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# *Early Ontario Furniture*

GERALD STEVENS

Royal Ontario Museum / University of Toronto

*I keep six honest serving-men*

*(They taught me all I knew);*

*Their names are WHAT and WHY and WHEN*

*And HOW and WHERE and WHO.*

RUDYARD KIPLING

## ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM SERIES

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WHAT? HOW?

Why? WHERE?

WHEN? WHO?

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# Early Ontario Furniture

*by* GERALD STEVENS

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## **WHERE** did furniture-making begin in Ontario?

The first furniture built by Europeans in what is now Ontario must have been made in the missions, forts, and fur trading stations of the French regime. Too often it is forgotten that more than a century before the British appeared on the scene, the French had established outposts in many parts of the province. The most important were at Fort Frontenac (now Kingston), Quinte, Fort Niagara, Fort Detroit, Fort Michilimackinac, and at Ste. Marie and other missions in the Huron country. At these places the settlers must at the very least have made tables, chairs, beds, and chests for their own use. Many of their products undoubtedly were crude, but there is evidence that at least some of Ontario's earliest furniture followed designs originating in the courts of Louis XIII, XIV, and XV.

A "Statement of expenses incurred by de la Salle, Governor of Fort Frontenac—Including the Payment of and Supplies for the Officers, Soldiers and Workers at the said Fort" includes reference to two carpenters, two blacksmiths, a joiner, a cooper, and a ship's carpenter. Another document from the fort dated September 7, 1677, mentions one Quesnel, an armourer; Moise Hillaret and Jean Fontaine, ship's carpenters; Pierre Perot, carpenter, and his son. There is little doubt that many if not all of these men could make and possibly decorate furniture of "country" type from the pine, butternut, and plain and figured maple so readily at hand.



*Slat-back armchair of ash and pine is typical of the "Country Loyalist" form produced in southeastern Ontario. This one was made in the Brockville area about 1800–1835. The box arrangement of chamfered rungs and the height of the back provide additional interest.*

Little if any furniture is known definitely to have survived from the French regime in Ontario. But this does not mean that none exists—only that it has to be searched out. Fort Michilimackinac, for example, at the junction of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, must have produced a goodly amount: built by the French as a military and trading post in 1715, it was ceded to England in 1761, and documentary and excavated evidence suggests that trained artisans worked there during both the French and English periods. A search in the Windsor-Detroit area might prove even more rewarding.

### *Why* does Ontario furniture reflect so many styles?

The French were only the first of many cultural influences which affected Ontario. The military and political events leading to the British conquest of Canada, the post-revolutionary separation from the United States, and the



*Inspired by Hepplewhite, and the beauty of the curled maple, an Ontario craftsman built this bureau desk about 1800–1820. Examples of similar form have been found in both the Kingston and Niagara areas. The dark bands are of inlaid mahogany veneer; brass pulls are the original Lion Head design. The fall-front, when closed, forms a false upper drawer. French feet and serpentine skirt are typical of Hepplewhite influence.*

settlement of Ontario by the United Empire Loyalists, all are mirrored in the furniture and other decorative arts of our early history. It was a period of rapidly changing concepts in design. Intermingled were the pioneers still living in log cabins, the garrison society with its Georgian architecture and elegant decor, and the newly established commercial class which dreamed of manor houses and gracious living. The blend was further enriched by German and other ethnic backgrounds represented in the Loyalist settlers.

In general, cultural influences spread from the edges of the province—the east (Kingston), the west (Detroit), and later the south (Loyalists)—into the centre. In the early days Kingston was the principal centre of population and culture, and although it was by-passed as capital of Upper Canada in favour first of Newark (Niagara) and then of York (Toronto), it has provided the historian and researcher with much of interest.



In the mid-19th century Victorian fashions began to embrace the styles of many earlier periods and other lands. Behind this eclecticism lay a revolution in transportation and industry. The railway and steamship accelerated travel and commerce; new steam-powered equipment began to replace the handcraftsman. Nails, screws, pulls, tacks, dovetails, and other elements of furniture construction were often machine-made and in some cases imported. Both manufacturers and consumers began to seek change in style for the sake of change, a pattern which led eventually to bad taste both in design and decor.

## **HOW** were different woods used?

Early Ontario furniture was made from such local woods as were suitable for the purpose. It was not until the mid-19th century that improved methods of transportation allowed cabinetmakers to import mahogany and other foreign woods.

