

Verbatim from page 6 of *Don Troiani's Soldiers in America, 1754 – 1865*.  
Close-Up of halberd head is also shown on page 6.

## Halberd Tomahawk

Among the ample array of weapons available to the American Indian warrior of the eighteenth century, none captures popular imagination as does the war ax, or tomahawk. The battle weapon of choice for close-quarter combat, it begot a host of distinctive variations. Although the pipe and spike tomahawks are probably the best known today, the halberd, or battle-ax, type may have been equally prevalent during the eighteenth century. European artists frequently show this pattern in paintings and engravings, notably the mezzotint portrait of the Mohawk chief King Hendrick published before his death at the Battle of Lake George in 1755 and *The Death of General Wolfe*, by Benjamin West.

The design is essentially a European military halberd, reduced somewhat in size with a much shortened haft. Most specimens had a head forged of one piece of shell and featured a splayed blade at the front, a dagger or spear point at the top, and a long, curved spike at the back, assuring the user a variety of equally gruesome death-dealing options. The spike was particularly adapted for puncturing skulls. Although they were common in their day, few examples have survived the ravages of hard usage and the passage of the years. Many have been reworked or discarded as they fell from favor toward the early nineteenth century.

The presentation specimen shown here bears an inscription on the flat of the blade, "WCT to GWM," in addition to the appropriate decorations of crossed arrows and bows. The height from the base of the forged socket to the tip of the dagger is ten inches. Extremely well crafted, this fine piece may have been given as a token of friendship or respect to parties now unknown. A few similar specimens are extant in institutions and private collections.



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### About

Auction: [Sale #2856M - 2856M](#)

Location: Marlborough

Date / Time : October 30, 2015 4:00PM

### Description:

**Halberd Tomahawk**, c. early 19th century, forged steel head with curved front blade, engraved on one side with a Federal-style shield and crossed arrows on the point above, the other side engraved *W.C.T./to/G.W.M.* with a bow on the point, with a wooden haft, overall lg. 23 1/4 in.

**Estimate \$3,000-5,000**

*In overall very good condition, with some age consistent patina and imperfections.*

*The absence of a condition statement does not imply that the lot is in perfect condition or completely free from wear and tear, imperfections or the effects of aging. Condition requests can be obtained via email (lot inquiry button) or by telephone to the appropriate gallery location (Boston/617.350.5400 or Marlborough/508.970.3000). Any condition statement given, as a courtesy to a client, is only an opinion and should not be treated as a statement of fact. Skinner Inc. shall have no responsibility for any error or omission.*

#### Keywords

Arrow, Axes, Blade weapons, Bow and arrow, Dagger-axe, Halberd, Hilt, Tomahawk