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HOUSEHOLD TEXTILES
IN PHILADELPHIA
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HOUSEHOLD TEXTILES IN PHILADELPHIA
1720-1840

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Philadelphia is perhaps one of the wonders of the world, if you consider its Size, the Number of Inhabitants, the regularity of its Streets, their great breadth and length...their Spacious publick and private buildings, Quays and Docks, the Magnificence and diversity of places of Worship...The plenty of provisions brought to Market, and the Industry of all its Inhabitants, one will not hesitate to call it the first Town in America,¹ but one that bids fair to rival almost any in Europe.

The pleasing impression that Philadelphia made, here described by Lord Adam Gordon (an English officer travelling in America in 1764 and 1765) was repeatedly mentioned by European visitors. The largest colonial port, Philadelphia became a center of fashion and culture, as well as economics and politics as the 18th century progressed. When the city became the national capital in 1790, the population had reached 42,520 people, making it the pre-eminent city in the country. Consumer products flowed into the port; the numerous choices and availability of these objects, including household textiles, influenced and enhanced the lifestyle and daily activities of the residents. By studying the bedding, table linen, floor coverings, window treatments and upholstery used by Philadelphians, additional nuances are added to our understanding of the city and its people two hundred years ago.

This study begins in 1720, after the first major shift in

¹N.D. Mereness, ed., "Journal of Lord Adam Gordon, 1764-5," Travels In the American Colonies (New York, 1916), 410-11; cited in Wilbur C. Plummer, "Consumer Credit in Colonial Philadelphia," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 66 (October 1942): 385-6.

the colonists' standard of living. Pennsylvania's original colonists arrived in 1682 and set up crude shelters along the banks of the Delaware River. As they set about establishing William Penn's vision of a "greene countrie towne," the physical struggles were difficult. Just having a roof over one's head, no matter how temporarily constructed, was enough to constitute comfort. However, as the settlement grew, more elaborate expectations developed concerning appropriate household appearance. By 1720, many colonists had established permanent forms of housing, worked at a trade or business and were able to procure supplies either in Philadelphia or from frequent overseas shipments. While few households had all of the forms of furniture and textiles we take for granted today, most had basic bedding, a few chests, some cooking utensils and a table.²

As the century advanced and the city and colony flourished, a greater variety of goods became available. By 1750, a "consumer revolution" was sweeping Europe and Britain found an eager market by exporting household goods and textiles to the colonies. Even during the Revolutionary War, most goods were still accessible and trade continued. By the 1790s, when the federal government took up residence on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia was a major style center, setting taste and trends.

²Kevin M. Sweeney, "Furniture and the Domestic Environment in Wethersfield, Connecticut, 1639-1800," in Material Life In America, 1600-1860, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 267-8; Lorena S. Walsh, "Urban Amenities and Rural Sufficiency: Living Standards and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1643-1777," Journal of Economic History 43 (March 1983): 109-111.

The 230 merchants inhabiting Philadelphia in 1756 had grown to 440 by 1791.³

During the first quarter of the 19th century, a larger volume of textiles were manufactured mechanically than ever before. Textile production began to expand in the United States. Mechanical innovations in weaving technology and the proliferation of textile mills in this country gradually lessened the cost of most household textiles. While the variety and quality of textiles were still ranged considerably, more and more Philadelphians, like Americans throughout the country, could afford upholstery, carpets, curtains, table linen and bedding. Storekeepers began to specialize their shops, selling only textiles or only carpets. Fashion magazines and household guides abounded advising the confused on appropriate fabrics, colors and styles. As the number of homes with fabric furnishings grew, the importance of displaying them and maintaining them correctly increased. Having carpets and upholstered furniture was no longer enough to symbolize gentility, the appearance of those goods became a determining factor.

While Philadelphia's population grew steadily throughout the colonial and federal periods from 4,883 in 1720 to 13,720 in 1751 to 42,520 in 1790 to 161,410 in 1830, the wealth structure

³Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 17.

remained skewed to the smallest percentage of city residents.⁴ Throughout the late-18th century, the percentage of the population with no taxable wealth varied from 35% to 50%, while the top 5% of the tax bracket routinely commanded 45% to 55% of the taxable wealth in the city.⁵

Though Philadelphia of the 18th- and 19th-centuries was a prosperous port and the city had a strong, though small, social elite, it was not immune to variations in the economic cycle. The city, like the country as a whole, had an unstable economy throughout the 18th century and experienced many ups and downs. While America was hailed as the land of opportunity, it was not easy to achieve prosperity. Uncontrollable external forces could impede economic progress with little notice. Thus, the number of working-class and poor residents in the city was far more numerous than upper-class citizens. Historians estimate that one-quarter to one-third of the city's free population in the late-18th century had a vulnerable material position from which they could easily be driven into subsistence or less.

⁴Susan Edith Klepp, "Philadelphia In Transition: A Demographic History of the City and Its Occupational Groups, 1720-1830" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980), 342. These figures are for the urbanized Philadelphia region, including Northern Liberties and Southwark. For more information on the city's and region's population, see: Billy G. Smith, "Death and Life in a Colonial Immigrant City: A Demographic Analysis of Philadelphia," Journal of Economic History 37 (December 1977): 863-889; Gary B. Nash and Billy G. Smith, "The Population of 18th-Century Philadelphia," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 99 (July 1975): 362-368; James T. Lemon, The Best Poor Man's Country (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1972).

⁵Smith, The "Lower Sort," 86.

Furthermore, at least 5% of inhabitants received public subsidies and an estimated 50% of American males were propertyless during the late-18th century.⁶ Far more Philadelphians struggled to achieve a minimum level of physical comfort, represented in textile use by bedding, than ever enjoyed the social comfort of matching bed and window hangings, soft, padded upholstery and colorful floor coverings.

Below the elite citizens who formed the top of Philadelphia's social scale were several socio-economic levels. The majority of Philadelphia's working citizenry, no matter what their economic position, had a connection to the port. If not mariners or merchants dealing directly with imports and exports, laborers, shopkeepers and some artisans all depended on the large volume of shipping business coming into and going out of the city. Merchants and professionals enjoyed a comfortable life, with many, but not all, of the most elegant, tasteful and expensive household textiles (see figure 1). However, they were as subject to economic downturns and natural disasters as most of the city's residents.

Among the city's working class, citizens were separated into artisans and tradesmen, working poor, like laborers, and destitute. The city's artisans achieved varying levels of material wealth. Some were able to adorn their homes with

⁶Billy G. Smith, The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 124; Billy G. Smith, "Poverty and Economic Marginality in Eighteenth-Century America," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 132 (March 1988): 115.

ingrain carpets and a few window curtains, while others probably inhabited spaces that resembled the homes of laborers (see figure 2). Laborers, and other unskilled workers, would be struggling to fulfill their needs of physical comfort. In textiles, this meant good bedding. Most household heads would be able to provide sheets and blankets for each family member with perhaps a tablecloth or two. At the bottom of the socio-economic ladder were Philadelphia's destitute inhabitants, many of whom had to rely on public or private charity to attain a bed and blanket, let alone food and clothing.

Initially an extremely expensive group of products, textiles began to decrease in cost after the beginning of the 19th century. For much of the 18th century, textiles had to be prepared and woven by hand, making their expense prohibitive to most Americans. A distinct hierarchy of fabric furnishing ownership developed as textiles, and other consumer goods, were recognized as symbols of social and economic standing. As machine technology developed, faster and cheaper methods of textile production were used. By the 1840s, most Philadelphians could afford the full array of household textiles, though there was still only a small percentage who could afford the top-of-the-line items. By the early 19th century, ownership of textiles ceased to be a status symbol in and of itself, and care and arrangement of textiles became the hallmarks of the truly genteel. Household guides abounded advising housewives on which

fabrics and forms to choose, how to keep the textiles clean and in which rooms to use them.

Throughout the period analyzed here, textiles were a widely understood cultural symbol. Highly visible indicators of taste, style and economic standing, household textiles indicated this information to visitors at a glance. Using textiles as a source for information on consumerism and daily life cannot be underestimated. They also alert historians to fashion trends and the 18th- and 19th-century aesthetic sense. Textiles were an essential component of the household decor.

Studying household textiles from the 18th and early-19th centuries is a challenge. Most household textiles were primarily functional and were used until they wore out, and then were replaced. Thus, few examples are extant to serve as sources. Much of the existing secondary source literature is devoted to description and definition of the fabrics used throughout the colonial and federal periods. Matching 18th-century textile names to the fabrics is difficult since many of today's textiles are made differently. Even those that have the same name today often look and feel different from their 18th-century precursors since the production technology has changed. Unfortunately, some historic fabrics are completely unknown today because they are no longer used or manufactured. Given all of these reasons, description and definition of the textiles were essential before analysis could be attempted. Only recently has analysis of the

textiles' function, appearance and use started to appear.⁷ Studying fabric furnishings for their decorative, symbolic and practical functions has started but there are still many questions to consider.

Other impediments to the study of textiles relate to how they were used during the period. Fabric fashions changed frequently, so high-fashion prints and solids were not available for long periods of time. Also, because of their status as valuable decorative accessories, it was primarily upper-class Philadelphians who had the largest number of textiles. This skews the extant material record, as well as the written record. Much is known about high-style fabric furnishings but little is known about everyday textiles and their patterns of use. Not only did the upper-class residents own more fabric furnishings but they were often better able to preserve them, leaving them to be passed down and treasured.

This paper will describe and analyze the household textiles, or fabric furnishings, used in 18th- and early 19th-century Philadelphia households. The first part of the paper describes each type of household textile--bedding, table linen, floor

⁷Some of the major sources on American textile history are: Grace Rogers Cooper, The Copp Family Textiles (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971); Ruth Yvonne Cox, "Textiles Used in Philadelphia, 1760-1775" (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1960); Florence M. Montgomery, Printed Textiles: English and American Cottons and Linens, 1700-1850 (New York: Viking Press, 1970); Florence M. Montgomery, Textiles in America 1650-1870 (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984); Susan Prendergast Schoelwer, "Form, Function and Meaning in the Use of Fabric Furnishings," Winterthur Portfolio 14 (Spring 1979): 25-40. A glossary of textile names follows in Appendix 2.

coverings, window treatments and upholstery--defining the popular forms, discussing their use and presenting fabric and color choices. The second part of the paper delves into the cultural value of textiles. As colorful, soft furnishings, household textiles provided comfort, both physical and social. Though bedding, table linen, floor coverings, upholstery and window treatments did serve practical functions within the home (warmth and protection), they were increasingly valued for less tangible reasons such as aesthetics and their pleasing appearance. What symbolic meanings did fabric furnishings take on during the 18th century? What do the textiles tell us about taste, aesthetics and fashion? How did household textiles function as part of the "consumer revolution"?

Much of the information included in the text is based on primary source research, particularly two databases. One is from a survey of Philadelphia-area inventories, the second compiled from dry goods ads in Philadelphia newspapers. Appendix 1 presents a detailed description of the methodology employed in collecting this data. Personal journals, diaries and travel accounts also provided important anecdotal evidence about the types of textiles used and contemporary viewpoints on style, form and function. Eighteenth-century design sources and 19th-century household guides suggested the pinnacle of household textile use, prescribing forms and methods of maintenance. Finally, pictorial representations from the period studied, including British political cartoons, Dutch genre paintings and American and

British portraiture offer insight into how textiles were placed within the domestic interior.

PART I.

TYPES OF HOUSEHOLD TEXTILES

A. BEDDING

last night, or rather one this morning I was awakened by a great noise, and a hard blow on my head, when lo! the cord that held up the cornice, had given way, and down it came upon us. The hurt I received is trifling, my husband none, this shall never be put up again says he;--so farewell to raised Teasters.--I believe there are very few of them now in use, this is near 49 years old, made for my dear mother before the birth of her last Child. Post bedsteads, which are a very old fashion, are now in general use.⁸

Elizabeth Drinker's description of her rude awakening on the morning of August 1, 1795 offers a wealth of information about late 18th-century bedding. While the terms she employed to describe the apparatus--cornice, "teaster [tester]," and post bedstead--may be foreign to 20th-century ears, they were well-known, though apparently unfashionable, forms of bed furniture in the 1790s.

The numerous types of 18th- and early-19th century bed clothes and bedsteads formed the most prevalent category of household textiles in Philadelphia. Bedding was accorded the status of a "necessity" by contemporary sources, thus if a household had any textiles at all, it most likely had some kind of bedding, however worn or old-fashioned. As one 19th-century household guide asserted, "Bedding is the first essential - with

⁸Elaine Forman Crane, ed., The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 711 (1 August 1795). Hereafter referred to as Drinker Diary. Elizabeth Drinker was the wife of a wealthy Philadelphia Quaker merchant.

this you can hardly be too well stored."⁹ Out of a survey of 532 probate inventories filed with the Philadelphia Register of Wills between 1720 and 1835, 92% of the decedents owned at least one bed.¹⁰

While sleeping directly on a mattress on the floor has its proponents in the late-20th century, most people can afford to sleep on a bedstead. This is a marked difference from the 18th and early 19th centuries. Though 92% of probated decedents owned a bed during that era, only 78% owned bedsteads.¹¹ However, these figures only represent the part of the population that was inventoried upon death. Many residents of Philadelphia were so poor that an inventory was unnecessary. Therefore, the overall percentage of Philadelphians who owned at least one bedstead was presumably much smaller.

Among those that did own a bedstead or two, like Elizabeth Drinker, there were several styles. The heavily draped, four-poster bedstead, complete with tester (similar to a canopy), curtains and head and foot cloths has been romanticized in our

⁹Esther Copley, Cottage Comforts (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1837), 33.

¹⁰Probate inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th floor, City of Philadelphia. The 18th-century use of "bed" is analogous to our present-day use of "mattress"--a linen case filled with a soft, supportive filling. The term "mattress" was used during the 18th century, sometimes interchangeably with "bed" and sometimes to refer to a firmer support for the bed (fulfilling the function of a modern box spring).

¹¹Probate inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

time and is familiar to almost any museum visitor. However, many of today's museum installations do not present this bedstead accurately. The primary reason for such elaborate sleeping arrangements was warmth. With no centralized heat source, the dark nights became extremely cold. What little body heat that could be generated needed to be contained within the bed. A full set of curtains, including a tester and head and foot cloths, such as Drinker's description suggests, would trap heat inside. Also, this kind of bedding arrangement offered privacy from other inhabitants of the household in rooms that were decidedly multi-purpose.

The high-post or four-post bedstead was the top of the line of bed furniture during the 18th century. While most were decoratively carved, it was the yards and yards of fabric required to fully curtain the bed, often fifty yards or more, that made these bedsteads so expensive. Even in the middle of the 19th century, these bedsteads were still recognized as fashionable objects. Eliza Leslie, who wrote her household guide in Philadelphia in 1841, recommended a square, high-post bedstead with curtains for a "large, handsomely furnished chamber" in her household guide.¹² Usually these bedsteads would have a sacking bottom, made from linen, providing a sturdier, and more comfortable, base for the mattress or bed (see figure 3). If a bedstead did not have a sacking bottom, it would be corded.

¹²Eliza Leslie, The House Book: Or, a Manual of Domestic Economy for Town and Country (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1841), 303.

Sacking bottoms appeared on 16% of the inventories surveyed.¹³

Less expensive than high-post bedsteads were low-post options. This style was often simpler in construction and could not support the elaborate hangings required by the high-post bed. Trundle (or truckle) bedsteads were necessarily of this style, small enough to fit under a full-size bedstead to be pulled out at night, saving space during the day. Field and camp bedsteads came in a variety of styles, high-post as well as low-post (see figure 3). Originally designed for military use in the field, the early forms of these bedsteads were easily collapsible and transportable. Even less substantial in size and cost were cots, hammocks and seabeds. First popular among sailors, these options were inexpensive and required little bedding, an attractive feature for the working class and poor. One other form of bedstead that appeared in the inventory survey was the "Dutch bedstead," an older form, popular in Europe in the 17th century. Many are illustrated in Dutch genre paintings, built into a corner of the room, often masquerading as a clothes press. The inventories do not list much descriptive information but all of the styles mentioned above did appear scattered throughout the estates surveyed with field, low post, high post, cot and trundle bedsteads appearing most frequently in that order.¹⁴

Elizabeth Drinker's words at the beginning of this paper

¹³Probate inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

¹⁴Probate inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

allude to two types of bedsteads, one with a raised tester and the more popular "post bedsteads." While it is difficult to know exactly what she is referring to, the difference between the two styles is suggested by Benjamin Franklin in a 1772 letter to his wife, Deborah, advising that "A new Bedstead is to be made with 4 Posts, not to fasten the Tester to the Cieling, which is never done here [in London]."¹⁵ Apparently, the elaborate bedstead styles that required tester and cornice to be attached to each other and supported by the ceiling were falling out of favor. The expense of this fashion would have been considerable and, given Drinker's experience, the physical danger was not incidental. As the 19th century progressed, heating sources improved and fewer bed hangings were needed. Eliza Leslie commented that "French low post bedsteads" were preferred by many "who have an objection to curtains" in 1841. However, Leslie still favored some covering, stating that:

...(to say nothing of the dreary and comfortless appearance of a curtainless bed, in cold weather...)...the winter climate of most parts of America is such as to render curtains highly desirable at that season, to all who can conveniently procure them.¹⁶

A complete set of hangings for a four-post bedstead included curtains to surround the bed, a tester cloth and a valance or cornice on which to hang the curtains. Hepplewhite's guide suggested several types of fabric suitable for bed hangings,

¹⁵Leonard W. Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 19:90 (19 March 1772).

¹⁶Leslie, The House Book, 303-4.

"[Beds] may be executed of almost every stuff which the loom produces. White dimity, plain or corded...The Manchester stuffs have been wrought into Bed-furniture with good success. Printed cottons and linens are also very suitable."¹⁷ The style and assemblage of hangings varied widely as did the fabric used to make bed hangings. 19th-century household guides recommended a wide variety of textiles for bed hangings, but all prized durability and warmth. Mrs. Parkes suggested that "moreen is very serviceable, and is well suited to cold situations..."¹⁸ Eliza Leslie was not quite as specific several years later when she advised her readers that bed curtains "may be of chintz, damask, rich silk or broad-striped dimity." In fact, Leslie seemed most concerned with cost, offering two "economical" choices for bed curtains, "figured or damasked brown linen" or "thick domestic shirting muslin."¹⁹ Those who could afford a full set of bed hangings probably changed them seasonally, replacing heavier textiles, like harateen or damask, with muslin or mosquito netting for the summer months.

The vast majority of Philadelphia's residents did have a bed of some sort even if they didn't have it up off the floor. Feather beds were the most comfortable, and the most valuable.

¹⁷George Hepplewhite, The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide (1794; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), 18.

¹⁸Mrs. William Parkes, Domestic Duties (New York: J. and J. Harper, 1828), 182.

¹⁹Leslie, The House Book, 306-307.

Flock and chaff beds were more economical²⁰, though less comfortable, and straw was perhaps the cheapest of all.²¹ Though feather beds were sought after for their comfort, they also had their drawbacks. A French visitor to Philadelphia during the late-18th century complained, "Bed bugs harass the entire continent in hot weather...The universal use of feather beds helps this vermin to multiply."²² Fifty years later, these beds were still under attack. Catherine Beecher advised her readers that, "Feather beds should never be used, except in cold weather...The best beds, are thick hair mattresses, which, for persons in health, are good for winter as well as summer use."²³

Bed ticks and mattresses appear on inventories and served the same function as beds though, as one mid-19th century household guide suggested, they were usually firmer, placed under a feather bed.²⁴ Putting a feather bed on a corded bedstead would have made for uncomfortable sleeping without the firmer

²⁰Flock is a material consisting of the coarse tufts and refuse of wool or cotton. Chaff is husks of corn or other grains.

²¹Feather beds appear most commonly on the inventories surveyed. However, the estates that were probated usually represented the wealthier part of the city's population. The majority of the city's residents would not have owned a feather bed.

²²Kenneth Roberts and Anna M. Roberts, eds., Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey [1793-1798] (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1947), 325.

²³Catherine E. Beecher, A Treatise on Domestic Economy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1848), 313, 329.

²⁴Thomas Webster, An Encyclopedia of Domestic Economy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1845), 297.

base that a mattress or bed tick provided.

Once the bedstead was constructed and softened by a mattress or bed, the bed was covered with ticking, usually a striped linen fabric, often with blue and white stripes.²⁵ Then sheets were put on top. The quality of bed sheets varied widely, as demonstrated by the multitude of types and qualities of sheeting linen listed in contemporary newspaper ads. For example, in 1765, John and Lambert Cadwalader advertised "yd. wd. Lancashire, 7 8ths and 9 8ths Irish, and 9 8ths Russia sheeting."²⁶ Other varieties offered by Philadelphia merchants included Spanish, Ghentish, Flemish and Scotch sheeting. Finer linens had more threads per inch, making them more tightly woven, warmer and longer lasting. The pillows and bolster (a long stuffed pillow or cushion used to support the sleeper's head) were also encased in ticking and linen cases.²⁷ Linen was almost always either bleached white or left "brown" or unbleached. As Eliza Leslie explained to her readers, "Linen bedding is universal in genteel families."²⁸ Catherine Beecher agreed, suggesting, "The most profitable sheeting, is the Russian, which will last three times

²⁵Ticking refers to the fabric used to make a bed tick. Once the ticking is used to enclose a stuffing material, it becomes a bed tick.

²⁶Pennsylvania Gazette, 23 May 1765.

²⁷Leslie, The House Book, 309.

²⁸Leslie, The House Book, 309.

as long as any other."²⁹

Aside from the warmest summer days, linen sheets alone would not have sufficed in 18th-century Philadelphia. Blankets, coverlets, counterpanes, quilts, rugs and spreads were available in a multitude of colors and patterns. Blanketing was a woven fabric that could be purchased by the yard, seamed and hemmed. A particularly popular style was the rose blanket, named for the stitched stars or wheels worked in the corners with colored wool.³⁰ These coverings were widely available in Philadelphia, appearing in many 18th and 19th-century newspaper ads. Coverlets and counterpanes were synonymous terms for another covering, often woven in raised figures, quilted or embroidered. Spreads were similar to coverlets and counterpanes in construction. Rugs were like blankets, a large piece of thick woollen cloth. Quilts, while familiar to us today as pieced, layered coverings, were more often two pieces of wholecloth sandwiched around a padded middle layer in the 18th century.³¹

Obviously, all of these bed accoutrements added up to a significant cost once they were amassed. Frequently, the bed

²⁹Beecher, Domestic Economy, 329. Russia linen, both specifically for sheeting and for other uses appears throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries in newspaper advertisements. The name possibly refers to the origin of the linen, though this is not documented.

³⁰Montgomery, Textiles In America, 170.

³¹Blankets and coverlets were the most popular coverings on area inventories, appearing on 36% and 17%, respectively, of the 532 inventories surveyed. Rugs, quilts, counterpanes and spreads followed in that order. Full statistical tables can be found in Appendix 3.

with all of the bedding was the most valuable item listed on the probate inventories. Elizabeth Drinker recorded several occasions when she either sent bedding to or received bedding from her children in her diary. These accounts, conscientiously noted by Drinker, reinforce the value of bedding. In 1796 Drinker wrote, "Sally Downing sent Blankets &c. to our care as she is preparing to go to Downingtown."³² Drinker's daughter, Sally Downing, probably did not want to leave her valuable bedding in an uninhabited house where it could get dirty, become bug infested or be stolen. Likewise, when Drinker "sent Blankets &c. by Peter Williamson to HSD [her son]," the same year, the motivation was possibly economic.³³ Drinker's children probably did not own as much bedding as their parents so when extra coverlets were needed, it was easy and cheap to borrow from the senior Drinkers.

As evidence from probate inventories demonstrates, not everybody had all the items necessary for a complete assemblage of bedding, or could borrow those items from their family. Personal preferences and economic status also determined which forms of bedding 18th-century Philadelphians tucked themselves into every night. However, some trends are suggested by the primary evidence. Elizabeth Drinker recorded in her diary in 1803 that she sent her servant girl to the hospital with the following bedding, "a good bed, boulder & pillow, two Sheets and

³²Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 808 (3 June 1796).

³³Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 864 (7 December 1796).

a Blanket."³⁴ This account corresponds to an entry thirty years earlier when Drinker recorded the bedding sent to her summer home, "two Beds 2 Boalsters 4 Pillows, 4 Blankets, 2 Sheats 2 Pillow Cases and 2 Check'd Pillow Cases."³⁵ Throughout the 18th century, inventories suggest that a bed, bolster, 2 pillows, 2 sheets and 2 blankets made up the typical assemblage of bedding.³⁶ Ann Ridgeley sent bedding to her sons at school in 1794 including one bed, bolster and two pillows, one bedstead with a sacking bottom, one quilt, two blankets and two pairs each of sheets and pillowcases.³⁷ By the second quarter of the 19th century, the commonly accepted assemblage had changed little. In her household guide, Mrs. Parkes suggested, "To every bed there should be, besides the feather bed, either a wool or a hair mattress, a bolster, and two pillows."³⁸

However elaborate the assemblage of bedding, the household guides agreed that the textiles used for bed curtains should match the other textiles in the room. Eliza Leslie counseled, "The bed curtains and window curtains should of course be of the same material, and corresponding in form. Their color should

³⁴Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 3: 1710 (6 December 1803).

³⁵Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 1: 218 (July 1776).

³⁶Probate inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

³⁷Mabel Lloyd Ridgeley, ed., What Them Befell: The Ridgeleys of Delaware and their Circle in Colonial and Federal Times: Letters 1751-1890 (Portland, Maine: The Anthoensen Press, 1949), 73.

³⁸Parkes, Domestic Duties, 181.

contrast well with that of the wall..."³⁹ Catherine Beecher agreed with this aesthetic advising her readers that, "It is in good taste to have the curtains, bed quilt, valance and window-curtains, of similar materials."⁴⁰ Though the en suite aesthetic was losing its influence on interior decoration by the time Leslie and Beecher were writing, a harmonic and attractively decorated room was still representative of good taste and economic prosperity. Furthermore, furnishing a room with matching fabrics not only took a considerable amount of money but also allowed the inhabitant to exercise some control over their environment.

³⁹Leslie, *The House Book*, 307.

⁴⁰Beecher, *Domestic Economy*, 313.

B. TABLE LINEN

WD. and O.A. come home after we had done dinner--laid the Cloath and gave them a dinner about 3 o'clock⁴¹

This seemingly mundane sentence from one of Elizabeth Drinker's July 1799 diary entries subtly conveys the close connection between table linen and dining rituals during the 18th and early-19th centuries. Though table linen did not enjoy the same prevalence as bedding in Philadelphia, 39% of the 532 probate inventories surveyed between 1720 and 1835 listed some form of table linen, making it the second most widespread household textile.⁴² The principal forms of table linen used during the 18th century were tablecloths, napkins and towels, though specialized tablecloths, crumb cloths and case furniture cloths are sparsely scattered among inventory entries.

Fundamentally, table linen served a protective role, guarding food from dirt that may have been ground into the table during its use for other purposes, while also shielding the wood of the table from more dirt and crumbs. Many 18th-century Philadelphia households had only one table, used for a multitude of activities such as preparing food, sewing and paying accounts, as well as dining.⁴³ Crisp white table linens provided protection while adding a touch of elegance to the room and the

⁴¹Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 1193 (25 July 1799).

⁴²Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

⁴³Elisabeth Donaghy Garrett, At Home: The American Family 1750-1870 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990), 48.

meal (see figure 2).

Table linens, particularly tablecloths, appear in many 18th- and 19th-century artistic depictions of the household, from Dutch genre paintings to British political cartoons to American family portraits. Many of these depictions were commissioned by wealthy colonists and the objects painted in the picture reflect an upper-class lifestyle. Portraits showing Oriental carpets on the table are one example. While some colonists did own these items, they were extremely expensive and uncommon. Among the inventories surveyed, the terms Oriental carpet or "Turkey carpet" never surfaced. Three inventories mentioned "table carpets," so perhaps a few wealthy households did possess one of these colorful coverings, but it is impossible to be certain. They were certainly never used as tablecloths and dined upon, rather they were a decorative table cover. Once Oriental-style carpets were more readily available, their function switched to floor coverings.⁴⁴

Table linen was made from a variety of linen fabrics, usually white or "brown" (unbleached). The linen was purchased by the yard from a dry goods dealer, cut, seamed down the middle, hemmed around the edges (with as little tucked under as possible) and marked with the owner's initials, the number of the item

⁴⁴Louise Conway Belden, The Festive Tradition: Table Decoration and Desserts in America, 1650-1900 (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1983), 10.

within the set and sometimes the date.⁴⁵ Markings varied from household to household and depended on the amount and types of linen owned by the family. In the mid-19th century, Eliza Leslie recommended that "all table linen should be marked in full with the whole name of the family."⁴⁶ These marks represented ownership, but they also assisted the owner in quickly identifying whatever linen was needed. Catherine Beecher explained one practical reason for marking, "To preserve the same napkin for the same person, each member of the family has a given number, and the napkins are numbered to correspond..."⁴⁷ Also, in a city like Philadelphia, where laundry was sent out by anyone who could afford it, markings assisted in the prompt return of the household's linen.

A variety of linens were used for tablecloths, napkins and towels including diaper, huckaback, osnaburg and damask. Damask, woven with elaborate floral and figurative designs was the most expensive. Huckaback and coarsely woven linens were cheaper alternatives. Diaper fell in the middle in terms of quality and price. Eliza Leslie offered the following guidelines for table linen, "There is nothing of the sort superior to the best double French damask; it being not only fine and thick, but soft and

⁴⁵C.A. Burgers, "Some Notes on Western European Table Linen from the 16th through the 18th Centuries," in Upholstery in America and Europe from the 17th Century to WWI, ed. Edward S. Cooke, Jr. (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1987), 155.

