

“Evidences of Daily Life in New England, 1790-1810”

Catalogue of a Special Exhibition at the Harrison
Gray Otis House, February 17 to March 12, 1965

THE Society's museum collections are especially rich in the common household articles used by earlier generations. Many of these are of a humble nature, for which reason they are seldom to be seen on display in the historical society cabinet and never, naturally, in the galleries of an art museum. Also many of them, being simple, practical and lacking definite style characteristics, are difficult to date. With the challenge of these various considerations our Museum staff arranged a month-long special exhibition during the spring of 1965, designed primarily to bring together both familiar and unfamiliar domestic items in daily use around the turn of the nineteenth century. The period selected marked the beginning years of our life as a young nation, 1790 to 1810—a time when increasing imports from Europe and the exotic Far East were mingled with traditional objects of native craftsmanship and the products of an infant American industrial revolution.

Only those articles were selected for which a date within this period could be proven beyond much question. And as a further unifying factor, the individual elements were grouped under certain familiar household headings, for example, as accessories to the sideboard, the desk, the gaming table and the toilette. The social range covered was roughly one of “average means,” with a few exceptions which fell either above or below that line.

Inasmuch as the exhibition represented a study in depth of a significant era in American history, it is thought that a simple catalogue, based almost entirely on the individual captions which accompanied the objects on display, might have some lasting value for students of the period. That catalogue is presented herewith, and preserves the subject matter groupings of the show itself, with illustrations of certain items both typical and unusual.

VARIOUS CONTAINERS

POCKET ALMANACK (for 1795) AND LEATHER CASE.

SNUFFBOX, with painted English scene.

CARDBOARD BOX, with label of R. Rogerson, No. 1 Dock-Square, Boston.

ROUND WOODEN BOX, with label of Samuel Hersey, Hersey St., Hingham, Mass.

PAINTED BOX, probably Essex Co., Mass.

EMBROIDERED WORKBOX.

LEATHER WALLET, marked “Samuel Ruggles. Cambridge Street.” West India goods merchant (Boston Directory, 1809).

- TRI-CORNERED HATBOX, covered with wallpaper.
- STONEWARE JAR, salt(?) glaze, with decoration typical of the unidentified "Boston 1804" maker.
- WOODEN BOX, with punched and carved decoration, marked "S B / Ap^L 17 / 1794."
- REDWARE JUG WITH MOTTLED GLAZE, probably made in New England.
- RUSSIA LEATHER COIN PURSE, with painted glass decoration, inscribed "Amour."
- WHITE COTTON RETICULE, with embroidery, initialed "H W" for Hannah (Williams) Weld of Roxbury, Mass., married in 1800.
- WHITE COTTON RETICULE, with floral embroidery.
- PATCHWORK RETICULE, marked "Jerusha Weston 1794."
- WALLET WITH FLAMESTITCH EMBROIDERY, marked "Z Cushing," probably worked between 1792 and 1800.
- FIRE BAG, heavy linen, dated 1809. Belonged to Samuel Cutler, member of the Cambridge Port Fire Society.
- FIRE BUCKET, dated 1802, belonged to Thomas Briggs of Lendell's Lane, Boston. Stamped "I FENNO" for John Fenno, "leather bucket and hosemaker," Orange St., Boston (Directory, 1803).

THE DESK

- TAMBOUR DESK, from the Bartlett-Atkinson House, Newburyport.
- PAINTING ON GLASS, "The Sailor Boy's Return from a prosperous Voyage."
- BRASS SCALES AND TIN CASE.
- BOTTLE OF SNUFF, labeled "Best Virginia / Lorillard's Maccoboy Snuff / Sold at No. 30 Chatham-Street . . . New York."
- SNUFFBOX, with English scene, "Life in London."
- MEMORANDUM TABLET, with ivory leaves.
- COMPOSITOR'S BOX, initialed (on lid) "B. F." for Bossenger Foster (1767-1816) of Cambridge, Mass., graduate of Harvard College, 1787, and member of the bar.
- COUNTRY BUILDER'S ASSISTANT, by Asher Benjamin, Boston, 1798.
- DRAFTING INSTRUMENTS, in original case, and ELEVATION for the "Front" of a three-story Federal-style house.
- WHALE-OIL LAMP, SINGLE DROP BURNER, blown glass font and stem.
- PACKET OF PENCILS, marked "Brookman & Langdon / His Majestys Pencils makers."
- INKWELL, black basalt, and WOODEN SANDER.
- SPECTACLES WITH ORIGINAL CASE, made in England, 1792, belonged to Abigail (Williams) May (1733-1811) of Boston.

