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Hepsibeth Hemenway's Portrait:

A Native American Story

She struggled as a laundress and cook on the margins of Worcester society. Yet toward the end of her life she chose to preserve for all time her sense of achievement as an Indian woman and fancy cake maker.

The past, as the folklorist Henry Glassie put it, "has vanished, leaving scars, tracks, stains," the memories, documents, shards, buildings, footprints of vanished structures, furnishings, textiles, tools, ceramics, stone fences, gravestones, mill raceways, paintings, photographs, and other artifacts that scholars and others use to try to reconstruct the past.[1] Stories that emerge from these recovered "scars, tracks, and stains" are necessarily incomplete; historians and others try to interpret from fragments the experiences of individuals, communities, even whole nations at a different time and place from our own. However incomplete, every story that can be pieced together contributes to a more refined understanding of the past in all its complexities.[2]

An unsigned, gilt-framed oil painting in the collections of Worcester Historical Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts, is just such an extant fragment and, like all artifacts, is part of a larger story. The portrait depicts a matronly-looking woman attired in a black dress with long full sleeves fitted at the top of the arms and cinched at the wrists, a patterned scarf draped over her shoulders, and a ribboned day-cap covering her dark hair—all elements of fashionable attire in the later 1830s and into the 1840s (fig. 1). She is seated in an upholstered armchair, her back straight, her hands crossed in her

lap, her mouth tight-lipped, and her dark eyes gazing confidently from an age-worn face. The sitter is a local Nipmuc Indian woman named Hepsibeth Hemenway. A formal nineteenth-century portrait of an identified Indian woman is rare, and the painting begged careful study to learn about Hepsibeth Hemenway's life, her ancestral roots, why her portrait might have been painted, and how it became part of the museum's collections. Answers, or clues, were found in late nineteenth-century newspaper accounts of a daughter's life, essays written by people who knew her, military and public records, minutes of meetings of the Worcester

Fig. 1. *Hepsibeth Bowman/Crosman Hemenway (1761-1847), oil on canvas, late 1830s; courtesy Worcester Historical Museum.*

Society of Antiquity (now Worcester Historical Museum), maps, paintings, and the collective memories of descendants. Because Hepsibeth was Native American, her story reaches back before English settlement and is entwined with the larger currents of local economic and social development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as with the particular narrative of the Native American experience in New England.

The Bequest

The time and circumstances of Hepisbeth's portrait coming into the museum collections had been long forgotten by 1993, when it was conserved in preparation for display. Research in the society's proceedings pinpointed the date and donor: at the meeting of December 1, 1895, the librarian reported seventy-one new gifts to collections and made special mention of "a cranberry rake, over a hundred years old, by J. L. Estey, and a portrait of Hepzibah [*sic*] Hemenway, mother of Aunt Hannah Hemenway, by F. F. Hopkins."[3]

Hannah's name had appeared in the proceedings several years earlier in an annotated list of deaths of notable elderly people in the commonwealth; she was ninety-eight when she died on December 2, 1891. The entry identified her as "probably the oldest colored person in the city" and made note that she "loved to relate reminiscences of the war of 1812, and was present and saw Lafayette when he passed through this city in 1824."[4]

Hannah Hemenway was, in fact, a Worcester institution. Because of her great age and her recollections of long-ago times, several reporters interviewed her in 1890. "Miss Hemenway has been familiarly known to more than two generations at least as 'Aunt Hannah,'" one journalist wrote, "and her kindly greeting and pleasant face have earned that endearing title for her."[5] During her lifetime, the reporter continued, Hannah had befriended multiple generations of children; enjoyed a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, sometimes receiving as many as forty visitors a day; baked wedding cakes for hundreds of brides from the best of Worcester families (and saved more than two hundred calling cards as proof); was a founding member and pillar of Worcester's First Baptist Parish; and "is always at home to callers, and is willing to talk about old times and old people."[6]

Her mother, Hepsibeth, was a local institution as well, not for preserving and sharing memories of a bygone era but for her expert culinary skills. "Mrs. Hemenway was well known in her day and is remembered yet by the older families as a great cook and an excellent hand at making wedding cakes for the prominent people in those days and her services were always in demand," the reporter explained, adding, "Miss Hemenway for a long time followed in the footsteps of her mother. She was the best hand for miles around at making a wedding cake, and she gave up her occupation only within a few years, account of old age."[7]

The portrait's donor, Frederick Hopkins, was, like the membership of Worcester Society of Antiquity generally, part of the established local elite, the gentlemen and ladies who most likely

employed the Hemenway women. The circumstances of his acquiring the painting most probably relate to the settling of Hannah's estate. She had written a will in 1886 listing ten bequests of personal possessions to friends and family members and naming the First Baptist Parish as her residuary legatee. She bequeathed the portrait of her mother to her brother Ebenezer. Because he predeceased her, the painting fell into the portion of her goods that were sold to benefit her church. Though there is not irrefutable proof, as the executor's account was never filed and no local papers covered the sale, it seems most likely that Frederick Hopkins purchased the portrait of Hepsibeth at the auction of Hannah's estate.[8] It was hardly a big investment on his part; appraisers valued it at fifty cents. He probably gave it to the society to preserve in institutional memory the Indian woman whose lives had intertwined with many of their own.

Her Daughter's Memories

Hannah's 1890 interviews provide an obvious starting point for learning something about her mother's life, as she told reporters a little about her family. "My mother," she informed them, "was Hepsibeth Cross [all other sources give it as Crosman], and she lived on the Hill where Holy Cross now stands [Pakachoag Hill]. She was half Indian and half white, and her father died in the Revolutionary War." Hepsibeth's mother "also died when she was quite young."[9] Hannah identified her own father, Jeffrey Hemenway, as a "mulatto" who "was taken when a boy to Framingham from Boston and given to a Hemenway family there to be raised." The family eventually adopted him; hence his surname.[10] One reporter mentioned that, in contrast to her mother's "pure" Indian blood, Hannah's own "mingled somewhat with the African race."[11] Jeffrey Hemenway was probably triracial—Native, African, and Euro American.[12]

Hannah proudly showed reporters the page in the family Bible where the names and birth dates of Jeffrey and Hepsibeth's children were inscribed, as well as other family treasures in her possession—her father's nutmeg grater that he carried during the Revolutionary War (to grate herb roots, he told his daughter) and her mother's commemorative Independence Day plate. She told reporters that her father fought with George Washington at the battles of Lexington, Bunker Hill, and Concord, which is confirmed in military service records.[13] Hannah told them also that she lived on the same spot where she was born though not in the same house, the old one having burned down in the 1830s. She knew that her father, a trained carpenter, had built the original house and in 1768 had helped build Worcester's Old South Church (other sources indicate that his adoptive uncle, Daniel Hemenway, was master builder for that project). It was likely the church construction job that led Jeffrey to settle permanently in Worcester. As for Hepsibeth, "Mother could do anything and whenever there was any occasion for a girl, mother was called in to help out."[14] In some cases the relationship was reciprocal. "On her birthday anniversary each year for the last 26 years," a reporter noted,

"Aunt Hannah has been in the habit of dining with a few friends at the residence of Mr. William H. Heywood, an old citizen and her neighbor. Mr. Heywood's grandmother was present when Aunt Hannah was born, and dressed her in her first clothes."[15] Hepsibeth Hemenway's services were not limited to domestic functions. "At the first Fourth of July celebration in this city [1789] mother roasted the first pig ever served [for that event] and that famous feast was at the brick tavern which stood on the common where the City Hall now stands," Hannah related. "The people were served on the Common at that feast."[16] (Was she given the commemorative Independence Day plate on this occasion?) Hannah declined to answer questions when she was unsure. "Mother always told us children," she explained, "that it would be a dreadful thing if we died with a lie on our lips."[17] Lastly, Hannah Hemenway recollected that her father was eighty-two when he died. "I wonder he did not die long before that time, he went through so much," she said. And her mother, who did not remarry, died nearly three decades later at the age of eighty-six.[18]

Daughter Hannah's memories, while truthful, were filtered through the selective and softening lens of time. Although she talked freely and proudly of her Indian heritage, her father's war service, her mother's skills, her own strong religious convictions and her prominent position in the First Baptist Parish, the family's long and intimate relationship with their white neighbors the Heywoods, her personal acquaintance with the late and much-revered Governor Levi Lincoln, and the genteel associations she and mother enjoyed as wedding cake makers, research revealed that their lives were distinctly harsher than Hannah's memories had suggested.[19] Like most people of color, the Hemenways were economically marginal. By hiring his labor to others, Jeffrey managed to acquire a couple of acres and build a small house, but he was never able to support his family fully by his own work. Hepsibeth also hired her labor to others in the community, and the children were put out to work at young ages. Hepsibeth held onto the family property after Jeffrey's death, but the heirs who took possession after she died lost it to debt, and it was only by the permission of the new owner that Hannah was able to live out her later years on the homestead.[20] Hepsibeth's story is one of determination and resourcefulness, but it is also, as it is for native people generally in early New England, a narrative of accommodation and adjustment to the Europeans who came to dominate society and culture in ancient Indian homelands.

Indian New England

The region now known as New England was inhabited for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans in the mid-1500s. Numerous tribes and subtribes of aboriginal people lived in a complex and sophisticated relationship with the land and each other. Europeans marvelled at the unspoiled beauty they encountered—a testament to how lightly Indians had used the land—even as they desired to acquire and "improve" it. Indigenous peoples were

exposed to decades of exploration and trade before the English established a permanent colony at Plymouth, in Wampanoag homelands, in 1620. As interest in settlement expanded, agents secured deeds for homelands from tribes who inhabited coastal lands and in Nipmuc or "Nipnak Country," a territory that historically encompassed what is now central Massachusetts, northeastern Connecticut, and northern Rhode Island (fig. 2).

Pakachoag, where Hepsibeth and her ancestors once lived, lay at the heart of Nipmuc Country. Their principal settlement was at Pakachoag Hill in what is now the southerly part of Worcester, with seasonal encampments at Tatasset (now Tatnuck) in the western hills and on the shores of Lake Quinsigamond in the east.[21] According to local historian William Lincoln, between two and three hundred Indians resided in this vicinity when the English laid their plans to establish a town there in 1674.[22] The hundreds of stone artifacts in the Worcester Historical Museum's collections—cooking pots, vessels for eating and lighting, tools, weapons, points, jewelry—that have been found locally over the years attest to the Indians' presence for thou-

Fig. 2. *"An Exact Mapp of New England and New York," by Robert Morden, 1702, reprinted from Cotton Matther,* Magnalia Christi Americana *(1702). "Nipnak Country" is shown just below and right of the center of the map. Photograph by Amanda Richardson, Old Sturbridge Village.*

sands of years before Europeans arrived in the mid-1500s.

By the 1670s the English "Apostle to the Indians," John Eliot, had established fourteen "praying towns" in New England, seven of them in Nipmuc Country, in an effort to convert the Indians to Christian allies and pave the way for European settlement. In 1674 colonial magistrate Daniel Gookin and Reverend Eliot paid a visit to Pakachoag to spread the gospel and to secure a deed to the land.[23] Although here and elsewhere Indians signed deeds granting homelands to outsiders, it was a concept and process that operated wholly outside their understanding of land ownership; English agents achieved this end through grossly unequal trade agreements, deceit, and political and economic manipulation. Native people bridled when they found themselves forcibly displaced from ancestral homelands, and when Wampanoag leader Metacomet led an uprising against the English in June of 1675, many Nipmuc from Pakachoag and other praying towns joined the fighting. The conflict, known as King Philip's War, ended in catastrophic defeat for the Indians. In the Worcester area the Nipmuc population was decimated, as William Lincoln explained, "by the sword, by famine, by violent removal, and by flight."[24] But significant numbers survived, and they lived on the fringes of the English society as they struggled to adapt to and persist in the radically altered social and physical landscape of New England.

