Cavalry Chest From H. Mawer & Stephenson

H. Mawer & Stephenson

Sold



REF: 83384

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Height: 112.99 cm (44.5")

Width: 99.02 cm (39")

Depth: 50.15 cm (19.7")

Description

A mahogany Cavalry Campaign Chest retailed by H. Mawer & Stephenson.

The design is most associated with the Army & Navy CSL who described the chest as a 'Set of drawers with table escritoire'. However, occasionally examples by other makers are also seen: Hill & Millard are known to have made a walnut version. The stamp of H. Mawer & Stephenson to the right-hand short drawer gives the retailer of this chest. However, they sold modern, antique and second-hand furniture so whether they were the first sellers of the chest or purchased it from a retiring officer to re-sell, we cannot say.

The chest has a few differences to the A&N CSL version. It has larger, inset campaign handles to the sides for carrying but also allowing the chest to slide in and out of packing cases, the pull-out desk supports have brass strap fittings to take a removable candle sconce to each side, it has a mirror to the back of the writing slope and it does not have a secret compartment.

With the escritoire drawer fully extended for use, the frame of the gilt tooled, leather writing slope can be lifted to access the stationery rack which is hinged to lie below during travel. When the rack is in its vertical position, the slope can rest against it at an angle. The bevelled mirror is set to the back of the leather work surface, which is hinged to the top so that the mirror can be pushed from the back to stand vertically. There is a brass locking arm to hold it in place and the mirror also has a hinged brass arm to set it at 10 different angles against an inset brass sawtooth fitting. The compartments to either side of the writing area have slide board lids with inset hard wood roundels for ease of opening. The left side has a single compartment whereas the right has a short compartment to the front with a larger one to the back. The front compartment is fitted with dividers for two inkwells, a wider middle compartment and a tip up pen tray. Below the pen tray is a further compartment which extends below the inkwells etc. This is usually the area where a secret compartment would be. The height of the table escritoire is 28 1/2 inches with a knee clearance of 24 1/2 inches.

The drawer linings are ash with quadrants to the sides and the base boards a little thinner than standard. The escritoire drawer has a stronger S. Mordan & Co. lock whereas all the other locks are simply stamped 'Patent' and 'VR' for Victoria.

At some stage, this chest has been through a workshop. Some of the drawer fronts have been repaired where they have split and it is likely it was repolished at the same time. This is the most popular form of secretaire campaign chest for modern use and the mirror and candlesticks add to its interest. Given the company's name changes, the addition of their H. Mawer & Stephenson can be dated to between 1882 and 1912 but the chest maybe a little earlier in date. Late 19th Century.

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