⁴⁶Leslie, The House Book, 255.

⁴⁷Beecher, Domestic Economy, 306-7.

glossy, like satin..."⁴⁸ But for kitchen tablecloths, Leslie suggested "unbleached cotton diaper, but coarse linen or huckaback will eventually be found cheapest, as it will last much longer."⁴⁹ All of these types of linen came in different grades. "Fine" tablecloths and "nice" napkins would have been more expensive than their "coarse" counterparts.

Using linen for tablecloths required special care. Household guides of the early and mid-19th century advised readers not only how to keep their table linen clean, but even how to place it on the table. Robert Roberts counseled house servants:

In putting the cloth on the table, you should be very particular, observing, in the first place, to have its right side uppermost...Likewise you must be very particular to have the bottom of the cloth to the bottom of the table...the centre of the table cloth should likewise go exactly down the centre of the table, and not hang the eighth of an inch longer at one end than the other.⁵⁰

Another guide helpfully advised "be particular to have the bottom of the cloth towards the bottom of the table, - this you will easily know by the design woven in the cloth."⁵¹ Eliza Leslie recommended "A table-cloth ought to be considerably larger than

⁴⁸Belden, The Festive Tradition, 13; Leslie, The House Book, 255.

⁴⁹Leslie, The House Book, 240.

⁵⁰Robert Roberts, The House Servant's Directory (Boston, 1827; reprint, Waltham: Gore Place Society, 1977), 46.

⁵¹The Domestic's Companion (New York: Edward W. Martin, 1834), 23.

the table, so as to hang down all round."⁵² Yet, even before the tablecloth was placed on the table, it had to be laundered and pressed. Leslie again was full of advice, "The appearance of table linen is improved by being mangled in a machine, instead of ironing."⁵³ Mangling was a form of ironing, performed with a mangle which smoothed and glazed the linen.⁵⁴ Though the mangle was labor intensive, the end result was distinctly more attractive than ironing alone. Mangling did not crease the linen so care had to be taken after the process was finished to carefully lay the flat cloth on the table. Creased table linen was not specifically recommended by most household guides. Though earlier pictorial evidence from Europe distinctly shows creased tablecloths, few English portraits and engravings and no American depictions picture creases. Whatever lines may have appeared on the cloths probably resulted from the folds necessary for the linen to fit into storage spaces.

Though frequently pictured in portraits and engravings, green baize and calico were listed in only two or three inventories surveyed and one decedent had a red tablecloth, but overwhelmingly, table linen was white. Household guides of the 19th century emphatically favored white linen as well. In Eliza Leslie's opinion in 1841, "Napkins with coloured borders look

⁵²Leslie, The House Book, 255.

⁵³Leslie, The House Book, 255.

⁵⁴Christina Hardymont, From Mangle to Microwave: The Mechanization of Household Work (New York: Polity Press, 1988), 65.

less genteel than those that are all white."⁵⁵

Tablecloths were the most common type of table linen, included on 82% of the inventories listing some form of table linen. While the inventory recorders rarely noted descriptive features such as fabric, color or quality, the most commonly noted fabric was diaper, followed by damask and huckaback.⁵⁶ Frequently, broadcloth or baize was used underneath the white linen, providing extra protection and cushioning for the wood table.⁵⁷ One 19th-century household guide reminded housewives, "Before putting on the dinner cloth, let the table be well dusted, and the green cloth put on..."⁵⁸ After the meal, the white linens could be removed, leaving the darker, sturdier material to serve as protection from the table's other uses.

Middle- and upper-class housewives owned a variety of sizes and shapes of tablecloths. The cloth would be selected depending on the number of diners expected, the table to be used and the meal to be served. Frequently, these cloths, as well as towels and other forms of table linen, were described by their function

⁵⁵Leslie, The House Book, 255.

⁵⁶Only 17% of the inventories listing table linen included fabric type or color, which precludes significant assertions about these choices. Furthermore, many inventories lumped all of the tablecloths, napkins and towels together into a one line entry of "table linen." Trends mentioned here are supported by the inventories surveyed but they may not reflect the preferences of all 18th-century Philadelphians.

⁵⁷Garrett, At Home, 48.

⁵⁸The Domestic's Companion, 23. The "green cloth" was probably baize.

or size. For example, at her death in 1819, Catherine Burn owned seven tablecloths and two breakfast cloths. In 1761, John Thomas's inventory listed two large and two small tablecloths amongst his other household goods.

Napkins were suggested for each diner and were considerably larger than today's paper counterparts. Only 37% of the inventories listing table linen included these items, suggesting that table manners had not yet reached all social classes. A French visitor explained the alternative:

The table is covered with a cloth, which also serves for napkins; it is ordinarily large enough to overflow on all sides, and each one wipes in front of himself (unhappily, they do not change it very often).⁵⁹

Like tablecloths, the most oft-mentioned fabric for napkins was diaper, recommended specifically by Catherine Beecher⁶⁰, followed by huckaback and damask, favored by Eliza Leslie. Leslie advised, "the best size is about Three-quarters square...The fine French double damask are the best and handsomest, and will last twice as long as any others."⁶¹

Though fewer households owned napkins, those that did had a considerable collection, far outnumbering the tablecloths. The inventories provide a wide range of numbers of napkins. Some households had only one or two for each tablecloth, some four or

⁵⁹"Maniere de Vivre des Americains," Archives Nationale Paris, MS. Cote M 1036, c. 1782; quoted in John C. Milley, ed., Treasures of Independence: Independence National Historical Park and Its Collections (New York: Mayflower Books, 1980), 88.

⁶⁰Beecher, Domestic Economy, 306-7.

⁶¹Leslie, The House Book, 255.

five or more. The amount of table linen owned by each household depended on the social entertaining the housewife expected to encounter. Anna Rawle, a well-to-do Philadelphian, wrote excitedly to her mother about a wedding gift she received, "Grandmammy & Aunt Nancy have made me presents...the former of a damask table cloth & 13 napkins..."⁶²

Towels were occasionally used in place of napkins but they primarily functioned as washcloths, thus they frequently appear in bed chambers. Significantly, towels outnumber napkins on the inventories, 44% of the decedents with table linen owned towels. Perhaps the towels did double-duty as napkins, or perhaps these items were mistaken for one another by inventory recorders. Little description appeared on the inventories for towels, but diaper was again the most popular textile, followed by one example each of damask and huckaback. Eliza Leslie counseled that towels should be of different textiles depending on their function, "there may be half a dozen rolling towels of crash, or coarse thick linen, a dozen smaller towels of the same quality...and a dozen towels of common thin linen diaper, for wiping glasses, china, etc."⁶³

Other forms of table linen, such as case furniture cloths and crumb cloths, appeared infrequently among inventory listings.

⁶²Anna Rawle to Mrs. Rebecca Shoemaker, 7 June 1783, "Letters and Diaries of a Loyalist Family of Philadelphia. Written Between the Years 1780 and 1786," typescript, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 189. Hereafter referred to as HSP.

⁶³Leslie, The House Book, 240.

Only 3% of the inventories listing table linen included a sideboard, bureau, chest or toilet table cloth. Like the more prevalent forms of table linen, they served a protective function and were usually made from white linen. Crumb cloths were an exception, frequently made of green baize. Laid on the floor, they protected the carpet from spilled food and drink. After the meal, the cloth could be washed far more easily than the carpet. Catherine Beecher advised, "A...crumb cloth is useful to save carpets from injury. Bocking, or baize is best."⁶⁴ Eliza Leslie listed laying the crumb cloth as the first step in setting the dinner table:

In an eating-room, the carpet should be protected from crumbs and grease-droppings by a large woollen cloth kept for the purpose, and spread under the table and the chairs that surround it, this cloth to be taken up after every meal, and shaken out of doors; or else swept off carefully as it lies.⁶⁵

Once the crumb cloth was laid, the rest of the table linen and dishes could be set, preparing the table for a meal.

By the middle of the 18th century, table linens could be bought from shops already seamed and hemmed. In 1783, Washington wrote to Clement Biddle requesting "large Table Cloths 3 dozn. Napkins to suit Do 12 pr. largest..."⁶⁶ Three months later Washington again wrote to Biddle requesting:

⁶⁴Beecher, Domestic Economy, 306.

⁶⁵Leslie, The House Book, 176.

⁶⁶John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., The Writings of George Washington (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-1944), 26: 435 (15 May 1783).

Table Cloths...are wanted for the common sized square Tables. one dozn. of whih. if they are to be had of any length may be long enough to cover two Tables; or if they are in the piece, they should not be cut at all, but so many Yards purchased as will make one dozn. of each kind.⁶⁷

Many of the Philadelphia dry goods dealers could supply the demand with "damask and diaper tablecloths and napkins," such as Robert Levers advertised in 1760.⁶⁸ Keeping these table linens clean still required an intense effort, but buying them pre-finished did save some time.

⁶⁷Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, 27: 101 (13 August 1783).

⁶⁸Pennsylvania Gazette, 22 May 1760.

C. FLOOR COVERINGS

And maples, of fair glossy stain,
Must form my chamber doors,
And carpets of the Wilton grain
Must cover all my floors.⁶⁹

These lines, from an 1823 poem by John Quincy Adams, suggest the widespread American desire for floor coverings during the 18th and 19th centuries. Floor coverings of any kind were rare until well into the 19th century, and those who owned them were sometimes targets of criticism for their frivolity.⁷⁰ However, the disdain shown by social critics of the period hid a secret desire, held by almost all householders, for elegant carpets and rugs. Floor coverings added a touch of color to a room, increased the warmth of the space, provided protection for the floor from dirt and wear and muffled the household noise.

Despite the intoxicating cachet of floor coverings, their expense was considerable and, until the 1830s, carpets and floor cloths were limited to well-to-do and upper middle-class households. In a survey of 532 Philadelphia-area probate

⁶⁹John Quincy Adams, "The Wants of Man," in Poems of Religion and Society (Buffalo: Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1854), 18; quoted in Rodris Roth, Floor Coverings in 18th-Century America (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Press, 1967), 40.

⁷⁰Many primary sources from the period give this impression. See citations in part two of this paper from J.P. Brissot de Warville, New Travels in the United States of America. Performed in 1788 (New York: T. and J. Swords, 1792), 174-5 and Thomas Lee Shippen's 1797 letter to Dr. William Shippen, Jr., cited in Rodris Roth, Floor Coverings, 39-40. Many of the foreign travelers who penned accounts of their visits mention the proliferation of carpets and their expense. The household guides cited throughout this paper also present mixed information and advice about the suitability and use of carpets.

inventories between 1720 and 1835, only 20% of the decedents owned some kind of floor covering. While this statistic is significant, demonstrating the rarity of carpets before the Victorian era, it is even more striking when broken down chronologically. Before the American Revolution, only 2.5% of the inventories surveyed listed a floor covering. From 1775 to 1835, the percentage rose quickly to 40%.⁷¹ Though still the exception rather than the rule, carpets became increasingly common throughout the late-18th and early-19th centuries.

Part of the reason for the dearth of floor coverings in this country was the lack of economical options. Though well-known contemporary portraits prominently display elegant, colorful Oriental carpets, often referred to during the period as "Turkey carpets," they usually adorn the table rather than the floor and their expense was prohibitive to all but the colonial elite.⁷² Given the rarity and expense of Oriental carpets, the desire among consumers to own one was high, despite the carpets' elaborate maintenance requirements. British manufacturers recognized this trend and set about developing technology to produce similar carpets at a lower price, so they could undersell

⁷¹Probate inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

⁷²Early 18th-century Oriental carpets were smaller in size and more suited for a table covering. As well, their use as table and chair coverings in the Near East established a precedent that accompanied use of this product in western countries. Using the Orientals as "table carpets" also preserved the costly rugs from wear and dirt on the floor.

the imports both at home and abroad.⁷³ Thus, the real significance of 18th-century Oriental carpets comes not from their widespread use in the colonies, which never occurred, but rather from the influence that their designs and construction methods exerted on British carpet manufacturing. Whether the carpets pictured and written about in primary sources are authentic Oriental carpets or "Turkey carpet" imitations made in Europe is difficult to determine. Adding to the confusion is the 18th-century use of "Turkey carpet" to refer to both carpets from Asia and European imitations. Both kinds were rare in America throughout the 18th and early-19th centuries, but they were sought after for their luxurious feel and attractive patterns and colors that enhanced any room, complementing any decor.⁷⁴

The aesthetic value of the carpets was not all that made them popular. In her 1828 household guide, Mrs. Parkes wrote, "Of late Persian carpets have been much more in fashion than those of other patterns. They are of an expensive kind, as well as the Brussels, but much more durable than the Venetian and Scotch carpets..."⁷⁵ However, by the time Eliza Leslie set down her household advice in 1841, the carpets were still rare, but had fallen out of favor, "They are...extremely thick, heavy, and

⁷³Sarah B. Sherrill, "Oriental Carpets in 17th- and 18th-Century America," Antiques 109 (January 1976): 142.

⁷⁴Sherrill, "Oriental Carpets," 142-167; Joseph V. McMullan, "The Turkey Carpet in Early America," Antiques 65 (March 1954): 220-223; Roth, Floor Coverings, 4-10.

⁷⁵Parkes, Domestic Duties, 176.

durable; but their colours and patterns have no beauty, and they accumulate much dust, and are so cumbrous as to be extremely difficult to shake."⁷⁶

Though Oriental carpets represented the 18th-century floor covering ideal, the most common covering throughout the century, by far, was nothing. Carpets, no matter what their quality and size, had to be woven or knotted by hand making them as expensive to make at home (because of the time involved) as to buy from a shop or import from England. Bedding, table linen, curtains and upholstery all required a considerable expense and had to be sewn together before they were ready for use, as did carpets, but provided more tangible practical factors (e.g. warmth, privacy, cleanliness) than carpeting. As a result, carpeting was the last household textile to be added to the household decor, and the one that received the most criticism as an unnecessary luxury.

All forms of 18th-century carpeting had to be stitched together in long rows, no matter what the quality. This provided consumers with control over how much of a room's floor was covered. Thomas Webster recommended that carpets be fit into "all the recesses of the room," though he acknowledged the expense of this choice.⁷⁷ Matching the strips of carpet side by side was not easy, as Benjamin Franklin's advice to his wife in 1758 demonstrates. Franklin sent his wife "some Carpeting for a best Room Floor" from England. There was enough for one large or

⁷⁶Leslie, The House Book, 173.

⁷⁷Webster, Domestic Economy, 256.

two small carpets but "it is to be sow'd together, the Edges being first fell'd down, and Care taken to make the Figures meet exactly."⁷⁸

Carpet size was an equally important selection criteria with color, pattern and quality. A perfect fit was necessary because carpets had to be securely nailed to the floor in order that the fabric would not bunch when the furniture was moved around. In the late-18th century home, tables and chairs were moved constantly. Ease of shifting and safety factors required that the carpets be firmly attached to the corners and edges of the room, for it would be easy to trip over bunched up rolls of fabric in a dimly-lit room.⁷⁹ However, this was most important in the public rooms of the house. Bed chambers and kitchens were the last to be carpeted, and when floor coverings did appear, small pieces or rugs were most often utilized.

At the middle of the 18th century, as the desire for Oriental carpets increased, British carpet manufacturers developed technology to more closely imitate these carpets. Brussels carpeting, a looped-pile carpet with a linen warp and weft and worsted pile, was first manufactured in England in 1740 and domestically produced in Philadelphia by the 1820s (see figure 5). The softer feel of the pile provided a product that could compete with the Orientals, and the cost, while decidedly

⁷⁸Albert Henry Smyth, ed., The Writings of Benjamin Franklin (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907), 3: 433 (21 January 1758).

⁷⁹Garrett, At Home, 39.

more expensive than flatwoven carpeting, was not quite as high as the authentic imported Oriental rugs. Brussels carpeting came in narrow strips and had to be seamed together. Usually produced with floral or small neat patterns, some striped choices were available for entryways and stairs.⁸⁰

Though gradually superseded by other carpet types, Brussels was still considered fashionable at the end of the 18th century and was chosen for the floors of the White House in 1800.⁸¹ Catherine Beecher claimed that "Brussels carpets do not wear so long as the three-ply ones because they cannot be turned."⁸² But Eliza Leslie preferred Brussels to almost anything else, recommending this covering for the best apartments of handsomely furnished houses.⁸³

Very similar to Brussels carpeting, in terms of construction, design and cost were Wilton carpets. Developed at approximately the same time during the middle of the 18th century, Wiltons were cut-pile carpets woven on a Jacquard loom (see figure 5). Very fashionable and expensive at the time, they are still manufactured today. Like Brussels, 18th-century Wiltons came in strips and would be sewed together to form a covering large enough for the specified room. Floral and

⁸⁰Helene Von Rosenstiel, American Rugs and Carpets (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1978), 112; Roth, Floor Coverings, 35-37.

⁸¹Roth, Floor Coverings, 36.

⁸²Beecher, Domestic Economy, 302.

⁸³Leslie, The House Book, 173.

geometric patterns were popular, though some consumers preferred solid colors.⁸⁴ Despite the luxurious feel and expensive price of this carpeting, both Catherine Beecher and Eliza Leslie discouraged its use. Leslie lumped Wiltons in with ingrain and Venetian carpets, citing that Wiltons were less durable than other kinds of floor coverings, the surface wearing off almost immediately, "every sweeping bringing away a portion of the wool."⁸⁵ Beecher concurred, advising, "Wilton carpets wear badly."⁸⁶

Axminster carpets, the top of the line of late-18th and early-19th century floor coverings next to Oriental carpets, improved on Brussels and Wiltons because they could be made in one piece without seams. Hand-knotted like Orientals, Axminsters reproduced the same quality and designs as the more expensive imports. Floral and Greco-Roman motifs were popular. During the 1770s and 1780s, at least three Axminsters were in use in America. Two are documented in New York and a third appears on a list of goods sold in Philadelphia in 1788 by Governor John Penn. Axminsters were rare in America because of their expense. In 1791 the United States government paid William Peter Sprague over one pound per yard for the Axminster carpet he produced for the floor of the Senate Chamber. In comparison, John Todd's ingrain

⁸⁴Von Rosenstiel, American Rugs and Carpets, 112; Roth, Floor Coverings, 37-40.

⁸⁵Leslie, The House Book, 173.

⁸⁶Beecher, Domestic Economy, 302.

carpet was valued at 5 shillings and 6 pence per yard in 1793.⁸⁷

During the mid-18th century, ingrain carpeting was developed in Scotland and England, increasing the inexpensive alternatives for floor coverings. Known as "Scotch carpet" in Scotland and "Kidderminster" in England, ingrain was a flatwoven all-wool reversible carpet in which the design was reproduced in reverse colors on the back. The standard width initially was 36 inches but as weaving technology improved, a variety of widths were made available.⁸⁸

Ingrain carpeting had to be purchased by the yard and seamed together until it was the correct size for the room. Complementary borders could be sewn on around the edges as well, making it versatile and suitable for rooms of almost any size.⁸⁹ Elizabeth Drinker noted in her diary in 1796, "Betsy Lang here this forenoon measuring a Carpet, which she promises to come, next fourth day to make up," demonstrating the importance of size in purchasing a carpet.⁹⁰ When offered a carpet by her eldest daughter, who decided she did not want it, Drinker remarked, "it very nearly fitts our front parlor, 33 square yards...it is rather gayer than I like, but as it is not dear, and suits

⁸⁷Susan H. Anderson, The Most Splendid Carpet (Philadelphia: National Park Service, 1978), 6, 19; Von Rosenstiel, American Rugs and Carpets, 124; Roth, Floor Coverings, 41-44.

⁸⁸Roth, Floor Coverings, 29-30; Von Rosenstiel, American Rugs and Carpets, 90.

⁸⁹Roth, Floor Coverings, 3; Webster, Domestic Economy, 256.

⁹⁰Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 771 (15 January 1796).

otherwise, I believe I shall take it."⁹¹

Despite the versatility and modest price of ingrain carpets, they were considered to be inferior by many genteel Philadelphians. Deborah Franklin wrote to Benjamin Franklin in 1765, dissatisfied with the "Scotch carpet" in her parlor, "which was found much Folte with." In its place Deborah requested, "[I]f you Co[u]ld meet with a turkey Carpet I shold like it but if not I shall be verrey esey as all thees things air be cume quite indifrent to me att this time..."⁹² Even as late as the mid-19th century, Eliza Leslie determined ingrains to be inferior, the lowest in price and the worst in quality.⁹³ Catherine Beecher did not condemn their use but suggested that ingrain carpets were "best for common use."⁹⁴

Venetian carpeting was frequently found in American homes, beginning around 1800. It was generally striped, with a worsted warp concealing the weft. This flat-woven carpeting was especially popular for entryways and stairs. It was an inexpensive option and available in a wide variety of widths and

⁹¹Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 994 (10 January 1798). Given Drinker's description, this carpet was probably not ingrain, which was not considered a fashionable choice, but something more expensive.

⁹²Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 12: 296-7 (6-13 October 1765). After the repeal of the Stamp Act removed any objections to sending goods from Great Britain to the Colonies, Franklin sent his wife "A large true Turky Carpet cost 10 Guineas, for the Dining Parlour."

⁹³Leslie, The House Book, 173.

⁹⁴Beecher, Domestic Economy, 302.

colors.⁹⁵ The origin of its name is a mystery for, as one household guide explained, "it is not known that what we call venetian carpeting was ever made in Venice."⁹⁶ Eliza Leslie lumped Venetian carpeting in with ingrain and Wilton as an inferior product, writing "Venetian or striped carpets are rarely used, except for stairs and passages. They...are made to be put down with either side outwards."⁹⁷

Virtually the only choice of floor covering available before 1750 for those desiring an added layer on the floor, but on a limited budget, floor cloths were used throughout the house. Though they were relatively inexpensive, certainly cheaper than Oriental carpets, floor cloths do appear in contemporary portraits suggesting that they were not regarded as inferior, but rather as a widely available, practical covering for the floor.⁹⁸ Deborah Franklin acknowledged the receipt of one sent by her husband, Benjamin Franklin, from England where he was engaged in colonial political duties in 1766, "By Robison I have reseved the...painted flore cloathe..."⁹⁹ Philadelphia-area inventory evidence supports the use of these colorful floor

⁹⁵Von Rosenstiel, American Rugs and Carpets, 103; Roth, Floor Coverings, 47-48.

⁹⁶Roth, Floor Coverings, 47.

⁹⁷Leslie, The House Book, 173.

⁹⁸Roth, Floor Coverings, 22; Garrett, At Home, 75.

⁹⁹Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 13: 30 (12 January 1766).

coverings by all economic classes.

Made by coating a piece of canvas with several layers of paint to seal out water and promote durability, floor cloths were called by many names, including oil cloth, painted canvas, canvas carpet, painted carpet and painted-duck floor cloths, and came in an enormous variety of colors, patterns and styles. Often the cloths were painted to look like more expensive items, such as marble, Wilton or Brussels carpeting.¹⁰⁰ Initially imported from England, the cloths were available domestically by the middle of the 18th century. They could be custom ordered to fit any room or space and thus varied widely in price as well.

Popular due to their practicality and adaptability, floor cloths could be periodically renewed with a new paint job. Easier to clean than other textiles, floor cloths were especially suited to heavy traffic areas such as entryways and kitchens.

Eliza Leslie counseled:

there is nothing so good for the hall or vestibule of a house...for a kitchen floor that is not painted, there is no better covering than a coarse, stout, plain oil-cloth...They save the trouble of scrubbing the floor...they are impervious to damp, or to cold from open cracks between the boards...and they have the advantage of collecting and retaining no dust or grease.¹⁰¹

Yet, floor cloths did not always receive such acclaim. In 1739, the Encyclopedia of Architecture warned:

nothing is more injurious to the floors than covering them with painted floor cloth, which entirely prevents

¹⁰⁰Roth, Floor Coverings, 10, 14, 19.

¹⁰¹Leslie, The House Book, 183-184.

the access of atmospheric air, whence the dampness of the boards never evaporates, and it is well known that oak and fir posts have been brought into premature decay.¹⁰²

In the course of a century, practicality and ease must have won out over concern for the floor boards, though building technology and better sidewalks probably contributed also.

Another inexpensive option available from the early-18th century was straw matting (see figure 4). Matting was usually imported from Asia, via Britain, and often referred to as "Canton matting." Like floor cloths, matting was used in many rooms and by all social classes. George Washington ordered thirty yards of yard-wide matting in 1772 from Robert Cary and Co. of London.¹⁰³ Catherine Beecher recommended its use in the bedroom, "Straw matting is best for a chamber carpet."¹⁰⁴ Eliza Leslie offered suggestions on color, "do not get that which is checkered or figured with two colours. The effect is never good, and it gives a common and ungentle appearance to the rooms."¹⁰⁵ Leslie's advice suggests that patterned matting was relatively common in Philadelphia, reinforcing the popularity of decorative floor coverings (see figure 6). As mentioned, few people could afford first-class carpets but there were many inexpensive options that recreated the high-style designs found on Brussels, Wilton and

¹⁰²Quoted in Von Rosenstiel, American Rugs and Carpets, 51.

¹⁰³Fitzpatrick, ed., The Writings of Washington, 3: 92 (15 July 1772).

¹⁰⁴Beecher, Domestic Economy, 311-312.

¹⁰⁵Leslie, The House Book, 184.

Oriental carpets.

When not used as the sole floor covering, matting was a serviceable form of padding for woven carpets. As Eliza Leslie suggested, "To preserve expensive carpets, it is well to completely cover the floor beneath them with drugget, or with coarse matting..."¹⁰⁶ Catherine Beecher concurred adding that "straw matting, laid under carpets makes them last much longer, as it is smooth and even, and the dust sifts through it."¹⁰⁷

Despite its versatility and popularity, straw matting was primarily used by residents of the upper economic levels as a seasonal alternative to heavier and hotter woven carpets. Along with changing the curtains and dressing the upholstery in slipcovers, most household guides recommended pulling up the heavy woolen carpets and replacing them with cooler straw matting for the summer months. Eliza Leslie counseled her readers to put the matting down around the middle of June and pull it up again before mid-September.¹⁰⁸ However, Thomas Webster, writing at approximately the same time in New York, referred to the seasonal switch as an old practice, dating thirty or forty years previously.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the disagreement stemmed from regional differences or perhaps the growing disenchantment with straw matting's drawbacks led to a decline in its popularity.

¹⁰⁶Leslie, The House Book, 175.

¹⁰⁷Beecher, Domestic Economy, 302.

¹⁰⁸Leslie, The House Book, 184.

¹⁰⁹Webster, Domestic Economy, 371.

Critics cited matting's tendencies to attract vermin and become smelly and dirty.¹¹⁰ As well, it was less durable than other kinds of floor coverings and would wear out more quickly. Even Eliza Leslie acknowledged the limitations of inferior matting, "low-priced matting should be avoided, as it cuts in streaks and wears out so soon that it will be found in the end more expensive than that of the best quality."¹¹¹

Rag, or list, carpets appeared on one-third of the Philadelphia-area inventories surveyed that listed some form of floor covering. Made from strips of scrap fabric, "list" specifically refers to the selvage edges of cloth, these coverings were a cheaper alternative to the more fashionable carpets made available throughout the century. Rag carpeting was practical since it could be washed and was durable. However, it was not as attractive as other forms of carpeting and not considered as appropriately genteel as the more expensive carpets. Eliza Leslie suggested that rag carpets "may be advantageously used in...a servants' sitting-room; as bed-side carpets for domestics; or for other purposes in families where much economy is necessary."¹¹²

For those who could not afford any kind of woven carpeting, spreading sand on the floor was an economical, practical alternative. It absorbed dirt and water and facilitated cleaning

¹¹⁰Roth, Floor Coverings, 26; Garrett, At Home, 35.

¹¹¹Leslie, The House Book, 184.

¹¹²Leslie, The House Book, 185-186.

the floor. Housewives commonly swept the sand into decorative patterns, mimicking the effect of patterned carpets.¹¹³ William McKoy documented this practice in Philadelphia, recalling "white sand for the floors, being at the time an important article of consumption, the old sand man, for the northern part of the city, was looked for the same as the milkman."¹¹⁴ Once the sand was delivered, the "parlour floors of very respectable people in business used to be 'swept and garnished' every morning with sand...and sometimes smoothed with a hair broom, into quaint circles and fancy wreaths..."¹¹⁵

If sand seemed too messy, painting the floor itself was a second inexpensive alternative. The paint sealed the wood from water and dirt while adding a decorative touch to the home. Popular designs from floor cloths and woven carpets could be reproduced for far less expense.¹¹⁶

As with upholstery, window treatments and bed hangings, color choice was an important consideration for floor coverings, particularly in the early to mid-19th century. Color and texture options for carpeting were more limited than for other household

¹¹³Roth, Floor Coverings, 48-49.

¹¹⁴John F. Watson, Annals of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Leary, Stuart and Co., 1927), 2: 550. Watson refers to William McKoy's "Lang Syne" articles, which appeared in Poulson's Advertiser in 1828 and 1829.

¹¹⁵Watson, Annals, 2: 550.

