

UC Santa Cruz

UC Santa Cruz Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

English Purchasing Power: The Rise of Consumerism in Rural England, 1675-1750

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s25f7wt>

Author

O'Connell, Joseph

Publication Date

2012

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

**ENGLISH PURCHASING POWER: THE RISE OF CONSUMERISM IN RURAL
ENGLAND, 1675-1750**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

by

J. BRIEN O'CONNELL

December 2012

The Dissertation of J. Brien O'Connell is
approved:

Professor Buchanan Sharp

Professor Jonathan Beecher

Professor Lynn Westerkamp

Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS.....	iv
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of Purpose.....	2
Scope.....	9
2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.....	12
Cambridgeshire.....	12
Agricultural Systems.....	18
Land Organization.....	31
3 SIGNIFICANCE OF GRAIN MARKETS.....	49
The Fens.....	49
Local Discontent.....	64
Corn Trade and Transport.....	81
4 THE EVIDENCE OF WEALTH.....	93
Architecture.....	98
Contents of Interior.....	125
5 ASSESSMENT OF LUXURY GOODS.....	130
Early Modern Debates.....	131
Evidence of Internal Wealth.....	140

	China.....	146
	Books.....	152
	Silver and Pewter.....	153
	Linen and New Draperies.....	157
	Beds and Bedding.....	162
	Wearing Apparel.....	169
6	OWNERSHIP AND DISSEMINATION	
	Furniture.....	175
	Pictures, Painting, Portraiture and Wall Coverings.....	200
	Tea and Tobacco.....	206
7	CONCLUSION.....	211

LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS

Table

1.	Cambridgeshire Population 1676.....	14
2.	Wealth Tables.....	96-98
3.	Rooms.....	111-114
4.	Luxury Charts.....	143-145
5.	Bedding.....	165-168
6.	Cupboards.....	185-186
7.	Chests.....	187-188

Abstract

“English Purchasing Power: The Rise of Consumerism in Rural England, 1675-1750” interrogates how the English yeomen transitioned from austere farmer to capitalist consumer during the Jacobean and post-Restoration eras. In agrarian England, this reconfigured landscape was most clearly embodied in the struggle over the enclosure of common land. Focusing on the yeoman’s understanding of the fiscal benefits of enclosure and land acquisition, I argue that—although beset by fractured social relations—the growth in grain markets within East Anglia led to a newfound prosperity, which was most clearly articulated in the yeoman’s rise as a viable and discernible luxury goods consumer. Accordingly, my project draws attention to the yeoman’s relevance and leadership in this role, which not only observes their elevation and advancement within the English class structure, but also views the expansion of luxury consumption and the impact of the developing market economy on the English rural household.

By juxtaposing probate documents, inventories, pamphlets, and diaries from the villages of Cottenham, Chatteris, and Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire, this study examines the process by which late seventeenth and early eighteenth century yeomen began to embrace the consumption of luxury goods, and, most importantly, a purely market-based understanding of agrarian life.

Note

The year has been taken as beginning on 1 January and a double year is used in the text where appropriate. In quotations from documents, the original spelling has been retained except for the following modifications. The initial letters of proper names have, where necessary, been altered to capitals; the initial 'ff' has been rendered as a capital only where modern usage deems necessary. Lastly, punctuation has been inserted in places to assist the reader.

The future is dark, the present burdensome; only the past, dead and finished, bears contemplation.

Geoffrey Elton

CHAPTER 1

This work is an effort to identify one area of change in seventeenth-century English society—namely the growth in yeoman wealth—brought on by agricultural development. This newfound prosperity gave people—for the first time—disposable income, which ultimately contributed to the emergence of a viable and discernible group: luxury good consumers. The yeomanry (prosperous farmers situated below the nobility and gentry) thrived in the late seventeenth-century due to the international and domestic demand for food. Access to more arable land over the period from 1550 to 1660, coupled with agricultural innovations after 1660, made the yeoman an important supplier of grain to both the domestic and foreign markets. Moreover, this “yeoman wealth” phenomenon gradually eroded some of the traditional ideas of English social hierarchy by creating the possibility of economic and social mobility. Although the yeomen were essentially agriculturalists, their wealth exceeded some of the lesser gentry and their consumption drove the demand for luxury items; accordingly, a substantial display of material goods can be observed in their homes, wardrobe, and furnishings.

In an attempt to measure the impact of trade in rural counties, my research concentrates on, but is not restricted to, analyzing the yeomen in the Cambridgeshire villages of Cottenham and Chatteris, and the town of Whittlesey. The consumer behavior that surfaced in these fenland towns and villages of East Anglia placed the yeomanry at the nexus of the consumer revolution. Their fortunes were also the result of a perfect mix of ingredients: their position in an evolving, fluid social structure, their close proximity to domestic and foreign trade routes, English land organization, the timely introduction of agrarian innovations and reclamation schemes, and the development of institutions and infrastructure that helped facilitate social emulation and consumer spending.

In an effort to understand these trends, it is first necessary to view the social structure and stratification of the early modern era. English society during the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries was preoccupied with social order. Village society was highly stratified and hierarchy was a fundamental fact of life.¹ Sumptuary laws² were promulgated over centuries in an effort to reinforce order and distinguish status. Thus, in England, the social hierarchy of rank and status was rigid and relatively unchanging. Social commentators have identified ways in which the nobility and gentry expressed their dominant social position: social customs, economic fortune, and the notion of fashion.

¹ Keith Writghtson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village, Terling, 1525-1700* (London: The Academic Press, 1979), 174.

² Medieval and early modern laws governing dress and the restrictions on the use of certain materials and fabrics to the nobility.

However, the fixed hierarchy was soon to be made more fluid by the growth of the “middling sort,” a social category routinely used to describe the tradesmen, manufacturers and yeomen who occupied the middle status of wealth and power in the later seventeenth century, and found the possession of wealth as the key to social mobility. Borsay argues that by the early eighteenth century, this prosperous middling sort “may have been increasingly visible as a distinct social group in provincial centers such as Bristol and Norwich, East Anglia, growing manufacturing hubs and port cities such as Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham, and possibly in the larger county and resort towns, notably York and Bath.”³ Thus, the growing wealth of the middling sort, as McKendrick and Brewer claim, gave birth to a consumer society. However, the most important question remains: is there evidence that the yeomanry belonged to this new “social group” of consumers and were they now obsessed with conspicuous luxury and overt displays of wealth in the decades preceding the Industrial Revolution?

This question is essential to understanding English consumerism, particularly in the countryside, since the investigation of emerging rural consumerism has been only partially answered by historians. Yeomen inhabited an important place in the social and economic history of England; however, their impact on the growth of consumerism in the seventeenth-century has seldom been studied. The traditional focus of early modern historians has been to analyze the

³ P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, c.1660-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 199-256.

disintegration of cultural and religious traditions as a result of the Reformation and the Civil War. As Peck claims in her work on luxury good consumption, “The story of seventeenth-century England is often told as a tale of the unique triumph of Protestantism, parliamentary sovereignty, and law over absolute monarchy and Counter-Reformation Catholicism through civil war and glorious revolution.”⁴ This is particularly true of the area under study, since the colleges of Cambridge University and the surrounding area proved to be a region that witnessed what yeoman-farmer and noted iconoclast William Dowsing (1596-1668) described as “a hotter sort of Protestantism.”⁵

However, the focus on major political and religious turmoil tends to ignore the economic and social changes that contributed to the yeoman’s central involvement in establishing a consumer culture. This study seeks to provide evidence of the growing wealth of the Cambridgeshire yeomanry through the development of trade, which ultimately led to their central position in a growing consumer culture. Moreover, I seek to elucidate the impact of that culture on the lifestyle and spending habits of the Cambridgeshire yeomanry, who, although having lived in an area with “the hotter type of Protestantism,” most notably, spearheaded the consumption of luxury goods.

⁴ Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor, Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

⁵ *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia During the English Civil War*, Trevor Cooper, ed. (London: The Boydell Press, 2001), 4.

A number of historians have made important contributions to our understanding of the social history in the early modern period. My analysis owes much to the work of Keith Wrightson, David Levine, and Robert Whiting, who have studied social change in English villages in the century and a half between the Reformation and the Glorious Revolution. Wrightson and Levine's seminal work, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village* (1979) is a groundbreaking analysis on social interaction and transformation in the Essex village of Terling. They utilize probate documents in order to reconstitute a model of early modern life, which ultimately sheds light on the weakening of local social ties, the growing differentiation between rich and poor, and the mounting hostility and fractious behavior brought about by economic change.

Whiting's *The Blind Devotion of the People* (Cambridge, 1989) explores the effects of the English Reformation on ordinary men and women in Devon and Cornwall. In this regional study, he assesses social changes by measuring the eroding levels of support for traditional, religious activities. Whiting concludes that religious piety and the sense of obligation to authority were being replaced by the hope of material gain, the fear of material loss, and the dread of social isolation.⁶ In effect, the region's inhabitants were more affected by economic expansion than religious change.

⁶ Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People* (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.

These scholars provide valuable assessments of local economic patterns and their impact on social behavior. The present work is an effort to bridge the ideas of these historians and to identify the economic underpinnings, geographical advantages, and social motives that placed the English yeoman at the forefront of luxury good consumption.

Since this work is also concerned with farming communities, it is necessary to include an examination of the growing wealth of the agricultural sector in England. In 1919 R.E. Prothero (Lord Ernle) claimed:

Mediaeval husbandmen had been content to extract from the soil the food which they needed for themselves and their families. Tudor farmers despised self sufficing agriculture; they aspired to be sellers and not consumers only, to raise from their land profits as well as food.⁷

Indeed, the move from traditional subsistence farming to an agricultural market society significantly impacted English society. As Lord Ernle explains, agrarian innovations during the early modern era were the catalyst for the shift from consuming to selling, a development that influenced agrarian history throughout the following centuries. More recently, Mark Overton—in response to Ernle’s classical model—argues that English agriculture experienced technological changes between the mid-sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth centuries, which essentially amounted to what some scholars refer to as an “agricultural

⁷ R.E. Prothero (Lord Ernle) *English Farming, Past and Present* (Chicago; Quadrangle Books, 1961), 58.

revolution.”⁸ Overton’s work further identifies and defines the nature of the innovations that led to this revolutionary change. More importantly, his work stresses the impact of the innovation, the introduction of fodder, root crops and grass substitutes in parts of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire that changed the East Anglian agriculture, which ultimately created profitability for the “farmers who adopted these innovations.”⁹

“The history of the English yeoman is the history of land,” wrote Mildred Campbell, author of the first essential work on English yeomanry who asserts that, although land remained extremely important, it was the *relationship* that people had with the land and the growing significance of trade and industry that redefined its character as a commercial vehicle. More recently, Craig Muldrew has added that there was little surplus production in traditional societies because “markets were submerged in social custom, yet innovation helped redefine the relationship and pulled land from its medieval moorings.”¹⁰ He further uses Adam Smith’s behavioral theory of “rational self-interest” in an attempt to explain the cognitive process and identify the results. There is also the question of whether consumption was based on a supply of consumer goods as opposed to a simple demand function; J.C.D. Clark believes:

⁸ Mark Overton, “A New Perspective on Medieval and Early Modern Agriculture: Six Centuries of Norfolk Farming c. 1250-c.1850.” *Past and Present* pp. 38-105.

⁹ Mark Overton, “The Diffusion of Agricultural Innovations in Early Modern England: Turnips and Clover in Norfolk and Suffolk, 1580-1740,” in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 10, #2 (1985), pp. 205-221.

¹⁰ Craig Muldrew, “Economic and Urban Development,” in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, Barry Coward, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2003), 150.

A market for consumer goods did not wait for the 'rise' of the 'middle class' in the eighteenth century, but can be observed, albeit for more simple products, from a far earlier period: the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries illustrate many of the economic structures which facilitated the steadily expanding output of an ever-growing range of such products in later decades, and witnessed also a deliberate government policy to foster the native manufacture of consumer goods...via the accoutrements of elegant living: swords and watches, shoes, and hats, lace and velvet, furniture and fabrics, china and silverware.¹¹

Historians, such as F.J. Fisher, argue that changes in the sixteenth and seventeenth century economic cycle are most visible in the consumer habits of London, which grew in population and spread out to its neighboring suburbs.¹² But is it possible to interpret the changes in villages as a symptom of the larger changes in the nation as a whole? Is the pattern of life within a few square miles indicative of the larger expansion of commercial activity and did the yeomen embrace these changes and develop consumption habits similar to the larger metropolis? This is a distinct possibility as Wrightson writes:

Lower in the urban hierarchy the mounting prosperity of the gentry and the yeomanry of the countryside rubbed off on the urban masters and professional men who supplied their needs for miscellaneous manufactures and services. In general this demand occasioned a growth in the range of occupations in the towns and a filtering down into quite small country towns of specialized services not formerly available at such a local level—those of doctors, lawyers, and booksellers, for example.¹³

¹¹ J.C.D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 227.

¹² F.J. Fisher, "The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser., vol. 30 (1948), 37-38.

¹³ Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (London: Routledge 1982), 139.

Therefore, according to Wrightson, it is possible to measure the impact of trade in rural areas, which, he adds, is necessary if one is “to understand the fortunes of individual towns.”¹⁴

In an effort to explore the impact of trade locally, I have chosen three communities in rural settings in Cambridgeshire, that were historically involved in trade, and which contained a significant population of yeomen. The examination of these communities will enable us to understand English economic behavior away from the metropolis and help us to grasp how consumption emerged in the lives of the yeomanry during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

From probate documents, I have reconstructed the lives of the yeomen, predominantly the main family structure and living space. Although religious and political controversies would occupy England for much of the seventeenth century, it is my belief that through the prosperous trade in grain, the yeomanry led a “consumer culture” that cultivated and encouraged attitudes towards displays of conspicuous affluence (consumption), which were manifested in the architecture of their houses, as well as their clothing, and household furnishings during the period 1660-1750.

The dissertation concludes in the 1750s, a point that economic historian Peter Mathias contends experiences the onset of a fundamental change in the structure of the agrarian economy—namely the redeployment of resources away from

¹⁴ Ibid.

agriculture over a period of time along with investment in trade, industrial production, and the labor force.¹⁵ Although the Industrial Revolution is a momentous event that emerges at this point in English history, its future impact on the yeomen is beyond the scope of this study.

I have chosen the villages of Cottenham and Chatteris, and the town of Whittlesey since they represent the various farming areas of East Anglia. My aim is to investigate how each village coped with the challenges of unpredictable soil, a constantly changing water level, animal husbandry, and—most importantly—how the resourceful yeoman eventually overcame and flourished under these often testing conditions. Also Cambridgeshire is relatively close to London, and it is fortunate enough to be situated near a number of important waterways, which afforded it the advantage of trade with the metropolis.

In the ensuing chapters we shall be concerned with the rise of the yeoman and his social transition in seventeenth and early eighteenth century Cambridgeshire. By using wills, inventories, land records and personal diaries, I aim to reconstruct and recapture the human aspect of the early modern English countryside. It is my hope that by concentrating on the towns and villages, and by examining various, causal factors such as land organization, the grain market, geography, and trade, we can begin to understand the process that transformed

¹⁵ Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Revolution: An Economic History of Britain, 1700-1914* (Routledge: London, 1983), 2.

the East Anglian yeoman from a practical, humble farmer into a luxury goods consumer.

CHAPTER 2

The story of the yeoman takes place in the English countryside, since land was “the center and substance of their lives and their livelihood.”¹⁶ The fortunes of the English yeomen—and their ensuing status as luxury consumers—are linked to changes in agricultural practices within the East Anglian region, which, in turn, impacted Cambridgeshire and the communities of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey.

The Elizabethan and Stuart periods were a time of “land hunger,” where the landowner now recognized the potential commercial value of land. This is particularly true of Cambridgeshire, a rural society with fielden parishes. Observing these changes will help explain how the villages of Chatteris, Whittlesey, and Cottenham adapted to them and helped develop an echelon of wealthy yeomen farmers. Accordingly, a fair amount of knowledge of the general agrarian conditions, claimed by some historians as “revolutionary,” is essential if one is to understand the yeoman’s central role. But first, it is necessary to describe the geographical backdrop and discuss the various forms of land tenure that characterized this regional landscape.

Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire is located in the southeast region of England, bordered by

¹⁶ Mildred Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968), 66.

Norfolk and Suffolk to the east, Huntingdon to the west, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire to the north, and Essex and Hertfordshire to the south. At a total area of 553, 555 acres, it resides in East Anglia. Jack Ravensdale describes the region as “a D shaped mass of land that bulges seawards between the Wash and the Thames estuary, that sometimes includes Essex, but comprises Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, which makes up its strong personality and distinctive rural landscape.”¹⁷

Early Modern Population Estimates

The Compton Census of 1676¹⁸ is an ecclesiastical survey of the various dioceses in England and Wales that provides information about the population in the late seventeenth century. Cambridgeshire, as a whole, contained 35,809 persons over the age of sixteen. Yet, this figures is a new estimate published in 1841¹⁹ in an attempt to rectify numerical deficiencies and re-calculate the population from the sixteenth century onwards. Although these figures are considered to be problematic, particularly by E.A. Wrigley, and should be

¹⁷ Jack Ravensdale and Richard Muir, *East Anglian Landscapes* (London: Michale Joseph, Ltd., 1984), 9.

¹⁸ The purpose of the Compton Census of 1676 was to establish a count of the population as well as the size of various religious groups. On the basis of the Compton Census of 1676, Cambridgeshire had 77,020 Baptisms, 120,304 burials, and 76,233 marriages in 1670. British Academy, *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition*, Records of Social and Economic History new ser., X (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1986), cvii.

¹⁹ These totals are a derived from Rickman’s new population estimates. He supervised the taking of the first four censuses and used additional returns of baptisms, burials, and marriages to arrive at new estimates for each county.

interpreted with a certain amount of caution, they do give a fair sense
Cambridgeshire's rural population and should be, to a certain degree, taken
seriously.

The Compton Census population estimates of people over sixteen years of age
for the villages under examination are as follows:

Cottenham	
Conformists	560
Papists	0
Nonconformists	14

Whittlesey	
Conformists	2021
Papists	0
Nonconformists	0

Chatteris	
Conformists	271
Papists	0
Nonconformists	43

20

These figures provide a rough indication of the size of each village at the
beginning of this investigation, and a useful estimate of adult consumers.

Geography of Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire has always had, from an agricultural perspective, an
unforgiving geography. The region contains a complex topography, which

²⁰ Ibid., cvii. 165–166.

includes a Breckland with fenland to the east, fielden area to the south, and heathlands to the north. The Breckland is an area of thin and dry soil or sand and gravel, which lies directly in the chalk.²¹ As a result, the Breckland isn't the most forgiving environment for a fruitful agricultural output. Fen landscapes are low lands covered wholly or partially with shallow water and are subject to frequent flooding.²² A fielden area is a level open land used for or suitable for cultivation.²³ A heathlands landscape is characterized by open, woody, low-growing vegetation on acidic soil. To add to this geographical mélange, the Essex Woodlands lie in the southeast corner of the region.²⁴

If one focuses on the areas surrounding the villages under study, it becomes clearer how prosperity grew within Cambridgeshire's patchwork of what Joan Thirsk refers to as the "sheep-corn" and "wood-pasture" landscape, and what Robert Morden referred to as a county that, "is generally plain and open, having but few Hills and Woods."²⁵ Some marked features delineate the topography of the villages in and around the town of Cambridge. The immediate area is

²¹ Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian Landscapes*, 97.

²² "fen, n.1". OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69207?redirectedFrom=fenland> (accessed September 07, 2012).

²³ "fielden, adj. and n.". OED Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69930?redirectedFrom=fielden> (accessed September 07, 2012).

²⁴ *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, General editor, H. P. R. Finberg, Vol. V (London: Cambridge U.P, 1967), 198.

²⁵ Robert Morden, *The New Description and State of England, Containing the Mapps of the Counties of England and Wales, in Fifty Threecopperplates ... the Several Counties Described, the Account of Their Ancient and Modern Names ...: To Which Is Added, a New and Exact List of the House of Peers and Commons* (London: Printed for R. Morden, T. Cockerill and R. Smith, 1701), 13.

composed of light soil, to the southeast is a chalk ridge that also supports corn farming and sheep. To the northwest are Western clays that support cattle grazing and dairying. Finally, to the direct north there are the Southern Fenlands that involve intermediate types of corn and cattle rearing with substantial dairying and grazing.²⁶

In an effort to understand the complex, physical features of the geographic location of each village under examination, John Jones has supplied a simplified grouping of these natural settings. He delineates the first area as the Fenland and its islands; next is the upland with its contrast between clay and chalk; following this is the river valleys; and, lastly, there exists a narrow strip of country between fen and upland which may be conveniently designated as the “fen-line.”²⁷ From this geological taxonomy, he categorizes the villages into four groups:

1. Fen villages
2. Upland villages
3. Valley villages
4. Fen line villages

He concludes this list with the caveat that not all of these sites are mutually exclusive, and that some sites “claim admission to more than one of these groups.”²⁸ Yet, it is essential to note that although the communities of

²⁶ Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian Landscapes*, 98.

²⁷ H.C. Darby, ed., *A scientific survey of the Cambridge district* (Cambridge: British Association for the Advancement of Science), 106.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Cottenham, Chatteris, and Whittlesey fall into two of the aforementioned groups, they can claim a certain amount of geological characteristics from all four areas, and by identifying these characteristics it is possible to comprehend the obstacles and issues yeomen faced when cultivating their land.

Chatteris, like most of the county, falls directly under the fen village classification. A seventeenth century alderman of Cambridge notably described the geology of the fens “to be like a crust of bread swimming in a dish of water.”²⁹ Predictably, its soil content contains a mixture of clay, fen silt, and a certain amount of gravel. Next, Cottenham is considered a fen-line village as it lies between fen and upland. Its geology is considered “heavy clay” or glacial boulders that defy draining and run across much of the region of western Cambridge. It is a chalky-clay and boulder clay amalgam that is characteristic of the southwest portion of the county. Water meadows formed an integral part of the landscape of the Cottenham chalk country, yet it has a detectable amount of upland soil. Lastly, Whittlesey is a true fenland village, with a soil made of gravel, peat, fen silt, and a subsoil of Oxford clay. It has some of the geographic characteristics of large areas of Norfolk, and stands a mere 26 ft. above sea level in a district that is purportedly “in no other spot more than 10 ft. above sea-level.”³⁰

East Anglia is often identified with the Breckland, a unique area of England

²⁹ Edmund Carter, *The History of the County of Cambridge, from the Earliest Account to the Present Time* (London: Printed by S. & R. Bentley, 1819), 7.

³⁰ Darby, ed., *A scientific survey of the Cambridge district*, 112.

that consists of a thin, dry soil with sand and gravel that lies directly on the chalk. This highly acidic and waterless area is known for its poor tillage, and skirts the three villages under study and touches the eastern end of Cambridgeshire.

East Anglian Agricultural Systems

As a consequence of these testing geological issues, there were a variety of agricultural systems practiced in East Anglia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Jack Ravensdale and R.E. Prothero maintain that most farming methods were practiced in order to maximize the use of various soil types. Some settlements were established above the general water level in little fields and gardens while some called “hards” were dry pasture grounds commonly used for dairy cattle.³¹ Furthermore, detached islets were useful for tending livestock and “necklace hamlets” were small, settlements—most likely created during the Roman occupation—and suitable for small, arable plots. Nonetheless, farming in the types of soils that existed within the sample villages was challenging.

Ravensdale, Overton, and Lord Ernle maintain that towards the end of the Middle Ages, East Anglian yeomen used an “infield-outfield” arrangement, an agricultural method similar to those used in poorer soils of Scotland and

³¹ Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian landscapes*, 96.

Devon.³² The system was quite simple: the nucleus of the village was the “infield” and was plowed in “ridge and furrow.” The infield was divided into furlongs (bundles of ridges running parallel to one another)³³ and the tenant holdings would be intermixed. Between the infield and the heath³⁴ was the “outfield” with a certain number of intakes or breaks (the probable source of the name Breckland).³⁵ In order to create fertile soil, the bulk of the village livestock were “folded” or left in the fields for a certain period of time. Ravensdale adds, “the fertility of these would have been built up by folding all the beasts of the village on them at night during the previous year. After a few years, the intake fertility would fall and it would revert to pasture in the outfield until its turn for cultivation came round again.”³⁶

Some East Anglian villages had field systems similar to those in the English Midlands, yet most of Cambridgeshire consisted of large fields. These were often called *precincts* and included furlong-type units called *stadia*. The strips that made up the holding or tenement were separate, small units averaging just over half an acre. But, the most salient feature of East Anglian farming in the Middle Ages and beyond was the *foldcourse*. According to K.J. Allison, this system confined flocks to “strictly defined areas with various kinds of pasture—open

³² Ibid., 96–97.

³³ A furlong was originally the length of the furrow in a common field, which was theoretically regarded as a square containing ten acres.

³⁴ A heath of heathland is the term describing a low-shrub habitat found oftentimes in acidic, infertile soils.

³⁵ Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian landscapes*, 97.

³⁶ Ibid.

field, arable land, heathland, and sometimes arable and pasture closes.”³⁷ Under this system, the lord of the manor had the right (or monopoly) to pasture sheep, thus his flock used these arable strips whenever they were unsown. A frequent arrangement demanded that the lord, or his lessee, would pay compensation for any disturbance to the tenant’s cropping from the exercise of foldcourse. Often this took the form of *cullet* right, by which the tenant was allowed to put a few sheep in with the lord’s flock. Sometimes the tenant paid to have the flock folded on his land in order to gain the valuable dung.

This system was used extensively on the light soils of East Anglia, particularly the eastern edge of Cambridgeshire (including Whittlesey and Chatteris), which Allison claims was “the basis for Norfolk [type] sheep-corn husbandry.”³⁸ But even with this and the manure produced by the tenant’s own sheep, horses and cattle, many villages with poorer soils were abandoned and much of the Breckland and fen edge went out of cultivation when population pressure ceased after the Black Death of 1349. Yet, as we shall see, the variegated and testing issues that plagued Cambridgeshire agriculture would be overcome with the introduction of new techniques, in what some of the early modern contemporaries referred to as “the age of the improver,” and would translate quite successfully to Cambridgeshire farming.

³⁷ K. J. Allison, “Flock Management in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *The Economic History Review* 11, New Series (1958): 98–112.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Agricultural Improvements and The Introduction of Revolutionary Crops

The development of English agriculture since the sixteenth century has been referred to as “revolutionary.” Agrarian changes led to an increase in output, which, in turn, “transformed English agriculture from a subsistence economy to a thriving capitalist agricultural system.”³⁹ This claim, although subject to questions regarding its significance and timing, is crucial to understanding the changes in English farming and marketing systems that occurred from the sixteenth century onward.

First, the “agricultural revolution” has been defined by a number of agricultural historians and observers over the past few centuries. Nineteenth century figures such as R.E. Prothero and Arnold Toynbee argued that the agricultural advance was due to technological changes, which were fostered by the onset of the Industrial Revolution. More recently, Mark Overton claims there have been (at least) five separate agricultural transformations between 1560 and 1880. In addition, H.C. Darby argues that many have, albeit wrongly, hailed the eighteenth century as the great century of agricultural improvement, while there is sufficient evidence, particularly from the agricultural writings of J. Fitzherbert (1523) and Walter Blith (1649), that the revolution took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is also evidence from the three

³⁹ Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4.

Cambridgeshire villages that the revolutionary improvement that convertible husbandry entailed were already being practiced in the 1660s.⁴⁰

The essence of the revolution was centered on the changes in crop rotation, which increased the quantity of cereal yields per acre. One of the sources of this higher yield was through the introduction of fodder crops⁴¹ especially turnips, and legumes such as clover and peas. Sources from the seventeenth century confirm this, especially Sir Richard Weston's *A Discours of Husbandrie* (1650), where after travelling through Flanders, he advocated the crop rotation of turnips, clover and grasses.⁴² Andrew Yarranton supported this view and stated in his work, *The Improvement Improved* (1663), that there is "a great improvement of lands by clover."⁴³ William Marshall, son of a yeomen farmer and author of *The Rural Economy of the West of England* (1796), a book that promoted farming standards, states that turnips and clover were important "cleaning crops," which,

⁴⁰ These groundbreaking agricultural changers are normally attributed to—or were disseminated by—Berkshire agriculturalist Jethro Tull. His work *Horse-Hoeing Husbandry* (1725) suggested innovative ideas with regard to, among other things, weed control, fertilizer and—his most notable achievement—improvement of the seed drill. For quite some time, broadcasting was the common method of sowing seeds, where Tull's drill avoided waste by setting seeds at regular intervals. In his work, Tull himself realized the benefit of his invention and contrasts the old methods of husbandry with his newer, contemporary outlook declaring, "By his calculation, the Profits arising from the New, are considerably more than double those of the Old." Nevertheless, the impact of many of these new "revolutionary" ideas upon open-field agriculture in the seventeenth century was considerable, particularly in the Cambridgeshire communities under examination.

⁴¹ Animal feeding crops.

⁴² Samuel Hartlib, Richard Weston, Sir Agriculturist., *A Discours of Husbandrie Used in Brabant and Flanders; Shewing the Wonderfull Improvement of Land There; and Serving as a Pattern for Our Practice in This Commonwealth*. Printed by William Du-Gard: London, 1605 [1650]., 1605), viii.

⁴³ Andrew Yarranton, *The Improvement improved, by a second edition of the great improvement of lands by clover, etc.* (London, 1663., n.d.), 75.

among other things, smothered weeds and supplied fodder for animals during winter months.

Turnips and clover grass were of great importance since being introduced from Holland in the sixteenth century. Although originally introduced as a market garden crop destined for English tables, turnips were found to be valuable since they provided a useful fodder and could be grown in relatively thin and somewhat infertile East Anglian soils. Both Turnips and clover were introduced into East Anglia in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Robert Allen asserts that probate inventories from Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Cambridgeshire show that the proportion of farmers growing turnips “increased from less than 10 percent in 1680 to over 50 percent in 1710.”⁴⁴ Increasingly, observers commented on the proliferation of these developments, especially Sir Richard Weston whose 1605 work, *A Discourse of Husbandry*, details his experiences in Flanders where he observes that “Dutch bores⁴⁵ [farmers] turned heathland into arable acreage in flax, turnips, and clover grass,”⁴⁶ and went on to advocate their use in England. Also, William Marshall, an eighteenth century agricultural writer who commented on the growing utilization of crop rotations including barley, turnips and clover grasses in 1795. Jethro Tull also commented on the use of turnips in the gravel-like East Anglian conditions as his

⁴⁴ Robert C Allen, *Enclosure and the Yeoman* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1992), 111.

⁴⁵ From the Dutch term *boer* meaning “farmer.”

⁴⁶ Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 86.

examination and suggests “sand and gravel are the most proper soil for Turneps, because that is most easily pulveriz’d, and its warmth causeth the Turneps to grow faster.”⁴⁷ Also, in Arthur Young’s later descriptions of the southern counties in *A Six Weeks Tour of England and Wales* (1769) he remarked that turnips were still an integral part of East Anglian farms since:

The culture of turnips is here carried on in a most extensive manner; Norfolk being more famous for this vegetable than any county in the kingdom; but I have seen much larger turnips grow in Suffolk in gravelly loams than ever I saw in Norfolk. The use to which they apply their vast fields of turnips, is the feeding their flocks, and expending the surplus in fattening Scotch cattle.⁴⁸

Although this last example is used to describe the adjacent Suffolk region, Cambridgeshire possesses similar geographic characteristics, especially loamy, *river gravels*, which are scattered along the existing rivers and around the southern edge of the Cambridgeshire fens.⁴⁹ These soil conditions, according to Nicholson and Hanley, “give rise to soils that are gravelly, brownish grey to grey–black in color, and loamy sands to medium loams in texture,”⁵⁰ and constitute a good part of the fen edge around Cottenham and are frequent in the “island” area

⁴⁷ Jethro Tull, *The Horse Hoeing Husbandry, or, A Treatise on the Principles of Tillage and Vegetation Wherein Is Taught a Method of Introducing a Sort of Vineyard Culture into the Corn Fields, in Order To increase Their Product and Diminish the Common Expense* (London: Printed for J.M. Cobbett, 1822), 79.

⁴⁸ Arthur Young, *A Six Weeks Tour, Through the Southern Counties of England and Wales Describing, Particularly, I. The Present State of Agriculture and Manufactures. II. The Different Methods of Cultivating The soil. III. The Success Attending Some Late Experiments on Various Grasses, &c. ... In Several Letters to a Friend. By the Author of the Farmer’s Letters* (London: printed for W. Nicoll, 1768), 25.

⁴⁹ Darby, ed., *A scientific survey of the Cambridge district*, 29.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

around Whittlesey.

Meanwhile, clover grass, or *trefoil*,⁵¹ a legume high in proteins and which could grow in light soils, held a substantially high nutrition value for Cambridgeshire livestock. The combined effect of turnips and clover created an increase in available animal feed, which, in turn, allowed farmers to keep more livestock. Clover proved especially popular amongst the yeomanry since it was both easy to grow in a great range of soils and climates and it was also easy on animal digestive systems.⁵² Evidence of yeomen utilizing clover grass cultivation in Cambridgeshire appears in various inventories, particularly in the village of Cottenham. Timothy Norman of Cottenham who held “a small parcel of hay & clover” valued at 13 shillings.⁵³ Also, Cottenham yeomen Francis Wisdom and Anthony Ashwell both held “Two parcels of clover and hay” worth 10 pounds.⁵⁴ Finally William Emerson held “4 pounds worth of clover and hay” in his 1683 inventory.⁵⁵

Cambridgeshire farmers, particularly those in Cottenham and Whittlesey, planted legumes, such as beans and peas, also known “catch” or “hitch” crops on fallow fields. This restored valuable nitrogen to the soil, which, in turn, increased fertility. Evidence is found amongst the Whittlesey inventories, where

⁵¹ The characteristic form of the clover possess three leaves (trifoliate), hence the name “trefoil.”

⁵² Various maladies, such as stomach swelling in cattle, are mentioned by Tull and Weston.

⁵³ Timothy Norman of Cottenham, will dated June 6, 1684, no.158, box 443, ref. 2301139, CRO, Cambridgeshire, UK.

⁵⁴ Francis Wisdom of Cottenham, will dated November 4, 1681, no. 307, box 442, CRO; Anthony Ashwell of Cottenham, will dated November 21, 1682, no. 342, box 442, CRO.

⁵⁵ William Emerson of Cottenham, will dated July 17, 1684, no. 805, box 442, CRO.

yeoman John Mayles maintained, “ a crop of peas and oats upon the ground” valued at 4 pounds,”⁵⁶ while his neighbor Daniel Colls owned “a parcel of peas and beans”⁵⁷ worth 1 pound 10 shillings. Additionally, Thomas Goulding probate accounts for “one acre of beans worth 1 pound 5 shillings”⁵⁸ and in a 1683 inventory, William Custerson of Whittlesey owned “three loads of peas” worth a respectable 12 pounds.⁵⁹ John Speechley, a yeoman, held “3 acres of peas in the field” worth 10 pounds.⁶⁰ Peas and beans were usually mixed with other parcels of barley and oats and account for roughly 17% of the inventories of the village of Whittlesey.

Mark Overton asserts these new crops were integral in allowing English agriculture to break out of a “closed circuit” agricultural system and replaced fallows with a valuable fodder that transferred atmospheric nitrogen into the soil.⁶¹ He estimates that clover growing increased—throughout the realm—from 10 to 17 percent from 1680 to 1710.⁶² Thus, the replacing of unproductive fallow with clover grasses and turnips ended the conventional approach of a two and three crop rotation, and allowed a “revolutionary” increase in output through technological changes rather than the traditional extending of the cultivated area.

⁵⁶ John Mayles of Whittlesey, will dated March 19, 1704, no. 548, box 452, CRO.

⁵⁷ Daniel Colls of Whittlesey, will dated February 27, 1748, no. 827, box 474, CRO.

⁵⁸ Thomas Goulding of Whittlesey, will dated July, 13, 1721, no. 543, box 462, CRO.

⁵⁹ William Custerson of Cottenham, will dated June 18, 1689, no. 624, box 444, CRO.

⁶⁰ John Speechley of Whittlesey, will dated March 29, 1708, no. 398, box 455, CRO.

⁶¹ Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England*, 3.

⁶² Allen, *Enclosure and the Yeoman*, 111.

In addition, perennial herbs such as *sainfoin* and *lucerne* were highly valued and were known to boost crop yields by—among other things—raising the nitrogen content of the soil. Sainfoin, a drought resistant and deep-rooted member of the legume family, in particular proved beneficial as a source of nutrition for working livestock. Translating from the Old French *sain foin*, which literally means “healthy hay,” it was celebrated by many agricultural improvers including Jethro Tull, who notably dedicates individual chapters to both St. Foin and lucerne. Tull fully defends the use of St. Foin since, based on his observations, “it will, in poor Ground, make a Forty times greater Increase than the natural Turf, is the prodigious Length of its peculiar Tap-root: It is said to descend Twenty or Thirty Feet.”⁶³ Robert Morden notes the use of sanfoin in 1701, and remarked that “in Cambridgeshire, sanfoin does wonderfully enrich the Dry and Barren Grounds of that county.”⁶⁴ Moreover, lucerne, a grass used during Roman antiquity and closely resembling clover, is seen by Tull to have the same if not equal characteristics to sain foin. It possesses a longer root system and “is the only Hay in the World that can pretend to excel or equal St. Foin, although it is much sweeter.”⁶⁵ Inevitably, some of Tull’s critics reasoned that a number of these grasses would not grow on land without a stratum of stone or chalk, which is an opinion he dismissed as “vulgar.”

Finally, *marling*, to counteract soil acidity, is another measure taken by East

⁶³ Tull, *The Horse Hoeing Husbandry*, 15–16.

⁶⁴ Morden, 13.

⁶⁵ Tull, *The Horse Hoeing Husbandry*, 193.

Anglian yeomen in an effort to develop and improve their farmland. The term is derived from *marle*, a fourteenth century French word for a mixture of clay and limestone,⁶⁶ but it is used to describe lime-rich mud found in many of the clay vale and fenland areas of Cambridgeshire, specifically Chatteris and Whittlesey. Marling is thought to be an ancient practice that survived throughout the medieval period and progressed steadily well into the 1800s. The process is recounted in a seventeenth century work *The Great Diurnall of Nicholas Blundell of Little Crosby* (1669-1737). A member of the gentry who lived on the manor of Little Crosby in Lancashire, his work consists of observations of early eighteenth-century society in which he specifically recounts the festivities that were held on his estate “in July 1712 when 14 marlers completed their work. The marl pit was dressed with garlands, eight sword-dancers performed to music in his barn, and the occasion was celebrated with feasting, dancing, and bull-baiting.”⁶⁷

Contemporary observers noted that the East Anglian or more specifically Cambridgeshire and Norfolk rotations consisted of “Marle, and break up for wheat. 2. Turnips. 3. Barley. 4. Laid down with clover and ray-gras for three years, or sometimes only two.”⁶⁸ The land was folded with dung for the winter-corn and it is believed that after a fresh marling, the yield was approximately

⁶⁶ *The Chambers Dictionary*, New ed. (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1998), 472.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Blundell and The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, *The Great Diurnal of Nicholas Blundell of Little Crosby, Lancashire* (Chester: Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1968), 302.

⁶⁸ Young, *A Six Weeks Tour, Through the Southern Counties of England and Wales*, 24.

four quarters of wheat per acre, and five of barley. However, about fifteen to eighteen years after the marling, the yields fell to “three quarters of wheat, and four and a half of soft corn.”⁶⁹ Young found marling to be “the great foundation of their [yeomen’s] wealth.”⁷⁰ The Cambridgeshire yeomanry had an alternative or failsafe system when marle had dissipated out of their soil. When “the marle begins to wear out of the soil, many of the great farmers have latterly got into a method of manuring with oil-cakes for their winter corn, which they import from Holland, and spread on their fields at the expence of about 15 s. per acre.”⁷¹

Mark Overton’s work contains estimates of grain yields based on information found in probate inventories. The strength of Overton’s work lies in his “population method” that assumes consumption per head of agricultural products was constant, so that agricultural production grew with the rise of the English population. One consequence of population growth and demand for food was growing yeoman prosperity. Overton has calculated gross yields from probate inventories for wheat and barley for East Anglia during 1587-1735.⁷² He shows that wheat yields per acre rose by 18% from the 1590’s to 1632 for the entire period.⁷³ They then rose by 8% for the period from 1660 to 1699, and

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 26.

⁷² Mark Overton, “Estimating Crop Yields from Probate Inventories: An Example from East Anglia, 1585-1735,” *The Journal of Economic History* 39 (1979): 363–78.

⁷³ Mark Overton, “Re-estimating Crop Yields from Probate Inventories: A Comment,” *The Journal of Economic History* 50 (1990): 931–35.

then jumped by 18% by 1735.⁷⁴ He calculated that barley yields rose by only 2% from the 1590s to the 1630s, but they “then climbed by 15% from the period from 1660 to 1699, and then jumped by 18%” by 1735.⁷⁵

Arthur Young saw the rise in output and provides some literary evidence. His summation of East Anglian (including Cambridgeshire) farming during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is that:

There is no great conjuration necessary to discover the reasons of such large fortunes being made in this country by farmers; for hiring unimproved lands at a small rent, and finding very fine marle every where under them, they made therby such a vast improvement, that nothing less than a perpetual drought could prevent large crops.⁷⁶

It is apparent from Young’s work that agricultural innovation—particularly the use of new crops—contributed to the improvements of agriculture in Cambridgeshire, which are confirmed by the evidence of yeomen inventories of the communities of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey. Even with the challenging geography and variegated soil conditions, these Cambridgeshire communities realized the benefits of the agricultural revolution. However, one must in addition consider the organization of land, tenure, and field systems within these villages, in order to explain the development of the yeomen into wealthy farmers.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Young, *A Six Weeks Tour, Through the Southern Counties of England and Wales Describing, Particularly, I. The Present State of Agriculture and Manufactures. II. The Different Methods of Cultivating The soil. III. The Success Attending Some Late Experiments on Various Grasses, &c. ... In Several Letters to a Friend. By the Author of the Farmer’s Letters*, 26.

Land Organization and Field Systems

There is the greatest prospect of seeing this kingdom, a land of yeomanry; a thing not to be dreaded, for better landed property.

Arthur Young, *The Southern Counties of England*, 1769

Land organization, or more specifically the field system—involving both landlord and cultivator—had taken a variety of forms in different parts of the country since the middle ages. By the early modern era, English farmland was organized into *fields*, which refers to the physical layout, the *organization* of the system includes two aspects: the rules of cultivation and property rights of ownership and use.⁷⁷

Although the topography of many field systems can be carefully reconstructed, late medieval and early modern field units cannot be generalized into a single type, since there were a variety of elements—especially regional variants—that contributed to their complexity. Nevertheless, most of the landscape looked very much the same as in present day: rectangular bands surrounded by hedges, ditches, or walls and sometimes separated by unplowed grass strips called *baulkes*.⁷⁸ Larger fields were divided into strips and often

⁷⁷ Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England*, 22.