FABRICS

BROCADE, piece of the wedding dress of Elizabeth Greenleaf Gerry who married William Blackler in 1793 in Marblehead, Mass.

STRIPED SILK, piece of the wedding dress of Elizabeth (Cotton) Haskell of Plymouth, Mass., married Aug. 14, 1790.

VELVET HANDBAG, with silk net decoration, made by the second Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis in 1810.



“EVIDENCES OF DAILY LIFE IN NEW ENGLAND, 1790-1810”

Accessories of the sideboard.

SLIPPER, silk with embroidery, made in Beverly, Mass., and worn by Polly Endicott (1782-1813) of Beverly who married John Ellinwood in 1808.

SLIPPERS, satin and yellow brocade.

VEST, white satin with floral decoration in metal thread, belonged to Capt. John Drew (1780-1823) of Boston.

BLUE AND WHITE FURNITURE CHECK, from a set of bed hangings, Cheshire, Conn.

CHECKERED LINING FOR WAISTS, Robbins family, Lexington, Mass.

STRIPED TICKING, Robbins family, Lexington, Mass.

- POCKET, lined with ticking, from the Perkins Homestead, Lynnfield, Mass.
- BED CURTAIN, checkered plaid, from the Jabez Kingsbury House, Tolland, Conn.
- PATCHWORK-POCKETBOOK, glazed woolens, marked (on reverse) "Susanna Woods / 1789" for Susanna Woods of Dunstable, Mass.
- POCKET, white cotton dimity.
- CHRISTENING BLANKET, white cotton dimity, used at the Christenings of the infants of Daniel and Hannah (Williams) Weld of Roxbury, Mass., married in 1800.
- SAMPLES OF WOOLEN CLOTH, imported (closely woven) and homespun (loosely woven), Philbrick family, Weare, N. H., and Robbins family, Lexington, Mass.
- ENGLISH COPPERPLATE BEDSPREAD, pillar print, Pike family, Rollingsford, N. H.
- ENGLISH COPPERPLATE COTTON, with scenes of African slaves, a portion of the original bed hangings from the Philip Call House, High St., Ipswich, Mass.

THE GAMING TABLE

- SHERATON STYLE CARD TABLES, with reeded legs and inlay.
- SHERATON STYLE SIDE CHAIRS (pair), owned originally by David Stetson (1769-1833) of Scituate, Mass.
- PAINTED TRAY (Robbins family, Lexington, Mass.) WITH DECANTER AND WINE GLASSES, decanter bears etched inscription "American Independence" and initials "N G" for Nancy Gay of Gay's Island, Cushing, Maine.
- PERSPECTIVE TOY, French.
- GAME OF LOTTO, with original leather-covered box marked "Hitty Whitwell / 1806," probably of Boston.

THE MANTELPIECE

- MANTEL, probably Boston, about 1810.
- PROSPECT, oil on canvas, "A View of Mr. Joshua Winsor's House &c," in Duxbury, Mass., by Rufus Hatheway.
- TEA SERVICE, Chinese Export porcelain, arranged on the mantelpiece as was sometimes the custom, earlier in the 18th century.
- GREEN WIRE FENDER, brass-bound.
- BRASS ANDIRONS, marked "JM / Boston" for John Molineaux, maker.

MEMORIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE

- EMBROIDERED MOURNING PICTURE, "In Memory of A Father / Shubael Abbe / ob April 16th 1804 / AE 39 years," Windham, Conn.
- CHINESE EXPORT BOWL, with Masonic emblems, belonged to Thomas Dennie (1756-1842) of Boston.
- MOURNING BROOCH, initialed "M L" for Mehitable (Harris) Livermore (1764-1793), born in Littleton, Mass., and died in Portsmouth, N. H.