¹¹⁶Garrett, At Home, 73-75.

textiles, thus the en suite guidelines were relaxed where floor coverings were concerned. One household guide counseled against color or texture preferences entirely, concentrating instead on more practical considerations, "Durability is an essential point to which you should direct your attention, in the choice both of the colours and of the texture of carpets, because, from their expensive nature, it is seldom convenient to renew them frequently."¹¹⁷ However, as carpets proliferated in American homes towards the middle of the 19th century, the number of colors and patterns available increased and household guides began making aesthetic suggestions. Eliza Leslie wrote:

For a carpet to be really beautiful and in good taste, there should be, as in a picture, a judicious disposal of light and shadow, with a gradation of very bright and of very dark tints...The most truly chaste, rich and elegant carpets are those where the pattern is formed by one colour only, but arranged in every variety of shade.¹¹⁸

Catherine Beecher agreed, suggesting, "The most tasteful carpets, are those, which are made of various shades of the same color, or of all shades of only two colors..."¹¹⁹

Once a tasteful color and pattern had been selected, the carpet had to be placed in the appropriate room. By the 1840s, household guides made recommendations about carpet forms,

¹¹⁷Parkes, Domestic Duties, 176.

¹¹⁸Leslie, The House Book, 174.

¹¹⁹Beecher, Domestic Economy, 302.

patterns and colors for specific rooms.¹²⁰ Even earlier, commonly accepted guidelines regarding floor coverings in bedrooms and the use of certain carpets in specific household areas were established. For example, securely fastened carpeting on bedroom floors was not recommended by any household guide. This practice was viewed as a health risk. Mrs. Parkes, Eliza Leslie and Catherine Beecher all suggested looser coverings that could be removed and cleaned or replaced easily. Eliza Leslie offered a practical rationale as well:

The custom of carpeting chambers all over in summer, though very general in American houses, is not a good one. It seems to add to the heat of the room, is very uncomfortable to the feet when the shoes and stockings are off, and causes an accumulation of dust which seldom fails to produce insects, and is in every respect a great sacrifice of convenience to show. Also, the carpet of course will not last half as long if in use all the year.¹²¹

Entrance halls, stairways and kitchens seem to have had stricter floor covering guidelines applied to them than any other rooms. Entrance halls received heavy foot traffic, often accompanied by mud, dust and dirt. Mrs. Parkes stressed that care must be taken when cleaning the hallway floor cloth. Soap would take the paint off, milk would give the cloth a "streaky and greasy appearance," beeswax would make it slippery and dangerous to walk on, but warm water and a flannel would clean

¹²⁰Leslie, The House Book, 178-179, 228, 328-330; Beecher, Domestic Economy, 311-312; Parkes, Domestic Duties, 173, 181; Webster, Domestic Economy, 256.

¹²¹Leslie, The House Book, 178.

the cloth and leave no slick residue behind.¹²²

Stairways required sturdy coverings that would provide traction and guard against falls. Eliza Leslie strongly suggested floor cloth for the entryway, but not for stairs. She counseled:

Straw matting is not advisable for a stair-case. It wears out very soon against the edges of the steps, and is, besides, too slippery to be safe for those that go up and down...Oil-cloth is also too slippery...For a stair-case there is no better covering (at all seasons) than a good carpet.¹²³

Kitchens needed a covering that was sturdy, durable, since it would get dirty quickly, and flame retardant. Leslie also made strong recommendations for kitchen floors, determining that, "the best covering for a kitchen...is a coarse, thick, unfigured oil-cloth, painted all over of one color." She discouraged the use of a rag carpet in the kitchen "in consequence of the dirt and grease with which they soon become saturated."¹²⁴ Presumably, they posed a fire hazard as well.

The use of carpets and other floor coverings increased throughout America during the 18th and 19th centuries. By the end of the 18th century, floor coverings had become a specialized business and shops selling nothing but carpets began to appear in Philadelphia and other cities. John Harland advertised in the Pennsylvania Gazette in 1790, offering, "A Large assortment of

¹²²Parkes, Domestic Duties, 180.

¹²³Leslie, The House Book, 185.

¹²⁴Leslie, The House Book, 228, 185-6.

Carpets and Carpeting, just Imported..."¹²⁵ Gradually, floor coverings became an accepted home accessory and criticism for unnecessary luxury turned to criticism for health and safety risks. As prices decreased and more and more rooms were carpeted, the "healthfulness" of carpeting came into question and many Victorian-era household guides cautioned against too much heavy carpeting. But the colorful patterns and soft texture of carpets provided a strong defense for their continued use by consumers.

¹²⁵Pennsylvania Gazette, 22 December 1790.

D. WINDOW TREATMENTS

I desired you to get the Silk Damask changed for some silk & Worsted Damask & to have it made into curtains for my dining room...Three curtains of Yellow Silk and Worsted Damask...to be hung festoon fashion.¹²⁶

William Franklin's description of his curtain order evokes an elegant and colorful vision, suggesting the status that such hangings would provide for their owner, as they adorned the house's windows. While not as prevalent in colonial and early American homes as bed hangings or table linen, window treatments were more visible outward signs of status and genteel taste. Compared to the 90% of inventories surveyed that listed some kind of bedding, only 21% listed any kind of window covering and the vast majority of those households listed only enough curtains or blinds to cover the windows in one or two rooms.¹²⁷ While curtains provided privacy, warmth and color, they were not as essential as bedding and, given the expense of textiles, many families could not afford window treatments, especially when they faded so quickly and had to be replaced regularly.

The distinguishing features of 18th-century window treatments were their simple styles and the minimal amount of fabric used. Though the inventories include no information about style or form, personal letters, journals and pictorial

¹²⁶Charles Henry Hart, ed., "Letters from William Franklin to William Strahan," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 35 (1911): 440-441 (18 February 1765).

¹²⁷Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

representations provide evidence of the preferred styles. Throughout the 18th century, window curtains were made to hang straight without a lot of excess material or intricate trimmings. The two halves of the curtain were cut to fit the window, covering it completely when closed. The simplest form used two strips of material to hold back the fabric during the day and, like the tops of the curtains, these tie-backs were tacked to the sill. Sometimes a valance or cornice was employed to cover the tops, presenting a more decorative look (see figure 7).¹²⁸

Two other popular 18th-century curtain styles were more decorative. The venetian style consisted of one piece of material drawn up from the sill by cords run through rings stitched in vertical rows to the back of the curtain (see figure 7). Festoon curtains, the style desired by William Franklin above, consisted of two pieces of fabric which were also raised to the top of the window by cords strung through rings sewed to the back of each curtain, but the rings were placed in a diagonal line rather than a vertical line (see figures 6 and 8). Variations appeared throughout the century, some more decorative than others. Benjamin Franklin wrote to his wife, Deborah, from England, updating her on the newest style, "The Fashion is to make one Curtain only for each Window. Hooks are sent to fix the

¹²⁸Annabel Westman, "English Window Curtains in the 18th Century," Antiques 137 (June 1990): 1408; Florence M. Montgomery, "18th-Century American Bed and Window Hangings," in Upholstery in America and Europe from the 17th Century to WWI, ed. Edward S. Cooke, Jr. (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1987), 163; Montgomery, Textiles In America, 51.

Rails by at Top, so that they may be taken down on Occasion."¹²⁹
The festoon style was in use by the first decade of the 18th century but declined at the end of the century when a fourth style, French rod curtains, became available.¹³⁰

The French rod was the major innovation for window treatments during the late 18th century. Roughly equivalent to the modern transverse rod, this innovation made sliding curtains open from the sides, without raising them from the floor, possible (see figure 7). This style eliminated the awkward puffs and bunches of raised-up curtains, resulting in increasingly elaborate displays of 19th-century drapery.¹³¹ Considered by one household guide to be the "best method of causing the curtains to open," the curtains were attached to rings which, in turn, were passed "over a rod stretched across, by which each half of the curtain is drawn to one side of the window."¹³²

18th-century high-style designers and 19th-century household guide authors recommended that window curtains match the bed hangings and upholstery of the room in both fabric and color. Therefore, most curtains were made from the same materials as bed hangings, often woolens such as damask, camlet and moreen, and,

¹²⁹Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 12: 62 (14 February 1765).

¹³⁰Westman, "English Window Curtains," 1408; Montgomery, "18th-Century American Bed and Window Hangings," 163, 165; Montgomery, Textiles In America, 51-52.

¹³¹Montgomery, "18th-Century American Bed and Window Hangings," 165; Montgomery, Textiles In America, 56.

¹³²Webster, Domestic Economy, 250.

later in the 18th century, cotton calicos and chintz. Economic status determined which fabrics were used in most households. Plain linens and cottons, checks and printed linens and cottons were less expensive options; wools and patterned silks and damasks were available only for the wealthy.¹³³

Among the inventories surveyed listing some form of window covering, most specified curtains. Of those entries, only 35% included any information about color or fabric, and what was listed varied widely. White was the most popular color, followed by blue and yellow. A few inventories listed red and white or blue and white curtains, probably printed cottons, and one household had "one suit handsome chocolate colored pattern curtains."¹³⁴ Fabric type was listed more frequently than color and calico curtains appeared most often, followed by muslin and diaper. Seventeen other textile names appeared only once or twice each, including two references to "paper curtains."

Throughout the late-18th century, popular fashion required that window hangings match bed hangings and upholstery, and that the fabrics match other decorative elements, such as carpets and wallpaper. Furnishing a room "en suite," as it was called, required a substantial outlay of cash, due to the extensive yardages needed, prohibiting most middle-class households from following the fashion. However, many upper-class households

¹³³Montgomery, Textiles In America, 58, 61.

¹³⁴Probate inventory of Laurence Keene, 1789, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

apparently furnished their rooms this way since references to "blue rooms" and "green rooms" appear in many letters and diaries from the period, as well as some of the inventories surveyed. While it is difficult to determine from the inventories how many households fulfilled the en suite guidelines, because of their lack of detail, several do list similar bed and window hangings, for example, James Logan had yellow worsted damask bed and window curtains, and Rose Coats died with red and white calico bed and window hangings adorning one of her rooms.¹³⁵

By the end of the first quarter of the 19th century, household guides were counseling consumers against the strict en suite aesthetic and favoring harmonic, though not identical combinations, possibly reflecting the growing interest in "wildness" and exotica that appears in art of the period. Eliza Leslie told readers, "Unless the chairs, sofas, etc., are covered with satin-hair, the curtains should, of course, always correspond with them in colour, if not in material. Also with the carpet." As for specific textiles, Leslie preferred, "silk and worsted damask, figured satin, and merino cloth; always with shades or inside draperies of muslin...Chintz curtains are now seldom seen in America, except for bed-rooms."¹³⁶ Thomas Webster made an even sharper break with the en suite aesthetic stating:

¹³⁵Probate inventories of James Logan, 1752 and Rose Coats, 1766, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

¹³⁶Leslie, The House Book, 188.

The colours of window curtains should harmonize with the rest of the room, as well as with the richness of the materials. When we say harmonize, we do not mean that they should correspond, or be the same, but that there should not be any violent contrasts, and that the colours should agree with each other.¹³⁷

Changes took place in styles and fabrics as well. By mid-century, the once popular "simplest kind of window curtain," two pieces of material tacked to the top of the sill and tied back, was suggested only for bedrooms in the smallest houses or cottages.¹³⁸ Slightly earlier in the century, Mrs. Parkes made curtain textile suggestions based on room function, for the dining room, "curtains, frequently of moreen, and sometimes of crimson and scarlet cloth, but never, I think, of a lighter kind, such as chintz." On the contrary, for the drawing room, "the curtains...are made of various materials, but seldom of moreen. Chintz, and watered and plain damasks, are most usual."¹³⁹

Though styles and fashions may have changed, switching window hangings seasonally remained a convention. Elizabeth Drinker recorded the change of curtains regularly in April and November from the 1780s until her death in 1807. Most of her references to this activity are matter-of-fact sentences like this one, "Molly Kelly put up three suits Curtains for us, one of them a new white suit in our Chamber,"¹⁴⁰ and it is difficult to

¹³⁷Webster, Domestic Economy, 251.

¹³⁸Webster, Domestic Economy, 250.

¹³⁹Parkes, Domestic Duties, 173, 179.

¹⁴⁰Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 1: 755 (25 November 1795).

know if she meant the bed curtains, the window curtains or both. Yet, a seasonal change in furnishings was made in the Drinker household and if there were window curtains, they would be changed at the same time as the bed hangings. As contemporary household guides suggested, changing the fabric furnishings was part of the spring and fall housecleaning, Eliza Leslie advised taking up the carpets, changing the bed and window curtains and putting slipcovers on upholstered furniture, along with a thorough housecleaning.¹⁴¹ As Leslie stated, "it is not a good custom to keep the curtains up during the summer, as it fades them, and covers them with dust..."¹⁴²

Leslie's suggestion for summer window treatments was venetian blinds.¹⁴³ This was not a new idea, venetian blinds were a common 18th-century treatment and they appear on inventories throughout the century, though less frequently than traditional window curtains. Only 16% of the inventories listing a window covering listed blinds and this seems to be an inaccurate number compared to other primary sources--newspaper ads, paintings, journal entries. Perhaps the venetian blinds were unobtrusive and missed by the recorders. Or perhaps they were so common that recorders took them for granted and missed them in many rooms. Also, they may have been considered an architectural feature and not counted as part of the household

¹⁴¹Leslie, The House Book, 342-345.

¹⁴²Leslie, The House Book, 188.

¹⁴³Leslie, The House Book, 188.

furnishings. Whatever the case, venetian blinds were used in Philadelphia, throughout the colonial and federal periods, in upper-class households as well as in middle-class homes and public buildings.

Elizabeth Drinker recorded in April 1796 that "the back parlor venetian window blinds were put up this afternoon."¹⁴⁴ Around the same time, a visitor to the city remarked in his travel journal that "the best houses in the city are furnished with Venetian blinds, at the outside, to the windows and halldoors, which are made to fold together like common window shutters."¹⁴⁵ By the time Eliza Leslie was recommending their use in 1841, blinds were still a common and accepted window treatment in Philadelphia, though their purpose and preferred paint color may have changed:

As they are intended for convenience rather than for ornament, it is not necessary that Venetian blinds should, like curtains, have a conspicuous effect in the room. On the contrary, it is better that their colour should as nearly as possible match that of the wall. Green Venetian blinds are getting out of favour, as that colour fades very soon, spots with wet, and shows the dust too plainly.¹⁴⁶

Whatever their form and color, blinds, like curtains, added to the "comfort and elegance of apartments," by providing warmth and color and preventing "curious persons from looking in."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 795 (21 April 1796).

¹⁴⁵Isaac Weld, Jr., Travels through the States of North America [1795-1797] (London: John Stockdale, 1800), 1: 252.

¹⁴⁶Leslie, The House Book, 190.

¹⁴⁷Webster, Domestic Economy, 249; Leslie, The House Book, 230.

E. UPHOLSTERY

Edward Weyman, upholsterer, "makes all kinds of Upholsterer's work, viz. FURNITURE for beds and window curtains...all kinds of settees, and settee beds, easy chairs, couches and chair bottoms, either of silk, worsted or leather, likewise feather beds, matrasses..."¹⁴⁸

As Edward Weyman's newspaper ad attests, 18th-century upholsterers did much more than add padding and colorful covers to furniture. They functioned more like modern interior designers than our present-day conception of an upholsterer. Since Philadelphia was a prominent port and later the nation's capital, upholsterers abounded in the city throughout the century. Prior to the Revolution, at least 28 upholsterers pursued their craft in the city. In the period from 1760 to 1810, the number rose to 89.¹⁴⁹ The sheer number of advertisements by upholsterers suggests that many residents did own upholstered furniture, and changed the colors and fabrics frequently. However, on the inventories surveyed, upholstery appears far less often than any other kind of fabric furnishing and with little detail about color, fabric or style.

Upholstered seating furniture of any kind appeared in only 12% of the 532 inventories surveyed.¹⁵⁰ But, this statistic is

¹⁴⁸Pennsylvania Gazette, 19 September 1754.

¹⁴⁹Patricia Chapin O'Donnell, "The Upholsterer in Philadelphia: 1760-1810" (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1980), 5, 20-23; Susan M. Prendergast, "Fabric Furnishings Used in Philadelphia Homes, 1700-1775" (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1978), 52.

¹⁵⁰Probate inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

misleading. Though the majority of 18th-century seating furniture was probably not upholstered (for example, cane and rush seats, Windsor chairs, benches), Philadelphians probably owned more upholstered furniture than is represented on the inventories. For example, during the 1790s, one French visitor to the city found that:

Almost all Philadelphia houses...have the simplest of furniture, usually consisting of several pieces of mahogany, chairs of the same wood with seats covered with horsehair in the case of wealthy people. Other classes have walnut furniture and wooden chairs painted green like garden furniture in France.¹⁵¹

This description also suggests a problem in determining the amount of upholstered furniture to be found in the city's households. The terminology employed by visitors, inventory recorders and residents alike was far from standardized. For example, a "green chair" could be elaborately upholstered with green damask or it could simply be a Windsor chair painted green. Frequently there was no description at all on inventories, just "chair," "couch" or "settee."

While inventories are not particularly fruitful for studying upholstery, the newspaper ads of local upholsterers and the papers and journals of prominent Philadelphians do suggest certain trends in the selection of colors, fabrics and styles. Leather and haircloth were the most popular upholstery materials during the late-18th century, according to both newspaper ad evidence and the scanty inventory entries. 65% of the

¹⁵¹Roberts, eds., Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1947), 263-4.

inventories listing upholstery included leather-bottomed chairs. Part of the appeal of leather was its practicality--it was sturdy and easy to clean.

Haircloth, made of the mane and tail hairs of horses with linen, cotton or wool, came in a variety of colors though black was the predominant choice (see figure 6). Deborah Franklin expressed pleasure with her haircloth upholstery, writing to her husband, "[T]he potterns of the Chairs air a plain Horshair and look as well as a Paddozway [a more expensive fabric] everey bodey admiers them."¹⁵² However, George Washington did not find haircloth acceptable for upholstery, writing "I wish the Chair bottoms may last as I had a tryal of hair once before which were of no duration and from thence determined to have no more; but perhaps all may not be alike and these will answer your recommendation of them."¹⁵³

Lavish textile choices included worsted fabrics like damask, camlet, harateen and moreen. All of these textiles were available in a multitude of colors and patterns. Moreen and harateen were watered worsteds, a process that made them similar to silk moire, though without the expense.¹⁵⁴ 26% of the

¹⁵²Labaree, ed., Franklin Papers, 12:296 (6-13 October 1765).

¹⁵³Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, 2:433 (20 September 1765).

¹⁵⁴Montgomery, Textiles In America, 97, 100, 103; Charles F. Montgomery, American Furniture: The Federal Period (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), 41-45; Brock Jobe, "The Boston Upholstery Trade, 1700-1775," in Upholstery in America and Europe from the 17th Century to WWI, ed. Edward S. Cooke, Jr. (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1987), 67, 69.

inventories surveyed with upholstery listed a textile-covered chair or couch. Damask was the most commonly noted fabric, followed by worsted and stuff, two types of woolen fabric. Scattered examples of needlework upholstery and "turkey work" upholstery appear in primary source evidence, though not in the inventories surveyed, and they were not as common as leather or whole cloth upholstery.

18th-century furniture designers did not hesitate to suggest suitable upholstery colors and fabrics. Thomas Chippendale provided explicit descriptions of the upholstery he believed appropriate for each style of chair and sofa, suggesting red morocco leather for one form, tapestry or needlework for another and leather or damask for a third.¹⁵⁵ At the end of the century, Hepplewhite suggested the following, "Mahogany chairs should have the seats of horse hair, plain, striped, chequered, etc. at pleasure, or cane bottoms with cushions, the cases of which should be covered with the same as the curtains."¹⁵⁶ Chippendale and Hepplewhite were style setters for the period and many local cabinet-makers and upholsterers imitated their designs and used similar materials.

Whatever the material chosen for upholstery, it was affixed to the furniture using brass-headed tacks. Contemporary portraits provide visual evidence of the decorative effect this

¹⁵⁵Thomas Chippendale, *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* (London, 1762; reprint, New York: Towse Publishing Co., 1938), unpag.

¹⁵⁶Hepplewhite, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, 2.

method produced (see figures 1 and 6). Chippendale incorporated tacking into his designs, "The Seats...are most commonly done with Brass Nails, in one or two Rows; and sometimes the Nails are done to imitate Fretwork."¹⁵⁷ This method used many more tacks than were necessary to serve a constructive function, making them an added decorative element.

Padding provided comfort but chairs and sofas were not overstuffed, as in later periods.¹⁵⁸ Given the cost of textiles, elaborate draping and the use of excess fabric was a considerable expense and beyond the reach of most. During the early-19th century, increasingly extravagant upholstery began to appear, but the Victorian period was the first to be marked by elaborate, overstuffed seating furniture.

As mentioned above, the upholstery fabric would be securely attached to the seating furniture. Cleaning it was difficult, if not impossible. An alternative, to protect the expensive textiles, was to cover the furniture with slipcovers. Frequently made from linen and cotton check and cotton printed fabrics, these covers could be easily removed and laundered when necessary (see figure 8).¹⁵⁹ They also enjoyed seasonal use in many

¹⁵⁷Chippendale, *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*, unpag. See Chippendale's drawings for examples. Many contemporary portraits also show decorative tacking, such as Ralph E. W. Earl's portrait *Mrs. Patty Porter*, John Singleton Copley's *Portrait of a Lady* and Ralph Earl's portrait of Oliver Ellsworth and Abigail Wolcott Ellsworth (figure 1).

¹⁵⁸Montgomery, *Textiles In America*, 107, 115, 119; Jobe, "The Boston Upholstery Trade," 72.

¹⁵⁹Montgomery, *Textiles In America*, 123, 125-126.

households, when, as part of spring cleaning, slip covers were placed on the furniture, carpets replaced with straw matting and heavy curtains exchanged for lighter ones, often made from the same material as the slip covers.¹⁶⁰

In rooms where the furniture was protected by slip covers year round, social standing was represented by whether or not the covers were removed in preparation for a visitor. Elizabeth Drinker commented from time to time on upholstery matters in her diary and she apparently employed slip covers for seasonal use as suggested by an April 1801 entry, "Polly Bryan made the greatest part of 6 Chair covers and left us."¹⁶¹ George Washington also followed the seasonal convention, requesting in a 1783 letter, "two dozen strong, neat and plain, but fashionable, Table chairs...with strong canvas bottoms to receive a loose covering of check, or worsted, as I may hereafter choose."¹⁶² Presumably, he would use the check in the summer and the worsted in the winter, leaving himself several decorating options.

Washington was not the only consumer interested in "neat and plain, but fashionable" household furnishings. Anna Rawle's mother counseled against overly elaborate furniture when she advised Anna on chairs to be purchased in preparation for her marriage, "I would advise them all mahogany & the chairs plain,

¹⁶⁰Leslie, The House Book, 344-345.

¹⁶¹Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 1398 (3 April 1801).

¹⁶²Fitzpatrick, ed., The Writings of Washington, 160 (22 September 1783).

even if carved were the same price; moreen bottoms and cross backs are clever."¹⁶³ While plain forms were preferred over elaborate ones, tasteful upholstery also meant en suite upholstery, where the colors and patterns harmonized if they didn't match exactly. Both Chippendale and Hepplewhite suggested that upholstered chairs "are usually covered with the same Stuff as the Window-Curtains."¹⁶⁴ Washington followed this convention, ordering "16 yards of Stuff of the same kind and colour of the curtains, to cover two dozen chairs."¹⁶⁵

During the 19th century, the en suite aesthetic lost its influence on household furnishing styles and upholstery suggestions, like those for other household textiles, were based on the function of the room where the chair was placed. In 1808, one designer suggested leather upholstery for parlor and library chairs, silk or chintz for the drawing room and leather or cloth in blue or green with printed ornamental borders for sofas.¹⁶⁶ Upholstery forms and fashions continued to evolve throughout the 19th century, becoming increasingly elaborate, colorful and heavily padded as taste and technology changed.

¹⁶³Mrs. Rebecca Shoemaker to Anna Rawle, 4 June 1783, in "Letters and Diaries of a Loyalist Family of Philadelphia," HSP, 187-188.

¹⁶⁴Chippendale, The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director, unpag.

¹⁶⁵Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, 29: 16 (23 September 1786).

¹⁶⁶George Smith, A Collection of Designs for Household Furniture and Interior Decoration (London, 1808; reprint, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

PART II.

THE PURSUIT OF COMFORT: A CULTURAL ANALYSIS

I should recommend every article to be first provided, upon which comfort depends, for it carries its influence through every day and moment of our lives, and leaves to embellishments and refinements the power of giving only a temporary and casual gratification.¹⁶⁷

Mrs. Parkes's advice, published in her 1828 household guide, suggests the importance attached to the pursuit of comfort throughout the 18th and early-19th centuries. Household textiles--bedding, floor coverings, table linen, upholstery and window treatments--while they fulfill utilitarian functions of warmth, protection, cleanliness and muffling sound, primarily provide comfort by beautifying and softening the home. The environment inhabited by Philadelphians during the 18th century, as for Philadelphians today, had to be mediated in order to sustain life. Objects, whether furniture, ceramics or textiles, influence lifestyles, providing comfort and pleasure.

18th-century Philadelphians needed household textiles to make life comfortable. Sleeping without blankets and walking on uncarpeted floors could be dangerous. Achieving subsistence required physical comfort. But household textiles, like all expenditures, had to be prioritized. The material lifestyle of Philadelphians, then as now, was determined by economic achievement. As the economic wealth of a citizen increased, so did their level of comfort, reflected by household textiles and other furnishings and consumer goods. Some 18th-century

¹⁶⁷Parkes, *Domestic Duties*, 168.

Philadelphians reached only the lowest level of physical comfort. Others were able to exceed subsistence necessities and attain household textiles that provided "social comfort."

Owning the minimum level of textiles allowed people to achieve some warmth and color in their homes, however, decorative considerations had to come second to practical considerations when choices were being made. Once all of the practical, physical needs were met, decorative considerations could move to the forefront. Taste and fashion were criteria for social comfort. Curtains and upholstery, serving only a small practical function, had to be chosen in good taste according to contemporary fashion guidelines. Once the correct choices were made, the consumer and householder could feel comfortable socially. If the correct choices were made, the inhabitant could fit into a particular part of society and also identify others with similar tastes, social and economic standing.

Finally, once a satisfactory level of physical and social comfort was achieved, the responsibilities accompanying that comfort had to be met. The care and maintenance of household textiles was essential to their long life and proper use. Women, as caretakers of the home, often shouldered this responsibility entirely. Comfort, and the societal ideals it represented, had to be pursued actively.

A. PHYSICAL COMFORT

Throughout the 18th century and well into the 19th century, textiles were expensive commodities, available in Philadelphia only to those who could afford them. Carpets, table linen, upholstery and window treatments were not necessary to daily life, instead they served a decorative function, adding social comfort rather than physical comfort. Thus, most residents did without these objects. However, bedding fit a different category. Most nights were cool or cold in the city, and without a sustainable source of heat, the Philadelphian without some kind of covering could suffer frostbite or even death, particularly given the flimsy construction of working-class housing. Primary sources from the 18th century attest to the importance of bedding. Beds, with their coverings and other accessories, appear more frequently in probate inventories, public records and personal letters and journals than any other kind of household textile. Bedding was defined as a necessity, like food, clothing and shelter, by all classes of Philadelphia society and incorporated into the poor laws instituted by the state of Pennsylvania.

Since most textiles were expensive, affordable only for the wealthy, scholarly attention has focused on the higher-style textiles available during the 18th century. The poor and working-class residents of the city owned few textile items and the ones they did own were used until they wore out, further decreasing the evidence left for historians to study. However,

by looking at the state poor laws, the conditions in the city jails and the activities and services provided by several private Philadelphia benevolent organizations, a pattern appears. These sources not only provide an idea of which textiles poorer Philadelphians owned and a sense of the subsistence level of physical comfort, but also suggest how their standard of living was measured. In turn, this evidence implies the aspirations of the less well-off during this period. Living in such a cosmopolitan port city, all residents, no matter how rich or how poor were aware of the goods arriving daily into the city. While the working-class and poor residents were not able to afford the purchase of many luxury items, they were aware of what constituted fashionable styles and could dream of owning those objects.

The state passed several laws regarding assistance for the poor throughout the 18th century. In 1770, Pennsylvania required that debtors be administered an oath confirming that they provided a "true and perfect account" of their real and personal estate. The law was necessary to expose hidden assets, but, the law continued, it would except "the wearing apparel and bedding for [the debtor] and family, not exceeding ten pounds in value."¹⁶⁸ This precedent, defining bedding as a necessity, was more explicitly spelled out in a 1792 state law:

¹⁶⁸The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682-1801 (Harrisburg: William Stanley Ray, 1900), 7: 348. Emphasis added.

Whereas many persons confined for debt...are so poor as to be unable to procure food for their subsistence, or fuel or covering in the winter season, and it is inconsistent with humanity to suffer them to want the common necessities of life...it shall be part of the duty of the...inspectors [for regulating and inspecting the common gaol of the county]...to provide fuel and blankets for such of [the debtors] are incapable of obtaining them by reason of his or her poverty...¹⁶⁹

State law recognized that blankets were a necessity to be provided to the most destitute residents of the city. But even those who could afford top-of-the-line household accessories understood the need for bedding before almost anything else.

Elizabeth Drinker, wife of a wealthy Philadelphia Quaker merchant, suggested the value that bedding held for her throughout her diary. In June 1795 she wrote, "Saml. Moore came with Cart, sent two beds &c to Clearfield, preparatory to my, and Sons going there."¹⁷⁰ Not only was bedding valuable enough to be transported from Drinker's city home to her country place, but she mentions only the bedding, attesting to its necessity. Drinker was even more explicit about the status of bedding in 1797 when she wrote, "Parker arrived here [the Drinkers' country house] between 7 and 8 in the evening he brought our beds and bedding with many Necessary Articles and some cloathing."¹⁷¹

In 1778, Richard Bache expressed the importance of bedding in a letter to his father-in-law, Benjamin Franklin, describing

¹⁶⁹Statutes at Large (Harrisburg: Harrisburg Publishing Co., 1909), 14: 267-8.