⁷⁸ Rosemary Milward, *A Glossary of Household, Farming, and Trade Terms from Probate Inventories* (Derbyshire Record Society Occasional Paper No. 1, 1977), 7. Balkes or bauks were oftentimes used as a boundary between two plowed portions of land.

grouped into units called *furlongs*⁷⁹ or *lands*, which also contained subdivisions commonly called *open-fields*. Of course, the terminology differed with regard to region, since different areas held different relationships amid their various topographical features. Medieval Cambridge, particularly the area near Cottenham, maintained a “ridge and furrow” system or characteristic ridged pattern created by the system of plowing used during the middle ages. A fine example still survives two miles outside of Cambridge in the great open-fields of Coton that consist of approximately twenty acres, made up of about seventy strips.⁸⁰

Much of the land in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, including those in Cambridgeshire, was not subject to private property rights, but to common property rights.⁸¹ Unlike the private property rights of today—which stipulate that no other person has the legal right to use land without express permission of the landowner—property rights were held “in common.” This implies that exclusive rights of ownership did not specify exclusive rights of use.⁸² It suggests that people living in the village community possessed special rights to the use of that land such as grazing animals or gathering wood for fuel.⁸³ Thus, land under “common rights” was also referred to as *common land*

⁷⁹ The term *furlong* was originally derived from the Old English word for a “furrow length.”

⁸⁰ Cambridgeshire Preservation Society Field Preservation Project.

⁸¹ Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England*, 24.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ The right to remove wood from the commons for fuel was known as *firebote*.

or *common fields*.⁸⁴

Common field farming was a communal effort and regulations were needed to insure that it operated efficiently, and in a fair and neighborly fashion.

Cambridgeshire farmers—using a collaborative approach—would look after one another’s livestock, plow fields together, and work together during harvests.

The legal term for the taking in and pasturing of beasts of another owner was *agistment*. For example, Ralph Aveling, a Whittlesey yeoman, obviously looked after his neighbor’s or relative’s livestock since his 1697 inventory records “two guest mares and a slowe horse” and “one mare and foal and five guest mares.”⁸⁵

In Robert Wheatley’s 1720 inventory, he had three cows valued at 4 pounds, which are located in “Mr. [William] Aslie [s] ground in Earith Fenn” and twenty sheep in the “eighteen acres at Mr. Milbank’s land.”⁸⁶ Common fields also held a fair amount of yeoman livestock, especially in Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire where Robert Ground’s 1722 inventory records that he had “92 lamhogs & about forty sheep valued at 50 pounds in the common field.”⁸⁷ In Chatteris March Soule kept “four score sheep and three Mares on The Comon”⁸⁸ and more than twenty years later his son, Adderton Soule, still kept “one hundred and sixteen sheep in Chatteris common.”⁸⁹ The village community collectively organized the actual

⁸⁴ Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England*, 24.

⁸⁵ Ralph Aveling of Whittlesey, will dated June 19, 1697, no. 483, box 449, CRO.

⁸⁶ Robert Wheatley of Chatteris, will dated May 24, 1720, no. 234, box 462, CRO.

⁸⁷ Robert Ground of Whittlesey, will dated October 29, 1722, no. 92, box 463, CRO.

⁸⁸ March Soule of Chatteris, will dated January 15, 1703, no. 79, box 452, CRO.

⁸⁹ Adderton Soule of Chatteris, will dated January 24, 1727, no. 151, box 466, CRO.

byelaws, which ranged from the control of livestock grazing to the management of ditches and weeding. The manorial court—the legal jurisdiction governed by public law and local custom—meted out the penalty for neglect of duty or other types of related violations, thus assuring that tenants rights, duties, and disputes were settled within the manor. Although, much like any legal body, it contained imperfections; nevertheless, it proved to be an effective system and most people abided by the rules.

Land Tenures

In the middle ages and well into the early modern period, the holding of land was based on a tenurial system. This medieval framework operated on legal precedent and custom, which is derived from the five main forms of land tenure: *knight service, socage, copyhold, frankalmoign, and serjeantry*.⁹⁰ However, by the late sixteenth-century, tenure had gone through a period of modification.

Manorial surveys or *extents*,⁹¹ divided tenure into three distinct groups: free, customary, and lease. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the tenures of

freehold, leasehold, and copyhold in order to understand their relationship to the

⁹⁰ Knight service, a form of feudal tenure that required a knight (tenant) to provide a certain number of horsemen to fight for the king, and originated with William I who, by process of *enfeoffment* rewarded his followers with grants of land (a knight's fee), which they held in return for knight service. By the early modern period, this service, particularly the acts of *homage* and *fealty* that so bound the fighting men to their lord, had both lost their meaning. The tenures of Serjeantry—a type of medieval tenure similar to knight service—that could be both chivalrous and non-chivalrous—where land was held in return for a variety of personal services—and frankalmoign—an ecclesiastical arrangement that required prayers for the soul of the donor—had both outlived their purpose and fallen into disuse by the Elizabethan period.

⁹¹ A detailed survey and valuation of a manorial estate. It records the names of tenants, the size and nature of their holding, and the form of their tenure.

yeomen rise.

Freehold is a tenurial status for property, which stipulates ownership of real property that includes both land and all structures upon that land for an indeterminate duration. Freeholders held land in “free tenure” and were not restricted by manorial custom, but were regulated by common law. A freehold was originally held either in knight service or in socage,⁹² and men aged between 21 and 70 with freehold property worth at least 40 shillings a year could vote at local and parliamentary elections. From 1696, lists of freeholders were identified by each parish for jury service.⁹³

Leasehold is property tenure where one party buys the right to occupy land for a given length of time, typically 99 years. Leasehold differed from freehold since property was leased for a determinant amount of time. The terms of the arrangement (length of tenure, rent, etc.) were contained in the lease. This method began to replace copyhold tenure in the early modern period. Leasehold was also used for demesnes land that a landowner did not wish to farm himself, but which he could recover at the end of the term.

Customary tenants, or copyholders, were the most common form of “unfree” or *villein* tenure. It was a form of tenure by which a tenant held a “copy” of the entry in the rolls of the manorial court on which was recorded his or her

⁹² Socage tenure is a form of feudal tenure where land was held, not by service, but by money rent. Socage, along with knighthood, was considered a “free” tenure, which meant that the “services to be performed were fixed both in their nature and duration.” By the sixteenth century it was the most common free tenure since it “had a secure title, was governed by common law and not by custom, and gave the tenant the right to lease, sell and bequeath land as he wished.

⁹³ Hey, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*, 193.

possession of a holding on agreed terms.⁹⁴ The terms usually required the tenant to perform labor services for the lord, but by the 16th century these terms were slowly converted into money payments, involving large entry fines and nominal annual rents. The method of holding property and conditions attached to leases was legally binding for a certain number of years at a fixed annual rent.

Land law in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries still maintained some of its original, medieval idiosyncrasies, especially with regard to copyhold. In early modern Cambridge, some of copyhold's stipulations required a *heriot*⁹⁵ upon the death of the tenant. This late Anglo-Saxon custom allowed the lord of the manor to seize payment, often the "best beast" or "best clothing," upon death. Sir Richard Carew comments on this manorial right in his *Survey of Cornwall* (1602) since in his county—and quite predictably on his own estate—it "is usuall it is for all sorts of Tenants, upon death, as least, if not surrender, or forfeiture, to pay their best beast for a *Heriot*."⁹⁶ He continues that this homage applies, not just to yeomen or husbandmen, but also to persons passing through the county: "if a stranger passing thorow the Countrey, chauce to leave his carkase behind him, he also must redeeme his burial, by rendering his best beast...or if he have none, his best Iewell [Jewell], or rather than fayle,

⁹⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁹⁵ A heriot or *heregeat* was a tradition that allowed the lord to reclaim loaned property at the death of a serf. This custom gradually gave way to a money payment or "best beast," and is considered the precursor to modern day inheritance tax. Heriot was legally abolished in Britain in 1922.

⁹⁶ Richard Carew, *The Survey of Cornwall*, 1st ed (London: Printed by S.S. for Iohn Iaggard, 1602), 38.

his best garment then about him, in lieu thereof.”⁹⁷ This homage is evident in the inventory of Cottenham yeoman William Emerson which lists “Eight Horses & mares whereof 3 taken for herriots” at a value of 15 pounds.⁹⁸

Major tenurial issues did arise concerning the structure of copyhold. The copyhold held “in inheritance” was essentially like freehold, because it carried a fixed rent and allowed the tenant to pass it along to his heirs, thus it put the tenant at an advantage. Though, with copyhold held as a “term of years or lives,” the landlord held the advantage since he could force the tenant to renew their terms at a higher rent than before. According to Mildred Campbell, the landlord could claim an increase in value of land justified the increase in rents and fines, wherein the tenant had to either meet the new rental increase—which in some cases was much higher than his previous rent—or forfeit his tenancy.⁹⁹ Campbell argues this resulted in “land greed,” a phenomenon that created an increase in demand with new buyers agreeing to higher rental terms, which pushed out the smaller farmer and allowed the more prosperous yeomen to improve his situation by increasing his acreage.¹⁰⁰

Is there evidence that land tenure within the Cambridgeshire communities of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey assist the yeomen in their rise in status? To find the answer, it is essential to assess the yeomen’s tenure in each village.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ William Emerson of Cottenham, will dated July 17, 1684, no. 805, box 442, ref. 2301138, CRO.

⁹⁹ Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, 121.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Freehold tenure is the most beneficial, since it means inheritable land and property ownership without limitations. It places the landholder in the most profitable situation; coincidentally, a good number of Cambridgeshire yeomen were freeholders¹⁰¹ and although Margaret Spufford claims, “every historian knows that real estate is not included in an inventory,”¹⁰² there is evidence taken from Edmund Carter’s 1819 survey of Cambridge that lists freeholders drawn up from the Quarter Sessions, and allows us to cross reference with yeomen inventories from Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey. These figures reflect the number of yeomen freeholders for each village between the years 1670-1740.¹⁰³

When cross referencing the total number of yeomen from Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey with the freehold list provided by Carter, it is possible to calculate the percentage of freeholding yeomen up to 1750. Out of 80 inventories, Chatteris had a total of twenty-two yeoman freeholders that were found on Carter’s record, which translates to 28%, Cottenham had fifteen yeomen freeholders out of a total of 92, thus showing a 16% holding, and Whittlesey had fifty-four freeholders out of 115, which reflects a 47% holding.

The three communities contain a very reasonable number of yeomen freeholders. Yet, when we add in the family members who appear in the probate documents that are not included by Edmund Carter (yet designated as

¹⁰¹ Freeholding yeomen could also maintain copyhold land.

¹⁰² Margaret Spufford, “The Limitations of Probate Inventory,” in *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 142.

¹⁰³ This is a rough estimate, as it could be plus or minus five years.

freeholders in their respected villages), we arrive at more elevated figures. First, Chatteris includes freeholding sons to the Reynolds, Leach, Read, Sole, Purring and Ellis families who are not included in the Edmund Carter's estimations, which consist of an additional eight yeomen in the six aforementioned families. These give Chatteris thirty freeholders, which reflect a 38% figure for freehold. Also, Cottenham includes eight more freeholding sons from the Glover, Ivett (Ivatt), Norman, Saintey, and Sanderson families, which brings the total to twenty-three and reflects a 25% holding. And Whittlesey reflects eight additional from the families of Clipson, Colls, Randall, Searle, and Ground that totals sixty-two and reflects a 54% result. These figures are evidence that, in the case of Whittlesey, over half of the yeomen enjoyed the privilege of freehold, while in Chatteris and Cottenham, freehold was enjoyed by approximately 1/3 and 1/4 of the yeomen, respectively.

Yet, we can assume that those freeholders and their heirs also held land in leasehold and copyhold. By the seventeenth century, legal recognition of copyhold had changed,¹⁰⁴ allowing the commutation of unfree services for fixed payments. J.H. Baker argues that these changes allowed "the widespread acquisition of base tenancies [copyhold] by men of substance."¹⁰⁵

This data gives a better understanding of the overall number of yeomen and

¹⁰⁴ These social and economic changes included the effect of the Black Death on the labor supply, peasant mobility, and the conversion of fixed payments [rent] in place of services

¹⁰⁵ John H Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 2d ed (London: Butterworths, 1979), 307.

their families. Most of them, as it appears, were freeholders who were protected by the royal courts and had control over the use of their property. In addition, many of these freeholders held copyhold and leasehold lands that were obtained as the nature of land tenures changed. The yeomen's freehold position helped to reinforce their status as landed elite and gave them a large measure of independence in Cambridgeshire during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The Debate on the Rise of "Capitalist" Farming

At the turn of the century, historians attempted to explain the dramatic changes in English agriculture. R.E. Prothero (Lord Ernle) produced the most comprehensive text on English farming that stressed the role of enclosure¹⁰⁶ as a pivotal factor in the agricultural revolution. In his 1912 work, he highlighted farmers who had raised output by enclosure, and transformed agriculture with large-scale farming. The result was, from an economic standpoint, "a good thing since it had encouraged capitalist farming."¹⁰⁷ But, Ernle espoused the idea that

¹⁰⁶ *Enclosure* is a general term—differing from region to region—that describes the act where common and open fields were enclosed by a hedge, fence or wall. Sometime referred to as *inclosure*, the practice of enclosing land goes back to the early thirteenth century when Henry III authorized it in the Statute of Merton during the thirteenth century. Although its importance lies in its eventual development, clarification and legal right of land ownership (one of its original purposes was to establish deer parks) it stated that the landlord had the fundamental right to enclose some of his wasteland providing that sufficient pasture remained for his tenants.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Edward Turner, *Agricultural Rent in England, 1690-1914* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3.

enclosure only helped spur revolutionary output in tandem with the Industrial Revolution. In his view, farmers of the eighteenth century “lived thought and farmed like farmers of the thirteenth century.”¹⁰⁸ His argument further claimed that, after the accession of George III, the post-1760 Parliamentary Enclosure Act was spurred by both agricultural and mechanical innovations, thus introducing new scientific farming, which created an intensification of “enterprise and outlay streamlined by these new capitalist landlords and tenant farmers.”¹⁰⁹

For many years, Lord Ernle’s work remained the primary source to which academics turned when studying eighteenth century English agriculture. The first serious challenge came in the late 1960s, when Chambers and Mingay reassessed Ernle’s argument. In *Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1880*, they suggest that 1700 was more likely the start of the period that witnessed the beginning of the agricultural revolution. They also insisted that Ernle’s work was “as a text, seriously out of date,”¹¹⁰ and that it did more to “capture the popular imagination instead of dislodging the great myths of agricultural history.”¹¹¹ Chambers and Mingay attributed the sudden rapid transformation to a variety of causes: new fodder crops and crop rotation, coupled with convertible husbandry,¹¹² field drainage, and parliamentary enclosure. They further argued

¹⁰⁸ Prothero, *English Farming : Past and Present*, 220.

¹⁰⁹ Turner, *Agricultural Rent in England, 1690-1914*, 3.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹¹ Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England*, 4.

¹¹² The process where the farmer or landowner deliberately alternates between pasture and arable land.

that these changes were quite revolutionary since they estimate that an “additional 6.5 million people were being fed by English agriculture in 1850 compared with 1750.”¹¹³ Although they did acknowledge enclosure as a factor since more enclosed land was under cultivation they drew attention to the fact that “much of this extra food was the result of increases in output per acre.”¹¹⁴

Before long, doubt was raised about Mingay and Chambers’ conclusion by Eric Kerridge’s *Agricultural Revolution* where he argues that the rise of new agrarian ideas took place in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In contrast to their theories, Eric Kerridge argues that a revolution in agriculture— notably between 1560 and 1767—preceded the Industrial Revolution and that seven innovations, ranging from fen drainage to new fertilizers, facilitated the outcome.¹¹⁵ This is the period, according to R.A. Bryer, when some farmers undertook enclosure and employed wage labor and resulted in what Marx termed, “the formation of modern capital.”¹¹⁶ Bryer postulates that technological change in agriculture had been taking place in a number of local areas for two to three hundred years prior to the dates set forth by the Chambers, Mingay, and Kerridge.

¹¹³ Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England*, 4.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁵ E.P. Thompson accused both Chambers and Mingay of ‘statistical dilution.’ He claimed quite openly that they “watered” the totals of large employers with the peasantry, hence minimizing capitalist agricultural processes.

¹¹⁶ R.A. Bryer, “The Genesis of the Capitalist Farmer: Towards a Marxist Accounting History of the Origins of the English Agricultural Revolution,” in *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* (May 2006) Vol. 17; 4, 370.

The antagonism between these theories evoked a more comprehensive effort by Joan Thirsk who expounded a theory of “uneven development.” Her edited work *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* claims that innovation may have been adopted in some areas hundreds of years before the “revolutionary” improvements spread to other places. She believes that “English agricultural history should be analysed as a continuum to be divided between more and less rapid change” and that historians should—once and for all—eschew what she terms the “Agricultural Revolution.”¹¹⁷

Thus, the issue is undoubtedly complex. Even if one cannot agree on the attempts to establish the specific temporal range of the agricultural revolution, new agrarian techniques and increasing land under plow were dominant factors in the process of change. They were certainly used by the Cambridgeshire yeoman during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a means of breaking through the perpetual poverty of subsistence farming. As Mildred Campbell observes, the yeoman, “suited by position, temperament, and ambition to carry on this kind of inclosing were probably the most numerous of all piecemeal inclosers.”¹¹⁸ By adopting the changes in agricultural processes and consolidating scattered holdings to create large, individual farms, the yeomen reaped the benefits of the population rise and demand for grains.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Turner, *Agricultural Rent in England, 1690-1914*, 9.

¹¹⁸ Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, 87.

¹¹⁹ Ravensdale, *East Anglian landscapes*, 112.

Conclusion

It appears that such factors as the size of land holding, the custom of English inheritance, and enclosure operated together to help the yeoman progress and become more commercially involved.

Campbell asserts that it was not that land became more important; however, it was the relationship that people had with the land and the growing significance of trade and industry, which redefined land as a commercial entity. The freedom to improve one's condition encouraged small landholders to seek more land. R.E. Prothero observed that previously "medieval husbandmen were content to extract from the soil the food which they needed for themselves; whereas Tudor families...aspired to be sellers and not consumers only, to raise from their lands profits as well as foods."¹²⁰ Yet, Joan Thirsk realized this assertion was somewhat oversimplified since she found that late Tudor and early seventeenth century yeomen were also commercially driven "cultivators and...their enthusiasm for innovation—as well as a crop's economic attractiveness—demanded their technical skill, capital, and labour resources."¹²¹

Although the slow transformation of tenant rights had an impact on the growing commercial opportunities in agriculture, another important feature in the growth of this particular sector of the English agrarian economy was the

¹²⁰ Prothero, *English Farming, Past and Present*, 6th ed (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961), 58.

¹²¹ Joan Thirsk, "New Crops and their Diffusion," in *Rural Change and Urban Growth, 1500-1800: Essays in English Regional History in Honour of W. G. Hoskins*, C.W. Chalkin, ed. (London ; New York: Longman, 1974), 76-77.

relatively high average size of peasant land holdings. Twenty to twenty-five acres was a common size in practically most villages in the mid 1600's as compared to one to two and one half acre holdings of the peasants in France.¹²² One reason for the sizeable holdings of English peasants were the terms of leasehold that allowed a peasant to work demesnes land, earn profit, and buy the lands of his less prosperous neighbors. They often bought strips in open fields in order to consolidate blocks of land, while turning waste into productive fields. Moreover, the "open field" arrangement (½ acre strips of land distributed on a communal basis) was also a lucrative opportunity if the peasant could get them in a row and get permission to enclose them. Thus, he could work them independently and realize a profit. For example, according to the leasehold document of yeoman landowner Roger Hilman, he awarded "his rights to lands to John Gylle in the areas of Waymeton and Netherhill."¹²³ It is this activity that further enhanced the differentiation amongst the regular peasantry and the growth of the relatively prosperous peasants who were now designated as *yeomen*.¹²⁴

The custom of English inheritance further increased the growing differentiation amongst the seventeenth-century peasantry. Although the labor of several able-bodied sons and daughters was necessary in cultivation, the laws

¹²² *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*; General editor, H. P. R. Finberg, Vol. V, 195.

¹²³ Thomas Robert Gambier-Parry, *A Collection of Charters Relating to Goring, Streatley And the Neighborhood, 1181-1546, Preserved in the Bodleian Library, with a Supplement* (Oxford: The Oxfordshire Record Society, 1931), 254.

¹²⁴ Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, World Economic History (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1973), 196.

of *primogeniture* guaranteed that the eldest son would inherit the entire land holding while younger sons would become laborers or be given a small start in trade.¹²⁵ This dynamic was significant, even at the lowest level of peasant life, since it turned younger sons into wage earners rather than dividing the land holding. By contrast, *partible* inheritance—the division of land to all heirs practiced in France and parts of the Continent—would shrink the overall holdings, which would reduce the yield and allow younger sons to remain home and not take part in the growing ranks of wage labor. Thus, the tendency to enlarge farms and the replacement of small peasants by the “capitalist farm dynamic” was pursuing a distinct and profitable course.

Since land was “the center and substance of their lives and their livelihood,”¹²⁶ the fortunes of the English yeomen are inherently linked to the changes in agricultural practices within the East Anglian region, which, in turn, impacted the county of Cambridgeshire and the communities of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey. The land on which these villages were located— heavy clay, chalky clay, and gravel, peat and fen silt—was, geologically speaking, unremarkable. If anything it proved to be a challenge even to those seeking basic sustenance. To the casual observer of the time, the fenland was a forbidding wasteland that was best left abandoned; however, it was not until the age of agricultural improvement that those with a sense of vision recognized that

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, 66.

parts of the fenland contained soil that could be brought under cultivation.

Fittingly, the yeomen of Cambridgeshire—whether or not it is considered by some as revolutionary—embraced this advanced wisdom since there is, as this work has shown, ample evidence in their wills and inventories that illustrates their use of *hitch* or *catch* crops in order to improve yields. No longer were fields sitting fallow and, by extending the area of cultivation, output slowly increased. Thus, the cycle of “closed circuit” medieval farming was at this point permanently broken, which now—along benefits of copyhold and freehold land tenure—gave the market-oriented yeomen their opportunity to reap the economic benefits.

Thus, the communities of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey were founded amongst a natural marshland located, in most cases, below sea-level and subject to constant flooding, which stood in stark contrast to the rest of southeastern England—an arable farming territory. Although these communities had immediate access to larger river systems and could move goods and livestock to market, their ability to grow crops and produce foodstuffs (namely grass-like cereal crops) were limited to the small, non-flooding chalk and surrounding limestone uplands. Roman and medieval inhabitants struggled with various ways of reclaiming land from overflowing rivers and tidal surges, but to no avail as reclamation was only transitory and led to the swift abandonment of nearly all drainage projects. However, it will be discovered in the following chapter that reclamation was only temporarily ignored; there would be a massive thrust

towards drainage that would transform the fenlands, including these three communities, from pastoral to arable farming. This alteration produced cash crops such as wheat, barley, and rapeseed; all of which would be vital to England's rising population.

CHAPTER 3

The following chapter examines the impact of the drainage of the fens and how the urgent monetary needs of the Stuart government—as well as the vision of one English politician, Francis Russell—brought medieval pastoral farming, fishing, and fowling into the early modern agricultural age. Russell, the fourth Earl of Bedford, held a considerable amount of property, including some 20,000 to 40,000 acres of fenland around Thorney and Whittlesey in the Isle of Ely where “he could expect to take an added interest in a project from which he would derive so great a personal advantage...in an effort to consolidate his position and pay off his debts.”¹²⁷ The villages of Chatteris and Cottenham, and the town of Whittlesey were in the direct path of this undertaking, and would feel the full impact—both positively and negatively from this change. Therefore, it is practical to examine the region of the fens with its geographical irregularities and incongruities; the difficulties that surfaced with construction and engineering; the growing opposition to the drainage scheme, and the irrevocable impact on the landscape.

The Fens

As the most prominent geographical characteristic of Cambridgeshire, the East Anglian Fenland has consistently dictated the way humans have been forced

¹²⁷ Dorothy Summers, *The Great Level: A History of Drainage and land Reclamation in the Fens* (London: David & Charles, 1976), 64

to interact with the land and has impacted settlement. For centuries, the fen area in the East Anglian plane came under such a variety of geographical descriptions that S.B.J. Skertchly's *Geology of the Fenland*, indicates that "no geographical description can be precise."¹²⁸ The term *fen* is derived from the Old English *fenn* and from the proto-Germanic *fanja* that is used to describe a marshy wetland that is inclined to seasonal moisture.¹²⁹ The Fenland covers roughly 13,000 square miles and is 75 miles and boasting a width of about 36 miles.¹³⁰ The geographical area contains a variety of differing elements (peat, inland clay, coastal silt) and a wealth of rivers running through to the Wash that include the Witham through Boston (Lincolnshire); the Glen and Welland, meeting below Spalding; the Nene through Wisbech (Cambridgeshire); and the many branched Great Ouse reaching the sea at King's Lynn (Norfolk).¹³¹

The fens of East Anglia, particularly the area of this study, possess a unique variety of geological characteristics. The northern reaches of the fenland, especially that which would later be subject to reclamation, consisted of peat, inland clay, and coastal silt.¹³² Peat areas include the land surrounding the great Level, which extends from Halton in Lincolnshire, through to Lincoln, Norfolk,

¹²⁸ Sydney Barber and Josiah Skertchly, *The Geology of the Fenland* (London: Geological Survey of the United Kingdom, 1846), 4.

¹²⁹ T. Northcote Toller and Joseph Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary: based on the manuscript collections of the late Joseph Bosworth; Supplement / by T. Northcote Toller*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press Press, 1898), 276.

¹³⁰ H. C. Darby, *The draining of the Fens*, 2nd ed., Cambridge studies in economic history (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 1.

¹³¹ F.H. Willmoth, *The Employment of Surveyors in the Fen drainage Scheme of 1649-1656: Their Status, Roles, and Achievements* (Unpublished M.Phil Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1985), 4.

¹³² *Ibid.*

Suffolk, Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Northampton. The clay and silt area roughly make up The Isle of Ely and Holland in Lincolnshire and some of the marshlands in Norfolk.¹³³

According to H.H. Nicholson and F. Hanley, the Fens contained soil known as *Fen Alluvial* deposits, which cover about half the area of Cambridgeshire.¹³⁴ These soils are divided into four groups: peat, silt, shell marl, and skirt.¹³⁵ They have been deposited through the river system, which—by carrying a rich accumulation of calcium—had a positive impact on the soil. Yet, Nicholson and Hanley are quick to point out that, because of the frequency of floods, these ingredients “alter given the considerable variations in existing soil conditions from place to place.”¹³⁶ Attempts to label the fenland and its variegated composition—let alone tame it—were challenges for those who wanted to reclaim the area for arable land.

The Draining of the Fens

Water levels had always been an issue with landowners and tenants of East Anglia; the motions of the tides, the collection of surface water and the constant action of underground springs dictated the success or failure of crop yields. In his work *Britannia* (1607), William Camden described the fens of northern Cambridgeshire as “pleasant in summer and abounding in grass, yet hollow and

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Darby, ed., *A scientific survey of the Cambridge district*, 29.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

spongy by reason of the waters which undermine the soil; which also sometimes overflow and drown the greatest part of it.”¹³⁷ Fenland tides were particularly ominous, since a normal spring tide could reach up to fourteen feet above sea level.¹³⁸ Wind was also the farmer’s nemesis, with powerful North Sea gusts driving water into catch basins, which could increase the tide to seventeen feet above sea level.¹³⁹ Given these factors, agricultural expansion could only occur when the problems of drainage and embanking could be addressed.

Although fen inhabitants were at the mercy of tidal floods, there were certain positive elements that allowed for habitation in the un-drained Fenland. As William Camden observed, there was “plentiful feeding” with “a cleere deepe fishful mere named Whittlesmere” and an abundance of turf for fuel.¹⁴⁰ The descriptions of the area around Crowland mentions an area filled with inhabitants who “kept their cattle at a good distance from town and went to milk them in little boats called skerries, which held but two persons, while their chief profit arose from catching fish and fowl.”¹⁴¹ The un-drained land, however, was uneven and boggy, attributes which are detailed in Michael Drayton’s *Polyolbion* (1622), a work dedicated to the Prince of Wales, in which he mentions:

The toyling Fisher here is tweing of his Net:

¹³⁷ William Camden, *Camden’s Britannia*: newly translated into English: with large additions ... / Publish’d by E. Gibson (London: pr. by F. Collins, for A. Swalle; & A. & J. Churchill, 1695), 479.

¹³⁸ Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian Landscapes* (London: Michale Joseph, Ltd., 1984), 101.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Camden, *Britannia*, 479.

¹⁴¹ Frances Willmoth, *Sir Jonas Moore*: practical mathematics and Restoration science / Frances Willmoth. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), 52.

The Fowler is imployed his lymed twigs to set.
One underneath his Horswe, to get a shoote doth stalke;
Another over Dykes upon his Stilts doth walke:
Their other with their Spades, the Peats are squaring out,
And others from their Carres [fens], are busily about,
To draw out Sedge and Reed, for thatch and Stover fit.¹⁴²

This useful depiction of the un-drained fens provides a snapshot of life and draws attention to the particular habits that people used to survive and—invariably—thrive during the reign of James I. Drayton’s *Second Part*, illustrates the culture of the fenland inhabitants and their reliance on the fertile commons attracted less attention because it was sold alongside other less-reputable publications that were considered, “beastly and abominable Trash.”¹⁴³ Unwittingly, the sour reputation of his second work helped reinforce the argument for drainage since it characterized the fens as a barren waste with a small number of farmers who saw little in its valuable, natural resources. Fenland drainage proponents sold their ideas as a profitable opportunity that was lost on their local opponents who were “at best, self-interested, feckless, and inert.”¹⁴⁴

Dorothy Summers defends the locals against such claims by asserting “to portray the fenmen as a race devoted exclusively to fishing and wildfowling, with

¹⁴² Michael Drayton et al., *The second part, or a continuance of Poly-Olbion from the eighteenth song: containing all the tracts, rivers, mountaines, and Forrests: intermixed with the most remarkable stories, antiquities, wonders, rarities, pleasures, and commodities of the east, and northerne parts of this isle, lying betwixt the two famous rivers of Thames, and Tweed.* (London: Printed by Augustine Mathewes for Iohn Marriott, Iohn Grismand, and Thomas Dewe, 1622), A2.

¹⁴³ Drayton, *Poly-Olbion*, A2.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

each man pursuing his own interests regardless of those of his neighbors, would be a dangerous oversimplification.”¹⁴⁵ The fens were highly valuable—both socially and economically—and should remain so, as drainage opponent and parliamentarian Sir John Manynard claimed in the early 1600s that, “Our Fens as they are, produce greate stores of Wood and Lamb, and large fat Mutton, and for corn and the afore cited commodities are the Oar of the Commonwealth.”¹⁴⁶ Those, like Sir John, who upheld the fenmen’s cause were drowned out since Drayton’s subsequent unflattering portrait of the fenlands was used by those who embraced a “pro-drainage” argument. This ignored both the value of the traditional fenland economy and denied that drainage could (and in most cases would) undermine the longstanding livelihood of the typical fen inhabitants.

Nonetheless, the matter of drainage attracted national attention in the seventeenth century,¹⁴⁷ which gave birth to a variety of suggestions and remedies. Essayists like Samuel Hartlib, Robert Child and Walter Blith, adeptly discussed the necessity of drainage, which, in their opinion, would enable the introduction of new crops. Blith’s *English Improver* (1649) was particularly valuable since it was the first to discuss the methods and needs of drainage, the necessity of enclosures, and the employment of more capital.¹⁴⁸ By following his

¹⁴⁵ Summers, *The Great Level*, 34.

¹⁴⁶ Keith Lindley, *Fenland riots and the English Revolution / Keith Lindley* (London: Heinemann, 1982), 7.

¹⁴⁷ Some appalling and unmanageable areas of the fens were surveyed by the Tudor government under the auspices of the Commissioners and Courts of Sewers for drainage of the Great Level in 1601.

¹⁴⁸ Prothero, *English farming*: past and present, 113.

advice, although it resembles that of a huckster or salesman, the farmer or husbandman would realize his land:

Both arable and pasture, may be advanced double or treble; other land To a five or tenfold: and some to a twentyfold improvement: yea, now Some not worth above one or two shillings per acre, be made worth thirty, Or forty, if not more.¹⁴⁹

His work—urging land improvement and increased fertility—was considered forward looking and ground breaking for the time. However, as Blith was a staunch Puritan, it also contained many Biblical passages and Scriptural messages, which tended to cloud the actual methods needed to undertake these challenging tasks.¹⁵⁰

It is little wonder that, as Lord Ernle reflects, “these literary and experimental agriculturists gained a reputation similar to that of quack medicine vendors.”¹⁵¹ The expansion mentioned by the early observers became, as Ravensdale and Muir argue, the emergence of many a “get rich quick scheme, no different from the other formation of companies of the period.”¹⁵² They liken these designs to the existing “speculative hard selling” of company settlement schemes—such as the colonization of the Americas and West Indies— which were no different

¹⁴⁹ Walter Blith, *The English improver, or, A new survey of husbandry discovering to the kingdome, that some land, both arable and pasture, may be advanced double or treble other land to a five or tenfold, and some to a twenty fold improvement, yea, some now not worth above one, or two shillings, per acree, be made worth thirty, or forty, if not more*: clearly demonstrated from principles of sound reason, ingenuity, and late but most certaine reall experiences, held forth under six peeces of improvement / by Walter Blith. (London: Printed for J. Wright ..., 1649), i.

¹⁵⁰ Prothero, *English farming*, 112.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian Landscapes*, 100.

from financial groups or corporations whose ideas about profit and “up-front money” were similar in structure and risk.

Land reclamation was nothing new in the Fenlands, yet reclaiming unproductive land was mostly done on a fragmented and local basis. Since the Roman occupation, settlers in and around East Anglia had forever tried to construct flood defenses or drainage culverts in order to tame the landscape. John Morton, Bishop of Ely a fifteenth century cleric and devoted agriculturalist, oversaw the construction of Morton’s Leam, a forty by four foot deep trench that begins in Peterborough and ends in Wisbech.¹⁵³ Similarly, Sir John Popham’s local Eau project created a seven-mile culvert that carried water out to the River Ouse. In 1589, Humphrey Bradley, an aristocrat who had noticed the success of drainage schemes being carried out in both the France and the Netherlands, argued for “a regal conquest capable of accommodation 200,000 families and more than 300,000 cattle.”¹⁵⁴ In his view, this undertaking would greatly expand English grain production, which, in turn, would ultimately “lower domestic prices and large-scale exporting.”¹⁵⁵ Unhappily, his grand idea lacked capital, laborers, and the coordination between landowners.¹⁵⁶ These schemes realized some success and may have been the impetus for larger projects, but they

¹⁵³ Prothero, *English farming*, 117.

¹⁵⁴ Robin Glasscock, ed., *Historic Landscapes of Britain from the Air* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 132.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

provided temporary results, and without large outlays of capital and labour, reclamation was marginally successful and advantageous to only a few.

Nevertheless, the first serious land reclamation proposal was made in 1620 by Sir Anthony Thomas and his father-in-law Sir William Ayloff. Thomas and Ayloff's drainage scheme was the first solid attempt by a group of investors to undertake the technical challenges of draining the Cambridge fens. Their scheme is important—not because of its imminent failure, but because it involved the blessing and explicit support of both James I and the Privy Council who “ordered the local commissioners of sewers more than once to do all in their power” to assist the Ayloff/Thomas drainage undertakers “in their efforts under pain of royal wrath.”¹⁵⁷ Yet, as the local commissioners of the sewers were against such a scheme, their passive resistance of foot dragging, stalling and lack of enthusiasm scuttled the project from the start.

Eric Ash believes that the failure of the undertaking, even with tacit royal approval, is merely the “centuries old pattern of local governance refusing to die, and the control over matters of land drainage proved to be no exception.”¹⁵⁸ Local authority, in his opinion, still carried considerable weight in matters that required local knowledge, skill, and experience. The impasse between the undertakers and commissioners of sewers occurred when both sides refused to divulge the plans for drainage with respect to the exact size and value of lands.

¹⁵⁷ Eric H. Ash, “The Non-Drainage of the Cambridge Fens, 1619-1620,” in *Drowned and Drained: Exploring Fenland Records and Landscape*, eds. Susan Oosthuizen and Francis Willmoth (Cambridge: Institute of Continuing Education, 2009), 27.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 28.

To break the deadlock, the Privy Council decided that the lands be valued by the commission, which would need to exclude all lands that were “valued at more than eight shillings.”¹⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, the commission of sewers assessed a significant portion at or above the eight-shilling mark, thus relegating the Thomas/Ayloff 1620 drainage scheme to the dustbin.

Although the 1620 scheme had foundered, it would give new life to another such attempt; success—or at least a measure of it—would come a few years later. The largest and most significant reclamation scheme was headed by Francis Russell, the fourth Earl of Bedford, a parliamentarian and one of the largest landowners in the region, whose deep pockets and entrepreneurial vision cast him as the first governor of the Bedford Level Corporation. The Bedford Level Corporation (BLC) was the private company formed by the drainers of the Great Level of the Fens—later called the Bedford Level—who divided up and sold shares of reclaimed land to new owners/investors. The Bedford Level was created by an amalgam of wealthy and influential land owning Adventurers (later appointed “Commissioners of Sewers for the Great Level” after the General Drainage Act of 1663), who functioned as an organizational body with the power to oversee future maintenance of the drainage project. This partnership, backed by a consortium of Dutch and English investors, required—quite simply—that the drainage engineers dig channels and raise dykes to create new arable farmland.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Among the consortium was Sir Miles Sandys (1563-1645), a central figure in the drainage schemes of the first half of the century, being a commissioner of sewers, deputy governor of the first company of adventurers of the Bedford Level and under-treasurer for the construction of the Bedford River. His support for the project was passed to his son, Sir Miles Sandys, the younger (1600-1654) who matched his father's enthusiasm for such schemes. Their action is recorded on an early seventeenth century document certified at Wisbech on 30 May for improving the Ely River (Ouse). It claims:

For remedying a swell of natural defects, as of the enforced decayes, and interrup[tions] of the great river of Ouse...and to make the said Watercourse bee the more profitable for Navigation.¹⁶⁰

This document is vital to understanding the important figures behind the project since it claimed such luminaries of the age such as "Sir Francis Bedford, Sir Myles Sandys, knighte and Barronett, Sir Oliver Cromwell knighte,¹⁶¹ Thomas Parke, Robert Balam, and Thomas Clapthorne, gent: and others his Ma[jes]ties

¹⁶⁰ *A Law of Sewers held at Wisbeach 16 Jacobi enacted at session of sewers May 30th, in the yeares of the reigne of our Sovereigne Lorde James by the Grace of God, Kinge of England, ffrance, and Ireland, 1618*, Document I, The Estate Papers of the Sandys Family, Formerly the Downshire Papers of the Berkshire Record Office, CRO, Document 20.

¹⁶¹ This is Sir Oliver Cromwell (1563-1655) of Huntingdonshire, made knight of the shire in 1588 and sheriff in 1598. He was a royalist during the Civil War and is, most notably, uncle to The Protector, Oliver Cromwell, (1599-1658). He married the widow of Genoan born financier named Sir Horatio Palavicino, Collector of Papal Taxes under Mary Tudor. He eventually betrothed his two daughters to Sir Horatio's widow's two sons. *A History of the County of Huntingdonshire, Vol II* (London: The University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1974), 69.

commissioners of Sewers amonge others assigned for the countyes of Northampton, Huntington, Cambridge North and the Isle of Elye.”¹⁶²

The capital outlay was substantial, particularly by the Earl of Bedford, whose wealth and influence was far reaching. His holdings consisted of vast tracts of property stretching from the village of Thorney¹⁶³ to Cambridge. There is evidence from the bursar of King’s College, Cambridge that shows “the Right Lord ffrancis, Earle of Bedford,” was being paid a yearly rent of “Seven shillings and two pence...to his manor of Shingay.”¹⁶⁴ Along with the other members of the corporation, Bedford was to receive the lion’s share of the 95,000 acres of the land reclaimed and the crown was to receive 12,000 acres. A copy of The Ordinance of Parliament claims that:

Awarding 57,000 acres of the original 90,000 to William Earl of Bedford and fellow adventurers for his recompence that he undertook to drayne.¹⁶⁵

Although the Adventurers understood and certainly trumpeted the advantages of reclamation, both practical knowledge and engineering expertise were required to complete the process. After completing some preliminary work on South Yorkshire’s Hatfield Chase, Dutch engineer Cornelius Vermuyden,

¹⁶² *Copy of Law of Sewers*, Doc. I.

¹⁶³ Thorney is an upper fenland village located in the north of the county of Cambridgeshire. John Russell, 1st Earl of Bedford and relative to Francis Russell, received the acreage of Thorney Abbey after the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

¹⁶⁴ Receipt, SH1/1 16 December 1630, King’s College Archives, Cambridge, Kings/KC/KCAR/SHI/1

¹⁶⁵ Copie of an Ordinance of Parliament for Dreyning, Undated. CRO. Document 70. This copy is among the personal papers of Sir Miles Sandys and, although undated, is most likely from the 1640s. CRO.

was called upon by the Commissioners of Sewers to begin work on a portion of the fens. Vermuyden was known as an embankment engineer, “who was born on the sea-threatened island of Tholen, in Zeeland; Holland, it goes without saying, was the unrivalled world leader in the art of keeping the waves at bay.”¹⁶⁶ A veteran of drainage projects in his native Holland, Vermuyden gained a reputation for his expertise with controlling the flow of tidal waters and his work on embanking and reinforcing the draining of the Netherland’s Zuider Zee.¹⁶⁷ He cemented his reputation in England during the 1620s while working on the successful reclamation project of Caveney Island in the Thames estuary under both James I and Charles I, which made him, in the eyes of the Adventurers, an obvious choice for the job.

In their effort to tame the environment, the Bedford Level Corporation unanimously chose Vermuyden as the project’s chief drainage engineer, and work commenced in 1630. The effort was simple: to reclaim 190,000 acres of the Bedford Level between Cambridge, Peterborough and Wisbech¹⁶⁸ by straightening existing rivers in the Bedford Level and increasing their gradients slightly to accelerate water flow.¹⁶⁹ This would result in two projects consisting of the Old Bedford River (1631) and the New Bedford River (1651), “the first and last elements of the system to be completed.”¹⁷⁰ Ultimately, these two rivers

¹⁶⁶ C. S Orwin, *A history of English farming*. (London: Nelson, 1949), 17.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶⁸ Hey, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* (London: BCA, 1996), 178.

¹⁶⁹ *Historic Landscapes of Britain from the Air*, 132.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

would be the main drainage conduits of the Bedford Level as the New Bedford River would eventually form the main channel for the River Ouse and the Old Bedford River would (theoretically) carry the excess water from both.