These three pieces, or similar ones, might have been found in the studies of prosperous homes anywhere along "the front" in mid-19th century Ontario.

The tallcase or "grandfather's" clock has an English eight-day movement of brass and iron: it is not unusual to find "Canadian-made" wall and tallcase clocks fitted with metal, and later wooden, works imported from England or the United States. The case, made in Brantford, is of figured maple and cherry. It is typical of a well-trained "country" or rural craftsman who understood the values of contrasting woods and basic design. The broken pediment, the decorative quarter columns on the waist, the valanced skirt and French feet reveal a serious approach to his craft.

The curled maple side chair comes from the Niagara area. Made about 1830, it shows the influence of the Directoire style. The incurved, sabre-like legs, solid back splat and crested top rail are typical of chairs made in the southeastern and central districts of the province.

The Empire secretary bookcase, with slant-front writing area, is of cherry with pine as the secondary wood. Manufactured in eastern Ontario about 1840, it illustrates well the "Upper Canadian Yeoman" approach to cabinetmaking. The unbroken cornice, sturdy supporting columns, and overall design are typical of a culture based on good taste modified by the need to conquer a northern wilderness.

One of the earliest known dated items, authenticated as having been made in the Johnstown area near Brockville, is a pine chest carved with the numerals 1796.

PINE was readily available. Much of the "country" type of early Ontario furniture was made of white pine (*Pinus Strobus* L.) (Pin blanc, pin du lord, etc.) and, to lesser degree, red pine (*Pinus resinosa* Ait.) (Pin rouge, etc.). Pine was used to construct tables, chairs, chests, chests of drawers, corner cupboards, and other types of pieces both large and small.

BASSWOOD (*Tilia americana* L.) (Tilleul d'Amérique) was a favourite for seats of chairs, interior finish, and as a base for veneer. Basswood is soft and fine in texture and seldom found with a figured grain.

BUTTERNUT (*Juglans cinerea*) (Noyer cendre, etc.) was favoured wood in early Ontario for chests of drawers, cupboards, table tops and numerous items of better quality and design. It was also used for cabinet items supplied with drawers, panels and fronts of figured maple.

BLACK CHERRY (*Prunus serotina* Ehrh.) (Cerisier tardif), sometimes erroneously called red cherry, was much favoured by early artisans. It was used, either alone or combined with waved and/or bird's-eye maple, curly birch or other decorative woods, in a goodly number of the finest examples of early Ontario cabinetmaking.

WHITE OAK (*Quercus alba* L.) (Chêne blanc) does not appear to have been much used by early Ontario cabinetmakers, according to the evidence that has survived. This seems strange, as many of our earliest artisans were of British descent and oak was much used in the British Isles and Europe. Here is a puzzle which could make an interesting research project.

CHESTNUT (*Castanea dentata* (Marsh.) Borkh.) (Châtaignier d'Amérique) was native to southern Ontario, but only a very few chests of drawers and other pieces made from it have been authenticated to Ontario craftsmen. All of them date from the mid- and late Victorian periods of design.

WHITE ASH (*Fraxinus americana* L.) (Frêne d'Amérique). Several varieties of ash (blue, black, green and red) are native to Ontario and all were useful; but because of certain characteristics inherent in the other varieties, white ash alone was popular with the early cabinetmakers. This wood was so widely used in the late mid-Victorian and late Victorian periods, however, that today it is surrounded by an aura of disrepute which should not always apply. Cabinetmakers with an eye for decorative and unusual woods occasionally made handsome desks, chests, and other pieces from boards obtained from a white ash tree of unusual growth and spectacular grain.

BLACK WALNUT (*Juglans nigra* L.) (Noyer noir) is native to a narrow area of southern Ontario extending approximately from Kingston westward to Lake St. Clair. The demand for furniture made from it became so prevalent during the mid-19th century that seedlings were transplanted to other areas of eastern Canada, and master craftsmen of Montreal and Quebec City used it to full advantage. As with white ash, furniture made from black walnut has tended to be classified as Victorian, but there is little doubt that Ontario craftsmen of the late 18th and early 19th centuries also used this decorative and lasting medium.

HICKORY. Six species occur in Canada. The most widespread of these is the bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis* (Wangh.) K. Koch) (*Carya cordiforme*). Hickory was little used for furniture in Canada, but should be mentioned with elm as a component of chairs and other items needing hard-wearing or bent parts.

