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Drawing Conclusions: The Use of Room-by-Room Probate Inventories to Study the Terminology, Evolution, and Function of Charleston Drawing Rooms and Parlors 1728-1866

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DRAWING CONCLUSIONS: THE USE OF ROOM-BY-ROOM PROBATE INVENTORIES TO STUDY THE TERMINOLOGY, EVOLUTION, AND FUNCTION OF CHARLESTON DRAWING ROOMS AND PARLORS 1728-1866

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Schools of
Clemson University and College of Charleston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
Historic Preservation

by
Michelle Marie Thompson
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Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the contents of seventy-five entertaining rooms called either parlor or drawing room in a sample of fifty room-by-room probate inventories recorded in Charleston, South Carolina between 1728 and 1866. Analysis of these inventories revealed that the usage of the term parlor declined in favor of the term drawing room in the late eighteenth century until the former appears to have supplanted the term parlor about 1810. Analysis of this sample of inventories also revealed that the furnishings Charlestonians acquired to appoint their principal entertainment rooms shifted as the social activities staged in them changed. Eighteenth-century parlors tended to be multi-functional, sometimes containing beds and tables and implements necessary for dining and tea drinking. Nineteenth-century drawing rooms on the other hand more often contained musical instruments and other furnishings for active entertainment and only infrequently dining equipage.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Room-by-room probate records show that many Charlestonians retained at least one room within their houses they called either “parlor” or “drawing room.”¹ In a city synonymous with notions of refinement and sociability, the history, evolution, and function of these rooms that once served as backdrops of social routine, make fascinating subjects for study.

¹ Room-by-room probate inventories are a type of probate record in which items were recorded as being located in a specific room such as: Garrett, Kitchen. Hall, Drawing Room, or Parlor.
In the eighteenth century, rooms intended solely for social interaction were differentiated both by their architectural embellishment and by specialized furnishings. Cary Carson, a noted authority on material culture, explains that “people with genteel sensibilities had a keen eye for such place-markers.” Expounding on this statement in his essay “Architecture as Social History,” he states that:

The furniture and other domestic goods that became ever-more-plentiful in the eighteenth century enabled affluent householders to partition the gentry house into specialized activity areas — public entertaining rooms designed for company, private apartments for family and intimates or special friends, and workrooms for the help. Increasingly, as the century drew to a close, even poor people acquired similar but cheaper household furnishings in unprecedented numbers.

Determinations of past functions and use of a particular room can sometimes be made through investigative field work. For example, special equipment or built-in furniture, in the form of ovens, buffets, or valance hooks give investigators clear indication of the activities that took place there. However, as Carson points out, “those clues are rare.” Field investigators are often faced with spaces that hold very few obvious clues as to their original function. Rooms, Carson asserts, had to be furnished for their functions to become clear. Expanding on Carson’s observations, Abbott Lowell Cummings has explained, that while formal, technical descriptions can convey much about the “physical essence of a building,” it is only when a building is being used that it “comes alive.”

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3 Carson, "Architecture as Social History", in The Chesapeake House, 24.
4 Ibid.
The single most important factor if a room is to “come alive” is that the room be furnished as it was originally intended (Figure 1.2). Herein lies the predicament for researchers who study how rooms were furnished and how they functioned and evolved over time. Very rarely, says Cummings, do old buildings retain their original furnishings. It is also clearly not possible to ask long-deceased occupants about their furnishings and room uses. The contents of rooms are ephemeral in nature moving changing, and disappearing with the changing of styles and the passing of time.

In response to these limitations, those who study the function and use of rooms must look to other sources for help. Over the last several decades the methods historians use to research and interpret interior space has matured. Following the example of scholars at Colonial

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Williamsburg, among others, it has become fundamental practice for researchers and field investigators to approach the examination of buildings in a more holistic manner than their predecessors. Researchers consider all available sources to understand the design and use of America’s early buildings, including individual room use and what roles gender, wealth, and race played in these spaces. One of the most valuable of these sources is the probate inventory. As such, most probate inventories were recorded simply as a running list of possessions of the deceased with no indication as to which room the items belonged. Room-by-room inventories, however, are a type of probate inventory in which assessors listed which objects were found in each room. The study of these documents has helped researchers to pinpoint what objects or what types of objects would have been in a particular type of room.

Recognizing their value, scholars have devised an assortment of methods aimed at teasing out information and patterns buried within the inventories. However, recognizing patterns when examining several inventories together can be a cumbersome task. One method for making the data more manageable is to use of a relational database. A relational database is a type of database in which data is stored in relatively simple tables. These tables can be combined in response to queries which use key information that is common to more than one table. Applying a relational database to the analysis of probate inventories allows for greater command of the data and expands the user’s ability to recognize patterns in large data sets. Some inventories, however, boasted various combinations of these rooms, often including some type of modifier in order to delineate, for example, between a “front” and “back” parlor, “great”

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and “little” parlor, or parlor “above stairs” and parlor “below”. With so many varying distinctions between these rooms, the divides they were meant to reflect by the assessors who recorded them can easily become

Employing a relational database this thesis analyzes the contents of seventy-five rooms called either parlor or drawing room taken from a sample of fifty Charleston room-by-room probate inventories. Using findings from the database, conclusions were made regarding correlations between the terminology, evolution, and function of the Charleston drawing room and parlor between 1728 and 1866.

Queries into these patterns revealed a clear evolution in Charleston regarding naming patterns for primary entertainment space in this period. Parlor was the predominant term used by Charleston probate assessors in the eighteenth century to denote a primary entertainment space. The term drawing room was employed by probate assessors in the city as early as 1792. After the appearance of the term drawing room on the Charleston records that term was used only sparingly by assessors in the last decade of the eighteenth century. However, by around 1810, the term drawing room was used predominantly by assessors in Charleston for naming an entertainment space. The term parlor did not disappear from the inventories in the nineteenth century but was found to be greatly overshadowed by use of the term drawing room.

Findings also revealed that the furnishings Charlestonians acquired for their principal entertainment rooms changed as the social activities that took place in them in shifted. Charleston parlors in the eighteenth-century tended to be multi-functional spaces. These rooms often contained beds and tables, as well as items for dining and tea drinking. In contrast,

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8 For the purposes of this paper, the author has defined a modifier as either a prefix or suffix, ascribed to either the term drawing room or parlor. A modifier delineates distinctions amongst these rooms, such as size or location of the room within the plan of the house. For example, *front* parlor or *Eastern* drawing room.
the nineteenth-century Charleston drawing rooms often contained items more specifically associated with social entertainment such as musical instruments and card tables but very rarely dining equipage.

All of the behaviors analyzed in this study were initially evident in the earliest Charleston parlors. However, individual behaviors followed unique evolutions and patterns after the term drawing room was first employed by assessors in the last decade of the eighteenth century. It is the author’s assertion that findings uncovered in this study bear witness to the process of Charlestonian’s “finding their feet” when deciding what behaviors previously established in the early parlors belonged to the drawing room once it arrived and which behaviors did not. Card playing, for example, was clearly a pastime that took place in the Charleston parlor early in the eighteenth-century. However, findings revealed that card playing did not immediately move into the drawing room. Instead, it transitioned slowly from the parlor until ultimately moving firmly into the drawing room where it remained. Other behaviors such as tea drinking followed a different tract. Tea drinking was so prevalent a pass time in Charleston that it was disseminated between both the parlor and drawing room uniformly as soon as the term drawing room was in use on the Charleston inventories. Conversely, eating and drinking was a standard activity in the eighteenth-century Charleston parlor. However, this was a behavior that did not move into the drawing room. Eating and drinking continued in the nineteenth-century Charleston parlor until virtually disappearing from that room later in the nineteenth century. Charlestonians were clearly also using their parlors for sleep in the eighteenth century. However, the practice of sleeping in a room also used for entertaining did not make it into either the Charleston parlor or the drawing room in the nineteenth century.
Charlestonians also showed a marked predilection for acquiring and displaying their objects and furnishings in pairs or even numbers. Evenness in number was observed in the eighteenth-century Charleston parlor. However, furnishings and other objects were listed specifically as being in pairs much more frequently after the term drawing room was first employed on the inventories sampled for this study. This suggests that the arrival of the controlled environment of the drawing room brought with it solidification for the taste for evenness and order in Charleston’s entertainment rooms. With the arrival of this new specialized entertainment space called drawing room, Charlestonians restructured their ideas of what were appropriate behaviors to be highlighted in this space through the furnishings and objects with which they equipped them.
CHAPTER TWO

PROBATE INVENTORIES:
THEIR ORIGINS, APPLICATIONS, BENEFITS, AND LIMITATIONS

Probate documents provide what leading scholars in the study of probate inventories Lorena Walsh and Lois Green Carr amusingly refer to as “pots and pans history.” This conjures up images of the historian vicariously surrounded by earthenware milk pans, pewter plates, or silver goblets, in the hopes of summoning up the life experiences of people in preindustrial times. The analysis of probate inventories provides valuable information utilized in numerous methods and modes of study. In truth, probate records provide scholars with valuable insights in their understanding of the material and social world of long-vanished people and their societies.

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Although there are several ways in which scholars might measure standards of living in the past, probate inventories make exceptionally useful documents for this purpose.

Given the tremendous value historians have placed on these documents, this chapter introduces their history and their use by researchers. This chapter begins with an explanation of the role of probate inventories. The remainder of this chapter assesses how some scholars have applied these documents to their research. This assessment includes a mini case-study that explores how researchers at Virginia’s Gunston Hall used room-by-room-probate inventories to determine period-appropriate room names for the house’s principal entertainment spaces. While probate inventories provide historians with a wealth of information, they are not without their drawbacks. It is important that the reader understands not only the many benefits of their use but their limitations and shortcomings as well. This chapter closes with a look at some of those limitations when applying probate inventories.

WHY AND FOR WHOM WERE THEY COMMISSIONED

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when a person—usually a property owner of some means—died, the court would, upon request, appoint an administrator to the estate of the deceased. The job of the court-appointed administrator was not only to care for the estate but to ensure that any outstanding debts left by the deceased be paid. After settling debts, the remainder of the estate could then be distributed to the rightful heirs of the deceased. Once an administer had been appointed to the estate three or four additional men were selected to aid in the process. These so-called probate assessors would have been chosen from a similar socio-economic class to the deceased and would have been directly familiar with his or her business

undertakings. The job of this select group of men was to list all of the deceased’s assets and possessions and then assign each with a fair market value.\textsuperscript{11}

The vast majority of probate inventories were recorded for male heads of a household. This pattern stems from the practice that all of the colonies in North America followed the English law of coverture. Under the law of coverture, a married woman and her husband were legally considered a single economic unit. This meant that once a woman married, regardless of what assets of monetary value she brought with her into the marriage, she was considered under the guardianship of her husband. Although she would have been allowed to own a few personal items she would no longer be legally allowed to own real property, sue or be sued in court, or make contracts. Some probate inventories were commissioned for unmarried women. However, this was rare. Most probate commissions performed for women were estates of “spinsters.” Widows were legally regarded the same as a male property owner.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{THE ORIGINS OF PROBATE COMMISSION IN CHARLESTON}

An impressive number of probate records survive for most counties in the United States.\textsuperscript{13} In Charleston, these documents can be found in several archival repositories. The forerunner to the Probate Court in Charleston was known as the Court of the Ordinary.\textsuperscript{14} In the early days of the court the Royal Governors or their secretaries were the only Ordinaries in the province. In 1778, the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly began to appoint Ordinaries for each of the province's seven court districts. However, due to the presence of British forces in

\textsuperscript{11} Carr and Walsh, “Wealth Consumption Patterns,” 82.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
South Carolina during this period, no District Ordinaries were actually appointed until 1782. With the departure of the last Royal Governor–after the implementation of the Federal Constitution in 1788–the South Carolina General Assembly finally appointed an Ordinary to the Charleston District.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1787 supervision of the newly-appointed District Ordinaries was transferred to county courts (although Charleston did not yet have a one). County courts, however, were abolished in 1799. Within the year the South Carolina General Assembly had created twenty-four circuit court districts who appointed their own Ordinaries until 1815 when these appointments became electable positions. In 1868 the South Carolina Constitution replaced the Court of the Ordinary with the Probate Court. Two decades later changes to the South Carolina Constitution required that the Probate Court be dependent on the General Assembly for funding and legal procedures. This was the case in all counties except Charleston, where it remained a constitutional court until 1962.\textsuperscript{16}

**APPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND BENEFITS TO SCHOLARS**

Probate inventories are generally available for most of the former British mainland colonies and can be studied regarding age, class, and occupation, making it possible to compare people in like circumstances or in different walks of life.\textsuperscript{17} The great value of probate documents as tools for analyses of theses subjects also comes from their detail and from the great range of people whose possessions were inventoried.\textsuperscript{18} “People who in societies where literacy is


\textsuperscript{18} Carr and Walsh, “Wealth Consumption Patterns,” 81.
not widespread have otherwise left little or nothing left to tell us about how they invested their assets. The choices revealed tell us about work, household and family arrangements, pleasures and responses to economic change of poor as well as rich.” 19 In studying developments in these documents over specific time period researchers can garner from them broad changes in patterns related to consumer behaviors, economic growth or decline, per capita wealth and the acquisition, distribution and composition of that wealth, changes in labor systems, social and cultural patterns and stratification, as well as technological changes in agriculture and craft. Specifically, Carr and Walsh assert, that in utilizing a wide sample set of inventories the historian can make broad observations and to chart patterns and trends over time and place. Economic historian Alice Hanson Jones adds:

Their great merit for sample drawing for the United States is their availability, year by year, in nearly every county for almost every estate probated. Except for the few situations where they are missing for an entire county, there seems no reason to believe that the surviving records are not representative of any that may have failed to survive.20

Lois Green Carr and Lorena Walsh’s “Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth Consumption Patterns in St. Mary’s County, Maryland, 1658–1777,” published in Historical Methods in 1980, is an especially useful publication to researchers and scholars, as it offers a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the history of their use, variations amongst different colonies, as well as their value and limitations to scholars. In Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth Consumption Patterns in St. Mary’s County, Maryland, 1658–1777, Walsh and Carr examine probate inventories found in the Chesapeake colonies, followed by one example of how

19 Ibid.
they believe probate inventories may be used for study. Aside from its value as a demonstration of one of the ways in which Walsh and Carr might approach a study of probate data, this publication is especially valuable among their many works, as they begin by giving the reader a thorough overview of how and why probate inventories were commissioned, as well as who it would have been that assessed them. Furthermore, they have systematically outlined several of their estimations as to how probate data might be utilized, as well as the benefits and limitations of this type of data to the researcher. The study offers some of the “precautions and adjustments” set out by Walsh and Carr, that they believe are required in order to make valuable inferences using probate data. In most of their other studies utilizing probate inventory data, Walsh and Carr have largely chosen to omit this rudimentary background information as to the how and why probate inventories were originally preformed. Having Walsh and Carr’s expertise contained in a single document is an extremely valuable asset for studying the use of probate inventories. For example, expanding on Lorena Walsh’s observation regarding their benefits, general availability for the colonies, and ability to be studied in terms of age, class, and occupation, in “Wealth Consumption Patterns” Walsh and Carr also note the benefits concerning the regularity of probate documents recorded for the English colonies. Probate inventories recorded for the English colonies were all modeled after the same method used by the English ecclesiastical courts. This allows researchers to make comparisons between a wide geographic range, not only between the greater North Atlantic trading community but with England as well. Walsh and Carr also note however, that although probate inventories recorded for the North American colonies followed the same model as the English ecclesiastical courts, what was appraised varied from colony to colony. In some colonies land held by the deceased was

recorded while in others land holdings were omitted and only chattel, which consisted of “movables that could be stolen or hidden from creditors or heirs if not listed in a public record,” was included. However, even those inventories in which greater holdings such as land are absent, documents in which chattel was recorded nevertheless provide researchers with generous information about such insights into an individual’s bound labor holdings, household goods and objects.22

In contrast to their usefulness in charting broad societal patterns, probate inventories provide insight into intimate aspects of individual lives. For example, they can detail what items specifically were owned or valued by an individual, what that person ate, or how they prepared their food. Probate inventories can also reveal information about things about individuals or individual families such as social mobility or aspirations, religious beliefs, worldviews, shared cultural values, family relationships, the function of household rooms, and gender roles within the home.23 The benefits of probate records to scholars and historians who seek answers to questions about either large swaths of people or about specific individuals is great. who

Probate inventories have been used by scholars across many disciplines. Probate records were likely first used by genealogists and were soon being utilized by antiquarians and curators of period rooms and furniture as early as the late nineteenth, and early twentieth century.24 Room-by-room probate inventories have served as a major tool to scholars of vernacular

22 Carr and Walsh, “Wealth Consumption Patterns,” 82.
24 Peter Benes and Jane Montague. Benes, Early American Probate Inventories (Boston, MA: Boston University, 1989), 7.
architecture since that time. Additionally, by the 1970s, probate and room-by-room probate inventories were being used by scholars of early American furniture as part of methodic examinations of their features. Concurrently, as historians worked to make the data they uncovered within the probate records more serviceable, researchers from myriad other disciplines were finding a renewed interest in probate documents as well. Scholars in the disciplines of material culture, vernacular history, and historical archeology found inspiration in SPNEA’s 1964 publication, *Rural Household Inventories: Establishing the Names, Uses and Furnishings of Rooms in the Colonial New England Home 1675-1775*, by architectural historian Abbott Lowell Cummings, and by research at Colonial Williamsburg and Plimoth Plantation.

Figure 2.2: Detail of a Room-By-Room Probate Inventory Listing the Contents of a Drawing Room. Photo by the author.

In *Rural Household Inventories*, Cummings utilized probate inventories to make conclusions regarding the contents and function of historic houses. Cummings imparts to the reader the information he has extracted from room-by-room probate records regarding room naming conventions, as well as the typical contents of these rooms (Figure 2.2). From this, Cummings provides the reader with his conclusions as to how each room was used in households representing a variety of wealth levels in Colonial New England between 1675 and 1775. Cummings’ method analyzed room-by-room probate inventories as a group in favor of the more traditional method of studying individual buildings in isolation with their probate inventories. This allowed Cummings to correct several long-standing misconceptions held by scholars and museum practitioners regarding the historical use of specific rooms. 26

In contrast to their great advantages, the use of probate inventories to explore historical habits, customs and behaviors have also uncovered a bevy of shortcomings. One should take precautions when making inferences based on the data recorded in the inventories. For example, probate inventories do not necessarily recount what items or types of objects were most fashionable during a given period, nor do they accurately represent what items were most readily available on the market. Instead, probate records can only represent items recorded as physically being in a particular household at the time of an individual’s death. Further, the commission of probate inventories was performed for a continuum of various individuals spanning both age and wealth lines. Specifically, this means that not all probate inventories were created equal. For example, in a merchant-planter community when an individual died, other planters were appointed to evaluate his estate as they would have been most competent to evaluate an estate similar to their own. Likewise, the estates of the poorer residents would have been assessed by

their social and economic equals. This practice created probate documents that vary widely in their detail, thoroughness, and quality.\(^{27}\) Additionally, as pertains specifically to this study, it is important that the reader keep in mind that it was the assessor who chose which terms to use when recording a name each room. Whether or not the deceased or other residents of the household would have used that same term can not be known for certain.

Walsh and Carr have stated that although probate inventories recorded for the North American colonies followed the same model as the English ecclesiastical courts, items included in the probate inventory differed not only between England and the Colonies but also between the individual colonies and regions as well.\(^{28}\) In New England, for example, probate inventories recorded the ownership and value of any real estate, both land and buildings, belonging to the deceased. In England, however, land does not appear in probate inventories. Inventories undertaken in the Middle Colonies or the South rarely include real estate. Moreover, in New England, inventories helped to establish clear land titles. In this region a probate court record usually needed to be presented whenever land that had passed through inheritance was sold. As such, an administrator or executor of the estate required court approval to sell land if movable assets were not sizeable enough to settle any outstanding debts left by the deceased. In the South, land titles passed validly by inheritance, yet there were no entries made regarding these transactions within the probate inventories. Aside from the varying regional practices regarding what was to be included in the probate inventory the amount of detail provided in individual inventories varied greatly as well. In fact, the amount of detail included in probate inventories could vary greatly, even for those commissioned within the same city or region and during

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\(^{27}\) Carr and Walsh, “Wealth Consumption Patterns,” 81.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.
similar periods. Although every item deemed saleable was meant to be included among the items belonging to the deceased, objects and goods considered by assessors to hold no monetary value were sometimes omitted. Additionally, it is likely that appraisers occasionally overlooked possessions of value belonging to the estate. It is also probable that the heirs of the deceased sometimes took steps to hide certain valuable items from assessors.

It was found that in the probate inventories utilized in this study some assessors appraised each item individually and ascribed a clear monetary value for each item. Other commissions tended to attach a monetary value to several items organized in clusters, with their relationship to one another not clearly defined. Further, in the earlier probate inventories sampled for this study items were valued in British pounds while later inventories were valued in dollars. Taking this fact into account as well as the complex subject of inflation, without extensive investigation well beyond the scope of this thesis, contrasts and comparisons of items and overall estate values of individual inventories recorded in either British pounds or dollars could not be determined. In addition, an examination by the author of the data contained in probate records sampled for this study shows that, especially in the eighteenth century, spellings for common words were often times written phonetically.

Further inspection of the probate data included in this study presented a wide disparity in detail when it comes to the description of goods. For example, many common items were recorded as simply, a “table” or “chair” on some probate inventories while other inventories recorded items with more descriptive terms, such as “Green & Gold Chairs,” or “Mahogany Chairs with Hair Bottom.” In some probate inventories in this study, tables were listed by use

30 Carr and Walsh, “Wealth Consumption Patterns,” 82.
and either included or else disregarded other characteristics such as the wood from which it had been constructed. Tables commonly appeared listed only as: “Tea Table,” “Card Table,” or “Backgammon Table,” or most often, simply as “Table.” Without further supporting documentation—which likely does not exist—it is not possible to know details such as the color, material, or use of a particular item if the assessor failed to include it in his description. Consequently, when attempting to achieve a truly accurate total of, say, the prevalence of “mahogany chairs with hair bottoms” listed in a particular type of social space, the author could not undoubtedly know how many, if any, of the items listed simply as “chair” should be included in this category.

