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IN
STORAGE

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE,
CINCINNATI, OHIO

FURNISHING PLAN

prepared by
Sarah Olson
under contract
No. CX-1100-5-0141

ON MICROFILM

B&W Scans

10/26/2005

Introductory Comments

The following furnishing plan is submitted in fulfillment of Contract No. CX-1100-5-0141. Part E of the plan includes a descriptive list of recommended furnishings, together with floor plans, elevations, and illustrations. Recommendations for the installation, protection, and maintenance of furnishings are encompassed in Part F.

While the Taft house is to be refurnished to the 1861-1877 period, most of the documentation and, therefore, many of the recommended furnishings date to the 1850's.

The only items in the William Howard Taft National Historic Site collection (formerly the William Howard Taft Memorial Association Collection) that can be traced to the 1861-1877 house are three oil portraits. However, this plan attempts to include every item from the collection deemed suitable to the refurnished house.

Acquisition of the recommended furnishings should be conducted with a strong bias toward Cincinnati furniture makers, with secondary consideration given to furniture makers in surrounding areas. Appendix A constitutes a list of furniture makers operating in Cincinnati at the mid-19th century.

SECTION E

Hall--Room Use

The early Victorian hallway served as nothing more than a passageway to something better, beyond, and, therefore, it received little decorative attention. No references were made by the Taft family to hallway furniture. During the early 1860's the Taft hall was apparently not even heated as, upon the installation of central heating in 1866, Louise Taft remarked that she no longer had to keep the hallway doors closed.

Hall--Furnishings

striped wallpaper, Rococo Revival, in green,
red, and white

reproduction

ingrain, 3-ply carpeting, in green, red,
and white

reproduction

ingrain, fringed mat

reproduction

console mirror, Renaissance Revival

antique
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)

The hall was papered in 1855. Wide-striped paper, decorated with scrollwork and flowers is invariably the type of wall-paper seen in illustrated interiors from the period. The hallway paper will be reproduced according to the inexpensive, machine-made example, in green, red, and white, featured in Antiques, 102 (December, 1972), 1050, Pl. III. The latter was found in a Dodge, Massachusetts house.

In 1861, there were mats in the hallway, as Alphonso Taft reported to his absent wife that cold weather had resulted in the family dog taking over one of the hallway mats. And some of the 3-ply, ingrain carpeting purchased in 1876 may have been used in the hall (perhaps in addition to mats).

Ingrain carpeting was napless and, therefore, reversible, making it ideal for heavily traveled areas such as stairways. Pictorial examples of ingrain carpeting are rare. A large, bordered, floral design ingrain carpet is illustrated in Weeks and Treganowan, Rugs and Carpets of Europe and the Western World, p. 211¹; and the Meerkland Ingrain Carpet Loom, exhibited at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial, is illustrated complete with a diamond-shaped, floral patterned rug in the December 16, 1876 issue of Harper's Weekly.

1. Jeanne G. Weeks and Donald Treganowan, Rugs and Carpets of Europe and the Western World (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1969).

Like the wallpaper, the hallway carpeting will be reproduced in shades of green, red, and white. It will extend to within six inches of the wall and stair edges, and the stairway carpeting will be held in place with brass rods such as are illustrated in the 1842 oil, Schuyler Ogden and his Sister, reproduced in Harold Peterson's Americans at Home, Pl. 66.²

A fringed mat, duplicating the hallway ingrain, should be placed at the foot of the stairs.

Furniture in Victorian halls was usually limited to an etagere or console mirror and, occasionally, a Gothic side chair. The only item of furniture in the refurnished hall is the console mirror in the collection of the William H. Taft NHS (figure 2, acc. #'s 027, 028, 029, the mirror consists of three separate pieces). While I was unable to find an exact duplicate of this mirror, it is similar to the Renaissance Revival console mirror illustrated in Celia J. Otto's American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, fig. 391.³ The Taft collection mirror is framed in walnut, with panels of burl walnut and hat or coat hooks on either side of the frame. A cabinet and single drawer, topped with pink Italian

2. Harold L. Peterson, Americans at Home (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971).

3. Celia Jackson Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century (New York: The Viking Press, 1965).

marble, fits onto the bottom of the mirror. The console
mirror will stand against the north wall of the hallway.

Parlor--Room Use

The Taft parlor appears to have conformed to the contemporary standard, serving primarily as a formal reception area. Louise Taft once mentioned entertaining 40 guests here, a staggering number considering the size of the parlor. Large groups such as this must have overlapped into the dining room.

Gaming, particularly euchre, and dancing were common forms of entertainment in the Taft parlor, the former generally to the exclusion of ladies. At one point Louise Taft even sponsored a dancing school for her sons.

Family birthdays were generally celebrated with great ceremony. Upon Charles Taft's 21st birthday, 35 guests and three black fiddlers were invited into the parlor.

In 1874, the first meeting of the Mt. Auburn book club was held here. It was attended by 26 residents of the area. A decade earlier another literary club had its inaugural meeting here, with 36 guests listening to Shakespeare's The Tempest. Doubtless, there were other community meetings held in the Taft parlor.

The parlor was also the site of family funerals, including, during the 1861-1877 period, those of Grandpa and Grandma Taft.

The parlor saw some more casual use by members of the Taft family. Louise Taft spent many hours here playing the piano, especially during the early years of her marriage. Alphonso Taft probably spent some of his evenings in the parlor. While there was a library across the hall, reference was made in 1861 to Alphonso's table and books being set up in the parlor. And, at times, the entire family gathered here for the nightly sessions of reading, helping the children with their lessons, letter writing, and playing euchre and chess. The upstairs sitting room, however, was probably better suited to this everyday function.

Parlor--Furnishings

visitor barrier

Brussels carpeting in a large bordered floral design, green, red, and white

reproduction

hearth-rug, red and white (winter only)

reproduction

striped wallpaper, Rococo Revival, in green, red, and white

reproduction

venetian blinds with carved boxings, painted green, and figured damask valences

reproduction

The visitor barrier will enclose an area just inside the parlor door of approximately three feet by seven feet.

While limited access to the parlor is necessitated by the many portable items in the room, this is also one means in which to point up the fact that Victorian parlors were off limits for rough-and-tumble, everyday use.

Rather than blending into the historical interior, the barrier should remain distinct from the parlor furnishings. An unobtrusive, modern installation will serve this purpose.

Louise Taft's taste in color must have leaned toward the dark side as, in 1877, a renter wanted to lighten the walls of the house with new paper. Certainly, dark appointments were the fashion of the day and the effect was further intensified with the dense floral patterns popular at the time. Favorite mid-century colors consisted of "arsenical" green and "harsh, bright" blue.⁴ The decorative scheme in the Taft parlor will be executed in shades of "arsenical" green, red, and white.

There is one extant photograph believed to have been taken within the Taft house (figure 1). It dates from approximately 1866 and is inscribed on the reverse side, "William Howard Taft, Mt. Auburn". While the chair and hassock pictured appear to be photographer's props, the carpet is probably the "splendid Brussels" purchased in 1861 for \$1.40 a yard.

4. Catherine L. Frangiamore, "Wallpapers Used in Nineteenth-Century America," Antiques, 102 (December, 1972), 1044.

Although the Tafts purchased additional Brussels carpeting in 1876, the refurnished parlor carpeting will be reproduced according to the earlier, photographically documented example.

The carpeting pictured in figure 1 is woven in a standard Brussels pattern consisting of large, bordered floral figures. As it is not rendered in sufficient detail for reproduction, it will be necessary to refer to other Brussels carpets of similar design. These are the carpets in the Hanby House, in Westerville, Ohio;⁵ and in the work entitled Rosa Heywood, in Americans at Home, Pl. 59. The Brussels carpets illustrated in the catalogue of the 1851 London Crystal Palace Exhibition are excellent references for design detail.⁶ The latter are reproduced in figures 27 - 29.

The parlor carpeting will extend from wall-to-wall and should be reproduced according to mid-century practice, in two to three feet strips, sewn together.

Throw rugs were commonly placed in front of parlor sofas and fireplaces. The prototype for the hearth-rug is one executed in rose garlands that was exhibited at the London Crystal Palace (figure 26). During the summer months, the hearth-rug should be placed in front of the parlor sofa.

5. photograph, Hanby House Parlor, in photo archives, Cincinnati Historical Society.

6. John Gloag, F. S. A., Ed., The Crystal Palace Exhibition, republication of The Art-Journal Special Issue (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970).

The parlor was papered in 1853, and not again until after the fire of 1877 when the parlor was both papered and frescoed. The original wallpaper is not visible in the 1866 photograph.

Mid-century wallpapers commonly consisted of widely spaced stripes enclosing scrollwork and floral motifs. This type of paper can be seen in a lithograph, dating from circa 1865, of the interior of the Grant home, in Galena, Illinois (figure 2), and in countless other Victorian prints from the 1850's and 60's. The same pattern appears in the cheap, machine-made paper illustrated in Antiques, 102 (December, 1972), 1050, Pl. III. A reproduction of the latter wallpaper was called for in the hall, and the parlor wallpaper should be a higher quality version of the same paper.

Usually, Victorian walls were also furnished with border papers:

The side-walls of a room equally ornamented in every part . . . by a rich paper, would be intolerable were it not for the contrast produced by the plain ceiling, and by the border with which the paper . . . is finished under the cornice, at top, and above the base or sur-base below.⁷

Border papers were listed on an 1876 bill for papering several

7. J. C. Loudon's Encyclopaedia cited in, Frangiamore, "Wallpapers," Antiques, 102 (December, 1972), 1046.

upper story rooms at the Taft house, and it is assumed that they were also used on the parlor walls in 1853. A useful reference are the border measurements given on a wallpaper sample dating from 1815-1825, where borders measured $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the top and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the bottom.⁸

Also in 1853, the parlor blinds were mended, and careful examination of a photograph of the house exterior (1860's) reveals venetian blinds hanging in the lower windows. I have seen one illustration of wooden venetian blinds combined with draperies. More common was the use of venetian blinds with a wooden cornice and simple valence. The 1862 Cincinnati City Directory contains an illustrated advertisement for "A. Vieth, Venetian Blind Manufacturer".⁹ The blinds pictured are identical to those featured in Antiques Journal, 12, no. 6 (June, 1957), 37. The latter were used in an 1832 St. Louis parlor and they included wooden boxings, carved in a Greek Revival pattern, and were painted green.¹⁰ A valence, of the type illustrated in figure 31, hung from underneath the cornice of the St. Louis example, and the blinds themselves were faced with woven tapes in red and green.

8. Frangiamore, "Wallpapers," Antiques, 102 (December, 1972), 1050, Pl. II.

9. Cincinnati City Directory, 1862, Cincinnati Historical Society.

10. Katherine Hagler, Associate Curator of Furniture at the Henry Ford Museum, told me she had seen such blinds painted in only two colors, green and brown; conversation of 2/1st/75.

The Ann Arbor House at Greenfield Village contains the same type of venetian blinds (figure 4), as does the study of James Buchanan at Wheatland, illustrated in Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, fig. 411. Neither of the latter, however, include valences. The valences in the Taft parlor will match the figured damask upholstery used on the parlor suite.

Parlor Center--Furniture

marble-topped, rosewood, center table, Rococo Revival

antique

2 rosewood, balloon-back side chairs, Rococo Revival

antiques

2 rosewood, balloon-back armchairs, Rococo Revival

antiques

A parlor sofa, marble-topped center table, and large and small armchairs were purchased by The Tafts in 1854, for \$65, \$65, \$40, and \$30, respectively. Upon William Howard Taft's marriage to Nellie Herron, Louise Taft gave the couple all of the above items, along with four more rosewood chairs. These items probably constituted the Taft parlor suite during the 1850's and 60's.

No doubt, the rosewood parlor suite was Rococo Revival in style. With regard to this style, A. J. Downing commented

in 1851: "There is . . . almost a mania in the cities for expensive French furniture and decorations."¹¹ Coinciding with the inception of the Rococo Revival was the beginning, on a large scale, of machine-made furniture. The latter was concentrated chiefly in Cincinnati and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Generally, Rococo Revival parlor suites--and this was a style intended primarily for parlor use--consisted of a sofa (two sofas for a double parlor), center table, four side chairs, and two armchairs. The champion of the style was the New York based John Henry Belter. Although some of Belter's laminated rosewood furniture made its way to Cincinnati, it was to be found only in the wealthiest homes, a Belter sofa alone commanding \$175 by 1855.¹²

There were other cabinetmakers producing Belter-like furniture at considerably lower prices. Notable among these were John Geyer and S. J. John, both of whom were operating in Cincinnati during the 1840's, 50's, and 60's.

The price of the Taft parlor suite indicates furniture of a quality somewhat above the so-called "simplified" Rococo.

11. Downing cited in, The Brooklyn Museum, Victoriana, An Exhibition of the Arts of the Victorian Era in America (The Brooklyn Museum, 1960).

12. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19th Century America, Furniture and Other Decorative Arts (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970). There are two Belter sofas in the John Hauck House, and a Belter suite, commissioned by Julius Freiburg, in the Cincinnati Art Museum.

A "simplified" Rococo sofa cost anywhere from \$28 to \$45.¹³

Louise Taft described the parlor center table as rosewood with a black marble top and black walnut legs stained to look like rosewood. Approximating this description is a pedestal table in the John Hauck House, in Cincinnati, dating from circa 1850 and signed by S. J. John (acc. # 1970.89, see figures 13 and 14). The table has a cartouche-shaped black marble top set upon a carved mahogany bed and base, supported by four diagonally placed legs. Carved decoration consists of a simple cartouche at the center of each side with turned finials hanging below. The Hauck House table is nearly identical to Pedestal Table, # 119, in Thomas Ormsbee's Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture.¹⁴ According to Ormsbee, this table was also produced in rosewood veneer.

Two side chairs and two armchairs are symmetrically arranged around the center table. The side chairs will be acquired in accordance with Balloon-Back Chair, # 4A, in Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture. This chair was advertised as early as 1836 in the Cincinnati Book of Prices, and it became the dominant occasional and dining

13. Conversation with Bob Bishop, Curator of Furniture, Henry Ford Museum, 2/18/75.

14. Thomas H. Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture (New York: Bonanza Books, 1952).

chair of the Rococo Revival period.¹⁵ The cresting and back splat of the chair were carved in leafage and fruit motifs, and bracket-like arms extended from the back to half the depth of the seat. An unornamented version of the balloon-back side chair may be seen in the refurnished Grant parlor (figure 3).

Two armchairs stand between the center table and the fireplace. Numerous examples of armchairs pulled up to fireplaces may be seen in the Harper's Weeklys, dating from the 1860's.

In speaking of her large and small armchairs, Louise Taft must have been referring to the so-called gentlemen's and ladies' chairs, the latter of which was considerably lower and had a smaller seat area than the former. Gentlemen's and ladies' chairs complementing the table and chairs indicated above are the Balloon-Back Chairs, #'s 11 and 12, in Ormsbee's Field Guide. Both chairs were produced in rosewood and had crestings carved with fruit and leafage. The back of the large chair was upholstered and tufted, and the arms padded. The ladies' chair had demi-arms formed as an extension of the chair back. The latter chair is visible in the 1865 lithograph of the Grant family (figure 2).

15. Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, p. 137.

Furniture--West Wall

spool-turned, corner whatnot, rosewood, Rococo
Revival

antique

burr elm, folding-top card table, American
Restauration

antique

2 gondola side chairs, mahogany, American
Restauration

antiques

medallion-back, rosewood sofa, Rococo Revival

antique

The parlor whatnot was custom-made in 1854 for \$25. As it was ordered simultaneously with the rosewood parlor suite, the whatnot was probably also constructed of rosewood and designed along Rococo Revival lines. Drawing # 182, in Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, illustrates the standard corner whatnot of the period. The triangular shelves numbered four to six and they were built progressively deeper towards the bottom. Three spool-turned spindles with projecting finials at the top supported each shelf. The top shelf, and sometimes the lower shelves, were flanked on two sides with scrolled and pierced strips. An identical whatnot was advertised in 1876 by the Kansas City firm, Abernathy, North & Orrison.¹⁶

16. catalogue: "Abernathy, North & Orrison, Kansas City, Missouri, Illustrated Catalogue," p. 121, bound in back of Kansas City Directory, 1876, Snyder Collection, Library, University of Missouri at Kansas City.

In addition to the center table, the parlor contained one to two card tables--Louise Taft mentioned an 1861 euchre party in the parlor with two tables--and a stand. Two tables and a stand were among several pieces of furniture re-varnished in 1853 by Grandpa Taft. These items, then, were probably purchased during the 1840's. Also dating from prior to the 1850's were several "common" mahogany chairs, two to four of which Louise Taft spoke of retaining in her redecorated parlor.

American Restauration design is evident in the famous 1833 advertisement published by Joseph Meeks & Sons (figure 33). This style was extended into the 1840's by the furniture designs of the Baltimore architect, John Hall. The Meeks advertisement contained a design for a folding-top card table (figure 33, # 34) that prevailed throughout the 1840's and 50's. The table was supported by an angular, vase pillar on an abacus-shaped base, with four rising, scroll feet. The same table is illustrated, in burr elm, in Celia J. Otto's American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, fig. 251.

Also illustrated in the Meeks ad were two varieties of the Restauration gondola chair (figure 33, #'s 11 and 12). The chair had a vase-shaped splat, uprights curving forward to the seat rail, and plain console front legs. The first version, with a carved cresting (# 11), is called for here. An identical chair, in the collection of the Henry Ford

Museum, may be seen in Otto's American Furniture, fig. 214.

We have no description of the parlor sofa, but it must have complimented the rest of the parlor suite. The medallion-back sofa, illustrated in Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, # 56, matches the Rococo Revival pieces called for in the center of the room. The upholstered medallion in this type of sofa was either oval or cartouche-shaped, and the top rail was carved with a simple cresting of flowers and fruit. An inexpensive version of this piece, in black walnut, exists at the Henry Ford Museum (acc. # 30.34.3).

Furniture--North Wall

Gothic chair, walnut

antique

The Gothic chair, also acquired in 1854, cost \$15 and was upholstered in "bright, colored figures". Although mid-19th century decorators considered the most appropriate use of the Gothic chair to be in the hall, it was also deemed suitable for parlor use.

The prototype is a walnut side chair at the Henry Ford Museum (acc. # 28.899.152). This chair is basically a Rococo Revival design overlaid with Gothic carving. It is reproduced in figure 6.

Furniture--East Wall

square paino, rosewood

antique

3-legged, pedestal piano stool, rosewood

antique

balloon-back side chair, rosewood, Rococo
Revival

antique

In 1854 the Tafts imported a rosewood piano from Boston. This was apparently the only major item in the house purchased outside of Cincinnati. It is assumed that this was a square piano, both from its cost (\$365 including freight) and the fact that, after the fire of 1877, the Tafts bought a grand piano. Upon the piano's arrival, a matching rosewood stool was acquired in Cincinnati.

A mirror, purchased in 1857 from a neighbor, was hung between the parlor doors, over the piano. This reference to the placement of piano and mirror is the only mention we have regarding the arrangement of the parlor furniture.

Certainly the most well known mid-century piano manufacturer was the Boston firm of Chickering and Mackay. In the 1850's the cases of Jonas Chickering's pianos were usually rosewood veneer and the cabriole legs were painted to simulate rosewood. The six-octave keyboard was standard.¹⁷ A Chickering piano,

17. Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, p. 388.

dating from 1850, is illustrated in Antiques, 104 (August, 1973), 230. The latter is in the collection of the National Museum of History and Technology.

The romance surrounding the piano was one of the favorite subjects of mid-century illustrators. Piano stools were invariably depicted with pedestal bases and three feet. Seats were upholstered and fringed. Such a stool is pictured in the April 7, 1860 issue of Harper's Weekly.

Often, an occasional chair was pulled up to one side of the piano, and a balloon-back chair, identical to the parlor suite side chairs, will be placed to the south side of the Taft piano.

Furniture--South Wall

mahogany stand, American Restauration

antique

"Sleepy Hollow" rocking chair, black walnut

antique

balloon-back, rosewood side chair, Rococo
Revival

antique

The work stand is one of the parlor pieces dating from prior to the 1850's. It is placed, functionally, beneath a window. The stand should approximate an American Restauration piece at the Cincinnati Art Museum (acc. # 1921.233). The latter is currently on exhibit in a Civil War period fashion

display. It sits on a pedestal base with four rising, scroll feet, and contains two small drawers with glass pulls.

Louise Taft made repeated references to her rocking chairs without specifying their locations. One mid-19th century advertisement for rockers included suggested use as a "Ladies' Sewing Chair".¹⁸ It, therefore, seems appropriate to include a rocking chair among the parlor furnishings, placed so as to suggest comfortable access to the work stand.

The rocking chair should resemble the "Sleepy Hollow" rocker in the collection of the Shawnee Mission in Kansas City, Kansas (figure 7). While this particular chair was used at the Shawnee Mission as early as 1832, it is identical in design to the "Sleepy Hollow" armchair illustrated in Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, # 14, the latter dating from 1850-1870.

On the opposite side of the fireplace stands the fourth side chair belonging to the Rococo Revival parlor suite.

Fireplace--Furnishings

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Dodge's Patented Grate | <u>antique</u> |
| brass tongs (winter only) | <u>antique</u> |
| brass shovel (winter only) | <u>antique</u> |

18. Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, p. 174.

embroidered firescreen, rosewood, Rococo Revival
(winter only)

antique

fireboard (summer only)

reproduction

Even after the introduction of central heating, the Victorian fireplace remained an important gathering place, signifying emotional if not bodily warmth. Similarly, after the introduction of gas lighting, candlelight was still occasionally used to set a romantic mood.

Every fireplace in the Taft house was equipped with a "Dodge's Patented Grate". Presumably, these grates were available in Cincinnati. The grate still extant in the birthroom fireplace will serve as the prototype.

Required accessories included only tongs and a shovel that are to be exhibited leaning against either side of the mantel. Both should be brass with the exception of the shovel scoop, which should be iron.

The antique firescreen represents one embroidered by Louise Taft in 1857. The Rococo Revival firescreen illustrated in Frances Lichten, Decorative Art of Victoria's Era, p. 100, is typical for the period.¹⁹

As much as possible was done to minimize Victorian fireplaces during the summer months, particularly in cities such

19. Frances Lichten, Decorative Art of Victoria's Era (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950).

as Cincinnati where the heat became especially oppressive. Sometimes furniture was even rearranged in order to obscure the fireplace opening. Often, fireboards were set up, as is called for here. The fireboard will be covered with the same wallpaper that is used on the parlor walls. This practice is illustrated in, Rev. John Atwood and His Family, Pl. 70 in, Americans at Home. The fireplace accessories should be removed at the time the fireboard is installed.

Parlor--Upholstery

parlor suite--figured linen damask	<u>reproduction</u>
gondola side chairs--black figured horsehair	<u>reproduction</u>
Gothic chair--tapestry	<u>reproduction</u>
"Sleepy Hollow" rocking chair--velvet	<u>reproduction</u>
piano stool--velvet, fringed	<u>reproduction</u>

In 1873, William H. Taft's older brother, Rossy, had the parlor furniture recovered as a gift to the family. This probably included only the parlor suite. At an earlier date Louise Taft mentioned the use of slipcovers in her parlor, a common practice before the introduction of steam heat, when soot and dust were still a major concern.

Silk damask upholstery is usually associated only with

furniture of the highest quality, such as Belter furniture. Linen damask was a less expensive alternative. The figured linen damask upholstery on the Rococo Revival parlor suite will be reproduced in either "arsenical" green or gold.

The black horsehair that is called for on the gondola Restauration chairs represents the most common type of upholstery in the parlor. Louise Taft's reference to an old "haircloth sofa" in the library justifies the use of this material on pieces that predated her tenure in the house.

The upholstery on the Gothic chair is tapestry, and the rocking chair and piano stool will be covered with plain velvet in either green or gold.

Parlor--Other Furniture Coverings

center table--fringed Indian shawl	<u>antique/reproduction</u>
piano--fringed Indian shawl	<u>antique/reproduction</u>
card table--printed throw, with border	<u>antique/reproduction</u>
rocking chair--antimacassar	<u>antique/reproduction</u>
work stand--doily	<u>antique/reproduction</u>
firescreen--Berlin work embroidery	<u>antique/reproduction</u>

In his Architecture of Country Houses, A. J. Downing advised the decorator: ". . . all tables depend on drapery or cover . . . concealing all but the lower part of the legs."²⁰ And, regardless of how elaborately a table was carved, most tables illustrated in mid-19th century prints were draped, as were pianos.

By the late 1850's the ladies' fashion market had been flooded with the Indian shawl. Genuine Cashmere shawls were beyond the means of most Victorian women, and shawls with printed or embroidered designs were soon developed in Paisley, England to meet the burgeoning demand. Louise Taft appears to have succumbed to the fashion as, in 1859, she attended the opera draped in an "Indian shawl".²¹

Very few of the shawls have survived, partly because they were quickly adapted to parlor use, as decorative throws.²²

The parlor center table and square piano will be draped with printed, woven, or embroidered versions of the Indian shawl. Numerous designs for shawls were exhibited at the London Crystal Palace and are reproduced in figures 35 - 42, and the paisley shawl exhibited on the square piano at the

20. Downing cited in, Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, p. 152.

21. Ihsbel Ross, An American Family, The Tafts, 1678 to 1964 (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1964), p. 31.

22. Lichten, Decorative Art of Victoria's Era, pp. 45-6.

John Hauck House appears in figure 15. Figure 42 represents a genuine Cashmere shawl that was reputedly purchased by Queen Victoria.

The card table covering is a printed square cloth with a wide border such as appears on a round table in the Grant lithograph (figure 2). A similar covering is pictured on a card table in the February 11, 1860 issue of Harper's Weekly.

The lace antimacassar became popular in the 1860's and prevailed throughout the 1890's. Godey's Lady's Book carried numerous patterns for antimacassars, or "tidys". The following should be referred to as prototypes for the rocking chair antimacassar: Godey's Lady's Book, 51 (1855), p. 70; 54 (1857), p. 457; and 55 (1857), pp. 286, 391, and 481. All of the above were rectangular and were to be netted in white cotton.

Godey's is also an invaluable reference for "lamp mats" or doilies, such as is used on the work stand: Godey's Lady's Book, 55 (1857), p. 263; and 56 (1858), p. 56. These were to be crocheted in colored yarns and employed beadwork on the edges.

The most popular form of embroidery during the Victorian era was Berlin wool work. Berlin work employed worsted wools, in a tent or cross-stitch on square meshed canvas.²³ A Berlin

23. Barbara Morris, Victorian Embroidery (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), pp. 19-31.

work pattern for a firescreen is featured in, Codey's, 42-49
(1854), p. 198.

Parlor--Lamps and Candlesticks

piano--astral lamp

antique

stand--Argand lamp

antique

mantel--pressed glass, dolphin-shaped candle-
sticks

antiques

The astral lamp was the table lamp found most often in early Victorian parlors. It usually had a glass dome, gilt column, and marble base. A typical astral lamp, made in Philadelphia in 1843, is illustrated in the Metropolitan Museum of Art catalogue, 19th-Century America, fig. 82.²⁴ The dome on this lamp is frosted and cut glass. Only the leaf castings at the top and bottom of the column are gilded. An astral lamp will sit on the north end of the piano, on top of the Indian throw.

Nearly as popular as the astral lamp was the Argand lamp that is called for on the work stand. This lamp had an amphora-shaped oil font and two glass domes extending on arms from the central font. One example, made in New York between

24. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19th-Century America, Furniture and Other Decorative Arts (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970).

1835 and 1840, is illustrated in, 19th-Century America, fig. 83. An Argand lamp will sit on the work stand, with a square doily beneath.

Dolphin-shaped, pressed glass candlesticks are exhibited on either end of the mantel. These were extremely popular mid-century mantel decorations, and may be seen in a Harper's Weekly interior dating from December 1, 1866. Two examples, manufactured in Sandwich where a huge number of these candlesticks were produced, are illustrated in, 19th-Century America, fig. 94. The latter were pressed in opaque blue and white glass.

