

# Basic Detail Report

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## Violin

### Date

1940-1955 ca.

### Primary Maker

Jackson-Guldan Violin Company

### Description

According to Lothar Meisel, violins that did not pass inspection at Jackson-Guldan were made into flower-pot violins, which were sold through Sears. I have not

identified them in any Sears catalog so far. (In the 1930 catalog, Sears offered German instruments, some by Hermann Geipel, in 1936 Geipel violins and Czech instruments, and in 1941 “American made” instruments, though by 1956, violins are listed as “Made in Germany,” suggesting that Sears reverted to European suppliers again after the War.) The internal construction, with corner blocks and no linings, matches labeled Jackson-Guldan violins in the Museum’s collections. The one-piece-semi-slab cut top is not typical of finished violins by JGV Co., indicating that these instruments may have been a combination of rejected parts and non-functional cosmetic components made from scrap wood, such as this top. The machine-carving process would have minimized the expense of creating a “mock” top. The lack of a bassbar suggests that this violin was destined to become a flower pot rather than an instrument before it was assembled. According to Lothar Meisel, the violin is in original condition with the exception of the bridge, which he added after the original gold-spray-painted bridge was lost. He and his father were given the instrument ca. 1955 while he was living in Cleveland. They visited the Jackson-Guldan factory in Columbus soon after acquiring the instrument, ca. 1955-1956. The factory was supervised by a German, Wolfgang Ritter, at that time. Lothar stated that teachers began to complain to the ASTA about the poor quality of the JGV Co. violins, and that there was correspondence between the Association and JGV. Soon after, JGV Co. was out of business. Matthew Benz of the Ohio historical society provided the following information on June 26, 2003: “Regarding your request for information on the Jackson-Guldan Violin Company, I did some quick research for you and located the company in the 1920-1921 Columbus City Directory. At that time, G.J.Guldan is listed as Vice President and W.R. Clymer as Treasurer (located in Cleveland, apparently). No other officers are listed. In the 1935 directory, Clymer is listed as President and Roy N. Baily as Vice, with Frances L. Jackson Secretary/Treasurer. I couldn't find a listing for the company in 1959.” The loop from which the violin can be hung is attached with an original Phillips head screw. Henry F. Phillips filled a patent application for this head in 1934, and was awarded U. S. Patent No. 2,046,343 in 1936. The original nylon strings on NMM 10,453 (not viable for playing) date to after late 1939, when Wallace Carothers’s invention (U. S. Pat. No. 2,130,948, filed April 9, 1937, awarded Sept. 20, 1938) was first marketed by DuPont, according to the DuPont website. These features suggest that the earliest possible date of manufacture is ca. 1940. Violin with center treble rib removed and metal flower

vase installed in the opening. Copper loop affixed to upper treble corner of back for hanging. Top: one-piece, semi-slab-cut spruce: wide grain Back: one-piece maple: plain; copper loop affixed to upper treble corner of back for hanging Ribs: quarter-cut maple: medium curl; center treble rib cut away to accommodate flower pot; rib corners deeply chamfered Head and neck: maple; neck spray-painted gold; groove in base of neck under fingerboard Edging: not scooped Purfling: none Varnish: spray-painted gold and over-painted with ivory paint on body, pegbox and scroll, the prominent craquelure revealing the gold painted underneath Fingerboard: hardwood; spray-painted gold; over-painted with ivory paint on underside and edges over body Nut: hardwood; spray-painted gold Tailpiece: hardwood; tulip-shaped; short saddle carved from top; prominent rounded ridge on lower face; spray-painted gold Tailgut: red gut Pegs: four hardwood; spray-painted gold Saddle: hardwood; spray-painted gold and over-painted with ivory, the prominent craquelure revealing the gold painted underneath Endpin: hardwood; spray-painted gold and over-painted with ivory, the prominent craquelure revealing the gold painted underneath F-holes: no notches; lined on inside with black canvas spray-painted ivory Linings: none Corner blocks: probably basswood Top block: probably basswood Bottom block: probably basswood Bassbar: none Other: gold-spray-painted steel flower pot box, 76mm by 78mm by 26mm, hung from back with a J-hook into opening in center treble rib; green and red plastic holly in flower pot; machine carving marks visible on inside of top and back

### **Dimensions**

Back length: 355 mm Total violin length: 599 mm Upper bout width: 165 mm Stop length: 191 mm Center bout width: 107 mm Vibrating string length: 324 mm Lower bout width: 207 mm Neck length (bottom of nut to ribs): 138 mm Upper rib height: 30-32 mm Center rib height: 30-32 mm Lower rib height: 30-32 mm