

Basic Detail Renort



Title High Chest

Date about 1769

Primary Maker Hannah Grant

Basic Detail Report

Medium Cherry primary wood, tulip poplar and oak secondary wood, brass

hardware

Description Cherry high chest with a swan's neck pediment in the Chippendale, or rococo, style. The pediment has a conforming roof, or bonnet top, which is open at the center. Each upper end of the pediment molding terminates in a pinwheel rosette. At the top of the high chest there are three three finials (replaced), each consisting of an abstract twisted flame over a small urn. The center finial sits on top of a curved plinth; the side finials sit on small rectangular plinths. The drawer arrangement of the upper case consists of a relatively narrow top drawer over four full-width, graduated drawers. The top drawer is flanked by a panel of carved wood, with the texture of basketweave, which conforms to the shape of the pediment. Each of the front corners of the top case have a fretted pilaster, or pierced flat column. The fretwork pattern consists of S-curves and C-curves, scrolls, and geometric spaces. The bottom of each pilaster is decorated with a carved fishscale pattern. The pilasters are pierced to reveal a narrow, removeable panel behind it. These panels are painted green on one side and painted red (now faded) on the other. The top case fits inside the mid-molding of the lower case. The lower case drawer arrangement consists of one full-width drawer over three equal-height drawers in a line; the lower center drawer has a carved shell on the front and is wider than the side drawers. The front skirt consists of three flathead arches separated by two hanging drop pendants (replaced). The middle of the skirt is recessed to match the curve of the carved shell in the drawer above. The side skirts each have one long flathead

Basic Detail Report

arch. The cabriole legs have carved knees and elongated claw-and-ball feet.

Hardware on each upper case drawer and on the top lower case drawer consists

of a brass-lined keyhole in the center flanked by a ring-and-bail pull. The shell-

carved drawer has a brass-lined keyhole in the top center, and a brass knob at

the bottom center of the shell. Each side drawer has a single ring-and-bail pull

below a brass-lined keyhole. There are two working keys. Condition: Repairs

have been made to the backboard and right side of the lower case. The wood

above the escutcheons on the top drawer and the fourth drawer in the upper

case has been repaired. Strips of wood have been added to the bottom of some

drawer sides. The surface has been cleaned and refinished. The finials, drop

pendants, and hardware are replaced. Design and Construction Details: Carving.

Each large, applied rosette consists of a four-lobed pinwheel; each pinwheel has

six graduated half-circles carved inside. The carved shell on the lower center

drawer consists of thirteen recessed rays; an arch of thirteen off-set lobes

adjoins the upper end. Each carved knee consists of a fishscale, or snakeskin,

panel flanked by two carved lines; there is a heart below the panel. The carved

knee returns consist of a C-curve with a scroll at the upper end. The back of the

knee on the rear legs is flush with the back of the leg post. Case Construction.

The back of the bonnet top is cut straight across the center; each interior side of

the bonnet top has a vertical support. The back of the bonnet top extends down

past the top of the upper case. The upper-case backboards are vertically

oriented and are nailed into rabbets in the case sides. The basketweave

decoration is carved on separate panels that are joined to the upper case. The

Basic Detail Report

painted panel behind the fretwork slides out of a slot in the top of the case, on

the inside corner of each side finial. The mid-molding is formed of two sections.

The top section consists of a molding strip that is nailed to the outside bottom

edge of the front and sides of the upper case. The front and sides of the lower

case each have a strip of wood applied lengthwise to the top edge. These strips

form the supports on which the upper case rests; the outside edges of these

strips form the bottom section of midmolding. The lower case has no top. The

lower case is formed with mortise-and-tenon construction. The interior

construction of the high chest has highly finished surfaces. Drawer Construction.

The upper case drawer dividers are tenoned into the case sides and have a notch

at each front corner to accommodate the pilaster. These drawer dividers are 6 1

/8 inches deep. The drawer runners are each tenoned into the drawer divider on

one end and into a piece of wood that is tenoned into the back of the case sides

on the other end. The drawer guides are nailed into the drawer runners. The

lower case drawer dividers and vertical partitions are tenoned into the case

sides. The top drawer has a medial drawer runner and a drawer runner at each

side. The drawer runners for the top drawer are dovetailed to the drawer divider;

the drawer runners for the lower drawers are dovetailed into the skirt. All drawer

runners at the sides of the case are nailed to the leg posts in the back. The center

drawer runners are tenoned into the backboard. All the drawer fronts are lip-

molded with ovolo, or thumbnail, molding on all four sides. The drawer sides are

rounded on top. The drawer bottoms fit into grooves in the front and sides of

each drawer and are nailed at the back. The dovetail pins extend past the back

Basic Detail Report

of the drawers to form a 1/8-inch stop; the dovetails in the back corners of each drawer are reversed. The center drawer in the lower case has an extra block of wood on the lower interior surface, probably to accommodate the hardware.

Please see attached essay by Dr. Thomas P. Kugelman for more information about this piece.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 85 x 42 1/2 x 20 5/8in. (215.9 x 108 x 52.4cm)