

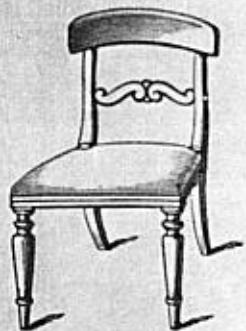
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"COTTAGE CHAIRS" AS ILLUSTRATED BY J. C. LOUDON IN HIS *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, LONDON, 1853

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Chairs for the Masses

A Brief History of the L. White Chair Company, Boston, Massachusetts

By MARY ELLEN YEHIA

IN the period between January, 1864 and December, 1869 the L. White Chair Company of Boston began, briefly flourished, and quietly went out of business. In those short six years the company produced some \$364,000 worth of chairs which graced not only Boston parlors but those of Detroit, Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia, Newport, and Portland, to mention only a few. Compared to other Boston manufacturers White's operations were limited. In fact, it seems probable that the company was created primarily for the purpose of supplying one of Boston's largest furniture manufacturers and dealers, the firm of Hayley, Morse, and Boyden, which supplied the initial \$20,000 needed to finance the company. The inexpensive "practical" furniture produced by White undoubtedly supplemented the higher quality, fashionable furniture made in the Hayley, Morse, and Boyden warerooms. White, how-

ever, also sold large quantities of chairs to furniture dealers in New England, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, and throughout the Middle West.

The business books of the White Chair Company were recently acquired by Baker Library at Harvard University. There are four books consisting of a sales book, a ledger, a cash book, and a trial balance book. The sales book shows the daily recorded sales, and gives information regarding the purchaser, the quantity, type, and cost per dozen of the chairs bought, and the amount of the total sale. The ledger is organized according to customer, each customer having his own page or pages of accounts. The cash, or expense, book records the expenditures of the company on a daily basis and in the trial balance book the figures of the sales and cash books are combined to produce the monthly accounts of the company.

PART I—*Cottage Furniture*

The L. White Chair Company manufactured what is known as "cottage furniture." Part of the movement to architectural simplicity and suitability promoted in England by J. C. Loudon and in America by A. J. Downing, cottage furniture was already somewhat out-of-date in 1864. The cottage movement gained momentum around 1833 when Loudon published his *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture* popularly known as the *Encyclopedia of Rural Architecture*. Inspired by democratic ideals Loudon set out to provide pleasing, suitable, and practical house designs for the less than well-to-do. Primarily reacting against the structures of the Greek Revival style—"that there is no manner of building worthy of the name of Architecture but the Grecian"¹¹—Loudon attempted to "induce Architects to study their art . . . on a theory formed on nature . . . and on the changing conditions of society, rather than on . . . the rules of former ages. . . ."¹² The first section in his *Encyclopedia* is entitled "Designs for Labourer's and Mechanics Cottages, and for Dwellings for Gardeners and Baliffs, and other Upper Servants, and for Small Farmers and Cultivators of Their Own Land."¹³ The idea was to provide the lower classes with designs that would give convenience and comfort at a low cost and yet be esthetically pleasing through their unpretentious picturesqueness. For those of more advanced means, designs for villas "in different styles of architecture"—English, Grecian, Italian, Gothic, etc.—were also included. Although many of these villas are quite elaborate the emphasis remained on sound construction and practical, convenient spatial arrangements and decorations. In writing of furnishings Lou-

don made a distinction between what was suitable for cottages (cottage furniture) (Frontispiece) and what was desirable in villas. The "villa" furniture is, of course, more elaborate and made of more costly woods but surprisingly the chair designs in the two sections are quite similar in design.

Loudon's American disciple was the architect Andrew Jackson Downing. Also in revolt against the pervasive Greek Revival style, Downing quickly adopted Loudon's tenets and wrote emphatically on the merits of simplicity, naturalness, and sound construction. (Fig. 1.) In *The Architecture of Country Houses*, first published in 1851, Downing writes:

We have been most anxious to give designs for cheap cottages. There are tens of thousands of working-men in this country, who now wish to give something of beauty and interest to the simple forms of cottage life; there are many of these who are desirous to have their home of three rooms tasteful and expressive, no less than among those whose dwellings number thirty rooms.⁴

Downing's sense of the intrinsic value of the lower classes and their equal humanity echoes a passage of Loudon's in the *Encyclopedia* on the subject of kitchen dressers:

The dresser may be called the cottager's side-board, and in the dining-rooms of the first nobleman's houses in Britain, the splendid mahogany sideboards, set out with gold and silver plate, differ only in the costliness of the materials employed from the cottage dresser; nor do the essentials of human food differ more in the palace and in the cottage than the furniture; for in Britain and America at least, good meat, good bread, and good potatoes are the main dishes on all tables, and may be obtained by the workman who has good wages and full employment, as well as by the wealthy merchant or hereditary aristocrat.⁵

The interestingly progressive social consciousness of the cottage movement is

DESIGN VIII.