Probate inventories present many additional shortcomings for scholars such as omissions in the data and a multitude of biases. In the 1970s and 80s, recognizing their exceptional value, scholars such as Lorena Walsh, Lois Green Carr, Gloria L. Main, and Daniel Scott Smith, among others, began focusing their efforts on presenting solutions to these issues. Scholars have devised and tested an assortment of methods aimed at teasing out information and patterns buried within probate inventories. Their work would come to have an enduring effect on subsequent research regarding the use of probate records as a valid tool for historical study. Lorena Walsh and Lois Green Carr often combined their efforts in studies chiefly focused in the Chesapeake and New England over the course of their respective lifetimes. In “The Standard of Living in the Colonial Chesapeake”, published in William and Mary Quarterly in 1988, Carr and Walsh employed what they termed their “Amenities Index,” a points system developed by the women for analyzing a large quantity of probate inventories. The Amenities Index is designed to assign

32 A more in depth discussion regarding the limitations of probate inventories to scholars is discussed later in this chapter. Please See: Limitations of Using Probate Inventories.

item by item numerical values to particular objects. Ranked by gross personal wealth, the index considers the presence or absence of select consumer goods in individual inventories.\textsuperscript{34} Walsh and Carr used their Amenities Index to study household comforts in four Chesapeake counties before the American Revolution. The index is divided into two types of objects.\textsuperscript{35} The first category is named Amenities, which represent items of convenience, sanitation, refinement, elegance of table, variety in diet, education and leisure, and signs of luxury or display. Objects in the Amenities category were things like bed and table linen, table forks and knives, fine earthenware, secular books, watches or clocks, pictures, and silver plate.\textsuperscript{36} The second category devised by Carr and Walsh is called Modern. This category includes items that Westerners today now consider minimal for comfort and sanitation, such as a mattress, bedstead, and basic bed linen, a table, one or more chairs, pots for boiling, at least one other item for preparing food in an alternate way, coarse ceramics, and some means of interior lighting.\textsuperscript{37} Having factored in discrepancies in wealth into their index, Carr and Walsh employed their points-based method to analyze the increase in comfort, attractiveness, and elegance in living quarters and dress, as well as “more arrangements for individual use of space and utensils, increased emphasis on manners and social ceremony, and a desire to be fashionable—all summed up by the word gentility.” Based on their findings, these increases, asserted Carr and Walsh, reached beyond wealthy households in the Chesapeake. The “trappings of gentility,” they concluded, had also infiltrated the households of middling planters as they aspired to genteel status, while items such as tea had reached even the households of the poor.\textsuperscript{38} Carr and Walsh’s points-method further revealed

\textsuperscript{34} Main, “The Standard of Living in Southern New England.” 126.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 143.
\textsuperscript{37} Carr and Walsh, "The Standard of Living in the Colonial Chesapeake,” 141.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 137.
patterns in topics such as characteristics of social groups or different monetary classes and allowed observations to be made by the women indifferences between rural and urban lifestyles.39

USE IN DETERMINING PERIOD-APPROPRIATE ROOM NAMES AT GUNSTON HALL

Beyond popular naming conventions, domestic spaces can also be subject to the naming preferences of individual occupants of a house. Without irrefutable primary-source evidence, it is often difficult for scholars to say definitively what a specific room within a particular house would have been called by those who resided there. This can be especially tricky when the room in question was used as a social space, as these rooms appear to be especially dynamic by nature in both use and terminology. In the late 1990s, researchers at Gunston Hall, the eighteenth-century home of George Mason, undertook an extensive room use study in the hopes of “better interpreting the complex world of 18th-century Gunston Hall to the 20th-century visitor.” In their attempts to determine the most appropriate naming conventions for all the house’s rooms—which included a room that had clearly originally functioned as a public entertainment space—they looked to 325 probate inventories from the Chesapeake region of Maryland and Virginia for the period of 1740 to 1810. No probate inventories are known to have survived for Gunston Hall. These 325 probate inventories were then transcribed and entered into a searchable database. Gunston Hall ultimately published the full, searchable database as "Probing the Past: Virginia and Maryland Probate Inventories, 1740-1810," to be used by researchers online.40 Users of the database can make quick and flexible searches of individual items. For example, it

40  More information about the “Probing the Past” Database, as well as how consultation of its object categories aided in the determination of object categories for this thesis can be found in Chapter 5 of this study in the Subchapter titled Determining the Object Categories.
can be used to find and compare inventories containing such items as silver candlesticks or Windsor chairs. These searches can also be done in combination with categories such as class and gender, as well as urban or rural dwellings.  

Of the 122 room-by-room inventories in their database, researchers discovered that just 6.5% specifically used the term drawing room, while 37.7% used the term parlor, adding credence to a historical preference for use of the term parlor before 1810. Documentary evidence confirms that George Mason himself referred to another room in what researchers believe to have been the private, family side of the house as the "Little Parlour" (Figure 2.3). Gunston Hall researchers stressed that it is important to use period terms for the rooms. For example, modern designations for particular rooms in the house such as the “Palladian Room” and the “Chinese Room,” are purely twentieth-century art-historical constructs and would certainly not have been used contemporaneously to designate spaces in an eighteenth-century house. In reality, however, it sometimes proved difficult even for experienced researchers and scholars working on the project to agree definitively on what a particular room should be called. In the absence of primary-source evidence, researchers relied on deduction in coming to a consensus on what


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Gunston Hall should term this particular room. They concluded that, in order to contrast to what Mason called the "Little Parlour" on the private, family side of the house, interpreters at Gunston Hall should use the term "Great Parlor" to refer to the room in the house which had clearly functioned as a grand public entertainment space, pending additional documentary evidence surfaces in the future.42

In conclusion, the information contained in probate records present researchers with a number of challenges. However, the benefits garnered from the information they contain has proven to be worth researchers’ efforts to develop new methods to better use and understand them. Surely the assessors who originally recorded these inventories could not have imagined that the results of a favor done for a family member or friend would, many years later, excite scholars with the information they contain. The assessors likely viewed the undertaking as a fairly mundane task. They possibly regarded the only real value of their commission as it had been intended, to settle commonplace matters of inheritance and debt. For scholars, the information probate documents contain about what people owned in the past, what they called their rooms, as well as monetary values ascribed to these objects, has shed light on several subjects, such as estimations of per capita wealth, eating and drinking practices, social class, customs, and personal consumer behavior, is both valuable and captivating. Experimenting with new approaches to uncovering information in a wide sample set of inventories has also allowed historians to chart over time and place a bevy of useful conclusions to the study of the way people and communities functioned in the past. These methods continue to evolve.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PARLOR AND DRAWING ROOM: ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF TERMS

Both the drawing room and parlor are related to the broader concept of social space. The terms frequently end up overlapping and colliding with one another causing ambiguity as to their actual distinctions. This chapter offers comprehensive definitions of the terms drawing room and parlor. Further, it traces these terms to their origins in medieval Europe while interlacing explanations of their respective uses and evolutionary trajectories. Bernard Herman has also helped to clarify the differences between these rooms. He asserts that:

Drawing rooms might best be understood as an affectation of elite sociability (or aspirations in that general direction). When you look at the items, they consist generally of four categories of social exchange: cards, tea, music, and conversation (prints reinforce this last aspect). There appear to be no objects that are not associated with the comportment of polite behaviors. This is a room to which folks withdrew for precisely that kind of intimate (and highly competitive) face-to-face interaction. Note as well that the room lends itself to gendered exchanges: tea (still largely the province of women in the early 1800s but rapidly moving toward the heterosocial) and cards (the reverse). Parlors tend to be a bit more general in their usage. Yes, they admit all the drawing room functions above, but they can also be a dining space.\textsuperscript{43}

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE TERM PARLOR

Dr. Carl Lounsbury defines the parlor as:

A multipurpose entertaining and family sitting room located on the principal floor of most dwellings. By the end of the colonial period, many grander houses had a number of parlors, which were often well appointed with wallhangings, carpeting, and elegant chimney pieces and reserved for formal entertainment.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{43} Bernard Herman, email to author, February 22, 2016.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 260.
Although the terms drawing room and parlor can both be traced back many centuries, parlor is the older term.\textsuperscript{45} The word parlor comes from the Anglo-Norman French parlur "place for speaking", which in turn stems from the Latin \textit{parlare}, meaning "speak," and traces its origins to around 1200. In its earliest incarnation, the term is sometimes understood as a window through which confessions were made, or else as a room or apartment in a monastery or convent set aside for conversation with outside persons.\textsuperscript{46} In his book \textit{English Houses 1300-1800: Vernacular Architecture, Social Life}, Professor of Archaeology at Northwestern University, Dr. Matthew Johnson, who has written extensively on the subjects of traditional houses, ‘polite’ architecture, and landscape, draws attention to a fourteenth-century literary reference that illustrates the increasing desire for privacy. This account, written in 1365, is found in William Langland’s Middle English allegorical narrative poem Piers Plowman, and tells of a Lord who “forsook the dais, but rather sat by him-selv in a privye parlour.”\textsuperscript{47} The dais was an early elevated space located at one end of the Great Hall in which the lord and his family would take their meals. This raised platform served as a symbolic divide between the lord and his household although it lacked any real privacy. Langland’s account of the privy parlour (private parlor) clearly illustrates its function as a room enjoyed by the lord in preference to the Great Hall. This literary reference further predicts the effect that the parlor would have on domestic interior space in that its introduction reduced the primacy of the great hall, irrevocably and permanently altering the communal medieval way of life. Langland’s is the first literary reference pointing to the growing

\textsuperscript{45} Bryson, \textit{A Dictionary of Troublesome Words}, 191.


desire for less formality and, more importantly, greater privacy on the part of the lord and his family.\textsuperscript{48}

The thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries in England ushered in an era in which fortification need not be considered as a primary factor in design of aristocratic structures. Substantial buildings of this period incorporated ground floor halls and featured a two-storied cross wing commonly in place at one end of the hall. Here, the upper room functioned as the lord and lady’s chamber, known as a solar, while the chamber located on the ground floor came to be known as the parlour or bower.\textsuperscript{49} Once established as a functional space, the parlor’s value as an alternate, informal eating and reception room for the lord and his family continued to increase. By the late sixteenth century, the domestic parlor had become a key ground floor room in houses of any consequence.\textsuperscript{50} In the following century, different types of parlors became increasingly common, especially in the larger country houses and urban terrace houses where the term of parlor took on various usages within the interior and was often used as a suffix for other types of rooms, such as dining parlour or reception parlour. Until the mid-eighteenth century in England, the houses of the elite commonly contained both a relatively relaxed rear or common parlour, as well as a more formal room known as the great parlour. In the great parlour, alternately known as the saloon or great dining room, the family would provide various types of formal entertainment while receiving guests, such as dancing, tea drinking, and card playing. The great parlour was intended to be a flexible space, and activities carried out in this room often included dining, which would take place early in the evening before the aforementioned

\textsuperscript{50} Lipsedge, \textit{Domestic Space}, 33.
entertainments began. Smooth transition from dining space to entertainment space would have been easily facilitated by the use of gate leg tables which could be either folded away or moved to the sides of the room as necessity required. In contrast, the common, or back parlour was utilized as a rather ordinary space where the family and their close friends would take their modest meals and could sit and converse in relative comfort. This room would have been located away from the more formal rooms of the house and would have been decorated in a much less impressive manner in comparison with the great parlour. For families in the eighteenth century, one room in the house would often provide for both family-centered private use as well as entertainment space. The acquisition of items associated with gentility, including tea ware and silver spoons, helped people to symbolically align themselves with the refined culture of the gentry. The acquisition of these types of objects signaled the desire by those relegated to the lower classes of society to participate in the genteel culture of the elite.

By the 1740s in Virginia, people were experimenting with new interior arrangements for their houses. Virginians were looking to emphasize coherence and uniformity of their public spaces. To demonstrate the separation of public and private domains, Mark R. Wenger points to the floor plan for Sabine Hall. The plan shows the public spaces of the dining room and parlor on one side of the passage and the private chambers on the other. Dell Upton asserts that in the early eighteenth century the dining room truly made its appearance in Virginia. However, this new room did not at first function as a primary dining space. Instead, the hall continued to serve as the house’s chief dining space. The dining room was a small front room that was not as

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51 Lipsedge, Domestic Space, 30.
elaborate as the hall. Initially, the dining room was used for informal activities away from the hall which still functioned as the center of routine household activity. In turn, the hall became the primary entertainment room.\textsuperscript{54} The hall, which was by the 1740s was now called parlor, was an extremely formal setting disconnected from daily household activity.\textsuperscript{55}

In the nineteenth century in the United States, the spread of “parlor culture” connoted a democratic shift in the structure of society. The incorporation of parlors into the houses of the average citizen helped signify this movement (Figure: 3.1). Although comparatively rudimentary in their furnishings, the parlor set aside for the entertainment of company became significantly more commonplace than in lower class homes of the previous century. Being embraced were the concepts and aspirations of gentility, even by those classes who had been previously relegated to mere observes of its values.\textsuperscript{56} Richard Bushman observed that these classes:

Invariably fell short of the mark, assimilating genteel values only sporadically, sometimes resisting the awkward constrictions, and often looking ridiculous to the more practiced elites above them. But at those times when the middling people strove to be refined, however awkward and reluctant the effort, they made the culture of the court, the aristocracy, and the colonial gentry their own. In making parlors in their houses, the people implicitly claimed the right to live like rulers.\textsuperscript{57}

By the last decades of the nineteenth century the term living room, which originated around 1870, quickly began to replace the usage of the term parlor in the United States.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{55} Wenger, “The Dining Room in Early Virginia,” 155.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Bushman, \textit{The Refinement of America}, 273.
Both parlor and drawing room are terms which connote social space. However, the term parlor was in use in the Southern United States well before use of the term drawing room.59 The term drawing room Carl Lounsbury notes did not come into use in the American South until the third quarter of the eighteenth century.60 When probate assessors dubbed a social space drawing room in favor of the term parlor they were indicating a room firmly dedicated to the concept of sociable gentility.

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE TERM DRAWING ROOM

In contrast to his description of the parlor as a multipurpose entertaining space, Lounsbury has defined the drawing room as:

A large, formal entertaining space: a reception room replicating English fashion, the term comes into use in the South in the third quarter of the 18th century to describe a room in which polite company was entertained. In terms of function, drawing room is nearly synonymous with saloon. However, rooms described as saloons generally were found in the center of a dwelling behind the hall or entry, whereas drawing rooms could be situated in a number of prominent locations in a dwelling. Many were located next to dining rooms and served as places to retire after dinner.61

The term drawing room stems from the terms withdraughte or draughte. These terms first emerged in the fifteenth century to denote any smaller room letting off a larger one.62 Mark Girouard, author of Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History, writes of one John Paston, whose draughte chamber, in 1453, contained only his writing board, coffers, and bed. By 1496, the grand country house known as Charlecote Park near Warwickshire is recorded as having a withdrawing chamber located between the great chamber and the owner’s chamber. However, this so-called withdrawing chamber appears to have functioned mostly as an antechamber to the larger room, as it contained only an old bed, a mattress, and two blankets, and would likely have been used by the servant of those occupying the adjoining chamber. In the sixteenth century, however, the withdrawing chamber began to appropriate many of the functions previously belonging to the chamber. Although the withdrawing chamber still functioned as a sleeping quarters for servants into the sixteenth century, and even later in many royal palaces, its usage gradually became increasingly devoted to

more social, yet private, endeavors. In effect by this time, the withdrawing chamber also functioned as a private sitting room for the occupant of the chamber, as well as a space for eating and receiving guests.  

In England the term withdrawing chamber eventually progressed to being called the withdrawing room. It also developed to become a gendered space in which ladies would physically withdraw themselves from the men after dinner. While awaiting the return of the gentlemen the mistress would serve tea to the other ladies in the drawing room. By the second half of the eighteenth century in many English houses as well as in the colonies, the term drawing room was shortened from withdrawing room to simply drawing room. In wealthy homes in the eighteenth-century rooms had been designated as either masculine or feminine. However, the differences in their respective furnishings as helping delineate rooms in terms of gender became more pronounced and the habit spread to the middle class in the nineteenth century. An illustration of this notion of the drawing room having eventually evolved to be considered a “feminine” space, emerges in advice literature. These materials offered homemakers instructions for creating the ideal home in the nineteenth century. These gender designations related to room use were often partially expressed through furnishings. The dining room was by now the “masculine” room, with advice literature dictating it be furnished with heavy, somber furniture, while the drawing room having become a uniquely “feminine” space, was instructed to be “light and airy.” The atmosphere of the drawing room was formal.

Beyond its use as an entertainment space, the drawing room was used also for occasions relating

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See Also: Lipsedge, *Domestic Space in Eighteenth-Century British Novels*, 32.
65 Lipsedge, *Domestic Space*, 74.
to rites of passage, such as weddings, christenings, and funerals. Elisabeth Garrett adds that it was common practice that the drawing room be interchangeably referred to by various appellations, such as parlor or front room, or by compass-point designation such as “southwest room” in reference to the room’s position within the floor plan. In genteel spheres, use of the term drawing room was rapidly replaced by sitting room by the middle of the nineteenth century, a word that first appeared in English in 1806 and was later challenged by lounge in England.

MINI CASE-STUDY: CHANGING TERMINOLOGY, CHARLESTON’S NATHANIEL RUSSELL HOUSE

As has been demonstrated, the popularity of using specific terminology to refer to a house’s primary entertainment spaces has not only evolved over time but is also susceptible to individual preferences. Additionally, as has also been noted in chapter two of this thesis, it is important that the reader remembers that when a probate inventory was recorded it was the assessor who chose which terms to use when recording a name each room. Whether or not that same term would have been used by the deceased or other residents of the house can not be known for certain. Room terminology is a fickle thing, and it seems that social space terminology is particularly susceptible not only to changes in fashion but varying preferences of individual residents.

In 1996, Orlando Ridout and Willie Graham undertook an extensive historic structure analysis for the Nathanial Russell House in Charleston South Carolina. The house dates to 1808 and is operated as a historic house museum by Historic Charleston Foundation. As illustrated by resident’s changing use of room terminology at different periods, this report clearly demonstrates

66 "Room Use Study: Room Use at Gunston Hall-Parlor and Dining Room,"
68 Bryson, A Short History of Private Life,191.
how social space naming conventions were susceptible to change. Modern floor plans rendered for this study by Glen Keyes Architects visually depict the change and evolution of room names and use uncovered by Ridout and Graham. In contrast to Gunston Hall, room terminology for the entertainment spaces in the Russell House were determined through direct documentary evidence. Beginning in 1832 and extending into the early-twentieth century, analyses shows clearly that the same room might be called by an entirely different name depending on both the period and user. On these interpretive plans, scholars mapped terminology to space.69

The years to which specific evidence for these determinations appears parenthetically under the room names on the plans. The large rectangular room located at the front of the house on the second floor was called the “Withdrawing Room” in 1832 by a member of the Russell family but alternately called the “Drawing Room” and “East Drawing Room” by occupants in 1864 and 1870 respectively. Interestingly, the circular-shaped small room to the south (Figure 3.3) was referred to in 1832 as the “Drawing Room.” However, in 1870 it is referred to as both the “Oval Drawing Room,” or the “Ballroom.” In 1863 additional primary source evidence points to it having been called the “Grand Parlour.” In 1870 and again in 1902 it is called the “Ballroom.” Further, what was referred to as the “West Bedroom,” or “Mama’s Room” in the 1860s became the “Small Parlour” by 1870.70


70 *Nathaniel Russell House, Report*, vol. 4, 46.
In a letter dated February 16, 1828, Alicia Hopton-Middleton wrote to Nathaniel Russell Middleton regarding the family’s being caught unprepared for visitors. She wrote:

I came home early in the evening, in walks Mrs. G [Guerard] to the consternation of the family who were quietly sitting round the blue room fire instead of being in the drawing room prepared for company.71

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The room Hopton-Middleton referred to as “the Blue Room,” (Figure 3.2) was clearly used as a family parlor and was not an appropriate room for public reception. This is supported by three key factors. First, the room is positioned beyond the stair. Second, the room’s placement within the floor plan is in a vertical stack with two other private spaces above. Finally—but possibly most importantly—the room has a general lack of additional ornamentation; a feature it shares with other private spaces within the house. Conversely, the upstairs drawing room to which Hopton-Middleton referred was, according to Graham and Ridout, “the most elaborate room in the house.” 72 Combined, this evidence clearly points to not only the dynamic nature of room designations for the same room over time but also to the idiosyncratic appellations various

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residents used for referring to a particular room. The same room which Hopton-Middleton designated the “Blue Room” in 1828 was subsequently referred to as the “Breakfast Room” by later residents in 1864.\textsuperscript{73}

Both the drawing room and parlor are rooms dedicated to the concepts of entertainment and sociability. However, they are distinctive rooms. The drawing room, an intimate and somewhat gendered space is highly associated with elite sociability and genteel aspirations. In contrast, the parlor can be thought of as more of a general entertainment room. Both rooms have clear and separate origins, evolutions, and histories dating back many hundreds of years prior to their arrival in the American colonies. Their respective terminology likewise boasts a rich and complex history making its way through the great halls, royal palaces, and country houses of England. Not only do these terms possess unique origins, but how and when they were used over time reveals much about changing attitudes in how and where guests were received and entertained. As demonstrated by information uncovered in the historic structure analysis for the Nathaniel Russell House undertaken by Orlando Ridout and Willie Graham, neither social space nor the terminology used in referring to it is static. Room naming conventions are often dependent on the popularity of specific terminology at a given point in time. They are sometimes determined simply by individual preferences. Historians, however, continue to strive to ascertain the most appropriate naming conventions for specific rooms.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
This chapter provides an introduction to the vernacular Charleston house-types that contained the entertainment spaces examined in this study. The physical locations of the drawing room and parlor within Charleston houses is also discussed. Lastly, this chapter introduces the types of furniture found in Charleston in the eighteen and nineteenth-centuries. This includes material related to some of the earliest-known Charleston-made furniture, as well as an overview of some of the city’s more well-known joiners and cabinetmakers. Beyond
furniture made locally, this chapter summarizes the evolution of popular furniture styles in the city with an emphasis on the types of furniture that would have likely populated the parlor and drawing room during the period examined in this study.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLY CHARLESTON AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The first permanent English settlement in the Province of Carolina, Charles Towne was named for Charles II, and was first located along the west bank of the Ashley River in 1670. Seven years before, in appreciation for their loyalty in having helped him to recapture the English throne, Charles II bestowed the title to the colony of Carolina to eight of his friends and supporters, naming them Lords Proprietors and absolute rulers of Carolina. The most important of these Lords Proprietors to the history of Charleston was Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury. With the assistance of his secretary, the renowned philosopher John Locke, Shaftesbury penned the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina. This established a landed aristocracy and decreed a significant degree of religious tolerance. This made the colony an attractive prospect for those fleeing religious persecution in Europe. In 1680, the town moved to its current location a spot that had previously been called Oyster Point by colonists. The city’s new (and permanent) location was three miles southeast of the original settlement on the narrow peninsula formed by the Ashley and Copper Rivers. By the end of the next decade, the town had more than a hundred houses which were largely constructed of wood, though some were constructed of brick, a building material encouraged by the Lords Proprietors. The newly-

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formed town was laid out using a regular British grid plan known as the “Grand Modell.” By 1690, however, large walls constructed of brick and earth surrounded the city. This fortification, with its corner bastions, drawbridge, moat, and enclosing walls, greatly influenced the early architectural development of the city’s urban core. The result was an interruption to the Lords Proprietor’s original Grand Modell plan for the city’s urban core in favor of a Baroque grid plan with a central square. In *The Buildings of Charleston*, Jonathan Poston uses a 1739 engraving by Bishop Roberts to discuss the early architectural types in the city. The engraving depicts the English-influence on the city’s early architecture, showing buildings fashioned in the late-seventeenth-century post-medieval and Jacobean styles. Many of these early buildings burned in the Great fire of 1740 but architectural design continued to evolve.76

Early in its history, Charleston was a flourishing, notably cosmopolitan city, boasting a rapidly-growing ethnically diverse population of English, French, and Barbadian settlers. Men who had found considerable wealth in Barbados were seeking new lands to develop, and many of them came to Charleston. After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France in 1685, a great number of French Huguenots fled to Charleston as well. Within the next few years, Charleston saw a number of Irish, Jews, Germans, and Scots as well as colonists from other places arrive.77 This remarkable ethnic diversity of the colony had a exceptionally strong impact on the material culture of the Lowcountry.78 While English culture predominated, by the early eighteenth century the second most powerful ethnic group in the region were the undoubtedly the French.

