

**THE SLOP SHOP AND THE ALMSHOUSE:
READY-MADE MENSWEAR IN PHILADELPHIA, 1780-1820**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in American Material Culture

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READY-MADE MENSWEAR IN PHILADELPHIA, 1780-1820**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ABSTRACT	x

Chapter

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	The Lower Sort of Philadelphia: An Historiographical View	12
	Common Dress in Social History	21
	Common Dress in Costume History	26
2	A WORLD OF WORK: SLOP SHOPS	36
	The Stock of Slop Shops	43
	Wearing Slops: A Wardrobe for the Working Man	62
	Making Slops	67
	Slops-sellers	72
	The Appearance of Slop Shops	84
	Selling Slops	95
	The Rise of the Merchant Tailor	100
3	A WORLD OF ALMS: CLOTHING IN THE PHILADELPHIA ALMSHOUSE	108
	Shoes for the Poor	112
	Weaving in the Almshouse	119
	Clothing Production in the Almshouse	120
	Clothing Repair	127
	Providing Clothing to Almshouse Residents	131
	Almshouse Inmate Wardrobes	140
4	CONCLUSION	149

Appendix

A	Philadelphia Tailor and Seamstress Locations in 1800.....	151
B	Inventory of John Waters, 1805	162
C	Inventories of John Antrim, 1818.....	164
D	John Purdon’s Advertisement, 1792.....	169
BIBLIOGRAPHY		173
Printed Sources		173
City Directories Cited (chronological)		184
Manuscript Materials		187
IMAGE PERMISSIONS		188

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	The lower sort in William Birch's <i>The city of Philadelphia</i>	13
Figure 2:	John Lewis Krimmel, <i>Election Day, 1815</i> , ca. 1816.....	17
Figure 3a:	Set of sailor's slops	38
Figure 3b:	Shirt and petticoat breeches.....	39
Figure 4:	British satire by Thomas Rowlandson	41
Figure 5:	Frame-knit stocking from the 1798 wreck of HMS <i>De Braak</i>	49
Figure 6:	Waistcoat fragments from the 1798 wreck of HMS <i>De Braak</i>	56
Figure 7a:	Man's linen breeches.....	58
Figure 7b:	Details of breeches construction.....	59
Figure 8:	Boy's coat with detail of skirt pocket.....	61
Figure 9:	Illustration of a sailor	64
Figure 10:	Two of Philadelphia's lower sort in conversation.....	65
Figure 11:	Men of Philadelphia's lower sort.	66
Figure 12:	François A. de Garsault's 1769 <i>Art du Tailleur</i>	68
Figure 13:	Denis Diderot's 1771 <i>Encyclopedie</i>	69
Figure 14:	Thomas Rowlandson's 1823 satire	70
Figure 15:	Late-eighteenth-century British satire	75
Figure 16:	Undated, ca. 1800 English trade card.....	87
Figure 17:	William P. Chappel, "The Dog Killer," ca. 1830s	89
Figure 18:	Advertisement print for Allin's clothing shop	93

Figure 19:	1789 British satire	97
Figure 20:	1791 British satire	98
Figure 21:	H. Charles McBarron, <i>Under My Own Eyes</i>	102
Figure 22:	The Philadelphia almshouse	110
Figure 23:	One of <i>De Braak's</i> common-pattern shoes	116
Figure 24:	A white and red striped and ribbed silk shoe ribbon	117
Figure 25:	Graphs showing the seasonal production of garments	126
Figure 26:	Boy's leather breeches and detail of a crude patch	129
Figure 27:	Undated, ca. 1800 British caricature	138
Figure 28:	1811 satire by Thomas Rowlandson	140
Figure 29:	British satire from around 1800	142

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the clothing of poor men in Philadelphia between 1780 and 1820, situated within the rich historiography of social and costume history. It examines two networks of clothing production and use, “slop shops” and the Philadelphia almshouse, and employs documentary evidence, visual depictions, and extant garments. “Slops” has long connoted coarse canvas garments associated with naval service. In fact, Philadelphia’s merchant sailors as well as other laborers bought a colorful variety of clothing in slop shops. These purchases allowed poor men to wear meaningful and expressive clothing. Slops-sellers managed networks of outworkers and employed sales tactics that other tailors eventually adopted, enabling the spread of ready-made menswear to higher social levels. Poor men also encountered ready-made clothing in the Philadelphia almshouse, where many of them sought shelter when they could not or would not provide for themselves. Resident workers produced shoes, textiles, and ready-made garments, and in this institution poor men wore varied and evocative clothing. This thesis contributes to a historiographical discourse about the origin and adoption of clothing styles among social groups. Whether they bought their clothing in a slop shop or received it in the almshouse, the “lower sort” engaged fashions distinct from those of the social elite, and exercised their agency to express themselves through clothing.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Clothing is the most immediate material manifestation of ourselves that we present to the world. Garments help individuals express their personal tastes, consciously and unconsciously reflect group identity and preferences, and identify others of similar or different backgrounds. This is not only true of high fashion, but also of common clothing, both today and in the past. This thesis examines two aspects of the clothing that poor men wore in Philadelphia in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The choices these men made related to clothing reflect dynamic social patterns. In this first chapter, I define the “lower sort,” the demographic whose clothing this thesis examines; I engage with the historiography of this group, especially as it relates to Philadelphia; and I examine understandings of their clothing in both social history and costume studies. Chapter 2 examines “slops” and the variety of ready-made garments this term encompassed; how different individuals made and sold slops; and the demise of slop shops as ready-made clothing production expanded in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Chapter 3 examines the clothing of the Philadelphia almshouse, a shelter for the city’s poor. The records of the almshouse related to clothing include documentation of the production and distribution of a variety of clothing items; records of the sort of clothing poor men wore; and inventories of their wardrobes. Throughout these chapters, I combine documentary

and material evidence to create a nuanced view of the meaning of everyday men's clothing. The physicality of the garments these men wore and the scrutiny of artifacts provides invaluable insight into clothing's importance and meaning.

The people of early America known as the "lesser," "meaner," and "lower," today called the lowest class, left little record of their experiences.¹ To study this historical demographic, it is essential to establish its basic definition.² Scholars have been casual in their delineation of this group, but historical commentators found it equally elusive. These terms were not definitive labels in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Members of the social elite, as well as more "middling" individuals, used the phrase pejoratively and imprecisely to refer to lower social strata. For the people who employed such phrases, the application connoted not just economic inferiority, but also more insidious ideas. In their eyes, the lower sort suffered from an inborn deficiency of morals, physical qualities, and fate, and

¹ For discussions of the various terms used by historians to refer to people in this group, see Jesse Lemisch and John K. Alexander, "The White Oaks, Jack Tar, and the Concept of the 'Inarticulate'," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 29:1 (January 1972), 133, and Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 4.

² Examples include Seth Rockman's combination of both free and enslaved labor as a single unit in *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). Simon Newman seems to define his "poor" people as anyone who appeared in the public record groups he employed in *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

historians have adopted the term without criticizing these implicit assumptions.³ While I use the lower sort as a moniker for the bottom levels of society, I have consciously employed it as a period label for a diverse group without the equally period judgments about personhood it once entailed. I also occasionally use the phrase “working men,” a modern term that nevertheless functions to distinguish this same group. In this study, the lower sort is defined as those individuals “who depend on their daily labor, for daily supplies” and “whose living absorbs all their earnings”⁴ as well as those who relied on public and private systems of relief to survive. The distinction between these two groups was flexible, as individuals moved between a world of work and a world of alms.

In this thesis, I consider the men of the lower sort in Philadelphia and use data on women only occasionally for comparison. Clothing, perhaps more than any other feature of the material lives of the poor in early America, divided people along gender lines.⁵ Women’s clothing was available ready-made in this period, and it

³ Newman noted the elite mindset regarding the connections between lower social rank and “flawed character,” *Embodied History*, 8. Authors like Smith and Rosswurm adopted the term without considering its full implications.

⁴ “Who depend on...” is how an anonymous author described the poor in a letter regarding combating the spread of diseases in Philadelphia. A Citizen, “For the Philadelphia Gazette,” *The Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, August 18, 1797. “Living absorbs...” appears in nineteenth-century censuses and is noted in Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men’s Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 129.

⁵ Many clothing studies have considered the affects of gender. See especially the work of Linzy A Brekke, “Fashioning America: Clothing, Consumerism, and the Politics of Appearance in the Early Republic,” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2007).

would be a mistake to conclude that poor women simply made their own garments at home. Newspaper advertisements for ready-made shortgowns and petticoats appeared alongside those for men's shirts and jackets, and poor women purchased such apparel from a variety of sources including tailors, milliners, and merchants.⁶ However, the waterfront slops-sellers whom I discuss in the first chapter of this study produced only menswear. Similarly, in the second chapter I examine the clothing of men in the Philadelphia almshouse, where the provision of garments to inmates varied based on gender. For instance, George Lowerman, a former tailor and later almshouse resident, facilitated almshouse menswear production and distribution in the first years of the nineteenth century but had nothing to do with the shifts, petticoats, and gowns provided to female inmates. The future study of women's ready-made garments will reveal valuable insights, but I have limited this thesis to menswear in order to examine certain systems of production and the garments produced.

What sort of men ranked among the lower sort? They were wage-laborers and often owned no substantial property besides the raw power of their bodies. They worked as seamen, privy-well-diggers, stevedores, chimneysweeps and woodcutters. Carters and draymen, recognizable by their long work smocks (overshirts), hauled freight from the docks and cleaned garbage from the streets.

⁶ To take only two examples of many, John Swanwick's 1783 advertisement of his sale of imported goods included "Shirts ready made" alongside "Durant, Tammy, and Calamanco Petticoats." Advertisement, *The Independent Gazetteer*, October 18, 1783. Terrasson Brothers & Co. advertised the arrival of imported "embroidered silk waistcoats" as well as "ready made Gowns, Hats Caps, Mantuas, Aprons, &c." in *The Pennsylvania Packet or the General Advertiser*, June 5, 1783.

Although they owned at least a horse and two-wheeled cart, the elite regarded carters as “semi-skilled” at best.⁷ Street criers and vendors of fruits, vegetables, and shellfish lived a literal hand-to-mouth existence on the streets of the city. Even some “artisans” and “mechanics” were among the lower sort. Many tailors, shoemakers, coopers, and bricklayers struggled at the very bottom of the socio-economic ladder.⁸ Like “the lower sort,” these terms were ambiguous; they might encompass the poorest shoemakers and the finest cabinetmakers.⁹ The slops-sellers I describe in the first chapter of this thesis were not usually members of the lower sort, but nor were they artisans. While these shopkeepers struggled to turn a profit, their sewing employees drifted in and out of poverty.

Indentured servants and trade apprentices were also members of the lower sort in some cases. However, the lives of American servants and apprentices varied drastically based on a myriad of factors, including location, time period, and masters’ temperaments. Servants in many better households received the cast-off clothing of their masters.¹⁰ Apprentices enjoyed the hope of upward mobility, but during their

⁷ Graham Russell Hodges dissected the lifeways and political mindsets of these men in *New York City Cartmen, 1667-1850* (New York: New York University Press, 1986).

⁸ Billy Smith was the first to quantitatively prove the impoverished conditions of some of these “artisans” in *The “Lower Sort.”*

⁹ An interesting examination of the culture of middling craftsmen is Ric Northrup Caric, “‘To Drown the Ills That Discompose the Mind’: Care, Leisure, and Identity Among Philadelphia Artisans and Workers, 1785-1840,” *Pennsylvania History* 64:4 (Autumn 1997), 465-489.

¹⁰ For accounts of indentured servitude, see John Harrower, *The Journal of John Harrower: An Indentured Servant in the Colony of Virginia, 1773-1776*, ed. Edward Miles Riley (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, 1963) and William Moraley, *The*

years of service, they were often housed and clothed little better than common laborers. Before rising to prominence as a theologian and journalist, Samuel Seabury III's father apprenticed him to a New York City cabinetmaker in 1815. Attending an evening soiree reminded him of the power of clothes: "Here perhaps I would meet persons on a footing of equality in the evening who would pass me in the streets next morning with a handbarrow or bed post in a dress not fit for a *sans-culotte*."¹¹ Seabury explicitly associated his work dress with that of the poor masses of the French Revolution, and afforded it equally little respect. Apprenticeship contracts gradually changed from stipulating clothing provisions to providing for cash allowances for garment purchase, and many apprentices used these funds to purchase sumptuous clothing.¹² Although many apprentices and indentured servants never reached a higher

Infortunate: The Voyage and Adventures of William Moraley, an Indentured Servant, ed. Susan E. Klepp and Billy G. Smith (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992). Harrower makes numerous interesting comments about clothing procurement and use in 1770s Virginia while Moraley's account focuses on his time in the middle colonies, 1729-1734. The best localized view of the indenture system, among a canon of American studies, is Sharon V. Salinger, "*To serve well and faithfully*": *Labor and indentured servants in Pennsylvania, 1682-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹¹ Samuel Seabury. *Moneygrape's Apprentice: The Personal Narrative of Samuel Seabury III*, ed. Robert Bruce Mullin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 68.

¹² Little has been written about the clothing of apprentices. See Ian Quimby, *Apprenticeship in Colonial Philadelphia* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 60-67. W.J. Rorabaugh argued that clothing was eventually dropped from craft indenture obligations in favor of cash as the retail clothing market expanded, *The Craft Apprentice: From Franklin to the Machine Age in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 70-72. For an interesting commentary on young dandies in Philadelphia, many of whom were "the sons of flourishing tradesmen, and

economic plane, the nuances of their clothing, like that of slaves, require independent study beyond this thesis.

Any definition of the lower sort should also include the indigent, the men historically labeled as beggars, criminals, drunkards, cripples, the infirm, and the insane. I include these men because they were also wearers and consumers of clothing and because they exercised substantial power over how society viewed the entirety of the lower sort.¹³ Life at the bottom of society was precarious, and it was easy for working men to lose their small foothold, through injury, age, or economy, and fall into the ranks of the indigent. Moreover, the records relating to this group, especially those of the Philadelphia almshouse, provide an unprecedented window into the clothing worn by the poorest men of the city.

The lower sort of Philadelphia was a heterogeneous body. It included recent immigrants from across Europe, as well as those with a more American ancestry. In 1788, Richard Allen advertised the flight of his sixteen-year-old indentured servant, Israel Tallman. Tallman was “by profession a chimney-sweeper.” Allen made special note of his “dark complexion,” which he ascribed to Tallman’s

mechanics,” see Peter Atall, ed., *The Hermit in America on a Visit to Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: M. Thomas, 1819), 93 and 85-98.

¹³ Examples of how these people affected societal views of the larger population of the working poor can be found in John K. Alexander, *Render Them Submissive: Responses to Poverty in Philadelphia, 1760-1800* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980) and his earlier article “The City of Brotherly Fear: The Poor in Late-Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia,” *Cities in American History*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson and Stanley K. Schultz (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 79-97. Also see Newman, *Embodied History*.

parentage: “his father a whiteman, his mother an Indian.”¹⁴ There were also many African Americans in Philadelphia, both enslaved and free, especially after the 1780 “Act for Gradual Abolition of Slavery” banned the importation of enslaved individuals and declared free all children born after its enactment. Formerly-enslaved men and women from across the region came to the city looking for work and a brighter future.¹⁵ Ten percent of the Philadelphia population was African American in the first part of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ African-American men found work in unskilled positions as laborers and aboard ships as merchant seaman; at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they constituted approximately seventeen percent of Philadelphia’s sailors.¹⁷ Artist John Lewis Krimmel’s *Black Sawyers Working in Front of the Bank of Pennsylvania* (1811-1812) shows three men wearing typical lower sort clothing, like striped trousers.¹⁸ African Americans expressed themselves in their clothing or in the

¹⁴ Advertisement, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 13, 1788.

¹⁵ Gary Nash, *Race, Class, and Politics: Essays on American Colonial and Revolutionary Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 284-289.

¹⁶ Rockman, *Scraping By*, 13.

¹⁷ W. Jeffrey Bolster, “A Inner Diaspora: Black Sailors Making Selves,” in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*, edited by Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 422.

¹⁸ This watercolor is part of the Svinin Portfolio at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. The handkerchief wrapped around one man’s head may be a mark of African-American style, but this use also appeared among white workers, as in Charles Willson Peale’s *Exhuming the First American Mastodon*. Krimmel also depicted an African-American oysterman in *Nightlife in Philadelphia – an Oyster Barrow in front of the Chestnut Street Theater*, in the same Portfolio.

addition of personal adornment like hoop earrings, but often race could not be distinguished among Philadelphia's lower sort based solely on clothes.¹⁹

The idea of race was more nuanced among the sailors and dockworkers of early Philadelphia than in other strata of society. The popular mobs that stirred colonial rebellion often included many African Americans, enslaved and free, alongside free white men.²⁰ However, the lower sort were not naturally egalitarian or blind to racial boundaries than their social betters. "In the Philadelphia prisons and among condemned criminals, colored people and whites do not eat together," wrote Frenchman Moreau de St. Méry in the 1790s, and "a white servant, no matter who, would consider it a dishonor to eat with colored people."²¹ But these insights were generalizations, and moreover, they referred to institutionalized racial interaction (prison, service, and apprenticeship) rather than the free labor pool. Especially among

¹⁹ Bolster noted earrings, "Inner Diaspora," 430. For two examples of studies illuminating the power of clothing among both enslaved and free African-Americans, see Sophie White, "'Wearing three or four handkerchiefs around his collar, and elsewhere about him': Slaves' Construction of Masculinity and Ethnicity in French Colonial New Orleans," *Gender & History* 15:3 (Nov. 2003), 528-549; and Brekke, "Fashioning America," 209-258.

²⁰ Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, "The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves and the Atlantic Working Class in the Eighteenth Century," in *Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labor*, edited by Colin Howell and Richard Twomey (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1991), 20. Linebaugh and Rediker expanded their thesis in *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

²¹ Moreau de St. Méry, Mederic Louis Elie, *Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey, 1793-1798*, edited and translated by Kenneth and Anna M. Roberts (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947), 302. Note that St. Méry was born to French-creole parents on Martinique, although he spent much of his later life in France.

worldly sailors, racial boundaries were less impermeable than elsewhere in American society.²² The lower sort of port cities like Philadelphia included men from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, and they mingled both socially and sartorially.

This thesis considers the period from about 1780 through the widespread expansion of ready-made clothing production as an industry in the 1820s. In many cases I have employed information from before and after these dates for context. This was an era of considerable change in men's dress. Breeches, with tight-fitting legs ending just below the kneecap, fell from fashion. By 1800, many fashionable men wore tight pantaloons, extending down to the top of the ankle or lower, and a few decades later they adopted loose-fitting trousers, long a favored garment among the lower sort. The male waistline gradually rose over this period; in the 1770s, breeches sat low on the hips, but by 1820 trousers rose above the naval. Men's collars transformed from falling "capotes" to stand-and-fall collars in the 1790s to full standing collars and other capotes by 1810. Such stylistic metamorphoses impacted the clothing of the lower sort, who were not blind to fashion. This was also an era of incredible social turbulence, and common dress is not irrelevant in understanding how poor men dealt with these significant changes.

Philadelphia represents a good place in which to situate this study for a variety of reasons. Public and private entities of the city left many commentaries on and records of the lower sort, and extensive scholarly attention has focused on this documentation, allowing for a study of their dress to draw on a rich library of works

²² The best work on this subject is W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

related to economics, politics, food, housing, imprisonment, sex, labor, and war.

Philadelphia was also at the center of American maritime life in the era. Many men of the lower sort were involved in the daily tasks of fitting, loading, sailing, and unloading ships. This dynamic environment spawned the slop shops that clustered near the Delaware River and catered to the demand among sailors and workers for cheap, sturdy, ready-made garments.

Historian Daniel Vickers argued “that until the workings of the waterfront community are better understood, we cannot know whether common seamen belonged to a seaborne proletariat, whether they constituted a species of traditional journeymen, or whether most treated their sea experience as merely an interlude in lives acted out primarily on shore.”²³ The purpose of this thesis is not to provide a new grounding for the understanding of shipboard class struggles or the life cycles of mariners. However, this study of the waterfront clothing industry in an important early American port represents a small contribution to understanding both these “lives acted out primarily on shore” (sailors) and the lives of the poor landmen who called Philadelphia home. These men patronized slop shops and wore ready-made clothing that marked them as the lower sort. There were regional variations in clothing styles, as there were in every other aspect of the material culture of early America. While I do not attempt to isolate the differences in the dress of Pennsylvania and Virginia, for example, I have used the source material most relevant to Philadelphia and only employed more distant information when necessary. Many of the illustrations I employ are British, because

²³ Daniel Vickers, “Beyond Jack Tar,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50:2 (April 1993), 423.

more visual depictions of both working people and slop shops survive from England than America. As discussed in the body of the thesis, regional differences in both clothing and how it was sold are important considerations in examining images as representative of or distinct from the situation in Philadelphia.

The Lower Sort of Philadelphia: An Historiographical View

Early-twentieth-century historians overlooked the importance and even the presence of the lower sort in early American cities. Writing in 1955, Carl Bridenbaugh stated the then-reigning view of the colonial urban poor: “Few day laborers and journeymen were to be found in any city, and such as there were did not belong on the same base level as the lower classes of Europe.”²⁴ In fact, laborers constituted a significant portion of these cities’ populations. More recent scholarship proved that poor laborers (including some artisans) accounted for between a quarter and a half of the free male population of Philadelphia by the time of the Revolution (Figure 1).²⁵

²⁴ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 148.

²⁵ Steven Rosswurm estimated “the generally unskilled wage earning sector of the [Revolutionary] Philadelphia labor force at 20 to 25 percent” in *Arms, Country, and Class: The Philadelphia Militia and the “Lower Sort” during the American Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 17. Adding the least lucrative of the craft trades, tailoring and shoemaking, Smith calculated that poor workers “comprised at least one-third and more often near one-half of Philadelphia’s free males during the second half of the [eighteenth] century,” *The “Lower Sort,”* 6.



Figure 1: The lower sort as they appeared in the corners of illustrations in William Birch's *The city of Philadelphia, in the state of Pennsylvania, North America: as it appeared in the year 1800* (Philadelphia: W. Birch, 1804). Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed Book and Periodical Collection. Throughout *Embodied History*, Newman discussed how these images only rarely show the lower sort, who would have crowded the places depicted.

Historians began examining the lower sort as a result of the social history that developed in the 1960s and 1970s. Previous generations of historians concluded that slaves, Native Americans, and non-elite white men were either irrelevant to history or impossible to study because they left no documentary record. In the 1970s, social historians began to study the lives of these “inarticulate” groups and questioned the legitimacy of this label.²⁶ “Is it not time that we put ‘inarticulate’ in quotation marks,” wrote Jesse Lemisch in 1969, “and begin to see the term more as a judgment on the failure of historians than as a description of historiographical reality?”²⁷ Among the first to address this new area of interest was John K. Alexander, who examined how society viewed and dealt with the poor in *Render Them Submissive* (1980) and provided new insights into the world of Philadelphia’s lower sort. However, his book was admittedly not about “history from the bottom up,” but rather one in which “the poor serve as a kind of mirror reflecting the image of the larger Philadelphia society.”²⁸ A decade later, Billy Smith aimed to study the poor as more than a mirror in *The “Lower Sort.”* Smith focused primarily on four occupational groups - laborers, merchant seamen, shoemakers, and tailors – because they “clustered near but not at the

²⁶ For an interesting early exchange regarding the use of this term see Lemisch and Alexander, “The White Oaks.” For an economic consideration of the pre-Revolutionary Lower Sort, see Marcus Rediker, “‘Good Hands, South Heart, and Fast Feet’: The History and Culture of Working People in Early America,” *Labour* 10 (Fall 1982), 123-144.

²⁷ Jesse Lemisch, “Listening to the ‘Inarticulate’: William Widger’s Dream and the Loyalties of American Revolutionary Seamen in British Prisons,” *Journal of Social History* 3:1 (Autumn 1969), 28-29.

²⁸ Alexander, *Render Them Submissive*, 4.

very bottom of the social and economic hierarchy.”²⁹ Using a myriad of statistical data, Smith recreated the lives of the urban poor of Philadelphia, exploring the quality and quantity of their food, housing, health, and wages. Smith’s work was a foundation upon which to build future studies, the first quantitative data necessary to illuminate qualitative insights.

Other scholars demonstrated the agency of the lower sort, whom historians had long assumed to be either a passive mass or a savage rabble.³⁰ Not only were they more numerous than historians once believed, but these men also exercised considerable agency in the Revolutionary era. Steven Rosswurm and others argued that the riots and protests that proliferated before the Revolution, while brutal, were more than random crowd violence. Such clashes, however, failed to enact societal change: “Though the laboring poor clearly had the capacity to organize themselves and act on their own, none of this activity fundamentally challenged class relations in Philadelphia; nor could it, in and of itself, provide a basis for the elimination of subordination and dependence.”³¹ In the age of the early republic, the “subordination and dependence” of the lower sort continued, and reforms of imprisonment systems,

²⁹ Smith, *The “Lower Sort,”* 5. Two other early studies of the city are Susan E. Klepp, *Philadelphia in Transition: A Demographic History of the City and Its Occupational Groups, 1720-1830* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989); and Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968).

³⁰ For an exploration of this radical agency, see Jesse Lemisch, “Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America.,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25:3 (July 1968): 371-407.

³¹ Rosswurm, *Arms, Country, and Class*, 34.

slavery, and enfranchisement did little to alter the everyday condition of the poor.³² For much of the city's poorest population, in fact, the Revolution had little or no lasting positive effect on their lives.³³ This was especially true for the day laborers and merchant sailors who formed the backbone of the pre-war mobs. Writing about seamen in particular, Lemisch explained:

Thus if we think of Jack Tar as jolly, childlike, irresponsible, and in many ways surprisingly like the Negro stereotype, it is because he was treated so much like a child, a servant, and a slave. What the employer saw as the necessities of an authoritarian profession were written into law and culture: the society that wanted Jack dependent made him that way and then concluded that that was the way he really was.³⁴

After the Revolution, attitudes about sex, race, and social structure shifted dramatically in America.³⁵ In this world of newly-emerging values, the lower sort continued to struggle for the basic standards of living. Crowd action continued to be

³² Alexander, *Render Them Submissive*, 161-163.

³³ Newman ignores the Revolution entirely in *Embodied History*, and Smith notes only the temporary economic turbulence it created, without any lasting social effects, in *The "Lower Sort."*

³⁴ Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets," 380. For another study of the way society viewed and feared the lower sort, see Alexander, "The City of Brotherly Fear." The best work on merchant sailors before the Revolution is Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³⁵ For the most significant study of this subject, see Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

an important form of expression for the lower sort in both celebration and protest.³⁶ John Lewis Krimmel's *Election Day, Philadelphia 1815* was a vivid depiction of the mingling of social levels and the variety of clothing on Philadelphia's streets (Figure 2).



Figure 2: This painting shows the many social groups (and clothing styles) of Philadelphia in 1815. John Lewis Krimmel, *Election Day, 1815*, ca. 1816. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

³⁶ Simon Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

In most cases, “the liberal promises of the American Revolution” – the ideas of equality, social mobility, and economic potential that had driven popular upheavals – were never fulfilled for the lower sort.³⁷ In Philadelphia, wage rates and living expenses demonstrate that the post-Revolutionary era was one of continuing hardships for the lower sort.³⁸ New waves of immigrants glutted the labor market, which was already far from reliable. Besides the disruptions of war and economic depressions, the lower sort were often out of work precisely when they needed wages the most – in the winter. Philadelphia was far enough north and the Delaware River sufficiently narrow that ice flows hindered if not totally halted shipping for several months of the year. Without ships arriving at the wharves, seamen, carters, and stevedores, not to mention the tradesmen who catered to these workers, faced partial or complete unemployment for months on end.

When poor men could find work, no matter the season, it was tenuous, temporary, and dangerous. Limbs were broken or crushed in the process of moving tons of freight from ship to shore to consumer. Sailors fell from the masts and spars of ships docked at the wharfs. Living conditions on the outskirts of the city and along narrow alleyways encouraged the spread of diseases, and fevers abounded in the stagnant water around the docks.³⁹ The yellow fever outbreak of 1793 devastated the

³⁷ Seth Rockman makes this point about Baltimore in *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 2-3.

³⁸ Smith, *The “Lower Sort,”* 125.

³⁹ Newman discusses examples of such injuries and diseases as recorded in the records of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Sick Poor in *Embodied History*, 76-81.

city, and the disease made regular if less-catastrophic appearances for years afterwards.⁴⁰ Venereal disease was also rampant among the lower sort: a quarter of the sailors admitted to the Pennsylvania Hospital between 1800 and 1803 suffered from various sexually-transmitted ailments.⁴¹ Moreover, after a few decades of strenuous labor, rheumatism, blindness, paralysis, and other ailments often prevented men from working. Imprisonment and unemployment also loomed for men who committed any number of minor or major offenses.⁴²

Life was hard on these men, but they formed an integral part of the commercial and social systems of Philadelphia. Many historians have studied the role of the city's lower sort in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, generally relying on documentary evidence to reconstruct their lives. But there is a large font of information that remains unemployed in such pursuits. The men of the lower sort left few diaries, letters, or memoirs, but they etched their lives into the things they used and the objects that surrounded them. These people inhabited a world of goods, and many of these things survive to testify about their original makers and users. If we are

⁴⁰ J.M. Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead: The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793* (1949, reprint Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

⁴¹ Newman, *Embodied History*, 113. In *Sex Among the Rabble*, Lyons is more concerned with the social networks of prostitution than the commonality or implications of venereal diseases.