Massachusetts colonial officials recognized only a handful of native settlements after the war and set off at those places reservation lands with English overseers to manage the Indians' affairs. Among the recognized communities were the Nipmuc villages at Hassanamesit (Grafton) and Chaubunagungamaug (Dudley-Webster), and the praying town of Natick, established in 1651 by Reverend Eliot and a Massachusetts Indian named Waban for Christian Indians from the various tribes to come together and build an English-style town (see fig. 3). Historians who have studied the overseers' records have found an extraordinary amount of movement among native people after the war, particularly between Hassanamesit and vicinity (including Worcester) and Natick, as well as a pattern of abandonment of the created town of Natick in favor of ancestral tribal homelands.[25]

The Bowmans

Hepsibeth's maternal grandfather, Samuel Bowman, made his way to the Nipmuc homeland of Pakachoag Hill, in what was now the English town of Worcester, shortly after he was named a Natick proprietor in 1719. In an affidavit filed after he died in 1749, at the age of roughly fifty, his heirs stated that "their deceased father lived in Worcester and places adjacent for more than twenty years before his death."[26] Historian Jean O'Brien concluded from studying the overseers' records that Samuel's "abandonment of the [Natick] community was quite conscious and appeared to be complete.... Because of this seemingly broken connection, his heirs thought of

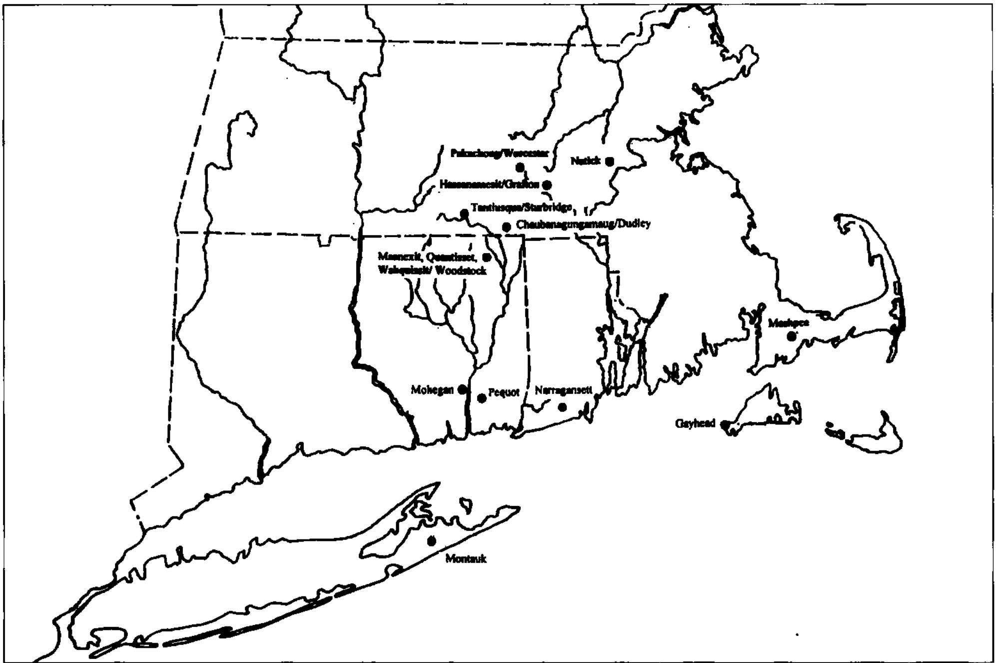


Fig. 3. *Map of southern New England showing the location of some Native American groups. Drawn by the author.*

themselves as 'strangers' to Natick, consciously distanced from the community and 'naturalized' to Worcester."[27] Samuel's tribal association was Nipmuc. His descendants living in Worcester and recorded in Indian Commissioner John Milton Earle's 1861 report were officially associated with the nearby Hassanamisco Nipmucs, and descendants today share this tribal identity.[28]

Samuel was likely a great-grandson of William Bowman, who in 1656 was "of Natick" but prior to that year resided on land that eventually became part of Framingham. Josiah Temple explained in his *History of Framingham,* "Our Indians were known by the general name of Nipnets, or Nipmucks, and the region hereabouts was for a long period called in deeds and official records, 'the Nipmug Country.'"[29] He added that the Indians who formed communities in the area had moved there from Hassanamesit and other older Nipmuc settlements. William Bowman was one of ten Indians who signed a deed of sale to English settlers at Framingham under the guidance of Daniel Gookin in 1656.

Probate records suggest that when Samuel Bowman removed to "Worcester and places adjacent" his family lived in traditional native manner, not unusual for Indians in eighteenth-century New England, and he supported them by hiring his labor to English farmers.[30] A slim estate—$40.25 worth of tools and wages due along with his proprietary holdings in Natick—

were his legacies to the next generation.

Probate and overseers' records highlight the varied ways his children negotiated life in English-dominated colonial society.[31] Daughter Betty Equi and her husband Zachariah were "dwellers on land belonging to others" in the southern Worcester County town of Sturbridge, probably living on what was the Nipmuc homeland of Tantiusque. Benjamin Wiser, son of Samuel's deceased daughter Ruth, lived with them.[32] Daughter Martha had married Joseph Pegan, a Nipmuc Indian who owned real estate in Dudley, the English town that included Chaubunagungamaug reservation lands.[33] They lived "in English fashion" and were eager to receive their portion of the estate in order to make material improvements to their property. Son Samuel Bowman Jr. attested that he had learned the "English manner" of husbandry through years of hiring his laborer to farmers, but because he did not have the money to purchase property of his own he decided to return to Natick to live on Indian common lands.[34] Samuel's widow Martha and young daughter Lydia remained in Worcester.

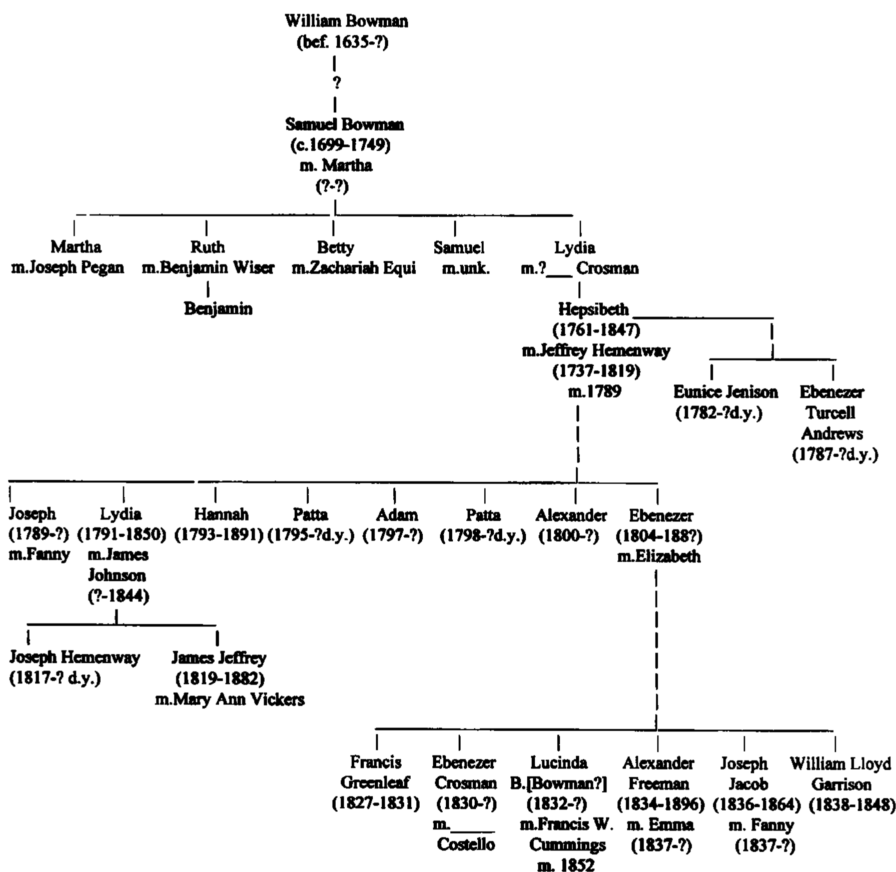
When she reached adulthood Lydia Bowman had a relationship with, and possibly married, a man whose surname was Crosman; their only child, Hepsibeth, was born March 25, 1761.[35] Hannah Hemenway variously told reporters that Hepsibeth was an "Indian maiden" and that she was "half Indian and half white." Hepsibeth's mother was of Nipmuc ancestry and her father may have been partially Indian, possibly the son of Mashpee Indian Dorkus Wicket and a white man named Samuel Croshman recorded in Rhode Island records.[36] Hannah said her father died in the Revolution. His service cannot be confirmed in military records for Massachusetts, though he may have served from another colony.[37] The lack of information on Hepsibeth's father in public records, and the fact that local residents consistently attributed the Bowman surname to her even though she used Crosman, suggests her father was not of Worcester.[38]

Hepsibeth would have been fourteen when her father went off to war and probably in her late teens when he died. Drawing on the general experience of Native Americans at the time, she and her widowed mother Lydia probably supported themselves by gathering wild edibles, cultivating a small patch of ground, hiring their labor to white families, exchanging items they produced for needed supplies, and relying on the good will of others. Local antiquarians related stories of Indians in their communities peddling baskets and woodenware, reseating chairs, weaving mats, working in fields and barns, serving in households, and providing musical entertainment.[39] Some mentioned an understanding that had developed between Anglo-Americans and their Native American neighbors. In Westborough in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries "it was the custom in many families to leave the doors unlocked all night," Harriette Merrifield Forbes explained, so that Indians "could come in at any time and enjoy the comfort of a warm kitchen."[40]

In 1784 Hepsibeth and her mother's economic lives unraveled, and they fell on public relief when Lydia was seized with what proved to be a fatal illness. Minutes for the November town meeting describe their circumstances: "due to William McFarland for mutton delivered to Heps Bow 0.3.6"; "due to Mary Bigelow for boarding Lydia Indian 5.18.0"; "due to Ephriam Miller for two loads of wood delivered to Heps Bowman 0.5.0." Lydia died a pauper that fall. Town officials paid £0.10.0 "to Jedediah Healy for a coffin" for her, and £2.7.3 "to Hepsibeth Bowman for sundries and attendance to her mother." Two years later, Dr. John Green belatedly received £2.0.0 for his services as attending physician.[41]

Hepsibeth, who was twenty-three when her mother died, started life alone on precarious footing; she was an orphan, she had no money, and she had given birth as a single woman in the winter of 1782 and would again in the spring of 1787. No father was named for either child (fig. 4).[42] She may have received public assistance after having had the second baby, as the clerk recorded a payment to her of £0.47.3

FIG. 4 BOWMAN/HEMENWAY GENEALOGY



at the May town meeting. These children most likely died in infancy. In an 1838 affidavit filed on her behalf for a widow's pension, a prominent and wealthy local gentleman named Nathaniel Paine stated, "Hepsibah Hemenway formerly and before her marriage lived as a servant in my father's family in Worcester. . . . She is an industrious woman, and I should put entire confidence in her word."[43] Paine family history places her in that household in 1788.[44] Domestic service in New England was an occupation almost always reserved for single women or mothers whose children were grown and out of the house; the presence of babies generally precluded this avenue of work.[45] In her own affidavit Hepsibeth named her third child, Joseph, as the eldest at the time of her marriage.

