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BELMONT MANSION TO RESTORE ORIGINAL GRAND SALON FLOOR

Floor, an original artifact, not seen in 130 years to be revealed and replicated

Nashville, TN, January 3, 2019 – It is with great excitement that Belmont Mansion Association begins its next major project – the restoration of the marbleized floor of the mansion’s Grand Salon, the largest interior space built in Tennessee prior to 1860. On January 7, 2019, workmen will begin tearing out the current modern floor and expose for the first time in 130 years the original 19th century floor, hand-painted to resemble black and white marble.

Originally built for Joseph and Adelia Acklen, Belmont Mansion became part of what is today Belmont University. After years of use by the school, the 19th century pine floor of the Grand Salon could no longer withstand the wear of hundreds of students and was covered with one and then another naturally finished narrow oak floors in the early 20th century.

The current modern flooring is beginning to fail structurally leaving the Belmont Mansion Association with a decision – repair or replace. So, the Association is removing the modern oak flooring from the historic space. The original floor is made of pine, a wood far too soft for the use this museum sees. Thus, the original floor will be covered, preserving it in place, and a new random width floor will be overlaid. The new floor will be painted to match the Acklen period floor, leaving a portion of the original floor exposed for viewing and study. The location of the interior fountain which once stood in the Grand Salon will also be indicated on the new floor.

This central room, a space built for entertaining by Joseph and Adelia Acklen, spoke to their place in Tennessee society and their aspirations, particularly Joseph's political aspirations. The floor was painted with a black and white pattern to resemble marble, a decorative technique used in the 19th century.

Deconstruction work of the modern floor begins on Monday, January 7, 2019. New flooring will be installed later that month followed by the painstaking work of Nashville area artisans who will be replicating the hand-painted marbleized technique of the mid-19th century. The pattern

found on the original floor, a small portion of which was recently uncovered, is providing the basis for artisans who will be hand-painting the new floor.

About Belmont Mansion

Belmont Mansion is an Italian villa constructed between the years 1849 and 1853. Through the years, it has been the summer home for Nashville socialite Adelia Acklen and her family, temporary headquarters of the Union army, and an all-girls college and seminary. One of the most elaborate antebellum homes in the South, with 36 rooms and 19,000 square feet, the entire Belmont estate was built, furnished, and landscaped by the Acklens and boasted such luxuries as lavish gardens, an art gallery, a bowling alley, and a zoo.

Belmont Mansion, on the National Register of Historic Places since 1971, currently operates as a house museum, maintained by the Belmont Mansion Association through admissions, venue rentals, event fundraisers and individual and company donations. Belmont Mansion is open daily for guided tours, Monday-Saturday from 10am-4 pm and Sunday from 12-4pm. For more on the floor restoration please visit, <https://www.belmontmansion.com/restore-the-grand-salon> or call 615-460-5459.

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