Parlor--Accessories

rectangular mirror, American Restauration	<u>antique</u>
gilt ormolu mantel clock	<u>antique</u>
wall shelf with John Rogers group	<u>antiques</u>
center table:	
Harriet Beecher Stowe, <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u>	
Elisha K. Kane, <u>Arctic Explorations</u>	
Washington Irving, <u>Life of Washington</u>	<u>antiques</u>
papier-mâché writing case	<u>antique</u>
dried flowers, under glass dome	<u>reproduction/antique</u>

whatnot:

aquarium

reproduction

"Niagara Falls" parian pitcher

antique

parian statuette(s)

antique

small bouquet

reproduction/antique

seashells

reproductions

bell rope--center table

reproduction

hanging wire basket of ivy--south window

reproduction

The mirror purchased in 1857 measured 62" x 46" and was of the finest French plate glass with a "simple but handsome" frame. The original cost of the mirror was \$137.

According to this description, the mirror was probably in the Restauration style such as the mirrors advertised in the New York Evening Post: "Elegant Pier Glasses, French Plates, sixty-five inches by thirty-three inches; sixty inches by thirty inches."²⁵ These mirrors had simple gilt frames and rounded top corners with slight crestings. A Restauration mirror is illustrated in Celia J. Otto's American Furniture

25. New York Evening Post cited in, Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, p. 89.

of the Nineteenth Century, fig. 207. The latter is similar to the mirror that hangs above the piano in the restored Grant parlor (figure 3).

The Taft mirror should be hung according to the specifications given for hanging the parlor pictures.

The porcelain and gilt ormolu mantel clock was among Katharine M. McClinton's list of common Victorian "Accessories".²⁶ Generally, this type of clock was of French manufacture and was decorated with figures of reclining muses. Two examples appear in Eric Bruton's Clocks and Watches, fig. 58; and Wallace Nutting's The Clock Book, fig. 154.²⁷ The latter example is in the collection of the Essex Institute and has porcelain mounts.

A carved shelf will be hung on the west wall. Suitable shelf types were illustrated in the 1876 catalogue put out by the Kansas City firm of Abernathy, North & Orrison. A page from this catalogue is reproduced in figure 43.

The plaster figures of John Rogers were found in middle-class Victorian parlors everywhere. There is a Rogers group pictured on a wall bracket in the painting, Visiting Grandma,

26. Katharine Morrison McClinton, An Outline of Period Furniture (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1972), pp. 232-33.

27. Eric Bruton, Clocks and Watches, 1400-1900 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967); Wallace Nutting, The Clock Book (Framingham, Massachusetts: Old America Co., 1924).

Pl. 126, in Harold Peterson's Americans at Home.

In the early 1880's, William Howard Taft presented a wedding gift of two Rogers groups to a friend. They were Coming to the Parson and Speak for Yourself John. Both are in the collection of the William H. Taft NHS (acc. #'s 395 and 396). An alternative to one of the above is the earlier Rogers group, Council of War, two copies of which exist in the collection of the Museums branch of the National Park Service.

All of the Tafts were avid readers. It is not uncommon to find books and newspapers included in Victorian parlor scenes. In 1856 Louise Taft was absorbed in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. The inclusion of this book on the center table is intended to indicate the approaching Civil War. Other books mentioned in the Taft correspondence were Dr. Elisha K. Kane's Arctic Explorations, read by Alphonso in 1856, and Vol. I of Washington Irving's Life of Washington that was the first mentioned (1866) reading material of William Howard Taft. Louise Taft had read Irving's entire Life of Washington at an earlier date. If possible, original editions should be acquired of these books.

Also included on the center table is a papier-mâché writing case, listed as a standard parlor accessory by Katharine M. McClinton and representative, here, of Alphonso Taft's compulsive letter writing habits.

The center table is decorated with a glass dome containing dried flowers. This is perhaps the item that best typifies Victorian decorative taste. The arrangement is illustrated, along with directions for preserving flowers, in Godey's Lady's Book, 57 (1858), p. 164.

Early in 1856, Godey's, 56 (1857), p. 51, announced that the marine and fresh water aquariums conceived by their staff the previous year were "already a rage". That issue contains illustrations of both rectangular and round tanks, along with instructions for their creation and care. A round aquarium is one of the whatnot curiosities.

Other items on the whatnot include a "Niagara Falls" parian pitcher. The Tafts visited Niagara Falls in 1858 and Louise Taft wrote of the occasion: ". . . it will be something to tell Willie years hence that he crossed the Niagara River in a little row-boat within reach of the spray from the Falls--before he was a year old." A "Niagara Falls" pitcher is reproduced in the Metropolitan catalogue, 19th-Century America, fig. 138.

Parian statuettes were the earlier and less expensive counterpart of the life-size marble figures that decorated the homes of the late Victorians. Parian pieces were exhibited at the London Crystal Palace and are reproduced in figures 46, 48, and 49, as prototypes for the whatnot statuette. The

two groups of "Children Sporting with Goats" are a well-known pair. All three examples were of English manufacture.

The tiny bouquet is a motif seen often in early Victorian interiors. One is clearly visible in the 1845 painting in the Museum of the City of New York, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Henry Augustus Carter. The painting is reproduced in Americans at Home, Pl. 71.

Seashells of all types were hallmarks of the mid-century taste for "collectibles". Favorites were conch shells and nautilus'.²⁸ The shells on the whatnot should number from three to four.

In 1863, several single bells were hung throughout the Taft house. Certainly, one of these would have been placed in the parlor. The bell rope should hang within easy reach of the center table, such as is illustrated in a Harper's Weekly parlor scene dating from May 5, 1860. Patterns for bell ropes are illustrated in Godey's Lady's Book, 52 (1856), p. 71; and a variety of tassels are illustrated in, Godey's, 56 (1858), p. 265.

Ihsbel Ross described the 1861 Taft library with baskets of vines and ivy hung in the window.²⁹ While the great era

28. Lichten, Decorative Art of Victoria's Era, p. 47

29. Ross, An American Family, p. 37.

of indoor palms and ferns did not come into full bloom until the 1870's, single potted plants were seen as early as the 1840's, and hanging vines were common by the 1860's.

There are two Harper's Weekly interiors that are good references for hanging ivies: June 29, 1861, frontispiece; and June 14, 1862. The hanging apparatus in the 1861 interior is decorated with long tassels. Instructions for planting and hanging a wire basket appear in Godsey's, 56 (1858), p. 455. This article suggests lining the inside of the basket with "rich, green, velvet" moss and then dirt, in which German ivy may be planted. The basket in the Taft parlor should be hung with the same cording that is used in hanging the parlor pictures.

Parlor--Pictures

oil portraits:

Alphonso Taft, 1859

(collection, William H. Taft NHS) antique

Peter Rawson Taft, 1859

(collection, William H. Taft NHS) antique

Sylvia Taft, 1857

(collection, William H. Taft NHS) antique

photograph: Louise Taft and William H. Taft,
1858

reproduction

photograph: William H. Taft, c. 1866

(collection, William H. Taft NHS) antique

4 engravings: The Voyage of Life, a set of 4 engravings by James Smillie after the work of Thomas Cole

antiques

hanging material: twisted red cording and glass-headed nails

reproductions

The family portraits were commissioned in 1858-59. Specific mention was made only of Alphonso's, Louise's, and Peter Rawson Taft's portraits. Sylvia Taft's portrait had apparently been painted at an earlier date as it has survived, dated 1857, in the collection of the William Howard Taft NHS, along with those of Peter Rawson and Alphonso Taft, both date 1859 (acc. #'s 351, 352, 353). The portrait of Louise Taft has been lost. The three surviving portraits are oils and carry the signature of William Walcutt. The frames are gold-painted plaster on wood, molded into a floral and leaf design.

Sylvia and Peter Rawson Taft's portraits will hang in the southwest corner of the parlor and Alphonso Taft's will hang on the east wall, opposite those of his parents.

An 1858 photograph of William Howard Taft and his mother is reproduced in Ross, An American Family, p. 214. The original is housed in the William Howard Taft Papers, Library of Congress. A copy of this photograph will hang above the piano, on the north wall, together with the c. 1866 photograph of William Howard Taft (figure 1). Both should be mounted with

1½ inch white borders in oval gilt frames, in accordance with Louise Taft's description of a photograph of William H. Taft taken upon his third birthday (this particular photograph has not survived).

At the same time the family portraits were painted, Louise Taft bought several "pretty" engravings to fill up the recesses in her parlor. Indeed, she was following the mid-century trend described by Russell Lynes as, "a head-over-heels fad for picture collecting."³⁰ The most popular prints were romantic landscapes such as Thomas Cole's Youth, which became the American Art Union's most widely distributed engraving. Youth was first introduced at the 1849 lottery of the American Art Union.

The four engravings executed after the landscapes of Cole by James Smillie included Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age. The set is available at The Old Print Shop. These engravings will be divided between the north and south walls.

All of the above should be hung in the same manner as the pictures in the Grant parlor (figures 2 and 3), matching Louise Taft's description of suspending her pictures on long, red cords from nails driven in near the ceiling, which method, she added, created a "very ornamental" effect.

30. Russell Lynes, The Tastemakers (New York: 1955), p. 37.

The twisted cording and glass-headed nails used in the Grant home are modern reproductions. "Picture Nails" were illustrated in the 1875 Abernathy, North, & Orrison furniture catalogue. They are reproduced in figure 32.

Dining Room--Room Use

The Taft dining room was used for family meals and for formal dining. On several occasions, Louise Taft brought ladies into the dining room to admire her silver and china.

During the 1861-1877 period, family dinners would have ranged in numbers from five to ten. Charles had departed for Andover in 1859 but would have been present at the dinner table during holidays. Rossy followed his brother in 1863. The family was further diminished by the deaths of Grandma Taft in 1865, and of Grandpa Taft in 1867. And by 1874 William Howard Taft was enrolled at Yale, leaving only Alphonso, Louise, Harry, Horace, and Fanny Taft as permanent residents of the Mt. Auburn house. The only long term house guests during this period were Louise Taft's sisters, Susan and Anna Torrey who each spent several months with the family in 1863 and 1869, respectively.

The following menu was served to 14 guests on Thanksgiving Day, 1858, and is probably exemplary of formal meals in the Taft dining room. The menu included roast turkey, chicken pie, oyster soup, scalloped oysters, vegetables, cranberry sauce, plum pudding, mince and custard pies, apples, nuts, raisins, and coffee.

Although the Tafts were, by nature, temperant people, alcoholic beverages may have been served on occasion. It is perhaps significant that Louise Taft refused to pledge her support to the Temperance Crusade.

Dining Room--Furnishings

The dining room underwent redecoration in 1869, that probably consisted of painting and papering, and an extension table that must have been intended for use here was purchased in 1873. Stylistically, the dining room probably post-dated the parlor by a few years.

The decorative scheme in the refurnished dining room has been largely determined by a set of four chairs in the collection of the William H. Taft NHS that reflect the Louis XVI substyle of the Renaissance Revival. The Renaissance Revival existed simultaneously with, and lasted nearly a decade longer, than the Rococo Revival. It was not unusual to find each room of a Victorian house furnished in a distinct manner. While the parlor is furnished in the Rococo Revival style, most of the dining room furnishings will complement the Renaissance Revival chairs.

American Restauration pieces are included in both rooms. This earlier style is, in fact, more complementary to the Renaissance Revival than it is to the Rococo Revival.

tear-drop design wallpaper, blue, rose, and white
reproduction

Axminster carpet, blue, rose, and white
reproduction

venetian blinds with carved boxings, and linen
damask valences
reproductions

coal-burning, cast-iron stove (winter only)
antique

japanned coal hod (winter only)
antique

The prototype for the dining room wallpaper is the paper (c. 1868) in the library of the Lockwood Mansion, in Norwalk Connecticut.³¹ This paper is similar to a fleur-de-lis patterned paper exhibited at the London Crystal Palace (figure 25). The framework of both papers is a large tear drop design.

The dining room carpet represents some of the Axminster carpeting mentioned by Louise Taft in 1878. While this reference falls after our period of reconstruction, the Axminster carpeting mentioned was in need of cleaning, and, therefore, must have been present in the 1861-1877 house.

An Axminster carpet exhibited at the London Crystal Palace is reproduced in figure 30. A "Patent Axminster" of similar design is illustrated in the catalogue, The Crystal Palace Exhibition, p. 89. The latter differed from the

31. Mary E. Adams, Ed., "The Lockwood-Mathews Mansion" (Norwalk, Connecticut: Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum of Norwalk, Inc.), frontispiece, and p. 2.

standard Axminster in that it was hand tied rather than woven. Both carpets were designed around a central cartouche-shaped motif with elaborate border and corner patterning. A less elaborate, overall design of large floral clusters exists in the parlor Axminster at the John Wornall House in Kansas City, Missouri.

The carpet in the Taft dining room will extend from wall to wall and should be woven in two foot strips, sewn together.

Window coverings should be identical to the venetian blinds in the parlor (see figure 4). Figured damask valences will be acquired in the rosy color of the Louis XVI chair upholstery.

This room was heated by stove rather than fireplace. The dining room stove dated from prior to 1864 as, in November of that year, reference was made to the stove being taken out of storage, flaked, and set up. Stoves were apparently removed during the summer months. Several prototypes exist for this item. The "Ilion" stove, patented 1853, by Wager, Richmond, & Smith of Troy, New York, is reproduced in Waite, "Stovemakers of Troy, New York," Antiques, 103 (January, 1973), 139; a stove, manufactured in Albany, New York by Potts & Co., is pictured in Joseph T. Butler, "A Case Study in Nineteenth-century Color: Redecoration at Sunnyside," Antiques, 78 (July, 1960), 56, fig. 5; one dating from around 1850 that was decorated with grape motifs is illustrated in J. H. Peirce,

"Box Stoves and Parlor Cook Stoves," Antiques, 48 (November, 1948), 349; and an elaborate Rococo Revival stove (1846) is pictured in Antiques, 43 (June, 1943), 254. The rectangular body of the latter was topped by an urn and rested on heavy leaf-scrolled feet. All of the above were cast-iron although the last example was painted white to resemble pottery.

Beside the stove sits a coal hod, the prototype for which is the hand-painted, "japanned" coal hod reproduced in Clarence P. Hornung's Treasury of American Design, fig. 1195.³²

Dining Room--Furniture

black walnut extension table	<u>antique</u>
walnut sideboard, Renaissance Revival	<u>antique</u>
dish cabinet, Rococo Revival	<u>antique</u>
pillar and scroll pier table, mahogany veneer on pine	<u>antique</u>
4 Louis XVI side chairs (collection, William H. Taft NHS)	<u>antiques</u>
6 side chairs, Renaissance Revival	<u>antiques</u>
high chair, Hitchcock or bent-arm type	<u>antique</u>

32. Clarence P. Hornung, Treasury of American Design, 4 Vols. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1972).

The dining room table will be acquired in accordance with the two-part dining table pictured in Crmsbee's Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, # 103. This six to eight foot, rectangular table consisted of two five-leg components, each with a drop leaf. The ends of the table were equipped with plain, round-ended skirts. This table type was produced primarily during the Renaissance Revival period.

A Renaissance Revival sideboard sits against the west wall. It should approximate a sideboard dating from circa 1850 in the collection of The Grand Rapids Public Museum (figure 5). The latter was made by the Grand Rapids cabinet-maker George M. Pullman. A nearly identical sideboard appeared in a dining room interior illustrated in the November 30, 1867 issue of Harper's Weekly. Interestingly enough, the prize winning Daniel Pabst sideboard that was exhibited at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial differs only slightly from the Pullman sideboard.

The prototype for the south wall cabinet is illustrated in Otto's American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, fig. 296. This cabinet has two full length glazed doors and a low, two-drawer base. Although Rococo Revival in design, the ornamentation on the piece is very restrained.

The sideboard and dish cabinet should both be equipped with a lock and key, pointing up Louise Taft's preoccupation

around her hired help with security.

The pier table standing against the east wall is an American Restoration piece. A mahogany veneer on pine, pier table at the Henry Ford Museum is reproduced in figure 16. It is identical to the pillar and scroll table advertised by Joseph Meeks (figure 33, # 25).

The most famous cabinetmaker working in the Louis XVI style was the New York based Leon Marcotte. Simultaneously with his Renaissance Revival pieces, Marcotte was producing furniture in the Rococo Revival style that rivaled the work of John Henry Belter. The side chairs in the William H. Taft NHS collection (figure, 8 acc. #'s 046, 047, 048, 049) are identical to an 1860 Marcotte chair reproduced in Robert Bishop's Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, fig. 610.³³ The latter chair was produced in ebonized maple and fruitwood with gilt and bronze ornamentation. The legs were fluted and the front legs mounted on castors. Back and seat cushions were fully upholstered and tufted.

The rosy silk damask upholstery on the Taft collection chairs is in poor condition and should be replaced with identical material.

The Louis XVI chairs are arranged around the walls of

33. Robert Bishop, Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, 1640-1970 (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972).

the room and six complementary chairs, should be acquired for the dining room table. Prototypes are an 1865 Marcotte chair in satinwood and rosewood, and an 1860-1880 factory-made walnut armchair with a cane seat. Both are Renaissance Revival pieces. They are reproduced in Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, figs. 602 and 679.

The high chair standing against the east wall may be either of the Hitchcock type illustrated in Katharine M. McClinton's Antiques of American Childhood, p. 147,³⁴ or the somewhat latter, bent-arm high chairs advertised in the Abernathy, North & Crrison furniture catalogue (figure 50). The Hitchcock type chair is of pine, maple, and hickory and is painted yellow. The bent-arm chairs were probably of pine. They were "finished light".

Dining Room--Accessories

rectangular mirror, American Restauration	<u>antique</u>
brass shovel, with iron scoop (winter only)	<u>antique</u>
cut glass candelabrum and candlesticks	<u>antiques</u>
2 embossed porcelain or Bennington cameo ware vases	<u>antiques</u>

34. Katharine Morrison McClinton, Antiques of American Childhood (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1970).

porcelain dinner service--U. S. Pottery; Charles
Cartlidge & Co.; or Union Porcelain Works--
dish cabinet antique

2 color lithographs after J. J. Audubon antiques

cut and engraved glass compote, filled with
artificial fruit antique/reproduction

square doily antique/reproduction

sideboard:

2 cut and engraved glass decanters, filled
with wine antiques

silver castor antique

1 dozen ivory handled, silver tea knives antiques

porcelain cake basket antique

bell rope reproduction

A gilt frame, rectangular mirror, like that called for
in the parlor, will hang above the pier table, and the coal
shovel standing near the coal hod is also a duplicate of the
one in the parlor.

On the dining room mantel, there is a pair of vases and
a candleabra set. Crystal candlesticks and matching

candlelabrum appear in the 1850 Ernest Fiedler parlor, illustrated in Americans at Home, Pl. 79. A more elaborate set of similar date is illustrated in the Metropolitan Museum of Art catalogue, 19th-Century America, fig. 111. The latter has bronze stands sculptured with American historical figures and the cut glass prisms hang from pierced bronze rings.

The vases should approximate either an embossed porcelain vase that was exhibited at the London Crystal Palace (figure 47) or the blue and white Bennington vase, illustrated in, Richard Carter Barret, "The Porcelain and Pottery of Bennington," Antiques, 69 (June, 1956), 529, fig. 2. The latter is decorated with an applied poppy and grape cluster design on a pin-pointed blue ground.

Louise Taft considered American porcelain as good, and far more economical than English and, in 1854, she purchased a set of "American Plate" for \$40. Her feelings were echoed by Harper's Monthly in a review of the New York Crystal Palace: ". . . the time is not far off, we feel sure, when we shall have no need of foreign designers of our plate and jewelry."³⁵

At the mid-century, most high quality American porcelain was produced at Bennington, Vermont, or Greenpoint, New York. One example of Bennington workmanship is a highly glazed white

35. Harper's Monthly cited in, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19th-Century America, p. xxii..

porcelain tea service with gold strippings produced by Christopher Webber Fenton's U. S. Pottery Co. The tea set is illustrated in "The Porcelain and Pottery of Bennington," Antiques, 69 (June, 1956), 529, fig. 6. It should be viewed as exemplary of a great deal of dinnerware produced in this mode. A porcelain cup and saucer dating from 1850, by Charles Cartlidge & Co. of Greenpoint, is pictured in 19th-Century America, fig. 139. The cup and saucer are decorated with polychrome flowers framed by a gilt arcade. Finally, two plates by the Union Porcelain Works at Greenpoint are illustrated in Edwin A. Barber's Pottery and Porcelain, pp. 253-54.³⁶ The first plate has a central floral cluster and a border of four small floral groups. The second is decorated with a border of evergreen boughs interspersed with birds and winged insects.

The American porcelain acquired for the Taft dining room should approach the quality and design of the contemporary English dinnerware that was so popular in Victorian America. Standard points of reference are the works of Copeland (1850's), Wedgwood (1850's-60's), Davenport (1849), Minton (1850's), and Alcock (1849-50's).³⁷

36. Edwin Atlee Barber, Pottery and Porcelain in the United States (Watkins Glen, New York: Century House Americana, 1971).

37. These companies are considered "standard" by Dr. Carol Macht, Curator of Decorative Arts, Cincinnati Art Museum.

The color lithographs made by J. Bowen after John James Audubon received wide distribution during the 1840's and 50's. Two of these prints will hang on either side of the dining room sideboard. The Audubon prints should be hung in the same manner as the parlor pictures.

The Renaissance Revival exerted a strong influence on glass design, deeply cut surfaces being given up in favor of restrained surface decoration.³⁸ Few Victorian dining rooms were without a glass compote overflowing with fruit. A cut and engraved compote filled with artificial fruit will sit on the center of the dining room table, on top of a square doily like the doilies called for in the parlor (Godsey's Lady's Book, 55 (1857), p. 263; and 56 (1858), p. 56).

As the 19th century progressed, decanters became shorter and more rounded. A cut and engraved decanter typical of the period is illustrated in 19th-Century America, fig. 163. Similarly shaped decanters appear in dining room interiors in the December 29, 1860 and November 30, 1867 issues of Harper's Weekly. The Taft decanters should be partially filled with wine, or something resembling wine.

Most quality glass during this period was produced at either the New England Glass Company or the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company. If possible, the Taft glass should represent these firms.

38. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19th-Century America, fig. 162.

In 1892 Louise Taft requested the return of her Gorham silver from William Howard Taft and his wife. Gorham ranked second only to Tiffany in the production of Victorian silver. Ideally, the ivory handled tea knives and castor recommended for the sideboard should be acquired in Gorham silver.³⁹ Both items were documented as having been in the Taft dining room in 1854. Suitable alternatives to Gorham is the silver of Jones, Ball & Co. or Bailey & Co. (figures 44 and 45). Louise and Alphonso Taft's honeymoon included a visit to the New York Crystal Palace, where both of these companies were represented.

Another item mentioned in 1854 by Louise Taft was a "pretty" cake basket. This piece may be acquired in either English or American porcelain.

As in the parlor, there is a bell rope in the dining room hanging at one end of the sideboard (Gojey's Lady's Book, 52 (1856), p. 71).

The dining room provides through access from the hall to the birthroom and is therefore without a visitor barrier. Security will be provided by a member of the park staff stationed here during visitation hours. In addition, single cords should be strung across the Louis XVI side chairs.

39. Illustrated catalogues, circulars, and booklets, put out by the Gorham Company between 1875 and 1900 may be found at the Rhode Island Historical Society.

Birthroom--Room Use

This east bedroom served as the family nursery throughout most of the 1860's. It is not certain, however, whether this room was the scene of William Howard Taft's birth, or of any of the other Taft children.

William Howard Taft slept here until 1863, at first in a crib and then in a bed with his brother Harry. Horace Dutton Taft had taken over the crib in 1861. At this time Linda, the nursemaid, was occupying a trundle bed. A year later Linda was replaced by a girl named Mary who became the undisputed favorite of the Taft children. One more child, Fanny Louise Taft, would arrive in 1865.

Birthroom--Furnishings

Documented pieces of furniture in this room included a crib purchased in 1858 that would be large enough to hold Willie until he was four or five, a large bed, a trundle bed, and two to three bureaus. One of the bureaus was located beneath a window. A second bureau and the crib probably stood against the west wall. This arrangement is based upon an 1863 description of the room when Louise and Alphonso Taft were occupying it during the redecoration of their own quarters.

Also in 1863, Louise Taft instructed the hired girl that she and the boys were to wash and dress in the adjacent bathroom, thus eliminating either washstand or chamberpot from the refurnished birthroom.

Probably none of the furniture in the nursery, with the exception of the crib, was purchased after 1854. A room of this type would have been furnished primarily with cast-offs from the other bedrooms in the house.

visitor barrier

striped wallpaper, Rococo Revival

reproduction

rectangular woven rag rug

reproduction

venetian blinds with carved boxings, painted green

reproductions

A modern barrier, identical to the one installed in the parlor, will be erected inside the southwest door, enclosing an area of approximately four feet by five feet.

In 1858, the birthroom carpet was mended "again", implying a fairly common type of carpet. A rectangular rag rug will be acquired for this room. It should measure approximately nine feet by twelve feet. The rug will consist of brightly colored cotton, linen, or wool wefts woven into fine linen warps.⁴⁰

40. Weeks and Treganowan, Rugs and Carpets of Europe and the Western World, p. 178.

The wallpaper should also be of a common type, such as the inexpensive paper called for in the hall (Antiques, 102 (December, 1972), 1050).

The venetian blinds will be identical to those in the parlor. The birthroom blinds, however, will be hung without valences (see figure 4).

Furniture--West Wall

bureau with attached oval mirror, Rococo Revival

antique

walnut crib

antique
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)

mosquito netting (summer only)

reproduction

One of the two bureaus in the refurnished birthroom is a Restoration piece in the collection of the William H. Taft NHS. The second bureau, placed against the west wall, is a later piece, showing the beginnings of the Rococo Revival influence. The furnishing prototype is drawing # 80 in Thomas Ormsbee's Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture. The bureau depicted had a marble-topped central section flanked by end cases, and an attached tilting oval mirror. There was an overhanging frieze with a single drawer and three more drawers below. This chest was commonly produced in mahogany

with drawer fronts and side panels of crotch-grained veneer or red-stained maple. This was a standard bedroom piece throughout the Rococo Revival period. In 1849, similar "dressing bureaus" were advertised in Cincinnati by both John Geyer and S. J. John and, Andrew Jackson Downing illustrated this bureau as part of a set of painted bedroom furniture. The eight piece set cost \$92.⁴¹

A walnut crib in the collection of the William H. Taft NHS is placed between the bed and the west wall (figure 17, acc. # 017). The crib has adjustable slatted sides and spool-turned legs.

During the summer months, all beds in the Taft house, including the crib, were equipped with mosquito "bars" or netting.

Furniture--North Wall

three-quarter high, post bed	<u>antique</u>
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)	
crotched maple and cherry, bedside table	<u>antique</u>
bobbin-turned, maple trundle bed	<u>antique</u>
balloon-back side chair, oak	<u>antique</u>
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)	

41. Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century, p. 129, and; Furniture for the Victorian Home, From A. J. Downing (American): Country Houses (1850), and J. C. Loudon (English): Encyclopaedia (1833) (American Life Foundation: 1968), fig. 195.

The William H. Taft NHS has in its collection a maple headboard and footboard that it is thought belonged to William Howard Taft's sister, Fanny (acc. #'s 023, 024). The two pieces are reproduced in figure 18. They match Thomas Ormsbee's description of the three-quarter high, post bed typical at the mid-century.⁴² The posts are turned and the footboard posts are topped with a carved pineapple. Both pieces are stained red. There is some question whether the two pieces are a pair. Should they ultimately prove un-matched, a headboard will have to be reproduced to match the pineapple-turned footboard.

A bobbin-turned, maple trundle bed should be exhibited beneath the end of the three-quarter post bed.

