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**PLAIN AND PECULIAR:
A CASE STUDY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY QUAKER CLOTHING**

by

Erin E. Eisenbarth

**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 Early American Culture**

Spring 2002

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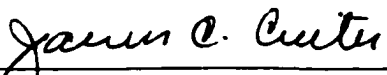
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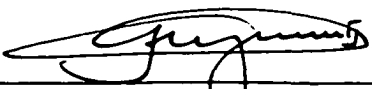
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not have written this thesis without the help and support of numerous colleagues, friends, and family. My advisor, Linda Eaton, provided immeasurable support and encouragement throughout this entire project. From choosing a topic to editing, her involvement in every phase of the thesis process enriched my work and made me a better scholar. I would also like to thank Anne Verplanck for generously sharing her knowledge of the Quaker aesthetic and for pointing me toward numerous helpful sources. Grateful thanks also go to Kristina Haugland and Mary Anne Caton, for their help and advice; to Lynne Hoyt, for taking time out of her busy schedule to teach me everything I know about mannequins and mounting costume; to the staffs of the Friends' Historical Library at Swarthmore College and the Special Collections Library at Haverford College; and to Neville Thompson and the staff of the Winterthur Library, for patient assistance and for kindly letting me keep all the books on Quakers checked out for nearly a year. I would also like to thank the Registrar's Office and the Photographic Services Office at Winterthur, especially Susan Newton and Laszlo Bodo, for helping me obtain images of the collection.

This work would not have been possible without the generosity of Eleanor A. Murphey, who donated the collection studied in this thesis to Winterthur. I can not thank her enough for sharing her family's heirlooms and history with me.

I would like to thank my fellow fellows for making these past two years fly by. Their intelligence and humor have made this process possible and bearable. Special thanks go to Sarah Fayen and Rob Rudd for their invaluable technical support. Many thanks go to my friends and family – whose encouragement, support, and nearly endless tolerance for hearing about Quaker clothing simply cannot be measured. Finally, I would like to thank my parents. Their confidence in my ability to finish this paper and this program mean more to me than they can ever know.

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ABSTRACT

Material culture scholars have long struggled to reconcile the Quaker doctrine of plainness with the appearance of Quaker material goods. Early descriptions of Quakers and early scholarship on Quaker clothing decreed that Quakers adopted a distinct style of dress that set them apart from their non-Quaker neighbors. This idea has grown into a mythology of Quaker dress and has led to the erroneous idea that all Quakers wore undecorated clothing in somber colors. This thesis first traces the history of scholarship on Quaker clothing, the early years of which were heavily influenced by Colonial Revival thinking. It then examines the concept of “plainness” to see how confusion over the meaning of the word has led to confusion about Quaker material goods. Finally, this thesis uses a collection of documentably Quaker clothing from the nineteenth century to examine the ways in which clothing and religion intersected for one particular group of Delaware Valley Friends and to expand the boundaries of the traditional definitions of “Quaker” dress.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In her 1901 work The Quaker: A Study in Costume, Amelia Gummere wrote that “the traditional idea of Quakerism always carries with it a suggestion of peculiarity in dress; and this peculiarity has been so marked, that Quaker life can hardly be portrayed without an understanding of the history of the garb.”¹ The “peculiar” dress of Quakers has long been one of the religion’s most easily identifiable features and has often been the main characteristic by which non-Quakers have identified Friends. In an 1838 issue of Godey’s Lady’s Book, J. T. F. from Boston celebrated the virtues of Philadelphia – its clean air, fine water, beautiful scenery, and charming Quakers. He wrote:

Philadelphia hath its Quakers, and I like them! They are a meek race, and I love quiet people. They never bustle about like your tailor-worshipping gentry. . . They dress like Christians: their style is simple un-Esquimaux. I glory in a drab suit and broad-brim hat. It is a goodly sight, those quaintly carved coats; they look easy, comfortable, always at-home like.

He went on to praise the city’s Quakeresses, particularly their white bonnet-strings, saying “there is nothing beautish or artificial about them: they serve for bonnet-strings, and nothing more, yet have I seen them arrayed with a maximum of taste, seldom met

¹ Amelia M. Gummere, The Quaker: A Study in Costume (Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, 1901), iii.

with in costly colours glittering around brocade!”² To him, the peculiar dress of Philadelphia’s Quakers was a visible manifestation of their personal qualities – quiet, goodly, sincere, and Christian. In his hymn to members of the Society of Friends, J.T. F. perfectly described the image of Quakers which has continued to persist in the American mindset for more than three hundred and fifty years.

Members of the Society of Friends, popularly known as Quakers, used dress as a protest and a protection against the vanities of the world. By their costume, they showed their commitment to live a Christian life and rise above the temptations of the world. According to tradition, this meant that they eschewed ribbons, laces, and other fripperies in favor of a subdued and severe approach to fashion. It is this image of the Quaker, in solemn gray with plain hat or bonnet, which has become fixed in America’s consciousness. When pressed to describe the appearance of a Quaker, most people picture the gentleman on the oatmeal box. Even among the scholarly community, despite the work of many who have increasingly begun to examine and question the idea of the “Quaker aesthetic,” the predominant idea of Quaker material culture (and dress) is best summed up by Philadelphia Quaker and merchant John Reynell’s 1738 insistence that his furniture be “of the best Sort but Plain.”³

² J. T. F., “Written for the Lady’s Book: Waymarks. Philadelphia – Quakers – Quakeresses – Album Verses,” Godey’s Lady’s Book, July 1838, 34.

³ John Reynell to Daniel Flexney, 25 November 1738, Reynell Letter Book, 1738-41, quoted in Frederick B. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia, 1682-1763 (Chapel Hill: U of NC press, 1948), 88. For a brief discussion of the problematic nature of this quote, see Susan Garfinkel, “Discipline, Discourse, and Deviation: The Material Life of Philadelphia Quakers, 1762-1781” (master’s thesis, University of Delaware, 1986), 5.

But to what extent is this idea of “plain” Quaker costume based in fact? In the 1830s, for example, when J.T.F. praised the quaint and Christian dress of Philadelphia’s Quakers, was he really describing how the city’s Friends actually looked? Or did he, like so many observers of Quaker life throughout the past two hundred years, see only what he expected to see? The repeated emphasis on the plainness and quaintness of Quaker costume has lead to an idea of Quaker dress based more on written accounts than on surviving articles of clothing. Is this image of the Quaker truth or stereotype? What factors influenced the way that Quakers really dressed? How did their dress compare to that of non-Quakers? Was there any difference between how Quakers presented themselves to a non-Quaker public and how they dressed in private? How did the thinking of the late-nineteenth century Colonial Revival affect the way that Quakers perceived the dress and habits of their forebears? Using a group of Quaker clothing that has descended in one family, this thesis will examine what is truly “Quaker” about Quaker clothing, and will look at the factors – religious, social, and economic – that influenced the way one group of families dressed.

CHAPTER 2

The History of Scholarship on Quaker Costume

The pervasive visual image of Quakers – the men in gray with beaver hats, the women in gray with bonnets – is in many ways a product of scholarship on the subject. The basis for almost all scholarly work on Quaker costume is Amelia Mott Gummere's 1901 work, The Quaker: A Study in Costume. Despite subsequent research that has expanded and reinterpreted Gummere's interpretation of Quaker costume, more than one hundred years later her book remains the only full-length text exclusively devoted to the study of this subject. In an article written in 2000, Deborah Kraak called Gummere's book "the basic work on the subject" – an opinion also held by many of Gummere's contemporaries.⁴ After reading her book, Quaker historian Isaac Sharpless told Gummere that "It is a good thing when attacking a subject to clean it up so that no one will ever have to write of it again. This I am sure is done in the matter of Quaker costume."⁵ In 1910, Alice Morse Earle used large sections of Gummere's work as the basis for her section on Quaker clothing in her work Two Centuries of Costume in

⁴ Deborah Kraak, "Variations on 'Plainness:' Quaker Dress in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," Costume 34 (2000): 51.

⁵ Isaac Sharpless to Amelia Gummere, 6 December 1901, Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, 1055 Box E, Haverford College Quaker Collection (Hereafter cited as Gummere Collection).

America.⁶ In fact, in the century since Gummere wrote her book, the only criticism it seems to have received came from other Quakers who felt that, as a Quaker, Gummere had treated the religious aspect of her subject inappropriately and had “taken too much counsel of those who are enemies of Friends and who have been too shallow in spiritual life to comprehend matters which religious people in all sects recognize.”⁷ Although some of her fellow Quakers may have felt that Gummere treated religion lightly, no modern scholars have appreciated the extent to which Gummere’s faith and her culture influenced her writings.

In the book’s introduction, Gummere divides her study of Quaker costume into three chronological periods: the period of persecution, when survival of the church and its members outweighed concern about clothing; the reactionary period, when the church was safely established; and the modern period, when “dress again falls into its proper place in the general scheme of things.”⁸ Her study of costume is thus inextricably linked to the history and progression of the Society of Friends. This history becomes central to the two audiences for whom Gummere wrote the book. Her explanation of the purpose and history of Quaker costume was designed to remind Quakers, particularly young ones, of the importance of their traditions. She notes that “many a young soul has lived hungry for some explanation of the reason for the singularity [of dress] forced upon him, quite unsatisfied by being told that the elder Friends ‘desired to have him encouraged.’”⁹

⁶ Alice Morse Earle, Two Centuries of Costume in America, 1620-1820, rev. ed., 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1910), 597, 600, 606, 609.

⁷ George Vance to Amelia Gummere, 16 January 1902, Gummere Collection.

⁸ Gummere, iv.

⁹ Ibid., v.

Gummere seeks to provide an explanation and justification for plainness beyond the unsatisfying “because I said so” doubtless given to many a questioning youth by parents and elders. But Gummere was also very conscious that she was writing for a non-Quaker audience as well. She laments that “the outside world has known little of the Quaker; when it has perceived his presence, it has not troubled itself to understand him, nor to penetrate the atmosphere of exclusiveness that has surrounded him.”¹⁰ Gummere hopes that her work can explain the Quakers and their costume to the rest of society that had heretofore regarded it as “little worth [their] time.”¹¹

Her period of study seemingly runs from the founding of the Society to her own time, or about 1650 to 1900, but she places heaviest emphasis on the eighteenth century. Gummere divides her book into five sections, each focusing on a specific aspect of Quaker clothing – the coat, the hat, beards and wigs, women’s clothing, and the bonnet. Within each section, Gummere traces the evolution of the subject from the beginning of the Quaker religion, although her information is not always presented in chronological order. Throughout the book, Gummere uses a wide array of documents and objects to create a picture of Quaker doctrine and its effect on costume. Her documentary sources range from the notes of Monthly and Yearly meetings in both England and the Colonies to prints, personal diaries, and letters, but it is difficult to determine the exact source of much of her information due to incomplete bibliographic records and the anecdotal style of the book. For objects, Gummere turns to her fellow Quakers, noting that “there is no community of people among whom, as a class, family heirlooms, old plate, and the

¹⁰ Ibid., 5.

costumes of an earlier day are more highly valued or more carefully handed down from parent to child, than the Quakers.”¹² Gummere draws upon several family collections of “Quakeriana” for the objects she examines in her book. It is, however, often difficult to determine exactly which families the objects come from, since she rarely cites her sources.

Gummere’s work breaks down into four main theses. First, according to Gummere, Quaker dress was a simple version of contemporary clothing. Secondly, most Quakers avoided calling attention to themselves by wearing clothing that was either excessively decorated or excessively plain. Thirdly, Quakers lacked a universally accepted standard for plainness. Finally, Gummere wrote that in the late eighteenth century, Quaker elders became increasingly concerned with plainness and with creating a uniform appearance among their members.¹³ These ideas have, for the most part, been corroborated by more modern scholarship.

Though Gummere’s attention is mostly focused on the eighteenth century, she does devote some space to the state of Quaker clothing in the nineteenth century. She notes that, “it may be set down as a safe rule, in seeking for a Quaker style or custom at any given time, to take the worldly fashion or habit of the period preceding. When the mode changes, and a style is dropped, the Quaker will be found just ready to adopt it.”¹⁴ However, she also notes that “younger Quakers followed the changes of Dame Fashion,” briefly mentioning clothing seen in artworks, including the fashionable gown of the

¹¹ Ibid., 6.

¹² Ibid., vi.

¹³ Enumerated in Kraak, 51-2.

1830s seen in the engraving “The Two Friends” (Figure 1).¹⁵ She discusses the neoclassical fad for light and gauzy dresses mainly so that she can mention how that fashion was impractical for Quakers, since it “demanded an attire too airy to be compatible with the sharp changes of an English or American winter.”¹⁶ While this assertion makes a good story, surviving costumes prove Gummere false. She also notes that Quakers participated in the early nineteenth century fashion for highly figured fabrics, although some Friends considered them too showy.¹⁷

Gummere’s decision to focus on the earlier periods of Quaker costume may have been influenced by her own proximity to the nineteenth century. Writing in 1901, Gummere and her first readers would likely have already been familiar with Quaker fashions from the mid- to late 1800s. After her mention of the “Two Friends” engraving from 1835-1840, Gummere notes that for information after that time period, “the present generation can refer to the costumes of their own parents.”¹⁸ Though this later costume is now of interest to modern readers and scholars, it was temporally too close to Gummere for her to consider it worthy of inclusion in her history. Unfortunately, this leaves modern readers without a clear picture of Quaker costume for the years after the 1840s. The scholarship that followed Gummere has also adopted her time frame. Most articles written on Quaker clothing concentrate on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with relatively little attention being given to the latter part of the 1800s.

¹⁴ Gummere, 183.

¹⁵ Ibid., 162.

¹⁶ Ibid., 169.

¹⁷ Ibid., 170.

¹⁸ Ibid., 162.

Deborah Kraak, who has worked extensively on eighteenth-century Quaker costume, confirms Gummere's assertions that in the 1700s, Quakers wore popular styles of clothing minus extraneous decoration.¹⁹ She also confirms, to a degree, the popular idea that Quakers wore drab colors and plain patterns, although she does note that this may have more to do with the popularity and availability of certain types of colors and patterns in the eighteenth century than with any particular Quaker preference for the fabrics.²⁰ Furthermore, she notes, as have other scholars, that especially affluent Quakers adopted a different standard of plainness than their poorer brethren.²¹ According to Kraak, Quakers rarely dismissed their members from meeting for wearing worldly costume alone. Infractions related to dress were generally included alongside more serious charges such as being married by a priest or "practicing the arts of war."²² There are many shades of gray (no pun intended) in the study of Quaker clothing. So much depends on an individual or family's relationship to the religion. Before looking for "the Quakerness" in a garment, one must first situate the wearer, both socially and economically, within Quaker society and within American society as a whole. For example, Kraak notes that:

"Birthright Quakers" (born to Quaker parents) were allowed greater latitude of behaviour than were converts, called "Convinced Friends." "Free Quakers" separated from the Philadelphia Meeting around the time of the American Revolution because they were not pacifists. After the

¹⁹ Kraak, 52; Gummere states "Until the early part of the eighteenth century, there appears to have been no really distinctive *cut* in Quaker costume. It is to be described in negations, was like that of everyone else, and was only conspicuous for what it lacked of the popular extravagances of the day," 15.

²⁰ Kraak, 52.

²¹ Ibid., 53.

²² Ibid., 57.

war, they established their own meetinghouse. People who were unofficially affiliated with the Quakers adopted variations of plain dress, such as children of disowned Quakers and disowned Quakers themselves who continued to attend meeting and to practice plainness in dress and speech, although not formally bound by Quaker discipline.²³

Kraak agrees with Gummere that nineteenth-century Quaker clothing was distinctive from non-Quaker costume. She writes that “the end of the eighteenth century marks a turning point in Quaker dress, and by the 1820s Quaker dress had become a distinctive costume. Women wore ‘Quaker bonnets’ (bonnets with long, tunnelled brims), antiquated fashions, and drab colors. Men wore breeches and stockings long after trousers had superseded them.”²⁴ While she gives several reasons for this change, including the lack of Quaker power in the nineteenth century and the new evangelical religious revivals, she provides no actual examples of this “new and distinctive” clothing style.

Joan Kendall’s article on English Quaker clothing gives more attention to the nineteenth century. In Britain, as in America, the standard of plainness varied according to a Friend’s personal feeling. Generally speaking, Quakers wore fashionable styles, but adapted them to “their most simple forms.”²⁵ Kendall tracks the debates held over the London Yearly Meeting’s dictates on plainness, noting that in 1849, the Meeting added the statement “We are renewedly persuaded that our testimony to plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel rests upon sound, unalterable grounds” while in 1860, the Meeting replaced its section on plainness with the advice, “Be careful to maintain in your own

²³ Patricia O’Donnell, personal communication, quoted in Kraak, 57.

²⁴ Kraak, 57.

conduct and encourage in your family that simplicity in deportment and attire. . . which become the disciples of the Lord Jesus.”²⁶ Although Kendall’s article provides an opportunity to compare English and American Quaker costume, its usefulness is somewhat limited because it relies on documentary evidence and print sources rather than actual costumes.

In an article entitled “Ellis Quaker Collection,” Nancie Allen examines a group of British Quaker clothing from the early decades of the nineteenth century. The clothing seems to adhere to the traditional “of the best sort but plain” view of Quaker clothing, perhaps because the family who wore the clothing were prominent farmers in Leicester who later became involved in the railroads.²⁷ Although Allen examines the clothing in the light of the family’s own history and compares it to extant examples of Quaker clothing from the same period, the article’s short length (only about two pages of text) precludes any in-depth analysis of the clothing or the family and society which it represents. In fact, the article is more a description of a museum’s new acquisitions than an examination of costume.

So where does all this leave the question of Quaker clothing in the nineteenth century? Most scholars seem to agree on a few things. First, there was, by the early nineteenth century, a distinctive form of Quaker dress. Secondly, although Quaker literature emphasized the importance of plainness, there was never any universal and rigidly enforced dress code. Finally, Quaker dress gradually lost its distinctive

²⁵ Mrs. Merrifield, Female Costume (1854), 81 quoted in Joan Kendall, “The Development of a Distinctive Form of Quaker Dress,” Dress 19 (1985), 69.

²⁶ Minutes of London Yearly Meeting 1860, quoted in Kendall, 71.

characteristics. But all these assumptions seem to have been made without examining actual surviving examples of nineteenth-century Quaker clothing, relying instead on personal accounts, Quaker doctrinal literature, and print sources. Furthermore, these other sources seem to indicate that there was indeed a wide variety of costume options open to Quakers, and that plainness was by no means a strictly defined term. So where does this idea of “distinctive dress” come from? I would argue that while Quakers did indulge in a peculiarity of dress, their dress was, generally speaking, not really that peculiar; instead, the commonly held idea of “Quaker clothing” is more of a colonial revival construction than a reality.

²⁷ Nancie Allen, “Ellis Quaker Collection,” Costume 11 (1977), 118.

