

Transcript of Lecture Delivered by  
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Actually Earning a Living:  
The Dominy Craftsman of East Hampton

For more than 100 years, craftsmen represented by four generations of the Dominy family were able to support themselves and their families with the products of their craft activity. Because virtually no records or products documented to Nathaniel Dominy III (1714-1778), a carpenter and surveyor, have survived, my studies have focused on a father, son and grandson active between 1760 and about 1850. They are Nathaniel Dominy IV (1737-1812), Nathaniel V (1770-1852), and Felix Dominy (1800-1868).

In the twentieth century, many individuals are called to become craftsmen (probably crafts persons would be a more politically correct term), many actually practice a craft, but very, very few are able to earn a living as craftsmen. Why then, were the Dominy craftsmen able to function successfully as craftsmen throughout most of the eighteenth century and for almost fifty years of the nineteenth century? The answers to that question can be found in the unique survival of more than 200 manuscripts items, approximately 2,000 craft tools and heavy equipment, and well over 100 objects made in their shops.

Being in "the right place at the right time" has always been a partial explanation for success stories. In the Dominys' case, that phrase is applicable. By the time that Nathaniel Dominy IV began to function as a craftsman, his family had lived in East Hampton for almost 100 years. The first Nathaniel Dominy settled in East Hampton about 1669, only twenty-one years after founding of the town. The home in which Nathaniel IV lived, had been built about 1715, forty-five years before he became active as a craftsman, on the North Main Street site on the road that led from the town to Three Mile Harbor and Long Island Sound. Dominy males had also married into local families such as Edwards, Baker and Miller. In short, they were a known and trusted family.

The Dominy craftsmen were also fortunate to have been born into a rural, agricultural region. They were like most craftsmen producing goods in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the vast majority of which lived and worked in rural areas. The United States Census of 1790 counted a rural population of over 3,700,000 individuals while only 202,000 people lived in "urban" communities. In all thirteen states, there were only twenty-four towns or cities that had more than 2,500 people residing in them. East Hampton, for example, had only 1,250 inhabitants in 1776 and had grown to a population of only 2,076 by the 1840 Census.

In describing the state of American manufactures in 1794, Tench Coxe defined rural tradesmen as "that part of the tradesmen and manufacturers, who live in the country, generally reside on small lots and farms of one acre to twenty, and not a few upon farms of twenty to one hundred and fifty acres, which they cultivate at leisure times, with their own hands, their wives, children, servants and apprentices and sometimes by hired laborers, or by letting out fields for a part of the produce, to some neighbor, who has time or farm hands not fully employed."

The Assessment Roll of the Town of East Hampton for 1814 notes that the Dominys owned 100 acres of land. By 1770, Nathaniel IV rented some of his land in exchange for a portion of the wheat, flax, corn, and rye grown on it. At the start of his career, Nathaniel IV had performed agricultural labor for others, earning for example, four shillings for cradling, bundling, and storing one-half acre of oats in 1765. As late as 1830, Felix Dominy purchased twelve sheep to graze on Dominy acreage and obtained sweet potato seed for his garden. City craftsmen in Colonial America generally were forced to purchase food and other basic necessities of living. Thus, their overhead costs were higher than their craftsmen counterparts working in rural areas.

Not only were the Dominy craftsmen a known quantity as a family with a long history of residence in East Hampton, they were also a known quantity as producers of goods. Nathaniel Dominy II (1684-1768) was a weaver and a surveyor, the latter always an important service skill in an agricultural community. He supervised building of the town's first poorhouse and was a partner in a local sawmill. It's already been noted that Nathaniel Dominy III was a carpenter and a surveyor. Nathaniel Dominy IV functioned as a joiner, house and barn carpenter, turner, millwright, coffinmaker, clockmaker, and a repairer of guns, jewelry and watches. His son, Nathaniel V was a cabinetmaker, joiner, turner, millwright, wheelwright, coffinmaker and repairer of small boats. His son, Felix, worked as a clockmaker, jewelry and watch repairer, and general metalworker.

