

Basic Detail Report



Bass viol

Date

1812-1860 ca.

Description

The top was microscopically identified as spruce by John Koster, 1/10/07. The screw-tipped auger marks in the pegbox are from a tool invented by Ezra L'Hommedieu in 1809. According to Samuel C. Silliman's history of the Town of Chester in *The History of Middlesex County 1635-1885*, L'Hommedieu and his brother Joshua established a gimlet factory there in 1812, which was taken over by Russell Jennings, who patented improvements to the auger bit in the 1850s. It is likely that NMM 11665 was made after these augers were widely available following the construction of the factory. Top: two-piece spruce cut slightly off-the-quarter: wide, irregular grain; not notched

at neck position Back: one-piece, slab-cut maple: prominent, verybroad curl Ribs: maple cut off-the-quarter: broad curl; ribs set into grooves in top and back Head and neck: maple: faint, narrow curl; pegbox fluting continues onto volutes, resulting in a rounded appearance; l'Hommedieu patented auger marks on inside of pegbox (see information in file); neck and original beech shim hollowed all the way to pegbox Arching: top arching flattened at center Purfling: none Edging: edging profile not rounded under fingerboard Varnish: medium brown Fingerboard: black-stained beech; wedge shaped; chamfered underside on lower end; original black-stained beech shim Nut: black-stained hardwood Tailpiece: missing Pegs: missing Saddle: missing; extended deep into top Endpin: missing F-holes: curved, pointed wings; rounded notch corners Linings: none; blocks with triangular end profiles between ribs and back Corner blocks: spruce; very small Top block: integral with neck; wider at joint with top; extended foot over platform carved from wood of back; flat-headed steel screw through block foot into back platform, probably later Bottom block: maple; divided into two pieces at lower rib joint; very narrow Bassbar: very wide; extends all the way top upper and lower ribs Other: marks in top from two bridge positions, one high (370 mm stop) and one low (402 mm stop); screw-tipped auger marks in pegbox

Dimensions

Total violoncello length: 1194 mm Back length: 747 mm Upper bout width: 352 mm Center bout width: 255 mm Lower bout width: 448 mm Neck length (bottom of nut to ribs): 263 mm Upper rib height: 106-112 mm Center rib height: 105-112 mm Lower rib height: 106-112 mm Stop length: 390 mm Vibrating string length: 653 mm Neck length (bottom of nut to ribs): 263 mm