

Finding Folk: Contemporary Craft Regionalism

by
Katrina Tompkins

A thesis exhibition presented to OCAD University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Design
Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design

Ignite Gallery, April 4 – 10

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, April, 2019

© Katrina Tompkins 2019

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I authorize OCAD University to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

I further authorize OCAD University to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Signature _____

Katrina Tompkins
OCAD University
Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design
Master of Design
2019

Abstract

This thesis considers place and belonging and explores craft as a method of discovering community. I recently moved my furniture practice from Toronto to Prince Edward County, an agricultural region in rural Ontario. This relocation inspired my research; Prince Edward County was the setting of this work and the community in which I attempted to form connections through my practice. The principles of architectural theory Critical Regionalism were applied as a framework for the design of new regional furniture.

The concept of becoming through making is explored throughout this research and refers to both a maker's acquisition of embodied and material knowledge, and to becoming part of a community. The paper documents the process of developing a body of work informed by Critical Regionalism, taking the form of wooden seats, and an engagement with community members through various craft-based projects, ranging from bending a metal basket to knitting furniture.

Keywords: Craft, Design, Furniture, Critical Regionalism, Place, Community

Acknowledgments

Thank you Dorie Millerson, my Primary Advisor, whose passion for craft inspired new directions in this research and broadened my understanding of craft. Thank you for being engaged with my work.

I would like to thank the Sheridan Furniture Studio community, specifically Peter Fleming, Rob Diemert, Connie Chisholm, Kirsten White, Christina Pupo, Vanessa Jackson and Heidi Earnshaw; with whom 'craft' and 'community' are synonymous.

To my family, who have each laid stones on this path in their own unique ways, thank you for your encouragement, love and support.

Shannon McLeod, thank you for listening to every detail, for making long days in the shop way more fun and for taking such good care of me while I focussed on this work.

Thank you Paul Epp, Barbara Rauch, Darrell Currington and Keith Bresnahan from OCAD University who have stood out as exceptional educators, mentors and friends.

Thank you Mike Paterson, the time spent with you in your workshop was incredibly influential. I hope to find myself in a workshop with you again someday.

Paul, Norm, Sue, Bay, Georgette, Anne, Leslie, Stephanie, Natalie, Trevor, Karen, Kirk, Bruce, Amy, Ted, Christine, thank you for crafting this community, together.

Dedicated to everyone who has joined a club, a choir or a workshop

Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Dedication	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Thesis Overview	1
1.2 Objectives	3
Chapter 2: Craft Literature Review	4
2.1 What is Craft?	4
2.2 Studio Furniture in North America	7
2.3 Craft as Methodology	8
2.4 Research Methods	9
2.5 A Brief History of the Stool	13
2.6 Stool Varieties	15
Chapter 3: Place	16
3.1 In Search of	16
3.2 Place and Placelessness	17
3.3 Prince Edward County	19
3.4 From the Outside	20
3.5 Some Local Furniture History	21
3.6 Critical Regionalism: Roots and Wings	22
Chapter 4: Community	23
4.1 Making Connections Through Material Sourcing	23
4.1.1 Norm and Sue Grant, The Rope Factory	23
4.1.2 Paul, Snow Plow Operator	24
4.1.3 Amy Liden and Bruce Milan, Island Forge	24
4.1.4 Christine MacMillan, County Fireplace Company	25
4.1.5 Bay Woodward, Honey Pie Hives	25
4.1.6 Georgette Fry and Anne Kratz, Shout Sister Choir	25
4.1.7 Lesley Snyder and Stephanie Boyte, Rosehaven Yarn Shop	25
4.1.8 Ted Pickering, Chetwyn Alpaca Farm	25
4.1.9 Karen and Kirk Kaiser, Rug Hooker and Farmer	26
4.1.10 Trevor Miller, Homestead Milling	26
Chapter 5: Work Made	26
5.1 Burn Basket	28
5.2 In the Workshop	28
5.2.1 County Chair	28
5.2.2 Wall Hung Stool	30

5.2.3 Wood Stove Stools.....	31
5.2.4 Knitted Stools	33
5.4.5 Indoor/Outdoor Rope Stool.....	38
5.2.6 Paul’s Side Table	42
5.3 Exhibition	43
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	47
6.1 Summary.....	47
6.2 Research Questions	38
6.3 In Closing	38
Reference List	49
Appendix A	52
Appendix B	56
Appendix C	62

List of Figures

Figure 1: Sketch page, bent wood stool (2018). Photo: Tompkins.....	10
Figure 2: Paper models of the Burn Basket (2018). Photo: Tompkins.....	11
Figure 3: County Chair model and pine prototype (2016). Photo: Tompkins.....	11
Figure 4: Four finish samples on Douglas Fir post for Pig Stool (2019). Photo: Tompkins.....	13
Figure 5: Rope manufacturing at The Online Rope Store (2019). Photo: Tompkins.....	24
Figure 6: Models of the Burn Basket illustrate material considerations and construction techniques (2018). Photo: Tompkins.....	27
Figure 7: Burn Basket prototype (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	27
Figure 8: County Chair final prototype in Ash (2016) Photo: Nicole Torres.....	29
Figure 9: County Chairs and Hung Stool (2019). Photo: Tompkins.....	30
Figure 10: Hung Stool (2016). Photo: Kristy Boyte.....	31
Figure 11: Wood Stove Stool. A low three-legged stool with wedged tenons (2018). Photo:Tompkins...	32
Figure 12: Pig Stool (2018). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	32
Figure 13: County Chair with Alpaca wool seat pad and Shadow wood stove stool (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	33
Figure 14: Crocheted Chair by Albert Lohnes. Jute/wool and wood. (1965-1975). Museum of History...	34
Figure 15: Elephant Stool in collaboration with Georgette Fry pictured with Anne Katz's stool prior to yarn-bombing (2019). Photo: Tompkins.....	35
Figure 16: Chandail knitted stool designed and fabricated in collaboration with Stephanie Boyte. Walnut and Alpaca wool (2019). Photo: Amy Dodd.....	35
Figure 17: Hard Maple and Wormy Soft Maple stool prepared for Natalie Stone's yarn-bombing (2019)	

Photo: Tompkins.....	36
Figure 18: Applying a natural soap finish to Natalie’s stool (2019) Photo: Tompkins.....	36
Figure 19: Slouch knitted stool designed and fabricated in collaboration with Natalie Stone. Maple, Wool, Leather (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	37
Figure 20: Outdoor rocker by Mike Paterson (2016). Photo: Tompkins.....	39
Figure 21: Rope weaving sample (2019). Photo: Tompkins.....	39
Figure 22: Rope Bench (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	40
Figure 23: Rope Bench (2019). Photo: Amy Dodd.....	40
Figure 24: Rope Bench (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	41
Figure 25: Detail of rope and wood relationship (2019). Photo: Amy Dodd.....	41
Figure 26: Paul’s Side Table (2018). Photo: Sarah Crawford and Katrina Tompkins.....	42
Figure 27: Paul’s Side Table (2018). Photo: Sarah Crawford and Katrina Tompkins.....	42
Figure 28: Finding Folk Exhibition, Ignite Gallery (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	44
Figure 29: Finding Folk Exhibition, Ignite Gallery (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	45
Figure 30: Finding Folk Exhibition, Ignite Gallery (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	45
Figure 31: Hung Stool and County Chairs on display at Finding Folk, Ignite Gallery, April 4 - 10 (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.....	46

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Thesis Overview

Through multiple explorations of the common seat form, the stool, I developed embodied and material knowledge. These are critical aspects of my practice and a form of study which is integral to being a craftsperson. In chapter 2 I have included a literature review defining craft and the studio furniture movement and described my methodology as a craftsperson.

This research was motivated by a recent relocation: I moved from Toronto to rural Prince Edward County. As a newer member of a rural, agricultural community in Eastern Ontario I was seeking to establish myself and make connections with community members through my craft practice. I was uncovering my own needs around feeling a sense of place, home and belonging and I found I was able to make connections within my adopted community through my craft practice. I share my experiences in forming these connections through craft in Chapter 4.

The work, a collection of handcrafted seating and a single, freestanding firepit, speaks to community and inclusion; the seating collection can be viewed as ‘many different seats for many different folks’ wherein diversity is considered through scale, shape and material and the sitter can select the seat that ‘fits’ them best. In the exhibition the metal firepit is encompassed by the seats which is an offer to gather, an invitation, a welcoming. Community is the major thread throughout these explorations, in that the work considers how craft can foster community and looks to my own experiences of establishing community through craft. This experience of focussing on becoming part of a community has proven to create a circular effect which continues to encourage localism at various

levels: raw materials have been sourced locally which supports the local economy and reduces the environmental impact of my wares; local manufacturers have produced components of this work which provides employment for community members; local retailers have been consulted in regards to local demand; goods will be retailed locally to meet the demand; and consumers will support several sectors of the local economy.

The traditional and familiar form of the milking stool has been a great source of inspiration for this work. This is due to my interest in the relationships between craft, community and regional vernacular furniture. Through the design and fabrication of these seats I explore furniture forms that range from traditional to contemporary while maintaining a design intention that I describe as Contemporary Craft Regionalism. In seeking an avenue to explore what Contemporary Craft Regionalism is or could be I found it useful to consider and apply the concepts and design criteria of Critical Regionalism. Chapter 3 explores this and other thoughts on place.

The development of this thesis has been guided by research questions, asking: In what ways might I engage with community members through craft-based exchanges and how might these exchanges vary? While seeking to discover community through my craft practice, am I able to employ craft as a method of research? This research is not an ethnographic study of *other* people, their opinions or cultures. While it could be considered an auto-ethnography in that I, the researcher, am central to it, the study is intended as a reflexive investigation to my creative practice as a crafts person, or as a person in general, who employs craft as a tool to building a life and finding community.

1.2 Objectives

There were four main objectives of this research, all of which came together and resulted in the production of objects. The first objective was to design and fabricate furniture “of a place”, meaning furniture that possesses regional attributes specific to Prince Edward County. I looked to the design criteria defined by Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis (2003, p.11) of Critical Regionalism, an approach to new architecture which favours regional identity, rejecting global design. Regional attributes as described by Lefaivre and Tzonis, include natural landscape, built structures, local histories and the community and culture as it is today (2003, p. 11). Designing and fabricating new, regional work fosters a sense of regional identity and contributes to supporting a unique, contemporary, local culture. The resulting works are of my own designs and are influenced by the history, culture and community of Prince Edward County.

The work produced is divided into two camps: that which is made in my workshop by my hand and that which has been produced by other local manufacturers and craftspeople. This enabled the second key objective of this research: fostering community through craft. This work supports local industries, makers, suppliers and retailers and aims to be a viable alternative to globally and massed produced objects. Localism enabled my third objective: to offer sustainable goods.

This work is interdisciplinary for its spanning across design disciplines, bridging contemporary theory with contemporary craft practices and forms. Beyond this, the body of work includes products, techniques and materials which expanded the repertoire of my practice. With a focus on the seat form I afforded myself the time for an extensive exploration. This supported my fourth and final objective: to invest in myself as craftsperson through the expansion of my material knowledge, my embodied knowledge, my design sense and my body of work. This objective was the motivating factor when

initially considering pursuing this degree. In the craft field our work is typically considered in terms of proficiency in technical ability and seldom do we have the opportunity to explore and articulate a concept with as much rigour as is required in this graduate program. In addition, the requirement of an interdisciplinary body of work broadened my portfolio and my understanding of secondary materials and processes. Gaining this knowledge and experience will benefit my own practice but more importantly, the exposure to this higher level of education, to the processes of my fellow cohort and to the depth of focus which this program demands strengthens my abilities as I facilitate the craft education of others.

