

# Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*

## Museum Charts Changing Bedroom Furniture Styles From 1650-1930

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**NEW MARKET, Va.** — At the Bedrooms of America museum located at 9386 Congress Street in the Lee-Jackson Building, bedroom furniture circa 1620-1920 is featured in 11 separate bedrooms.

The arrangements of authentic furniture depict periods and styles in American history and are accessorized with suitable bed coverings and wall coverings.

While the periods of furniture styles in America cannot be precisely pinpointed to the exact beginning and ending date in each, approximate dates have been established through research.

The dates are recorded on the wall beside each bedroom door, along with a condensed history about the furniture styles.

From the landing of the Pilgrims until approximately 1800, English furniture styles were used by the majority of early American settlers, who, after all, were still English subjects upon reaching opposite Atlantic Ocean shores. Furniture from the land of their nativity accompanied them. In later years, however, cabinetmakers devised variations of English styles.

Starting with William and Mary furniture, the trumpet and inverted cup turnings are notable characteristics on the legs of highboys, lowboys and tables.

Silk and satin coverings of bed frames were additions that hid bedsteads with a flowing regality, since William and Mary were the King and Queen of England. The period spanned 1689-1702 in England but lasted longer than

that after its influence reached the colonies.

Queen Mary was a daughter of James the Second. She had a sister, Queen Anne who also had a furniture-style period named after her.

Although the Queen Anne room was restricted owing to renovations, the Queen Anne period was approximately 1745-1750. People favored the curved lines of Queen Anne, which gave the furniture greater elegance as opposed to the formal lines of William and Mary. Not only did the cabriole legs add grace to Queen Anne furniture, but also the rich mahogany wood. At the time mahogany was the principal wood and used increasingly, during the Queen Anne period.

From 1755-1785 was the period of Chippendale when the prevailing style was of consummate craftsman, Thomas Chippendale. Chippendale furniture featured the claw foot and the O-G foot. His furniture earned the reputation of being the finest ever made.

It is said Thomas Chippendale's name by general consent has been attached to the most splendid period of English furniture.

Meanwhile, George Hepplewhite was hard at work in London. His furniture in England rose to greatest popularity between 1780-1792.

In America, however, the style flourished around 1800, after the Revolutionary War. Hepplewhite furniture was lighter than the heavier Chippendale pieces and often had long graceful legs.

Thomas Sheraton was called

"A champion of the straight line." Like Hepplewhite, he used inlay freely. Furniture called "Later Sheraton" have simple turned legs, notably on chests and stands. The Sheraton style in America was between 1795 and 1815.

Sheraton's work was so respected that he was regarded second only to Thomas Chippendale.

From approximately 1805 to 1840 the "Empire" period developed from French and English styles. It continued to the enduring Victorian period which spanned the years 1837 to 1901 and is sometimes considered to have had three parts.

The beginning Victorian was 1837 to 1850, mid-Victorian was 1850 to 1875 and late-Victorian, 1875 to 1901.

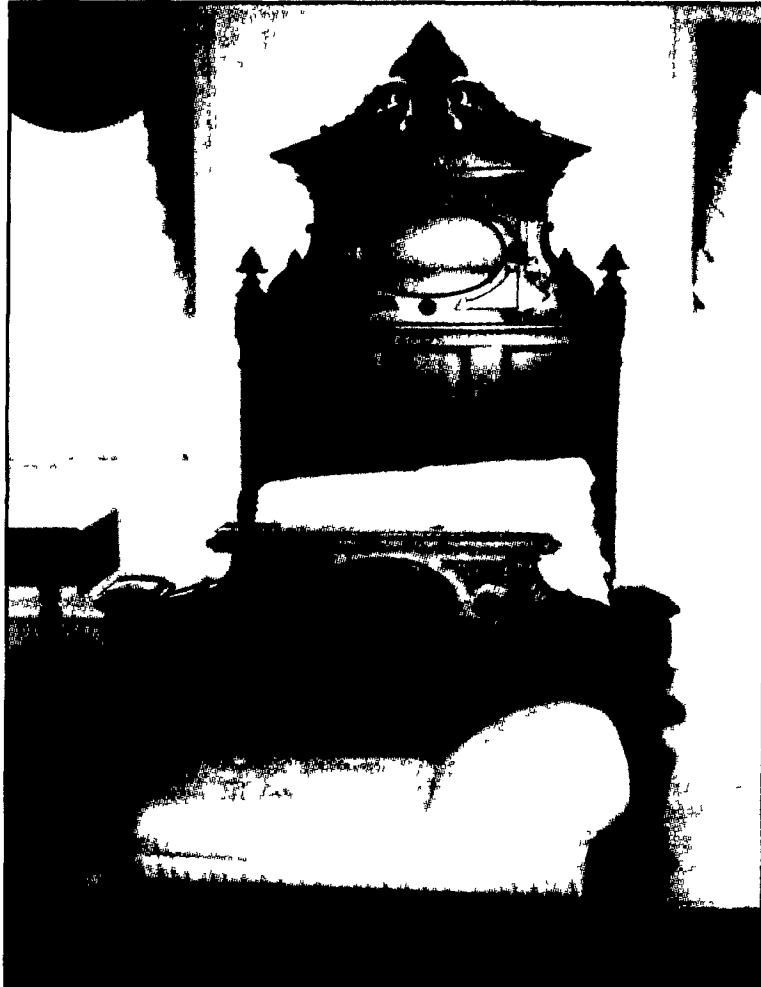
The enormous and airy Victorian bedroom furniture is a strong favorite of museum visitors.

