



TALBOT LOOMS RETURN HOME TO HEARTHSTONE 100 YEARS LATER



2012---Hearthside became known as "Hearthside" because of the Hearthside Looms, a hand weaving business that was run out of the 3rd floor by Arnold G. Talbot during the early part of the 20th century. Now, the original looms that both Arnold and his wife Katharine used to create some of the country's finest fabrics are back at Hearthside, in the very same place they were some 100 years ago. This was made possible through a long-term loan from the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts, where the weaving equipment had been donated by Frances Talbot in her will in 1975. This is a tremendously exciting development of our plans for the 3rd floor in the interpretation of this important era of Hearthside's history.

The antique looms, dating back to the 18th century, had to be disassembled at the American Textile Museum's storage facility, packed up, moved back to Hearthside, and then they had to be assembled again. The looms are prepared with warp that is being woven into some of the actual Talbot weave patterns. Regular weaving demonstrations on the looms are planned with the help of a network of weavers around the state, as well as our own volunteers.

The Talbots were highly regarded throughout the country for their fine handiwork on these antique looms. Several articles appeared in national magazines that featured their work at Hearthside, included Ladies Home Journal, American Home and Garden, and House Beautiful. One of their most popular patterns was known as "Sun, Moon and Stars." With just 8 weavers, the "Hearthside Looms" produced coverlets, curtains, linen, rugs, towels, table and pillow covers, couch covers, portieres, rugs, and altar cloths to customers well beyond the Rhode Island borders. Their weaving represented a rebirth of the American arts and crafts movement, according to the House Beautiful article in 1907.



They finally moved the business to Philadelphia in 1926 to be closer to the bigger city markets. The Talbots became the only commercial enterprise in the United States dedicated to weaving ecclesiastical fabrics by hand. Their work adorned more than a thousand churches of various denominations across the country. The Talbot Studios closed in the 1960s, no longer able to compete with machine woven goods. We are fortunate to have two items in our collection that were woven by the Talbots in the Hearthside attic: an intricate linen pillow case and a coverlet. Other pieces of



equipment that are part of the exhibit besides the two large looms include large spinning wheels (walking wheels), small flax wheels, winders, table loom, parlor loom, warping frame, hand loom, and a creel.

Interestingly, Arnold Talbot was related to the Arnold family, founders of Lincoln, and his great-grandmother was a cousin to Stephen Hopkins Smith, builder of Hearthside