

# 18th Century Material Culture

## Beds & Mattresses



# Bedding

From: Gunston Hall  
ROOM USE STUDY  
( [www.GunstonHall.com](http://www.GunstonHall.com) )

*Gunston Hall Plantation*

Bedding is defined as being composed of those structural elements—beds, bolsters, mattresses, and pillows—which underpin the sleeping experience.

A mid-19th-century American dictionary defined a bed as “*in modern times, and among civilized men, a sack or tick filled with feathers or wool; but a bed may be made of straw or any other materials.*”(4) These “sacks” used with or without a mattress, were the major component in most 18th-century sleeping units.(5) Ticking for such items of bedding were part of the regular stock of regional merchants. In 1759, the goods ordered by storekeeper Alexander Henderson included a total to 360 yards of “*Bed Tyke*” in two different widths and four different price grades ranging from eight pence per yard to 15 pence a yard.(6) The following year he ordered 550 yards in two widths and five grades.(7) In 1771, the Maryland firm of Wallace, Davidson & Johnson ordered two different widths of bed tick to have “*a neat strip.*”(8) They also ordered “*2 Bed Bunts or 20 yds bed Ticking,*” offering evidence of pre-made bed ticks as well as clues to the amount of yardage required for these essential items of bedding.(9) The following year, they ordered “*2 Doz. Flock beds,*” evidence that these items could be purchased already stuffed.(10) It is clear from the inventory listings that some bedsteads had more than one “bed” as part of the bedding.

# State Beds



State High Post Bed  
c. 1725  
(Victoria & Albert)

# High Post Bedsteads



Eastern Massachusetts High Post Bedstead with Reproduction Mattresses & Bedding

c. 1760 - 1795  
(Winterthur)



Massachusetts or Rhode Island High Post Bedstead

c. 1740 - 1770  
(Winterthur)



Newport, Rhode Island, High Post Bedstead  
c. 1760 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



New England High Post Bedstead  
c. 1740 - 1780  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



New England High Post Bedstead  
c. 1700 - 1790  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



New England High Post Bedstead  
c. 1760 - 1800  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Massachusetts or Rhode Island High Post Bedstead  
c. 1760 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Massachusetts or Rhode Island High Post Bedstead

c. 1740 - 1770

(Colonial Williamsburg)



New England High Post Bedstead  
c. 1760 - 1820  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Connecticut High Post Bedstead  
c. 1740 - 1760  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Connecticut High Post Bedstead  
c. 1770 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, High Post Bedstead  
c. 1770 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Virginia High Post Bedstead  
c. 1750 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Mid Atlantic High Post Bedstead

c. 1775 - 1785  
(Winterthur)



Williamsburg, Virginia, High Post Bedstead  
c. 1780 - 1810  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American High Post Bedstead

c. 1775 - 1785  
(Winterthur)



Charleston, South Carolina, High Post Bedstead

c. 1755 - 1775  
(Winterthur)

# Low Post Bedsteads



American Low Post Bedstead from New England  
c. 1610 - 1710  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



American Low Post Bedstead from New England  
c. 1715 - 1760  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from New England  
c. 1760 - 1780  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from Massachusetts

c. 1740 - 1770  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



SKINNER

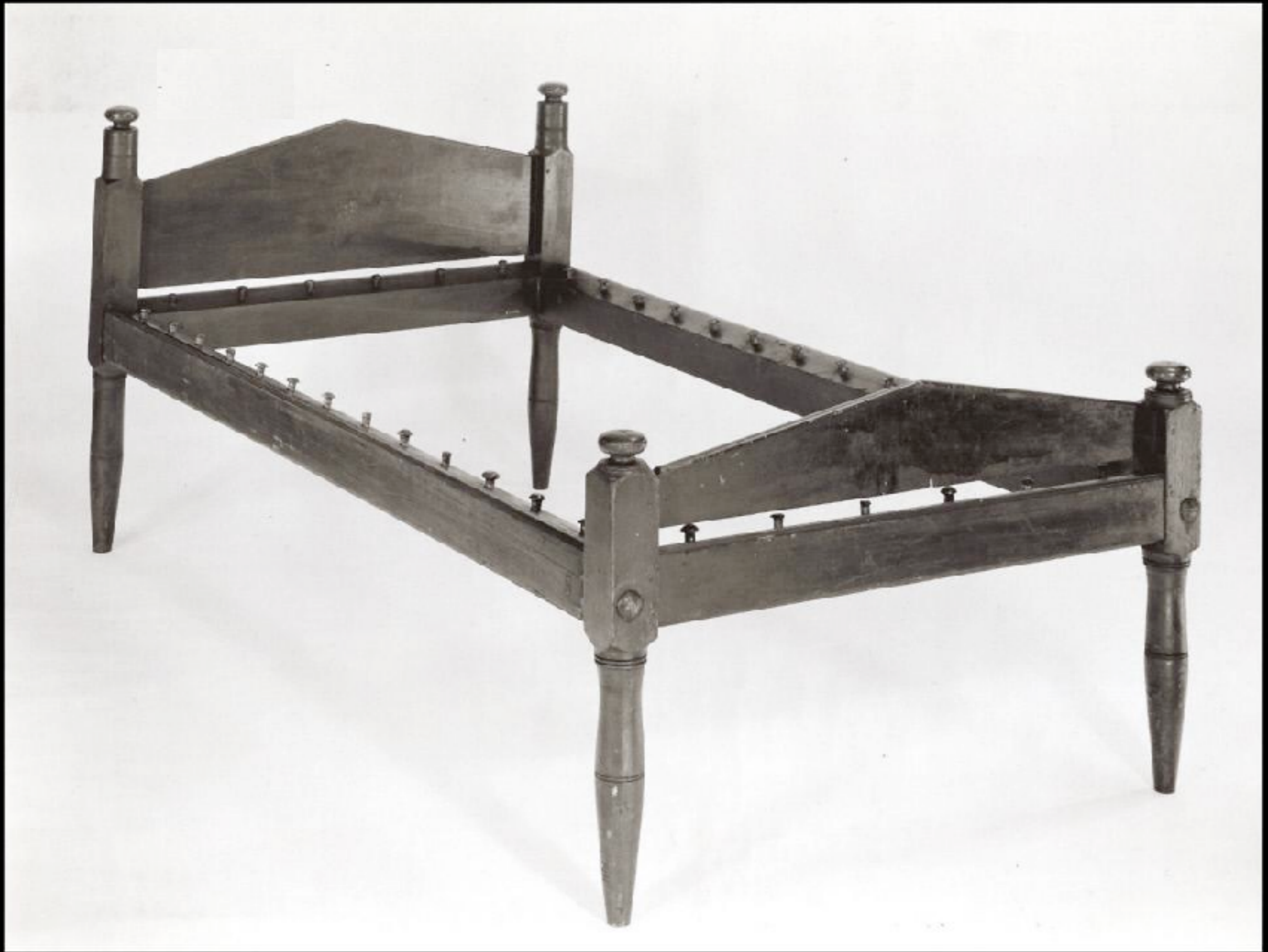
American Low Post Bedstead from New England  
18th Century  
(Skinner)



