The Diary of an Apprentice Cabinetmaker: Edward Jenner Carpenter's 'Journal' 1844–45

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I

LIVELINESS AND READABILITY often make personal documents, such as letters, diaries and autobiographies, valuable sources for social history. The diary kept by Edward Jenner Carpenter during his apprenticeship in the western Massachusetts town of Greenfield in the mid-1840s has these qualities in full measure. But it also provides rich insights into small-town life in New England during the Industrial Revolution. It sheds light on a range of social and cultural issues of interest to historians, from the work process in an artisan trade to family ties, from literary and cultural activities to moral values, from perceptions of class relations to political attitudes.[1]

We wish to acknowledge Richard D. Brown's helpful advice on the Carpenter family and the assistance with tracing references to staff at the American Antiquarian Society and the Boston Public Library.

1. Edward Jenner Carpenter, 'Journal,' March 1, 1844 – June 30, 1845, American Antiquarian Society. It was written in ink, in a single, bound octavo volume of 140 pages. The journal was given to the Society by Carpenter's granddaughter, Winifred C. Gates of Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1974. She described the diary in an essay 'Early American Industries: Journal of a Cabinet Maker's Apprentice,' *Chronicle of the Early American Industries Association* 15(1962): 23–24, 35–36.

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Because it is a diary, it does more than provide glimpses into fragments of the past. At a time when historians are trying to overcome the tendency to separate the elements of peoples' experience into categories—'economic,' 'religious,' 'political,' and so on—and to reconstruct the texture of their cultures, records such as Carpenter's provide vital evidence as to how individuals fitted together the different strands of their lives. Readers of his journal will be able to draw a series of conclusions about the ways in which the need to earn a livelihood, work patterns, family and kinship, friendships, reading and recreation came together to shape Carpenter's life and those of the people around him. His evidence is particularly useful because he wrote at a period when many of these social patterns were changing rapidly. Manufacturers and traders, recovering from the depression that followed the 1837 panic and directing goods towards expanding markets, sought stronger control over production and more routinized work patterns. Country people increasingly entered nonfarming occupations and swelled the populations of towns and cities. Many young men and women followed different career paths from their parents' and grandparents', found new social and cultural opportunities and allegiances, and faced new problems. New patterns of politics and moral reform movements attempted to channel peoples' responses to changing experience. Carpenter's diary provides a valuable guide to these aspects of New England culture from the perspective of a young man setting out on his career.

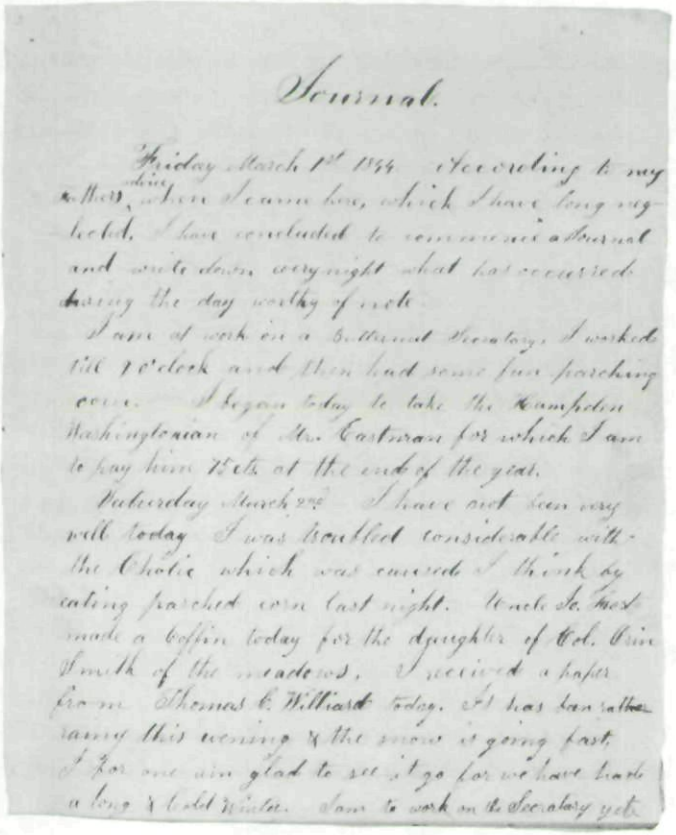
ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES TO INTRODUCTION AND THE 'JOURNAL'

