Robert Saul's Campaign Chest

Maynard & Co.

Sold

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REF: 83630

Height: 99.03 cm (39")

Width: 83.78 cm (33")

Depth: 43.16 cm (17")

Description

A small sized mahogany Campaign Chest by Maynard & Co.

The chest has good shaped, flush handles that we associate with the early 19th century and are similar to those we have seen on a secretaire chest by Maynard. Both chests also have raised, round escutcheons to each drawer. Conversely, a third chest we have had marked Maynard had skeletal flush handles and standard escutcheons. This chest differs to the other two in that it has a plinth base rather than screw in feet and a removable gallery. The labels to all three chests give the address of 27 Poultry but the label to this one is far smaller and less descriptive that those to the other two. It is situated to the righthand side of the top drawer. It is known that the company had their own carpenters but also bought items in for sale, so whether their workshops made their chests, they bought them in from other companies or both is not clear.

The two halves of the chest are united by four lugs to the bottom section with the base board to the top section set back behind the drawer front to give it a more natural look. This is a method that was common amongst the Dublin makers of campaign furniture. The edges of the chest are rounded with brass strap work to each corner and drawer dividing board. The drawer linings are oak with pine or deal used for the backboards etc. The back has been fitted with three iron strengthening bars to each section, where the wood has split, likely due to the climate change. These historic repairs use multiple screws to each bar with a determination to make it a good job.
All four drawer locks are unmarked.

The iron carrying handles and removable fiddle gallery to the top suggest that this chest of drawers was made to be practical for use on board ship. This would tie in with Maynard, a business that provided passengers to the East with everything they would need from furniture, to passage and intelligence. It would also tie in with the owner, Mrs. Saul, whose details of 'Prospect House, Teignmouth' are written on a paper label to the chest. 'Mrs. Saul. Passenger to Shanghai No. 5' is also painted to the top of the bottom half of the chest.

Martha Saul was born in Batavia (Jakarta) in 1831, the daughter of Rev. Dr. Walter Medhurst a member of the London Missionary Society. She married Robert Powell Saul (born in 1816 or 1817), a merchant who had worked for Thomas Ripley & Co. and Wetmore & Co. in Shanghai and Hong Kong before moving to Batavia. The marriage was a relatively short one with the ceremony likely in 1849 or 1850 and Robert dying in 1855. They had 3 children, George born in Lancashire in 1851 and Emily and Dora born in Shanghai and Batavia respectively. Dora was born in 1856 after her father had died. It is probable that Martha and her children had returned to England not long after her husband's death. The children are recorded in the 1861 census as living with their widowed grandmother and aunt in Bedford, England. Martha was recorded on the same census as a visitor to the Carroll household in Hampstead, so presumably was also living in her mother's Bedford house. Hicks & Allen, the printers of the label, were only formed in 1858 which ties in with Martha moving to Devon after this date. In 187...

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