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COVER
(Photograph in R.I.H.S.)

View of South Main Street, Providence, looking north from the intersection of
Planet Street, taken in 1894. The portion of the building at the right was the home
of Welcome Arnold, formerly Devin’s Tavern, and now the site of the International
Business Machines Corporation. Far to the left is Infantry Hall, burned in 1942,
the present site of the Firemen’s Mutual Insurance Company. (See p. 18 for
further detail.)

PROVIDENCE CABINETMAKERS

By Eleanore Bradford Monahon

A great deal has been written about the Townsend-Goddard
school of Newport furniture, but little attention has been paid to the
Providence cabinetmakers of this same period. The Newport group
comprising some twenty members of the Townsend-Goddard dynasty
of cabinetmakers worked for about a hundred years (ca. 1740-1840)
and has been credited with the work of other furniture makers, not
only workers in Newport but also craftsmen elsewhere in Rhode
Island. We know now that it is not sufficient to attribute certain pieces
of furniture to the Newport school solely on a basis of style and the
kind of wood used. Moreover recent studies have revealed that there
were competent cabinet workers in Providence, six of whom banded
together on February 19, 1756, to make a price fixing agreement,
which was revised on March 24, 1757.1 (see pp. 2 and 3)

Although Providence in the 1750s was smaller and less wealthy
than Newport, it was beginning to give evidence of its eventual trade
leadership. In the Crawford Papers in The Rhode Island Historical
Society’s library are several bills from a signer of this trade agreement,
Phillip Potter, to Captain Joseph Crawford, who was carrying on a
profitable trade with the West Indies. On August 6, 1762, he lists
tables and chairs amounting to £357. Again on May 14, 1763, desks
of “mapel and walnot,” tables of “mapel, mahogany and charatry”
(cherry tree) to the amount of £575. On January 22, 1764, Potter
had sold Crawford a lot of furniture including “mapel, walnot and
mahogany Tables”... Joyners’ chairs, desks, etc. for £826. In this

1Ms. in The Rhode Island Historical Society.
bill was also listed a “Black Walnut Desk Cas’d (crated) to go by the sloop Rhodes,” at £143. Again on July 1, 1767, Potter was billing Captain Crawford: 

To 3½ feet mahogany Table with claw feet 67—6—11
To 1 mahogany Tea Do 34—0—0
To cutting the claw feet 16—0—0

£117—6—11

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providence Cabinetmakers</th>
<th>January 1664</th>
<th>Providence Cabinetmakers</th>
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Without doubt Potter’s furniture compared favorably in quality and design with that made and exported from Newport, since Job Townsend, Jr., was charging Joseph Wanton about that time £65 for a “Mahogany Fly table.”

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**REVISED AGREEMENT OF MARCH 24, 1757**

Providence March ye 24th 1757 Made By us Subscribers the Price of Joyner’s work a Low Case of Drawers @ £33 Do with Polished @ £36 0 0
Plane Desk @ £44 with Polished hands @ 48 0 0
Desk with two tear of Drawers £55 a high Case of Drawers @ 70 0 0
Maple Rule Joynt tables @ 6£ pr foot old fashion Joyns 65—10—0
Common tea table @ 10£ Citchen table @ 12£ Beadsted with high Posts 12—0—0
Pael Beadsted @ £18 Do with Loc Posts @ £10
Trundel Beadsted @ 11—0—0
Pine Chests with two Drawers @ £22 Do with one Draw @ 16—0—0
Maple Chest with two Drawers @ 25£ Do with one Drawer @ 20—0—0
House Chest @ 10£ Maple Gradel @ 12£ Do Pine @ 10—0—0
Common Sea Chest @ 7£ Do 4 feet Long @ 8£ 08—0—0
Mehogey Stand Table @ 30£ Do Black walnut @ 26—0—0
Maple Do @ 20£ maple Candel Stand @ 10£ 10—0—0
Do walnut 12 & mehogany @ 18£ mehogany high Case of Drawers @ 100—0—0
Do with Crown and Claws @ 150£ Mehogany Chamber table @ 50—0—0
Mehogany Desk with 2 Drawers @ 95£ walnut Do with 2 tear of Drawers @ 75—0—0
Black walnut high Case of Drawers @ 85£
Mehogany Rule Joynt tables @ 11£ a foot
Walon Do @ [ torn ] £ a foot
To Casen of a Desk @ £5

Gershom Carpenter
Grindall Rawson
Benja. Hunt
John Power
Phillip Potter
Joseph Sweeping

a Desk with two tear of drawers & ye Protitions Brought [ torn ] £11 0 0
A Bedside with Cock Tennants £10
A desk with two tear of Drawers one Square draw £39 0 0

Rule And Price of A Table of Joyners Work
Phillip Potter His
Book 1756

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Crawford Papers, R.I. Hist. Soc.
The mahogany high case of drawers (highboy) referred to in the
agreement of 1757 for £100 must have been every whit as good as
those produced by the Townsend-Goddards. For less money they
made simple and less pretentious pieces for home trade and for export.

We do know that Phillip Potter was well enough established to hire
a wood turner, one William Barker, to make such items as his chair
rounds, stiles, bed posts, chair bottoms, handles, and chair legs. As
a master cabinetmaker Potter doubtless could spend his time to better
advantage carving intricate details rather than turning legs for cheap
bannister-backs or slat-back chairs.

At any rate the geographical situation of Providence at the head of
Narragansett Bay, with roads leading to western Connecticut, to
southern Massachusetts, and to Boston, would account for the town's
control of a certain amount of custom from the hinterland even before
the American Revolution. The war put an end to Newport's wealth
and consequently restricted her buying power, while Providence
gained in foreign export business as well as in coastwise traffic and in
overland commerce. Moreover, the years just following the war saw
the construction of small, medium, and large houses, a real postwar
building boom in Providence. Some were even of superior quality:
John Brown House (1786), the Joseph Nightingale House (1792),
the Thomas Poynton Ives House (1806), and the Sullivan Dorfl
House (1809), to name a few. The question naturally arises as to how
these new buildings and more especially how hundreds of other
moderately pretentious new homes were furnished.

