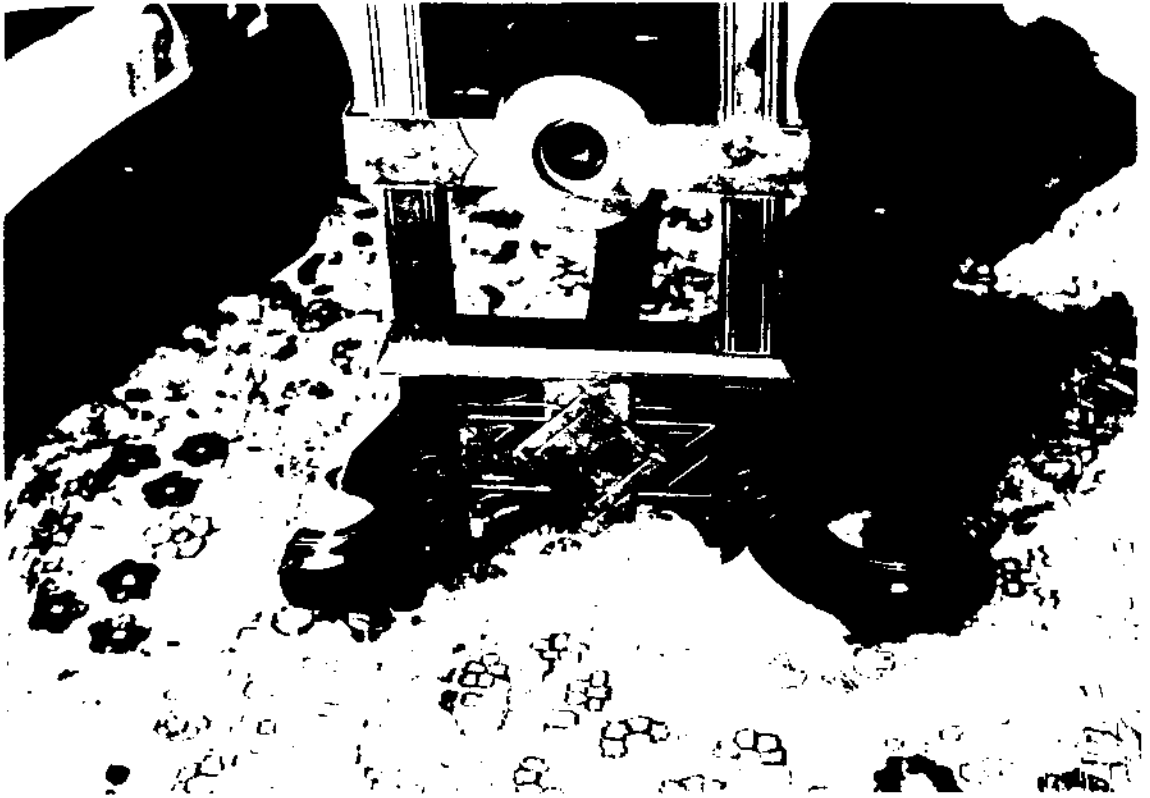


Figure 155. Library Table, detail.

## George House: Lamp Table

## Figure 156

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1895.

Dimensions: Height--30", Width--20½", Depth--13½".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The white marble top has a beveled edge and chamfered corners. The corresponding wooden frame is incised with cut ornaments attached to the edges at either end. Constructed of flat-sided boards, the legs angle outward at mid-point and then curve inward to terminate in square feet. Projections on the inner edges of each leg connect to a central finial.



Figure 156. Lamp Table.



## George House: Pedestal

## Figure 157

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height-- $25\frac{1}{4}$ ", Diameter--13".

Material: Black walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: A substantial lathe-turned pillar is ringed and has a vase shape at its center. The round wooden top has a grooved edge. High and low concentric grooves on the thick base impart a sculptural quality. Four bracketed feet are decorated with split, wooden buttons.



Figure 157. Pedestal.

## George House: Pedestal

## Figure 158

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1900.

Dimensions: Height--27", Diameter--13½".

Material: Oak.

Condition: Good.

Description: The thick baluster is ring-turned and reeded.

A scalloped-edge top is constructed of one piece of oak while the round base is made of several layers of wood. The base is raised on four simple block feet. This pedestal and the one shown in Figure 157 were probably used to display Boston ferns, popular house plants of the Victorian era.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Kathryn McNerney, Victorian Furniture (Paducah, Kentucky: Collector Books, 1981), pp. 203-206.

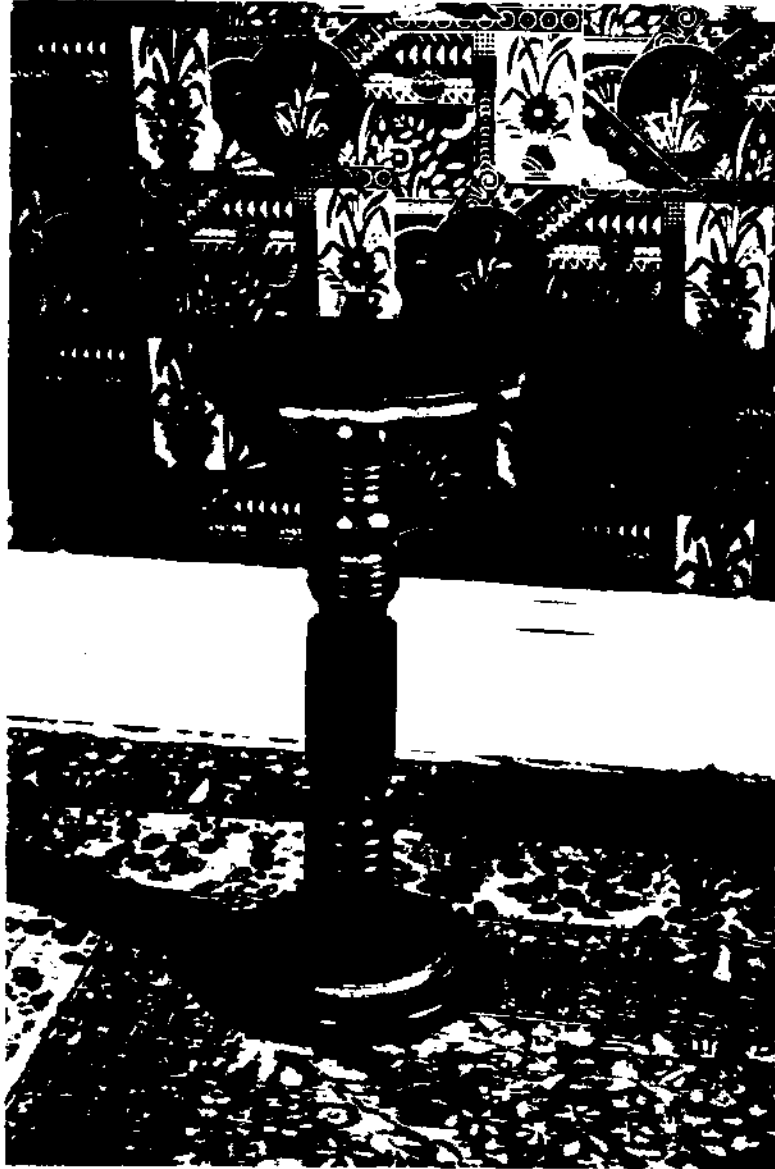


Figure 158. Pedestal.

## George House: Dining Table

Figures 159 and 160

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1893.

Dimensions: Height-- $30\frac{1}{2}$ ", Top--45" x 47".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The square top with rounded corners overhangs a carved apron; horizontal carved sections feature center rosettes with scrolled acanthus leaves. Rounded corner carvings have stylized four-petaled flowers. The top rests upon six large ring-turned segments which are raised by inward-curving rails. Four downward-curving shapes terminate in square, molded legs which are raised by casters; these legs are incised and have applied ornaments. The two center legs are joined by a ring-turned stretcher with a round, central platform and a round, pendant finial. This eclectic, Eastlake-influenced table is believed to have been purchased at Rick's Furniture Store in Dallas in 1893.

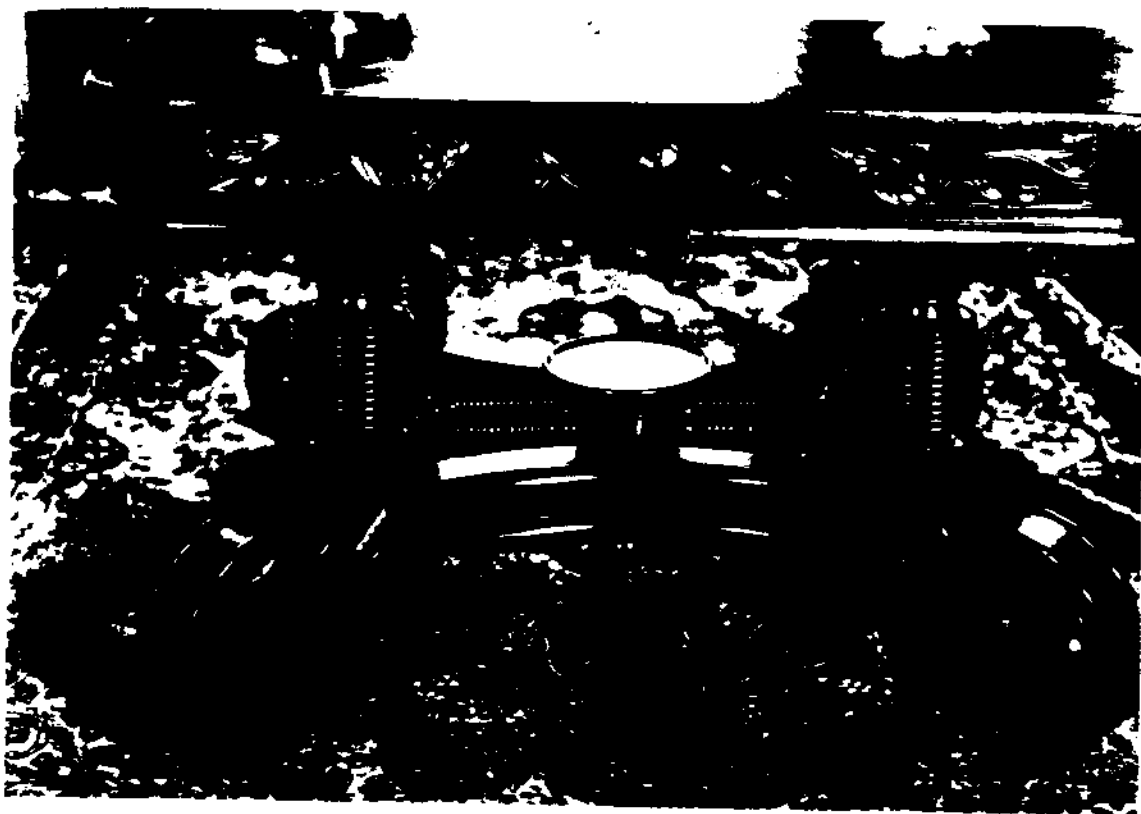


Figure 159. Dining Table.



Figure 160. Dining Table, detail.

George House: Etagère

Figures 161 and 162

Substyle: Eastlake (Oriental Influence).

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--77½", Width--43", Depth--15".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: Three vertical, rectangular mirrors are framed by flat members with molded edges to form the back of this piece. The central sections feature a storage area topped by two slender stiles which support a top shelf; a carved gallery features a series of arches and fleur-di-lis motifs. Semi-circular shelves, decorated with curved fretwork, attach to the back and to the stiles. Front corner stiles support two side shelves with pierced, decorative enclosures. The focal point of the piece--a carved, wooden door--features a bird and foliage above a sawtooth fret. The rectangular projecting base is raised on curved, oriental-inspired legs. An apron of open latticework is attached to the legs and base.

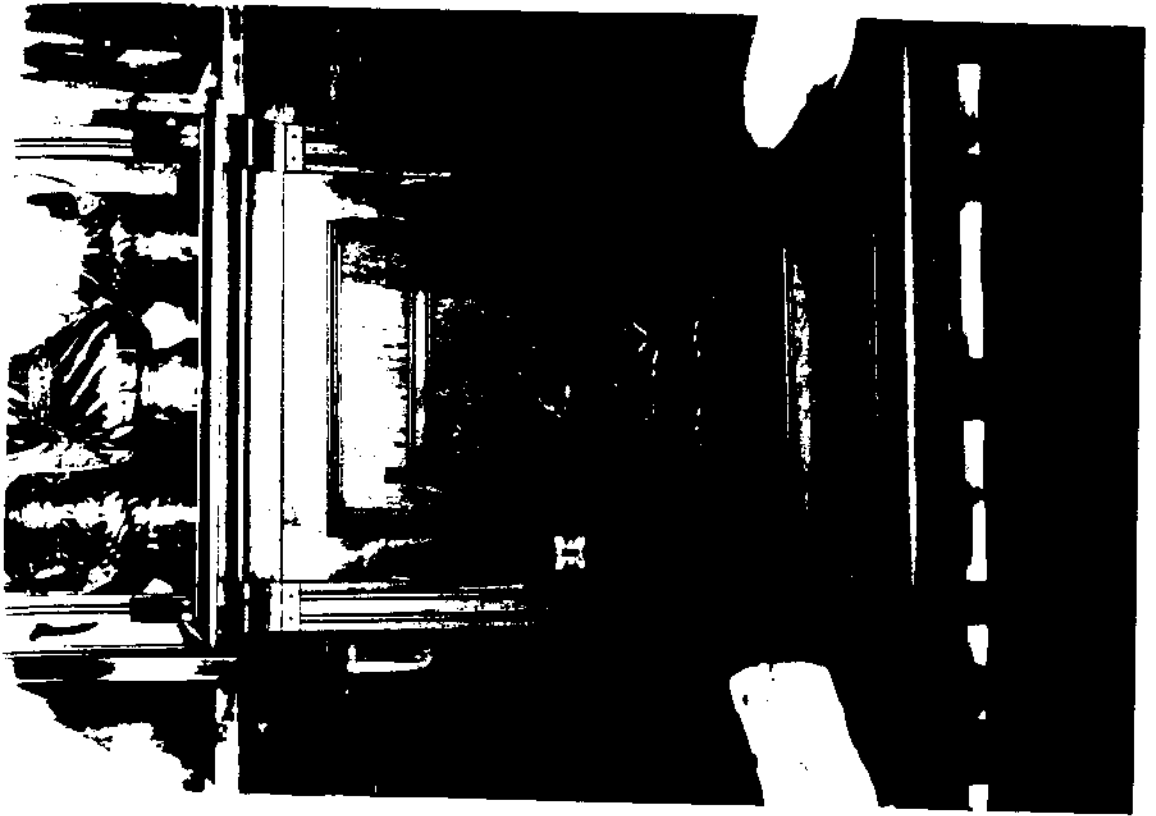


Figure 162. Etagère, detail.

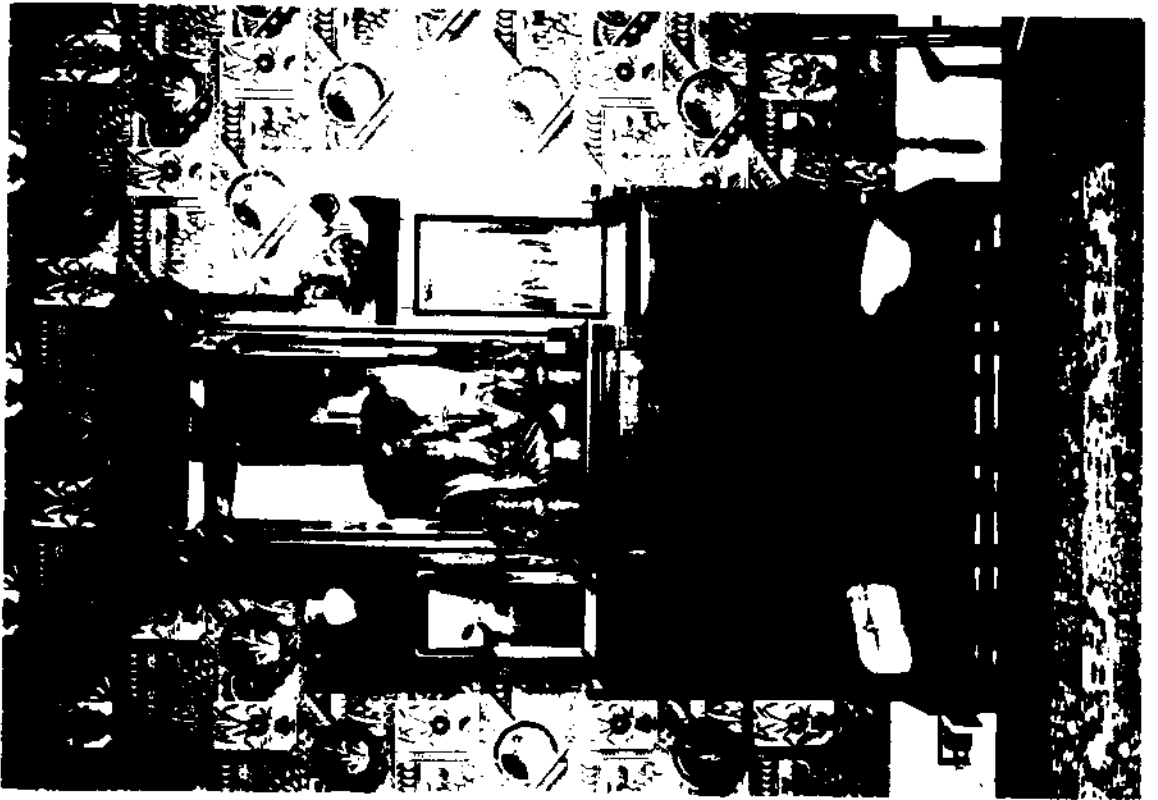


Figure 161. Etagère.



George House: Etagère

## Figure 163

Substyle: Victorian Medley.

Date: 1880-1890.

Dimensions: Height--57", Width--36½", Depth--11".

Material: Oak, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The delicate appearance of this large etagère is imparted by the use of slender, tapered stiles and curvilinear fretwork. Four tapered stiles are reeded vertically and turned at the tops and the bottoms. The top shelf is pegged to the stiles and topped at the front corners with ball finials. The top has a pierced, jig-sawed gallery with a central palmetto motif. Five round, beveled mirrors are incorporated in a pierced, center panel. On either side, two square, beveled mirrors reflect pierced and carved brackets which are attached to the front edges of the shelves. Two full-width shelves, and three shorter shelves with curved ends, are connected by two tapered columns and an arched, pierced apron. Each of these shelves has a low, spindled gallery at the back edge.



Figure 163. Etagère.

## George House: Child's Drop-front Desk

## Figure 164

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1880-1890.

Dimensions: Height--36", Width--22", Depth--12".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The upper desk area is attached to a base with flat board sides. The top gallery has a central fan shape made of balls and spindles with walnut cross rails which are turned to simulate bamboo. Molding repeats the simulated bamboo on all edges except the lower front sides. The interior is divided into three compartments--some partitions are missing. The three-legged, needlepoint-covered child's stool is typical of the early nineteenth century.