⁴² Relevant works not already mentioned which discuss the imprisonment of the lower sort include Mark E. Kann, *Punishment, Prisons, and Patriarchy: Liberty and Power in the Early American Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 2005) and Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

to understand the lives of the lower sort, it is necessary to examine their connection with the material world.

Without this examination, the subject remains abstract. Rockman's *Scraping By* begins by asking the reader to

Imagine a scene on the docks of Baltimore in 1816, as American-born stevedores loaded crates of ready-made shirts aboard a merchant ship bound for South America... Expand this view, and one might glimpse that sailor's laundress wife washing clothes in Harford run...[and] the widowed seamstresses stitching shirts at home...⁴³

This image is one in which the lower sort interacts with goods at every level of their production, distribution, and use. However, Rockman does not explore either the importance of these objects in their time or their potential to illuminate the study of the lower sort. His interest in outwork seamstresses, for example, extends only as far as their representation of the new problems of poverty inherent in the piecework system.⁴⁴ He does not consider the web of materials to which these seamstresses were connected. Who wore the shirts they sewed for such a cheap price? Why were stevedores loading them for transport overseas? What did these laborers wear and what did these garments mean to their wearers and outside observers? The absence of these questions carries the implicit conclusion that they are irrelevant to the study of the lower sort. In fact, the material world of the early poor was critical to their understanding of the world, and so it should be equally important in our contemporary

⁴³ Rockman, *Scraping By*, 3.

⁴⁴ Rockman's discussion of seamstresses and their wages appears in "The Living Wage" in *Scraping By*, 132-157.

consideration of these people. For the student of material culture, much is left to discover about the lives of the lower sort in early America.

Common Dress in Social History

Of all the material goods with which the lower sort interacted, clothing was perhaps the most personal, provocative, and meaningful. The garments they owned, used, and wore both set them apart from and connected them to members of the better orders. For poor men, dress represented a means of rebellion or emulation, a way to differentiate oneself from others or connect to a group, and a way to display pride or hide among the masses. It was the single most striking aspect of their existence not just for the people who took time to notice, but for anyone who went anywhere in Philadelphia. John Lewis Krimmel left vivid images of Philadelphia's lower sort in watercolors like *Pepper-Pot: A Scene in the Philadelphia Market* and other sketches mentioned above. If we combine visual, documentary, and material sources, common clothing can tell us much about common life in Philadelphia and elsewhere.

Historians have presented a view of common clothing that is less nuanced than visual and material remains suggest. Writing about "class" in the Revolutionary era, Carl Bridenbaugh noted that

Dress supplied the most obvious distinction... The leather breeches and plain shirts of the artisan and tradesman contrasted sharply with the cloth knee breeches and small wig of the merchant in his countinghouse, though in many instances prosperous shopkeepers and

working people donned Sabbath finery in emulation of, and to the disgust of, their betters.⁴⁵

In fact, the clothing of “artisans and tradesmen” (Bridenbaugh’s lowest class), not to mention laborers and even the indigent, was far from plain. Billy Smith thought of clothing only as another expense for the lower sort.⁴⁶ Other authors have discounted the significance of the lower sort’s dress because, as John Alexander argued, their dress was merely an imitation of high style, one more sign to the elite that the poor were threatening social divisions.⁴⁷ However, the lower sort did not construct their wardrobes simply in emulation of social betters, but rather as an independent fashion that followed styles and trends distinct from those of high fashion.

When historians explored the dress of common Americans, even briefly, significant insights followed. Simon Newman’s *Embodied History* (2003) examined the physicality of the lower sort and brought new insight to “the significance of the ways in which people have clothed, inscribed, and decorated their bodies, or the ways in which they employed gesture, style, and performance to take control of themselves and their circumstances.”⁴⁸ By moving beyond both cultural tropes and quantitative data, Newman created the most nuanced portrait of Philadelphia’s lower sort yet accomplished. His consideration of common dress was consciously more detailed than

⁴⁵ Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt*, 148.

⁴⁶ Smith, *The “Lower Sort,”* 106.

⁴⁷ Alexander, *Render Them Submissive*, 24.

⁴⁸ Newman, *Embodied History*, 13.

that of preceding scholars, but his description of this clothing's sources and significance was still lacking.

Wealthy men and women could be identified not just by the quality of the fabric of their dress, but also by the cut, for their clothes were tailor made, carefully matched, and intended to fit closely to the body. In contrast, the clothes of the lower sort were loose and ill-fitting, often mismatched, and designed to allow freedom of movement to men and women who performed arduous physical labor... Bought off the peg, these coats had been manufactured from coarse fabrics in fairly drab shades of brown, cinnamon, gray, or blue.⁴⁹

Newman's use of "tailor made" obscured the fact that both men and women handmade all clothing in early America. Similarly, "matched" and "mismatched" implied that the lower sort assembled their wardrobes in a haphazard fashion. In fact, many poor men had the resources to create wardrobes they regarded as fashionable, using slop shop garments that were far from "drab."

A number of scholars have employed runaway advertisements to explore lower sort wardrobes, but without synthesizing material and documentary evidence. Jonathan Prude analyzed the importance of appearance among runaways in the second half of the eighteenth century and his essay represented a singular application of the idea of identity construction to a lower sort group. Prude's emphasis was on the dual nature of the better sort's understanding of runaways: "Power could involve *both* politely ignoring social inferiors *and* impolitely focusing directly on them."⁵⁰ Perhaps

⁴⁹ Ibid., 98.

⁵⁰ Jonathan Prude, "To Look upon the 'Lower Sort': Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750-1800," *The Journal of American History* 78:1 (June, 1991), 28 (Prude's italics).

his most important conclusion was that “the reality that the clothing that historians have accepted as ‘simple’ – the clothing of runaways and of the poorer nongenteel generally – was experienced by contemporaries as extraordinarily heterogeneous.”⁵¹ Prude also explained that the “limited size of plebeian wardrobes may actually have tightened personal connections with specific garments.”⁵² Until we confront the physical nature of these wardrobes, however, our understanding of their implications – of the heterogeneity and agency Prude ascribed to their wearers – is incomplete

The paucity of American studies of common clothing’s relationship to social dynamics is distinct from the work of British historians, who have worked to delineate and study the dress of the poor.⁵³ Studies of the institutional and secondhand clothing networks of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Great Britain have demonstrated the potential of these aspects of the garment trade to inform an understanding of the lower sort.⁵⁴ Beverly Lemire adeptly traced the multifaceted

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 157.

⁵³ Among the most relevant recent works on English common dress is the “Special Issue on the Dress of the Poor” of *Textile History*, 33:1 (May 2002), with articles by John Styles, Sam Smiles, Steven King, Christiana Payne, and others. Peter Jones responded to Smiles’s article in “Clothing the Poor in Early-Nineteenth-Century England,” *Textile History* 37:1 (May 2006): 17-37.

⁵⁴ On institutions see, for example, Anne Brogden’s work on Liverpool in “Clothing Provision by the Liverpool Workhouse,” *Costume* 36 (2002): 50-55, and “Clothing Provision by Liverpool’s Other Poor Law Institution: Kirkdale Industrial School,” *Costume* 37 (2003): 71-74. Regarding the secondhand trade, see Madeleine Ginsburg, “Rags to Riches: The Second-hand Clothes Trade 1700-1978,” *Costume* 14 (1980): 121-135, and Elizabeth C. Sanderson, “Nearly New: The Second-hand Clothing Trade in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh,” *Costume* 31 (1997): 38-48.

world of clothing production and consumption at the lowest levels of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, including the secondhand and ready-made markets as well as outwork, theft, and pawning.⁵⁵ As with any other subject, however, common clothing and networks of production, sale, and use varied on either side of the Atlantic. Just as different regions within Great Britain had distinct patterns of clothing use, North American practices were not identical to those of England.

John Styles made the most significant progress in applying theories of material culture to the study of English common dress in *The Dress of the People* (2007), in which he explored both the networks of clothing consumption and production in eighteenth-century England as well as how clothes contributed to the viewpoints of social betters and lessers. In both Lemire and Style's works, however, extant garments are conspicuously absent. While Styles discussed the incredible textile fragments left as tokens with babies delivered to the London Foundling Hospital, these swatches are only small pieces of the greater puzzle of clothing. If, as Styles said, "Ordinary people in the eighteenth century often chalked out their lives in clothes,"⁵⁶ it is essential to delineate these chalk marks in the few relevant garments that survive

⁵⁵ Beverly Lemire's three most relevant works in this respect are *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave, 1997); and *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c.1600-1900* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2006).

⁵⁶ John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 57.

today. To understand the world of common clothes, we must examine extant garments and place them in conversation with documentary evidence

Common Dress in Costume History

Two central plotlines drove most books written about costume history in the twentieth century: the first charted the progress of costume through time, based on silhouette and style; the second presented surviving garments as object of wonder and beauty. In many ways, these trends were similar to those that dominated the early study of other decorative arts in their descriptive rather than interpretive nature. Common clothing was of little interest to either of these agendas. Tracing the stylistic evolution of costume is essential to its potential as a learning tool, and historic clothing can provide viewing enjoyment. But it is necessary to move beyond chronology and aesthetic judgment of extant garments to discover the deeper meaning of clothes.

Clothing studies have only recently begun to consider the interpretive potential of extant garments.⁵⁷ In *What Clothes Reveal* (2002), Linda Baumgarten argued that

An eighteenth-century suit or an heirloom dress is far more than a tangible survival; it is an event in history that continues to happen. Stretched and shaped by the body that wore it, wrinkled by years of use, soiled from two-hundred-year-old perspiration, clothing is the

⁵⁷ One early exception is the work of Claudia B. Kidwell, "Riches, Rags and In-between," *Historic Preservation* 28:3 (July-Sept. 1976), 28-33.

most intimately human of the surviving decorative arts. In some ways, old clothing brings the original wearers back to life.⁵⁸

Baumgarten's emphasis on learning from extant garments was a significant step forward in costume studies. There is more to explore, however, particularly regarding common clothing. In this thesis, I examine not just how clothing was created, distributed, and used by the lower sort, but also what extant garments can reveal about makers and users.

Only a few other costume studies have focused on common dress in America. Ellen Gehret's *Rural Pennsylvania Clothing* (1976) examined the garments of one region, but did not account for the wider markets involved in clothing production. Her work also focused on the re-creation of this clothing, and she did not examine garments' interpretive value. Moreover, the original clothing she considered was sometimes not actually rural in origin.⁵⁹ Similarly, Tandy and Charles Hersh's *Cloth and Costume, 1750-1800, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania* (1995) analyzed over 500 inventories listing common menswear but offered little interpretation of these statistics' implications.⁶⁰ One problem with these works is their suggestion that

⁵⁸ Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2002), 52.

⁵⁹ Ellen J. Gehret, *Rural Pennsylvania Clothing* (York, PA: Liberty Cap Books, 1976). For instance, the collection of the Germantown Historical Society featured prominently in Gehret's menswear section. However, some of the pieces she documented are associated with elite men living in Germantown, which was quite different from the Pennsylvania Dutch countryside.

⁶⁰ Tandy and Charles Hersh, *Cloth and Costume, 1750-1800, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1995).

common clothing was somehow timeless and did not respond to elite or urban fashions. For instance, Peter Copeland wrote in the introduction to his *Working Dress in Colonial and Revolutionary America*, which covered 1710-1810, that:

In the period before mass-produced, ready-made clothing became available, the styles worn by working people changed very little from one century to the other. Thus, the dress of the farmer, waggoner, or sailor, for example, did not change significantly during the hundred-year span presented here. The dress of urban workers and skilled craftsmen underwent greater changes because they deliberately imitated upper class fashions.⁶¹

Copeland's statement echoes Bridenbaugh's and demonstrates the persistent assumption that clothing styles moved in a purely top-down pattern, as members of lower social orders sought to imitate their betters. In reality, the lower sort was engaged in a network of fashion distinct from the world of the elite, and their clothing styles in both rural and urban areas changed significantly and regularly not just over the century, but often by decade.

If American scholars have paid little attention to common dress, they have directed even less focus towards non-bespoke (non-custom) tailoring, an area that British scholars have considered in detail. Both Beverly Lemire and Miles Lambert outlined the British ready-made trade and argued for its significance.⁶² However,

⁶¹ Peter Copeland, *Working Dress in Colonial and Revolutionary America* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1977), xv.

⁶² Miles Lambert graciously provided an unpublished chapter of his dissertation which detailed this subject. A condensed version of his argument can be found in Miles Lambert, "Bespoke Versus Ready-Made: The Work of the Tailor in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Costume* 44 (2010): 56-65.

regional differences make the study of American slop shops more than just a supplement to previous British work. In 1936, Fred Mitchell Jones dismissed slop shops in his article on the retail stores of the early United States as patronized by “sailors whose stay on shore did not permit time for the cutting and fitting of the tailor.”⁶³ American historians have never revisited this simplified view of the slop shop. In his 1970 study of the history of the men’s clothing industry, Harry Cobrin paid only slightly more attention to these shops, whose name “to a degree...correctly described the quality and fit of the merchandise.”⁶⁴ These simplifications resulted from a long-standing emphasis on nineteenth-century innovations and the absence of readily-available records or discussions of early ready-made businesses. One notable exception was Egal Feldman’s *Fit for Men* (1960), a singularly detailed study of the New York City ready-made garment trade that focused on the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁵

Slop shops have been invisible to commentators for much longer than just the recent past. In 1858, Edwin Freedley acknowledged that some “Slop Clothing” had been available earlier in the century, but dated the first large wholesale production of

⁶³Fred Mitchell Jones, “Retail Stores in the United States, 1800-1860,” *The Journal of Marketing* 1, No. 2 (October 1936), 135.

⁶⁴ Harry A. Cobrin, *The Men’s Clothing Industry: Colonial Through Modern Times* (New York: Fairchild Publications, Inc., 1970), 19.

⁶⁵ Egal Feldman, *Fit for Men: A Study of New York’s Clothing Trade* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1960).

ready-made clothing in the United States to 1835.⁶⁶ Alexander Hamilton happily noted in 1791 that his study of various parts of the new country indicated “that two-thirds, three-fourths, and even four-fifths of all the clothing of the inhabitants are made by themselves.”⁶⁷ Yet in America’s cities, men of the lower sort, often unmarried, obtained their clothing from neither home nor a bespoke tailor. These men were a substantial segment of the early urban population, and they were the patrons of slop shops.

Even the Smithsonian’s seminal 1974 exhibition “Suiting Everyone: The Democratization of Clothing in America” and its accompanying catalog of the same name only mentioned the slops business as having “little to do with the democracy of dress.”⁶⁸ For the authors, Claudia B. Kidwell and Margaret C. Christman, the fact that slop garments “marked a man apart from the main in an inferior sense” meant they were of little significance to the greater pattern of American clothing.⁶⁹ “The great bulk of eighteenth-century clothing can be characterized as having been made for *somebody* and *not* for *anybody*,” they argued, and the adoption of ready-made clothing

⁶⁶ Edwin Freedley, *Philadelphia and its Manufactures* (Philadelphia: Edward Young, 1858), 220.

⁶⁷ Alexander Hamilton, *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, (Alexander Hamilton,) on the Subject of Manufactures, Made the Fifth of December, 1791* (Philadelphia: Joseph R. A. Skerrett, 1824), 64.

⁶⁸ Claudia B. Kidwell and Margaret C. Christman, *Suiting Everyone: The Democratization of Clothing in America* (Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974), 15.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

could “be traced to the press of circumstances rather than to a choice on the part of the wearer.”⁷⁰ Finally, “Slops... cost more than they were worth, and we can safely conclude that if a fit was achieved it was quite by accident.”⁷¹ However, early ready-made clothing was not the ill-fitting, imported, last-choice option presented in *Suiting Everyone*.

The authors of *Suiting Everyone* also concluded that the makers of ready-made garments were unable to create finer clothing because of some incompetency. They divided the garment-producing world between bespoke tailors and “amateur” housewives.⁷² More recent scholarship has demonstrated that individuals who fit neither of these categories made vast quantities of clothing for large markets. Thousands of women, far from amateur, produced garments in a system of outwork well before it came to the attention of social reformers in the nineteenth century.⁷³ The seamstresses and tailors involved in the slops trade were not relegated to this business because of their own lack of skill. Instead, they catered to a specific and profitable market whose patrons prioritized affordability over adherence to elite fashions. Ready-made clothing was not simply the resort of poor tailors, either. In fact, the finest tailors

⁷⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁷¹ Ibid., 29.

⁷² Ibid., 23.

⁷³ For the best and most recent study of women working in the needle trades, see Marla Miller, *The Needle's Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006).

sometimes offered ready-made garments for sale in their shops.⁷⁴ The social elite declared the idea of a “proper fit”; the utility and fashionability of a loose fit in working men’s dress was no less significant in its divergence from this standard. A commentator in 1799 used the sailor’s watchcoat as a religious allegory; like some people’s faith, it might be “convenient sometimes in stormy weather, hanging loosely about him, and put on or off as may suit the convenience of the moment.”⁷⁵ However, loose fit was not only functional. It also marked a man as part of a distinct social and sartorial group, and facilitated group recognition and social interaction.

Occupational dress is full of nuanced meanings for both wearers and viewers. This clothing allows its wearer to perform certain tasks otherwise hindered by fashionable dress. A sailor in 1800, for instance, would be unable to operate in a shipboard environment that required flexibility and movement while wearing the tight pantaloons and coats fashionable among gentlemen of the period. However, the clothing worn by members of specific trades also affects how the wearer interacts with and is viewed by society, be that his peers, social betters, or clients.⁷⁶ The lower sort

⁷⁴ Miles Lambert found frequent evidence among English tailors for the sale of finished ready-made garments alongside bespoke clothing. “Bespoke Versus Ready-Made,” 57-58.

⁷⁵ Fontaine, “COMMUNICATION,” *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia), September 3, 1799.

⁷⁶ For more on conceptions and uses of occupation dress, see Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms: Communication Through Clothing* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 143-166. A valuable consideration of the importance of appearance is Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1979).

used their appearance to announce themselves. Sailors were more likely to keep their hair in queues after the style fell from men's high fashion. Around 1800, nearly 30% of Philadelphia sailors had one or more tattoos, according to the descriptions in the Seamen's Protection Certificate Applications.⁷⁷ These men wore their hair long and marked their bodies with ink for the same reason they wore unique clothing, because it served social purposes rather than merely functional ones.

A scholarly emphasis on the "democratization of clothing" has also prevented research into the networks of slops-sellers and their patrons. Kidwell and Christman argued that "Ready-made clothing in eighteenth-century America was not the embryo from which the democratization of dress would grow."⁷⁸ Similarly, Michael Zakim's *Ready-Made Democracy* (2003) focused primarily on the industry of ready-made menswear that grew exponentially beginning in the 1820s.⁷⁹ Discussing the work of one merchant tailor, the sort of salesman he saw as the protagonist in a new capitalist system, Zakim noted that:

Burk's enterprise did not at all resemble the low-end 'slops' shop, in which merchants with no artisanal pretensions sold cheap garments to a clientele of mechanics, sailors, itinerants, and other urban rabble. The unabashed commercialism of these "salesmen," as slops dealers were

⁷⁷ Ira Dye, "The Tattoos of Early American Seafarers, 1796-1818," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133:5 (Dec. 1989), 533.

⁷⁸ Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 31.

⁷⁹ Zakim purported to cover menswear from 1760 to 1860, but in reality focused primarily on the New York trade after about 1820.

professionally known, was the traditional antipode of skilled tailoring.⁸⁰

While Zakim went on to acknowledge that merchant tailors were perhaps even more unabashedly commercial than the slops dealers, his dismissal of slops salesmen ignored a system of ready-made production that had been in place for decades before the 1820s and that contributed significantly to the methods of the new merchant tailors.

This continued emphasis on the democratization of men's dress overlooks a critical aspect of ready-made clothing. More so than other aspects of democratic development – from enfranchisement to property laws – ready-made menswear was a trend that moved from the bottom up. Like many other aspects of democratization, it spread as the result of an ongoing system of discourse and exchange between societal levels. By the time men of the middle and upper reaches of society adopted ready-made fashions in the 1820s and 1830s, laborers had been wearing ready-made garments for more than a century. To understand the eventual acceptance of these fashions, it is necessary to trace their roots to the waterfront slop shops and public institutions.

Indeed, according to Beverly Lemire, something akin to a “democratization of dress” was widespread in England by the 1760s, more than half a century before Zakim's period: “The products of the British cotton industry enabled a larger portion of the population to display a greater degree of fashion than ever before. The ready-to-wear clothing combined the essence of popular fashion with a range of

⁸⁰ Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 43.

garments that had immediate utility.”⁸¹ In America, cheap ready-made clothing, produced in slop shops or by almshouse tailors, was “democratizing” men’s dress and creating complex networks of countercultural fashions well before the store-bought suit came to epitomize the new urban capitalism of the mid-nineteenth century.

⁸¹ Lemire, *Fashion’s Favourite*, 190.

Chapter 2

A WORLD OF WORK: SLOP SHOPS

The Slop-Shop sells all kind of Shirts, Jackets, Trouzers, and other Wearing Apparel belonging to Sailors, ready made. It is a Business of great Profit, but requires no great Skill to become Master of it.⁸²

The *London Tradesman*, a 1747 guide to English trades, offered the above appraisal of a business that soon became commonplace in many port cities on either side of the Atlantic. This chapter explores the slop shops of Philadelphia between 1780 and 1820, although material from before and after these dates provides context. It begins by defining slops, considering the sorts of garments sold in slop shops and how men and women produced this clothing. Then, the business practices, shop appearances, and selling strategies of slops-sellers are examined. Finally, this chapter considers the rise of “merchant tailors” and the increasing commonality of ready-made clothing across social strata after 1815.

This chapter asks basic questions because there are no substantial studies of early American slop shops or clothing, and the occasional references to this trade are overly dismissive and perpetuate unproven assumption.⁸³ Were slop shops simply

⁸² R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (1747, facsimile reprint London: David & Charles, 1969), 301.

⁸³ G.E. Manwaring considered English naval slops in “The Dress of the British Seaman from the Revolution to the Peace of 1748,” *The Mariner’s Mirror* X (1924), 31-48. The only study of American naval slops is later: James E. Marshall, “Uncle

clearinghouses for massive maritime and naval contracts and warehouses of imported English clothing? Could a man have walked into such a shop in Philadelphia or another port city and bought something “off the peg”? Who were Philadelphia’s slops-sellers and how did they navigate the complex world of lower sort business in the early republic? Were slops always coarse garments of unbleached canvas and rough wool, with little visual power? These questions are important in considering the impact of ready-made clothing on the lower sort.

Slops entered the English language as a term for clothing as early as the fourteenth century; in 1386, Chaucer described men clothed in “sloppes.” By the end of the fifteenth century, *slops* referred to a sort baggy legwear, a protective garment that varied stylistically but retained the name into the nineteenth century (Figures 3a-b).⁸⁴ Also in the fifteenth century, Englishmen used *slops* to describe certain footwear and mourning cassocks, although this usage faded quickly.⁸⁵ Samuel Pepys mentioned a *slopseller* in his 1665 diary, albeit not specifically relating to ready-made clothing; *Sloppshop* appears as early as 1723 in the *London Gazette*.⁸⁶

Sam’s Slops:’ Notes on Clothing for U.S. Navy Enlisted Men, 1830-1840,” *Military Collector & Historian* 58:4 (Winter 2006): 252-255.

⁸⁴ W.A. Craigie, *A New English on Historical Principles*, Vol. IX, Part I, Section “SI-SQ.,” edited by James A.H. Murray, Henry Bradley, W.A. Craigie, and C.T. Onions (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1919), s.v. “slops,” 230. I found no evidence for the use of the term “skilts” for this same sort of garment before 1845, *Ibid.*, s.v. “skilts,” 141.

⁸⁵ F.W. Fairholt, *Costume in England: A History of Dress to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1896), 372.

⁸⁶ Craigie, *A New English Dictionary*, Vol. IX, s.v. “slop-shop,” 233.



Figure 3a: This set of sailor's slops date to the late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century, and represent a very rare survival of a mariner's protective garments. 53.101/1. Courtesy of the Museum of London © 2011.



Figure 3b: The shirt (linen) and petticoat breeches (linen with linen-cotton patches) are stained from shipboard use. 53.101/1. Courtesy of the Museum of London © 2011.

A 1765 dictionary defined *slops* in three ways; the term referred to “potions,” “any mess of mixed liquors,” and “also cloathing for seamen, &c.”⁸⁷ In his 1785 *Dictionary*, Samuel Johnson defined *slop* clothing simply as “Trowsers, open breeches,” a definition later lexicographers copied verbatim.⁸⁸ Sailors continued to wear this sort of garment, also known as petticoat breeches and generally worn over normal breeches, into the early nineteenth century (Figure 4).

⁸⁷ Thomas Dyche and William Pardon, *A New General English Dictionary* (London: Printed for Catherine and Richard Ware, 1765), s.v. “slops.”

⁸⁸ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Volume II (London: J.F. Rivington, 1785), s.v. “slop.”



Figure 4: This British satire by Thomas Rowlandson shows three sailors around 1815, two wearing trousers and one (at left) wearing petticoat breeches or “slops,” which lingered as a maritime alternative to trousers into the nineteenth century. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (815.03.01.02).

For the rest of the nineteenth century, slops remained in the maritime vernacular as a general term referring to “clothes for seamen.”⁸⁹ Before 1820, however, the term also referred to any ready-made clothing worn by both sailors and laborers, and I retain that usage in this chapter.

⁸⁹ Francis Lieber, editor, *Encyclopedia Americana, Volume XI* (Philadelphia: Desilver, Thomas, & Co., 1835), 442.

Slops were available in Philadelphia throughout the eighteenth century. As early as 1735, merchants offered imported finished garments, such as the “Pea Jackets, Wast-Coats, Shirts, and Trowsers for Sailors (ready made)” advertised by Samuel Sanson in that year.⁹⁰ Throughout the eighteenth century, enterprising merchants continued importing clothing into Philadelphia. In 1783, Joseph Wharton announced the arrival of the snow (a common type of merchant ship) *King David* whose cargo included salt, wines, oils, china, textiles, and “ready made Shirts and Vests for seamen.”⁹¹ Imported clothing also appeared in the public street auctions known as “vendues” through which these merchants used to liquidated large and diverse cargoes. In 1790, John Patton included “Ready made clothing” in a vendue notice that also featured some twenty different types of yardgoods.⁹² Like other textile goods from abroad, ready-made clothing arrived bundled in large bales or sometimes trunks; cheap slops helped pad more valuable cargo.⁹³ In 1784, merchant Thomas Palmer was selling “Slops by the package” along with other imported goods at his Water Street store.⁹⁴ Merchants ensured that finer items like embroidered waistcoat fronts were

⁹⁰ Advertisement, *The American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), July 17-24, 1735.

⁹¹ Advertisement, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 25, 1783.

⁹² Advertisement, *Pennsylvania Packet, and Daily Advertiser*, September 23, 1790. For more on Philadelphia merchants, see Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and the Economic Development of Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press: 1986).

⁹³ Feldman notes the use of “cases” and “camphor wood trunks” without a citation, *Fit for Men*, 20.

⁹⁴ Advertisement, *The Pennsylvania Packet, and Daily Advertiser*, January 22, 1784.

packed carefully, but other imported ready-made clothing was little more than profitable dunnage.

Although imported ready-made clothing continued to enter Philadelphia after the Revolution, it faced increasing domestic competition. By 1800, many shops in Philadelphia made and sold slops. These were the slop shops, where businessmen both managed networks of garment production and offered these goods for sale.

The Stock of Slop Shops

The clothing slop shops sold is central to understanding how they operated as businesses and how their patrons dressed. In 1805, Philadelphia slops-seller John Waters's household goods amounted to \$298.75 while the stock of his shop was worth \$489.61. His inventory included 28 vests, 22 shirts, two "loung coats," eleven coats, seven great coats, 24 "round jacoats," 29 pairs of trousers, six pairs of drawers, nine pairs of stockings, five caps, a dozen gloves, 43 handkerchiefs, and a variety textiles, including velvet, swansdown, baize, and check (see Appendix B).⁹⁵ Slops like the ones in Waters's shop were not course canvas garments. Instead, the clothing sold in slop shops was varied and colorful, like the garments described in an advertisement that appeared in Philadelphia's *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser* on September 8, 1795:

At the Mayor's Office ARE the following articles of Cloathing, all new, supposed to have been stolen out of some Slop Shop or Shops.

⁹⁵ File 216, 1805, Philadelphia Register of Wills.

They were found upon a Joseph Long, a convict not long since escape from goal. – They may be seen by the claimants. Sep. 5, 1795.

1 pair cotton striped yellow, purple, and white trousers
3 pair cotton striped yellow and white trousers
2 pair cotton striped red and white trousers
1 pair cotton striped black and white trousers
1 pair plain nankeen trousers
1 pair plain nankeen trousers with fringe
2 sailor's jackets, plain nankeen, bound with black silk
1 sailor's jacket, striped silk
1 sailor's jacket, plain nankeen
1 sailor's jacket, Russia duck, bound with black
1 red waistcoat, bound with black
1 buff fustian waistcoat, striped yellow and grey
2 waistcoats, striped black, red and white
1 white waistcoat, with red stripes and spots
1 cassimere buff waistcoat, with blue and red spots
1 white waistcoat, with blue and white spots
1 nankeen purple striped waistcoat
1 muslin waistcoat, with red spots
1 cotton checked striped shirt
A sheeting bag with a drawing string.⁹⁶

Joseph Long apparently loaded these 23 garments (eight pairs of trousers, five sailor's jackets, and nine waistcoats, and one shirt) into the sheeting bag, only to be captured soon after his theft. These slops were varied and colorful, vividly striped and spotted, fringed and trimmed (Figures 9-11). Stripes were especially popular among seafaring men; British and other European navies had favored striped cloth for outfitting sailors since before 1700.⁹⁷ Whoever Long robbed was not simply dealing in large maritime contracts for plain canvas trousers and blue wool jackets, but instead selling a strikingly diverse range of garments.

