

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: 'HAVE HONESTLY AND FAIRLY LABOURED FOR MONEY': WILLIAM AND WASHINGTON TUCK AND ANNAPOLIS CABINETMAKING, 1795-1838.

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The careers of William and Washington Tuck coincided with a significant transition of Annapolis furniture-making, and changes in the political and economic hierarchies in the post-revolutionary market economy of Maryland. Both brothers learned their trade under the tutelage of John Shaw at a time when the center of Maryland's cabinetmaking shifted to Baltimore. Politically, republican ideas of democracy and representation began to take hold, and slowly found a place in Annapolis, a town characterized by its adherence to an older system of patronage and backroom negotiations. The Tucks' entrepreneurial talents and social, political, and artisanal connections facilitated their access to the State House, Annapolis' most important source of commerce and employment. This study adds two new players to the scholarly understanding of Annapolis cabinetmaking, a story heretofore dominated by John Shaw, and shows how two artisans in Maryland's capital pursued their trade and maintained their competency in early national Annapolis.

‘HAVE HONESTLY AND FAIRLY LABOURED FOR MONEY’: WILLIAM AND  
WASHINGTON TUCK AND ANNAPOLIS CABINETMAKING, 1795-1838

by

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## Introduction

“Washington G. Tuck, Esq., an old and respected citizen of Annapolis, and formerly State Armorer, died last week.”<sup>1</sup>

On July 4, 1859, only the most astute readers of Maryland’s largest newspaper, *The Sun* would have seen this two-line death notice at the very bottom of page two. Lead stories on the front page which documented a recent tightrope crossing of Niagara Falls, news from Europe, and local affairs would have attracted the attention of most readers on the eighty-third anniversary of the nation’s independence. Eight other obituaries appeared in the paper that day, five of which noted the deaths of children. But this death notice, located under the editorials and buried amidst advertisements for ships and artisans, would not have generated too much attention.

Who was this “old and respected citizen of Annapolis?” Clearly he had been important enough at one time to merit a death notice in *The Sun* that had a small hand ☞ printed in the margin of the paper to indicate this was a story of note. In reality, however, the seventeen-word announcement, published more than a week after the man’s death, was little more than a footnote to the biggest story of the day: the nation’s birthday. How could this “respected” man have disappeared into such anonymity that one of the two newspapers in his hometown, the *Annapolis Gazette*, did not even mention his death? It seems plausible that Tuck, formerly involved in state government, really was nothing more than a footnote to more important events, trades, and individuals in Maryland. For nearly one hundred and fifty years with little

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<sup>1</sup> *The Sun* (Baltimore), 4 July 1859.



published scholarship on nineteenth-century Annapolis to counter it, this view of Washington G. Tuck has remained surprisingly intact.

Unbeknownst to many of the readers of the *Baltimore Sun* on Monday the fourth, Washington G. Tuck was not simply a former State Armorer in charge of maintaining, distributing, and repairing the State's weaponry. Instead, Tuck, a member of the capital city's cabinetmaking fraternity for nearly forty years and longtime superintendent of the State House, had been actively involved in the socio-political and artisanal circles of Annapolis. More surprisingly, little has been written about Washington (b. 1781), his older brother William (c.1774-1813), or their careers in Annapolis during the early national period. Little is known about the Tucks as artisans although both brothers studied under and worked with John Shaw, the city's most recognized and celebrated cabinetmaker, before engaging in the furniture-making trade on their own.

Throughout their lives, both brothers continued a family tradition of public service and involvement in the public sphere through a variety of means, including cabinetmaking. Designers and builders of furnishings for public and private markets, the brothers' furniture exemplifies their contributions, both material and social, to their Annapolis community, and symbolized the path two artisans took in Annapolis during the early national period. Built between 1795 and 1838, the furniture attributable to the brothers illustrates the Tucks' shift from designing and building for a private setting to objects intended for public use and examination. William died suddenly in 1813, but Washington continued to provide public services, primarily

through his cabinetmaking and entrepreneurial skills, into the late 1830s before retiring to his South River estate in southern Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

The brothers' entrée into the city's economic and mechanical circles in the closing decade of the eighteenth-century was facilitated by the political and social associations of their father, William Tuck, an independent Annapolis mechanic since 1762. The lone painter and glazier listed in the 1783 tax assessment of Annapolis, William Tuck also served as the sheriff and tax collector of Annapolis, as well as messenger to the Senate. The significance of the elder William Tuck was not evident in his financial status or in his land holdings—he owned no land and, as evidenced by the 1783 assessment, was not in the top sixty percent of the city's wealthiest residents—but rather in his professional and social relations with influential Annapolitans of the era. These connections helped his sons establish their niche in the city.

Between 1795 and 1838, William and Washington combined their father's prominence, a family history of entrepreneurial spirit, and their own industry to maintain the family's economic and political influence and middle-level status. Indeed, the brothers' ability to capitalize upon their local connections and entrepreneurial skills ensured their access to official Annapolis—and thus to the opportunities for work. Both brothers were highly trained cabinetmakers, and William was a skilled designer. They concentrated their efforts towards making furniture for a public setting, especially for the State House, because such work provided the most reliable income in nineteenth-century Annapolis. Documentary evidence indicates that between 1804 and 1838, the Tuck brothers, primarily

Washington, built more than twenty-five pieces of furniture for the State House, ranging from desks for the chambers of the House of Delegates and Court of Appeals to ballot boxes and clocks for the Senate Chamber and the Governor and Council. Shrewd entrepreneurs, the Tuck brothers also commissioned the design, construction and delivery of more than one hundred additional pieces of furniture for the State House.<sup>2</sup>

The rapidly declining population and wealth in Annapolis and much of Anne Arundel County in the decades following the Revolution and the concomitant shift of commerce to Baltimore dramatically reduced opportunities to design and build furniture for private commissions. In response to the increasing importance of public furnishings, the Tucks turned to state commissions to practice their trade and resist the rising influence of Baltimore furniture-makers. The Tucks created a successful and stable livelihood by relying on their connections to secure contracts to build, supply and repair furniture, and supervise construction and maintenance projects at the Maryland State House. William and Washington's decisions to design furniture for the State House and remain active in the public sphere represented a necessary response to the changes facing Annapolis artisans, especially cabinetmakers, in the early national period.

Despite their cabinetmaking talents, the stagnant economic climate in nineteenth-century Annapolis dictated that neither brother, nor even John Shaw, could rely solely on the trade for economic success. Indeed, it is important to recognize that the Tucks' importance and contributions should not be measured by their failure to

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<sup>2</sup> An aesthetic evaluation in the furniture catalogue will illustrate William and Washington's capabilities as cabinetmakers.

dramatically elevate the family's economic prestige beyond their middle-level status. As artisans in an era characterized by political transition and the uneven development of a capitalist market economy, the legacy of William and Washington and their successes cannot be defined monetarily.<sup>3</sup> Instead, recognition of the brothers' ability to maximize the political associations in the public sphere to utilize all available opportunities to secure the sources of capital necessary to maintain a "comfortable subsistence" represents a more accurate indicator of their achievements.<sup>4</sup> The Tucks resisted the trend of flight from Annapolis, and strove to maintain and solidify the connections necessary to preserve the family's reputation as economically sufficient and respected entrepreneurs. Because it was in their economic self-interest to stay, the Tucks adopted a variety of means to remain in Annapolis, pursuing opportunities to build and supply furniture and provide a number of artisanal services for the city's most public setting: the State House. Indeed, William and Washington were the only individuals besides John Shaw consistently entrusted with the official care and upkeep of the State House between 1808 and 1838.

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<sup>3</sup> Chesapeake historian Alan Kulikoff introduced the idea of the "transition to capitalism" in his article "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America." In this piece, Kulikoff used a socio-historical approach to "uncover patterns of economic and social behavior of ordinary rural people and relate their behavior to the social relations of production and to social and political consciousness." Kulikoff analyzed the formation of regional and national identity through examinations of household, gender and class relations within context of the development of the market economy. Kulikoff's phrase is applicable to for an examination of how Annapolitans responded to the political and economic changes that accompanied the end of the Revolution. The presence of the State House and the absence of industry, coupled with the rapid post-war growth of Baltimore, delayed the development of the capitalist market economy. It was indeed a period of transition, as the prospects for economic advancement remained tied to longstanding members of the city's social and political elites. The hierarchy of Annapolis offered a challenge to republican notions of an economy that was, at least theoretically, accessible to all. Alan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., XLVI (Jan., 1989) : 120-144.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., XLVII (Jan., 1990) : 7.

The significance of Washington and William Tuck and their contributions to the Maryland State House and to Annapolis cabinetmaking is fourfold. Using their father's political and social connections that provided them access to the city's public sphere, William and Washington sought all available opportunities to satisfy their entrepreneurial spirit. Indeed, their father's connections with political leaders including those in the Maryland Senate, and his relationships with fellow craftsmen and artisans, including John Shaw, facilitated William and Washington's access to the city's economic and mechanic circles. Regularly commissioned with public work, the brothers provided services and furnishings for the State House for more than three decades. The Tucks' struggle to maintain their competency in Annapolis illustrates many of the challenges that faced artisans in Maryland's capital during the early national period. The brothers' success cannot be measured in their land holdings or financial wealth because they found themselves forced to consistently maximize all available outlets for public work. Instead, their successes are better exemplified in the achievements of subsequent generations who all enjoyed high levels of political connectedness and social prominence. The lives and furniture of William and Washington Tuck demand scholarly examination because they will augment the understanding of artisan life in early national Annapolis, illustrate the intertwined importance of political and social connections, and underscore the importance of the State House, public commissions and public service for local artisans.

The scope of this study bridges two bodies of literature relating to the history of Annapolis and Maryland furniture from the neoclassical or "Federal" period. A significant portion of this study relates to the history of the Maryland State House, the

oldest state house in continuous legislative use. Former Maryland State Archivist Morris L. Radoff published the only two books dedicated to the history of the State House, most recently in 1971, and his works provided jumping off points for this study. Radoff's books primarily related to the architectural history of the State House and the evolution of its aesthetic appearance, but were by no means comprehensive.<sup>5</sup> More recently, the Maryland State Archives, in conjunction with the Maryland Historical Trust, has embarked on a comprehensive examination of the State House as part of the research relating to the compilation of a Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the capitol.<sup>6</sup> Documents uncovered during the initial research phases of the HSR provided the genesis for this study.

Scholarship relating to Maryland furniture ranges from monographs and stylistic surveys to exhibition companion pieces and catalogues of museum collections. For the most part, this body of literature has concentrated overwhelmingly on Baltimore furniture and its makers. One of the earliest books, *Baltimore Furniture: The Work of Baltimore and Annapolis Cabinetmakers from 1760 to 1810*, appeared in conjunction with a 1947 exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA), and provided basic descriptions of designs, decorations, and structure of the pieces in the exhibit.<sup>7</sup> In 1972, William Voss Elder published *Baltimore Painted Furniture, 1800-1840* as a catalogue for a BMA exhibit on painted

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<sup>5</sup> Morris L. Radoff, *Buildings of the State of Maryland at Annapolis* (Annapolis: The Hall of Records Commission of the State of Maryland, 1954); Radoff, *The State House at Annapolis* (Annapolis: The Hall of Records Commission of the State of Maryland, 1972).

<sup>6</sup> Upon completion, the HSR will become the definitive record of the Maryland State House, and all of the relevant materials will be made accessible online through <http://mdstatehouse.net>, an interactive website containing all of the documents and images pertaining to the building and grounds from 1769 to the present. The website is part of the Archives of Maryland Online publications series. See: Special Collections (Maryland State House History Project) MSA SC 5287.

<sup>7</sup> *Baltimore Furniture: The Work of Baltimore and Annapolis Cabinetmakers from 1760 to 1810* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1947).

or “fancy” furniture.<sup>8</sup> Twenty years later, the material published in Elder’s catalogue was supplemented and updated in Gregory R. Weidman’s article “The Furniture of Classical Maryland, 1815-1845.” Weidman’s article appeared in *Classical Maryland, 1815-1845: Fine and Decorative Arts from the Golden Age*, an exhibit companion containing essays relating to history, architecture, and fine and decorative arts from Maryland’s neoclassical era.<sup>9</sup> Other influential works from this early period of literature on Maryland furniture included Dr. Henry J. Berkley’s “A Register of the Cabinet Makers and Allied Trades in Maryland, as Shown by the Newspapers and Directories, 1746 to 1820,” and John Hill’s “The Furniture Craftsmen in Baltimore, 1783-1823.”<sup>10</sup>

The next major scholarly work relating to Maryland furniture appeared with the 1984 publication of Gregory Weidman’s *Furniture in Maryland, 1740-1940*.<sup>11</sup> Weidman’s book documented the collections of the Maryland Historical Society in an effort to “define distinctive characteristics of Maryland furniture, to distinguish it from that made elsewhere, and to correct previous attributions.”<sup>12</sup> Unlike earlier works, the catalogue situated the objects into the larger context of the Annapolis/Baltimore rivalry, and provided explanations of the significance of certain stylistic changes. More recently, scholars of Maryland decorative arts, including

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<sup>8</sup> William Voss Elder III, *Baltimore Painted Furniture, 1800-1840* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1972).

<sup>9</sup> Gregory R. Weidman and Jennifer F. Goldsborough, *Classical Maryland, 1815-1845: Fine and Decorative Arts from the Golden Age* (Baltimore: The Maryland Historical Society, 1993).

<sup>10</sup> Henry J. Berkley, “A Register of the Cabinet Makers and Allied Trades in Maryland, As Shown by the Newspapers and Directories, 1746 to 1820” *Maryland Historical Magazine* XXV, no. 1 (March 1930) : 1-27; John Hill, “The Furniture Craftsmen in Baltimore, 1783-1823” (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1967).

<sup>11</sup> Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland, 1740-1940: The Collection of the Maryland Historical Society* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

Weidman, J. Michael Flanigan, Alexandra Alevizatos Kirtley, and Sumpter Priddy III, have strengthened the overall understanding of Baltimore cabinetmaking by moving beyond aesthetic studies to examine the furniture and lives of individual Baltimore makers and the possible links with Annapolis and Washington artisans.<sup>13</sup>

The study of Annapolis cabinetmaking, however, remains incomplete, especially in comparison to Baltimore. Nearly every scholarly work regarding furniture made in Maryland's capital has focused on the city's most celebrated cabinetmaker, John Shaw, and virtually excluded the work of his contemporaries.<sup>14</sup> With no recent scholarship on Annapolis cabinetmaking, the most comprehensive study of Shaw and his furniture remains William Voss Elder and Lu Bartlett's *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*.<sup>15</sup> Written as a companion piece for a BMA exhibit on Shaw, the monograph contains over sixty pieces made or attributed to Shaw and three essays that help contextualize the objects within the changing interpretation of furniture design. The essays examine Shaw, his shop, his furniture labels, and social life in Annapolis during Shaw's career, and provide an excellent analysis of the forms and motifs common in the maker's oeuvre. As a whole,

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<sup>13</sup> See for example: Alexandra A. Alevizatos, "'Procured of the best and most Fashionable Materials': The Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyd Family, 1750-1850" (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1999); Sumpter Priddy III, J. Michael Flanigan, and Gregory R. Weidman, "The Genesis of Neoclassical Style in Baltimore Furniture" in *American Furniture*, ed. Luke Beckerdite (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for the Chipstone Foundation, 2000), 59-99; Alexandra Alevizatos Kirtley, "A New Suspect: Baltimore Cabinetmaker Edward Priestley," in *American Furniture*, ed. Luke Beckerdite (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for the Chipstone Foundation, 2001), 2-53;

<sup>14</sup> Examples of early studies of the city's premier cabinetmaker include: W.M. Horner, Jr., "John Shaw of the Great Days of Annapolis," *International Studio*, March 1931, 44-47, 80; Louise E. Magruder, "John Shaw, Cabinetmaker of Annapolis," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, March 1947, 35-40; Rosamond Randall Beirne and Eleanor Pinkerton Stewart, "John Shaw Cabinetmaker," *Antiques*, December 1960, 554-558; Lu Bartlett, "John Shaw, cabinetmaker of Annapolis," *Antiques*, February 1977, 362-377.

<sup>15</sup> William Voss Elder III and Lu Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1983).



however, the catalogue failed to move beyond an aesthetic evaluation of the designs and forms of Shaw, and did little to situate the city's preeminent cabinetmaker within the larger context of his artisanal community of post-Revolutionary War Annapolis.

A limited body of furniture with Annapolis provenance and no new scholarship on Annapolis cabinetmaking has perpetuated the myth of John Shaw as the city's only successful maker. Research by decorative arts scholars has only recently begun to acknowledge the influence of the "John Shaw School" and the presence of cabinetmakers and other woodworking artisans in Annapolis during the early national period. Elder and Bartlett noted the presence of a "large, and doubtless constantly changing, group of craftsmen working in [Shaw's] shop at any one time," but suggested it was impossible to connect details of construction techniques with any individual artisans working in the shop.<sup>16</sup> Further research into the Annapolis furniture-making community and its links to England and Baltimore may overturn or call earlier attributions of furniture into question. The first step towards a broader study of Annapolis cabinetmaking, however, should be to acknowledge the contributions of some of Shaw's contemporaries and to put these artisans into context of their time, and especially their relationship to the State House. A further awareness of the place of artisans within the economic landscape in Annapolis during the early national period and a revived interest in furniture from the capital city will hopefully lead to a more complete knowledge of Annapolis cabinetmaking, its makers and their objects.

While numerous scholars have studied colonial life in the Chesapeake, Annapolis and Tidewater regions, many fewer have focused on the history of

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 29.

Annapolis from 1750 to 1850, the scope of this study. Most of the scholarship on eighteenth-and nineteenth-century Annapolis has focused on the city's economic, political, and social past but only within context of its "Age of Affluence." Two of the more influential studies have focused on its artisans and merchants within context of eighteenth-century Annapolis. Edward C. Papenfuse's *In Pursuit of Profit: The Annapolis Merchants in the Era of the American Revolution, 1763-1805* concentrated on a mercantile house to examine the rise and fall of the city's economy during the Revolutionary era. More recently, Mark B. Letzer and Jean B. Russo's *The Diary of William Faris: The Daily Life of an Annapolis Silversmith* blended a study of the social and artisanal history of Faris within the context of his community.<sup>17</sup>

For myriad reasons, however, no scholars of Annapolis who have focused on the Revolutionary and early national periods chose to continue the story of the city's artisans and residents into the nineteenth century. Although unintentional, this has strengthened the perception that there is simply no reason to study the aftermath of city's heyday. Until now, few scholars have addressed the social, political, or economic environments in post-1805 Annapolis, the year where the majority of decorative arts and historical scholarship has tended to conclude. As a result, this project will pick up where the literature relating to Annapolis furniture, the history of the Maryland State House and artisan life has left off. But the lack of scholarship and the extensive time and undocumented resources required to fit a substantial

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<sup>17</sup> Edward C. Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit: The Annapolis Merchants in the Era of the American Revolution, 1763-1805* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); Mark B. Letzer and Jean B. Russo eds., *The Diary of William Faris: The Daily Life of an Annapolis Silversmith* (Baltimore: The Press at the Maryland Historical Society, 2003).

discussion of race and gender into this study represents an obvious gap in this work, and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Through a combination of furniture analysis, social history and biography, this study will illuminate some of the political and social issues of the era in context of artisans, and add two new middle-level players into a story dominated by the better-known Annapolis families. It is important to recognize, however, that this is not a decorative arts thesis. This study will begin a consideration of the furniture at the point where Elder and Bartlett ended theirs', and move from a basic discussion of aesthetics to a nuanced reading of the appearance and social significance of the objects. Rather than evaluating the appearance of furnishings made by the Tucks and Shaw, this work will use the objects to explore the larger social, cultural, and historical significance of the development of Annapolis furniture. Drawing from E. McClung Fleming's influential method, the analysis of the Tuck pieces that follows will begin with an evaluation of appearance before locating the objects within a larger context of the public and private settings in Annapolis.<sup>18</sup> The work of Barbara G. Carson, Kevin M. Sweeney and other scholars who moved beyond aesthetics to analyze the social and material significance of objects also influenced the analytical scope of this project.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," *Winterthur Portfolio* 9 (June 1974) : 153-161

<sup>19</sup> Many material culture scholars have taken this approach to study fine and decorative arts. See for example, Barbara G. Carson, *Ambitious Appetites: Dining, Behavior and Patterns of Consumption in Federal Washington* (Washington, D.C.: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1990); Kevin M. Sweeney, "Furniture and the Domestic Environment in Wethersfield, Connecticut, 1659-1800," in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988) , 261-290; Kenneth L. Ames, "The Stuff of Everyday Life: American Decorative Arts and Household Furnishings," in *Material Culture: A Research Guide*, ed. Thomas Schlereth (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1985) , 79-112.

In summation, the furniture described in this study will serve as a vehicle to discuss the contributions of Annapolis cabinetmakers, the importance of public furnishings, and artisanal life. Social history will contextualize the cultural, economical and artisanal aspects of life in Annapolis during the early national period. Finally, this work will show that there were other cabinetmakers worthy of recognition besides John Shaw working in Annapolis, and highlight the role of the State House in the lives of the citizens and artisans in Maryland's capital.

The stories of William and Washington Tuck provide a unique opportunity to examine the history of Annapolis and the importance of the public sphere in the years following the American Revolution. Though they left no price books and their furniture-making talents have heretofore largely been relegated to footnotes of in-depth examinations of John Shaw, governmental records demonstrate the brothers' contributions to the State House, Annapolis' most viable source of employment. The question of how artisans coped in the midst of economic stagnation has stood outside the focus of most decorative arts studies, nor has it generated significant attention from historians who tend to place economic decay within the context of subsequent growth. The choices that William and Washington Tuck made during the early national period represent the paths taken by two artisans who secured work and established themselves in a city in the midst of a decline.

## Chapter 1

“A young Man, just entering into Business in his Native Place”

The Tuck family had lived in Maryland for decades before William and Washington Tuck embarked on the road to their entrepreneurial success in post-Revolutionary War Annapolis. A William Tucke, possibly a family relation, may have come to the New World as early as 1639, and the Tucks can be firmly placed in Maryland during the first half of the eighteenth-century.<sup>1</sup> The Parish Register of St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church in Anne Arundel County Maryland recorded the marriage of William Tuck and Sarah Taverner on February 24, 1738. Thereafter, the Tucks had at least two offspring: William (the father of cabinetmakers William and Washington), born c. 1741, and Elizabeth (date of birth unknown).<sup>2</sup>

Little else is known about the location or the lives of the Tuck family members until the twenty-one-year-old William Tuck wrote an advertisement that appeared for two weeks in the *Maryland Gazette* during 1762. Beginning on March 4, the Annapolis-based paper published the following notice:

WILLIAM TUCK, GLAZIER *and* PAINTER,  
(*Who served his Apprenticeship to the late Mr.*  
*Patrick Creagh, and since his Death with Mr.*  
*Richard MacKubin,)* *being now Free, and set up*  
*on his own Account,*  
HEREBY gives Notice, That he will Paint  
and Glaize for any Gentleman who shall be  
pleased to employ him, as well and as reasonably  
as any Man. At present he lives with his Mother  
(The Widow Pratt) in *Prince-George’s Street*, a few

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Wilson Coldham, *The Complete Book of Emigrants, 1607-1660: A Comprehensive Listing Compiled From English Public Records of Those Who Took Ship to the Americas for Political, Religious, and Economic Reasons; of Those Who Were Deported for Vagrancy, Roguery, or Non-Conformity; and of Those Who Were Sold to Labour in the New Colonies* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co. Inc., 1988), 203-204.

<sup>2</sup> Special Collections (St. Margaret's Church Collection) MSA SC 109, page 89. The author thanks Anne Tria Wise whose research and correspondence uncovered this reference.

Doors above the House of his late Master *Creagh*,  
and every Gentleman who shall be pleased to employ  
him may depend on having their Work done  
with the greatest Dispatch and Fidelity, by

*Their obliged humble Servant,*  
WILLIAM TUCK

*N.B.* As he is a young Man, just entering into  
Business in his Native Place, he Hopes at least for  
an equal Share of Business with any Stranger.<sup>3</sup>

By virtue of the publication of this trade notice, William Tuck announced that he had concluded his apprenticeship with two important artisans and joined the swelling ranks of Annapolis craftsmen as a painter and glazier. As the advertisement indicated, Tuck was likely born—or at least reared—in Annapolis; his father, William, had likely died some years previous, and his mother, Sarah, had remarried only to lose a second husband. Soon after completing his apprenticeship, the younger Tuck joined forces with John Robinson, another painter-glazier with links to Richard MacKubin, to form his first partnership.<sup>4</sup> The association ended with Robinson's death in June, 1765, and Tuck served as the executor of his partner's estate. As executor, Tuck published a notice in the *Maryland Gazette* requesting payment for all outstanding debts owed the business. At the end of the note, Tuck wrote: "N.B. The Subscriber carries on the Painting and Glazing Business at his shop in *Annapolis*, as usual, and will be obliged to Gentlemen for their Custom. WM TUCK." Robinson's estate inventory included a list of "articles being in Partnership between Will<sup>m</sup> Tuck and the deceased," such as paint brushes, painters oil, several different colors of paint,

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<sup>3</sup> *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, MD), 4 March 1762.

<sup>4</sup> John Robinson advertised in 1762 that he carried on the business of glazier and painter "at his Shop, near the Dock in *Annapolis*, which was formerly Mr. *Creagh's*." At the close of his advertisement, he added, "Enquire for me at Mr. *Richard Mackubin's* Store, on the Dock." *Maryland Gazette*, 4 March 1762,

copper, large amounts of glass, one hundred and forty old sash lights, and thirty-nine pounds of white lead.<sup>5</sup>

By 1765 William Tuck had started to establish his place in Annapolis, a town experiencing its greatest period of financial success. Tuck likely worked in the Prince George's Street shop formerly owned by Creagh and Robinson. Located a few blocks from city's main business district, Church Street, the shop was in an ideal location for its owner to take advantage of Annapolis' expanding population and increased spending on homes and consumer goods. Indeed, Annapolis in the mid-1760s, referred to by some as the "Athens of America," was the ideal place for a young artisan such as William Tuck, who was looking to ply his trade.<sup>6</sup>

Within six months of the death of his partner John Robinson, William Tuck appears to have continued working independently as a painter-glazier in downtown Annapolis. William completed his first documented commission in February, 1766, for which he charged ten shillings to supply thirty-two panes of glass to the Government House, a private home in Annapolis occupied by colonial Governor Horatio Sharpe. Tuck also charged two pence for trimming the sashes at Sharpe's house, and four months later William supplied seven feet of leaded glass at seventeen shillings six pence, presumably for the Governor's residence.<sup>7</sup> The ruinous condition

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<sup>5</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 27 June 1765. PREROGATIVE COURT (Inventories) Volume 88, 1765, folio 248-251, MSA S 534-89.

<sup>6</sup> Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 45.

<sup>7</sup> Tuck received payment of £1.10.10 on January 26, 1767 for providing the aforementioned services to the State. ANNAPOLIS TREASURER (Ledger) 1766, folio 11, MSA M 69-1, MdHR 10,635. At the time that Tuck supplied materials for Government House, Governor Sharpe lived in a home in owned by Edmund Jennings, former deputy colonial secretary. Sharpe leased the home, known as Jennings House, for his entire tenure as governor at an annual cost of £1,200. Subsequently in 1769, the next governor, Sir Robert Eden purchased the home from Jennings for £1,000. Jennings House, located on the present grounds of the United States Naval Academy served as the residence of all of the executives of Maryland until construction of the present Government House in 1868-1870. Jennings

of the old State House and the increasing numbers of new Georgian homes, such as the Upton Scott House (1762-3), William Paca House (1763-5), and John Brice III (1766-1775) and James Brice (1767-1773) Houses, built for entertaining and residential purposes, epitomized the disparity of money spent on public and private buildings. In the mid-1760s, the growth of the city's private sector far exceeded that of the public sphere, and William Tuck would have found greater numbers of employment opportunities outside of governmental commissions.

The city's improving economy, rising quality of living and the availability of fine European wares at the city dock, spurred a growth in the population of Maryland's capital, which swelled by 27.7 percent between 1765 and 1775.<sup>8</sup> During the early years of the 1770s, Annapolis saw a significant increase in the construction of stores and homes, an event closely connected with the colony's thriving tobacco trade. By the early 1770s, construction of the massive homes for elite Annapolitans such as the Brice, Hammond, and Ridout families had finished. The most dominant building project of the prewar period was the new State House, the city's third, for which the cornerstone was laid in 1772. Government employees and workmen employed in construction of the State House and other buildings were important sources of income for local merchants, and the city's artisans also benefited financially from the rise of consumer spending that accompanied the rising standard of living in the colonial capital. Craftsmen such as silversmith William Faris and blacksmith Andrew Slicer supplied luxury goods to wealthy residents in the city, and

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House was demolished in the early twentieth century. Special Collections (Government House Research Collection) Edward C. Papenfuse, Mimi Calver, Carol Borchert and Emily Oland Squires, "A Private Mansion: The Symbols and Rituals of Power," [1998], MSA SC 4806.

<sup>8</sup> See Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 14 and 29 for analysis of population growth in Annapolis between 1699 and 1783.



also provided goods and services to citizens at all levels. The effect of this not only enabled all residents to have a taste of progress and refinement, but ensured a steady flow of money that helped to strengthen the economy.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout the 1760s and 1770s, William Tuck competed with other local painter-glaziers, such as George White and Richard MacKubin, for opportunities to provide services relating to the construction of the new Georgian buildings.<sup>10</sup> While many craftsmen found employment working at the State House, the best workmen often pursued contracts at the private homes because these jobs provided the best forum for them to showcase their artisanal talents. Artisans such as these painter-glaziers usually formed professional networks with the individuals who commissioned these homes, associations which could lead to further patronage and enhance the workmen's reputations. It was the best artisans in each of building trades who had the greatest success developing these relationships. William Tuck, for example, provided services and materials for the James Brice House, built at 42 East Street, and established a working relationship with the Brice family that continued long after the completion of the house. In March 1781, William received salary payments from the Treasurer of the Western Shore on behalf of John Brice, suggesting that he was closely connected to one of the more prominent and influential

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<sup>9</sup> Letzer and Russo, *The Diary of William Faris*, 6. Annotated by Letzer and Russo and complemented with several informational essays detailing the artisanal, social, and historical context of life in late eighteenth-century Annapolis, the Faris diary provides a magnificent window into cultural and social life in Annapolis from the observations of its leading silversmith.

<sup>10</sup> George White advertised in the *Maryland Gazette* on October 11, 1764. Reference taken from Special Collections (Historic Annapolis Index Files Collection) Retail Craftsmen, MSA SC 1393-20. Further research or the discovery of more contemporary account books may connect William Tuck and other painter-glaziers with the construction of some of the more important homes built in Annapolis in the 1760s and 1770s. In general, while the scarcity of private accounts from pre-Revolutionary Annapolis hinders the ability of modern scholars to firmly connect particular artisans and trades with the private sphere, sources such as newspaper trade notices and advertisements, and court records help identify artisans and merchants who were contemporaries of William Tuck and active in public and private arenas during the golden age of Annapolis.

families in Annapolis.<sup>11</sup> Tuck's longstanding connections with the Brices illustrate the early social and political bonds he established within the community and from which he benefited financially and politically.

Annapolis artisans and merchants, like their contemporaries in urban centers such as Philadelphia and Boston, pursued their trades while remaining socially and politically active within their community. Annapolis artisans and other citizens joined clubs and societies as a way of interacting and providing leadership that contributed to the stability of the community. Pre-Revolutionary clubs included the Tuesday Club, the South River Club, the Forensic Club, and Homony Club, and some of these organizations provided forums for discussions grounded in politics and ideas of the enlightenment. Coffee houses and taverns also fostered interactions by hosting social and political gatherings, plays, musical performances and other forms of entertainment. Some artisans, such as silversmith William Faris, belonged to the Freemasons, while others such as William Tuck joined organizations that catered to a variety of social, economic, financial interests.

William Tuck's membership in the Well-Meaning Society provides a window into the relationship between artisans and the larger community. In 1773, Tuck appeared as a member of the Well-Meaning Society, a local branch of a social

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<sup>11</sup> Special Collections (William Tell Claude Collection) James Brice Account Book, MSA SC 530 M 364. At the time of these payments John Brice III was mayor of Annapolis, and in 1782 would return to his position of alderman in the city before being named commissioner of taxes in Anne Arundel County in 1783. He served as alderman until 1792, and tax commissioner until 1798. Similarly, Brice's younger brother James, served on the Governor and Council while William worked on his home, and later served as mayor and an alderman during the revolutionary era. See biographies of John Brice III and James Brice in the Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) MSA SC 3520-148 and MSA SC 3520-146. See: An Historical List of Public Officials of Maryland, 1634-present, reproduced in William Hand Browne, Edward C. Papenfuse, et. al. eds., *Archives of Maryland Online*, 215+ volumes, (Baltimore and Annapolis, Md., 1883-), 76, (hereinafter cited as *Archives of Maryland*). This series is ongoing and available online at <http://aomol.net> where volumes, collectively or individually, can be searched electronically.

organization that likely derived from a politically-active literary group of the same name founded by William Patterson in 1765.<sup>12</sup> Although the degree of literary involvement of the Annapolis Well-Meaning Society is not clear, its membership suggests that it may have been a charitable group concerned with some of the more pressing social issues of the prewar era. Comprised of shopkeepers, tavern owners, councilmen, and artisans, the group met on Saturdays during 1773. Annapolis scholar Elaine G. Breslaw wrote that the group “may well have been patterned on the freemason lodge already in existence [in Annapolis] and devoted to the public welfare.”<sup>13</sup> The society’s membership claimed some of the more prominent artisans in Annapolis, including printer Jonas Green and silversmith Thomas Sparrow. Little else is known about this society, suggesting either that it was a short-lived organization, or that it was simply one of a number of local social groups in pre-Revolutionary Annapolis.

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<sup>12</sup> Other founding members of the national Well-Meaning Society (later renamed the Cliosophic Society of Princeton) included: Oliver Ellsworth, who would later serve as a Senator from Connecticut, Luther Martin, delegate to the Constitutional Convention and influential Maryland lawyer, Tapping Reeve, founder of the first law school in the United States, and Robert Ogden, a future New Jersey lawyer. At the College of New Jersey, the Well-Meaning Society competed against the College’s other literary society, the Plain Dealing Club (later the American Whig Society), whose early members included William Livingston. In 1768 and 1769, the faculty at the College of New Jersey shut down both societies because of heightened competition, although they both reorganized in 1770 under new names. For more information, see: Cliosophic Society Archives, 1789-1941, AC #016 Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Archives, Princeton University, Internet, [http://libweb.princeton.edu/libraries/firestone/rbsc/finding\\_aids/clio.html](http://libweb.princeton.edu/libraries/firestone/rbsc/finding_aids/clio.html) [accessed 8 June 2003]. Elaine G. Breslaw noted that a Well-Meaning Society in Annapolis met on Saturdays in 1750. Nothing else known about this organization and whether it endured continuously into the 1770s. See: Elaine G. Breslaw, ed., *Records of the Tuesday Club of Annapolis 1745-1756* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988.)

<sup>13</sup> Elaine G. Breslaw, “Dr. Alexander Hamilton and the Enlightenment in Maryland” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1973), 143. Breslaw’s study of the founder of the Tuesday Club traces the development of social clubs and societies in Annapolis and focuses on the economic, legal, and political factors for their growth and popularity among the intellectual citizens in the colony. The author thanks Heather Foster-Shelton at the Hammond Harwood House for bringing this reference to his attention.

One of the best-documented events in the group’s history occurred in 1773, and showed its interactions with citizens from the upper echelons of Annapolis society. On February 19, 1773, thirteen members of the society, including William Tuck, James Maynard, Francis Fairbrother, Robert Henwood, Charles O’Neale, Thomas Sparrow, and William Caton appeared in Annapolis Court to lease a forty-foot square parcel of land on Prince George Street from Matthias Hammond “for the use Intent and Purpose of Building a House thereon for holding their meetings in...for a term of ninety nine years and then renewable.” The group’s involvement with this leading citizen is significant, and indicates that the group—or at least some of its members—had some influence and connections in the city.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the deed suggested the social involvement of these craftsmen extended well beyond their role as entrepreneurs and indicated the links between artisans and the city’s political leaders.

Six months later on August 21, 1773, the thirteen members appeared in Anne Arundel County Court to cancel the initial deed of indenture that had been signed in the Annapolis Court, explaining that “the said Society find it very Inconvenient to build the said House by the time in the said lease.” In an event that suggested his position in the social organization, William Tuck, along with Maynard and Philip Meroney, went in front of the Justices of the Peace to confirm the execution of the

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<sup>14</sup> ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records) 1773, folio 261-265, MSA C 97-31. The following year, Hammond would employ William Buckland to direct construction of a “party house” on his lot on Prince George Street. It is unlikely, however, that the land given briefly to the Well-Meaning Society in 1773 was a part of the lot where the Hammond Harwood House now stands. Members of the Annapolis Well-Meaning Society came from a variety of artisanal and community-oriented professions: Maynard later operated a tavern in the old coffee house; Fairbrother was a common councilman, tax assessor in Annapolis and a member of the vestry at St. Anne’s Church; O’Neale was also a Freemason; Sparrow was a silversmith and a printer; and Caton was a sea captain and operated a tavern.

new deed.<sup>15</sup> Little else about the group appeared in the public records until the *Maryland Gazette* published a notice that Richard Henwood, described as a “one of the senior members of the Well-Meaning Society,” had died on November 25, 1773. Henwood’s death may have caused the society to break up as there is no evidence of its continued existence after the end of 1773.<sup>16</sup>

Membership in social organizations such as the Well-Meaning Society may have proven advantageous for colonial artisans who looked for outlets to capitalize upon the successful economy in Annapolis. In the years leading up to the Revolution, Tuck worked as a painter-glazier serving the public and private spheres, including working at elite homes such as the Samuel Chase-Edward Lloyd House on Maryland Avenue in Annapolis.<sup>17</sup> While his religious affiliation is unknown, Tuck offered his services to the Episcopal Parish of St. James, the same parish where his parents were married in 1738. The vestrymen of St. James contracted with him, “Mr. William Tuck Glasier to Glase and Repair the Church windows” in 1774, and for miscellaneous glazing in 1776.<sup>18</sup> Like many members of the middling community in Annapolis, Tuck likely rented land or a house in Annapolis; his name does not appear in the Anne Arundel County land records in connection with ownership of residential property.

Tuck’s business could not always be relied upon for sufficient income, and like many middling residents at the time, he sometimes had to take out mortgages to

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 2 December 1773.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Lloyd III paid Tuck £13.15.2 for “painting & Glazing per Acc<sup>t</sup>.” J. Donnell Tilghman, “Bill For the Construction of the Chase House,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 33 (1938) : 26.

<sup>18</sup> Edith Stansburg Dallam, *St. James’: Old Herring Creek Parish, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, 1663-1799* (Annapolis, MD: Port City Press, Inc., 1976) , 334-335.

settle debts and make new purchases. William probably owed debts to merchants and other craftsmen, and may have sometimes purchased on credit because he did not always have readily-available capital. The “largely informal network of giving and receiving credit” was omnipresent in the colonial Chesapeake and Tidewater, and especially in a planting class reliant on the economics of tobacco. Credit, according to historian T.H. Breen, “offered a recognized means of structuring social relationships within the white community,” and on a local level “represented a personal favor a kind of patronage that great planters were expected to provide to worthy neighbors whom they encountered at church, the county courthouse, or militia training.”<sup>19</sup> In Annapolis, however, “where no commodities were exchanged for goods,” merchants conducted most sales in cash, although they undoubtedly granted some forms of credit on occasion.<sup>20</sup>

One particular mortgage, a deed executed in 1770 between William Tuck and Annapolis surgeon Doctor John Shaw, illustrates the social and economic status of this middle-rank painter-glazier and documents the tools and the types of objects Tuck worked with and had in his home. For the sum of £32.7.6, William mortgaged:

two Glaziers vices, Two Diamonds used by Glaziers for cutting Glass, three Glaziers Hammers, two stones and two mullers used by Painters for grinding paint, one new Large round walnut Tea Table, one small old Walnut Tea Table, one Bedstead with a sacking Bottom, one gun, six old rush bottom chairs, six Silver Tea Spoons and one Silver tea strainer, one Iron Gallon pott, one Iron Fifth Kettle, one Feather bed and Bedding.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> T.H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) , 94-95.

<sup>20</sup> Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 27. Citing merchant account books from the early 1770s, Papenfuse noted that most transactions were finalized in cash, and these merchants primarily catered to residents of Annapolis. It would be interesting to establish when payment for goods and services was rendered, at the outset or whether a grace period for payment was often offered.

<sup>21</sup> ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records), 1770-1771, liber IB2, folio 1-2, MSA C 97-29, punctuation added by author. Even though the deed was executed prior to Tuck’s marriage and the

An examination of the possessions of the twenty-eight year-old Tuck illustrates that the desire to acquire fashionable and luxurious household amenities had spread into the lives of the middling classes in Annapolis. Guided by the framework derived by Chesapeake scholars Lois Green Carr and Lorena Walsh, an analysis of the household “amenities” that Tuck mortgaged suggests that the artisan maintained a comfortable standard of living.<sup>22</sup> The presence of two tea tables and a silver tea strainer and spoons suggests Tuck’s participation in a social ritual, formerly restricted to elites, that made the quintessential statement of gentility: tea drinking.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, although incomplete, this partial record of Tuck’s possessions confirms Carr and Walsh’s suppositions that “at all levels Chesapeake planters were learning to use personal possessions to make increasingly sophisticated and elaborate social statements...to help them bridge the gap separating them from those above.”<sup>24</sup> Ownership of these luxury items undoubtedly set Tuck apart from the middling artisans and citizens who could not afford to purchase these goods, and were his statement of adherence to these cosmopolitan rituals.<sup>25</sup> Tuck’s inclusion of his artisanal tools and prized tea ware indicates the economic and social value that he

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growth of his family, it holds extra significance because no probate information survived for him. When Dr. Shaw died in 1775, his probate inventory listed almost all of the possessions that Tuck had mortgaged in 1770; the only items not included in Shaw’s estate were the painting and glazing tools.

<sup>22</sup> See: Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, “Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake,” in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 59-166.

<sup>23</sup> According to English Loyalist William Eddis who moved to Annapolis in 1769, tea drinking had become an established social ritual in Annapolis by the 1770s. William Eddis, *Letters from America*, ed. Aubrey C. Land (Cambridge, MA, 1969), 57 in Carr and Walsh, *Changing Lifestyles*, 130-131. For more on the social and cultural rituals associated with tea drinking, see: Rodris Roth, “Tea-Drinking in Eighteenth-Century America: Its Etiquette and Equipage,” in *Material Life in America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 439-462.

<sup>24</sup> Carr and Walsh, *Changing Lifestyles*, 132.

<sup>25</sup> It could take middling families in pre-Revolutionary Annapolis up to twenty years to buy “six silver tablespoons from three different Annapolis silversmiths.” Letzer and Russo, *Diary of William Faris*, 7.

placed on these objects, especially evident with the recent purchase of the large tea table. For Tuck, the ownership of these objects represented a combination of his artisanal and financial livelihood and was an indicator of his social position.

### **Artisanal life and cabinetmaking in William Tuck's Annapolis**

From 1763 until the declaration of war in 1776, the glory years of Annapolis were characterized by the city's most significant period of sustained economic growth and building construction. Driven by British demands for Chesapeake tobacco and grain, Maryland planters enjoyed increased economic success in the years after the French and Indian War. An influx of money generated from bountiful harvests and export markets, and a rising demand for high-quality consumer goods helped establish the power of the colony's landed gentry in town. Annapolis became the primary port for Maryland's national and international trade, and many wealthy landowners moved there because it was the leading city in the colony. The presence of social and political elites with an interest in displaying their wealth, and the frequent arrival of European goods at the city dock helped spark a greater interest in consumer goods among Annapolitans. The local merchant class benefited from this increased spending to become financially and socially important in order to challenge "the existing mercantile hegemony that controlled and financed the Maryland tobacco trade from London."<sup>26</sup>

In the years prior to the outbreak of war, Annapolis' rising merchant and planter classes maintained a profitable trade with Europe and developed local markets for high-quality consumer goods. The combination of consumer spending,

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<sup>26</sup> Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 1.



strengthened local trade markets, and increased mercantile power had significant implications for economic life in pre-Revolutionary War Annapolis. Crop diversification encouraged financial stability, which in turn encouraged residents to “spend income on more than necessities, however necessities were defined at various economic levels.” Additionally, “crafts and home industries could supply some of the necessities that formerly had been imported, such as shoes or clothing, thereby freeing income for purchase of nonessentials,” or household amenities.<sup>27</sup>

By the 1770s Chesapeake planters and merchants had developed a thriving and stable consumer society open to those at all economic levels. For the local gentry, life in Annapolis resembled that in other Chesapeake markets:

They enjoyed comforts unknown to earlier generations, they were using artifacts and social rituals to advertise social position, those who could afford them were insisting on the newest fashion, and storekeepers were catering to these needs with increasingly elaborate displays of merchandise aimed at attracting buyers.<sup>28</sup>

Cabinetmakers, painter-glaziers, and silversmiths, like the majority of merchants and artisans in Annapolis, also enjoyed great prosperity in the early 1770s because they could provide high-quality objects to members of the fashion-conscious planter class. The rising standard of living also touched the lower and middling classes, who also benefited from the increased spending on domestic architecture and on nonessential luxury items. William Tuck’s 1770 mortgage reveals that even middling citizens possessed items representative of sophistication and civility as a way of overcoming economic indicators and class distinctions to emulate the behavior of the elites.