American Low Post Bedstead from Newport, Rhode Island  
c. 1760 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from Newport, Rhode Island  
c. 1760 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



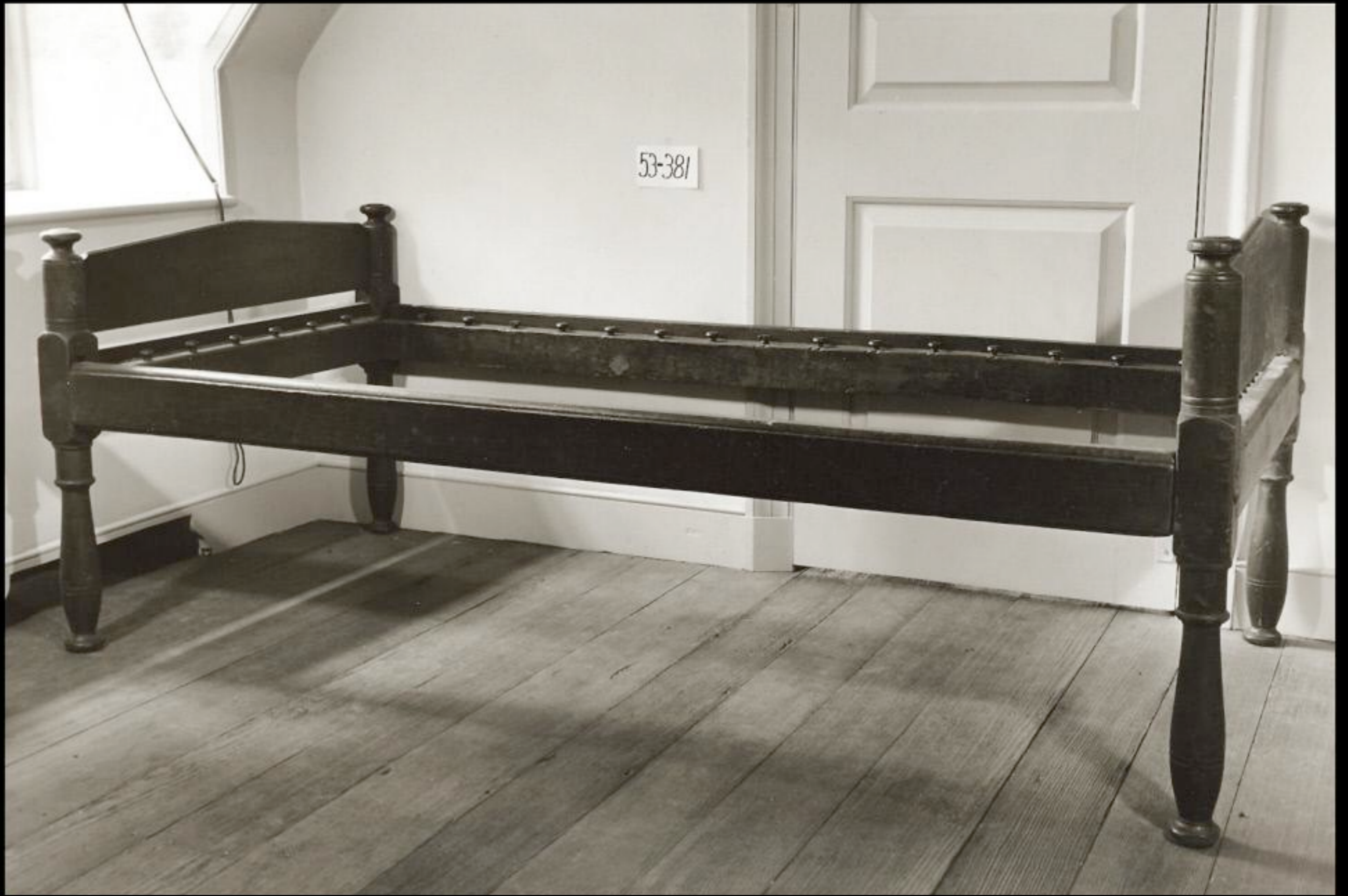
American Low Post Bedstead from New England  
c. 1770 - 1810  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from Pennsylvania  
c. 1740 - 1780  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from Pennsylvania  
c. 1730 - 1750  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from Pennsylvania  
c. 1750 - 1775  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Mahogany Low Post Bedstead from Chester County, Pennsylvania

c. 1750 - 1775

(Brunk Auctions - Frank L. Horton Collection)



American Low Post Bedstead  
c. 1780 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead  
c. 1750 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead  
c. 1780 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from Williamsburg, Virginia  
c. 1750 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from Virginia  
c. 1760 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Southeast American Low Post Bedstead  
c. 1770 - 1820  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Bedstead from North Carolina  
c. 1770 - 1820  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



In one corner of this Poetical Apartment, stood a Flock-bed, and underneath it, a green Jordan presented it self to the Eye, which had collected the Nocturnal Urine of the whole Family, consisting of M. Waymer his Wife and two Daughters. Three rotten Chairs, and a half-seem'd to stand like Traps in various Parts of the Room, threatening Downfalls to unwary Strangers; and one solitary Table in the Middle of this aerial Garret, serv'd to

hold the different Treasures of the whole Family. There was now lying upon it the first Act of a Comedie, a Pair of yellow Stays, two political Pamphlets, a Plate of Bread and Butter, Three dirty Night caps, and a Volume of Miscellany Poems. The Lady of the House was drawing a Neck of Mutton in meagre Soup, and their two Daughters sat in the Window, mending their Father's brown Stockings with blue Worsted. Such are the Mansions of M. Waymer the Poet.

And to complicate his Misfortunes, instead of an expected Reward for his Works from a Nobleman, he brought home as a Present, little Pompey. This so enrag'd his Wife that with savage Hands she seiz'd his Works, on the Table, and was going to commit them to the Flames, but her Husband's Voice interrapted her, crying out see, see, my Dear, the Pot boils over, and the Broth is all running away into the Fire. This luckily put an end to their Debate. They sat down to Dinner without a Table clear, moving one another every Morsel that escap'd their own Mouths.

