



A child's rocking chair by William Brear & Sons of Addingham, Yorkshire, early twentieth century. *Photo John Boram*

Evolution of the Rocking Chair

Gillows' of Lancaster Day Book and Waste Books (City of Westminster Archives Centre) describe, date and identify the customers for their eighteenth-century rocking chairs and suggest some of the original purposes served by such chairs.

According to Folio 278 in the *Day Book* 344/20, dated the 23 March 1762, Thomas Turner was sent 'a Child's Rocking & Close Stool Chair with a Table before it'. Price 4s.

According to Folio 877 in the *Waste Book* 344/7, dated January 1780, Mrs Banks Russell was sent 'a Childs Rocking Chair with a Convenience in it' Priced at 4s 6d. A packing case was 1s. extra.

According to Folio 458 in the *Waste Book* 344/14, dated 27 August 1791, William Assheton of Preston was sent '12 neat rout chairs @5/3' and '2 ditto rocking chairs @6/3'. Rout chairs made by Gillows in the eighteenth century were normally stained and rush seated (see John Boram, 'The Domestic Context for Gillows' Rush- and Cane-Seated Chairs', *Regional Furniture*, vol. XXIX (2015) pp. 74-6).

Such developments from at least the 1760s may explain the evolution of Windsor rocking chairs and the rush seated version in Lancashire and in North America from the eighteenth century onwards.

Children's rocking chairs, incorporating many of the eighteenth-century features described above, were being made by firms such as William Brear & Sons of Addingham, Yorkshire in the early twentieth century, according to their catalogue (see *Addingham: A View from the Moorside*, edited by Arnold Pacey (2008), p. 139).

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