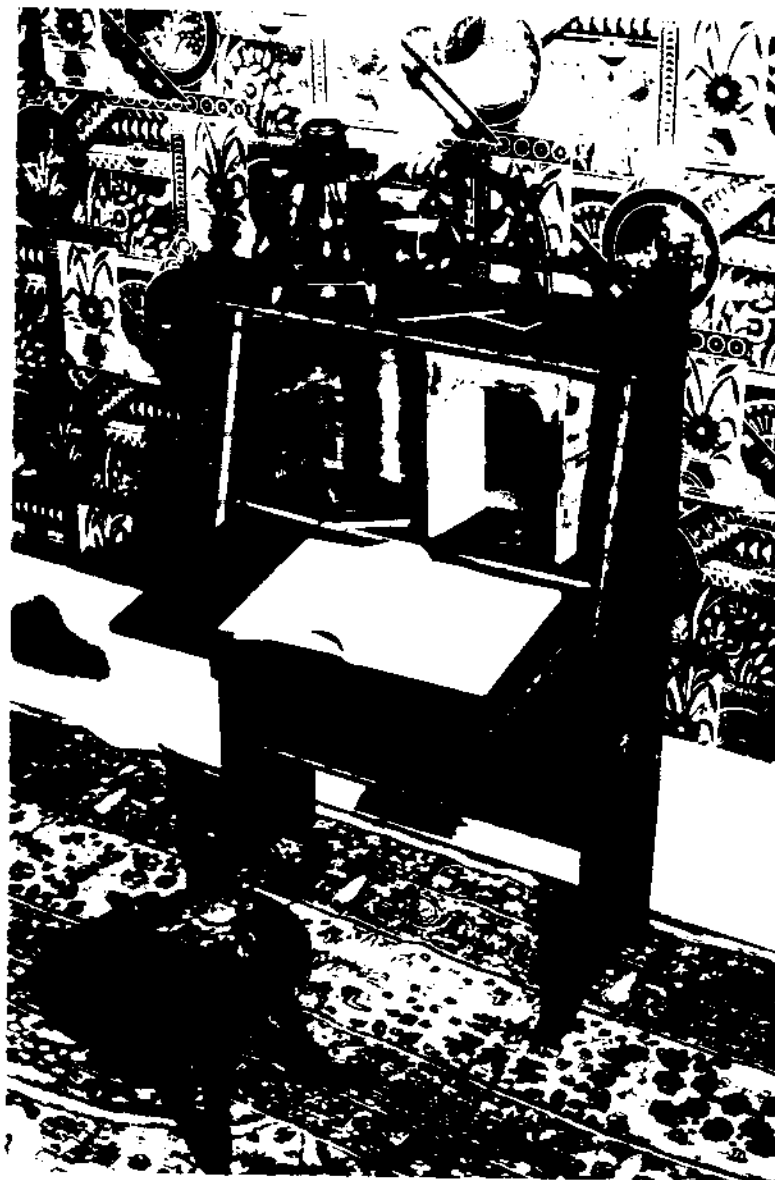


Figure 164. Child's Drop-front Desk.

## George House: Drop-front Bookcase Desk

Figures 165 and 166

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1890-1900.

Dimensions: Height--65", Width--40", Depth--13".

Material: Oak, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: A popular mail-order piece of the 1890s, this bookcase-desk has one full-length glass door which encloses four adjustable shelves. The overhanging top has a back gallery with scrolled edges and applied ornaments. A drop-front desk occupies the right side, along with an asymmetrical-shaped, French-beveled mirror. The desk area features pigeonhole compartments and one small drawer. Supported by a bracket at the lower right corner of the mirror is one small candlestick shelf. Storage areas include one half-width drawer, and a lower drawer conceals one shelf. Scalloped, with bracket feet, the plinth is centered with a carved shell motif.



Figure 166. Drop-front Bookcase Desk, detail.



Figure 165. Drop-front Bookcase Desk.

## George House: Library Bookcase

## Figure 167

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--83", Width--41", Depth--16".

Material: Walnut, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: The projecting three-quarter gallery is decorated by incised lines and three floral roundels. Surmounting the gallery is a flat, incised cresting with terminating scrolls. Above each door is a floral, applied roundel with an incised leaf motif. Two glazed doors are divided into four sections of equal size. The bookcase section rests upon a projecting base which contains one full-width drawer. Embellishing the base are incised lines and floral roundels. The brass bail handles feature engraved goat heads. An identical bookcase is in the collection of East Terrace, Figure 35.



Figure 167. Library Bookcase.



## George House: Sideboard

Figures 168 and 169

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--86", Width--54", Depth--22½".

Material: Walnut, marble, glass, brass.

Condition: Good.

Description: A massive dining room piece, the rectangular base supports a tall deck of small shelves. The top has a three-quarter gallery of molding with scroll brackets attached to the underedge. A vertical, rectangular mirror is flanked by four square shelves and bridged at the center by a brass-galleried shelf. Short, turned and squared posts with curved, corner brackets support the shelves. On either side of the mirror are panels which are carved with geometric patterns. The rose-colored marble top overhangs the case which contains three drawers and two doors. The fronts of the drawers and doors are embellished with burl veneer and incised lines. A center, sunken panel is incised with a tree motif. The bail handles and keyhole escutcheons are brass. The side stiles are incised and terminate in bracket projections. Similar sideboards of oak and walnut were illustrated in the C. & A. Kreimer Company's trade catalogue of 1890.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Dubrow, pp. 134-139.

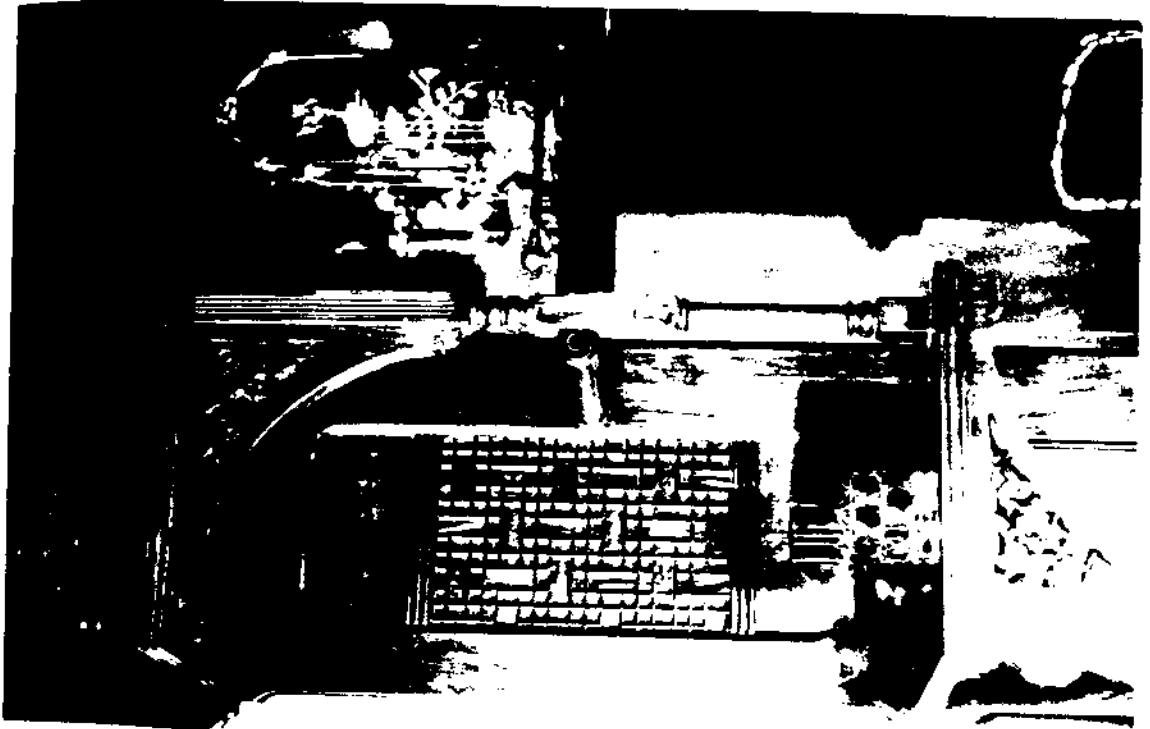


Figure 169. Sideboard, detail.

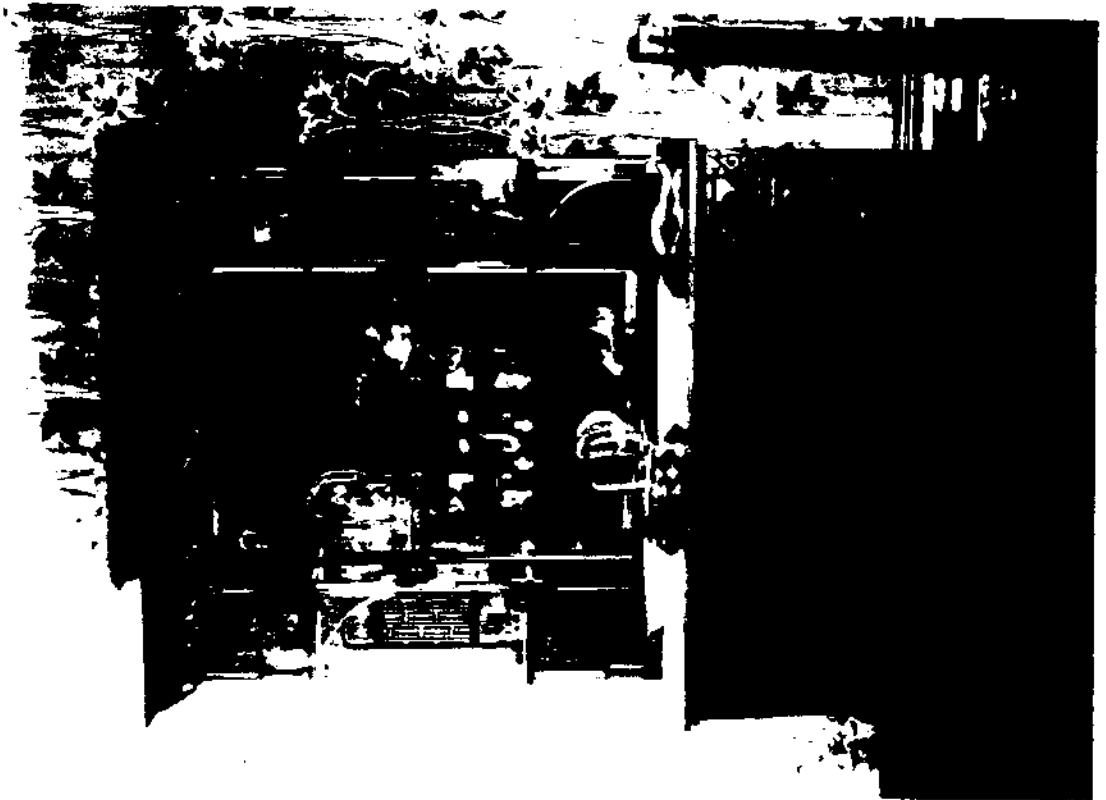


Figure 168. Sideboard.

## George House: Folding Cabinet-bed

Figures 170 and 171

Substyle: Golden Oak.

Date: Circa 1900.

Dimensions: Height--74", Width--53", Depth--17".

Material: Golden oak, glass.

Condition: Good.

Description: Designed to resemble a wardrobe, the oak cabinet with a vertical mirror conceals a full-sized bed. The curved top has a molded center section, rounded projecting corners, and applied decorative scrolls. Similar scrolls are applied to the projecting base and to vertical panels which flank the mirror. The back has been rebuilt with modern paneling and the entire bed has been refinished; the backing of the mirror has not been restored.



Figure 171. Folding Cabinet-bed, detail.



Figure 170. Folding Cabinet-bed.

## George House: Upright Piano

## Figure 172

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1884.

Dimensions: Height--56", Width--57", Depth--28".

Material: Mahogany, oak.

Condition: Good.

Description: Manufactured in 1884 by the Mathushek Piano

Company of New Haven, Connecticut, this upright piano is in good playable condition. The most striking Eastlake elements are the front legs; baluster-turned and reeded, the tops of the legs flare into symmetrical brackets to support the keyboard. The overhanging top and the keyboard base are bordered with decorative molding. Round-cornered openings in the front of the case have pierced grills with fabric backings; similarly shaped solid panels are featured on the base. The stool with ball-and-claw feet is not the original, but it is a common type of the period.



Figure 172. Upright Piano.

## CHAPTER VII

### MCNAMARA HOUSE

#### History of the House

Built in Victoria in 1876, William J. McNamara's home consists of a classical square plan topped with a hipped roof. Supported by six simple square posts which are ornamented with sawn and carved brackets, the porch runs the full width of the house. The dormer gables have decorative motifs that repeat the ones on the porch. The entrance features double doors surmounted by an arched, glazed transom with matching side lights. A pair of arched, floor-length windows flank the doorway.

Designs for dwellings such as the McNamara House were probably derived from the classic Georgian plan brought to the American South by English planters. The style became typical of farms and small towns of the Lowland South. To achieve maximum ventilation during the hot, humid summers on the Texas coast, windows and doors are arranged symmetrically on all four exterior walls. The central block of the house has two rooms of equal size on either side of a wide, central hall. These rooms were originally used for a parlor, sitting room, and two bedrooms. A staircase leads from the central hall to three small bedrooms in the attic. The

interior walls of whitewashed, exposed, horizontal boards have remained relatively unchanged since the house was built.

Typical of many southern homes of the nineteenth century, the kitchen and dining room are in a separate wing. Although under the same roof, the exterior walls of the wing are detached from the main house. These two sections are connected by a covered, dog-trot passage and a wide, L-shaped rear veranda.

William John McNamara and his wife Mary Ann Buckley were born in County Cork, Ireland. They emigrated to America and settled in South Texas in the 1870s. McNamara became a dealer in cotton, wool, and hides. He built the house in Victoria in 1876 to house a family of four daughters. The eldest child--Mary Ellen--married Thomas O'Connor and inherited the house after the deaths of both parents. Although two sisters survived her, the house became known as the McNamara-O'Connor House. Presented to a newly formed museum organization, the home was opened to the public in the 1960s as the McNamara-O'Connor Historical and Fine Arts Museum. Renamed the McNamara House Museum, the exterior of the building received major restoration in 1983. The removal of modern additions and an extensively researched tri-color paint treatment have restored the exterior to its original 1876 appearance. The interior is scheduled for restoration during 1984, at which time the grounds will be landscaped as a Victorian garden of the late nineteenth century.





Figure 173. McKanara House Exterior.

## Catalogue of Furniture

McNamara House: Transitional Side Chair

Figures 174, 175 and 176

Substyle: Transitional (Rococo Revival/Renaissance Revival).

Date: 1860-1870.

Dimensions: Height--43½", Width--21", Depth--18½", Seat  
Height--15".

Material: Mahogany, wool needlepoint, velvet.

Condition: Good.

Description: The hourglass-shaped back has a finger mold frame surmounted by a pierced and deeply carved cresting of fruit, leaves, and scrolls. The lower back frame has a pierced and carved central scroll motif. The canted rear legs are joined to the back a few inches above the seat frame. An upholstered seat is set into a deep, molded, rounded wooden frame. Small, incised, bulbous shapes are placed near the tops of the tapered legs. Tapered, peg feet terminate in casters. The needlepoint upholstery is appropriate but not original.

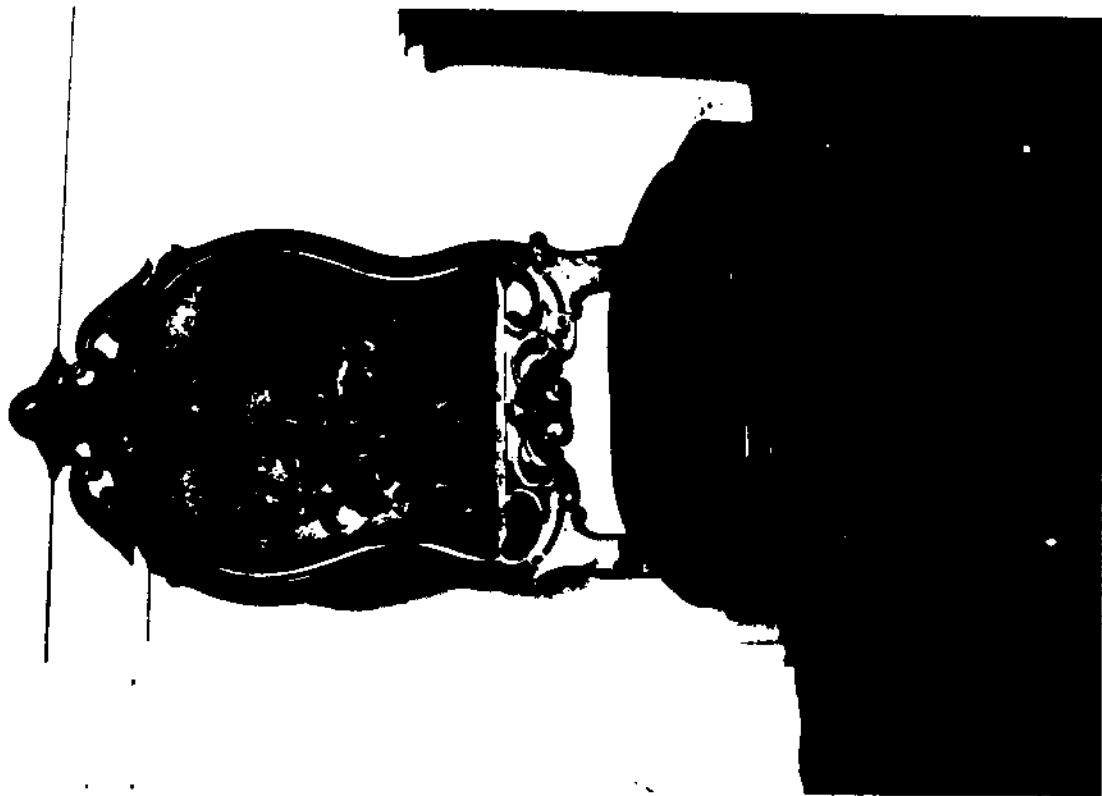


Figure 174. Transitional Side Chair.

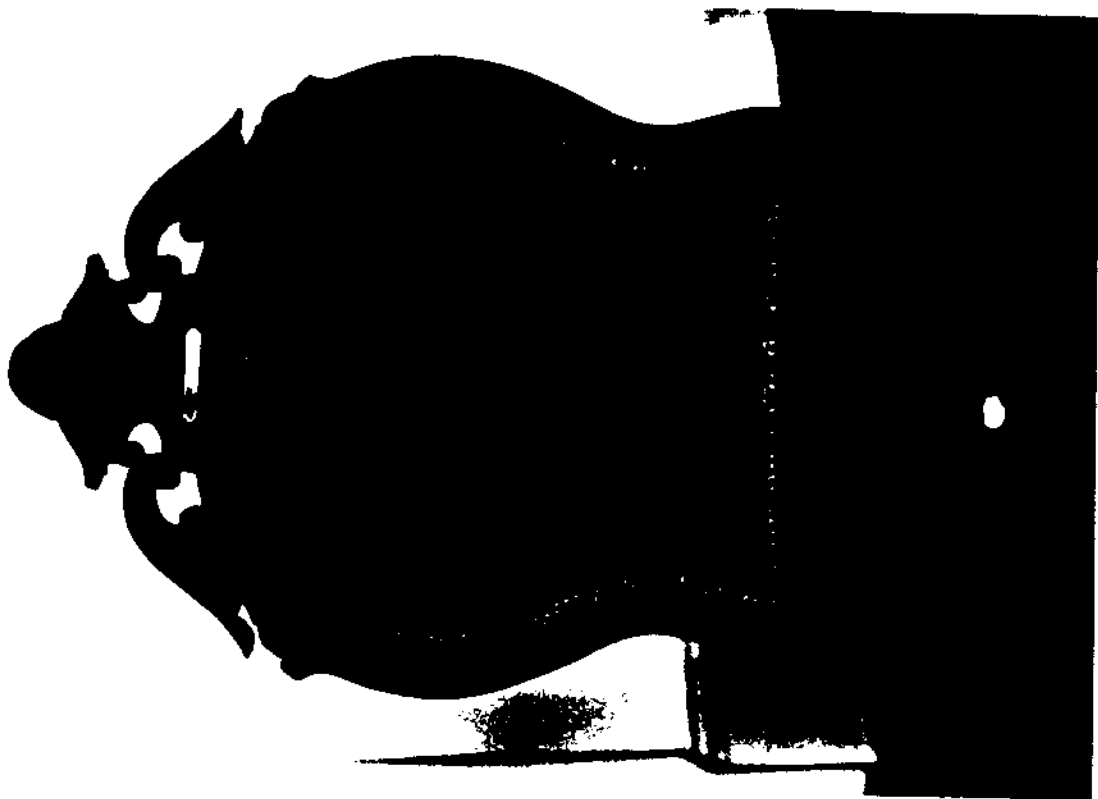


Figure 175. Transitional Side Chair, detail.

