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# A LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY OAK AND ELM CURVED BACON SETTLE,

West Country,

the paneled front opening to reveal cupboard above base, the seat of sliding panels opening to reveal further cupboard space below, on sledge feet.

DIMENSIONS: 183.5cm (72<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" ) High, 146cm (57<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" ) Wide, 82cm (32<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" ) Deep

STOCK CODE: 74906



## HISTORY

This piece is typical of much farmhouse and country furniture by being multipurpose - in this case a seat, storage and room divider. Another example of this in stock at LASSCO Brunswick House is the Irish Coop Dresser (currently on the first floor) which, as well as being used for the display of the families finest china and the usual storage of cutlery and utensils, was where chickens and hens were kept to provide them with warmth and protect them from predators.

Whilst such high backed settles are traditionally associated with the hanging and curing of bacon, this is somewhat disputed - David Knell, in his book English Country Furniture 1500-1900 sights this as bucolic fantasy, stating, '...it seems unlikely that that was invariably their purpose and the storage of outdoor clothing presents itself as an obvious, if more mundane, alternative.' What is accepted is the fact that settles, those with hanging space and those without, were used as room dividers. With typical West Country farmhouses' principle

living rooms (invariably the kitchen) having a door directly to the outside, such pieces, when placed between this and the fire provided a screen from the draughts, creating a cosy and warm environment around the hearth.

Such pieces of furniture have been found exclusively in the West Country and Wales and one of the tell-tale signs is the use of sledge feet, generally associated with furniture from Somerset and Devon.

For further reading see Gabriel Olive, *Farm and Cottage Furniture in the West Country*, The Regional Furniture Society, 2002.