To the left of the bed sits a small bedside table, the prototype for which exists in the Cary House bedroom at the Cincinnati Art Museum (acc. # 1907.1904). The table was constructed of crotched maple and cherry and dated from 1850. It had turned legs and two small drawers with glass pulls.

A side chair in the collection of the William H. Taft NHS sits to the north of the fireplace (figure 9, acc. # 144). The chair belonged at one time to a Mt. Auburn family by the name of Podd. The oak frame is covered with a dark stain and the seat is rush. The chair approximates a walnut chair made

42. Ormsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, p. 336.

in 1870 by the Detroit Chair Factory, that is reproduced in Bishop, Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, fig. 682. The Taft collection chair, however, is more elaborately turned than the factory-made example.

Furniture--East Wall

Victorian Boston rocker

antique

walnut chest of drawers, American Restauration

antique
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)

There was probably a rocking chair in the nursery as Louise Taft mentioned Willie pulling up a rocker while she was feeding Harry. During the Victorian period, Boston rockers were produced in maple with seats of pine and were painted to simulate rosewood. The top rail often bore a gilt stencil design. The prototype for the birthroom rocker is illustrated in Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, # 32.

The walnut chest of drawers at the William H. Taft NHS has five drawers, the topmost of which has a cyma-curved front and overhangs the rest of the chest (figure 19, acc. # 008). The chest appears to date from the John Hall era. Stamped in the bottom of the second drawer is the mark of the famous Cincinnati firm, Mitchell & Rammelsberg. This chest is

particularly interesting as it is earlier than most Mitchell & Rammelsberg pieces that I am aware of.⁴³

Furniture--South Wall

mid-Victorian, machine-made lounge, with black horsehair upholstery

antique

During the children's illnesses Louise Taft slept in the nursery on a lounge that she had brought down from one of the upstairs rooms. The furnishing prototype for the birthroom lounge is the inexpensive, machine-made lounge illustrated in Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, # 70. The body of this lounge was fully upholstered and was supported by out-curving scroll-bracket feet. The lounge should be upholstered in black horsehair.

Birthroom--Accessories

willow chair

antique

walking cage

antique

mantel:

cast bronze clock

antique

peg top or whistling top

antique

43. Rococo Revival pieces by Mitchell & Rammelsberg may be seen at the John Wornall House, Kansas City, Missouri; the Shawnee Mission in Kansas City, Kansas; and the Cincinnati Art Museum, in the office of Dr. Carol Macht.

tin drum antique

2 views of Cincinnati, engravings or lithographs antiques

brass tongs (winter only) antique

brass shovel, with iron scoop (winter only) antique

astral lamp--bedside table antique

square doily--bedside table antique/reproduction

embroidered candlewick spread--crib antique/reproduction

embroidered candlewick spread, fringed--three-quarter, high post bed antique/reproduction

trapunto quilt--trundle bed antique/reproduction

2 white cotton pillow shams with lace borders-- three-quarter high post bed antique/reproduction

A "willow chair with a little table in front for play-things" was one of the items purchased in 1865 for the newly born Fanny Louise Taft. There is a "Child's Willow Nursery Chair" advertised in the Abernathy, North & Orrison furniture catalogue that matches the above description. The chair is reproduced in figure 50.

A walking cage stands near the southeast window close to the willow chair. The two items are geared to approximately

the same age level. While no mention was made of a walker, in 1860 9-month old Harry was pushing himself about the nursery with the support of a chair.

The walking cage may be acquired in either wood or wicker, as illustrated by two examples in Katharine M. McClinton's Antiques of American Childhood, p. 143. While the turned maple walker pictured dated from 1700, the style prevailed throughout the first part of the 19th century.

The cast bronze clock placed at the center of the mantel shelf will be acquired according to a catalogue page of bronze clocks that is reproduced in Carl Drepperd's American Clocks, foll. p. 149.⁴⁴ The models entitled "Amor", "Lion Head", and "Patches" are suitable prototypes. All were produced in Connecticut between 1869 and 1876 and were distributed throughout the country by the American Clock Company.

In March of 1864, Louise Taft reported that the boys were, "busy with kites, balls, and tops, successively, all the time out of school." Toys appeared on a nursery mantel in the March 3, 1860 issue of Harper's Weekly. On the birthroom mantel are displayed a top and a tin drum. The latter also appeared in the Harper's Weekly illustration although not on the mantel shelf.

⁴⁴. Carl W. Drepperd, American Clocks and Clockmakers (Boston: Charles F. Branford Company, 1958).

With the onset of the Civil War, the manufacture of toy drums doubled.⁴⁵ Most mid-century drums were made in Massachusetts and, up until the late 19th century, drumheads were made of sheepskin. The most popular tops were whistling tops and peg tops. The first type was produced in tin by the J & E Stevens Company of Cromwell, Connecticut. The pear-shaped, peg top was usually made of boxwood.⁴⁶

Hanging above the mantel are two prints showing views of Cincinnati. A number of engravings and lithographs were produced of Cincinnati and its environs during the 1850-1870 period, and may be found in the collection of The Old Print Shop.⁴⁷

The birthroom coal grate is extant and in place. During the winter months, tongs and a shovel, similar to those called for in the parlor, will be placed on either side of the fireplace.

Also like the furnishings recommended for the parlor are the astral lamp and crocheted lamp mat called for on the bedside table (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19th-Century America, fig. 82; and Godey's Lady's Book, 55 (1857), p. 263, and 56

45. McClinton, Antiques of American Childhood, p. 286.

46. Ibid., pp. 209-11.

47. The Old Print Shop Portfolio, 34, no. 2, 30-32.

(1858), p. 56).

Bed linen was made by the female members of the Taft family. Mention was made of cotton sheets and pillow cases and of linen cases for the "small" pillows. Blankets and a white spread were bought for William Howard Taft's crib.

The birthroom coverlets will include two embroidered candlewick spreads in cotton, and a quilted Trapunto spread in cotton, or cotton and linen. Both types are described in, Safford and Bishop, America's Quilts and Coverlets.⁴⁸ The large pillow shams on the three-quarter, high post bed should be white cotton with wide crocheted borders.

48. Carleton L. Safford and Robert Bishop, America's Quilts and Coverlets (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972), pp. 75-85, 279-90.

Billiard Room--Room Use

This room came into being in 1864 at the urging of the two elder Taft sons. Considerable effort seems to have gone into the conversion and decoration of the room. By creating a pleasant environment for billiards, Louise Taft hoped to spare her sons the mild delinquencies associated with the game.

Billiard Room--Furnishings

visitor barrier

leaf-drop design wallpaper

reproduction

venetian blinds with carved boxings, painted green

reproductions

gas-burning, cast-iron stove (winter only)

antique

A modern barrier, located at the bottom of the stairs leading to the billiard room, will enclose an area of approximately five feet by ten feet. The barrier will extend along the west side of the stairwell.

In 1864 the billiard room was papered and painted in honor of the recently acquired billiard table. The billiard room wallpaper should be similar to the paper called for in

the dining room (see, "The Lockwood-Mathews Mansion," p. 2), and the window coverings will duplicate the venetian blinds used throughout the rest of the house (see figure 4). No valences are indicated for the billiard room windows.

I have been able to locate only four illustrations of 19th century domestic billiard rooms: two from the early years of the century; an 1870 example at Lyndhurst that is a combination billiard room and art gallery; and the double billiard room at the Lockwood-Mathews mansion in Norwalk, Connecticut.⁴⁹ The early 19th century rooms have throw rugs placed adjacent to the billiard table. The Lockwood billiard room (c. 1867) was carpeted with strips custom-made to fit around the billiard tables, and the Merritt Art Gallery at Lyndhurst is without any sort of floor covering. There are numerous 19th century renditions of public billiard rooms, all of which show bare floors. As no mention was made of a floor covering here, the floor will be left bare in the refurnished fast billiard room.

Unlike the dining room, the billiard room had a gas stove. This was, in fact, the location of the first gas stove in the house. Two appropriate prototypes appear in Josephine

49. The 1807 billiard room at Gore Place in Waltham, Mass. is reproduced in, "Billiard Tables, Cues, and Maces," Antiques, 95 (April, 1969), 565; the refurnished billiard room at the Henry Francis Dupont Winterthur Museum appears in, Louise C. Belden, "Billiards in America before 1830," Antiques, 87 (January, 1965), 101; Merritt Art Gallery is reproduced in, Peterson, Americans at Home, Pl. 138; and the Lockwood billiard room is pictured in, Adams, Ed., "The Lockwood-Mathews Mansion," p. 25.

Peirce's Fire on the Hearth, Pls. 97 and 132.⁵⁰ The first is "Seavey's Coal & Gas Burner," made in Boston in 1857. The Seavey parlor stove was advertised in the 1859-60 "Stove Annual" put out by the New Bedford, Massachusetts firm of Almy & Swain. It came in 23 sizes. Pl. 123 shows a gas-burning stove advertised in Jewitt & Root's 1860 catalogue, published in Buffalo, New York. Both show the influences of the Rococo Revival.

Billiard Room--Furniture

pocketless billiard table	<u>antique</u>
cue rack	<u>antique</u>
platform rocker, Eastlake, upholstered in tapestry	<u>antique/reproduction</u>
marble-topped pedestal table	<u>antique</u>
armchair, Renaissance Revival, upholstered in blue velvet	<u>antique</u>
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)	
library table	<u>antique</u>
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)	
4 Gothic side chairs, upholstered in figured black horsehair	<u>antiques</u>

50. Josephine H. Peirce, Fire on the Hearth, The Evolution and Romance of the Heating Stove (Springfield, Massachusetts: Pond-Ekberg Co., 1951).

maple settee, upholstered in paisley silk damask
antique
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)

secretary/bookcase, American Restauration, with
books
antiques

The pocketless billiard table was smaller than the conventional billiard, or pool, table and, after 1860, it was enthusiastically adopted for domestic use.⁵¹

The pocketless table at Lyndhurst is nearly identical to the table designated "The Nonpareil", manufactured by the Brunswick Company in 1880, and to the table in the Eureka Billiard Hall at Canyon City, Colorado (1875 photograph reproduced in Americans at Home, Pl. 205).⁵² All three show the cabriole legs of the American Empire style, carved decoration at the middle of each side, and teardrop ornaments at the corners. It is this table type that will be acquired for the Taft billiard room.

19th century cue racks were simply narrow boards furnished with pegs or holes.⁵³ Such a rack hangs on the east wall of the billiard room.

An armchair and pedestal table are placed to one side

51. Belden, "Billiards in America," Antiques, 87 (January, 1965), 101.

52. "Obsolete Styles", xerox, courtesy of the Brunswick Corporation, Skokie, Illinois.

53. Belden, op. cit., 101.

of the cue rack, in front of the northeast window. The chair should approximate the Eastlake rocker pictured in Thomas Crmsbee's Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, # 34. This "patent rocker" dated from 1870-80 and was relatively inexpensive for the period. It was commonly produced in black walnut, ebonized maple, or cherry, with plush or tapestry upholstery.

The prototype for the adjacent table is a table in the John Hauck House signed by the Cincinnati cabinetmaker Emile L. Wagner (acc. # 1970.93). The table has a rectangular marble top supported by a turned pedestal column and four cyma-curved, scrolled legs. The Hauck House table matches Crmsbee's description of a Renaissance Revival center table.⁵⁴

There is a Renaissance Revival armchair in the collection of the William H. Taft NHS (figure 10, no acc. #) that is similar to a Louis XVI armchair reproduced in Bishop, Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, fig. 615. The latter dates from 1876 and is of questionable origin. It was probably manufactured in either New York or England. The two chairs are of identical design and, while the decorative details differ somewhat, both exhibit invalid designs of mother-of-pearl. The Taft collection chair will sit beneath the northwest window.

⁵⁴. Crmsbee, Field Guide to American Victorian Furniture, pp. 196-97.

The blue velvet upholstery that presently covers the piece is faded and should be replaced with identical material.

In 1872 Louise Taft purchased a library table. An elaborately carved table in the park collection will sit against the west wall (figure 20, acc. # 009). This is one of the rare pieces in the collection that actually belonged to the Taft family. It is thought to have been carved by Heinrich Fry. The table probably dates from the period of the Fry mantelpiece (c. 1878). Although this table post-dates our period of reconstruction, it is included here for its connection to the Taft family and because it is stylistically suited to a Victorian billiard room.

The billiard room at Lyndhurst was a showcase for the Gothic furniture of Andrew Jackson Davis. Two Gothic side chairs will flank the library table in the Taft billiard room and two more identical chairs will sit in the southwest corner of the room. These chairs should carry the straight lines of a true Gothic side chair rather than the curvilinear proportions of the Rococo Revival/Gothic chair in the parlor. The Gothic chairs will be upholstered in figured black horsehair.

Sitting in the southwest corner is a maple settee with characteristic Eastlake lines that complements the Eastlake rocker. The settee has a heavily carved and crested central panel. The silk damask upholstery is a paisley design in shades

of green, yellow, and pink. It is in good condition (figure 11, acc. # 014, William H. Taft NHS).

The secretary bookcase should approximate an American Restoration piece, on exhibit at the Cincinnati Art Museum, by the Cincinnati cabinetmaker, William Hawkins (figure 34). The following books should be displayed in the cabinet:

Alice B. Neal, No Such Word as Fail; or, the Children's Journey (Appleton & Co., before 1852)

Jacob Abbott (Rev.), History of Alexander the Great (Harper & Bros., before 1852)

_____, History of Julius Caesar (Harper & Bros., before 1852)

Charles Dickens, Child's History of England, 2 vols. (Harper & Bros., 1853)

Fanny Fern, Ruth Hall

William H. Thackeray, The Virginians, A Tale of the Last Century (Harper & Bros., 1858-61)

Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dred, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp (Phillips, S. & Co., 1856)

Mrs. Marsh, Emilia Wyndham (Harper & Bros., before 1852)

Oliver W. Holmes, Poems (Picknor & Co., before 1852)

The Norman Exile

William R. Lawrence (MD), Ed., Diary and Correspondence of Amos Lawrence

Washington Irving, Life of Washington

The above constitute both children's and adult books mentioned in the Taft correspondence. They may be supplemented with

other titles by the same authors. One volume of Irving's Washington is called for in the parlor, the other volumes of the set being exhibited here. Ideally, antique editions of the books should be acquired.

Billiard Room--Accessories

4 ivory balls	<u>antiques</u>
6 leather-tipped cues, mixed hardwoods and ivory	<u>antiques</u>
bridge	<u>antique</u>
astral lamp	<u>antique</u>
crocheted dolly	<u>antique/reproduction</u>
potted palm	<u>reproduction</u>
Indian shawl	<u>antique/reproduction</u>
parian statuette, <u>The Greek Slave</u>	<u>antique</u>
print: Guido Reni, <u>Aurora</u>	<u>antique</u>
2 engravings: Hudson River School landscapes	<u>antiques</u>

Four balls are arranged on the billiard table along with a single cue and bridge. After 1826, cues were usually leather-tipped.⁵⁵ Five more cues complete the cue rack.

⁵⁵. Belden, "Billiards in America" Antiques, 87 (January, 1965), 101.

The marble-topped pedestal table is equipped with an astral lamp (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19th-Century America, fig. 82) on top of a large dolly that overhangs the edges of the table (Codey's Lady's Book, 55 (1857), p. 263, and 56 (1858), p. 56). Both items were discussed under the parlor.

Covering the west-wall table is a fringed paisley shawl that should meet the criteria for Indian shawls given under the parlor (see figures 35 through 42). Sitting on top of the table throw is a parian statuette of Hiram Powers' Greek Slave. The prototype is a statuette of English make at the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia (acc. # V.69.587). Powers hailed from Cincinnati. His life-size Greek Slave was a sensation at both the London and New York Crystal Palaces, small versions of the sculpture being produced thereafter for wider distribution.

In 1878 Louise Taft purchased four new pictures for her newly refurbished parlor. One of these was a copy of Guido Reni's Aurora, acquired for \$10. The Aurora was a favorite decorative item in high Victorian interiors. It appeared in an 1883 photograph of Mrs. George Carlisle's Cincinnati parlor.⁵⁶ The presence of the Aurora in an 1860-77 billiard room is justified by the fact that, other than the family portraits,

56. photograph: "Parlor of Mrs. George Carlisle, 471 W. 6th St., Cincinnati, Ohio" (1883), Cincinnati Historical Society.

this was the only documented work of art in the Taft house, and the restrained Baroque quality of the piece is well suited to the character of the room. The Aurora should hang on the south wall.

Two more pictures, in the same vein as the set of Cole engravings in the parlor, hang in the southwest corner. Prototypes include several hand-colored engravings after the Hudson Bay School artists Hart, Whittredge, and Smillie, at The Old Print Shop.

The billiard room pictures should be hung from glass nails and long red cords, in the same manner as the parlor pictures (see figures 2 and 3).

Kitchen--Room Use

During the early years of her marriage Louise Taft set out fervently to prove herself in the management of the kitchen, resulting in occasional conflicts with her mother-in-law, and one reprimand from Alphonso that she was devoting too little time towards the improvement of her mind.

A great deal of baking was done in the Taft kitchen, much of which Louise Taft accomplished herself. Butter and cheese were among other items of home manufacture.

Kitchen--Furnishings

visitor barrier

venetian blinds with carved boxing, painted
green

reproductions

The "kitchen blinds" were mended in 1852. All of the kitchen windows will be fitted with venetian blinds like those called for in the parlor, but without valences (see figure 4).

Mid-century kitchen floors were left bare just as often as they were covered. No mention was made of a floor covering in the Taft kitchen, but the fact that the floor had been painted was capitalized upon. The floor in the refurnished kitchen will be left bare.

East Wall--Furniture

range

antique

metal plate under range

antique/reproduction

sink unit

reproduction

sink

antique/reproduction

In 1859 the Tafts purchased a large kitchen range that historical architects have located at the center of the east wall.

In 1866, a large range with an attached hot water tank was advertised by the Cincinnati firm of Adolphus Lotze.⁵⁷ Similar ranges appeared in the 1874 chromolithograph entitled The Kitchen, in Americans at Home, Pl. 164; and in Isabella Beeton's Book of Household Management (1861). The "Improved Leamington Kitchener" (figure 52), recommended by Mrs. Beeton was described as follows:

It has on the one side, a large ventilated oven; and on the other, the fire and roaster. The hot plate is over all, and there is a back boiler, made of wrought iron, with brass tap and steam-pipe.⁵⁸

57. catalogue: Adolphus Lotze, "Heating, Cooking, and Ventilating Apparatus," Cincinnati, Ohio, 1866, Cincinnati Historical Society.

58. Mrs. Isabella Beeton, The Book of Household Management (London: S. C. Beeton, 18 Bouverie St., E. C., 1861), p. 27, fig. 5.

The stove hearth will consist of a metal safety plate.

Mrs. Beeton's American counterpart was Catherine Beecher (Harriet Beecher Stowe). In The American Woman's Home (1869),

Mrs. Beecher described the typical kitchen as follows:

. . . the table furniture, the cooking materials and essentials, the sink, the eating room are at such distances apart that half the time and strength is employed in walking back and forth to collect and return the articles used.⁵⁹

Her design for a "cook-form", or sink unit, was intended to alleviate the problem (figure 54). This sink unit had a dish drainer, grooved and hinged to the sink frame so that it could be turned over, covering the sink. Mrs. Beeton's plan is similar to the Convenient Kitchen Sink, dating from 1865, in Americans at Home, Pl. 117.

The sink unit illustrated in figure 54 will have to be altered to the northeast window of the Taft kitchen.

The only reference to the sink itself dates from 1861 when Grandpa Taft repaired the plumbing with some lead pipe. The sink would have been iron, soapstone, wood, granite, or crockery.⁶⁰

59. Beecher cited in, Molly Harrison, The Kitchen in History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), p. 126.

60. Louise K. Lantz, Old American Kitchenware, 1725-1925 (Camden, New Jersey: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1970), p. 22.

North Wall--Furniture

oak cupboard, painted

antique
(collection, William H. Taft NHS)

step ladder

antique

Apparently there was not a pantry, or storage area, immediately adjacent to the Taft kitchen. The equivalent to pantry shelves are located at the center of the north wall, within easy reach of the sink unit, work table, and range ("... so arranged that with one or two steps the cook can reach all he needs").⁶¹

Reference was made in 1851 to the construction of a kitchen cupboard and Historical Architect Souder (NPS) believes the oak cupboard presently stored at the Taft house to date from the original kitchen (figures 21 and 22, no acc. #). There are three shelves in the upper half of the cupboard and two in the lower half, all open. The cupboard should be painted to match the "stone color" of the kitchen woodwork.

A small step ladder was a common item in mid-century pantries, and one is called for beside the north cupboard.⁶²

61. Beecher cited in, Harrison, The Kitchen in History, p. 126.

62. Lantz, Old American Kitchenware, p. 30..

West Wall--Furniture

cistern and pump (provided by NPS)

ice chest

antique

2 wooden laundry tubs

antiques

wooden clotheshorse

antique

mangle

antique

oak dish cupboard, painted

antique

By the middle of the 19th century, most middle class kitchens could boast of either an ice chest or a modern upright refrigerator, the former predominating. An ice chest will be placed in the coolest corner of the kitchen, the northwest corner. The furnishing prototype is the imitation oak "Excelsior Chest Refrigerator" advertised by the New York firm of L. H. Mace & Co. (figure 51).⁶³

Moneyed Victorians sent the major part of their laundry out, although fine household linens and cottons were always "got-up" at home. Laundry tubs were usually located directly opposite the kitchen range and, during the early Victorian period, wooden tubs were still prevalent. On laundry days,

63. catalogue: "Illustrated Catalogue of L. H. Mace & Co., Manufacturers of and Wholesale Dealers in Refrigerators," 111, 113, 115, & 117 E. Houston St., New York; Chicago Historical Society.

the range and work table were entirely given over to this function.⁶⁴

In addition to laundry tubs, the raft kitchen would have easily accommodated a clotheshorse and mangle. Both are placed to one side of the wooden tubs. An 1850 prototype for the mangle is illustrated in The Kitchen in History, p. 105.

A second cupboard, serving primarily as a storage area for dishes and lamps, sits against the west wall. This cupboard should also be oak and painted to match the kitchen woodwork.

The standard 19th century dish cupboard, in both England and America, had three tall open shelves, above two or three shallow drawers with wooden pulls, and a single shelf at the bottom. This cupboard type is illustrated in Molly Harrison's The Kitchen in History, figs. 35, 38, and 39, and architectural drawings of dish cupboards may be found in A. J. Downing's Country Houses, figs. 563, 564, 557, and 558.

South Wall--Furniture

Wheeler & Wilson sewing machine	<u>antique</u>
balloon back side chair	<u>antique</u>
high chair, Hitchcock or bent-arm type	<u>antique</u>

64. Harrison, The Kitchen in History, p. 125.

It was not uncommon to find the household sewing machine in the kitchen, along with a comfortable chair for the lady of the house. A sewing machine appeared in a kitchen interior in the January 7, 1871 issue of Harper's Weekly. Sewing machines were also found in Victorian parlors which explains the high degree of ornament on most 19th century machines,⁶⁵

Peter Rawson Taft's account book showed an 1861 entry for a "Huggins" sewing machine, at \$40, and, in 1863, Louise Taft hired a seamstress with a Wheeler & Wilson sewing machine. Apparently the latter was superior to the Huggins machine. The Wheeler and Wilson sewing machine was certainly the most widely distributed machine in the 19th century. There is an illustrated advertisement for the Wheeler & Wilson sewing machine in the January 3, 1863 issue of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.

The chair is a duplicate of the rush seated, balloon-back chair in the birthroom (see figure 9).

The high chair may be of either type called for in the dining room (see McClinton, Antiques of American Childhood, p. 147, and figure 50).

Kitchen Center--Furniture

kitchen table

. antique

65. Herwin Schaefer, Nineteenth Century Modern, The Functional Tradition in Victorian Design (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 96.

4 "kitchen" Windsor chairs

antiques

Kitchen work tables everywhere approximated one advertised by the New firm, L. H. Mace & Co., that is reproduced in figure 52. A five or six foot version of this table will best suit the large Taft kitchen.

Four "kitchen" Windsor chairs are pulled up to the table. A "kitchen" Windsor of pine, maple, and ash, made between 1869 and 1890 by Pack & Co., of Cleveland, is illustrated in Robert Bishop's Centuries and Styles of the American Chair, fig. 783. Identical chairs were manufactured throughout the country between 1860 and 1915.

Kitchen Range--Accessories

coal scuttle with shovel

antique

wing duster

antique

dust pan

antique

poker

antique

wrench

antique

lifter

antique

cast-iron pot

antique

cast-iron teakettle	<u>antique</u>
cast-iron frying pan	<u>antique</u>
3 saucepans, tinned copper or brass; graniteware; or tin	<u>antiques</u>
fish kettle, tinned copper or brass; graniteware; or tin	<u>antique</u>
laundry boiler, copper or tin	<u>antique</u>
flatiron, cast-iron or soapstone	<u>antique</u>
wire oyster broiler	<u>antique</u>
2 trivets, cast-iron or soapstone	<u>antiques</u>
2 basting spoons, graniteware or tin	<u>antiques</u>
skimmer, graniteware or tin	<u>antique</u>
cast-iron match box	<u>antique</u>
hot water bottle, pottery (winter only)	<u>antique</u>

The first six items listed were necessary for the maintenance of a 19th century range. The same items were pictured in an 1874 chromolithograph in, Americans at Home, Pl. 164. The poker, wrench, and lifter should hang from an iron rack positioned on the wall beside the stove and the brush and dust

pan from a nail driven low into the wall. Stove and hearth brushes, or wing dusters, were commonly made of wing feathers from turkeys, geese, or chickens.⁶⁶

By the mid-19th century, the cast-iron pot had been largely displaced by less cumbersome vessels of copper, brass, enamelware, and tin. Most kitchens, however, retained a few cast-iron pieces distinguishable from their earlier counterparts by a new cylindrical shape and the absence of legs.⁶⁷ An 1850-60 prototype for a cast-iron pot is illustrated in Antiques, 100 (August, 1971), 221, fig. 7.

Cast-iron teakettles prevailed throughout the mid-century, teakettles of tin or enamelware also being common.

Enamel coated iron, or graniteware, received much attention at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial. In the Midwest, some of the most widely distributed pieces in this material were manufactured by the St. Louis Stamping Company.⁶⁸ Granite-ware was found atop Victorian stoves in saucepans, fish kettles, basting spoons, and skimmers. Generally, shapes that were available in graniteware were also available in seamless tin. While frying pans were produced in both tin and graniteware,

66. Lantz, Old American Kitchenware, p. 61.

67. John D. Tyler, "Cast-iron Cooking Vessels, Technological Features as a Guide to Date and Source," Antiques, 100 (August, 1971), 217-21.

68. Lantz, Old American Kitchenware, pp. 31, 107, and 119.

most Victorian housewives clung to the conventional cast-iron frying pan.

Common shapes in copper and brass were saucepans and fish kettles. These pieces were heavily tinned on the interior.

The largest vessel exhibited on the Taft range is a laundry broiler. By the mid-19th century, these important items had assumed an oval shape and were made of either copper or tin.⁶⁹ Incidentally, in 1866, one of the Taft's hired girls strained her back lifting a broiler from the range. Probably it was a laundry broiler.

In order to accommodate the above vessels, the stove lids should be removed and placed on the stove hearth, as pictured in the 1874 chromolithograph cited above.

A Victorian kitchen usually contained at least three cast-iron flatirons, or sadirons. One will be exhibited on the stove while two others will sit on the central work table, the latter on stands. The iron-handled, soapstone flatiron enjoyed great popularity for a brief period during the 1860's.⁷⁰

Trivets of soapstone were also common, as were cast-iron trivets, the latter lavishly decorated with naturalistic forms.

One of the items introduced as a by-product of the mid-century

69. Ibid., p. 247.

70. Ibid., p. 225.

rage for wire goods was the corrugated wire oyster broiler that hangs above the stove. Oysters became almost a staple in the 19th century and were often mentioned as part of the bill of fare in the Taft household.