Even before surveying the conditions of the fens, Vermuyden's first challenge was to find an equitable solution for both sides of an emerging drainage-navigation argument. The proponents for reclamation were divided into two groups, both debating the best ways to approach the undertaking whilst avoiding probable side effects that could have both long and short-term consequences. The "drainage" group argued for a full and total removal of all obstructions, weirs, shallows, gravels, and ponds.¹⁷¹ They reasoned that eradication and straightening of the courses would provide a steeper gradient, which, in turn, would eliminate the problems of slow running rivers that could eventually result in large silt deposits. Conversely, the "navigation" group—those whose livelihood depended on a navigable system of rivers—argued against obstruction removal and draining, since it could result in a lack of water, which would make it difficult or impossible to float barges. Barge traffic had steadily increased upon the routes from King's Lynn to Cambridge, carrying provisions such as meat and fuel. Additionally, drainage during the summer months, coupled with evaporation, would be particularly severe since a new

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

channel would drain the Old West River and the Cam “so fast that they would cease to be navigable.”¹⁷²

There are documents addressed to the Privy Council by the Sandys family, shareholders in the Bedford Level Corporation, relating to the “drainage” argument. They claim that successful draining would not impact Cambridge navigation in that:

That Navigation of Cambridge cannot be lost in the River of Ouse be there never soe many draynes opened... for that the tyde there commeth daylie upp...and it cometh upp thither with a good force for it rayseth the water at Ely.¹⁷³

This argued that, even with seasonal evaporation, the tidal surge would be more than adequate to allow for the transport of goods and people, yet it does admit that the inhabitants would lose some depth “every Som[m]er when Floods come downe.”¹⁷⁴

Vermuyden’s second challenge was to counter growing criticism of his selection as chief engineer. Local discontent over Vermuyden—concerning both his lack of competence and alien status—is evident in a petition submitted by inhabitants of the south part of the Isle of Ely to the Commissioners of Sewers at King’s Lynn. They petitioned against the appointment of Sir Cornelius on the premise that:

¹⁷² Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian Landscapes*, 101.

¹⁷³ *Reasons addressed to your Lordships [the Privy Council] in favour of executing laws for opening the drains about the River Ouse, The Sandys Papers*, Document 55, CRO.

¹⁷⁴ *The Sandys Papers*, Undated Document 55, CRO.

He demandeth a high proportion of best grounde And demandeth a smale proportion of worst, that it will drawe in a fforaine nation being planted amongste us and we understand that he is so disabled in his estate by the greate losse so sustayned in his Northerne works amounting to about tenne thousand pounds, and for the appointment of the Earl of Bedford,(as wee thinke) of whose sufficiency to undergo so greate a work there can be no doubt to support him in it.¹⁷⁵

Thirty-eight signatures accompanied the petition that boldly alluded to Vermuyden's health,¹⁷⁶ wastefulness, his predilection for better land for himself, and the strong likelihood of him bringing his countrymen into the Fenland, a likelihood that is addressed in the following section.

Local Discontent

Behold the great design, which they do now determine,
Will make our bodies pine, a prey to crows and vermine:
For they do mean all Fens to drain, and waters overmaster,
All will be dry, and we must die, 'cause Essex calves want pasture.
Powte's Complaint (1619)

Predictably, with advancement and progress, comes dissent. Not all those living in East Anglia believed—as the irreverent and somewhat libelous song above demonstrates—that drainage was the answer to the nation's pressing land issues. Given the reputation of both agricultural improvement advocates and their plans, there was not surprisingly, fierce resistance at the local level. These ambitious drainage schemes, as David Underdown reflects, “aroused

¹⁷⁵ *A Petition of Inhabitants of the Isle of Ely to the Commissioners of Sewers, 13 Jan. 1630/1*, The Estate Papers of Sir Edwin Sandys, Document 87, CRO.

¹⁷⁶ The petition claimed that Vermuyden was not in a healthy “state of mind” during the embanking project.

determined opposition by the poorer commoners.”¹⁷⁷ Christopher Clay indeed records that “even more prolonged resistance occurred in the fenlands of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, when the drainage schemes of the 1630’s threatened to deprive the peasantry there of their rights of common in order to create large arable holdings, which the promoters could let at high rents to commercial farmers.”¹⁷⁸ Finally, Keith Lindley asserts that “those who stood to lose most were the fenland peasantry who relied in varying degrees upon the rich resources of their commons, and who would be constrained to witness a transformation of the traditional fenland economy.”¹⁷⁹

From the local point of view, native inhabitants argued that, “Fens were made Fens and must ever continue as such, and are useful in multiplying fowl and fish producing, turf etc.”¹⁸⁰ Meddling with the Fenland peasantry also meant ignoring their complex, diverse common rights, which, by custom, “marshes were to fenmen what wastes and commons were to dwellers on their verge.”¹⁸¹ Most fen districts acknowledged claims to fishing, rights of pasture, and turf cutting, and to upset this balance by creating a new design for cultivation was to invite indignation and resistance on a grand level. This, as Dorothy Summers writes, was “a complex system of communal regulation, designed to ensure a

¹⁷⁷ David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 113.

¹⁷⁸ C. G. A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 79.

¹⁷⁹ Keith Lindley, *Fenland riots and the English Revolution*, (London: Heinemann, Ltd.), 1.

¹⁸⁰ Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian Landscapes*, 100.

¹⁸¹ Prothero, *English farming*, 118.

careful utilization of the land at all times,"¹⁸² and to disrupt this system was to invite resistance.

In response to Sandy's appeal to the Privy Council in favor of draining and as a measure of growing disaffection, the Fenlanders submitted an Under Petition to the King against the Undertakers outlining the specific liberties that were being infringed:

Concerning drayned lands they therefore humbly pray that all such Land & Fenn grounds and others as have bine by Comissioners and Lawes of Sewers under pretnce of Draynieinge; taken from the wrightfull Comoners and owners may other be restored to them againe in such maner as they were before any such undertakeings on such owners and Comoners Lest to as wee tryall and ___ att the comen Law for the right & inheritance of the same.¹⁸³

Evidence of local discontent is also contained in a note about the poor state of Burwell and Wicken Lodes¹⁸⁴ and the damaging effect of its "grown up," or overgrown state, which claims that:

Burwell & Wicken load on the two small navigable rivers it belong to each place are grown up to that degree, that they are become useless to the Inhabitants who does not only lose commerce for their Corn, and other goods by water to Cambridge or to & from Wisbech Lynn and other places as they formerly did, But alsoe their Grounds are absolutely ruinated that lay each side both Rivers such ffenn Grounds it formerly were worth 6 shillings an acre will scarce now give 6 pence.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Summers, *The great level*, 34.

¹⁸³ *A Peticon to his Ma[jes]tie against the Undertakers*, The Sandys Family Papers, Document 75, CRO, Undated, Seventeenth Century.

¹⁸⁴ A ditch navigable to the narrow barges of the fenland.

¹⁸⁵ The State of the Burwell and Wicken Lodes, 1690-1700, Document 62, The Sandys Family Papers, CRO, 1.

Yet, the Adventurers responded quickly and predictably. They entered a rebuttal to a formal Petition exhibited against them by a group of inhabitants of Peterborough who claimed the Adventurers were nothing more, “than a Monopoly, that it is against Magna Charta and *The Petition of Right*.”¹⁸⁶ The Adventurers had also been questioned about whether the Level was “hurtfully” surrounded, and if the work was feasible, or beneficial. They asserted their innocence in various claims:

These Works are so far from drowning any other Grounds, that they secure all Holland, which is a third part of Lincolnshire, and all Marshland, consisting of many Thousand Acres, and all excellent Grounds, from the fresh Water, which did every year endanger the drowning of both those countres...The Draining quite takes from them both the Charge and Danger.¹⁸⁷

This answer to the Petition, possibly from the late 1650s, claims that there was no monopoly and that the drainage scheme did not result in a drowning of meadows. Once more, they fully objected to the “untruths” and accusations and that “The Adventurers are not to have any possession, or a penny profit of the 95,000 Acres, until Judgement be given by the Commissioners, That the work is done.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ *The State of the Adventurers Case, in Answer to a PETITION exhibited against them by the inhabitants of the Soake of Peterburgh*, Undated, The Estate Papers of Sir Edwin Sandys, CRO, Document 150.

¹⁸⁷ *The State of the Adventurers*, Doc. 150.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

Labor

Draining the East Anglian landscape—or any substantial landscape for that matter—is a formidable task that needed more than “vision” to complete. It required an answer to a larger question: who was to do the work (digging, hoeing, hauling, etc.) for the gentlemen investors? Most importantly, a workforce was needed that possessed local knowledge and expertise. Since most of the local inhabitants found the drainage an invasion of their land and a threat to their livelihood, it was necessary for the Adventurers to seek an outside workforce to meet their objectives. Quite fortuitously, the Dutch-Spanish conflict from 1568 on forced many a Dutch citizen to flee to England. They originally came to work in Norwich’s burgeoning cloth manufacturing industry and settled permanently in the Protestant haven of East Anglia. Thus, Vermuyden and the Fourth Earl of Bedford found the answer to their problem by recruiting and employing a fair number of Dutch refugees.¹⁸⁹

As work progressed on the Bedford Level in the 1630s, the arguments and complaints of local inhabitants eventually turned to resistance and hostility. In 1637, a full-scale riot broke out south of the River Ouse in Cottenham fen.¹⁹⁰ Marshmen and fen dwellers further showed their opposition through an effective mixture of violence and mayhem. Gangs of commoners that included “a weaver, a cordwainer and other ‘poor men’” attacked the workmen and “threw

¹⁸⁹ Summers, *The Great Level*, 66.

¹⁹⁰ A. P. M. Wright & C. P. Lewis (Editors) *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 9: Chesterton, Northstowe, and Papworth Hundreds* (1989), pp. 48-54. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>.

some of them into the river.”¹⁹¹ Robert Winder refers to these fractious rebels as the “Fenland Tigers;” a group of rugged individuals who “for generations, hunted, fished, in the sedge and reed marshes.”¹⁹² They also “sabotaged the windmills, chapels, pumps, and camps of the intruders.”¹⁹³ Foreign workmen appeared to be a preferable target since—not only being unarmed and accessible—most were Dutch Walloons or (later) Scottish prisoners who represented an invasive “foreign element.”¹⁹⁴

To add fuel to this volatile situation, it was rumored that once the work was completed the Dutch laborers were set to benefit most from the reclamation project. Thus, in the fenman’s view, they would gain nothing from the project, but the outside, migrant population and the Adventurers were the ones who would profit.

The coming of the English Civil War and the ongoing disputes interrupted the drainage scheme during 1640s. With the country in turmoil, the general lack of governmental leadership helped further the campaign against drainage. Parliament was aware of the attacks and sent Major-General Edward Whalley to protect the adventurers, but the commoners were not impressed and equally defiant which is noticeable in the following verse:

Come, brethren of the water, and let us all assemble,

¹⁹¹ Lindley, *Fenland riots and the English Revolution*, 96.

¹⁹² Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London: Little, Brown, 2004), 72.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Trevor Allen Bevis, *Prisoners of the Fens: A True Story of Scottish and Dutch Prisoners-of-War Brought to the Fens to Work on the Drainage Scheme* (March: T. Bevis, 2003), 14.

To treat upon this matter which makes us quake and tremble,
For we shall rue it, if't be true, the Fens be undertaken,
And where we feed in fen and reed, they'll feed both beef and bacon.¹⁹⁵

Further disdain for the authority of Parliament was expressed in one fenman's idea that the current authority was inept and that "we could make as good a Parliament ourselves."¹⁹⁶

End of the First Reclamation: Vermuyden Answers his Critics

After several years of toil, fighting and resistance, the Commissioners of Sewers declared all work completed on the new Bedford Drain in 1637, which, in fact, was only partially complete since the first winter rains reversed most of the work by flooding out the newly built drains, destroying the embankments, and the crops, despite months and years of planning, capital expense, and back-breaking effort. Vermuyden's response to his hydro-dynamic success (or failure) was a twenty-four page mea culpa entitled, *Discourse Touching on the Draining of the Fennes* (1642), in which the Dutch engineer claimed that his aim was to construct "summer grounds"¹⁹⁷ as opposed to "winter grounds."¹⁹⁸ He also

¹⁹⁵ William Dugdale, *The History of Imbanking and Draining of Divers Fens and Marshes,; Both in Foreign Parts and in This Kingdom, and of the Improvements Thereby. Extracted from Records, Manuscripts, and Other Authentic Testimonies. By William Dugdale, ... The Second Edition, Revised and Corrected, by Charles Nalson Cole* (London: printed by W. Bowyer and J. Nichols, at the expence of Richard Geast, Esq; and sold by W. Owen; and P. Uriel, 1772).

¹⁹⁶ Prothero, *English farming*, 119.

¹⁹⁷ A summer ground is generally described as a land that is free from water during the summer months and can only be utilized at that time of year. It is also believed that summer grounds were immune from winter floods, however this idea was to be contested with respect to the diverse and differing conditions of the marsh.

¹⁹⁸ A winter ground is defined as one that is available for year round use and, by consequence, is subject to winter flooding.

reaffirmed that he was the appropriate person for the undertaking because of his appointment by James I to head the project after the deliberations on the advantages of drainage:

And his highness being well pleased with the way, after debate had thereupon was pleased to put the direction of that work upon me, and to perform it at his own charge.¹⁹⁹

Trouble increased when accusations of negligence were leveled at Vermuyden and his cohort of engineers. Displeasure with the drainage (or lack thereof) was first taken up by Andrewes Burrell, a gentleman resident of East Anglia. Burrell published a critical treatise entitled: *Exceptions Against Sir Cornelius Vermudens for the Draining of the Great Fennes*. Initially released as an assault on *Discourse*, it gives a scorching view of Vermuyden's unsophisticated approach and lack of expertise, and accuses him of "craftily speaking of bounding the waters."²⁰⁰ The manual is structured with a point-by-point argument that asserts:

A Few exceptions against Sir Cornelius Vermudens mystical discourse, wherein You may plainly perceive his design doth rather disswade then incourage such As are willing to be Adventurers being so dark, that no man, though experienced, Can finde by what workes the Levell shall be drained.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Cornelius Vermuyden, *A Discourse Touching the Draying the Great Fennes, Lying Within the Severall Counties of Lincolne, Northampton, Huntington, Norfolk, Suffolke, Cambridge, and the Isle of Ely: As It Was Presented to His Majestie* (London: Printed by Thomas Fawcet, 1642), 3.

²⁰⁰ Andrewes Burrell, *Exceptions Against Sir Cornelius Vermudens Discourse for the Draining of the Great Fennes &c: Which in Ianuary 1638 He Presented to the King for His Designe; Wherein His Majesty Was Mis-Informed and Abused in Regard It Wanteth All the Essentiall Parts of a Designe: And the Great and Advantageous Workes Made by the Late Earle of Bedford, Slighted, and the Whole Adventure Disparaged* (Printed at London: by T. H. and are to be sold by Robert Constable, 1642), 4.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

In additiona, Burrell charged him with deliberately misleading the king:

And soon after to ingratiate himself with His Majesty, in commendation
Of his own service, tells him of great tariff mixed with safety and profit;
To no other end but to delude His Majesty.²⁰²

Issue was also taken with the amount of money the scheme was losing and with
Vermuyden's inability to provide fiscal accountability:

The King's Majesty was informed by Sir Cornelius, that above a hundred
Thousand pounds expended by the Earle of Bedford was misspent, the
Fennes being little or nothing better.²⁰³

The treatise furthermore accuses Vermuyden of failing to draw up a time
schedule on the work, a date of completion, or how much he was charging for his
services.

Criticism of Vermuyden for his inept work and inability to correct his
engineering failures soon fell upon his associate Mr. Hill. Hill was given the task
of correcting drainage problems with the Bedford River, but was summarily
discharged from his position by Sir Miles Sandys since he:

Consented that Hill should only medill w[i]th Wisbeach River where he
has wasted money in pursuing ridiculous ideas of his own and
unauthorised works...since he undertook to make Wisebeech river 6 or 8
foot deeper then it was and hat made it no deeper than the old channel.²⁰⁴

Hill's botched attempts cost the Adventurers (in materials alone) 2000 pounds
"or more for the sluice... where he used good stone (instead of wood) that Hill

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 1.

²⁰⁴ *Reasons Whie Hill ought to be discharged in the Dreyning, The Estate Papers of The Sandys Family, from the Estate of Sir Edwin Sandys, Document 54, CRO*

hath wasted most of them.”²⁰⁵ This waste of money was inexcusable given the growing sophistication of mathematics and engineering at this time, as well as the fact that existing technology could simplify design and construction and avoid large costs. According to Francis Wilmott, “observers were impressed by their [the drains and sluices] size, but appalled by their cost (which was increased by the need to add navigable locks): a sluice placed on Shire Drain by Vermuyden for Charles I was valued at 1000 pounds.”²⁰⁶

Later Discontent: Cottenham Riots and Whittlesey Unrest

As the second half of the reclamation project commenced, so did the troubles. Unease and perceived prejudice toward the Adventurers did not lessen with time. Rioting occurred in Whittlesey at the enclosures of the Earl of Bedford during the summer 1643 and 1644. Keith Lindley notes that the most serious disturbances, by people carrying agricultural implements and staves, took place in the northern part of the Whittlesey fen.²⁰⁷ The justice, George Glapthorne, urged the troublemakers to desist and disperse, however his position as a drainage advocated and staunch parliamentarian caused resentment amongst the rioters and they defied his warnings and ultimately “threatened him with

²⁰⁵ *Sandys Family Papers*, Doc. 54.

²⁰⁶ Willmoth, *Sir Jonas Moore, Practical Mathematics and Restoration Science*, 100.

²⁰⁷ Lindley, *Fenland riots and the English Revolution*, 157.

pitchforks...jeering that they would not recognize him as a justice...and that they would not obey him nor any Law.”²⁰⁸

Trouble also arose in and around Chatteris, where some of the most serious rioting of 1652 occurred. The Twelve Foot Drain was substantially damaged by the local inhabitants. This riot was thought initially to have been carried out by women, however it was later “discovered that the rioters had in fact been men dressed in women’s clothes in order to avoid detection. A second large-scale riot occurred in February of the following year where 150 local men chased away ditch workers. The Adventurers quickly requested that Oliver Cromwell send cavalry to the area as a way to “remind the people of Chatteris and elsewhere the forces the Adventurers had at their disposal by parading a contingent of soldiers before them.”²⁰⁹

In the 1650s, riots occurred in Cottenham fen due to the completion of an inefficient barrier bank along the south side of the River Ouse—a fortification that most of the time, if not always, failed to keep the flood waters out. Of this area, 239 acres of the northeastern corner were taken from local use and awarded to the Bedford Level Corporation in 1663.²¹⁰ Julie Bowring relates that, in April 1673, incensed residents from the same area (including the nearby town

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Jacobus Korthals-Altes, *Sir Cornelius Vermyden* (London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 1925), 99-100.

²¹⁰ Julie Bowring, “Exploring Landscape and Livelihood: the Bedford Level Corporation Collection and the Great Level of the Fens,” in *Drowned and Drained: Exploring Fenland Records and Landscapes*, Susan Oosthuizen and Francis Willmoth, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, 2009), 32.

of Haddenham) “intended to cut the dam at the head of Downham Eau in a Ryotous manner.”²¹¹ She continues that the people from the area surrounding the South Level wanted “the dam opened to relieve them from the flooding by allowing the Ouse water to run around the almost permanently blocked Denver Dam.”²¹² Various attempts to correct the problem were undertaken in 1737 and again in 1806.

The problem of excess water, especially as it was created by the use of water engines and windmills, was continuous. Petitions to the Bedford Level Corporation from downstream residents regarding the opening of BLC dams complained about how the “lands Adjacent are drowned & damaged by the excess water being thrown onto their land or into the nearby drain,”²¹³ which inevitably caused more flooding. In 1703, 19 residents of Whittlesey, including prosperous yeoman George Goulding, son of a wealthy, established family of Whittlesey, whose patience had worn thin and whose petitions had apparently fallen on deaf ears attacked and pulled down a “dreyning engine” or watermill²¹⁴ owned by Francis Keate.²¹⁵ The Attorney General cited the Liberty of the Bishop of Ely²¹⁶ and “prayed a *venire facias*²¹⁷ for a jury of inhabitants of Soham, the

²¹¹ Bowring, “Exploring Landscape and Livelihood,” 32.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Such mills are found amongst the inventories of fenland yeomen, especially Whittlesey’s James Davey who owned “a water mill in the fen” valued at 10 pounds. James Davey of Whittlesey, will dated November 27, 1713, no. 169, box 458, CRO.

²¹⁵ Bowring, 32.

²¹⁶ A *liberty* is a local unit that retains a legally defined degree of independence.

²¹⁷ In legal terms, a *venire facias de novo* (cause to come anew) is a writ issued by the court to summon prospective jurors (*juratores*) from Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 64.

nearest town to Whittlesey “outside the liberty” in an effort to settle the matter. Goulding and the others were ultimately found guilty at the Cambridge Assizes of creating a criminal disturbance.

As the work on the second stage of the Bedford Level continued during the late 1640s, a severe shortage of labor slowed progress. Although the successful recruitment of Dutch immigrants proved useful to the Adventurers during the pre-Civil War years, the second half of the drainage project would prove much more challenging.

Finding a source of labor had always been difficult for the Adventurers, since it would take not only a considerable outlay of money and time, but also an army of men and materials to achieve their objectives. The resistant attitudes of the Fen dwellers and immigration issues being debated in Parliament continually limited sources for a substantial labor pool. Conveniently enough, the English Civil War provided a much-needed—and somewhat consistent—source of labor for the later reclamation projects.

The ill-fated Battle of Worcester²¹⁸, which pitted Cromwell’s New Model Army against the Royalists under the Earl of Derby, conveniently addressed the need for labor during the second stage of reclamation. In seeking to gain his rightful throne, Charles II was aided by his supporters and large contingent of Scottish allies, but as Sean Kelsey illustrates the “would-be king failed entirely to raise

²¹⁸ The Battle of Worcester took place on 3 September 1651, and is considered the final conflict of the English Civil War.

the support of his English subjects, who were loath to see him placed on the English throne with Scottish arms.”²¹⁹ On this, G.M. Trevelyan reflects, “Englishmen disliked the government much, but they disliked the Scots more.”²²⁰ Outmanned two-to-one, the Royalists were routed by Lambert who took up to 10,000 prisoner, 8,000 of whom were Scots.²²¹

A parliamentary decision dictated that those captured were either to be absorbed into the English Army or transported to the West Indies to work on either a sugar or tobacco plantation. But, a plan was set in motion by the Council of State to allow the Gentleman Adventurers to inspect the prisoners held at Tottenhill Fields. Accordingly, Lord Chief Justice Oliver St. John declared, “the Company’s patron and good friend of Oliver Cromwell, helped to persuade the government to transport the remaining prisoners to the Fens.”²²²

To be sent to the fenlands as a prisoner of England was decidedly harsh considering the landscape, which provided an environment that was nothing short of miserable and deadly. The fens were, environmentally speaking, a most forbidding and unsuitable place; even in the best of circumstances they were challenging, hardscrabble, and dirty. While visiting his uncle in Parson Drove in the Isle of Ely, Samuel Pepys had less than attractive comments in 1651, describing the fenland as a “heathen place” and that “inhabitants constantly

²¹⁹ Sean Kelsea, “Unkingship, 1649-1660” in Barry Coward ed. *A Companion to Stuart Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 342.

²²⁰ G.M. Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1949), 247.

²²¹ Bevis, *Prisoners of the Fens*, 2.

²²² *Ibid.*, 5.

aggravated by stinging gnats struggled with their horses, often sinking up to their bellies in foul smelling mud.”²²³

Rioting, unrest, resistance, and criticism against the reclamation project finally ebbed by 1714. As calm was re-established, the government slowly came to the realization that drain and embankment maintenance was a necessity. Thus, the Dutch engineers and their supporters asserted that reclamation was “progress, and unstoppable, and sheep and oxen were more profitable than eels.”²²⁴

When all was Said and Done

Views on the drainage of the fens are decidedly split. C.S. Orwin describes the efforts of the great landlords importing a Dutch engineer to impose land reclamation on the local inhabitants as “appalling,” and Jack Ravensdale—a fenland resident and historian—claims the Adventurers were nothing more than “wealthy and privileged masters of the countryside imposing their will on the landscape and the lesser folk who lived on it.”²²⁵ In contrast, Lord Ernle concludes with no hint of dissatisfaction that “as many of the swamps and marshes of the fen districts were restored to the ague-shivering, fever-stricken inhabitants in their primitive unproductiveness.”²²⁶ William Camden who, in

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Winder, *Bloody Foreigners*, 72.

²²⁵ Ravensdale and Muir, *East Anglian Landscapes*, 192.

²²⁶ Prothero, *English farming*, 119.

1637, described the fenland inhabitants as “rude, uncivil and envious to all others” echoes these exact sentiments.²²⁷ Likewise, a traveler named Cole, in 1745, thought St. Mary’s spire in Whittlesey Fen the most beautiful he had ever seen, but stated that the fenland townsmen were “reckoned but a boorish and rough kind of people.”²²⁸ In his final salvo, Ernle uses an example from Stone’s work on Lincolnshire that professed as late as 1794, the:

General attitude of the ague-stricken, opium-eating fen-men towards the drainage of the district may be illustrated by the example of Burwell, a chalkland parish on the Suffolk border and any attempt in contemplation of the better drainage of the Burwell fen, already greatly injured by the digging of turf and constantly inundated is considered as hostile to the true interests of these deluded people.²²⁹

Finally, the conclusion of the drainage work can only be described as a both astonishing and miraculous. Given the immense effort of taming a wild, uncharted area that had few roads, poor visibility (towering reed beds created visual obstruction on all sides), very few maps and a lack of modern industrial technology (most notably steam engines), it is amazing that the task was ever completed. Flooding was never fully conquered by Vermuyden or his engineers, since a later treatise written by Waterbeach resident and antiquary William Cole insists that flooding was still—and always going to be—an ongoing problem. In his *Blecheley Diary 1765-67*, he claims in a letter to Horace Walpole that his

²²⁷ William Camden, *Britannia*, 391.

²²⁸ R B Pugh ed., *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 4* (London: The Victoria History of the Counties of England, 2002), pp. 123-135. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>.

²²⁹ Prothero, *English farming*, 245.

estate “drowned three times in six years” and further decides, “not being a water-rat, I left Waterbeach.”²³⁰ On top of this, financial ruin came to some who participated, especially the Earl of Bedford. In *A Narrative Of the Dreyning of the Great Level of the Fenns* (1649), point fourteen of a twenty point narrative mentions that: “In the prosecution of this Work the Adventurers have exhausted their Estates, some to their ruine, but all to very great loss, and in equity ought to have a further recompence and encouragement, the Countrey being the onely gainers.”²³¹

In reflection, the project did involve a large amount of displacement and loss, especially with regard to common rights and human life. It was the unmistakable vision of ambitious men, a formidable group with high ambition that produced unrest in small towns and villages in a remote and wild corner of East Anglia. They carried on in order to create a landscape where the floods were “Muzzled, and the Ocean tam’d...[and] heaps of water turn’d to land.”²³² Thus, when all was said and done, man versus nature had achieved the most amazing statistic: reclamation of the East Anglian fens added nearly three-quarters of a million fertile acres to the farmlands of England.²³³

²³⁰ John Denson, *A Peasant’s Voice to Landowners: On the Best Means of Benefiting Agricultural Labourers, and of Reducing Poor’s Rates* (Cambridge: Printed by W. Metcalfe, and published for and by W.H. Smith, 1830), xiii.

²³¹ *A Narrative Of the Dreyning of the Grat Level of the fens, Extending into the Counties of Northampton, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincoln, Cambridge and Huntington, and Isle of Ely, containing above Three Hundred Thousand Acres*, 1649, The Estate Papers of Sir Edwin Sandys, CRO, Document 154 (Broadsheet).

²³² Anonymous 1685:72 in Julie Bowring’s “Exploring Landscape and Livelihood: the Bedford Level Corporation Collection and the Great Level of the Fens,” 29.

²³³ C.S. Orwin, *The Open Fields* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1938), 19.

The Corn Trade in Cambridgeshire

With the addition of arable land and more navigable waterways complete, the yeomen of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey were now in a position to satisfy demand for corn and utilize the elaborate waterways that the drainage provided. In the early sixteenth-century, market towns still served a purely local area and did not specialize in marketing any particular type of commodity. However, in the course of the century, specialization increased in East Anglia, especially in the coastal and Ouse-side towns of Ely, and Cambridge—“the least tortuous of all the channels in the Fens.”²³⁴ These towns were largely devoted to butter, cheese, poultry, fish and cattle, but, they began to slowly develop a focus on the corn trade.

Transportation of Grain

Improved transportation was a major factor in “breaking out” of the traditional economic horizon of the local market town. Advances in shipping agricultural products gave the yeomanry an opportunity to sell their product in more remote markets. As Margaret Spufford remarked, “Cambridge was a

²³⁴ Neville Williams, *The maritime trade of the East Anglian ports 1550-1590* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 55.

county of “overwhelmingly arability, an exporter of grain.”²³⁵ N.S.B. Gras argued that:

It is clear that London by 1565 had begun to look to the counties to the north, especially Cambridge, as an important source of corn supply whether the route was through Lynn and then by sea, or over-land and down the Lea. This is particularly interesting when we remember that it is a return, in a magnified form, to the earlier conditions of the Middle Ages when London was in part supplied with corn from the north through the manorial marketing organization.²³⁶

Although water travel during the Elizabethan era was adequate, the Stuart age brought with it an increase in movement of provisions as new stretches of river—most notably new wider parts of the Cam—were cleared for boat traffic and channels were deepened. Moreover, the importance of waterborne trade was most evident in the attention paid to improving navigation of various rivers, especially the Great Ouse. Its most vocal advocate was Thomas Badeslade, who, in his *The History of the Ancient and Present State of Navigation of the Port of King’s Lynn* (1725), declared:

I have said the River Ouse, was thus famous for Navigation and Draining; Indeed it is far, very far from being so now, having for several Years last past gradually decayed, insomuch that it is rendered incapable of Draining any of the aforesaid lands, and will be lost to Navigation in a very short time.²³⁷

²³⁵ Margaret Spufford, *Figures in the Landscape: Rural Society in England, 1500-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 144.

²³⁶ Norman Scott Brien Gras, *The Evolution of the English Corn Market from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, [Mass.]: Harvard University Press, 1915), 109.

²³⁷ Thomas Badeslade, *The History of the Ancient and Present State of the Navigation of the Port of King’s-Lyn, and of Cambridge, and the Rest of the Trading-Towns in Those Parts: ... With the Method Propos’d for Draining the ... Fens, and Amending the Harbour of Lyn* (London: printed by J. Roberts, for the author: sold by Charles Harwick, at Lyn; Will. Thurlbourn, at Cambridge; Cotobed [sic] East, at Ely; Richard Standfast, [London], 1725), 11.

The improvements Badeslade wished for point to the simple fact that traffic had already increased on the Ouse.

Initially, Chatteris, Whittlesey, and Cottenham were localized markets, but given their navigable streams and rivers, they developed into extensive inland grain sources for the metropolitan market. Hence, for much of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, inland-waterway corn traffic to London increasingly complemented that of the coastal trade. A good deal of the metropolitan demand and supply came from not only the traditional midland counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire, but also originated from areas along the east and southeastern coasts. The East Anglian shippers of grain included Boston, which sent “malt, beans and barley, but was quite overshadowed by King’s Lynn, which was one of the great grain ports, drawing its supplies from Norfolk and from the arable farms of the interior tapped by the Ouse.”²³⁸ Willan concludes that the shipments of grain from King’s Lynn “could exceed ten thousand quarters²³⁹ in certain years.²⁴⁰ N.S.B. Gras estimates that London’s consumption of corn stoked the demand for supplies from provincial sources since, in 1605, Londoners consumed 550,000 qrs., a number based on a population of 224,275 consuming 2 ½ qrs. per head per annum, together with an additional 50,000 qrs. to cover a ships’ provisions, horses, fodder and corn used in beer brewing.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Thomas Stuart Willan, *The Inland Trade: Studies in English Internal Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), 27.

²³⁹ One quarter is equal to 8 bushels with each bushel weighing 56 pounds.

²⁴⁰ Willan, *The Inland Trade*, 27.

²⁴¹ Gras, *The Evolution of the English Corn Market from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century*, 77.

Not surprisingly, the years 1500-1640 seem to have witnessed a striking expansion of grain exports overseas from the eastern counties with the principal destination being the Netherlands.²⁴² Thus, the opportunity to sell further afield contributed to the growth of yeoman prosperity.

Cambridge Transportation

The movement of goods, especially luxury goods, is vital to this discussion. Moreover, it is essential to pay particular attention to transport networks, the most cost effective means of travel, and how the movement of goods took place in Tudor and Stuart England. Thomas Birch's eighteenth century publication, *The History of the Royal Society of London* (1760), contains the views of Sir Robert Southwell, the Irish Secretary of State and President of the Royal Society. Southwell extolled the virtues of navigable waters in his 1673 treatise, "wherein the principal use of the sea and rivers is for easier carriage of commodities."²⁴³ He recognized the advantages of sea transport as he compares the striking cost differences between coastal and over land movement of goods:

For we see, that a tun of twenty hundred of seacoal is brought near three hundred miles for about four shillings; or at six shillings and six pence per

²⁴² Ibid., 526.

²⁴³ Thomas Birch. *The History of the Royal Society of London for Improving of Natural Knowledge: From Its First Rise. In Which the Most Considerable of Those Papers Communicated to the Society, Which Have Hitherto Not Been Published, Are Inserted in Their Proper Order, as a Supplement to the Philosophical Transactions* (London: printed for A. Millar, 1756), 207.

chalder²⁴⁴ which is in weight about thirty-three hundred: but the land carriage of the same by wagon would be about fifteen pounds, viz. seventy five times as much, and on horseback above an hundred times as much; horse carriage being in proportion to wheel carriage as three or two. Wherefore, more commonly and practically speaking, the ordinary proportion between ship and wheel carriage is about one to twenty, and of inland water-carriage to wheel carriage, as one to twelve.²⁴⁵

T.S. Willan asserts that the relative costs of different transport—as outlined by Sir Robert—“was valid for not only the later seventeenth century, but for the later sixteenth century as well.”²⁴⁶ Henceforth, Willan argues that, although far from being completely accurate, Sir Robert’s evidence illuminates the heart of the Elizabethan and Stuart transport issues: the ongoing difference between the cost of waterborne carriage and land carriage as it applies to weight and value of goods. Willan notes that bulk goods of low value, such as coal, were highly expensive to transport over land since the cost of transport grossly outweighed the value of the goods. These heavy commodities, as Sir Robert’s figures certainly illustrate, were better suited for water transport. However, bulk goods of high value, such as cloth, could invariably withstand the cost of expensive over land delivery. This is also true of luxury bulk items such as “spices and drugs or silk thread and silver buttons.”²⁴⁷

Late Elizabethan roads were, as T.S. Willan describes as “extensive and expensive.” They were expensive with regard to the transport cost of raw and

²⁴⁴ A *chalder* is an ancient unit of measurement of Scottish origin that refers to dry goods such as grain.

²⁴⁵ Birch, *Royal Society*, 207.

²⁴⁶ Willan, *The Inland Trade*, 1.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

manufactured goods, yet there was also a rather extensive network of horse trails and cow paths that etched their way to and from the capital. Road tables chronicling the network of routes branching out from London began to appear as early as the 1540s, quite possibly due to the population expansion of the 1520s. Willan argues that the population boom led to a growth in migration and the search for opportunity, thus both people and goods now moved along English roads. These roads, he asserts, were used by merchants to develop England's inland trade in an effort to link capital with countryside. With the increase of economic activity along these routes, Craig Muldrew claims that "networks of distribution and marketing became more complex as traders took advantage of the profits which could be made by shipping goods to places where prices were high because demand was greatest."²⁴⁸

By the middle of the seventeenth century, agriculture became, in the words of Craig Muldrew:

Very commercialized, with grain and meat being sold not only to local towns and labourers, but also to grain merchants in regional market towns who shipped it by river and coastal shipping to places where demand was high, such as London or the northern counties where sheep grazing was common and the land was too poor to support the population.²⁴⁹

Roadwork in late Tudor and early Stuart in East Anglia, especially in the fens was challenging. Prior to drainage, most villages sat on dry land, an island

²⁴⁸ Craig Muldrew, "Economic and Urban Development," in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, Barry Coward, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 153.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

surrounded by rising tides, regular flooding, and wasteland. Even during the summer months, conditions could change with a long, wet spring or a rise in the water table. Therefore, boats were usually the preferred mode of transport, especially in the upper fenland as we see in the example of Richard Dowe, yeoman of Whittlesey, who, apart from leaving an estate worth over 300 pounds, owned “a boat and a fenn plow.”²⁵⁰ Also, among the assessments of James Aveling, also of Whittlesey, there was “1 boate valued at 1 pound ten shillings.”²⁵¹ Peter Maxey’s 1707 inventory mentions amongst the implements of husbandry that there is “in the river a boat valued at one pound 15 shillings,”²⁵² and John Cole, yeoman of the fenland owned “a boat and two horse bridges valued at one pound 11 shillings and 6 pence” when he died in 1743.²⁵³ Although English roads were improving during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and being utilized to move people and goods in most parts of the country, water transport was preferable to roads in the Cambridgeshire fenlands.

Thomas Bedeslade, writing on the state of affairs in East Anglia in 1712, mentioned that:

The number of Inhabitants, the Value of Land, the Trade, the Riches, and the Strength of every Free-State, are great, in Proportion to their Navigable Rivers. For as People Increased, communities were formed; who took to manufactures, which began as first Domestick, then Foreign Trade and Commerce: This induced them to settle on navigable Rivers,

²⁵⁰ Richard Dowe of Whittlesey, will dated September 18, 1694, no. 817, box 447, CRO.

²⁵¹ James Aveling of Whittlesey, will dated April 1, 1697, no. 481/482, box 449, CRO.

²⁵² Peter Maxey of Whittlesey, will dated February 20, 1707, no. 625, box 454, CRO.

²⁵³ John Cole of Whittlesey, will dated May 31, 1743, no. 80, box 473, CRO.

whereby they might with most Ease and least Expenſe make their Exports and Imports. Foreign Trade advance their Wealth, and the Expectation of Profit increas'd the Number of Inhabitants of Such Towns; and with them advance Husbandry and Feeding, and the Value of Land; the Manufacturers alſo flouriſhed with the Manufacturers, and Traffick with Domestic and Foreign Neighbours became more and more extended.²⁵⁴

Bedeslade accurately defines the region's economic activity and prosperity, especially the port of King's Lynn and its development as the nexus of a major local and international trading system. King's Lynn supplied six counties and attracted the majority of its trade from towns including Northampton, Peterborough, Brandon, Thetford, Bury St. Edmonds, and Cambridge. It was fed by the Ouse, a river where "accommodations of merchandise, food, and necessary provisions are constantly carried up and down it, and Lynn ſits on the door of this river."²⁵⁵ In the early Middle Ages, the Ouse, and its estuaries ſuch as the Nene, the Cam, the Lark, and the Little Ouse had emptied into the Waſh near the fenland town of Wiſbech. However, by the early 1300s, heavy ſilting brought this inland navigation to a ſtandſtill. Thankfully, an "eaſtern branch of the Great Ouse was diverted to King's Lynn by an artificial channel from Littleport, and the proſperity of the new port was aſſured."²⁵⁶

The villages of Cottenham, and Chatteris, and the town of Whittleſey all had one particular advantage. Although ſubject to continual flooding during winter months, they were in cloſe proximity to a variety of navigable waterways, canals,

²⁵⁴ Bedeslade, *The History of the Ancient and Present State of the Navigation of the Port of King's-Lyn, and of Cambridge, and the Rest of the Trading-Towns in Those Parts*, 10.

²⁵⁵ Williams, *The maritime trade of the East Anglian ports 1550-1590*, 54.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

and streams that were, in one way or another, completely accessible to larger river systems. First, Whittlesey, a village that is originally considered an “island,” is located amongst the nexus of ancient waterways including King’s Dyke and Morton’s Leam. The course of the Nene River forms the northern boundary of the area, and is conveniently navigable to the large cathedral town of Peterborough. The Earl of Salisbury referred to the Nene as “a portable river to bring and carry all merchantable commodities to five sundry shires adjoining upon it.”²⁵⁷ This is a crucial point, since it shows that as early as the late sixteenth century, the Nene linked up to the fenland town of Wisbech and then to the Great Ouse system. From here, the Ouse made its way to King’s Lynn, which was heavily involved in trade with the Hanseatic League,²⁵⁸ and a main distribution center. A modern map:

Illustrates the destinations of goods sent from King’s Lynn after the February Mart of 1585 shows such goods going north to Boston, Sleaford and Lincoln, west to Spalding, Leicester, Stamford, Peterborough, Oundle, Northampton and St. Ives, south to Cambridge, Newmarket and Ely and east to Thetford.²⁵⁹

The significance of King’s Lynn in international trade is highlighted (and openly lamented) in Andrew Yarrington’s *England’s Improvement by Sea* (1677) as he eavesdrops on a conversation between a yeoman, clothier and a draper. In this fictitious dialogue, each sees problems with the loss of local commerce—

²⁵⁷ Willan, *The Inland Trade*, 18.

²⁵⁸ The Hanseatic League was an amalgam of cities and guilds that conducted a monopolistic trading concern along the Northern waterways of Europe from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period (13th-17th centuries).

²⁵⁹ Willan, 18.

namely in the cloth industry—and they openly bemoan the amount of trade lost to Ireland and Holland not only due to inept Parliamentary decisions and shiftless lawyers, but also owing to the volume of goods moving from East Anglia “to Lynn in Norfolk...and then ship it to be carried to the Clothiers...into *Flushing* in Zealand.”²⁶⁰

The village of Cottenham lay in close proximity to navigable water sources and possessed substantial roads. The Aldreth causeway, a medieval road from Cambridge to Ely, crosses the northern tip of the town where a bridge by the same name carried goods and people across an estuary of the River Ouse up until the late 19th century.²⁶¹ The main road branches south towards the important market towns of Cambridge and Histon, and travels southeast to the village of Landbeach.

Not surprisingly, river transport was integral to Cottenham’s development, especially throughout the Middle Ages. The Cottenham Lode²⁶² leads to the lower reaches of the Ouse estuary known as the Old West River, and is known to have been navigable during the early part of the seventeenth century.

²⁶⁰ Andrew Yarranton, *England’s Improvement by Sea and Land: To Out-Do the Dutch Without Fighting, to Pay Debts Without Moneys, to Set at Work All the Poor of England with the Growth of Our Own Lands ...with the Advantage of Making the Great Rivers of England Navigable* (London: Printed by R. Everingham for the Author, and are to be sold by T. Parkhurst, and N. Simmons, 1677), 110.

²⁶¹ A. P. M. Wright & C. P. Lewis (Editors), "Cottenham: Introduction," *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*: Vol. 9, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>, pp. 48-54.

²⁶² A *lode* is a man-made waterway believed to be of Roman origin. These are specific to the geography of eastern England, particularly Cambridgeshire.