HG: Francis M. Thompson, *History of Greenfield, Shire Town of Franklin County, Massachusetts*, 2 vols. (Greenfield, 1904).

Kellogg, *Bernardston*: Lucy Cutler Kellogg, *History of the Town of Bernardston, Franklin County, Massachusetts, 1736–1900, with Genealogies* (Greenfield, 1902).

VR: *Vital Records of Greenfield, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1915).

1850 Census: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Massachusetts, 1850, Population Schedules, vol. 126, Massachusetts Archives, Boston.



Journal.

Friday March 1st 1844 According to my
dear
father, when I came here, which I have long neglected. I have concluded to commence a Journal and write down every night what has occurred during the day worthy of note.

I am at work on a Cottage at Secretary. I worked till 7 o'clock and then had some fun parching corn. I began today to take the Hampden Washingtonian of Mr. Castman for which I am to pay him 75 cts at the end of the year.

Saturday March 2nd I have not been very well today. I was troubled considerable with the Cholic which was caused I think by eating parched corn last night. Uncle Jo. Hunt made a coffin today for the daughter of Col. Orin Smith of the meadows. I received a paper from Thomas L. Williard today. It has been rather raining this evening & the snow is going fast. I for one am glad to see it go for we have had a long & cold Winter. Am to work on the Secretary yet.

The first page of Edward Jenner Carpenter's diary, March 1, 1844.

Edward Jenner Carpenter (1825–1900) was well placed to comment on change. His father, Elijah Woodward Carpenter (1788–1855) was a physician in the town of Bernardston, just north of Greenfield in Franklin County, Massachusetts. Edward was the first of eight children borne by his mother, Vallonia Slate Carpenter (1798–1873), between 1825 and 1839, all but one of whom survived into adulthood. He and his siblings grew up in the midst of a farming community, although they were slightly set apart

from it. His closest friend in Bernardston, Silas N. Brooks, was also the son of a physician. The Carpenter family enjoyed only modest comfort. They lived in a one-and-a-half-story frame house on the common near the center of Bernardston, which Elijah had purchased in 1829 with six acres of land. By 1839, when the last child was born, there were at least nine people living in six or seven rooms. There were resources enough to send Edward to Shelburne Falls Academy for a period but not on to college. For him, as for three of his brothers after him, the immediate path to the future lay through apprenticeship or a clerkship. After a short spell working at a factory village in Amherst, Edward went to Greenfield in April 1842 as an apprentice to the cabinetmaking firm of Miles & Lyons. He was sixteen. His apprenticeship bound him for nearly four and one-half years, until he reached twenty-one.[2]

In the 1840s, apprenticeship to a craft was still a common means by which rural families sought to set their offspring up in the world. Support from his family during his term was Edward's patrimony. When Elijah W. Carpenter died in 1855 he left Edward only five dollars in his will. Two brothers obtained store clerkships in Bernardston and then moved to stores or workshops in Greenfield, too. Edward's third brother, Timothy, after hiring out as a farm hand during his early teens, would eventually follow Edward into Miles & Lyons's shop.[3] For this generation there was still not the clear distinction between 'manual' and 'nonmanual' occupations that was to emerge during the middle of the nineteenth century, as craft trades declined or became concentrated in larger factories and workshops. Work with the hands could still provide an avenue for middle-class security and advancement that would

2. Genealogical and biographical information on the Carpenter family is drawn from Kellogg, *Bernardston*, pp. 329–34. The Carpenter house still stands in Bernardston Center. A brief description of its rooms and contents is to be found in the inventory of Elijah W. Carpenter's estate made in 1855, in Probate Records case no. 734, Franklin County Courthouse, Greenfield, Massachusetts. All subsequent references to probate records are from this source.