What the local community needed in the way of woodwork or metalwork - furniture, house and mill carpentry, clocks, watch repair, agricultural tools, spinning wheels, dry cooperage, coffins, and more - the Dominys provided for well over 100 years. In short, they were a well-known, respected local family of full-service craftsmen whose craft activity was also supported by a 100 acre farm. This recipe for success in earning a living as craftsmen is confirmed by the fact that one Dominy account book alone contains the names of over 1600 different customers while the names of customers who gave their watches to Nathaniel IV and Felix Dominy total almost 2,000.

In addition to East Hampton Village and Township customers, the Dominys provided services to individuals living in Flushing, Huntington, Islip, Moriches, Patchogue, Quogue, Riverhead, Smithtown, Southold, and at least eight other towns on Long Island. A short sail across Gardiners Bay and Long Island, they had customers in Haddam, Hartford, Lyme, Moodus, New Haven, Saybrook, Stonington, and Wethersfield Connecticut. Sometimes, the Dominys would travel to seek additional work. In 1795, Nathaniel IV credited Nathan Dayton with twelve shillings for the use of Dayton's mare "on a clock - tour to Mastick." Several years later, in 1809, he advertised in the Suffolk Gazette, "... a tour to the western parts of this county," for the purpose of repairing clocks.

Another key to the Dominys' success in supporting themselves as craftsmen, is the fact that there were always a substantial number of years during which father and son could work together. This enabled them to specialize in their craft activity and increase their production. Nathaniel Dominy IV had received sufficient training to begin working on his own by 1758. His father did not die until 1778 thus enabling Nathaniel IV to concentrate on making clocks and repairing both watches and clocks as well as other metalwork while his father focused on woodwork. When "young Nat," Nathaniel V, started his craft activity about 1789, his father was able to

concentrate, again, on metalwork, clockwork and repairing of watches and clocks until his death in 1812. Nathaniel V focused on woodwork until his father's death, adding metalwork until his son, Felix, took on metalwork, clockwork and watch repair in 1817.

Raised in a rural, agricultural area, the Dominys knew their customers' tastes - their likes and dislikes. As one looks at the surviving products of their handiwork, one might question the degree of craft skill possessed by the Dominys. My assessment of the superlative skills of the Dominy craftsmen, made thirty years ago, has not changed. Indeed, an excellent article by Phillip Zea, "Diversity and Regionalism in Rural New England Furniture," published in *American Furniture* in 1995, reinforces my earlier conclusions. Zea notes that rural design doesn't reflect ignorance and eccentricity. He observed that provincial objects can have elements of high style and command an expensive price. In general, agricultural economies demand conservative, solid, functional, time-tested objects unlike the demand for changing, "mutable fashion" in urban economies. The Dominys' customers demanded "neat" goods. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, "neat" meant "elegance of form or arrangement with freedom from all unnecessary additions or embellishment; of agreeable but simple appearance; nicely made or proportioned." That is a perfect summary of Dominy craft products. The importance of a large number of customers who trusted the Dominy craftsmen to make objects for them which they liked and with which they were comfortable, cannot be overemphasized. As businessmen needing to support their families and themselves, the Dominys functioned in a barter economy involving the exchange of goods and services and the extension of credit over long periods of time. In exchange for their products the Dominys received household goods such as woven coverlets, "Sundries of Earthenware," linen cloth, shoes, skins of wool, indigo, spoons, hats and blanketing. Customers paid them with foodstuffs - bushels of wheat, corn, rye, oats, spices, rice, beef, mutton, fish, salt pork, vinegar, apples, tea, molasses, rum and tobacco. They were also paid with business supplies and services such as tools, lumber, paint, varnish and the carting of products.

Because their names appear prominently on the dials of clocks made in their house and shops on North Main Street, the Dominy craftsmen had been primarily known as clockmakers. But close examination of their records and surviving products indicates that they earned more from furniture production and watch repair than they did from clockmaking. At least 936 pieces of furniture were made in the Dominy Woodworking Shop between 1760 and 1840. Of that number, almost eighty percent were made of wholly or partially turned parts.

