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Appendix C

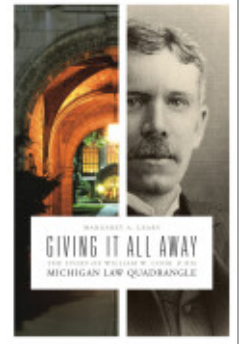
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APPENDIX C

A Description of William Cook's Manhattan Town House

THE LAYOUT AND CONTENTS of Cook's finished town house, reconstructed from the probate inventory after his death, speak volumes about his taste and lifestyle.¹ The town house had five floors, with a kitchen in the basement and a wine cellar in the subbasement. It was clearly the house of someone who liked to live and entertain graciously. The first floor had an entry hall, dining room, and well-stocked pantry. The furniture in the entry hall was walnut and described as being in the Louis XIV and Renaissance styles. The entry hall was at least eighteen by twenty-seven feet, for it held a tufted rug that was twelve by eighteen feet and a matching runner that was six by twenty-seven feet. Various chairs, settees, and stools offered seating for about sixteen, and the furniture included a cabinet and a four-foot table. Most of the upholstery was red velvet. Some of the pieces are noted as "worn" in the official probate contents list.

The dining room was also on the first floor, and its carpet was twenty-one by twenty-four feet. The table was set up to seat eight and there was a seven-foot buffet, a four-foot serving table, and two armchairs and six side chairs with leather backs and seats. Both of these first-floor rooms had fireplaces.

The pantry held Minton, Coalport, and Royal Doulton china in twelve place settings for multicourse meals (bouillon bowls, soup bowls, dinner or luncheon plates, dessert plates, bread plates, and salad plates). These dishes were all white with gold. A similar assortment of crystal glassware—for wine, water, liqueur, champagne, sherry, and port—also appeared on the contents list. It included cut-glass decanters; candlesticks, salt and pepper shakers, ashtrays, and a card receiver, all in sterling silver; and a set of three ruby glass bottles with the inscription "WWC 1903" on its silver base. Two English sterling silver coffee pots were engraved with "WWC Xmas 1906," and other sterling tableware, trays, and dishes were marked with a "C." Would Cook have bought these and engraved them for himself, or were they a gift, perhaps from silver king John Mackay? From whom might they have come otherwise? Unfortunately, we don't have the

answer to these questions. Some of the glasses and dishes are now with Cook's grandniece Ann, who also has some furniture from the Cooks' Hillsdale house.

The second floor, with a large central window and two side windows at the front, featured the library, where the furniture was mahogany and the upholstery green velvet or satin. The carpet was eighteen by eighteen feet; the room must have been larger, given the furniture it contained: nine chairs, two sofas, a bench, four tables, a desk, and a music cabinet. The ceiling displayed a crystal chandelier, and the walls featured four crystal wall brackets. The drapes were plum-colored cut velvet with fringe, and a brick fireplace had a green marble mantel. A portrait of Cook's father was on one wall, and over the fireplace was a painting of flowers. The tables must have been loaded with Cook's collection of Chinese porcelain: beakers, jars, vases with and without covers, an incense burner, and parakeets. The floor, too, was crowded and included marble busts of Voltaire and Rousseau (sitting on top of individual five-foot-high carved-and-gilt pedestals) and a pair of serpentine marble couchant lions, among other items.

The walls were Renaissance-style walnut paneling, with carved cornices and five built-in bookcases filled with the collected works by the authors of the day: Balzac, Hugo, Elliot, De Maupassant, Goethe, Carlyle, and others.² The contents of this library, books and all the rest, went mostly to Michigan Law. At the back of the second floor was a bedroom with mahogany furniture (a bed, dressers, tables, chests of drawers) and a bathroom.

The billiard room was on the front, windowed side of the third floor, and it held a convertible billiard and pool table and oak furniture; it also had a fireplace. The color scheme was blue, red, and gold, and the room had seating for eight. A pheasant and two wild geese were mounted in the closet. A bedroom on that floor was sparer, with mahogany furniture and red upholstery and drapes.

The third floor also included a cedar closet and a second closet with several tables, chairs, and vases. At the front of the fourth floor was another bedroom, opening out to the balcony with the Guastavino loggia, furnished with a mix of maple and mahogany furniture and two more closets. At the rear of the floor was a sitting room with seating, a desk, and a table, as well as another bedroom, with less furniture, all mahogany.

On the fifth floor were four maid's rooms, each with at least an iron bed, dresser, and side chair; some had additional chairs. The servants' sitting room was in the basement, along with the kitchen. The 1920 census reveals that Cook had four servants, all Irish-born women. Delia Cahill, twenty-nine, and Anna Conway, forty-five, were his cooks. Catherine Healy, twenty-seven, was his chambermaid, and her sister, Mary, twenty-eight, was his housekeeper.³

Other items in the inventory included a modest amount of jewelry: a pair of pearl studs, a scarf pin set with sapphires, and a platinum watch chain with a gold and jade charm. It also listed personal items such as pens and pencils, a cigar cutter, and a pearl and diamond dress set of cuff links and waistcoat buttons.