The new style set by the classical revival made the Queen Anne
curvilinear line, a favorite of Newport cabinetmakers, unpopular
even as early as 1785. Styles set by Robert Adam's Syon House, based
on his illuminating trip to the Roman ruins at Pompeii and Dalmatia,
swept away the rococo forms of the American Chippendale and earlier
Queen Anne styles in furniture. The classical Adam style was again
emphasized in Hepplewhite's Guide (1788) and Sheraton's Drawing
Book (1791-94) as well as in Charles H. Tatham's Etchings of
Ancient Ornamental Architecture (1799). Antique art based on a
trip to Sicily, Egypt, and the Near East was the source of furniture
designs in Thomas Hope's Household Furniture and Interior Decoration
(1807).


A set of three chairs of the intermediate style, just between the
Chippendale and the more classic Hepplewhite version, has recently
been added to the Society's collections. The splats of these chairs are
topped by a Greek kylix urn, originally illustrated in Hepplewhite's
Guide and used in the so-called "Rhode Island Hepplewhite" shield-
back chairs, which can be seen in the dining room of John Brown
House. The lower portion of the central splat of the newly acquired
chairs is, however, unusual in its use of three large graduated and
vigorously carved bell flowers (Illustration 1). The channelled taping
of the front legs is in the best Rhode Island tradition. Clearly these
chairs are not the work of an amateur or country joiner. Indeed the
only deviation from the Newport tradition is the use of slightly lighter
weight mahogany. By family tradition they are the work of Job
Danforth, a Providence cabinetmaker and father of Walter Danforth,
mayor of Providence, 1853. In the Job Danforth account book, which
is also in the Society's library, we see that he was working for the
more prominent Providencians: Arthur and James Fenner, William
Goddard, John Mason, Benjamin Gladding, Samuel Nightingale,
James Burrill, Amos Throop, Tristam Burgess and Philip Crapo.

On October 16, 1792, Job was listing a "high Post Bedsted" among other
pieces of furniture for Jabez Bowen who, we know, accustomed to the
best in furnishings, employed John Goddard of Newport to make him a
tea table and other pieces of furniture.

On July 25, 1802, Elisha Dyer bought from Danforth a mahogany
sideboard for £15 and on November 24, 1802, a "high post birch bedstead,
fluted posts" for £2. 2. 0. The prices in this account book are lower


Illustration 1. Transitional Hepplewhite chair (probably made by Job Danforth) in
John Brown House. Gift to The Rhode Island Historical Society by Col. and Mrs. J. Danforth
Edwards.
than those in the 1756 fair price agreement. This does not necessarily indicate the lack of prestige of the cabinetmaker, but could as well result from the variable buying power of Rhode Island money.

By the turn of the century the Rawsons, Webb and Scott, John Burr, the Carolles, James Aborn, Luther Metcalf, Cyrus Cleveland, and Thomas Howard, Jr., were evidently taking over a great deal of the Newport cabinetmaking business — all working in the new classical style. One is tempted to add Peter Grinnell's name to this list of cabinetmakers. As a ship chandler he advertised in the newspapers in addition to ships' supplies gilded architectural mirrors. There is a labeled example in the Los Angeles County Museum. These mirrors are identified by a very slender twisted rope column. It seems more reasonable, however, that Grinnell either employed a journeyman mirror maker or secured them from a local cabinetmaker. In 1824 Rhodes G. Allen advertised in the Providence Directory: "fine furniture for sale and has 6 journeymen, good workmen and only 1 apprentice who all work under his instruction." But this was the era of specialization. The Industrial Revolution made one noticeable change in cabinetmaking: the enterprising artisan quite often took on a wholesale line of associated items of upholstery and house furnishings and gained a rapid turnover by selling (along with his own finer line) a cheaper variety of fancy and Windsor chairs made by chair specialists. He was likely to accumulate a much more substantial estate than did the plodding eighteenth century individual craftsman who, in spite of his skill, often kept only one step ahead of the sheriff. Thomas Howard, Jr., is an example of one such enterprising furniture wholesaler and entrepreneur. A skilled workman, he began his career about 1790 and died in 1833, at the age of 59, with a considerable fortune, acquired mainly from a wholesale furniture and upholstery business, together with a large trade in ivory, popular at this time for decoration of fine furniture and sundry other uses. The recent discovery of a handsome and fairly sophisti-

Illustration 2. Desk and bookcase labeled Thos. Howard, Jr., owned by Mr. and Mrs. W. Stanley Barrett, Providence, Rhode Island.
knobs are indeed a characteristic more peculiar to Providence than to other New England areas. Thomas Howard, Jr., advertised in the March 1812 Providence Gazette “600 ivory knobs on a new and improved plan, warranted.” Beds with ivory escutcheons were also a Providence product.\textsuperscript{11} Between 1814 and 1819 Howard imported through the firm of Brown and Ives thousands of dollars worth of ivory.\textsuperscript{12} In one shipload alone in 1816 he paid $27,140.50 for “elephants’ teeth and schrevilla (scrivello)” but sold to Mrs. Brown of Warren, Gideon Young, and Daniel Dailey over $3,000 worth of this shipment. This was the beginning of an ivory business which was later expanded to Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{13} In 1827 Howard had sold his Providence furniture warehouse business and kept only his ivory wholesale activities.\textsuperscript{14} In fact Howard’s son Joseph (b. 1803) seems to have acted as his father’s agent in these wholesale activities. Joseph died at Funchal on the island of Madeira in 1837 while in pursuit of the family business.\textsuperscript{15}

Thomas Howard, Jr., was born in Pawtuxet in 1774, on the Warwick side of the Pawtuxet River, the grandson of John Howard, who had arrived in Rhode Island in the early part of the eighteenth century from England. Thomas, Sr. (1733-1818) who had married Abigail Lawton (1750), became a baker and lived in a gambrel-roofed house near the junction of the present Narragansett Parkway and the old Post Road, close by the bridge over the Pawtuxet River. He had bought the land in 1774 together with a house and bake shop from George Arnold, a descendant of the original grantee, William Arnold.\textsuperscript{16} In the same year he obtained from George Arnold a right-of-way across Peck Lane to a wharf on the Pawtuxet River.\textsuperscript{17} Here he imported flour for his bread and shipped his baked loaves on board a small boat to market in Providence.