Chapter 2: Craft Literature Review

2.1 What is Craft?

It is a word to start an argument with. (Pye, 1968, p. 351)

Craft, somehow, cannot be neatly defined. In North America, popular opinion is evolving; the value to be gained in working with one's hands is once again an accepted idea. However, until recently craft has been misunderstood and undervalued in Western society where, according to Professor of Gender Studies at Santa Clara University Dr. Laura Ellingson, we "deeply privilege the mind over the body" (2008, p. 245). Within the scope of "work", I believe it is generally understood that trades-oriented professions (wherein the work of a craftsperson traditionally lies) are perceived as lower ranking than those of a "white collar" worker or "knowledge worker" as Crawford (2009) defines it in *Shop Class as Soulcraft* (p. 1). To grasp the scope of craft perhaps we should ask who is the craftsperson? Is it the hobbyist, the child, the amateur? The factory worker in Pakistan sewing handmade soccer balls?

The Brew Master? The actor in the car commercial modelling a full-scale clay sedan by hand? Perhaps this is another quality of craft that makes it interesting to those of us involved: not only can we consider the how and the why of making, we can also ask ourselves who and what is craft? My career as a maker differs greatly from other makers around the globe who fabricate handmade objects and this is the paradox of craft, as Adamson describes it (2010). I recognize my privilege within the global context of craft.

Of all that craft is and for all those who engage with it, fundamentally it is the practiced exploitation of tool and material (Adamson, 2018, p. 25). Through a maker's explorations in manipulating materials they develop an embodied knowledge, defined by *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* as, "sensory knowledge that is grounded in bodily experience" (Ellingson, p. 245). Something akin to riding a bike, or being able to type without looking at the keyboard or, for the furniture maker, knowing the amount of pressure to apply to your spindle gouge when you are turning parts on a lathe. While developing embodied knowledge the craftsperson also uses their hands and tools to gain insight into the properties of a material. The repetition in making, of imposing oneself on a material and applying varying techniques, whether of minute or grand difference, develops an internal reference library of material properties. It is a library built upon and referred to throughout the craftsperson's endeavours in making. This practical knowledge cannot be gained through texts but must be developed by putting hand or tool to material, time and time again. Regardless of how undefinable craft may be or how it may shift in the eye of popular culture, this fact is something that has not and will not change about the craftsperson and their process, as French potter, Bernard Palissy recounted in the year 1580:

Even if I used a thousand reams of paper to write down all the accidents that have happened to me in learning this art, you must be assured that, however good a brain you may have, you will

still have to make a thousand mistakes, which cannot be learned from writings, and even if you had them in writing, you would not believe them until practice has given you a thousand afflictions. (Palissy, *Admirable Discourses*, as cited in Adamson, 2018, p. 206).

Commitment then can be regarded as a characteristic of the craftsperson and, as maker and craft theorist David Pye imparts in his text *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, “the only reason for doing this work is quality not quantity” by which he means that the craftsperson must be motivated to make (quality) work rather than any quantity of money (1968, p. 351).

Beyond the forewarning that I will likely never get rich making furniture, I have Pye to thank for his system of describing and differentiating fabrication processes; Pye defines workmanship as any undertaking of a task using a technique or apparatus. He then categorizes it into two sections: workmanship of risk and workmanship of certainty (p. 342). Essentially, the workmanship of risk is the domain of the craftsperson wherein “the quality of the result is continually at risk during the process of making” (p. 342). In contrast, the workmanship of certainty is about speed and quantity in production in, for example, factory labour and mass production. Risk and certainty, however, are both at play in all endeavors of workmanship. Pye further subcategorizes the workmanship of risk into regulated workmanship wherein a jig or assistive device is employed to reduce the amount of risk, or free workmanship wherein the maker asserts their dexterity and knowledge alone (p. 343). Free workmanship affords the greatest amount of risk. Pye’s writing on workmanship reminds me to prioritize process over product and guided the formulation of my own definition of craft:

Craft is the method of the maker who applies their material knowledge through embodied knowledge, seeking a balance between free and regulated workmanship.

2.2 Studio Furniture in North America

As I find my place in craft today I look back to the studio furniture movement that occurred across North America in the 20th century, a time that saw handcrafted furniture gain in popularity, value and validation. According to Edward S. Cooke Jr., Gerald W.R. Ward and Kelly H. L'Ecuyer, (2003) authors of *The Maker's Hand*, studio furniture had roots in the Arts and Crafts movement, but didn't begin until the early 1940's, lasting until approximately 1990 (2003, p. 10). Within these years it is generally understood that there was a first and second generation of studio furniture makers. At the birth of the movement were legendary makers Wharton Esherick, George Nakashima, Tage Frid and Sam Maloof, among many others (Cooke, War & L'Ecuyer, 2003, p. 10). Though their furniture styles are undoubtedly unique to each other, their work still exists together under the term studio furniture. The work of this first generation is characterized by a reverence for wood and a focus on functionality. Studio furniture by appearance is broad; ultimately it is the link between concept, material and technique (2003, p. 13) that binds the 50-year span of these craftspeople. As described in *The Maker's Hand* "the term studio evokes this type of long-term, exploratory learning while also suggesting a high degree of visual literacy as well as a vigorous conceptual approach to design and construction" (2003, p. 12). The word studio also signifies the location in which the maker is working, drawing upon long-familiar imagery of the craftsperson in their workshop.

According to Cooke (1989) the strength of America's economy after World War II, a deep sense of national pride, plus growing opportunities in alternative careers as a result of the war ending contributed to the establishment of the studio furniture movement (p. 11). Interestingly, many who were drawn to the vocation were reacting against mass-produced goods and consumer lifestyle; a sentiment that still motivates many craftspeople today.

The second generation of studio furniture makers is characterized by an emphasis on concept (Cooke, 1989, p. 23). Studio furniture of this period was often ornately painted, highly sculptural and possessed graphic imagery. Formal education in furniture design opened doors for women to pursue the profession however it was the feminism of the 1970's when change truly occurred. Leading female furniture makers of the second generation include Wendy Maruyama, Roseanne Somerson and Judy Kensley McKie (1989, p. 22). Most recognized studio furniture makers of the 20th century have had parallel careers in the classroom. Teaching their own philosophies in making has shaped the trajectory of studio furniture and continues to do so today (Cooke, Ward & L'Ecuyer, 2003, p. 40). There remains an undeniable impression of studio furniture in the contemporary craft scene as makers continue to explore concept, form and materiality in our independent studio practices.

2.3 Craft as Methodology

A research methodology is a system of methods or “the actions to be taken” in a research project (Schensul, p. 517). Disciplines have their own applicable methodologies, aspects of which may cross over to, or pull from other disciplines. As is the case with many creative disciplines my research falls into and draws from art, design and of course, craft. For this research I have been looking to design research methods in formulating my own research methodology; some of which could quite as easily and naturally be referred to as craft research methods. These include analysis, collaboration, theoretical reviews, archival studies, museum visits, case studies, sketching, modelling, prototyping, sampling, reflexivity and so on.

By my own definition, craft is a method of making which employs knowledge housed in the mind and the body. As practice-led research, craft is a verb. This research is also guided by craft as free and regulated workmanship which sets parameters to the manufacturing methods to be used.

My research is exploratory, open-ended and practice-driven, it is conducted for and through the actions and processes of making. These craft based actions are what formulate my research methodology.

2.4 Research Methods

Though my design research methods may vary slightly from piece to piece, I typically flow through the following steps in this order when undertaking new work:

Sketching: starting with rough sketches then, as the design formulates, transitioning to detailed section sketches and more refined drawings. I produce numerous sketches to work through any technical dilemmas, such as the design and construction of assistive devices including jigs.

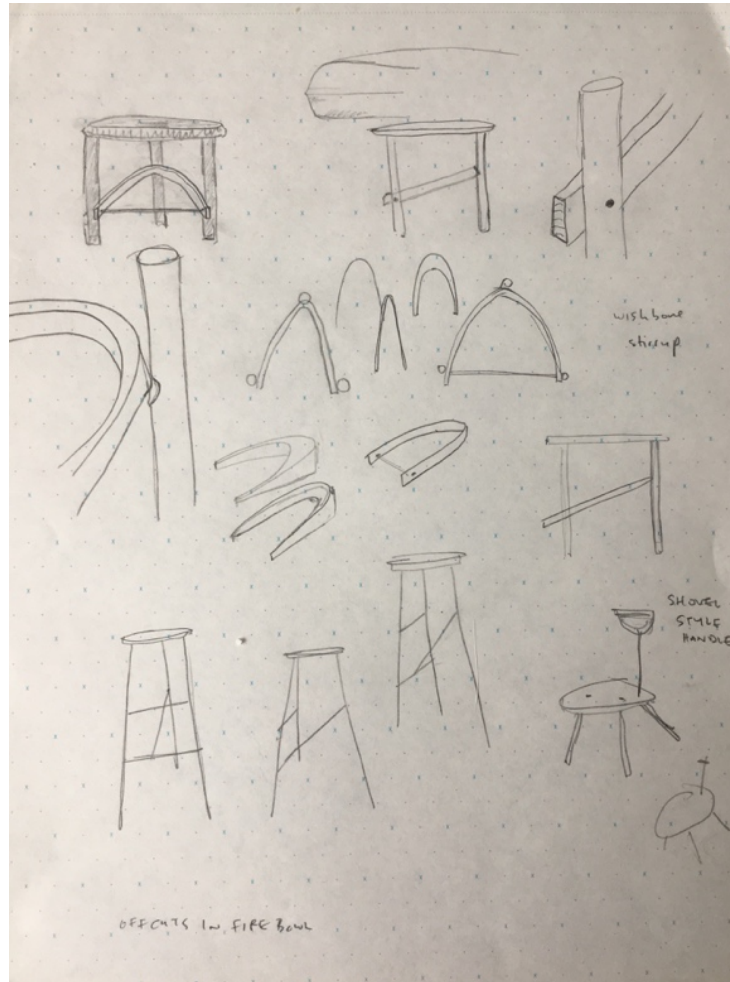


Figure 1: Sketch page, bent wood stool (2018). Photo: Tompkins

Research: sketching and research are interchangeable in the design process, I go back and forth between the two. Research includes:

- field research: visits to retailers, antique stores, museums, period homes, libraries, etc.
- site visits: location for work to reside OR source of inspiration, landscape, etc.
- image collection: I keep digital files of images which relate to my concept or inform my work
- suppliers: this may include in person, telephone or online information collection
- text review: I may require information on fabrication techniques, seek historical context, etc.

Technical drawings: I often draft orthographic views (top, plan and side) to scale, or in full scale, with dimensions. This assists in developing a materials list, required when planning the lumber required for a build.

Modelling: I use this term to refer to anything three-dimensional that is in a smaller scale than full scale. I typically work in 1/8 scale. Sketch modelling is work that is created loosely in the exploratory phase of the project; I may use paper or wood, whatever resembles the qualities of the final material. I may produce a more refined presentation model if I intend to convey my design to someone else in a scale size.



Figure 2: Paper models of the burn basket (2018). Photo: Tompkins

Prototyping: a prototype can either look like or function like the designed object and can represent a defined section of an object or the entire object. I produce multiple prototypes throughout

my fabrication process to confirm the desired appearance and function of the work. Most commonly, a sample joint is an aspect to prototype.