Hepsibeth's married life

In November 1789 Hepsibeth, who was twenty-eight, married Jeffrey Hemenway, a fifty-two year old widower with an adult son who lived elsewhere.[46] A pension affidavit filed by one of his cousins provided the wedding date and some details: William Young Esquire of Worcester performed the civil ceremony in a house that Jeffrey had built on Patch (now May) Street, on the southwest fringes of town (fig 5).[47] It stood on two acres of land that he had purchased with his labor from Colonel Ebenezer Lovell two years earlier.[48] The couple resided on Patch Street their entire married life, which lasted nearly thirty years, through the births of eight or ten children and the deaths of two.[49] Hepsibeth may have worked for members of the white community in her youth, and she had lived and worked in at least one white household as a young adult; she was accustomed to navigating her way in the dominant society as an employed single woman. Now she would negotiate life in the midst of that society as a wife and mother. That she was a Nipmuc Indian, a member of the Bowman family who grew up on Pakachoag Hill, was clearly important to her personal identity: she told her children of her heritage, and it passed from generation to generation of her descendants into the present.

An 1825 map of Worcester shows the Hemenway dwelling as one story with a central chimney, a front entry flanked by a window on either side, and one window visible in the gable end (fig. 6). The inventory of Jeffrey's estate, taken in 1819, indicates it was a two-room plan with a garret above and cellar below, a common house form of the time.[50] The language and ordering of the inventory indicates that the west room was a multipurpose space used for meal preparation, food processing, domestic work, dining, entertaining, and sleeping. The inventory and other accounts establish that the east room, or "bed room," served as lodging for boarders and for storage. The garret functioned as sleeping and storage space, and the cellar was used for the storage of such bulky items as casks and tubs. The multipurpose use of the west room was certainly not unique to this household in early nineteenth-century New England, but it was out of step with prevailing cultural values of the times, which placed increasing

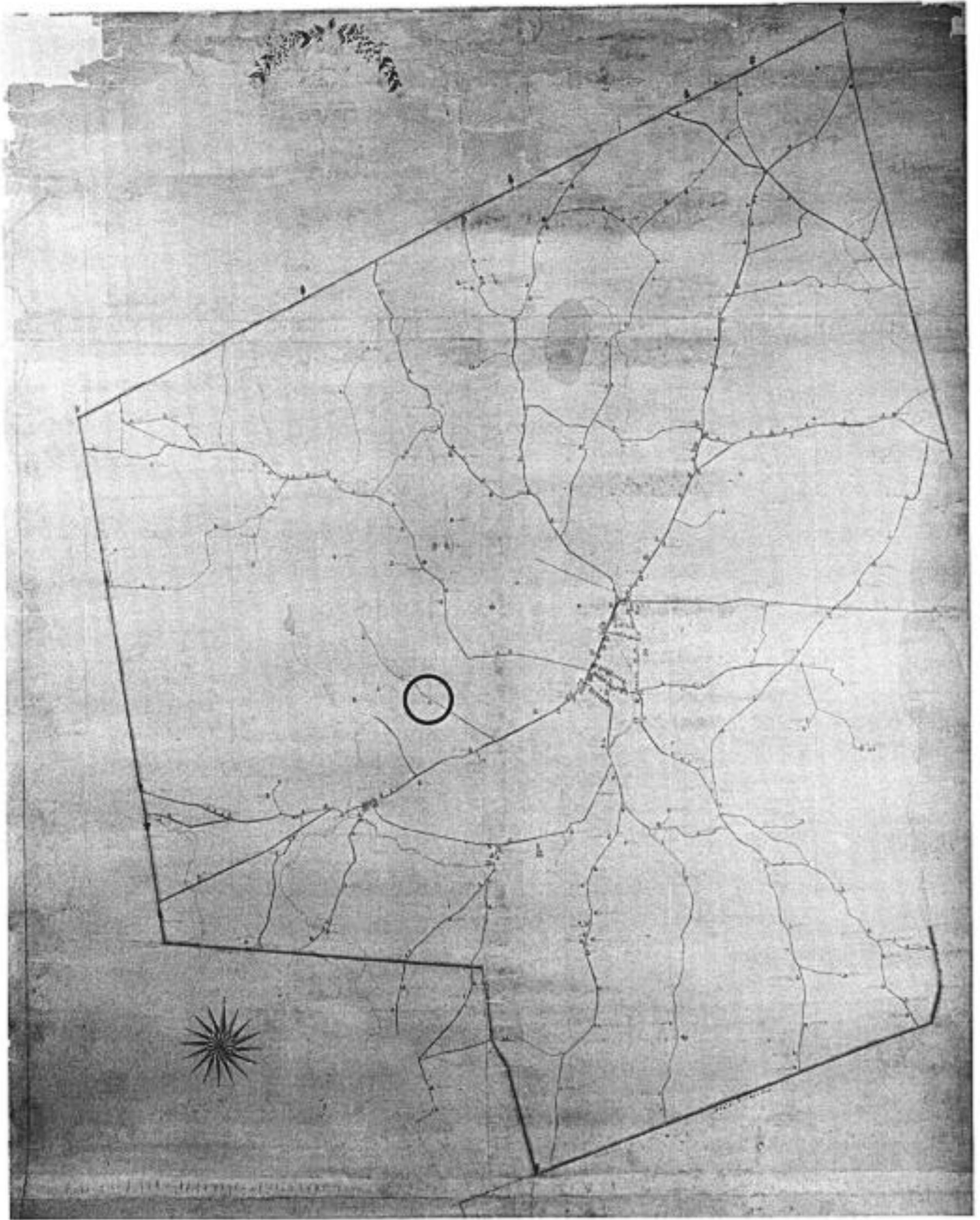


Fig. 5. *Nominative map of Worcester, 1825, drawn by Caleb Butler. A nominative map labels houses with owners' names; the Hemenway house site is circled. Courtesy Worcester Historical Museum.*

emphasis on privacy and on the separation of public and private activities and spaces.[51]

As itemized in the inventory, the Hemenways' accumulated array of furnishings was fairly ordinary and comparable in value to other lower-middling

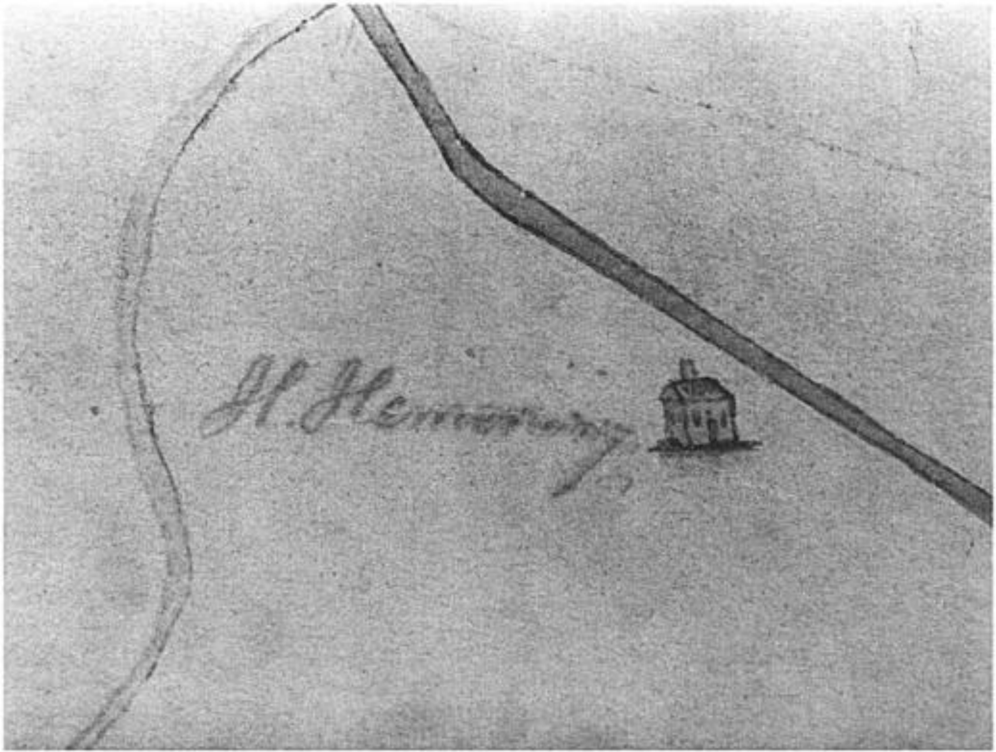


Fig. 6. *Detail of the Hemenway house as shown on Caleb Butler's 1825 Worcester map; courtesy Worcester Historical Museum.*

households of the time.[52] Because Hepsibeth had no home of her own and probably few possessions when she married, many of the items may have dated to Jeffrey's first marriage. Some pieces, including perhaps the tea table, an eighteenth-century furniture form with genteel associations, may have been hand-me-downs from her employers.[53] The house was furnished with three beds and bedsteads (mattresses and wooden frames, valued at $12.00, $5.00, and $4.00) along with ample bedding (sheets, blankets, coverlets, etc., $27.00), a square table ($1.75), a table with drawer ($1.00), a tea table ($3.00), a light stand ($1.00), a chest with drawers ($4.50), three chests (lumped with "lumber" or stored odds and ends at $2.50), five painted chairs ($1.25), nine "old" chairs ($1.00), a looking glass and broken pictures ($.50), hearth equipment, and cooking and eating apparatus. Miscellaneous items listed included six baskets ($1.50), casks in the cellar, a water pail and tubs ($5.50), a loom and large wheel ($4.00), and "corn on the ground and sauce [garden produce]" ($11.00), a hog ($7.00), and Jeffrey's clothing ($2.00).[54] In 1819 the couple's youngest child was fifteen and most probably not at home, though the household may have included their daughter Lydia with her husband and two young children.

Appraisers specified room placement for only some of the items. The most expensive bed and bedstead were located in the east room, the least expensive in the bedroom, and the second-best bed and old chests as well as an assortment of small items and "lumber" (what the appraisers considered junk) were inventoried in the garret. In the cellar they found casks, a water pail, tubs, "etc." It seems likely that the multipurpose west room also contained the square table and five painted chairs for dining, the looking glass, the kitchen work table, hearth equipment, the cooking and eating apparatus, the chest with drawers for clothing and textile storage, and probably the tea table. It is likely too that the bedroom also contained the old chairs, the small pair of "fire dogs" (andirons), and the "light stand," a small table to hold a candle or other lighting device.

For eating and cooking the Hemenways owned an assemblage of "pewter, tin, crockery, & glassware" valued collectively at $5.00, knives and forks valued together with candlesticks and a lamp at $1.50, and cookware including "toaster & gridiron, spider & frying pan, & other iron ware" valued, along with three flatirons, at $7.00. In the eighteenth century when Jeffrey and Hepsibeth set up housekeeping, pewter was the most common tableware in central Massachusetts households. By 1819, however, many families had acquired at least some more fashionable and affordable ceramics. The ordering and relatively low total value of tableware in the inventory intimates that the Hemenways did not make that transition in his lifetime.[55] They did, however, adopt the custom of using knives and forks, a practice that only a minority of rural households embraced in the 1780s and one that was still not universal in the 1810s.[56]

That the Hemenways owned a house and a small amount of real estate that supported limited agriculture, more than one candlestick, a tea table, and knives and forks indicates they were certainly not among the poorest households in town. But the way they lived, crowded into a single multipurpose room with the other ground-floor room reserved, as town records indicate, for boarders, demonstrates that they were a family of limited means.