CHAPTER 3

The Colonial Revival

Although there were nineteenth-century Quakers who dressed plainly and eschewed fashionable clothing, there were many Friends who did not meet the “standard” of plainness as described by many scholars. Quaker dress does not seem to have actually been as distinct and different from the costume worn by non-Quakers as scholarship would indicate. The notion of a plain standard of dress for mid-nineteenth century Quakers, while based in reality, was and still is heavily influenced by Colonial Revival thinking. Beginning around the time of the Centennial in 1876, Americans began to look back nostalgically to the country’s colonial days. All aspects of American culture – art, architecture, literature, and interior design, just to name a few – began to look back at the past.

But when people began to look at the past, they saw it through the lens of the world in which they lived. Their modern concerns affected the way they interpreted events, objects, and ideas. The version of the past created by Colonial Revival thought was filled with mythic heroes and settings – fearless pioneers, noble patriots, and virtuous homes. This revisioning of the past “became a common thread that linked some citizens with their own ancestors and ultimately, a way by which the elusive and loosely defined

idea of ‘Americanism’ came to be defined.”²⁸ The heroic colonial period, the halcyon “good old days” created through this thinking, was not, of course, the most accurate or the only version of history. But Kenneth Ames argues that “the requirement to possess a past as we need it is often more pressing than any motive of historical accuracy. What one age deems as historical accuracy a later one sees as naiveté or self-deception.”²⁹ To those who subscribed to the Colonial Revival mentality, the heroic past was the REAL past, and facts and objects were either made to fit this past or were relegated to the fringes of history, scholarship, and the national consciousness.

Ames argues that the drive to possess the past can often lead to the manipulation of physical objects to make them support a certain conclusion. This may partially explain what happened to Quaker clothing collections and to the study of Quaker clothing in the early twentieth century. Like scholars and collectors in other fields who used artifacts to define their vision of the past, Amelia Gummere reinvisioned the past by reinterpreting the Quaker clothing that was available to her. Ames writes, “In elevating or admiring one piece of the past, we tend to ignore and devalue others. One reality lives at the expense of countless others.”³⁰ Gummere created a past in which Quaker plain dress was distinct and widely worn because it suited her view of Quaker history. But this version of the past did not take into account many surviving examples of Quaker clothing.

²⁸ Harvey Green, “Looking Backward to the Future: The Colonial Revival and American Culture,” in Creating a Dignified Past: Museums and the Colonial Revival, ed. Geoffrey L. Rossano (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991), 1.

²⁹ Kenneth Ames, introduction to The Colonial Revival in America, ed. Alan Axelrod (New York: Norton, 1985), 5.

Ames also argues that “many cultural accomplishments have been propelled by a strong desire *not* to be confused with or associated with other people.”³¹ Fear and resentment of immigrants fueled much of the Colonial Revival. Feeling threatened by the competition for space and jobs created by growing waves of immigration, many Americans emphasized the glories of the colonial past. The implied message was that to be a real American, one had to have a past in America. In addition to dealing with the “threats” of immigrants, Quakers during the Colonial Revival were also attempting to cope with life in a world where they were becoming increasingly marginalized. In the colonial period, Quakers had dominated the government, economy, and society of the Mid-Atlantic region. But by the nineteenth century, their influence had waned. According to J. William Frost and Hugh Barbour, “by 1900 Philadelphia Quakers appeared to most outsiders as quaint survivals of the colonial period whose customs and beliefs were irrelevant to the wider society.”³² The Colonial Revival gave Quakers a chance to reassert both the importance of their contributions to American history and their importance in the current world. It also provided them with an opportunity to take a nostalgic look back at Quakerism’s glory days.

Amelia Gummere’s constant references to the decline of Quaker mores and the need to explain the concepts of plainness and simplicity to Quaker youth may be an extension of what Harvey Green calls “associationism” – the idea that “by properly arranging and decorating a home or other environment with references to the past, one

³⁰ Ibid., 6.

³¹ Ibid., 8.

might stimulate in the inhabitants the character traits most admired in the bygone civilization."³³ In Gummere's case, she might have emphasized the plain dress and virtuous character of Quakers of the past to help readers of the book, particularly young Quaker readers, follow the Quaker conventions of plainness and simplicity more closely.

Gummere's championing of plain dress also ties into the Colonial Revival's affinity for costumes of the past. At fancy dress parties and at events such as the colonial kitchens featured at sanitary fairs and expositions, women of the late nineteenth century dressed in representations of the costumes of yesteryear. These costumed events, particularly popular in New England, were seen as having moral and political benefits. Beverly Gordon writes that "the Centennial was to function as a 'school' where American values and accomplishments could be exhibited, and it would have an important influence on the future of the nation."³⁴ The costumed women at these events embodied the virtues of the past and helped spread them to the present generation. Often memorialized in photographs or engravings, the costumes worn at these events were usually not completely accurate. According to Gordon, "it was important to give a feeling for the past without getting too close to its reality."³⁵ It was the feeling that the costume created and the virtues that it symbolized that mattered.

³² Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, The Quakers (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 221.

³³ Gummere, v, and Green, 11.

³⁴ Beverly Gordon, "Dressing the Colonial Past: Nineteenth Century New Englanders Look Back," in Dress in American Culture, ed. Patricia A. Cunningham and Susan Voso Lab (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1993), 133.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

Amelia Gummere was not immune to the desire to make the past come alive through reenactment. One of the illustrations in The Quaker: A Study in Costume, entitled “Going to Meeting in 1750,” is taken from an original photograph of a woman (perhaps Gummere herself) dressed in the cloak and flat hat of the mid-eighteenth century (Figure 2). It is unclear whether the woman is wearing antique clothing or reproductions. Since she felt that “no costume was more important for the Quaker woman of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than that designed for use on horseback,” it is significant that here Gummere chose to illustrate this point with one of the four photographs of people she included in her book.³⁶ As the only photograph of a person with a clearly visible face in the book, the picture of the woman “going to meeting” emphasizes the importance of both the plain riding costume and the act of attending meeting to Quaker life in the colonial period.³⁷ Gummere’s use of colonial Quaker clothing may express her feelings that present-day Quakers needed to be reminded of who they were, and of who they could become again.

³⁶ Gummere, 155. There are other photographs of objects alone, but only four of people. Of these, one is of a Welsh tea party and was borrowed from another source (60), while the other two are of bonnets (207 and 223).

³⁷ The tea party photo is too small to make out detail, while the bonnet photos are arranged so that the model’s face does not show.

CHAPTER 4

Plainness and Simplicity

Like most other religious groups in the early nineteenth century, the Society of Friends felt the effect of the Second Great Awakening. Feeling the pull of evangelicalism, Quakers in the United States “belonged to Bible societies, created tract societies, endorsed missionary work, and supported a variety of reform groups advocating temperance, prison reform, peace, and antislavery.”³⁸ But this new religious fervor had a downside. The evangelical emphasis on personal conversion and the saving grace of Jesus Christ was accompanied by a desire to stamp out all conflicting beliefs, which were seen as infidelities.

The central tenet of Quakerism is a belief in the “inward light of Christ,” the idea that “the eternal Christ, the immanent Word, [is] present in the soul of every man.”³⁹ George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, formulated this idea in 1652. He preached no other specific doctrines, believing that “theological doctrines, . . . were merely intellectual ‘notions.’”⁴⁰ But as Quakerism matured, it gradually gained other rules and doctrines, especially once it began to mix with evangelical ideas. Instead of

³⁸ Barbour and Frost, 171.

³⁹ Frederick B. Tolles, Quakers and the Atlantic Culture (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 1.

believing that salvation could be achieved through recognition of the inner Christ, evangelical Quakers began to claim that salvation was impossible without the Crucifixion and blood of Christ. The evangelical Quakers, later known as Orthodox Quakers, placed importance on “the virgin birth, Scriptural innerancy, the Trinity, a physical resurrection, and heaven and hell . . . mainly as guarantees of the atonement.”⁴¹ These new beliefs did not sit well with all Quakers, many of whom still felt that an emotional conversion was the only real requirement for salvation. The opponents of this new evangelical view, called “Hicksites” by the Orthodox Quakers, were made up of several factions. The largest group of Hicksites were traditionalists who placed primacy on the idea of the internal light of Christ, counting the Bible and theological learning as insignificant.⁴²

Quakers divided into Hicksite and Orthodox camps based on social, economic, and geographic factors. Orthodox Quakers tended to be urban merchants and their rural relatives, while the Hicksites were comprised of rural Quakers, rural immigrants to the cities, and Philadelphia’s old established families who resented the rising merchant class.⁴³ Tensions between these two groups came to a head in 1827, when the Hicksite and Orthodox factions separated over matters of government, leading to the establishment of two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings. The split effectively crippled the political and social power of the Society of Friends, since the Quakers could hardly promote tolerance and peace when they were fighting amongst themselves.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Barbour and Frost, 173.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 171.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 181-2.

The Hicksite-Orthodox split was about government and theology, not aesthetics, but it did have indirect ramifications on Quaker conceptions of plainness. Leanna Lee-Whitman's "Silks and Simplicity" studies twenty Quaker portraits taken in the years between the split and the Civil War. The portraits, depicting an equal number of Hicksite and Orthodox Friends, show a uniformity of dress between the two groups.⁴⁵ The portrait sitters all wear basically the same garments, all of which seem to be plain in ornament and drab in color. For the most part, the portraits are of older Friends, who, in the eighteenth century, at least, dressed more plainly than their younger counterparts.⁴⁶ Written descriptions from diaries, memoirs, and letters with descriptions of young Friends in bright colors and fashionably cut clothes all suggest that the same situation existed in the nineteenth century as well.⁴⁷ Lee-Whitman speculates that since the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting stopped disowning members for infractions of dress and speech in 1810 and since the Orthodox and Hicksite Yearly Meetings never disowned anyone for such violations, plainness "played no role in the Orthodox-Hicksite quarrel . . . [and] digressions from the plain uniform were tolerated."⁴⁸

Although plainness was not a specific point of contention during the Orthodox-Hicksite quarrel, the 1827 split may have opened the door for Friends to question other aspects of the Quaker faith besides evangelical doctrines. Anne Verplanck notes that "the Orthodox-Hicksite schism . . . involved not just issues of doctrine, but also wordliness

⁴⁵ Leanna Lee-Whitman, "Silks and Simplicity: A Study of Quaker Dress as Depicted in Portraits, 1718-1855" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1987), 102.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 104.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 106-108.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 110.

and outspokenness.”⁴⁹ The largest group of Hicksites believed that all one needed was the Inner Light of Christ – everything else was superfluous. It is not a great leap to move from that idea to a criticism of plainness. According to Don Yoder, “Quaker plainness existed for many reasons, some positive, some negative – positively to express Quaker ideals such as equality and humility, negatively to express Quaker quietism and symbolize the Quaker’s partial flight from the ‘world’”.⁵⁰ But when Quakers, particularly Hicksites, began to focus solely on the Inner Light, the need for outward symbols decreased. Plain dress could be seen as a form of vanity, or as an outmoded and unneeded tradition.

In the years after the split, pamphlets decrying or defending plainness flooded both sides of the Atlantic. In Observations on the Quaker -- Peculiarities of Dress and Language, the anonymous author contended that imposing antiquated clothing and dress on the Friends was “substituting superstition for piety.”⁵¹ Critics of plainness argued that when clothing was used to help a Quaker defend himself against the temptations of the material world, he was not really relying on his own spirituality, but only on the appearance of spirituality.⁵² Although many Hicksites took a very traditional approach to

⁴⁹ Anne Verplanck, “Facing Philadelphia: The Social Functions of Silhouettes, Miniatures, and Daguerreotypes, 1760-1860” (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1996), 67.

⁵⁰ Don Yoder, “Sectarian Costume Research in the United States,” in Forms Upon the Frontier: Folklife and Folk Arts in the United States, ed. Austin and Alta Fife and Henry Glassie (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1969), 47.

⁵¹ Observations on the Quaker: Peculiarities of Dress and Language (London: Effingham Wilson, 1836), 12.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 14.

Quaker theology, it is not hard to see how such an argument might have appealed to a Quaker concerned with the primacy of the inward over the outward.

Meanwhile, defenders of plainness claimed that one should avoid appearances of evil, and visibly show one's withdrawal from the world. Quakers needed to reject worldliness and pride, but how could they do that if they did not reject pride's material manifestations? The 1872 pamphlet Dress and Worldly Compliance quoted a seventeenth-century sermon which stated, "As we are commanded to abstain from all appearance of evil, we should also abstain from every appearance of pride, which manifests itself in fine, fashionable furniture, houses, and dresses of all kinds, which most certainly lead thereto. We should be clothed with humility, letting our moderation be known to all men."⁵³ Defenders of plainness were also conscious of costume's ability to improve or to damage one's morality. One reformer felt that clothing was directly linked to morals, and decried a new style of hat, saying:

There are doubtless many beside the writer of this essay, who have deplored the *brigand* style of hat for women and girls which of late years has become so common. To place a hat of this sort, peaked atop, flared up in front or at the side, and conspicuously decorated with feathers or plumes, upon the head of a modest school girl, seems tantamount to bidding her be bold, to hold her head high, and to speak her mind smartly. The influence of this costume in producing just this effect of feminine boldness, is probably greater than most of us have any conception of. Its tendency cannot be otherwise than one of antagonism to that meek, lowly, and chaste demeanor which the Lord our God delights in.⁵⁴

⁵³Dress and Worldly Compliance: Addressed to the Members of the Society of Friends (Philadelphia: Jacob Smedley, 1872), 8.

⁵⁴ Josiah W. Leeds, Simplicity of Attire, as Related to the Promotion of Social Purity 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Josiah W. Leeds, 1886), 10.

The debates about plain dress raged throughout the nineteenth century, with most meetings gradually relaxing sections in the Disciplines dealing with plain dress and language. In 1894, the Hicksites formally “broke the equation between simplicity and the plain style of dress.”⁵⁵ This brings up an important distinction in terms (plainness and simplicity) that is only now beginning to be understood.

Because the Quaker faith includes a doctrine of plainness, it has long been assumed that Quaker objects should look plain.⁵⁶ But countless material objects with a Quaker association and without a plain appearance have forced scholars to try and account for this apparent contradiction. Usually, they come up with one of two solutions: either Quakers were plain and had plain objects, or Quakers claimed to believe in plainness, but did not practice what they preached.⁵⁷ According to Susan Garfinkel, Friends were indeed “concerned with the type and quality of outward behavior.”⁵⁸ When Monthly Meetings disciplined Friends, it was often because their outward actions were in conflict with the inward doctrines that a Quaker in the proper spiritual mindset should hold. Garfinkel believes that in the Quaker sense, plainness did not describe the characteristics of an object. Instead, “plainness is an adjective used to describe the proper silent state.”⁵⁹

Through silence, Quakers could attend to interior spiritual matters, namely the Inner Light of Christ. Speaking, although not necessarily problematic, was best avoided

⁵⁵ Barbour and Frost, 219.

⁵⁶ Garfinkel, “Discipline,” 2.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 7-8.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 47.

unless it was done “in the service of the spirit.”⁶⁰ Garfinkel explains that speech and silence could be conveyed through conversation and behavior – “the individual’s transference of a spiritual state to the physical world.”⁶¹ But a behavior, whether it is a physical action or an object, like clothing, through which an individual expresses him- or herself, is not governed entirely by theology. Every action or object embodies multiple concepts. Clothing, for example, embodies the current standards of fashion, one’s economic status, one’s sewing skill (if the garment was homemade), and occasionally, one’s morality.⁶² Additionally, for Quakers, clothing could be an expression of piety. Because clothing could embody so many meanings, it became an ambiguous object that reflected the ambiguity allowed within the Quaker religion. Clothing and other objects embodied a Quaker’s conversational competence. The same object could mean different things depending on who was using it. A Quaker in good standing who understood and accepted the Inner Light could have greater leeway in his or her material choices than a Quaker whose connection and commitment to the faith were more tenuous. Quakers understood these subtle differences, but they were not so obvious to outsiders then and now.

Hicksite Quaker Abby Hopper Gibbons wrote about the multiple attitudes her fellow Friends held on material objects: “Our tastes differ and we cannot all agree as to

⁶⁰ Susan Garfinkel, “Genres of Worldliness: Meanings of the Meeting House for Philadelphia Friends, 1755-1830” (Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1997), 28.

⁶¹ Garfinkel, “Discipline,” 60.

⁶² Garfinkel’s uses furniture as an example, but I believe that the same argument can be applied to clothing as well.

what is most becoming. Therefore, everyone is to his liking.”⁶³ Non-Quakers often assumed that all Quakers (and all Quaker material culture) were alike, seeing a homogenous group where distinct individuals existed. “Non-Quakers perceived Quakers as different, even though Friends’ dress, behavior, and possessions were not uniformly distinct from those of non-Quakers.”⁶⁴ But because non-Quakers saw Friends as being different, they assumed that their material culture must be distinct as well. In fact, more often than not, Quaker and non-Quaker material culture looked similar. It was the meanings embedded in these objects that was different.

This is why it is so hard for modern viewers to make sense of Quaker material culture. Plainness was never an absolute for Quakers. There were never detailed rules about what constituted plainness and what did not. Instead, plainness was relative. It depended on an individual’s or family’s level of commitment to the Quaker faith, their economic status, the nature and symbolism of the object in question, and any number of other factors. Taking an approach like Garfinkel’s to Quaker clothing may help to clarify what plain dress meant to one group of families – the Moons and the Richardsons – in the nineteenth-century Delaware Valley.

⁶³ Abby Hopper to Isaac Hopper, 7 November 1829, in Sarah H. Emerson, The Life of Abby Hopper Gibbons, Told Chiefly Through her Correspondance (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1896), 21-22 quoted in Verplanck, 191.

⁶⁴ Verplanck, 187.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction to the Collection

In 1993, Eleanor A. Murphey donated 120 textiles, mainly clothing, to the Winterthur Museum.⁶⁵ Ranging in date from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the objects form a rare collection of everyday clothing with documented ties to Quaker families. The collection falls into three main sections – household textiles, children’s and infant’s clothing, and women’s clothing. There are also a man’s vest and stockings. The bulk of the collection is hand-sewn and probably homemade, although some of the later garments are machine-stitched or have manufacturers’ labels. Whereas many times, garments handed down from family member to family member are special occasion garments – christening and wedding gowns, for example – this collection features mostly “everyday” type items, the majority of which feature definite evidence of wear and repair.

Both written labels and markings on the objects themselves link the pieces in this collection to two Quaker families and their descendants – the Moon family of Bucks County, Pennsylvania and the Richardson family of Wilmington, Delaware (Figures 3 and 4). Both families have extensively documented ties to the Society of Friends and

seem to have enjoyed similar levels of economic success and social status in the nineteenth century. Although the scope of this thesis precludes a detailed family history, what follows is a brief attempt to place the Moons and the Richardsons in a social, economic, and religious context.

