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**FASHIONING QUAKER IDENTITY:
NINETEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN'S CLOTHING IN THE
FRIENDS' HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION COLLECTION**

by

Emily Constance Cline

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 2005

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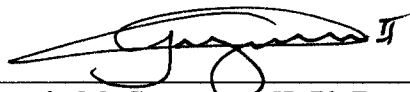
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ABSTRACT

Scholars have debated the distinctiveness of Quaker dress since the 1901 publication of Amelia Mott Gummere's The Quaker: A Study in Costume. Gummere's involvement in the Friends' Historical Association (FHA) in Philadelphia resulted in a collection of Quaker artifacts, including a large number of garments, which now reside at the Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia. This thesis first examines the definitions of Quaker dress established in clothing scholarship looking to Amelia Gummere's work. It then explores the development of the FHA collection as a Colonial Revival institution which used ancestral clothing to fashion Quaker identity in pageants and tableaux during the early twentieth century. Finally, this thesis interprets the construction and use of selected nineteenth-century women's garments as primary evidence in support of continuing discussions about degrees of "Quakerness" in Friends' clothing.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Perception of culture in the United States in the nineteenth century was in very large part based on appearances and that there was a powerful drive toward a “proper” façade. It was of tremendous, almost *moral*, significance during the nineteenth century that one appear cultured.¹

Objects have the unique ability to inform us not only of their styles and functions, but of the values our ancestors placed on their belongings. These values frequently change over the course of several generations: at first a dress might be saved because of the value of the fabric, though a later generation might continue to preserve the garment for its association with a particular individual or event. When humans assess objects, choosing what to save, they reflect their cultural biases. The Friends Historical Association Collection at the Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia stands as an excellent example of one such collection. The collection’s early twentieth century formation owed much to the efforts of Amelia Mott Gummere, an Orthodox Quaker author, who advocated the collection and promotion of Quaker culture. Under the guiding hands of Amelia and her sister-in-law Lydia Flagg Gummere, the collection grew

¹ Joan Severa, Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900 (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995), xv.

to feature a range of Philadelphia area Quaker artifacts dating from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Essential to the collection are numbers of nineteenth-century Quaker garments, initially used in the collection as pageant costumes during the 1920s and 1930s. The garments are primarily women's dresses which support the evidence offered by Amelia Gummere in her 1901 publication The Quaker: A Study in Costume, stressing the singular appearance of Quaker dress. Though the clothes in the FHA collection do enlighten discussions of distinctive Quaker dress, they also explain how nineteenth-century dress enabled Friends to interact within their specific social or religious groups while projecting their individual concerns and interests. The dresses also illuminate how Colonial Revival thinking helped twentieth century Friends shape Quaker identity. Essentially, the FHA clothes are garments, but also important cultural texts.

Social response and attitudes toward the body and its coverings can elicit very positive or negative reactions in an audience depending on time, place, individual, and cultural baggage. Therefore, one cannot commence a study of historic garments without considering the intentions and expectations of the people who created and wore the clothes and without acknowledging our personal expectations and projections about the experience of historic garments and peoples.² The appearances of human bodies in history, attired in past fashions, were in the period viewed through a variety of lenses and are in our period viewed through similar lenses.

² For roughly the past twenty year, the appearance of the human body has been a popular topic among scholars, with studies reaching beyond clothing to encompass body surfaces, motions, and expressions. These various means of expressions are frequently broken down into sub-units for study. See Robert Hillestad, "The Underlying Structure of Appearance," *Dress* Vol. 5 (1980): 117- 125.

Clothes are not rigid, they wrinkle, stretch, and are not static in nature. It is the human body, shaped by undergarments, diet, exercise, and posture, which provides the foundation for clothing.³ Without the original wearer and wearer's circumstance, the function of a particular garment is sometimes difficult to discern. Similarly, issues of quality of materials and style can offer information about the function. However, even with documentary support, such aesthetic considerations can severely limit the interpretation of any object, especially a garment. In the end, the best evidence lies in the physical object, especially since we cannot re-create all of the bodies or environments which the object encountered in the course of two centuries. Instead, we can take the clues found in the clothes and reconstruct some of the object's experiences, using these details as the base of our interpretation and reaching out to written sources.

Amelia Gummere understood the value of an object as a cultural document: her book, The Quaker: A Study in Costume emphasizes the links between objects, people, and history. Some reviewers of the book praised her for delving into these links, others argued that distinctive dress had nothing to do with Quaker politics or agendas.

³ Discussions of the human body's impact on clothing can be found in tailoring instruction manuals beginning in the late eighteenth century. See James Queen, The Taylor's Instructor or, a Comprehensive Analysis of the Elements of Cutting Garments of Every Kind to which are added, Directions for cutting various Articles of Dress, For both Sexes, without the Usual Seams, and Regimentals of all Descriptions; with Instructions for making up work with Accuracy and Precision (Philadelphia: James Queen and William Lapsley, 1809) and Joseph Coutts, A Practical Guide for the Tailor's Cutting-Room; being a treatise of Measuring and Cutting Clothing in All Styles, And for Every Period of Life from Childhood to Old Age (Edinburgh: Blackie and Son, 1848). See also Linda Baumgarten and John Watson with Florine Carr, Costume Close-up: Clothing Construction and Pattern 1750-1790 (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Association with Quite Specific Media Group Ltd., 1999), 5-9.

However, all the responses indicate that Quaker clothing, then and now, presents an especially sensitive issue, since individual's garments were outward declarations of their spiritual journey. Distinctive Quaker dress originally helped foster group identity during times of religious and social upheaval in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During these years many early Americans commented on Quaker dress, praising the virtue and simplicity suggested by non-worldly fashion. Praise extended to practice later in the nineteenth-century as Quaker dress was upheld as a standard for modest dressing, with Quakers and non-Quakers using plain style clothing and decorative arts objects. By the time of the nation's 1876 centennial, Quaker clothing had come to symbolize early Pennsylvania. At the turn of the twentieth century, Quakers were using historic Quaker dress in pageants and exhibits to help re-connect the generations and the divisions in Quaker Meetings. Around the same time, the image of a Quaker man came to adorn oatmeal boxes, promoting a superior quality product, which remains familiar today.⁴ The political and religious implications of Quaker clothing are certainly relevant, however, what is the clothing itself? How does the image of the Quaker Oats man reflect qualities that Quakers and plain dress followers advocated in the nineteenth century? How do garments in particular collections tell us about how Quaker women

⁴ The Quaker Oats brand name has an interesting story. One of the company founders, Henry Seymour, "was searching the encyclopedia for an image that would instill confidence in consumers for the company's product when he spotted an article on the Quaker sect. Quakers projected values and standards of honesty, integrity and strength- connotations that Seymour wanted for the product. . . In 1877, the Quaker Mill Co. registered as a trademark the 'figure of a man in Quaker garb.'" See PepsiCo, "Quaker Oats Revisited," May 2001, 1. As of 2001, Quaker is a unit of PepsiCo Beverages & Foods.

looked and used their clothing in the period? How did their twentieth century descendants use ancestral clothes?

The questions in this thesis are many. However, at the core are issues of the construction and use of historic garments in the nineteenth century and the re-use of the garments in the twentieth century by Quaker organizations. The construction of nineteenth century Quaker women's dresses in the FHA collection informs ongoing Quaker scholarship about how Quaker women from the Philadelphia region managed to dress in accordance with economy, utility, and the expectations of the Society of Friends. In the twentieth century, Quaker individuals and organizations, shaped by Colonial Revival thinking, used the dresses in exhibits, pageants, and tableaux. Individuals, such as Amelia Mott Gummere, advocated the collecting and use of historic "things," in hopes of reuniting Quaker parties split since the 1827-28 Hicksite schism. Gradually, Quaker organizations developed collections devoted to the preservation of family artifacts and Philadelphia history. These collections, the Friends' Historical Society and the Friends' Historical Association, had inherent biases, with the objects evaluated and selected for inclusion according to what families valued. However, because of cultural bias, the collections offer wonderful insight into how twentieth-century Quakers wanted to remember the past in looking forward.

Chapter 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND PUBLISHED SOURCES

On December 29, 1902, Elizabeth B. Bailey, a Quaker woman in Covington, Kentucky, sat down to write Amelia Mott Gummere, Quaker author of The Quaker: A Study in Costume, to congratulate her for delving into the philosophies behind “singular” Quaker costume. Bailey wrote:

It is so pathetic to think of the bondage in which many sweet souls lived during the past century- with no power to free themselves with the expectations “Friends have always believed this and so was right”. I remember the emancipation that came to me in reading of the life of Elizabeth Fry that “The testimony of the Society of Friends was for simplicity, not uniformity.” Margaret Chester in urging me to wear a plain bonnet used to quote Joseph John Gumey as saying Quakerism “was a whole and could not be divided and that the peculiar dress was a part of our religion!” And in his “Habits of Discipline” and in his “Distinguishing Views” he did not see beyond the teaching of his generation although he proved that Quakerism had and was adapted to the needs of the world as long as it exists. I had a young friend whose aunt reproved her for wearing the point of her shawl outside, that is the shawl was not folded evenly, the point should be inside as it was gayer to wear it outside! Which was it gathers or pleats that was regarded the gayer? . . . I could multiply instances in any own experiences when these outward things were dwelt upon to the detriment of the soul.¹

¹ Elizabeth Bailey, letter to Amelia Mott Gummere, 29 December 1902, Amelia Mott Gummere Collection 1005, Box E, The Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

Bailey's letter anticipates the responses of later Quaker clothing scholars' examinations of early Quaker teachings, disciplines, and dressing practices. Scholars using Gummere's book concur that in the late eighteenth century, a distinctive form of Quaker dress emerged, in Britain and Philadelphia, which remained more or less popular through the nineteenth century. However, nineteenth century Quakers, like their eighteenth century ancestors and twentieth century descendants, feared that dwelling on matters of dress would detract from spiritual concerns.

Amelia Mott Gummere's The Quaker: A Study in Costume traces the development of this distinctive form of Quaker dress by using a variety of documentary and visual sources from both Great Britain and the United States.² Today most Quaker clothing scholars acknowledge Gummere, an Orthodox Quaker woman writing in Haverford, PA from the 1880s through the 1930s, as the author of the seminal work on Quaker Costume. However, Gummere wrote with a political agenda, intent on re-

² Gummere and other scholars emphasize the similarities between English and American Quaker dress. Since the seventeenth century, Friends on both sides of the Atlantic have frequently traveled and corresponded back and forth, commenting on society, religion, and dress. This resulting trans-Atlantic Quaker community maintained strong, relatively unified ties throughout the middle of the nineteenth century. Print evidence, journals, and extant garments testify to the parallels between British and American Friends during this time period. In the early twentieth century, Amelia Gummere and other Quaker scholars corresponded with English Friends and researched in Friends archives in London, while tracing the lives of early American Friends who wrote and traveled to Britain. For information about the similarities between American and British Friends, see Joan Kendall, "The Development of a Distinctive Form of Quaker Dress," *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society*, No. 19 (1985): 58-74; Deborah Kraak, "Variations on 'Plainness': Quaker Dress in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society*, No. 34 (2000): 51-63; Amelia Mott Gummere, The Quaker: A Study in Costume (Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, 1901). For information about Gummere's trans-Atlantic research see Amelia Mott Gummere Collection 1005, Boxes A-E, Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

educating young Quakers about the past as she saw it, using clothing as a vehicle for her discussion. Emphasis on connecting dress to the politics of the Society of Friends was not unusual in Quaker circles and the writings of George Fox, Elizabeth Bailey, and other earlier Friends concur that dress was closely tied to social agendas. Gummere's agenda and antiquarian writing style further emphasize the impact of the Colonial Revival on her scholarship which continues to influence recent Quaker clothing discussions. This chapter attempts to outline Quaker clothing historiography, while acknowledging the impact of the Colonial Revival on Amelia Mott Gummere and later scholars.

Amelia Mott Gummere: the Advent of Quaker Clothing Scholarship

Reviewers and Quaker readers met Amelia Mott Gummere's 1901 The Quaker: A Study in Costume with mixed reactions. Most praised Gummere for examining a previously neglected topic, while others argued that dress was not connected with Quaker politics.³ However, the book was the first work to focus exclusively on the subject of Quaker clothing, with attempts made to link doctrine with society, individuals, and their garments. Today the publication remains the only book devoted entirely to Quaker clothing, presenting the information in the tremendously informative, anecdotal, and detail-oriented style characteristic of antiquarian-scholars of the period.

The study concerns three chronological periods: the period of persecution in England, the reactionary period during which the Society of Friends was safely

³ Folder "The Quaker: A Study in Costume Reviews, etc.," Amelia Mott Gummere Collection 1005, Box E, Quaker Collection, Haverford College. For a history of the publication of The Quaker: A Study in Costume, see Appendix A.

established, and the modern period.⁴ However, Gummere primarily addresses the clothing of the seventeenth (period of persecution) and eighteenth centuries (reactionary period). The early nineteenth century is discussed some, mostly through the inclusion of images of the period. Gummere excuses her relative dismissal of the nineteenth century, noting that “the present generation can refer to the costumes of their own parents.”⁵ However, her brushing regard for the nineteenth century has resulted in a lack of scholarship about that era: few Quaker clothing scholars have chosen to break into the nineteenth century, instead building on aspects of earlier Quaker clothing not examined by Gummere.⁶

In her discussion of the modern period of Quaker dress, Gummere finds “the crisis of the present” bringing Quakers “face to face with intricate problems” where “dress again falls into its proper place in the general scheme of things”.⁷ The noted “crisis” was the impetus for many of Gummere’s later publications: her perception of the lack of instruction in Quaker history for young Quakers increasingly separated from

⁴ Gummere’s periods are roughly the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century, and the nineteenth century.

⁵ Gummere, 162.

⁶ Some of the decision to not study nineteenth century clothing may stem from difficulties in placing clothing of this era into the context of the “Hicksite schisms,” when largely rural, more liberal Quakers split from the largely urban, merchant class Quakers (Orthodox) in Philadelphia over matters of faith. This is discussed in Bruce Dorsey’s “Friends Becoming Enemies: Philadelphia Benevolence and the Neglected Era of American Quaker History” in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 1998): 395-428.

⁷ Gummere, iv.

Quaker beliefs in twentieth century life and non-denominational schools. Gummere uses the introduction to The Quaker: A Study in Costume to express her concerns over the experience of young Quakers. She notes:

A total absence in the denominational schools of any proper teaching of Quaker history, has in past years made the matter of dress a veritable 'cross' to many a youthful member, who has thrown off the obnoxious burden as soon as he was master of his own movements; a result that might frequently have been avoided, had he at all appreciated his inheritance. But an understanding of the spirit of Quakerism can no more come by heredity alone than can any of the other Christian virtues; and many a young soul has lived hungry for some explanation of the reason for the singularity forced upon him . . . The present crisis in the whole religious world is upon every other member of a sect. How many of these young people can judge, from a clear understanding of the history of their Society, whether the new problems-social, religious or moral- are counter to his own ancestors' teachings, put forth at the cost of life itself, or not?⁸

With such a bold statement, Gummere addresses not only the appearance of Quaker clothing, but the reasons for "singularity" and its role in the modern world. In doing so, she tackles a problem noted in much literature at the turn-of the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries: the role of traditional values in an industrial world. As Gummere wrote in her 1931 "Foreward" to a translation of Dr. Auguste Jorns The Quakers as Pioneers in Social Work,

It is profitable for students of our modern complicated industrial problems to endeavor to understand the motives of those 'Children of the Light'

⁸ Amelia Mott Gummere, The Quaker: A Study in Costume, iv-v. In "Plain and Peculiar: A Case Study of Nineteenth-Century Quaker Clothing," Erin Eisenbarth cites Gummere's quotes as being "designed to remind Quakers, particularly young ones, of the importance of their traditions." See Erin Eisenbarth, "Plain and Peculiar: A Case Study of Nineteenth-Century Quaker Clothing" (Master's Thesis, University of Delaware, 2002), 5.

who, in the seventeenth century, revived the relation between conscience and commerce which had largely been lost by their contemporaries.⁹

Many writers of her day, apprehensive about the effects of increasing mechanization, rapid transportation, and immigration on the native-born America populace, strove to reinforce the values, morality, and purity they perceived in the American past. These values included religious conviction and patriotism, and were examined with the rose-colored glasses of romanticism. Gummere is not unaware of the romantic bias, noting:

There is hardly a picturesque side to the story of the Quaker; he himself hardly appreciated how much of the romantic there has been in his quiet life. The trend of his thought has led him to take himself too seriously, and he has lost much of the sense of his relation to the great world around him.¹⁰

In a serious world of controlled deadlines, industry, and change, the pleasantries, anecdotes, and simplicity of the perceived past were marginalized and de-contextualized, used more as a means of escape from the realities of modern daily life than as a portion of the foundation of society. For Gummere, the factual side of Quaker “singularity,” was rooted in the events of prior generations and some romanticization provided another means of connecting events, ideas, people, and generations.

Gummere organizes her book in five sections: the coat, the hat, beards and wigs, women’s clothing and the bonnet. In these sections Gummere connects articles of clothing to the literature of the Society of Friends and society at large. Sources include a variety of primary documents, including letters, diaries, newspaper and periodicals,

⁹ Amelia Mott Gummere as quoted by Elizabeth B. Jones, “Amelia Mott Gummere,” in *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal*, Vol. 111, No. 12, (December 2, 1937): 199.

¹⁰ Gummere, *The Quaker: A Study in Costume*, iii.

Monthly and Yearly Meeting Records, paintings, and a few extant garments. She rarely documents her sources and presents primary quotes in anecdotal fashion. Gummere's writing style results from her organization: notes for books and works in progress organized by pasting fragments of articles and text into copybooks and linked with handwritten commentary.¹¹

From her research, Gummere makes four primary points about Quaker clothing which continue to inform Quaker clothing studies today. First, Quaker clothing was a simplified version of contemporary clothing. Secondly, excessive ornamentation and excessive plainness were avoided by Quakers so as not to draw too much focus. Thirdly, plainness was interpreted differently by various groups of Quakers; there was no standard of plainness. Finally, any distinct "Quaker" form of clothing appears to emerge in the late eighteenth century when Quaker elders pushed for a uniform appearance among members.¹²

One overwhelming point emphasized by Gummere and other scholars argues that Quaker fashion, from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, follows the lead of non-Quaker clothing silhouettes adopted just slightly after a style was popularized in mainstream fashion. As Gummere notes, "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

¹¹ See HSP Boxes 1-4 at Atwater Kent Museum and Gummere Collection 1005 in The Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

¹² Most Quaker clothing scholars include Gummere's four points in their work, the arguments being the foundation for Quaker clothing studies. See discussion below.

found just ready to adopt it.”¹³ According to Gummere, male and female Quakers remained just enough behind fashion to appear non-worldly and plain.

Subsequent Quaker Clothing Scholarship

Recent Quaker clothing scholars focus primarily on aesthetics in relation to ideas about Quaker “simplicity” and “plainness,” examining fabric choices, style/cut, and trimmings, and relating these elements of Quaker costume to Meeting records and other Quaker literature. All of the following authors cite Gummere’s scholarship, developing their questions from her four primary points. How did distinctive dress form? Did it differ for British and American Friends? What do case studies of specific Quaker families or communities contribute to the larger picture of trans-Atlantic Quaker costume?

In “The Development of a Distinctive Form of Quaker Dress,”¹⁴ Joan Kendall remarks on discussions among English Friends in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, arguing that the concern with “worldly” dress pushed eighteenth century Friends to argue for an entirely distinct form of dress. The resulting discussions of plainness at the London Yearly Meeting went so far as to lead some nineteenth century Friends to approach “dress, speech and behavior to the detriment of Spiritual Life.”¹⁵ Thus many Quakers took a moderate approach, dressing plainly according to personal interpretation. In 1849 and 1860, the London Yearly Meeting cautioned Quakers to

¹³ Gummere, 183.

¹⁴ Joan Kendall, “The Development of a Distinctive Form of Quaker Dress,” *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society*, No. 19 (1985): 58-74.

¹⁵ Kendall, 70.

renew testimonies to plainness and to encourage simplicity in appearance.¹⁶ Kendall determines that the result was the adoption of simplified forms of fashionable dress by nineteenth century English Friends.

Deborah Kraak addresses similar discussions over plainness among American Quakers in “Variations on ‘Plainness’: Quaker Dress in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia.”¹⁷ She determines that following the ultimate rejection of “ostentatious plainness” in late eighteenth century Philadelphia, Quaker clothing became characterized by nuances dependent on a wearer’s family, wealth, age, and status. Furthermore, degrees of plainness in dress are contingent upon the type of Quaker a person was:

“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 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.¹⁸

Kraak concludes with the emergence of distinctive Quaker costume in Philadelphia in the first decades of the nineteenth-century: drab cloth, slightly out-dated clothing, and distinctive hats.

¹⁶ Kendall, 70-71.

¹⁷ Deborah E. Kraak, “Variations on ‘Plainness’: Quaker Dress in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia,” *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society*, No.34 (2000): 51-63.

¹⁸ Pat O’Donnell, personal communication, quoted in Kraak, 57.

Leanna Lee-Whitman's University of Pennsylvania Ph. D. dissertation Silks and Simplicity: A Study of Quaker Dress as Depicted in Portraits, 1718-1855, examines American Quaker formal dress as expressed in portraiture during Colonial (1718-1775), Early Republic (1776-1826), and post-Orthodox-Hicksite Split (1827-1855) years.¹⁹ Whitman considers the meanings of plain dress, comparing dress as expressed in portraits with disciplinary statements about dress issued by various Philadelphia area Monthly Meetings. After exploring the variety of plain style fabrics and dry-goods available to Friends from 1718-1855, Whitman notes "By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, all older Hicksite and Orthodox Quaker dressed for their portraits in dark uniforms, or a 'badge of identity.' However, contemporary advertisements indicate that gay Quakers continued to buy and dress in finery, but all those who had their portraits painted chose to wear dark color and severe styles."²⁰

Kraak and Kendall's articles and Lee-Whitman's dissertation evaluate documentary and visual sources that illustrate the development and emergence of Quaker clothing. However, like Gummere, their texts do not elaborate on the evidence found in extant garments. Kraak includes examples of Quaker clothing from several Philadelphia area collections, but documentary sources provide the substance of her discussion. Together, Kraak and Kendall suggest that distinctive dress emerged in the eighteenth century, though variations were continually present and reflected individual preferences

¹⁹ Leanna Lee-Whitman, Silks and Simplicity: A Study of Quaker Dress as Depicted in Portraits, 1718-1855, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1987 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987).

²⁰ Ibid., 148-9.

in personal displays of Quakerism. Lee-Whitman continues the discussion by exploring the visual displays of Quakerism by nineteenth-century Friends.

Erin Eisenbarth's 2002 Winterthur thesis, "Plain and Peculiar: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century Quaker Clothing,"²¹ investigates one Hicksite Quaker family's clothing in relation to ideas of plainness. Eisenbarth uses extant garments now in the Winterthur collection to argue that plainness and simplicity were interpreted differently by various groups of Quakers. She determines that Quaker women in the late nineteenth century did not dress in styles that isolated them from non-Quaker women.

Eisenbarth's secondary discussions focus on the impacts of Amelia Mott Gummere and the Colonial Revival on Quaker clothing scholarship. She includes thoughts on where Plainness and Simplicity stem from in Quaker doctrine and how the Colonial Revival shaped collections of Quaker clothing. Eisenbarth secures Amelia Gummere's status within the context of the Colonial Revival, citing Gummere's discourses on "associationism" (the idea that drawing from the past might stimulate the present), the general Colonial Revival interest in old clothing and re-enactment, and the struggle to maintain tradition seen as threatened by immigration and booming industry. It is Gummere, writing in response to the Colonial revival, who pushes ideas of simplicity and plainness in Quaker dress. However, Eisenbarth proves that distinguishing features of Quaker dress are relative when compared with non-Quaker examples.

