Historic Costuming

Presented By Jill Harrison

IMPRESSIONS

Each of us makes an impression before ever saying a word. We size up visitors all the time, anticipating behavior from their age, clothing, and demeanor. What do they think of interpreters, disguised as we are in the threads of another time? While stressing the importance of historically accurate costuming (outfits) and accoutrements for first-person interpreters, there are many reasons compromises are made - perhaps a tight budget or lack of skilled construction personnel. Items such as shoes and eyeglasses are usually a sticking point when assembling a truly accurate outfit.

It has been suggested that when visitors spot inaccurate details, interpreter credibility is downgraded and visitors launch into a frame of mind to find other inaccuracies. This may be true of visitors who are historical reenactors, buffs, or other interpreters. Most visitors, though, lack the heightened awareness to recognize the difference between authentic period detailing and the less-than-perfect substitutions. But *everyone* will notice a wristwatch, sunglasses, or tennis shoes. We have a responsibility to the public not to misrepresent the past; otherwise we are not preserving history but instead creating our own fiction and calling it the truth.

Realistically, the appearance of the interpreter, our information base, our techniques, and our environment all affect the first-person experience. Historically accurate costuming perfection is laudable and reinforces academic credence. The minute details can be a springboard to important educational concepts; but the outfit is not the linchpin on which successful interpretation hangs.

DOING THE RESEARCH

There have been so many fashion changes in our lifetime. . .how many of us remember (or wore) poodle, mini, or granny skirts, hip-hugger bell-bottoms, the polyester leisure suite, platforms, penny-loafers, go-go boots, or Roman sandals? What was considered underwear has become outerwear and the "hip-huggers" are sporting boxer waistbands. Just look at all the fashion changes in the last 20 or 40 years? Fashions change quick. This is especially true for women's fashions. Researching the fashion changes of times long past can be a rewarding challenge, especially for the living history interpreter.

Research resources, as well as some of my own in-depth research done over several years at the Yorktown/Jamestown Foundation, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Corydon Capitol State Historic Site, will be included in this symposium. Hopefully this information will not seem irrelevant or overwhelming, but can be used as a guide or a spark to further your own research. What we discover about event he tiniest detail may be contradicted tomorrows or years from now. We must accept that no book, thick or thin, is the last work on any subject.

If you are doing clothing and accoutrement research for a first-person interpretation, it helps (tremendously) to have a persona. Portraying an actual historical figure is quite a challenge and could be a lifelong commitment to research. There will almost always be someone who knows a little more than we do about the famous person we are portraying. There are many things to consider when creating a persona. To name a few, what is the time frame you are portraying? It is best to narrow it down to a 2 or 5-year period rather than a huge span or an era, like the Fur Trade or Victorian Era. Where are you and what are you doing? What is happening in the world around you during your decided time frame? Which money or bartering system is in use? What are the fashions for the social class and area you have chosen? These and many other considerations can go as deep as you feel like digging. Having a persona will help direct your research; it becomes a focus ~ a person, a place, a time.

Researching fashions can be quite a challenge, especially on the Internet. This tool can put you in touch with all the major libraries and universities in the nation. When searching Web Rings, remember that just because someone has created a web page about a particular accoutrement or piece of clothing does not mean that it is absolute truth. If it is from a reputable source, i.e. a museum or well-known company, you can pretty much believe what you find, until you come across some contradicting information. Again, no book, thick or thin, is the last word on any subject.

Some of the best sources for research that I have found are museums and living history sites, especially during special events with lots of demonstrators and interpreters of a specific era. Nothing quite compares to seeing actual artifacts and reproductions in action or getting a hands-on opportunity. You will learn by watching, by doing, and by asking questions. Then again, many times I have heard, "If they'd a had it, they'd a used it." Well, we don't know what we don't know, and is it possible to utilize something that hasn't been invented yet?

Many sites have good libraries available to the serious history student. Most public libraries have excellent reference books and art books; conversely with art books, the facts are subject to the interpretation or intent of the artist. Formal portrait painters may have focused on the face and the details of the clothing were

secondary. Sometimes painter would paint a generic body at home then add the faces of their patrons on the road, but other times they included minute details and hints of their patron's lives or interests. Sutlers and reenactor magazines offer an incredible source of books on historical costuming.

FABRICS

The printed and painted fabrics delivered to the Colonies were mainly from England and Indian; while France also made printed cloth, the designs were not as desirable. English and French printers of cloth used a linen warp, cotton weft cloth. Much of the English linen-cotton was woven in 30-yard bolts and the same width as cotton calicos from India, which were 36, 40 and 45 inches. Printed or painted calico first came into Europe in the early 1600s when the East India trade companies were formed.

Indian cottons and the European imitations of them became very popular for clothing. The weavers of medium-priced silks, half-silks and woolens in both England and France were complaining about the competition from imported cottons. In England an act of Parliament in 1700 prohibited the use, wear, and import of East Indian and Persian silks and calicoes. Between the years of 1686 and 1756, France prohibited the wearing, sale, printing, and import of calicoes. This did not work very well, as the smugglers were able to bring in goods and many of the noblemen who were supposed to be enforcing the laws were among the lawbreakers. By 1759 printing cloth in France was once again lawful. Even when prohibited in England and France, these fabrics were available here in the United States, as they were bring exported. Printed fabrics from England between 1774 and 1811 had blue warp yarn in their selvages. The blue threads fulfilled a regulation that cloths intended for export be woven this way if a refund of taxes levied on printed cloth was to be claimed.

Most linen was imported before the era of the American Revolution. Once the Stamp Act and Townshend Duties were passed, citizens boycotted imported goods and women began to spin and weave their own cottons and linens at home. Once the Revolution was over, the merchants went back to importing a wide variety of fabrics for sale in New England.

