

Thomas Passmore: Tinsmithing Entrepreneur in the Early Republic

by Karl J. Schmidt

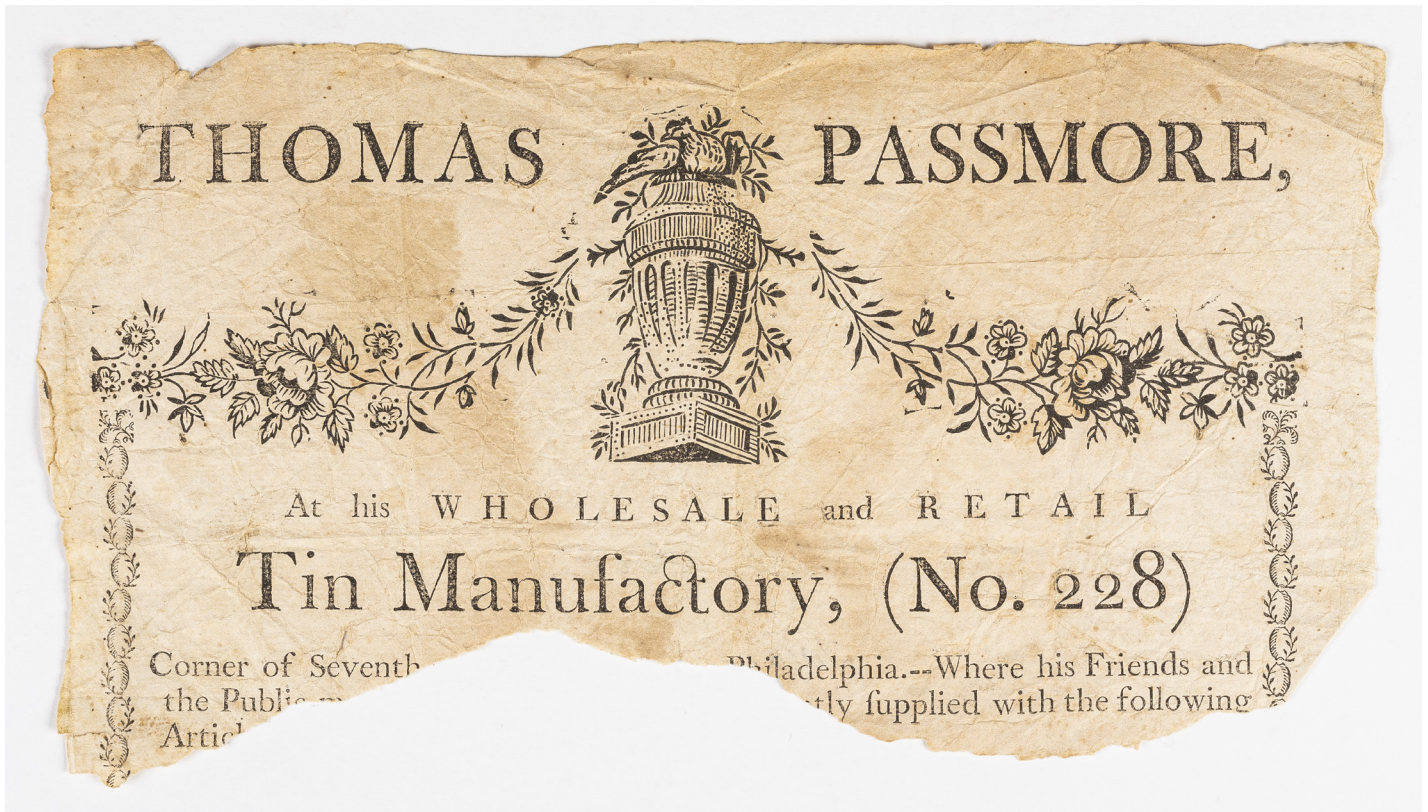


Figure 1. The torn top portion of one of Thomas Passmore's handbills, circa 1793. This is apparently the only surviving example. AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, BOSTON.

In this article, the first of two about Thomas Passmore (1774–1824), Karl J. Schmidt focuses on his biography, detailing the scope of his tinsmithing business in Philadelphia from 1792 to 1809. The second article, which will be published in a future issue of *The Chronicle*, will focus on the types of tinware Passmore produced and what they can tell us about the material culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Travel to perform archival research for these articles was paid for by a James M. Gaynor Award through the Early American Industries Association.

Thomas Passmore (1774–1824) worked in Philadelphia as a tinsmith between 1792 and 1809. During that time, he rose from being an ordinary tinplate worker who owned a small shop to being the owner of a “tin manufactory” (a small-scale factory where tinware was produced), employing at one time more than ten journeymen tinsmiths.¹ Their production was of such

size and scale that Passmore also later owned a separate warehouse in Philadelphia in which he stored his tin goods ready for sale and, according to newspaper advertisements, sold his goods throughout the country. Passmore was an inventor, too, receiving an early U.S. patent (December 1796) for his “Conjuror,” a fuel-saving cooking apparatus with tin components. He was one of ten master tinplate workers in Philadelphia who signed the 1796 booklet, *A Book of Prices, of Journeyman's Wages for Making Tin-Ware*, which was an early agreement among tinsmiths in that city to pay set rates of pay for journeymen engaged in tinware production.² In 1803, he sold tin goods to the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition before they headed west.³ The quality of Passmore's tin work was such that even a decade after Passmore left the trade, Thomas Jefferson, who was one of his customers,⁴ referenced him in a letter to a friend, remarking that Passmore's high-quality planished tinplate was “almost like silver.”⁵

Despite his importance among early American tinsmiths, historians of the tinsmithing trade have largely overlooked Passmore. He appears in passing in Edwin Freedley's 1859 book, *Philadelphia and Its Manufactures*.⁶ He receives a brief mention in Henry Kauffman's book, *Metalworking Trades in Early America* (1966).⁷ Margaret Coffin, in her 1968 book, *American Country Tinware*, mentions Passmore as the owner of a "prominent tin shop," but provides only a few details about his work.⁸

Historians generally know very little about specific tinsmiths of the early United States because their business records rarely survive. Until recently, Passmore was no different. Fortunately, however, in 2019, I was able to locate some of his business records, which survive in the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). These documents do not show up in any conventional search of the records at HSP, having been classified within the papers of another family. This classification made them somewhat difficult to find, which may partly explain why they have been overlooked until now.

Compared to the records of other American tinsmiths, for whom perhaps only one volume of records or less survives, the Passmore records represent a veritable treasure trove of untapped information, over a significant period of his working life.⁹ In addition to these business records, I have located the original 1796 patent document for Passmore's "Conjuror," signed by President George Washington, which is currently held by the Smithsonian Institution.¹⁰ The receipt noting the sale of tinware to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, received and signed for by Capt. Meriwether Lewis, also survives.¹¹

Passmore's Business Records

Passmore's surviving business records, comprised of seven bound volumes and four folders, are classified within the Cadwalader Family Papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Thomas Cadwalader (1779-1841) was Passmore's attorney, and these records remained in his office even after Passmore's death in 1824. The records include a bills payable/bills receivable book covering 1795-1802, two daybooks covering the period between 1792 and 1799, a ledger covering the years 1792-1795, journals for 1800 and 1802, a memorandum book covering 1800-1802, a letter book covering 1799-1802, and four folders with a miscellany of papers and letters. All the records are written in manuscript, with at least five different styles of handwriting present, suggesting that several people wrote in the books over a period of time. The penmanship varies from excellent to barely legible, highlighting one of the challenges of using eighteenth-century materials of this kind. The volumes contain information about day-to-day sales of tinware, including customers' names and the

details of their purchases, journeymen's names and their wages, the creation of Passmore's tin manufactory, and the business correspondence between Passmore and some of his specialty suppliers in Great Britain.

Thomas Passmore's Origins

Before his appearance in Philadelphia in the early 1790s, Thomas Passmore's origins are somewhat obscure. A piece of mourning needlework from the 1820s at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond, identified as belonging to Catherine Passmore Sparhawk of Philadelphia, the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Passmore, includes typescript information on the back giving Thomas Passmore's birth and death years as 1774-1824 and Elizabeth Passmore's birth and death years as 1772-1823.¹² Using this information as a starting point, I was able to find a marriage announcement in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, dated May 23, 1794, which gives Passmore's bride's name as Eliza Peirce.¹³ The same announcement also appears in *The Oracle of the Day*, a Portsmouth, New Hampshire, newspaper.¹⁴ Searching through New Hampshire marriage records, I discovered that Thomas Passmore (of Philadelphia) and Elizabeth Peirce (of Portsmouth, New Hampshire) were married in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on May 14, 1794.¹⁵ Given that the marriage took place in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, it is not unreasonable to assume that Thomas Passmore was originally from Portsmouth and that the two met there.

Did Passmore train as a tinsmith in Portsmouth? There is no direct evidence to support that conclusion, but when Passmore took out his first newspaper advertisement in the Philadelphia-based *Federal Gazette*, on November 29, 1793, his list of tinware for sale is nearly identical to a list published in a 1786 Portsmouth newspaper by Portsmouth tinman James Norie.¹⁶ The 1790 U.S. Federal Census from Portsmouth shows that James Norie's household contained two white males over the age of sixteen.¹⁷ When Norie died in 1794, his will mentions his wife and four daughters as heirs, but no males.¹⁸ Was the other male aged sixteen and over in his household in 1790 perhaps Thomas Passmore? Given Passmore's 1774 birth year, he would have been sixteen at the time of the 1790 census, so the dates fit. While it is possible that Passmore was James Norie's apprentice, in the absence of direct evidence, I can only speculate. A final bit of evidence that seems to tie Passmore to New Hampshire is that he donated a specimen of New Hampshire mica to the American Philosophical Society in 1798.¹⁹

Philadelphia in 1792

What was Philadelphia like when Passmore opened his shop for business? Founded in 1681



Figure 2. William Breton's watercolor of the Presidential Residence (1790-1800), 190 High Street, Philadelphia, one block east of Thomas Passmore's tin shop. The house no longer exists, but the site today includes an outline of the original house and outdoor exhibits. Washington was one of Passmore's customers. WILLIAM BRETON WATERCOLOR COLLECTION, ATHENAEUM OF PHILADELPHIA. USED WITH PERMISSION.

by William Penn, Philadelphia grew steadily for the next 110 years. In 1790, with a population of more than 28,000 people, Philadelphia was the second largest city in the United States, after New York City, and ahead of Boston, according to the first United States census. If one added in the area just to the north of Philadelphia proper, known as "the Northern Liberties," Philadelphia would have been the largest metropolitan area in the country in 1790.²⁰ After the passage of the Residence Act in 1790, the city was for a decade the temporary political capital of the United States, while the District of Columbia was under construction. Congress met in Philadelphia every year, holding their sessions in Congress Hall, while the U.S. Supreme Court met in chambers at the Old City Hall. President George Washington took up residence just one block north of Congress Hall, in a mansion formerly owned by Robert Morris, then a U.S. Senator

from Pennsylvania (Figure 2).