²¹ Erin Eisenbarth, "Plain and Peculiar: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century Quaker Clothing," (Master's Thesis: University of Delaware, 2002).

In Fitting and Proper: 18th Century Clothing from the Collection of Chester County Historical Society, Sharon Ann Burnston examines the cut of thirty-eight garments with provenances from primarily Quaker families in Chester County, PA.²² Burnston's examination of clothing delves into the construction of extant garments, offering basic textual information about garment descriptions. She presents visual insight into the appearance and construction of clothing, with the bulk of her information presented through scale drawings of garment cut and black-and-white photographs.

Mary Anne Caton's chapter "The Aesthetics of Absence: Quaker Women's Plain Dress in the Delaware Valley, 1790-1900,"²³ delves deeper into the ideas of plainness in Quaker clothing at the Chester County Historical Society (CCHS). Extant garments at CCHS suggest degrees of plainness and simplicity, though the cut and appearance of the garments and accessories suggest style consciousness. Caton suggests that examinations of the cut and construction of Quaker clothing cement the recognition that several generations of nineteenth century Quakers increasingly accepted degrees of plainness and simplicity in their clothing, choosing either the traditional "singularity" (as noted by

²² Many eighteenth century Chester County residents were Quaker or related to Quaker families. Thus, many of the Chester County Historical Society collection garments have Quaker provenances. See Sharon Ann Burnston, Fitting and Proper: 18th Century Clothing from the Collection of the Chester County Historical Society, (Texarkana, TX: Scurlock Publishing Co., 2000).

²³ Mary Anne Caton, "The Aesthetics of Absence: Quaker Women's Plain Dress in the Delaware Valley, 1790-1900," in Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections on a Quaker Ethic in American Design and Consumption, ed. Emma Lapsansky and Anne Verplanck (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 246-271.

Amelia Gummere in The Quaker: A Study in Costume) or a less ostentatious style of popular dress.

Burnston, Eisenbarth, and Caton use a material culture basis, commencing with extant garments in a connoisseur's approach and then reaching out to documentary and visual sources to complement their arguments. Their evidence, like that offered in this thesis, is somewhat self-selected by the families who saved the extant garments in museum collections, offering unique insight into what specific Quaker individuals and communities wore. In doing so, they link social and cultural history with costume history, expanding on Gummere's antiquarian investigations and linking people to the construction and performance of their clothing.

Costume History

The historiography relevant to this thesis relies heavily on costume history, focusing on the stylistic and technical aspects of clothing. Two types of costume history publications are utilized. These include primary publications about construction and fashion advice from the nineteenth century as well as secondary interpretations by twentieth-century costume historians. Primary sources include period fashion sources which describe the fashions for each season through elaborate text and some fashion plate illustrations. Such sources also comment on the cultural meanings of specific clothes. Period construction sources support the evidence costume historians use, explaining the step-by-step techniques used in making clothes. These sources start with basic stitches and walk the reader through the selection of fabrics, the creation of a pattern, and finally, the completion of a garment.

Secondary sources include histories of clothing written by costume historians working in museums and in theater: Janet Arnold, Joan Severa, and Nancy Bradfield. However, all commonly examine the evidence found in extant garments in forming their arguments. Many of the sources describe construction techniques through brief text and detailed illustrations from photographed or drafted sources.

Janet Arnold is the primary model for academic costume history.²⁴ Arnold examines representative garments from British collections, dating them based on comparisons with contemporary fashion plates. As she notes in her acknowledgements and introduction, “it only deals with the practical side of the cutting and construction of period costumes . . . It is not intended to be a complete history of women’s costume of the period.”²⁵ Arnold examines the garments briefly in text, clarifying her discussion with carefully drawn scale patterns and notes, in addition to overall views of the garments. As such, Arnold provides the standard for costume history of this type.

In Costume and Detail: 1730-1930, Nancy Bradfield also works from British collections, examining many of the same garments Arnold discusses, but from a historical theater perspective.²⁶ However, Bradfield publishes her results in a series of less precise

²⁴ Janet Arnold, Patterns of Fashion 1: Englishwomen’s Dresses and Their Construction, 1660-1860 and Patterns of Fashion 2: Englishwomen’s Dresses and Their Construction, 1860-1940, (Hollywood, CA: Quite Specific Media Group Ltd., 1977).

²⁵ Janet Arnold, Patterns of Fashion 2: Englishwomen’s dresses and their construction, 1860-1940, 2.

²⁶ Bradfield discusses more garments than Arnold, covering the years 1730-1930 in her book. See Nancy Bradfield, Costume in Detail: 1730-1930, (Hollywood, CA: Costume and Fashion Press, 2003).

sketches accompanied by notes. The result is a chronological overview of individual garments. Although Bradfield does give the measurements and drawings of the interiors for the garments, information is difficult for readers without working knowledge of historic garments to understand. Bradfield offers an excellent chronology of stylistic characteristics from which to compare other collections.

Although both Janet Arnold and Nancy Bradfield were working in Britain, their scholarship is relevant to this thesis. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Americans looked to Britain for the latest fashions, increasingly looking to France in the nineteenth century, and more globally in the twentieth century.²⁷ Even after the American Revolution, Quakers continued to maintain close ties to British Friends, traveling back and forth between the two nations.

In Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900, Joan Severa delves into the dress and appearance of middle-class Americans in the nineteenth-century through the lens of photography.²⁸ Severa organizes her text by decade, introducing each with a discussion of prescriptive sources and individuals' records which illuminate how common people accepted and interpreted the garments

²⁷ Many decorative arts scholars revel in tracing the transmission of style from community to community on local and international scales. See Morrison H. Heckscher and Leslie Greene Bowman, American Rococo, 1750-1775: Elegance in Ornament (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1994) for information about the transmission of English styles in the eighteenth century; Wendy Cooper's Classical Taste in America, 1800-1840 (New York: The Baltimore Museum of Art and Abbeville Press Publishers, 1993) describes the increase of Napoleonic French fashions on American style.

²⁸ Joan Severa, Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900, (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995).

illustrated in popular fashion. Severa's book informs much of the method used in this book, examining the clothes of average citizens to find inconsistencies between the practical and the popular, the printed and the constructed.

Period clothing sources merit similar evaluation, since many nineteenth century domestic books promoted moralistic stances in addition to information on what to wear. The Workwoman's Guide was published in England in 1838 by "A Lady" for "clergymen's wives, young married women, school-mistresses, and ladies' maids."²⁹ These women needed to know how to sew for home and charitable work, thus, the author presents a clear method for saving labor and costs by offering precise directions and patterns for cutting and making garments and household linens. In the book's "Preface," the author comments on the moral and financial benefits of neat, orderly work and plain dressing, noting that "Dress . . . has of late been admitted by philosophical critics to the dignity of a fine art: it both requires and cultivates taste, and the consideration of a pleasing effect and air in dress is first applied in the cutting out."³⁰ The author's statement applies to Quaker clothing and plain dress worn and praised during the nineteenth century.³¹ The text of the book suggests that it was intended for at least a

²⁹ The Workwoman's Guide, Containing Instructions to the Inexperienced in Cutting Out and Completing Those Articles of Wearing Apparel, &c., which are Usually Made at Home; Also, Explanations on Upholstery, Straw-Platting, Bonnet-Making, Knitting, &c. (Birmingham: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1838. Reprinted by Piper publishing LLC, 2002), iii.

³⁰ Ibid., v.

³¹ It is useful to note that plain dress and Quaker dress are not used interchangeably throughout this text. Although Quaker dress is characterized by relative plainness, it refers to clothing worn by members of the Society of Friends. Plain Dress derives from

partially Quaker audience, offering directions for several Quaker garments, including bonnets, caps, and shawls.³²

Godey's Lady's Book (1830-98), offered fashion and domestic advice, literature, and social commentary for American women.³³ The magazine was immensely popular and widely read, with circulation increasing from twenty-nine-thousand to one-hundred-fifty-thousand between 1839 and 1860, largely because of the editorial influence of Sarah

the 'plain style' which, beginning in the seventeenth century, described an aesthetic devoid of much ornamentation and associated with extreme Protestant sects, such as Puritans and Quakers. Plain style can refer to architecture, decorative arts, literature, music, and dress. In the nineteenth century, domestic and moralistic writers advocated plain style lifestyles which shunned worldly concerns and looked to domestic and spiritual realms for guidance. See Emma Lapsansky and Anne A. Verplanck, eds., Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections on a Quaker Ethic in American Design and Consumption. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Lydia Marie Child, The American Frugal Housewife (Boston: Carter, Hendee, and Co., 1833). A useful comparison to the Plain style aesthetic is Sumpter Priddy, American Fancy: Exuberance in the Arts 1790-1840 (Milwaukee: The Chipstone Foundation, 2004).

³² Since Quakers frequently corresponded between England and America, it is likely that Philadelphia area women were aware of The Workwoman's Guide. Later chapters in this thesis look in depth at the directions for dresses published in the book which nearly exactly correspond to dress construction in the FHA collection.

³³ Several individuals and websites devote scholarship to Sarah Josepha Hale, moralistic commentators, and lady's magazines, including *Godey's Lady's Book*. See Stella Blum, Fashions and Costumes from Godey's Lady's Book. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1985); Sally Helvenston, "Popular Advice for the Well Dressed Woman in the 19th Century," *Dress*, Vol. 5. (New York: The Costume Society of America, 1980); Robert Kunicov, ed. Mr. Godey's Ladies: Being a Mosaic of Fashions and Fancies (Princeton: The Pyne Press, 1971); Sarah A. Leavitt, From Katherine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A Cultural History of Domestic Advice. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Laura McCall, "'The Reign of Brute Force is Now Over:' A Content Analysis of Godey's Lady's Book, 1830-1860." *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer, 1989): 217-236; Dorothy M. Hetherington and William Sprenger, "Fashion Terms from Godey's Lady's Book," *American Speech*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (December 1952): 284-5.

Josepha Hale.³⁴ Hale contributed to and edited the magazine, using it as a platform for promoting women's education. Hale's editorial influence shows in the moral arguments made by original contributors (and perhaps in Hale's own comments published under pseudonyms), who claimed that educating women would make better citizens, wives, and mothers, starting in the domestic sphere. As moral leaders, Hale argued that women should appear (and be) pious, plain, and modest. Thus, Quakers were upheld as models for other Americans. *Godey's Lady's Book*, then, offers excellent comparisons between high fashion and common fashion. Though articles and fashion plates described Americanized high-fashions (often simplified versions of fashions imported from Europe³⁵), Hale countered with examples of what Quaker women and other common women were wearing, praising plainness and simplicity as representative of inward virtues.³⁶

³⁴ Lisa Niles, "Sarah Josepha Hale," *Domestic Goddesses*, online, available from www.womenwriters.net/domestic_goddess/ ; 18 March 2005.

³⁵ Blum, i-ii.

³⁶ Although Hale did not support high-fashion, she understood its' importance to her readers and as an astute business woman, included fashion articles and plates in each magazine. See Blum, i.

Chapter 3

THE FRIENDS' HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Friends' Historical Association collection at the Atwater Kent Museum is a result of the contributions of numerous individuals and several organizations, who considered the possessions of earlier generations worthy of scholarly examination, celebration, and preservation. Beginning near the time of the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, Americans began collecting, assembling, exhibiting, and studying American history in an organized manner.¹ In 1873, several prominent Philadelphia Quaker men established the Friends' Historical Association (FHA), consisting of "persons such as feel interested in the Society of Friends and its history."² In 1904,

¹ Even before the Centennial Exposition, objects considered worthy of preservation and historical inquiry were displayed in local museums or used in other manners in public celebrations. Pilgrims Hall (b. in 1824) in Plymouth, MA and "Colonial" Kitchens at the Fairs are among the institutions that displayed artifacts with various goals. Later, period room settings at homes and in museums continued the exhibition of artifacts in a "realistic" setting. See Rodris Roth, "The New England, or 'Olde Tyme,' Kitchen Exhibit at Nineteenth-Century Fairs," Susan Schoelwer, "Curious Relics and Quaint Scenes: The Colonial Revival at Chicago's Great Fair," and Melissa Young Frye, "The Beginnings of the Period Room in American Museums: Charles P. Wilcomb's Colonial Kitchens, 896, 1906, 1910," *The Colonial Revival in America*, Alan Axelrod, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company for the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum, 1985), 159-183, 184-216, and 217-240.

² Albert Cook Myers, "Some Brief Historical Notes on Friends' Historical Association," *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association*, Vol. 13, No.1 (Spring 1924): 4.

a similar organization under the title of Friends Historical Society of Philadelphia commenced, focused on the artifacts and history of American Quakers. The Friends' Historical Association and the Friends Historical Society merged in 1923, adopting the name of the former organization. The newly revitalized Friends' Historical Association sought to continue preserving Quaker history and artifacts, publishing Quaker scholarship, and providing a social forum for twentieth century Quakers and non-Quakers interested in Quaker history.

This chapter attempts to illuminate the motivations for both the Friends Historical Association and the Friends Historical Society, as individual organizations and as a single organization after the 1923 merge. Special focus is given to the publication of scholarship relating to collection items, exhibition of artifacts, and the use of objects in celebratory pageants in twentieth century.³ It then examines the roles of both Amelia and Lydia Gummere in the development of the collection, including the acquisition of objects and the search for a permanent location for the collection. Finally, the chapter explores the transfer of the collection from the FHA to the Atwater Kent Museum, where the collection continues to grow and thrive today.

³ It is useful to note that the Friends Historical Association collection at the Atwater Kent Museum consists of approximately 1,200 artifacts including ephemera, decorative arts objects, miscellaneous household items and textiles, and clothing/ accessories. Objects of all types were included in FHS/ FHA publications, exhibits, and pageants. This thesis considers primarily the use of clothing and related objects.

The Friends' Historical Association (FHA)

At 7:30 p.m. on the 4th of December 1873 in a second floor room of a house at Fifth and Callowhill Streets in Philadelphia, nine prominent Philadelphia Quaker men, both Orthodox and Hicksite, met to establish an organization aimed at “collecting and preserving” Quaker history at a time when Philadelphia itself was preparing to celebrate the nation’s centennial.⁴ The organization, the Friends’ Historical Association (FHA) determined to preserve, promote, and celebrate American Quakerism. Membership was never large, and was limited to “specialists, collectors, antiquaries, historians and genealogists in the field of Quakeriana”.⁵ In 1875 women joined the membership of the Association, which hovered between 12-20 members for the next several years. By 1910, many members ceased to attend or had passed away and the decision was made to divide the Association’s books and funds between Haverford and Swarthmore Colleges.⁶

Although membership remained limited, the Association managed to collect a number of books and artifacts relating to Philadelphia Quakers. In a 1923 article, Albert

⁴ FHA membership was divided between Hicksite and Orthodox members. The Hicksite men (and members of Race Street Meeting) were Samuel Parrish (1830-1890), Nathaniel E. Janney (1842-1910), Joseph M. Truman, Jr. (1827-1902), and Jonathan Comly (1831-1916). The Orthodox members (and members of Arch Street Yearly meeting) were Dr. S. Mason McCollin (1843-1917), Samuel Smedley (1832-1894), Josiah W. Leeds (1841-1908), Samuel Worthington (1843-1897), and Lewis Woolman (1841-1903). In his review of FHA history, Albert Myers charts the founders Quaker leanings, placing an upper-case “O” for Orthodox or “H” for Hicksite next to each man’s name. This pattern establishes the precedent for the later history of the FHA, which required that both Orthodox and Hicksite Friends hold offices within the Association. Later Friends are similarly marked with an “O” or and “H” indicating their leanings. See Myers, 3.

⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁶ Ibid., 6.

Cook Myers notes that, "It was customary for the members to bring to the meetings donations of books, manuscripts and the like, so that in time quite a considerable Quaker library was formed."⁷ Eventually a large walnut bookcase was donated to house the collection, which consisted not only of books and manuscripts, but other objects. For instance, at the December 6, 1876 meeting,

Elizabeth Worthington (mother of Samuel Worthington) presented a very beautifully prepared lay figure representing the dress of the average woman Friend of the present day. In years to come this figure may be valuable in determining just what was the costume of Friends in 1876.⁸

Although the figure has since been lost to time, its documentation establishes the interests of the Association in preserving not only important artifacts from early Philadelphia Quaker society, but also objects with relevance to contemporary Quakers and to future Quakers with an interest in their ancestry and traditions.

With the cessation of meetings in 1910, the Association entered a dormant phase, collections and funds split between Haverford and Swarthmore and members dispersed. However, in 1923, James H. Atkinson, a charter member and Treasurer of the FHA and a Hicksite Race Street friend, and Marcellus Balderston, FHA member and Orthodox Arch Street Friend, met with surviving FHA members and proposed to elect the membership of the Friends' Historical Society into the Friends' Historical Association, ushering in a new era of activity.⁹

⁷ Myers, 6.

⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁹ Ibid., 7.

The Friends' Historical Society (FHS)

Founded in 1904, the Friends' Historical Society focused on conserving American Quakerism, preserving Quaker artifacts, publishing Quaker historical material, and providing a social forum for the celebration and exploration of Quakerism. It is this organization which had a greater obvious impact on the formation of the new Friends' Historical Association in 1923. An advertising membership card from the first quarter of the twentieth century elaborates on the Society's goals:

Why should I become a member of the Friends' Historical Society? *First-* Because it is the purpose of the society to conserve the Annals of American Quakerism and to stimulate interest in the preservation for posterity of the relics and memories of a past, rich in historic interest. This is a work that should merit thy approval and support. *Second-* Because of the pleasure and instruction derived from a membership in the Society. The excursions in the summer to nearby points of historic interest are always enjoyable, the occasional suppers to which each member is usually entitled to invite one guest have become most interesting social events, and the addresses delivered from time to time before the Society are stimulating and educational. *Third-* Because of the Bulletin of the Society, issued from time to time, and sent free to the members, contains valuable historical matter and is alone worth the amount of the annual dues.¹⁰

The membership card effectively illustrates one large difference between the Society and the Association: the Society promoted scholarship while stressing the *social* qualities of learning and sharing to celebrate history. The social outlet of the Society is emphasized by the advertisement of the excursions and meetings as "stimulating," and by the invitation to bring a guest to functions. Additionally, the semi-annual *Bulletin*, a

¹⁰ Un-numbered membership advertisement card, Folder "FHA Material Relating to Friends' Historical Association Programs, Invitations, etc.," Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.4, Atwater Kent Museum.

magazine/newsletter for members, listed the minutes of meetings, summaries of articles and addresses, and social information (obituaries, notices, and reviews), making information available to all members. In contrast, the Association promoted scholarship and investigation within the boundaries of the Association membership in attendance at meetings or in the occasional publication.

The first mission of the Friends' Historical Society was to "collect manuscripts and other material for the elucidation of the history of Friends in America."¹¹ Later, the Society's constitution was amended to read

The objects of the Society shall be to collect manuscripts, heir-looms, antiques, and other material and data of historical or sentimental importance for preservation or publication, for the elucidation of the history of the Society of Friends and for the promotion of historical interest and research among its members.¹²

Thus, the Society continued to collect manuscripts, but also miscellaneous objects of domestic and public use. This amendment to the Friends Historical Society suggests why the collection which later became sheltered at the Atwater Kent Museum is so varied, containing documents, textiles, household goods, and other artifacts.¹³ Many of these early collection objects were donated by members who would present the object with a short paper at Society meetings.

¹¹The reasoning for manuscript collections continued, "The need for the preservation of papers and documents had been recently brought to the attention of interested persons by the destruction, chiefly through ignorance of their value, of valuable papers and documents. See "Tributes to Allen C. Thomas," *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia*, Vol.10, No. 2 (May 1921): 52.

¹² Ibid., 52-3.

¹³ The contents of the collection are discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

While the reading of papers or display of artifacts by members was a common event at meetings, special celebrations, such as anniversaries and commemorations, resulted in formal exhibits and programs. One example is the “Friends’ Commemoration of the Bi-Centenary of the Death of William Penn, 1718-1918,” advertised with a note reading:

A loan exhibition of Relics, Deeds and other Manuscript relating only to William Penn and his family, with the co-operation of the Friends’ Historical Society of Philadelphia, will be on view in the Meeting House the evening of the Commemoration and will be fully safeguarded. The loan of such Penn mementoes is solicited and may be sent to the care of William B. Harvey, 304 Arch Street.¹⁴

Several points suggested by the Penn Exhibit are of relevance in relation to the later Friends Historical Association collection at the Atwater Kent. First, the Society was concerned with the collection, maintenance, and exhibition of Quaker artifacts in Philadelphia. Artifact assemblage and exhibition suggests that the Society stressed the placement of artifacts into the context of cultural (Quaker) and social (Philadelphia) history. Secondly, artifacts were solicited from members of the Society, giving any member the opportunity to share their family history and knowledge with others, thereby connecting them to Quaker society of the present and of the past. Finally, the Penn exhibit demonstrates a concern for displaying artifacts in a safe manner.

The concerns for the preservation of the collection are not solely realized through an examination of F.H.S. exhibits. Articles published in the *Bulletin* examine many

¹⁴ “Friends’ Commemoration of the Bi-Centenary of the Death of William Penn, 1718-1918” Program, Folder “FHA Material Relating to Friends’ Historical Association Programs, Invitations, etc.,” Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP.4, Atwater Kent Museum.

objects, expressing concern for their storage. If anything, concern over the storage of family heirlooms and artifacts greatly limited the size of the collection. Allen C. Thomas noted, "While the accumulation of objects is not large, not a few are of much interest. The *number* would have been *much larger* had there been an *assured* place of deposit."¹⁵ The assurance of a "safe place of deposit" appears repeatedly in the F.H.S. literature. When asked to project a course of action for the Society, Thomas responded to President Lucy Roberts with a list of projects:

First. A *room* where the possessions of the Society can be safely preserved and consulted.

Second. A more active support of the *Bulletin* in the way of contributions of articles, and especially of items illustrative of the Friends of the past, anecdotes and unpublished or rare documents (original or faithful copies) issued by Meetings or individuals.

Third. Continuing to place tablets marking sites of historical interest.

Fourth. The formation of a collection of portraits, silhouettes, photographs, engravings and prints of Friends eminent for various reasons.

Fifth. Closely allied to this last would be a collection of prints and photographs of Meeting Houses old and new, and buildings and scenes with which individuals and incidents of Quaker history are associated. There are many such pictures and views which would be given if safe keeping were assured. Those who have visited the Friends' Institute in London know how extensive and how interesting such a collection may be made.

Sixth. Occasional meetings for addresses, conferences, exhibitions of lantern slides, the subjects not necessarily restricted to the past, but illustrating present conditions, and revealing history in the making."¹⁶

¹⁵ "Tributes to Allen C. Thomas," 53.

¹⁶ Note five emphasizes the perseverance of the trans-Atlantic Quaker connection in the twentieth century as contemporary Friends continued to visit, attend meeting, minister, and research in London. See "Tributes to Allen C. Thomas," 53-4.

The overwhelming goal of the Society, then, was to preserve history of the past and present and for the future. Only by drawing on the Quaker experience of earlier history could modern Quakers address contemporary concerns, thereby adjusting to changing social needs while maintaining a group identity. Exhibits, publications, entertainments, and a “safe permanent home” for collections objects allowed Quakers to preserve their history, provide a material foundation for addressing their identity, and assemble as a group to discuss past and present issues.