To the north of the parish, Chatteris has water transport to the River Leam and Vermuyden's Forty-foot Drain. Yet it also has older roads that connect it with the trading towns of St. Ives, Wisbech, and more recently, with the Isle of Ely. During the English Civil War, General Ireton (1611-1651), the Parliamentary General, constructed the road in an effort to convey troops through Chatteris to Ely.

Thus, it was quite possible during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for the yeomanry of Cottenham, Whittlesey, and Chatteris to ship agricultural goods, specifically cereal crops such as wheat, rye, and barley, to both local and distant locations. Willan claims that the "cargoes going out of King's Lynn by sea, much of the corn (chiefly wheat, malt, barley, and rye)...had reached the port by the river."²⁶³

Given the broad patchwork of watercourses and principle roads, bridges were a major transportation concern, and were a vital component of Fenland infrastructure. Crossovers, including the medieval Smithy Fen Bridge and Aldreth Bridge in Cottenham and the pre-drainage "Dog in a Doublet" Bridge in Whittlesey, are proof of bridge building, which required occasional, if not seasonal, maintenance. Evidence of bridging over the Bedford Drain is found in a bond, which mentions John Phipps, yeoman of Mepal, Cambridgeshire and Francis, Earl of Bedford. It indicates that the Earl and the rest of the Adventurers provided materials for such an undertaking:

²⁶³ Willan, *The Inland Trade*, 18.

“15 peeces of new first timer 365 feet being 9 loads and 5 foote of timber...to make a sufficient and good cartway over bedford river neere adjoininge unto the said towne of Meaple [Mepal]...and the good John Shipp his heirs, shall from time to time & at all times within 5 months next after the date of these presente bee readye upon demand to restore unto the said Earl or his assigns the said 15 peeces.”²⁶⁴

This chapter has been both descriptive and exploratory. First, it recounted the painstaking task of large-scale drainage of the fens that brought riches to the undertakers and undermined the property rights of the fenland inhabitants. Second, it examined the villages of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey and illustrated their unusual historical and geographical advantages that placed them in an advantageous position for waterborne transportation of goods. It has also drawn attention to the process by which their natural topography was altered (“disfigured,” some might say) in order to forge a new set of agricultural activities that would create opportunities, and ultimately access, to the brave new world of goods. The following chapter will assess the evolution of the yeomen household and the outward expression of their newfound wealth.

²⁶⁴ *Bond by John Phipps of Mepal, yeoman, with Francis Earl of Bedford, 7 July 1636.* The Estate Papers of Sir Edwin Sandys, CRO, Document 137.

CHAPTER 4

The Evidence of Yeoman Wealth (Architecture)

The main point of this chapter is to examine the architectural evidence of yeoman wealth as well as the various motives behind the outward expression of that wealth. It begins with an evolutionary examination of the typical yeomen household, the changes in room use, and how the use of space served different social functions. This chapter also illuminates how, as the Middle Ages waned, the prosperity of yeomen became more apparent. Their affluence allowed them to take advantage of seventeenth century artisanal and architectural innovations with regard to the utility and comfort of interior space.

As Arthur Young, author of *A Six Weeks Tour Through England and Wales*, made his journey through the East Anglian countryside, he paused and commented on the level of wealth amongst the yeomanry. He believed this was best exemplified in the holdings of Mr. Mallet, a Norfolk farmer who:

Has lately purchased estates in the parishes of Middleton, Testerton, and Hockham, to the amount of 1700 l. per annum: this remarkable person has made his fortune in less than 30 years, and on a farm consisting of not above 1500 acres of land, which is by no means the largest in this county. Let me further add, that, since the above was wrote, I am informed, on undoubted authority, that Mr. mallet, in Januar, &c. 1768, had 280 steers fating on turneps, and artificial grass hay. And this on a corn-farm!²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ Arthur Young, *A Six Weeks Tour, Through the Southern Counties of England and Wales Describing, Particularly, I. The Present State of Agriculture and Manufactures. II. The Different Methods of Cultivating The soil. III. The Success Attending Some Late Experiments on Various Grasses, &c. ... In Several Letters to a Friend. By the Author of the Farmer's Letters* (London: printed for W. Nicoll, 1768), 30–31.

His views are important since they substantiate, as much as evaluate, the growing wealth of the yeomen during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The Evidence of Yeoman Wealth in Probate Inventories

The wealth that Arthur Young described is evident in both the interior and exterior of the Cambridgeshire yeoman's home, as found in probate inventories. These documents contain quantitative and qualitative descriptions of all that deceased yeomen owned, and allow a measurable reconstruction of their homes and furnishings. When a person died in early modern England, the executor or administrator listed and assigned appropriate value to the deceased's personal effects. As Jan de Vries states, "probate inventories ordinarily were drawn up only from decedents leaving sufficient moveable assets to make the exercise worthwhile," and he continues that, "the social 'depth to which they reach is not everywhere the same, but rarely comprehends true proletarians."²⁶⁶ It is important to realize there are practical limitations to the data, and that problems do arise from incomplete information. However, the villages under examination were chosen with regard to their inventories: each set is relatively complete and have not been broken up between dioceses and various county archives.

²⁶⁶ Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 126.

In addition, I have used the entire range of yeomen wills and inventories from Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey from the years 1660 to 1750. They originated in a county that experienced great changes, and played an important part in the economic and social climate of early modern England.

Margaret Spufford sheds light on the evidence found in wills and inventories, and illustrates how yeomen wealth in East Anglia continued to rise with the growth in population. Spufford measured the impact of wealth in the neighboring county of Suffolk during two periods, 1570-1599, and 1680-1700. She hypothesized that groups of fenland yeomen or husbandmen for the earlier period had a median wealth of 55 pounds in the 1570's and 80's, compared with 114 pounds in the late 1680's."²⁶⁷ This is a projected increase in wealth of approximately 107% over the century.

In the Cambridgeshire villages of Chatteris and Cottenham, and the town of Whittlesey, the mean wealth of yeomen (some described as yeoman/husbandman) matched or, in many cases, exceeded Spufford's Suffolk figures during the period 1670-1699. The average wealth of Cottenham's yeomen from 1670-1699 was 114 pounds. Chatteris had an average of 129 pounds. The average for Whittlesey was much higher at 240 pounds. Cottenham and Whittlesey's average wealth rose substantially during the remainder of the period under examination. From 1700-1750 the average

²⁶⁷ Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclotting of Rural England: Petty Chapmen And their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 116.

wealth for Cottenham's yeomen was 160 pounds per household, while Whittlesey had an astounding average of 294 pounds. Chatteris' yeomen seem to have reached a plateau during the same period since the average went down to 123 pounds.

For the three communities, there is a visible rise in inventories valued above 100 pounds for the period of 1660-1750. According to the *Table 1*, the number of inventories in Cottenham exceeding 100 pounds is forty-eight or 52%, Chatteris (*Table 2*) forty inventories at 50%, and Whittlesey (*Table 3*) 76 inventories or 66%.

Table 1 – Cottenham 1660-1750

Value in Pounds	No. of Wills	Percentage
1 to 30	6	6.5
30-60	10	11
60-80	17	18.5
80-100	11	12
Over 100	48	52

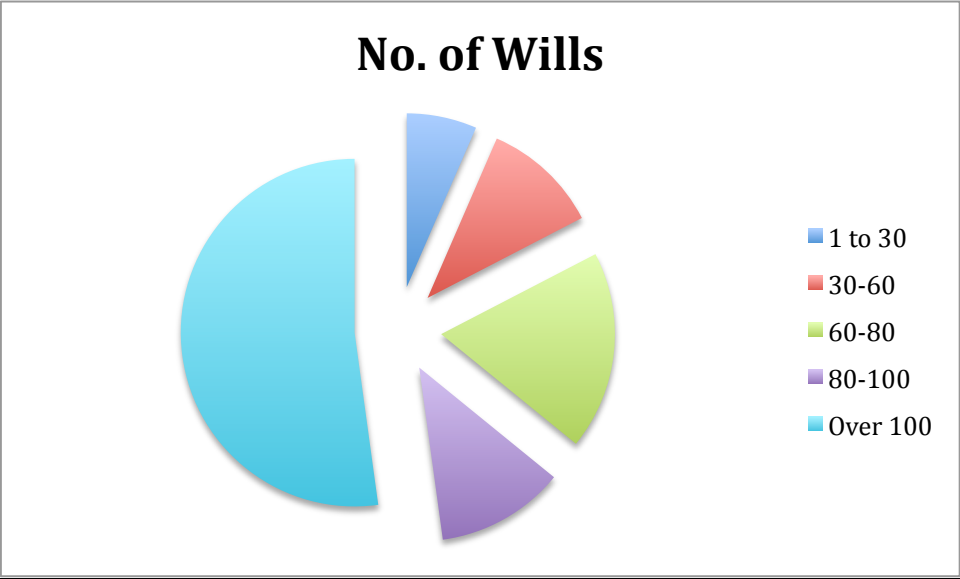


Table 2 – Chatteris 1660-1750

Value in Pounds	No. of Wills	Percentage
1 to 30	11	13.8
30-60	17	21.2
60-80	5	6.3
80-100	7	8.7
Over 100	40	50

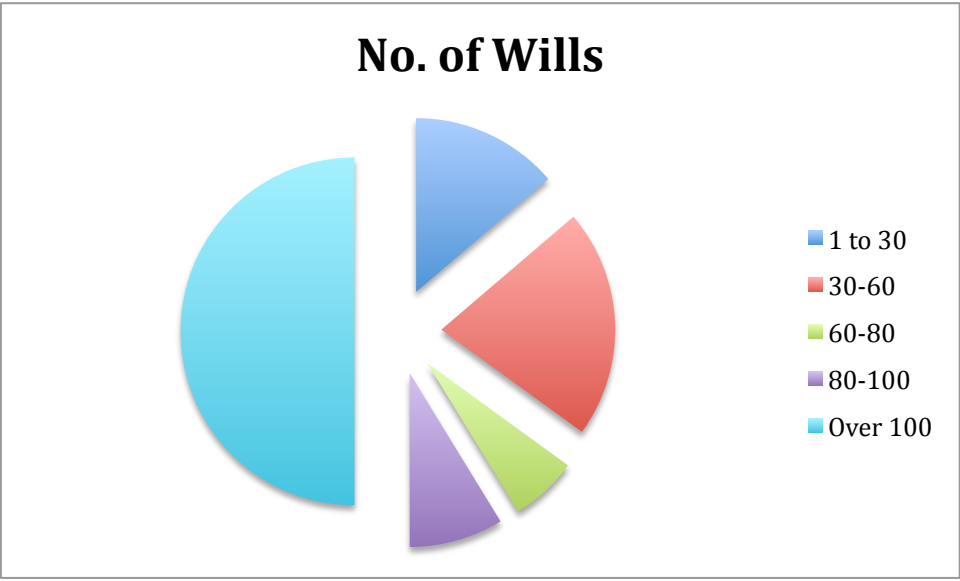
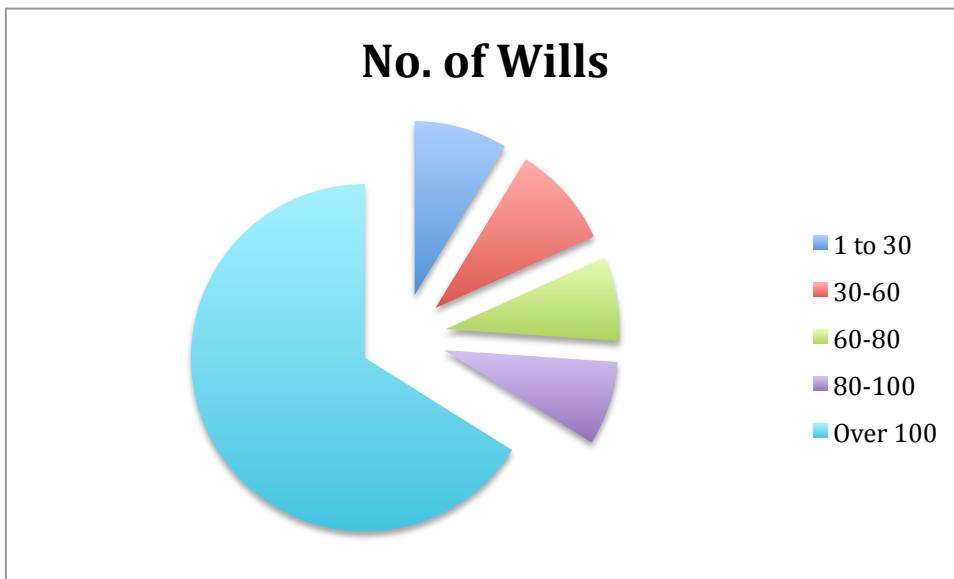


Table 3 – Whittlesey 1660-1750

Value in Pounds	No. of Wills	Percentage
1 to 30	10	8.7
30-60	11	9.6
60-80	9	7.8
80-100	9	7.8
Over 100	76	66



This is the first conclusive evidence of a significant increase in yeoman wealth, and the beginning of a move towards domestic comfort.

Architecture

The changes in the rural economic climate were never more apparent than in the living in spaces inhabited by the yeoman. There is ample evidence that the seventeenth century Cambridgeshire yeoman expanded his house for both utility and comfort. According to W.G. Hoskins, “a housing ‘revolution’ occurred in England between the accession of Elizabeth I and the outbreak of the Civil War, that not only initiated a substantial modernization of existing structures, but also

triggered a remarkable and simultaneous increase in household furnishings and equipment.”²⁶⁸

Jeremy Black believes that this spate of rebuilding continued after the Civil War and that “the stately homes of the period were a testimony to wealth, confidence, the profits of agricultural improvement, the greater social stability that followed the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, and the increased political stability of the eighteenth century.”²⁶⁹ The yeomanry were active agents in this development as Christopher Clay states in his work on seventeenth economic expansion in England that “even the yeomen are sometimes found buying hundreds of acres or complete manors.”²⁷⁰

Contemporary observers, such as Nicholas Barbon, noticed the benefits of building and commented that, “building, which is natural to Mankind, being the making of a nest or Place for his Birth, it is the most proper and visible Distinction of riches, and Greatness, because the Expences too Great for Mean Persons to follow.”²⁷¹ From the various wills and probate documents in the village of Chatteris and Cottenham, and the town of Whittlesey it is possible to observe the transition and modernization of the fifteenth century hall house.

²⁶⁸ W. G. Hoskins, “The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640,” *Past & Present*, 4 (1953): 44–59.

²⁶⁹ Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth-Century Britain, 1688-1783* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 163.

²⁷⁰ Christopher Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 151.

²⁷¹ Nicholas Barbon, *A Discourse of Trade* (London: Printed by Tho. Milbourn for the author, 1690), 67.

The accounts of Admiral Edward Russell (who later became the Earl of Orford and whose family was originally from yeomen stock), show lavish sums spent on the purchase of his Chippenham estate, Cambridgeshire, which he bought from various wealthy yeomen that held farms from “120 to 150 acres apiece.”²⁷² His expenditure was “16,250 pounds,” which was used as “the purchase money.”²⁷³ Unsurprisingly, Margaret Spufford found that the Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax return of 1664 indicates that “half of the houses in the village of Chippenham had only one hearth, against just under a third with three or more hearths...in Cambridgeshire at this date, the occupancy of a house with one hearth indicated a status and wealth not much higher than that of the average labourer, whereas a house with three or more hearths was usually occupied by a yeoman.”²⁷⁴ More hearths, in her opinion, meant a larger home and higher tax rate, the result of higher income.

The period of “The Great Rebuilding,” an era that highlights the growing yeoman concern for architectural form and decoration, emerged during the period of transition from a church-dominated medieval world to a growing secular society. Lucy Archer believes that Christian dogma was now undermined by a new culture that was primarily inspired by the study of the

²⁷² Margaret Spufford, *Figures in the Landscape: Rural Society in England, 1500-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 138.

²⁷³ *The Acct of the Right Hono[r]able Admiral Russell, 1690*, The Estate Papers of Sir Edwin Sandys, CRO, Document 144.

²⁷⁴ Spufford, *Figures in the Landscape*, 138.

classical past, which is readily apparent in Tudor architecture.²⁷⁵ The rise of a prosperous merchant class meant that for the first time the laity began to rival the clerics in undertaking new architectural projects. William Harrison's observations in 1598 provide an example of that transformation. He noted that in his village there were now:

A multitude of chimneys lately erected, whereas in their young days there were Not above two or three, if so many, in most uplandish towns of the realm (the Religious houses and manor places of their lords always excepted, and Peradventure some great personages)

In addition, W. G. Hoskins asserts, "The Great Rebuilding took two forms—either a complete rebuilding of the old house (possibly in a new material and a new style) or a reconstruction and enlargement on such a scale as to make it virtually a new house."²⁷⁶ During this period, there was construction in every county save for the four northern ones.²⁷⁷ Later, in the late seventeenth century, Sir Josiah Child commented on the proliferation of new housing twenty-five years after the Great Fire of London: "The speedy and costly buildings of London are a convincing (and to strangers an amazing) argument of the plenty, and late encrease of money in England...houses newly built in London yield twice the

²⁷⁵ Lucy Archer, *Architecture in Britain and Ireland, 600-1500* (London: Harvill Press, 1999), 309.

²⁷⁶ Hoskins, "The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640." 44-59.

²⁷⁷ Albert J Schmidt, *The Yeoman in Tudor and Stuart England* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1961), 17.

rent they did before the fire; and houses generally immediately before the fire yielded about one fourth part more rent than they did twenty years past.”²⁷⁸

Reconstruction of dwellings was expensive and usually took the form of inserting a ceiling in the medieval hall, thus creating an increase in living space with a parlour on the ground floor and bedrooms above.²⁷⁹ A description of such construction was left by a Devonshire yeoman, Robert Furse, who wrote in 1593 about his successful attempts to add a ceiling, construct a massive granite stairwell and glaze the window to his fifteenth-century ancestral dwelling.²⁸⁰

In one example of the rebuilding in the town of Whittlesey, the home of yeoman Henry Ground contained goods and chattels in “a chamber over the new room” and also “in the new room” points to a recent addition that was obvious to his testators. Ground’s add-ons held quite an assemblage of fashionable furniture, especially the new room, which contained “12 chears two tables and fire grate with other irons.”²⁸¹ This indicates that he included a fireplace for heating his new chamber and enough seats to accommodate visitors and family alike. Also, his chamber over the new room held “one bed & furniture to it belonging one table, one trundle bed, some chears and some wooll.”²⁸² Later,

²⁷⁸ Josiah Child, *A New Discourse of Trade: Wherein Is Recommended Several Weighty Points Relating to Companies of Merchants, the Act of Navigation, Naturalization of Strangers, and Our Woollen Manufactures, the Ballance of Trade ...: And Some Proposals for Erecting a Court of Merchants for Determining Controversies* (London: Printed and sold by Sam. Crouch, Tho. Horne, and Jos. Hindmarsh, 1694), xxxii.

²⁷⁹ Hoskins, “The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640,” 35.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

²⁸¹ Henry Ground of Whittlesey, will dated January 13, 1686, no. 594, box 443, CRO.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

yeoman William Hurry's will mentions a wealth of luxury items in his "new room" that features:

One bedstead & feather bed with curtains & furniture thereunto belonging One Oaken table one little table one oaken cupboard, two rush chaires four earthen potts full of honey with a spinning wheel and other lumber.²⁸³

The goods in Hurry's room totaled five pounds in value, which added to his already substantial inventory worth 200 pounds.

"So lived our yeomanry and our gentry of old," commented Whitaker in the *History of Whalley* where he compares the two strata of rural inhabitants while discussing the wave of stone buildings erected by yeomen in parts of Lancashire. The yeoman's financial independence enabled him to live better than his predecessors and "his individualistic inclinations whetted his appetite for privacy, which had been, of course, an impossibility in the medieval hall."²⁸⁴

Yet, the ebbing of enthusiasm for rebuilding is reported by Du Bois, who felt that some changes in domestic architecture were less than appropriate. In 1715, he wrote:

We see so many bungled houses and so oddly contrived that they seem to have been made only to be admired by ignorant men and to raise the laughter of those who are sensible of such imperfections Most of them are like bird cages, by reason of the largeness and too great number of windows; or like prisons, because of the darkness of the rooms, passages and stairs. Others, through the oddness of some new and insignificant ornaments, seem to exceed the wildest Gothic. It were an endless thing to enumerate all the absurdities which many of our builders introduce every day into their way of building.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ William Hurry of Whittlesey, will dated August 13, 1705, no. 322, box 453, CRO.

²⁸⁴ Schmidt, *The Yeoman in Tudor and Stuart England*, 18.

²⁸⁵ Esther Singleton, *French and English Furniture* (New York: McClure, Phillips & co, 1903), 115.

This hostile attitude was also shared by John Evelyn, who indicated his distaste for, “a certain and licentious manner of building which we have since called *Modern* (or *Gothic* rather) congestions of heavy, dark, melancholy and monkish piles without any just proportion, use or beauty.”²⁸⁶ Or, Evelyn just may have been echoing the nervousness of the elite when it felt encroached upon.

Classical ideas came to inform British architecture, especially new aspects of style and taste that essentially re-defined the old. Inigo Jones and Andrea Palladio espoused new ideas of Classicism. Exponents of Gothic and English Baroque, Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and Colen Campbell (d. 1729), had a similar impact on the architectural landscape. Vanbrugh, an adherent to the style and approach of Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmore, and one of the first to design informal parks and gardens, helped bring respectability to Gothic architecture and eventually brought it to the same level as Classicism.²⁸⁷ It is important to mention innovative architectural styles since Herbert Cescinsky argues that seventeenth-century architecture ultimately influenced “cabinet making and the design of furniture.”²⁸⁸ Thus, homes built by the affluent gentry, would allow those of lesser financial and socio-cultural

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth Century Britain*, 163.

²⁸⁸ Herbert Cescinsky, *The Old-World House: Its Furniture & Decoration* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 109.

backgrounds (including the Cambridgeshire yeomen), to emulate and reflect, to a lesser extent, “the motifs, and styles of greater works.”²⁸⁹

Although it has been stated by Jean Andre Rouquet in his treatise on English art and architecture that, “The English have no national architecture in what regards the decoration of their buildings...like other nations, they take their models from Italy and from antiquity.”²⁹⁰ Nonetheless, architecture in England developed according to local tastes and materials, which is particularly true for smaller and less pretentious dwellings.²⁹¹ This is particularly true in Banbury where R.B. Wood-Jones suggests that by the sixteenth century yeomen were concerned about the disappearance of woodland. Thus, by the seventeenth century, the good local stone—namely a middle *lias* that formed a hard stratum of shale—was to become the exclusive building material.²⁹²

Mildred Campbell points out that elsewhere, in the southeast including East Anglia and the Thames Valley, the building activities of yeomen were marked by the greatest variety in both style and materials as a result of continental influences. Variety is indeed apparent, since there was some difficulty building on the “springy turf” of the fenlands, thus forcing creativity in construction materials. Traditional peasant homes usually consisted of “wattle and daub and

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Jean André Rouquet, *The Present State of the Arts in England*. By M. Rouquet (London: printed for J. Nourse, 1755), 95.

²⁹¹ Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, 222.

²⁹² Raymond B. Wood-Jones, *Traditional Domestic Architecture of the Banbury Region* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), 102.

thatched with a small garden of herbs.”²⁹³ Yet, yeomen edifices were most likely a “long room with stone pillars...an alcove built out at right angles with a private parlour.”²⁹⁴

According to W.G. Hoskins the Spartan image of the country cottage can be seen in Sir Richard Carew’s 1580 *Survey of Cornwall* where he observes the houses of husbandmen as:

Walls of earth, low thatched roofs, few partitions, no planchings or glasse windowes, and scarcely any chimnies, other than a hole in the wall to let out the smoke: their bed, straw and a blanket: as for sheets, so much linen cloth had not yet stepped over the narrow channelle between them and Brittain (in France)²⁹⁵

Additional visual evidence is apparent in Jan Van Aken’s 1650 portrait, *Grace Before a Meal*. Van Aken, an artist known for depicting country life, captures a family—quite possibly a local husbandman—gathered for a meal, their heads bowed in prayer. Yet, the most telling issue is not the piety and thankfulness of his subjects, but the striking lack of comfort, the bareness of the floors and walls, as well as a complete absence of silverware, curtains, and wall hangings.²⁹⁶

Yet if one goes by this depiction of a “middling sort” household, it might seem that country dwellers did not embrace the building associated with economic well being. Fortunately, there is artistic evidence of a yeoman/gentleman’s

²⁹³ Mary Evelyn Monckton Jones, *Life in Old Cambridge* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd, 1920), 88.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁹⁵ Richard Carew, *The Survey of Cornwall*, 1st ed. (London: Printed by S.S. for Iohn Iaggard, 1602). Hoskins, *The Rebuilding of Rural England*, 45.

²⁹⁶ Jan van Aken, Dutch (1614-1661), *Grace Before a Meal*, 1650 (oil on canvas), Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University.

dwelling that contrasts with the aforementioned evidence. *The Tea Table*, a print measuring 6 ¼ inches by 5 3/8 inches and published in London about 1710, displays a room that is “richly but sparsely decorated.”²⁹⁷ This artistic rendering is what most observers feel to be an accurate depiction of a Queen Anne interior of a wealthy yeoman’s home. Displayed in the picture are a floor or “foot” rug (somewhat rare at this time as most rugs were hung as wall décor or used on tables), a sideboard and shelving used to display china, high back, cane chairs, and a looking glass in the background. These goods made up the backbone of consumer luxury goods during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Hoskins goes on to explain, that, although not every yeoman, husbandman or peasant found themselves in a new house, “almost all of the rural population enjoyed a higher level of domestic comfort, in the way of furniture, fittings and household equipment on the eve of the Civil War than their grandparents had done seventy years earlier.”²⁹⁸ Yet, “All this affected yeomen and husbandmen principally.”²⁹⁹

In his seminal work, *The Midland Peasant* (1957), Hoskins effectively connected Hearth Tax entries with probate inventories for the Leicestershire village of Wigston Magna in an effort to emphasize the impact of the Great

²⁹⁷ Ralph Fastnedge, “Furniture,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods* (London: The Connoisseur, 1968), 334–335.

²⁹⁸ Hoskins, “The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640,” 49.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

Rebuilding on rural housing. He argued that the number of rooms in relation to the number of hearths, when cross referenced with the corresponding probate inventories, could be used as a somewhat accurate guide to the number of rooms in rural homes.³⁰⁰ This was taken a step further by Margaret Spufford who examined both Hearth Tax and probate documents and applied this idea to houses in Cambridgeshire. Spufford built on Hoskins example, which she claimed could accurately determine the size and wealth of rural homes during the Great Rebuilding. She further argued that not only were Hearth Tax entries particularly useful, but when coupled with probate records, they reflected personal wealth and social status, and therefore functioned as a general “rough and ready” social and economic guide.³⁰¹

Although this study does not consider the Hearth Tax assessments, Spufford’s work is of considerable value when considering the average number of rooms, especially those that were considered “new” during the Great Rebuilding in Cambridgeshire. Spufford finds that five-roomed houses “formed the largest single class in Cambridgeshire and were occupied by the biggest group of husbandmen, some craftsmen, and some yeomen, who usually had goods from under 10 to 70 pounds [of value].”³⁰² She adds that such houses were also occupied by a select group of individuals, whose wealth, particularly moveable goods and chattels, were valued in the 100 to 400 pound range. From her

³⁰⁰ Spufford, *Figures in the Landscape*, 81.

³⁰¹ Margaret Spufford, “The Significance of the Cambridge Hearth Tax,” in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 55, (1962): 53.

³⁰² Margaret Spufford, “The Significance of the Cambridge Hearth Tax,” 56.

sample of various villages, which include those in this study, Spufford concluded that a full 30% of the Cambridgeshire yeomen lived in five and six roomed houses.

The evidence from the three Cambridgeshire communities substantiates Spufford's assertions. When all 287 inventories from Cottenham, Chatteris, and Whittlesey are analyzed, it appears the median for the Cambridgeshire yeomen was a five to six room dwelling with a gross worth of approximately 150 pounds. A substantial fifty-two inventories or 18% of the yeomen were in this range. Additionally, the table shows that there was a larger number of yeomen (10%) living above the median in both the 150-200 and 200-250 pound ranges, and that most of the seven and eight room ranges comprised 9% and 15% respectively. Surprisingly, there were eleven yeomen (4%) in the highest range of over 700 pounds, which exceeds those in the 20-30 and under 10 pound ranges. Thus, this data confirms previous scholarship and also illuminates the fact that wealthy Cambridgeshire yeomen were living in larger homes that reflected their economic position.

Margaret Spufford remarks that a house with three hearths might have from six to eleven rooms, but over three quarters had six, seven, or eight rooms. The people in these dwelling were amongst these with personal wealth of 30 to 300 pounds, most of them yeomen. Such houses contained a good number of service rooms, Spufford notes that, "most of the eight roomed houses had three or four." The inventory of yeoman John Wright of Cottenham indicates a house of

approximately eight rooms, including a hall, parlor, other chamber (new), as well as chambers over the kitchen and a buttery.³⁰³ His inventory is particularly revealing since his chambers show use as service rooms, especially next to the dairy and buttery where copper, hogsheads, barrels, and linen are located. On the whole, service rooms are a good indicator of additional storage rooms and sometimes add-ons, but they never reveal many luxury items—if any at all.

Randle Holme's 1688 treatise on contemporary dwellings described the term "house" or "dwelling house." His description refers to a basic cottage or the ubiquitous two-room home that Spufford insists was still common in Cambridge at this time. He affirms that a dwelling that has been, "Slated, Tyled, slated, or Roofed is likewise termed an House of one Bay, or a Countrey house, or a Farmers house, or a Dary house, or a Cottage."³⁰⁴ Yet, he also refers to dwellings inhabited by prosperous yeomen and asserts that the several rooms inside of a proper dwelling consisted of: "Entry, Buttery, Stove, Pastery, Hall, Seller, Wash, Skullery, Parlar, Pantrey, Larder, and Brew-house."³⁰⁵

In addition to examining the size of houses, it is necessary to look at household size in order to reconstruct yeomen living arrangements. Lorna Weatherill asserts that households were "of modest size" and that most "early modern homes in both England and Scotland had between four and seven people living in them, and the houses for which there is evidence surviving contained

³⁰³ Inventory of John Wright of Cottenham, will dated July 20, 1669, no. 161/2, box 438, CRO.

³⁰⁴ Randle Holme, *[The] Academy of Armory 1688* (Menston: Scolar Pr., 1972., n.d.), Book III, 450.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 451.

between three and seven rooms.”³⁰⁶ Further, she adds that the households of London in the 1690’s “record an average of as high as seven in one parish, whereas Cambridge averaged about four.”³⁰⁷

Inventories for Cottenham, Chatteris, and Whittlesey reveal the number of rooms exceeds Wetherill’s average and come close to the previous calculations made by Margaret Spufford. According to *Table 1*, Cottenham exhibits a higher average of six rooms (22%) from a total of ninety-two inventories, which includes 10.8% of homes with nine or more rooms. Also, Whittlesey (*Table 3*) reveals a high average of five rooms (16.5%), which also includes double figures for six rooms (11.3%), seven rooms (13.9), and eight rooms (12.2). The most salient figure for Whittlesey’s one hundred fifteen inventories is the 15.7% of yeomen houses with nine or more rooms. In summary, Chatteris (*Table 2*) falls into the four-room average (18.75), yet it shows a strong percentage of five (17.5) and six (16.25) rooms among the eighty yeomen inventories.

Table 1 - Cottenham

Rooms	No. of Rooms In Inventory	Percentage
Dubious	2	2
1	2	2
2	0	0
3	6	7
4	13	14
5	18	20
6	20	22
7	8	9
8	13	14

³⁰⁶ Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (London: Routledge, 1988), 94.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

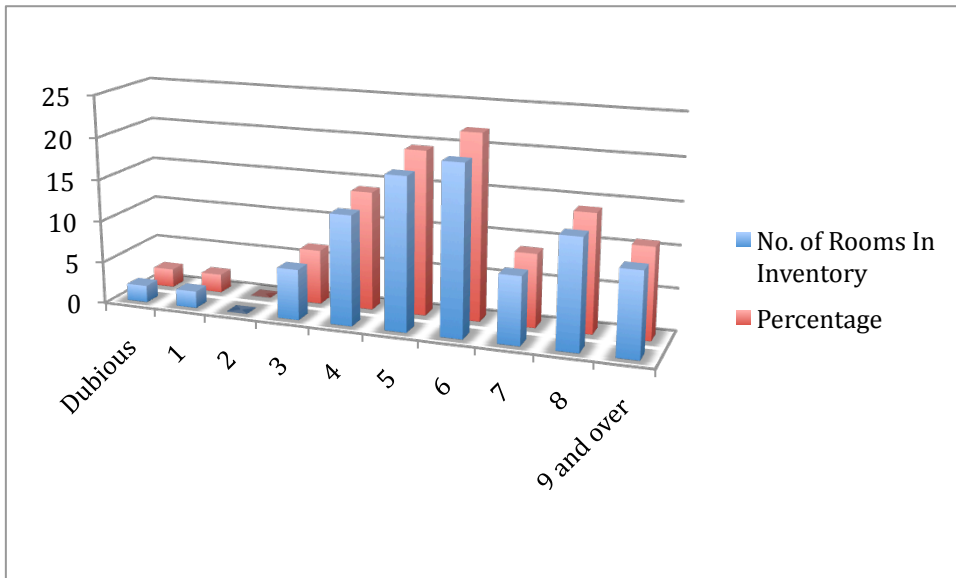


Table 2 – Chatteris

Rooms	No. of Rooms In Inventory	Percentage
Dubious	4	5
1	13	6
2	3	4
3	6	8
4	15	19
5	14	18
6	13	16
7	5	6
8	5	6
9 and Over	2	3

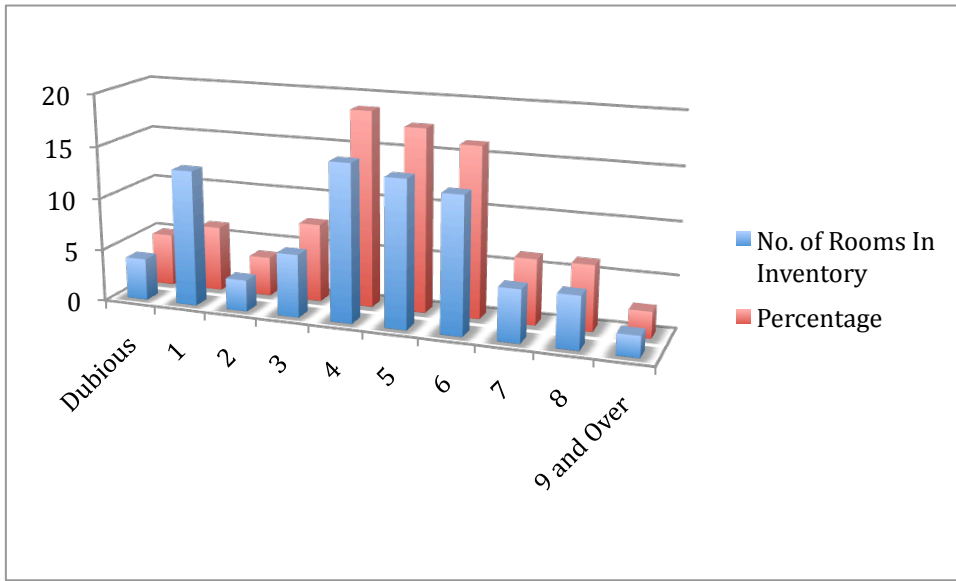
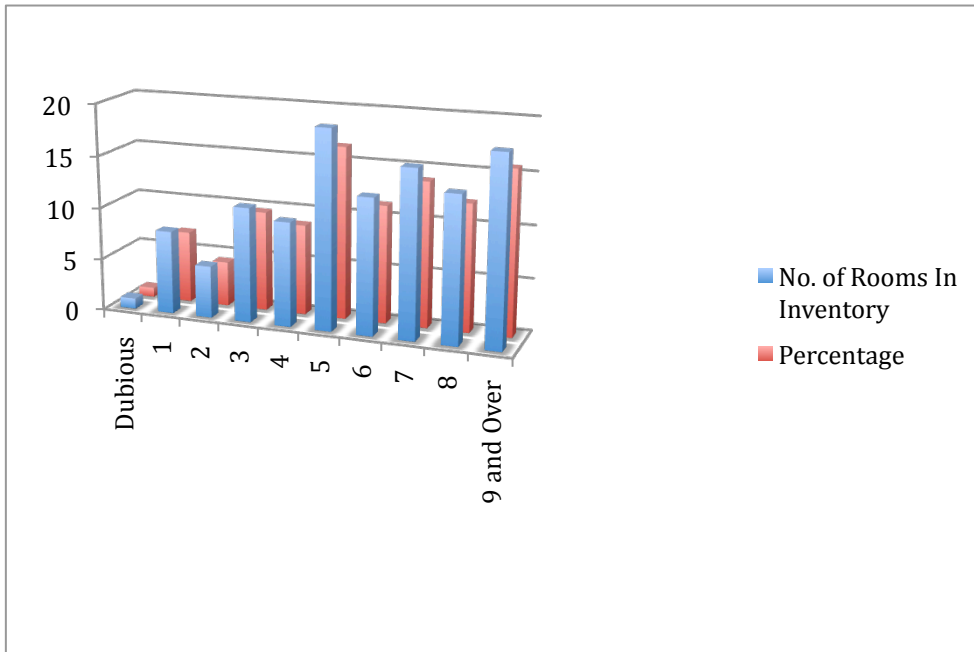


Table 3 – Whittlesey

Rooms	No. of Rooms In Inventory	Percentage
Dubious	1	1
	1	8
	2	5
	3	11
	4	10
	5	19
	6	13
	7	16
	8	14
9 and Over	18	16



Still, during the early modern period, rooms were also developing different purposes. M. Stafford and R.K. Middlemas found that in the seventeenth century, “families retired from the great hall to smaller dining rooms.”³⁰⁸ The following is a survey of various chambers in the early modern house and how their size and function adapted to the changes and demands of wealthy yeomen eager to display their economic fortunes.

Hall

In the Middle Ages, the hall, or “open hall” was the largest room in both large and small houses. In larger homes, it served as a meeting room and communal dining area and, upon entrance, one found themselves viewing “a table set on a

³⁰⁸ Maureen Stafford, *British Furniture Through the Ages* (London: Barker, 1966), vii..

dais, or platform, and a screen cut off the entrance to the kitchen.”³⁰⁹ John Hunt maintains that the most imposing feature was “the large chair of the master of the house standing upon the dais or raised platform at the top of the room.”³¹⁰ And in smaller country homes occupied by the lesser gentry or the well-off yeomanry, the great hall was the focal point of the house, but “without the interposition of a screen between the body of the hall and the entrance.”³¹¹ Singleton remarks that, up until the dawn of the architectural revolution, the great hall was the most important room in the house where guests were received, and meals were generally served.

However, with the coming of the early modern age, the hall’s original function and size began to change, especially in the country home. Contemporary evidence points to a change in attitude towards the hall’s comfort and appearance, which may have contributed to its transformation. Francis Bacon remarked in *Of Building*, that “Houses are built to live in and not to look on; therefore let *use* be preferred before uniformity.” These words were published in 1625 and reflect what Margaret Whinney sees as the great hall being placed “across and not along, the main axis of the house, and thus permitting a more symmetrical arrangement of the rooms on either side of it.”³¹² Thus, rooms were

³⁰⁹ Esther Singleton, *French and English Furniture, Distinctive Styles and Periods Described and Illustrated* (New York: McClure Phillips & Co. 1903), 40.

³¹⁰ John Hunt, “Furniture,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods*, Ralph Edwards and L.G.G. Ramsey eds. (New York: Bonanza Books, 1968), 45-58.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² Margaret Whinney, “Architecture,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides*, 277-320.

now small suites, each with its own character and function. This, she believes, is a clear reflection of Bacon's statement that "symmetry is agreeable, but use, or convenience is now more important."³¹³

The hall also enjoyed a transformation with regard to floors and use of flooring. To those, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, the lack of cleanliness in the hall was a cause for alarm. His observations of English Hall flooring are recorded:

Covered with rushes, of which the upper layers were renewed with Reasonable regularity. The lower, however remained undisturbed sometimes For as much as twenty years, and harbored in their depths the abominations That should by rights have been swallowed by the cess-pit.³¹⁴

Yet, well into the late seventeenth century, stone flagged or wooden floors were still covered with straw "in farms and smaller manor houses long after that insanitary habit had been abandoned in town houses."³¹⁵

Nevertheless, the great hall was to experience a most dramatic change during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. By the latter part of the Stuart period, "a bay window was added at the dais end of the hall, which formed a private retiring-place for conversation while the table was being cleared." This is confirmed in John Evelyn's *A Journey to England*:

for either being mingled in a Room, the *Gentlemen* separate from the Conversation of the *Ladies*, to Drink as before I related; or else to Whisper

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Hunt, "Furniture," 45-58.

³¹⁵ John Gloag, *The Englishman's Chair; Origins, Design, and Social History of Seat Furniture in England* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 91.

with one another at some Carner, or *Bay Window*, abandoning the *Ladies* to Gossip by themselves, which is a Custom so strange to a *Gallant* of our *Nation*.³¹⁶

Prior to the parlor or sitting room, the hall was normally a place for positioning luxury goods, which included fine furniture, expensive objects, and art. Evidence of this is seen in a few examples in the villages under study, particularly in yeoman John Taylor's Cottenham home. His great hall contained joined furniture that included "one side bord table" valued at 1 pound 1 shilling and 6 pence.³¹⁷ Also, upon entering William Briggs' eight bedroom home, one would immediately see his consumer finery since his hall boasted "a Clock 3 tables 8 chairs and fire Iron, Pickters and other small things." Nonetheless, the hall would become much smaller and could change, through the work of such architects as Inigo Jones and sir Roger Pratt, into "something of a grand entrance vestibule."³¹⁸

The Bedchamber

The great bedchamber or bedroom of the master and the mistress of the house was, while being a place for sleep, also a means of escape. The bedchamber served as a dedicated room for the heads of household, and for the prosperous yeoman comfort was essential. Large beds represented both

³¹⁶ John Evelyn, *A Journey to England, With Some Account of the Manners and Customs of that Nation. Written at the Command of a Nobleman in France. Made English* (London: Printed and Sold by A. Baldwin, near the Oxford-Arms-Inn in Warwick-Lane, 1700), 21.

³¹⁷ John Taylor of Cottenham, will dated March 20, 1721, no. 864, box 462, CRO.

³¹⁸ Whinney, "Architecture," *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides*, 277-320.

comfort and elegance, and during the seventeenth century, most of the elite still utilized the four-poster Elizabethan bed. For the wealthy or those of elevated status, this ornately carved durable still existed during the Stuart period. Esther Singleton claims they “died hard” even as new styles of lighter beds were being introduced.