In addition to being the political capital of the United States, Philadelphia was also the cultural and intellectual capital of the country. It was home to the Library Company of Philadelphia and the American Philosophical Society, both founded by Benjamin Franklin, in 1731 and 1743, respectively. The city boasted a vibrant commercial life, as evidenced by its busy City Market, its active port, and its status as a financial hub for the new nation. The Southwark Theatre and the Chestnut Street (or "New") Theatre, as seen in Figure 3, provided entertainment to the city's inhabitants. Philadelphia was also the site of Peale's Philadelphia Museum, which began with more than forty portraits on display.²¹ In sum, Philadelphia in 1792 would have been an exciting place for a young man like eighteen-year-old Thomas Passmore to start a new business.



CONGRESS HALL and NEW THEATRE, in Chestnut Street PHILADELPHIA.

Drawn, Engraved & Published by W. Birch & Son, Nishaniny Bridge. 1800.

Figure 3. “Congress Hall and the New Theatre” from William Russell Birch’s *Views of Philadelphia in 1800*. Passmore’s tin shop was only two blocks from the New Theatre. LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA.

Competition and Location

When Passmore opened his tin shop, he had some competition within the city’s tinware trade. While there is no city directory available for 1792, the 1793 Philadelphia directory lists seven other working tinsmiths in the city, in addition to Passmore: Joseph Feinauer at 48 Lombard Street (“tin plate worker”), Benjamin & Joseph Harbeson at 44 S. Second Street (“tin and coppersmiths”), Martin Riser (or Raizer) at 97 N. Third Street (“tin-plate worker”), John Mercer Smith at 33 Pewter-platter Alley (“tin plate worker”), James Trueman at 45 N. Second Street (“coppersmith and tin-plate worker”), Jacob Tryon at 165 N. Second Street (“tin-plate worker”), and Jacob Walter at 77 N. Second Street (“tin-plate worker”).²² Four of the seven tinsmiths were clustered on Second Street. Except for Feinauer on Lombard Street, the other tinsmiths were

concentrated in the older part of the city, within one block of the City Market stalls (Figure 4). By contrast, Passmore’s tin shop was located in a more affluent and quieter part of the city at 228 Market (or High) Street, on the southeast corner of Seventh and Market streets (Figure 5).²³ Passmore’s tin shop was part of the newer development on the city’s western edge. What motivated him to select that site is unclear, but Passmore’s location quickly proved fortuitous, as it was the only tin shop on the western side of the city (Figure 6).

Open for Business

Passmore’s first daybook starts on June 16, 1792, with a summary of his starting stock and supplies, including their value. These items included, in their original values in pounds, shillings, and pence:²⁴



Figure 4. "High Street, from the Country Marketplace" from William Russell Birch's Views of Philadelphia in 1800. The City Market was covered and extended for several blocks down the center of High, or Market Street. The western tail of the market ended just two blocks shy of the President's House. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D.C.



Figure 5. "High Street from Ninth Street, Philadelphia" from William Russell Birch's Views of Philadelphia in 1800. Thomas Passmore's first shop was half-way down, on the right. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D.C.



Figure 6. Passmore's first tin shop and manufactory location was at 228 Market (or High) Street, on the southeast corner of Seventh and Market (the street numbering system in Philadelphia in the 1790s was sequential, not based on cross streets). His shop was across Seventh Street to the east from the Declaration House, where Thomas Jefferson penned the famous document (a 1976 reconstruction stands there now). Today, a Dunkin' Donuts and a parking garage stand where Passmore's original shop once stood. AUTHOR PHOTO.

- Tinware stock - £113-0-0
- Cash in ready money - £23-0-0
- 12 boxes of tinplate @107/- per box - £63-8-9
- Iron wire, 8 stone - £4-14-10
- Scales beam - £1-14-1
- Lead, 63 pounds - £1-1-4
- Rosin - 55 pounds - £2-12-0
- Sundry tools - £15-17-8

When he opened his shop for business, Passmore had at least one month's stock of tinware on hand (based on subsequent sales information contained in the daybook), a complete set of tinsmith's stakes and other necessary tools (based on the total value listed), and sufficient tinplate and other supplies to make more items. A standard box of tinplate contained 225 sheets (typically 13¾ inches by 10 inches in size), so with 12 boxes of tinplate, he had 2,700 sheets of tinplate on hand, a sizeable quantity by any measure of the time. While an itemized list of tools

does not survive, it is likely that his tools, including the tinsmith's stakes, were English in origin (Figure 7).

Passmore's first recorded sale was to Samuel Fraunces, President Washington's chief household steward in Philadelphia (and former owner of the Fraunces Tavern in New York City) who bought a ten-shilling chocolate pot on July 13, 1792.²⁵ While more customers arrived in the ensuing days and weeks, it was slow-going at Passmore's business for the next seven months. He averaged less than £5 per month in gross sales. In February 1793, his situation improved when he sold in excess of £24 worth of goods, more than £14 of which came from a single sale to Elihu Chandler, who purchased six expensive lamps and lamp glass.²⁶ Thereafter, Passmore's monthly income rose steadily, until a disaster came his way.

The Philadelphia Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793

Passmore's business was just beginning to prosper when a medical catastrophe struck Philadelphia in

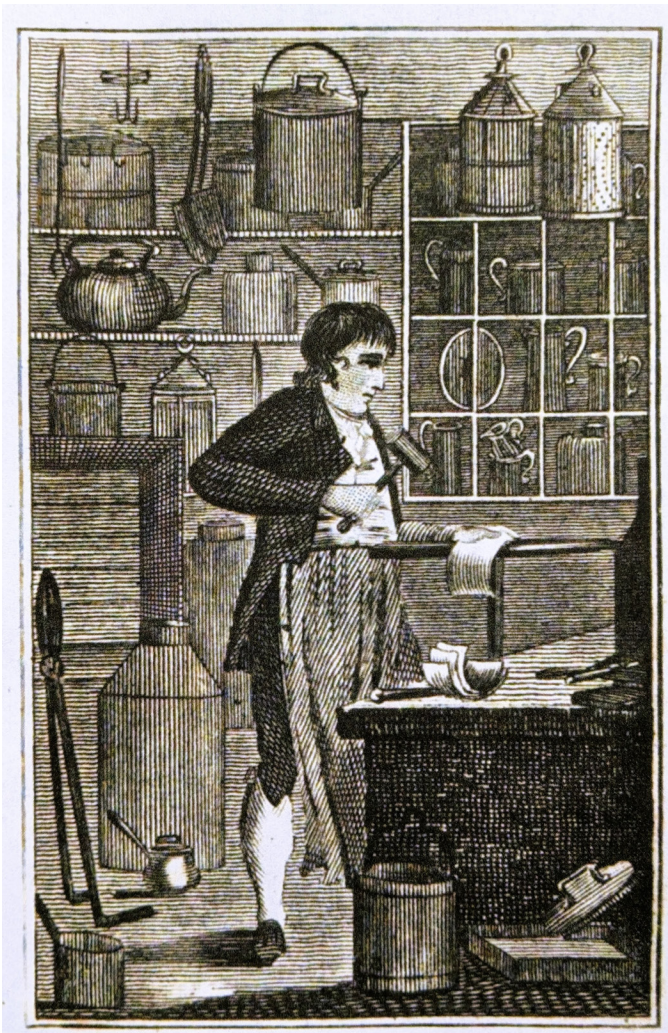


Figure 7. A tinsmith worker in his shop, ca. 1804. The engraving highlights some typical aspects of a tinsmith's shop of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: large shears for cutting tinplate (on the floor at lower left), the tinsmith working tinplate over a stake called a 'bick iron' secured into his workbench, on the right edge of the image is his tinner's pot (used for heating soldering coppers), and various kinds of finished tinware on the floor and in the background. *THE BOOK OF TRADES, OR LIBRARY OF USEFUL ARTS, VOL. III* (LONDON: TABART AND CO., 1804-1807).

the form of a yellow fever epidemic in late summer 1793. Philadelphia's hot, humid climate was a perfect breeding ground for the disease-carrying mosquitoes. The first cases of yellow fever appeared in early August. The disease spread quickly, and the number of deaths from it rose dramatically. What started with a few deaths in early August increased to hundreds each week. Panic set in and commerce ground to a halt. Many of the city's wealthiest inhabitants fled for outlying areas. People who could do so went to live with relatives in the countryside. President Washington returned to Mount Vernon. An estimated 20,000 people fled the city by the end of September. Those who remained behind, like Thomas Passmore, faced the threat of illness and death.²⁷

Although I do not have specific details about what Passmore was doing while the epidemic raged outside his shop, I do know that he wasn't selling much tinware. In the seven months preceding the outbreak of the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia, Passmore had been averaging approximately £43 per month in gross sales. In August 1793, the month the epidemic began, his gross sales had increased to just under £98, the most of any of the preceding months of the year. In September, however, while the epidemic was in full swing, his gross sales for the entire month dropped to a mere £2. Moreover, there was a month-long gap between his last recorded sale on August 26, and his next recorded sale on September 27. And Passmore only earned those £2 because three brave souls ventured out—all on the same day—to visit his tin shop.²⁸ October was not appreciably better. It was not until November that business began to pick up and even then, his November sales were less than half of his August sales.²⁹

It is no coincidence that Passmore's sales dropped to zero after August 26, 1793. Elizabeth Drinker, a prominent member of the Philadelphia Quaker community, noted in her diary that same day that "We have been rendered very uneasy this evening by hearsays from the City of a great number of funerals that have been seen this day there."³⁰ On that day, seventeen separate funerals and burials took place; all were victims of yellow fever.³¹ Deaths and funerals continued at an appalling rate for the next few weeks. According to Dr. Benjamin Rush's account, 325 people died of yellow fever in August; 1,798 died in September; and 3,700 died in October. By early November, deaths had begun to taper off, and Rush did not record any more deaths due to yellow fever after November 9.³² Yellow fever deaths were most pronounced in the city blocks closest to the Delaware River, where deaths on some streets reached as high as 67% of their inhabitants. Passmore's neighborhood, by contrast, was relatively lightly affected, with under 5% fatalities.³³ By late October, Samuel Fraunces, who had stayed behind in the presidential residence when the Washington family retreated to Mount Vernon, reported to the president in a letter dated October 23 should he wish to return to Philadelphia that "I think you will be as safe as any where—as our Neighbourhood [sic] is entirely clear of any infection—The Fever still continues to abate in the City but rages in Southwark & other out parts."³⁴

Passmore's dramatic decline in sales no doubt left him much free time, which he likely put to good use making tinware to build up his stock for when the conditions in Philadelphia improved. In late July, before the yellow fever outbreak, he had purchased twenty boxes of tinplate from Meeker, Cochrom & Co., Philadelphia merchants at 28 N. Front Street, at the cost of £150, no doubt anticipating a

continuing need.³⁵ While the demand for tinware dried up by late August, Passmore was, however, well-positioned to produce more tinware stock during the epidemic, given his supply of tinplate. By the end of November, the medical crisis in Philadelphia had abated, and the weekly newspaper advertisement he paid for starting on November 29, 1793, can be taken as evidence that he had built up sufficient tinware stock in the interim to warrant advertising it.