ELM. Of the three species native to Canada, the rock elm (*Ulmus Thomasi* Sarg.) (Orme liege) and the white elm (*Ulmus americana* L.) (Orme d'Amérique) had great significance to the early chairmaker of Ontario. During the half century (1791-1841) that the province was known as Upper Canada, temporary furniture was in great demand and chairs in particular were in short supply. Chairs were a necessity; they came in many forms but the most comfortable and desirable were of the Windsor type, made with one or more parts bent like a bow. Short-grained woods could not be used successfully for this, but hickory and elm filled the need admirably. Wheels for vehicles, hoops and staves for barrels, thin veneer-like strips for woven baskets, chair seats and boxes also were made from white and rock elm.

YELLOW BIRCH (*Betula lutea* Michx. f.) (Merisier, bouleau jaune, etc.) is the most important of the nine birch species native to Canada: from it comes the very decorative waved or wavy grain so desired by the collector





*Two-part moveable corner cupboard, made in Agincourt about 1840, is an interesting revival of an 18th century design. The overall concept, bracket feet, moulded cornice, small lights, and lunette-like decorative moulding all suggest an early period. But the butt hinges, pulls (replaced), nails, screws and other trivia of construction conform with the documented period and source. The wood is curled and bird's-eye maple.*

of Canadiana. Plain, straight-grained birch was and is stained to resemble mahogany or walnut, but from earliest times Canadian craftsmen sought to preserve and emphasize the figured variety. Wavy birch was used for the tops, skirts and legs of tables; for entire chests of drawers, bureaus and bookcases; and as decorative slats and splats of chairs. The student of Canadiana must learn to distinguish between it and the ever-popular figured maples.

SUGAR MAPLE (hard maple, rock maple) (*Acer saccharum* Marsh.) (*Erable à sucre*, etc.) is the only one of the ten species of maple native to Canada that is important to the collector. The sugar maple produces a hard, strong wood especially useful in cabinetmaking. Early Ontario craftsmen appreciated the decorative values inherent in the figured varieties, and used the curled (curly) and bird's-eye for their better examples of household furniture.

Figured maple was used both in the solid and as a veneer. Early veneer was hand-sawn and therefore thick in cross-section. In many instances, the excellence of figure depended upon the method used by the sawyer who, if knowledgeable, would quarter-cut rather than slab- or box-cut a log and thereby lose part of the desired pattern. The most desirable figure is that originally listed as "curled" and presently described as "tiger". Next in



*“Landlord’s” table, with its pedestal base, illustrates the Regency and Directoire-Duncan Phyfe influence found in early 19th century furniture manufactured in the larger urban centres. This example was made in the Kingston area about 1820 out of cherry, with pine as a secondary wood. The sabre-like reeded concave legs, cast brass paw casters, and lipped drawer suggest a sincere attempt at elegance.*

importance was the “burly bird’s-eye”, i.e. a mingling of curl and bird’s-eye, and last, but by no means least, was the “bird’s-eye”.

In Canada, curled maple was used alone, or with black cherry, or with butternut stained to represent black cherry, black walnut or mahogany. It was also used as an inlay replacing satin wood. Every form of furniture was made from it, including tea caddies, decorative household items and treen. The wood is hard and strong, and being decorative in itself was seldom carved. Bird’s-eye maple was used in much the same way, but a revival in thin veneer during the late 19th and early 20th centuries has cast a shadow over this variety in the eye of the purist.

## WHEN were styles in vogue?

Ontario cabinet and chair makers followed the furniture fashions of England, France, and colonial America—but usually many years after the designs were originally introduced. This section lists the most important of these styles (followed by their primary periods of popularity in brackets) and the extent of their influence here.

LOUIS XIII (1610–1643). The basic concepts associated with side chairs of this period were modified and used by rural chairmakers of southeastern Ontario from about 1780 to 1830.

LOUIS XV (1715–1774). Chests of drawers (commodes) supplied with the elaborately shaped skirt and French foot of this period have been found in eastern Ontario. All examples appear to be of the period 1790–1840.

*Hepplewhite influences were long dominant in the cabinetmaking of early and mid-19th century Ontario. The slim, squared and tapered legs provided a fitting support for the woods so often chosen by rural craftsmen. This drop leaf table of curled maple was made in the Brockville area about 1840.*



AMERICAN COLONIAL (17th century). Armchairs exhibiting the influences of American chairs of the Carver and Brewster types were manufactured during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

QUEEN ANNE (1710–1760). Chairs and tables designed with the cabriole legs and Dutch foot of this period were manufactured in Ontario from about 1790 to 1810.

