

Set of Six George II Mahogany Dining Chairs

A270

Documentary Record

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Christie's sale catalogue title page, 23 May 1963

CATALOGUE
OF
Objects of Art and Clocks
Fine English Furniture
Eastern Rugs and Carpets

THE PROPERTIES OF

The Rt. Hon. The LORD ASTOR OF HEVER
The Rt. Hon. The LORD BRUNTISFIELD, M.C.
The Rt. Hon. The EARL BEATTY, D.S.C.
The Rt. Hon. The COUNTESS OF ROSSE
Sir FITZROY MACLEAN, Bart., C.B.E.
Mrs. RUDOLPH DE TRAFFORD
BRYAN L. HUNTER, Esq.
The late W. C. N. CHAPMAN, Esq.
(sold by Order of the Trustees)
and others

which will be sold at Auction by

CHRISTIE, MANSON & WOODS, LTD.

I. O. CHANCE	J. A. FLOYD	A. G. GRIMWADE	GUY HANNEN, M.C.
THE HON. PATRICK LINDSAY	JOHN HERBERT	A. J. H. DU BOULAY	

AT THEIR GREAT ROOMS

8 KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S, LONDON, S.W.1

Telephone: Trafalgar 9060

Telegrams: Christiart, London, S.W.1

On THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1963
AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK PRECISELY

MAY BE VIEWED THREE DAYS PRECEDING

Illustrated Catalogue (13 Plates), Price 3/6

Christie's sale catalogue, lot 73: six mahogany chairs

THURSDAY

20

MAY 23, 1963

- 220 73 SIX MAHOGANY CHAIRS, in the Chippendale style, with moulded
 08
 -
 uprights and waved top rails, the splats pierced and carved with
 C-scrolls and foliage, the seat frames on cabriole legs carved on
 the knees with acanthus leaves and terminating in claw-and-ball
 feet, the slip-in seats stuffed and covered in floral gros-point
 needlework—possibly American—18th century (6)

- 1500 74 A PAIR OF HEPPLEWHITE MAHOGANY OPEN ARMCHAIRS, with moulded
 d
 -
 borders and rail uprights to the shield-shaped backs, the seat
 frames on moulded square tapering legs carved with husks and
 overlapping foliage (2)

- 17 75 A mahogany four-leaf dwarf screen, inset with leather panels
 ds
 decorated with flowers and terraces in the Chinese style, on
 square legs—each leaf 43½ in. high, 13 in. wide

- oc
 75 76 A Georgian mahogany specimen cabinet, with panel doors enclosing
 75 08
 ten sliding drawers, on stand with square legs united by plain
 stretchers—22½ in. wide

- 60 77 A Georgian mahogany cellaret, with rectangular lifting top, a
 1x
 cupboard enclosed by panel doors below, on bracket feet—23 in.
 wide

- 200 78 A NEST OF FOUR SHERATON MAHOGANY COFFEE TABLES, with
 6
 rectangular tops on twin-column end supports, the tops with
 satinwood banded borders—13½ in. to 18½ in. wide (4)

Arthur Brett & Sons Ltd. to Mrs. L. C. Register, 13 April 1970

Arthur Brett and Sons Limited

Dealers in Antique Furniture
Wholesale and Export
Members of the British Antique Dealers Association
42 St. Giles Street, NORWICH, NOR 16E, England
Telephone: Norwich 28171 (STD 0603) Cables: Brettus, Norwich

Established 1870



Mrs. L.C. Register,
East Brow Road,
Signal Mountain,
Tennessee, 37377,
U.S.A.

13th April, 1970.

Our Ref. FAB/R/MRJ.

Dear Madam,

We have your letter of April 9th reference the six 18th Century Chairs which you purchased from Fowler Brothers of Chattanooga some years ago.