A pole lathe was very useful in a small shop because it required only one person to operate it, thus eliminating the need for an apprentice. Using green wood, that is, wood with a high moisture content, not only furniture parts but pump - box pipe for wells, mill shafts, wagon hubs, workbench screws and hubs for spinning wheels or winding reels, could also be turned by the Dominys on their pole lathe. Five, six - foot tall sections for columns used on the portico of Clinton Academy in East Hampton, were turned on this lathe by Nathaniel V in 1802.

When Nathaniel IV was training his son as an apprentice, or when their other apprentices or journeymen were available, they must have preferred using their great wheel lathe. The differential between the large wheel's diameter of five and one - half feet and the smaller pulleys set into the lathe bed, provided a choice of speeds and continuous cutting motion, resulting in

greater productivity. We know that the great wheel lathe also provided rental income to the Dominys. In 1776, for example, Abraham Mulford, Jr. paid Nathaniel IV, 1 s. 3p. for the use of a "gun bit and great wheel."

Both lathes were used by the Dominys to make parts for more than 350 chairs recorded in their accounts. Armchairs and side chairs were made in splat-back, fiddle-back, slat-back and Windsor types usually for adults, but occasionally for children as well. After 1804, rocking chairs were also produced by Nathaniel Dominy V.

Patterns or templates for furniture parts were used by all cabinetmakers and joiners from the seventeenth-century to the present day. Those used by the Dominys have survived in greater numbers than is the case for any American woodworker of the colonial or early - Republic periods. These patterns for splats and crest rails helped to speed production of chairs made in the Dominy woodworking shop. By outlining the shape of these patterns on boards, with a scratch awl or pencil, the Dominys and other craftsmen could produce objects in quantity.

Amateur woodworkers and even some hand-craft professionals often scoff at statements relating to the speed with which the Dominy craftsmen produced furniture and other objects. But like today, for those who are self-employed, time is money. When the Dominys were productive craftsmen, materials were expensive and labor was cheap. That, of course, is the reverse of today. Yes, labor-saving devices, like templates for the parts of furniture, hastened the process of cutting, shaping and assembling pieces made in their shop. But more important was the speed with which the Dominys and their contemporaries used their tools and equipment. Long years served as apprentices, journeymen and master craftsmen gave men like the Dominys a sure touch in the use of tools and manipulation of wood. These craftsmen also worked ten-to-twelve hours each day, six days a week. So it is a romantic notion that craftsmen like the Dominys didn't care about time and took as long as perfection required to complete an object.

Using the traditional division of the price of an object into thirds, -one-third each for labor, materials and profit, the number of days or hours spent by the Dominys to produce various objects can be calculated. For example, side chairs like the one owned by the Halsey House in Southampton, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Fordham, were made by Nathaniel Dominy V at a price of five to six shillings between 1790 and 1830. Given his wages of 7s per day, the labor cost for this type of chair never exceeded 2 shillings or thirty percent of a twelve hour day. Such chairs could be completed in one- third of his workday. Obviously that time would be spread over more than one day.

From 1790 to 1810, at least thirty-one "fiddle back" chairs are entered into Dominy accounts. Like the one illustrated here, they all had a Chippendale style crest rail and were sold for 8s. each for the side chairs and 12s. - 14s. for the armchairs. Time required for completion of the side chair - a little over four and one half hours.

Slat-back chairs were probably the most common type made by the Dominys. Sixty-one are listed in accounts between 1796 and 1818 at prices selling from 4s. to 6s. apiece. A "great" slat - back armchair like one made for Abraham Sherrill, Jr. in 1822, cost 14s. and eight hours of labor to complete. Nathaniel V made two slat-back rocking armchairs for his own use in 1796 and

1809, a "great" slat-back rocking armchair was made for Thomas Baker at a cost of 14s.. The pattern for the slats has survived as has a slat-bending clamp used by Nathaniel V to bend a curve into slats that had been immersed in warm water. Slat-back chairs, then, could be had with straight, curved, or arched slats.