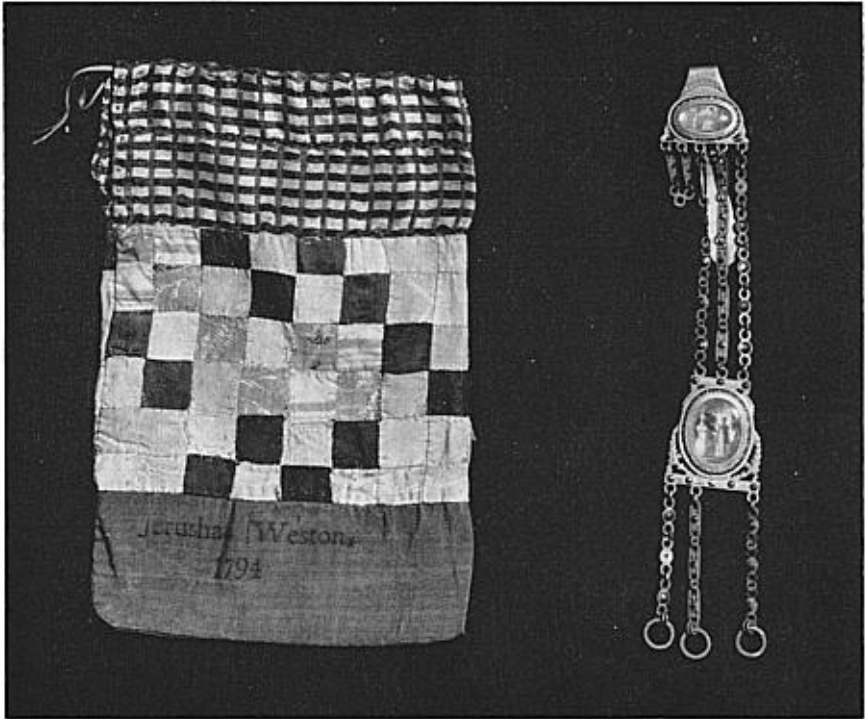
PIN WITH MINIATURE PORTRAIT.

MOURNING PIN, with hair inscribed "Cha^s Moulton / ob^t 27 Feb^y / 1801. At. 4."

GOLD MOURNING RING, inscribed "George Otis: Ob. 13: April / 1797. AE 19."

MOURNING LOCKET (disassembled), with hair and painted mourning scene, inscribed: "M W / OB Oct. 10th / 1790 / AE 35" for Mary Ward of Salem.

MINIATURE ON IVORY IN GOLD FRAME, with hair and initials in gilt "J D" for John Drew (1780-1823) of Boston. Painted in Italy as an engagement present for Sarah Snelling whom he married in 1810 or 1811.



PATCHWORK RETICULE MARKED "JERUSHA WESTON 1794" (left); WATCH CHAIN WITH MINIATURES ON IVORY MADE IN LONDON FOR A NIECE OF MRS. GEORGE WASHINGTON (right)

SILVER REWARD OF MERIT, marked "William Brigham," of Boston.

SILVER REWARD OF MERIT, dated 1810, awarded by the Boston School Committee to Jonathan G. Stevenson.

