

Basic Detail Report

Title High Chest

Date 1770-1790

Primary Maker Levi Gilman

Medium Cherry primary wood, eastern white pine, yellow poplar, and cherry

secondary wood, brass hardware

Description Cherry high chest with a stepped, swan's neck pediment in the Queen Anne, or late baroque, style. The chest-on-chest has local characteristics of the Colchester style. The stepped, swan's neck pediment (possibly an early addition) has a conforming roof, or bonnet top, which is open at the center. Each upper end of the pediment terminates in a shallow pinwheel rosette, consisting of an eleven-pointed star. The center of the pediment has a turned finial, consisting of a small urn on a tapered plinth. The upper case drawer arrangement consists of five full-width, graduated drawers. The upper 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 is wider than the side drawers, and it has a carved shell (later addition) with eighteen projecting rays. The front skirt has three flathead arches, one under each drawer, and two drop pendants (replaced). The side skirts each have one long flathead arch. Each cabriole leg has a curved knee return (replaced) and a pad foot. Hardware on each full-width drawer includes a center brass lock escutcheon flanked by a brass escutcheon with a bail pull; on the lower three drawers of the upper case, the lock escutcheon is blind. The two

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side drawers each have a brass escutcheon with a bail pull. The shell-carved

drawer has a brass knob at the lower center of the shell. There are two working

keys. Condition: The stepped pediment may be an early addition to the high

chest. The carved shell on the bottom center drawer has been added; the shell is

unusually wide and has patched holes for hardware. The drop pendants and

knee returns are replaced. The backboard has been renailed. The back left

corner of the upper case has been repaired; the repair extends across much of

the back bottom edge of the case. The back left leg post of the lower case split

on the interior surface at some time in the past, and has been repaired with glue

and nails. Most of the drawer runners and guides are replaced. The lower edges

of the drawer sides are replaced. The hardware and the finial appear to be

original. Design and Construction Details: Case Construction. The stepped

pediment is separate from the top case and is formed with dovetail

construction. The back of the bonnet top is cut straight across the center. The

top of the upper case is dovetailed to the case sides; the cornice molding is

nailed to the case and rises above the top. The upper case backboard is nailed

into rabbets in the case sides. The lower case is made with mortise-and-tenon

construction. The knee returns are nailed to the front of the skirt. Drawer

Construction. The drawer dividers of the upper and lower cases are visibly

dovetailed into the case side. The vertical partitions in the lower case are visibly

dovetailed into the drawer divider above and the skirt below. The drawer

runners are nailed to the case sides. Full-height drawer guides for the bottom

row of drawers sit behind the vertical partitions; these drawer guides are nailed

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into the backboard. The center drawer runners in the bottom row of drawers

have been nailed to these full-depth drawer guides. The lip-molded drawer

fronts have 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 are large.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 78 1/2 x 39 1/4

x 21 1/8in. (199.4 x 99.7 x 53.7cm)