The beds huge headboard and matching classic dresser dominate the high-ceilinged, airy apartment. Both pieces are mid-Victorian (1860 to 1870). The arrangement of furniture overall is combined to reflect parts of the entire Victorian era.

After mass production in American factories began, cottage furniture became popular.

The bedroom sets were painted and stenciled to reflect happy times as evidenced in the cheerful cottage room.

The comfortable Country Room is a depiction of homey furniture from no particular period. Most of the pieces were made on the farm or by a friendly



The massive bed is displayed in the popular Victorian bedroom.

neighbor who also happened to be a good carpenter.

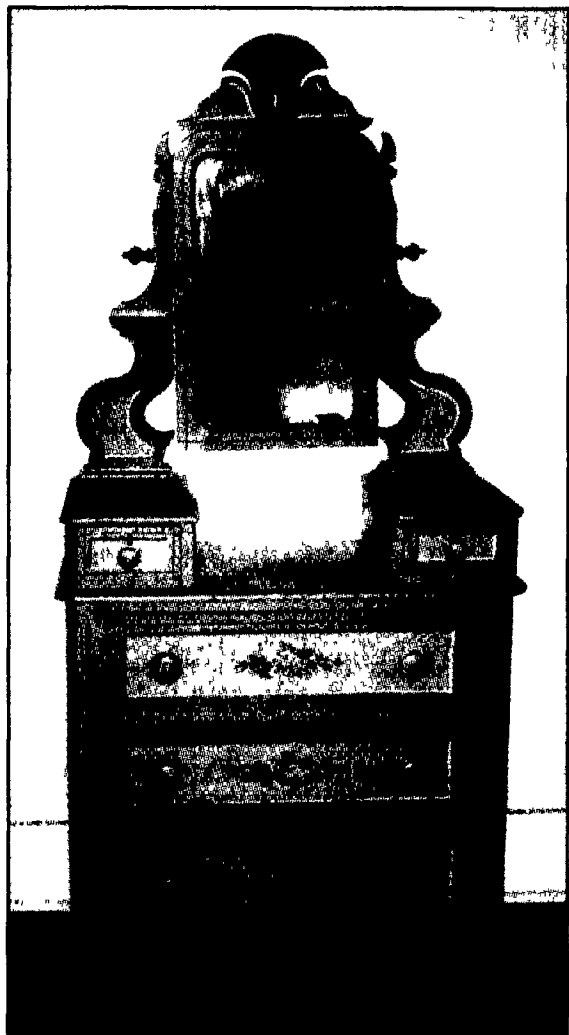
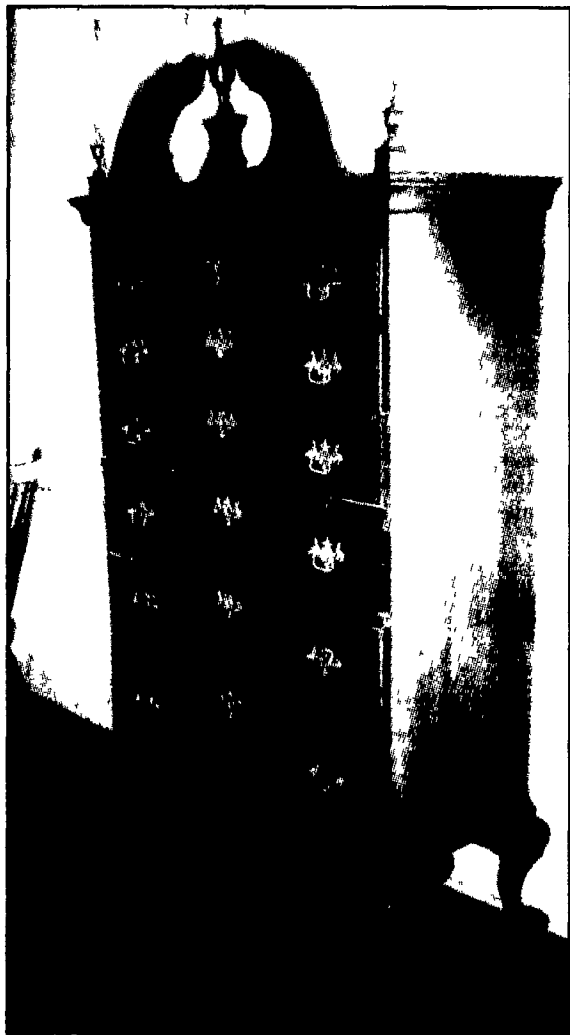
Mass production brought in the Art Deco period when the bulk of furniture was manufactured in Grand Rapids, Michigan and sold by firms like Sears Roebuck. During the Great Depression, furniture was constructed with cheap veneers and laminated.

