

## ***Objects in Thomas Dugan's 1827 Inventory***

December 3, 1827

**Personal Estate \$32.30**

**Real Estate \$300.00**

House, Barn, and seven acres of land

### **1 Cow \$12.00**

A cow eats grass in the meadow and hay that has been cut and stored in the barn. In return, the cow provides manure to fertilize tilled land; milk, often made into butter; and when slaughtered provides meat, fat to make soap and perhaps candles, and leather that could be sold to a tanner.

### **2 old Scythes & sneaths \$0.20**

A scythe is a sharp iron blade attached to a long wooden handle, called a sneath or snath, that is used for cutting grain or hay.

### **1 Grind Stone \$0.50**

Dull tools do not work well and maintaining sharp edges is a constant chore. A stone like this one would be mounted in a frame so it could be made to spin by pumping a treadle with the foot. To be sharpened, a tool would be held against the edge of the spinning wheel.

### **1 Dung Fork, hoe & shovel \$0.50**

A dung fork is for moving manure around the farmyard and is of stouter construction than a hay fork. A hoe is useful for weeding rows of produce and a shovel is for digging.

### **3 old axes \$1.00**

An axe gets constant use on a farm, particularly for cutting firewood, and requires sharpening. An iron axe head might get several wooden handles over time.

### **1 Augur, 2 Shaves, hoe & 2 Sickles & flail \$0.25**

An auger is for drilling holes in wood. Shaves, often called spokeshaves, are used to shape smaller pieces of wood, like the staves used to make buckets and barrels. Sickles are, like scythes, used to cut grain. Once cut, the grain is separated from the stem by being beaten on the barn floor with a flail.

### 1 Dish Kettle \$0.12 – 1 Small Dish Kettle **\$0.12**

The term “dish” indicates that these entries in the probate inventory refer to kettles with rounded bottoms.

### Large & Small iron pots **\$0.50**

Pots made of iron are used at the fire, as iron can take the heat without melting or cracking.

### 1 Tea Kettle **\$0.12**

Tea was still an imported luxury in 1827 and had to be purchased with cash earned from labor or by selling surplus crops, such as butter.

### 1 Hay Fork **\$0.12**

A hay fork is used to move cut hay or grain around and can be of lighter construction than a dung fork. Because hay is usually stored in lofts in the barn and must be pitched up there, hay forks are often called pitch forks.

### 2 Steel Traps **\$1.00**

Steel traps are used to trap small animals like woodchucks and muskrats. The carcasses might be used for food, but the pelts could be sold for cash to buy luxuries like tea.

### 1 Gun **\$1.50**

This gun—called a fowler—would have been useful for shooting waterfowl such as ducks and geese, as well as small mammals. The gun was recently acquired by the Concord Museum with the history that it had belonged to Thomas Dugan.

### 1 pail **\$0.20**

A “pail” is wider at the top than it is at the bottom. Easy to keep clean, a metal pail is useful at milking time. A similar vessel could be made of wood, either solid or coopered like a barrel.

### 1 Churn **\$0.25**

In the Dugan household, milk was made into butter, which, when salted, could keep far longer than milk. The lighter, denser, fattier cream was separated from the milk and beating it in the churn turned it to butter.

### 2 Cider barrells **\$0.50**

Barrels are made of wooden staves by a specialized craftsman called a cooper. The word “barrel” also refers to the capacity, which was normally 31½ gallons. In the

early 19<sup>th</sup> century most of New England's apples were crushed and pressed to make cider. Cider, lightly fermented, was nutritious and safer to drink than water. Thomas Dugan had a reputation for being a temperate drinker at a time when many of his neighbors were not. The barrel in the exhibition is a reproduction made by master cooper Ron Raiselis.

### **5 milk pans \$0.40**

At milking time, milk is quickly transferred from the pail to shallow metal or ceramic pans so that it can cool quickly.

### **1 pr dogs \$0.33**

The term "dogs" refers to fire dogs, or andirons, which hold the logs in a fireplace.

### **5 Chairs \$0.50**

Five chairs is a normal quantity for a smaller household of this period. Ten cents is a fairly low value for a chair. Dugan might have owned simple plank-seated chairs, or like many of his Concord neighbors, he might have been living with older, used furniture.