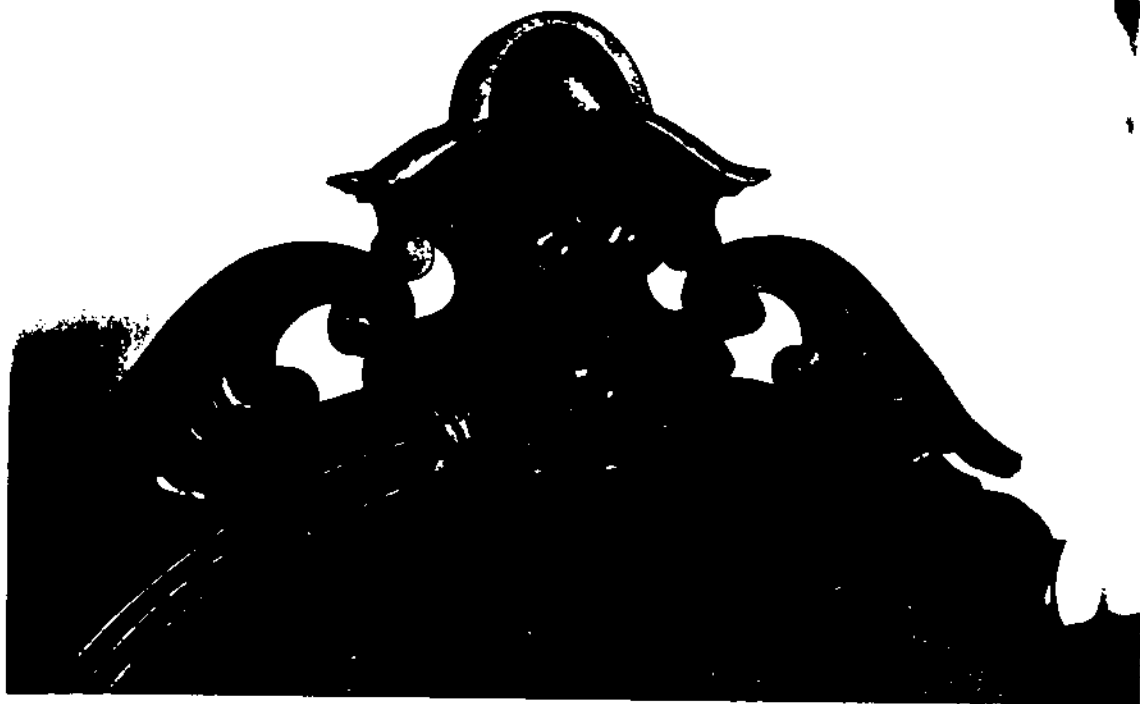


Figure 176. Transitional Side Chair, detail.

## McNamara House: Cane-bottom Side Chair

## Figure 177

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1890.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--17", Depth--17½", Seat Height--17".

Material: Pine, walnut, cane.

Condition: The top front stretcher is badly worn.

Description: A scrolled top rail is joined to an intermediate rail by five spool-turned spindles. The vertical rectangle of the center back, which is formed by grooved rails and upright members, has a woven cane covering attached to the front. Flat-sided and grooved, the rear stiles curve into the back legs. Front legs are ring-turned and terminate in button feet. The front rungs are ring-turned--one is badly worn--and the other stretchers are simple dowels. The keystone-shaped seat has a cane bottom with beveled edges. This straight chair of Eastlake inspiration is believed to have been made by an inmate in the Texas State Prison during the late nineteenth century.

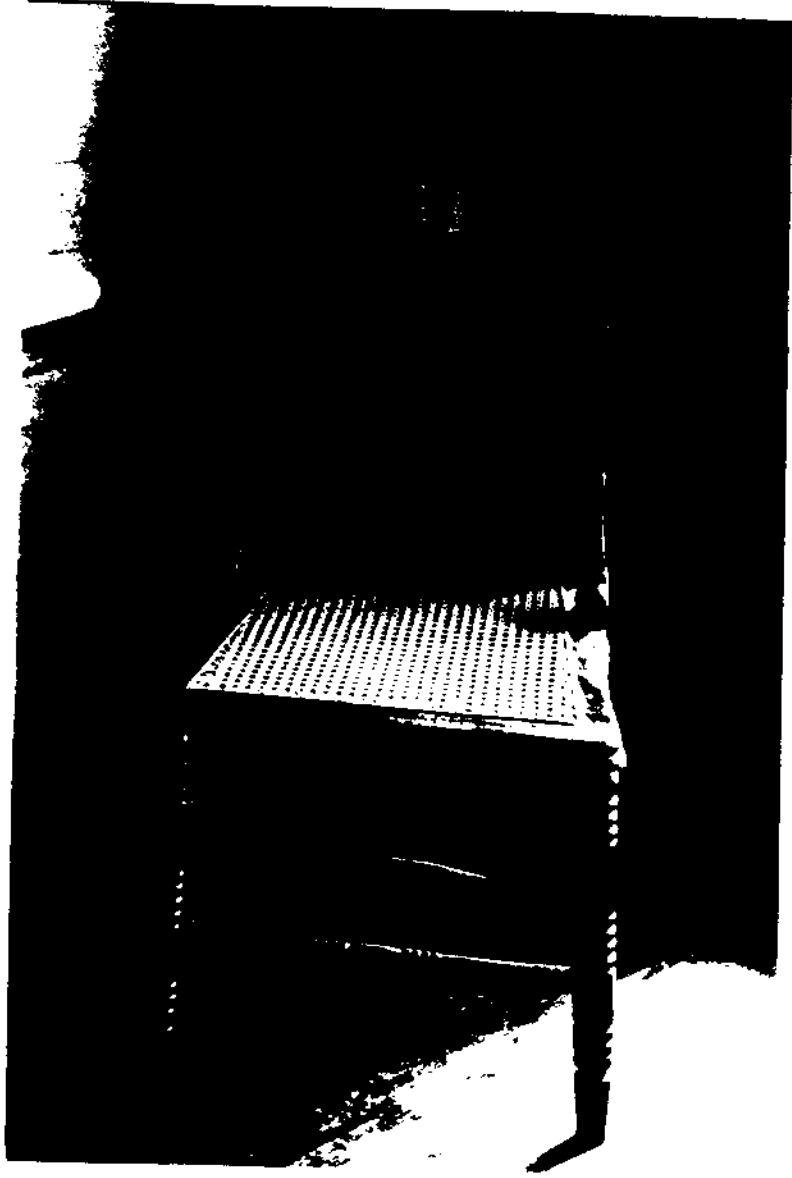


Figure 177. Cane-bottom Side Chair.

## McNamara House: Rocking Chair

## Figure 178

Substyle: Country.

Date: 1850-1880.

Dimensions: Height--43", Width--22", Depth--19", Arm  
Height--25", Seat Height--16".

Material: Fruitwood, modern synthetic upholstery.

Condition: The frame is structurally sound; upholstery is  
poorly attached and inappropriate.

Description: The contoured stiles form the back and continue downward to the rocker. Front legs are ring-turned and tapered. Rounded flat-surfaced arms are doweled into the tops of the front legs. The front stretcher is ring-turned while the other stretchers are plain dowels. Because this type of common, country rocker was made by numerous factories in great numbers, it is difficult to date with accuracy. McNamara House records state that this chair may have been brought to Texas from New Orleans in 1857. Presently poorly upholstered, the back and seat were probably originally rush or cane. Constructed with double cane bottoms, chairs such as this were made by the Taylor Chair Company of Bedford, Ohio, and by The E. F. Pierce Company of Boston during the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eileen and Richard Dubrow, Furniture Made in America, 1875-1905 (Exton, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing Company, 1982), pp. 238-239.

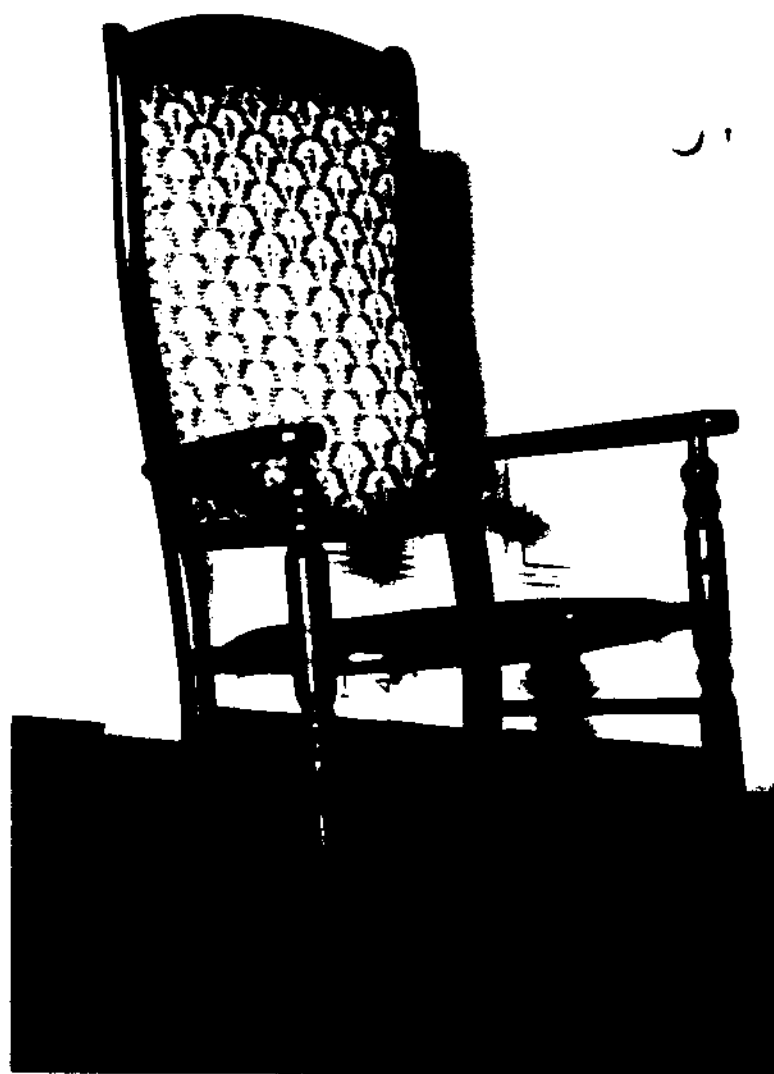


Figure 178. Rocking Chair.



## McNamara House: Straight-back Parlor Chair

## Figure 179

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1865-1885.

Dimensions: Height--34", Width--18", Depth--17", Seat  
Height--15".

Material: Walnut, silk damask.

Condition: Good.

Description: The square back is slightly canted with square stiles which curve into the rear leg. The rectangular upholstered center has rounded bottom corners flanked by slender dowels and carved scrolls. Curved, bracketed demi-arms connect the back to the curved seat frame. The deep, upholstered seat is set into a frame with a double-molded seat rail. Flat-sided front legs are modified saber curves which terminate in square rudimentary feet. The casters of the front legs have squared flanges with beaded edges. This chair is part of a matched, three-piece parlor suite, Figure 180.



Figure 179. Straight-back Parlor Chair.

## McNamara House: Asymmetrical-back Settee

Figures 180 and 181

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1885.

Dimensions: Height--35", Width--44", Depth--21", Back  
Width--34", Arm Height--24", Seat Height--16".

Material: Walnut, silk damask.

Condition: Good.

Description: Part of a three-piece parlor suite, this small-scale settee has an asymmetrical back with one arm. The vertical chair back has an upholstered, rectangular center flanked by slender dowels. The upper rail has five ball-and-spindle dowels and two small square carved inserts. A saw-cut scroll connects the back to the plain lower back rail. A narrow upholstered panel forms the remainder of the back area; it is enhanced at the right corner by a carved lion's head. The arm is curved with a rounded handgrip and attaches to a flowing curve which becomes the left front leg. The upholstered seat is curved downward at the right end in the manner of a Turkish couch. Presently upholstered with an inappropriate striped fabric, the original covering was probably similar to that which is shown on a settee at East Terrace, Figure 21.

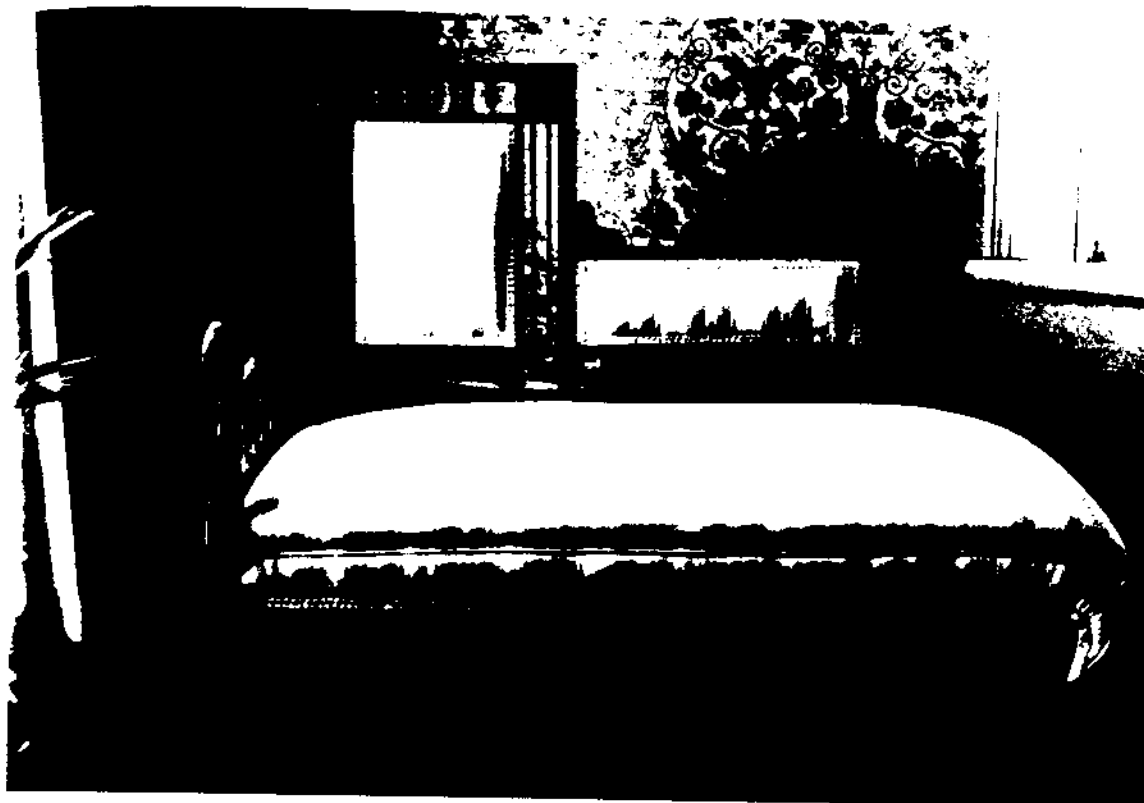


Figure 180. Asymmetrical-back Settee.



Figure 181. Asymmetrical-back Settee, detail.

## McNamara House: Parlor Center Table

## Figure 182

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1885.

Dimensions: Height--29", Width--23", Length--36".

Material: Oak, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The white marble top is rectangular in shape with rounded, beveled corners. The corresponding wooden frame has narrow applied panels of burl veneer which terminate in antefix shapes. Beneath each panel is a symmetrical inverted pediment shape with incised decoration. Four pendant finials are attached to the underside of the top. The wooden base consists of a central baluster which terminates at the junction of four cyma-curved legs. Additional support is provided by four curved pieces which connect to scroll brackets extending from the central pillar. The legs are incised, beveled, and have correspondingly shaped applied panels of veneer. Each leg, which terminates in a wheel shape with four applied buttons, is raised on a plain wooden block.

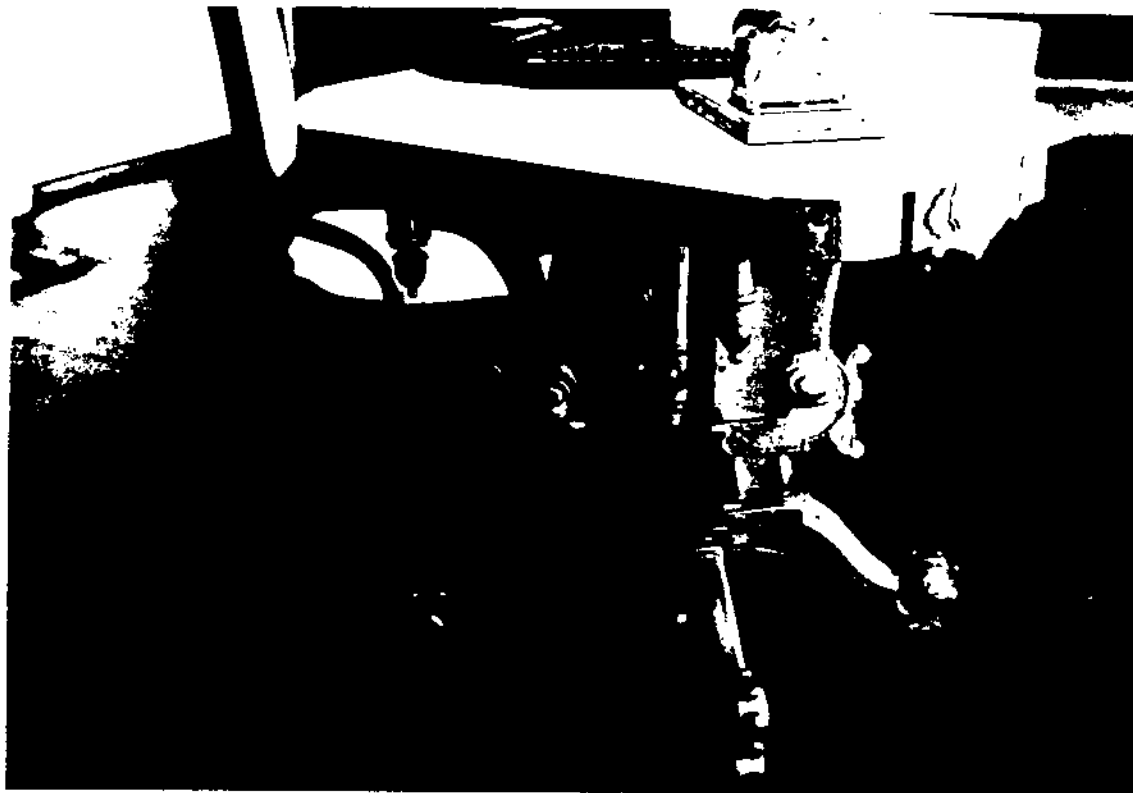


Figure 182. Parlor Center Table.

## McNamara House: Scroll-leg and Column Lamp Table

## Figure 183

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1880.

Dimensions: Height--28", Width--24", Depth--17½".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Fair.

Description: The oval, beveled, white marble top rests on a corresponding oval, molded apron. The turned, central pillar joins the four shaped and grooved, angular leg parts. Ormsbee comments that tables such as this were often part of a bedroom suite and sometimes had cheaper, wooden tops.<sup>2</sup> Swedberg illustrates several similar tables and describes them as misfits--not corresponding to any particular style.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture (New York: Bonanza Books, 1952), p. 197.

<sup>3</sup>Robert and Harriett Swedberg, Victorian Furniture (Des Moines, Iowa: Wallace-Homestead Book Company, 1981), pp. 73-75.



Figure 183. Scroll-leg and Column Lamp Table.



## McNamara House: Cylinder Secretary-Bookcase

## Figure 184

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1870-1886.

Dimensions: Height--94", Width--44", Depth--23".

Material: Walnut solids and burl veneers, glass.

Condition: Good; one knob has been replaced; blistered finish needs restoration.