Published May 20<sup>th</sup> 1751. p. 6

“A DESCRIPTION of the Miseries of a GARRETEER POET, Taken...”  
by John June 1751  
(Lewis Walpole Library)

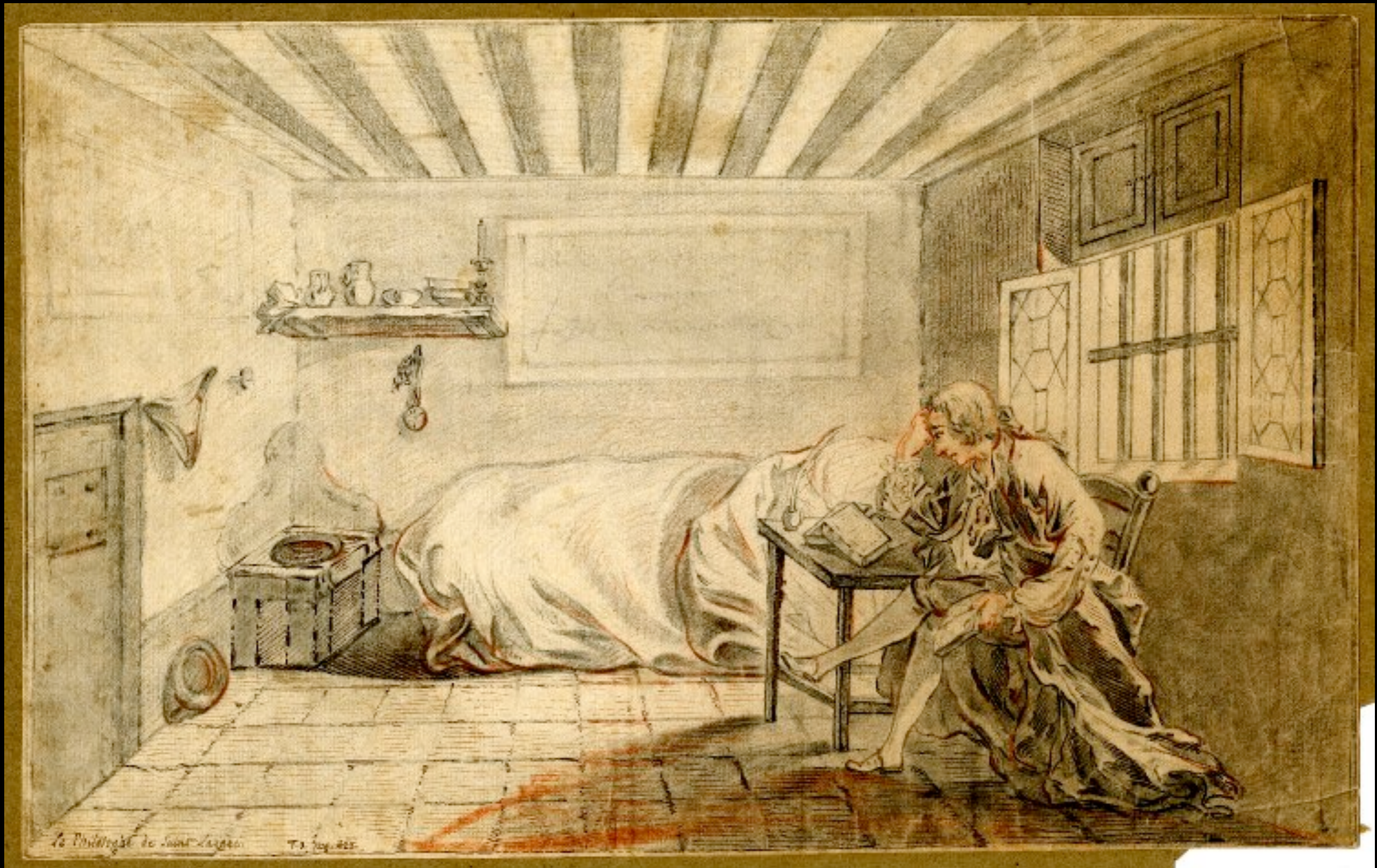


*The Humorous FARCE of JOBSON and NELL from an Original Painting in Vauxhall Gardens. 1757*

“The Humorous FARCE of JOBSON and NELL from an Original Painting in VAUXHALL Gardens.”  
by Robert Sayer c. 1750  
(Lewis Walpole Library)



*"The Death of Voltaire"*  
by Samuel Percy (1750 - 1820) c. Late 18th - Early 19th Century  
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



Unknown French Bedroom  
18th Century  
(The British Museum)



*Le Repos*

*Le Repos de la Princesse de Conti, par le Sieur de la Roche*

“Le Repos”  
by Jean Baptiste Le Prince (French) c. 1771  
(The British Museum)

# Children's Bedsteads



New England Youth Bed  
18th Century  
(Sharon Platt)



New England Youth Bed  
18th Century  
(Sharon Platt)



New England Youth Bed  
18th Century  
(Sharon Platt)



New England Youth Bed  
18th Century  
(Sharon Platt)

# Folding Beds



Rhode Island Folding Bedstead  
c. 1760 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Printed for W. Hill by Carington Bowles.

N<sup>o</sup>. 10. Strand. London.

A ST. GILE'S BEAUTY.

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Published by W. Hill.

“A ST. GILE’S BEAUTY”  
by Carington Bowles c 1784  
(The British Museum)



"A ST. GILE'S BEAUTY"  
by Carington Bowles c 1784  
(The British Museum)



New England Folding Bedstead  
c. 1770 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



New England Folding Bedstead  
c. 1780 - 1820  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Low Post Folding Bedstead  
c. 1700 - 1750  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Rhode Island Maple and Pine Folding Bedstead in Red Paint  
18th Century  
(Antique Associates West Townsend)



Rhode Island Maple and Pine Folding Bedstead in Red Paint  
18th Century  
(Antique Associates West Townsend)



Rhode Island Maple and Pine Folding Bedstead in Red Paint  
18th Century  
(Antique Associates West Townsend)

# Trundle Beds



New England Trundle Bedstead  
c. 1700 - 1750  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



