

What Life Was Like

Another thing you might notice in some of the walls of the Hermitage are little white buttons. These are Servant Call Buttons. By pushing one of these buttons, Mr. and Mrs. Sloane could make a bell ring so a servant would know that they needed something. In the early 1900s when the Sloane family lived at the Hermitage, it was common for families to have servants or maids to help them with many things.

Servant
Call Button



EXPLORE
on your own

The Hermitage has many other interesting carvings displayed on walls, ceilings and doors. Continue to look throughout the house and see what you can find. Also, be sure to examine the outside walls of the house! There you can find carved faces, creatures, and much more.

Think About This

How would you design your own house? Would you have woodcarvings decorate the walls and ceilings? What woodcarving that you saw today do you think took the longest? Which was your favorite?

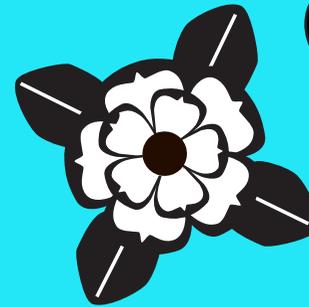


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Hermitage Family Guide #1

Secrets of the Walls, Ceilings and Floors



WELCOME TO THE HERMITAGE!

Explore The Hermitage with your eyes, not with your hands.
Please do not touch the things you see!

Does the Hermitage look anything like your home?

What things are similar? What is different?
Walking through the Hermitage, you may notice things that you don't see in most modern homes today. Look closely at the walls and you will see beautiful woodcarvings of flowers, faces, words, and shapes. You will spot tiny details in unexpected places like on doors and ceilings. These details were all made by hand which means it took a long time and hard work to create them. Using this guide, you will examine these details and discover surprises hidden throughout the Hermitage!

The Hermitage

was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sloane and their sons, William and E.K. Can you imagine growing up here? Not only is this house filled with fantastic art and furniture, the design and decoration of the building itself makes the house a unique work of art.



Bosses

Gothic Drawing Room or Music Room

What type of material are the walls in this room made of? What about the floors?

Many of the walls and floors throughout the Hermitage are made of wood (oak and teak). What are the walls in your house made of?

Look Down! Can you find a butterfly shape in the floors?

These are butterfly joints, made of walnut wood, which keeps the floorboards together.

Look Up! Find the carved pieces that connect the wooden ceiling beams.

These are called *bosses* and if you look closely you will see that they are carvings of flowers, fruit, and even faces. How many faces can you find in the ceiling?

Are they the same or different?



Kitchen Witches

Great Hall

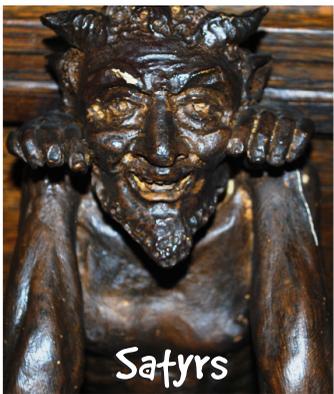
On either side of the fireplaces, notice the large, carved figures. These figures are **Kitchen Witches**. Don't worry, these witches are good! They are inspired by European folklore which says that these figures will protect the home from bad luck. The same story inspired the carved **satyrs** (half man, half goat) above the doors.

Can you think of other stories, myths or superstitions about creatures that protect homes?

Little Library

As you enter this room, turn to your left. Look closely at the wall and you may notice an outline of a doorway. This is a "**secret passage**" that leads upstairs to William and E.K.'s bedrooms. This cleverly hidden doorway allowed the boys to move through the house without disturbing any guests their parents might have had visiting.

If you had a secret passage in your house, where would it go?



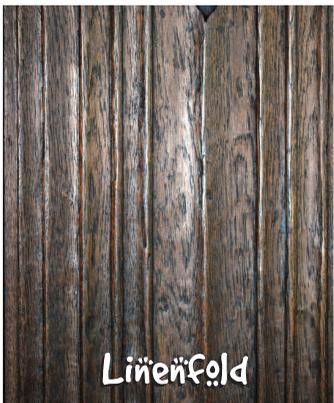
Satyrs

Morning Room

Can you see the carved pattern on the walls in this room? Can you tell that it almost looks like fabric? This is called **linenfold** and it is made to look like folded cloth. How long do you think it took to carve this pattern throughout the entire room? The linenfold pattern can be found in other rooms in the house.

See if you can spot it!

There is another hidden passageway in this room. Look closely and see if you can find the door. (Hint: It blends into the wall because it is decorated with the linenfold wood carved pattern.)



Linenfold

Who did all of this work?

MEET THE WOODCARVERS!

- *Charles Woodsend* was an English architect and woodcarver who oversaw the design and construction of the Hermitage from 1908-1925 and helped make Mrs. Sloane's dream home a reality. His studio was housed in the former water tower which is the building you first passed when you entered the grounds. When he passed away, Mr. Woodsend left his tools, notebooks and sketches with the Hermitage.

- *Karl von Rydingsvard* was a Swedish woodcarver and the founder of the Arts and Crafts School in Boston. The influence of his heritage can be seen in the intricate carvings inspired by myths, like the Kitchen Witches in the Great Hall, and can be found both inside and outside the house.

Why did Mrs. Sloane have secret doors in her home?

The architecture of the Hermitage is inspired by old English estates and castles which often had secret doors, niches, and passageways. Besides, don't you think they are fun?