The Moon family's life and fortunes centered around Woodbourne, their farm near Fallsington, Pennsylvania. In the late nineteenth century, the family recorded their memories of the farm and their experiences there in a journal called Woodbourne Reminiscences. According to the journal, James Moon, the first member of the family to reach America, arrived in the mid-seventeenth century. His father (also named James) followed him sometime around 1683.⁶⁶ A third James Moon, the grandson of the elder James Moon, built Woodbourne in 1757, some time after his marriage to Ann Sotcher Watson. The house went through several renovations and additions, and was inhabited by members of the Moon family until its demolition in 1967 to make way for a highway.⁶⁷

According to the family tradition, the Moon family had belonged to the Society of Friends in England. Their religious convictions held strong throughout the generations. James Moon (1782-1855), the grandson of Woodbourne's builder, was an abolitionist who went to great lengths to convince his fellow Friends and neighbors to emancipate their slaves. A large selection from his diary, copied into the Woodbourne Reminiscences, records his duties as part of a committee appointed by the Bucks

⁶⁵ In the spring of 2002, Mrs. Murphey gave several more items to the museum, a few of which will also be discussed in this thesis.

⁶⁶ "Woodbourne Reminiscences," (1885), 11.

Quarterly meeting “to visit those of our members who hold their fellow Men in bondage and captivity.”⁶⁸ Over a five-year period from 1776 to 1781, he listed more than 70 meetings with his neighbors. Although it occasionally took more than one visit to convince a family to manumit their slaves, thanks to his efforts many Friends eventually conceded that “keeping slaves [for a] term of life was wrong and not justifiable upon principles of Equity and Justice.”⁶⁹

James’ wife, Jane Haines Moon, shared her husband’s anti-slavery views.⁷⁰ In 1817, while on a trip to Baltimore to improve her health, she met Elizabeth H. Walker, a Quaker and abolitionist speaker. Despite her family’s concerns for her health, she accompanied Walker on a tour of the South. The two women and their escorts visited Quaker meetings in Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas, where Walker gave impassioned abolitionist speeches. During the tour, which did take its toll on Jane Moon’s health (she had to miss the Charleston leg of the trip) Walker spoke before several members of Congress, and the women were even able to take tea with President Monroe and his family at Christmas.⁷¹

When not pressing for abolition, the Moon family worked the land. Eventually, Mahlon Moon (1814-1887), Jane and James’s son, formally went into business as a nurseryman after an unsuccessful investment in mulberry trees, which had been expected

⁶⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 251.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 269.

⁷⁰ Jane Haines’ sister, Amy Haines, married Benjamin Albertson, the great-grandfather of Eleanor Murphey, making her parents third cousins. The “Woodbourne Reminiscences” contain several mentions of Amy and Benjamin’s son, Henry Albertson, who frequently visited his aunt and her family at the Moon farm.

to feed silkworms and create a silk industry in America. In 1849 he opened Morrisville Nursery, which operated until 1911 and was later reopened in the 1950s by a descendent.⁷² The oldest of Mahlon's four children, William H. Moon, married Ellen Maria Taylor, a descendent of Joseph Taylor, William Penn's secretary, in 1875. Their daughter, Maria Balderston Moon was the mother of Eleanor Albertson Murphey. Most of the Moon family's children, up to and including Mrs. Murphey, were educated at home or at small local schools and, when they were old enough, at Westtown school in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where school officials strictly upheld Quaker teachings.

In the Woodbourne Reminiscences, both family members who lived at Woodbourne and the numerous cousins who paid constant visits described their memories of the farm and its inhabitants, particularly James and Jane Haines Moon. Although the family were devout Quakers, they nonetheless enjoyed many of life's finer comforts. Entries in the journal record the purchase of silver, both as wedding presents (a creamer and sugar bowl) and as a gentle bribe to increase the presence of soup on the family's dinner table (a soup ladle).⁷³

Members of the Richardson family made their home just south of Wilmington, along the Christina River. In 1687, John Richardson, an English settler and Quaker, began acquiring land on the north side of the Christina River in New Castle County. Among the properties he bought was a third-interest in a gristmill that had already been

⁷¹ "Woodbourne Reminiscences," 83-84.

⁷² Mrs. Eleanor A. Murphey, letter to author, 5 October 2001.

⁷³ "Woodbourne Reminiscences", 75-76.

established by Swedish settlers in the area.⁷⁴ His son, John 2, bought out his partners in the mill in 1723, giving the family exclusive control of one of the few mills in the area. This John further enriched the family's coffers by expanding into the West Indies shipping trade and renting out much of his property.⁷⁵ His sons further cemented the family's social and economic status when Robert married into the Shipley family, prominent Quakers and one of the founders of Wilmington, and Richard married Sarah Tatnall, sister to patriot, miller, and Quaker Joseph Tatnall, one of the richest men in Delaware. Richard's inheritance included the mill, and in 1785 he remodeled the gristmill to help it compete with the newer facilities that were springing up throughout Delaware and added a sawmill to the family's holdings to cash in on the region's growing demand for lumber. By his death in 1797, Richard, like his father before him, had become one of the wealthiest men in Delaware. In his will he left the mills to his three sons, Joseph, Ashton, and John 6, whose newly inherited wealth quickly made them "the most eligible bachelors in New Castle County."⁷⁶

In 1804, three years before he married Philadelphia Quaker Mary Wood, Ashton Richardson built his house "Ashley" on 14 acres of farmland. From the captain's walk on the roof, he could overlook the mill and his other properties. Judging from the 1895 will of Hannah Richardson, the last member of the family to live in the house, it was handsomely furnished with the revenues those properties brought in, including a

⁷⁴ C.A. Weslager, The Richardsons of Delaware (Wilmington: Knebel, 1957), 35. I am following Weslager's system of keeping track of the many John Richardsons. They are numbered in chronological order, with John 1 being the first in America to bear that name.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 38-9.

considerable amount of silver, china, and glass.⁷⁷ The two-story brick mansion housed the Richardsons and their 11 children, eight of whom lived to adulthood. The Richardson children, like the Moons and many of the children of other Delaware Valley Quakers, attended Westtown school.

Both during Ashton Richardson's lifetime and after his death in 1852, when the estate passed to his three unmarried children, Ashley played host to a constant stream of visiting friends and family. Elizabeth Richardson, his eldest daughter, who married Englishman Willam R. Hodgson, Jr. in 1867, frequently visited her childhood home from her residence in Philadelphia. Hodgson, a druggist and amateur artist, enjoyed sketching scenes in the woodlands around Ashley.⁷⁸ In an 1856 letter to his daughter Mary, then studying at Westtown, he expressed his feelings for the family seat: "I missed thee very much at Ashley and wished thou could have been there with us to enjoy the dear old place. It was very much against my inclination to leave it so soon, but I knew I ought to come home."⁷⁹

In 1871, Mary Richardson Hodgson married Henry Albertson. Their son, Henry Haines Albertson married Maria Balderston Moon in 1915. Henry H. Albertson was a fruit grower in southern New Jersey until his death in the late 1950s. It was one of their four daughters, Eleanor Albertson Murphey, who donated the clothing collection to the museum.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 56.

⁷⁷ "Hannah W. Richardson's Memoranda of Articles for Distribution" rpt. in Weslager, 193.

⁷⁸ Weslager, 79.

⁷⁹ William R. Hodgson to Mary Hodgson, 13 July 1856, in Weslager, 184.

CHAPTER 6

Women's Clothing

This thesis will focus on three aspects of the Murphey collection – women's clothing, children's clothing, and undergarments.⁸⁰ The women's clothing in the collection consists of a short gown, a spencer-style bodice, four gowns from the 1830s and 40s, an 1880s bodice, and a late nineteenth-century dress. It is my contention that these gowns, despite their concrete attribution to documentable Quakers, defy the commonly held notions of what nineteenth-century Quaker clothing should look like. Instead of being "different" and immediately identifiable as Quaker clothing, they are actually representative of what all but the most elite American women – no matter their religion – wore in that period.

The first garment is a reddish-brown short gown (1994.107.69), believed to have been worn by Rachel Borgess Moon, who lived from 1753 to 1819 (Figure 5). The garment probably dates from the last twenty years of her life. Made of a plain-woven cotton printed with a design of small white hexagons, the short gown's waist drawstring, inserted in a channel created by folding the material and whipstitching it, is placed relatively high, indicating the gown's early nineteenth-century date. The gown, simply

constructed out of rectangles of fabric, features fabric reinforcements at the back of the neckline and under the arms. The dyes used to create the brown background of the fabric have shifted color over the years to a purplish tone, while there is additional discoloration under the arms caused by perspiration. Claudia Kidwell writes that short gowns “could be worn by women continuously during their adult lives.”⁸¹ They could adjust a woman’s changing figure, no small recommendation in era when pregnancies were frequent and clothes were precious.

The collection also includes a spencer-style waist (1994.107.86) from the early nineteenth century (Figure 6).⁸² Only a bodice survives, but threads around the bottom of the garment indicate that it might at one time have been attached to a peplum or skirt. The garment, made of subtly striped brown plain-woven wool, has long sleeves and a square neckline that has a white gathered insert of self-striped material sewn into it with long running stitches. It is lined with a light brown material, probably cotton, except for the lower fourth of the sleeves, which are lined in a tan silk. The bottom hem of the garment is formed by turning the lining and outer material up and whipstitching them together, using the same thread that holds the collar insert on. The waist has been damaged by moths and there is staining, particularly around the armholes. Information provided by the donor attributes this waist to Mary Wood Richardson (1785-1853).

⁸⁰ Because of the focus of this thesis, the household textiles in this collection will only be treated in Appendix B.

⁸¹ Claudia Kidwell, “Short Gowns,” *Dress* 4 (1978), 45.

⁸² I am calling this garment a waist rather than a short gown because of its set-in sleeve construction. See Kidwell, 58.

Three of the dresses share the same basic size and profile, making it likely that they have a common date (the mid-1830s) and wearer. This is confirmed by material provided by the donor, which states that these dresses all belonged to Elizabeth Richardson Hodgson, daughter of the Mary Richardson who may have worn the striped waist. The first of these dresses (1994.107.88.1-2) is described by the family as a wedding dress (Figure 7). Made of khaki-colored sheer silk, the dress has a high neck, long straight sleeves, slightly dropped shoulders, and a moderately full skirt. The bodice and sleeves are made of a double layer of the khaki silk and are lined with thin white linen. The cuffs of the sleeves are lined with white silk and feature white piping along the wrists that matches piping found around the neck and shoulders. The bodice fastens down the front with eleven hook and eye closures. The skirt consists of five panels of netting sewn together. It has an approximately 8 ½ inch wide hem. The skirt is gathered and sewn into the bodice with an opening in the front that is closed by a single hook and eye closure. The dress is accompanied by an underskirt made of the same netting with a waistband and tie of brown cotton tape. The underskirt is longer than the skirt of the dress and would probably have shown beneath it, creating a layered look. Both the dress and petticoat feature severe shattering and are quite fragile. Parts of the dress, particularly the underarms, are badly discolored. Accompanying these two items are two triangular fragments of the silk netting. Hems on one of the fragments indicate that it may have been a fichu or shawl, but the pieces are so wrinkled and damaged that it is difficult to tell if they were actual wardrobe pieces or scraps. The wedding ensemble is finished off with a pair of black satin slippers marked “3 ½ / Miss Hodgson.”

The other two dresses in this part of the collection (1994.107.89 and 1994.107.90) are nearly identical in style. Both dresses feature long sleeves that are slightly fuller at the shoulder than the wrist and slightly dropped shoulders. The fitted bodices open at the front and feature boning inserted to give shape. The full skirts are gathered and sewn to waistbands that are connected to the back of the bodice and have a long strip that wraps around the waist like a belt. Dress 1994.107.90, made of a plain-woven printed cotton in lavender and brown, features a v-neck with self-piping at the neck, wrists, and shoulders (Figure 8). The bodice fastens with six brass hook-and-eye fixtures. A white cotton fabric serves as lining for the bodice and the inside wrist area of the sleeves is lined in white and purple cotton. The dress shows considerable evidence of wear, repair, and alteration. Thread evidence and patching indicates that the waist of the dress was lowered to a natural level and that the sleeves were cut down to become narrower. In addition, pieced strips added to the shoulders, presumably to give them a dropped look, have small closed buttonholes on them, and may have originally come from the dress's waistband. The dress appears to have been first constructed in the mid- to late 1820s and was apparently altered at or around the time that the other two dresses were made.

Its companion dress, 1994.107.89, is slightly more sophisticated in material and construction and would probably have been worn for more formal occasions while the cotton dress might have been for everyday wear (Figure 9). The bodice features a high neckline and has two large areas of padding to give shape to the bust. As with the cotton dress, a small pocket has been inserted along one of the front seams in the skirt. The dress is completely lined. A brown polished cotton lines the bodice while an unpolished

cotton of similar color lines the skirt and is joined to it at the inside of the bottom hem with a brown braided tape. The left arm of the garment has been carefully pieced together out of five pieces of fabric, while the right arm is made out of only one. This may indicate that the seamstress was short on fabric. Although the dress fabric has become slightly discolored from age and the lining fabric in the bodice has begun to deteriorate, the dress as a whole shows less evidence of wear than its cotton counterpart, which is further evidence that this dress might have been worn less frequently and for more special occasions. All three of these dresses have elements in common with fashion plate designs and existing non-Quaker fashions of the period, although they feature less decoration and more austere sleeves. Fashion plates tend to represent an idealized extreme of fashion rarely seen in reality, so it may not be surprising that they are far more elaborate than the examples of clothing seen in the Murphey collection (Figure 10). A surviving English gown from the same period, while less elaborate than the fashion plate, still features fashionable details not seen in these Quaker dresses, such as a floral print, full sleeves with ruching below the shoulders, and a decorated bodice (Figure 11).

While this thesis was being written, Mrs. Murphey sent several more items to the museum. Among them was a khaki-colored ribbed silk dress that both Mrs. Murphey and her great-grandmother Maria Balderston Taylor wore at their weddings. Wearing the gown, Maria Balderston (1816-1899) married Jesse Williams Taylor on October 6, 1840, and Eleanor Albertson wore it again on June 12, 1952 when she married Rhoads

Murphey (Figure 12).⁸³ With a full skirt, a v-shaped waist, and long, slightly puffed sleeves, the dress was perfectly in style for its time. The neckline of the dress featured two bands of pleated silk sewn on to the front and gathered together with a lozenge-shaped piece of fabric to create the v-shaped shawl design so popular at this time. Unlike more modish designs, however, the shawl does not form the neckline of the gown (Figure 13). Instead, the dress has a modest rounded neckline. The lozenge in the front of the gown, the neck, and the sleeves all feature piping made of the same silk as the dress. The sleeves close at the cuff with two hook-and-eye fasteners and 11 of the same hooks close the dress down the back. The bodice is lined with tan polished cotton and features small pockets where boning was inserted. A darker brown cotton lines the interior hem of the skirt, the waistband, and the sleeves. The skirt, which measures 38 ½ inches long, is made up of panels of silk with a 17 ½ inch selvage width. A fichu of matching silk accompanies the dress. It has a small cotton tab in the back that shows the marks of pins used to hold it in place. Although this dress is much closer in style to non-Quaker garments of the time than the dresses discussed previously, its solid color (as opposed to the floral print) and its lack of ornamentation (such as a sash or rosettes) represent a compromise between fashion, practicality, and simplicity (Figure 14).

The Murphey collection moves into the 1880s with a black silk faille bodice (1994.107.14). This garment has the most complicated construction of any of the clothing mentioned yet. The main bodice is made up of eight panels of fabric, two in the front (where there is a clearly visible selvage edge on the inside), one on each of the

⁸³ The collection also contains a vest (1994.107.69) worn by Jesse Williams and believed

sides, and four in the back. The four back panels are longer than the others and are sewn together to form two tails (Figure 15). The tails are decorated with two triangular groupings of three black sequined and beaded circular decorations. A black thread-wrapped toggle hangs from the bottom of these groupings. From the toggle are suspended three ropes, two of black braided silk and one covered in beads, and two beaded tassels. These ropes are draped between the two sequined groupings to form swags. Compared to the back of the garment, the front is rather plain. Twelve ball-shaped buttons covered in crocheted netting and black beads fasten the garment down the front. Three similar buttons decorate the wrists of the sleeves, although these buttons are not functional. A small watch pocket is sewn onto the bodice just below the waistline on the left front of the garment. The set-in collar band shows evidence that pins were used to hold it shut. The bodice is fully lined in brown plain woven cotton. The four darts in the front of the garment are reinforced on the inside and two small strips of the lining fabric have been sewn to the two interior darts to serve as an interior waistband. The dress has been considerably damaged by time and wear. Many of the beads are loose and missing, and there are scattered silk losses throughout the garment. The silk is torn under the right arm and evidence of mending is clearly visible. Family records give no indication of who might have worn this garment. Combining two trends from the late 1880s and early 1890s, this garment features the severe cut and tailoring of a riding habit or suit jacket with the elaborate jet beading found on more formal dresses of the day (Figures 16 and 17). The plain cut of the bodice combined with the relatively elaborate

by the family to have been worn at his wedding.

beading on the buttons and tails of the garment are an interesting adaptation of high fashion into reality.

A dress from about the same period, part of Mrs. Murphey's second group of donations to the museum, also shows a restrained approach to the fashions shown in magazines and fashion plates. Made of a light teal ribbed silk and trimmed with dark teal silk velvet, the dress features a high velvet collar and puffed sleeves with long fitted velvet cuffs (Figure 18). The skirt features a band of velvet piping and two rows of tucks at the hem. The bodice opens down the front with hooks and eyes and the skirt fastens at the left front. The bodice and skirt are now loosely pinned together. The join between the bodice and the skirt is covered by an exterior corset made of the dress silk and trimmed top and bottom with velvet piping. The boned corset, the dress' distinguishing decorative feature, fastens down the left side with hooks and eyes. The bodice, corset, and bottom of the skirt are lined with various patterns of brown printed cotton. The skirt measures 41 ¾ inches long and features panels with a selvage width of 20 inches. The corset has an approximately 27-inch circumference. While I could find no examples of other dresses with a similar exterior corset, several evening gowns from the early 1890s feature waist decorations in a corset shape and may have been the inspiration for this dress (Figure 19).