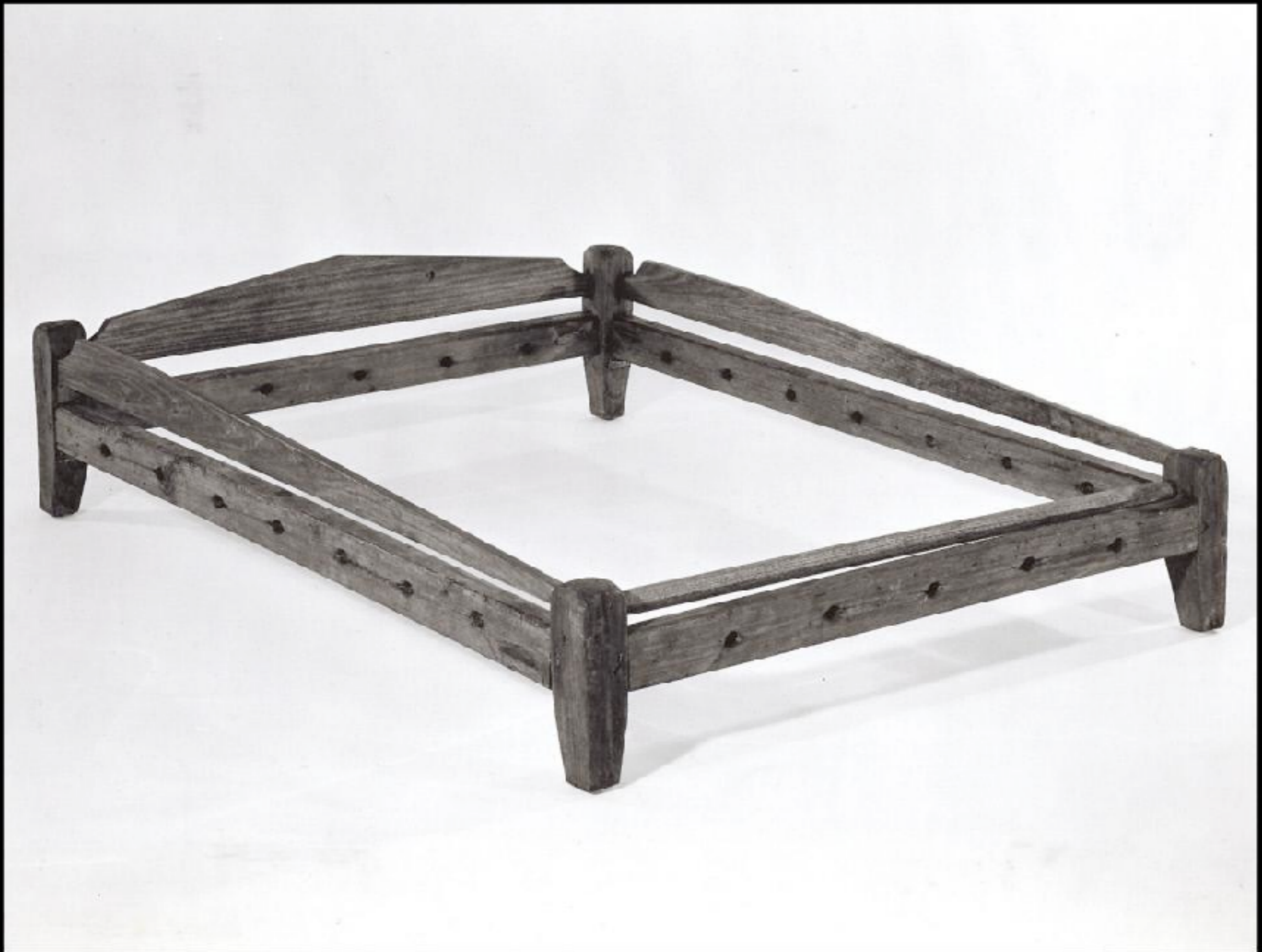
New England Trundle Bedstead  
c. 1700 - 1750  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



New England Trundle Bedstead  
c. 1750 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Petersburg, Virginia, Trundle Bedstead  
c. 1770  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



North Carolina Trundle Bedstead  
c. 1750 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



North Carolina or Virginia Trundle Bedstead  
c. 1750 - 1790  
(Colonial Williamsburg)

# “Field” Bedsteads



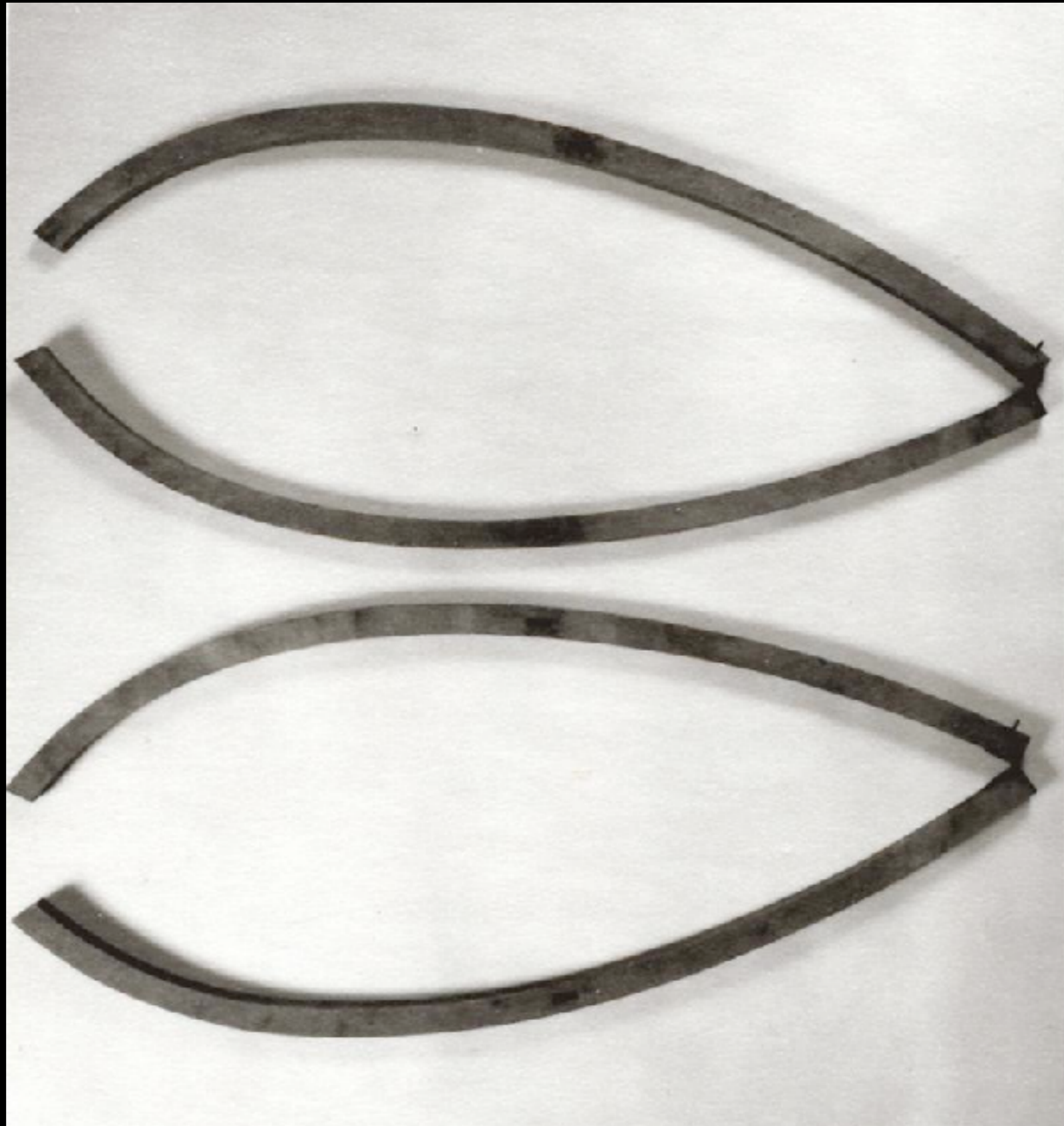
Folding English or American "Field" Bedstead  
c. 1770 - 1815  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



