**CAPE COD TIMES**

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**JFK's table to be served up at auction**

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This furniture, used by generations of Kennedys in Hyannisport, will be auctioned Saturday in Nantucket.**Rafael Osona Auctions**

**By** [**Gwenn Friss**](javascript:NewWindow(575,480,'/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=gfriss',0))

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**August 01, 2013**

There was nothing unusual about the chowder that Rafael and Gail Osona had for lunch last week, but the table they ate it on is another story — actually, many stories — from the era some call America's Camelot.

"Boy, if this table could talk," Rafael Osona said in a telephone interview from Nantucket, where the dining room tables and chairs, as well as a side table, from President John F. and first lady Jacqueline Kennedy's Hyannisport home will be sold Saturday by his family's auction house, Rafael Osona Auctions.

**Nantucket auction**

9:30 a.m. Saturday, American Legion Hall, 21 Washington St., Nantucket. Previews from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and Friday. Phone bids will be accepted, but preregistration is required 24 to 36 hours before the auction at [www.rafaelosonaauction.com/](http://www.rafaelosonaauction.com/).

The Kennedy pieces comprise a pair of American Queen Anne curly maple drop leaf tables made in the 1760s to 1770s in New England. Combined, the two measure 112 inches by 47 inches and seat 12 people comfortably. Accompanying the tables are an assembled group of 10 New England hickory and pine American Windsor chairs and an 18th-century tavern table. The furniture was used by the Kennedys in their Hyannisport compound.

Source: Catalog for the annual Americana, Fine Art and Marine Auction

Bidding will start at $65,000 on lot 222A — two American Queen Anne drop-leaf tiger maple "kissing" tables that push together to create seating for 12, as well as 10 American Windsor chairs from the 18th and 19th century, Osona said. A rectangular tavern table from the late 18th century will likely start at "a couple of thousand," he said.

The furniture was among items the Kennedys' daughter, Caroline Kennedy, had auctioned by Sotheby's in February 2005. Her brother, John F. Kennedy Jr. and his wife, Carolyn Bessette, had been renovating the Irving Avenue house where the table was used when they died in a 1999 plane crash.

Records supplied Wednesday by Tanya Hayes, assistant vice president of single-owner sales at Sotheby's, showed the 32-inch-wide American maple and pine tavern table with a restored top was listed at $300 to $500, but sold for $4,500. The dining tables and chairs were sold separately, bringing $64,800 — more than seven times the $9,100 that was on the high end of the appraisals.

The dining tables are unusual, Osona said, because the six sections that come together to form the top are cut from the same tree so the grain matches perfectly. Still, he estimated the set would fetch only $20,000 or so were it not for the historical value of America's first family sitting around it. The furniture was bought in the 2005 auction, Osona said, by a "very private" Cape Cod resident who now wants to see it sell as a set, perhaps to a museum where more people can see it.

Osona has gotten a jump on that.

Excited to sell his first Kennedy items (a late addition to the 178-page catalog for his annual Americana, Fine Art and Marine Auction), he has welcomed friends and vacationing families to come in and take photographs of themselves with the Kennedys' dining table. Some have sat in the Windsor chairs.

"People stop and they gasp. Parents call the kids in to see it," Osona said. "It is so touchable, so approachable. It shows that the Kennedys lived, here, like everybody else."

"I think I will rope it off (for the preview), but I will let everybody take pictures," he added.

No stranger to rare, big-ticket items (he sold a Nantucket basket for a record-breaking $115,000 and has a jade-covered urn, possibly from China's Imperial City in this auction), Osona still took a moment with the first family's dining room table.

"It's one of those key pieces of furniture for a family. They likely planned the first presidential campaign here. I can just see the table strewn with papers, with Rose, Teddy and Bobby sitting around it... You want to sit in a chair and look to your right and left and imagine who is sitting there," Osona said.

"It's kind of magical."