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<sup>27</sup> Carr and Walsh, *Changing Lifestyles*, 122.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

The influx of wealth coming into Annapolis brought a noticeable improvement in the overall standard of living in the city. Recent and longtime residents in Annapolis purchased new homes and improved and refurbished existing dwellings in town.<sup>29</sup> The designs of the recently-completed edifices built for the urban elites reflected the Georgian style popular in England—although surviving architecture indicates there was no consensus as to the best style or design books to emulate—and their furnishings and architectural motifs represented a combination of rococo tastes favored in England and the colonies.<sup>30</sup> Furniture purchased in Annapolis during the colonial era demonstrated an increased appreciation for luxury consumer goods from international and domestic sources. Whether made locally or purchased through merchants, cabinetmakers, or directly from England, these items and other merchandise were often sold at the Annapolis city dock.

Unlike cities such as New York, Philadelphia and Boston which had already established recognizable regional furniture styles, upper class Annapolitans looked to England for stylistic influences and imported furniture as a way of emulating the cultural and design preferences of the English gentry.<sup>31</sup> Maryland furniture historian Gregory Weidman and others have posited that middle and upper class Marylanders “wished to replicate the comforts at home (i.e. Britain) and to keep up with both the

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<sup>29</sup> For more on the development of elite and gentry homes in Annapolis during the city’s age of affluence, see: Marcia M. Miller and Orlando Ridout V, eds., *Architecture in Annapolis: A Field Guide* (Crownsville, MD: The Vernacular Architecture Forum and the Maryland Historical Trust Press, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> Chesapeake architectural historian Orlando Ridout V noted that architects throughout the golden years of Annapolis were still “experimenting” with the ‘best’ design for the five-part houses under construction for the city’s gentry. The experimentation of designs is reflected in the decorative motifs and the lack of a clear-cut determination of the proper hierarchy of spaces and rooms within the homes. Orlando Ridout V, interview by author, Crownsville, MD, 22 March 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, “The Standard of Living in the Colonial Chesapeake,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, Vol. 45, No. 1 (January, 1988) : 139.

English gentry and their Maryland neighbors by owning the latest London fashions.”<sup>32</sup> Other historians, such as T.H. Breen, noted that Chesapeake and Tidewater planters purchased large amounts of consumer goods on credit to follow the choices made by their English counterparts and enhance their standing and reputation among local contemporaries.<sup>33</sup> Maryland furniture scholar Alexandra Alevizatos Kirtley has argued that the wealthiest Marylanders, such as the Lloyd family, patronized English merchants because it was in their economic interest to do so. Indeed, the Lloyds, like many planters, shipped wheat and tobacco to England for sale, and their patronage abroad likely encouraged the sales of their own products.<sup>34</sup>

Overall, the persistent popularity of English styles guided taste in Annapolis throughout much of the eighteenth century and continued to do so in the years after the Revolution. Not only did new residences incorporate designs and motifs published in leading English architectural manuals, but the appearances of the interior furnishings reflected the pervasiveness of English cultural influences in Annapolis. Few surviving documents record the importation of furnishings from Philadelphia, aside from Windsor chairs, into Annapolis—although a notable amount of Philadelphia furniture did find its way to Baltimore. Throughout the second half of the century, Annapolis cabinetmakers drew upon their own training and familiarity with popular English rococo and neoclassical styles to produce furniture-designs unique to the region. Characterized by its stylistic links with English models and motifs, Annapolis furniture from the eighteenth century serves as one example of the

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<sup>32</sup> Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 43.

<sup>33</sup> See Breen, *Tobacco Culture*, 84-123.

<sup>34</sup> Alexandra Alevizatos Kirtley, “Survival of the Fittest: The Lloyd Family’s Furniture Legacy,” in *American Furniture*, ed. Luke Beckerdite (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for the Chipstone Foundation, 2002), 10.

importance that local residents placed on the city's economic and social relationship with the mother country.

Beginning in the 1740s and 1750s with William Hayes, John Anderson, and Gamaliel Butler, a small but successful group of local cabinetmakers worked in Annapolis to design and sell custom furniture for citizens who chose not to purchase English exports.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the 1760s, several English and Scottish cabinetmakers emigrated to Annapolis and brought a familiarity of English furniture-making styles and techniques to Maryland's capital. These new craftsmen were aware of the new furniture design books, whose influence and wide circulation helped spread the rococo and neoclassical designs throughout England and then to the colonies. Immigrant craftsmen in Annapolis drew upon the motifs and styles popularized by English professional designers such as Thomas Chippendale and Robert Adam whose works strengthened the union between furniture and architecture.<sup>36</sup> Among the artisans and workmen joining these foreign-born cabinetmakers were English indentured servants trained as "carpenters, cabinet-makers, sawyers, shoe-makers, blacksmiths, tailors, gunsmiths, bricklayers, hatters, butchers, farmers, labourers."<sup>37</sup> While the names of most of these servants remain unknown, their awareness of styles and construction techniques ensured that they would have been able to contribute to the development and production of Annapolis furniture. Architecture and furniture in

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<sup>35</sup> For listings of early Annapolis cabinetmakers, see: Berkley, "A Register of the Cabinet Makers and Allied Trades in Maryland," 6-8.

<sup>36</sup> For more on the relationship between published furniture pattern books and the resulting objects made in England during the eighteenth century, see: Elizabeth White, comp., *Pictorial Dictionary of British 18<sup>th</sup> Century Furniture Design* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors' Club, 1990).

<sup>37</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 24 February 1774. In this notice, cabinetmaker William Whetcroft also noted that he had for sale at his shop: "elegant mahogany Furniture, consisting of Tall Boys, Desk Tables, and neat fluted Bed steds." See also: Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 42.

Annapolis demonstrated the importance of proportion and the classical and rococo designs pioneered and popularized by Chippendale, Adam and their contemporaries.

Scottish immigrants Archibald Chisholm and John Shaw came to Annapolis in the early 1760s looking for employment as journeymen cabinetmakers. Trained in England, Shaw and Chisholm arrived with knowledge of English styles and construction techniques which they modified to fit within local design preferences. By 1772, the two Scots had banded together to form the largest shop in the city and established their reputations as the premier cabinetmakers in Annapolis.<sup>38</sup> Shaw and Chisholm worked on Church Street until they dissolved their partnership on November 14, 1776. After their breakup, the parties continued “carrying on their business of cabinet and chair making as formerly,” with Shaw working “at the house lately occupied by the company,” while Chisholm moved his shop to “the house lately possessed by Mr. Charles Peale in Church Street.”<sup>39</sup> Shaw and Chisholm reformed their partnership in 1783 after a fire destroyed Shaw’s entire shop, an event which, according to the *Maryland Gazette* made “Mr. Shaw...a very capital sufferer, having lost all his tools, and every other thing in his shop.”<sup>40</sup> The following year, Shaw purchased a home on State House Circle directly across from the State House where he would live until his death in 1829.

Catering to middle-level and elite patrons, Shaw and Chisholm advertised more than any other contemporary Annapolis cabinetmaker and offered the widest

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<sup>38</sup> For more on Archibald Chisholm, see: Joseph Suess, “Archibald Chisholm—An Annapolis Cabinetmaker,” *Maryland Genealogical Society Bulletin* 31, no. 3 (1990), 223-238. For more on the partnership between Shaw and Chisholm, see: Bartlett, “John Shaw, cabinetmaker of Annapolis,” 362-377.

<sup>39</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 14 November 1776. The author thanks Jennifer Hafner for this reference.

<sup>40</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 6 February 1783. MESDA Research Files.

range of services. The oeuvre of Shaw and Chisholm included sideboards, chairs and desks, tables and card tables, bedsteads and cellarettes, and case pieces such as desk and bookcases, linen presses, secretaries and chests of drawers. In addition to building and repairing furniture and working as undertakers, Shaw and Chisholm trained apprentices, imported and sold interior furnishings, and provided additional services to the public sphere, suggesting their roles as both artisans and entrepreneurs. The men had a working relationship with the mercantile house of Wallace, Davidson and Johnson, which undoubtedly helped them acquire and resell numerous products including furniture, lumber, and finishing materials. Savvy businessmen, Shaw and Chisholm provided services and sales to other local cabinetmakers whom they targeted with sales of specialized materials. On May 27, 1773, an advertisement appeared in the *Maryland Gazette* reading: “Just imported from London, and to be sold by Shaw and Chisholm, Cabinet and Chair Makers...a neat and general assortment of Joiners and Cabinet Marker tools.”<sup>41</sup>

Maryland-born and immigrant cabinetmakers joined Shaw and Chisholm in pre-Revolutionary Annapolis to form a successful woodworking community comprised of master artisans, journeymen, and apprentices. *Maryland Gazette* advertisements from the period indicated a thriving group of workmen consisting of furniture-makers, chairmakers, turners, carvers, joiners, wheelwrights, and numerous carpenters. Besides Shaw and Chisholm, prewar cabinetmakers in Annapolis included: John Golder, William Curie, Francis Hepburn, Joshua Collins, William Whetcroft, a silversmith who also sold furniture, and Alexander Anderson. Not only were there several independent cabinetmaking shops, but skilled woodworking

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<sup>41</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 27 May 1773 in Sues, “Archibald Chisholm,” 223.

artisans from outside communities came to Annapolis a few days each week to sell their furniture and work in shops owned by the city's makers.<sup>42</sup>

While some Annapolis residents may have elected to purchase locally-made furniture out of personal preference, loyalty to a certain maker, or for financial reasons, much of the furniture found in pre-Revolutionary homes in Maryland's capital had been imported from England by merchants and cabinetmakers.<sup>43</sup> Shaw and Chisholm imported a number of pieces for their clients, but advertisements and surviving attributed furniture suggest that they also made numerous pieces in their Annapolis shop. Similarly, William Slicer advertised in 1769 that he was performing a wide range of cabinet and chairmaking services at Mr. James Cannan's shop, "a little below the market house" where he made: "Desks, Book-Cases, Escritoirs, Bureaus, Card, Chamber, Parlour and Tea-Tables; Easy-Arm, Parlour and Chamber Chairs; Corner Settees, Clock-Cases, Couches, Dumb-Waiters, Tea Boards, Bottle-Boards and Bedsteads."<sup>44</sup> While few account books and other documents definitively connect Annapolis cabinetmakers with furnishings made for local elites, a combination of local and imported pieces undoubtedly filled the grand new homes in Annapolis. Even though it is conjectural at best to attempt to explain the rationales or motivations of buyers who chose to purchase objects from one source over another,

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<sup>42</sup> Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 284, 276; Special Collections (Historic Annapolis Index Files Collection) Retail Craftsmen, MSA SC 1393-20; Special Collections (Maryland Historical Society Collection) William Coffing Account Book, MSA SC 1174 M 2635; *Maryland Gazette*, 15 February 1773, 24 February 1774, 23 February 1775. In 1771, for example, Walter Osborn, a turner and spinning wheel maker from Londontown advertised that he was coming to Annapolis on Tuesdays and Fridays to work at William Slicer's shop in Annapolis. *Maryland Gazette* 28 February 1771. All *Maryland Gazette* references listed here appear courtesy of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts Research Files (hereafter referred to as MESDA Research Files).

<sup>43</sup> Advertisements and trade notices published in the *Maryland Gazette* during the colonial and early national periods provide valuable information regarding the popular types of furniture made locally or imported into Annapolis and the sources of these goods.

<sup>44</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 1 June 1769. MESDA Research Files.

the need to provide adequate numbers of furnishings likely played a role. Yet, with the survival of only a few known pieces, the appearances of locally-made colonial furnishings remain a mystery.

### **The Revolutionary Years**

The possibility of war threatened to disrupt the greatest period of economic prosperity in Annapolis, and jeopardized the city's strong ties with the British import and export markets. While many citizens supported the upcoming fight for independence, not all Marylanders readily embraced ideas of revolution. Some residents believed that resolutions favoring policies of nonimportation and nonexportation would hurt the thriving merchant and planter communities greatly dependant on the influx of British capital and goods.<sup>45</sup> At the end of May, 1774, William Tuck along with one hundred and thirty-four male citizens, primarily from Annapolis, submitted a signed letter of protest to the *Maryland Gazette*. Tuck joined a number of prominent merchants, artisans and future members of the General Assembly and the Governor and Council to protest a decision to end all trade with England as a response to the coercive acts. Men such as James Brice and John Randall, State House architect Joseph Horatio Anderson and future legislator William Cooke, several members of the Dulany family, and five members of the Well-Meaning Society expressed disapproval with the act,

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<sup>45</sup> A notable example of these competing factors occurred on May 27, 1774 when Annapolitans voted to support the Boston Committee of Correspondence in their decision to end all trade with the Mother Country as a way of protesting the coercive acts. The text of this act, reprinted in the *Maryland Gazette* explained "That it is the opinion of this meeting, that, the gentlemen of the law of this province, bring no suit for the recovery of any debt, due from any inhabitant of this province, to any inhabitant of Great-Britain, until the said act be repealed." *Maryland Gazette*, 2 June 1774.



Because...this resolution is founded in treachery and rashness, inasmuch as it is big with bankruptcy and ruin to those inhabitants of Great Britain, who, relying with unlimited security on our good faith and integrity, have made us masters of their fortunes, condemning them *unheard*, for not having interposed their influence with parliament in favor of the town of Boston, without duly weighing the force, with which that influence would probably have operated...  
SECONDLY—Because whilst the inhabitants of Great Britain are partially despoiled of every legal remedy to recover what it justly due to them, no provision is made to prevent us from being harassed by the prosecution of internal suits, but our fortunes and persons are left at the mercy of domestic creditors, without a possibility of extricating ourselves...  
THIRDLY—Because our credit, as a commercial people, will expire under the wound; for what confidence can possibly be reposed in those, who shall have exhibited the most avowed and most striking proof that they are not bound by obligations as sacred as human invention can suggest.<sup>46</sup>

By articulating his economic concerns in this letter of protest, William Tuck aligned himself with some of the important citizens of Annapolis and positioned himself to solidify existing social, political and financial networks and develop new ones that could generate new opportunities for work.

At the outbreak of war, British Loyalists in Annapolis fled or were forced to leave their lands, changing the city's economic environment and significantly altering its population demographics. Indeed, more than a quarter of the capital's wealthiest residents left at the start of the conflict. The war "transformed Annapolis from a town of wealthy consumers and their suppliers into an armed camp and distribution center for the war effort."<sup>47</sup> Tobacco prices soared with the British blockade of the Chesapeake Bay in 1777 and 1778 and the subsequent reduction of the overseas trade. The loss of its European markets and the city's mobilization for an anticipated British invasion severely curtailed the vitality of the port of Annapolis. The collapse of the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 73-5, 78.

private market meant that, for the first time in nearly two decades, merchants and mechanics no longer had incentives to direct their sales to this shrinking clientele.

Construction of the State House, which began in 1772, continued throughout the Revolutionary years and provided employment opportunities for local craftsmen who suffered from the economic decline within the private sector. While the war did not interrupt construction, it made it more difficult to keep materials and workers in steady supply. State House undertaker, Charles Wallace, recounted the difficulties caused by the arrival of the British fleet in the Bay.

From [1775] till the month of August 1777 when the British Fleet came...up the Bay your petitioner [Wallace] had in his employ a number of exceeding good workmen, but upon the Fleet's coming up the Bay most of the inhabitants left Annapolis for a while amongst them your petitioner and most of the workmen then in his service and upwards of twenty of them have not returned to him. Since that time your petitioner could procure but very few workmen whose wages have rose with the Depreciation of money.<sup>48</sup>

At the outset of the war, Annapolis merchants concentrated their efforts toward public business and encouraged Baltimore merchants to coordinate goods imported for the private market. These choices fit within labor historian Bruce Laurie's definition of "classic republicanism," suggesting that the Annapolitans understood virtue as a symbol of the "subordination of self-interest to the good of the whole...essential for republican rule."<sup>49</sup> The willingness of Annapolis merchants to direct their potential profits to a different market for the greater good of the war effort demonstrated their commitment to the revolutionary cause. In a clear example of

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<sup>48</sup> Charles Wallace to the General Assembly of Maryland, 28 December 1779 in Morris L. Radoff, "Charles Wallace as Undertaker of the State House," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 51 (March 1956) : 52.

<sup>49</sup> Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1989) , 49.

republican ideology, Annapolis merchants continued to subsidize the Baltimore market and encourage the economic success of that city because they saw themselves contributing to the greater success of the state.

As Annapolis merchants and the rest of the city's residents handled the wartime demands for stores and equipment, the center of the state's trade market shifted to Baltimore. With its safe ports and seemingly infinite acres of land on which to build and farm, Baltimore, whose economic potential had not been fully realized, became the fastest growing city in America during the war years. By the early 1780s, monies and supplies provided by Annapolis mercantile firms such as Wallace, Davidson and Johnson helped Baltimore join Philadelphia as two of the primary ports of American business.<sup>50</sup>

As the conflict continued, Baltimore firms explored alliances with merchants in Philadelphia and Georgetown in an attempt to expand their sphere of influence outside of the Chesapeake. Baltimore became an official port of entry in 1780, and by the end of the war had become the third-largest city in America. Changing patterns of consumer spending, uncertainties regarding the safety and security of the ports, and the threat of confiscation by privateers led Annapolis merchants to develop new alliances with other firms in town. As Annapolis merchants sold large amounts of "low-quality goods in order to free capital for reinvestment," Baltimore and Philadelphia became more attractive locales for trade centers, roles they would not relinquish after the war.<sup>51</sup> The success of Baltimore merchants during the war and the city's rapid growth illustrated a new American tendency to accumulate capital in

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<sup>50</sup> See Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 101-125.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

large urban areas—such as Philadelphia and Baltimore—and precipitated the economic demise of Annapolis.

Luckily for the Annapolitan merchants, government contracts and public commissions replaced the void left by the decline in trade, the slow commercial market and expansion of Baltimore's economic influence. More than sixty percent of Annapolis mechanics, including Shaw, Chisholm, Wallace and Davidson took public employment or lent needed resources to support the colony's war effort.<sup>52</sup> Most merchants suffered from a loss of revenue, but few despaired at the status of their businesses. Instead, in a clear expression of Republican ideology, they ignored the potential economic consequences in order to focus their energies on sustaining the war effort needed to insure success and the safety of the colony. Shoemaker Thomas Hyde provided shoes for soldiers and served as Commissioner and Endorser of Bills of Credit, and retired merchant Nicholas Maccubbin milled flour for the army. Appointed State Armorer in 1777, Shaw supplied cartridge boxes and made coffins "for Continental soldiers," and along with Chisholm, assembled muskets after acquiring the stocks and the gun barrels—some of which had been made by local blacksmith Isaac Harris.<sup>53</sup>

Unlike artisans such as Shaw and Chisholm who used their trade skills to assist the Revolutionary cause, William Tuck could not rely on his training as a painter-glazier to further the war effort and maintain his competency. Instead, Tuck sought employment with the colonial government as his outlet for public service and a reliable income. Tuck combined his intellect and community prominence as a

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>53</sup> See *ibid.*, 80-93; Suess, "Archibald Chisholm," 224; AUDITOR GENERAL (Journal) 1780 MSA S 150-4, Peter Force Collection, MSA SC 4391, page 225.

successful artisan to provide services to the Maryland council of safety, created in 1775 as the state's executive body. The council helped govern Maryland, enforced the dictates of the Continental Congress and coordinated all policies of resistance, issued licenses, instituted boycotts and called the militia to arms. In 1776, Tuck worked as an assistant clerk for ten days in June and July, also served as doorkeeper for the council from September to November. Tuck's work with the council of safety marked the start of a career in public service that for the remainder of his life would complement his artisanal work.

After William Tuck had earned a valued reputation among governmental leaders at the State House for his work for the council of safety, the Maryland Senate appointed him doorkeeper for the 1777 Session of the General Assembly, the first session after the adoption the new State Constitution. Tuck qualified for the position "by taking the oath prescribed by the form of government, by subscribing a declaration of his belief in the christian religion and by taking the oath of office."<sup>54</sup> The following year, Tuck was appointed messenger of the Senate, a post which he held intermittently into the 1790s. Tuck's position in the Senate, which required him to carry messages, orders, and bills from one house to the other, put him in regular contact with elite Marylanders in both branches of the legislature. William would have had regular interactions with the four signers of the U.S. Constitution, and his lengthy tenure as messenger suggests that he likely was a man of some influence

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<sup>54</sup> Votes and Proceedings of the Senate of Maryland, February 1777 Session. An attendant in the upper house where the oath of governor was conducted, Tuck was likely present in the council house for the inauguration of Governor Thomas Johnson on March 21, 1777. This inauguration took place in the old State House, identified as "the old one" in Charles Willson Peale's 1788 sketch of the State House elevations, because construction of the new building had not been completed. See notes on the first gubernatorial inauguration, MSA SC 5287-1-7.

among those employed at the State House. The relationships he developed with senators and other local leaders strengthened his economic and social associations within the city's political and artisanal circles. In a community that often parlayed connections into advancement, Tuck seemed poised to take advantage of the shifting economic and social balance in Annapolis.

In the midst of the Revolution, William found time between legislative sessions to provide additional means of support to his local community. On March 20, 1779, William mustered in an independent company of the Annapolis militia where he joined butcher Daniel Wells, cabinetmaker Joseph Middleton, 4<sup>th</sup> Sergeant Archibald Chisholm, and Captain Gilbert Middleton, a cabinetmaker and tavernkeeper.<sup>55</sup> Tuck rode express for the council in 1776 and 1781-2, received several payments for unspecified services rendered for the Auditor General, and even supplied a gun to the Armorer, John Shaw.<sup>56</sup>

Throughout the Revolution, William also served an important middleman between Annapolis merchants and artisans and their clients, and may have operated a small business with his wife, Elizabeth (Johnson) whom he had married prior to 1774, to provide services for the community and the Revolutionary cause.<sup>57</sup> Driven by the need to earn additional money and to provide assistance to the war effort, the Tucks sought new outlets for work, and Elizabeth may have joined other Annapolis women

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<sup>55</sup> S. Eugene Clements and F. Edward Wright, *The Maryland Militia in the Revolutionary War* (Silver Spring, MD: Family Line Productions, 1987), 144.

<sup>56</sup> Journal and Correspondence of the Maryland Council of Safety, July 7, 1776 to December 31, 1776, in Archives of Maryland 12, pages 245, 269, 294; Journal and Correspondence of the State Council, October 27, 1779 to November 13, 1780, Archives of Maryland 43, page 263; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Scharf Collection) MSA S 1005-94-14070, MdHR 19,999-086-130.

<sup>57</sup> Some genealogical references suggest that Elisabeth Tuck may have been related to Thomas Johnson, the first elected governor of Maryland. The author has not been able to independently verify these familial connections, and he has not located any marriage or probate information for Mrs. Tuck.

to sew clothing for the army and navy.<sup>58</sup> On August 13, 1779, William signed for two receipts on which was written: “In Council: Ordered that the Western Shore Treasurer pay to Elizabeth Tuck twenty six Pounds five Shillings due her pr. Acct. passed by the Aud<sup>t</sup> Genl.” Three months later William received £18 “for the use of Mrs. Elizabeth Tuck.”<sup>59</sup> Tuck accepted payments for John Shaw and leading merchant John Davidson, and signed these receipts “Wm. Tuck &C.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Annapolis in the postwar years, 1783-1790**

Shortly after the conclusion of the war, the first tax assessment of the entire state of Maryland, including Annapolis Hundred, was taken in 1783, and was the only such study taken between the censuses of 1776 and 1790. The assessment of Annapolis compiled economic and population data for all residents (a total of 1,280), and listed individual career profiles for the two hundred and forty-seven heads of household named in the tax list. An index compiled by Edward C. Papenfuse indicated that Annapolis residents fell into six primary categories of occupations: professionals and government employees; merchants and storekeepers; craftsmen;

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<sup>58</sup> Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 89-90. Historian Mary Beth Norton has noted that women throughout the colonies participated in sewing groups as a way of providing tangible and moral support for the revolutionary cause. Contemporary newspaper accounts recognized the participation of these women and heralded the achievements of the “Daughters of Liberty.” These sewing groups, according to Norton, “were intended to convince American women that they could render essential contributions to the struggle against Britain, and to encourage them to engage in increased production in the privacy of their own homes.” Yet, while the war provided American women with an opportunity to provide invaluable support for the war effort, this contribution to the war effort was rooted in traditional notions of domesticity and femininity which limited their autonomy, a notion supported by the fact that William Tuck received payment on behalf of his wife for her work. Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 168-169, 187.

<sup>59</sup> MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-19-4630 MdHR 6636-16-129/17; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-5037 MdHR 6636-16-132/19.

<sup>60</sup> Examples of these payments can be found in the MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Scharf Collection) MSA S 1005-60-7260 MdHR 19,999-056-056 and MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Scharf Collection) MSA S 1005-60-7260 MdHR 19,999-056-057.

service occupations such as bakers, butchers, and inn keepers; laborers and unknowns; widows and spinsters.<sup>61</sup> While nearly one-fifth of those in the assessment were categorized as craftsmen, William Tuck was the only painter-glazier listed—although he was not necessarily the only individual in town capable of glass-work. Tuck, like Shaw and Chisholm, may have employed journeymen, free blacks, or even slaves in his shop to help his business.

At the time of the assessment, Tuck and his wife, Elizabeth, lived with their four children, sons William A., about ten years old, and Washington Greene, born March 22, 1781, daughter Maria (d. 1805), and an unnamed daughter. Like the majority of households in Annapolis, the Tucks owned one slave, aged between eight and fourteen, although the Tucks were in the minority of families with such a low number of chattel. William Tuck did not own any lots or property, and probably rented a home and land in the city. The total value of the Tucks' property, including their slave (valued at £25) and four ounces of plate (valued at £1.13.4) totaled £86.13.4, a figure that placed William in the thirty-fourth percentile of wealth in the city.

At the opposite end of the spectrum lay a large number of planters, lawyers and merchants, all of whom enjoyed high levels of financial success. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, with an assessed wealth of £3,295.00.0, was the richest man in the city, while the second-richest man, merchant Nicholas McCubbin, Sr. had £2,475.13.4 of assessed holdings. Current Governor William Paca, assessed at £863.06.8, stood just outside the top ten percent (numbering twenty-five heads of household) of the

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<sup>61</sup> Analysis of the 1783 assessment is taken from data listed in Appendix B in Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 250-268.



assessment, and only one craftsman, William Whetcroft, assessed at £1,000.00.0, was listed in the top ten percent. The majority of those in this elite category were planters, lawyers, or merchants. The median worth in the assessment was £183.00.0, while the mean was about £321—although this number falls to £309 when Charles Carroll of Carrolton’s figure is excluded. Shaw and Chisholm were the only two cabinetmakers listed in the assessment, and only Chisholm, whose .75 acres were valued at £333.00.0, fell within the top quarter (79.7%) of wealth. Shaw owned half of an acre and two slaves, and fell in the fifty-ninth percentile of wealth. William Tuck, however, was among ninety-three heads of household (18.03%) with an assessed worth of less than £100.00.0.<sup>62</sup>

For many in Annapolis, especially the merchants, the possibilities for social mobility and advancement were great. Opportunities also existed for artisans to improve their status, although it was unlikely that their trade alone could be relied upon for them to attain this goal. In his analysis of the assessment, Papenfuse argued that mechanics from all levels strove to become shopkeepers and hoped to parlay their successes into entry to the elite merchant class. Papenfuse suggested that “the chances for economic success of people in the below £100.00.0 category were not great.” He also noted that those in this average category were “least economically mobile and had the least prospect or expectation of rising above their lot.”<sup>63</sup>

The frequency of new employment opportunities for members of the artisanal community in the capital slowed dramatically after the conclusion of the Revolution and the ratification of the Treaty of Paris in Annapolis on January 14, 1784. Aside

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 152-153.

from a few initial post-war building projects such as the Adams-Kilty House, a handful of homes on Cornhill Street and the home of blacksmith Simon Retallick on Green Street, the State House was the only noteworthy building project—public or private—in the city until the early nineteenth-century. The construction of the State House provided a vital outlet for the city’s artisans, including cabinetmakers, carpenters, plasterers and blacksmiths, to find work.

The story of the State House, however, is hardly representative of the events that transpired in Annapolis during the postwar period. More symbolic of Annapolis’ changing architectural landscape and population demographics was the story of Mathias Hammond’s home. The two-story home, constructed as a “party house” in 1774-1775 for Hammond, a young lawyer and legislator from Maryland’s Eastern Shore, was built on Maryland Avenue. Drawing on popular building styles, noted architect William Buckland modeled the Georgian mansion with two connected hyphens after Andrea Palladio’s five-part plan.<sup>64</sup> After completion of the construction, however, Hammond and his family never occupied the home. Mathias’ failure to win reelection and the city’s changing social outlook forced the young lawyer to return to his other residence on his Eastern Shore plantation. With the city’s uncertain politics and economic situation, the home stood empty for nearly a decade, and did not have a permanent owner until Ninian Pinkney purchased it in 1810.

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<sup>64</sup> For more on the architecture and furniture of William Buckland, see Luke Beckerdite, “William Buckland Reconsidered: Architectural Carving in Chesapeake, Maryland, 1771-1774,” *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 8, no. 2 (November 1982); and Luke Beckerdite, “Architect-Designed Furniture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia: The Work of William Buckland and William Bernard Sears,” in *American Furniture*, ed. Luke Beckerdite (Hanover NH: University Press of New England for the Chipstone Foundation, 1994), 28-48.

The loss of the port, Annapolis's primary source of capital, was devastating for the city and its merchants and mechanics. Unlike Annapolis, Baltimore's housing market underwent a lengthy period of expansion in the immediate postwar period. By virtue of its location, Baltimore, unlike Annapolis, had the potential to be a city that could provide farming, manufacturing, and residential areas. By the end of the war, Baltimore's growth led to the end of the domination of the state's national and international trading markets by the Annapolis merchants. The seed had been planted, and the small provincial town on the Bay could no longer compete with Baltimore as the center of the state's commercial and shipping industries. By 1789, a storekeeper in Annapolis reported to a friend in Philadelphia that the city's age of affluence had ended:

I have no news to give you from this place, everything being at a stand. I in my store don't receive more than from two to three dollars per day. Annapolis is diminishing fast...Citizens leaving it every day!<sup>65</sup>

Although some Annapolis artisans and merchants believed their misfortunes would soon be reversed, the collapse of the tobacco market in 1793 on account of wars in Europe effectively ended their hopes for economic and social revitalization. Cabinetmakers and other skilled artisans left Annapolis for Baltimore in search of greater opportunities for wealth and individual success, an event that signaled the end of the capital's hold on the furniture-making trade. Baltimore cabinetmakers clearly capitalized upon the decline of the private market in Annapolis. The number of cabinetmakers in Baltimore rose from two in 1780 to fifty in 1800, while numbers of

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<sup>65</sup> David Geddes to John White, August 21, 1789, Executive Papers, Box G, Maryland State Archives, quoted in Papenfuss, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 156.

those working in the capital city diminished.<sup>66</sup> Annapolis planters, many of whom had sown wheat in their tobacco fields during the war years to supply the state's soldiers, found their overworked soil devoid of nutrients and utterly unusable. All but the wealthiest landowners felt pressures to seek opportunities in the "wheat fields of western New York, tobacco plantations in the west, or for jobs in Baltimore."<sup>67</sup> Increasingly, residents in post-war Annapolis succumbed to these economic and social forces and elected to leave the city in search of achieving financial success.

The local merchants and craftsmen who remained in Annapolis in the years that followed the war had to adapt to the new economy and changing demands of the market to earn a suitable income. By providing services for private citizens as well as the city and state governments, William Tuck positioned himself in the community to be a successful and respected middle-class artisan. William served as Sheriff of the City of Annapolis in 1783, an office that required him to jail prisoners, enforce laws, and also serve as the city's tax collector. Tuck received a payment of £223.0.7 for serving as the sheriff in 1783, a position that indicated his level of social prominence in town because as a municipal employee he would have had regular interactions with the town's governing body comprised of the Mayor, Alderman, and Councilmen, and known as the Corporation. Tuck received an ordinary license in 1783, and either operated his own tavern or found employment in an existing establishment.

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<sup>66</sup> See Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 71 for comparative discussion of the rising population and number of cabinetmakers in Baltimore during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries.

<sup>67</sup> Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 221.

Throughout this period, Tuck continued to work as messenger of the Senate, appearing in the Senate proceedings in 1786, 1791, and 1796.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to pursuing work as a public servant at state and local levels, Tuck catered to clients in both public and private sectors to continue his artisanal work. In 1786, Tuck published a gentle solicitation in the *Maryland Gazette* reminding the members of the community that he still worked as a painter-glazier.

WILLIAM TUCK,  
Painter and Glazier  
Begs leave to inform the public, that he carries  
on the above business in all their branches.<sup>69</sup>

This advertisement, the first he had published in over a decade, suggests that while William still worked as a painter and glazier, he may not have benefited from the same level of local patronage as he had for nearly two decades before. Artisans such as Tuck, dependant on improvements to homes and business for a steady income, suffered from the decline of money spent on the private sphere. For Tuck, this notice could have indicated that he was having trouble sustaining a suitable income through his artisanal work. His solution, like that of the majority of residents who chose to stay in Annapolis after the war, was to turn his eye toward the State House and the public sphere because they provided the most reliable sources of money.

Although Tuck fell within the lower tier of the 1783 tax assessment and could no longer rely upon his trade for the bulk of his earnings, opportunities to attain a

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<sup>68</sup> ANNAPOLIS MAYOR, ALDERMAN, AND COUNCILMEN (Treasurers Reports and Vouchers) A Report of the Committee Appointed to Settle the Accounts with the Sheriff, 1783, MSA M 37-1. Tuck declined to continue his role as sheriff in 1784. It is somewhat unusual for Tuck to have been Sheriff of Annapolis, because the Constitution of 1776 stated that sheriffs served at the county level and were elected to three-year terms. ANNAPOLIS MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND COUNCILMEN (Proceedings) Annapolis Records 9, folio 5, MSA M47-10. Residents in Anne Arundel County needed to have ordinary licenses to operate a tavern or serve alcohol in such an establishment.

<sup>69</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 15 April 1786.

stable and successful competence were still within his grasp. Like many of his fellow Annapolitans—nearly twenty percent—William Tuck found financial success in a government-related occupation, which for the better parts of two decades provided him a steady but not overwhelming source of income. After the Revolution, Tuck’s artisanal work, whether at the State House, St. James’ Church, or private homes, could not be depended on for a particular amount of money. The city’s lone painter-glazier likely used artisanal commissions to supplement steadier sources of money derived from his work in the public sphere. Indeed, his financial status is not an accurate indicator of his standing in Annapolis. For middling artisans such as Tuck, the effects that their social and economic achievements and relationships had on the rest of their families provides a more comprehensive measure of their “success.”

The choices William made throughout this period indicate that he was content with his social position. Tuck’s economic situation had little bearing on his social and political status in postwar Annapolis. Tuck’s standing as a middling craftsman did not disadvantage his children because he relied on his ability to transcend artificial class barriers to cultivate personal and professional relationships with citizens at all levels. Cognizant that his sons’ preparedness would not originate from his accumulated wealth, William likely spent much of the 1780s and 1790s developing relationships with important Annapolitans, ranging from legislators and wealthy landowners to successful and middling artisans, to ensure that his sons, should they choose to remain in the capital after they reached their majority, had a path to success. William’s work in the Senate gave him access to the inner circle of the city’s, and indeed the entire state’s, political pulse. This position, when combined

with his status as an important craftsman, made Tuck a notable, trusted, and respected artisan.

Despite the changing social and economic landscapes, William Tuck decided to stay in Annapolis with his wife and four children. As evidenced by the 1790 census, six white members comprised the Tuck household, and the family no longer had the slave who had been listed in the 1783 assessment. On the eve of the last decade of the eighteenth-century, William remained employed as messenger to the Senate, and believed that he and his family were best suited in his native city of Annapolis. William's choices to pursue all open avenues for work demonstrated his determination to withstand the depressed economy, and to help his family survive it as well.

## Chapter 2

“To be taught the Trade of Cabinet Maker and Joiner”

In 1795 William and Washington Tuck took advantage of their father William’s connections within Annapolis to make their first forays into public life. Although not wealthy, as indicated by the 1783 assessment, the elder William Tuck had managed to secure his place among the respected Annapolitans. Two events that occurred in 1795 provide the best evidence of William the elder’s place in the larger Annapolis community. First, on January 1, 1795 thirteen year-old Washington Tuck matriculated at St. John’s College in Annapolis in the Grammar School and School of Humanity or Languages. Significantly, the entry noted that Washington, “Son of W<sup>m</sup> Tuck. Painter & Glazier. Annapolis: adopted by the Senate of Maryland p<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Cooke Esq.,” was to attend school part time, “tuition gratis.”<sup>1</sup> Later that same year, the younger William Tuck, now twenty-one, began to work as a journeyman for cabinetmaker John Shaw at his shop on Church Street.

Washington received a Senate Scholarship which enabled him to attend the foremost learning establishment in the state, St. John’s College.<sup>2</sup> Washington’s father could not afford to have his son educated at St. John’s, and this scholarship was extended as a way of thanking the elder William for the services he had provided the Senate since the 1770s. The scholarship also ensured that the youngest son of William Tuck had an opportunity to succeed in spite of the family’s economic status. At St. John’s, Washington joined children of some of the leading merchants, lawyers, and families of Annapolis, including the Pinkneys, Maynadiers, Neths, Retallicks,

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<sup>1</sup> ST. JOHNS COLLEGE (Archives) St. John’s Matriculation Book, 1795, folio 10, MSA T 1406.

<sup>2</sup> This may be the first recorded instance of the Senate Scholarship, a tradition still extended to local students for admission at St. John’s.



and Ridgelys.<sup>3</sup> This part-time education, earned because of his father's connections with the political elite, provided Washington with his first opportunity to associate with those who would form the next generation of influential Annapolitans.

It is unclear whether William the younger had previously trained under Shaw as an undocumented apprentice, or whether he had learned his cabinetmaking skills from another Annapolis furniture-maker—such as Archibald Chisholm who retired in 1794—or perhaps had received some instruction from his father. While it is doubtful that William received much relevant training from his father, the elder Tuck undoubtedly imparted his artisanal values of quality of workmanship and loyalty to community to his son. William the elder realized that his position as a painter and glazier was not ideal for a local artisan in a town with little active construction, because his trades could not possibly generate much steady income. That realization led William to investigate alternative means of enabling his sons to have access to the premier artisanal positions.

The circumstances surrounding William's work with John Shaw will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, but the association between the Tuck and Shaw families merits further examination. Three connections between the Tuck, Shaw, and Pratt families seem to suggest an important and previously undocumented familial relationship.<sup>4</sup> As noted in William the elder's 1762 trade advertisement in the *Maryland Gazette*, his mother Sarah, described as the "widow Pratt," had married

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<sup>3</sup> St. John's Matriculation Book, 1795, folio 10, MSA T 1406.

<sup>4</sup> Some genealogical publications and internet postings have connected the Tuck and Shaw families through a heretofore undocumented and undated marriage between John Shaw and a Wealthy Tuck. The author has not seen any documentary evidence for this claim and these genealogical sources are slightly inaccurate with names and dates. Acknowledgement of these connections by other scholars, however, strengthens the understanding of this complex familial relationship.

(her second marriage) a member of the Pratt family.<sup>5</sup> On June 20, 1776, Gilbert Middleton, Shaw and Chisholm advertised in the *Maryland Gazette* for the return of three runaway apprentices, including the twenty year-old Henry Pratt.<sup>6</sup> A year later, Shaw married Elizabeth Wellstead Pratt. It is plausible that Shaw's apprentice Henry Pratt, born about 1756, was the son of the Widow Pratt—who, assuming she had married at age eighteen, would have only been thirty-six in 1756—and thus the half-brother of William Tuck the elder. Going one step further, Elizabeth Pratt may have been a daughter of the Widow Pratt, indicating that the half-sibling of William Tuck might have married John Shaw.<sup>7</sup> In an era in which kin connections played a valuable role in artisan communities, the fact that William Tuck and John Shaw were relatives as well as contemporary mechanics helps to explain how both of Tuck's sons found employment with the great cabinetmaker.

The father William Tuck was active in the mechanical and social circles of Annapolis throughout the 1790s, serving as messenger to the Senate in 1791 and appearing in debt lists of a number of prominent Annapolitans.<sup>8</sup> He continued to work in Annapolis until his death in 1797. On Sunday May 7, 1797, William Faris wrote in his diary: “this morning William Tuck died, with the Gout in his stomach.”

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<sup>5</sup> The dates of the death of Sarah's first husband, William, are not known, nor are the dates of her second marriage or the death of her second husband, Mr. Pratt. Although the Tuck and Pratt families appear to have remained in Annapolis or Anne Arundel County during the 1750s and 1760s, no probate or marriage records for any members of these families can be found at the Maryland State Archives. After the publication of William's 1762 advertisement, Sarah Pratt appeared in local judicial records until 1768, suggesting that she died c. 1770.

<sup>6</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 20 June 1776.

<sup>7</sup> A further footnote to these connections occurred in the 1840s, when William Hallam Tuck (grandson of William Tuck the painter-glazier) lived next door to Thomas Pratt (future governor of Maryland) in Prince George's County and both practiced law in the same community.

<sup>8</sup> In 1796, for example, Tuck owed £24.3.5½ to the estate of tavern keeper George Washington Mann. Almost every well-known Annapolitan, including Shaw, Chisholm, George Plater, William Paca, and Dr. John Schaaf, also appeared in this list of debts.

The following day, Faris recorded that “in the evening William Tuck was Buried.”<sup>9</sup> No probate records exist for William Tuck or his wife, Elizabeth, nor were either of their deaths noted in the *Maryland Gazette*.<sup>10</sup> William’s death left Annapolis without one its better-known middling artisans. Although William did not die wealthy, the legacy he left ensured that his sons had the opportunity to pursue a livelihood in the city by relying on his connections and social standing in the community.

### **Cabinetmaking in early national Annapolis**

As William Tuck the elder was passing from the scene, his sons were both making their first forays into the city’s artisanal community. By the time William Tuck the younger began to work in Shaw’s shop, Baltimore had seized almost total control of the Maryland furniture-making industry.<sup>11</sup> Although Baltimore became the center of Maryland’s cabinetmaking trade, “a small but important group [of cabinetmakers] continued to thrive in Annapolis at the end of the eighteenth century making products for residents of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, and

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<sup>9</sup> Letzer and Russo, *Diary of William Faris*, 262.

<sup>10</sup> It is possible that Elizabeth died prior to the 1798 tax assessment since no Tucks were listed in Annapolis, although she may have remarried sometime after her husband’s death. In a conversation with the author on February 26, 2004, noted Maryland genealogical expert Robert Barnes suggested that publication of obituaries and death notices in the *Maryland Gazette* frequently depended on what day of the week the death occurred. Mr. Barnes indicated that the *Gazette*, a weekly newspaper published on Thursdays, did not always note deaths that had occurred at the start of the week (as in the case of William Tuck), perhaps on the assumption that the city’s residents already knew of the death. Socio-economic standing also influenced publication of obituaries in the *Gazette*. The lack of a published record of the death of William Tuck may be a combination of both of these scenarios. Robert Barnes, interview by author, Annapolis, MD, 26 February 2004.

