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Legal aspects of probate inventories with examples from Writtle and Roxwell, Essex, England 1635-1749

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LEGAL ASPECTS OF PROBATE INVENTORIES WITH
^ EXAMPLES FROM WRITTLE AND ROXWELL,
ESSEX, ENGLAND 1635-1749

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Nancy E. Welch

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LEGAL ASPECTS OF PROBATE INVENTORIES

VITA

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ABSTRACT

This paper sought to explore the legal origins of probate inventories and to establish the place of probate inventories in public policy between 1635 and 1749. Commentaries from the period provided the legal background.

A series of probate inventories from Writtle and Roxwell, Essex, England furnished the examples of the probate system. Published by Francis Steer in 1950, the series, dated 1635-1749, was studied for information on land use, material culture, and system of rural credit.

INTRODUCTION

In seventeenth and eighteenth century England, death was a familiar, yet significant, event that demanded human and material responses from people. During the period 1625-1699, the average life expectancy for adults was less than 40 years and the infant mortality rate was approximately 118 to 143 deaths per 1,000 births during the second half of the seventeenth century.¹ These realities, coupled with widespread disease and recurring famine, illustrate how close death was to all inhabitants.

The human response to a death was the public mourning, funeral, burial, and memorial. These events effectively eased the deceased from their recent participation and membership in the life of the community into the world of remembrance.

The material response was to distribute the deceased's wealth and property and to settle any claims on the estate. The material response, as illustrated by wills, last testaments, and probate inventories, was governed by numerous rules, traditions, and requirements and provided a framework for the settling of financial affairs.

Part of that material response, the making of a probate inventory, is the subject of this paper. Probate inventories, lists of the deceaseds' goods and their monetary values, are remarkable sources of information about material culture, agriculture, prices, and economic growth.

This paper will discuss the rudiments of how and why inventories were made, some of the scholarly commentaries that helped people make inventories and some conclusions drawn from a sample of 237 inventories dated 1635-1749 from Writtle and Roxwell, Essex, England. Occupations, rural credit, land use, and the individual distribution of wealth will be explored. In addition, certain legal characteristics of inventories will be highlighted to show their relationship to public policy during the era.

Writtle and Roxwell are highlighted because of Francis Steer's publication in 1950 of 248 probate inventories from those two English parishes. The documents cover the period 1635 to 1749. Only 237 of the inventories have been used here due to the incompleteness and irregularity of eleven of them.

The making of inventories was traditional not only because of a legal requirement, but also because the document made the execution of a will more efficient, and at times, more equitable. There were chiefly three reasons why an inventory was considered to be important: 1) it enabled one to determine, in relation to the will, what truly constituted the estate, 2) it insured the heirs' receipt of the inheritance due, and 3) it made certain that all debts had been settled. Inventories were designed to serve both the heirs and the creditors, and ideally helped to protect the heirs against theft by an executor or unlawful claims upon the estate.

THE PREPARATION OF PROBATE INVENTORIES

Chapter 1

Promulgated under King Henry VIII, the statute requiring inventories and assigning the oversight duties to the Church of England originated in Roman canon law. The Henrician statute reads:

By the Statues of this Realme, it is thus enacted concerning the forme to be obseved by the Executor Testamentary in making of an Inventory; viz. that the Executor or Executors named by the persons, two at the least, to whom the person dying was indebted or made any Legacy, and upon their refusal or absence, two other honest persons in their presence, and by their discretions shall make, or cause to be made, a true and perfect Inventory of all the goods and chattels, wares, and merchandizes, as well moveable as not moveable, whatsoever they were of the said person so deceased; and the same shall cause to be indented, before the Bishops Ordinaries, their Officials and Ordinaries, or other person having power to take probate of the testament, upon the holy Evangelist, to be good and true: and the same one part indeented, shall present and deliver to the keeping of the said Bishop, Ordinary, or Ordinaries or other person whatsoever having power to take probate of testaments and the other part of the said Inventory indented, to remain with the Executor: and that no Bishop, Ordinary or Ordinaries, or other person whatsoever, having authority to take probate of testaments, upon paine in the said Statute contained do refuse to take any such Inventory to him or them presented, or rendered, to be delivered as aforesaid."²

Long before Henry VIII however, the concept and practice of inventories were in use. William Nelson credited Justinian with beginning the practice to protect the heir.

"By the Civil Law the Heir was obliged to satisfy all the Debts of the Testator, by reason whereof it sometimes happened that the Inheritance was prejudicial to him, for he might pay more than it was worth; therefore Justinian ordained, that if the Heir would exhibit a True Inventory of all the Goods and Chattels of the Deceased, he should be no farther chargeable than to the Value of the Inventory; and so

much Strictness was requir'd by the Law in making an Inventory that if the Heir neglected it for a Year or more, he was obliged to pay all the Legacies, tho' he had not sufficient of the Testator's estate to do it."3

The inventory thus existed as a bond between the executor and the Church official. The bond was written half in English and half in Latin. The Latin portion bound the executor of the will to the clergy for the proper performance of duties and the prompt payment of fees. The English half specified how the requirements were to be accomplished. The bond directed that a "true and perfect" inventory be made, debts be paid, and the remainder distributed to the heirs.

The creation of an inventory was governed by numerous rules and traditional practices. Legal scholars wrote texts that illuminated the mandates for laypeople and for the Church officials who oversaw the inventory process. Three representative commentaries were consulted for this paper: Henry Swinburne A Briefe Treatise of Testaments and Last Wills (London, 1640); Burn, Ecclesiastical Law (London, 1723); and William Nelson, Lex Testamentaria, (2nd ed., 1724). The sections on inventories were generally chapters of books which covered a multitude of legal topics. The detail of the inventory chapters illustrates the possible complexity of the subject. Swinburne can be characterized as the most straightforward of the three authors, while Burn was the most stilted and legal. Nelson showed the most humor and examples and wrote in a light vein. One's choice of any legal guide would have been dictated by one's level of expertise and the complexity of the questions.

The procedure for proving a will and obtaining an inventory was uncomplicated in itself, but the particular circumstances of each case

could present a complex, and costly situation, as illustrated by the numerous examples of complaints about exorbitant fees. When a person died, he or she was buried with a ceremony befitting their rank, station, wealth and status. The will was proved, filed and sealed at the parish registry under the auspices of the Ordinary or the local church official. At this point an inventory was required.

Most testamentary business was handled by the immediate parish clergy or Church official or by the Ordinary, or Bishop, of a diocese. Most probate business was executed locally. Only the wealthy, defined as those who owned property worth more than 5 pounds in more than one diocese, went to the Prerogative Courts at York or Canterbury for the disposition of their estates. The Ordinary set the schedule by which the inventory was to be made. In determining the schedule for an inventory, the official considered the distance that had to be traveled to execute business and the exact location of the property. If for any reason the Ordinary failed to set a due date, the executor of the will remained responsible for making an inventory before distributing any legacies. The responsibility for making an inventory had priority over most of the executor's other duties.⁴ At least this is the way Swinburne interpreted the law. Nelson interpreted the scheduling requirements more strictly yet left some flexibility for the situation. Nelson wrote: "By the Civil Law it was to be exhibited within three months after the death of the Testator, but if 'tis done afterwards 'tis good, but the Ordinary may dispence with the Time of bringing it in; and so he may, whether 'tis brought in or not."⁵ After the presentation and the registration of the inventory, the executor could continue with his charges.