CHIPPENDALE (1740–1780). Side chairs with pierced splats, straight squared front legs and recessed front stretchers were produced from about 1790 to 1840.

Straight front chests of drawers with rudimentary ogee bracket feet are known to have been made in the Kingston area about 1800–1845.

Candlestands and tilt top tables supported by turned pedestals and cabriole legs terminating in pad feet found in the eastern areas are provincial in design and date from about 1800–1855.

Slant top desks made of cherry and figured maple and suggesting a provincial form of Chippendale were produced about 1800–1850.

HEPPLEWHITE (1780–1800). Early Ontario craftsmen showed the influence of this master from about 1790 through 1867. Side or arm chairs of Hepplewhite design appear to be few in number, but the typical straight, tapering leg is to be found in countless numbers of one- and two-drawer tables, stands, and drop leaf tables of excellent design. Chests of drawers with valanced skirts and French feet, sideboards, and other case pieces of this style have been found in the eastern and central areas of the province, while country or survival forms are everywhere to be found.



*Mid-Victorian chest of drawers is typical of furniture manufactured in the smaller urban centres—in this case, in Prince Edward County—about 1860. The well-figured bird's-eye maple is emphasized by applied half-round mouldings of black walnut. The two small box-like cabinets and the back board are very much "of the period".*

Formal examples of dining, Pembroke, card and sewing tables enhanced by contrasting inlays were produced about 1800–1830. These items exhibit carefully executed craftsmanship and a deliberate choice of beautifully grained woods.

SHERATON (1790–1820). As with Hepplewhite, the styles of Thomas Sheraton provided the early Ontario cabinet and chair maker with inspirations and influences that endured for decades after the formal period had ended. Indeed, a provincial or country type of Sheraton-style furniture was produced in Ontario from about 1800 to 1875. Formal items made from decorative local woods included dressers, serving and card tables, stands and sewing tables, all designed with the straight, turned and reeded legs of the original style.

A great many survival pieces based on Sheraton designs are available, but the decline in craftsmanship and taste is exemplified by an absence of reeding and a thickening of once-delicate legs. Settees and sofas of the later period have been found in all areas.

Lightweight painted chairs with bamboo-style turning and rush seats of the early Sheraton period are quite rare. The later "fancy" chairs with cane seats, slats, and rear legs or stiles flattened and elongated in the so-called "rabbit ear" manner were produced in quantity.

EMPIRE (Early Empire 1810–1820; Late Empire 1820–1835). The influences of Sheraton combined with those of the Directoire of France (1792–1810) were everywhere used in 19th century Ontario. This was a period of change and transition, and couches, side and arm chairs reveal

a mingling of design. Lightly-made chairs continued to be Sheraton-like in concept with seats of cane and rush. Graining, and stenciled decorations in gilt and colour, were popular, and the Hitchcock form of chair was introduced. Formal chairs were designed with in-curving legs shaped like sabres, or with a modified cabriole leg which, combined with a solid vase-shaped back splat, suggest a revival of Queen Anne design. Examples of both types are numerous in Ontario.

Chests of drawers produced during the early period much resemble the designs of Sheraton, but are distinguished by heavier lines and the addition of a back board and/or a section of small drawers. Later examples exhibit overhanging top drawers and columns or pilasters supported by carved or turned feet. Much more common is the very late Empire veneered chest of drawers supplied with an overhanging drawer supported by cyma-curved scrolls. These were produced in great numbers.

Sideboards of the period produced in Ontario typically had back boards, an overhanging section or frieze, panelled sides on frame or carcass, and the two lower doors which distinguish this form from that of a chest of drawers.

Early Empire sofas were designed with the fan-shaped reversing arms that provided a semi-enclosed area to hold a bolster or cylindrical cushion. If of the formal type, they were given sabre-like legs. Few, if any, sofas supported on elaborately carved legs have been authenticated as made in Ontario. Late Empire sofas with S-shaped feet and veneered frames appear to have been mass-produced, as were those with heavy turned or octagonal legs.

Documented beds of this period retained the tester and canopy, but the tall turned posts are heavy in design and thick in cross-section.

Empire tables of this period are available everywhere. The most popular and desirable are those designed with legs, skirts and tops of figured maple. The veneered, pedestal-supported card table with folding top was mass-produced and has retained its popularity.