The Power of Advertising

Thomas Passmore was unusual among Philadelphia's tinsmiths in that he made vigorous use of newspaper advertising to promote his tinware. He did not advertise frequently, but when he did, he provided substantial details to his customers regarding what he had to offer. As a result, Passmore's advertisements provide a useful outline and timeline for understanding the scope and development of his tinsmithing business.

As noted earlier, Passmore placed his first advertisement on November 29, 1793, in *The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*.³⁶ Except for the first week of December 1793, when it ran twice in one week, the advertisement ran weekly for the next seven weeks (Figure 8). As mentioned above, the ad is strikingly similar to an advertisement Portsmouth, New Hampshire, tinsmith James Norie ran in 1786,³⁷ (with whom Passmore may have apprenticed). Instead of simply telling his customers that he offered a full range of tinware, he lists nearly eighty items by name or category, taking up nearly half of an entire newspaper column. The ad is designed to impress his customers and set him apart from the other tinsmiths in town who advertised, but whose much smaller ads provided scanty details of their work. Moreover, in perhaps an additional effort to impress potential customers, he advertised that his place of business was a "manufactory," which at that stage was likely only an aspirational expression of the size of his business, given that it was unlikely he had anyone else working for him at the time.

It is difficult to attribute specific increases in sales to advertising, but it cannot be a complete coincidence that Passmore's November gross sales were £47-9-9½ (all but fifteen shillings of which were earned before the November 29 advertisement appeared in the newspaper), while his December 1793 gross sales (after the ad started running) rose to £84-17-10½, a more than 78 percent increase over November.³⁸

Passmore took out an extensive and detailed advertisement in October 1797, highlighting a larger range of tinware than before, along with a wide selection of imported japanned ware. The advertisement notes his new manufactory location at 13 N. Seventh Street, while

Thomas Passmore, TIN PLATE WORKER,

At his wholesale and retail Manufactory,
No. 228, at the corner of Seventh and
Market streets

B E G S leave to inform his friends and customers and the public in general, that he now has a large and compleat assortment of a Tin Ware, ready for sale, consisting of the following articles, viz.

Ale tafters, argyles for gravy, bafters, boxes for writing, bathing machines, bread baskets, cranes, cheefetrays, cream skimmers, cheese toafters, cheese ovens, coffee biggins, plenifhed in neatest manner, equal to any imported, coffee pots of all sizes, chocolate pots and mul-lers, cullenders, candle boxes, candle fafes, candle moulds, candlesticks, canif-ters, covers for plates and dishes, neatly plenifhed, cake pans and hoops, duff pans, dripping-pans, dreffing boxes, egg slices, extinguifhers, flour boxes, fish kettles, funnels of all sizes, fendens, garden engines, gingerbread cutters, graters, hash dishes and lamps, hearing trumpets, jack, jugs and tumblers, ice cream pots and freezing moulds, kettles, knife trays, lanthorns of all kinds, lamps of all kinds, moulds for blomonges, milk strainers, money boxes, meat skreens, milk pails, milk fauce pans, ovens, oil pumps, oil kettles, pots and meafures, plate warm-ers, punch strainers, powder canisters, pepper boxes, pudding pots and pans, patty pans, fauce pans, speaking trum-pets, fugar boxes, shuff boxes, fuet strain-ers, fegar boxes, slices, fcollops, falvato-ries, steam kettles, foup ladles, stills, stoves, fuitable for ladies, tureens, tinder boxes, ventilators, watering pots, assort-ment of tea and coffee urns, black ebony cafters, with filver and plated tops, ja-panned, inlaid, and ornamented ditto, with many other articles too numerous for infertion, all of which, he flatters himself, his friends and the public, will find their advantage to make trial, as it is a particular point with him to fell for the fmallest profit.

Orders from any part of the United States duly attended to and goods packed up with punctuality and dispatch and executed as if the parties were pre-sent, and the money returned for any article sent that is not approved of.

Nov. 29.

f&tuf.

Figure 8.
Facsimile
of Thomas
Passmore's
November
29, 1793
advertisement,
the first one he
placed after
opening his
tin business.
It appeared in
the Federal
Gazette and
Philadelphia
Daily
Advertiser.
TRANSCRIBED AND
FORMATTED BY
THE AUTHOR.

directing customers to his retail store at 228 Market Street. Notable among the items listed are those available in either “block” and “common” tin.³⁹ The expression “block tin” was used in two ways among tinsmiths in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It could mean either ingots of solid tin, or it could mean tinplate that had a heavier coating of tin on it, making it a premium product. “Common” tin(plate) didn’t have as thick a coating of tin on it and was, therefore, a less expensive material.⁴⁰ By having items available in both kinds of tinplate, Passmore offered products for every budget.

Thomas Passmore’s Customers

Using Passmore’s 1792-1796 daybook, I have compiled a list and index of his more than five-hundred customers during those years. They came from a wide range of backgrounds and occupations. At the top of the social ladder were people like George Washington and Robert Morris. Most of the purchases for Washington and Morris were of a culinary nature, including coffee pots and other cookware. Early on, Samuel Fraunces purchased many items for use in the President’s House.

Some of Thomas Passmore’s customers stopped by repeatedly, while many others patronized Passmore’s business only once. One such prominent individual who visited only one time was Thomas Posey, who rose through the officer ranks in the patriot army during the Revolution. In early 1793, Posey had just been commissioned a brigadier-general and received orders to join Major-General Anthony Wayne in a series of campaigns against the Northwest Indian Confederation.⁴¹ Prior to his departure to Ohio, Posey purchased many items of tinware from Passmore to be used while the brigadier-general was in the field. This campaign kit included six dishes, twelve plates, two camp kettles, two coffee pots, one colander, two sugar canisters, two tea canisters, two tinder boxes and steels, two pepper boxes, two wash bowls, and several miscellaneous non-tin items.⁴²

Other prominent customers included Thomas Jefferson, who at the time was the U.S. Secretary of State; General Henry Knox (1750-1806), the U.S. Secretary of War; Matthew Clarkson (1733-1800), the mayor of Philadelphia; George Hammond (1763-1853), the British minister plenipotentiary to the United States; Edmond-Charles Genêt (1763-1834), the French ambassador to the U.S.; James Wilson (1742-1798), associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court; ministers from the United Provinces (the Netherlands), Spain, and Portugal; along with numerous government officials at both the federal, state, and local level. Other military officers also frequented his establishment, such as Captain John Barry (1745-1803), master of the new frigate *United States*.⁴³

Passmore’s clientele was not limited only to

Philadelphia’s political elite. Many of the city’s merchants frequented his business, as did many fellow tradesmen, such as local blacksmiths. Many ordinary Philadelphians also visited his shop, sometimes only once, but many others were repeat customers over several years, like the New Theater on Chestnut Street, for which Passmore supplied candle sconces and other tinware. Several “players” (actors) also frequented his shop, typically listed only by their first names and their thespian occupation. A significant number of Passmore’s customers were anonymous, as they were listed in the daybook only as the “Lady in Arch Street” or the “Gentleman in 8th Street” or “Quaker Lady.” One of the other details that comes out of examining Passmore’s 1792-1796 daybook is that he supplied tinware to several local merchants at wholesale rates for resale in their own shops, while extending them typically sixty days credit to facilitate the transaction.⁴⁴ Passmore’s largest single wholesale customer was probably George Roberts, an ironmonger at 83 High (Market) Street, who consistently bought sizeable quantities of tinware from Passmore at almost weekly intervals.⁴⁵

Supplying Tinware to the Federal Government

While most of Passmore’s customers were private citizens, he did fill a few orders for the new federal government. On September 3, 1794, for example, Passmore fulfilled an order for 119 camp kettles to the government, which he delivered to “continental stores,” likely a hold-over name for a government warehouse storing military supplies. In the 1792-1796 daybook, this was the only sale identifiable as being one to the federal government. Oddly, the charge for the kettles was not noted in the daybook.⁴⁶

In April 1797, Passmore’s tin manufactory supplied £109-2-6 (also noted as \$291) worth of “sundry goods for the Algerine frigate”—a reference to the thirty-six-gun frigate built by the United States and given as a gift to the Dey of Algiers, as part of a package of tributes.⁴⁷ Another entry in Passmore’s daybook notes “Made by A. Gilmore—2 doz. tin Lanthorns large size for the frigate.”⁴⁸ Given the timing of this entry, these lanthorns were likely bound for the Algerine frigate as well.