The reasons for making an inventory are clear and the process needed to obtain approval for an inventory was fairly simple. That leaves the question - exactly how did one know what to put into an inventory? Again the commentaries helped to show what was to be included and what was not. The inventory makers did not, of course, always follow the suggested procedures. Those problems will be discussed later in this paper.

"A list of goods, and chattels, wares, and merchandises as well as moveable as not moveable" does not appear to be difficult to assemble, although it could be time consuming. People during the 17th and 18th centuries ordinarily did not have a large number of possessions. However the issue could be clouded by questions of what should be put into an inventory and what was exempt because of the nature of the item or of an agreement with the heir or any other singular situation.

Burn partially defined the words used in the instructions for the inventory to simplify the question of what to include. Burn defined "goods" as "cattle, bulls, cows, oxen, sheep, horses, swine, poultry, household goods, money, plate, jewels, corn, hay, wood severed from the ground, and such like moveables."⁶ Even Burn did not attempt to list all the items that might fit the definition of "goods."

Chattels had a broader definition. Chattels were "goods, moveable and immoveable except what are in nature of freehold or parcel of it either personal or real."⁷ Real property and personal property are further explained by Burn. "Personal" meant articles that belonged directly to the person. Personal property was that which "if they be any way injuriously withheld from him he hath no other remedy but by personal action."⁸ Real property on the other hand was property which

did not have to do with the person directly or indirectly. "Real property was that which was part of something else, such as a box of charters of land; or such as are issuing out of some immoveable things as a lease, or rent for term of years; and chattels real concern the realty, lands and tenements, interest in advowsons, right of presenting a nominee to a vacant ecclesiastical benefice in statutes merchant and the like."⁹

Window glass provides a good example of the types of items that could present problems to the maker of an inventory. Window glass was a fixture in middle to upper class homes during the period 1635 to 1749, and it was a commodity that could be moved from house to house. The general rule for inclusion in an inventory was that if something was attached to the freehold it should be inventoried. Window glass appeared to be part of the freehold but actually was not because it could be, and frequently was, removed and replaced in another house. Swinburne explained the rule for glass and similar items;

"the glass annexed to the windows of the house, because they are parcel of the house, they shall descend as parcel of the inheritance to the heir, and the Executors shall not have them...but not only glass and wainscot, but any other such thing affixed to the freehold, or to the ground with mortar and stone, as tables dormant, leads, bayes, mangers and so on for these beong to the heir and not the the Executor." "Fish in the deceased's pond and doves in the dovecotes belonged to the property and thus were not inventoried. However, hounds were not considered as part of the property and thus should be listed in the inventory."¹⁰

Although women as widows are well represented in the inventories from Writtle and Roxwell, the commentaries said little about the disposition of goods owned by a woman at the death of her husband or those of a husband at the death of his wife. Women were allowed to hold property independently of their husbands at this time, although in actual practice women possessed few rights and their personal pro-

perty was usually negligible. Swinburne mentions that goods belonging to the wife, apparel and jewels for example, should be included in the inventory at the death of the husband. However, he also states that in the Province of York, the custom was that women could retain their goods out of the inventory if there were sufficient funds in her husband's estate to pay the debts. If the wife's belongings were needed to pay debts they were to be put into the inventory.¹¹

Nelson adds little information but he states "...That all the personal Estate of what Nature or Quality soever it be, but the Goods to which the Husband is entitled as Administrator to his Wife, are not to be put in the Inventory after her Death; but Things which are Active must be put in."¹²

Debt plays an important part in the legal reasons for creating inventories, in the execution of the inventory, and in the historical study of them. How to deal with debts in the preparation of an inventory was addressed by most of the commentators. There were numerous interpretations, and contemporary practice failed to follow any pattern faithfully.

Swinburne and Burn agreed that debts to the testator, the deceased, should be included in the inventory. Unrecorded debts and "desperate", or unrecoverable, debts should not be listed. However Burn quoted another earlier source, Lyndwood, as establishing that all debts due to the testator should be detailed.¹³ Debts owed by the subject of the inventory constituted another matter entirely, according to some authors. Debts owed by the deceased should not be part of the inventory as a protection to the heir. Perhaps some did not want to publish their debts to their creditors.

"But the debts due by the Testator, they need not be put into the Inventory, the Ordinary shall do well to make diligent examination, whether the Testator did owe any such: for many times debts are thrust into the Inventory, which are not due by the Testator and so the Legataries and children of the deceased are often defrauded, at least some part of their due, by the unfaithfulness of the Executor, and negligence of the Ordinary, or his officer."¹⁴

Burn asserted that the debts owed belonged not to the Testator but to the creditor.

The English Civil War did not by any account affect all of England's population. However during the period 1635 to 1749, the series of national events which had the greatest impact on the traditional probate process were those of the Civil War and Interregnum from 1642 to 1660.

The periods of civil war and Interregnum in England disrupted the probate process just as they did other traditions. The disruptions of war account for the gaps in the Writtle and Roxwell inventory series from 1640-1660. The fighting itself did not affect every area of England, but the effects of war, such as change in local government, and taxation and the factional strife engendered by the national conflict, reached into every county.

One result of the Civil Wars was a legal reform movement that abolished episcopacy and the secular governmental powers of Church officials. The anticlerical sentiments were well articulated, although it is difficult to gage their popularity among the majority of the population. "We shall, without respect of persons, endeavor the extirpation of property and prelacy that is, church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that heirarchy."¹⁵ In the case of probate administration, the

change to a completely secular form of public administration meant that inventory preparation and execution would no longer be done under the auspices of the Church.

The new Parliamentary government was motivated to create an alternative system for probate which would replace that which was followed in the local courts and the provincial Prerogative Courts. This new system was not developed until 1653. Evidence suggests that until 1653 the Church courts maintained their probate responsibilities. The existence of registrations, although very few, from Writtle and Roxwell between 1642 and 1653 corroborates the continuance of the Church court.

During the last twenty years of the sixteenth century and the first sixty years of the seventeenth century, the reform of the English law was an important issue to practitioners of the law, perpetrators of the law, and people who settled their grievances through the legal system. The period of approximately 1580 to 1625 saw the development of a reform movement that advocated a cheaper and more efficient legal system, the eradication of corruption, and the creation of a new fee system.¹⁶ In 1621 the House of Commons appointed a Committee of the Whole on Courts of Justice to study the legal system and to recommend solutions to perceived problems.

Little happened as a result of the Committee of 1621's work and the issue of law reform resurfaced again in the late 1640's. Probate administration was only one of the areas slated for review by Parliament, whose ultimate goals were the simplification and codification of England's laws, the rationalization of the court structure, greater efficiency in litigation management, and changes for more equitable punishments.¹⁷ The Hale Commission, a non-Parliamentary body comprised

of lawyers, merchants, and army officers, was charged with studying the needed reforms and recommending changes to Cromwell's government. The Commission started working in January of 1652. The Hale Commission's work on the problems of probate administration resulted in a new Probate Act which was approved for a six-month trial period in April of 1653. Besides difficulties in removing probate administration from the jurisdiction of the Church, other problems existed. The greatest obstacle to probate reform was the lack of a trained, viable nationwide civil service. The Church maintained many people in small jurisdictions and controlled a ready workforce for carrying out government business.