Alphabet Soup: The 1923 FHS/ FHA Merge

Prompted by relative inactivity since dividing the collection and funds in 1910, surviving members of the Friends’ Historical Association agreed to elect the membership of the Friends’ Historical Society of Philadelphia, in 1923.¹⁷ The Friends’ Historical Association brought to the merge an effective, established charter, a small library, and funds. The Friends’ Historical Society offered, in addition to a younger and more active membership base, a growing collection of documents and artifacts, and the publication the *Bulletin*. The official merge occurred at the Friends’ Historical Society of Philadelphia Annual Meeting on November 26, 1923, with the election of officers,

¹⁷ In “electing the membership,” the FHA agreed to admit all FHS members into the Association, offering them full membership privileges.

presentation of “An Account of the Friends’ Historical Association,” and a discussion of “*The Bulletin*, Its Aims and Problems.”¹⁸

From its inception the Friends’ Historical Society was a more accessible organization than the older Friends’ Historical Association. The Association tended to recruit from learned ranks of antiquarians, historians, genealogists and other “elites,” while the Society members tended to be people simply interested in Quaker history and culture, though not by any means studied “specialists”. While Association members attended meetings, which by default resulted in a social atmosphere, their purpose was to study and conserve Quaker history. In contrast, the records from Society meetings indicate that preservation and scholarship were core interests, with meetings frequently organized around the reading of papers or discussion of artifacts. However, the Society was equally social, with frequently planned outings, dinners, and other social events as published in membership recruitment cards.¹⁹ Finally, the cost of yearly membership dues in the organizations reflects the differences: the older Association cost five dollars annually plus five dollars as a membership entrance fee; the Society dues amounted to one dollar and included a subscription to the *Bulletin*.²⁰

¹⁸ The above information is drawn from two un-numbered postcards in the HSP.3 box at the Atwater Kent Museum.

¹⁹ The *Bulletin* of the Friends Historical Society published news relevant to the minutes of the previous meeting, in addition to reviews of outings and dinners, many of which are advertised in a series of postcards and flyers at the Atwater Kent Museum. See Folder “FHA Material Relating to Friends’ Historical Association Programs, Invitations, etc.,” Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP. 4, Atwater Kent Museum.

²⁰ Myers, 4. Membership fees for the Friends’ Historical Society are found in an un-numbered membership advertisement card located in Folder “FHA Material Relating to

Advocating Collections: Amelia and Lydia Gummere

At the Friends' Historical Association meeting on December 1, 1923, members elected directors and officers.²¹ Among the elected officers was co-vice president Amelia Mott Gummere, an Orthodox member of Arch Street Friends and later Haverford Friends' Meeting. Gummere, listed as a charter member of the Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia (FHS), was extremely active in the FHS, submitting articles for publication in the *Bulletin*, serving as Co-Vice President in 1920-24, as Director and Vice-President of the Friends' Historical Association from 1924-37, and promoting the collecting of historical material. Her sister-in-law, Lydia Flagg Gummere, also formerly an FHS member, was soon elected as Curator of the FHA. As curator, Lydia oversaw collections, helped organize exhibits, and served as the chair of the entertainments committee, the body of members responsible for organizing pageants and tableaux.

In a 1922 article entitled "Cooperation in Collecting Historical Material," Amelia Gummere reports Swarthmore College's interest in the development of Quaker historical collections.²² Gummere uses the article as a plea for the preservation of "Quakeriana" consisting of "old relics, family papers, diaries, journals and letters which are valuable

Friends' Historical Association Programs, Invitations, etc.," Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.4, Atwater Kent Museum. In 1922, Friends' Historical Society dues increased to \$2.00 annually or \$50.00 for a life membership.

²¹ Myers, 7.

²² *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia*, Vol. 11, No.1 (Spring, 1922): 34-35. See Appendix B for a transcription of this article.

historic records of the manners and customs of our Quaker ancestors”.²³ Amelia’s article was not her first attempt at promoting the preservation or study of Quaker artifacts: since 1882 she had studied, researched and published articles and books concerning Quaker society, history, and material life.

Amelia Mott Gummere was born on July 17, 1859 in Burlington, New Jersey to Richard Field Mott and Susan Thomas Mott.²⁴ She studied at home under the direction of her father and a French tutor during early childhood, later attending the Moses Brown School in Providence Rhode Island, a “stronghold of Orthodox Quakerism,” graduating in 1878 at age nineteen.²⁵ Shortly after her graduation Amelia commenced writing, co-authoring Friends in Burlington in 1882.²⁶ The same year she married Dr. Francis Gummere²⁷, then the headmaster of the Swain Free School in New Bedford, MA. The two likely knew one another from Burlington and developed a close acquaintance during her attendance at the Moses Brown School where Gummere taught for a time.²⁸

²³ Gummere, “Cooperation in Collecting,” 34.

²⁴ “Mrs. Francis B. Gummere,” Folder PG7 “Amelia Mott Gummere, 1859-1937,” Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Francis Barton Gummere (1855-1919) was born in Burlington, New Jersey, to Samuel and Elizabeth Barton Gummere. Francis earned an undergraduate degree from Haverford College in 1872, studying later in Germany and at Harvard College, where he taught from 1881-1882. See Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, Haverford College.

²⁸ Elizabeth B. Jones, “Amelia Mott Gummere,” in *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal*, Vol. 111, No.12, (December 2, 1937): 198.

In 1887 the Gummeres and their two young sons, Richard Mott Gummere and Samuel J. Gummere, moved from New Bedford to Haverford, PA where Francis was offered a position teaching German and English at Haverford College.²⁹ The following year, 1888, son Francis B. Gummere Jr. was born. For roughly the next thirty years Amelia continued writing, publishing, serving in various organizations and as a faculty wife, and nursing the invalid son Francis.³⁰ In 1904 she became a charter member of the Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia, in addition to gaining membership in the Friends' Historical Society of London, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. During this time and throughout the next ten years she published several works including The Quaker: A Study in Costume (1902), Witchcraft and Quakerism (1908), The Quaker in the Forum (1909), and the section "New Jersey" in The Quakers in the American Colonies (1911). Mrs. Gummere also published articles and participated in the Historical Research Committee of the Pennsylvania Society of the Colonial Dames for the publication Forges and Furnaces in the Province of Pennsylvania (1914). In 1915 she organized and served as President of the John Woolman Memorial Association, which assisted in the restoration of a house on Branch Street in Mt. Holly, New Jersey belonging to John Woolman's daughter Mary.³¹ Amelia's active participation in such a

²⁹ Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, Haverford College.

³⁰ Amelia's campus activities included the "Campus Club," started in 1902 to meet the "special needs of the college," such as campus beautification. Son Francis died in the summer of 1937, shortly before Amelia passed away. See Jones, 198.

³¹ Jones, 198-99.

variety of activities indicates a deeply committed and scholarly woman, devoted to the history of her faith, community, and family.

Dr. Gummere died in 1919 leaving Amelia and three sons living in Haverford, PA. Upon his death, Amelia increased her participation in the Friends Historical Society and the Society for the Colonial Dames, devoting herself to her causes. In 1923, Amelia assisted in the merge of the Friends' Historical Association and the Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia. At the first meeting of the new FHA, she was elected as the co-Vice President of the organization, also serving as an editor and contributor for the *Bulletin*, the Friends Historical Association publication. In the following years, Gummere helped head the campaigns for artifact collection, often publishing papers about 'relics of interest' and speaking at Association meetings along similar lines. As a member of the entertainment committee, Amelia assisted Lydia Flagg Gummere (her sister-in-law) in organizing pageants and exhibitions of artifacts at meetings and other events.

Gummere's name appears in the FHS *Bulletin* one-hundred and ten times between 1906 and her death in 1937, primarily in listings of her activities, or her articles.³² Her participation in the Friends' Historical Association slowed down around 1930, though she continued to attend meetings, preside as Vice President, and contributed the occasional article to the *Bulletin*. During her final year of life (1937), the *Bulletin* notes Amelia's absence at Friends Historical Society meetings and activities, declaring

³² See the indices for the *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Society* from 1906-1937. After 1923, the publication is entitled *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association*.

that the summer meeting held May 5, “was called in the meeting house under the chairmanship of Lydia Flagg Gummere, as the President of the Association, William W. Comfort, was in Europe and Mrs. Francis B. Gummere, Vice President, who had been expected to preside, was prevented by illness from serving”.³³

Amelia M. Gummere passed away on October 6, 1937 at the age of 78.

Obituaries celebrated her literary successes, mentioning particularly The Journal of John Woolman (1922).³⁴ One obituary praises Gummere’s historical research:

Mrs. Gummere’s distinction as historian and writer . . . her critical mind and wealth of ably prepared biographical notes concerning individuals mentioned in his (Woolman’s) text, are of inestimable value. Added to which is a complete bibliography and a carefully prepared index.³⁵

The obituary certainly illustrates Amelia’s capacity for historical research and writing, especially when related to American Quakerism: the same care and indexing can be found in the 1901 The Quaker: A Study in Costume. Her study, written much in the style of antiquarian-historians such as Alice Morse Earle, makes much use of primary documents and objects-as-relics. Her questions are social, political, and philosophic: however, the overwhelming undertaking is addressing the concept that “dress at one time

³³ *Bulletin of the Friends’ Historical Association*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring 1937): 3-4.

³⁴ Gummere’s research, notes, images and drafts for sections of her work on John Woolman are located in the Special Collections of Haverford College. See Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, Boxes A and B, Haverford College.

³⁵ “Mrs. Francis B. Gummere,” Folder PG7, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

went far to make a Quaker- at least in the world's thinking".³⁶ She delves deeper into the philosophy and experience in the making of the Quakers in The Quaker in the Forum in 1910. There she focuses on social history, in which the Quaker "largely succeeded in living out his unwritten creed in a philosophy that made belief a conduct of life, and manifest to the world its practicability as a working theory".³⁷ For Amelia, the perseverance of Quakerism in the twentieth century was contingent upon proving that the theories behind Quakerism could apply to modern society. Publishing books about Quaker philosophies as practiced and promoting collections and scholarship in Quaker organizations was elemental in achieving her goal.

Amelia's efforts increased the collections of Quaker memorabilia in Philadelphia throughout the 1920s and 1930s, fueled in part to preserve Quaker history and to document the contributions of Quakers to the city of Philadelphia. The collections of artifacts and documents were regularly distributed to Quaker repositories, including Swarthmore and Haverford colleges, Westtown school, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the Friends Historical Association. However, with artifacts increasing

³⁶ Amelia Mott Gummere, The Quaker: A Study in Costume, (Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, 1901), iii.

³⁷ Amelia Mott Gummere, The Quaker in the Forum (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1910), i-ii. This publication addresses the differing experience in the acceptance of Quaker franchise in three American regions: New England, the mid-Atlantic (Pennsylvania), and the South. Just as The Quaker: A Study in Costume utilized both English and American sources, so too does The Quaker in the Forum. Gummere argues that manifestation of Quaker thought is partially responsible for the democratic nature of American society, including religious freedom and 'substantial justice' and trial-by-jury. While both of her books celebrate Quaker practice, The Quaker in the Forum addresses a public, not strictly a Quaker audience and stresses the impact of Quakerism on political and commercial history.

and with no consolidated home or method of organization, the Friends Historical Association came to recognize the need for not only a permanent home for the collection, but for a curator. The needs for one individual to organize and oversee acquisitions were found in the person of Lydia Flagg Gummere, Amelia's sister-in-law, acknowledged in the Spring 1935 issue of the *Bulletin of the Friends' Historical Association* as Curator and as a Director.³⁸

Lydia's life is not as well documented as that of Amelia, largely because she did not actively publish books or write for the *Bulletin*. Instead, Lydia remained behind the scenes, managing the FHA collection and occasionally speaking at Meetings. Correspondence in the files of the Atwater Kent Museum indicates that the majority of Lydia's responsibilities revolved around responding to inquiries about Quaker artifacts, donations and acquisitions. Postings in the *Bulletin* also indicate reports at every meeting in relation to accepted donations. A typical report of Lydia's activities reads as follows: "The Curator, Lydia Flagg Gummere, reported that the Aimwell School had been laid down, and that the records of the school had been presented the FRIENDS' HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, consisting of the charter, the minute books, the official seal, and other papers, all filed in a mahogany box".³⁹ Lydia's records of the collection provide some of the only links between objects and specific families in the earliest accessioned FHA collection garments at the Atwater Kent Museum. As Curator, all

³⁸ *Bulletin of the Friends' Historical Association*, Vol. 24, Number 1 (Spring, 1935).

³⁹ "Annual Meeting of Friends' Historical Association, 1935" *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association*, Vol. 24, No.2 (Autumn, 1935): 55.

objects exhibited through the 1930s were accompanied by a line noting that the object was from the Friends' Historical Association, loaned by Lydia Flagg Gummere (See Figure 1). She also served as the chair of the entertainment committee responsible for organizing tableaux at meetings. Although no records verify her duties as chair, Lydia may have been responsible for selecting pageant props and accessories, since collection objects were used in the entertainments. With Amelia serving on the entertainment committee, the two could combine their talents to actively increase awareness of the collection as a resource.

The Craze for Collecting and Pageantry: The 1920s and 1930s

An emphasis on linking mid-twentieth century Quakers with the past permeates the early collecting policies, events, and *Bulletin* articles. When asked what the future of the Friends' Historical Society was, Professor Allen C. Thomas of Haverford College replied, "It is impossible for us to sever ourselves from what has gone before, because 'the roots of the present lie deep in the past.'"⁴⁰ Thomas continued,

Is it not, therefore, incumbent upon us to devote some attention to the past in order to gain a fuller knowledge of how we came to be what we are, so that we may better become what we should be? Many questions and problems that seem to *us new*, differ but little in essentials from those which were proposed by our ancestors, and which had to be met and answered by them. . . Had the Friends of the last half of the Eighteenth century and the first quarter of the Nineteenth century been better acquainted with the real, rounded history of the earlier days-the exterior life as well as the interior- it is quite likely that the great rift of 1827-28 would not have taken place.⁴¹

⁴⁰ "Tributes to Allen C. Thomas," 51.

⁴¹ "Tribute to Allen C. Thomas," 52.

Thomas' statements summarize almost fifty years of sentiments from the Friends Historical Association and the Friends Historical Society: Look to the past to learn how to approach the future. Only then could the problems of yesterday be explored to help reunite twentieth century Quakers, spurring them to again find group identity.⁴² The formation of both the FHA and FHS included diverse memberships of Orthodox and Hicksite Friends. From the 1920s through 1940s, dinners and meetings of the Association and Society offered forums for exchange between the two parties. At the meetings, events typically included lectures, discussions, or pageants centered on particular early Quakers or their objects. Any member could present his or her family artifacts (all to be over 100 years old, placing the approximate date of the object's creation *before* the Hicksite schism), symbolically re-affirming their personal ties to the Society of Friends.⁴³ Other events allowed for mass re-affirmation through re-enacted tableaux of Quaker history, often featuring descendants dressed in or using the artifacts of their ancestors to establish the authenticity of the history portrayed.

Although these events are presented in programs as amusements organized by an entertainment committee, they often promote the messages presented in the lectures and messages presented beforehand. Sometimes the presentations centered around objects,

⁴² Similar issues permeate Amelia Gummere's writing, especially The Quaker: A Study in Costume.

⁴³ The particulars of the objects used at Association events are discussed later in this section. At this time in collecting throughout America, any object one hundred years old was defined as antique, and therefore, of greater interest in regards to early American history.

such “Two Centuries of Quaker Costume Illustrated by Lantern Slides” offered by Albert Cook Myers at the Annual FHA Meeting on Monday, November 25, 1929.⁴⁴ A note in the *Bulletin* relays that as Myers presented, he was “impersonating Joseph Besse (1683-1757), London Friend and author”.⁴⁵ Following Myers came a “Salutation by William Penn” with the notation “Founder of Pennsylvania; impersonated by Dr. Rayner W. Kelsey, Professor of American History at Haverford College.”⁴⁶ Finally, the evening concluded with a “Tableaux of Fifteen Foremost Early Friends in Period Dress.”⁴⁷ Printed in the *Bulletin* is a list of these “Foremost Friends”, organized with their name, dates of birth and death, profession and followed by the name of their impersonator and that person’s place of residence.

Inserted into the *Bulletin* are two images of the event. The first serves as the frontispiece, illustrating a group photograph entitled “Early Friends and Others in Period Dress: As Impersonated at the Annual Meeting of Friends’ Historical Association” (Figure 2). The second illustration faces page two and is entitled “Early Friends in Period

⁴⁴ The *Bulletin* notes that this “was a notable meeting, the largest in the history of the Association,” with five-hundred-and-fifty-one people attending. See “The Annual Meeting, 1929,” *Bulletin of the Friends’ Historical Association*, Vol. 19, No.1 (Spring, 1930): 1-2.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Albert Cook Myers and Lydia Gummere (listed as Mrs. Henry V. Gummere) directed the tableaux under the management of Henry V. Gummere, then the entertainment committee chair. It is interesting to note that while Amelia Gummere is always listed as Amelia Mott Gummere in FHA literature, Lydia typically appears as Mrs. Henry V. Gummere. Lydia’s use of her married name seems to emphasize her modest behind-the-scenes approach.

Dress: As Impersonated at the Annual Meeting of Friends' Historical Association"

(Figure 3). This illustration is actually a series of six snapshots of the impersonators in costume with individual captions alluding to the player's name and who they are impersonating. Featured at the top left-hand corner is "Amelia Mott Gummere impersonating Lucretia Mott".⁴⁸ Gummere, like the other player's, is attired in a distinctive Quaker costume.⁴⁹ Gummere appears to wear a black silk apron fall Meeting dress with white cap, kerchiefs, and a large shawl. In the group image, two other women wear distinctive nineteenth century Meeting dress, four women wear what appears to be a mixture of eighteenth century historic dress and twentieth century costume pieces, and one woman wears a late nineteenth century silk satin gown. Four men are illustrated in the group photograph: three appear to wear eighteenth century style clothes, and one wears nineteenth century. All of the men shown in the snapshots are dressed in eighteenth century style clothing.

A larger, more photographed event occurred during the F.H.A. summer meeting on Saturday, June 20, 1931, which marked the observance of the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends

⁴⁸ The description offered for Mott in the play listing for "Tableaux of Fifteen Foremost Early Friends in Period Dress as Follows" is: "Lucretia Mott (1793-1880), noted Quaker minister; impersonated by Amelia Mott Gummere, of Haverford." See "The Annual Meeting, 1929," 1.

⁴⁹ Gummere is the only player impersonating a primarily nineteenth-century Friend. Five players represent seventeenth century Quakers. Five represent Quakers whose lives spanned the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, two represent eighteenth century Friends, and two span the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

(1681-1931, See Figure 4).⁵⁰ Friends' Historical Association members met at the High Street Friends' Meeting House in Burlington, New Jersey (the Yearly Meeting's First Assembly Place) for the program, which opened with a "Welcome by the Clerks of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting," followed by "Greetings from Older Yearly Meetings," "Roll Call of Delegates From the Philadelphia Yearly Meetings," and an address entitled "Our Past and Our Future" by Amelia Mott Gummere. Together, the addresses and tableaux illustrate the melding of entertainments and Society politics.

The addresses delivered during the "Greetings from Older Yearly Meetings" repeatedly advocated re-unification. In his remarks, D. Robert Yarnall, Clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Arch Street), noted "In the 250 years that have passed there have been differences . . . Happily in 1931 the Friends in the vicinity of Philadelphia are living together in rather stable equilibrium and with an accelerating degree of Love and Unity."⁵¹ A letter from London Yearly Meeting echoed Yarnall's sentiments: "It is no small joy to us that the two Yearly Meetings of Philadelphia are joining with one heart and mind in the celebration of an event so precious and so sacred to both alike."⁵² Henry

⁵⁰ The following information is drawn from an un-numbered program in the HSP.3 box at the Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia. The entire Autumn edition of the *Bulletin* for 1931 is devoted to the anniversary celebration and includes transcripts of all of the presentations and speeches offered at the event. The *Bulletin* also includes photographs of the tableaux. See *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn 1931): 55-93.

⁵¹ D. Robert Yarnall, "Remarks by D. Robert Yarnall," *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn 1931): 78.

⁵² Harold J. Morland, "Letter From London Yearly Meeting," *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn 1931): 81.

T. Hodgkin, member of London Yearly Meeting and resident of Pennsylvania followed, stating,

There can be no doubt now that London Yearly Meeting feels a sense of fellowship with Friends in the varied groups into which Quakerism has unfortunately been divided in this country and that there will be many in London Yearly Meeting who would greatly rejoice if an outcome of this 250th anniversary were the quickening of the processes already at work for sweeping away these ancient barriers so largely meaningless today . . . How thankful we must be that we can look back on that period now as to history of a kind which we may well hope will not repeat itself.⁵³

In his address, Lindley D. Clark, Recording Clerk of Baltimore Yearly Meeting (Homewood) commented,

Qualities had become fixed and attitudes developed in the older bodies, outgrowths of use and wont and established tradition . . . We can all rejoice today in whatever present measure of fellowship there is that unites all who bear the name of Friends, cultivating whatever mutual interest we find, cherishing each common ideal, each treasured portion of the common heritage. Surely the impatiences of the past and the bitter fruits they have borne may well make us thoughtful of the unities that remain and teach us to prize such occasions as this that make for fellowship and better understanding.⁵⁴

The “Greeting from New England Yearly Meeting (Westerly, RI)” by Henry H. Perry, clerk of that Meeting, made the strongest statement about reunification: “The future of our little group is uncertain . . . Division lines may still be justified but there is no barrier left which must be climbed in order to see over it, no barrier left to shut out intercourse or

⁵³ Henry T. Hodgkin, “Notes From and Address by Henry T. Hodgkin,” *Bulletin of Friends’ Historical Association*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn 1931): 82-3.

⁵⁴ Lindley D. Clark, “Substance of Remarks by Lindley D. Clerk,” *Bulletin of Friends’ Historical Association*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn 1931): 91.

light and air and good will.”⁵⁵ The message within the “Messages from Older Yearly Meetings” was clear: the times of dissension were over and in order to meet the demands of the future all Friends’ needed to re-unify.

Following the Messages from yearly Meetings and Gummere’s Address was the “Roll Call of the Early Friends, Represented in Costume of that Period by Descendants.” The tableaux occurred during evening meeting in the meeting house yard “under the Sycamore Tree standing in 1677” and featured re-enactments of important scenes from early American Quaker History. The tableaux program lists the characters present, props utilized, the location, and the date of each scene (Figure 5). The inclusion of such detailed lists in the program indicates that the specific items and people used to enact a scene were extremely important to the viewers and the participants. By using artifact props (including vellum deeds) and “costume of that period” worn by actual descendants in a performance under a sycamore tree “standing in 1677,”⁵⁶ the F.H.A. helped connect Quakers with their ancestors and heritage (Figure 6). In essence, the depiction helped Quakers to transcend time, schism, and generational conflicts in order to celebrate (and memorialize) the positive outcomes of Quaker history (Figure 7).⁵⁷ At the same time, by

⁵⁵ Henry H. Perry, “Greeting From New England Yearly Meeting (Westerly, RI),” *Bulletin of Friends’ Historical Association*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn 1931): 87.

⁵⁶ Un-numbered program in the Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP.3 at the Atwater Kent Museum.

⁵⁷ Just before the Tableaux, Amelia Gummere offered a speech entitled “Our Past and Our Future.” In the speech, Gummere speaks of early Friends, stating “One’s regret for the dissensions that overtook them . . . and which broke out at intervals throughout their later history, is only lessened by the knowledge of how very human they were, after all.”

impersonating early Friends, the players embodied them, manifesting the beliefs and practices of each “Foremost” Friend feature in the tableaux (Figure 8).⁵⁸ In doing so, they physically connected with their ancestors by wearing historic and quasi-historic garments, and made the messages advocated by early Quakers relevant to modern Quakers. By selecting the events to enact, the pageant committee could selectively determine the important events surrounding the formation of the Philadelphia Yearly meeting, elevating the people and things involved to create idealized history free from any negative implications.