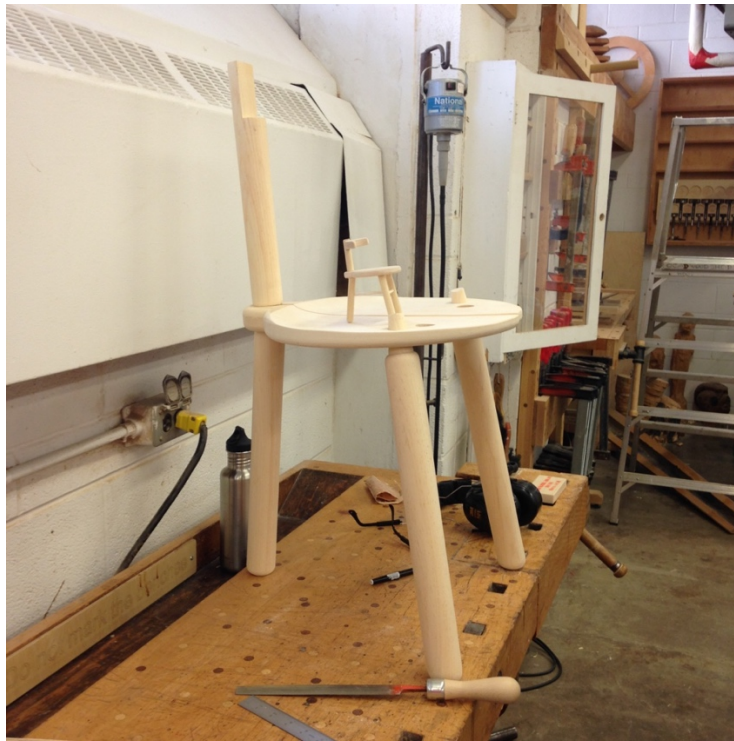


Figure 3: County Chair model and pine prototype (2016). Photo: Tompkins

Production: Every project will have a logical order of fabrication; in the case of the stools, parts were primarily turned on the lathe. In some cases I would fabricate the legs in advance of the seat but not ordinarily. I always turn the rails last as they are secondary supports to the legs. The mortises must be drilled in the seat and the legs in place before I can determine the exact design of the rail.

As mentioned, this is the typical flow of my design process however, as my time invested in the stool form increased so did my comfort level. I found myself working entirely in the workmanship of risk, as Pye describes it. As this body of work developed I worked less from premeditated designs and more from instinct. I found this to be a satisfying method of working and appropriate to the scale of the stool.

Finishing: Unless a clear oil/wax was applied, finishing samples are always prepared to determine the relationship and appearance of the intended finish with the wood used.



Figure 4: Four finish samples on Douglas Fir post for Pig Stool (2019). Photo: Tompkins

2.5 A Brief History of the Stool

Stool: armless and backless seat for one person (Kuiper, 2006)

Since the majority of pieces in this body of work are armless and backless seats for one person, I have included a very brief history of the stool. The earliest forms of seating were logs, stumps, stones and other naturally produced and available objects. It seems a natural evolution that early humans designed a stool from the stump: something of the same material and size but lighter and therefore easier to relocate, as needed. According to furniture historian Graham Blackburn (2005), the earliest

stools were fabricated with “three splayed legs” mortised into a solid seat, then stool forms resembled the “trestle table” where the stool base was comprised of “two solid sides” and a stretcher connecting them, followed by the klismos legged stool of Early Greek civilizations and the ‘X’ frame stool associated with Ancient Roman civilization.

Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Vikings are all known to have used both “folding stools with... fabric seats and solid [wood] framed stools with... rush seats” (Kuiper, 2006). Eventually the jointed stool, where four legs are assembled to stretchers in a frame with mortise and tenon joinery, became the most common stool type (Blackburn, 2005). The design of a stool determined who would make it; solid seat stools were made by turners who produced parts on the lathe whereas a jointed stool required the skill of a licensed joiner (Blackburn, 2005).

In early civilizations stools were reserved for important people, they were often high and the sitter would require another stool, a step stool, to sit atop it (Gurr, Straker, & Moore, n.d.). With the introduction of a backrest the stool became a chair and the stool then became something more commonplace.

As a common object the stool has undergone innumerable design changes, many of which were born from necessity; the stool became a tool for a variety of tasks. Certainly, throughout history there have been a great number of curious and intriguing stools that were designed for all manner of work. As the nature of work changed through industrialisation, the need for such stools no longer existed and these irrelevant task stools were no longer crafted. I would speculate that a great number of historical task stool designs have been lost through time. Inspired by this disappointing realization, I have compiled a list of stools that I consider to exist in present day Western cultures.

2.6 Stool Varieties

Note to reader: This list is not complete. It is a starting point to a list that is surely twice as long. If only I had access and insight into every factory, every makers studio, every shop and workers quarters, every place of business, every corner of every institution, and so on...

I have opted to omit photo examples to stimulate your imagination.

Bar stool	Camp Stool
Workshop stool	Outdoor Stool
Lab stool	Swivelling stool
Piano stool	Shower stool
Foot stool	Gardeners stool
Milking stool	Shoemakers stool
Draftspersons stool	Upholstered stool/ottoman
Sewing table stool	Step stool
Prayer stool	Monopod stool
Folding stool	Loom bench
Saddle Stool	Potter's stool

In review of this list I would consider the milking stool to be the only stool that has no practical context in present day society but still is an object widely referred to in design. Coincidentally, I found inspiration in the milking stool and consider it to be the starting point for several of the pieces that make up my thesis work.

Chapter 3: Place

3.1 In Search Of

I had travelled halfway around the world, all the way across my own country, looking for a place in the land to come home to. If only I found that place, I had thought, everything would fall into place. It was only in this year of moving from house to house that I came to realize – really realize – that home is not a place we ever reach. It is those moments – in time, not in space – where the wind cannot reach, the eddies and pools where things do not tremble. It is less a noun than a verb, an attitude and an action, living from the inside out...

(Armbrecht, 2008, *Thin Places: A Pilgrimage Home* as cited in Relph, 2016)

This thesis research was supposed to be about design and I have pushed back against the various forces that have tried to steer my direction anywhere otherwise. However, in a meeting with an advisor I was questioned, with persistence, on why I moved to Prince Edward County to begin with. I was made to realize that this is important and I can't avoid looking at it, and this occurrence prompted the reflexive aspects of this thesis. Our selves, fears, comforts and questions are imbedded into even the most functional designed goods; I know that now.

I see why it might seem curious; I decided to move my life and build something from scratch in a new place which held no personal history for me, and I did this for me alone, by myself. I was looking for something. Foremost I was looking for the space, literally and figuratively, to make work. Alongside this, I have lived my life feeling like I don't belong to a place or have a culture. Likely not a unique feeling, being a Caucasian Canadian of ambiguous European origin raised in Ontario suburbs, but regardless I have never felt that I have roots. I decided to grow myself some, to transplant myself to a place and proclaim *This is where I will be*, consciously, with intention. Am I allowed to do that, to paint my name on the mailbox and say I'm a country girl now? With concerns to avoid appropriation and gentrification, I try to conduct myself appropriately.

The process of making work about the place I have deposited myself has been one of discovery as I consider what makes a place a place, and what makes this place this place. It seems fitting to focus on making work about the place that I came to explore making work, and find who I am as a maker. In that way this thesis is about becoming through making and it is equally about becoming local as it is a process of self-discovery, I am looking for and becoming more me at the same time. This move from urban to rural life may read as pastoral craft; pastoral in the arts being long criticized as an idealized and romantic view of rural life or “sentimental escapism” (Adamson, 2007, p. 105). By relocating to a rural setting I am not attempting to return to an imagined point of origin but I do seek to find meaning in my craft practice and I look back to traditional forms, techniques and histories from rural life to challenge my own understanding of craft and to find value in my furniture concepts and forms. As described in his essay “Understanding Tradition” by Miguel Gomez-Ibanez “tradition is the medium that connects furniture makers to each other and the rest of the world”, whether making work that is seemingly traditional or contemporary (2001, p. 42). In my work there is traditional, contemporary and progressive elements drawing from present-day design trends.

3.2 Place and Placelessness

“There’s no place like this place, any place.”

(Honest Ed Mirvish as cited in Relph, 2016)

With regards to the concept of placeness, meaning the study of anything that has to do with place, a *place* is somewhere with distinctive qualities (Relph, 2016). I understand it to be somewhere that has evolved naturally, is authentic and holds meaning. Geographer Edward Relph writes extensively on place and popularized the term “placelessness” in 1976. He identifies meaning, belonging, culture

and local significance as qualities of place (Relph). In contrast placelessness is anonymous, efficient and uniform (Relph, 1976, in Laurice & MacDonald, 2007, p. 120). In short, it could be understood as the difference between humane and inhumane built environments. Placelessness is symptomatic of mass culture; mass production and globalization being major contributors to placelessness.

The concepts of place and placelessness pertain to physical, emotional and spiritual states. A most significant example of the emotional effects of place is that it affords a sense of belonging. According to Relph, a place is an important source of individual and communal identity and belonging can be found through a deep sense of experiencing place (2016, p. 120). There are no specific boundaries to a place, it is defined less by location than it is by experiences. In developing new relationships through this body of work with people from a place I am encouraging such experiences. Many of these experiences have manifest into objects, extensions of myself, becoming through making, and place is explored through investigations into individual and communal identity.

In a recently published article in Studio Magazine about the home and the arrangement of its' contents, Design Historian Michael Prokopow (2018) writes "the performance of place-making is integral to being, and one's awareness of self in time and place" (p. 64). One's objects function as tools, as markers of time, as consequences of creativity and are the construction of identity (p. 62). The products of this research are indeed all of these things and I am able to see this work with the intention of acting as my contribution to the domestic objects, a "tangible expression of character" (p. 62) which decorate a landscape whose boundaries extend beyond my house or my town but to my whole region: my place.

Home is the foundation of our identity as individuals and members of a community, the dwelling-place of being. Home is not just the house you happen to live in, but an irreplaceable centre of significance. In other words, home is at the heart of place. (Relph, 2016)

3.3 Prince Edward County

Prince Edward County is a 1050 sq. km landmass that drops from the Bellville area into Lake Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2018). According to Johns, before United Empire Loyalists began settling in 1784 at the time of the American Revolution this region had been populated by Iroquois and Huron peoples (2018, p. 10). From my observations there remains little public acknowledgement of the First Nations inhabitants, other than a permanent exhibition at a former church, now museum. In contrast, the history of the Loyalist settlers is widely visible and celebrated in Prince Edward County; many residents can trace their Loyalist heritage, there are early homes and museums intended to preserve Loyalist history, and the main road that crosses Prince Edward County is named Loyalist Parkway. I include this only to acknowledge that I consider this to be problematic, it is not a significant aspect of my research. I am cognisant of the lack of First Nations representation in the preservation of regional histories. I do not support the erasure of First Nations bodies, histories or cultures in this region, or any region. By looking to the contemporary culture of the region which evolved from Loyalist settlement this work does not seek to omit First Nations peoples, cause ill will or discriminate.

The region of Prince Edward County possesses several geographic anomalies such as the dunes at Sandbanks Provincial Park, a lake on top of a mountain and nearly 800km of natural shoreline (“Living in the County”). The local economy was based primarily in agriculture for all of the 20th century and today, now coupled with tourism, agri-tourism is a strong and growing industry (“Living in the County”). In 2016 the population of ‘The County’ as it is affectionately known, was 24,275 and the town of Picton, where I live, boasts a population of 4,702 (Statistics Canada, 2018). In warmer seasons the County swells with upwards of a million tourists visiting each year (Bell, 2017).