The Probate Act of 1653 provided for the appointment of 20 judges, practically the entire Hale Commission, for the "probate of Wills and granting of Administrations in all and every of the Counties and Cities of England and Wales: and shall and may use, exercise and put in execution, all such further Powers and Authorities touching the Probate of Wills and granting of administrations, with the Incidencies and Dependancies thereupon in the late Provinces of Canterbury and York, that Sir Nathaniel Brent lawfully did or might have done in the late province of Canterbury"¹⁸

The Act also tied the probate court to the Council of State closely because of a desire to make the court accountable for its finances and its revenues. Fees and salaries had to be approved and accounts prepared weekly for the Council's perusal. Whatever profits the probate department produced, which became substantial, were to be appropriated to the Navy. An Ordinance for the reviving of an act of Parliament entitled "An Act for Probate of Wills, and Granting Administrations" renewed the new centralized court's existence in December 1653 and again in April of 1654, with minor modifications. The practices of the Hale Commission court differed little from the

previous ecclesiastical methods of probate. The fees remained, according to popular opinion, distressingly high. A comparison of fees in 1653 and those during the 1590's showed little change, although some fee categories had been altered to reflect the new secular jurisdiction.¹⁹

The considerable revenues from the probate court were used to the government's benefit. Funds generated by the court refurbished the Star Chamber space in Westminster, for example, besides outfitting the Navy. However, popular sentiments for the Court's location and petitions from London residents forced the return of the probate office to London. With concrete and visible projects being accomplished with revenues from the probate court, it could no longer be said that profits were lining judges' pockets.

The volume of business done by the new probate court increased dramatically owing to the absorption of the whole country's business and the need to erase the backlog of cases. As with the old system, residents who had to use and depend on the new system expressed distrust of the new centralized form of probate. Grievances revolved around three points, namely distance, costs, and delays. These issues were really no different than the complaints about the Church-governed system. Despite some accommodations to the localities, many people evaded probate altogether because of the cost of a trip to London, the fear of unequal treatment because of Royalist leanings, or the expectation that regional or county registries would be established soon. Opportunities for the unlawful dispersal of property were numerous.

Probate practices were returned essentially to their previous state at the restoration of Charles II in 1660 and the basic practices continued into the 19th century.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

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3. William Nelson, Lex Testamentaria, 2nd ed. (London, 1724), p. 353.
4. Swinburne, A Briefe Treatise, p. 45.
5. Nelson, Lex Testamentaria, p. 354.
6. Richard Burn, Ecclesiastical Law (London, 1763), p. 644.
7. Ibid, p. 645.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Swinburne, A Briefe Treatise, p. 51.
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12. Nelson, Lex Testamentaria, p. 52.
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17. Kitching, "Probate During the Civil War and Interregnum," p. 346.
18. C.H. Firth, and R.S. Rait, Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum (London:MSO, 1911; reprint ed., London: Wm. W. Gaunt and Sons, Inc., 1972), p. 702.
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AN OVERVIEW OF ESSEX COUNTY AND
ENGLAND FROM 1635-1749

Chapter 2

During the period 1635-1749, England was governed by five kings, a Lord Protector and a Council of State, a partnership of a king and a queen, and one queen. The period saw a violent revolution that presented a constitutional crisis, the temporary abolition of the monarchy and the Established Church, the beheading of a monarch, the restoration of the monarchy, a so called "Bloodless Revolution", and the change from the Stuart to the Hanoverian dynasty. During this same period, England grew in material wealth and international prestige and regained a secure national government. Agricultural and general economic growth provided a base for the creation of a trading empire and the development of England as a commercial and financial power.

The political history of the period has been the subject of countless books, papers, monographs, and essays. Although politics affected the people represented by the inventories, the impact was probably slight. Only half of the upper classes, including half of the Long Parliament, took part in the Civil Wars at all. For many people, particularly those in rural areas, life went on as usual. Government, as illustrated by Alan Everitt in Change in the Provinces, was localized. The central government played a small role in peoples' lives, because of the period's social structure, the lack of mobility, and the difficulties of communication.

What was more important and immediate to the families and individuals represented by each inventory from Writtle and Roxwell was the state of the local economy. The economic developments and changes of the period affected the majority of the citizenry. As agricultural workers and merchants dependent on local business, citizens' livelihoods were precarious and at the mercy of chronic inflation and depression, weather and natural disasters, and inefficient agricultural methods. Stability was not a characteristic of the agricultural worker's life.

For Essex residents however, the growth and development of London helped to alleviate some problems. The growth of London as a financial, social, and governmental center stimulated the economy by providing a steady market for many types of foodstuffs and goods derived from agriculture. F.J. Fisher, in the article "Development of the London Food Market, 1540-1640," charted the growth of the London market and its impact on the surrounding counties, on transportation, and on the growth of retail trade in London. Chiefly, Essex provided cheese, butter, grain, fruit and hops to the London market. The London market was a crucial outlet for the county's produce. 20

Inflation and rising prices were fixtures of England's economy from approximately 1590 to 1650. Some of the causes of inflation that have been cited are enclosure, unstable currency, and increases in population and in the demand for goods and services. The military's role in the general growth of trade and in the increased demand for goods and services also fueled inflation. Up to 1642, the growth of population was particularly significant. The number of people increased by approximately 40% from 1500 to 1600 and by another 30% by

1642. It is little wonder that contemporaries complained of the great number of vagabonds as well as a drop in the purchasing power of their money.

The second half of the 17th century showed more economic strength, although this should not be overestimated. Greater economic resiliency was illustrated by the fact that the ruinous harvest of 1697-8, which occurred during a period of war, was weathered more easily than in previous years. Furthermore, plague and the London fire in the second half of the 17th century were destructive and disruptive, but did not paralyze the entire country. Of course many authors have maintained that the fire and plague were beneficial to some extent because they checked the population growth and spawned new economic and social developments.

World inflation slowed during the second half of the 17th century and set the stage for continued growth during the first half of the 18th century. The increase in foreign trade assisted the English domestic economy, and the trading companies of the 1670s and 1680s were instrumental in England's rising stature as a trading power.

