

## Basic Detail Report



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## Title High Chest

Date 1765-1785

Primary Maker Epaphras Lord

Medium Cherry primary wood, eastern white pine secondary wood, brass

hardware

Description Cherry high chest with a swan's neck pediment in the Chippendale, or rococo, style. The high chest has local characteristics associated with Colchester style production, specifically the Lord 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 four-lobed pinwheel rosette. At the top of the high chest there are three spiral-turned finials. The center finial sits on a plinth above an inverted, projecting, stylized shell with vertical ribs. The side finials rest on fluted, rectangular plinths. The upper case drawer arrangement consists of three drawers in a line over four full-width graduated drawers. The top center drawer has a recessed carved shell; the top side drawers conform to the shape of the pediment. The lower case drawer arrangement consists of one full-width drawer over three drawers in a line. The center drawer has a shallow, recessed, carved shell, and it is slightly wider than the side drawers. A recessed area on the front skirt, below the carved shell, has horizontal ribs. The front skirt has a shaped lower edge with a cyma curve, or S-

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curve, and reverse cyma curve in the center. This pair is flanked by a quarter arch, a drop pendant (replaced), and a flat-head arch. Each side skirt has a shaped lower edge with a flat-head arch. The high chest has cabriole legs; the front legs each have a carved knee and a claw-and-ball foot, while the back legs each have a pad foot. Hardware on each full-width drawer consists of a pierced brass blind lock escutcheon in the center, flanked by a pierced brass escutcheon with a bail pull. Each shell-carved drawer has a small brass knob in the center of the shell. The side drawers in the upper and lower case each have a single pierced brass escutcheon with a bail pull. Condition: Some drawer runners in the upper case have been repaired. The lower edges of some drawer sides have been repaired. The drop pendants are replaced. The finials and hardware appear to be original. Design and Construction Details: Carving and Design. The applied rosettes are each carved with four curved, tear-shaped lobes. Between each lobe is an incised oval inside an abstract, incised triangle. Each circular opening flanking the center plinth has a semi-circular notch immediately beneath the rosette. The recessed shell on the top center drawer consists of eleven projecting rays around a small, abstract fan; the wide rays give the shell an undulating edge. The recessed shell on the bottom center drawer consists of twenty-five projecting rays, interrupted by a raised half circle, creating a double shell. Each ray in the outer shell has an incised medial line. The outermost edge of the double shell is scalloped and has punched decoration in the shape of circles and half-circles. The front knees have linear vines carved on the front that end in scrolls; the two front knee returns are also carved. The front legs each

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have web shaping that extends from just below the carving of the knee down to the foot; the claw surrounds a slightly flattened ball. Each rear pad foot has an ankle hock. Case Construction. The back of the bonnet curves down giving the upper backboard a saddle shape. The upper case backboard is horizontally oriented and slides into grooves in the sides of the case. The lower case is formed with mortise-and tenon construction that is secured with wooden pins. The knee bracket returns are applied over the skirt; all the knee brackets have a distinctive inward-curving curl, called a "Colchester curl." Drawer Construction. The upper case drawer dividers are visibly dovetailed into the case sides. The vertical partitions are also visibly dovetailed into the pediment above and the drawer divider below. The drawer runners for the full-width drawers fit into sliding dovetails that extend to the back of the case sides. The center drawer runners for the top three drawers are tenoned through the back of the case. The drawer guides are nailed down to these drawer runners. The lower case has a rail above the top drawer that is tenoned into the case sides. The drawer divider is visibly dovetailed into the leg posts. The vertical partitions are visibly dovetailed to the drawer divider above and the skirt below. The drawer runners at the sides and center are tenoned into the backboard; the drawer guides for the two center drawers are nailed down to the drawer runners. Each drawer front is solid, with a flat interior surface and a lip-molded edge with ovolo, or thumbnail, molding. The drawer sides are curved on top. The drawer bottoms slide into grooves in the front and sides of each drawer and are nailed at the back. Please see attached essay by Dr. Thomas P. Kugelman for more

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information about this piece.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 84 1/2 x 39 3/4

x 21in. (214.6 x 101 x 53.3cm)