

AMST 335
New England
Roger Williams University
2:00-3:20
CAS 228
Fall Semester, 2006

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Week of November 7, 2006

Note: Due to popular demand, Paper II will be due the 14th, not today

For *Tuesday, November 7*

Note this is a repeat of Friday's assignment. Because I took so much time teaching a few tricks available on Microsoft Word, I figure we're not going to get through everything planned for the week of October 31

Read, in *Nylander*,

Chapter V *Clean, Bright, and Comfortable: Dimensions of Housework* pp. 104 -142
Chapter VI: *Clean and Decent: A Family's Clothing* pp.143 -162

Chapter V reminds us of two related things. First, inefficient technologies are frequently dirty technologies, and second, nothing drives invention harder than necessity. Text and illustrations alike will provide evidence of both the desire for, and difficulty of attaining of, cleanliness. We'll also see how innovations begin to make the lives of New Englanders more pleasant. Be careful to recognize the truth in the old saying that we don't miss what we've never had.

Chapter VI: *Clean and Decent: A Family's Clothing* pp.143 -162

Chapter VI is about more than mere clothing. Of course, clothing isn't really "mere," anyhow. All one needs to do is think about how much time and effort we spend choosing our garments. This chapter marks the transition from a period in which clothes were almost entirely home products (homespun becomes a metaphor for everything from moral sayings to humor) to products made at least partly by machine in the great mills of towns like Lawrence and Lowell and Fall River. Be aware of who or what served as an "arbiter of taste". Note, too which occasions called for "special regalia". Finally, be aware that Nylander has chosen to consider *personal cleanliness* in this chapter, and not the preceding one.

For *Friday, November 10*,

Read, in *Nylander*,
Chapter VII, "Toward our Mutual Support" pp. 163 - 182
Chapter IX, *The Pleasure of Our Friends and Neighbors*, pp. 221- 261

Note that I've made a decision to take some liberties with the sequence of chapters in our text. We are not abandoning Chapter VIII: We'll combine it with chapter X the last class in November (if you look at the chapter titles, you'll see my logic at work.

With Chapter VII we return to a consideration of the village and the family as economic units. We've had a chance to think about this before through work in Wood, but here, we'll be able to concentrate on the artifacts that New Englanders' accumulated for their use... the hard goods, the textiles, the pottery, and the way that they accumulated these. If you've ever had a favorite mug or plate you will understand something of the importance of objects in defining who you are.

Chapter IX introduces is to the social side of life in New England...something we'll pursue when we return to Hansen the week following this. Recognize at least two distinct types of social activities...those which have a relationship to labor and those which seem to have been conducted for the sheer joy of getting together. Be aware of the kinds of amusements which New England Citizens practiced, and also be aware of the various rituals associated with these. The illustrations are going to be very important here... I wish they were better reproduced. Look at who gets involved with whom, and over what. Always bring the books with you. I've been a little lax in reminding you of this, but then, maybe I shouldn't *have* to remind you of this any longer.

Regarding a possible Field Trip to Old Sturbridge.

Is there any interest in this? It would be voluntary. I can get the trip subsidized to the extent of providing transportation and admissions, but students would be responsible for providing their own lunches. Looking at my calendar, the most feasible date seems to be Saturday November 18. I'll pass around a sign-up sheet on Tuesday. I'd need about ½ the class to make this worthwhile.