3. Elijah W. Carpenter, Will, Probate Records case no. 734. Timothy B. Carpenter was listed in the 1850 census as a cabinetmaker living in the household of Joel L. Lyons of Greenfield. He returned home after his father's death in 1855 and took care of his mother until she died in 1873; see Vallonia Slate Carpenter, Will, Probate Records case no. 746.

later be closed off. Carpenter's was one of the last generations to bridge a gap that was emerging under industrial capitalism.

When Edward moved to Greenfield, he became absorbed in his new trade and the experiences and opportunities offered by the mechanics' culture of the town. This absorption may explain why he decided to keep a diary. His own explanation, which he set down in his first entry, was that he had decided to follow 'my Fathers advice when I came here, which I have long neglected,' to 'commence a Journal and write down every night what has happened during the day worthy of note.' The suggestion was conventional enough. Often fathers urged their sons to record, literally to 'keep account of,' their lives during the crucial transition from childhood to adulthood. However, it was nearly two years after he came to Greenfield that Edward finally adopted this parental advice. Probably, it was only then that he felt mature enough to set down what was happening to him.

The journal was not an appointment book or (other than in the most limited sense) a financial account book. Nor was it a spiritual account book of the kind so commonly kept in New England. Carpenter attended churches from time to time, but he never commented on what he heard there. Like many country people, Carpenter followed the farmer's habit of recording the weather, and his diary reflected the seasons and the cycles of nature insofar as they affected him. But Carpenter's father was a physician, not a farmer, and this distanced him from a real concern with the land. He paid little attention to crops or to the rhythms of the farming year. Instead, he charted the contrasts between his town life as an apprentice and his childhood in Bernardston. He celebrated a style of life that offered him a variety of activities and a range of new friendships. We do not know what his initial feelings about Greenfield had been, but by the time he started his journal he had evidently become attached to the place. On a visit home to Bernardston in June 1844, he felt 'homesick before night for there is not so much going on here as in Greenfield.' Carpenter's accounts of events and activities provide us with valuable insights, not only

into the lives of small towns in a period when they dominated New England culture and consciousness but also into the role of their activities in a young man's progression towards adulthood. We see Carpenter embarking on a career in an uncertain world, leaving some trappings of his past behind him and achieving a degree of autonomy in his new circumstances.

II

Family circumstances and connections had first brought Edward Carpenter to Greenfield, and they continued to play an important part in his life. His father had probably negotiated the terms of his apprenticeship with Miles & Lyons during one of his frequent visits to Greenfield on business. During his apprenticeship, Edward often received visits from his parents or brothers and occasional supplies of clothing or food. He also had considerable contact with relatives who lived in Greenfield, Bernardston, or nearby Shelburne. He made visits to his family's home and to his relatives, ran errands, and made things for them. The people he worked among had similar connections. Many had come to work in Greenfield from outlying towns in Franklin County. This was true for both of Carpenter's employers. Isaac Miles was from Ashfield. Joel L. Lyons came from Gill, as did Carpenter's fellow apprentice, Dexter P. Hosley.[4] Even for people who had to migrate in order to make a living, family and kinship ties played an important role in life and work. But, as Carpenter's diary shows, Greenfield's mechanics and apprentices also had another orientation to their lives. On coming to the town, they entered a new world of contacts and associations that gave them a work rhythm and culture of their own.

