

52

SMALL STORAGE OR  
DOWER CHEST,  
c. 1780–1820

Pine



FINISH

Early brown paint, probably  
late 19th century but  
not the original

PROVENANCE

Unlocated

DIMENSIONS

28.5 x 54 x 34

(11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>)

SIMILAR EXAMPLES

No. 51,

Palardy, nos. 551–52;

Johansson, figs. 4, 9



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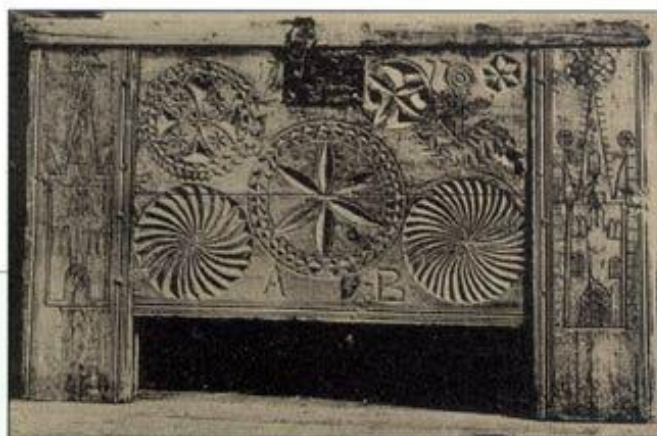
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This chest, like No. 51, is a six-board type. The front, back, and sides are each a single plank and are mortised and pinned into slots in the four corner posts. A base moulding is applied around three sides. The corner posts end in small round turned feet. The underside of the top is reinforced by

two battens, shallowly dovetailed front to back. The hinges and lock are original.

The front panel is roughly carved with six-pointed stars and oval patterns on a stippled background. This form of carving is a survival from French post-medieval *coffres rustiques* of the 16th and 17th centuries.

ANTECEDENT



French six-board larch *coffre* from Savoie, c. 1550–1630

The box chest or *coffre* is an ancient form, at its simplest just six boards butted and nailed or pinned together. French furniture was not all formal and ornate; country or *rustique* furniture, carpenter- or homemade, was also very common. Rather than butted boards, the most common French and Quebec construction was of side and end boards, or panel frames, to be tenoned and then slotted or mortised into corner posts which extended as legs. Simply incised stars, stars-in-circles, rosettes, pin-wheels, and geometric “chip” or “gouge” carvings were ancient motifs, and universal to all European countries and cultures. These motifs were common on both French and Quebec furniture and, being simple to carve, particularly on country or *rustique* pieces. The simple six-board *coffre* illustrated has carved geometric motifs repeated on many Quebec pieces, including Nos. 7–8, 16, 32, 35, 47, 52, and 152.