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76 Ibid.
The French Huguenot population in the region is said to have had a strong effect on Charleston furniture styles.79

Some of Charleston’s most imposing colonial buildings were constructed in the mid-eighteenth-century. By this period Charleston had become the fourth largest and by all measures, the wealthiest city in British North America.80 The city’s thriving economic status and wealth was firmly dependent on the forced labor of imported African slaves. African slave labor produced the valuable commodities of rice, indigo, and cotton sold by Lowcountry merchant-planter on the robust world market. These conditions worked to cement the plantation system in the Lowcountry as well as the wealth and establishment of an American landed gentry that came with it. This elite Lowcountry merchant-planter class demonstrated and reinforced their status and authority by constructing the city’s infrastructure in the form of wharves and public buildings as well as the grand plantations, urban residences, and a cache of cultural institutions in and around the city of Charleston built for their personal pleasures.81 According to Dr. Maurie McInnis, a leading scholar of the cultural history of America in the colonial and antebellum South, merchant-planter elite demonstrated their status through the adoption of British manners, education, and expensive commercial goods. Many Charlestonians of this privileged class sent their children to England for their formal schooling and perhaps more importantly, their cultural schooling.82 Undoubtedly, the most powerful and conspicuous of these prominent visual statements which signaled the cultural authority of the merchant-planter elite were the houses

they built. The houses they constructed had one foot firmly fixed in the vernacular building traditions of the Lowcountry while the other touched the latest London fashions.  

After the Revolutionary War, “mechanics” skilled in construction trades began to repopulate the city, building in the Adamesque or Neoclassical style which they adapted to local tastes and climate. One Charleston “architect” of this period was Gabriel Manigault, known as “the gentleman architect.” Manigault designed several of the city’s most celebrated buildings and houses such as the South Carolina Society Hall (c.1799), the Joseph Manigault House (1803), and possibly the William Blacklock House (c.1802). A handful of English Regency style buildings in the city are attributed to the work of William Jay. Most notable of these is the Patrick Duncan House (1819), now incorporated into the campus of Ashley Hall.

Another architect, Robert Mills, “Charleston’s most famous native architect,” is celebrated for his building designs in the Classical Revival style. Mills, is often referred to as “the first native-born professionally trained architect in America.” His most famous project is the Washington Monument in Washington D.C. Born in 1781, Mills grew up in Charleston and took courses at what is now the College of Charleston. In the early nineteenth century, Mills went to work with Henry Latrobe, working with him on the U.S. Capitol Building. Mills further designed buildings in Philadelphia, Richmond, and Baltimore. In 1821, Mills returned to South Carolina as Acting Commissioner of Public Buildings. The following year, Mills devised his plans for Charleston’s County Records Building, known as “the Fireproof Building, constructed in the Greek Revival Style.”

85 The probate inventory of the William Blacklock House is included in this study.
86 Poston, The Buildings of Charleston, 27.
In her celebrated book, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston*, which she characterizes as “a cultural study of Charleston during the antebellum period,” Maurie McInnis has made a fascinating and telling argument. McInnis states that the Classical Revival style ubiquitous in Europe and America in the eighteenth century, a style with an “aesthetic vitality” closely influenced by developments in England, had a distinctive and unusual meaning when applied to the Charleston aesthetic. Americans in the northern states considered their modern democracy to hold a special relationship to the ancient world. Charlestonians’ “enthusiasm for the classical style, however, held a distinctive symbolic meaning that, in fact, was anything but democratic.” The Charleston elite, McInnis contends, viewed themselves as the natural successors of the ancient world. Expanding on this idea, McInnis has stated that:

Charlesonians stressed the parallels that that existed between the ancient and modern European societies and their own society. They noted that the Roman republic and English squirearchy were based on an agrarian economy, as was Charleston’s merchant-planter elite. Additionally, Charlestonians were governed by the public service of a citizen gentry within a democratic republican framework. They emphasized that ancient cultures were built on the foundation of a hierarchical class system supported by human bondage. In Rome and Charleston, this servitude became institutionalized in the form of chattel slavery. 

Elite Charlestonians’ belief in their own society’s natural affinity with the ancient world explains, McInnis argues, one of the key aspects of Charleston’s antebellum era architectural hallmarks, the steadfast use of a classical architectural vocabulary. Unlike other American cities Charlestonian boasted fewer buildings that followed the many other revival styles popular in the period. Charlestonians greatly preferred to build in their own unique interpretations of the

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90 Ibid, 36.
classical style. The predominant use of classical architectural language favored by the 
Charleston elite conveyed to locals and outsiders alike their own powerful mythology of who 
belonged and who did not.

In the decades leading up to the Civil War, Charleston began a process of economic 
deterioration. As slavery and cotton moved away from coastal regions Charleston became a 
“leisure capital” for its elite citizens. Charlestonians, doggedly committed to their self-crafted 
attitudes of the genteel mythology of their society, responded to this burgeoning competition by 
assuming a stubbornly conservative stance to industrialization. In 1833, for example, city 
officials refused proposed railroad tracks into the city that would have connected Charleston’s 
faltering wharves with Savannah River trade routes. Officials insisted the construction of these 
tracks end once they reached Charleston’s city limits. This resulted in the ineffectual and 
inefficient use of wagons to haul incoming cargo from the city’s docks to meet the awaiting rail 
lines. Further, political divisions amongst Charleston’s white population, rooted in debates over 
issues of nullification, constitutionalism, and state’s rights, added to the city’s decline. By April 
1861 when the first shots of the Civil War were fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, 
Charleston’s “golden age” had drawn to a close.91 The blockade and bombardment of 
Charleston during the War, fires in 1861 and 1865, and a devastating earthquake in 1866 all 
colluded in taking a toll on the city’s architectural fabric. However, these disasters did not 
succeed in spoiling Charleston’s rich architectural fabric. New buildings in the Victorian styles 
were erected in the City during this period, many paying homage to Charleston’s traditional 
architectural traditions.92

91 Yuhl, A Golden Haze of Memory, 3. 
CHARLESTON VERNACULAR HOUSE-TYPES

Like other provincial ports and market towns of the period, Charles Town boasted an assortment of architectural house-types. However, as Carl Lounsbury had noted, in colonial Charleston, distinctive architectural and building material features such as “piazzas, wooden shingles, and beaded weatherboards set the city apart from Georgian London. Social conditions, levels of wealth, access to materials, technological capabilities, craft skills, climate, and topography shaped its response to building forms.” Of the recognizable types of vernacular architecture found in the South Carolina Lowcountry, none is more closely identified with the city of Charleston that the single house. The Charleston single house first appeared (sans piazza) in the early part of the eighteenth century and gradually became the predominant plan for the houses of antebellum Charleston. Other prominent yet less common house types seen in Charleston are the so-called double-house and the side-hall-single house, and the suburban villa. Together, these represent the Charleston vernacular house-types that would have contained the entertainment spaces of the Charleston parlor and drawing room examined in this study.

The Charleston single house (Figure 4.2) is not simply a dwelling. Rather it is just one component of a much larger complex of amenities and outbuildings contained within a deep narrow city lot. The single house was designed to accommodate the Charleston’s deep narrow city lots, as well as the city’s semitropical climate. Although they vary in appearance, the single house is characterized as a single-pile plan with one or more stories of the same plan and features

95 McInnis, The Politics of Taste, 38.
a center stair hall opening to a room on either side. The first floor main, or formal, entrance opens directly into the hall. There is often a preceding public entrance (piazza screen) accessed directly from the street. The back wall opposite the formal entry contains the house’s chimneys, one for each main room.96 The single house plan is one room wide with its gable end facing the street. This vernacular Charleston house-type is further distinguished by a long, multi-story porch which runs the length of the house and usually faces south, called a piazza. This feature capitalizes on the breezes that flow across the Charleston Peninsula between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. The single house, as Jonathan Poston has noted, grew tall as a means of raising the main entertainment room to capitalize on the prevailing breeze that passed through the side piazza.97 As Bernard Herman has noted, it can be best understood “not as a building type, but as an architectural strategy focused on the maintenance of complex social relationships.”98 Herman notes further that:

The house was only one element in a complicated social landscape that emphasized division, regulation, and control. Social distinctions among one's peers were communicated through the elaborate processional approach to the public rooms of the house that usually involved ascending stairs, passing through a piazza door, then through the house door, up another flight of stairs, and finally into the drawing room. The elite domestic space became more and more a retreat from the public space. High above the street, behind an elaborate series of barriers, the upper-class household fabricated an oasis of stability, gentility, and refinement in a sea of increasing chaos.99

98 Herman “The Embedded Landscape,” 42.
Figure 4.2: A Charleston Single House (Colonel Isaac Motte House, 30 Meeting Street). Photo by the author.

Although the name suggests two single houses combined, the double house (Figure 4.4) is instead a type of formal townhouse. The double house is generally found on a larger lot than the long narrow lots common to the single house and its accompanying outbuildings. Elaborate double houses may also have outbuildings, or dependencies, which are located in a walled courtyard accessible through a wrought iron gate. The double house is generally twice as wide as the single house and usually features a distinct Palladian influence. This is seen in the common addition of a two-tiered, pedimented portico to this house type. The early Charleston double house is nearly square, features a centered front entry door which opens directly into the hall. In fact, these early double houses closely resemble an urban version of the Huguenot plan houses. Off of the entry hall is a dining room and two or three smaller rooms to the back of the house, used as either bedchambers or as offices. The second floor of the early double house also contained bedchambers to the rear. The front room on this floor, however, usually featured a large drawing room for entertaining guests.\footnote{Foster, \textit{American Houses}, 158.}

Double houses built later, either just before or just after the Revolution, feature Adamesque or Federal architectural elements such as

\begin{center}
\textbf{Figure 4.4: A Charleston Double House (William Gibbes House, 64 South Battery), Frances Benjamin Johnson, Photographer, 1937, “64 South Battery, Gibbes, William House, Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina,” Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-J7-SC-1265 [P&P].}
\end{center}
dentiled cornices, quoins, shutters, and Palladian windows. The square plan of the double houses of this period features an eighteenth-century Georgian layout. This is evident in the wide center hall which runs straight through the house with two rooms on either side. These rooms were typically a reception room, dining room, and offices.\textsuperscript{101}

Suburban Villas (Figure 4.5), constructed during the antebellum period, generally combine aspects of both the urban single or double houses found in the city of Charleston with fundamental aspects of vernacular Lowcountry plantations. Resting atop a raised basement, the floor plan of the suburban villa typically mimics that of the single or double house, however, this house-type’s relationship to the street is distinct. Unlike the single house in which the piazza screen creates a barrier between house and street, the suburban villa—although often set back from the street—runs parallel to it. This configuration exposes the piazzas which run across the front of the house to the street. As does the single house, the suburban villa can vary greatly in its architectural details. The Charleston suburban villa was built using either brick or frame construction, features two or four rooms per floor, and either a one or two-story

\textsuperscript{101} Foster, \textit{American Houses}, 158.
underscoring Charlestonian’s distinctive ties with British culture, in Charleston, the suburban villa was also partially a response to the villa concept fashionable in Regency London. Traveling builders and patrons would have been keenly aware of this concept through their travels and architectural books.  

Charleston’s various housing-types were determined not only by floor plan but by their unique relationships between the house, its outbuildings, the street, and the garden. Even during the antebellum period, noted McInnis, “when various new floor plans and styles were introduced in northern cities, these traditional arrangements dominated Charleston.” Charlestonians rarely built new single houses in the antebellum period. Instead, existing single houses were often modified. Elite Charlestonians lucky enough to claim a long-established lineage to old Lowcountry families showed off their prized heritage and belonging with the largest most ostentatious of artifacts, their houses. While in other cities new wealth could buy the latest in grand architectural style and furnishings as well as entrance into elite social circles, in Charleston an envied lineage and a reverence for vernacular architectural

\[\text{Figure 4.6: A Charleston Side-Hall Single House (Robert William Roper House, 9 East Battery) Photo by the author.}\]

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102 McInnis, The Politics of Taste, 43.
103 Ibid., 47.
104 Ibid., 38.
heritage were the most powerful currency.\textsuperscript{105}

The side-hall single house (Figure 4.6), a popular Charleston building style between 1825 and 1850 embodies the primary example of this claim. This building-type was a favored choice of Charleston’s elite in this period. The vernacular building form is a common site along Charleston’s East Battery Street (Figure 4.1) which faces the Cooper River. Completed in the 1820s, Charleston’s Battery promenade was a popular site for wealthy residents to stroll along the sea wall. The side-hall single house features the common exterior spatial relationships between the residence, street, and outbuildings as the single house. Externally, the side-hall single differs from the single house in that it lacks a piazza screen and can be accessed directly from the street.\textsuperscript{106} The most notable external distinction, however, is the placement of the stair hall not at the center, but to the (usually) north side of the house opposite wide piazzas to the south. On the interior, this created the opportunity for double drawing rooms to be located off the main stair hall. These entertainment spaces are separated by pocket doors and allow access to the piazza.\textsuperscript{107}

\textbf{LOCATING THE DRAWING ROOM AND PARLOR WITHIN THE CHARLESTON HOUSE}

In the late-eighteenth-century Charleston single house, explains Dr. Herman, the most formal room was known as either the best room or the drawing room, although this type of room was often alternately referred to as a parlor. In Charleston, he continues, the drawing room would have been located on either the first or second floor, but always in the front or "street" side.

\textsuperscript{105} Mcinnis, ““An Idea of Grandeur,”” 33.
\textsuperscript{106} McInnis, \textit{The Politics of Taste}, 38.
of the house.\textsuperscript{108} This “elaborately ornamented public portion of the house,” consisted of the front entry and passage, the dining room, and the drawing room.\textsuperscript{109} Dr. Herman clarifies that this particular choice of location is purposeful and relates directly to the overall functions of the house. Many of the houses along Church Street were built to suit Charleston’s early merchant-planter. In these houses, the drawing room was generally located on the second floor over a ground floor office or shop (Figure 4.7). According to Herman, “Sociability literally and symbolically occupied a space above commercial endeavor.”\textsuperscript{110} The primary entertainment space in houses located along Church Street, noted Herman, “reflected the greatest decorative investment in an interior hierarchy of finishes that visually conveyed the relative importance of individual rooms.” In the single house, the placement of the best room at the front of the house created a marked contrast between these most exclusive, formal rooms in the house with the common, everyday realm of the street outside. Access into the parlor or drawing room by the

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{Figure 4.7: A Second Floor Drawing or Best Room in an Early Merchant-Planter House on Church Street. Photo by Carter Hudgins.}
\end{flushright}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{108} Herman “The Embedded Landscape,” 45.
\item \textsuperscript{109} McInnis, The Politics of Taste, 177.
\item \textsuperscript{110} Herman “The Embedded Landscape,” 46.
\end{itemize}
owner of the house “invariably mediated that juxtaposition.” Within the house, the best room
defined one extreme of spatial hierarchy glossed with ornament and articulated only through the
visual relationship between rooms. No visitor could easily mistake the best room for a front
office, chamber, or everyday back dining room. The quality of detailing in the best rooms might
differ from house to house, but within each house, the hierarchy of detail clearly communicated a
decorative and social progression.111

The tradition of locating the best room on the second floor directly over the first-floor
commercial space at the front of the house was a practice Charleston shared with other urban
centers located along the North Atlantic rim. This same practice is also seen in townhouses in
cities like Philadelphia, Baltimore, Alexandria, London, Bristol. Less often, however, in
Charleston the drawing room was sometimes located on the ground floor, though still at the front
of the house. In the eighteenth-century single house, drawing rooms located on the ground floor
were most often found away from the commercial center of the city in the more residential areas,
such as Orange and Legare Streets. In the Charleston houses that lacked the incorporation of a
commercial function, the drawing room could be brought down into a more intimate relationship
with the street.112

CHARLESTON FURNITURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

This section specifically addresses the furniture and types of furniture that would have
been found in Charleston entertainment rooms in the period examined in this thesis (1728-1866).
Beyond the consultation of their expertise in constructing a narrative timeline for the evolution of
furniture styles in the city, several observations made by scholars cited in this section are

111 Bernard Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830* (Chapel
112 Herman “The Embedded Landscape,” 46.
especially beneficial in interpreting some of the findings uncovered in this study. For example, their insights greatly help to shed light on regional tendencies and idiosyncratic terminology unique to Charleston furniture and probate inventories.

Charleston probate inventories recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth century undoubtedly listed many objects and furnishings constructed in the previous century. Consequently, this section begins with a discussion regarding some of the earliest-attributed examples of Charleston-made furniture. Provided also is a discussion of the styles and origins of these pieces as well as their connections to furniture produced in other settlements of the coastal South. The remainder of this subchapter is dedicated to providing a narrative of the evolution of furniture styles popular in the city of Charleston during the period relevant to this study.

Early Charleston Cabinetmakers and Joiners

Scholars have uncovered evidence of approximately sixty joiners practicing in Charleston and its surrounds between 1680 and 1730. Twenty-eight percent of these early joiners had French surnames, and all were known to have been working in the area before 1716. However, as woodworking was done mostly by general and not specialized practitioners during this period, it is impossible to know how many of these sixty tradesmen were employed beyond positions as house joiners. Specialized objects associated with furniture making found in probate inventories recorded prior to 1730 do indicate, however, that a large percentage of these early joiners likely made least some furniture. Despite the presence of several Huguenot joiners known to have been

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113 Rauschenberg and Bivins, The Furniture of Charleston, 23.
114 “A craftsman whose occupation it is to construct things by joining pieces of wood; a worker in wood who does lighter and more ornamental work than that of a carpenter, as the construction of the furniture and fittings of a house, ship, etc.” Source: Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “joiner,” accessed October 2, 2016, http://www.oed.com.libproxy.clemson.edu/view/Entry/101536?rskey=7JfJYc&result=1#eid
practicing in Charleston from the end of the seventeenth century on, the majority of know joiners were English. Joiners working outside the city in the surrounding environs were more likely to have worked as house joiners. Those joiners working in the city, however, especially those who owned shops, were often employed in more discerning work such as making window sashes, doors, wainscot, and movable household goods.  

The *South Carolina Gazette* was first published in 1732. The establishment of this newspaper meant that area tradesmen, including cabinetmakers, could more-readily advertise their services to the public. Charleston was by this time a thriving city, able to beckon and support skilled tradesmen. These men, however, did not view themselves as generalized joiners. Instead they saw themselves as specialized cabinetmakers. Charleston’s prosperous elite were eager to fill their fashionable homes with not only high-end imports but with the work of locally-commissioned cabinetmakers as well. From about 1730 to 1760 Charleston’s furniture-making trade was near completely dominated by skilled British artisans. Surviving examples of the earliest known Charleston -made furniture were unquestionably shaped by French, British, and Dutch stylistic influences. However, as Lowcountry Huguenots assimilated more and more into Charleston’s English-dominated community, overt Continental influences on Charleston-made furniture began to disappear. Huguenot furniture-making traditions were not absorbed by the mounting demand for furniture constructed after British tastes. Instead, the ebb of French styles in the Lowcountry signaled a desire on the part of Lowcountry Huguenots to assimilate and join the class of the local planter elite.

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116 Ibid.
Early furniture produced in the shops of Charleston cabinetmakers are illustrative of not only stylistic evolutions and trends throughout the eighteenth century but also of design trends originating from a wide variety of sources. From the 1730s until the end of the colonial period, Charleston-made furniture is a testament to South Carolina’s position as the crown jewel of British trade. Charleston did not export its finished goods, as ships departing Charleston’s harbor were already chock-full of enormously wealth-producing stores of rice, and indigo. However, this immense network of trade and business relationships indelibly bound the South Carolina merchant-planter elite with British factors. The result was a rapid and colossal spread of British fashions into Charleston which lasted at least until the end of the 1760s.

Thomas Elfe, Jacob Sass, and Robert Walker were some of the most acclaimed local cabinet-makers who worked in Charleston. Although many talented cabinetmakers worked in Charleston in the second half of the eighteenth century, Thomas Elfe’s pieces were most highly sought by Charleston’s elite. Born in England in 1719, Elfe trained as a cabinetmaker in London where he completed his apprenticeship. Elfe arrived in Virginia in the late 1740s. Soon after receiving word that he had inherited his uncle’s workshop and estate, Elfe left Virginia for Charles Towne. During this period Charleston boasted an exceedingly thriving economy, about six times greater than that of Philadelphia or Boston. Elite Charlestonians clamored to build luxury residences and to fill their houses with the latest fashions. Because of the thriving trade market, cabinetmakers living in Charleston had access to the latest English pattern books such as

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118 The Oxford English Dictionary defines a factor as one who “deals with (goods, money, property, etc.) as a factor or agent.”