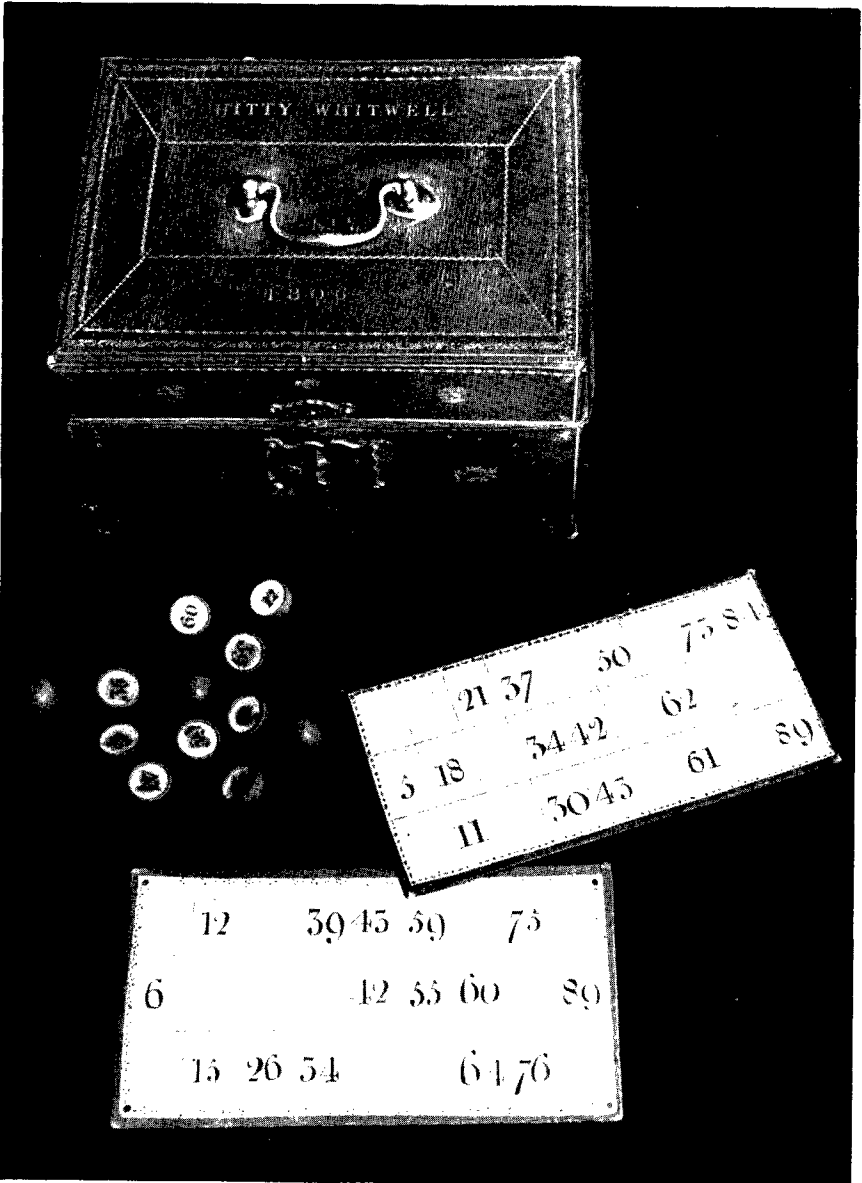
LIVERPOOL PITCHER, with transfer engravings of the frigate *Constitution* and head of John Adams.

WATCH CHAIN WITH MINIATURES ON IVORY, made in London for a niece of Mrs. George Washington, and presented by Mrs. Washington to Hannah S. Prescott (according to her own written statement) in 1797.

- GOLD PIN SET WITH PEARLS**, containing the hair of George Washington and Gov. Caleb Strong of Massachusetts intertwined.
- SILVER MEDAL**, commemorating the death of Washington in 1799, inscribed, "He is in Glory, The World is in Tears."
- WAISTCOAT BUTTONS**, worn at a ball in honor of Washington at the Charleston, S. C. Exchange, in 1791.
- ENGRAVING**, "Sacred to the Memory of the Illustrious G. Washington," by T. Clarke, Boston, 1801. Inscribed on obelisk: "There is Rest in Heaven."
- BUST OF WASHINGTON**, Staffordshire.
- WALLPAPER PANEL**, "Sacred to Washington," manufactured in Boston, in 1800, by Ebenezer Clough.
- "**PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF GRIEF, FOR THE DEATH OF GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON . . .**" Inscribed on flyleaf (in ink): "Phinehas Tuckers Book / 1800."

NEEDLEWORK AND ITS IMPLEMENTS

- EMBROIDERED INDIA MULL**, fragment.
- DESIGN FOR EMBROIDERY** on paper watermarked 1804.
- DESIGN FOR EMBROIDERY** on paper watermarked 1796. Written on reverse: "Miss Speakman / Spring Lane / Boston."
- SAMPLER** worked by Caroline Langdon, born December 31, 1780. Dated July 8, 1790.
- THREAD ROLL** stamped: "Abey W. Austen, Boston, 1806."
- THREAD ROLL**, initialed: "S M" for Sally Moors of Groton, Mass., born 1780.
- CREWEL CUSHION COVER**, embroidered on wool, unused. Probably from the Rust family of Boston.
- PACKET OF CREWELS**, original twisted skeins.
- PINS**, London-made.
- SCISSORS** in leather case, suspended from homespun woolen strap.
- EMBROIDERED MEMORIAL PICTURE**, unfinished.
- KNITTING SHEATH**, silver. Belonged to J. (Mudge) Holbrook.
- THREAD WINDERS**, mother-of-pearl.
- THIMBLE POCKET AND SILVER THIMBLE**, belonged to Hannah (Williams) Weld (1781-1841).
- COMBINATION NEEDLECASE & NOTEBOOK**, belonged to Catharine Eliot. Clasp in form of memorial urn painted on ivory.
- THREAD ROLL AND NEEDLEBOOK** made for Hannah (Williams) Weld (1781-1841), before her marriage.
- NEEDLECASE**, mother-of-pearl.
- NEEDLEBOOK**, brocade.