As the steadily growing 'shire town' of Franklin County, Greenfield was a focus for the people of the towns around it. They came to do business at its stores, to attend court, to exchange news, and to take stagecoaches. But they also sought employment for themselves and their children in its workshops and factories. In the mid-1840s, in addition to two cabinetmakers' shops, Greenfield

4. Isaac Miles (b. Ashfield, Massachusetts, 1808) (*Vital Records of Ashfield, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* [Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1942, p. 76]) was

Woodcut of the center of Greenfield, Massachusetts, a few years before Carpenter moved there, drawn by J. W. Barber, reproduced in Ivan Sandrof, Massachusetts Towns: An 1840 View *(Barre: Barre Publishers, 1963).*

had boot- and shoemakers, printshops and bookbinderies, tailors, blacksmiths, jewelers, harnessmakers, carriage shops, tinsmiths, chairmakers, a planing shop, a lumber shop, a foundry, and a baker. There was also a small woolen mill. Nearby, a substantial cutlery works employed English and German immigrants who had been encouraged to bring their skills there, but it was also beginning to hire operatives from the local area.[5] The craft workshops, in particular, provided the arena for Carpenter's new life, distanced from that of his family and kin.

Work, of course, dominated this world. Carpenter's account of the cabinet trade and his role in it provides valuable insights into

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listed in the 1850 census as a cabinetmaker with $2,000 in real estate. Joel L. Lyons (1814–93) was the son of a physician in Gill (*Vital Records of Gill, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* [Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1904], p. 26). The two men formed a partnership in 1837 (HG, 2: 875). A manuscript account book of the firm of Miles & Lyons for the years 1835–47 is held at the Library of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, Massachusetts. See also Patricia A. Lommel, 'From Cradles to Coffins: A Study of Miles and Lyons, Cabinetmakers of Greenfield, Massachusetts, 1838–93' (paper, Summer Fellowship Program, 1985, Historic Deerfield, Inc., Deerfield, Massachusetts).

5. J. G. Palfrey, *Statistics of the Condition and Products of Certain Branches of Industry in Massachusetts, for the Year Ended April 1, 1845* (Boston, 1846), p. 197; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Massachusetts, 1850, Industrial Schedules, Massachusetts Archives, Boston.

artisan production at a period when old forms of organization were being adapted to meet the demands of an expanding market and industrial concentration. Shops like Miles & Lyons's retained an old-fashioned craft hierarchy. For most of the period covered by the journal, it employed two 'bosses,' one journeyman, and the two apprentices. The bosses, in Carpenter's view, did the most interesting work, and used materials that were too expensive or fragile for him to be permitted to handle. Joseph Frost, the journeyman, also had responsible work, including the irregular but unending duty of making coffins to order. Apprentices did less-skilled jobs. Distinctions were sufficiently fine that when Hosley was absent or sick Carpenter noted that he had to do the mundane chores that normally fell to the junior apprentice. By 1843 Carpenter was already experienced enough to be making furniture on his own, and by the time he started the journal he was almost a year into a regular diet of bureaus and 'secrataries,' which he turned out at the rate of one every two to three weeks. Over time, he came to rail against this regimen and to demand more varied tasks from his employers. Although he succeeded in this to some extent, he was caught by changing conditions in the cabinet trade that limited the flexibility that Miles and Lyons could permit in their shop.

The distinctions between the bosses' work and the tasks they set for Carpenter were not merely ones of skill: the different work was aimed at different markets. Miles & Lyons balanced their business between producing custom-made furniture, often of good quality, and making cheaper goods for sale to peddlers and country traders or to be set in the firm's 'ware room' for sale to chance customers. During 1844, they did most of the custom work themselves, leaving Carpenter to produce 'cheap' pieces. He apparently complained at this, and they varied his tasks more, in part because there was extra demand for special work in 1845 from new storekeepers and the building of an Oddfellows Hall. But, as Carpenter's entry for April 4, 1845, suggests, he was obliged to return to his usual output of bureaus whenever purchases depleted stocks. He was caught between becoming an apprentice in the traditional

Printed label of the firm of Miles & Lyons, to which Carpenter was apprenticed. The label was attached to a nineteenth-century mahogany secretary acquired by Historic Deerfield, Inc., in November 1988. Courtesy, Historic Deerfield, Inc.

sense, being introduced to the arts and mysteries of a craft, and being a wage-worker making relatively standardized products. To him and his family, apprenticeship may have appeared as the road to a 'career'. To his employers, it was a means of securing inexpensive labor in an increasingly competitive market.

