

Basic Detail Report



Title Chest-on-Chest

Date 1780-1800

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Primary Maker Samuel Loomis

Medium Cherry primary wood, eastern white pine, chestnut and sycamore

secondary wood, and brass hardware.

Description Cherry chest-on-chest with a swan's neck pediment in the

Chippendale, or rococo, style. The chest-on-chest has local characteristics

associated with Colchester style production, specifically the Samuel Loomis

group. The swan's neck pediment has a steep slope and a conforming roof, or

bonnet top, which is open at the center. Each upper end of the pediment

molding terminates in a sunburst rosette. At the top of the chest-on-chest, there

are three finials. The center finial, in the shape of a thistle, sits on a square plinth

above an inverted, stylized carved shell. The spiral-turned finial on each side

rests on a fluted, rectangular plinth. The upper case drawer arrangement

consists of three carved false drawer fronts forming the front of a single full-

width drawer, over four graduated, full-width drawers. The lower case drawer

arrangement consists of four full-width, graduated drawers. The front corner of

each case has a rope-twist column. The top case fits inside the mid-molding of

the lower case. Each ogee bracket foot has a deeply-scrolled knee bracket

return. Hardware includes one small brass knob at the center of the carving on

each false drawer front on the top drawer. All other drawers have a brass-lined

keyhole flanked by a ring-and-bail pull. Condition: The finials and hardware are

original. The bottom of most drawer sides has been repaired. A horizontal strip

of wood has been added at the top of each backboard; this is an early

restoration to compensate for shrinkage in the wood. Design and Construction

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Details: Carving and Design. A row of dentils, in the shape of an astragal flanked

by a fillet, is located above the deep cove molding on the pediment. Each

circular opening flanking the center plinth has a semi-circular notch

immediately below the applied rosette. The upper and lower sections of the

applied shell below the center plinth are carved with different designs: vertical

projecting ribs above, and a sunburst design below. Both fluted, rectangular,

side plinths are removeable and are attached to the case with a dowel back at

the interior corner of each plinth. The center false front of the top center drawer

has a recessed, carved shell with twenty-six wavy rays around a small sunburst,

over fourteen small, projecting rays; a punched sunburst decoration is located

at the end of each ray. The false front at each side of the top drawer has a

carved, recessed sunburst containing twenty-eight projecting rays; a punched

sunburst decoration is located inside each scallop at the edge of the sunburst.

Case Construction. The back of the bonnet top is cut straight across the center.

The backboard is horizontally oriented and slides into grooves in the sides of the

upper and lower case; the bonnet backboard rests on the top board of the upper

case. The columns are formed of three parts: a spool-turned capital, over a rope-

twist column, over a spool-turned base. The chest-on-chest rests on a three-

sided frame at the front and sides, which forms the base molding. The ogee

bracket feet are constructed of molded ogee facing applied to the supporting

frame and reinforced with glue blocks. The faces of each front foot are

dovetailed together; the dovetails are visible from the sides. Each foot has a

pronounced curve and a well-defined supporting pad. Both faces of each front

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foot, and the side face of each back foot, has a knee bracket return with a

distinctive inward-curving scroll, called a "Colchester curl." Drawer

Construction. Each drawer divider fits into an angled groove in the sides of the

column housing and is tenoned into the sides of the case. The drawer runners

are nailed to the sides of the case; the drawer guides are nailed to the drawer

runners. With the exception of the top drawer, the drawer fronts are lip-molded

and have ovolo, or thumbnail, molding on all four sides. The top drawer front is

solid, and the three false drawer fronts are applied to it. All the drawer sides

have a double astragal on top. The drawer bottoms fit into grooves in the front

and sides of the drawer and are nailed at the back. The dovetail pins are small

triangles; the dovetails at the back of the drawers are reversed.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 81 1/2 x 41 3/4

x 21 1/2in. (207 x 106 x 54.6cm)