The bedrooms, themselves are found on the second floor of the imposing Lee-Jackson building. An interesting staircase curves at the top landing, providing the option of turning right or left to access the various displays. Another set of stairs with 17 steps exits down again.

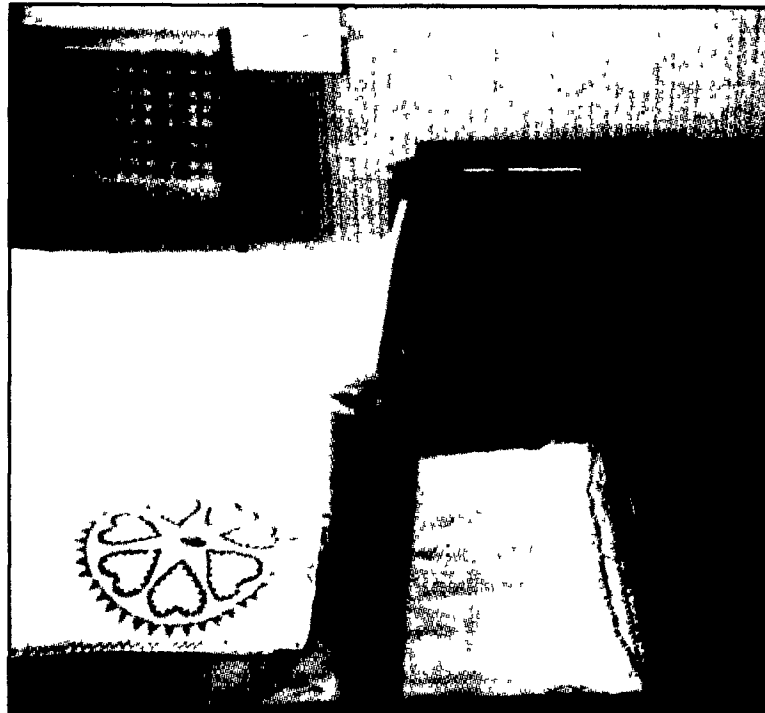
Owner Benny Long, a native of New Market who has worked with antiques for decades, said when the 18th century structures existence was threatened with plans for demolition 20 years ago, he decided to purchase and restore it for historical preservation.

It had been built in three stages, the first part in 1765, then 1880, and in 1910.

Long believes Bedrooms of America is the nation's most unique concept in antique museums because it shows how furniture styles and tastes have changed through the passage of time.



The William and Mary bedroom highboy, left, is notable for legs with turnings shaped like a trumpet or an inverted cup. At right, cottage furniture was notable for bedroom sets painted and stenciled such as this piece.



Country furniture was often made on the farm or by a neighbor skilled in carpentry.