Nevertheless, Carpenter's working conditions were quite flexible. He usually had his own time in which to finish work. He also had considerable control over its quality. In May 1844, when he made a 'bull' of a door for the piece he was working on, it was he, not one of his bosses, who decided to 'let it go.' There was some flexibility in working hours as well. The working day varied with the seasons. Five summer months saw work end at 6 P.M. instead of 9 P.M., leaving the warm, light evenings free for recreation, and Carpenter groaned when later working hours resumed in the autumn. But there were periodic breaks during work time. Visitors came to the shop, and apprentices made trips to stores to arrange fittings or make purchases. Afternoons or evenings were sometimes taken off for house-raisings, lectures, or dances. In addition to the usual holidays for Fast Day, the Fourth of July, Muster Day, and Thanksgiving, there were several occasions when Carpenter's

weekend trips home extended into the working week, sometimes by two or three days. In October 1844, he took time off to attend an election picnic and to visit relatives down the Connecticut Valley.

By early 1845, this flexibility was apparently causing some friction between Carpenter and his bosses, but the journal hints that the cause was not Miles's and Lyons's disapproval of laxity per se, as much as their attempts to expand and reorganize their business. After taking in an extra boarder in February, Miles insisted that the apprentices take breakfast one half-hour earlier than usual; he 'has turn over a new leaf about getting up,' Carpenter wrote on February 11, 'but I hope it will get dirty before long, for I don't like the plan.' His bosses had also started setting Carpenter 'stints' for the completion of work tasks. The incentive was free time or the opportunity to work on his own account if Carpenter completed tasks within the allotted time, but it was also a temporary form of speed-up that enabled the firm to increase its output. During the last few weeks that Carpenter kept his journal, rapid changes were under way at Miles & Lyons. The owners bought a site on which to set up a small water-power and took over the business of F. A. Birge, a former chairmaker who had branched into cabinetmaking in competition with them in 1843 but who now, as Carpenter remarked, 'thought he had got more irons in the fire than he could tend upon.'[6] By June 1845, three more journeymen had joined the firm. Carpenter's working conditions already held him balanced between the master-servant relations of traditional apprenticeship and the newer world of wages and piece rates. He ended the journal too early to reveal what effect Miles & Lyons's expansion had on his work, but it would be surprising if it took him towards the former, rather than the latter.

III

Leisure, not work, occupied most of Carpenter's attention and was prominent in his journal entries. He probably had more leisure

6. F. A. Birge advertised his 'New Furniture Ware Room' in the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, July 1, 1843.

time than many shop or factory workers in the 1840s, and his diary reveals much about how he spent it. A list of his activities over sixteen months would be long and varied. In fine weather, he took country walks, went berry-picking, fishing, or swimming, 'loafed around,' played ball games, or watched militia musters and drills. Indoors, there were fiddlers to listen to, debates at the Literary Club and lectures at the Lyceum, dances, card games, and, above all, reading. Carpenter took an interest in all of them. Sometimes he calculated that he could not afford to attend particular events, but he paid attention to them in any case. Greenfield was not Boston, by any means, but Carpenter was attracted by the amount 'going on' there as compared with the outlying towns, and his leisure activities were a crucial part of his growing up.

