

Federal Brass and Rosewood-Inlaid Mahogany Lyre-Base work Table
Possibly by Charles-Honore Lannuier
New York, 1815



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VERY FINE FEDERAL BRASS-INLAID MAHOGANY WORK TABLE

Possibly by Charles Honoré Lannuier (active 1803-1819)

New York c.1815

The cross banded lidded top above a conforming two drawer case opening to a compartmentalized interior with adjustable writing surface and mirror plate on the underside of the top, the drawers flanked by rosewood panels inlaid with brass stringing forming Gothic arches and with a brass string inlay in the bead at the base of the case. The case supported by lyres with brass strings at each end raised on a trestle base with reeded, down-swept saber legs terminating in carved animal-paw feet on brass casters connected by a shaped, veneered stretcher.

H: 33¼" W: 24¼" D: 17¼"

Condition: *Excellent; about half of the brass stringing flanking the drawers and most of the stringing at the bottom edge of the case has been replaced. Small veneer chips to front edge of top repaired and mirror molding may be replaced. The brass drawer pulls are replacements and abrasions on the drawers from later pulls have been restrained to blend. Veneered surfaces have been cleaned and polished with shellac in the manner of the period and solid mahogany has been waxed.*

This work table, probably inspired by plate 193 of *Mémoires de la Commission des Meubles et Objets de Gout*, is very closely related to a work table attributed to Honoré Lannuier and illustrated in Peter M. Kenny, Frances F. Bretter and Ulrich Leben, *Honoré Lannuier: Cabinetmaker from Paris* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), p.157.

The case against Lannuier: The two tables (this and the one attributed to Lannuier) have been compared side-by-side and, in addition to the relatively small but obvious differences in dimensions and other obvious differences such as the design of the legs, swan heads, bronze escutcheon mount, stretcher and number of drawers, subtler but important differences are also clear: the proportions of the design are different with the case of the attributed table being shorter and the lyre base taller, the lyres themselves are a different proportion with the attributed lyres having a wider stance at their base which relates to those on Lannuier-attributed card tables. The case construction is visible on the attributed table because the bead at the bottom of the case is applied to its side where as the present table's bead extends in under the case all the way to the interior, is mitered at the corners and is fastened to the underside, hiding the case construction. The dovetails are also different, the attributed table having dovetails that are uniformly thin whereas the present table has dovetails that are very pointed and fine at their base but flare in the style of Phyfe. All of the above suggest that this table was made by another top quality New York cabinet shop, possibly Phyfe's. Shop practices should be consistent even when designs diverge.

The case for: This basic design was not a popular one used by many cabinetmakers; indeed, these are the only two of this design known. The design of the interiors is identical, down to the specific arrangement of compartments and the mirror. The molded plinth at the bottom of the lyres is virtually identical on both tables. The casters, not the type typically used on New York pieces of the period, are identical on both tables. It is difficult to explain both the obvious as well as the subtler similarities of the tables without hypothesizing that they had a cabinetmaker in common.

It has been well established that carvers and journeymen of the period moved from shop to shop and this fact may well explain the remarkable similarities in two tables made in different shops yet it begs the question, if this is so, is the attributed table any more the product of Lannuier than the present example?

Having compared in detail the two closely related tables, one can conclude that the present example is as beautifully conceived and made, if not more so, than the table attributed to Honoré Lannuier and survives in better original condition. Further, there is compelling evidence, there being no exact pattern book design of this form in any of the period directories, that the tables are connected by more than coincidence. [supportFootnotes](#) [1] [endof](#)

Provenance:

The Hatfield family, Red Bark, N.J., prior to 1920

Mrs. J. Amory Haskell (1864-1942), Red Bank, New Jersey

As indicated by the chalk inscription, the table was formerly part of the renowned collection of Mrs. J. Amory Haskell. Born Margaret Moore Riker, she married Jonathan Amory Haskell in 1891 and in 1907, the couple removed to Monmouth County New Jersey where they built a Georgian Revival home called Oak Hill Farm. Mrs. Haskell amassed a vast collection of Americana and at the sale of her estate at Parke-Burnet Galleries in 1944; it took over 25 days to auction over 7,000 items. In her obituary, she was remembered as "one of this generation's greatest collectors of antiques." Much of her collection has found its way to the nation's great art museums.

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<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[1]<!--[endif]--> Pierre de La M^onsang^ore published designs in *Collection de Meubles et Objets de Go^ut* for a Vide-Poches (pl. 193) (the most closely related), and Toilette (pl. 197) in 1805 and in 1814 a Tricoteuse and Table de Travail in plate 387 with lyre supports yet none of these closely resemble the work table attributed to Lannuier and would have required another maker to interpret or extrapolate from all these designs in the same way to have synthesized the present table.

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