⁹⁶ Advertisement, *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), September 8, 1795.

⁹⁷ Manwaring, "Dress of the British Seaman," 33.

Besides color and pattern, variety of garment type was also part of the slops business. In 1799, the Philadelphia clothing firm of Weyman & Son, 43 North Second Street, advertised that “Gentlemen may be fitted in a few minutes with any quality, either for sea or land.”⁹⁸ Initially “salesmen,” the Weymans soon dubbed their establishment a “Warehouse of Ready-Made Clothes.”⁹⁹ In 1800, they offered, among goods for both men and women, “Body Coats and Frocks,” “Overalls,” “Suits of Black,” “Stocking Web Pantaloon,” “Clothes adapted for servants,” and “Sea Clothing.”¹⁰⁰ Masters purchased such garments for servants and captains for crew, but individuals bought slops for themselves as well. The Weymans’ “overalls” were a sort of tightly-cut legwear with a buttoned gaiter portion covering the foot. Soldiers popularized overalls during the Revolution and the garment remained an alternative to pantaloons, especially among rural workers, in the 1790s and early 1800s.¹⁰¹

The Weymans also sold another type of common ready-made garment, “stocking web pantaloons,” or frame-knit legwear made using the same technology as stockings. Like stockings and embroidered vests, knit breeches and pantaloons were

⁹⁸ Advertisement, *Porcupine’s Gazette* (Philadelphia), August 27, 1799.

⁹⁹ Advertisement, *Philadelphia Gazette*, January 14, 1800.

¹⁰⁰ Advertisement, *Philadelphia Gazette*, January 21, 1800.

¹⁰¹ Anne Murray, “From Breeches to Sherryvallies,” *Dress* 2:1 (1976), 31. For more on legwear see John Greene and Elizabeth McCrum, “‘Small clothes’: The evolution of men’s nether garments as evidenced in The Belfast Newsletter Index 1737-1800,” *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 5 (1990), 153-171. For an interesting visual depiction of overalls, see the two workers in the center of Charles Willson Peale’s painting *Exhuming the First American Mastodon*, now at the Maryland Historical Society.

particularly suited to the ready-made trade, as they could be woven into pattern pieces elsewhere and assembled later in a tailor's shop. As early as 1749, "mens scarlet knit breeches" were offered alongside an array of goods brought on the snow *Friendship* for sale by import merchant James Burd of Philadelphia.¹⁰² Enterprising American manufacturers also made knit breeches, as mentioned in the 1776 *Virginia Almanack*.¹⁰³ In 1797, Philadelphia tailors Ashby and Tyson had in stock "knit breeches patterns," or the unassembled pieces of the garments, in silk, worsted (wool), and a cotton-silk blend.¹⁰⁴ In 1806, Andrew Bayard, one of the city's many vendue auctioneers, offered among other textiles "1 trunk knit Pantaloons." These garments were flexible and extremely form-fitting, making them ideal for a fashion that emphasized men's legs. The Weymans sold knit pantaloons to fashionable men, but, like leather breeches, they appealed to working men as well, and occasionally appeared in runaway advertisements.¹⁰⁵ They came not only in buff colors but also scarlet, black, and blue.¹⁰⁶ In August of 1799, the Weymans advertised, alongside their other "summer clothes," "Blue stocking web pantaloons, with red seams, suitable for the uniform [city militia] companies."¹⁰⁷ The variety and production techniques of

¹⁰² Advertisement, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 16, 1749

¹⁰³ Bryan Paul Howard, "Had On and Took With Him: Runaway Indentured Servant Clothing in Virginia, 1774-1778" (PhD diss., Texas A&M University, 1996), 119.

¹⁰⁴ Advertisement, *Porcupine's Gazette* (Philadelphia), May 5, 1797.

¹⁰⁵ Howard, "Had On and Took With Him," 119.

¹⁰⁶ Advertisement, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 11, 1751.

¹⁰⁷ Advertisement, *Porcupine's Gazette* (Philadelphia), August 3, 1799.

knit breeches and pantaloons made them appealing to customers and well-suited to the ready-made trade.

The frame-knitting process that artisans used to create breeches and pantaloons originated with stocking production. Englishman William Lee devised the knitting frame around 1600, and in 1758 Jedediah Strutt introduced the Derby rib frame. This device mechanized the previously-laborious process of creating ribbed stocking and resulted in stockings with decorative vertical ribs that also made them more elastic.¹⁰⁸ By the middle of the eighteenth century, Germantown, outside Philadelphia, had gained a reputation for quality frame-knit stockings. English traveler Andrew Burnaby heard that Germantown artisans knit some 720,000 pair annually in the late 1750s, and sold their products for \$1 a pair, although the industry declined over the following fifty years.¹⁰⁹ Workers knit stockings on the frame and then sewed the back seam up the leg. Hand-knit stockings, also common in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were knit “in the round” with no such back seam.¹¹⁰ A third type of stocking employed wool fabric sewn into the stocking shape; although cheap, this stocking type was rare after the introduction of affordable frame-knit stockings. In 1785, the *General Carlton of Whitby*, a British collier, sank off the Polish coast. Some

¹⁰⁸ Marilyn Palmer, *Framework Knitting* (Buckinghamshire, UK: Shire Publications, Ltd, 2002), 9-10.

¹⁰⁹ Andrew Burnaby, *Burnaby's Travels Through North America* (1798, facsimile reprint New York: A. Wessels Company, 1904), 93. Martha C. Halpern, “Germantown, Philadelphia: An Emigré Textile Settlement c. 1680-1960,” *Textile History* 2:2 (Autumn 1998), 158-161.

¹¹⁰ I am grateful to Heather Hansen for insights into knitting processes.

of the barrels of tar she was carrying spilled and covered a number of clothing items, preserving them until recovery in the 1990s. Among this cache were both hand-knit and frame-knit stockings. The stockings recovered from another British shipwreck, HMS *De Braak*, wrecked in Delaware Bay in 1798, were all frame-knit (Figure 5).¹¹¹ Workers in Philadelphia probably wore a mix of hand- and frame-knit stockings, sometimes with colorful stripes. The slop shops they patronized sold these forgotten items of apparel as well.

¹¹¹ For *General Carleton*'s stockings, see Lawrence Babits and Matthew Brenckle, "Sailor Clothing," in *The General Carleton Shipwreck, 1785*, edited by Waldemar Ossowski (Gdańsk, Poland: The Polish Maritime Museum in Gdańsk, 2008), 192-196.



Figure 5: A frame-knit stocking from the 1798 wreck of HMS *De Braak* with an overall view and a detail of the foot section. Courtesy of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs/Delaware State Archaeological Collections.

Advertisements for the contents of slop shops and vendue sales not only illustrate the variety of ready-made clothing available in Philadelphia but also the distinctions in place between certain types of garments. In 1813, auctioneer John Dorsey sold a group of “great coats, long surtouts, round about and pea jackets, pantaloons, monkey jackets, fancy waistcoats, with a variety of other articles of the

trade.”¹¹² Great coats were heavy men’s overcoats worn in cold weather, and were a common ready-made item in England and America; “surtouts” were similar heavy coats. “Fancy waistcoats” were another popular ready-made item, often constructed from pre-embroidered, uncut patterns shipped from Europe.¹¹³ The jackets Dorsey offered for sale provide a prime example of sellers and consumers making specific distinctions between similar garments. “Round about,” “pea,” and “monkey” jackets are all referenced in other period descriptions, but a precise delineation of their style is difficult. All three were tailless jackets, but distinctions varied over time. *Pea jacket* was an older term, in use in America by at least 1720, when William Glan deserted the *Princess Amelia* in Boston harbor wearing “a dark coloured Pea Jacket lined with blue baize.”¹¹⁴ A century later, tailor Robert Byfield noted that pea jackets were double-breasted with buttons “placed five inches from the edge, which will give them a good lap over, as they are generally worn in cold countries.”¹¹⁵ *Pea coat* took longer to catch on, not appearing until the 1780s.¹¹⁶ *Roundabout* entered common usage for men’s jackets after the Revolution, as in 1791 when apprentice George Ireby ran away

¹¹² Advertisement, *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), December 10, 1813.

¹¹³ A number of uncut patterns survive, include one worked with tambour embroidery at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

¹¹⁴ Advertisement, *The Boston Gazette*, May 16, 1720.

¹¹⁵ Robert Byfield, *Sectum, Being the Universal Directory in the Art of Cutting* (1825, facsimile reprint LaVergne, TN: Kessinger Publishing, n.d., ca. 2010), 35.

¹¹⁶ Advertisement, *The Pennsylvania Packet, And Daily Advertiser*, September 4, 1789.

from Godfrey Munich's Philadelphia bakery wearing "a gray round about jacket."¹¹⁷ *Monkey jacket* is an even later term, absent from newspapers until the second decade of the nineteenth century. Byfield explained that "Seamen's jackets, known by the name of monkey jackets" had "two rows of buttons, and two rows of button holes," but in an odd trick of tailoring "do not require either back seam or side seam."¹¹⁸ Whatever their name, such jackets were the mainstay of Philadelphia's working man. Most had slash cuffs easily folded up for work and extensive use resulted in wear and stretched buttonholes.¹¹⁹

Advertisements that described ready-made clothing in detail became more common over time. In 1817, Stacy Winter, a slops-sellers whose business is detailed below, included:

A quantity of ready made Clothing, being the remains of the stock of a Slop Shop, consisting of Pantaloons and fancy Vests, Pea and Monkey Jackets, Check, Flannel and Linen Shirts, Great Coats and Trowsers, fine Long Coats, Coatees, &c.¹²⁰

Winter's goods resembled the other lots of ready-made clothing Dorsey sold, but also included at least two types of legwear (pantalons and baggier trousers) and coatees, which had short tails. In September of 1817, John Humes offered an array of goods for

¹¹⁷ Advertisement, *The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*, January 31, 1791.

¹¹⁸ Byfield, *Sectum*, 37.

¹¹⁹ This buttonhole distortion can be seen on surviving garments as evidence of regular use, including several at the Germanton Historical Society.

¹²⁰ Advertisement, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), February 12, 1817.

auction, from “rum puncheons” to “handsome furniture,” as well as “the entire stock of a slop shop, consisting of Coats, Waistcoats, Pantaloons, great Coats, &c.”¹²¹

Advertisements like these attracted both individual buyers as well as men who hoped to resell the garments for profit, in the city or countryside.¹²²

Understanding the garments produced by slop shops requires more than just printed sources. Archaeological excavations in downtown Philadelphia, especially along the I-95 corridor and on other building sites, often produce clothing-related artifacts and some textile fragments.¹²³ In the late 1980s, excavations south of Penn’s Landing uncovered artifacts related to the home of John Phillips, a tailor at 83 Swanson Street, along the Southwark waterfront, but these included only general domestic material.¹²⁴ No other archaeological evidence related to the shop practices or products of slops-sellers has been uncovered in Philadelphia.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Advertisement, *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), September 12, 1817.

¹²² Feldman considers this factor in antebellum New York City, *Fit for Men*, 11-34.

¹²³ For example, a 1973 excavation at the Second Street Market between Cedar and Pine produced buttons and both woven and knit textile fragments. See Barbara Liggett, *Archaeology at New Market: Excavation Report* (Philadelphia: The Athenaeum, 1981).

¹²⁴ The Cultural Resources Group, Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., “The Meadow’s Site: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of Philadelphia’s Waterfront” (CRM Report, 1993), PDF provided by Louis Berger & Associated, Inc. See also *The River and the City: Archaeology of the Delaware Riverfront* (unbroadcast documentary, 1991), <http://www.phillyarchaeology.org/more/river-and-city.html>. In 1800, Phillips appeared at 81 Swanson Street, *The New Trade Directory, for Philadelphia, Anno 1800* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Author, 1799), 179.

Archaeological work beyond Philadelphia, particularly on nautical sites, has resulted in the recovery of a number of rare traces of common clothing. Shipwrecks like the *General Carlton* and HMS *De Braak*, mentioned above, can provide time capsules of garments worn by common sailors hitherto absent from the material record. Garments from the *General Carlton* exhibit construction techniques distinct from those used by master tailors and seen on most surviving garments beyond their “crude but strong stitches.”¹²⁶ For instance, the fragments of a pair of sailcloth petticoat breeches are identical in construction to sails of the late eighteenth century and may have been made aboard ship.¹²⁷ Wool jackets and breeches recovered from the wreck feature unusual piecing, improvised linings, reinforcements, and crude alterations. One pair of breeches “may have been pieced at the crotch and seat” and “were later lined with rough brown blanket wool pieced together somewhat awkwardly, and is reinforced with a large patch in the seat.”¹²⁸ Tailors and seamstresses often pieced together linings and even bodies of garments using scraps known as “cabbage.” This term dates to the seventeenth century and connoted both

¹²⁵ This is based on a survey of published literature and the reports on file at John Milner Associates, Philadelphia. The two best works on archaeology in Philadelphia are John L. Cotter, Daniel G. Roberts, and Michael Parrington, *The Buried Past: An Archaeological History of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); and Rebecca Yamin, *Digging in the City of Brotherly Love: Stories from Philadelphia Archaeology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

¹²⁶ Babits and Brenckle, “Sailor Clothing,” 189.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 189. I base this comparison on the photograph shown in their article and sail fragments from HMS *De Braak*.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

fabric scraps, the process of piecing (cabbaging) and sometimes the tailors themselves, whom patrons accused of stealing the cabbage of expensive cloth for their own profit.¹²⁹

HMS *De Braak*, the British navy brig that sank in Delaware Bay in 1798, also produced fragments of sailor clothing like those worn in Philadelphia. Among the objects recovered were the fragments of a waistcoat with an outer fabric of diaper-woven cotton and a lining of plain white linen (Figure 6). Diaper-woven cloth, linen or cotton, was a common and inexpensive textile.¹³⁰ This waistcoat is not as coarsely made as some of the clothing from the *General Carleton* and includes two flap pockets trimmed with red silk ribbon, perhaps added by a fashionable sailor. The same sailor evidently lost one of his buttons and replaced it with a different type. The garment lining is irregularly cabbaged and its buttonholes are notably coarse compared to those of many extant garments from the same period. It is impossible to know for certain, but these fragments may represent a slop waistcoat as neither the construction or textile was especially fine. These fragments may even be the pieces of two distinct waistcoats, as their buttoning style and pocket arrangement seems to preclude them

¹²⁹ I am grateful to Chuck Fithian for bringing this term to my attention. James A.H. Murray, editor, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Volume II (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1919), s.v. “cabbage,” 4.

¹³⁰ Florence Montgomery, *Textiles in America, 1650-1870* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), 218.

coming from a single garment. In this case, they represent the uniformity that resulted from naval slops contracts.¹³¹

¹³¹ The fragments of this waistcoat are in the collection of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Dover.

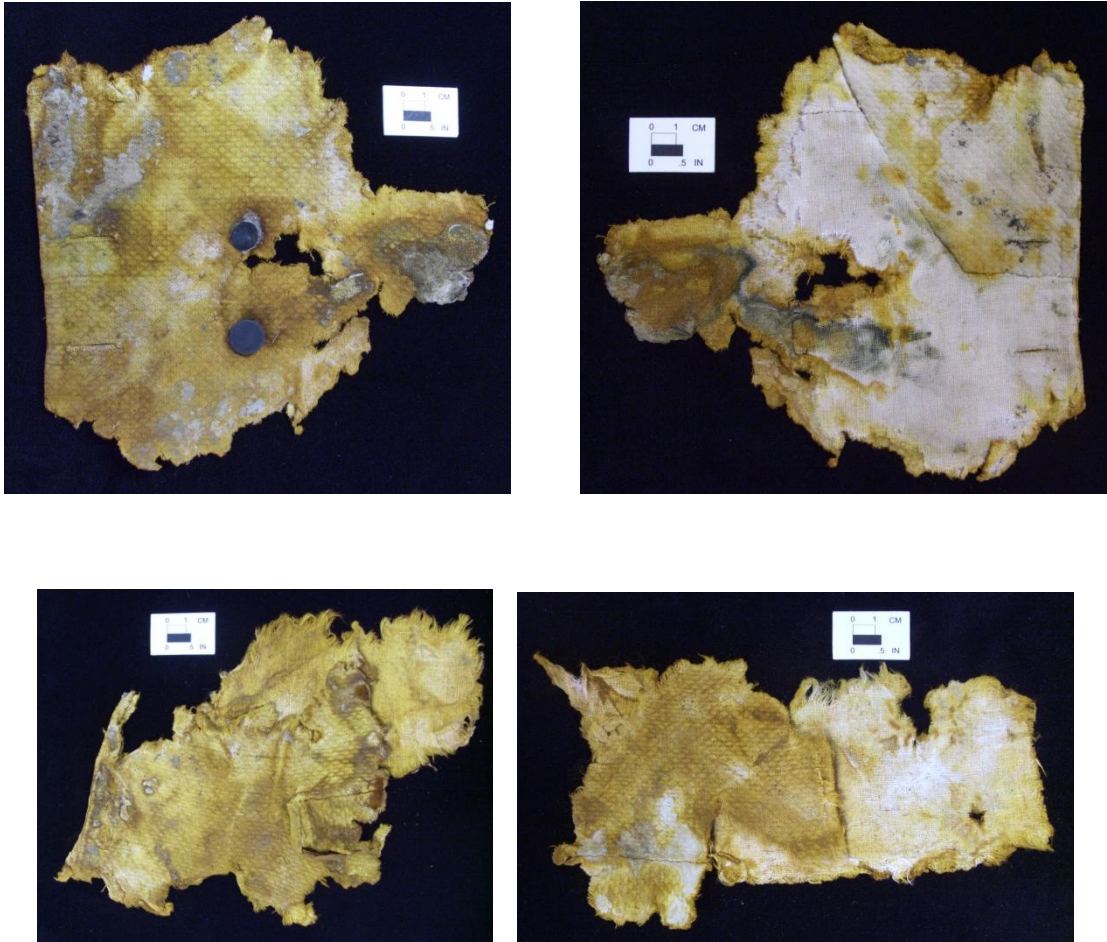


Figure 6: Waistcoat fragments from the 1798 wreck of HMS *De Braak*. The upper two images show the front and reverse of a piece from the upper left breast. The bottom two images show two fragments from the stomach with pocket flap remnants. Courtesy of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs/Delaware State Archaeological Collections.

Besides garments recovered from these wrecks, I was unable to locate any examples of surviving garments whose provenance indicated production in a slop shop or other ready-made setting before 1820. Individuals generally save clothing for

aesthetic reasons or because of a connection with an event or person. Men of the lower sort had neither the inclination nor luxury to save their clothing. They wore garments until they began to fall to pieces, and sometimes longer. They often then sold their garments to a ragman, who in turn sold the textiles he collected to paper mills for fiber. The vast majority of common clothing was destroyed by a system of recycling. When clothing used by the lower sort does survive, it is often accidental or because of some other unusual condition. The textile fragment “tokens” left with infants at London’s Foundling Hospital are one example and reveal the variety of printed and woven textiles that the city’s poor used to express style in the eighteenth century.¹³² In other cases, surviving ready-made garments may have gone unrecognized precisely because they do not fit the conception of rough materials and coarse construction associated with these goods.¹³³

Without provenanced slop clothing, there are still garments that reflect how people made and used slops. For instance, a pair of breeches in the collection of the Chester County Historical Society echoes the construction of the *General Carlton* clothing in sturdy but unrefined techniques (Figures 7a-b). The breeches are buff-colored linen and partially lined with unbleached osnaburg linen. Most of the seams are simply pressed open and only occasionally overcast, leaving the rest vulnerable to fraying. The buttonholes are crudely but sturdily stitched. We cannot know who made

¹³² These tokens featured prominently in Style’s *Dress of the People* and were discussed and illustrated in more detail in John Styles, *Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital’s Textile Tokens, 1740-1770* (London: The Foundling Museum, 2010).

¹³³ I am grateful to Nicole Belolan for suggesting this idea.

this garment or how this person sold or gave away the breeches. However, it is clear that, like slops, little effort was expended on aspects of aesthetics beyond the sturdy construction of the garment.



Figure 7a: Man's linen breeches. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA.



Figure 7b: Details of breeches construction showing coarse buttonhole and varied seam treatments. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA.

Certain children's garments also echo the construction of slops, a result of the intended uses of these two classes of garments. Children's clothing, even the fine examples that survive in some collections, was intended to be worn for a short period of time. In many cases, this resulted in less care in the aesthetic dimension of the garment's construction, much as immediate demand and cheap prices prompted similar trends in slops. Like the lower sort, however, children often required clothing that was sturdily constructed and could withstand active use. Makers of both children's clothing and slops needed to create durable garments.

An interesting, albeit earlier, example of this idea is a very small coat (20" from collar to hem) at the Chester County Historical Society. Curators recently discovered the coat, which probably dates to the 1750s, with the effects of a local polar explorer, and its provenance is unknown (Figure 8). The coat is constructed of

green twill-woven wool and lined in the body and arms with a buff and blue checked linen, probably woven in America (if the coat is American). The buttonholes are sewn neatly with a green thread, but the body is constructed using a coarser linen thread that has probably faded to tan from an original green color. The coat is constructed securely, with flat seams whip-stitched to the body to prevent fraying. However, most of the stitches exposed on the outside of the coat – the reverse of whip stitches used to hem the skirts and secure the lining – are unusually large, uneven, and visible. This coat may represent the work of a novice or simply a garment that merited little extra effort. In either case, it is another illustration of the visibility of clothing construction in many slop garments.



**Figure 8: Boy's coat with detail of skirt pocket showing stitches and buttonhole.
Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA.**

The visibility of construction details is a striking aspect of lower sort clothing. Stitches are sturdy but large, regular but visible. Construction was not invisible on any clothing of this period – even the best garments featured discernible stitchlines. But many finer garments give the impression that the tailor was attempting to hide the marks of his craft – indeed, this may have been precisely what his customers demanded. But slops gave unusually visible clues to their physical construction. Large stitches would have been noticeable in many places. This was the result of the speed and lack of precision through which slops were created, but was also enabled by a social system. For the men who purchased and wore slops, fine construction was far less important than a cheap price and ready availability. The style

and fit of their clothing marked sailors and workers as a distinct group, and this distinction was visible in every stitch.

Wearing Slops: A Wardrobe for the Working Man

With all of these distinctions and choices at hand, how did the lower sort of Philadelphia use slop clothing to present themselves? It is important in this case to move beyond the scrutiny of individual garments and consider how men combined them into wardrobes. Trousers and coats survive today in isolation, stored in acid-free boxes, divorced from their original context. But the lower sort combined shoes, stockings, trousers, shirts, waistcoats, jackets, neckerchiefs, and hats in a myriad of ways to create complex fashion statements.

Bernard Bailyn and Bryan Paul Howard both demonstrated the power of visually depicting the people described in runaway advertisements.¹³⁴ However, the whims and finances of a master sometimes hindered the variety of clothing among apprentices, servants, and slaves. What about free laborers, black and white, who worked for daily wages and, unlike many of the runaways, purchased their own clothing by necessity? How might these men have appeared on the streets of Philadelphia?

¹³⁴ Note that these illustrations do not appear in the paperback edition of Bernard Bailyn's book, but only in the hardcover, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), unnumbered insert. Bryan Paul Howard presented nearly fifty rather dehumanized line drawings of runaway outfits in his dissertation, "Had On and Took With Him," 177-201.

To this end, I prepared, with illustrator Gwendolyn Basala, a series of conjectural reconstructions of the wardrobes that might have been constructed from the contents of one slop shop, the store robbed by Joseph Long in 1795 (see Page 43). The cut and variety of garments, shoes, and hats are based on historical illustrations and surviving objects while the colors and patterns are taken from the advertisement.¹³⁵ These illustrations demonstrate the vivid possibilities of slop clothing and its potential for personal and group expression (Figures 9-11).

¹³⁵ Besides the various illustrations discussed elsewhere in this thesis, an excellent source for images of sailors especially is J. Welles Henderson and Rodney P. Carlisle, *Jack Tar: Marine Art & Antiques, A Sailor's Life, 1750-1910* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors' Club Ltd., 1999).



Figure 9: Illustration of a sailor based on a Thomas Rowlandson sketch (PW5937, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London) and clothes listed in the 1795 theft advertisement. Gwendolyn Basala, 2011.



Figure 10: Two of Philadelphia's lower sort in conversation. The man on the left wears a high-collared roundabout jacket of the sort common around 1810 and has his initials, JL, tattooed on his hand. Gwendolyn Basala, 2011.



Figure 11: Men of Philadelphia's lower sort wearing clothing from the 1795 advertisement. The central figure wears a coatee and fringed trousers. Gwendolyn Basala, 2011.

Making Slops

The mechanics of ready-made clothing production differed little from those of bespoke menswear in that they involved only a few small tools. In the finest bespoke tailoring shops, drapers and cutters prepared the pieces of a garment before assembly. Tailors sat cross-legged atop sturdy tables to keep textiles away from the dust and grime of the floor. Sitting close to window for light, a tailor placed his tools within easy reach, spread around him. Similarly, an outwork seamstress sat on a chair next to a small worktable, also near a light source.

The factor that differentiated the production of slops from that of bespoke garments was the very first step, the cutting and preparing of a garment's shape. Slops-producers made clothing in regular sizes; bespoke tailors made clothing to fit the individual body it would clothe. Until around 1820, the incremental tape measure was unknown in tailoring shops. Instead, a bespoke tailor took measurements from each customer's unique body and marked these lengths with snips on a strip of paper, each snip labeled with a coded letter. French authors Diderot and de Garsault included illustrations of this practice occurring in their depictions of tailoring shops from the mid-eighteenth century (Figures 12 and 13).¹³⁶ Bespoke tailors who maintained regular dealings with a customer kept his strip on hand for future orders. From these measurements, a tailor drafted a garment pattern onto paper or sometimes directly onto fabric. These pattern pieces rarely survive, but one set, discovered hidden in a house in

¹³⁶ Françoise A. de Garsault, *Art du tailleur* (Paris: de l'imprimerie L.F. Delatour, 1769), Plate I. Denis Diderot, *Encyclopedie*, Volume 9 (Paris: Briasson, 1771), s.v. "Tailleur," Plate I. This system of measurement also appears in the first of William Hogarth's 1730s series "A Rake's Progress."

Hampshire, England, reveals that, like tailors, home-based sewers used whatever scrap paper came to hand, in this case the pages of a 1752 newspaper.¹³⁷



Figure 12: A tailor's shop as it appeared in Françoise A. de Garsault's 1769 *Art du Tailleur*. Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed Book and Periodical Collection.

¹³⁷ "Deliberately Concealed Garments Project," "Paper Patterns" Object Page, <http://www.concealedgarments.org/cache/28579>.



Figure 13: A tailor's shop as it appeared in a 1771 edition of Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie*. Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed Book and Periodical Collection.

Most slops-producers operated in environments much more cramped and cluttered than these French authors might have us believe. The cost of sewing tools was among the lowest of any trade and the required space was minimal, making it relatively easy to establish oneself in the business.¹³⁸ Outworkers worked from tiny spaces, using garret lights and candles for illumination; poor tailors might set aside a small room for their work. When slop shops did include production space alongside retail, these areas resembled Thomas Rowlandson's 1823 cartoon more than Diderot or de Garsault's depictions (Figure 14).

¹³⁸ Marla Miller, *The Needle's Eye*, 80.



Figure 14: Thomas Rowlandson’s 1823 satire shows the crowded interior of a tailor’s shop. A “hot goose” was a tailor’s iron, as the young boy is placing in the fire, and “cabbage” were scraps of fabric (see page 53). Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (823.8.1.1).

Rather than producing garments in their shop, however, many slop-sellers employed networks of outworkers predating the general adoption of this tactic in the clothing trade.¹³⁹ The majority of these sewers were women who worked from home, before the term “sweating” was coined. When Baltimore’s journeymen tailors went on strike in 1799, their masters turned to outworkers:

Every woman whom they are informed can make her own children’s clothes, they sedulously hunt up; ney the very slop makers are put in a state of requisition, and they who heretofore, could hardly put together check’d shirts, and duck trowsers are now employed in making vests, breeches, pantaloons, coatees, and summer coats.¹⁴⁰

During the eighteenth century throughout the colonies, women became increasingly involved in clothing production for consumers beyond their own household.¹⁴¹

Despite their establishment in this role, these women rarely profited much from their labor. In 1833, before the introduction of the sewing machine, a reform pamphlet estimated that a woman without children working long days could produce “8 or 9 shirts, or duck pantaloons per week,” the pay for which, it declared, was impossible to

¹³⁹ Bruce Laurie mentions antebellum outwork briefly in *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 24-25. The best history of outwork in England, albeit of a later period, is Duncan Bythell, *The Sweated Trades: Outwork in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Batsford Academic, 1978).

¹⁴⁰ *American* (Baltimore), as quoted in Charles G. Steffen, *The Mechanics of Baltimore: Workers and Politics in the Age of Revolution, 1763-1812* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 118.