Visually speaking, the bedchamber contained a variety of movables and, most importantly, a chest in which to store valuables.³¹⁹ This item, vital to housing cherished goods or family heirlooms, is recorded during the Elizabethan period:

In cypress chest my arras counterpoints,
Costly apparel, tents, and canopies,
Fine linen, Turkey cushions boss'd with pearl,
Valance of Venice gold in needlework,
Pewter and brass, and all things that belong
To the house or housekeeping.³²⁰

The country bedroom of the elite typically contained “front-stage” objects,³²¹ and colorful drapery and fabrics. Also, there were such items as “chairs, stools, cushions, table-carpets and cupboard cloth and cushions of fine cloths.”³²² The inventories of Cambridgeshire yeomen also reflect this trend. For example, the bedchamber of Robert Spalton, yeomen of Chatteris, contains, “one standing bed

³¹⁹ This was called a trussing chest and was used as a receptacle for bedclothes, however there was usually another chest used specifically for valuables and the preservation of wearing apparel.

³²⁰ William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew A comedy* (London: printed by R. Walker; and may be had at his shop, 1735), Act II.

³²¹ A term coined by Lorna Weatherill that indicates important luxury goods that were “staged” in the front hall or parlour.

³²² Singleton, *French and English Furniture*, 59.

with feather bed, pillows, a pare of blankets one rug & mattrice with a paire of redd curtaines & valance.”³²³ Also the bedroom of John Hearde, another Chatteris yeoman, contains a “poster bed, six chairs a trunk table & looking glass.”³²⁴ In the 1709 inventory of John England, a yeoman of Whittlesey, there is “one bedstead with curtains vallanse feather bedd five chairs caine and a chest of drawers and other furniture valued at seven pounds.”³²⁵ Lastly, John Taylor, yeoman of Cottenham had a pair of “striped curtains”³²⁶ and John Brigham, also of Cottenham owned “one joined bedstead with a payre of green curtaynes & valances.”³²⁷ The materials chosen for curtains were usually, as Singleton claims, the same as those for cushions and cupboard cloth, which gives an idea of the color and appearance of the interior. It is clear within the Cambridgeshire yeomen bedchamber that luxury had taken hold. With regard to modern “conveniences,” chamber pots are listed among most inventories of bedchambers.³²⁸ The evidence reaffirms the old adage that “a Jacobean bedroom is lacking neither in beauty nor richness.”³²⁹

³²³ Robert Spalton of Chatteris, will dated October 12, 1677, no. 2301136, box 440, CRO.

³²⁴ John Heard of Chatteris will dated November 26, 1689, no. 2301140, box 444, CRO.

³²⁵ John England of Whittlesey, will dated December 5, 1709, no. 2301276, box 455, CRO.

³²⁶ John Taylor of Cottenham, will dated February 3, 1675, no. 2301113, box 439, CRO.

³²⁷ John Brigham of Cottenham will dated June 27, 1673, no. 2301111, box 437, CRO.

³²⁸ William Ivatt of Cottenham, will dated February 7, 1721, no. 642, box 462, CRO.

³²⁹ Singleton, *French and English Furniture*, 57.

The Parlor

During the architectural changes of the Stuart period, the great hall and great chamber gave way to the *privee parlour*, a small sitting room built at the end or side of the hall. In the Tudor era, the parlor is described in probate inventories as a ground floor sitting room and bedroom, a private room (or rooms) for the family reached by a short passage beyond the main living quarters. Yet, by the dawn of the eighteenth century, the parlor or “parlour chamber” became a secondary room for the showing of front stage goods. As defined by Thomas Dyche in his *General English Dictionary* (1744) a parlour, “among the *Architects*, is a convenient lower room, appropriated to the use of entertaining visitors.”³³⁰ Jean Andre Rouquet describes the parlour as “always on the ground floor; here they take their repasts, and indeed it is not the least convenient, nor the least elegant room in the house that they pitch upon for this important operation.”³³¹ Beds were common in the parlor since it remained the best bedroom in the house, long after the introduction of upstairs chambers. James Davey’s inventory shows that “2 beds and bedding”³³² were maintained with other furniture in his parlor. Finally, the parlour could also be a final resting place.

³³⁰ Thomas Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary; Peculiarly Calculated for the Use and Improvement of Such as Are Unacquainted with the Learned Languages. To Which Is Prefixed, a Compendious English Grammar. Together with a Supplement Of the Proper Names of the Most Noted Kingdoms, Provinces, Cities, Towns, Rivers, &c. As Also of the Most Celebrated Emperors, Kings, Queens. Originally Begun by the Late Reverend Mr. Thomas Dyche and Finished by the Late William Pardon* (London: Printed for C. and R. Ware, J. Beecroft [etc.], 1771), 616.

³³¹ Jean Andre Rouquet, *The Present State of the Arts in England*. By M. Rouquet, Member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture: *Who resided Thirty Years in this Kingdom*. London, Printed for J. Nourse at the *Lamb* opposite *Katherine Street* in the *Strand*. MDCCLV, 1755, 102.

³³² James Davey of Whittlesey, will dated November 27, 1713, no. 169, box 458, CRO.

John Marsey's last will and testament claimed that he owned two beds with other furniture, and two chests in "the parler where he died."³³³

In addition, William Doe, a prosperous East Anglian yeoman, had a "first parlour with a bedsted and fether bed two tables and a dozen napkins" and "the other parler with 2 fether beds and furniture one chest two chairs and other small things"³³⁴ totaling five pounds. A Nethercote farmhouse owned by Elizabeth Goodrytch, the widow of a prosperous yeoman, contained sixteen rooms, usually specifying trade and service rooms, but omitting outhouses. Her well-stocked living space contained a conventional hall,³³⁵ a parlor, or chamber.³³⁶

Also, yeoman William Colls' 1689 inventory notes "items in the old parlour" that contained an assortment of beds, bedding and chairs, whereas he "items in the new parlour" listed "two beds with some furniture" totaling five pounds and two pounds respectively.³³⁷ Similarly, William Speechly's testators record items in both "the best parlour" as well as "the parlour" that contain " a looking glass six chairs two chests, a chest of drawers, ten chairs, a parcel of child bed lining, some Holland pillows, ten pair of Holland sheets & other small things" valued at

³³³ John Marsey of Whittlesey, will dated March 3, 1707, no. 621, box 454, CRO.

³³⁴ William Doe of Whittlesey, will dated November 1, 1711, no. 836, box 456, CRO.

³³⁵ Occasionally referred to as the "hallhouse."

³³⁶ The second ground floor room is referred to as a parlor or chamber, which has a derivation from the Norman-French. Parlors usually were furnished with tables, chairs, and sometimes contained a bed and fireplace.

³³⁷ William Colls of Whittlesey, will dated November 6, 1689, no. 607, box 444, CRO.

18 pounds.³³⁸ His descendant, Richard Speechly, may have inherited some of these items, for his effects contained a looking glass, a good number of chairs and a chest of drawers, yet he inhabited a different dwelling that also had dual parlors. Testators referred to them as “the little parlour” and “the great parlour,” respectively.³³⁹

Luxury items emerge in William Easom’s records, which describe goods in the “little parlour” and goods in the “best parlour” which include “a bed & furniture and Plate in the clossit”³⁴⁰ valued at 22 pounds. David Quitto’s inventory mentions one of his many chambers as “the Maid Servant’s Parlour,” which could very well have previously functioned as a formal parlor. His parlour once contained a parcel of plate, but it now contained merely “a bed & an old chest.”³⁴¹ In the inventory of Christopher Budd, his chamber over the little parlour” and “in the little parlour” and “the great parlour” contained furniture, and “seventeen pare of sheets and one old one” that totaled 18 pounds.³⁴²

Parlors also appeared to have been updated along with the owner’s growing wealth. Peter Maxey, a yeoman/husbandman from Whittlesey had three chambers in his abode known as an old parlor, a new parlor, and (simply) a parlor. Each contained comfortable amenities such as “a bedstead with curtains

³³⁸ William Speechly of Whittlesey, will dated October 10, 1723, no. 854, box 463, CRO.

³³⁹ Richard Speechly of Whittlesey, will dated April 15, 1743, no. 405, box 473, CRO.

³⁴⁰ William Easom of Whittlesey, will dated January 26, 1738, no. 114, box 471, CRO.

³⁴¹ David Quittoe of Whittlesey, will dated March 19, 1739, no. 561, box 471, CRO.

³⁴² Christopher Budd of Whittlesey, will dated February 17, 1691, no. 833/834, box 445, CRO.

vallans a quilt,” and others such as “a fetherbed two pillows, two chares, & a clok”³⁴³

Parlors also seemed to offer comfort to the visitor or guest, since Robert Norman’s little parlor was less formal than the main parlor. It contained a “couch cushins and chair cushins, bed bedding and four chairs.”³⁴⁴

Parlors could also house less conventional, yet valuable goods. Thomas Wright, yeoman of Chatteris had goods in the little parlour that included “five pounds of malt, and wheat & four pounds of masseldine.”³⁴⁵

Gardens

A compass or a sundial usually graced the gardens of affluent yeomen, and there are exceptional examples of these throughout East Anglia. With their growing popularity, manuals provided tips on how to best display one’s sundial. Designer Batty Langley in his work *The City and Country Builder’s and Workman’s Treasury of Designs* (1745), urges that, “Pedestals for horizontal Sun-Dials, which, when erected should be elevated about three Steps from the Ground; whereby they will be less liable to be displaced by Accident, and thereby

³⁴³ Peter Maxey of Whittlesey, will dated February 20, 1707, no. 625, box 454, CRO.

³⁴⁴ Inventory of Robert Norman of Cottenham, will dated 1724, no. 429/430, box 464, CRO.

³⁴⁵ Inventory of Thomas Wright of Chatteris, will dated 1704, no. 797, box 452, CRO. Messeldine or meslin was flour produced from mixing rye and wheat. It was used to make a popular bread known as “yeoman bread.”

rendered useless.”³⁴⁶ There is evidence of a sundial in Robert Matthews 1673 inventory, where it is situated in “the Yard and valued at 1 pound,”³⁴⁷ and Thomas Brigham’s inventory lists “ a compass (sundial)” appraised at ten shillings.³⁴⁸

Brew House

“Drink held an important place in the yeoman’s fare,”³⁴⁹ claims Mildred Campbell. She adds that “white wine, Rhenish wine, malmsey, muscatel, and many other wines were highly esteemed, and now and then one encounters yeomen drinking them.”³⁵⁰ However, she points out that England was not a grape growing country and that wine was “usually beyond their purses.”³⁵¹ Thus, they drank beer, ale, mead, and cider brewed in their own homes. Home brewing was widespread in seventeenth century Cambridgeshire, and most yeomen houses contained special rooms devoted to it. Prosperous yeomen sold, consumed, and used home brew at meals, possibly as a way for entertaining guests. A good percentage of yeomen—Chatteris 20%, Cottenham 55%, and Whittlesey 34%--had brew houses or produced beer since evidence is found in the “staves” or “hogshead” barrels that housed beer and cider to be taken to

³⁴⁶ Batty Langley, *The City and Country Builder’s and Workman’s Treasury of Designs: Or, The Art of Drawing and Working the Ornamental Parts of Architecture* (London: Printed for and sold by S. Harding, 1750), 22.

³⁴⁷ Robert Matthews of Cottenham, will dated September 30, 1673, no. 962, box 438, CRO.

³⁴⁸ Thomas Brigham of Cottenham, will dated January 20, 1680, no. 228, box 441, CRO.

³⁴⁹ Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, 250.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

market or simply to store for home use. These containers were valuable, Chatteris yeoman Christopher Marriot held “Beere and Mault Hogshead” valued at an impressive 15 pounds.³⁵²

Although a fair number of yeomen maintained brew houses or brewing chambers, less well-to-do yeomen were licensed to run alehouses and taverns. This was a necessary situation, especially in East Anglia toward the end of the seventeenth century because decline in the wool trade in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk forced many to supplement their income. In addition to providing ale to the household—and quite often the general public—it was also a chamber that contained some valuables. For instance, yeomen Henry Charter kept “twelve pewter dishes and twelve pewter plates with five beer vessells” in his brew house.³⁵³ Although beer and ale are not necessarily considered luxury items, home brewing and the addition of these chambers serves as proof that the yeomen were expanding their homes.

Contents of the Yeomen Interior

As the prosperous yeoman hall-house grew with its new additions, various fixtures such as loose floorboards, window frames, transoms, wainscoting, stairs, and partitions creating smaller rooms could be separately bequeathed if so

³⁵² Christopher Marriot of Chatteris, will dated May 1, 1674, no. 210, box 439, CRO.

³⁵³ Henry Charter of Chatteris, will dated June 5, 1722, no. 11, box 463, CRO.

desired. Evidence of this lies in the decision of testators, who listed these items separately from the house itself.

Wainscoting was considered an important movable, particularly since it provided wealthy homeowners with a highly elaborate, yet decorative solution to the ever-growing number of rooms. J.H. Pollen maintains that room paneling (wainscoting) was introduced into England during the reign of Henry III, and that the king ordered a room at Windsor Castle to be paneled with specially imported Norway pine. Since paneling was initially imported from the Baltic region, wainscoting was for the well to do, a circumstance that caused Harrison to remark “it was brought hither out of Dank, for our wainscot is not made in England.”³⁵⁴ The high point of ornate paneling came during the Renaissance when Flemish and Italian craftsmen carved intricate designs of lion’s heads, cupids, satyrs, and leaves, to mention just a few. It quickly grew fashionable amongst the English elite as a decorative architectural addition. English carvers imitated continental workmanship, which can be seen in Hampton Court where Henry VIII employed many artisans to embellish the interior. Such designs and ideas would eventually filter down to the gentry and wealthy yeomen.

In Cambridgeshire, wainscoting appears in various inventories such as Thomas Dowe’s 1691 probate that lists the yeoman’s parlor as “borden,”³⁵⁵ which alludes to the fact that it was composed of ornate or carved wood. Also,

³⁵⁴ Frederick S. Robinson, *English Furniture* (London: Methuen, 1905), 48.

³⁵⁵ Thomas Dowe of Whittlesey, will dated February 28, 1691, no. 817, box 445, CRO.

Thomas Searle's testators mention a little chamber that contains two beds, furniture & chairs and "a piece of wainscot" valued separately at 12 shillings.³⁵⁶

The Yeoman's Growing Visibility

These external refinements are only the beginning of the yeoman's statement that he possessed the means to live comfortably and luxuriously. Their homes, although an expression of their growing wealth and taste, were merely vast storage receptacles for the variety of luxury items they collected and admired.

The real ostentation, as we shall see in the following chapter, lies within.

Schmidt's work on the history of the yeomen sums it up best when he stated, "The yeoman's daily existence and the prosperity which he enjoyed from his fields is best revealed in the contents of his farmhouse."³⁵⁷ Hoskins also echoed these sentiments when he proclaimed, "The mere list of contents of farmhouses and cottages in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is sufficiently conclusive; there is more of everything and better of everything, and new-fangled comforts (like cushions and hangings) as well."³⁵⁸

Also, writing about the increasing visibility of household luxuries, William Harrison acknowledged that costly furnishings were once part of the wealthy merchant or noblemen's houses; however, it now seemed that this exclusivity

³⁵⁶ Thomas Searle of Whittlesey, will dated June 16, 1747, no. 695/696, box 474, CRO.

³⁵⁷ Schmidt, *The Yeoman in Tudor and Stuart England*, 16.

³⁵⁸ Hoskins, "The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640," 49.

was being usurped by different social groups ranging from merchants to artisans and, most notably, to farmers since:

The furniture of our houses also exceedeth and is grown in manner even to passing delicacy; and herein I do not speak of the nobility and gentry only buy likewise of the lowest sort in most places of our south country...in noblemen's houses it is not rare to see abundance of arras, rich hangings of tapestry, silver vessels, and so much other plate as may furnish sundry cupboards...now it is descended yet lower, even unto the inferior artificers and many farmers, who, by virtue of their old and not of their new leases, have for the most part learned also to garnish their cupboards with plate, their joint beds³⁵⁹ with tapestry and silk hangings, and their tables with carpets and fine napery, whereby the wealth of our country (God be praised therefore and give us grace to employ it well) doth infinitely appear.³⁶⁰

Harrison's lament is born out of his belief—and alarm—that the now costly movables possessed by farmers were a result of long leases and lower rents.

We will see shortly that the cost of living extended beyond the architecture and exterior design. Indeed, we will soon understand as Linda Levy Peck states that Jacobean “aspirations to splendor and magnificence extended to interior furnishings as well.”³⁶¹ And with this, it will become more apparent that the evidence suggests that the increase in wealth and refinement is reflected in the increasing quantity of napery the yeoman owned: linen, napkins, pillow bears, etc.³⁶²

³⁵⁹ Beds made by joiners. These creations were far more ornamental than the average carpenter's work.

³⁶⁰ William Harrison, *Description of England*, 200.

³⁶¹ Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 216.

³⁶² Schmidt, *The Yeoman in Tudor and Stuart England*, 21.

Much can be learned from the evolution of the yeoman cottage into a larger or grander type of dwelling. The changes in room use and the allocation of space to serve different social functions illustrates the enrichment of the country farmer and his ability to outwardly express his economic fortunes.

CHAPTER 5

The first part of this chapter is concerned with the theoretical assessments of luxury good consumption and its impact on the English yeomen. When discussing the yeoman's active role as a consumer, it is necessary to explore the wider concept of luxury, particularly by juxtaposing scholarship that emerged during the consumer revolution of the early modern period with that of the last few decades. Therefore, it is prudent to define the term *luxury*³⁶³ both clearly and unambiguously. This will not only help to recognize the interplay between notions that constitute the societal definition and perception of luxury consumption, but it will allow us to identify luxury goods as a crucial component within early modern English society.

The second half this chapter illustrates the material culture of the yeoman's domestic lives. It begins with an exploration and explanation of luxury household items, which leads to a discussion of fine furniture, *objets de art*, textiles, and drinking vessels that reveal the transformation of yeomen consumerism. It describes the ownership patterns of luxury goods and explains the evolution of furniture and how craftsmen's innovations—specifically the ornamentation of durable goods—created new luxury items that successfully combined the ideas of utility and comfort. Most importantly, it illustrates the

³⁶³ Christopher J. Berry defines a luxury good as “a widely desired (but not yet widely attained) good that is believed to be ‘pleasing,’ and the general desirability of which is explained by it being a specific refinement, or qualitative aspect, of some universal generic need,” in Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9.

Cambridgeshire yeomen's appreciation for finery and the way in which these items filled the interior of their homes and reveals the effort put forth to showcase their newfound wealth.

The Debates

Since this work is concerned with growth of luxury consumerism amongst the yeomanry in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, it is necessary to evaluate the debates regarding luxury consumption. Through these ideas and theories, we can gain insight into the development of the institutions and infrastructure that helped facilitate the acquisition of luxury goods by English yeomen. A cursory examination of the debates will also allow us to evaluate the mindset of country-dwelling consumers, and to understand that the underlying measures of acquisition, ownership, and use were driven by a combination of ideas and events. These included new attitudes and mentalities, the decline of luxury's moral stigma brought about by the growing acceptance of commerce and trade, social emulation and competition, and a spatial component that facilitated the availability of goods.

The Early Modern Debates and the Definition of Luxury

The first debates on the economic benefits of luxury spending and conspicuous consumption emerged during the late seventeenth century against

the backdrop of the consumer revolution and demonstrate a considerable shift towards the acceptance of trade and free-market forces that drove luxury consumerism.

Throughout the classical and medieval eras conspicuous consumption of luxury goods was seen as ruinous—a fixation that if not controlled would, in the words of Livy, sow *semina futurae luxuriae* or the “seeds of future lust.”³⁶⁴ Edward III spoke of luxurious clothing as “a contagious and excessive apparel of diverse people, against their estate and degree.”³⁶⁵ And, quite notably, St. Augustine’s theological musings associated luxury with avarice, ambition, and sensual indulgence. Thus, since early on, luxury consumerism has been credited with many social maladies that include declining health, sexual immodesty, and decaying, political morality.

However, these ideas were displaced with the onset of the “consumer revolution,”³⁶⁶ when the rise of trade changed these antiquated perceptions and lessened the ambivalence toward luxury consumerism. In the late seventeenth century, contemporary writers departed from the traditional opinion that luxuries led to social corruption, and embraced the idea that spending on life’s frivolities was, for the most part, socially beneficial. Evidence of this can be found in Nicholas Barbon’ *A Discourse of Trade* (1690), a work that contributed

³⁶⁴ Livy, *The History of Rome*, Bohn’s Classical Library (London: H. G. Bohn, 1853), 39.6.

³⁶⁵ Berry, *The Idea of Luxury*, 30.

³⁶⁶ A period between the late sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries that witnessed an aggregate consumption of services and goods. Although the existence of this event is still debated, it is argued that this rise in consumerism grew “in the shadows” of the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions.

directly to the foundation of modern economics. Although trained as a physician, Barbon's *Discourse* extols the virtue of free trade and that commerce—especially those concerned with luxury goods—should “flow freely.”³⁶⁷ He urged people to habitually purchase goods regularly; this he reasoned, would create a constant demand for products. Barbon also argued against the control of luxury items by stating, “The freer the trade, the better the nation will thrive.”³⁶⁸ Yet, the true genius of Barbon's work manifests itself in the segment, which ignores the moral aspects of luxury consumption and articulates trade as a necessary function:

Trade Increaseth the Revenue of the Government, by providing an employ For the people: For every Man that Works, pay by those things which he Eats and Wears, something to the Government. Thus the excise and customs Are Raised, and the more every Man Earns, the more he consumes, and the King's Revenue is the more increased.³⁶⁹

He goes on to assert that those “expences that most promote Trade, are in Cloaths and Lodging: In Adorning the Body and the House, there are a Thousand Traders Employ'd in Cloathing and Decking the Body, and Building, and Furnishing of Houses.”³⁷⁰ Indeed, Barbon draws a connection between society's need to fulfill private desires with expenditure on luxury goods (in a virtuous

³⁶⁷ Nicholas Barbon, *A Discourse of Trade* (London: Printed by Tho. Milbourn for the author, 1690). 37.

³⁶⁸ Nicholas Barbon, *A Discourse Concerning Coining the New Money Lighter. In Answer to Mr. Lock's Considerations About Raising the Value of Money* ([Westmead, Farnborough, Hants: Gregg International Publishers, 1971), 59.

³⁶⁹ Barbon, *A Discourse of Trade*, 64.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

and benevolent manner, of course) and economic support for the established government. Christopher Berry surmises that through Barbon's argument "fashion and luxury goods can be justified by their instrumental promotion of trade."³⁷¹

Barbon trumpets the "theory of accumulation," and fully agrees with his contemporary, free-market proponent John Houghton (1681), a theorist who described consumers as "those guilty of Prodigality, Pride, Vanity and Luxury created wealth for the Kingdom while running down their estates."³⁷² Similarly, Blaise Pascal, commented in his *Pensees* (1669) that the vanity of man "has taken such firm hold in the heart of Man...pride does balance all our Miseries, for either it hides them, or if it discovers them, it boasts in having them known."³⁷³

Bernard Mandeville, a jurist and political economist, echoed the sentiments of Barbon in his work, *The Fable of the Bees* (1724), an early discussion of the notions of buying and selling that extols the virtues of luxurious living. Like Barbon, Mandeville was a trained physician who believed that luxuries stimulated capital, which encouraged commercial progress and provided benefits to all of society:

³⁷¹ Berry, *The Idea of Luxury*, 125.

³⁷² Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth Century England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 171.

³⁷³ Blaise Pascal, *Monsieur Pascal's Thoughts: Meditations and Prayers, Touching Matters Moral and Divine, as They Were Found in His Papers After His Death. Together with a Discourse Upon Monsieur Pascal's Thoughts, Wherein Is Shewn What Was His Design. As Also Another Discourse on the Proofs of the Truth of the Book of Moses. And a Treatise, Wherein Is Made Appear That There Are Demonstrations of a Different Nature, but as Certain as Those of Geometry, and That Such May Be Given of the Christian Religion* (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1688), 251.

The Root of Evil, Avarice That damn'd ill natur'd baneful Vice,
Was Slave to Prodigality, That noble sin; whilst Luxury Employ'd a Million
Of the Poor, and odious Pride a Million more; Envy itself, and Vanity Were
Ministers of Industry; Their darling Folly, Fickleness In Dyet, Furniture
and Dress, That strange ridic'lous Vice, was made the very Wheel that
turn'd the
Trade³⁷⁴

Thus, the basest and vilest behavior will ultimately produce the most positive overall economic effect. His work for the time was also ground breaking, however it did catch the eye (and ire) of various essayists, moralists, and church officials who attacked his idea on luxury and his encouragement of other significant evils.

The eighteenth century was a period of debate on the meaning and value-laden status of luxury. Scottish philosopher David Hume defined luxury consumption in his work *Of Refinement in the Arts* (1752). He stated simply that, "luxury is a word of very uncertain signification, and may be taken in a good as well as a bad sense. In general, it means great refinement in the gratification of the senses; and any degree of it may be innocent or blamable, according to the age, or country, or condition of the person"³⁷⁵

Hume's work was a response to Mandeville. He employs both the extreme example of moral condemnation of luxury and the liberal idea of consumption to

³⁷⁴ Bernard Mandeville, [*The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*], [Another edition.] *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private vices publick benefits. Containing several discourses, to demonstrate that human frailties ... may be turn'd to the advantage of the Civil Society, etc. [In prose and verse.]* (London: J. Roberts, 1714., n.d.), 10.

³⁷⁵ David Hume, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (London: pr. for T. Cadell: and A. Kincaid, and A. Donaldson, Edinburgh, 1772), v. II, part II, 25.

discuss luxury's impact on civil government. He claims that in order to reconcile the two, he will endeavor to:

Prove that, *first*, the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; *secondly*, that where-ever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious, tho' perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.³⁷⁶

Contemporaries such as Barbon, Pascal, and later Hume sought to explain the benefits of luxury through the example of trade and its growing impact on a commercial society. Generally speaking, trade will expand and luxury, in its innocence, will be an advantage rather than a moral hazard to society. Also, it is important to note that in these theories, the term *luxury* has changed from being essentially a negative term, which threatened social virtue, to a new understanding that deemed it a fundamental part of the commercial society of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Christopher Berry sees this understanding as the inevitable "drift toward luxury acceptance, which eventually transformed into a deceitful ploy that aids and abets consumptive behaviour where wants and appetites are multiplied."³⁷⁷ This behavior is typical, in his opinion, of contemporary society. Nonetheless, this consumer "acceptance" allowed those with disposable income, particularly the yeomen, to enjoy a conscious-free foray into the world of luxury goods in the late early

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 27.

³⁷⁷ Berry, *The Idea of Luxury*, 132.

modern period, where “desire, and its gratification via rising personal consumption, were not, after all, a danger to the soul.”³⁷⁸

Modern Debates

Modern arguments about consumerism oftentimes reflect the impact of the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions, events that fall within and extend beyond the scope of this study. Hence, these debates are useful towards shedding light on the trajectory of consumerism and how social emulation communicates a visible statement of wealth, status, and taste. Nonetheless, there are other schools of thought concerning consumer behavior that are applicable to the study of the English yeoman and are a better fit for the communities under study.

Carol Shammas and Lorna Weatherill have written extensively on the English and American early-modern consumerism. They believe the word “luxury” should be normally used to convey the idea of costly and high-quality goods, food, or services. Weatherill, however, believes the word can also carry some implicit connection to immorality. The word also means something that is *desirable* but not *indispensable*, although possibly of higher quality and price than other goods of a similar nature. Further, Weatherill uses data tables in order to illustrate the qualitative features of people’s possessions. She believes

³⁷⁸ John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds. *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1992), 65.

that data gleaned from taxation and probate records show the extent of household purchases amongst various occupations, particularly yeomen. Further, she argues that the cultural aspects of luxuries are also recognized in their ability to mark the rank of the owner and thus communicate social position in a non-verbal way. She concludes that consumerism is an eighteenth century phenomenon. Although consumption of luxury goods was experienced in the late seventeenth century, she claims the “consumerist” approach is not appropriately applicable to the earlier period.

Furthermore, Linda Levy Peck combines both quantitative data and social behavior to draw conclusions. Peck views consumption as a social action; it is essentially a response to an often-repeated social situation, such as shopping for goods. She also argues that luxury consumption impacted culture and aesthetic standards long before the eighteenth-century where most scholars believe the consumer revolution originally occurred. Levy Peck cites both social and economic factors for the growth of consumer behavior and luxury good consumption. Her research into gender and shopping reveals evidence of women as luxury consumers, especially when making decisions with regard to how the household (which they ran) should look. She has also noted the prominent theme of women as shoppers who succumb to the seduction of merchants in eighteenth century literature. Levy Peck defines luxury items as

“the habitual use of, or indulgence in, what is choice or costly, whether food, dress, furniture, or appliance...or surroundings.”³⁷⁹

Lastly, and somewhat contrary to the previous historiographical assessments on consumer studies, Jan de Vries argues that consumer behavior during this period did not amount to a “consumer revolution,” nor did it:

Jump start the growth of production of the leading sectors of the Industrial Revolution, nor was the consumer demand driven primarily by emulation, where rising incomes allow progressively lower socio-economic strata to adopt, and be incorporated into, the material world of their social superiors.³⁸⁰

For de Vries, consumer demand of this era was a simple matter of choice, which broadened within the selection of “consumer technologies.”³⁸¹ The demand itself developed or was born out of the interaction between, and maturation of, market and household economies. This marriage of these two components provided individuals with an expanded range of goods, which thereby “led to a more frequent exercise of individuated choice.”³⁸²

These arguments will help illuminate the following evidence on luxury consumption of goods found within the yeomen household.

³⁷⁹ Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 5.

³⁸⁰ Jan De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 124.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 122.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

The Internal Signs of Yeoman Wealth and Household Luxury Goods

The Restoration of Charles II was a pivotal time not just for the reconfiguration of the English polity, but also for innovations in furniture form and style. After the grim years of war and enforcement of strict rules on behavior between 1642 and 1660, the aesthetic emphasis on extravagance and beauty were natural responses to the end of Cromwell's military dictatorship. John Gloag argues that, "The King came back and it was safe to smile, wear extravagant and beautiful clothes, to order carved and gilded furniture, to indulge a taste for delightful inutilities, and to flout every Puritan sentiment."³⁸³ The production and consumption of luxury goods revived and appear regularly in the household inventories of the Cambridgeshire yeomanry.

Economic factors—both global and local—enabled the emerging appreciation of luxury goods amongst the yeomanry. Due to the ever-increasing growth of agricultural trade, a noticeable transformation occurred in the both the appearance and contents of yeoman cottages. Early Tudor cottages contained furniture that usually consisted of some rough carpentry work—often constructed by the owner himself and was of little value. Before 1550, most houses contained the basic furniture: benches, a table, stools and beds, essential cooking and eating vessels. But by the reign of Charles I in the early 1600's,

³⁸³ John Gloag, *The Englishman's Chair; Origins, Design, and Social History of Seat Furniture in England* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 76.

many a farmer “possessed at least one article of *joined*³⁸⁴ furniture, properly constructed by a trained craftsman, carefully described by the neighbours who drew up his inventory, and lending a new touch of modest luxury to his home.”³⁸⁵ New goods came on the market in greater quantity than ever before. Thus, by the time of Charles II, multiple pieces of joined furniture, tailored clothing and textiles, books, clocks and looking glasses could be found amongst the yeomen’s effects.

While these capitalist farmers climbed their way up the social ladder, their now sizeable land holdings allowed them to profit from the opportunities of the age. They added new rooms to their cottages, invested an increasing proportion of their income in domestic comforts, and purchased a few pieces of joined furniture that they left to their sons and widows.³⁸⁶ An early witness to this social change was William Harrison, a gentleman who discussed with a group of contemporaries the economic fortunes of the yeoman during his lifetime. He pointed to various changes in his town, which included “a multitude of chiminies lately erected; a great amendment of lodging [by which he meant better bedding]; the exchange of vessel [that is tableware] from wood to pewter and even silver.”³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ Furniture comprised of jointed frames

³⁸⁵ *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*; General editor, H. P. R. Finberg (Cambridge U.P, 1967), vol. 4, 454.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 462.

³⁸⁷ Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680*, 121.

Evidence of rising living standards can be found in the rise of the Ivatt family of Cottenham. In only three generations, the family rose in social status from husbandman to gentleman.³⁸⁸ In 1673, Thomas Ivatt bought a farm of “one acre of land in Church Field and Two in Mill Field in exchange for an acre of arable land scattered in Cottenham fields.”³⁸⁹ In 1685, “nine acres of arable land in Foxton and Mill Field” were enfeoffed to “his youngest son, William Ivatt, of Brickhill Close,”³⁹⁰ and by 1720, his grandson William Ivatt inherited three hundred acres of “arable land with extensive orchards, paddocks, large barns and outhouses.”³⁹¹ The Ivatt family, like many other yeoman families in the communities under examination, accomplished this social and economic transformation because they were able to specialize in the production of crops (namely wheat and barley), which were in strong demand in the London market.³⁹² Moreover, the family wealth can be seen in a household inventory, which included “a safe, courtcouber, chair for his chamber; also pieplates and earthenware” as well as “a Large looking glass one silver Tanker and three silver spoons.”³⁹³

³⁸⁸ Thomas Ivatt of Cottenham, will dated September 9, 1712, no. 559, box 457, CRO.

³⁸⁹ Deeds relating to Elmington near Oundle, Northamptonshire, Bargain and sale to Thomas Ivatt of Cottenham, 27 Oct. 1673, Reference CCCC09/N5/68, Corpus Christi College Library, Cambridge University.

³⁹⁰ Terrier, Enfeoffment of land in Ferme Field, Foxon Field, the Two Mill Field, Church Field and Dustall Field, 8 September, 1685. Reference CCCC09/N5/69, Corpus Christi College Library, Cambridge University.

³⁹¹ William Ivatt of Cottenham, will dated October 31, 1745, no. 11/12, box 474, CRO.

³⁹² Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680*, 135.

³⁹³ Thomas Ivatt of Cottenham, will dated September 9, 1712, no. 559, box 457, CRO.

The Ivatts are one example of social transformation; their inventory is substantial since it reflects both the basic goods needed for everyday use and costly luxury items. But the question remains: what type of luxury goods appeared amongst the yeoman's effects? Luxury goods are simply those items that were acquired (and admired) by not only the enlightened elite, but also by those who made up fashionable society. Also, these items were never deemed "essential" to daily living. Examples include books, silver, pewter, textiles (linen and silk in particular), and furniture (bedding, chairs, cabinetry).

The following charts represent a broad assessment that contrasts the percentage of luxury items and durable goods in the homes under examination (against the total number of inventories for each community) in the homes under examination. Whittlesey (*Chart 1*) has a large number of luxury items such as pewter (16%), pewter dishes (9%), clocks (7%), table linen (12%), looking glasses (4%), and china (3%) compared to essentials such as cooking pots (11%) and saucepans (6%). Chatteris also contains a high percentage of luxuries such as window curtains (8%), table linen (9%), looking glasses (4%), and silver plate (3%) compared with cooking pots and saucepans at (13%) apiece. Lastly, Cottenham contains a fair percentage of pewter dishes (13%), table linen (12%), looking glasses (4%), window curtains (10%), and silver plate (2%), as compared to saucepans (8%) and cooking pots (13%).

Chart 1 – Whittlesey

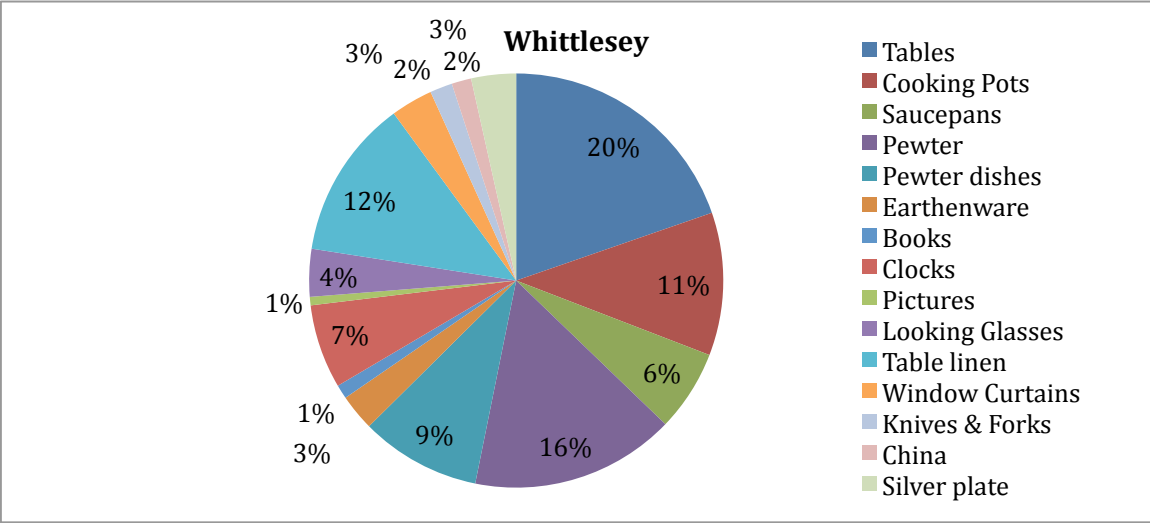


Chart 2 - Chatteris

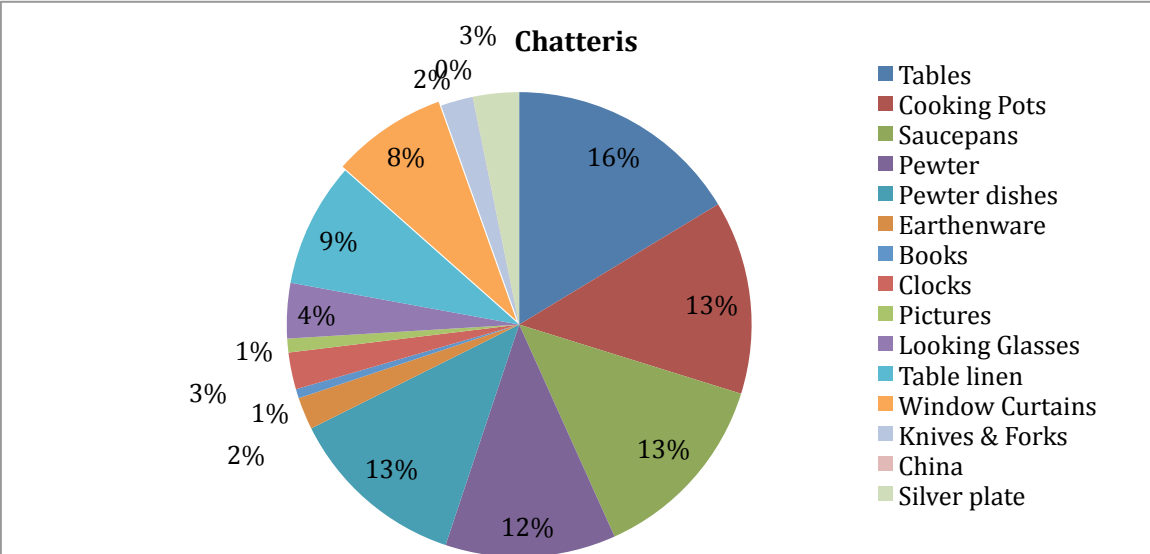
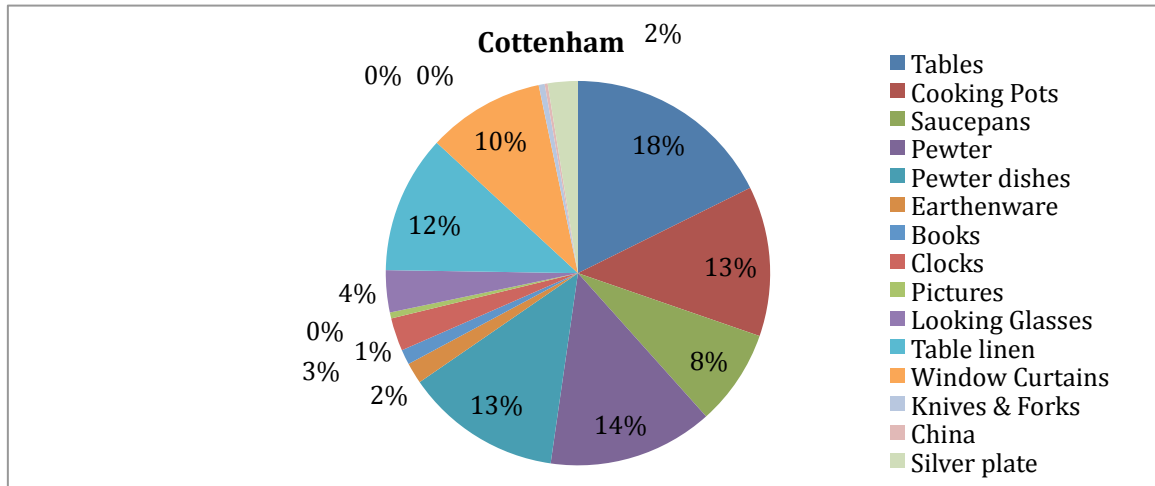


Chart 3 – Cottenham



Lorna Weatherill regards luxury items as, “surviving objects or artifacts that are those of the highest quality and greatest aesthetic appeal.”³⁹⁴ In the seventeenth century, the decoration of the gentry’s houses “sacrificed everything to fashion, to social significance.”³⁹⁵ Decorative furniture (buffets, heavily carved sideboards) now supported decorative pieces of silverware and plates, dishes and pictures. Moreover, luxury items are easily distinguished from basic goods (pans, benches, jugs, chamber pots) or what Weatherill defines as “household durables”³⁹⁶ and were considered to be frivolous and unnecessary, unfit to

³⁹⁴ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 21.

³⁹⁵ Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 307.

³⁹⁶ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 40

attract the attention of honest Englishmen.³⁹⁷ Although goods like tobacco, fruit, vinegar, and tea fall into the category of luxury items, it will be necessary to adhere to the basic, non-perishable goods in this study.³⁹⁸

Pots! Pots! Good Pots and jars!
These are all earthen vessels and all first class.³⁹⁹
(Hereward the Exile, 11th century)⁴⁰⁰

China

Porcelain, like silk and glass, was beautiful and refined, its manufacture secret, and its desirability great.⁴⁰¹ M. Stafford and R.K. Middlemas claim that cabinets, particularly those displaying earthenware and glass luxuries, became more common in houses because of “porcelain imported from the East.”⁴⁰² Early examples of Chinese porcelain reached Europe through the Portuguese trade, most notably in 1514. The demand for traditional blue and white porcelain, although relatively small during the sixteenth century, did not go unnoticed by Chinese Emperor Wan Li (1573-1619) and a full exploitation, through the network of Dutch East Indian Company traders, occurred during the seventeenth

³⁹⁷ Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 78.

³⁹⁸ Although tea and tobacco will be assessed later in this work, they will be mentioned specifically because of their impact on luxury items in the yeoman household

³⁹⁹ *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), Book II, 217.

⁴⁰⁰ Hereward the Wake or Exile (1035-1072) is an Anglo-Saxon ruler from the Cambridgeshire who resisted Norman rule. He disguised himself as a simple potter and pretended to sell his wares in the king’s court in order to uncover information about plans against him.

⁴⁰¹ Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 50.