The well-known sleigh bed, produced in quantity, was introduced during this period.

EARLY VICTORIAN (1840-1850). Chairs and sofas were influenced by designs made popular in the Louis xv period. Cabriole legs, curved or serpentine skirts and flowing lines assure this style a continued acceptance. Side chairs exhibited slip or spring-filled seats, curved or decorated back slats and crested top rails carved in relief. The ever-popular Ladies' and Gentlemen's chairs are survivals of this period, and were manufactured in many urban centres including Toronto.

During this period, metal springs were replacing padding on seats and backs of chairs, and imported mahogany and rosewood were plentiful. Cup casters, so popular during the Sheraton period, were being replaced by post casters inserted into legs of chairs and tables. Towards the end, spool turn-

ing, architectural designs, and furniture made from local black walnut became available and popular.

MID-VICTORIAN (1850–1875) furniture exhibits the influences of Louis XVI (1774–1793), Sheraton, and recently acquired mechanization. All forms of furniture were made of black walnut; frequently they were decorated with machine-made applied carvings. Marble tops were popular on tables and other pieces. The overall characteristics of this period were size, weight, height, and the machine running rampant.

The earlier years, about 1865, reveal the true Louis XVI influence. Legs were turned, tapered, and embellished with large rings, or with very heavy bun-shaped and decorated turnings on the upper area. Sofas were triple-arched with a graduated central area.

Bureaus were survival pieces. Many were fitted with swinging mirrors mounted on single drawers. Some produced in the urban areas were designed with serpentine fronts and mirrors mounted on fretwork supports.

The best known and most readily available chests of drawers have three or four drawers fitted to a case which is flush to the floor, mounted on post casters, or supplied with rudimentary feet. The drawers are decorated with a half-round moulding designed to suggest a panel, and are fitted with machine-carved pulls representing leaves, branches, and similar forms. All items of this nature are of the “cottage” variety, made from woods less decorative and expensive than ash.

To sum up, in Ontario up to Confederation, anything and everything was possible in the way of furniture. But only a limited number of styles and designs have actually been documented or accepted, because of an all too recent interest in the early decorative arts.

SPECIAL CATEGORIES. Every type, classification and form of Windsor chair was manufactured by early Ontario chairmakers. Low-back, comb-back, bow-back, loop-back, fan-back and brace-back examples have been found. All early forms were designed with an H arrangement of bulbous rungs and saddle seats; later ones had glue-joined two-, three-, or four-board seats. Early examples of writing armchairs and settees also survive. Later examples with a box stretcher design of rungs, including the so-called “Captain’s” or “Firehouse” Windsor chairs, are plentiful.

Rocking chairs of every period, style and design also were produced by early Ontario chairmakers.

Signed plank-seated side chairs of original design, decoration and construction were produced during the period 1830–1867. In a number of cases it has been possible positively to identify their makers as residents of Ontario.

Documented beds of the Hepplewhite and Sheraton periods of design are rare, but those of the later periods are known to have been manufactured throughout the province.



*Tables of "Eastlake derivation" were mass-produced in Ontario. This one was made by "David Dougal, Manufacturer" about 1875. In design and choice of wood (bird's-eye maple and black walnut) it is a perfect example of Victorian decor and craftsmanship. The ornamental leather work decorating the shelf above it was produced in Ontario about 1870. The flint glass lamp, with pressed base and mould-blown bowl, was manufactured in the Burlington Glass Works of Hamilton about 1875. The blown chimney dates from the same period.*

## WHO made the furniture?

There was no shortage of craftsmen in the 19th century. This is amply proven by a census taken in 1851 of "trades, professions and useful employments" in Canada. It lists in part:

ARTISTS OF ALL KINDS, ARCHITECTS, SCULPTORS, &C.: *Upper Canada—218.*  
 JEWELLERS, WATCH AND CLOCKMAKERS: *Upper Canada—200*  
 CHAIR, CABINETMAKERS, AND UPHOLSTERERS: *Upper Canada—1258*  
 SHIPWRIGHTS, CARPENTERS, JOINERS, &C.: *Upper Canada—8367*  
 BLACKSMITHS: *Upper Canada—4235*

Most of the shipwrights, carpenters and joiners listed in such numbers would, of course, be equipped mainly to production of the country type. The more than four thousand blacksmiths contributed their quotas of nails, screws, hinges, and other hardware.