At least 206 "chairs" were made for their customers without including a description of the type. Included in that group is a set of mahogany Windsor chairs made in 1794 for Captain William J. Rysam of Sag Harbor, at a cost of 10s. each. That price probably doesn't include the materials because Captain Rysam was the owner of a mahogany grove in Honduras. Very few American Windsor chairs were made of mahogany and it is likely, therefore, that Captain Rysam supplied Nathaniel Dominy V with the material for his chairs.

Rysam was a man of means who had acquired a shipyard, a pier at the foot of Bay Street in Sag Harbor, and a ropewalk by 1799. He was the sole owner of the 200 ton Brig, Merchant. The Dominys supplied Rysam with other furniture and Nathaniel Dominy V also constructed for him a double-g geared sawmill on Studley Hill. The mill was dismantled and shipped on an armed vessel to Honduras where it was re-erected in Rysam's mahogany grove. For work on the sawmill, Nathaniel V and his "Boy", Asa, received £23-2-0 for forty-two days work. That breaks down to 7s. per day for Nathaniel V and 3s. 6d. per day for Asa.

A direct descendent of the Dominy craftsmen, Phoebe Dominy Mason, rescued this Windsor side chair from the Dominy House in East Hampton, just before that building was torn down in 1946. Dating between 1815 and 1825, the chair, and a related child's fancy rocking chair, resemble Windsors made in the metropolitan New York City area. The child's chair may have been made for a grandson of Nathaniel V. It, too, was rescued from the Dominy House by Phoebe Dominy Mason. These chairs also lend credence to the supposition that some of the undesignated chairs in Dominy accounts were Windsor or Windsor types.

Turned stands were a very useful furniture form in demand from the Dominys. At least seventy-nine stands and three tea-tables were listed in their accounts between 1789 and 1833. Using lathes and patterns for legs, Nathaniel V could produce stands so quickly that his prices for them ranged between 7s. 6p. to £1, an indication that even the largest stand could be finished in ten or eleven hours of work. Often, the difference in price lay in the wood selected by his customer, mahogany being the most expensive choice, followed in cost by cherry, maple and pine.

The conservative nature of his customers is well-illustrated by a maple stand with a cherry top probably made for Thomas Baker between 1800 and 1815. With its pendant drop, the stand resembles those made in the early eighteenth-century, rather than a fashionable stand made in the Federal period. By contrast is a cherry stand, made between 1790 and 1820, also with a dished top, but with a plain, baluster-turned shaft. It has a tilt-top without a latch, indicating that only objects light in weight were placed on its top. Its original owner is not known, but it was purchased in Sag Harbor in 1920 by its recent owner when research for *With Hammer in Hand* was underway. It is quite similar to a mahogany stand made for John Lyon Gardiner by Nathaniel V in 1799.

A maple stand with a rectangular top and "swept" corners displayed at the Halsey House in

Southampton is similar to one made for Abraham Sherrill (1754-1844) with the exception of curved corners on the latter example. Both were made between 1810 and 1830 and both made use of the same "spider-leg" pattern that survives in the Dominy tool collection at Winterthur. Relatively speaking, that type of leg was up-to-date because it wasn't in popular use by American cabinetmakers until about 1800.

An earlier cherry stand, made by Nathaniel V for Abraham Sherrill, Jr. Between 1790 and 1815, uses the cabriole leg with a so-called "snake" foot. It stands out in the group made by the Dominys because its elongated, tapered, columnar shaft springs from an urn. It is a good example of how the Dominys could use variety in their turned work to provide similar, but unique, objects to each of their customers.

Much larger is the mahogany, tilt-top tea table made by Nathaniel V in 1796, for his own use. Like the Sherrill family stand, it, too, has a plain, Doric column for its shaft but the diameter of its dished top is over two feet and its tripod-base, cabriole legs are larger and sturdier. A Dominy family genealogy has an old photograph illustrating this tea table in the parlor of the Dominy House. Only three other tea tables are listed in Dominy accounts. All were made in 1792 at prices ranging from £1-4s. to £1-14s.