Linen is made from fibers of the flax plant. The amount of time between planting seeds and making linen cloth is about 18 months. Seeds are sown in March and the crop is ready to harvest in July. The stalks are pulled out by the roots and allowed to dry. The seeds are removed by pulling the stalks through a rippling comb. The seeds may then be pressed for for linseed oil, and the fibers may now be retted (soaking the flax in a stream or dewy field so the gummy sap binding the fiber of the bark rots away), after which the flax contains a pulpy core that must be separated from the fibers by being broken into pieces. This is done on a flax brake--a heavy wooden contraption that allows

the flax to be placed between two sets of heavy boards and pounded. The flax is then hung over a board and struck in a continuous scraping motion with a wooden knife. This process, called "scutching", removes the hard or gummy residue and the short, coarse tow from the long, fine fibers. Next is the process of hackling, which involves drawing the bunches of fibers through a series of combs-coarse to fine. Any remaining hard or gummy pieces are separated, and the long fibers are completely separated from the tow. Tow is collected from the hackle and used to swab gun barrels, used as tender for fire making, or spun on a wheel to make coarse cloth. Long fiber flax is spun on a Saxony wheel. Linen is brown when it comes off the loom and can be bleached or dyed.

The early printed cloth in Europe was done with woodblocks cut into the desired designs. The cut woodblocks were then coated in dye and placed on the cloth, which is on a padded table. The printer pounds the top of the blocks in several places to transfer the design to the cloth. To repeat the design, small points were matched up and the block was put on the cloth and pounded again. When printing multi-colored calicoes with woodblocks, blue and yellow had to be painted in by hand. There was no fast dye that gave a true green, so the area to be green must first be penciled with either blue or yellow and then penciled again with the other color. Because green was a two-step process, the matching of the design was often faulty and blue or yellow could often be seen at the edges of the design.

Before the 1780s, printed cloth usually (but not always) had a light or white ground (background). Black grounds were rarely seen, as black was generally reserved for mourning and a lively print certainly would not be suitable for that. Dark grounds were usually printed by the resist method: a block was cut for the design and wax was printed onto the cloth with the block. The cloth was dipped into the dye bath and the background picked up the dye. When the wax was removed, the pattern remained white. Using different blocks and dipping the cloth into the dye bath several times would obtain shadings in the design. Most designs were small for clothing, larger for furnishing fabrics, until 1752 when engraved copperplates dramatically changed the printing process. These plates were 36 inches square and the design or scene would be repeated the length of the cloth. Copperplates could only print in one color at a time, but very fine color definition was possible.

In 1785 a new process was patented. The copperplate was made into a cylinder (15 to 17 inches in diameter), and it was used as roller so that the printing was continuous. The use of rollers made it very easy to print designs, stripes, and tiny dots. At first roller printing was one color, like the copperplates from which it developed. But soon the rollers were using several colors at the same time. New and brighter dyes were developed in the early 1800s, and after 1814 a green was available that ended the two-step process.

With this background on cottons and linen, following is a list of several other fabrics popular in the 19th century:
Alamade--thin, light, and glossy silk
Banyan--cotton textile
Barleycorn--checked fabric
Barragon--a cotton Fustian with a short nap, coarse and quite durable; inexpensive for working class use
Bay--a long napped thin woolen, nearly a serge, often coarse and frizzed on one side: used on coats and capes
Broadcloth--fine, smooth cloth made of cotton, wool, or silk woven on a wide loom, thus the name
Brocade--silk fabric with raised pattern of figures in colors
Calico--any cotton cloth, solid or printed
Calimanco--glossy woolen cloth, ribbed or plain; used for curtains, linings, coats, shirts
Cambric--fine French linen, medium weight; used for shirts, dresses, good chemises
Camlet--a coarse yet some were smooth) blend of silks, hairs, & woolens; used in petticoats, capes, cloaks, heavy aprons, and winter bodices
Canvas--heavy, coarse cloth; used as a utility cloth, for stiffening collars, covering stays, or made into bags, breeches, and leggings
Chintz--Calico with colored pattern, painted or printed, sometimes glazed
Corduroy--stout corded cotton, twilled
Crape--thin silk gauze, crimped, nearly transparent; used in coifs, scarves, hat trim and mourning garb
Crocus--cheap coarse bag cloth, open weave, dull colors; used by the very poor and slaves to make clothing
Damask--silk cloth with reversed pattern on the back
Denim--a serge; later colored twilled cotton
Dimity--fine ribbed cotton Fustian
Dowlas--a cheaper, coarse weave of linen; used by the poor class
Drab--thick woolen cloth, yellowish color
Duffield--coarse wool flannel
Duffles--coarse woolen cloth
Everlasting--hard-wearing woolens resembling serge
Fearnough--thick cloth with pile
Ferrit--narrow silk ribbon; also cotton tape
Frieze--medium weight coarse napped woolen cloth; used for linings
Fustian--cloth of linen warp and cotton weft, worsted, different weights and colors; used for petticoats, waistcoats, breeches, winter shirts, suits, and window curtains
Gauze--very thin silk
Gingham--cotton fabric of dyed yarn woven into stripes or checks
Hessians--coarse cloth of hemp and jute

