

## Weaving

An artisan weaver would teach his sons at least basic elements of the trade, although not all may have practiced the craft as adults. A young son might wind spools and bobbins, and, having mastered these easy chores, be allowed to throw the shuttle and weave plain cloth. When he was proficient and skilled enough, he would learn how to make a warp and dress the loom in order to produce a variety of patterned fabrics. At this stage, the young son became an important contributor to the family's cloth output and was allowed to retain some of his earnings. Until he reached the age of majority, he was legally obligated to provide his services to his father; after that, he could set up on his own.<sup>29</sup>

There was no hard and fast rule about which sons learned their fathers' trade or inherited his tools. In some instances, the oldest son received all the equipment; in others, the first two male offspring shared it.<sup>30</sup> If a father with young children died before training them in his craft, he might demand that an elder son teach the skills to his brothers, after which they would divide the weaving equipment among them. James Rogers of Goshen Township stipulated in his 1793 will that his son

David continue to live on the place with his mother and to have his diet as usual without expence to him for one year, he having the profits of his work in order that he may instruct his younger brother Mahlon in the Weaving business: and at the end of the year that he . . . shall have one loom, at his choice and one half the Gears, and . . . Mahlon to have the other Loom & the other half the Gears & to work with his mother till he is Twenty one.<sup>31</sup>