⁴⁰² Stafford, *British Furniture Through the Ages*, vii.

century. As a result, most of the Chinese porcelain before the turn of the eighteenth century arrived in England via the Netherlands. Yet the English were soon to enter the market. In 1703, an English East India Company ship *Fleet Frigate* was “laden with goods, namely: 205 chests of China and Japan ware, porcelain and a great deal more loose China and Japan earthenware.”⁴⁰³ John Evelyn’s opinion of Oriental wares appears in his *Diary* (1664) when, “A Jesuite shewed me such a collection of rarities sent from ye Jesuites of Japan and China to their order at Paris, as a present to be received in their repository, but brought to London by the East India ships for them, as in my life I had not seen.”⁴⁰⁴

During the Protectorate, however, Oliver Cromwell taxed Oriental wares including china heavily. It wasn’t until the Restoration that this assessment was eased. In the second half of the century, the demand for china throughout England is evident with the granting of patents to produce “earthenware.” In 1671, a patent was “granted to a certain John Dwight for the Mystery of Transparent Earthenware, Comonly knowne by the Names of Porcelain or China, and Persian Ware, as alsoe the Misterie of Stoneware vulgarly called Cologne Ware.”⁴⁰⁵ Dwight, an ecclesiastical lawyer, showed talent in not only the arts

⁴⁰³ R.J. Charleston, “Pottery, Porcelain, and Glass,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods* (London: The Connoisseur, 1968), 384-420.

⁴⁰⁴ John Evelyn, *Diary*, Oxford standard authors ed. (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 264.

⁴⁰⁵ Charleston, “Pottery,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides*, 378.

and sciences (he was a fellow of the Royal Society), but also had continual success in selling china during the late seventeenth century.

China shops became popular during the Restoration, but quickly “became the lounging-places of fops and curiosity hunters, and the appointments made there caused them to fall into bad repute.”⁴⁰⁶ Nonetheless, china appears among the goods of the country yeoman. In the little parlor of Robert Norman in 1726, there were “ten table Cheania [China] tea spoons one table two other tables six chairs a glass one grate and fender.”⁴⁰⁷ It is apparent that Mr. Norman’s used his vessels for tea drinking, a custom that emerged at the same time as the import of porcelain. Although decoration is not mentioned, the subject matter on Chinese porcelain ranged from birds, to deer and other animals depicted in outdoor scenes. Despite the high price of porcelain, “an enormous quantity was absorbed by Europe during the second half, and particularly the last quarter of the seventeenth century.”⁴⁰⁸ This was due to the court of William and Mary, whose courtiers showed an insatiable appetite for porcelain. This was especially true of Queen Mary, whose passion for china developed while living in Holland. It is also believed that Christopher Wren, architect of such notable buildings as St. Paul’s, was commissioned to design cabinets and shelves exclusively for her china in Hampton Court Palace.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁶ Esther Singleton, *French and English Furniture* (New York: McClure, Phillips & co, 1903), 113.

⁴⁰⁷ Robert Norman of Cottenham, will dated 1724, no. 429/30, box 464, CRO.

⁴⁰⁸ Charleston, “Pottery,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides*, 384.

⁴⁰⁹ Singleton, *French and English Furniture*, 113.

The growing passion for porcelain⁴¹⁰ was evident in the countryside. It is famously mentioned in William Wycherly's *The Country Wife* (1724). When the character Lady Fidget, a woman most familiar with India houses, the contemporary name for Oriental ware emporiums, enters the room with a piece of china in her hand and exclaims to Mrs. Squeamish and Mr. Horner that:

I have been toying and moyling, for the pretty'st Piece of China, my Dear. What d'ye think if he had any left, I would not have had it too, for we Women Of Quality never think we have China enough.⁴¹¹

Since china was intended for display and presented as a front stage item, it influenced the way architects approached interior design. Singleton claims that both D'Aviler and Marot's book of designs employed "a most lavish use of china as an integral part of the interior decoration." "He piles up his chimney-pieces with tier on tier shelves loaded with porcelain of all shapes and sizes, arranged, however, with an eye to symmetry."⁴¹² Singleton continues that most of the Queen Anne rooms reflect the china craze and "one of Marot's plates shows more than 300 pieces of china on the chimney-piece alone."⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ The demand for china was realized by Thomas Frye Bow, who founded porcelain works in 1740 close to Bow Bride, London. It was the first to produce porcelain in Britain and mixed cattle bones from the local slaughterhouse with clay to create "fine porcelain." Known as the *Bow China Works*, it employed some three hundred artists until 1770, most of who were proficient in "japanning and modeling clay." Elizabeth Adams, *Bow Porcelain, Faber Monographs on Pottery and Porcelain* (London; Boston: Faber, 1981), 18.

⁴¹¹ William Wycherly, *The Country Wife. A Comedy Acted at the Theatre-Royal. Written by Mr. Wycherley*: London: Printed for Sam. Tooke and Ben. Motte, at the Middle Temple-Gate, in Fleet-Street, 1724, Act IV. Scene I, 76-77.

⁴¹² Singleton, *French and English Furniture*, 116.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

As cabinetmakers revolutionized furniture making during the early eighteenth-century, they created a new style of cabinet called a *Buffet* from the French term *Beaufait*: a separate, wooden-columned apartment for display of table service. It is defined in Thomas Dyche's *English Dictionary* (1744) as: "A handsome open cup-board, or repository for plate, glasses, china, &c. which are put there either for ornament or convenience of serving the table."⁴¹⁴

This trend did not escape Cambridgeshire since there is evidence of china and cupboards in the households of fenland yeomen. William Tandrew of Whittlesey provides an excellent example of the proper setting with which to entertain guests and showcase one's china. It seems that towards the latter part of his life, he and his family concentrated less on agriculture. In his inventory, the household furnishings—not livestock and crops—account for approximately two thirds of his wealth. His parlor contained "two oval tables one square table and one tea table," and "a corner Cupboard with six china tea cups and saucers, six silver tea spoons and tea tongs, four Delph Basons and eleven plates."⁴¹⁵ In addition, there were seven chairs and a featherbed to provide comfort for family and guests at tea. His china is duly displayed on the corner cupboard or buffet with all the necessary implements such as silver spoons and tea tongs.

⁴¹⁴ Thomas Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary; Peculiarly Calculated for the use and Improvement of such as are Unacquainted with the Learned Languages*, Originally begun by the late Reverend Mr. Thomas Dyche, And now finish'd by William Pardon, Gent. (London: Printed for Richard Ware at the *Bible and Sun* in *Warwick-Lane, Amen Corner*, 1744), 117.

⁴¹⁵ William Tandrew of Whittlesey, will dated February 7, 1748, no. 59, box 475, CRO.

The “Delph Basons” mentioned in the inventory quite possibly refer to *Delftware*, a type of pottery first produced in Delft, Holland early in the seventeenth century. This pottery, which reproduced the method of the Italian majolica of the 15th and 16th centuries, was highly valued, particularly for its craftsmanship and unique blue colouring.⁴¹⁶ Yet, this may (or may not) be a type of English Delftware, which was produced in Lambeth, Liverpool, and Bristol. This imitation is thought to be much “coarser” in both finish and colour than its Dutch counterpart, yet it was still sought and collected as a luxury item. Delftware is also found in the inventory of Whittlesey yeoman William Reason, whose hall entry contains, “two oval tables, a clock, and a Boefet,” which contains both “a parcel of delph and china ware” valued at 10 pounds.⁴¹⁷ Also, Thomas Aveling, a yeoman of the same village, displayed his goods in the hall, where he had “three ovell tables, twelve chears, a Cubord and a parcel of chiney [china]” valued at 26 pounds and 2 shilings.⁴¹⁸

More earthenware appears in the inventory of Chatteris yeoman William Blench. It is found in the kitchen and included, “fore earthen platters and foure earthen plates.”⁴¹⁹ Blench’s neighbor John Pitchford displayed his “parcel of Earthen Ware” amongst “one dresser, two tables and seven chairs.”⁴²⁰ Finally,

⁴¹⁶ Ian Cameron and Kingsley-Rowe, Elizabeth, eds. *The Collins Encyclopedia of Antiques* (London: Collins, 1973), 115.

⁴¹⁷ William Reason of Whittlesey, will dated May 29, 1722, no. 276, box 463, CRO.

⁴¹⁸ Thomas Aveling of Whittlesey, will dated March 16, 1738, no. 16, box 471, CRO.

⁴¹⁹ William Blench of Chatteris, will dated December 8, 1724, no. 143, box 464, CRO.

⁴²⁰ John Pitchford of Chatteris, will dated May 16, 1729, no. 771, box 467, CRO.

yeoman Thomas Bonfield's parlor contained a closet where he kept "three earthen potts & some Pork" in his eight-room Chatteris home.⁴²¹

Books

Books, at this time, were considered a luxury item taking into account price and workmanship. The most common found in the homes of yeomen were usually a Bible, "how-to-manuals," usually concerned with gardening, or a basic grammar. Among the effects of Cottenham yeoman Joseph Mynott was "a parcel of old Bookes," that were valued at 1 pound 2 shillings and 6 pence.⁴²² In addition Cambridgeshire yeoman Thomas Smith's inventory of 26 November 1702 contained "two Bookes worth 3 pounds and some bookes in the parlor worth 1 pound 10 pence."⁴²³ Also Isaiah Showell bequeathed several books to his cousin Nathaniel, which included "Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, two Bibles and a statute book."⁴²⁴ Books were similarly found in the little parlor chamber of Cottenham yeoman Robert Norman, but there was no description of titles or subject matter. Thomas Owen, yeoman of Chatteris, had "a parcel of books" valued at 12 shillings within the confines of his little parlor.⁴²⁵ George Goulding of Whittlesey had "one Little Booke in the parlor" valued at 10 shillings next to

⁴²¹ Thomas Bonfield of Chatteris, will dated January 3, 1747, no. 501/2, box 474, CRO.

⁴²² Joseph Mynott of Cottenham, will dated 1697, no. 681/2, box 449, CRO.

⁴²³ Thomas Smith of Cottenham, will dated 1702, no. 564/5, box 451, CRO.

⁴²⁴ Isaiah Showell, yeoman, will dated 1622. ORO.

⁴²⁵ Thomas Owen of Chatteris, will dated May 17, 1746, no. 383/4, box 474, CRO.

his “huss bed.”⁴²⁶ Books were not confined to the parlor or hall, since the inventory of Thomas Hodson mentions “two books, one box Iron and one Lantern”⁴²⁷ in his kitchen.

Although books made up only a small, but evident amount of luxury items they were seldom accurately described and were usually assessed in bundles, which makes the probate inventories less useful to the historian.

Silver and Pewter

In 1652, Thomas Fuller remarked:

In his house he is bountiful both to strangers, and to poor people. Some hold, When Hospitality died in England, she gave her last groan amongst the Yeoman. And still at our yeoman’s table you shall have as many joynts as dishes.⁴²⁸

The yeoman’s penchant for hospitality, and desire to display his finery, is clearly illustrated in the use of drinking vessels and dishes, which were silver or pewter. They occupied a central position in the homes of the yeomen, who were now in a position to afford such luxuries to demonstrate their wealth and position in the community.

Silver, in early modern England was an “essential” luxury, sometimes found alongside, or often replacing, regular pewter dinnerware and drinking vessels.⁴²⁹

The enthusiasm for silver has always been, from a practical and material

⁴²⁶ George Goulding of Whittlesey, will dated July 20, 1677, no. 2301130, box 408, CRO.

⁴²⁷ Thomas Hodson of Chatteris, will dated October 14, 1748, no. 918/9, box 474, CRO.

⁴²⁸ Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State*, The 3d ed. (London: Printed by R. D[aniel] for J. Williams, 1652), Book II, 106.

⁴²⁹ Philippa Glanville, “A Treasured Inheritance” in *Oxford Today*, vol. 16 (2004): 33.

perspective, a distinct part of English life. It was used as the ultimate display on sideboards, buffets and dinner tables, but “was given pride of place because it was not only a luxury good but easily convertible to ready money.”⁴³⁰

Silver has always been a staple amongst the wealthy and upwardly mobile. Playwright Ben Jonson uses silver, among other things, in the dialogue of *Epicoene or The Silent Women* (1620) to highlight the importance amongst the newfound rich of displaying luxury goods within the proper setting:

Where she must have that rich gown for such a great day; a new one for the next; a richer for the third, be serv'd in silver; have the chamber fill'd with a succession of Grooms, Footmen, Ushers, and other messengers; besides Embroyderers, Jewellers, Tyre-women, Sempsters, Fether-men, Perfumers; while she feeles not how the Land drops away; nor the Acres melt; nor foresees the change, when the Mercer has yuour Woods for her Velvets; never weighes what her Pride costs.⁴³¹

Although Jonson's work is best described as an attack on conspicuous consumption and the participation of both men and women in the “shopping culture,” his satire on the love of finery deals with a major theme of the early seventeenth century and does, in many ways, reflect the growing importance of fashion.

Silver can be found in various wills and inventories and its rising importance can be seen by comparing yeoman inventories in the late Tudor period with those of the seventeenth century. For example, Richard Busbye, a recently

⁴³⁰ Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 29.

⁴³¹ *Epicoene or The Silent Woman A Comoedie*. Act II, Scene II, lines 101-9. The Author B. Ionson. London, Printed by William Stansby, and are to be sold by John Browne at his shop in Saint Dunstances Church-yard in Fleetstreet, 1620.

deceased yeoman in the Bradford parish of Enstone whose goods in 1589 amounted to over 100 pounds, owned “eight silver spoons assessed at 1 pound six shilling and eight pence.”⁴³² However, when we compare it to Christopher Marriott’s 1674 inventory, the value of such goods had risen considerably: “one Silver tumbler one Silver Cupp & Some silver Spons [spoons] valued at five pounds.”⁴³³ This amount pales when compared to Marriott’s neighbor Richard Basley’s 1736 inventory, which lists “Four Silver Spoons one Silver Cupp one Pare of Silver Buckles” valued at 7 pounds 16 shillings and 6 pence.⁴³⁴

Although pewter production began in England towards the middle of the fourteenth century, its manufacture grew during the 1660s⁴³⁵ and it becomes a presence in yeoman effects, especially in the form of personal drinking vessels and chargers. Pewter, now seen as a utility item, was sought as a luxury item to grace English tables during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. English households sought French and German artisans, who produced elaborate buffet dishes “that showed mold making and casting at its most skilled.”⁴³⁶ Superfine pewter, containing the “touchmark” of the artisan, was the chief tableware listed in inventories since the lower quality alloy—known as *laymetal*—was poisonous and forbidden “in flatware such as plates, dishes, or

⁴³² Michael Ashley Havinden, *Household and Farm Inventories in Oxfordshire, 1550-1590* (London: HMSO, 1965), 312.

⁴³³ Christopher Marriott of Chatteris, will dated May 1, 1674, no. 210, box 439, CRO.

⁴³⁴ Richard Basley of Chatteris, will dated January 26, 1736, no. 170, box 470, CRO.

⁴³⁵ This was due to the development of the Cornish tin mines, reputedly the largest in Europe during the seventeenth century.

⁴³⁶ <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/b/collections-brass-pewter-cutlery/>.

porringers.⁴³⁷ Pewter was also used in aristocratic households during the Elizabethan era to serve food. German diarist Thomas Platter remarked in his *Travels in England* (1599) that, "Straightway all maner of lavish dishes were served more decorously...and there were two servers or carvers who removed one plate after another from the table to anther covered table near by...they laid the food in small pewter bowls, placing these before each person upon plates."⁴³⁸

The rising importance of pewter meant a shift from wooden vessels, and can be found amongst the yeomen inventories. The 1677 inventory of Robert Spalton of Chatteris contains "a halfe a dozen pewter dishes and candlestickes."⁴³⁹ The mammoth 1737 inventory of William Brittin, Chatteris yeoman, lists "ten pewter plates three puter dishes and two puter potts valued at 8 pounds."⁴⁴⁰ Also, the will of yeoman Jacob Lebaut of Whittlesey taken on 23 January 1679 listed "eight puter dishes with other small puter and puter case valued at 4 pounds 7 shillings and 4 pence."⁴⁴¹ Cottenham's Thomas Smith owned "ffourteen pewter dishes six pewter plates & four porringers and two pewter candlesticks."⁴⁴² Finally, a good example of the average cost of pewter flatware can be seen in the 1690 inventory of Whittlesey's William Wilkinson whose goods include "ten pewter plates or dishes and one flagon at a value of 10 pounds 13 shillings and 4

⁴³⁷ <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/b/collections-brass-pewter-cutlery/>.

⁴³⁸ Thomas Platter, *The Journals of Two Travellers in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (London: Caliban, 1995), 158.

⁴³⁹ Robert Spalton of Chatteris, will dated October 12, 1677, no. 2301136, box 440, CRO.

⁴⁴⁰ William Brittin of Chatteris, will dated September 8, 1737, no. 610, box 470, CRO.

⁴⁴¹ Jacob Lebaut of Whittlesey, will dated January 23, 1679, no. 2301130, box 976, CRO.

⁴⁴² Thomas Smith of Cottenham, will dated January 20, 1702. no. 564/5, box 451, CRO.

pence.”⁴⁴³ The totals of these goods are impressive when the average wealth of an English yeoman during the late seventeenth century was approximately 40-50 pounds.⁴⁴⁴

Linen and New Draperies

Textiles, especially linen, were part of the growing spread of luxury items in the seventeenth century. Dutch linen was a novelty on the London market as early as the 1560’s when Edmund Howes commented that “new fine linen fabrics, lawn and cambric, were sold by Dutch merchants in yards and half-yards.”⁴⁴⁵ Furthermore, linen had a particularly dramatic impact on the tastes of the consumer population. By the end of the seventeenth-century, people had a choice of “so many different types of linen for domestic use and personal wear that it is impossible to count them.”⁴⁴⁶ The growth of Irish linen production, in heated competition with the English and Scottish output, added to the variety available to consumers who now sought quality goods and satisfactory prices. In 1702, yeoman Thomas Smith of Cottenham owned “twelve napkins with other wareing Linnen” valued at the substantial amount of 3 pounds five shillings.⁴⁴⁷

Linen is conspicuous in William Reason’s 1722 effects, whereas the inventory

⁴⁴³ William Wilkinson of Whittlesey, will dated December 24, 1690, no. 753, box 445, CRO.

⁴⁴⁴ Amy Louise Erickson, “Family, Household, and Community,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor & Stuart Britain* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 114.

⁴⁴⁵ Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, 85.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴⁴⁷ Thomas Smith of Cottenham, will dated January 20, 1702, no. 564/5, box 451, CRO.

lists “2 webs of linen and 30 pair of sheets with table linen” valued at 18 pounds and 11 pence.⁴⁴⁸ Apart from articles of clothing, the bulk of linen wares were napkins, tablecloths, and wall hangings. Further on in the Williams inventory is “the hangings of ye room” which is possibly a painted linen wall cloth.

Yeoman inventories also point to other lavish accessories that were undeniably the brunt of England’s increasing trade and wealth. Yet, in this instance, the availability of this item, particularly with regard to East Anglia, is the result of its local manufacture. The phenomenon of New Draperies is an instance where the product actually came “to the yeoman doorstep” from the Continent.⁴⁴⁹

New Draperies, so called because of their lighter weight and cheaper price, were introduced in the sixteenth century, “as one example of the several contributions...specifically from the Low Countries, to English industry.”⁴⁵⁰ The growth of new draperies in England can be linked in some ways to the decline of “old draperies,” which consisted of a dense, short-stapled carded wool in both warp and weft” whose weave was best known for its sturdiness “and thoroughly felted to give an enduring, strong weather-resistant fabric.”⁴⁵¹ New draperies, on the other hand, were a mixture of wool-worsted or half-worsted fabrics that

⁴⁴⁸ William Reason of Whittlesey, will dated May 29, 1722, no. 276, box 463, CRO.

⁴⁴⁹ Eric Kerridge argues the term “New Drapery” was hardly ever used outside fiscal circles, and that by the early 1600s, a new range of cloths and a variety of workmanship and colors allowed the cloth to be used for a wide variety of purposes (clothing, bed hangings, etc.).

⁴⁵⁰ D. C. Coleman, “An Innovation and Its Diffusion: The ‘New Draperies’,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series 22 (1969): 417–429.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

made them lighter and cheaper than traditional forms of broadcloth.⁴⁵² For example, the names *stammets*, *freseados*, and *rashes* referred to new draperies and implied a mixture of various, specifically “the worsted yarn that was spun using a spindle and distaff.”⁴⁵³

The majority of these draperies were made in the East Anglian counties of Suffolk and Norfolk, especially around the city of Norwich. In fact, T.S. Willan claims they “were often described as Norwich stuffs.”⁴⁵⁴ Also, variations on new fabrics were created by weavers whose names were connected to their invention such as Mr. John Hastings’ creation known simply as “Freseadoes of Hasting’s making.”⁴⁵⁵

In addition, changes and the outright decline in the traditional textile industry in the latter part of the sixteenth century in such places as Lombardy, Florence, and Antwerp were the result of competition from the New Draperies resulted in the reorganization of the industry. The largest component of this shifting market was the transfer of technical expertise to East Anglia by foreign immigrants. Members of the Dutch and Walloon congregations, driven to re-settlement by Spanish persecution in the Low Countries, brought New Draperies

⁴⁵² Willan, *The Inland Trade*, 128.

⁴⁵³ Coleman, “The New Draperies,” 420. A distaff is the rod on which wool, etc is held ready for spinning. It is designed to hold unspun fibers, keeping them untangled and thus easing the spinning process.

⁴⁵⁴ Willan, 128.

⁴⁵⁵ N. J. Williams, “Two Documents Concerning the New Draperies,” *The Economic History Review* 4, New Series 4 (1952): 353–58. Mr. Hastings obtained a grant for the monopoly and manufacture of “a particular type of freseado, which he had introduced to England—the double piece measuring 24 yards by a yard, the single piece 12 yards by a yard, ‘which frezeadowes do varye in making and workemanshipp from all sortes of clothes heretofore usuallye made within our Realme.”

to England, which were now mixed with a light English kersey, silks, and linen.⁴⁵⁶

The contribution of these immigrants cannot be ignored: in the record of Aulnager's Account kept by the authorities of the City of Norwich for all the New Draperies kept by the authorities of the City of Norwich,⁴⁵⁷ aliens dominated the manufacturing. N.J. Williams finds that in a year long period ending 20 April 1585, of the "total of 43,371 cloths made there...38,092 were alien made."⁴⁵⁸

Not only did innovations associated with this product, particularly with its brighter colors and lighter weight, fit the changing tastes of English consumers, it also found an expanding overseas market. The Spanish and Dutch truce of 1609-21, aided the growth in the international market for New Draperies.⁴⁵⁹ The demand for English New Draperies began somewhat earlier with the growth of the English Levant Company whose business concerns in the Mediterranean created a competition with both the Venetian and Dutch cloth industries. Peace between England and Spain in 1604 improved commercial prospects by opening up English trade with the Mediterranean. As a result, according to Clay:

Throughout most of the seventeenth century...exports from London of the Traditional types of woolens (broadcloths, kerseys and dozens, which Were coming to be known collectively as old draperies...averaged about

⁴⁵⁶ As Coleman asserts, "the horrors of warfare and the insistent persecutions peculiarly associated with religious or racial bigotry were virtually essential ingredients of the effective and rapid diffusion of the new textile techniques and thus of economic benefits derived in England" in Coleman, "The New Draperies," 420.

⁴⁵⁷ William Fitzwilliam and George Delves, who were appointed by the Lord Treasurer, kept annual accounts of cloths entered by members of the Dutch and Walloon congregations for sealing and measuring at Bay Hall, Norwich.

⁴⁵⁸ Williams, "Two Documents Concerning the New Draperies," 353-58.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

106,000 cloths a year.⁴⁶⁰

During the 1620's Norwich, as well large areas of Suffolk and the neighboring county of Essex, was the traditional center of the manufacture of new draperies, and was consulted by JP's and parliamentary regulatory committees regarding the correct size and quality of all manner of draperies. Norfolk itself remained a nexus for trade in East Anglia and was described by Daniel Defoe in the 1720s. He praised its many towns, as "industrious and filled with trade and prosperity,"⁴⁶¹ that resulted from the expanding of this unique industry.

Luc Martin argues that probate inventories from Norwich and Norfolk in the early seventeenth century give "the impression that it was the richer clientele of [East Anglia] who were able to make the greatest use of the variety of fabrics being woven in the Norwich looms. New draperies were particularly prominent among the furnishings of the local gentry."⁴⁶² He also claims "another group that

⁴⁶⁰ C. G. A Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), v. 2, 118.

⁴⁶¹ Craig Muldrew, "Economic and Urban Development," in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, Blackwell Companions to British History (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 163. Yet, with the influx and prosperity of Dutch and Flemish, the refugees that settled in East Anglia found rules and restrictions on their activities became more pronounced. In Norwich, "foreigners were not allowed to sell their goods at retail level except to other foreigners," and "were not allowed to operate more than one loom each, or to transport their yarn without special permission from the mayor. As much as luxury cloth was in demand during this time, the regulatory impositions reflected the unease in which volatile industries reacted. Winder, *Bloody Foreigners*, 57.

⁴⁶² Luc Martin, "New Draperies in Norwich, 1550-1622," in *The New Draperies in the Low Countries and England, 1300-1800*, Pasold Studies in Textile History 10 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 262.

certainly used the products of the industry in their homes were those described in inventories as yeomen.”⁴⁶³

The introduction of new draperies to the English market attracted new buyer, particularly Cambridgeshire yeomen with increased incomes. In his 8 September 1737 inventory, William Brittin of Chatteris owned not only bed curtains and valances, but also “one pare of window curtains” in his chamber over the parlor.⁴⁶⁴ Used for both warmth and decoration, draperies can be found in various Cambridgeshire inventories. In 1714, Edward Haddow’s inventory contains “Curtaynes & valences in the parlor” valued at 5 pounds.⁴⁶⁵ John Parker’s 1686 will lists “Winnow cloth” in a separate chamber next to the parlor.⁴⁶⁶ Described in detail in most inventories, but sometime referred to as simply “window cloath,”⁴⁶⁷ as in the 1716 inventory of Richard Waterfall, draperies had a substantial presence in the household effects of the farming community of East Anglia.

Beds and Bedding

Although normally thought of as an essential item, more luxurious beds were more common in the yeomen house. Between the sixteenth and seventeenth

⁴⁶³ Luc reinforces this fact since he shows that “the inventories of lesser farmers or husbandmen in Norfolk list even fewer varieties of cloth, and the more expensive textiles are notably absent from the lists of their goods.”

⁴⁶⁴ William Brittin of Chatteris, will dated September 8, 1737, no. 610, box 470, CRO.

⁴⁶⁵ Edward Haddow of Cottenham, will dated March 1, 1714, no. 850, box 458, CRO.

⁴⁶⁶ John Parker of Whittlesey, will dated May 3, 1686, no. 715, box 443, CRO.

⁴⁶⁷ Richard Waterfall of Whittlesey, will dated April 10, 1716, no. 942, box 459, CRO

centuries, it was common for Europeans to sleep on sacks of straw with planks for support. This trend soon changed towards the latter part of the seventeenth century, and John Gloag claims that early eighteenth century “beds were a minor exercise in architectural composition.”⁴⁶⁸ David Linley asserts that beds were a significant and monumental item of furniture, and that “lavish hangings and testers proclaimed the wealth and status of a household.”⁴⁶⁹ Furthermore, in the late seventeenth century, the chief use of fabric in the home was “as bed coverings and drapery, providing much needed warmth and privacy.”⁴⁷⁰ Ralph Fastnedge asserts that by the late Stuart period, the “value of the four-post bed then lay almost entirely in its often very costly clothes and hangings—curtains and fringed valances of rich materials, and tester head-cloth; silk or linen inner curtains; blankets, rugs, quilts and couterpane; and flock, feather or down mattresses.”⁴⁷¹ The bed itself, noted some early modern contemporaries, was almost completely invisible given the amount of fabric contained within.

Invariably, late Stuart beds were a not the product of the cabinetmaker or joiner, but the upholsterer since the exhibited slender bedposts and the headboard was usually covered with fabric.⁴⁷² Nevertheless, “the carving of the bed could very well indicate the wealth and position of a household.”⁴⁷³ An inventory taken after the death of Queen Anne, wife of James I, in 1619 revealed

⁴⁶⁸ David Linley, *Classical Furniture* (London: Pavilion, 1998), 146.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ Ralph Fastnedge, “Furniture,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides*, 334.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ Linley, *Classical Furniture*, 59.

that in addition to her tastes of Persian and Turkish carpets, she packed Denmark House with “elaborate upholstery for her beds with matching chairs and stools, such as a field bed of carnation satin wrought with gold and silver with a broad lace of gold with spangles, a counterpoint wrought in flowers suitable to the bed.”⁴⁷⁴ Now, yeomen households witnessed the introduction of extravagant, colored canopies and patterned hangings, particularly striped coverings. This is evident in John Taylor’s 1675 inventory that lists “striped curtains”⁴⁷⁵ situated in a joined bedstead and feather bed. Edward Joy argues that in the seventeenth century, “The bed was the most valuable piece of furniture on account of its costly hangings and bedding.”⁴⁷⁶

Margaret Spufford studied probate inventories in the neighboring county of Suffolk for two periods, 1570-99 and 1680-1700 and found that “Suffolk men described as ‘yeomen’ or ‘husbandmen’ for the earlier period showed a growth in median wealth that coincided with an increase in the value of their bedding linen from 1 pound 16 shilling 10 pence in the late sixteenth century to 3 pound 18 shilling in the late seventeenth.”⁴⁷⁷ Similarly, yeomen in Cambridgeshire within the three villages under study possessed a value of linen for the years 1670-1699 and from 1700 to 1750.

⁴⁷⁴ M.T.W. Payne, “An Inventory of Queen Anne of Denmark’s Ornaments, Furniture, Household Stuffe, and Other Parcells’ at Denmark House, 1619,” *Journal of the History of Collections*, 13 (2001), 23-44.

⁴⁷⁵ John Taylor of Cottenham, will dated February 3, 1675, no. 585, box 439, CRO.

⁴⁷⁶ Edward Thomas Joy, *The Country Life Book of English Furniture* (London: Country Life, 1964), 15.

⁴⁷⁷ Spufford, *The Great Reclathing of Rural England*, 117.

The beds and bedding of Cambridgeshire yeomen reflect the same changes, with a wide assemblage of beds and bedding that coincided with a growing taste for luxury. The table below reflects the sleeping arrangements that were found in both private chambers and parlors throughout homes in Cottenham from 1666-1749. The first column describes the type of bed or bedding, the middle column shows the amount, and the last column shows the first and last time the item is described in the inventory. There are a total of 215 beds of eight different varieties, which calculates to 2.34 beds per household. A large number—roughly 59% of the yeomen beds—were joined. Another was listed as “shawled,” which denotes that it contained ornamentation. With regard to bedding, a generous 88% of the homes utilized feather beds and a further 62% contained curtains, which provide evidence of the yeoman’s desire for comfort.

Beds/Bedsteads		Dates listed
Unspecified	108	1682-1749
Joined	54	1666-1749
Board	8	1666-1730
Truckle	1	1677
Trundle	27	1666-1749
Field	12	1681-1712
Shawled	1	1666
Little "for a child"	1	1699
Cradle; crybbe	3	1681-1701

Bedding		Dates listed
Unspecified	141	1666-1749
Feather b.	81	1666-1749
Flock	22	1666-1740
Mat	1	1675
Rug	12	1666-1690
Blankets	33	1666-1749
Bolster	29	1666-1749
Flock bolster	1	1689
Pillow	27	1669-1749

Pillowbeare	5	1680-1701
Coverlet	12	1669-1690
Quilt	2	1708
Curtains	57	1669-1740
Valence	37	1669-1749
Linen bedclothes	3	1714
Sheets		
Unspecified	10	1669-1701

Also, the inventories from Whittlesey reflect a substantial amount of beds and bedding, with an average of 1.91 beds per household from 1677-1749.

Interestingly, the bedding reflects an eclectic taste amongst the Whittlesey yeomen, which includes expensive Holland pillow bears, satin blankets, and three rugs. Most notably, there are imported damask sheets, which show that yeomen were interested in imported linen, not simply in the basic “coarse” or “hempen” shrouds that catered to a large home market in East Anglia.⁴⁷⁸

Beds/Bedsteads		Dates listed
Unspecified	188	1677-1749
Huss (House)	1	1677
Lorry	1	1728
Truss	4	1679-1690
Servant's	3	1694-1714
Chaff	12	1706-1740
Trundle	8	1677-1749
Little "for a child"	1	1709
Cradle; crybbe	2	1677-1714

Bedding		Dates listed
Unspecified	25	1677-1749
Feather b.	31	1679-1749
Flock	1	1738
Flannel Blankets	1	1728

⁴⁷⁸ Spufford, *The Great Reclathing of Rural England*, 91. According to Spufford, a study of linen-weaving in the pastoral regions of Norfolk and Suffolk emphasizes the growth of the industry in the seventeenth century.

Satin Blankets	1	1728
Holland Pillow-b.	1	1732
Rug	3	1707-1721
Twill cloth	1	1709
Blankets	12	1680-1749
Bolster	7	1680-1749
Feather Bloster	1	1736
Bolster Beares	2	1742
Pillow	10	1680-1749
Pillowbeare	21	1677-1749
Coverlet	3	1680
Quilt	1	1742
Curtains	23	1705-1740
Rods	1	1742
Valence	10	1706-1749
Linen bedclothes	5	1680-1730
Child bed linen	3	1722
Sheets		
Unspecified	30	1677-1749
Hempen	3	1709
Coarse	1	1742
Flaxen;linen	4	1679
Holland	4	1709-1730
Old	1	1679
Damaske	2	1709

And finally, Chatteris inventories reveal that the average number of beds was 1.56 per household with 48% of households possessed curtains and valances, and 51% with featherbeds from 1674-1748. Also, the testators noted five homes contained linen bedclothes and two had little beds “for a child.”

Beds/Bedsteads		Dates listed
Unspecified	109	1674-1748
Joined	1	1694
Standing	1	1677
Timber		
Board	2	1689
Truckle	2	1710
Half-headed	2	1677
On four boxes	1	1689
Little "for a child"	2	1736-1748
Cradle; crybbe	5	1723-1740

Bedding		
Unspecified	74	1674-1748
Feather b.	41	1677-1748
Flock	6	1710-1730
Wool	1	1674
Mattress	1	1677
Mat	1	1742
Rug	4	1677-1740
Blankets	17	1677-1730
Bolster	10	1677-1733
Pillow	10	1677-1748
Pillowbeare	7	1677-1714
Quilt	2	1722
Curtains	38	1677-1748
Valence	32	1677-1742
Linen bedclothes	5	1704-1733
Sheets		
Unspecified	21	1689-1748
Hempen	3	1677
Flaxen;linen	2	1713

Moreover, the change in yeomen status can be seen in the growing trend to joined beds and linen bedding in various rooms. One salient example is found in yeoman John Rawlinson's probate that lists no fewer than fourteen beds (including three trundle and two feather beds in the parlour alone) valued at 12 pounds.⁴⁷⁹ Bedding had grown so significant that Lewis Hughes included flock beds when advising Englishmen in 1614 about necessities for settling in Bermuda, which, due to the climate, are better than featherbeds.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁹ John Rawlinson of Chatteris, will dated August 29, 1710, no. 497, box 456, CRO.

⁴⁸⁰ Thirsk, *Economic Policy, and Projects*, 49.

Clothing

I am an English man, and naked I stand here
Musing in my mind what raiment I shall wear;
For now I will wear this, and now I will wear that;
Now I will wear I cannot tell what.
All new fashions be pleasant to me.⁴⁸¹

Karin Calvert notes that a “man of wealth could be identified by the wealth he displayed and an important part of that display was costume.”⁴⁸² Sumptuary legislation⁴⁸³ was reinforced periodically throughout the Elizabethan era to ensure that “no man under the degree of a knight’s eldest son could wear velvet in his jerkin, hose, or doublet, nor any satin, damask, taffeta, or grosgrain in his Clokes, Coates, Gownes, or other uppermost garments.”⁴⁸⁴ These laws were promulgated periodically to ensure social order and safeguard the traditional status quo. Nonetheless, Thomas Fuller claims that although a yeoman wears “russet clothes, but makes golden payment, having tinne in his buttons, and silver in his pocket.”⁴⁸⁵ Well-to-do yeomen seemed eager to wear their success.

Campbell finds evidence that some yeomen and other farmers were less likely to adopt changes in dress and manners than others. She found that “countryfolk are an ever conservative lot and custom was often a more active agent of social

⁴⁸¹ Andrew Boorde, *The Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge Made by Andrew Borde, of Physycke Doctor. A Compendyous Regyment; or, A Dyetary of Helth Made in Mowntpyllier* (London: Pub. for the Early English Text Society, by N.T. Trübner & Co, 1870), 22.

⁴⁸² United States Capitol Historical Society, *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994), 254.

⁴⁸³ Statutes that regulated the dress code according to social station.

⁴⁸⁴ Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, 252.

⁴⁸⁵ Fuller, *The Holy State*, Book 2, 106.

control in rural communities."⁴⁸⁶ However, the relaxation of sumptuary laws coincided with growing wealth,⁴⁸⁷ and the wives and daughters of prosperous merchants and well-to-do yeomen were able to dress according to their income rather than their social station.⁴⁸⁸ Social and economic forces were now affecting changes within a community once confined to conventional "felts, petticoats and waistcoates."⁴⁸⁹ Nicholas Barbon, in his treatise *A Discourse of Trade* (1690), reasoned that:

Fashion, or the alteration of Dress, is a great promoter of Trade, because It occasions the Expence of Cloaths, before the Old ones are worn out: It is the Spirit and Life of Trade; It makes a Circulation, and gives a Value by Turns, to all sorts of Commodities; keeps the great Body of Trade in motion.⁴⁹⁰

His insight makes it possible to understand the attitudes that emerged during this period regarding the growing significance of and attention to clothing, style, and "bodily" fashion. He concludes by stating that, "The Promoting of New Fashions, ought to be Encouraged, because it provides a Livelihood for a great Part of Mankind."⁴⁹¹

Male fashion was becoming somewhat ornate. Linda Peck recounts, "The male costume was every bit as elaborate as women's attire."⁴⁹² This is also

⁴⁸⁶ Campbell, *The English Yeoman*, 112.

⁴⁸⁷ The Statute of 1579-80 was modified to allow men and women such dress if they possessed a personal wealth of one-hundred pounds per annum.

⁴⁸⁸ Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, 112.

⁴⁸⁹ Adam Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, Richard Parkinson ed. (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1845), 253.

⁴⁹⁰ Barbon, *A Discourse of Trade*, 65.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 67

⁴⁹² Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 66.

recorded by John Evelyn who thought little of men's ostentatious (and somewhat feminine) fashions:

It was fine silken thing which I spied walking th' other day through Westminster Hall, that had as much ribbon on him as would have plundered six ships, and set up twenty country peddlers. All his body was dress't like a may pole...whether he were clad with his garment, or (as a porter) only carried it was not to be resolv'd...Behold we one of our silken chameleons and aery gallants, making his addresses to his mistress, and you would sometimes think yourself in the country of the Amazons, for it is not possible to say which is the more woman of the two.⁴⁹³

Bernard Mandeville illustrates the shortcoming—and social dangers—of disregarding fashion in his 1724 treatise *The Fable of the Bees*. He warns that, “how mean and comically a Man looks, that is otherwise well dress'd, in a narrow brim'd Hat when every body wears broad ones, and again, how monstrous is a very great Hat when the other Extreme has been in fashion for a considerable time?”⁴⁹⁴

Stylish hats were certainly in demand amongst the English. The French hat making industry that made towns such as Caudebed in Normandy the center of production moved wholesale to England's shores and met this demand. Discrimination against Huguenots in France precipitated the move. This caused a somewhat alarmed Louis XIV to send an emissary named Bonrepaus to London in order to assess the extent of the damage. After visiting the Huguenot strongholds in London and Ipswich, his report, dated 1685-6, stated that he was

⁴⁹³ John Evelyn, *Tyrannus, or, The Mode: In a Discourse of Sumptuary Lawes* (London: pr. for G. Bedel, & T. Collins; and J. Crook, 1661), 11.

⁴⁹⁴ Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, 376.

sorely grieved to see that our best manufacturers are being established in this kingdom as “a result in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.”⁴⁹⁵

Evidence of this rise in fashion and variegated wardrobes is documented in some Cambridgeshire inventories. Joseph Foster of Suffolk bequeathed to a close relative in 1619 his “futsian doublet with silver buttons on it, a green cloak, a pair of green hose.”⁴⁹⁶ In Chatteris, Cambridgeshire yeoman William Brittan, a man of substantial means whose “apparele was valued at 7 pounds, 2 shillings and 6 pence,” owned “one pair of silver spurs” that were listed along with a silver “girdle buckle.”⁴⁹⁷ The English girdle refers to a man’s belt or sash, which, in this case, is made much more ostentatious using silver as opposed to the common brass.

Also with some regret, yet not without an underlying sense of gratification, yeoman Adam Martindale furtively admitted that his wife and daughters were beginning to wear “gold or silver laces about their petticoats, and bone laces or works about their linens.”⁴⁹⁸

The Trouble with Cambridge Inventories and Clothing

Gregory King’s *Annual consumption of Apparell* of 1688 estimates that amongst the 1.36 million families within the kingdom, there were no less than

⁴⁹⁵ Singleton, *French and English Furniture*, 110.

⁴⁹⁶ Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, 254.

⁴⁹⁷ William Brittan of Chatteris, will dated September 8, 1737, no. 610, box 470, CRO.

⁴⁹⁸ Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, 6.

ten million shirts and smocks.⁴⁹⁹ Margaret Spufford indicates “every family in the kingdom was acquiring over seven new shirts or smocks a year, which makes such garments then commonplace...and easier for appraisers to ignore.”⁵⁰⁰ As clothing is a vital sign of social degree and value, the Cambridgeshire inventories are woefully silent regarding basic clothing, and dreadfully uneven at mentioning even rare and colorful wardrobes. Spufford comments that ubiquitous objects would attract little attention, which possibly is why clothing is scarcely mentioned in the probate inventories. She adds that most of the Cambridge inventories she has analyzed lack “specific information and conclude the category of other lining.”⁵⁰¹

Although lacking description, the amount the Cambridgeshire yeomen spent on clothing can be deduced from the monetary evaluations. The following evaluates the apparel averages among the Cambridgeshire villages. Cottenham’s mean average is 8 pounds per yeoman, Chatteris shows an average percentage of 12.78 pounds per yeoman, and Whittlesey’s average clothing assessment is 15.26 pounds per yeoman.

Predictably, there are some striking examples of financial expenditure on clothing. Wearing apparel for yeoman William Reason is valued at an impressive 100 pounds.⁵⁰² Thomas Aveling’s 1738 inventory similarly lists his apparel

⁴⁹⁹ Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England*, 126.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁵⁰² William Reason of Whittlesey, will dated May 29, 1722, no. 276, box 463, CRO.

worth 91 pounds, 5 shillings, 6 pence.⁵⁰³ And Francis Ross, a Chatteris yeoman, owned apparel that was valued at 100 pounds, which is approximately half of his entire estate.⁵⁰⁴ Chatteris yeoman Thomas Grant's apparel was valued at 10 pounds, yet he also possessed "other wareing Lenin" valued at 7 pounds.⁵⁰⁵ As these were located in a chest away from his other clothing, it can be assumed that they were either bedclothes or fashionable undergarments. In summary, it is difficult if not somewhat impossible to judge the change in the yeoman wardrobe over the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, based on their final bequests. Thankfully, there are other items that can tell the story.