FOR THE WEAVER'S COTTAGE.

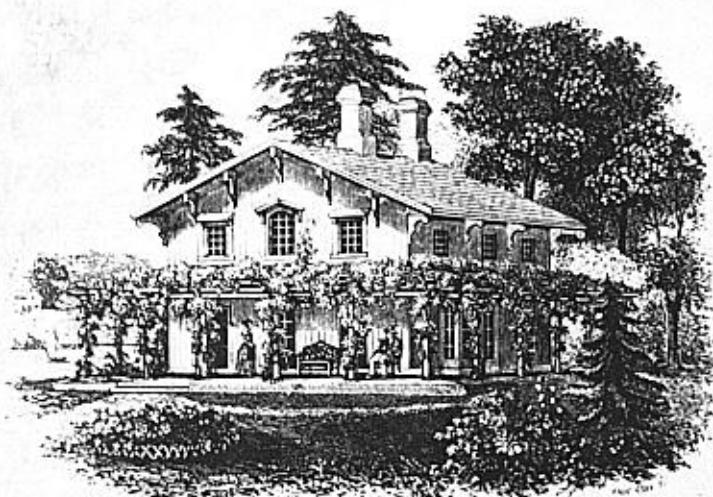


FIG. 37.

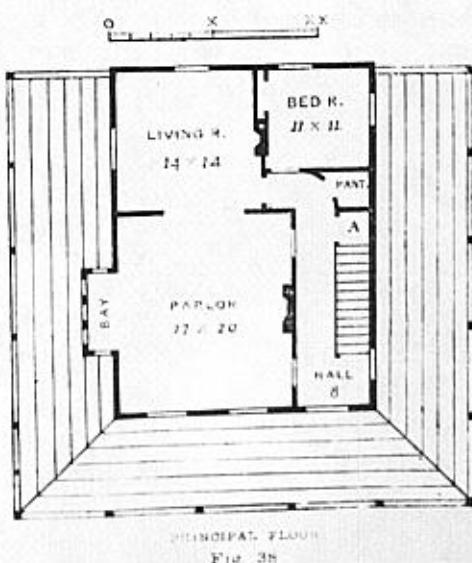
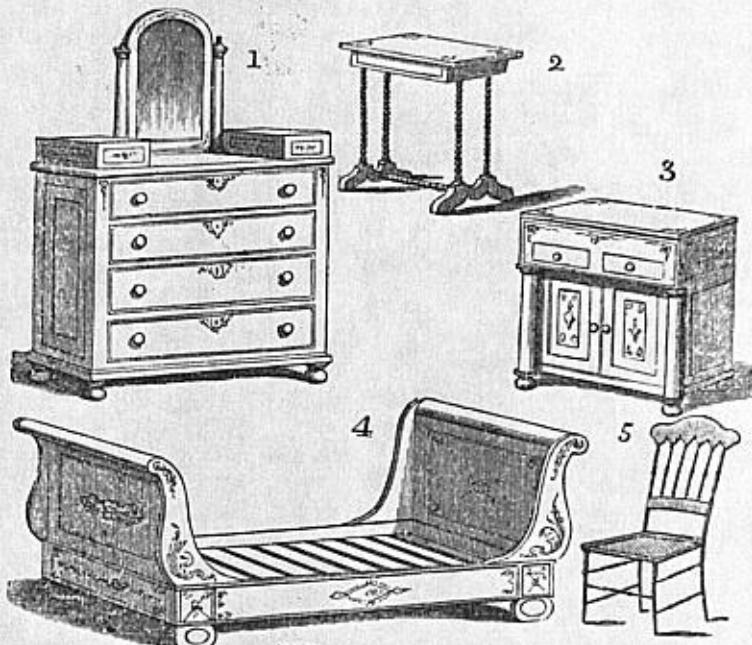


FIG. I. POPULAR "SWISS COTTAGE" FROM DOWNING'S
Architecture of Country Houses

we have seen none so excellent or cheap as that made at Hennessey's warehouse.



[Fig. 194.]