3.4 From the Outside

I have met a vast collection of friendly, like-minded people in the county: hard workers, dreamers, farmers, every one of them with a deep love of this island that feels forgotten somewhere in time. There are the born-and-bred county folks who have been here for generations, who know every road, every pasture and every family. Then there are the newcomers: the people who picked up from wherever they lived, who saw what I see, and ultimately made significant life changes to move to the county. For so many, this is a place where people can start anew, be part of something, and work to contribute to the community. The County, although it is not my home, feels like home.

David McMillan, restaurateur. (Johns, 2018, p.3)

It may seem paradoxical, I am an outsider celebrating the local. Outside of what boundary though? Outside of when? Prince Edward County has experienced a significant re-settlement, a surge of city folk who saw something, an opportunity, an escape. I do not know what hides in the hearts of the residents who have been here for generations, or just the people who got here before me, I can only speak to my experiences of how I have been received, and I have felt welcomed. What is problematic however is whether, in my coming, have I displaced others?

I recently stumbled across a booklet written by county local Steve Campbell titled *The County Handbook: How to Survive in Prince Edward County* (2005). It is a humorous recount of all things County and a large portion of the text works through the author's observations and feelings on the "New Settler". Ultimately the sentiment, which he says he shares with other long-time residents is this: "The problem is – not the people moving here – but the people moving here who have no stake in the land or the community." (p. 76)

3.5 Some Local Furniture History

Early furniture of Prince Edward County is typical of Upper Canada's vernacular furniture. Furniture brought with the settler, whether they hailed from England, Germany or America, partook in the European lineage of styles and fabrication methods. Time does not permit this research to be an extensive historical account of the vernacular furniture of this region, however a brief overview of some local furniture history is necessary. In that spirit I have included an exhibition catalogue (Appendix A) from a chair exhibit titled *A Seat in the County* which took place at The Prince Edward Co. Museum in 1975. The exhibition's purpose, as described by museum Curator S. James Gooding, was to "illustrate chairs of the types used and made in Prince Edward County from about 1750 to the last years of the 19th century" (p. 1). Furniture would have been made using domestic hard and soft woods such as ash, cherry, walnut, butternut and basswood, amongst others (Capon, 2016, p. 18). The town of Picton saw a few different woodworkers keep stores on Main Street during the 20th century. An article published in June of 2016 by Margaret Haylock Capon in the local newspaper *County Weekly News* describes the impact of The Gilbert Company, a furniture, cabinetmaking and undertaking business, producing objects from chairs to caskets (p. 18). Although the original business started in 1860 no longer exists, there remains a prominent building in town bearing the name Gilbert which houses an interiors store.

Presently there are several talented furniture makers practicing in the County, some of whom I have met and many I have yet to.

3.6 Critical Regionalism: Roots and Wings

In seeking a framework to approach work that is "of a place", I came upon the concept of Critical Regionalism. In 1983 Architectural Historian Kenneth Frampton published his seminal essay Towards a

Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance which pressed for a new architecture, one that possessed a critical conscience highlighting regional culture and rejecting the globalization of new building design. Frampton was building on a term originally coined by architects LeFaivre and Tzonis (2003) who stated that Critical Regionalism “is to abandon universal design formulas and make something specific to a place and a people” (p. 15).

I have distilled these points from the texts by LeFaivre, Tzonis and Frampton and consider them to be the tenets of Critical Regionalism. New architecture designed with the principles of Critical Regionalism will:

- honour the work that came before it and the space in which it will occupy
- make people aware of their common past and participate in their collective memory
- not offend the landscape or existing architecture
- nurture community activity and act as a monument to regional identity
- employ technological advancements and/or remain traditionally fabricated

As I approached the design and fabrication of furniture for this research I looked to these design principles as a starting point; this is where my ideas stemmed from. I have heard my Mother use the term “Roots and Wings” with regards to raising children; a place of origin, a history, a base to build on and to launch from. I think this simple saying can be thoughtfully applied to design: make work with both a past and a future.

In the Canadian landscape, Architect Brian Mackay-Lyons is the exemplar of a contemporary approach to Critical Regionalism. His work dots Eastern Canada primarily, most noticeably in his home province of Nova Scotia where he builds minimalist structures that “sit within a landscape in a way that

is both quiet and respectful but also innovative and progressive” (Bradbury, 2016). Accurately captured by Bradbury, Mackay-Lyons’ structures “feel quietly bound to their surroundings rather than shouting out their presence”. I see this statement as a manifesto for the design and fabrication of this new collection of work on the subject of craft and community.

Chapter 4: Community

4.1 Making Connections Through Material Sourcing

Material sourcing has been an opportunity to make connections within my community and options in material selection have proven to offer a diverse range of levels of interaction. Materials can be standard and basic, as in off-the-shelf products sourced in a store. This type of community interaction might require brief discussion with a salesperson or supplier and perhaps an opportunity to strike up a friendly chat. More elaborate and rewarding community exchanges have occurred from more complex material sourcing. All names, images of and description of businesses by community members have been used with their consent given through image release forms. Here are brief profiles of community members I have been working with (also see Appendix C):

4.1.1 Norm and Sue Grant own and operate a small, independent rope manufacturing facility called The Online Rope Store on the shoulder of Trenton at the highway exit to Prince Edward County. The pair produce ropes for sailing vessels, attend trade shows and sell their products online. I have stopped in to visit with them on multiple occasions and were excited over their products and how I might use them in my furniture designs. I have toured their facility to see the

manufacturing process and equipment (see fig. 1). Norm has prepared a special batch of rope for me to experiment with which contains no interior fibres. This produces a flat rope rather than a common cylindrical rope. This variation on the standard product inspired specific directions in my designs.

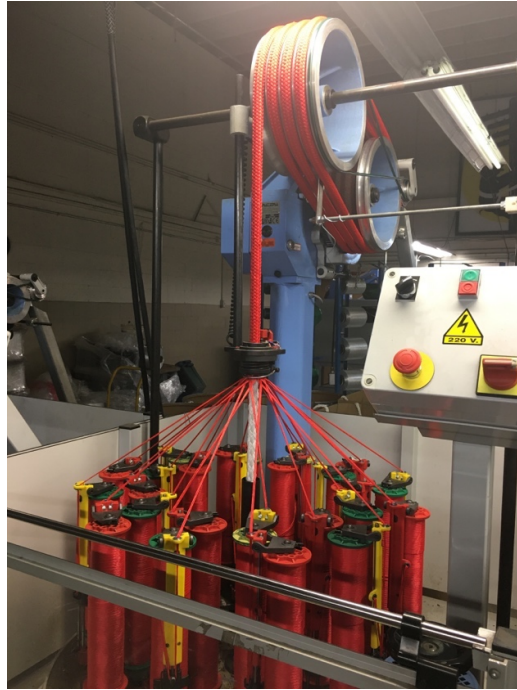


Figure 5: Rope manufacturing at The Online Rope Store (2019). Photo: Tompkins

4.1.2 In exchange for driveway snow removal last winter I made and traded two side tables with Paul, a local plow driver (see fig. 26-27). In this way craft has enabled a trade economy.

4.1.3 Bruce Milan is a blacksmith in Bloomfield, his operation is called Island Forge and is situated behind his home on Main Street. He and his assistant Amy Liden worked collaboratively with me on the production of my design of a fire pit.

4.1.4 Christine MacMillan co-owns County Fireplace Company, a retail shop on Picton Main Street. I contacted Christine and asked for a meeting to discuss my concept for a fire pit.

Christine offered design tips and price point suggestions as we discussed aspects of what makes a great fire pit. Bruce, Christine and I will all sell our locally designed and crafted fire pit from our shops and studios.

4.1.5 Bay Woodward is a beekeeper and owner of Honey Pie Hives, she supplied the beeswax that I used in the development of a wood finish.

4.1.6 When telling a member of my community about my desire to connect with local knitters, she suggested I share my ideas with the Shout Sister Choir, a local choral group. Upon doing so I made several contacts within the choir, two of whom, Georgette Fry and Anne Kratz, collaborated with me on knitted “yarn bombed” stools.

4.1.7 Lesley Snyder owns Rosehaven Yarn Shop in Picton. I called her to discuss the possibility of approaching her Tuesday night knitting group about the knitted stool project. The knitting group of five women enthusiastically contributed as we brainstormed the best design for a stool to facilitate the knitting. They also taught me the term ‘yarn bomb’ which is when one knits around something existing, such as lamp posts, etc. One member of the group, Stephanie Boyte, worked closely with me on the design of a knitted stool.

4.1.8 Ted Pickering is an Alpaca farmer in Hillier. He supplies Rosehaven Yarn Shop with high quality alpaca wool. Stephanie used Ted’s Alpaca wool on her finished stool which brought

together three skilled community members; the farmer, the knitter and the furniture maker. As well, I have used Ted's felted alpaca wool to produce seat cushions for the County Chairs.

4.1.9 A few years ago I participated in a rug hooking workshop with skilled hooker Karen Kaiser. She and her husband Kirk Kaiser live at a nearby farm. Kirk and Karen sold me lumber that they had milled from their farmland. Much of the work in this thesis collection is built from Kirk and Karen's wood.

4.1.10 Trevor Miller is a dairy farmer and woodworker in Milford. He fells and mills trees on his farm and sells lumber under the name Homestead Milling. I have sourced material used in this work from Trevor.

These exchanges revolve around commerce however it becomes evident quickly that my craft is my point of connection to this community and through our overlap we find a space to relate.

Chapter 5: Work Made

5.1 Burn Basket

This outdoor fire pit is the sole piece in the collection that was outsourced; it was fabricated by Bruce Milan and Amy Liden, local blacksmiths. Burn Basket is made up of two components: the basket which is the vessel that contains the wood and fire, and the stand or structure which elevates the basket from the ground. The design for the Burn Basket developed through a process of sketch modeling using paper wherein the paper was manipulated through bends and folds to create a container. The resulting

design requires only 1/3 of a 4'x8' flat sheet of cold rolled steel, 3/16" thick. Eliminating a welded panel construction, which would require time, equipment and resources to weld the panels together dramatically reduces the cost to construct the unit enabling feasible local construction.



Figure 6: Models of the Burn Basket illustrate material considerations and construction techniques (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Figure 7: Burn Basket prototype (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce.

5.2 In the Workshop

The following works were fabricated in-house incorporating the materials and/or talents of local suppliers and craftspeople.

5.2.1 County Chair

The concept for the County Chair is that it is an extrusion of a milking stool; a simple, three-legged low stool found in the back sheds and barnyards of the Loyalists who settled in Prince Edward County. The raised seat height and addition of a backrest extending up from the seat enables everyday use. The design did not originate from any particular milking stool, but rather from what my imagination has assembled after viewing countless images of vernacular furniture, which I have poured over in my years of interest in Upper Canada furniture histories.

Traditionally primitive task stools would have been crafted by its user, not by a specialized furniture maker therefore, the construction would be crude, the members chunky. This history influenced the design of the heavy leg of the County Chair and the extreme transition point where the leg tapers to mortise into the seat.

A low stool would not necessarily require the rails joining the legs of the County Chair, it is the height of this chair that demands it. The proportions of the County Chair are based off of common chair proportions available today, with a seat height of 18". The round and tapered rails which mortise into the legs are similar to those pictured in the below image. Traditionally rails of such design would have been shaped using a drawknife or a spokeshave. The County Chair rails were turned on the lathe for consistency and convenience.

The County Chair required significant investment in my design process, having produced numerous plans and iterations in advance. Sketches, models and full prototypes in Pine were explored. This final version of the County Chair incorporates a bent lamination back rest, or crest rail, wedged tenons and turned legs. The final seat was milled on the CNC router in OCAD U's Rapid Prototyping Centre and assembled around the back post; this is an unorthodox method of assembly that I have not yet seen elsewhere. For my thesis exhibition I produced variations of the seat in four different domestic woods: Walnut, Maple, White Oak and Cherry and have experimented with bleached and painted versions as well. The woods were sourced locally, primarily through Kirk and Trevor. The seat pad was fabricated with felted alpaca wool sourced from Ted at Chetwyn Alpaca farm. A collection of process images has been included as Appendix B.