¹⁷⁰Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 1: 695 (23 June 1795).

¹⁷¹Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 956 (24 August 1797).

the family's flight from a disgruntled mob, "We were obliged to leave most of the furniture behind, taking with us nothing more than what we thought absolutely necessary for our comfort, such as beds, cloaths, house linnen &c..."¹⁷² Although Drinker and Bache who belonged to Philadelphia's upper class could afford the most fashionable household textiles, and did indeed own them, they were still conscious of what was necessary compared to what was a luxury. These examples suggest that members of all of Philadelphia's social classes held a common understanding of what was essential for daily existence. Though most people purchased more decorative textiles as soon as they were able, when times were hard the identification of what was necessary was easily performed and quickly acted upon.

Perhaps in part because the understanding of textile necessities was so pervasive and accepted, benevolence movements flourished in Philadelphia. All of these groups wanted to provide "necessities" to those in need. The commonly understood definition of "necessities" and the ability to envision oneself without those items probably contributed to the willingness of so many to assist the less fortunate.¹⁷³ During the winter of 1762, a group of Philadelphia residents organized the Committee to Alleviate the Miseries of the Poor. They expressed their

¹⁷²Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 25: 552-553 (31 January 1778).

¹⁷³John K. Alexander, Render Them Submissive: Responses to Poverty in Philadelphia, 1760-1800 (Amherst, Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 123.

objective in the meeting minutes:

The inhabitants of this City comiserating the distress of the Poor in the present severe Season have generally joined in raising a sum of money to be laid in firewood and other necessaries to be distributed amongst the poor and Indigent in such manner as their several necessities shall appear to Require...¹⁷⁴

Throughout the winter, members of the group distributed firewood, blankets and stockings to those in need, keeping track of the amounts in a disbursement ledger. In total, 377 half cords of wood, 165 blankets and 63 pairs of stockings were distributed. The list of recipients included many women as well as a number of men, graphically representing the increasing urban problem of poverty.¹⁷⁵ The language used in the minutes of the Committee tacitly places blankets into the "necessity" category, recognizing them as essential to physical comfort.

Thirty years later, the problems of the poor had multiplied. During the 1790s several Quaker friends formed the Female Society of Philadelphia for the Relief and Employment of the Poor. In 1802, Catharine Morris, one of the Society's founding members,

¹⁷⁴Committee to Alleviate the Miseries of the Poor, Minutes. In the Wharton-Willing Papers, Box 1, 1762 folder, HSP.

¹⁷⁵Committee to Alleviate the Miseries of the Poor, Disbursement Ledger. Wharton-Willing Papers, oversize #26, HSP. Scholars disagree on the exact number of destitute residents in 18th-century Philadelphia, though all agree that the number was considerable. Some sources to consult: Alexander, Render Them Submissive; Gary B. Nash, "Poverty and Poor Relief in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia," William and Mary Quarterly 33 (January 1976): 3-30; Gary B. Nash, "Up from the Bottom in Franklin's Philadelphia," Past and Present No. 77 (1977): 57-83; David J. Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971); Smith, The "Lower Sort"; Smith, "Poverty and Economic Marginality," 85-118.

copied part of the group's minutes into a personal notebook. The entries chronicle the Society's work as it collected and distributed food, clothing, cash and blankets. Morris was moved by one recipient's circumstances, which she included in her notebook, "Handed a blanket to M.S. as a covering for her Bed of shavings - she is a poor afflicted Woman and has two children - further Care necessary."¹⁷⁶ Again, as with the Committee to Alleviate the Miseries of the Poor, the language of the Female Society's records distinctly defines a blanket as a necessity.

A second female relief effort, the Female Association of Philadelphia for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances, followed suit, publishing an ad in the newspaper stating, "A room is provided at No. Chestnut Street, for the reception of cloathing, bedding and other necessaries sent in donations to the Female Association..."¹⁷⁷ Through these groups, the elements for subsistence, and the physical comfort it represented, including food, clothing and blankets, were made accessible to all Philadelphians.

Along with the many private benevolence organizations in Philadelphia, the city provided public forms of relief. A public

¹⁷⁶Catharine W. Morris, Notebook of Extracts of the Minutes of the Female Society of Philadelphia for the Relief and Employment of the Poor, 1802. Haverford College Library Special Collections, Haverford, PA (hereafter referred to as HCL).

¹⁷⁷Female Association of Philadelphia for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances, Minutes 1800-1830, Packet 1, HCL.

hospital and Almshouse were constructed during the 18th century and accepted as many people as possible. However, this was still not sufficient and the Almshouse quickly overflowed. In 1766, the colonial Assembly authorized construction of a new Almshouse. The building opened in 1767 and admitted 368 people in its first three months of existence.¹⁷⁸ While there is little evidence of the material conditions experienced by the Almshouse inmates, a short list of the property owned by a group of residents admitted in 1811 and 1812 indicates that over half brought bedding with them. The vast majority of those who passed away while living at the Almshouse between 1811 and 1818 owned only the clothing they were wearing.¹⁷⁹

If the inmates owned additional items, generally it was some form of bedding. John Turner possessed one pillow case. Similarly, Hannah Johnson owned her outfit of clothes and one blanket. A few entries list a tablecloth or towel. The only exception to these sparse accounts was James Luther, who died October 10, 1811, owning one bedstead, two feather beds, one mattress, one large pillow, two pillowcases, three blankets, one coverlet and two towels along with some clothing and a few other

¹⁷⁸Watson, Annals, 3: 334.

¹⁷⁹City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, GP 684, Guardians of the Poor Register of Paupers' Property at Death, September 1811-May 1818 and Inventory of Articles Belonging to Paupers at the Time of their Admission into the Almshouse, 1811-1812. The "Property at Death" register lists approximately 550 names. The "Inventory of Articles at Admission" list includes only 14 entries.

items.¹⁸⁰ These records reinforce our understanding of the status that bedding held in the daily life of Philadelphians, wealthy, working or poor. Bedding was the first household textile to be procured and the most firmly retained.

Even the city's criminal element was provided with bedding under state and city laws, with Philadelphia's prison serving as a form of public assistance. In 1787, an Irishman, identified only as "Dennis K____y," emigrated to Philadelphia. Though he wished to work, Dennis was unable to find a job and could barely subsist. He soon heard that state law required a sentence of hard labor for thieves, instead of the gallows or the whipping post. Furthermore, the inmates would be provided with all of the trappings of physical comfort--food, clothing and lodging, while also assigned to a hard labor task. This seemed a reasonable trade to Dennis so he fell in with a group of "foot-pads [petty thieves]," committed robbery and was sent to jail. From prison, Dennis wrote to his brother, encouraging him to follow a similar path writing, "I never lived better in all my life...I think you could not do better than by coming over, and becoming one of our company..."¹⁸¹ Though this is an extreme example, Dennis' desire for the minimum level of physical comfort and his actions to achieve it are significant.

¹⁸⁰City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, GP 684.

¹⁸¹The Independent Gazetteer, 10 July 1787.

Dennis found the reported material conditions of the city jail enticing. However, in 1770, when a committee appointed by the Assembly visited the city's Old Stone prison at Third and Market streets, they were appalled by the conditions they found there. The prisoners had "no bedding of any kind to lie upon, their only covering by night being one blanket for two of them, those necessities having been purchased from charitable contributions made in the various churches."¹⁸² After these conditions became public, a group of Philadelphia citizens began working to improve the situation. The Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons submitted a "Memorial" to the legislature on January 12, 1789, stating that:

amongst the great number confined in Prison previous to trial there frequently happens cases of great want, many of the prisoners being destitute of shirts and stockings and warm coverings...with respect to Lodging, it appears that no provision of any kind is made by law, the prisoners lying promiscuously on the floor unless supplied by their friends...¹⁸³

Eventually, through legislation, the situation was rectified and the Walnut Street prison, built between 1773 and 1775, became a model for other cities and states in the 1790s.

Contemporary accounts of conditions at the Walnut Street jail applauded the facility. A 1793 description presented comfortable conditions, though still sparse:

The prisoners are lodged in beds, with sheets and

¹⁸²Negley K. Teeters, They Were in Prison: A History of the Pennsylvania Prison Society 1787-1937 (Chicago: John C. Winston Co., 1937), 12-13.

¹⁸³Cited in Teeters, They Were in Prison, 448-9.

blankets on bedsteads; the beds are filled with red cedar shavings. We have found this regulation greatly conducive to cleanliness and decency.¹⁸⁴

Three years later, two accounts appeared extolling the virtues of the jail, with almost identical descriptions of the material conditions of the prisoners' sleeping quarters, "In each of the rooms are about one dozen beds with mattresses, sheets and [bed] rugs; every prisoner being allowed a single bed."¹⁸⁵ For each inmate to have their own bed was truly a luxury, even this late in the century, despite the 1792 state regulation mandating, "The prisoners shall be furnished with suitable bedding..."¹⁸⁶ By 1811, the sleeping arrangements were described somewhat differently, "The prisoners lie on the floor, on a blanket, and about thirty sleep in one room..."¹⁸⁷ In fact, visiting committees to the debtors' prison in 1798 and 1806 remarked on the lack of amenities, despite the law requiring blankets. In 1798 the committee found two blankets for seven women and, in 1806, they declared, "Blankets and linen are wanting and an early

¹⁸⁴Caleb Lownes, "An Account of the Gaol and Penitentiary House of Philadelphia" in William Bradford, An Enquiry How Far the Punishment of Death is Necessary in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1793), 84 (INDE catalog #4461).

¹⁸⁵Robert J. Turnbull, A Visit to the Philadelphia Prison (Philadelphia: Budd and Bertram, 1796), 17. An almost identical description appears in La Rochefoucauld, On the Prisons of Philadelphia by an European (Philadelphia: Moreau de Saint-Mery, 1796).

¹⁸⁶Cited in Negley K. Teeters, The Cradle of the Penitentiary: The Walnut Street Jail at Philadelphia 1773-1835 (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Prison Society, 1955), 134.

¹⁸⁷James Mease, The Picture of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: B. and T. Kite, 1811), 166.

attention thereto is necessary."¹⁸⁸ Perhaps an increase of inmates or rising costs caused the fluctuation in supplies and resulted in such varied descriptions. Regardless of whether or not the state was fulfilling its duty, it had determined what the necessities were: clothing, food, shelter and blankets.

Though many Philadelphians relied on some form of charitable assistance during the 18th century, the majority did provide for themselves and their families on their own. Throughout the city, at all economic levels, bedding was the most common household textile owned by Philadelphians. Defined as a necessity and representing the basic level of physical comfort, owning a bed with any amount of coverings was imperative for a subsistence-level existence. In a study of 532 Philadelphia-area inventories between 1720 and 1835, 92% of the documents listed at least one bed. Though probate numbers are skewed to the wealthy,¹⁸⁹ this

¹⁸⁸Teeters, They Were in Prison, 65-8.

¹⁸⁹Throughout the 18th and most of the 19th centuries, when a property-owner died, his or her estate was often inventoried and that document filed with the will and estate administration papers in the appropriate government office. While these inventories are an excellent source for studying the material record, they must be used carefully. There seems to be no pattern to who was inventoried and who was not. As well, among those who were inventoried, there is a distinct bias towards wealthier, older men which needs to be considered. For more information on these biases and the use of probate inventories see: Peter Benes, ed., Early American Probate Inventories (Boston: Boston University Press, 1989); Gloria L. Main, "Probate Records as a Source for Early American History," William and Mary Quarterly 32 (January 1975): 89-99; Kevin M. Sweeney, "Furniture and the Domestic Environment," 261-290; Lorena S. Walsh, "Questions and Sources for Exploring the Standard of Living," William and Mary Quarterly 45 (January 1988): 116-123.

overwhelming number of beds seems to indicate that most people, no matter what their income, had something to sleep on. The bed may have been filled with straw and set directly on the floor, but it was a fixture in the home.

Once a householder had achieved a sense of physical comfort and owned the subsistence-level household textiles, they could move onto other, less practical, considerations when choosing fabric furnishings. Choices of color, style, pattern, texture and form were abundant in 18th-century Philadelphia. If you could afford the purchase price, it was available. However, for most Philadelphians, aspiring to carpets, curtains and upholstery was as close as they would get to these elegant possessions. Few would ever be able to afford everything they wanted. Some could not fight the temptation and turned to theft.

In April 1747, someone robbed Timothy Scarth. His "escrutore" was broken open and "sundry things" were taken, including a gold necklace and locket, one pair of gold buttons, six silver teaspoons, two large silver spoons, a bed quilt, some bed linen and a set of "fine hugabug" napkins.¹⁹⁰ The expensive and portable nature of textiles made them attractive to thieves. At the same time, they represented taste, value and personal identity to the owners, who often advertised in the newspaper, offering substantial rewards for the return of their goods.

¹⁹⁰Pennsylvania Gazette, 21 May 1747. "Hugabug," or huckaback, was a linen fabric used for various household purposes.

Timothy Scarth considered his bed quilt, linen and napkins valuable. Not only did he keep them locked up with his silver and gold items, he also advertised a five pound reward for the return of his possessions.

Elizabeth Drinker was also acquainted with the theft of household items. While she herself was never robbed, she wrote in 1777 about her neighbor, Howell, who was:

Robed of a Bed from one of their 2 [p'r.] Stairs Chambers, the Fellow being surpris'd got of, without the rest of the Bootey which he had lay'd out of the Drawers ready to take away--there has been many roberies committed lately in Town.¹⁹¹

Indeed, one need only browse through a few issues of the Pennsylvania Gazette from any year during the 18th century to understand Drinker's concern. Notices of stolen property and of slaves and servants absconding from their masters after layering on clothing and picking up whatever portable valuables they could carry are rife among the newspapers' pages.

Theft was a common enough occurrence in the city that prevention required constant vigilance. Just the suspicion that one's goods, particularly textiles, would be stolen or were missing was enough to cause great consternation among the owners. Elizabeth Drinker wrote of her concern in 1795, when the washerwoman she used was taken to jail "for keeping...a disorderly or riotous House." Drinker prepared herself for a loss, writing:

[the constable] took them off, I expected we should

¹⁹¹Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 1: 262 (7 December 1777).

loose our Linnen &c that was in her Custody...as they had left their house open and nobody in it--in about an hour after she return'd in good Spirits...soon after she brought our Linnen home, nothing missing.¹⁹²

While the episode ended happily enough, Drinker's concern was so severe that she chose to incorporate it into her diary entry after the fact. The value of textiles and the anxiety that the threat of their loss provoked is reinforced by another entry from Drinker's diary. In 1802, one of Drinker's friends "came after breakfast, in a flustre, she had mislaid 2 Coverlids &c. which she fear'd was lost, but after looking into her depossitaries upstairs she found them, and went home pleased."¹⁹³

Once physical comfort was achieved, with the basic human needs of shelter, clothing, food and warmth supplied, attention could turn to the pursuit of social comfort. However, pursuing social comfort did not justify overindulging in elaborate luxuries. One European visitor to Philadelphia felt that residents had become too extravagant in home furnishings in the 1790s, "Luxury is very high there [in towns and cities], especially in New York and Philadelphia, and makes a dangerous progress every year...."¹⁹⁴ Instead, wealthy Philadelphians showed a growing preference for "neat and plain" objects. For

¹⁹²Crane, ed., *Drinker Diary*, 1: 651 (20 February 1795).

¹⁹³Crane, ed., *Drinker Diary*, 3: 1590 (13 November 1802).

¹⁹⁴La Rochefoucauld, *Travels through the United States of America...in the years 1795, 1796 and 1797* (London: R. Phillips, 1799), 19 (page number refers to a typescript of selections from this book of unknown date in the Independence National Historical Park Library).

example, in 1783, Rebecca Shoemaker advised her about-to-be-married daughter on the purchase of furniture, "12 Chairs for Parlour 6 for a Chamber...I would advise them all mahogany & the chairs plain, even if carved were the same price..."¹⁹⁵

Household goods that were attractive and of good quality but simpler in style corresponded with the political ideals of the new nation, mirroring Greek and Roman motifs.

B. SOCIAL COMFORT

Newly married in 1799, Joseph Brevitt of Baltimore wrote to his father in England with some wedding gift suggestions:

If Mrs. Stracy should be induced to make me any present & request of you 'what may be best?' I would wish a silver Teapot & stand for my wife or a good carpet.¹⁹⁶

The items Brevitt requested were hallmarks of a genteel lifestyle, aspired to by all who had not yet reached its pinnacle.¹⁹⁷ The pursuit of social comfort, purchasing items, like household textiles, that served primarily as symbols and decoration and identified like-minded neighbors, had many levels in the city during the 18th century. Once a household's physical

¹⁹⁵Mrs. Rebecca Shoemaker, New York, to Anna Rawle, Philadelphia, 4 June 1783, in "Letters and Diaries of a Loyalist Family," 187-188.

¹⁹⁶ Cited in Roth, Floor Coverings, 60.

¹⁹⁷For an in-depth explanation of gentility see: Richard L. Bushman, The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) and Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the 18th Century (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994).

needs were provided for, attention turned to social needs and ambitions. Household textiles, while serving a practical purpose (warmth, protection), also fulfilled less tangible objectives. Feeling comfortable in society was made easier by adorning the home with consumer products, being able to identify fashionable goods and fit in with a group of people.

Yet, there was a line between elegant, tasteful comfort and opulent luxury. Was social comfort a luxury? Or was it simply a less pressing need than physical comfort--one that could be filled as Philadelphians were able, to the best of their ability? Social comfort was pursued on a variety of levels, determined by a person's economic wealth. Certainly whatever level one could afford was not a luxury for that person. But how was home decoration viewed by society? Fashions, styles and tastes were set by the people who could afford the items considered appropriate. Those who were not in the highest income bracket had to make do, making choices and selections as best they could, following the guidelines presented by the elite but at economical prices.

While textile use was based on emulation and imitation, it was not simply the fulfillment of specific material conditions. Consumer objects, like textiles, became cultural symbols and artifacts in their own right. Household textiles symbolized beliefs and values, while elevating mundane, even crude activities, smoothing out rough edges and cushioning hard surfaces. They provided comfort physically, intellectually and

emotionally.

Household textiles serve as an excellent example of the split in fashion preferences among Philadelphia's upper class. Among those who could afford fashionable goods, there was a moral undertone, a conscious attempt by many Philadelphians to avoid overindulgence and pure pleasure. This split in preferences can be grouped, in part, by religious denomination, the Quakers and the non-Quakers. Beginning in the 1760s, part of Philadelphia's upper-class society wanted household furnishings to be visible signs of cosmopolitan sophistication. Those who owned and appreciated current European furnishings considered themselves exemplars for those who were unable to study the fashions firsthand by travelling to Europe. However, another part of Philadelphia's high society believed that only restrained furnishings allowed them to remain faithful to their beliefs and principles, political for some, religious for others, both for a few. Good quality fashionable furnishings were still sought by this group, but "neat and plain" was preferred over elaborate ornamentation.¹⁹⁸

Attitudes toward and the presence of carpets, in particular,

¹⁹⁸David L. Barquist, "'The Honours of a Court' or 'The Severity of Virtue': Household Furnishings and Cultural Aspirations in Philadelphia," in Shaping a National Culture: The Philadelphia Experience, 1750-1800, ed. Catherine E. Hutchins (Winterthur, Delaware: Winterthur Museum, 1994), 314-320; Steve Rosswurm, "Class Relations, Political Economy, and Society in Philadelphia," in Shaping a National Culture, 46-47; Robert J. Gough, "The Philadelphia Economic Elite at the End of the 18th Century," in Shaping a National Culture, 16; Kevin M. Sweeney, "High-Style Vernacular: Lifestyles of the Colonial Elite," in Of Consuming Interests, 31.

demonstrate the bias against luxury. Although most fabric furnishings primarily provided social comfort rather than physical comfort, carpets seem to have received more than their fair share of negative attention. Perhaps it was because despite their substantial expense, they wore out quickly. To many Philadelphians, carpets served little practical purpose and to walk on such a decorative, expensive object symbolized pure luxury. One European traveler decried this expense as contrary to Penn's original motivation for establishing the colony, "When towns acquire this degree of population, you must have...all the sweeping train of luxury; that luxury which Penn wished to avoid. It already appears: they have carpets, elegant carpets."¹⁹⁹ However, another European visitor praised the use of carpets, writing "Good carpeting tends to concentrate the heat, which is an advantage in a country, where, as I have said, rooms are drafty."²⁰⁰

Towards the latter half of the 18th century, carpet ownership quickly became a hallmark of taste, style and gentility. However, those Philadelphians who favored plainer, simpler furnishings often disagreed with the use of carpets, and some took their disapproval even further, as one European visitor attests:

¹⁹⁹Brissot de Warville, New Travels, 174-175.

²⁰⁰Roberts, eds., Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey [1793-1798], 326. A similar statement appears in Johann David Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation [1783-4] (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1911), 60.

The Quakers have likewise carpets; but the rigorous ones blame this practice. They mentioned to me an instance of a Quaker from Carolina, who, going to dine with one of the most opulent at Philadelphia, was offended at finding the passage from the door to the staircase covered with a carpet, and would not enter the house; he said that he never dined in a house where there was luxury; and that it was better to clothe the poor, than to clothe the earth.²⁰¹

Another Philadelphian was similarly unimpressed in his description of a relative's new home:

I would fain give you some idea of the elegance in which this kinsman of ours has settled himself to make amends for the caprice of his fellow citizens. The house is new...and lately furnished from Philada. with every article of silver plate, mahogany, Wilton carpeting and glass ware that can be conceived of that you will find in the very best furnished houses of Philadelphia. Parlours and chambers completely equipped with every luxury as well as convenience.²⁰²

Many Philadelphians were ambivalent about the use of carpets and unsure of how to use and react to them.

As carpeting became cheaper, the criticism of its ownership declined. Perhaps many of the critics were jealous. Or, as carpeting became widespread, it was easier to accept. As the 19th century progressed, criticism of carpet ownership gave way to criticism of carpets for health risks. The household guides present many suggestions for floor covering choices based on room function. The unhealthful properties of carpeting made them anathema for bed chambers, while the risk of fire made carpets dangerous in the kitchen. Thus, carpets required extensive care

²⁰¹Brissot de Warville, New Travels, 175.

²⁰²Thomas Lee Shippen, Sully, Virginia to Dr. William Shippen, Jr., Philadelphia, 24 October 1797. Cited in Roth, Floor Coverings, 39-40.

and vigilance throughout the period to prolong their life.

While carpets illustrate the importance that following fashion had on providing social comfort, the use of table linens elevated the act of eating, raising a rather base physical need to a genteel social level. Using table linen created a particular "look," providing a visible indicator of social and economic status at what was often a group activity.²⁰³ Benjamin Franklin sent "Six coarse diaper Breakfast Cloths" to his wife from England, explaining, "they are to spread on the Tea Table, for no body breakfasts here on the naked Table, but on the Cloth set a large Tea Board with the cups..."²⁰⁴

Elizabeth Drinker demonstrated that the ritual of laying the cloth was inherently linked with dining throughout her diary. In 1799, she wrote of an impromptu meal, made acceptable by the placement of a cloth, "W.D. and O.A. came home after we had done dinner--laid the cloath and gave them a dinner about 3 o'clock."²⁰⁵ The latecomers did not grab a quick snack and sit down by the fire with a plate, instead the cloth was taken out again and places were set at the table for their meal. The textiles, in the form of table coverings, served to modify dining behavior. The use of table linen, no matter the size and

²⁰³Schoelwer, "Form, Function and Meaning," 28.

²⁰⁴Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 7: 381 (19 February 1758).

²⁰⁵Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 1193 (25 July 1799).

formality of the meal, served as a reminder that appropriate behavior was required.

Several years later, in 1805, Drinker wrote again about an unusual dining experience in her household, "I eat my dinner in my Chamber, Sister being alone would not have the cloath laid, but din'd in the kitchen I dont remember the like ever before happening."²⁰⁶ This event obviously bothered Drinker as it did not seem quite proper. Children and servants ate in the kitchen, adults, especially of Drinker and her sister's status, ate in the dining room seated at a covered table.

Following conventions, like laying a cloth before eating, and keeping abreast of popular styles required an intensive effort. The variety of consumer goods available in Philadelphia continued to grow and change throughout the century.²⁰⁷ Choices had to be made by shoppers about which specific objects to buy as well as between categories of goods. Few Philadelphians could afford all of the things they desired, thus a choice between

²⁰⁶Crane, ed., *Drinker Diary*, 3: 1877 (10 November 1805).

²⁰⁷For more information on the causes and theories of the "consumer revolution," see: T.H. Breen, "An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America, 1690-1776," *Journal of British Studies* 25 (October 1986): 467-499; John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Of Consuming Interests*; Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988); Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of 18th-Century England* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982); Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

better table linens, silverware or a set of upholstered chairs frequently had to be made.²⁰⁸

With a greater number of artifacts on the market and more and more shops springing up in the streets of Philadelphia, shopkeepers had to devise new marketing strategies. The increasing importance of aesthetic concerns drove these marketing techniques. Purchasing textiles, ceramics or furniture became more than just filling supply lists, it was a means of realizing aspirations. Selection and presentation motivated customers. Shop window displays had to draw shoppers' attention and bring people into the store. One city historian remembered Philadelphia's first window display as that in a dry goods shop:

The then uncommon sized lights [i.e., window panes] in the two bulks [i.e., display windows], and the fine mull-mull and jaconet muslins, the chintses, and linens suspended in whole pieces, from the top to the bottom, and entwined together in festoons...caused it to be "all the stare" for a time.²⁰⁹

The conduct of the shopkeeper underwent changes as well. No longer just providing utilitarian goods that everyone needed, the shopkeeper had to compete with other merchants, supplying the customer with whatever their heart desired. As well, the shopkeeper had to be able to dispense advice and help customers identify fashionable goods.²¹⁰

Tracking the textiles available in city newspaper ads

²⁰⁸Richard L. Bushman, "Shopping and Advertising in Colonial America," in Of Consuming Interests, 243, 245.

²⁰⁹Watson, Annals, 1: 222.

²¹⁰Bushman, "Shopping and Advertising," 250-251.

suggests trends in fashion and style.²¹¹ Though few dry goods dealers advertised in the first half of the 18th century, only 2 in 1730 and 14 in 1740, the variety of textiles offered by these men was considerable. A wide selection of linens and wools was obtainable by anyone who could afford the price. In these early ads, the merchants stated that the goods were imported and would be sold at reasonable prices. While a few ads detailed specific names of fabrics, overall they are general, geared more towards fulfilling functional needs than towards decoration. Colors and patterns rarely appear.

Around 1745 to 1750, the ads began to change. Fabrics are differentiated by quality and a few vendors distinguish fabrics by pattern and color. While many merchants listed only generic textile names (linen, wool, silk) previously, now five or ten different wools and linens are listed in the advertisements. Also, the graphic appearance of the ads has changed, with the seller's name set off in bolder and larger type. Perhaps as the number of dry goods dealers in the city grew, they needed more customers to take notice of their ads.

By 1760, the newspaper ads had lengthened considerably with specific color and pattern information included. The amount of ready-made household textiles also increased and diaper and

²¹¹A computerized database of 490 dry goods ads from Philadelphia newspapers covering 1720 to 1820 is available in the Cultural Resources Management department, Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, PA. Summary tables of this data appear in Appendix 4, with a discussion of the data-gathering methodology in Appendix 1.

damask table linen and harateen and calico bed curtains appear scattered throughout the ads. The vendors continued to proclaim "Just imported" or "Lately imported" at the top of each ad. The word imported was less important than the "just" or "lately." Merchants were advertising recently arrived products, catering to colonists' desire for the newest fashions and objects. Owning the newest fabrics conveyed status; no one wanted to buy old yard goods that had been sitting around in a shop for months or years.

During the second half of the 18th century, the ads continued to change. As shopkeepers started to specialize in certain kinds of goods, the ads became shorter, advertising only the most recent arrivals and newest fashions. Staples like linen and wool were always available and did not require attention. By 1790, interest in the exotic is apparent from the profusion of Indian cottons advertised throughout the pages of the newspaper. Some dry goods dealers seem to have specialized in these cottons, printing ads listing exotic names and vivid colors.

By the early 19th century, into the 1830s, dry goods ads continued to reflect specialization. Storekeepers sold specific types of textiles, like cottons, or forms of household textiles, like carpets. Few continued to sell a variety of general goods in addition to textiles. Slowly a variety of American or "domestic" textiles became available and was advertised in the newspaper. "China and Calcutta goods" continued to appear, attesting to the popularity of the colorful, washable cottons.

With all of the textile choices available, consumers had to learn not only what was fashionable in order to purchase the right items, but they had to learn how to use and display the textiles and other household goods in a stylish manner as well. During the late 1780s, Hannah Morton of Philadelphia welcomed important guests into her best room, the front parlor. Furnished with a sofa covered in blue worsted moreen, eight mahogany chairs with blue moreen bottoms, a pair of blue moreen window curtains, six table mats and a carpet, presumably also in blue, the room must have made quite an impression.²¹² Morton carefully chose these furnishings, matching them in the en suite style, knowing the effect they would create. Rooms furnished en suite, in identical colors and fabrics, were part of a larger cultural phenomenon represented by sets of ceramic plates and cups, matching furniture and wallpaper patterns, and symmetrical architecture (see figures 1 and 4). While some of the trappings of social comfort were available to the middle and professional classes in Philadelphia, for example, an ingrain carpet, fine table linens, or an upholstered chair or two, the true en suite style was affordable only for the city's elite.