¹⁴¹ Marla Miller, *The Needle’s Eye*, 63.

live on.¹⁴² Without daybooks or other documentation, it is impossible to know the precise origin of Philadelphia's ready-made clothing. However, unlike bespoke menswear, slops were often the product of female needlework.

Slops-sellers

Slops-sellers, the common title for ready-made clothing dealers, did not appear in the early Philadelphia city directories. Nor did these directories list dealers of "cast-off" (secondhand) clothing, pawnshops, or other occupations that would indicate the networks through which common clothing circulated. This is not true of all American cities. In the 1800 *New Trade Directory for New York*, for instance, there were twelve entries under "Slops-sellers," including two widows and one independent woman.¹⁴³ But when cities in England had dozens of ready-made and used clothing businesses (Liverpool had at least 42 slop shops in 1800; Manchester at least 21), it is unlikely that in all of New York City there were only twelve people dealing in ready-made clothing.¹⁴⁴ A few directories offer clues, like Jones's 1805 *New-York Mercantile and General Directory*. Jones listed 26 "merchant taylors" and "clothing

¹⁴² Cadwallader Evans and Matthew Carey, *Case of the Seamstresses* (Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1833?), 1.

¹⁴³ *The New Trade Directory for New York* (New York: Printed for the Editor, 1800), 165.

¹⁴⁴ Miles Lambert, "The Consumption of New and Used Ready-made Clothing in Northern England, 1660-1830" (PhD diss., University College, London, 2006), Chapter 2, 32, 43.

stores” on New York’s Water Street alone.¹⁴⁵ In both New York and Philadelphia directories, slops-sellers sometimes appeared alongside tailors under that heading. Tailoring was a trade that included both successful gentlemen tailors and, more commonly, poor tradesmen. Determining which individuals sold bespoke clothing and which sold mostly ready-made garments is the first step in understanding their patronage and production.

All of the slops-sellers of early Philadelphia were “tailors” in the city directories’ terms. Moreover, their locations, almost always on Water Street or at other addresses near the docks, suggest that many of the other “tailors” clustered in this area dealt primarily in slops. This was the neighborhood where many of their laboring and sailing patrons both lived and worked. Despite its small size, Philadelphia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had distinct socio-occupational clustering resulting in localized neighborhoods of trades and economic levels.¹⁴⁶ Of the 344 tailors listed in the 1800 *Trade Directory*, 77, or 22%, had Water Street addresses. Including Front Street and cross-street addresses within two blocks of the waterfront, over 40% of Philadelphia’s tailors operated close to the docks (Appendix A).¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ John F. Jones, *Jones’s New-York Mercantile and General Directory* (New York: printed for the Editor, 1805).

¹⁴⁶ Mary M. Schweitzer’s groundbreaking work on this subject is “The Spatial Organization of Federalist Philadelphia, 1790,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24:1 (Summer 1993), 31-57. Schweitzer noticed the clustering of tailors on the waterfront but offered no explanation, 50.

¹⁴⁷ *The New Trade Directory, for Philadelphia, Anno 1800* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Author, 1799), 172-181.

Tailor was a common occupational title but lacked the derisive connotations of slops-seller. The men who compiled the city directories may have intentionally or unintentionally obscured such divisions within trades.¹⁴⁸ Many tailors dealt occasionally in ready-made clothing, even if only the rejects of picky customers, and even those who sold only slops considered themselves tailors. They sold clothing; it did not matter who made it, bought it, or for what price. This idea was not simply in the mind of the slops-seller, either. A British satirical print from the 1780s shows a bespoke tailor and ready-made shopkeeper arguing, but despite their apparent differences the men are “two of a trade” (Figure 15). Clothing production varied from those tailors who made only bespoke garments to those who sold only slops. In between were the majority of tailors, producing and selling both in varying proportions. For clarity, I use “tailor” in this chapter in reference to bespoke tailors and “slops-seller” in reference to those who dealt mostly or entirely in ready-made clothing.

¹⁴⁸ Miles Lambert suggested such an explanation for the absence of slop sellers in Manchester, England, directories before 1800, “Consumption of New and Used,” Chapter 2, 43.



Figure 15: This late-eighteenth-century British satire shows two “Quarrelsome Taylors.” Note that Snip (an apocryphal tailor’s name) offers “nete Gallows for Breaches,” a pair of which (suspenders) hangs inside his stand. This is an early appearance of a garment accessory which changed little over the next century. In both Snip’s window and in the bespoke tailor’s coat pocket are textile sample cards, suggesting that both men are using the visual appeal of swatches to attract customers. By permission from Lambert, “Bespoke Versus Ready-Made,” *Costume* 44 (2010). Manchester City Galleries, Gallery of Costume archives (1964.191).

By the end of the eighteenth century, American consumers recognized sloop shops as retail locations rather than warehouses for large contracts. Men could enter such establishment in cities of the early republic and walk out with a new suit of clothing. In 1815, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* ran a story out of Wilmington, Delaware, that described a thwarted theft of one such retail establishment:

Last evening, a young man appeared in our borough, dressed in nankeen coatee and pantalets. As he passed down Market street, near the corner of Front, he slipped into a sloop shop, priced a well finished great coat, which the owner held at \$17 – Observing no person in the shop but a young woman, he put on the coat, threw a small bundle of rags tied up in an old black silk handkerchief, on the counter, and walked off, under the pretence of getting a noted changed.¹⁴⁹

In 1814, there were at least ten tailors on Front Street in Wilmington, along with a number of female hucksters, tayloresses, seamstresses, all possible labels for the owner of this store.¹⁵⁰

The notice from Wilmington both confirms the retail nature of sloop shops and, like other sources, describes a sloop shop operated by a woman. In England, women often managed ready-made clothing businesses.¹⁵¹ In Philadelphia as well, women were engaged not only in the production of slops, but also in the administration of sloop shops. Some came to the trade independently, like Mary

¹⁴⁹ “Murphy Lost!” *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), October 26, 1815.

¹⁵⁰ *A Directory and Register for the Year 1814* (Wilmington: R. Porter, 1814).

¹⁵¹ Lambert, “Consumption of New and Used,” Chapter 2, 65.

Graham, listed variously as a seamstress and tailoress at the corner of Walnut and Water Streets between 1807 and 1811, and whose stock auctioneer John Dorsey sold in 1812.¹⁵² The auction advertisement described the shop owner only as “a person declining business.” Male slops-sellers were rarely concerned with branding their shops, but their names did usually appear in sale notices. Dorsey knew that Mary Graham’s name meant little to the potential buyers of her clothing.

As with women in other trades, a female slops-seller might take over titled operation of business only after the death of her husband. In January of 1807, Christianna Fraly, administratrix, announced the sale of the stock of “John Waters, taylor, deceased, of the Northern Liberties, consisting of Ready made Clothes, Household Furniture, &c.”¹⁵³ Waters appeared in city directories between 1803 and 1805 at 347 North Front Street, and his widow, Fraly, continued to reside there through the 1808 listing.¹⁵⁴ John Waters died in 1805, but a sale of his estate did not take place until early 1807. In the interim, Fraly continued to sell slops intermittently out of their home in the Northern Liberties, but Waters’s estate was also billed for his children’s housing and lodging and food for Mrs. Water, for “18 months while

¹⁵² Advertisement, *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), March 20, 1812. Dorsey gave the address as “No 8 Walnut Below Water Street,” and so the attribution to Graham’s “corner” location in the directories is not incontrovertible.

¹⁵³ Advertisement, *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), January 24, 1807.

¹⁵⁴ For Waters’s first entry, see James Robinson, *The Philadelphia Directory, City and County Register, for 1803* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Publisher, 1803), 266. For the last entry for his “Waters widow of John,” see James Robinson, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1808* (Philadelphia, Printed for the Publisher, 1808), s.v. “W.”

deranged.”¹⁵⁵ Before her husband’s death and perhaps afterwards, Fraly likely produced a portion of the clothing sold in their store.

Like many women, male slops-sellers often came to the trade in an indirect fashion; there were no slop shop apprentices. From December 12, 1798 through January 25, 1799, William G. Bell, also a tailor, ran fourteen notices in the *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*. Bell sought a new tenant for:

A Capital Stand for Business.
To be Let,
THE HOUSE No. 56, in South Water-street, lately occupied by Robert Taylor, deceased; situate two doors below Chesnut-street – The different business of Slop Shop and Tavern was carried on therein, with the greatest success.¹⁵⁶

Robert Taylor first appeared in Philadelphia city directories in 1791, when he opened a tavern at 170 South Water Street.¹⁵⁷ In 1794, he moved to open a boarding house at 56 South Water Street, where in 1796 he was a “shopkeeper.”¹⁵⁸ Slops-sellers in England regularly assumed the title of “salesmen,” and thus shopkeeper (an ambiguous term in period directories) suggests the possibility of a similar trade. In

¹⁵⁵ File 216, 1805, Philadelphia Register of Wills. Fraly was illiterate and left only an “x” as her mark on the probate papers.

¹⁵⁶ Advertisement, *The Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, December 18, 1798.

¹⁵⁷ Clement Biddle, *The Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Editor, 1791), 129.

¹⁵⁸ James Hardie, *The Philadelphia Directory and Register* (Philadelphia, Printed for the Author, 1794), 152. Thomas Stephens, *Stephens’s Philadelphia Directory For 1796* (Philadelphia: Printed for Thomas Stephens, 1796), 182.

1797 and 1798, the city directories listed Taylor as a tailor.¹⁵⁹ Despite his varying titles, the advertisement for Taylor's property suggests that he made the most of his locations and catered to the various needs of his clients. The workers and sailors of the waterfront could obtain both food and raiment at Taylor's establishments. Taylor's business changes represent the flexibility of slops-sellers and other waterfront businesspeople as they worked to make ends meet.

Slops-sellers were also geographically mobile within the city, another tactic they used to remain profitable when rent and other factors worked against them. William Smiley, for example, dabbled in ready-made sales while also making bespoke garments. In 1794, Smiley worked as a tailor at 30 South Water Street, only a short walk from Robert Taylor's shop and tavern. However, Smiley moved at least ten times between 1794 and 1818.¹⁶⁰ His various locations were all south of Market Street and within a few blocks of the waterfront, and in all likelihood his motivation for moving was a combination of rent issues and the potential to attract new customers. After 1809, he appeared in the directories as a merchant tailor, a new and more respectable-sounding term for dealers in ready-made clothing that is discussed in more detail

¹⁵⁹ Cornelius William Stafford, *The Philadelphia Directory For 1797* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Editor, 1797), 179. Cornelius William Stafford, *The Philadelphia Directory For 1798* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Editor, 1798), 140.

¹⁶⁰ This is based on the city directories for these years. For the earliest entry for William Smiley, see James Hardie, *The Philadelphia Directory and Register* (Philadelphia, Printed for the Author, 1794), 141. For the last entry, see John Adams Paxton, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1818* (Philadelphia: Published for the Editor, 1818), s.v. "S."

below.¹⁶¹ Smiley believed in the power of print, and regularly advertised the quality of his textiles, often imported from London.¹⁶² In 1806, he announced that he was “declining the business” and wished to sell his stock “either in parcels or the whole together.” He also sought to rent his shop at 75 South Front Street, which was “well fitted up, and a pretty good stand.”¹⁶³ However, Smiley’s later advertisements and directory entries indicate he continued to deal at least partly in ready-made clothing.

Like Smiley, Francis Lynch was a slops-seller who moved frequently, at least five times between 1800 and 1811.¹⁶⁴ Each of these locations was on South Front or South Water Streets, close to the docks where Lynch’s clientele worked and lived. When Lynch died in 1811, the administrator of his estate commissioned auctioneer John Dorsey to sell the remaining stock of the shop at 160 South Water Street, which included “New ready made Clothing of good quality and extensive variety.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ James Robinson, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1809* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Publisher, 1809), s.v. “S.”

¹⁶² See, for example, Advertisement, *Aurora General Advertiser* (Philadelphia), November 2, 1807.

¹⁶³ Advertisement, *Aurora General Advertiser* (Philadelphia), June 4, 1806.

¹⁶⁴ This is based on the city directories for these years. For the earliest entry for Lynch, see Cornelius William Stafford, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1800* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Editor, 1800), 80. For the last entry, see *Census Directory for 1811* (Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1811), 197.

¹⁶⁵ Advertisement, *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), June 10, 1811.

Auctioneer John Dorsey's sale advertisements provide additional glimpses of Philadelphia's slops-sellers. Several years after selling Lynch's stock, Dorsey announced in February, 1817, that he would be auctioning:

Clothing. On Friday afternoon at half past 2 o'clock, at No. 76, South Water street, between Chesnut and Walnut streets. A quantity of ready made Clothing, being the remains of the stock of a Slop Shop, consisting of Pantaloons and fancy Vests, Pea and Monkey Jackets, Check, Flannel and Linen Shirts, Great Coats and Trowsers, fine Long Coats, Coatees, &c.¹⁶⁶

The former resident of 76 North Water Street was Stacy Winter, who had arrived there the year before and set up shop as a tailor.¹⁶⁷ In 1817, after apparently liquidating his stock, Winter moved to 53 Walnut Street and fashioned himself as a merchant tailor.¹⁶⁸ In 1820 he moved again, this time remaining for two years at 79 Race Street.¹⁶⁹ Stacy was part of a small group of tailors who shared his surname, possibly brothers. Joseph Winter first appeared in the city directories in 1811, and in 1813 he was residing with William Winter at 345 Arch Street.¹⁷⁰ Although William appeared

¹⁶⁶ Advertisement, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), February 12, 1817.

¹⁶⁷ James Robinson, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1816* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Publisher, 1816), s.v. "W."

¹⁶⁸ James Robinson, *Robinson's Original Annual Directory for 1817* (Philadelphia: Printed at Whitehall, 1817), 474.

¹⁶⁹ Edward Whitely, *The Philadelphia Directory and Register, for 1820* (Philadelphia: McCarty & Davis, 1820), s.v. "W."

¹⁷⁰ *Census Directory for 1811* (Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1811), 357. John A. Paxton, *The Philadelphia Directory and Register, for 1813* (Philadelphia: B. & T. Kite, 1813), s.v. "W."

in directories only until 1822, Joseph remained through 1849, having moved at least ten times.¹⁷¹ Another Winter tailor, Jacob, probably a son, appeared in directories between 1839 and 1850.¹⁷²

The case of the Winters, besides reinforcing the geographic mobility of ready-made dealers, also illustrates how individuals could rise and fall in the trade over long periods of time. Just as they modified their business into boarding-houses, taverns, or slop shops to turn a profit, slops-sellers moved whenever rent surpassed their earnings or new opportunities proved irresistible. Their geographic mobility and business flexibility allowed some of these men to make long careers out of selling goods and services to the lower sort. From 1823, Stacy Winter lived in two houses behind addresses on Keys' Alley, including one where Joseph lived in the larger house at the main address.¹⁷³ In 1828, the two men opened the "J and S clothing store" at 6

¹⁷¹ For the last entry for William Winter, see *The Philadelphia Directory and Register for 1822* (Philadelphia: McCarty & Davis, 1822), s.v. "W." For the last entry for Joseph Winter, see *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory for 1849* (Philadelphia: Edward C. & John Biddle, 1849), 411.

¹⁷² For the earliest entry for Jacob Winter, see A. McElroy, *A. McElroy's Philadelphia Directory for 1839* (Philadelphia, Published by A. McElroy, 1839), 279. For the last entry see *A. McElroy's Philadelphia Directory for 1850* (Philadelphia: Edward C. & John Biddle, 1850), 455

¹⁷³ For Stacy Winter's first listing, "behind 18 Keys' Alley," see Robert Desilver, *The Philadelphia Index, or Directory, for 1823* (Philadelphia: Published for the Editor, 1823), s.v. "W." The last entry where he is at the back of 21 Keys' Alley while Joseph has the main address is Robert Desilver, *Desilver's Philadelphia Directory and Stanger's Guide, for 1828* (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1828), 91.

South Water Street.¹⁷⁴ This was the sort of ready-made emporium that became increasingly common in the 1820s. In 1829, Stacy opened another clothing store on High Street, but in 1831, both men lived on Montgomery Street (probably in the same house) and Stacy operated a clothing store at 362 High, where he continued business until his final listing in the 1835 directory.¹⁷⁵

Even slops-sellers with shorter careers moved often. Between 1813 and 1818, John Antrim, Jr., moved three times.¹⁷⁶ In August, 1818, it was again auctioneer John Dorsey who sold the remnants of Antrim's stock:

Slop Shop Cloathing, &c. On Wednesday the 19th instant, at 10 o'clock, at the auction rooms, by order of the executors of John Antrim, deceased, A very extensive variety of Cloathing, as well as of the present as ensuing season, worth as well the attention of the trade as of individuals – it consists of ready made Coats, Pantaletts, Vests, Canton and American made, Hose, Shirts, &c.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Robert Desilver, *Desilver's Philadelphia Directory and Stanger's Guide, for 1828* (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1828), 91.

¹⁷⁵ Robert Desilver, *Desilver's Philadelphia Directory and Stanger's Guide, 1829* (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1829), 214. Robert Desilver, *Desilver's Philadelphia Directory, and Stanger's Guide, 1831* (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1831), 235. Robert Desilver, *Desilver's Philadelphia Directory and Stranger's Guide for 1835 & 36* (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1835), 195.

¹⁷⁶ This is based on the city directories for these years. For Antrim's first listing, see John A. Paxton, *The Philadelphia Directory and Register, for 1813* (Philadelphia: B. & T. Kite, 1813), s.v. "A." For his last entry, see John Adams Paxton, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1818* (Philadelphia: Published for the Editor, 1813), s.v. "A."

¹⁷⁷ Advertisement, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), August 15, 1818.

Antrim died in the middle of his business career, with stores in Philadelphia and Reading, and his stock was quite diverse. It included both summer and winter clothing, “as well as of the present as ensuing season.” Antrim’s probate inventory listed an astounding variety of garments, including “velvet Roundabouts,” “Cord Pantaloons,” “Seersucker Pantaloons,” and “striped Trowsers” (Appendix C).¹⁷⁸

Slops-sellers were clever businessmen. They had to manage production and sale, changing business plans and locations regularly. With these relocations, slop shops appeared and disappeared at many addresses. Few advertised, both because of their mobility and because they catered to an often-illiterate clientele. But these shops, however recently established, were recognizable to passersby. Their best advertisement was their storefront, which they used to attract customers with ready money to buy ready-made clothes.

The Appearance of Slop Shops

The appearance of Philadelphia’s slop shops varied considerably. The most basic were one- or two-story frame structures that fronted the wharves, the sort of establishment described by Dell Upton as “rough-and-ready affairs designed to do little more than protect merchandise from the elements.”¹⁷⁹ Many may have been quite literally the “stands” they were advertised as, a generic American term for small

¹⁷⁸ File 200, 1818, Philadelphia Register of Wills.

¹⁷⁹ Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 150.

business locations that were little different from covered market stalls.¹⁸⁰ Other proprietors maintained slop shops as storefronts in larger buildings and lived in the spaces behind and above a retail space fronting the street. In February of 1811, John Dorsey offered:

A GOOD & LONG ACCUSTOMED STAND FOR BUSINESS. A WELL built four story brick house and brick kitchen situate on the west side of Water street, above Walnut street, No 75 containing in front 15 feet, and in depth 20 feet, exclusive of the said kitchen with a good cellar – it is and long has been a prosperous situation for a slop shop, or other active business. Also in the rear of the above mentioned property and fronting on a wide court or alley leading from Walnut street, one other brick dwelling house three stories high 14 feet 9 inches front, and about 20 feet deep two rooms on a floor, it has been long occupied as a boarding house or tavern for mariners or others and is a convenient situation for that purpose. The whole of the above property, has lately undergone a thorough repair and will be sold together.¹⁸¹

This was the shop of George Reed, who lived and worked there as a “tailor” between 1805 and 1811.¹⁸² Reed then moved to 337 South Front Street and continued his work

¹⁸⁰ No such definition of “stand” appears in Dyche and Pardon’s *New English Dictionary* (1765) or Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (1785). W.A. Craigie notes its usage in English to refer to “a stall or booth” dating to the sixteenth century, and also notes that in the U.S. it refers to “a position, site or building for a business, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Vol. IX, Part I, Section “SI-SQ.,” edited by James A.H. Murray, Henry Bradley, W.A. Craigie, and C.T. Onions (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1919), s.v. “stand,” 800.

¹⁸¹ Advertisement, *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), February 27, 1811.

¹⁸² This is based on city directories for these years. For Reed’s earliest entry, see James Robinson, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1805* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Publisher, 1805), s.v. “R.” For his last entry at this address, see *Census Directory for 1811* (Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1811), 265.

until 1814.¹⁸³ The description of Reed's shop is remarkably similar to one shown on the British trade card of T. Roberts, issued around 1800 (Figure 16).

¹⁸³ This is the last year he appeared in city directories. *Kite's Philadelphia Directory for 1814* (Philadelphia: B. & T. Kite, 1814), s.v "R."

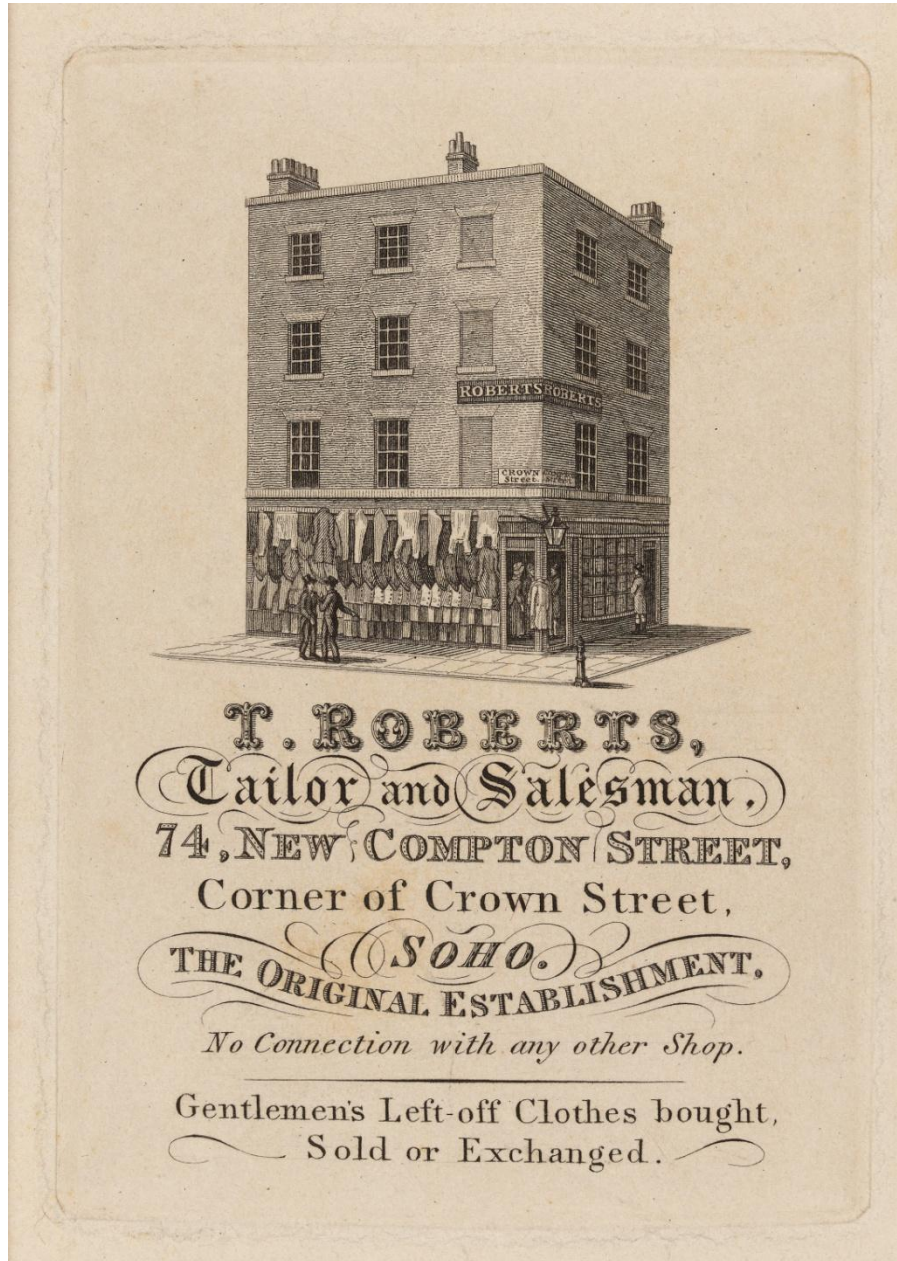


Figure 16: This undated, ca. 1800 British trade card shows the display techniques common among slops-sellers. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Reed was not unique in diversifying his business beyond the slops trade. As noted above, in 1799 Robert Taylor was operating a “Slop Shop and Tavern... with the greatest success.”¹⁸⁴ Slop shops were one part of a complex network of waterfront businesses that included taverns, inns, grocers, and craftsmen who served the needs of the lower sort. Boarding houses provided drink, rooms, and sometimes prostitutes to a transient population of sailors and workers.¹⁸⁵ These various operations were situated among the warehouses and other maritime businesses along the wharves and were as important in supporting the waterfront economy. Sailors and workers earned their money here, and they spent it here, on food, housing, and clothing.

The earliest illustration of an American slop shop, never identified as such, shows this landscape of connected businesses (Figure 17). William Chappel (1800-1880) was a tinsmith who created a series of small watercolors depicting New York City as it appeared during his childhood. The paper ground dates no earlier than 1825, but certain details, like modified captions, suggest that Chappel copied the sketches earlier drawings.¹⁸⁶ The drawing of interest shows a “dog killer” removing a stray from a block “in Water Between Rosavelt & Dover, New York, 1813.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Advertisement, *The Philadelphia Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, December 18, 1798.

¹⁸⁵ Wendy Gamber, *The Boarding House in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 141.

¹⁸⁶ John Caldwell, Oswaldo Rodrigues Rogue, and Dale T. Johnson, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Volume I: A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born by 1815* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 440.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 449.



Figure 17: William P. Chappel, “The Dog Killer,” ca. 1830s. The Edward W. C. Arnold Collection of New York Prints, Maps, and Pictures, Bequest of Edward W. C. Arnold, 1954, 54.90.513, © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Chappel’s image is an amalgamation. For instance, Daniel Davis, who operated a boarding house at 359 Water Street, appeared in New York directories no later than 1811, but a sign on the rightmost building in Chappel’s sketch (1813) features a large sign with a figure over “Davis.”¹⁸⁸ Davis himself, if he had a peg leg, may be shown in the doorway. Over an adjacent alley is the sign for a boarding house, and, on the opposite side of Davis’s building, boots hang over the doorway to a

¹⁸⁸ David Longworth, *Longworth’s American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory* (New York: David Longworth, 1811), 73.

shoemaker's shop. At the other end of the street is a grocer. A slop shop stands in the center of this business block.¹⁸⁹ This could be the shop of Jacob Abraham, whose "clothing store" was located at 360 Water Street in 1813.¹⁹⁰ Hung from the pent roof at the front of the two-story building are various trousers and jackets, just the sort of garments worn by the sailors and workers strolling through this scene.

The accuracy of Chappel's signage is less important than the business connections his illustration conveys. This is precisely the sort of network of businesses that appeared on Philadelphia's Water Street in the same period. However, boarding houses, taverns, and especially slop shops rarely merited the attention of commentators. Abraham Ritter grew up along the Philadelphia wharves, and in 1860 he published a memoir in which he described the merchants and buildings of the waterfront streets as they had appeared "fifty and seventy years ago." Ritter explicitly avoided "trespassing upon a compiler of a Directory" and only described the most prominent merchants.¹⁹¹ As early as 1808, John Culin "betokened his calling as tailor and vendor of ready-made clothing" on the southwest corner of Market and Water streets. In six chapters devoted to delineating the merchants of Water Street, Culin is the only tailor Ritter mentioned. Yet the 1800 *New Trade Directory for Philadelphia*,

¹⁸⁹ Caldwell, Rogue, and Johnson incorrectly speculate that this shop "seems to be a maker of children's clothes," *American Paintings*, 449.

¹⁹⁰ Andrew Beers, *Longworth's New York Almanac* (New York: Longworth, 1813), 49.

¹⁹¹ Abraham Ritter, *Philadelphia and her Merchants* (Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1860), 70.

for instance, listed 82 tailors, two tailoresses, and one seamstress with Water Street addresses (Appendix A).¹⁹² This is another reminder that slops-sellers were often all but invisible to anyone besides their patrons. Culin merited Ritter's attention because he was an anomaly whose business longevity was his best qualification for fame; after fifty years on Water Street, Culin was "a venerable relic of the olden time, and holds his own as a respectable good citizen."¹⁹³

Both Robert's British trade card and Chapel's New York illustration show finished garments on display, and recent scholarship demonstrated just how important exhibition was in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century salesmanship.¹⁹⁴ This was a transatlantic trend, reflected in the designs of shops in England and America, and it was not limited to the upper echelon of retailers. The eighteenth-century trade card of pawnbroker John Flude of London shows a shopfront dominated by jewelry cases and all manner of clothing hanging in the windows.¹⁹⁵ A print from the first decade of the nineteenth century for "Allin's Cheap Clothes & York Shoe Warehouse" of

¹⁹² *The New Trade Directory for Philadelphia, Anno 1800* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Author, 1799).

¹⁹³ Ritter, *Philadelphia*, 69.