Figure 8: County Chair final prototype in Ash (2016) Photo: Nicole Torres



Figure 9: County Chairs and Hung Stool (2019). Photo: Tompkins

5.2.2 Hung Stool

This stool was created freely, meaning I did not work from plans. I developed this piece as a revision to the rail system that connects the three legs on the County Chair which I find more visually appealing. This stool can be hung on a wall peg if desired. It was sandblasted in OCAD U's Metal Shop to exaggerate the grain before it was finished in milk paint with a urethane top coat. This stool is made of Ash that was sourced through OCAD U's Wood Shop.



Figure 10: Hung Stool (2016). Photo: Kristy Boyte

5.2.3 Wood Stove Stools

These stools are designed to be used wherever a low stool is helpful; I have found it to be most beneficial when used with a wood stove, a common feature in a Prince Edward County home. The low seat height makes it ideal for sitting close to the wood stove when assembling a fire and the sturdy base provides ample support for adult use. Fabricated with locally sourced materials.



Figure 11: Wood Stove Stool. A low three-legged stool with wedged tenons (2018). Photo:Tompkins



Figure 12: Pig Stool (2018). Photo: Kristy Boyce



Figure 13: County Chair with Alpaca wool seat pad and Shadow Wood Stove Stool (2019).
Photo: Kristy Boyce

5.2.4 Knitted Stools

This project could have been a thesis on its own with the potential for numerous collaborators. Initially I provided a few stools to members of the Shout Sister Choir without any design directives. The elephant and cow stools were the creations of Georgette and Anne, both choir members. Upon approaching the knitting group at Rose Haven Yard Shop in Picton, I came prepared with an aesthetic vision. The knitted stool provided an opportunity to bring together three County resources: the knitter,

the wool maker and the woodworker. I was inspired by folk art such as the crocheted chair (Figure 11) created by a retired fisherman Albert Lohnes (Einarsson and Taylor, pg. 90). This series of knitted stools in collaboration with Stephanie, Georgette, Anne and Natalie attempts to embody the same sense of comfort and charm.



Figure 14: Crocheted Chair by Albert Lohnes. Jute/wool and wood. (1965-1975). Museum of History



Figure 15: Elephant Stool in collaboration with Georgette Fry pictured with Anne Katz's stool prior to yarn-bombing (2019). Photo: Tompkins



Figure 16: Chandail knitted stool designed and fabricated in collaboration with Stephanie Boyte. Walnut and Alpaca wool (2019). Photo: Amy Dodd



Figure 17: Hard Maple and Wormy Soft Maple stool prepared for Natalie Stone's yarn-bombing (2019)
Photo: Tompkins



Figure 18: Applying a natural soap finish to Natalie's stool (2019) Photo: Tompkins



Figure 19: Slouch knitted stool designed and fabricated in collaboration with Natalie Stone. Maple, Wool, Leather (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyte

5.2.5 Indoor/Outdoor Rope Bench

The design for this bench was inspired by a low and long rectangular bench that my uncle had deteriorating in his barn in Georgetown, Ontario. I have no records of the bench, only that I recall it had a broken reed woven seat, it was an old and authentic piece of typical Ontario vernacular furniture. I also drew from an outdoor rocking chair made by Newfoundland furniture maker Mike Paterson (see fig. 16). Mike explained that the rope he used to weave the seat was a common rope used in the local fishing industry and that he used Ash for the chair for its weight, the chair will not blow away in a flash of wild Newfoundland weather.

The rope seat was woven with 1" flat rope that Norm and Sue Grant prepared for me. The benefit of this nylon rope is that it shrinks after getting wet. Steady use will determine how much the rope stretches and whether the shrinking rope will be a viable solution. The frame was built using Yellow Birch from Kirk and Karen's farm, it is intentionally robust to withstand the tension of the rope and to hold position in our equally wild Prince Edward County weather.



Figure 20: Outdoor rocker by Mike Paterson (2016). Photo: Tompkins



Figure 21: Rope weaving sample (2019). Photo: Tompkins



Figure 22: Rope Bench (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce

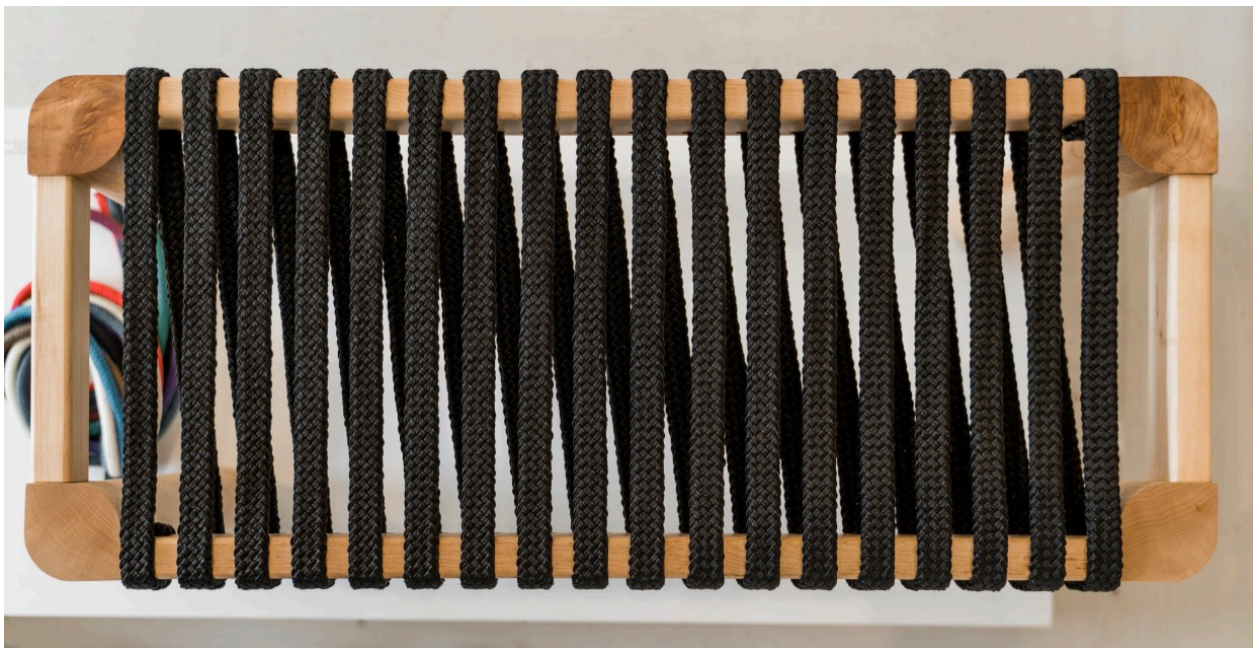


Figure 23: Rope Bench (2019). Photo: Amy Dodd



Figure 24: Rope Bench (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce



Figure 25: Detail of rope and wood relationship (2019). Photo: Amy Dodd

5.2.6 Paul's Side Table

Paul's side table was produced to his specifications: he requested Walnut, required the footprint to fit under his sofa and the top surface area to measure 14" wide. We exchanged snow plowing for the table. The below images of the table (figures 26-27) were taken with a friend at her farm and were displayed alongside the side table at the exhibition.



Figure 26: Paul's Side Table (2018). Photo: Sarah Crawford and Katrina Tompkins



Figure 27: Paul's Side Table (2018). Photo: Sarah Crawford and Katrina Tompkins

5.3 Exhibition

The exhibition was mounted at Ignite Gallery, April 4 - 10, 2019. Each piece was displayed on a custom fabricated 4" plinth, framing the work. The Burn Basket was situated centrally in the space with the chairs and stools in the surrounding area. Some objects were grouped; County Chairs were placed together, three pieces from the Shadow series (Shadow Wood Stove Stool, Shadow County Chair and Hung Stool) were grouped, and knitted stools were positioned closely. Two County Chairs were not on plinths and were marked with signage offering their availability to be sat in. I felt that it was important to be able to test their function however I could not offer that with all of the pieces on display. Posters

describing the materials and/or collaborators were wall mounted within the proximity of the appropriate piece. The posters are included as Appendix C.

The title of this thesis and exhibition “Finding Folk: Contemporary Craft Regionalism” is intended to outline my motivations in pursuing this work: to explore and develop relationships with my community through my craft practice and to consider how to craft contemporary regional furniture.



Figure 28: Finding Folk Exhibition, Ignite Gallery (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce



Figure 29: Finding Folk Exhibition, Ignite Gallery (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce



Figure 30: Finding Folk Exhibition, Ignite Gallery (2019). Photo: Kristy Boyce



Figure 31: Hung Stool and County Chairs on display at Finding Folk, Ignite Gallery, April 4 - 10 (2019).
Photo: Kristy Boyce

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The real test of an object's worth lies not in its efficiency, novelty, or even beauty (which, in any case, is in the eye of the beholder), but in whether it gives us a sense of our shared humanity. (Adamson, 2018, p. 9)

6.1 Summary

Initially I laid out the four main objectives of this research; 1) to design work that is *of a place*, 2) to foster community through craft, 3) to offer sustainable goods, and 4) to invest in myself as a craftsperson. These objectives were to be guided by the design principles of Critical Regionalism, guided by the people, industry, history and landscape of Prince Edward County. This work is the result of my research of furniture histories, explorations of the notions of place and placelessness, collaborations with community members, local sourcing, and my own design processes as a craftsperson. I have explored techniques, materials and forms to create a diverse collection of seats, along with a single and central fire pit, to reflect my experiences of discovering community through my craft practice, with the intention to make work that is quietly bound to its surroundings.

6.2 Research Questions

Through this research I was seeking to engage with community members through craft-based exercises. I found I was able to make connections within my community through a variety of formats, materials and processes, thus making the possibilities quite varied. This work has made me aware of the merits of collaboration; it is my observation that these have been enjoyable and valued exchanges for all parties involved. I see opportunity to continue with these and other craft-based community collaborations and will continue to find ways to engage. I came to discover that the more people involved in a project, for example the knitted stools, the greater it grew and the more energy that

surrounded it. Of all the projects I consider the knitted stools to be the most successful in community engagement, for it touched many community members: the choir members, knitting club members, it grew via social media and with the upcoming window display in the local yarn store this Spring, it will surely touch more.

Can craft be employed as a methodology? I would argue that yes, this research led with craft and craft became the actions of this research: the concept, the process and the resulting object in each of these exchanges.

6.3 In Closing

By becoming part of a community one becomes responsible to it. I feel a responsibility to the people who live here today as much as I do to the people who have passed. The stories and the work of our regional predecessors are the folklore and foundation of what we carry forward and build upon. If our objects are an extension of ourselves then it is through surviving objects that we can get some sense of the people and the culture of an ever-evolving community. The people who I have engaged with during this research have been kind, curious and supportive. I, too, feel the same for them. This work that they have contributed to means a great deal more to me because of these exchanges, and there is value and reward in holding space for community in all future endeavors.