Other hanging items include basting spoons, a skimmer, and a cast-iron match box. Prototypes for the last item are pictured in Clarence P. Hornung's Treasury of American Design, fig. 1718-1726.

In December of 1854 Louise Taft's visiting sister, Delia, sent the following message to her father: "Tell Anna that I sleep very cold without my bedfellow and a bottle of warm water has to supply her place." 19th century hot water bottles were produced in pottery and flint enamelware. Pottery prototypes made by the Bennington pottery works are illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, p. 46. The illustration includes both the common cylindrical, or "blind pig" shape, and the somewhat rarer type of bottle that was shaped to the foot. During the summer months, the hot water bottle should be removed from the range area to one of the north shelves.

Sink Unit--Accessories

woven wire bottle carrier	<u>antique</u>
2 woven wire baskets	<u>antiques</u>
woven wire seive	<u>antique</u>

woven wire strainer	<u>antique</u>
2 woven wire dish covers	<u>antiques</u>
3 muffin pans, cast-iron, graniteware, or tin	<u>antiques</u>
3 bread pans, cast-iron, graniteware, or tin	<u>antiques</u>
2 pie plates, cast-iron, graniteware, or tin	<u>antiques</u>
graniteware cake mold	<u>antique</u>
coffee pot, graniteware or tin	<u>antique</u>
2 tin trays	<u>antiques</u>
graniteware colander	<u>antique</u>
2 graniteware water buckets	<u>antiques</u>
3 yellow earthenware bowls	<u>antiques</u>
"Dover" type egg beater	<u>antique</u>
syllabub churn	<u>antique</u>
pressed tin egg separator	<u>antique</u>
egg drainer, wood, tin, or porcelain	<u>antique</u>
hinged juicer, tinned cast-iron	<u>antique</u>

2 hardwood mashers	<u>antiques</u>
wire potato masher	<u>antique</u>
tin sifter	<u>antique</u>
funnel, graniteware or tin	<u>antique</u>
goose feather baster	<u>antique</u>
3 linen dishcloths	<u>reproductions</u>
linen-strip swab	<u>reproduction</u>
graniteware soapdish, with handscap	<u>antique</u>
wooden towel rack with roller-type linen towel	<u>antique/reproduction</u>

The sink unit shelves are stocked primarily with pans and utensils used off the stove. For the most part, the items listed above are tin or graniteware with a representative selection of the woven wire goods that became so popular after the 1850's. Where possible, the smaller utensils should be hung from the underside of the first shelf above the sink.

Wire dish covers deterred the flies that invaded Victorian homes during the summer. The covers came in round, or oval shapes.

Cake molds were available in 8-sided, 12-sided, turban,

and turk's-head shapes.⁷¹ The turk's-head mold is illustrated in Treasury of American Design, fig. 1756.

The two varieties of beaters popular at the time are illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, pp. 98 and 102. The "Dover Eggbeater", patented in 1878, had an iron crank and handle, and tinned blades. Patented in 1868, the "Lightning Cream Whip and Eggbeater" was a two piece cylindrical object of heavy tin plate and an iron handle. The latter was referred to as a syllabub churn.

Small egg separators were frequently give-away items and they are often found embossed with mid-century trademarks.⁷² Egg drainers resembled skimmers and came in a wide variety of materials.

A variety of wooden mashers were found in both 18th and 19th century kitchens, whereas the wire potato masher was not invented until the 1850's. This utensil had a hardwood handle with either a square or round wire head. A mid-century potato masher is illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, p. 152.

Another Victorian invention was the tin sifter that, with slight modifications, was the same sifter that is used today. Louise K. Lantz described a tin sifter, patented in 1866, that

71. Lantz, Old American Kitchenware, p. 108.

72. Ibid., p. 103.

was a combination scoop and sifter.⁷³

Three separate linen dishcloths, hemmed and looped, should be hung from nails directly above the sink. This arrangement was recommended by Catharine Beecher. The three cloths were for normal use; greasy dishes; and pots. An additional swab of linen strips tied to a stick was recommended for "nice dishes".⁷⁴

Handsoap was also part of Mrs. Beecher's well-planned kitchen.

A wooden towel rack with a roller-type linen towel should be hung to the right of the sink unit.

North Cupboard--Accessories

flat copper measure

antique

2 cup measures, tin

antiques

spice kit, tin, or tin and wood

antique

7 tin canisters

antiques

3 large tin boxes

antiques

73. Ibid., p. 215.

74. Beecher cited in, Harrison, The Kitchen in History, p. 55.

7 mason jars	<u>antiques</u>
scoop-type balance scales	<u>antique</u>
box-type coffee grinder	<u>antique</u>
kraut cutter	<u>antique</u>
cast-iron apple parer	<u>antique</u>
cast-iron or cast brass pie crimper	<u>antique</u>
salt box (collection, William H. Taft NHS)	<u>antique</u>
mortar and pestle, cast-iron or soapstone	<u>antique</u>
3 cast steel food choppers, with wooden handles	<u>antiques</u>
2 tin graters	<u>antiques</u>
ice tongs, iron	<u>antique</u>
ice pick	<u>antique</u>
ice shaver, iron	<u>antique</u>
ice chisel	<u>antique</u>
tinned steel ice cream dipper	<u>antique</u>
ice cream freezer	<u>antique</u>

rolling pin, wooden or pottery	<u>antique</u>
2 wooden bowls	<u>antiques</u>
wooden scoop	<u>antique</u>
lignum vitae butter mold	<u>antique</u>
wooden cake board	<u>antique</u>
white cedar butter churn with crank handle	<u>antique</u>
goose feather duster	<u>antique</u>
5 strings of dried apples (winter only)	<u>reproduction</u>

In his Nineteenth Century Modern (fig. 99), Herwin Schaefer illustrated a streamlined flat copper measure as exemplary of the changes in utilitarian design that occurred around 1850. The changes were dictated in part by new methods of manufacture. Tin, for example, had been used in moderation during the first half of the century but, by 1850, it displaced wood as the standard material for kitchen utensils. The several storage containers on the north shelves are a case in point.

A transitional maple and tin spice kit (c. 1865), made by the Patent Package Co. of Newark, New Jersey, is pictured in Nineteenth Century Modern, fig. 167. Later spice kits

were made entirely in tin. They were either round or oblong and held six to seven small tin boxes.⁷⁵ Either type would be appropriate in the Taft kitchen.

The new tin spice kits were followed by canisters made of tin for sugar, flour, biscuit, tea, coffee, and cleaning agents. One of the essential cleaning agents, used every week for cleaning silver, was ground hartshorn powder.⁷⁶

Large bread, cake, and cheese boxes, either square or round, were also produced. Usually, these containers were japanned or carried stenciled labels. Mrs. Beeton recommended either white or japanned tin canisters that should be, "lettered in front," only "if necessary . . . to distinguish them."⁷⁷

Food was now preserved in glass rather than earthenware. A mason jar, manufactured in Muncie, Indiana and dated 1858, is illustrated in Nineteenth Century Modern, fig. 184.

19th century recipes were written by weight rather than volume and a set of scales was therefore essential to the Victorian kitchen. The scoop-type balance scale best suited to household use is illustrated in Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management, fig. 20.

75. Lantz, Old American Kitchenware, p. 226.

76. Harrison, The Kitchen in History, p. 117.

77. Beeton, The Book of Household Management, p. 30.

The scores of kitchen appliances conceived in the second half of the 19th century rendered Victorian kitchens as complex as the modern kitchen. Among these were coffee grinders, kraut cutters, and the cherry pitter that is exhibited on the central work table. Wooden coffee mills with ornamental cast-iron surfaces are illustrated in Hornung's Treasury of American Design, figs. 1790, 1792, and 1796. All dated from the 1850's upwards. Fig. 1792 is a mill that received especially wide distribution, made by the Enterprise Manufacturing Co., of Philadelphia.

Kraut cutters were oblong wooden frames with one or two metal cutting blades inserted at an angle.

A cast-iron apple parer, made in 1856 by Lockey & Howland of Leominster, Massachusetts, is illustrated in Nineteenth Century Modern, fig. 115. This new labor saving device appeared in Winslow Homer's Fall Games-The Apple Bee that was reproduced in the December 24, 1859 issue of Harper's Weekly.

There is a pottery salt box with wooden lid in the collection of the William H. Taft NHS that should be used in the refurnished kitchen (figure 23, acc. # 373). The box is decorated with a blue and white delft pattern.

The 19th century food choppers pictured in Treasury of American Design, fig. 1734 and 1755, are almost identical in shape to the "Mincing Knives" advertised in 1910 by the Biddle

Hardware Company of Philadelphia. The latter are illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, pp. 70-71.

Ice picks and chisels were made of cast steel with hard-wood or cast-iron handles. The cone-shaped ice cream dipper common in the 19th century is illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, p. 137. It was made of seamless tinned steel with extracting knives of steel or German silver.

Ice cream freezers were first patented in America in 1848.⁷⁸ An 1889 model advertised by The Gooch Freezer Co., of Cincinnati, is illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, p. 129.

Rolling pins were usually wooden although pottery or china rolling pins enjoyed a brief period of popularity during the Victorian era. The latter were decorated with delft or Meissen patterns.

The wooden bowls and scoop go hand in hand with the butter churn that sits to one side of the shelves. Churned butter was scooped into a wooden bowl where it was worked in order to extract the water.⁷⁹ By the second half of the 19th century, the plunger churn had been largely displaced by the crank, cylinder churn. The latter was manufactured in white cedar bound by iron hoops. A late model (1910) of this churn

78. Lantz, Old American Kitchenware, p. 129.

79. Ibid., p. 63.

made by the Biddle Hardware Company is illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, p. 65.

A feather duster should sit on top of the cupboard and, during the winter months, five strings of apples, pared, cored, and sliced, will hang from linen threads in the northwest corner of the kitchen.⁸⁰

Kitchen Table--Accessories

cast-iron cherry pitter

antique

2 cast-iron or soapstone flatirons, on cast-iron stands

antiques

cast-iron fluting iron

antique

washboard

antique

Cherry pitters were made of tinned or japanned cast-iron. The cherry pitter clamped to the kitchen table should duplicate the "Enterprise Cherry Stoner No. 1" made in 1883 by the Enterprise Manufacturing Company of Philadelphia. It is reproduced in Schaefer's, Nineteenth Century Modern, fig. 116.

All other items on the work table are laundry devices. Two flatirons sit on cast-iron stands. 19th century flatiron holders were usually made in the shape of hand mirrors and,

80. This practice is described in, Lantz, Old American Kitchenware, p. 38.

during the 1850's and 60's, they were often decorated with Jenny Lind motifs such as those reproduced in Treasury of American Design, figs. 1811 and 1813. The fluting, or crimping, iron consisted of two cast-iron, corrugated parts with a wooden handle. The "Geneva Hand Fluter", patented 1866, in Geneva, Illinois, was advertised in the 1883 catalogue of the U. S. Stamping Company (Portland, Connecticut). The catalogue page is reproduced in Old American Kitchenware, p. 81.

A washboard sits on one of the "kitchen" Windsor chairs. The prototype is an 1850 wooden-framed board with a Rockingham pottery scrubber illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, p. 246.

West Cupboard--Accessories

Nanking ware	<u>antiques</u>
2 pieces britannia ware	<u>antiques</u>
German silver dinner bell	<u>antique</u>
3 blown-in-the-mold glass nursing bottles	<u>antiques</u>
1 pair brass candlesticks	<u>antiques</u>
2 astral lamps	<u>antiques</u>
rectangular case clock, on wall shelf	<u>antiques</u>

Charles P. Taft (William Howard Taft's son) has in his possession several pieces of underglaze blue willow-pattern

ware that was given to him by William H. Taft's sister, Fanny (figure 24). A plate from this collection was immediately identified by the Curator of Decorative Art at the Cincinnati Art Museum as the Nanking ware that was produced in the Chinese province of Ching-Te-Chen throughout the second half of the 19th century.⁸¹ The Nanking pattern is distinguishable by its closely latticed network border with a small ornament at the center of each mesh of the network, and by spearheads at the inside edge of the border. While Nanking ware was slightly higher priced than the similar Canton ware, both were inexpensive and considered by socially conscious Victorians appropriate for kitchen use only.⁸²

Mr. Taft's collection includes several plates, cups and saucers, and serving pieces. Reproductions of Nanking ware are easily obtainable should it be impossible to acquire this set from Mr. Taft.

Additional items displayed in the dish cupboard include two serving pieces in britannia ware. Britannia bears a close resemblance to pewter (britannia is composed of tin and antimony with some zinc, brass, and copper) and was frequently

81. Mr. Taft showed me the dishes when I visited him on February 14, 1975. At that point he seemed willing to donate them to the National Park Service. Sam Witherup, Park technician at the William H. Taft NHS, took one of the plates to Dr. Macht at the Cincinnati Art Museum for identification.

82. Jean McClure Nudge, Chinese Export Porcelain for the American Trade, 1785-1835 (Wilmington: University of Delaware Press, 1962), p. 140.

found in the form of 19th century vegetable dishes. It was often engraved.

German silver (actually copper, nickel, and zinc) was also popular with the Victorians. It was very common in dinner bells.

Early glass nursing bottles were usually flask-shaped. The 1872 "Burr's Patent Nursing Bottle", illustrated in Old American Kitchenware, p. 167, should be used as a prototype for the three bottles in the dish cupboard.

In her Book of Household Management, Mrs. Beeton spoke of the daily process of cleaning, filling, and trimming the oil lamps in a Victorian house.⁸³ The two astral lamps sitting on the lower shelf of the dish cupboard are intended to represent this process. These lamps should be similar to the parlor astral lamp (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 19th-Century America, fig. 82). Additional lighting equipment stored in the dish cupboard includes two brass candlesticks.

Mrs. Beeton considered a clock essential to the efficient operation of a Victorian kitchen. A kitchen clock was especially useful in keeping the hired help honest:

There is nothing fitter to be under lock and key than the clock; for however true to time, when not interfered with, it is often made to bear false testimony.⁸⁴

83. Beeton cited in, Harrison, The Kitchen in History, p. 116.

84. Ibid., p. 105.

The prototype for the kitchen clock is the shelf clock in an 1859 kitchen pictured in Americans at Home, Pl. 88. This clock matches the veneered frame, rectangular case clocks, with decorated glass panels, that are reproduced in Treasury of American Design, figs. 1016 and 1058.

The clock sits on a carved wall shelf located to the right of the dish cupboard. The prototype is one of the shelf types from the Abernathy, North, & Orrison catalogue that was prescribed for the parlor (see figure 43).

Southeast Corner--Accessories

2 sleds	<u>antiques</u>
row of bells	<u>reproduction</u>
broom	<u>antique</u>
bent wire rug beater, with wooden handle	<u>antique</u>
fly swatter	<u>antique</u>
potted ivy	<u>reproduction</u>
wooden barrel with iron hoops	<u>antique</u>

Sledding appears to have been an important facet of the Taft boys' childhood. Many winter afternoons were spent sliding down the hill that led from the Taft house on Mt. Auburn into

the city, a route that Alphonso Taft considered very dangerous. In 1856, Charlie and Kossy were using sleds made by their grandfather. By the time William Howard Taft was old enough to enjoy the sport, sleds had become luxury items made scarce by the Civil War. In 1864, it was mentioned that the neighbor boys had contrived "boxes & runners" to ride on.

The two sleds hanging from nails in the southeast corner of the kitchen should resemble the homemade sled (1874) pictured in Katharine M. McClinton's Antiques of American Childhood, p. 214. The painted sled was made of pine and poplar and had open runners that curved slightly upwards at the ends. This sled approximated a sled advertised in the 1877 Montgomery Ward catalogue. The runners on the latter ended in elaborate swans' heads.⁸⁵

An early Victorian kitchen in England was described with a row of bells on the wall, numbered as to room, that communicated with the rest of the house.⁸⁶ It will be remembered that bells were hung throughout the Taft house and a central bell system must, therefore, have been a feature of the Taft kitchen.

Decorative items were not spared even in the utilitarian

85. McClinton, Antiques of American Childhood, p. 213.

86. Harrison, The Kitchen in History, p. 102.

areas of a Victorian house. The kitchens illustrated in Pls. 88, 118, and 164, of Americans at Home all included either potted plants or bouquets, and, in one case, both. There should be a potted ivy sitting on the southeast windowsill.

The barrel located in the southeast corner represents the last vinegar barrel, the hoops of which burst in 1865.

Widow's Walk--Room Use

This area existed primarily for the enjoyment of Alphonso Taft although events such as Donati's Comet, in 1858, brought the entire family out onto the widow's walk. In time, Charles Taft also came to acquire an interest in astronomy.

There was an additional space just beneath the widow's walk that probably constituted the "little room at the top of the house" so often mentioned by Louise Taft. Only the widow's walk proper, however, will be refurnished and, as access to this area is infeasible for the average visitor, it will be refurnished only to an extent that is visible from the ground.

Widow's Walk--Furnishings

mounted telescope (summer only)

antique

Alphonso Taft's telescope was purchased in Cincinnati in 1851. Maintenance of the telescope, in 1877, consisted of the addition of a new celestial eye-piece, and the repairing, polishing, and lacquering of the rack.

Other equipment housed on the widow's walk included stereoscopes, spectacles, and, probably, the spyglasses that

were ordered by Alphonso at the onset of the Civil War.

Furnishings here will be restricted to summer display and will include only a mounted telescope. Prototypes exist in an 1848 catalogue of optical apparatus' put out by Benjamin Pike, Jr., of New York. This catalogue is in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution.

SECTION F

Installation, Protection, and
Maintenance of Furnishings

For the most part, the furnishings in the refurnished Taft house are antiques and will require a museum like environment for their maintenance. The most important single factor for the preservation of antique furniture is the maintenance of a constant relative humidity between 50 per cent and 65 percent, at temperatures from 60 to 75 degrees F. (16-25 degrees C.)⁸⁷

Wooden furniture and furnishing fabrics are particularly susceptible to damage from direct sunlight, and the sunlight must be carefully controlled by the venetian blinds in each of the refurnished rooms.

Many of the items in the William Howard Taft National Historic Site collection are in need of repair before installation. Specific problems were referred to in Section E of this report.

87. H. J. Plenderleith and A. E. A. Werner, The Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), passim.

Housecleaning

Before the advent of gas heat, soot and grime posed special problems to the 19th century housekeeper and, like most Victorian housewives, Louise Taft put a great deal of energy into her housecleaning. Major housecleaning at the Taft house coincided with the removal of the winter effects, in May, and of the summer items, in November. The process was thorough and included the cleaning of carpets, curtains, and mattresses. Furniture was often rearranged during these biannual purges and items needing repair or refurbishing were attended to.

The refurnished house will be maintained with constant vigilance rather than rigorous spring and fall cleanings. Furnishings should be thoroughly dusted and carpets vacuumed twice weekly. Heavily traveled areas, such as the hall and dining room, should be vacuumed daily. H. J. Plenderleith recommends the following furniture polish for the protective maintenance of antique furniture: 1 pint each of linseed oil, turpentine, and vinegar, and 1 teaspoon of methylated spirits.⁸⁸

The dining room silver will require polishing at least every other week.

88. Plenderleith and Werner, The Conservation of Antiquities, p. 141.

The installation and removal of seasonal items should occasion the thorough inspection, and necessary treatment, of all furnishings for damage or deterioration (antique wood, for instance, is vulnerable to the infiltration of insects). Also at this point carpets, draperies, and the birthroom linen should be cleaned.

Several items in the house require attention of a nature other than cleaning. All clocks should be kept in running order. The parlor fish must be fed daily and the plants throughout the house watered at least twice a week. Godey's Lady's Book suggested the following care of hanging plants:

. . . you must not forget to water it every few days, and, once in a while, the whole basket had better be dipped in a pail of water, which will make the moss perfectly green and fresh.⁸⁹

89. Godey's Lady's Book, 56 (1858), p. 455.

Appendix A
List of Cabinetmakers Operating in Cincinnati, Ohio
during the Period of 1840-1875*

Bonte, A. P. C., picture frames (1853-1870)
Cloesterman, Henry, chairs (until 1872)
Coolidge, John K. (until 1864)
DeCamp, John
Geyer, John (until 1867)
Hawkins, William
John, Squire James (until 1860)
Meador Furniture Co. (until 1885)
Mitchell & Rammelsburg (until 1914)
Morehouse, William, upholstery and cabinetware
Mudge, Enoch (originally Mudge and Clawson; became Enoch
Mudge Bedstead Manufactory, 1853-1877)
Orr, Arthur (until 1870)
Fogue & Jones
Richards, A. C.
Richards & Lyford (originally Shaw & Rettig; then Aaron
Shaw; then Shaw, Richards & Lyford)
Straus, A. & N.

* list, courtesy of Mrs. Clayton B. Sikes, Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio. Mrs. Sikes is in the process of compiling a dictionary of Cincinnati cabinetmakers.

Valentine & Hoffman (until 1878)

Wagner, Emile

Wiswell, William, mirrors and picture frames (until 1890)

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ILLUSTRATIONS

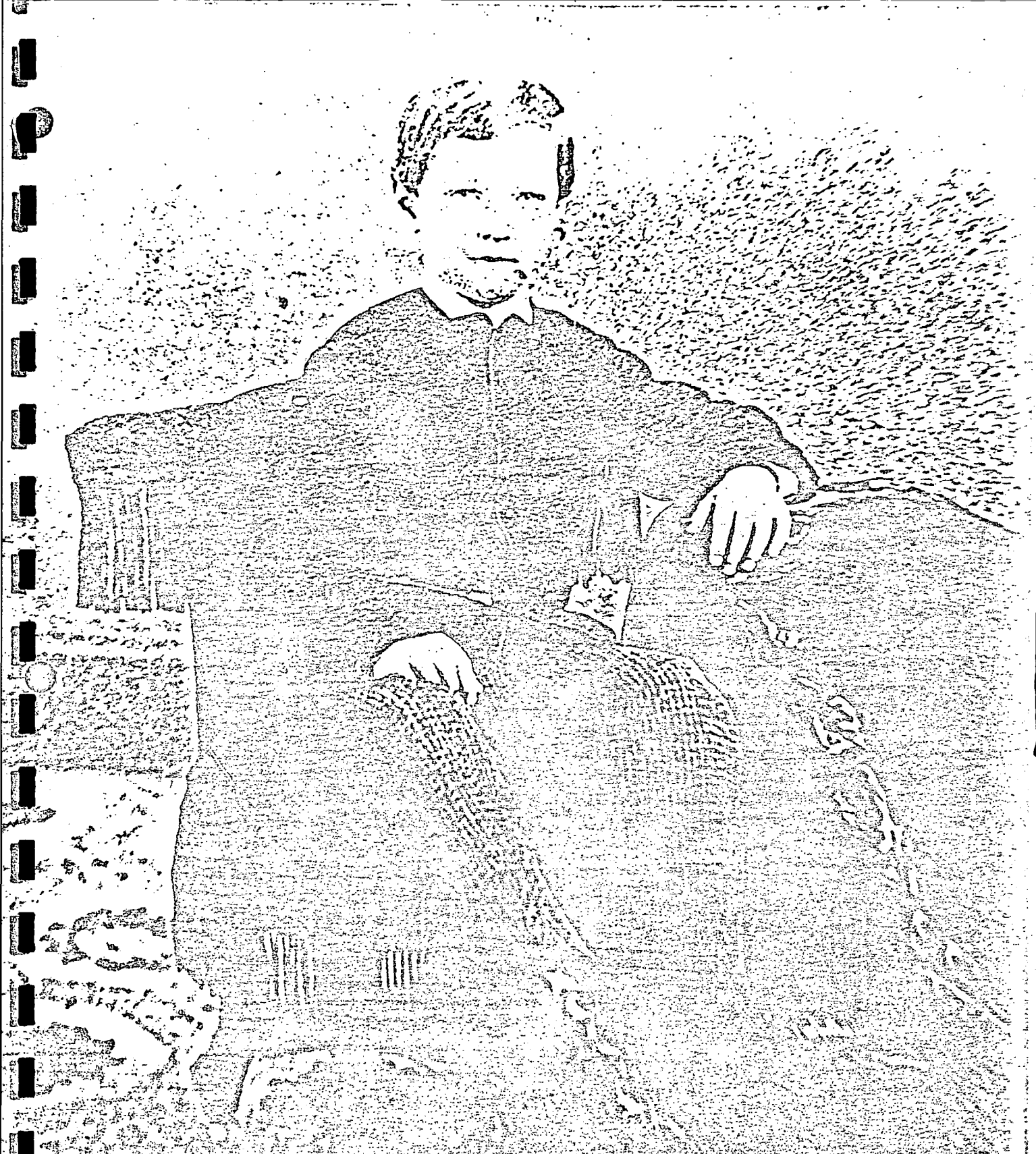
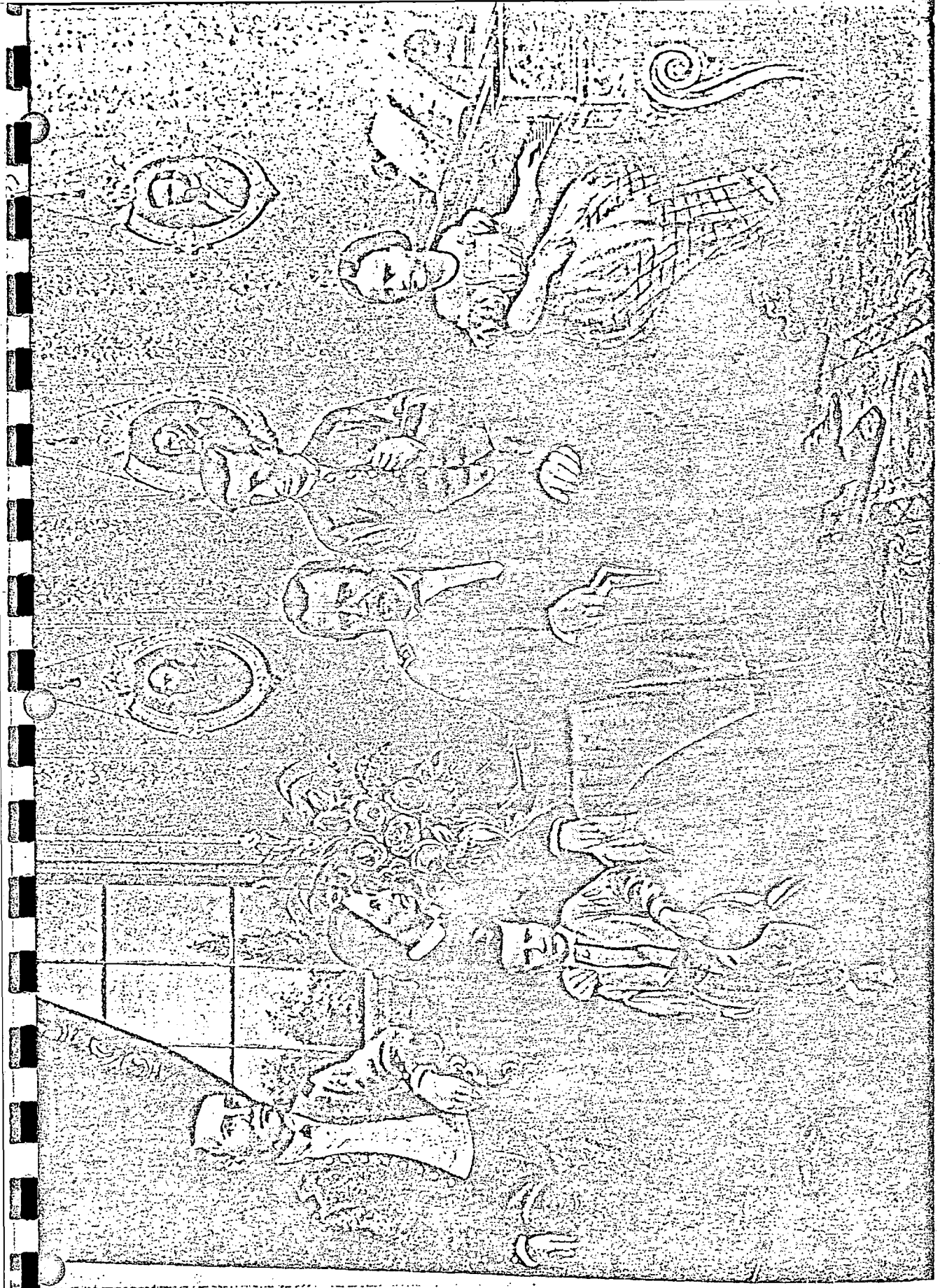


figure 1
William Howard Taft, Mt. Auburn, c. 1866
(photograph in collection of William H.
Taft NHS)