Later that year, the manufactory also supplied “sundry” tin goods to the frigate *United States* (Figure 9) and the frigate *Constitution* (Figure 10), two of the six original frigates authorized by Congress in 1794 under the “Act to Provide a Naval Armament.”⁴⁹ The *United States* was being built in Philadelphia, while the *Constitution* was being built in Boston. On November 8, 1797, Passmore noted that he had “received from Mr. Humphreys 102# copper in pieces for making clasps for the use of the UStates,” a reference to the frigate.⁵⁰ Joshua Humphreys was the naval architect and builder responsible

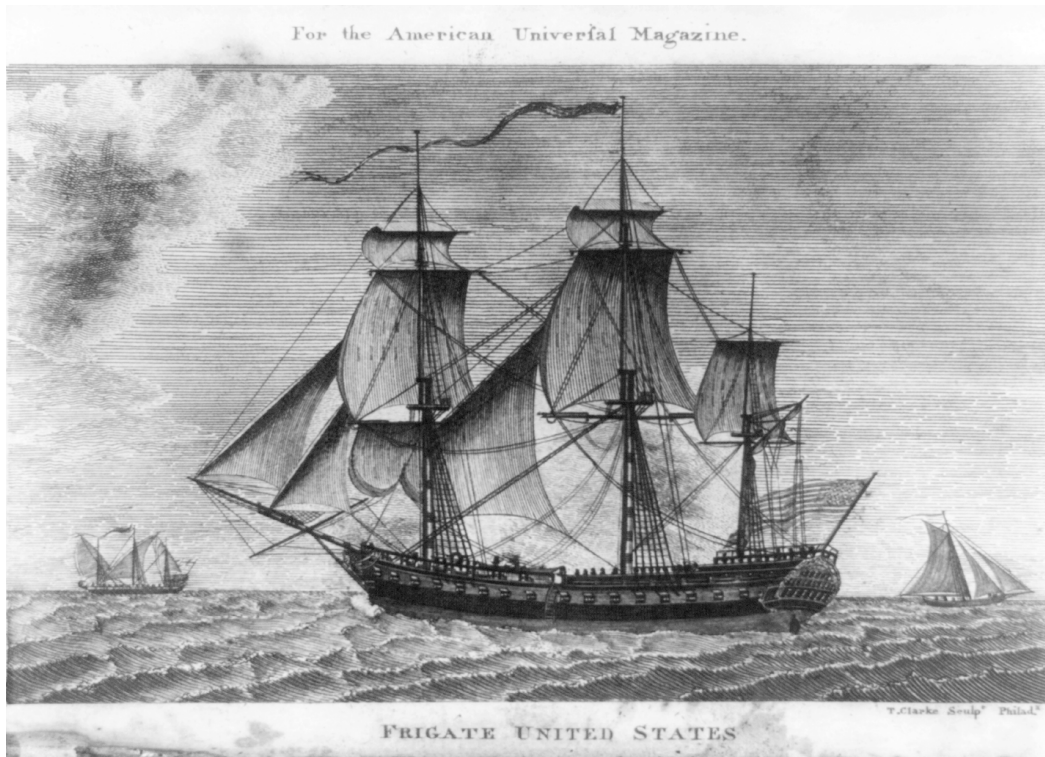


Figure 9 (left). The frigate United States, one of the three frigates Thomas Passmore supplied with tinware. The United States was one of the original six frigates that formed the basis of the US Navy in the 1790s. This is the earliest known image of the ship, published in the American Universal Magazine in 1797. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, LC-USZ62-109. F

Figure 10 (below). A circa 1803 watercolor of the Constitution, one of the three frigates Thomas Passmore supplied with tinware. The Constitution was one of the original six frigates that formed the basis of the United States Navy in the 1790s. This watercolor is attributed to Michele Felice Corné and is the earliest known depiction of the vessel. NAVY ART COLLECTION.

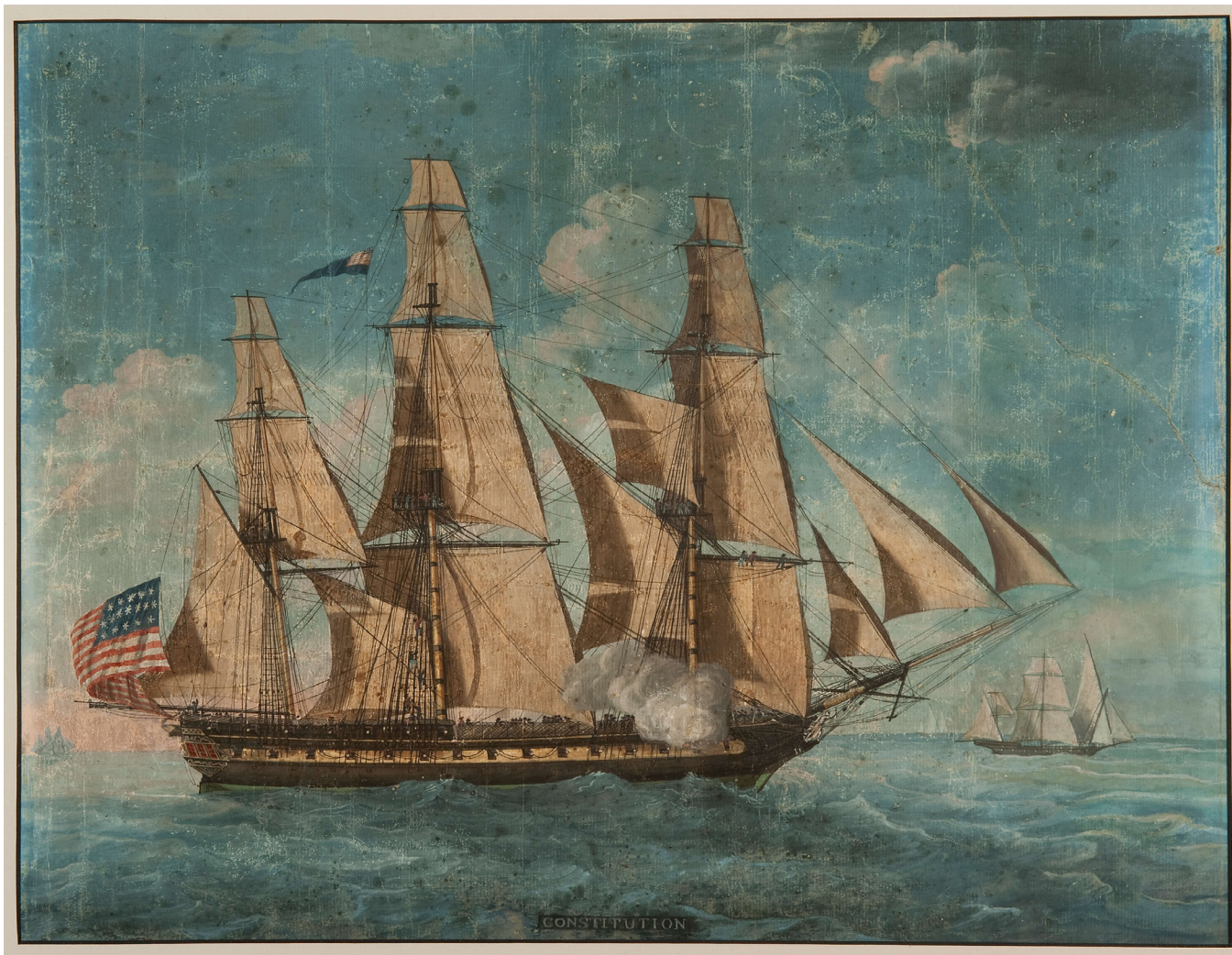




Figure 11. Map of Passmore's America, the United States in 1794. ROBERT WILKINSON, "A MAP OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WITH PART OF THE ADJOINING PROVINCES FROM THE LATEST AUTHORITIES," <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/80397>, COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR.

for the design and construction of the first six naval frigates of the U.S. Navy. While Passmore's records do not list what "sundry" tin goods were supplied to the two frigates, we do have a record of the complement of tin items on board the frigate *United States*, which survives in the records of the U.S. War Department. These tin goods included twenty-four sailor's pots, twenty-four riveted pint cups, four camp kettles, four tin tea pots, two tin cannisters, four sconces, seven speaking trumpets, twenty-four tin lanterns, two basins, two pudding pans, seven funnels, two flour boxes, two pepper boxes, one cheese toaster, two soup ladles, one colander, two gallon measures, two half-gallon measures, two quart measures, two pint measures, two half-pint measures, and two gill measures.⁵¹

Selling Tinware to the Hinterland

With his first newspaper advertisement, Passmore declared that "orders from any part of the United States duly attended to and goods packed up with punctuality

and dispatch and executed as if the parties were present."⁵² True to his word, Passmore sold larger quantities of tinware to several buyers in outlying areas, some of which would have been considered remote for the time. His first long-distance customer was a John B. Pollock, who lived in Milford, Sussex County, Delaware, in the central part of the state. In late April 1793, Pollock ordered a range of household tinware, totaling more than £5 in value.⁵³ In June 1793, Passmore received an order for tinware totaling nearly £24 from a John Sparhawk, then living in Alexandria, Virginia. This was likely a commercial order, as it included large quantities of single items; for example, Sparhawk ordered four dozen pepper boxes.⁵⁴

Passmore also sent several orders to commercial customers on the Kentucky and Tennessee frontier (see Figure 11). Kentucky became a state the year Passmore opened his business in Philadelphia (1792), and Tennessee became a state only in 1796. Sparsely populated and poorly connected to the coastal states, shipping tinware to these areas was challenging.⁵⁵ In the mid-1790s, an order sent to



Figure 12. Part of a stereograph from circa 1865. The building that housed Thomas Passmore's second tin manufactory (from 1796 to 1804) is the brick building at right, No. 13 N. Seventh Street, Philadelphia. The building no longer exists. LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA.

Danville, Kentucky, or Knoxville, in the Western Territory (later Tennessee), for example, involved shipping the tinware overland by wagon (in hogshead casks filled with straw) from Philadelphia down into Virginia along the Great Valley Road, connecting with the Wilderness Road in southeastern Virginia, and taking the latter route through the Cumberland Gap, into central Kentucky, or down into what became Tennessee. Even after the improvements to the Wilderness Road announced in newspapers in 1796, the route was still arduous and time-consuming.⁵⁶

The Journeymen and the “Factory”

One of the other things that made Thomas Passmore different from many other tinsmiths was his relatively quick reliance on journeymen after starting his business. In 1795,

between April 21 and May 15, Passmore, seeking to expand his tinsmithing business dramatically, placed thrice-weekly advertisements in one of the local Philadelphia newspapers, announcing that he was seeking a dozen journeymen tinplate workers and promising that “Good wages will be given to those who are proficient in their business, either by the month or piece-work.” He also sought some apprentices to work in his tin business.⁵⁷ The advertised workplace was still his original tin manufactory location at 228 Market Street. Unfortunately, none of Passmore’s surviving records show if he hired that journeymen in the spring of 1795.