GAME OF LOTTO WITH ORIGINAL LEATHER-COVERED BOX MARKED "HITTY WHITWELL 1806," PROBABLY OF BOSTON

THE SIDEBOARD

- HEPPLWHITE STYLE SIDEBOARD AND CASE OF BOTTLES from the Dale family of Gloucester, Mass.
- PORTRAITS OF CAPT. ISAAC MANCHESTER (1768/9-1860) AND HIS WIFE, PRISCILLA (TABER) MANCHESTER (1773-1852) OF BRISTOL, R. I., painted by Cephas Thompson in 1806.
- HEPPLWHITE STYLE SIDE CHAIRS, from the Gov. John Hancock House, Boston.
- WINE COOLERS, painted tin, belonged to Harrison Gray Otis.
- SILVER WINE SIPHON, from the Joy family of Boston.
- TEA CADDIES, in lacquered box, initialed "A B K."
- CONDIMENT SET OF CUT GLASS, probably made at Stourbridge, Staffordshire, with silver mounts by Samuel Baker of Birmingham, 1791, belonged to Freelove (Lippitt) Chace of Providence, R. I.
- TUMBLER, Steigel-type, with SILVER DRINKING TUBE, marked "H. Joy" of Boston.
- CRACKER, with original baker's brand "I · R", saved by Alice (Stearns) Abbott of Bedford, Mass., to mark the birth of her son, Moses Abbott, Aug. 17, 1795.
- TEA CADDY, Irish plate, presented to Lemuel Cox of Boston while in Ireland in 1790.
- KNIFE BOX, shagreen with brass mounts, from Keene, N. H.
- TEA STRAINER (no mark), SERVING SPOON (Robert Evans, act. Boston, 1798) and set of TEASPOONS (Ebenezer Moulton, act. Boston, 1795).
- DESSERT COOLER WITH COVER FOR ICE, Chinese Export porcelain.

THE TOILETTE

- BUREAU, Seymour type, so-called.
- DRESS, mull, with metal flecks, about 1805.
- SHAWL, India mull, embroidered in white cotton and gilt metal thread, belonged to Charlotte (Fowle) Wiggin, b. in Watertown, Mass., in 1782.
- BROCADE DRESS, belonged probably to Anne Gordon Read (1780-1807) who married John May, Jr., of Boston in 1806.
- MINIATURE, gold frame, unidentified man, perhaps of the Hooper family, Marblehead, Mass.
- CUFF LINKS, paste set in silver, Robbins family, Lexington, Mass.
- BOTTLE FOR SMELLING SALTS, with original stopper, Robbins family, Lexington, Mass.
- FOLDING COMB, with ivory case.
- PERFUME BOTTLE, molded glass.
- SHOE BUCKLES, engraved silver over brass, initialed "A H" for Abiah Haskell, born 1779 and married in 1808 to Isaac Thompson.

SHOE BUCKLES, silver and gold, set with rhinestones, belonged to Benjamin Joy (1757-1829) of Boston.

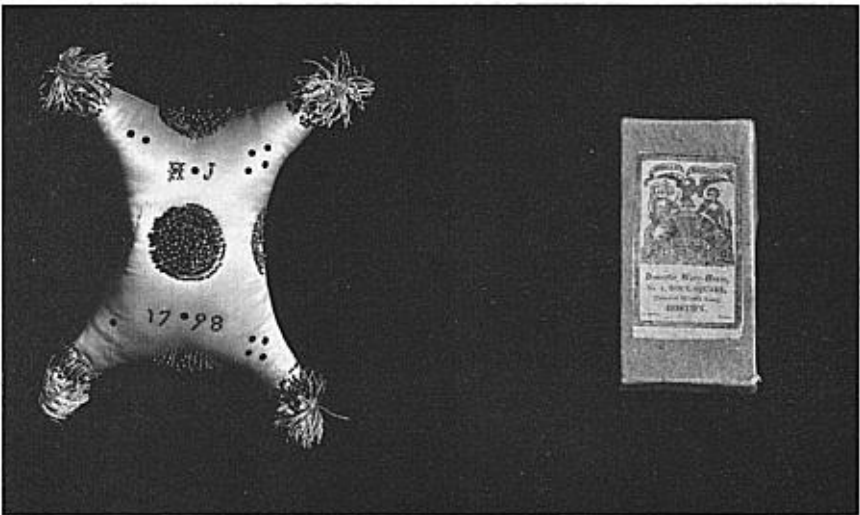
STOCK BUCKLE, silver, belonged to Daniel Weld (1772-1852) of Roxbury and Boston.

