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Who Invented The Sash Window And What Is Its Origins - An Interesting Story

It is impossible to tell who invented the sash window and what is its origins. In French, a 'chassis' means a frame and sash derives from this word. They may have been created in Holland, as the window is in some Vermeer paintings. A 'Yorkshire Sash', a sash window that slid along the horizontal axis was used in England at around the same time.

The French have earlier examples of this horizontal window though. They later used a vertical sash kept open by a block that turned under the open window, they are also credited with the vertical mechanism of rope and weight. Mechanization in general kept pace with the new invention. Britain is renowned for appropriating culture, art and architecture that appealed to them when colonizing a country. Perhaps the Queen took the French master joiners home with her on her return to England.

While Thomas Kinwood, Sir Christopher Wren's best craftsman created the first instructions for its design and installed it in Whitehall Palace, Robert Hooke also used them in Ham House in 1670 and later at Kensington Palace and Hampton Court. Wren was a palace favourite and famous in his own right and thus a fashion was born. In the colonies and in Britain, sash windows were all the in thing.

A rainy climate meant that the possibility of circulating air while moderating the gap to an appropriate size to keep out rain was appreciated. Casement windows that were hinged were subject to warping and rotting, sash windows had a mechanism enclosed by the frame. In addition, gracefulness was enhanced by larger panes and fewer wood joints.

Originally sashes only had a lower section that opened. During the Georgian period when their use became ubiquitous, both windows were designed to move. Oak was most commonly used for the frame. As glass manufacture became more efficient, larger panes needed less wood to support them. The classic design of six panes over six, comes from this period.

Embellishments in various forms were introduced by Victorians who adored the sash. Sculptured stone graced the sashes grouped to form bay windows. A ground view of grandeur and perspective was created by smaller windows higher up. Rooms on the ground floor would have bigger windows to let in more light.

Casement windows, widely used until the early 1600's were replaced by sash windows until the early 1920's. A sash window was preferred and reigned supreme. After the First World War, master craftsmen were less affordable. Casement windows were again easier to mass produce in wood or metal in factories. Who invented the sash window and what is its origins remains lost in the distant past.

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