
QUEEN ANNE SITTING ROOM

Japanned High Chest

High Chest of Drawers, c. 1730–60, paint, gesso, gold leaf, eastern white pine, soft maple, brass; eastern white pine, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.69.348.



MISSION

Before the American Revolution, the territories that became the first thirteen states were English colonies. Many colonists looked to England for political, social, and cultural leadership and as the source of national identity. With this in mind, what do these historic objects tell us about American identity—what it meant to be an American—during this time period?

Japanned High Chest

This high chest was made in Boston and is decorated with a technique called “japanning,” which uses many layers of paint, varnish, gesso, and gold leaf to achieve a look that imitates lacquered Asian furniture. It would have taken many different skilled craftsmen to create this rare piece.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



Who might have owned a piece of furniture like this? How would they have used it?

This high chest would have been owned by a wealthy person in Boston who had it custom-made for their home. They would have likely displayed it in a prominent place in their home and would have stored valuable objects like textiles, silver, or important documents inside of it.



What types of craftsmen would have been involved in creating a piece like this?

A cabinetmaker would build the furniture, a turner or carver would add the decorative elements, and a japanner would have added the complex, detailed finish to the piece.



Why were people during this time trying to imitate styles from Asia?

Because of increased trade with the East, people in England and the colonies were now exposed to objects and design motifs that they had not previously seen. These influences impacted fashions in the West, as designers and craftsmen sought to emulate Asian styles.

QUEEN ANNE SITTING ROOM

Portrait of Anne McCall McCall

Robert Feke, *Portrait of Mrs. Samuel McCall, Sr. (Anne McCall, 1720–1785)*, 1746, oil on canvas, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.71.81.



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Portrait of Anne McCall McCall

This painting is by Robert Feke, who is considered to be America's first important native-born artist. He created many portraits similar to this one, copying settings, poses, and costumes from prominent European painters of the time. Featured here, Anne McCall McCall was a young woman from Philadelphia who married her cousin Samuel McCall, a wealthy merchant.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



Why did Anne marry her cousin?

It was not uncommon during this time for cousins to marry one another. The population of the country was smaller during this time, and the members of the elite in a city like Philadelphia were limited.



What do we know about Anne McCall McCall?

She was the mother of eleven children and a member of high society in Philadelphia. At the time that Feke painted this portrait of her, he also painted similar ones of her sister and mother, who both have a similar pose and wear similar clothes.



Why is she standing like that?

Anne McCall McCall would have been wearing an undergarment called "stays," which was a corset-like piece that went around a woman's midsection and was tightly laced. She would have then inserted a "busk" into the front of her stays, to help her maintain such upright posture.

QUEEN ANNE SITTING ROOM

Cauliflower Ware

Tea and Coffee Service
(*Cauliflower Ware*), c. 1765–80,
lead-glazed earthenware, the
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,
the Bayou Bend Collection, gift
of Miss Ima Hogg, B.56.20.4.



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Cauliflower Ware

This set of English-made ceramics includes a cream pot, teapot, tea canister, and coffeepot that are molded and glazed to look like cauliflower.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



Why do the pieces look like cauliflowers?

English tea wares initially imitated versions imported from China, but as tea drinking gained popularity, English potters began to create more amusing and playful styles, such as this. Natural forms were popular, and other teapots from this period exist that are made to look like a variety of fruits and vegetables.



What would these ceramic pieces be used for?

These objects were used to serve coffee and tea, an important ritual in colonial America and an opportunity for socializing, courting, and gossiping. Tea drinking and owning the wares to serve and drink tea were popular among many groups. Tea wares were often sold in sets.



What are all the different pieces for?

The tallest piece is a coffeepot and the small piece with a spout is a teapot. The small pitcher is for cream and the other piece with a lid is a tea caddy—used for storing loose tea. The bowl is a waste or slop bowl, where a tea drinker would empty the dregs of their teacup before refilling it.

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Concertina-Action Card Table

Card Table, c. 1730–60, mahogany and unidentified inlay; mahogany, cherry, eastern white pine, and spruce, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.69.406.