Thomas Chippendale’s The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker’s Director. Elfe became a devotee of the Chinoiserie style and produced several desks, bookcases, and tea tables in the style.\textsuperscript{120}

Another of Charleston’s celebrated cabinetmakers was Jacob Sass. Born in the Schenstad in Hesse-Kase, part of the Holy Roman Empire, Sass immigrated to Charleston in 1773. Eight years later, shortly after British forces evacuated the city, Sass advertised that he had moved to a “large and commodious shop.”\textsuperscript{121} Sass’ successful career spanned more than sixty years. He worked in the city for many years as a sought-after producer of fine case furniture. Upon his death in 1836, Sass was still engaged in the trade. By this time, however, his efforts were limited to coffin production.\textsuperscript{122}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure4_8}
\caption{“Cabinetmaker Jacob Sass’ Newspaper Advertisement for His Various Services.” The South-Carolina Weekly Gazette, December 26, 1783, Volume:1 Issue: 46 Page: 2, Location: Charleston, South Carolina. infoweb.newsbank.com.}
\end{figure}

In the early nineteenth century, Robert Walker was one of Charleston’s most successful cabinetmakers. Walker was born in Cupar, Fife, Scotland, and immigrated to New York in 1793

\textsuperscript{120} René Bilodeau and Anselm Fraser, \textit{Celebrating Thomas Chippendale 250 Years of Influence} (Georgia (USA): Learning Mill Press, 2005), 126.
\textsuperscript{121} British forces occupied the city in 1780.
\textsuperscript{122} Rauschenberg and Bivins, \textit{The Furniture of Charleston}, 166.
at the age of just twenty-one. In 1795 Walker settled in Charleston where it is likely he worked as a journeyman in one of the city’s many Scottish-owned shops. Walker joined fellow cabinetmaker Charles Watts later that same year until the dissolution of their partnership in 1803. A handful of Walker’s surviving pieces are affixed with labels or have been signed by the cabinetmaker. One such label reads:

ROBERT WALKER/ (LATE WATTS AND WALKER)/CABINET-MAKER, /NO.39 CHURCH-STREET, CHARLESTON; Has, at all times, on hand, a large and handsome/Assortment of every article in His Line. / Orders from the Country speedily and carefully/executed in the neatest of manners.123

Figure 4.9: “Robert Walker’s Newspaper Advertisement for His Cabinet Furniture.” City Gazette and Daily Advertiser, February 15, 1804, Volume: XXIII Issue: 5116 Page: 2, Location: Charleston, South Carolina. infoweb.newsbank.com.

123 Rauschenberg and Bivins, The Furniture of Charleston, 583.
Primary and Secondary Woods Used in Early Charleston-Made Furniture

In the colonial period favored primary woods for furniture making in Charleston were walnut, red cedar, cypress, red bay (a swamp wood), and mahogany. Mahogany, however, which was imported, was the most popular material used for furniture making in Charleston, at least by 1730. Such vast amounts of mahogany were imported into Charleston from the West Indies that by 1740 all duties on the wood were repealed. Charleston-made chairs were distinguishable from English imports not only by their thicker rails and heavier corner blocks but by the amount of mahogany used for the piece. Mahogany was a superior in its woodworking

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124 Ibid., 69.
qualities to both white pine and cypress. However, mahogany has little resistance to wear. It was typically used to construct drawer frames and desk interiors, as well as fly frames and tables. In addition to mahogany another imported wood used in Charleston-made pieces as early as 1730 was white pine. Unlike mahogany, however, the use of white pine was used sparingly until the near end of the colonial period. Although black walnut did grow sparsely on the Charleston Peninsula, it was not found in plentiful enough amounts anywhere near the city to make it a popular wood for furniture making. Cedar pieces from this period would have been constructed of either Southern red cedar, which grew abundantly around Charleston, or Spanish cedar which came from Mexico, Central America, or The West Indies. Red cedar was a popular choice for desks, chests of drawers, and clothes presses in the first quarter of the eighteenth century although it faded from use in Charleston furniture constructed after 1730 except as a secondary wood.

Secondary woods appear in surviving Charleston-made pieces dating from Charleston’s colonial period. All native to South Carolina, these secondary woods were cypress, yellow pine, tulip, poplar, ash, walnut, and red cedar. By far, the most common secondary wood found on Charleston-made pieces of this period is cypress (Figure 4.11). This was the case until after the Revolution when white pine became

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126 Rauschenberg and Bivins, The Furniture of Charleston, 69.
127 Rauschenberg and Bivins, The Furniture of Charleston, 69.
increasingly available from New England. The closest source for native white pine was in the Blue Ridge Mountains several hundred miles from Charleston. However, nearly all white pine used in the Southern colonies came from New England. In addition to the many kinds of wood used in Charleston pieces Japanned furniture pieces were also popular items in colonial Charleston. However, there were no known local artisans that were skilled in this type of work.

Early Charleston-Made Furniture and Popular Styles

Like Charleston itself, the story of early Charleston furniture styles and influences boasts many unique qualities. This is sometimes even observed in the preferred nomenclatures inhabitants of the area used to describe their furniture. For example, while early Chesapeake inventories often describe “a table and frame” to indicate a medieval trestle table with removable top, this terminology has not been found in the Charleston inventories of the same period. Charleston inventories reveal that this same object was likely what assessors were referring to when they listed the “Table and Two Formes.” Furthering this point, Lowcountry probate inventories, often used the term “elbow chair” in favor of the term “great chair” used in other colonies to describe armchairs.

The earliest known Charleston-made piece of furniture is thought to be a cherry armchair constructed sometime before 1740. Although the use of cherry attributed to early Charleston furniture may seem odd given the absence of cherry growing near Charleston today, cherry was known to grow prevalently in the Lowcountry during the seventeenth century. The cherry

128 Ibid.
129 Ibid., 70.
130 Rauschenberg and Bivins, The Furniture of Charleston, 23.
131 Ibid., 22.
armchair is one of only two chairs to possibly have been made in South Carolina before that date. The other, also an armchair, though constructed slightly later, is made of black walnut.\textsuperscript{132}

Like similar patterns connecting characteristics of early furniture between northern colonies, particularly New York and New Jersey, the early settlements of the coastal South share patterns as well. However, patterns connecting settlements of the coastal South are evident in their shared French influence. Accounting for this was the early presence of French Huguenot joiners in the region. Typical of early immigration patterns to the colonies, immigrant communities frequently continued to work in their traditional crafts. They also tended to maintain family and trade networks already established in their countries of origin. The black walnut armchair believed to have been constructed in Charleston shares characteristics with a small number of pieces, a chair, and two tables that were made in eastern North Carolina sometime in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The “flow of style” in Europe is closely linked with shifting political alliances and religious wars. Therefore, scholars can track the movement of styles of French influence by tracing the resulting patterns of displacement of these people into the American colonies. The Huguenot joiners who fled into the Lowcountry came from various regions in France. However, owing to scant amounts of published research focused on French furniture made outside Paris in the seventeenth century, it is difficult for scholars to compare early Charleston furniture to the furniture constructed in areas such as Normandy and the western French provinces, especially Aunis and Languedoc.\textsuperscript{133}

Details that characterize the early-Charleston-made cherry armchair are shared with early seating furniture made in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. In that region, these characteristic details are associated with the Huguenot settlements in the lower

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} Rauschenberg and Bivins, \textit{The Furniture of Charleston},15.
Chesapeake. North of Charleston, the highest concentration of French Protestant settlements was found in southeastern Virginia where significant Continental chair-making traditions continued into the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Huguenots had settled into eastern North Carolina. The characteristic features shared by the Charleston-made cherry armchair and chairs originating from these other Huguenot settlements in the lower Chesapeake include: materials used, turned crest finials which have been individually tenoned in place—rather than tenoned to them—arms that pass over the arm supports, rail-and-spindle construction of the back, turned decorative stretchers at the chair’s sides and back, and turned rear feet.

Interestingly, several of these features have also been observed in Dutch chairs and chairs made in Dutch settlements in North America. In the U.S. colonies, French styles are sometimes seen in Dutch artisanship. This is due in part to the numbers of French who emigrated to Holland—where they influenced Dutch tradesmen— but also to the emigration of French Huguenots previously settled in Holland who eventually landed in New York. As a result, French influences of style are often seen in furniture designs in this country that had previously been attributed solely to Dutch artisanship.  

The earliest surviving piece attributed to Walker is a cabinet on chest. This piece, constructed with mahogany as its primary wood, shares similarities in construction and decoration to a wardrobe possibly done by Walker as well. Both pieces feature inlay on the tympanum, a similar curve of the pediment, French feet, and elliptical fields on the upper doors of each piece. Each piece utilizes veneering. The cabinet on chest features rosewood veneer and the wardrobe mahogany. However, the cabinet on chest also features red cedar as a secondary wood (among others). The use of red cedar, a southern secondary wood, places this piece more

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134 Rauschenberg and Bivins, The Furniture of Charleston, 16.
firmly with a Charleston attribution than the wardrobe which contains only white pine as its secondary wood.\textsuperscript{135} Both pieces have been entirely constructed using wrought iron finishing nails. This suggests a date either during or just prior to Walker’s time with Watts or possibly during Walker’s early work in one of the city’s Scottish shops. The tall French feet featured on the cabinet on chest were not a familiar form in the United States. They were, however, commonly found in Britain. Walker is known to have favored the design source the London Book of Prices. The form of the tall French feet were represented on the frontis plate of a contemporaneous issue of the publication.\textsuperscript{136}

Of the staggering variety of furniture forms, the production of chairs proved to be one of the most difficult pieces to construct for any early cabinet shop. Experts believe that the small numbers of Charleston-made seating furniture produced before 1760 may also be partly attributed to an unwillingness on the part of Charleston cabinetmakers to compete with the less expensive imports. Nevertheless, even the simplest styles require a complex geometry, especially where the trapezoidal form of the seat and its mortise-and-tenon joinery was concerned. Nevertheless, the production of chairs was a daily occurrence in colonial Charleston cabinet shops. Fashion required shops be able to produce a variety of chair designs. That meant that each shop would have had to have had at least a dozen sets of splat, crest, back stile, as well as arm and arm-support patterns needed for producing the various styles.\textsuperscript{137}

Charleston-made chairs of the mid-to-late-colonial period are identifiable to furniture scholars by a vast array of characteristic features. For example, most center stretchers were

\textsuperscript{135} For more on the subject of primary and secondary woods used in Charleston furniture see page next section, Primary and Secondary Woods Used in Early Charleston-Made Furniture.
\textsuperscript{136} Rauschenberg and Bivins, \textit{The Furniture of Charleston}, 583.
\textsuperscript{137} Rauschenberg and Bivins, \textit{The Furniture of Charleston}, 341.
joined with a half-dovetailed joint that can only be observed from below. Other Charleston-made chairs feature center stretchers which were “blind tenoned” to the side stretchers with many being “through-tenoned.” Some Charleston stretchers were positioned just below the top of the chair’s side stretchers. Charleston stretchers were not turned nor were they “boxed,” meaning a stretcher that has been placed between the chair’s front legs rather than between the side stretchers. Charleston stretchers are either plain or slightly rounded on top. Like the urban British practice, but unlike methods used in Philadelphia and Boston, very few Charleston-made chairs of this period have mortise-and-tenon joints that have been pinned. Instead, the individual chair members of the seat frame, stretchers, and crests were glued. Charleston cabinet shops also followed the British fashion for full-depth rear seat rails constructed as one piece and feature an integral splat shoe.

Researchers who have studied the Charleston probate inventories have made several pertinent observations regarding the early inventories that should be mentioned. In addition to previously-noted observations, such as Charlestonian’s preference for the term “elbow chair” in favor of “great chair” when describing an arm chair, early Charleston inventories often identified chairs by their seating material.138 In the Charleston inventories, chairs of this period are sometimes listed as, palmetto, rush, or flag-bottom.139 References to tables in the early Charleston probate inventories probably refer to trestle-type tables, described by Charleston assessors as a “table and two formes.” However, the Chesapeake inventories list these same

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138 In MESDA’s “Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820,” Dr. Rauschenberg describes an elbow chair as “a chair with arms being described as ‘elbows’. This was to distinguish between side or chairs without arms.” According to Rauschenberg the earliest record of this term being used was in the 1718 guardianship agreement of Fayer Hall selling furniture to William Rhett which included “Two Elbow Do[chairs]” Source: Bradford L. Rauschenberg, "Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820," Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts 35 (2014), accessed October 15, 2016, http://www.mesdajournal.org/2013/documentary-evidence-furniture-forms-terminology-charleston-south-carolina-ii/#SeatWindsorElbow

139 Rauschenberg and Bivins, The Furniture of Charleston, 21.
objects as “table and frame,” terminology not found in the Charleston inventories. Some early probate inventories include the further description of these tables trestle-type tables as having been “longue” (long). By the late seventeenth century, however, preference for this table type in Charleston had waned.

In its place, Charlestonians preferred either round or oval-topped tables for dining that had hinged or “falling” leaves. Although the term was not in use during the period, these types of tables are what we today call “gate leg” tables (Figure 4.12). The popularity of the gate leg table is attributed not only to its being fashionable but to the fact that it was also portable. Excluding the specialized rooms in the houses of the very wealthy, the rooms of most houses of this period needed to perform multiple functions. By the 1730s the gate leg table which featured classical baluster forms adapted as leg turnings had become out dated. In their place, English fashions now dictated a partiality towards round or oval top “fly-leg” dining tables with either cabriole of straight turned legs and round feet. If Charleston probate assessors recorded the type
of wood used for a table in this period, they would almost undoubtedly have been referring to this new type of table.\footnote{Rauschenberg and Bivins, \textit{The Furniture of Charleston}, 21.}

The tea table occupied a powerful position in the minds of eighteenth-century consumers. As Sarah Fayen Scarlett (née Neale Fayen), Material culture historian and former Chipstone Foundation curator has explained:

\begin{quote}
The social ritual of tea drinking, made popular by the English elite beginning in the 1680s, was increasingly affordable and widespread in the colonies after the turn of the century. It became a venue for a new genteel code of conduct that spread throughout the middling social ranks over the course of the eighteenth century. This set of polite manners emphasized physical cleanliness, graceful deportment, and pleasant conversation. It was a model of how people should treat one another that allowed individuals from different social backgrounds to comfortably interact according to a shared set of rules. In the common imagination, the ritual of tea drinking was frequently identified by the tea table itself.\footnote{Sarah Fayen, "Tilt-Top Tea Tables and Eighteenth-Century Consumerism," in \textit{American Furniture}, ed. Luke Beckerdt (Milwaukee, WI: Chipstone, 2003), 126.}
\end{quote}

References to “tea tables” first occurred in advertisements and inventories in the American colonies in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. These tea tables were probably rectangular in form. However, variations in colonial-era tea tables existed from shop to shop and region to region. In Charleston, tea tables often resembled English examples more closely than those from other American cities.\footnote{Ibid.}

According to MESDA’s “Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820,” the

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Figure4.13-ScallopCrustTeaTable.png}
\caption{Scalloped or Pie Crust Tea Table. “Chippendale Style Pie Crust Tea Table”. C.1790, Mahogany, Dimensions: H-73.4 W-72.7 Dia-71.2 cm, Furniture Collection, Object ID: HF 356, Image Courtesy of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.}
\end{figure}
first Charleston probate inventory to include a tea table was recorded in the 1725 inventory of Daniel Gale. Gale’s assessors did not specify in which room within the house the piece was located. 143 Up through the 1740’s “square” and “Dutch” tea tables were common items recorded in the Charleston inventories. 144 The “Dutch” tea table was likely rectangular with a stretcher base. Interestingly, the “square” tea table also was also likely rectangular in form. This assertion, made by Rauschenberg and Bivins, is based on evidence that the term square was also commonly used to describe rectangular dining tables throughout the eighteenth century and later. 145

Almost all known surviving examples of colonial tea tables originating from Charleston have hinged round tops. Round-topped tea table, however, were not recorded in the Charleston inventories before the late 1730s. Tea tables, all with some sort of round top, were variously recorded in the Charleston inventories as either “turnup, falling, round, pedestal, scallop, claw’d foot, or pillar and claw.” 146 Scallop-top tea tables (Figure 4.13) made reference to various versions of the so-called piecrust design that had been used in China for round tea boards at least as early as the seventeenth century (Figure 4.13). Scalloped tops were sawn into shape and required beveling. In Charleston, the depth and refinement of this work tended to be consistent with the work of individual shops. Several clues evidenced by individual scalloping techniques have helped researchers to identify the work of individual shops. In modern parlance, the term “tilt-top tea table” is used in place of the term pedestal tea table. 147 By examining the legs and

144 In this subchapter on Charleston furniture references are often made to Charleston probate inventories. Only when explicitly noted otherwise, however, do these references refer specifically to any of the room-by-room Charleston probate inventories examined in this study.
145 Rauschenberg and Bivins, The Furniture of Charleston, 225.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid., 226.
form of the hinge block and cleats of Charleston-made pedestal tea tables, scholars have been able to attribute fifteen of these to a single shop.\textsuperscript{148} Appraisers, merchants, and tradesmen also used the term “pillar and claw” to describe tilt-top tea tables. The word “claw” was used to describe the table’s three legs, not claw feet.\textsuperscript{149} The term claw’d foot does typically refer to the form of the foot, however, in the eighteenth century, the term foot often meant the entire leg. The term Pillar referred to the upright of the pillar and claw tea table.\textsuperscript{150}

By 1760 Charleston was the wealthiest per capita city in British North America.\textsuperscript{151} The essence, at least for wealthy, white, elite Charlestonians, of late colonial Charleston is eloquently illustrated in a description of the city that appeared in \textit{The London Magazine} in June of 1762. The article contains, as its full title reads, a “Description of Charles-Towne: An Account of the City of Charles-Towne, Metropolis of the Province of South Carolina, with an Exact and Beautiful Prospect Thereof:”

Here the rich people have handsome equipages; the merchants are opulent and well bred; the people are thriving and extensive, in dress and life; so that everything conspires to make this town the politest, as it is one of the richest in America.\textsuperscript{152}

Prior to the American Revolution Charleston’s elite acquired their furniture directly from Europe. It is likely that more furniture produced by British artisans was shipped to Charleston than to any other colonial port. Most furniture imported into the city came directly from England. However, large quantities of pieces made in Massachusetts and New York also made their way to into the houses of Charleston. Labor was extremely costly in the Lowcountry as

\textsuperscript{148} Rauschenberg and Bivins, \textit{The Furniture of Charleston}, 296.
\textsuperscript{149} "Tilt-Top Tables and Eighteenth-Century Consumerism."
\textsuperscript{150} Rauschenberg and Bivins, \textit{The Furniture of Charleston}, 224.
\textsuperscript{151} Poston, \textit{The Buildings of Charleston}, 26.
\textsuperscript{152} "Description of Charles-Towne: An Account of the City of Charles-Towne, Metropolis of the Province of South Carolina, with an Exact and Beautiful Prospect Thereof," \textit{The London Magazine}, June 1762, 296, accessed October 7, 2016, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015021269504;view=1up;seq=326.
was the cost of living in general. This meant that Charleston cabinetmakers living in Charleston in the colonial period had to compete with prices of import furniture. Although they never expected an end to import furniture into the city, Charleston’s cabinetmakers were successful competitors. The city’s cabinetmakers competed in part by participating in the importation of furniture themselves, especially seating furniture.\(^{153}\)

Before the American Revolution, wealthy Charlestonians held pronounced ties to English society and the prevailing styles of London reached Charleston quite quickly. For example, the influence felt by Thomas Chippendale’s celebrated 1754 London-published pattern book, *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker’s Director*, helped spur the eighteenth-century taste for *Chinoiserie*, that is furniture fashioned “in the Chinese taste.” Charlestonians taste for Chinoiserie endured for several years. A May 1767 advertisement that appeared in the *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, by London-trained cabinetmaker John Lord, boasts his aptitude for furniture carving “in the

Chinese, French, and Gothic tastes,” styles also made popular by Chippendale’s *Director.* On the title page of Chippendale’s pattern book (Figure 4.14), the cabinetmaker announced *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker’s Director* as “Being a Large Collection of the Most Elegant and Useful Designs of Household Furniture, in the Gothic, Chinese, and Modern Taste.” This, declares Chippendale, includes, among other pieces listed, a great Variety of: Book- Cases for Libraries or Private Rooms, Library and Writing-Tables, Buroes, Breakfast-Tables, Tea Chests, Trays, Fire-Screens, Chairs, Settees, Sophas, Presses, Pier-Glass Sconces, Slab Frames, Candle Stands, and Clock Cases. None of the probate inventories included in this study specifically list the styles in which they are made. However, nearly all of the furniture forms listed above were found in the probate inventories recorded for the Charleston entertainment spaces consulted in this study.

**Chinoiserie in Charleston**

One of the most commonly found ceramics uncovered at several Charleston archaeological sites is Chinese export porcelain, which accounts for 24% of ceramic finds at in the city. Chinese porcelain is one but one type of item that was part of a “broader stylistic language” in the eighteenth century known as Chinoiserie. With the expansion of international trade, Asian luxury goods such as Chinese lacquer and hardwood furniture, Chinese wallpapers and silks became popular items throughout the European world. Further, wealthy Charlestonians through their extensive ties to English culture, as well as their European travels, became intimately familiar with the aristocratic predilection for collecting and displaying

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Chinese export porcelain along with a wealth of other Asian export luxury goods. In 1753, soon after their arrival in London, the famed Pinckney family of Charleston was received by the Princess and Princess of Whales at Kew Palace. Mrs. Pinckney, in a letter to a fellow Charlestonian, described having been escorted by a servant through the private rooms of the Princess to her dressing room for an audience. Mrs. Pinckney described paying particular attention to the decorative aspects of the Princess’ apartment and noted that “there was in the room a great deal of China upon two cabinets.” Upon their departure, the Pinckney’s they would have seen the palace gardens—which already featured a pagoda shaped temple—in the midst of being transformed by architect and designer Sir William Chambers to feature Chinese, Gothic, and Classically-inspired follies.¹⁵⁷

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, fashion called for entire rooms to be decorated using Chinese-export porcelain and lacquered paneling. The popularity of Asian import goods resulted in the Chinoiserie style. Asian influence inspired the technological innovations made by western designers through the invention of porcelain. Stylistically, however, western designers employed a combination of Asian and European motifs. These designs relied on whimsical Chinese-inspired designs used in architecture and interior decoration. The popularity of the Chinoiserie style reached its height in the mid-eighteenth century. Beyond the influence of Thomas Chippendale’s designs, other designer’s publications also promoted the influence of designs in the Chinese taste, especially those of the French-born court designer Daniel Marmot. Other designer’s published works influential in helping to make Asian goods common in European interiors were Jean, Pillement, William and John Halfpenny, and Sir William Chambers.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Leath, ““After the Chinese Taste,” 58.
¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 49.
The height of fashion for the Chinoiserie style coincided with Charleston’s economic golden age. Through their enormous wealth, Charleston’s merchant-planter elite made up a unique class of newly wealthy Americans “boldly acquisitive in their adoption of the latest European designs and unafraid of looking to outside style influences.”\(^{159}\) As John Bivins has asserted, this elite class of Charlestonians “were ever eager to learn of styles that were both new and modish, as long as they were not excessively flamboyant.”\(^{160}\) By the middle of the eighteenth century, Charleston was importing not only Chinese porcelain but textiles, reverse

\(^{159}\) Leath, “‘After the Chinese Taste,’” 49.