In 1792 Thomas, Sr., acquired two lots of land from Gideon Frost up and across the Post Road abutting on land owned by Col. Samuel Aborn, Benjamin Ellis, and one Bartlett.\textsuperscript{18} However, the elder Thomas evidently did not have the business acumen evinced by his son, for in 1795 we find he began to sell his land to Thomas, Jr.: first, the Frost lot he had so recently acquired, then in 1798 all the real estate he owned (including a dwelling) in return for a dowry of $70 to each of his three daughters when they should marry, and in consideration of an extra $100 he secured a life estate on his son’s property.\textsuperscript{19}

Thomas, Jr., was well enough established to marry on November 28, 1798, Mary Humphrey of Barrington.\textsuperscript{20} He had already set up a cabinetmaker’s business in Providence. Four years earlier Thomas, Jr., and his brother Joseph had sailed forth to the larger town, Joseph as a housewright and Thomas, Jr., as a cabinetmaker. They chose the newly established commercial area on the west side of the Weybosset Bridge.\textsuperscript{21} The venture did not prove successful and in 1795 Thomas sold his half interest in this land to Joseph and advertised October 15, 1795, that he was going home to Pawtuxet where he would “be happy to attend the commands of his old customers and such others as may please to employ him.”\textsuperscript{22} Obviously Thomas, Jr., not only spent time in working on fine pieces like the Barrett secretary (Illustration 2), but had an eye out for every possible dollar, for in 1800 he had taken on a “concession for installing a new method of fitting windows to stand without weights or spring” from one Thomas Overton of Providence.\textsuperscript{23} By 1804 Howard had built up such a backlog of fine furniture that he essayed a bold move: a “big-time” advertisement in The Providence Gazette in which he listed a considerable array of items (Illustration 3). His “secretaries with bookcases and panel doors” refer to the type shown in Illustration 2. “Serpentine, elliptic, sash cornered or straight front side boards” suggest the Hepplewhite

\textsuperscript{11} The large canopy bed, formerly in the Carriage House Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design and thought to be the work of MacIntire, is conceded now to be of Providence origin.

\textsuperscript{12} Brown and Ives Papers, Petty Ledger No. 7, p. 83; John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, R. I.

\textsuperscript{13} Philadelphia Directory, 1829.

\textsuperscript{14} Providence Manufacturers’ and Farmers’ Journal, March 1, 1827.


\textsuperscript{16} Warwick Town Records, Book 11, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{17} Idem, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., Book 12, p. 507.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., Book 13, p. 186, 474, 475.


\textsuperscript{21} Dec. 18, 1784, “James Sabin and wife, Nancy, for the sum of 150 dollars granted to Joseph Howard and Thomas Howard Jr., both of Providence, Housewright & Cabinet-maker, as tenants-in-common a lot of land situated on the west side of the Weybossett Bridge,” Providence R. I. Deed Book, No. 24, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{22} The Providence Gazette, Oct. 15, 24, 31, 1795.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., Aug. 30, 1800.
The young cabinetmaker's industry paid off, and shrewdly he continued to invest in land and buildings near the houses he had bought in 1798 from his father. In 1817 Peleg Arnold sold Thomas, Jr., a "lot of land and barn, 50 feet fronting on the lane and gangway leading from the estate of the late Job Randall." In 1808 he secured it necessary to charge his father $10 a year rent although he had already given him life tenancy. His last property deal in Pawtuxet was the acquisition from John Anthony Aborn of a house and lot on the west side of the Post Road near the Great Bridge for $1,600.

It was doubtless in this period that Howard made the three truncated Hepplewhite chairs, now the property of Miss Alice Mauran of Providence, and by family tradition, bought at the Howard shop on South Main Street (Illustration 4). Since the Maurans and the descendants of Thomas Howard, Jr., have always been close friends this attribution seems reasonable. Truncated Hepplewhite chairs are far from common especially with such vigorously carved, feather designed splat as is displayed on these armchairs. Black and white geometric inlay is a characteristic of Providence cabinetmaking of the classical years (Illustration 5). These chairs have a certain naiveté, a rather provincial quality, which can be assigned to a great deal of the Rhode Island work of the 1800 period. One is immediately struck by the similarity to the truncated side chair in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which has been attributed because of the rake of the legs and slight thickening at the base to Elbert Anderson, who worked in New York 1789-1800 (Illustration 6). Alexander Hamilton also owned truncated shield-back Hepplewhite armchair, by family tradition from the shop of Thomas Howard, Jr.; owned by Miss Alice E. Mauran, Providence, Rhode Island.
white chairs, but they are far different not only from Howard's version but also from the Metropolitan Museum chair, which has a feather and shell carved splat identical with the Howard chair. The satinwood and ebony inlay while not exactly the same follows a similar naïve, geometric black and white pattern of Howard's bellflower found on the card tables sold to Edward Carrington in 1817 (Illustration 10).

Triangular stringing surrounds a wide satinwood panel on the crest of the Providence chair while the New York chair has simple stringing and lacks the broad panel. The splay and strength of its tapering front legs gives more sophistication to the latter, but the appearance of the back of the two chairs is strikingly similar, as seen in the cut of the splat and the inlay. One must attribute both chairs to the same shop. Since Howard did not begin to import chairs from Newark and New York for his wholesale business until 1813 (and these were cheap Windsor or fancy chairs) one must conclude that this truncated heavy mahogany Hepplewhite chair was made in Howard's shop either by the master or by able apprentices.

There is good probability that the small hunt board or server, formerly in the Hoffman Collection and now in the Society's dining-room, may also be a Howard product of the 1800 period (Illustration 7). Of mahogany and simply strung with a tulip wood inlay, this piece has a characteristic Howard feature: a simple and rather crude crossed branch and leaf inlaid design whose details remind us strongly of the bellflowers used on the Metropolitan Museum chair. One of a small group of skillfully executed pieces, this server lacks the broad variegated banded inlay found on at least two

On April 3, 1813, he announces that Jonas & Nutman of Newark, N. J., have appointed him their sole agent for the sale of chairs. It was not until Jan. 11, 1823, that Howard ran a small advertisement in The Providence Journal offering "4000 fancy and Windsor chairs of superior quality 50c to 5 dollars."