Description: The upper bookcase is topped by a three-quarter gallery of beveled molding and applied panels of burl veneer. Two glazed doors have rounded and molded upper corners, while the lower corners are square. Architectural brackets are attached to the top of either side above a narrow, vertical strip of veneer. A quarter-round cylinder top, which conceals a flat writing surface, is divided symmetrically by two inset panels with molded borders. The sunken fronts of the drawers have applied raised sections of veneer. Wooden mushroom-shaped knobs decorate each drawer, door, and the cylinder top. Owned by a family in Indianola, this piece survived the hurricane which destroyed that Texas coastal town in 1886. Chittenden & Eastman, a Burlington, Iowa, manufacturer, advertised similar secretaries in the 1880s.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Dubrow, p. 24.



Figure 184. Cylinder Secretary-Bookcase.

## McNamara House: Four-drawer Commode

Figures 185 and 186

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1860-1875.

Dimensions: Height--34", Width--20", Depth--20".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good; one piece of molding is missing from the third drawer.

Description: Designed as a bedside chest of drawers, not as a cabinet for a chamber pot, this commode has one shallow drawer with a keyhole, and three deeper drawers with carved wooden pulls. All drawers have fronts of burl veneer and borders of deep, mitered molding. Ring-turned and grooved, the tapered front stiles have hexagonal sections near the top and at the base. The sides are paneled; the top is made of beveled, white marble. While this piece does not match the other bedroom furniture in McNamara House, it probably was originally part of a bedroom suite.

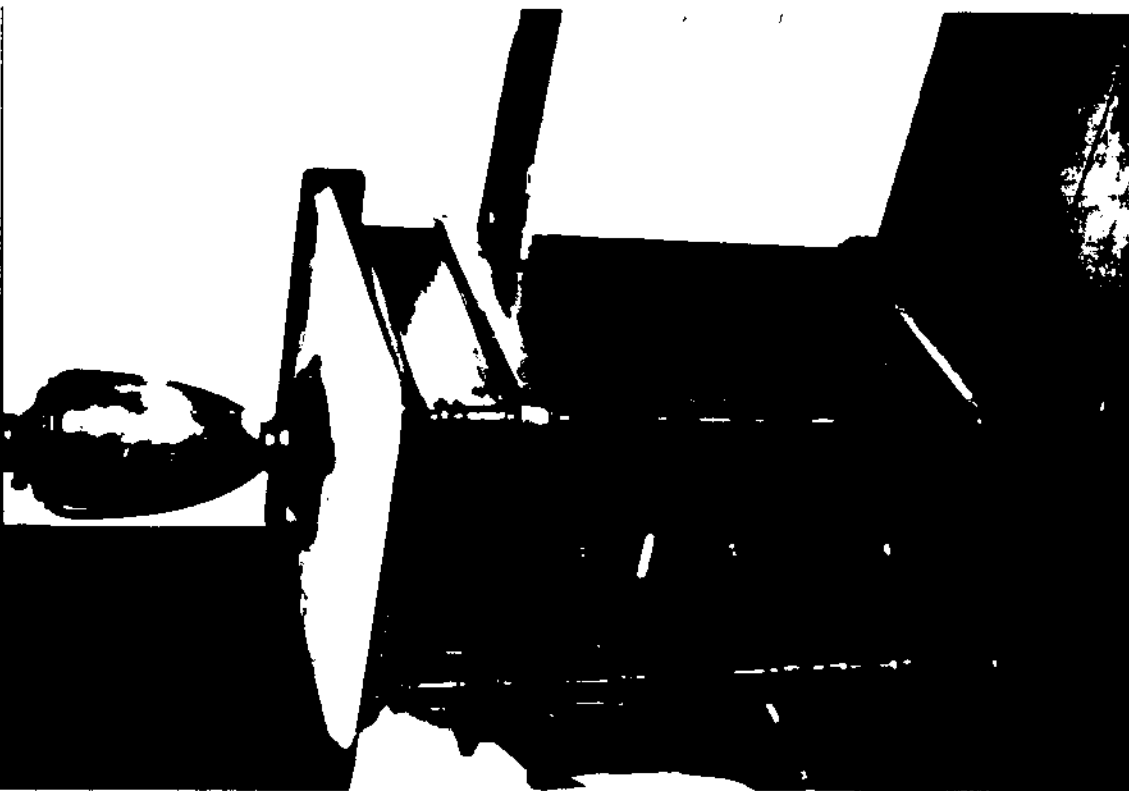


Figure 185. Four-drawer Commode.



Figure 186. Four-drawer Commode, detail.

## McNamara House: Dresser

Figures 187 and 188

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1865-1885.

Dimensions: Height--89", Width--49½", Depth--20".

Material: Walnut, glass, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The tall architectural frame has a fixed mirror above a carcass which contains six drawers of various sizes. The rectangular mirror is surrounded by a number of applied ornaments which testify to the versatility of woodworking machinery of the period. Above the mirror is a shell cresting applied to a pediment shape which, in turn, surmounts an arched and spindled pierced area. Ears on either side of the mirror have applied rosettes. Short, round columns flank the mirror above small, rectangular shelves. Fan-shaped brackets form supports for the shelves. The base has a raised center which divides the top surface into three marble-topped sections. Beneath the raised center is one drawer with a curved front. Other drawers are flush, with borders of double-incised lines. All drawers are surfaced with burl veneer and have plain mushroom wooden knobs.

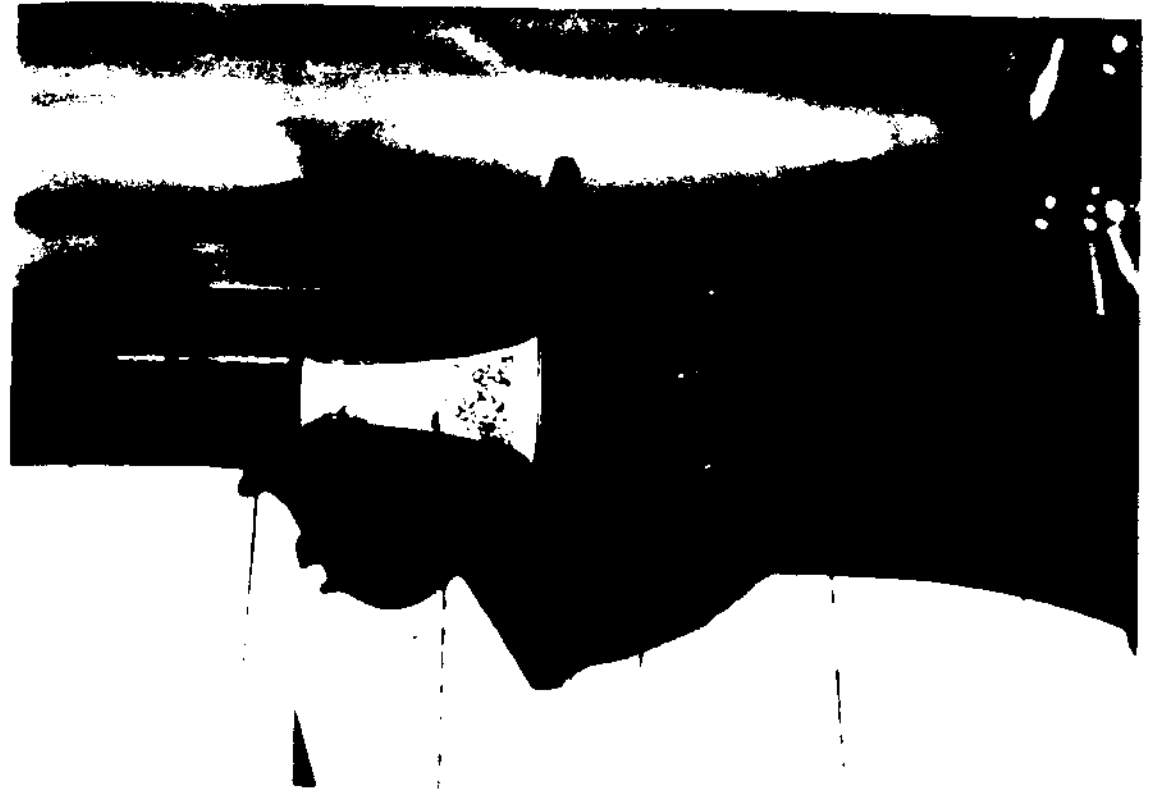


Figure 188. Dresser, detail.

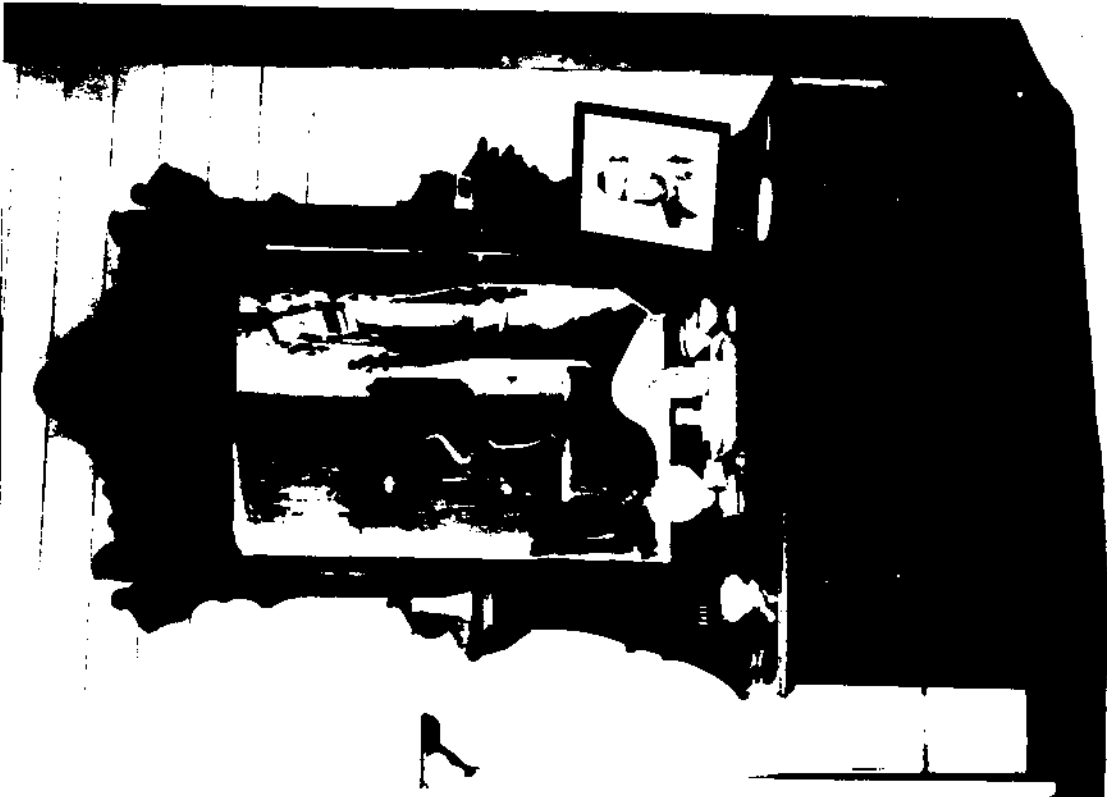


Figure 187. Dresser.

## McNamara House: Bed

Figures 189, 190, 191 and 192

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1865-1885.

Dimensions: Height--89", Width--63", Footboard Height--36".

Material: Walnut solids and burl veneer.

Condition: Part of applied scroll is missing from the lower left rail of the footboard; some spindles are loose.

Description: The architectural headboard is topped by a carved shell motif and applied, incised molding. An arched and spindled segment is applied as an open grill over a cutout area at the center of the upper cross rails. Rondels and rosettes are applied to terminal ends of the upper cresting and upright stiles. Two short, round, turned columns rest upon brackets which are attached to the frame on either side of a sunken panel of burlled veneer. Finials--quarter segments of nautical wheels--surmount the upper ends of the side stiles which form the headboard legs. The footboard introduces variations of the same ornaments. A central, sunken panel of burl-veneer is topped with a dogtoothed, incised cross rail. Vertical rectangular panels are set into arched frames with three-quarter, incised, patera shapes. Incised brackets and stiles further subdivide the panels. Attached to the top of either end of the footboard are vase-shaped spindles

with horizontal caps of grooved molding. The spindle on the right corner is inserted upside down. This piece is the matching companion of the dresser in Figure 187.



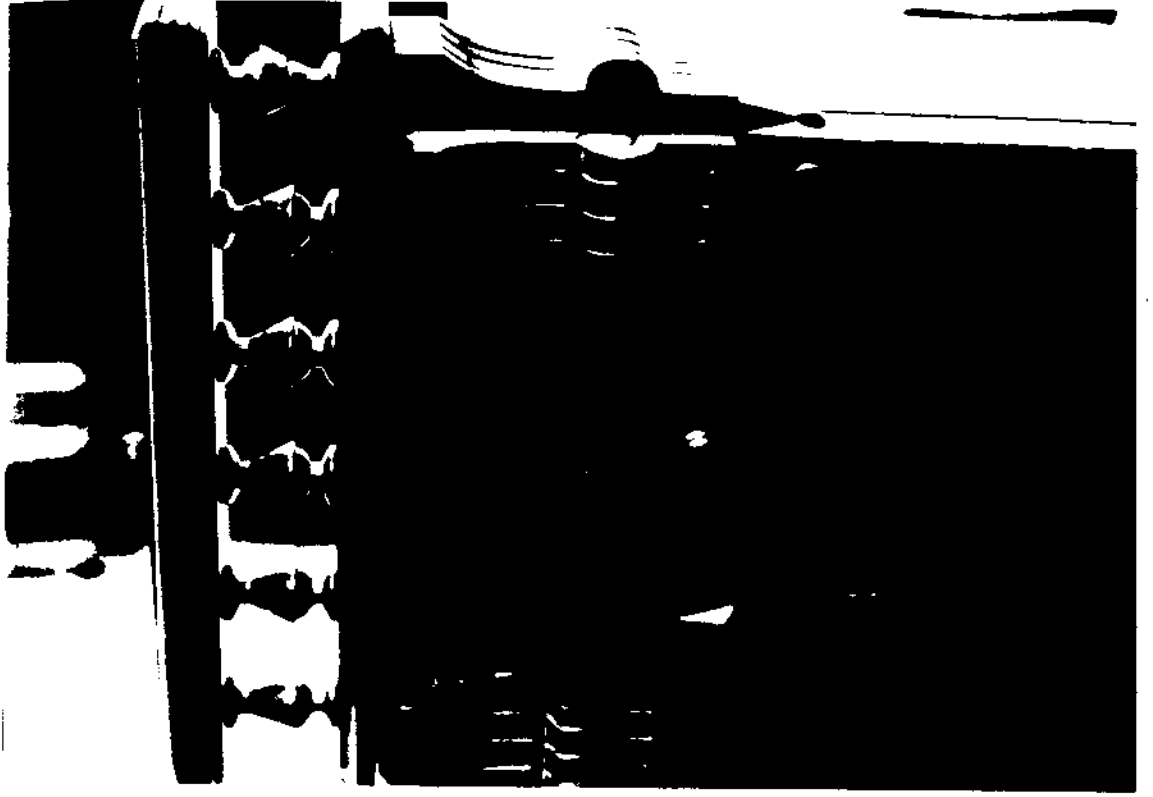


Figure 190, Bed, detail.

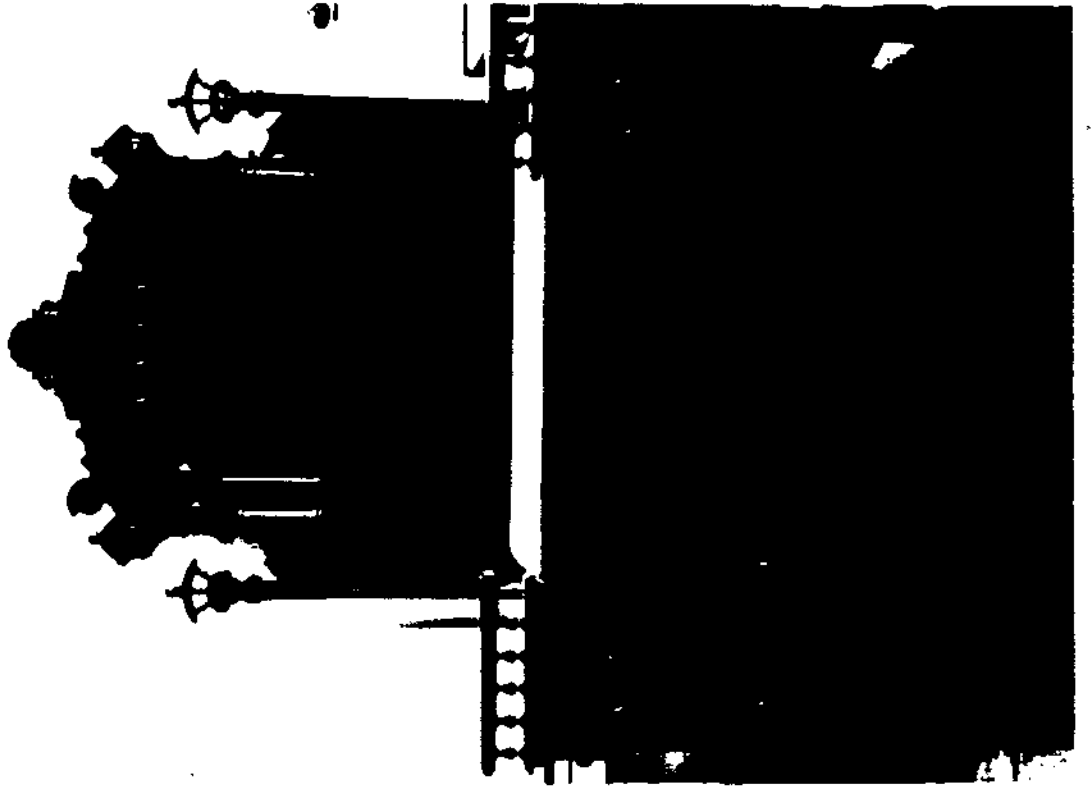


Figure 189. bed.

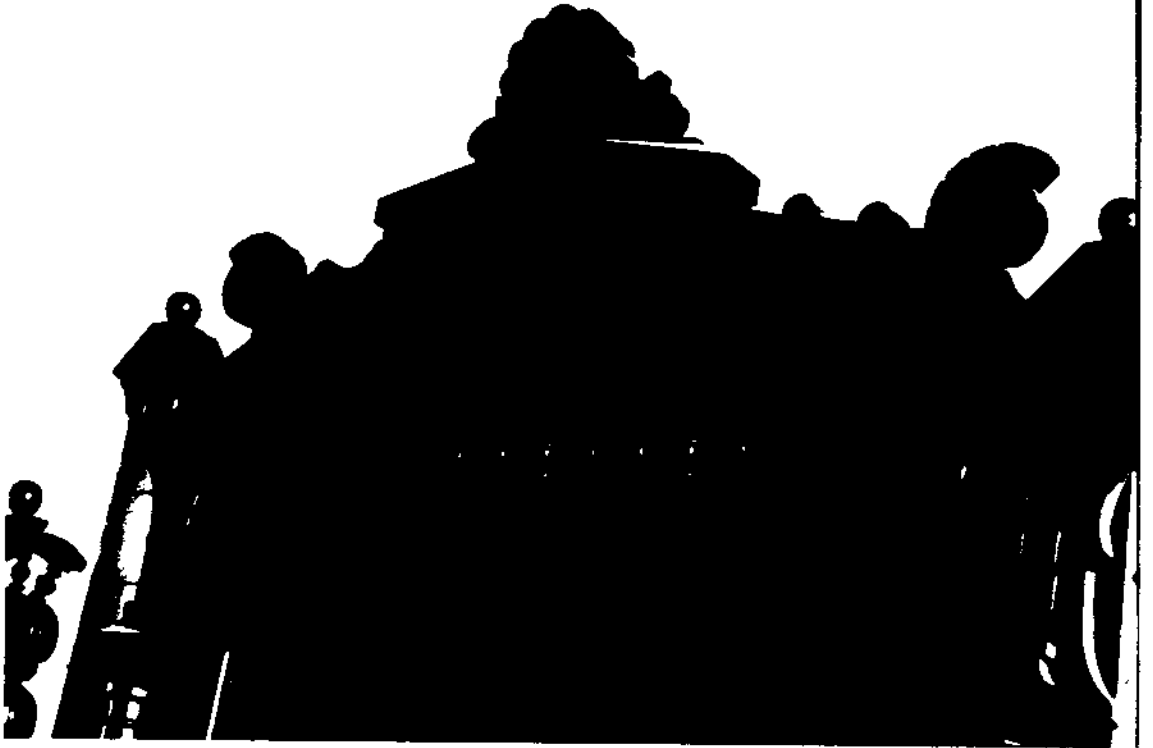


Figure 191. Bed, detail.