Holland linen--Dutch linen of high quality, yet poorer mislabeled linens were passed off by merchants and traders as such. Holland Linen became a generic name; used for waistcoats, chemises aprons, shirts, summer bodices and petticoats
Jaconet--soft muslin
Kersey--coarse cloth of wool, usually ribbed with cotton wrap
Lawn--very fine linen
Linsey-woolsey--coarse cloth of mixed linen and wool, usually home woven; used for coats, vests, skirts, capes, and many other items
Muslin--fine cotton cloth of plain weave, various weights; used for shirts, shifts, suits, curtains, jackets, waistcoats, bodices, linings, and many other items
Moleskin--much like a Fustian, a cotton cloth with a short nap, inexpensive with a wide usage; used for linings and skirts
Nankeen--hard-wearing cotton cloth of plain weave originally sold at Nanking, China. A yellow variety of cotton, originally worn by upper class with cheaper imitations available to middle and lower classes; used for waistcoats and breeches
Nicannee--rough, dull, homespun calico, usually striped and used for slave clothing
Osnaburg--unbleached linen of German origin, rough, coarse to touch, durable; used for working class utility clothing, breeches, aprons, shirts, jackets, etc.
Pellise--soft woven lightweight broadcloth, very durable
Poplin--lightweight weave of cotton; used for dresses, shirts, and petticoats (skirts)
Ratteen--a thick twill woven wool cloth, often a coarse weave with high and low nap; used for coats, capes, wraps, breeches, winter shirts and skirts
Satin--silk with a glazed surface
Saxone--inexpensive weave of linen & silk threads, used for skirts, shirts, and dresses
Serge--twilled worsted fabric (usually wool), durable, inexpensive, widely used by all; used in coat liners, shirts, capes, aprons
Shagreen--silk used for linings
Shalloon--slight woolen stuff
Stuff or Worsted Stuff--lightweight cloth made of long-staple, combed wool yarn, plain or twilled, smoother than many other types of wool
Swankin (also called Stammel)--closely woven flannel made from wool, inexpensive; used for shifts and petticoats, usually in a red or brick color
Taffeta--fine smooth silk with gloss
Thunder-and-Lightning--wool serge
Ticklengburg--coarse linen
Tissue--woven cloth of gold or silver silk thread
Velvet--the pile thick and close
Vermillion--cotton cloth dyed scarlet (have also heard that this is *any* scarlet cloth)
Virginia Cloth--domestically produced linen/cotton blend; used for servant's wear; linen osnaburg was used to clothe plantation slaves.

Just as today, fabrics 200 years ago were associated with different levels of economic and social status. Silk brocades and velvets were easily recognizable as upper class fabrics. The upper classes did not confine themselves to only silks and woolens. The higher up the socio-economic ladder, the greater was (and is) the freedom of choice.

DYES

Bleaching fabrics before 1760 (when a bleach powder of chlorine in lime was developed by the Irish) was a 13-step process that took about a month to complete. It involved lye, cow manure and/or sheep urine, buttermilk, and stretching the cloth over the green grass. The process was repeated week after week until the fabric was white enough.

The main items used for dyes in the 18th and 19th centuries were plants, minerals, and insects. Since plants were easiest to obtain, they will be the focus for this symposium. Plants have different amounts of dyestuffs in them at different times of their growing seasons. Usually the dyestuffs will give better color if they are picked at the peak of their bloom. Just about anything can affect the hue of the dye, including the type of pot they dye is cooked or prepared in, the mordant, and even the hardness of the water will affect the hue. Iron pots sadden or darken the color and are excellent for black and green colors. Brass and tin will help to brighten the color and are better for red and yellow. Copper kettles are the most common and can be used for all hot dye baths. Alum and chrome are the most common mordants (a chemical that helps the dye adhere to the cloth fibers); iron, vinegar, lime, and urine (also called sig) can be used as a mordant. Mordanting is a process done to the fabric or dye bath before fabric is added to the bath. This is sometimes required to allow the fabric to absorb the dye. Dyestuffs that contain tannic acid, such as tree bark and nut hulls, generally do not require the use of a mordant.

The fabric should be clean before dyeing, preferably in soft water and leaving no trace of soap. When washing wool, make sure that you do not change the temperature of the water suddenly. If cold wool is put into hot water, it will shrink and felt up. But if cold wool is put into cold water and gradually heated, the wool will not shrink at all. A very large container is needed for dyeing yards of fabric. If the fabric does not have enough room in the dye bath so that it can be stirred and turned, blotches of more or less color will result in the folds of the fabric.

Common Plant Colors:
Blue--buckwheat, indigo (cold water dye that does not need a mordant)
Brown--the bark of many trees and nut hulls are good sources. These should be collected in the fall or winter and can be used either fresh or dried. The inner bark of oak and maple will give a light tan to deep brown. Walnut hulls give a wonderful golden brown that holds its color well. Personally, I seldom strain this dye for fabric or clothing

with a rugged purpose, i.e. Frontiersmen pants, shirts, and frocks; blotching gives the fabric character. Another light brown can be produced with black tea leaves and chrome mordant.
Green--artichokes, privet berries
Grey--blackwood bark
Grey-brown--red sumac berries; does not require a mordant (sumac with white berries is poison sumac and can give you a terrible rash).
Pink--polk berries, cochineal (an insect)
Purple--rotted maple wood, aloes
Red--madder, bloodroot, woodruff, cinnabar, cochineal
Rose-tan--black tea leaves with alum mordant
Yellow-tan--coffee beans when used with chrome mordant
Yellow--chrysanthemum, marigold, goldenrod flowers, almond or pear tree leaves, ash bark, turmeric, savory, mistletoe, magnolia, saffron, saw-wort
Yellow to yellow-orange--onion skins, bindweed
Yellow-green--ebony wood

THE CUT OF CLOTHING

Clothing is the first thing that is observed. It makes the first impression: all else follows. History reenactors use period style clothing to create the illusion of another place in time, in spite of the fact that we all know we are living in the 21st century. If the reenactor is going to create a credible impression, then all his parts must go together in order to be perceived as genuine; lest he be asked that innocent question, "Who are you supposed to be?" The signaling system that we use naturally to day must be consciously employed to recreate a character from the past.

While the styles of garments have changed, the deciding factors that cause us to choose one garment over another are the same now as they were 200 years ago. Regardless of the time frame, we are consciously or unconsciously determining how others will see us. We are all actively engaged in a visual signaling system that includes styles, garments, accessories, and body language. The clothing, accoutrements, and behavior that we display transmit a signal to observers. For most of us, what we project is a matter of choice.

Certain individuals have limited choices in what they can or could wear...the very poor, the military, children in schools requiring uniforms, and the incarcerated are some examples. Even with limited choice, clothing is routinely embellished with individual touches to assert identity. Slaves dyed their standardized, issued clothing or decorated it with scraps of colored fabric for this purpose. Today's gangs are another good example.