There is some evidence of the family's economic struggles in public records. At a town meeting in November 1793 officials agreed to abate Jeffrey's taxes of £0.6.3, levied in 1789, because he was "poor."[57] When he applied for a Revolutionary War pension many years later he stated that he needed to collect it "by reason of my reduced circumstances in life and poverty."[58] On at least two occasions and probably far more often, Hepsibeth cared for indigent women to earn extra cash. On one such occasion, in 1809, town officials paid her $11.27 "for boarding & nursing Anne Elder when she lay in & for some clothing being the balance of her account."[59]

There is also the deep evidence of family experience, recorded in published and public sources and in private papers. For nearly all of her adult life Hepsibeth worked as a laundress, among the least desirable and lowest-paying work available to women and generally undertaken

either by people of color or desperately poor whites.[60] "In the best of weather," Jane Nylander explained in her study of domestic life in early New England, "doing laundry meant a day outdoors carrying large quantities of water [fifty gallons or more] in heavy and awkward wooden containers, and tiresome lifting, rubbing, and scrubbing."[61] Hauling and lifting water, and plunging and scrubbing in the near-boiling water left women's skin raw and bleached and their bodies exhausted.[62] Letters written in the early 1800s by a wealthy Worcester gentleman named Stephen Salisbury to his wife, who was visiting in Boston, indicate that in all seasons and even when she had babies at home, Hepsibeth walked the distance of several miles from her house to his mansion to wash or iron.[63] Certainly she would have done this only out of necessity, and surely the Salisburys were not the only affluent Worcester family to employ her in this capacity.

The Hemenway children were put out to work at early ages as well. Hannah told interviewers in 1890 that "when four years old she went barefooted through the woods to school at New Worcester" but "at the age of nine she went out to work" and "did not live much at home" after that.[64] Only families that were poor or broken by death put such young children out, and only families that perpetually struggled financially required such lengthy terms of service from its female members.[65] Early federal census schedules, while imprecise about people of color, indicate the other Hemenway children followed Hannah's pattern.[66] In 1800 four of six children were at home—baby Alexander, two-year-old Patta, three-year-old Adam, and Hannah, who was seven. The older two, Joseph and Lydia, were eleven and nine. Hannah by her own account went out to work in 1802; only three children resided at home in 1810.

Widowhood on Mechanic Street

Jeffrey Hemenway died August 15, 1819, at the age of eighty-two. Assisted by probate clerk Theophilus Wheeler, who was also his executor, he had written his will in 1807. It reflected the common language of the time: after payment of debts, he bequeathed Hepsibeth lifetime use of the remainder of the estate provided she not marry again. If she did, the will stipulated, "she is to have all the goods and estate she brought to me at marriage." At her death or remarriage, his estate became the property of his surviving children in equal shares, "namely Joseph, Lydia, Hannah, Adam, Alexander, and Ebenezer Hemenway, the same to be, to them, their heirs and assigns forever."[67] The executor's account indicates that Jeffrey had few monetary assets but also few debts; no part of the personal estate had to be sold. The small balance after settling, $9.52, went to Hepsibeth to contribute to her support.[68]

Hepsibeth was fifty-eight when she was widowed. By this time all but two of the children had reached adulthood. Her minor sons, nineteen-year-old Alexander and fifteen-year-old Ebenezer, were living and working elsewhere.[69] She no longer had the responsibility of small children, and she had lifetime use of a small estate. But, by his own admission to pension

officials just months before his death, Jeffrey was a poor man; he left no marketable assets, such as fields to rent or livestock to sell.[70] Thus, for Hepsibeth in her widowhood as throughout her life, laboring for others was a necessity.

Fairly soon after her husband's death, Hepsibeth rented the house on the outskirts of town to others and moved to an even smaller dwelling on Mechanic Street. A district school census taken in 1826, the first source of specific information on her whereabouts, listed "Hepsibeth Hemenway, widow" on one of five schedules for the center district.[71] In *The Worcester Village Directory,* published by Clarendon Harris in 1829, she was listed as residing at 24 Mechanic Street in a house owned by the heirs of Daniel Heywood.[72] The directory map (fig. 7) shows that the house stood next to the Mechanic Street burial ground, where Jeffrey Hemenway had been interred. Living there, near boardinghouses and business establishments and within easy walking distance of many wealthy households, placed her nearer to sources of employment. Also, Hepsibeth now resided in an area of town where African and Native American households were so numerous that it was known locally as "Guinea."[73]

Antiquarian essays, property deeds,

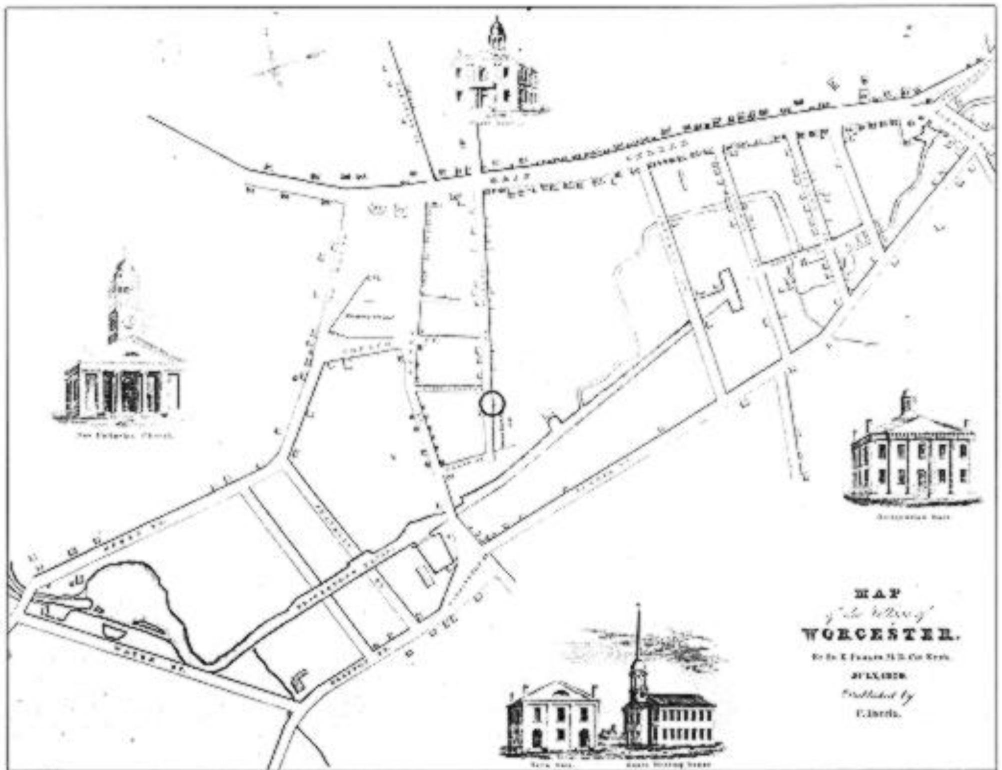


Fig. 7. *Map of Worcester Village, 1829, drawn by Ed. E. Phelps, M.D., published by Clarendon Harris; Hepsibeth Hemenway's Mechanic Street house is circled. Courtesy Worcester Historical Museum.*

and an 1846 oil painting and preliminary sketch by local artist Henry Woodward (figs. 8 and 9) provide information about Hepsibeth's rented quarters. The structure had been built as a mill in the 1780s and was refitted to serve as a dwelling sometime before 1809.[74] It may have had an interim use associated with the burial ground, as it was incorporated into the stone fence built in 1796 to enclose the graveyard: the west wall abutted the northwest corner of the house, and the south wall that ran along Mechanic Street adjoined the building's southeast corner. Writing in 1897, nearly twenty years after the entire area had been torn down and rebuilt, Frederick Stiles remembered the house as sited "partly under the rise of land joining the burying-ground. A part of it was two stories in height, and sometime had been painted red."[75] The part he described as two stories was actually a walk-out cellar on the down side of the slope. The chimney, most likely added when the structure was converted from shop to house, was built in the northeast corner along the north eave side. The main floor was several feet above ground level, reached by steps that began outside and may have continued within.[76] The building was small, measuring roughly fifteen by eleven feet (based on a window width of two-and-a-half feet). The cellar below, Frederick Stiles explained, was rented separately to other tenants.

Although her rented quarters were small, Hepsibeth provided shelter for family and possibly others and lived with the commotion of children around her as well as other tenants below.[77] In the 1830s Frederick Stiles recalled, "Hepsy Heminway and her daughter, Hannah" as well as "Ebenezer, Hepsy's son" lived on the main floor. In the lower part lived Edmond Connor, "a somewhat noted character of the town."[78] In the 1826 district school census, two women of color were listed in Hepsibeth's household, herself and probably her daughter Hannah, who lived off and on for decades with her mother when between employment in other households. The Connor family, who lived in the walk-out cellar, numbered six, including two young boys. When in 1828 Hepsibeth's son Ebenezer returned from Boston with his wife and child, they moved in with his mother in what proved to be a permanent arrangement. In 1830 Ebenezer's family included a newborn and two toddlers. Over the next eight years, five more babies were born and the eldest two died. The manuscript census schedule for 1840 indicates that Ebenezer and his wife Betsey kept their children at home, meaning there were as many as nine people including four adults crowded into the first floor of the tiny house. In 1845 widowed daughter Lydia Johnson joined the household and worked alongside her mother as a laundress as much as her deteriorating health would permit. She was living there when her mother died.

Hepsibeth spent the remainder of her days in the Mechanic Street house, working as a laundress, cook, and a maker of wedding cakes (fig. 10). A dispute over the future of the Mechanic Street burial ground that erupted near the close of her life in the 1840s captured Hepsibeth at her

Fig. 8. *Preliminary sketch for burial ground painting, 1846, pencil, by Henry Woodward; courtesy Worcester Historical Museum.*

Fig. 9. *Mechanic Street burial ground, 1846, oil on canvas by Henry Woodward; courtesy Worcester Historical Museum.*

most tedious work. Area residents agitating to remove the burial ground and the adjoining building in order to put the land to more profitable use complained that children played noisily amidst the headstones, men rested upon the walls to enjoy a smoke or chat, and, apparently adding insult to injury, "'it is seldom that one can pass along the lower end of Mechanic street without seeing clotheslines heavy