All of the plain or dished circular tops for stands and tables were made using the most important piece of lathe equipment to survive in the Dominy Tool Collection. No eighteenth-or-nineteenth century source on tools and craft technology illustrates an "arbor and cross." Responding to a growing demand for these furniture forms, in 1795 Nathaniel V had a local blacksmith, Deacon David Talmage, make "an Arbor and Cross for Turning Stands" at a cost of 6s. 9p. Nathaniel V then fitted it to a soft maple pulley and dogwood and hickory screws on a hickory puppet in order to set it in the great wheel lathe bed. The tops were turned in a vertical position.

Turned legs and joinery fashioned the mahogany breakfast table that Nathaniel V made for his son Felix, probably at the time of Felix's marriage to Phoebe Miller in 1826. It's late-Sheraton design would not have been out-of-place in New York City but, then, Felix had received his clock-and-watch training in that city. Presumably, he would have expected a fashionable table for his family's use. Thirteen breakfast tables are listed in Dominy accounts between 1794 and 1823. One made for Abraham Hand in 1803, described as mahogany, fetched £ 2-16s, almost double the price of a mahogany, tilt-top tea table.

During their productive years, the Dominys used their joinery skills to produce at least 127 case pieces of various types. Patterns for the bracket feet, pad feet and legs for case furniture have survived in the Dominy Tool Collection along with the templates for the legs of stands and tables. In conducting research for *With Hammer in Hand*, only one example of a "chest-on-chest", Nathaniel V's term for a "highboy" was found, although thirteen or fourteen of them were listed in their accounts between 1791 and 1806. Subsequently, the example now on the screen was acquired by Winterthur from a dealer in Ohio. Its history was unknown but it matched in virtually every detail, including the template used for its feet and legs, the chest-on-chest made in 1796 by Nathaniel V for his own family's use. Only this year, a third example, undoubtedly, made for John Parsons III in 1791, at a cost of £7-12s.-6p., was called to my attention. In keeping with the Dominy's practice, all three are, for all intents-and-purposes, identical.

As just noted, case furniture with drawers was quite expensive, their cost ranging from that made for the Parsons, to £12 charged by Nathaniel V for the one he made for Daniel Conkling, Jr. in 1797. Like much of the furniture produced in the eastern end of Long Island, there is a close relationship to cabinetwork produced across Long Island sound in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

By far, the most ambitious and expensive piece of furniture made in the Dominy's woodworking shop was a maple desk and bookcase made for John Lyon Gardiner in 1800 at a cost of £20-8s. That price included carting it to Fireplace, an area just opposite to Gardiner's Island. Much of the cost was due to making thirteen cherry and white pine drawers in the desk section. Showing the Dominys' recognition of the speed with which they could produce lathe work, the elaborate molding on the pediment was first turned on the arbor and cross shown earlier, and then sawn into quarter sections that were attached to the pediment. All told, Nathaniel V spent about twenty days to make this piece of furniture.

It was inherited by Winthrop Gardiner, Jr. about 1933 and is now owned by Winterthur, installed near the Dominy Shops on the second floor of its new Galleries building. The desk's feet have now been correctly restored and its present finish is based on matching segments of the original finish discovered after Winterthur had acquired it.

A cherry desk and bookcase, one of two made by the Dominys for their own use, is a good illustration of why researchers must be cautious in relying solely on a craftsman's accounts. Only one desk and bookcase is recorded in Dominy records but the family's examples, and another made for John Lyon Gardiner are not listed. This desk and bookcase had been owned by Washington Tyson Dominy but was sold to a Long Island dealer in recent years. It's whereabouts are unknown at this time. Clearly, the practical, straight-forward design of the family's desks and bookcases were intended to handle the needs of a flourishing business. Like many other modern owners of antiques, however, the Dominy descendant was in the process of removing the desks' original finish in order to savor the color and grain of its natural wood. But most of the Dominy's cherry, maple and pine furniture had been stained to give surfaces an appearance of more costly woods such as walnut or mahogany.

John Lyon Gardiner, born in the same year as Nathaniel Dominy V (1770), was one of the best customers for Dominy-made objects. A piece of case furniture in point is a mahogany, fall-front desk, made in 1802. Another example of expensive furniture, Gardiner paid £11 or \$27.50 for it, but the price certainly doesn't reflect its decoration or lack thereof. It is, again, a plain or "neat", utilitarian object almost devoid of any surface treatment other than moldings or sawn decoration.

