

Basic Detail Report



Title Dressing Table

Date probably made in 1783

Primary Maker Eliphalet Chapin

Medium Cherry primary wood, eastern white pine secondary wood, brass

hardware

Description Cherry dressing table in the Chippendale, or rococo, style. The dressing table has characteristics associated with the Eliphalet Chapin shop of East Windsor. The top has ovolo, or thumbnail, molding at the top edge of the front and sides; below this is additional molding. The drawer arrangement consists of one full-width drawer over three drawers in a line. The central lower drawer is taller than the side drawers and has applied carving in the shape of

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initials, "AL"; the letters are embellished with trailing vines and finely carved

leaves. Each front corner of the case has a fluted quarter column. The front skirt

has a hanging quarter circle flanked by a fillet, a small cyma curve, or S-curve,

and a deep cyma curve. Each side skirt has a flathead arch in the center flanked

by two descending quarter circles. Each cabriole leg is short and ends in a claw-

and-ball foot. Hardware on the top drawer consists of a blind brass lock

escutcheon in the center, flanked by an escutcheon with bail pull. The lower

center drawer has a blind brass lock escutcheon over the applied carving and a

small brass knob below. Each side drawer has a brass escutcheon with bail pull.

Condition: The brasses are original. The top has some staining and scratches.

Design and Construction Details: The top is formed from two boards. It has

thumbnail molding above a fillet and cove at the front and sides. The top is

attached to the case with screws from below. Cornice molding nailed to the top

of the case sides consists of a fillet, cove, and bead; the nails are concealed by

toeing-in the nails from the top surface of the cornice. The case is made with

mortise-and-tenon construction; stacked vertical glue blocks secure the front

and side mortise-and-tenon joints on the interior of the case. The backboard is

tenoned into the leg posts. There is a rail above the top drawer. The quarter

columns are constructed in three parts: turned capital; fluted column; and

turned base. The rounded ends of the fillets terminate on the capital and base.

The knee returns each have a cyma curve profile and are nailed to the underside

of the skirt. The ball of each foot is slightly flattened; the talons at the end of

each toe are wedge-shaped. The rail, drawer divider, and skirt are tenoned into

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the leg posts. The vertical partitions are tenoned into the drawer divider above and the skirt below. The side drawer runners and drawer guides, formed from a single piece of wood, are screwed to the sides of the case. The center drawer runners and guides are tenoned through the backboard. The drawer fronts are lip-molded on all four sides with ovolo molding. The drawer sides have a bead at the outside edge of the top. Each drawer bottom fits into grooves on the front and sides of each drawer and is nailed at the back. The drawer dovetail pins are relatively small and have little angle. Please see attached essay by the Chapin authority, Dr. Thomas P. Kugelman for more information about this piece.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall height x width x depth): 31 3/8 x 34 7/8 x 21 5/8in. (79.7 x 88.6 x 54.9cm)