Walnut Campaign Chest

Sold

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REF: 83861

Height: 109.81 cm (43.2")

Width: 99.01 cm (39")

Depth: 46.34 cm (18.2")

Description

A figured walnut Secretaire Campaign Chest.

As is typical of walnut chests, book matched veneers of figured walnut are used for the drawers of the chest with solid, straight grain walnut used for the top and sides. The edges of the drawers have a raised moulding that sits on top of the veneers to protect any edges for chipping or lifting. The top and sides couldn't be veneered on a chest that would be slid in and out of packing cases for travel.

The drawer formation is three short drawers over three long, with the wider middle drawer, a secretaire. This drawer retains its board that prevents the internal drawers moving during travel. Behind it are a long drawer, with dividers to the right side for an inkwell and a lidded compartment, and two short drawers flanked by pigeon holes. The secretaire is set at a height to stand at and the drawers are veneered in birds eye maple.

This chest, from the applied moulding to the drawers to the shape of the removable, is similar to a number of other chests we have had but there is one interesting difference. Underneath the long secretaire drawer is a pencil inscription with what looks to be S.F. Gamble, Malta and the date 1860. It is typical of the type of inscription you are occasionally lucky to find hidden on an English chest.

The chest has had parts of the side boards of the chest replaced, likely due to damage. The question that is difficult to answer is, does the pencil inscription refer to the original maker or could it refer to a Maltese cabinet maker who restored it ? It might also refer to the owner. Many British troops were stationed at, or stopped off at Malta on their way east and we do know of a couple of Maltese cabinet makers who made campaign furniture. We have found a George Francis Gamble who was a Royal Marine officer stationed in Portsmouth in 1860.

This chest stands out not just for the fact that it is walnut but also for the pencil inscription. Dated 1860.

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