Illustration 7. Small server by Thomas Howard, Jr., in John Brown House, from the bequest of Henry A. Hoffman to The Rhode Island Historical Society.
chairs. By this time he was out of the woods financially and well on his way to wealth. The evidence of the 1,000 fancy & Windsor chairs indicates that about this time Howard had begun to retail chairs for other cabinetmakers. By 1812 also he decided to move back to Providence again and purchased a building on South Main Street upon which he paid a moderate tax. This wooden house had two stores in its brick basement.\(^{33}\)

Immediately after returning to Providence he began bringing in large numbers of chairs from Newark. This enlarged business activity indicates a larger market. Besides supplying furniture to the local houses Howard was sending a number of ventures by Brown and Ives ships, which by 1814 supplied him with large amounts of ivory for his wholesale trade.\(^{34}\) In 1816 he furnished chairs for their counting rooms, made furniture for Thomas Ives, and outfitted the ship Charlotte to the amount of $1,020.87. That year Howard's ivory business with Brown and Ives totaled $27,140.50, a fairly substantial bill, which Howard settled in June with a $1,000.00 cash payment and notes on Providence and New York banks, maturing in three months.\(^{35}\) He must have foreseen a rapid turnover in his ivory business,

\(^{33}\)Providence tax books mention T. Howard Jr. first in 1813 as paying town and state taxes, in 1818 as paying $28.56 town tax compared to $257.60, the tax of his neighbor, Welcome Arnold.

\(^{34}\)Brown and Ives Papers, Petty Ledger no. 7, p. 83; no. 8, p. 9, 124, 347.

\(^{35}\)Ibid., no. 7, p. 83, 341, 351.

resulting from the general improvement in all lines of trade at the close of the war with Great Britain. Howard, however, could count on the Brown and Ives's payment of $4,423.00 for furniture, cargo, and sundry other items for that year. By the twenties then, we can safely say that our artisan, Howard, has turned merchant and become a substantial citizen.

Howard was also doing an extensive business with Edward Carrington during these years, billing him on November 20, 1817, for a pair of card tables (Illustration 10) in the currently popular D shape. The detail (Illustration 11) shows the same simple black and white stylized bellflower used in his earlier pieces together with a simple urn incorporating a similar bellflower inlay. Triangular stringing such as that used on the upper panel of the truncated Hepplewhite armchair.

Illustration 10. One of a pair of card tables made for the prominent China trade merchant, Gen. Edward Carrington, by Thomas Howard, Jr. Owned by Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Hunter Mauhan, Providence, Rhode Island.
chairs." Among other items is a sizable lot of furniture. During 1820-21 he sold Carrington a long list of upholstery materials, tea trays, knives and forks, as well as mahogany washstands, snuffers, and the ever-present ivory commode knobs. In these upholstery materials there is mention of haircloth, morines, fringes, tassels, cards, and carpet binding. Howard launched quite a venture on the ship *George* on June 28, 1821, which included mahogany dining tables, bookcases, washstands. Again he sent ventures on the ship *Trumbull* in 1823 and the *Panther* in 1825.38

The success of his furniture warehouse business and ivory trade led Howard to attempt to extend his business to another city. Philadelphia offered opportunities greater than Providence. He took his family and tried his luck at expansion in that city in 1819 soon after the birth of his son, Ezra Williams Howard. For some reason this move did not prove satisfactory, and he returned to Providence after a year's absence. Later he resumed business in Philadelphia (1831-1833) as an ivory dealer only.39

The small quarters at 88 South Main Street south of Market Square had to be enlarged. Howard had already occupied 13 Cheapside as a wholesale store or "furnishing warehouse." By 1820 he obviously had to expand to No. 2 North Water Street, for he held a furniture auction there on April 29, 1820, and described the store "as amply large and commodious therefore ladies will find no inconvenience in attending."40 Enthusiasm for classical styles being still rampant, we note that Howard offered "Grecian as well as common sofas," along with easy "lolling" chairs, bureaus, night cabinets, and Pembroke tables. We assume that the Sheraton style of furniture was in full swing in Providence in the year 1820. B. & T. Hoppin, Auctioneers, were knocking down a large assortment of "elegant mahogany" pieces to the ladies as well as the gentlemen that day.

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37 Ibid. Papers of the *Brig Viper,* 1815-1817.
38 Ibid. Ships' Papers.
39 *De Sizer's Philadelphia Directories* 1831-1833. In his will, in which he calls himself "of Philadelphia," made in 1831 and probated in Providence in 1833 . . . he names his mother, Abigail; his wife, Mary; sister, Martha Carpenter; sister, Abigail who m. Duty Roberts; Mary Niles and four children, who were: Joseph, (1803-1837) buried at Funchal, Island of Madeira; Marion m. Dr. Lewis W. Clifford; Elizabeth m. Mayor Thomas M. Burgess; and Ezra W. Howard . . .
40 *Rhode Island History,* v. 11, p. 46.
41 *Providence Patriot,* April 9, 1820.
To learn how Thomas Howard, Jr., acquired his second house on South Main Street we must go to Mayor Walter Danforth's "Reminiscences of Providence" given to enthusiastic audiences over a period of years between 1835 and 1861. The good mayor used the Society's famous theater curtain view of Providence by Worrall to spellbind his listeners with tales of early Providence and its curious citizens. An old photograph in the Society shows a view of South Main Street looking north (front cover). The wooden gambrel-roofed house to the left was the house to which Howard moved in 1812.41 Mayor Danforth tells us how the fine three-and-a-half story brick building to the right, probably designed by the famous Providence architect, John Holden Greene, happened to be built. "Between the Burroughs, or Thomas Howard, house and Welcome Arnold's farther down South Main Street, were three old wooden buildings occupied by a nondescript corps of tenants, keeping hucksteries and grog shops. From the aspect of the buildings and the looks and habits of the tenants and patrons of the shops, it had obtained the name of Rotten Row and was a nuisance to those who lived in the vicinity. Dr. Richardson and the late T. Howard obtained a long lease of the ground, abated the nuisance and erected the brick dwelling house which now occupies the place..."42