### **2 Tables \$0.50**

Most early 19<sup>th</sup>-century tables had leaves that could be folded up for use or down for storage out of the way.

### **1 Light Stand \$0.26**

Larger tables would be used for a variety of purposes during the day, but one variety of small table is consistently referred to in early records as a light stand. Easily moved around, their principal purpose in the home is to support a candle or lamp wherever light is needed.

### **Shovel & Tongs \$0.25**

In New England homes in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there was generally a fire burning in the hearth day and night, year-round, for use in cooking and other chores and to heat the home.

### **1 Pr Bellows \$0.12**

Bellows help to get a fire started and are also useful in regulating the temperature of the fire, as when cooking.

### 1 old Pr dogs **\$0.12**

An old pair of fire dogs, or andirons, though worth only about one third as much as a newer pair, is still functional.

### 1 Bake Kettle **\$0.25**

A bake kettle is useful for baking breads and other dishes. To bake the dishes on an open fire, coals would be placed below the kettle and on top of the fireproof cover.

### 1 Pr Sad irons **\$0.50**

Clothing and bedding both require ironing after washing. Sad irons (“sad” means solid) are heated in the fire, a delicate matter that requires some skill to avoid both scorched hands and scorched linens.

### Lot crockery **\$1.00**

The term “crockery” is usually used to refer to earthenwares of various sorts. Earthenware is produced at a lower temperature than the more expensive porcelain or stoneware. Earthenware can be used with hot foods and drinks, like soup and tea.

### Glass ware **\$0.25**

Glass cannot withstand heat, so in households like the Dugans, it is most often used as vessels for cold drinks, like cider.

### Lot tin ware **\$0.25**

Tinware is useful for both hot and cold foods and beverages, but if put in the fire, its solder melts.

### 2 lamps **\$0.08**

In 1827, lamps were a common alternative to candles for lighting. Unlike the solid wax of candles, the fuel of lamps was liquid, and could be vegetable oil, whale oil, or even a melted animal fat like tallow.

### 1 Looking Glass **\$0.25**

The term “looking glass” means mirror. Mirrored glass was expensive to produce and the 25-cent value of Thomas Dugan’s looking glass suggests that it was not very large.

### 1 half Hh’s tub & wash tub **\$0.50**

The measurement “Half Hh’s” means half-hogshead, that is, a hogshead (63-gallon barrel) cut in half.

### **1 Chain \$0.25**

Making a chain is blacksmith's work; each link has to be forged closed. Chains had many uses on a farm like that owned by Thomas Dugan.

### **1 Frying pan \$0.12**

Like pots and kettles, frying pans are used in the fire and so are made of iron. A long handle helps keep the cook away from the fire.

### **1 Chest \$0.25**

A chest, like the one listed in Dugan's probate inventory, was used for storage, mainly of textiles, and usually had an undivided interior accessible through the lift lid. A chest might have one or two drawers, but a piece of furniture completely divided into drawers was referred to as a case of drawers, or "case draws," rather than as a chest.

### **1 Bed, bolsters, bedding & Stead \$5.00**

A bedstead and bedding was often the most expensive item of personal property in any estate; only Thomas Dugan's cow was worth more than his bed. "Bed" refers not to the frame, but to the featherbed—a bag of forty or fifty pounds of goose down. Bolsters are essentially long pillows that go at the head of the bed to support the pillows. Bedding refers to sheets and blankets, and "Stead" means bedstead, the frame that supports all the rest.

### **old Bedding \$1.00**

In 1827, textiles were expensive to buy and time consuming to make and retained some value even after a great deal of use.

### **Wearing apparel \$0.75**

A man's everyday clothing in 1827 included a coat, vest, breeches, stockings, and shirt. Shirts and stockings might be made at home, but coats were complicated and normally required the services of a tailor.

### **1 Beetle & 3 weges \$0.50**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the New England fireplace consumed a great deal of wood each year and the task of splitting it to a convenient size was never-ending. A beetle is a wooden sledge hammer that is used with wedges to split logs that have been sawn to length.