Grant family in Galena: Fred, Mrs. Grant, Jesse, General Grant, Ulysses S. Grant, 2nd, and Nellie.
Lithograph in Grant House, Galena.

figure 2

The Grant Family, c. 1865, lithograph
(photograph courtesy of U.S. Grant State)



figure 4
Venetian Blinds, Ann Arbor House, Greenfield
Village (photograph courtesy of Henry Ford
Museum and Greenfield Village, Dearborn,
Michigan)

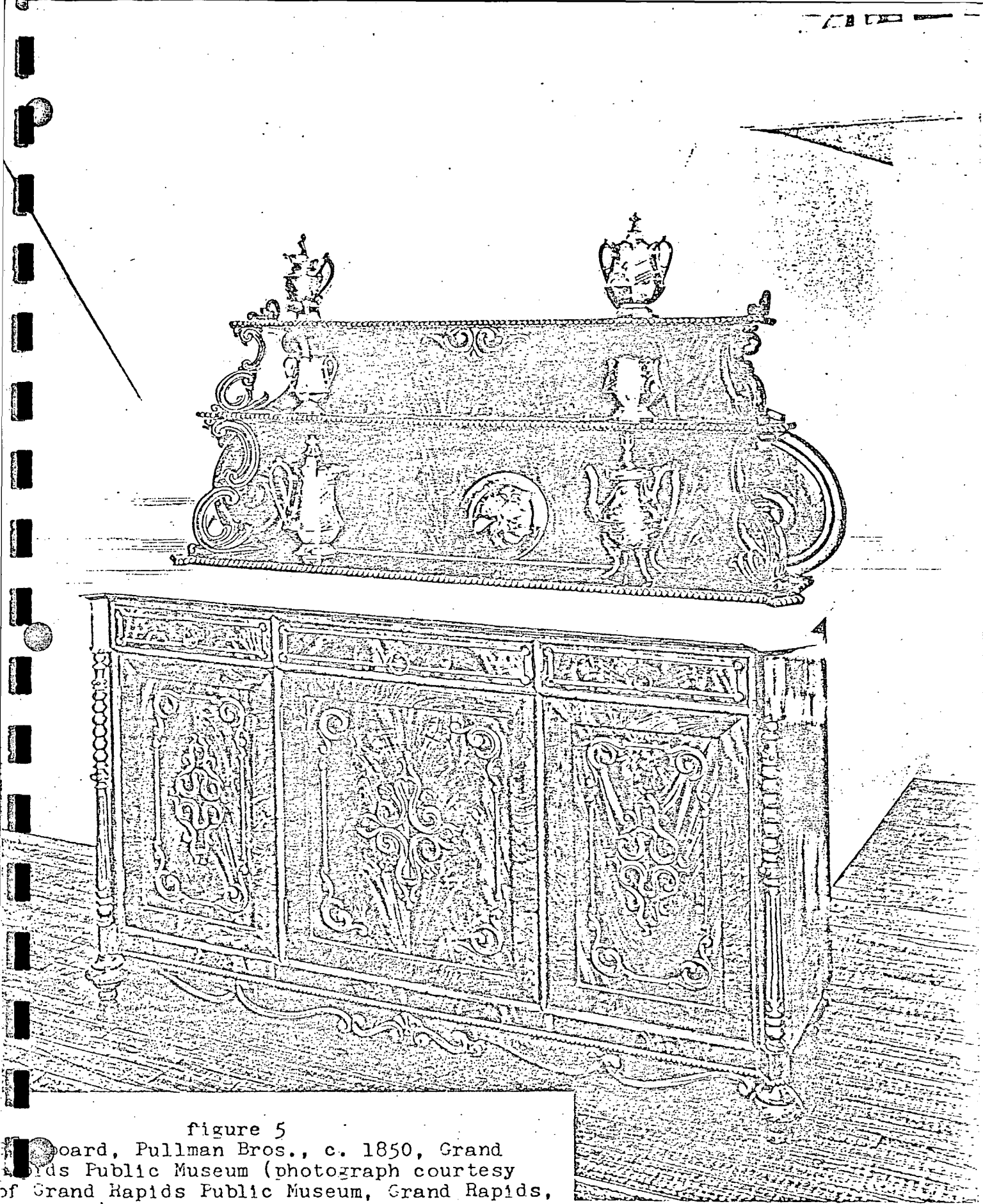


figure 5

board, Pullman Bros., c. 1850, Grand
Rapids Public Museum (photograph courtesy
of Grand Rapids Public Museum, Grand Rapids,
Michigan)

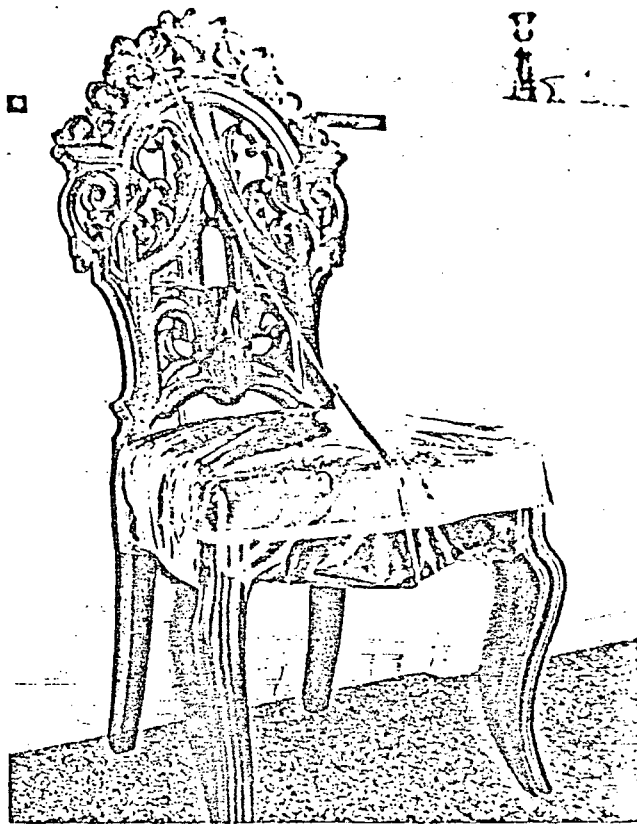


figure 6
Gothic chair, walnut, showing Rococo Revi-
val influences, Henry Ford Museum (acc. #
28.899.152)

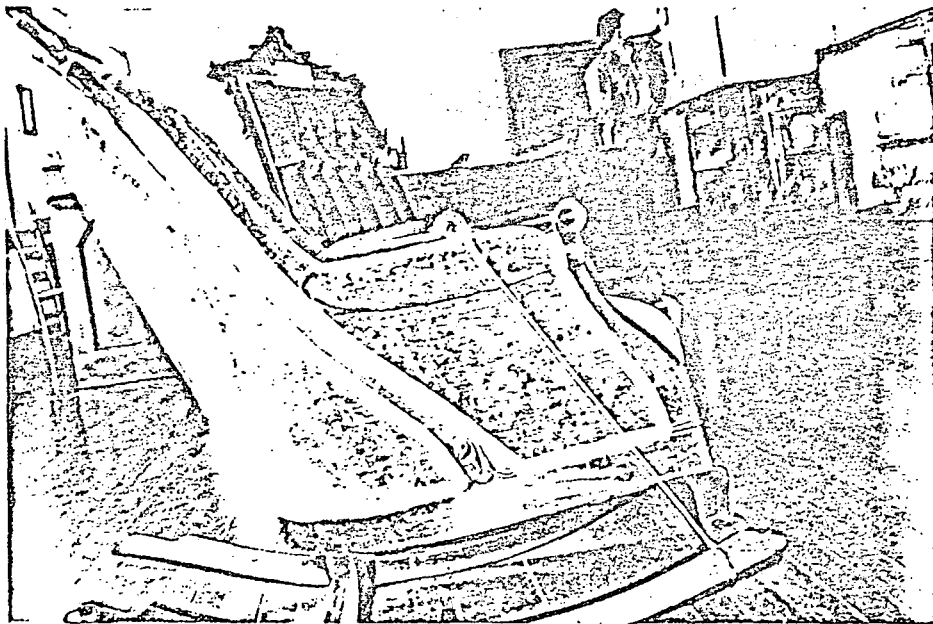


figure 7
"Sleepy Hollow" rocking chair, Shawnee
Mission, Kansas City, Kansas

figure 8
Louis XVI side chair, William H.
Taft NHS (acc. # 046) (photo-
graph courtesy of William H.
Taft NHS)

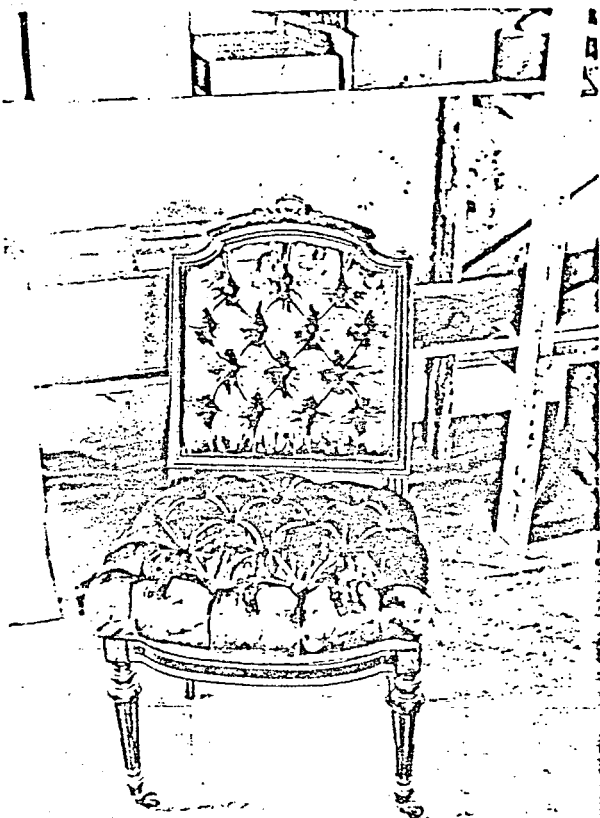
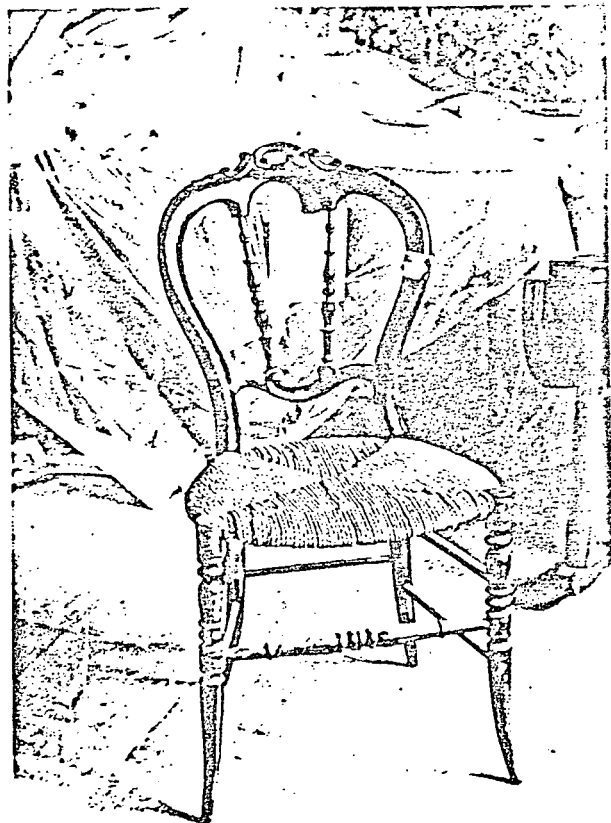


figure 9
balloon-back side chair,
oak, William H. Taft NHS
(acc. # 144) (photograph
courtesy of William H.
Taft NHS)



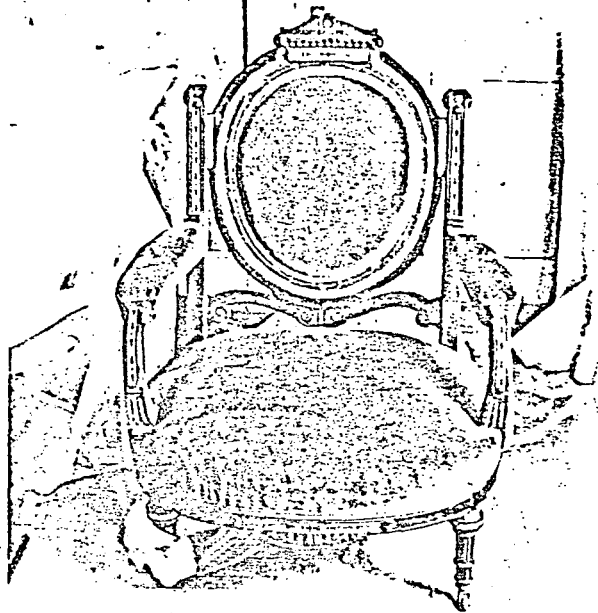


figure 10
Louis XVI armchair, William H. Taft NHS
(no Acc. #) (photograph courtesy of William
H. Taft NHS)



figure 11
maple settee, William H. Taft NHS (acc. #
014) (photograph courtesy of William H.
Taft NHS)

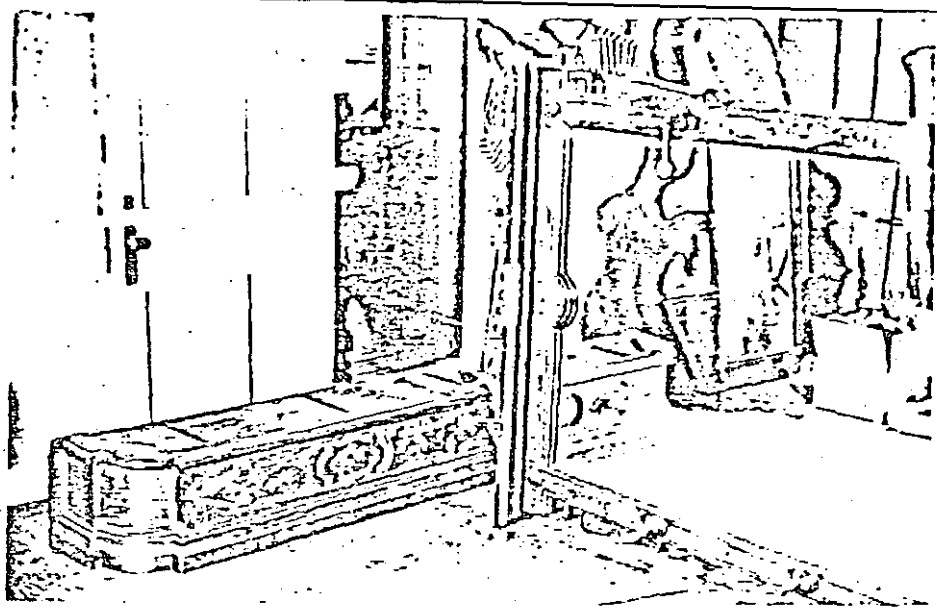
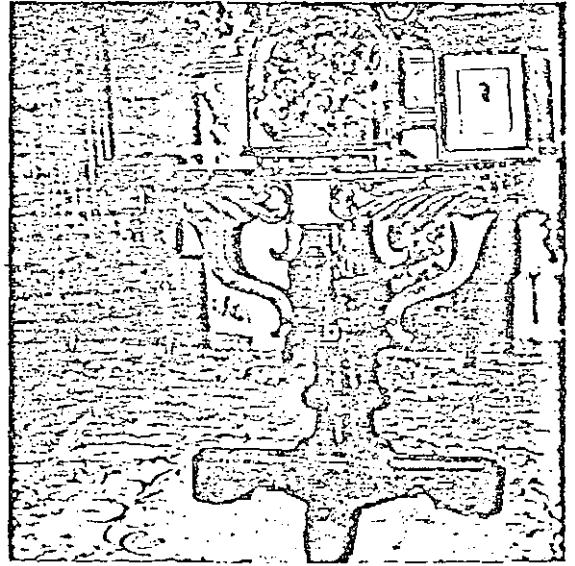


figure 12
console mirror in three pieces, William
H. Taft NHS (acc. #'s 027, 028, 029)
(photograph courtesy of William H. Taft
NHS)



figures 13 and 14
marble-topped pedestal table, S. J. John,
c. 1850, John Hauck House (acc. # 1970.89)
(photographs courtesy of Miami Purchase
Association, Cincinnati, Ohio)

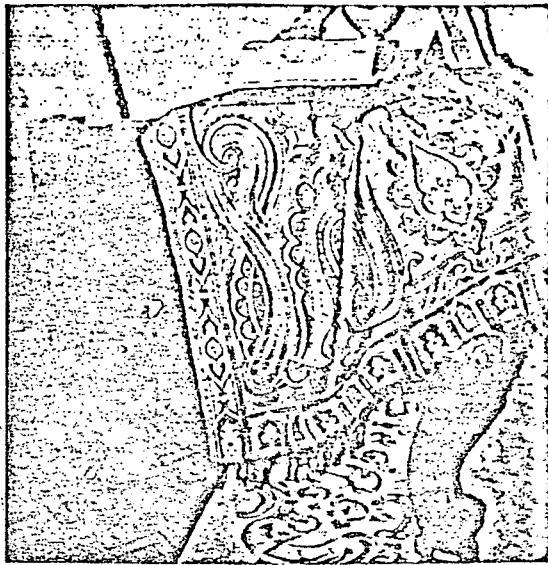


figure 15
fringed paisley shawl, John Hauck House
(photograph courtesy of Miami Purchase
Association)

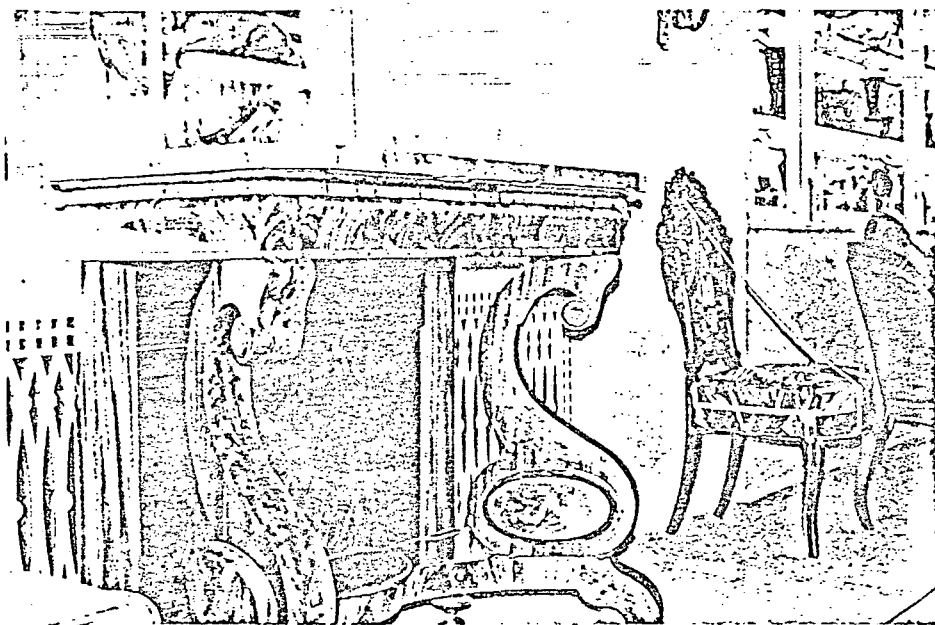


figure 16
pier table, mahogany veneer on pine, Henry
Ford Museum

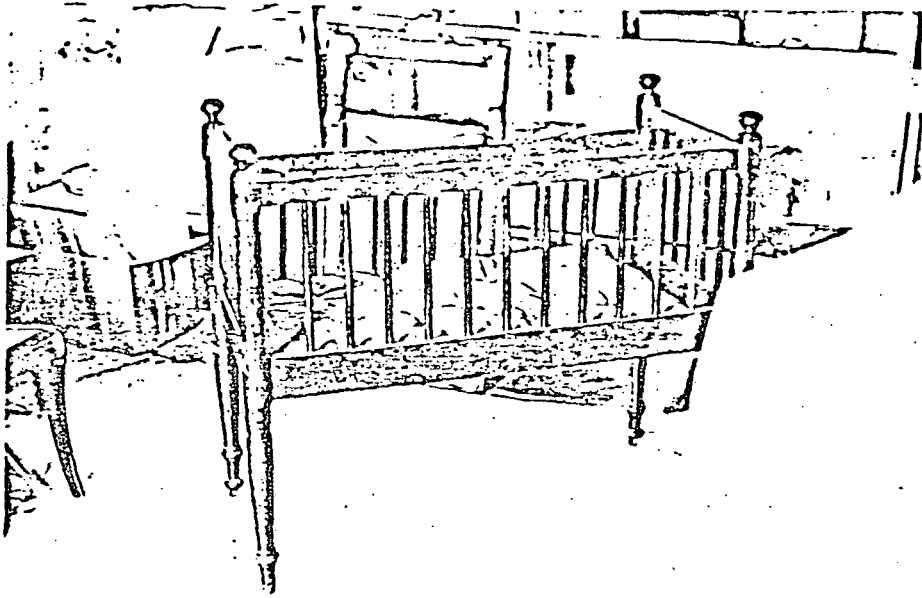


figure 17
walnut crib, William H. Taft NHS (acc. #
017) (photograph courtesy of William H.
Taft NHS)

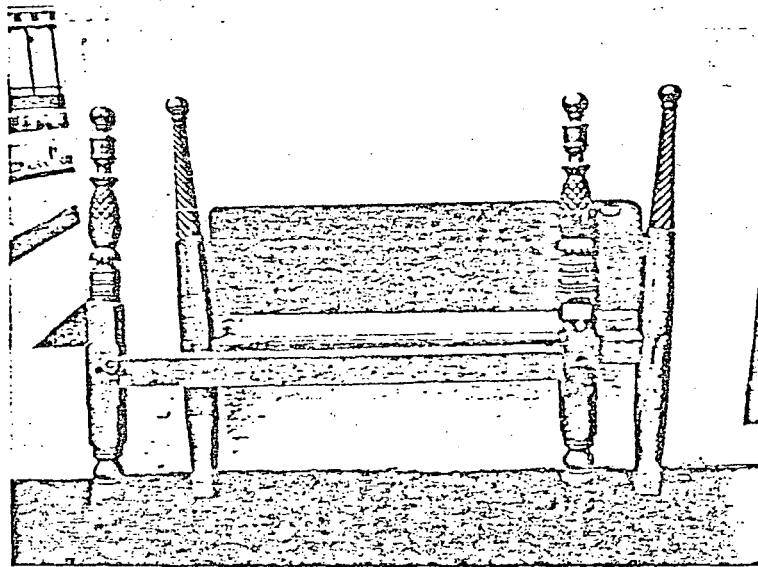


figure 18
maple headboard and footboard, William H.
Taft NHS (acc. #'s 023, 024) (photograph
courtesy of William H. Taft NHS)

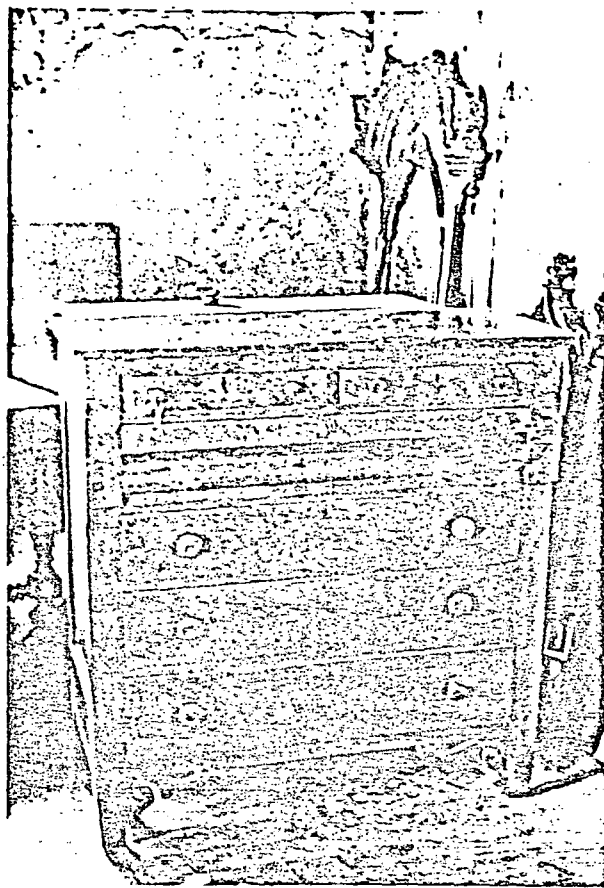


figure 19
walnut chest of drawers, William H. Taft
NHS (acc. # 008) (photograph courtesy of
William H. Taft NHS)

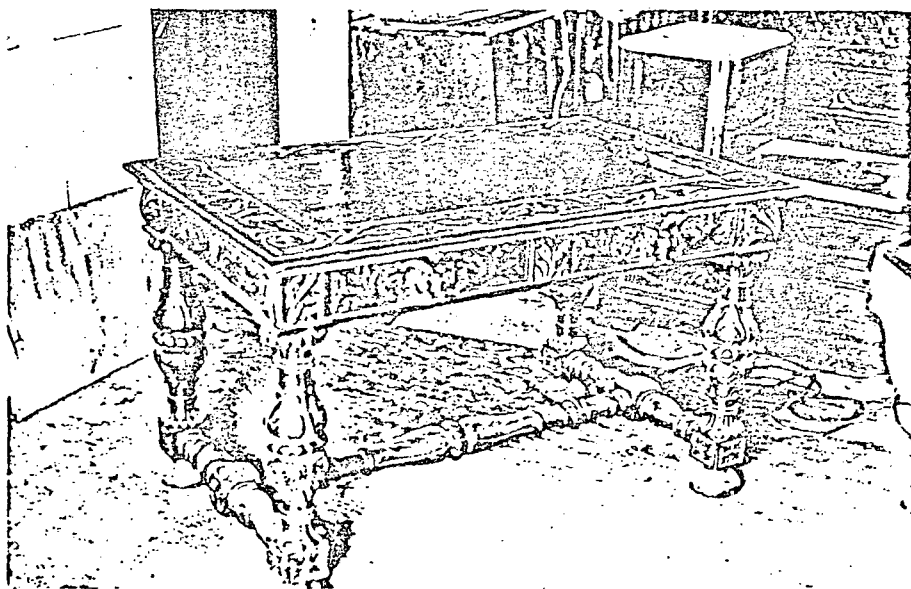
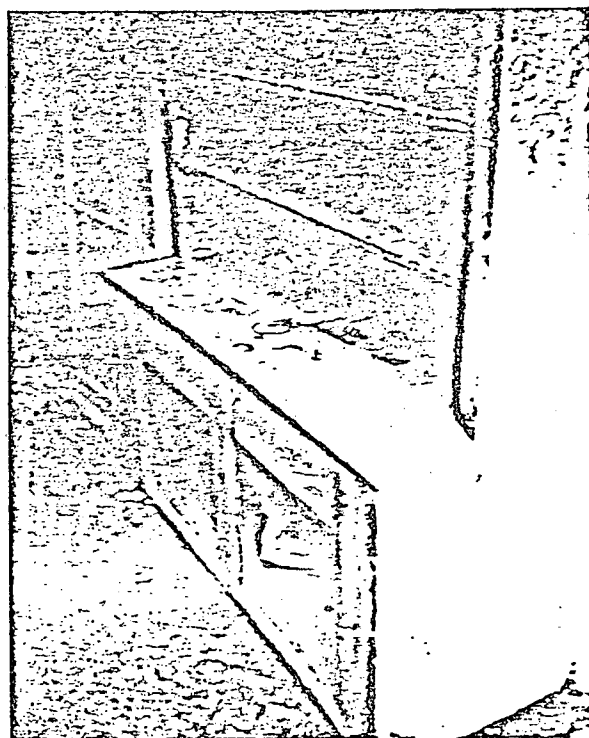
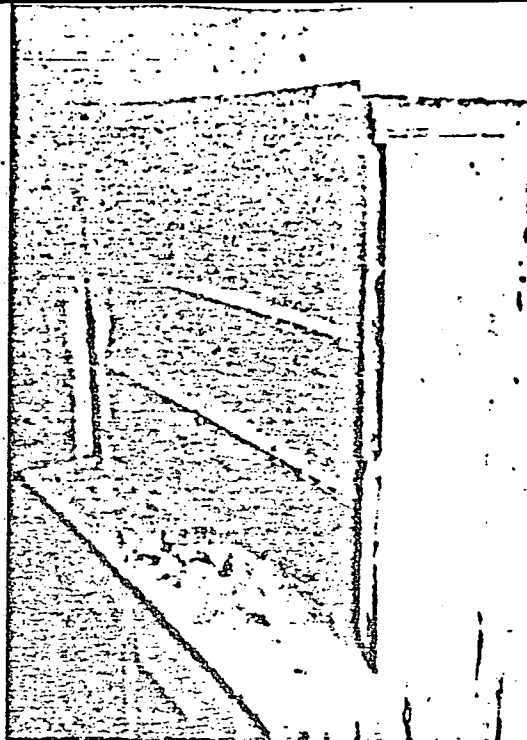


figure 20
table, Heinrich Fry, c. 1878, William H.
Taft NHS (acc. # 009) (photograph courtesy
of William H. Taft NHS)



figures 21 and 22
oak cupboard, William H. Taft NHS (no acc. #)
(photograph courtesy of William H. Taft NHS)