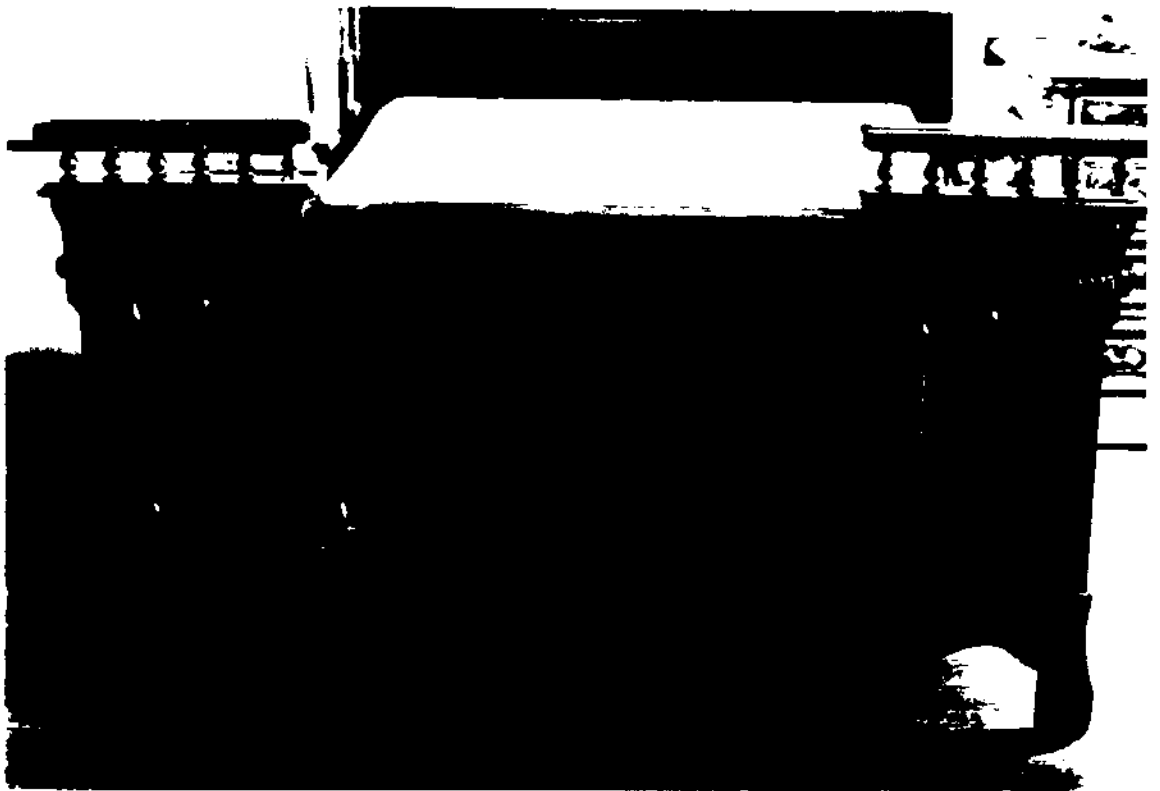


Figure 192. Bed, detail.

## McNamara House: Platform Rocking Crib

## Figure 193

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1885.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--17", Length--37".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good; one arched rocker cover is loose.

Description: A rather plain and utilitarian piece, this child's crib features a mechanism which allows it to be rocked in the same manner as a platform rocking chair. The headboard and footboard are formed of grooved stiles and cross rails. Each end has an inset panel with two horizontal bands of machine-carved ornament in low relief. Similarly carved decorations appear on the top and bottom rails. Eight spool-turned dowels connect the cross rails on the headboard and footboard while the side fences are formed with half-round dowels. One small burl panel is applied to the inner surface of the headboard. The ends of the stiles are cut at angles and attached to rockers. The supporting base forms a platform for the crib. It consists of two end units of beveled top rails, incised cross rails, and short legs which are turned and ringed. Wooden pegs are used to attach curved and beveled pieces of wood to either end of the base in order to hide the spring mechanism. Thin shield motifs and saw-cut pendants decorate the base.

The wooden casters are original, but the bolts--visible in the photographs--have been added for support. Similar rocking cribs and folding cribs were manufactured during the 1880s by the Hale and Kilburn Company of Philadelphia.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Dubrow, pp. 218-222.

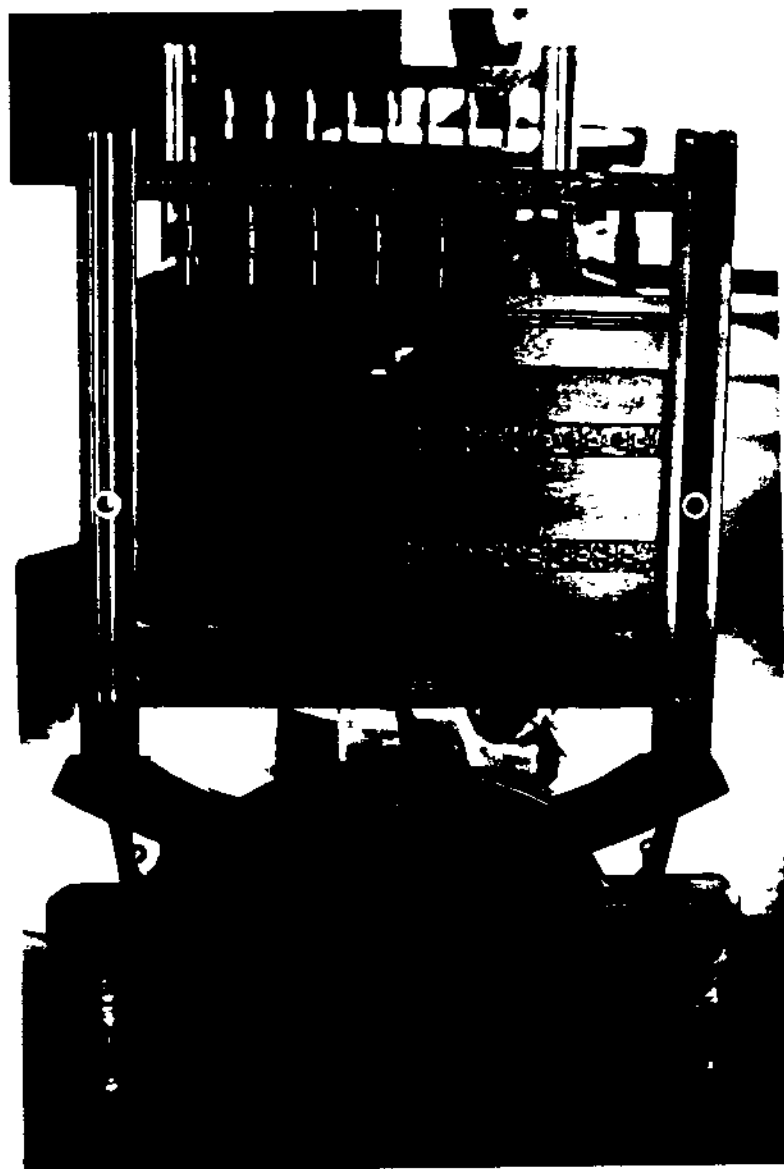


Figure 193. Platform Rocking Crib.

## McNamara House: Wardrobe

## Figure 194

Substyle: Hybrid, with elements of various styles.

Date: 1840-1865.

Dimensions: Height--88", Width--53", Depth--18½".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Fair.

Description: A wide, overhanging cornice with rounded corners is surmounted by a large, carved, and pierced cresting. A Rococo Revival influence is evident in the pierced top. A Gothic influence is displayed in the unusual doors of the wardrobe; the doors are paneled, with a surrounding beveled edge, and double cusp shapes at the top ends. The drawers resemble Renaissance Revival pieces with shaped panels and wooden, mushroom-shaped knobs. One interpretation of these numerous influences upon different sections of the wardrobe is that it is the product of a small workshop with limited machinery. Perhaps at the request of a client, the various elements were copied from different sources. The piece may be considered a hybrid--not corresponding to any particular substyle--and was probably made in New Orleans. After surviving the hurricane which destroyed Indianola in 1886, the wardrobe was moved to Victoria where it remained in the possession of one family before being donated to the McNamara collection in the 1970s.



Figure 174. Wardrobe.

## McNamara House: Square Grand Piano

## Figure 195

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1865.

Dimensions: Height--40", Width--77", Depth--38".

Material: Rosewood.

Condition: The finish is in poor condition due to the extreme humidity of South Texas.

Description: This square piano has a large rectangular case with rounded corners. The lower edge consists of scalloped finger molding with a projecting beaded trim. Massive cabriole legs, which screw onto the case, have a cartouche and pendant swag carved on the knees. The whorl feet are raised by octagonal pads which conceal casters. A carved, lyre-shaped pedal frame has a central antefix motif and opposing scrolls. The music support is cut from one piece of thin, veneered wood. Made in 1865 by the Emerson Piano Company of Boston, the case is inscribed above the keyboard with the name of the Galveston representative--Thomas Coggin & Bros., Galveston, Texas. This piece displays striking similarities with other pianos included in the study, especially those in the collections of East Terrace



and Fort House. Pianos of this type sold for about two hundred dollars.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>William Seale, The Tasteful Interlude, American Interiors Through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), pp. 38, 199.

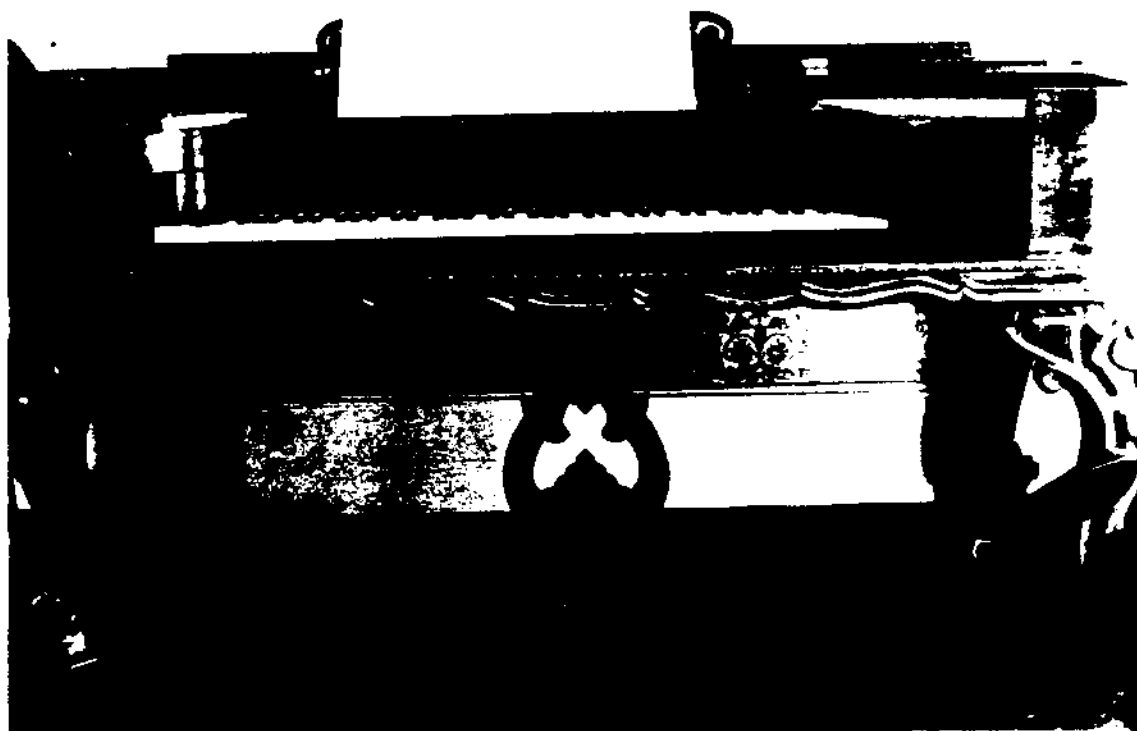


Figure 195. Square Grand Piano.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MILLERMORE

#### History of the House

Built by William Brown Miller and named Millermore by his youngest daughter, the Greek Revival style house was begun in 1855 and completed in 1862. Constructed of native Texas materials, the cedar and post oak timbers were cut on the site while pine and cypress planks were brought by oxen from Jefferson, Texas. Several alterations were made on the facade before the present Colonial Revival style porch was added in 1912; a bracketed balcony above the front entrance was probably added at that time. A tin roof, approximating the original, was installed after the house was moved to Old City Park in Dallas.

While floor plans of Greek Revival style houses are characteristically square with rooms of equal size placed on either side of a central hall, the plan of Millermore is an L-shape. The house has three rooms and two large halls on each floor. Each room measures twenty feet by twenty feet; the halls are ten feet by twenty feet. Placed on the original site with North to South orientation, the hallways of the house created natural ventilation as well as providing extra living space. The main block of the house contains a formal

parlor, an informal parlor, and a central hall. An additional hall, which connects the back of the informal parlor with the dining room, doubled as an office. The kitchen was housed in a detached building which no longer exists.

The interior woodwork consists of plain, wide planks. According to family tradition, the window and door frames were executed by an itinerant carpenter. Three simple mantels in the upstairs rooms are original to the house, while the brick mantels of the parlors were installed in 1912.

Born in Kentucky in 1807, William Brown Miller lived in Alabama, Tennessee, and Missouri before settling in Texas in 1847. With the help of his second wife Minerva, five children, and four slaves, Miller established a farm at Hord's Ridge-- a section of Dallas which is now called Oak Cliff. Well-educated and industrious, Miller operated a ferry service across the Trinity River, in addition to farming and raising livestock. After the death of his second wife--while bearing Miller's eighth child--he remarried. Emma, his third wife, bore him three children. A log cabin, which has been moved to Old City Park, served as the family home until Millermore was completed in 1862. In 1899, at the age of ninety-one, Miller died in Millermore. The house was occupied by his descendants until 1967 when the Dallas County Heritage Society acquired the home. While the many historical structures at Old City Park represent a complete nineteenth-century community, Millermore continues to be the most popular attraction.



Figure 196. Willermore Exterior.

## Catalogue of Furniture

Millermore: Balloon-back Side Chair

Figure 197

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--35", Width--17", Depth--18", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut, satin.

Condition: Good.

Description: The balloon-back--the shape resembles a spherical, hot air balloon--is upholstered and enclosed by a finger-molded frame; the back is attached to the seat by curved stiles and brackets. The upholstered, dome seat is rolled over the padded frame to meet a serpentine-curved apron. Cabriole legs have a simple, carved ornament on the knees; the plain feet are without casters. The most popular chair style of the Rococo Revival, this example is one of a matched pair. Sophisticated Rococo Revival side chairs of this type were produced in Grand Rapids as late as the middle 1880s.<sup>1</sup> Ormsbee designates this type of chair as a Louis XV balloon-back and illustrates several variations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Bishop, Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, 1640-1970 (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1972), p. 345.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture (New York: Bonanza Books, 1952), pp. 44-47.



Figure 197. Balloon-back Side Chair.

## Millermore: Open Balloon-back Side Chair

## Figure 198

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: Circa 1850.

Dimensions: Height--37", Width--17", Depth--15", Seat  
Height--16".

Material: Walnut, velvet.

Condition: Good.

Description: The open back has a molded frame with an arched top loop. Curved rails attach the back to the seat and continue downward to form the square, canted rear legs. The domed, upholstered seat conceals the chair frame. Cyma-curved cabriole legs terminate in rudimentary feet. This chair is one of a matching pair. Ormsbee describes and illustrates similar chairs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ormsbee, p. 45.





Figure 193. Open Balloon-back Side Chair.

## Millermore: Demi-arm Chair

## Figure 199

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--40", Width--21", Depth--21½", Seat  
Height--17½".

Material: Ebonized hardwood, brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: An upholstered, balloon-shaped back panel is surrounded by elaborate, pierced carving consisting of fruit and scroll motifs. Demi-arms are carved in opposing cyma curves and attach the back to the seat frame; the scrolled carving of the back meets the rear of the seat frame. The upholstered seat partially conceals the frame; centered with a floral motif, the carved apron has a finger-molded edge. Modified cabriole legs are shaped in shallow cyma curves with cabochon-shaped carvings on the knees; the legs terminate in rudimentary feet. Canted rear legs are rounded, tapered, and without feet.



Figure 199. Semi-arm Chair.

## Millermore: Cartouche-back Armchair

Figures 200 and 201

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--45", Width--25", Depth--24", Arm  
Height--24", Seat Height--15".

Material: Walnut, slub silk.

Condition: Good.

Description: The upholstered cartouche-shaped back has a frame of curved finger molding; the cresting is pierced and carved with a motif of grapes and leaves. Rear legs continue above the seat frame to support the back frame. Curved, partially upholstered arms connect to the back frame. Carved, wooden hand grips attach to the front cabriole legs; carved cartouche motifs decorate the knees of the legs. A serpentine apron continues the curves of the legs; casters are inserted into all four legs. An almost identical chair is illustrated by McNerney.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Kathryn McNerney, Victorian Furniture (Paducah, Kentucky: Collector Books, 1981), p. 90.



Figure 200. Cartouche-back Armchair.



Figure 201. Cartouche-back Armchair, detail.

## Millermore: Balloon-back Armchair

Figures 202 and 203

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1875.

Dimensions: Height--43", Width--25", Depth--24", Arm  
Height--24", Seat Height--15".

Material: Walnut, slub silk.

Condition: Good.

Description: The balloon-shaped, upholstered back is surrounded by a wide, finger-molded frame; the top loop is carved with a motif of grapes and leaves. Low, partially upholstered arms swell out from the back frame and continue in downward curves to the front legs. A serpentine-curved apron joins the cabriole legs to the seat frame; the finger-molded legs terminate in rudimentary feet. Brass casters are inserted into all four legs.



Figure 202. Balloon-back Armchair.



Figure 203. Balloon-back Armchair, detail.



## Millermore: Parlor Chair with Pierced Back

Figures 204 and 205

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--41", Width--18", Depth--18", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Rosewood, damask.

Condition: Good.

Description: The upholstered panel is cartouche-shaped and framed by a pierced and carved border with an elaborate top cresting. Cyma curves and scrolls with carved gadroon borders flank a center ornament of flowers, leaves, and shells. Attached to the seat frame by finger-molded, curved brackets, the lower back features a center cabochon shape and small volute scrolls. The upholstered seat is round and domed; the conforming rail is partly covered by the fabric. The apron features a relief-carved cartouche and a scrolled bottom edge. The front legs are a modified form of the cabriole type and terminate in rudimentary feet; the rear legs are square and canted. One of a pair, this chair reflects the influence of John Belter upon the Rococo Revival style; the chairs match the sofa illustrated in Figure 227. A similar chair made by John Belter was once owned by Abraham Lincoln and is now in the Henry Ford

Museum.<sup>5</sup> This type of chair is described by Ormsbee as a gentleman's armchair.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Bishop, p. 331.

<sup>6</sup>Ormsbee, pp. 53-54.



Figure 204. Parlor chair with Mercedes Beck.



Figure 235. Parlor Chair with Pierced Back, detail.

## Millermore: Parlor Chair

## Figure 206

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1855-1875.

Dimensions: Height--39", Width--21", Depth--17", Seat  
Height--15".

Material: Walnut, velvet.

Condition: Good.

Description: The upholstered back has an arched top with a scroll outline and a central roundel; irregular shapes of veneer are applied to the cresting. Incised projections, brackets, and stiles frame the back. Flat-sided brackets connect the back to the upholstered seat. The plain apron attaches to block-topped, turned, and tapered legs. Casters are inserted into ring-turned feet. A similar chair is illustrated by McNerney.<sup>7</sup> This chair may be compared with a Renaissance Revival chair at East Terrace, Figure 7.

