

---

## TO THE EDITOR

Having recently received a copy of the Newsletter of the Regional Furniture Society containing a review by Jenny Cook of my *Canadian Country Furniture 1675–1950*, I would like to reply briefly to some remarks made by the reviewer.

Because Jenny Cook so kindly expressed her congratulations regarding the appearance of my study, I do wish to indicate my appreciation for her supportive comments. At the same time, I feel that I should call attention to a few concrete remarks which, in my judgment, invite clarification.

At one point, the reviewer quotes me as saying that certain furniture forms were 'abandoned' in Canada, notably the three-legged stool popularly called a creepy. If, by this

comment, she is having me suggest that the creepy was never made in this country, that is not quite accurate. What I do say in my text is that this form is virtually unknown. Given the efforts of myself and other researchers to locate examples (only one of which is held in the extensive collections of Kings Landing in New Brunswick), I believe it important to emphasize not the total absence of such pieces but rather their comparative rarity in the Canadian context.

I am appreciative of Jenny Cook's point that I might have given greater attention to some cultural traditions outside those covered in my study, namely bentwood cedar chests made by indigenous peoples in British Columbia and Icelandic furnishings in the central plains. My intent, however, is not so much to show occasional pieces from every tradition but rather to delineate a fuller profile within more highly-developed traditions. For this purpose I have focused upon cultural contexts in which there is an extensive body of work produced by furniture-makers. Thus, with regard to western Canada, I have concentrated upon the extensive and richly textured furniture-making traditions of Mennonite, Hutterite, Ukrainian and Doukhobor settlements, in which several hundred pieces could be studied and discussed. To simply include two or three token illustrations of, say, Icelandic furniture would, in my assessment, provide very little insight into anything constituting a 'tradition', and would therefore not be particularly useful in the present study. I do make reference to these cultures in the text and suggest that these might be the subject of more specific future research elsewhere.

She has made the valid observation that I might have more carefully weighed recent research findings against some older literature which I quote with respect to New Brunswick cabinetmaking. This point is well taken. I am very much appreciative of ongoing work being conducted by such capable investigators as Darrel Butler, Tim Dilworth and Walter Peddle, whose current research is helping us all to obtain a better perspective on origins and adaptation in the furniture-making traditions in several regions of eastern Canada. Jenny Cook is herself conducting research on furniture of the Saint John River Valley in New Brunswick, and her published work in this area will fill a significant gap in our knowledge of Maritime material culture. I and others look forward to the publication of her important investigations. I have endeavoured in *Canadian Country Furniture 1675-1950* to construct a broad profile of furniture in Canada's diverse cultural settings. Perhaps one day soon we may benefit from the publication of a collaborative book in which all of our regional studies can be included together.

Michael Bird