Thus, the luxury items found within the home offers a spectrum of tastes and, fittingly, ideas with regard to comfort and practicality. The country yeoman's desire for finery extended to furniture, and the decorative development of the early eighteenth century facilitated that growth. Therefore, the following chapter discusses the yeomen taste in furniture and how manufacture and design gained a following and appreciation by the Cambridgeshire yeomen.

⁵⁰³ Thomas Aveling of Whittlesey, will dated March 16, 1738, no. 16, box 471, CRO.

⁵⁰⁴ Francis Ross of Chatteris, will dated June 10, 1710, no. 508, box 456, CRO, Ross' inventory is valued at 200 pounds, 15 shillings, and 10 pence.

⁵⁰⁵ Thomas Grant of Chatteris, will dated January 29, 1704, no. 223, box 453, CRO.

CHAPTER 6

This chapter will continue the discussion of the increase of luxury consumption during the late seventeenth century and how luxuries were disseminated to the yeomen and elite members of society. It describes the ownership patterns of luxury goods and explains the evolution of furniture and how craftsmen's innovations—specifically the ornamentation of durable goods—created new luxury items that successfully combined the ideas of utility and comfort. Most importantly, it illustrates the Cambridgeshire yeomen's appreciation for the finery, which populated the interior of their homes and reveals the effort put forth to showcase their newfound wealth.

Furniture

For the majority of the English yeomanry, an ancient manor or a country estate was unattainable because—quite simply—it was unaffordable, but we have seen previously that room additions and new ideas in architecture provided the yeoman with a considerable amount of extra space. However, more living space equates to more empty space, and faced with an increase in square footage, and as some historians claim in an effort to compensate for this residential shortcoming, the yeoman's focus on luxury turned towards furniture.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁶ Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*, 309.

The history of furniture in early modern England, as well as the last four hundred years, is “a reflection of society and domestic habits.”⁵⁰⁷ In the seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries, the very best furniture was expensive and created for a certain clientele: the privileged elite, who populated their homes with the newest and finest of European influenced decor. From a stylistic perspective, Ralph Fastnedge contends that English seventeenth century furniture can be divided into two main groups:

First, joined furniture, which developed slowly on established lines from that in use during the Elizabethan period, comprising useful, solid, enduring articles, such as press cupboards, settles⁵⁰⁸ and joint stools, made usually of oak or indigenous woods; secondly, post-Restoration furniture, the design of which was strongly influenced by contemporary models from France and Holland.⁵⁰⁹

This post-Restoration furniture reflected the tastes of the court of Charles II in London. It was seen by many as a reaction to the staid and utterly conservative styles maintained during the Cromwellian era, a reaction that would have a profound impact on yeoman tastes. Thus, Cambridgeshire yeomen followed this trend since joined tables, chairs, cupboards, and beds populated the interior of their various rooms.

English furniture makers in the post-Restoration period started to specialize, creating, as Edward Joy claims, a “subdivisions of labor such as cabinet makers, chair makers, clock-case makers, upholsterers, japanners, gilders, carvers,

⁵⁰⁷ Stafford, *British Furniture Through the Ages*, v.

⁵⁰⁸ A wooden bench.

⁵⁰⁹ Ralph Fastnedge, “Furniture,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides*, 321.

etc.”⁵¹⁰ Given the inevitable reaction to the Commonwealth and Protectorate period, there was a demand for luxury evidenced by the introduction of new specialized pieces of furniture such as “the bureau, dressing glass and candle-stand,” which Fastnedge considered an inevitable and critical “break with tradition.”⁵¹¹ These developments are the product of skilled technique and decorative art, talents unknown to the medieval joiner, which grew into what has been described as “the art and design and the search for fashion.”⁵¹² This late seventeenth century craft specialization was especially true with regard to joined furniture. London cabinet-makers were now the true arbiters of high quality furniture, replacing the simple woodworking craftsman.

However, the middling sort, when considering furniture for everyday purposes, still aspired to the same high standards of the elite.⁵¹³ People—particularly the Cambridgeshire yeomen—now had an affinity for finely wrought, delicate pieces, less clumsy than the old furniture, adapted to the new dimensions of the boudoir, drawing room, and bedchamber.⁵¹⁴ Cabinets, simple wooden structures in the previous century that held crockery and were normally found in the kitchen, were now decorated with narrow mouldings, two-

⁵¹⁰ Joy, *The Country Life Book of English Furniture*, 23.

⁵¹¹ Fastnedge, “Furniture,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides*, 321.

⁵¹² Stafford, *British Furniture Through the Ages*, v.

⁵¹³ Linley, *Classical Furniture*, 63.

⁵¹⁴ Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*, 309.

dimensional finishes, marquetry and dovetailing. This became an essential in the yeoman's house.⁵¹⁵

Cabinet-makers also introduced new techniques such as *veneering*⁵¹⁶ that “resulted in lighter, more varied furniture.”⁵¹⁷ Although painted furniture would not become popular until the latter part of the eighteenth century, veneering was a useful and decorative way of enhancing the finish of wood furniture, and it provided a convenient way to manipulate decorative wood. In England, *banding*—the practice of “using narrow strips of veneer often in contrasting colours—gave a crisp outline to drawers, tops and panels.⁵¹⁸ *Marquetry*, a process of veneering that involves intricate design and the meticulous piecing together of various craftwork, was practiced in Venice and the Netherlands during the sixteenth century. It is defined by Thomas Dych as, “inlaid work or fineering being a plane of oak or well dried firr, covered with several pieces of fine hard wood, of various colours, in the forms of birds, flowers, knots, &c. and sometimes intermixed with tortoise shell, mother of pearl, silver, &c.”⁵¹⁹ Eventually, it made its way to English households. Since this new method required “special

⁵¹⁵ Linley, *Classical Furniture*, 66.

⁵¹⁶ The process of gluing thin slices of wood onto core panels of doors, furniture, etc. in an attempt to enhance pattern and colour to an existing structure.

⁵¹⁷ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain*, 33.

⁵¹⁸ Linley, *Classical Furniture*, 72.

⁵¹⁹ Thomas Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary*, 500.

preparation and execution, it gave birth to a new class of specialist craftsmen—the cabinet makers.”⁵²⁰

Craftsmen also utilized use new woods such as mahogany⁵²¹ and walnut during the years 1660 to 1750.⁵²² This period is particularly associated with walnut, which, due to its malleability and forgiving nature, made the process of veneering a realistic possibility. Walnut was used in England as both a solid and as a veneer. Both the *Juglans regia*⁵²³, and the *Juglans nigra*, or “black wood,” was grown in limited amounts on English soil during the latter half of the seventeenth century. John Evelyn remarked on the use of walnut, which he claimed was an “excellent wood” that French craftsmen employed in their country’s furniture; however, he also noticed that the impending shortage of domestic walnut caused craftsmen to use beech wood in its place. This wood, Evelyn maintained, “is indeed good only for *Shade* and for the *Fire*, as being brittle and exceedingly obnoxious to the worm.”⁵²⁴ Nonetheless, it was used as a veneer and could be transformed by cabinetmakers to appear as walnut since, “they have a way to make it as black as *Ebony*, and with a Mixture of *Soot* and *Urine*, imitate the *Walnut*.”⁵²⁵ Yet, he concluded, if more walnut could be

⁵²⁰ Joy, *The Country Life Book of English Furniture*, 23.

⁵²¹ The period of c.1725-55 is known as “The Early Mahogany Period.”

⁵²² The period of c.1660-1750 is sometimes referred to as “The Walnut Period.”

⁵²³ A pale English walnut.

⁵²⁴ John Evelyn, *Sylva, or A Discourse of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesties Dominions / Also, Kalendarium Hortense* (London: pr. by Jo. Martyn, and Ja. Allestry, 1664), 47.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

procured from such outposts as Virginia in the American Colonies, “we should have better utensils of all sorts for our Houses, as *Chairs, Stools, Bedsteads, Tables, Wainscot, Cabinets, &c.*, instead of the more vulgar *Beech*...I say if we had store of this material, especially of the *Virginian*, we should find an incredible improvement in the more stable furniture of our houses.”⁵²⁶

The early Walnut Period (1660-1690) is a notable landmark in the history of English furniture. The Restoration of Charles II introduced continental elegance, which grew out of the influence of his years in exile. As a result, Joy contends that English men and women sought different styles with more luxury and comfort. This period coincides with the rise of yeomen wealth, and the desire or need to make a fashionable statement with one’s domestic interior.

The late Walnut Period during the reign of William and Mary, 1689-1702, introduced the restrained “buffs and browns and arabesques” of the Dutch influenced cabinetmakers of the royal court.⁵²⁷ Additionally, the “Mahogany Period” of the early half of the eighteenth century proved vital to the luxury trade since it introduced mahogany wood from the West Indies to the English consumer and also established the architect as furniture maker. With influx and availability of this new material, a growth in artistic experimentation emerged amongst cabinet, chair, and other furniture makers. This creative surge could

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 59.

⁵²⁷ Joy, *The Country Life Book of English Furniture*, 30.

not have happened without the support of the Whig government, whose commercial and financial policies resulted in an increase in mercantile activities.

Tables

Trestle tables, a board or massive wooden plank on trestle supports, were common during the late medieval and Tudor periods and were used continually up until the early modern era. These tables were “kept in position by one or two stretchers⁵²⁸ which passed through the trestles and were fastened outside them by oak wedges.”⁵²⁹ Early trestle table tops were not permanently joined to the underside—giving the owner the option of disassembling the piece, however, with the growing use of joining, the tops were fixed permanently to the undersides or side framing.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw “a proliferation of table types, and the variety of terms gives a vivid picture of the range of interest and pursuits of the time,”⁵³⁰ which the Cambridgeshire yeoman-consumer could employ to make a fashionable, contemporary statement. Tea, dining, and gaming tables became much more popular as well as oval tables, writing tables and “desks.” Successful yeomen decorated their homes with multiple pieces of attractive furniture. Singleton notes that late Jacobean elites decorated their homes with movables “that consisted of one large table, several small, round or oval tables

⁵²⁸ These are cross rails.

⁵²⁹ Joy, *The Country Life Book of English Furniture*, 14.

⁵³⁰ Linley, *Classical Furniture*, 116.

and side tables.⁵³¹ Evidence of oval, square and tea tables are found in the 1748 effects of Whittlesey yeoman William Tandrew whose fashionable parlor contained: “two oval tables one square table and one tea table,”⁵³² Although, they may not be considered a luxury good, some warrant attention because of size and purpose. Also, they were used to display “front stage” items in halls or parlors.

Given the growth of tea as a luxury consumable, the ceremony and importance of tea drinking affected the design and purpose of furniture. Not surprisingly, a good number of Cambridgeshire yeomen who used tea, found it necessary to provide an appropriate table for its consumption. For example, the tea table can be found amongst prosperous yeomen’s effects, such as Thomas Skeelee’s 1729 inventory that lists a hall chamber, which purposefully front stages “one clock, five chears, one tea table and one box.”⁵³³ The box might have been a tea caddy or tea safe, a safeguard that ensured the protection of an expensive comestible against theft. Also, William Bagshaw’s inventory lists “one tea table”⁵³⁴ in his study chamber and a “tea stand” in his kitchen. And Thomas Hodson owned “one Tee table” that held a sugar pot.⁵³⁵ Also, Chatteris yeoman Robert Hall used a unique and somewhat rare “tea stant” that sat amongst “two other tables and

⁵³¹ Singleton, *French and English Furniture*, 45.

⁵³² William Tandrew of Whittlesey, will dated February 7, 1748, no. 59, box 475, CRO.

⁵³³ Thomas Skeelee of Chatteris, will dated January 1, 1729, no. 851, box 467, CRO.

⁵³⁴ William Bagshaw of Chatteris, will dated November 7, 1742, no. 586, box 472, CRO.

⁵³⁵ Thomas Hodson of Chatteris, will dated October 14, 1748, no. 918/9, box 474, CRO.

“sevean chears.”⁵³⁶ Tea, tea tables, and stands were prominent representations of luxury that provided the yeomen, and those who entered their houses, with a visible statement of wealth and luxury.

Cupboards

As taste in luxury furniture began to permeate the countryside, Cambridgeshire yeoman inventories also reveal numerous cupboards. These can be found throughout the house, but mostly in larger rooms such as the hall or large parlor, which gave them a purposeful and commanding position amongst the yeomen’s effects. At first glance, it is easy to assume that they performed a regular function. Even the definition given in Thomas Dych's piece is fairly pedestrian since “it is a convenient place with shelves, doors, &c. to put pans, dishes, &c. in or upon.”⁵³⁷ Conversely, these were not “the doored structures as now understood for in its original meaning, but a ‘cup-board’ was a table or shelf for displaying the family plate to visitors.”⁵³⁸ As time progressed, some of these pieces were enclosed with small doors creating multiple compartments, which would transform them into the familiar modern structure.

Another important piece of yeoman furniture was also to emerge from the cupboard’s evolution. The press cupboard, a tall version of the late Tudor and

⁵³⁶ Robert Halls of Chatteris, will dated September 24,1733, no. 337, box 469, CRO.

⁵³⁷ Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary*, 201.

⁵³⁸ Edward T. Joy, *The Country Life Book of English Furniture*, 15.

early Stuart cupboard, contained long doors and interior shelves, which were used specifically for fine linen, napkins, tablecloths, and clothing. Most importantly, it provided a decorative storage space for valuables and fine items in yeomen parlors and entry halls. It also offered an important, enhancing addition to tables and chairs. This is evident in William Searle's home where, in the main hall, he had "one frame table, two buffet forms, one press Cubbard & another Table and chairs."⁵³⁹ The press seems to have been a decorative supplement to the well-furnished entrance of his six-bedroom home, while his relative Thomas Searle's 1747 inventory lists an especially decorative piece that may have functioned as a display case and is described as "a corner cupboard with glass."⁵⁴⁰ Also, in the well-decorated parlour of Chatteris yeoman Thomas Shaw, a "press cubard" is surrounded by "5 chears and 1 bed with furnetuer" valued at 5 pounds.⁵⁴¹ And in Cottenham yeoman William Meadle's entry included "one old linsey cupboard one old joined Cupboard, a table and one little huch."⁵⁴² This allowed the finery to be protected while it also enabled the yeoman to furnish the interior with a decorative fixture.

Cupboards are well represented amongst the chattels of the Cottenham yeomen. There are a total of 127 cupboards listed in a total of 92 wills. This equates to an average of 1.4 cupboards per yeoman household. The cupboards

⁵³⁹ William Searle of Whittlesey, will dated October 4, 1679, no. 30, box 441, CRO.

⁵⁴⁰ Thomas Searle of Whittlesey, June 16, 1747, no. 695/6, box 474, CRO.

⁵⁴¹ Thomas Shaw of Chatteris, June 26, 1725, no. 400014, box 465, CRO.

⁵⁴² William Meadle of Cottenham, will dated June 18, 1666, no. 713, box 437, CRO.

are variegated and a good many are unspecified with regard to basic function.

As shown by the table below, many were for livery, but most contained glass to show “front stage” objects. The date to the right denotes the first and last year they appeared in the Cottenham inventories.

Cupboard		Dates listed
Unspecified	26	1669-1749
Livery c.	17	1666-1749
Press	2	1721
Press c.	37	1669-1749
Joined c.	6	1666-1738
Glass c.	14	1666-1740
Hanging c.	1	1673
Linen c.	2	1673
Safe (meat)	6	1675-1749
Green c.	1	1669
Pen c.	3	1666-1700
Hanging press	12	1681-1749

In Chatteris, there are a total of 61 cupboards listed in a total of 80 wills. This equates to an average of 0.76 cupboards per yeoman household. It includes two glass cases and two unique corner cupboards.

Cupboard		Dates listed
Unspecified	24	1674-1748
Standing	1	1733
Hanging press	5	1703-1733
Press c.	7	1677-1748
Glass c.	2	1736
Corner	2	1727-1740
Hanging c.	1	1713
Little c.	1	1702
Dresser board	18	1702-1733

Whittlesey has a total of 56 cupboards listed in a total of 115 inventories. This averages 0.50 per yeoman household. The inventory lists 2 glass cupboards, and 5 corner cupboards.

Cupboard		Dates listed
Unspecified	32	1677-1749
Close press	1	1725
Press	3	1679-1698
Press c.	7	1679-1733
Glass c.	2	1702-1747
Livery c.	2	1677-1701
Hanging Press	3	1686-1740
Small c.	1	1680
Oaken c.	1	1705
Corner c.	5	1738-1749

Thus, the number of cupboards (both basic and decorative) illustrates their importance within the yeomen household since they provided the prosperous owner with a decorative piece of furniture and, at the same time, allowed him to stage the luxury goods he consumed.

Chests and Chests of Drawers

Largely considered a staple item, chests held a luxurious position amongst yeoman furnishings. It deserves mention if only because of its utility particularly since it was often used to house valuables and luxurious items that were significant for household style and decoration. Chests and cabinets also had an aesthetic appeal since, according to Middlemas, chests now contained

“decorative motifs associated with the Renaissance, which began to replace the simple Gothic style.”⁵⁴³ In addition, the Jacobean chest, according to Singleton,⁵⁴⁴ was decorated with carved panels and mouldings, and was usually rendered secure with a lock and great iron hinges that were extremely decorative.⁵⁴⁴ The surviving examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum contain a standard brass drop-handle and “the date and the initials of the owner were carved on it, as well as a fanciful motto or legend.”⁵⁴⁵

This trend is noticeable in the Cottenham inventories, which list a number of chests, especially with drawers.

Chest	Dates listed	
Unspecified	51	1673-1749
Coffer	1	1721
C. of Drawers	24	1683-1749

Whittlesey’s inventories reveal a large number of chests and greater variety than Cottenham’s. They list 74 unspecified chests and an additional 49 chests of drawers (see table below). This gives a total of 167 chests in a sample of 115 inventories, averaging 1.45 chests per yeoman household.

Chest	Dates listed	
Unspecified	74	1677-1749
Coffer	37	1677-1749
C. of Drawers	49	1690-1749
Great c.	2	1695-1728
Oaken c.	2	1705
Little c.	1	1705
Old	1	1709

⁵⁴³ Stafford, *British Furniture Through the Ages*, vi.

⁵⁴⁴ Singleton, *French and English Furniture*, 59.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Nest of Drawers 1 1722

Chatteris's inventories list 91 total chests including 30 chests of drawers in a sample of 80 inventories. This gives an average of about 1.14 chests per household.

Chest		Dates listed
Unspecified	23	1674-1748
Coffer	31	1694-1748
C. of Drawers	30	1674-1748
Nest of Drawers	3	1708-1740
Pair of Drawers	4	1721-1730

Desks

Desks, known also as bureaus or secretaries, were a seventeenth century development. They were essentially small writing tables that included secret drawers that were "small-scale beautifully decorated pieces to suit the new mood of court life."⁵⁴⁶ Desks are present amongst the yeomen inventories, but somewhat limited to two of the communities under examination. Whittlesey's inventories list a total of five which included Ralph Speechley's home that listed "one clock, a desk, and seven chairs" in the hall valued at 3 pounds 9 shillings.⁵⁴⁷ Cottenham had one in the inventory of Francis Briggs who owned a "deske in the

⁵⁴⁶ Linley, *Classical Furniture*, 94.

⁵⁴⁷ Ralph Speechley of Whittlesey, will dated 1720, no. 112/113, box 742, CRO.

chamber over the parlour.⁵⁴⁸ Although few, they are nonetheless included in the front or staging areas of the home.

Chairs

“Chairs,” claims David Linley, “almost more than any other type of furniture, reveal social preoccupations” and during the course of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, “chairs became simpler and more elegant, while all seat furniture showed a new concern for comfort.”⁵⁴⁹ Gone were the days during the late Middle Ages where the “lord of the manor sat in a chair with arms, in the middle of the communal table, while his retainers used the crude benches at the side.”⁵⁵⁰ As a result, individual chairs and stools appear in a large segment of the yeomen inventories. The “stool”⁵⁵¹ or “back stool,” an armless version of an armchair, was further developed during the seventeenth century. With the introduction of the use of mahogany, chairs could be strengthened and were, due to the amenable nature of the wood, open to new design expressions. John Gloag believes that chairs gained a growing popularity and purpose, and argues that chair making, at or about the 1670’s, became a distinct craft, which “united the

⁵⁴⁸ Francis Briggs of Cottenham, will dated April 4, 1689, no. 550, box 444, CRO.

⁵⁴⁹ Linley, *Classical Furniture*, 104.

⁵⁵⁰ Stafford, *British Furniture Through the Ages*, v.

⁵⁵¹ A “stool” was the normal term for a seat for one person, particularly during the Tudor era.

skills of a joiner, turner, carver and upholsterer.”⁵⁵² Chair makers, joiners and upholsters constructed even numbers of chairs, “perhaps to include a pair of elbow chairs that reflect the new emphasis on dining.”⁵⁵³

Upholstered seat furniture appeared during the early part of the seventeenth century in homes of the more well off, and, from examples in probate inventories, expanded well into the early eighteenth century. Once again, Cambridgeshire yeomen appreciated the importance of luxury and comfort based on the evidence contained in their wills. The inventory of Joseph Mynott of Cottenham lists “six leather chairs and one cloth covered chair” in his front hall.⁵⁵⁴ Also, Joseph Read of Chatteris chose to exhibit his finest “six leather chairs” and four large tables in his entry hall.⁵⁵⁵

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, joined chairs were made with a paneled back and columnar legs, which supplanted the traditionally chunky, massive carved legs of the Elizabethan era. Examples of mid-century joined chairs are seen in yeoman John Osburne’s inventory as he possessed goods that were appraised as “one great ioned table, eight stooles and one forme, I li. 10s. / one litle ioyned table, 2 stooles and one great ioyned chayer.”⁵⁵⁶ And Thomas Brigham’s parlour included “one joined chayre with a great chest and other

⁵⁵² Gloag, *The Englishman’s Chair*, 77.

⁵⁵³ Linley, *Classical Furniture*, 104.

⁵⁵⁴ Joseph Mynott of Cottenahm, will dated March 31, 1697, no. 681/2, box 449, CRO.

⁵⁵⁵ Joseph Read of Chatteris, will dated March 6, 1705, no. 507, box 453, CRO.

⁵⁵⁶ The Inventory of John Osburne, yeoman of Essex, 1638, in *Farm and cottage Inventories of mid-Essex, 1635-1749*, F.W. Steer, ed. (Chelmsford: Essex City Council, 1950), 73.

things.” Additionally, the low-backed farthingale chair, so named because it was allegedly designed to accommodate ladies wearing the farthingale,⁵⁵⁷ attained a somewhat notable following during the rule of James I. The chair’s most notable feature was its wide and generously stuffed seat cushion, which was covered in *Turkey work*, the course stitching thought to imitate a Turkish carpet.

As the century progressed and the makers of English furniture absorbed more and more ideas from French and Dutch chair makers, a new conception in design gave chairs a different appearance. In the reign of Queen Anne, a new “curvilinear” pattern was introduced, which gave the appearance, most notably in the legs, of a transition into less-rigid, softer, more comfortable shape. This motif, also known as a *cabriole leg*, or sometimes the Dutch cabriole leg, is described as a gently curved leg ending in a flat toe. They were modeled after the “legs of a beast,” which was formed by a characteristic scroll or gently curved leg. Although the cabriole leg provided chairs with a new shape, it also provided “a new understanding of stability, and when chairs were released from structural dependence upon under framing, fresh aspects of elegance were disclosed.”⁵⁵⁸

The first forty years of the eighteenth century, sometimes referred to as the Cabriole Period,⁵⁵⁹ witnessed further modifications and signified a further move

⁵⁵⁷ A structure worn under the skirt by women in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to give the shape of a cone, bell, or drum.

⁵⁵⁸ Gloag, *The Englishman’s Chair*, 91.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

in the evolution of chair making. Since the cabriole leg was advanced in both construction and design, it allowed for more ornamentation than straight-legged chairs. Previously, chairs were decorated on the back panel or front stretcher rail, which were the few places that could accommodate crests, scrolls, or floral patterns. During the early Georgian period, new bends in legs appeared and could accommodate further decoration. Thus, ornamentation such as lions' heads were carved into the curvature of the legs, yet Singleton adds that the "legs of the furniture are slightly curved and not so heavy as the Louis XIV furniture, however they retain a look of solidity."⁵⁶⁰ Also, claw-and-ball feet or talon-and-ball feet became visible at the base of the leg where simple "flat toe" and "hoof toe" legs once stood. Most importantly, however, the most obvious change in style came with the need for comfort. The curvilinear design called for a scroll over arm or elbow, which, as previously stated, was absent from early Jacobean and Caroline chairs. According to John Gloag, this allowed "a curve to flow into curve."⁵⁶¹ This harmonious unity of complementary arcs also allowed a more bended back that, in marked contrast to previous furniture, allowed a person to sit "back" without loss of dignity.

The innovation in furniture, especially in ornamentation, provided Cambridgeshire yeomen with a means of household adornment. Furniture made of cane, joined chairs, upholstered seats, and contemporary laquerwork were the

⁵⁶⁰ Singleton, *French and English Furniture*, 141.

⁵⁶¹ Gloag, *The Englishman's Chair*, 90.

perfect vehicle for the yeomen of Chatteris, Whittlesey, and Cottenham to highlight their domestic interior refinements. By stylizing basic furnishings, artisans had supplied the yeomen with necessary objects of luxury consumption.

Cane chairs are a surprising addition to Cambridgeshire inventories and can be seen amongst the yeomen furnishing. The import of cane to England from the East Indies most likely occurred in the 1650's, and it was possibly acquired through trade with the Dutch given the role of the Dutch East India Company. Yet most scholars agree that cane chairs were first produced in England during the reign of Charles II. There is evidence of a petition to Parliament by the cane chair makers in the 1680's:

That about the Year 1664, Cane-Chairs, &c. came into use in England, which gave so much Satisfaction to all the Nobility, Gentry and Commonality of this Kingdom, (for their Durableness, Lightness, and cleanness from Dust, Worms and Moths)⁵⁶²

Cane was an appealing alternative to leather or tufted fabric chairs and gained an enormous popularity from the Restoration well into the early eighteenth century. John Gloag states that “medieval stiffness that survived from the early sixteenth century, was replaced by a new flexibility of line and early in Charles II's reign the seats and backs of chairs acquired a new and comfortable resiliency from cane work.” Chatteris yeoman Richard Read possessed many chairs in his six-bedroom abode including a parlor with “five old chears called cane,”⁵⁶³ and

⁵⁶² Fastnedge, “Furniture,” in *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides*, 331.

⁵⁶³ Richard Read of Chatteris, will dated December 20, 1727, no. 85, box 466, CRO.

similarly John England's bedchamber contained "five chairs caine"⁵⁶⁴ and an additional seven cane chairs in another room. Yet, some historians argue that although cane provided a suitable and cost efficient alternative to expensive and limited woods, it was, to some experts, a short-lived fad and went out of fashion in the 1720s, but most argue that the cane furniture trade flourished until 1740.⁵⁶⁵

Lacquerwork, or oriental lacquer furniture, was a successful import supplied by the East India Company since Asian luxury goods after the Restoration gave consumers a choice of style with international character. David L. Porter contends that while the fashion of *chinoiserie* is normally ascribed to the eighteenth century, the Earl of Somerset's inventory from 1615 reflects the early demand for lacquered furniture that would soon spread to other consumers. Somerset's inventory, "listed many carpets from Persia, Turkey, and Egypt, and imported lacquered chests, including a cabinet of ebony with a frame...furniture and hangings of china work, including six pieces of hangings of crimson China velvet embroidered China fashion, a China chest, one oval china table, a little china table, and a china chest gilt and painted."⁵⁶⁶

Oriental lacquer had an appearance of smooth, hard polish. It was generally black, yet it could be a variety of different colors, and became highly popular during the early eighteenth century. The varnishing process was referred to as

⁵⁶⁴ John England of Whittlesey, will dated December 5, 1709, no. 643, box 455, CRO.

⁵⁶⁵ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, 33.

⁵⁶⁶ Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 217.

“Japanning” and can be found in Stalker and Parker’s *Japanning and Varnishing* (1688), which expounds on the range of techniques and colors, especially the traditional “original rich black of the original oriental product, which can be applied to furniture, tables, stands, boxes, and looking-glass frames.”⁵⁶⁷

Japanning consisted of covering wood, painted or unpainted, with opaque, Lacc-Seed varnish and lampblack. A somewhat lofty opinion of this art is asserted in the work of Stalker and Parker:

Let no Europeans any longer flatter themselves with all the empty notions of having surpassed all the world beside in stately Palaces, costly Temples, and sumptuous Fabricks; Ancient and modern Rome must now give place. The glory of one Country, Japan alone, has exceeded in beauty and magnificence all the pride of the Vatican at this time and the Pantheon heretofore.⁵⁶⁸

In the Cambridge inventories, some lacquer work is found. Mr. William Blench, a prosperous yeoman of Chatteris, owned “six Black chears” in the hall, which were quite possibly lacquerwork that sat along side one wicker chair along with a comfortable amount of “bedsted pillows, bouldsters, blankitts one rug curtins and vallants.”⁵⁶⁹ In addition, William Beard’s 1736 inventory lists “half a dozen Black chairs in the parlour.” valued at ten pounds⁵⁷⁰ at his home in Whittlesey.

⁵⁶⁷ John Stalker, *A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing: Being a Compleat Discovery of Those Arts of Making Varnishes for Japan, Wood, Prints or Pictures, Guilding, Burnishing and Lackering, Separating and Refining Metals, Painting Mezzo-Tinto Prints, Counterfeiting Tortoise-Shell and Marble, Staining or Dying Wood, Ivory and Horn: Together with Over 100 Patterns for Japan-Work Engraved on 24 Large Copper Plates* (Reading: Alec Tiranti, 1688), 6.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁶⁹ William Blench of Chatteris, will dated December 8, 1724, no. 143, box 464, CRO.

⁵⁷⁰ William Beard of Whittlesey, will dated August 30, 1736, no. 184, box 470, CRO.

The Looking Glass

A mirror or looking glass gained its popularity as a luxury item during the Renaissance. Glassmakers in sixteenth century Venice perfected the technique of coating glass with a tin mercury amalgam. Joy reveals that English mirrors were made at the Duke of Buckingham's Glass House at Vauxhall shortly after 1660, and, although no longer frequently imported, they "were still expensive."⁵⁷¹ Mirrors like other furnishings, were often decorated with veneers, marquetry, and "sometimes with tortoiseshell and ebony enrichments."⁵⁷² Additionally, they had square or rectangular frames, which held a forty-five inch convex segment. Venetians were now framing looking glasses with "exotic woods such as ebony;" John Evelyn notes this in his effort to purchase mirrors for John Hobson, consul of the Levant Company in Venice⁵⁷³. Above all, they were required for the proper furnishing of a provincial gentleman's house in the late seventeenth century, as Randle Holme comments in his *The Academy of Armory* (1688), the dining room should have a "Flowere potts, or Allabaster figures to adorn the windows, and glass well painted and a large seeing Glass at the higher end of the Rome."⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷¹ Joy, *The Country Life Book of English Furniture*, 30.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 251.

⁵⁷⁴ Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon: Containing the Several Variety of Created Beings, and How Born in Coats of Arms, Both Foreign and Domestick; with the Instruments Used in All Trades and Sciences, Together with Their Terms of Art: Also the Etymologies, Definitions, and Historical Observations on the Same, Explicated and Explained According to Our Modern Language* (Chester: Printed for the author, 1688), 16.

Predictably, there are a good number in the inventories from the three communities. Whittlesey has a total of nineteen, Chatteris twelve, and Cottenham four. Francis Briggs, a yeoman of substantial means had a “Looking glass & some small things”⁵⁷⁵ in his parlor. John Hearde of Chatteris had “a board & bed, six cheares a trunk table & looking glass” in his best chamber,⁵⁷⁶ and William Dowe’s will states that he owns “1 Looking glass”⁵⁷⁷ that resides in his parlor.

Towards the end of the Restoration period, looking glasses, although still quite expensive, were becoming more affordable, yet they were still found primarily amongst persons of means. They still had a square or rectangular shape, but also contained a semi-circular hood. As this was the Walnut period—and most looking-glass frames were constructed of this material—the cabinetmaker or joyner applied a cross banded veneer. Since the method of Japanning or varnishing as a decorative application was fashionable, it was most likely used on looking glasses during the late seventeenth century.

As English furniture became more ornamental, contemporaries would take a differing view of its ostentation or lack thereof. In 1755, Jean Andre Rouquet applauded English handiwork and argues that English furniture was well finished. At the same time he found it lacking in elegance: “notwithstanding its

⁵⁷⁵ Francis Briggs of Cottenham, will dated April 4, 1689, no. 550, box 444, CRO.

⁵⁷⁶ John Hearde of Chatteris, will dated November 26, 1689, no. 2301140, box 444, CRO.

⁵⁷⁷ William Dowe of Whittlesey, will dated October 8, 1696, no. 554/5, box 448, CRO.

extreme neatness, [it] makes a dull appearance in the eyes of those who are unaccustomed to it.”⁵⁷⁸

Clocks

A new luxury item found in the late Stuart yeomen’s effects is the long-case clock. G. Bernard Hughes comments that Tudor clocks were “costly pieces of mechanism and poor timekeepers, since the balance had no natural period of vibration and in consequence never swung freely.”⁵⁷⁹ Most Tudor clocks were constructed, albeit crudely, of brass and iron. When one needed to keep time during this period, an hourglass was usually employed. By 1631, the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers was founded, and it set the standards for the timekeeping industry.⁵⁸⁰ During the Cromwellian Protectorate, Dutch clockmaker and *émigré* Ahasuerus Fromanteel produced the first pendulum regulated clock in Britain.⁵⁸¹ In the 1650s, there were more than “forty members of the Worshipful Company along with numerous watchmakers, which included James Letts who, they thought, produced the first watch to show the day of the month in 1656.”⁵⁸² Clockmakers during the Restoration of Charles II introduced the long-case clock, a sophisticated invention of both artistic decoration and mechanical innovation. With the arrival of French Huguenot

⁵⁷⁸ Rouquet, *The Present State of the Arts in England*, 1755, 104.

⁵⁷⁹ G. Bernard Hughes, “Domestic Metalwork,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides*, 163.

⁵⁸⁰ Winder, *Bloody Foreigners*, 85.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵⁸² Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 237.

artisans, clock making in England began to flourish. The clock itself, enhanced by the improvement in brass making and cases supplied by cabinetmakers, consisted of a long pendulum and “greatly increased the accuracy of time-keeping and—by some accounts—ushered in the golden age of English clock-making.”⁵⁸³

Both clocks and watches are found amongst goods of the Chatteris yeomen. A total of nine clocks and one watch are listed for Chatteris, especially in homes such as yeoman John Rawlinson’s, whose clock was positioned in his parlour amongst other fine goods such as “a chest of Drawers, two tables and one looking glass.”⁵⁸⁴

Clock	9	1710-1748
Watch	1	1737

Whittlesey inventories have a much larger sample that includes twenty-nine clocks and three watches. James Aveling placed his clock amongst “the brass and pewter in his kitchen;”⁵⁸⁵ while William Speechly set his “clock and clock case valued at 1 pound 3 shillings”⁵⁸⁶ in his parlour.

Clock	29	1697-1749
Watch	3	1722-1740

⁵⁸³ Joy, *The Country Life Book of English Furniture*, 30.

⁵⁸⁴ John Rawlinson of Chatteris, will dated August 29, 1710, no. 497, box 456, CRO

⁵⁸⁵ James Aveling of Whittlesey, will dated April 1, 1697, no. 481/2, box 449, CRO.

⁵⁸⁶ William Speechly of Whittlesey, will dated January 29, 1702, no. 571/2, box 451, CRO.

Finally, Cottenham inventories contain eleven clocks, but no watches.

Yeoman Thomas Smith boasts a substantial 160-pound will and inventory that lists his clock “in the parlour with one joyne bed and bedding with curtins and valance and seven chares.”⁵⁸⁷

Clocks	11	1702-1749
--------	----	-----------

Most of the clocks found among the yeomen’s effects were in prominent places: entry halls, parlors, and well furnished chambers that intimate their awareness of staging this somewhat rare and expensive luxury good.

Pictures, Paintings, Portraiture, Wall Coverings

Jean Rouquet, a member of the Royal Academy of Portraiture and Sculpture commented on the state of English painting in 1755,

In England, religion does not avail itself of the assistance of painting to inspire devotion; their churches at the most are adorned with an altar piece which no body takes notice of; their apartments have no other ornaments than that of portraits or prints; and the cabinets of the virtuous contain nothing but foreign pictures, which are generally more considerable for their number than their excellence. The English painters have one obstacle to surmount, which equally retards the progress of their abilities, and of their fortune.⁵⁸⁸

Irrespective of this perceived handicap, art historians have argued that production and acquisition of paintings in Early Modern England was “unlike

⁵⁸⁷ Thomas Smith of Cottenham, will dated January 28, 1702, no. 564/5, box 451, CRO.

⁵⁸⁸ Rouquet, *The Present State of the Arts in England*, 22.

several other types of conspicuous consumption since collecting was associated with virtue, learning, and discernment rather than with decadence.”⁵⁸⁹ The age of the Stuarts, as Oliver Millar claims, “is a rich and fascinating period in the history of painting in England and the development of English connoisseurship...and by the time of the Hanoverian succession, taste in this country had undergone a radical transformation.”⁵⁹⁰ However, scholars claim that portraiture and paintings were considered a luxury and were consumed by English yeomen.

As indicated by both professional art historians and European historical researchers, portraiture or decorative pictures were gaining popularity in the early modern home. Mark Ormrod suggests “the growth of the London art market was well under way before the Glorious Revolution.”⁵⁹¹ He asserts that home-produced work of immigrant artists along with “the rise of specialist art dealers in London, economic growth, and a low taxation of personal wealth contributed to the growth of the fine and decorative arts, and in general, though I believe his majesty patronized neither painters, nor poets.”⁵⁹² Similarly, Brian Cowan argues that by the 1670’s, there was an active—if not flourishing—market for portraiture and prints and that “both shops and auctions sold

⁵⁸⁹ David Ormrod, “Art and Its Markets,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series 52 (1999): 544-51.

⁵⁹⁰ Oliver Millar, “Painting and Portrait Miniatures,” in *The Connoisseur’s Complete Period Guides*, 337.

⁵⁹¹ Ormrod, “Art and its Markets,” 549.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*

pictures in England.”⁵⁹³ Thus, in London there were “extraordinary sales of pictures and curiosities, which are a kind of market for the productions of the arts...and within these twenty or thirty years they have built several halls or auction rooms in London, which are set aside for the sale of pictures.”⁵⁹⁴

These assertions seems to hold true, since the research of Tom Wilks affirms that the Restoration period was an active time for purchasing and collecting. It appears that Charles II “displayed impressive resolve to reconstitute the Stuart royal collection; first, by retrieving what had been lost, to the extent that was possible, and then by buying anew.”⁵⁹⁵ For this, the monarch created the Committee for the recovery of goods, which existed until 1672 and, by most accounts, enjoyed some success in recovering important royal portraits, especially those that had been taken to France by his mother, Queen Henrietta Maria.⁵⁹⁶

It is believed that Amsterdam fueled a large part of this market as Jan de Vries finds that Dutch art was well know and morphed form an old luxury after the

⁵⁹³ Brian Cowan, “Arenas of Connoisseurship: Auctioning Art in Later Stuart England,” in Michael North and David Ormrod ,eds, *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 1998) pp. 153-66.

⁵⁹⁴ Rouquet, *Present State of the Arts in England*, 1755, 121.

⁵⁹⁵ Tom Wilks, “Art and Architecture in Politics,” in *A Companion to Stuart Britain* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 202.

⁵⁹⁶ In addition to recovery, Charles II assembled a collection of high quality portraiture through the work of William Frizell, an art dealer who helped King Charles I build his initial collection. Dutch contemporary work made up the bulk of this addition, yet there were also paintings and sculpture from the old Italian Masters. Acquisition of new work was crucial to the collection, some of which because of their religious themes that were deemed “idolatrous” and “superstitious,” had fallen under the destructive hands of anti-royalists and religious zealots during the Civil War.

Reformation into a “new luxury” that was supported by elite patronage. Similarly, he finds: “By developing both product innovations (new themes in paintings) and process innovations (new techniques of painting), Dutch artist opened new markets, allowing by mid-century some 700 to 800 masters to be active simultaneously, producing over the course of the century many millions of paintings.”⁵⁹⁷ As early as the 1620s, galleries in the Netherlands sold pictures, sculpture, and decorative arts, especially by contemporary painters. This is evident in playwright James Shirley’s comedic work *The Lady of Pleasure* (1637). Shirley’s work is a satirical attack on luxury consumption whose main character, Artentia, is caught up in the need for new portraiture. Early in the text, Sir Thomas Bornevell remarks to her:

Obeded no modest counsell to effect.
Nay study wayes of pride and costly ceremony
Your change of gaudy furniture and pictures,
Of this Italian Master, and that Dutchman,
Your mighty looking-glass like Artillery...
Antique and novel, vanities or tires,
More motley than the French, or the Venetian.⁵⁹⁸

By the middle of the seventeenth and well into the early eighteenth, art dealers in the Netherlands “targeted both the rich and less well off.”⁵⁹⁹ This new

⁵⁹⁷ de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution*, 55.

⁵⁹⁸ James Shirley, *The Lady of Pleasure: A Comedie, as It Was Acted by Her Majesties Servants, at the Private House in Drury Lane* (London: printed by Tho. Cotes, for Andrew Crooke, and William Cooke, 1637), 10. Horace Walpole—an avid collector and connoisseur of fine art and architecture—commented about the commercial migration of European painting and portraiture: “Commerce, which carries along with it the Curiosities and Arts of countries, as well as the Riches, daily brings us something from Italy. How many valuable Collections of Pictures are there established in England on the frequent ruins and dispersion of the fines Galleries in Rome and other Cities!”

era in Dutch artistic genius was both appreciated and fuelled by a new consumer culture that recognized the innumerable choices in artwork. This fresh and eager segment of an enlarged population was—most importantly—in a position to consume since they were “newly endowed with discretionary income.”⁶⁰⁰ On a visit to Rotterdam in 1640, John Evelyn visited the annual art fair and sent home pictures of “landskips, and drolleries as they call those clownish representations, as I was amazed.”⁶⁰¹ Yet, some thought the Dutch market too saturated and its subject matter and quality rather rough and unworthy of collecting. Astonishingly, Horace Walpole felt generally that Dutch artists lacked a seductive vision, “And as for the Dutch Painters, those drudging Mimicks of Nature’s most uncomely coarsenesses,” and they lagged behind the skills of the Venetian School since, “their idleness seems to have been in the choice of their Subjects.”⁶⁰²

Evidence from probate shows that pictures were used with a conscious decorative effect and sometimes hung directly on the tapestry or wall hangings of late Stuart and early Queen Anne rooms. Not surprisingly, there are some rather exceptional examples of pictures and maps used as décor in the yeoman household. William Tandrewe’s 1748 inventory lists “maps pictures and other

⁵⁹⁹ Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 172.