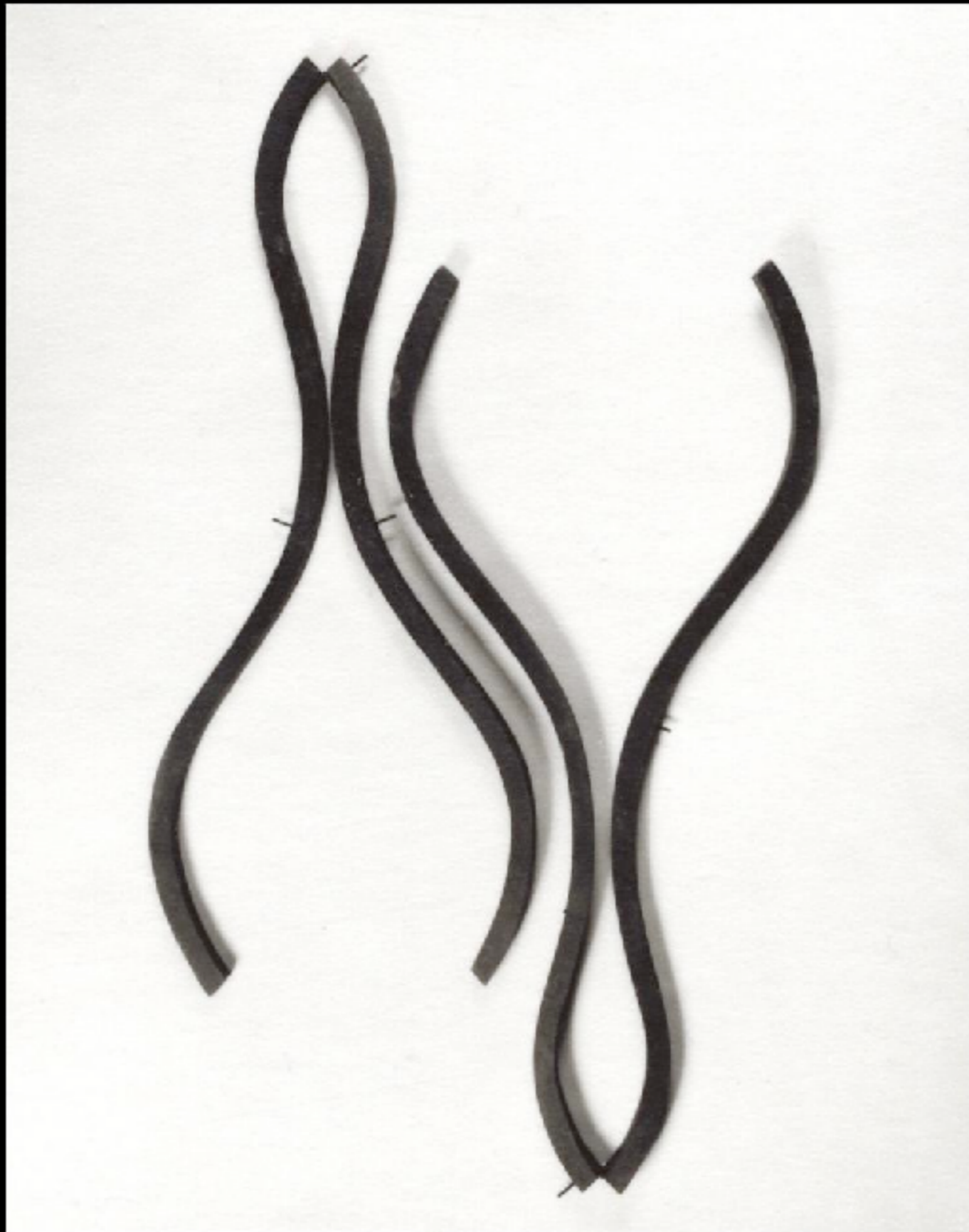
New England "Field" Bedstead  
c. 1780 - 1820  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Petersburg, Virginia, "Field" Bedstead  
c. 1780 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



New York "Field" Bedstead Tester Frames  
c. 1780 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



New York "Field" Bedstead Tester Frames  
c. 1780 - 1800  
(Colonial Williamsburg)

# Bed Wrenches



Iron Bed Wrench  
18th Century  
(Great Planes Trading)



Handmade Iron Bed Bolt with Nut Used to Assemble a Bed  
The Nut Was Implanted in the Rail and the Bolt was Tightened by an Iron Bed Wrench  
Often the Assembly was Hidden by a Decorative Cover  
18th Century  
(Fred Taylor, Auction Central News)