Fig. 194 shows one of these sets. It consists of

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. a dressing Bureau. | 2. a small Table. |
| 3. a Wash Sink. | 4. a French Bedstead. |
| 5. four Cottage Chairs. | |

This set, painted white, drab, or blue, is sold for \$37.

Another more complete set, in the same style, but intended for a larger bed-room, is shown in Fig. 195. This consists of

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. a Commode, or wash stand. | 2. a Bureau. |
| 3. a Zommo, or night-stand. | 4. a Bedstead. |
| 5. a Towel Stand. | 6. a small Table. |
| 7. four Cottage Chairs. | |

The price of this set, without marble tops, but highly

FIG. 2. "CHEAP, LIGHT FURNITURE FOR COTTAGES" AS ADVERTISED BY HENNESSEY OF BOSTON IN HIS FURNITURE WAREHOUSE CATALOG

well documented by the above passages.

Downing's attitude towards furnishings corresponds to his architectural theories. Criticizing the fact that "hitherto, the fashions of town houses have been implicitly followed everywhere in the country,"⁶ he described his preferred alternative:

The great desideratum in the furnishing of country houses is, that it should be essentially country-like—which, we think, is attained only when it unites taste, comfort, and durability in the greatest degree. It should be in correct taste, so as to harmonize with the house in which it is placed; it should be convenient and comfortable in the highest degree; and it should be substantially made, so as to unite durability with the capacity of being used without the fear of being spoiled by fulfilling its true purpose.⁷

In 1849 Downing complained that "it is as yet difficult to find such furniture"⁸ because the majority of contemporary furniture was in the "Parisian taste." He noted, however, that "Hennessey of Boston has already made a successful attempt in the manufacture of cheap, light furniture for cottages"⁹ and illustrated pages from Hennessey's catalog. (Fig. 2.) Downing described Hennessey's bedroom set as:

Remarkable for its combination of lightness and strength and its essentially cottage-like character. It is very highly finished, and is usually painted drab, white, gray, a delicate lilac, or a fine blue—the surface polished and hard, like enamel. Some of the better sets have groups of flowers or other designs painted upon them with artistic skill. When it is remembered that the whole set for a cottage bedroom may be had for the price of a single wardrobe in mahogany, it will be seen how comparatively cheap it is.¹⁰

This, then, is the appeal of cottage furniture—inexpensiveness, lightness and delicacy of design, strength (through sound construction), and tasteful suitability. The cottage furniture style was

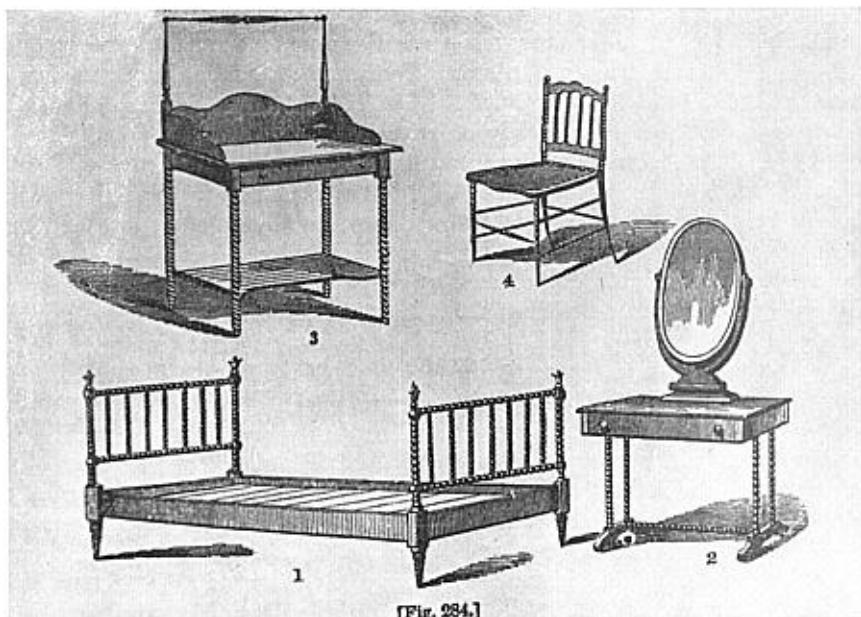
particularly successful in chair design and chairs in the style could easily be mass produced through the use of the lathe. Most cottage chairs consist almost entirely of turned parts (the legs, stiles, and spindles) which could be quickly and easily formed on a lathe and then assembled with dowels, screws, nails, and glue. The seats were almost universally caned or rush. Varieties of style were achieved by differing the turnings of the legs and stiles and by changing the design of the back. If the chairs were made of inexpensive woods like beech, maple, or oak they were usually painted and decorated with hand or stencil paintings of fruits and flowers. Chairs made of black walnut or mahogany were usually varnished.

