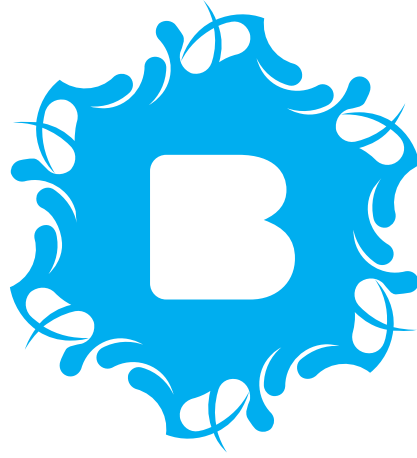


Press Release



February 2014

Two Brooklyn Museum Nineteenth-Century Period Rooms Get Makeover; Renovations to Be Completed in Late March

The Parlor and Library of the Colonel Robert J. Milligan House of Saratoga Springs, New York, have been conserved and refurbished for the first time since the two rooms were installed in the Brooklyn Museum in 1953 as a part of a group of late nineteenth-century American period rooms. In addition to repainting the rooms and laying bold tartan carpeting on the Library's previously bare wood floors, the Museum has restored and installed the Parlor's original chandelier and decorated the rooms with a select group of recently acquired objects and several furnishings original to the rooms but not previously on view in Brooklyn. The two rooms have been on public view throughout their facelift, which will be completed in late March.

The house from which the rooms come was built by Robert J. Milligan in 1854–56 and is still standing in Saratoga Springs. The rooms illustrate two of the diverse revival styles popular in interior decoration in mid-nineteenth century America: in the Parlor, the Louis XV Revival style, first developed in mid-eighteenth-century France and emphasizing curvilinear silhouettes and the realistic depiction of nature; and, in the Library, the Gothic Revival style.

The walls of the Parlor, painted gray since first installed, now sport a reproduced nineteenth-century French wallpaper and Rococo Revival lace curtains of a similar design. The previously bare walls of the Library are now covered with an ashlar faux stone design that contrasts with the colorful Scottish tartan design of the carpet. Popular interest in tartan patterns was inspired by Queen Victoria's refurbishment of Balmoral Castle in Scotland in the 1850s.

The Parlor was first installed with a modern re-creation of a Rococo Revival chandelier, but it has now been replaced with the original chandelier by Cornelius and Baker of Philadelphia, thanks to the discovery of an exact period duplicate of the chandelier's long-missing central female figural group. To reflect changing ideas about children during the late nineteenth century, a rare child's chair by John Henry Belter has also been added to the Parlor. In the Library, a pair of mismatched walnut Gothic side chairs and a rare marble top center table with cast iron bull's legs have been added.

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The Milligan Parlor and Library were a 1940 purchase that included much of their original furniture and objects, along with many of the bills of sale for the furnishings of the house. The latter provide unique and important documentation about the makers of the contents of the rooms.

Period rooms were first installed at the Brooklyn Museum in 1929 and have been augmented over the years. They consist of seventeenth-, eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth-century rooms, all from homes in the Eastern United States, ranging from two Dutch farmhouses from Brooklyn to a lavish twentieth-century Art Deco library-study from a Manhattan apartment. The Brooklyn Museum was a pioneer in the presentation of period rooms, which continues to be an important focus of the decorative arts collection.

The refurbishment of these rooms was organized by Barry R. Harwood, Ph. D., Curator of Decorative Arts. It has been made possible with generous support from the Barrie A. and Deedee Wigmore Foundation.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission:

Contribution \$12; students with valid I.D. and seniors \$8. Free to members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

Museum Hours:

Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; first Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Directions:

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.