All these garments have descended in a documentably Quaker family. But their provenance aside, does anything about them mark them as Quaker garments? It would be easy to say they are Quaker because of their generally drab coloring and lack of ornamentation, but these are qualities that can not be exclusively associated with

members of the Society of Friends. In a January 1854 article in Godey's Lady's Book about the history of fashion, the author, Mrs. Merrifield, describes current Quaker attire, noting that "every part of their dress is useful and convenient; it has neither frills nor flounces, nor trimmings to carry the dirt and get shabby before the dress itself; nor wide sleeves to dip in the plates, and lap up the gravy and sauces, nor artificial flowers, nor bows or ribbons." In short, she contends that Quaker dress is the ultimate in practicality. Furthermore, she relates that while Quakers used to be remarkable for the peculiarity of the outmoded fashions they wore, they now "occasionally approach so near the fashions generally worn, that they are no longer distinguishable by the singularity of their dress, but by its simplicity and chasteness."⁸⁴

A few months later, in April 1854, Mrs. Merrifield recommended women follow the Quaker example in the decoration (or lack thereof) of their clothing. In an installment of her series "Dress as a Fine Art" entitled "Ornament Economy," Mrs. Merrifield recommended that ornament "appear designed to answer some useful purpose." She further stated that good quality dress material would last longer than cheap, and recommended plain dresses of a single color because they were "more economical, as well as more quiet in their appearance, than those of various colors." She went on to note that some colors wear better than others, and recommended women use "drabs and other 'Quaker colors' because they are the most permanent. Finally, she noted that "it is not economical to have the dresses made in the extremity of fashion, because such soon become remarkable; but the fashions should be followed at such a distance that the

⁸⁴ Mrs. Merrifield, "Dress as a Fine Art: Remarks on Particular Costumes," Godey's

wearer may not attract the epithet of old-fashioned.”⁸⁵ By recommending plain dresses of good quality with only useful ornament that were fashionable but not extreme, Mrs. Merrifield was essentially recommending that women dress like the Quakers she described a few months earlier. While Quaker clothing may have been plain and stripped-down compared to the styles shown on fashion plates, chances are it did not look significantly different than the clothing worn by non-elite women across the country. Not everyone could afford to (or wanted to) make or buy extravagantly trimmed dresses. In households where economy and durability mattered, women might have chosen garments quite similar to the frugal “Quaker-style” fashions described by Mrs. Merrifield regardless of their own religious affiliation. While the dresses studied above did belong to Quakers, it is impossible to tell whether the costume’s appearance reflected fashion concerns, economic sensibility, religious feeling, or a combination of all three.

If the dresses did not necessarily set Quakers apart from their non-Quaker contemporaries, the outer accessories they wore with those dresses did. The 1838 Workwoman’s Guide contains patterns for a cap, bonnet, and shawl “for a member of the Society of Friends,” but does not give separate patterns for any other clothing form (Figures 20 and 21).⁸⁶ Interestingly, there is a separate cap pattern for elderly Friends. This separation of Quaker and non-Quaker patterns suggests that Quaker accessories (but not Quaker garments) were different, both visually and in construction. It is interesting to

Lady’s Book, January 1854, 25.

⁸⁵ Mrs. Merrifield, “Dress as a Fine Art: Ornament Economy,” Godey’s Lady’s Book, April 1854, 347.

note that many descriptions of Quaker clothing written by non-Quakers focus on headgear. In Godey's Lady's Book, J.T.F. waxed poetic about the Quakeresses and their bonnets, describing their "... pleasant smile, the artless face, / And all the nameless traits that grace / The simple bonnet's tie."⁸⁷ Quaker headgear seems to have been differentiated from non-Quaker styles since the very beginning of the religion. In the eighteenth century, female Friends wore large flat hats with very low crowns. These were replaced by the ubiquitous Quaker bonnet by the nineteenth century.⁸⁸ Large brimmed "coal scuttle" style bonnets and the caps that went under them were worn by Quaker women long after they went out of fashion in the rest of society. In 1926, George Barton wrote:

On the ordinary days of the year the garb of the members of the Society of Friends is as rare as the Indian in his native dress, but during "Quaker Meeting" week they come forth from the suburbs and unexpected places looking the same in outward appearance as they did in those far-off days. . . The broad-brimmed hats are rarer now than ever, but they still persist with the poke bonnets of the women.⁸⁹

The Murphey collection includes six women's bonnets and one bonnet cover, most of which date to the mid to late nineteenth century.⁹⁰ One bonnet is made of straw (1994.107.74), one is made of cotton (1994.107.72), and the others are all made of silk.

⁸⁶ A Lady, The Workwoman's Guide: A Guide to 19th Century Decorative Arts, Fashion, and Practical Crafts, (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1838), reprint, (Guilford, CT: Opus, 1986), 160, 126-7, 166.

⁸⁷ J. T. F., 34.

⁸⁸ Gummere, 217.

⁸⁹ George Barton, Little Journeys Around Old Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Peter Reilly, 1926), 20.

⁹⁰ Most of the bonnets were attributed by the donor to Ellen Maria Taylor (1850-1911). For a more thorough description of the bonnets in the collection, see Cheryl Denbar,

In ivory, black, or olive, the bonnets are decorated simply (with self-fringe or ruffles) and lack the ostentatious ornaments found on many non-Quaker examples. They fit into the range of colors for Friends' bonnets suggested by The Workwoman's Guide – "black, white, grey, or fawn colored silk."⁹¹ Even the straw bonnet, though not "typical" Quaker headgear, lacks the ribbons, flowers, or other decorations usually seen on such a form. In 1854, Mrs. Merrifield noted that Quaker women had recently "adopted the straw and drawn-silk bonnet in their most simple forms."⁹² The bonnets' shapes and lack of decoration would have clearly distinguished their wearers from non-Quakers. Shawls included in the collection would also have marked their wearers as Quakers. Although there is no way of knowing whether the shawls' makers and wearers were aware of The Workwoman's Guide, they managed, intentionally or not, to adhere to its suggestion that Quaker shawls be "made either of fine white, or very pale drab, grey, or other quiet coloured cloth."⁹³ The collection's shawls, in ivory, khaki, and various shades of gray, would have been a stark contrast to the immense variety of brightly colored and elaborately patterned kashmir-type shawls popular throughout the nineteenth century.⁹⁴

To female Quakers, the shawl and bonnet were badges of religious affiliation. Amelia Gummere claimed that at one time, "to the initiated, the Quaker bonnet once

"Textile Connoisseurship Student Project," student paper, 2000. Not all the family information included in her paper is accurate, however.

⁹¹ The Workwoman's Guide, 160.

⁹² Mrs. Merrifield, "Dress as a Fine Art: Remarks on Particular Costumes," 25.

⁹³ The Workwoman's Guide, 166

⁹⁴ Alice Mackrell, Shawls, Stoles, and Scarves (New York: Drama Book Publishers, 1986), 48-72. The Murphey collection contains 8 shawls (1994.107.75-.77, .79-.84), 1 related neckerchief (1994.107.81), and three of the popular white fichus also worn by female friends (1994.107.24-.26).

spoke volumes; a glance sufficed to distinguish Beaconite, Wilburite, Maulite, Gurneyite, or Hicksite, and the dwellers in the Mesopotamia of the East” (Figure 22).⁹⁵ While most people would not have been able to make such detailed judgments about a person’s religious affiliation based on their headgear alone, it does seem clear that the garment most associated with Quaker women was the bonnet. While in the privacy of her own home, a Quaker woman might not look that different from a non-Quaker, but the garments she donned to present herself to the world when she went in public made a clear statement about her religious beliefs. By donning or removing headgear and shawls, Quaker women could choose to blend in with or stand apart from non-Quaker society.

The bonnet was an important part of a Quaker woman’s wardrobe that allowed her to negotiate a place in both Quaker and non-Quaker society. But it has also become a crucial icon in the mythology of Quaker costume. Any collection of Quaker costume is full of them. They survive in large numbers because they were important objects both to their nineteenth-century owners and to the collectors and curators who amassed them in such great quantity. To both groups, they were, and still are, quintessentially Quaker objects. They instantly identified their wearers’ religious affiliation – and they allow modern viewers to make the same connection today.

⁹⁵ Gummere, 227. This claim was challenged by her critic George Vance, who noted that his Gurneyite aunt and his Wilburite aunt each wore bonnets attributed by Gummere to the opposite sect. He noted that “as a matter of fact I do not think that Quaker politics had anything to do with bonnets.” George Vance to Amelia Gummere, 16 January 1902, Gummere Collection.

CHAPTER 7

Children's Clothing

Numerous pieces of children's clothing make up the bulk of the Murphey collection. The traditional view has held that Quaker children were not expected to adhere to the standards of plain dressing followed by adults. Yet plenty of evidence exists to show that Quaker parents were deeply committed to raising their children with Quaker principles. In The Quaker Family in Colonial America, J. William Frost notes that "the Quaker child was to be subjected to the plain style of life from an early age. The infant was not dressed in frilly laced petticoats with ribbons attached so that he might not later succumb to the temptations of finery and pride in appearance."⁹⁶ Although his book treats the Colonial period, the same sentiment seems to have held true in the nineteenth century as well. The 1834 Disciplines for the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting advised "that all Friends, both old and young, keep out of the world's corrupt language, manners, vain and needless things and fashions, in apparel, buildings, and furniture of houses; some of which are immodest, indecent, and unbecoming."⁹⁷ Young Friends were expected to reject the corruption of fashionable goods, and their parents were the ones

⁹⁶ J. William Frost, The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Portrait of the Society of Friends (New York: St. Martins, 1973), 78.

charged with teaching them to do it. In a section on parental responsibilities, the 1834 Disciplines cautioned against allowing youth to wear worldly dress and listed dire consequences for parents who allowed such a thing to happen: "If any parents in membership with us, willingly indulge their children or youth under their care, in such extravagance, liberties and excesses, as are here pointed out, they should in like manner be treated with and dismissed."⁹⁸ It should be noted that not only were these guidelines vague, they were also theoretical, and in practice few Quakers were ever dismissed from meeting for infractions related to clothing. Still, regardless of how well it was enforced, the idea that children should be at least as plain as adults (whatever that standard of plainness might be) seems to have been fixed in the Quaker mindset. Certainly the rules from Quaker schools suggest that young students were held to a strict standard of dress. In 1840 and 1842, the Orthodox-run Friends Select School in Philadelphia, for example, mandated that "the boys are not to wear caps or falling collars to their coats or jackets: the girls are not to wear any superfluous ribbons or trimmings, nor are the scholars in either school to indulge in articles of mere ornament or fashionable modes of attire."⁹⁹

Perhaps, the idea that children were not expected to dress "Quaker" has its origins in the look of surviving pieces of juvenile clothing with a Quaker provenance. These items don't look "Quaker," the reasoning goes, so Quaker children must not have had to dress plainly. This idea may be due, in large part, to the general misconception about

⁹⁷ Rules of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, for Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Delaware, and the Eastern Parts of Maryland (Philadelphia: Rakestraw, 1834), 109.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

what is really “Quaker” about Quaker clothing. As standards for adults gradually relaxed throughout the nineteenth century, it seems reasonable to assume that the same would hold true for children’s wear, especially since it looks like few of the Discipline’s instructions about plain dress were ever enforced. Particularly as the Society of Friends’ influence withered after the Orthodox-Hicksite schism, parents and church elders might have been reluctant to enforce clothing codes that might drive youth from their faith. The clothing in this collection is not appreciably “plain.” It reflects the growing freedom of (and from) plain dress experienced by Quakers in the nineteenth century.

The children’s clothing in the collection breaks down into two main groups – infants’ and children’s clothing. The infants’ clothing consists mainly of kimonos, long gowns, and headgear. There is also one long infant’s coat. The children’s group contains clothing for girls and boys, some underwear, a coat, and some shoes. Very little of the clothing from either group is marked, making it difficult to ascertain who originally wore the garments. They do, however, seem to have descended from both sides of the donor’s family.

Among the garments are eleven shirts or short kimonos. Along with a diaper, these would have been the staples of an infant’s wardrobe throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Workwoman’s Guide provided several patterns for these garments in 1838 and in 1904 Wanamaker’s catalog still advertised baby’s shirts in the

⁹⁹ Philadelphia Monthly Meeting Overseers Committee on Select Schools, 1832-1847, entries dated 1st month 24, 1840 and 8th month 6, 1842, in the Quaker Collection, Haverford College, rpt. in Lee-Whitman, 141.

complete layettes they offered for sale.¹⁰⁰ The shirts can be roughly divided into four groups, based on their construction – shirts made from one piece of fabric, shirts where the sleeves are of one piece with the body of the garment, shirts that were put on over the head, and shirts that combine features from more than one of the groups (see appendix). One of the shirts in the third group, 1994.107.106 is marked MRH for Mary Richardson Hodgson Albertson (1836-1904), daughter of Elizabeth Richardson Hodgson (1812-1867). It is constructed like a miniature of her mother's shifts, with separate sleeves, underarm gussets, and a neck drawstring.¹⁰¹

In addition to a large number of baby shirts, the collection also features 13 long baby gowns. All have long skirts to help keep the infant's legs covered. In 1838, The Workwoman's Guide recommended a skirt length of 18 nails (approximately 39.5 inches) for rich children and 15 nails (approximately 27 inches) for poor children.¹⁰² Although most of the 13 gowns are difficult to date due to the ubiquity of long white baby gowns throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, four gowns can be identified as being among the earliest in the collection because of their materials and style. Gowns 1994.107.27, 1994.107.38, 1994.107.39, and 1994.107.49 all have very high waistlines, giving them probable dates in the early nineteenth century.¹⁰³ Gown 1994.107.27 is the only one of the gowns not made completely out of white fabric (Figure 23). The 15-inch long skirt of the garment is of blue and white striped woven linen. It is sewn to a

¹⁰⁰ Linda Martin, The Way We Wore: Fashion Illustrations of Children's Wear, 1870-1970 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), 67.

¹⁰¹ Her mother's shifts are 1994.107.113 and 1994.107.114.

¹⁰² The Workwoman's Guide, 17. A nail measures approximately 2.25 inches.

¹⁰³ See Appendix B for further descriptions of the gowns other than 1994.107.27.

relatively coarse plain-woven linen bodice. The bodice is tubular with no real shaping. Two tapes, white with a wide blue stripe, are sewn to the shoulders to create straps. At some point in its life, the garment was either damaged or worn out enough to merit considerable repair work. Half of the original linen bodice has been covered with cotton to cover a large rip. The original shoulder strap tape was mended with a large patch on the right front side of the garment, and one of the original sets of tapes which tied the garment in the back has been replaced with a similar material. The donor's information indicates that the garment could possibly have belonged to either Mahlon (1814-1887) or William Hutchin Moon (1849-1911). This gown is similar in construction and style to a baby gown at the Philadelphia Museum of Art that is dated from 1839 to 1850. This gown, also with a Quaker provenance, has the same attached shoulder straps and about the same bodice length as the Murphey gown, while earlier gowns at the museum tend to have higher waistlines.¹⁰⁴ Because of this information, it is most likely that the gown was worn by William Hutchin Moon in the early 1850s, although because of the heavy wear this garment shows, it is likely that more than one child used it.¹⁰⁵

The rest of the baby gowns are more difficult to date but seem later than the previous four. They can be divided into two groups – those with one-piece fronts and those with front yokes. While the four previously discussed gowns have low necklines, the rest of the gowns have high necks, occasionally with neck bands and ruffles. Five gowns have yokes and four do not. Of the four gowns that do not have yokes, two are

¹⁰⁴ Kristina Haugland, personal conversation. The gown described is PMA 60.239.44.

¹⁰⁵ A marked baby bonnet for WH Moon exists, 1994.107.19.

labeled.¹⁰⁶ Gown 1994.107.45 features tucking embellished with vertical rows of French knots at the front (Figure 24). It also has a collar, probably worn turned-down, and cuffs with scalloped edges. The cotton garment closes in the back with two tiny buttons. Inside the back opening is a small machine-sewn label reading “Hand Made” in a cursive script done with red thread. The other non-yoked garment, 1994.107.47, also features a sewn-in label (Figure 25). “Strictly / Hand Made” is machine sewn in red thread on the label sewn to the back of the neck. This elaborately trimmed cotton gown features tucks at the front and back. The tucks in front are interspersed with a design of embroidery and openwork circles. A similar openwork and embroidery design decorates the cuffs of the sleeves. The neckline is bound with an embroidered band and finished off with a ruffle of lace. It closes in the rear with three small pearl-colored buttons.

In addition to the long gowns, the collection also includes a long baby coat (1994.107.98). Made of a white wool and silk blend, the coat is fully lined in white silk. It closes in front with three buttons (Figure 26). The most outstanding feature of the coat is its deep collar with a dagged, almost crenellated, edge finished with a silk blanket stitch. The cuffs of the coat also feature the same dagged design as the collar. Inside the neck of the coat is a satin ribbon label reading “John Wanamaker / Philadelphia New York / Paris London” (Figure 27). The writing is flanked on either side by two coats of arms. John Wanamaker opened his New York store in 1896, so the coat must date to

¹⁰⁶ The yoked baby gowns are 1994.107.41, 1994.107.43, 1994.107.40, 1994.107.102, and 1994.107.46. The two non-yoked, non-labeled gowns are 1994.107.44 and 1994.107.42. See Appendix B for further descriptions of these garments.

some point after this.¹⁰⁷ I can find no evidence of stores in London or Paris. The label may list these cities in an attempt to make the store seem fashionable and cosmopolitan, two qualities that in the nineteenth century were often equated with Europe.

The children's clothing in the collection consists of both clothing that sends clearly defined gender signals and clothing that is more ambiguous. There is underwear, clothing, and one coat. The boy's clothing consists of trousers, a shirt, a smock, and a "shirt pie". The pants (1994.107.13) are made of a tan fabric with a small blue and white windowpane check. They measure 27 inches around the waist and have an 11-inch inseam, which indicates that they were short pants as opposed to full-length trousers. The pants open with a fall-front flap. They are held shut with purple buttons sewn on to the back sides of the trousers that fasten to horizontal buttonholes on the front sides. There are two additional buttons, one on each side of the pants below the waist that would help keep the flap from gaping open. There is also a pocket built into each side of the pants in this area. Both the front and back of the waistband feature four vertical buttonholes that could fasten the pants to a shirt or an undergarment. A grow tuck decorates each leg near the hem.

A shirt of purple and white checked cotton is the second item of boy's clothing in the collection (1994.107.100). The back panel of the shirt extends over the front of the shoulders. The dropped sleeves are attached to the main body of the shirt, which fastens down the front with six white china buttons. The shirt cuffs are fastened with the same buttons. The sides of the shirt are drawn towards the back by a self-fabric half-belt that

¹⁰⁷ William Allen Zulker, John Wanamaker: King of Merchants (Wayne, PA:

fastens in the back with two more buttons. The shirt features a round collar and likely dates to the third quarter of the nineteenth century, as purple checks were quite popular then, especially in the 1870s. Originally catalogued as a dress, object 1994.107.3 may actually be a young boy's smock (Figure 28). Made of a blue cotton with a white printed design of intertwining vines, the smock closes diagonally across the front with a line of buttons that begins at the right shoulder and moves left and down to the middle of the front hem. A white ruffle, machined to look pleated, has been sewn inside the high neckline of the garment. The smock has straight sleeves and a small semi-circular pocket sewn on to its right side. It is lined inside with reddish brown plaid printed cotton sewn on at the smock's top and side.

The final article of boy's clothing in the collection is a "shirt pie" which belonged to the donor's father, Henry Haines Albertson (1880-1959.)¹⁰⁸ According to the donor, her father attended a Friends' school that had a plain dress code. Tired of being teased by non-Quaker boys because of his appearance, one of his aunts created this garment to help him hide his Quaker clothing on the way to and from school. Made of a circle of cardboard measuring approximately 12 ½ inches in diameter, the garment has a buttonhole in the center that would have fit over one of the wearer's middle shirt buttons. The cardboard has a sewn-on cover. Each side of the cover is divided into four quadrants, each featuring a different patterned cotton fabric (Figure 29). Henry Albertson could have buttoned on the shirt pie, and, when he was wearing a coat or jacket, the patterned fabric would have covered his plain shirt. On one side of the shirt pie, the

Eaglecrest, 1993), 26.

fabrics are a blue and white wave pattern, a gray background with shadow dots, a green and black vermicelli-type pattern, and a black and white woven plaid. The other side features pink and brown dots, a gray check with white dots, a blue and white woven striped fabric, and a deep blue fabric with streaky white dots. A young boy could not have made this object without the assistance of a female and her knowledge of sewing (and access to scrap fabrics). This indicates that on some level, his use of the shirt pie to “hide” his plainness was sanctioned by his family. Most likely, his plain garments were only for school, and he was allowed to wear more colorful fabrics (like those represented on the pie) on other occasions.