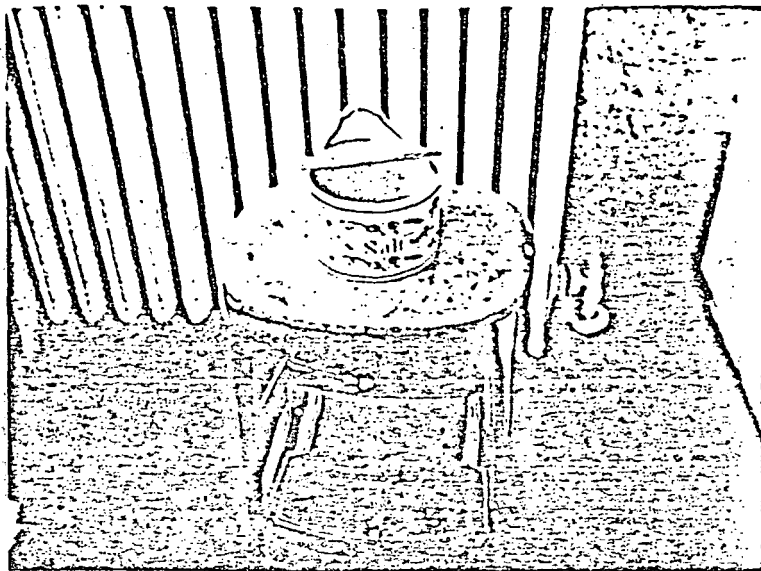


figure 23
salt box, William H. Taft NHS (acc. # 373)
(photograph courtesy of William H. Taft NHS)

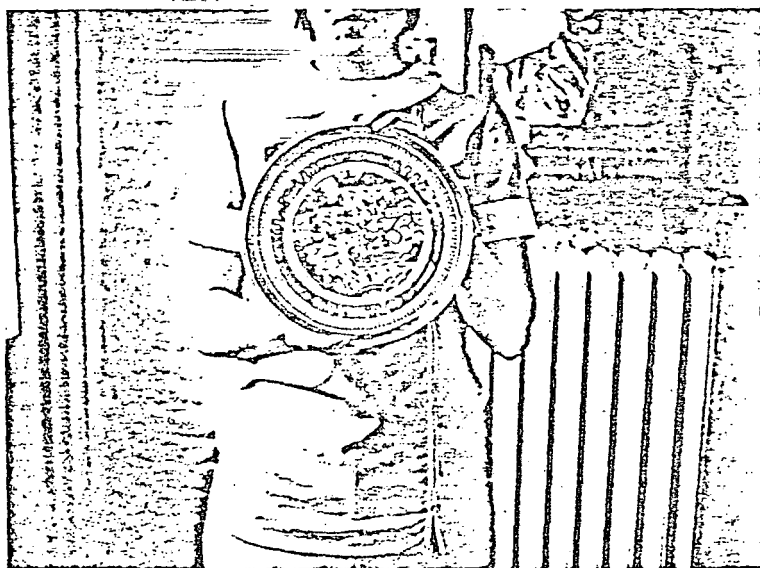


figure 24
willow pattern plate, Nanking, c. 1860,
privately owned by Mr. Charles P. Taft
(photograph courtesy of William H. Taft
NHS)

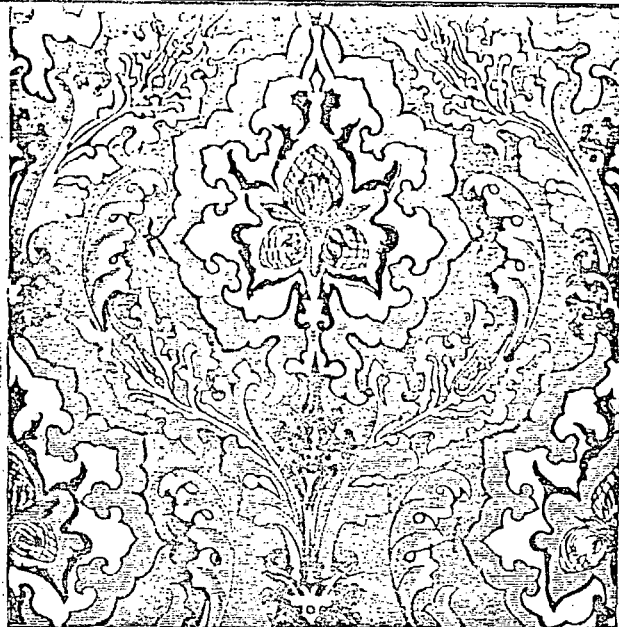


figure 25

design for a paper hanging, exhibited at the London Crystal Palace by Woollams of London, reproduced from, Gloag, The Crystal Palace Exhibition, p. 129

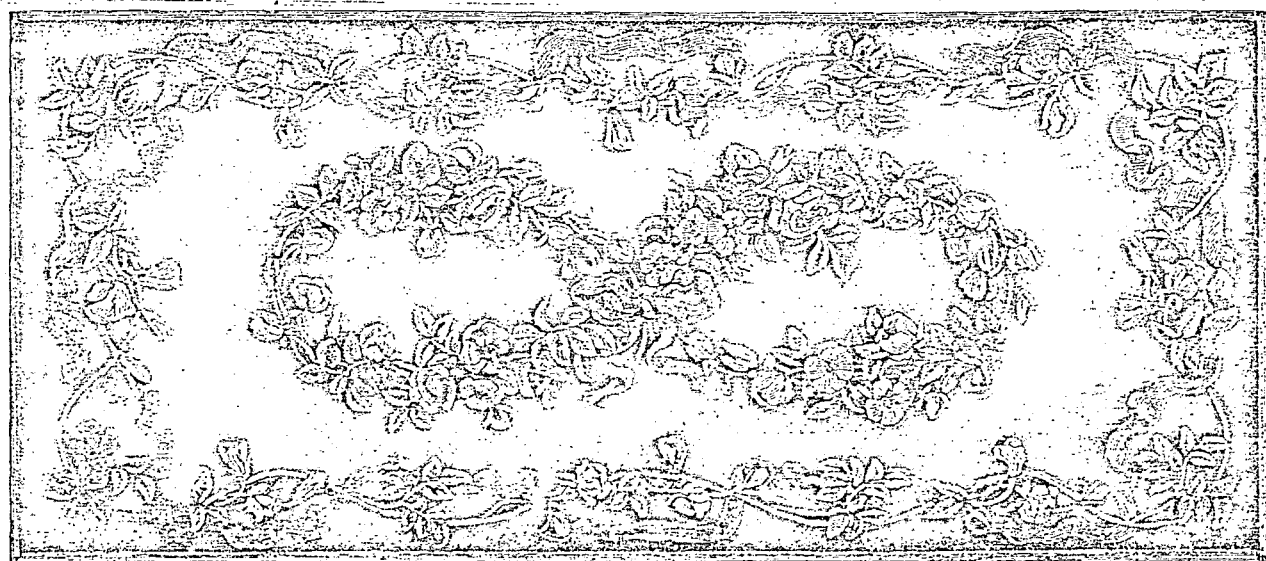
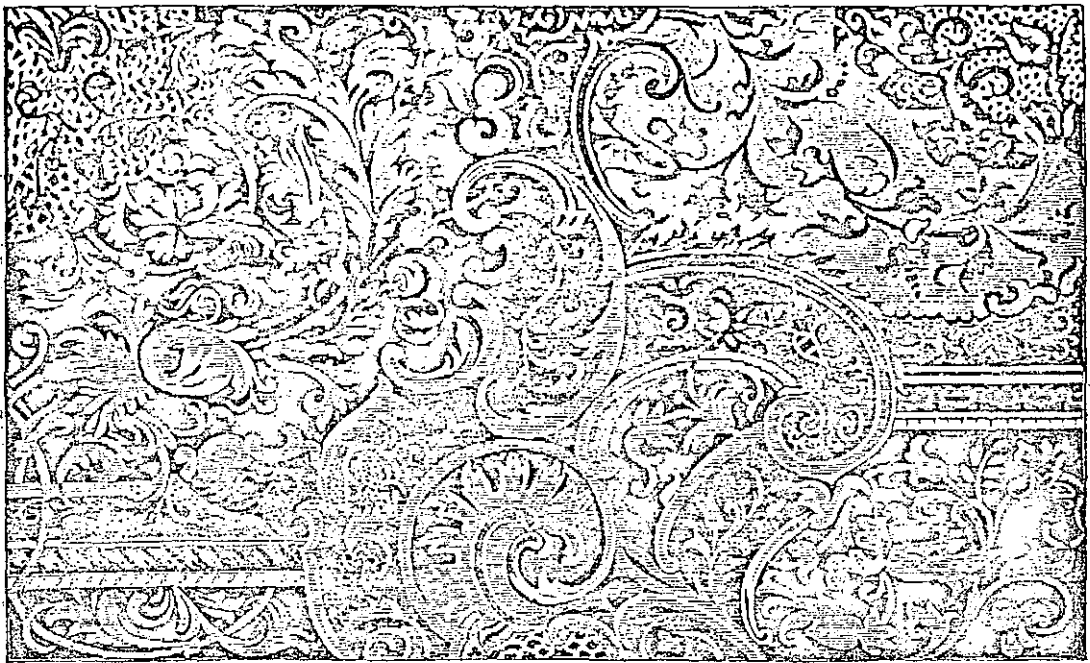


figure 26

design for a hearth-rug, exhibited at the London Crystal Palace by A. Lapworth & Co., of London (roses are red and white on a claret ground, with a white ribbon in the border), reproduced from, Gloag, The Crystal Palace Exhibition, p. 161.



figures 27 and 28
designs for Brussels carpets, exhibited at
the London Crystal Palace by Henderson & Co.,
of Durham, reproduced from Gloag, The Cryst-
tal Palace Exhibition, p. 42

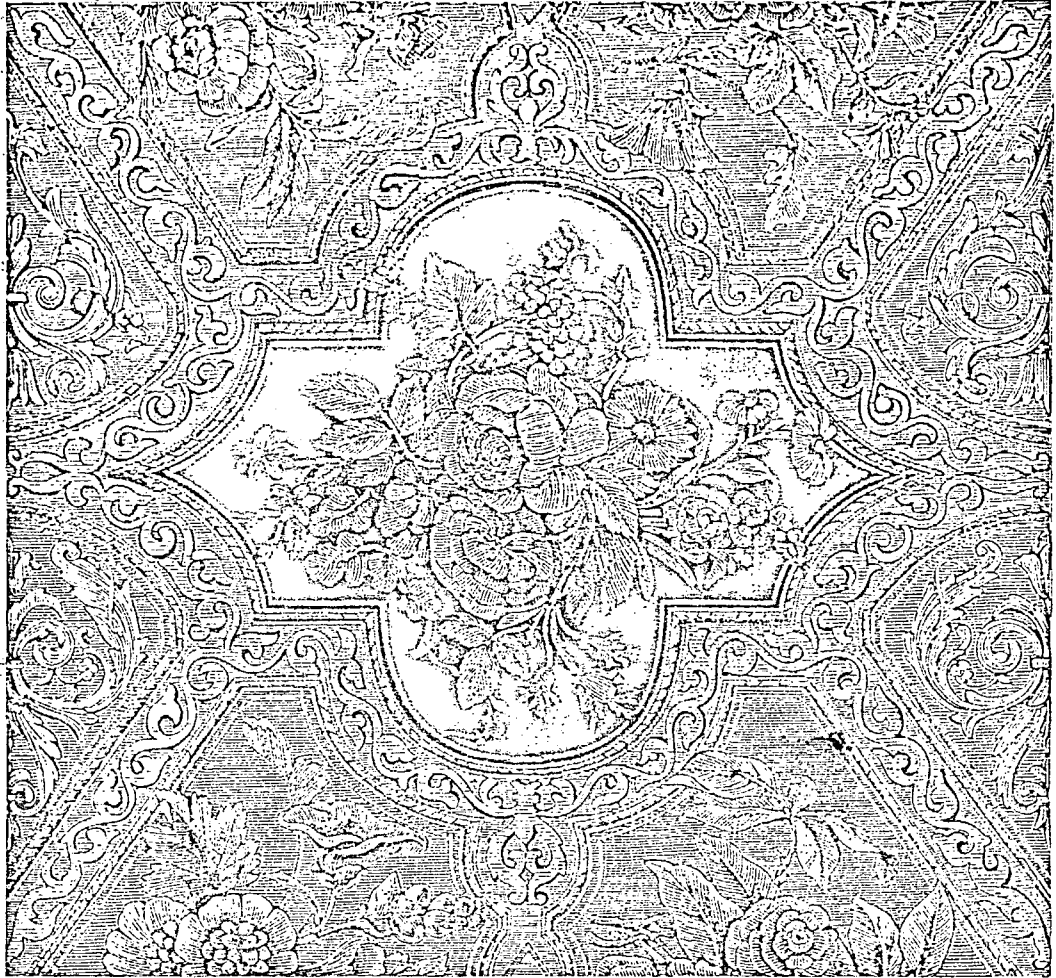
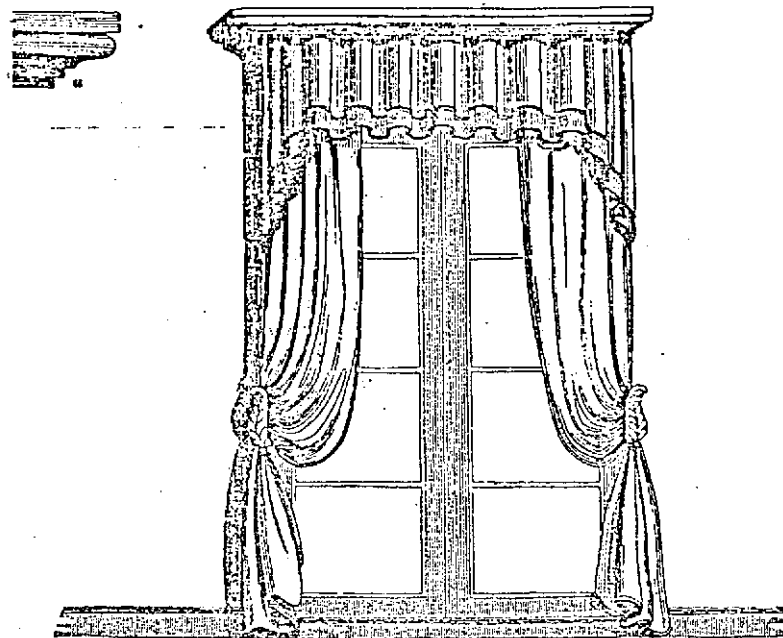


figure 29
design for a Brussels carpet, exhibited at
the London Crystal Palace by C. W. Dove & Co.,
of Leeds, reproduced from Gloag, The Crystal
Palace Exhibition, p. 246



figure 30
design for an Axminster carpet, exhibited at
the London Crystal Palace by A. Lapworth & Co.,
of London, reproduced from Gloag, The Crystal
Palace Exhibition, p. 161

710



711

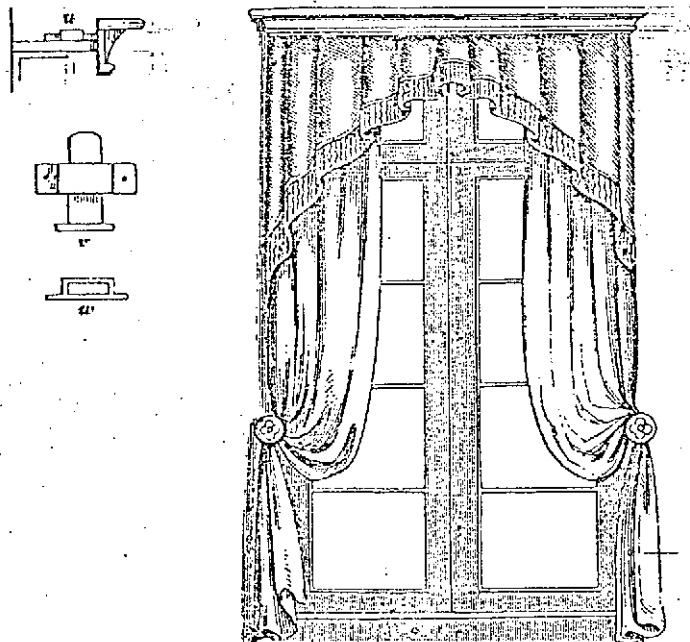
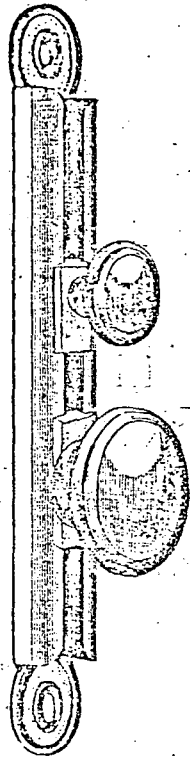
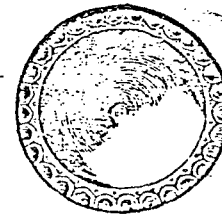


figure 31
window treatments, reproduced from
Furniture for the Victorian Home, p. 126

PICTURE NAILS.



WEDGE RACK PULLEYS.
For Endless Cord Fixtures.



PICTURE NAILS.

figure 32
picture nails, reproduced from "Abernathy,
North & Orrison" catalogue, p. 133.

JOSEPH MEEKS & SONS.
Manufacturers of Cabinet and Upholstery Goods
 43 & 45, Broad-Street,
 NEW YORK.

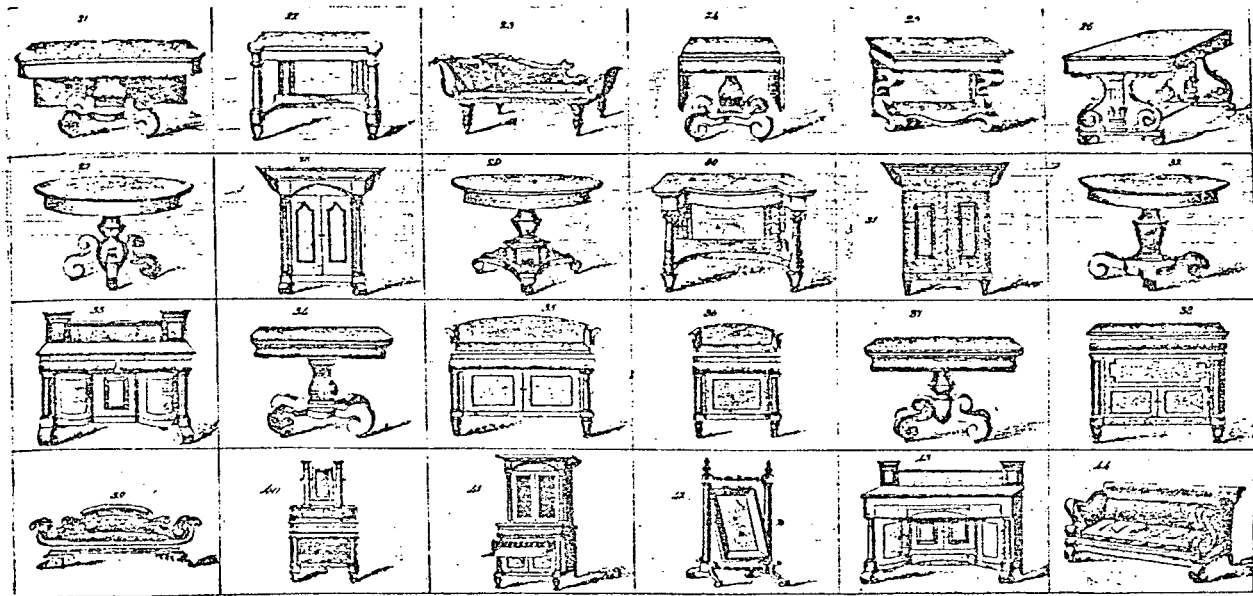


figure 33
 Joseph Meeks & Sons advertisement, 1833,
 reproduced from, Otto, American Furniture of
 the Nineteenth Century, pp. 114-15

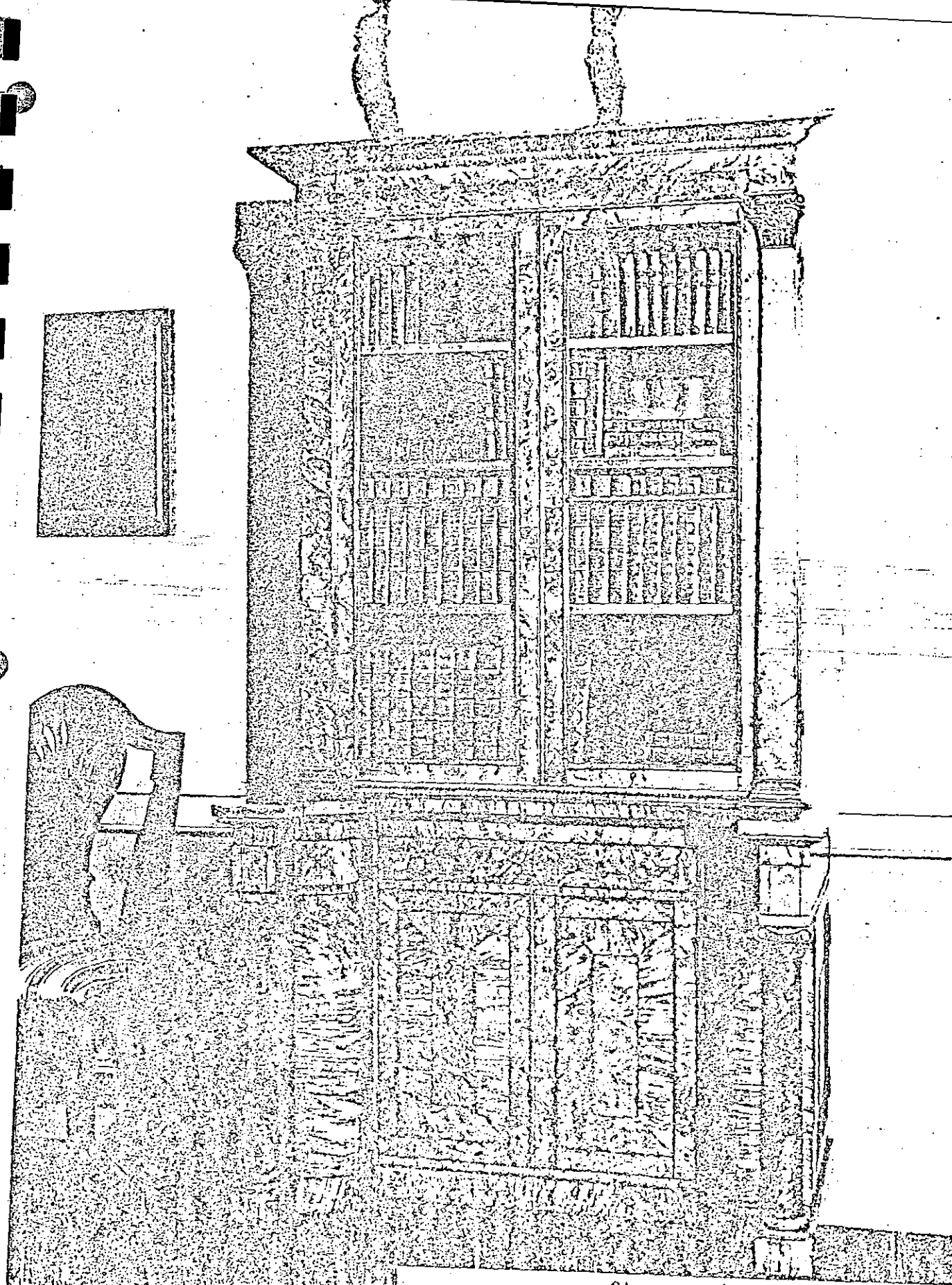


figure 34
secretary/bookcase, made in Cincinnati
by William Hawkins, Cincinnati Art Museum
(xerox courtesy of Henry Ford Museum)

