



Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

Thompson Trunk Bed

J.T. Thompson

Sold



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REF: 81674

Height: 57.5 cm (22.6")

Width: 96 cm (37.8")

Depth: 54 cm (21.3")

Description

An iron bound, painted pine trunk by J. T. Thompson that opens to form a 6ft. brass and iron bed with canopy.

This form of campaign bed was extremely practical in that it could be assembled very quickly. The maker described it as composed of metallic drawn tubes, one tube over the other; but the simplicity of its construction is its chief merit. The whole bedstead is in one piece, with the legs attached, and merely the act of opening fixes those legs without any fastenings whatever; with a very heavy weight upon it, it may bend but it can never break or get out of repair; in one minute it is ready for use ... The hessian, that would support a mattress, is sewn to the frame but can be tightened by both the central rope and the 6 leather belts to the foot of the bed. The bed can be used with or without its canopy frame which is assembled by screwing on to the bed frame. The trunk has good iron straps and the handles to the sides are not iron but made of 4 strips of leather hide for both strength and to reduce the weight. Under the bed frame in the trunk, there are webbing belts which were presumably to hold the bed linen etc.

This ingenious form of camp bed probably has its design origins in the very late 18th century and the Henry Ford Museum believe they have one which may have been used by Washington. William Chapple also advertised a similar bed on his trade labels and The National Army Museum have an unnamed version which was used by Lieutenant J. Malcom of the 42nd Regiment during the Peninsular War and Waterloo. This bed has an embossed brass label noting J. T. Thompson & Co. London, Patent Tube Bedstead Plated With Brass, fixed to the trunk lid of this bed.

This bed is from Raynham Hall but is unmarked with an owner's name. A possible candidate might be Rear Admiral John Townshend, the 4th Marquess. He was born in 1798 and so would be the right age but this is not the type of bed that you would associate with naval use. This type of bed, folding out of a trunk, is rare and the maker is perhaps the most celebrated of portable bed makers in the 19th century. Circa 1830.

Size as a Trunk is given.