The girl’s clothing in the group consists of five dresses. Relatively flat in front and full in the back, dress 1994.107.101 dates to the 1870s. The garment, of plain-woven cotton printed in a blue and white figured check, is constructed without a waist in front, but has a peplum “jacket” look in the back (Figure 30). The skirt fastens on the right rear hip with a single button at the waistband. The back of the bodice, featuring the same princess seaming as the front of the garment, fastens with six buttons and terminates in four flaps which form a small flounced peplum. This peplum, along with the undergarments that would underlie such a dress, would give the garment the rear fullness so desirable in the period. The peplum is edged with bias-cut strips of the same fabric that makes up the dress. The high neckline of the dress is decorated with a white ruffle sewn in behind the neckband. The cuffed sleeves have a slight fullness, and the left sleeve has been carefully pieced together. The right sleeve around the cuff is

¹⁰⁸ This is one of the objects donated by Mrs. Murphey in 2002.

considerably more worn than the left one, leading to the conclusion that the wearer was right-handed.

Dating from the 1870s or 80s, dress 1994.107.4 is a princess line dress with short sleeves.¹⁰⁹ The dress is made of white cotton printed with a design of alternating columns of black dots and red and black hearts and arrows (Figure 31). The high neckband of the dress is decorated with a sewn on ruffle made of white ribbed cotton. The garment buttons down the back with eight pearl-colored buttons molded with a design of concentric circles. The dress' construction is quite complicated, consisting of at least fifteen separate pieces of fabric, not counting the piping on the sleeves and the neck ruffle.

The third girl's dress is made of a purple plaid twill wool (1994.107.99). It features princess seaming and a dropped waist (Figure 32). The sleeves, which appear to be three-quarter length, are trimmed with wide green velvet cuffs. The sleeves are pieced together in the back. Piping at the neck and shoulders is made of the same green velvet. The dress' skirt is pleated and features a trim of decorative tabs around the waist. Small pointed tabs of the plaid fabric hang vertically from the waistline. Every other tab is folded up and has a non-functional buttonhole of black silk sewn on to it. A small pocket is hidden behind the folded up tabs on the right-hand side. Mother of pearl buttons, painted with an orange and yellow paisley-type design, are sewn onto the fake buttonholes, although many of these buttons are now missing. The same buttons fasten

¹⁰⁹ Princess robe dresses were popular in 1875-1880, see Ann Buck, Clothes and the Child: A Handbook of Children's Dress in England 1500-1900 (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1996), 261.

the dress down the back. The bodice and sleeves are lined in brown cotton. The dress appears to be homemade, since the buttons are not all oriented in the same direction. The inner seams are all double finished with running and whipstitches.¹¹⁰ Dresses such as this one can be seen in fashion and sewing magazines as early as the 1880s (Figure 33).

While younger girls' dresses of this style had bloused bodices and low waists, girls ages 7 to 12 wore dresses that "kept the low-waisted short-skirted proportions, but had a more tailored look and were made from women's dress fabrics rather than the machine-made white embroidery which was used for infants' and toddlers' dresses."¹¹¹

Featuring the type of machine embroidery discussed in the quote above, the final two dresses are made of white cotton and would be appropriate for young girls, probably between 2 and 6. Dress 1994.107.53 has a rounded yoke and long sleeves. Like some of the longer baby gowns described earlier, the yoke features alternate columns of tucking and embroidered inserts. The shoulder seams of the yoke are covered with bands of eyelet lace. The neck and sleeves are trimmed with two different kinds of lace, and there are two different bands of embroidery that trim the bottom of the yoke and the cuffs above the lace ruffles. The full skirt of the garment features three grow tucks. The dress fastens in the back with four buttons, three in the yoke and one further down the dress. The second white dress, 1994.107.54, also features elaborate embroidery. The rounded yoke features embroidered flowers in the back and a floral and medallion design in front. The skirt of the garment is gathered and sewn into the yoke. The skirt features four grow

¹¹⁰ Conservation report, object file 1994.107.99, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

¹¹¹ Claire Rose, Children's Clothes since 1750 (London: B. T. Batsford, 1989), 88.

tucks. Above the tucks, the skirt is embroidered with a medallion design that repeats the motif in the front of the yoke. The garment features lace at the neck and cuffs of the short puffed sleeves. There is also openwork along the shoulder seams, at the base of the yoke, under the armholes, and above the lace on the arms. The embroidery on both garments seems to be machine made, and they probably date to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

One dress and a coat and cape in the collection could have been worn by children of either sex. Dress 1994.107.5 dates from the 1840s or 50s and features a wide square neckline, a natural waist, and a full skirt with one grow tuck (Figure 34). Made of white cotton with white, red, and green polkadots, the dress has short square sleeves. The bodice, lined in white cotton, fastens in back with seven buttons covered in netting. The neckline on this dress corresponds with the necklines on the shirts/shifts 1994.107.9, .10, .11, and .106, which suggests that these garments could all date to about the same time. Such low necklines on children's clothing were often criticized for being both immodest and unhealthy.¹¹²

The final child's garment examined here is a coat and matching cape (1994.107.1 and .23). Made of a sage green wool-silk blend, the coat features long sleeves, a full skirt, and a natural waistline. The sleeves are trimmed at the cuffs with dark green velvet and there is self-piping at the neck and shoulder seams. The bodice is lined with a brown wool-silk blend fabric, while the skirt is lined with two different fabrics – plaid silk in the front and tan polished cotton in the back. The sleeves are lined with a brown silk with

¹¹² Buck, 232 and 70.

textured dots. The garment fastens down the front with eight hooks and eyes in the bodice. There are no closures on the skirt. A matching cape would have been worn along with the coat (Figure 35). Made of the same green fabric, the cape is trimmed with green ribbed ribbon and lined in green silk. The cape has a rounded collar and fastens with a single hook and eye. The cape is longer in front than on the sides or back, which would have allowed the wearer to have some range of arm movement. According to Claire Rose, “the masculinity of boys’ dresses was demonstrated by trimmings such as faceted metal buttons, by bright color combinations. . . , and by a looseness of cut around the waist.”¹¹³ This austere garment lacks the bright color and decorations that might signal the gender of the intended wearer, but it does have a relatively loose and unfitted waist and bodice. It could have been either a boy’s tunic coat and cape, or a plain and “Quaker” girl’s ensemble. It may even have served both purposes, and could have been used by both sexes. In many ways, this is the most “Quaker” (in the traditional sense of the word) garment in the children’s collection.

As with the women’s clothing discussed in the previous section, the children’s clothing in the Murphey collection reflects the lack of a “distinctive” form of Quaker clothing in the nineteenth-century. With the possible exception of the child’s coat, none of the clothing is “Quaker” in the traditional sense. But, like the women’s garments, the children’s clothing has a general simplicity of design and ornament that corresponds to Mrs. Merrifield’s definition of mid-century clothing. The latter children’s clothing does seem to be slightly more ornate and colorful than the adults’ – a trend that may owe more

¹¹³ Rose, 95.

to the nature of Victorian childhood than to a more relaxed standard for Quaker children than for their parents.

CHAPTER 8

Undergarments

The Murphey collection contains several examples of both women's and children's undergarments as well as what appears to be a maternity or nursing gown. I do not claim that any of this underwear exhibits "Quaker" tendencies. Rather, I have chosen to describe and, where possible, date the examples in this collection. My initial idea was that Quakers, having a general tendency towards conservatism, might have worn certain styles of underwear long after they had been abandoned by the general public. In some cases this appears to be true, while in others, the difficulty of dating objects (and the lack of dated examples to compare them to) makes the question, for now, unanswerable. But even if we could claim that these particular Quakers wore out-of-date underwear, could we really attribute this to their religion? Might not socio-economic considerations, frugality, or a modesty and conservatism having nothing at all to do with religious sentiment provide the answer instead? Although the underwear in the Murphey collection did not provide me with the answers to the questions I started with, it does raise its own interesting questions.

Most of the women's undergarments were marked in some fashion, and it is with these garments and their wearers that I begin. The earliest marked garments belonged to

Elizabeth Richardson Hodgson (1812-1867) and probably date from sometime around the time of her marriage (1835) to her death. The two shifts are marked “ER/12” (1994.107.113) and “ERH/6” (1994.107.114). It seems likely that the garment marked only with her maiden name predates the shift marked with her married name. The two garments are similar in style and construction, with 114 being slightly larger in size. Made of plain woven white linen, the shifts consist of two large trapezoidal pieces of material which form the body of the garment (Figure 36). A wide square neckline is created by two small strips of fabric that form the shoulders of the shifts. To these are sewn the short sleeve pieces. On shift 113, the sleeves consist of two pieces of material for the sleeve which are gathered into a narrow cuffband, forming small puffs. The sleeves are connected to the body of the garment by squares of material folded in half into a triangle. One side of the triangle is sewn to the sleeve and the other is sewn to the body of the shift. Similar construction is used on shift 114, although the sleeves consist of one piece of material and are not gathered into a cuff. In both cases, extra cloth reinforcements were sewn in where the triangles of fabric join the main body of the shift. Both garments were fitted to the body of the wearer by drawstrings sewn into channels just below the necklines. The inked inscriptions on both garments are located in the center front of the neckline, just below the opening where the drawstrings come out. Both garments show some discoloration from aging, and shift 113 has been repaired on the front at the ends of the drawstring channel.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ These shifts are similar in construction to the infant’s shirt 1994.107.106.

The collection also contains a more elaborate shift attributed to Ellen Maria Taylor, who lived from 1850 to 1911 (1994.107.116). This plain woven cotton garment, more elaborate than the previous two shifts, probably dates from the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. A v-shaped yoke is sewn into the body of the shift (Figure 37). A series of vertical tucks and a center placket of eyelet lace trimmed with a narrow band of eyelet decorate the yoke. Short sleeves are sewn to the body of the garment and are gathered at the neck and cuff, both of which are trimmed with narrow bands of fabric and more of the lace that trims the center placket of the yoke. The garment is reinforced under the arms. The back of the shift is gathered at the neckline. Below the center of the front yoke is a penned inscription reading "Ellie M. Taylor."

Edith C. Moon's (the daughter of Ellen Taylor Moon and aunt of the donor) petticoat also survives in this collection and likely dates to the late 19th or early 20th century (1994.107.95). Made of plain-woven cotton, the petticoat is approximately 27.25 inches long. The three-paneled skirt has twelve narrow tucks near the bottom, with a plain band of fabric and then a ruffle sewn on to finish it. All of this is gathered and sewn into a waistband that opens in the back center seam. The waistband has three evenly spaced vertical buttonholes in the front and two horizontal buttonholes in the back and was probably meant to button onto either an undervest or some type of combination garment. Just to the left of the center front buttonhole is the inked inscription "Edith C. Moon." The back seam, which is partially open to allow the wearer to put on the garment, originally had an 8 inch opening, but has since been ripped even further open.

One more undergarment in the collection is labeled, although it is not quite clear who would have worn it.¹¹⁵ Object 1994.107.115 is a pair of combinations, dating from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century (Figure 38). C. Willet Cunnington dates the beginning of their popularity to 1877 and it appears that they remained in use until around 1908, when they began to be replaced by “skirt-knickers.”¹¹⁶ The short-sleeved garment has a square neckline that opens down the front and fastens with eight buttons. The crotch is left open. The garment gets its shape from two darts in the front and from two shaped panels in the back. There is also gathering at the back near the waist to provide fit and some fullness. The neck and sleeves are trimmed with a narrow band of eyelet lace while the legs are finished with four grow tucks and a wider band of eyelet. The garment features machine sewing throughout. A sewn-on printed label on the inside back of the neck reads “Eleanor T. Albertson,” but it is likely that this label was sewn on at a later point in the garment’s life because Eleanor Albertson (the donor of the collection) is too young to have worn this garment at the time it was fashionable. She would not have been old enough for such a garment until at least the early 1930s, by which time combinations had been replaced by more modern undergarments.

The collection also contains three unmarked petticoats that seem to relate in date to the dresses in the collection. Two petticoats, 94.107.17 and 94.107.94, may be

¹¹⁵ The collection also includes two pairs of marked stockings. One, 1994.107.55, is marked in ink with the following inscription “JWT / knit by his mother 1864 / in her 86th year.” They likely belonged to Jesse Williams Taylor (1816-1905) and were knit by his mother Ellen Shoemaker Taylor. The other pair, which has not yet been matched up with a family member, features knitted top bands into which the name “Anna’s” and the date “186?” (the last digit is unreadable) have been worked (1994.107.57).

contemporaneous with the three dresses attributed to Elizabeth Richardson Hodgson, although there is no evidence of which side of the donor's family they might have come from. Petticoat 94.107.14 is made of quilted taupe silk taffeta with brown silk velvet trim at the hem. Its dropped waist is lined with brown plain-woven cotton, and the skirt is lined with cotton printed in brown, white, and red to look like a moiré-type fabric. Below the dropped waist, the skirt is quilted in a simple pattern of diagonal lines running upward from left to right. Below this, a wide band of the same silk has been sewn on as a border to the petticoat. It is quilted in a series of s-shaped curves, giving the border a wave-like appearance. The petticoat closes at the waist with a single taffeta-covered metal button.

The second unidentified petticoat is made of plain-woven white linen (1994.107.94). The wide skirt, measuring 122 inches in circumference, has two large tucks near the bottom and is gathered into a narrow waistband. Two triangular-shaped gores have been sewn into the front of the skirt to give it the necessary width and fullness. A pocket made of a folded triangular-shaped piece of cloth is sewn into a front seam on what would be the wearer's right side. It is sewn into the waistband at the top and then into the side seam. The waistband of the petticoat fastens with a single mother of pearl button and a horizontal buttonhole. Four vertical buttonholes have been sewn into the waistband, perhaps to hold the petticoat onto another undergarment. This is similar to the extra buttonholes seen on petticoat 94.107.95, which belonged to Edith C. Moon, although this garment almost certainly predates that one.

¹¹⁶ C. Willett Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, The History of Underclothes (London: Michael Joseph, 1951), 176, 209.

The final unidentified petticoat dates to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Made of black silk satin, petticoat 1994.107.15 is shaped to be fuller and slightly longer in the back, giving it the distinctive shape of the 1870s and 80s when bustles and large skirts were popular (Figure 39). The main body of the petticoat consists of a front panel, two side panels each consisting of two pieces of fabric – a small piece at the top and a much larger piece forming the majority of the panel, and two back panels. All these panels are sewn into a waistband that closes with a hook and eye along the center back seam. Two loops of narrow black ribbon have been sewn into the waistband, presumably to hang the garment up for storage. There are two small triangular gores of fabric sewn into the back of the dress between the each of the side and back panels and between the two back panels. These help give the garment more fullness in the back. The bottom hem of the skirt is lined on the inside with a band of black velvet ribbon. An 8 ½ inch wide flounce of a diagonally ribbed silk blend has been sewn on the outside of the skirt. The top edge of the flounce is covered by a band of silk sewn on top of it. The bottom of the flounce is sewn with a simple running stitch. This unfinished edge is covered with a silk ruffle that finishes off the garment. The flounces have come loose in several places and have been rather obviously mended on, sometimes on top of the silk band that was originally intended to hide the join between skirt and flounce. With a waist measuring 33 inches, this garment is the largest of the petticoats included in the collection. Although it appears to be contemporaneous with the bodice discussed in the women's clothing section, this garment is too large to have been worn along with the bodice.

The final example of women's undergarments in the Murphey collection is a rare example of a maternity or nursing gown dating from the second half of the nineteenth century (1994.107.92).¹¹⁷ Although the gown was not technically underwear, it would have likely been worn in the privacy of the home rather than out in public, so it is included in this section. Made of white warp-stripped cotton, the front-opening gown features a yoked front with a single button closure (Figure 40). The opening continues for approximately 16 inches down the length of the front. The long sleeves and back of the gown conform more closely than the front to the style and construction of normal period outerwear. The long straight sleeves fasten at the cuffs with a hook and eye closure. The back, constructed of two panels, would fit the wearer closely. The skirt is gathered closely in the back. There are two sets of ties to fit the garment to the wearer. A set of narrow tapes sewn to the back panels inside of the garment and a sash sewn to the outside of the dress regulate the fit over the wearer's waist and help keep the front opening shut. The gown is relatively plain but does feature piping along the neckline, sleeve cuffs, and all seams except for those on the back and on the skirt. Still, the gown does make some concessions to fashion, most notably in the sloping line created by the dropped shoulders of the bodice. A brief note in the documentation given to the museum indicates that this garment descends from the Taylor side of the donor's family. Although it is difficult to date a garment of this type, it was most likely worn by Ellen Maria Taylor (1850-1911), who married William Moon in 1875. The couple had four children between 1877 and 1889, and this garment could conceivably have been worn for

¹¹⁷ For more drawings and research on this garment, see Amanda Glesmann, "Elegant

any of those pregnancies. This gown would be ideal for use both during and after pregnancy, as the adjustable ties would allow the garment to be worn at any stage in pregnancy and the single button closure and long front opening would have been convenient for nursing (Glesmann 6). Although the maternity gown is certainly an unusual survival, on the whole the undergarments in the collection are relatively typical for their time. Certain aspects of their outer garments may have been distinctive, but underneath, Quakers looked like everyone else.

Undress?: A Nineteenth Century Quaker Nursing Gown," student paper, 2001.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

In her 1910 book Two Centuries of Costume in America, Alice Morse Earle writes about "*The Romance of Old Clothes*", noting that "all these honest stuffs, with their quaint fashionings, render them a true expression of old-time life; and their impalpable and finer beauty through sentiment puts me truly in touch with the life of my forebears."¹¹⁸ Even 90 years ago, people were fascinated by the clothing of the past and what it could tell them about their ancestors and themselves. Quaker clothing holds an additional fascination, because it is an intersection between religion and the material world. According to Patricia Keller:

The ways members of America's minority Protestant sects historically have structured their material lives to deal with the tensions between their sacred beliefs and the secular world holds a particular fascination for our late-twentieth-century society. Whether we are the summer tourists to "Amish Country" in Pennsylvania's Lancaster County or students of American material culture focusing on objects in public and private collections, we seek in Amish dolls, Shaker chairs, and Quaker clothing material evidence of sacred belief."¹¹⁹

We want to believe that in a material culture context, Quaker plainness meant "an absence of intricacies of pattern, design, or detail, and a lack of embellishment and

¹¹⁸ Earle, 805, 807.

superfluous ornament,” even in the face of numerous contradictory examples.¹²⁰ In “Of the best Sort but Plain,” Quaker Quilts from the Delaware Valley, 1760 – 1890, Patricia Keller relates how, during a survey of Quaker quilts, quilt owners repeatedly asserted that their elaborate and brightly colored quilts were aberrations from the “typical” Quaker quilt which, they assumed, was made of “expensive (‘of the best sort’) but very plain fabrics that were worked in very simple patterns.”¹²¹ But at what point do these brightly-colored quilts (and the clothing studied here) cease to be the exception that proves the rule? When do they become the evidence that proves the rules need to be reconsidered?