In addition to the template for the desk's bracket feet surviving in the Dominy Tool Collection, a rare pencil inscription in Nathaniel V's hand on the back of the desk's upper left-hand drawer states, "Nathaniel Domine Junr fecit Jan 1802 / For John Lyon Gardiner Esqr - Price 27\$ - 50 cts."

From 1769 through 1835, the Dominys made at least thirty-four pieces of furniture for nine separate members of the Sherrill family. The frame of this looking glass, made for Abraham Sherrill about 1820, is one example from that group purchased by Winterthur from Sherrill

Foster in 1992. In return for furniture and other goods received from the Dominys, the Sherrill family supplied the craftsmen with shoes for the daughters of Nathaniel IV, work performed in the Dominy's woodworking shop, field work, carting of wood, rental of a horse, butchering of animals to supply meat, and even hammering out the iron triangle that Nathaniel IV used to support his clock-gear cutting engine.

Gun repair and the stocking of guns were always a source of income for the Dominys. It's not surprising, therefore, that a pattern for making a rough cut gunstock has survived in the Dominy Tool Collection. Made of birch, it probably dates about 1820. Its length is very close to a breech-loading flintlock rifle adopted by the United States Army for production on a large scale in 1819. Felix Dominy was active in the militia from 1817 to 1835. It's been suggested, therefore, that this object is actually a training device for militia drills. Dominy records don't help to unravel that mystery. In 1800, for example, the Dominys were paid for "stocking a gun" and also for "2 Rifles@6p." The latter could only be mock toy or training rifles at that price.

Although the Dominy craftsmen's claim to fame initially rested on the products of their clock shop, there can be no doubt that they would not have prospered solely from the sale of their clocks. They made only ninety clocks over a sixty year period. Clocks were expensive and Nathaniel Dominy IV's watchpapers and engraved copperplate for printing them are forthright in describing him as a clockmaker and repairer of watches [emphasis mine]. Felix Dominy's watchpaper stretches the truth by describing him as a clock-and-watchmaker. He never made any watches. My current research on the Dominy craftsmen is focused on their business of repairing watches. From 1769 through 1827, Nathaniel IV and Felix kept a record of all watches coming into their shop for repair, including the names of their owners, and makers, and their serial numbers. In that period, 4,600 entries for watch repair occur, representing 1,983 owners and 1,108 different watchmakers. It was an incredibly lucrative business that accounted for a significant portion of the Dominy's annual income.

But I have still to locate any of the watches repaired by the Dominys, although I hope to do so. A couple of examples of their clocks will have to suffice, therefore, to illustrate their earning a living from clock-and-watchwork. The timepieces made by Nathaniel IV are wonderfully simple mechanisms. This example was made around 1788 or 1790, possibly for William Hunting at a cost of £6. Its hood is the same shape as the pewter dial and only one hand is used to mark the hour and minutes past the hour. As shown, the time is about 2:55. Although the narrow case makes this clock appear to be tall, it is only six and one-half feet in height and only twelve inches wide. Ever practical, the Dominys scooped the interior surface of the case's side boards in order to provide enough space for pendulum sway. The original, applied molding brackets for feet are missing from the base of this clock.

Stick-like brass plates to support the clock gears and winding drum for the weight are unique to Dominy clocks. They were designed to save brass, an expensive metal in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

One of the most expensive of the Dominy clocks was made for David Gardiner of Flushing, Long Island in 1799. Described in Nathaniel IV's bill as "an Horologigraphical, Repeating, alarm, monition clock," it cost ninety dollars or £36. Its mahogany case, silvered bell, alarm and

repeater functions account for its high cost. The painted, enamel dial, like most used by American clockmakers in this period, was manufactured in England; in this case, at "Osborne's Manufactory / Birmingham." David Gardiner purchased the dial in New York City and was credited by Nathaniel IV for its cost.