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Concertina-Action Card Table

Card tables were popular in the colonies during this time, as wealthy colonists had more leisure time and an increased interest in forms of entertainment like dancing and gambling. Men and women would have gathered around a table like this in their homes to play cards, and the small disks, called “fish,” were used to place bets. This card table is particularly special because of the way in which it opens up and of the needlework on top of it.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



Why is it called a “concertina-action” card table?

Card tables during this time would have been folded up and moved out of the way when not in use. Often one of the legs would swing around as part of this process, but this table is different because it has a mechanism inside that allows it to fold up like an accordion. The cabinetmaker who built this was likely English, as this type of mechanism was more common in England than in the colonies.



What is the fabric covering on the top?

This style of needlework is called tambour, and it was likely crafted in the 1700s, possibly as a replacement for another needlework that originally covered the top of this table. Covering card tables with fabric continues today, if you think of the green felt that is commonly seen on poker tables.



Who owned this card table?

This was owned by a wealthy family from Boston, and they actually had two identical ones, which was quite rare.

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Portrait of Sarah Henshaw Henshaw

John Singleton Copley, *Portrait of Mrs. Joseph Henshaw (Sarah Henshaw, 1736–1822)*, c. 1770, pastel on paper, mounted on linen, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.54.25.



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Portrait of Sarah Henshaw Henshaw

This pastel was created by famed American artist John Singleton Copley and depicts Sarah Henshaw Henshaw from Boston, who married her cousin Joseph Henshaw. Her husband was in the shipping business and named his first ship after her. Copley created this portrait when Sarah was in her mid-30s. The Henshaws never had any children.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



Why did Sarah marry her cousin?

It was not uncommon during this time for cousins to marry one another. The population of the country was smaller during this time, and the members of the elite in a city like Boston were limited.



What else is known about Sarah Henshaw Henshaw?

She was a brilliant needleworker, and several of her pieces are owned in private collections and museums. After marrying and initially living in Boston, she and her husband moved to inland Massachusetts.



Why did Copley create this portrait using pastels instead of oil paint?

Copley was highly regarded for his skill with pastels, and his ability to use this medium to depict a wide range of textures and tones, which can be seen in the silk dress, pearl necklace, and fur stole Sarah is wearing. Copley painted many members of the Henshaw family, including her husband, father, brother, and sister-in-law.

QUEEN ANNE SITTING ROOM

Peter Stretch Tall Clock

Made by Peter Stretch; made by John Head, *Eight-day Clock*, c. 1730–40, black walnut; southern yellow pine, eastern white pine, and Atlantic white cedar, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, museum purchase funded by the Theta Charity Antiques Show in memory of Betty Black Hatchett, B.86.4



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Peter Stretch Tall Clock

This clock is from Philadelphia and was made by Peter Stretch, a Quaker immigrant and the earliest known clockmaker in the city. During this time it was most common for different people to create the clock mechanism itself and the case that it went in. Stretch created and signed the workings for this clock and a different craftsman, a cabinetmaker, created the wooden case that it sits in.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



Who might have owned this clock?

Clocks were rare in colonial America, although they were more common in Pennsylvania, where this one is from. They were more popular in the homes of German immigrants, who settled in that area. This clock would have been specially ordered by a customer who would have chosen the specific details that they wanted.



Why did two different people create this clock?

The skills needed for precision metalwork and clock making were very different than the skills needed for carpentry and cabinetmaking. The clock maker and cabinetmaker would each have trained as apprentices for many years to learn their skills.



What makes this clock special?

Owning a clock at all was rare in the 1700s—George Washington only had one at Mt. Vernon. This clock also has hands for the hour, minute, and second, as well as a day-of-the-month clock. Many early clocks only had hands for the hour or hour and minute, as the need to keep time precisely was not as essential as it is today.

QUEEN ANNE SITTING ROOM

Punch Bowl

Punch Bowl, c. 1740–50, tin-glazed earthenware (delftware), the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.72.10.



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Punch Bowl

This bowl was made in England during the mid-18th century and is a type of ceramic called tin-glazed earthenware. Images of fish adorn the exterior of the bowl, which may have been used to serve punch. The glasses and ladle next to the bowl also give us a clue about this bowl's use.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



What kind of punch did people drink?