# Pull Out Beds



Pull Out Bench - Bed

1779

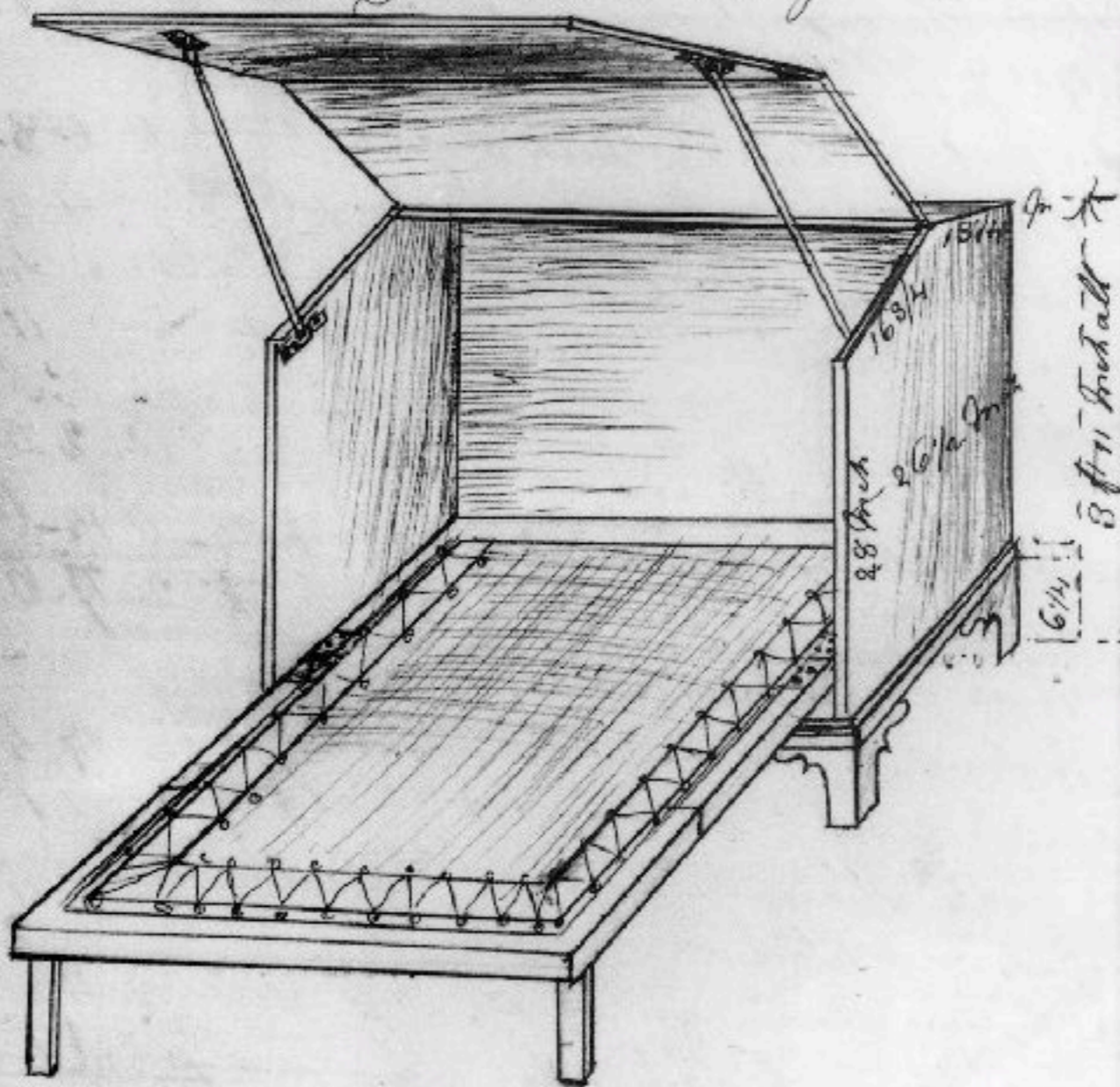


Pull Out Bench - Bed

1779

a Buro Bedstead Made of deal with  
5 Sham drawers in front.

The Lincas 4 ft 6 inch Long



Design for "a Buro Bedstead Made of deal with 5 Sham drawers in front"  
Gillow Estimate Sketch Book 344/94 p. 310 1788  
(Westminster City Archives, London)



Mahogany Bureau-Bedstead  
c. 1790  
(Philips of Hitchin Antiques Ltd.)

# Daybeds



English Daybed  
c. 1690



English, London, Daybed  
c. 1700 - 1720  
(Winterthur)



English or Welsh Daybed  
Early 18th Century  
(Christie's Auction House)



Massachusetts Daybed  
c. 1710 - 1730  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Boston, Massachusetts, Daybed

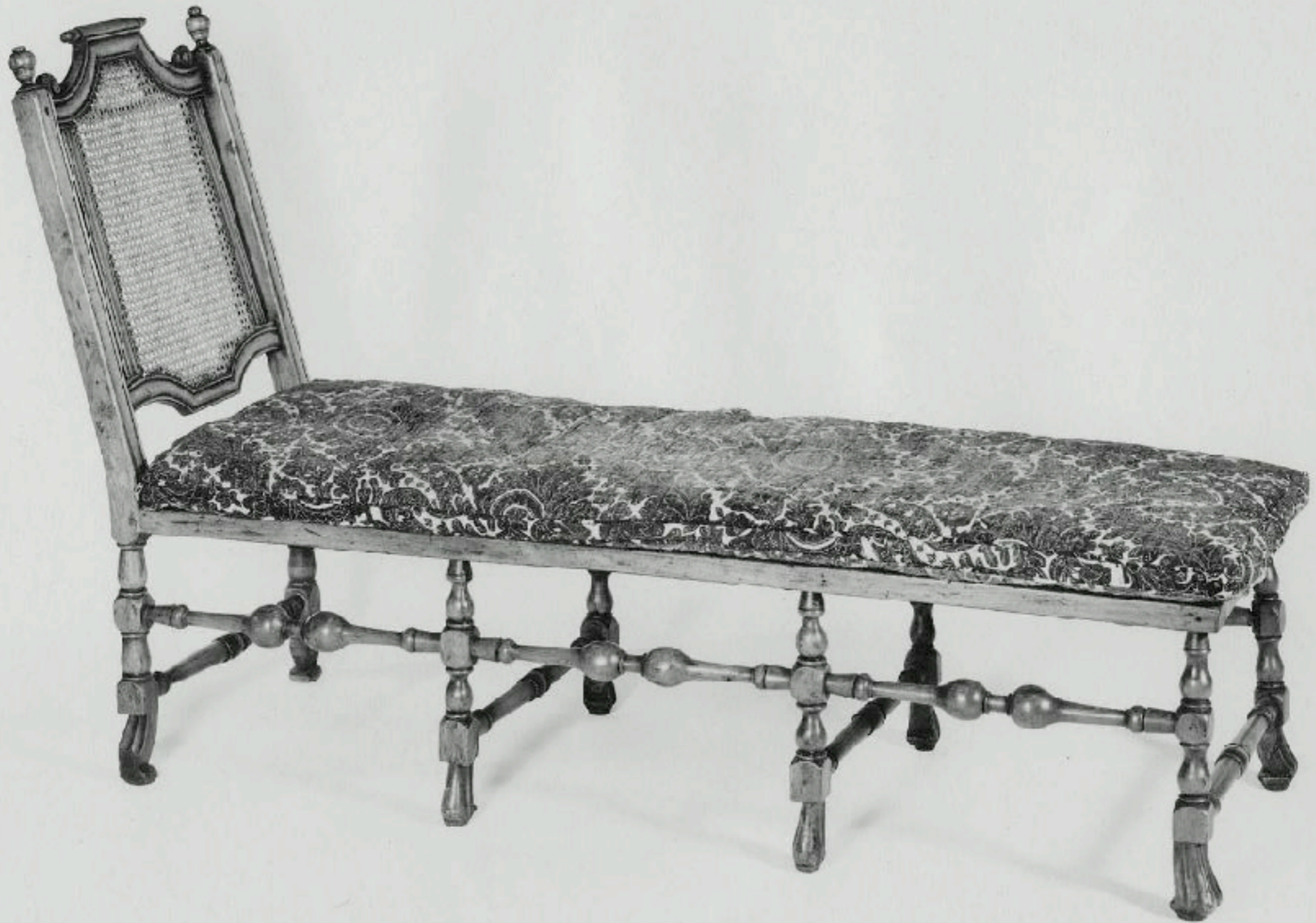
c. 1722 - 1740  
(Winterthur)