¹⁹⁴ Best among these is Claire Walsh, "Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of Design History* 8:3 (1995): 157-176. For work on American spaces, see the chapters "Gridding Consumption" in Upton, *Another City*, 145-179, and "Setting the Stage, Playing the Part" in Ann Smart Martin, *Buying into the World of Goods: Early Consumers in Backcountry Virginia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 145-172.

¹⁹⁵ Ambrose Heal, *London Tradesmen's Cards of the XVIII Century: An Account of Their Origin and Use* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1925), plate LXXI.

Birmingham shows a castellated building over which flies the British flag (Figure 18). Garments hang on the outer walls and in large windows. In the lower panes fashion plates serve to attract potential customers.¹⁹⁶ In England, urban slop shops adopted the more refined-sounding moniker of “show shops,” and in America as well the display of ready-made clothing was an important business tool.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Beverly Lemire noted the fashion plates in *Fashion's Favourite*, 196. The date is my attribution based on the use of the 1801 Union flag.

¹⁹⁷ Madeleine Ginsburg, “The Tailoring and Dressmaking Trades, 1700-1850,” *Costume* 6 (1972), 67.



Figure 18: An advertisement print for Allin's clothing shop in Birmingham, England. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford: John Johnson Collection: Men's Clothes 1 (3).

Although some Philadelphia merchants included ready-made clothing in their listings of arriving cargoes, few slops-sellers spent money publicizing their businesses in print. In England, some issued trade cards, like Kenelm Dawson of London, whose card featured a sailor surrounded by rococo vines.¹⁹⁸ However, slops-

¹⁹⁸ Heal, *London Tradesmen's Cards*, plate XVII.

sellers had little to gain from publishing either trade cards or newspaper advertisements. Only later would ready-made clothing stores begin catering to the literate middle- and upper-class gentleman. Philadelphia's early slops-sellers sold to men who were transient and often illiterate. This made the storefront display of clothing all the more important.

The same display that attracted customers also sometimes attracted thieves, who knew that slop shops contained finished goods that they could easily steal and resell elsewhere. Shop robberies included individual thefts like the Wilmington one mentioned above as well as more coordinated operations.¹⁹⁹ In Philadelphia in 1767, for instance, "some Rogues broke into a Slop-shop, in Front-street, and carried off several Seamens Jackets, about a Dozen pair of Trowsers, two Great Coats, and other Things, to the Value of about Twenty Pounds" before the family, who lived above the shop, awoke and chased them away.²⁰⁰ Theft was a danger of which the slops-seller was well aware, and one common in waterfront neighborhoods, but it did not deter slops-sellers from displaying their clothing outside their shops.

Visual sources suggest that slops-sellers displayed clothing in a fashion akin to that of other retailers. This method differed from the practices of bespoke tailors, who did not display finished goods, because the slops-seller was more merchant than artisan. A hanging sign and newspaper advertisements attracted

¹⁹⁹ In 1800, Patrick Deagan's slop shop in Baltimore was "broke open and robbed of goods to the amount of 3000 dollars." "BALTIMORE, April 24," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 30, 1800.

²⁰⁰ "PHILADELPHIA, November 26," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 26, 1767.

customers to a bespoke tailor, who profited from the credibility of his name and the reputation of his clothing quality. But the most significant asset of the slops-seller, the way he attracted customers and convinced them to spend money, was the immediate availability of his stock. Slops-sellers and slops-buyers knew that the garments in a slop shop were ready to wear and ready to purchase, a distinct advantage over the time and money required by bespoke tailors. Quality was lower and fit might not follow high fashion standards, but this in turn meant a lower price for the consumer. The men who bought slops sought minimal expenditure and immediately-available garments, and the slops-seller was ready to oblige. In hanging clothing out for display, the slops-seller was announcing to the world that these goods were available for immediate consumption.

Selling Slops

In many shops of this period, production and retail spaces were separate.²⁰¹ However, slop shops varied in their interior spatial organization. Those that operated simultaneously as slop shops and taverns may have been unrecognizable as retail spaces. Other small slop shops served as both a workspace and a selling space, much like the workshops of many poor artisans. Usually, however, slop shops featured no workspace at all, because clothing production required a minimum of space and outworkers could execute it at home.

Slop shop sales were complex interactions rife with haggling and flattery. Englishman James Lackington experienced this firsthand during the winter of 1773,

²⁰¹ Walsh, “Shop Design,” 160.

his first in London, when he went looking for a new heavy coat and was “hauled into a shop by a fellow who was walking up and down before the door of a slopseller, where I was soon fitted with a great coat.”²⁰² Lackington refused to pay 25 shilling for the coat and turned to go, only to find that the door “had a fastening to it beyond my comprehension, nor would the good man let me out before I had made him an offer.”²⁰³ The slops-seller finally accepted Lackington’s 10s.6d, less than half the initial asking price. Writing years later, Lackington viewed the seller with some sarcasm; he remembered that the “honest slopman” had tried flattery, complementing Lackington’s “clean honest industrious looks.”²⁰⁴ British satirists also enjoyed depicting the slops-seller’s flattery of naïve customers (Figures 19 and 20), scenes that played out in American shops as well.

²⁰² James Lackington, *Memoirs of the First Forty-Five Years of the Life of James Lackington* (1791, new edition London: Printed for the Author, 1792), 208.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 209

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 208



Figure 19: This 1789 British satire shows a tailor in Monmouth Street, London, deceiving a young customer. S. Collings and J. Cooke. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (789.6.9.1).



Figure 20: This 1791 British satire shows two customers subjected to the flattery of Mr. and Mrs. Snip, ready-made clothing dealers. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (791.12.10.04).

A man who wanted to purchase slops had to be a savvy customer to avoid overpriced or low-quality garments. There was even a unique vernacular language to slops clothing, especially among sailors, whose vocabulary was a tool of group identification and membership. Writers parodied these terms for the amusement of other audiences, as when the *Salem Gazette* ran a small piece in 1801 (later copied in

Philadelphia's *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*) that documented the terms applied to slop clothing:

A Sailor's Demand Upon A Slopseller		
A Shappo	–	Hat
A Mappo	–	Wig
A Flying Gib	–	Handkerchief
An In-defender	–	Shirt
An Out-defender	–	Small Jacket
A Cold defender	–	Flushing Coat
Up-haulers	–	Trowsers
Down trappers	–	Shoes
Trappings & Gaskets	–	Shoestrings and
for the same.		Garters. ²⁰⁵

Once a buyer selected his clothes by whatever name, he paid the price in cash. According to one history of the Brooks Brothers firm, which began as a ready-made store near the New York waterfront, the happy slops-seller might even offer him a drink.²⁰⁶ Generally, however, slops purchases were quick transactions without such generosity. Slops-buyers had little to offer in the way of goods and services for barter, and even less reliability in credit. Fixed prices and cash exchanges made for quick

²⁰⁵ *The Salem Gazette*, November 10, 1801. On December 17, 1801, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia) ran the same piece but changed "Cold Defender" to "Bold Defender."

²⁰⁶ This apocryphal story comes from *Established 1818: Brooks Brother Centenary, 1818-1918* (New York: The Cheltenham Press, 1918), 13. Having abandoned an earlier tale that Henry Brooks was an artisanal tailor, Brooks Brothers now claims a more mercantile pedigree, albeit one that attributes too much originality to the company. A recent company history holds that "Brooks Brothers was, if not the first, at least among the first to offer ready-made clothing," and that "'Off the rack' clothing was unheard of in Europe at this time.'" John William Cooke, *Generations of Style: It's All About the Clothing* (New York: Brooks Brothers, Inc., 2003), 21.

sales and maintained a shop's immediate finances.²⁰⁷ Because profit margins of ready-made clothing were notably lower than those of bespoke garments, slops-sellers relied on the volume of their transactions to offset lower profits per garment.²⁰⁸ Frequency of sales, they hoped, would offset lower profits per garment.

The Rise of the Merchant Tailor

Military activity was a major factor in the expansion of ready-made clothing sales in the nineteenth century. In 1799, the federal government established the Schuylkill Arsenal, known by a variety of other names throughout the next century and a half, as a center for army supply and clothing in the Gray's Ferry neighborhood south of the city.²⁰⁹ In the first years of the nineteenth century, the Arsenal was the center of bureaucratic and logistical struggles to clothe the army.²¹⁰ With the outbreak of the War of 1812, expanding army and state militia forces placed unprecedented demands on the federal supply system. During the war, the Arsenal served primarily to hold clothing stores awaiting shipment. Soon after the outset of hostilities, however, Commissary General of Purchases Callender Irvine recognized that government-

²⁰⁷ Walsh points out this aspect of lower-end London shops in "Shop Design," 170.

²⁰⁸ Lambert noted the relative profitability of bespoke over ready-made clothing, "Bespoke Versus Ready-Made," 58.

²⁰⁹ Francis Burke Brandt and Henry Volkmar Gummere, *Byways and Boulevards In and About Historic Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Corn Exchange National Bank, 1925), 259.

²¹⁰ Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* (1962, reprint Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1989), 119-127.

contracted master tailors were unnecessary middle-men who added expense to the process and took advantage of the working poor, and he eliminated the contract system in favor of directly paying outworkers in 1812.²¹¹ Irvine rented a separate building in Philadelphia where tailors cut fabric and inspected the work of the 3-5,000 outwork seamstresses the government employed at any point during the war (Figure 21).²¹² This system was extremely efficient; in 1813 Irvine told Secretary of War John Armstrong that he could “have 10,000 cotton jackets with sleeves made in 2 weeks.”²¹³

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid., 145-147.

²¹³ Callender Irvine to Secretary of War General John Armstrong, 17 June 1813, Entry 2117, Commissary General of Purchases Letters Sent, Record Group 92, National Archives and Records Administration, as quoted in Stephen E. Osman, “Background Notes,” essay in sewing pattern *Past Patterns #041, U.S. Army Roundabout Circa 1812* (Past Patterns, 2003), 2.



Figure 21: In Philadelphia during the War of 1812, government workers prepared uniform patterns and pattern pieces while outworkers sewed the garments together. H. Charles McBarron, *Under My Own Eyes*, ca. 1979. U.S. Army Art Collection.

One of the master tailors who received a contract before Irvine's overhaul was John Curry, who organized the production of 2,000 linen jackets in 1812.²¹⁴ Curry was working as a tailor in the city as early as 1804, but not until 1810 was he listed as a "merchant taylor."²¹⁵ This was not a new term; as early as 1504 merchant tailor denoted a tailor who also supplied his textiles.²¹⁶ In 1790, Philadelphian John Shepherd used the term in an advertisement for his fine fabrics and waistcoat fronts.²¹⁷ Other such advertisements became increasingly common over the next two decades, and while many described only the textiles of these merchant tailors, others announced supplies of ready-made clothing. In 1819, William Thomas arrived from London on the brig *Alexander* with a large assortment of men's clothes, intending to engage in "the business of a Merchant Tailor in all its branches."²¹⁸ There was never a clear point of demarcation, but early in the nineteenth century, tailors who dealt primarily in ready-made clothes assumed the title of merchant tailor, a name they retained into the twentieth century. The first tailors listed under this title appeared in Philadelphia's city

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ James Robinson, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1804* (Philadelphia: 1804), 61.

²¹⁶ Henry Bradley, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Volume VI, Section "L M," edited by James A.H. Murray, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1919), s.v. "merchant tailor," 348.

²¹⁷ Advertisement, *The Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*, December 10, 1790.

²¹⁸ Advertisement, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, March 4, 1819.

directory in 1801.²¹⁹ By 1810, the directory listed at least nineteen merchant tailors; in 1820 there were some 28.²²⁰ Many such retailers retained the simple title of tailor, and the merchant tailors in the directories represent only a portion of those dealing in ready-made clothing.

A contributing factor to the increase in merchant tailoring was the government's arsenal system. During the war, hundreds of women sewed uniforms as part of a system of garment production and outwork. After the war, these same seamstresses shifted to producing civilian coats and pantaloons. Whereas late-eighteenth-century slops-sellers employed a handful of outworkers, the federal government established a massive new labor pool of women experienced in outwork. When the war ended, these women were ready to sew, and there were more than a few entrepreneurs in Philadelphia ready to put them to work.

By 1820, ready-made clothing establishments were booming. J. James offered "the best most fashionable Goods the market could afford" at his store at the corner of Decatur and Market Streets in 1819.²²¹ By this time as well, *slop shop* no longer meant a store for ready-made clothing, but encompassed any place that sold cheap, and thus poor quality, goods. In 1818, an editorialist railed against the credit

²¹⁹ Cornelius William Stafford, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1801* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Editor, 1801), 10 and 97.

²²⁰ James Robinson, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1810* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Publisher, 1810). Edward Whitely, *The Philadelphia Directory and Register, For 1820* (Philadelphia: McCarty & Davis, 1820).

²²¹ Advertisement, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), December 16, 1819.

system in a time when “it seemed for a while as if every house was converted into a slop shop; and that the whole pursued no other business but the purchase and sale of dry goods.”²²² In 1819, an anonymous columnist in the *Weekly Aurora* chided complacent American consumers for regarding “this continent only as a sort of slop shop for the sale of English commodities.”²²³ Merchant tailors operated in the same fashion as slops-sellers, but they effectively rebranded themselves in order to cater to a more genteel clientele.

These men also adopted new techniques for creating and marketing their garments. James Burk, who opened the “Shakespeare Fashionable Clothing Store” in 1817, cleverly obscured the origin of his garments by assuring potential customers that “he can fit any person from the above assortment, they all being cut by measure.”²²⁴ Next door, M. Thomas opened “The Cheapest Clothing Store in the United States” in the same Shakespeare buildings on Sixth street in 1818.²²⁵ In a “sham heroic poem” of 1813, “The Bobadiliad,” General Henry Dearborn enters a “tonish [fashionable] Slop

²²² Richard Saunders, “To the Members of Both Houses of the Congress of the United States,” *Weekly Aurora* (Philadelphia), December 14, 1818.

²²³ “The Force of Habit,” *Weekly Aurora* (Philadelphia), June 7, 1819.

²²⁴ Advertisement, *Poulson’s Daily American Advertiser* (Philadelphia), September 22, 1819. Zakim noted Burk’s establishment of two other shops in New York City in 1821 and 1822, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 41-43.

²²⁵ Advertisement, *Poulson’s Daily American Advertiser* (Philadelphia), March 22, 1819. The earliest illustration of the Shakespeare Building I located dates to 1850: Bb862 Ev 15 No. 219, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

shop” where the proprietor offers to “take the measure of your person.”²²⁶ Merchant tailors like Burk, Thomas, and Dearborn’s did in fact cut garments “by measure,” but these measurements were not the personal ones taken by bespoke tailors. Instead, they were plotted according to the new systems of standardization that dramatically changed men’s tailoring.

Tailoring was making the transition, both conceptually and technically, from art to science. In this regard, slop shops had long foreseen the trend in standardization that revolutionized tailoring in the early nineteenth century. In 1825, Robert Byfield published *Sectum, Being the Universal Directory in the Art of Cutting*. This was a book for “the Slopseller, who may employ numerous work-people, on different sized articles, which he deals for in wholesale,” and Byfield promised “an unimpeachable standard... upon such plain mathematical principles as leave no doubt with respect to fitting the shapes.”²²⁷ Byfield’s guide offered mathematical tables for over fifty unique garments for men. These were all cut to measure along a system of body types that connected average measurements in tabular form. The chart for “Seamen’s Pea Jackets,” for instance, included six standard sizes, each with eight measurements for the body and sleeves of the jackets.²²⁸

Besides adopting new methods and approaching new markets, these merchant tailors also began to expand their businesses in order to make greater profits.

²²⁶ Evangelicus Sockdollager [pseudonym], “The Bobadiliad,” *The Tickler* (Philadelphia), July 7, 1813.

²²⁷ Byfield, *Sectum*, v and iv-v.

²²⁸ Byfield, *Sectum*, 34.

When slops-seller John Waters died in 1805, his stock included 129 garments and a variety of textiles. When John Antrim died in 1818, his Philadelphia store included 485 garments as well as various fabrics, “shop fixtures,” and an awning.²²⁹ A second inventory of a shop Antrim owned in Reading, sixty miles northwest of Philadelphia, documented another 404 garments and 48 suspenders, not to mention various textiles, worth \$700.45, plus \$189.96 in cash (Appendix C).²³⁰ Ready-made clothing was no longer the slops of small waterfront shops, and nor was it the sole domain of poor laborers. More and more men began wearing suits cut by tailors they had never met, merchant tailors opened clothing emporiums, and eventually ready-made clothing became the standard for gentlemen of all social levels. Even if a Jacksonian gentleman would have balked at the idea of patronizing such an establishment, we can nevertheless trace the genealogy of his suit, and every suit to follow, to the production and sales techniques devised in the slop shops.

²²⁹ File 200, 1818, Philadelphia Register of Wills.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

Chapter 3

A WORLD OF ALMS: CLOTHING IN THE PHILADELPHIA ALMSHOUSE

The giving of alms, material and monetary charity, was an ancient tradition by the time Philadelphia's elite decided to establish an institution to provide for the city's poor. Examining how the Philadelphia almshouse managed to purchase and produce the goods necessary to clothe thousands of inmates over several decades sheds new light on what the lower sort of Philadelphia wore. Even when they benefitted from alms and institutional charity, poor men dressed in diverse ways and used clothing to make personal statements. This chapter explores the production and distribution of certain items in the almshouse, including shoes, textiles, and ready-made garments. It also considers garment repair and secondhand exchange as represented in documentary and material evidence. Finally, this chapter examines the complex process of distributing clothing to inmates and the resulting inmate wardrobes.

Although poor, the men who patronized Philadelphia's slop shops did have enough money to buy their own clothing and therefore exercised considerable agency in constructing their wardrobes. However, other men of the lower sort could not afford to support themselves, either because of temporary trouble, like an injury, or more chronic issues, like disability or age. In rare cases, they benefitted from the work of one of Philadelphia's religious and secular benevolent societies that sewed

clothing and distributed it to the poor, but these organizations were few and had little effect on the need for clothing until later in the nineteenth century.²³¹ To find shelter and relief, Philadelphia's poor could turn to the small Quaker-run Friends' Almshouse or the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Sick Poor. But without a steady income or private charity, many of Philadelphia's lower sort spent brief or prolonged periods as residents in the Philadelphia public almshouse, located, between 1767 and 1835, in the square block bordered by Tenth, Eleventh, Spruce, and Pine Streets (Figure 22).²³² The walled complex included two brick buildings, the "Bettering House" (almshouse) and the "House of Employment" (workhouse).

²³¹ See, for example, the records of the Infant's Clothing Association at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Manuscript Collection 1800; or the activities of ethnic groups such as the St. Andrews Society (Scottish), founded in 1747, James Bishop, email message to the author, March 31, 2011.

²³² Gary B. Nash noted that in 1772, a quarter of male Philadelphians had either spent time in the almshouse or were too poor to be subject to taxes, "Poverty and Poor Relief in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 33:1 (Jan. 1976), 28.



Figure 22: The Philadelphia almshouse (left) and workhouse (right) as they appeared in William Birch's *The city of Philadelphia, in the state of Pennsylvania, North America: as it appeared in the year 1800* (Philadelphia: W. Birch, 1804). Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Printed Book and Periodical Collection.

Many men who arrived at the almshouse feigned disability or sickness in order to gain shelter and relief, but others suffered from alcohol dependence, debilitating occupational injuries, serious illness, or had aged beyond their ability to

work.²³³ Some left the almshouse after short stays; others became permanent inmates. Most residents kept busy at a variety of tasks like picking oakum, which involved untwisting used lengths of rope so that the fibers could be recycled in combination with tar for ship caulking. Other men arrived with training in a craft, and some of these individuals continued or returned to their trade in the almshouse.

When new men and women arrived at the almshouse, many “nearly naked,” clerks precisely noted their attire to both identify them and document the clothing they required. John and Sarah Smith (whom the clerk noted were “Constant Autumnal Customers,” or return winter residents) requested admission in October, 1790, “covered or wrap’d up in rags swarming with filth & Vermine.”²³⁴ Others had more resources. When Patrick Early arrived on January 14, 1790, with an injured leg and hand, he was “destitute of Necessary Cloathg.” The clerk was careful to record that Early “says he lately came to town from Delaware state, where he left some Cloaths & property,” the hope being that these belongings meant he was one of the “deserving” poor and would only be a temporary burden.²³⁵ Whether nearly naked or

²³³ The best work on the early history of the almshouse and poor relief in the city is Nash, “Poverty and Poor Relief.” On deserving and undeserving poor see Newman, *Embodied History*, 16-29. See also Smith, *The Lower Sort*, 166-170, and Alexander, *Render Them Submissive*, 116-121. For a broader study of such institutions, see David Wagner, *The Poorhouse: America’s Forgotten Institution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.), 2005.

²³⁴ Guardians of the Poor, “Daily Occurrence Docket,” 1790-1792 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.75.

²³⁵ Guardians of the Poor, “Daily Occurrence Docket,” 1787-1790 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.75.

more tolerably clothed, the men who arrived at the almshouse often came from the bottom of society. They had either fallen into disgrace or been broken by a lifetime of work. In either case, they entered an institution that, by the late eighteenth century, had mastered the complicated tasks of producing and providing for its many residents.

The Guardians of the Poor, the managing body of the almshouse, controlled a network of in-house production, much of which centered in the adjoining House of Employment.²³⁶ The workhouse both supplied and employed almshouse residents, and it was there that inmate weavers, tailors, and shoemakers worked to provide at least some of the apparel needed by the institution. Even though the almshouse was never entirely self-sufficient, these men, provided with the necessary tools and materials, helped offset some of its costs.

Shoes for the Poor

Shoes were in constant demand at the almshouse, where the institution issued men who arrived with inadequate or no footwear either a pair of low-cut shoes

²³⁶ Before 1788, the “Overseers of the Poor” oversaw poor tax collection and distribution and the “Contributors to the Relief and Employment of the Poor of the City of Philadelphia, the District of Southwark, and the Townships Northern Liberties, Moyamensing, and Passyunk” oversaw the almshouse. After 1788, the “Guardians of the Poor” were organized as the new managing body. The House of Employment is usually referred to as the General Manufactory in the almshouse records. Record Group 35 Description, Philadelphia City Archives. An interesting corollary to almshouse production was the work of criminal prisoners, for example as examined in an archaeological study by John Cotter et al., *The Walnut Street Prison Workshop* (Philadelphia: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 1988).

or higher “boots.”²³⁷ In one case, Thomas Malborough received a pair of “High heeled Shoes” worth 75¢ on September 24, 1807, significantly less than \$1.25-\$1.50 that pairs of shoes cost institutions like the almshouse and the State Penitentiary.²³⁸ Possibly these had been a donation, and may have originally been a gentleman’s riding shoes; a high-heeled shoe recovered at Fort Ligonier in Pennsylvania (1758-1766) had wear indicative of use with stirrups.²³⁹ During the worst economic times, the almshouse issued up to sixty pairs of men’s shoes in a week, but generally demand was not so substantial.²⁴⁰ This exceeded the capacity of in-house shoemakers, and so in some cases the almshouse relied on outside artisans for footwear, as in December of 1805 when the Guardians purchased “50 pair Childrens Shoes” from Mathew Conrad for \$26.80.²⁴¹ Meanwhile, inmate shoemakers busied themselves with both the

²³⁷ Guardians of the Poor, “Clothing Issues Ledger,” 1805-1814 men’s volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.81.

²³⁸ Guardians of the Poor, “Clothing Issues Ledger,” 1805-1814 men’s volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.81. Men’s shoes generally cost \$1.50 in the records of the Walnut Street State Penitentiary in this period, although one pair, issued to “Tom a Negro” cost only \$1.20. Pennsylvania State Penitentiary, “Stock Book,” 1800-1805 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 38.27.

²³⁹ Jacob L. Grimm, *Archaeological Investigations of Fort Ligonier, 1960-1965*, *Annals of the Carnegie Museum* 42 (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum, 1970), 131.

²⁴⁰ Guardians of the Poor, Treasurer’s “Weekly Entries,” 1791-1795 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.49.

²⁴¹ Guardians of the Poor, “Daily Receipts,” 1805-1806 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.79. Mathias Conrad was a shoemaker at 40 New Street in 1805. James Robinson, *The Philadelphia Directory for 1805* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Publisher, 1805), s.v. “C.” Shoe purchases were also included in the “Accounts of the Guardians of the Poor” published annually in city newspapers. See for instance *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), May 19, 1802.

production and repair of shoes in the almshouse. In October, 1791, for instance, the shoemakers devoted their time to “considerable mending or Cobling done weekly,” which consumed one side of sole and one side of upper leather.²⁴² Of course, the almshouse’s artisan residents were often no more reliable than its less-skilled ones. John Cooney was described as a “noted, worthless or rather Infamous lame Shoemaker... he is a Shoemaker but so very great a Villian that he continually Purloins and makes way with more leather, Tools &c. than all his Earnings would amount to.”²⁴³

Philadelphia’s average day laborer or sailor wore cheap shoes, made locally from leather produced in the city’s many tanneries, and he wore them until they fell apart, sometimes after extensive repairs.²⁴⁴ Archaeological excavations along the Vine Street Expressway Corridor (Northern Liberties) and the Commuter Tunnel (Center City) uncovered many examples of early footwear. Because leather often survives intact in moist environments, a variety of excavated privies and other features in these areas contained examples of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century shoes. The Commuter Tunnel project resulted in the discovery of a cache of 1830s

²⁴² Guardians of the Poor, “Daily Occurrence Docket,” 1790-1792 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.75.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ The best source on footwear of this period is D.A. Saguto, trans., *M. de Garsault’s 1767 Art of the Shoemaker, an Annotated Translation* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2009). On archaeological shoes, see Stephen R. Davis, “With Feet Firmly Planted: Footwear from Archaeological Sites,” in Symposium Papers, “Issued to the Troops: Military Uniforms of the Last Half of the 18th Century” (Winterthur Conference, 1996); and Howard, “Had On and Took With Him,” 138-157.

shoes that were “extensively worn to the point of uselessness.”²⁴⁵ The earliest shoes recovered in the Vine Street excavations, dating to the late 1770s, were typical of the sort of shoe worn by Philadelphia’s lower sort. These shoes were constructed with leather welts in the seams and the flesh-side of the leather out, which added to their durability.²⁴⁶ Other excavated shoes date to a slightly later period but also reflect earlier patterns in footwear quality. A mid-nineteenth-century privy associated with 1527 Vine Street produced a cache of heavily-worn shoes; these shoes feature holes worn through the soles, heels worn down from use, and partial or complete resoling repairs. One pair of boots shows the unmistakable signs of supination, the condition in which an individual walks on the outside of his heels.²⁴⁷ These examples demonstrate that the shoes of Philadelphia’s workers had to endure substantial abrasion and use.

Some examples of laborers shoes show that while they were cheap, they were not simply utilitarian. HMS *De Braak* produced between thirty and forty pairs of shoes and boots, many of a standard pattern behind the fashion of 1798, which would be typical of both military- and naval-issued items of apparel (Figure 23).²⁴⁸ One of

²⁴⁵ CRM Report quoted in Belinda Blomberg, Helen Schenck, Philip J. Carstairs, George D. Cress, and Thomas A.J. Crist, “Archeological Monitoring and Data Recovery of the Vine Expressway Corridor (I-676), L.R. 67045, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania” (CRM Report, Philadelphia: John Milner Associates, Inc., 1996), 69. Report on file at Milner offices.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ D.A. Saguto, “Footwear And Shoe-Related Artifacts Recovered from the Wreck of the H.M.S. DeBraak – 1798, Preliminary Report” (Unpublished Report, 1987), 4. On file at Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Dover.

these shoes features a unique tie, a relatively wide (1.25") silk ribbon with three narrow stripes (red, white, red) running down its center and rows of floating red warps every 1/2" along the body (Figures 24).



Figure 23: One of *De Braak*'s common-pattern shoes similar to the one tied with the ribbon in Figure 24. This one has a leather thong tie. Courtesy of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs/Delaware State Archaeological Collections.

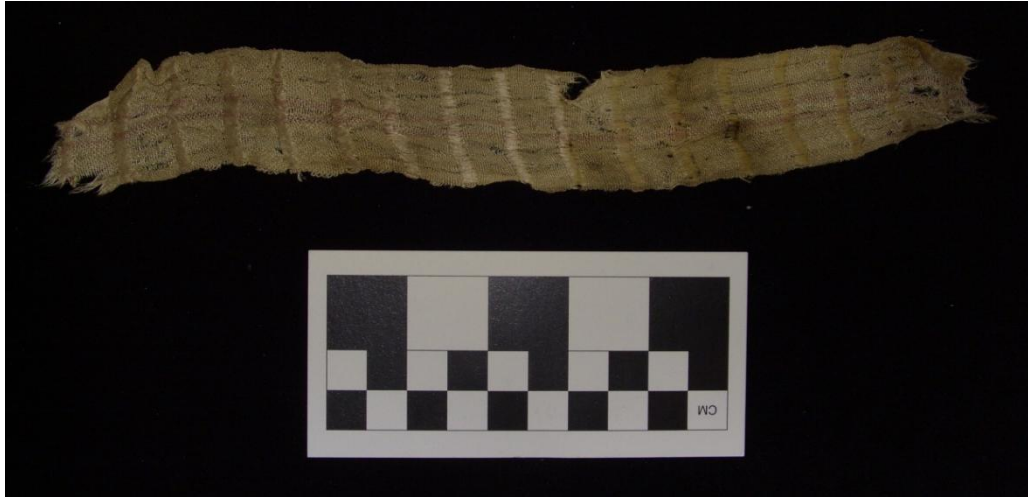


Figure 24: A white and red striped and ribbed silk shoe ribbon from the 1798 wreck of HMS *De Braak*. Courtesy of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs/Delaware State Archaeological Collections.