More than anything else, his work and status as an apprentice defined the milieu in which Carpenter lived. His contacts, and his companions for walks, card games, and other activities, were almost exclusively from among artisans, usually other apprentices. They play a more prominent part in his journal than members of his family. Within limits, he and his friends used their talents and interests, and the property of their masters, to open up a world to each other that was largely autonomous. His friends ranged in age from fifteen to twenty-one and came from a variety of trades. Distinctions of age, or competition between rival firms, were apparently less significant than shared status. Carpenter brought these companions into the shop, visited them in their shops, went to the bakeshop to hear a fiddler, was admitted by the printer's boys to the newspaper offices so that he could read old papers, and sought out friends to share his bed when Hosley was away. He followed the 'careers' of other apprentices, noting when their 'time was out' or when bankruptcy forced their bosses to discharge them. He wrote to them when they moved away, exchanging letters and newspapers as far afield as Chicago. Separated from their bosses by age, property, and status, apprentices made their own lives within the constraints placed upon them. Carpenter's diary was above all a record and celebration of this autonomy.

But work and status also gave apprentices close links with bosses

and journeymen, whose shops they worked in and whose families boarded them. This bound them to another world, that of 'mechanics' in general. There were gradations here, to be sure. Carpenter referred to Joel Lyons, the younger of his bosses, by his surname, but the fact that he occasionally wrote of 'Mr Miles' implied a greater formality with the older man. He and other apprentices often called older journeymen, such as Joseph Frost, 'uncle,' implying a fine balance between respect and familiarity. But in a period in which the economic position of small producers and wage workers was changing constantly, the sense of group cohesion among mechanics remained strong. Carpenter's record of his work was itself a reflection of the pride felt by many mid-nineteenth-century artisans, who distinguished their labor at producing things from what they saw as the idleness and pretension of professional men and wealthy traders. Carpenter helped at a raising for the prosperous financier H. W. Clapp and was indignant when he was not even thanked for it. From the names in his journal, it is apparent that Carpenter's Greenfield, centered on the lives of fellow-apprentices, was bounded by the world of the town's workshops. His references to town officers or prosperous citizens were perfunctory, usually related to a particular transaction or public event. His life intruded neither on their time nor their houses.

Carpenter expressed sympathy with mechanics who acted on several occasions in 1844 to assert themselves against the 'aristocrats' or 'big bugs.' After debating the issue, the Literary Club voted that mechanics had done more good than lawyers. At formal dances or informal skating parties on the river, 'aristocrats' and 'mechanics' did not easily mix. On July 17, 1844, when mechanics were denied access to a dance in the town hall, 'they staid outside & made such a noise that could hardly hear the music.' Mechanics organized a fair to raise money for the town graveyard after the 'aristocracy' had failed to 'get any one to do the work for them.' In these ways they expressed a collective sense of superiority over people who claimed the privileges of wealth. As Carpenter wrote, 'the Mechanics are not afraid to work.'

IV

If Carpenter felt a sense of pride and independence in his association with other mechanics, he also created for himself a sense of personal autonomy. He was an avid reader and keen to attend public lectures and other events associated with moral reform. He steeped himself in the advice given by guardians of morality to the poor and underprivileged and shared in the literature and voluntary activity, dedicated to propagating moral standards, that flooded New England in the 1840s. There was no shortage of such instruction, and Carpenter must have absorbed much of it. But did he adopt the complex but prepackaged morality of the people he read and listened to, or did he make his own decisions about how to live his life? His diary can help answer such questions because of the manner in which it juxtaposed otherwise disparate issues.

Carpenter's reading interests were quite broad. He had grown up in a house with books. Elijah W. Carpenter owned about 146 volumes by the time of his death, about one-third of them medical texts.[7] In Greenfield there were wide and eclectic opportunities for reading, although Carpenter was limited by his means to cheaper items or books that he could borrow. A reading room had been opened in the town shortly before he started his journal, but he gave no sign that he used it.[8] Instead, he used his contacts. He seems to have read local newspapers as a matter of course, but rarely commented on them. However, some of his closest friendships were with apprentice printers, who showed him copy before it was published, allowed him to read exchange papers in the printing offices, and joined with him in subscribing to periodicals published elsewhere. From these friends and his employer Joel Lyons, he also borrowed books and periodicals. He particularly enjoyed historical adventures or romances, and he borrowed or occasionally purchased cheap editions singly or in compendia from local booksellers. The ideas of moral reformers also figured