\(^{160}\) “The Convergence and Divergence of Three Stylistic Traditions in Charleston Neoclassical Case Furniture.”
paintings on glass, scenic wallpapers, and lacquer and hardwood furniture. During this period Charleston boasted a fashionable retail district which ran along Broad, Elliott, and Tradd Street, just behind the wharves on the Cooper River. Here, Charleston’s shopkeepers and merchants sold an immense variety of goods just imported into the city from England. In his article “After the Chinese Taste: Chinese Export Porcelain and Chinoiserie Design in Eighteen-Century Charleston,” published in *Historical Archaeology* in 1999, Robert Leath, points to a 1756 shop inventory which lists the goods that belonged to Charleston merchant Samuel Perroneau. Perroneau’s list of goods included teas and spices from Asia as well as a variety of expensive Chinese porcelains and textiles. Among these were: Thirty-two pint-sized China bowls, priced at five shillings each, two dozen tea cups with saucers priced at fifty shillings per dozen. Suggesting the variety in price points available to Charleston’s colonial consumers, Perroneau’s customers could also choose either the more costly Chinese silks or, more specifically, one piece of “Black China Taffety” priced at £20 or two whole and two half pieces of “Mock Chints” priced at only £2 10s.161 The Mock Chints found in Perroneau’s inventory of goods referred to a much less expensive English made textile fashioned in the Chinese taste.162

By the 1730s, Leath asserts, porcelain had become commonplace in South Carolina. Leath points to letters written by Charleston merchant Robert Pringle to various merchants in London, Hill, Newport, Boston, and Barbados in Pringle to support his claim. Pringle often wrote to his fellow merchants during this period seeking ready supplies for porcelain he could sell to his eager Charleston customers. China ware, wrote Pringle, was in Charleston “very

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161 A name applied at different times to different fabrics. In early times apparently a plain-wove glossy silk (of any colour); in more recent times, a light thin silk or union stuff of decided brightness or lustre. In the 16th c. mention is also made of ‘linen taffety’. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “relational database,” accessed October 2, 2016, http://www.oed.com.libproxy.clemson.edu/view/Entry/197003?redirectedFrom=Taffety#eid

scarce and in great demand.” By the next decade, notice of the sale of porcelain in Charleston was a common addition to advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*. In a 1749 advertisement Merchant David Crawford whose store was located on Broad Street advertised in the *Gazette*, “JUST IMPORTED, a large assortment of China ware as breakfast cups and saucers, dishes, plates, and bowls of all sorts, tea and coffee cups, and saucers, also 3 compleat sets of color’s china for a tea table.”  

Another factor that contributed greatly to the popularity of Chinoiserie was the eighteenth-century fondness towards tea drinking. The culture of drinking tea required an appropriate Chinoiserie stage setting or *mise en scène*. "Tea drinking was a fundamental part of polite society; much of the interest in both Chinese export wares and Chinoiserie rose from the desire to create appropriate settings for the ritual of tea drinking." Tea tables were sometimes recorded in the Charleston inventories as “China” tables. Thomas Chippendale’s *Director* first published in 1754 included a plate illustrating “China Tables” which he explained were “…China or Breakfast Tables…the frets to go round the tops…” In the third addition of Chippendale’s *Director* published in 1762, the same image was used to describe “…Tables for holding…a Set of China, and may be used as Tea-Tables…” The first use of the term China tables in Charleston is found in a 1765 South Carolina Gazette advertisement placed by Nicholas Bernard who offered “…China Tables…” along with furniture and some imported items in his store. The 1768 inventory of Charles Skinner is the first known record of this particular form in a Charleston inventory. Skinner’s inventory listed “…1 fretted Chine Do[table] £7.

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Furnishing Charleston in the Nineteenth Century

Importations of American-made pieces from the other colonies coming into Charleston were at first intermittent. Advertisements from the period imply that these imports were “venture” furniture, meaning furniture put on ships at their respective home ports and then sold to interested buyers, if any existed, as the ship made its way south from port to port. For example, an April 1783 advertisement that appeared in the *South-Carolina Gazette* boasted that the schooner “Gerard” from Philadelphia was carrying, among as slew of other items, Windsor chairs in its cargo. Charleston cabinetmakers likely would have resented competition from importations making their way into the city. Later that same year, another advertisement was placed in the Gazette, this time by Charleston cabinetmaker, A. Redmond. Redmond’s advertisement boasts his ability to produce in his shop “Philadelphia Windsor chairs, both armed and unarmed, as neat as any imported, and much better stuff.”

The late eighteenth century marked the beginning of the antebellum period in the South (1784-1860). It was during this period that Charleston went from an “open” to a “closed” city. The malleable Charleston social structure of the eighteenth century, a time, McInnis Notes, in which someone like Miles Brewton, the grandson of a goldsmith could become a delegate to the second Provincial Congress, had evolved into a “rigid social hierarchy led largely by a genteel clique bound by a common ancestry, inherited wealth, social status, and a shared passion for

167 *South-Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, April 29, 1783: [4], accessed October 03, 2016, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/image/v2:107BB63A1428DF98@EANX-10776854092E9600@2372406-107768546AE9B7C0@3-107768558D68F8A8@?p=AMNEWS.
168 *South-Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, October 07, 1783: [3], accessed October 03, 2016, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/image/v2:107BB63A1428DF98@EANX-107768D0CDBBA7D0@2372567-107768D13B2AD1F0@4-107768D29B5EA720@?p=AMNEWS.
polite pursuits.” 170 Charleston in the antebellum period was “characterized by retrenchment and maintenance of the status quo.”171 As Stephanie Yuhl also stressed in her book *A Golden Haze of Memory*, in the decades leading up to the Civil War, as slavery and cotton moved away from coastal regions, Charleston became a “leisure capital” for its elite citizens who responded to this instability by clinging even tighter to the to their self-storied mythology of their society’s past glories.172 However, despite a decline in the Charleston’s economy in the early nineteenth century, the city still boasted a per free capita wealth that was more than three times that of Massachusetts and New York by 1860.173

By the last decade of the eighteenth century, about forty furniture artisans were working in Charleston. Adding to their numbers, soon, almost two dozen journeymen and shopmasters were also working in the city. Not taking into account the numbers of tradesmen working as carvers, turners, and upholsterers, by 1810 there were more than a hundred cabinetmakers working in Charleston. Recent arrivals from Europe, like Robert Walker, introduced Charleston cabinetmakers to new details adding to the growing assortment of Charleston furniture trends.174 Prior to the American Revolution, much of Charleston’s elite furnishings had come directly from Europe, especially England. Beginning in the early nineteenth century. However, this long-established direct trade with Europe was in decline. A few decades prior Charleston had begun to experience intermittent importations of American-made pieces from northern cities such as Philadelphia. However, the city now looked increasingly to other American cities as sources for

174 “The Convergence and Divergence of Three Stylistic Traditions in Charleston Neoclassical Case Furniture.”
procuring their fashionable furnishings and luxury goods. As the popularity of Philadelphia furniture declined, the demand for New York furniture grew. The first Charleston retailer, around 1817, to exclusively offer New York furniture was Robert Otis. Otis’ advertisements boasted a selection of looking glasses, fancy and Windsor chairs, cellarets, bureaus, sideboards, a secretary-and-bookcase, wardrobes, as well as tea, card, and work tables. Soon New York cabinetmakers were clamoring to fill this hole left in of the Charleston furniture market. Famed New York cabinetmakers, such as Duncan Phyfe, Charles Honoré Lannuier, offered Charlestonians gilded and boldly carved classical furniture.\textsuperscript{175} McInnis has stated that the majority of New York furniture that has descended through Charleston families features bold figural carving and elaborate gilded decoration based on European classical designs. These pieces represent a unique body of New York classical furniture made especially for the southern market. Driven by publications such as: Thomas Sheraton’s \textit{The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer’s Drawing-Book} (1807), Thomas Hope’s \textit{Household Furniture and Interior Decoration} (1807), \textit{George Smith’s Collection of Designs for Household Furniture and Interior Decoration} (1808), and Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine’s \textit{Recueil de decorations intérieures} (1812) style-conscious Americans embraced the sculptural forms of Paris and gilded ornament. Americans considered Lannuier and Phyfe’s richly ornamented furniture pieces to embody taste and sophistication.\textsuperscript{176} Phyfe’s greatest contribution was in blending of the English Neoclassical and Regency styles found in Sheraton’s and Hope’s design books. Phyfe introduced elements such as lyres, harps, and fasces into his furniture that related contemporary decorative arts to the motifs of classical antiquities (Figure: 4.16). Phyfe’s career

\textsuperscript{175} McInnis and Leath, “Beautiful Specimens.”
lasted through the 1840s, and his shop eventually also produced furnishings in the Late Grecian, and Rococo and Gothic Revival styles.

The middle classes were no longer left out in being able to acquire material goods. During this same period, Charleston’s middle-class market was being flooded with mass-produced items. Some of these items came into the city as venture cargo while other stores were warehoused by local merchants and cabinetmakers. Scholars can track the spread of refinement in early-nineteenth-century America both geographically and within the social classes by tracing the spread of material goods. Further, as a seaport city, most of the goods available in other such cities during this period were also available in Charleston. For example, similar types of glass and ceramics recovered in the Charleston digs are the same as those found in other American cities in this period. Curator of Historical Archaeology at the Charleston Museum, Martha Zierden’s excavations of the city, confirm a significant increase in the number of artifacts such as these found in the early nineteenth-century layers when

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177 McInnis and Leath, "Beautiful Specimens,"
compared with earlier deposits. The classical interiors from this period in the houses of Charleston’s elite required that the upmost attention be paid to the quality of the pieces. Emphasis was on the creation of an interior that would dazzle the eye of any visitor. Although the middle class in this period had unprecedented access to refined goods, the drawing rooms of the upper classes would have been appointed not only with more numbers of goods, but goods and furnishings of much higher quality. The drawing room of the elite Charlestonian in this period likely would have boasted large sets of matching furnishings. Woods used would have been the most exotic and expensive, especially rosewood and mahogany. The drawing rooms of the middle classes were more apt to have mismatched furniture made of much more inexpensive and in many cases, painted woods.

Figure 4.17: A Newspaper Advertisement Placed by the Popular Furniture Firm Deming and Bulkley (1823). City Gazette, June 27, 1823: Copy of [3], accessed November 03, 2016, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/image/v2:1089C6C0AF0CEFE8@EANX-12948BE4703E3840@2387074-12948BE4E04A5798@4-12948BE8EB7E0880@?p=AMNEWS.

179 Ibid., 39.
One New York furniture firm in particular during this period is uniquely important to any chronicle aimed at relating the history of Charleston furniture. Like many other New York cabinetmaking firms, intent on cornering the unique Charleston furniture market in this period, partners Brazilia Deming and Erastus Bulkley also took part in the venture cargo trade with Charleston. Their successes and popularity of their high-end furniture in Charleston signaled many return trips. Eventually, wishing to sidestep the hassles of fulfilling long-distance commissions in New York for their pieces, Deming and Bulkley established a retail storefront on King Street near the intersection of Beaufain Street. Their shop and the refined classical pieces they presented to an eager Charleston market set the standard for furniture retailers in Charleston for the next two decades.180

Figure 4.18: A Deming and Bulkley Empire-style card table, once owned by General Thomas Pinckney, c.1820, Mahogany, Rosewood Veneer and Pine, Gilding, Velvet. “The pedestal is decorated with a lyre motif and the four gilded legs are decorated with gilded acanthus leaves at the knee. The legs terminate in paw feet fitted with casters and the table top is lined with red velvet.” DIMENSIONS: H-29.646 W-36.024 D-18.031 inches, Furniture Collection, OBJECT ID: HF 200, Image Courtesy of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.

180 McInnis and Leath, "Beautiful Specimens,"
The leisure and grand interior of Charleston’s wealthy elite during this period are exemplified in an 1827 wash drawing of Arthur Middleton’s household captured by his brother Thomas (Figure 4.19). The drawing, titled *Friends and Armatures in Music*, is of rare value to historians for its depiction of a furnished Charleston social space in “action” during this period. The scene depicts an elite Charleston interior with its large painting collection and inherited furniture from earlier periods. The rush-seated fancy chairs and sideboard are typical of northern furniture shipped to Charleston from 1810 to 1840. Middleton’s inscription indicates that the image was made for the sake of posterity.181 “I mean,” wrote Middleton, “posterity of those whom it was intended to represent. Should it still be preserved after a lapse of many years, it will convey a pleasing idea of the custom of these times and the habits of their forefathers.”182

Figure 4.19: *Friends and Amateurs in Musik*, 1827, by Thomas Middleton (American, 1791–1863); ink and wash on paper; 13 3/x 20 inches; 1940.010.0001; Image Courtesy of the Gibbes Museum of Art/Carolina Art Association

181 McInnis and Leath, “Beautiful Specimens,”
UNDERSTANDING A RELATIONAL DATABASE

A relational database stores data in relatively simple two-dimensional tables that can be combined in response to queries. Queries are used to combine key information that is common to more than one table. Applying a relational database such as Microsoft Access to the analysis of probate inventories allows the user to compile a large amount of data from many probate documents (in this case, the contents of seventy-five drawing rooms and parlors) into a single, manageable structure (the database). Thus, ultimately expanding the user’s ability to recognize patterns in a large amount of data. Although Access has many additional features, the database used in this study was constructed using six key elements available to Access users (Figure 5.1). These elements, along with the basic definitions of their functions are listed as follows:

TABLES:
Tables are essential in the database because they hold all the information or data. In the Access database, each Table stores data about a particular topic. Individual Tables can be named anything the user wishes. In this study, the author refers to all the Tables collectively as the “Object Tables.”183 Examples of individual Object Tables are, Music, Lamps and Candles, and Pictures, Paintings, and Prints. The decedent’s basic information such as name, date of probate commission, address (if known) is stored in a Table the author has named Basic Information.

Records:
A Record represents a group of Fields within a Table that are relevant to a specific entity. In this study, that specific “entity” would be the deceased. In each Table, the Record shows only the information related to that individual. (Access makes this possible by automatically assigning each decedent a unique ID number called a Primary Key.)

Fields:
A Field is a piece of information related to a single thing (or in this study a single object or furnishing). For example, in the Object Table called Music, Piano, Piano Forte, and Music Bench are all examples of that Table’s Fields.

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183 Object Tables are discussed in depth later in this chapter.
**Primary Key:**
A Primary Key is an ID number in a relational database that is unique for each Record (decedent). The Primary Key automatically assigned this identifying number to each decedent. This ensures that the information from his or her inventory was consistently linked with the correct decedent in each Table in the database.

**Relationships:**
Creating a Relationship allows the user to combine two or more different Tables or select data (Fields) from two or more different Tables in the database.

**Queries:**
A Query is the result of creating a Relationship. A Query can be thought of as the offspring of two or more different Tables; the Query becomes a unique entity but retains aspects taken from each parent Table. Making a query allows the user to answer very specific questions about the data that would be difficult to answer by looking at table data directly.\(^{184}\)

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**Figure 5.1:** “Screenshot: Some of the Key Elements of the Access Database and Object Tables.” This image shows the resulting Query made forming a Relationship between Fields in the Wealth Table and Basic Information Tables. Image by the author.
DETERMINING THE OBJECT TABLE CATEGORIES

A sample of fifty Charleston probate inventories recorded between 1728 and 1866 comprising the database came from three sources. These sources are: Charleston County Will Books (1671-1868) and microfilm housed in the Charleston County Public Library’s South Carolina Room, and from digital copies of South Carolina Probate Records. The room-by-room probate records in this study were selected because they record the contents of either a drawing room or parlor.

Consulting these inventories, a series of tables were created in Access. The first table created by the author was named basic information table. This table contains each decedent’s first and last names, the year his or her inventory was commissioned, and whether that individual had either a parlor, a drawing room, or both. Next, a table called wealth was constructed. This table contains the total (overall wealth-value) for the probate inventory of each decedent in this study. The total value of all objects in all rooms, as well as any moveable chattel listed for each decedent is included in this table.

Next, twenty four object tables were constructed. Each of these tables represents either a specific type of furniture or behavior. These categories were determined with the aide of three sources. First, the author began by examining the contents of the parlor and drawing room in the fifty probate inventories included in this study, making note of common tendencies in

185 Digital copies of South Carolina Probate Records used in this study were sourced from Family Search, a genealogy organization operated by the Genealogical Society of Utah. The probate records from this source are scanned copies of the bound volumes of original probate records and will books. The original documents are housed at the Department of Archives and History in Columbia, South Carolina.


furnishings or types of furnishings observed. The author also consulted MESDA’s “Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820,” compiled by Dr. Bradford L. Rauschenberg, which is available as a searchable online database. Rauschenberg’s study provides documentary evidence for furniture forms and terminology in Charleston before 1820 and presents chronological evidence for their usage. The information provided in this study was garnered through probate inventories, wills, account books, newspapers, shipping returns, letters, as well as other sources. Rauschenberg divided his furnishings into three levels, from general categories to specific items. He began by first identifying five very broad general categories: Case Furniture, Seating, Tables, Sleeping Furniture, and Other Furniture Forms. These categories were then each broken down into the “Second-Level Contents Directory.” For example, Case Furniture at the second level was divided into twenty-two categories, such as Bookcase, Cabinet, General Case, Chest, Cistern, Clock, and Desk. Clicking on any of these twenty-two categories takes the user to the “Third-Level Contents Directory,” which provides a listing of specific items that fall under that category. For instance, clicking on Desk in the Second-Level Contents Directory provides the user with a list of fourteen types of desks such as Music, Child’s, Portable, Round Topped, Cylinder Fall, Writing, and Double desks. Finally, clicking on any of these specific types of desks takes the user to information about this type of piece found in the various Charleston documents consulted.

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Also consulted in the determination of the twenty-four object tables for the database used in this thesis was Gunston Hall Plantation’s online database “Probing the Past.”188 This database is comprised of more than 300 probate inventories and transcriptions, recorded in Virginia and Maryland between 1740 and 1810. The “Probing the Past” database allows the user to search the database in a variety of ways. However, it was “Probing the Past’s” list of “Search Terms” that was consulted to aide in creating object categories for this thesis. “Probing the Past’s” list of Search Terms was organized alphabetically into more that twenty main categories of types goods. Example of these categories are Art, Beverage, and Furniture. Like MESDA’s “Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820,” the “Probing the Past” database is ultimately divided into three levels. Again, beginning with general categories then narrowed down to reflect specific items. For example, under the main search term Art (level 1), one finds several subcategories, such as Maps (level 2) for example. Under Maps, one finds specific types of Maps, such as Chart, Draft, Map, and Plan (level 3). If one looks to Beverages, one finds the subcategories of Alcohol, Coffee, Chocolate, and Tea. Looking at the items listed under Tea, one finds Basin, Basket, Board, Boat, Boiler, Bottle, Bowl, Box, Bucket, Caddy, Can, Canister, Case, Caster, and so on. Guided by consultation of these three sources specifically, the twenty-four Object Tables included in the database and their contents (Fields) are as follows:

188 What began as the analysis of probate records used by researchers to determine period-appropriate room names for the social spaces at Gunston Hall eventually evolved into the database, “Probing the Past.” (referenced in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Gunston Hall: Determining Period-Appropriate Room Names). The “Probing the Past” database can be accessed online at http://chnm.gmu.edu/probateinventory/index.php.
LIST OF THE TWENTY-FOUR OBJECT TABLES CREATED BY THE AUTHOR

1. Bookcases & Cases  
2. Carpets, Floor Cloths, & Mats  
3. Chairs  
4. China for Eating and Drinking  
5. Clocks, Barometers & Thermometers  
6. Desks  
7. Drinking Alcohol  
8. Drinking: General  
9. Drinking Coffee  
10. Drinking Tea  
11. Eating: General  
12. Fire Accessories  
13. Gaming  
14. Lamps and Candles  
15. Making Music  
16. Mirrors  
17. Pictures, Prints, & Paintings  
18. Reading  
19. Rocking Chairs  
20. Sleeping  
21. Sofas, Settees, & Couches  
22. Stools and Ottomans  
23. Tables  
24. Window Treatments  
25. Basic Information  
26. Wealth

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189 For a list of Fields (Individual furnishings and objects) included in each the above Object Tables see Appendix A.
Relationships were created in the Access database between the above-listed twenty-four object tables and the basic information table. Creating a relationship in Access allows the user to combine data from two or more different tables into a newly-formed table. In Access, this is referred to as making a query. When making a query, the user is given the option to include either all the data from a chosen table into this newly-formed table or to include only select data (Fields) from that table. For example, the newly-formed table called gaming and music listed below was constructed using a combination of all data from two complete tables, the basic information and the object table called music. However, the remainder of the gaming and music table includes only card and backgammon tables. Card tables and backgammon tables are fields that have been extracted from the complete object table called tables.

This study took nine queries. The first of these queries, pictures and prints, gaming, and tea drinking were performed in order to analyze patterns in behaviors heavily associated with the notion of gentility. The remaining three queries, eating and drinking, reading correspondence, and sleep reflect some of the other types of behavior patterns that stood out to the author in examining the inventories sampled in this study. Along with the findings regarding these six types of behaviors the author has included summary findings in which conclusions have been drawn from patterns, if any, observed in the data. The final three queries undertaken in this study were performed for three types of furnishings. These are seating, tables, and lighting. These queries were undertaken to understand the evolution of furnishings that would have been typical of the Charleston parlor and drawing room between the years 1728 and 1866. The Combinations of complete object tables and (Fields) that were used to create these six queries are as follows:
LIST OF THE NINE QUERIES:
COMBINATIONS OF OBJECT TABLES AND RECORDS

BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED WITH GENTILITY

PICTURES AND PRINTS
Basic Information Table
Pictures, Prints, and Paintings
Maps (F)190

GAMING AND MUSIC
Basic Information Table
Music
Card Tables (F)
Backgammon Tables (F)

TEA DRINKING
Basic Information Table
Drinking Tea
Tea Tables (F)

OTHER BEHAVIORS

EATING AND DRINKING
Basic Information Table
Eating: General
Drinking: General
China for Eating and Drinking
Drinking: Alcohol
Drinking: Coffee
Drinking: Tea

READING AND CORRESPONDENCE
Basic Information Table
Desks
Book Case (F)
Mahogany Book Case (F)
Books (F)
Magazines (F)

190 (F) indicates that these items were Records taken from complete Object Tables.
THE FOUR PERIODS QUERIED

Discoveries uncovered in the nine queries are presented in two primary divisions. These are 1728 through 1791 and 1792 through 1866, before and after the term drawing room appeared on the documents sampled for this study. Inventories in period one were recorded between 1728 and 1791 and use only the term parlor to denote decedent’s primary entertainment space. In total, twelve room-by-room Charleston probate inventories were sampled for this period.