The agricultural developments of the 17th and 18th century are important to economic change in the era. These improvements offered the agricultural worker more stability through better yields and more predictable harvests. In the last quarter of the 17th century the land was quite evenly divided between tilled land and pasture. Improved agricultural implements, such as redesigned ploughs, aided England's agricultural development. Walter Blith in 1652, for example, wrote about fundamentals of good plough design as he saw it. He thought the current construction too heavy and the handles too long or too short

to control the plough well. Blith's investigations opened the way for other inventors.¹

Seed drills also received attention during the seventeenth century. J. Sha's book Briefe Discoveries of Divers Excellent Ways and Means for Improving and Manuring of Land, described his ideas for a machine that sowed and manured at the same time.² Another author, John Worlidge, fostered design for a seed drill. Worlidge's drill consisted of a wooden wheel with leather projections which when turned by a kilt from the rear wheels caught the seeds and delivered them into a wooden pipe through which they fell into the soil.³ Worlidge's model was never mass produced, but it did help to stimulate interest in agricultural inventions. These innovations and others in similar books were not widely disseminated during the seventeenth century but interest in new, more reliable methods of agriculture was obviously growing. Jethro Tull's seed drill of the early 18th century proved to be the most effective and practical of the new inventions. Tull's drill could sow three rows of seed and could be drawn by one horse. New tools and other innovations allowed farmers to be more productive and less vulnerable during economic downturns.

Part of Chelmsford Hundred, Writtle and Roxwell lie in the north central portion of the county of Essex. Northeast of London, Essex has been influenced by its position on the eastern coast of the country and by its proximity to the London metropolitan area. Essex makes up part of the lowland, mixed husbandry, area of southeastern England. The county itself has three different regions, the marshland, wood and pasture, and an area of mixed husbandry.⁴

The 1594 edition of John Norden's Description of Essex extolled

the virtues of the county without minimizing its defects. This familiar description refers to the different areas of the county.

"This shire is most fatt, frutefall, and full of profitable things, exceeding (as farras I can finde) anie other shire, for the general comodeties, and the plentie. Though Suffolke be more highlie comended for some wherewith i am not yet acquaynted: But this shire seemeth to me to deserve the title of the englishe Goshen, the fattest of the Land: comparable to Palestine, that flowed with milk and honey. But i can not comende the healthfulness of it: and especialie nere the sea coastes, Rochford Denge, Tendering Hundreds and other lowe places about the creekes, which gave me a moste cruell quarterne fever. But the manie and sweete comodeties couterwayle the daunger."⁵

The population of England had grown significantly through the 17th century and the growth did not taper off until the start of the eighteenth century. In 1670 the population of Essex was approximately 120,000 and by 1700 there were approximately 135,000 county residents. Brown in his study Essex at Work stated that by 1723 the majority of people were engaged in farm work of some type. This statement was probably also true for the century before 1723. Farmers, market gardeners, textile artisans, and other artisans comprised the major portion of the population.⁶ Those who lived on rents and investments were a small portion of the county's residents.

Despite John Norden's glowing description of Essex's natural virtues, the county was burdened with heavy taxation, and like other counties, a significant number of poor people. Essex was among the most heavily taxed counties between 1648 and 1660,⁷ and particularly at times when funds were needed for warfare.

"From the Spring of 1648 till the Autumn of 1649 the four most heavily burdened counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, and Essex each paid considerably more in assessments than London, and their total taxation amounted to nearly one third of that of all England and Wales..."⁸

Between 1649 and 1660 the assessments on Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent and Essex fell by 11%, but these counties still paid 21% of the total assessments of England and Wales. By the Hearth Tax Assessment of 1662, Essex had approximately 63,833 hearths with holdings up to fifteen acres.

Although Essex residents were quite mobile, the distance between towns was significant, communications were marginal and county residents were most concerned about what happened in their immediate area rather than in the county as a whole. In 1659-60 England contained 40 county communities, over 700 urban communities, and approximately 9,000 rural parishes.⁹ These places were "all distinct from one another, all consciously separate, and many surprisingly different."¹⁰ Events and ways of life in 17th and 18th century England served to increase rather than to decrease the insularity of individual communities.

During the period covered by the inventories, Writtle and Roxwell were "peculiar" under the auspices of New College, Oxford. A "peculiar" parish was one under the jurisdiction of a diocese other than the one in which it was located. Ecclesiastically a parish was "that circuit of ground which is committed to the charge of one person or vicar, or to another minister having care of the souls therein."¹¹ In civil terms the parish was "a place for which a separate poor rate is or can be made, and for which a separate overseer is or can be approved."¹² The simplest parish definition is that the parish is "the territorial basis of community service."¹³ These definitions illustrate the importance of the parish designation to the country and the tremendous administrative system established through the Church and the parish system.

The status of the two towns and their New College landlords is described in the History and Typography of Essex. The warden and fellows of New College, Oxford "...have been the proprietors of the rectory, patrons of the vicarage, and ordinaries ever since the founding of New College, 1391: being a peculiar jurisdiction belonging to that college, it is subject in all spiritual matters to such commissary as its warden and fellows may appoint; for which reason it is exempt from episcopal visitation." The civil duties of the parish remained the same despite its peculiar status.

Writtle and Roxwell, agricultural villages close to market towns, together probably averaged a population of significantly less than 3,000 during the period under consideration. Agriculture and day to day existence framed the lives of the inhabitants. In communities such as these, people were "not chiefly occupied with politics at all, but with its own affairs of buying, selling, making love, marrying, bringing up a family, and with all those thousand little concerns that tied together the bonds of family life and formed the staple of conversation..."¹⁵

A community's style of life is easier to detail than its standard of life. The fluctuations in wages and prices made definite impacts on people's lives. Yet, it is difficult to determine exactly the value of money, the adequateness of wages, the burdens of land rents and tax responsibilities, and their relationship to purchasing power. Historians have attempted to construct price indexes for the 16th and 17th centuries, but the results have been limited. Inventories offer some information on prices and values or at least provide material for comparison with other sources.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

1. Michael Partridge, Early Agriculture Machinery (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969) p. 50.
2. Ibid, p. 58.
3. Ibid, p. 52.
4. Joan Thirsk, ed., Agrarian History of England and Wales, vols. (Place: publisher, date), 4:53.
5. John Norden, Essex, (1594), p. 2.
6. F.J. Brown, Essex at Work 1700-1815, No. 49 (Chelmsford, England: Essex Record Office Publications, 1969) p. 108.
7. Alan Everitt, The Local Community and the Great Rebellion, (London: The Historical Association, 1969), p. 53.
8. Ibid, p. 28.
9. Alan Everitt, Change in the Provinces: The 17th Century (Leicester, England: Leicester University Press, 1969) p. 6.
10. Ibid.
11. W.E. Tate, The Parish Chest, 3rd ed., (Cambridge, England: Cambridge at the University Press, 1969), p. 10.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Everitt, Change in the Provinces, p. 10.

PROBATE INVENTORIES AS RESEARCH TOOLS

Chapter 3

In recent years probate inventories have been in vogue as research documents among both the historian and the archeologist. Touted as the best resource for studies from economics to eating habits, inventories have made headlines in historical journals. Unfortunately the drawbacks of probate inventories as sources are not always carefully considered. This chapter explores some of those drawbacks.

A probate inventory was a companion to a will, and the will was the document of primary importance. The will divided the estate, set down directions for distribution, recorded the circumstances of the family for posterity, and often valued the property. The property, as listed in a will, is often overvalued and exaggerated. Inventories were essentially an administrative document. They were legal pieces which were created for reasons of public policy and to expedite the use of the will. As such, property in inventories was generally undervalued. Probate inventories clarified the provisions of the will and were used to insure fairness and equitable distribution. They were a part of a complex legal system which was often in a state of flux.