On September 3, 1796, Passmore placed another series of advertisements, twice weekly, this time calling for twenty journeymen tinplate workers, to begin

their work in three weeks at his “new manufactory on north Seventh street, between Market and Arch streets.” The advertisement ran twenty-three times between September 3 and December 6 and helps us understand the changes taking place in his business. His original location, at 228 Market Street, was clearly too small for his growing operation, so he expanded into another building just one-half block to the north. Passmore’s manufactory on North Seventh Street, described as “new” in 1804, was a three-story brick building measuring 32 feet wide by 20 feet deep.⁵⁸ With more than 1,900 square feet of floor space overall (640 square feet on each of the three floors), it enabled him to produce even more tinware and expand the range of items he offered for sale (Figure 12).⁵⁹

Eager to make the work more appealing, Passmore

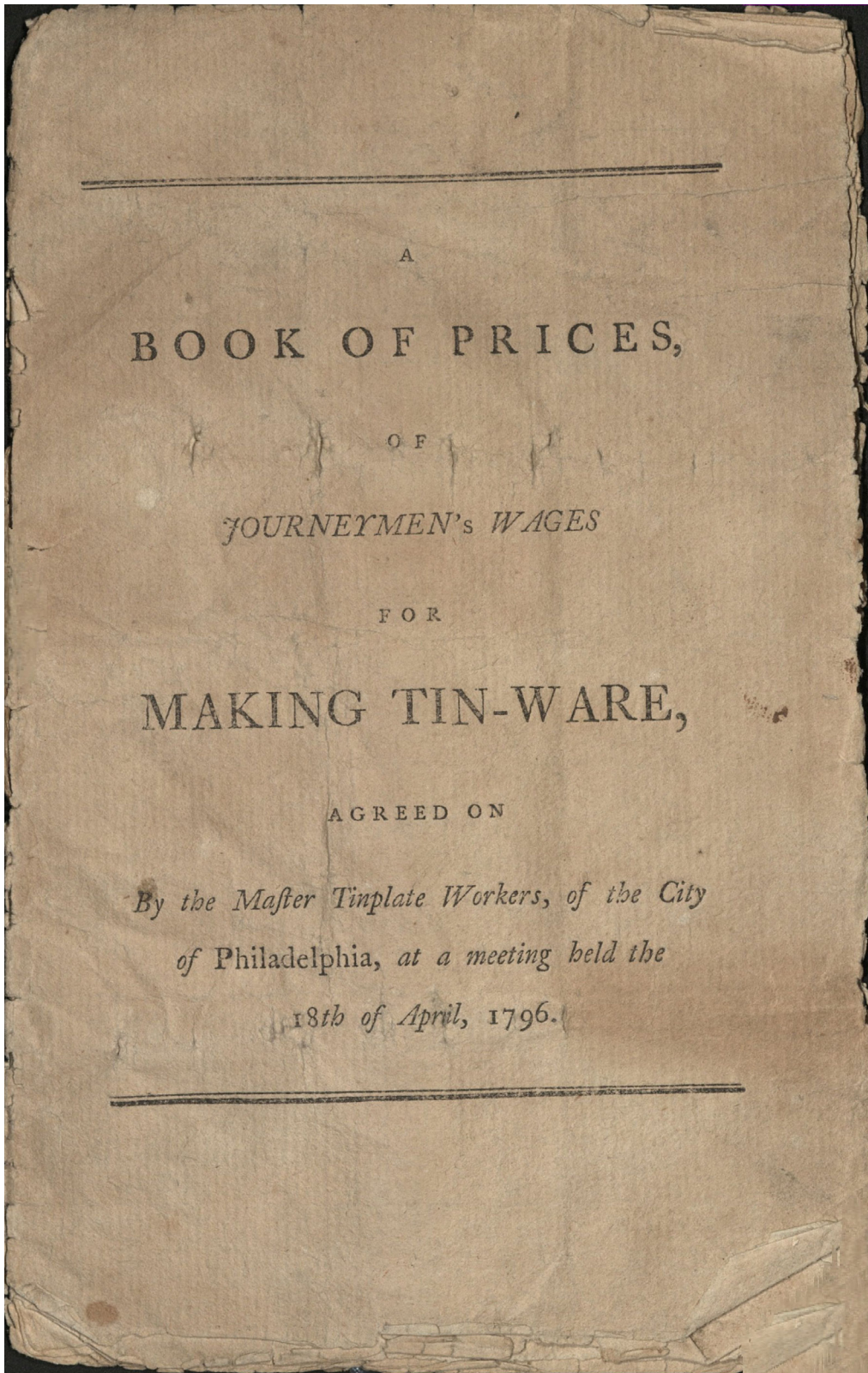


Figure 13a. Front cover of the 1796 Book of Prices, of Journeymen's Wages for Making Tin-Ware. The terms of payment for piece-work delineated in the book were agreed to by the 10 master tinsmiths in Philadelphia, who listed their names on the back cover. WINTERTHUR LIBRARY: PRINTED BOOK AND PERIODICAL COLLECTION.

tried a different approach in his new advertisements—he offered journeymen a chance to earn a higher rate of pay if they committed to a full year in his employ. Those who did so could expect twelve shillings per day. For less

than a full-year commitment, Passmore offered eleven shillings, three pence per day. In either case, the journeymen could choose to do piece-work where Passmore paid them by the number of tinware items completed versus a fixed daily rate of pay.⁶⁰ While piece-work rates of pay were often associated with the newest workers, more skilled journeymen might have found the piece-work rate more advantageous as the more items they could produce in a fixed period of time, the more they could earn. For example, Thomas Loudon, one of the most productive of Passmore's journeymen, made two dozen tin oil pots in a single day on July 13, 1797, for which he was paid seventeen shillings, five more shillings for a day's work than he would have made had he been paid at the normal maximum daily rate of pay (twelve shillings).⁶¹ While they may seem generous compared to what other workers were making at the time, these higher rates of pay for journeymen tinsmiths were partly a product of labor unrest in the capital city over a period of years. In the mid-1790s, journeymen in other vocations in Philadelphia, like printing and cabinetmaking, had begun to organize and press their masters for higher and set rates of pay for piece-work, so the publication of a book of tinware prices and journeymen's wages for piece-work that was established by agreement among ten master

tinsmiths in Philadelphia in April 1796 should be seen in that context (Figures 13A and 13B).⁶²

The surviving records do not elucidate what specific work or contractual arrangements Passmore made with

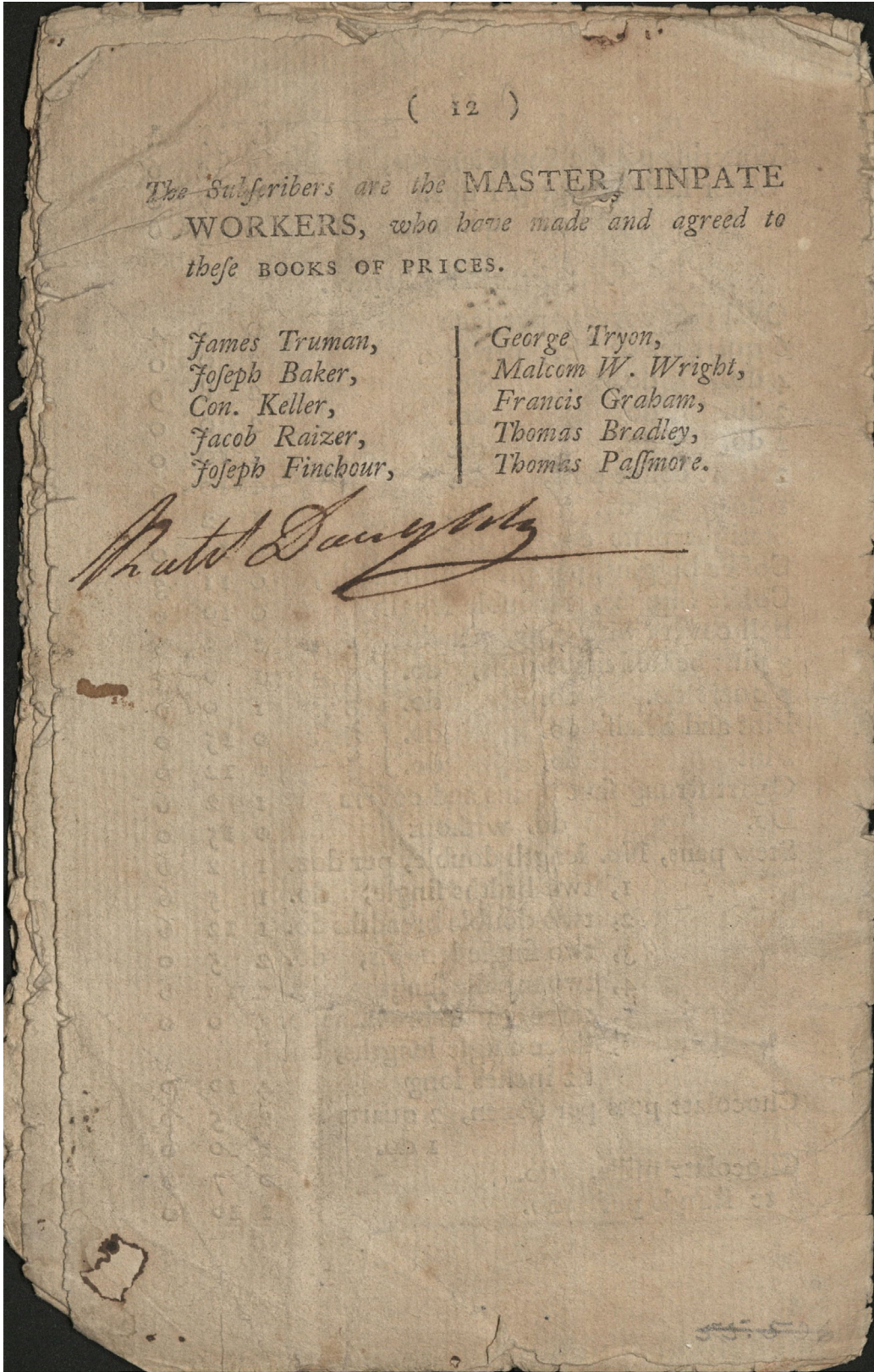


Figure 13b. Back cover of the 1796 Book of Prices, of Journeymen's Wages for Making Tin-Ware. WINTERTHUR LIBRARY: PRINTED BOOK AND PERIODICAL COLLECTION.

any of his journeymen, but they do show that by the end of January 1797, he had ten journeymen in his employ, as their names all appear in Volume 21 of the Passmore business records, along with details of the tin items they produced. The ten men were (in the order in which they first appear in Vol. 21): Samuel Biggs, John (no surname

listed), Jeffrey (no surname listed), John Man, Thomas Louden, Thomas Cecil, Joshua Smith, William Casaday, Adam Peck, and John Stiff.

As evidenced by the 1797-1799 daybook and 1800-1802 journal, Passmore paid his men promptly after they completed a batch of work. In the earlier period, he

typically paid them the same day or the very next day, while in the later period, he paid them once a week. As noted in Vol. 21, for example, journeyman Adam Peck completed two dozen large sugar scoops on Oct. 4, 1797, and was paid £1-2-6 cash for that work the same day.⁶³ Evidently some of the journeymen wanted payment in dollars as opposed to pounds, as some of the notes about production mention the pay priced in dollars.