7. Elijah W. Carpenter, Will, Probate Records case no. 734.

8. The recent opening of a reading room in Greenfield was reported in the *Northampton Courier*, March 26, 1844.

strongly in his reading. He took the *Hampden Washingtonian* and read temperance tales such as *Easy Nat, Or Boston Bars and Boston Boys* (Boston, 1844), which, he commented, 'shows the evil of drunken companions.' Other comments about drunken acquaintances or the advice of elder relatives betrayed a strong sympathy for the temperance cause, and in 1845 he enjoyed a lecture by the Boston temperance advocate Charles Jewett that 'did not show any mercy to the rumseller.' But there are many reasons to doubt Carpenter's conformity to moral reform ideals. His own makeup was more complex. If anything, his reading gradually had less influence in changing his views of the world. Although he did not switch his habits entirely, Carpenter paid more attention to histories and romances at the end of his journal-keeping period than he had done at the beginning, and he was less concerned with morality stories.

The clear, direct language of Carpenter's journal contrasts markedly with the orotund character of much mid-nineteenth-century rhetoric and literary expression. He did not ape the style of the newspapers and novels he read so avidly. He may have been helped here by the fact that he did not go to college. If he had a literary model, it was the plain talk of the people he lived among. Even here, though, some influences were lacking. Perhaps because of his father's Unitarian sympathies, the biblical references common in other contemporary manuscripts are absent from Carpenter's journal. He attended church at irregular intervals, but he wrote virtually nothing about the sermons he listened to and made few other references to religious matters. His morality was not rooted in conventional piety. Even his commitment to temperance had limits. He avoided strong liquor himself, but drank 'small beer.' Taverns formed part of his cultural life, and he recorded visits to them without a sense of impropriety. As for other aspects of moral conformity, he appears to have made up his mind against conventional restrictions in favor of setting his own limits. He played cards, read novels, and went to dances. He got tired of a pious Literary Club debate about whether novels were beneficial and went home in the middle of it to read some stories. Aware that

chewing tobacco posed risks to his health, he made attempts to give it up but failed. Content with smaller quantities, he even permitted himself a higher quality of tobacco in compensation. His only concessions to conventional attitudes were brief explanations of his actions. He never, he insisted, played cards for money or other stakes, and if he spent Sunday at work or some outdoor recreation, he felt the need to justify it.[9]

Here, from a moral reformer's point of view, was a complicated young man: a card-playing, Sabbath-breaking, novel-reading, young temperance advocate who frequented taverns and whose religious views sat so easily with him that he never took the trouble to mention them in his diary. A number of things may have contributed to Carpenter's equipoise in the face of social and literary pressure to conform. His Unitarian background and habit of selective reading, reinforced by his experience of the relatively unsupervised world of apprentice mechanics, gave him a sense of self-confidence that extended the cultural autonomy of his group into individual autonomy for himself also.

V

Edward Carpenter filled the volume that held his journal at the end of June 1845. His apprenticeship still had more than a year to run, until his twenty-first birthday in August 1846. We do not know whether he continued the journal in another volume that has since been lost, but there is internal evidence to suggest that he did not. On March 1, 1845, after keeping the journal for a year, he seemed full of enthusiasm for recording his life on paper. 'The more I write in it the more I like to,' he wrote. But he may, in fact, already have been losing interest. The entries for the three months up to that date were only three-quarters of the length of the previous three months, and they continued to get shorter during the spring of 1845. Entries for the final month were almost perfunctory. Harder work or, more likely, his greater devotion to social activities as he grew older, help explain his dwindling atten-

9. A complaint by 'Greenfield' about desecration of the Sabbath appeared in the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, December 24, 1844.

tion to keeping a diary. But the journal may also have served out its purpose. If, as we suggested earlier, Carpenter kept it in order to chart his passage from an old to a new life, and from childhood towards adulthood, it is likely that at some point he felt it had accomplished this task. In certain respects, ending the journal showed that he had come of age.