Status and rank were evinced through expensive fabrics such as silk brocades, velvets, and fine linen; through trimmings such as lace, metallic braid; and embroidery, and through accessories like jewelry, watches, and swords. Clothing of any type was expensive in comparison to other costs of living. By the beginning of the 18th century, increased prosperity brought wealth and leisure to an ever expanding circle. Expenditure on clothes was not enough to set the elite apart in the layers of society. Those who wished to distinguish themselves turned to the refinement of "good-breeding", which could not be purchased or easily imitated. Thus, it was understood that individuals must be refined before they were ready to take their place in society. One could not be truly and accurately judged by his or her clothes alone; clothing no longer "made the man".

So compelling was the ideal of fine carriage that courtesy books and dancing manuals flourished; their authors promising the attainment of the desired "artful carelessness" if their readers copied the postures they described and depicted. In 1744, at about age 16, George Washington wrote "*Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior In Company and Conversation"*. He has been accredited with saying that a man has little more than his name, his word, and the way he carries himself.

Thus began the attempt to perfect the human body through learned behavior and garments that artificially produced the desired shape. Good posture was reinforced, even forced, by the cut and construction of clothing. Contemporary stands for carriage of the body are evident in the cut of clothing of both sexes in the 18th century. Arms, thought of as "disagreeable" when held straight, had sleeves cut to accommodate a bent position. The curve of the arm allowed for the requisite graceful hand movements and insured that these gestures-and the fine lace or linen they set off-were in front of the gesturer and therefore prominent. High, tight armholes, sleeve caps with very little fullness, and narrow backs ensured that the shoulders would be held down and back. A narrow sloping masculine shoulder line was the ideal, as reflected in sloped shoulder seams. These shoulder seams were set back from the point of the shoulder and helped give a fuller appearance to the chest, as did the side seams (which were set towards the back rather than under the arm).

Masculine garments were made with the desire to emphasize a robust stomach and were not cut to slenderize the abdomen, but rather to accentuate its bulk. The short rise of the breeches was meant to sit below the natural waist, resting on the hips, leaving the waist unrestrained. A full seat in the breeches added bulk behind when gathered into the back waistband, and the pleats of the coat skirts also emphasized the hip area.

The way clothes were worn also furthered the fashionable masculine form. Men's waistcoats were usually buttoned only below the stomach (buttoning just the bottom

three buttons was commonly advised) allowing the full-cut shirt to add volume to the chest. The prescribed stance for men, with the right hand in the front of the waistcoat and the left under the pocketflap, gave prominence to the stomach and hips and also provided support for curved arms, as the hoop-petticoat did for women.

MEN'S CLOTHING

"Put your best foot forward"... Ladies took a fancy to gentlemen's calves. Men were known to have "padded" the backs of their lower legs to make them look more muscular through their stockings. Thus, you would "put your best foot forward" to draw the attention to your best calf.

The three-piece suit for men consisting of coat, breeches, and waistcoat, established in the late 17th century, altered only in details during the 18th century progressing from a heavy full form to a slimmer line. Since the three-piece suit with shirt and tie had already been adopted as standard dress, selection of reproduction garments is easier for men than for women. The question still arises as to which style of suit to make and what type of fabrics to use. This depends on what impression we are trying to create.

Shirts

A man's shirt was quite long, mid-thigh to knee length depending on the man's preference. This length was necessary because the shirt was also used as a nightshirt and was the only form of underwear worn by most men. Shirts were cut straight, wide and full so that the wearer has freedom of movement; a pullover style with one button at the neck. It was not until after 1850 that men's shirts were made with an opening all the way down the front and closed by buttons. This style was not common until the end of the 19th century. Plackets on the front slit of the shirt started appearing by 1840 to 1850. However, in general, the cut of the shirt up through 1840 remains unchanged from the shirt made in the early 1700s.

Men on the frontier wore the same type of shirt as the eastern people, although many favored a colorful blue and white or red and white checked shirt. The most common, however, was the bleached white shirt. The dress shirts of the 18th century either had or did not have sleeve ruffles, depending on the status and preference of the wearer. The sleeves of a gentleman's linen shirt had finer linen ruffles attached to the wrist bands. This asserted that he did not work with his hands, as merchants and tradesmen did. Often, these shirts had no buttons on the cuffs and required cuff links, which one had to be able to afford. Into the 19th century, the ruffle folded up and became a cuff, which we recognize today as the French cuff. Over the collar most men wore a stock or neckerchief, or tied a cravat around the neck with the long ends hanging down the front. The cravat is a long, narrow strip of fine white linen, usually about 60 inches long and at least four inches wide. The middle of the cravat is placed at the front of the neck

over the shirt collar. A gentleman might pleat the fabric to make the cravat less bulky, then the ends are wrapped around the neck and brought back to the front where they are looped one over the other. The two ends hand down over or under the waistcoat and can be pulled through a waistcoat buttonhole.

Farmers often used heavier shirts called frocks, which were basically the same style as the common shirt but made of a more coarse linen. They were sometimes dyed brown, sage green, or indigo blue. One-inch checked gingham was also used.

Hunting shirts, also called "rifle shirts" or "rifle frocks" were universally worn from the mid 1700s until the second quarter of the 1800s, after which they gradually went out of style. They were usually made of linen or linsey-woolsey and were a highly practical garment. It retained warmth in cool weather, was comfortable in hot weather, and could be easily washed in any stream or pond. Cheap and simple to make, they found favor with General Washington himself, who at one time ordered 10,000 of them to be made for the Continental Army. Each hunting shirt was similar and cut along the same lines, but each was a bit different and reflected the owner's particular tastes. Usually, one or two capes were attached for added protection from the elements. One cape with a double row of fringe was common. A collar was usually attached to the body of the shirt and they could also have regular or puckered sleeves. Either pullover or wraparound, the hunting shirt was totally utilitarian. They were dyed a variety of colors with white, brown, and grey being the most common, and often the fringe would be dyed a contrasting shade. The amount of fringe was up to the wearer's particular fancy. The average frock would have fringe around the bottom, one or two rows around the cape, and one row around each cuff.