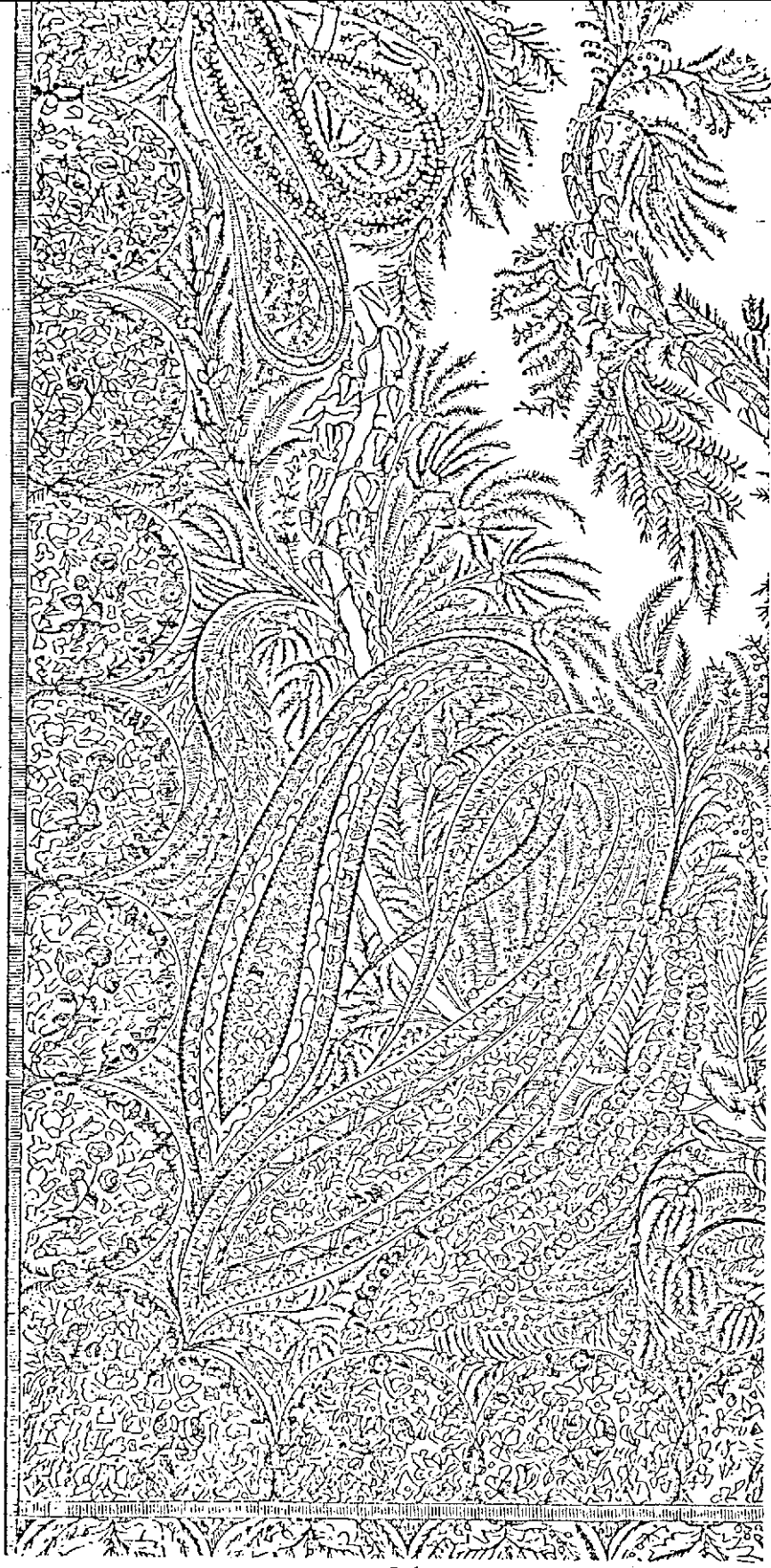
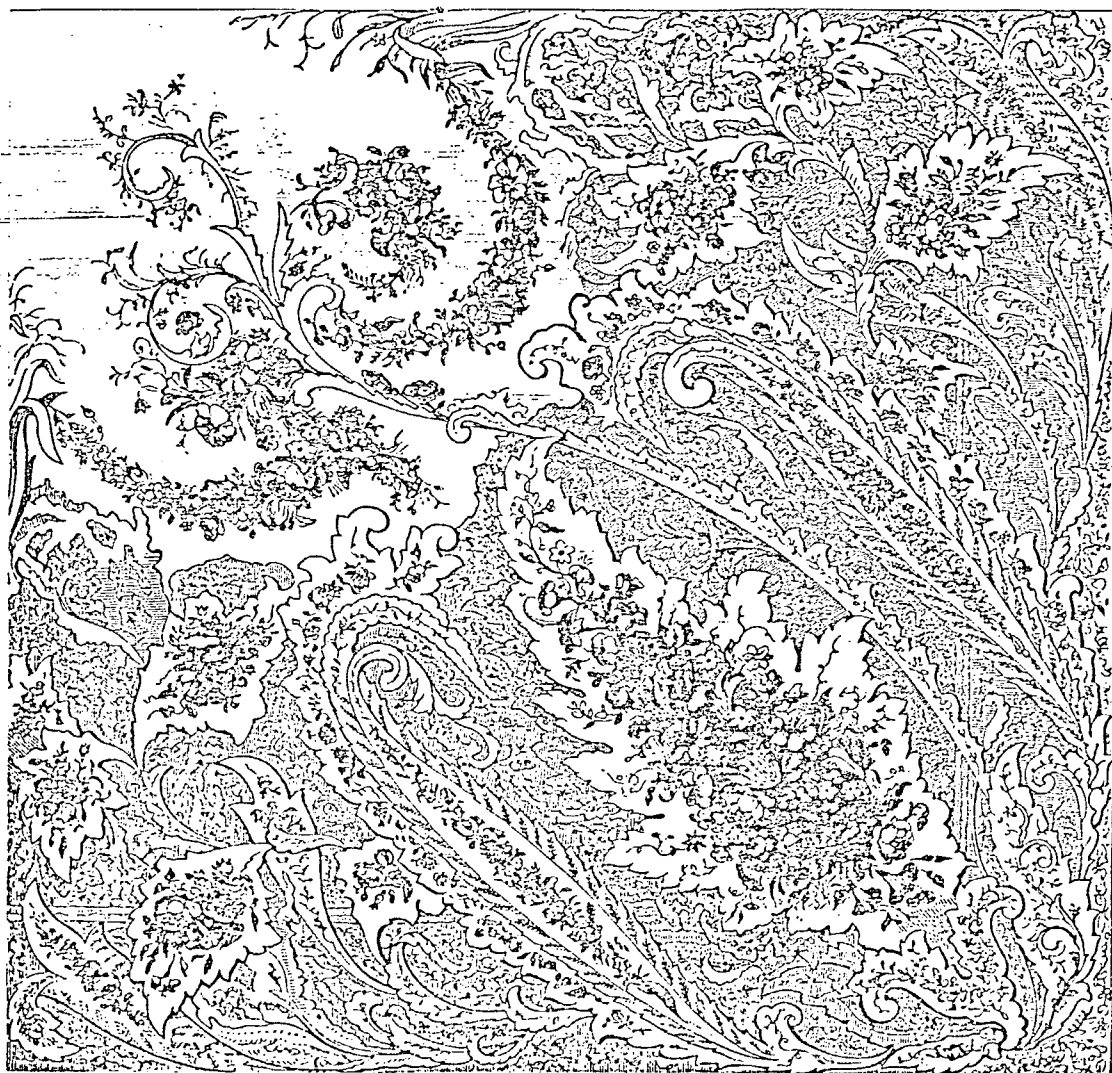


figure 35
pattern for shawl, designed at Paisley, 1851,
reproduced from, Lichten, Decorative Art of
Victoria's Era, p. 50



figures 36 and 37
designs for shawls, exhibited at the London
Crystal Palace by Blakely, of Norwich,
reproduced from, Glog, The Crystal Palace
Exhibition, p. 103

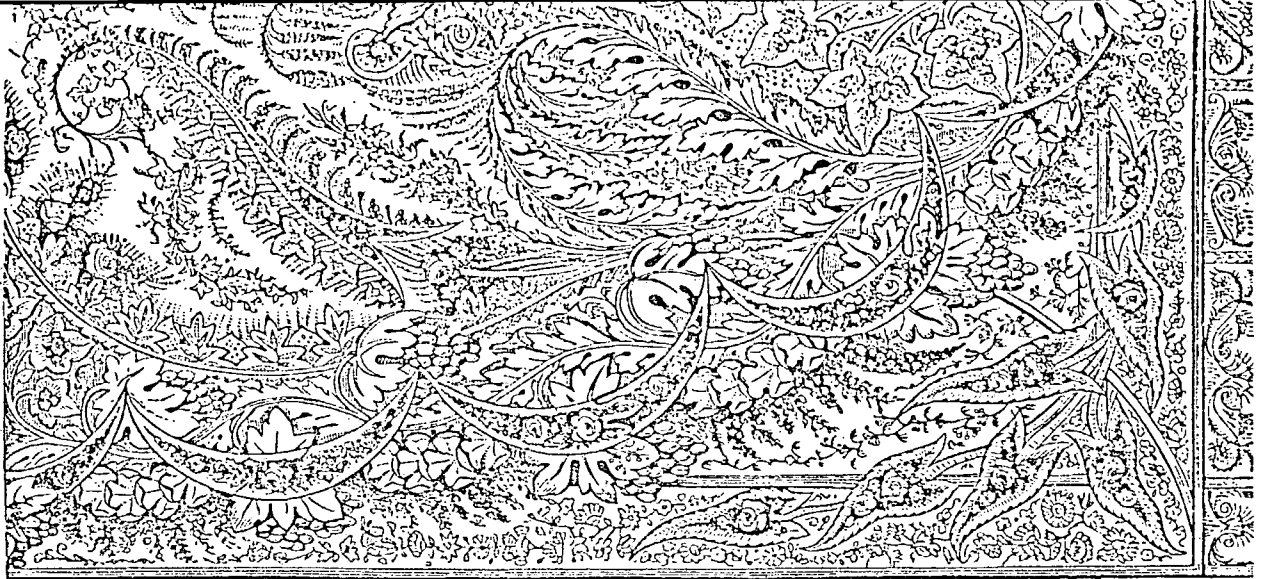
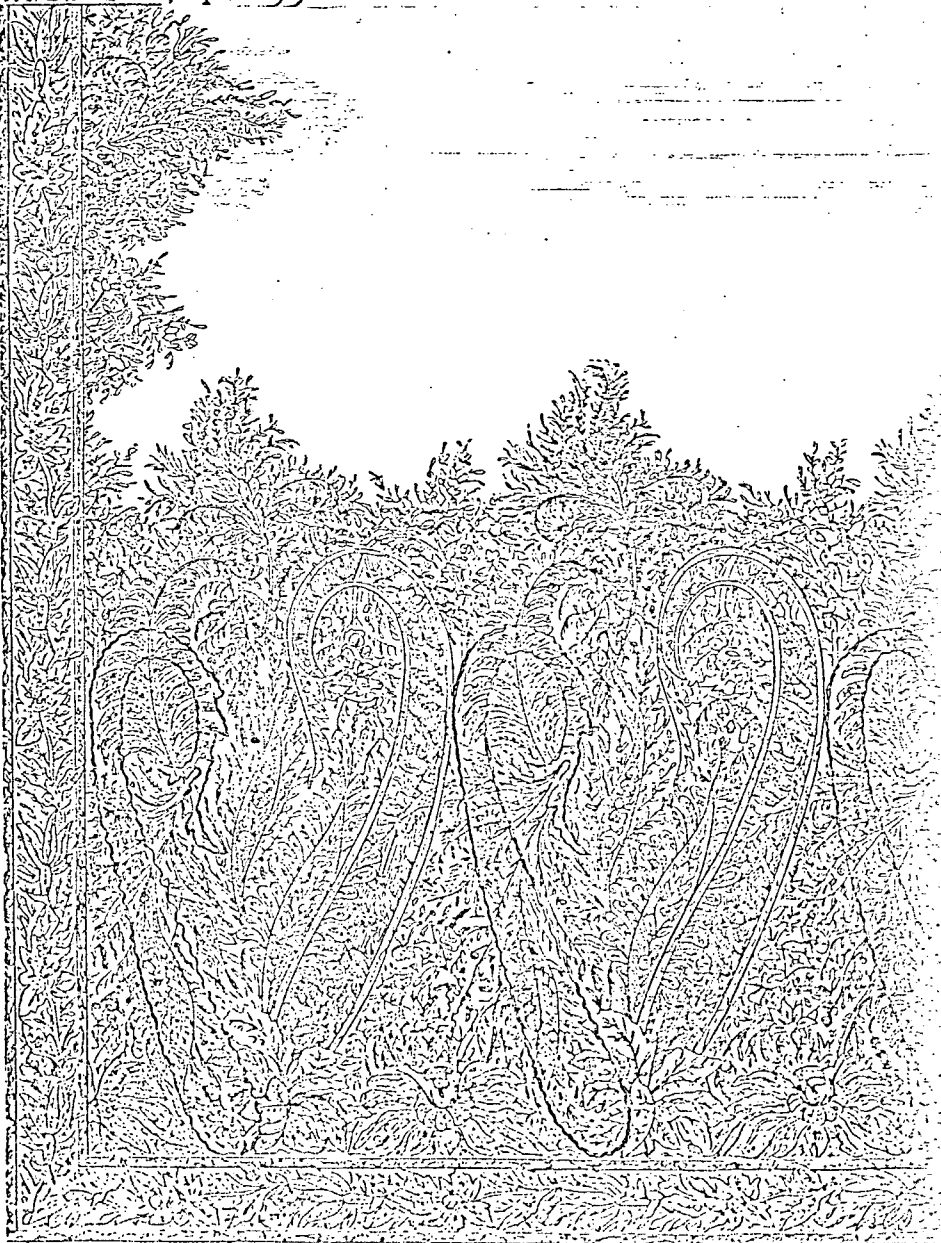


figure 38
design for a shawl, exhibited at the London
Crystal Palace by John Morgan & Co., of
Paisley, reproduced from, Gloag, The Crystal
Palace Exhibition, p. 55

figure 39
design for a shawl,
exhibited by Keith &
Shoobridge, London,
The Crystal Palace
Exhibition, p. 308



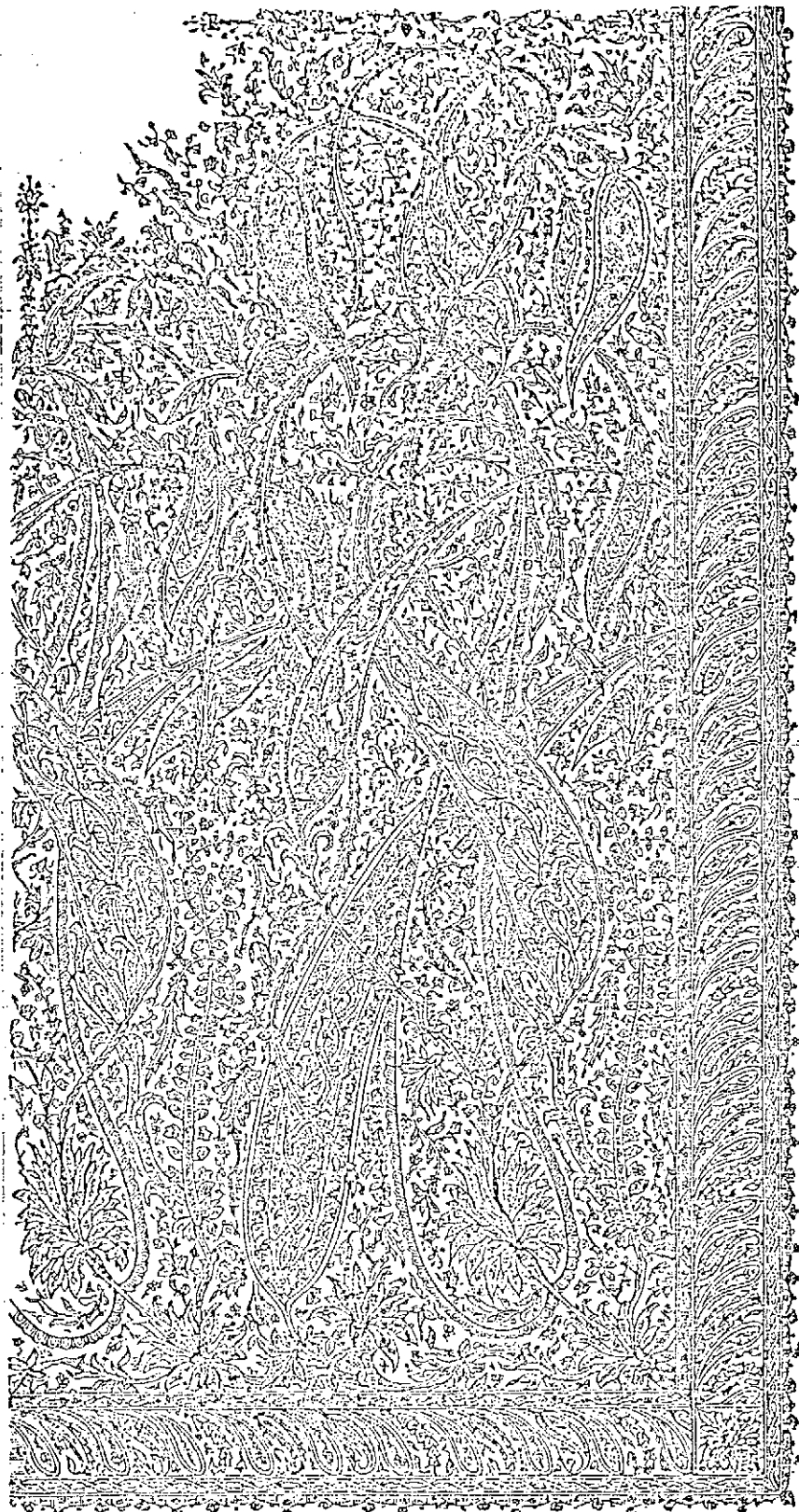


figure 40
design for a printed shawl, exhibited at
the London Crystal Palace by Lewis & Allenby
of London, reproduced from, Gloag, The Cryst-
tal Palace Exhibition, p. 157

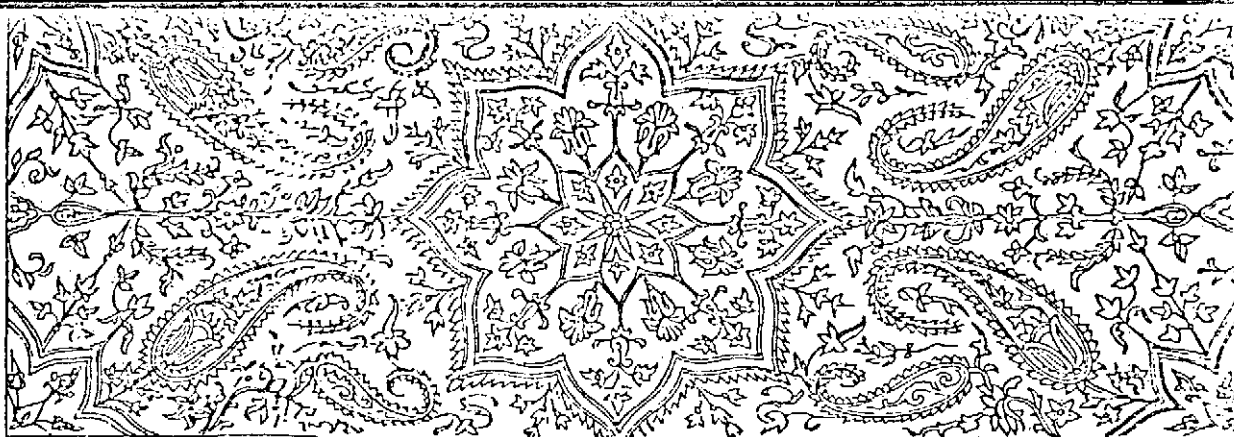


figure 41

pattern for a Cashmere shawl, exhibited at the London Crystal Palace by Capt. H. C. James of the Bengal Army, reproduced from Gloag, The Crystal Palace Exhibition, p. 28

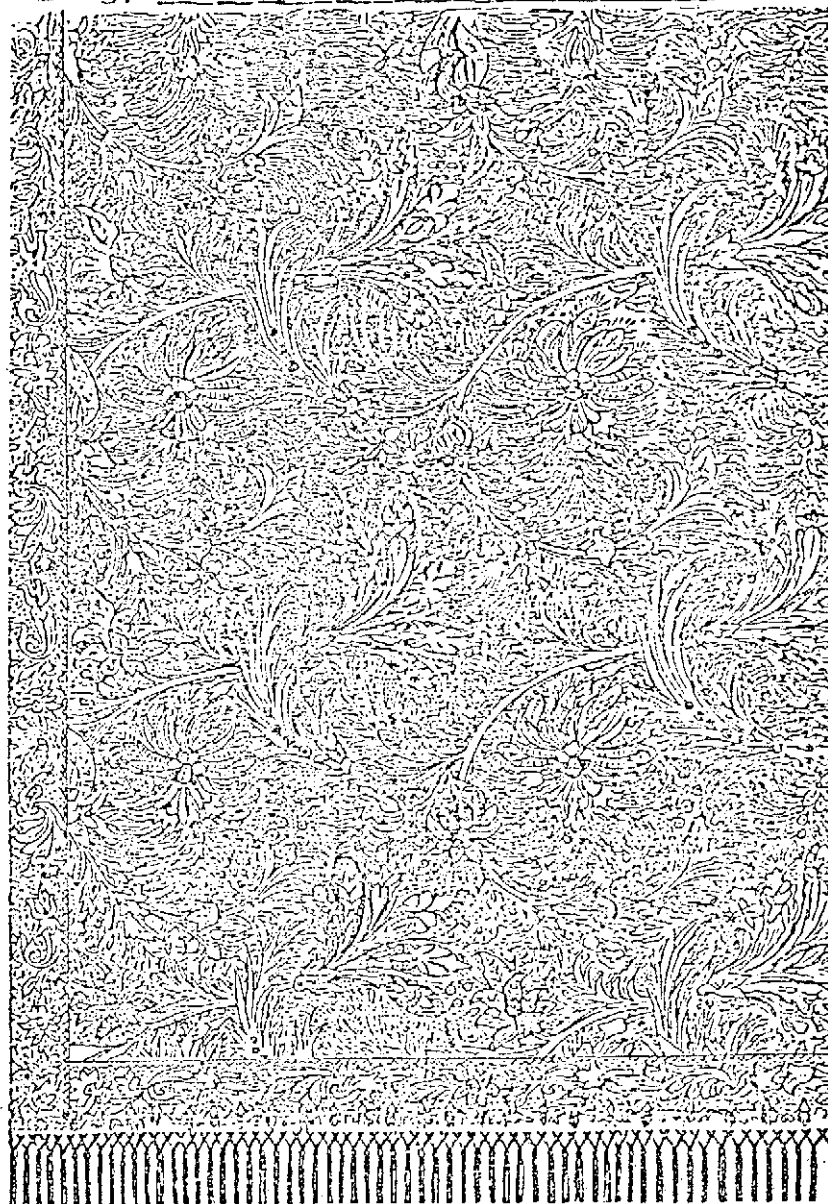
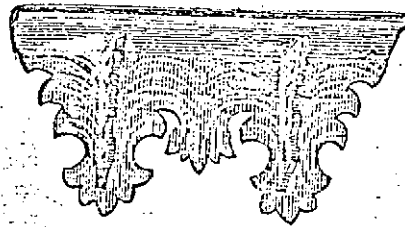


figure 42

Cashmere shawl woven on a jacquard loom, exhibited by Claburn, Sons & Crisp, of Norwich, The Crystal Palace Exhibition, p. 326



No. 402, SHELF, (carved).
6x16.



No. 101, SHELF.
11x12.

figure 43.
wall shelves, reproduced from "Abernathy,
North & Orrison" catalogue, p. 122

GLEASON'S PICTORIAL DRAWING-ROOM COMPANION.

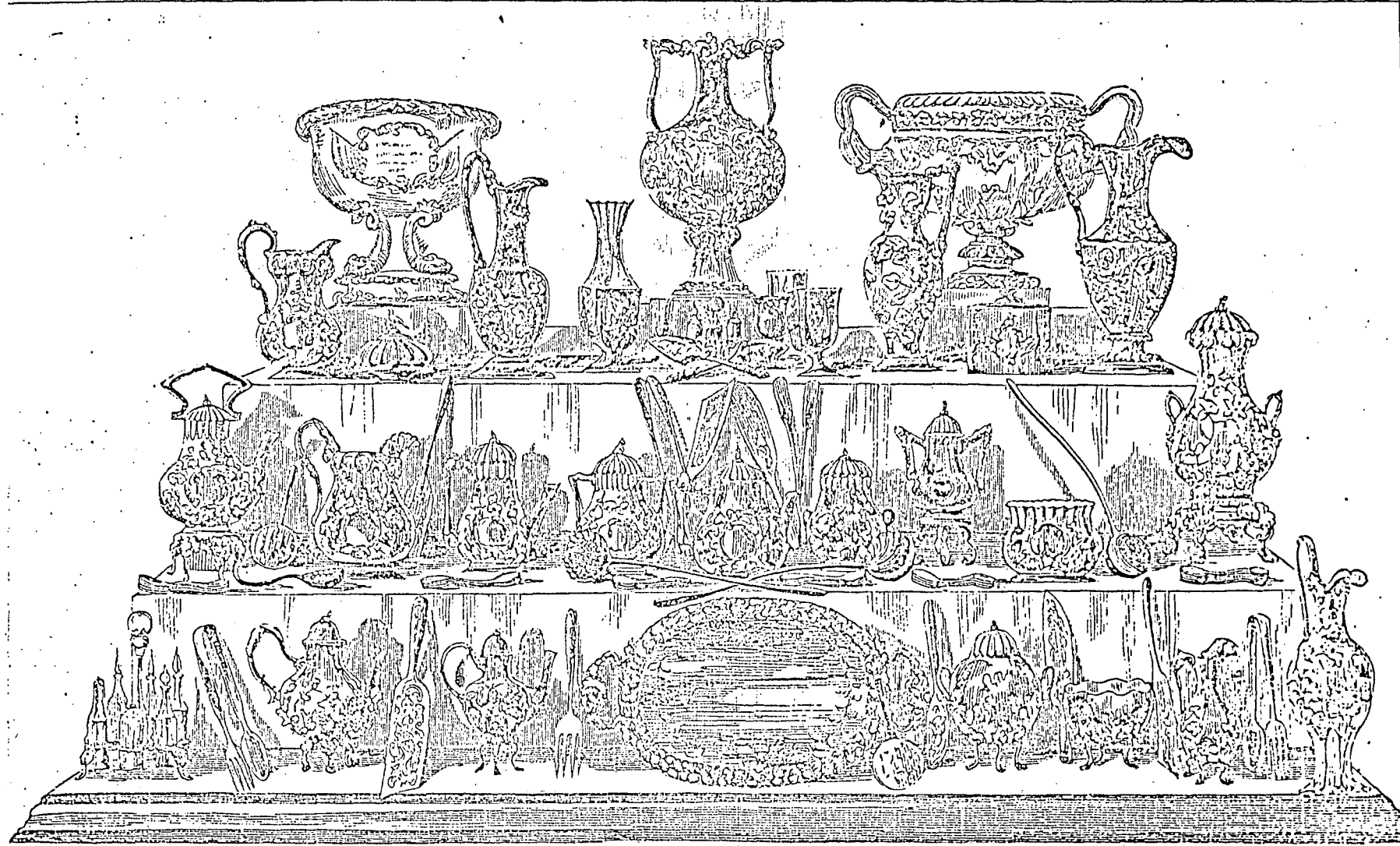


figure 44
silver exhibited at the New York Crystal
Palace by Jones, Ball & Co., of New York,
reproduced from Gleason's Pictorial, Sept.
3, 1853

JONES, BALL & CO.'S EXHIBITION OF SILVER WARE, AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE, NEW YORK.



Figure 45
 Silver exhibited at the New York Crystal
 Palace by Bailey & Co., of Philadelphia,
 reproduced from Gleason's Pictorial, Oct.
 8, 1853

BAILEY & CO.'S EXHIBITION OF SILVER WARE, AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE, NEW YORK.



figure 46

"Puck Throned on a Mushroom,"
 parian statuette from Staffordshire,
The Crystal Palace Exhibition, p. 259

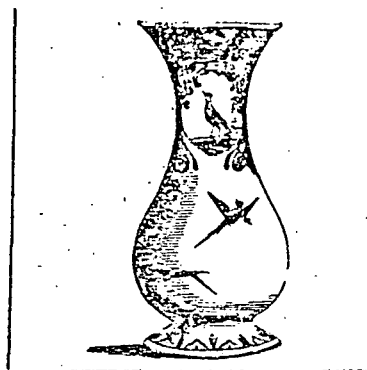


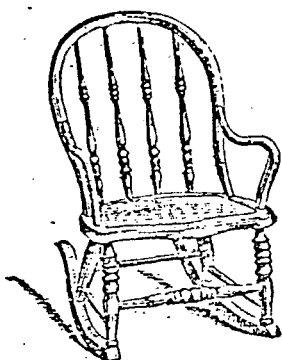
figure 47

Staffordshire vase, porcelain,
The Crystal Palace Exhibition,
 p. 259

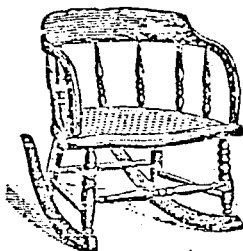


figures 48 and 49
 "Children Sporting with Goats," parian
 statuettes, The Crystal Palace Exhibition,
 p. 115

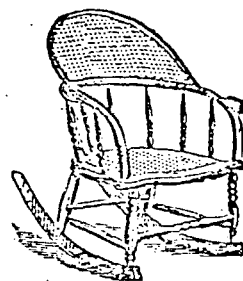
CHILD'S CANE SEAT CHAIRS.