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<sup>7</sup>McNerney, p. 67.



Figure 2.6. Parlor Chair.

## Millermore: Vase-splat Side Chair

## Figure 207

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1830-1850.

Dimensions: Height--33", Width--18", Depth--15", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: An arched top rail with rounded edges connects to plain side stiles. The vase-shaped splat and a notched upper panel creates a partially open back. A domed, upholstered slip seat has a shaped front which corresponds to the serpentine apron. Flat-sided front legs are curved while the rear legs are of modified saber shapes.

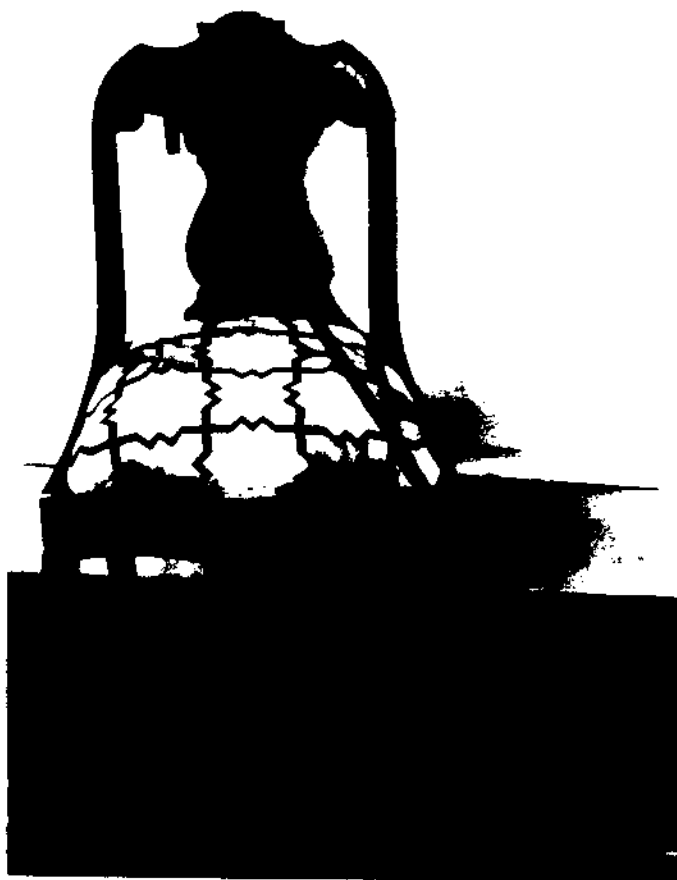


Figure 207. Vase-splat Side Chair.



Millermore: Vase-splat Side Chair with Finger-hole

Figure 208

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1830-1850.

Dimensions: Height--33", Width--18", Depth--15", Seat  
Height--17".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: A carved scroll and acanthus leaf motif is centered on the U-shaped top. A notched horizontal back section and a vase-shaped splat form the back; a pierced, heart shape creates a finger-hole. Flat-sided rails with rounded edges are curved into the sides of the seat frame. Corresponding to the serpentine apron, the lightly padded, upholstered slip seat tapers toward the back. The cyma-curved front legs are cut from flat-sided boards; edges are rounded, undecorated, and without foot terminations. Saber-shaped rear legs are continuations of the back stiles.



Figure 208. Vase-splat Side Chair  
with Finger-hole.

## Millermore: Folding Rocking Chair

## Figure 209

Substyle: Eastlake.

Date: 1870-1885.

Dimensions: Height--32", Width--12", Depth--12", Seat  
Height--14".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The contoured, upholstered back is arched at the top and features side rails with rounded edges. The curved front legs are loosely bolted to the back; the short, canted rear legs are bolted to the lower back frame. Square and upholstered, the seat has exposed side frames and a rolled-front edge. Two ring-turned stretchers--the only turned elements used to construct the chair--brace the front and back legs. Short, flat-sided rockers are connected to the inner edges of the legs.



Figure 209. Folding Rocking Chair.

## Millermore: Scroll-back Sofa

Figures 210 and 211

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height-- $37\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width--88", Depth--21", Arm  
Height--26", Seat Height--16".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: Two opposing solid wooden scrolls flank a central cartouche to form the top rail of the back. The half-lyre arm sections are faced with conforming wooden ends with rounded edges. The arms, joined at right angles to the back, have rolled-over upholstery. Serpentine, with an applied beaded molding, the front rail corresponds to the shape of the deep, box-edged seat. The front feet are plain, flat-sided brackets while the rear feet are simple, flat stiles.

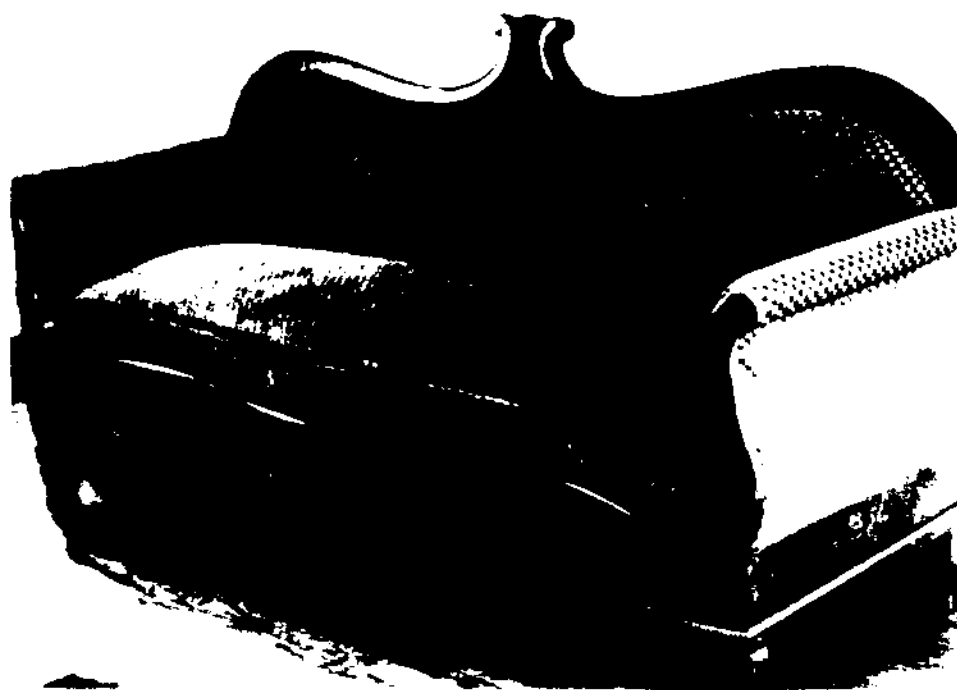


Figure 210. Scroll-back Sofa.



Figure 211. Scroll-back Sofa, detail.

## Millermore: Scroll-arm Sofa

## Figure 212

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--88", Width--35", Depth--24", Arm  
Height--27", Seat Height--19".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The flat top rail is supported by curved-end projections. Scroll arms are rolled and attached at right angles to the back; the wooden facings have rounded edges and painted, raised surfaces. The horizontal apron is molded in a cyma curve. Rectangular blocks surmount scrolled bracket feet; the front feet have applied roundels while the rear feet are plain. Designed with deep, coil springs, the seat features a rolled-over edge which attaches to the frame.



Figure 212. Scroll-arm Sofa.



Millermore: Serpentine-back Sofa with Medallion

Figure 213

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--40", Width--80", Depth--26", Arm  
Height--29", Seat Height--17".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The serpentine top rail is veneered with figured mahogany; a small, oval medallion is framed with veneer and topped by a pierced cresting of carved foliage. Exhuberant carvings of leafage are attached to either side of the central medallion. Half-lyre arms are faced with solid mahogany; rounded top sections are connected to the downward curve of the top rail. The front apron is serpentine with a molded top and applied carving on the lower edge. Curved bracket feet are flat-sided with an applied acanthus leaf ornament. The seat, arms, and back are tightly upholstered in a millefleur design fabric. Ormsbee illustrates a similar sofa with half-lyre arms and a serpentine top rail.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ormsbee, p. 106.

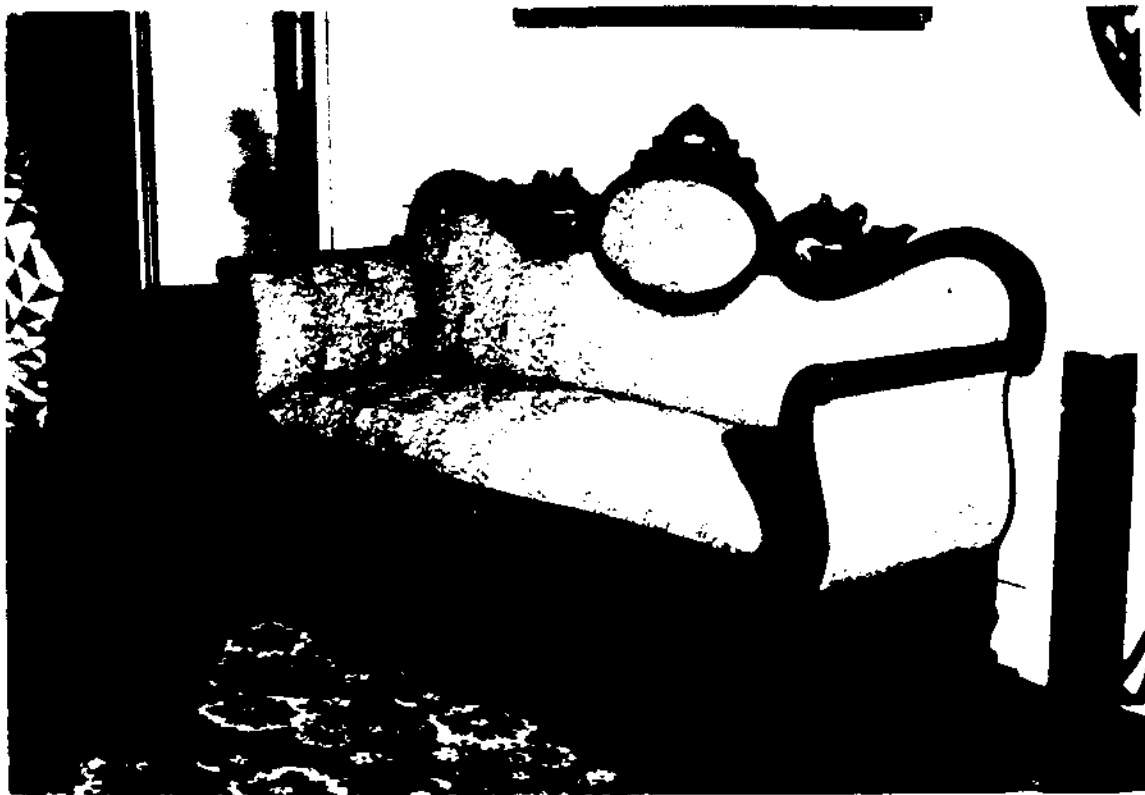


Figure 213. Serpentine-back Sofa with Medallion.

Millermore: Medallion-back Demi-sofa

Figure 214

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1860.

Dimensions: Height--34", Width--64", Depth--18", Arm  
Height--20", Seat Height--14".

Material: Walnut, damask.

Condition: Good.

Description: The serpentine, arched frame is finger-molded and curves downward in an unbroken line to the enclosed arms. The same molding forms a central, upholstered medallion; small scroll carvings join the top rail and the medallion frame. Handgrips, front legs, and apron are curved and molded. The legs end in rudimentary feet without casters. Upholstered as a unit with the back, the enclosed arms are rolled at the tops to create arm pads; the seat has a tight, upholstered edge. Sofas such as this were usually part of a parlor suite which consisted of a gentleman's chair, a lady's chair, and four balloon-back side chairs. During the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, Gould and Company advertised a seven-piece Rococo Revival parlor suite for sixty-five dollars; packing and shipping charges were not included.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Bishop, p. 345.



Figure 214. Medallion-back Demi-sofa.

## Millermore: Scroll-curved Sofa

Figures 215 and 216

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1845-1863.

Dimensions: Height--47", Width--57", Depth--24", Arm  
Height--24", Seat Height--15".

Material: Rosewood, brocade.

Condition: Good.

Description: Usually called a Belter-type sofa--the pierced carving is characteristic of the ornament created by John Belter--the back is outlined by undulating scrolls. The exposed, wooden frame is partially finger-molded; a carved and pierced cresting of flowers and scrolls emphasizes the curved back. Hand grips, legs, and apron are cyma-curved and finger-molded. A carved cartouche--which does not match the cresting--is created on the apron. The short legs terminate in whorl feet with casters. The back and enclosed arms are upholstered as a unit while the seat has a tight, rolled-over edge. A similar scroll-curved sofa is illustrated by Ormsbee.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ormsbee, pp. 111-112.

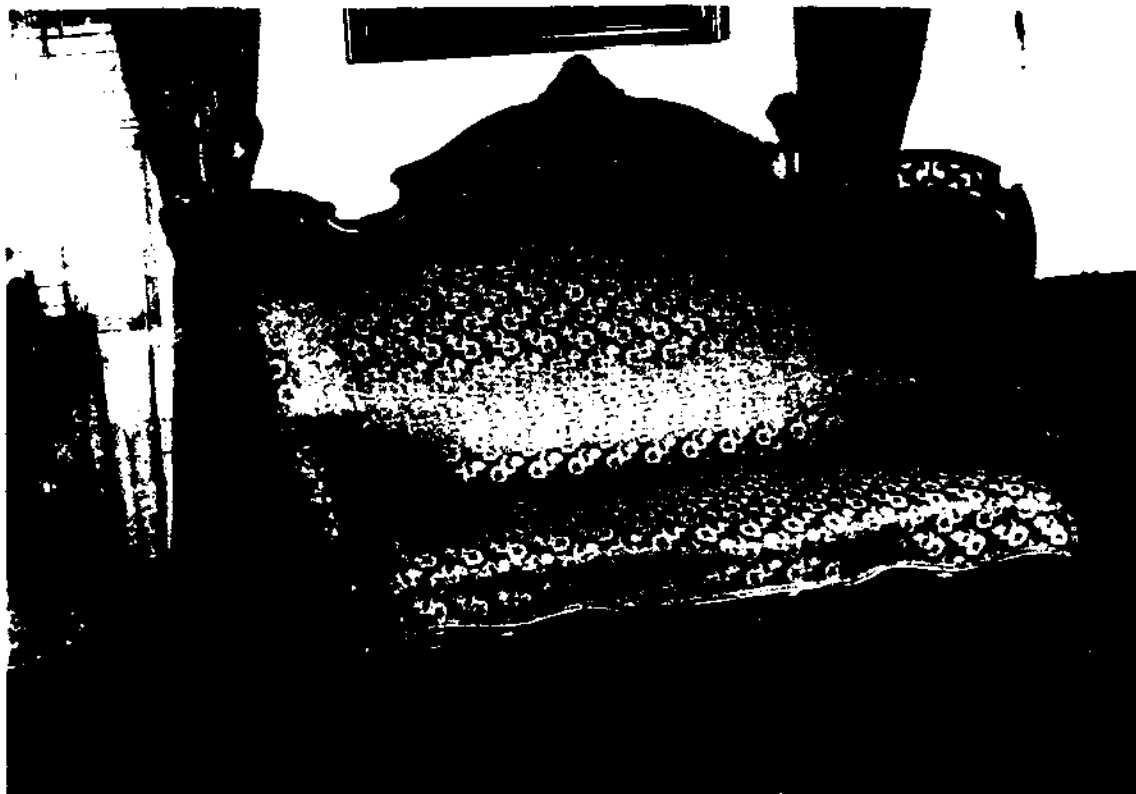


Figure 215. Scroll-curved Sofa.



Figure 216. Scroll-curved Sofa, detail.

## Millermore: Triple-arch Sofa

Figures 217 and 218

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--43", Width--72", Depth--17", Arm  
Height--22", Seat Height--16".

Material: Rosewood, velvet.

Condition: Good.

Description: Surmounted by arched, pierced crestings, the continuous frame is finger-molded and curved to create three back sections. The asymmetrically designed crestings of flowers, leafage, and scrolls top the canted back; other carving appears on the knees of the legs and on the apron. Buttoned and tufted, the back is pierced above the upholstered seat by a cyma-curved, wooden rail; the enclosed arms have padded tops and wooden hand grips. The serpentine apron flows into cabriole legs with pad feet. A sofa at East Terrace, Figure 25, may be compared to this piece. This sofa displays similarities with a Belter sofa which is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>11</sup> Ormsbee illustrates a similar sofa.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Bishop, pp. 338-339.

<sup>12</sup>Ormsbee, p. 114.



Figure 217. Triple-arch Sofa.



Figure 218. Triple-arch Sofa, detail.



## Millermore: Pillar Table with Drawer

## Figure 219

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1830-1850.

Dimensions: Height--29", Width--30½", Depth--19".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The plain rectangular top overhangs the case which contains one full-width drawer. Faced with a concave front with rounded edges, the drawer does not have attached hardware. Round and tapered, the pillar support has a plain collar at its base. An X-shaped plinth is cut from one thick board and is raised on four flat-sided, scrolled feet.



Figure 219. Pillar Table with Drawer.

## Millermore: Pedestal Parlor Table

## Figure 220

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1830-1850.

Dimensions: Height--30", Width--34", Depth--34".

Material: Mahogany, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The white marble top has serpentine-curved edges with rounded corners; the shape corresponds to the curved wooden frame. Baluster-shaped with squared edges, the pedestal rests upon a plinth which is built up of convex- and cyma-curved platforms. The bracket feet partially conceal small wooden casters. An 1848 portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Carter (now in the Museum of the City of New York) shows the couple seated at a similar table in the drawing room of their Greenwich Village home.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Bishop, p. 327.



Figure 220. Pedestal Parlor Table.

## Millermore: Folding-top Card Table

## Figure 221

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: Circa 1850.

Dimensions: Height--28", Width--34", Unfolded Top--42" x  
34", Folded Depth--17".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The hinged, folding top is made of solid wood with chamfered corners; one leaf is larger than the other, and when folded, it overhangs the frame. An apron of cyma-curved molding has chamfered corners. The four legs are square posts with baluster-turned sections which terminate in round feet.



Figure 221. Folding-top Card Table.

## Millermore: Pillar-and-Scroll Occasional Table

## Figure 222

Substyle: Gothic Revival.

Date: 1840-1865.

Dimensions: Height--30", Diameter--25".

Condition: Good.

Material: Mahogany, marble.

Description: A concave, molded edge accents the white marble top which rests upon a notched and beaded wooden frame. The hexagonal pillar is carved with a motif of pointed Gothic arches and terminates in a ringed collar. Three bracket legs are cut with flat sides and opposing cyma curves; small casters are inserted into the rounded ends.

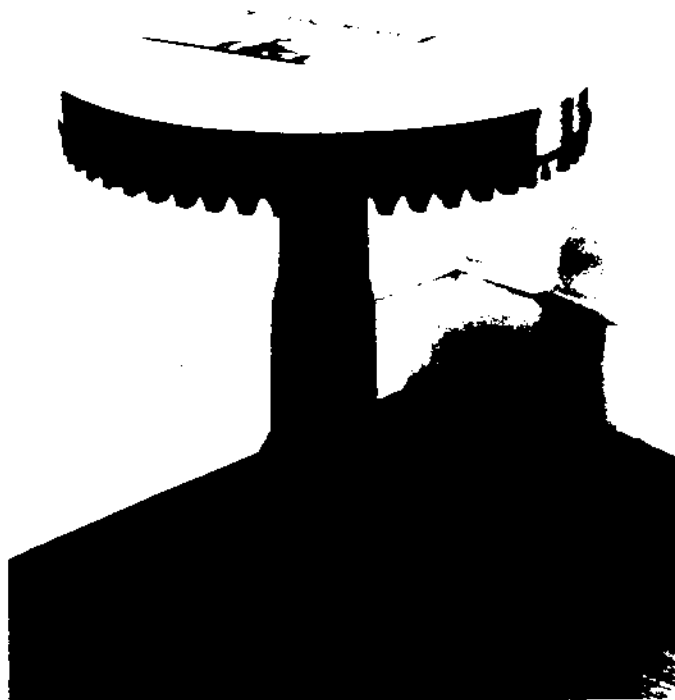


Figure 222. Pillar-and-Scroll  
Occasional Table.