The 1820s saw a great increase in the amount of Howard's wholesale business caused by the rising standard of living and the concentration of money in Rhode Island by the textile industry. The common man, and there were many of them, had begun to spend his salary for furniture. The Eastern, West Indian, and South American trades brought wealth to many a Providence family. Buying power was not restricted to the few merchant princes as in the eighteenth century. The advertisement of January 8, 1823, (Illustration 13) shows the addition to Howard's Furnishing Warehouse of hardware items such as screws, hinges, brass andirons, candlesticks, lamps, bellows, masons' and carpenters' tools, and carpets. Upholstery items were extended, and a note advised retailers to outfit themselves for their trade from the Howard store. Pianoforte of "Geibs Make" were advertised with much guile; the same old hardwood lumberyard near Cheapside was evidently doing a thriving business.43 Howard must have remembered later that he had forgotten to mention the extraordinary quantity of Windsor and fancy chairs he had on hand, because on January 11, 1823, he offered no fewer than 4,000 of them of "superior quality with handsome patterns from 50 cents to 5 dollars."44

Footnotes:
41 "Records of the Providence Mutual Insurance Company, v. 6, show Howard insured in 1820 a "self occupied wooden house, the lower stories of which is brick with two shops, 40' front, 38' front to rear, 3 stories in the rear addition."
42 "Rhode Island History, v. 11, p. 54.
43 "The Providence Gazette, Jan. 8, 1823.
44 "The Providence Gazette, Jan. 1, 1823."
Between 1820 and 1827 Howard's operations increased steadily: outfitting ships, venture cargoes, and the lucrative ivory business. At length he felt unable to cope with so great a mass of divergent details; therefore on March 1, 1827, he announced that he was giving up his Providence business and selling everything at his stores on North Main and North Water streets at auction.45

On March 13, 1828, he extended his land holdings from his house on South Main up to Benefit Street. He then owned a greater part of the block on the north side of Planet Street. Nothing was done to improve this land until after Howard's death, when according to the terms of his will the three small buildings situated on Benefit Street were torn down and the present triple row house built, now numbered 304, 306, and 308.

Ventures in real estate had always had an attraction for him since his Pawtuxet days, and in 1826-1827 he invested in a five-story, granite office blockfrontingon Market Square with an addition projecting on North Main Street just opposite the Market House. This block was let to printers, tailors, attorneys, and the Providence Journal, while three dry goods firms, Messrs. R. Harding and Son, B. and G. A. Taylor, and James E. Butts, sold their wares on the first floor. Having begun to realize a substantial income in rents, Howard returned to Philadelphia, where he had established himself briefly in the ivory business back in 1819. There he was listed as a "gentleman" in the city directories.46

Life seemed serene until a huge fire struck the five-story granite building at Market and Main streets in Providence. There is an account of the bravery of the local people in helping to carry out prized papers from the offices in spite of "molten lead pouring down like lava" on the struggling firemen below from the Providence Journal room and the job printers' shop (Smith & Parmenter's). But the blaze was quenched and stock taken of the damage, well covered by the Mutual Insurance Company, amounting to $6,000. Howard tendered his thanks to his neighbors for their help and regretted that he had not been in Providence on the night of the fire.47

Until 1833 Howard divided his time between Philadelphia and Providence, living the life of a wealthy business man. He died February 4, 1833, in the fifty-ninth year of his age and was buried from his home on South Main Street.48

His estate, large for those days ($90,363.81) was made up of his house and land, stocks, notes, and personal property. In his will, executed by George Curtis (since Thomas Burgess, his son-in-law, who later became mayor of Providence, had declined to draw it up) was mention of 70 elephants' tusks, already sold to Howard & George in Providence, for $2,506.50. The furniture, though by our standards extremely valuable, was appraised in very low terms indeed, except two pier tables "in Philadelphia" that were valued at $40.00. No doubt these were in the French Empire style, so popular at the moment. Among the storeroom items were 48 yards of Saxony and 24 yards of Brussels carpets valued at $144 and a painted floor carpet at $20, which latter type of floor covering was made by putting layers of paint in designs on canvas. Many of these geometric "painted carpets" were made on shipboard by sailors and can be seen in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century paintings.49

So Thomas Howard, Jr., lived across two eras. He started in the artisan tradition of the eighteenth century (trained in the late Chippendale styles), saw the amazing revolution instigated by Robert Adam, Thomas Hope, and George Smith, was affected by French classicism of the 1790's, and finally adopted the Egyptian motifs inspired by Napoleon's campaign of 1798-1802. The new nation saw itself as the second Roman Republic. Its leaders threw themselves wholeheartedly into a furor of imitation of the stylistic trends of classical art in the same way as they likened their military heroes to Cincinnati. Both the United States and France, the two new republics, enthusiastically adopted classical designs produced by the geometric arrangement of ovals, rectangles, and squares, seen best in the inlay of their furniture. The shape of their pieces was disciplined, self-contained, not fluid and restless as that of the preceding rococo Chippendale period, against which these republicans violently re-

45Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal, March 1, 1827.
47Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal, March 1, 1827. R.I. H.S.
48Paxton's Annual Directory of 1819 lists Howard, Thomas, Gentleman, 257 North Front.
49Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal, April 2, 1827.
50Providence Journal, Feb. 11, 1833.
51Providence City Records, No. A547U. Record Book No. 4.
belled. Surfaces were made to appear slick and taut with veneers of exotic woods, contrasting with the plastic quality of the carved surfaces of the previous period.

In the years between 1790 and 1810 Thomas Howard, Jr., followed the current trend: to use the straight tapering legs of the Hepplewhite style, to create serpentine case pieces with emphasis on inlay, to adopt Adam's niche urn finials, to employ the flaring French bracket feet on chests of drawers, and to make shield back chairs. From 1800 to 1820 he adopted Sheraton furniture forms with its tapering reeded legs, square backs on chairs and sofas, convex ends on case pieces, projecting sections and projecting colonettes. Between 1815 and 1830 he was affected by the late Sheraton, or Early Empire, followed by the Late Empire (1820-1830) designs, stemming directly from the heavier Napoleonic styles including the Greek kismos chair with incurved leg, the Roman curule base, the rolled back, winged and caryatid supports, upswingng arms on sofas, lion's paw foot, lyre splats, and "gondala" lines on sleigh beds.