Most of the notations in the records are straightforward, indicating which journeyman made something and what it was. Sometimes, however, there are additional comments, such as this one from May 13, 1797:⁶⁴

Timothy Miller
By Making 61 pint funels [sic]
Badley made [sic]

Or this one from May 26, 1797:

William Casady
By Making 3 Portable Kitchens
3 dollars to be deducted for not finishing
them Compleate [sic]

The records are unclear about what the division of labor was between the named journeymen and the factory, which produced large quantities of tinware. Factory production was itemized separately in the 1797-1799 daybook, but no specific journeymen were associated with that work. The notation simply says “Factory” and then the items

produced appear just below. Looking at the broad sweep of the factory’s production, however, we can see that most of the emphasis there was on producing larger and often, more expensive items, like portable kitchens (which varied in cost from \$35-\$50 each), roasters (or ‘tin kitchens’), and bulky items like rain gutter and downspout work (known as ‘house pipe’ at the time).⁶⁵ Several unanswered questions remain. Did the named journeymen also work in the factory or did others work there? If the journeymen also worked in the factory, why was their labor and pay noted in detail in the records, but factory production was noted in an anonymous aggregate? Was a division of labor imposed on the workers in the manufactory—each one making separate parts of a whole—or were they tasked with making a single product from beginning to end? According to a list of documents created by Passmore’s lawyer, there were at one time two more specific volumes related to the manufactory—a “manufactory book” and a “manufactory daybook”—these volumes might have shed more light on the inner workings of Passmore’s manufactory but unfortunately, they are now apparently lost to history.⁶⁶

Many of Passmore’s journeymen stayed working for him for several years. Seven of the original ten men who started as journeymen in January 1797 were still working for him in late 1801, when the business records recording journeymen pay stop. Most of his journeymen worked continuously during that time, but some show gaps in

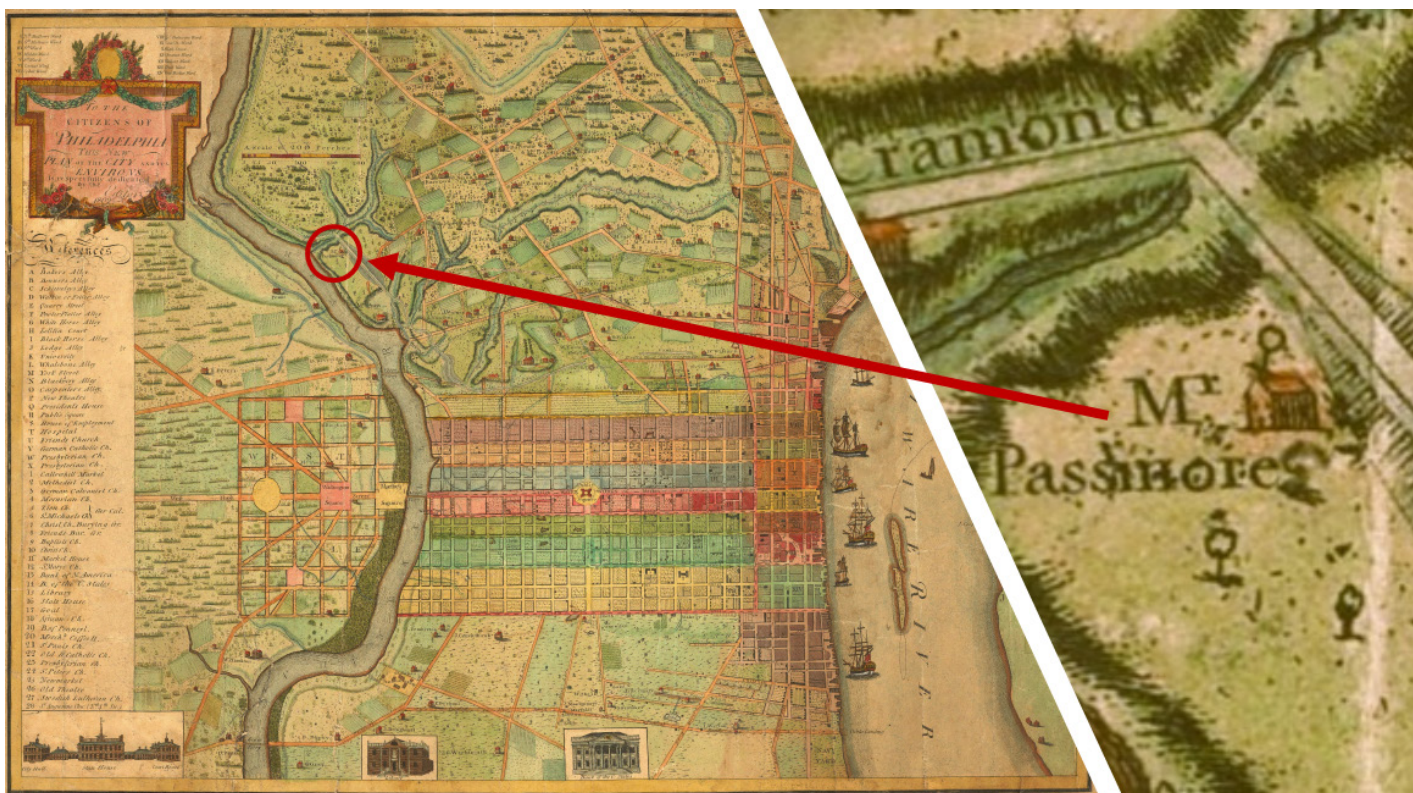


Figure 14. 1802 Charles Varle map of Philadelphia, showing the location of Thomas Passmore’s country house, Mount Sidney. DAVID RUMSEY MAP COLLECTION, DAVID RUMSEY MAP CENTER, STANFORD LIBRARIES.

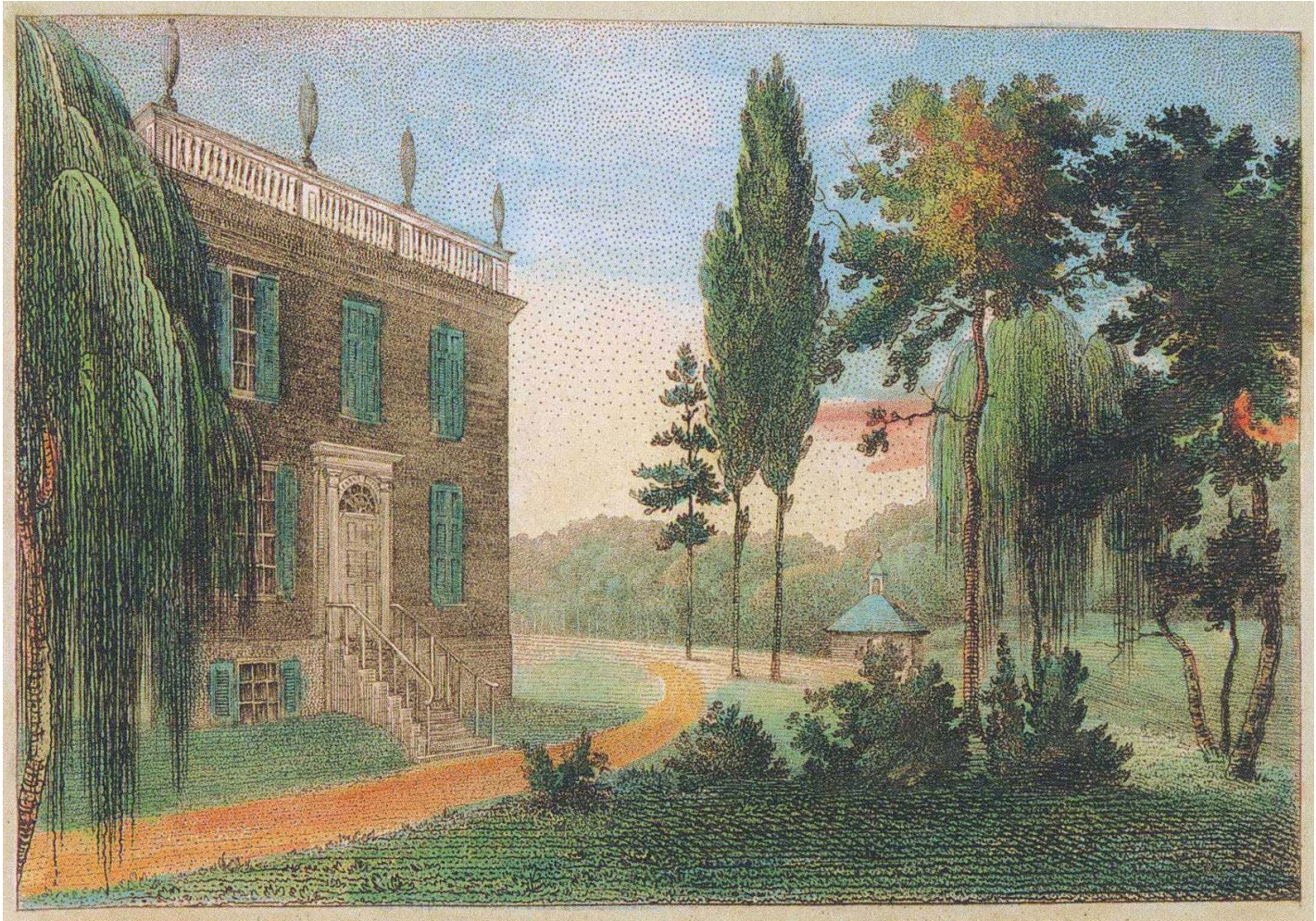


Figure 15. Thomas Passmore's country home, "Mount Sidney," located to the west of Philadelphia (see 1802 Charles Varle map and inset in Figure 14). The engraving was done by William Birch. LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA.

their employment. Adam Peck, for example, worked three days in January 1797 and then not again until August that year; however, he worked for Passmore continuously after that. Journeymen John Stiff had a similar experience. Interestingly, among the men Thomas Passmore employed was his younger brother, John, who began work in October 1797.⁶⁷

Passmore's Business Expands

By the end of 1797, Passmore's tin business had become so large that he was essentially only the manager of his operation, with journeymen tinsmiths responsible for making all the tinware produced and sold. By the following year, he was also importing japanned tinware from Great Britain, as he was not yet capable of producing those items within his own business. Japanning, the coating of tinplate with asphaltum followed by a baked-on, high-gloss varnish, was designed to mimic the lacquerware common in Japanese woodworking. Britain was a major center for japanned tinware, and Passmore cultivated business relationships with suppliers there to provide him with products he could sell in Philadelphia.⁶⁸

