Our former print newsletter, *The Glessner Journal*, is no longer being produced. In place of that publication, we started issuing an e-newsletter in April 2020. Since we do not have an email address for you (or you indicated your preference for a print copy), we are summarizing some of the highlights of the issues published from April through June. We hope you enjoy reading through the articles and will go online to read our blog articles and other web content and look at our YouTube videos. The e-newsletter is currently being issued via email on the first and third Wednesday of each month. If you would like to start receiving our e-newsletter, or no longer need to receive the print newsletter, please contact William Tyre at wtyre@glessnerhouse.org.

**Thank you Donors!**
We wish to express our deepest thanks to all of the individuals and organizations who made donations to Glessner House during the first six months of 2022. This also includes everyone who contributed to the in-person and online auctions for A Walk Through Time. Thank you! To view the list of donors, please visit: [www.glessnerhouse.org/2022-donors](http://www.glessnerhouse.org/2022-donors)

**A Walk Through Time**
Our annual tour of Prairie Avenue mansions took place on Sunday, June 12, after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. Nearly 500 people, almost twice what we last had in 2019, came for the event that included interior tours of the landmark houses and the first peek inside the Marshall Field, Jr. house, followed by a reception back at Glessner House with live jazz music and a silent auction. Our deepest thanks to everyone who supported the event, and especially our wonderful homeowner for opening their properties for everyone to enjoy!

**Geothermal System Goes Live**
On June 30, our geothermal system went fully live, providing air conditioning throughout the house for the first time in its 135 year history. The current phase of the project, begun in early 2021 with the digging of four 500-foot deep wells in the courtyard, was financed by a generous $350,000 Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Our project was just one of 14 funded out of 60 applications received. Interior work on the project, which involved the installation of seven heat pumps along with related piping and ductwork, began in late February and was completed by Advanced Geothermal, under the supervision of Mark Nussbaum of Architectural Consulting Engineers. Electrical upgrades were completed by RNL Electric.

Due to the significant increase in cost for both labor and equipment since our application was submitted in January 2020, some elements were eliminated from the current scope of work, which we hope to undertake in 2023 if additional funding is secured. These include the addition of humidifier units, reactivation of the brass wall-mounted radiator in the schoolroom, and the installation of a heat pump to replace the aging furnace unit in the coach house.
UPCOMING PROGRAMS
For a full listing and to register online, visit GlessnerHouse.org or call 312-326-1480

CLASSICAL COURTYARD CONCERTS
Pack your picnic basket, grab your blanket and chairs, and chill your favorite beverages, it's time once again for Courtyard Concerts at Glessner House.

Attendees will receive a special snack box prepared by the Glessners’ beloved cook, Mattie Williamson.

Doors open at 6:00pm, concert begins at 6:30pm. Seating is not provided. The music will conclude around 7:30pm. In the event of inclement weather, the concert will be moved into our coach house.

$50 per person / $40 for members
Please note that dogs are not allowed at the concerts.

THE CHEN STRING QUARTET
Wednesday, August 10, 2022

The Chen String Quartet has been playing together for six years. Robert Chen has been concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1999. Laura Chen is a former member of the first violin section of both Lyric Opera and Grant Park Symphony. Beatrice Chen is a viola student at The Curtis Institute of Music. Noah Chen is a student of Clara Kim at Juilliard Pre-college.

JOHN SHARP AND FRIENDS
Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Our concert will feature CSO principal cellist John Sharp, joined by CSO violist Lawrence Neuman, and Lyric Opera violinist Liba Shacht. They will perform a variety of works written for string ensemble. A rare opportunity to hear these world-class musicians in the intimate setting of the Glessner courtyard.
Secrets of Glessner House
Part 28: Before there was a Glessner House, Part 1
This is the first of two installments discussing the history of the land on which Glessner House was built. As part of our commitment to acknowledge the indigenous peoples who resided at the south end of Lake Michigan for hundreds of years prior to white settlement, we begin with a discussion of the Potawatomi nation, which, along with the Odawa and Ojibwe, formed the Council of the Three Fires. The present site of Chicago was the traditional homeland of the Council, as well as other tribes.

