



MRS. LEES'S VANITY SET

by Samantha George, Curator

Mrs. Lees was one of the Parkwood seamstresses employed by Adelaide McLaughlin. Mrs. Lees would work in the sewing room, which is currently an office space, top of the central staircase, and opened to see during our servants' tours. This space, with built in floor to ceiling linen cupboards, housed a sewing machine, a work table and stools during the time of Lees's employment.

In the Parkwood interpretive program and historic record, Mrs. Lees is the staff member behind the green room vanity pieces; the bottles, glass tray, and powder boxes which have had decorative textile, lace filigree, and beading elements applied to them as part of historic practice, and these elements require some conservation work.

All five pieces in the green room require attention; basic mechanical cleaning to remove years of dirt and grime, from handling and environmental deterioration. The cleaning will consist of several processes, the glass or main components for the powder, and the satin overlay. These delicate adornments are soiled and have missing components, or what in material culture conservation practice we term, "areas of loss".

The next stage will be the reshaping of the textiles. The lace has become distorted over the years. This will be manipulated back into their original position. The final stage will consist of creating a supporting backing, and/or infilling the areas of lace and bead work that has been lost to time, complementing the historic work of Mrs. Lees, and providing the lace filigree and beadwork the TLC and supportive environment that it may thrive another 80 years at Parkwood for all to admire.