Cottage chairs were produced in an incredibly large number of designs. In White's most profitable period he was manufacturing about seventy different types of chairs in walnut, oak, and maple, including parlor, dining, nursery, and library chairs. In White's production there were four main categories of types offered: Grecian, a cottage creation suitable for the old Greek Revival houses and illustrated in Loudon's *Encyclopedia*. (Frontispiece.) Cottage, the regular sized turned chairs which could be purchased in a variety of styles suitable for the various types of cottages then popular; Nurse, chairs made with seats lower to the floor for the mother's ease in caring for her children (the name is derived from "nursery" or "nursing" but the type is similar to the eighteenth-century "slipper chair") and produced in all of the popular styles; and, Dining, chairs made in several different styles suitable for the dining room. Within each major category there were many variations of style offered. The elaborateness of the style and the woods used determined the

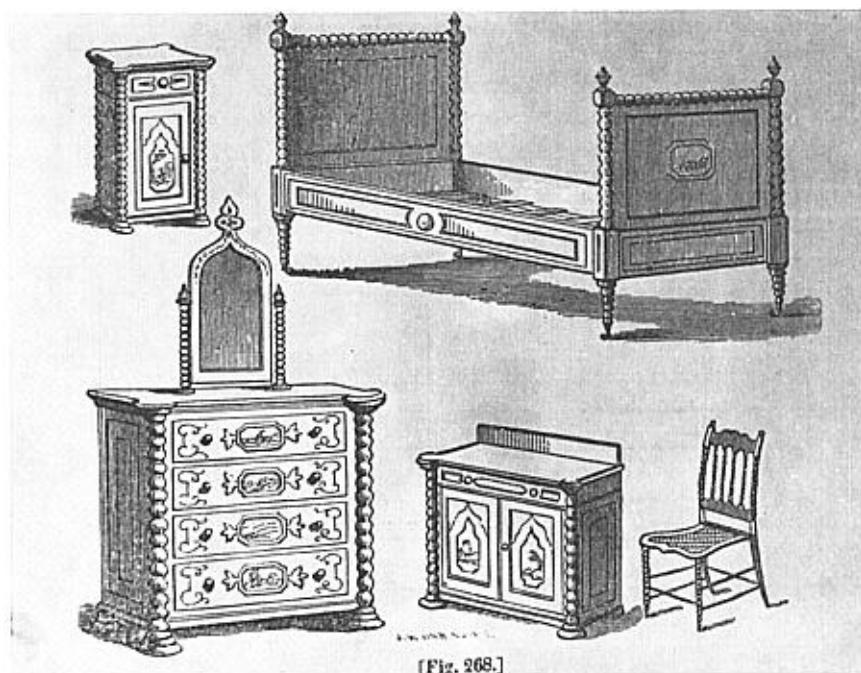
price, which ranged from extremely low to moderate. Compared to contemporary prices for "French style Drawing Room Furniture in the Antique style" (the heavily carved rococo rosewood pieces so popular at the time) which generally ran between \$25 and \$50 for a side chair, White's cottage furniture was extremely reasonable and "affordable for all." The following outline will give an overall picture of the product line of the White Chair Company:

