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Title Chest-on-Chest

Date about 1784

Primary Maker Unknown

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Medium Mahogany primary wood, pine and tulip poplar secondary wood, brass hardware

Description Mahogany chest-on-chest with a swan's neck pediment and serpentine lower case, in the Chippendale, or rococo, style. The swan's neck pediment has a conforming roof, or bonnet top, which is open at the center. At the top of the chest-on-chest, there are three finials (replaced), each in the shape of a flame over an urn. The center finial sits on a small, fluted, rectangular plinth above a taller plinth with rounded edges. The side finials each sit on a fluted, rectangular plinth. The upper case drawer arrangement consists of three drawers in a line over four full-width, graduated drawers. The top center drawer is taller than the two side drawers, and has a carved shell. Each front corner of the upper case is canted and has a stop-fluted pilaster, or fluted flat column with reeding on the bottom half. The upper case fits inside the mid-molding of the lower case. The lower case front has a serpentine profile. The serpentine shaping consists of two recessed curves separated by a center projecting curve. The lower case drawer arrangement consists of four full-width, graduated drawers. Each ogee bracket foot has two exuberant curls on each knee bracket return. Hardware includes a small brass knob at the bottom center of the shell on the shell-carved drawer. Each top side drawer has a brass ring-and-bail pull. Each full-width drawer has an oval brass lock escutcheon in the center, flanked by a brass ring-and-bail pull. Condition: The finials are replaced. There is a scratch to the finish on the center of the second and third full-width drawer in the upper case. At least one of the corner blocks from the ogee bracket feet is

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replaced. The lower case drawer locks are missing, with the exception of the second drawer. The hardware appears to be original. Design and Construction Details: Carving. The carved shell on the top center drawer is shallow and has a scalloped edge. It consists of twenty-five projecting rays. Case Construction. The back of the bonnet top is cut straight across the center. The inside of the bonnet roof is lined with strips of newspaper from the 10 June 1784 edition of the Norwich Packet. The backboard is nailed into rabbets on the sides of the upper and lower case. The top and bottom of each pilaster is ornamented with a lamb's tongue stop. The base construction of the chest-on-chest consists of a three-sided frame that forms the base molding at the front and sides of the lower case, and ogee bracket feet constructed of molded ogee facing applied to supporting glue blocks. The knee bracket return on the front face of each front foot has carved cock beading at the edge. Drawer Construction. The drawer dividers and drawer runners fit into sliding dovetails in the case sides; the upper case drawer guides are glued to the drawer runners. The vertical partitions are each visibly dovetailed into the drawer divider below; they are nailed with a lap joint to the tympanum above. Drawer dividers behind the two vertical partitions are full height and full depth; these rest on drawer runners that are tenoned into the backboard. The lower case drawer dividers have extra wood added to the back, to extend the depth of the divider. Each drawer front has cock beading on each edge. The serpentine drawer fronts are each made from a solid piece of wood; the back of each drawer is flat. The drawer sides are rounded on top. The drawer bottoms fit into grooves in the front and sides of each drawer and are

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nailed at the back; the bottoms extend past the back of the drawer.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 89 x 43 3/8 x 22

5/8in. (226.1 x 110.2 x 57.5cm)