New England Daybed  
c. 1730 - 1770  
(Winterthur)



Massachusetts or Rhode Island Daybed  
c. 1730 - 1760  
(Winterthur)



New England Daybed  
c. 1720 - 1730  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



American Daybed  
c. 1710 - 1730  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Rhode Island or Massachusetts Daybed  
c. 1730 - 1760  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Mid - Atlantic / Pennsylvania Daybed  
c. 1725 - 1750  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Mid - Atlantic / Pennsylvania Daybed  
c. 1725 - 1750  
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



English Daybed / Couch  
c. 1725  
(Colonial Williamsburg)

# Mattresses

Text From: Gunston Hall  
ROOM USE STUDY  
( [www.GunstonHall.com](http://www.GunstonHall.com) )

*Gunston Hall Plantation*

Mattresses, were not a universal part of 18th-century bedding, even in Elite homes. Generally commercially made, they were stuffed with wool, straw or, in the best examples, curled hair, and provided a firmer sleeping surface than beds. Charles Carroll of Carrollton in October of 1771 ordered through his English agent “4 best Wool or hair mattresses for Bed Chambers” as well as “6 common strong (B?) flock mattresses for servants pretty full & strong ticked or quilted with black thread.” The following year he ordered “30 yds of thick brown Linen one yard wide proper to cover mattresses not to exceed 12 pr yard.” In November of 1771, Charles Wallace ordered for himself “1 large good Hair Mattress.” The following year, his firm ordered “2 Doz. Hair mattress sorted.”



The Morning Toilet (Dutch)  
by Jan Steen 1663



Amnon and Tamar (Dutch)  
by Jan Steen c. 1660 - 1670  
(Wallraf-Richartz Museum)



John Morris

FLOCK MAN

Remov'd from y<sup>e</sup> Woolpack near  
Iron gate by y<sup>e</sup> Tower, to y<sup>e</sup> Wool-  
pack & Black-boy, near S. Katherine  
Stairs, LONDON. Sells all sorts of  
Flocks for Beds, Wholesale or Retail at  
reasonable rates, ready beat & order'd  
for filling, or otherwise; any Person  
that wants convenient room, may  
send their Cases, & have them filled  
without further Trouble. NB Also

61.5

Trade Card for John Morris - Flock Man (Mattress Maker)  
18th Century  
(The British Museum)



Eastern Massachusetts Bedstead with Reproduction Mattresses & Bedding  
c. 1760 - 1795  
(Winterthur)



Eastern Massachusetts Bedstead with Reproduction Mattresses & Bedding

c. 1760 - 1795  
(Winterthur)



Trade Card for John Morris - Flock Man (Mattress Maker)  
by Robert Laurie after Antoine Daudrouin, Published by Robert Sayer 1772  
(The British Museum)



Trade Card for John Morris - Flock Man (Mattress Maker)  
by Robert Laurie after Antoine Daudrouin, Published by Robert Sayer 1772  
(The British Museum)

Robert Smith, George Tankerfield & their Fellow Prisoners, conferring together in Newgate.



10

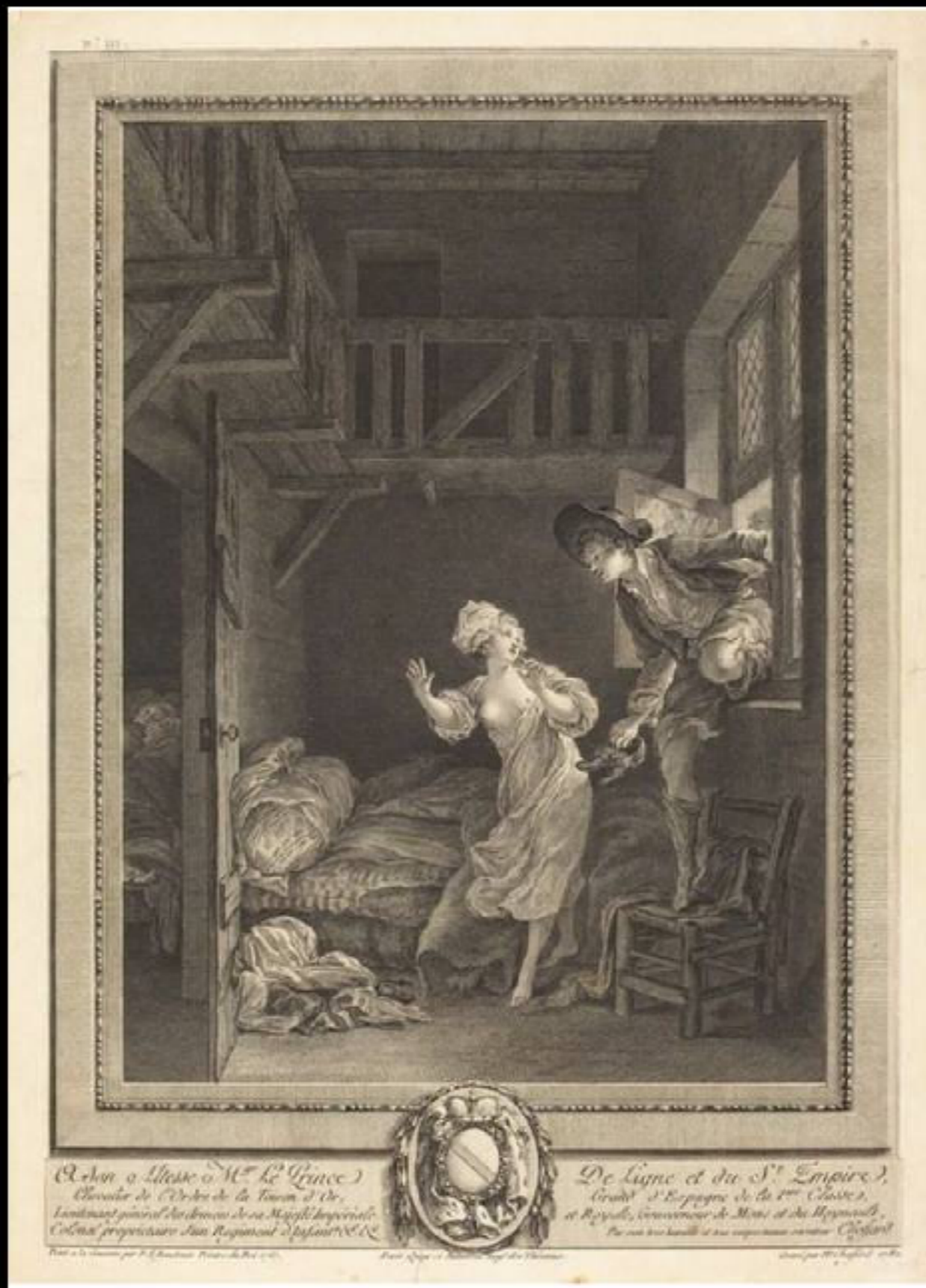
T: Bowles Sculp.

