

Basic Detail Report



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Title Tall Case Clock

Date 1775-1785

Primary Maker Thomas Hildrup

Medium Case: Cherry primary wood, brass and iron hardware. Dial: Cast brass.

Works: Cast brass and steel.

Description Tall case clock in the Chippendale, or rococo, style, with a cherry case, a pagoda pediment, a brass clock movement, and a brass dial that is engraved "Thomas/ Hildrup/ HARTFORD". 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 (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 is a pagoda-shaped pediment with a conforming roof, or bonnet top, that extends the full depth of the hood. Each front corner of the hood has a finial consisting of a flame twist over an urn; each finial sits at the top of a plinth. The front of the hood has a glass door that is arched and recessed, with a small brass knob over an oval brass lock escutcheon at the left side. There is a projecting

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fluted column at each front corner of the hood. Each side of the hood has a rectangular opening with a rounded top; the opening reveals a recessed panel of wood. Each rear corner of the hood has a projecting three-quarter column. The trunk of the clock case has deep cove, or recessed quarter-circle, molding at the top and bottom; a tall rectangular door on the front; and quarter-columns at each front corner. The door has an arched top and applied projecting molding around each side. The left side of the door has an oval brass lock escutcheon. Each quarter column is turned with alternating thick and thin rings. The rectangular base of the clock case has projecting base molding on the front and both sides, and a hanging half circle on the front. The clock case has straight feet.

Construction Details: A single, vertically-oriented backboard with squared top corners extends the full height of the hood and case. 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 a pagoda-shaped top and two vertical sides. The top consists of a pair of vertical boards with a pagoda-shaped top edge and an arched lower edge; these boards are located at the front and back of the sides of the hood. The conforming roof is nailed down to the top edges of the vertical boards. Each side of the hood consists of two boards, each with a rectangular cut-out in the center; a third smaller board is inserted in the cut-out, creating a recessed panel on each exterior side of the hood. All ornament is either nailed or glued to the three-part frame: the arched and projecting molding at the front of the hood, the projecting pilasters at the front of the hood, and the projecting panels and

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horizontal molding at each side of the hood. The sides of the hood attach to a horizontal, three-sided frame with molding at the outside edges. Each three-quarter column is joined to a corner of the hood; each column extends 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, H-shaped hinges at the top right and bottom right corner. The backboard is nailed into a rabbet on each back corner of the sides of the trunk; the nails are inserted through the back corner of the sides of the trunk. The boards that form the sides of the trunk extend several inches above the bottom of the hood. The clock works rest on a seat board, or horizontal board immediately behind the dial. The seat board rests at the top edge of each side 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 consists of a four-sided frame that is tenoned and pinned at each corner. The top of this frame has an arched lower edge, conforming to the shape of the door. Each side of this frame is recessed to accommodate the quarter-column that is located at each front corner of the trunk. The frame is nailed to the front of each side of the trunk. The cut-out corner for each column is lined with a panel of wood that forms projecting, quarter-round molding. The door is constructed of a single board with projecting molding nailed to the front edges. The door is joined to the trunk with two iron hinges at the right side; there is an brass, oval lock escutcheon at the left side of the door. The sides of the trunk extend down to the floor. The base of the clock is constructed of a front and two

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side boards that are joined together at each front corner with a nailed butt joint.

These boards extend to the floor; their lower edges conform to the shape of the skirts and feet. A board is nailed over the lower outside edges of each of the boards forming the base of the clock; these outer boards form the base molding and the facing that forms the foot on each side of the base. Dial: The engraved, brass dial is square with an arched top. The dial arch has an applied boss, or projecting disc, engraved "Thomas/ Hilldrup/ HARTFORD". This boss is flanked by cast brass spandrels, each consisting of a stylized dolphin or eel and multiple C-scrolls and S-scrolls. The middle of the square dial plate has an applied chapter ring, consisting of a ring of Roman numerals, inside of ring of minute gradations, inside a ring of Arabic numbers from one to sixty in increments of five. 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. A round seconds dial is engraved on an irregularly-shaped brass plate that is applied over the main arbor; a hand pivots around the center (the plate is probably removed from behind the dial and applied to the front). A square opening below the main arbor reveals the calendar dial that rotates to indicate the date. Additional spandrels are applied to the corners of the dial plate (later additions). Clock Works Movement: weight powered Duration: eight day Materials: brass (thin) Strike: rack and plate Escapement: recoil The works have light gearing and non-descript pillars. The seconds bit is replaced. The seat board is original. The works are accompanied by a pendulum and two cylindrical weights. Condition: The top back portion of the pagoda pediment has been

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damaged or removed. The recessed panel on the right side of the hood has insect damage. A small portion of the front left side of the base has split. The bottom edge of the backboard has dark stains, possibly the result of water damage. The dial would have been silvered originally. The dial hands are original, but have been broken and repaired. The corner spandrels on the dial are a later addition. The seconds dial has been moved from behind the dial to be applied to the front. The seconds bit is replaced. The key(s) to the hood and trunk door is missing; some hardware is replaced. The pendulum and two cylindrical weights are separated from the clock works.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 86 x 20 3/4 x 12 3/4in. (218.4 x 52.7 x 32.4cm)