Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

# Portable Shower

Sold

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REF: 6178

Height: 246 cm (96.9")

Width: 83.5 cm (32.9")

Depth: 80.5 cm (31.7")

Description

A very similar shower to this one but with five pillars is photographed in Victorian Tinware by Ralph Cox. This volume also contains a copy of the 1862 catalogue of J. H. Hopkins & Son, Wholesale Tin Plate Workers and Japanners of Birmingham. Their catalogue shows a similar shower, described as a 'Portable Shower Bath'. It was available as a '5 Pillars Large. Richly Jap.d' at £ 4.15.0 or 'Middle. Richly Jap.d' at £ 4.4.0, which was perhaps a four pillar shower. Cox describes the photographed shower as painted green, rare and circa 1820 in date. He also notes another shower with deal panelled case as auctioned at Covent Garden in 1841 by Mr. E. Robins.

A simulated bamboo shower is also shown in British Campaign Furniture. As can be seen the shower breaks down into a base unit with pump, a top which contains the reservoir and four support poles, three of which are wooden and one hollow with a tap which plumbs to link the top and bottom. However, it is intriguing for its possible history and the decoration of cartouches of the American flag and red and green armorials suggests some clues as to it provenance. The brass tap, which is probably a replacement, is also stamped 'Sn. Juan', the capital of Puerto Rico. It is possible that the shower might have been used in the Spanish American War of 1898. Ninety percent of American casualties in the war were from infectious diseases and strict orders were given over to sanitation in the belief that if the rules of hygiene were followed yellow fever and other diseases could be eradicated. In such a climate, a portable shower would be a very desirable item for any American officer. Although the shower is earlier in date than the War and English in origin, the connection is very interesting and entirely possible.

Although rare, it seems that these showers were made for the most part of the 19th century. Dimensions assembled are given.



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