Where did the “Costume of that Period” used by descendants in the tableaux at the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting come from? The descendants who participated in the tableaux may have provided their own clothing and accouterments, but many of the objects are from the Friends’ Historical Association. In 1922, Amelia Gummere had published a short article entitled “Cooperation in Collecting Historical Material,” attempting to revive interest in collecting objects for Quaker inquiry. She notes that many Quakers are moving across the country or moving from family homes into apartments, and are, therefore, in need of a place to deposit their family belongings. She concludes, “Let all Friends or those who are descendants of

Throughout the speech she connects Quaker history with twentieth century Friends and the future. See Gummere, “Our Past and Our Future,” 67.

⁵⁸ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, impersonate means “Embodied in a person; invested with personality; To invest with an actual personality; to embody; To invest with a supposed personality; to represent in a personal or bodily form; to personify; To manifest or embody in one's own person; to typify; To assume the person or character of; to play the part of; to act (a character); to personate.” See *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), 25 March 2005.

Friends, and who are interested in Quaker history, see to it that their heirlooms reach a place of security during their lifetime.”⁵⁹ Gentle reminders of Amelia’s arguments are stated again and again throughout each edition of the *Bulletin* when she elaborates on the history of recently donated objects. Since the article was written in the year just preceding the FHS/FHA merge, the FHS’s emphasis on collecting provided impetus in the merge negotiations: the FHA already had some collections and a case for storage of such objects, and the FHS had collections objects in need of storage. After the merge, Amelia continued publishing stories about donated objects in the *Bulletin*. Although Lydia’s name does not appear in the published records, she played an integral role in documenting the objects.⁶⁰

An undated, printed advertising card amongst F.H.A. papers at the Atwater Kent Museum⁶¹ supports the solicitation of objects:

A Round-up of Historical Objects: In nearly every family there is some prized letter, document or relic of the long ago, which of itself may be only of family interest, but grouped with others it may be a connecting link in some matters of historical importance. Instead of one long, set address at the Annual Meeting it is proposed to ask ten members to bring a letter or other historical paper or relic, and to read or explain it to the

⁵⁹ Amelia Mott Gummere, “Cooperation in Collecting Historical Material,” 35.

⁶⁰ Amelia’s articles were greatly indebted to Lydia’s work. The two obviously corresponded, as their object notes and records are scattered intermittently throughout the HSP and FHA files at the Atwater Kent Museum.

⁶¹ A folder marked “FHS Material Relating to Objects in the Collection” contains many odd scraps and bits of paper with written notes describing various objects and donors of artifacts. The presence of these notes with the FHA materials indicates that some objects were transferred from the FHS to the FHA in 1923 when the two organizations merged. The notes do not correspond with any known references to particular objects in the FHA Collection. See Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP.4 at the Atwater Kent Museum.

Meeting. The document or relic should be at least 100 years old and should in some way relate to the Society of Friends. We are in no way intimating that any member is to give to the Society the object exhibited. Such a request can only be made when we have a safe and permanent home. The purpose of the enclosed addressed postal card is that information may be had of the location and ownership of interesting and valuable historical objects. We ask that it may be returned promptly with information in the following form: "I have in my possession (brief description of article.) I am willing to bring it to the Annual Meeting and say a few words about it. Sign, with address." Should the responses provide more material than could be used in our limited time, it will necessitate a selection which would perhaps provide enough subject matter for a future Meeting.⁶²

Respondents to the object inquiry cards were likely persuaded to lend their family heirlooms and artifacts to the Association for discussion at meetings or other FHA events. By allowing the association to use an artifact or document, the lender acknowledged the contributions of their family, past and present, to the Society of Friends, thereby reaffirming their ties to the Quaker community.

The back page of the 1931 FHA "Summer Meeting in Observance of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Establishment of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends,"⁶³ hints that the Association's collection was growing despite the lack of a safe, permanent home. The page indicates that "the collections of the Association are in a room of the fireproof building of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia,"⁶⁴ curated by Lydia Flagg Gummere,

⁶² Un-numbered document in box marked "FHA Papers," Atwater Kent Museum.

⁶³ Un-numbered program in Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.3, Atwater Kent Museum.

⁶⁴ Un-numbered program in Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.3, Atwater Kent Museum.

who also chaired the “Entertainment Committee”. It seems likely that some of the collection artifacts were also used in the tableaux and pageants offered to members of the Association. Indeed, in at least one instance, loaning out collection objects for use in commemorative events resulted in the donation of additional objects to the collection. A note from Mrs. Archibald MacIntosh of Haverford Friends Meeting to Lydia Gummere on October 15, 1941 reads:

I am taking the liberty of sending along with the costumes that were borrowed for last evening at the Haverford Friends’ Meeting House, some quaint baby clothes which I am sure are well over a hundred years old; also as a matter of interest I thought the society might like to have a few samples of my great uncle Dr. Joseph Wright-Taylor’s hankys, hand-made undershirts, etc. (he was the Founder of Bryn Mawr College). We are moving in a month and I am in the act of ridding myself of encumbrances! These days when we do not have attics it is impossible to hoard these old things, sentimental as we may be about them.⁶⁵

Borrowing objects for pageants and exhibits increased the size of the collection and provided members with a place to deposit family artifacts, just as Amelia suggested.

Documentary evidence shows that by 1937, the Friends’ Historic Association was actively collecting Quaker objects. That year, the collections of the FHA were presented to the City of Philadelphia, perhaps in hope of finding “a safe and permanent home.” As with most FHA events, members were invited to attend the formal presentation with the following note by Anna B. Hewitt, Secretary, of Haverford, Pennsylvania:

The Board of Directors of Friends’ Historical Association request the honor of your presence at the formal presentation of the Quaker Loan Collection to the City of Philadelphia, in the Old City Hall in

⁶⁵ Correspondence from Margaret Taylor MacIntosh to Lydia Gummere, October 15, 1941, in Atwater Kent Museum Object File 87.35.348-372.

Independence Square, Southwest Corner Fifth and Chestnut Streets on Thursday afternoon, June third, 1937, at two-thirty o'clock (Daylight Saving Time).⁶⁶

The collection found a temporary home in Old City Hall, while other objects continued to be stored at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania building. However, as slips of paper, written by FHA Curator Lydia Gummere attest, the collection was increasing and in need of a larger home.⁶⁷

A Safe and Permanent Home: The 1940s

The “safe and permanent home” dream became a reality in 1940, when the FHA collection was permanently loaned to the Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia. The transfer was organized by Lydia Gummere, still curator of the FHA collection, and Joseph McCosker, Director of the Atwater Kent. In a letter dated 10 April 1940, McCosker writes to Gummere stating the goal of the Atwater Kent to “illustrate by means of exhibitions the chronological developments of the various phases of Philadelphia life from the earliest times to the present.”⁶⁸ McCosker continued that “The Friends have

⁶⁶ Un-numbered document, Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP.3, Atwater Kent Museum.

⁶⁷ Numerous slips of paper and partial correspondence concerning artifacts are written in the hand of Lydia Gummere or are addressed to her. These slips are irregularly filed in Friends’ Historical Association Boxes HSP.3 and .4, Atwater Kent Museum.

⁶⁸ Letter from Joseph McCosker, Director of the Atwater Kent Museum, to Lydia Flagg Gummere, Curator F.H.A., April 10, 1940. The letter notes that “The Atwater Kent Museum is owned and operated by the City of Philadelphia. Its function is to depict the history of the community. The Atwater Kent Museum is free to the public and is located in the old Franklin Institute building, built in 1824.” McCosker continues, “The important part played by the Society of Friends in the founding and development of Philadelphia will be emphasized in our exhibitions. Before developing this theme, we

always, even during the present times, contributed to the wealth of this community . . . it would give us great pleasure to exhibit any material that would aid us in narrating the story of Philadelphia's growth from the ideals fostered by William Penn and the Society of Friends." On May 29, 1940, Mrs. Gummere responds that she will "be so glad to get our Quaker Material in order . . . some of the beautifully made things will be very desirable."⁶⁹ After sixty-seven years, the Friends Historical Association finally had a safe and permanent repository for the maintenance and exhibition of collection objects.

The Director's Report of December 1940 formally notes the permanent loan status of the one hundred twenty-five FHA objects, including clothing, books, maps, and manuscripts. Loan agreements dating to this period indicate that individuals wishing to dispose of their Quaker artifacts could bring items directly to the Atwater Kent Museum for acquisition into the FHA collection. Two-years after the permanent loan of the collection, the FHA began holding meetings at the Atwater Kent, further linking the two organizations, and resulting in continued acquisitions to the collection.

turn quite naturally to the Friends' Historical Association in order that we can obtain the proper background." The typed letter is in Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.4 at the Atwater Kent Museum. Other information relating to this correspondence is found in an unpublished report entitled "The Friends Historical Association Collection at Atwater Kent Museum" completed by Susan Detscher Pizzano, an Atwater Kent Museum intern during the summer of 1986. Pizzano's work draws on information in the holdings of Haverford and Swarthmore Colleges and oral interviews with Nancy Webster, curator of the FHA in 1986, and Dr. John M. Moore, president of the FHA 1980-86. The report is on file in the Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.3, Atwater Kent Museum.

⁶⁹ Letter from Lydia Flagg Gummere, Curator of FHA to Mr. McCosker, Executive Director of the Atwater Kent, dated 29 May 1940. See Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.4, Atwater Kent Museum.

Professional Museum Standards: The 1980s

The 1980s found the FHA collection being refined and organized according to the professional standards adopted by the Atwater Kent in the 1970s. On 14 February 1984, Professors Edwin B. Bronner of Haverford College and J. William Frost of Swarthmore College selected primarily pamphlets, cards, manuscripts, and pictures to transfer from the FHA collection at the Atwater to the Quaker collections and archives at the respective colleges. A letter dated 19 March 1984 from John M. Moore, FHA President, to John V. Alvitti, Executive Director at the Atwater Kent, acknowledges the transfer, reading: “Their action in this respect was authorized by the Board of Directors of the FHA as a preliminary to the transfer of the rest of the collection to the museum as we are now planning to do.”⁷⁰

On 1 April 1987, the Friends’ Historical Association collection was officially transferred and accepted by the Atwater Kent Museum.⁷¹ The agreement between the

⁷⁰ Professors Bronner and Frost continued through the 1980s to determine the distribution of Quaker objects and documents. The continued dispersal reflects the 1827 Hicksite schism in which the Society of Friends split into Orthodox and Hicksite (liberal) traditions. Swarthmore College collections reference the Hicksite materials, Haverford, the Orthodox. Some material of general interest is split between the two organizations. The colleges function primarily as archives of transcripts, books, papers, photos, and ephemera, while the Atwater Kent Museum functions as repository for FHA artifacts. Susan Detscher Pizzano, “The Friends Historical Association Collection at Atwater Kent Museum,” Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP.3, Atwater Kent Museum, 3.

⁷¹ Box HSP.4, Folder “FHA Certificate of Gift and Master Inventory- Original” at Atwater Kent Museum. A document entitled ‘Revised Draft: Friends’ Historical Association Collection Transfer,” box HSP.4, folder “FHA Certificate of Gift and Master Inventory,” suggests that as early as December 1982, negotiations for official transfer were underway. The document is effectively summarized in the “Summary of Advantages of Transferring the Entire Friends’ Historical Association to the Atwater Kent Museum.” The summary has four points: “1) the entire collection stays intact, 2)

Friends Historical Association and the Atwater Kent Museum is outlined in “The Certificate of Gift,” signed by the president and secretary of the FHA and the Executive Director of the Atwater Kent. The Certificate of Gift contains three provisions: 1) “The Friends Historical Association agrees to give, donate, bestow and set over unto the Atwater Kent Museum the property described in the attached Collection Shelf List/Inventory,”⁷² 2) “The Atwater Kent Museum agrees to maintain in perpetuity the property described in Appendix A of this Certificate of Gift to the best of its abilities,”⁷³ and 3) “The Friends Historical Association and the Atwater Kent Museum encourage further gifts to the ‘Friends Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum.’” The provisions display the combined efforts of the two organizations in promoting Philadelphia’s history (a substantial portion of that being Quaker), preserving relevant artifacts, and providing resources for scholarly inquiry.

The united efforts of the two organizations are further explored in the Certificate of Gift’s Appendix B, entitled “A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Atwater Kent Museum Concerning the Gift of the Friends Historical Association to the Atwater

the objects will receive the professional attention they require, 3) Public and Institutional access will be maintained, and 4) an inventory of the collection will for the foundation upon which future regional catalogues of Friends Historical material can be prepared.” See “Revised Draft,” 2.

⁷² The Collection Shelf List/ Inventory is elaborated on in Appendix A of the document. Appendix A is twenty pages long and lists the contents of 107 boxes and other objects identified as property of the FHA.

⁷³ This provision also established the credit line for the exhibition, publication, and loan of collection objects as “Friends Historical Association, Atwater Kent Museum.”

Kent Museum.”⁷⁴ The three resolutions in Appendix B establish the entitlement of the FHA to use of the collection, provide for access to the collection in accordance with professional museum standards, and restrict the use of artifacts for pageants to reproductions. A more thorough analysis of the specific resolutions suggests that the resolutions address the needs of both the FHA and the Atwater, as expressed formally since the 1940s Gummere/ McCosker correspondence.⁷⁵ The first provision states:

Requests from the Board and the Curator of the Friends Historical Association for loan objects from the Friends Historical Association Collection at Atwater Kent Museum, shall receive preferential treatment and special consideration.⁷⁶

The resolution allows the FHA to borrow artifacts from the collection for exhibition or other use, in keeping with the Association’s practice of discussing objects at meetings and in using objects in programs. The second read provision ensures that the items loaned to the FHA from the collection, or items studied by scholars, will be managed in an appropriate manner. The resolution reads,

Access to the materials in the Friends Historical Association Collection at Atwater Kent Museum shall take place under the supervision of the Curators of the Atwater Kent Museum and shall take place according to professionally accepted standards of museum practice.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Appendix B is included with the “Certificate of Gift,” located in Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP.4, Folder “FHA Certificate of Gift and Master Inventory-Original” at the Atwater Kent Museum.

⁷⁵ The resolutions also directly address the needs of the FHA as expressed since the early twentieth century in Meeting programs and membership information.

⁷⁶ Appendix B “Certificate of Gift,” Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP.4, Folder “FHA Certificate of Gift and Master Inventory- Original” at the Atwater Kent Museum.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Thus, the concern of the FHA, evident since the initial 1930s search for “a safe and permanent home,” is provided for, with the assurance of professional maintenance and storage of the collection. Finally, the third resolution speaks to the FHA’s tradition of pageants and tableaux, “the loan of costumes and objects for historical enactments and other pageants will be restricted to reproduction materials only.” Before professional museum standards were introduced in the last half of the twentieth century, many institutions with collections, including the Friends’ Historical Association, allowed objects to be used in publicity photographs, presentations, and pageants. This included the wearing of historic garments by models and tour guides. Today, curators, conservators, and collections managers recognize that the physical use of many objects destroys documentary evidence and endangers the preservation of the object. This has resulted in the construction and use of reproduction objects in staged events which endanger historic objects. With these provisions, the use of artifacts as costumes and props for pageants and tableaux officially ended and the era of professional museum standards began.

Since 1873, the Friends Historical Association has promoted Philadelphia Quakerism, actively documenting the city’s Quakers from William Penn to the present. The organization’s meetings, programs, publications, and collections attest to the need for memorializing and celebrating one group’s contributions to the Society and society at large. Today the FHA collection includes approximately twelve hundred objects representing an array of Quaker material culture dating primarily to the nineteenth century. The collection continues to grow, as evidenced by acquisitions as recent as

2000. Although a Colonial Revival institution, the FHA's ideals are still alive and functioning under the umbrella of the Atwater Kent Museum.

Chapter 4

THE FRIENDS' HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION COLLECTION

Quakers wore their clothes with poise and dignity and sweetness (something like the demeanor of a nun). Don't get your picture taken otherwise! They took great care of them since they did not change with the styles and used them until they were worn out.¹

The Friends Historical Association Collection at the Atwater Kent Museum contains a diverse assortment of objects related to the lives of Philadelphia area Quakers: clothes, dishes, accessories, decorative arts objects, tools, and utensils. In 1986, the collection consisted of approximately one-thousand-two-hundred items.² The collection is still growing, with accessions as recently as in 2000. While many of the objects, stored at the Atwater Kent Museum since the 1940s, were formally accessioned by the museum in the 1980s, few of these records validate accompanying provenance information. Objects which have been added to the collection since the 1980s have firmer provenances. Together, the early collection and later additions provide unique insight into the material culture of Quaker Philadelphians since the seventeenth century.

¹ Thyra Jane Foster, "Suggestions for use of Quaker Costume," Unpublished paper, April 10, 1968. This paper was kindly shared with the author from the personal file of Pat O'Donnell at the Friends' Historical Library of Swarthmore College.

² Susan Detscher Pizzano, "The Friends Historical Association Collection at Atwater Kent Museum," Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.3, Atwater Kent Museum.

The “Stuff” A Collection is Made From

According to the calls for artifacts in early Friends Historical Society and Friends Historical Association publications and mailings, any type of artifact at least one hundred years old was eligible for inclusion in the collection. Nevertheless, many of the objects in the Friends Historical Association collection date to the late nineteenth century. The greatest number of items date from 1825-1840, the years surrounding the Hicksite Schism and also the one-hundred-year cut-off point for antique items being collected in the 1930s.

The 1987 “Atwater Kent Museum FHA Collection Shelf List” suggests the variety of items in the collection: hairbrushes, pincushions, locks of hair, doll furniture, eating utensils, chamber pots, and dishes.³ It seems that Philadelphia area Quakers found nearly everything worthy of saving, resulting in the rich diversity of the collection. The diversity could be accounted for by the correspondence between Mrs. Archibald MacIntosh and Lydia Gummere in 1941, in which Mrs. MacIntosh notes that she and her husband are downsizing and moving to a smaller home and are, therefore, in need of a repository for family heirlooms.⁴ Many other area Quakers must have been in similar situations, valuing artifacts as memorials to family, but finding them inconvenient to store. The lack of records dating to this early period of collecting additionally suggests

³ Folder “FHA Certificate of Gift and Master Inventory- Original,” Friends’ Historical Association Box HSP.4, Atwater Kent Museum.

⁴ See Correspondence from Margaret Taylor MacIntosh to Lydia Gummere, October 15, 1941, in Atwater Kent Museum Object File 87.35.348-372. MacIntosh’s note is discussed at length in Chapter 3, section “The Craze for Collecting and Pageantry- The 1920s and 1930s.”

that many objects might simply have been deposited anonymously at collection sites, or with provenances given by word of mouth. As the older generations passed away, information about the collection was lost. Since many early objects are displayed as being loaned by Lydia Gummere and subsequent Curators, it is likely that the lack of record keeping resulted in curators becoming surrogate guardians of unnamed Quaker history.⁵

Clothing as Evidence

Unlike other types of objects, clothing associated with special events is often saved, offering good provenance information. Many of the garments in the FHA collection have provenances verifying use in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. The majority of the clothing dates to the nineteenth century, particularly from 1820 to 1890. The collection contains a wealth of children's clothing and several fine examples of men's clothing, including seven waistcoats belonging to various men and the suit of Samuel R. Fisher (Quaker merchant exiled to Virginia from Philadelphia in 1777 during the British occupation of the city).⁶ However, most of the well-provenanced

⁵ Any object in the collection with an accession number beginning 87.35 is an object acquired as part of the whole Friends Historical Association Collection in 1987. Most of these objects do not have secure provenance information. For discussion about Lydia Gummere's loaning of objects, see Chapter 3, section "Advocating Collections: Amelia Mott Gummere and Lydia Flagg Gummere."

⁶ Fisher's coat, waistcoat, and breeches (90.3.6.2, A-C) are of pea-green wool. Fisher is the father of Deborah Fisher Wharton, whose dress is described later. The family records are at Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College. A summary of Fisher's and other Quaker exiles during the Revolution is found in Robert Wilson's Philadelphia Quakers 1681-1981 (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1981), 56-57.

garments and accessories are women's.⁷ As Nancy Bradfield notes, "usually it is a woman's garments that are kept, a wedding or an evening dress, because of the beauty of the material, or for sentimental reasons."⁸ Since women's clothes comprise the bulk of clothing items and have the greatest number of provenances, they serve as the evidence for this thesis.⁹ The array of women's clothing in the collection provides a rather thorough chronology of Quaker women's fashion in and around Philadelphia in the nineteenth century.¹⁰

Quaker appearance is defined by articles of women's clothing and adornment which are labeled as distinctive by early nineteenth century viewers: these include a

⁷ Most of the dresses in the collection are accompanied by some type of information suggesting a particular owner, family, or event. Most commonly, the dresses are designated as "Meeting" dresses, or "wedding" dresses. Articles of dress are usually saved for specific reasons, often for their association with special events or people. Evidence in the Friends' Historical Association collection and in collections in other Quaker repositories suggests a strong Quaker tendency to preserve family and group heritage by donating family artifacts and documents to institutions for preservation.

⁸ Nancy Bradfield, Costume in Detail 1730-1930 (New York: Costume and Fashion Press, 2003), v.

⁹ Approximately one-third of the dresses in the collection have some type of provenance information which helps establish general dates for the construction and use of the garments. However, the information often traces an object to a family, not a specific owner, making the assignment of specific dates difficult.

¹⁰ When an artifact does not have an assigned date of construction, it is useful to assign the date based on the most recent feature found in the object. See the bibliography for publications which aided in establishing aesthetics based dates to garments. Since construction comprises the substance of much of this text, the most useful comparisons for dating are offered by: Janet Arnold, Patterns of Fashion 1: Englishwomen's Dresses and Their Construction c. 1660-1860 and Patterns of Fashion 2: Englishwomen's Dresses and Their Construction c. 1860-1940 (Hollywood CA: Quite Specific Media Group, 1972). Nancy Bradfield, Costume in Detail 1730-1930; Norah Waugh, The Cut of Women's Clothes 1600-1930 (New York: A Theatre Arts Book, 1968).

dress, fichus or neckerchiefs, a shawl, cap, and bonnet. The range of women's clothing items in the collection include dresses (including individual bodices and skirts or incomplete dresses), underpinnings and foundation garments (stays, corsets, shifts/chemises, petticoats, pockets, hoops), outerwear (mantles, shawls, cloaks), bonnets, and accessories (aprons, caps, mitts, reticules, neck-kerchiefs, under-sleeves, and shoes). Not all of the clothing in the collection is distinctive: many accessories, day dresses, and wedding dresses appear very similar to objects worn and used by non-Quaker American women.

Many of the dresses were altered in the early twentieth century for use in pageants and tableaux, providing insight into Quaker colonial revival practices. As Linda Baumgarten notes, "Altered clothing has value because it speaks eloquently about the nature of human history as a continuum, as past life lived out from day to day, rather than as a succession of isolated grand events occurring at one particular date in the past."¹¹ While these recent alterations (evidenced primarily by materials and techniques in use or available long after the garment was made) might seem like blemishes on otherwise excellent primary documents, they provide wonderful information about how late nineteenth and twentieth century people viewed and used their ancestral objects.

In 1968, Thyra Jane Foster, a Quaker woman, wrote a short paper entitled "Quaker Costume" which accompanied an exhibition given at Prior Street Meeting

¹¹ Linda Baumgarten, "Altered Historical Clothing," *Dress*, Vol. 25, (1998): 42.

House on April 10.¹² With the paper is a list, entitled “Suggestions for Use of Quaker Costumes,” offering eight suggestions for wearing historic Quaker clothing from head to toe. Curiously, most of Foster’s comments pertain to women’s clothing. Bonnets are to be worn parallel to floor, dresses should not be shorter than three inches from the floor, waists should be snug, shawls should have three pleats pinned across the bias to drape neatly over the shoulder, aprons should be white, hair should be centrally parted and coiled in a high or low bun, and black shoes and stockings should cover the legs and feet. Additional comments in three of the statements directly address the use of historic clothing. When discussing bonnets, Foster states “it is assumed that these can be found locally but we can furnish them under careful supervision. We could also furnish two men’s coats and hats.”¹³ Evidently, Foster had Quaker bonnets and men’s clothing available to her which she was willing to let out for use provided that the materials were handled carefully. The other two notes relate to alterations to be performed on historic garments for modern use. After stating that hems should be no more than three inches above the ground, Foster states “hems can be easily changed”. Later, when discussing waistlines, she comments “size of waist can be adjusted by plaiting at side seam.” She then singles out a brown dress, noting that the dress’s collar should be plaited to fit the wearer’s neck snugly. While these alterations are minor, they would alter the original appearance of the garment, adding another information layer to the history of the garment

¹² Foster, “Quaker Costume”.

