Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

E.A. Seagrove Secretaire Antique Campaign Chest

Seagrove

Sold

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REF: 81448

Height: 107 cm (42.1")

Width: 102 cm (40.2")

Depth: 48 cm (18.9")

Description

This mahogany Chest has a short secretaire drawer fitted with a single, plain drawer to the interior below four pigeon holes.

The two part chest is brass bound and has replaced, removable feet. The drawers have a rounded edge and are constructed with teak sides, oak base boards and stained pine backs. To the back of both halves of the chest is a large paper label giving the suppliers name of E. A. Seagrove of 22 & 23 The Hard, Portsea. An advert of 1878 notes Seagrove were established in 1795. The earliest record we have, shows William Seagrove as a draper in Portsea, however it is very possible that he had a relative who started the business before him. It was not uncommon for drapers to expand from supplying uniforms to become complete outfitters selling everything from swords to furniture. Given their location, not only being in Portsea but also opposite HM Dockyard, their biggest customers were naturally naval officers. Whether they manufactured all of their supplies we do not currently know. Certainly in their early days it is unlikely they also made the furniture they sold. It is probable they commissioned it from a local cabinet maker. William Jnr joined his father (noted above) in the business in 1844 and the name changed from William Seagrove to Seagrove & Son. Two of his sons, his namesake and Edwin, changed the name to W & E Seagrove on their father's death in 1849. The business then passed to Edwin and his nephew William in 1853 to become E & W Seagrove. On the nephew's death, at the age of 34, the company name changed to E. A. Seagrove in 1866. The name remained the same, even after Edwin's death in 1880, until 1892 when it changed to Seagrove & Co. before becoming Gieve, Matthews & Seagrove Ltd in 1904.

The paper label also notes the name Capt. Hawkins R.N. c/o Rosekilly (?), Devonport. There was a R. Rosekilly who was a GWR and shipping agent on Cornwall Street and it is possible this is a reference to him. Unfortunately with so little information on Captain Hawkins, it is difficult to research the owner. Given the E. A. Seagrove name to the label, the chest can be dated to between 1866 and 1892.

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