

‘SEARANCKE’ not ‘SPARANCK’

In *RFS Newsletter* 34, 2001, Robert Parrott revealed the existence of a late eighteenth-century comb back Windsor chair with vase-shaped splat, crook underarm supports, cabriole legs and cross stretcher with dart- or arrowhead-shaped ends. The chair was said to be stamped ‘SPARANCK’ and Robert Parrott had made no progress in working out what the significance of these letters might be: he wondered whether they might be some form of institutional mark.

I think he may have misread his pencil rubbing of the stamp. The second letter is an ‘E’ not a ‘P’- the beginning of the horizontal stroke of the bottom of the ‘E’ is just visible. I also think that there is another vertical just faintly discernible after the ‘K’, which I would suggest is the beginning of another ‘E’. Thus re-read we have ‘SEARANCKE’.

One Bunn Searancke, farmer, was married at Chesham on 7 May 1759.⁶ One Atwood Searancke was apprenticed to a millwright named John Rolfe in Thetford, Norfolk on 4 March 1780.⁷ Other Searanckes may be found in the eighteenth century in Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and London. One branch of the Searancke family had more than a dozen public houses in the St Albans/Hatfield area in the late eighteenth century. It was not uncommon for chairmakers to have their workshops on licensed premises.⁸

The only Searancke associated with furniture-making that I have tracked down so far is C(harles) J(ohn) Searancke (1819–1888) ‘Cabinet Maker, Upholsterer, Paper Hanger & Undertaker, Bayle, Folkestone’.⁹ According to the 1871 census he was born in Taverham just outside Norwich. All his



Bob Parrot’s rubbing of the Searancke name stamp on a late eighteenth-century comb back Windsor chair Image *RFS Newsletter* 34, 2001

advertisements are in the 1860s which is too late for Robert Parrott's chair, but I wonder whether one of his ancestors may have had a hand in the chair?

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⁶ Phillimore Marriage Registers, Buckinghamshire Marriage Registers, Chesham Marriages, Volume 8, p. 87

⁷ The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Collection: *Board of Stamps: Apprenticeship Books: Series IR 1*; Class: *IR 1*; Piece: 30

⁸ <https://www.stalbanshistory.org/social-history/industry/brewers-in-st-albans-in-1830>

⁹ *Folkestone Chronicle*, 22 March 1862 and later, British Newspaper Archive