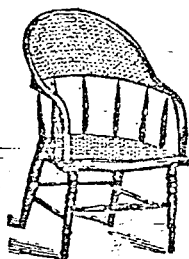
CHILD'S BENT ARM ROCKER.
Oak.



CHILD'S BENT RIM ROCKER.
Oak.



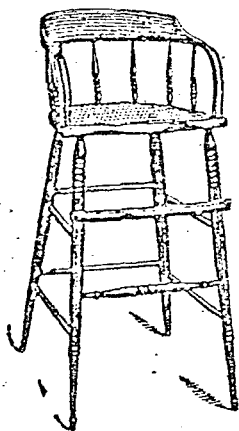
CONTINENTAL ROCKER.
Oak and Walnut.



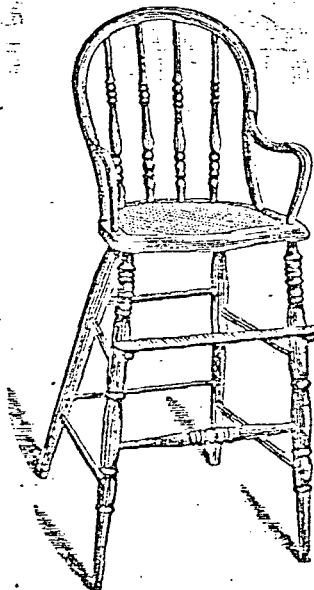
CHILD'S CONTINENTAL
LOW CHAIR.



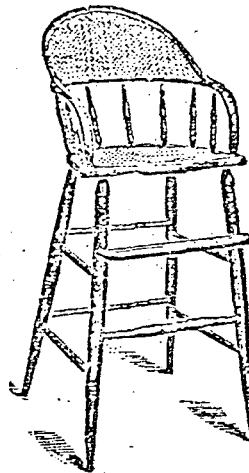
CHILD'S WILLOW
NURSERY CHAIR.



CHILD'S BENT RIM TABLE
CHAIR.
Oak.



CHILD'S BENT ARM TABLE
CHAIR.
Light.



CHILD'S CONTINENTAL
TABLE CHAIR.
Oak or Walnut.

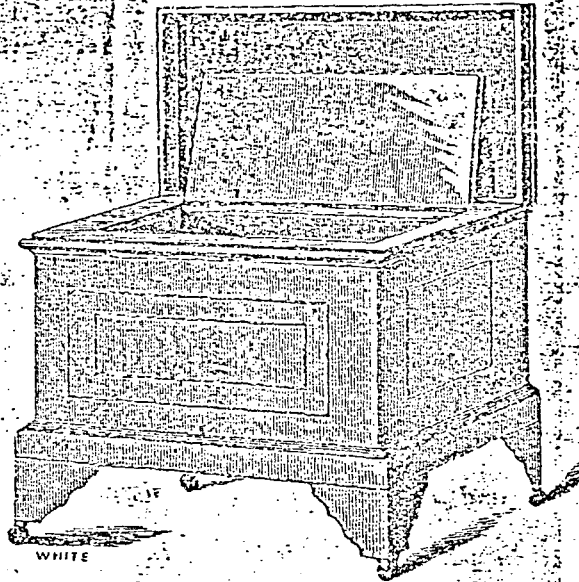
figure 50
children's furniture, reproduced from
"Abernathy, North & Orrison" catalogue,
p. 13

EXCELSIOR CHEST REFRIGERATOR,

WITH THE

Excelsior Wrought-Iron Bottom or Ice-Rack.

PATENTED MARCH 3D, 1868; MARCH 23D, 1869
OCTOBER 23D, 1872; OCTOBER 24TH, 1870.



NO.	LENGTH	WIDTH.	HEIGHT.	IMITATION OAK.
1	25 inches.	18 inches.	24 inches.	
2	26 "	19½ "	25¼ "	
3	29 "	21 "	27 "	
4	32 "	22 "	28 "	
5	35 "	23 "	29 "	
6	38 "	24 "	30 "	
7	44 "	25 "	31 "	
8	50 "	25 "	31 "	

The ice being placed in the bottom, with shelves above, in this Refrigerator, it consumes less ice than any other in use (warm air rises and cold air falls), and we strongly recommend it where ice is very expensive, as in all tropical regions.

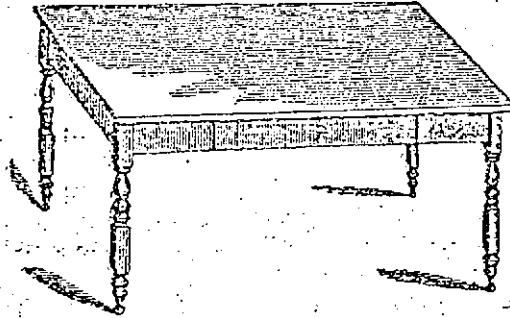
Castors furnished only with Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8 of above style.

Keep the sipoon on the lower end of the tube to prevent the cold air from escaping. Refrigerators should be washed out as often as once a week, with soap and hot water, and wiped dry.

All Excelsior Refrigerators are double-boxed. The joints are glued, and tongued-grooved together, making the inside box perfectly tight, thus preserving ice as well as provisions.

figure 51
ice chest, reproduced from "Catalogue of
L. H. Mace & Co"

KITCHEN TABLES.



Plain.

3 feet	
4 "	
5 "	
6 "	

With Drawers \$100 Extra.

WARDROBE STRIPS.

Pine, 2 1/2 in. wide, per running foot	
" 3 " " " " " " " " " " " "	
Black Walnut, 2 1/2 in. wide, per running foot	
" 3 " " " " " " " " " " " "	

figure 52
kitchen table, reproduced from "Catalogue
of L. H. Mace & Co."

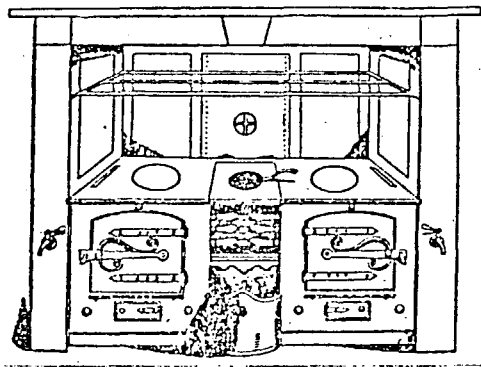


figure 53
 Leamington "Kitchener", reproduced from,
 Harrison, The Kitchen in History, fig. 46

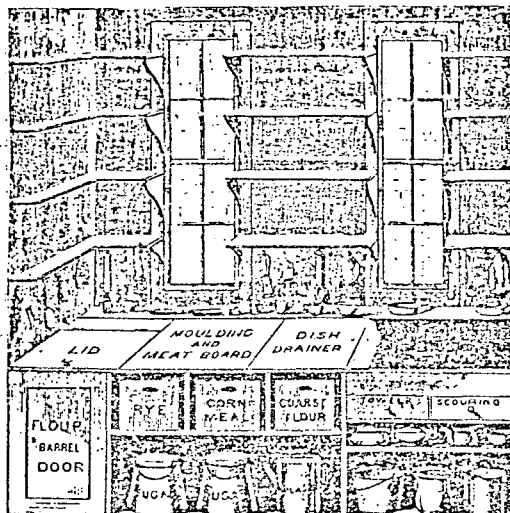
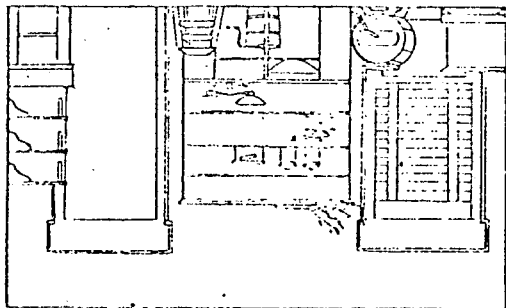
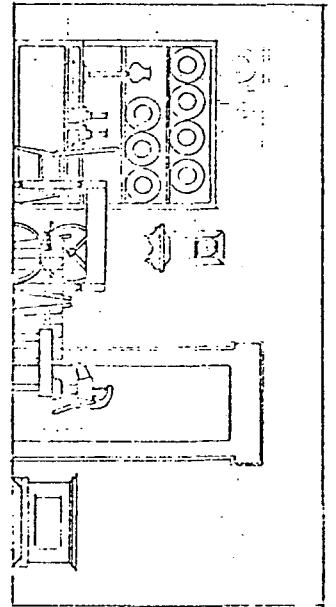
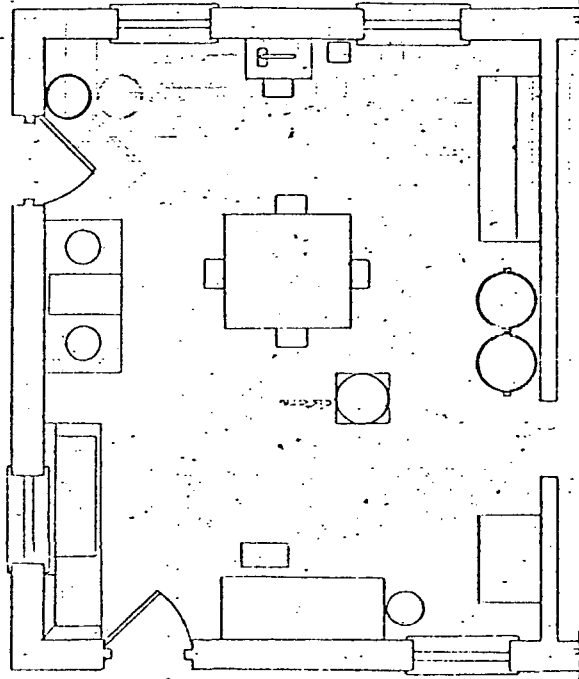
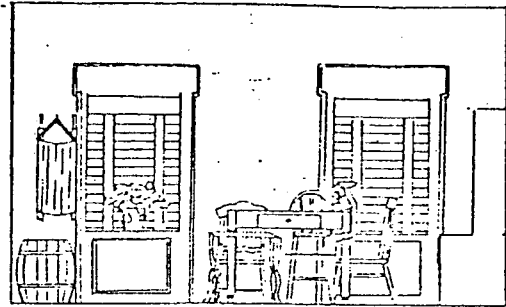
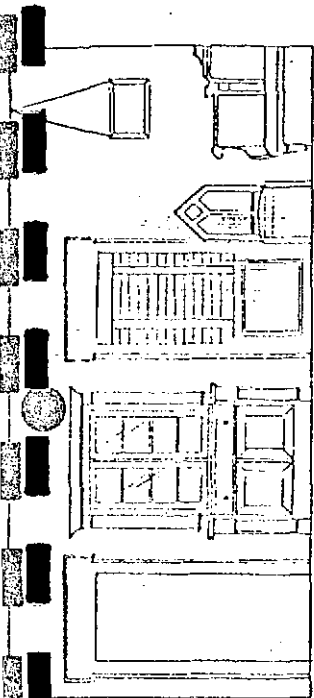
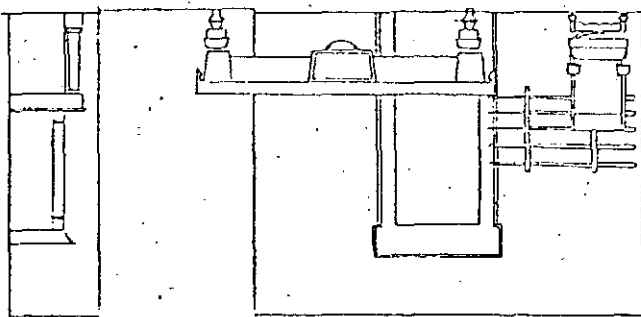
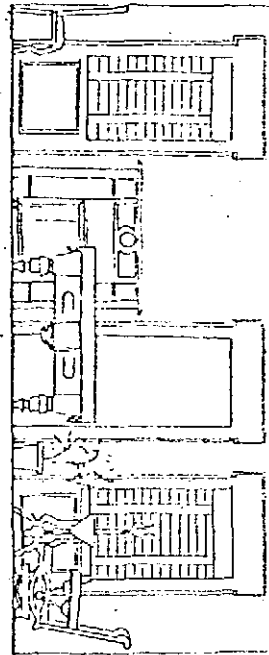
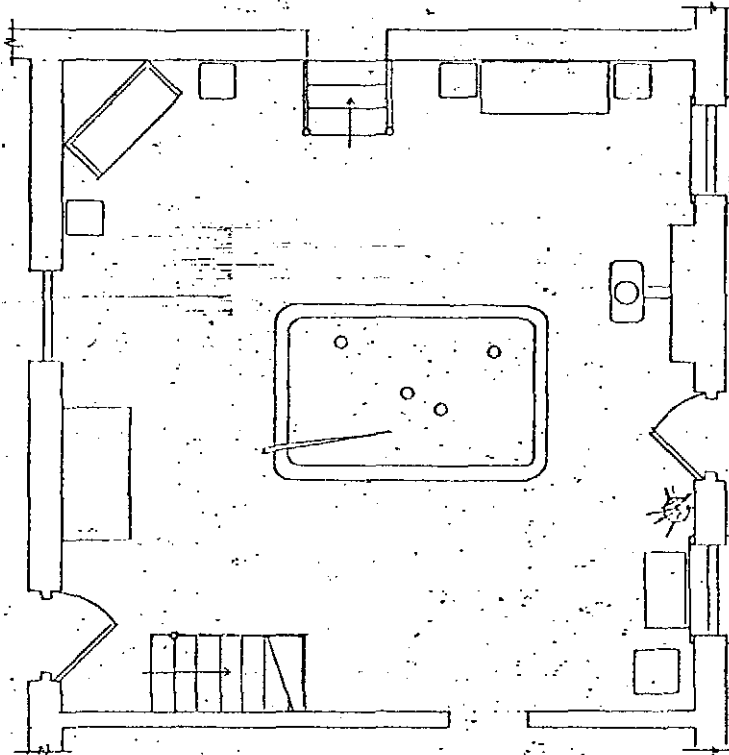
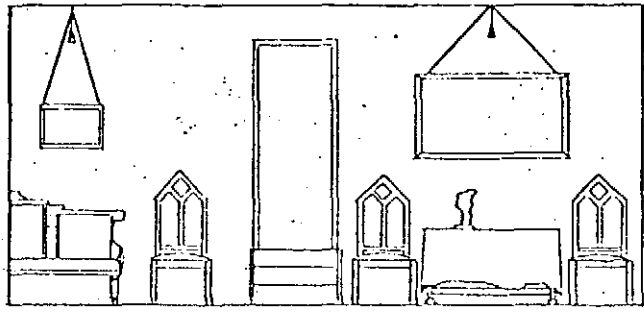


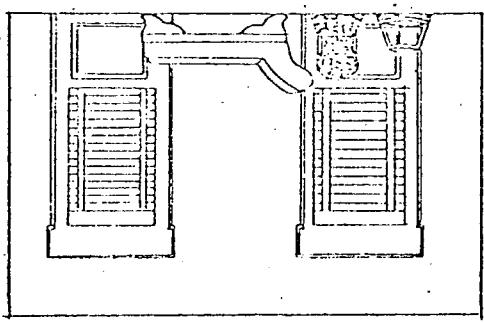
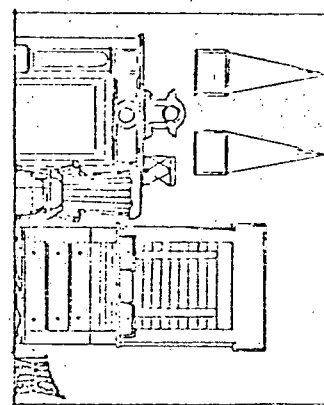
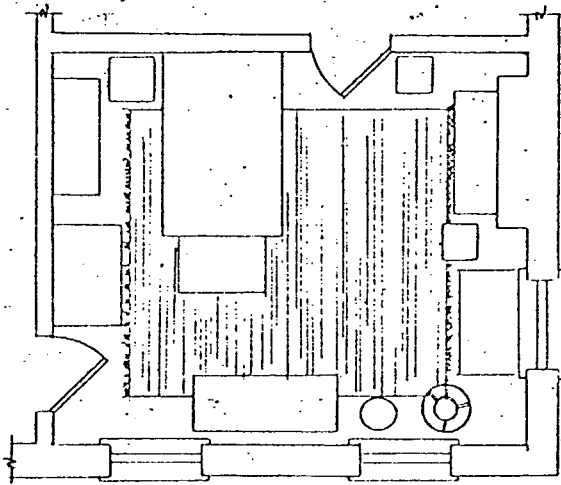
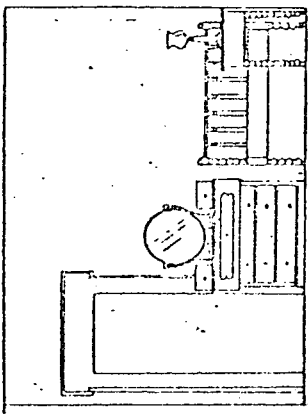
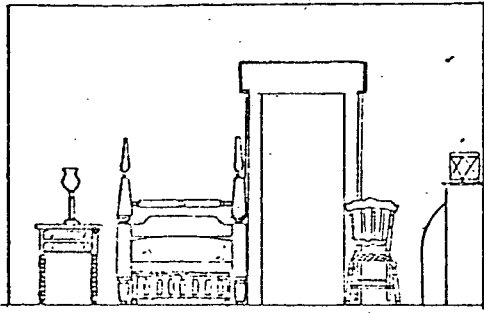
figure 54
 Mrs. Beecher's "cook-form", reproduced
 from, Harrison, The Kitchen in History,
 fig. 55



KITCHEN

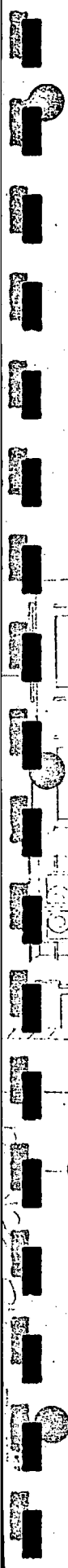
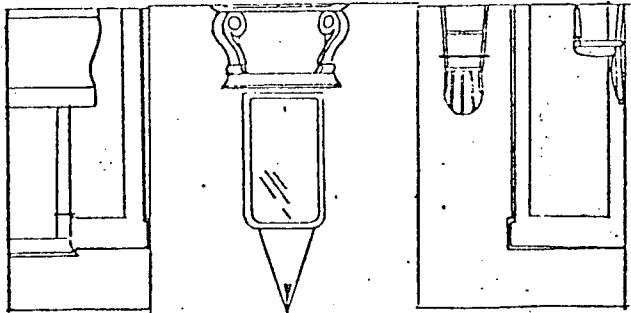
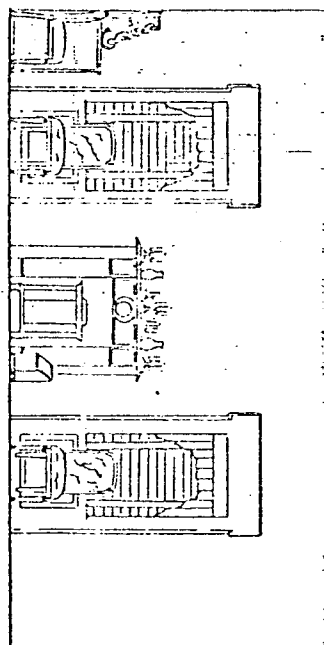
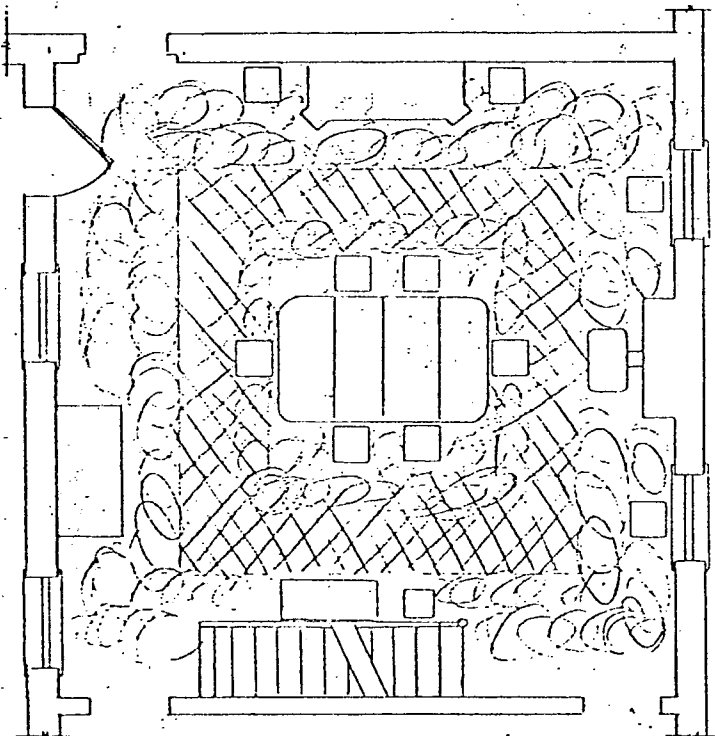
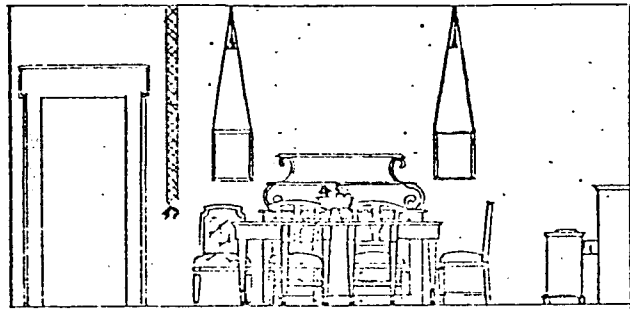
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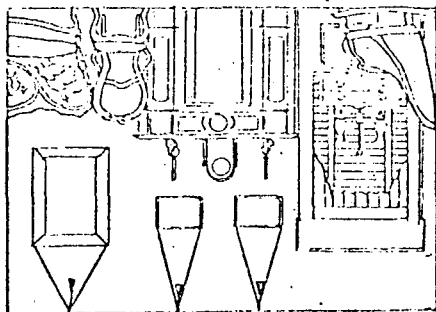
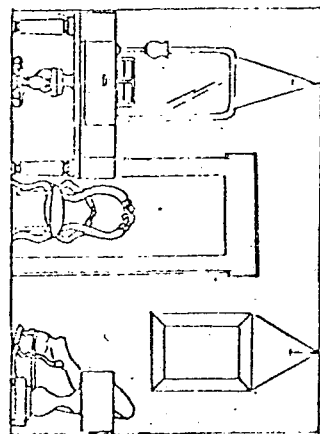
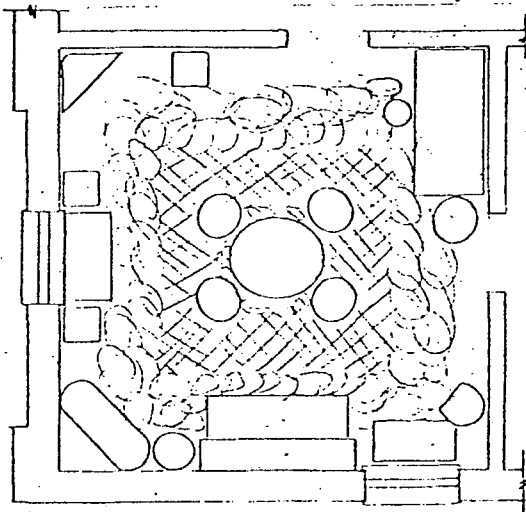
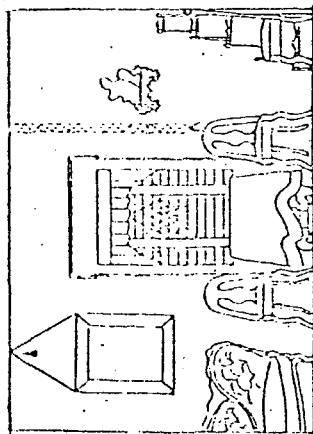
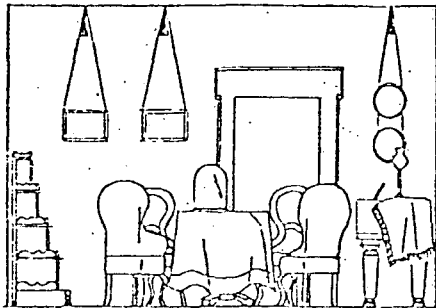





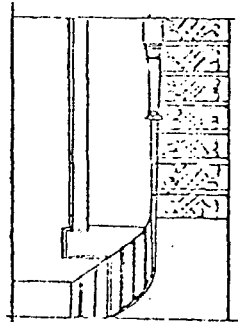
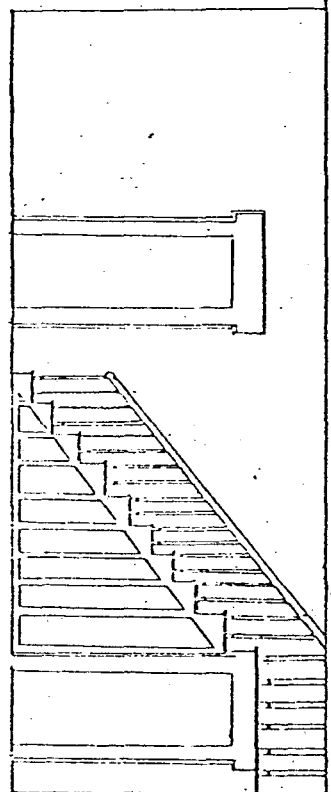
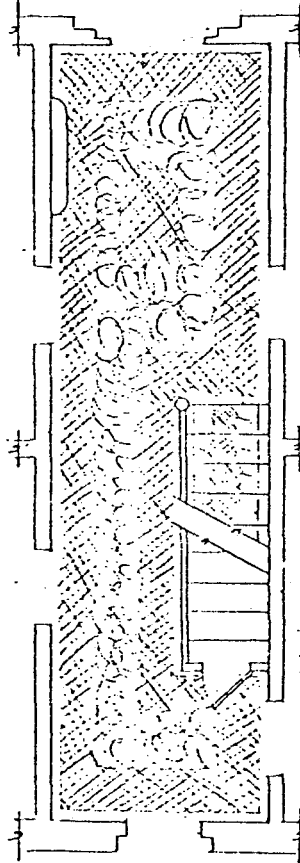
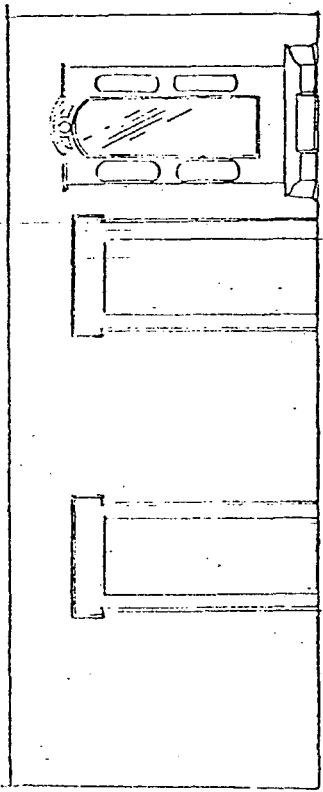
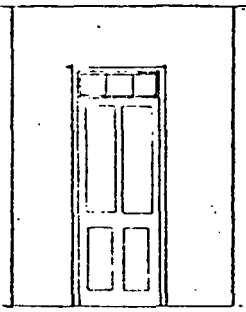
BIRTHROOM

1/2" = 1'-0"





PARLOR 



HALL

1894