“Robert Smith, George Tankerfield & their Fellow Prisoners, conferring together in Newgate”  
by Thomas Bowles II c. 1710 - 1767  
(The British Museum)



Striped Bed Tick

“Robert Smith, George Tankerfield & their Fellow Prisoners, conferring together in Newgate”  
by Thomas Bowles II c. 1710 - 1767  
(The British Museum)



*Archevêque de Metz (M. le Prince)  
Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or,  
Lieutenant général des Armées de sa Majesté Impériale,  
Colonel propriétaire son Régiment d'Infanterie*



*De ligne et du S. Empire,  
Général d'Espagne de la 1<sup>re</sup> Classe,  
et Royal, Gouverneur de Metz et des Paysans,  
Par son Excellence et son Commandement en Chef*

“Marchez tout doux, parlez tout bas”  
by Pierre - Phillippe Choffard after Pierre - Antoine Baudouin 1782  
(National Gallery of Art)



*“Marchez tout doux, parlez tout bas”*  
by Pierre - Phillippe Choffard after Pierre - Antoine Baudoun 1782  
(National Gallery of Art)



American (Likely Pennsylvanian) Plain Weave / Tabby Linen Mattress Tick - Once Straw Filled  
Width 54 1/2"; Length 79"; Selvage 27 1/4"  
c. 1750 - 1830  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American (Likely Pennsylvanian) Plain Weave / Tabby Linen Mattress Tick - Once Straw Filled  
Width 54 1/2"; Length 79"; Selvage 27 1/4"  
c. 1750 - 1830  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



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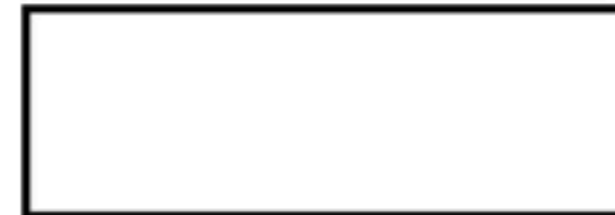
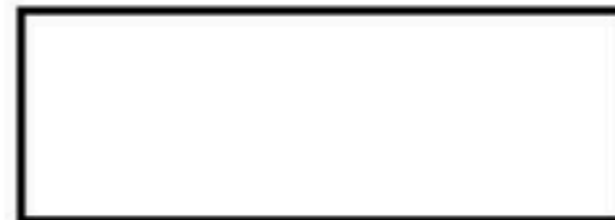
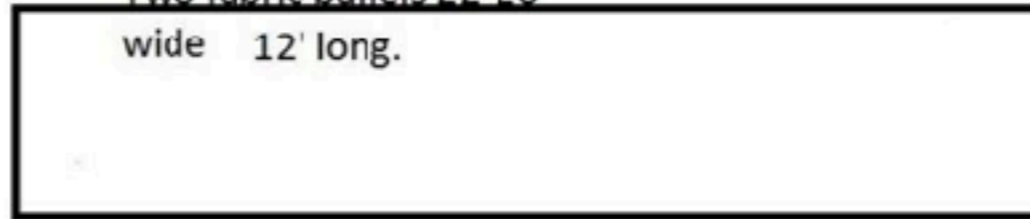


A "Country" Bed or Mattress Tick of Linen - 2 Panel Construction with Center Opening  
Late 18th - Early 19th Century  
(Nathan Barlow)

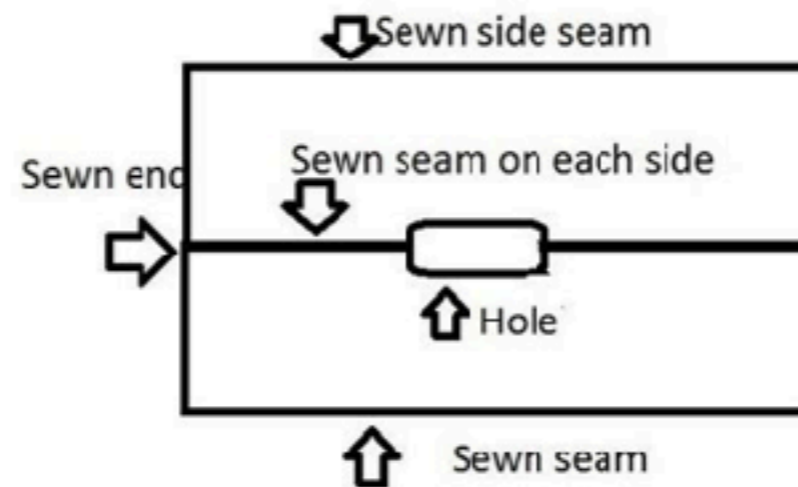
# 18th - Early 19th Century Bed Tick Construction



Two fabric panels 22-26"  
wide 12' long.



Fold panels in half  
making them 6' long  
then sewn together



\*These also exist with the two panels  
being cut making it into 4 panels, up  
to you if you wish to do extra sewing

Folded over end not sewn

Research: Paffagaffakaweag

# Bed Cases



Linen Bed Case  
82" x 51" - 3 Panels  
(Private Collection - Contemporary Makers)



Linen Bed Case  
82" x 51" - 3 Panels  
(Private Collection - Contemporary Makers)



Linen Bed Case  
82" x 51" - 3 Panels  
(Private Collection - Contemporary Makers)

# Acknowledgements

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