

LEARN ABOUT NEW BRUNSWICK CABINETMAKERS IN OUR COLLECTION!

See more great
early furniture at the
New Brunswick
Museum &
Kings Landing
Historical
Settlement!

WHO WERE THEY?

THOMAS JEFFERSON CASWELL

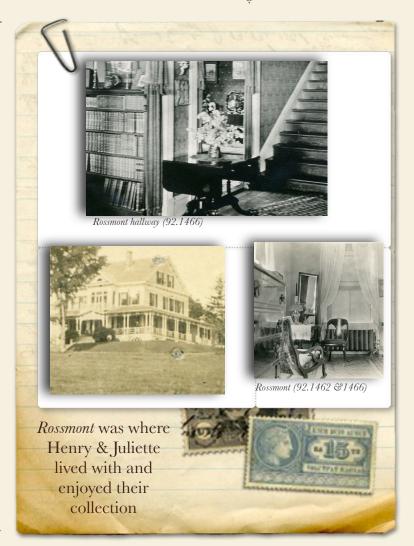
Caswell was born in St. Stephen in 1806 and died there in 1894. He was a cabinetmaker who had a furniture store in Milltown, now part of St. Stephen.

ROBERT CHILLAS

Chillas came to Saint John on the ship *Anne* along with other refugees in the second wave of Loyalists after the American Revolution, in 1783.

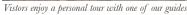
ALBAN EMERY

Alban Emery (1893-1990) apprenticed with J.D. Howe in Saint John from 1911 to 1921 and did extensive restoration work on the Rosses' collection from 1910 to 1916. His father, James, and his brother, Frederick, were also cabinetmakers. The family firm changed names and partners over the years until it became 'Emery's Cabinet Shop' in 1948.



NEW BRUNSWICK CABINETMAKERS







HPR photo of Howe chair (92-1465)

JOHN D. AND JONAS HOWE

THE REAL PRINCIPLES

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John D. Howe was born in Saint John in 1841 while his brother Jonas was born in the same city in 1844.

Jonas seems to have been the business manager, while John who completed his training under Albert J. Lordly, was the craftsman.

ALEXANDER LAWRENCE

Born in Scotland in 1788, Lawrence arrived in Saint John in 1817 and died there in 1843. His sons, Joseph W. and George H. carried on the family business until the late nineteenth century.

ALBERT J. LORDLY

Born in Nova Scotia in 1826, Lordly was living in Fredericton in 1848 and was then established in Saint John by 1862. Sons Charles E., Sterling B., Walter A., and Harry R. Lawrence all joined the firm.

THOMAS NISBET

Nisbet was born in Scotland in 1766 and arrived in Saint John in 1813 and subsequently died there in 1850. Considered one of Canada's great cabinetmakers, Nisbet's sons Thomas Jr. and Robert became cabinetmakers with their father.

Henry Ross's diary, February 24 1912

"Sofa tables and chairs come and we go into ecstasies over them!"

W BRUNSWICK FURNITURE

The Ross Collection: New Brunswick furniture

HENRY PHIPPS ROSS AND SARAH JULIETTE **ROSS AS COLLECTORS**

Both of the Rosses were avid collectors but Henry seems to have had a particular passion for furniture! For an early collector, he kept remarkably detailed records about what he purchased, who he bought from, the condition of the piece purchased and how much he paid for it.

Nowhere in his records does he indicate a desire to collect specifically New Brunswick furniture. Rather, he was passionate about furniture made in the styles of designed by the great British cabinetmakers such as Sheraton and Hepplewhite—styles which were popular during New Brunswick's early cabinetmaking years.

THE TRADITION OF CABINETMAKING IN NEW **BRUNSWICK**

Many of the 14,000 Loyalists who arrived as refugees in New Brunswick in 1783-84 (after the American Revolution) were accustomed to elegantly furnished houses. As a province with many seaports, New Brunswick's population was also exposed to foreign influences, a factor which sustained demand for good design and fine quality.

The shipping industry and trade with the south also provided an abundant supply of mahogany. The sandy beaches of the West Indies, to which ships sailed with barrels of dried fish, were unable to provide the large boulders generally preferred for ballast. Instead, "great heaps of logs...were piled near the trading posts. These logs were usually mahogany"* and were collected when the cargo ships off-loaded the ballast on their return to New Brunswick. Fine local woods were also used to great effect in the work of

By the mid-nineteenth century, New Brunswick also played a leading international role in shipbuilding, industry which required skilled craftsmen to execute finely

these early cabinetmakers.

finished officers' quarters and passenger cabins and offered cabinetmakers an additional source of employment.

The tradition of cabinetmaking in New Brunswick continues into the 21st century. Alban Emery, who apprenticed with John D. Howe, who had in turn trained under Albert J. Lordly, hired his own apprentice in 1951. Peter Claessen, who came from the Netherlands to train in Emery's shop, now has his own two sons working with him in their cabinetmaking shop in Saint John.



Want to learn more?

One of the first and most important books on New Brunswick furniture was written by Charles Foss and is called:

*Cabinetmakers of the Eastern Seaboard

NEW BRUNSWICK FURNITURE

WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO NEW BRUNSWICK CABINETMAKERS

WHERE TO FIND PIECES IN THE COLLECTION

MAIN HALL:

Coat stand (76.656)—John Howe

DRAWING ROOM:

Wing chair, originally a 'po' chair (76.416)—Robert Chillas Sofa table (76.410)—Alexander Lawrence Sofa (76.654)—Alexander Lawrence Shield-back side chairs (76.383)—John Howe Prince of Wales feather-motif chair (76.385)—John Howe Sewing stand with bag (76.28)—Thomas Nisbet

DINING ROOM:

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Tambour desk (76.370)—Robert Chillas
Dropfront desk (76.396)—Robert Chillas
Writing table with bookcase (76.378)—Thomas Nisbet
Thirteen dining chairs (76.382)—reproductions made by
Alban Emery during his apprenticeship with John Howe to
match two originals collected by the Rosses

UPSTAIRS HALL AND BLUE BEDROOM:

Slip-seated side chairs (76.27)—Thomas Nisbet

GENTLEMAN'S SITTING ROOM:

Two-drawer stand (76.35)—Thomas Nisbet

MASTER BEDROOM:

Five-drawer chest (76.428) (next to bed)—Robert Chillas Four-drawer chest (76.15) (right of mantel)—T. Nisbet Secretary desk (76.26)—Thomas Caswell

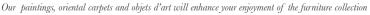
SLEIGH BEDROOM:

Nesting tables (76.384)—Alban Emery

LADY'S SUITE BEDROOM:

Washstand (76.12)—Thomas Nisbet







Thomas Nisbet sewing stand (76.28)