¹³ Foster, “Suggestions for use of Quaker Costume”.

The objects in the FHA collection were worn for specific commemorative events and with behavior deemed appropriate for the event. The twentieth century women wearing Quaker clothing in pageants were told specifically how to conduct themselves appropriately: the demeanor with which the clothing was worn was as important as the clothes themselves. By using the clothes in pageants, Quakers projected certain assumptions about the appearance and behavior of their ancestors. It is imperative that examinations of the Friends Historical Association Collection acknowledge the historic and modern uses of the collection, enabling scholars to draw even more evidence about “Quakerness” in clothing. The alterations and reuse of the clothes simply add another layer in debates about portrayals of Quaker identity, while the clues inside the clothes offer primary evidence about the construction of Quaker identity.

Chapter 5

QUAKER MEETING DRESSES

It used to be that the sight of the Quaker garb was visible somewhere almost everyday to anyone who might take a casual walk. But now he must watch closely for it in the streets, unless he should happen to be in the vicinity of a meetinghouse on that first day, or the time should be the season of the annual meeting. Indeed it is doubtful whether all the orthodox living in the city- not counting the larger number outside the city in adjacent counties covered by the Philadelphia Meeting- still wear habitually what is regarded as the distinctive Quaker Dress.¹

The largest group of “distinctive” clothing objects in the Friends Historical Association Collection pertains to women’s Meeting dress. Meeting dresses are the garments worn by women to their respective Meetinghouses on First day, or Sunday. As such, these dresses took on a ceremonial function, proclaiming the wearer’s status as an active member of the Society of Friends. The parts of women’s Meeting dress include a dress, cap, bonnet, one or more neckerchiefs, and a shawl. While all parts of the costume are important, eighteen dresses provide the focus of this chapter.

Dresses in hanging storage and boxes reveal a rainbow of drab colors: olive, khaki, tan, brown, sage, black. Bonnets are equally colorful, while caps and neckerchiefs display shades of white and cream. The ensembles are completed by shawls in drab

¹ “Men and Things,” *The Evening Bulletin*, January 31, 1902. This review is included in one of Gummere’s scrapbooks in the Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, 1005, Box E, Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

colors, most typically executed in fine wool or silk and bound with grosgrain ribbon. The ribbon binding the edge of the shawls is the only feature which can be construed as ornamental in the meeting dress, and this serves the functional purpose of preventing the fine wool shawl fabric from unraveling with wear.² When considered as a group, the Meeting dresses and accompanying accessories demonstrate why Quaker dress was considered as distinctive throughout much of the nineteenth century.

First examination leads a viewer to surmise that all of the dresses are the same, simply executed in slightly different colors. However, closer investigation indicates stylistic and construction differences which link the dresses to contemporary mainstream fashions. Sleeves, necklines, bodice finishes and treatments, and hem circumferences illustrate that Meeting dresses, though perhaps visually “singular” compared to non-Quaker fashions, were not uniform, especially when viewed across the span of the nineteenth century.³

² The Workwoman’s Guide includes directions for a “Shawl for a Member of the Society of Friends”. The directions match the appearance of shawls in the collection: “This is a square of about one yard, twelve nails, and is made either of fine white, or very pale drab grey, or other quiet coloured cloth, with a satin ribbon, the same shade and one nail broad, laid on all round it. It may be lined or not, according to pleasure.” See The Workwoman’s Guide, 166. As Erin Eisenbarth notes, non-Quaker shawls at this time tended to be elaborately woven and colored Kashmir or paisley shawls. See Alice Mackrell, Shawls, Stoles, and Scarves (New York: Drama Book Publishers, 1986), 48-72, quoted in Erin Eisenbarth, “Plain and Peculiar: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century Quaker Women’s Clothing,” (Master’s Thesis, University of Delaware, 2002), 43.

³ Leanna Lee-Whitman describes the distinctive dress as a “standardized uniform.” However, investigation into the evolution of Quaker clothing across the decades of the nineteenth century reveals that Quaker dress was never really uniform, but varied depending on individual circumstance. Variations in Quaker Meeting dresses are discussed below. For arguments about uniformity, see Leanna Lee-Whitman, Silks and Simplicity: A Study of Quaker Dress as Depicted in Portraits, 1718-1855, Ph.D.

Classic Simplicity: 1800-1820

The earliest plain meeting gowns in the collection date from approximately 1803 through 1820. This sample of dresses is the smallest in the collection, consisting of two complete dresses (96.22.27, 98.38.1a) and one bodice (87.35.257). The bodices of the dresses are constructed using eighteenth century techniques, with the fitting achieved by small darts stitched through the bodice fronts after the lining and silk was joined. The empire-waisted gowns also share wide, square necklines, fitted sleeves, and apron-fall skirts. Rebecca Justice's sage green silk meeting dress (98.38.1a, Figure 9) is the best provenanced F.H.A. gown of those available for the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The dress has long fitted sleeves, a front fastening bodice, and apron fall skirt. The bodice is lined with white cotton seamed in the back and at the shoulders, indicating that the lining was cut as two fronts with shoulder straps and a back (the back seams are enclosed by the outer fabric). The silk is cut as two fronts with integral shoulder straps, and either a single back with pleats stitched to resemble sides or two sides and a back. It is carefully and beautifully hand sewn using backstitches, running stitches, whip stitches, and hemming stitches. Much of the construction and the apron fall of the skirt suggest a continuation of familiarity with eighteenth century construction techniques. Evidence suggests that the bodice was originally either pinned closed or basted (indicated by needle holes and bits of thread along the center front) and the pleated skirt fall tied

dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1987 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987), 90-96.

around the waist. Justice was a Hicksite Quaker woman who attended Horsham Meeting after her marriage to Gove Mitchell on October 13, 1803.⁴

At the time of her marriage, Rebecca was twenty-one years old. Family history suggests that a cape and pair of slippers accessioned with the dress were worn to Rebecca's marriage. The provenance does not indicate that she wore the dress at the wedding, although the similar materials used in the shoes and dress and the styling of both articles does suggest that the garments may have been worn together. However, the

⁴ Horsham Meeting records indicate that Grove and Rebecca were active members: They were also involved in Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (Hicksite) and Falls Monthly Meeting. See Horsham MM, "Men's Minutes 1795-1805," Friends' Historical Library, Swarthmore College, MR-PH 256, 310-311; William Wade Hinshaw, The Encyclopedia of Early American Quaker Genealogy, Vol. II (Ann Arbor: Genealogical Publishing Co, Inc., 1994), 810, 965. Rebecca was the daughter of George and Phebe Justice of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting for the Northern District. Their marriage certificate reads, "Whereas Gove Mitchell of the township of Moreland in the county of Montgomery and state of Pennsylvania, son of Pearson Mitchell of Middletown Township in the County of Bucks and the state of Pennsylvania and Rebecca his wife, and Rebecca Justice, daughter of George Justice of the City of Philadelphia in the state aforesaid and Phebe his wife, having declared their intention of marriage with each other before several Monthly Meetings of the people called Quakers, held at Philadelphia for the Northern District, according to the good order used amongst them October 13, 1803 . . . they the said Gove Mitchell and Rebecca Justice appeared in a publick Meeting of the said people, held in their Meeting house at Haddonfield in the county of Gloucester and state New Jersey," followed by the signature of those in attendance. See MR-PH 408 Philadelphia Monthly Meeting for the Northern District, "Marriage Certificates, 1772-1836," Friends' Historical Library, Swarthmore College, MR-PH 408, 182-183. The marriage produced ten children, with the garments descending through the line of son Pierson (b. February 18, 1820). Pierson married and removed to Abington Meeting in October 1850. Pierson and his wife May Ann begot Rudolph Justice (b. January 5, 1844) Anna Martha (b. April 4, 1846), and Mary Mitchell (d. September 7, 1890). The garments and slippers were passed from Pierson to Mary and through Mary's line to Ann Comly, relation of Dan Comly who donated the garments to the Atwater Kent Museum. See Atwater Kent Museum Object File 98.38 and "Horsham MM Membership, 1713-1947," Friends' Historical Library, Swarthmore College, MR-PH 258, 119-20.

provenance indicates that Rebecca wore this dress to Meeting at Horsham, and most likely on a regular basis since both she and Gove were extremely active members. The long sleeves, high-waist, and full apron-fall skirt would remain common in fashion for approximately twenty years. Therefore, Rebecca would not have needed to update her dress with frequency; the old-fashioned appeal of the gown would simply attest to Rebecca's spiritual involvement and preoccupations.

The appearance and construction of Rebecca's Meeting dress is not overly different from other Quaker and non-Quaker dresses in Philadelphia area collections for this time period. The most distinctive part of the gown is the drab silk fabric: the cut and construction closely resemble that found in other examples. Although a modest interpretation of classically inspired dress, the gown does exhibit the high waistline and apron fall skirt seen in mainstream fashion.⁵ Classically inspired dresses were relatively liberating when compared to the stiff fabrics of eighteenth century fashions, and were widely adopted by both wealthy and middling sort American women.⁶ To achieve the proper drape, many dress skirts were made with an apron front, very widely used through the 1790s when voluminous skirts remained popular.⁷ Philadelphia area artist John

⁵ Norah Waugh offers a lovely, concise explanation of the Grecian influence on women's attire in the early 1800s. See *The Cut of Women's Clothes, 1600-1930* (New York: A Theatre Arts Book, 1968), 132. For photographs of many early nineteenth century gowns, see Akiko Fukai, ed. *Fashion: A History from the 18th to the 20th Century* (New York: Taschen, 2002), 156-167.

⁶ Fukai, 150.

⁷ Costume historian Jane Ashelford describes an apron front as having "the top section of the skirt slit at the sides and the front lifted up to be fastened with long tape ties that were

Lewis Krimmel (active 1807-1821) illustrates many middling and lower sort women at work and in town who are attired in simple, but classically cut gowns with voluminous apron fall skirts, including Quaker women.⁸

The use of a voluminous apron fall skirt on Justice's gown may indicate her status as a married women: in "Silks and Simplicity," Leanna Lee-Whitman describes a needle work picture made by seventeen year old Ann Hutchinson (1789-1848) in 1806, depicting Ann, her sister, mother, and grandmother. The gowns on all four women are high-waisted, though the grandmother's is a darker color. Although the image in Whitman's text is dark, the married women appear to be wearing apron front dresses pleated fully around the waist while the young women's skirts are straight across the stomach and hips.⁹ The full skirt was practical for a modest married woman, for by

tied around the waist". See Jane Ashelford, The Art of Dress: Clothes and Society 1500-1914 (New York: Harry N. Abrams Incorporated, 1996), 180.

⁸ Krimmel's sketchbooks are in the Downs Manuscript collection at the Winterthur Museum. For a discussion of his work, see Anneliese Harding's John Lewis Krimmel: Genre Artist of the Early Republic (Winterthur, DE: A Winterthur Book, 1994), 21, 25, 27, 168, 170, 203, and 212.

⁹ Both the grandmother and mother wear silk dresses, fichus, and caps, though Ann and her sister do not. See Lee-Whitman, 285. Several extant Philadelphia area Quaker dresses dating to the first two decades of the nineteenth century do utilize a more classically inspired silhouette. Most of the dresses are wedding dresses, which utilize the silhouettes found in popular contemporary fashion. See Merrill D. Smith, "The Bartram Women: Farm Wives, Artists, Botanists, and Entrepreneurs," in *Bartram Broadside*, (Winter 2001):1-11. The Winterthur Museum also has examples of other empire-waisted Quaker gowns: 1991.0026, which belonged to Mary Ann Warder Bacon; and 2001.0037.003, which was worn by the daughter of Moses and Elizabeth Bartram between 1800 and 1820. The second dress is a green silk dress similar to the wedding dress in the Bartram collection and to the description of Ann Hutchinson that Leanna Lee Whitman offers in her dissertation.

pleating the skirt fully all around, the contours of the lower body were masked from sight. Additionally, the full skirt made it easier to adjust the dress through early stages of pregnancy. The ninety-two-and-one-half inch hem circumference of Justice's apron fall skirt supports the practicality of a classically inspired apron fall Meeting dress for a married Quaker woman.

Romantic Sensibility: 1825- 1840

Twelve dresses in the collection date from approximately 1825-1840. Of the twelve, eight are meeting dresses.¹⁰ These dresses comprise the largest segment of Meeting dresses in the collection. Two of Elizabeth Long Nicholson's (1810-1870) Meeting dresses are included in the FHA collection. Nicholson was seventeen years old at the time of the schism. Her green Meeting dress (87.35.848, Figure 13) was probably made between 1827 and 1835. The dress has a wide scoop neckline, long fitted sleeves with white cotton gauze cuffs, and a pleated apron fall skirt. The bodice fastens down the center front with brass wire hooks and eyes at the top and bottom, the mid section likely fastened with straight pins. Four waist to neck vertical pleats and one waist to bust pleat are taken on each front. The front linings are separate from the silk fronts from the waist to the shoulder. The shoulders, armholes, and neckline are finished with self-fabric piping. The hem measures one-hundred-twenty-inches. This dress was altered in the

¹⁰ Accession numbers of dresses discussed in this chapter are: 90.3.3.1, Deborah Fisher Wharton; 87.35.848, Elizabeth Long Nicholson; 84.21.3a, Margaret Pryor Bacon; 88.13.1; 87.35.125; 87.35.847, Elizabeth Long Nicholson; 81.18.2, Sarah Jones Gibson; and 88.13.2.

twentieth century, using a zig-zag stitch on a sewing machine to increase the waistline of the dress by opening the seam allowances.

Nicholson's second dress (87.35.847) is very similar to the former. The olive green silk dress consists of a pleated apron front skirt with waistband and attached bodice with two high bust darts, a slightly pleated long sleeve, and left over right, center front hook and eye closure. The side seams, armholes, shoulder seams, and neckline have 1/16th inch piping. This dress is boned through the side seams and at the bust darts. The hem measures one-hundred-twenty-five inches. Unlike the first dress, this one has not been altered.

Sarah Jones Gibson's brown silk Hicksite Meeting dress (81.18.2, Figure 10) consists of a scoop necked bodice with slightly gathered sleeves, and an attached pleated apron-front skirt.¹¹ The bodice is flat-lined with tan cotton shaped by one eight-inch bust dart on each side of the center front fastening. Six brass wire hooks and eyes fasten the

¹¹ Information in Atwater Kent Museum Object File 81.18 illustrates the line of descent of the garment in the Gibson family. John Gibson (b. June 24, 1792, d. February 4, 1858), who married Sarah Jones (d. May 26, 1847) on October 26, 1815. Sarah and John produced Ann (b. August 22, 1827, d. October 27, 1897), who married Isaac Dixon on October 27, 1847. Their daughter Margaret Dixon (b. July 8, 1858) married Walter Horstmann in November 18, 1880. Margaret's daughter, Margaret Horstmann (b. October 15, 1881, d. January 5, 1959) married Francis R. Packard M.D. (b. March 23, 1870, d. April 18, 1950) on February 10, 1905. Their daughter Margaret (b. February 26, 1907) married John H.W. Rhein (b. July 11, 1902) on June 23, 1927. Their daughter Margaret (b. July 22, 1929) married Gerard R. Williams on June 12, 1954. Their daughter Margaret (b. June 6, 1959) is the final entry on the genealogical chart. The dress was given to the Atwater Kent Museum by the daughter of Margaret and Francis Packard, Frances R. Packard (married to Mr. Peyton R. Biddle) in 1981. According to Hinshaw's Encyclopedia of Early American Quaker Genealogy, Sarah and John were members of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (Hicksite). See Hinshaw, 807.

bodice front, right over left. The sleeves are gathered at the elbow and continue to a slashed wrist, inside which is basted a machine sewn 5/8 inch white cotton cuff. The bodice is boned and finished with piping at the neckline, armholes, and back seams. Sewn to the bottom right side of the bodice is a two-and-one-half inch by four inch watch pocket of brown cotton. When the apron fall skirt is folded up and fastened about the waist, the pocket is effectively covered. Family history relates that this dress was worn at Sarah's wedding on October 26, 1815. However, the construction and appearance of this dress indicates a construction date closer to 1830. The dress was altered at some point, with some machine re-construction and the addition of machine sewn cuffs. These alterations were probably made in the early twentieth century for the dress's use in tableaux.

Deborah Fisher Wharton's plain meeting dress (90.3.3.1) was probably constructed around 1827 when her family was received on request to the Hicksite Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.¹² Deborah would have been approximately thirty-five years old when her dress was made. The hand-sewn brown poplin dress has a scoop-necked, center-front fastening bodice, long sleeves, and an apron fall skirt with a hem circumference of one-hundred-twenty-eight-and-five-eighths inches. The bodice is flat-lined with brown polished cotton and the sleeves in pieced linen. Piping finishes the

¹² Deborah married William Wharton in 1817. On October 24, 1827, William, Deborah and their children Hannah, Rodman, Sarah, Charles, and Joseph were received on request from Philadelphia Monthly Meeting for the Southern District. On November 20, 1833 the family was set off to Spruce Street Monthly Meeting. See Hinshaw, 938. Wharton (1795-1888) was an extremely active Hicksite woman, helping to found Swarthmore College and corresponding with Elias Hicks. See Wharton Family Papers, RG5/161 and 162, Boxes 3:15, 38-317, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College.

neckline, the cuffs, and the armscyes. The dress probably fastened down the center front with pins, as no evidence of any fastener remains (Figure 12). The dress has experienced heavy alterations, probably in the early twentieth century for use in a pageant.

Margaret Pryor Bacon's brown silk-wool blend meeting dress (84.21.3a, Figure 11) is entirely hand-sewn and treated similarly to Deborah Fisher's dress. Bacon (1788-1872), and Orthodox member of Salem Monthly Meeting, was the wife of David Bacon and the mother of Charles Wilson Bacon (1811-1886).¹³ She would have been middle aged when this meeting dress was constructed between 1830 and 1840. The dress has a small scooped neckline, long sleeves, center front bodice opening with two darts per half, and apron fall skirt. Black cotton tape drawstrings are pulled through the neckline hem, allowing the fit to be adjusted. Piping is inserted only at the armscyes. The skirt is pleated to the waistband all around.

All of the FHA dresses from 1825-1840 have darted or pleated fronts, wide scoop necklines, long sleeves which are fuller at the top than at the wrist, slightly raised

¹³ Margaret married David Bacon of Cumberland County, NJ. They attended Salem Monthly Meeting (Orthodox). See Hinshaw, 52. A note accompanying this gown reads, reads "Clothes worn by Margaret Pryor-Bacon, wife of David Bacon/ Parents of Charles West Bacon who married Jane Wilson/ Parents of Amos Wilson Bacon who married Rachel Love Evans/ Parents of Elizabeth Love Bacon and these articles belong to Elizabeth L. Bacon". Garments and household linens in this gift were donated by Mrs. Peter H. Rose and Mrs. George D. Vick, III, daughters of Reba Fenimore Zelley, in November 1984. Letter from Mrs. P. H. Rose to Miss Meisner, Atwater Kent Museum, July 10, 1984. See Atwater Kent Museum Object File 84.21. The letter also notes that the family Bibles relating to the gift were donated to the Friends' Historical Library of Swarthmore College.

waistlines, and apron-fall skirts pleated all around.¹⁴ The sleeves on several of the dresses are pieced under the armhole, suggesting that the silk fabrics used were too narrow to accommodate the bias cut sleeves. The Workwoman's Guide notes, "Silk is sometimes too narrow for a very large sleeve to be made without joining, when care should be taken to join together two selvages. The joinings must be so contrived as to set either under, or at the back of the sleeves."¹⁵ The modestly shaped sleeves on the FHA dresses indicate that the sleeves were cut similarly to those in non-Quaker dresses, although not as full.

Several of the dresses also have bodices similar to those found in The Workwoman's Guide: the book warns that the bodices described are "a few simple patterns for those kinds which are independent of fashion, and especially for those worn by servants, and persons engaged in laborious employments, with a very few other plain ones."¹⁶ The most commonly utilized type of bodice on Meeting dresses is one similar to what The Workwoman's Guide calls "A High Body to Open in Front," deemed especially

¹⁴ The bodices on dresses from 1825-1840 are slightly longer than dress bodices from 1800-1820. Center front bodices here measure between nine-and-one-half inches and ten-and-one-quarter inches high. In contrast, dress bodices in the earlier group measured between six-and-one-half and seven-and-one-half inches high.

¹⁵ The Workwoman's Guide, 84.

¹⁶ The Workwoman's Guide, 106. See Plate 14 for illustrations of the bodices. Those similar to bodices in the collection are Fig. 8, "A Plain High Body" (directions on p.109); Figs. 10-14, "A Full French High Body" (p.109); and Fig. 18, "A High Body to Open in Front" (p.111). The structure of both plain and fashionable bodices was essentially the same. The exception was in the fabric and trimming. In contrast to decidedly plain bodice examples, popular fashions were typically trimmed with ornate puffs and ruffles, which are detailed in The Workwoman's Guide, 111.

suitable for elderly ladies. This bodice opens down the center front and is worthy of examination. The directions for making up the dress read:

The gown is open down the two seams at the sides for about four or five nails, so that the front ties round the waist like an apron, being of course well full in front into a band, to which strings are attached. The slits at the sides form pocket holes. The body is sewed on to the skirt behind and opens in front. It has one back, which, if full, is cut with the selvage-way or stripe to lie straight down from the neck to the waist, but if plain, it should be on the cross. The fronts are generally on the cross with the material cut to lie with the stripe or selvage-way, from the extreme point of the shoulder to the middle of the waist. The fronts are continued so as to pin down at the waist, one across the other, over which the front breadth or apron ties.¹⁷

The descriptions of this dress exactly match the basic construction for distinctive FHA Meeting dresses from 1800-1820 and from 1825-1840: apron fall skirts, bodices which fasten down the center front, and full skirts all around.

Although the apron fall skirt was being used in the 1790s, in 1838 The Workwoman's Guide indicates that it remained popular with older women through the 1840s. Part of the distinctiveness of Meeting dress through the first two quarters of the nineteenth century then, was the tendency to appropriate conservative techniques associated with older women.¹⁸ Younger women's bodices might have pleats over the bosom, wider necklines, or shaped sleeves but the apron fall skirt helped unify Meeting

¹⁷ The Workwoman's Guide, 111.

¹⁸ This evidence corroborates that in Mary Anne Caton's study of Chester County Historical Society Meeting dresses. See Mary Anne Caton, "The Aesthetics of Absence: Quaker Women's Plain Dress in the Delaware Valley, 1790-1900," in Emma Lapsansky and Anne Verplanck's Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections on a Quaker Ethic in American Design and Consumption, ed. Emma Lapsansky and Anne Verplanck (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 262-270.

dress. The apron fall effect allowed Quaker women to tuck in several layers of kerchiefs worn over the bodice and fastened under the front fall of the skirt (Figure 12). The bodice was thus masked from view, which might explain the persistence of this type of gown in photographs of older conservative Quaker women into the late nineteenth century.¹⁹

While Meeting dress seamstresses might look to contemporary cutting guides, using the older apron fall skirts with slightly more fashionable bodices, the construction inside the gowns reveals the persistence of some eighteenth century seaming techniques. Most of the fitting on the dresses is achieved by flat lining the silk with cotton and constructing bodice darts through both layers of fabric. However, the bodices utilize piped seams which are associated with contemporary fashionable examples. The result is a juxtaposition of eighteenth and nineteenth century technique. Nine of the twelve dresses dating 1825-40 have one-sixteenth inch self-fabric piping at the necklines and armholes. This piping appears as a decorative touch, but functions to finish the raw edges which were finished with the underhand hemming stitch through the lining and silk in the eighteenth century. Piping around the arm holes increases the stability of the armholes which are dropped over the shoulder and encircle the upper arm. Additionally, the piping provides extra support to increasingly full gigot sleeves.