Its alarm dial reveals the engraved, script name of "N. Dominy" in East Hampton and the date, 1799. Its complex works are confined to skeleton plates to save brass. The casting pattern for this type of plate survives in the Dominy Tool Collection.

Felix Dominy made this silent clock in 1824 or 1825, probably for Jonathan Osborn III. It came as a gift to Winterthur in 1986. It has a pine case and, in an attempt to hold down costs, its dial is made of painted cherry. It had no strike mechanism but still cost twenty-five dollars, or slightly more than a master craftsman's monthly wage. The dial shown here is from a one-stroke clock made by Felix in 1828 for S. Hedges Miller. It is to illustrate that time was running out for the makers of hand-crafted clocks in 1828. In that year, Sarah Nicoll of Islip canceled an order for a clock by writing to Felix Dominy that "some of my friends think it such a piece of folly for me to have an expensive clock made." In other words, "I can get a cheaper clock of Connecticut manufacture that will serve my purpose."

Printed on Nathaniel IV's watchpaper is the warning, "time flies." It makes sense to move swiftly to a conclusion by showing a mahogany and whalebone swift made by Nathaniel V for his wife Temperance, about 1800. Used to wind wool yarn into skeins of wool, it reveals the craftsman's knowledge of the neo-classical revival underway in fashion centers of the new Republic.

By the late 1820's or early 1830's, for the Dominys to try to earn a living as craftsmen was like tilting at the windmills they had built on the eastern end of Long Island. This one is not the "smock" or "petticoat" mill built by Nathaniel V between 1804 and 1806 that stands in Easthampton on "The Hook." It is an example in Bridgehampton built about 1820.

I have often wondered whether or not Felix Dominy was being somewhat cynical when, in 1822, he paraphrased the New York Mechanics Society motto in his weatherbook by writing: With Hammer in Hand All Arts Do Stand All Arts Do Stand With Hammer in Hand

As noted by Pavel Svinin, a Russian artist in America during the early nineteenth century, steampower had been applied to moving boats. It had also been applied to moving railroad trains and machinery. Goods could be produced cheaper, in greater quantity, and much faster than was possible by the Dominys in their handcraft shops.

Convinced that the days of being able to earn a living as a craftsmen were severely numbered, Felix moved to Babylon by 1835 in order to become the keeper of the Fire Island lighthouse and by 1847 was operating a hotel on Fire Island during the summer and in Bay Shore during the winter. A seal on a letter from Felix to his son Nathaniel VII in 1847, advertises his Fire Island Hotel. His son, Nathaniel VII had been left to the care and training of Felix's father, Nathaniel V.

What is probably the most beautiful "make do" tool to survive in the Dominy Collection is a 14

\_-inch-long turning chisel made by Nathaniel III or IV from the fine steel of a sword. A flower and leaf design and the date 1660 are inlaid in brass on its blade. This tool bears witness as a reminder of the long period of time when hand craftsmen, like the Dominys, produced all of the structures and objects used by consumers. It also provides sad testimony to the change in the Dominys ability to earn a living from their skills. In 1883, Charles Burr Todd described East Hampton as the new playground of the Barbizon School of artists. He mentioned, "An old weather - beaten dwelling at the upper end of village street." It was sketched and painted so often that an in-joke on new artists arriving in town was "that Dominys is going onto the canvas." After describing the run-down condition of the house, the author noted further, "Two workshops, one flanking each side of the cottage, present curious interiors, - low ceilings, dusty, cobwebbed windows, tools of various callings, disposed on the walls or cribs in the ceiling, and a medley of articles scattered about - old fashioned clocks in long cases, a photographer's camera, a Damascus blade, with gold inlaid hilt, fashioned into a chisel." Clearly, the Dominy family could no longer earn a living as craftsmen. But the activity of their heyday and the surviving examples of their legacy provide us with ample evidence of what it was like to earn a living in the centuries when "With Hammer in Hand," all arts did stand.

Winterthur is proud to be the custodian of the major collection of material related to the Dominy craftsmen. In the museum and in its library, this collection offers the best evidence of what it was like to earn your living as a craftsman. A time when "With Hammer in Hand," all arts did stand.