In 1800, Passmore recruited a London-based japanner to work for him. He was apparently "a very fine hand at the business" but died in early January 1801.⁶⁹ Passmore then attempted to recruit two more English japanners through the good offices of Lees & Rundle, merchants and brokers in Liverpool. The letter in which Passmore solicits the two japanners is particularly interesting because he mentioned that he had recently gone to "great expense in putting up buildings for the purpose of carrying on the Japanning Business."⁷⁰ Whether Passmore was successful in recruiting two japanners is unclear from the surviving records, but he did continue to import japanned tinware from England.⁷¹

The Philadelphia directories give some indication of how his business was shifting focus over time. In 1796, he was still listed as a "tinman" in the directory. In 1797, he was listed as a "tin manufacturer."⁷² Passmore's newspaper advertisements also illustrate that shift. By 1799, Passmore had become the quintessential late eighteenth-century "merchant-manufacturer," someone who came from an artisanal background, but who became primarily a merchant of wares and thence to manufacturing

(directing the labor of others). In July that year, he shifted his business location a few doors to the east to 215 Market Street, presumably because the business had outgrown the original location at 228 Market Street. He had also by this time purchased a country home, called Mount Sidney, in the western hinterlands of Philadelphia, northwest of where the Philadelphia Museum of Art is today.⁷³ The brick, two-story house, 45 by 27 feet in size, was later described as “furnished in the modern fashion and built of the best materials.” The property included a coach house with space for four horses, an icehouse, and “an elegant garden laid out in handsome stile [sic], and in high state of cultivation” (Figures 14 and 15).⁷⁴

Another dramatic change in Passmore’s business occurred in late 1799, when he became co-owner of a merchant ship, the *Amity*, to facilitate his overseas transactions, primarily bringing goods from Bristol, England. He also offered space on the vessel for passengers who might wish to travel to England.⁷⁵ By March 10, 1800, he was the sole owner of the ship.⁷⁶

Bankruptcy

Passmore bought a second ship, the brig *Minerva*, in 1801. Everything appeared to be going well for Passmore at this point, until the *Minerva*, on its way to Bristol, England at the end of September that year, sprang a leak and began to take on water. The captain of the *Minerva* was able to get the ship as far as Shelburne, Nova Scotia, but it needed significant repairs, which were difficult to effect in so small a place. In the end, the ship was declared a total loss as it would have cost more to repair it than the ship itself was worth. The ship was insured, and Passmore moved quickly to collect from the insurers. Multiple insurers were involved, and all agreed to pay except one, Pettit & Bayard, who claimed the ship was already damaged before it left port, so the insurance claim was forfeit. Passmore sued Pettit & Bayard to get them to pay the claim and the court-appointed referees found in his favor. While the other insurers at that point paid Passmore, Andrew Bayard still refused to pay and tried to petition the court for an appeal. The window of time for an appeal had lapsed, however, but the effect of the delay in the nearly \$500 payment from Bayard frustrated and angered Passmore and prompted him to post a notice in a local coffee house that accused Pettit & Bayard of being “quibbling underwriters” and of attempting to get the other underwriters to stop their payments to him. The notice went on to accuse Andrew Bayard of being “a liar, a rascal, and a coward.” The only person who apparently saw the notice was the coffee-housekeeper, who promptly took it down and delivered it to Bayard, who would not otherwise have known about the document and its contents.⁷⁷

Bayard promptly appealed to the court to find Passmore in contempt because of the libel. Even though the libel in question was not against the justices, but rather against Bayard himself, and should have been dealt with as a separate civil matter, the court subsequently ordered Passmore to apologize to Bayard, and when he refused, ordered the sheriff to arrest him on a count of contempt of court. On December 28, 1802, he was arrested, fined \$50, and jailed in the debtor’s apartment of the local jailhouse for thirty days. The effect of his jailing wreaked havoc on his business. Because he was unable to take care of the detailed day-to-day work from his cell, much of which dealt with finance, his business collapsed. Rather than wait for him to sort out a possible solution, some of his creditors filed a petition in federal court to start bankruptcy proceedings against Passmore. A judge appointed a commission to begin those proceedings. At the time, bankruptcies involving merchants and traders were covered by the federal Bankruptcy Act of 1800. Under the act, creditors initiated bankruptcies, not the debtor, so Passmore had no control over the situation.⁷⁸

What followed was a nearly two-year personal struggle for Passmore as the sheriff took everything Passmore owned and auctioned it off to pay his creditors. He lost his country home, Mount Sidney, and all of its contents, including personal possessions, all of the tinware stock he had on his personal property, his phaeton (a type of horse-drawn carriage) and eventually, the building housing the tin manufactory on North Seventh Street.⁷⁹ The federal bankruptcy law allowed the bankruptee to keep some of his property, which was ostensibly the tools of his trade, as they were not mentioned as auction items in any of the documents.

If there was anything good to come from Passmore’s bankruptcy, it was that he was compelled to turn over business records to his attorney. From the list his attorney compiled at the time, we know that he turned over many more documents than survived, so whether he later retrieved some of them is unknown, but the fact remains that some of the documents survived 226 years indirectly because of Passmore’s bankruptcy and the Cadwalader family’s presence of mind to retain them until they were donated to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania starting in 1947.⁸⁰

Later Incarnations

Passmore proved a resilient businessman. Although his bankruptcy destroyed the business he had built up over the past decade, once that ordeal was over, he moved to reestablish himself as a tin manufacturer in Philadelphia. By June 1804, he had moved into new premises at 172 Market Street, which had been occupied until recently by Denniston & Wray, ironmongers, once again advertising

his tin manufactory, now under the name “Passmore & Co.”⁸¹ In November that year, he advertised that he had acquired “a patent right of Messrs. Whiting and Parson’s machine for manufacturing Tin Ware” and noted the new speed with which his manufactory could produce tin goods.⁸² With this advertisement, Passmore shows that he was an early adopter of the new machinery of tinsmithing. Invented by Calvin Whiting, of Dedham, Massachusetts, this new tin machinery was officially patented on April 14, 1804. Unfortunately, the original patent documents were destroyed in a U.S. Patent Office fire in 1836, but we know that it took many years before these machines were widely adopted. Interestingly, Passmore not only adopted the machines for use in his own manufactory, but also helped distribute the machines to buyers in other states, except for Pennsylvania, perhaps to keep his competitors in the state from having that advantage.⁸³

We have few details about Passmore’s business in the post-1802 period, apart from newspaper advertisements, because his business records for that period have not survived. He likely continued to employ journeymen tinsmiths in his manufactory. City directories tell us that he continued in the tinware trade for the next seven years. At one point in 1808, he had a German indentured servant named Caspar Pickle, who ran away. Passmore took out an advertisement in the newspaper, offering a \$30 reward for his return, noting that “he speaks English, but indifferently, and is a good Tin plate worker.”⁸⁴ We do not know if he returned.

For reasons that are unclear, Thomas Passmore ceased being a tinsmith sometime in early 1809. On March 14th that year, he was appointed by the governor of Pennsylvania to be an auctioneer for the city of Philadelphia.⁸⁵ By the end of that week, he had opened a new office on South Front Street and announced publicly that he was ready to assume his duties as an auctioneer. Passmore continued in that position until his death on May 2, 1824 at age 50.⁸⁷

Acknowledgments

Historical research of this sort cannot be completed without the kind assistance of others. I’d like to acknowledge the following individuals who helped make this research possible: the late William McMillen, master tinsmith at Historic Eastfield Village in New York, for training me in historical tinsmithing, being a most excellent mentor and friend, and for his enthusiasm for this project, including writing a letter of reference; John Verrill, executive director of the Early American Industries Association (EAIA), for encouraging me to apply for an EAIA research grant; Heidi Campbell-Shoaf and the EAIA grants committee for funding my project; Steve Smith, Director of Research Services at

the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), Briana Giasullo, Access Services Librarian at HSP, and the many members of the HSP Reading Room staff that facilitated my research there. I also wish to thank the American Antiquarian Society, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, and the Winterthur Museum, Library & Garden for providing four of the illustrations (and permissions to use them) for this article. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Professor Scott Gordon, Andrew W. Mellon Chair at Lehigh University, who generously diverted time from his own research to take some initial photographs of the Thomas Passmore records, so I’d have a better idea of what to expect when I arrived at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Finally, I want to thank my family for their support and patience over the past year as I traveled and conducted the research for this project.

Notes

1. In the shorthand of the time, a “tin manufactory” in the United States was a place at which tin goods were made, not a place at which tin or tinplate was produced.
2. *A Book of Prices of Journeymen’s Wages for Making Tin-ware: Agreed on by the Master Tinplate Workers, of the City of Philadelphia, at a meeting held the 18th of April, 1796* (Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library).
3. Donald D. Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: With Related Documents, 1783–1854* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1962), 79.
4. “Memorandum Books, 1799,” *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Second Series, Jefferson’s Memorandum Books, vol. 2, ed. James A. Bear, Jr. and Lucia C. Stanton, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 996–1012.
5. “Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Cooper, 2 April 1819,” *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 14, 1 February to 31 August 1819, ed. J. Jefferson Looney (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 191–192.
6. *Philadelphia and its Manufactures: A Hand-book Exhibiting the Development, Variety, and Statistics of the Manufacturing Industry of Philadelphia in 1857* (Philadelphia: Edward Young, 1859), 417.
7. Henry Kauffman, *Metalworking Trades in Early America*. (1966; repr. Mendham, NJ: Astragal Press, 1995), 142.
8. Margaret Coffin, *The History and Folklore of American Country Tinware* (New York: Galahad Books, 1968), 163.
9. Thomas Passmore, Volumes 19–25 and Folders 7–10, Cadwalader Family Papers, Collection 1454, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
10. The original patent document is in the Smithsonian Institution library and is available online at <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/author/passmore-thomas>. This patent document was not available online until I requested the Smithsonian Institution to scan it.
11. Thomas Passmore, Receipt No. 2, Records of the Office of