Waistcoat (or WesKit)

Waistcoats (vests) were worn by most men as a normal part of their everyday clothing in both summer and winter. Sleeved waistcoats were much preferred for winter. They were worn over the shirt and breeches and under a frock or coat. They were made of linen, fustian, silk, or fine wool twill, and almost always lined. The length of the waistcoat was determined by the wearer, In the mid 1700s they were generally mid-thigh and got shorter as the century progressed. They may have been striped, printed, checked, or solid, and matched or contrasted with the breeches and the coat.

While many waistcoats were cut to fit the wearer snugly and fashionable, others were made with lacing or ties on the back to draw the waistcoat snug. Lacing or ties are very practical for weight gain and loss, but were seldom used on sleeved waistcoats. Most waistcoats had front pockets at the waist, yet some had "false pockets" with only a pocket flap complete with buttonholes.

By 1790 the waistcoats were shortened to just below the waistband and were cut straight across the bottom. Either single or double breasted, the high and rounded neckline was replaced with either lapels or a high standup collar. The open neckline of the waistcoat allowed the ruffles of the gentleman's shirt to be seen. Flaps covering the pocket slits were being replaced with a straight stand-up welt.

Slops, Pantaloons, Knee Breeches, Trousers

Wide trousers were worn by the Venetians in the 15th century. St. Pantaleon was their patron saint. This garment was ridiculed by both the French, who called them Pantaloons, and Italians, who called them Pantaloni. English sailors wore wide trousers, which they called Slops, for almost three centuries beginning in the 1500s. Slops can be either loose, baggy trousers or an over-garment to keep breeches clean while working aboard a ship. the slops had very wide legs that were gathered into the waistband and ended at about the knee, giving the impression of a full skirt. *Pantaloons seems to be a universal term for all types of breeches and trousers throughout the ages.*

Usually made of homespun linen, linsey-woolsey, or deerskin, trousers and breeches were made with a puckered back, tight in the leg, loose in the seat, and drop flap in the front (either broad fall or small fall--similar to the 13-button Cracker Jack uniform of the US Navy). The center back seam was either a slit for several inches below the waist, or contained a gusset of lightweight fabric to allow some expansion and contraction of waist girth. Small fall breeches replaced button-fly front or French-fly breeches about 1765. Fall front breeches came into use because waistcoats became shorter and this presented a nice smooth line on the body. Fall fronts continued in use until 1840 when the center fly returned.

Deerskin breeches were extremely popular in the east and it created a need for a steady supply of hides--one of the main reasons the long hunters penetrated the eastern mountains in the late 1760s and early 1770s. Knee breeches went out of style by 1800 but were still worn by older men as late as 1830; however, other documentation states a date up to 1870 by some country gentlemen much past middle life.

The reintroduction of trousers, at first considered a distasteful innovation by the fashionable world, seem to have become more popular in the late 1780s. A decorative and highly functional fringe was often added to the trousers worn on the frontier. By 1800 the bagginess in the back was greatly lessened as the trousers became tight fitting. Pantaloons were cut so tightly that it was difficult to get them on. If the pantaloons did not come to the ankle, boots or gaiters were worn to cover the lover leg. By 1810, gaiters and pantaloons were made all in one with straps going under the sole of the shoe to hold them tight to the leg. Braces, the newly invented suspenders, were broad tapes passing over the shoulders and buttoned to the pantaloons both in the front and

back, helping to hold them straight and tight. Braces were also used with breeches, slops, and trousers.

Breeches and shoes required buckles in order to stay on the body. The selection said a great deal about the status of the wearer. Paste, silver and gold were favored by the upper class gentleman whereas pinchbeck, brass or iron had to do for the rest. Then there were the lower classes and slaves, who tied or laced their breeches and shoes in lieu of buckles.

Coats

The coat of the 1750s was long and full. It typically came to the knee and the fronts were straight with no cutaway. The section below the waist, or skirts, was cut quite full, pleated at the side seams and stiffened to stand away from the body. A slit was almost always present from the waist to the hem in the center back. The side seams were set towards the back of the body and moved father back as the years progressed. The sleeves were quite full and had large cuffs. By the 1770s the coat became less full and the pleats in the skirts were greatly reduced. The fronts were starting to be cut away from the straight and small, standing collars began to appear. The cuffs and sleeves became smaller. Fashion had really shown a change by 1790. Coats were significantly cut away from the front and buttons and buttonholes were only for decoration. The one voluminous side skirts were almost non-existent, although the back retained the slit opening to the waist. Sleeves were narrow and fitted with a small cuff, and a high collar came up to the gentleman's chin.

Around 1800 another frock coat appeared that was quite fitted to the body down to the waist. Sewn to the waist were knee-length skirts that were quite full and hung straight down in the front. While these started as an informal dress, they became the height of fashion for the Victorian gentleman. By the late 1820s, the shape of a gentleman's clothing became more rounded. The coats often had rounded lapels and the shoulders were puffy, perhaps to compliment the leg-o mutton sleeves on women's dresses. The coat tails were rounded so that they cupped around the hips.

Stockings

Stockings for men and women were the same, and since breeches came to just below the knee they were a prominent part of men's clothing. Stockings came over the knee and were usually held in place with garters that tied or buckled either above or below the knee. The stockings were knitted of wool, cotton, silk, or linen and many were actually knitted on machines. These knitting machines knit the stockings to shape in flat pieces and then they were sewn up the back. Designs were often knitted or embroidered at the ankles and partially up the legs.

The clothes of the working class did not change all that much between 1800 and 1840. Farmers and laborers usually wore slops or loose-fitting trousers made from sturdy fabrics. A shirt, neckerchief and waistcoat or jacket completed the attire.

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Fashions changed as fast as the weather in England, and hence here in America. Millineries knew that one way to keep sales humming was to keep the styles changing. By the 19th century the presentation of status could no longer be visually presented through clothing alone. A lady dressed as a poor person and a poor person dressed as a wealthy one never really became the class that they were appearing to be dressed--a lady was always a lady no matter how she dressed; it was her carriage, gracious manner, civility, innate ease, fine bearing and speech that would define her class. Only by looking at the appearance and the manner could one really see who was wearing what.