The problem does not lie in the “abberant” objects, but in those of us that view them. Amelia Gummere writes that “Quaker life can hardly be portrayed without an understanding of the history of the garb.”¹²² The reverse is true as well. Quaker costume can not be understood without first understanding the principles that guided Quaker life and the way in which they translated into material objects such as clothing. The clothing examined in this thesis is demonstrably Quaker – it belonged to documented members of the Society of Friends. But it does not fit in with the common preconceptions of Quaker plain dress. Perhaps this is because the common preconceptions need to be reexamined. To non-Quakers of the past and to many of us today, “plain” and “simple” are adjectives with straightforward meanings. But to members of the Society of Friends these words

¹¹⁹ Patricia J. Keller, “Of the best Sort but Plain:” Quaker Quilts from the Delaware Valley, 1760-1890 (Chadd’s Ford, PA: Brandywine River Museum, 1996), 9.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Gummere, iii.

are complex theological concepts that do far more than just describe an object's level of ornamentation.

Additionally, it is necessary to look at more than Quaker theology to make sense of Quaker clothing – these garments can not be studied in a vacuum. The economic status and faith of the individuals who wore the clothing, along with fashionable and practical standards for non-Quaker clothing need to be studied together. Quaker objects studied out of context cannot completely reveal their meaning. Without its family history, the clothing in the Murphey collection does not appear to adhere to the Quaker doctrine of plainness. But when viewed with its history and in the proper cultural context, the collection speaks volumes about the faith, lives, and material choices of one group of Delaware Valley Quakers in the nineteenth century. The ambiguous and individual meanings of plainness within the Quaker faith may preclude an over-arching study of Quaker costume, but hopefully case studies such as this can help scholars to understand how faith and fashion both played important roles in the clothing styles of members of the Society of Friends.

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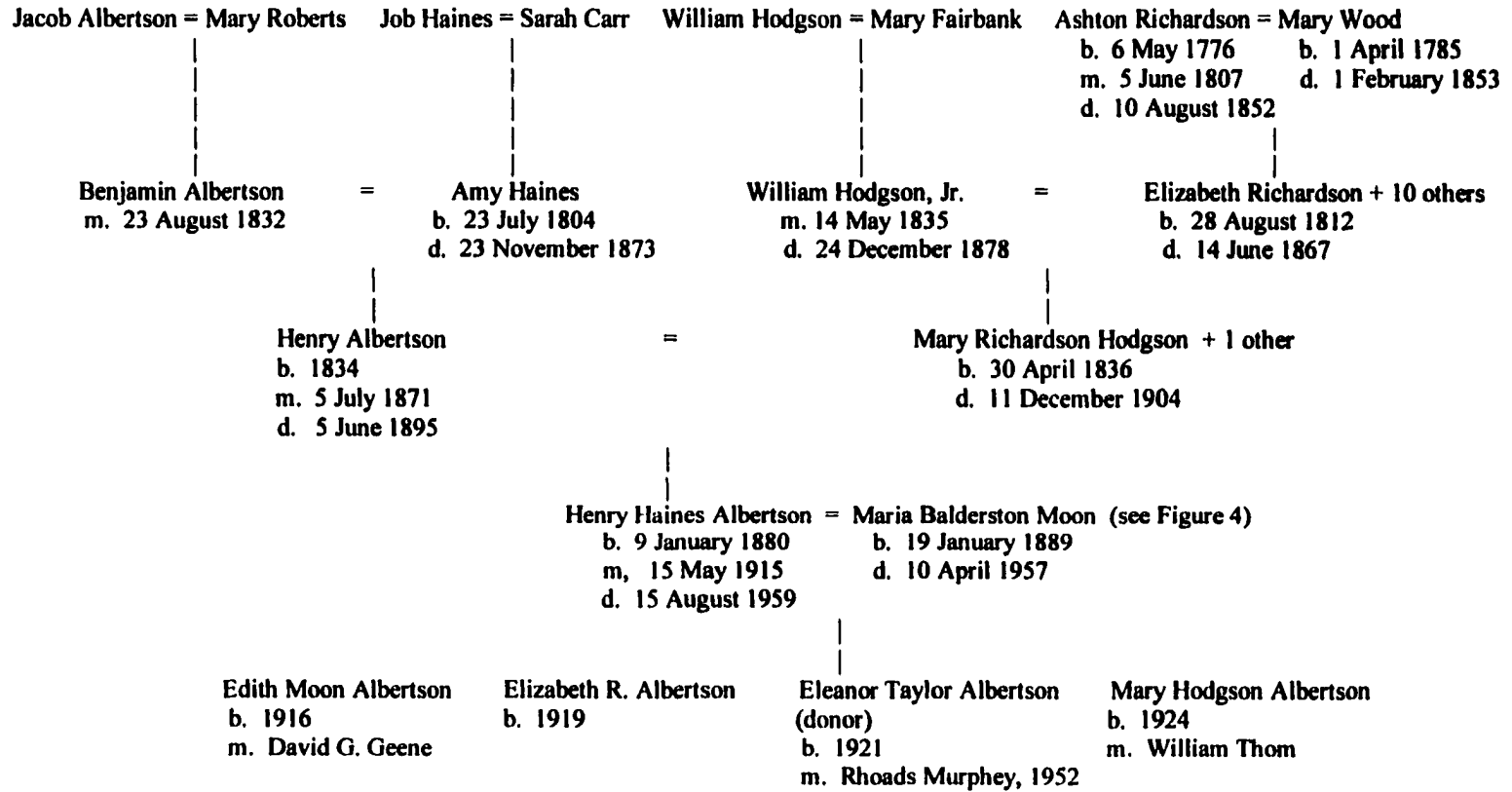


Figure 3: Albertson/Richardson Family Tree

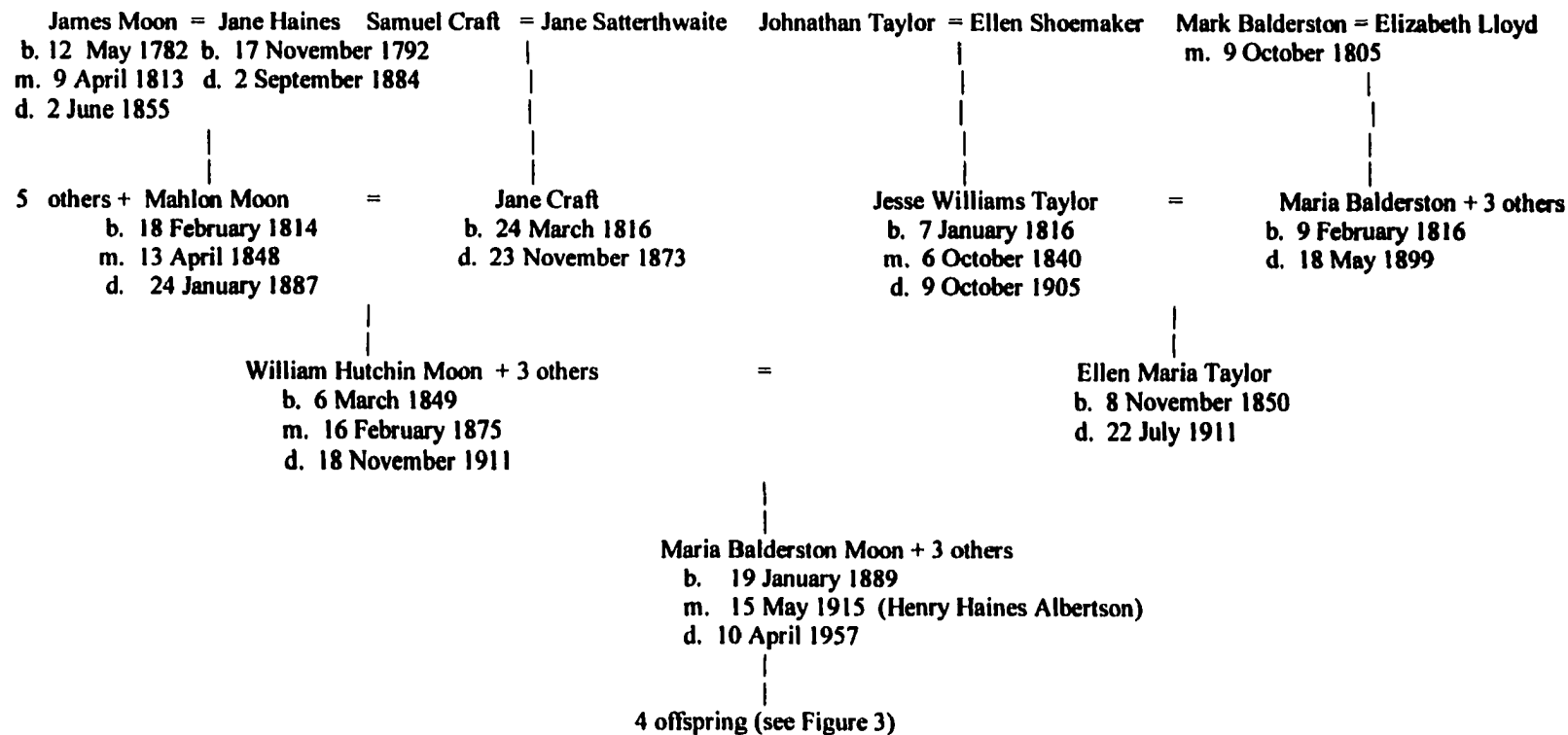


Figure 4: Moon Family Tree.

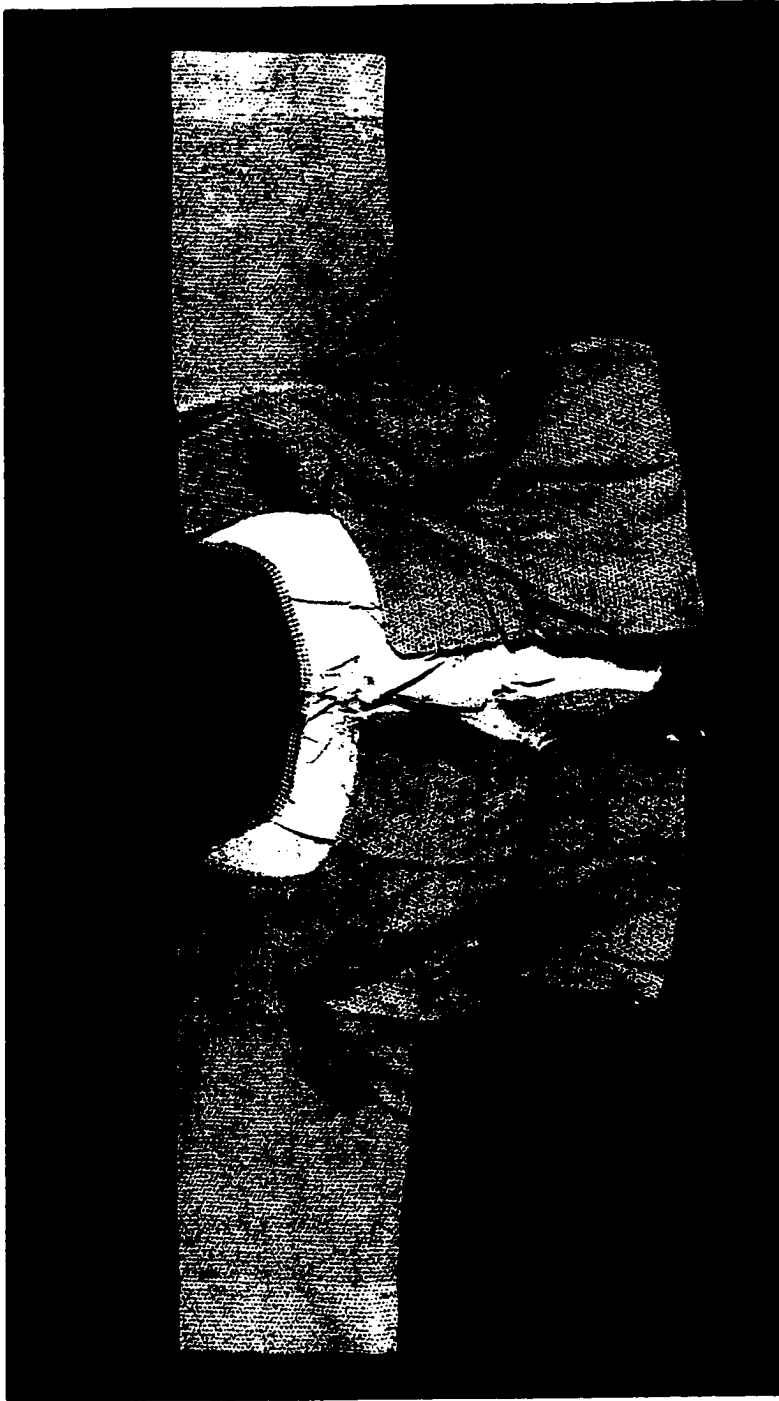


Figure 5. Short gown 1994.107.69. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum

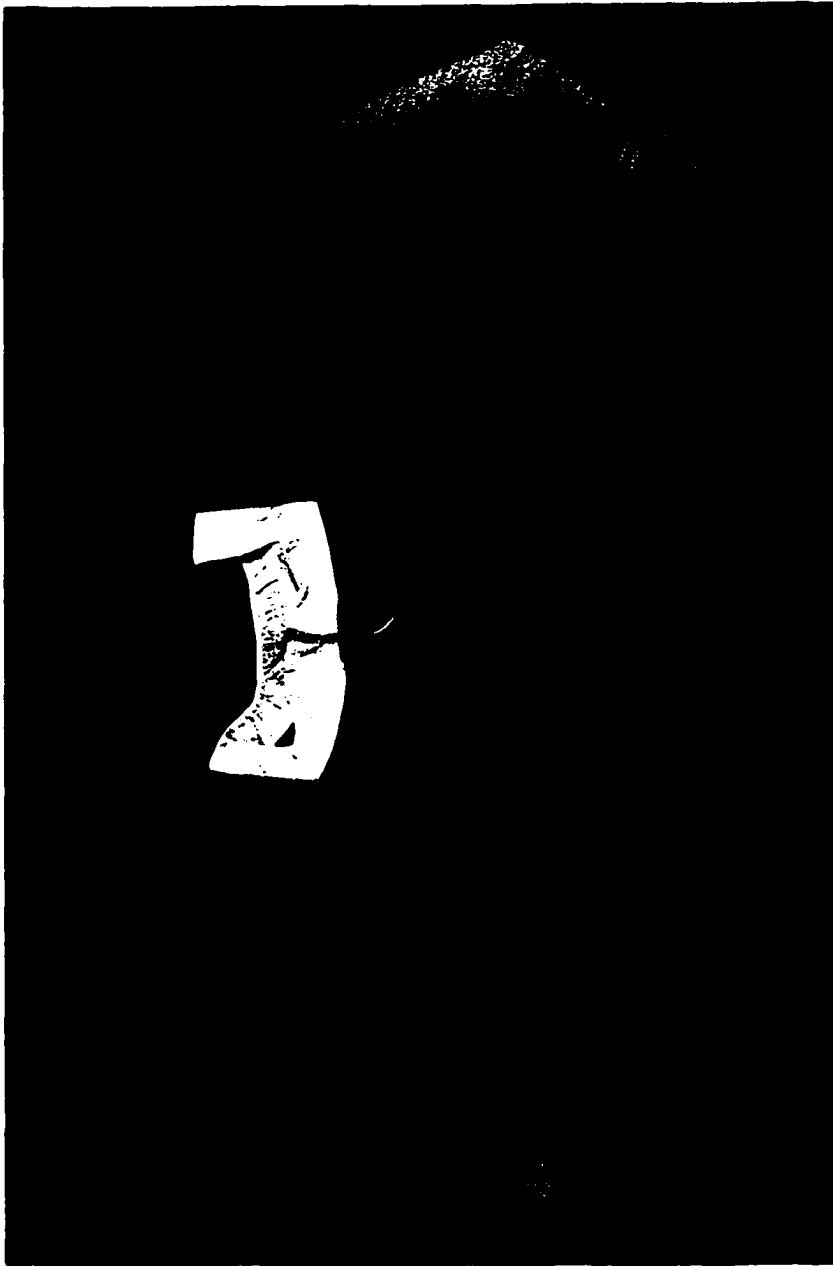


Figure 6. Spencer Waist 1994.107.86. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 7. Khaki silk dress 1994.107.88.1. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 8. Cotton dress 1994.107.90. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 9. Silk dress, 1994.107.89. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

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Figure 12. Wedding photo of Eleanor and Rhoads Murphey, June 12, 1952. Courtesy, Eleanor A. Murphey.

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Figure 15. Back of bodice 1994.107.14. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 16. Basque of riding habit. From May 25, 1889 issue of Harper's Bazar, in Stella Blum, Victorian Fashions and Costumes From "Harper's Bazar," 1867-1898.

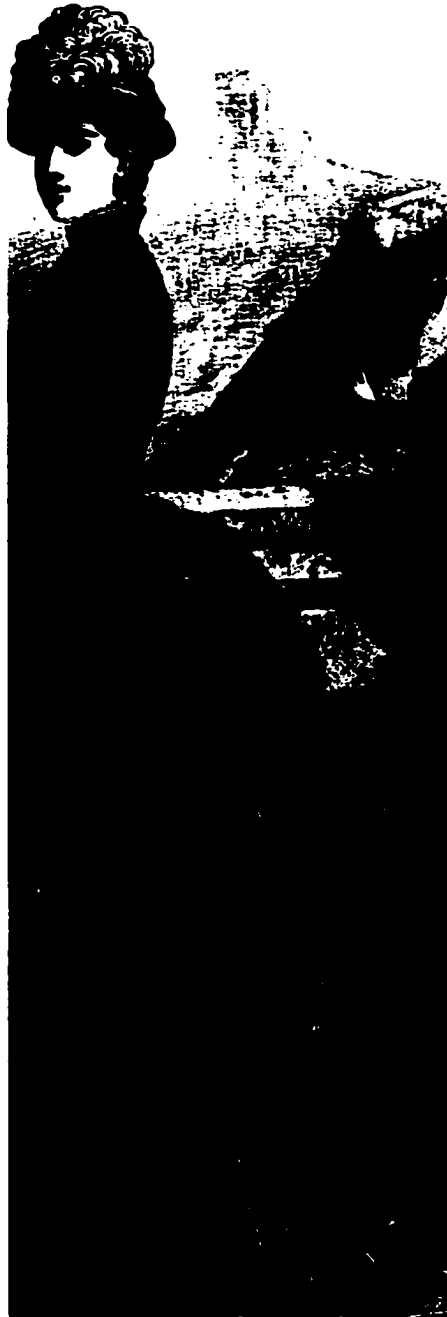


Figure 17. Beaded “long cloak.” From April 26, 1884 issue of Harper’s Bazar, in Stella Blum, Victorian Fashions and Costumes From “Harper’s Bazar,” 1867-1898.