These chairs were certainly purchased from us by Messrs. Fowler Brothers, and they were shipped to Chattanooga in October 1964. I am very interested to hear of the labels which appear on each chair, and whilst I remember the chairs I do not recall having seen the labels. They are fine chairs and I always had the feeling that they could possibly have been American in origin. I am afraid I cannot help you about the provenance of these chairs, but it may be helpful for you to know that they were purchased at auction from Christie, Manson & Woods, 8, King Street, St. James's, London, S.W.1. at their sale of May 23rd, 1963, lot number 73. You may think it worthwhile asking Christies if they can help you, but since these chairs were catalogued as "The property of a Lady" I doubt very much whether they will be able to give you any information. You will no doubt appreciate that some people do not mind their name appearing as owners of goods put up for auction, but there are others who prefer to remain anonymous and in these circumstances auctioneers will not divulge the name of the owner.

Yours sincerely,

FRANK A. BRETT

Frank A. Brett.

for Arthur Brett & Sons Ltd.,

P.S. It was very kind of you to send us U.S. postage stamps for our reply, but unfortunately we cannot use them in this Country, and we return them to you.

Research memorandum: description and references

A Set Of 18th Century Chippendale Side Chairs

Description - A set of six mahogany 18th Century Chippendale chairs, with moulded uprights; crest rails with foliage, "C" scrolls, and waved crest; seat frame has serpentine shape with carved design of "C" scrolls, foliage and flower; the cabriole legs have acanthus carving on the knees and terminate in a claw and ball foot. The back legs are squarish in shape ending in a block foot. The slip seats are covered in old needlework, consisting of gross and petit point floral and leaf designs, each different from the other. The frames of the slip seats are found to be of pine on four chairs and are original to the chairs, while two appear to be replacements, being of another wood and thicker. The delicate pierced splat of "C" scrolls and foliage carvings closely resemble those mentioned in the references.

References -

- (1) The chairs are of the same general design as that listed in Joseph Downs' "American Furniture: Queen Anne and Chippendale Periods" as number 137.

- (2) Another is shown in Hornor's "Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture," plate 119.

- (3) "The Furniture of Our Forefathers" by Singleton, page 148 shows two of similar design, of Charleston, South Carolina provenance. Page 447 shows another example, also of Charleston, South Carolina provenance. Page 623 shows another very similar specimen, also of Charleston provenance.

- (4) "The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts" reprinted from Antiques, January, 1967, relates these facts:

Fig. 16 - "The rather square back legs ending in block feet have been seen on several chairs of Charleston origin."

Fig. 10 - "Unusually abrupt turn of the knee and the general form relate it to English design; this relationship is often noted in Charleston work of the Queen Anne and Chippendale periods."
(Underscored Added)

Also stated by the author is that some pieces contain a "number of highly individual features - a characteristic of Southern furniture".

- (5) Mr. Samuel T. Blaisdell of Parke-Bernet Galleries feels they are not of English origin, but probably American.

Research memorandum: provenance and former owner

-2-

- (6) Recent correspondence with Christie, Manson, and Woods, who catalogued these chairs for sale many years ago, said their original description still stands. Their opinion at that time was that the chairs may have originated from America, although no provenance was offered. They were sold as the property of a Lady.
- (7) Labels appear on each chair (except one which present owner removed looking for marks) as to a previous owner. The labels state "S. Eliot Lewis, 7 Kensington Palace Gardens, W. 8 - ordered sold by the trustees of his estate".
- (8) Correspondence with the Victoria and Albert Museum relates that little is known in England about American antiques, but often provencial pieces of England are confused with American. Obviously, these chairs are not provencial, but very urban in style and workmanship.

Facts About Previous Owner - The previous owner, whose name appears on the labels posted in each chair (except one removed), S. Eliot Lewis, Esq., late of 7 Kensington Palace Gardens, W. 8, died at the age of 80 years on the 16th of June, 1934. Copies of the death certificate and Will have been obtained. He was a gentleman of means, and provided amply for his nurse, servants, friends and relatives.

Two daughters survived him and a grandson, and two sons-in-law. Taxes were paid on his estate but no household inventory has been located.

Lewis' sons-in-law and grandson are listed in Who's Who as late as 1965. The family is of great prominence, one son-in-law being the son of Sir Alexander William Prince (also listed in Who's Who) and Lady Prince. As of this date, no answer has been received from a recent attempt to contact by mail his daughter, Mrs. Norah Millie Prince, and the grandson, Eliot Joseph Benn Rose.