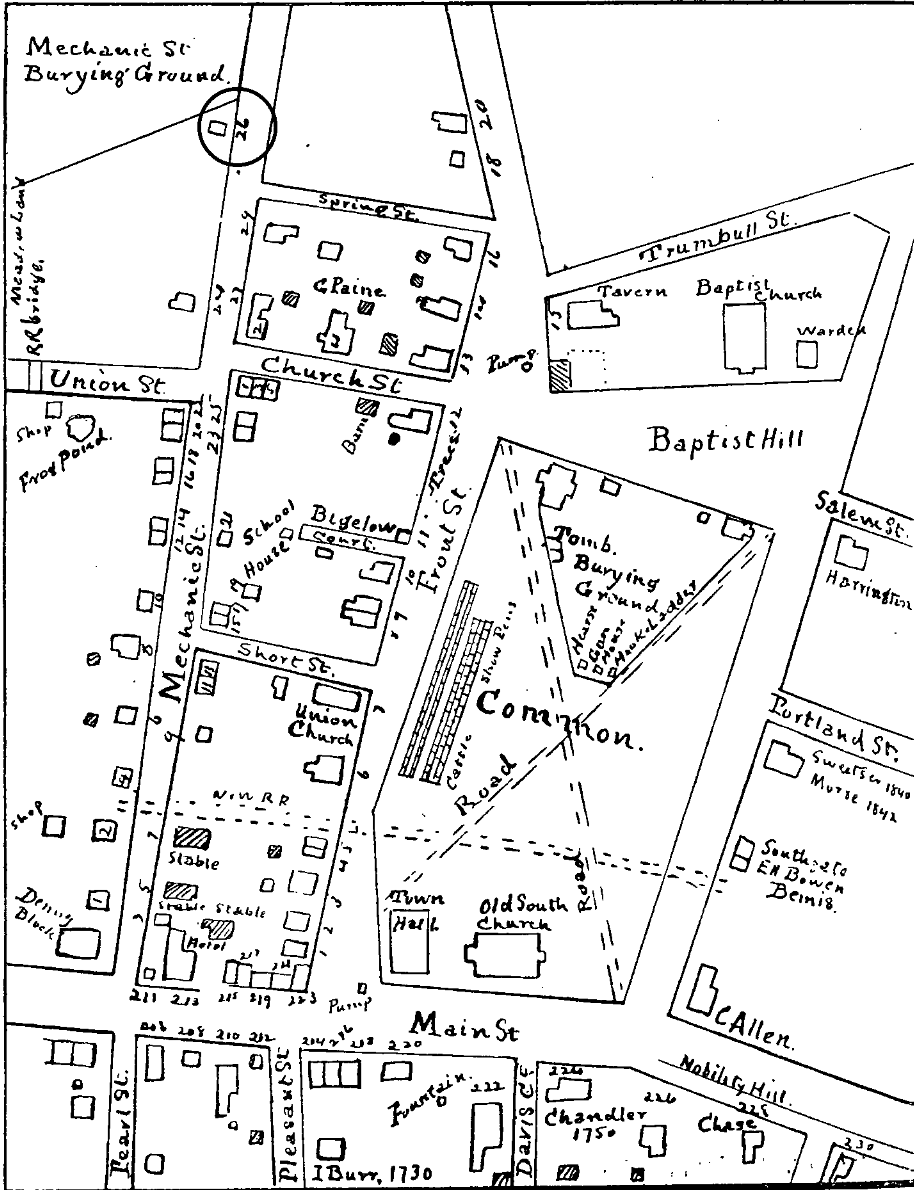


Fig. 10. *"A Rough Diagram of the Common and Adjacent Streets, 1839-43," by Nathaniel Paine; Hemenway's house is circled. Courtesy Worcester Historical Museum.*

laden swinging in all directions over the graves.'"[79] Indeed, Henry Woodward's 1846 painting and sketch show clotheslines strung within the graveyard's walls behind Hepsibeth's house, filled with laundry swinging (in only one direction) over the burial ground. The Reverend George Allen wrote an editorial rebuking the would-be developers for their lack of respect for the dead, as well as for their living relations, and pleading particular compassion for Hepsibeth Hemenway. Although laced with the "last Indian" rhetoric of the times, his editorial revealed a respect for Hepsibeth.

And yet, if we might . . . intercede for any, it would be worthy "old Hepsy," whose dwelling joins death's door, that she may still enter the grave-yard in peace, and a little longer stretch her brief line from tree to tree, in its most unsettled corner. It is only asking for a little patience for the last remnant of a tribe that have vanished away like the forests where they chased the panther and the deer. The fourscore and five years that have so bent her tall frame, and crippled her queenly step, plead much better than we that none molest or make her afraid. Soon in the sure course of nature her not 'heavy laden' clothesline will be missing, with herself: but while she stays, perhaps a few months more, let her enjoy quietly her little privilege above the graveyard's turf, and, if she chooses, let her at last sleep beneath it, in the silent neighborhood of her own generation, till the dead, both small and great, out of every tribe and nation, shall rest together. Then, when the distinctions and rivalries of earth shall be over, her work having been done and well done, shall she walk erect or grateful bow in that ever spotless robe, the gift of him who, as she trusts, hath "loved her and washed her from her sins in his own blood."[80]

Where Hepsibeth may have acquired the skills of her other occupations, cooking and wedding cake making, can only be suggested. Probably her mother Lydia taught her to cook, but aside from the 1789 pig roast celebration on the Common there is no definitive information on where and for whom Hepsibeth cooked. It is likely that she prepared meals when she worked as a domestic servant in the Paine family, as kitchen work was often relegated to help. That she was asked to roast the pig for the first Fourth of July suggests she may have established her reputation as a "great cook" by that time. It seems plausible that she prepared food for some of the elegant parties and dinners that were very much a part of Worcester's upper-class social life. The annual agricultural fair attracted people from all parts of the county and was always an occasion for elite households to give lavish dinner parties for out-of-town friends.[81] Prominent politicians such as Governor Levi Lincoln, who hosted the Marquis de Lafayette in 1824 and who was renowned for his generous hospitality, regularly entertained visiting dignitaries with large dinner or breakfast parties.[82] The city's industrial leaders, who emerged as a significant class by the 1830s, undoubtedly hosted dinners and teas in their newly built mansion houses to meet social and business obligations. Also, weddings in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, *if* they were held as public events (and many were not), were a

time for hearty feasting and dancing.[83] When Hannah said her mother was called in to help whenever there was "an occasion for a girl" she was probably referring to the preparation of wedding feasts.

Changing wedding customs in early nineteenth-century New England help to explain her becoming "an excellent hand at making wedding cakes."[84] Typically in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, couples wed at the home either of the bride or the presiding official in informal ceremonies that were attended by friends and neighbors and followed by a multicourse meal and revelry that could continue all night. Worcester resident Louisa Clap Trumbull, whose great-grandfather was a justice of the peace in colonial Rutland, Massachusetts, recorded this tradition in her journal.

> I have heard my mother often relate the wedding scenes which she witnessed at her grandfathers. He would say *Betty* we shall have a wedding tonight, the clean apron was tied on, room neatly arranged, the fire plentifully supplied. . . . The custom was for people to ride on horseback, as the roads were not safe for any kind of carriage. The company were in couples two on each horse. A pillion was the stately throne of the bride and with her arm around the waist of her future lord and master. She was the first of a procession often twenty in number. They all came double as this was both more convenient and social. . . . After the ceremony they went through the custom of salutation, each maiden from the groom and the bride from all the males. After this was ended the bride and her lord again led the way and their destined home or the one she had left was the place where a *good frolick* and dance were organized.[85]

As New Englanders moved west in the nineteenth century they continued these traditions unimpeded by the gradual refinement of weddings back home.[86] But beginning as early as 1800 among New England's elite families, ceremonies became smaller, entertainment more formal, and refreshments more delicate. By 1820 these new, genteel customs had become widely accepted at least in the more established parts of the region.[87] With this shift, Jane Nylander has explained, the "wedding cake became the culinary feature of these receptions instead of the variety of meats and pies served previously."[88] A formal reception followed the ceremony, at which the hosts (friends or family of the newlyweds) served wine and wedding cake, carried around to guests who were sometimes seated in rooms that were segregated by gender. A young Worcester gentleman named Christopher Columbus Baldwin described the rituals of a polite wedding reception in an 1829 diary entry.

> The new married couple take a sort of military position in one corner of the room, flanked with the bride's maids and bride's *men*, and the person introducing their friends, receives them at the door and leading them up, announces their names. . . . Usually before ten, the company retires, after having drank [*sic*] wine and eaten the wedding cake. It is customary to make a free use of the cake, and a large quantity of letter paper is furnished for individuals who may wish for it, to wrap up a piece of the cake in, to carry

home. Some want it for friends, some to eat it, and others to put it under their pillows to sleep on, *thinking it may produce* new matches.[89]

The amount of cake required for such wedding receptions could be considerable. For the marriage of the youngest daughter of the late George Crowninshield in 1816, a guest estimated that the wedding cake exceeded 130 pounds. For an 1821 wedding in Newburyport preparations including baking more than two hundred pounds of cake. To make such enormous quantities of the confection required deft use of the bake oven (the temperature gradually drops after embers used to heat it have been removed) in addition to culinary and decorative skills. The widely popular early nineteenth-century advice writer Lydia Maria Child provided recipes for wedding cakes that weighed approximately fourteen pounds, perhaps the amount she believed was sufficient for a small, private wedding celebration.

While the recipe that Hepsibeth used remains unknown, typically a wedding cake was a rich fruit cake with a white glaze icing.[90] Although there is no surviving record to indicate what Hepsibeth's famed wedding cakes looked like, an 1821 account describes one. "Its garb was purely white; Paradisical grains were scattered over its surface, & it was studded with gilded almonds. In the centre towered a beautiful collection of artificial flowers & round its body was a wreath of laurel."[91] As Hepsibeth was long remembered as a "skillful" confectioner who "made nearly all the wedding cakes for the prominent people" in her days, she probably decorated her masterpieces with comparable flair.[92]

Hepsibeth may in fact have developed her skills as a wedding cake maker at the urging of the families who employed her, as "occasions for a girl" switched from a wedding feast to cake and wine. Sketchy evidence suggests she started in this new occupation before she moved to Mechanic Street, just as genteel wedding customs had won widespread acceptance. One reporter who interviewed Hannah in 1890 mentioned that although fire destroyed much of the original dwelling, "the old fireplace and oven where she and her mother made the wedding cakes are still in the house, but the fireplace is covered over and is never used."[93] In the *Gazette* article of 1890 as well as in a published obituary from 1891, mention of the hearth and its use for baking wedding cakes was coupled with the explanation that after Jeffrey's death Hepsibeth "came into possession of the house," raising the possibility of a link between his passing and her pursuing a new line of work.

Adopting this new line of work may have prompted Hepsibeth to tell the census taker in 1826 that she was a "confectioner." The schedule for the district school census included the usual informational categories found on federal schedules—names of heads of household followed by columns to categorize family members by age and gender, with a separate and abbreviated schedule to categorize people of color. It also asked for occupations of male heads of household

(female heads of household were identified only by their marital status), whether their houses were one or two stories and made of brick or wood, whether they owned mills, offices, shops, or manufactories, and, if so, how many people they employed. On the list for Hepsibeth's section of the center district, men reported a wide range of white- and blue-collar jobs, but no male identified himself as a confectioner. Yet the summary of occupations in the right-hand margin included one confectioner.

In city directories, first published in 1844, Hepsibeth gave her occupation as laundress (1844), cook (1845), and wedding cake maker (1847). Reverend Allen's essay and Henry Woodward's painting, which both date to 1846, indicate that at the very least she was washing until the last year of her life. However, listing herself as a wedding cake maker in 1847 suggests that for Hepsibeth this more genteel occupation finally defined her role in Worcester society.

Hepsibeth Hemenway died February 17, 1848, at the age of eighty-six. The heirs—daughters Lydia and Hannah and son Ebenezer—requested that the court appoint Isaac Davis, a prominent Worcester attorney and politician, as administrator of her estate. On June 5, 1847, he reported, "I certify that I have made diligent search for the estate and property of said Hepsibeth Hemenway and found . . . she had only lifetime interest in it [her husband's real estate] and her pension I found to belong to her heirs and finding no property or estate for the appraisers, I did not take the time to make any returns on this warrant."[94] But in September 1848 he learned that she had ninety-nine dollars on deposit at the Worcester County Institute for Savings. By this time her outstanding debts also had come to his attention. Now hastening to settle her affairs, he filed on the first Tuesday of October his "first & final account." Davis paid sundry debts amounting to $49.87 and $17.84 worth of settlement expenses, such as preparing court papers and the cost of travel to the pension office in Boston, charged the estate $31.29 for his time, and balanced the account at zero.