## Millermore: Serpentine-top Parlor Table

## Figure 223

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height-- $29\frac{1}{2}$ ", Width--42", Depth-- $26\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Material: Walnut, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The white marble top with beveled edges overhangs a corresponding serpentine-shaped frame. Shallowly carved scrolls outline the curved apron and continue into the elaborately curved legs. Casters are inserted into the scrolled ends of the legs. Decorated on the flat edges with brass, dome-shaped tacks, the single shelf acts as a stretcher between the legs.

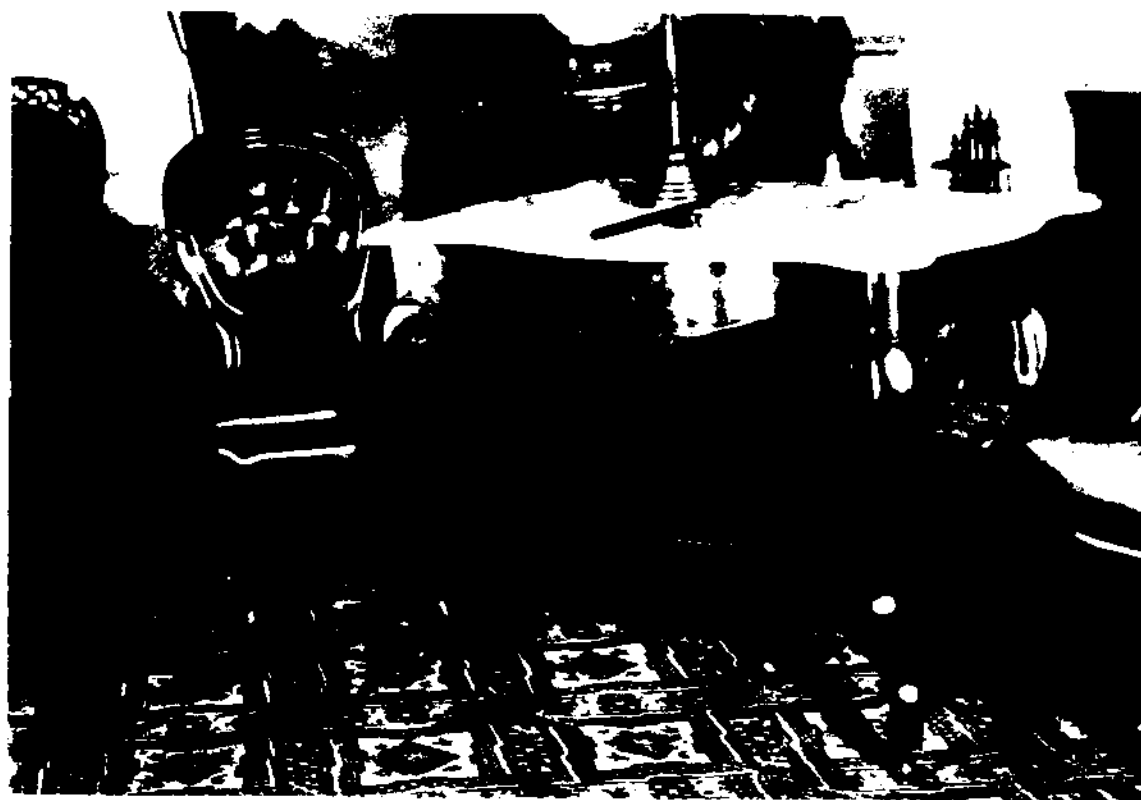


Figure 223. Serpentine-top Parlor Table.

## Millermore: Pier Table

## Figure 224

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1830-1850.

Dimensions: Height--36", Width--43", Depth--19½".

Material: Walnut, glass, marble.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular, white marble top has rounded edges and overhangs a plain, wooden frame. Supporting the top is a mirrored back with flat pilasters and carved ornaments. Curved and scrolled front legs are attached to a flat, deep base with a recessed center. Pier tables--designed to fit between windows--usually included a mirror which hung on the wall in addition to the mirror at the back of the base. Sometimes called a petticoat mirror, the purpose actually was to reflect the front scrolled legs of the piece and to emphasize decorative objects which were placed on the base. Tables such as this were priced at fifty dollars when illustrated in an 1833 advertisement of Joseph Meeks.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>William Seale, Recreating the Historic House Interior (Nashville: American Association for Local and State History, 1979), p. 151.

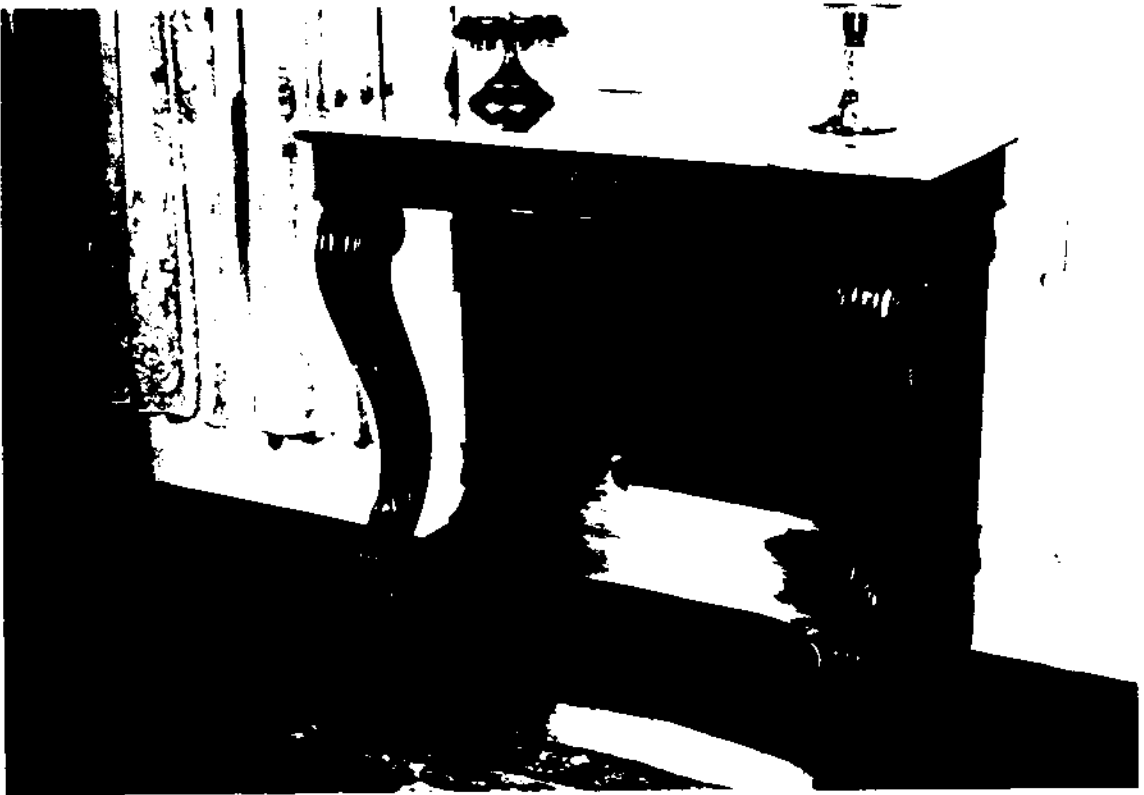


Figure 224. Pier Table.

## Millermore: Sideboard

## Figure 225

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1840-1850.

Dimensions: Height--54", Width--61", Depth--24".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular top is backed by a high, plain gallery with cyma-curved, bracket ends. Paneled sides are constructed of solid mahogany while the front is crotch-grain veneer. The projecting top contains two flush-mounted drawers and a center drawer with a convex-molded front. One convex door is recessed in a center niche; paneled doors with pointed arches flank either side. Cyma-curved brackets with flat sides are attached to each end and connect to turned-under scroll feet. This sideboard may be compared with a similar one at Fort House, Figure 91.

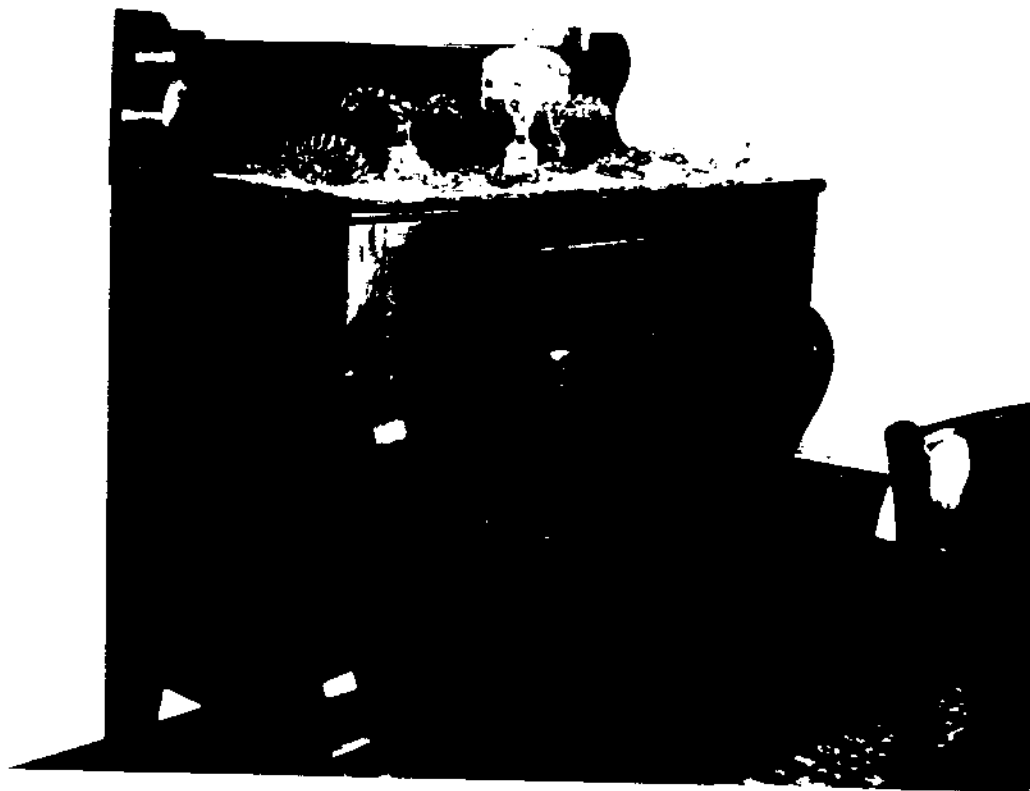


Figure 225. Sideboard.

## Millermore: Chest of Drawers

## Figure 226

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1830-1850.

Dimensions: Height--86", Width--41", Depth--18½".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: A recessed case with three shallow drawers is topped by a scrolled, back gallery. Two half-width drawers project above the three full-width drawers of the base. The front legs, with squared tops and rounded shafts, terminate in turned, vase-shaped feet. Each drawer has wooden, mushroom-shaped knobs and brass keyhole escutcheons.

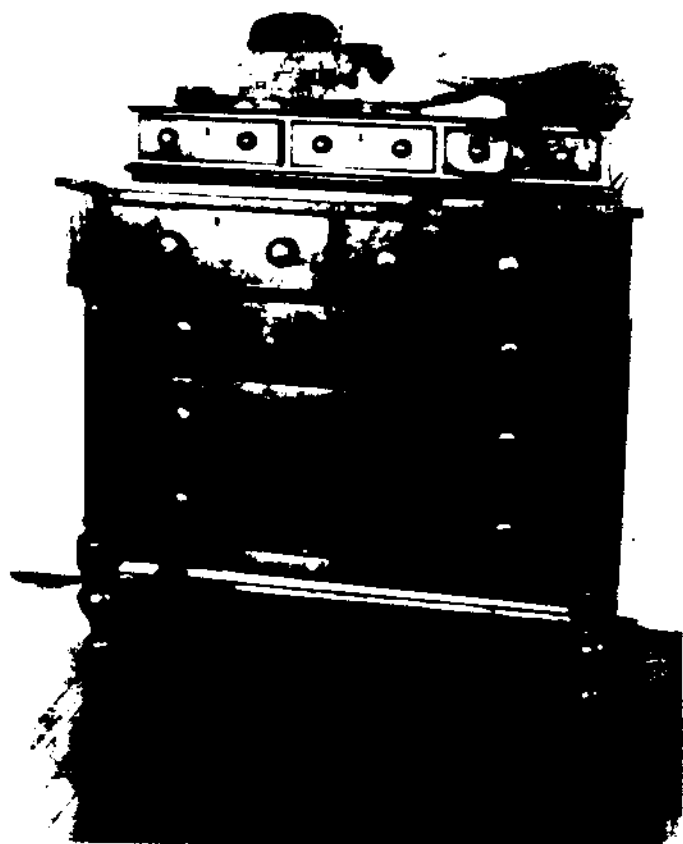


Figure 226. Chest of Drawers.



## Millermore: Folding Youth Bed

## Figure 227

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1865-1880.

Dimensions: Height--48", Width--33", Length--55".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: Hinges at the center of the headboard and footboard allow this bed to be folded flat. A curved, foliate cartouche is centered on the arched and paneled headboard; the footboard has applied and inset panels. Baluster-turned legs with square sections have vase-shaped finials. The side fences have multiple spindles with plain upper and lower rails. The M. Keating Company of Boston manufactured a folding crib of this type around 1875.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Eileen and Richard Dubrow, Furniture Made in America, 1875-1905 (Exton, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing Company, 1982), p. 218.



Figure 227. Folding Youth Bed.

## Millermore: Youth Bed

## Figure 228

Substyle: Renaissance Revival.

Date: 1855-1875.

Dimensions: Height--63", Width--38", Length--58".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: The arched pediment of the headboard has a projecting, shield-shaped cartouche; the molded pediment is supported by shallow brackets on either side of a sunken, molded panel. Four stiles are topped with segmental finials and small, flat, saw-cut ornaments. Arched with rounded molding, the footboard features irregular-shaped applied decorations and a horizontal, rectangular panel.



Figure 228. Youth Bed.

## Millermore: Hanging Wall Shelf

## Figure 229

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: Circa 1850.

Dimensions: Height--14", Width--22 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", Depth--9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Material: Walnut, silk rope.

Condition: Good.

Description: Six barley twist spindles are topped with turned finials and connect two thin wooden shelves. Suspended by four silk-wrapped cords and decorated with two tassels, the shelves hang flush with the wall. Andrew Jackson Downing illustrated a similar hanging book shelf in The Architecture of Country Houses in which he expressed the Victorian idea that a display of books signified intellectual taste.<sup>16</sup> Priced at one dollar and fifty cents, The John Danner Company of Canton, Ohio, manufactured shelves of this type as late as the 1880s.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses (New York: Appleton and Company, 1850; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publishers, 1970), p. 423.

<sup>17</sup>Dubrow, p. 179.

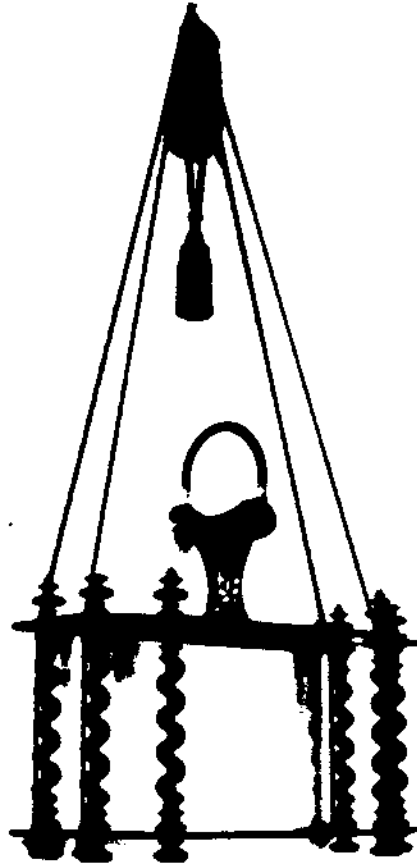


Figure 229. Hanging Wall Shelf.

Millermore: Spool-turned Whatnot

Figure 230

Substyle: Spool-turned.

Date: 1860-1880.

Dimensions: Height--54", Width--28", Depth--29".

Material: Walnut.

Condition: Good.

Description: Each serpentine-curved shelf is recessed a few inches above the next lower shelf and is supported by turned spindles. Finials at the front corners of each shelf give the appearance of the spindle penetrating the shelf. The bottom shelf is raised on short, turned legs. Scrolled galleries--characteristic of spool-turned whatnots--are missing from this piece. Manufactured by many companies over a number of years, spool-turned whatnots of this type were produced as late as the 1880s by the Archer Manufacturing Company of Rochester, New York.<sup>18</sup> Ormsbee illustrates a similar corner whatnot.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Dubrow, p. 303.

<sup>19</sup>Ormsbee, p. 288.



Figure 230. Spool-turned Whatnot.



## Millermore: Commode

## Figure 231

Substyle: Victorian Empire.

Date: 1830-1850.

Dimensions: Height--18", Diameter--14".

Material: Rosewood veneer.

Condition: Good.

Description: The round lid with a molded edge fits on a round frame. Undecorated, except for small wooden knobs, the cylinder has one convex door. The base is plain with a top-molded rim; one interior shelf supports a chamber pot. Although this piece corresponds to characteristics of the American Empire style, it is possibly English in origin. Also called chamber boxes and pot tables, Aronson illustrates similar commodes.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph Aronson, The Encyclopedia of Furniture (New York: Crown Publishers, 1965), p. 140.

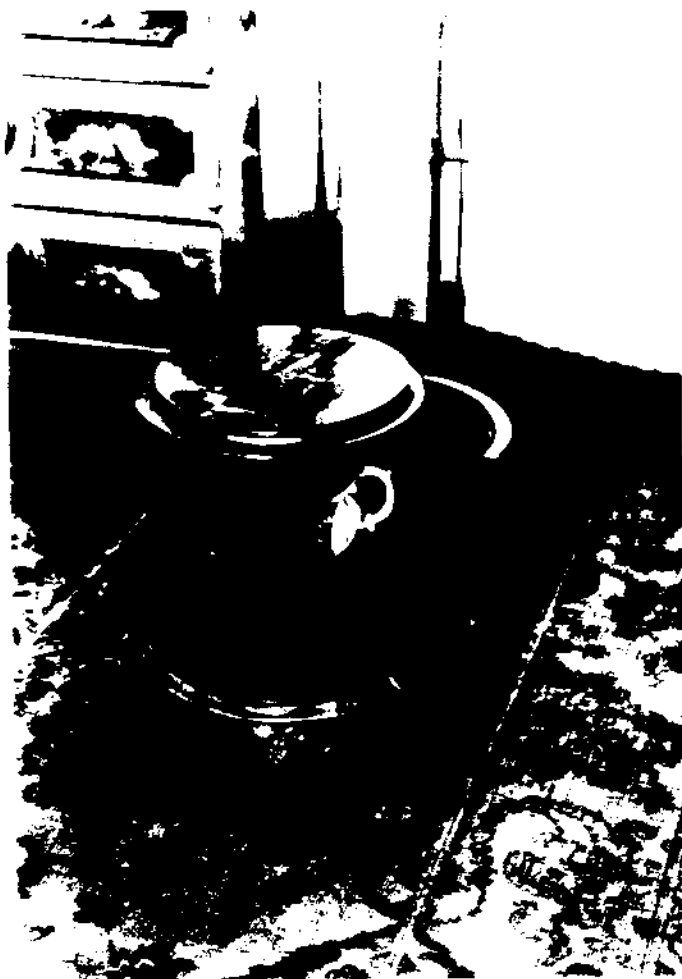


Figure 231. Conmode.

## Millermore: Footstool

## Figure 232

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: 1850-1870.

