

REPORT
November 17, 2022

On August 1, 2022, Graham Arader asked me for my written opinion on the identity and authenticity of a Rhode Island mahogany drop-leaf table, furniture inventory number 348. This report summarizes my observations and opinions.

Drop-leaf or dining table

Newport, Rhode Island, 1780-95

Mahogany; maple frame, white pine corner blocks

28-1/8 x 60-1/4 x 21-3/4 (open, 59-5/8)

The dense, fine-grain mahogany, a rectilinear form, and fluted Marlborough legs readily identify this table as a product of one of the several furniture-making establishments in Newport, Rhode Island. Its dating after 1780 acknowledges the research of Michael Moses, who stated that he could find no documented uses of fluted Marlborough legs before the Revolutionary War (*Master Craftsmen of Newport: The Townsends and Goddards* [1984], p. 13). The Marlborough legs have chamfers cut on the inside corners, which reduces the heavy appearance of the leg when viewed from an angle. The frame, constructed of maple with mahogany ends, is held together with rose-head nails. An applied bead runs along the bottom of the end rails and across the end faces of the legs. A small section has split off an end of one of the beads.

The deep, heavy table leaves are supported by opposing legs that swing outward on rails attached to the frame by wooden hinges. Three iron hinges on each side of the fixed center leaf originally held each drop-leaf. All hinges remain in place, but the middle hinges on each side lack one of the hinge plates and are therefore ineffective. One of the swing legs has a repaired break where it joins the swing rail. Evidence shows that the break was once repaired with an iron strap at the very top, immediately under the tabletop. The strap has been removed. The center leaf, attached to the frame by screws, sits loosely on the frame.

An early 20th century label with the name "Austin" is glued onto one of the side rails behind the hinged swing rail. The name is likely that of a former owner whose identity is now unknown. The table was owned by Israel Sack, Inc., and is illustrated as fig. P3600 in *American Antiques from The Israel Sack Collection*, vol. 4, p. 891. The Sack firm sold the table to collectors Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Hennage in 1980. They in turn bequeathed it to Colonial Williamsburg (acc. no. 1991-77), from where it was deaccessioned. The table is listed as RIF 1596 in the Rhode Island Furniture database created and maintained by the Yale University Art Gallery.