The expense of en suite furnishing was prohibitive for most Philadelphia residents. Universally recognized and acclaimed,

²¹²1788 probate inventory transcribed in Katherine L. Niven, "Domestic Interiors of Philadelphia 1775-1800" (Unpub. paper, University of Pennsylvania, 1985), at the Athenaeum, Philadelphia, PA. Moreen was a worsted cloth with a waved or stamped pattern, especially popular before the Revolution and during the early 19th century.

seemingly easy to emulate, the style was perhaps deceptively so.²¹³ It simply was not practical or affordable for most Philadelphia residents to decorate in this manner. If the style was pursued to the letter, no longer could pieces of furniture be purchased one or two at a time and put in a room with other pieces purchased or made ten, twenty or fifty years ago. The outlay for Hannah Morton's matching parlor furnishings must have been considerable. At her death the room's textiles were worth almost 30 pounds. James Logan's yellow room contained textiles totalling 46 pounds, while the fabric furnishings in Robert Montgomery's crimson back chamber were valued at 27 pounds.²¹⁴ These totals do not include the rooms' furniture and reflect prices at the time of the death of the owners, thus the initial expense of furnishing these rooms would have been significantly higher.

Perhaps a less expensive alternative was to furnish the home partially en suite, with a matching bed quilt and curtains but no upholstery or carpet. Most of the probate inventories studied included little specific descriptive material in regard to color, pattern or texture. Only five of the 532 inventories surveyed

²¹³Cary Carson, "Why Demand?," in Of Consuming Interests, 642.

²¹⁴Niven, "Domestic Interiors 1775-1800"; Melissa Vernon Johanningsmeier, "An Analysis and Transcription of Ten Philadelphia Inventories, 1767-1776" (unpub. paper, University of Pennsylvania, 1986); Susan Ellis and Kate Frankel, "Anthony Palmer Residence: A Hypothetical House Museum" (unpub. paper, University of Pennsylvania, 1989). All of the above are available at the Athenaeum, Philadelphia, PA.

demonstrated unmistakable evidence of the en suite style.²¹⁵

However, several other inventories suggest that householders were trying to follow the style by furnishing their textiles bit by bit. Or, perhaps, the recorders omitted descriptive information, feeling it to be a waste of time or because they were so accustomed to the style, they neglected to note its presence specifically. For example, Denning Oliver's 1780 inventory lists one suit of yellow harateen curtains, two pairs of window curtains, two counterpanes and two carpets. Possibly these were all in one room and matched impeccably. Likewise, Jane Dawson's 1806 inventory lists one field bedstead with calico curtains, three calico bed quilts and two calico window curtains.²¹⁶ Were these all from the same fabric and placed in the same room? Though impossible to know for sure, these examples do suggest that some form of the en suite style was more prevalent than the inventories lead us to believe on first glance.

Given the expense and rigidity of this aesthetic, how loyal were Philadelphians to the en suite style? Apparently, many genteel citizens took it very seriously. In 1758, Benjamin

²¹⁵Those decedents were: Jonathan Dickinson, a merchant who died in 1722; James Logan, whose Germantown home, Stenton, was inventoried in 1752; Rose Coats, who died in 1766; Edward Robeson, whose home in the Northern Liberties section of the city was inventoried in 1769; and Laurence Keene, of Northumberland County, inventoried in 1789. The textiles these people owned are available on the inventory database or from the data collection sheets in the appropriate binder.

²¹⁶Probate inventories, Register of Wills Archives, City of Philadelphia.

Franklin wrote to his wife that he purchased:

56 Yards of Cotton printed curiously from Copper Plates, a new Invention, to make Bed and Window Curtains; and 7 Yards Chair Bottoms printed in the same Way, very neat; these were my Fancy, but Mrs. Stevenson tells me I did wrong not to buy both of the same Colour...²¹⁷

Perhaps we can forgive Franklin, given the novelty of the product.

The dismay in mismatching colors described by Franklin above had turned to absolute displeasure less than fifteen years later. Following a vendue of John Penn's furniture in 1771, Joseph Shippen wrote to Penn recounting the event. One bidder had purchased only part of Penn's dining room furniture, a regrettable mistake for:

by dividing and unsorting the Furniture he has rendered what he purchased of no Use to him, as he cannot procure here the same kind of damask to make up Curtains and Chairs to compleat the Set: And by this egregious Mistake, he is now under the Necessity of selling the Sofas and 5 Chairs...²¹⁸

Furnishing a room with mix-and-match furniture was simply not an option for people of Shippen's and Penn's, and Franklin's, social standing.

En suite rooms decorated in blue, like Hannah Morton's, described above, were a popular choice.²¹⁹ Benjamin Franklin's

²¹⁷Labaree, ed., Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 7: 382 (19 February 1758).

²¹⁸Joseph Shippen to John Penn, 29 June 1771, Independence National Historical Park Library, Notecard file, Philadelphia, PA.

²¹⁹Graham Hood, "Early Neoclassicism in America," Antiques 140 (1991): 981.

correspondence with his wife, Deborah, about the construction of their new home in Philadelphia refers to a "blewroom."²²⁰ Likewise, George Washington furnished one of his rooms at Mount Vernon in blue. In 1759 Washington ordered matching bedroom furniture from Robert Cary, Esq. and Co. in London including one tester bedstead, "with fashionable bleu or bleu and White Curtains to suit a Room lind w't the Ireld. paper," window curtains of the same for two windows, a bed coverlet to match the curtains and four chair bottoms of the same fabric.²²¹ Blue was still a favorite color for Washington in 1797 when he wrote to Tobias Lear requesting "new Carpeting as will cover the floor of my blue Parlour. That it may accord with the furniture it ought to have a good deal of blue in it..."²²²

Beginning in the 1750s, lists of textiles in newspaper ads were accompanied by color choices. Apparently, as the appeal of en suite decor increased, so did the availability of different colors. For example, in 1760, Francis Harris advertised brown, blue, mixed, black, drab, scarlet, crimson and red broadcloth, brown, drab, crimson, scarlet, red and blue shalloon, brown, blue and drab calimanco and china blue, red, black and blue Bengal

²²⁰Labaree, ed., Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 12: 62, 294 (14 February and 6-13 October 1765).

²²¹Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, 2: 320 (May 1759).

²²²Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, 37: 577 (10 March 1797).

among many others.²²³ All of these textiles fulfilled household functions and provided a number of possibilities for en suite decorating.

Crimson and green were also popular choices for furnishing. During the 1770s, Robert Montgomery and Lynford Lardner both had back chambers furnished in crimson. Along with the blue room already mentioned, Washington furnished another room in green. While still in New York, Washington had an assistant inquire about a carpet, "A Pea Green Ground, with white or light flowers or spots would suit the furniture of the Room..."²²⁴ Thomas Jefferson also preferred crimson, green and blue. In 1808, Jefferson requested "a counterpane of such crimson Mantua silk such as the draperies which Mr. Rea [a Philadelphia upholsterer] formerly furnished..." This counterpane would not only match Jefferson's draperies, but also several furnishings that he had brought from France in 1790, specifically a number of crimson chairs.²²⁵ Other colors were also used, according to the homeowner's preferences. Philadelphian Robert Montgomery furnished his front chamber with a yellow harateen sofa and three

²²³Pennsylvania Gazette, 4 December 1760. Broadcloth, calimanco and shalloon were heavy woollen cloths; bengal was a cotton fabric.

²²⁴Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, 31: 8 (10 February 1790).

²²⁵Susan R. Stein, The Worlds of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1993), 58, 108; Julian P. Boyd, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 18: 36.

yellow harateen window curtains.²²⁶

Understandably, contemporaries frequently identified rooms by their dominant color during the mid- and late-18th century. When James Logan's Germantown house, Stenton, was inventoried after his death in 1752, the appraisers identified three of the second floor rooms as the white, yellow and blue "lodging rooms."²²⁷ Forty years later, the practice was still evident in Philadelphia; Elizabeth Drinker wrote in her diary that "Molly Kelly [is] at work here, making white Curtains for Green Chamber."²²⁸

The aesthetic appearance and the comforting nature of en suite decoration struck a chord in generations of Americans as the style persisted for over a century. George Washington consistently worked to harmonize his private space. In 1757 he wrote to a London merchant requesting "one doz'n strong chairs...the bottoms...of three different colours to suit the paper of three of the bed chambers..." When he ordered the fabric for his blue room, Washington's goal was "to make the whole furniture of this Room uniformly handsome and genteel."²²⁹ Into the mid- and late-19th century, household guides continued

²²⁶Montgomery and Lardner probate inventories are transcribed in Johanningsmeier, "An Analysis and Transcription." Harateen is a worsted furnishing material.

²²⁷Ellis and Frankel, "Anthony Palmer Residence."

²²⁸Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 1: 746 (28 October 1795).

²²⁹Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, 2: 138, 320 (September 1757 and May 1759).

to recommend monochromatic color schemes. In 1841, Eliza Leslie commanded, "Unless the chairs, sofas, etc., are covered with satin-hair, the curtains should, of course, always correspond with them in colour, if not in material. Also with the carpet."²³⁰ The persistence of this style comes, in part, from its soothing, harmonic effect.

The relationship of en suite furnishing to the "quest for order" during the 18th and early 19th centuries is readily apparent. Pursuing social comfort through adorning the home in en suite textiles provided a sense of control for the inhabitant. In an uncertain and dangerous time, a Georgian-style house, with symmetry and ordered spaces, furnished with attractive, matching objects supported a stable, balanced environment, a safe haven from the outside world and its troubles, while allowing the residents to feel some sense of control over the unknown forces of nature.²³¹

Pursuit of the en suite aesthetic had roots in Enlightenment ideals. Though few Philadelphians actually read the theories of Edmund Burke or the Earl of Shaftesbury, the ideas expressed by those men were taking hold in intellectual and political circles and influencing the opinions and understanding of life. A renewed interest in nature and the hierarchical order of being,

²³⁰Leslie, The House Book, 188.

²³¹Jules David Prown, "Style in American Art: 1750-1800," in American Art: 1750-1800 Towards Independence, eds. Charles F. Montgomery and Patricia E. Kane (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1976), 39.

along with its links to a republican form of government were cherished by Philadelphia's elite. Though subtle, these philosophical and political ideas had an effect on the aesthetic sense and conception of "good taste" of Americans.

Natural forms and exotic locations or famous people were replicated on textiles. These pictures conveyed ideas and stories to a population that was only partly literate, few of whom would ever see or hear about all of the people, places and things reproduced on fabric. In 1788, John Penn draped his bed with curtains of a copperplate-printed fabric depicting "William Penn's Treaty with the Indians." A young man remembered "lying in bed looking at the peacocks and other figures on the chintz curtain of my four post bedstead" during the early 19th century. Another woman, remembering back to her childhood in the 1820s, wrote:

A shadow of the childish awe with which I used to tiptoe into that sacred apartment, and gaze at the Eastern splendor of fruit and flowers, comes over me now as I write. I remember putting out a timid little finger to touch those forbidden fruits, and then quickly drawing it back as if I had committed a sacrilege.²³²

Man's control over nature gripped the imagination during the 18th century. In a society where every day was filled with uncontrollable threats, such as sickness, fire, or economic disaster, transforming a room into whatever color the inhabitant

²³²Garrett, At Home, 115-116.

preferred provided a sense of power.²³³ Smooth, clean lines were fashionable, subtly underscoring the desire for order and control over nature and its unpredictable actions. Edmund Burke valued smoothness as an important component of the definition of beauty, extolling it as:

A quality so essential to beauty, that I do not now recollect any thing beautiful that is not smooth. In trees and flowers, smooth leaves are beautiful; smooth slopes of earth in gardens; smooth streams in the landscape; smooth coats of birds and beasts in animal beauties...a very considerable part of the effect of beauty is owing to this quality.²³⁴

Textiles, furniture, wallpaper and ceramics all became smoother and shinier, transforming their raw natural origins into man-made artifice. Furthermore, their application to wooden walls, floors and ceilings transformed those barriers against nature into smooth, colorful surfaces. This transformation elevated these objects, allowing them to symbolize and provide comfort in the surroundings.

Burke's comments illustrate another component of Enlightenment theory as well. His definition of beauty comes through his own observations of nature. Self-education was highly prized by Burke and other influential thinkers of the period. The accessibility of learning by seeing and doing seemed particularly appropriate for a new country based on democratic principles. Part of this educational process was the act of

²³³Hugh Honour, Neo-Classicism (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 94.

²³⁴Cited in Bushman, Refinement of America, 72.

recording one's experiences and observations.²³⁵ Embellishing fabrics, ceramics, wallpaper, and even furniture, with these motifs extended the opportunity for observation into the daily schedule. Even historic scenes, buildings, people and foreign locales were made accessible in this way. Textiles hung at windows and covered beds, ceramics were displayed on the table and showcased in glass-fronted cases, wallpaper adorned the walls--all were easily noticed and available for observation. Many more people had access to these items than to the real locations, animals, flora and people. Even illustrated books and oil paintings depicting these things were far beyond the reach of many.²³⁶

By the mid-19th century the en suite aesthetic's hold was loosening.²³⁷ There was a move towards a less rigid combination of colors and fabrics but still a belief that harmony and balance were virtues to strive for, as suggested by an 1845 household guide:

²³⁵Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The Colonial Experience (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), 164-168; Edgar P. Richardson, Brook Hindle and Lillian B. Miller, Charles Willson Peale and His World (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1983), 123.

²³⁶Jane C. Nylander, Fabrics for Historical Buildings (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1990), 26.

²³⁷Even as early as 1795 the rigidity of the en suite aesthetic may have begun to loosen. The quotation from Elizabeth Drinker's diary on page 94 (note 227) demonstrates that although rooms were still being identified according to color, not all of the fabric furnishings matched. Or, possibly, Drinker was describing white muslin curtains used to line the room's more "suitable" green curtains.

The colors of window curtains should harmonize with the rest of the room, as well as with the richness of the materials. When we say harmonize, we do not mean that they should correspond, or be the same, but that there should not be any violent contrasts, and that the colours should agree with each other.²³⁸

While these strictures have continued to loosen to the present day, most people still follow some kind of compatible color scheme when furnishing their homes and apartments. For the colonists and early Americans, en suite decoration represented control. A greater variety of consumer goods was available than ever before. How did one decide what to purchase, how to use the goods and how to arrange them? Sorting by color, pattern and texture provided an order, as well as a sense of control over one's environment.

C. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMFORT

Simply achieving the consumer goods that provided physical and social comfort was not the only indication of social status. At all levels of physical and social comfort, maintenance was required to preserve and protect the accoutrements of this lifestyle. Keeping textiles clean was a constant struggle and one that had to be actively pursued in order to make them last as long and appear as attractive as possible. During the first half of the 19th century, household advice books began to appear in the city providing guidelines on how to choose appropriate household furnishings, how to care for them and defining what was

²³⁸Webster, Domestic Economy, 251.

tasteful. These books counseled readers on everything from mundane spot-removing remedies to undertaking spring and fall cleaning and protecting one's home from the devastating threat of fire.

As valuable artifacts, textiles had to be carefully protected. However, they were also flammable and numerous journal entries and newspaper accounts document the seriousness of the threat of fire. Many fires started like this one, described in the newspaper in 1739, "A Fire broke out at the upper End of Front-street, & burnt down three or four Houses in a short Time; it is suppos'd to have been occasion'd by a part of the snuff of a Candle falling among some loose Linnen."²³⁹ Owing fabric furnishings required constant vigilance. Elizabeth Drinker exemplifies the fear and concern that fires inspired throughout her diary. She described one incident in 1798 at a house "where they take lodgers":

one [lodger] had gone to bed with a book, fell asleep, left the candle burning by the bedside, which caught the curtains and burnt them and part of the bed, and the mans Cheek is badly burnt, he is a member of Congress--the Curtains were pulled down in flames, and the bed forced out of the window, the house saved²⁴⁰

Fire was a constant threat, often leaving not just one person or family homeless, but whole blocks destitute, if the fire could not be contained.

Increasingly, household guides warned of the dangers of

²³⁹Pennsylvania Gazette, 8 February 1739.

²⁴⁰Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 1027 (30 April 1798).

falling asleep while reading in bed. Eliza Leslie was particularly forceful in her admonition against this practice:

Do not allow yourself to contract the inexcusable habit of reading in bed at night. It never fails to injure the eyes; but there is a still greater evil attending it, the probability of your insensibly falling asleep, and the light catching the bed clothes, and consequently, endangering your own life, and perhaps setting the house on fire.²⁴¹

Leslie specifically mentioned the threat posed by children or "any persons that are not habitually careful," like domestics who "if they had [bed] curtains, might very probably set them on fire with their candles."²⁴² Lacking proper know-how and a watchful eye, adorning the home with textiles could be dangerous. Philadelphians increasingly turned to household guides to learn how to maintain and protect their textiles and to form a standard of cleanliness.

Though rigorous standards of housekeeping did not become prevalent until the mid-19th century, earlier evidence does suggest the importance of cleanliness as a measure of social standing. Having clean, quality linens was a sign of wealth and those residents who could afford nice bedding for their use at home expected a comparable level when they traveled. Both Elizabeth Drinker and Benjamin Franklin had bad experiences with bed linen while traveling. The fact that each set down their incident in writing is significant, suggesting the importance

²⁴¹Leslie, The House Book, 147.

²⁴²Leslie, The House Book, 304, 326.

that bedding and cleanliness held in their minds.

Franklin wrote of his experience while traveling in 1756 to his wife, Deborah. He compared his current lodging, "on deal feather beds, in warm blankets," to the night a month before when Franklin and his fellow commissioners stayed at an inn on their way to Bethlehem. The landlady was "about to put very damp sheets on the bed," when Franklin and his companions "desired her to air them first." She complied, but the end of Franklin's tale reveals the importance and value placed on standards of cleanliness and the expectations of the genteel class:

...half an hour afterwards, she told us the bed was ready, and the sheets well aired. I got into bed, but jumped out immediately, finding them as cold as death, and partly frozen. She had aired them indeed, but it was out upon the hedge. I was forced to wrap myself up in my great coat and woollen trowsers, every thing else about the bed was shockingly dirty.²⁴³

Twenty years later, Elizabeth Drinker recorded a strikingly similar description of bed linen conditions while she was traveling with her husband. She recorded the event in her diary:

This Evening our Landlady, a dirty old Dutch Woman, refused Changing very dirty, for Clean Sheets, tho after much intreaty, she pretend'd to comply, but to our mortification found she had taken the same sheets, sprinkled them, then Iron'd and hung 'em by the fire and placed them again on the Bed; so that we were necessitated to use our cloaks &c & this Night slepp'd without sheets.²⁴⁴

Both Franklin and Drinker recorded not only their dismay at the initial condition of the bedding but, even after the dirtiness

²⁴³Labaree, ed., Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 6: 365 (25 January 1756).

²⁴⁴Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 1: 168 (29 August 1771).

was brought to the attention of the respective "landladies," both women attempted to mollify their clients with as little effort as possible, effort that did not produce acceptable results, according to Drinker and Franklin.

Were these cases of busy, hardworking women trying to get the work done as quickly as possible with a modicum of fuss? Or do these examples illustrate the differences in the conception of what constituted cleanliness between social classes? The latter explanation takes on greater plausibility when studied in the light of Deborah Norris Logan's comment in her diary, "I am glad I am not of that order of Beings who can set down contentedly in the dirt."²⁴⁵ Clearly she regarded such people as ungentleel. Regardless of the explanation, the textiles themselves, the bedding, were symbolic of more than just a good night's sleep. The standard of cleanliness adhered to in tandem with the bed trappings a person owned signified to which social level they belonged. True social comfort was measured by the goods themselves, both in the quantity and quality of what was owned and the care and condition of those goods.

While Franklin simply recorded that he had to spend the night huddled in his clothes, Drinker wrote that she wanted to teach the woman a lesson. She and her husband "each folded a dirty sheet Nutmeg fashion [i.e., wrinkled up], and left then cover'd up in the Beds, for the old Woman...may it be the means

²⁴⁵Deborah Norris Logan diary, 1: 188 (30 August 1815), HSP.

to mend her Manners."²⁴⁶ These two incidents, so similarly recounted, suggest the hidden standards of gentility, subtly highlighting the barriers to admission for those of the working class. Both of the anonymous landladies attempted to rectify the situations in a way that would meet their standards, not knowing that their solutions would be viewed as unsatisfactory by Franklin and Drinker. From these examples it is easy to see why household guides became so prevalent during the first half of the 19th century.

By the mid-1840s, household guides were making decorating suggestions based on the ease of cleaning specific fabrics. Thomas Webster counseled, "Much drapery confines the air, harbors dust, and is not only expensive, but requires a great deal of trouble to keep it as clean as necessary."²⁴⁷ Webster also discouraged the use of moreen, noting that while it was "much employed some time ago" at present it is "not so much employed, being liable to moths, and to collect dust."²⁴⁸

One mid-19th century household guide recommended, "Have your bed-chamber well aired; and have fresh bed linen every week."²⁴⁹ This standard was also suggested by the city's late 18th-century jail regulations. The buildings were to be whitewashed twice a

²⁴⁶Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 1: 168 (30 August 1771).

²⁴⁷Webster, Domestic Economy, 290.

²⁴⁸Webster, Domestic Economy, 291.

²⁴⁹Lydia Maria Child, The American Frugal Housewife (Boston, 1833; reprint, Kent, Ohio: Friends of the Libraries of Kent State University, 1985), 38.

year, prisoners were to wash their hands and faces regularly, be given clean linen once a week and make their beds every day. Sheets, which promoted cleanliness, were provided in addition to blankets, which promoted warmth.²⁵⁰ Perhaps by surrounding them with clean conditions, the prison authorities hoped that the inmates would improve their conduct. As one observer noted:

The former practice of prisoners sleeping in their cloaths, and being crowded together without any regard to decency, was destructive to the health of the prisoners, and was attended with many other ill consequences, especially where men are collected in the manner they are in prisons.²⁵¹

In a sense, these standards were part of the inmates' rehabilitation.

Eliza Leslie, writing in Philadelphia in 1841, provided readers with several cleaning remedies for specific stains, and was also particularly vigilant against insect infestation. Sofa beds, used bedsteads and cot bedsteads were all "objectionable" because of the difficulty in keeping them "free from bugs."²⁵² Bugs were not a new problem in the city. As one French visitor remarked in the 1790s, "Bed bugs harass the entire continent in hot weather, and in Philadelphia even daylight doesn't prevent them from showing themselves. The universal use of feather beds

²⁵⁰La Rochefoucauld, On the Prisons of Philadelphia, 17; Turnbull, Visit to the Philadelphia Prison, 29; Teeters, Cradle of the Penitentiary, 134.

²⁵¹Lownes, "An Account of the Gaol and Penitentiary House of Philadelphia," 84.

²⁵²Leslie, The House Book, 297, 303, 326.

helps this vermin to multiply."²⁵³

Even earlier, in 1730, a newspaper ad offered a matter-of-fact, conspiratorially-worded answer "for the GOOD of the PUBLICK." Bugs were a fact of life for everyone, no matter what the size of one's income. In fact, it was a physician who ran the ad describing his potion's effectiveness:

this well-experienced Receipt for the destroying of Buggs, with which [the physician] entirely cleared his own Beds, &c. five Years ago, and has sold it to Scores of Families since who have all found the same Effects by it, and never saw a Bugg afterwards.²⁵⁴

The ad suggests a solution instead of castigating the afflicted. Further, this potion "will neither stain, soil, or in the least hurt the finest Silk or Damask Bed that is." The mention of these expensive textiles implies that this problem was not even a stranger to wealthy households.

Indeed, at the beginning of the 19th century, even Elizabeth Drinker mentioned the problem:

Sister Sall, Judy and Rose, busy upstairs Bugging &c, in two of our bedsteads some bugs were found, a very uncommon occurrence with us, as we are often, for years together, without seeing one, and when any make their appearance we make fuss enough, and make a thorough examination.²⁵⁵

Although Drinker stopped short of expressing shame at having this problem, she was bothered by it. Her description of the problem, marked by protestation and blatantly declaring its rarity, is

²⁵³Roberts, eds., Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey [1793-1798], 325.

²⁵⁴Pennsylvania Gazette, 14 May 1730.

²⁵⁵Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 3: 1665 (8 July 1803).

very different from the newspaper ad above. As the 19th century progressed, the reaction of genteel people, like Elizabeth Drinker, to this problem became one of disgust and embarrassment. In 1841, Eliza Leslie used a prescriptive tone in providing an antidote for bedbugs. The comparison of her words with the 1730 ad is striking:

In new houses, where the habits of the family are neat, and a general attention is paid to cleanliness throughout, there will be little danger of bed-bugs; but on removing to an old house which has had various occupants, these disgusting and intolerable insects frequently make their appearance...²⁵⁶

Dirt and bugs had become shameful things. Leslie would never admit that she had the problem herself.

Newspaper ads appeared throughout the 18th century offering cleaning products and services. In 1731 a "parcel of superfine CROWN SOAP" was imported. Appropriate for all fine textiles, the soap was easy and expeditious to use. It was also "excellent for the Washing of Scarlets, or by any other bright and curious Colours, that are apt to change by the Use of common Soap." Its "sweet Flavor" and "fine lather" were augmented by its "neatly put up" appearance in "exact and equal cakes."²⁵⁷ For those who did not want to do their own washing, there were a multitude of dyers, scourers and cleaners offering their services in Philadelphia. Most performed chores similar to the ones described below:

²⁵⁶Leslie, The House Book, 105.

²⁵⁷Pennsylvania Gazette, 16 November 1731.

Notice is hereby given to all persons who have brown linen, diaper, huckaback, counterpains, sheets, napkins, linen yarn, cotton yarn, stockings, or any other sort of linen or cotton manufacture to be whitened, mildews, spots or stains to be taken out, may depend on having all or any of the above mentioned done with care, and in the most expeditious and best manner...²⁵⁸

Keeping textiles clean and fresh was an arduous struggle, yet to be displayed properly and signify status, these items had to look attractive.

During the 18th and early 19th centuries, keeping the household textiles clean and fresh generally fell to the women of the house. Contemporary journals depict the difficult nature of housework, as well as the pride that clean bedding and a sparkling home instilled in their owners. Esther Burr noted in a brief entry to her journal in 1755 that she was "Very busy puting up Beds and no body to help me and it is a good deal of work to pin up two beds."²⁵⁹ Yet, Burr persisted and probably felt a sense of accomplishment when finished. Elizabeth Drinker faithfully noted in her diary when the bed curtains were put up, like Esther Burr, however, she always had assistance if not outright labor. Drinker recorded the return of the bed curtains in November throughout her diary, as in 1798 when she recorded,

²⁵⁸Pennsylvania Gazette, 8 April 1756.

²⁵⁹Carol F. Karlsen and Laurie Crumpacker, eds., Journal of Esther Edwards Burr, 1754-1757 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 148.

"Molly Kelly here putting up beds, or Curtains."²⁶⁰

Perhaps because the women were entrusted with the care of these items, they were also believed to have a special ability to select appropriate household furnishings. While the men usually provided the money to pay for household items, women had an active role in selecting what was to be purchased. In the case of the Washingtons, Martha educated George about household decorating, as he demonstrated in a letter to his assistant, Tobias Lear:

I mentioned the want of a Carpet for my parlour at Mount Vernon; and observed that as the furniture was blue, the ground or principal flowers in it ought to be blue also...Mrs. Washington says there is a kind different from both much in use (Russia) if not dearer or but little more than the former I would have it got.²⁶¹

Female influence is also evident from the many extant bills of sale listing their names.²⁶²

Throughout the late 18th century women gradually became the primary consumers of household goods. Letters between husbands and wives from the period demonstrate the frankness with which many couples communicated about matters of domestic concern, making home decoration a collaborative effort. Women were

²⁶⁰Crane, ed., Drinker Diary, 2: 1114 (23 November 1798). Similar entries appear throughout Drinker's diary, including the following citations where she refers to women who came to her house to perform textile-related chores: 1: 556, 2: 1287, 3: 1594, 1664, 1704.

²⁶¹Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, 37: 579 (12 March 1797).

²⁶²Elisabeth Donaghy Garrett, "Furnishing the Early American Home," Antiques 138 (September 1990): 544-547.

especially acknowledged as connoisseurs of household textiles by their families.²⁶³ In 1763, William Franklin wrote to his London factor ordering silk and worsted damask curtains for his dining room, stating, "Mrs F. desires you will employ Mr Timothy Golding, upholsterer...as she is acquainted with him, & thinks he will do it in the best & most reasonable manner when he knows it is for her."²⁶⁴ Likewise, in the early 1770s, James Wilson wrote to his soon-to-be wife telling her about the new house he was building. While Wilson planned to order "Such furniture as will be absolutely necessary" from the local cabinetmaker in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, he promised his wife that she could choose elegant chairs, tables, curtains and rugs from the shops in Philadelphia.²⁶⁵

As home decoration increasingly became the responsibility of the female head of the household, women became the country's tastemakers. Shops began to gear their marketing and selection towards women. Fashion magazines reporting the latest styles from Europe sprung up in major cities during the beginning of the 19th century. Women also relied on friends and family members to transmit information. Esther Burr wrote to a close friend from her home in New Jersey, requesting advice on household furniture

²⁶³Garrett, At Home, 266-267.

²⁶⁴Hart, ed., "Letters from William Franklin to William Strahan," 432.

²⁶⁵Ann Marie Dubé, "An Examination of James Wilson's Draft of the Constitution," lecture given 19 May 1995 at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

selection:

I want to know how a body may have some sorts of Household stuff--What is the price of a Mehogane [mahogany] Case of Drawers (...) in Boston...and plain Chairs with Leather bottoms and a Couch covered with stamped Camblet or China...²⁶⁶

Design and quality were important selection criteria in the pursuit of social comfort. Women had strong preferences and searched carefully for the textiles and furnishings that they wanted.