The ages of the women who owned the FHA dresses suggest that similar plain style Meeting dresses were being worn by mature Hicksite and Orthodox women in the

¹⁹ Caton, 260.

years surrounding schism.²⁰ In her research into twenty Quaker women's portraits dated 1827-1860, Leanna Lee-Whitman observes that "There does not seem to be any evidence to suggest a distinction between Hicksite and Orthodox clothing in portraits at this time."²¹ Lee-Whitman's conclusion supports the evidence found in the FHA collection. However, in the portraits, Lee-Whitman observed great uniformity in the colors of dress and in the accessories of white caps, kerchiefs, and shawls.

Dresses in Lee-Whitman's examination were brown, black, or grey. In contrast, four of the FHA dresses are made of silk shades of green. Alternately, one dress is made of gold silk satin (unprovenanced and not discussed here), one of brown silk, another of black silk, and two of brown silk/wool blends. All of these light weight silks are lined in sturdy linen or cotton.²² As Mary Anne Caton notes in "The Aesthetics of Absence: Quaker Women's Plain Dress in the Delaware Valley, 1790-1900," a variety of similar colors were considered proper for plain dress from 1830-40. In 1832, the New York City *Atlas* remarked on the colors of Quaker dresses, "Quakeresses . . . are restrained . . . to

²⁰ Leanna Lee-Whitman's research into Philadelphia Quaker portraiture during this time period reveals similar observations. She notes, "Considering the bitter Split in 1827, it would be reasonable to assume that, among Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers, group pressure to conform to an approved 'plain style' was particularly strong during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, in attempts to look the part of the 'only true Quakers.'" See Lee-Whitman, 109. Although Meeting dresses may not be visibly distinctive, bonnets are. The possible differences in Orthodox and Hicksite bonnets are discussed in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

²¹ Lee-Whitman, 102-03.

²² The Workwoman's Guide suggests that silk should be lined in "strong linen or brown Holland as it keeps them in shape, by preventing them from stretching." See The Workwoman's Guide, 106.

garments composed of scarcely more than two colors, [but they can] contrive from these simple elements to extract as much food for vanity as a painter from his seven primitive colors.”²³

The range of colors seen in the FHA dresses attest to the endless variety of drab colors considered appropriate for plain dress. Caton comments on the variety for individual interpretation within a limited color range, noting, “Although plain Quaker women ostensibly avoided the superficial concerns of the fashionable, they nonetheless could distinguish their wardrobes within limited palettes.”²⁴ The garments in the FHA collection support this conclusion, ranging in color from brown to green and black, with lighter shades of color being used on dresses for younger women.²⁵ This color palette could also have functioned to allow Quaker women to select fabric colors which were becoming to their individual complexions. Contemporary advice books often advocated that women select fabrics which suited their coloring. Even The Workwoman’s Guide notes that “The complexion should determine the choice of colors,” for “Gaudy colors strike the eye, and magnify deformity.”²⁶ Women with sallow complexions were warned to avoid light green and buff, instead choosing black. In contrast, pale complexions

²³ *New York Atlas* 1, 17 (January 7, 1832), quoted in Caton, 250.

²⁴ Caton, 251.

²⁵ In “Silks and Simplicity,” Leanna Lee-Whitman devotes a several pages to a discussion of plain style fabrics being sold in Philadelphia around 1850. She notes five dry goods merchants who specialized in plain goods, in addition to two hat-makers and a tailor. See Lee-Whitman, 112-114.

²⁶ The Workwoman’s Guide, 107. See also Sally Helvenston, “Popular Advice for the Well Dressed Woman in the 19th Century,” *Dress*, Vol. 5 (1980): 31-46.

could wear light green and brown, fair persons anything but buff and dark complexions, clear tints. The colors listed here are not focused on Quaker women, but on the readers of The Workwoman's Guide. The listing of these colors in a popular sewing manual indicates their appropriateness and popularity among middle class women.²⁷ The range of colors available to Quaker women enabled individuals to select plain, but possibly becoming dresses that were not colored distinctively from the plain style dresses advocated in The Workwoman's Guide.

Evidence in the FHA collection suggests that the distinctive form of Philadelphia Quaker Meeting dress, recognized in the early twentieth century due to the scholarship of Amelia Gummere, emerged in the 1820s. This distinctive dress characterizes the inhabitants of Philadelphia in many prints, even establishing the character of the only woman featured in Charles Wilson Peale's 1822 self-portrait of *The Artist in His Museum*. In the portrait, Peale lifts aside a curtain on the second floor of his museum in Philadelphia, revealing a long hall filled with displays and a few spectators. The woman in the foreground is dressed as a Quaker in a plain style empire-waisted dress and a distinctive bonnet.²⁸ FHA dresses support the appearance of this "standard" Meeting dress, which includes a drab colored gown constructed with eighteenth century seaming

²⁷ A similar range of colors are mentioned in day dresses in *Godey's Lady's Book* in the 1830s and 40s. See Stella Blum, Fashions and Costumes from Godey's Lady's Book (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1985).

²⁸ For discussion on this painting, see Alexander Nemerov, The Body of Raphaelle Peale: Still Life and Selfhood, 1812-1824 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 33-35; and Laura Rigal, The American Manufactory: Art, Labor, and the World of Things in the Early Republic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 110-113.

techniques and an apron fall skirt. The date of the emergence of this particularly distinctive nineteenth century Meeting dress corresponds almost directly with the Hicksite Separation in 1827-28, a time when area Quakers adhered closely to plain dress in an attempt to claim their persuasion's superiority. Women's Meeting dress through these years continued to utilize a distinctive apron fall skirt associated with older women with bodices which followed simplified fashionable lines.

Gothic Restraint: 1840- 1860

Five dresses in the FHA collection date from 1840-60.²⁹ Unfortunately, none of the dresses are provenanced. Two of the dresses are black silk, one is grey silk, one is black and white wool, and one is brown silk. All of the dresses have closely fitting bodices with boned darts, small armscyces, long sleeves with some shaping across the top, and full skirts. Most of the bodices measure between eleven-and-one-half inches and fourteen inches long at center front, indicating that Meeting dresses were not constructed with the deeply pointed bodices seen on mainstream fashion in the 1840s.³⁰ However, the necklines conform to those in popular fashion, utilizing a close scoop (87.35.1,

²⁹ These dresses are: 87.35.1, 87.35.882, 87.35.122, 87.35.549, and 87.35.1170. The center front measurements are as follows: 87.35.882, 13.5 inches; 87.35.882, 13.5 inches, 87.35.122, no measurement recorded; 87.35.549, 14 inches; and 87.35.1170, 11.5 inches.

³⁰ Fashion plates and photographs of fashionable women through the 1840s illustrate long, pointed waistlines. Waistlines in *Godey's* remain long through 1852: then, as skirts increase in fullness, waists creep upward, falling just under the ribcage by 1865. See Blum, 5-24. Older women frequently wore dresses with shorter waists, although the darts and bodice treatments remain similar to mainstream fashions. See Joan Severa, Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900 (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995), 28-83.

87.35.882, 87.35.1170) or a deep V-shape (87.35.122, 87.35.549). All of the dresses utilize one-sixteenth or one-eighth inch piping in all bodice seams (excepting the underarm seam) and in the sleeve seams. The extensive use of piping indicates that these bodices were constructed to fit snugly over a well corseted figure: piping offered additional fabric and stitching to strengthen seam lines. The snug fit of these dresses is emphasized by the cut and boning at all major seams.³¹ Instead of being cut primarily as the three piece bodices in earlier dresses, dresses from 1840-60 are overwhelmingly cut as five piece bodices incorporating side backs pieces, similar to the cut of mainstream fashion (Figure 13).³² The greater number of seams in a bodice, the closer the garment can follow the contours of the body and corset. Of the dresses, only one (87.35.1, Figure 15) retains the apron fall skirt of earlier examples. The other dresses utilize a skirt which fastens to the left of the center front fastening bodice as in mainstream fashion.³³ All of the skirts are directionally pleated towards center front and center back from the side

³¹ All of the FHA Meeting dress bodices from 1840-1860 are boned: dresses 87.35.1 and 87.35.1170 have 4 boned darts; dresses 87.35.122 and 87.35.549 have two boned darts; and dress 87.35.882 has six boned darts.

³² In The Cut of Women's Clothes 1600-1930, Norah Waugh explains variations in bodices which can assist with dating. One or two darts on either side of the center front of the bodice frequently indicate and 1840s date. Three darts typically indicate an 1850s date: "These darts, very subtly shaped, began from the point of the breast, curved in and ran down to the waist, almost meeting at the centre front. This cut gave to the nineteenth century woman the characteristic ogee-shaped body . . . It was used for the foundation fitting of the front bodice right into the early years of the twentieth century, though the line of later corsets modified the curves." See Waugh, 139, 149.

³³ In her study of American photographs from the 1840s, Joan Severa noted few front fastening bodices. This suggests that front fastening Meeting dresses would appear somewhat distinctive from non-Quaker examples which fastened in the back through the 1840s. By the 1850s, front fastening bodices gained in popularity. See Severa, 8.

seams. The hemlines of these gowns are faced with polished cotton and all hems were originally bound with wool hem tape (Figure 14).³⁴

Several details in the FHA dresses speak to the departure from earlier distinctive dress and the acceptance of simplified versions of popular fashion. Mary Anne Caton suggests that by mid-century “Plainness thus became an extreme simplification of fashionable cut rather than a continuation of construction details associated with early nineteenth-century plain dress.”³⁵ The bodices of gowns in the FHA collection are constructed with the cutting and piping techniques of mainstream fashion and the skirts are constructed to fasten over the left hip instead of as the apron fall in distinctive dress (See Figure 17). With the departure of the apron fall came the departure of layered kerchiefs tucked into the skirt and masking the entire bodice from view.³⁶ Layered kerchiefs would mask the effort put into constructing the fitted bodices and shaped necklines seen on the FHA gowns dating 1840-1860. Therefore, it is likely that the bodices of these mid-century dresses were meant to be seen. Similarly, the increasing numbers of watch pockets in the dresses parallels a rise in the display of watches by non-

³⁴ Dress 87.35.1 does not retain the hem tape, although a line of unpicked stitches around the hem evidences where the tape was sewn in place.

³⁵ Caton, 269.

³⁶ Caton and Lee-Whitman illustrate several photographs and portraits of Quaker women 1840-60, in which older women continue to wear kerchiefs tucked in. By contrast, middle aged women appear to wear dresses with kerchiefs worn out over fashionably cut bodices. See Caton, 251-265 and Lee-Whitman, 220-260.

Quaker women.³⁷ The watch pockets are incorporated into the seams at the right hips of gown skirts, where the watch, suspended from a chain worn around the neck, sat (Figure 16). There is no need to include a watch pocket in a dress, if the watch is not meant to be worn and used. The increasing presence of watch pockets in FHA dresses also parallels the increasingly public involvement of Quaker women in reform movements as noted by scholars.³⁸ Joan Severa notes that even Susan B. Anthony, reared as a Quaker, purchased fine clothes in 1846 while seeking employment as a school teacher. Anthony's interview ensemble included "her cousin's watch with gold chain and pencil".³⁹ The watch

³⁷ In images throughout the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, women wear watches on chains suspended around their necks and tucked into pockets at their waistlines or into their belts. References to watches and watch jewelry are scattered throughout Joan Severa's work: Nineteen percent of photographs in the 1840s evidence women with watch pockets, forty-one percent in the 1850s, and twenty-five percent in the 1860s. See Severa, 45, 42, 53, 62, 70, 74-6, 118-25, 132-33, 138-39, 150, 153, 159, 165, 178, 179, 239, 246, 257, 269, 271, 272, 274-7, and 287. By the 1890s, watches are worn pinned to the bodice, placing time even closer to the wearer's mind, regulating activity. See Severa, 468. Three of the FHA gowns have full pockets on the right side of the skirt. As skirts grew increasingly fuller from the narrow skirts of the first decades of the nineteenth-century, it became visually possible to insert pockets into skirts without marring the line of the fabric with the bulge from a pocket.

³⁸ Joan Jensen, Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750, 1850 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 145-207. Quaker women's involvement in the public sphere is not limited to the nineteenth century. Eighteenth century women were involved publicly. However, in the nineteenth century, women's watches and watch jewelry became a common item in dress, reflecting the growing concerns with time and scheduling.

³⁹ Severa, 7. In her dissertation, "Silks and Simplicity," Leanna Lee-Whitman includes at least one portrait of a middle aged Quaker woman in conservative Meeting Dress without an over-kerchief wearing a watch on a chain at her waist. See Lee-Whitman, 103-4 and 245-6.

symbolized status, but also suggests that in wearing it for a teaching interview, Anthony proclaimed her ability to manage time efficiently.

The colors found in the FHA dresses also parallel those found in contemporary fashion. Photographs in Joan Severa's book Dressed for the Photographer reveal that most middle class America women, were wearing plain dark silk or lightweight wool dresses with long narrow sleeves and shaped necklines in the 1840s.⁴⁰ Severa notes that popular colors were drab: brown, olive, deep blue, dark green. Therefore, the coloring of the Quaker dresses in the FHA collection would not set their owners apart from non-Quakers. In a discussion of one group of women in drab garments, Severa concludes, "Their clothing, considered to be in good, conservative taste and not meant to represent the latest fads in fashion (so that they would not look out of date even if they did not have a new dress for three years), reveals a conformity in dress and attitude that was important in their time."⁴¹ FHA Meeting dresses from 1840-60, appear to confirm American attitudes towards practical, conservative best dresses which could last several years.

The dresses in the FHA collection dating to the mid-nineteenth century follow the plain, austere fashions found in mainstream dressing practices.⁴² The fashionable silhouettes of the FHA dresses tended to resemble the fashionable Gothic arch, exuding a

⁴⁰ While Severa discusses these plain, drab dresses in her 1840s chapter, similar dresses appear on middle aged women in the 1850s and into the 1860s. However, the cuts of these later dresses appear more along the line of Quaker Meeting dresses, fastening in the front and having fuller sleeves. See Severa, 84-291.

⁴¹ Severa, 40-1.

⁴² Severa, 7.

“look of modesty and reticence,” with the torso and arms severely restricted but the slim cut of the long bodice and a dome shaped skirt blossoming below.⁴³ Additionally, the use of mainstream colors and watch pockets suggests that the visual promotion of plainness as a virtue by some Quaker women came to be surpassed by the promotion of good works. As May Ann Caton notes, “Plainness became less about signaling group identity and more about moderation and performing good works. . . perhaps replaced by concerns about slavery, Indian rights, women’s and other national issues.”⁴⁴ Nineteenth century dress critics advocated plain dress for similar reasons, quoting a Bible passage from St. Paul, “I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety, not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but with good works.”⁴⁵ By mid-century, Quaker thought, like that of mainstream Americans, was shifting away from outward appearances and towards works.

Victorian Modesty: 1865-1900

Meeting dresses in the final group, 1865-1900, retain the plain light-weight silk fabrics and full skirts of the earlier dresses. Of the nine dresses dating to these years, only

⁴³ Vanda Foster, A Visual History of Costume: The Nineteenth Century (London: BT Batsford Ltd., 1986), 13. Norah Waugh notes that “The demure line of the 1840s was repeated in the simplicity of trimmings, or in the absence of trimming.” See Waugh, 141.

⁴⁴ Caton, 268-69.

⁴⁵ William Alcott, The Young Wife or Duties of Woman in the Marriage Relation (Boston: George W. Light, 1837), 243; Charles Butler, The American Lady (Philadelphia: Hogan and Thompson, 1836), 90; Julia McNair Wright, The Complete Home: An Encyclopedia of Domestic Life and Affairs (Philadelphia: Bradley, Garretson and Co., 1883), 413. All cited in Helvenston, 39.

two feature the characteristics of meeting dresses (87.35.739, 90.70.1). The first dress (87.35.739, Figure 18) consists of a machine sewn bodice and attached skirt made from black silk satin. The shallow V-neck bodice with eight buttons is lined in black cotton treated as one with the fabric. Front pieces have two boned darts each, in addition to center front boning. The sleeves are cut as an upper sleeve and lower sleeve, with lining and fabric treated as one and hand sewn. A double band of cream colored cord (like piping) is sewn to a white cotton band and basted into the cuff of each sleeve. The waistband of the dress is finished with large 1/8th inch piping. The skirt fits smoothly across the hips, with three deep pleats arranged at each side over the hips. The deep pleats continue to the back where there are very tight cartridge pleats. These cartridge pleats fall into a gored and trained skirt measuring forty-two-and-one-half inches long at the center back.⁴⁶ The hem is faced with black cotton, pinked at the top edge, and bound with black cotton velvet. A pocket is inserted at the right proper hip.

The second dress (90.70.1) consists of bodice with a shallow V-neckline, six button center front closure, and slightly pleated, shaped sleeves with an attached pleated skirt. The dress has hand and machine stitching and is fully lined with brown cotton twill on the bodice fronts, tan cotton in the sleeves, a lighter twill cotton on the back, and black polished cotton in the skirt. Each front has two darts. The skirt is pleated to the dress through the back and to a waistband for eight inches across the front. This eight inch section flaps over to fasten on the left hip. A small pocket is located in the pleats over the right hip.

⁴⁶ The center front skirt length measures thirty-eight-and-one-half inches long.

While earlier groups of Meeting dresses were distinguished by color, both Victorian Meeting dresses are black, light-weight silk fabrics. By contrast, non-Quaker examples of high fashion frequently utilized wild combinations of color and heavy fabrics.⁴⁷ By contrast, Joan Severa notes that many middle class American women owned a “best” black dress which served for any important function and location from a weddings and funerals to churches and photography studios.⁴⁸ As in earlier groups of Meeting dress, the bodices, sleeves, and skirts follow a fashionable line which hugged the body closely through the bodice. However, the sleeves and skirt bustles do not reach the ostentatious scale of popular fashionable forms; the skirts of the dresses are densely pleated and gathered at the back to accommodate modest bustled without swags and drapery.⁴⁹ Inside the gowns, much of the construction parallels contemporary non-Quaker construction. Mary Anne Caton suggests that the outside appearance of these gowns shows how the old styles of Quaker clothing had become an object of historical curiosity, using the conservative cut, simplistic construction, and simple ornamentation to denote Quakerness in a time of increasing contact with other groups of people.⁵⁰ Joan Severa notes a similar trend in her discussion of late nineteenth-century clothing,

⁴⁷ See Stella Blum, ed., Victorian Fashions and Costumes from Harper’s Bazar 1867-1898 (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1974).

⁴⁸ Severa, 292-539.

⁴⁹ Blum, Victorian Fashions, 77-292.

⁵⁰ Caton, 266-271.

suggesting nostalgia as a fashion influence.⁵¹ With their higher necklines, button fronts long fitted sleeves, and modestly bustled long skirts, these two Quaker dresses reflect the modest Victorian “best black dress” used throughout the late nineteenth century.⁵² Little in the dresses, other than the Friends Historical Association provenance, suggests that these gowns are Quaker.

Reminiscent Response: A Collection with Purpose

Throughout the nineteenth century, Quaker women’s Meeting dresses were most frequently simplified versions of popular fashion. Sleeves, bodices, and skirt shapes all closely resemble the shapes found in popular women’s fashions (Figure 18). Although visibly distinct because of a lack of trimming, a restricted color palate, and specific forms of bonnets, the appearances of Quaker women were not in actuality overly different from the appearances of other women. However similar the gowns appear on the outside (in terms of cut and silhouette), there are noted differences on the interiors of the garments. Construction during the first half of the nineteenth-century often utilizes outdated techniques. By mid-century, construction techniques closely parallel those found in popular fashions. By the late part of the century, construction is virtually undistinguishable from non-Quaker techniques. These variations in Meeting dresses throughout the nineteenth century speak to how Quakeresses constructed and maintained

⁵¹ Severa, 457.

⁵² Severa illustrates photographs of many middle aged and elderly women attired in simple black best dresses throughout the final quarter of the nineteenth-century. See Severa, 292-539.

group identity without appearing ostentatiously plain when compared to their non-Quaker neighbors.

These objects, collected in the early twentieth century, remind us that the survival of specific objects in museum collections reflects the biases of the people who sought to preserve the material culture of their ancestors: the garments examined above are not representative of all nineteenth century Meeting dresses, but rather, are the dresses that twentieth century descendants saved as representative examples of Meeting dress in their families. Together, this group of objects offers great insight into why early twentieth century Quakers sought to celebrate the popularity of the “singular Quaker dress” worn by their nineteenth century ancestors and enables us to trace the demise of such dress which caused 1902 reviewers of The Quaker to remark doubtfully upon the continuance of Quaker fashion in the twentieth century.

The bias of twentieth century Quakers reveals itself in the numbers of Meeting dresses in the FHA collection: the numbers of provenanced dresses purport to align themselves with specific individuals, primarily through the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The result is that dresses from 1825-1840 are the best provenanced; later nineteenth century dresses have fewer provenances which can be verified. This occurrence could be a direct result of the pressure exerted by the Friends Historical Society and the Friends Historical Association in the calls for one-hundred year old relics in the early twentieth century. As Quakers sought to re-align themselves and to push for unity, they looked to the past for direction towards the future. In doing so, they re-evaluated the value of ancestral dress, donating garments to the Society and Association

collections in hopes of reaffirming familial ties with the Society of Friends. By donating meeting dresses with detailed family provenances dating to the years surrounding the Hicksite schism, individuals established their “right” to celebrate their Quaker heritage. It was not that Quaker dresses from the later half of the nineteenth century were not valued, but these dresses did not, for the most part, speak to being decidedly Quaker, nor did they have direct ties to the schism. Late nineteenth century dresses simply did not have any overwhelmingly distinctive characteristics that would make families treasure them as evidence in pushing for Quaker reunification. For this reason, when Amelia Gummere chose to impersonate Lucretia Mott (the only nineteenth century Friend impersonated in the tableaux: Mott lived from 1793-1880) at the 1929 annual Friends’ Historical Association meeting, she wore one of the dresses dating 1825-1840, which proclaimed the beneficial modesty and restraint of distinctive dress in forming the identity of a member of the Society of Friends.⁵³

The collection holds fewer dresses dating from 1840-1865, with the dresses during this range resembling simplified versions of popular fashion. As Quaker women became more active in the public sphere, they celebrated their social proclamations over their spiritual. Consequently, their ancestors did not save or donate as many dresses to the FHA collection. Finally, in the final decades of the century, Quaker women continued to wear functional, conservatively styled clothes constructed and visually unified with mainstream fashion. In 1902, Amelia Gummere and her reviewers had

⁵³ Albert Cook Myers and Lydia Gummere, “Tableaux of Fifteen Foremost Early Friends in Period Dress,” *Bulletin of Friends’ Historical Association*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 1930): 1-2.

every right to mourn the absence of distinctive dress on the streets of Philadelphia and had the perfect impetus for collecting Quaker Meeting dress in an effort to preserve one part of Quaker history.