An inventory was supposed to detail the estate at the time of death. However, as Stephen Porter shows in the article "The Making of Probate Inventories", a delay was a common occurrence.¹ The Ordinary set the date by which the inventory was to be finished, but there

could have been many reasons for delay. Thus depending on the circumstances, a delay could have caused the estate to be diminished, enlarged, or inadequately described.

The local nature of inventories has added to their popularity as sources. The information was recorded by local people, and there were no qualifications, except honesty, for being an inventory maker. Considering the low literacy rate of many rural areas, inventories were often made by semi-literate people who produced documents that are now nearly unintelligible. The low level of literacy, the problems of changes in the meaning and usage of words, and the obsolescence of certain words make the misinterpreting of inventories easy. In addition, inventories exhibit no standard format despite a customary outline and the examples of legal commentary mentioned earlier.

The value of an item in an inventory was supposed to be the price at which the piece could have been sold that day.² This rule required a great deal of judgment on the part of the inventory writer. Goods could easily have been overvalued, undervalued or priced in incongruent groups (e.g. cooking utensils and cattle). Because there was little movement between areas and often scant communication, the valuing of items was highly localized and reflected only the local market.

An inventory was based on the testator's wealth at the time of death. Because older people were more likely to die and more likely to have accumulated measurable amounts of money and possessions, young people are generally underrepresented in any given series of inventories. Also people who held property in several jurisdictions usually do not appear in local parish record books because their estates were handled by the Prerogative Courts. Those with estates valued at less

than five pounds were not required to have inventories prepared. Thus the very poor and the very rich are often underrepresented.

These problems and others, such as the loss and destruction of many documents, have not lessened their popularity with researchers. Despite their shortcomings, inventories have been most successfully used in two ways, either to chronicle or to establish trends or an overall framework for a period. Studies of the distribution of wealth, women's roles during American colonization, agricultural change, and other topics have been the results of exploiting inventory series either for generalizations and trends or chronicles.

Authors who have used inventories as a means to chronicle an era are many. Emmison in Jacobean Inventories³ utilized the inventories from the County of Bedfordshire, 1617-1619, to fit the styles of furniture in that period into the history of English furnishings. Emmison also used the 166 inventories to show the self-sufficiency of each household. This work on Jacobean inventories, published in 1938, was one of the first to have an explanatory introduction and interpretive notes along with the transcribed documents. Emmison was instrumental in setting precedents for other studies. J.H. Bettey and D.S. Wilde used many inventories dated 1573-1670 from Dorset farmers to chronicle the agricultural development of the region and the changes in houses, furnishings and equipment. The inventories, over 1,000 documents, came from the 'peculiars' of the Dean of Salisbury and covered generally the middle class.

Carr, Menard, and Harris relied on inventories to establish trends of wealth distribution in colonial Maryland. The results were published under the title "Opportunity and Inequality: The Distribution of

Wealth on the Lower Western Shore of Maryland, 1628-1705." "This essay examines inventories as indicators of wealth and its distribution to study accumulation of opportunity, structure of society, and direction of social change."⁴ This statistically based study includes an investigation and description of wealth patterns found in the 1735 inventories reviewed, as well as an explanation of how measures of wealth must be adjusted to account for the biases and distortions of the sources. Finally, the article speculates on explanations for the wealth patterns by looking at immigration, local opportunity, and the growth of the Cheapeake economy. The conclusion of this inventory research showed that the accumulated wealth and the potential for accumulating wealth was based on the length of stay in the area.

Volume IV of The Agrarian History of England and Wales is based in part on the extensive examination of inventories. Over 3,000 documents were examined to try to ascertain the economic status and the living and working conditions of laborers between 1560-1600 and 1610-1640. The Agrarian History concluded that the number of very poor laborers, those without livestock, increased from the early series to the later and that the small stock owners lost stock over the two periods. The inventories represented 17 counties where the population of laborers was estimated at eight percent of the total.

Robert Machin analyzed 141 inventories from Chetmole, Leigh, and Yetminster between 1576 and 1769. The object of the study was to establish trends concerning the use and availability of credit while also gaging the self-sufficiency of each household. He concluded that surplus cash was used for credit ventures and that self-sufficiency

for each household meant patronizing the local baker rather than producing everything in the home.

The use of inventories to show trends or to provide an overall framework to explain trends is a fairly recent addition to inventory scholarship. Whether as a tool to chronicle an age or to generalize about a period, inventories have offered information that was not readily available elsewhere.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

1. Stephen Porter, "The Making of Probate Inventories," Local Historian, No. 6 (1976), p. 43.
2. Francis W. Steer, ed., Farm and Cottage Inventories of Mid-Essex, 1635-1749 (Chelmsford, England: Essex Record Office, 1950) p. 15.
3. F.G. Emmison, Jacobean Household Inventories (Bedfordshire, England: Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1938), p. 32.
4. Lois Carr, P.M.G. Harris, Russell Menard, "Opportunity and Inequality: Distribution of Wealth on the Lower Western Shore of Maryland 1638-1705," Maryland Historical Magazine, No. 69 (Summer 1974):171.

INVENTORIES FROM WRITTLE AND ROXWELL,
ESSEX 1635-1749

Chapter 4

As seen in the previous chapter, probate inventories are best used for either the chronicling of an era or as a basis for establishing trends in a specific subject area. The value of this particular set of documents is that the series reinforces the findings of other scholars while raising questions about trends in agriculture, debt and credit, and the standard of living. Although the 248 inventories raise queries, there is insufficient information in the set to answer questions about trends over the 114 year period. The series from Writtle and Roxwell is best suited to contributing to the description of life and change during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Writtle and Roxwell inventory series contains just 237 usable documents over a span of 114 years. The years 1641-1657 have no entries, while many other years have only one or two entries. Only half of the people represented by the inventories had an occupation listed or even one which could be deduced by the contents of the inventory. The valuations of the estates spread from less than five pounds to more than 1,000 pounds with the bulk of the values falling between 50 and 300 pounds.

The 248 inventories transcribed by Steer by no means constitute all of the inventories for this period in these locations. It is difficult to generalize without an idea of the total number of inven-

tories for the years 1635-1749. The occupations listed lack continuity over the years, and thus reveal nothing about the stability of or the changes in the labor force in the area. The number, representation, and distribution of the inventories offer little hope of an investigation which would result primarily in viable conclusions of trends.

The yeoman farmer has been perceived for centuries as the backbone of English rural society. The yeoman has been painted, literally and figuratively, as a solid sort, God-fearing, upwardly mobile, conservative, and often independent in political thought and action. As many researchers have shown, much of that description, of course, is myth. However, parts of that description fit many of the inhabitants of Writtle and Roxwell as represented by the inventories.

As seen through the inventories, the people were mainly yeoman farmers, husbandmen, craftspeople and agricultural workers. They were not tremendously rich, but neither were they generally impoverished. They were quite self sufficient and had a knowledge of at least the simplest luxuries. They farmed their land by the traditional method of crop rotation, raised livestock, and borrowed and lent money. Some acquired the latest material possessions produced through technological gains or changes in style. The inventories offer a picture of stability and of a static way of life despite the political upheaval of the period.

