



HEARTHSTONE RECEIVES ORIGINAL WEAVING COLLECTION FROM AMERICAN TEXTILE HISTORY MUSEUM

February 2017---With the sad news of the closing of the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts comes the good news that all the weaving equipment that Francis Talbot left to the Museum upon her passing in 1975 is being donated back to Hearthside. Her will specified that the collection would go to her nephew William Talbot should something happen to the Museum. In turn, William has signed the entire collection over to Hearthside, as was his wish ever since he first discovered that his grandparents' house had been turned into a museum.

The collection includes six additional large looms, a warping frame, several spinning wheels, winders, and other weaving equipment, most of which date to the mid-1700s. Also in the collection are a variety of coverlets and fragments that show examples of different patterns that the Talbots produced. Shawls, dating to the mid-19th century, are included in the collection as well. It is thought that these may have been heirlooms from the family's ancestors, who were merchants in the China Trade and could have been brought here from their travels abroad. When Francis Talbot passed away, it meant the end to the family weaving business, which at that time was located in Philadelphia.

“What makes this collection so meaningful is that all of this antique equipment was here at Hearthside and used by the Talbots while operating their business “The Hearthside Looms” in the very same space on the third floor from 1904-1926,” states Hearthside president Kathy Hartley. “The fact that the Talbots were at the forefront of the Arts & Crafts movement in this country and were so widely recognized for the high quality of their hand woven goods make this

gift an extraordinary addition to our museum,” she adds. “While a house museum may receive items that were once part of the household, it is extremely rare that such a complete collection comes back home again.”

The attic exhibit has expanded into a third room where classes in hand weaving, spinning, and embroidery will take place beginning in late spring. Modern table top looms, books and materials were also donated by the American Textile History Museum to aid in Hearthside’s mission to keep these traditional arts alive.

“In addition to hand weaving, both Katherine Talbot and her daughter Frances were especially skilled in embroidery, which they added to pieces such as altar cloths and wall hangings that were commissioned by churches throughout the country,” adds Hartley.

Visitors may view the third floor weaving exhibit during any of our tours, with demonstrations taking place whenever possible. An announcement for the start-up of classes will be forthcoming as arrangements are completed.

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