<sup>11</sup> The cabinetmaking industry played such a valuable role in Baltimore, that the majority of furniture shops were located adjacent to the center of the city’s trade and business districts. Increasing numbers of cabinetmakers and related tradesmen from smaller cities such as Annapolis and Georgetown, and the growth and popularity of ready-made furniture, helped make Baltimore furniture more available and less costly. See Elder, *Baltimore Painted Furniture*, 93-95 for a discussion of the composition of Baltimore’s neighborhoods and location of businesses. Elder’s catalogue also contains a list of Baltimore cabinetmakers and the locations of their shops for the periods covered in the exhibition, information augmented in Weidman’s essay in *Classical Maryland*.

competing with Baltimore goods for the trade with Southern Maryland and Maryland's Eastern Shore."<sup>12</sup> John Shaw remained the premier cabinetmaker during this era although a number of cabinetmakers still worked in Annapolis during the 1790s, including: Henry Hutton, William Ross, John Ross, William Waters, George Johnson, Isaac Holland and Joseph Middleton.

When William Tuck began to work for John Shaw in 1795, Shaw's shop was located on the same lot as his home on State Circle. The home faced the State House (Figure 1), while the shop was probably situated on the back end of the lot and fronted onto Church Street. In the 1798 Direct Federal Tax Assessment of Annapolis, Shaw's lot consisted of a "brick dwelling house single story (50' x 20') with back elbow brick single story (18' x 12'), [a] brick smoke house (8' x 8'), [and a] frame shop (30' x 2')."<sup>13</sup> Tuck joined a large shop crowded with a combination of apprentices, journeymen such as himself, and even visiting cabinetmakers from outlying villages and Baltimore and perhaps even Georgetown and Philadelphia.<sup>14</sup> The total output of the shop was substantial enough to have "necessitated the employment of journeymen or other experienced cabinetmakers to help full orders."<sup>15</sup> William, a skilled journeyman, could have earned money from a combination of work commissioned by Shaw, and possibly from work that he solicited himself.

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<sup>12</sup> Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 82.

<sup>13</sup> 1798 Direct Federal Tax Assessment of Annapolis, in Special Collections (Shirley Baltz Collection) MSA SC 5224.

<sup>14</sup> Baltimore carver and gilder George Smith came to Annapolis in 1800 to work in Shaw's shop, and noted his services "will be a great saving of risk and expense to the citizens in not having to send their goods to Baltimore." Shaw also acted as an agent for Baltimore artisans, and in 1802 coordinated sales for Baltimore carver, gilder and looking-glass manufacturer Samuel Kennedy. *Maryland Gazette*, 8 September 1800; 27 May 1802. MESDA Research Files.

<sup>15</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 29.

Figure 1



The Maryland State House, Engraving attributed to Charles Willson Peale, published in the February 1789 issue of the *Columbian Magazine*. The John Shaw house is seen in the lower-left corner.  
Special Collections (Bond Collection) MSA SC 194-4.  
Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives

Throughout the early national period, the slow economic climate in Annapolis may have made its hierarchy of labor within the cabinetmaking community slightly different than the situation in larger cities. In most urban centers, including Baltimore, where relationships within shops were increasingly inharmonious because of the division of labor, artisanal societies developed as a way to protect the interests of large numbers of journeymen. The artisanal environment in Maryland's capital appears to have been more traditional, and operated under an older system of patronage and social connectedness which was not influenced by the ideas of liberty and equality popularized after the Revolution. Annapolis had no price books or fraternal organizations to protect the interests of its workers, and the master artisans still controlled the shops and their employees, journeymen and apprentices. Journeymen could be skilled or partially-skilled free workmen who could choose where and for whom to work, while apprentices had been bound to the shop master to be taught all aspects of the trade. Until the late eighteenth century, most apprentices became journeymen after the conclusion of their apprenticeships, and if they succeeded, they could choose to become independent artisans in charge of their own shops.

In Annapolis, master artisans such as Shaw were “proprietors who did everything from waiting on customers to ordering supplies and raw materials and keeping the books, such as they were.”<sup>16</sup> In addition to training their apprentices, and working next to them (at least occasionally), masters were responsible for providing food, shelter and some education. Most of the apprentices bound to Shaw served

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<sup>16</sup> Bruce Laurie, *Artisans Into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1989), 35.

until they turned twenty-one, at which point they would have received journeymen status and perhaps “given a suit of clothes as a symbol of their manhood and a set of tools in recognition of their formal entry into the fraternity of the trade.”<sup>17</sup> In this period, apprentices commonly continued to working in their master’s shop as journeymen after they had completed their apprenticeship so that they could earn enough money to open their own shop.

In the 1790s and into the nineteenth century, Shaw’s shop produced furniture for a combination of public and private patrons, including the Maryland State House. Like most shop owners of the time, Shaw found himself increasingly serving as an entrepreneur, coordinating custom orders, developing and supervising the appearance, style, design and production of some of the standard shop pieces and motifs. The master artisan also worked to improve the skills of the men working under his roof, and to familiarize them with his preferred designs and techniques. The shop’s success led to its expansion, as Shaw ceased to provide only on-demand services, and likely started to develop a ready-made furniture business or wareroom, possibly in an attempt to compete with the Baltimore makers who by this time specialized in this market.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>18</sup> The concept of a furniture wareroom developed during the neoclassical or Georgian periods to refer to a large commercial shop that sold new and second-hand furnishings from an amalgam of sources. The furnishings in these warerooms could have been ready-made by journeymen and apprentices in the shop owner’s workshop, or sold to the owner from small shops or independent cabinetmakers. Furniture warerooms contrasted sharply to the small furniture shops which commonly sold pieces made by the shop owner, and rarely included objects made by a second or third party. British furniture scholar Christopher Gilbert explained that the lines between shops and warerooms blurred in the nineteenth century, but this contrast can be exemplified by a study of the small shops in Annapolis and the large warerooms commonly seen in Baltimore during the early national period. See Christopher Gilbert, *Pictorial Dictionary of Marked London Furniture, 1700-1840* (Leeds, Great Britain: Furniture History Society and W.S. Maney and Son Ltd, 1996) , 2.

William Voss Elder and Lu Bartlett explained that while Shaw may have worked on some selected pieces or commissions—such as the furniture made for the Lloyd family’s Annapolis and Wye River homes—“his diverse activities in business, politics, and community affairs may have left him little time to devote to cabinetmaking in the later years of his career.”<sup>19</sup> Some of the surviving furniture from Shaw’s shop is of a superior design and construction than the rest, suggesting these were custom-made pieces for important patrons that the master cabinetmaker himself had personally worked on. The majority of the furniture made in the shop, however, were stock pieces constructed by apprentices and journeymen under guidance from Shaw, although the experienced journeymen probably required little supervision.

Shaw, like his contemporaries throughout the state, used mahogany and walnut as the primary woods for his high-quality furniture, and common secondary woods in Annapolis furniture included locally-available white and yellow pine, cedar, and tulip poplar. Large quantities of West Indian mahogany began to arrive at the port of Annapolis during the 1750s; by the end of the decade it had become the most fashionable wood in the colony.<sup>20</sup> Cherry and oak were sometimes found in the simpler and more utilitarian furniture produced in Maryland, especially in the years

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<sup>19</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 29. A good example of Shaw’s own craftsmanship is the ornate neoclassical billiard table made circa 1800 for Edward Lloyd V at Wye House, and now in the collections of the Winterthur Museum.

<sup>20</sup> Honduran mahogany did not start to appear at Maryland ports until circa 1815. In his article “The Commercial Introduction of Mahogany and the Naval Stores Act of 1721,” Adam Bowett examined the 1721 British legislation intended to promote the “production of naval stores in the North American colonies.” The legislation was so successful that it also increased the demand and perception of West Indian mahogany as a valued commodity. Bowett’s article also examined the effect this act had on the markets in Maryland and Virginia. See Bowett, “The Commercial Introduction of Mahogany and the Naval Stores Act of 1721,” *Furniture History* 1994, 43-56. The author thanks Claire Jones, Keeper of Furniture, The Bowes Museum in County Durham for this reference. See also: Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 47.



before the Revolution. The neoclassical era saw the continued use of these primary and native secondary woods, although Baltimore cabinetmakers began to use maple and rosewood veneers in the early nineteenth century.

Despite the existence of established cabinetmaking shops in town and the availability of a wide range of furniture sold in Baltimore, Annapolitans continued their earlier pattern of purchasing English export pieces—even though citizens in many American cities tended to purchase domestic goods instead of imported ones. Just one month after George Washington appeared in the Senate Chamber in the Maryland State House to resign his position as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, Shaw and Chisholm informed the public they had just received another shipment of imported furnishings including: “A NEAT assortment of mahogany framed looking glasses, backgammon tables, draught-boards, tea-chests, tea boxes, cribbage boards and boxes, decanter stands, knife-boxes,” and a piano forte.<sup>21</sup> Nearly a decade later, Shaw advertised that he had “Just received from LONDON, by the WILLIAM and MARY...to be sold by the subscriber, URN DRESSING GLASSES, with drawers, oval and square; sewing ditto; without drawers; double and single inlaid tea caddies; billiard balls; backgammon tables; dice boxes and dice.”<sup>22</sup> The continued demand for imported furniture must have guided the appearance of locally-made furniture, and encouraged Annapolis cabinetmakers to design furniture that catered to the design preferences of local residents.

A number of objects bearing labels from John Shaw’s shop made during the 1790-1804 period have survived, suggesting that this was the shop’s busiest period

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<sup>21</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 11 December 1783 in Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 18.

<sup>22</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 22 December 1791. MESDA Research Files.

and the era in which Shaw had the greatest number of highly skilled journeymen working with him. At least one carver may have joined Shaw and his workforce during this period to work on the fretwork and scrollwork seen in the pediments of case pieces produced in the shop. A substantial amount of labeled Shaw furniture from this era contains signatures, initials or dates inscribed on the labels by the artisans who helped in their construction. For example, fourteen of the twenty-three labeled pieces listed in Elder and Bartlett's catalogue bear the initials of a workman from the cabinetmaker's shop. Indeed, William Tuck's tenure in Shaw's shop between 1795 and 1797 is confirmed by the presence of his initials on four surviving pieces bearing Shaw labels.

It is widely acknowledged that John Shaw labeled a significant amount of furniture made in his shop. Elder and Bartlett noted in 1983 that at least fifty labeled pieces still existed at the time of publication, and doubtless more existed in addition to those examined by the authors. Many fewer decorative arts scholars, however, have looked into why Shaw labeled such a high percentage of the objects built in his shop. Shaw began labeling his furniture soon after partnering with Chisholm, and may have used labels as a way of displaying pride in his work. Shaw labeled the majority of the pieces he sold to attest to the authenticity of his products and the quality of workmanship. Decorative arts scholar Barbara McLean Ward suggested that Shaw labeled his pieces as a way to advertise and gain patronage from Baltimore residents who "regularly did business in the state's new capital."<sup>23</sup> This may not be entirely accurate considering that Baltimore makers sold furniture at lower prices than

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<sup>23</sup> Barbara McLean Ward, "Marketing and Competitive Innovation: Brands, Marks, and Labels Found on Federal Period Furniture," in *Everyday Life in the Early Republic*, ed. Catherine E. Hutchins (Winterthur: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1994), 215.

their counterparts in Annapolis, they worked in a higher style, and sold a greater volume of furniture. Overall, citizens of Baltimore in the early national period would have had little need or interest in traveling to Annapolis, either for business or pleasure, except to attend the annual meetings of the legislature.<sup>24</sup>

Labeled pieces of furniture made during the neoclassical or federal era in the United States survive in greater numbers than those made in any other era in the history of American decorative arts. Barbara McLean Ward attributed this to a rise in postwar entrepreneurial spirit that accompanied a “fundamental change in the attitude of cabinetmakers toward the objects they produced.”<sup>25</sup> While a Parisian guild statute ordered all cabinetmakers, or *ébénistes*, to stamp their furniture in 1741 as a means of identifying the makers, neither American nor English furniture-makers were required to do so by law. The use and location of labels and signatures on furniture evolved throughout the eighteenth century, and it was not until after the Revolution that many American cabinetmakers used labels to advertise their products and the range of services they provided. In the decades after the Revolution, many cabinetmakers started using labels at a time when furniture warerooms were increasing in size and number, while others used them to claim “psychological ownership of a design.”<sup>26</sup>

Surviving furniture labels are important evidence not only because they firmly establish the provenance and maker of the objects, but also because of what they suggest about the relationship between the master and his craftsmen. It is now widely

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<sup>24</sup> Gregory Weidman indicated in a conversation with the author that there are few if any Annapolis-made pieces whose provenance can be firmly traced to Baltimore families, and no Annapolis cabinetmakers are known to have advertised in Baltimore newspapers. Mrs. Weidman noted that although John Shaw sold furniture to clients throughout Maryland, none of his labeled pieces can be definitively traced to sales in Baltimore. Gregory R. Weidman, phone interview by author, Silver Spring, MD, 1 April 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Ward, “Marketing and Competitive Innovation,” 206

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

accepted that most master cabinetmakers in the neoclassical era—from Thomas Chippendale to Duncan Pfyfe—primarily concentrated on attracting clients and designing objects and did not personally have a hand in the production of the majority of furnishings attributed to their shops. Instead, the journeyman and apprentices who worked in the shops were, in all likelihood, the ones who built the pieces. By the end of the eighteenth century, a significant amount of furniture was made piecemeal in shops that had established standardized sizes for individual elements, such as legs, arms, and drawers—a stage in the movement towards mass production fueled by price books and artisanal societies.

The postwar period saw the development of a streamlined piecemeal system of furniture-making that enabled cabinetmakers to amass stockpiles of furniture that could be sold as less-costly alternatives to custom-made pieces. Regardless of whether one or ten journeymen constructed a piece, it was still sold as a product of the master’s shop, a guarantee of a high degree of quality and workmanship. The addition of a trade label affixed to a discrete element of the piece confirmed its source. Labels enabled cabinetmakers to identify ‘themselves with the designs of their furniture and their furniture designs with their business...an ownership of skill.’<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Shaw labels were commonly placed on interiors of cases, doors, drawer bottoms, and fly rails, all places not visible on the exterior but easily locatable as a way of demonstrating the skill of the cabinetmakers. Most fashionable London makers thought it “undignified” to sign their pieces or use trade cards or labels to advertise their business because they did not think it gave them a economic

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<sup>27</sup> Ward, “Marketing and Competitive Innovation,” 206.

advantage.<sup>28</sup> Cabinetmakers in many American cities such as Annapolis, however, chose to utilize all of these labeling techniques to claim ownership of the pieces.

The survival of a number of labeled Shaw pieces improves the ability of scholars to draw conclusions about the types of furniture commonly produced in early national Annapolis. Unfortunately, this survival has contributed to the development of the “Shaw School,” a phenomena that has caused the attribution of most Annapolis furniture to the celebrated cabinetmaker. Until this study, very few documented Annapolis pieces have been attributed to any cabinetmaker other than Shaw or Chisholm, and none made after 1790 fall into this category.<sup>29</sup> Many attributions to Shaw have been made solely on stylistic appearance because of the similarities with labeled examples. Scholars of Maryland furniture, such as Sumpter Priddy III and Alexandra Alevizatos Kirtley, have recently argued that it is misleading to attribute most Annapolis pieces to Shaw strictly on the basis of appearance. Priddy and Kirtley have both posited that similarities in construction resulted from the fact that Shaw trained nearly all of the early national cabinetmakers working in Annapolis to work in his style. Every journeyman and apprentice working under Shaw’s direction would have learned the master’s design preferences, construction techniques, and stylistic ideas, and likely would have continued working in this tradition after they left Shaw’s shop.

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<sup>28</sup> Gilbert, *Marked London Furniture*, 5-6.

<sup>29</sup> Some post-1790 pieces have been attributed to the Annapolis region or even to an unspecified Annapolis cabinetmaker other than John Shaw, but no definitive attributions have been made. For example, see c. 1790-1800 desk and bookcase in the MESDA photo files that is attributed to Annapolis but does not have construction elements commonly associated with Shaw furniture. MESDA Photo Files S-7780.

The fact that Shaw has been associated with essentially all Annapolis furniture made between 1790 and 1804 demonstrates the persistent privilege of the master in the early national period in the United States. The master received credit for all of the work done in his shop because he was responsible for the designs, even if he did not play an active role in the construction stage. The umbrella of the Shaw school has subsumed the creativity and identity of the cabinetmakers who worked alongside Shaw in his shop, or competed against him for patronage of the public. Crediting Shaw as the sole influence or player in the city minimizes the contributions his contemporaries made to the local furniture trade. The celebration of the master cabinetmaker obscures the names and stories and discredits the cabinetmaking skills of the individuals who actually constructed the furniture.

A handful of select journeymen working in Shaw's shop inscribed their initials onto the shop labels to attest to their roles in the construction of some pieces sold by the master cabinetmaker.<sup>30</sup> William Tuck left his initials on five Shaw labels and his brother Washington signed one piece made for the Old Senate Chamber in the Maryland State House. Even though they primarily worked on stock items, the journeymen who signed these labels demonstrated some autonomy and pride in their work. Despite working in a trade that saw growing limits placed on the artistic freedom of its journeymen and apprentices, these young Annapolis artisans embraced the revolutionary sense of "equality of opportunity," which according to Wood meant "opening up careers to men of talent and virtue while at the same time destroying

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<sup>30</sup> Only eight sets of initials appear in the pieces illustrated in the Baltimore Museum of Art's 1983 Shaw exhibition catalogue. These combinations include JA, IB, TB, IT, HT, WT, WASH TUCK and I [A] W. Most furniture scholars now agree that initials and signatures on labels, punch marks, and other types of markings on furniture often belong to the journeymen who built the piece rather than the shop master.

kinship and patronage as sources of leadership.”<sup>31</sup> These journeymen used their initials to create their own space within the shop, and also to lay a foundation for future furniture commissions and business associations they could pursue after leaving Shaw’s shop.

After accounting for the high number of workmen in the shop, it is clear that this select group must have been highly skilled and trusted workers. It is unlikely that Shaw would have let a worker sign his name on the piece unless the workmanship reflected positively on the owner of the shop. Because of the prominent placement of Shaw’s labels, it would have been too risky for a worker to surreptitiously initial a piece as a way of showcasing his role in its construction.<sup>32</sup> John Shaw permitted these journeymen to sign their initials because he also subscribed to these enlightened values, or, as a savvy entrepreneur, he realized that he must in order to prevent his cabinetmakers—in short supply in Annapolis—from leaving his employment.

As two of the more valuable workmen in Shaw’s shop, the Tuck brothers played significant roles in the production of many pieces sold by the master cabinetmaker.<sup>33</sup> Rather than seeking to overturn the attribution of the Shaw furniture with labels signed by the Tucks, the analysis that follows will use Thomas J. Schlereth’s idea of “explanations of superiority” to call into question the

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<sup>31</sup> Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 233-234.

<sup>32</sup> Robert D. Mussey, Jr. noted in his recent comprehensive study of John and Thomas Seymour that there are at least three existent pieces of furniture made and signed by journeymen at the time of their employment with Thomas Seymour, or after they departed his shop as independent artisans. Mussey wrote that the “signatures on [the men’s] work probably indicate that they were to be paid as journeymen by Seymour for their share of the production, typically twenty to twenty-five of the final sale price...the system of signatures allowed each man to be paid for the work he executed.” One wonders whether Shaw had a similar system in place. Perhaps further examination of John Shaw’s cabinetmaking shop will yield additional knowledge about the professional relationships that the master artisan had with his journeymen and apprentices. Robert D. Mussey, Jr., *The Furniture Masterworks of John & Thomas Seymour* (Salem, MA: Peabody Essex Museum, 2003), 61.

<sup>33</sup> I refer to the pieces that the brothers “built” or “worked on” with full recognition that they did not necessarily construct each piece in its entirety.

generalization of attributions relating to the “John Shaw School.” This study will argue that the evidence suggests that William and Washington had a much larger role in Annapolis cabinetmaking than they have previously been credited.<sup>34</sup> The six pieces whose production can be traced to William and Washington during their tenure with Shaw were principally stock items commonly available in Annapolis. These pieces will serve as examples of types of objects that the brothers would have typically made during this period while working with the city’s preeminent cabinetmaker. This study will contend that the Tucks played an instrumental role in the construction of several pieces of furniture to be sold by John Shaw. It is important to understand these six objects as representative of a greater number of similar undocumented or non-surviving pieces that William and Washington likely built during their time with Shaw. The analysis of four pieces of furniture that follows in the next two chapters will describe more fully Annapolis cabinetmaking and the shifting market that furniture-makers had to contend with in the decades following the revolution.

It is difficult to say authoritatively that the six labeled pieces can be traced to the William and Washington, but the initials correspond with similar handwriting samples from the brothers, and the dates on the labels correspond with the brothers’ tenures with Shaw. Most of the furniture bearing initialed labels represents some of the most common shop designs that journeymen and apprentices would have worked on, either piecemeal or from start to finish. Because of that, it is extraordinarily difficult to firmly overturn the Shaw attributions and say conclusively that these

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas J. Schlereth, “Material Culture and Cultural Research” in *Material Culture: A Research Guide*, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1985), 21.



pieces were made by William or Washington Tuck alone. Instead, this study will use these six objects as types of furniture the brothers would have worked on while at Shaw's. The brothers' initials confirm their presence at the shop and illustrate their familiarity with the Annapolis-style of furniture design and construction, skills they would have taken with them after leaving Shaw's shop. Having placed the Tucks in Shaw's shop during its most prosperous period, I will use some of the pieces they helped to construct as a way of analyzing the importance and use of furnishings in early national Annapolis.

### **Furniture by the Tuck brothers**

The first documented piece built by William Tuck was a mahogany cellarette (Cat. 1), or bottle case as they were also called, made in Shaw's shop in 1795.<sup>35</sup> This cellarette, constructed with mahogany veneers, light wood stringing, and secondary woods of tulip poplar and yellow pine, represents a common Shaw design and also used woods commonly available to Maryland cabinetmakers. The rectangular case of this cellarette features a hinged lid, inlaid false front, and chamfered straight tapered legs. Interestingly, the legs are "elled out" so that they do not intrude into the interior compartment. The lift-top lid bordered with ovolo molding and mitered corners represents a common design element seen on pieces associated with the John Shaw

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<sup>35</sup> Ronald L. Hurst and Jonathan Prown used the term "bottle case" instead of cellarette, suggesting that the latter phrase was not widely used in America until the early nineteenth century. See Ronald J. Hurst and Jonathan Prown, *Southern Furniture 1680-1830: The Colonial Williamsburg Collection* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1998), 531 fn. 2. Bottle cases such as this were more likely to be found in southern states, rather than in New England, because of the importance that the planter-class placed on formal entertainment, as well as the warmer and more humid climate.

school during the neoclassical period. The John Shaw label, inscribed in pencil *W* 1795 *T*, is glued in the center of the underside of the lid.<sup>36</sup>

When raised, the hinged lid of the cellarette reveals six compartments on each side of the center section of a removable caddy and one large undivided section, possibly for holding drinking glasses.<sup>37</sup> In general, the dividers of the caddy were likely made from a secondary wood—perhaps yellow pine in Annapolis—and Hurst and Prown indicate they were probably custom-made to fit “specific sets of bottles since the latter were mold blown in different sizes.”<sup>38</sup> Interiors of similar cellarettes contain the Shaw school’s characteristic double-round molding “applied to the sides of the case above the bottle section,” presumably to catch the removable caddy when it was put into the case.<sup>39</sup> Strips of applied molding designed to support a mahogany bottle stand are nailed to the front and back of the interior of the case about an inch below the top. The bottle stand is removable and can be moved to each side of the case to facilitate access to the bottles below.

The design of the cellarettes made in Shaw’s shop, including the one made by William Tuck, was influenced by George Hepplewhite’s 1794 *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer’s Guide*. The third edition of this guide stated that “CELLERETS, CALLED also *gardes de vin*, are generally made of mahogany...the inner part is

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<sup>36</sup> No images of this label are known to exist. The label was “too stained to reproduce” in the 1983 Shaw catalogue, and the location and owner of this item are no longer known. A 1797 label inscribed with the initials IH and affixed to a Shaw sideboard owned by the Baltimore Museum of Art has sometimes been mistakenly associated with the William Tuck cellarette but this stems from some confusion created in the 1968 BMA exhibition catalogue in which this label was depicted next to this cellarette and thus perpetuated an association between this label and cellarette. William Voss Elder III, phone interview by author, Baltimore, MD, 3 December 2002.

<sup>37</sup> The removable caddy does not survive in the present object but an almost identical example can be seen in a cellarette at the Hammond-Harwood House, accession number F 169.

<sup>38</sup> Hurst and Prown, *Southern Furniture*, 529.

<sup>39</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 88.

divided with partitions... may be made of any shape. These are of general use where sideboards are without drawers.”<sup>40</sup> The mahogany veneers, light stringing, and interior finishing details complement the basic model derived from pattern books. The use of false fronts in furniture design was not a new phenomenon in Annapolis cabinetmaking, and may have been inspired by English pieces imported into the capital during the eighteenth century. Charles Carroll of Carrollton’s letters suggest a regional preference for “very neat... furniture formed with such a deception as to appear anything but what it really is,” that existed decades before William Tuck entered Shaw’s shop.<sup>41</sup>

While most Shaw school sideboards from this period were built with a bottle case drawer (conforming to the specifications set forth in *The London Cabinet Book of Prices*), the height of the cellarettes made in Annapolis during the 1790s indicate they would have fit underneath sideboard tables produced in town. The Tuck cellarette, for example, measuring 29 5/8” in height, would fit underneath a sideboard table now owned by the Baltimore Museum of Art—although it is unlikely these two particular pieces would ever have been displayed next to each other because of the different levels of ornamentation on the two pieces. On the other hand, two other Shaw-attributed cellarettes with inlaid pateras on the top lid could have accompanied the BMA’s sideboard table also ornamented with an inlaid patera in the center of the apron and two inlaid shells on the pilasters of the front legs.

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<sup>40</sup> George Hepplewhite, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer’s Guide* (1794; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1969), 7.

<sup>41</sup> Baltimore Museum of Art Research Files. Charles Carroll of Carrollton quoted in “The Carroll Family: An English Lifestyle in America” *Anywhere So Long As There Be Freedom: Charles Carroll of Carrollton, His Family & His Maryland* (exhibition catalogue) (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1975), 278.

In accordance with the designs of at least five cellarettes made in Annapolis during the late 1790s, the front of the Tuck cellarette is outlined with stringing to suggest it is a chest of drawers; the rest of the piece is very utilitarian and without ornamentation. Inlay stringing appears on a large number of Annapolis pieces made between 1790 and 1807, and the prevalence of this design element indicates that it was likely made locally instead of being purchased from Baltimore. No local inlay specialists appear to have been in Annapolis during the neoclassical era, probably because there was little local demand for heavily inlaid pieces in a community that preferred simpler and more conservative furniture over those sold in Baltimore.<sup>42</sup> A large amount of the inlay seen in Shaw school furniture came from Baltimore, but others were imported from England. Gregory Weidman suggested that much of the inlay used in Shaw furniture, including eagles, shells, dot and line stringing, and the “ruffled patera,” are all commonly seen in neoclassical Baltimore furniture, and may have roots in the influential Baltimore cabinetmaking firm of Bankson and Lawson.<sup>43</sup> Although the firm dissolved in 1792, its inlay forms continued to appear in Maryland furniture for several more years, perhaps because of Bankson and Lawson’s links with inlay specialists Thomas Barrett and William Patterson. Inlays exported from

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<sup>42</sup> There must have been cabinetmakers trained in inlay-making who could have made stringing and the quatrefoil patterns—an idiosyncratic design used in Annapolis but never in Baltimore—often seen on the feet of Shaw’s pembroke tables.

<sup>43</sup> For more on Bankson and Lawson and their role in shaping the Baltimore neoclassical style see: Priddy, Flanigan, and Weidman, “The Genesis of Neoclassical Style in Baltimore Furniture,” 59-99. Inlays made by the firm maintain a close stylistic connection with English inlays, but some of the design characteristics and patterns are distinctive to furniture made or attributed to Bankson and Lawson. See also: Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 73.

the firm appear in furniture made in Easton, Maryland, and in Annapolis, possibly because Patterson's association with Bankson continued into the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup>

The use of stringing to create a false front had several implications for the use of the cellarette, and reveals important information regarding the social significance of bottle cases in this period. This type of luxury item conveyed a statement about the intentions of its owner, who probably purchased the item for its functional use in entertainment settings as well as the statement of sophistication conveyed by possession of such an object. Portable and versatile, this cellarette serves as an example of an object designed in the midst of an era without firm delineations of public and private spaces, even in some elite houses. With its false front, the cellarette could have been used in numerous rooms within a home to blend in with wardrobes, desk and bookcases, chests and the aforementioned sideboards and sideboard tables. Local probate inventories from this period indicate that cellarettes could be located in spaces reserved for entertaining or for more private activities, such as sleeping.<sup>45</sup> While this piece could have been made to accompany a sideboard table—as Hepplewhite suggested—its design reveals that it could have also stood alone if the owner did not have the larger, costlier, item. The piece could conceivably have been carried into a dining room for a social occasion, such as a dinner party, and then returned to a bedroom or parlor where it would be placed against a wall so its frontal design would help it blend in with the other objects in that space.

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<sup>44</sup> Patterson worked in Baltimore until 1818. In 1800, soon after purchasing the majority of Barrett's supplies, Patterson advertised that he had inlay and stringing for sale to the "county cabinetmaker," a label that would have applied to Annapolis cabinetmakers. *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, 22 November 1800. MESDA Research Files.

<sup>45</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 102.

In 1795 William also initialed and dated a Shaw label on a mahogany wardrobe (Cat. 2) whose design reflected the influence of English pattern books.<sup>46</sup> The linen press, with the Shaw label affixed to the bottom of the top drawer and signed *W 1795 T*, is now in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society and is nearly identical to a labeled and initialed 1795 press owned by the Hammond Harwood House in Annapolis. The design of these pieces, both of which have dentil moldings and door panels with incurved corners, were inspired by Plates 85 and 88 of Hepplewhite's *Guide*. Elder and Bartlett noted that these two objects are "simplified versions" of later Shaw wardrobes because they are smaller in scale and lack the fretwork, inlay and stringing seen on these later examples, such as the 1797 press at the BMA. The link between the rococo designs of Chippendale and those of Hepplewhite is apparent in the 1795 versions of the linen press produced in Shaw's shop, as is the local preference for the "neat and plain." When contrasted with the 1797 wardrobe, these linen presses illustrate the transitional designs of Shaw's Annapolis cabinetmaking and the late development of the high-style neoclassical motifs popular in urban centers for nearly a decade. Of course, the addition of an experienced carver in the shop, or a shift in the master cabinetmaker's design preferences may also account for this change in appearance.

As evidenced by the nearly identical construction of surviving examples, wardrobes were probably a stock item in Shaw's shop, and thus objects that the

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<sup>46</sup> For references to neoclassical pattern books in Baltimore, see Morrison H. Heckscher, "English Furniture Pattern Books in Eighteenth-Century America," in *American Furniture*, ed. Luke Beckerdite (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for the Chipstone Foundation, 1994), 197-202. Architectural and furniture pattern books appeared in Annapolis as late as 1777, when the inventory of architect William Buckland recorded a number of books including Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinetmakers Director* (1754), Abraham Swan's *The Carpenter's Complete Instruction in Several Hundred Designs* (1768), and architectural guides by men such as Isaac Ware, James Gibbs, and Batty and Thomas Langley. MESDA Research Files.

journeymen would have worked on. At least three similarly-designed linen presses bearing Shaw labels were made between 1795 and 1797, and in each instance a set of initials and a date were written on the label. The sizes of each of the three known wardrobes are nearly identical (with the exclusion of the pediment on the 1797 example), and the dimensions of the lower portions of both 1795 pieces are also the same. Close examination of these pieces may reveal that some elements of these presses are interchangeable—much like the desk and bookcases designed in the shop during the same period.<sup>47</sup> Like most stock pieces, the presses may have been built in an assembly line-like production by a number apprentices and journeymen specializing in the various elements of the piece, and it is unlikely the shop owner would have been involved in the construction and assembly phases.

The following year, William built a demilune, or circular, card table (Cat. 3) that carries a John Shaw label inscribed *W 1796 T* on the inside of the hinged flying rail. Like most card tables associated with Shaw's shop, this mahogany table with mahogany veneers was built with secondary woods of tulip poplar, yellow pine and white oak. This four-legged table, like many from Annapolis, has one fly leg built with overlapping fly leg construction that allowed the leg to “fit neatly into the rear structure of the table.”<sup>48</sup> Tapered straight legs with stringing on three sides, spade feet, a central rear leaf-edge tenon, and lack of medial brace all bear similarities to

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<sup>47</sup> In a study of four c. 1797 Shaw desk and bookcases, Elder and Bartlett noted that while each interpretation of the forms are different, “this group is so similar in proportion and dimensions that it would be possible to interchange parts.” See Cat. 5 for the desk and bookcase probably made by William Tuck in 1797. Further examinations of known Shaw wardrobes and others from the circle of his Annapolis contemporaries should indicate whether these too were made so similar that some individual elements can be interchanged. Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw, Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 121.

<sup>48</sup> Benjamin A. Hewitt in Benjamin A. Hewitt, Patricia E. Kane and Gerald W.R. Ward, *The Work of Many Hands: Card Tables in Federal America 1790-1820* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), 95.

other Annapolis card tables. Ovoid spade feet commonly appear on neoclassical pieces associated with Shaw and the Annapolis school, and are a design element frequently seen in English furniture from the same period. The exterior of the hinged top of the table has a “rounded and inlaid molded edge” and a half-moon inlaid panel of mahogany veneer in the center of the leaf that is thought by some to be original.<sup>49</sup>

Labeled and dated 1796 by William Tuck, this piece is the only documented circular card table produced in Shaw’s shop, and its ornamental appearance embraces the late eighteenth-century neoclassical designs to a much higher degree than many of the square shaped tables produced in the shop at the same time. The design and decoration of this demilune table marks a significant stylistic departure from the known Shaw shop pieces and does not correlate with the standard appearance of all other documented Annapolis card tables. There is significantly more inlay on this demilune card table than on most associated with the Annapolis school. In addition to the rectangular stringing on the legs that terminates just above the feet, rectangular stringing also appears on the façade of the apron, and the bottom edge of the apron features sawtooth inlay of light and dark woods. The interior of the top is covered with red baize and has a molded and inlaid edge.

Inlaid ovals adorn the pilasters on each of the four legs; they are the most decorative elements of the table and the most illustrative of the new American neoclassical style. On each pilaster of the two front legs is an inlaid eagle with an

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<sup>49</sup> In a conversation with the author, Stiles T. Colwill asserted that he has always believed this inlaid panel to be original, although he did indicate that there were two schools of thought. For example, Elder and Bartlett wrote in the catalogue description of this piece that inlay is a replacement, noting that the top “was originally embellished with a semicircular inlaid motif.” Stiles T. Colwill, interview by author, Lutherville, MD, 18 August 2003. Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 112.



American shield in its middle and a streamer with five X's in its mouth, and both eagles hold arrows in their outside talons. The eagles face each other to create a sense of inclusion and draw attention to the central decorations in the piece. The inlaid eagles on this card table are the most typical type seen on Baltimore federal furniture, and are examples of the type of pictorial inlay that John Shaw purchased from Baltimore for use with his furniture.<sup>50</sup> The sawtooth inlay along the apron also corresponds with inlay used on Baltimore furniture from this period, although it could have possibly been made locally in Shaw's shop.

Citing a lack of additional demilune tables from Annapolis or Shaw's shop and the popularity of this shape among Baltimore makers and patrons, some scholars have suggested that William Tuck's card table was custom-made for a particular client. Examinations of surviving Shaw card tables support the supposition that the Tuck table was a custom design and not ready-made shape. Indeed, the most common shape of Annapolis card tables from John Shaw's shop was a straight-legged table with a baize interior and a single flying-leg. Most tables made in Shaw's shop, including pembroke and card tables, were either completely square or square with a serpentine front and ends and canted corners. The label, as well as the rounded leaf edges, spade feet, baize interior, and absence of a medial brace brand this piece as a product of Shaw's shop.

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<sup>50</sup> Examples of these eagles can be seen on three Baltimore card tables in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the United States Department of State, illustrated as cat. 130-132 in Clement E. Conger, Mary K. Itsell; Alexandra W. Rollins, ed. and Will Brown, *Treasures of State: Fine and Decorative Art in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the U.S. Department of State* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991), 220-222. See discussion of the Baltimore form of the eagle in cat. 130. The author thanks Gregory R. Weidman for this reference. Elder and Bartlett suggest that the "flame-like oak leaves" on the pilasters of the rear legs may have also been produced in Baltimore. Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 112.

The circular table fits within Hewitt, Kane and Ward’s definition of a custom-made piece because it is a “‘rare’ shape or different shape from those popular in a region,” and its production “deviate[s] significantly from the production of the standard model.”<sup>51</sup> The similarities between the design of this piece and Baltimore demilune tables might mean that this table was built to replace or accompany an existing Baltimore table owned by a Shaw client. Because this was not a standard shop design, each of the elements had to be built specifically for this piece. There are other clues besides the WT label that suggest this table appears to have been built by a journeyman, such as Tuck, who may not have been as skilled at assembling circular card tables as some of those, such as Shaw, who commonly built the square ones. The dovetails and finger hinge are less finished than on most documented Shaw pieces from this era, and pegs and through-tenons are visible on both of the rear legs—a feature not seen on other square tables built in this same period. While it is not clear why a journeyman would have worked on a custom piece, these construction differences are clearly indicative of the work of a journeyman or possibly an apprentice rather than the master.

Card tables played significant roles in England and the United States during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because of their functional and social uses. These objects tended to be found in a “room of some elegance and formality,” although Edward S. Cooke, Jr. and other furniture scholars have suggested card tables were often moved throughout homes as dictated by the

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<sup>51</sup> Hewitt et. al., *Work of Many Hands*, 100.

situation.<sup>52</sup> As evidenced by Hewitt, Kane and Ward, demilune card tables were the most versatile and likely the most common in neoclassical America.<sup>53</sup> These tables, much like the majority of neoclassical furniture, were designed to be more aesthetic than functional. Furniture scholar Gerald W.R. Ward noted that most neoclassical card tables “are less specialized than their earlier counterparts—they generally lack the wells for counters and recessed corners for candlesticks often found in tables made in the Queen Anne and Chippendale styles,” and rarely have the same amount of embellishment found in the earlier periods.<sup>54</sup> Some scholars have suggested that neoclassical card tables were actually *more* specialized than previous ones because they were designed specifically for playing cards, whereas designs of tables made in earlier eras often accommodated a variety of general gaming activities rather than simply cards.

Tables with a circular-shaped hinged top, such as the one made by William Tuck, had important connotations for their use within early national period homes. Demilune tables were placed at the sides of the rooms when not in use, and traditionally made in pairs to ensure visual balance within a room. The importance of functionality, symmetry and balance of furniture within a room, a remnant of the rococo style, remained throughout in the neoclassical period. When not in use, card tables could serve as side or pier tables. Contemporary illustrations and paintings show circular tables were placed against walls, “flanking a window, doorway, or

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<sup>52</sup> Gerald W.R. Ward, “‘Avarice and Conviviality’: Card Playing in Federal America,” in Hewitt et. al., *Work of Many Hands*, 17-19.

<sup>53</sup> This shape accounted for one-third of all straight-legged tables examined by Hewitt, Kane and Ward in their study. See *ibid.*, 72.

<sup>54</sup> Ward, “Avarice and Conviviality,” in *ibid.*, 19.

fireplace, and perhaps standing under a looking glass.”<sup>55</sup> Gerald W.R. Ward explained that the visibility of the inlay on the top of the table—whether open or closed—attested to the variety of functions served by the object. Similarly, the ornamentation and pictorial inlays on the Tuck table appear in the front and on the legs, areas most visible when the table was situated at the edges of the room. The inlay on the exterior of the upper leaf on the Tuck table further illustrates that this piece was primarily designed as an aesthetic complement to a room, and its top usually kept closed.

The cellarette, card table and other furniture made in Shaw’s shop in the latter part of the 1790s reflect changing attitudes in America toward the appearance and use of furniture. While neoclassical furniture had supplanted rococo designs as the primary style of new furniture in urban areas, cabinetmakers in rural communities did not adopt these new designs as quickly as their urban contemporaries. Rural furniture-makers often combined elements of both styles in their furniture because their cabinetmaking techniques lagged behind and because local design preferences were slow to change. Surviving Annapolis furniture shows that Shaw was working within the neoclassical style by the mid-1790s, but it is unclear at this time what drove the cabinetmaker to embrace this new style. Indeed, a paucity of documentary evidence hinders an examination of whether the design of early national furniture in Annapolis was based upon the preferences of the buyer or the maker.<sup>56</sup> What is clear,

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> See: Edward S. Cooke Jr., “The Study of American Furniture from the Perspective of the Maker, in *Perspectives on American Furniture*, ed. Gerald W.R. Ward (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988).

however, is that the latest American and European furniture styles only slowly reached the quiet capital of Maryland, and did not find immediate acceptance.

The new neoclassical style brought an increased specialization of furniture designed for specific spaces in the home—a sharp contrast to earlier eras of multipurpose rooms and furnishings—as objects became active players in the arrangement and function of rooms. Changes in conceptions of public and private spaces had a significant effect on the lives of middle level and elite citizens, and influenced the appearance of furnishings built during this period. The furniture that William and Washington Tuck worked on during the early national period serve as examples of the shifting use of furniture in domestic and public settings.

Not all homes in the late 1790s, especially in small, rural towns—as Annapolis was—had begun to clearly delineate the separation between public and private living spaces that had become common in urban areas and on large plantations. Primarily in homes of the elites would visitors consistently find that the owners completely subscribed to notions of this separation and a hierarchical progression of spaces.<sup>57</sup> But since few new residences had been built since the Revolution, some non-elite homes in Annapolis at this time would undoubtedly still have had multipurpose rooms that served public and private functions for its occupants. Designed for both public and private settings, the range of furniture made in Annapolis reflects varying consumer interests, stylistic concerns, and the slow development of the Federal style among local artisans. An analysis of pieces made locally in this period indicates that makers and citizens in Annapolis adopted the new

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<sup>57</sup> For more on the development of elite and gentry homes in Annapolis during the city's age of affluence, see: Miller and Ridout, *Architecture in Annapolis*.

designs and uses of furniture and incorporated them into more familiar and traditional notions of form and function.

The furniture made in Shaw's shop and signed by William Tuck during the late 1790s illustrates the changing landscape of the appearance and use of furniture. William, like his mentor Shaw, drew on pattern books and national motifs, and incorporated local preferences for the "neat and plain" into pieces for Annapolis consumers. Not only did the new styles have to fit within established standards of design, they also had to fit within the socially-constructed uses of domestic spaces, and accommodate local design preferences. An examination of three pieces made by William documents the transition from multipurpose furniture that emphasized function over appearance, to more aesthetic, but still utilitarian, objects that contained motifs from the early national period.

Pieces made in John Shaw's shop between 1790 and 1800 reflect the cabinetmaker's blending of old and new styles within a landscape of evolving conceptions of spaces and furniture use. The demilune card table attributed to William Tuck and the furniture Shaw supplied for the Senate and the Governor and Council in 1796 and 1797 demonstrates the shift in appearance of his furniture towards the neoclassical style while still adhering to local fondness for the neat and plain. Indeed, the increased use of pictorial and figured inlays and stringing augmented characteristic Shaw design elements derived from English models and helped bring the shop's work within the neoclassical style. The appearance of chairs, case pieces, and tables made in Shaw's shop during this period indicates the

development of neoclassicism in Annapolis, a style that blended the popular Federal style within local preferences for furniture with restrained ornamentation.

### **A new independent cabinetmaker and another apprenticeship**

Records and documented pieces indicate that the younger William Tuck's presence at Shaw's shop ceased after 1797, and it is possible that he may have ended his career as a journeyman in the shop because of the death of his father in May. Little else is known about William's activities during this period, although he may have formed a partnership with another local cabinetmaker, or perhaps returned home to live with his younger siblings—including Washington who departed St. John's four days after his father's death.<sup>58</sup> As late as 1799, William may have entered into a partnership with James Lusby, an Annapolis cabinetmaker whose younger brother, Henry, later apprenticed with Shaw.<sup>59</sup>

Eight months after the death of William the elder, the Tuck family once again reunited with John Shaw. Washington Tuck joined Shaw's shop on August 16, 1798, an event undoubtedly grounded in familial connections and the artisanal associations established by both William Tucks.