Dimensions: Height--3½", Diameter--11".

Material: Walnut, wool, glass beads.

Condition: Good.

Description: The round walnut base has a molded collar and bun-shaped, knob feet. Covered with padded wool needlepoint, part of the design is executed in glass beads. Stools such as this were common parlor furnishing in nineteenth century homes.<sup>21</sup> They were used to elevate a woman's feet above cold and drafty floors; full skirts covered the stool and the round edges could not get entangled in the fabric.

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<sup>21</sup>McNerney, p. 170.



Figure 232. Footstool.

## Millermore: Square Grand Piano

## Figure 233

Substyle: Rococo Revival.

Date: Before 1847.

Dimensions: Height--39", Width--82", Depth--39".

Material: Mahogany.

Condition: Good.

Description: The rectangular case has rounded corners, an inset keyboard, and a hinged, fold-over top; a narrow, molded border decorates the lower edge. Four tapered, octagonal legs support the case; massive in appearance, the thick legs are necessary to support the cast iron elements of the musical apparatus. The scrolled music holder and lyre-shaped pedal support are pierced and carved. Made by G. A. Miller and Company of Boston, Massachusetts, this style was popular from the late 1840s to the 1850s; this piece is believed to have been in Dallas since 1847.

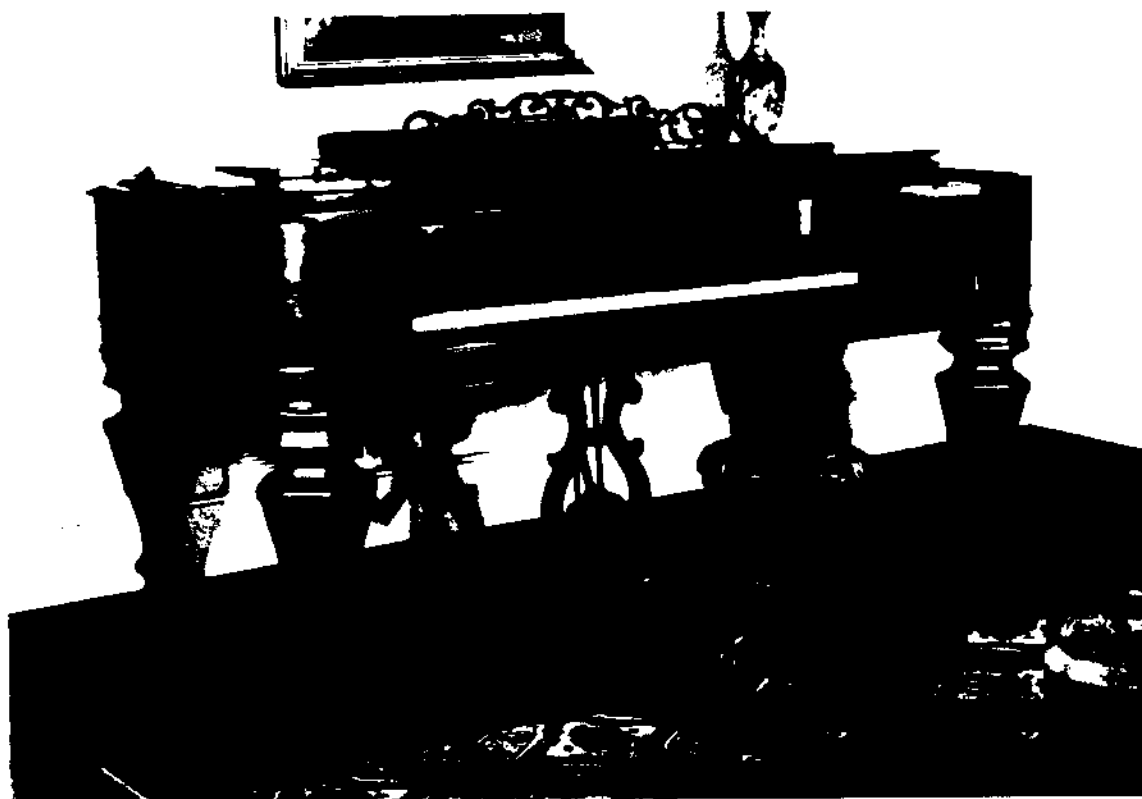


Figure 233. Square Grand Piano.

## CHAPTER IX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

One hundred and seventy-eight pieces of Victorian furniture in six Texas historic house museums have been photographed and researched. Chapter I introduces the background of the study and states the three-part problem: (1) to research and write descriptive essays of the four major Victorian substyles--Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Eastlake; (2) to identify and choose six Texas historic houses which are open to the public and which display these Victorian substyles in period room settings; and (3) to identify, photograph, measure, and catalogue each piece of authentic Victorian furniture, and to compile a research guide which includes each of these six houses and their Victorian furnishings. This six-part guide includes brief histories of each house and a catalogue of authentic pieces which represent the major substyles of Victorian furniture. Appearing in Chapter II is a discussion of the influences upon Victorian furniture, the evolution of the four substyles, the characteristics of each substyle, and the principle pieces which were made during each period.

Although furniture of the Victorian period may be divided into more than four substyles, the most popular styles were the Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Eastlake. There are no clear-cut dates for the beginning and ending of a substyle during the Victorian era; substyles often overlap or run concurrently. In addition, there are transitional pieces which possess characteristics of two or more styles. While bridging the major substyles, these transitional pieces also helped to blend pieces from distinctly different styles into more harmonious interiors; substyles were frequently mixed within a room. Furthermore, throughout the Victorian period, motifs from various sources were sometimes combined on one piece of furniture. Instead of objecting to this practice, Victorians seem to have relished the great variety of choices and styles which were available.

After a review of the literature on Victorian furniture which has been discussed previously, and after studying the museum collections, three major factors emerged which influenced American Victorian furniture: (1) technological innovation and mass production, (2) the family and the role of women, and (3) literature and furniture pattern books. These influences have not been discussed at length in any of the previous literature. A summary of these findings follows.

Victorian furniture reflects the changes from handmade to machinemade products. While constantly changing and



improving their machinery and techniques throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, manufacturers produced vast quantities of economically priced furniture. A growing population, emigrant labor, and an improved transportation system created a climate which was compatible for the accelerated growth of the furniture industry and distribution of products. As mechanization increased during the second half of the nineteenth century, curves were replaced by straight lines. Furthermore, the distinctive characteristics of each substyle may be attributed in part to the capabilities of the machinery of the period. The flat, plain scrolls of the Victorian Empire substyle display the relatively simple woodworking machinery of mid-nineteenth-century craftsmen and small factories. Rococo Revival furniture was created with steam-powered machinery which was introduced at world's fairs in England and America. Easier to produce, the straight lines of the Renaissance Revival replaced the curvilinear silhouette of the Rococo Revival. Lastly, the Eastlake substyle relied totally on mass produced, interchangeable components which were applied to basic, rectilinear cases.

Inclined to acquisition, ostentation, and exhibition of their personal social status, Victorians readily accepted the products of mass production. Technological innovations allowed them to rise from one strata of society to the next and to imitate the style of living of the more wealthy through the use of facsimile comforts. While women during the nineteenth

century were restricted from participation in many areas, they played a prominent role in the decoration of homes. Consequently, fabrics, draperies, and certain furniture types display an affinity to women's fashions of the period.

American furniture of the early Victorian period was influenced primarily by the pattern books of English and American craftsmen. The first pattern book published in America--John Hall's The Cabinet-maker's Assistant of 1840--was used by manufacturers during the Victorian Empire period. At mid-century, the styles of furniture advocated by Andrew Jackson Downing in his 1850 The Architecture of Country Houses helped to formulate an American taste in home furnishings. Books which described earlier historical styles, architectural revivals, and advocates of reform in design were influential in the latter half of the century. Interpreted by manufacturers, the ideas of authors such as Charles Locke Eastlake and Bruce Talbert, who wrote about furniture and architecture, replaced individual designers. Art and Decoration Applied to Furniture (1878), by Harriet Prescott Spofford was the first book on interior design which was written by a woman; the book was used by women in Victorian America as a guide to the selection of interior furnishings. An appeal for a return to French period furnishings was presented in 1897 by Edith Wharton's The Decoration of Houses; the book encouraged the manufacture of reproductions of

historic styles rather than interpretations based upon previous periods.

To fulfill the second part of the problem, a list of historic house museums in Texas was compiled. From a total of thirty-five houses, several were disqualified for various reasons: (1) they did not display furniture in room-like settings, (2) they were not open to the public on a regular schedule, (3) photography was not permitted, or (4) the administrators were not interested. It was discovered that some historic house museums were never homes at all; missions, barns, and commercial structures were eliminated. The selection was further limited by the fact that in several houses, items other than furniture were displayed in the same rooms--glass display cases of bric-a-brac, farm implements, and regional art projects. To give the study a broad base, and to make it useful for all students, teachers, and professional interior designers in Texas, it was decided to make the final selection of houses from diverse areas of the state. Houses were visited in North, Central, and South Texas. Thus, the list of possibilities was narrowed to ten. Because the administrator of one house in this group unethically insisted upon the payment of a fifty dollar fee, that house was omitted. In the final culling, two houses which represented the best collections of furniture from each geographic location were chosen. These included (1) from North Texas, the George House and Millermore, both in Dallas; (2) in Central Texas,

East Terrace and Fort House, historic houses located in Waco; and (3) in South Texas, Fulton Mansion in Fulton Beach, and McNamara House in Victoria. The dates of the construction of the houses range from 1868 to 1900; all four of the most popular substyles are represented in the outstanding furniture collections displayed.

Arrangements for research were made with the curator or director of each house. Two of the houses presented problems: they were new restorations and not yet open to the public. Fulton Mansion--the most extensive restoration ever undertaken in Texas--was in the final days of a five-year renovation. The park superintendent and curator allowed one day for the photography of the furniture which was on the site. This unique opportunity allows the student of interior design to study photographs of furniture in various stages of restoration. Representing a family home of the 1880s, the furnishings are primarily Renaissance Revival and Eastlake. In Dallas, the George House was being readied for public tours. Although some items were not yet placed in their proper settings, photography was permitted. Built in 1900, the Queen Anne-style farm house is furnished as the home of a middle-class family at the turn of the century; the furniture is largely the Eastlake substyle.

Open to the public while undergoing restoration, the McNamara House in Victoria represents the smallest collection of furniture. However, the pieces are interesting and unusual.

The McNamara House is illustrative of the small historic house museum, with the seemingly inherent problems of a small staff and almost nonexistent records concerning the collection. The furniture had not been previously photographed, measured, or catalogued for the museum files. Newly appointed, the first professionally trained curator of the museum welcomes students and teachers to use the collection as a research source.

Located in Waco, the two largest collections of Victorian furniture were found at East Terrace and Fort House. An Italianate-style villa, East Terrace contains furniture from all four of the most popular substyles; many of the rooms are arranged as mixtures of two or more periods. Outstanding in the collection are the Rococo Revival sofas and chairs which may be seen in the double parlors. Perhaps the most unusual item found in the six houses--a papier-mâché sewing cabinet--is the prized possession of the East Terrace. In the Greek Revival-style Fort House, the Victorian Empire sofas and bedroom furniture are exemplary. The house contains pieces from the four popular substyles; an unusual mixture of Victorian Empire and Eastlake furnishes the dining room.

Millermore in Dallas completed the research of the six houses. The collection includes Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, and Renaissance Revival pieces. Belter-type sofas and chairs grace the two parlors. Arranged as a home during

the mid-Victorian period, numerous pieces of furniture are placed against the walls and scattered about the centers of the rooms. The only piece in the Gothic Revival substyle--a small table--to be discovered in any of the six houses may be seen in the parlor of Millermore.

The third part of the problem is fulfilled in Chapters III through VIII, each of which presents one of the six historic houses. Each of these chapters consists of a brief history of the house and builder, followed by photographs and descriptions of the furniture collection. Collectively, the six houses contain a wide variety of pieces and styles. The only duplications discovered were bookcases and rocking chairs at East Terrace and the George House. Chairs were the most numerous items in the collections, followed by sofas, tables, etâgeres, and whatnots. Millermore has a large number of beds while the other houses have few; the bedrooms at the George House have not been furnished. All of the homes have pianos, which attests to the Victorian practice of educating women in the arts of cooking, sewing, and music--all deemed practical accomplishments for the housewife. Always a symbol of status and refinement, the piano was often the most expensive single item in the Victorian home.

Only two reproductions were found; in each incident the curator was aware of the fact. These reproductions were not photographed--a sofa at McNamara House, and a balloon-back chair at Fort House. Possibly dating before the Victorian

era, a cradle and a crib were judged to be of handmade, English origin. Three additional items were judged to be too far past the limits of the Victorian period to be included: a dining table and chairs at Millermore, a tête-a-tête at East Terrace, and a bow-front china cabinet at the George House. Only one piece retained the original upholstery.

In all of the houses, the quality and condition of the furniture was good. While some restoration was not professional, these instances were usually temporary measures. Conservation and preservation practices revealed varying degrees of professionalism. The collections of Millermore and the George House are maintained according to strict museum practices. Because Fulton Mansion and the McNamara House were in the process of restoration, the quality of preservation could not be assessed. In Waco, several factors are combined to create a situation which is detrimental to the collections of East Terrace and Fort House. General housekeeping is performed by live-in caretakers; often college students, these caretakers also double as docents who conduct tours. Since these houses may be rented for weddings, receptions, meetings, and even fraternity beer-busts, the furniture is frequently subject to irreparable damage. This practice keeps museums such as these from being accredited by various museum associations.

Archival information which was available concerning the holdings of these museums may be classified as being from poor

to excellent. The previously mentioned files of McNamara House, and the records of East Terrace and Fort House--both maintained by the Historic Waco Foundation--were lacking in many details. None of the furniture items had recorded measurements, and the materials were often incorrect. Although embarrassed by these revelations, the curators of these houses were cooperative and enthusiastic in the research of their collections. While a state survey study of Fulton Mansion was made available by the curator, little information concerning the furniture was included. Receipts for the original furnishings of the mansion are in the Fulton Family Archives which are deposited in the library of the University of Texas, Austin. However, while these records assisted the curator in the selection of furnishings for the restored house, none of the original furniture has been returned to the house. The Department of Parks and Wildlife plans to publish a guide to the mansion and its furnishings at a later date. The best documented archives are those of the Dallas County Heritage Society, which administers Millermore and the George House. One of the few full-time registrars to be employed by a historic house museum in Texas, the society's registrar maintains files which include measurements and other data concerning each piece of furniture in the collection. However, at the request of the curator, measurements were taken from each piece of furniture in this research project in order to check the accuracy of their information.



Each house presented a different set of problems for photography. Because a photoflash may cause serious fading and damage to textiles, portable tungsten floodlights and a camera on a tripod were used in all of the houses. In some instances, small items of furniture could be moved in order to achieve a better light balance. Unfortunately, the majority of items could not be moved, and objets d'art on surfaces had to be left in place. Wherever possible, a large, gray sheet of cardboard was used under chair legs in order to show details. Three photographic sessions were necessary at East Terrace and Fort House; two sessions were required at Millermore. Fulton Mansion, the George House, and the McNamara House each were photographed in one day.

#### Conclusions

The following conclusions may be drawn regarding Victorian furniture in the six Texas historic house museums.

(1) The major influences upon American Victorian furniture were (a) technological innovation and mass production, (b) the family and the role of women, and (c) literature and pattern books.

(2) There are no clear-cut dates to determine the beginning or ending of a Victorian substyle.

(3) The majority of pieces of furniture in the six houses are representative of the four most popular substyles of the

Victorian era: Victorian Empire, Rococo Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Eastlake.

(4) The collections of the six houses are composed of a wide variety of good quality pieces; the variety and quality attest to the inventiveness of the Victorian designer and the durability of the techniques and the materials which were used. Furthermore, pieces which logically receive more wear and tear--chairs and sofas--were found in large numbers and in good condition. Duplications of individual items in the six houses were rare; identical pieces were found in only two instances. Reproductions and pieces which were not actually Victorian were observed in only seven examples.

(5) Because of the difficulty in obtaining matching suites of dining room furniture, the dining rooms of four of the six houses are furnished in mixtures of two or more of the substyles. East Terrace has an eclectic grouping in the sparsely furnished dining room: an English Victorian table, six Victorian Empire chairs, and an Eastlake sideboard. Fort House has a similar blending of substyles which range from Victorian Empire to Eastlake. At the George House, the dining room chairs match the parlor suite but not the dining table. Compatible but from different substyles, a sideboard and an et ager e complete the ensemble. The only suite of reproduction dining room furniture found in the six houses is at Millermore. Dating from the 1920s, the furniture is scheduled to be replaced with authentic pieces. Other items

in the dining room are Victorian Empire. Because the dining room at Fulton Mansion was still undergoing restoration, the furniture was not on the premises. However, a study of photographs in the superintendent's files showed that the furniture was of a transitional period with elements of Renaissance Revival and Eastlake substyles. Also under restoration, the McNamara House did not have a furnished dining room. The curator indicated that the original dining room would house exhibits of local history and would not be furnished as a period room. Discussions with the curators concerning the incomplete dining room furnishings in their collections revealed two common problems in obtaining needed furniture: (a) people tend to keep dining room furniture in the family for sentimental reasons and (b) good quality antique dining room furniture has a high market value and is beyond the budget of many house museums. Consequently, the furnishing of a period dining room is often an ongoing project for a number of years. The director and curator of the Historic Waco Foundation said that they often accept loans of furniture from would-be donors in hope that the pieces may eventually become part of the permanent collection. At Millermore, the curator stated that while the dining table and chairs are the only reproductions in the house, the problem of replacing them is twofold. Firstly, a good quality suite of the proper substyle has to be located. Secondly, funds have to be available at the right time. To illustrate the curator's dilemma,

Millermore's reproduction dining room furniture has been on display for over a decade.

(6) Records concerning the furniture collections of the houses were not uniformly maintained. The curator of each house requested a copy of this research which pertained to his collection, and each indicated his willingness to participate in further research of their collections.

#### Recommendations

In addition to aiding in the identification of the Victorian substyles, the research of the furniture in these six historic house museums may be utilized by students, teachers, and professionals in the field of interior design in the following ways.

(1) The photographs and dimensions of each piece of furniture enables the interior design student to make measured drawings, an essential skill in the study of historical styles.

(2) The catalogue of the furniture collection of each house furnishes the teacher with previously unavailable information which can be utilized in the creation of class projects for the study of historical styles.

(3) By scrutinizing the catalogues of the collections, students and interior designers may ascertain substyles, furniture types, approximate dates, scale, and compatibility of pieces when called upon to create Victorian settings.

(4) Combined with the histories of each substyle, references, and bibliography, the photographs provide extensive information for anyone pursuing the further study of the furniture collections of these homes.

APPENDIX A

FURNITURE DATA SHEET

House: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Item:

chair      sofa      table      etágerè      desk  
bookcase      cabinet      sideboard      bed

Style: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials and Finish: \_\_\_\_\_

Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Measurements (in inches):

H. \_\_\_\_\_

Seat H. \_\_\_\_\_

W. \_\_\_\_\_

Arm H. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Photograph:

## APPENDIX B

### LOCATIONS OF HOUSES

- East Terrace, Waco, Texas. Historic Waco Foundation,  
P.O. Box 3222, Waco, Texas 76707. Open Friday and  
Saturday.
- Fort House, Waco, Texas. Historic Waco Foundation, P.O.  
Box 3222, Waco, Texas 76707. Open Friday and Saturday.
- Fulton Mansion, Fulton Beach, Texas. Texas Parks and Wild-  
life Department, P.O. Box 1859, Fulton, Texas 78358.  
Open daily.
- George House, Dallas, Texas. Dallas County Heritage Society,  
Old City Park, 1717 Gano, Dallas, Texas 75215. Closed  
Mondays.
- McNamara House, Victoria, Texas. Victoria Regional Museum  
Association, 306 West Commercial, Victoria, Texas  
77901. Open daily.
- Millermore, Dallas, Texas. Dallas County Heritage Society,  
Old City Park, 1717 Gano, Dallas, Texas 75215. Closed  
Mondays.

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