Punch was a popular drink in the colonies during the 18th century, and although the ingredients varied, a typical punch would have been a mix of distilled liquor, citrus juice, water, and spices. The word "punch" is thought to derive from the Sanskrit word pañca—meaning five, which could refer to the number of ingredients used.



Why is the bowl decorated with fish?

You can imagine that if the bowl was filled with liquid, the fish—which may be carp—might almost appear to be submerged under water. Fish-decorated punch bowls were popular in New England during this period.



Why would this bowl have been imported from England instead of made in the colonies?

The colonists in America were not yet as skilled in the production of ceramics as Europeans, so most ceramics were imported. Ceramics were also small, lightweight, and easy for merchants to transport to the colonies. Bowls like this were very popular and, based on inventories of homes during this period, could have been found in a quarter of all estates.

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Easy Chair

Easy Chair, 1740–95, black walnut, sweetgum, cherry, and soft maple, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.69.251.



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Easy Chair

This easy chair was probably made in Philadelphia in the mid-to-late 1700s. Easy chairs were most commonly used by the sick and the elderly, as they provided greater comfort than armchairs and the wings on the sides of the chair helped to insulate the sitter and keep them warm.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



How was a chair like this used?

Because it had padding and upholstery on all sides, this would have been the most comfortable style of chair in a home and therefore would have been the chair most likely used by someone in poor health. Often, easy chairs had a hidden chamber pot underneath the seat cushion, which also provided convenience to the sick and elderly. It would have been more common to see an easy chair in a colonial bedroom than in a parlor.



How do we know this chair was made in Philadelphia?

While we don't know for sure, some of the clues that it comes from Philadelphia include the types of wood that the craftsman used—black walnut, cherry, and sweetgum—as well as the chair's pad feet, which were more common in that area.



What kind of fabric is it covered in?

The chair is now upholstered in modern silk damask fabric that experts think is representative of what would have been used during that time, which would have been the most stylish choice for pre-Revolution customers. The fabric and upholstery materials (stuffing, etc.) for a chair like this would have accounted for more than half the cost of the entire chair.

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A South East View of the Great Town of Boston in New England... Print

Engraved by John Carwitham; possibly after a view by William Burgis, *A South East View of the Great Town of Boston in New England in America*, c. 1765, copperplate engraving, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.63.77.



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A South East View of the Great Town of Boston in New England... Print

This print is an engraving that was created in England and depicts a view of Boston from the harbor in the mid-1700s. The text along the bottom reads “A South East View of the Great Town of Boston in New England in America.”

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



Where did this image come from?

This print, like many, is thought to be based on a painting from around the same time. Printmakers would often reproduce paintings, allowing the images to be more widely seen by the public.



Why would the artist show a scene of Boston harbor?

Scenes like this were a common subject in the 18th century and served as a way to catalog towns in the colonies and show their various economic interests. As Boston is located on the water and was a center for shipping, the artist has shown the city in the background with the harbor in the foreground. Just a couple of decades after the time that this print was created, the Boston Tea Party would take place in this location.



What was Boston like around the time that this print was made?

Boston was one of the major cities in the colonies, but the popular city was small by today's standards—around 15,000. Its location on the Massachusetts Bay made it a center for shipping and trade.

QUEEN ANNE SITTING ROOM

Watson and the Shark

After John Singleton Copley, *Watson and the Shark*, c. 1780–90, oil on canvas, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.56.167.



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Watson and the Shark

This painting depicts a dramatic scene where a 14-year-old merchant sailor was attacked by a shark in the harbor of Havana, Cuba. He was saved by his fellow sailors and survived, but he lost a leg. He later commissioned the artist John Singleton Copley to commemorate the event. This painting is a copy of Copley's original, which is significantly larger.

TRIVIA QUESTIONS



Why would someone make a copy of the original painting?

Copley's painting was very popular at the time it was made. He made two other versions himself, and further copies were made to allow the image to be seen by a wider audience.



What makes this painting unique for the time in which it was painted?

During this time, it was much more common for artists to depict scenes from the Bible or Classical mythology—called history painting. Copley expanded this genre to include contemporary figures and scenes, which was quite a sensation.



Why would Watson want to commemorate being attacked by a shark?

The painting was commissioned about 30 years after the attack. Watson had become a successful merchant by that time, and he thought his story of overcoming such adversity would be an inspiration to others.