The Orphans Court bind Washington Tuck, seventeen years old the Twenty Second day of last March, to John Shaw until he arrives to the age of twenty one years. The said John Shaw is to cause the said Washington Tuck to be taught the Trade of Cabinet Maker and Joiner, and agrees to find him in Sufficient Meat, Drink, Washing, Lodging and Cloathing, and to cause him to be taught reading, Writing, Arithmetic as far as the Rule of Three, and at the expiration of his

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<sup>58</sup> Neither brother was listed in the 1798 assessment of Annapolis, suggesting that they may have established residence with another artisan in town or possibly rented a house in town.

<sup>59</sup> Alevizatos, "The Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyd Family, 1750-1850," 216.

Servitude to pay him his freedom dues agreeably to the Act of Assembly.<sup>60</sup>

By 1798 John Shaw had become undertaker of the State House and assumed the lead role in superintending or performing all necessary maintenance and renovations to the building and its furniture; the master cabinetmaker also served as warden and vestryman at St. Anne's Church.<sup>61</sup> Shaw, much like the elder Tuck and other artisans in town, was active in the public life of the city because of his social connections, and because it was in his economic interest to do so.

Washington's apprenticeship solidified the Tuck family's links with one of the city's most important artisans, and indicated that the children of the elder William Tuck had capitalized upon their father's reputation earned through artisanal and political connections in Annapolis. Although William had not died wealthy, he had placed both of his sons in position to take advantage of his relationships with local Annapolitans. Cognizant that his competency could no longer be secured in the private sphere of Annapolis, William had succeeded in positioning his sons to take advantage of all relevant artisanal opportunities in the city. There was no better place for the Tuck children to be at the close of the eighteenth century than with the man who was inextricably linked to the public sphere, the city's sole source of reliable income. While it is unlikely that the brothers' tenures with Shaw overlapped, their time in the shop coincided with Shaw's decision to shift his primary focus away from the private market and towards building for the public sphere. Throughout the 1790s and into the 1800s, Shaw and his shop concentrated on providing furniture for the

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<sup>60</sup> ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY REGISTER OF WILLS (Orphans Court Proceedings) 1798, folio 31, MSA C 125-8.

<sup>61</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 24.



State House, the seat of the government closely connected with most of the commercial and economic activity in Annapolis.

In the midst of the shifting market and stylistic preference of Shaw's shop, Washington Tuck completed his apprenticeship with the master cabinetmaker in 1801. Washington's early craftsmanship can be definitively traced to one Senate desk (Cat. 6) that passed through Shaw's shop during his apprenticeship, but no known documents or pieces have surfaced to connect him to other work in the shop during this period. Working under Shaw's tutelage, Washington would have worked on public and private commissions and some of the ready-made household furniture periodically sold by Shaw at his shop or on the grounds of the State House.<sup>62</sup>

Household furniture commonly made under the direction of Shaw at this time included side and arm chairs, portable writing desks, desk and bookcases, pembroke tables, card tables, and sideboards. Tuck would also have assisted his master with repairs made to the furniture and possibly even other artisanal projects at the State House.

Like a number of other contemporary Shaw apprentices, Washington Tuck appears to have traveled to Baltimore in search of work after the end of his

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<sup>62</sup> Shaw frequently advertised sales of new and second-hand furniture in the *Maryland Gazette*. Examples include February 14, 1799 when he announced the sale of second hand "tables, chairs, desks, bookcases, wardrobes, a clock" and other articles at the Stadt House. *Maryland Gazette* notices indicate that Shaw sold new, imported, and second-hand furniture throughout the eighteenth century, but did not use the term "ready-made" in any of his advertisements until the early nineteenth-century. On October 10, 1803, Shaw announced the sale of "ready made...articles of household furniture," including "desk and book-case, bureaus, wardrobes, secretaries, side boards, dining, breakfast, and card tables, drawing room and easy chairs, sofas, bedsteads of different kinds, bason stands, knife boxes, liquor do..." The sales of "ready-made" furniture in the early 1800s may point to a shift in the construction and sale of furniture in Annapolis. Perhaps Shaw's busiest period of production had generated a surplus of new objects built in the standard shop designs that could be purchased immediately—an option that would not have been possible prior to the establishment of a streamlined system of production which he implemented towards the end of the eighteenth century. It may also suggest that Shaw was operating a wareroom in which he sold furniture made in his shop and those of other local cabinetmakers. From MESDA Research Files and the Hammond Harwood House archives.

apprenticeship in 1801. Recent scholarship indicates that Edward Lloyd V and his favored Annapolis cabinetmaker, John Shaw, may have had a working relationship with the successful Baltimore cabinetmaker, Edward Priestley. Born in Annapolis but resident in Baltimore since 1790, Priestley provided furnishings to the Lloyd family for over two decades and was an active leader in Baltimore's mechanic community. Priestley had an arrangement in which young Maryland journeymen cabinetmakers trained in shops with connections to the Lloyd family were offered employment at his Baltimore shop, a process described as Lloyd's promotion and "funneling of cabinetmakers to Priestley."<sup>63</sup>

Possibly in exchange for patronage of furniture and related services, Edward Lloyd encouraged Shaw to send his former apprentices to study and work with Priestley, who had become a prominent independent Baltimore cabinetmaker by 1807. A number of Shaw apprentices, including Henry Lusby, the son of William Tuck's former partner Jacob, moved to Baltimore to continue the trade after completing their apprenticeships. Upon their arrival in Baltimore, these young journeymen initially found work as journeymen in Priestley's shop at Shaw's urging where they could learn the additional skills and financial savvy necessary to start their own independent cabinetmaking businesses.<sup>64</sup>

Washington's later social and professional relationships with Baltimoreans, including noted cabinetmaker William Camp—who employed cabinetmakers such as John Needles, an important furniture-maker who also started his career with

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<sup>63</sup> This idea was first introduced by Alevizatos, "The Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyd Family," 219-220. Unlike his contemporaries, many of whom relied heavily on the labor of apprentices, Priestley appears to have preferred to employ skilled journeymen and indentured tradesmen in his shop. For more information about Edward Priestley, see also Kirtley, "Edward Priestley," 2-53.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Priestley—and city dock owner and former Anne Arundel County delegate Hugh McElderry, suggests that the younger Tuck spent several years in Baltimore.<sup>65</sup> Probably encouraged by Shaw to travel to Baltimore and work for Priestley, Washington stayed in Maryland's largest city because it afforded him an opportunity to ply his trade in a burgeoning furniture-making market. In Baltimore, Tuck would have been exposed to and trained to work in the latest neoclassical designs, which he later brought back to Annapolis when he returned in 1807. Tuck may have left Priestley's shop to work as a journeyman with another cabinetmaker, and may have even worked on some of the fancy furniture which became popular in the city during the early nineteenth century. Washington's exact whereabouts between 1801-1807 cannot be confirmed by assessment records or city directories, as he owned no property and the directories rarely listed journeymen. The lack of documents pointing to Washington's presence in Annapolis and the fact that Tuck brothers did not form a partnership until 1807, suggests that the younger Tuck traveled to Baltimore for work soon after completing his apprenticeship.

While Washington worked in Baltimore, his brother William had already established his presence within Annapolis's artisanal community and sought new opportunities for cabinetmaking. After two years with James Lusby, William became an independent shop owner in October, 1801 when he published the following trade notice in the *Maryland Gazette*:

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<sup>65</sup> In 1808, Washington Tuck requested the assistance of William Camp for an evaluation of the work that the Tuck brothers had done in the House of Delegates Chamber. Camp, along with Baltimore cabinetmaker Walter Cook, examined the work in the chamber and made a report to the Governor and Council. It is unlikely that Washington would have asked Camp to look at the renovations on his behalf unless they already had a professional or a social relationship. See Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session, 84. Washington Tuck sold his fifty-foot schooner, *Belvedere*, to McElderry and James Beacham (also of Baltimore) in 1823. ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records) liber WSG 9, folio 549-551, MSA C 97-60.

### NOTICE

THE partnership of LUSBY and TUCK is this day dissolved by mutual consent.

N.B. WILLIAM TUCK respectfully informs his friends, and the public, that he still carries on the cabinet business in this city, and hopes by his attention and punctuality to merit their patronage.

Annapolis. Corn-Hill-street. October 6, 1801<sup>66</sup>

Tuck continued to work in the shop where he and Lusby formerly worked together, and one week later, Lusby advertised that he had formed a new cabinetmaking partnership with Robert Davis, another local furniture-maker.<sup>67</sup>

William built and repaired furniture for local Annapolitans, and by virtue of his cabinetmaking skills, was one of the few Annapolis artisans who received the patronage of Edward Lloyd V. A connection that stemmed from his success as a journeyman with Shaw, Tuck provided significant amounts of furniture for the Lloyds between 1803 and 1809.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, in 1803 William received more than \$140 from Edward Lloyd for unnamed furnishings, one of which may be a painted kitchen cupboard still in use at Wye House.<sup>69</sup> Payments from Lloyd to Tuck did not necessarily come in the form of cash. Instead, the Wye House account books note

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<sup>66</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 15 October 1801.

<sup>67</sup> Clearly competing with William for the city's cabinetmaking business, Lusby and Davis advertised one week later that they also carried on their business on Cornhill Street, "in the house lately occupied by William Brewer," where they made mahogany and walnut furniture. *Maryland Gazette*, 20 October 1801.

<sup>68</sup> Shaw and Chisholm both provided furnishings for the Lloyds' Annapolis house and also Wye House in Talbot County, Maryland. Alexandra A. Kirtley suggested that the Lloyds favored Chisholm and "only patronized Shaw when he worked on his own after Chisholm retired in 1794." Alevizatos, "Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyd Family," 207. The Lloyd Papers, MS. 2001, Reel 25, Manuscripts Department, Maryland Historical Society.

<sup>69</sup> Alevizatos wrote "it is likely that this piece was made by William or Washington Tuck, and is reflected on their early nineteenth-century orders." The piece is missing its entablature and cornice, and aside from its painted finish is characterized by a very utilitarian design. Alevizatos, "The Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyds," 383-385, cat. 29.

that between 1803-1811, Lloyd paid Tuck \$423.19 in wood, wheat and pork, while only paying him \$60 cash.<sup>70</sup>

William Tuck the younger's involvement with elite Lloyd family is significant, especially because Edward Lloyd V served as governor of Maryland from 1809 to 1811. William, like his father, sought to continue his family's artisanal tradition and realized this was best accomplished by maintaining successful business relationships with prominent political, social, and artisanal leaders of the Annapolis community. His own cabinetmaking skills and connections—first established by his father—with men such as Shaw and Lloyd facilitated William Tuck's access to the public sphere and a State House seemingly in constant need of repairs. William's connections came to fruition at a time when John Shaw had retired from his role as the building's superintendent, putting the young cabinetmaker in an advantageous position to capitalize on this opportunity.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the apparent successes of William Tuck the younger between 1801 and 1807, it is clear that the money available from private commissions was not reliable or sufficient enough for any Annapolis cabinetmakers, including Shaw, to depend upon as the sole resource for their competency. Most cabinetmakers and other artisans began to look elsewhere for additional markets that could support their

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<sup>70</sup> Although surviving receipts at Wye House do not specify the type of services that William provided for Edward Lloyd, it is clear that future governor of Maryland actively patronized Tuck during the early 1800s. This was especially evident in 1813 when Lloyd paid William's estate the balance of his accounts at Wye, a total of \$549.25 for work done prior to November 15, 1809. See Wye House Account Book, 1803-1820, quoted in Alevizatos, "Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyd Family," 217. Wye House Account Book, 1803-1820, page 33. The author thanks Alexandra A. Kirtley for this reference.

<sup>71</sup> Between 1806 and 1807, Shaw briefly retired unofficially from his role as the general State House contractor, although he did not relinquish his role as State Armorer. It is not known why Shaw stopped working for the state, although it may be connected to the death of his second wife, Margaret, on July 5, 1806. Shaw reclaimed his position as superintendent in 1808, a role which he held until 1820 when Washington Tuck took over these duties.

talents.<sup>72</sup> Edward C. Papenfuse's examination of the heads of household listed in the 1783 assessment indicated that nineteen percent (75 of 247) of the residents left town, while an additional sixteen percent cannot be accounted for. Papenfuse noted that "those who had the most to lose or the most to gain found it easiest to leave," thereby linking mobility with wealth and economic standing.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to financial reserves, the possibility of future economic opportunities may have driven or at least been an important determinant of mobility. Twenty-six percent (19 of 71) of mid-level heads of households (considered to be those with an assessed wealth between £200-400) left Annapolis after the war, a rate comparable to that of the upper third of the population (assessed at £400 and above) of whom twenty-four percent (14 of 58) left.<sup>74</sup> Only nine percent (8 of 87) of those assessed at less than £200 left Annapolis, suggesting that those who chose to leave all had the capital necessary to support their quest for future economic gain.

Of the city's craftsmen, representing twenty percent of the total heads of household, between twenty and twenty-six percent (between 8 and 12 of 44) left Annapolis during the post-Revolutionary era. A number of local artisans left the city in search of more work in Baltimore or in communities to the west. Artisans in the

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<sup>72</sup> The 1783 assessment listed Shaw and Chisholm as the only two cabinetmakers in Annapolis. Neither artisan left Annapolis, a fact that becomes slightly misleading when examined in context of Papenfuse's analysis of the assessment which only followed the lives of the heads of households listed in 1783. Trade notices published in the *Maryland Gazette* indicate the presence of a number of cabinetmakers in Annapolis in the postwar years, but with the exception of Shaw, the Tucks, Gilbert Middleton, and Henry Thompson, most of these men probably did not stay in town for any significant duration. Aside from this small group, most cabinetmakers may have worked as journeymen in one of the established shops in town, or perhaps left to find work in Baltimore, Georgetown, or Washington, D.C., as William Waters, Henry Lusby, Robert Davis, and William King chose to do. For more on William King, see Anne Castrodale Golovin, "William King Jr., Georgetown furniture maker" *Antiques*, May 1977, 1032-1037. Further population and trade analysis would help determine which classes of artisans suffered from the loss of commerce in Annapolis. See Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 156-168.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>74</sup> The median assessed wealth in the 1783 assessment of Annapolis was £183.00.0.

shoemaking and silversmithing trades were most effected, as half of their members departed, but mechanics in all trades suffered from the decline in commerce and the loss of a quarter of the wealthiest residents. In trades where the artisans did not “leave,” death, insolvency or retirement (in the case of cabinetmaker Archibald Chisholm) leveled out the artisanal population after the war; it did not increase noticeably for the next several decades. Whereas in the years before the Revolution several artisans participated in each trade, in the postwar era, most trades were increasingly practiced by one artisan, such as William Tuck the elder, the lone painter-glazier in town after the war. Those citizens with little or no connection to the sphere of government or government-related positions were the most impacted by the decline in commerce in Annapolis.

Many of those who chose to stay looked to the public sphere and the State House as the most likely sources of commerce and economic opportunity. Although not always a lucrative employment, the State House construction filled a niche for workmen who suffered with the decline of the city’s private housing market. Those lucky enough to secure work at the State House had ample opportunities to earn some money to complement earnings from the private contracts. At the close of the eighteenth century, the State House had recurring leaks, and collapse of the ceiling in the Senate Chamber was imminent. The Tucks, with their connections to John Shaw and links established by their father, were among those ideally positioned to take advantage of the employment possibilities available at the State House.

### Chapter 3

#### “A name and no advantage”

The bustling pace of life in prewar Annapolis slowed dramatically after the war, and by the middle of the 1790s, the city’s sources of economic success, along with the shipping trade, had moved to Baltimore. The housing market, which had thrived on improvements and renovations prior to the start of the war, had virtually collapsed as many residents migrated away from the capital city. A city formerly comprised of wealthy planters and successful government employees, “Annapolis was quickly becoming little more than a market town for outlying farms and a residence for low-salaried government clerks.”<sup>1</sup> Profitable merchants who had once coordinated the sale of high-quality European imports now retailed goods shipped from Baltimore, the only items that reliably arrived at the city dock in Annapolis. No longer catering to elite planters, Annapolis merchants resorted to retailing Baltimore-made goods, often at greatly-reduced prices that diminished their opportunities for large profits. Craftsmen such as barbers, tailors and shoemakers had trouble sustaining successful businesses, as did the city’s merchants, tavern keepers and shop owners.<sup>2</sup> Residents in the city formerly dubbed the “Athens of America” struggled to comprehend the changing economic circumstances that had transpired since the conclusion of the Revolution. One individual wrote in *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*:

This city [Annapolis] has been incorporated for sixty-five years, and what are we the better? We have a name and no advantage; we have

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<sup>1</sup> Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-165.



no commerce, no manufacturers (tho' a favourable situation) nor any mechanicks, except such as dire necessity compels.<sup>3</sup>

Postwar visitors to the town noticed the aesthetic beauty of the city's landscape and architecture, but they also commented on the lack of any substantial commerce or evidence of successful artisanal life. English visitor John Melish wrote in his diary that Annapolis had a state house and "a college, a theater, and two places of worship in the city, [but] it has...no great commerce; but, being a pleasant place, it is the residence of a great many wealthy people."<sup>4</sup> An Italian traveler noted, "this city's commerce is of little importance; the people are almost all landowners and they live in such luxury and elegance."<sup>5</sup> Other visitors, such as David Bailie Warden observed "there is not a merchant vessel of any description...[and] There is not a single manufacture in this place; Indeed, there is no Stream to impel machinery, and the height of the tide is not sufficient for this purpose." Pleasure and entertainment, according to Warden, not commerce, drove life in postwar Annapolis. "Annapolis appears to me to be a most Economical and pleasing place of residence, for those who have no particular profession, or Commercial pursuit."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser* (Baltimore), 13 January 1794. MESDA Research Files.

<sup>4</sup> John Melish, *Travels Through the United States of America, in the Years 1806 & 1807, and 1809, 1810, and 1811; Including an Account of Passage betwixt America and Britain, and travels through various parts of Britain, Ireland and Canada* (London, 1818), 142. Baltz Collection, MSA SC 5224, Box 1, Folder 4.

<sup>5</sup> Luigi Castiglione, *Voyage in the United States* (Milan, 1790), 399-402, in Baltz Collection, Shirley Baltz, *Present Condition of Maryland*, MSA SC 5224, Box 1, Folder 5.

<sup>6</sup> David Bailie Warden, "Journal of a Voyage from Annapolis to Cherbourg, on Board of the Frigate *Constitution*, 1 August to 6 September, 1811," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 11 (1916): 130, 133. From the Baltz Collection, MSA SC 5224, Box 1, Folder 4.

## **Artisanal Life in the Early National Maryland**

The changes to the character of artisanal life seen in Annapolis paralleled those seen in smaller communities throughout the state as residents in these areas adjusted to the sudden and rapid rise of Baltimore at the close of the eighteenth century. Scholar Christine Daniels connected the decline of Kent County and its county-seat of Chestertown to the opening of the port of Baltimore. Daniels explained that by the 1790s, Chestertown, much like Annapolis, had become a backwater, and most of its artisans had left in search of greater fortunes in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Wilmington and even Pittsburgh.<sup>7</sup> “The growth of Baltimore continued to push rural craftsmen toward the low end of the market, as local demand remained constant for the most common artisanal chores alone.”<sup>8</sup> While the presence of state government in Annapolis gave the city an opportunity to combat its economic stagnation, the majority of small cities in Maryland simply collapsed.

The population of Baltimore rose throughout this period as the city became an attractive economic destination for Maryland residents, especially those from its merchant and mechanic communities. Artisans in Baltimore, including those from Annapolis, Chestertown and Washington, D.C., found employment opportunities in the private sphere, building and repairing materials for the city’s burgeoning middle and upper classes. The growth of Baltimore reduced the opportunities available to other artisans throughout the state, affecting cabinetmakers, blacksmiths as well as other mechanics.

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<sup>7</sup> Christine Daniels, “‘WANTED: A Blacksmith who understands Plantation Work’: Artisans in Maryland, 1700-1810,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., L, (October, 1993) : 750.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 760-761.

By the end of the eighteenth century, ownership of skill no longer provided a viable means of economic security. More importantly, the demise of the economic vitality of Maryland's rural communities and the beginning of a new market economy in Baltimore signaled one of the legacies of the Revolution and its impact on traditional craft hierarchies and notions of artisanal independence.<sup>9</sup> Within the old economic system, an artisan's understanding of the craft "made him independent, his ability to add to the wealth of his community made him useful, and his dedication to a simple life of hard work made him noble...setting him apart from his fellow citizens."<sup>10</sup> But these artisanal skills, which had formerly "represented indispensable knowledge, and upon that knowledge rested a claim to a certain authority within the community," no longer guaranteed community respect or economic prosperity.<sup>11</sup>

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, apprentices became increasingly seen as sources of cheap labor for the shop masters because they could be trained enough to work in an assembly-line-like environment that valued speed over quality. As a result, masters often failed to impart the intricacies of their crafts, and instead chose to advocate the opportunities to purchase ready-made objects at lower costs. With fewer well-trained apprentices, the quality of the products greatly diminished while the number of journeymen increased exponentially because of the demand for labor. Mechanic and journeymen societies formed in major cities—generally to the north—to help skilled artisans maintain their status amidst rising numbers of

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<sup>9</sup> For more on the pre-Revolutionary artisans in Baltimore, see: Tina H. Sheller, "Freemen, Servants, and Slaves: Artisans and Craft Structure of Revolutionary Baltimore Town," in *American Artisans: Crafting Social Identity, 1750-1850*, eds. Howard B. Rock, Paul A. Gilje, and Robert Asher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 17-32.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara McLean Ward, "The European Tradition and the Shaping of the American Artisan," in *The American Craftsman and the European Tradition, 1620-1820*, ed. Francis J. Puig and Michael Conforti (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1989), 15.

<sup>11</sup> Gary B. Nash, "A Historical Perspective on Early American Artisans," in *ibid.*, 2.

unskilled or partially-trained workers. These societies also protected the wages of their members, and fostered economic, social and political relationships in a manner similar to the function of European guilds.

Baltimore's rise to power coincided with the development and growth of mechanic and journeymen's societies throughout urban centers, marking an important development in post-Revolutionary America. While the identity of pre-Revolutionary artisans was often economic and linked to their trade, Charles Steffen explained that this sense of identity changed significantly in post-war Baltimore. Between the 1790s and 1812, Baltimore mechanics "articulated a new collective identity...fashioned...from their experiences in the workplace, not the marketplace—in the shops, yards, and manufactories." According to Steffen, these artisans helped to "create a new republican order" while struggling for greater social, economic and political influence.<sup>12</sup>

The development of the new market and cash-based economy brought changes to the role of artisans and their place in the emerging republican society. This shift also precipitated a significant evolution in the relationship between master artisans, journeymen, and apprentices, and ended the paternalistic hierarchy within the shops. This shifting hierarchy magnified the competing economic and social interests that separated journeymen and apprentices from the shop owners. Increasingly, successful artisans "seized new opportunities, and as masters with capital, became businessmen...form[ing] the nucleus of America's new middle class by taking themselves out of the workshop and assuming positions in which they

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<sup>12</sup> Charles G. Steffen, *The Mechanics of Baltimore: Workers and Politics in the Age of Revolution, 1763-1812* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 1984), xv.

supervised and coordinated the manual work of others, or sold and distributed goods that they did not make themselves.”<sup>13</sup> As the 1817 bylaws of the New York printers society indicated, “the interests of journeymen are separate and in some respects opposite to those of employers.”<sup>14</sup> As in most urban areas, Maryland’s largest city was characterized by the formation of distinct artisan communities that safeguarded the interests of the workers amidst a growing separation of artisans and entrepreneurs. Despite this, workers throughout the State continued to flood the streets of Maryland’s most prosperous city in the decades after the Revolution.

The rise of Baltimore affected the lives and economic opportunities of artisans, throughout Maryland and Washington, D.C.—although perhaps not as dramatically as it did in Kent County and Annapolis. The growth of large cabinetmaking shops and the expansion of Baltimore’s private markets made it impossible for artisans to rely solely on their trades if they hoped to remain in their native communities. Much like the elder William Tuck, who combined his artisanal talents with a lengthy tenure as Messenger of the Senate, middling artisans and even successful merchants in Annapolis had to broaden their economic and financial outlets. Annapolis merchants Charles Wallace and John Muir responded to this change by becoming debt collectors, but Edward Papenfuse suggested that many merchants became disillusioned by the death of the city’s “marketing function.”<sup>15</sup> Although not acknowledged by most scholars, it was simply not possible for artisans to practice only one trade and still succeed in Annapolis.

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<sup>13</sup> Paul A. Gilje, “Identity and Independence: The American Artisan, 1750-1800,” in Rock et. al., *American Artisans*, xv-xvi.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Laurie, *Artisans into Workers*, 51.

<sup>15</sup> Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 226.

As Annapolis and the rest of the fledgling nation entered the early national period, the economic challenges facing artisans and craftsmen persisted. In a continuation of a trend begun in the Revolutionary era, Annapolis artisans, from silversmiths to cabinetmakers and shoemakers, could no longer depend on the private market to maintain their competencies. To many outsiders, the thought of a state capital without a thriving economic base or successful businesses seemed paradoxical, especially since as many as half of all inhabitants of Baltimore took “direct or indirect part in commerce.”<sup>16</sup> While residents in Baltimore could turn to a “successful” commercial economy defined by increased production for the private sector, those in Annapolis appeared to have no source of economic prosperity that fit within this definition of success.

The frequency of observations noting the lack of commerce in postwar Annapolis indicated the city’s diminished economic activity, and revealed that Americans and foreign visitors at all social levels equated success with the accumulation of money and economic power. Indeed, the nation seemed captivated with a celebration of business that appeared to permeate all levels of society. “Americans,” according to historian Gordon Wood, “seemed to be a people totally absorbed in the individual pursuit of money.”<sup>17</sup> Commerce and business replaced social bonds and civic duty as the “golden chains” that held society together.<sup>18</sup> Commentary on life in early national Annapolis underscored an understanding that cities without commerce could not succeed financially or politically in the post-

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<sup>16</sup> Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland, A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 137.

<sup>17</sup> Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 325.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Blodget, *Thoughts on the Increasing Wealth and National Economy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C., 1801) quoted in *ibid*, 338.

Revolutionary era. In contrast to thriving cities such as New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, Annapolis' lack of commerce, observed by visitors and residents, undermined its prominence and hope for a vibrant economy in the early national years.

To the outside observer, Annapolis at the start of the nineteenth century appeared to be a town rooted in a previous era, catering to social entertainment but not business or commerce. Unlike in Baltimore, commerce for Annapolitans was not marked by mass production, furniture warerooms, or a thriving port that could support national and international trade markets. Some artisans including watchmakers, silversmiths, cabinetmakers and coachmakers continued to sell luxury goods, albeit less often and for less money than previously. Enough artisans specialized artisans such as blacksmiths, hatmakers, tailors, and shoemakers remained in town to provide necessary services for local residents.

But the real commercial element of early national Annapolis, unnoticed by most contemporary visitors, was that as the state capital, the city housed all three branches of the state government. Most of the reliable economic outlets available to local residents were for those who could connect their talents or products with the public sphere. Tavernkeepers, boardinghouse owners and local shopkeepers—comprising a quarter of the population—provided necessary services and derived their greatest sources of income from the annual legislative session, the semiannual meetings of the Court of Appeals and the General Court of the Western Shore, and the steady flow of out-of-town students to St. John's College. As evidenced by notices published in the *Maryland Gazette*, tradesmen from Baltimore and other areas

outside of Annapolis frequently traveled to the capital city to take advantage of the economic opportunities related to the legislative and judicial sessions.<sup>19</sup>

Not only did local artisans and shop owners benefit from the patronage of those that came to the State House for business, but the building itself provided its own sources of economic opportunity. William Tuck the elder worked in the State House as messenger for the Senate for over a decade, a position that allowed him to earn enough money to support his artisanal work as a painter and glazier and develop a network of contacts within the political sphere of the city. Many other citizens of Annapolis found work at the State House as clerks and officers, or as suppliers of materials for the sessions. Edward C. Papenfuse noted that in 1786 nearly twenty percent of the heads of households had positions affiliated with the government, a figure that diminished little in the decades that followed.<sup>20</sup> Still others found employment at the State House which was constantly in need of repairs, both incidental and major. The caretaker of the State House, John Shaw, delegated work, commissioned most of the building materials from local merchants and artisans, and employed local craftsmen and laborers to assist him. Most of the furniture provided for the capitol building under Shaw's direction came from his shop, and thus was built by the apprentices and journeymen cabinetmakers working for him.

The public building and its grounds served not only as the city's principal sources of employment, but they also played invaluable roles in the social lives of the

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<sup>19</sup> In December 1817, Mrs. Ann Merriken of Baltimore advertised that she had taken up lodging in the house "formerly occupied by Mr. Washington G. Tuck & directly opposite the State house, where she has on hand, and intends keeping during the legislature, an elegant assortment of Millinery, a large variety of fancy goods of the latest fashion...baskets, gloves." She noted that "those that wish any thing in her line will find it to their advantage to give her a call, and especially Gentlemen of the legislature that would wish to give their Wives and Daughters A CHRISTMAS GIFT." *Maryland Gazette*, 11 December 1817.

<sup>20</sup> Papenfuse, *Pursuit of Profit*, 137.



city's residents. Local militias mustered on the grounds, and furniture and other goods were sold at "Public Vendue" on the State House hill. John Shaw purchased his home directly across from the State House in 1784 and often sold materials outside of the capitol.<sup>21</sup> The grounds of the State House were not only used for the sale of material goods, but periodic slave auctions were held outside of the state capitol building.<sup>22</sup> Silversmith William Faris recorded a number of meetings of private citizens at the State House, including one 1793 meeting which resulted in a resolution of "ceeping gard with the Intent of Preventing people's comeing to Town from Philadelphia either by Land or water."<sup>23</sup> This social function of the building continued in the nineteenth century, as Annapolitans gathered in the legislative chambers to listen to itinerant preachers and outside lecturers, including Charles Willson Peale who spoke in 1823.<sup>24</sup>

### **The State House**

Construction of the State House began in 1772 under the direction of Annapolis merchant, Charles Wallace with plans submitted by local architect Joseph Horatio Anderson. Legislation passed by the General Assembly in 1769 appropriated £7500 and instructed the superintendents of the new State House, or stadt-house as it was known throughout the eighteenth-century, to build:

good convenient Rooms for the upper and Lower Houses of Assembly and for holding the Provincial Court separate from each other two

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<sup>21</sup> For an example of these sales, see *Maryland Gazette*, 14 February 1799.

<sup>22</sup> The *Maryland Gazette* announced that "a young negro fellow who calls himself STEPHEN" would be sold at "PUBLIC SALE...at the STADT-HOUSE" on Tuesday October 23, 1804. *Maryland Gazette*, 18 October 1804.

<sup>23</sup> Letzer and Russo, *Diary of William Faris*, 163. The authors note this resolution was an attempt to prevent the spread of yellow fever from Philadelphia to Annapolis.

<sup>24</sup> *The Maryland Republican or Political and Agricultural Museum* (Annapolis), 3 June 1823.

convenient Rooms for the use of Jurors attending the Provincial Court and four convenient Rooms for the use of Committees of the Lower House of Assembly. And also good convenient safe and secure Rooms for Offices and Repositories of the Records of the Upper and Lower Houses of Assembly, High Court of Chancery, High Court of Appeals and Provincial Court Prerogative Court and Land Office.<sup>25</sup>

Construction of the building moved quickly. The exterior of the building would have been completed by the end of 1773 had a dispute among the assembly members over the best means of covering the building not ensued.<sup>26</sup>

Local artisans, merchants, free laborers of both races, and likely African-American slaves, all played integral roles in the construction of the State House.<sup>27</sup>

Charles Wallace assumed the role of undertaker of the State House, and quickly used his commercial connections to secure building supplies from England. Aided by associations with his business partners in the merchant firm of Wallace, Davidson,

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<sup>25</sup> Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland 1769-1770, *Archives of Maryland* 62: 148-149.

<sup>26</sup> Radoff, "Charles Wallace as Undertaker of the State House," 52.

<sup>27</sup> Research conducted as part of the Historic Structure Report on the Maryland State House indicates that a number of free African American workers participated in the construction and maintenance of the state capitol building. In 1785, the Auditor General paid Negro Nathan two pounds five shillings for "cleaning rooms and makings fires etc. in the State House." Ben, listed as a free African American in the 1800 census, received payment from John Shaw in 1801 for working 45½ days at four shillings a day. Negro Moses received payment in 1804 and 1805 from the State for "cleaning the public temple," the State House privy. Moses, a former slave of Rezin Hammond, the brother of Matthias Hammond of the Hammond Harwood House, was freed by Rezin shortly before finding employment with the State. There is only one known document indicating the use of slave labor at the State House, although the lack of information does not suggest that no other slaves participated in the construction and upkeep of the building. On June 23, 1819, Mrs. Susanna Wells received \$250.00 for the "hire of her Negro Man employed in cutting Poplar Trees before the State House." Unlike the aforementioned payments, Mrs. Wells (widow of Daniel Wells the Annapolis butcher) received payment on behalf of "her Negro man," indicating that as his owner, she controlled his finances. AUDITOR GENERAL (Journal) MSA S 150-5, Peter Force Collection B-2, folio 464, MSA SC 4391; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-127, MdHR 6636-84-75; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Orders on the Treasury) MSA S 1092; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 23 June 1819, MSA S 1071-33. Considering the ownership of slaves by Annapolis architect Joseph Clark and the use of slave labor at other construction projects in Annapolis, it is possible that slaves could have been used in the construction of the State House. Finding references to these slaves, however, has proven quite difficult, likely because payments from the State were often made to the contractors or the slave owners, as in the case of Mrs. Wells, rather than directly to the workmen. See also Special Collections (Maryland State House History Project) Sasha Lourie, "Final Report: Use of Slave and Free African-American Labor at the State House," June 2002, MSA SC 5287-33-2.

and Johnson, Wallace imported numerous objects for use in the construction of the public building.<sup>28</sup> Throughout the eighteenth century, many Annapolis workers, not only the Tucks but also a number of carpenters and plasterers, found employment at the State House constructing and repairing the capitol.

Although slowed by violent storms, the Revolutionary War, and a legislature that at times was unsure of its final vision of the building, the State House opened in time for the March 1779 session of the General Assembly. At the start of the session, the House of Delegates Chamber, gallery, and adjoining committee room were two of the few areas in the building where construction had been completed.<sup>29</sup> By the time the Continental Congress met in Annapolis between from November 26, 1783, to August 13, 1784, work to the interior of the Georgian-style State House had finished. The most celebrated event in the history of the Maryland State House occurred during this session of Congress, when General George Washington resigned his Commission as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army on December 23, 1783.

Visitors to Annapolis throughout the eighteenth century recorded their impressions of the State House in travel diaries and published journals. Not only did these writings provide descriptions of the appearance of the building, but they also conveyed the author's personal response to the new capitol. French philosopher, the Abbé Robin, traveling with the French army as a chaplain, wrote in 1781: "the state-house is a very beautiful building, I think the most so of any I have seen in America.

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<sup>28</sup> Wallace imported materials including sheets of lead, copper, plaster of paris, and glass for the "public building" in 1771, 1772 and 1774. See Jacob M. Price, ed., *Joshua Johnson's Letterbook, 1771-1774: Letters From a Merchant in London to his Partners in Maryland* (London: London Record Society, 1979), 3-5, 48-49, 132 for bills, receipts and correspondence relating to these imports. See also CHANCERY COURT (Chancery Papers, Exhibits) Wallace, Davidson & Johnson, Invoice Book, MSA SM 79-41 M 1226.

<sup>29</sup> Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates, July Session 1779, folio 131-132, *Archives of Maryland* Early State Records MSA SC M 3196, 874.

The peristyle is set off with pillars, and the edifice is topped with a dome.”<sup>30</sup> But not everyone was as impressed by the appearance of the State House. German surgeon Johann David Schoepf reported after his 1783 visit to the capital that:

The State House indeed is not the splendid building of which the fame has been sounded, although certainly one of the handsomest in America, but no less insubstantial than most of the other publick and private buildings in America. That it pleases the eye is due to its elevated situation, its small cupola, its four wooden columns before the entrance, and because no other considerable building stands near it. It has only seven windows in front, and is built of brick two storeys high. The large hall on the ground floor is tasteful, although not spacious. At the other end, facing the entrance, as is customary in State and Courthouses, there are raised seats in the form of an amphitheatre designed for the meetings of the high courts. For the rest, the building has space enough for the rooms of the Provincial Assembly, the Senate, Executive Council, General Court for the Eastern Shore, Indentant of the Revenue &c.<sup>31</sup>

The dome or cupola described by the Abbé Robin and Schoepf was a source of continual problems at the State House. Charles Wallace expressed his concerns to the General Assembly regarding a need to determine a suitable design and covering for the cupola, but the end result failed to keep water out. Indeed, the General Assembly concluded in 1784 that the cupola was “originally constructed contrary to all rules of architecture,” and there was no allowance for water runoff.<sup>32</sup> Construction of a new wooden dome—the largest such dome in America—began in 1788 under the

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<sup>30</sup> The Abbé Robin, *'New Travels in America'--From Rhode Island to Maryland--Annapolis--The French Army in the Chesapeake--M. de LaFayette--Williamsburg--Tobacco--Yorktown after Siege--Billeting of the French Troops*, trans. Phillip Freneau (Philadelphia, 1783) in Alfred J. Morrison, ed., *Travels in Virginia in Revolutionary Times* (Lynchburg, VA: J.P. Bell company, inc., c.1922), 32. Available online via the Library of Congress' American Memory Project.

<sup>31</sup> Johann David Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation* [1783-1784], trans. and ed. Alfred J. Morrison (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1911), 365. Special Collections (Schoepf Collection) MSA SC 2745.

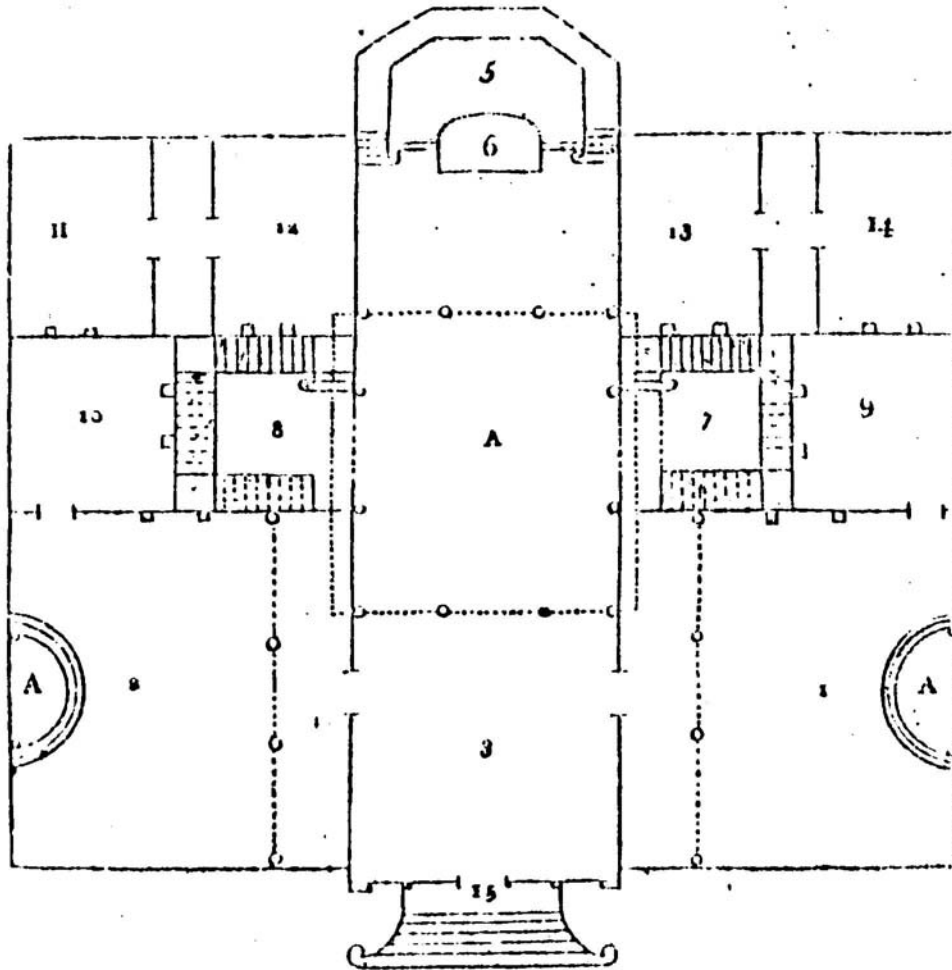
<sup>32</sup> Special Collections (Maryland General Assembly House of Delegates Collection) MSA SC 2734-2, folio 85.

direction of local architect Joseph Clark and was completed in 1795 under the supervision of John Shaw.

Shortly after construction of the dome began, floor plans of the building were published for the first time in the February 1789 issue of the *Columbian Magazine* (Figure 2). Known as the “Columbian Plan,” the layout showed the presence of the Senate and House of Delegates Chambers and committee rooms, the General Court, and the record offices of the Chancery Court, General Court, Land Office, and Register of Wills on the first floor. Located on the second floor were the Council Chamber (above the Senate Chamber), Auditor's Chamber (above the House Chamber) two jury rooms for the courts, and the repositories for arms located above the record offices. The floor plan showed a classically Georgian layout, with the Senate Chamber to the right of the main door and the House of Delegates Chamber to the left. The two chambers were the same size and mirror images of each other, with raised podiums or “thrones” for the Speaker and the President in the center of the rooms, and a visitor’s gallery was located at the back of each chamber.

The original furnishings in the State House came from a variety of national and international sources, and combined the popularity of rococo designs with American preferences for the “neat and plain” style. These objects were probably much plainer and simpler than some of the English models, and the furnishings in the legislative chambers, the court room, and the Council Chamber were probably very simple. Members of the Upper and Lower Houses may have both sat at tables and benches, much as the members of Congress did at Philadelphia’s Congress Hall, and there is little evidence of artwork and documents that may have hung on the walls

Figure 2



“The Ground Plan of the State-House at Annapolis,”  
From the *Columbian Magazine*, February, 1789  
Special Collections (State House Graphics Collection) MSA SC 1556-1-121  
Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives

prior to 1790.<sup>33</sup> While there are no known examples of pre-1790 furniture with State House provenance, surviving documents indicate some of the makers and types of furniture supplied to the state in the 1770s and 1780s.

Noted architect and designer, William Buckland, provided “one large double desk covered with green cloth, locks, hinges, brasses etc.” in 1774, Cornelius Mills made a chair for the Speaker of the House of Delegates in 1782, and Baltimore chair makers Nick Valliant and George Allen supplied sixty Windsor chairs for the members of the Continental Congress in 1783. In 1785 Archibald Chisholm supplied a “bookcase and desk for the Intendent’s Office.” The majority of Maryland-made State House furniture, however, seems to have been provided by John Shaw. Shaw received payment for furniture such as tables and presses supplied for the Council Chamber in 1780, and put up seats in the House of Delegates in 1788.<sup>34</sup>

By the close of the eighteenth century, the furnishings in the State House had fallen into a state of disrepair and needed to be replaced. The tables and chairs in the House of Delegates had been in place since the first session in 1779, while the furniture in the Senate probably need repairs as well. In November, 1797, Shaw

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<sup>33</sup> In April 1774, the General Assembly approved Charles Willson Peale’s bid for placing his portrait of William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, in a convenient place in the State House. Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland, October 13, 1773-April 19, 1774, Archives of Maryland (64), page 281. In November, 1791, the Council ordered John Shaw “to make such repairs to the windows and fire places in the House of Delegates as are necessary to procure tables, benches.” Tables were certainly used in the House Chamber until at least 1794, and possibly as late as 1807, but no documents describing the original appearance of the Senate Chamber have been located.

GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 1791, Archives of Maryland (72), 232; for more on the furnishings of Congress Hall, see Karie Diethorn, “Furnishing Plan for the First Floor of Congress Hall Independence National Historical Park, Supplement 1: A Study of the Historic Philip Van Cortlandt Seating Plan” (Philadelphia: Independence National Historical Park, 1992, photocopy) , 1-17.