We have not as yet had the Society of Genealogists to research this Lewis family, but will do so if we are unable to communicate directly with his heirs.

White House to Mr. Register, 17 February 1971

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 17, 1971

Dear Mr. Register:

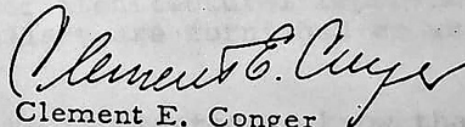
It was such a pleasure to meet you and Mrs. Register on Monday and receive you in the White House.

On behalf of Mrs. Nixon and the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, I wish to thank you for your generosity in lending to the White House the six beautiful Chippendale side chairs and the fine American banjo clock. We look forward to placing these important objects in the appropriate locations in the White House.

We hope your return trip was enjoyable and that the weather improved considerably over the trip to Washington.

With grateful appreciation, and with best wishes,

Very sincerely,


Clement E. Conger
Curator

Mr. Levon C. Register
734 Market Street
Chattanooga, Tennessee 34702

202-456-141

Department of State to Mr. Register, 25 January 1972

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 25, 1972

Dear Mr. Register:

Thank you for your letter of January 18, 1972. My associates in the State Department would be delighted to see you on January 31, February 1 or February 2. Unfortunately, I shall be in Williamsburg, Virginia speaking at the Annual Antiques Forum that week but my assistant, Mrs. Gail Daly will be glad to accept the tripod tea table at whatever time is convenient for you. If you will call Mrs. Daly at 632-0298 when you arrive in Washington she will arrange for you to park your car and unload the table.

I hope you will have enough time to visit the Diplomatic Reception Rooms. The John Quincy Adams State Drawing Room is closed for architectural improvements but the Entrance Hall and Gallery are furnished as well as the other reception rooms.

I thought you might be interested to know that we have found a chair very similar to the set of Middleton chairs in the Map Room. The central splat is identical and the chair is definitely from Charlestown, South Carolina. This might confirm that the other chairs are also from Charlestown.

I am sorry to miss seeing you and I look forward to showing you the newly designed Adams Drawing Room when it is completed in early April.

Very sincerely,


Clement E. Conger
Chairman
Fine Arts Committee

Mr. Levon C. Register,
734 Market Street,
Chattanooga, Tennessee.

White House Office of the Curator to Mrs. Register, 6 December 1972

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 6, 1972

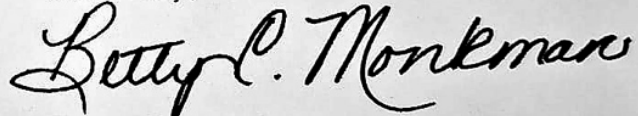
Dear Mrs. Register:

In accordance with our recent conversation on your visit to our office, I am sending you a color photograph of one of the Chippendale chairs on loan to the White House from you and your husband.

We hope you will enjoy having it.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Betty C. Monkman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "B" and "M".