The second section of analyses looks at query results for the period after the drawing room first appeared in this study (1792-1866). This section analyzes this period in three time increments of roughly twenty-five years each.

The second primary division (inventories recorded between 1792 and 1866) was analyzed in three parts. These represent roughly twenty-five year increments. The first of these time increments is called period two. Period two considers query results from inventories recorded
between 1792 and 1815. This period represents the initial years in which the term drawing room was being used in Charleston as evidenced by an analysis of the terms used in the inventories sampled for this study.\textsuperscript{191} This analysis of terms clearly shows the progression and transformation in the terminology used for the Charleston entertainment space during this period. In essence, the dominant terminology progressed during this period from parlor—which was still used more frequently in the last decade of the eighteenth century even after the term drawing room emerged—to drawing room. The term drawing room had become the dominant term used by assessors by around 1815. Analysis of terms also revealed that during this period both parlor and drawing room began sometimes to be used to differentiate different rooms within the same house.

The next time increment analyzed, period three, considers the query results from Charleston inventories recorded between 1816 through 1839. This segment represents the time period when the term drawing room was fully established as the dominant term used by assessors to refer to the entertainment space within the Charleston house. Use of both terms within a single household was found less frequently in this period.

The final time-segment, period four, considers the latest inventories sampled for this study recorded between 1840 and 1866. In this period the use of the term drawing room was even more common in the room-by-room inventories sampled. However, no inventories from this time period show the use of both terms within a single household. The following table shows the year of commission for every room-by-room probate inventory sampled for this study. Although the gaps in time vary between the inventories and some decades are represented

\textsuperscript{191} For an in-depth look at when the terms parlor and drawing room were used in the inventories sampled for this study, please see the subsection \textit{Analysis of Terms} part of the \textit{Preliminary Findings} included in the beginning of Chapter 6 \textit{Access Query Findings}.
slightly more than others, all fourteen decades between 1728 and 1866 are represented by at least one inventory. The following table shows the number of probate inventories in each period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>NUMBER OF INVENTORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (1728-1791)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (1792-1815)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (1816-1839)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (1840-1866)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: The Number of Inventories Included in Each of the Four Periods.*
CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS

This chapter details the results of the queries performed in the Microsoft Access database. It begins with the findings from some preliminary queries. The first is an analysis of terms which illustrates for the reader how and when the terms drawing room and parlor were used by assessors in the probate inventories sampled for this study. This is followed by a short analysis of findings where assessors recorded a single household as having both a drawing room and a parlor. This includes a comparison of the assessed monetary value for both room-types within a single household. This comparison was performed by querying the information entered into the Wealth Data Table. This preliminary material laid some of the groundwork for better comprehension of subsequent analyses which traces the evolution, and function of the Charleston drawing room and parlor between 1728 and 1866.

Analysis of Terms

Analysis of the terms used to denote entertainment rooms in the sample inventories revealed a correlation between the use of parlor or drawing room in relation to time period. In the earliest twelve inventories of period one was the only term used by assessors to refer to entertainment spaces. The first inventory in this study in which an assessor applied the term drawing room to a Charleston entertainment space was recorded in 1792. A shift in terminology began afterward. In the last decade of the eighteenth century after the term drawing room was first observed, the term parlor was still the
dominant term. Parlor was used in five of inventories to denote an entertainment room. In contrast, the term drawing room was used only three times. In one inventory drawing room was the only term used to refer to an entertainment room. In two inventories both drawing room and parlor were used to differentiate two entertainment rooms in the same house.

In the next decade and a half, however, use of terms reversed. Between 1801 and 1815, the term parlor was recorded only twice in inventories that contained only a single entertainment room. Drawing room, however, was used in five separate inventories. Additionally, four inventories used both drawing room and parlor to differentiate two entertainment rooms in the same house. The analysis of terms used in the inventories further revealed that at least up through 1866, the term drawing room continued to be the dominant term used by assessors to refer to Charleston entertainment rooms.

To summarize, an analysis of terms revealed that in Charleston parlor was the dominant term used by probate assessors throughout most of the eighteenth century to denote a primary entertainment room. By the last decade of that century, the term drawing room was clearly in use and beginning to gain momentum in its popularity. During the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century, the term drawing room was rapidly embedded into the Charleston vocabulary. These findings are represented in the line graph below (table 2).
Entertainment Space Combinations in a Single Household

Analysis revealed that several inventories recorded a single household as sometimes having both a drawing room and a parlor. This combination of both a parlor and drawing room in a single household was observed in six inventories all recorded after 1792. A comparison was made of the total assessed value of the contents of both room types in inventories that contained both a drawing room and a parlor. This query indicates that a higher monetary value was frequently placed on drawing rooms. In four out of six of these inventories, a higher value was placed on the contents of the drawing room.

Table 2: Line Graph Showing the Evolution of Room Terminology 1728 through 1866.
The comparison above shows that Charlestonians who owned both a parlor and a drawing room were more likely to have expended more money on their drawing rooms. Further comparisons of the average monetary value assessors placed on parlors and drawing rooms for all inventories in this study is are listed below:

Average Amount in Dollars ($) Spent on Drawing Rooms: $338.92
Average Amount in Dollars ($) Spent on Parlors: $221.63
Average Amount in Pounds (£) Spent on Drawing Rooms: £32.75192
Average Amount in Pounds (£) Spent on Parlors: £127.43

Given that parlor was the predominate term used in the eighteenth century (during the same period when the British colonies were still using the pound) it is not possible to make a meaningful comparison between the amounts being allocated to parlors and drawing rooms recorded in pounds. However, if one compares the average value of

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192 Inventories in this study continued to occasionally be recorded in pounds into the first decade of nineteenth century.
entertainment spaces recorded in dollars there is a striking difference in the average value assessors placed of the drawing room as compared to the parlor. The comparison of monetary values placed on rooms in households that listed both a parlor and drawing room shows that more money was typically allocated to the drawing room. A comparison of average values of these rooms overall supports this finding.

QUERY FINDINGS:

FUNCTIONS AND EVOLUTION OF THE CHARLESTON PARLOR & DRAWING ROOM: 1728-1866

GENTILITY:

PICTURES AND PRINTS

GAMING AND MUSIC

TEA DRINKING

PICTURES AND PRINTS

PERIOD 1: 1728-1791

Beginning with the earliest inventories sampled and continuing throughout this period, pictures and prints were found to be common in the Charleston parlor. Prints, especially, were a staple of the parlor. They were only listed in multiple numbers.  

193 In the eighteenth century, prints were separated from the classification of pictures. While paintings remained unaffordable and unavailable for most, printed images were an inexpensive choice. Prints were widely available and in great demand. Martin Brückner, *Early American Cartographies* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 386-398.
Prints were observed in the earliest inventory dating to 1728. Assessors of this inventory logged the presence of an astounding 120 prints—the largest number of prints recorded for any entertainment space in this study—of “several kinds” in a parlor. Subsequent inventories from this period also showed large quantities of prints in other parlors. One inventory (1744) boasts thirteen prints in the parlor. The assessors of this estate also noted the subject of these prints, “the Royal Family.” They also noted that “some” of these prints were “in frames.” Like the 120 prints of “several kinds” found in the 1728 parlor, the latest (1791), recorded twenty-seven prints of “different sorts.” Display of an assortment of various prints was common in the Charleston parlor of this period. The sole record of items specifically termed “pictures” in the inventories examined for this period was in 1754. As with prints they were also recorded in multiple numbers. This inventory recorded a total of twenty-six “pictures in glass” in the parlor.

Another noteworthy observation in the Charleston parlors of this period was the abundance of maps recorded by assessors. Beginning with a 1732 inventory maps were observed to have been a regular addition to the parlor at least through the 1750s. Several of these were noted as being “old.” Further, unlike prints, which were most commonly recorded in multiple, maps were most often recorded as singular. The only

194 Maps became “acceptable” as tasteful consumer goods in the eighteenth century. Prior to 1750 large ornamental maps were not widely available on the American market. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, a fledgling American map trade began to develop into a lucrative business. By the 1770s the number of ornamental maps available for sale in America had reached unprecedented numbers. This suggests that ornamental maps were part of the burgeoning marketplace flush with consumer goods. “Eighteenth-century advertisements vividly document the ascent of map commerce in British America” as acceptable decorative goods. Vendors specializing in printed goods pointedly sold maps next to prints as early as 1721. Maps were often sold next to print genres deemed “morally edifying” or “tasteful entertainment,” such as picturesque landscapes and seascapes. Brückner, Early American Cartographies, 399.
exception was in a 1744 inventory which recorded that parlor as having on display twelve “small” maps “in frames.”

PERIOD 2: 1792-1815

Following the emergence of the term drawing room (1792) in the inventories sampled for this study, prints especially continued their popularity in the parlor.\(^{195}\) By 1800 pictures and prints had also firmly been incorporated into the Charleston drawing room. They continued as a staple of the drawing room throughout this time period. However, a new pattern was observed. Charleston’s parlors from the previously-examined period recorded pictures and prints in either odd or even quantities. In this period, they were noticeably most often recorded in even numbers. Usually numbering four, eight, twelve, and sixteen. It appears multiples of four were most common. Depending on whether or not the objects were recorded as having been in the parlor or the drawing room, no difference in the precise quantity of either pictures of prints was apparent,

Paintings and engravings, appear as a “new” form observed in this period. Paintings first appear on an inventory for a drawing room evaluated in 1810. Assessors of this inventory noted two paintings in this drawing room. Paintings continue to appear only amongst the contents of drawing room throughout this period, and in quantities of

\(^{195}\) The invention of lithography around 1800 made it possible to produce a large amount of prints from a single drawing executed on a block of limestone. Thanks to ease of production and economical distribution, it did not take long for lithography to find a broad range of applications in art and commerce. As a means of multiplying drawings, it was embraced by portraitists and illustrators. Ives, Colta. “Lithography in the Nineteenth Century.” In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/lith/hd_lith.htm (October 2004)
either one or two. Engravings also appear for the first time on the record in period. The earliest account of engravings recorded in an inventory that dates to 1811. Two engravings were recorded for a drawing room and one “large” engraving for a parlor of the same household.

PERIOD 3: 1816-1839

There were no engravings or paintings recorded for either the parlor or drawing room in the inventories examined for this period. However, pictures and prints continued as a mainstay. Multiples of four, or six were most common. Although both forms also appear in the parlor, pictures and prints in this period were found much more often in the drawing room.

PERIOD 4: 1840-1866

In this period, Access queries revealed a reemergence of engravings that first appeared in this study in both a parlor and drawing room of the same household in an inventory from 1811. Paintings too, which first appeared in the contents of a drawing room dating to 1810, were not present in the period last observed (1815-1839). Engravings again appear on the record in a parlor dating to 1843. Additional engravings were observed twice more in inventories dating to this period. In both instances, they were recorded as having been in a drawing room. In one of these inventories, the assessor included additional information, noting that this drawing room (the last in this study, dating to 1866), contained two “small” engravings “on the mantle,” as well as five
other engravings. However, these additional engravings included no further
distinguishing detail. Paintings do not reemerge on the records in this period until 1866
in a drawing room. Prints do not appear in this period; a notable observation, as they
were found regularly, first in the parlor (1728-1791), and in both the drawing room and
parlor (1792-1839). Pictures continue to appear in inventories of this period, continuing
in quantities of six and only in the drawing room.

SUMMARY FINDINGS: 1728-1866

It is unclear why ornamental maps which were a popular addition to the
Charleston parlors of the eighteenth century did not make their way into either the parlors
or drawing rooms of the nineteenth century.196

Prints were initially observed in a parlor in the earliest inventory in this study
Prints, described as being lumped in multiple numbers and of “several kinds,” or of
“different sorts,” were first commonly observed in parlors throughout period one. Prints
in that period were listed as having been in either odd or even numbers. Items termed
“pictures” specifically appeared only once in a parlor of this period.

In period two, prints in multiple numbers continued to be seen in the parlor.
However, around 1800 prints also moved into the drawing room. Unlike the parlors in
period one, however, in which assessors listed pictures and prints, a new pattern emerged.
In this period assessors only listed these items together as “pictures and prints,” and not

196 Vendors of printed goods intentionally sold maps next to prints as early as 1721. They were often sold
next to print genres such as picturesque landscapes and seascapes which were deemed tasteful or morally
separately as in period one. This pattern was true for both the parlor and drawing room in this period. Interestingly, query findings also revealed that unlike the previous period in which prints were commonly recorded as having been in either odd or even numbers, in this period pictures and prints were noticeably most often recorded in multiples of even numbers. Multiple pictures and prints were often listed in quantities of four, eight, twelve, and sixteen. However, it appears multiples of four were most common. The fondness for items in even numbers in the nineteenth century not seen in the eighteenth was observed in other queries in this study. In period two no difference in this pattern of multiple prints in even numbers was found between rooms termed either parlor or drawing room. It was a pattern seen in both rooms early on.

These are the first of several instances found throughout this study in which patterns established in the early Charleston parlors of period one seem to shift around the end of the eighteenth century at the same time the term drawing room was beginning to be used as a new term for denoting a principal entertainment space in Charleston. It is also the first of many instances where a newly-emerging pattern was, at least for as short period, observed in both the parlor and the early drawing rooms. Meaning that even though assessors were still widely using the term parlor in the last decade of the eighteenth century some of those rooms initially at least mirrored similar emerging patterns as those found in the early drawing room.

Ultimately, one sees this taste for multiple pictures and prints in even numbers transition firmly as a pattern specific to the drawing room by period three. However, by this period, these items were much more likely at this time to be found only in the
drawing room which by this period was a term firmly in use by assessors. By the final period observed, the widely available and inexpensive print was no longer a staple of the drawing room. Drawing rooms instead boasted the more highly prized items of pictures.

**GAMING AND MUSIC**

**PERIOD 1: 1728-1791**

Items relating to gaming appear in the parlor of the first inventory of this study. Access queries into this topic showed that the Charleston parlor was clearly used for the pastimes of backgammon and card playing during this period. The backgammon table and “boxes” present in 1728 as did the card table and fish counters. Card tables were most often listed as “small.” Listed only as singular items were backgammon and card tables. Additionally, both types of game tables continued in the Charleston parlor throughout the period between 1728 and 1791. No objects associated with the playing of musical instruments appeared in the inventories examined in this study prior to 1798.

**PERIOD 2: 1792-1815**

Backgammon tables were no longer observed in this period. However, an explosion of card tables appeared on the records. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, just before the term drawing room begins to gain momentum as a term used by Charleston assessors, card tables continue to be observed as having been only in the

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197 Anything used in counting or keeping account: round piece of metal, ivory, or other material, formerly used in performing arithmetical operations. In later times used chiefly in keeping an account or reckoning in games of chance, esp. cards. (These counters are of various shapes, according to convenience.) *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “Counter,” accessed June 22, 2016, http://www.oed.com.libproxy.clemson.edu
parlor. Unlike the last period, however, when card tables were found to have been listed only singularly, card tables in Charleston parlor in the last decade of the eighteenth century are found in pairs. With the start of the nineteenth century, a shift was observed regarding card tables. In this period the card table appears to have firmly moved to the drawing room. These items were sometimes noted as being of mahogany or more often simply as general-type card tables. These items were seen in the overwhelming majority of drawing rooms examined for this period and nearly without exception noted as being in pairs. Interestingly, the sole inventory recorded post eighteen hundred to include the card table in the parlor also notes that this parlor contained “two” card tables, while in the drawing room of the same household the card table was recorded as having been a “pair.”

Although no items associated with music were recorded as having been in the examined in the last and earliest period examined, an abundance of these types of items were discovered in the records examined for this period. The piano forte was recorded as having been amongst the contents of two parlors examined prior to eighteen hundred. However, similar to the pattern observed with card tables, with the start of the nineteenth century at the time when the term drawing room was beginning to gain momentum with assessors as a means of denoting social space, piano fortes were subsequently recorded as having been only amongst the contents of the drawing room. Piano fortes were also sometimes noted as having accompanying music benches. Beginning with an inventory recorded in 1810, pianos too appear on the record during this period. In contrast to the piano forte, however, pianos appear evenly as having been in both the drawing room and the parlor. The harmonica accounts for another musical item not witnessed in the last
PERIOD 3: 1816-1839

In this period, the card table clearly retained its popularity as a fixture of the Charleston drawing room. It was a furniture type seen in the drawing room of nearly every inventory examined for this period. No card tables were found in the parlor in this period. The earlier-established pattern of the card table having overwhelmingly been recorded in pairs also continued throughout this period. In a handful of inventories only a single card table was recorded as having been in the drawing room. However, that was the exception and not the rule. Card tables in this period continued to be most often recorded as general-type of card table with no further distinctions made. Several card tables were specifically noted as being mahogany. Mahogany card tables were only recorded in pairs. Card boxes commonly were observed in the drawing room of this period.

The same types of musical instruments observed in the inventories of the last period continued to be seen in this period. A smattering of pianos and piano fortes were observed, although not in significant enough numbers to warrant a proper analysis. The upright grand piano first appeared in a drawing room dating to 1815.

PERIOD 4: 1840-1866

The card table (most often recorded as a general-type of card table but also sometimes as mahogany), continued its pattern as a mainstay of the Charleston drawing
room. Card tables were now observed only in the drawing room. In fact, the card table was ubiquitous. A fondness for card tables recorded in pairs also continued into and throughout this period. In this period the piano forte does not appear on the record. The piano, however, appears several times in this period, sometimes listed as having accompanying music stands or benches. The piano forte moved into the drawing room. It was observed only in that room subsequent to eighteen hundred.

SUMMARY FINDINGS: 1728-1866

Findings for items associated with gaming uncovered a pattern very similar to that seen with prints in the previous query. In the parlors of period one, specialized gaming tables were only listed as singular. However, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, just before the term drawing room begins to gain momentum, card tables continued to be found only in the parlor. Nevertheless, card tables in Charleston parlors in the last decade of the eighteenth century began to be recorded as specifically being in pairs. Similarly, prints were initially recorded in either odd or even numbers in the parlors of period one. However, a clear shift in a preference for prints in even numbers (eight, twelve, and sixteen, and especially four) emerged as patterns seen in both the parlor and the early drawing rooms of period two. Although the pattern for specialized gaming tables, especially card tables, in pairs was established in the Charleston parlors in the last decade of the eighteenth century, this pattern rapidly and firmly moved away from the parlor and into the early drawing room. Card tables were observed in almost all drawing rooms after the turn of the century in this period and nearly without exception were noted
as being in pairs. Only one inventory in this period recorded post eighteen hundred recorded card tables in a parlor. The pattern for card tables in pairs which not only moved quickly and firmly away from the parlor and into the drawing room but continued as a key feature of that room throughout periods three and four.

No musical items were observed in the parlors of period one. However, an abundance of these types of items were discovered in the records examined in period two. The piano forte, however, was first recorded for two parlors in the last decade of the eighteenth century at the beginning of period two. However, similar to the pattern observed with card tables these items quickly moved away from the parlor in the first decade of the nineteenth century to be found only amongst the contents of the drawing room. Like paintings, some items in this study were observed only in either the parlor or drawing room.

TEA DRINKING

PERIOD 1: 1728-1791

Tea equipage was an exceptionally common finding in the Charleston parlor during this period. Tea items in various forms appeared in parlors a total of twenty-three times in this period. In Charleston, the colony’s white per capita import of tea and tea equipage was already overshadowing that which was imported into Virginia and Maryland as early as 1733. In fact, during the period between 1733 and 1737, Charleston was importing 0.53 pounds of tea per capita to Virginia and Maryland’s 0.10 pounds. Charleston’s import of China and earthenware pieces for tea drinking during this period
was 9.7 per capita as compared with just 1.6 pieces per capita in Virginia and Maryland.\(^{198}\) A reference to tea paraphernalia appeared in the in the 1728 probate inventory. This inventory lists one tea kettle made of brass. Tea items appear to have been a mainstay of the room throughout period one. Tea tables also make their appearance very early in the inventories and were found to be the most common item associated with tea consumption in the parlor in this period. The only other furniture form specifically relating to tea consumption found amongst these inventories was the tea stand. However, tea stands were much less common in the parlor than the tea table. Tea tables in this period were often recorded by assessors with no further distinguishing details, such as indication of the wood-type with which they were constructed. However, when assessors did note a particular wood used, the vast majority were recorded as being made of mahogany. The first record in this study of a tea table specifically recorded as being mahogany dates to 1754. The only other tea table in this period with an additional detail was a “round” tea table constructed of “madera wood.” This inventory was recorded in 1744.\(^{199}\) Also of note, when tea tables were recorded in the parlors dating from this period, they were without exception recorded as singular items.


\(^{199}\) Although the room in which these items were found was not included in this inventory, according to MESDA’s “Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820,” the first evidence of this wood used in tables was in the 1726/1727 inventory of Albert Muller who had “one Scrutore & one small table of made of madeira wood. Rauschenberg, "Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820," accessed October 15, 2016, http://www.mesdajournal.org/2013/documentary-evidence-furniture-forms-terminology-charleston-south-carolina-ii/#TableWoodMadeira
Other tea equipage recorded in the Charleston parlor during this period was the tea tray, tea chest, mahogany tea chest, tea board, tea canister, tea tong, tea spoon, tea pot, tea kettle, tea strainer, and tea china. Parlors from this period often contained a variety of tea accessories. However, although a particular parlor may have boasted a mahogany tea table, tea tongs, tea chest, pot, and kettle, only one of each of these items was noted by assessors. Very infrequently did the Charleston parlor of this period possess multiples of the same item.200

PERIOD 2: 1792-1815

In this period an abundance of tea equipage continued to be observed in the parlor recorded in the last decade of the eighteenth century after the term drawing room was in use. Observed were two findings of particular note. Firstly, similar a shift in the numbers of specialized gaming tables—found only as singular items in the parlors of period one but observed in pairs beginning in the parlors of the last decade of the eighteenth century—during this same time frame several items of tea equipage began to be observed in multiple numbers. Although several of these same items were observed in the parlors of period one, tea-related items seen in multiple beginning in this period were: the tea tray, tea chest, mahogany tea chest, tea tongs, tea spoon, tea pot, tea strainer, and tea china. Numbers of tea spoons were especially seen in abundance, sometime

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200 These being two tea boards in an inventory dating to 1754, and two tea chests in an inventory recorded in 1776.
numbering more than thirty but always more than ten. Objects such as tea china, cups, and trays were also noticeably more numerous.

