



Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture  
& Travel Items

## The Ship Franklin of Boston

Sold



REF: 82321

Height: 54 cm (21.3")

Width: 65 cm (25.6")

Depth: 3 cm (1.2")

## Description

A large gouache on paper entitled Ship Franklin Of Boston.

The 18 gun, 200 tons Franklin was owned by the Boston merchants James and Thomas H. Perkins with James Danlap. The ship's master was James Devereux of Salem and she became famous as the first American ship to enter a Japanese port. Trade with Japan was extremely difficult at the end of the 18th century and was controlled by the Dutch at Java. The Franklin left Boston on the 11th of December 1798 for Batavia. On arrival she was chartered by the Dutch to sail to Japan and back with careful notification of the customs to be observed in Japan.

The Perkins family business, led by Colonel Thomas Handasyd Perkins developed their trade with China, and were likely to have been the first Americans to establish a permanent trading post in Canton. Initially they traded sandalwood, ginseng, sea otter, beaver and seal skins. When the profit in these goods decreased, they moved into opium dealing. As the Chinese looked to halt this trade Perkins & Co. moved into smuggling opium. The company had several ships with shares in others and generated millions for the family. Their wealth, in turn, helped to build Boston. J & T H Perkins merged with Russell & Co. in 1830 to become the largest firm of American merchants in China.

Another portrait of the Franklin, by a Dutch artist, is known and is illustrated in Old-time Ships of Salem, published by the Essex Institute in 1917. This gouache is well painted and is accurate when compared to the Dutch picture. Several crew members are shown on board and the ship flies the Stars and Stripes and has a dingy to the rear. It is likely that it was commissioned either by the Perkins or the ship's captain.

The painting has a period gilt frame and the glass is reverse painted in black with gilt tram lines to form a mount. Circa 1800.

Image Size is H 16 1/4 W 21 3/4

Frame Size is given.