Chapter 6

QUAKER WEDDING DRESSES

The bride's dress was an entrancing affair of white corded silk, billowing as to skirt and trimmed with the ball fringe so typical of the Victorian age.¹

Wedding dresses are typically the most prevalent type of women's garments found in museum collections. Quaker women, like other American women, dressed according to the occasion: Meetings, weddings, and housework all required particular costume. However, unlike most women and their families, Quakers who donated to the Friends' Historical Association collection chose to save Meeting dresses with greater frequency than wedding dresses. Unlike Meeting dresses, which assumedly were used on a regular basis, wedding dresses were typically used only once for the marriage ceremony. Thus, Quaker wedding dresses are defined as the dresses or ensembles worn by a bride during her marriage ceremony. Of the nineteenth century gowns in the Friends' Historical Association Collection at the Atwater Kent Museum, five are linked

¹ Eleanor Price Mather, describing the wedding dress of Margaret Ely Rhoads in "A Quaker Wedding of 1860," *Friends Journal*, Vol. 9 (March 15, 1963): 127.

to specific brides and weddings.² Three additional gowns resemble wedding gowns, though the dresses do not retain any provenance information.³

Going to the Meetinghouse: Tacy Townsend Walmsley, 1835

Tacy Townsend wore a plain green Meeting dress (87.35.124) at her marriage to Charles Walmsley on December 17, 1835 when she was thirty-two years old.⁴ Tacy's sage green wedding dress consists of a scoop necked, front-fastening bodice with four pleats at either side center front, slightly shaped leg-of-mutton sleeves, self-piping, and an apron fall skirt. The bodice is lined with red-brown polished cotton and the sleeves with white cotton. All raw edges inside the bodice are overcast with whip stitches. The bodice fastens with six brass wire hooks and eyes, with the right overlapping the left, giving the effect of nine total pleats. The apron fall skirt utilizes directional pleats on both the fall and on the remainder of the skirt, fastening with silk tape ties stitched to the

² Dresses with verified wedding provenances are: 87.35.124 (Tacy Townsend, December 17, 1835), 87.35.854 (Elizabeth Dutton, May 1840), 87.35.845 (Margaret Ely Rhoads, 21 March 1860), 89.80.1a (Martha Cernby Morris, 1861), and 84.21.12 (Rachel Love Evans Bacon, 23 October 1867).

³ Possible wedding gowns without definite provenance are: 91.68.1a (c.1845), 87.35.1190 (c. 1850), and 87.35.1169 (c. 1855). These garments are described here.

⁴ A label accompanying the dress reads "Green Wedding Dress of Tacy Townsend-married to Charles Walmsley Dec. 17, 1835/ Tacy Townsend born July 11, 1802/ Charles Walmsley, son of Benjamin and Beulah Walmsley, was born Sept. 27th 1802/ And part of her wedding outfit as well as wedding certificate/ A gift of Miss Florence C. Harper and her sister Miss E.C. Harper/ Tacy Townsend Walmsley died . . . on August 3, 1881, aged 79 years and is buried in Fairhill Cemetery." See Atwater Kent Museum Object File 87.35.124.

fall. The skirt consists of six panels of silk measuring eighteen inches from selvage to selvage for a total hem circumference of one-hundred-and-eight inches.

Tacy's dress vaguely resembles a discussion of an 1834 wedding documented in an unpublished article by Amelia Mott Gummere. That year, Susan Kite wrote to her cousin Rebecca Walton of Washington County, New Jersey describing the marriage of Kite's cousin Abby. Kite relayed:

Aunt P., Edith and Aaron came on the first day, and then we set in for business and achieved wonders in the shopping line. They and I chose dresses of which I send thee a pattern. Edith and I intended to be just alike and were in all points, only her dress was made at her home and mine by a mantua-maker, who contrived to give it (my charges to the contrary notwithstanding) a little more fashionable appearance; it was rather presuming to wear dresses off the same piece as the bride, but she gave consent . . . Now thou must know that much had been said about moderation, plainness, simplicity and so forth, and it was settled that we should make a very simple wedding feast marry Abby . . . Abby got herself almost dressed before we found out that she was at the business, so we had only to criticize and propose alterations and emendations. However, when done she looked very sweet, as brides always do, and I believe excited as much admiration as was needed. Edith and I had given her notice long before that we meant to eclipse her, but really we were too busy that day to try, so she had the victory.⁵

Writing only a year before Tacy Townsend's wedding, Kite stresses the importance of moderation, simplicity and plainness, all of which are characteristics of Meeting dress. Indeed, Kite even despairs over the mantua-maker having made up her dress too fashionably and stresses that she and Edith intended to look alike.⁶ Since distinctive

⁵ Folder entitled "Gummere, Amelia Mott- article by- Marriage Customs among the Early Quakers," TS, Box C, Amelia Mott Gummere Collection 1005, Quaker Collection, Haverford College, 96-99.

⁶ Kite also notes that the attendants had their gowns made some the same fabric as the bride, which suggests that many so called "Quaker wedding dresses" in local collections

Meeting dress was intended to achieve group identity, it is likely that these bridal fashions were very much, if not exactly like Meeting dresses.

Tacy's dress does not vary in form from FHA Meeting dresses dating from 1820-1840, discussed in Chapter 5. The drab green color, apron fall skirt, shaped leg-of-mutton sleeves, and the full hemline all stand as witness to the distinctive dress worn in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. As such, Tacy could have worn this dress to her wedding and later re-used it as her Meeting dress, wearing it with white or cream colored cotton kerchiefs tucked inside, a large square shawl or short, shaped mantles, a Meeting bonnet, white cap, and possibly shoes matching the gown fabric.

My, What Big Sleeves You Have: Elizabeth Spencer Dutton, 1840

Elizabeth L. Spencer Dutton's gown (87.35.854, Figure 19) is a singular example among the Friends' Historical Association dresses reported to be wedding gowns.

Elizabeth (b. July 15, 1812) married Thomas Dutton (b. January 7, 1803, d. April 6, 1849) in April of 1840 when she was twenty-eight years old.⁷ Elizabeth's hand-sewn

with unverifiable wedding provenances might actually be wedding dresses worn not by brides, but by attendants. In turn, this could also suggest that many Meeting dresses functioned as wedding dresses during the years surrounding the schism.

⁷ Elizabeth Dutton was an Orthodox Quaker. Thomas Dutton was also Orthodox and an extremely active member of Concord Monthly Meeting. He was received into Burlington Monthly Meeting on certificate from Concord Monthly Meeting on January 29, 1824. In March of 1841, Thomas was granted certificate to Abington Monthly Meeting. On July 5, 1841 Elizabeth was received on certificate from Abington Monthly Meeting to Burlington Monthly Meeting (Orthodox). Together, the Duttons had four children, Charles Spencer (b. December 8, 1842), Hannah (b. December 29, 1843), Thomas (b. June 16, 1846), and George (b. August 24, 1848, d. October 27, 1848 and buried at Burlington Monthly Meeting). Thomas Sr. died April 6, 1849 at age forty-seven and was buried at Burlington. Following his death, Elizabeth and the four surviving children got

wedding dress is made of sheer pearl-colored silk gauze partially lined in cream colored silk. The short-waisted, piped bodice features extremely large long leg-of-mutton sleeves cut from the silk gauze and a faux cross-over front with center-back fastening. Under the gauze sleeves, short, puffed silk sleeves are gathered to an arm band and set into the bodice shoulder seam. The gown's skirt is very densely gathered to a muslin waistband which is sewn over top of the bodice. The skirt also features a deep, ten and a half inch self-faced hem which would help create a modest bell-shaped skirt when worn with the proper petticoats and under-dress.⁸ At some point, probably in the early twentieth century, a coarse piece of un-hemmed silk was triple box-pleated and attached inside the gown's skirt with large running stitches through the waistband.

Elizabeth Dutton's gown would have been accompanied by an under-dress without sleeves since the sleeves are already partially lined with short puffs.⁹ The under-dress would resemble a petticoat with attached bodice cut from a cream colored silk similar to that lining the bodice and short puffed sleeves.¹⁰ The hem on the under-dress would probably be deeply faced to help provide a slightly bell-shaped silhouette. Deep

certificates to Philadelphia Monthly Meeting for the Northern District. See William Wade Hinshaw, Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, Volume II (Ann Arbor: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), 172, 216, 286.

⁸ Nancy Bradfield, Costume in Detail 1730-1930, (New York: Costume and Fashion Press, 2003), 153.

⁹ Bradfield, 143-52.

¹⁰ A sleeved example of a silk under-dress for a silk-gauze dress dating 1830-33 in the Snowhill Collection is pictured in Bradfield, 153-54. Janet Arnold examines similar dresses in Patterns of Fashion 1 (Hollywood, CA: Quite Specific Media Group Ltd., 1972), 58-63.

hems provide weight around the bottom of gowns constructed of delicate fabrics, functioning by preventing skirts from sliding up over delicate under-skirts and providing extra-width at the hem to balance the width of the sleeves. Deep pleats around the waist of the under-dress would have offered extra support for the light silk-gauze of the gown's skirt.

Dutton's bodice is comparable with mainstream evening gowns made from silk gauze with leg-of-mutton sleeves, under-dresses, and faux cross-front ornamentation dating from 1827-1835.¹¹ Although these earlier dates do not correspond with the 1840 date of Elizabeth Dutton's wedding, The Workwoman's Guide of 1838, provides illustrations and instructions for the construction and treatment of similar dress bodices. Approximately thirty-four figures in Plate 14 relate to the cut and appearance of several styles of cross-front bodices, including faux cross-fronts to be made up of un-washable fabrics such as silk gauze. Among the instructions for illustrated bodices are directions for making a "Plain Low Body," described in a fashion which resembles the construction of Elizabeth Dutton's bodice.¹² The foundation of Elizabeth's bodice is of off-white

¹¹ Nancy Bradfield illustrates several dresses which resemble Elizabeth Dutton's wedding gown. The cross-over front appears in an early form in a cotton gown from the Snowhill Collection. Bradfield dates this gown to 1827-28, in part because of the V-shaped gathered bands on the bodice. Other similar examples also date from 1825 through 1833. See Bradfield, 137, and 145-54.

¹² The directions read "Pin the material with the selvage-way or stripe, to lie from the extreme point of the shoulder to the middle of the waist, so as to throw the body quite on the cross up the middle, which is joined with a piping. The backs are always selvage-wise up the middle. Join the backs and fronts with a piping on the shoulder, also at the seams, for the side pieces. Stitch up the plaits that are made at the bosoms." See The Workwoman's Guide, (London: Simpkin, Marshall, And Co., 1838). Reprinted by Piper Publishing LLC, 2002, 111.

China silk lined in white cotton and overlaid with silk gauze. The bodice has two front darts and a very wide neckline as described in the Workwoman's Guide directions for making up the "Plain Low" bodice. Similarly, her bodice is constructed with piping at the shoulders and side back seams. Piping also finishes the neckline of the bodice.

The "Plain Low" bodice was constructed to fit close to Elizabeth's figure and is set off by a faux cross-front made of silk gauze, as illustrated in Plate 14, Figure 20 of The Workwoman's Guide. Instructions for "Various Modes of Trimming Low Bodies When Tight To The Figure" offer suggestions for constructing a similar faux cross-front:

Plate 14, Figure 20 represents a plain body with the folds sewn on. These folds are in two parts one for each side of the body in front. They are cut crosswise and are only suitable to those gowns which are not of a washing material, they should be from nine to ten nails wide, and as long as will reach from shoulder to the middle of the waist. In making them up stitch them firmly down on the shoulder in regular plaits, and again about a nail in front of the shoulder. Arrange them as regularly at the waist, sewing them firmly into the middle of the band, exactly to meet or correspond with the folds of the other side.¹³

During the construction of Elizabeth's bodice, a triangular shaped piece of silk gauze was laid along the neckline of the gown from shoulder to shoulder with the center point falling between the two bodice darts. The piece was treated as described in the instructions, with the pleats swelling slightly in the middle of the bodice, crossing left proper overlay over right at the waistline. The resulting effect is of silk gauze cross front dress with a pleated "dickey" filling in the neckline.

¹³ The Workwoman's Guide, 111.

The Workwoman's Guide also discusses sleeves (long and short) similar to those on Elizabeth's gown. Plate 12 illustrates the cut of the sleeve, with Figures 9, 10, 11 and 12 offering options for the shape and fullness of the sleeve. Figures 9 and 10 are for a "Plain Long Sleeve" and Figures 11 and 12 for a "Full Sleeve".¹⁴ Both sleeve types have similar fullness, though the sleeve of Figures 11 and 12 are cut with a greater curve along the underarm seam. Precise determination of Elizabeth's sleeve is difficult since the sleeve is heavily padded with acid-free tissue for storage and conservation.¹⁵ The shape of the sleeve, cut on the bias, was larger than the silk was wide. To accommodate the sleeve, the fabric is pieced at the underarm as described in the Workwoman's Guide, which notes: "Silk is sometimes too narrow for a very large sleeve to be made without joining, when care should be taken to join together two selvages. The joinings must be so contrived as to set either under, or at the back of the sleeves."¹⁶ The sleeves of Elizabeth's gown are cut as such and seamed down the underarm with one inch seam allowances. The piecing is not overly noticeable with the sleeve densely gathered into the armscye.

Short puffed sleeves sewn into the armscye under the long silk gauze over-sleeve help maintain the full leg-of-mutton appearance in the fashionable silhouette of Elizabeth's gown. Instructions and illustrations for Figures 30, 31, and 32 in The

¹⁴ The Workwoman's Guide, 87.

¹⁵ Removal of the tissue for photographic purposes would endanger the fragile silk gauze and the china silk under-sleeve.

¹⁶ The Workwoman's Guide, 84.

Workwoman's Guide depict the construction of a short puffed sleeve very similar to that on the gown:

This is another kind of short sleeve, being cut out of a circle. It is hollowed a little (see Figure 30), A B, for the inside of the arm. A circular hole is cut in the centre, a little larger than the width of the arm; this inner circle is gathered and set into the band, and the outer one, also gathered, is sewn into the armhole of the dress.¹⁷

In the construction of Elizabeth's gown, the under-sleeve is flat lined in stiff cotton to help hold out the sleeve. In assembling the dress, the seamstress placed the finished under-sleeve inside the gauze sleeve and sewed the two into the dress.

Elizabeth's gown skirt is plain. Similarly, her bodice displays a stylish boat-neckline, crossed-front, and huge leg-of-mutton sleeves. The only suggestion of trim on the gown is the presence of the cotton waistband. Nancy Bradfield suggests that wide, colored silk-satin sashes or belts covered plain ribbon or cotton waistbands, wrapping around the waist and tying in bows at the center back.¹⁸ Such ribbon or band, most likely in a white or pearl colored silk must have encircled Elizabeth's waist, covering the sturdy but unsightly cotton waistband and offering modest ornamentation.

Elizabeth's gown is stylishly made, though simply ornamented, and utilizes current construction techniques and materials. Though the gown's silhouette does reflect shapes popular from the mid-1820s through the 1830s in dated clothing examples, The Workwoman's Guide suggests that such shapes were popular in 1838, two years before Elizabeth's wedding. Elizabeth or her dress-maker may or may not have had access to

¹⁷Ibid, 90.

¹⁸ The Workwoman's Guide, 147-48.

the Workwoman's Guide or another similar clothing construction manual. Perhaps it is mere coincidence that a bodice and sleeve very similar to those on Elizabeth's gown are called "Plain Low Bodice" and "Plain Long Sleeve". However, the titles for these cuts reflect the plain-style fashions popular in America during the early nineteenth century, not necessarily Quaker garments.¹⁹ The only element in Elizabeth Dutton's dress which betrays a conservative Orthodox Quaker connection is the provenance.

Crinoline Glory: Margaret Ely Rhoads and Martha Cernby Morris, 1860 & 1861

Two dresses (87.35.845 and 89.80.1a) in the Friends Historical Association Collection closely resemble one another in fabric, cut, and construction (Figure 20). Both dresses are made of cream colored silk faille fabric cut with large, trimmed pagoda sleeves, wide and slightly over-the-shoulder necklines, center back fastening bodices with shortened waistlines, and full box pleated skirts with slight rear trains. The skirts on both gowns are designed to be worn over very full hoopskirts, with the back hem lines trailing along the floor.²⁰

Both gowns utilize simple lines and modest trim, with the beauty of the gowns drawing from their simplicity and rich fabrics. The first (87.25.845) is that of Margaret

¹⁹ Sally Helvenston, "Popular Advice for the Well Dressed Woman in the 19th Century," *Dress*, Vol. 5 (New York: The Costume Society of America, 1980): 31-46.

²⁰ Ely's hem measures one-hundred-fifty-seven- inches. The Cernby hem measure one-hundred-fifty-eight-inches.

Ely who married James Evans Rhoads on March 21, 1860.²¹ Martha Cernby wore the second gown (89.80.1a) at her wedding to Ellistere Perot Morris in 1861.²² Both gowns are accompanied by the shoes and fichus with which they were worn. Margaret Ely's ensemble also includes a celadon wool cloak, a silk faille capelet, cream silk drawn bonnet, and capette. The Cernby gown includes net under-sleeves.²³ The Ely-Rhoads and Cernby-Morris gowns are remarkably similar, though not identical. The visual similarities extend to the lace trimming Margaret Ely's slippers and Martha Cernby's

²¹ James Evans Rhoads (b. January 21, 1828, d. 1895) and Margaret W. Ely (b. April 27, 1829, d. ?) appeared at Buckingham Monthly Meeting (Orthodox) and declared their intention of marriage on February 6, 1860. James was the son of Joseph and Hannah Evans Rhoads. Margaret was the middle child of Elias and Sarah M. Wilson Ely. Sarah Ely died July 25, 1849. The surviving parents of Ely and Rhoads consented to the union, though Rhoads was required to produce a certificate of his clean relationship with Frankford Meeting, of which he was a member. James produced the necessary certificate from the Frankford meeting on March 3, 1860. The two were officially married on March 2, 1860. Margaret then joined James as a member of Frankford Monthly Meeting on January 7, 1861. The marriage produced three children: Anna Ely (b. February 16, 1863), Caroline (b. December 5, 1864), and Charles James (b. October 4, 1872). No information suggests how Margaret's wedding ensemble was transferred from the family to the Friends Historical Association and then to the Atwater Kent with the museum's official acquisition of the collection in 1987. See "Minutes of the Buckingham Monthly Meeting, 1844-1847," Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, microfilm MR-Ph44, 231. James was later the first president of Bryn Mawr College; his papers are in the Quaker Collection Family Papers at Haverford College.

²² Martha Cernby Morris's wedding dress was given to the Atwater Kent by Anna Morris: the dress was first sent to Haverford College because of the family's Orthodox associations. See Atwater Kent Museum Object File 89.80.

²³ These articles are not addressed in this thesis.

fichu, which utilize the same floral motif, though the Cernby lace contains a slightly alternating repeat.²⁴

Margaret Ely's white silk faille dress (87.25.845) has a fitted back-fastening bodice with a wide neckline, puffed sleeve caps over curved pagoda sleeves, and a double box pleated skirt that is trained slightly in the back. The dress is fully piped and trimmed with silk chenille and braid trim on the edges of the pagoda sleeves. Martha Cernby's white silk faille gown (89.80.1a) consists of a back fastening bodice with a wide neckline, pointed pagoda sleeves, and a triple box pleated skirt with slight train.

While the gowns are visually similar, the quality of construction in the gowns is quite different. Ely's gown is carefully hand-sewn, with the bodice silk cut in five pieces (a front, two side backs, and two backs) to sit closely to her figure. In contrast, Martha Cernby's gown is machine sewn and the bodice silk cut in three pieces (two backs and a front), indicating that the bride's figure did not necessitate the use of side back pieces to achieve a snug fit, or that a snug fit was not desired. Directions for making a bodice in "Instructions in Cutting Out a Dress" explain how to achieve the proper fit:

It is not generally advisable to cut out the half of the back all in one piece, as it fits better with pieces joined at the sides; these called side-bodies; and this method should always be adopted, unless the lay has a very flat back: in that case, it is best to cut the half all in one piece. The backs must be cut straight; and it is best to tack the material to the lining before cutting it.²⁵

²⁴ Both laces measure one inch wide. The floral pattern on Martha Cernby's lace alternates slightly, while the pattern on Ely's lace is consistent.

²⁵ The Ladies' Self Instructor in Millinery and Mantua Making, Embroidery and Applique, Canvas-Work, Knitting, Netting and Crochet-Work, (Philadelphia: Leary and Getz, 1853), 137.

The construction of Cernby's bodice suggests that she was relatively flat-backed in comparison with Margaret Ely. An examination of the two women's dressed bodice measurements can help to illustrate some differences in their figures which could account for the differences in bodice construction.²⁶ The original waistline on Cernby's gown measured twenty-three-inches, since altered to twenty-six inches. Margaret Ely's dressed waistline measured twenty-two inches.²⁷ Ely's back shoulders measured fourteen inches

²⁶ Dress making requires great precision if the finished gown is to appear properly fitted. Draping and the cutting of patterns require that pieces be fitted to the corseted figure before the garment is fully constructed so that discrepancies in measurements and fabric can be accounted for. The Ladies' Self-instructor offers suggestions about how to create a pattern for the body of the gown from paper, insuring a good fit. Even today, home dress-makers and professional tailors/ seamstresses must fit a mock-up to the body for whom the finished product is intended in order to achieve the desired fit. The mock-up of cheaper cloth allows the garment to be fitted to the body for planning the cut and construction of the good or "fashion" fabric. In historic construction, many women or dress-makers used an old garment already constructed to the proper proportions as a guide for cutting patterns for new garments. By the 1860s when the Ely and Cernby gowns were being made, some commercial patterns were available, as well as fashion magazines such as *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Peterson's Magazine* which published line drawings of pattern pieces beginning in the 1850s. The skilled home or professional seamstress would have had much practice in interpreting the necessary cut of a garment for a specific type of figure by referencing visual material. Later seamstresses also had access to pattern drafting systems for achieving the proper fit for an individual's garments. I have found several books very useful in researching patterning and cut: Janet Arnold, Patterns of Fashion 2: Englishwoman's Dresses and Their Construction c. 1860-1940, (Hollywood, CA: Quite Specific Media Group Ltd., 1977); Claudia B. Kidwell, Cutting a Fashionable Fit: Dressmakers' Drafting Systems in the United States, in *Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology*, No. 42, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979); and the Ladies' Self-Instructor, 134-39.

²⁷ These measurements must be considered in the light of the evidence supplied by the gowns. Ely and Cernby's physical measurements might have slightly varied from their gown's proportions, considering that both women would have worn chemises and corsets which slightly alter actual physical measurements. Thus the measurements given are for their bodies as dressed in several layers of undergarments.

and her wide neckline measured sixteen inches across. Her bodice measured nine-and-one-half-inches long at the center front (from the scooped neckline, which drops two-and-one-half inches into the bodice from the shoulder, to the waistline) and nine-and-three-quarters-inches long at the center back. In contrast, Cernby's center front bodice measures nine-and-one-fourth-inches high at center front (one-and one-half-inches lower in the front neckline than in the back) and ten-and-one-quarter inches high at the center back. The neckline of her gown is sixteen-inches across.²⁸ The measurements indicate that Margaret Ely was smaller than Martha Cernby, who was larger throughout her torso and more tubular in shape. Thus in fitting Cernby's gown the seamstress did not need to use curved side-back pieces to achieve the desired appearance. However, in Ely's gown, the seamstress used the slightly bias cut side-back pieces to fit the bodice to Ely's curved torso.

Evidence of the Ely and Cernby's figures are also evident inside the gowns. While the cut of the cream-colored cotton linings in the two dresses is identical, individualized darts help achieve a custom fit. The Ladies' Self Instructor suggests that in constructing a bodice, "put the several parts of the body or waist together. This should be done slightly, and the body tried on, in order that the fit may be made as perfect as possible."²⁹ Making the fit perfect involved taking up excess fabric in small darts on the lining as needed so that the silk would lie smoothly when fitted on top during the actual construction. Both gowns utilize tiny darts to draw in excess fabric at the necklines and

²⁸ A shoulder to shoulder measurement for Cernby's gown was not recorded.