Further, card tables which at first continued to be found only in the parlor in the last decade of the eighteenth century even though three drawing rooms were recorded in that decade, but eventually became a mainstay found only in the drawing room beginning in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Contrastingly, however, tea equipage observed in multiples was seen immediately in the first drawing room recorded in 1792. It was seen also in the other two drawing rooms recorded in the last decade of the eighteenth century again with multiple items of the same kind. Consistently, the tea table as well as well as tea-related items were seen in multiple in both the parlor and drawing room in this period with no discernable preference for being in either room. Of all tea-related items observed in this period, only Japanned tea items and mahogany tea table were observed were observed to have favored the drawing room.

PERIOD 3: 1816-1839

No significant shift in patterns associated with tea consumption in this period was noted to have differed notably from the last. There were no noticeable shifts in patterns or items established in period three after the term drawing room was first employed.

PERIOD 4: 1840-1866

Tea tables and equipage continue to be observed in both the parlor and drawing room throughout this period. Again, with no significant shift in the patterns or items
established in the period examined between 1792 and 1815 after the appearance of the term drawing room.

SUMMARY FINDINGS: 1728-1866

Tea equipage began to appear in noteworthy quantities in the parlors of period one. A reference to tea paraphernalia initially appears in the first probate inventory utilized in this study. Although an assortment of tea equipage was found in exceptional numbers in both the parlor and drawing room, one item associated with tea consumption, the tea table, was found to be the most abundant throughout the entirety of this study. In fact, the tea table was the single most common item found amongst all inventories included in this study.

With the emergence of the term drawing room, the consumption of tea was not observed to have been relegated to either the parlor or the drawing room. Instead, tea drinking was found to have been fairly evenly distributed between the parlor and the drawing room as soon as the drawing room appeared in this study. Unlink card tables, which eventually transitioned to being an item only found in the drawing room, tea equipage did not disappear from parlors after 1791.

OTHER BEHAVIORS:

READING AND CORRESPONDENCE

EATING AND DRINKING

SLEEPING
READING AND CORRESPONDENCE:

PERIOD 1: 1728-1791

Books appear in the parlors of the earliest-recorded inventories sampled, beginning with a “sundry, printed books” recorded in a “little parlor” in 1734. Collections of books are seen in the Charleston parlor throughout the remainder of this period. A single inventory dating to 1751 lists the specific titles of books found in that parlor as Three volumes of “Roderick’s Random,” one “Quatro Bible,” one volume “New Testament Folio,” and one Testament. No items termed magazine appear in the parlor during this period. Although none appear in the earliest parlors in this period, the bookcase and desk were found in the Charleston parlor of this period. The first desk to was in an inventory dating to 1776. This desk was noted as being constructed of mahogany. The bookcase was first observed in an inventory from 1776. Both the general bookcases, mahogany book cases, and desks appear steadily throughout the remainder of this period.

PERIOD 2: 1792-1815

Access queries revealed that following a pattern which emerged towards the end of period one, book cases, desks (sometimes referred to specifically as “writing desks” by assessors), and books all continued to appear regularly and consistently in the Charleston parlor during this period. Most notably, although they were recorded fairly commonly in the inventories dating to this period, these types of objects were only recorded as having been in rooms designated as parlor by assessors during this period. Although the term
drawing room began to emerge with regularity in the inventories in the first decade of the
nineteenth century, no inventories examined for this period listed either associated with
correspondence or reading in the Charleston drawing room.

PERIOD 3: 1816-1839

Findings showed that during this period, books continued to be listed commonly
by Charleston probate assessors. However, in this period too, books continued to be
listed as having only been in the parlor. Magazines, which were not observed in previous
periods began to appear in the inventories from this period, beginning in an inventory
dating to 1816.201 However, again, only amongst the contents of the parlor. Magazines
were commonly listed by assessors as either simply “magazines,” but were also
sometimes listed as “one lot,” or “a lot of” magazines. Books cases continue to appear in
the parlor of this period although more sporadically that in period two. Only a single
desk appears in the inventories in this period. This “small” desk was recorded as having
been in a drawing room in 1817. It represents only one of two references to items
associated with reading and or correspondence to appear in a drawing room at any point
in this study.

PERIOD 4: 1840-1866

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201 In the mid 1800s monthly magazines gained popularity. They were general interest to begin, containing
some news, vignettes, poems, history, political events, and social discussion. Joseph D. Straubhaar and
Robert LaRose, Media Now: Understanding Media Culture and Technology (Belmont, CA:
Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004), 72.
Although desks were not recorded in the contents of any parlors from this period, book cases, books, and magazines, continue to appear in the parlor. No significant change in pattern concerning these types of items was observed in this period. Further, unlike magazines which appeared as a “new” item beginning in the parlor of the previous period, no items not observed in previous periods were seen. A single item associated with reading and correspondence, a “gilt” inkstand, appeared in a drawing room from this period.

SUMMARY FINDINGS: 1728-1866

Queries into the general habits related to reading and correspondence reveal that these type of activities, when they occurred in a social space, were overwhelmingly carried out in parlors. This was true of all but two inventories. Other items and behaviors examined in this study such as card playing, initially witnessed in both the parlor and the drawing room but eventually coming to favoring the drawing room. Tea consumption showed no preference for either room type. In contrast, items associated reading and correspondence were first observed in the parlors of period one and were found to have firmly stayed there.

EATING AND DRINKING

PERIOD 1: 1728-1791

Examination of the Access queries revealed that the practice of eating and drinking was a behavior that occurred profusely in the Charleston parlor during this
period. Various items recorded as having been in the parlor specifically relate to the consumption of food, alcohol, tea, and coffee.\textsuperscript{202} It was discovered that China objects were the most plentiful items relating to general food and beverage consumption found in the parlors of this period. These items were china plates, soup plates, salad dishes, mugs, both large and small china bowls. The most common china item seen in the Charleston parlor in this period were “china dishes,” or “table china.” China dishes and table china were often listed as a “lot,” or “collection” of, or sometimes as “a set.” “Queen’s ware, a cream-colored Wedgwood earthenware, so named after Queen Charlotte who gave royal patronage to J. Wedgwood, was common in the Charleston parlor later in this period. It first appeared in an inventory dating to 1786.\textsuperscript{203}

Several other objects were recorded on the inventories of this period. These were the knife box or case, general dishes and crockery, plates, stone plates, plate warmers, bottles, stone jars, pickle jars, glass tumblers, butlers, cruet stand, mortars, table mats, porringer, salvers, salts, spice boxes, sugar dishes, waiters and milk, mustard, and pepper pots. Additionally, several items were noted as having been constructed of brass, such as pepper pots and plate warmers. Butlers were not observed until later in this period. Cruet stands and waiters were not recorded prior to 1751.

Items related to beverage consumption were also plentiful in Charleston parlors of this period. Items related to the consumption of alcohol were bottle stands, quart

\textsuperscript{202} A complete analysis of tea drinking in Charleston entertainment rooms was discussed previously in this study and is not included here.
decanters, wine glasses (typically multiple), a silver tankard, rum cases both large and small which included several bottles of rum each, and demijohns. These items were found consistently throughout inventories in this period. Items relating to coffee consumption such as coffee mills and coffee pots (some copper), were relatively scant and found only in inventories dating to the 1750s.

PERIOD 2: 1792-1815

Continuing to be noted in this period were a majority of the same items observed in period one. Several items were noticeably more plentiful such as castors, butlers, spice boxes, trays, waiters. The numbers of inventories listing general crockery and glassware, knife trays and boxes also noticeably increased in this period. However, several items such as “Japan” waiters, bread baskets, dessert spoons and knives, “diaper” table cloths, table linens, towels, the dumb waiter, sauce boats, and ladles for soup and punch were observed in this period and not in the last. The sideboard was seen early in this period. So was the breakfast table and dining table with ends. Most notably, however, after the the term drawing room was employed in 1792, eating habits, when they occurred in a social space continued to transpire almost solely in the parlor. In rare instances, objects such as the dessert spoon or knife box appeared in the drawing room in this period.

Some alcohol-related items, such as the bottle stand, decanter, silver tankard, rum cases, and demijohns observed in the last period continued. Most notable, however, was the appearance of the cellaret, and cooler (or wine cooler) in this period. The cellaret is first seen in an inventory dating to 1806, the cooler in 1792. Both items were first
observed in a drawing room but were subsequently also found in parlors. In fact, although items related specifically to the consumption of alcohol were observed more often in the parlors of this period, they were not uncommon in the drawing room.

As in the last period, items related to coffee consumption were extremely scant. Coffee-related goods observed in this period were the coffee biggin, Japanned coffee biggin, coffee urn, and the coffee pot. All of these items were recorded only once. The coffee biggin and Japanned coffee biggin were recorded in the same inventory dating to 1792. The coffee biggin and coffee pot were in a parlor. The Japanned coffee biggin and the coffee urn were in a drawing room.

PERIOD 3: 1816-1839

Items and patterns associated with general food consumption followed patterns observed in the last. No “new” goods were noted in this period not seen in the last. There was also no increase in the numbers of items. Observed, instead, was a decrease. Not only was this decrease seen in the variety of eating & drinking items listed but in their amounts as well. Although, when noted, objects associated with food consumption were still listed overwhelmingly as having been the parlor, even the parlors of this period contained only a smattering of these types of items.

Similar items associated with alcohol consumption observed in the last period were found in this period as well with no evident shift in their types or numbers. As in the last period, alcohol-related objects were found in both the drawing room and parlor with no apparent partiality given to either room.
PERIOD 4: 1840-1866

Items and patterns associated with general food and drink consumption observed in the last period continued into this period. As was noted for the last period, many of the items of this type observed in the first two periods were no longer seen in either room in this last period examined. Items such as the sideboard and plate warmers appear in the parlors of this period, but they were found infrequently and sporadically. Items associated with general food consumption continued not to be found in the drawing room.

SUMMARY FINDINGS: 1728-1866

Charlestonians were clearly using their parlors for the taking of their meals at least as early as 1728. The earliest Charleston parlors were fairly well appointed when it came to objects used for food consumption especially. A surprising variety of specialized items for eating such as cruet stands, mortars, table mats, porringers, salvers, salts, spice boxes, sugar dishes, waiters and milk, mustard, and pepper pots were found in the early parlors of period one. In fact, multiple items relating to the consumption of food and drink appear in all inventories examined from this period. Charlestonians also clearly had a fondness for china dishes,” or “table china.” The drinking of wine and rum were clearly taking place in the early parlors. Multiple wine glasses indicate wine was being consumed in the parlor throughout this period. Charlestonians were consuming coffee in the early parlor. Coffee consumption, however, was relatively rare in the Charleston parlor. Around the same time the term drawing room was first employed in this study in 1792, specialized items related specifically to food consumption increased both in
number and variety. However, food consumption continued to transpire almost solely in
the parlor. Unlike card tables which moved from the parlor to the drawing room around
the turn of the eighteenth century or tea consumption which was uniformly distributed
between the parlor and the drawing room as soon as the drawing room came into fashion,
food consumption very clearly was an activity that remained relegated to the parlor. This
was not observed to have changed throughout the remainder of this study. A significant
decreased in items related specifically to food consumption was observed in period three
(1816-1839). These objects found so abundantly in the earlier parlors of period one and
two also eventually all but disappeared from the Charleston parlor by period four (1839-
1866).

Coffee consumption was still taking place in the parlor in the last decade of the
eighteenth century. However, its popularity in the parlor which was minimal at best in
the period one did not increase. Items related to coffee consumption were seen in both
the parlor and drawing room in that decade but not in numbers or anywhere equal to
items related to food consumption. By period two, items related to the consumption of
alcohol were observed most often in the parlor. However, they were not uncommon in
the drawing room. Findings did not show that Charlestonians had a striking preference
for consuming alcohol in either room. This pattern was consistent throughout the
remainder of this study.
SLEEPING

PERIOD 1: 1728-1791

Access query analysis provides evidence of the activity of sleeping having occurred in the Charleston parlor. Although objects pointing unmistakably to this activity were found in only three inventories in this study, all such instances occurred in this period before the term drawing room was first employed. The first sleep-related items were observed in a parlor inventory dating to 1754. This parlor contained a rather well-appointed set of items related to sleeping. Sleep-related items recorded as being in this parlor were listed as, bedstead and feather bed, bolsters, multiple pillows, counterpane, and coverlid. Two remaining inventories included in this study listed bed furnishings or related items in a parlor. This inventory also includes bolsters, multiple pillows, and counterpanes. The inventory also includes a head cloth and pavilion, as well as a mahogany bedstead with feather mattress, an additional mattress, and “English blankets” to boot! The last of these inventories to include sleep items lists only a “set” of “bed furniture, chintz, ‘compleat’ with window curtains.”

SUMMARY FINDINGS: 1728-1866

The inclusion of sleep-related objects recorded by assessors in several Charleston parlors does not necessarily indicate that this behavior was necessarily typical of this period. However, it does warrant reiterating that in the subsequent periods analyzed in this study, sleep-related objects were seen again in any later any primary entertainment space.
Findings showed that some previously-discussed items and behaviors found in the parlors of period one, such as food consumption and reading and correspondence, remained almost solely in the parlor. Others, such as card playing very clearly moved away from the parlor and firmly into the drawing room. What makes these observations concerning sleep taking place in the Charleston parlor unique is that this is the sole type of behavior queried in this study that did not in some way make its way from period one into either the drawing room, parlor, or both in the three subsequent periods queried.

FURNISHINGS AND OBJECTS:

SEATING

TABLES

LIGHTING

SEATING

PERIOD 1: 1728-1791

Query findings suggest that the earliest Charleston parlors recorded prior to 1760 would have commonly included one arm chair and either two “elbow chairs” or two chairs constructed of black walnut wood. Findings also show that the earliest Charleston parlors were commonly appointed with either general types of chairs with no further descriptive identifiers, cane chairs, or chairs with rush bottoms, always in sets of twelve. Straw-bottomed chairs were also found in large quantities. Most often that number was six. This clearly indicates that all of these types of chairs were used, at least on occasion,
for entertaining multiple guests in one’s parlor. Different groupings of seating forms were in various combinations in individual parlors. For example, while some of the earliest Charleston parlors examined for this study contained only one arm chair and two elbow chairs, others contained one arm chair and a dozen cane chairs. No exact seating groupings were observed to have been dogmatically standard. Beyond these items, several of the earliest Charleston parlors would have also contained a single stool. Although not typical, a “child’s bass chair” was listed as having been in an early Charleston parlor in 1734. Bass is short for bass-bottomed chair which is a woven split reed or grass.\(^{204}\) No single seating piece intended to accommodate multiple sitters were observed in the earliest Charleston parlors.

Findings revealed that later parlors in this period would have likely been appointed differently than what was typical of the earliest Charleston parlors. Findings indicate that the typical Charleston parlor between about 1775 and 1791 would still likely have included a single arm chair. However, instead of the single arm chair and two elbow chairs seen in the earlier parlors, later parlors would have instead probably included two Windsor chairs. Chairs recorded in large enough numbers to have obviously been used while entertaining guests in the Charleston parlor was now more likely to have been cabriole chairs in quantities of twelve, either with or without Damask coverings, or rush-

\(^{204}\) Bradley L. Rauschenberg defines this seating form as: “A term found in Charleston probate inventories from 1735 to 1763 most frequently as ‘Bass Bottomed’ which is a woven split reed or grass. This term describes the bottoms of chairs in inventories which also identify ‘Rush Bottoms’ and ‘Cane Back’, thus the appraisers recognized Bass as different from Rush and cane.” Rauschenberg, "Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820," accessed October 15, 2016, http://www.mesdajournal.org/2013/documentary-evidence-furniture-forms-terminology-charleston-south-carolina-ii/#SeatBackBass
botted chairs in sets of six. However, the Charleston parlor at this time was most likely to have contained six mahogany chairs. Mahogany chairs would sometimes have had leather bottoms but were still found in sets of six. As with the Charleston parlors earlier in the eighteenth century, groupings of seating furniture varied from parlor to parlor.

PERIOD 2: 1792-1815

Chairs in the parlors during this period still typically numbered either six or twelve. Windsor chairs, which were still common, were recorded only in sets of twelve when in the parlor. Chairs noted simply as “green chairs” emerge a handful of times in the inventories dating to the 1790s. When recorded, these chairs were found in the parlor and were always six in number. Chairs designed with comfort in mind, including the Arm chair or Mahogany Arm chair, continued to be found in parlors of this period although still only one in number. In the last decade of the eighteenth century a notable shift was observed in terms used by assessors to denote parlor seating furniture intended for multiple sitters. In this period the term sofa (or sopha) was observed profusely. The sofa was consistently observed in the parlor during this period. Sofas were most frequently recorded as being made of mahogany with horse hair. From inventories examined for the previous period, the only material of note applied to the mahogany chair was the leather bottom. However, beginning around 1800, as with sofas assessors began to note horse hair as an additional material used for mahogany chairs in the parlor. In fact, horsehair appears as a preferred material used for seating in general during this
period. Other seating distinctions began to emerge amongst the contents of the probate inventories as well. For example, chairs were likely to be noted by assessors as having been “covered.” Specifically, records indicated the prevalence of “striped covers.”

The Arm chair, mahogany arm chair, and Windsor chair continued as standards of the parlor until at least 1810. Their typical numbers continued as well, one arm chair and twelve Windsor chairs. Much of the same types of seating furniture found in parlors of this period was also in the drawing room. Unsurprisingly, pieces recorded by assessors simply as “chair” were listed as having been in the drawing room. These were usually noted in quantities of twelve, fourteen, or as many as twenty-four. Mahogany chairs were found in drawing rooms only recorded in sets of twelve, unlike parlors of the same time period in which they were more likely to number, five, eight, or nine. In summary, this evidence points towards an inclination for the placement of an even number of chairs in the drawing room, most often twelve and less regard for an evenness in number of chairs within parlors of the same period.

Also of note during the period was the relative likeliness for chairs found in the drawing room to have been recorded as being “covered.” Furthermore, several instances of general chairs, as well as those made of mahogany, note these pieces as having been “covered.” Of note, were covered “chairs with arms,” as well as mahogany armchairs with “dimity” covers. Overwhelmingly, chairs with “covered arms,” as well as mahogany chairs with dimity covers, were discovered in pairs within the drawing room.

Pieces intended for multiple sitters deemed by assessors to be either a sofa or settee were more likely to have been recorded in the space termed drawing room than in
parlors. Sofas in the drawing room were chiefly recorded as simply “sofa,” though some were also noted as mahogany sofa or horse hair sofa. Single quantities predominated, as was also true of parlors of this same period. The mahogany settee was also observed to have been a seating-type in the Charleston drawing room of this period, with some noted as having dimity covers. Unlike the drawing room sofa, however, mahogany settees were only found in the inventories assessed for this period to total two in number.

PERIOD 3: 1816-1839

Chairs recorded in multiple numbers were still found in both the parlor and the drawing room in this period. The fashion for chairs of all types in even numbers also continued into this period, especially in the drawing room. When noted in odd numbers or in the plural form simply as “chairs” this was much more likely to have been a reference of chairs in a parlor. Typically chairs in the parlor were listed in quantities numbering five or less. Without exception, the room that contained the largest numbers of chairs was in each case the drawing room. The number of chairs recorded in drawing rooms were not observed in quantities of less than twelve. Sets of fourteen or eighteen were common.

The Windsor chair, which first appeared in this study in 1791 and seen often in the parlor until 1810, does not appear in the inventories analyzed from this period. Nevertheless, several items of seating furniture, not previously observed in this study, were first observed in this period. The Easy Chair, as well the so-called “Sitter” were
recorded for the Charleston parlor of this period.\textsuperscript{205} The easy chair and sitter were only observed as having been in the parlor, and both appear as a singular item of its type in that room.

Seating furniture intended for multiple sitters were also recorded for inventories examined for this period. The sofa which first appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century and continued profusely during the previous period now seems to have moved from a staple of the parlor to a staple of the drawing room. Sofas were recorded in the Charleston drawing rooms of this period in numbers of either one or two. Many of these sofas were described as mahogany, often with horse hair. Again, this trait continued a pattern which emerged in the previously-examined period. Other drawing room sofas from this period were noted specifically as having cushions. A pair of footstools first appears on the record in a drawing room dating to 1821. The footstool was observed twice more in this period, both times in a drawing room and each time recorded as two in number.

PERIOD 4: 1840-1866

By far the most notable shift observed in the inventories analyzed for this period was the tremendous increase in the numbers of pieces relating to resting the feet. The footstool, as well as the foot bench and ottoman, were observed in significant numbers. In

\textsuperscript{205} Consultation of Rauschenberg’s "Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston, South Carolina, 1670-1820," unfortunately did not include reference to the seating form of “Sitter.”
every instance observed in this study, this type of piece—regardless of the room to which it belonged—was recorded as having been in quantities of two. Most commonly, these types of pieces were recorded as having been in a drawing room. Only once, within an inventory dated 1817, do these forms appear in a room termed parlor.

The general-type, as well as the mahogany chair, continue their presence into, and throughout this period. However, chairs specifically noted as being mahogany were notably less common than before. For example, the general-type chair was recorded only amongst the contents of rooms termed drawing room during this period, thus continuing the fashion observed during the last period in which these items were recorded in relatively large quantities. Without exception, these records indicate quantities in multiples of two, with twelve chairs in the drawing room being most common.

Mohair chairs were first observed in a drawing room evaluated in 1840. The mohair chair was subsequently seen myriad times throughout this period, always in multiple numbers and only in the drawing room. In addition, the rocking chair was first observed in an inventory dating to 1842. This type of chair was subsequently observed a handful of times throughout the 1860s and always in quantities of either one or two. The rocking chair was most often observed in the drawing room, while the “mohair” rocking chair was always located in the drawing room.

Sofas continued to be typical pieces seen in the drawing room and were most often recorded in single quantities. Like the mohair chair and rocking chair, the mohair sofa was prevalent throughout this period. The mohair sofa was first seen in the contents of a drawing room evaluated in 1840 as a “lot” of mohair sofas. However, mohair sofas
were most often noted as the singular piece of its type. The settee, a seating type that was last observed in the inventories dating between 1792 and 1815, was recorded as having been in two drawing rooms of this period. In both instances, these settees were noted as having totaled two in number.