In conclusion, household textiles present many fascinating possibilities for understanding the past. Even if a historic installation has only reproduction textiles, they are still artifacts and can be used to educate visitors about issues of taste, style and fashion, economic and social position, physical and social comfort and consumer choices. Like ceramics, which were probably the "cutting edge" of household furnishings during the 18th and early 19th centuries, textiles were visible signs of a household's social aspirations and economic achievements. From one-room homes with sanded floors and one bedstead to the good quality, neat and plain professional-class preferences to the lavishly furnished interiors of the elite, the fabric furnishings symbolized gentility, comfort and aesthetic choices, either in what appears or what the inhabitant hoped to create.

As the most active port in America during the late 18th

²⁶⁶Karlsen and Crumpacker, eds., Journal of Esther Burr, 170 (24 November 1755).

century, the city was a style center, receiving goods and merchandise from all over the world. Cottons from India, linens from Ireland, straw matting from China and wools and silks from England and France, all entered the port every day, presenting Philadelphians with a unique world view. Even if a resident could not afford to own these goods, they certainly knew about them--watched them being unloaded from incoming vessels, read about them in the newspaper or saw them in shop windows--and planned what they would buy first, as soon as the money was saved. Colorful damask bed hangings. Plush Wilton carpets. Crisp white tablecloths. Sturdy leather upholstery. Cheerful calico window curtains. All were available in 18th-century Philadelphia for elegant household decoration or daydreams of a genteel lifestyle.

APPENDIX 1

DATABASE METHODOLOGY

I. INVENTORIES¹

A. SELECTION

1. City Register of Wills Archives

The Philadelphia City Register of Wills Archives in room 920 at 401 North Broad Street currently houses the wills, estate administrations and probate inventories for the city and county of Philadelphia from the 17th through mid-20th centuries. Some Chester and other surrounding county wills and inventories are mixed in.

I began with the 1720 files and surveyed every tenth folder (each estate has a folder filed in (more or less) chronological order) through 1784 for a total of 527 estates. Of the 527 files surveyed, only 342 were useful. Many of the files did not include inventories. Other files had inventories but they were incomplete or illegible or the appraisal was too general for my purposes. A few files only included a business inventory, not a household one. Others included inventories but no household textiles were listed.

From 1785 through 1835, I surveyed every twentieth folder for a total of 409 files. Of these files, 190 included useful inventories. Thus, out of

¹Throughout the 18th and most of the 19th centuries, when a property-owner died, his estate was inventoried and that document filed with the will and the estate administration papers in the appropriate government office. These documents are extremely useful for the historian as they list, sometimes room by room, the household objects that the recorders found as they walked through the house of the deceased. Not everyone was inventoried and it is impossible to know why some people were and some were not. For more information on probate inventories and their use as a historical source, see: Peter Benes, ed., Early American Probate Inventories (Boston: Boston University Press, 1989); Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Standard of Living in the Colonial Chesapeake," William and Mary Quarterly 45 (January 1988): 135-159; Gloria L. Main, "Probate Records as a Source for Early American History," William and Mary Quarterly 32 (January 1975): 89-99; Gloria L. Main, "The Standard of Living in Southern New England, 1640-1773," William and Mary Quarterly 45 (January 1988): 124-134; Kevin M. Sweeney, "Furniture and the Domestic Environment in Wethersfield, Connecticut, 1639-1800," in Material Life in America, 1600-1860, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 261-290.

approximately 13,450 estates filed at the Register of Wills Archives from 1720 to 1835, 936 estate folders were surveyed and 532 (56.8%) ended up as part of my database.

2. The Athenaeum

As a starting point, I surveyed the inventories available at the Athenaeum (Sixth Street, Philadelphia). These inventories appear in a collection of graduate school papers written by University of Pennsylvania students in the classes of Roger Moss and Gail Caskey Winkler. However, the inventories available in these papers were not numerous enough and did not have a wide enough spread of economic levels so I went to the City and used the inventories discussed above. The worksheets from the Athenaeum inventories are in a three-ring binder, separate from the City inventories and were used only for anecdotal information.

B. DATA COLLECTION

Each inventory surveyed at both the Athenaeum and the City Register of Wills Archives was transcribed onto a numbered data collection sheet (DCS). DCS numbers 1 to 108 represent the inventories surveyed at the Athenaeum. Numbers 109 to 641 are the inventories from the City Register of Wills. There were a few inventories that showed up in both groups and some that I transcribed and then discarded from my survey, so the DCS numbers don't exactly equal the number of inventories in the database plus the Athenaeum inventories. All of the DCSs are filed in three-ring binders available in the Park library and each binder has an alphabetical and chronological list at the front for easier reference.

1. DCS categories (sample DCS attached)

a. Name of decedent

b. Address of decedent. Sometimes a town, sometimes a county. If this is blank, the inventory didn't specify.

c. Occupation. Filled in if the will or inventory specified.

d. Age of decedent at death. None of the City inventories listed this information. Some of the Athenaeum ones did.

e. Date the inventory was taken. To request specific files at the City Register of Wills Archives, the year

of the inventory plus the file number is needed (see k. below).

f. Total value of the estate. The inventory takers varied widely in their record-keeping procedures. Sometimes just household goods were listed, other times bonds, real estate, livestock and crops and even business goods were listed. When possible I noted both the total listed on the inventory and the total value of just the household goods (including cash on hand and clothing, generally). For reference, one pound equals 20 shillings and one shilling equals 12 pence.

g. Total value of textiles. The total value of the household textiles listed on the DCS.

h. Total value of the textiles as a percentage of the total value of the estate. This is filled in where it was possible and easy to compute. However, it is not a very good measure of anything because the economy fluctuated so much during the 18th and 19th centuries. Also, most of the goods being appraised would have been older, thus decreasing their values. Finally, over such a long period of time (1720-1835) there is no consistent method of evaluating the values listed. Inflation and the different types of money (for instance, the change from pounds to dollars) were not constant. Given all of these difficulties, none of the value information was used in the computerized database.

i. Description. In this space I listed the household textiles (bedding, floor covering, table linen, upholstery and window treatments) that appeared on each inventory surveyed. I did not transcribe literally unless there was a particularly interesting spelling or I inadvertently copied what was on the document. The assessed value also appears if it was noted on the inventory, unless the object was listed with several other non-textile items. If the inventory included room designations of any kind (numerical, descriptive, etc.) they are transcribed.

j. Text on file. None of the inventories are included in photocopy form.

k. Source. Either the Athenaeum collection of Penn term papers or the City Register of Wills Archives. The City's number appears in this spot, but to request a particular file from the Archives, the year of the inventory is also needed.

l. Preparer's Name and Date. My initials (AEN) and the date I transcribed the inventory appear.

m. Database. The name of the dbase file in which this inventory appears (should be inventor.dbf).

3. The DCS are filed chronologically in three-ring binders so as to provide a hard copy of the evidence and a source for future reference. The Athenaeum inventories are in a different binder from the City inventories (unless one of the Athenaeum inventories came up in the City survey, then the DCS is in the City binder). At the front of each binder (City and Athenaeum) are chronological and alphabetical lists for easier reference.

C. DATA ENTRY

1. All of the City DCS were entered into dBase 4 under the database titled INVENTOR.DBF.

2. dBase Record Format.

a. DCSNUM: The DCS number is entered here as a back-up record-keeping system.

b. NAME: The decedent's name is entered here.

c. ADDRESS: Same as on the DCS. Generally a town or county name.

d. OCCUPATION: If known, entered here.

e. DATE: Year of the inventory.

f. BEDDING1: Bedsteads, sacking bottoms, and mattresses listed on the inventory are entered here. The total number is listed first, followed by descriptive information, ex. 4 bedsteads 1 field 1 old 3 sacking bottoms 1 hair mattresses. All base objects are plural (to make searching easier).

g. BEDDING2: Includes beds, sheets, bedding and furniture. The last two are generic terms, frequently appearing on generalized inventories or used as a catchall by the recorders.

h. BEDDING3: Includes bolsters, pillows, bolster cases, pillow cases, ticking/ticks and bed cases.

i. BEDDING4: Lists blankets, counterpanes, coverlets, quilts, rugs, and spreads.

j. BEDDING5: Includes bed hangings/curtains, valances,

cornices, testers, head cloths, cradles, cribs, hammocks, cots and the generic term bed clothes.

k. FLOOR1: Ingrain, Scotch and rag carpets are listed here as well as the generic listing of "carpets."

l. FLOOR2: Includes floor and oil cloths, straw matting, hearth rugs, foot cloths, floor mats, fire carpets and rugs.

m. FLOOR3: Includes Brussels and Wilton carpets, entry and stair carpets and stair rods.

n. GENFLOOR: If marked with an "x," the inventory included a floor covering. This field is included only to make searching for general floor coverings easier.

o. TABLE1: Lists tablecloths and table carpets.

p. TABLE2: Lists napkins.

q. TABLE3: Lists towels and toweling.

r. TABLE4: Lists case furniture cloths (chest cloths, drawer cloths, sideboard cloths, etc.) and the general listing "table linen."

s. UPH1: Any leather upholstered items are listed here.

t. UPH2: Textile-upholstered items.

u. UPH3: Cushions and covers are here.

v. GENUPH: If marked with an "x," this field indicates that the inventory included upholstered items. Like the GENFLOOR field, it was included to make searching for upholstered items easier.

w. WINDOW1: Curtains are listed here.

x. WINDOW2: Blinds and hardware (rods, rails and lines, cords, cornices and valances) are listed here.

y. SPINWHEEL: If any spinning wheels were listed on the inventory, this field is marked "y."

z. LOOSECLOTH: If any loose cloth was noted on the inventory this field is marked "y."

aa. GENDER: "m" for male and "f" for female.

bb. ROOMBYROOM: If the inventory included any kind of

room designation, i.e. names, numbers, just one or two room names, this field is marked with an "x."

cc. ENSUITE: If the inventory included any evidence of en suite decoration, i.e. matching fabrics and colors, this field is marked with an "x."

dd. OVERFLOW: If there were items or descriptive information that did not fit in the object fields (f to w above) this field is marked and that information is in the memo field under "overflow entries."

ee. NOTES: The memo field; contains overflow information.

ff. URBANRURAL: "1" means the inventory belonged to someone who lived in the City of Philadelphia. "2" represents any county listed as the address. "3" includes all other named locations. "4" means no address was specified.

gg. OCCCODE: This field lists an occupation code for the decedent if that information was easily obtainable from the inventory or probate folder. The occupations listed on the inventories were divided into categories to make data analysis and manipulation easier. "n" means no occupation was specified. "w" represents all of the female decedents, including those whose inventory stated "widow," "spinster," "single woman" or "gentlewoman" as well as those for whom no title was supplied. "y" means yeoman and includes yeomen, farmers and husbandmen. "l" represents laborers, including laborers, carters, porters, stevedores, watchmen, waiters and a free black man. "m" stands for mariners. "r" stands for merchants. "g" represents gentlemen including the titles gentleman, professional, esquire, justice of the peace, Pennsylvania governor, reverend and Army paymaster. "t" signifies tradesmen including shop/storekeepers, innkeepers/holders, victuallers, grocers, tanners, hatters, bakers, clothiers, tobacconists, brewers, hairdressers, surgeons, skindressers, carriers, soapboilers, manufacturers and tallow chandlers. "c" identifies craftsmen including carpenters, stone cutters, weavers, stocking weavers, smiths, glass blowers, cordwainers, coopers, wheelwrights, tailors, papermakers, saddlers, masons, cabinetmakers, potters, gunsmiths, painters, silverplaters, watchmakers, shipwrights and

wharfbuilders.²

hh. SOURCE: This field should be marked "01" for all records. This is a code for the City Register of Wills Archives.

II. NEWSPAPERS

A. SELECTION

1. My newspaper advertisement survey utilized three papers over the period 1730 to 1820. Since my data is not affected by the political leanings of the various Philadelphia papers, I could switch between them without harming the validity of the data. The Pennsylvania Gazette, published once per week, was used for 1730, 1735, 1740, 1745, 1750, 1755, 1760 and 1765 because it was easily accessible on CD-ROM for those years at the American Philosophical Society Library. I used the "Clothing and Textiles" index and skimmed through each of the years listed above, using one ad for each dry goods dealer each year. For 1772, 1781 and 1790, I used the Pennsylvania Packet on microfilm, also available at the APS Library. I switched to every tenth year because the number of ads was increasing. The paper was initially published once each week, but switched to twice per week during those years. 1772 and 1781 had to be used rather than 1770 and 1780 because those years were not available in their entirety from an area repository. 1801, 1810 and 1820 were surveyed in Poulson's American Daily Advertiser, using bound volumes at the Historical Society of

²Categorizing occupations can be done a number of different ways. I chose to group the occupations in my survey according to services and products offered. This grouping also roughly indicates social class levels. For more information on occupations in 18th-century Philadelphia, see: Billy G. Smith, The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Gary B. Nash, The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); Susan Prendergast Schoelwer, "Form, Function and Meaning in the Use of Fabric Furnishings," Winterthur Portfolio 14 (Spring 1979): 25-40; Stuart M. Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); David R. Brigham, "Social Class and Participation in Peale's Philadelphia Museum," in Mermaids, Mummies and Mastodons: The Emergence of the American Museum, ed. William T. Alderson (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1992); Mary M. Schweitzer, "Occupation, Residence and Real Estate Values in Philadelphia 1790" (unpub. paper, Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies, 1984).

Pennsylvania. Poulson's is a continuation of the Packet and I had to use 1801 instead of 1800 in order to get a complete calendar year. Poulson's was published daily but I continued surveying one day per week in an attempt to control the size of the data set.

2. Only one ad per vendor per year was used as a means of controlling the number of database entries. Since the dry goods dealers often ran identical ads for several weeks in a row following a shipment, it would have been redundant to count the textiles in every ad in each paper. My method provides a survey of the ads and suggests trends in the types of textiles available in the city and when they were available.

B. DATA COLLECTION

1. Each merchant/shopkeeper's ad was transcribed onto a numbered data collection sheet (DCS). DCS numbers 1 to 288 indicate the Pennsylvania Gazette ads. Numbers 289 to 441 signify the Pennsylvania Packet ads and numbers 442 to 545 represent the ads transcribed from Poulson's. The DCS are arranged alphabetically in three-ring binders by year.

2. Only textiles used for household tasks or decoration were entered into the newspaper ad database. Many of the textiles advertised in the papers were almost exclusively used for clothing. I used the glossary in Florence Montgomery's Textiles In America 1650-1870 (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984) to determine which fabrics were used primarily in the household (See Appendix 2 for a glossary).

3. DCS Categories (see example attached):

a. DCS Number.

b. SELLER'S NAME: The name of the seller as it appeared in the paper.

c. SELLER'S BUSINESS: Very few of these blanks are filled in, those that are simply say merchant or shopkeeper, based on my guess.

d. ADDRESS: If the seller's address was included in the ad, it is listed here.

e. DATE: Date of the newspaper the ad was transcribed from.

The next several sections appear on DCS used from 1772 through 1820 only.

f. DESCRIPTIVE TERMS: Any descriptive information about the goods appears here--"just imported," ship names, captains' names, where the goods are from, any other applicable information about the entire list of goods for sale.

g. PRICE TERMS: Actually includes credit terms such as any information in the ad about payment options.

h. OTHER ITEMS OFFERED FOR SALE?: If the ad lists other goods (non-textile-related), this section says yes. This is not filled out on every sheet.

i. WOOLS: This section lists the woollen textiles that appeared in the ad.

j. LINENS: Linen textiles in ad.

k. COTTONS: Cotton textiles in ad.

l. SILKS: Silk textiles in ad.

m. FUNCTIONAL: If any household textiles (sheeting, blankets, carpets, tablecloths, etc.) were listed in the ad, they appear here.

n. BLENDS/MISCELLANEOUS: Blends listed in the ad are transcribed here. If I was unfamiliar with a textile name or there was a questionable entry, I transcribed it here.

o. An earlier DCS format lists the following categories in place of the ones listed above: QUANTITY, FUNCTION/SUGGESTED USE, MATERIAL, COLOR, PRICE, CONDITION, DESCRIPTIVE TERMS, OTHER ITEMS OFFERED FOR SALE?, REASON FOR SALE. These were not particularly useful headings (thus the change) but PRICE does include the kind of credit information described in PRICE TERMS above and DESCRIPTIVE TERMS includes the same kind of information on both sheets. OTHER ITEMS OFFERED FOR SALE is also the same on both sheets and REASON FOR SALE is occasionally filled in if the ad specified a particular reason. The earlier DCS format was used for 1730 to 1765 entries and sporadically for 1772 ads.

o. NOTES: Miscellaneous observations or interesting text from the ad appears here on some sheets.

p. TEXT ON FILE: If a photocopy of the ad was taken, a "y" is marked here.

q. SOURCE: The name of the newspaper and the form I read it on appear here.

r. PREPARER'S NAME/DATE: My initials (AEN) and the date I transcribed the ad appear here.

s. DATABASE: The name of the database the information was entered into is here. All the DCS should have NEWSADS.DBF here unless the ad wasn't included in the database.

C. DATA ENTRY

1. All of the newspaper DCS were entered into dBase 4 under the database titled NEWSADS.DBF. A few inadvertent duplications of sellers within one year were left out.

2. dBase Record Format

a. DCSNUM: DCS Number.

b. NAME: The name of the vendor.

c. ADDRESS: If the address appeared in the ad, the street name is entered here.

d. DATE: Year of the ad.

e. PRICE: The credit terms from the ad are entered into this memo field.

f. DESCRIP: Any descriptive language from the ad, particularly ship names, captain's name and source of the goods, is entered into this memo field.

g. LINEN1: Linen codes 1 through 9 are entered in this field (a list of the codes and which textiles they refer to is attached).

h. LINEN2: Linen codes 10 through 19 are entered into this field.

i. LINEN3: Linen codes 20 through 28.

j. WOOL1: Wool codes 1 through 9 are entered in this field (see attached list of textile codes).

k. WOOL2: Wool codes 10 through 19 are entered in this field.

l. WOOL3: Wool codes 20 through 30.

- m. COTTON1: Cotton codes 1 through 9 are listed in this field (see attached list of textile codes).
- n. COTTON2: Cotton codes 10 through 19.
- o. COTTON3: Cotton codes 20 through 24.
- p. SILK1: Silk codes 1 through 9 are listed in this field (see attached list of textile codes).
- q. SILK2: Silk codes 10 through 12.
- r. FUNCTION1: All of the functional household textiles listed in the ads are in this field (see attached list of textile codes).
- s. BLEND1: All of the blend codes are in this field (see attached list of textile codes).
- t. QUALITY: A "y" in this field means that the ad included some quality description (i.e., "superfine broadcloth" or "coarse holland").
- u. PATTERN: A "y" in this field means that the ad included some pattern description (i.e., "striped" or "flowered").
- v. COLOR: A "y" in this field means that the ad listed some textiles with specific color choices.
- w. SIZE: A "y" in this field means that the ad included size information (i.e., "7/8 wide sheeting" or "10/4 rose blankets").
- x. NOTES: This memo field includes all of the descriptive information signified by a "y" in one of the four above fields. Also, any other miscellaneous or interesting information from the ad or about the ad is included here.
- y. SOURCE: A "01" in this field indicates that the source of the ad was the Pennsylvania Gazette. A "02" represents that the source was the Pennsylvania Packet. A "03" means the source was Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

III. DATABASE ACCESS/MANIPULATION

1. DBase 4 is accessed from the C drive. Type in cd\dbase at the c: prompt. When c:\dbase> appears, type in dbase again and follow the instructions on the screen.

2. When you reach the assist screen (after the licensing agreement has been assented to), select the file you wish to use by moving the cursor and pressing enter. Press enter again for "use file" and the database name will move to the top of the column. Hit F10 to get to the top line of choices and select "Exit to dot prompt." Once at the dot prompt, the database can be viewed, edited or analyzed.

3. To view the database information type in "edit." The records will appear and can be viewed in two formats. One is record by record, the other is several records at a time, each record on one line. Scroll up and down from record to record with the arrow keys and field to field with Tab and Shift-Tab. To switch views, hit F2.

4. To extract statistics or examples of specific kinds of data, return to the dot prompt.

a. Type "set exact off."

b. To limit the data gathering to a particular date, gender, occupation, etc., type "set filter to [field name] = (or > or <) "data." Multiple conditions can be met by using ".OR." or ".AND." in between requirements.

c. To count the number of records within a particular set of conditions, type "count for "data"\$FIELDNAME." Again, multiple items can be counted by using ".OR." or ".AND." (\$ means within in dbase-speak)

d. Locate for--will locate records meeting specific conditions. Command is written, LOCATE FOR FIELDNAME = (or > or <; .OR. and .AND. can also be used) "data"

e. The list command--Typing in LIST alone will display all of the records in the database. To list certain fields, type LIST fieldname, fieldname, etc. Records meeting specific conditions can also be listed by using the same modifiers discussed in c. and d. above.

f. Display--similar to list command. "DISPLAY" alone presents only the record that the file pointer is on. DISPLAY ALL displays all of the records in the database, but will pause when the screen is full.

g. To print--add TO PRINT to the end of the syntax line, for example LIST ALL TO PRINT or LIST fieldname, fieldname TO PRINT, etc.

5. Keep in mind that overflow records in the inventory database have to be counted separately. In other words, a few inventory records have items that will not

be counted when running the above-described commands.

6. To exit:

- a. From viewing records--Hit F10, go to Exit and highlight Exit, hit return.
- b. From the dot prompt--type assist, hit F10 go to Exit, highlight quit to DOS and push return.

No.:

TEXTILE PROJECT 1750-1840
INVENTORY DATA COLLECTION SHEET

Name:

Address:

Occupation:

Age:

Date:

Total Value of Estate:

Total Value of Textiles:

Value of Textiles as % of Total Value of Estate:

DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION (Quantity, Material, Function, Color, Value, Style, Accessories):

ROOM 1:

ROOM 2:

ROOM 3:

ROOM 4:

ROOM 5:

ROOM 6:

NOTES:

Text on File? (y or n):

Source:

Preparer's Name/Date:

Database:

No.: TEXTILE PROJECT 1750-1840
NEWSPAPER DATA COLLECTION SHEET

Seller's Name:

Seller's Business:

Address:

Date (for ad, date of newspaper; for auction, date scheduled):

Descriptive Terms:

Price Terms:

Other items offered for sale (non-textile related)?:

Wools:

Linens:

Cottons:

Silks:

Functional:

Blends/Miscellaneous/Questions:

NOTES:

Text on File? (y or n):

Source:

Preparer's Name/Date:

Database:

Page # 1

Structure for database: C:\DBASE\INVENTOR.DBF

Number of data records: 532

Date of last update : 05/29/92

Field	Field Name	Type	Width	Dec	Index
1	DCSNUM	Character	3		N
2	NAME	Character	30		Y
3	ADDRESS	Character	30		N
4	OCCUPATION	Character	15		Y
5	DATE	Numeric	4		Y
6	BEDDING1	Character	50		Y
7	BEDDING2	Character	50		Y
8	BEDDING3	Character	50		Y
9	BEDDING4	Character	50		Y
10	BEDDING5	Character	50		Y
11	FLOOR1	Character	50		Y
12	FLOOR2	Character	50		Y
13	FLOOR3	Character	50		Y
14	GENFLOOR	Character	2		N
15	TABLE1	Character	50		Y
16	TABLE2	Character	50		Y
17	TABLE3	Character	50		Y
18	TABLE4	Character	50		Y
19	UPH1	Character	50		Y
20	UPH2	Character	50		Y
21	UPH3	Character	50		Y
22	GENUPH	Character	2		N
23	WINDOW1	Character	50		Y
24	WINDOW2	Character	50		Y
25	SPINWHEEL	Character	2		N
26	LOOSECLOTH	Character	2		N
27	GENDER	Character	2		Y
28	ROOMBYROOM	Character	2		N
29	ENSUITE	Character	2		N
30	OVERFLOW	Character	2		N
31	NOTES	Memo	10		N
32	URBANRURAL	Character	2		N
33	OCCCODE	Character	2		N
34	SOURCE	Character	2		N
* Total **			965		

page # 1

structure for database: C:\DBASE\NEWSADS.DBF

number of data records: 490

date of last update : 05/31/92

field	Field Name	Type	Width	Dec	Index
1	DCSNUM	Character	3		N
2	NAME	Character	30		N
3	ADDRESS	Character	30		N
4	DATE	Numeric	4		N
5	PRICE	Memo	10		N
6	DESCRIP	Memo	10		N
7	LINEN1	Character	30		N
8	LINEN2	Character	30		N
9	LINEN3	Character	30		N
10	WOOL1	Character	30		N
11	WOOL2	Character	30		N
12	WOOL3	Character	30		N
13	COTTON1	Character	30		N
14	COTTON2	Character	30		N
15	COTTON3	Character	20		N
16	SILK1	Character	30		N
17	SILK2	Character	20		N
18	FUNCTION1	Character	50		N
19	BLEND1	Character	30		N
20	QUALITY	Character	2		N
21	PATTERN	Character	2		N
22	COLOR	Character	2		N
23	SIZE	Character	2		N
24	NOTES	Memo	10		N
25	SOURCE	Character	2		N
* Total **			498		

NEWSPAPER AD DATABASE
TEXTILE CODES

LINEN:

Barras--1

Bielefeld Linen--27

Buckram--2

Cambric--3

Check Linen--4

Diaper--5

Dowlas--6

English Check--22

Furniture Check--25

Garlick--7

Hessian--23

Holland--8

Huckaback--9

Irish Linen--10

Kenting--11

Linen--12

Osnaburg--13

Platilla Linen--28

Pomerania Linen--15

Princes Linen--16

Printed/Stamped Linen--14

Roll--17

Russia Linen--18

Scotch Linen/Check--19

1
135

Silesia--20

Swiss Linen--24

Tandem--26

Ticklenburg--21

WOOL:

Baize--22

Broadcloth--5

Calimanco--1

Camlet--11

Camleteen--12

Cassimere--30

Damask--19

Drugget--3

Durance--24

Flannel--7

Frieze--14

German Serge--16

Harateen--27

Kendal--25

Kersey--4

Mohair--10

Moreen--29

Naps--23

Plaid--18

Plush--21

Ratteen--15

Russel--13

Scotch plaid--20

Serge--17

Shalloon--6

Stroud--26

Stuff--2

Tammy--9

Witney--28

Woollen--8

COTTON:

Baftas--22

Bengal--3

Calico--1

Chintz--11

Corduroy--21

Cossa--12

Cotton--20

Cotton Check--4

Cotton Holland--5

Dimity--7

Drawboy--19

Fustian--9

Gingham--10

Grandrelle--18

Gurrah--23

Guzzee--24

Humhum--2

India Check--17

Manchester Goods/Check--13

Muslin--6

Pillow--15

Printed Cotton--14

Striped Cotton--8

Tufts--16

SILK:

Culgee--6

Damask--3

Gauze--10

Mantua--1

Paduasoy--5

Plaid--7

Satin--8

Silk--4

Tabyrean--12

Taffeta--2

Tiffany--11

Velvet--9

BLENDS:

Alapeen--2

Bombazine--5

Cuttanee--4

Dorsetteen--7

Haircloth--6

Linsey-woolsey--3

Seersucker--1

Tapsel--8

FUNCTIONAL:

Bed Ticks/Ticking

- 10=unspecified
- 11=Flanders
- 12=diaper
- 13=bed bunts
- 14=English bed ticks
- 15=Scotch bed ticks
- 16=bolster ticking
- 17=Dantzick bed ticking
- 18=cotton ticking
- 19=German ticking

Blankets

- 20=unspecified
- 21=rose
- 22=Indian
- 23=English
- 24=Dutch
- 25=point

Bed Fabric

- 30=unspecified
- 31=chintz
- 32=harateen
- 33=calico
- 34=damask
- 35=cotton/dimity
- 36=moreen
- 37=check
- 38=mosquito netting
- 39=copper-plate

Counterpanes/Coverlets/Rugs

- 40=unspecified fabric
- 41=cotton counterpanes
- 42=Italian counterpanes
- 43=chintz counterpanes
- 44=fringed

Tablecloths

- 50=unspecified
- 51=diaper

52=damask
53=French table carpets
54=stringed/fringed
55=sets of table linen
56=table mats/carpets
57=twilled

Napkins

60=unspecified
61=diaper
62=damask
63=huckaback
64=towelling
65=Hamburg

Sheeting

70=unspecified
71=Spanish
72=Russia
73=Irish
74=Ghentish
75=Roannes
76=holland/Flanders/Flemish
77=Lancashire/English
78=Scotch
79=diaper

Carpet

80=unspecified
81=Kidderminster
82=brown holland
83=bedside
84=Scotch/ingrain
85=English
86=Turkey/Persian
87=Wilton
88=floor cloth/oil cloth
89=Brussels

Quilts

90=unspecified
91=Marseilles
92=calimanco
93=Turkey
94=French
95=Italian
96=silk
97=Dutch
98=London

APPENDIX 2

GLOSSARY

The following glossary provides definitions for the names of textiles used to serve household functions. Fabrics used mainly to construct clothing are not included. The definitions below are based on those given in Florence M. Montgomery, Textiles in America 1650-1870 (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984). For further information, please consult that book.