Again, there is some internal evidence for this. The spring of 1845 found Carpenter arranging a store-clerkship for his younger brother, something that previously his father would have done. But Greenfield, for Carpenter, had not only been a world of mechanics. It was also overwhelmingly a world of men and boys. Except for the members of his family, of Miles's household where he boarded, and the cousins he met or visited, women played a small part in his life up to the winter of 1844–45. With one exception, a friend who had moved to the South, his correspondents were male, too. Respectable convention restricted social contacts between young men and women who were not related to one another and required that they be supervised. That winter, the nineteen-year-old Carpenter and some friends joined the one institution that relaxed these barriers, albeit in a formal setting—the dancing-school. The journal shows that he threw himself into dancing with the same enthusiasm he had previously shown for novel-reading and Lyceum lectures. Late nights began to affect his work. But the dancing lessons, the all-night ball one Wednesday in March 1845, the dinner at Chase's hotel, and the sleighs or omnibuses hired to carry young women to and from the dance-hall were not just entertainment designed to fill the time. They were the beginnings of a rite of passage, from apprenticeship towards courtship and adulthood, which Carpenter had time to note briefly before he probably ceased using his journal.

His later life realized both the limits and the opportunities posed during his apprenticeship. Although he continued to work in Greenfield, apparently at his trade, until 1849, opportunities to do the handcraft work that he had learned were dwindling. In 1844, when an acquaintance was unable to find employment, he remarked that 'these times are hard times for Cabinet Journeymen.'

Periodic business cycles merely exacerbated the long-term decline of small-town furniture making, as factories in the cities, in Central Massachusetts, and in the Midwest grew to take over a larger share of the market. Some young men remained in the trade. Dexter Hosley was probably still working for Miles & Lyons in 1850, for example. The firm itself lasted until 1869, and Lyons continued in the business after that.[10] But Carpenter had early decided not to cast his fortunes with a trade whose prospects for new entrants seemed poor.

At the age of twenty-four, and a few months before his marriage to a young Greenfield woman, Carpenter moved a few miles north, to Brattleboro, Vermont. With capital from a partner, he opened a small store and turned to his first love, reading matter. He built up a 'periodical bookstore' and pioneered a wholesale newspaper distribution business for the upper Connecticut Valley. His business reflected both his literary interests and changes in market structure. Unable or unwilling to make a living producing the goods he had been trained to make, he left the artisan culture that had nurtured his passage from childhood to adulthood and turned to distributing the goods that he had always most avidly consumed. Merely distributing them was not enough for him, though. Later in his life he became town librarian of Brattleboro and held the post for twenty-seven years. He passed his interest in the printed word to at least one of his sons, also named Edward, who became a printer and editor in Amherst and, four years before Edward Jenner Carpenter's death, an author of its first town history.[11] In the end, Elijah W. Carpenter helped shape his son's life and career not so much by his choice of his son's apprenticeship as by the books he had kept in his house.

10. The Census of 1850 shows Dexter P. Hosley, a cabinetmaker, aged twenty-four, resident with Isaac and Fanny Miles of Greenfield. *HG*, 2: 875, gives a brief biography of Joel L. Lyons.

11. Carpenter's later life is outlined in Kellogg, *Bernardston*, p. 330. His modest estate is listed in Edward Jenner Carpenter, Inventory, box 315, file no. 12, Hampshire County Registry of Probate, Hall of Records, Northampton, Massachusetts. His son wrote and published, with Charles F. Morehouse, *History of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts* (Amherst, Mass., 1896).