References

- Adamson, Glenn. (2017). *Thinking Through Craft*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Adamson, Glenn. (2010). *Eye on the ball*. American Craft Council. Retrieved from <https://craftcouncil.org/magazine/article/eye-ball>
- Adamson, Glenn. (2018). *Fewer, Better Things*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Armbrecht, Ann. (2008) *Thin Places*. Retrieved from <http://www.placeness.com/529-2/>
- Blackburn, Graham. (2005). *A Short History of Stools*. Fine Woodworking Magazine. Taunton Press. <https://www.finewoodworking.com/2005/09/13/a-short-history-of-stools>
- Bradbury, Dominic. (2016). *Supporting act: how Brian Mackay-Lyons hides his residential projects in plain sight*. Wallpaper Magazine. Retrieved from <https://www.wallpaper.com/architecture/how-brian-mackay-lyons-hides-his-residential-projects-in-plain-sight>
- Bell, Bruce. (2017). *County Tourism Strong as Ever*. County Weekly News. Retrieved from <https://www.countyweeklynews.ca/2017/01/09/county-tourism-strong-as-ever/wcm/39ed6f5f-bd7a-1fec-fb1d-3a005b6517ed>
- Campbell, Steve. (2005). *The County Handbook: How to Survive Prince Edward County*. Bloomfield: County Magazine Print Shop.
- Cooke, Jr., Edward S. (1989). *New American Furniture: The Second Generation of Studio Furnituremakers*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts.
- Cooke, Jr., Edward S., & Ward, Gerald W.R., & L'Ecuyer, Kelly. (2003). *The Maker's Hand: American Studio Furniture, 1940 - 1990*. Boston: MFA Publications.
- Crawford, Michael. (2009). *Shop Class as Soulcraft*. New York: Penguin Books.

- Einarsson, Magnus and Helga Benndorf Taylor. (1993). *Just for Nice: German Canadian Folk Art*.
Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization.
- Ellingson, Laura. (2008). Embodied Knowledge. In Lisa M. Given (Ed.) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. (Vol. 2 pp. 244-245). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Frampton, Kenneth (1983) *Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance*. Retrieved from <https://www.moderninddenver.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Frampton.pdf>
- Gomez-Ibanez, Miguel. (2001). Understanding Tradition. In R. Mastelli & J. Kelsey (eds.) *Tradition in Contemporary Furniture* (p. 42 - 49). Bethel: The Furniture Society.
- Gooding, James. (1975). *A Seat in the County: A Chair Exhibit*. Picton: Prince Edward Co. Museum.
- Gurr, Kim, Leon Straker and Philip Moore. (n.d.) *A History of Seating in the Western World*.
Perth: Curtin University of Technology. Retrieved from
<http://www.exmoorantiques.co.uk/History%20of%20Seating.htm>
- Haylock Capon, Margaret. (2016, June 2). Furniture of merit at The Gilbert Company. *County Weekly News*, p 18.
- Kuiper, Kathleen. (2006). *Britannica Academic Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from
<https://academiceb-com.ocadu.idm.oclc.org/levels/collegiate/article/stool/69821>
- Johns, Chris. (2018). *A Taste of Prince Edward County*. Canada: Penguin Random House.
- Lefaivre, Liane and Alexander Tzonis. (2003). *Critical Regionalism: Architecture and Identity in a Globalized World*. Munich: Prestel Verlag.
- Living in the County. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.thecounty.ca/around-thecounty/about-the-county/living-in-the-county/>
- Material Culture Review. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/MCR/index>
- Prokopow, Michael. (2018). Art of Seeing. *Studio Magazine* (Vol. 13, pp. 62-65).

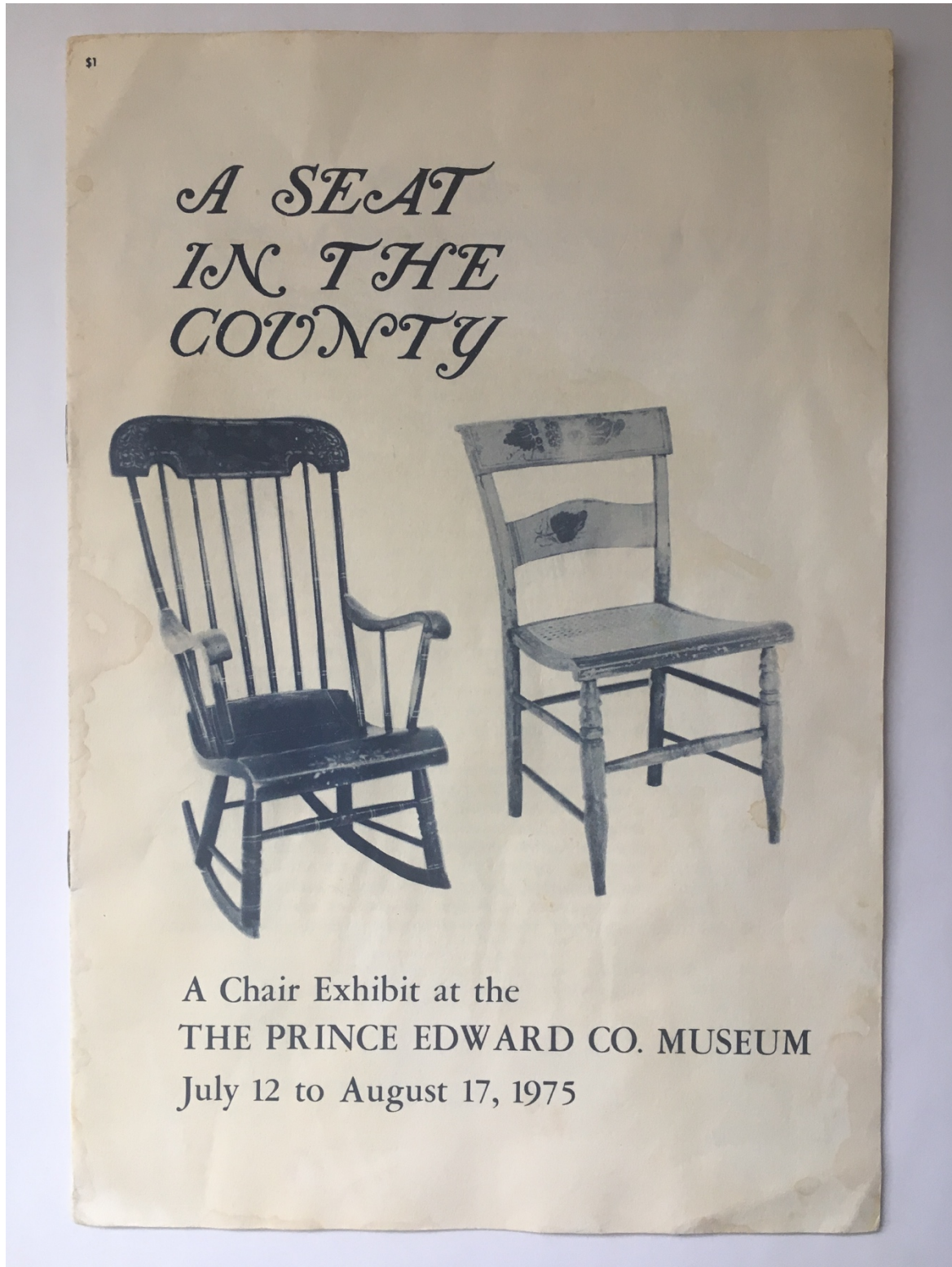
Pye, David. (1968). The Nature and Art of Workmanship. In G. Adamson (Ed.), *The Craft Reader* (341-353). London: Bloomsbury Publishing

Relph, Ted. (1976) Prospects for Places. In Laurice, Michael and E. MacDonald. (Eds.), *The Urban Design Reader* (p. 119-124). New York: Routledge.

Relph, Ted. (2016). *Placeness, Place and Placelessness*. Retrieved from <http://www.placeness.com>

Schensul, Jean. (2008). Methodology. In Lisa M. Given (Ed.) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. (Vol. 2 pp. 244-245). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Statistics Canada. (2018) Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dppd/prof/details/page.cfm?B1=All&Code1=3513020&Code2=35&Data=Count&Geo1=CSD&Geo2=PR&Lang=E&SearchPR=01&SearchText=Prince+Edward+County&SearchType=Begin&TABID=1>



A SEAT IN THE COUNTY

This exhibit is designed to fulfill two purposes. The first is to illustrate chairs of the types used and made in Prince Edward County. The second is to produce an illustrated "dictionary" of chair designs from about 1750 to the last years of the 19th century.

These two objectives are not at all incompatible. Prince Edward County is a clearly defined area in Southern Ontario. It is located on the north shore of Lake Ontario, about half way between the Niagara River to the West and the St. Lawrence River to the East. It was settled in the last decades of the 18th century, first by United Empire Loyalists who wished to practise their professions and trades under the Union Jack as British subjects. Later, craftsmen, farmers and industrialists recognized the importance of "Quinte" with its proximity to the new Canadian markets and the traditional markets in the United States.

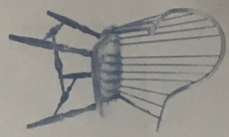
Thus, the furnishings of County homes covered the fashions of the period. There was the wealth to acquire the latest designs, the craftsmanship to produce the latest designs and a wealthy rural population to retain the traditional designs.

Collectors, historians and antique dealers have "invented" names for most of the chairs in this exhibit. Sometimes the same name will be given to two apparently quite different chairs. In this catalogue we have tried to use the original name when ever possible and not to give a name which is suggested purely by the use of the chair.

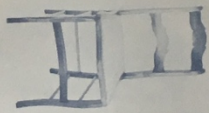
This exhibit has been designed to serve both needs. The basic research was undertaken by Charles Baird, a student in the Museum Technology Course at Algonquin College, Ottawa. He has been assisted by Donald MacDermaid of the County Museum staff and Donna Midwinter, a fellow student. Assistance of many friends of the museum has been received but special thanks must be extended to Mrs. Jeanne Minhnick who offered valuable comments for this catalogue. Thanks are also due to the owners and donors of the chairs illustrated and they are recorded with the illustrations.

S. James Gooding,
Curator.

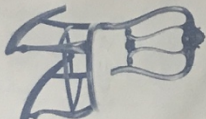
Copyright 1975 Prince Edward County Museum
Printed in Canada.



1. CONTINUOUS ARM WINDSOR, c. 1820
This style of chair was made between about 1790 and 1820. It has a deeply saddled seat with thin tapering spindles. The legs are well splayed and the H stretcher is nicely turned. Note how the legs protrude through the seat. The term Windsor, when applied to a chair, means one where the legs, arms, spindles, etc. are joined to the seat. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. E. L. Young.



2. PARLOUR CHAIR, c. 1865
This chair is stamped "G. P. Walter & Co., Bowmansville, C. W." on the back of the rail. This firm began business in 1861 and was destroyed by fire c. 1866. The front legs are of the sabre pattern and the concave front stretcher was borrowed from the much earlier Empire style. Mr. & Mrs. W. James Musgrave collection.



3. LADIES OCCASIONAL CHAIR, c. 1870
This is a fine example of a cabinet-maker's craftsmanship. It was probably made as a gift for a very special friend. Note the delicate back lines and the heavily carved crest rail with shell designs. This chair was found in The County and may have been manufactured here. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. T. S. Walker.



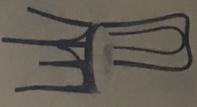
4. DINING ROOM CHAIR, c. 1850.
Abram Southard had a furniture factory in Picton from the mid 1840's to the late 1870's. This walnut dining room chair was made by him before 1850, and bears his hand-written label under the seat. From the Jeanne Minhnick collection.

5. BOSTON ROCKER, c. 1850.
The Boston Rocker was made all over North America. It became popular after the 1840's and remained a favourite until the last years of the 19th century. It is still being made. The S shaped, scrolled seat, long tapering spindle and back posts are most characteristic. This chair retains its original black finish and yellow stencil. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. T. S. Walker.