Secrets of Glessner House
Part 29: Before there was a Glessner House, Part 2
Our previous video concluded with the Potawatomi being forced into relinquishing their remaining lands in Illinois. More than 6,000 tribesmen assembled in Chicago in 1833, when the lands were formally ceded by treaty. Two years later, Billy Caldwell escorted his people west, where they settled along the east bank of the Missouri River near present day Council Bluffs, Iowa. Their removal cleared the way for the development of the town of Chicago. Interest in the area had been sparked earlier with the announcement of plans for the Illinois & Michigan Canal, resulting in the first map of the town being drawn by James Thompson in 1830. The original town was centered around the all-important Chicago River and extended north from Madison Street and west from State Street. In 1833, Dr. Elijah Harmon, first surgeon at Fort Dearborn, purchased 138 acres of land from the U.S. government, comprising the entire area around the future site of Glessner House, for $1.25 per acre.

Secrets of Glessner House
Part 30: The Parlor Wallcovering
In honor of May being National Preservation Month, we share the story of one of our most ambitious restoration projects – the recreation of the elaborate hand-painted wallcovering in the parlor. The original was painted in situ by the English artist William Pretyman while the Glessners were away at their summer estate in 1892. Composed of multiple layers of metallic paints and glazes atop decorator-grade burlap, the covering was later painted over when the house was occupied by a printing company. Our faithful reproduction, produced by The Grammar of Ornament in Denver, Colorado, was financed by generous bequests and memorial gifts honoring long-time docents Bunny Selig and Aileen Mandel.
Richard Nickel and Glessner House
April 13, 2022, marked the 50th anniversary of the tragic death of Richard Nickel in the partially demolished Chicago Stock Exchange building at 30 North LaSalle Street, where he was attempting to salvage ornament from the Adler & Sullivan masterpiece. Nickel’s impact on the emerging preservation movement in Chicago was enormous, including his efforts to save Glessner House in the 1960s. A talented photographer, he documented the work of Louis Sullivan and other architects, his outstanding photographs serving as an irreplaceable record of Chicago’s architectural heritage that was disappearing at an alarming rate during 1950s and 1960s urban renewal. This article focuses on Nickel’s close connection with Glessner House from the time it was threatened with demolition in 1965 until his death in 1972.

The Story of “Meditation” by Paul Dubois
In 1968, the Glessners’ grandchildren, John Glessner Lee and Martha (Lee) Batchelder, returned 143 items of furniture and decorative arts to the house, the first of many donations which have allowed us to restore the interior to its appearance during the Glessner family occupancy (1887-1936). Among the items in the first donation was a bronze sculpture of a seated man deep in thought which until recently was misidentified in the museum database. The record has been corrected. This is the story of that sculpture.

Elihu Vedder and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam
The Glessners assembled more than 8,000 books for the libraries in their Prairie Avenue and New Hampshire homes. Among the most distinctive volumes is a folio-size edition of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, designed and illustrated by the American artist Elihu Vedder in 1883-1884. The book received rave reviews upon its release, secured Vedder’s reputation as an artist, and provided him with financial security for the rest of his life. In this article, we will explore Vedder’s career, the creation of the Rubaiyat, how it came into the Glessner library, and their ongoing interest in the artist.
On March 25, 2022, more than 80 people gathered at Glessner House to celebrate the 144th anniversary of the birth of Frances Glessner Lee, the “mother of forensic science,” and to witness the unveiling of an accurate replica of “Unpapered Bedroom,” one of her famous Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death. The meticulous recreation is the work of talented miniaturist Drew Munao, who generously offered to make and donate the model. It is on permanent display in the schoolroom.