The barrier between utter poverty and fabulously wealthy is the middle class. Within this grouping the range in pocketbook size alone makes the task of defining what the middle class woman had behind the cupboard doors and inside the chest of drawers a perfectly impossible task. A woman then, as now, had the opportunity to wear as she was able, upgrade as she was inclined, and the limits of her expenditures were the family finances. Women had a wardrobe suited or adapted to her life's situation. In the ordinary wardrobe was a bit of everything; new to old, functional to fashionable, everyday to special. Even within the environment of slavery there were those who received two new outfits a year. A few slaves even had credit account in stores enabling them to buy fashion supplements for themselves. Be it a single article or an entire wardrobe, fashion is a form of self-expression. . .a way to be individual.

The general fashion line of 1759 to 1770 was narrow shoulders, narrow waists, and full petticoats (known as skirts today) that moved form being wide at the hips to more of a bell shape. The fullness of the petticoats moved toward the back. Petticoats once worn over false hips were worn over a false rump or bustle as the century progressed. After years of very constructed shapes for women's dress, the 1790s (and French Revolution) brought softness and drapes into vogue. The chemise dress became popular and had an unstructured look, with full skirt and drawstrings at both the waist and neckline. The Empire fashion or Grecian style of dress evolved from the English chemise. These dresses were longer and wider than the chemise and had a similar drawstring at the neckline, which was getting considerable lower, and another drawstring below the breast, giving a high-waisted effect. The sleeves were shortened or dispensed with all together. This style of dress became known as the Empire Gown and was the first costume for several centuries in any way approximating to the natural feminine form. Women of the upper class indulged their fancy in this new style of classic dress to an extravagant degree and they did it thoroughly, abandoning all undergarments which in

any way 'spoilt' the line of clinging drapery. The Empire Gown was made of light, clinging gauze of fine muslin, a strong contract to the stiff brocades and satins that were in vogue before the French Revolution. By 1807, dresses were so close-fitting that walking in them was nearly impossible and the outline of the figure was clearly revealed. Ladies went so far as to soak their dresses in water immediately before putting them on so that they might cling more closely to the figure. Whether it is from this practice of wetting down or just because the thin fabrics gave no protection from the cold, the gowns were nicknamed "influenza gowns".

There was hue and cry from the pulpits and in the press over the scantiness of the Empire Gown. And not all women wore these stylish Empire Gowns of thin fabrics. Working women and girls in rural areas may have followed fashion in a general way, but their fabrics were a more substantial choice. Many rural women were still wearing short gowns and petticoats.

From the 1820s, women again began to wear more petticoats under their gowns and a wider shape returned. The gathers in the skirts that had been concentrated in the back were now spreading around the waistband. The width at the hem in the early 1820s was about 72 inches around. By the end of the 1830s, they were from 120 to 140 inches around. The waistline gradually returned to a nature level. The shoulders widened until the leg o'mutton sleeves came into style. Sleeves were long and quite full at the top and narrow at the wrist. By 1830 sleeves were at their most extravagant--the top part was often as much as 35 inches wide gathered into the armhole. Dresses now had wide collars and skirts (needed to balance the huge sleeves) and the corset again narrowed the waist.

Showing the elbows in the 18th and 19th centuries was considered indecent and unladylike. A woman could expose as much of her chest as she wanted, but kept her elbows covered. Of course, the working woman rolled up her sleeves while doing laundry or gardening. Women of the upper class wore long gloves and mittens to cover their elbows. Green gloves were considered very chic.

With this brief overview of styles and fashion changes, let's turn our attention to the basic garments worn by almost every woman between 1740 and 1840. As with men's fashion, there are far too many accessories and accoutrements to be included in this symposium.

Chemise

Chemise, shift, and bed gown are terms referring to a large group of unfitted gowns. The chemise was usually a T-shaped unfitted garment with sleeves pieced to the appropriate length. As with a man's shirt, the chemise is cut to use the width of the fabric to the best advantage, being made from rectangles and squares. Worn by all

classes, the wealthier set cut their clothing fuller and longer as costs were secondary to these ladies. Linens used by the poorer women came at 40 to 70 threads per inch. The finer linens had 90 to 120 threads per inch and were more polished and durable. Necklines were often adjusted to fit with a drawstring. The length of the chemise varied from hip to ankle. Some gowns were fitted to the torso with back pleats; others were left loose. Variations in shape and fabric gave great variety to the form. The chemise was the undermost garment for a woman; it served as a blouse, underwear and sleeping gown. Shifts were usually left natural or bleached white in color.

Petticoats

Petticoats are known as skirts today; an under-petticoat would probably serve as a type of slip today. Instead of wearing a hooped petticoat to keep her petticoats full, a woman of the early 1800s wore an under-petticoat with a corded hem. Rows of cords were placed into tucks around the hems, giving them a considerable amount of stiffening and holding the petticoat away from the body. By the 1840s a stiff under-petticoat made of horsehair was being worn under the petticoat, and by the 1850s this was replaced by the hooped petticoat. It was common for a woman to wear more than one petticoat at a time. Many woman wore seven quite routinely. For winter warmth, some were known to wear as many as 16 petticoats!

Petticoats were usually drawstring or pleated into a waistband. The number of panels of fabric determined fullness, and as mentioned earlier, the gathers moved around the waistline depending on fashion. The circumference at the hem was anywhere between 80 and 144 inches. The side seams were commonly left open about eight inches from the hip to the waistband to allow access to the detachable pocket. If there were no side seams, a slit could be cut into the side for pocket access. the hemlines of the gowns and petticoats began to be modified slightly by rising to the ankle around 1810. In the 1820s the waistline was still raised from the natural level, but was lowered from the very high level of the Empire style. This waist was level around the body and generally had a waistband one to two inches wide. Buckled belts were fashionable, too, and were often wider than the waistband.