Like Duncan Phyfe of New York, Howard was swept along by rapid changes of the 1790-1820 period, and like Phyfe he saw the importance of the furniture wholesaler selling related lines of merchandise. As a true follower of the nineteenth century economy he engaged in the venture cargo, the furniture auction, and the wholesaling of furniture and ivory. He had dipped into real estate deals; he had bought and sold commercial paper, with the result that when he died he had indeed a tidy fortune, — another success story of the Industrial Revolution in New England, where an artisan turned merchant could take his place in the upper class by way of success in business.
William is buried in the family lot in North Burial Ground.

**Children of William and Abigail (Dexter) Smith:**

1. **Abigail** Smith, b. 1754. *The Providence Gazette* issue of 1 Sept. 1771 reports the marriage of Abigail, daughter of William Smith, merchant, and Joseph Crawford at Providence. Her gravestone in the family lot of the Crawfords in North Burial Ground reads: “Abigail, wife of Joseph Crawford and daughter of William and Abigail Smith, died 9 Oct. 1773, at 19 years.”

II. **Daniel** Smith, b. about 1757; d. 29 April 1780; m. Sally Hopkins at Woonsocket 3 Oct. 1776, daughter of Christopher and Sarah (Jenckes) Hopkins. Daniel was a merchant and lived in North Providence. He is buried in the family lot at North Burial Ground. His wife is not buried beside him, but *The Providence Gazette* issue of 21 April 1792 reports the death of Sarah, widow of Daniel Smith, in her thirty-third year.

**Children of Daniel and Sally (Hopkins) Smith:**

1. Abigail Smith, b. 8 Sept. 1777; the Gazette of 11 May 1793 lists the death of Abby, “only daughter of the late Daniel Smith, merchant,” at North Providence in her sixteenth year.

2. William Hopkins Smith, b. 16 Sept. 1778. His gravestone in the family burial lot records his death 22 March 1831. A North Providence deed of 2 Dec. 1811 records the sale by William Hopkins Smith of North Providence to George Smith of North Providence of one-half of an undeveloped lot which William Smith (his grandfather) had conveyed to William H. Smith and Hazel Smith by deed 18 Sept. 1810.

47. **Benjamin** Smith (*Daniel*, 1 *Benjamin*, 3 *John*, 2 *John*), b. 7 April 1728; d. 16 Sept. 1759. A Providence Town Council entry at that time refers to him as Capt. Benjamin Smith and records that he died of smallpox. He is buried with his parents in the family lot at North Burial Ground. There is no indication that he married and had issue.

48. **Job** Smith (*Daniel*, 1 *Benjamin*, 3 *John*, 2 *John*), b. 24 Sept. 1736; d. 15 Aug. 1818; m. 3 Feb. 1765 Ruth Harris, daughter of Henry and Hope (Hawkins) Harris of Providence, b. 2 April 1740; death recorded in *The Providence Gazette* issue of 16 Sept. 1820. Job was a Quaker.

Job ran a distillery business in Providence but spent the latter part of his life in Johnston, near Manton, where he built a house.

Only three of his children survived him: Henry, Benjamin, and Susan. His will left a life interest in his property to his wife, and after her to Benjamin and Susan, “Henry having had his share.” Benjamin was executor of the will. A division of property was later made between Benjamin and Susan, with Susan retaining the residence.

Job and members of his family are buried in his lot in North Burial Ground, Providence.

**Children of Job and Ruth (Harris) Smith:**

97. **Col. Henry** Smith, b. 10 Feb. 1766; death recorded in the June 28, 1818 issue of *The Providence Phenix*; m. 20 Oct. 1799 by Rev. Stephen Gano, Abigail Crawford Allen, daughter of Zachariah Allen Sr., who d. 28 Sept. 1855 at seventy-nine.

Colonel Henry was a Providence merchant. He was senior member of the Rhode Island Senate in 1805 and for a short time served as acting governor.

Colonel Henry built a mansion at the corner of Smith and Davis streets, Providence, early in the 1800s, and it was purchased in 1837 by Alexander Duncan. On the site of the Henry Smith mansion was erected the present State House Annex.

The widow, Abby C. Smith, was administratrix of the estate of Henry Smith, with Philip Allen and Zachariah Allen as sureties. The inventory totaled $3,685.

**Children of Col. Henry and Abigail C. (Allen) Smith:**

1. Henry Smith, b. 27 Jan. 1803; d. 29 Dec. 1820.

2. William Smith, b. 27 April 1805 at three months. Both children buried beside their mother in Crawford lot at North Burial Ground.

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II Benjamin

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29 Dec. 1824; m. Frances Fosdick, daughter of Mehitable Fosdick of Portland, Maine, who d. 23 Dec. 1834, at fifty-three years. Both Benjamin and Frances, with members of their family, are buried in the Job Smith lot at North Burial Ground. Benjamin lived on Davis Street in Providence.

Children of Benjamin and Frances (Fosdick) Smith:

1. Albert Thomas Fosdick Smith, b. 1806; d. 5 May 1834; the Rhode Island American issue of 3 Oct. 1827 reported the marriage of Albert T. F. Smith and Emma J. Dunn, daughter of the late Capt. Bertron Dunn, by the Rev. Dr. Gano.

2. Benjamin Franklin Smith, b. 26 Dec. 1808; d. 2 Jan. 1859.

3. Susan Adeline Smith, m. 7 June 1838 Abner Gay Jr.


There may have been other children born to Benjamin and Frances Smith.

III Sarah Smith, b. 22 Feb. 1770; d. 3 Sept. 1788.

IV Dorcas Smith, b. 24 May 1772; d. 22 Oct. 1772.

V Abigail Smith, b. 29 Nov. 1773; her death is reported in the Rhode Island American issue of 30 March 1814; m. 6 Dec. 1793 Col. Edward Dexter, of Edward, b. in North Providence in 1770 and d. 23 Aug. 1860. He m. (2) Sarah Mumford, of John Mumford. His residence in later years was in Seekonk, Massachusetts.

