Basic Detail Report

Title Tall Case Clock

Date 1800-1810

Primary Maker William Chappel

Medium Case: Mahogany primary wood, mahogany and other light and dark wood veneers, pine secondary wood; brass. Dial: Painted brass. Works: Brass and steel.

Description Tall case clock in the Federal, or early neoclassical, style, with a mahogany case, a swan's neck pediment at the top of the arched hood, a brass clock movement, and a painted brass dial. 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 hood is a brass finial, consisting of a slender cone atop a ball. The finial sits at the top of a small plinth located between the upper ends of the swan's neck pediment. Each upper end of the pediment molding terminates in a rosette carved with a shallow, six-petal flower. There is a vertical band of light wood veneer on the front of the pediment at each side. The front of the hood has a glass door that is arched and recessed, with a small brass knob at the left side (replaced). The door is flanked by a slender, fluted, free-standing column. Each column has a brass capital and base. Each side of the hood has a rectangular glass window

with a rounded top. The trunk of the clock case has deep cove, or recessed quarter-circle, molding at the top and bottom; a tall rectangular door with an arched top edge at the front; and stop-fluted quarter columns at each front corner. A band of dark wood inlay framing two light wooden ovals, and a series of short, vertical, light wood veneers are located at the top front of the trunk. Light wood veneer in a dark wood veneer frame is located above and below each quarter-column. The trunk door is outlined with two bands of light wood veneer, each separated by a darker veneer. The front of the base has geometric light and dark wood veneer decoration with an eight-pointed star in the center. The base has narrow base molding at the front and sides and small flared 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 top and two sides that are joined with dovetails at the top corners. All other parts of the hood are nailed, screwed, or glued to this frame: the pediment, the molding at the top of the pediment, the projecting medallion below the finial, the arched projecting molding at the front, and the projecting molding at the sides. The sides of the hood attach to a horizontal, three-sided frame with ovolo molding at the outside edges. Each free-standing column is carved from a solid piece of wood. Each column, with the brass capital and brass base, extends between the projecting molding at the top of the hood and the horizontal, three-sided frame at the bottom. The door is constructed of veneered wooden rails that are tenoned at

each corner. The door pivots on a pair of brass hinges at the top right and bottom right corner. The backboard is joined to each side of the trunk with a pair of large, triangular, vertically-oriented glue blocks at the interior back corners of the case. The boards that form the sides of the trunk extend several inches above the bottom of the hood. A slender, horizontal strip of wood is glued to the upper exterior of each side of the trunk (one is separated from the case); these strips serve to stabilize the hood when it is sitting at the top of the case. The clock works rest on a seat board, or horizontal board immediately behind the dial. The seat board rests on 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 at the sides. This frame, and the tall block of wood used to form the quarter columns, are joined to each side of the trunk with a pair of large, quarter-round, vertically-oriented glue blocks, with a pair of smaller glue blocks between. The door is constructed of a single board that is joined to the trunk with two brass hinges at the right side; there is an oval lock escutcheon on the center left side. The sides of the trunk extend down to the top of the base. The front, sides, and backboard of the base are joined with vertically-oriented glue blocks at the interior corners. The bottom of the case is nailed to the underside of the base. The base molding is nailed to the front and sides of the base. Each foot is constructed of facing that is joined to the underside of the base molding with horizontally-oriented glue blocks; each foot is supported by a vertically-oriented, triangular glue block on the interior corner. Dial: The brass dial is square with an arched top; it is painted

white. The center of the dial arch has an arched, recessed moon dial behind two semi-circles. The moon dial is painted with landscapes in blue, green, black, red, and white. 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 a black painted 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. 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 black-painted seconds dial is located above the main arbor, with a hand pivoting around the center. An arched, recessed calendar dial is located below the main arbor. Each corner of the dial plate is painted with a pink, red, and green floral arrangement inside a gilded border. Clock Works Movement: weight powered Duration: eight day Materials: brass Strike: rack and snail Escapement: recoil The works have bulbous pillars and thin plates. The bell is replaced. The seat board is replaced; thus, the works are married to the dial. The works are accompanied by one pendulum and three weights. Condition: The paint on the dial plate is flaking and worn. One slender strip of wood has separated from the top right exterior side of the trunk. The dial is married to the works. The bell is replaced. The case is refinished. The pendulum and two weights are separated from the clock works.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 94 7/8 x 21 1/16 x 10 1/4in. (241 x 53.5 x 26cm)