The Portrait

Isaac Davis found "no property or estate for the appraisers" to inventory because she had only lifetime use of whatever had belonged to her husband (which would include any household items purchased during their married life) and because she had given any personal property of her own to her children during her lifetime. This included the commemorative Independence Day plate that daughter Hannah showed reporters in 1890 and the portrait, which was in Hannah's possession when she died in 1891.

The schedule of accounts settled suggests that Hepsibeth commissioned a local artisanal painter to do her portrait. In addition to payments of $3.37 to Henry H. Heywood's dry goods store, $4.74 to shoemaker William W. Patch, $5.25 to carpenter John Mann, a total of $8.70 to laborers Robert Ridler and William L. Smith, $8.50 to coffin maker William G. Maynard, and $10.00 to her neighbor

Luther Gunn, who operated a livery stable, Davis paid Mills (or Miles) & Wilder the sum of $9.30.[95] City directories include "Thomas Wilder, portrait painter," one of only two living in the city in 1847, and James Mills and Jonas M. Miles, both listed as "carpenter," or framemakers.[96] The sum owed is appropriate for an inexpensive, framed oil portrait in the 1840s.[97] That the debt was not yet settled suggests Hepsibeth sat for the painting shortly before her death, coinciding with her listing "wedding cake maker" as her primary occupation.[98] She may in fact have been among the painter's first local clients, as Thomas Wilder settled in Worcester in 1846.

Having her likeness painted was a bold step for someone of Hepsibeth's economic level. Once the sole province of the elite, portraiture had greatly democratized in the early nineteenth century. Entrepreneurial "artisanal" painters (as opposed to academically trained artists) were settling in villages and traveling the countryside, advertising themselves as portrait painters, often offering likenesses at a variety of prices and quality. Very inexpensive, flat portraits could be had for two or three dollars, while figured, contoured portraits such as Hepsibeth's were considerably more costly; in her case she saved money by opting for no background detail or props.[99] Because of these entrepreneurial painters, historian Jack Larkin has explained, "there was an explosion in the painting of such portraits throughout New England between 1800 and 1850."[100] For the first time large numbers of ordinary folks were leaving visual representations behind. Careful analysis of a group of "ordinary" sitters in Worcester County who could be identified, however, revealed that for the most part they were from the upper-middling ranks, individuals or members of families engaged in commercial and professional occupations. As Larkin explained, "farmers, craftsmen, and their families were greatly underrepresented," and the working class hardly represented at all.[101] A relatively inexpensive portrait like Hepsibeth's represents roughly a week's work for a common farm laborer in the 1840s and more than a month's work for a domestic servant.[102] As a skilled baker in high demand, Hepsibeth certainly earned more than household help, but women generally were paid at significantly lower rates than men. The framed portrait at $9.30 was a substantial investment for her.

Hepsibeth's portrait can best be thought of as her legacy to succeeding generations. It is a symbol of her rise from the ranks of the ordinary working class to a more refined status through her work associations and evidence of the empowerment she must have experienced by the close of her life. Though she lived in rented quarters in a less-than-genteel part of town and owned little or nothing, Hepsibeth was proud of who she was and what she had achieved, and she wanted to be remembered. She was an Indian who in her widowhood provided shelter and security for her children and grandchildren, and with her expert culinary skills she filled a specialty niche in the cultural world of the wealthy, thus earning the patronage and appreciation of Worcester's

most elite families.

Ebenezer Hemenway wrote a eulogy poem expressing deep affection for his deceased mother in words that highlight Hepsibeth's unfailing maternal love and devotion. Preserved among family records, the verse reads in part:

The last tear I shed was the warm one that fell
When I kissed my dear mother and bade her
farewell;
When I saw the deep anguish impressed on her
face,
And felt for the last time a mother's's
embrace. . . .

Ah! years of endurance have vanished, and now
There is pain in my heart, there is care on my
brow;
The visions of hope and of fancy are gone,
And cheerless I travel life's pathway alone. . . .
There's none here to love me; there is no love
like thine.[103]

The memory of Hepsibeth Hemenway as a great cook and an excellent hand at making wedding cakes was retained in local knowledge nearly fifty years after she died, testament to the important role this Indian woman played in the community.

Ironically, the portrait's central meanings for Hepsibeth were forgotten or overlooked after it moved out of family hands. The celebration of personal achievement that it represents had been disassociated from the painting by the time it was donated to the museum. Rather it came with the association that she was the "mother of Aunt Hannah Hemenway," shifting the focus to the next generation and giving it meaning within the context of the white community's remembrances of the wedding cake makers. Further, the fact that the portrait depicts a Nipmuc woman was not recorded in the librarian's records of donations. The painting's significance in both respects was all but lost, even as Hepsibeth Hemenway made sure through her stories that her children knew who she was and where she came from, and even as she left them this legacy of her perseverance and success.

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Notes

The author would like to thank Hepsibeth Hemenway's great-great-great-great grandson Richard Massey for his assistance with this study and Worcester Historical Museum director William Wallace for institutional support.

1. Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in*

Balleymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 649.

2. Henry Glassie, "The Practice and Purpose of History," *Journal of American History* 81(December 1994): 961-68.
3. *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity for the Year 1895* 7 (1896): 313. I am grateful to museum librarian Theresa Davitt for finding this information. "Aunt" was a term of endearment for well-known elderly persons.
4. "Obituaries for 1891," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity for the Year 1891* 6 (1892): 177.
5. "Famous for Bridal Cake. Oldest Cook in Worcester is Aged 97," *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.
6. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.
7. "She Saw Lafayette. Aunt Hannah Hemenway's Recollections," *Worcester Gazette,* Mar. 15, 1890. The same information was repeated in the *Worcester Telegram* article of Aug. 28, 1890, and again in the *Telegram* on Dec. 8, 1891, six days after her death. Another article from an unidentified newspaper appearing shortly after her funeral focused on her influential role in the First Baptist Parish (established 1812) and the fact that Hannah's passing marked the demise of its founding members. The writer observed, "No person living had so long been connected with the church; she was the link that bound the present with the past." Biography clippings file, Worcester Historical Museum Research Library, Worcester, Mass., and obituaries clippings file, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.
8. Docket #13525, Worcester County Probate Records (hereafter cited as WCPR), Series B, Office of Probate, Worcester County Court House, Worcester, Mass. Research in local newspapers did not turn up a notice of the auction or a record of purchasers. Notices for auctions of more substantial estates ($300 or more; Hannah's was worth only $27.85) were listed regularly under court news; in no case were auction results reported.
9. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.
10. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890. This is confirmed in Josiah H. Temple, *History of Framingham, Massachusetts* (published by the town, 1887), 587. Temple noted that Ebenezer Hemenway Jr.'s wife Mary had been taken captive by Indians in infancy and redeemed in girlhood. From her children's birth dates, there is no possibility that Jeffrey was her biological son. Jeffrey's Indian identity has passed to the present generation through family stories. Checking racial assignations in published vital records (which end at 1850) for persons known to be of mixed Indian/African parentage has shown that town clerks variously used the terms "mulatto," "colored," "African," "Negro," or "Indian." The choice of an appropriate descriptive was subjective.
11. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.
12. Genealogical research in progress suggests Jeffrey may be the biological son of a member of the Quitticus family, who resided near his adoptive parents.
13. Jeffrey Hemenway's military records indicate he enlisted on Apr. 24, 1775, and served for three months and fifteen days in the fifth regiment in the company of Captain Thomas Drury under the direct

command of Captain John Nixon, who commanded a company of minutemen who were among the forces at Bunker Hill. He served for the duration of the war. Massachusetts, Secretary of the Commonwealth, *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the War of the Revolution* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1900), 7: 702, 707; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of the Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Rare Book Shop Publishing Co., Inc., 1914), 414.

14. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.
15. William Heywood's grandmother, Abigail Chamberlain Heywood, was Hepsibeth's immediate neighbor during her married life. Hannah's host for this quarter-century tradition was twenty-four years her junior.
16. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Hannah talked freely of her Indian heritage but did not elaborate at all on her African descent. She stated that she remembered Governor Lincoln "very well and shook hands and often spoke with him." *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.
20. In 1851 Hannah and her brother Ebenezer mortgaged the property to local carpenter Jerome Billings. He sold the mortgage to physician John Green who in 1865 foreclosed for nonpayment. Books 603/252 & 253; possession, Book 705/274, Worcester County Deeds (hereafter cited as WCD), Office of the Registry of Deeds, Worcester County Court House, Worcester, Mass.
21. William Lincoln, *A History of Worcester, Massachusetts, from Settlement to 1836* (1837; reprint, Worcester: William Hersey, 1862), 16-17.
22. Lincoln, *History of Worcester,* 23.
23. Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England [1674]," in Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections,* 1st ser., I (1792): 192-93; *Abstract of Early Land Titles* (Worcester, Mass.: Worcester Society of Antiquity, 1907), 80-81; Lincoln, *History of Worcester,* 16-17.
24. Lincoln, *History of Worcester,* 31.
25. Jean M. O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 162-67; Daniel Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), Chap. 3. Indians at Natick lived in relative isolation from Europeans until 1713, when peace with France resulted in the expansion of English settlement into Natick and vicinity. In 1719 villagers decided to name proprietors—nineteen men and one woman presumably from long-established families—in order to secure land titles and boundaries protected under colonial law. But as the English population increased, native people who became disaffected with the experimental community abandoned it. For early studies of the recognized Nipmuc settlements, see John E. Lynch, "The Dudley or Pegan Indians," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity* 5 (1890): 23-48, and Frank Speck, "A Note on the Hassanamisco Band of Nipmuc," *Massachusetts Archaeological Society Bulletin* 4 (1943): 49-55.
26. Massachusetts Colonial Records, 1749 (hereafter cited as MCR), Massachusetts Archives, Boston, 32: 6-7. Samuel died

Mar. 21, 1749.

27. O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees,* 165.
28. John Milton Earle, *State of Massachusetts, Senate Report No. 96, to Governor and Council, Concerning the Indians of the Commonwealth, under the Act of April 6, 1859* (Boston: William White, 1861), lv. Because of the official system in place, Earle could not designate them simply "Nipmuck." They had to belong to a sanctioned community, either the Hassanamisco or the Dudley Indians.
29. Temple, *History of Framingham,* 58.
30. WCPR, Series A, Book 3/103. Historian Daniel Mandell has concluded that "wigwams dominated native villages from Natick to Gayhead in the middle of the [eighteenth] century." *Behind the Frontier,* 61. Antiquarians writing in the nineteenth century often included descriptions of Indians living in nonwestern manner. For example, Harriette Merrifield Forbes mentioned that in her town of Westborough an Indian named Joseph Aaron lived alone in the swamp weaving baskets and working as a hired hand to make a living. Another Indian named Simon Gigger lived "in a hut built of stones, the walls being two feet thick at the base and gradually growing narrower at the top. It sloped from the bottom to the ridge-pole; the stones were covered with sods and branches of trees. In the top was a hole to let out the smoke from the wood-fire blazing underneath. A plank for a table comprised the furniture." Afterwards he lived on the Old Mill Road in "a kind of wigwam" that he shared with Bets Hendricks and Deb Brown. Also, "there was a family of Indians living on John Belknap's old place at Rocklawn, in a kind of dug-out in the side of the hill. It was enclosed by stone walls, covered by sods, with grass growing on the roof. The door was about four feet square." She mentioned that Wamesit Indians who returned to Marlborough sometime after King Philip's War settled near the borders of Williams Pond, where they "built their wigwams near some immense chestnut-trees"; in 1889 the field still bore the name "wigwam yards." Harriette Merrifield Forbes, *The Hundredth Town: Glimpses of Life in Westborough, Mass.,* 1717-1817 (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1889), 173-83.
31. MCR, 1749-1753, 32: 6-7, 316-318, 607. Although the documentary trail does not specifically name Lydia, family history has it that Lydia was the daughter of Samuel and Martha and resided at Pakachoag. Indian genealogist Lorraine Rainwaters Henry has also reached this conclusion from extensive study of available documentation. Unlike her siblings, who had all reached adulthood, Lydia would have been a child of around ten years old in 1749. Perhaps in the heirs' petitions to sell Natick proprietary lands the child's interests were subsumed in her mother's.
32. The probate judge ordered that as "Betty Equi daughter of said deceased, having hitherto taken care of Benjamin Wiser, the only child of Ruth Bowman, deceased & daughter of said deceased, and she engaging to take of him for the future I order the child's part to be paid her." WCPR, Book 3/258.
33. In the nineteenth century members of the Chaubunagungamaug band of Nipmucs were also known as Dudley or Pegan Indians. Their reservation lands were in

that part of Dudley that was set off to create the industrial town of Webster in 1832.