6. SIDE CHAIR, c. 1870.
This style of chair was popular from the late 1860's until c. 1880 or 1890. The original seat would have been of cane. Note how the back legs continue to be-





10

come back splines. The hole in the top rail is a finger hole. This chair of "G. P. Walker & Co., Philadelphia, C. W." is on the first floor. It was made before the first in the late 1860's. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. W. James Musgrove.

7. LADDER-BACK CHAIR, c. 1840.

This is a very primitive example of a ladder-back, or as they are sometimes called, slat-back chair. It has an elm bark seat and the slats are bowed for comfort. The legs are slightly tapered at the bottoms. This style of chair was in common use from about 1830 to 1880. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Grace Hawkins.

8. CANE-BACK ARM CHAIR, c. 1875.

This chair with its lightly carved crest rail will also be found as a rocker. The arms are carried into the front legs but are supported by splines. The front legs and stretcher have been turned. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. W. James Musgrove.

9. FANCY CHAIR, c. 1830.

This chair is a good example of a painted chair. It retains its black finish and metallic gold stencil. The seat is of woven rush, capped at the front and sides with a narrow strip of cane. This is a "Hutchcock" chair after Leonard Hutchcock, an American chair maker of the 1830's. From the Jeanne Minthorn collection.

10. BENTWOOD CHAIR, c. 1880.

The bentwood was made by steaming strips of ash or hickory and bending them into the desired shape. The original seats were either pressed wood or cane. Some were made in Canadian factories in the 1890's. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Walker.

11. SPINDLE-BACK WINDSOR, c. 1840.

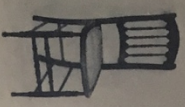
The spindle, or rod-back, Windsor was made along the same lines as the arrow-back from about 1820 until well into the 1880's. On this example, the back posts are straight as are the splines. It has a single slab seat. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Young.

12. WALNUT END CHAIR, c. 1870.

This came seated side or end chair has four turned splines connecting the



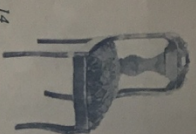
11



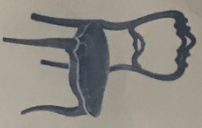
12



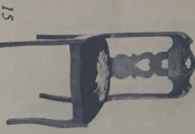
13



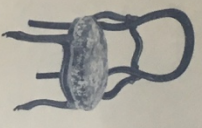
14



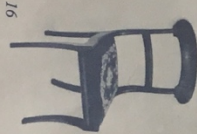
18



15



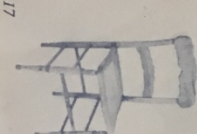
19



16



20



17



21

centre rail with the top rail. The broad fronted seat, thick legs and stretchers, make it a very stable chair. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. W. J. Musgrove.

13. WALNUT ARM CHAIR, c. 1880.

This came-seat, low-back Windsor was used by Robert Merrill, first Judge of the County of Prince Edward, Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Merrill Hagerman.

14. PARLOUR CHAIR, c. 1870.

This parlour chair is known as a "Yase Splat-back" because of the shape of the centre panel. This was a popular style with chairmakers and many variations of design in the panel will be found. James Musgrove collection.

15. PARLOUR CHAIR, c. 1870.

"Heart Splat-back" parlour chair with slip seat. The sabre legs are a variation which will be occasionally found. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Donald Thompson.

16. PARLOUR CHAIR, c. 1840.

This dining, or parlour chair is styled in the "Grecian" manner which was popular from about 1830 to 1850. The sabre legs are typical of the style. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Donald Thompson.

17. VICTORIAN SIDE CHAIR, c. 1860.

In the early Victorian period the scrolls of the earlier Empire, and the Regency periods were carried further and seen here on the back rails. The legs and the front stretcher are turned and a serpentine or multiple curve front seat rail added. The cane seat was most popular. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. W. James Musgrove.

18, 19, 20. BALLOON BACK CHAIRS.

The three variations of the balloon back chair shown here were developed in the late 1850's and remained popular until the early 1870's. After about 1880, the cabriole leg began to replace the straight and sabre legs in the drawing room chair. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Donald Thompson.

21, 22. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN'S CHAIRS, c. 1870.

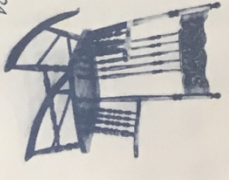
This set of matching "Ladies and Gentlemen's Chairs" are upholstered with the original horse-hair fabric. The



22



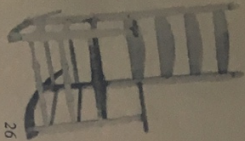
23



24

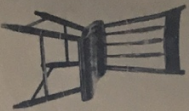


25



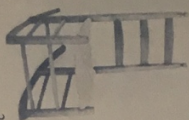
26

23. CANE-BACK ROCKER, c. 1870.
Cane-back rockers may be dated from about 1860 to 1880. Long rockers were typical of the period. It should be noted how the arms connect with the front and continue down into the front legs. On this chair there is a broad front seat rail and thick rungs. There are five splatules in the lower back. These are sometimes located in the top of the back instead of the bottom. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. W. James Masgrove.



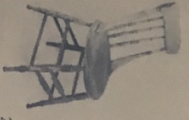
27

25. VASE-SPLAT ROCKER, c. 1840.
This attractive rocker is not common in Eastern Ontario although it was made extensively in the Kitchen/Waterloo area. The vase shaped splat in the back is typical of Empire styling and gives the chair its name. The seat is a simple shaped seat. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Young.



28

26. LADDER-BACK ROCKER, c. 1900.
This heavy rocker is typical of the venetian chairs of the period 1890 to 1920. This one was made by Sandford Corliss, a carpenter who built chairs during the winter months. He had his home and shop on Bethel Street and died in 1917 at the age of 51 years. He made a number of rockers of this pattern. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Duff Folkard.



29

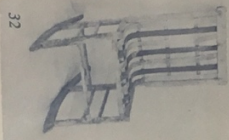
27. ARROW-BACK CHAIR, c. 1830.
The arrow-back was popular from about 1820 to 1835. This one retains its original black paint, yellow striping and a trace of the stencil on the top rail. It has a square "S" or ogee shaped seat which is cut from a single slab of pine. Note how the legs are well spread with the box stretcher. Although the arrow-back was popular for only about 15 years, it is possible to identify those of early



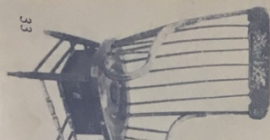
30



31



32



33

Although they are quite scarce, almost any pattern of full size chair may be found in "children's size." This group includes an upholstered rocker, a steam-slat rocker, and a wicker arm chair. From the collection of Mrs. Grace Hawkins.



construction by the more pronounced curve of the arrows. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Walker.

28. LADDER-BACK ROCKER, c. 1840
This fine example of an early ladder back rocker has the original woven rush seat. The rockers are short, flat bottomed from long use and are attached to the legs with an open mortice. Gift of Mrs. Grace Hawkins.

29. WINDSOR CHAIR, c. 1860.
This late Windsor chair, which is of the pattern sometimes called "gun-stock Windsor," was popular from about 1860 to 1870. The name was given to it in modern times because of the shape of the two back posts which were designed to give support. The spindles, front legs and stretchers are turned in the reel, hall, and vase shapes. Many of this style have curved seats and the lower sides of the crest rail is often arched. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. E.E. Young.

30. FANCY CHAIR, c. 1830.
The advertising of the 19th century reserves the term "fancy chair" or as they were often called "fancies," for chairs or rockers which had a painted decoration. This fine example shows the

stencilled decoration which has been accented with brush strokes. It was found in Prince Edward County and may have been made in The County. Gift of Jeanne Minihnick in memory of Ann Farwell.

31. HALF-ARROW WINDSOR ROCKER, c. 1830.
This rocker, with its short arrows, has been stripped to show its original painted decoration. It was found in The County and may have been made by the same maker as No. 30, Prince Edward County Museum collection.

32. STEAMED-SLAT ROCKER, c. 1900.
This chair of simple design and construction was intended for "verandah" use although they occasionally found their way into the house. They were known as "carpet cutters" because the rockers are so narrow. From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Elmer E. Young.

33. COMMODE CHAIR, c. 1860.
This fine chair retains its original black paint, yellow striping and stencil on the crest rail. The long tapering spindles and curved arms are most graceful. It is of the Windsor family of chairs. From the Annelisburg Museum collection.

Appendix B: County Chair process images



Cutting back post joinery with dado set (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Rounding over post on router table (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Turning parts on the lathe (2018). Photo: Tompkins



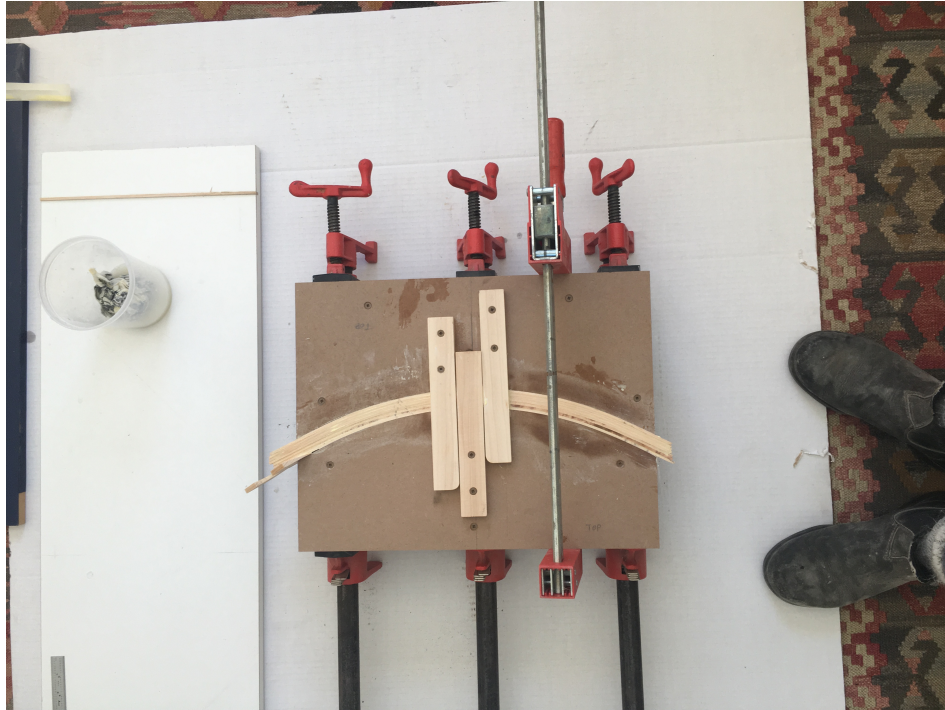
Laying out joinery with template (2018). Photo: Tompkins



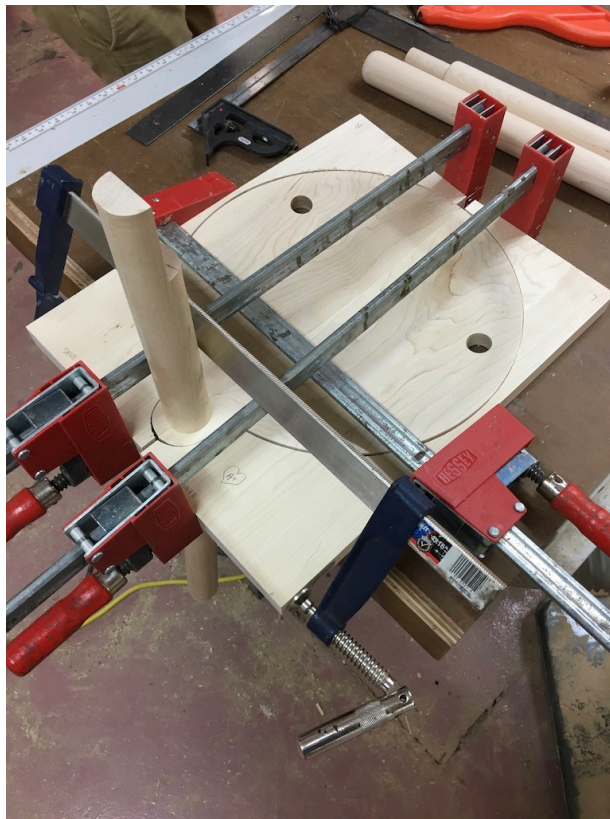
Removing excess material on bandsaw prior to rounding over seat parts (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Drilling seats for through-tenons (2018). Photo: Tompkins