- the Quartermaster General, 1774-1985, RG92, Box 560A, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
12. The needlework is mentioned as an acquisition of the Virginia Historical Society in their Annual Report for 1982. Andrew Talkov, senior curator of Curatorial Affairs at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, was kind enough to provide me with photographs of the front and back of this framed piece of needlework. Email communication with author, dated March 9, 2020.
 13. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 23, 1794, p. 3, col. 3.
 14. See *The Oracle of the Day* (Portsmouth, New Ham), May 13, 1794, p. 2, col. 3.
 15. "New Hampshire, Marriage and Divorce Records, 1659-1947." Online index and digital images. New England Historical Genealogical Society. Citing New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Records, Concord, New Hampshire. Accessed on 1/17/2023 through Ancestry.com.
 16. *Fowle's New-Hampshire Gazette and The General Advertiser*, July 13, 1786, p. 4, col. 3.
 17. *First Census of the United States, 1790.*; Census Place: Portsmouth, Rockingham, New Hampshire; Series: M637, Roll 5; p. 202. Accessed through Ancestry.com on 1/17/2023.
 18. Probate Records, 1771-1969. New Hampshire. Probate Court (Rockingham County). Rockingham, New Hampshire. Accessed through Ancestry.com on 1/17/2023.
 19. Minutes of the January 4, 1799, meeting of the American Philosophical Society, published in *Medical Repository of Original Essays and Intelligence Relative to Physic, Surgery, Chemistry, and Natural History*, Vol. 2 (New York: Printed by T & J Swords, 1799), 336.
 20. U.S. Census Bureau, *Population of the 24 Urban Places, 1790*, accessed 1/17/2023, <https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/1998/demo/pop-twps0027/tab02.txt>.
 21. For an older, but still excellent summary of Philadelphia as the temporary capital of the United States, see Edward M. Riley, "Philadelphia, the Nation's Capital, 1790-1800," in *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (October 1953), 357-379.
 22. James Hardie, ed., *The Philadelphia Directory and Register, 1793* (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, Printers, 1793), 44, 59, 117, 121, 134, 147, and 151.
 23. The building must have been of relatively new construction as just two years earlier the location was referred to as one of a few lots owned by long-time Philadelphia resident Jacob Hiltzheimer. See entry for September 15, 1790, in Jacob Cox Parsons, ed. *Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: William Fell, 1893), 164.
 24. Thomas Passmore Daybook, 1792-1796, Vol. 20, p. 1, Cadwalader Family Papers, Collection 1454, Historical Society of Pennsylvania [hereafter Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP].
 25. Entry for July 13, 1792, Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP. Fraunces once owned the famed Fraunces Tavern in New York, which was a gathering place of notables during the War for Independence, including George Washington.
 26. I have been unable to identify this individual. He does not appear in any of the Philadelphia directories from the 1790s, nor has a newspaper search turned up an identification.
 27. For an older, but still useful account of the yellow fever outbreak of 1793, see J. H. Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead: The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949).
 28. Data compiled from pages 4-26 of the Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 29. See Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 30. Henry Biddle, ed., *Extracts from the Journal of Elizabeth Sandwich Drinker* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1889), 190.
 31. See J. H. Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead*, 45. A more recent, but briefer treatment can be seen in Eve Kornfeld, "Crisis in the Capital: The Cultural Significance of Philadelphia's Great Yellow Fever Epidemic." *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 51, no. 3 (1984): 189-205. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27772983>.
 32. Benjamin Rush, *An Account of the Bilious Remitting Yellow Fever, as it Appeared in the City of Philadelphia, in the Year 1793* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, printer, 1794), 129-130.
 33. See map of the 1793 epidemic, accessed 2/11/2023, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Yellow-Fever-1793-jpg.jpg>.
 34. "To George Washington from Samuel Fraunces, 23 October 1793," Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-14-02-0187>. Accessed 2/21/2023.
 35. See entry for July 26, 1793, in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 36. *The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*, November 29, 1793, p. 3, column 4.
 37. See Norie ad in *Fowle's New-Hampshire Gazette and The General Advertiser*, July 13, 1786, p. 4, col. 3.
 38. Data tabulated from Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 39. See *Porcupine's Gazette*, October 28, 1797, p. 4, col. 3.
 40. See Thomas Webster, *An Encyclopædia of Domestic Economy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1845), 233.
 41. See letter from Henry Knox, War Department, to Thomas Posey, April 10, 1793, in *Papers of the War Department, 1784-1800*, accessed 1/31/2023, <https://wardepartmentpapers.org/s/home/media/99097>.
 42. See entry for May 23, 1793 in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 43. See notation on Jan. 3, 1798 in Thomas Passmore Daybook,

- Vol. 21, HSP.
44. For a list of the businesses to whom Passmore extended credit, see the 'Bills Receivable' section of Thomas Passmore, Vol. 19, HSP.
 45. Data tallied from indexing the Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 46. See entry for September 3, 1794, Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 47. See entry on April 22, 1797 in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, HSP. For a good overview of the Algerine frigate, see William J. Prom, "The Seventh Frigate," *Naval History Magazine*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (August 2020), accessed 1/26/2023, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2020/august/seventh-frigate>.
 48. See entry for March 10, 1797, in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, HSP.
 49. See entry on Sept. 7, 1797, in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, HSP.
 50. See entry on November 8, 1797, in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, HSP.
 51. The tinware used on board the frigate United States is listed in a 10-page document titled "Sundries for the Frigate United States," accessed 1/31/2023, <https://wardepartmentpapers.org/s/home/item/63512>.
 52. See Passmore advertisement, *The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*, November 29, 1793, p. 3, col. 4.
 53. See entry on April 24, 1793, in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 54. See entry on June 20, 1793 in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 20, HSP.
 55. See Abraham Bradley's 1796 "Map of the United States exhibiting the post-roads, the situations, connections & distances of the post-offices, stage roads, counties, ports of entry and delivery for foreign vessels, and the principal rivers," Library of Congress, accessed 2/21/2023, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004633148/>. Accessed 2/21/2023.
 56. *Kentucky Gazette Extra*, October 15, 1796, 1.
 57. Passmore's first advertisement soliciting journeymen for his manufactory appears in the *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, April 21, 1795, p. 3, column 1. There is one mention of apprentices in the Passmore documents, but no specifics such as names, pay rates, or apprenticeship arrangements.
 58. See *Aurora General Advertiser*, September 22, 1804, p. 3, col. 4.
 59. According to the Philadelphia directories, Passmore's manufactory remained at this location until 1804.
 60. See Passmore's September 3, 1796, advertisement in the *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, p. 2, col. 2.
 61. See entry for July 17, 1797, in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, HSP.
 62. For a discussion of the labor issues in Philadelphia in the 1790s, see Sharon V. Salinger, "Artisans, Journeymen, and the Transformation of Labor in Late-Eighteenth Century Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Jan. 1983), 62-84. See also *A Book of Prices, of Journeyman's Wages for Making Tin-Ware Agreed on by the Master Tinplate Workers, of the City of Philadelphia, at a meeting held the 18th of April, 1796*, Winterthur.
 63. See entries for Oct. 4, 1797, in Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, HSP.
 64. Entry for May 13, 1797, Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, HSP.
 65. See Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, HSP.
 66. See list dated September 12, 1803, in Thomas Passmore Folder 9, Box 167, Cadwalader Family Papers, Collection 1454, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
 67. Information about journeymen gleaned from Thomas Passmore Daybook, Vol. 21, and from Thomas Passmore Journeymen's Book, 1800-1802, Vol. 22, HSP. See also letter from Garth Roebuck to Thomas Passmore, March [n.d.] 1802, Thomas Passmore Bankruptcy Papers, 1798-1805, Box 167, Folder 10, Cadwalader Family Papers, Collection 1454, HSP.
 68. See Passmore's advertisement of November 4, 1797, in *Porcupine's Gazette*, a Philadelphia newspaper.
 69. This was apparently a man named Richard Davison. He is the only journeyman listed in the Passmore Journeymen's Book (Vol. 22) that shows any japanned work. His last date of pay was December 20, 1800, and he doesn't appear in the book after that.
 70. See letter dated January 10, 1801, in Thomas Passmore Letter Book, Vol. 24, HSP.
 71. See letter dated June 19, 1801, in Thomas Passmore Letter Book, Vol. 23, HSP.
 72. See Philadelphia directories for 1796 and 1797, accessed 2/12/2023, <http://www.archive.org>.
 73. See J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, Vol. III (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co, 1884), 1866.
 74. See auction notice in *Aurora*, July 23, 1803, p. 1, col. 4. The house no longer exists.
 75. See newspaper advertisement of September 30, 1800, in *Gazette of the United States and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*, page 3, col. 5.
 76. See letter dated March 10, 1800, in Thomas Passmore Letter Book, Vol. 24, HSP.
 77. For details, see *Report of the trial and acquittal of Edward Shippen, Esquire, Chief Justice, and Jasper Yeates and Thomas Smith, Esquires, Assistant Justices, of the Supreme court of Pennsylvania, on an impeachment, before the Senate of the Commonwealth, January 1805*. (Lancaster, PA: 1805), accessed 2/14/2023, <http://www.archive.org>. This court case later led to an impeachment trial of the three Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justices, who the Pennsylvania Senate felt had overstepped their bounds in

jailing Thomas Passmore for contempt. The justices were later acquitted, but Passmore felt vindicated.

78. The entire contents of Thomas Passmore's bankruptcy case file (199 pages) has survived and is housed at the National Archives in Kansas City, Missouri. See U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Bankruptcy Act of 1800 Case Files, No. 169.
79. The details of Passmore's bankruptcy are contained in Thomas Passmore Folders 7-10 in Cadwalader Family Papers, Collection 1454, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Bankruptcy Act of 1800 Case Files, No. 169. The auction of the tin manufactory on North Seventh Street is detailed in a newspaper advertisement. See *Aurora General Advertiser*, September 22, 1804, p. 3, col. 3.
80. *Cadwalader Family Papers Finding Aid*, accessed 2/15/2023. Available online at Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
81. *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, June 29, 1804, p. 1, col. 4.
82. See *Aurora General Advertiser*, November 22, 1806, p. 1, col. 4.
83. See list of machines in use "according to Parsons' & Passmore's calculation, 1806" in the Calvin Whiting papers, Dedham Historical Society.
84. See *The Democratic Press*, April 5, 1808, p. 3, col. 2.
85. See *The Democratic Press*, March 14, 1809, page 4, col. 1.
86. See *The Aurora*, March 19, 1809, p. 4, col. 3.
87. See *The Aurora*, May 3, 1824, p. 2, col. 3. Passmore's wife, Elizabeth, predeceased him in 1823 at age 51. See *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, April 24, 1823, p. 3, col. 2. After a brief illness, his brother, John, died in April 1809, at age 34, just a few weeks after Thomas Passmore became an auctioneer. See *The Democratic Press*, May 2, 1809, p. 3, col. 1.

Author

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