<sup>34</sup> AUDITOR GENERAL (Journal) MSA S 150-5, Peter Force Collection B-2, folio 365, MSA SC 4391; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-65 MdHR 6636-46-94/96; AUDITOR GENERAL (Journal) MSA S 150-5, Peter Force Collection B-2, folio 444, MSA SC 4391. For examples of payments to Shaw for furniture supplied in the 1780s, see Auditor General (Journal) MSA S 150-4, Peter Force Collection folio 165, 198-199, MSA SC 4391; TREASURER OF THE WESTERN SHORE (Journal of Accounts) 1788, folio 72, MSA S 606-3.

received payment of £217.18.6 for “24 Mahogany arm chairs, 10 Mahogany Desks for the use of the Senate & 1 neat Mahogany d<sup>o</sup> for the president & to Simon Rettalick for a pair of And Irons.”<sup>35</sup> The younger William Tuck assisted with this commission, leaving his initials on a label affixed to the interior of the desk made for the President of the Senate. (See Cat. 4) The 1797 furniture that Shaw provided for the Senate demonstrated the local preference for the neat and plain, and fell within the broader stylistic shift that occurred in the Shaw shop at that time. Members of the Senate, however, were among the few occupants of the State House aside from the Governor and Council who received new furnishings in the 1790s. Shaw made incidental repairs and replacements to a few pieces in the offices of the State House, but most of the furniture in the building would not be replaced until the early nineteenth century.

### **Renovations in the House of Delegates Chamber**

A year after Shaw completed refurnishing the Senate Chamber, the General Assembly considered its first reconceptualization of the basic layout of the House of Delegates chamber since 1779. On January 21, 1798, the General Assembly requested that:

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<sup>35</sup> TREASURY OF THE WESTERN SHORE (Journal of Accounts) 1797, folio 48, MSA S 606-8. The furniture supplied for the Senate in 1797, including desks and chairs, is discussed in detail in Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 126-131. A November 1798 account “for repairs of the Senate Chamber to J. Shaw” provides a list of nineteen names of artisans and laborers who provided materials and work for the renovations made to the Chamber in 1797. Although the account named the local plasterers, carpenters and others who provided additional building materials, unfortunately, none of the journeymen who helped Shaw construct the furniture for the chamber are listed. John Shaw would have paid the journeymen out of the money appropriated to him by the General Assembly or the Governor and Council. See MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-18-22075, MdHR 6636-81-99. Scholars have questioned why Shaw only provided ten desks for the Senate during the 1797 commission because there were sixteen senators at the time. Perhaps the 1797 desks replicated existing desks from an earlier (original?) commission, but the absence of any documentation for the remaining five desks makes these theories highly speculative.



the Governor and Council be authorized to contract for the furnishing of the room in which the house of delegates hold their session with circular tables, and as many windsor chairs thereto as will be sufficient to accommodate all the members belonging to the said house, the said tables and chairs to be formed and fixed in the same manner as in the house of representatives of the United States.<sup>36</sup>

The resolution instructed that the tables and chairs in the House Chamber be formed and fixed in the same u-shaped configuration in place in Congress Hall in Philadelphia, an arrangement that featured three tiered rows of tables. That June, the Council voted three to two against this bill. Those who voted against it shared “the opinion that the room is too small to have it fitted so as to accommodate the [eighty] members comfortably,” and the Council employed John Shaw “to measure the room...and to produce a plan for the accommodation of the Representatives of said room.”<sup>37</sup> No records of Shaw’s arrangement survive, although he repaired the seats and put green cloth on the tables in 1801.<sup>38</sup> Until the early nineteenth-century, aside from a few incidental repairs, the House appears to have remained furnished with the original furniture made for it in 1779.<sup>39</sup>

Plans to refurnish the House of Delegates lay dormant until 1807, when the delegates revived the idea of modeling the lower house chamber after the United States House of Representatives. By this time, the House of Representatives had moved into its new chamber in the Capitol Building in Washington, designed by

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<sup>36</sup> Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, November Session 1797, 145.

<sup>37</sup> GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 1798, folio 325-326, MSA S 1071-29.

<sup>38</sup> MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-113, MdHR 6636-84-89.

<sup>39</sup> No documents relating to a total refurnishing of the House of Delegates Chamber in the eighteenth century have been found, nor was prospect of such work frequently discussed by the legislature. In December, 1794, the House of Delegates requested the Council to “employ a person to procure...eighty Windsor chairs and eighty small desks” for the use of the delegates. No further references to this work appear in the legislative or executive proceedings, and the House’s 1797 recommendation for the refurnishing provides further evidence that the 1794 work did not occur. Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1794 Session, page 111.

William Thornton and Benjamin Henry Latrobe. On January 3, 1807, the Maryland House of Delegates passed a bill that ordered the Governor and Council to:

furnish the house of delegates with twenty-one convenient writing desks, with four separate drawers each, for use of the delegation from each county, and the delegation from the city of Annapolis and Baltimore, and that each desk be marked for the use of the particular county or city, and that the expense of providing the same be paid out of any unappropriated money in the treasury.<sup>40</sup>

At this time, the Council, by virtue of its role as the state's executive body, had the final decision relating to all of the construction, renovations, and contracts for work at the State House; no formal bidding process existed for government contracts.

Instead, the Council, guided by a longstanding tradition of patronage, selected its preferred contractor and determined a suitable appropriation for the work to be done.

Reputable local artisans, such as Shaw, and those with important political or social connections within the government most frequently benefited from this system.

On March 25, 1807, the Council issued a resolution regarding work in the House Chamber.

Ordered that William Tuck be employed to do the workmanship, in carrying the designs of the legislature into effect, as related to the fitting up and repairing the house of delegates room: That the room be laid off in circular form, and that the desks be raised one above the other as nearly like the room occupied by congress as may be practicable: That the said house of delegates room be furnished with a new carpet and completed by the time of the meeting of the legislature: That James Lusby and Robert Davis be employed to fit up the senate chamber, by repairing the desks and chairs now out of repair, and make as many new ones as may be necessary to complete the number of fifteen, and that the said senate chamber be provided with a new carpet.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1806 Session, 93-94.

<sup>41</sup> GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 1807, folio 427-428, MSA S 1071-30.

Passage of this resolution coincided with Shaw's two-year hiatus from state work and forced the Governor and Council to select cabinetmakers who would effectively and efficiently complete the renovations—although the Council may have consulted with Shaw because of his role as State House superintendent and his familiarity with local craftsmen. The Council's decision to choose two Annapolis cabinetmaking firms to complete the renovations in the State House—even though it would have been cheaper to use Baltimore makers—demonstrates the executive body's loyalty to local craftsmen and cabinetmakers and the importance of maintaining social and political associations in early national Annapolis. Likewise, it was imperative for cabinetmakers and other artisans to develop connections with the influential members of the government in order to take advantage of public commissions.

The House of Delegates commission marked the Tuck brothers' initial entry into the public sphere, and afforded them an opportunity to capitalize on the only reliable source of income for the city's artisans. In the case of William and Washington, this commission represented the next chapter in the family's quest for artisanal success that was not achieved through money, but rather through hard work and connections with important artisans and politicians. Their family's longstanding connections to the city and the public sphere, and the brothers' own work with Shaw and the Lloyd family helped the William and Washington establish a reputation as artisans worthy of such a prestigious commission.

The brothers formed an official partnership soon after William received the House commission, although the elder Tuck later explained that he and his brother “contracted their partnership back to about the first of January preceding [January 1,

1807], in consequence of other work done by them” before the House renovations.<sup>42</sup>

The Randall and Dobbin account book records Washington’s presence as a cabinetmaker in Annapolis at the start of 1807, noting that he purchased scantling and plank for Annapolis cabinetmaker John Ross.<sup>43</sup> The brothers may have officially become partners as early as March, but they were certainly together in July, 1807, when Washington purchased more than two pounds worth of lathes and other materials from Randall and Dobbin on behalf of his brother.<sup>44</sup>

Prior to beginning the State House renovations, William, possibly accompanied by Washington, traveled to the Capitol in the District of Columbia to view the chamber they were to emulate.<sup>45</sup> The House of Delegates wished to copy the plan of the renowned architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, who played a significant role in the construction of the Capitol before the fire of 1814. Latrobe’s 1806 “Plan of the Principal Story of the Capitol, US,” illustrated the symmetrical House chamber with a combination of straight and curved desks in varying sizes arranged in a tiered semi-circular manner.<sup>46</sup> After viewing the Chamber, William returned to Annapolis

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<sup>42</sup> Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session, 84.

<sup>43</sup> Randall and Dobbin Account Book, 1798-1807, MS. 679, Manuscripts Division, Maryland Historical Society.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Baltimore cabinetmakers William Camp and Walter Crook indicated in a March 31, 1808 letter to the Governor and Council that William and Washington’s bill included “their expenses going to Washington to take a plan of the finishing of the house of representatives,” for which the brothers charged fifteen dollars. William Camp and Walter Crook in Exhibit No. 7, Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session, 93.

<sup>46</sup> No furniture from the original House of Representatives survived the 1814 destruction of the Capitol by the British during the War of 1812. Following the fire, Latrobe was once again employed to redesign, among other rooms, the House of Representatives Chamber. Thomas Constantine, a New York cabinetmaker, was awarded a contract to construct enough straight tables to accommodate thirty-two members, and enough circular tables to accommodate one hundred and sixty members. These desks, built with one, two and three drawers were organized in tiered concentric rows facing the speaker, as had been the case before the fire. As in the original Hall, commodious sofas were placed at the end of each aisle on the main floor for visiting dignitaries, while elevated galleries for use by the general public were located at the rear of the Chamber. For more on the furnishings from the U.S. House of Representatives Chamber, see Margaret B. Klapthor, "Furniture in the Capitol: Desks and

to implement the Latrobe design on a smaller scale, a significant challenge because of the discrepancy in size and shape of the two chambers. The brothers also faced the stipulation that all renovations be finished by the start of the legislative session on November 3, 1807. This was especially difficult because the work entailed providing new furnishings for all eighty delegates and two clerks, as well as plastering and painting the room, and supplying a new carpet and window blinds. Work in the Chamber began in earnest in August, 1807.

The Tucks purchased the majority of the building materials for the renovations from Annapolis merchants, and received assistance from unnamed, and presumably local, journeymen cabinetmakers. They employed local workmen including a plasterer, a painter-glazier, and a blacksmith. William and Washington bought their materials in town, purchasing planks from John Randall and Joseph Sands, brass for lamps from William McParlin, lime and hair from William Fowler and boot and shoemaker John Hyde respectively for materials to replaster the Chamber, and retained the services of silversmith William Fowler.<sup>47</sup> The Tucks also purchased significant amounts of building and furniture-making materials, including nails, flooring brads, screws, and sheets of lead and tin from Lewis Duvall, a

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Chairs Used in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, 1819-1857” in *Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C.*, 1969-1970, Volume 69, 1971, 190-211. For more on the life and furnishings of Thomas Constantine, see Mathew A. Thurlow, “Thomas Constantine: Cabinetmaker and Mahogany Merchant in Early Nineteenth-Century New York” (M.A. Thesis, University of Delaware, 2004). Like the Tuck brothers, Constantine’s oeuvre included furniture made for public and private settings. The New York cabinetmaker had three other public commissions in addition to his work in the House of Representatives, including making chairs for the U.S. Senate in 1819, a chair and canopy for the Speaker of the Senate in the North Carolina State House in 1823, and in 1825 he designed pulpit furniture for Christ Church in New York City.

<sup>47</sup> Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session, 90. See appendix for transcription of this bill.

prominent local merchant, served on the Governor and Council at the time of the House renovations.<sup>48</sup>

The brothers' final bill (Appendix A) detailed the furniture they supplied for completion of the House of Delegates Chamber, and demonstrated the range of their cabinetmaking and entrepreneurial skills.<sup>49</sup> As part of their work in the House, the Tucks made twenty-four pieces of furniture for the room: nine circular desks at \$90 each, twelve straight desks at \$55 each, one speaker's desk at \$50, and two clerks' desks at \$35 each. Only one known object, the desk built for the Speaker of the House, survives from the twenty-four supplied by the Tucks. Designed to the specifications of the General Assembly, each members' desk had four drawers, one for the use of each county delegate. With no known surviving members' desks, it is impossible to determine the sizes of the furniture supplied by the Tucks, although the curved desks were probably three different sizes because of the tiered configuration of the chamber. The Tucks also repaired some of the existing furniture in the chamber, including objects made nearly a decade earlier by John Shaw. These repairs included work to: benches and the clerk's chair (\$15), the foot-stool to the speaker's chair (\$1), and stuffing, repairing and cleaning the speaker's chair (\$7) that had been made in Shaw's shop in 1797.

Additional receipts submitted in conjunction with the House commission suggest that the Tucks traveled to Baltimore to subcontract the chair making and to

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<sup>48</sup> Duvall sat on the Council between 1806-1809, before serving as a member of the House of Delegates from 1811-1820 and also as Mayor of Annapolis from 1819-1823. Testimony by Duvall in 1808 suggests that the merchant may have been a confidant of the brothers during their billing dispute with the Council. An Historical List of Public Officials of Maryland, 1634-present, *Archives of Maryland*, 76. See Maryland State Archives Master Biographical Database Files Collection, MSA SC 3520-13903.

<sup>49</sup> Submission of this bill on December 5, 1807 indicates that the work in the House Chamber must have been completed by that day.

procure inkstands and sandboxes. The Tucks billed for “80 chairs at 24 dollars per dozen at \$160, to freight on ditto at \$11.12, expenses on chairs at \$24.50.” The bill makes clear that the Tucks and their local contemporaries did not make the eighty members’ chairs for the House of Delegates. The low cost of the chairs (\$2.00 each) suggests they were Windsors, seating furniture made in large quantities in Baltimore and used in the galleries in the House and Senate Chambers in the State House.<sup>50</sup> William and Washington subcontracted the chairs because it was unlikely they could have completed the commission within the allotted time specified by the Council. The size of the Tucks’ shop and the lack of available manpower in town meant that eighty chairs could not efficiently be made in Annapolis. By recognizing that it was in their best interest to purchase chairs in Baltimore and have them shipped to the capital city—as many private citizens in Annapolis chose to do—the brothers demonstrated their entrepreneurial savvy and artisanal awareness; skills which undoubtedly helped them rise to the top tier of local mechanics. Through William’s associations with the Lloyds and the connections with cabinetmakers and merchants that Washington established during his tenure in Baltimore, the brothers had enough contacts in Baltimore to subcontract an important element of their House commission at a reasonable price.

Of the twenty-four pieces of furniture that William and Washington Tuck made for the House of Delegates Chamber, one piece has been misattributed to John

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<sup>50</sup> The Tucks were not the first Annapolis artisans to look to Baltimore for assistance with renovations in the State House. A decade before, John Shaw received £3.15.0 for “expenses going to Baltimore for a plasterer” in conjunction with unspecified renovations that may have been in the Senate Chamber. For a comprehensive study of Windsor chairs, see Nancy Goyne Evans, *American Windsor Chairs* (New York: Hudson Hills Press in association with the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1996).

Shaw. This piece, the desk of the Speaker of the House of Delegates that is now at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is the only piece known to have survived from this commission (Cat. 4). This piece has historically been attributed to John Shaw on the basis of style and construction and because of its similarities to the desk designed by Shaw for the President of the Senate in 1797.<sup>51</sup> The final bill from the 1807 House renovations submitted by the brothers, and John Shaw's brief retirement, however, confirm that this desk is correctly attributed to the shop of William and Washington Tuck.<sup>52</sup>

Made by William and Washington Tuck in 1807 for the Speaker of the House of Delegates the desk features a curved back, canted sides, and a straight front with a

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<sup>51</sup> As previously noted, the President's piece has a WT written on the Shaw label. Comparisons relating to the construction and aesthetics of the Senate President's desk are difficult to make, since the desk was converted into a coffee table at the end of the nineteenth century by a relative of John Needles. The desk, now located in the Old Senate Chamber in the Maryland State House, was rebuilt in 1940 by Enrico Liberti who replaced the gallery, legs and stretchers.

<sup>52</sup> The survival of the Speaker's desk is fortuitous considering the paucity of State House furniture that has survived into the modern era. While the 1797 furniture from the Senate Chamber has been saved because of possible associations—mythic but almost all inaccurate—with George Washington's resignation, few pieces from the rest of the building have survived or are documented. The low rate of survival can be partially attributed to the use of these public pieces over long periods of time. Recurrent use—an average of ninety days each year for legislative furnishings and similar durations for objects made for the executive offices—over sustained periods took its toll on the furnishings in the State House, such as those provided by the Tucks in 1807. Some governors, including Charles Ridgely of Hampton, took some State House pieces after completion of their terms. In some instances, the State offered old furnishings as payment to contractors as a cost-cutting measure. Oral tradition suggests that at least one cabinetmaker, John Needles, received some of the 1797 Shaw furniture from the Senate Chamber as partial payment for work, although no documents that support this theory have been located. Other furnishings were given to contractors who worked at the State House for a significant amount of time. Public auctions, such as those held by Shaw on the State House Circle may have helped dispose of some of the old State House furniture. None of these sales or donations are documented, forcing modern scholars to rely heavily on oral histories and family traditions to trace the provenance of surviving State House furniture.

In the case of the Tucks' House of Delegates furniture, none of the desks were replaced until 1837, and a complete refurnishing of the chamber did not occur until 1858. When the furniture was replaced, the desks, some of them damaged after nearly fifty years of use, were probably thrown away or sold as scrap. Stylistically outdated and with few associations with noteworthy events that had occurred in the House, the appearance and size of the four-drawer members' desks would have been impractical or undesirable in mid-century Annapolis houses, and few people would have had any sentimental attachment to them. The removal of the desks from the House of Delegates probably passed unnoticed by most residents of Annapolis.



false drawer ornamented with two large wooden knobs. The desk measures OH. 33” x OW. 36½” x OD. 23¾”, and the primary woods are mahogany and mahogany veneers, while the secondary woods are yellow pine and satinwood. The front legs of the desk are square and tapered, while the rear legs are tapered and diamond-shaped. Brown leather covers nearly the entire writing surface, including the hinged lift-top lid, although this leather is not thought to be original. Cross-banded mahogany veneers indicate the edges of the writing surface. A tray fitted for pens, ink and a sander is built into a raised ledge below the gallery whose design conforms to the overall bowed shape of the piece.

Each of the legs on the Speaker’s desk is adorned with light stringing on the front and outward facing sides, and concave stringing is seen on the bowed front and sides of the desk. A double line of stringing runs up the edges of the legs and terminates with an arch at the top, and a tablet-form reserve with incurved corners is inlaid on each pilaster. These decorations are more related to Baltimore designs than anything previously associated with Annapolis, and even bear some resemblance to furniture from the school of John and Thomas Seymour.<sup>53</sup> A large oval with the eagle of the Great Seal, a standard American neoclassical motif that was probably purchased in Baltimore, is inlaid in the center of the bowed front. The inlaid eagle holds in its mouth a streamer marked with Xs, now mostly obliterated, to symbolize each state in the Union, or possibly the original thirteen. William and Washington Tuck chose to use satinwood banding on the apron instead of using the characteristic Shaw beading often used in early national Annapolis furniture, and in doing so, the brothers set their piece apart from the majority of those produced at this time by those

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<sup>53</sup> See Mussey, *John & Thomas Seymour*, 35, 276-277 (cat. entry 71) and 284-285 (cat. entry 75).

working in style of the John Shaw school. This motif may point to a design technique consistent with more pieces produced by William or Washington, but the paucity of surviving documented pieces prevents further identification of their stylistic preferences.

The design of the Speaker's desk reflects the Tuck brothers' familiarity and knowledge of the appearance of the Senate furniture, objects both had worked on while at Shaw's. Accordingly, the brothers designed the Speaker's desk to appear similar to that of the Senate President—to preserve the Georgian symmetry of the building—yet different enough to keep the identity of the House separate from the upper house chamber across the hallway. To incorporate a new spirit of design in their furnishings, the brothers drew on the influences of the prevailing neoclassical style which had undoubtedly reached Annapolis by 1807, and integrated the themes and motifs from the architecture and furniture in the House of Representatives Chamber in Washington. The result was a manifestation of the Tuck brothers' training and design preferences, local styles and construction techniques, and a symbolic union of state and national governments.

The appearance and construction of the Speaker's desk is very closely related, but not identical, to that of the Senate President's, built in Shaw's shop in 1797, demonstrating an interesting dichotomy between the work of Shaw and the Tucks. For example, each gallery on 1797 desks is scalloped, while the gallery on the Speaker's desk is straight, a design detail presumably repeated on all of the desks made by the brothers for this commission. The inlaid eagle in the center of the Speaker's desk reflects the appearance of the President's desk but is less grotesque.

Despite the skillfully rendered design of the eagle, its prominence in the center of the front connects it stylistically with the 1797 desk in the Senate Chamber. Similarly, while each of the drawers in the Senate desks have brass bail pulls, the large wooden knobs on the false drawer of the Speaker's desk resemble those commonly seen in urban centers at this time.<sup>54</sup> Repairs made to the knobs in the House desks by James Askey in 1837 confirm that each of the desks made by the Tucks had wooden knobs.<sup>55</sup> Nine of the desks built for the Maryland House Chamber were curved in the front to mirror the appearance of the desks in the Capitol, while all of the Senate desks made by Shaw have straight fronts.

The Tucks converted the House of Delegates chamber into a classically-inspired amphitheater-like setting by raising the floor to create a three-tiered seating arrangement (Figure 3).<sup>56</sup> William and Washington listed a total of nine circular desks and twelve straight desks in the bill they submitted to the Auditor's Office on December 5, 1807. For the purposes of their bill, the Tuck brothers considered one desk to be "the space allowed for four members to sit at," and the twenty-one desks accommodated the eighty members of the lower house. All of the desks were "screwed together...[and] separated by small pieces of mahogany" to create individual workspaces for each of the delegates. A green cloth covered the entire

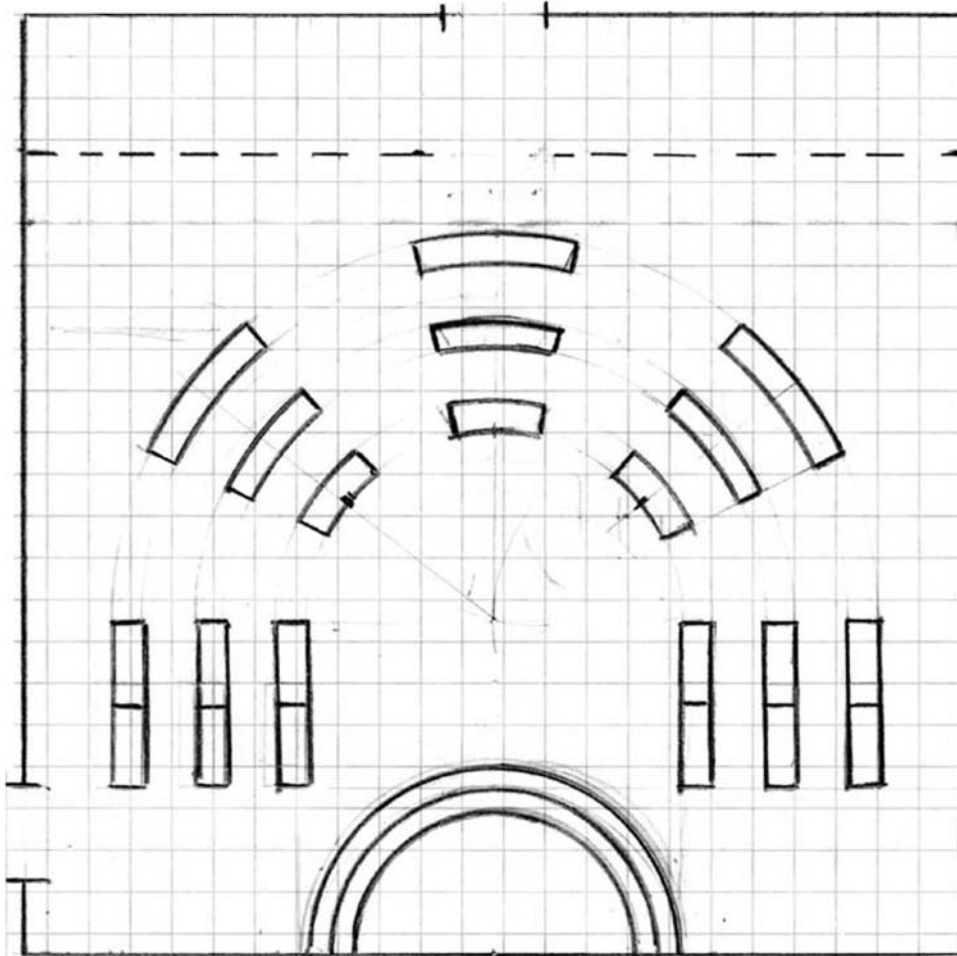
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<sup>54</sup> There are no known Shaw pieces with original wooden knobs, although the pulls may have been removed at some point for "more authentic" hardware. Charles Montgomery noted that "mahogany knobs held in place by wood screws came into use" in about 1810. Interestingly, the knobs on the Speaker's desk bear stylistic similarities to those made by Constantine for the United States House of Representatives in 1819. Charles Montgomery, *American Furniture: The Federal Period* (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), 51.

<sup>55</sup> MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-225, MdHR 6636-157-265.

<sup>56</sup> The raised floor was an expensive design element which undoubtedly had detrimental consequences for the acoustics in the Chamber. William Tuck later noted that the \$850 charge for raising the floor was a "lumping charge" intended to pay for the stated work as well as for items not included in the "aggregate amount of his claim." *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session*, 85.

Figure 3



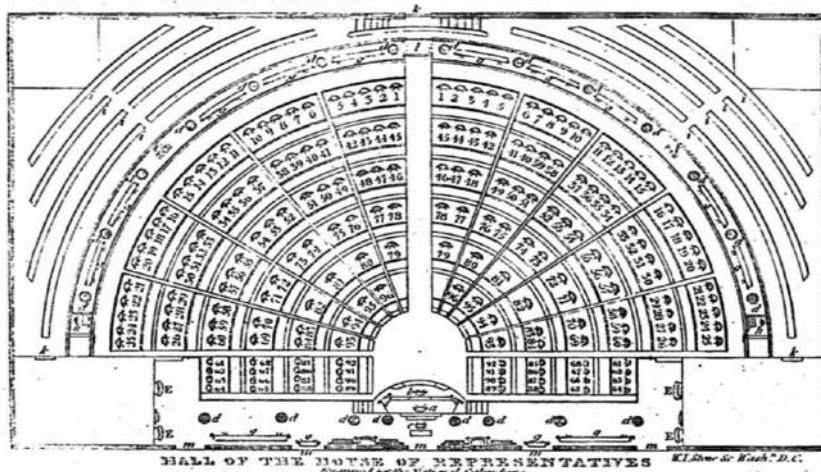
Conjectural drawing of the floor plan of the House of Delegates Chamber in 1807  
showing the layout of desks supplied by William and Washington Tuck

Scale: 1 square = 2 feet

Drawing by the author and Faith E. Darling

Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives, MSA SC 5287-33

Figure 4



**ON THE LEFT OF THE SPEAKER.....MEMBERS.....ON THE RIGHT OF THE SPEAKER.**

1 Stewart, Penn	33 Crooks, N J	65 Eddy, R I	1 Wright, Md	83 Sander, N C	95 Linn, Mass
2 Patterson, Penn	34 Nelson Md	66 Dorice, R I	3 [Vacant]	84 Alexander, Va	96 White, Ver
3 Brown, Penn	35 Edwards, Penn	67 Wilson, S C	3 Reed, Md	85 Matson, N H	97 Bigelow, Mass
4 Denton, Penn	36 Rodney, Del	68 Gist, S C	4 Sloan, Ohio	86 Russ, Conn	98 Hawk, N Y
5 Murray, jr, Penn	37 Warfield, Md	69 Pitcher, N Y	5 Newton, Va	87 Tucker, Va	99 Litchfield, N Y
6 Tola, Penn	38 Sergeant, Penn	70 Walworth, N Y	6 [Vacant]	88 Tracy, N Y	100 Mallory, Ver
7 Findlay, Penn	39 Harris, Me	71 Morgan, N Y	7 Harvey, N H	89 Ross, Ohio	71 Little, Md
8 [Vacant]	40 Mitchell, Penn	72 Dickinson, N Y	8 [Vacant]	90 Mercer, Va	72 McCoy, Va
9 Johnson, F, Ken	41 Phillips, Penn	73 Tucker, S C	9 Baylies, Mass	41 Stevenson, Va	73 Darlington, Penn
10 Forward, Penn	42 Cook, Ill	74 Archer, Va	10 Dwight, Mass	42 Lincoln, Me	74 Gebhard, N Y
11 Mitchell, S C	43 M-Sherry, Penn	75 Wood, N Y	11 Taylor, N Y	43 [Vacant]	75 Conklin, N Y
12 W Smith, Va	44 Farrelly, Penn	76 Tomlinson, Conn	12 Upham, N H	44 [Vacant]	76 Hubbard, N Y
13 Allen, Tenn	45 Buchanan, Penn	77 Cushman, Me	13 Cuthbert, Ga	45 Farnall, Geo	77 Thompson, Geo
14 J T. Johnson, Ken	46 Plumer, N H	78 Williamson, Me	14 [Vacant]	46 Jones, Tenn	78 Edwards, N C
15 Rogers, Penn	47 Plumer, Penn	79 Johnson, Lou	15 Van Wyck, N Y	47 Smyth, Va	79 Keyes, Ver
16 Blackledge, N C	48 Fuller, Mass	80 Montgomery, Ken	16 Rich, Ver	48 A Smith, Va	80 Garrett, Va
17 McNair, N C	49 Edwards, Conn	81 Cooke, Penn	17 Jennings, Ind	49 Ledwith, Va	81 Campbell, Ohio
18 Long, N C	50 Rankin, Miss	82 Randolph, Va	18 Neale, Md	50 Sibley, M I	82 Spencer, N Y
19 McFar Alab	51 M-Lane, Del	83 Swan, N J	19 Williams, N C	81 Burrows, Conn	83 Barber, Conn
20 Hemphill, Penn	52 Gorham, Mass	84 Ratemann, N J	20 Floyd, Ver	82 Kirkland, N Y	84 Scudder, Conn
21 Stephenson, Va	53 Cambreling, N Y	85 Nelson, Mass	21 Hardin, Ken	83 Chambers, Ohio	85 Barland, Jr, N C
22 [Vacant]	54 Polioett, S C	86 Reed, Mass	22 Brackenridge, Ken	84 Hobart, Mass	86 Allen, Mass
23 [Vacant]	55 Metcalfe, Ken	87 Dane, Me	23 Walker, N C	85 Sterling, Conn	87 Mattock, Ver
24 [Vacant]	56 Woodcock, N Y	88 Gaven, S C	24 Bayly, Md	86 Butler, N H	88 Crafts, Ver
25 Nelson, Va	57 Trimble, Ken	89 Pauls, Mass	25 Hall, N C	87 Rice, Tenn	89 Williams, Va
26 Bell, Va	58 Rochester, N Y	90 Russell, Mass	26 Scott, Mo	88 Smith, Ky	90 [Vacant]
27 Jones, Va	59 Campbell, N Y	91 Barston, Mass	27 Ingham, Penn	89 Barber, Ohio	91 New, Ken
28 VanRensselaer, N Y	60 M-Carly, N Y	92 Hill, Ma	28 Jackson, Va	90 Vance, Ohio	92 Patterson, N Y
29 Sterling, N Y	61 Acedy, N J	93 Grant, Penn	29 Woodson, Ken	91 Kutz, Md	93 Glimmer, Geo
30 Reclos, N Y	62 Pierson, N Y	94 Condit, N J	30 C-Ann, N C	92 Abbot, Geo	94 Sawyer, N C
31 Crutlip, N C	63 Matlack, N J	95 Bassett, Va	31 M-Dunle, S C	93 Bates, A T	95 Whipple, N H
32 Burton, N C	64 Halsecomb, N J	96 Tolson, N Y	32 Moore, Va	94 Reid, Geo	96 Herrick, Me

a Speaker's Chair....b Clerk....c Sergeant at Arms....g Seats for privileged Members....k Reporter's boxes.

Floor plan of the United States House of Representatives, 1823  
 From the National Calendar by Peter Force,  
 Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, AY141.W18 N38

writing surface to create a uniform appearance for each group of desks; the color of the cloth matched the tassels on the window blinds. The twelve straight desks were situated on either side of the Speaker's dais in three elevated rows. The nine circular desks, also arranged in three rows, were "in one place three and in others two, screwed together," a reference to the size and number of mahogany dividers on each of the desks in a particular section.<sup>57</sup> Two clerks' desks, also made by the Tucks, were placed directly in front of the Speaker's dais.

The final design of the House of Delegates Chamber modified the appearance of the House of Representatives Chamber in the District and preserved the symmetry of the Georgian-style State House. William and Washington replicated a layout seen in the plans for Congress Hall and the House of Representatives where groups of straight desks were placed to the immediate right and left of the Speaker's dais. In Annapolis, as in D.C., two aisles flanked the square desks and led to the House committee room. The arrangement of circular and curved desks in the House of Delegates drew upon the floor plan the Tucks saw in the U.S. House of Representatives, a layout replicated in the post-1814 House chamber. A plan published in 1823 for the U.S. House (Figure 4) depicted two rows of two circular desks and one row of three circular desks positioned at the extreme left and right sides of the chamber; a similar pre-1814 layout may have been the impetus for the Tucks' use of dividers and graduated desk sizes. In order to preserve the symmetrical arrangement of furniture in the Maryland State House, the Tucks modified the desk design and layout by adding another group of three desks (one group divided into

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<sup>57</sup> William Tuck quoted in *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session*, 85.

three workspaces and the others in half) in the center of the chamber. Aisles separating each group of desks provided members easy access to their seats.

The General Assembly's decision to model the House of Delegates Chamber after the Hall in Washington was significant and symbolic, as Maryland legislators grasped the importance of bridging the separation between the state and federal governments to unify the nation. At the time of the Tucks' House commission, "there was no analogy between the central government of the United States and the individual states, which were sovereign entities."<sup>58</sup> Until 1824, state capitols across the nation were built and arranged according to regional architectural elements with little obvious connection with the sense of nationhood or national spirit symbolized in the design of the U.S. Capitol.<sup>59</sup> Although built more than two decades before the completion of the U.S. Capitol, the Maryland State House may have been the first state house in the United States to show deference to the Capitol in the District in the decoration and aesthetic appearance of one of its rooms. The Tucks incorporated the General Assembly's vision into a design that stressed the idea of unity at national, state, and local levels.

The curved design and arrangement of the desks in the House alluded to the appearance of the U.S. Capitol, and also symbolized a celebration of classical ideas of democracy and inclusion. Further, the curved front and semicircular tiered arrangement of desks in the House of Delegates recalled classical designs of the

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<sup>58</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock and William Seale, *Temples of Democracy: The State Capitols of the USA* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 53.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 58. While state houses in South Carolina, Massachusetts, and Connecticut drew design inspirations from Federal Hall in New York, the first Capitol of the United States, no state houses looked toward the building in Washington, D.C. as an architectural model until work was done to the Pennsylvania and North Carolina capitols, both completed in 1821. The Pennsylvania capitol in Harrisburg incorporated a semicircular house chamber, while the North Carolina state house changed its dome design and integrated sculpture into its halls. See *ibid.*, 60-67.

Roman era. Indeed, the arrangement of desks recalled an earlier era that celebrated equality, and suggested the inclusion of the public's representatives within the sphere of government. The design of the House of Delegates Chamber was a notable celebration of democracy that symbolized the mood of the early national period. Gordon Wood noted that "there is no doubt that the new Republic saw the development and celebration of democratic social bonds and attachments different from those of either monarchy or republicanism."<sup>60</sup> The sense of civil equality that Wood described undoubtedly effected the architectural designs of government buildings almost as much as it influenced the political activities that occurred within them during the nineteenth century.

The Tucks finished the renovations in the House of Delegates Chamber in early December 1807, but the Governor and Council considered the final bill of \$2,988.86 (which did not include a \$300.00 advance paid to William in May, 1807) too high and refused to remit payment. For many months it appeared that the Council would renege on its promise to go to arbitration if a billing dispute arose. Three months after submitting his bill, William Tuck composed a scathing letter to the Council, writing "I am not asking a favour, but asking for my money; money that you unjustly detain; money that I boldly say, I have honestly and fairly laboured for, money that...I am entitled to."<sup>61</sup>

William and Washington found themselves embroiled in the midst of a major political controversy in the intervening eight months between the completion of the work and their receipt of payment. The Tucks received final payment on August 17,

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<sup>60</sup> Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 232.

<sup>61</sup> William Tuck in Exhibit No. 4, Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session, 92.



1808, and William proclaimed, “That in his life he was never more surprised, for from the previous conduct of the council it was what he least expected...[for] he thought it impossible that they could now pass his account with propriety for the full amount.”<sup>62</sup> A contemporary newspaper account of this saga chronicled the sudden culmination of the billing dispute and noted that “Without a word...or any new information to alter their opinion, the council sent an order to the Tucks for the full amount of their claim to the great surprise of William Tuck.”<sup>63</sup>

Despite the anticlimactic resolution of the billing dispute, the political ramifications warranted the appointment of a House of Delegates committee on November 10, 1808 to “inquire into the expenses incurred by the Governor and Council in fitting up the House of Delegates room, under the Resolution of November Session, 1806.”<sup>64</sup> The committee’s final report, published in the journal of the proceedings of the November 1808 session of the House of Delegates as well as in several Maryland newspapers, revealed important information regarding the Tucks’ role within the social and political spheres of Annapolis, as well as the status of cabinetmaking in the state capital.<sup>65</sup> Testimony recorded in the House proceedings

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<sup>62</sup> Henry H. Harwood quoting William Tuck, *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session*, 89.

<sup>63</sup> *Fredericktown Herald* (Frederick, MD), 2 September 1809. MESDA Research Files.

<sup>64</sup> *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session*, 5-6. This marked the House of Delegates’ second attempt to investigate the billing dispute between the Tucks and the Council. The previous session, the House failed to pass an order requesting the Governor and Council to “furnish this house with information of the expense incurred” during the renovations of the House of Delegates Chamber. *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1807 Session*, 97.

<sup>65</sup> Often cited by scholars of Maryland furniture, this report has only been vaguely referred to in context of the Speaker’s desk and its relationship to the State House. Few scholars, if any, have attempted to unravel one of the richest sources of information regarding cabinetmaking and artisanal life in nineteenth-century Maryland. In his history of the General Assembly of Maryland, Carl N. Everstine, former Director of the Department of Legislative Reference, downplayed the report’s significance and found it strange that the Journal of the House devoted “attention to the curious and inconsequential episode involving the Tuck brothers.” Everstine also noted that the “puzzle about the whole affair is why the House of Delegates and its committee felt any obligation to expend their time

noted that the billing process took so long that neither brother expected to be paid. The report, which chronicled the heated political rhetoric between the brothers and members of the Council, revealed that in the end, the Tuck brothers secured payment primarily because of their political influence in town and their repeated threats to upset the existing political balance in the House of Delegates and the Council.

While the Tucks used their position to challenge older political hierarchies, the Council sought to preserve its power as the state's executive body, a branch that refused to be bound by an arbitrator's ruling. Both brothers often considered themselves "ill-treated" by the Council, and Washington added that the Council's refusal to pay would "injure the Republican cause."<sup>66</sup> The brothers sought the election of a new candidate—not the Council's choice—for the Annapolis seat in the lower house. Washington, a staunch Republican, proclaimed in 1807 that he "consented to uphold a federalist in order to create a schism" and prevent the election of the Council's candidate, Arthur Schaaf. Washington declared that he would "*oppose the council, or the party...*[and] the impression made by [him]...was that in elections for delegates (in which the members of the council, residents in [Annapolis] generally take a very decided and active part) [the members of the Council] should never have his vote or influence."<sup>67</sup> Washington reportedly told many influential Annapolitans that he would "oppose the council in their election unless his account was paid."<sup>68</sup>

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and energies on a minor political squabble marked chiefly by threats to 'get even.'" Carl N. Everstine, *The General Assembly of Maryland, 1776-1850* (Charlottesville: The Miche Company, 1982) , 294-295.

<sup>66</sup> Washington Tuck in *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1808 Session*, 85.

<sup>67</sup> Washington Tuck in *ibid.*, 88.

<sup>68</sup> Washington Tuck in *ibid.*, 87.

William and Washington's involvement in city and state politics was significant in Annapolis, a town where members of the Governor's Council influenced legislators and even local elections. The Tucks' conflict with the Council took on added significance in an election year, because the "Tucks were men likely to be active and of some influence in the city election, where every vote is a matter of consequence."<sup>69</sup> The eight-month billing dispute was risky for the brothers because the Tucks purchased materials from several members of the Council as well as the Annapolis city government, and it did not behoove them to alienate their suppliers and their clientele.

Cabinetmaking—as well as all state commissions—in Annapolis during the early part of the nineteenth century was still conducted under the auspices of a patronage system which had existed for decades in America, and centuries in much of Europe. The experience of the Tucks demonstrated the inner-workings of a system that depended upon preserving social connections and appeasing the established political leaders. Upon receiving the commission to renovate the House Chamber in 1807, William Tuck did not submit an estimate for the work nor did the Council appropriate a sum of money to be set aside for the work—a combination of events that undoubtedly fueled the subsequent billing dispute. William later recalled not "having produced to the council any bills or vouchers for particular charges" specified in the bill, "nor was it required of him."<sup>70</sup> Indeed, at this time, the council and the General Assembly rarely stated a specific dollar amount for similar commissions, and simply paid the amount specified in the contractors' bills because it

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<sup>69</sup> *Fredericktown Herald*, 2 September 1809.

<sup>70</sup> William Tuck in *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland*, 1808 Session, 85.

illustrated the control the executive body exercised over the public sphere. The billing dispute between the Tucks and the Council reflected the newness of democracy and the need to publicly account for governmental expenses. This episode showed how the Revolution called the old-style cronyism and patronage politics into question, and started to expose the spending of state money to public scrutiny.

As the Tucks' experience demonstrated, the changes in the character of the economic markets in republican Annapolis, while dramatic, hardly spelled the end for the city's artisans. Forced to reevaluate their strategies for financial gain, the Annapolitans who remained after the Revolution were not fixated with achieving the highest levels of economic success possible within their trades. In some ways, this made Annapolis the antithesis of life in many economic centers in the United States. Gordon Wood argued that by the start of the nineteenth century,

the classical republican conception of government officeholding was losing much of its meaning. If each person was supposed to pursue his private interests, and the pursuit of private interests was the real source of the public good, then it was foolish to expect men to devote their time and energy to public responsibilities without compensation.<sup>71</sup>

Throughout the nation, conceptions of public and private spheres were shifting, and the best source of financial success in many cities was to be in the private market. As Benjamin Latrobe indicated in a 1806 letter, the success of the public good and the strength of the nation depended on the actions and economic decisions of individuals acting on the own behalf.<sup>72</sup>

In Annapolis, however, the opposite was true. For residents of Annapolis, the State House proved to be the most important symbol of the city's economic and social

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<sup>71</sup> Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 293.

<sup>72</sup> Latrobe in *ibid.*, 295-296.

significance, and the strength of the city relied heavily on the presence of the public sphere. Citizens lucky enough to secure employment had financial reasons to continue to work in Annapolis. For those who stayed, the social significance of the city, not simply its economic potential, probably provided additional incentives for people not to leave. Despite this, however, the construction of the State House represented the high-water mark for the economic power and commercial opportunities available in the city of Annapolis. While the seven-year long construction of the State House provided employment for residents of all races, additional opportunities for artisanal employment waned on account of the Revolution and the growth of Baltimore. At the start of the new century, Annapolis remained the capital of Maryland, but no longer retained the economic influence it had previously enjoyed. As Southern Maryland historian Jean Lee noted, “local people kept trying...even as their individual fortunes and prospects rose and fell, their society lost much ground, and much vitality, during the last years of the century.”<sup>73</sup> Indeed, Annapolis in 1800 had “a name and no advantage.”

### **“Our cabinet, may it be enriched by union”**

In 1810, the situation for Annapolis cabinetmakers and craftsmen was dramatically different than it had been on the eve of the Revolution in 1776. No longer did the highest fashions and best products and materials arrive in Annapolis before being sold in other Maryland cities, and the state’s finest artisans rarely sought employment in the capital city. Baltimore rather than Annapolis was the wealthiest

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<sup>73</sup> Jean B. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood: The American Revolution in Charles County* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 228.

and most populous and influential city in Maryland. Craftsmen journeyed to Baltimore for work, and the best domestic and international materials arrived in Baltimore before being sent elsewhere. The number of documented cabinet and chair makers in Baltimore rose from fewer than five in 1770 to nearly eighty-five in 1810, a figure included neither journeymen nor apprentices.<sup>74</sup> The shift of population and talents changed the economic conditions of cabinetmaking, as it did for most artisanal trades, and altered the position of artisans within the local community.

