



Bride's box or dower's chest

Date

1796

Primary Maker

Artist not recorded

Medium

wood, paint, leather twine

Description

This bride's box, or dowry chest, is constructed in the traditional bentwood style, held together with braided leather twine. It is decorated with floral motifs and a

printed marriage scene depicting a man in a red outfit and a woman in a light blue dress, and it bears an inscription in Fraktur script. German bride's boxes served both practical and symbolic purposes. Traditionally given to a bride as part of her dowry or wedding gifts, these boxes were used to store personal belongings such as linens, clothing, or keepsakes that she would bring into her new household. Beyond their practical use, bride's boxes were deeply symbolic—they represented love, commitment, and the transition from maidenhood to married life. Often elaborately painted and inscribed with names, dates, and blessings, they also served as cherished keepsakes and family heirlooms, preserving memories of the wedding and the couple's union for future generations.