Inventories were initially used to study the growth and development of material culture, and this aspect still garners the most attention. The generally recognized conclusion is that as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries passed people accumulated more material goods and invested more of their total estate in household

and material, or luxury, goods. Items that were uncommon luxuries during the 15th and 16th centuries became necessities in the 17th and 18th centuries. "In these inventories we see the slow development of comfort, the introduction of new appliances and the discontinuance of some of the old, but what had been luxuries in the reign of Charles I became necessities in those of his son."¹

The study of household goods from inventories is the study of rules and exceptions. The inventories all contain basically the same materials, but the differences come in the number, quality, or condition of the items or in the introduction of a new item. Nearly every inventory lists tables, chairs, beds, chests, brewing equipment, cheese making equipment, baking equipment, bed and table linens, and the normal cooking utensils, namely hooks, pots, posnets, skillets, spits, and irons, and other items in some combination. Despite the similarity of the articles, one can see changes in goods and differences between two items of the same type by looking for the exception.

The majority of the houses represented by the Writtle and Roxwell inventories had between six and eight rooms. The following chart shows the sizes of houses as nearly as can be estimated from the inventories.

RELATIVE SIZE OF DWELLINGS

<u>NO. OF ROOMS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF HOUSES REPRESENTED IN INVENTORIES</u>	<u>NO. OF ROOMS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF HOUSES REPRESENTED IN INVENTORIES</u>
1 room	3	12 rooms	18
2 rooms	1	13 rooms	15
3 rooms	7	14 rooms	5
4 rooms	18	15 rooms	6
5 rooms	14	16 rooms	4
6 rooms	32	17 rooms	0
7 rooms	24	18 rooms	2
8 rooms	28	19 rooms	2
9 rooms	15	20 rooms	1
10 rooms	13	21 rooms	1
11 rooms	7	22 rooms	1

Chairs, stools, chests, cupboards, tables and beds are the most common household furnishings found in the inventories. Generally little is said about these items except perhaps the type of chair or table. Although beds occupied a very important place in terms of status in the 17th century household, they are not specifically described in the majority of inventories. One hundred sixty-seven inventories, or over half, list beds without describing them. Of those that were described, 57 were joined beds and 47 were halfheaded. Only one was described as being elaborately carved. Joined beds were the four poster variety with a canopy and halfheaded beds were ones with short posts but no canopy. Most beds that were described in any detail included bed curtains and valences, another important 17th century sleeping accouterment. The inventories illustrate that the basics needed for a relatively comfortable existence, such as furnishings for eating, sleeping, and preparing food, were prevalent in nearly every household. The series further illustrates that despite the prevalence of basic furnishings, few experienced luxury in their homes.

This lack of luxury is illustrated by numerous other examples. Because many articles were introduced throughout the series and appeared infrequently after introduction, it is possible to assume that these articles were luxuries that only a few could afford to own.

Desks, originally wooden boxes held on the lap and later boxes with legs attached, appear in the inventories only ten times after 1670. Window curtains, as opposed to bed curtains, appear in 1672 and again several times after that date. Looking glasses were not found before 1663 but often after that date. A surprisingly large number of looking glasses are found in the series. Apparently looking glasses

were not the luxury that they had been thought to be. Carpets are mentioned several times toward the end of the series, but they were not meant as floor coverings. These carpets were found on top of cupboards and used like modern tablecloths. Floor coverings were not mentioned in the inventories at all. The first mention of a lamp other than a candle or rush light was made in 1725. However the reference was among the goods found in a shopkeeper's stock so that it was not representative of the majority of local houses. The first reference to a clock appears in an inventory dated 1673, and the next mention is an inventory from 1679. After that year, clocks are mentioned quite often.

Table forks make their appearance in the series in 1725 and are mentioned a total of three times. In addition, tea and coffee are found in the inventories in 1725. The common, traditional wooden platters gave way to pewter and earthenware as the 17th century progressed into the 18th century. Considering the number of table coverings listed, the table was generally covered during meals and napkins were in wide use. Vessels of pewter or horn were probably the most common, although even these are not mentioned often. However the many references to glass cases, storage shelves for glasses rather than a decorative display case, indicates the commonness of glasses. The first mention of wine glasses and tumblers, and a decanter and punch bowl comes at the end of the series in 1744.

These examples from the inventories allow one to understand the development of material goods and the basic division between the widely held basic furnishings and the uncommon luxuries. During the period 1635-1749 people's luxuries became their necessities and new articles were introduced. However this progression was extremely slow.

People, regardless of their station, had basically the same types of goods, chairs, tables, chests, stools, and beds, although the quality and number varied with wealth and social class.

The inventories of Writtle and Roxwell however do not uphold the notion that people put more of their total estates into household items as time passed. The value of household wares shows no pattern of growth over time, or actually any pattern at all. The general pattern at any point in the series is that the greater the estate value, the less the percentage of the estate tied up in household goods. These estates generally had more of their assets in crops and livestock or in loans to others. These inventories appear to rebut the idea that as time passed people's wealth became concentrated in household goods.

The average value of the 237 inventories was 134 pounds. On the average, that estate would have been divided into 37% household goods, 16% livestock, and 20% crops and farm equipment. The remainder would have been in ready money, apparel, plate, or miscellaneous goods.

It would be interesting to determine the growth of occupations and the relative wealth of different types of workers, but the basic information is lacking. Only 101 inventories listed an occupation. Twenty inventories listed the testator as a widow. Widow was an important designation, but hardly an occupation. More people were designated yeomen than any other occupation or class. Husbandmen followed in frequency. Although twenty crafts were mentioned throughout the series, no pattern emerged to show the continuation of a craft.

Judging from the occupations of Writtle and Roxwell and from the traditions of English rural society, land was an extremely important commodity. Farming meant a fairly stable livelihood for everyone from

the laborer to the landlord. Wheat was by far the most important crop in the area. The number of acres of wheat outnumbered the number of barley acres, the second most important crop, by 50 percent. Peas, oats, and bullimong, as separate crops, followed in importance. Grass also played an important role in the agriculture of the area. Considering the significance of livestock to the parishes, grass would be vital. Only one inventory recorded fruit and orchards.

The mixed nature of the farming and the size of the holdings - 54 percent of the holdings were between 5 acres and 45 acres and none were over 150 acres -- shows that the farms were of a medium size and dedicated to the support of the local inhabitants first and outside markets second. Despite the influence of the London market, farming continued to be mixed with a variety of crops and a balance of livestock. Most residents must have realized that a variety of crops best suited to the characteristics of the land was the most logical and profitable type of agriculture.

The amount of fallow land recorded was a significant amount of the cultivated land. This would be expected because of the continued use of the traditional three crop rotation system. Wheat, barley, or a similar crop was planted for two seasons and then followed by a fallow period. This inactivity replenished the fertility of the soil. Fallow land thus was as productive as ploughed land. Approximately 3,561 acres were under cultivation and the fallow land represented about 28% or 987 acres of the total.