At the time of the Tucks' 1807 House of Delegates commission, all building and cabinetmaking materials arrived in the Baltimore because of the economic collapse of the port of Annapolis and the migration of the center of the state's woodworking trades to Baltimore. Baltimore artisans and shop owners usually had a chance to purchase goods before the materials were sent by boat or overland to Annapolis and other rural communities, a journey that added to the materials' cost. Even when the cabinetmaking resources such as wood arrived in Annapolis and other smaller towns, the best materials had already been sold, selected by Baltimore craftsmen who had first access to the wood.

Annapolis cabinetmakers had no trade associations or guilds to combat the Baltimore makers' monopolization of the market, or protect their finances and ability to successfully maintain their competency through their trade. In his testimony to the House committee, longtime Annapolis merchant and delegate, John Muir, recalled that Washington Tuck had accused a group of unnamed Baltimore cabinetmakers of monopolizing the importation of mahogany to ensure their own financial success. Muir testified that Tuck had told him that:

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<sup>74</sup> Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 71.

certain cabinet-makers in Baltimore had associated for the purpose of purchasing quantities of mahogany as they arrived; that they, of course, secured for themselves the prime of the wood, and disposed of the inferior to other cabinet-makers in Baltimore, or distant workmen, at such advanced prices as often left their own stock at less than nothing in point of cash.<sup>75</sup>

Washington's connections with Baltimore cabinetmakers and his own experiences as a journeyman in Baltimore gave credence to this statement, although it was difficult for Annapolis craftsmen to do much to combat these actions.

Annapolis cabinetmakers could not afford to sell their furniture at prices competitive with Baltimore makers because the demand for Annapolis furniture was substantially less—for economic and demographic reasons. In defense of the bill for the House renovations, William Tuck stated that the prices for the “sort of work done in the house of delegates room are always about 20 per cent higher in Annapolis than in Baltimore.” William also noted that the “prices charged the public [state government] are the same he would have charged individuals for the same work.”<sup>76</sup> Tuck's statement is significant, but not surprising, because the cost of building materials increased when sold to Annapolis artisans, and the city's master cabinetmakers—such as Shaw and the Tucks—did not have access to the same volume of apprentices and journeymen as their Baltimore counterparts did, nor were their shops as big. The smaller work force and lower demand for furniture helps account for the Tucks' decision to subcontract the eighty members' chairs, stock items that could be procured in Baltimore at a cost much lower than anything the Tucks could have constructed.

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<sup>75</sup> John Muir in *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland*, 1808 Session, 86.

<sup>76</sup> William Tuck in *ibid.*, 84.

Early national artisans and journeymen in Baltimore set up trade associations and societies to strengthen their trades and to prevent the undercutting of prices by master artisans. Groups of artisans, including tailors, masons, painter-glaziers, coopers, and carpenters, formed associations that devised rules and price books to govern work and costs for each specific element of their trades. During the end of the eighteenth century and in the first decade of the nineteenth century, these organizations actively sought to establish trade protections and fair wages, and attempted to prevent the hiring of non-members. Leaders of these artisan groups lobbied politicians at the local and state levels to protect their members and fostered a sense of activism and community involvement among members and local citizens.

Each Independence Day, mechanics, journeymen and apprentices from these societies marched through the streets of Baltimore in a parade that honored artisans of all trades as citizens who contributed to the strength of the Union, a true reflection of neoclassical and enlightenment values. These parades attracted large numbers of artisans, many of whom built objects *during* the event and carried banners and flags proclaiming the importance of their trades. In the 1809 parade—the first after the resolution of the Tucks’ billing dispute—the Baltimore cabinetmakers society carried a flag painted with the symbol of the society and the motto: “Our cabinet, may it be enriched by union.”<sup>77</sup> Local newspapers recorded the proceedings of these parades to demonstrate the contributions local artisans made to the larger—local and national—community.

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<sup>77</sup> *Maryland Herald & Hagerstown Weekly Advertiser* (Hagerstown, MD), 19 July 1809. MESDA Research Files.



By the close of the first decade of the nineteenth century, Baltimore artisans at all levels had incorporated into their work the designs and republican values of the neoclassical era and created their place in the city. Although most cabinetmakers were journeymen and the shops were large, the majority of these workers—perhaps through the aid of trade associations—could sustain themselves financially through their trade. The annual Fourth of July parades reinforced the role of artisans in the local community, both in the public and private spheres. Unlike Baltimore, Annapolis had no societies or organizations to champion or safeguard the causes of local artisans, nor did the hierarchy imposed by the city and state’s political bodies welcome this new form of advocacy. Conspicuously absent from Annapolis was the community perception that linked artisanal duties to the well-being and greater good of the city.

Local cabinetmakers and craftsmen faced a dramatically different situation in Annapolis than that which faced their counterparts in Baltimore. The rising influence and availability of Baltimore furniture, and the capital’s stagnant economic climate dictated that neither the Tucks, nor even John Shaw, could rely solely on cabinetmaking for economic success. The high costs associated with cabinetmaking in Annapolis made it impossible for local cabinetmakers to earn their livings by concentrating on designing or buying furniture for the private sphere because the market could not support it.

While Baltimore artisans formed trade organizations that ensured them a political voice in a democratic forum and provided access to work, Annapolis artisans, fewer in number, had to navigate through an older and increasingly

unreliable system—dependant on social and political connections and patronage—to gain access to the public sphere, and thus, to work. Public commissions, primarily those related to the State House, provided the steadiest source of income for all mechanics, including cabinetmakers. The woodworking skills of the Tuck brothers and Shaw made them ideal workmen at the State House, because they could complete a myriad of tasks, including painting, repairing furniture and walls, and plasterwork. Their longstanding political ties, however, and not just their versatility, secured them public commissions.

Baltimore’s continual expansion and influx of new and established wealth ensured the sustainability of its private market for furniture. Most cabinetmakers owned large shops and warerooms, affording them opportunities to sell greater numbers of ready-made furniture while supplying custom-made objects on demand. Some master cabinetmakers, such as John Needles, William Camp, William Crook, John and Hugh Finlay, and Edward Priestly prospered to the extent that they attempted to expand to new furniture markets in Southern ports.<sup>78</sup>

At the opposite end of the spectrum lay Annapolis, a city without mass production or commerce outside of state government, and little demand for new furnishings. Local artisans such as the Tuck brothers worked to garner enough social and political influence to secure work and remain in the favor of those who controlled the access to the public sphere. As evidenced by William and Washington Tuck and John Shaw, the work such men found often lay outside the direct sphere of their trade. Craftsmen accepted a wider variety of work because their families relied on a more dependable salary.

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<sup>78</sup> Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 86-87; Kirtley, “Edward Priestley,” 104-105.

The Tucks' political, social and familial connections provided them admittance into the public sphere, and their cabinetmaking and entrepreneurial talents put them in the favor of the executive and legislative branches of the government—the 1808 billing controversy notwithstanding. William and Washington combined their entrepreneurial spirit with the social and political connections initiated by their father, as well as those they had established themselves through their associations with the Lloyds and Shaw, to gain access to the State House, the city's steadiest source of public work. But even then, Annapolis artisans including Shaw and the Tucks could not sustain themselves only as the principal cabinetmakers and caretakers of the State House. Much like Shaw, William and Washington turned to governmental and other positions that allowed them to serve “the public.” The brothers adopted a variety of means to remain in Annapolis by actively seeking all available outlets for work.

Despite struggling to receive payment for their first state commission, the Tucks' successful completion of the socially and politically significant State House renovations solidified their reputations as two of the more important and influential cabinetmakers to remain in Annapolis during the early national period. The brothers' victory over the Council likely earned them respect among their peers and may have led to additional private commissions. William and Washington developed their talents at a time when the cabinetmaking trade in Annapolis shifted its emphasis from private to public markets, and the fortunes of Baltimore makers were on the rise. After they decided to remain in the capital city, the brothers adapted their understanding of cabinetmaking to successfully respond to the changing nature of

their business. To supplement their contacts in Annapolis, the brothers relied on connections that Washington had forged with Baltimore cabinetmakers while working as a journeyman in that city. Thus, they relied on old ties to secure work, even in a new setting.

The brothers' ability to parlay the success of their 1807 House commission into future work at the State House reveals much about the centrality of the building in the lives of early national artisans in Annapolis. What local outlets existed for the brothers to turn to for additional money? What positions could they combine with their cabinetmaking talents? How could the brothers maintain their established connections with the state to remain active in the public sphere? Would they be able to ensure the success of their families and thus be able to continue to work in Annapolis, a city with few opportunities for cabinetmakers who could not find positions within the public sphere? The stories of William and Washington Tuck show how two artisans responded to the challenges of artisan life in early national Annapolis.

## Chapter 4

“To Super-intend the necessary repairs”

In many ways, life in Annapolis at the start of the second decade of the nineteenth century remained as stagnant as it had been in 1800. The 1810 census revealed that the town’s population had stabilized, as it claimed only twenty-five fewer residents than it had in the previous census. Almost the exact number of white Annapolitans listed in 1800 (1,294) lived in town in 1810 (1,296), while the number of free blacks increased by only fifty-five.<sup>1</sup> For the majority of the year, life in Annapolis was very quiet, and the business activities within the private sector aroused little attention. David Bailie Warden, traveling through Annapolis in 1811, commented on the inhabitants of the city and their daily regimens.

The people are gay and social, free from the anxiety and cares of Commercial Operations... They go to bed early, and rise with the sun, and prefer early walks, picturesque scenery, and the productions of nature, to night parties, to cards and artificial light.<sup>2</sup>

As had been the case since the Revolution, the range of available economic opportunities hinged upon the public sphere, and especially the presence of the state and local governments situated in town. Warden suggested, albeit in romantic tones, that life in Annapolis during the legislative session deviated significantly from its normal series of activities. “During the session of the Assembly in the winter, the Town is said to be very attractive. The young ladies, many of whom are beautiful and accomplished, vie with each other in their attention to strangers.”<sup>3</sup> In the absence of commercial development, the town relied upon visitors for a significant amount of

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<sup>1</sup> 1810 Federal Census, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, District 2, analysis by Jean Russo.

<sup>2</sup> Warden, “Journal of a Voyage,” 133.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

patronage. With the completion of a road connecting Annapolis and Washington, a number of individuals arrived at the port of Annapolis to spend a day or two before traveling to the nation's capital.<sup>4</sup>

Revenue from visitors notwithstanding, most of the economic possibilities in Annapolis remained tied to the public sphere and the State House. In the continuation of a trend started during the war for independence, only the opportunities in some way affiliated with the State House provided reliable sources of income and employment for Annapolitans of all economic levels. At a time when the rise of the capitalist economy spurred periods of unprecedented growth in private commercial industries, encouraged new public works projects, and saw the expansion of private housing markets, Annapolis' economy lagged behind that of urban areas in Maryland and the rest of the nation. This stagnation meant that the city's mechanics could no longer pursue the same type of artisan work that their eighteenth-century predecessors had, as the economic environment forced them to pursue opportunities outside the traditional boundaries of their trades.

Although the frequency of work at the State House (Figure 5) declined during the 1810s, the building still provided the steadiest source of employment for local artisans and craftsmen, even though it primarily entailed routine maintenance projects. In 1810, William and Washington Tuck superintended renovations to a room for the "fit and proper [storage] for the public arms and cannon."<sup>5</sup> The brothers employed local carpenters and oversaw the work of plasterers and bricklayers.

Annapolis cabinetmakers Henry Thompson and John Sullivan, who in

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<sup>4</sup> Jane W. McWilliams, "The History of Annapolis, 1790-1845" [draft 7 March 2003]. For example, see: *Maryland Gazette* 30 October 1806, and 3 July 1811.

<sup>5</sup> GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 10 May 1810, MSA S 1071-13.

Figure 5



The Maryland State House, by G. W. Smith, c. 1810  
Published in Morris Radoff, *The State House at Annapolis*, 32.

Baltimore probably would have catered to the private market, resorted to supplying miscellaneous materials and caring for the furniture in the Senate and House of Delegates Chambers during the recesses. Other cabinetmakers received commissions to supply individual furnishings to offices in the State House, including Thomas Harris, who made two cases for the Court of Appeals record office. John Sullivan made a bookcase for the same office, and William Sewell painted the roof during this period. Even middling and poor residents of Annapolis such as Elisabeth “Betty” Simmons, Jubb Fowler, and James Holland found work there. Simmons cleaned the privy, known as the “Public Temple,” while Fowler—listed in the 1783 assessment as a scrivener—provided wood, and Holland cleaned the chimneys.<sup>6</sup> For the most part, though, the work at the State House during the second decade of the nineteenth century was primarily done by John Shaw, or at least performed under his supervision.

After his brief retirement from this role in 1806-1807, Shaw had reassumed his role in 1808 as caretaker of the State House and also continued to serve as State Armorer. In 1808 Shaw supplied a carpet and repaired a chair in the Council Chamber, repaired a desk and bookcase for the Adjutant General, and “fitted up and repair[ed] the room in which the Court of Appeals has their session,” work for which

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<sup>6</sup> Examples of payments to Thompson and Sullivan for their work in the Senate and House appear in MD Laws, 1810, Archives of Maryland (599), 102. GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 1 November 1810, MSA S 1071-13; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 18 June 1812, MSA S 1071-13. The *Maryland Gazette* reported on July 3, 1811 that “while engaged in painting the cornice of the roof of the stad house, Mr. William Sewell and an apprentice Boy were thrown from the hanging scaffold on which they stood,” and Sewell’s recovery was doubtful. While his death did not occur at the State House, Sewell’s death would have been the second to have occurred in conjunction with work at the State House since the building opened in 1779. *Maryland Gazette*, 3 July 1811. For examples of payment to Simmons, Fowler, and Holland, see: GOVERNOR and COUNCIL (Orders on Treasury) 1810, MSA S 1092. Simmons received payments for cleaning the privy until at least November 1, 1838, when her name ceased to appear in the records of the Council—although she may have continued to work at the State House after the Council was abolished in 1838.



he received over \$400.<sup>7</sup> Not all of his work at the State House was elegant, and that same year Shaw also billed for items such as six panes of glass “for the lamps,” purchasing and installing a large latch for the door to the dome, taking care of the military stores, and renting the gun house. Shaw coordinated work at the building, employing John Halfpenny and Zac. Williams for mending lamps and cleaning.<sup>8</sup> Overall, however, few larger-scale renovation projects occurred at the State House in the years immediately following the Tucks’ work in the House Chamber and James Lusby and Robert Davis’ work in the Senate Chamber in 1807.

If Annapolis represented a town with a static economy, than its antithesis was Baltimore, a city whose growth symbolized the emergence of the new democratic and capitalist systems. Simply put, Baltimore became everything that Annapolis was not. No other city in the nation could match Baltimore’s rate of growth. The city’s population, which had doubled between 1790 and 1800, nearly doubled again between 1800 and 1810, rising from 26,500 to 46,600. By 1810, Baltimore’s free black population comprised twenty-two percent of the overall population; the actual number of free blacks grew by nearly twenty percent between 1790 and 1810, numbers that far exceeded comparable percentages in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.<sup>9</sup> With its busy port, and expanding artisanal trades and industrial markets, Baltimore became a symbol of hope and financial opportunity for craftsmen and other residents throughout the nation.

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<sup>7</sup> MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-91, MdHR 6636-91-12; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 5 February 1808, MSA S1071-31.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Steffen, *The Mechanics of Baltimore*, 4-6.

Unlike in Annapolis where landowners and established political elites retained much of their influence, Baltimore's mechanic and merchant communities, proportionally the two largest groups in town, had major roles in the development of the city. In a true manifestation of republican ideology, Baltimore's power and influence did not hinge entirely upon established wealth and longstanding political dominance. In its stead, as Charles Steffen explained, "merchants were practically synonymous with [the original portion of] Baltimore," and their "influence far exceeded their numbers."<sup>10</sup> Although employment in Baltimore did not necessarily guarantee economic advancement, the centralization of many specialized trades and the importance of its ports, made the city an attractive destination for workmen from all classes in search of greater opportunities.

The mechanic community, which Steffen indicated comprised roughly half of the city's total workforce, seemingly embodied the republican ideology of activism and community interactions.<sup>11</sup> Since the 1790s, Baltimore's mechanics had mobilized into trade societies with elected leaders who commanded political influence, shaped local legislation and represented a challenge to the hegemony of established social leaders. Power and influence in Baltimore depended on the mobilization and participation of the rank-and-file members, as well as community acknowledgement of the importance of the mechanics. The organizational structure changed in the early years of the nineteenth century, but artisans remained active in politics and began to hold public offices after 1800. Activism, as Steffen and others

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>11</sup> See table 1 in *ibid.*, 13.

have noted, characterized the mechanic and artisanal communities in Baltimore in the years preceding the War of 1812.<sup>12</sup>

The economic and political landscapes in Annapolis, however, appeared to have been largely uninfluenced by the national trend of the declining importance of longstanding social and political connections. Throughout the nation, republican ideals of equality and liberty, and the growth and mobility of the population “weakened traditional forms of social organization” and destroyed traditional hierarchies. Gordon Wood noted that by the second decade of the nineteenth century, “social authority and the patronage power of magistrates and gentry were no longer able to keep the peace,” and notions of individualism became interpreted as a freedom from helping the public good.<sup>13</sup> In Maryland’s capital, urban migrations had failed to unseat the city’s dominant political leaders. With the city’s artisans dependant on the established leaders for employment in the public sphere, there could be no effective challenge mounted against the social and political hierarchy that controlled access to the city’s only constant source of income, nor was such a challenge necessary. In a setting where the economic forces remained constant and unaltered, it was only natural for those who benefited from state commissions to preserve their political and social connections with the elites, because the other choice was to leave town. Political activism, omnipresent in Baltimore and led by its Republicans, was virtually unknown in Annapolis.

The outbreak of war in 1812 illustrated the differences between artisanal climates in Annapolis and Baltimore. Soon after the declaration of war on June 18,

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<sup>12</sup> See *ibid.*, 171-177, 189 for the changes in the artisanal power base, and the origins of the succession of mechanics to public office.

<sup>13</sup> Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 307-8.

1812, Baltimore erupted into political violence between the Republicans and Federalists, primarily in response to the condemnation of the war by Alexander C. Hanson, editor of Baltimore's Federalist newspaper, the *Federal Republican*. Fueled by the anti-American sentiments of the Federalists, a pro-English mercantile group who believed the war would threaten their economic interests, and aggravated by the economic hardships from embargoes leading up to the war, Republican mechanics, journeymen and apprentices vehemently protested the actions and rhetoric of the Federalists. This set of incidents culminated in a series of riots which did not end until August 3, 1812. By the time the riots had been quelled, several Federalists had been beaten and killed, and the militia had been called repeatedly to restore order. In his assessment of the riots and their aftermath, Steffen indicated that of the fifty-two men indicted for the riots, only thirty could be identified through the city directories; of those thirty, twenty could be identified as mechanics. According to Steffen, this act symbolized that the journeymen, "who had since 1805 been organizing, striking, and gaining political notoriety...now stepped forward as crowd leaders," further demonstrating the rising, and at times violent, political influence of the artisanal classes.<sup>14</sup>

In Annapolis, however, if there had been any outcries against the war or challenges to the economic power of the city's merchants and social elites, they were muted and ineffective. Without a vocal and united class of journeymen, and with

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<sup>14</sup> Steffen, *The Mechanics of Baltimore*, 250. Brugger provides a brief summary of the politics surrounding the 1812 riots in Baltimore while devoting more attention to the War of 1812 in Maryland. See Brugger, *Maryland, a Middle Temperament*, 178-185. The events in Baltimore fell within a larger pattern, where the Jacksonian entrepreneurs "spoke the language of republicanism, denouncing 'privilege' and 'monopoly' with the same passion of their Revolutionary fathers." Such activism was unknown in Annapolis at this time. Laurie, *Artisans into Workers*, 51.

access to employment opportunities concentrated in the hands of the elites, it would not have been in the interest of the artisans and middling citizens to protest. Instead, the citizens immediately mobilized for war effort and prepared for an anticipated British attack. Washington Tuck, appointed State Armorer in 1810, inventoried the weapons held in the armory, and helped distribute supplies to the Annapolis militia and Maryland regulars, and may have been aided by John Shaw who had taken this role during the last conflict. At the end of 1812, Tuck left his position to serve as a private in the Anne Arundel County 3<sup>rd</sup> District Cavalry, and local cabinetmaker William Ross took over as armorer. Tuck also served in the cavalry and fought with the rest of the division during the battle of Bladensburg in 1814.<sup>15</sup> The British invasion impacted every element of life in Annapolis. Governor Levin Winder used the State House dome as a look-out station, and the *Maryland Gazette* reduced its output to a single page because “all hands employed in the office” were “daily called out on military duty.”<sup>16</sup>

After the war, Annapolis returned to its more familiar pace of life, reliant on travelers and an economy tied to the public sphere. The city of Baltimore, on the other hand, financed the erection of a monument to George Washington and the Baltimore Exchange, both according to the designs of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, as the city’s architectural landscape continued to benefit from a successful economy and

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<sup>15</sup> See “A Report of all the Arms, implements & Military stores delivered to the present Armourer,” from Washington G. Tuck, “late Armourer,” to William Ross. MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Scharf Collection) MSA S 1005-54-6198, MdHR 19,999-051-030. Between 1813 and 1814, Tuck served three separate times in the Third District Cavalry—a unit comprised of men from Anne Arundel and Calvert Counties—including between August 23 and August 30, 1814, when the Annapolis men fought at the Battle of Bladensburg. See: F. Edward Wright, *Maryland Militia, War of 1812, Volume 4, Anne Arundel and Calvert* (Silver Spring, MD: Family Line, 1981), 45.

<sup>16</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 8 September 1814 in McWilliams, “The History of Annapolis,” 10. On pages 8-11 of her study, McWilliams provides an excellent examination of the role of Annapolitans in the War of 1812.

public works projects which drew heavily upon neoclassical influences.<sup>17</sup>

Neoclassical motifs seen in the architecture of public and private buildings were also reflected in the designs of Baltimore furniture, as the city's cabinetmakers continued to work in this established style.<sup>18</sup> Men such as John Needles, Edward Priestley and William Camp maintained large warerooms, providing a wide range of ready-made and custom furniture to a large market, a notable contrast to their counterparts in Annapolis. The contrast between Annapolis and Baltimore sharpened in the postwar period, and was most evident when a Baltimore magazine in 1816 described the city as the "Athens of America."<sup>19</sup> Annapolis' demise in the decades after the Revolution, a period referred to by some scholars as the golden age of Maryland, could not be more apparent; its recovery would hinge on the spread of democracy and the responses of its residents.

### **The Tuck families in Annapolis during the Napoleonic era**

During the early years of the 1810s, William and Washington Tuck continued to look beyond the private sphere for employment positions that would enable them to combine their cabinetmaking talents with their entrepreneurial skills. The Tucks and other artisans in town found that the private market provided little reliable income, and the State House, with its newly-furnished legislative chambers, no longer

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<sup>17</sup> See Brugger, *Maryland, a Middle Temperament*, 187-194.

<sup>18</sup> For more on Baltimore architecture during the neoclassical era, see Robert L. Alexander, "Classical Maryland Architecture," in Weidman and Goldsborough, *Classical Maryland*, 21-45. See also: Elder, *Baltimore Painted Furniture*, 21-27 regarding the use of architectural views in fancy furniture made by the Finlay brothers during this period; Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 84-90 and Weidman "The Furniture of Classical Maryland, 1815-1845" in Weidman and Goldsborough, *Classical Maryland*, 89-140 for more on Baltimore's late neoclassical furniture movement; Kirtley, "Edward Priestley," 112-128 for more on the French, Grecian and Egyptian influences seen in Priestley's neoclassical furniture.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Brugger, *Maryland, a Middle Temperament*, 189.

needed massive repairs and renovations. William and Washington looked to capitalize upon their political and social connections with leading Annapolis and Maryland residents for artisanal patronage, and also sought entrepreneurial posts within town. The decisions the Tuck brothers made in this period demonstrates that the emerging capitalist economy and the privatization of artisanal work that occurred in urban centers such as Baltimore had no role in Annapolis.

The 1810 census indicated that the two brothers, aged approximately 36 and 29, lived together along with William's wife and a total of six children. William had married Cave Williams Mulliken on May 21, 1801, and they had become parents of five children, including four girls by the time of the 1810 census.<sup>20</sup> William's lone son, William Hallam, was born on November 20, 1808 and named for his father and relative, Louis Hallam, who had died only days before the younger William's birth. Washington Tuck married Elizabeth Lee in Annapolis on October 16, 1808, but she appears to have died prior to the 1810 census, possibly in connection with the birth of her first child, daughter Maria Letetia, on February 2, 1810.<sup>21</sup>

After 1810, both brothers purchased homes in locations that increased their presence and proximity to the public sphere. William Tuck's house sat at the foot of the State House hill, providing him greater access to the heart of the city's political and social activities. The location of William's house put him near several taverns and adjacent to the home that Lewis Duvall occupied until 1812. On July 23, 1811,

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<sup>20</sup> 1810 Federal Census, Anne Arundel County, Annapolis District.

<sup>21</sup> On November 17, 1808, the *Maryland Gazette* reported that in "Philadelphia on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. in the 75<sup>th</sup> year of his age, Lewis Hallam, the father of the American Theater" had died. Quoted in George A. Martin, cont., "Biographical Notes From the 'Maryland Gazette,' 1800-1810," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 42 (1947) : 174. The notice of Tuck and Lee's marriage appeared in the *Maryland Gazette*, 20 October 1808; source of Maria L. Tuck's date of birth courtesy of genealogical posting on <http://genforum.genealogy.com> [accessed 5 June 2003] but this author was unable to independently verify this information. Martin, "Biographical Notes," 173.

Washington purchased a “House and Lot of grounds in the City of Annapolis situate on the north side of a street called Church Street and adjoining the lot sold by a certain David Long to John Shaw” in 1784 (Figure 6).<sup>22</sup> For the sum of three hundred dollars, Washington, following a precedent set by Shaw, bought a house on State House Circle, adjacent to the home and shop of his mentor. Tuck’s house was situated in an ideal location for an artisan who hoped to capitalize on the economic opportunity offered by the public building.

Surviving accounts of elite residents of Annapolis reveal that they had more access to capital for luxury goods than the majority of those in town, and the Tucks were among the beneficiaries of a demand for custom cabinetmaking services. Edward Lloyd V paid William Tuck \$299.72 for an account dated December 8, 1804, and an additional \$249.53 by account to the date of November 15, 1809, for a substantial amount of services rendered to Lloyd’s Wye House estate. These payments, the second of which would have coincided with Lloyd’s tenure as Governor of Maryland, probably came in the form of cash, wood, wheat, and meat.<sup>23</sup> Washington received ten dollars for “repairing and cleaning [a] bookcase” owned by Dr. John Ridgely. On the whole, the brothers probably benefited infrequently from the patronage of the elite residents of Annapolis who likely looked to Baltimore for a more diverse and less expensive selection of furnishings.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records) liber WSG 1, folio 7-8, MSA C 97-52.

<sup>23</sup> Alevizatos, “Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyd Family,” 217-218.

<sup>24</sup> Special Collections (Ridout Papers Collection) MSA SC 910, Box 30, Folder 3. Aside from bedding and beds provided on numerous occasions by John Shaw, the Ridgelys seem to have purchased the majority of their furniture from Baltimore cabinetmakers. While Tuck, Shaw, Henry Maynadier and a few other Annapolis cabinetmakers provided furniture for the Ridgely family, receipts in the Ridout Family Collection indicate that the Ridgelys frequently purchased furniture from Baltimore makers including William Crook, and fancy furniture-makers Hugh and John Finlay. See receipts in boxes 28, 30 and 31 of this collection.



Figure 6



Photograph of Washington Tuck's House on State Circle  
Late nineteenth-century  
Special Collections (George Forbes Collection) MSA SC 182-1-707  
Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives

Although the brothers probably supplied wealthy residents with custom-made objects and furniture repairs, they may also have tried to sell their objects to middle-level citizens to compete against John Shaw and the large markets in Baltimore. But in a community that undoubtedly struggled under the economic crisis in the years preceding the War of 1812, it would have been a challenge for most artisans to generate a reliable income from the private sector. After the War of 1812, Baltimore auctioneers began to sell furniture made by local cabinetmakers as well as pieces imported from urban centers such as Philadelphia, and possibly from small rural towns including Annapolis and Easton. The Tucks and other Annapolis cabinetmakers may have tried to sell their furniture on commission in some of the home furnishing shops and furniture warerooms in Baltimore.<sup>25</sup>

The financial challenges facing the Tuck brothers on account of the lull in work at the State House and the slow private market for furniture may have led William to publish a sale notice in the *Maryland Gazette* on July 15, 1812. In this note, he informed residents of a public sale of “a quantity of HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE consisting of Beds, Bedding, Bedsteads, Chairs, Tables, almost new, and also the Kitchen Furniture, with a variety of other property.”<sup>26</sup> Although the motivation for this sale is unclear, Tuck offered the sale of his personal household articles—some of which he may have made himself—to earn additional money,

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<sup>25</sup> Gregory Weidman had indicated, however, that there are no documents or advertisements connecting Annapolis cabinetmakers to these sales in Baltimore. Although John Needles and other owners of large successful cabinetmaking enterprises vehemently protested the rise of these furniture auctions, the sales provided an outlet for owners of small furniture-making shops who had increasingly had less of a place in the marketplace. For more on warerooms in Baltimore, see Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, 85-86.

<sup>26</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 15 July 1812.

perhaps to help him refurnish his home but more likely find a way to compensate for the shortages in income.

Even though the brothers found they could not rely on their trade for a substantial income, they took advantage of the city's connections to the State House. William and Washington's choices in the early part of the nineteenth century revealed that they had learned from their father's efforts to pursue all available financial outlets that could be combined with their artisanal work. But in early national Annapolis, these opportunities took advantage of the city's most viable resources: out of town visitors and the state government.

At the beginning of the second decade of the nineteenth century, William Tuck published an advertisement in the *Maryland Gazette* in which he announced the beginnings of a new career that would put him in competition with a number of other citizens in Annapolis. First published in April, the notice ran twenty-nine different times in 1810, appearing until the end of the year.

**The Subscriber**

**TAKES** this method of informing his friends, and the public, that he has taken the house formerly occupied by captain *James Thomas*, and lately by Mr. *William Brewer*, where he intends keeping a **PRI-VATE BOARDING HOUSE**. All those who may favour him with their company, may depend on his best endeavours to give general satisfaction.

WILLIAM TUCK.

Annapolis, April 10, 1810.<sup>27</sup>

By paying for this advertisement to run for the remainder of the year, Tuck ensured that the entire citizenry of Annapolis knew that he now provided this service, and it

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<sup>27</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 10 April 1810.

also signaled that cabinetmaking was no longer his primary occupation. By advertising for almost eight full months, Tuck indicated that the boarding house was not open seasonally to cater to the assembly, but open year-round. Aided by his wife, Cave, who would probably have served a major role in the daily operation of the establishment, and two of his slaves, Tuck would have rented rooms to out-of-town students at St. John's College, employees and people in town for sessions of the Court of Appeals, and travelers passing through Annapolis. Tuck would have also provided rooms for legislators and others in town for the annual meetings of the General Assembly. Thus, while running a private business, he catered to public servants drawn to the city by virtue of its role as the seat of government. Three years after he placed this advertisement, Tuck had amassed eighteen beds at his house, an amount that after accounting for the six to eight beds used by his family and their slaves, would have provided sleeping spaces for at least ten to twelve lodgers.

Operation of the boarding house enabled William and Cave to enter the workforce and earn additional money. Because management of the house fell within the domestic sphere, Mrs. Tuck would have been responsible for ensuring the cleanliness of the linen and for overseeing the preparation of food, to free her husband for the pursuit of other jobs, including cabinetmaking.<sup>28</sup> An advertisement that was published on March 11, 1813 in the *Maryland Gazette* shortly after William's unexpected death early confirms the valuable role that Cave played in the business. The notice read that "MRS. TUCK respectfully informs her friends and the

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<sup>28</sup> Jeanne Boydston explained that participation of the wives of artisans and shopkeepers in work tied to the domestic sphere, including operating inns, boardinghouses, or even taking in a boarder made an important contribution to household. Boydston, *Home & Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 37. See also: Carson, *Ambitious Appetites*, 138-145.

Public that she continues the Boarding House lately carried on by her husband... All those who favour her... may depend on her best endeavours to give general satisfaction.”<sup>29</sup> Mary Beth Norton wrote that “a woman could make a comfortable living from taking in lodgers,” and the notice published by Tuck’s widow just weeks after his death reveals that she was an active player in the business.<sup>30</sup> Cave Tuck continued to run the boarding house until she remarried in October, 1813, but her position was one of the few in early national America where a widowed woman could support herself with relative ease.<sup>31</sup>

When William Tuck opened his boarding house, these institutions and taverns still played a very significant role in early national Annapolis. While operation of a tavern required a license issued by the County Court, boarding houses were less regulated and could theoretically be run by anyone who had sufficient space. Even though most taverns offered short-term lodgings, they principally served as meeting places and sites for social entertainment. Boarding houses, on the other hand, “were both more respectable and potentially more lucrative than inns that catered to transients,” and certainly placed more emphasis on hospitality and gentility than taverns.<sup>32</sup> Tuck’s boarding house, one of the few advertised in the newspaper in 1810, may have catered to visitors more desirous of refined lodging to capitalize on a market dominated by taverns.

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<sup>29</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 11 March 1813.

<sup>30</sup> Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters*, 144-145.

<sup>31</sup> A marriage license between Cave Williams Tuck and Thomas Henderson Edelin of Prince George’s County was issued in Anne Arundel County on October 28, 1813, indicating that William Tuck’s widow had remarried. Subsequently, Mrs. Edelin and her children moved to Prince George’s County, where she was resident until her death on January 24, 1847 at age seventy. ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Marriage Licenses) 28 October 1813, folio 18, MSA C 113-2. Shirley V. Baltz and George E. Baltz, *Prince George’s County Maryland, Marriages and Deaths in Nineteenth Century Newspapers, Volume 2: K-Z* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1995), 551.

<sup>32</sup> Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters*, 144.

The same year that William opened his boarding house, Washington Tuck started to work as the State Armorer, a position that John Shaw had held since the start of the Revolution.<sup>33</sup> Washington's professional relationships with Shaw and Governor Edward Lloyd V had much to do with his appointment, especially since he gained this position only two years removed from his bitter struggle with the Council in 1808. Shaw appeared in the public records as an armorer until about 1819, while Tuck held this position for the next twenty-nine years until his retirement in 1839.

As armorer, Tuck cleaned and repaired firearms, swords, and artillery owned by the State, supervised the use and storage of these goods, and made recommendations to the Governor and Council regarding the care, distribution and purchase of arms. Throughout his tenure, Tuck's primary duties ranged from cleaning and varnishing scabbards, to supplying weapons and ammunition to the State Armory and military units, and storing and organizing the armory and the gun house. In addition, the Council required the armorer to fire artillery salutes on the grounds of the State House on several occasions each year. These events included Independence Day and George Washington's birthday, for which Tuck was paid about eight to ten dollars per event, and the inauguration of the governor.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Washington Tuck first appeared in the records as State Armorer in November, 1810, and it is unlikely that he held this title prior to 1810. Indeed, John Shaw received payments from the Council in 1808 and 1809 for duties such as "taking care of the military stores" (1808) and "mounting cannon" (1809). In some cases, Shaw and Tuck may have both served as armorer concurrently, although by 1820, Tuck had taken over for the celebrated cabinetmaker. See: MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-91, MdHR 6636-91-12; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Orders on Treasury) 8 March 1809 MSA S 1092.

<sup>34</sup> A report submitted by the Auditor, Thomas Karney, in 1823 revealed that between 1820 and 1822, Tuck cleaned 1,170 muskets at seventy-five cents each, repaired 470 muskets as one dollar each, and fired salutes at different periods. Tuck received \$1,397.90 for this work, not including his salary. "Report of the Auditor Transmitting the Accounts of Washington G. Tuck, in Compliance with a Call from the House of Delegates," December Session, 1822, PAM 2643, Manuscripts Division, Maryland Historical Society. Accounting records for payments from the Council to Tuck for his work as armorer

Washington Tuck's employment in a public position closely aligned to the powerful Governor and Council indicated that he, like his father, had found a way of finding reliable employment with the government in a town where it was hard to succeed economically without one. His work as armorer provided him with a dependable quarterly or semiannual salary, a luxury not afforded to most artisans in the private market. With a reliable source of income, Tuck could also pursue additional avenues of work to earn more money, which he did after opening his own cabinetmaking shop sometime after 1814. Receipts such as the ten-dollar payment from Dr. John Ridgely for furniture repairs indicate that Washington, perhaps in tandem with his brother William, supplemented his income by repairing furniture throughout the early national period.

Just a few years after he embarked on his new entrepreneurial venture, William Tuck died unexpectedly at the start of 1813.<sup>35</sup> Furnishings listed in his probate inventory highlight the connections between his primary occupation as a boarding house owner and his training as a cabinetmaker—even if the trade was not his primary source of income. Tuck's inventory, especially valuable because he died in the middle of his career, began with a listing of household furnishings, including a stained wood writing desk, two dozen Windsor chairs, a mahogany bureau and book case, a stained beaufat, a walnut sideboard, one easy chair, and a lot of books, valued at one hundred dollars. Other furnishings included one mahogany bottle case, a

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appear frequently in the GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) MSA 1071. These payments included his regular salary as well as supplemental monies for specific work that he had performed.  
<sup>35</sup> No obituary or death notice appeared in the *Maryland Gazette* to mark his death, but public records suggest that he died between January and March, 1813. On January 7, 1813, William appeared in Anne Arundel County Court to mortgage two slaves, thirty pairs of blankets and six bedsteads to Joseph Sands, and two months later his wife published her trade notice on March 11, 1813. The publication of these records indicates that he died sometime between these two dates. ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records) liber WSG 2, folio 100-101, MSA C 97-53.

walnut bureau and book case, a gilt looking glass, a clothes press, two kitchen tables, two long tables and four small stained tables.<sup>36</sup> Although Tuck died in significant debt—perhaps because he had recently opened his boarding house—his possessions indicate that his business had achieved some measure of success. His inventory revealed that he owned a number of items associated with sophistication and entertainment. A generation before, it would have been unthinkable for a middle-rank artisan in William Tuck’s position to have possessed such a wide range of decorative furnishings and an extensive library.

The presence of a walnut work table, a “tea square,” and a “lot of lumber broken furniture &c.” listed together in the inventory indicates that William continued his cabinetmaking work, although without the aid of any apprentices or journeymen—who would have had their own work tables listed in the inventory. Tuck would have repaired and possibly even built some of the objects in his home. The inventory lists the presence of eleven low post beds and seven field beds, types of objects that could be relatively plain and easily-made by cabinetmakers such as Tuck.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY REGISTER OF WILLS (Administration Accounts) 28 July 1825, liber THH, folio 471-473, MSA C 29-16.

<sup>37</sup> The inventory lists the bedsteads in the same section as the items in Tuck’s workshop, and his walnut work table is listed immediately after the beds. Twenty-eight and one-half pairs of blankets are listed after the work table, and after the valuation of an easy chair, the eighteen beds with fifteen bolsters and twelve pillows are listed. The placement of the beds—with separate valuations for the bedsteads, bolsters and pillows, blankets, coverlids, and sheets—in the inventory makes it difficult to determine whether or not Tuck had made the bedsteads himself. Plates 102 and 103 of Hepplewhite’s *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer’s Guide* (1788) showed designs for construction of field beds, while plate 104 illustrated designs of the sweeps for these beds. Low post beds had fewer ornamental details, and were plainer and less expensive than field beds and usually were made from woods other than mahogany. Montgomery, *American Furniture*, 55. Many cabinetmakers built beds, and some, including Anthony G. Quervelle of Philadelphia targeted, “proprietors of Hotels, large Boarding Houses, &c.” for sales of their products, suggesting this could have been a lucrative market for furniture-makers. Quervelle advertisement quoted in Robert C. Smith, “The Furniture of Anthony G.



Although Tuck was only thirty-nine or forty at the time of his death and he died in significant debt, his role as a middling artisan in the early national period must not be understated. Following in his father's footsteps, William combined his artisanal work while pursuing the employment opportunities in Annapolis that would allow him achieve enough competency to continue to live in town. William's experiences in Annapolis, first as a journeyman with John Shaw, and later an independent cabinetmaker who received a prestigious State House commission and patronage from elite Marylanders before opening his own business, demonstrated the struggles one middle-level artisan had in his effort to pursue a manageable income in Maryland's capital during the early national period.

### **Washington Tuck's Annapolis**

The State House and the public sphere still served as the greatest sources of employment and economic gains for Annapolis artisans and its residents in the years following the War of 1812. John Shaw retained his role as the primary figure charged with the preservation of the State House, and it is clear that this position remained his most important source of income. Indeed, in 1817, the Governor and Council ordered that "the State House and its appendages be committed to John Shaw for the preservation of the same," giving the master cabinetmaker an important supervisory role at the building.<sup>38</sup>

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Quervelle, Part IV: Some case pieces," *Antiques*, January, 1974, 193. The author thanks Ryan Polk for this reference.

<sup>38</sup> This marked one of the earliest official appointments of a particular artisan to such a role. GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 12 June 1817, MSA S 1071-32.

Other residents of Annapolis found that providing materials for the State House remained an important outlet of employment, if such work could be obtained. Men who could provide specialized work, such as William Lillie who repaired the pump on the State House grounds, benefited from these opportunities, as did cabinetmakers and carpenters. In 1818, the Council ordered three Annapolitans, Colonel Henry Maynadier, Francis Hollingsworth, and Jeremiah Hughes be contracted “for improvement and embellishment” of the public grounds with installation of a wall and new elevations.<sup>39</sup> The three supervisors solicited proposals from many local residents to provide materials and to execute the work; no proposals appear to have come from Baltimore. Perhaps with the tacit approval of the Governor and Council, the renovations at the public building, performed under the direction of the three Annapolitans, was primarily accomplished by the involvement of local residents. The frequency with which Annapolitans supervised projects and performed renovations at the capitol reveals that the Governor and Council must have grasped the importance of supporting the local economy through employment and its patronage at the State House.<sup>40</sup>

Shaw’s work at the State House revealed the diversity of his artisanal abilities, as the services he provided ranged from building and repairing furniture and architectural elements, to landscaping the grounds and supervising other work. In 1815, Shaw made six Venetian blinds for the Council Chamber and two for the land

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<sup>39</sup> *The Maryland Republican*, 9 May 1818.

<sup>40</sup> Although the House of Delegates passed a resolution during the November 1817 Session to authorize the appropriation of money to enclose and improve the State House grounds, the Governor and Council had the authority to appoint to a committee to superintend the work. Work on the grounds not only fit within the specifications of the Council, but the executive body, not the Treasurer of the Western Shore, controlled all fiscal measures relating to the public sphere. As before, the Council had the overarching authority to direct all work done to the State House.

office, repaired the blinds in the Court of Appeals, and “trimmed the trees.” The following year, Shaw supplied a “large press with 6 Doors for the Court of Appeals divided into pidgeon holes & shelves with locks & hinges...[painted] Mahogany Colours,” a “bookcase for the Council room with 4 doors pidgeon holes and shelves,” and a number of voting boxes. Shaw also fixed the floor, built “a box to send marriage licenses to the E. Shore,” repaired and stuffed a chair for the Clerk of the Council (a chair that he had supplied to the chamber in 1797), “fitted up a long press with 6 Doors for Books & papers in the Council room,” and supplied two white vases to decorate the bookcases in the same. He even paid a local boy for extinguishing a house fire, and supplied locks and ropes to various offices. In 1818, Shaw supplied a dozen Windsor chairs for the Senate gallery, recovered the members’ chairs, and repaired the desks in the House of Delegates Chamber. Shaw also ordered David Potter to paint the two presses in the Council Chamber “a mahogany color.”<sup>41</sup>

While the State House provided residents of Annapolis with a variety of employment opportunities directly and indirectly connected to the public sphere, the economic situation for many workers remained tenuous. Annapolis’ lone advantage was the public sphere; the town would collapse financially and socially without its connections to the state and local governments. The greatest threats to the economic stability of Annapolis came in 1817 and 1818 when the General Assembly addressed the question of relocating the capital to Baltimore. The legislature rejected the idea in 1818 even though the Baltimore city government had pledged to finance the construction of all the necessary public buildings. Elihu S. Riley later noted in his

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<sup>41</sup> GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 5 May 1815, 7 December 1815, MSA S 1071-32; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-101-195/196; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-145-104/105.

history of Annapolis that the “strongest point made against proposed removal was the mob in Baltimore in 1812.”<sup>42</sup> Riley’s statement suggested that the legislature, undoubtedly with the approval of the Council, may have felt threatened by the volatile atmosphere in Baltimore and favored the more tranquil setting in Annapolis. Some mechanics in Baltimore, unlike those in Annapolis, probably had little regard for the established power of the political elites, and would have presented a challenge to the hegemony of the incumbent leaders. Sensing the potential threat to the economic vitality of Annapolis, the local leaders made attempts to persuade the United States Navy to add the city to the list of potential sites for a navy yard or other military installations, as a way to attract more business and citizens to the capital. Although their attempts proved futile, the response by the Annapolitans revealed their cognizance of their city’s fragile economic state.<sup>43</sup>

While John Shaw had returned to his familiar position as superintendent of the State House, Washington Tuck struggled to establish himself and find his place in Annapolis. In the midst of this unsteady environment with an economic downturn being felt across the nation in 1819, Washington Tuck continued to pursue all available outlets for work to augment his income as armorer. The father of five children who had married Rachel Smith Whittington in 1814, Washington needed to rely on his entrepreneurial skills because he did not work at the State House. An advertisement that he placed in the *Maryland Gazette* on June 24, 1819 indicated that the opportunities he pursued fell well outside of work traditionally associated with cabinetmaking. In his advertisement, Tuck wrote that “the subscriber will furnish

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<sup>42</sup> Elihu S. Riley, *The Ancient City* (Annapolis, 1887), 254.

