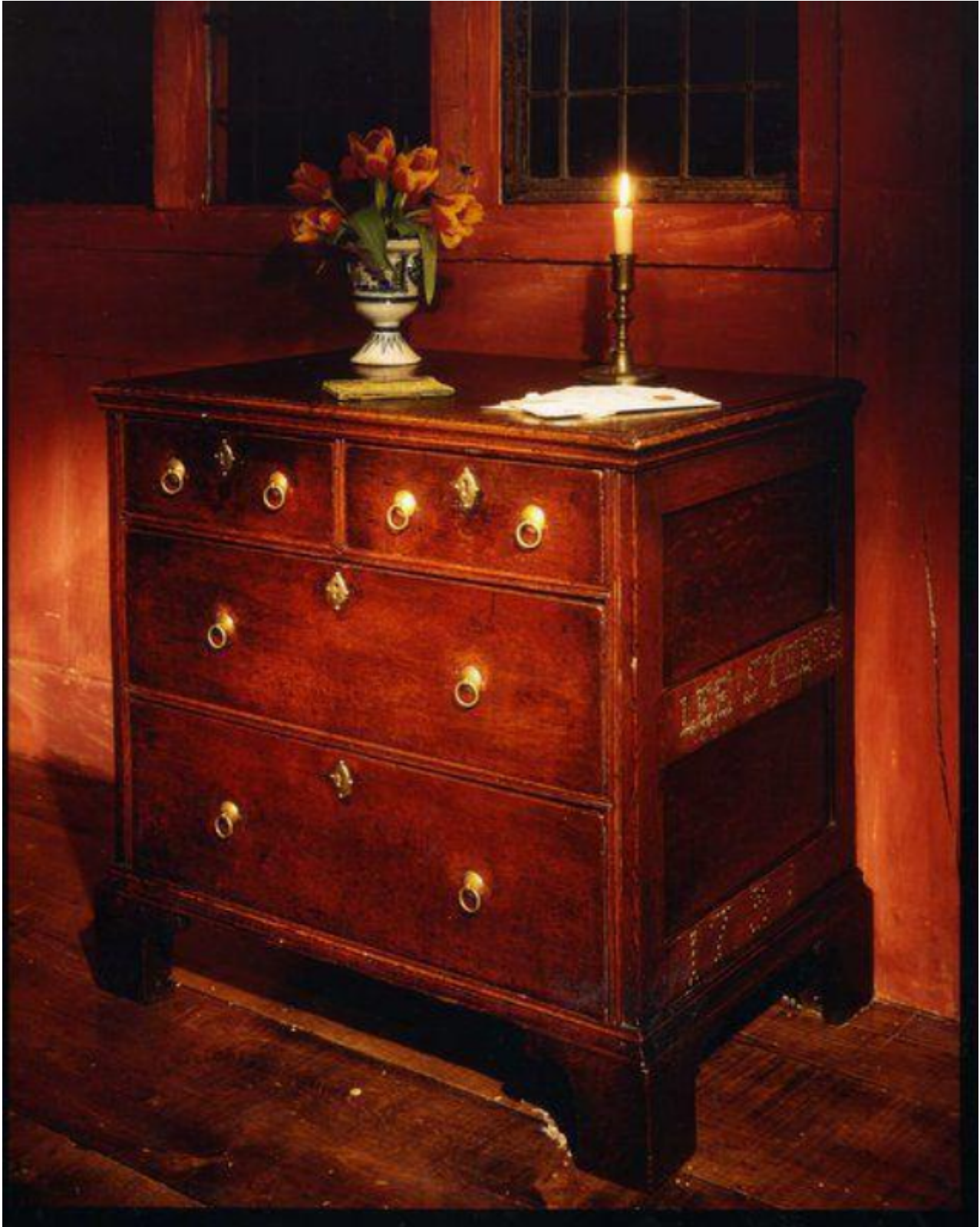


A rare and fine William & Mary oak chest of drawers, Lee Steere, 1731

Sold



REF: 10362

Height: 76 cm (29.9")

Width: 80 cm (31.5")

Depth: 52 cm (20.5")

Description

The plank top with a moulded edge. Two short drawers above two long drawers with later handles and replaced escutcheons. One side decorated with the names "Lee Steere" and the date "1731" in replaced brass studs. Standing on later bracket feet. Excellent original colour and patination. English, circa 1690. 2035562

It is extremely rare to find pieces of furniture bearing either personal or surnames, as dated pieces of provincial furniture generally only carry the initials of the owner. The date is not original to the piece which was probably decorated with brass studwork when as the stile feet were replaced with more fashionable bracket feet.

Extensive research has been carried-out to decipher the symbolism of the decoration. The search was initially undertaken to find a record of a marriage between individuals surnamed Lee and Steere in 1731. Secondary sources indexing English marriage registers, particularly the International Genealogical Index and Percival Boyd's Marriage Index were searched. No distinction was made between Steere and Steer as, at that time, spelling varied from occasion to occasion and was not fixed in the sense that we understand it nowadays. One of the 17th century marriages listed on the attached sheet might represent the marriage of the Lee and the Steere which could have led to the bestowing of the personal name "Lee" upon an individual surnamed Steere in 1731.

Another alternative is that the chest of drawers could be what is known as "Form", which was commonplace in the American colonies, where the practise of commemorating an individual by writing his or her name in nails in furniture was very popular. It is, in fact, more likely that the commemoration is of an individual called Lee Steere who either died or was born in 1731. Research on genealogical index sources covering America confirms that there were individuals called Lee Steere living in America in the late-18th century and is therefore likely that there were individuals there with the same names (see attached sheet).