Children of Col. Edward and Abigail (Smith) Dexter:

1. Sally Smith Dexter (unmarried), b. Providence 1797.

2. Edward Dexter, b. Providence 1799.

3. Henry Harris Dexter, b. Providence 1801.


VI Thomas Smith, b. 10 Aug. 1775; d. 18 March 1776.

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1777; d. 1 Dec. 1815 at Plymouth, Washington County, North Carolina, with his death notice referring to him as Major Harris. The Providence Gazette issue of 13 Aug. 1808 reported his marriage to Miss —— Mackey, daughter of the late Capt. Mackey of Washington, North Carolina.

VIII Thomas Smith, b. 17 June 1779; d. 17 Aug. 1870.

IX Susan or Susanna Smith, b. 28 May 1782; The Rhode Island American issue of 16 July 1826 listed the marriage of Susan to the Hon. Nathan Brown in Johnston, Rhode Island. She was a second wife of Nathan Brown, and there was no issue. By her will made in 1853 she left her property to Phebe Brown, a stepdaughter, for life. After Phebe's death the property was to pass to Emma D. Smith, daughter of Albert Thomas Fosdick Smith, but if Emma died before Phebe Brown, the estate was to go to the Protestant Episcopal Church.

49 Ezekiel Smith (Capt. Solomon, Benjamin, John, John), b. in Glocester 13 March 1726; d. in Thompson, Connecticut 18 July 1777; m. 11 Aug. 1748 Mary Barker, daughter of Nathaniel and Mary Barker, who died in Thompson 4 July 1777 in her 49th year.

On 31 Oct. 1757 David Arnold of Glocester sold the farm on which he was dwelling to Ezekiel Smith. Then on 22 Oct. 1763 Ezekiel deeded the whole of the 45 acres he had bought of David Arnold to Joseph Olney of Glocester for 2,000 pounds, with Mary, wife of Ezekiel, signing off her dower rights. Another deed was registered 28 March 1764 in which Ezekiel conveyed nine acres in Glocester to Abraham Fairfield, the land abutting Fairfield's property. Presumably it was about this time that Ezekiel moved to Thompson.

Children of Ezekiel and Mary Smith:

100 William Smith, b. in Glocester 14 Oct. 1748. Buried in the

362 Arnold, op. cit., Glocester Births, 3:60.

363 East Thompson, Connecticut, cemetery records.


365 Gravestone record. Ibid., 6:253.

366 Glocester Deeds, 6:212.

367 Ibid., 6:357.

Jonathan, deceased, and also mentioned "the heirs" of Jonathan. Putnam, Connecticut, Congregational Church records note that Jonathan Smith d. in Sept. 1811 and three children d. in 1803.

XX RACHEL8 SMITH, b. 30 July 1763 in Gloucester; d. 31 May 1845 in Pennsylvania; m. 6 Jan. 1788 Darius Bixby of Amos and Elizabeth (Sabin) Bixby, b. 4 Sept. 1761 in Thompson and d. 18 Sept. 1834 in Pennsylvania. The Bixby genealogy records that Darius settled first in western Vermont but soon after moved to Rush, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, when it was still a wilderness.\footnote{471}

CHILDREN OF RACHEL AND DARIUS BIXBY
listed in the Bixby genealogy:

1. Neomi Bixby, b. 18 Sept. 1788 at Killingly, Connecticut; m. (1) Zerah Bryan; (2) Horace Birchard.
2. Darius Bixby, Jr., b. 25 Feb. 1792, m. Lodema Mott.
3. Betsey Bixby, b. 1794, d. 1 Nov. 1846, age 52, unmarried.
5. Richard Bixby, b. 14 March 1800, m. Mary Birge.
6. Amos Bixby, b. 28 July 1803, perhaps at Wardsboro, Vermont; m. (1) Hannah Birchard; (2) Lydia G. Sheffield Smith, b. 1808, d. 12 Feb. 1837 at 29. Amos was a Baptist minister. There was no issue.

X. ANNE8 SMITH, b. 30 June 1766 in Gloucester.

103 XI. DEXTER8 SMITH, b. 11 July 1768. He was living at the time his brother William made his will, but no further reference to him has been found.

50. CAPT. JOHN8 SMITH (Solomon,4 Benjamin,5 John,2 John1), b. 20 Jan. 1729/30 in Gloucester;\footnote{472} d. in Burrillville 7 May 1826 in 99th year (gravestone); m. Sarah Arnold, probably the Sarah, daughter of Stephen, Jr., and Hannah (Case) Arnold, b. in Warwick, Rhode Island, 18 Nov. 1733.\footnote{473} She d. in Burrillville 19 June 1812 in her 80th year (gravestone).

The Rhode Island American death notice for Capt. John said that he was a member of the General Assembly during the Revolution.

\footnote{471}{Willard Goldthwaite Bixby, Descendants of Joseph Bixby (New York, 1919), p. 293.}
\footnote{472}{Arnold, op. cit., Gloucester Births, 3:60.}
\footnote{473}{Ibid., Warwick Births, 1:139.}
The Providence Phenix death notice for John Smith, Esq., stated that he was a member of the Baptist church for more than 70 years, served in the Revolution, and was at one time a state senator. Sarah's death notice stated that she had lived with her husband for 64 years and 5 months and left a postcary of 166 persons, 134 of whom were living in 1812.

Captain John lived in the part of Glocerter which became Burrillville, in the southeastern part of the town near Mapleville. He and his wife are buried in the Smith family cemetery in the woods of Tarklin on what was in later years known as the Jason Olney farm.

Solomon Smith deeded to his son John one half of his homestead farm or one half of 216 acres on 17 April 1750.474

The will of Capt. John, made 29 Nov. 1804 and probated in Burrillville 28 June 1828, mentions his wife, his son and Arnold and Arnold's two eldest sons Solomon and Daniel; son Stephen, son Israel, and son Silas; grandson Jesse Smith "son of my son Nicholas," and daughters Lydia, Anna, Mary, and Zilpha. His son Simeon, named executor, was left the residue of the estate on condition that he pay debts and legacies.