Shortgowns

Shortgowns were loose, unfitted, T-shaped, and commonly unlined jackets that adjusted well to changes in size and shape. The sleeves were pieced on to the body; if made from a striped fabric, the stripes ran around the arm rather than down the length of the arm. This garment was commonly worn by the majority of women who could not afford fashionable gowns requiring yards of costly fabric; nor could these women carry on the strenuous routine of their daily lives when inhibited by the cut of the latest styles. The shortgown is also referred to as a bed-gown or bed jacket, which may sound like something worn to bed. However, that is not the case. It is an everyday working jacket

and simple to make since it has no lining. It can be adjusted by size by adding fabric in the back and center front and made large enough to be worn during pregnancy.

Stays

Stays are a bodice constructed of multiple layers of fabric, with channels sewn through two of the layers for inserting baleine (whalebone) or other strong material. Stays were worn by ladies to confine the waist and support the bust and back. This sleeveless garment reaches form below the waist in the front to the center of bust. With or without shoulder straps, stays were the garment that most molded the 18th century woman's body into the fashionable, conical shape. Stiffened with buckram, the garment has vertical rows of casing to insert baleine or strips of wood. Baleine is the material of choice for stays since it is very light, elastic and flexible. If baleine was too expensive or unavailable to the maker, strips of red or white oak were an acceptable substitute. Wooden stays often broke in several places and wore through the casings. Stays are worn over the shift and are laced with a cord either up the front or back. Because there is no accommodation for the fullness of the bust, stays push the fullness up into a high, rounded shape. They are usually considered an undergarment but are regularly seen as an outer garment. Corsets, on the other hand, were worn as an undergarment. Similar to stays in construction, although the corset had gussets for the fullness of the bust and the hips while shaping the midriff.

Pockets

Prior to pockets, both men and women used pouches attached at waist-level to the exterior of the clothing. Men adopted inset pockets around 1550. The fashionable alternative to this pouch consisted of a long drawstring bad suspended from the waist to fall at or below the knee. Women wore detachable, bell-shaped bags tied around their waists as pockets as early as the mid 1600s and continued to use detachable pockets for almost 200 years. Since women of all economic levels frequently re-modeled their garments, detached pockets eliminates extra needle work.

The average pocket was between 14 to 24 inches in length. Pleats would make for an even more spacious pocket. Women would carry everything from the obvious, such as sewing implements and fabrics, handkerchiefs, snuff boxes, keys, fans, and smelling salts, to unusual objects like drinking cups, broken silver spoons and toys. Wearing several pockets accommodated the weight of the items carried while maintaining the shape of the dress. One probable reason for the abundance of items found in a lady's pockets is security. People lived in small spaces and owned few containers for storage. There was also very little privacy in the modern sense of the word.

The four major types of decorations were: embroidered, pieced, whole-cloth, and appliqué. With the steep price of printed cloth, many women chose embroidery or

crewel work. The most common design consisted of a vine meandering along the contour of the pocket, embellished with flowers and leaves. Pockets were also made form smaller pieces of different fabrics that had been sewn together into a large piece of cloth. Piecework gained popularity in the second half of the 18th century when colorful cotton fabrics became more plentiful. The most common was whole-cloth, utilizing one large piece of fabric or smaller pieces of the same fabric sewn together to create the image of one entire piece. Some women used colorful fabrics including printed cotton, while others made plane pockets with white fronts. The term plain is misleading; most pockets calculated forethought and a clever use of fabric, having a white-on-white patterned fabric for the front and an ordinary-weave fabric for the back. Appliqué pockets, the technique of sewing fabrics on a background fabric to create two layers, were not as common as the other three categories.

For a brief period from the 1790s to 1820s, the thin, clinging dresses with high waists rendered pockets impractical since they ruined the line of the dress. Women replaced their bulky, detachable pockets with reticules, what we think of as pocketbooks or purses today. Pockets returned circa 1825 as the Empire dress gave way to layers of petticoats. Women thus had the option of using pockets, purses, or both. By the 1840s, pockets were regularly sewn into dresses, although some women most likely retained their familiar detached pockets for many more years. Mid and late 19th century pocket characteristics would include buttons on the tie tapes, reinforcement of the fabric around the slit opening, and strips of fabric attaching the pocket to the tie tape.

Caps, footwear, and outerwear are just as important as the clothing described above. However, time does not allow for the numerous fashions of these items to be included in this symposium. Pattern resources and research information will be listed at the end of this paper.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Children's clothing underwent a gradual evolution during the 18th century, from constricting garments patterned after those worn by adults to apparel designed specifically for them. Very young children of both sexes wore dresses with close-fitting bodices similar to those worn by women. The bodices usually fastened at the back and often had leading strings or bands attached to the shoulders to help parents guide the child as he or she was learning to walk and helped to restrain a very lively youngster. Leading strings were occasionally retained on girl's dresses as a symbol of youthfulness long after their practical functions had been outgrown. In the 19th century the leading strings were replaced by leading reins.

Most small girls and many young boys wore stays since it was believed that stays supported the back and encouraged proper posture. However, not all children,

particularly those of the laboring classes, were put in stays. Towards the end of the 18th century, boys began to wear suits with long trousers rather than knee breeches. Throughout the century, when a young boy between the ages of three and seven graduated from his little dress or gown to his first pair of breeches, this was called "breeching". Breeching was symbolic of his first step toward becoming a "little man" and often a party would be given to celebrate the end of his childhood.

Gowns
Bed gowns were long, shapeless gowns that opened down the front. These were either pinned or tied. Blanket robes of light wool, shaped similar to the bodice, were wrapped around the baby for warmth and typically worn beneath the gown. A back fastening gown was worn by girls until about age 12 years and by boys until breeching. The gown resembled a man's coat and would button down the center front. The infant's shirt was a loose-fitting T-shaped, waist-length garment worn by babies; it opened down the front and could be pinned or tied. Some might be trimmed with remnants of lace.

Swaddling clothes
Clothing of strips of fabric were wrapped about a baby to hold its arms and legs immobile, straightening and strengthening the body. A practice from Roman times, swaddling began to disappear in the 1700s, but remained a practice in some countries until the 1920s.

