

## Glessner House Collections

**Most of the objects in the house today belonged to the Glessner family. Discover more about the collections at Glessner House through the stories of the artists and designers who created some of the objects the Glessners owned and cherished. Today, the museum continues to care for these objects.**



The **Arts and Crafts Movement** followed the Aesthetic Movement in the art world. Arts and Crafts flourished in England with the design of the Red House for William Morris in 1859, and ended with World War I. The Movement took off in the United States in the late 1880s, reaching a zenith between 1890 and 1910, and fading after 1920. The Arts and Crafts Movement has been associated with the Aesthetic Movement, Socialism, and Art Nouveau. Chicago was a major center of the Arts and Crafts Movement.



**Louis Comfort Tiffany  
Glasswork**

With his studio of artists, glassmakers, stonemasons, mosaicists, modelers, metallurgists, carvers, potters and textile workers, Louis Tiffany ushered in the idea of the continuity of design in a single aesthetic expression. He became known as a master of Art Nouveau.



**William Morris  
Bedsread**

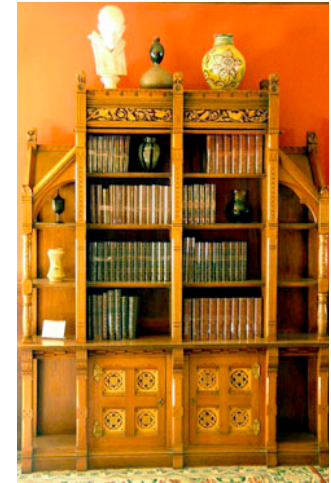
Morris, a leader of the English Arts and Crafts Movement, is also remembered as a poet and social reformer. Morris wore many hats, as a wood-engraver, illuminator, dyer, weaver, painter, printer, paper maker, author, politician, publisher, Socialist, lecturer, avid traveler, student of architecture, and interior decorator.

In 1897 the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society was founded at Hull-House, marking the importance of the city to the movement, which culminated with founding of the Prairie School. Leaders of the movements traveled back and forth between Chicago and England for annual craft exhibits at the Art Institute between 1902 and 1921. The movement had a broad audience in Chicago, from the wealthy upper class on Prairie Avenue to working class families who bought Arts and Crafts products by mail order.



**Isaac Scott**

One of the most highly regarded designers and craftsmen in the art furniture movement at the time, Scott lived in Chicago between 1873 and 1883. He hailed from Philadelphia and taught himself to carve. His relationship with the Glessners ensured his success in the emerging furniture market. Scott met the couple at the 1875 Inter-State Industrial Exposition, where the Glessners purchased their first piece—the bookcase that still stands in the Second Floor Hall. The purchase marked the beginning of a loyal patronage and friendship.



The Glessners commissioned Scott to design furniture for their house on Washington Boulevard, for their house on Prairie Avenue, and their summer estate, in New Hampshire.

Scott's designs often reflected medieval influences in form and motifs, exemplifying the Modern Gothic style and the Design Reform Movement that had begun in England's design world and flourished in Chicago after the 1871 fire.



## American Arts & Crafts Movement

The American Arts and Crafts Movement that emerged in the 1890s is distinctly American, defined by a dedication to simplicity, the exposure of the object's construction, and honesty about tools, methods and materials used. It served in many ways as a link between Victorian historicism and twentieth century modernism. American designs were often more imaginative and bolder than English ones, though for the most part they continued to refer to the European design tradition.



During 1886 and 1887 when the house was under construction, John and Frances Glessner spent considerable time shopping for countless items for their new home, from fireplace fittings to rugs, and textiles to tiles. One of the most interesting items they acquired was a set of Iznik tiles for the dining room fireplace. (The name Iznik derives from the city in Turkey where the tiles were made). An example is pictured on the left.



Francis Bacon

Bacon was an American designer who worked for Herter Brothers and later in H. H. Richardson's office. Remembered for incorporating the ideals of handcraftsmanship into machine-made production, he designed the case for the Glessners' Steinway piano in the parlor. The Glessners' finished piano cost \$1,500 and weighed 900 pounds.

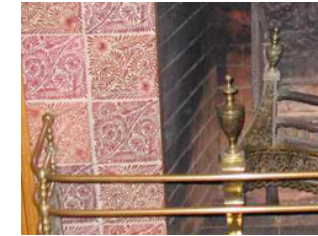


The Herter Brothers

Gustav and Christian Herter, had gained fame by the mid-nineteenth century for producing pieces in a variety of styles: Renaissance Revival, Neo-Grec, Eastlake, and the Aesthetic Movement. They came to be associated with the Anglo-Japanese style in the 1870s and 1880s.

On December 12, 1886, John and Frances Glessner "christened" their new house at 1800 South Prairie Avenue. Although they would not move into the house for nearly another year, the house was finished off to the point where they could walk through the entire building. The following is an excerpt detailing the event taken from Frances Glessner's journal:

*We took Mr. and Mrs. Shepley for their first view of the house. They were in raptures over it. Mr. Shepley said we were the first clients he had ever envied.*



William DeMorgan

As a designer of ceramic tiles, stained glass and furniture for his lifelong friend, William Morris, De Morgan played a central role in the English Arts and Crafts Movement. While working on stained glass De Morgan discovered that silver pigments created iridescence in the surface of the glass. His subsequent experiments on tiles to reproduce this effect created the first luster tiles in 1870. He took over the production of Morris' tile designs, copying Morris' floral and vegetative fabric and wallpaper patterns.



Emil Gallé

The son of a glassblower, after studying at the Weimar Art School in Germany, as well as in Paris and London, Gallé became the artistic director of his father's business in 1874. His style was inspired by the curvy asymmetry of nature. Gallé found inspiration for his designs in nature, often incorporating foliage and landscape decorations.