

Basic Detail Report



Title Desk and Bookcase

Date 1786-1790

Primary Maker Eliphalet Chapin

Medium Cherry primary wood, white pine and maple secondary wood, glass,

brass hardware

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Description Scroll-top desk and bookcase. Bookcase has English-style glazed

panels with overlapping mitred doors (vertically slanted inner edge), above a

narrow bosom drawer. The oxbow lower case has four equivalent size drawers,

the top drawer a pullout butler's, or secretary drawer, which pivots forward to

reveal the interior. The interior includes drawers and pigeonholes with a double-

blocked drawer on the left side. The "balls" pediment features small, carved

spheres integrated into carrot-shaped openings. The urn-shaped finials are

original; the carved rosettes are appropriate but are later restorations. Design

and Construction Details: Quarter columns are assembled from three pieces: a

turned capital and base with a fluted column in between. The flutes extend into

the capital and base with a clearly visible seam where they are joined.

Backboards are slid into grooves in the case sides and top or bottom.

“Quadrant base” construction of the base. The front ogee feet are joined

together at the corners with concealed dovetails (invisible from the outside) and

mounted on a large quarter-round horizontal block (quadrant) that is nailed to a

3-sided frame which incorporates the base molding. This frame, in turn, is nailed

to the case bottom. The rear feet are supported by a right angle brace with

exposed vertical dovetails, visible from the rear, and similarly mounted on a

quadrant block. The feet splay (angle outward) by approximately 7°. Condition:

There are various repairs and signs of wear, but, except for the restored upper

half of the pediment, the piece is essentially intact. The brasses are replaced but

stylistically correct. Please see attached essay by the Chapin authority, Dr.

Thomas P. Kugelman for more information about this piece.

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Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height): 102 3/4in. (261cm) Upper Case

(height x width x depth): 56 3/4 x 41 3/4 x 3/4in. (144.1 x 106 x 1.9cm) Lower Case

(height x width x depth): 46 x 42 1/8 x 18 1/2in. (116.8 x 107 x 47cm)