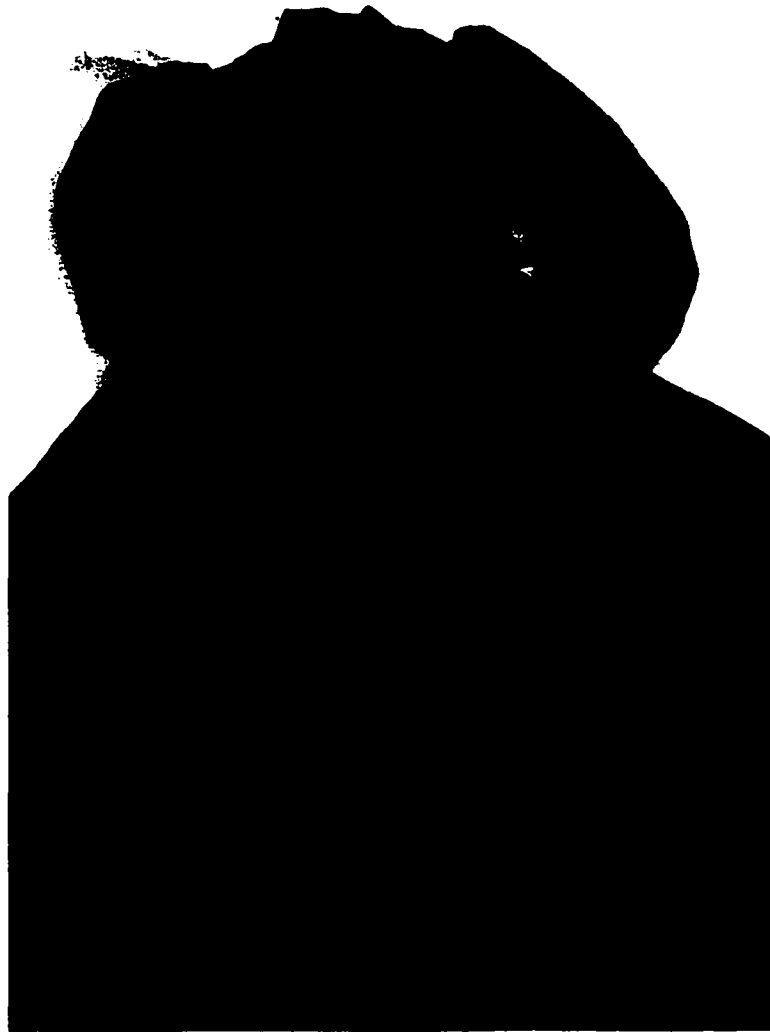


Figure 18. Silk dress with exterior corset. Photo by author. Courtesy, Eleanor A. Murphey.



Figure 19. "Fur-trimmed satin gown." From January 2, 1892 issue of Harper's Bazar, in Stella Blum, Victorian Fashions and Costumes From "Harper's Bazar," 1867-1898.

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Figure 23. Back view of baby gown 1994.107.27. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 24. Baby gown 1994.107.45. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 25. Baby gown 1994.107.47. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 26. Infant's coat 1994.107.98. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 27. Close-up of label on infant's coat 1994.107.98. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 28. Child's smock 1994.107.3. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 29. "Shirt pie." Photo by author. Courtesy, Mrs. Eleanor A. Murphey.



Figure 30. Child's dress 1994.107.101. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 31. Child's dress 1994.107.4. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

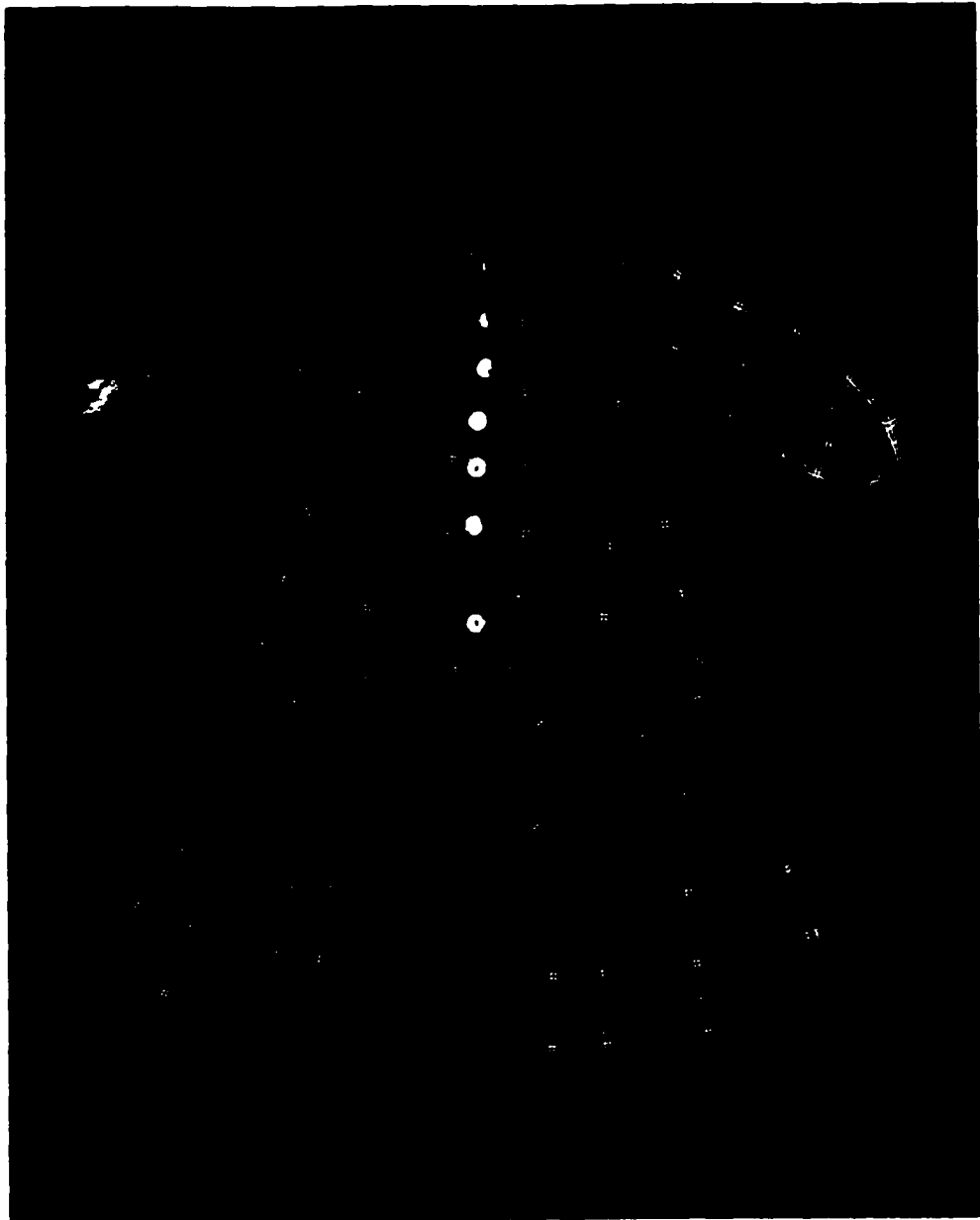


Figure 32. Child's dress 1994.107.99. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

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Figure 34. Child's dress 1994.107.5. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

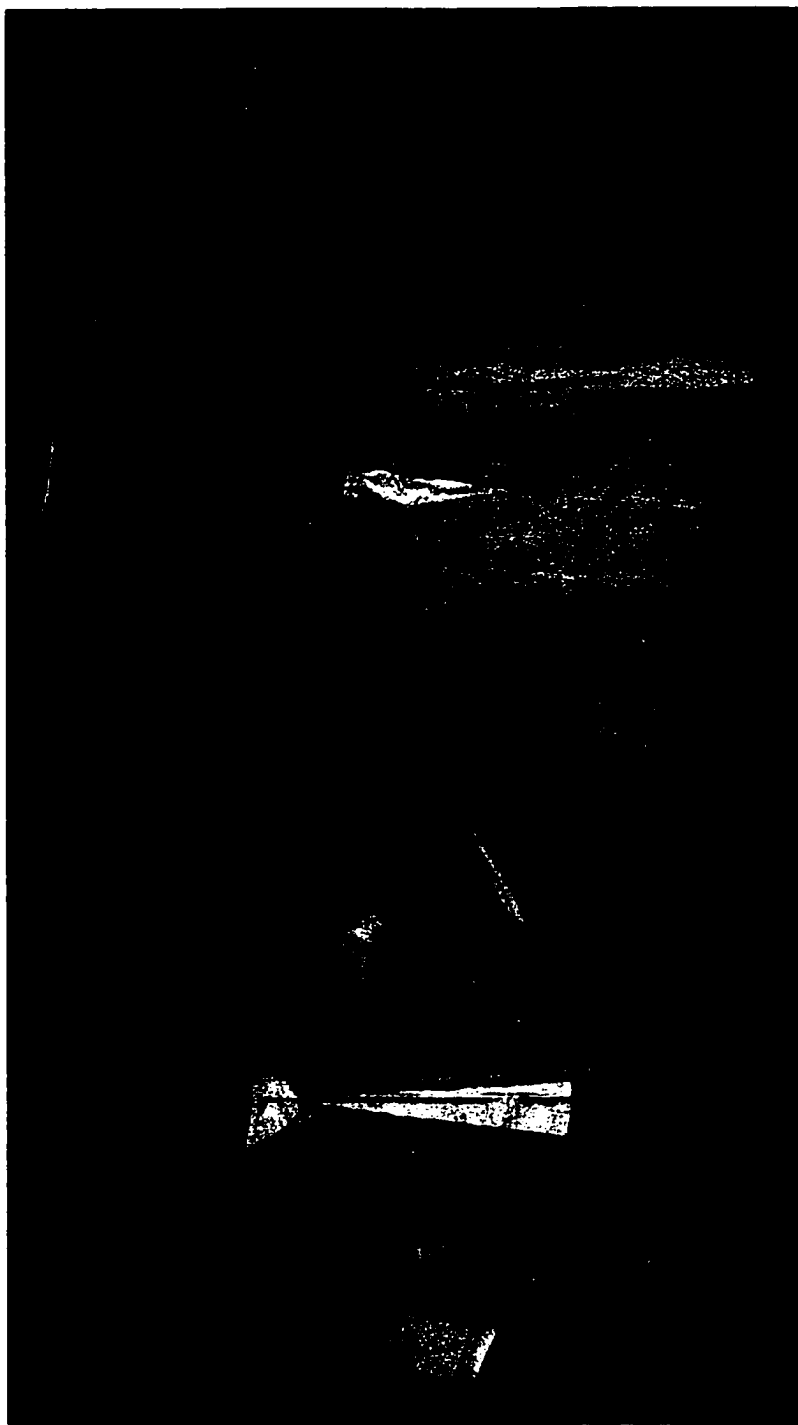


Figure 35. Child's coat and cape 1994.107.1, .23. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

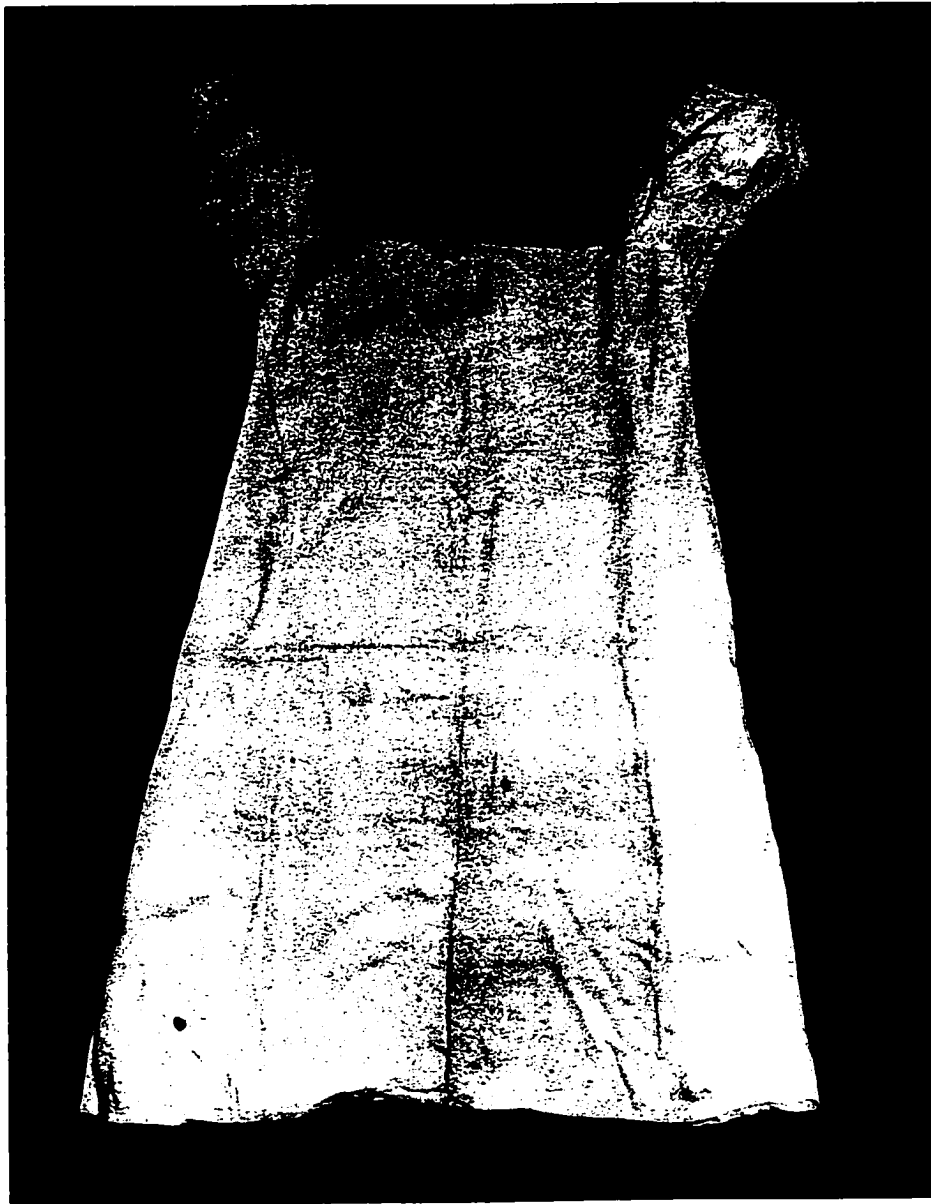


Figure 36. Woman's shift 1994.107.113. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 37. Woman's shift 1994.107.116. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 38. Woman's combinations 1994.107.115. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

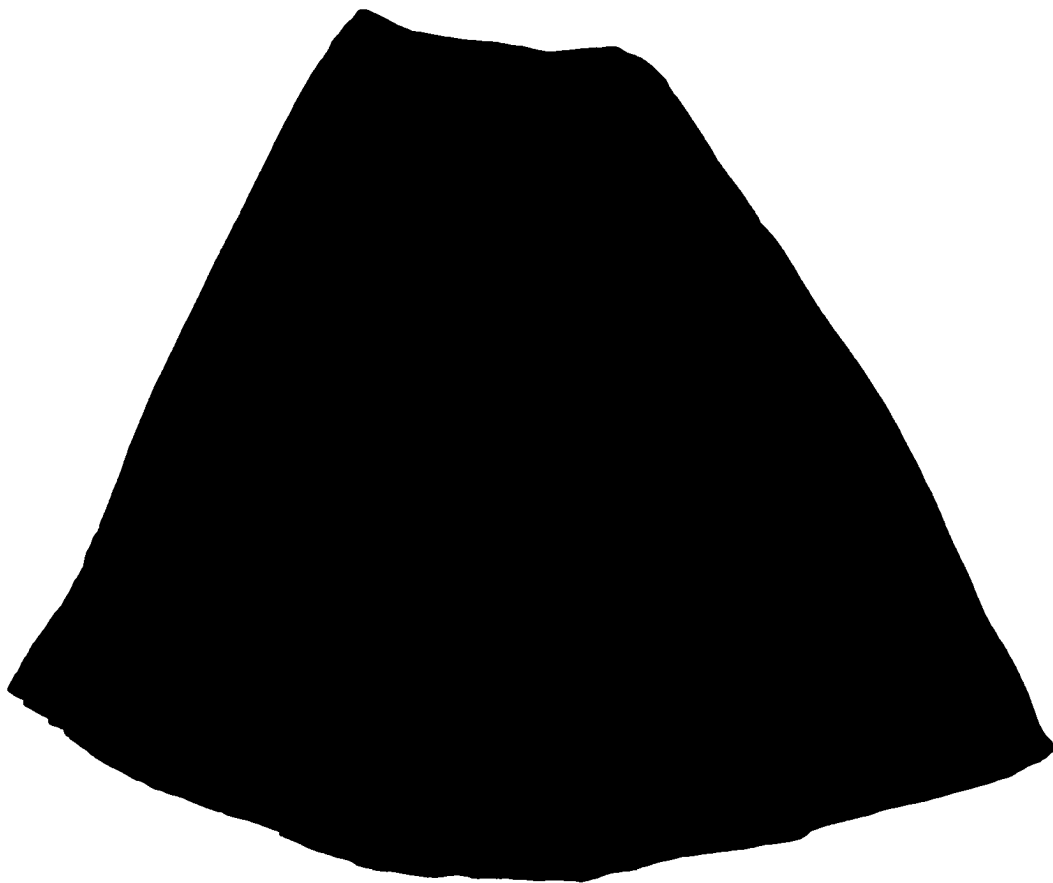


Figure 39. Woman's petticoat 1994.107.15. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



Figure 40. Maternity gown 1994.107.92. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.

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APPENDIX A:
Two Quaker Dolls

In February and March of 2002, Mrs. Murphey sent two dolls to the Winterthur Museum. Because dolls' costumes so often mirror the real-life fashions of their era, they can be invaluable tools for fashion historians. The two dolls, both with a Quaker provenance, represent radically different approaches to fashion. The first doll conforms in almost every respect to the traditional view of nineteenth-century Quaker costume. Measuring 16 ½ inches tall, the doll has wooden arms and legs attached to a white kid leather body. Her head appears to be carved wood that has been sealed and painted. Her right leg is currently detached, revealing that her body is stuffed with sawdust.

The doll is completely dressed for the outdoors (Figure A.1). She wears a shift and petticoat of white linen and white knit stockings with red stripes at the knee. Her black leather shoes feature slightly upturned toes. On top of her linen petticoat, the doll wears a black silk petticoat that is quilted at the bottom. The inside of this petticoat is lined with a dark brown polished cotton and there is an intermediate layer of fabric between it and the silk. Next comes the doll's dress. Made of a black silk similar to that of dress 1994.107.89, the dress also shares stylistic features with its real-life counterpart. Both dresses have bodices that open down the front and skirts that have a tie that wraps around the waist. Like the life-size black silk dress, the doll's dress has a v-shaped neckline, but it has elbow length sleeves (beneath which is a pair of knit silk mitts) while the larger dress has full-length sleeves. The bodice of the doll's dress is lined in white

linen, while the skirt is lined at the hem with a medium brown polished cotton (also similar to that found on the life-size dress).

