

Basic Detail Report

Title Tall Case Clock

Date 1735-1930

Primary Maker Unknown

Medium Case: Figured maple primary wood, chestnut secondary wood, brass.

Dial: Brass, paint. Works: Cast brass and steel.

Description Tall case clock in the Chippendale, or rococo, style, with a figured maple case, an arched pediment, a brass clock movement, and a brass dial that is engraved "Hosmer Hartford" (later addition). The tall case clock consists of three major components: the removable hood, the removable dial and clock works, and the clock case. The dial and works sit on a horizontal board at the top of the clock case; the pendulum and weights (all separated from the clock) that drive the works would be suspended in the trunk, or narrow body, of the case. The hood slides over the works and sits at the top of the case. At the top of the arched hood are three finials, each consisting of a flame over a ring. Each finial sits at the top of a fluted plinth. Between the center plinth and each side plinth is a panel of wood that conforms to the shape of the arched pediment. A similar panel with a shaped top edge is located above the projecting molding on each side of the hood. The top edge of each panel is shaped with a small, projecting triangle flanked by a curl, a recessed half circle, a small curl, and a large curl. The front of the hood has a glass door that is arched and recessed, with a small brass knob at the left side. The door is flanked by a free-standing column; each column has fluting that twists as it extends down the column.

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There are two projecting rings in the center of each column. The trunk of the clock case has deep cove, or recessed quarter-circle, molding at the top, and a tall, rectangular door with an arched top. The top of the door has a carved sunburst at the center, with twenty-one projecting rays around a small, carved, six-petal flower. The outer edge of the sunburst is scalloped. A four-petal flower is inlaid on the front of the door, just below the center. The door has ovolo, or thumbnail, molding around all four sides. The top of the base has shallow cove molding. The bottom of the base has base molding. The center of the front skirt has a pair of hanging scrolls. Each ogee bracket foot has a knee bracket return with a small spur; each foot projects beyond the front and sides of the case.

Construction Details: A single, vertically-oriented backboard with an arched top edge extends from the top of the hood down to the top of the base; below this is a separate pine backboard. The hood does not have a back; it slides over the clock works to rest on the cove molding at the top of the trunk. The hood is constructed of a three-part frame, with an arched top and two sides. The arched top consists of an arched panel of wood at the front and back; the conforming roof, or bonnet top, is nailed down to the top of the arched panels. All ornament is nailed or glued to the frame: the plinths, the solid panels, the arched projecting molding at the front, and the projecting molding at the sides. The shaped panels of wood at the top of the hood are held in place with glue blocks at the lower back edge. The sides of the hood attach to a horizontal, three-sided frame at the bottom of the hood. Each free-standing column is carved from a solid piece of wood, and each has a brass capital and base. Each column extends

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between the projecting molding at the top of the hood and the horizontal, three-sided frame at the bottom. The door of the hood is constructed of wooden rails that are tenoned and pinned at each corner. The door pivots on a pair of brass hinges at the top right and bottom right corner. The chestnut backboard is nailed into a rabbet on each back corner of the sides of the trunk. The clock works rest on a seat board, or horizontal board immediately behind the dial. The seat board rests on two vertically-oriented chestnut boards that are screwed to the interior of the sides of the trunk. The cove molding is nailed to the front and sides of the top and bottom of the trunk. The front of the trunk is constructed of a single board, with an opening for the door cut out of the center. The front is joined to the sides of the trunk with vertically-oriented glue blocks at the interior front corners. The door is constructed of a single board that is joined to the trunk with a pair of hinges at the right side; there is a brass lock escutcheon at the center left side of the door. The sides of the trunk extend down to the bottom of the base. The back board of the base is a single, horizontally-oriented board that extends past the sides of the trunk to the sides of the base; there is a gap on the interior edges of the base between the sides of the trunk and the sides of the base. The backboard, front, and sides of the base are joined together at the corners with dovetails. The bottom board of the base is nailed to the bottom sides of the trunk. The base molding is nailed to the front and sides of the base. Each ogee bracket foot is constructed of facing that is supported by a vertical, triangular glue block at the corner. Dial: The brass dial is square with an arched top. The center of the dial arch has a recessed, painted moon dial that is

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behind two engraved hemispheres. Above the moon dial are the Arabic numbers

one to twenty-nine and one half in intervals of five, with the final interval

shortened to accomodate the lunar calendar. The middle of the square dial

plate has an applied, engraved chapter ring, consisting of a ring of Roman

numerals, inside a ring of minute gradations, inside a ring of Arabic numbers

from one to sixty in increments of five. At the bottom of the chapter ring,

"Hosmer" (later addition) is engraved between the Arabic numbers "35" and

"30", and "Hartford" (later addition) is engraved between the Arabic numbers

"30" and "25". In the center of the chapter ring is an arbor, or axle, around which

the hour and minute hands pivot. To either side of the main arbor is a winding

arbor, to wind the clock. An applied seconds dial is located above the main

arbor, with a hand pivoting around the center. A recessed, square calendar dial

is located below the main arbor; a plate or wheel rotates behind a square

opening in the dial, indicating the date that is engraved on the plate. Cast brass

spandrels, or elaborate ornaments, are applied to each corner of the dial plate;

the spandrels consist of leafy C-scrolls and S-scrolls in a roughly triangular

shape. Clock Works Movement: weight powered Duration: eight day Materials:

brass (light gearing) Strike: English-style rack and snail Escapement: recoil The

false plate behind the dial is cut out of sheet metal. The works are accompanied

by two cylindrical cast weights and a pendulum; the pendulum bob has a brass

face. Condition: The eighteenth-century dial is married to an early-twentieth-

century movement; the engraved "Hosmer/ Hartford" is a later addition. The

case was fabricated out of old wood in the late nineteenth or early twentieth

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century. The hardware on the door is replaced. The case is refinished. The

weights and pendulum are separated from the clock works. The pendulum bob

is separated from the pendulum stick. Please see attached essay by Dr. Thomas

P. Kugelman for more information about this piece.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 89 x 20 3/8 x

10in. (226.1 x 51.8 x 25.4cm)