FAN, horn brisé, painted, with steel bead decoration.

PINCUSHION, with original pinhead decoration, inscribed "H J / 1798" for Hannah Joy of Boston.

GLOVES, York tan.

PIN, silver set with paste.



PIN CUSHION WITH ORIGINAL PINHEAD DECORATION, INSCRIBED "H J / 1798" FOR HANNAH JOY OF BOSTON (*left*); CARDBOARD BOX WITH LABEL OF R. ROGERSON, NO. 1 DOCK-SQUARE, BOSTON (*right*)

ENAMELED PATCH BOX, with transfer design, "In Remembrance of Friendship."

ENAMELED PATCH BOX, with transfer design, "Esteem the Giver."

MOURNING PIN WITH HAIR, inscribed "George Stevenson / Ob Sept 2d 1805 AE 9 M^o" and "John Boier Stevenson / Ob June 20 1803 AE 11 Mo," belonged probably to Martha C. Stevenson of Brookline.

SHOE BUCKLES, silver, initialed "E W W" for Elizabeth Williams Weld (1803-1809) of Roxbury.

HEART-SHAPED PIN, silver, set with paste, Robbins family, Lexington, Mass.

EARRINGS, belonged probably to Martha Frye who married Moses Abbot, Jr., of Andover, Mass., in 1799, and died in 1804, aged 32.

GOLD RING, bound with hair and initialed "F A."

VEST, white cotton dimity, embroidered with silver thread and metal ornaments.

CORSET, white cotton, with busk.

CHEMISE, initialed "IN" for Jane Norton of Hingham, Mass., who married Thomas Wigglesworth of Boston, March 17, 1803.

STOCKINGS, knit by Betsey Bryant of Stoneham, Mass., married in 1807 to John Sweetser, Jr., of Lynnfield.

HANDKERCHIEF, initialed "W" for Hannah (Williams) Weld (1781-1841) of Roxbury.



COMPOSITOR'S BOX INITIALED (ON LID) "B. F." FOR BOSSENGER FOSTER (1767-1816) OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

FRAMED PRINT (colored), entitled (on reverse) "Persuasion."

"My lovely Maid let me impart
The Secrets of an honest Heart
Believe my Love without Disguise
So let us marry and be wise."

"Publish'd July 25, 1803 . . . London"

DOLL'S DESK, white pine painted red, made by George Churchill Thacher (1796-1856) of Yarmouthport and Dorchester, Mass.

FRENCH DOLL, wooden, jointed, with original dress (cap is modern).

WINDOW CURTAIN, red damask, in original form, vicinity of Lyme, Conn.

ENGLISH SIDE CHAIR, caned and japanned, belonged to Harrison Gray Otis, and was probably a part of the original (1797) furnishings of 141 Cambridge St. in Boston.

DRESS, India mull with crewel embroidery.

SLIPPERS, yellow kid.

NEEDLEWORK PICTURE, inscribed "Attention / Wrought by Ruth Alley" who married Dr. John Lummus of Lynn, Mass., in 1811.

PORTRAITS (pair), water color, Dr. John Lummus (1790-1836) of Lynn, Mass., and his wife Ruth Alley (1792-1813). Portraits dated 1810.

HOMESPUN TOWEL, initialed "H G" for Hannah Gove (1774-1838) of Weare, N. H., who married Joseph Philbrick in 1797.

WASHSTAND, with folding top and collapsible mirror.

RAZOR AND CASE, marked "I · H. / John Heifor / 3 Paradise Square / Sheffield."

SHAVING DISH, wooden, painted yellow, from the Ichabod Hayes Homestead, West Wilton, N. H.

PEWTER BOWL (unmarked).

TUMBLERS, plain and Steigel-type (decorated).

CURLING IRON, probably Lexington, Mass.

SOAP AND ORIGINAL WRAPPER, labeled "Warranted / Crown Soap . . . Sold by Gilman Frothingham . . . Newburyport." Gilman Frothingham (1764-1825) was a "leather-dresser."

ETUI and contents. ("A case for tweezers and such instruments"—Walker's Dictionary, 1807).