Advertisements of the early and mid-19th century provide further evidence of working cabinetmakers and the articles they produced. Examples of such advertisements chosen at random include:

JAMES BECKETT, *Belleville:*

"Every description of furniture constantly on hand, or made to order."

ROBERT & WILLIAM DALRYMPLE, *Brantford:*

"Cabinet, chair and sofa factory."

GEORGE HUNTER, *Kingston*:

“Cabinet and upholstery warerooms . . . constantly on hand, or made to order.”

JACQUES & HAY, *Toronto*:

“Cabinetmakers and Upholsterers, windsor and cane seat chairs.”

PORTER & HOODLESS, *Hamilton*:

“Chair and Bedstead factory—every description of Rocking, Windsor, Cane Seat and Rush Bottom Chairs—and Bedsteads.”

The following is a partial list of early Ontario cabinetmakers. Most were active from about 1810 to 1867. Many more names could be added if space were available: even so, it is obvious that the possibilities offered the researcher and the collector are almost limitless:

- Amherstburg*. Lewis Butts  
*Bath*. D. T. Forward  
*Bowmanville*. Robt. S. Manning  
*Brantford*. Bacon & Chave;  
Michael Ryan  
*Brighton*. J. C. Simpson  
*Brockville*. Geo. Stewart  
*Bytown (Ottawa)*. James Walkley;  
Ebin Wood  
*Cayuga*. John Matthews  
*Chatham*. R. O. & R. Smith  
*Coburg*. Henery Huff; Geo. Stephens  
*Cornwall*. John Shirkey  
*Dundas*. Cowper & Builder;  
O. W. Everitt  
*Embroy*. Wm. Halliday  
*Farmersville*. Archibald Jackson;  
Geo. Stevens & Bro.  
*Galt*. John Barbour; A. Malcolm  
*Grimsbey*. Jacob Kenith  
*Guelph*. G. W. Allen  
*Hamilton*. Bain & Hastings; Munroe,  
Williamson & Morton; Porter &  
Hoodless  
*Hawkesbury*. Geo. Hodgins  
*Ingersoll*. J. Buchanan; Homer  
Campbell  
*Jordan*. H. Summerman  
*Kemptville*. Thos. Baldwin  
*Kingston*. H. Baseman; Hatch & Son;  
Geo. Hunter  
*Lancaster*. John Steward  
*London*. W. Bissell; Jeffrey & Sons;  
R. Mountjoy & Sons  
*Merrickville*. Sam Langford  
*Millroches*. I. Brooks  
*Newboro'*. James Leech  
*Newcastle*. Fuller & Beachan  
*Newmarket*. J. Millard  
*Orillia*. N. Morrison  
*Oshawa*. Thos. Fuller & Co.  
*Owen Sound*. Wm. Holmes  
*Perth*. David Hogg  
*Peterborough*. Jas. Hurley  
*Pictou*. Rufus Sawyer  
*Port Hope*. W. F. Russell  
*Port Sarnia*. R. & H. F. McKenzie  
*Richmond Hill*. J. Hurst  
*St. Catharines*. Thos. M'Intyre  
*St. Thomas*. Aitkens & Mitchell  
*Simcoe*. L. Wells  
*Smith's Falls*. W. Bartlett  
*Toronto*. J. A. Browning; J. Campbell;  
Robt. Fullarton; John Jacques;  
Jacques & Hay; March & Church;  
Robson & Wilson; J. & E. Sheppard;  
Wilson & Haigh; Wisman & Chanley  
*Uxbridge*. A. G. Hemphill  
*Vankleek Hill*. E. Darion;  
W. M. Ferguson  
*Whitby*. W. Caldwell; Wm. Till  
*Woodstock*. John Bain; H. Inglesgrove;  
J. Norman



A partial list of clockmakers active from 1825 to 1860 would include John Carswell, *Toronto*; G. D. Darling, *Simcoe*; Edward Magill, *Hamilton*; Thomas McMurry, *Toronto*; Charles Sewell, *Toronto*; James Vance, *Toronto*; Samuel Wheeler, *Dunnville*.

R. Brough, of Gananoque, was the only spinning-wheel maker chosen to represent Canada in the Universal Exhibition of 1855 in Paris.

## WHAT do these words mean?

*Acanthus*. Conventional leaf form usually carved from the solid.

*Applied carving*. Carved separately.