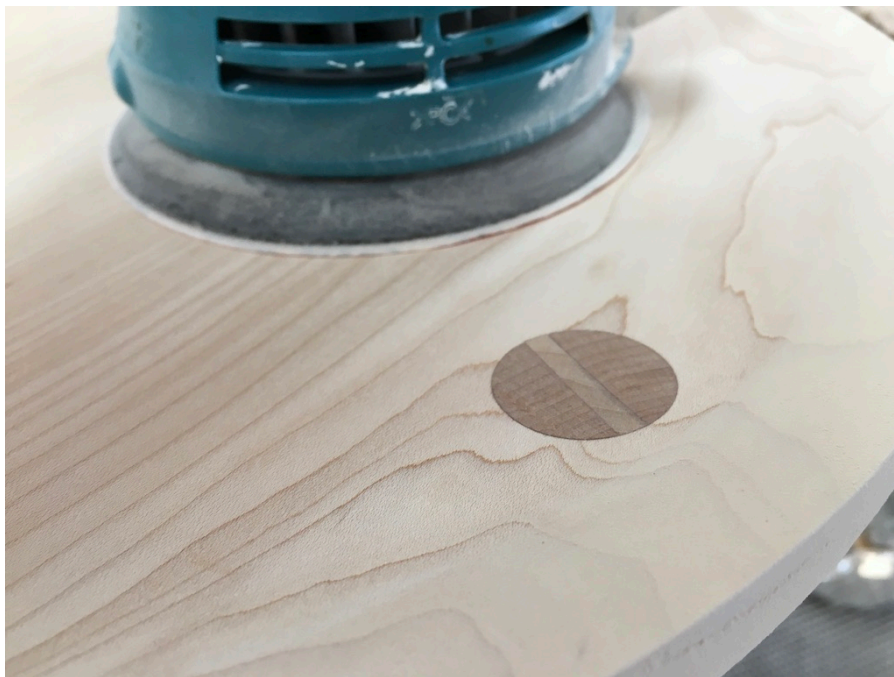
Gluing bent laminations for crest rail (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Dry-fitting parts prior to assembly (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Flush-trimming wedged tenons (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Sanding assemble seat, post and rails (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Shaping crest rails (2018). Photo: Tompkins



Stamping undersides of seat with logo (2019). Photo: Tompkins



Burn Basket

Island Forge

Bruce Milan
& Amy Liden

islandforge.ca

County
Fireplace
Company

Christine
MacMillan

countyfireplace.ca

Bruce is a blacksmith in Bloomfield, his operation is called Island Forge and is situated behind his home on Main Street. He and his assistant Amy built this first prototype.

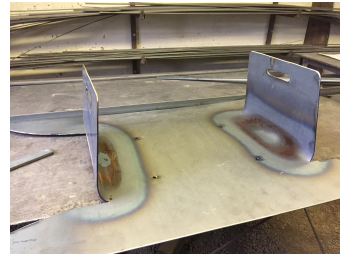
Christine co-owns County Fireplace Company, a retail shop on Picton Main Street. We met at her shop to discuss my concept for a fire pit. Christine offered design tips and price point suggestions and other useful information on what makes a great fire pit.

The aim of this project is to fabricate an

outdoor fire pit locally, at a competitive price.

The design of the Burn Basket reduces labour and equipment costs, the single sheet can be folded and tacked without industrial machining processes.

The Burn Basket can be moved easily, a quality I have learned from experience to be an asset. The sweeping curves of the steel plate emulate the softness of paper. The basket form was inspired by the gathering of harvest.





Birch
Walnut
Cherry
Oak

Homestead
Milling

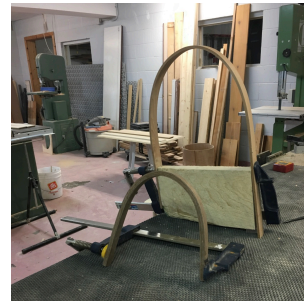
Trevor Miller

Kaiser Farm

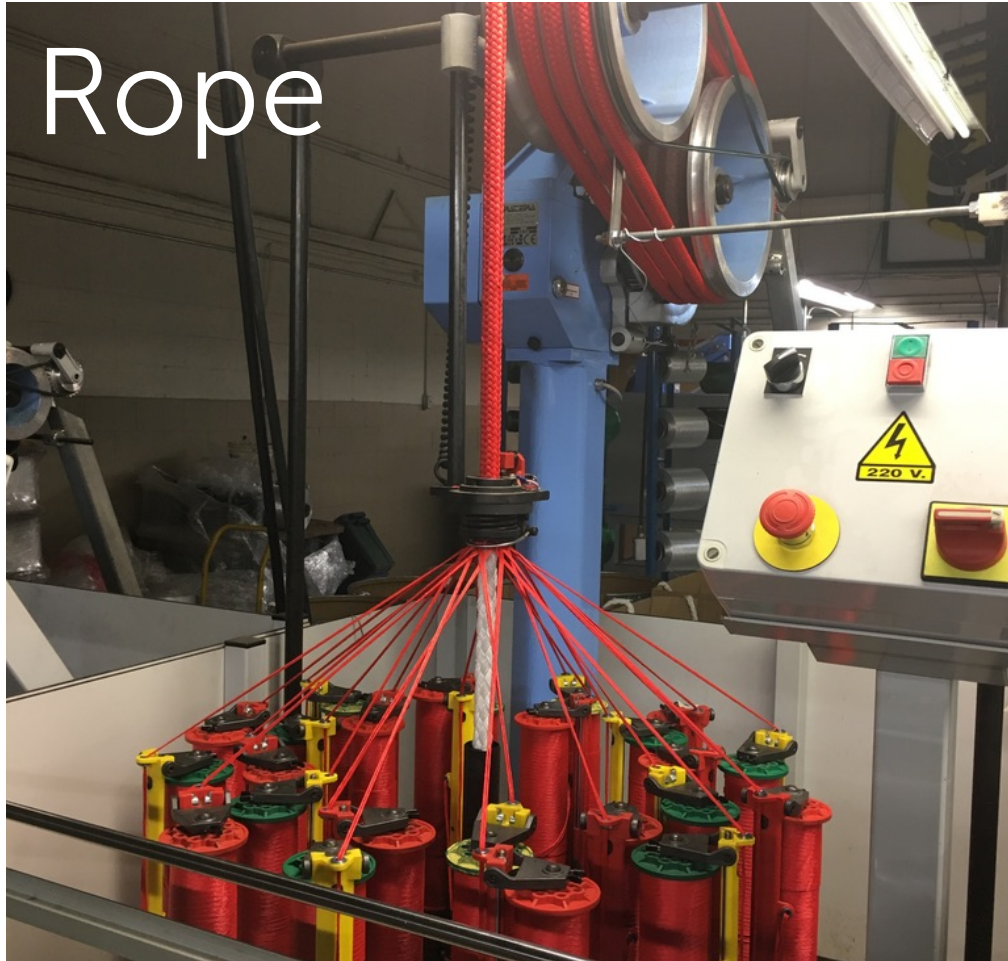
Karen &
Kurt Kaiser

Trevor is a dairy farmer and woodworker in Milford. He fells and mills trees on his farm and sells lumber under the name Homestead Milling. I have sourced material used in this work from Trevors land.

A few years ago I participated in a rug hooking workshop with skilled hooker Karen Kaiser. She and her husband Kirk live at a nearby farm. Kirk and Karen sold me lumber that they had milled from their farmland. Much of the work in this thesis collection is built from Kirk and Karen's wood.



Rope



The Rope Store

Norm & Sue Grant

onlineropestore.com

Norm and Sue own and operate a small, independent rope manufacturing facility on the shoulder of Trenton at the highway exit to Prince Edward County. The pair produce ropes for sailing vessels, attend trade shows and sell their products online. It has been fascinating to tour their facility and understand their manufacturing processes and equipment.

Norm has prepared a special batch of rope for me to experiment with which contains no

interior fibres. This produces a 'flat' rope rather than a common cylindrical rope. The product variation inspired specific directions in my work and I am eager to continue my explorations with the material.

Nylon rope is designed for outdoor applications, one added benefit is that if it gets wet it shrinks when drying, therefore re-tensioning the weave on this outdoor furniture line.

'wheelbeddo' lounge chair scale model



Beeswax Finish



Honey Pie
Hives

Bay
Woodward

honeypie.ca

Beeswax from Honey Pie Hives was used in the development of a walnut and wax wood finish made specifically for this body of work.



Wool



SHED
Chetwyn
Farms

Ted
Pickering

shedchetwyn
farms.com

Ted is an Alpaca farmer in Hillier. He supplies Rosehaven Yarn Shop in Picton with high quality alpaca wool.

Stephanie knitted with Ted's Alpaca wool on her stool which brought together three skilled community members; the farmer, the knitter and the furniture maker.

Ted's felted alpaca wool was also used to produce seat cushions for the County Chairs.

"Alpaca fleece is hypoallergenic having a hollow fibre which renders it uniquely light and up to 30% warmer than the same weight of merino wool. Their fleece ranges naturally in over 22 shades ranging from black, charcoal, silver, sand, brown and ivory.

Alpacas are not killed for their fleece; they can live for 20 years with a lifetime of shearing potential, they produce a rich organic garden manure and leave a light eco footprint."

SHED





Rosehaven
Yarn Shop

rosehavenyarn.com

Shout Sister
Choir

shoutsisterchoir.com

Stephanie
Boyte

Natalie Stone

When telling a member of my community about my desire to connect with local knitters, she suggested I share my ideas with the Shout Sister Choir, a local choral group. Upon doing so I made several contacts within the choir, two of whom, Georgette Fry and Anne Kratz, are collaborating with me on knitted 'yarn bombed' stools.

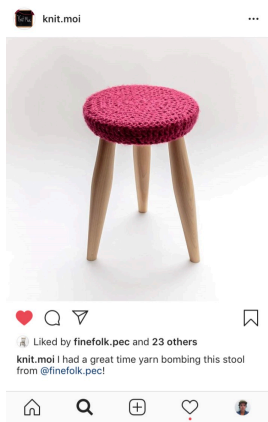
Lesley Snyder owns Rosehaven Yarn Shop in Picton. Upon the choir's suggestion, I called her to discuss the possibility of approaching her Tuesday night knitting group about the knitted stool project and she was very supportive. The knitting group of women enthusiastically contributed

as we brainstormed the best design for a stool to facilitate the knitting. They also taught me the term 'yarn bomb' which is when one knits around something existing, such as lamp posts, etc.

Stephanie Boyte, a member of the group, and I have worked closely to design the alpaca wool and walnut low stool.

The project grew over social media and attracted friends like Natalie to try yarn bombing a stool too!

Rosehaven will showcase a display of the yarn bombed stools in their windows this Spring.



Shout Sister Choir

Rosehaven Yarn Shop