The shoe this ribbon tied is poorly constructed compared to others from the wreck and also has few signs of wear.²⁴⁹ Despite its lower quality, the lack of usage and its fine ribbon suggests that one of *De Braak*'s crewmembers might have used this shoe for a special purpose, perhaps as part of a set of clothing saved for port visits and other special occasions. Other shoes from the *De Braak* also feature ribbon ties, many added after the original buckle latches (leather straps) of the shoes were broken or cut. The commonality of ribbon ties aboard *De Braak* indicates a level of fashion among its Royal Navy crew that might not be expected, and represents how sailors expressed their unique style. The lower sort used ribbons in a system of popular

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 6.

fashion and to engage in networks of courtship and kinship.²⁵⁰ In Philadelphia, working men adopted ribbons for shoe ties in the 1790s, as buckles fell out of fashion; even common laborers and sailors could afford short lengths of ribbon, the type of textile that Ann Smart Martin called “an index of whirling change in fashion,” as a cheap expression of style.²⁵¹

Kerchiefs were another inexpensive item of adornment available to the lower sort, and a variety appeared among inmates in the almshouse. When Philadelphia slops-seller John Waters died in 1805, his stock included 43 “Hankerchiefs.”²⁵² Sailors and laborers wore these solid, checked, and stripes squares of cloth folded and tied loosely around their necks. One example recovered from the *General Carleton* was originally red or blue with clustered white spots.²⁵³ While gentlemen of the early republic wore neckcloths of white or black, vividly-colored kerchiefs gave the lower sort another inexpensive way to make colorful sartorial statements.

²⁵⁰ John Styles discussed the importance of ribbons as indicated by the Foundling Hospital tokens in *Threads of Feeling*, 42-51.

²⁵¹ Ann Smart Martin, *Buying into the World of Goods: Early Consumers in Backcountry Virginia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 169.

²⁵² File 216, 1805, Philadelphia Register of Wills. See Appendix B.

²⁵³ Babits and Brenckle, “Sailor Clothing,” 193.

Weaving in the Almshouse

Besides shoes, the almshouse also produced massive amounts of textiles.²⁵⁴ The weavers of these goods included both almshouse residents and individuals hired as day workers.²⁵⁵ The institution sold much of this yardage to local buyers in order to support other expenses but also reserved some for the production of bedding and garments in-house.²⁵⁶ On the first of January, 1807, for instance, its stock included 328 yards of “Bird-eye Diaper,” 204 yards of jean, 49 ½ yards of striped cotton, 72 yards of “Jacket pattern stripe,” 20 yards of “Kersey cloth,” 30 yards of “Herring bone,” and 47 yards of “Flaxen Check.”²⁵⁷ This was the material that was either as yet unsold or was reserved for use by almshouse tailors and seamstresses.

Weaving was one way the almshouse kept its residents at work, but also a major source of income for the institution. The almshouse was a veritable cornucopia of textiles. In 1808, for instance, the House of Employment produced flax sheeting,

²⁵⁴ For more on weaving in the Philadelphia region, see Philip Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; Cynthia J. Shelton, *The Mills of Manayunk: Industrialization and Social Conflict in the Philadelphia Region, 1787-1837* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); and Halpern, “Germantown, Philadelphia.”

²⁵⁵ Shelton, *Mills of Manayunk*, 39.

²⁵⁶ “The Accounts of the Guardians of the Poor,” published annually in Philadelphia newspapers, also sometimes listed the textiles woven and consumed in the institution. See, for example *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), February 21, 1812.

²⁵⁷ Guardians of the Poor, Steward, “Merchandise Accounts,” January-July 1807 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.102.

cotton sheeting, “tow linnen,” tow stripe, linsey, check, “birds eye,” “ticken,” cotton & tow stripe, cotton stripe, flannel, “woollen cloth,” fustian, diaper, tow twill, and rag carpeting. In 1809 they added holland, sail cloth, and jean to this impressive repertoire.²⁵⁸ The yardage produced was even more impressive than the variety. To take only a few examples, from May through November of 1808, the House weavers produced 10,220½ yards of flax sheeting worth \$5,296.34½ (52¢ per yard); in the year from May 1808 through May 1809, they wove 1,117½ yards of fustian worth \$698.95 (62.5¢ per yard) and 1,021½ yards of striped cotton worth \$834.90½ (82¢ per yard).²⁵⁹ The pace of this production was rapid. In a period of four days in early 1807, twenty inmate weavers produced “diaper Tabling,” striped and plain linsey, flax sheeting, flax and tow shirting, “Bedticken,” “royalrib,” “Huckaback,” tow linen, coverlets, and rag carpeting, totaling 1,265½ yards of textiles worth \$448.90.²⁶⁰

Clothing Production in the Almshouse

What textiles almshouse did not sell, it set aside for the production of bedticks, mattresses, pillowcases, and garments. In November, 1789, the almshouse paid for 32 yards of “half upr. Mill’d Linsey” to be cut up into sixteen pairs of men’s

²⁵⁸ Guardians of the Poor, “Manufactory Accounts Ledger,” 1808-1810 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.100.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Guardians of the Poor, Steward, “Merchandise Accounts,” January-July 1807 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.102.

trousers.²⁶¹ The same month, “Thomson the Taylor” used 24 yards of linsey and two yards of tow linen scraps to prepare eleven men’s jackets.²⁶² In January of 1790, 54 yards of tow linen produced the pieces for six men’s shirts, four “Double Bedsacks,” and “lineings and Pockets for 6 Mens Coatees.”²⁶³ In March, 1793, 21 yards “Grey Cloth” was enough for two petticoats, three jackets, one waistcoat, and four pairs of trousers.²⁶⁴ Some of this cutting and tailoring was done with outside help, as in 1811 when the almshouse paid \$19.42 for “Cutting out pauper clothing.”²⁶⁵

At other times the almshouse purchased ready-made clothing from beyond the walls of the institution, as in July, 1786, when it paid “John Dugan” £18.3s for “Cloathing &c.”²⁶⁶ John Duggan was a shopkeeper on Spruce Street and may have been yet another slops-seller listed under a more mercantile title.²⁶⁷ Similarly, John Purdon received £62.10s.d11 on September 12, 1787, for clothing delivered the

²⁶¹Guardians of the Poor, “Daily Occurrence Docket,” 1787-1790 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.75

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Guardians of the Poor, “Daily Occurrence Docket,” 1792-1793 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.75

²⁶⁵ Guardians of the Poor, “Expenses, Provisions, and Services,” June 1810-May 1811 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.63.

²⁶⁶ Contributors to the Relief of the Poor, “Treasurer’s Accounts,” 1780-1796 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.1.

²⁶⁷ Francis White, *The Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Young, Stewart, and McCulloch 1785), 20. This is the only entry for Duggan in the city directories.

previous winter.²⁶⁸ Like Duggan, Purdon was a shopkeeper, with a store on Front Street between Walnut and Spruce from at least 1785 until 1817, when his widow took over business.²⁶⁹ Purdon was a loquacious man who dealt chiefly in textiles but also in clocks and other accessories.²⁷⁰ He was prone to publishing his shop advertisements in the form of extended poems, with stanzas like these (see also Appendix D):

Hence doth arise that way of telling,
In public prints, what folks are selling;
Then since it's so, and deem'd no crime,
I'll measure out a few in rhyme;
... [102 lines]
Here's flannels, ozenburgs, and checks,
With large bandanoes for the necks;
With Yorkshire cloth for honest Jack,
To keep him warm when on the deck;
With lawns and Kentings from the Clyde,
And Caledonian thread beside,
Fine, and as cheap from off my reel,
As e'er came from the *spinning wheel*.
To prove the above, the way's to try,
Step in, my friends, for once, and buy.

JOHN PURDON.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Contributors to the Relief of the Poor, "Treasurer's Accounts," 1780-1796 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.1.

²⁶⁹ Francis White, *The Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Young, Stewart, and McCulloch 1785), 58. *Robinsons' Original Annual Directory for 1817* (Philadelphia: Printed at Whitehall, 1817), 356. Purdon was apparently fairly prosperous, and was made a city commissioner in 1813. John A. Paxton, *Philadelphia Directory and Register for 1813* (Philadelphia: B. & T. Kite, 1813), s.v. "D."

²⁷⁰ For Purdon's mention of his clocks, see Advertisement, *The Pennsylvania Mercury and Universal Advertiser*, May 8, 1788.

²⁷¹ Advertisement, *General Advertiser*, November 15, 1792.

The almshouse records indicate that besides the dizzying array of textiles Purdon had in his shop, he also dealt in ready-made clothing. The few other merchants who appear in the almshouse records also sold a variety of goods, but the almshouse had no single contractor for shoes or clothing.

The almshouse only rarely required outside tailoring assistance because, like textile weaving, garment production was already taking place inside. This production fell along gender lines, with tailors producing menswear (except shirts) while women under a “Matron” produced female clothing. While a few names appear as single entries alongside receipts of men’s clothing in the account books of the almshouse, one man appears with striking regularity in the first years of the nineteenth century: George Lowerman (or Lohrman). Few traces of Lowerman’s life survive elsewhere. He was born in 1750 in Philadelphia; in 1772 he managed two indentured boys, John Steward for seven years to learn the tailor’s trade and Gerlack Haas for five years as a servant.²⁷² In the 1780s and 1790s, Lowerman worked as a tailor on Second and Third Streets.²⁷³ Then, on December 30, 1800, he arrived at the almshouse, where the clerk included this entry in the “Daily Occurrence” docket:

²⁷² *American Genealogical-Biographical Index*. Godfrey Memorial Library, Middletown, CT, via Ancestry.com Library Edition, accessed 2/12/11. *Record of Indentures of Individuals Bound Out as Apprentices, Servants, Etc.* Mayor’s Office, Philadelphia, via Ancestry.com Library Edition, accessed 2/12/11.

²⁷³ George Lowerman was at 509 Second Street in *MacPherson’s Directory, for the City and Suburbs of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Francis Bailey, 1785). The other city directory for this year listed a George Loarmar as a shopkeeper on Third between Vine and Lombard. Francis White, *The Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Young, Stewart, and McCulloch 1785), 44. George Lohrman was listed as a “taylor” on Third Street in the 1793 and 1794 directories. James Hardie, *The Philadelphia Directory and*

Admitted George Lowerman of Legal residence, and formerly a reputable industrious Taylor but having of late years given himself up to hard drinking; is reduced to that situation which totally renders him unable to taking care, and providing for a livelihood, and is come here, in a naked and perishing condition. The Steward, as soon as he saw him, immediately ordered some cloaths to be given him.²⁷⁴

Lowerman never again appeared in the city directories, but he made regular appearances in the records of the almshouse.²⁷⁵ By April of 1801, barely four months after his arrival, an almshouse clerk was noting Lowerman's name alongside every batch of jackets, trousers, and vests received by the institution. The almshouse had apparently placed Lowerman, with his several decades of experience, in charge of the tailoring division of the House of Employment. Similarly, many other tailors arrived at the almshouse after time spent in one of the era's poorest trades, and the almshouse promptly put them to work in the largest manufactory of ready-made clothing in Philadelphia. Inside the workhouse, they creating garments for male inmates out of the lengths of textile woven and purchased by the almshouse as well as

Register (Philadelphia, Printed for the Author, 1793), 86, and *The Philadelphia Directory and Register* (Philadelphia, Printed for the Author, 1794), 92.

²⁷⁴ Guardians of the Poor, "Daily Occurrence Docket," 1800-1801 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.75, quoted in Billy Smith, ed., *Life in Early Philadelphia: Documents from the Revolutionary and Early National Periods* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 55.

²⁷⁵ While earlier entries list him as George Lowerman, in the 1803-1808 volume several different clerks spelled his name variously as Lorrimer, Lowreman, Lohaman, Loharman, and Lockerman. Guardians of the Poor, "Daily Receipts and Issues of Food and Supplies," 1803-1808 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.77

other materials, like the 2448 buttons delivered in the fall of 1802 alone.²⁷⁶ Like the work of slops-sellers, their products have been largely forgotten because they went to lower sort consumers, and institutionalized ones at that. However, unlike slops businesses, the records of the almshouse tailors survive with enough detail to reveal the rate of production and consumption of their goods.

Lowerman's clothing deliveries occurred at regular intervals, usually four to six times every month, although sometimes more. The clothing produced by the almshouse tailors included the basic garments worn by working men. Trousers were made of "cloth" (wool), linen, linsey, and jean, a fairly course twilled linen-cotton blend; jackets were most often wool but also sometimes linsey or linen.²⁷⁷ The tailors also produced vests and sometimes heavier coats. The clerks of the almshouse did not record material usage uniformly enough to indicate whether there was a seasonal aspect to textile use – for instance, whether linen trousers were more common in the summer and wool in the winter – but the climate of Philadelphia would have necessitated such accommodations. The two graphs below show the extent of garment production under George Lowerman for the two years with the most complete information, 1802 and 1803 (Figure 25). The few coats noted in the almshouse records are not included (nine in January, 1802; three in February, 1802; and one in February, 1803).

²⁷⁶ Guardians of the Poor, "Daily Receipts and Issues of Food and Supplies," 1801-1803 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.77.

²⁷⁷ Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, 271.

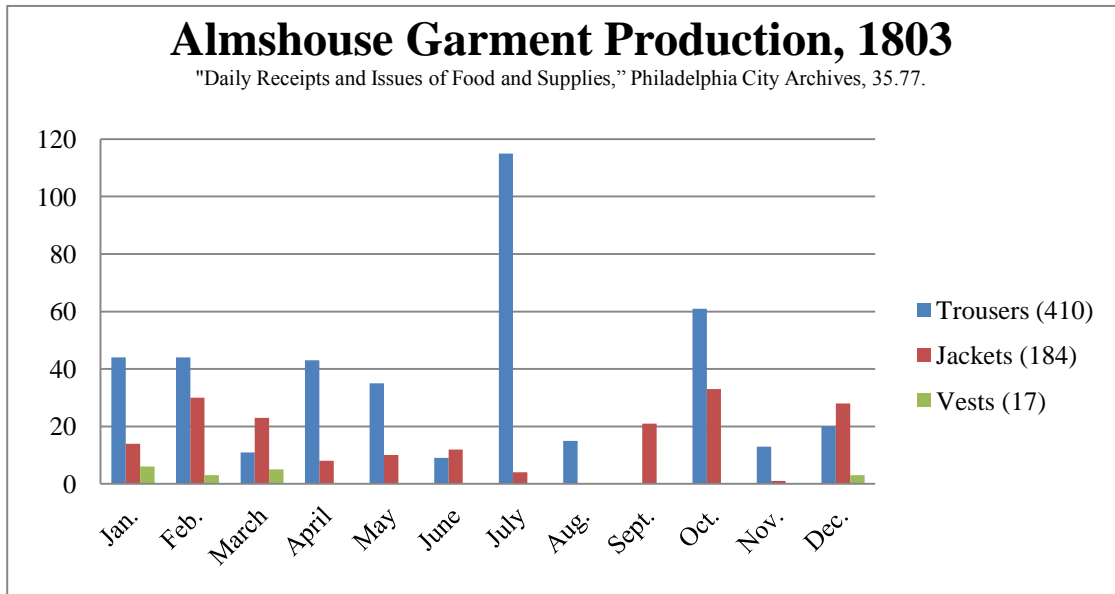
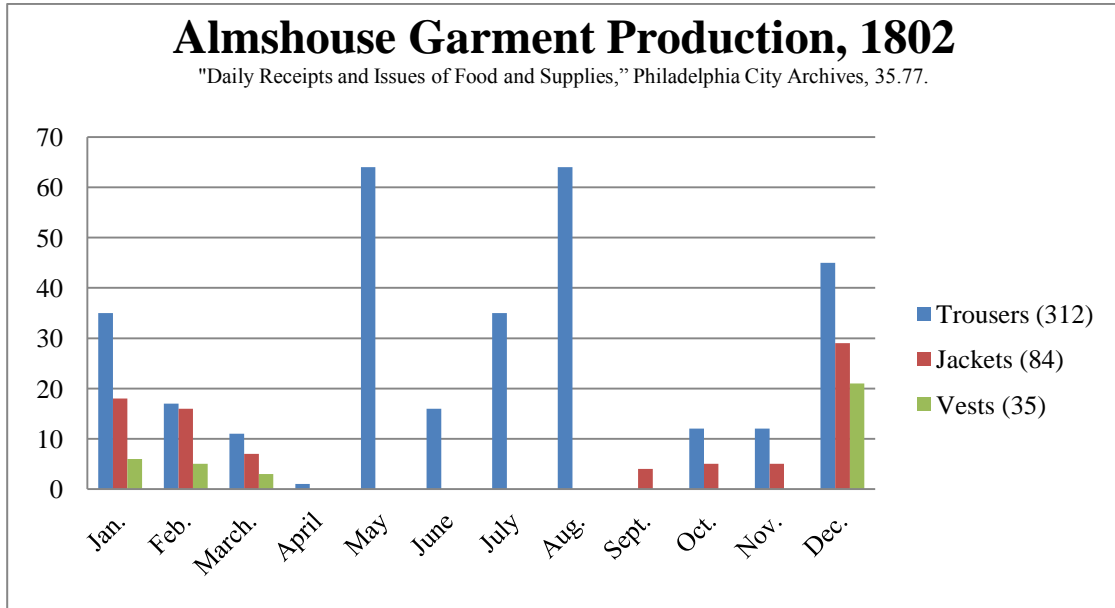


Figure 25: Graphs showing the seasonal production of garments in the Philadelphia almshouse, 1802 and 1803.

These graphs demonstrate not only the scale of ready-made clothing production in the almshouse, but also its seasonality. The tailors produced vests only in the winter months, from December through March. Both trouser and jacket numbers fluctuate, but in general they are inversely proportional. In summer, the almshouse tailors produced very few jackets and instead devoted their work to trousers. In other seasons, however, jacket production rose to meet the demand that resulted from colder weather and an influx of residents and, consequently, less time was devoted to trousers. This same trend occurred in the months of 1801 and 1804 for which records survive.²⁷⁸

Clothing Repair

Besides creating clothing, the almshouse tailors also repaired garments already in use, and this consumed a considerable amount of thread and other supplies. The laborers of Philadelphia, inside the almshouse and out, worked in occupations and environments that put much wear on their cloths, even those garments designed for durability. A variety of techniques helped combat this damage, including the practice of “turning,” wherein the individual pieces of a garment were detached, reversed, and reassembled. The resulting garment did not appear brand new, but turning prolonged its functionality and hid damages. In other cases, patching covered areas of extra damage, and this treatment appeared occasionally in runaway advertisements for servants and slaves. In 1779, a Virginia sailor-slave named Conner absconded from

²⁷⁸ Guardians of the Poor, “Daily Receipts and Issues of Food and Supplies,” 1801-1808 volumes, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.77.

the *Jean* wearing a “long trousers with one pocket, [and] a thick blue sea jacket patched with canvass.”²⁷⁹

A few surviving garments reveal patching practices. Much of the sailors’ clothing of the *General Carleton* features repairs and reinforcements. Another example of repair work is a small pair of leather breeches at the Chester County Historical Society (Figure 26). These breeches probably passed through several wearers, perhaps from master to servant, as boys outgrew them. The original maker carefully set in a small round patch to cover the fatal bullet hole in the hide. On the inner thigh, a rectangular reinforcement was inserted in the same manner as the breeches were constructed, with the seam allowance facing the outside. Later repairers were hasty, using pieces of leather whip-stitched in place behind holes and tears. Like the boys who wore these breeches, laboring men placed regular stress on their garments, and simple wear and tear would have put clothing beyond use on a regular basis. In the almshouse, these men continued to consume clothing and required new garments at a constant rate.

²⁷⁹ Advertisement, *The Virginia Gazette*, June 12, 1779.



Figure 26: Boy’s leather breeches and detail of a crude patch. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA.

Non-tailors among Philadelphia’s working men could also be competent with a needle and thread when necessary, able to repair and even make some clothing for themselves. This was a skill especially common among men who had spent time at sea. On some ships, a half day, “Rope Yarn Sunday,” was set aside every week for the crew to make and repair garments.²⁸⁰ Writing about his time on the Royal Navy frigate *Unité* between 1805 and 1808, Robert Mercer Wilson explained:

²⁸⁰ Admiral Sir Gerald Dickens, *The Dress of the British Sailor* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1957), 7. Harold D. Langley, curator emeritus of naval history at the Smithsonian Institution, has not encountered this term and doubts its widespread usage, email message to the author, March 31, 2011.

Every sailor knows a little about his needle though, and can cut clothes, particularly trousers. It's curious to see a tar lay hold of a piece of fine white linen (to make himself a go-ashore shirt, as he terms it) and a black cinder and mark where he wishes to cut the linen. Then, after he has cut out the body, sleeves, cuffs, gussets, collar, etc., to see him take into his hand, that's like unto a shoulder of mutton, a fine small needle and sew away, and that not slow. I say it is in a manner surprising, and you could not but give him credit when he has finished his shirt.²⁸¹

This was not artful tailoring by any means. Sailors marked their linen with a cinder and used no patterns or draping techniques; seamstresses meticulously pulled threads out of a length of linen to mark a straight line. Wilson saw sailors making shirts, an unusual occurrence because, unlike other men's garments, shirts were usually the sole province of seamstresses, who made thousands of them for ready-made sales. In the almshouse, women sewed shirts while men made trousers and jackets. But clearly some men of the lower sort had skill enough to create their own garments. They simply cut out memorized shapes, many of which were simple, like the series of rectangles required for a man's shirt. Sailors' and workers' trousers fit loosely and were hemmed at a variety of lengths; an approximate waist size was all that was needed to draft a rough pattern onto cloth. The end result of this sort of production would have been recognizable as made by the male wearer, but this may have added to its value as a signifier of social status and occupation. Like the petticoat breeches fragments from the *General Carleton*, a pair of canvas trousers recovered from the 1758 wreck of the British warship HMS *Invincible* feature outside seams sewn with

²⁸¹ Robert Mercer Wilson, "Remarks on Board His Majesty's Ship *Unité* of 40 Guns," in *Five Naval Journals 1789-1817*, ed. H.G. Thursfield (London: The Navy Records Society, 1951), 257.

long and sturdy whip stitches like those used in sail construction.²⁸² The elaborately-embroidered sailors' smocks and sea bags from later in the nineteenth century, and the artifacts from HMS *De Braak* discussed above, demonstrate that sailors often crafted special wardrobes for their port excursions. The choices they made in these wardrobes demonstrate their fashion agency. The same was true in a different way among laborers, who also made colorful statements with items like ribbons and kerchiefs. These men recognized each other – and thus found solidarity and respect – by noticing clothing. The same was true in the almshouse, where men received clothing from the institution but also used it as a mark of their free laboring identities.

Providing Clothing to Almshouse Residents

After the tailors produced their batches of jackets, trousers, and vests, the almshouse was ready to distribute these garments, along with any they purchased or received as donations, to inmates. While women and a few men in the almshouse sometimes received uncut textiles with which they could make their own clothing to supplement issuances, the majority of male residents received issuances of finished garments. Some of this clothing was secondhand, received as donations to the almshouse from the city's better off, like the "Old vest" listed as without any value and issued to Joseph Hunt on November 20, 1806, the "Second hand Hat" (also without value) issued to John Schriver on September 3, 1807, or the "Coatee – worn"

²⁸² James P. McGuane, *Heart of Oak: A Sailor's Life in Nelson's Navy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 86-87.

issued to Ebenezer Massey on October 15, 1812.²⁸³ Most of the clothing given to inmates, however, consisted of newly-made garments.

The demand for clothing in the almshouse, like that for shoes, was substantial, and reflected a seasonal influx of new residents in the fall and a general exodus in the spring. Between March 25, 1801 and March 25, 1802, incomplete records indicate that the almshouse issued at least 140 pairs of wool trousers, 312 pairs of linen trousers, and 301 pairs of men's shoes. In the same period in 1802-1803, records survive for the issuance of 403 pairs of trousers, 523 shirts, 35 vests, 134 jackets, and 366 pairs of men's shoes.²⁸⁴ A few years later demand was still growing, and in eighteenth months between July, 1805, and the end of 1806 the almshouse issued 602 pairs of trousers, one pair of drawers, 804 shirts, 64 vests, 374 jackets, four coatees, 577 pairs of men's shoes, and hundreds of pairs of stockings.²⁸⁵ Much of this clothing was produced inside the almshouse, with the tailors laboring to keep up with demand for outerwear while seamstresses sewed shirts along with women's shifts. In 1808, the Guardians organized the production of frame-knit stockings for both inmate use and institutional profit.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Guardians of the Poor, "Clothing Issues Ledger," 1805-1814 men's volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.81.

²⁸⁴ Guardians of the Poor, "Weekly Receipts and Issues of Food and Supplies," April 1801-March 1804 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.78.

²⁸⁵ Guardians of the Poor, "Weekly Receipts and Issues of Food and Supplies," May 1805-November 1808 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.78.

²⁸⁶ Shelton, *Mills of Manayunk*, 40.

The standard wardrobe of a man in the almshouse was similar to the clothing he wore outside of the institution. Upon arrival, most men received a new shirt, new trousers, and a jacket suited to the season. Coats, coatees, and a “Surtout coat” appear with much less frequency than jackets.²⁸⁷ The almshouse even provided a few other essentials when supplies and funds allowed; Samuel Hopps received a pair of spectacles along with his new clothing on January 4, 1810. Other men received the garments needed for work, like John Urquart, who received a “Frock [large overshirt] & Apron” on June 4th, 1807. For elderly or infirm men, there were extra issues of warm clothing.²⁸⁸

Some almshouse residents only stayed for brief periods, long enough to collect a new wardrobe, and promptly left. Others were permanent fixtures in the almshouse, and their rates of clothing consumption provides an interesting case study. However, even those men who appear for years in the almshouse records did not use clothing at a constant rate. For instance, from the beginning of 1805 to the middle of 1813, George Taverner received only one jacket, three vests, eight pairs of trousers, seven shirts, three pairs of stockings, and four pairs of shoes.²⁸⁹ Taverner’s relatively low rate of consumption suggests he either had an outside source of clothing or was

²⁸⁷ The surtout was issued to Jonathan Dilworth on October 16, 1806. Guardians of the Poor, “Clothing Issues Ledger,” 1805-1814 men’s volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.81.

²⁸⁸ Guardians of the Poor, “Clothing Issues Ledger,” 1805-1814 men’s volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.81.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

one of the “autumnal customers” who only spent a few months of the year in the almshouse.

Other men relied entirely on the almshouse for their garments, and their issuances represent just how long the lower sort could wear their clothing and shoes before these items became insufficient. Between April, 1807, and February, 1813, William Ross, a “Marriner,” received six jackets, four vests, ten pairs of trousers, twelve shirts, four pairs of stockings, six pairs of shoes, and one “suit of old clothes.” In the same six years, John Mead collected five jackets, two vests, twelve pairs of trousers, eleven shirts, five pairs of stockings, ten pairs of shoes, four aprons, and one hat. It would be easy to use such figures alone to determine how quickly working men used clothing. But these numbers hide the fluctuations in almshouse issuances that occurred in the case of most inmates. For instance, in 1807 Ross received three jackets, one vest, four pairs of trousers, two shirts, and two pairs of shoes, but in 1813 the almshouse issued him only two shirts and a pair of stockings. After several years, Ross had apparently become independent enough that he required little clothing from the institution, possibly evidence that the almshouse was successful, on an individual level, at reforming their charges and imbuing them with self-sufficiency. Other men were anomalies, and they needed much more clothing than the typical resident. Daniel Dougherty, in only two years between February, 1805, and February, 1807, received seven jackets, seven pairs of trousers, four shirts, four pairs of stockings, eight pairs of shoes, and two hats, not to mention short lengths of textiles for shirts.²⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ Guardians of the Poor, “Clothing Issues Ledger,” 1805-1814 men’s volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.81.

Despite these outliers, it is still possible to discern a typical rate of clothing use among men in the almshouse. The average male resident required at least one jacket, two pairs of trousers, two shirts, one pair of stockings, one pair of shoes, and one vest every year. Around 1810, the minimum wardrobe for an almshouse male cost at least \$12, not including repairs, washing, and accidental loss or damage. This included the following costs: jacket: \$2-3, trousers: \$1.50-2; shirt: \$1.50; stockings: \$1; shoes: \$1.25; vest \$1.5-2.²⁹¹ In this same period, a laborer in Philadelphia earned around \$1 per day while seamen sailing out of the city might expect \$20-\$25 per month.²⁹² Clothing cost more on the open market than it did in the almshouse, and many of the lower sort were sporadically unemployed, so the cost of clothing was higher than the 3-5% of an annual income that these figures suggest. However, the relatively low cost of some clothing compared to wages in this period allowed men to purchase more clothing than simply that required for warmth and survival and thus make aesthetic statements that displayed identity and group membership. In fact, \$12 was something of a pittance compared to what a wealthy or even middling-sort man

²⁹¹ Guardians of the Poor, "Clothing Issues Ledger," 1805-1814 men's volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.81.