The distinguishing factor of the farming of Essex was its diversification. Many crops, coupled with significant livestock raising

allowed Writtle and Roxwell farmers to weather hard times. They were not dependent on one product.

Cows, horses, pigs and sheep were the most prevalent types of livestock.

"The table shows that while sheep greatly out numbered all other types of animals, the percentage of farmers who kept them in quantity is considerably higher than for farmers who had small numbers. On the other hand, it was the smaller farmers who kept the largest number of cows, horses, and pigs."² Sheep were important to the area because they provided wool and the raw materials for cheese. Also they cost little to maintain and benefited the land. However, Essex was not one of the great wool producing counties.

Even the diversification of agriculture could not protect Writtle and Roxwell farmers against all the misfortunes that a farmer could experience. For that reason, credit played an important role in keeping individuals solvent and productive members of the community.

For centuries farmers have lived from season to season hoping that the weather would be right and that disease and other natural disasters would not appear. This uncertainty was a fixture of the farmers' outlook of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because of low yield agricultural methods and the lack of resources to deal with sudden misfortune. The ability to borrow money for the next crop or to survive until harvest was crucial to the farmers and their families' survival. The importance of credit can be seen in the inventories from Writtle and Roxwell.

Modern banking systems as we know them did not appear in Essex until between 1760 and 1770.³ Between 1625 and 1749, bills, drafts,

bonds, and promissory notes, created and passed between private citizens, were the most common forms of credit. Bills might be a bill of exchange or a promissory note, although promissory notes were usually listed as such in the inventories. Possibly bills and drafts were drawn up for country dwellers by an agent with connections in London.⁴ Bonds were the most common type of credit listed in the inventories. One testator's inventory listed bonds worth 1,875 pounds out of an estate of 2,085 pounds. Bonds appeared to serve the credit needs of the local populace best.

Some of the legal commentaries, discussed earlier in this paper, advised the inventory maker not to include debts owed by the testator in the record. It is difficult to decide whether or not people adhered to this guideline. In the cases of debts owed by the testator, the debts are clearly enumerated and described in greater detail than in the inventories where money was owed to the testator.

Sixty three of the 237 inventories, 27%, recorded some form of credit transaction, either money owed to or by the testator. In some cases an inventory would show both money owed to and by the testator or the document would be unclear about who owed whom. Of the 63, 26, or 41%, documented that all or part of the debts owed to the testator were "desperate" or uncollectable. The word desperate was frequently used to describe debts that were unrecoverable. Likewise the word 'sperate' was used to denote debts that were recoverable. The inventories numbered 169 (1692) and 198 (1713) named sperate debts. One inventory listed: "Good debts owing that are sperate 20 pounds 1 shilling 7 pence Desperate debts 25 li (pounds) 7s 4d" No. 198 detailed: "In money and bonds 1085 li, debts sperate 70 li 20s, debts

desperate 29 li 12s 6d". Sperate, now an archaic term, had a specific financial meaning during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The word passed out of usage during the 19th century.

As with any society, some of the people in Writtle and Roxwell owed sums of money and some did not. Six of the inventories which listed credit recorded specifically how much money the testator owed to whom. For example number 145 listed:

"Due to the landlord for rent at Michaelmas last 19 li 5 s

Due to the smith 1 le 17s 2 d

Funeral charges 5 li

Due to Mary Stokes for wages 1 le 10s

Due to Mr. Butler for tithe 10s

Lords Rent 5s 10d

Chimney money 4s

Similarly number 125 contained:

"Debts owing to several people half a year's rent 7 li,
Servants wages, taxes, charges 5 li Owing to Tho. Bridgman
5 li, 7s, To Wm. Poole 3s 1d Charges in sickness and nursing
8 le 5s"

As illustrated by 57 instances of credit, there seems to be no pattern as to who would be most likely to extend credit. The percentage of total estate tied up in credit of some type ranged from 1% in #85 (inventory total of 5 pounds) to 99% in #110 (inventory total of 1051 pounds). However it would be reasonable to assume that those with wealthier estates had the means to engage in lending money to other residents. One test of what assets people had to use with discretion would be the amount of ready money listed in the inventory.

Ready money could represent savings and thus money that could be used for things other than necessities. Eighty-two percent of the 237 inventories listed some ready money. However ready money is difficult to calculate exactly because it was often coupled with the value of wearing apparel and, at times, debts. However the majority of those with ready money had over five pounds and many were significantly above that amount. It seems that many citizens throughout the period had money to lend to others and that for some people credit was an important part of their financial situation.

Although credit transactions appear in slightly less than one third of the inventories, it is clear that the citizens of Writtle and Roxwell had access to various types of credit. Credit was an important part of their financial dealings, but not so pressing as to create a debtor class. This conclusion reinforces the static nature of these communities.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

1. Francis W. Steer, ed., Farm and Cottage Inventories of Mid-Essex, 1635-1749 (Chelmsford, England: Essex Record Office, 1950) p. 2.
2. Ibid, p. 55.
3. Ibid, p. 64.
4. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Probate inventories, as seen in the examples from Writtle and Roxwell, were documents created for reasons of public policy. The making of inventories became a tradition and this tradition was based on the need for an equitable distribution of estates. An understanding of the legal aspects of inventories and the development of the civil service system needed to oversee probate matters helps to clarify the possibilities of using inventories as historical sources.

Inventories have been used to chronicle periods of time and to establish trends for certain periods. The series from Writtle and Roxwell adds to the body of works which describe the period 1635-1749 and offers a glimpse of the way of life and the tradition associated with the 17th and 18th centuries.

APPENDIX

OCCUPATIONS*
LISTED FROM MOST COMMON TO LEAST COMMON

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>NUMBER RECORD</u>
Yeoman	47
Husbandman	13
Miller	6
Blacksmith	4
Gentleman	4
Bricklayer	3
Gardener	3
Tanner	2
Glover	2
Innholder	2
Victualler	2
Carpenter	2
Tailor	1
Seamstress	1
Grocer and Draper	1
Barber Surgeon	1
Laborer	1
Weaver	1
Mason	1
Baker	1
Grocer	1
Sawyer	1
Butcher	1

*As recorded in the inventory.

Although being a widow is not an occupation, women do not appear in the inventories except as widows. Thus, the number of widows, 20, is noteworthy.