Surcingle
A bellyband of strong fabric wrapped around the infant's body to support the abdomen and suppress the navel. A surcingle was often satin covered. It was very common during the first six weeks of age to place a coin wrapped in a cloth over the navel, held in place by the bellyband as added protection from ruptures or hernias.

Clout
Today we call this the diaper. The clout was made of linen diaper fabric and was pinned or tied with tapes. A pilch or pilcher was a cover of filled wool used over the clout for further protection.

Caps
A plain cap, or under cap, was worn next to the young baby's head to help protect it from drafts. A fancier cap, or over cap, was put over the under cap. These were more fashionable and also provided extra warmth and protection. The Pudding Cap was a padded cap that was tied on the head of a child learning to walk. It protected the child's brain when it fell and hit its head. There was a belief that if the head was hit it would be permanently soft, and falling frequently could lead to the brain turning mushy like pudding. Toddlers were often and livingly referred to as "little pudding heads".

Skeleton Suit
Between 1780 and 1820, a small boy's suit with the trousers buttoned on the waist of the jacket or waistcoat was known as a skeleton suite. It was usually high-waisted and tight fitting.

Stays
Stays were worn by both boys and girls as soon as they learned to walk. A child's first stays were soft, or lightly boned, and never tightly laced. Stays were intended to support and round the soft rib cage. By the age of two or a little older, the stays would be of a heavy linen, boned with pack thread, reeds, or wooden splints, and gentle but firm in the lacing. These stays encouraged good posture. Boys wore them until they were breeched; girls wore them the rest of their lives.

SHOES FOR THE FAMILY

In the early 1800s, several varieties of boots were worn by men. Hessian boots had an oval-shaped or pointed front at the top. There were also boots having a longish brown top set fairly low on the leg. Boot heels were made of layers of wood and leather. Shoes were very low heeled, square or rounded-toed with a very short tongue. Shoes with buckles were also still in use.

For the ladies: high-heeled shoes were abolished after the French Revolution. Shoes with flat heels were worn throughout the early 19th century. Shoes were pointed; some tied up the leg like a sandal (carrying out the Grecian style in vogue). About 1810, a rounded-toe shoe came into fashion. Ankle-high boots were seen around 1808. Some shoes were made of cloth and fastened across the instep with ribbon. A square toe was fashionable in the 1830s, and the front part of the shoe was commonly decorated with a small bow or rosette. After 1840 most shoes had low heels and rather square toes. Boots laced up the inner sole and in 1850 boots with elastic sides became quite common.

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A few original clothing descriptions:
"On the frontiers, and particularly amongst those who were much in the habit of hunting, and going on scouts and campaigns, the dress of the men was partly Indian, and partly that of civilized nations. The hunting shirt was universally worn. This was a

king of loose frock, reaching halfway down the thighs, with large sleeves, open before and so wide as to lap over a foot or more when belted. The cape was large, and sometimes handsomely fringed with a raveled piece of cloth of a different color from that of the hunting shirt itself. The bosom of the dress served as a wallet to hold a chunk of bread, cakes, jerk, tow for wiping the barrel of the rifle, or any other necessary for the hunter or warrior. The belt, which was always tied behind answered several purposes, besides that of holding the dress together. In cold weather the mittens, and sometimes the bullet-bag, occupied the front part of it. To the right side was suspended the tomahawk and to the left the scalping knife in its leather sheath. The hunting shirt was generally made of linsey, sometimes of coarse linen, and a few of dressed deer skins. These last were very cold and uncomfortable in wet weather. The shirt and jacket were of the common fashion. A pair of drawers or breeches and leggings, were the dress of the thighs and legs; a pair of moccasins answered for the feet much better than shoes. These were made of dressed deer skin and well stuffed with deer's hair or dry leaves, so as to keep the feet comfortable warm; but in wet weather it was usually said that wearing them was 'a decent way of going barefooted', and such was the fact, owing to the spongy texture of the leather of which they were made.

"Our clothing was all of domestic manufacture. We had no other resource for clothing, and this, indeed, was a poor one. The crops of flax often failed, and the sheep were destroyed by the wolves. Linsey, which is made of flax and wool, the former the chain and latter the filling, was the warmest and most substantial cloth we could make. Almost every house contained a loom, and almost every woman was a weaver.

"Every family tanned their own leather. The tan vat was a large trough sunk to the upper edge in the ground. A quantity of bark was easily obtained every spring, in clearing and fencing the land. This, after drying, was brought in and in wet days was shaved and pounded on a block of wood, with an axe or mallet. Ashes was used in place of lime for taking off the hair. Bear's oil, hog's lard and tallow, answered the place of fish oil. The leather, to be sure, was coarse; but it was substantially good. The operation of currying was preformed by a drawing knife with its edge turned, after the manner of a currying knife. The blacking of the leather was made of soot and hog's lard.

"Almost every family contained its own tailors and shoemakers. Those could not make shoes, could make shoepacks. These, like moccasins, were made of a single piece of leather with the exception of a tongue piece on the top of the foot. This was about two inches broad and circular at the lower end. To this the main piece of leather was sewed, with a gathering stitch. The seam behind was like that of a moccasin. To the shoepack a sole was sometimes added. The women did the tailor work. They could all cut out and make hunting shirts, leggings, and drawers."

Reverend Joseph Doddridge, Notes on the Settlements and Indian wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1763-1783

"My wardrobe was scanty and light. It consisted of a roundabout jacket of woolen, a pair of half-worn buckskin breeches, two pairs of woolen stockings, a hat with a feather, a hunting shirt, leggings, a pair of moccasins, a pair of tolerable good shoes, which had been closely hoarded. . .

"Having on a fine white blanket coat, and turning my cap or 'bonnet rouge' inside out, the inside being white, made me, as it were, invisible in the snow. . ."

John Joseph Henry. An Accurate and Interesting Account of The Hardships and Sufferings of That Band of Heroes, Who Traversed Thru The Wilderness in the Campaign Against Quebec in 1775, 1812