

Finch & C^o



A VERY RARE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, SOUTH AFRICAN STINKWOOD MILITARY COURT MARTIAL OR OFFICERS MESS CHAIR
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CIRCA 1830-1840

SIZE: 83CM HIGH

LITERATURE

ORIGINALLY THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY ENVISAGED THE SOUTHERN TIP OF AFRICA AS 'A RENDEZVOUS AND STRONG-HOLD'. A MEETING PLACE FOR THE SHIPS ENGAGED IN THE LUCRATIVE TRADE BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS AND BATAVIA, AND A FORT TO PROTECT IT.

BY 1750 THE CAPE COLONY COMPRISED 47,000 PEOPLE, OVER HALF OF WHOM WERE SLAVES. A DISTINCTIVE COLONIAL CULTURE BEGAN TO APPEAR IN LOCAL ARCHITECTURE AND FURNITURE MAKING. IN 1806 WHEN THE BRITISH TOOK OVER THE CAPE, THE AREA HAD ALREADY MADE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF SOUTH AFRICA

THIS CHAIR HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS AN OFFICER'S MESS CHAIR AS, WITHOUT THE LEFT ARM, IT ALLOWED THE SITTER IN FULL DRESS UNIFORM TO WEAR A SWORD, OR MORE POSSIBLY IT IS A COURT MARTIAL CHAIR SO THE ACCUSED COULD BE SEATED IN FULL MILITARY ATTIRE.

STINKWOOD IS PARTICULARLY RESILIENT TO PESTS AND IS INDIGENOUS TO SOUTH AFRICA. THE UNDERSIDE OF THE SEAT IS MADE OF RAWHIDE STRAPS, WHICH WAS A DEVICE USED SOLELY AT THE CAPE.