

A Red Carpet Affair

by Lynne Belluscio

We'll be rolling out the red carpet Saturday, February 21, for the annual Dinner Auction at LeRoy House. Quite literally, there will be a red carpet on the sidewalk into LeRoy House that night. (We've heard that the paparazzi will show up that evening when Brad and Angelina arrive in their limo.) Tickets are \$40 per person. Call 768-7433 to reserve tickets or to reserve a table. We still have a few seats left.

The D & R Depot is catering the event which this year will be a sit down dinner instead of the usual buffet. The menu will include, clams casino with a 5 oz. beef fillet, twice baked potatoes, asparagus spears with hollandaise sauce. The cash bar and hors d'oeuvres will open at 5 PM followed by dinner at 6 PM. Immediately following dessert will be the auction conducted by William Kent Auctioneers.

This year we have three oil paintings to be auctioned. Two are by noted LeRoy artist, David Walsh - a beautiful still life and the other an Italian street scape. The third painting is by Mary Bryant of the Garden Arbor and LeRoy House. Chuck Dusen has made a beautiful wooden candlestand that will be auctioned that evening and Larry and Sheri Boylan have generously offered a stay at their home in Tucson.

One of the more intriguing items that will be auctioned that evening will be "Your Ancestors" - a remarkable photograph that was discovered beneath a painting several years ago. Each year it comes to the auction. We have no idea who the people are in the photograph, but they can be adopted and proudly displayed. For the past year, the "ances-

tors" have been at the D & R Depot, watching intently as you come in for dinner.

Also this year we have a number of "treasure boxes" available for \$20. Each box contains at least an item worth \$20, but some of the boxes hold certificates or items worth considerably more. So if you have February 21 available, we'd love to have you join us for this annual event. We have seating available in three rooms on the second floor, the land office room and the basement. It will be an evening to remember - besides what else is there to do in LeRoy in February!!

I am not too sure why a red carpet signifies something special. In the United States, the carpet industry was almost entirely due to the tenacity of Erastus Bigalow. In 1842 he patented a power loom that wove what were known as "ingrain" carpets. His carpets were woven at the Lowell Carpet Company in Massachusetts.

He made numerous improvements to the power loom. Ingrain carpeting was woven in a variety of patterns and was reversible. These ingrain carpets were woven in narrow widths and then sewn together for large wall to wall or area rugs. The "double-cloth" carpeting wasn't as thick or durable as the "triple-cloth"



Diagram of the construction of a Brussels carpet.



Diagram of the construction of a Wilton carpet.

carpets. But for the most part, the ingrain carpet was fairly inexpensive and had been manufactured in England and Scotland in the 1700s. It remained popular well into the late 1800s, and even by 1899, more than 50 percent of carpet production was ingrain carpeting.

In 1846, Bigalow adapted the Jacquard loom for making Brussels carpeting. Brussels carpeting is not reversible and consists of yarn that is woven with loops that form the pile. The technique of weaving loop carpets is ancient, however the Brussels carpet can be traced to the Flemish. The first Brussels carpet factory in England was begun in Wilton in 1740 and Kidderminster in 1749. They were imported to the United States and John Adams had Brussels carpeting in the White House. It is believed that the first Brussels carpets were manufactured in Philadelphia as early as 1807 by

Isaac Macaulay.

Wilton carpets were loop carpets, but the loops were cut to give the carpet a velvet finish. All cut-loop rugs came to be called Wilton carpets and were considered very fine and most desirable. George Washington had a Wilton carpet at Mount Vernon. Before the industrial revolution Brussels and Wilton carpets could only be woven in narrow strips and had to be sewn together like the ingrain carpets. However with the introduction of the power loom, carpets could be woven in much wider strips.

Well the red carpet in the hall on the night of the Dinner Auction will be neither ingrain, Brussels or Wilton, but it will welcome all who join us for this special event.



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