TRENDS IN ENTERTAINMENT ROOM FURNISHINGS: 1728-1791

Seating

The Earliest Parlors in Period One Showed a Predilection for:
1 Arm Chair
Either 2 “Elbow Chairs” or 2 Chairs Constructed of Black Walnut Wood
12 Cane Chairs or Chairs with Rush Bottoms
1 Stool

Later Parlors in Period One Showed a Predilection for:
1 Arm Chair
2 Windsor Chairs
12 Cabriole Chairs with or Without Damask Coverings
Either 6 Rush-Bottomed Chairs or 6 Mahogany Chairs with or Without Leather Bottoms

(1792-1815)

Parlor:
12 Windsor Chairs
1 Arm Chair
6 Green Chairs
1 Sofa with Horse Hair Bottom
5, 8, Or 9 Mahogany Chairs
1 Sofa Likely of Mahogany with Horse Hair Bottom

Drawing Room:
12 Mahogany Chairs
Either 12, 14, Or 24 Chairs
1 Pair Covered “Chairs with Arms”
1 Pair Mahogany Armchairs with “Dimity” Covers
1 Sofa Likely of Mahogany with Horse Hair Bottom
1 Sofa Likely of Mahogany with Horse Hair Bottom
2 Mahogany Settee with or Without Dimity Covers
(1816-1839)

**Parlor:**
1-5 Chairs
1 Easy chair
1 “Sitter”

**Drawing Room:**
Either 12, 14, or 18 Chairs
Either 1 or 2 Sofas Likely Mahogany, Often with Horse Hair.
1 Or 1 Sofas with Cushions
1 Pair of Footstools

(1840-1866)

**Parlor:**
2 Rocking Chairs
1 Easy chair

**Drawing Room:**
2 Footstools
2 Foot Benches
2 Ottoman
12 Chairs
2-6 Mohair Chairs
2 Mohair Rocking Chairs
1 Mohair Sofa
2 Settees

**TABLES**

PERIOD 1: 1728-1791

Beyond a few pieces listed simply as “table,” queries clearly indicate Charlestonians had a marked taste for tables constructed from mahogany. The exceptions were tables made of pine and tables made of cedar. Tables constructed of mahogany
appeared in the parlor by 1732 and were found uninterruptedly during this period. The mahogany table was recorded in a variety of shapes, sizes, and conditions. Specifically, these pieces were listed as either “large” or “small,” and were sometimes noted as being “old” or broken. Most commonly, tables were recorded as having been either square, round, or oval in shape. Although the majority of mahogany tables were recorded in single quantities, they were also recorded in pairs. Further queries also revealed that some Charleston parlors also contained marble slab-type tables, either with or without frames.

PERIOD 2: 1792-1815

General tables during this period were sometimes recorded as either “small” or “little.” They appeared in the drawing room in 1792 but were also recorded in the parlor throughout this period. The marble slab table continues to appear. Now, however, it was seen in both the parlor and the drawing room. The lady’s work table materializes in records for the first time in a drawing room recorded in 1795. This table-type is subsequently seen in only one other instance during this same period, again in a drawing room. Dining tables, dining tables with ends, the breakfast table, and especially mahogany dining tables, were all present in the records from this period. However, these types of pieces are noticeably absent from the drawing room. Without exception, all tables associated specifically with food consumption were in the parlor during this period. These types of items were not found in the Charleston drawing room.
PERIOD 3: 1816-1839

General-type tables, some “small,” others “round,” continue to appear on the inventories of this period. There was with no obvious tendency for these pieces to have been found more often in either the parlor or the drawing room. End tables make their appearance in this period. They were first recorded in an inventory dating to 1816 and were observed continuously throughout the period. End tables were recorded as having been only in the drawing room and only in either pairs or quantities of two. Dining tables appear more regularly in the earliest inventories of this period but became decidedly scant in the later inventories. However, as was established in the last period, tables associated specifically with general food consumption, such as the dining table, continue to only appear in the parlor during this period and never amongst the contents of the room termed drawing room.

PERIOD 4: 1840-1866

Although quite meager in this final period examined, the “small” table and the marble slab continued in use. Small tables were noted only as being in the drawing room. The marble slab appeared in both rooms, although slightly more often in rooms termed drawing room. The pier table made its first appearance in this study during this period. However, this table type was recorded only twice; once in a drawing room (1841), and once in a parlor (1843).

By far the most notable piece to first be observed in the inventories of this period was the Center table. The Center table appears on record in an inventory dating to 1840
as one “center table” “with cover.” Subsequent center tables were recorded as having marble tops, while other were specifically noted by assessors as wooden. The center table was observed as a table type only appearing in the drawing room. In contrast, the nest table (sometimes mahogany) appeared also for the first time on inventories of this period as a piece common to both the parlor and drawing room.

TRENDS IN ENTERTAINMENT ROOM FURNISHINGS: 1728-1791

**Parlor:**
1 Table
1 Large or Small Square, Round or Oval Mahogany Table
1 Marble Slab-Type Table with or Without Frames.

(1792-1815)

**Parlor:**
1 Marble Slab Table
1 Dining Table Likely Mahogany
1 Dining Tables with End
1 Breakfast Table

**Drawing Room:**
1 Small or Little Table
1 Marble Slab-Type Table
1 Lady’s Work Table (rare)

(1816-1839)

**Parlor:**
1 Small or 1 Round Table

**Drawing Room:**
1 Small or 1 Round Table
1 Pair of End Tables

(1840-1866)
**Parlor:**
1 Marble Slab Table  
1 Pier Table  
Nest Tables

**Drawing Room:**
1 Small Table  
1 Marble Slab Table  
1 Pier Table  
1 Center Table Some with “Covers” or Marble Tops  
Nest Tables

**LIGHTING**

**PERIOD 1: 1728-1791**

Inventory records of objects relating to lighting for this period are relatively scant. However, queries into this topic did reveal a propensity for such objects to have been constructed using either brass or tin. The first evidence in the inventories of lighting being in the Charleston parlor was in 1728. Assessors listed this “parlor as having a “pair” of “brass” branches. From the earliest inventories from this period, the only other record (1744) of lighting objects in the parlor comes in the form of a “tin mounted,” glass lantern. Sconce glasses, most often listed either in pairs or else in quantities of two, begin to appear in the inventories recorded for this period during the early 1770s. Sconce glasses continue to be observed until at least 1792. In the latest inventories from this period, glass shades—also found in pairs—begin to appear on the record.

**PERIOD 2: 1792-1815**

Glass shades continue to be seen regularly and always in pairs. However, these objects were only recorded as having been found in the drawing room. In contrast,
Sconce glasses, which also regularly appeared in the parlors of the last period (also in pairs), were not recorded as having been in either the parlor or the drawing room in inventories dating between 1792 and 1815. Information found in MESDA’s “Documentary Evidence for Furniture Forms and Terminology in Charleston,” sheds light on this finding. Although evidence stemming from probate record uncovered in this study reveals that this particular object was found at least until 1792, according to Rauschenberg, items known as sconce glasses were discovered in the contents of Charleston probate inventories between 1718 and 1765. Rauschenberg argues that after this date the terminology “abruptly changed to ‘Girandoles.’”

Many items associated with lighting were found in this period that were not recorded for the Charleston parlor in the last. These items, as well as the date in which they first appeared in this study include:

- Glass with Girandole (1793)
- Candle Molds (1794)
- Brass Lamp (1795)
- Staircase Lamp (1795)
- Snuffers and Extinguishers (1798)
- Plated Candlestick (1798)
- Japan Lamp (1806)
- Candlesticks (1806)
- Japan Candlestick (1806)
- Silver Candlestick (1810)
- Glass Candlestick (1810)
- Shades (1810)
- Brass-Bound Lantern (1811)
- Glass Lantern (1815)

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Lamp (1815)

The brass-bound lantern, staircase lamp, Japan lamp, candlesticks, and candle molds, were recorded in only one inventory each. In each case they were recorded for a parlor. The glass lantern (1 pair), glass candlestick, Japan, and brass lamp were also recorded only one inventory each. All were found in a drawing room. Snuffers, extinguishers, and shades (usually in pairs) were recorded as having regularly been in both the parlor and drawing room throughout this period. However, glass shades (in pairs), also recorded regularly during this period were only found in the drawing room. Candlesticks in general including brass, and especially plated candlesticks were recorded abundantly for this period. Although brass candlesticks (almost always in pairs), were recorded throughout this period (until 1812), they were only recorded as having been in a parlor. An abundance of both plated and silver candlesticks were amongst the contents of several drawing rooms. Again, silver and silver plated candlesticks were almost always listed as having been in pairs. Glasses with girandoles were recorded during this period. These items first made their appearance in the Charleston parlors of the last decade of the eighteenth century. Glasses with girandoles, when seen subsequent to this first appearance, were only recorded in the Charleston drawing room.

PERIOD 3: 1816-1839

Pairs of glass shades first began to appear in the Charleston parlor in inventories recorded at the end of the eighteenth century. These objects (still in pairs) continued to being located only in the drawing room. Plated candlesticks first appeared in this study
in a parlor dating to 1798. They were observed regularly and continuously in the drawing
room during the entirety of the last period. In this period that same pattern continued. An
interesting finding regarding lighting from this period is the emergence of an object
referred to as a “patent lamp.” This type of item was found only in the drawing room.

PERIOD 4: 1840-1866

Examination of the Access queries showed an exciting and significant shift in the
lighting recorded in the Charleston parlor and drawing room in this period. Candlestick
branches (“gilt” or “silver plated”), as well as the candelabra, all appear in several
drawing rooms beginning in the early 1840s. Candlestick branches are sometimes noted
as existing in pairs. The girandole appears again in this period as “one pair” in a drawing
room dating to 1843. As the numbers of candlesticks declined, several “new” lighting
pieces occur in their place. Globe lamps appear in the drawing room in pairs in the early
1840s and are seen twice more (again in pairs) and in the drawing room only throughout
that decade. The so-called Table lamp also appeared on the record during the early
part of the 1840s. In various inventories throughout this decade it was observed only a
handful of times although exclusively in the parlor. Astral lamps too appeared in the
early 1840s. The Access database reveals that these objects could be found in either

207 Globe Lamp: lamp in which the light source is protected by a globe of glass. Oxford English
Dictionary, s.v. “Globe Lamp,” accessed June 22, 2016,
http://www.oed.com.libproxy.clemson.edu/view/Entry/79025?redirectedFrom=globe+lamp#eid3013905
208 Astral Lamp: one resembling an Argand lamp, with the oil contained in a flattened ring, and so
contrived that uninterrupted light is thrown upon the table below it. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “Astral
Lamp,” accessed June 22, 2016,
http://www.oed.com.libproxy.clemson.edu/view/Entry/12204?redirectedFrom=astral+lamp#eid36024354
the parlor or the drawing room. Astral lamps appear to have been an especially popular item, as they appear consistently during this period with the last one in the final inventory examined in this study dating to 1866. Unlike the globe lamp, which was only recorded as having been in pairs, instances of the Astral lamp varied from room to room. With no apparent partiality towards either room-type, some inventories recorded these objects as having been presented in pairs, while within others only one Astral lamp was recorded. Mantle lamps and Entry lamps were next to appear beginning in an inventory dating to 1850. Moreover, each of these items appear only once and in the same inventory. Likewise, both were recorded as having been amongst the contents of a parlor. A pair of Shade lamps were recorded in the parlor of a subsequent inventory dating to 1854.

**TRENDS IN ENTERTAINMENT ROOM FURNISHINGS: 1728-1791**

**Parlor:**
- 1 Pair of Brass Branches
- 1 Tin Mounted, Glass Lantern
- 1 Pair of Sconce Glasses
- 1 Pair of Glass Shades

**Drawing Room:**
- 1 Pair of Glass Shades
- 1 Pair of Silver or Silver-Plated Candlesticks
Glasses with Girandoles
1 Japan Lamp

(1816-1839)

**Drawing Room:**
1 Pair of Glass Shades
1 Pair of Silver Plated Candlesticks
1 Pair of Glass Candlesticks
2 Patent Lamps (Rare)

(1840-1866)

**Parlor:**
1 Table Lamp
Either 1 Or 1 Pair of Astral Lamps
Mantle Lamps
Entry Lamp
1 Pair of Shade Lamps

**Drawing Room:**
1 Pair of Candlestick Branches Noted as Being Either “Gilt” or “Silver Plated,”
1 Candelabra
1 Pair of Girandoles
1 Pair of Globe Lamps
1 Or 1 Pair of Astral Lamp

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209 Lighting was not found plentiful enough in parlors for this period to make meaningful conclusions.
CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS

Scholars and researchers of material culture rely on probate inventories as a valuable tool for making conclusions about the behavior of those who lived in the past. However, their non-uniform nature has obliged historians to experiment with numerous methods aimed at making the often clumsy data contained in them more useable. Especially as the technology available to study them evolves, it remains necessary that researchers continue to experiment with methods that help make these documents more serviceable. The author’s approach in constructing the database for this study proved to be a useful tool in approaching this task.

These findings concluded that the term drawing room was employed on the Charleston inventories by 1792. Initially, the term drawing room appeared only sporadically in the inventories recorded in the last decade of the eighteenth century. However, by around 1810, the term drawing room was used predominantly Charleston probate assessors as a name for a principal entertainment room. Use of the term parlor did not disappear as from the Charleston probate records the nineteenth century although the drawing room was by then clearly the most important entertaining room.

Access queries show correlations between this change in the naming conventions Charleston probate assessors used for principal entertainment rooms and the furnishings Charlestonians appointed them with as the activities that took place in them shifted. Queries showed that Charleston parlors in the eighteenth-century tended to be
multi-functional rooms. These rooms sometimes contained beds but also boasted tables, gaming equipment, and items associated with dining and tea drinking. Conversely, nineteenth-century Charleston drawing rooms contained items specifically associated with social entertaining such as musical instruments and card tables but very rarely dining equipage. All of the behaviors analyzed in this study were first observed in the Charleston parlor of the eighteenth century. However, each of these behaviors followed individual evolutions and patterns after the term drawing room was first employed by assessors in this study. For example, evidence of card playing was clear in the Charleston parlor early in the eighteenth-century. However, at the same time an explosion of card tables appeared in the probate records in the late eighteenth century these items began to moved fixedly into the drawing room. Other behaviors such as tea drinking followed a different evolution after the introduction of the specialized entertainment space of the drawing room in Charleston. Tea drinking was so pervasive an activity that it was distributed uniformly between the parlor and drawing room. Eating and drinking was an activity that occurred prevalently in the parlor in the eighteenth century. In contrast to tea drinking, this activity stayed in the parlor until it virtually disappeared from that room too. Supporting the assertion that the eighteenth-century Charleston parlor was a much more flexible space than parlors, but especially the drawing rooms, in the nineteenth century, findings showed that Charlestonians were clearly sometimes using their parlors for sleep in the eighteenth century. This practice was the only behavior examined in this thesis that appears to have died out as an acceptable activity
for an entertainment room even before the term drawing room was first employed in this study.

Less significant, but nonetheless notable findings showed that Charlestonians had a taste for furnishing their principal entertainment rooms with objects and furnishings in pairs or even numbers. This proclivity became especially noticeable around the same time frame that the term drawing room was first observed in this study. Evenness in number was observed but was far less common in the the eighteenth-century Charleston parlor. Parlors of this period tended to be equipped with only a single card table, for example. However, in the last decade of the eighteenth century card tables began to appear in pairs. First in the parlor and then only in the drawing room. Chairs, especially, recorded in the earliest inventories showed an obvious tendency towards even numbers. However, it seems almost as if that the arrival of the controlled environment of the drawing room brought with it the solidification for the taste for evenness and order. With the arrival of this new formal room for entertaining they called drawing room, aspirations towards gentility obliged Charlestonians to streamline their notions of what were appropriate behaviors for this room. After undergoing a transitional process, the behaviors they ultimately deemed appropriate for this room are evident in the types of furnishings and objects with which they equipped them.
APPENDIX: COMPLETE LIST OF FIELDS (INDIVIDUAL FURNISHINGS AND OBJECTS) BELONGING TO EACH OBJECT TABLE

PICTURES AND PRINTS

- Engravings
- Maps
- Maps “In Frames”
- Painting
- Picture
- Pictures “In Glass”
- Prints

GAMING

- Backgammon Table
- Backgammon Box
- Card Table
- Card Box
- Fish Counters

MAKING MUSIC

- Harmonica
- Music Bench
- Piano
- Piano Forte
- Upright Grand Piano

BOOKCASES AND CHESTS

- Book Case
- Chest of Drawers
- Clothes Press
- Corner Cupboard
- Mahogany Book Case
- Mahogany Chest of Drawers

DRINKING TEA

- Mahogany Tea Chest
- Mahogany Tea Table
- Tea Board
- Tea Canister
- Tea Chest
- Tea China
- Tea China.
- Tea Kettle
- Tea Pot
- Tea Spoon
- Tea Spoon Tea Pot
- Tea Stand,
- Tea Strainer
- Tea Table
- Tea Tong
- Tea Tray

DESKS

- Desk: General
- Mahogany Desk
- Mahogany Library Desk
- Small Desk

READING

- Books
- Magazines
- Volumes of Books
### EATING: GENERAL

- “Diaper” Table Cloths
- “Japan” Waiters
- Bottles
- Bread Baskets
- Butlers
- Castors
- Crockery
- Cruet Stand
- Dessert Spoons Dessert Kn
- Dumb Waiter
- General Dishes
- Glass Tumblers
- Glassware
- Knife Box Or Case,
- Ladles for Punch
- Ladles for Soup
- Milk Pots
- Mortars
- Mustard, Pots
- Pepper Pots
- Pickle Jars
- Plate Warmers
- Plates
- Porringer
- Salts
- Salvers
- Sauce Boats
- Spice Boxes
- Spice Boxes
- Stone Jars
- Stone Plates
- Sugar Dishes
- Table Linens
- Table Mats
- Towels
- Tray
- Waiters
- Waiters

### DRINKING: GENERAL

- Bottle
- Cup
- Cup and Saucer
- Jar
- Strainer
- Tumbler

### CHINA FOR EATING AND DRINKING

- Blue and White China Soup
- Plates
- China Dishes: General
- China Mug
- China Plate
- China Salad Dishes
- China: General
- Large China Bowl
- Queen’s Ware
- Small China Bowl
- Table China
- Tea China

### DRINKING: ALCOHOL

- Bottle Stand
- Bottle for Liquor
- Cellaret
- Cooler or Wine Cooler
- Decanter
- Demijohn
- Liquor Case
- Mahogany Cellaret
- Rum Case
- Silver Tankard
- Wine Glass
DRINKING: COFFEE

Coffee Biggin
Coffee Mill
Coffee Pot
Coffee Urn
Japanned Coffee Biggin

SLEEPING

Bead Stead
Bed Furniture “Chintz”
Bolsters
Counterpane
Coverlid
English Blankets
Feather Bed
Mahogany Bedstead Feather
Mattress
Pillows

SOPHAS, SETTEES, AND COUCHES

Sofa or Sopha
Couch
Horse Hair Sofa
Mahogany Settee
Settee
Sofas with Cushions

STOOLS AND OTTOMANS

Foot Bench
Foot Stool
Ottoman
Stool

CHAIRS

Arm Chair
Black and Gilt Chair
Black Walnut Chair
Cane Chair
Chair with Cane Bottom
Chair with Leather Bottom
Chair with Rush Bottom
Chair with Straw Bottom
Chair with Striped Covers
Chair: General
Easy Chair
Elbow Chair
Green Chair
Horse Hair Chair
Mahogany Arm Chair with Dimity Cover
Mahogany Arm Chair with Hair Bottom
Mahogany Arm Chair with Leather Bottom
Mahogany Chair
Mahogany Chair with Cover
Mahogany Chair with Covered Arms
Mahogany Chair with Hair Bottom
Mohair Chair
Painted Chair
Sitter
Sitting Chair
Straw Chair
Windsor Chair
Wooden Chair

SPECIALTY CHAIRS

Child’s Bass Chair
Child’s Chair
Corner Chair

ROCKING CHAIRS

Rocking Chair
“Mohair” Rocking Chair
### TABLES

- Nest Tables
- Breakfast Table
- Center Table
- Center Table with “Covers”
- Center Table with Marble Tops
- Dining Table
- Dining Tables with Ends
- End Tables
- Lady’s Work Table
- Mahogany Dining Table
- Marble Slab Table
- Marble Slab-Type Table with Frames
- Oval Mahogany Table
- Pier Table
- Round Mahogany Table
- Round Table
- Sideboard
- Small or Little Table
- Square Table
- Table: Large or Small

### LAMPS AND CANDLES

- Japan Lamp
- Astral Lamps
- Brass Branches
- Brass Lamp
- Brass Lamp
- Brass-Bound Lantern
- Brass, Candlesticks
- Bronze Candlesticks
- Candle Molds
- Candlesticks
- Entry Lamps
- Glass Candlestick
- Glass Candlestick
- Glass Lantern
- Glass Lantern
- Glass With Girandole
- Glasses With Girandoles
- Globe Lamps
- Japan Candlestick
- Japan Lamp
- Lamp
- Mantle Lamps
- Plated Candlestick
- Plated Candlesticks
- Sconce Glasses
- Shades
- Silver Candlestick
- Silver Candlesticks
- Snuffers And Extinguishers
- Staircase Lamp
- Staircase Lamp
- Table Lamp
- Tin Mounted Glass Lantern
FIRE ACCESSORIES

Andirons
Bellows
Chimney Furniture
Fenders Grates
Fire Dogs
Fire Screens
Pokers or Fire Irons
Shovels
Stove
Stove Grate
Tongs

MIRRORS

Glass
Looking Glass
Mirror
mirror with branches
pier glasses

CLOCKS, BAROMETERS, AND THERMOMETERS

Barometer
Clock: General
Eight-Day Clock
Mantle Clock
Sixteen-Day Clock
Table Clock
Thermometer

WINDOW TREATMENTS

Chintz Window Curtains
Curtains or Window Curtains
Drapery Curtains
Sliding Shades
Window Blinds
Window Scarves
Window Shades

CARPETS, RUGS, FLOOR CLOTHS, AND MATS

Carpet: General
“Fine” Carpet
“Old/Worn” Carpet
Baize Carpet
Brussels Carpet
Brussels Staircase Carpet
Scotch Carpet
Scotch Staircase Carpet
Wilton Carpet
Rug: General
Floor Cloth
Painted Floor Cloth
Floor Mat
Hearth Rug
Oil Cloth
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