<sup>43</sup> McWilliams, “History of Annapolis,” 14-17.

persons desirous of procuring them, with pacing bricks, on the cheapest terms.”<sup>44</sup>

The 1819 assessment of Annapolis placed Tuck in the twenty-seventh percentile of total wealth (70 of 259), but while his personal wealth of \$910 put him in the fifteenth percentile (40 of 259) his real wealth of \$600 put him in the fortieth percentile (104 of 259). The thirty-eight year-old Tuck owned two improved lots on a quarter of an acre on State House Circle, three slaves, and fifty ounces of silver. His possessions put him and sat comfortably in the upper middle-class levels of Annapolis society.<sup>45</sup>

The eve of the 1820s was not only a period of economic transition for Washington G. Tuck, but the close of the 1810s also marked a landmark event for the entire city. Against the backdrop of economic uncertainty, the municipal government, known as the corporation, made its most important republican and democratic statement by revising the city charter and changing its electoral process and governmental representation. Virtually unchanged since 1708, the charter specified that the city government be composed of a mayor, six alderman, ten common councilmen, and a recorder. The document had severe limitations regarding eligibility and terms of office. Indeed, it provided for an annually-elected mayor, but limited the eligible candidates to the six sitting aldermen; the members of the corporation then voted for a member drawn from this pool to serve as the mayor. Only if a member of the common council resigned, could a new citizen join the

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<sup>44</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 24 June 1819. For more on brickmaking in the Tidewater and Chesapeake regions, see: Calder Loth, “Notes on the Evolution of Virginia Brickwork From the Seventeenth Century to the Late Nineteenth Century,” *APT Bulletin*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (1974) : 82-120; Harley J. McKee, “Brick and Stone: Handicraft to Machine,” in *Building Early America*, ed. Charles Peterson (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Co., 1976) , 74-95.

<sup>45</sup> ANNAPOLIS MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND COUNCILMEN (Assessment Record) 1819 Real and Personal Property MSA M 71-1 and M 71-2. Resources for analysis provided by Dr. Jean B. Russo.

corporation—and only then by election of the “free-holders” in the city.<sup>46</sup> Terms of office for the rest of the corporation lasted “soo long as [the members] shall well behave themselves.”<sup>47</sup> Not only did this ensure that a very select group of elite residents controlled the city government, but as historian of Annapolis, Jane McWilliams explained, when the corporation chose to meet, few of its members elected to attend, and its accounts and proceedings were rarely made public.<sup>48</sup> Scathing editorials in the local papers denounced the charter as “one of the most aristocratical and absurd charters that ever disgraced the land of freedom,” and mocked its electoral processes as grounded in the “true spirit of aristocracy” and contrary to the “sentiments, the feelings, and the wishes of the independent citizens of a free republic.”<sup>49</sup>

A new city charter, approved by the General Assembly in December, 1818, set monthly meetings, established regular elections of all members, required a greater accountability of the officeholders, and granted suffrage to those eligible to vote in state elections—or the free white males aged twenty-one years and above who had lived in Annapolis for at least six months.<sup>50</sup> The first election under the new charter in April, 1819 returned only two of the sitting members of the corporation to offices, thereby ushering in a new era of a more democratic process. In this first democratic election in the city of Annapolis, local citizens selected Washington G. Tuck as one of the members of the new common council. Tuck’s election signaled that his social connectedness in town extended beyond his economic position.

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<sup>46</sup> Riley, *Annals of Annapolis*, 255.

<sup>47</sup> 1708 Charter of the City of Annapolis quoted in McWilliams, “History of Annapolis,” 18.

<sup>48</sup> The corporation met eight times in 1816, seven times in 1817, and four times in 1818. *Ibid.*, 18-19.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Riley, *Annals of Annapolis*, 255.

<sup>50</sup> McWilliams, “History of Annapolis,” 20-21.

Although only a middle-level artisan by economic standards, Tuck's prominence in town related more to his role in the public sphere, and his status as a local cabinetmaker favored by elite families such as the Lloyds and Ridgelys. As such, his election must be seen as part of a larger transitional step in the growth of democracy in Annapolis. Thus, while local politicians were elected democratically, those individuals with connections were the first beneficiaries of the new system. The election of Washington Tuck in 1819 and his subsequent role at the State House until 1838 demonstrated the transitional nature of the development of the openly-democratic political and economic landscapes in Annapolis. Tuck's experiences serve as a window into the uneasy growth of democracy in Maryland and its effects on one Annapolis artisan.

The revision of the Annapolis charter in 1819 fell within a much larger social and political shift in Maryland amidst the steady growth of democracy. Throughout the nineteenth century, more Marylanders gained a role, or at least a voice, in politics and increasingly called for equal representation within state and local government. In 1802, the General Assembly passed a constitutional amendment removing property qualifications for voting in state and local elections, and replaced voice votes with the more democratic paper ballots. While the amendment granted white male suffrage, it also stripped the right to vote from free blacks in Maryland and marked a retreat from equal representation. In 1810, the Assembly extended white male suffrage to include federal elections, and abolished property qualifications for holding state offices. In

1826, Thomas Kennedy's sponsored "Jew Bill," finally passed the Assembly, and enabled Jews to hold public office in Maryland.<sup>51</sup>

As the story of the Annapolis corporation demonstrated, changes to Maryland politics came slowly, and only when those in power could no longer avoid sharing it, and these politicians, drawn largely from the gentry class, sought to neutralize the spread of democracy by "reconstituting their authority." While Marylanders saw an increase in the establishment of free public schools and the chartering of the University of Maryland, legislative and political reforms were harder to achieve. Bills proposing to change the representation of the Senate and to alter the size of the Baltimore City house delegation died in the Senate. As early as 1818, legislators tried to amend the constitution to provide for a popularly elected governor, but this and other attempts proved unsuccessful, as did an 1825 bill that proposed to abolish the Council. In regard to the 1818 bill regarding gubernatorial elections, editors of the *Niles Register* lamented that "We have no hope that it will pass; because, the representation of the minority have a majority of influence to prevent it." Each step forward in Maryland politics seemed to be matched by a corresponding step backwards, as those in power sought to maintain their positions. As Alan Kulikoff noted, despite "the development of political parties and the increasing size of the electorate, voter turnout would diminish over the early nineteenth century."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Brugger, *Maryland, a Middle Temperament*, 259.

<sup>52</sup> *Niles Register* (Baltimore, MD), 19 December 1819 quoted in Everstine, *The General Assembly of Maryland*, 382. Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 313.



### **“To Super-intend the necessary repairs”**

Not long after his election to the common council of Annapolis, Washington Tuck succeeded to John Shaw’s role as superintendent of the State House.<sup>53</sup> As important as it was for Tuck to take over this position from his mentor, the Governor and Council’s quiet unofficial appointment of Tuck was as significant as it was symbolic. In 1820 Tuck began to appear regularly in the records as the main caretaker at the State House, a role undoubtedly achieved because of his longstanding web of social, artisanal and political relationships. While some Marylanders clamored for a larger role in state government, Washington Tuck received his new position the way Annapolitans had customarily done it: on the basis of who he knew. Tuck’s artisanal connections linked him to the city government, to the city’s most prominent artisan, and to several notable Maryland families and governors. These associations, grounded in his father’s experiences in the public sphere in the Revolutionary era, had finally placed Washington Tuck firmly at the center of the city’s most viable resource.

From 1820 until 1838, Washington Tuck worked at the State House, primarily as its superintendent, fulfilling cabinetmaking commissions, completing miscellaneous maintenance tasks for the building and the grounds, and coordinating and supervising additional projects. The work Tuck performed at the State House revealed that his skills stood well outside of those traditionally associated with a

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<sup>53</sup> The author has not seen any official record of this changing of the guard at the State House, but at the end of 1819, after more than four decades of service at the public building, John Shaw essentially disappeared from the records relating to the repairs and maintenance at the capitol. Shaw’s last documented commission at the State House occurred on November 2, 1819 when he received \$26.40 for providing “paper cases to the Executive Department.” The following year, Washington Tuck began to receive regular payments and commissions for work done at the State House. Tuck was officially appointed to this role in 1822. GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 2 November 1819, MSA S 1071-33.

cabinetmaker. Washington also provided recommendations for structural and aesthetic repairs to be done to the building, a duty often requested by the Council in anticipation of upcoming renovations. Importantly, Tuck's ability to provide a myriad of services at the public building ensured that he had a steady income. Indeed, Tuck was the only person regularly paid for work at the State House between 1820 and 1838. In addition to his salary for "taking care of the public property," Tuck received lump sums of money from the Council to cover his time, supplies, the work of others involved on each of the renovation projects, and his commission.<sup>54</sup>

The position of superintendent of the State House provided Washington Tuck with an opportunity to use the cabinetmaking skills he had developed as an apprentice to John Shaw and as a journeyman artisan in Baltimore. Although money was rarely appropriated prior to work being undertaken—a contrast to modern-day state contracts—Tuck and his predecessor probably worked under unspoken budgetary restrictions that would have guided whether these men made the furniture requested for the State House, or whether to save money, they purchased items from Baltimore cabinetmakers. Efficiency and fiscal constraints played important roles in this position, and Tuck and Shaw both demonstrated their economic savvy by balancing cabinetmaking expertise with their entrepreneurial skills to remain accountable to their patrons in the legislature and the Council.

In 1822, for the first time since he and his brother, William, had refurnished the House of Delegates Chamber in 1807, Washington Tuck received payment for cabinetmaking work at the State House. This marked the first of a number of

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<sup>54</sup> For an example of these payments, see GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 7 May 1823, MSA S 1071-35.

furniture commissions that he would undertake at the capitol as the building's superintendent. In February, 1822 the Council ordered that Tuck receive \$325.66 "on account for a Book case for the Council Room, packing up and delivering Arms and so forth" and the balance of a former account. In the absence of major refurnishing projects at the State House, Tuck simply built and supplied furniture as needed for the various agencies and offices in the building. Tuck provided a clock for the Senate Chamber in 1823, made a case for the Chancery Office "to hold the books of records of chancery papers" in 1827 for which he received \$200, a mahogany ruler for the Chancery Office (an object that Shaw often supplied for the offices in the State House) in 1828, as well as voting and record boxes which he frequently made for the General Assembly, Court of Appeals and Register of Wills. In 1828, Tuck received an additional \$242.98 for "making cases for chancery records," suggesting the work he had done the year before had not been sufficient to accommodate all of the records of the court. In addition, he repaired writing desks in the Auditor's Office and the Chancery Office in 1827, and repaired two chairs in the Council Chamber in 1828. In 1829, Washington received five dollars for a case for the Court of Appeals, five dollars for a hat rack for the Chancery Court, and twenty five dollars for boxes for the laws and proceedings.<sup>55</sup>

An example of the fiscal constraints that Washington had to contend with occurred in 1826 when the Governor and Council ordered him to:

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<sup>55</sup> GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 20 February 1822, 7 August 1823, MSA S 1071-35; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 15 October 1827, MSA S 1071-36; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-179, MdHR 6636-128-83; GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Public Documents) Report of the Treasurer of the Western Shore, 1837 Session; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 23 July 1829, MSA S 1071-36.

Super-intend the necessary repairs to stop and prevent a leak in the Roof of the State House, and the purchasing of such Desks, Tables, Chairs and other furniture as may be necessary for the Chamber now occupied by the Court of Appeals – provided that the whole amount of said expenditures shall not exceed four hundred dollars.<sup>56</sup>

For one of his larger furniture commissions at the State House, Tuck received payment for this work in June, 1826. In December, he received an additional \$90.72 for “making a Large double Desk for the Court of Appeals Room and putting partitions in ditto, repairing lock in old Armoury and for Lead putting down around fireplaces in the State House, and for two fire fenders.”<sup>57</sup> Tuck probably procured the remainder of the furniture for the court room—perhaps from Baltimore where it would have been considerably less expensive—but the purchases proved more costly than anticipated. Tuck informed the Governor and Council that “his expenditures exceeded the appropriation by the sum of \$81.39, although he procured such articles of furniture only, as were deemed essential to the decent and comfortable fitting up of the chamber.” While the Council recommended payment of his account after determining that “no improper or un-necessary expense was incurred,” the episode revealed that Tuck had to assume a role closer to that of a supplier than that of a cabinetmaker, a change likely driven by the economics of his time.<sup>58</sup> Time constraints and low appropriations may help explain why Tuck made a disproportionate number of utilitarian pieces for the State House, while purchasing the more ornamental furnishings from Baltimore makers.

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<sup>56</sup> GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 21 April 1826, MSA S 1071-36.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 December 1826. A reference in the GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Public Documents) Report of the Treasurer of the Western Shore, 1837 Session suggests that Tuck may have also performed work to the presses in the Court Chamber.

<sup>58</sup> Except of message from Governor Joseph Kent to the General Assembly quoted in *ibid.*, 27 December 1826.

More than his cabinetmaking abilities alone, however, Tuck relied on a broad base of artisanal skills to accomplish his duties at the State House. Indeed, the work required of the man paid “for taking care of the public property,” was various and depended as much upon his entrepreneurial savvy as his workmanship. In 1827 and 1828, Washington received over nine hundred and seventy-five dollars to set up a space—now used as the Governor’s Office—for the State Library.<sup>59</sup> Throughout this era, Tuck made frequent repairs to the windows, built a woodshed for the Treasury Building, and provided carpets and repaired the chambers of the House of Delegates and Court of Appeals. He also superintended landscaping projects including the replacement of stone steps on the west side of State House Circle and the repairs made to the “shingling of the circle wall.” Tuck painted, plastered, repaired doors and ladders, fixed fireplaces, locks and shelves, reeved the halyards, fixed the State flag, and preformed dozens of unspecified “sundry” repairs to architectural elements and public offices.<sup>60</sup> Much like that of his predecessor, John Shaw, the work Washington often did was prestigious but not glamorous.

Throughout the 1820s, the Council directed Tuck to perform work to the State House dome and roof, as well as other painting and plastering projects. He painted and gilded the dome and the acorn in 1820, and two years later the Council ordered him to “cause the Platform on the Steeple of the State House to be repaired and that he be further required to cause the roof to be carefully examined and all leaks therein

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<sup>59</sup> For more on the history of the State Library, see Robert W. Coover, *History of the Maryland State Library 1827-1939, with a Summary of Events from 1939-1959* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Library, 1959).

<sup>60</sup> Examples of these payments include: GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 12 June 1823, MSA S 1071-35; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 15 October 1827, 3 January 1828, 1 January 1830, MSA S 1071-36; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-124-183; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 15 September 1832, MSA S 1071-37.

stopped, and the roof including the remainder of the steeple to be painted.” Tuck received \$1,187 for superintending this work, a portion of which was given to Annapolis carpenter Jeremiah L. Boyd, formerly of Baltimore, who superintended work at Government House. In 1826, Tuck hired Boyd to make necessary repairs to the dome of the State House, while Tuck performed work to the ceilings in the House and Senate Chambers. Governor Joseph Kent reported in his 1826 message to the General Assembly that Tuck had preformed, or certainly overseen, satisfactory work. Kent noted that the ceilings were “found very much injured and unsafe, we [the Council and Tuck] had the old plastering entirely removed, the work done anew, and the Chambers put in compleat order.”<sup>61</sup>

The elevation of Washington Tuck to the role of head caretaker of the city’s most prominent symbol of democracy and economic success boosted his status at a time when even the most successful artisans throughout the state struggled financially after the panic of 1819. Economic prosperity in the years following the War of 1812 demonstrated the financial capabilities of a booming capitalist economy and the potential for social change that accompanied this new wealth. Rising fortunes of many mechanics threatened the hegemony of the established gentry, and helped sharpen the political, social and moral differences—especially relating to slavery, taxes, and political representation—between urban and rural communities in the northern and southern regions. In a holdover from the war years, citizens throughout America took on increased loans as transactions shifted to “bank notes, bills of

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<sup>61</sup> GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 18 October 1820 MSA S 1071-34; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 24 April 1822, 14 December 1822, MSA S 1071-35; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 21 April 1826, MSA S 1071-36, message from Governor Joseph Kent to the General Assembly quoted in *ibid.*, 27 December 1826.

exchange, and corporate stocks.”<sup>62</sup> As inflation rose, “both bankers and borrowers were gambling on the indefinite continuance of high commodity prices and speculative profits.”<sup>63</sup>

The panic of 1819 proved a watershed year in Baltimore, as its financial markets virtually collapsed. Economic historian Charles Sellers noted that “Baltimore’s leading commercial house, Smith and Buchanan ‘failed with a crash which staggered the whole city’ and toppled within three months over one hundred leading merchants.”<sup>64</sup> The depression that followed had an adverse effect on the city’s cabinetmakers and their local and out-of-state markets. Gregory Weidman explained that the fancy furniture-makers John and Hugh Finlay, employers of seventy workers in one of the largest shops in town, announced in the newspaper that the recession of 1819-1820 “threw all hands out of work.”<sup>65</sup>

In Annapolis, however, where the town’s invaluable connection to the public sphere minimized the rise of the capitalist economy, the panic of 1819 had only a minimal effect. Life in Annapolis in 1820 was much like it had been in 1790: quiet and undisturbed by the rapidly developing nation. One writer characterized the city as the earth’s axis:

It should be called the pivot city...for while the world around it revolves it remains stationary...To get to Annapolis you have but to cultivate a colossal calmness and the force of gravity will draw you...there...Annapolis keeps the Severn River in its place. This will be useful when the harbour of Baltimore dries up. Annapolitans are waiting for this. They are in no hurry....<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 133.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Weidman, “The Furniture of Classical Maryland, 1815-1845,” in Weidman and Goldsborough, *Classical Maryland*, 100.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted in Riley, *The Ancient City*, 145 quoted in Papenfuss, *In Pursuit of Profit*, 235.

Although Washington Tuck preformed or directed the majority of work at the State House in this period, many other Annapolis artisans completed incidental maintenance and renovation projects. Henry Thompson provided a desk and bookcase for the Council Chamber in 1820, Andrew Slicer made “venetian shutters” in 1821, cabinetmaker and former Shaw apprentice Jonathan “John” Weedon supplied a “writing table and case” for the Council in 1823, and carpenter Jeremiah Boyd preformed a large amount work to the roofs at the State House and Government House.<sup>67</sup> After Tuck provided carpeting for the new State Library in 1834, Annapolis cabinetmaker Daniel Dashields almost single-handedly furnished the room by making a large round mahogany table, ten small square mahogany tables, a mahogany desk, a globe stand, and four step ladders.<sup>68</sup> Some mechanics provided blacksmith work, repaired windows and the State House pump, while others cleaned the chimneys, preformed sundry duties on the grounds, and hauled materials to be used during the repairs. Thompson, named messenger to the Council around 1825, and Jonathan Hutton both served tenures as the Superintendent of the Public Buildings, between 1826 and 1832, as more Annapolis artisans found employment at the State House.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Thompson and Weedon provided additional pieces of furniture during the 1820s and early 1830s. GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Orders on Treasury) MSA S 1092-2; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 13 July 1821, MSA S 1071-34; GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 22 February 1823, MSA S 1071-35.

<sup>68</sup> The new State Library was located in the amphitheater-like chamber originally designed for the General Court of the Western Shore. This space had been unoccupied since the 1804 abolition of the General Courts in 1804 and subsequent relocation of the Court of Appeals Chamber to the second floor of the State House. Maryland State Papers (Series A) MSA S 1004 MdHR 6636-148-77.

<sup>69</sup> For example, blacksmith Vachel Severe appears in the GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) MSA S 1071-36 for sundry services in the 1820s; Joseph Wayson trimmed the poplar trees on the ground and Rezin Spurrier cleaned the chimneys, GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 21 April and 15 June 1822, MSA S 1071-36; Samuel Woodall repaired the pump in 1828, MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-132-499. For examples of Hutton and Thompson’s work at the State House, see: GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) 11 February 1831 MSA S 1071-37 (Hutton). During the 1836 Session of the General Assembly, Thompson,



While the private furniture market in Baltimore had reasserted itself at the end of the 1820s, Annapolis artisans remained inextricably linked to the public sphere for economic support.

### **Tuck and the Annapolis community**

Tuck's role at the public building, coupled with his position as State Armorer, provided him with a sufficient income so he could also pursue private cabinetmaking commissions and raise his family. Cabinetmaking and his superintendence of the majority of work at the State House during the 1820s kept him in contact with the elite members of the community and the government, and helped him elevate his social standing. The stagnant economic conditions in Annapolis meant that Tuck was unable to make cabinetmaking his primary trade, and may begin to explain why Washington appears not to have officially taken on apprentices or hired any journeymen to assist him in his shop.

Even without a workforce behind him, Washington's furniture-making talents and his social and professional connections gave him a decided advantage over his furniture-making contemporaries in Annapolis. Although several other cabinetmakers are documented as working in Annapolis during the 1820s and 1830s, Tuck was the most frequent beneficiary of contracts for work at the State House—even after he no longer served as its official caretaker. In addition, Tuck received the

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identified as the messenger of the Executive Council, submitted a petition to the House of Delegates "praying to be paid the annual allowance" for the years 1826-1831, which he was entitled to receive for "taking care of and keeping clean the State House." A resolution authorizing payment was later rejected by the House. *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1836 Session*, 193, 517-518. Hutton advertised in the *Maryland Gazette* on September 23, 1813 that he operated a coach and harness-making shop on Cornhill Street. He was probably the son of Samuel Hutton, a turner, carriage-maker, blacksmith who was active in Annapolis between 1783-1810 at his shop on Cornhill Street. *Maryland Gazette* 23 September 1813.

patronage of a number of elite residents, even though he did not advertise his services in the *Maryland Gazette* until 1834.

Like his father, Washington found time to combine his work in the public sphere with private commissions that helped him form and strengthen his social and economic associations. Between 1819 and 1826, Tuck preformed a number of services for Edward Lloyd V at a time when the Lloyd family was buying almost exclusively from Baltimore. In 1821, for example, Tuck received \$39.87½ for work that included: setting up seven bedsteads (\$2.62½), putting up two suits of bed curtains (\$4.00), rods and hooks for stair carpet (\$1.50), and for three sacking lines and putting on bedstead bottoms (\$2.50). On December 24, 1821 Washington Tuck submitted a voucher to Lloyd for \$2.25 for a pair of crutches.<sup>70</sup> Tuck maintained his contacts with Edward Priestley during this period, and was listed in the deceased cabinetmaker's list of debts in 1837.<sup>71</sup>

As John Shaw and other Annapolis cabinetmakers had done earlier, Tuck and his contemporaries provided funerary services to local families as another means of earning money. In August, 1828, for example, Tuck coordinated the funeral of the wife of Dr. John Ridgely, for which he received \$75.37½ for his role. Not only did Washington make all arrangements for the funeral and burial, including sending out funeral tickets, he also made “a raised top coffin lined and shrouded, with cambrick, cords, tassels & pillows, covered with super fine Black cloth.” Tuck charged fifty dollars to make the coffin, and also provided “a false coffin,” for the burial.

Washington's work for the Ridgely family and the services he provided for the

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<sup>70</sup> Lloyd Family Papers, MS. 2001, Reel 26, Manuscripts Division, Maryland Historical Society. See also, Alevizatos, “Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyd Family,” 217-218.

<sup>71</sup> Kirtley, “Edward Priestley,” 150.

funeral of Senator Dr. Octavius C. Taney demonstrated some of his connections with important private and public citizens in Annapolis.<sup>72</sup> Undertaking may have been one of the more common cabinetmaking-related services that Tuck and his contemporaries provided for local residents during the nineteenth century, and may have helped them maintain social and political links to citizens in their community.

It was not until 1834 that Tuck, aged fifty-three, began to decrease the scope of his cabinetmaking duties, a decision he announced in a trade notice published in the *Maryland Gazette* on June 12.

#### **FUNERALS**

THE subscriber begs leave to inform his friends and the public in general, that he has discontinued the Cabinet Making Business, and intends to confine himself for the future altogether to that of an **UNDERTAKER**.

All orders for Funerals will be attended to at the shortest notice, either in the usual manner, or according to special direction.

He returns his thanks to the public for their patronage during the last twenty years, and hopes that his promptness and attention will continue to merit their favour.

WASHINGTON G. TUCK.<sup>73</sup>

For the first time since he had opened his own cabinetmaking shop in 1814, Tuck, who remained employed at the State House and retained his role as armorer, began to reduce some of the services that he provided to the residents of Annapolis.

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<sup>72</sup> Special Collections (Ridout Papers) MSA SC 910, Box 31, Folder 6. Washington received \$208.67½, on his order “for the funeral expenses” of the late Senator Taney, a project he appears to have been helped by Calvert County Delegate James A.D. Dalrymple who received \$293 in connection with the funeral. MD Laws, 1831, Archives of Maryland (213), 506-507.

<sup>73</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 12 June 1834. The notice ran sporadically through the rest of 1834, and then ran from February, 1835 until the end of the year. This advertisement may mark the first time that Tuck published a notice in the *Maryland Gazette* for his cabinetmaking services.

Washington's last commission at the State House took place in 1837, when he and Richard W. Gill, clerk of the Court of Appeals of the Western Shore, were appointed by the Governor and Council to superintend "repairs, improvements and furniture in several parts of the State House...to carry into execution the purposes of the General Assembly."<sup>74</sup> The two men supervised the painting of the dome, the painting and furnishing of the Chambers of the Court of Appeals, Chancery and House of Delegates, and the House Committee Room.<sup>75</sup> Tuck and Gill received proposals, selected contractors and laborers—many of whom came from Annapolis, although most of the new furniture was purchased from Baltimore cabinetmakers—and coordinated payment of vouchers and receipts. Tuck personally oversaw the construction of the "desk of the tribunal" and the clerk's desk for the Court of Appeals that were designed by noted Baltimore architect Robert Cary Long and made by Annapolis artisan Elijah Wells. In his contract, Wells noted that the work was "to be done in the best most modern and improved style," and according "to the satisfaction of said Tuck." Tuck and Gill supervised the first series of major

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<sup>74</sup> Governor Thomas W. Veazey in *Journal of Votes and Proceedings of the Senate of Maryland, 1837 Session*, 23. Appointed Clerk of the Western Shore Court of Appeals in 1836, Gill served continuously until 1852, retaining his role when the Constitution of 1851 consolidated the two Courts of Appeal. Gill served as Clerk of the Court of Appeals from 1851 until his death in 1852. See: *Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) MSA SC 3520-13650; An Historical List of Public Officials of Maryland, Archives of Maryland, 76.*

<sup>75</sup> Renovations to the House of Delegates Chamber, the first significant ones since the Tucks' 1807 commission, were made necessary by the growth of the membership of the House—two additional delegates for Baltimore City and four for the newly created Carroll County. Among the furnishings Tuck and Gill were to procure were six additional desks and chairs for the new members; the supplier or maker of these desks are not yet known, nor have receipts for payment been located. Baltimore cabinetmaker James Askey spent twenty-five days repairing desks and purchasing new desk knobs for the House of Delegates Chamber, while Baltimore craftsmen Walter Ball painted desks in the Chamber. John Robinson, also from Baltimore, supplied chairs for the House Chamber, Committee Room, Court of Appeals, and Adjutant General's office. Receipts submitted in connection with these renovations are too many to list, but come primarily from the MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-157 and 6636-158, and the GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL (Proceedings) MSA S 1071-39. A full list of work done in 1837 and 1838 can be seen on <http://mdstatehouse.net> and the Maryland State House History Project, MSA SC 5287-3-10 and 3-11.

renovations to the interior of the State House that had occurred since the 1807 work preformed in the House of Delegates and Senate Chambers. Tuck's supervisory role in these high-profile renovations likely resulted from a combination of his familiarity with the building, where he had worked since 1820, and his entrepreneurial connections with Annapolis artisans and Baltimore cabinetmakers.

At the conclusion of the 1837 renovations, Washington Tuck sat at the highest levels of economic and social prominence that he, or any other Tuck family member, had ever attained. Throughout this period, Tuck had continued to serve as a common councilman in the Annapolis city government, helping him preserve his connections with the political leaders of Annapolis. Tuck's position in the corporation allowed him to remain active in local politics, and his prominent role at the State House enabled him to preserve his longstanding associations with the economic and social leaders of Annapolis. Washington undoubtedly understood the importance of supporting the city's tradesmen, and when possible he purchased building and household materials from local merchants and mechanics.<sup>76</sup> Washington remained a loyal and trusted artisan at the State House, enjoying reliable patronage (and a salary as armorer) at a time when Annapolis artisans were beginning to compete against their counterparts in Baltimore for work at the capital.

The most recent assessment, taken in 1831, placed Tuck within the top ten percent of total and personal wealth in the city.<sup>77</sup> Tuck's total assessed wealth was

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<sup>76</sup> Although few account books from Annapolis craftsmen and merchants active in this period have survived, the account book of Vachel Severe reveals that Tuck made frequent purchases from the local blacksmith between 1820 and 1824. Vachel Severe Account Book, MS. 740, Manuscripts Division, Maryland Historical Society, 47.

<sup>77</sup> The 1831 assessment measured the real and personal wealth of the two hundred and ninety heads of household in Annapolis, and serves as a valuable resource for locating Washington Tuck within his local community at a time when his economic, social and political standing had risen steadily since his

\$4,313 which placed him twenty-sixth out of the two hundred and ninety heads of households, while his personal property valued at \$813 listed him twenty-eighth. The median total wealth was \$729, while the average of all of the Annapolis residents was \$1,557.52.<sup>78</sup> An important indicator of Tuck's status is evident in an examination of assessed personal holdings, which included his three slaves (\$245), sixty-eight ounces of silver plate (\$68), and other consumer goods (\$500). While the average personal wealth in Annapolis was \$287.30, the median was considerably lower figure of \$102; Tuck's personal property put him well above most Annapolitans.<sup>79</sup>

Washington Tuck's financial standing in Annapolis indicated that he had become an important member of his local community by relying on employment connected to the public sphere. Fifty-four years before the 1831 assessment, his father, William, was listed in lowest tier of the 1783 tax, an artisan barely within the top two-thirds of wealth. But Washington had followed his father's connections and pursued the employment opportunities necessary to elevate his status beyond that of a middling artisan. In the midst of a stagnant economy in Annapolis, Tuck strengthened his family's links to the public sphere and elevated himself to be one of the wealthiest and most successful artisans in Annapolis.

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1819 election. Although real and personal assessments of Annapolis residents had been taken in 1819, 1829, the 1831 assessment would be the last full survey of real and personal wealth was done until 1845. Thus, the 1831 provides the most accurate means of locating Washington Tuck at the height of his political and economic careers. ANNAPOLIS MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND COUNCILMEN (Assessment Record) 1831 Assessment, MSA M 71-5. Resources for analysis provided by Dr. Jean B. Russo.

<sup>78</sup> The median is a slightly misleading figure because the top two figures, Richard J. Jones (\$15,532) and James Williamson (\$12,635) each had almost \$4,000 more than the heirs of Jeremiah T. Chase (\$8,700) who were listed third.

<sup>79</sup> ANNAPOLIS MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND COUNCILMEN (Assessment Record) 1831 Assessment, MSA M 71-5.

Having achieved economic and political success by virtue of his connections to the public sphere and moving beyond his roots as the son of a middling artisan in early national Annapolis, Tuck sought outlets to demonstrate his artisanal and entrepreneurial accomplishments. Tuck enrolled his sons William Clement and Washington Greene, Jr. in St. John's College, and developed and solidified his associations with the city's elite residents and politicians. More importantly, in 1832, Tuck paid off the \$2,550 mortgage on the two hundred and sixty-eight acre farm along South River in Anne Arundel County that he had purchased in 1830.<sup>80</sup>

In his acquisition of this estate, known as Selby's Marsh, Tuck engaged in a pattern of behaviors traditionally associated with elite southern landowners and gentlemen for whom the acquisition of land conveyed the quintessential statement of economic and social status. Following a socially-constructed pattern of southern gentlemen, Tuck eventually planted large quantities of tobacco, wheat, corn, and hundreds of fruit trees on his land, and relied on his slaves to produce the basis of an income that symbolized he was no longer simply an artisan. Tuck's purchase of Selby's Marsh and development of a tobacco plantation marked a significant step for the fifty-one year-old cabinetmaker, who after struggling to maintain his competency, undoubtedly envisioned a comfortable retirement fitting for successful citizens of rural Maryland.

Historian Eugene Genovese described the role of slavery for Southern gentlemen, writing that "slavery established the basis of the planter's position and

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<sup>80</sup> Soon after being released from this mortgage, Tuck purchased a large amount of household furniture, several horses, a pair of cows, and farming equipment from William and Jane Nichols, possibly to help him furnish his new farm. ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Chattel Records) MSA C 49-1, liber WSG 1, folio 320-322.

power. It measured his affluence, marked his status, and supplied leisure for social graces and aristocratic duties.”<sup>81</sup> Tuck demonstrated his financial prosperity and role in Maryland’s political hierarchy through acquisitions of land and slaves, and by 1850 he owned thirty-one slaves distributed between his two residences; nine women and six males in Annapolis, and ten males and six women on his South River estate.<sup>82</sup> But as Genovese explained, “slavery, for economic reasons as well as for social prestige, directs its reinvestments along the same lines as the original investment—in slaves and land.”<sup>83</sup> The challenge facing this newcomer to the Maryland gentry in the 1830s was how he would continue to navigate the political and social systems in place without possessing much financial reserve.

### **The end of an era: 1836-1838**

Between 1836 and 1838, the entire political hierarchy in Maryland underwent a dramatic series of changes that fell within the larger Jacksonian vision and republican spirit of democracy and increased representation. Described by Carl Everstine as the “drive toward placing government in Maryland directly within the control of the voters,” the calls for political reforms in the State culminated in revisions to the State Constitution, a document that Elihu Riley referred to as “an attenuated relic of colonial times with a dash of republican spirit permeating it.”<sup>84</sup>

Calls for constitutional reforms had been ongoing since the late 1820s, spurred by the

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<sup>81</sup> Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967) , 29.

<sup>82</sup> 1850 Federal Census, Anne Arundel County, MD, Slave Schedules, Annapolis District and First District. Owner of thirty-one slaves, Tuck owned more than twice the median number of slaves owned by individual residents in Southern Maryland and Anne Arundel County. See Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) , 25.

<sup>83</sup> Genovese, *Political Economy*, 17.

<sup>84</sup> Everstine, *The General Assembly*, 453; Riley, *Annals of Annapolis*, 244.



provision that representation in the House of Delegates be equal for each county—rather than apportioned on the basis of population—which essentially rendered the influence of the Baltimore electorate moot. Similarly, the original constitution prevented the direct election of senators and governors, both of whom, along with the Governor’s Council were chosen indirectly through an electoral college. Overall, Everstine characterized the membership of Maryland’s legislative and executive branches as illustrating a “lack of a fervor for democracy.”<sup>85</sup>

The new constitutional amendments, confirmed by the General Assembly early in 1838 (during the 1837 Session), marked a significant step in the democratization of Maryland politics. The new amendments, which began to take place by the start of the 1838 legislative session, altered the membership and composition of the House of Delegates and provided for the direct (popular) election of the governor. Significantly, the amendments abolished the Governor’s Council, created the office of Secretary of State, and gave powers of appointment to the governor, although these were subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. These democratic reforms signaled a major defeat for the state’s political elite by fostering a system of openness that ran contrary to the older system of closed-door politics that had dominated the political scene in Annapolis since the early eighteenth-century.

Just as the constitutional reforms of 1836-1838 marked a landmark date for Maryland politics, they were also a watershed period for the preservation and restoration of the public sphere of Annapolis. Under the old regime, the Council had always ensured that Annapolis cabinetmakers, carpenters and artisans maintained a

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 451. See *ibid.*, 443-457 for summary of Maryland’s hierarchical political structure prior to the constitutional reforms of 1836-1838.

foothold in work in the public sphere, even after the mid-1820s when Baltimore cabinetmakers began to supply greater numbers of furnishings to the State House. The democratization of the politics, and subsequent abolition of an executive system that preserved the economic and social connections that Annapolitans had to the State House, threatened to diminish the dominant role that the city's artisans had in the public sphere. Almost immediately, Baltimore craftsmen came to Annapolis in search of artisan work connected to the State House and Government House. Accounting records submitted between 1836 and 1840 in connection with renovations at the State House and the Governor's Mansion indicate an artisanal market saturated by Baltimore mechanics of all skill levels.<sup>86</sup>

Not only did the constitutional reforms alter the composition of the workforce involved in projects at the State House, but the entire process of caring for the public building became less secretive with greater input from the legislature. The House of Delegates assumed control and oversight of the preservation of the State House—a role formerly held by the Council—and on December 30, 1837 appointed the Committee on Public Buildings to “take charge of all matters relating to the public buildings and grounds.”<sup>87</sup> The committee appointed commissioners for the work, controlled appropriations, made recommendations, and solicited proposals for projects. For the first time in the history of the State House, the renovations performed in 1837 and 1838 were not done under the direction or supervision of an

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<sup>86</sup> A list of accounts due from the State for furniture purchased for Government House between 1836-1838 demonstrates the massive influx of Baltimore artisans into the public sphere in Annapolis. The list shows that purchases were made mechanics from both communities, including: John Needles and the Messers. Lusby from Baltimore, and Henry Thompson, James Iglehart, William Ross, and Elijah Wells from Annapolis. Most of the fabrics for the furniture came from Baltimore. MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-166-26.

<sup>87</sup> Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, 1837 Session, 28.

individual artisan, and the men appointed to superintend the projects solicited proposals in newspapers in Baltimore and Annapolis.<sup>88</sup>

Annapolitans with longstanding connections to the public sphere, such as Washington Tuck, no longer enjoyed the advantages their political loyalty and social and familial connections had once provided for them. The system of legislative oversight of maintenance of the State House no longer welcomed those previously rewarded with patronage under the old system. Jobs formerly performed by John Shaw, Washington Tuck and other superintendents of the State House now fell under the jurisdiction of the legislature. The age of the “jack-of-all-trades” artisans employed at the State House had ended. The reality of this, coupled with the nationwide depression of 1838, must have overwhelmed Washington Tuck, a member of the old guard displaced by the new political reforms. After serving as armorer for the remainder of 1838 and supplying twenty-one boxes for packing the Senate Proceedings in 1839, Washington Tuck quietly retired from public life.<sup>89</sup>

The implications of the political reforms and the severed relationships between connected individuals and the public sphere resonated far beyond Washington Tuck. Anyone who had succeeded under the older, less democratic, system, struggled to reestablish themselves within the parameters of the new constitutional amendment. Governor Thomas W. Veazey, stripped of his Council,

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<sup>88</sup> Tuck and Gill solicited proposals for the 1837-1838 renovations in the *Maryland Gazette* (6 April 1837) and the *Baltimore American* (7 April 1837). Similarly, on May 6, 1837, Annapolis residents George G. Brewer and David Ridgely advertised in the *Baltimore American* requesting proposals for construction of a to be built under the House of Delegates Chamber. Brewer and Ridgely, along with Annapolis Mayor and former Senator Dr. Dennis Claude, had been appointed by the House of Delegates to direct the construction of this new heating system. MD Laws, 1836, Resolution 58; *Maryland Republican*, 6 May 1837.

<sup>89</sup> Tuck submitted his final payment for his duties as armorer in January, 1839, and received payment for his boxes on August 1, 1839. MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-166-150; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-166-248.

lamented to an acquaintance, “What is my situation? I am here in this empty chamber without council without clerk without any friend to whom I can turn to ask advice or ask for papers, which I often am [sic]. I cannot tell where to find them.”<sup>90</sup>

Washington Tuck must have felt just as helpless as the State’s Executive in the aftermath of the reforms. A man whose access to the public sphere stemmed from connections that he and his father had established, Tuck found himself suddenly excluded from the positions he had occupied for close to two decades. After a lengthy career of public service and nearly thirty years as State Armorer, Washington Tuck responded to the widespread economic and political changes as southern elites often responded to challenges to their hegemony: he returned to his family and his plantation, a place where tradition still mattered and his status was clear. For the first time in his life, Tuck had succumbed to a fate that had overtaken his town and many of its residents for over four decades: he had a name and no advantage.

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<sup>90</sup> Special Collections (Walter R. Benjamin Collection) Thomas W. Veazey, Annapolis, to Col. Nathaniel T. Williams, Baltimore, 9 March 1838, MSA SC 245.

## Chapter 5

“I think I never saw a man more devoted to his family and friends”

After retiring from public life, Washington G. Tuck continued to occupy his residence on the State House Circle and his Selby’s Marsh estate on Anne Arundel County’s South River (Figure 7). Tuck maintained his links with the city’s cabinetmaking community by leasing his shop to William Daws, “Cabinetmaker and Undertaker.” Daws advertised in the *Maryland Republican* in October 1842 that he had “taken the shop on the Public Circle formerly occupied by Washington G. Tuck, where he is prepared to do all CABINET WORK, PAPER HANGING, UPHOLSTERING &c. &c,” and this confirmed that Tuck had ceased to practice the trade.<sup>1</sup> Although no longer a member of the Annapolis city government, Tuck, aged fifty-nine at the time of the 1840 census, undoubtedly maintained his social and professional relationships with members of the town’s elite. At the time of his retirement, Tuck lived with his wife, Rachel, and their two sons, William Clement and Washington Greene, Jr., and six daughters.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the 1840s, Tuck, appears to have concentrated on developing his land into a prosperous entity that befitted such a successful artisan. Tuck acquired more slaves for his land, as the total he owned rose from four in 1830 to thirty-one—distributed among his two properties—in 1850. Tuck commonly appeared in the Anne Arundel County land and chattel records in the 1840s for the acquisition of crops of wheat and tobacco. The productivity of Tuck’s land increased during the 1840s and 1850s, as the former cabinetmaker poured money into improvements,

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<sup>1</sup> *Maryland Republican* (Annapolis), 17 October 1842.

<sup>2</sup> 1840 Federal Census, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Annapolis District.

Figure 7



Washington G. Tuck's estate is in the second quadrant from the left in the second row, and identified as the land of "Hon. W.H. Tuck."

Simon J. Martenet,  
*Martenet's Map of Anne Arundel County, 1860*  
Special Collections, MSA SC 1213-1-461  
Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives

crops, and slaves. An 1845 mortgage to his nephew William Hallam Tuck for \$1800, indicated that Washington had amassed at least “six horses, twenty head of cattle, two sheep, [and] forty hogs” on his estate. Two years later, Washington wrote his nephew and informed him that he had “twenty large odd hogshead of tobacco” on the farm, indicating the scale of his farming operation. By 1858, the land contained a “small DWELLING, Kitchen, Ice-House, Corn House, Stable and Grainery, and Houses for 25,000 pounds of tobacco.” In addition, “hundreds of “Fruit Trees, embracing the best varieties of apples, peaches, pears, apricots, plums and cherries,” sat on land “well adapted to the growth of tobacco and grain.”<sup>3</sup> To the outside observer, it appeared that Washington Tuck had turned his South River estate into a prosperous plantation that rivaled some of the other properties in the area.