	<i>Cost/dozen</i>
I. Grecian	
a. Maple Davis Grecian	\$12.50
b. Maple Spindle "	12.50
c. Maple Astor "	12.
d. Maple Common "	12.
e. Maple Serpentine "	12.50
f. Walnut Davis "	22.
g. Walnut Spindle "	16.50
h. Walnut Bell "	18.
i. Oak Bell "	16.
II. Cottage	
a. Maple parlor Cottage	10.
b. Maple plain Swiss "	21.
c. Maple carved Swiss "	23.
d. Maple Rival "	10.
e. Oak Parlor "	12.
f. Oak plain Swiss "	28.
g. Oak carved Swiss "	30.
h. Maple Franklin "	21.
i. Oak Franklin "	23.
j. Walnut Franklin "	28.
k. Walnut plain Swiss "	33.
l. Walnut carved Swiss "	35.
m. Walnut Monitor "	36.
n. Walnut Leaf "	36.
o. Walnut English "	36.
p. Walnut Italian "	29.
q. Walnut Bell "	17.
r. Maple English "	22.
s. Oak English "	24.
t. Walnut French "	62.
u. Walnut Medallion "	56.
v. Walnut Shell "	70.
w. Walnut York "	60.
III. Nurse	
a. Maple C.B. Nurse	28.
b. Oak C.B. "	30.
c. Maple Franklin "	34.
d. Oak Franklin "	42.
e. Maple Spindle "	22.
f. Oak Parlor "	23.
g. Maple Common "	24.
h. Oak common "	26.
i. Walnut Common "	30.
j. Walnut Franklin "	68.
k. Oak plain Brace Arm "	48.
l. Oak carved " "	56.
m. Walnut plain "	56.
n. Walnut carved "	64.
o. Oak plain Swiss Nurse	48.
p. Oak carved "	52.
q. Walnut plain "	52.
r. Walnut carved "	56.
s. Oak Medallion "	64.
t. Walnut Medallion "	66.
u. Walnut French "	70.
v. Walnut Leaf "	66.
w. Walnut Ellis "	64.
x. Walnut Shell "	114.
y. Walnut York "	70.
IV. Dining	
a. Maple Lady Dining	16.
b. Oak Lady "	18.
c. Walnut Lady "	30.
d. Oak York "	44.
e. Walnut York "	46.
f. Walnut Star "	50.
g. Walnut Crosby "	66.
h. Walnut Ellis "	64.
V. Rockers	
a. Common	38.
b. Cane back	38.
VI. Library	
a. Walnut Swivel Library	64.
b. Walnut patent Spring	118.
c. Walnut York Library	58.
d. Oak Douglass Office	25.

Since no chairs produced by the White Company have been identified, and since almost nothing has been written on the subject of cottage furniture, it is impossible to determine the appearance of these variously styled chairs. The Grecian chairs are the most readily identifiable as such chairs were copiously illustrated in Loudon's *Encyclopedia*. (Frontispiece.) An advertisement published by the Oswego Chair Factory of Oswego, New York in 1853 shows other Grecian chairs of this type. The term "Davis Grecian"



[Fig. 284.]



[Fig. 268.]

FIG. 3. DOWNING'S "SWISS" STYLE FURNITURE

certainly refers to the well-known architect A. J. Davis and the term "Astor Grecian" refers to a style of chair known to be popular with the Astor family of New York. The extremely popular "Swiss Cottage" chairs were designed to harmonize with the Swiss cottages designed by Loudon and Downing (Fig. 1), and two sets of furniture illustrated by Downing are described as being "of Swiss origin . . . particularly well suited to cheap cottages and farm-houses in the Bracketed style."¹¹ (Fig. 3.) The chairs in each seem to be characterized by twist turnings and a spindle back and are similar to a group of chairs appearing in Loudon's *Encyclopedia*. Undoubtedly White's Swiss cottage chairs were similar to these published designs. The "medallion" cottage and "medallion" nurse chairs probably had a carved medallion in the center of the backs in place of spindles or slats and may have been similar to certain chairs illustrated by Loudon. The French cottage and French nurse chairs must have had certain rococo features and may have resembled the French-style chairs shown in Downing. Their high cost indicates that they were more elaborate in design and decoration than most of the other types of chairs. This is also true of the medallion chairs. The "English" chairs were probably Gothicized; for some reason they were not particularly popular. The meaning of "Franklin"-style chairs remains obscure (it may be a reference to Benjamin Franklin), but judging from their relatively moderate cost and great popularity they may have resembled the Swiss-style cottage chair. The "Leaf," "Shell," and "Bell" chairs obviously had decoration of that type, but I have no insight into the appearance of the "York" cottage, nurse, and dining chairs or the extremely popular "Lady" dining chairs.