²⁹² Donald R. Adams, Jr., "Wage Rates in the Early National Period: Philadelphia, 1785-1830," *The Journal of Economic History* 28:3 (Sept. 1968), 406 and 422. An early government study includes the same rate for day laborers but cites instances of sailors making only \$10-17 per month. United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, *History of Wages in the United States from Colonial Times to 1928* (1934, repr., Detroit: Gale Research Company republication, 1966), 98 and 138. For a broader view of real wages, see Paul A. David and Peter Solar, "A Bicentenary Contribution to the History of the Cost of Living in America," *Research in Economic History* 2 (1977), 1-80.

paid for his bespoke clothing. In 1807, Philadelphia gentleman Robert J. Evans paid \$30.75 for a coat, vest, and pantaloons, which was slightly less than he usually paid for a month of room, board, and washing. In 1810, he spent \$9 on a pair of boots.²⁹³

One of the problems the almshouse faced after it issued these wardrobes to new residents was insuring they remained in the institution. Escape and recidivism were constant problems, and clothing was a contributing factor in attracting men who sought to take advantage of charity. Hugh O'Hara arrived at the almshouse on December 30, 1788, "in a very wretched condition, with disease & Rags, Winter'd here got cured & cloathed, and went off in the Spring... & immediately Sold most of his Cloathing and soon drank the whole they produced." By November of 1789, he was back, "now Wretchedly Naked & badly diseased, as before." Barely a month later, the clerk noted cynically that O'Hara, having been "cured & Cloathed & now very Hearty – is according to Custom ran off."²⁹⁴ Such cases were common in the almshouse, where staff members came to expect that some new residents would abscond with their new clothes.

O'Hara was not unique among almshouse residents in selling this clothing, either. In fact, much of Philadelphia's lower sort relied on a network of cast-off clothing dealers to both sell and purchase clothing. Some of these businesses dealt directly in used clothing, selling wearable garments to the urban poor and rags to

²⁹³ Robert J. Evans receipt book, 1807-1828, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Manuscript Collection 684, Series 1(c).

²⁹⁴ Guardians of the Poor, "Daily Occurrence Docket," 1787-1790 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.75.

paper manufacturers.²⁹⁵ Other businesses were essentially pawnbrokers, both purchasing used clothing and holding it as collateral against small loans. Pawnbroking did not nominally appear in America until around 1800 but such businesses had operated in Europe for centuries. Contrary to popular belief, they were not usually fronts for stolen goods.²⁹⁶ Rather, most pawnbrokers operated legally, offering short-term loans to customers, many of whom had little besides clothing to offer as collateral. The daybook of George Fettes, who operated a pawnshop in York, England, in the 1770s, reveals that 75% of pawned items were garments of one kind or another.²⁹⁷ Many of Fettes's patrons pawned and redeemed the same item repeatedly as they needed ready money. John Thompson, for instance, pawned his leather breeches thirty-one times, often for periods of less than a week.²⁹⁸ In America as well, the earliest surviving records, dating to the 1820s, indicate that clothing was also the most frequently-pawned class of material.²⁹⁹ Jews, long associated with money-lending, soon became the target of popular scorn as the operators of both pawnshops

²⁹⁵ An interesting product of the English used clothing trade was the "it narrative" (a genre of fiction where an object narrates a story) *The Adventures of a Black Coat*. (Dublin: Robert Bell, 1762).

²⁹⁶ Wendy Woloson dates the first appearance of American pawnshops to New York in this period, *In Hock: Pawning in America from Independence through the Great Depression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 56.

²⁹⁷ Alison Ruth Backhouse, *The Worm-Eaten Waistcoat* (York, UK: A. R. Backhouse, 2003), 25.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁹⁹ Woloson, *In Hock*, 100.

and used clothing businesses. In fact, the anti-Semitic conception of both of these businesses was false; while Jews were more common in these trades than other occupations, in neither business did they constitute a majority (Figure 27).³⁰⁰



Figure 27: An undated, ca. 1800 British caricature of a Jewish clothing dealer. Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera, Collection 463.

³⁰⁰ See Lemire, *Dress, Culture, and Commerce*, 75-94, and Woloson, *In Hock*.

The used clothing trade also attracted other minorities in America's cities. Some free African Americans operated cast-off clothing stores on the fringes of the urban environment and offered an essential service to the lower sort. Like peddlers in the countryside, these men served as carriers of valuable and sometimes inflammatory information. David Walker, a used clothing dealer in Boston, used his connections to distribute his abolitionist pamphlet *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* beginning in 1829.³⁰¹ Mariners carried copies of his pamphlet into Southern ports, but an old story about Walker sewing the book into clothing is probably apocryphal.³⁰² Regardless of their owner's other agendas, however, these businesses provided another option for poor urban workers when it came to finding acceptable and even fashionable clothing. Depictions of "rag fairs" and used clothing shops in England show that, like slop shops, they boldly displayed their wares (Figure 28).

³⁰¹ Peter Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 66-68.

³⁰² Peter Hinks, email message to author, March 7, 2011.



Figure 28: This 1811 satire by Thomas Rowlandson shows a bustling port scene and a dealer of cast-off clothing on the left. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (814.0.2.2).

Almshouse Inmate Wardrobes

The almshouse clerks rarely offered descriptive phrases about the clothing they provided inmates, with a few notable exceptions. Jacob Palmer received a “Cotton Stripe Jacket” on August 4, 1808. Other garments were made of jean, including trousers, breeches, and an “Outside Coat.” On August 13, 1807, Richard West collected an “Inside Jacket,” and on March 24, 1808, John Warner received a pair of trousers described as “finer than Common.” Sometimes men received

exceptional garments. On July 14, 1808, Robert Willey received a “dress Or Loose Gown India Callico” worth \$5.00, more than any other item the almshouse ever issued him. On June 29, 1810, Henry Zantzinger received a “Callico frock coat.”³⁰³ Garments like these were almost certainly the result of donations by Philadelphia’s wealthier citizens. Banyans, like Willey’s “Loose Gown,” were a popular option for elite men, who wore them at home as a casual statement of refinement and intelligence (Figure 29). In the almshouse, such a garment was both a comfort and an item of pride for its wearer.

³⁰³ The examples in this paragraph are from Guardians of the Poor, “Clothing Issues Ledger,” 1805-1814 men’s volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.81.



Figure 29: This British satire by Roberts from around 1800 shows both the common sailor's attire and a calico banyan worn by the miniaturist. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (807.1.1.3).

The result of all the tailoring work and distribution of clothing in the almshouse was a complex variety of garments and a network of wardrobes that combined some free choice with institutional authority. There is no evidence that the almshouse issued any sort of uniform. Instead, the clothing they provided male residents was identical in construction and material to the clothing of free working

men. The issuance records make it difficult to determine just how much clothing any man owned, but another ledger clarifies this question.

Between 1811 and 1818, an almshouse clerk recorded the estates of inmates who died in the institution, and these inventories reveal the variety and non-uniformity of clothing among almshouse residents. The garments they wore were like those of the broader population; they had coats, coatees, roundabouts, round jackets, and pea jackets made of wool, flannel, linen, and nankeen. The men of the almshouse sometimes had breeches or pantaloons, but usually they wore loose trousers. Working men adopted trousers, like jackets, decades before the better sort. To German traveler Gottlieb Mittelberger, trousers seemed unusually common in Pennsylvania when he visited in the early 1750s.³⁰⁴ In 1765, the governor of Massachusetts remarked that among the mob protesting the Stamp Act “some fifty gentlemen actors were disguised with trowsers and jackets.”³⁰⁵ Some workers continued to wear breeches well into the nineteenth century and others adopted tighter-fitting pantaloons or overalls. But trousers, which allowed for flexibility in the rigging of a ship or while working along the docks, remained the mainstay of the lower sort, both inside and outside the almshouse.

Most often, the estates of Philadelphia’s almshouse inmates consisted of clothing and little else. A few men treasured the only papers that legitimized their various social statuses. John Tinney had a “Pocket Book with his paper of

³⁰⁴ Gottlieb Mittelberger, *Journey to Pennsylvania*, Oscar Handlin and John Clive, ed. and trans. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 89.

³⁰⁵ Governor Bernard quoted in Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 21.

manumission,” one of the few suggestions that the almshouse was racially integrated. Michael Burney had an “old ragged Pocket Book with two papers citizens oath W.S. & certificate of his being a Soap Boiler &c,” and Joseph Sheldon died with two lottery tickets in his pocketbook. Other men had a few pieces of non-clothing property. James Melanafy owned two sets of clothes and a wooden leg; some had a few books or small tools like a thimble or a pocket knife. John Carey had, among other things, twelve “profile frames” and a silver watch. John F. Sluke carried two razors, two combs, and a shaving box. A few men had spectacles, Michael Naylor had a “breast pin,” and John Beaumi had a silver-mounted walking cane.³⁰⁶

Often, the men who died in the almshouse owned nothing but clothing. Many, especially those recently arrived, had little else besides rags: James Biers’s “old clothes, lousey & worn,” John Saltburgh’s “old clothes destroy’d,” John Buchley’s “old Bag with old worn clothes,” and Peter Rosenberg’s “Chest containing old worn out clothes”³⁰⁷ Most, however, had at least a basic wardrobe. Jonathan Childs was typical: when he died on October 12th, 1815, he owned a pair of trousers, a shirt, a round jacket, a vest, a pair of shoes, and a straw hat.³⁰⁸ Others had several sets of clothing; a few owned an exceptional amount. George Blackwell had “two Trunks of Cloaths containing Sundry Articles.” In between the two extremes was the typical almshouse male inmate, like these five examples:

³⁰⁶ These examples all come from *Guardians of the Poor, “Inmates’ Property at Death,”* 1811-1818 volume, Philadelphia City Archives, 35.120.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Thomas Walker, died 24 Octr 1811. 1 great coat, 1 Jean coat, 2 Roundabouts, 2 pr trowsers, 1 vest, 1 shirt, stockings, 1 Hatt, 1 handkerchief, 1 pair Bootlegs, & 1 pair Shoes.

Albert Crouse, 7th December 1813. 1 Pea Jacket, 1 Red Flannel shirt, 2 Vests, 1 pair Breeches, 1 pair shoes, 1 Bag.

Ferdinand Junis Dennis, 1st October 1814. 1 Hat, 1 pair shoes, 1 Blue Coatee, 1 vest, 3 hkhfs, 1 pair stockgs, 1 inside Nankeen Jacket, 1 Check Shirt, 1 White shirt, 2 pr nankeen Pantaloons, 1 Pocket knife, Cash 4 cents, 1 prayer Book.

James Boyly 15th October 1814. 2 Yellow Bandana hkhf, 1 Blue Coatee, 1 Hat, 2 pair shoes, 1 pr worsted stockgs, 4 shirts, 2 Vests, 2 pair pantaloons.

Alexr. Rogers, 2d March 1815. 1 Shawl, 1 hat, 2 pr shoes, 2 pr stockings, 1 pair socks, 1 great coat, 2 Coatees, 1 Vest, 1 Wd. Cloak, 1 pr Breeches, 1 pocket book, 1 pair nankeen pantaloons, 1 Vest.³⁰⁹

Men like Thomas Walker, Albert Crouse, Ferdinand Junis Dennis, James Boyly, and Alexander Rogers were not dressed simply in rags. In fact, the almshouse and their own past purchases outfitted them with comfortable and variable wardrobes. Walker was ready for winter with his heavy coats. Crouse had a red flannel shirt but wore breeches instead of trousers. Dennis had spent the summer of 1814 wearing a light outfit of nankeen jacket and pantaloons. Boyly had several changes of clothing and two yellow handkerchiefs. Rogers died with his winter wardrobe.

These inventories also suggest the distinct seasonality of almshouse wardrobes. Just as the time of year affected the labor market of Philadelphia, it also affected the dress of the laboring man. Great coats, overcoats, and watch cloaks appeared regularly in their inventories, as did other garments that men wore in layers

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

to protect themselves from the cold.³¹⁰ Michael Slessman had, among other clothing, vests, a coatee, a coat, and an overcoat, all of which he could wear at once in harsh weather. James Mervin had a “wool hat” and Robert Ellis owned a pair of mittens.³¹¹ When they lacked adequate winter clothing, Philadelphia’s lower sort adapted their garments to suit the weather. Like the sailors on the *General Carleton*, many probably added impromptu linings to their clothing, cabbaged from whatever other textiles they could find.

In fact, for the previous two centuries, European-Americans had been adapting their clothes to suit new climates and environments. In the eighteenth century, traders with the Hudson’s Bay Company combined European and Native American dress to withstand harsh winters. In the 1950s, Canadian archaeologists discovered a sleeved waistcoat or jacket and a single wool legging in the rubble of the northeast bastion (a carpenter’s shop) of Fort Prince of Wales, on the western edge of Hudson’s Bay.³¹² The jacket dates to sometime before the fort’s partial destruction in 1782, and its construction and cut indicate that it may have belonged to a poor worker coping with the North American climate. Coarsely-woven, madder-dyed wool forms the body of the jacket, while the lining consists of twill-woven beige wool. The maker

³¹⁰ An interesting study of men’s layering garments is Linda Baumgarten, “Under Waistcoats and Drawers,” *Dress* 19 (1992), 5-16.

³¹¹ *Ibid.* Interesting knit wool caps were recovered from both HMS *De Braak* and the *General Carlton*.

³¹² Jennifer Hamilton, Collections Archaeologist, Parks Canada, email message to the author, October 20, 2010.

constructed this garment with large but sturdy stitches, much like other examples of common clothing.³¹³

The same sailors and laborers who came up with clever ways of combating the cold in Philadelphia and elsewhere in the Atlantic world made other, more aesthetic, clothing choices. In both summer and winter, Philadelphia's lower sort men favored checked shirts like the one Ferdinand Dennis had when he died in the almshouse. Like trousers and jackets, checked shirts became symbolic of working men early in the eighteenth century. In 1748, one regiment of the Pennsylvania Associators militia carried a banner to promote unity across social levels that bore "Three Arms, wearing different Linnen, plain, ruffled, and chequed, the Hands joined by grasping each the other's Wrist."³¹⁴ In England, checked shirts were so associated with sea service that a laborer wearing one might be in danger of impressment into the navy.³¹⁵ In many ways, the blue-and-white checked shirt was a badge of the lower sort, and while it was only one step above the unbleached osnaburg that many servants and slaves wore, it was an important mark of their social standing and membership in an occupational and social group. This continued after they arrived in the almshouse.

The records of the Philadelphia almshouse reflect the complex network of production, distribution, and consumption managed by the Guardians of the Poor as

³¹³ Francis Back, "Winter Trader's Dress in Eighteenth-Century Hudson Bay," *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly* 40:4 (Winter 2004): 4-6.

³¹⁴ "PHILADELPHIA, January 12," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 12, 1748.

³¹⁵ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (1986, repr., New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 64.

they clothed some of the city's lower sort. Unlike other institutions, especially later in the nineteenth century, the almshouse did not use clothing as a tool to reform prisoners. Unlike uniforms, the clothing sewn and issued in the almshouse did not reinforce institutional control or propose alterations in behavior. Men there wore varied trousers and jackets, checked shirts, and sturdy shoes. Their choices were restricted, and their clothing did not represent personal aesthetics. However, they still looked like the lower sort. By providing clothing indistinguishable from common dress, the almshouse allowed these men to maintain their free, unreformed identities. This encouraged them to abandon the almshouse when convenient. And when they did, it was with a new wardrobe that blended with the clothing of Philadelphia's lower sort.

CONCLUSION

Clothing represents cultural patterns as diverse as social relations, labor, consumption, commerce, gender, and ethnicity. What Philadelphia's poor men wore and what these garments said about them is only a small part of the world of clothing in early America. This thesis contributes to discussions of the origin and imitation of fashionable dress and the "democratization" of style by illuminating unique networks of clothing production, consumption, and fashion. Documentary and material evidence demonstrate that the clothing of Philadelphia's poor men was neither an imitation of high fashion nor a simple and unremarkable product of poverty and occupational needs. Instead, their dress was colorful and complex, and it displayed personal taste and group identity.

Slop shops and slops-sellers are one example of a system through which the lower sort acquired clothing. Slop clothing defined the sailors and laborers of Philadelphia and elsewhere in the Atlantic world, and slop shops were an important part of the network of businesses that supported the labor of international commerce. These shops provided men with a variety of clothing options, and the production and sale of slops demonstrated the agency of both slops-sellers and their patrons. Slops-sellers used their shops as a sales tool, a tactic that was the ancestor of a now-pervasive system; Americans today purchase almost all their clothing from stores that resemble slop shops, not bespoke tailors.

The Philadelphia almshouse was the refuge of some of the city's poor, and it was there that they found shelter and clothing. But these men did not wear plain uniforms; instead, the institution supplied them with garments of various textiles and types. Examining what inmates wore illuminates the dress of the working poor because, despite their institutionalization, their clothing was identical to that of men outside the almshouse. Even when they did not choose their clothing, Philadelphia's poor men were able to wear their identities on their sleeves.

This thesis examined only two aspects of the complicated network of clothing supply and consumption among the lower sort. Poor women's clothing represented distinct patterns of production and use, and deserves equal attention. Other relevant systems merit further study, such as the theft of clothing for profit, the used clothing market, rag-picking and clothing recycling, apprentice clothing and occupational variations in dress, and the regional distinctions between urban and rural clothing. These various subjects will contribute to a growing understanding of the nuances of common fashions.

In Philadelphia and elsewhere in early America, the wealthy, the middling, and the poor recognized and judged each other based on their clothes. But the men of the lower sort did not mindlessly imitate the elite, and they were not careless in their appearance. They combined colorful garments into complex wardrobes, responding to a system of aesthetics unique to their social level. With few other tools at their disposal, poor men used clothing to mark themselves as individuals and members of social and occupational groups. They were not the inarticulate; they said things with their clothes.

Appendix A:

PHILADELPHIA TAILOR AND SEAMSTRESS LOCATIONS IN 1800

The following information is from *The New Trade Directory for Philadelphia*, published at the end of 1799. This volume lists the residents of Philadelphia by trade, and I have reorganized the alphabetical entries under “Tailors and Tayloresses” and “Seamstresses” (marked here with an S) by street location.³¹⁶ Note that most outwork seamstresses were probably never listed in the directories. The first twelve streets run north-south, from Water Street on the Delaware River to Tenth Street, and I list the addresses on these streets from north to south. Next, I list eleven east-west streets, from Callowhill in the north to Swanson in the south, with addresses listed from east to west. Finally, I list alleys and other minor streets with only a few entries alphabetically by street. Where tailors and seamstresses were given two addresses, I list them at each address. I list corner addresses by the first street in the directory (i.e. Water and Fourth is listed under Water). Where a street number was not given, I list the resident at the end of the street list, unless it was clear where he or she fit within the spatial organization.

³¹⁶ *The New Trade Directory, for Philadelphia, Anno 1800* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Author, 1799), 172-181 (tailors and tailoresses) and 151-153 (seamstresses).

North-South Streets:

Water Street

North Water Near Vine, Henry Leech
190 North, Fireing
188 North, James Weekam
168 North, John Case
160 North, Bernard Seip (and 165 north Front)
130 North, Christian Bosby
124 North, George Swartz
124 North, Peter Witner
122 North, John Jones
120 North, John Hynemon
108 North, James Childs
94 North, Ann Richardson (S)
Opposite 79 North, John Campbell
74 North, Heister Brown
74 North, John Miller
63 North, Taylor and Derrick
50 North, Jacob Gilbert
36 North, David Pimple
34 North, John Levizey
33 North, John Campbell
28 North, Gilbert Copperthwaite
28 North, Thomas Hartley
26 North, William Flinn
24 North, Daniel Eltell
24 North, Daniel Elston (probably the same as above)
16 North, William Hemble
14 North, John Stroup
12 North, Reuben Brown
12 North, Paul Brown
10 North, Alexander Anderson
8 North, George Chambers
6 North, Clevanger
1 North, Nathan Eyre
1 South, Mary Hyberger
2 South, Pilman & Curtes
13 South, Daniel Brown
14 South, William Wisdom
18 South, Edwards, Jacob (and 157 Arch)
20, Thomas Dobbins (and 21 South Front)
22 South, Thomas Wallace
23 South, William Hamilton
24 South, Frederick Dick
26 South, Philip Dick
28 South, Isaac Alrick

28 South, Daniel McArthur
36 South, Peter Kraft
38 South, Philip Mitner
43 South, George Peter (and 157 North Third)
48 South, Jared Sexton (and 14 Elfriths Alley)
49 South, Michael Slaceman
51 South, John Phillips
53 South, James Pollock
54 South, William Sherer
56 South, Fortune and Farmar
57 South, Amos Bunting
57 South, Loudenflager and Hameltone
60 South, David Thompson
68 South, Frederick Gilbert
73 South, Robert Killough
75 South, Alexander Gillaspy
76 South Souderslager & Hamilton (probably the same as 57)
77 South, John Taney
78 South, John Purves & Son
79 South, William Huchel
91 South, Job Cragehead
92 South, Charles Steward
92 South, William Williams
98 South, Aaron Bohan (and 8 Strawberry)
102 South, Wood and Hopper
113 South, George Wall
117 South, Gahiel Kern
131 South, John McQuilkin
131 South, William Mooney
141 South, Henry Fenner
174 South, John Barnhart
178 South, Dennis Doyle
206 South, James Barker
Near Pine, William Vanneman

Front Street

448 North, Elizabeth Montgomery (S)
423 North, John Cline
413 North, Robert Thomas
364 North, Daniel McNulty
345 North, Hugh Boyle
342 North, Sarah Warthington (S)
320 North, Benjamin Free
280 North, Samuel Thomas
193 North, Elizabeth Downey (S)
183 North, John Hyde
165 North, Bernard Seip (and 160 North Water)
108 North, Paul Chierdel
108 North, Paul Shrouller

48 North, Joseph Cooper
22 North, Samuel Ratcliffe
21 South, Thomas Dobbins (and 20 Water)
40 South, John Stille senior
51 South, John Lodur
69 South, Peter Dick
77 South, William G. Bell
85 South, William Smiley
105 South, Gilber Carrell
143 South, Peter Maloney
161 South, William O'Brian
177 South, Patrick Taggart
189 South, David De Barrholt
196 South, William Wainwright
245 South, Nathaniel Stockley
282 South, Martha Dodds (S)
290 South, Lewis Meyers
291 South, James Hutchinson
344 South, Margaret Melley (S)
409 South, Catharine Parkes (S)
423 South, Isabella Colwell (S)
Back of 423 South, Margaret Davis (S)
490 South, Christopher Merteos

Second Street

475 North, Tobitha Himis (S)
435 North, John Conrad
393 North, Andrew Young
386 North, John Mintzer
370 North, Jacob Swab
366 North, Simon Shergard
334 North, Geoge Mintzer
326 North, Isaac T. Hopper
273 North, Hester Stouse (S)
193 North, Joseph Peter
190 North, Caleb Hughes
157 North, George Peter (and 43 Water)
149 North, George Cook
137 North, Christian Hensman
129 North, Simon Masson
107 North, John Troubat
76 North, Joseph Wilds
7 North, William Davis
15 South, James Alexander
77 South, M. Calderwood
87 South, Thomas Billington
87 South, Thomas will
94 South, John Gover
99 South, Robert Brobston

112 South, Jeffe Maddock
122 South, Thomas Veazy
181 South, John Bonfall
207 South, Leonard Brown
271 South, McKay
310 South, Thomas Donaghain
Back of 357 South, Rebecca Barber (S)
Back of 376 South, Elizabeth Gardner (S)
428 South, Ann Vanderson (S)
Corner of [blank] and Second, Titus Own
Between Chesnut and Walnut, Abner Bartleson
Between German and Catharine in South Second, Crodus Colwel

Strawberry Street

3, Alexander Phillips
8, Aaron Bohan (and 98 South Water)
17, Frederick Bysfield
17, John Wheeler,
19, David Brooks

Third Street

419 North, Elizabeth Fairy (S)
393 North, Mary Hookey
365 North, Christian Sockart
313 North, Joseph Sanders
299 North, Rebecca Austin (S)
205 North, Conrad Whickerly
91 North, Powell & Trump
87 North, Samuel Tatem
82 North, Henry Townsend
55 North, Englebut
29 North, Edward Scott
11 North, Justian Fox
9 South, William McKeever
31 South, Lewis Howard
31 South, Frouitize
38 South, Abraham and Benjamin Hilyard
55 and 57 South, Benjamin Sharp
72 South, Thomas Harrison
78 South, William Smith
86 South, John Bleyler
87 South, Elizabeth Forsyth (S)
146 South, Griffith
215 South, Alexander Graham
220 South, Christopher Smedley
226 South, Hugh Morrison
231 South, Caleb Griffith
245 South, John Walter Michael
259 South, Francis Robins

Near South in South Third, Walter Graham
Corner of Third and Green St., John Magnus
Near German in South, Mary Depang (S)
Between German and Plumb, John Mervine
Corner of Third and Chesnut, Samuel Reynolds
Corner of Third and Queen, Samuel Rice.

Fourth Street

54 North, Joseph Eliston
29 North, Frederick Greiner
26 North, George Smith
Near Vine in North Fourth, Joseph Hallowell
3 South, James McAlpin
27 South, Jacob Thomas
30 South, Dobbins and Roberts
65 South, Jacob Earnet
134 South, John Napier
138 South, George Beck
142 South, Nathaniel Collorn
146 South, Samuel Axford
208 South, Charles Mulvey

Fifth Street

89 North, Edward Graham
50 North, Henry Lawer
10 North, Philip Derrick
6 South, William Davis
41 South, Samuel Tomkins
Near 44 South, James Phillips
49 South, Philip Ellick
Corner of Fifth and Shippen, William Young
Corner of Fifth and Shippen, Francis Hilfrick
Near Walnut in South Fifth, John Coburn

Sixth Street

98 North, Eliza Carson (S)
18 North, Barnett Hansell
17 North, Jacob Shuster
Between Race and Vine, Conrad
Near Spruce, Sophia Penrose (S)

Seventh Street

54 North, Jonathan Goodwin
Near 52 North, John Ashton
47 North, Ezekiel Howel

Eighth Street

24, William Davis
Between Spruce and Pine, Mary Kelly (S)

Ninth Street

24, John Hyde
22 North, Sarah Stanbury (S)
29 and 35 North, Mary Sturch (S)

Tenth Street

Near 63 North,, Jane Royston (S)
55 North, Rebcca Everhart (S)
South, Mary Stewart (S)

East-West Streets:**Callowhill Street**

5, Nathan Matthias
18, George Streland
85, Mary Hemings (S)
112, Lewis Urban
118, Ann Miller

Race Street

Corner of Race and Water, John Barker
47, John Trump
50, Frederick Newlock
84, Charles Carriau
112, Vanderherchua
131, Joseph Marier
203, John Dorville
Near Eighth, Elizabeth Holeday (S)
Near Eighth, Hannah McDonald (S)

Cherry Street

52, Ann Easton
55, Susanna Wiggins
Near Fourth, Henry Husta
Near Eighth, Mary Stewart (S)
Near Tenth, Sarah Austin (S)

Arch Street

Corner of Arch and Water, Asa Elkington
Corner of Arch and Water, John Hillman
35, Benjamin Furguson
37, David Lownes
37 and 39, Benjamin Thaw
42, Thomas Hickey
52, William McIlhaney
76, Robert Seaborn
78, Kenneth Jewel

123 William McDonald
131, Andrew McGill
157, Jacob Edwards (and 18 South Water)
180, Enoch Wright
235, Philadet Seherrpephenfier

Market Street

Corner of Market and Water, McDowell
12, George McDowell
15, Angela Elkin
25, Enoch Allen
45, Atkinson Rose

Chesnut Street

27, Benjamin Charlton
62, Caleb Wilkins
64, J. Garaud, J.
82, James Cummins
92, Charles Watson
163, Isaac Roberts
193, James Girvan

Walnut Street

Corner of Walnut and Water, John Vannest
143, George Beck

Spruce Street

10, David Smith
14, Josiah Crap
26, Jacob Andrews
35 and 37, Selby Hickman
49, Josiah Siddons
78, John McCollin
137, Peter Field, peter
Between Fifth and Sixth, Anthony Russell
Near Sixth, Ezekial Filberston

Pine Street

51, Archibald McDonald
Pine corner of Penn, Michael Kelley

Gaskill Street

30, Ann Marshall (S) (and 14 Christian)
30, Mary Otway (S)
37, James Karr
Ann Holdshife (S)
John Leitzenger
Andrew Russell
Near Fifth, Francis Gibbons

Swanson Street

6, James Dougherty
22, John McDonald
26, Susanna Little
81, John H. Phillips
98, Isabella Frazier (S)
Corner of Swanson and Water, Atchinson, Thompson
Below Swedes Church, Jacob Cline
Near Almond, Eleanor Florence (S)
Near Catharine, John Farrell

Other Streets:**Alleys**

Ball Alley, William Davenport
Ball Alley, Susanna Magill (S)
Black Horse Alley, Caspar Guyger
Brewers Alley, Jane Adair (S)
3 Brewers Alley, Catharine Sybert
Carters Alley, Ezekiah Cox
25 Carters Alley, John South
7 Coombs Alley, Robert Long
Next to 18 Cresson Alley, Benjamin Smith
19 Cresson Alley, Henry Rass
9 Elfriths Alley, Francis Lagan
14 Elfriths Alley, Jared Sexton (and 48 South Water)
23 Elfriths Alley, John Hillman
2 Etris's Alley, Christiana Bay (S)
Fearess Alley, Sarah Lobby (S)
Fullers Alley, Ann Hutley (S)
14 Grays Alley, Richard Lauden
Greanleafs Alley, Peter Auner
9 Hoffmans Alley, Elijah Bowen
33 Keys Alley, Eddy Gardner (S)
Lilly Alley, Johanna Starkey (S)
Mead Alley, Mary Saunders (S)
Mead Alley, John Sharedin
Near 10 Mead Alley, Frederick Vanneman
8 Moravian Alley, James Lewis
14 Moravian Alley, Moetitia Davis
44 Moravian Alley, Jacob Flake
13 North Alley, Frederick Steiner
25 Pewter Platter Alley, William Abraham
29 Pewter Platter Alley, Joseph Brays
Sassafras Alley, Henry Burke
15 Sassafras Alley, Catharine Hailer (S)
Shieveleys Alley, Henry Parke
South Alley, Isaac Warner

