

KINGS LANDING HISTORICAL SETTLEMENT

Through over sixty buildings restored and furnished to various time periods, Kings Landing Historical Settlement represents the evolution of the way of life of the central Saint John River valley from 1790 to 1870. The settlement's large furniture collection, dating from the early 1600s to 1917, includes pieces from all of the traditional sources of the time period — British, American, and local cabinetmakers — as well as several pieces from other areas of eastern Canada.

For many prominent settlers living along the Saint John River during the nineteenth century, the "best" furniture had to be imported from England. This attitude, reinforced by several waves of immigrants from the British Isles, brought many fine examples of English furniture into the province. Kings Landing's collection includes many examples: an early seventeenth-century oak table and a slant-top yew desk, ca. 1790, exhibited in the Jones House, and two games tables, ca. 1770, mahogany with satinwood inlay, exhibited in the Morehouse House.

Since many of the settlers in this area were originally Loyalists, some American furniture was brought into New Brunswick in 1783 and afterwards. Examples found at Kings Landing include a bannister-back chair, ca. 1690, in the Jones House, and a pair of bow-back Windsor chairs, marked R. Wall (maker of chairs for Independence Hall in Philadelphia) in the Morehouse House.

Although furniture was imported into New Brunswick, local cabinetmakers were equally capable of making fine pieces. Thomas Nisbet and sons, Alexander Lawrence, John Warren Moore, James Hawes, and others used local woods and mahogany (used as ballast on ships returning from the West Indies) to produce furniture of outstanding quality. Kings Landing is rich with examples from these men with nearly every house reflecting the greater or lesser skills of local craftsmen. Two houses, however, are of special interest. The Hagerman House (restoration date 1870) has many of the over fifty pieces of John Warren Moore furniture in the collection. The Ingraham House (restoration date 1840) features the work of many New Brunswick craftsmen including Nisbet, Lawrence, Hawes, Thompson, and Emery.



Fig. 1. Parlour at the Ingraham House (restoration date 1840). (Photo: John Fullmer for King's Landing Historical Settlement, uncatalogued.)

Kings' Landing's collection of furniture is rich and diverse. Developed since Centennial year, it represents the people of central and southern New Brunswick — their tastes, their values, and their skills.

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