The production and sales of the White Company gradually increased from a first month's sales figure of \$930 to a record high in May, 1868 of \$18,556. Average monthly sales ranged between \$3,000 to \$6,000 in the slower months to between \$8,000 and \$12,000 in good months (March, April, May, and October, November). The production capacity of the company seems incredibly high. In a typical month of high sales like October, 1867 a total of 398 dozen, or 4,776 chairs, were sold for \$12,543. The most popular types of chairs were the cottage chairs whose sales totaled 135 dozen. Among the most preferred cottage chairs were the walnut plain Swiss cottage (28 dozen sold), the walnut carved Swiss cottage (11 dozen sold), the walnut Franklin cottage (22 dozen sold), the maple Parlor cottage (11 dozen sold), the oak Parlor cottage (8 dozen sold), and the oak plain Swiss cottage (9 dozen sold). Also extremely popular were the maple Davis Grecian (10 dozen sold), the maple Spindle Grecian (18 dozen sold), and the maple Astor Grecian (14 dozen sold). Sales of Grecian chairs totaled 78½ dozen in October, 1867. Undoubtedly the maple Grecian chairs owed their great popularity to their extremely low cost of from \$12 to \$14 a dozen. The most successful single chair was the oak Lady dining chair which was reasonably priced at \$18 to \$20 a dozen for the "plain" chairs and about \$30 a dozen for the carved versions. In October, 1867, 56 dozen oak Lady dining chairs were sold. Dining chairs must have been popular items in all forms as in this month 20 dozen walnut plain Lady dining chairs and 14 dozen walnut carved Lady dining chairs were sold. The more expensive dining chairs sold less well but the total sales of dining chairs in October was 117½ dozen. The least

popular line of chairs were the specialized nurse chairs, of which only $57\frac{1}{2}$ dozen were sold in October, 1867. Of the nurse chairs the most favored design was the walnut carved brace arm nurse costing \$64 a dozen. Sales of this particular chair totaled 9 dozen in October. The next successful nurse chair was the medallion nurse which had sales of $5\frac{1}{2}$ dozen.

It can be seen that the most popular chairs produced by the White Company were their less expensive models. The more elaborate chairs which sold for \$50 to \$70 a dozen seldom sold more than one to three dozen a month. The uniformly costly nurse chairs were also not large volume sellers. Undoubtedly the popular Lady dining chairs, the Swiss and Franklin cottage chairs, and the various types of Grecian chairs fulfilled well Downing's requirements for suitable cottage furniture. Although White produced chairs probably more elegant than the cottage ideal, they did not sell well. The public determined which styles best suited their needs and in so doing reinforced the cottage character of White's business. It can be said, in fact, that the L. White Chair Company represented the ideal manufacturer spoken of by Downing—a man who produced good quality, inexpensive and well-designed chairs that would fit harmoniously into contemporary interiors. The tremendous sales volume of White's chairs indicates that the public was thoroughly appreciative of his consideration and was as eager as Downing anticipated to be offered an "eminently sensible" product.

PART II—*Company Operations*

The internal operations of the White Company reveal much regarding the running of a medium-sized business in mid-century Boston. The cash book lists the daily expenses of the company from

its inception in January, 1864 to its demise in December, 1869. The expenditures consisted of payments for materials, rent (about \$150 a month), gas, and the weekly payroll. Of course, the cost of the raw materials of chair making was White's greatest expense. He purchased the lumber needed from several different dealers located both in and outside of Boston. Owen Bearse and Clark and Leatherbee of Boston, G. W. Merrill and Thomas Bemis of Bangor, Maine, and A. J. Roberts of New Hampshire each supplied White with several thousand dollars' worth of lumber a year. Cyrus Wakefield of 33 Fulton Street, Boston and the American Rattan Company of Fitchburg sold White the majority of the cane and rattan needed for chair seats, but occasionally he also purchased cane and cottage chair seats from the Blind Institute of Boston. His saws came primarily from the firm of Charles Griffiths & Co. of 48 Congress Street, Boston and his hardware supplies—nails, screws, files, bolts, etc.—from A. S. Haven located at 503 Washington Street. White's furniture-making tools, such as awls, lathe knives, and planes came from the Boston dealer A. J. Wilkinson and the all-important lathes were supplied by the firm of C. Greenwood.

The payrolls of the White Company advanced markedly over the six years of operations. As no figures are available as to the number of employees in the company it is impossible to determine the actual individual average wage. It is possible, however, to estimate this figure. According to the 1876 report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, chair makers in Boston were paid the following weekly wages: stock turners about \$12; sawyers about \$20; finishers about \$11; cane seaters from \$1.80 to \$3.00; and "undesignated" workers

about \$12.¹² Combining these weekly figures to obtain a rough average of about \$11.50 a week per worker, and assuming that the wages paid in 1876 were not markedly different from those paid in 1866, it would seem that White had only about ten employees during the first months of operation as his weekly payroll for March, 1864 totaled only \$200. As the demand for White chairs increased additional workers were hired, thus creating a higher payroll figure. In the peak operating period of late 1867 wages usually totaled about \$650 a week, thus indicating that now the company employed close to sixty-five workers. By December, 1868 the weekly payroll had risen to an average of \$700. Although this increase may represent additional workers it is more likely that White raised individual wages somewhat during profitable periods. He even took the trouble to give his employees a Christmas bonus as on December 31, 1868, when the payroll was \$1,064.