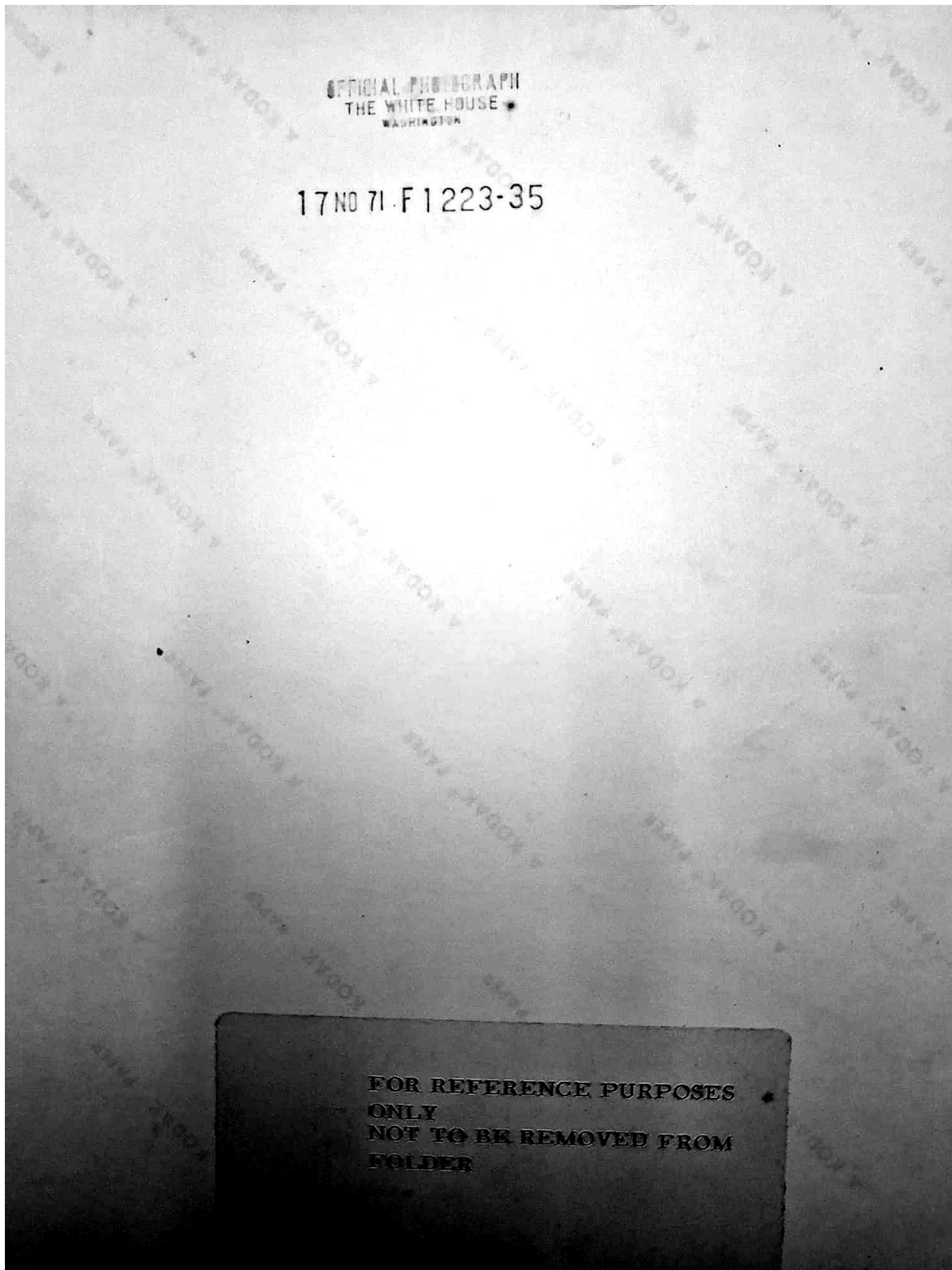
Betty C. Monkman
Registrar
Office of the Curator

Mrs. Levon C. Register
734 Market Street
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402

Official 1971 photograph of one chair in the White House



Reverse of official White House photograph



Published interior photograph showing the chairs



furnished in the American Chippendale style which
 second half of the 18th century. Brilliant hues in the Heriz
 living mahogany tones of the furniture, richly ornamented with
 and Chinese motifs. The claw-and-ball foot on many pieces—
 ons and fire screen—derives from Oriental designs of a
 ing a jewel. On the piecrust table at center is Thomas
 g desk. A rare New England blockfront, slant-top desk
 r beneath the portrait of Benjamin Franklin.

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White House Collections Manager to Mrs. Register, 10 March 1999

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 10, 1999

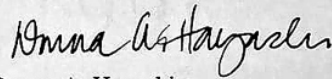
Dear Mrs. Register:

I am pleased to respond to your recent telephone inquiry regarding the chairs you loaned to the White House during the 1970s.

We are unable to send you a color photograph of the chairs but have instead enclosed a photocopy of a photograph of one of the chairs taken in 1971 (There were no photographs taken of the entire set). Also, we were unable to locate the May 23, 1963 Christies of London catalog in our files. I suggest you contact the archives at Christies to inquire if they would be able to photocopy the entry in the catalog you are interested in.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Donna A. Hayashi
Collections Manager

Mrs. Levon C. Register
Post Office Box 377
Franklin Springs, Georgia 30639