On the surface, it appeared that Washington Tuck had managed to develop a thriving farm that helped him continue to accumulate additional capital to augment the money he had previously earned while working at the State House and as the armorer. A former artisan who had relied on the public sphere for his earnings now turned to another traditional source of income, one rooted in the economy of tobacco and slaves. But Tuck, like many of his contemporary antebellum landowners, probably saw his farm as a statement of his success, rather than a viable source of revenue, or as U.B. Phillips characterized it, “less a business than a life.”<sup>4</sup> Genovese interpreted the persistence of slavery as a means of preserving the hierarchical

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<sup>3</sup> William H. had just completed an eight-year tenure in the House of Delegates when his uncle, Washington, mortgaged Selby’s Marsh to him in 1845. ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Chattel Records) 1844, liber WSG 2, folio 321-322, 357-358, 373-374, MSA C 49-2; ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records) 1845, liber JHN 1, folio 86-89, MSA C 97-81; *The Sun*, 9 December 1858, from the Claude-Gray-Hughes-Tuck-Whittington Family Papers, Archives and Manuscripts Department, University of Maryland, College Park, Series 2, Box 3.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery*, 1.

authority of the agricultural elite, a community which for whom “paternalism provided the standard of human relationships.”<sup>5</sup> Having been pushed away from the public sphere by the progression of democracy and capitalism in state government, Washington Tuck turned to a more traditional expression of demonstrating his self-worth.

The money Tuck earned from the sales of his crops was likely redirected into the land and towards consumer goods. Tuck’s property symbolized his autonomy and independence, as it had done for the elite planters of the colonial era, but this environment demanded almost continual spending on “conspicuous goods and finery.” “A man’s *visible* estate,” T.H. Breen explained, “became an index to his virtue, to his moral standing in the community of planters.”<sup>6</sup> As Eugene Genovese noted, this proved fatal for the slaveholders because it directed “reinvestment along a path that led to economic stagnation” and limited “the volume of capital accumulated for investment of any kind.”<sup>7</sup> Breen asserted that in “maintaining the show of wealth...many a planter brought himself ever more deeply into debt.”<sup>8</sup> It was a vicious cycle that bankrupted a number of landowners who succumbed to it.

Almost as soon as he retired, Tuck began taking out debts against his estate, his slaves, and even his personal possessions. Although these debts had the potential to lead to future economic success, the former cabinetmaker had no such luck, and he quickly fell into a financial crisis. Between 1840 and 1846, Tuck took out four mortgages against his land, compiling debts owed to the Farmer’s Bank, his nephew

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>6</sup> Breen, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 105.

<sup>7</sup> Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Breen, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 106.



William H. Tuck, and other citizens in Annapolis.<sup>9</sup> By 1848, these mortgages and dozens of other debts owed to local landowners and Annapolitans had caught up to him, and James Iglehart sued Tuck in Chancery Court to recover his money.<sup>10</sup> The case was not settled until 1851, but ended with the sale of Tuck's farm and other personal property from the estate to help cover the \$11,680.97 worth of debts.<sup>11</sup> Two hundred and sixty-three of the two hundred and sixty-seven acres of the Selby's Marsh estate were sold to William H. Tuck in 1855, while Rachel Tuck retained the remaining four acres.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of the mid-1850s, Washington Tuck had all but disappeared from public life. Although he still owned his house on State House Circle, he had lost most of his land—albeit to his nephew—and many of his slaves in the chancery case, Tuck probably knew he had lost his tangible claim to the gentry class. Tuck, aged seventy-five in 1856, became quite ill in the last few years of his life, and slipped into relative oblivion in his hometown. The seventy-eight year-old former cabinetmaker and caretaker of the State House passed away at the end of June, 1859. Maryland newspapers including *The Sun* and the *Planters Advocate* carried death notices noting that “Washington G. Tuck, Esq. an old and respected citizen of Annapolis, and formerly State Armorer, died last week.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records): liber WSG 25, folio 373-375, MSA C 97-78; liber WSG 27, folio 99-100, MSA C 97-80; liber JHN 1, folio 86-89, MSA C 97-81; liber JHN 2, folio 7-10, MSA C 97-82.

<sup>10</sup> CHANCERY COURT (Chancery Record) 1848, liber 175, folio 650-684, MSA S 517-201, MdHR 17,891. The case is: James Iglehart against Washington G. Tuck, William H. Tuck and the President, Directors & Company of the Farmers Bank of Maryland.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT (Land Records) 1855, liber NHG 4, folio 585-587, MSA C 98-4; CR 39,543-2 MSA CM 109-4; Claude-Gray-Hughes-Tuck-Whittington Family Papers, Series 3, Box 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Planters Advocate* (Upper Marlboro, MD), 6 July 1859.

Washington Tuck's probate inventory and will do not yield significant details of the possessions of the former cabinetmaker nor do they reveal much about his former status as a "respected" artisan. Unfortunately, Tuck died almost entirely bankrupt because of his chancery case, and his inventory revealed that the fifteen slaves in his possession comprised an overwhelming portion of the \$10,704.75 in his estate. Tuck had neither cash in the house nor any in the bank when he died.<sup>14</sup> Washington's lasting influence in town would not be measured monetarily, but through his relationships with those around him. Indeed, a letter from Lucius Manwaring, Tuck's English son-in-law, to Washington's daughter Louisa offered a fitting characterization of the longtime State Armorer, loyal to his city and the government, and affectionate with his family.

We feel to sympathize with you all in this affliction. I am aware your Father had not been able to fill that social position which he had formerly occupied in his family or society but while he was alive. you had the privilege of seeing his venerable form and administrating[?] to his multiplied wants which would often remind you of his able counsels given in active life. You must miss him very much, for I think I never saw a man more devoted to his family and friends than he appeared to be when in health.<sup>15</sup>

## Epilogue

The lives of William and Washington Tuck demonstrate that material and social contributions cannot be measured solely within economic terms, nor can financial status be used as a suitable indicator of "success." The stories of the brothers show what two middling artisans did to maintain their competency in the

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<sup>14</sup> ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY REGISTER OF WILLS (Testamentary Papers) 1860-1861, MSA C 491-242, MdHR 16,868-15.

<sup>15</sup> Claude-Gray-Hughes-Tuck-Whittington Family Papers, Series 1, Box 6.

midst of a town in decline. William and Washington pursued connections, in some cases initiated by their father, as a way to gain access to the public sphere and sources of employment for artisans. While many artisans left Annapolis in the decades following the Revolution, the Tucks managed to stay and elevate their standing within the social and political circles of the state capital.

Because the economic environment in Annapolis was different than in most centers, it is difficult to measure success strictly in economic terms. Instead, as the story of William and Washington showed, it was possible for artisans and other citizens in Annapolis to elevate their social standing and political influence without becoming wealthy or accumulating substantial landholdings. Like that of their father, the careers of William and Washington Tuck were characterized by their continued pursuit of all available employment opportunities, including those outside the traditional scope of their trade. Their successes are better exemplified in the achievements of subsequent generations of Tucks, who all enjoyed high levels of political connectedness and social prominence. Although the Tucks did not succeed by modern economic terms, as agents within the evolution of the modern economic system, their achievements must be understood within context of their time. Indeed, in their Annapolis, social and political connections served as a more accurate measure of one's talents, largely because the city's slow development of industry and commerce meant that monetary worth was not the sole determinant or indicator of success.

The most important legacy of William and Washington cannot be seen in their economic or artisanal achievements, but in the choices available to their children.

The successes of the subsequent generation revealed that their social mobility was not hampered by the economic status of William and Washington. William Tuck's son, William Hallam Tuck, practiced law in Prince George's County, before returning to Annapolis in the 1830s to serve in the House of Delegates. A sharp defender of the rights of slaveholders, William H. served seven years in the House (including one as Speaker), served as Director on behalf of the State in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company in 1847, was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1850, and a Judge in the Maryland Court of Appeals between 1851 and 1861.<sup>16</sup> Somerville Pinkney Tuck, the son of William H., served as the United State's unofficial representative to the League of Nations after the conclusion of World War One.

Several of Washington's children who remained in Annapolis after his death also enjoyed high levels of connectedness. One daughter, Rachel Ann married Abram Claude, son of the well-respected and longtime mayor of Annapolis, Dr. Dennis Claude—whose tenure as mayor coincided with Washington's service in the corporation—while son William Clement was appointed the Secretary of the Annapolis and Elkridge Railroad Company in 1856.<sup>17</sup> Washington's other son, Dr. Washington G., was physician of Annapolis during the Civil War and in the 1890s was the town postmaster. Dr. Tuck, like his father, was active in local politics, and

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<sup>16</sup> Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) William Hallam Tuck, MSA SC 3520-1887; MD Laws, Resolution 42, 1846 Session.

<sup>17</sup> Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) Abram Claude, MSA SC 3520-13688; Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) Dennis Claude, MSA SC 3520-1540; Claude-Gray-Hughes-Tuck-Whittington Family Papers, Series 3, Box 4.

between 1859 and 1897 appeared frequently in the records as a member of the city's Republican party.<sup>18</sup>

Much like John Shaw and Joseph Clark, architect of the State House dome, the children of William and Washington Tuck did not carry on their fathers' trades, instead choosing to pursue other positions tied to public service. Although the Tucks' children continued the familial tradition of working in the public sphere and governmental service, their careers signaled a change in the artisan market and the use of skilled labor. Indeed, the connections established by their fathers ensured access to positions dependent on education, not artisanal skills. Changes in the market economy and the composition of the artisanal work force and the industrial revolution had devalued the importance of skilled labor. The skills and connections that had elevated William and Washington Tuck to the status of respected artisans and entrepreneurs no longer held a place in their children's Annapolis.

William and Washington fell within a transitional period in the history of Annapolis, an era buffered by periods of economic growth and the slow development of democracy—both in town and throughout the State. The Tucks found work in the public sphere during the early national period on the basis of their connections, and this old system of patronage helped the brothers maximize their economic opportunities in a city characterized by its economic, social and political stagnation. By connecting their entrepreneurial spirits and artisanal talents to various facets of the public sphere, William and Washington took advantage of the prospects for work to make frequent contributions to their Annapolis community. In an era marked by a

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<sup>18</sup> COMPROLLER OF THE TREASURY (Vouchers and Receipts) 1892, MSA S 723, Box 308. See for example: *Annapolis Gazette*, 28 July 1859 and *Port Tobacco Times, and Charles County Advertiser* (Port Tobacco, MD), 1 May 1896.

rise of individualism, the Tucks, reliant on their cabinetmaking and artisanal abilities, remained in Annapolis committed to helping the city's artisan community survive an era of economic decline.

## Catalogue 1

Cellarette

1795

Annapolis, Maryland

John Shaw, and probably made by journeymen William Tuck

Cellarettes appear to have been an object commonly made in John Shaw's shop during the 1790s, and the design of these pieces appears to have been influenced by Hepplewhite's 1794 *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*.<sup>1</sup> The simplistic and utilitarian form of Shaw's cellarettes suggests they may have been made by the apprentices and journeymen employed by the master cabinetmaker.<sup>2</sup> At least five cellarettes from this period have survived, and they are characterized by their similarities in appearance, suggesting that they may have been made piecemeal or from design templates created by Shaw. Like the facades of other cellarettes made in Shaw's Annapolis shop during the late 1790s, the front of the cellarette made by William Tuck is outlined with satinwood stringing to suggest it is a chest of drawers.

Although there were some variations in the designs of these objects, visible in the hardware and inlay on each particular piece, the cellarettes produced in Shaw's shop demonstrate the local preference for neat and plain furniture. Aside from the inlay, the rest of the piece is very utilitarian and without ornamentation. An unlabeled cellarette in the collections of the Hammond Harwood House that is attributed to Shaw is nearly identical to the piece that William Tuck helped construct in 1795, although it is slightly larger.<sup>3</sup>

**CONSTRUCTION:** The cellarette has a rectangular case with hinged lift top, and the ovolo molding with mitered corners is nailed to the front and sides of the top. The piece has a false front inlaid to simulate two over one drawer configuration, and the interior is fitted with partitions for storage of six bottles on each side of a center section with a removable caddy with ring handle (possibly a replacement). Brasses and escutcheons on the false drawers do not protrude into the interior of the case. Strips of applied molding are nailed to the front and back of interior of case to support mahogany bottle stand. The four straight legs are chamfered on the inner edge, and are the same thickness as the sides of the interior of the case.

**CONDITION:** Unknown.

**MATERIALS:** Mahogany, mahogany veneers, light wood stringing, primary; tulip poplar top, core and backing, interior dividers, yellow pine back and bottom, secondary.

**DIMENSIONS:** OH. 28 $\frac{1}{4}$  x OW. 29  $\frac{3}{4}$  x OD. 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

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<sup>1</sup> Hepplewhite, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 102.

<sup>3</sup> Baltimore Museum of Art Research Files.

MARKS: John Shaw label glued to center underside of lift top and is inscribed in pencil W 1795 T. Additional marks unknown.

PROVENANCE: According to Elder and Bartlett's catalogue, the early history of this piece is unknown. It was purchased by Dr. James Bordley of Baltimore circa. 1930. It was acquired by Ellen Bordley Webb, and then descended to its present owner.<sup>4</sup> The current owner and location of the cellarette are unknown.

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<sup>4</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 101.



Catalogue 1



Cellarette similar in appearance to the one signed by William Tuck in 1795  
Courtesy of the Hammond Harwood House, Annapolis, MD  
Photographs by the author

## Catalogue 2

Wardrobe

c. 1795

Annapolis, MD

John Shaw, and probably made by journeyman William Tuck

The design for this wardrobe, like that of many pieces made in Shaw's shop during the mid-1790s, was inspired by plates eighty-five and eighty-eight of George Hepplewhite's *Guide*. These plates depicted a wardrobe with straight bracket feet, dentil molding, and paneled doors with molded concave corners. In the introduction of his guide, Hepplewhite stated that the wardrobe "is an article of considerable consequence...usually made plain, but of the best mahogany," a statement which also seemed to summarize the types of furniture popular in Revolutionary-War Annapolis.<sup>1</sup>

This wardrobe, now in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society, is similar in design and size to another labeled Shaw piece owned by the Hammond Harwood House. The 1795 date has been ascribed to the MHS wardrobe because of its similarities with the Hammond Harwood House piece where the label is signed I 1795 B. Although there are slight variations in the appearance of these two pieces (the Hammond Harwood example has a more ornamental cornice but does not have a writing surface), the designs of these wardrobes are very closely related and are more conservative than the labeled 1797 example owned by the Baltimore Museum of Art.<sup>2</sup> The 1795 pieces contain standard Shaw shop design elements including ogee bracket feet, dentil moldings, and cock-beading around the drawers, and Elder and Bartlett noted that the top and bottom sections are the same size.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that linen presses such as these might have been a piece commonly made by apprentices and journeymen in a standardized pattern of construction, much like the card tables and desk and bookcases made in this period.

**CONSTRUCTION:** The wardrobe features an attached cornice, two paneled doors and ogee bracket feet. The back of the upper section is dovetailed to the solid mahogany sides. Interior of upper section has five graduated drawers for clothes, while the paneled doors have applied molding with concave corners. The bottom section has four graduated drawers with full dustboards, while the top drawer is fitted with a secretary.

**CONDITION:** Unknown.

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<sup>1</sup> Hepplewhite, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, 16.

<sup>2</sup> The 1797 wardrobe, accession number BMA 1975.76, is illustrated and described in Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 115-118.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

MATERIALS: Mahogany, mahogany veneers, primary; tulip poplar writing surface and back paneling, yellow pine stiles, yellow pine and tulip poplar interior casing, yellow pine dustboards, top and bottom, secondary.

DIMENSIONS: OH. 81½ x OW. 49 7/8 x OD. 25"<sup>4</sup>

MARKS: John Shaw label is affixed to the bottom of the secretary drawer and inscribed in ink W 179[?] T. Additional marks unknown.

PROVENANCE: The piece was reportedly purchased from the Annapolis area before being sold in 1969 by Archers Antiques in Westminster, Maryland. It was in a private collection until 1980 when it was purchased by the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore with support from the Dr. Michael and Marie Abrams Memorial Fund (acc. 80.20).

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from *ibid.*, 108.

Catalogue 2



Wardrobe, Annapolis, c. 1795  
John Shaw, probably by William Tuck  
Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD

## Catalogue 3

### Card Table

1796

Annapolis, Maryland

John Shaw, and probably made by journeyman William Tuck

This demilune card table is atypical from other documented John Shaw and Annapolis school card tables made in the neoclassical era. The overall appearance of this table is closely related to those widely produced in Baltimore during the neoclassical period, and its design may have been inspired by plates sixty and sixty-one of Hepplewhite's *Guide*.<sup>1</sup> The inlay is almost certainly of Baltimore origin and may have some connection to the successful firm of Bankson and Lawson or their inlay makers Thomas Barrett and William Patterson.

Although the shape of the table as well as the eagle and leaf inlays on the pilasters and the sawtooth inlay around the skirt correspond with Baltimore designs, there are several clues that this table is a product of John Shaw's shop in Annapolis. The inclusion of spade feet, a baize interior, single-flying leg, and the Shaw label link this piece with standard shop designs and other objects made under the cabinetmaker's direction. The lack of a medial brace, commonly found on tables of Baltimore origin but not on those from Annapolis, and the rounded leaf-edges support a stylistic connection to Maryland's capital city.

The hand of a skilled, but not experienced, workman is evidenced in the construction of this piece, further supporting the notion that an artisan such as William Tuck was intimately involved in its completion. The dovetails on the rear rail are not as refined as they are on some other card tables made during this period, and the finger hinge is not as finely-made as those in others from the same era. In addition, tenons are visible on the interior of the flyleg where it is mortised to the outer end of the flying rail, a feature not seen in two square card tables examined by the author for this study. The unfamiliarity with the production of a table of this shape may account for the slight imperfections and irregularities of the construction details of this piece.

**CONSTRUCTION:** This table consists of a hinged circular top with a rounded molded edge, and the top is secured by six screws placed in the front and rear rails. Satinwood stringing is inlaid in three sections on the façade, while sawtooth inlay appears on the skirt. The exterior top is outlined in satinwood stringing and a plain semicircular inlay is in the center. The front legs are affixed to the front rail with screws, while the rear legs are tenoned to the rear rails and flying rail. This table has wood filler back construction and a single overlapping flyleg. A leaf-edge tenon plays an important role in the stability of the table when the top is open because there is no medial brace to add strength to the rails. The four legs are straight and tapered and terminate in ovoid spade feet.

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<sup>1</sup> Hepplewhite, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, plates 60-61.

CONDITION: This card table is in overall good condition. There are four nail holes in the flying rail that surround the label, suggesting that a protective cover may at one time have been placed over the label. The red baize top is probably a replacement.

MATERIALS: Mahogany, mahogany veneers, light and dark wood inlays, primary; tulip poplar back rail, yellow pine frame, white oak hinge and flying rail, secondary.

DIMENSIONS: OH. 28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x OW. 36 x OD. 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"

MARKS: John Shaw label affixed to inside of hinged flying rail is inscribed in ink W  
1796 T. There is one illegible chalk marking on the underside of the top, and a label from Bernard & S., Dean Levy, Inc. New York is affixed to the rear rail.

PROVENANCE: The early history of this piece is unknown. At some point it was acquired at auction by private owner, and in 1978 was purchased by Bernard & S., Dean Levy, Inc. New York, and David Stockwell, Inc., Greenville, Delaware. The piece was sold by Dean & Levy in the early 1990s and is now in a private collection.

Catalogue 3



Card Table, Annapolis, MD, 1796  
John Shaw, probably made by William Tuck  
Courtesy of a private collection  
Photographs by the author

## Catalogue 4

Desk for the Speaker of the House of Delegates

1807

Annapolis, Maryland

William and Washington Tuck

This desk, made in 1807 for the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, is the only known surviving piece of furniture whose production can be firmly traced to the shop of William and Washington Tuck. At the request of the Governor and Council, William and Washington Tuck superintended the renovations in the House of Delegates Chamber and built twenty-four desks for the use of the eighty delegates, the speaker, and two clerks. Included among the twenty-four desks listed on the brothers' final bill for the work was one speaker's desk valued at a cost of fifty dollars. This work in the House of Delegates marked the Tucks' initial foray into providing furnishings for the public sphere of Annapolis. Work at the State House would play an integral part of Washington's cabinetmaking career between 1820 and 1838.

The work in the House Chamber coincided with a two-year period in which Shaw, the city's preeminent Annapolis cabinetmaker, had briefly and unofficially retired from his position of caretaker of the State House. Under normal circumstances, Shaw would have been appointed by the Governor and Council to supervise the renovations and supply the necessary furniture. Instead, the Tucks probably received this commission on the basis of Shaw's retirement and their artisanal and familial connections with the celebrated cabinetmaker. The Tuck brothers had both worked with Shaw during the final years of the eighteenth century, William as a journeyman and Washington as an apprentice. Surviving examples of their work clearly indicate that they were working in the style of their master whose design preferences and construction techniques had influenced the entire Annapolis cabinetmaking school.

This piece has historically been attributed to John Shaw on the basis of construction and its similarities to the furniture that Shaw made for the Maryland Senate in 1797. In their 1983 catalogue, Elder and Bartlett attributed the desk to Shaw but suggested that it might have been made by William and Washington Tuck.<sup>1</sup> Until this study, however, the desk has not been firmly attributed to the Tuck brothers; here they receive full credit for constructing it as a part of the 1807 renovations. The design of the Speaker's desk is very similar to the appearance of the thirteen desks that Shaw made for the Senate Chamber, including the one for the President of the Senate. But the Tuck-made desks contained decorative features that have never been seen in Shaw's oeuvre. For example, each gallery on 1797 Shaw desks is scalloped, while the gallery on the Speaker's desk is straight, a design detail presumably repeated on all of the desks made by the brothers for this commission. Although more skillfully rendered, the inlaid eagle in the center of the Speaker's desk connects the piece stylistically with the inlay on the 1797 Senate President's desk made by Shaw. The

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<sup>1</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw, Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 131.



inlay on the Speaker's desk, like the majority of inlay seen on neoclassical Annapolis furniture, was probably purchased from Baltimore.

The wooden knobs on this piece are original and are a finishing detail that was rarely, if ever, seen in Annapolis furniture. Each of the desks supplied by William and Washington Tuck had similar round wooden knobs to maintain the symmetry in the appearance of the furnishings in the chamber. A payment rendered to James Askey in 1837 for repairing the knobs in the House desks confirms that each of the desks made by the Tucks had wooden knobs.<sup>2</sup> The presence of these knobs on the Speaker's desk and the other twenty-one desks they made for the delegates may signal a construction detail not seen in the shop of John Shaw, or at least introduce a design element that until now has not been associated with the Annapolis school.

**CONSTRUCTION:** Brown leather covers nearly the entire writing surface, including the hinged lift-top lid, and the side battens are either mortised or tongue-and-grooved to the single board that comprises the lift top. Cross-banded mahogany veneers mark the edges of the writing surface. A tray fitted for pens, ink and a sander is built into a raised ledge below the gallery whose design conforms to the overall bowed shape of the piece. The front legs of the desk are square and tapered, while the rear legs are tapered and diamond-shaped. The bottom of the desk is a single board of yellow pine nailed the underside of the desk section, and there are corner blocks in the front section of the interior. The mahogany knobs on the false drawer have wooden pegs or screws that hold them in place.

Each of the legs on the Speaker's desk is adorned with light stringing on the front and outward facing sides. A double line of satinwood stringing runs up the edges of the legs and terminates with an arch at the top, and a tablet-form reserve with incurved corners is inlaid on each pilaster. Elder and Bartlett wrote that the false drawer is "outlined with light wood stringing which also forms a panel with rounded edges on the drawer front," and a satinwood band with ebony borders is inlaid on the bottom of the apron.<sup>3</sup> The false drawer is bordered by vertically crossbanded veneers. The bowed front of the desk features vertically grained veneers, while the central section of the back of the desk (indicated by the false drawer) has horizontally grained veneers. A large oval with the eagle of the Great Seal is inlaid in the center of the bowed front. The bowed front and the sides are also inlaid with light stringing with convex corners.

**CONDITION:** At the time the desk was accessioned into the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1963, the piece had lost some height in the legs, and the surface was much abraded. The desk was restored by the MFA in 1970, at which time portions of the gallery were repaired, and the entire desk was sanded and refinished in French polish.<sup>4</sup> At the time of the restoration, the lock and escutcheon were both replaced. Replacements have been made to portions of the stringing and the veneers, and the

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<sup>2</sup> MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004-225, MdHR 6636-157-265.

<sup>3</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw, Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 131.

<sup>4</sup> Museum of Fine Arts, Boston curatorial file for desk, 1963.12.

leather top has been recovered. Some shrinkage cracks appear in the interior of the case and on the underside of the lid.

**MATERIALS:** Mahogany, mahogany veneers, light, dark, and stained wood inlays, primary; yellow pine lift lid, drawer construction, interior desk bottom, and casing, secondary.

**DIMENSIONS:** OH. 32 ¾ x OW. 36¼ x OD. 23”

**MARKS:** Illegible chalk writing is on much of the underside of the base. A possible reference to the duration of the 1847 legislative session is written in pencil in the interior of the base: “1847 [two illegible words] 93 [or 95] days.” Another pencil inscription in the interior notes that desk and the leather were restored by Vincent Cerbone at the Museum of Fine Arts in November 1970; this writing obscures the much older handwriting noted above. A fragment of a label is affixed to the underside of the lid, but infrared imagery from the MFA suggests the typing on the label is from the modern era.

**PROVENANCE:** This was built for the House of Delegates Chamber in the Maryland State House, Annapolis, 1807. It was used as the desk of the Speaker of the House of Delegates until about 1860, and it was subsequently acquired by Rear Admiral Albert Ross. The desk then descended to Margaret Ross Caswell of Washington, D.C until it was sold to Mrs. Robert B. Choate, Danvers, Massachusetts, who gave it to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1963. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Choate (acc. 63.12).

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston catalogue credit:

*Desk*

about 1807

Object Place: Annapolis, Massachusetts, United States

Attributed to: John Shaw, 1745-1829

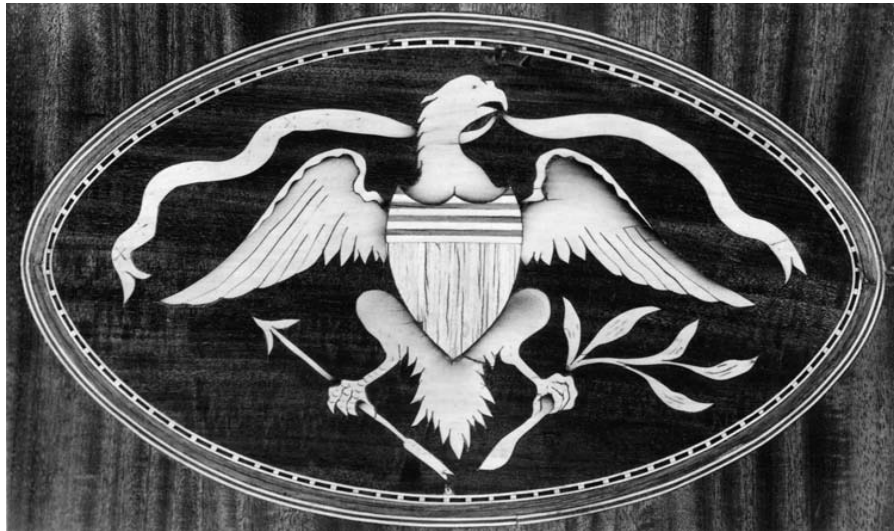
Mahogany, mahogany veneer, light-, dark- and stained wood inlays; yellow pine  
83.2 x 92.1 x 58.4 cm. (32 ¾ x 36¼ x 23 in)

Randall, 59

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

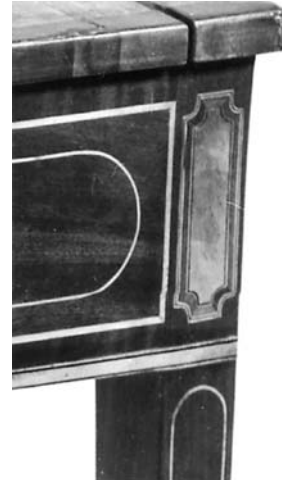
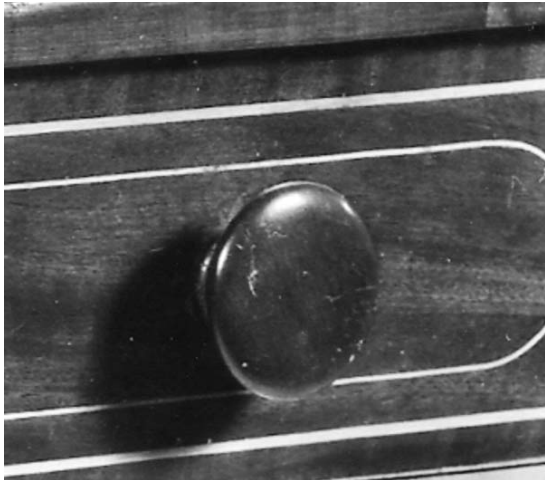
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Choate, 63.12

Catalogue 4



Desk of the Speaker of the House of Delegates, Annapolis, MD 1807  
William and Washington Tuck  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Choate  
Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Catalogue 4



Desk of the Speaker of the House of Delegates, Annapolis, MD 1807  
William and Washington Tuck  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Choate  
Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Catalogue 4



Desk of the President of the Senate, Annapolis, MD, 1797  
John Shaw, possibly made by William Tuck  
Photographs courtesy of the Maryland State Archives, MSA SC 1545-0749

## Catalogue 5

Desk and bookcase

1797

Annapolis, Maryland

John Shaw, and was probably made by journeyman William Tuck

The desk and bookcase was one of most impressive pieces made in large quantities in Shaw's shop, and was undoubtedly one of the more expensive pieces sold by the cabinetmaker. Many scholars have noted the stylistic connections that this form shared with the designs popularized in Chippendale's *The Gentleman & Cabinet-maker's Director* (1762) and Hepplewhite's *Guide*. Indeed, the neoclassical motifs and inlay complement the basic Chippendale form of ogee bracket feet, four graduated drawers, and an ornamented cornice. The overall appearance of this piece, which blends the rococo and neoclassical designs, illustrates the transitional nature of the furniture made in Shaw's shop at the end of the eighteenth century. To this point, no Annapolis desk and bookcases from before the mid-1790s have been documented, and it is interesting to note each of the known examples have intricately pierced fretwork.

At least five nearly identical desk and bookcases made during the neoclassical era have been attributed to John Shaw. It is clear that Shaw had developed a standard design for the desk and bookcases produced in his shop, as the overall appearance and proportions of these pieces are virtually identical. Many elements of these pieces are standardized, suggesting these pieces, or at least elements of them, could have been the work of journeymen and apprentices. Elder and Bartlett noted that some of the drawers in this group of extant pieces were interchangeable, and the proportions and dimensions of many of these objects are very similar.<sup>1</sup> Each of these examples have an inlaid scrolling broken pediment with open fretwork, a cornice with dentil molding and inlaid frieze, inlaid finial plinth, glazed mullioned doors, interior pigeonhole compartments and document drawers that flank a prospect door, and four inlaid graduated drawers in the lower case. The desk and bookcases at the White House, Hammond Harwood House, and Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts each have a carved anthemion in the fretwork just below a finial plinth. Skilled journeymen, as William Tuck had become by 1797, would undoubtedly have had opportunities to demonstrate their furniture-making talents within the framework of a predetermined design form.

Although the desk and bookcase was a standardized shop form, there was flexibility in some of the aesthetic appearances of specific design elements, including the inlays, feet, and configuration of the pigeonholes and document drawers. Whether influenced by cost limitations or the aesthetic taste of the cabinetmaker or the buyer, the final design of these pieces still reflected the preferred Shaw-shop design. For example, Alexandra Alevizatos noted that Shaw modified the form of his desk and bookcase to fit between two pier windows in the south office at Wye House and to

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<sup>1</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw, Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 121.

accommodate the needs of its user, but the design of the piece still fits within the overall form and aesthetic of the shop.<sup>2</sup> Two of the Shaw desk and bookcases, including the one at Wye House and another sold at Sotheby's in 1996, have French style feet, while the other three have ogee bracket feet. Some pieces have an oval inlay in the center of the prospect door (see White House and MESDA examples), while others (such as the two at Wye and at Hammond Harwood) have no inlay, but all four have pilasters with inlaid stop-fluting. Perhaps future discoveries of additional Shaw and Annapolis school desk and bookcases, labeled or initialed examples, or even new documentation regarding the aesthetic appearance of these pieces will enhance the understanding of these standardized yet highly ornate objects.

**CONSTRUCTION:** A broken scroll pediment with carved fretwork that terminates in inlaid rosettes sits above a molded cornice with dentil molding and acorn drops. There is a carved anthemion in the fretwork just below a finial plinth with sawtooth inlay, and three patera are inlaid on the frieze of the cornice. A thin line of satinwood stringing marks the perimeter of the frieze. Two mullioned glazed doors with ovals comprise the front of the case, and each door is fastened to the sides of the case with two hinges. Inside the bookcase, two interior shelves are set into dadoes on the sides of the case while the bottom shelf is fixed; each of the shelves has a molded front edge. The upper case is secured to the lower case with two screws.

The fall front of the desk consists of a single board attached by two hinges, and enclosed by mitred battens. Light satinwood stringing with ovolo corners outlines the front of the fall front and surrounds an inlaid conch shell in the center. Below the fall-board are four graduated drawers with inlaid rectangular stringing, and each of the drawers has a cock-beaded edge on the top and bottom. Each of the drawer frames are dovetailed and the bottom board is nailed on. The runners are mitred and nailed, and in at least one instance are also glued. The first drawer is flanked by the fall-board supports. The lower case has a molded base and sits on four ogee bracket feet.

The interior of the desk features a baize covered writing surface, and consists of eight pigeonhole sections with shaped valences and seven document drawers that flank an inlaid prospect door. The left section of the interior has a two over two drawer arrangement, each with rectangular stringing. On the right side of the interior are two small drawers over one long drawer that is built and inlaid to appear as if it is two separate small drawers. Each of the document drawers have full dustboards, while the sides of the drawers are dovetailed and the bottoms are nailed. The prospect door features an inlaid oval with two oak leaves and three acorns which and is surrounded by an inlaid crossbanded arch with three keystones. Two Doric pilasters with inlaid stop-fluting flank the prospect door. A pigeonhole with shaped valence and a document drawer are seen inside the prospect door.

**CONDITION:** The original finial is missing from this piece. The right rear foot is a replacement, and the baize on the writing board is not original. Some cracks appear

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<sup>2</sup> Alevizatos, "The Furniture and Furnishings of the Lloyd Family, 1750-1850," 356.

in the fretwork of the pediment. Small loss of mahogany veneer on one of the drawers in the lower case.

**MATERIALS:** Mahogany, mahogany veneers, light, dark, and stained wood inlays, primary; white oak interior drawer construction, backs of top and bottom section, interior pigeonhole and drawer dividers, tulip poplar base of secretary, yellow pine dustboards of bottom section, top and bottom of both sections, and foot blocking, secondary. The brass bail pulls on the large desk drawers are thought to be original. Baize writing surface

**DIMENSIONS:** OH. 98 5/8 x OW. 45<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x OD. 36<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"

**MARKS:** John Shaw label affixed to center interior back of the bookcase section and is inscribed in ink W<sub>1797</sub> T. There are illegible chalk marks on the underside of the second drawer in the lower case. Grooves are visible on both sides on each of the four drawers of the secretary. This is a peculiar element that appears on a large number of pieces made or attributed to Shaw or his shop.

**PROVENANCE:** According to family tradition, this desk and bookcase was made for John Randall of Annapolis. The desk descended to Henrietta Randall Magruder, John Randall Magruder and to Peter Hagner Magruder. It was purchased by Lionel Manuel Hendler at Magruder estate auction held by Galton-Osborn Co., Baltimore in 1948, and was given as a gift of the Hendler Foundation in memory of Lionel Manuel Hendler to the White House in 1963 (acc. 963.471.1).



Catalogue 5



Desk and bookcase, Annapolis, MD, 1797  
John Shaw, probably made by William Tuck  
Courtesy of the White House  
Photographs by the author

Catalogue 5



Desk and bookcase, Annapolis, MD, 1797  
John Shaw, probably made by William Tuck  
Courtesy of the White House  
Photographs by the author

## Catalogue 6

Desk

Annapolis, Maryland

c. 1797

John Shaw; repaired in 1801 by Washington Tuck an apprentice working in his shop

The design of this desk is fairly consistent with that of the other desks built by Shaw in 1797 for the Senate Chamber, and Elder and Bartlett suggested that this desk might have been made prior to the 1797 refurnishing.<sup>1</sup> The date associated with Washington Tuck has been questioned by previous scholars, who interpreted it as 1804 or possibly 1807. Recent research conducted as part of the Historic Structure Report on the Maryland State House, however, suggests that this desk was repaired in 1801 as part of the work that Shaw did in the Senate Chamber when he supplied and put down two and one-quarter yards of green cloth in the Senate Chamber.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the 1801 date corresponds with the dates of Washington Tuck's apprenticeship with Shaw. Shaw received a payment of \$54.76 for repairs to seats and furniture in the State House in 1804, and by 1807 the cabinetmaker had unofficially retired from his position at the capitol.<sup>3</sup>

Since Washington was probably not in Annapolis for the 1804 work that Shaw preformed in the State House—although it is not known which pieces in the building were repaired—it is more plausible this desk was repaired in 1801 before Tuck completed his apprenticeship and traveled to Baltimore. This is an important object because it is the one known extant object that can be traced to Washington Tuck's tenure with Shaw. In addition, this piece confirms Washington's presence in the State House before the 1807 renovations in the House and indicates that he was familiar with the Shaw furniture already in situ. This familiarity likely played a role in the design of the Speaker's desk that Washington and William built in 1807 for the House of Delegates Chamber.

**CONSTRUCTION:** The desk features a hinged lift-top lid, four square tapered legs, a full drawer, and applied molding along the apron of the desk and the top. Inlay stringing is on the front of the desk, and an inlaid oval panel is in the center of the replaced scalloped gallery.

**CONDITION:** The present owner of this piece indicated to the author that the desk was restored for the 1983 John Shaw exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art. There was no gallery on the desk when it was purchased by the present owner, but this element was replaced before the piece was exhibited. There was evidence of the original green baize on the lift top, but a new green baize covering was replaced for the exhibit.

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<sup>1</sup> Elder and Bartlett, *John Shaw: Cabinetmaker of Annapolis*, 134.

<sup>2</sup> MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) MSA S 1004, MdHR 6636-84-89.

<sup>3</sup> TREASURER OF THE WESTERN SHORE (Journal of Accounts) 7 January 1804, folio 38, MSA S 606-9.

**MATERIALS:** Mahogany, mahogany veneers, light wood inlay, primary; tulip poplar lift top lid, desk bottom, drawer construction, and inner casing, and the mahogany sides, back, and front are backed with yellow pine, secondary.

**DIMENSIONS:** OH. 35 x OW. 24½ x OD. 21"

**MARKS:** John Shaw label is affixed to underside of lid and inscribed in ink Wash Tuck 180[1]. Also inscribed on the label is: Kate Davis Anderson, T.A. McParlin, April 16, 1842; inscribed in ink on outside of right drawer side T.A. McParlin.

**PROVENANCE:** This desk was originally made for the Senate Chamber in the Maryland State House, Annapolis and later acquired by Annapolis resident Thomas A. McParlin, ca. 1842[?]. The desk descended to Eleanor McParlin Davis, and was later purchased from her estate by Miss Louise Magruder. It was offered for sale at Edward Lee Antiques, Annapolis in 1975 and was purchased in 1978 by Richard Meyer III for his son. Collection of Charles Heyward Meyer.

Catalogue 6



Senate Chamber desk, Annapolis, MD, 1797  
John Shaw

This desk is similar to the one repaired by Washington Tuck in 1801  
Photographs courtesy of the Maryland State Archives, MSA SC 1545-0701



Photograph of the Old Senate Chamber in the Maryland State House showing the layout of the furniture as it would have appeared in 1797 after John Shaw had supplied the furniture for the room.  
Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, MSA SC 1890-01-03

Appendix A

William and Washington Tuck's Bill for the House of Delegates Renovations

*Auditor's Office, Annapolis, December 5th 1807*

<i>The State of Maryland in account with William and Washington Tuck;</i>	DR.	
TO 80 chairs, at 24 dollars per dozen, Dolls.	160	00
To freight on ditto,	11	12
Expenses on chairs,	24	50
To 46 inkstands and sandboxes,	64	50
To expenses on ditto,	15	00
Cord and tassels for blinds,	7	50
To taking down, repairing and putting up ditto,	18	00
To plank, bought of Joseph Sands,	38	20
To plank, bought of John Randall,	20	37
To plank, bought by ourselves, 500 feet,	15	00
To plank and scantling for scaffolds,	4	00
Mr. Duvall's bill,	94	07
To 1000 brads,	1	25
To 3 gross screws at 62½ cts.	1	82
To plasterer's bill,	21	00
To painting and glazing bill,	13	80
To smith's bill,	3	00
To carting,	6	00
To William M <sup>c</sup> Parlin's bill,	6	00
To William Fowler's bill, for lime,	2	89
To carting ditto, with sand,		50
To hair, of John Hyde,		50
To glue used in room,	4	00
To 500 brads, at 12½ cts.		62 ½
To two dozen screws at 12½ cts.		25
To raising floor,	850	00
To repairing benches and clerk's chair,	15	00
To repairing foot-stool to speaker's chair,	1	00
To stuffing, repairing and cleaning, speaker's chair,	7	00
To 48 spit boxes,	48	00
To covering committee room desk and tables,	28	50
To cleaning and putting up lamps,	5	00
To a lock, and putting it on case in committee room,	1	00
To 3 curtains,	4	50
To taking out furniture, and taking up carpet,	12	00
To making carpet and putting it down,	100	00
To putting down lead,	5	00
To putting on tin,	8	00

To 9 circular desks, at 90 dollars,	810	00
To 12 straight desks, at 55 dollars,	660	00
To fitting desk to the floor,	21	00
To speaker's desk,	50	00
To 2 clerks desks, at 35 dollars,	70	00
To expenses to city of Washington,	15	00
To commission on 439 dollars,	43	97
	<hr/>	
	3288	86
By cash,	300	00
Balance due,	Dollars	<hr/>
		2988 86

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  - Research Files from 1983 Exhibition of John Shaw Furniture
  
- B. Maryland Historical Society
  - The Lloyd Papers, MS. 2001
  - Randall and Dobbin Account Book, 1798-1807, MS. 679
  - “Report of the Auditor Transmitting the Accounts of Washington G. Tuck, in Compliance with a Call from the House of Delegates,” December Session, 1822, PAM 2643, Manuscripts Division, Maryland Historical Society
  - Vachel Severe Account Book, MS. 740
  
- C. Maryland State Archives, Hall of Records
  - Manuscript Collections
    - Brinckle Collection, MSA SC 467
    - Government House Research Collection, MSA SC 4806
    - Historic Annapolis Index Files Collection, MSA SC 1393
    - Maryland General Assembly House of Delegates Collection, MSA SC 2734
    - Maryland Historical Society Collection) MSA SC 1174
    - Maryland State Archives Map Collection, MSA SC 5339
    - Maryland State House History Project, MSA SC 5287
    - Master Biographical Database Files Collection, MSA SC 3520
    - National Endowment for the Humanities, Annapolis Project Collection, MSA SC 829
    - Peter Force Collection, MSA SC 4391
    - Ridout Papers Collection, MSA SC 910
    - Schoepf Collection, MSA SC 2745
    - Shirley Baltz Collection, MSA SC 5224
    - St. James' Church Collection, MSA SC 2497
    - St. Margaret's Church Collection, MSA SC 109
    - Walter R. Benjamin Collection, MSA SC 245
    - William Tell Claude Collection, MSA SC 530
  
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    - Anne Arundel County Circuit Court (Land Records) MSA C 98
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    - Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (Accounts of Sale) MSA C 27
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D. Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts

Photographic collections  
 Research card files

E. Newspapers

*Annapolis Gazette*  
*Fredericktown Herald*  
*Maryland Gazette*  
*Maryland Herald & Hagerstown Weekly Advertiser*  
*Maryland Republican*  
*Planters Advocate and Southern Maryland Advertiser*  
*Port Tobacco Times*  
*The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*  
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F. University of Maryland at College Park, Archives and Manuscripts Division

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