It is difficult to determine the exact profitability of the L. White Chair Company. In January, 1865 profits of \$3,000 were left in the company account after the expenses and payroll of a year of operations had been paid. By January, 1866 this profit figure had risen to \$7,000. As the total sales for that year were \$64,480 the profits represented about 11 percent of the sales. The year 1866 was not a profitable one for the company. Although sales totaled \$85,000, high expenses created a loss of \$4,000. The record sales year of 1867 resulted in profits of \$6,500, or 6 percent of the \$107,732 sales. The profit figure for 1868 was not given. Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine how much money the company actually made in these years because the sums L. White himself extracted are not recorded.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that the chair company was not a big money-maker. Its products were well received and enjoyed a tremendous sales volume but were not items that generated large profits.

The L. White Chair Company ceased operations in December, 1869. During the last months of 1869 furniture production was sharply curtailed and no lumber was purchased after September 30. The working staff was so thoroughly cut back at this time that the weekly payroll in the last three months dropped to an astonishing \$28. It seems as though Hayley, Morse, and Boyden's chair-producing company had outlived its usefulness.

PART III—*Customers*

The White Chair Company had customers throughout New England, the East coast, and the Middle West. In the first year of business customers outside of Boston were limited primarily to Baltimore, Washington, and Philadelphia, and to towns in Massachusetts and Maine. By mid-1865 the company boasted customers in Chicago, Ohio, Indianapolis, and upper-state New York. In June, 1865 28 percent of the company's business was conducted with out-of-Boston buyers. Of that 28 percent, one-third of the business went to the Philadelphia-Baltimore area, one-third to New England, and one-third to the Middle West. By September of 1866 the percentage of out-of-town customers had risen to 47 percent and in October, 1867 to 58 percent.¹³ At this time the value of business with New England and the Middle-West was about equal but the Philadelphia-Baltimore trade had slipped to third position. Although the number of customers in New England, Philadelphia, and Baltimore remained relatively constant, with certain large dealers in each city providing most of the business,¹⁴

the Middle-Western clientele quintupled in size during the period 1866-1868. Over these three years White sold chairs to 124 different dealers from Denver City, Colorado to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Of course, the largest percentage of sales went to the large city dealers in Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and Binghamton who bought \$100 or more worth of chairs every month.¹⁵ But the small shop owners in frontier towns like Ottawa, Illinois or Lafayette, Indiana, who bought just a few dozen White chairs, still managed to help spread the cottage style throughout the Middle West.

White's Boston customers consisted of both furniture dealers and furniture manufacturers. Seventy-seven different firms patronized White in Boston during his business years. The manufacturers often purchased cottage chairs from White to supplement their more elegant inventory, as in the case of E. A. Smallwood who produced mostly fashionable French furniture or to increase their stock of cottage furniture, as in the case of A. S. Hodge & Co. "manufacturers of cane seat chairs." As mentioned previously the White Company was financially supported by the large Boston furniture manufacturer and dealer Hayley, Morse, and Boyden, located at 407 Washington Street. This firm seems to have offered a wide variety of furniture from fashionable rosewood sets to oak and painted suites of "chamber furniture." Their production was aimed at both local and Western consumption and they advertised that they paid particular attention to "safety in transportation." Undoubtedly the L. White Company provided Hayley, Morse, and Boyden with the majority of the cottage chairs that they sold; in fact, Hayley, Morse, and Boyden was White's largest Boston customer.

Other Boston furniture dealers who purchased large quantities of chairs from White include W. K. Bacall & Son of 609 Washington Street, Beal and Hooper of Haymarket Square, Buckley and Bancroft of 95 Beach Street, Daniels, Kendall & Co. of 25 Sudbury Street, H. R. and J. L. Plimpton of 652 Washington Street, Russell and Phelps of 19 Brattle Street, G. W. Stevens of 601 Washington Street, Sawyer, Thompson, and Perley of 159 Fulton Street, Sidney, Squire & Co. of 575 Washington Street, and Geo. R. Sneaden of 567 Washington Street.