Frances Glessner Lee developed the idea of the Nutshells in the early 1940s, to provide a way for police officers to hone their skills in visual observation during the biannual Seminars in Homicide Investigation which she sponsored at Harvard Medical School. She hired a full-time carpenter, Ralph Mosher (and later his son Alton), to build the rooms and furniture, while she focused on the myriad inch-to-the-foot objects found throughout the rooms. Lee fully dressed the corpses (including underclothes), burned tiny cigarettes for the ashtrays, knit stockings and accessories with needles the size of straight pins, and wrote on letters and envelopes with a “pen” the width of a hair. She was also careful to accurately represent blood stains, bullet wounds, and the discoloration on the body.

Lee made a total of 19 Nutshells for Harvard, which were named after the police saying, “convict the guilty, clear the innocent, and find the truth in a Nutshell.” All contain at least one corpse who may have met their end through natural causes, an accident, suicide, or murder. After Harvard closed the Department of Legal Medicine in the late 1960s, the models were transferred to the Chief Medical Examiner’s Office in Baltimore, Maryland, where they are still used for training during the now renamed Frances Glessner Lee Seminars in Homicide Investigation.

“Unpapered Bedroom,” Lee’s 18th case, was reported to the “Nutshell Laboratories” on June 4, 1949, and involves the discovery of a deceased female in a rooming house, who had, two days earlier, checked in with her husband as Mr. and Mrs. John Smith. A brief statement from Bessie Collins, the landlady, was provided to police during the training; this was the only additional information they received beyond what they observed in the Nutshell. Police were tasked with how to confirm the identity of the woman and analyzing clues to determine the course of the investigation.

Our replica is the work of Drew Munao, a former actor, who utilized his interest in carpentry and antique restoration to craft the meticulous 1:12 scale model. Munao spent months on the project, studying countless detailed photos of the original, including the tiny objects in the wastebasket and on the vanity (not visible in the photo above) – cigarette packs, matches, orange peels, cosmetic containers, and a pill box. Hand tools and a Dremel were used to create everything seen in the room. The linoleum floor, area rug, and fabrics were accurately copied from the originals, and the corpse was dressed, with the face colored to indicate the possible cause of death. This is the only interactive model Lee made, so Munao also recreated the wire pull and tiny hinge that would allow the police to raise up the pillow next to the body to reveal an all important clue.

This is Munao’s second model to make its way into a museum collection. In 2020, he completed a 1:12 scale model of the Reading & Writing Room from the RMS Titanic, owned by the Titanic Historical Society and displayed at its Titanic Museum in Indian Orchard, Massachusetts.
On May 21, 2022, a walnut chest of drawers returned to the house for the first time since the Glessners lived here. The chest, crafted by Isaac Scott in 1877, was the “missing” piece of the bedroom suite he completed that year, while the Glessners were residing in their previous home on Washington Street.

As plans were developing for the new house on Prairie Avenue, consideration was given as to the placement of furniture. It was evidently decided that the chest would be placed along the east wall in Frances Glessner’s dressing room. This is very significant, because it is an example of how furniture can directly impact the design of a building. The dressing room contains two windows facing Prairie Avenue, but their sills are considerably higher than those in the adjacent bedroom. This is readily apparent when viewing the house from the exterior.

It was long thought that this was done to provide a level of privacy for Frances Glessner, who would have changed her clothes in the space, and this probably was a consideration. However, the placement of the dresser on this wall would have specifically dictated the placement of the windows so that the dresser would not block them.

Isaac Scott’s original sketch for the chest is shown above at left. It is a scaled drawing, so a quick measurement verifies that the full height of the piece was 50 inches. Measurements taken in the dressing room confirm that the edge of the trim at the bottom of the windows is exactly 50 inches above the floor. Clearly this is no coincidence – the windows were placed so that the trim would start immediately above the chest.

