

IRISH FURNITURE

A table made by Arthur Jones and Son, Dublin



Fig. 9 Dublin Table, measuring 96" (2400mm) long and 35" (820mm) wide

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, furniture makers of Ireland have produced many fine examples of elaborately carved mahogany furniture which is characteristically flamboyant in style. The history and origins of such pieces is often relatively easy to trace as the furniture frequently displays either trade labels or is already well documented in the inventories and other records of the many large Irish country houses.

The history of provincial Irish furniture is an entirely different matter as so much of it was constructed by anonymous country craftsmen for a people whose past had been one of acute hardship. The style and design of household furniture was of little importance to the struggling peasant workforce in the early 19th century, but gradually after the famine of the 1840s, as the Irish farmer became a little more prosperous the furnishing

style began to reflect his economic status. There is growing evidence of strong regional variations in the design of chairs, settles and dressers so that it is now possible to associate a particular furniture style with a particular county.

The table top is birch and the legs and the frieze rails are walnut. Stamped on the underside of each rail are the words "Arthur Jones & Son, Dublin". The firm of Arthur Jones flourished between 1824 and 1860 and specialised in carved yew wood furniture which was exhibited in the London and Dublin Exhibitions during the 1850s. However the existence of this table suggests that the firm also made many pieces for the kitchens and farmhouses of the Irish community.*

The many regional variations in the style of Irish provincial furniture make the research and study of this particular cultural aspect of Irish social history extremely exciting. Any further information on tables, dressers or cupboards in particular would be gratefully received by the author as this contribution forms part of a much larger study.

Bibliography

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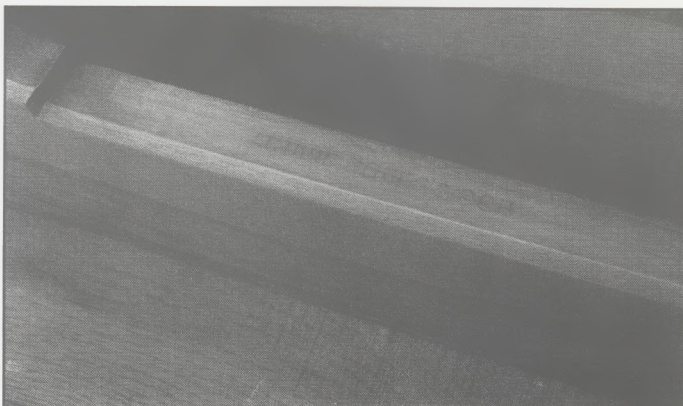


Fig. 10 Part of stamp mark of 'Arthur Jones & Son, Dublin'