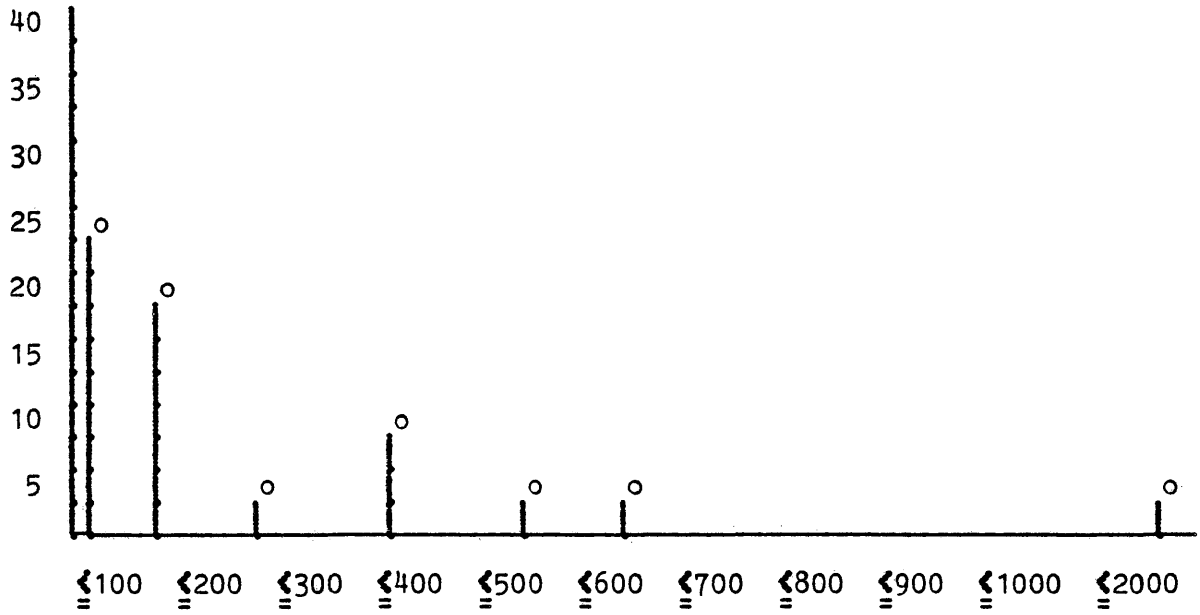
*Most of the occupations are severely underrepresented. This can be attributed again to the lack of a standard structure for inventories, the uniqueness of each document and the fact that these inventories do not represent the total population.

DISTRIBUTION OF INVENTORIES BY YEAR

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO. INV.</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO. INV.</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO. INV.</u>
1635	1	1687	8	1720	2
1637	2	1688	4	1721	2
1638	16	1689	7	1722	2
1639	2	1690	4	1723	2
1640	1	1691	3	1724	3
1658	2	1692	2	1725	3
1659	2	1693	5	1726	5
1660	4	1694	3	1727	1
1662	3	1695	1	1728	1
1663	7	1696	2	1729	1
1664	5	1697	0	1730	1
1665	4	1698	4	1731	1
1666	2	1699	2	1732	0
1667	2	1700	2	1733	0
1668	5	1701	0	1734	0
1669	3	1702	0	1735	0
1670	5	1703	0	1736	0
1671	5	1704	0	1737	0
1672	7	1705	1	1738	0
1673	3	1706	2	1739	0
1674	3	1707	1	1740	0
1675	8	1708	3	1741	0
1676	3	1709	1	1743	2
1677	4	1710		1744	1
1678	4	1711		1745	0
1679	9	1712	1	1746	0
1680	3	1713	4	1747	0
1681	7	1714	0	1748	0
1682	3	1715	1	1749	1
1683	2	1716	1		
1684	4	1717	1		
1685	3	1718	1		
1686	5	1719	4		

RANGE OF INVENTORY VALUES

NUMBER OF
INVENTORIES



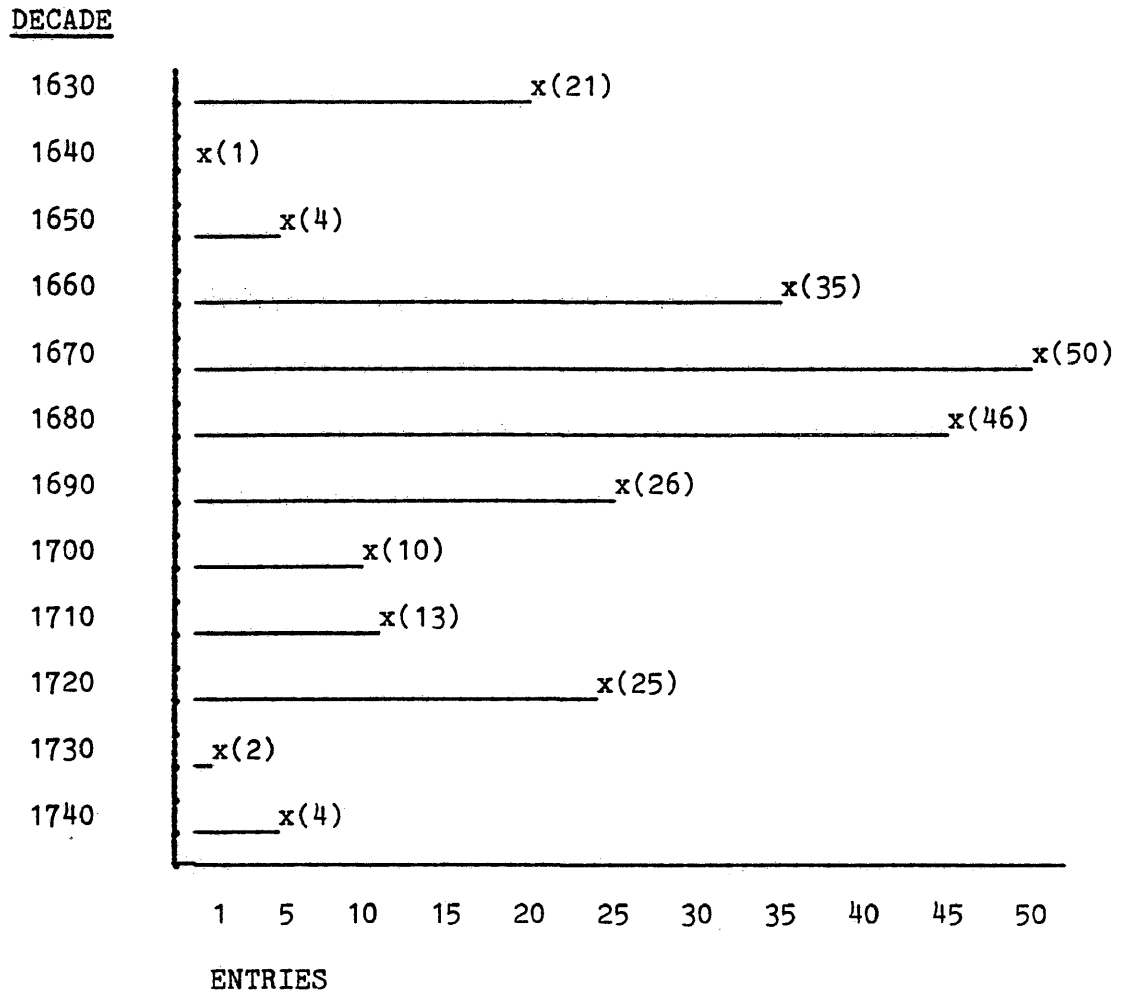
VALUE

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THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF
CROPS AND LIVESTOCK

	NUMBER OF INVENTORIES	PERCENT OF TOTAL INVENTORIES
No livestock or crops	48	20%
Livestock but no crops	23	10%
Crops but no livestock	14	6%
Equal crops and livestock values	4	2%
Both livestock and crops with livestock value higher	53	22%
Both crops and livestock with crops value higher	95	40%

NUMBER OF ENTRIES PER DECADE



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