34. Natick records indicate that Samuel Bowman Jr. died sometime before 1759. O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees,* 165.
35. Bureau of Indian Affairs historian Virginia DeMarce has seen a reference to a Mr. Crosman marrying a Lydia Barnes in Worcester County, possibly this couple. The Worcester town clerk did not record a marriage for them. Hepsibeth's birth date was provided by her youngest son Ebenezer in a footnote to a eulogy written on the occasion of her death.
36. This information was supplied by Indian genealogist Lorraine Rainwaters Henry.
37. A Robert Crosman from Bristol County died in 1782; a William Crosman served in a Worcester unit under the command of Timothy Bigelow, but he was discharged, not killed.
38. In minutes of town meetings she was called "Bow" or "Bowman." In her death record the town clerk identified Hepsibeth as the daughter of Lydia Bowman, suggesting this association was necessary for her identity. There is no death record for her father, which often happens for people only fleetingly in a community (and also commonly happens for people of color such as Lydia, whose death was recorded in town meeting records only because the town incurred expenses due to her poverty).
39. See excerpted references in Donna Keith Baron, J. Edward Hood, and Holly V. Izard, "They Were Here All Along: The Native American Presence in Lower Central New England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 53 (July 1996): 560-86; Marge Bruchac, "Indians in 1830s New England" (Research report, Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Mass., 1997); correspondence in the John Milton Earle Papers, Manuscript Collection, American Antiquarian Society; Forbes, *The Hundredth Town;* "Indian Families Who Lived in this Vicinity," *The Warren Herald,* June 18, 1897; Alice Morse Earle, *Stage Coach and Tavern Days* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1922); J. H. Temple and George Sheldon, *History of the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts* (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1875); John Packard De Forest, *History of the Indians of Connecticut* (Hartford, Conn.: W. J. Hamersley, 1851); John Avery, *History of the Town of Ledyard* (Norwich, Conn.: Noyes & Davis, 1901); Lydia Huntley Sigourney, *Sketch of Connecticut, Forty Years since* (Hartford: Oliver D. Cooke & Sons, 1894).
40. Forbes, *The Hundredth Town,* 186. See also *Warren Herald,* June 18, 1897, and Earle, *Stage Coach and Tavern Days,* 94.
41. Franklin P. Rice, ed., *Records of Town Meetings, 1784-1800* (Worcester, Mass.: Worcester Society of Antiquity, 1890), 30-32, 91.
42. Eunice Jenison was born Jan. 5, 1782, and Ebenezer Turcell Andrews Mar. 4, 1787, to Hepsibeth Crosman. Franklin P. Rice, *Vital Records for Worcester, Massachusetts, to the Year 1849* (hereafter cited as *WVR*) (Worcester, Mass.: Worcester Society of Antiquity, 1894).
43. Massachusetts Pension Records (hereafter cited as MPR), Case #W19757, Military Files, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
44. Nathaniel Paine (1759-1840) was a son of Timothy (1730-1793) and Sarah Chandler (1727-1811) Paine, a family at the pinnacle

of old Worcester aristocracy. After enduring public humiliation as a colonial official because of his strong British sympathies, Timothy voluntarily went into exile during the Revolution. But he returned with his wife and family in 1788 and resumed his place among Worcester's elite. His house, known as "The Oaks," is preserved by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

45. Holly V. Izard, "The Ward Family and Their 'Helps': Domestic Work, Workers, and Relationships on a New England Farm, 1787-1866," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society,* 103 (1993): 61-90, and Faye Dudden, *Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983).
46. Their marriage date was erroneously listed as Nov. 3, 1792, in the *WVR.* Though it was not included in the published vital records, the town clerk recorded their marriage intentions on Dec. 13, 1788, a copy of which Hepsibeth filed with pension officials. She told them that she and Jeffrey lived together for a year after announcing their intentions, and then married. MPR. According to his youngest son, Jeffrey Hemenway was born July 15, 1737 (not recorded). He married first Susanna Wright of Framingham (not recorded), and they had Thaddeus, born Feb. 22, 1761, and Susanna, born Jan. 15, 1768. Mother and daughter died in a smallpox epidemic about 1770.
47. Affidavit of Jonas Hemenway, MPR.
48. The deed was signed Mar. 9, 1787, and recorded Nov. 9, 1809, Book 171/86, WCD.
49. Hannah told reporters that she was the fifth of ten children, eight of whom survived to adulthood. *WVR* includes the names of eight (see fig. 4). Spacing between births is, for the most part, a little over two years, with four years between the last two. Two babies were named Patta and both died young. In his will written in 1807, Jeffrey named his heirs as Joseph, Lydia, Hannah, Adam, Alexander, and Ebenezer.
50. Inventory, WCPR, Series A, Book 51/411. For an overview of Worcester County housing stock based on the manuscript schedules of the 1798 Federal Direct Tax, see Michael P. Steinitz, "Landmark and Shelter: Domestic Architecture in the Cultural Landscape of the Central Uplands of Massachusetts" (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, 1988).
51. Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); Edward Chappell, "Housing a Nation: The Transformation of Living Standards in Early America," in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century,* eds. Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 167-232; Kevin M. Sweeney, "High-Style Vernacular: Lifestyles of the Colonial Elite," in *Of Consuming Interests,* 1-58. Separation of public and private spaces certainly occurred unevenly in New England, influenced by factors such as date of settlement, local economy, and level of connections to port cities and the wider world. As soon as possible, settlers separated processing and cooking from other activities. See Robert Blair St. George, "'Set Thine House in Order': The Domestication of the Yeomanry in Seventeenth-Century New England," in *New England*

Begins: The Seventeenth Century (Boston, Mass.: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), 2: 159-352. In hall/parlor houses, a typical eighteenth-century house form, work functions were relegated to the hall, with dining, entertaining, and sleeping occurring in the parlor. In central-chimney houses cooking and processing were further removed, to the rear of the building. If two stories, bedsteads typically were removed from parlors. In Georgian-plan houses, which moved from England to the colonies in the early eighteenth century and became popular with wealthy elite families, mediating central hallways physically restricted access to private spaces. Although sleeping, entertaining, and dining occupied shared space even among some affluent eighteenth-century households, by the nineteenth century this was generally considered an old-fashioned arrangement to be avoided if monetary resources permitted. For an example of implementing prevailing cultural notions of privacy within the constraints of a modest family economy, see Myron O. Stachiw, "The Color of Change: The Bixy House and the Social and Economic Transformation of the Household, 1807-1850," in *Paint in America: The Colors of Historic Buildings,* ed. Robert W. Moss (Washington: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994), 127-37.

Some families, of course, lived in one-room houses in nineteenth-century New England, precluding separation of functions or hierarchy of spaces.

52. Analysis of content and values is based on my data base of Sturbridge, Massachusetts, probate inventories filed before 1850. It includes thirty reasonably complete inventories filed between 1810 and 1819. For discussion of the changing material conditions in one Worcester County community, see Holly V. Izard, "Another Place in Time: The Material and Social Worlds of Sturbridge, Massachusetts, from Settlement to 1850" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1996).

53. Tea taking assumed great importance as a social ritual in colonial America, as it was in England, and specialized tea tables, which are smaller than dining tables, became a popular furniture form. For examples, see Jonathan F. Fairbanks and Elizabeth Bidwell Bates, *American Furniture 1620 to the Present* (New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1981). Tea taking continued to be a highly important ritual in the early national. Also see Kevin M. Sweeney, "Furniture and the Domestic Environment in Wethersfield, Connecticut, 1639-1800," in *Material Life in America,* ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 261-90; Rodris Roth, "Tea-Drinking in Eighteenth-Century America: Its Etiquette and Equippage," in *Material Life in America,* 439-62; and Jane Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside: Images of the New England Home* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), Chap. 9.

54. Clothing and personal effects of living family members were not included in the itemization of a decedent's possessions. Inventories functioned as a list of assets that could be liquidated to discharge debts.

55. Twenty-four of the thirty reasonably complete inventories filed for Sturbridge decedents between 1810 and 1819 included ceramic tableware, and nearly half included some tea dishes. Jedediah Marcy, a wealthy

gentleman who died in 1811 at the age of fifty-five, owned four-and-a-half dozen earthen plates, one-and-half dozen earthen bowls, an unspecified number of tea cups, and tea pots. WCPR, Book 40/378. Two other inventories included full sets of ceramic dishes. The majority listed a mix of pewter and ceramic tableware.

56. Richard Bushman estimated that by 1750 about one-half of colonial households in British North America ate from plates with knives and forks and seated at tables, and their numbers were concentrated in the well-established trading towns. *Refinement of America,* 74-78. Between the 1780s and 1810s, the presence of knives and forks in Sturbridge inventories increased from 36 to 82 percent.
57. *Records of Town Meetings, 1784-1800,* 253.
58. The Revolutionary Claim Act was passed Mar. 18, 1818. Jeffrey's Certificate of Pension was issued on Jan. 19, 1819, retroactive to Apr. 14, 1818. He received a pension of $8.00 per month. Case #5406, MPR.
59. Rice, ed., *Records of Town Meetings,* 170.
60. Analysis of Ward family helps, Ward Family Papers, Manuscript Collection, American Antiquarian Society. Also Worcester city directories, published beginning in 1844, listed laundresses; overwhelming they were people of color.
61. Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside,* 130-31.
62. A mid-nineteenth-century diarist in Worcester wrote weekly about the heavy and tedious drudgery of laundry day. Her Nov. 26, 1854, entry is typical. "Helping wash some and mending the remainder of the day with my feelings so tired I did not know what to do. It is very hard to be amiable at all times." In most cases she had help, usually Irish girls. Hannah Marsh Inman Diary, Manuscript Collection, Worcester Historical Museum.
63. Salisbury Family Papers. Stephen Salisbury (1746-1829) always referred to her as "Hepsy"; his considerably younger wife Elizabeth Tuckerman (1768-1851) called her "Mrs. Hemenway." The letters mentioning Hepsibeth date from 1805-6; in the 1810s and 1820s names of other laundresses were mentioned.
64. *Worcester Gazette,* Mar. 15, 1890.
65. In the Ward household in Shrewsbury, analysis of help over a period of nearly one hundred years showed that help was nearly always at least sixteen, more commonly eighteen or older. There was only one case of a young girl, thirteen-year-old Maria Brigham, who worked in the family in 1834 and 1835. She was there because her mother had died and her father, who occasionally labored on the Ward farm, had serious financial difficulties and decided to break up housekeeping. The Wards treated her like a daughter; they gave her minimal responsibilities and worried over her schooling and health. Older widows and spinsters who worked in the family were, without exception, poor. Ward Family Papers.
66. The federal census included a schedule for whites, another for colored persons, and a column for "all other persons except Indians not taxed." Indians who paid taxes were recorded on the schedule with African Americans and others of dark complexion, and Indians who exercised their right not to pay taxes were not enumerated; they were officially invisible. Beginning in 1820

people of color achieved a measure of distinction over previous years: for the first time, their schedule included gender and age categories.