*Apron* (skirt). Plain or carved frame connecting upper areas of legs of tables, chairs, bureaus, etc.

*Ball turning*. Turned in the form of a ball.

*Bamboo turning*. Turned in imitation of natural bamboo.

*Bun foot*. Ball-like turning flattened top and bottom.

*Breakfront*. A cabinet piece with an advanced central section.

*Burl*. Wart-like growth with involved grain found on maple, ash, elm and other trees native to Canada.

*Butt hinge*. Rectangular or square two-part hinge introduced about 1800; prototype of modern hinge of the same name.

*Cabriole leg*. Elongated reversed S shape with exaggerated upper area or "knee".

*Carcase*. Basic body of framed furniture.

*Chamfer*. The flattening of a right angled corner.

*Comb back*. Comb-like form added to the backs of chairs.

*Country*. Simplified modifications of period design.

*Cyma curved*. Having a profile partly concave and partly convex.

*Deal*. English term for pine or soft wood. Boards cut to standard size.

*Dust board*. The division separating drawers.

*Dutch foot*. Elongated rounded foot surmounting a pad.

*Ebonized*. Wood painted or stained in imitation of ebony.

*Escutcheon*. Keyhole plate.

*Façade*. Frontal areas of furniture, buildings, etc.

*Fiddle back*. Violin-shaped back splat.

*Finial*. Turned or carved terminations used by cabinet or chair makers.

*Fluting*. Rounded grooves cut vertically on columns, pilasters, legs, etc.

*French foot*. Outswep foot forming a continuation of a skirt.

*Gate leg*. Movable support consisting of two vertical and two horizontal members.

*Ground*. Secondary wood upon which the veneer is fastened.

*Hoop back*. Synonymous with the term bow back.

*H stretcher*. Three rungs or stretchers in the form of the letter H.

*Inlay*. Materials of contrasting colours inset into a solid surface.

*Joined*. Mortise and tenon method of assembly.

*Knee*. Convex upper area of cabriole leg.

*Ladder back.* Chair supplied with graduated or equidistant horizontal slats.

*Laminate(d).* Plywood.

*Ogee.* See cyma curved.

*Provenance.* Area to which a specific form of furniture is attributed.

*Quarter cut.* Method of cutting used to achieve a well figured grain. The log is quartered and the quarters sawn from the centre to the outer edge. Box cutting implies the log was turned after each board was obtained. Slab cutting, the most inept of all, indicates that the log itself remained stationary while it was reduced to boards.

*Raked* (splayed, slanted). Term used to indicate that legs, etc. are fitted at an angle.

*Reeding.* Continuous series of rounded and raised parallel lines achieved by a cutting away of the depressed areas.

*Relief.* Carving slightly elevated above the background (low relief), or (high relief) elevated above the background by undercutting the motif.

*Ruler joint.* The joining of a drop leaf to a table top in such a manner that it resembles the hinged joint on an old-fashioned folding carpenter's ruler. Indicates good workmanship.

*Saddle seat.* Plank seat shaped with a raised central area at the front similar to that of a saddle. Also found on two-, three-, and four-board seats of Windsor chairs manufactured in Ontario about 1865–1880.

*Scratch carving.* Elementary decoration achieved through use of a V-shaped tool.

*Serpentine.* A curve with a central full swell flanked by two concave and two half swells.

*Side chair.* Chair without arms.

*Slat.* Plain, carved or pierced horizontal elements, used to decorate and strengthen backs of chairs. Opposite of splat.

*Slip seat.* Removable seat.

*Spindle.* A round rung tapering at both ends; turned element supporting the legs or back of a chair.

*Splat.* Vertical elements as represented by the pierced or solid central back pieces of chairs.

*Splint seat.* Seat woven of thin, flat strips of elm or hickory.

*Stile.* Vertical element as represented by a leg extending from the floor to the top of the chest, chest of drawers, etc. Also associated with the rear legs of chairs.

*Stretcher.* Elements used to connect and strengthen legs. When turned, are classified as rungs.

*Survival.* Design continued from an earlier period.

*Swing leg.* Movable leg or support associated with drop leaf tables and designed with one horizontal and one vertical member.

*Template.* A pattern for contemplated designs.

*Transitional.* Descriptive of overlapping periods of design and decor.

*Trundle bed.* A low bed designed to be placed under the master bed.

*Underframing.* See stretchers.

*Valance.* Drape-like form of decoration.

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