Alapeen: silk-wool blend; upholstery

Baftas: a generic term for plain calico of various qualities from Gujarat in western India

Baize: a woollen cloth dyed brown or green and frequently used as a table covering

Barras: a coarse linen originally imported from Holland

Bay: a wool woven in England from the 16th century

Bengal: silk or a cotton-silk blend exported from the Bengal region of India

Bielefield Linen: a German linen of excellent quality

Blanket: a white woollen cloth used for bed covers; in the 19th century rose blankets had stars or wheels stitched in color in the corners

Bombazine: a silk-wool blend introduced into Norwich, England during the late-16th century

Broadcloth: a wool woven on a wide loom (54-63" wide) with the finest ones made in the west of England

Buckram: a linen cloth

Calico: a cotton first made in India and later in the West

Calimanco: a wool fabric; some were solid, some patterned

Cambric (or batiste): a fine white linen cloth in plain weave

Camlet: wool, wool-silk and wool-linen blends (figured camlet is one color with stamped figures)

Camleteen: a wool

Cassimere: a medium-weight twilled woollen cloth of soft texture;

patented in England in 1766

Chambray: a cotton gingham

Check: usually linen

Cheney: a wool cloth, sometimes watered

Chintz: a cotton fabric, originally from India

Corduroy: a coarse cotton fabric with a piled surface raised in
cords, ridges or ribs

Cossa: a cotton (muslin)

Culgee: a figured Indian silk

Cuttanee: a silk-cotton blend from India with a satin weave that
is usually striped

Damask: a reversible patterned fabric of silk, wool or blends

Diaper: a kind of dimity (linen) with a diamond weave; name is
derived from Ypres in Flanders, the place of the fabric's
first fame

Dimity: harness-loom patterned cotton fabrics originally imported
from India

Dorsetteen: a wool-silk blend

Dowlas: a coarse linen manufactured in Germany

Drawboy: figured and quilted cotton fabric from Manchester

Drill: a heavy linen cloth

Drugget: a wool or wool-silk blend imported from England but also
made in America

Durance (Durant): a woollen manufactured in England

Flannel: a wool

Frieze: a coarse napped woollen cloth

Fustian: a linen or cotton imported into England from other parts
of Europe and eventually manufactured in England

Garlick: a linen first imported from Goerlitz, Silesia; one of
the most commonly imported fabrics

Gauze: a sheer, open silk fabric

Gingham: a cotton fabric originally from India

Grandrelle: a cotton fabric

Gurrah: plain cotton cloth made in northeastern India

Guzzee: an ordinary plain white calico similar to Baftas and Gurrah

Haircloth: horse hair blend with linen, cotton or wool

Harateen: a wool manufactured in Norwich, England

Hessian: a coarse hempen cloth

Holland: initially specified the country of manufacture; later became a generic name for linen cloth, often of fine quality; Garlick (or gulix) holland was a very fine, white cloth chiefly used for clothing; Ghentish holland was used for sheeting

Huckaback: a linen with raised figures, often used for towels

Humhum: a cotton fabric woven in Bengal

Kendal (Kendal Cotton): a green woollen cloth made in a Westmoreland town

Kenting: a fine, closely woven linen cloth largely manufactured in the county of Kent in England

Kersey: a cheap, coarse woollen cloth good for keeping out wet and cold

Linsey-Woolsey: a coarse linen-wool blend

Longcloth: a cotton

Mantua: a plain weave silk

Marcella (Marseilles): fine quilted coverlets from Marseilles in France

Mohair: an expensive wool from the Angora goat

Moreen: a woollen cloth usually given a waved or stamped finish

Muslin: a fine cotton textile first made in India; book muslin gets its name from the booklike form in which some of the finer calicoes were folded and marketed in India

Naps: a heavy woollen material with a napped surface

Osnaburg: a coarse, unbleached linen or hempen cloth first made in Osnabruck, Germany

Paduasoy: a rich, heavy silk

Pillow: a common plain fustian of linen or cotton

Plaid: silk or wool

Platilla Linen: a very fine, well-bleached linen first made in Silesia and later in France

Plush: a wool velvet, a specialty of France

Prince's Linen: a cheap, linen fabric

Ratteen: a thick woollen stuff chiefly manufactured in France, Holland and Italy

Rattinet: a thinner, lighter ratteen often used as a lining

Roll: a cloth traditionally rolled rather than folded; brown rolls may refer to unbleached linen

Russel: a worsted damask

Satin (and Satinet): a silk

Seersucker: an Indian striped fabric of mixed silk and cotton

Serge: a woollen cloth

Shalloon: a wool

Silesia: thin twilled linen cloth made near Hamburg; referred to many grades and patterns of linen (the word "sleazy" is derived from this name)

Stroud: a woven and dyed wool, especially red, on the River Stroud in Gloucestershire

Stuff: a general term for worsted cloths

Tabinet: a silk-wool blend usually woven in diaper patterns that often received a watered finish

Tabyrean: a fabric of silk and worsted especially adapted for the American market and manufactured in England

Taffeta: silk and silk-cotton blends; many from India were

striped or checked; most European ones were plain woven silks

Tammy: a strong, lightweight plain weave wool, often glazed

Tandem: a linen cloth first made in Germany

Tapsel: a cheap, striped or patterned silk-cotton blend made in western India

Ticking: a linen twill

Ticklenburg: a coarse, rough cloth made of hemp or linen; named after the German town where it was once made

Tiffany: a thin, transparent silk

Tufts: a kind of fustian or cotton velvet related to thickset and made in the Manchester area

Velvet: silk, wool or cotton

Witney: a heavy, loose woollen cloth made at Witney in Oxfordshire

APPENDIX 3

TABLES FROM INVENTORY DATA

TABLE 1. General Summary

Total Inventories with Household Textiles=532

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Total Listing Beds	490	92.1
Bedsteads	413	77.6
Bed Coverings ¹	223	41.9
Sheets	227	42.7
Bed Hangings	140	26.3
Total Listing Table Linen ²	209	39.3
Total Listing Window Coverings ³	110	20.7
Total Listing Floor Coverings ⁴	108	20.3
Total Listing Upholstery ⁵	65	12.2

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

¹ Includes blankets, counterpanes, coverlets, quilts, rugs, spreads.

² Includes tablecloths, napkins, towels, case furniture cloths and generic references to table linen.

³ Includes curtains, drapery and blinds.

⁴ Includes carpets, rugs and straw matting.

⁵ Includes cushions, leather and textile upholstery.

TABLE 2. Specific Bedding

N=532

Category	Number	Percentage
Bedsteads		
Sacking bottom	87	16.3
Corded	16	3.0
Truckle/Trundle	13	2.4
Pallet	2	0.4
Cot	16	3.0
Camp	2	0.4
Field	30	5.6
Low post	26	4.9
High post	20	3.8
Dutch	3	0.6
Painted	3	0.6

Bedding		
Mattress	30	5.6
Bed		
Chaff	52	9.8
Feather	207	38.9
Flock	10	1.9
Hammocks	6	1.1
Pallet	2	0.4
Sea	2	0.4
Field	3	0.6
General Terms		
Bedding	223	41.9
Bed		
Clothes	47	8.8
Bed Linen	6	1.1
Appurtenances	6	1.1
Furniture	82	15.4
Sheets		
Linen	13	2.4
Cotton	6	1.1
Dowlas	1	0.2
Flax	2	0.4
Garlick	1	0.2
Holland	3	0.6
Homespun	2	0.4
Flannel	4	0.8
Muslin	4	0.8
Russia	1	0.2
Sheeting	4	0.8
Tow	7	1.3
White	2	0.4
Bolsters	140	26.3
Pillows	152	28.6
Bolster Cases	15	2.8
Pillow Cases	94	17.7
Ticking/Ticks	23	4.3
Bed Cases	15	2.8

Bed Covers		
Blankets	193	36.3
Rose		
Blankets	4	0.8
Blanketing	2	0.4
Counterpanes	39	7.3
Cotton	6	1.1
Coverlets	92	17.3
Quilts	64	12.0
Rugs	69	13.0
Spreads	15	2.8
Bed Hangings		
Curtains	140	26.3
Calico	21	3.9
Camlet	1	0.2
Check	4	0.8
Chintz	4	0.8
Cotton	4	0.8
Damask	2	0.4
Harateen	2	0.4
Linen	9	1.7
Mosquito	1	0.2
Muslin	2	0.4
Silk	1	0.2
Wool	1	0.2
Worsted	5	0.9
Valances	9	1.7
Cornices	5	0.9
Tester Cloths	13	2.4
Head Cloths	11	2.1

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

TABLE 3. Specific Table Linen

N=532

Category	Number	Percentage
Tablecloths	170	32.0
Baize	1	0.2
Calico	1	0.2
Damask	9	1.7
Diaper	18	3.4
Homespun	2	0.4
Huckaback	3	0.6
Linen	3	0.6
Muslin	1	0.2
Osnaburg	2	0.4
Wool	1	0.2
Breakfast Cloths	3	0.6
Table Carpets	3	0.6
Napkins	77	14.5
Damask	4	0.8
Diaper	11	2.1
Huckaback	7	1.3
Linen	3	0.6
Osnaburg	1	0.2
Towels	91	17.1
Damask	1	0.2
Diaper	3	0.6
Huckaback	1	0.2
Osnaburg	1	0.2
Towelling	3	0.6
Table Linen ⁶	35	6.6
Case Furniture Cloths ⁷	5	0.9

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

⁶Includes references to "table clothes."

⁷Includes sideboard, toilet, drawer and bureau cloths.

TABLE 4. Specific Window Coverings

N=532

Category	Number	Percentage
Curtains	105	19.7
Calico	15	2.8
Check	2	0.4
Chintz	1	0.2
Cotton	3	0.6
Damask	2	0.4
Diaper	3	0.6
Dimity	1	0.2
Durance	1	0.2
Garlick	1	0.2
Homespun	1	0.2
Linen	1	0.2
Linsey	1	0.2
Moreen	1	0.2
Muslin	4	0.8
Paper	2	0.4
Silk	1	0.2
Worsted	3	0.6
Blinds	18	3.4
Venetian	8	1.5
Hardware/Accessories ⁸	14	2.6

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

⁸Includes rods, rails and lines, cords, cornices and valances.

TABLE 5. Specific Floor Coverings

N=532

Category	Number	Percentage
Carpets/Carpeting		
Brussels	1	0.2
Ingrain/Scotch	18	3.4
Rag	31	5.8
Venetian	2	0.4
Wilton	2	0.4
Floor Cloth ⁹	11	2.1
Matting ¹⁰	3	0.6
Rugs		
Fire	2	0.4
Hearth	8	1.5
Bedside Carpet	2	0.4
Entry Carpet	15	2.8
Stair Carpet	13	2.4
Stair Rods	7	1.3

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

⁹Includes references to oil cloths, floor mats and foot cloths.

¹⁰Includes specific references to straw matting.

TABLE 6. Specific Upholstery

N=532

Category	Number	Percentage
Leather	42	7.9
Textiles		
Damask	4	0.8
Hair/Haircloth	17	3.2
Mohair	1	0.2
Moreen	1	0.2
Plush	1	0.2
Stuff	4	0.8
Worsted	4	0.8
Cushions	8	1.5

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

TABLE 7. Household Textiles by Gender

	N=415	N=117
Category	MALE: Number/%	FEMALE: Number/%
Beds	384/92.5	106/90.6
Bedsteads	321/77.3	92/78.6
Bed Coverings		
Blankets	140/33.7	53/45.3
Counterpanes	27/6.5	12/10.3
Coverlets	71/17.1	21/17.9
Quilts	37/8.9	27/23.1
Rugs	47/11.3	22/18.8
Spreads	6/1.4	9/7.7
Sheets	172/41.4	55/47.0
Bed Hangings	100/24.1	40/34.2
Table Linen		
Tablecloths	131/31.6	39/33.3
Napkins	60/14.5	17/14.5
Towels	67/16.1	24/20.5
Table Linen	28/6.7	5/4.3
Window Coverings		
Curtains	74/17.8	31/26.5
Blinds	11/2.7	7/6.0
Floor Coverings		
Carpets	74/17.8	34/29.1
Floor Cloths	59/14.2	31/26.5
Rugs	7/1.7	3/2.6
Rugs	9/2.2	4/3.4
Upholstery		
Leather	45/10.8	20/17.1
Textiles	30/7.2	12/10.3
Cushions	14/3.4	3/2.6
Cushions	3/0.7	5/4.3

Note: Males comprise 78% of the inventories surveyed; females 22%.

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

TABLE 8. Urban/Rural I

Urban=Philadelphia and all other place names
Rural=Any County

Category	N=359		N=75	
	URBAN: Number/%		RURAL: Number/%	
Beds	335/93.3		69/92.0	
Bedsteads	294/81.9		50/66.7	
Bed Coverings	146/40.7		25/33.3	
Sheets	145/40.4		27/36.0	
Bed Hangings	91/25.3		18/24.0	
Table Linen	131/36.5		28/37.3	
Window Coverings	75/20.9		8/10.7	
Floor Coverings	90/25.1		6/8.0	
Upholstery	48/13.4		5/6.7	

TABLE 8A. Urban/Rural II

Category	N=127		N=75		N=232	
	Urban= Philadelphia-- City		All Counties		All Other Place Names	
Beds	121/95.3		69/92.0		214/92.2	
Bedsteads	114/89.8		50/66.7		180/77.6	
Bed Coverings	63/49.6		25/33.3		83/35.8	
Sheets	58/45.7		27/36.0		87/37.5	
Bed Hangings	43/33.9		18/24.0		48/20.7	
Table Linen	58/45.7		28/37.3		73/31.5	
Window Coverings	44/34.6		8/10.7		31/13.4	
Floor Coverings	52/40.9		6/8.0		38/16.4	
Upholstery	31/24.4		5/6.7		17/7.3	

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

TABLE 9. Occupation

Category	Women ¹¹ N=116	Yeoman ¹² N=58	Laborer ¹³ N=10	Mariner N=11	Merchant N=14	Gentleman ¹⁴ N=14	Tradesman ¹⁵ N=40	Craftsman ¹⁶ N=50	No Occ N=219
Beds	105/90.5	55/94.8	10/100.0	10/90.9	14/100.0	14/100.0	37/92.5	46/92.0	199/90.9
Bedsteads	92/79.3	45/77.6	9/90.0	9/81.8	14/100.0	12/85.7	36/90.0	42/84.0	154/70.3
Bed Coverings	60/51.7	13/22.4	3/30.0	7/63.6	10/71.4	6/42.9	15/37.5	19/38.0	90/41.1

¹¹This group includes all of the women whose inventories were surveyed. None of the females in my survey listed a trade on their inventory or will, though many were described as "widow" and a few each as "gentlewoman" or "single woman."

¹²Includes yeoman, farmers, husbandmen.

¹³Includes laborers, carters, porters, stevedores, watchmen, waiters and free black men.

¹⁴Includes gentlemen, professionals, esquires, justice of the peace, Pennsylvania governor, reverends and an Army paymaster.

¹⁵Includes shop/storekeepers, innkeepers/holders, victuallers, grocers, tanners, hatters, bakers, clothiers, tobacconists, brewers, hairdressers, surgeons, skindressers, curriers, soapboilers, manufacturers, tallow chandlers.

¹⁶Includes carpenters, stonecutters, weavers, stocking weavers, smiths, glass blowers, cordwainers, coopers, wheelwrights, tailors, papermakers, saddlers, masons, cabinetmakers, potters, gunsmiths, painters, silverplaters, watchmakers, shipwrights, and wharfbuilders.

Sheets	55/47.4	17/29.3	1/10.0	6/54.5	11/78.6	8/57.1	13/32.5	19/38.0	97/44.3
Bed Hangings	40/34.5	8/13.8	0/0.0	6/54.5	8/57.1	7/50.0	13/32.5	15/30.0	43/19.6
Table linen	46/39.7	19/32.8	2/20.0	5/45.5	11/78.6	7/50.0	11/27.5	11/22.0	75/34.2
Window treatments	32/27.6	4/6.9	3/30.0	1/9.1	9/64.3	8/57.1	12/30.0	12/24.0	29/13.2
Floor Coverings	34/29.3	4/6.9	1/10.0	4/36.4	8/57.1	9/64.3	17/42.5	12/24.0	19/8.7
Upholstery	20/17.2	1/1.7	1/10.0	1/9.1	7/50.0	6/42.9	3/7.5	8/16.0	18/8.2

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

TABLE 10A. Chronological--Events

Category	1720-1749 N=102	1750-1775 N=186	1776-1787 N=63	1788-1800 N=41	1801-1815 N=56	1816-1835 N=84
Beds	93/91.2	172/92.5	60/95.2	36/87.8	51/91.1	78/92.9
Bedsteads	61/59.8	134/72.0	53/84.1	39/95.1	50/89.3	76/90.5
Bed Coverings	46/45.1	70/37.6	27/42.9	25/61.0	23/41.1	32/38.1
Blankets	42/41.2	57/30.6	23/36.5	24/58.5	22/39.3	25/29.8
C'panes	8/7.8	8/4.3	6/9.5	8/19.5	5/8.9	4/4.8
Coverlets	14/13.7	35/18.8	12/19.0	12/29.3	8/14.3	11/13.9
Quilts	17/16.7	18/9.7	7/11.1	5/12.2	7/12.5	10/11.9
Rugs	27/26.5	22/11.8	7/11.1	7/17.1	3/5.4	3/3.6
Spreads	0/0.0	0/0.0	1/1.6	3/7.3	4/7.1	7/8.3
Sheets	54/52.9	82/44.1	28/44.4	21/51.2	20/35.7	22/26.2
Bed Hangings	22/21.6	43/23.1	21/33.3	18/43.9	16/28.6	20/23.8
Table Linen	47/46.1	80/43.0	24/38.1	19/46.3	16/28.6	23/27.4
T'cloth	39/38.2	66/35.5	20/31.7	15/36.6	13/23.2	17/20.2
Napkins	28/27.5	25/13.4	10/15.9	7/17.1	4/7.1	3/3.6
Towels	19/18.6	37/19.9	10/15.9	8/19.5	7/12.5	10/11.9
Window Coverings	20/19.6	24/12.9	11/17.5	14/34.1	16/28.6	25/29.8
Curtains	20/19.6	24/12.9	11/17.5	14/34.1	15/26.8	21/25.0
Blinds	1/1.0	0/0.0	2/3.2	1/2.4	5/8.9	9/10.7

Floor Coverings	2/2.0	6/3.2	8/12.7	11/26.8	24/42.9	57/67.9
Carpets	1/1.0	3/1.6	8/12.7	11/26.8	22/39.3	45/53.6
F. Cloth	1/1.0	2/1.1	1/1.6	1/2.4	2/3.6	2/2.4
Rugs	0/0.0	0/0.0	0/0.0	0/0.0	1/1.8	12/14.3
Upholstery	7/6.9	26/14.0	9/14.3	7/17.1	9/16.1	7/8.3
Leather	3/2.9	22/11.8	8/12.7	4/9.8	5/8.9	0/0.0
Textiles	2/2.0	5/2.7	3/4.8	0/0.0	4/7.1	3/3.6
Cushions	3/2.9	3/1.6	0/0.0	0/0.0	1/1.8	1/1.2

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

TABLE 10B. Chronological--Generational

Category	1720-1760 (N=177)	1761-1800 (N=215)	1801-1835 (N=140)
Beds	162/91.5	199/92.6	129/92.1
Bedsteads	107/60.5	180/83.7	126/90.0
Bed Coverings	74/41.8	94/43.7	55/39.3
Blankets	64/36.2	82/46.3	47/33.6
Counterpanes	11/6.2	19/8.8	9/6.4
Coverlets	26/14.7	47/21.9	19/13.6
Quilts	23/13.0	24/11.2	17/12.1
Rugs	38/21.5	25/14.1	6/4.3
Spreads	0/0.0	4/1.9	11/7.9
Sheets	87/49.2	98/45.6	42/30.0
Bed Hangings	40/22.6	64/29.8	36/25.7
Table Linen	73/41.2	97/45.1	39/27.9
Tablecloths	58/32.8	82/46.3	30/21.4
Napkins	37/20.9	33/15.3	7/5.0
Towels	30/16.9	44/20.5	17/12.1
Window Coverings	28/15.8	41/19.1	41/29.3
Curtains	28/15.8	41/19.1	36/25.7
Blinds	1/0.6	3/1.4	14/10.0
Floor Coverings	4/2.3	23/10.7	81/57.9
Carpets	2/1.1	21/9.8	67/47.9
Floor Cloths	2/1.1	4/1.9	4/2.9
Rugs	0/0.0	0/0.0	13/9.3
Upholstery	16/9.0	33/15.3	16/11.4
Leather	11/6.2	26/12.1	5/3.6
Textiles	4/2.3	6/2.8	7/5.0
Cushions	4/2.3	2/0.9	2/1.4

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor,
City of Philadelphia.

TABLE 10C. Chronological--Standard

Category	1720-39 N=42	1740-59 N=126	1760-79 N=142	1780-99 N=77	1800-19 N=79	1820-35 N=66
Beds	41/97.6	113/89.7	132/93.0	71/92.2	72/91.1	61/92.4
Bedsteads	30/71.4	71/56.3	113/79.6	68/88.3	70/88.6	61/92.4
Bed Coverings	25/59.5	48/38.1	49/34.5	44/57.1	33/41.8	24/36.4
Blankets	24/57.1	39/31.0	39/27.5	42/54.5	31/39.2	18/27.3
C'panes	5/11.9	5/4.0	7/4.9	11/14.3	8/10.1	3/4.5
Coverlets	7/16.7	18/14.3	26/18.3	22/28.6	12/15.2	7/10.6
Quilts	14/33.3	9/7.1	14/9.9	9/11.7	12/15.2	6/9.1
Rugs	17/40.5	20/15.9	13/9.2	12/15.6	4/5.1	3/4.5
Spreads	0/0.0	0/0.0	0/0.0	4/5.2	7/8.9	4/6.1
Sheets	27/64.3	57/45.2	62/43.7	37/48.1	29/36.7	15/22.7
Bed Hangings	18/42.9	21/16.7	34/23.9	28/36.4	22/27.8	17/25.8
Table Linen	25/59.5	46/36.5	66/46.5	30/39.0	26/32.9	16/24.2
T'cloths	24/57.1	32/25.4	58/40.8	23/29.9	23/29.1	10/15.2
Napkins	20/47.6	16/12.7	21/14.8	13/16.9	6/7.6	1/1.5
Towels	12/28.6	18/14.3	30/21.1	12/15.6	13/16.5	6/9.1
Window Treatments	13/31.0	14/11.1	21/14.8	18/23.4	27/34.2	17/25.8
Curtains	13/31.0	14/11.1	21/14.8	18/23.4	26/32.9	13/19.7
Blinds	0/0.0	1/0.8	0/0.0	2/2.6	7/8.9	8/12/1

Floor Coverings	1/2.4	3/2.4	7/4.9	13/16.9	42/53.2	42/63.6
Carpets	1/2.4	1/0.8	5/3.5	13/16.9	35/44.3	35/53.0
F. Cloths	1/2.4	1/0.8	2/1.4	2/2.6	2/2.5	2/3.0
Rugs	0/0.0	0/0.0	0/0.0	0/0.0	2/2.5	11/16.7
Upholstery	3/7.1	13/10.3	20/14.1	12/15.6	11/13.9	6/9.1
Leather	0/0.0	11/8.7	17/12.0	9/11.7	5/6.3	0/0.0
Textiles	1/2.4	3/2.4	3/2.1	3/3.9	4/5.1	3/4.5
Cushions	2/4.8	2/1.6	2/1.4	0/0.0	1/1.3	1/1.5

Source: Probate Inventories, Register of Wills Archives, 401 North Broad Street, 9th Floor, City of Philadelphia.

APPENDIX 4

TABLES FROM NEWSPAPER DATA

TABLE 1. Vendors Listing Any Textile in a General Category

DATE	LINEN	WOOL	COTTON	SILK	BLEND	FUNC.
1730 N=2	100%	100%	50%	50%	0%	50%
1740 N=14	100%	93%	93%	79%	0%	71%
1750 N=55	98%	82%	85%	49%	36%	69%
1760 N=73	96%	95%	88%	86%	60%	86%
1772 N=37	81%	81%	78%	78%	35%	92%
1781 N=37	89%	78%	86%	54%	5%	57%
1790 N=51	63%	80%	82%	35%	2%	63%
1801 N=40	65%	43%	58%	23%	5%	48%
1810 N=32	50%	38%	72%	16%	19%	47%
1820 N=30	73%	67%	67%	40%	20%	70%

Source: Pennsylvania Gazette, Pennsylvania Packet and Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

TABLE 2. Vendors Listing Specific Linen Textiles

Linen Name	1730 N=2	1740 N=14	1750 N=55	1760 N=73	1772 N=37	1781 N=37	1790 N=51	1801 N=40	1810 N=32	1820 N=30
Barras										
Buckram		14%	35%	48%	27%	3%	6%			3%
Cambri c	50%	57%	69%	67%	51%	49%	27%	18%	16%	10%
Check Linen	50%	43%	53%	63%	49%		16%	20%	19%	20%
Diaper	50%	21%	24%	16%	22%	11%	14%	10%	3%	13%
Dowlas			16%	40%	27%	14%	10%	30%	6%	7%
Garlic k	50%	57%	51%	23%	3%					
Hollan d	100%	43%	62%	25%	43%	16%	10%	13%	6%	3%
Huckab ack		7%	4%	12%	8%					
Irish Linen			45%	73%	65%	27%	33%	15%	16%	17%
Kentin g			2%		22%	3%	2%			
Linen	50%	14%	20%	25%	22%	73%	22%	38%	16%	37%
Osnabu rg	50%	71%	58%	55%	62%	16%	24%	8%	13%	3%

Printed/Stamped Linen		7%	27%	27%	8%		2%			3%
Pomerania			7%	5%	3%					
Princes			13%	32%	14%	3%				
Roll			2%	26%	14%			13%	17%	
Russia	50%		13%	16%		3%				
Scotch			9%	7%	3%					
Silesia		7%	25%	27%	8%			10%	3%	
Tickleburg			4%	11%	3%		10%	13%	13%	
English Check			2%					3%		
Hessian			2%	14%	11%		8%	10%	17%	
Swiss			2%					3%		
Furn. Check			2%	3%	16%	3%	2%			3%
Tandem			22%	8%	3%					
Bielefeld								13%		

Platila						3%	6%	23%	22%	3%
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Source: Pennsylvania Gazette, Pennsylvania Packet and Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

TABLE 3. Vendors Listing Specific Wool Textiles

Wool Fabric	1730 N=2	1740 N=14	1750 N=55	1760 N=73	1772 N=37	1781 N=37	1790 N=51	1801 N=40	1810 N=32	1820 N=30
Calimanco	50%	86%	62%	70%	57%	22%	25%	10%		
Stuff	50%	14%	7%	23%	14%		18%	5%		
Drugget	50%	36%	16%	5%	3%					
Kersey	50%	21%	9%	30%	8%		12%			
Broadcloth	50%	43%	67%	70%	70%	62%	63%	28%	16%	37%
Shalloon	50%	50%	55%	73%	59%	14%	24%		3%	
Flannel	50%	14%	36%	41%	30%	14%	29%	15%	13%	30%
Woolle n	50%	7%		4%	3%		8%			3%
Tammy		29%	58%	67%	38%	3%	6%			
Mohair										
Camlet		50%	60%	66%	51%	22%	14%			7%
Camlet een		21%	31%	11%	19%					
Russel		14%	15%	22%	22%	3%				
Frieze		14%	4%	25%	11%		10%			

Rattee n				3%						
German Serge		7%	4%	5%	22%					
Serge		7%	9%	27%	22%	8%	4%	3%		
Plaid		7%	2%	1%					3%	23%
Damask		21%	56%	52%	22%					
Scotch Plaid	50%			3%	3%					
Plush			11%	16%	11%	8%	6%			
Baize			13%	8%	11%		25%	10%		10%
Naps			9%	21%	14%	14%	4%			
Duranc e			16%	62%	51%	22%	27%	5%	3%	
Kendal			2%	1%			8%	5%	3%	
Stroud			16%	11%	5%		2%			
Harate en			2%	1%						
Witney			2%							
Moreen						11%	16%			3%
Cassim ere					8%	19%	14%	23%	16%	33%

Source: Pennsylvania Gazette, Pennsylvania Packet and Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

TABLE 4. Vendors Listing Specific Cottons

Cotton Fabric	1730 N=2	1740 N=14	1750 N=55	1760 N=73	1772 N=37	1781 N=37	1790 N=51	1801 N=40	1810 N=32	1820 N=30
Calico	50%	64%	58%	70%	68%	68%	45%	15%	22%	20%
Humhum			11%	5%	41%	8%	4%			
Bengal			4%	4%	22%	8%	6%		3%	
Cotton Check		21%	47%	53%	49%	24%	29%	18%	28%	3%
Cotton Holland			29%	26%	8%					
Muslin		43%	28%	51%	49%	38%	35%	25%	41%	37%
Dimity		29%	29%	16%	30%	30%	12%	8%	9%	7%
Striped Cotton		7%	13%	5%	14%	8%	10%	8%	6%	
Fustian		14%	38%	22%	30%	5%	27%	8%		
Gingham		7%	16%	8%	16%	8%		13%	31%	37%
Chintz		7%	31%	45%	46%	57%	39%	13%	13%	7%
Cossa			2%	3%	3%			10%	9%	3%
Manchester			2%	5%			12%			

Printed		7%	16%	21%	19%	5%	29%	8%	9%	
Pillow			4%	7%	5%		4%			
Tufts			2%							
India Check			2%							
Grandr elle			5%							
Drawbo y			2%		8%	5%				
Cotton			4%	19%	43%	3%	12%	8%	13%	3%
Cordur oy						16%	25%	5%		
Baftas						3%		8%	19%	7%
Gurrah								10%	31%	3%
Guzzee										

Source: Pennsylvania Gazette, Pennsylvania Packet and Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

TABLE 5. Vendors Listing Specific Silk Fabrics

Silks	1730 N=2	1740 N=14	1750 N=55	1760 N=73	1772 N=37	1781 N=37	1790 N=51	1801 N=40	1810 N=32	1820 N=30
Mantua	50%	14%	27%	18%	41%	24%	2%	3%		
Taffeta		64%	31%	44%	51%	24%	4%		3%	
Damask		43%	20%	12%	8%					
Silk		7%	2%	7%	5%	22%	6%	3%		7%
Paduasoy		14%	20%	27%	32%	3%				
Culgee			2%							
Plaid			2%							
Satin			15%	36%	49%	24%	18%	13%	3%	17%
Velvet			11%	48%	32%	14%	16%	8%	9%	20%
Gauze				27%	35%	41%	6%			3%
Tiffany						3%	2%			
Tabyran							4%			

Source: Pennsylvania Gazette, Pennsylvania Packet and Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

TABLE 6. Vendors Listing Specific Blends

Blends	1730 N=2	1740 N=14	1750 N=55	1760 N=73	1772 N=37	1781 N=37	1790 N=51	1801 N=40	1810 N=32	1820 N=30
Seersucker						3%			19%	3%
Alapeen			27%	18%	5%					
Linsey - Woolsey			9%	34%	14%		2%			
Cuttanee										
Bombazine			11%	19%	14%					17%
Haircloth			4%		3%	3%				
Dorsetteen			4%	27%	22%					
Tapsel								5%		

Source: Pennsylvania Gazette, Pennsylvania Packet and Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

TABLE 7. Vendors Listing Specific Household Textiles

Function	1730 N=2	1740 N=14	1750 N=55	1760 N=73	1772 N=37	1781 N=37	1790 N=51	1801 N=40	1810 N=32	1820 N=30
Tickings		57%	24%	56%	51%	11%	22%	20%	19%	33%
Blankets		29%	25%	42%	35%	30%	22%	15%	19%	20%
Bed Fabric		14%	13%	14%	24%	8%	10%	5%	16%	10%
Counterpanes /Covs/ Rugs		50%	25%	38%	14%	5%	6%	3%	9%	3%
Tablecloths	50%	7%	38%	36%	35%	14%	8%	15%	22%	13%
Napkins			15%	14%	19%	11%			6%	3%
Sheeting	50%	7%	33%	55%	57%	32%	31%	15%	17%	43%
Carpet		7%	5%	8%	14%	3%	2%	8%		13%
Quilts			9%		3%	19%	4%	5%	9%	7%

Source: Pennsylvania Gazette, Pennsylvania Packet and Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

APPENDIX 5

THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON PARK INSTALLATIONS

Textiles are an essential part of a house's furnishing plan and must be as carefully selected as the furniture, wallpaper and accessories. Once they are properly selected, textiles can enhance the interpretation of the site, highlighting issues of consumer choice and values either subtly or bluntly.