67. WCPR, Series A, Book 52/85. An estate was intended to provide for the present and future generations. Because a woman's property automatically became her husband's at marriage, unless the couple signed a prenuptial agreement (which was fairly uncommon), men built in the clause about remarrying in order to protect their children's interests.
68. WCPR, Series A, Book 53/36. At the time, aside from haying season when wages were at a premium, a common laborer earned between sixty-six cents and a dollar per day. The balance in her hands, then, represented a week-and-a-half to two weeks' pay.
69. This is based on earlier census schedules, which indicated children left the household fairly early to work. Also, neither of the boys were living at home when the 1820 census was taken.
70. The garden sauce, corn in the ground, and hog itemized in Jeffrey's probate would have been for family consumption.
71. Worcester County, Massachusetts, Papers, Manuscript Collection, American Antiquarian Society.
72. In this street-by-street directory for Worcester's center village, for each property he listed the owner(s) in one column, the occupant(s) in another. The number that appeared by property in the directory corresponds to the same number on the map. He also included a directory to selected businesses and services in the center village (it did not include laundresses).
73. A local antiquarian explained in 1908, "Some seventy years ago the east end of Mechanic Street was called 'Guinea' because it was inhabited by the Riches, the Coughs, and the Hemenways, very respectable colored families." Charles A. Chase, "Nobility Hill," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity for the Year 1908* 16 (1908): 233. The Rich family was an extended kin group that occupied four houses, all owned by Peter Rich. These families boarded other people of color.
74. *Records of Town Meetings, 1784-1800,* 29; WCD, Books 118/557, 138/137, 171/513, 175/204, and 186/509; Lincoln, *History of Worcester,* 19-20.
75. F. G. Stiles, "Recollections of Mechanic Street," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity for the Year 1897* 8 (1898): 68.
76. The preliminary sketch and the oil painting vary significantly on the height of cellar windows in relation to the main-floor entry. In the oil painting, the top of the window casing is slightly below the top of the exterior steps. In the sketch, the top of the casing is roughly two feet above the highest exterior step, which necessitated interior stairs.
77. In 1820, when she may still have lived in the May Street house, Hepsibeth's household included three "colored" boys under fourteen and a "colored" woman between the ages of twenty-six and fifty-one. Because the age categories are so broad, it is impossible to know whether these people were family (Lydia and her sons?) or boarders. Also, it is not possible to determine where she lived by following the census taker because the manuscript census schedule for 1820 is alphabetized.
78. Stiles, "Recollections of Mechanic Street,"

68.

79. Quoted in Rev. George Allen, "Historical Remarks Concerning the Mechanic Street Burial Ground . . . Offered to the Joint Committee of the Legislature of Massachusetts, March 14 1878," *Bay State Ledger,* July and August 1846, 10.

80. Allen, "Historical Remarks," 10.

81. The roster of membership in the Worcester Agricultural Society was a "who's who" in high society list; its members for the most part were very wealthy, well educated, and well connected. Governor Levi Lincoln served as the society's president from 1824 to 1852. Writing about the cattle shows (another name for the fair), Henry Chamberlain mentioned, "During all the years of his Presidency, the Governor's house was always filled with the distinguished strangers who could be persuaded to partake of his lavish hospitality." Henry H. Chamberlain, "Worcester County Cattle-Shows," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity for the Year 1897* 8 (1898): 203. Jenny Trumbull's diaries (1829-37) highlight the social swirl surrounding the fair each year.

82. On that particular occasion, "a breakfast for gentleman only was given him by Mr. Lincoln, and later in the day a brief reception for townspeople was held, while the upper windows of the house were filled with ladies, anxious to catch a sight of the famous Frenchman as he walked down the pathway to his carriage to proceed on his journey." Elizabeth O. Paine Sturgis, "A Story of Three Old Houses," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity* 17 (1900): 139. Also see Nathaniel Paine, "Random Recollections of Worcester, 1839-1843," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity for the Year 1884* 3 (1885): 115.

83. In Martha Ballard's family, who lived in Hallowell on the Maine frontier, weddings "were distinctly unglamorous affairs." Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 138. In the prosperous Ward family of Shrewsbury, weddings were simple ceremonies held in the parlor with neither guests nor fanfare. In the prominent Worcester family of George and Louisa Clap Trumbull marriages seem to have been treated similarly; not until the 1850s did Mrs. Trumbull begin to describe these events as significant festive occasions that were celebrated by inviting guests to elegant receptions in their house, which was festooned with flowers for these occasions, and serving food and wedding cake. Ward Family Papers, and Louisa Clap Trumbull Diary, 1829-1879, Trumbull Family Papers. In the Taintor family of Hampton, Connecticut, traditions similarly evolved from low-key ceremonies with no fanfare to bridal parties, guest lists, special clothing, and gifts by the late nineteenth century. James Oliver Robertson and Janet C. Robertson, *All Our Yesterdays: A Century of Family Life in an American Small Town* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993).

84. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.

85. Louisa Clap Trumbull Journals, entry for Apr. 3, 1829. Also see Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside,* 257, for Reverend Timothy Dwight's observations on eighteenth-century weddings, which he considered to be "festivals of considerable signifi-

cance," and Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 63-65.

86. John Mack Farragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 80-82.
87. Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside,* 259, and Larkin, *Reshaping of Everyday Life,* 71-72.
88. Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside,* 259. Cake was served as part of wedding feasts in earlier times, but it was not the central feature.
89. *Diary of Christopher Columbus Baldwin, Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, 1829-1835* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1901), 247.
90. Lydia Maria Child advised her readers that to make a "good common wedding cake" use "four pounds of flour, three pounds of butter, three pounds of sugar, four pounds of currants, two pounds of raisins, twenty-four eggs, half a pint of brandy, or lemon-brandy, one ounce of mace, and three nutmegs." In addition, "A little molasses makes it dark colored, which is desirable. Half a pound of citron improves it; but is not necessary." For a "still richer" wedding cake she recommended a mixture of "three pounds of flour, three pounds of butter, three pounds of sugar, twenty-eight eggs, six pounds of currents and six pounds of seeded raisins, one ounce of cinnamon, one ounce of nutmeg, three quarters of an ounce of cloves, half an ounce of mace, one pound of citron, two glasses of brandy, two glasses of rose-water, and one glass of wine." To make the icing, "beat the whites of eggs to an entire froth, and to each egg add five teaspoonfuls of sifted loaf sugar, gradually; beat it a great while. Put it on when your cake is hot, or cold, as is most convenient."Mrs. Child, *The American Frugal Housewife,* 12th ed. (Boston: Carter, Hender, and Co., 1833), 72, 120. Interpreters at Old Sturbridge Village tested many early nineteenth-century recipes, including those for Child's wedding cakes, in the kitchens of village houses. The results were compiled in Caroline Sloat, et., *Old Sturbridge Village Cookbook: Authentic Early American Recipes for the Modern Kitchen* (Chester, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 1984). The editor provided useful information, such as recipe yields, that were not included in original sources.
91. Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside,* 259. This was the wedding cake made for Elizabeth Margaret Carter and William Reynolds in Newburyport.
92. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890, and *Worcester Gazette,* Mar. 15, 1890.
93. *Worcester Telegram,* Aug. 28, 1890.
94. WCPR, Docket 28972.
95. The relatively large bill to the livery operator raises the question: did she take a journey near the close of her life, perhaps an excursion to visit relatives or simply to see some site or place? This for the present remains a mystery.
96. A member of a New Ipswich, N.H., chair-making family, Thomas Wilder began his career as an ornamental painter. In 1827, by which time he had relocated to Walpole, he advertised that he did "painting—coach, chaise, house, sign, military cap, standard and all kinds of ornamental painting." Martha McDonald Frizzell, *History of Walpole, New Hampshire* (Walpole, N.H.: Walpole Historical Society, 1963), 1:156.

When he came to Worcester in 1846, he advertised himself as a "portrait painter," but beginning in 1855 and until his death in 1862 he listed himself as a "portrait & ornamental painter," perhaps in response to the decline in demand for artisanal portraiture after the development of photography. His work shows a wide range of painting execution, much of it at the lower range of artisanal production. At least one portrait, however, exceeds Hepsibeth's portrait in execution. Four of his very inexpensive portraits are in the collections of Old Sturbridge Village, four considerably more detailed and contoured examples are in Worcester Historical Museum collections, and a finely executed 1842 portrait of Lucy Thomas is in the Winchester (Mass.) Historical Society Conant Library. More survive in other repositories and private collections. Wilder ordinarily signed the back of his canvases, sometimes in pale colors that over time have faded to illegibility (on two of the unconserved Wilder portraits in WHM collections his signature can only be partially seen under raking light). Evidence of such a signature on Hepsibeth's conserved portrait, if it was there, is no longer visible. William Lamson Warren spent more than a decade locating and studying Wilder's portraits and ornamental painting, research that documented his wide range of execution but did not fully puzzle out the man.

97. I am indebted to Caroline Fuller Sloat for her evaluation of the portrait. Also, see essays and exhibit catalogue in *Meet Your Neighbors: New England Portraits, Painters, and Society, 1790-1850,* ed. Caroline F. Sloat (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press for Old Sturbridge Village, 1992).

98. Regarding accounts in earlier times, when local economies were based primarily on exchange of goods and services between neighbors, book accounts customarily were reckoned and settled perhaps once or twice annually, and debt could in fact be carried for years. But in the mid-nineteenth century, by which time the economy was national and largely cash-driven, debts were settled promptly.

99. For the range of possibilities see Jessica F. Nicoll, "Catalogue of the Exhibition," in *Meet Your Neighbors,* 65-139. The well-documented work of William Matthew Prior shows the remarkable range an artisanal painter could be capable of executing, depending on a client's willingness and ability to pay.

100. Jack Larkin, "The Faces of Change: Images of Self and Society in New England, 1790-1850," in *Meet Your Neighbors,* 9.

101. Larkin, "Faces of Change," 11; see also Nicoll, "Catalogue of the Exhibition." The existence of Hepsibeth's portrait and the unexpected finding that she commissioned it raises an interesting question. Many of the thousands of artisanal portraits painted in the nineteenth century have not survived, and many that do have become disassociated with the sitters and their particular stories. Current understanding of the economic and social profiles of clients is based on thorough research on known sitters. Perhaps hidden in the many unidentified portraits are more stories like Hepsibeth's, someone of working-class background choosing to make such an investment.

102. Estimates are based on the wages paid to

domestic help and farm laborers by the Ward family of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.

103. A printed copy of the poem is titled "Written by Ebenezer Hemenway on the death of his Mother, February 17, 1847. A line at the bottom says "Worcester, Massachusetts." Where it appeared remains unknown. A descendant provided me with a copy.