CHILDREN OF CAPT. JOHN5 AND SARAH (ARNOLD) SMITH:

104 I ARNOLD6 SMITH, b. in Glocerter 22 Feb. 1750; m. (1) 1 Jan. 1773 Lydia Mathewson,475 probably the daughter of Daniel and Lydia (Montague) Mathewson. Lydia obtained a divorce from Arnold in Rhode Island Supreme Court in March 1790. Possibly she was the Lydia Smith buried on the old Darling Smith farm in Burrillville on 2 Aug. 1829 in her 80th year. Arnold m. (2) 24 April 1791 Cynthia Ballou, b. 7 Nov. 1758,476 daughter of Obadiah and Martha Ballou.

On 2 March 1796 Arnold Smith of Glocerter for one dollar quitclaimed to his son-in-law Eber Smith of Glocerter and daughter Anney about 80 acres, a quarter interest in property set off to his first wife, Lydia Mathewson.477 Arnold quitclaimed to John Wood, Jr., and wife Robe (daughter of Arnold) on 24 Oct. 1795 one quarter right in the property set off to Arnold's first wife, Lydia.478 Arnold also appeared 1 Dec. 1799 to acknowledge a deed giving his son Solomon Smith of Glocerter an undivided interest

in the property set off to his first wife Lydia.479 No mention is made of sharing the property with Arnold's son Daniel, mentioned in the will of Capt. John Smith.

Probably after disposing of property to his children by his first wife, Arnold set off for New York State and thus disappeared from Glocerter records. A note in the Boston Transcript genealogical page of 12 May 1919 asking for information on the background of Arnold, sheds light on his travels. It mentioned his first marriage to Lydia Mathewson and second to Cynthia Ballou and then states:

"He was hired by John Brown (a relative by marriage) to survey the purchase of Brown, known for many years as 'Brown's Tract,' in the Adirondack wilderness. After the failure of Brown, Smith settled in Oneida County, where his second wife died 24 Feb. 1808. Later he lived in Wayne County, New York, where he married, third, widow Betsy Harris, mother of Bishop Harris of the Mormon church, whose money paid for the printing of the first Mormon Bible."

Arnold was known as Carpenter Arnold to distinguish him from other Arnold Smiths of the period. He was active in setting up a Baptist church in Glocerter.

CHILDREN OF ARNOLD6 AND LYDIA (MATHEWSON) SMITH:

1 SOLOMON7 SMITH, d. 16 May 1863 at 84 years, 6 months, 20 days (gravestone on Jason Olney farm): m. in Burrillville 4 Jan. 1807 Maria Steere of Simeon,480 who d. 24 July 1860 at 70 years and 13 days and is buried beside her husband. Three children of Solomon and Maria are recorded in Burrillville births:481 SERIL, b. 31 Aug. 1807; HARRIET, b. 28 June 1809; and ALICE WHITE SMITH, b. 4 Sept. 1816. Seril d. 8 Aug. 1824, Harriet on 12 April 1828, and another daughter, RHODA J. SMITH, d. 26 Nov. 1858 at 33 years, 4 months and 13 days. Seril, Harriet and Rhoda are buried beside their parents.

2 DANIEL7 SMITH was mentioned as one of the elder sons of Arnold in the will of his grandfather Capt. John Smith, but no further record identifying him has been found, and he is not buried in the Smith lot on the Jason Olney farm.

479Ibid., 14:280.
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3. AMETY SMITH, m. 19 April 1795 Eber SMITH, son of John and Sarah SMITH (see Rhode Island History, July 1963, p. 88). Both are buried on the old Smith homestead in Gloucester, later known as the Darling Smith farm, with the gravestone for Amey recording her death 14 Dec. 1819 at 44 and that of Eber 26 May 1844 at 71.

4. RORO SMITH, b. 1 Nov. 1774, d. 20 April 1849, m. Capt. John Wood of John and Sarah (McDonald) Wood who d. 9 Sept. 1827. Capt. John kept a store and tavern and also had a blacksmith shop in Burrillville. Their children were: (1) Charlotte Wood, b. 19 Jan. 1795; d. 13 Oct. 1845; m. William Albee of Burrillville; (2) Otis Wood, b. 5 May 1796; m. Celia Sayles and resided in Harrisville, Rhode Island; (3) Fenner Wood, b. 1 Jan. 1798; d. 11 Feb. 1878; m. (1) Sarah Arnold and (2) Sarah Sayles; (4) Smith Wood, b. 7 Oct. 1799; d. 26 May 1876; m. Nancy Olney; (5) Amey Wood, b. 24 March 1803; d. 7 March 1863; m. John Olney; (6) Laura Wood, b. 23 Dec. 1804; m. Hardin Sayles, a manufacturer of Pascoag, Rhode Island; (7) Maria Wood, b. 13 Feb. 1809; d. 2 April 1864; m. Capt. Syria Sherman, a Burrillville stone mason; (8) Marana Wood, b. 21 Oct. 1816; m. William Wilcox and resided in Burrillville, where she died.485

105. II STEPHEN SMITH, b. 3 Dec. 1751 in Gloucester, d. in Gloucester 22 Oct. 1836, m. 21 April 1772 Abigail Phetteplace of Samuel and Mercy (Phetteplace) Phetteplace, who was b. 24 June 1752.484

Stephen was a pensioner for his Revolutionary War service and was orderly sergeant for six months under Col. Chad Brown.485

THE CHILDREN OF STEPHEN AND ABIGAIL

recorded in Gloucester births include:

1. Rachel Smith, b. 24 Jan. 1773.
2. Samuel Smith, b. 14 April 1778.
3. Mowry Smith, b. 5 Feb. 1781.
4. John Smith, b. 17 Feb. 1787.486

[To be continued]
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LECTURES

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Sunday
What of the Future
FREDERICK L. RATH, JR.

February 16, 1964
Sunday
Some Brown Men in the Civil War
ROBERT GEORGE

March 15, 1964
Sunday
A Rhode Islander in Chile —
Samuel Ward Greene
ALAN S. TRUEBLOOD