Although the dealers in the Middle West and in rural areas of New England occasionally purchased White's more expensive chairs, they generally bought large quantities of the popular Grecian, dining, and Swiss cottage chairs. It is significant that in the first year and a half of operations, when White was selling primarily to Boston dealers, a much larger proportion of the medallion, French, and nurse chairs were sold than in later years. By October, 1867, when 58 percent of White's business was outside of Boston, only a few dozen of these expensive chair types were sold in contrast to the mammoth sales of the less expensive varieties. One is tempted to make judgments here on the taste of rural and Western America—that Hugh Alexander's customers in Chicago or George Burrough's in Portland were more concerned about cheapness and practicality than their Boston counterparts. Certainly more maple and oak furniture was sold in these areas than in Boston where customers seemed to prefer walnut furniture. Also the more elaborate chairs had something of a market in Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore but almost none outside of these cities. If the White Company had continued in existence, orders from such

burgeoning Middle-Western cities as Chicago and Cleveland may have reflected an increased sophistication and standard of living. But that is not really the issue. The White Company is interesting because it *did* provide goods suitable to the taste of rural and middle-class urban America; because it responded to Downing's challenge that furniture should be designed specifically for "country houses" and not merely copied from fashionable town-house furniture. The White chairs were designed and sold in an age which was becoming increasingly concerned about the taste of the masses.

Although Downing was somewhat motivated by his desire to provide families of low income with practical furniture that they could afford, his real concern was with improving the "taste" of Americans of all income levels. He recommended "tasteful, country-like furniture" both for cottages and for large

country houses, protesting "against the display" of extravagance in the country "whatever the ability to pay for it, as not only in bad taste, but out of keeping with the comparative simplicity and ease of manners which ought to characterize rural life."¹⁶ Downing's ethos was submerged for two generations beneath the extravagances of Richard Morris Hunt and the furniture maker John Henry Belter. Although simple furniture makers like White continued to practice Downing's dictums, the cause of improving the taste of the masses in America did not really rise again until Edward Bok began his crusade in the *Ladies Home Journal* in 1895. Like Downing he was hoping that his suggestions to the less affluent would rub off on the real offenders. In the process, however, he managed to "give largely to the ease and comfort of the labouring mass,"¹⁷ in the best tradition of A. J. Downing and J. C. Loudon.

NOTES

¹ J. C. Loudon, *An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, London, p. v.

² *Ibid.*, p. vi.

³ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

⁴ A. J. Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, New York, 1865, p. 71.

⁵ Loudon, p. 294.

⁶ Downing, p. 409.

⁷ Downing, p. 410.

⁸ Downing, p. 410.

⁹ Downing, p. 410.

¹⁰ Downing, p. 415.

¹¹ Downing, p. 452.

¹² Bureau of the Statistics of Labor, Public Document No. 31, March, 1876.

¹³ These figures were obtained by totaling the amount of individual purchases by New England, Western, and Philadelphia-Baltimore customers and comparing these figures to the total monthly sales.

¹⁴ The major dealers in Baltimore were O. L. and A. Mathiot, S. S. Stevens and Son, J. E. Phillips, and A. H. Pfeiffer; in Philadelphia, Marcus Davis, Richmond and Forepaugh,

Peckham and Cowee, F. Gotleib & Bros., and J. H. Wisler; in Massachusetts, John D. Chollar of Worcester, Maxfield and Kellogg of Springfield, A. S. Hoard of Taunton, Caleb Maxfield of New Bedford, and J. Pillsbury, Jr. of Lawrence; in Rhode Island, Curry and Richards, Potter, Dennison & Co., Cargill and Stevens, and Mitchell Magoon & Co. all of Providence, J. L. and G. A. Hazard of Newport, Herrick Fifield and Wm. B. Read of Pawtucket; in Maine, Walter Corey, G. R. Burroughs, and Charles Whittemore of Portland, and G. W. Merrill of Bangor (who also sold lumber to White).

¹⁵ The major dealers in Chicago were Hugh Alexander, Jacob Biersdorf, W. W. Strong, and Gilbert & Sampson; in Cleveland, Hart, Malone & Co., and Vincent & Sturm; in Pittsburgh, Douler, Close & Co. and Fulton, Hopper & Co.; in Detroit, J. W. Tillman & Co.; in Milwaukee, Fleck and Schwaab and G. W. Guettler; in Indianapolis, J. & E. W. Ross; and in Binghamton, J. H. Parsons and Elliott & Wheeler.

¹⁶ Downing, p. 411.

¹⁷ Russell Lynes, *The Tastemakers*, New York, 1954, p. 179.