10 South Alley, Mary Sidleman (S)
Stampers Alley, Mary Murdock
Stampers Alley, Mary Burklow (S)
20 Sugar Alley, Nathan Kilfield
32 Sugar Alley, Henry Cline
Waggoners Alley, John Conyer
9 Willings Alley, William Murry
11 Willings Alley, Dorathy Thornhill (S)

Streets

8 Almond Street, Robert Flinn
70 Almond Street, Robert Bloer
16 Ann Street, Adam Messeiner
13 Branch Street, John H. Gointher
Brown, Solomon Sell
Brown, near Second, Thomas C. Say
Budd Street between Brown Street and Polar Lane, Sarah Vient (S)
South Budd Street between Brown Street and Poplar Lane, Jonathan Edwards
South Budd Street between Brown Street and Polar Lane, Thomas Carmals
Corner of Catharine and Front, Daniel McAnulty
Catharine between Front and Second, Rebecca Barker (S)\
2 Chancery Lane, Nancy Mason (S)
Near Second in Catharine Street, John Messner
Charlotte Street, Elizabeth Kline (S)
Charlotte Street, Lawrence Whitner
14 Christian Street, Ann Marshall (S) (and 30 Gaskill)
19 Christian, Elizabeth Marat
77 Christian Street, Sarah Woodfall (S)
94 Christian Street, Elizabeth Morton (S)
Back of 17 Coates Street, widow McGrady
Coates Street between Second and Third, Edward Burke
Coates Street between Second and Third, John Senneff
Coates Street between Third and Fourth, Mary Rush (S)
Coates Street between Third and Fourth, Elibabeth Scirmighousen (S)
Crab Street, John Fletcher
Corner of Crab and Oak Street, Walter Foster
69 Dock Street, Kerr and Brown
Drinkers Court, John Griner
Duke Street, Hannah Cope
Duke Street, Philip Masor
Duke Street, Martha Mahaffee (S)
Duke Street, Susanna Preston (S)
Duke Street, Catharine Richardson (S)
Duke Street, Abigail Witts (S)
54 German Street, Ann Dunning (S)
German Street, near Second, John Gihon
German Street, between Third and Fourth, William Phifer
German Street, near Fourth, Jane Petrie (S)
84 Green Street, Lydia Vanesdale (S)

Hudsons Lane, Hannah West (S)
17 Lombard Street, Emanuel Rindollar
McCullochs Court, Baodia Paschallis (S)
Mifflins Court, John Anderson
119 New Street, Jacob Eckstein
129 New Street, Elizabeth McNair
Oak Street, NL, Catharine Sutter
Oak Street, Northern Liberties, Frederick Miller
Near Fifth in Oak Street, Elizabeth Nigznasour (S)
Corner of Penn and South Water, William O'Brian
Opposite Plum Street in Passyunk Road, Brightwell Hibb
Plumb Street between Third and Fourth, Hugh McConnell
Corner of Prime Street and Passyunk Road, Graham
Prune Street, Margaret Glynne
1 Quarry Street, Andrew Way
12 Queen Street, Sarah Lawton (S)
St. Johns Street, Abijah Chatham
St. Johns Street, between St. Tammany and Green, Robert Farguson
St. Johns Street, between Green and Coates, Philip Fireing
St. Johns Street, between Green and Coates, John Moore
St. Johns Street, between Green and Coates, Jacob Young
St. Johns Street, between Green and Coates, Temperance Grimes
St. Tammany Street, near the hay scales, Elijah Dickinson
10 Shippen Street, William McClelland
75 Shippen Street, Mary Robertson (S)
Shippen Street, between Second and Third, David Forsyth
Near Fourth in Shippen Street, Maria Levenston (S)
306 South Street, Caspar Graff
Beehive South Street, William Nelson
Corner of South and Swanson, Michael McConnonry
Summers Row, James Simpson
14 Union Street, Adam Weaver
Corner of Vernon and Shippen, John Sherriden
60 Vine Street, Patience Stoy (S)
180 Vine Street, Jacob Henrigal
Wood Street, Schellinger (S)

Appendix B:
INVENTORY OF JOHN WATERS, 1805

Philadelphia slops-seller John Water's inventory takes up both sides of a long piece of paper. The front is dedicated to his household goods and the reverse to his stock of clothing. All spelling is as it appears in the original document.³¹⁷

Inventory of John Waters goods Deceast
November 28 1805

one Ten Pleat Stove	15.0
one half Doz. Of Chiers	6.0
one half Doz. Of Chiers	4.50
one Dinning Table	4.0
one Lookenglass	3.0
one Lookenglass	2.0
one Lookenglass	7.0
11 Picters	4.0
2 Waiters	2.0
one Sektary	3.50
one Burow	8.0
one Teable and Stand	4.0
one Dressen Table	8.0
one Bead and Beding	80.0
one Bead and Beding	30.0
one Saut of Bead Courtins 2 Souts windy	30.0
one Chier and Caise	6.0
2 Pair of Hand Irens	7.0
one Pair of Shovel and Toungs	1.50
one Old Talbe	2.0
4 pair of Beadstids	7.0
one Wash Tublet	3.0
2 Iren Pots	2.0
1 Frianpan	1.0
one Chist 2 Trunks	3.0

³¹⁷ File 216, 1805, Philadelphia Register of Wills.

one half Doz Of Chainey	0.75
5 plaits by Tea Pots	1.0
one Doz of Knives and Forks	1.0
one half Doz of Silver Spons	3.0
one half Doz of Large Spons	0.50
Sundry Artcals	2.0
one Carpit	4.0
one Wach	8.0
3 wash tubs one Bucket	2.0
2 Pair of Flatirens	<u>1.50</u>
	298.75
[reverse]	
28 vests	55.50
22 Shirts	33.0
43 Hankerchiefs	16.25
2 Loung Coats	15.0
11 Coats	49.40
7 Great Coats	49.0
24 Round Jacoats	72.0
29 Pair of Trowsers	58.0
6 Pair of Drawrs	4.50
9 Pair of Stockens	6.75
25 yd of velvet	22.30
10 yd of Cloath	10.25
23 yd of Cassamer	27.3
28 yd of Cloath	18.62
1 Remnant of Cloath	4.0
4 yd of Cassamer	6.0
6 yd of Cloath	7.25
8 yd of velvet	6.0
22 yd of Swansdown	30.0
0 Sundry Remnants	6.0
1 Peice of Cloath	10.0
5 Caps	1.0
6½ of Baize	3.30
¼ of Green Baise	0.82
3½ of flannel	0.75
2 Pieces of Ankeen	2.0
19 yd of Check	4.32
1 Doz of Gloves	0.50
	298.75
	<u>489.61</u>
	\$788.36

Thomas Scout sworn the 26^t day of Novr. 1805
Joseph Fraley Before J.E. Wampole

Appendix C:

INVENTORIES OF JOHN ANTRIM, 1818

Philadelphia slops-seller John Antrim's file contains two inventories, one dated August 10, 1818 and the other August 14, 1818. The second appears to be related to a shop Antrim operated in Reading, Berks County, about sixty miles northwest of Philadelphia. All spelling is as it appears in the original documents.³¹⁸ The August 10 inventory contains 124 number entries on the front and reverse of two sheets (entry numbers and quotation spacing marks omitted in this transcription):

[first sheet]

Inventory of the Goods and Chattels Rights and Credits which were of John Antrim late of the City of Philadelphia Taylor deceased valued and Appraised the Tenth day of August AD. 1818 by Mahlon Lawrence & Charles Hill

		\$	cts
Ten Great Coats & Surtouts at \$3.75		37.50	
Five ditto ditto & ditto (damaged)	at \$1.50	7.50	
Two Surtouts	at \$5.50	11.00	
Twelve Long Coats	at 6.75	81.00	
Nine Coats	at 5.00	45.00	
Five ditto	at 4.00	20.00	
Eleven ditto	at 2.75	30.25	
Five Great Coats	at 5.00	25.00	
Three ditto ditto	at 3.00	9.00	
Eight velvet Roundabouts	at 3.00	24.00	
Four Cloth ditto	at 2.00	8.00	
Six ditto ditto	at 1.50	9.00	
Fourteen Sham Jackets	at 0.75	10.50	
Twenty two Pair velvet Pantaloons	at 2.50	55.00	
Nine Red Jackets	at 0.87½	7.87½	
Ten Swansdown vests	at 0.87½	8.75	
Thirty vests	at 1.25	37.50	
Thirty ditto	at 1.12½	33.75	

³¹⁸ File 200, 1818, Philadelphia Register of Wills.

Fifteen ditto	at 1.12½	16.87½
Twelve ditto	at 1.00	12.00
Twelve ditto	at 1.00	12.00
Twelve ditto	at 1.00	12.00
Twelve ditto	at 1.00	12.00
Eight Black Silk florentine vests	at 2.00	16.00
Three ditto Satin vests	at 1.00	3.00
Six Pair of Coburg mixt Pantaloons	at 3.75	22.50
Twelve Pair Cloth & Cassimere ditto	at 3.00	36.00
Eleven ditto ditto ditto	at 3.00	33.00
Ten ditto ditto ditto	at 3.00	30.00
Twelve ditto ditto ditto	at 2.25	27.00
Four ditto ditto ditto	at 2.25	9.00
Eighteen ditto Cord Pantaloons	at 2.25	40.50
	Amount	\$742.50
	(over)	

[reverse]

	Amount Brot. Over	742.50
Three Pair Seersucker Pantaloons	at \$1.75	\$5.25
Twenty Three Pair striped Trowsers	at 0.87½	20.12½
Ten Pair Nankeen Trowsers	at 1.12½	11.25
Twelve Pair Coarse Cloth ditto	at 1.00	12.00
Twelve Pair ditto ditto ditto	at 1.00	12.00
Five ditto ditto ditto ditto	at 1.00	5.00
Nine ditto Pantaloons	at 2.25	20.25
Eight Thin Coatees	at 1.50	12.00
Seven Round Jackets	at 1.00	7.00
Two velvet ditto	at 2.75	5.50
One ditto vest	at 1.00	1.00
Two Pair of Drawers	at 0.50	1.00
Twelve Pair Grand dural Trowsers	at 1.12½	13.50
Nine vests	at 1.12½	10.12½
Fourteen Muslin Shirts	at 0.87½	12.25
Two Coatees	at 5.00	10.00
One Blue Nankeen Jacket	at 1.37½	1.37½
Three Coatees & one Pair Pantaloons (unfinished) at		11.00
Eight Pair Trowsers	at 87½	7.00
Six unmade Shirts	at 62½	3.75
Fourteen Handkerchiefs	at 15	2.10
A Lot of unfinished Goods	at	7.00
A Lot of damaged ditto	at	3.00
A Pair of Cotton Stockings	at	.31¼
A Lot of Remnants	at	2.00
Five Pair Shambaree Trowsers	at 0.87½	4.37½
¾ Yards mixt Cloth in two Remnants	at 1.50	5.62½
4¼ ditto ditto	at 0.75	3.18¾
10¾ ditto ditto	at 1.75	18.81
7 ditto Blue Cassimere	at 0.87½	6.12½
1½ ditto Mixt ditto	at 0.87½	10.06¼

13½ ditto Fancy Vesting	at 0.75	10.12½
8¼ ditto Blue Baize	at 0.40	3.30
18 ditto Olive Baize	at 0.40	7.20
7 ditto Bearskin	at 0.60	4.20
4¼ ditto Red Baize	at 0.75	3.18¾
12 ditto Red Flannel	at 0.25	3.25
	Amount –	\$1017.73½
	(up	

[second sheet]

	Amount Brot. up 1017.73½	
4¼ Yards Waistcoating	at \$0.40	\$1.70
7 ½ ditto Black Satin	at 1.00	7.50
3 ditto Blue Cassimere	at 1.00	3.00
14½ ditto Black & White Muslin	at 0.25	3.62½
6 ditto White Flannel	at 0.18¾	1.12½
3 ditto Blue Cassimere	at 1.00	3.00
A Lot of Remnants	at	3.00
Three vests and Pair Pantaloons	at	4.00
A Lot of Remnants	at	.50
5½ yards Vesting	at 0.75	4.12½
A Lot of Thread	at	1.50
A Case & Drawers with Contents	at	1.50
A Large Chest & Trunk	at	2.00
A Demijohn and Pistol	at	1.50
A Stove with the Appurtenances	at	2.00
Ten Lights of Glass	at 6¼	62½
An Awning	at	1.50
Shop Fixtures	at	20.00
Two Hats	at 25	.50
One Box Ironmongery & One Keg of Nails at		[blank]
A Dearborn Waggon & Harness	at	25.00
One Horse	at	40.00
One Pair Card Tables	at	12.00
One Gilt Looking Glass	at	5.00
Seven Windsor Chairs	at 1.00	7.00
Two Waiters & Bread Tray	at	2.50
Two Prints, Framed	at	2.50
Andirons Shovel & Tongs, (Brass)	at	8.00
Snuffers & Snuffer Trays Candlestick & Flower Pots		1.25
Carpet & Hearth Rug	at	8.00
A Map of the World	at	1.00
Furniture in Back Chamber	at	5.00
Wearing Apparel	at	5.00
Five Windsor Chairs	at 50	2.50
One Settee	at	3.00
One Field Bedsted Bed & Bolster	at	<u>15.00</u>
	Amount	\$1223.21

[reverse]

		Amount Brot. over 1223.21
One Low Bedstead & Cattail Bed	at \$	\$2.50
Two Pair Blankets	at 1.50	3.00
Five Cotton Sheets	at	2.00
One Pine Table & Oil Cloth	at	.50
Two Rugs	at 25	.50
One Mahogany Table	at	5.00
One Map of "US"	at	1.00
A Lot of domestic Carpeting	at	4.00
An old Pinch Back watch	at	1.00
A Lot of Tin Ware	at	3.00
A Tailors Smoothing Iron & two Flat Irons	at	1.00
Coffee mill & Bellows	at	1.00
A Lot of Crockery	at	.25
A lot of China & Glass	at	3.00
A Table & Three Chairs	at	1.50
A Lot of Ceder Ware	at	1.50
A lot of Kitchen Furniture	at	1.50
A Lot of Lumber & Cuppard	at	1.50
Cash in Hand		<u>256.56</u>
	Amount	<u>\$1512.52</u>
	Mahlon Lawrence [signed]	
	Charles Hill [signed]	

[new hand] Mahlon Lawrence one of the Appraisers sworn the 27th day of August 1818 Before,

Saml. Bryan, Register
Inventory of Estate of
John Antrim, decd.

The August 14 inventory appears on two sides of a long sheet of paper:

Inventory of the Goods & Chattles Rights & Credits which were of John Antrim Taylor decd. Of Philadelphia Augt. 14th 1818 in Reading

No. 1	20 prs. Cassimere & stockinete Pants	2.75 \$	55.00
2	2 ditto do. Damagd. do.	2.00	4.00
3	22 ditto do & cloth ditto	2.25	49.50
4	11 ditto velvet & cords ditto	2.25	24.75
5	17 ditto cloth & cassimere do	2.80	47.60
6	11 course cloth do	0.91	10.01
7	34 Thin Trowsers do	1.06 ¹ / ₄	36.12
8	32 ditto do do	1.00	32.00
9	13 do do do	0.87 ¹ / ₂	11.37 ¹ / ₂
1	5 fine vests	1.25	6.25
2	17 common thick do	1.06	18.02

3	26 ditto thin do	1.00	26.00
4	85 ditto ditto do	0.75	63.75
5	7 Damgd. do do	0.50	3.50
6	8 satin vests	1.06¼	8.50
1	4 Pr Drawers	.50	2.00
2	22 Womases Red & White	87½	19.25
1	2 long coats & 1 Surtoot coat	6.66	19.98
2	3 ditto (damgd.)	3.00	9.00
No. 1	13 coatees cloth	3.50	45.50
2	11 ditto (damaged)	3.00	33.00
3	5 thin coatees	1.37½	6.87½
4	21 do (damd.) do	1.00	21.00
1	2 velvet Round Jackets Lind	2.25	4.50
2	6 ditto not Lind	1.75	10.50
3	6 thin Roundabouts	1.00	6.00
4	10 ditto common (injurd.)	0.87½	8.75
5	2 Round Jackets Cloth course Lind	1.75	3.50
6	4 ditto not Lind	1.50	6.00
7	4 Womases (injurd.)	0.75	3.00
1	8 Great Coats	4.00	32.00
2	1 do course	1.75	<u>1.75</u>
			\$628.98

[reverse]

		Amt. Over \$628.98	
No. 3	9 Great Coats small capes (injurd.)	\$3.00	27.00
4	2 Surtoots cloth (damagd.)	2.00	4.00
1	16 fine shirts	0.75	12.00
2	3 course do.	0.50	1.50
	2 ¼ yds. muslin course Lot	0.50	0.50
	4 pc. Nankeen	0.62	2.50
	4 ½ yds Baize	0.37½	1.68
	14 Madrass Hankf	0.17	2.38
	12 ditto	0.14	1.68
	14 ditto	0.17	2.38
	10 cotton Bandannoes	0.15	1.50
	2 Hankf. sort	0.60	0.60
	48 suspenders	0.12	6.00
	1 coat unfinished.	4.75	4.75
	Lot boards	0.50	0.50
	1 stove & pipe (sheet Iron)	2.25	2.25
	1 Lot buttons	0.25	0.25
			\$700.45
	Cash in store		189.96

[other administrative information from Berks county and signatures, etc. at the end of this page]

Appendix D:

JOHN PURDON'S ADVERTISEMENT, 1792

Philadelphia merchant John Purdon ran a number of poems only slightly different from this one between 1788 and 1796.³¹⁹

At the ninth house above the Drawbridge, No. 122, South Front-street, is for sale a general Assortment of the following GOODS, at the lowest prices that justice will admit of, and were orders from the country will be carefully put up at the shortest notice.

AS custom that more powerful draws,
Than all the acts of human laws,
Mankind to follow man, and throng
The beaten path, be it right or wrong –
Hence doth arise that way of telling,
In public prints, what folks are selling;
Then since it's so, and deem'd no crime,
I'll measure out a few in rhyme;
Yet shall I not (as usual, name
This or *that* ship in which they came –
Suffice to say, twas no galloon;
Nor came they in an air balloon:
No truth was every taught more clear,
Than that they came, since they are here;
And reason says, when we produce
A thing we may point out its use;
Then, here, I hope I'll not offend
In pointing out their use and end.
Cloths various textures coarse and fine,
Shalloon, and rattinets to line;

³¹⁹ Advertisement, *General Advertiser*, November 15, 1792.

Of colours different in their hue,
 The farmer's drab, the sailor's blue,
 The brown, the light, don't (think I joke) –
 For contrast, here's the London smoke,
 The friendly pearl, the bottle green,
 An olive, and a shade between
 That and a darker, mix'd with grey,
 Such – patriot Senators, they say,
 Were wont to wear, e'er seats were sold
 Or conscience barter'd off for gold –
 'Ere place or pension, star and garter,
 Were us'd fair Liberty to fetter:
 Then, sure, *our* Senators, whose deeds
 For Liberty, so far exceeds
 All those of yore, will chuse to buy
 Cloth of such plain and modest dye.
 But, of all dyes for grief excessive,
 Here is the *black*, the most expensive;
 This serves as index to declare,
 What turns our minds and callings are –
 That learned Barrister in black,
 Pleads for his client at his back,
 Unravels all the knotty points
 Of law; his safe and sure disjoints;
 The reverend Sir, in sable hue
 Declares *that* heterodox, *this* true;
 While clad in black, commands respect,
 Tho' *merit* here hath some effect.
 Their honors too, whose ears attend,
 As fixt as polar star, supend
 The seale of justice, 'midst the war
 Of jarring interest at the bar:
 This emblem of impartial mind,
 Worn by our guardians, you will find
 Beneath their scarlet robes, when slack,
 This never changing colour *black*.
 This points out oft the fatherless;
 This the widow's signal of distress;
 When braces, stay, and streamers made
 Of *black* upon a brighter shade;

This calls for pilot's helping hand,
To bring the lonely bark to land.

Blankets, nine and ten quarters wide,
Well flank'd with roses on each side,
Like bastions formed by engineer,
For to defend each embrasure;
Left Boreas' storms, while Morpheus sorts
The word – silence, and secures the ports.

Here's cassimers and collinets,
Black Florentine, and settinets,
With colours Friends wear now a-day,
And buff and scarlet for the gay;
Elastic stripe, coatings soft as down,
More sure than ancient mail; when round
Your trembling breast this armour's cast,
You're proof against the northern blast.
Thickset, federal, royal rib,
With fancy cord; but its forbid
To say for what, for time names fitches
Say – for *small-clothes*, instead of *breeches*.

Here's the velverets and corduroys,
Hats, different sorts, for men and boys;
Silk, worsted, thread, and cotton hose,
For ladies, gentlemen, and beaux.
All castes, all ranks may be supplied,
The aged matron, the young bride,
Cambrick for those, for these more thing,
Transparent gauze to shew the skin;
With shawls so large, if they don't smother,
At least they will the bishops cover.

Here's joans and calicoes for Sue,
And, Ladies, chintzes fine for you;
Stuffs, calamancoes and moreens,
Fustian, plain and spotted jeans;
With sheeting strong, from up the Baltic;
From Peters town, beyond the Dantzic;
And ditto fine, from Shamrockshire,
To suit my Lady, and the 'Squire;
Hibernia linen, as white as snow,
With country make, and price so low,

That they who want, will find their end,
To stop and buy here of a friend.

Here's the muslin clear, brought from afar,
Beyond the coast of Malabar;
Silk from Ama's and Canton roads;
A little north of our antipodes,
Where those who wore them wore their heads
In a right angle to our beds,
Nearly reverse to what we do,
Were a right line extended thro'

Here's the flannels, ozenburgs, and checks,
With large bandanoes for the necks;
With Yorkshire cloth for honest Jack,
To keep him warn when on the deck;
With lawns and Kentings from the Clyde,
And Caledonian thread beside,
Fine, and as cheap from off my reel,
As e're came from the *spinning wheel*.
To prove the above, the way's to try,
Step in, my friends, for once, and buy.

JOHN PURDON.

Philadelphia, November, 1789.

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IMAGE PERMISSIONS

Figures 1, 12, 13, 29

WINTERTHUR



April 5, 2011

Tyler Putman
Lois F. McNeil Fellow
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RBR	Garsault, François A. de (François Alexandre), 1693-1778.	
TT575	<i>Art du tailleur: contenant le tailleur d'habits d'hommes, les culottes de peau, le tailleur de corps de femmes & enfants, la couturiere, & la marchande de modes par M. de Garsault.</i>	
G24 F	[Paris]: de l'imprimerie L. F. Delatour, 1769. {Plate 6 detail: La Vignette represente un Tailleur d'habits...}	

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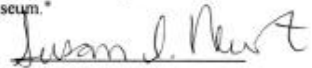
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Figure 3

RE: Research Inquiry - Winterthur Fellow Thursday, March 17, 2011 1:03 PM
From: "Davidson, Hilary" <h davidson@museumoflondon.org.uk>
To: "Tyler Putman" <trputman@yahoo.com>

Apologies Tyler, I'm not sure why I missed your email. Yes, this is fine. Please credit the images as 'Courtesy of the Museum of London (c) 2011'

best wishes,
Hilary

Hilary Davidson
Curator, Fashion & Decorative Arts, Department of History Collections
Museum of London
150 London Wall
London, EC2Y 5HN
Tel: 020 7814 5757 / 5548
Fax: 020 7410 2201
Investors in People Award 2010

Figures 4, 14, 19, 20, 27, 28, 29

RE: Image Permissions Friday, February 18, 2011 9:07 PM
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To: "trputman@yahoo.com" <trputman@yahoo.com>

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Susan Walker

Susan Odell Walker
Head of Public Services

The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University
154 Main Street
Farmington, CT 06032

Figures 5, 6, 23, 24

RE: Images Wednesday, April 6, 2011 6:52 PM
From: "Fithian Charles (DOS)" <chuck.fithian@state.de.us> 
To: "Tyler Putman" <trputman@yahoo.com>

Tyler,


You are more than welcome to use the images of the DeBraak artifacts. Consider this e-mail permission to move forward. The credit line should read "Courtesy of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs/Delaware State Archaeological Collections"

Thanks for the date of your presentation. Would not miss it! Let us know at time when you know one.

Things are going. Francis and I just brought up (and unloaded) more of the Island Field collections. Both of us are half dead right now!

Chuck

Figures 7, 8, 26

FW: Men's Clothing images Tuesday, March 22, 2011 2:58 PM
From: "Ellen Endslow" <eendslow@chestercohistorical.org> 
To: "Tyler Putman" <trputman@yahoo.com>
Cc: "Andrea Cakars" <acakars@chestercohistorical.org>


Hello Tyler,

Andrea forwarded your request. Congratulations on nearing completion of your current research! Yes, you may use your images of CCHS objects in your thesis. CCHS is acknowledged with images of its collections in publications as: Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA. We request one copy of publications in which our collections appear and we would like to have a hard copy for the library. We do not subscribe to the database.

Thanks,
Ellen

Figures 9, 10, 11: Original art for this thesis by Gwendolyn Basala

Figures 15

Re: Slop Shops Monday, February 21, 2011 9:46 AM
From: "Miles Lambert" <M.Lambert@manchester.gov.uk> 
To: "Tyler Putman" <trputman@yahoo.com>

Dear Tyler

As you only want to reproduce the Quarrelsome Taylors in your thesis, I'm sure I can authorise that. Just credit as in the COSTUME article. How exciting that you have nearly finished - I'd love to see the doctorate when you are at that stage.

Very best wishes

Miles

Dr Miles Lambert
Senior Manager: Gallery of Costume
Platt Hall, Rusholme, Manchester M14 5LL
(Manchester City Galleries)
tel: 0161 245 7245
m.lambert@manchester.gov.uk
www.manchestergalleries.org

Manchester Art Gallery: Winner - Large Visitor Attraction
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Figure 16



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Figure 17

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From: "Stimler, Neal" <Neal.Stimler@metmuseum.org>
To: "Tyler Putman" <trputman@yahoo.com>
Cc: "Vincent, Nicholas" <Nicholas.Vincent@metmuseum.org>

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Unfortunately, The Image Library does not currently have a high resolution color digital image available for use in your thesis. The only image currently available is the black-and-white image as seen on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's website (<http://bit.ly/eS8G3G>). You have permission from The Image Library to download this image from the web and include it in your thesis with the proper caption information and the photography credit, Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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Thank you for your interest in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. I wish you all the best with your thesis.

Regards,

Neal Stimler
Associate Coordinator of Images
The Image Library
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028
Telephone: (212) 650 - 2351
Fax: (212) 396 - 5050
E-mail: neal.stimler@metmuseum.org

Figure 18

RE: Image Permission Monday, April 4, 2011 8:17 AM
From: "Samantha C Townsend" <Samantha.Townsend@bodleian.ox.ac.uk>
To: "Tyler Putman" <trputman@yahoo.com>
Cc: "Imaging Admin Staff" <imaging@bodley.ox.ac.uk>

Dear Tyler Putman ,

I can confirm that you have been granted permission for the use of John Johnson Collection. Men's Clothing 1 (3), a formal letter has now been sent to you in the post.

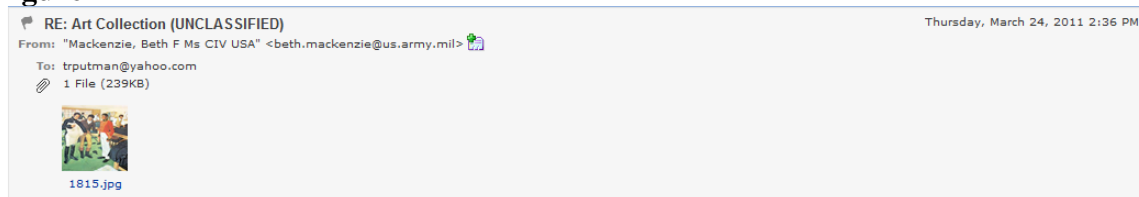
If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Wishes

Samantha Townsend
Bodleian Libraries
Osney One Building, Osney Mead
Oxford,
OX2 0EW
e-mail: imaging@bodleian.ox.ac.uk samantha.townsend@bodleian.ox.ac.uk
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Temporary Move of Special Collections. More information at: www.ouls.ox.ac.uk/scmoves

Figure 21



Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

Mr. Putman:

Your request to CMH Answers has been forwarded to me for response.

I have attached a high-resolution jpeg of the image you requested. This is the best digital version we have on hand. The image and artwork is considered to be in the public domain, but you can credit the U.S. Army Art Collection, if you like.

Best of luck with your project.

Sincerely,

Beth MacKenzie
Chief, Production Branch
U.S. Army Center of Military History
(202) 685-2350
FAX: (202) 685-4578

Figure 25: Author's graphs