The chest was “found” in the Maryland home of the Glessners’ great-granddaughter, Percy Lee Langstaff, in 2017. She was surprised to learn the story of the piece, as her memories always connected it with her grandmother, Frances Glessner Lee, and her cottage at The Rocks. Langstaff didn’t realize the chest extended back another generation to Prairie Avenue. The occasion of the Baltimore study tour in May provided the opportunity to pick up the chest and return it to Chicago. As seen in the right image, at some point in its history, the elaborate top portion of the chest was removed and discarded. The missing gallery and carved elements were identical to those seen on the existing dresser and will be replicated. Patrick Burke, who is currently working on recreating our dining room table and sideboard, has agreed to restore the piece to its original appearance. We hope this can be done in 2023, and a campaign will be undertaken this fall to fund the work.

We are pleased to be able to return this important piece of furniture to its original location and are deeply grateful to the Langstaff family for donating it back to the house. We look forward to its restoration as a way of celebrating both the craftsmanship of Isaac Scott and Patrick Burke, who will employ Scott’s exacting methods to recreate the missing elements.
Update on new furniture for the dining room

Work is proceeding on the reproduction dining table and sideboard, being crafted by Patrick Burke at Atelier Burke in Newton, Wisconsin. To recap, the original furniture was designed in H. H. Richardson’s office and made by A. H. Davenport & Company in Boston. When the house was donated to the Armour Institute (now I.I.T.) in 1938, the dining room furniture was left in place, and it remained in the house when it was leased and eventually sold to the Lithographic Technical Foundation. When the Foundation moved out in 1965, they sold off the furniture and it has never been located. A generous lead gift, received in 2021, has allowed us to accurately recreate both table and sideboard in quartersawn oak. The image at right shows three of the five intricate carvings which have already been replicated. We hope to have the new furniture installed before the end of the year. Stay tuned for updates on this exciting project!

New rug for the dining room

As part of our plans to recreate the missing dining table and sideboard, a new rug was recently installed in the room, a generous gift of our good friends at Oscar Isberian Rugs. Measuring nearly 14 by 21 feet, the rug is almost identical in size to the original the Glessners selected for the room, and features a similar ecru field and six-part border. The rug was made about 1900 in the Bakhtiari region of southwest Iran. It is perfectly sized to accommodate the forthcoming reproduction oak table, which will open to 16 feet in length when fully extended.

Roof project completed

We are very pleased to announce the completion of our extensive roof assessment and repair program with a total investment of nearly $300,000. The project began in late 2020 with the first of two phases of assessments undertaken by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. to address a number of ongoing problems that have plagued the building for years. With both assessments in hand, two phases of work were developed and implemented in 2021 and 2022. The work finished this spring was funded by a generous $100,000 adopt-a-landmark grant from the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development.

Our deepest thanks to our wonderful contractors:
-Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (Sarah Van Domelen)
-Berglund Construction (Eric Dexter)
-Jones & Cleary (Thomas Cleary)

Interior repairs, including plastering, painting, and wallpapering, will be addressed during the upcoming winter season, once the walls have had time to dry out and we can confirm that all issues have been successfully resolved.
Ongoing ways to support and engage with Glessner House

Public tours are offered on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday at 11:30am, 1:00pm, and 2:30pm. You are also always welcome to take a virtual tour of the house online! The link is permanently posted at the top of our website home page.

Make a gift to our annual fund to provide ongoing operating support. Or become a member or renew your membership to receive valuable benefits and show your support for Glessner House.

Our online store offers a variety of publications that provide perfect reading material to learn more about Glessner House. Browse our shop online today.

Select Glessner House as your charity of choice while shopping on Amazon. Select Glessner House on the AmazonSmile page, and then continue shopping as you normally would.

Save the dates for our popular holiday events coming later this year:
October 28-29: Haunted Tours of Prairie Avenue
October 29: Edgar Allan Poe Readings
December 4: We Wish You a Mattie Christmas
December 10-11 and 17-18: Candlelight Christmas Tours

We hope everyone is having a great 2022, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

Bill Tyre, Executive Director & Curator