In general, textiles are rarely used as effectively in historical interpretation as they could be. Partly this is because all historic textile installations must be reproductions. There is simply not enough original fabric left to realistically decorate all of the period rooms currently on display. Also, authentic reproductions of many 18th-century fabrics cannot be made, either because we no longer recognize the textile name or because the means of production is no longer viable. As well, modern conservation concerns conflict with accurate furnishing installations. Window coverings are necessary to protect the furnishings from sun and glare, yet most 18th-century homes had curtains in only one room, if at all. The floors must be protected from heavy visitor foot traffic and many institutions use floor coverings that will protect the floors, ignoring aesthetic and historic considerations.

Finally, fabric furnishings were fluid commodities, changing frequently, depending on the season and the style, as well as the amount of wear they received. If a room or a house is supposed to depict a range of years, it is difficult to select appropriate

fabric furnishings.

Leaving these concerns aside, even in installations where the textiles have been carefully chosen and adorn the room in a meaningful manner, they are rarely incorporated into the guided tour. Textiles were highly symbolic objects in the 18th century, signifying a multitude of meanings. They conveyed status, represented aesthetic choices and added color and warmth to a home. Like today, great attention was paid to color and pattern, quality and style and the household textiles were changed frequently, often seasonally. They represent choices made by the house's inhabitants and can educate the visitors, whether they are reproductions or not. A simple explanation of how many household textiles appear and the level of expense or style they represent would be sufficient to introduce visitors to ideas about 18th-century style, consumerism and comfort.

Great care has been taken at Independence National Historical Park to furnish the historic buildings, public and private, with appropriate textiles. The Todd and Bishop White Houses, Independence Hall and Congress Hall all exhibit appropriate levels of textiles, however, the color and style of some choices could be modified. The most glaring oversight is the lack of an example of working-class furnishings. All of the buildings discussed here represent a substantial level of economic and social standing. But these buildings demonstrate the exception rather than the rule. My suggestion is to offer visitors an opportunity to see the upper floors of the Todd and

Bishop White houses where servants, at the Bishop White house, and law clerks, at the Todd House, would have been housed. These areas would be furnished quite differently from the family's rooms and would give visitors an idea of which household textiles the majority of the city's residents owned--a bed, sheet and blanket, perhaps a towel or two. My other suggestions for each building follow.

TODD HOUSE

A young couple just starting their family in the 1790s, the Todds' house is furnished to reflect the lifestyle of a young family. Older pieces are scattered amidst newer pieces, secondhand donations from family members next to new purchases or wedding gifts. The house is furnished to represent a professional-class family. John Todd was a promising attorney, but still in the early stages of his career. The Todds were Quakers and their religious beliefs may have had some effect on the furnishings they chose, when they selected plainer forms, though still of good quality.

The public rooms, the law office and the two parlors, showcase the Todds' fabric furnishings with carpets, upholstery and window treatments. The ingrain carpet in the first floor parlor and the venetian carpeting in the law office and upstairs parlor, while not top-of-the-line floor coverings, are a step above floor cloths or bare wood. All of these rooms were areas of public interaction and access. They received the best furnishings and transmitted information to visitors about the

Todds' social and economic status as well as their aspirations to a genteel style of life.

In contrast, the bedchambers and the kitchen are furnished with less detail. While the master bedroom is outfitted with matching bed and window hangings, they are made from cotton check, not damask or silk, and the side chair is upholstered in a different fabric. There is no carpet. The kitchen bedroom is even more plainly furnished with a low-post bedstead, simple curtains and no floor covering or upholstered furniture.

The current fabric furnishings convey a number of ideas and suggest the Todds' lifestyle. However, every room has window treatments, except the kitchen, which seems like too much. John Todd's partial inventory only lists 4 pairs, plus an odd curtain, barely enough for two rooms. Also, while the first floor parlor is carpeted, the upholstery does not correspond very well. The couple probably would have bought some new upholstered furniture and, most likely, would have matched it to the carpet in this room.

BISHOP WHITE HOUSE

The Bishop White house presents furnishings from two time periods, the first floor is furnished to represent the late 1780s when Bishop William White first moved in with his family. The second floor represents 1836, the year of the Bishop's death and reflects the lifestyle of an elderly widower. Bishop White numbered among Philadelphia's elite and lived a very comfortable life, more fashionable than the Todds. Both the architecture of

the house and its furnishings represent White's social and economic standing.

The first floor rooms are closest to an en suite furnishing plan among the Park installations. The parlor and dining room are furnished with good quality objects that match and offer an elaborate comparison to the Todd House interiors. At present the parlor is furnished for the summer, a fact that needs to be clearly stated on the tour. The upholstery is covered with matching slipcovers (though the sofa's covering is slightly different, which, in an ideal world, it should not be) and the window blinds are up. In keeping with the seasonal furnishings, straw matting should be used on the floor, but the winter carpet is currently in place. The dining room furnishings resemble the parlor's in terms of color and style. The upholstery and wallpaper are the same in both rooms. There should probably be some kind of floor covering on the dining room floor, which would be protected by a crumb cloth at meal times.

The stairs to the second floor should be covered with venetian carpeting to correspond with the wallpaper and muffle the noise of foot traffic. Venetian carpeting, a flatwoven striped covering, was popular during the early 19th century and ideally suited to stairs and entryways. Once upstairs, the rooms represent the 1830s, where the Bishop spent most of his time during his later years. John Sartain's depiction of the study and part of the Bishop's bedroom, was painted shortly after the Bishop's death in 1836. These rooms have been furnished as

closely to this arrangement as possible. While not strictly en suite, the study is accented with green, with the cushions, upholstery and venetian blinds providing a harmonic effect.

The bedroom is furnished for summer with mosquito netting instead of heavy curtains on the bed, straw matting on the floor and no window treatments. Most people who could afford fabric furnishings changed them seasonally, once again demonstrating the symbolic power of textiles and the fluidity of styles and fashions. While seasonal textile changes promoted cooler temperatures, they were probably also necessary because of the wear that fabric furnishings received. One of the chairs in the bedroom is upholstered differently and probably would have remained on the third floor rather than in the Bishop's chamber where the other chairs all match.

CONGRESS HALL and INDEPENDENCE HALL

Congress Hall and Independence Hall are furnished to reflect their use as public, governmental buildings. Congress Hall presents an excellent example of good quality furnishings while demonstrating the hierarchy of household textiles available in the city during the 1790s. On the first floor, the domain of the House of Representatives, ingrain carpeting covers the floor, chairs are upholstered in leather and the green curtains are attractive and match the floor covering, but are not ostentatious. Upstairs in the Senate, the floor is covered with a luxurious Axminster carpet made to order for the government and surrounded with matching upholstered chairs and red drapery. Few

rooms in Philadelphia were more sumptuous than the Senate and it provides an excellent example of what was available to the city's elite residents.

Independence Hall is furnished more simply than Congress Hall, in part because of its earlier date and partly because of the larger volume of traffic through its courtroom and assembly room. Upstairs, the textiles are of better quality, particularly the Governor's Council Chamber. This room presents some textile problems that need to be rectified. Most obvious is the mismatch between the upholstered chairs and the venetian curtains at the windows. These fabric furnishings would have been purchased to match, corresponding with the paint color and the floor coverings. The linen cloth on the small table is a little long and the large table in the center of the room should have a covering, though it may have been pushed toward the center from one end to provide a work space. The tables in the Long Gallery, a space used for entertaining by the colony's governor, should be covered with a patterned linen over green baize.

Overall, the household textiles adorning Park installations are effective and suggest appropriate ideas and values. They add to the effect of the furniture, ceramics and architecture and should be used as interpretive tools to educate visitors about daily life, style and consumerism. However, at the same time, the choice of textiles presents many possibilities. The proliferation of fabric choices and the different preferences for

their use are numerous. While Bishop White changed his household textiles seasonally and took down his bedroom curtains, there were doubtless other Philadelphians of comparable social and economic standing who left their curtains at the windows. Textiles need to be considered thoughtfully and chosen with specific interpretive goals in mind.

1. Ralph Earl, Oliver Ellsworth and Abigail Wolcott Ellsworth, 1792. Courtesy Wadsworth Atheneum, Gift of the Ellsworth Heirs.

This portrait provides an illustration of the upper-class lifestyle, presenting the forms of household textiles that would have been present in that household. Oliver Ellsworth's chair shows the decorative tacking that was popular and the carpet is a vibrant pattern of salmon, green and white. The drapes in the background and the upholstered chair match in color and fashionably correspond with the carpet, suggesting the popular en suite aesthetic.



2. John Lewis Krimmel, Quilting Frolic, 1813. Courtesy,
Winterthur Museum.

Though painted in the early-19th century, Krimmel's interior provides a picture of the material lifestyle of working class and rural households. The floor is bare and the only textiles apparent are the white tablecloth and the quilt being stretched on the frame. Far more Philadelphians lived in this style than in that depicted in Figure 1.

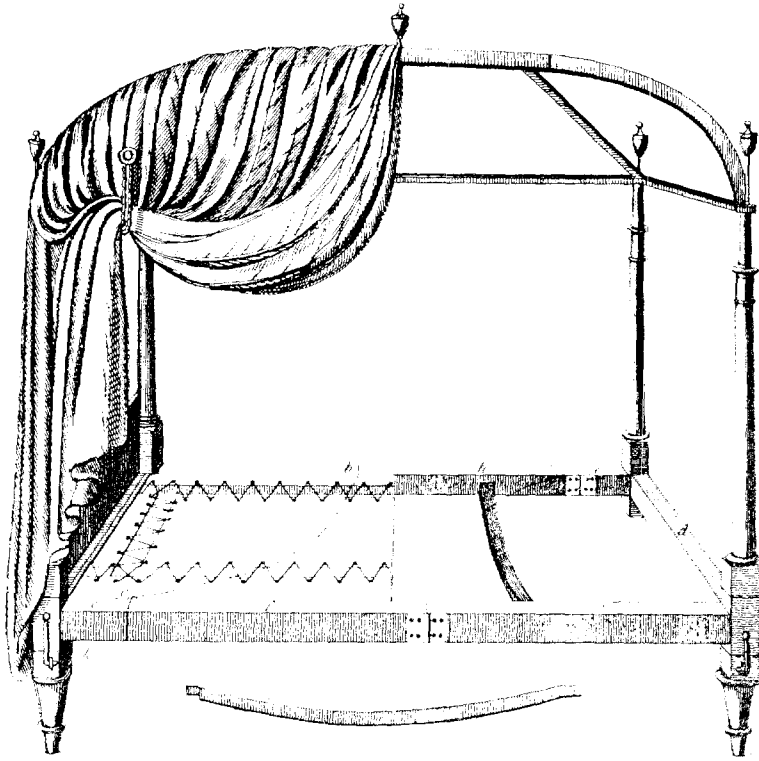


3. Thomas Sheraton, "Camp Bed with Sacking Bottom, Laced." Plate XV in The Cabinet Dictionary (London, 1803). Courtesy, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

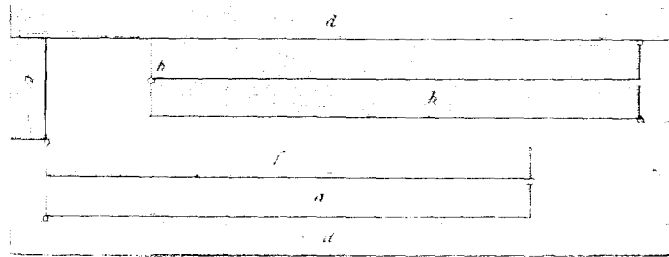
Sheraton's design book included this depiction of a camp bed, a form initially designed for use in the field by military men. The sacking bottom, usually made from linen, provided a sturdy and comfortable base for the mattress. At the bottom of the plate are folding instructions for the bedstead.

CAMP BEDS.

PL. 17



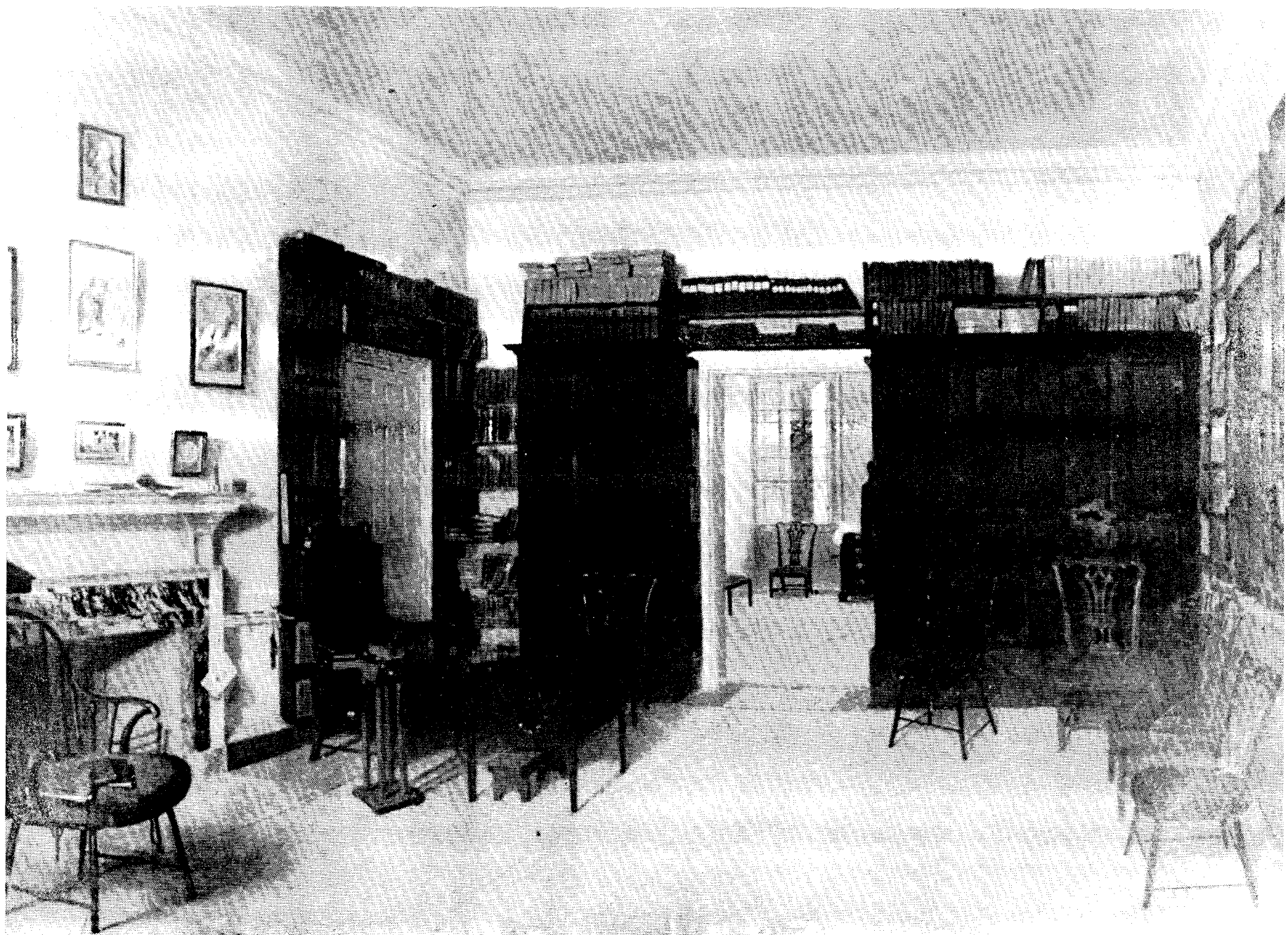
The plan of the bed folded in



Edwards & Sons

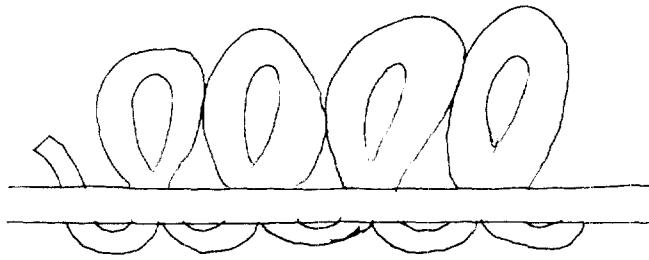
4. John Sartain, Bishop White's Study, 1836. Courtesy,
Independence National Historical Park.

Sartain was commissioned by the Bishop's family to paint a realistic picture of the study as left by the Bishop before his death. The summer season is evident from the straw matting on the floor and the bare windows seen through the door to the bedroom. The influence of the en suite aesthetic is also apparent from the green cushions and upholstery in the room.

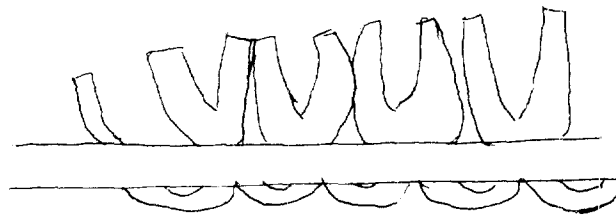


5. Drawing of looped and cut pile.

This drawing depicts looped pile, characterizing Brussels carpets, and cut pile, characterizing Wilton carpets.



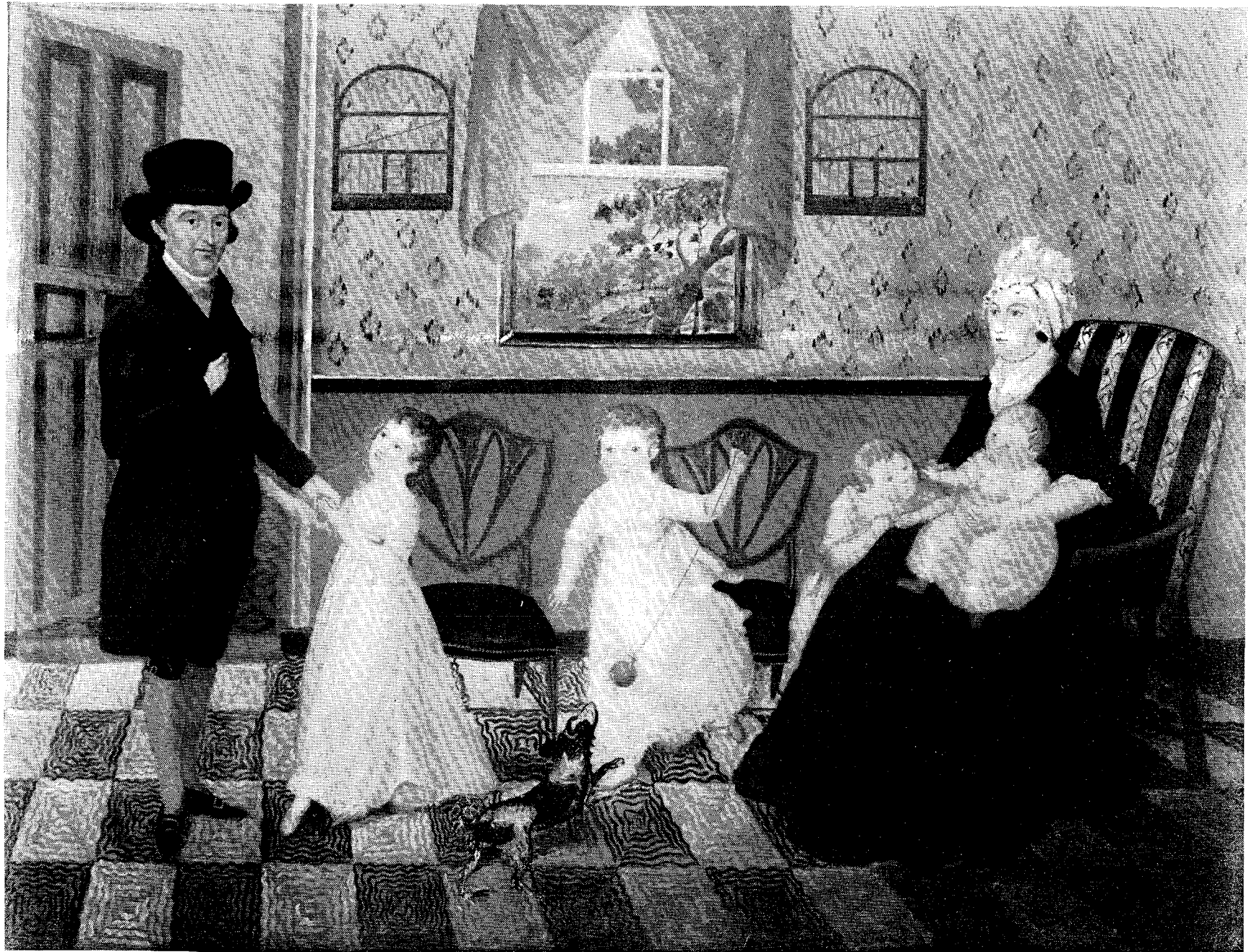
LOOPED PILE



CUT PILE

6. Unknown artist, The Sargent Family, 1800. Courtesy, National Gallery of Art, Washington. Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch.

A middle- to upper-class interior from the early 19th century. The chairs in the middle ground suggest the popular black haircloth upholstery and demonstrate decorative tacking. The window is adorned with festoon-style curtains. Most striking is the floor covering, presumably patterned matting. Though condemned as "ungenteel" by Eliza Leslie in 1841, it was apparently a popular item.



7. Thomas Webster, An Encyclopedia of Domestic Economy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1845), 250. Photo courtesy, Independence National Historical Park.

Webster's household guide counseled readers on all forms of housekeeping. Here, popular window treatments are illustrated: the simple style, the venetian style and the French rod.

1034. The effect of the sun's rays upon oil colours may be mentioned as an exception to this rule; for pictures painted in oil, which are put away with their faces turned to the wall, change much more than when hung up and exposed to the light; it may also be observed, that those parts of walls which have been long covered by pictures or mirrors have changed and become darker than the rest: oil paint, therefore, does not suffer from the sun's rays. Water-colour drawings, however, suffer much from being always exposed to the light; and, when valuable, should be defended by a silk screen, to cover them when not required to be seen.

1035. The simplest kind of window curtain, which may be used in the bedrooms of small houses, or in cottages, consists merely of two pieces of dimity, printed calico, muslin, or other material, of the proper length and width, nailed to the top of the architrave, or to a piece of wood fastened up on purpose, as in *fig. 161, a*, and kept back in the day by being looped up on each side, by a cord fixed on the sides of the window. This curtain may, if thought proper, have some kind of border at the top, with or without a fringe, as in *fig. 161, b*.

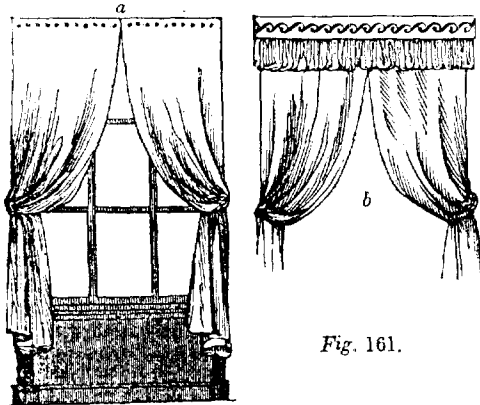


Fig. 161.

Another simple mode is to have the curtain in one piece to draw up by means of lines and

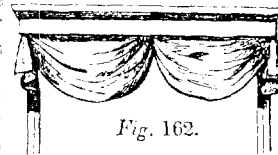


Fig. 162.

as in *fig. 162*. To effect this, a pulley is fixed at each end of a flat piece of wood as long as the window is wide; and another pulley is let into the wood, so as to divide the lath into two equal parts. The curtain is nailed to this wood, and pieces of tape are then sewed down the curtains at the two sides, and also just under the middle pulley, and there a number of rings are fixed. Through these rings are passed three cords, which go over the pulleys, and are then fastened together; by means of these cords the curtains can be raised or lowered at pleasure. The boards, with the pulleys, may be concealed by a lath covered with a border, and having a small valance; these are called by upholsterers *festoon* curtains, and were very general before the French manner was introduced of making them slide on a rod.

1036. The general mode of hanging curtains at present, in the better sort of rooms, is by having rings at the top of the curtains, passing over a rod stretched across, by which each half of the curtain is drawn to one side of the window, as in *fig. 163, A*. This curtain rod may either be visible, or may be concealed by a cornice, valance, or drapery. When it is intended to be visible, it is made thicker, of wood or brass, and is then termed a *pole*: when it is not to be visible, it is made thinner, of iron or brass. The curtain pole is supported at each end by an iron bracket screwed to the architrave of the window, as in *fig. 163, B*.

1037. The best method of causing the curtains to open is the following: on each end

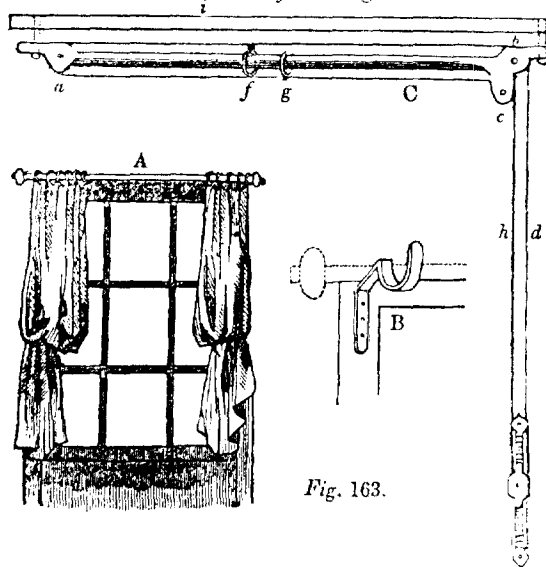


Fig. 163.

of the brass curtain rod, *a, b*, *fig. 163, C*, are pulleys, one at *a*, and two at the other end, *b, c*. A line, *d*, passes over the pulley *b*, then over that at *a*, and after going over the pulley *c*, returns down by *h*, to join *d*, by passing over the wheel in the little brass rack which is placed at *e*, and screwed on the architrave, or otherwise fixed. Each corner of the curtains, where they meet, is attached to rings, *f, g*, which slide on the curtain rod. By considering the motion of this line over the pulleys, it must be evident that when it is drawn down by pulling at *h*, the curtain attached below the rod to the ring, *g*, must move towards *c*, and, consequently, open; while, at the same time, the other curtain, fixed above the rod to the ring *f*, must also open by moving in a contrary direction

8. "The Gouty Husband and his Young Wife," c. 1760. Courtesy of the Print Collection, Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

This English political cartoon provides evidence of the material lifestyle and popular fabric furnishings. The "Gouty Husband" is seated in a chair with a slipcover and faces a window treated with festoon-style curtains. The floor could be carpeted, perhaps with an ingrain covering.

The Gouty Husband and his Young Wife.



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