The doll also wears all of the traditional Quaker accessories. The v-neck of the dress's bodice is hidden by a finely woven white linen fichu and a dove gray silk shawl, both of which are still pleated and pinned into place. On top of this, the doll wears a khaki silk cape, lined on the inside with the same dove gray silk as the shawl. The doll's painted black hair is hidden by three layers of headgear – a white cap of the same material as the fichu, a black grosgrain silk bonnet, and a black grosgrain silk bonnet cover lined in white silk with black silk ribbon ties.

If the silk of the doll's dress is indeed the same material as the larger dress in the collection, then this doll may have been dressed at about the same time that Elizabeth Richardson Hodgson made (or had made) her black silk dress. Since her two daughters were born in 1836 and 1838, and since she died in 1867, it seems reasonable to give this doll a date in the 1840s. This doll is clearly meant to represent a Quaker woman, and has all the trappings of "plainness" that traditional thinking about Quaker costume would lead one to expect. It seems like a reasonable leap to see this doll as both a toy and a teaching tool. As its young owners played with it, they would be taking in the message that this is how a respectable Quaker woman should look.

The second Murphey doll, however, does not have a "Quaker" appearance (Figure A.2). Made of cloth with kid hands, glass eyes, and a paper mache head, the second doll measures 23 inches from head to foot. Although her head is cracked and the leather of her hands is deteriorating, she still retains her undergarments and two changes of

clothing. Under her current dress, the doll wears a combination garment of white plain woven cotton. The lower legs of the combination are made of cotton with a woven windowpane check design and trimmed with loops of braid. The legs of the garment are intended to mimic the elaborate pantaloons worn by children during the middle years of the nineteenth century. The doll is wearing a dress of dark pink and white striped and flowered cotton. The bodice of the dress has a wide neckline and features pleats of fabric running diagonally from each shoulder to the center of the waist to form a shawl-like appearance similar to that seen in Mrs. Murphey's wedding dress (Figure 12). The sleeves are slightly full and are cuffed at the wrist. The skirt is full and ends at the knee to show the decorated legs of the doll's undergarment. The doll comes with a second dress made of cotton printed in a blue and white wavy, flame-like pattern (Figure A.3). It has a low wide neck and features vertical gathering at the bodice between the neckline and waist. The sleeves are full and lack cuffs. The skirt has grow tucks and appears to be the same length as that of the other dress. The bodices of both dresses are partially lined and fasten in back with hooks and eyes.

The stylistic features of the doll's two dresses give it a mid-century date, comparable to or slightly later than the first doll. But the dresses' bright colors and fashionable cuts send a very different message than the somber drabs worn by the first doll. Because of the length of the second doll's dresses and pantaloons, it seems that the doll is intended to represent a child, rather than an adult. But like children of that era, the doll is dressed in miniature versions of adult clothing. Both of the second doll's dresses share many features in common with women's dresses of the time. Because many people

believe that Quaker children were not held to the same standard of plainness as adults, one might explain the differences between these two dolls by making the first doll represent an adult and the second represent a child. However, it seems unlikely that Quaker parents would have allowed their children to play with toys that would encourage “worldly” tendencies. Even though the second doll’s clothing is not “traditionally” Quaker like that of the first doll, her clothing, like the other dresses and garments in the Murphey collection, can still be fit into a Quaker framework. Quaker women had both articles of clothing that publicly marked them as Friends (bonnets and shawls) and articles of clothing nearly indistinguishable from those of their non-Quaker neighbors. Why couldn’t the same be true of the dolls as well? The first doll might represent the “public” Quaker, wearing the badges of her religion that set her apart, while the second might represent the Quaker “at home” – where there was less need to display the outward badges of religious faith. There are several surviving examples of “obviously” Quaker dolls, but other dolls whose Quaker ownership is not clearly visible, like the second doll, may exist unknown to us – their “Quakerness” lost along with their provenance.



Figure A.1. Quaker doll. Photo by Linda Eaton. Courtesy, Mrs. Eleanor A. Murphey.

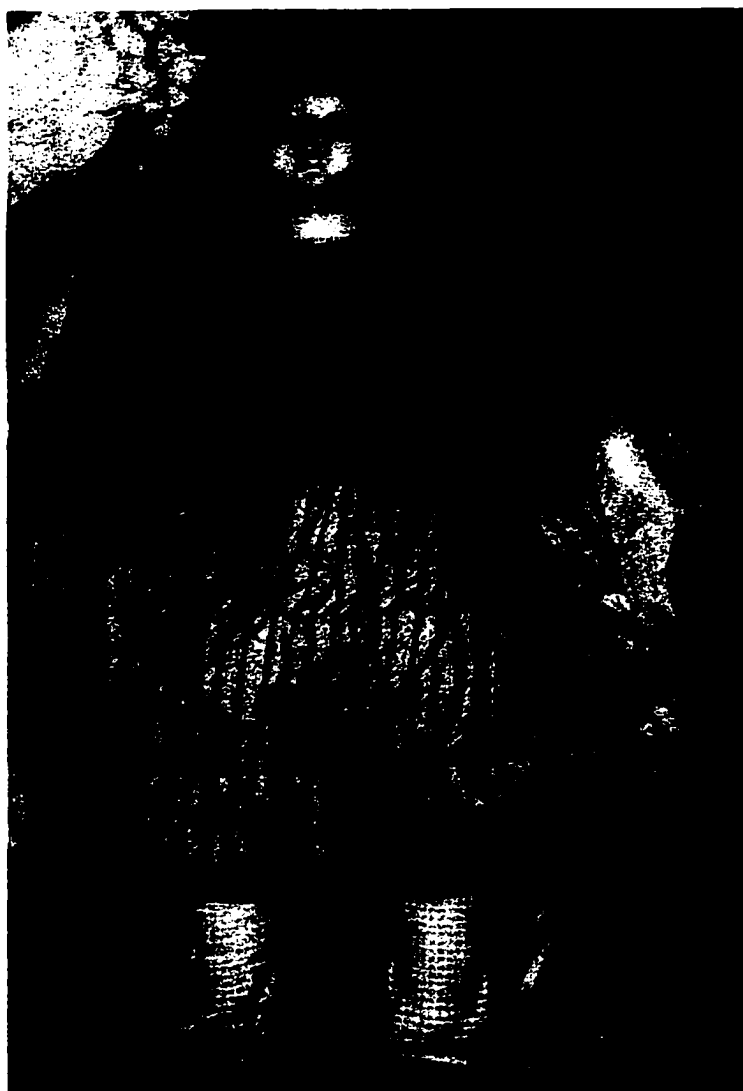


Figure A.2. Quaker Doll. Photo by Linda Eaton. Courtesy, Mrs. Eleanor A. Murphey.



Figure A.3. Extra dress for Quaker doll. Photo by Linda Eaton. Courtesy, Mrs. Eleanor A. Murphey.

APPENDIX B:
Partial Catalog of Collection 1994.107

This catalog will cover items in the collection not discussed in the main body of the thesis.

Accession Number: 1994.107.2

Object: Bonnet – children's

Date: 1875-1890

Materials: brown wool, plush, satin ribbon, silk lining

Mark: "Edith C. Moon"

Accession Number: 1994.107.6

Object: Undershirt – children's

Date: 1840-1900

Materials: white plain woven linen, china buttons

Accession Number: 1994.107.7

Object: Booties – infant's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: yellow knit wool

Accession Number: 1994.107.8

Object: Mitts

Date: 1770-1820

Materials: white knit silk

Accession Number: 1994.107.9

Object: Shirt – infant's

Date: 1800-1850

Materials: white plain woven cotton with woven red stripe

Accession Number: 1994.107.10

Object: shirt – infant's

Date: 1800-1850

Materials: white plain woven cotton

Note: construction similar to shirt 1994.107.11

Accession Number: 1994.107.11

Object: Shirt – infant's

Date: 1800-1850

Materials: white plain woven cotton

Note: construction similar to shirt 1994.107.10

Accession Number: 1994.107.16

Object: Parasol

Date: 1880-1900

Materials: Black silk taffeta, steel

Note: collapsible handle

Accession Number: 1994.107.18

Object: Bonnet – children's

Date: 1830-1900

Materials: White wool and silk

Accession Number: 1994.107.19

Object: Bonnet – children's

Date: 1849-1860

Materials: Cotton

Mark: "W.H. Moon / 6" – William Hutchin Moon

Accession Number: 1994.107.20

Object: Bonnet – woman's

Date: 1875-1900

Materials: Khaki silk twill, paperboard form

Accession Number: 1994.107.21

Object: Bonnet – woman's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White satin, cotton lining

Accession Number: 1994.107.22

Object: Apron – woman's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: Blue and white checked silk taffeta

Accession Number: 1994.107.24

Object: Fichu – woman's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White linen with woven border

Accession Number: 1994.107.25

Object: Fichu – woman's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White linen with woven border

Accession Number: 1994.107.26
Object: Fichu – woman's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White linen with woven border

Accession Number: 1994.107.28
Object: Shirt – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen

Accession Number: 1994.107.29
Object: Shirt – infant's
Date: 1820-1850
Materials: White diaper weave linen
Note: Possibly made from old household textile. One-piece construction.

Accession Number: 1994.107.30
Object: Shirt – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen and bobbin lace
Note: Sleeves and bodice of one piece. Similar to 1994.107.31.

Accession Number: 1994.107.31
Object: Shirt – infant's
Date: 1830-1840
Materials: White plain woven linen
Note: Sleeves and bodice of one piece. Similar to 1994.107.30.

Accession Number: 1994.107.32
Object: Shirt – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White diaper weave linen
Note: Possibly made from old household textile.

Accession Number: 1994.107.33
Object: Cap – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Indian cotton
Notes: According to Linda Eaton, this cap is the second oldest of the five caps 1994.107.33 - .37.

Accession Number: 1994.107.34
Object: Cap – infant's
Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven linen with Indian muslin frill

Note: According to Linda Eaton, this cap is the fourth oldest of the five caps 1994.107.33 - .37.

Accession Number: 1994.107.35

Object: Cap – infant's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven linen

Note: According to Linda Eaton, this cap is the oldest of the five caps 1994.107.33 - .37.

Accession Number: 1994.107.36

Object: Cap – infant's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven linen

Note: According to Linda Eaton, this cap is the third oldest of the five caps 1994.107.33 - .37.

Accession Number: 1994.107.37

Object: Cap – infant's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White cotton with woven check

Note: According to Linda Eaton, this cap is the most recent of the five caps 1994.107.33 - .37.

Accession Number: 1994.107.38

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1800-1830

Materials: White plain-woven cotton

Note: With its high waist, low neck and puffed sleeves, this is probably one of the earliest baby gowns in the collection.

Accession Number: 1994.107.39

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1800-1850

Materials: White plain-woven cotton

Note: The gown features a square neckline, a clearly defined waist, and tucking at the bodice and on the sleeves.

Accession Number: 1994.107.40

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1860-1900

Materials: White plain woven cotton

Note: The yoked gown is decorated with tucking and floral eyelet lace inserts.

Accession Number: 1994.107.41

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven cotton

Note: This undecorated gown is yoked and features a sash tie attached underneath the right arm.

Accession Number: 1994.107.42

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven cotton

Note: This gown has two tucks at the high neckline, which is decorated with an eyelet lace ruffle.

Accession Number: 1994.107.43

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1850-1900

Materials: White plain woven cotton

Note: The yoke of this garment is made up of ribbed fabric to simulate pleating. The neck and sleeves are trimmed with ruffles.

Accession Number: 1994.107.44

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1850-1900

Materials: White plain woven cotton

Note: The sleeves and body of the garment are of one piece. The gown is decorated with embroidery at the neck and hem and an eyelet ruffle at the hem.

Accession Number: 1994.107.46

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1850-1900

Materials: White plain woven cotton

Note: This gown features an embroidered yoke with lace-trimmed cuffs and neckline.

Accession Number: 1994.107.48

Object: Gown – infant's

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: Plain woven white cotton

Note: This waisted gown features tucking at the bodice, hem, and sleeves.

Accession Number: 1994.107.49

Object: Petticoat – children's

Date: 1830-1900

Materials: Plain woven white cotton and eyelet lace

Accession Number: 1994.107.50
Object: Diaper cover
Date: 1850-1900
Materials: White plain woven cotton
Note: Closes with buttons

Accession Number: 1994.107.51
Object: Underdress – children's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven cotton and eyelet lace

Accession Number: 1994.107.52
Object: Underdress – children's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven cotton and eyelet lace

Accession Number: 1994.107.55.a, b
Object: Stockings – men's
Date: 1864
Materials: White knit cotton or wool
Mark: "JWT" -- Jesse Williams Taylor

Accession Number: 1994.107.56.a, b
Object: Stockings
Date: 1860-1869
Materials: White knit cotton or wool

Accession Number: 1994.107.57.a, b
Object: Stockings – women's
Date: 1860-1869
Materials: White knit cotton or wool
Mark: "Anna's 186?" – knit into top band

Accession Number: 1994.107.58
Object: Table cloth
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White diaper weave linen
Mark: "EL" – Elizabeth Lloyd

Accession Number: 1994.107.59
Object: Sheet
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: "EL" – Elizabeth Lloyd

Accession Number: 1994.107.60

Object: Pillowcase

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: "EC" – Ellen Craft

Accession Number: 1994.107.61

Object: Pillowcase

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: "AA / 8" – Amy Albertson

Accession Number: 1994.107.62

Object: Pillowcase

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: "H"

Accession Number: 1994.107.63

Object: Pillowcase

Date: 1836-1904

Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: "MRH" – Mary Richardson Hodgson

Accession Number: 1994.107.64

Object: Pillowcase

Date: 1861

Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: "MH / 1861" – Mary Richardson Hodgson

Accession Number: 1994.107.65

Object: Pillowcase

Date: 1861

Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: "MH / 1861" – Mary Richardson Hodgson

Accession Number: 1994.107.66

Object: Pillowcase

Date: 1836-1904

Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: "MRH" – Mary Richardson Hodgson

Accession Number: 1994.107.67
Object: Pillowcase
Date: 1836-1904
Materials: White plain woven linen
Mark: "MRH" – Mary Richardson Hodgson

Accession Number: 1994.107.68
Object: Vest – men's
Date: 1840
Materials: White wool and silk blend with diaper weave pattern, plain woven linen
Note: This is believed to be Jesse Williams Taylor's wedding vest.

Accession Number: 1994.107.70
Object: Bonnet cover – woman's
Date: 1800-1850
Materials: Olive plain woven silk, satin ribbon

Accession Number: 1994.107.71
Object: Bonnet – woman's
Date: 1850-1875
Materials: Black silk satin, silk ribbon, wire and buckram frame

Accession Number: 1994.107.72
Object: Bonnet – woman's
Date: 1850-1875
Materials: Black plain woven cotton, satin ribbon, and frame of wire, buckram, and paperboard.

Accession Number: 1994.107.73
Object: Bonnet – woman's
Date: 1870-1890
Materials: Olive silk satin, frame of buckram, wire, paperboard, and nails.

Accession Number: 1994.107.74
Object: Bonnet – woman's
Date: 1870-1890
Materials: Woven straw, wire frame
Mark: "B / 12 / 19"

Accession Number: 1994.107.75
Object: Shawl
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Gray silk twill

Accession Number: 1994.107.76
Object: Shawl
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Gray plain woven silk

Accession Number: 1994.107.77
Object: Shawl
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Gray silk twill

Accession Number: 1994.107.78
Object: Neckerchief
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven silk
Mark: "Charles Collins"

Accession Number: 1994.107.79
Object: Shawl
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Ivory silk with woven pattern, self-fringe

Accession Number: 1994.107.80
Object: Shawl
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Gray plain woven silk

Accession Number: 1994.107.81
Object: Neckerchief
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Ivory silk with woven pattern and self-fringe

Accession Number: 1994.107.82
Object: Shawl
Date: 1816-1899
Materials: Khaki silk twill

Accession Number: 1994.107.83
Object: Shawl
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Gray silk twill

Accession Number: 1994.107.84
Object: Shawl
Date: 1800-1900

Materials: Taupe silk twill

Accession Number: 1994.107.85

Object: Bonnet – miniature

Date: 1815-1830

Materials: Bonnet – cardboard, ivory silk, silk ribbon; cap – linen and string, box – wood and nails

Mark: “little old plain bonnet” – on box

Accession Number: 1994.107.87

Object: Ribbon

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: Brown silk faille

Accession Number: 1994.107.91

Object: Fichu

Date: 1830-1850

Materials: Brown floral print plain woven cotton

Accession Number: 1994.107.93

Object: Gown – infant’s

Date: 1800-1900

Materials: White plain woven linen

Mark: “Bell”

Note: This strapless garment has a long straight bodice.

Accession Number: 1994.107.96

Object: Shoes – children’s

Date: 1850-1900

Materials: Red and gray checked wool, leather, and buttons

Mark: “Mart. Hollans / 9”

Accession Number: 1994.107.97

Object: Shoes – children’s

Date: 1850-1900

Materials: Brown leather, cardboard, nails, buttons

Accession Number: 1994.107.102

Object: Gown – infant’s

Date: 1860-1900

Materials: White plain woven linen

Note: This yoked garment is decorated with tucked inserts at the yoke and sleeves and lace at the neck, yoke, sleeves, and hem.

Accession Number: 1994.107.103
Object: Nightcap – woman's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven cotton

Accession Number: 1994.107.104
Object: Headcloth – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen and woven tape

Accession Number: 1994.107.105
Object: Headcloth – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen and woven tape

Accession Number: 1994.107.107
Object: Shirt – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen
Note: Constructed of one piece of fabric, ruffles at sleeve. Identical to 1994.107.108.

Accession Number: 1994.107.108
Object: Shirt – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen
Note: Identical to 1994.107.107

Accession Number: 1994.107.109
Object: Collar – children's
Date: 1850-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen and cotton with embroidery

Accession Number: 1994.107.110
Object: Undergarment – children's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen and cotton
Note: Combination garment with removable legs

Accession Number: 1994.107.111
Object: Undershirt – children's
Date: 1870-1900
Materials: White linen twill

Accession Number: 1994.107.112

Object: Dickey
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven cotton and tape
Note: This object fit underneath the neckline of a bodice to give a layered effect.

Accession Number: 1994.107.117
Object: Blanket
Date: 1800-1855
Materials: Yellow plain woven wool, blue embroidery thread
Mark: "JJM" – James and Jane Haines Moon

Accession Number: 1994.107.118
Object: Pillowcase
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Plain woven linen

Accession Number: 1994.107.119
Object: Pillow buttons
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: Mother of pearl
Notes: 20 buttons to fasten pillowcases

Accession Number: none assigned
Object: Headcloth – infant's
Date: 1800-1900
Materials: White plain woven linen and tape