⁶⁰⁰ de Vries, *Industrious Revolution*, 54.

⁶⁰¹ John Evelyn, *The Diary, 1641 to 1706* (London: Wm. M. Thomson, 1892), 39.

⁶⁰² Horace Walpole, *Ædes Walpoleanæ: Or, A Description of the Collection of Pictures at Houghton-Hall ... the Seat of ... Sir Robert Walpole*, 2nd ed., with additions. (London: pr. by J. Hughs, 1752), xi–xii.

small things” in his parlour.⁶⁰³ Similarly, William Briggs hung “pickters” in the entryway to his home and also had “pictors” in the parlor room that contained beds, bedding, and six chairs and a chest.⁶⁰⁴ Briggs’ estate contained some livestock, which accounted for the majority of most yeoman estates, yet the sum total of his goods and chattels in his eight-bedroom edifice reached a substantial 490 pounds. Additionally, William Brittin’s Chatteris inventory contains a healthy array of furniture in his parlour that reveals “eight chears, one press cubbard and seven old Pickters,”⁶⁰⁵ as well as a gun and a set of window curtains not too far in the distance. And Thomas Hodson’s hall held “one Ovel table and two pictors” that was additionally stuffed with feather beds, bolsters, and “a Chester draws.”⁶⁰⁶

As wealth increased, so did the number of pictures that hung on yeoman’s walls. Critics complained that this new wealth brought about a “self-styled connoisseurship,” a symptom that prompted Horace Walpole to famously exclaim, “the Restoration brought back the Arts, not Taste.” One thing is certain: interest in art among the landed gentry and urban elites increased and, as the century progressed, so did the growth of pictures as an art form, wall hanging and decoration in yeoman households in this remote, yet visually perceptive area of Cambridgeshire.

⁶⁰³ William Tandrew of Whittlesey, will dated 1748, no. 59, box 475, CRO.

⁶⁰⁴ William Briggs of Cottenham, will dated February 7, 1722, no. 1032, box 462, CRO.

⁶⁰⁵ William Brittin of Chatteris, will dated 1737, no. 610, box 470, CRO.

⁶⁰⁶ Thomas Hodson of Chatteris, October 14, 1748, no. 918/9, box 474, CRO.

Tea and Tobacco.

Food can be considered both a basic necessity and a luxury item depending on the context. Craig Muldrew estimates that import of foodstuffs, most notably fresh fruit rose dramatically at the beginning of the seventeenth century. He claims that:

In 1581, 21,000 oranges and lemons reached Norwich in time for Bartholomew Fair, and possibly over 1,000 tons of foreign, fruit, spices, and groceries were being shipped into East Anglia each year by 1590s. The popularity of foreign groceries is shown by the fact that this represents possibly between 7-8.5 pounds per person in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. In 1660, there were also 200,000-300,000 pounds of pepper being imported into London per year, or about 6 ounces for every household in England.⁶⁰⁷

Tea and related vessels during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were more apparent in homes of the English elite, and the yeoman household was no exception. Teapots became quite popular in the late seventeenth century. James Morley, a potter based in Nottingham, advertised his wares that included a decantor, a mogg, a flower-pot, and—most significantly--a large Carved Teapot which he claimed: “Such as have occasion for these sorts of pots commonly called Stone-Ware, or for such as are of any other shape not here

⁶⁰⁷ Craig Muldrew, “Economic and Urban Development,” in *A Companion to Stuart Britain* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 151.

Represented may be furnished with them by the maker James Morley at the Pot House in Nottingham.”⁶⁰⁸

Also, Tea caddies, in both earthenware and silver, were found throughout homes in both urban and rural settings. Tea tables can be found in the 1741 inventory of David Gray, yeoman of Whittlesey, which lists, “two ovile tee [tea] tables” and “eight tea spoons and tea tongs.”⁶⁰⁹ John Reason, also of Whittlesey, had, “two Oval tables for tea...with 12 China cups & 12 saucers.”⁶¹⁰ In addition, implements such as “one pare of tea tongs”⁶¹¹ were found amongst other silver cups and large and small spoons in the 1737 inventory of William Brittin, yeoman of Chatteris.

In 1599, Thomas Platter observed the English relationship with tobacco when he noticed that in the many inns, taverns and alehouses scattered about London “tobacco or a species of wound-wort are also obtainable for one’s money, and the powder is lit in a small pipe, the smoke sucked into the mouth, and the saliva is allowed to run freely, after which a good draught of Spanish wine follows...[tobacco] they regard as a curious medicine for defluctions, and as a pleasure, and the habit is so common with them, that they always carry the instrument on them, and light up on all occasions...and I am told the inside of

⁶⁰⁸ Copperplate advertisement of the Nottingham stoneware potter, James Morley, 1700. The Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁶⁰⁹ David Gray of Whittlesey, will dated 1741, no. 285, box 472, CRO.

⁶¹⁰ John Reason of Whittlesey, will dated 1742, no. 856, box 472, CRO.

⁶¹¹ William Brittin of Chatteris, will dated 1737, no. 610, box 470, CRO.

one man's veins after death was found to be covered in soot just like a chimney."⁶¹²

Yeomen contributed greatly to the development of English colonial tobacco production during the seventeenth century. Robert Brenner argues that, in the early 1600s, the West Indies economy had been dominated almost exclusively by tobacco, produced on small plots by a yeoman population."⁶¹³ The first shipment arrived in London in 1617."⁶¹⁴ Craig Muldrew notes a striking growth in tobacco imports occurred. Tobacco imports went up 36 times in just 20 years, from 50,000 pounds in 1618 to 1,800,000 pounds in 1638, and then rose to 9,000,000 pounds in 1668.⁶¹⁵

Yeoman David Gray's inventory reveals that among the books, candlesticks, looking glasses and chairs, he had a parcel of "pitch tar tobacco" in his warehouse valued at 5 pounds.⁶¹⁶ Again, in the inventory of William Brittin "one small parcel of Tobacco and other lumber" is listed as items in his warehouse sitting amongst two barrels valued at 7 shillings and six pence.⁶¹⁷

Although tobacco became an important luxury good in England, there was a royal concern about the import of foreign tobacco and the possible effects of the

⁶¹² Thomas Platter, *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599* (London: J. Cape, 1937), 170–171.

⁶¹³ Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (London: Verso, 2003), 161.

⁶¹⁴ John E Kicza, *Resilient Cultures: America's Native Peoples Confront European Colonization, 1500-1800* (Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2003), 130.

⁶¹⁵ Muldrew, "Economic and Urban Development," in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, 151.

⁶¹⁶ David Gray of Whittlesey, will dated May 29, 1741, no. 285, box 472, CRO.

⁶¹⁷ William Brittin of Chatteris, will dated 1737, no. 610, box 470, CRO.

use of any tobacco expressed in *A Proclamation Concerning Tobacco* (1624)

where:

Hereas Our Commons, assembled in Our last Sessions of Parliament became humble petitioners unto Us, That for many waightie reasons, much concerning the Welfare of our Kingdome, and the Trade thereof, We would by Our Royall power utterly prohibite the use of all foraigne Tobacco, which is not of the growth of Our own Dominions.⁶¹⁸

The crown only grudgingly approved its use since it had “upon all occasions made known our dislike, we have ever had of the use of tobacco, as tending towards the corruption of both the health and manners of our people.”⁶¹⁹ In the end, the king was unable to stem the demand for tobacco among his subjects.

Thus, the evolution of furniture and the new methods developed by early modern craftsmen had now transformed common, traditional furnishings into decorative objects. Simple wooden structures were now ornamental and attractively patterned in part to the development of techniques such as veneering and marquetry. English households, especially those inhabited by the yeomen, embraced these new improvements and they used them to make a fashionable statement within their domestic space.

The increase in the consumption of luxury comestibles, such as tea and tobacco, created the need for storage and display, as well as a space in which to

⁶¹⁸ By the King. *A Proclamation concerning Tobacco*. Given at Our Honour of Hampton Court, the nine and twentieth day of September, in the tow & twentieth yeere of Our Reigne of England, France and Ireland and of Scotland the eight and fiftieth. Imprinted at London by Bonham Norton and Ion Bill, Printers to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie. 1624, (Society of Antiquaries, STC/1876:09), 1.

⁶¹⁹ *A Proclamation concerning Tobacco*, 1.

consume and appreciate such goods. Tea tables and ornate cupboards were now found throughout the house, and the parlor gave the prosperous yeoman an appropriate venue to exhibit these decorative furnishings in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere.

Wall coverings, pictures, and paintings also gained popularity among the yeomen. Seventeenth century observers, such as John Evelyn, noticed the significant rise in the demand for painting and artistic wall coverings. This demand was fueled, in part, by a flourishing portraiture concern in Amsterdam that resulted in the formation of active auction market in post-Restoration London. These objects, along with upholstered chairs, joined tables, and other ornate furnishings illustrate the Cambridgeshire yeoman's appreciation for domestic finery, which occupied the spaces of his home, and reflected the presence of his newfound wealth.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters we witnessed the rise of the yeoman and his social transition in seventeenth and early eighteenth century Cambridgeshire. By using wills, inventories, land records and personal diaries, it was possible to assess the increase in yeoman wealth and their growing impact as consumers. Furthermore, by examining the communities of Chatteris, Cottenham and Whittlesey, and by evaluating factors such as land organization, the grain market, geography, and trade, it was possible to witness and understand the process that transformed the East Anglian yeoman from a practical, humble farmer into a luxury goods consumer.

Initially, this work charted the rise of the yeoman from his beginnings in the medieval, feudal land structure to his general participation in the English luxury good economy. It has also been argued that there were initial social and economic factors—low population, a slackening land market, falling rents—that facilitated the emergence of this new, rural class. By the sixteenth century, it was, as historians Margaret Spufford and Keith Wrightson argued, possible for this class to take advantage of the renewed growth of population and rising prices of agricultural produce.

Since land was “the center and substance of their lives and their livelihood,”⁶²⁰ fortunes of the English yeomen were inherently linked to the changes in

⁶²⁰ Campbell, *The English Yeoman*, 66.

agricultural practices within the East Anglian region, which, in turn, impacted the county of Cambridgeshire and the communities of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey. The lands on which these communities were located—heavy clay, chalky clay, gravel, peat and fen silt—were, geographically speaking, unremarkable. If anything, they proved to be a challenge even to those seeking basic sustenance. To the casual observer of the time, the fenland was a forbidding wasteland that was best left abandoned. However, it was not until the age of agricultural improvement that those with a sense of vision recognized that parts of the fenland contained somewhat nutrient rich soil that could be brought under cultivation.

Fittingly, the yeomen of Cambridgeshire embraced this change, which is indicated in their wills and inventories. No longer were fields allowed to sit fallow and, by extending the area of cultivation, output slowly increased. Thus, the cycle of “closed circuit” medieval farming was permanently broken, which now, along with the benefits of copyhold and freehold land tenure, gave the market-oriented yeomen their opportunity to reap the economic benefits.

Close inspection of the unique topography in which the three communities chosen for study are located suggests there was a close connection between patterns of the yeoman’s conspicuous consumption and the location of Chatteris, Cottenham, and Whittlesey. They are all situated close to navigable waterways that, in turn, allowed access to trade in local and regional markets.

Yet the most telling event is the impact on these communities of the drainage of the fenland and the result of the vision of one English landowner, Francis Russell. He brought medieval pastoral farming, fishing, and fowling communities into the early modern agricultural age. Russell, the fourth Earl of Bedford, owned a considerable amount of property including some 20,000 to 40,000 acres of fenland around Thorney and Whittlesey in the Isle of Ely, where he initiated a project from which he, and many landholding yeomen in East Anglia, would derive so great a personal advantage. If it were not for the Earl's ambition and foresight, the fens would have remained an agricultural backwater and cultural afterthought until the early part of the nineteenth century, when steam engines and pumping apparatus would possibly have been employed to do the work that Russell had accomplished over one hundred years earlier.

The best evidence for the growing wealth of yeomen is found in the inventories of their goods and in the commentaries of the day. The wills attest to the average size of the yeoman house and to the growing importance of room use. The rooms now focused on comfort and style. It was no longer the frugal, independent yeomen's hall, barn, and brewhouse that dominated the living space. Parlors with multiple chairs and cushions, wainscoting from Flanders, and bedchambers with multiple, ornate beds filled his dwelling. Now, *livability* was the key function for most new and additional rooms that had been added to fit the yeoman's new lifestyle.

The main point of this work was to illustrate the material culture in the domestic lives of the yeomanry. By exploring luxury household items during the time of the Restoration, we can see the response that followed years of repressive military rule and forced austerity of the Cromwellian age. China and earthenware made its appearance in yeomen households despite a heavy tax levied by the Cromwell administration. Other luxury staples such as silver, pewter and fine new draperies now populated the Cambridgeshire yeoman's domestic interior. By following the arrival of fine furniture, *objets de art*, textiles, and drinking vessels in the yeoman household, the spending habits the yeomen revealed their taste for luxuries demonstrated.

The evolution of furniture and craftsmen's innovations, specifically the ornamentation, created new luxury items that successfully combined the ideas of utility and comfort. Tables were no longer simple furniture, but now ornately veneered pieces that had been crafted to display front stage, luxury items. Chairs, previously stiff and uncomfortable, were now upholstered and designed to accent and compliment other pieces of furniture within a room. English artisans embraced new ideas in interior design, mostly from France, Holland, and Asia, as a way to satisfy consumers, including yeomen. Also, pictures, paintings and wall coverings are evidence that this type of conspicuous consumption, as most art historians argue, is associated with virtue, learning and discernment rather than with decadence or folly. Most important, luxury consumption illustrates the Cambridgeshire yeoman's appreciation for finery.

The way in which such items populated the interior of yeoman homes reveals the effort made to showcase their newfound wealth.

Finally, the Cambridgeshire yeoman, whether consciously or not, played a large part in the theoretical debates concerning luxury good consumption. When discussing the yeoman's active role as a consumer it was necessary to explore the wider concept of luxury, particularly by juxtaposing scholarship that emerged during the consumer revolution of the early modern period with more modern ideas. Therefore, it was prudent to define the term *luxury* both clearly and unambiguously. This approach helped to reveal the notions that constituted the early definition and perception of luxury consumption, and how the later idea of luxury goods was re-shaped to become a crucial—if not somewhat inevitable—component amongst the yeomen within early modern English society.

Throughout the classical and medieval eras conspicuous consumption of luxury goods was seen as ruinous—a fixation that would, in the words of Livy, *semina futurae luxuriae* or the “seeds of luxury” would “erode social virtue” while Edward III spoke of luxurious clothing as “a contagious and excessive apparel of diverse people, against their estate and degree. These attitudes changed at the onset of the seventeenth century since contemporaries such as Barbon, Pascal and, later, Hume sought to explain the benefits of luxury through examples of trade and its growing impact on a commercial society. Generally speaking, these theorists argued that when trade expands luxury would be an

advantage rather than a moral hazard to society. This essentially put to bed the notion that luxuries were inherently linked to avarice, greed, and other church sanctioned deadly sins.

Yet, the ascent of the yeomen did not last forever. Boom periods of sustained economic growth are normally followed by downturns, corrections, or declines. According to Martin Daunton, many yeomen farmers did not survive the latter part of the eighteenth century. He agrees there was a period during the seventeenth century of remarkable growth “when yeomen farmers had greater security, which contributed to their willingness to raise yields by improving land during the yeoman’s agricultural revolution.”⁶²¹ However, many yeomen family landholdings were eventually acquired by larger landowners “rather than by a gradual move of the yeomen upwards into the gentry.”⁶²² Land consolidation slowed towards the 1780’s and now the holdings of the “prosperous yeomen were often transitory.”⁶²³ Gone were the days of the wealthy husbandman, peasant, or yeoman purchasing land; the gentry now initiated a “top-down” process of land consolidation. Thus, the nature of the land market changed, checking the ability of yeomen to rise into the gentry by reducing the pool of smallholdings within their means. The route of consolidation, lucrative crops,

⁶²¹ Martin Daunton, *Progress and Poverty: An Economic and Social History of Britain, 1700-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 75.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

⁶²³ *Ibid.*

and favorable leases would come to an end during the advance of industrialization in late eighteenth century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPTS

Cambridge University Archives, Cambridgeshire, UK

Corpus Christi College Archives, Cambridge University, UK

County Records Office: Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, UK

County Records Office: Oxford, Oxfordshire, UK

King's College Archives, Cambridge University, UK

PRINTED SOURCES

A Law of Sewers held at Wisbeach 16 Jacobi enacted at session of sewers May 30th, in the yeares of the reigne of our Sovereigne Lorde James by the Grace of God, Kinge of England, ffrance, and Ireland, 1681.

Badeslade, Thomas. *The History of the Ancient and Present State of the Navigation of the Port of King's-Lyn, and of Cambridge, and the Rest of the Trading-Towns in Those Parts: ... With the Method Propos'd for Draining the ... Fens, and Amending the Harbour of Lyn.* London: printed by J. Roberts, for the author: sold by Charles Harwick, at Lyn; Will. Thurlbourn, at Cambridge; Cotobed [sic] East, at Ely; Richard Standfast, [London], 1725.

Barbon, Nicholas. *A Discourse Concerning Coining the New Money Lighter. In Answer to Mr. Lock's Considerations About Raising the Value of Money.* [Westmead, Farnborough, Hants., England: Gregg International Publishers, 1971.

———. *A Discourse of Trade.* London: Printed by Tho. Milbourn for the author, 1690.

Blith, Walter. *The English improver, or, A new survey of husbandry discovering to the kingdome, that some land, both arable and pasture, may be advanced double or treble other land to a five or tenfold, and some to a twenty fold*

improvement, yea, some now not worth above one, or two shillings, per acree, be made worth thirty, or forty, if not more : clearly demonstrated from principles of sound reason, ingenuity, and late but most certaine reall experiences, held forth under six peeces of improvement (London: Printed for J. Wright ..., 1649).

Boorde, Andrew. *The Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge Made by Andrew Borde, of Physycke Doctor. A Compendyous Regyment;or, A Dyetary of Helth Made in Mountpyllier*. Early English Text Society. Extra Series no. X. London: Pub. for the Early English Text Society, by N.T. Trübner & Co, 1870.

Burrell, Andrewes. *Exceptions Against Sir Cornelius Virrudens Discourse for the Draining of the Great Fennes &c: Which in Ianuary 1638 He Presented to the King for His Designe ; Wherein His Majesty Was Mis-Informed and Abused in Regard It Wanteth All the Essentiall Parts of a Designe: And the Great and Advantagious Workes Made by the Late Earle of Bedford, Slighted, and the Whole Adventure Disparaged*. Printed at London: by T. H. and are to be sold by Robert Constable, 1642.

By the King. *A Proclamation concerning Tobacco*. Given at Our Honour of Hampton Court, the nine and twentieth day of September, in the tow & twentieth yeere of Our Reigne of England, France and Ireland and of Scotland the eight and fiftieth. Imprinted at London by Bonham Norton and Ion Bill, Printers to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie. 1624.

Camden, William. *Camden's Britannia : Newly Translated into English: With Large Additions ... / Publish'd by E. Gibson*. London: pr. by F. Collins, for A. Swalle; & A. & J. Churchill, 1695.

Carew, Richard. *The Survey of Cornwall*. 1st ed. London: Printed by S.S. for Iohn Iaggard, 1602.

Child, Josiah. *A New Discourse of Trade: Wherein Is Recommended Several Weighty Points Relating to Companies of Merchants, the Act of Navigation, Naturalization of Strangers, and Our Woollen Manufactures, the Ballance of Trade ...: And Some Proposals for Erecting a Court of Merchants for Determining Controversies*. London: Printed and sold by Sam. Crouch, Tho. Horne, and Jos. Hindmarsh, 1694.

Drayton, Michael. *The second part, or a continuance of Poly-Olbion from the eighteenth song : containing all the tracts, rivers, mountaines, and forrests:*

intermixed with the most remarkable stories, antiquities, wonders, rarities, pleasures, and commodities of the east, and northerne parts of this isle, lying betwixt the two famous rivers of Thames, and Tweed. London: Printed by Augustine Mathewes for Iohn Marriott, Iohn Grismand, and Thomas Dewe, 1622.

Dugdale, William. *The History of Imbanking and Draining of Divers Fens and Marshes; Both in Foreign Parts and in This Kingdom, and of the Improvements Thereby. Extracted from Records, Manuscripts, and Other Authentic Testimonies. By William Dugdale, ... The Second Edition, Revised and Corrected, by Charles Nalson Cole.* London: printed by W. Bowyer and J. Nichols, at the expence of Richard Geast, Esq; and sold by W. Owen; and P. Uriel, 1772.

Dyche, Thomas. *A New General English Dictionary; Peculiarly Calculated for the Use and Improvement of Such as Are Unacquainted with the Learned Languages. To Which Is Prefixed, a Compendious English Grammar. Together with a Supplement Ofthe Proper Names of the Most Noted Kingdoms, Provinces, Cities, Towns, Rivers, &c. As Also of the Most Celebrated Emperors, Kings, Queens. Originally Begun by the Late Reverend Mr. Thomas Dyche and Finished by the Late William Pardon.* London: Printed for C. and R. Ware, J. Beecroft [etc.], 1771.

Evelyn, John. *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn ... to Which Is Subjoined the Private Correspondence Between King Charles I and Sir Edward Nicholas and Between Sir Edward Hyde, Afterwards Earl of Clarendon, and Sir Richard Browne.* London, New York: G. Routledge & sons, limited; E. P. Dutton & co, 1906.

———. *Sylva, or A Discourse of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesties Dominions / Also, Kalendarium Hortense.* London: pr. by Jo. Martyn, and Ja. Allestry, 1664.

———. *Tyrannus, or, The Mode: In a Discourse of Sumptuary Lawes.* London: pr. for G. Bedel, & T. Collins; and J. Crook, 1661.
A Journey to England, With Some Account of the Manners and Customs of that Nation. Written at the Command of a Nobleman in France. Made English London: Printed and Sold by A. Baldwin, near the Oxford-Arms-Inn in Warwick-Lane, 1700.

Fuller, Thomas. *The Holy State.* The 3d ed. London: Printed by John Redmanyne for J. Williams, 1663.

Gambier-Parry, Thomas Robert. *A Collection of Charters Relating to Goring, Streatley Andthe Neighborhood, 1181-1546, Preserved in the Bodleian*

Library, with a Supplement. The Oxfordshire Record Society ... Oxfordshire Record Series vol. 13-14. Oxford: Issued for the Society, 1931.

Harrison, William. *The Description of England.* Folger Documents of Tudor and Stuart Civilization. Georges Edelen, ed. Ithaca, N.Y: Published for the Folger Shakespeare Library by Cornell University Press, 1968.

Hartlib, Samuel. *A Rare and New Discovery of a Speedy Way and Easie Means, Found Out by a Young Lady in England, She Having Made Fullproofe Thereof in May, Anno 1652. For the Feeding of Silk-Worms in the Woods, on the Mulberry-Tree-Leaves in Virginia: Who After Fourty Dayes Time Present There Most Rich Golden-Coloured Silken Fleece, to the Instant Wonderfull Enriching of All the Planters There, Requiring from Them Neither Cost, Labour, or Hindrance in Any of Their Other Employments Whatsoever.* London: Printed for Richard Wodenothe in Leaden-hall street, 1652.

Holme, Randle. *[The] academy of armory 1688.* Menston: Scolar Pr., 1972., n.d.
———*The Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon: Containing the Several Variety of Created Beings, and How Born in Coats of Arms, Both Foreign and Domestick ; with the Instruments Used in All Trades and Sciences, Together with Their Terms of Art: Also the Etymologies, Definitions, and Historical Observations on the Same, Explicated and Explained According to Our Modern Language.* Chester: Printed for the author, 1688.

Jonson, Ben. *Epicoene or The Silent Woman A Comoedie.* Act II, Scene II, lines 101-109. The Author B. Ionson. London, Printed by William Stansby, and are to be sold by John Browne at his shop in Saint Dunstances Church-yard in Fleetstreet, 1620.

Langley, Batty. *The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs: Or, The Art of Drawing and Working the Ornamental Parts of Architecture* London: Printed for and sold by S. Harding, 1750.

Mandeville, Bernard. *[The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits [By Bernard De Mandeville]].* [Another edition.] *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private vices publick benefits. Containing several discourses, to demonstrate that human frailties ... may be turn'd to the advantage of the Civil Society, etc. [In prose and verse].* London: J. Roberts, 1714., n.d.

Martindale, Adam. *The life of Adam Martindale / written by himself ; edited by Richard Parkinson.* Manchester: Chetham Society, 1845.

- Morden, Robert. *The New Description and State of England, Containing the Mapps of the Counties of England and Wales, in Fifty Threecopperplates ... the Several Counties Described, the Account of Their Ancient and Modern Names ...: To Which Is Added, a New and Exact List of the House of Peers and Commons*. London: Printed for R. Morden, T. Cockerill and R. Smith, 1701.
- Pascal, Blaise. *Monsieur Pascall's Thoughts: Meditations and Prayers, Touching Matters Moral and Divine, as They Were Found in His Papers After His Death. Together with a Discourse Upon Monsieur Pascall's Thoughts, Wherein Is Shewn What Was His Design. As Also Another Discoure on the Proofs of the Truth of the Book of Moses. And a Treatise, Wherein Is Made Appear That There Are Demonstrations of a Different Nature, but as Certain as Those of Geometry, and That Such May Be Given of the Christian Religion*. London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1688.
- Rouquet, Jean André. *The Present State of the Arts in England. By M. Rouquet*. London: printed for J. Nourse, 1755.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Taming of the Shrew A comedy. By Shakespear*. London: printed by R. Walker; and may be had at his shop, 1735.
- Shirley, James. *The Lady of Pleasure: A Comedie, as It Was Acted by Her Majesties Servants, at the Private House in Drury Lane*. London: printed by Tho. Cotes, for Andrew Crooke, and William Cooke, 1637.
- Stalker, John and Parker, George. *A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing: Being a Compleat Discovery of Those Arts of Making Varnishes for Japan, Wood, Prints or Pictures, Guilding, Burnishing and Lackering, Separating and Refining Metals, Painting Mezzo-Tinto Prints, Counterfeiting Tortoise-Shell and Marble, Staining or Dying Wood, Ivory and Horn: Together with Over 100 Patterns for Japan-Work Engraved on 24 Large Copper Plates*. Reading: Alec Tiranti, 1688.
- Tull, Jethro. *A Supplement to the Essay on Horse-Hoing Husbandry. Containing Explanations and Additions Both in Theory Andpractice. Wherein All the Objections Against That Husbandry, Which Are Come to the Author's Knowledge Are Consider'd and Answer'd*. London: Printed for and sold by the author, 1740.
- . *The Horse Hoeing Husbandry, or, A Treatise on the Principles of Tillage and Vegetation Wherein Is Taught a Method of Introducing a Sort of Vineyard Culture into the Corn Fields, in Order Toincrease Their Product*

and Diminish the Common Expense. London: Printed for J.M. Cobbett, 1822.

Vermuyden, Cornelius. *A Discourse Touching the Drayning the Great Fennes, Lying Within the Severall Counties of Lincolne, Northampton, Huntington, Norfolk, Suffolke, Cambridge, and the Isle of Ely: As It Was Presented to His Majestie.* London: Printed by Thomas Fawcet, 1642.

Walpole, Horace. *Ædes Walpoleanæ: Or, A Description of the Collection of Pictures at Houghton-Hall ... the Seat of ... Sir Robert Walpole.* 2nd ed., with additions. London: pr. by J. Hughs, 1752.

Wycherly, William. *The Country Wife. A Comedy Acted at the Theatre-Royal. Written by Mr. Wycherley:* London: Printed for Sam. Tooke and Ben. Motte, at the Middle Temple-Gate, in Fleet-Street, 1724, Act IV. Scene I, 76-77.

Yarranton, Andrew. *England's Improvement by Sea and Land: To Out-Do the Dutch Without Fighting, to Pay Debts Without Moneys, to Set at Work All the Poor of England with the Growth of Our Own Lands ...with the Advantage of Making the Great Rivers of England Navigable.* London: Printed by R. Everingham for the Author, and are to be sold by T. Parkhurst, and N. Simmons, 1677.

Yarranton, Andrew. *The Improvement improved, by a second edition of the great improvement of lands by clover, etc.* London, 1663.

Young, Arthur. *A Six Weeks Tour, Through the Southern Counties of England and Wales Describing, Particularly, I. The Present State of Agriculture and Manufactures. II. The Different Methods of Cultivating The soil. III. The Success Attending Some Late Experiments on Various Grasses, &c. ... In Several Letters to a Friend. By the Author of the Farmer's Letters.* London: printed for W. Nicoll, 1768.

SECONDARY WORKS

BOOKS

- Adams, Elizabeth. *Bow Porcelain*. Faber Monographs on Pottery and Porcelain. London ; Boston: Faber, 1981.
- Allen, Robert C. *Enclosure and the Yeoman*. Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Appleby, Joyce Oldham. *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth Century England*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1978.
- Archer, Lucy. *Architecture in Britain and Ireland, 600-1500*. London: Harvill Press, 1999.
- Baker, John H. *An Introduction to English Legal History*. 2d ed. London: Butterworths, 1979.
- Barber, Sydney and Skertchly, Josiah. *The Geology of the Fenland*. London: London Geological Survey of the United Kingdom, 1846.
- Berry, Christopher J. *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*. Ideas in Context 30. Cambridge [England] ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Bevis, Trevor, Allen. *Prisoners of the Fens: A True Story of Scottish and Dutch Prisoners-of-War Brought to the Fens to Work on the Drainage Scheme*. March: T. Bevis, 2003.
- Black, Jeremy. *Eighteenth-Century Britain, 1688-1783*. Palgrave History of Britain. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Blundell, Nicholas and The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire. *The Great Diurnal of Nicholas Blundell of Little Crosby, Lancashire*. Chester: Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1968.
- Borsay, P. *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1760*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Braudel, Fernand. *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*. 1st U.S. ed. Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century v. 1. New York: Harper and Row, 1981.
- Brenner, Robert. *Merchants and Revolution Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653*. London ; New York: Verso, 2003.
- Brewer, John and Porter, Roy, eds. *Consumption and the World of Goods*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- British Academy. *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition*. Records of Social and Economic History new ser., X. London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1986.
- British Association for the Advancement of Science. Meeting 1938 : *A scientific survey of the Cambridge district : Prepared for the Cambridge meeting (1938)* and edited by H. C. Darby, 1938.
- Cameron, Ian and Kingsley-Rowe, Elizabeth, eds. *Collins Encyclopedia of Antiques*. London: Collins, 1973.
- Campbell, Mildred. *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*. Reprints of Economic Classics. New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968.
- Cannon, John ed. *The Oxford Companion to British History*. Oxford [England] ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Carter, Edmund. *The History of the County of Cambridge, from the Earliest Account to the Present Time* (London: S. & R. Bentley, 1819).
- Cescinsky, Herbert. *The Old-World House: its Furniture & Decoration*. New York: McMillan, 1924.
- Chambers Dictionary*. New ed. Edinburgh: Chambers, 1998.
- Clark, J.C.D. *English Society, 1660-1832*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Clay, C. G. A. *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

- Cooper, Trevor, ed. *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia During the English Civil War*. London: The Boydell Press, 2001.
- Coward, Barry, ed. *A Companion to Stuart Britain*. Blackwell Companions to British History. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003.
- Darby, H.C. *The Draining of the Fens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956.
- Daunton, Martin *Progress and Poverty: An Economic and Social History of Britain, 1700-1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Davis, Ralph. *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*. World Economic History. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Denson, John. *A Peasant's Voice to Landowners: On the Best Means of Benefiting Agricultural Labourers, and of Reducing Poor's Rates*. Cambridge: Printed by W. Metcalfe, and published for and by W.H. Smith, 1830.
- de Vries, Jan. *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Edwards, Ralph and Ramsey, L.G.G., eds. *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1968.
- English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*. Past and Present Publications. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Finberg, H.P.R. ed. *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- Glasscock, Robin, ed. *Historic Landscapes of Britain from the Air*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Gloag, John. *A Social History of Furniture Design, from B. C. 1300 to A. D. 1960*. London: Cassell, 1966.
- . *The Englishman's Chair; Origins, Design, and Social History of Seat Furniture in England*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1964.

- Gras, Norman Scott Brien. *The Evolution of the English Corn Market from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century*. Harvard Economic Studies v.13. Cambridge, [Mass.]: Harvard University Press, 1915.
- Havinden, Michael Ashley. *Household and Farm Inventories of Oxfordshire, 1550-1590*. London: HMSO, 1965.
- Hey, David, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*. London ; New York: BCA, 1996.
- Hume, David. *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*. New ed. London: pr. for T. Cadell: and A. Kincaid, and A. Donaldson, Edinburgh, 1772.
- Joy, Edward Thomas. *The Country Life Book of English Furniture*. London: Country Life, 1964.
- Kicza, John E. *Resilient Cultures: America's Native Peoples Confront European Colonization, 1500-1800*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2003.
- Korthals-Altes, Jacobus. *Sir Cornelius Vermyden*. London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 1925.
- Levine, David and Wrightson, Keith, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village, Terling, 1525-1700*. London: The Academic Press, 1979.
- Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth*. Janet Fairweather, ed. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005.
- Lindley, Keith. *Fenland Riots and the English Revolution*. London: Heinmann, 1982.
- Linley, David. *Classical Furniture*. London: Pavilion, 1998.
- Livy. *The History of Rome*. Bohn's Classical Library. London: H. G. Bohn, 1853.
- Marshall, William. *Rural Economy of the West of England (1796)* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1970), 20.
- Mathias, Peter. *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700-1914*. London: Routledge, 1983.
- Mills, A. D. *A Dictionary of British Place-Names*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

- Milward, Rosemary. *A Glossary of Household, Farming, and Trade Terms from Probate Inventories*. Derbyshire Record Society Occasional Paper No. 1, 1977.
- Morrill, John, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor & Stuart Britain*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- North, Michael and Ormrod, David, eds. *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 1988.
- Orwin, C.S. *A History of English Farming*. London: Nelson, 1949.
- Overton, Mark. *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500-1850*. Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography 23. Cambridge, England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Peck, Linda Levy. *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Platter, Thomas. *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599*, trans. and ed. Clare Williams. London: J. Cape, 1937.
- Prothero, Rowland E. (Lord Ernle). *English Farming, Past and Present*. New 6th ed. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961.
- Pugh R.B. ed. *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 4*. London: The Victoria History of the Counties of England, 2002.
- Ravensdale, Jack and Richard Muir. *East Anglian Landscapes: Past and Present*. London: Michale Joseph, Ltd., 1984.
- Robinson, Frederick S. *English Furniture*. The Connoisseur's Library. General Editor: Cyril Davenport. London: Methuen and co, 1905.
- Rural Change and Urban Growth, 1500-1800: Essays in English Regional History in Honour of W. G. Hoskins*. C.W. Chalkin, ed. London ; New York: Longman, 1974.
- Schmidt, Albert J. *The Yeoman in Tudor and Stuart England*. Folger Booklets on Tudor and Stuart Civilization. Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1961.

- Singleton, Esther. *French and English Furniture, Distinctive Styles and Periods Described and Illustrated*. New York: McClure, Phillips & co, 1903.
- Spufford, Margaret. *Figures in the Landscape: Rural Society in England, 1500-1700*. Variorum Collected Studies Series CS666. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
- . *The Great Reclathing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen Andtheir Wares in the Seventeenth Century*. History Series v. 33. London: Hambledon Press, 1984.
- Stafford, Maureen and Middlemas, R.K. *British Furniture Through the Ages*. London: Barker, 1966.
- Steer, F.W. ed. *Farm and Cottage Inventories of mid-Essex, 1635-1749*. Chelmsford: Essex City Council, 1950.
- Summers, Dorothy. *The Great Level: A History of Drainage and land Reclamation in the Fens* . London: David Charles, 1976.
- Thirsk, Joan. *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Trevelyan, G.M. *England Under the Stuarts*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1949.
- Turner, Michael Edward. *Agricultural Rent in England, 1690-1914*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Underdown, David. *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660*. Oxford: Oxford University Press,1985.
- United States Capitol Historical Society. *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*. Perspectives on the American Revolution. Charlottesville: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1994.
- Weatherill, Lorna. *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*. London: Routledge, 1988.
- Whiting, Robert. *The Blind Devotion of the People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

- Willan, Thomas Stuart. *The Inland Trade: Studies in English Internal Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Manchester [Eng.] : Totowa, N.J.: Manchester University Press ; Rowman and Littlefield, 1976.
- Williams, Neville. *The Maritime Trade of the East Anglian Ports, 1550-1590*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Willmoth, F.H. *Sir Jonas Moore: Practical Mathematics and Restoration Science*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993.
- Winder, Robert. *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain*. London: Little, Brown, 2004.
- Wood-Jones, Raymond b. *Traditional Domestic Architecture of the Banbury Region*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963.
- Wright, A.P.M. and Lewis, C.P., eds. *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 9: Chesterton, Northstowe, and Papworth Hundreds*, 1989.
- Wrightson, Keith. *English Society, 1580-1680*. London: Routledge, 1982.

CHAPTERS CITED IN BOOKS

- Charleston, R.J. "Pottery, Porcelain, and Glass," in *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods*, ed. Ralph Edwards and L.G.G. Ramsey. New York: Bonanza Books, 1968. pp. 384-420.
- Cowan, Brian. "Arenas of Connoisseurship: Auctioning Art in Later Stuart England," in *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800*, pp. 153-166.
- Erickson, Amy Louis. "Family, Household, and Community" in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor & Stuart Britain*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. pp. 90-118.
- Fastnedge, Ralph. "Furniture," in *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods*. ed.

- Ralph Edwards and L.G.G. Ramsey. New York: Bonanza Books, 1968. pp. 321-336.
- Hughes, Bernard, G. "Domestic Metalwork" in *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods*, ed. Ralph Edwards and L.G.G. Ramsey. New York: Bonanza Books, 1968. pp. 126-166.
- Hunt, John. "Furniture," in *The Connoisseur's complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods*, ed. Ralph Edwards and L.G.G. Ramsey. New York: Bonanza Books, 1968. pp. 45-58.
- Kelsea, Sean. "Unkingship, 1649-1660" in Barry Coward ed. *A Companion to Stuart Britain*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003. pp. 342
- Martin, Luc. "New Draperies in Norwich, 1550-1622," in *The New Draperies in the Low Countries and England, 1300-1800*, Pasold Studies in Textile History 10 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 262.
- Millar, Oliver. "Painting and Portrait Miniatures" in *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods*, ed. Ralph Edwards and L.G.G. Ramsey. New York: Bonanza Books, 1968. pp. 337-352.
- Muldrew, Craig. "Economic and Urban Development," in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, Blackwell Companions to British History (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003. pp. 148-165.
- Ormrod, David. "Origins of the London Art Market, 1660-1730," in Michael North and David Ormrod, eds. *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 1988. pp. 167-186.
- Spufford, Margaret. "The Limitations of Probate Inventory," in *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*. Chartres, John and Hey, David, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Thirsk, Joan. "New Crops and their Diffusion," in *Rural Change and Urban Growth, 1500-1800: Essays in English Regional History in Honour of W.G. Hoskins*, C.W. Chalkin, ed. London: Longman, 1974.
- Whinney, Margaret. "Architecture," in *The Connoisseur's Complete Period Guides to the Houses, Decoration, Furnishing and Chattels of the Classic Periods*,

ed. Ralph Edwards and L.G.G. Ramsey. New York: Bonanza Books, 1968.
pp. 277-320.

Wright, A.P.M. and Lewis, C. P. Lewis, eds. "Cottenham: Introduction," *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*: Vol. 9, British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>. pp. 48-54.

Wilks, Tom. "Art and Architecture in Politics," in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, Blackwell Companions to British History. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003. pp. 187-213.

ARTICLES

Allison, K. J. "Flock Management in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 11, no. 1. New Series (January 1, 1958): 98-112.

Ash, Eric H. "The Non-Drainage of the Cambridge Fens, 1619-1620," in *Drowned and Drained: Exploring Fenland Records and Landscape*. Susan Oosthuizen and Francis Willmoth, eds. Cambridge: Institute of Continuing Education, 2009.

Bowring, Julie. "Exploring Landscape and Livelihood: the Bedford Level Corporation Collection and the Great Level of the Fens," in *Drowned and Drained: Exploring Fenland Records and Landscapes*, Susan Oosthuizen and Francis Willmoth, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, 2009.

Bryer, R.A., "The Genesis of the Capitalist Farmer: Towards a Marxist Accounting History of the Origins of the English Agricultural Revolution," in *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, Vol. 17, no. 4 (May 2006): 370.

Coleman, D. C. "An Innovation and Its Diffusion: The 'New Draperies'." *The Economic History Review* 22, no. 3. New Series (December 1, 1969): 417-429.

- Fisher, F.J., "The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 30, no. 4 (1948): 37-50.
- Glanville, Phillipa, "A Treasured Inheritance" in *Oxford Today*, Vol. 16 no. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 33-34.
- Hoskins, W. G., "The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640." *Past & Present*, no. 4 (November 1, 1953): 44-59.
- Ormrod, David. "Art and Its Markets." *The Economic History Review* 52, no. 3. New Series (1999): 544-551.
- Orwin, C.S. *The Open Fields*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1938.
- Overton, Mark, "A New Perspective on Medieval and Early Modern Agriculture: six Centuries of Norfolk Farming c. 1250-c, 1850." *Past and Present*, no. 141 (1993): 38-105.
- Overton, Mark, "Estimation Crop Yields from Probate Inventories: An Example from East Anglia, 1585-1735," *The Journal of Economic History* 39, (1979): 363-78.
- Overton, Mark, "Re-estimating Crop Yields from Probate Inventories: A Comment." *The Journal of Economic History* 50 (1990): 931-35.
- Overton, Mark, "The Diffusion of Agricultural Innovations in Early Modern England: Turnips and Clover in Norfolk and Suffolk, 1580-1740," in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 10, no. 2 (1985): 205-221.
- Payne, M.T.W., "An Inventory of Queen Anne of Denmark's Ornaments, Furniture, Householde Stuffe, and Other Parcells' at Denmark House, 1619," *Journal of the History of Collections*, 13 (2001), pp. 23-44.
- Spufford, Margaret. "The Significance of the Cambridge Hearth Tax," in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 55, (1962): 53.
- Williams, N. J. "Two Documents Concerning the New Draperies." *The Economic History Review* 4, no. 3. New Series (January 1, 1952): 353-358.

THESES

Willmoth, F.H. *The Employment of Surveyors in the Fen Drainage Scheme of 1649-1656: Their Status, Roles, and Achievements*. Unpublished M. Phil Thesis University of Cambridge, 1885.