²⁹ The Ladies' Self-Instructor, 138.

armscyes. Ely's gown has a small one-inch long dart at the center front of the neckline and Cernby's gown has two one-fourth-inch wide darts taken at the back armscyes. The presence of these tiny darts indicates that the linings of both gowns were fitted and altered on the brides before construction continued. In addition to the tiny darts, three darts on each side of the center front were taken up in the lining fabric and marked. The darts extend up from the waist toward the bust at a slight angle and measure approximately four-inches high on Ely's gown and four-and-one-half-inches on Cernby's. Ely's darts are slightly deeper than Cernby's, indicating that more fabric was taken in between the bust and waist on Ely's gown than on Cernby's.³⁰

While both gowns have pagoda sleeves, they are of two different types. In The Cut of Women's Clothes 1600-1930, Norah Waugh describes the differences in true pagoda sleeves:

³⁰ The Ladies' Self-Instructor suggests the proper procedure for assembling the bodice: "Sew the parts firmly together, and put a cord over all the joinings except those under the arms. Fasten the plaits down on the fronts, hem the parts which require it, cut the proper shape round the neck, and see that the armholes are so made as to be easy and agreeable. Then hem the back, stitch up the front (on a gown with a center front seam) as firmly as you can and do the same at the shoulders . . . and under the arms." 'Sewing the parts firmly together' refers to stretching the silk over the linings and arranging it so that there was little excess fabric or puckering on the outside of the bodice. The 'cord over all the joinings' refers to the piping found at the shoulder seam of Ely's gown. The piping was basted to one side of the shoulder seam before joining the front and backs together along that line. Next, the marked bodice darts, or "plaits" were sewn and then the bodice fronts were seamed to the bodice backs with one-inch seam allowances. At some point after initial construction, Cernby's bodice was altered to accommodate a larger figure; the side seams, originally machine-sewn, are currently sewn by hand with one-fourth-inch allowances. The large darts and side seams were then finished with the insertion of baleen into the seam allowance and darts on both gowns. Additional pieces of boning are inserted at the center front and center back of Ely's gown. This baleen offers additional support and would help hold the bodice firmly against the figure. See The Ladies' Self-Instructor, 138-139.

The sleeve widened to become the ‘pagoda’ sleeve. When it became very full it was pleated on top and the pleats were stitched down a couple of inches, or the pleats were mounted on to a very short lining sleeve which was hidden by the jockey. It was usually cut in one piece and the seam, set rather forward, either sewn or left open.³¹

Margaret Ely’s gown has long “angel” pagodas surmounted by small jockey puffs at the upper arm. The pagodas measure fourteen-and-one-half inches long at the outer curve and five-and-one-half inches long at the inner arm seam.³² Martha Cernby’s sleeves are cut in the pagoda form with an outer point falling twenty-four inches below the armscye. The curved inner arm seam of the pagoda measures eight inches. The total hem of the sleeve measures forty-four inches.

A long pagoda sleeve similar to that of Margaret Ely is pictured on a party dress of white silk with fluted flounces in *Godey’s Lady’s Book* in September, 1860.³³ Other large pagoda sleeves are found in fashion plates through 1863, especially on gowns for dressy occasions, but also on select day dresses.³⁴ While very ornamental, the gown in Godey’s has the same wide, low neckline and the long, full pagoda sleeve of both Ely’s and Cernby’s gowns. In September 1861, *Godey’s* “Chitchat Upon New York and

³¹ Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Women’s Clothes 1600-1930*, (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1968), 140.

³² The entire sleeve length, from puff to tip of the pagoda, measures twenty-and-three-quarters inches at the outer arm and eight-and-three-quarters inches at the inner arm seam. The outer puff measures six-and- three-quarters inches at the outer arm and three-and-one-quarter inches at the seam.

³³ Stella Blum, ed., *Fashions and Costumes from Godey’s Lady’s Book*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1985), 39.

³⁴ For discussion of the difference between 1850s and 1860s pagoda sleeves, see Joan Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900*, (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995), 196.

Philadelphia Fashion for September,” describes sleeves in wedding dresses with the statement, “Sleeves loose and ample, edged simply by a ruche of ribbon.”³⁵ Both Ely’s and Cernby’s sleeves are simply trimmed along the hem: Margaret Ely’s gown incorporates tufted chenille and braid trim, while Martha Cernby’s gown uses a meandering braid trim sewn one inch up from the hem.

The overall appearance of these gowns dates them to the early 1860s. Gowns with similar silhouettes are published in many prescriptive sources. Under the title of “Chitchat Upon New York and Philadelphia Fashion,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book* frequently published monthly articles describing wedding, and other, attire. Several descriptions of wedding gowns bear striking resemblance to the Ely and Cernby gowns:

As our plate has suggested bridal-dresses, we give one or two other styles verbally, as being seasonable and useful hints:-First, a robe of very rich white satin; the skirt is extremely full . . . The corsage is plain and pointed in front of the waist.³⁶

The subject of our plate naturally leads us to a few items on bridal costumes, although we have given them an unusually full illustration. We are told by the best authorities, that the attempt to introduce white velvet as a wedding-dress has entirely failed, as such an *outré* idea should have done. Heavy plain and reps silks have driven satin from its late general favor, and are once more dividing the honors; in fact, nothing can be more simple, maidenly, and suitable. If richness is required, it can be made up to any extent in the garniture of lace, as will be seen in our paragraph upon laces.³⁷

³⁵ “Chitchat Upon New York and Philadelphia Fashions For September,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, Vol. LXII, (September 1861): 263

³⁶ “Chitchat Upon New York and Philadelphia Fashions For January,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, Vol. LX, (January 1860): 91.

³⁷ “Chitchat Upon New York and Philadelphia Fashions For December,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, Vol. LXI, (December 1860): 569.

The wedding-dress was of rich white corded silk, the skirt seven yards wide, with demi-train.³⁸

From the descriptions offered by *Godey's*, we gain a clearer vision of the appearance of 1860s wedding fashion. The fabrics and styles mentioned suggest that ribbed or textured silks were more fashionable than satin and velvet, full but slightly trained skirts were popular, and plain corsages (low bodices) were not unheard of. The central quote even suggests that plain gowns were fashionable, simple, and suitable for brides, and that if a richer appearance were wanted, lace would best do the job. Cernby and Ely selected styles and trims not uncommon in popular fashion, but also in line with the simple aesthetic of Quaker dress: in choosing their wedding ensembles, they followed the mandates of crinoline, and not Quaker, fashion by selecting demure white gowns with fashionable accessories.

A Shot-Silk Wedding: Rachel Love Evans, 1867

The final provenanced wedding dress is actually the remnants of a dress, namely the skirt, worn by Rachel Love Evans at her marriage to Hicksite Amos Wilson Bacon the night of October 23, 1867 (84.21.12, Figure 21).³⁹ The skirt is labeled inside the cotton waistband in graphite "Worn by Rachel Love Evans/ the night she was married

³⁸ "Chitchat Upon New York and Philadelphia Fashion For September," *Godey's Lady's Book*, Vol. LXIII, (September 1861): 263.

³⁹ This skirt descended in the same family as the Meeting dress of Margaret Pryor Bacon (84.21.3a) which is discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis (page 74). The Evans's were Hicksite and their family papers are in Collection SC/ 005, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College.

Oct. 23 1867. Married Amos Wilson Bacon". However, inside the back of the skirt, on cotton twill lining is the inscription "Silk was Rachel L. Evans Wedding Dress Oct. 23 1867." The two notes speak to a major alteration experienced by the gown after the 1867 wedding, probably in the 1880s.⁴⁰ The remainder of the dress is an extensively pieced skirt with multiple rows of unpicked stitches. The skirt is relatively smooth across the front, pleated lightly over the hips, and thickly smocked in the center back. The entire shape is dependent upon the linings: the front and sides of the skirt are flat lined with the polished cotton and buckram, giving the area from the knee to the hem a firm line. The lower edge of the front of the skirt has a pinked, pleated, and ruched flounce measuring forty-three-and-one-half inches long and five-and-one-quarter inches deep. The back of the skirt is of twill cotton with casings made by stitching one inch wide bands of fabric to the cotton at roughly five inch intervals from the waist to the knee. These casings contain traces of cotton twill tape drawstrings which would adjust the drape of the lining. Sewn over the cotton twill is a cartridge pleated and smocked silk panel which is attached at the side seams to the understructure and silk. The entire panel is lined with a loose cotton gauze and was overlaid by cotton embroidered net lace, still evident in the side seam allowances. Champagne colored ribbed silk moiré bows caught the lace at the sides, twelve-and-one-half inches up from the hem.

⁴⁰ The skirt currently resembles one pictured in "March" for The Wedding Dress: Historic Fashions Calendar Series 2004, edited by Sally Queen (Texas Tech University Press as Part of the Costume Society of America Series, 2004). That dress is of silk satin, with a similarly box pleated ruffle at the hem and bustle in the back and dating to 1881. Another skirt appears in the "October" entry of the calendar, dating to 1887.

Since little of the original construction remains, the fabric here stands as testimony to one Quaker bride's choice. For her marriage, Evans chose a cream colored "shot" or "changeable" silk taffeta. The changeable quality of the fabric comes from the use of champagne colored warp threads and cream colored weft threads. Shot silks were popular for wedding and formal dresses throughout the nineteenth century.⁴¹ Although the dress was later altered significantly, Evans' saved the fabric, carefully labeling it for the association with her wedding. Since the dress descended with a firmly Quaker provenance, we can assume the alterations were done for a Quaker bride.⁴² Though we can not reconstruct the appearance of the gown, the reuse of the fabric and the presence of lace and ribbon bows indicates that by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, one Hicksite Quaker bride (whose family later associated with the FHA) chose to ornament her wedding gown according to fashion. The dictates of *Godey's* about plain wedding dresses in the 1860s no longer mattered, what did matter was a fashionable gown.

⁴¹ Stella Blum, Victorian Fashions and Costumes from Harper's Bazar 1867-1898 (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1974), 149- 225.

⁴² Genealogical material accompanying the gift indicates that Amos Wilson Bacon married Rachel Love Evans in 1867. Amos and Rachel produced Jane Wilson Bacon (b.1870) and Elizabeth Love Bacon (b.1872). Jane Wilson Bacon married Samuel Stockton Zelley, with the marriage producing Reba Fenimore Zelley and Fenimore Bacon Zelley. Reba married Chester Lawrence Mitchell, who fathered Barbara Lee Mitchell (Mrs. Peter H. Rose) and Linda Ann Mitchell (Ms. George D. Vick, III). Mrs. Rose and Mrs. Vick donated the skirt to the FHA collection and sent the other family documents to the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College. See Letter from Mrs. P. H. Rose to Miss Meisner of Atwater Kent Museum, July 10, 1984, Atwater Kent Museum Object File 84.21. Amos Wilson Bacon's papers are in Collection SC005 Amos W. Bacon, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College.

Wedded Bliss: Quaker Brides and Mainstream Fashion

Compared to contemporary Non-Quaker styles and construction, the provenanced wedding gowns are plain interpretations of fashion and utilize simple, if any trims. The appearance of the aforementioned wedding gowns does not appear astonishing considering the various ways ‘plainness’ could be interpreted both in the nineteenth century and continuing today. Indeed, at least since the eighteenth century, Philadelphia Quaker brides dressed in plain versions of popular dress. In a Philadelphia letter from Hannah Pemberton to her friend Hannah Redwood, dated September 26, 1782, the apparel at a recent wedding is discussed as plain, but “smart”:

The bridegroom was dressed in a full suit of Lead colored cloth; no powder in his hair, which made him look tolerably plain. The bride was in a lilac satin gown and skirt with a white satin cloak and bonnet. It would be needless to enumerate the variety of dresses which made their figure on this occasion; suffice it to say they all looked much in the smartness, especially Neighbor Guest, who had procured an uncommon large Hat, which rendered him more conspicuous than any person there.⁴³

Hard evidence in the extant wedding gowns in the Friends Historical Association collection at the Atwater Kent Museum verifies that through the 1860s, Quaker brides

⁴³ This information is drawn from an unpublished article by Amelia Mott Gummere about Quaker marriage customs. Gummere notes that the letter was written by Hannah Pemberton, to her friend Hannah Redwood. In her anecdotal style, Gummer writes, “The sentimental fashion of the day precluded the use of their own proper names; the signature is therefore Emma, under which the youthful Hannah chose to write: ‘Cleora’ was her sister Sally, and ‘Sophia,’ Sally Fisher”. Gummere does not note whose wedding Pemberton writes about, but she does note that the original letter was in the possession of Miss Anne Hollingsworth Wharton. See Amelia Mott Gummere Papers, Col. 1005, Box C, Folder “Gummere, Amelia Mott- article by- Marriage Customs among the Early Quakers,” Quaker Collection, Haverford College, 88-89.

accepted a variety of dress styles, adapting fashionable silhouettes but interpreting them in a plainer manner.

The wedding dresses in the FHA collection suggest several trends in Quaker wedding costumes.⁴⁴ Tacy Townsend, married in 1835, wore a distinctive Meeting-style dress to her wedding. However, by 1840, Elizabeth Dutton wore a non-distinctive gown. The trend here parallels that found in FHA Meeting dresses of this time period: as Friends gained greater distance from the schism, they slowly stopped practicing and saving distinctive dress. Instead, gowns are more distinctively “wedding” fashions, set apart from Meeting dresses by the use of textured fabrics (such as silk faille, shot silk, and silk gauze) and modest trims (ribbon, lace, braid, chenille tape, tassels, fringe, self-fabric ruching). The two FHA gowns dating to the 1860s indicate a tendency to follow popular fashion in the presence of a bridal ensemble including matching under-sleeves, fichus, collars, bonnets, capes, and slippers. These later dresses belonging to Ely, Cernby, and Evans, display a common, sentimental attachment to wedding clothes, with brides labeling their ensembles with inscriptions commemorating the marriage.⁴⁵ The wedding dresses in the FHA collection suggest that while a Quaker woman might

⁴⁴ These trends parallel the trends in documented nineteenth-century Quaker wedding dresses in the textile collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Of the 47 Quaker garments, 12 are wedding dresses. See “Philadelphia Museum of Art Quick List with Accessioned Objects and Donors” and Quaker Clothing Notebooks in the Costume and Textiles Department of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

⁴⁵ Saving and labeling wedding garments in a common practice across many levels of society. See Sally Queen, ed. The Wedding Dress: Historic Fashions Calendar Series 2004.

otherwise follow plain-style or distinctive fashion, on her wedding day, she might choose to follow mainstream fashion.

Chapter 7

QUAKER DAY DRESSES

Meeting dress comprised only one part of a Quaker woman's wardrobe, being worn for first day (Sunday), and other Society of Friends events. Unlike Meeting dresses, wedding dresses were typically worn once: on the day of the marriage ceremony. However, several dresses in the Friends Historical Association collection are not meeting dresses or wedding dresses. These dresses are characterized by modest printed cottons, sheer voiles, or heavy plain satins or velvets, fabrics used in mainstream fashion for day wear. I consider four types of day dresses: printed cotton dresses worn around the home, white muslin dresses worn by young women, printed cotton dresses, and elegantly textured dresses worn in public.

A Neat and Tidy Appearance: Work Dresses

The first group of four day dresses speaks to the practical functionality of plain dress.¹ Dresses in this group date from 1800-1850 and are characterized by printed cotton fabrics which would effectively hide dirt encountered while engaging in domestic activities. Two of the dresses date from 1800 to 1820: the first is brown cotton with

¹ Dress accession numbers are: 00.29.309, 91.68.722, 87.35.242, and 91.5.11.

white speckles (00.29.309) and the second is green cotton with a black fern print (91.68.722). Both dresses are constructed differently, though the construction of the former closely parallels Meeting dress construction for this time period. The bodice features a drawstring neckline, three-quarter length sleeves which are seamed at the front of the arm, and a center front closure, which tied at the neckline and was pinned closed down to the apron fall skirt.² The skirt is pleated toward CF on front, toward CB on sides and back.

The construction of the second dress (91.68.722, Figure 22) is arguably more interesting. Stylistically, the gown dates to the first decade of the nineteenth century, with a high waist, short bodice, narrow skirt, and two part sleeves (an attached three-quarter length sleeve and lower sleeve tacked into the attached sleeve to make the overall sleeve cover the arm to the wrist). The sleeves are possibly made in this fashion to allow for warm and cool weather wear: in warmer weather or for dirty chores, the lower calico sleeve could be removed, leaving the $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeve to cover the arm.³ The bodice

² The gown is very similar to one dating 1780-1794 in the Snowhill Collection in Great Britain. Eighteenth century gowns, with fuller skirts and lower waistlines, frequently had pocket slits at the sides of the skirts. Nancy Bradfield notes the inclusion of pocket slits and other eighteenth century construction techniques in English Quaker gowns from this era. See Nancy Bradfield's Costume in Detail 1730-1930 (New York: Costume and Fashion Press, 2003), 73-4 and 371-4.

³ Norah Waugh notes that "Sleeves, long or short, were becoming fuller and an over-sleeve was very general" from 1800-1810. See Norah Waugh, The Cut of Women's Clothes 1600-1930 (New York: A Theatre Arts Book, 1968), 132

construction parallels that in mainstream fashion (Figure 23).⁴ Most notable in this dress are the inclusions of pocket slits at both sides of the skirt center front fastening skirt. Since classically inspired empire gowns tend to utilize less fabric, draping closely about the body, the bulge from pockets tied under a gown is unsightly. Instead, while attired in fashionable dress, ladies often carried reticules or purses for carrying personal belongings, instead of using pockets. The presence of pocket slits in this dress suggests that it was intended for wear in the home where the bulge from pockets would not mar the silhouette.

One other dress (87.35.242) dating from 1820-30, is constructed in the manner of the first dress, but executed in red cotton with a small blue print. The dress consists of a slightly square necked bodice with full sleeves and an apron fall skirt. The dress lining is pieced with multiple brown linen and cotton fabrics commonly found in sturdy dresses.⁵ The lining was assembled with the fashion fabric in the 18th century manner at the shoulder seams, neckline, center front, and waist. All raw edges and seam allowances are encased within the garment, indicating that the dress was made to withstand vigorous laundering. A cotton twill tape runs through a casing at the back neckline, and the apron fall is finished with a casing through which is strung a white cotton string, allowing the bodice to be fitted or adjusted, possibly in anticipation of pregnancy. The sturdy

⁴ Norah Waugh describes this type of bodice lining: “The bodice back and side fronts were mounted on a lining which had front flaps that pinned round the breasts to act as a kind of brassiere.” See Waugh, 132.

⁵ See Chapter 5 Quaker Meeting Dresses for a discussion of lining materials.

construction, the red printed cotton fabric, and the drawstrings suggest that the dress was intended for informal wear around the home.

Information accompanying a brown and white printed cotton dress (91.5.11) dating from 1825-40 suggests that the dress was Nancy Thomas Fell's Quaker wedding dress. Nancy was born in 1780 and was an Orthodox member of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. However, the provenance information is not secure, as a note from the donor's estate notes that the donated objects were "the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century clothing, shoes and articles of the time which belonged to my husband's ancestors."⁶ The dress does not have the characteristics of a Meeting or wedding dress; rather, it resembles the other printed cotton day dresses. The dress is constructed from light weight cotton, with a wide scoop neckline (measuring eleven inches across), slightly shaped sleeves, and a very densely pleated skirt. The dress is constructed like Meeting dresses dating from 1825-1840, although the densely pleated skirt (measuring 159 inches in circumference) and weighted hem suggests a construction date closer to the mid-nineteenth century. Like early dresses, the gown is made with an apron fall skirt and a bodice which pins up the center front. The light fabric indicates that the dress was not formal enough for Meeting, but that the dress could have been worn as a day dress. If the dress was Nancy Fell's, she would have been in the final years of her life when the dress was made. The conservatively printed fabric, lack of ornamentation, and the apron fall skirt would have made the dress a suitable plain day dress for an older Quaker woman.

The appearance and construction of these day dresses indicates that the garments

⁶ Atwater Kent Museum Object File 91.5.11.

were probably intended for working situations around the house. Similar dresses are worn by working women in domestic scenes illustrated the paintings and sketches of John Lewis Krimmel in the Philadelphia area.⁷ Three quarter length sleeves on the earlier examples leave the lower arms free to work efficiently. In colder weather, the lower sleeves in the green dress could quickly be tacked into place to protect the arms. The apron fall skirts on the first, third, and forth dresses and the pocket slits on the second would enable a woman to quickly access tools or key (for the management of a household) from her pockets. The modestly printed fabrics of all the dresses utilize dark backgrounds which would effectively hide dirt encountered while doing chores. Since these activities would be done in the home and largely out of sight of neighbors, the day dresses did not need to be distinctive like Meeting dresses intended for public wear. Instead, the day dresses were made to function while the wearers engaged in ordinary daily activities.

A Plain, Public Persona: Social Dresses

Six Friends Historical Association public day dresses are characterized by better fabrics, modest amounts of trim or ornament, and the inclusion of watch pockets in the skirts. Two un-provenanced day dresses date between 1815 and 1825. Both gowns are a cream colored, light-weight cotton cloth, which was originally white (87.35.1172, Figure

⁷ In Krimmel's *The Quilting Frolic (1813)*, two of the older women in the painting wear colored, high-waisted dresses with three-quarter length sleeves and generous kerchiefs and aprons. Additionally, several sketches show women working at domestic tasks such as cooking, ironing, and sewing. These women wear variations of high-waisted working dresses with skirts and sleeves pleated to allow for a range of arm movements. See Anneliese Harding, *John Lewis Krimmel* (Winterthur: A Winterthur Book, 1994), 42, 162, 165.

30; 87.35.1171, Figure 24). The silhouette of both gowns closely resembles that found in popular fashion of the day: a gored skirt, slightly shaped sleeve, wider and corded neckline, and shoulders set far back.⁸ The two Quaker gowns have a series of corded bands run about the hem, creating a cone-shaped skirt.⁹ The delicate white muslins and plain, but ornamental details, indicate that these dresses were not intended for wear while engaging in domestic duties.¹⁰ Unlike the sturdier printed cotton work dresses in the FHA collection, these dresses were worn by young women either being visited in the home or while visiting in other homes.¹¹

⁸ Norah Waugh suggests that the use of cording in the wide necklines is characteristic of circa 1820 construction, "The neckline in the early 1820s was generally hemmed, and a narrow gathering cord or thin ribbon inserted." See Waugh, 148.

⁹ Around 1820, fashions abandoned the classic simplicity formerly favored. High fashion Non-Quaker gowns of this time tend to be elaborately embellished at the hem with a series of rolls, false flowers and leaves, or other padding which hold out the hem, creating a cone-shaped skirt. See Stella Blum, Ackermann's Costume Plates: Women's Fashions in England, 1818-1828 (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1978). Jane Ashelford notes that "Soon simplicity and restraint gave way to a more exuberant taste which expressed itself in complex surface decoration on stiff printed cottons, and light-colored silks." See The Art of Dress: Clothes and Society 1500-1914 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996), 183.

¹⁰ Nancy Bradfield illustrates ten white muslin or white muslin with small prints dresses worn by non-working women in domestic and public situations. At least one of the dresses is an evening dress. Essentially the ten dresses make up the entirety of the dresses dating 1800-1822 that she examines. This indicates that their survival is due, in large part, to the delicate materials and beautiful craftsmanship. Bradfield cites the *Lady's Monthly Museum* 1808 which describes the use of white dresses for young women in entertaining situations. See Bradfield, 86-117.

¹¹ White dresses were very popular with young women. Since the final quarter of the eighteenth century, children's clothing had been made from white cloth. White dresses grew increasingly popular for young women through the 1780s and 1790s and were a mainstay in fashion by 1800. White dresses, symbolizing purity, would remain popular through the twentieth century for young women and children and for summer wear.

Two un-provenanced day dresses from the mid-nineteenth century are printed gowns fashioned along the visual and construction lines of late 1850s and 1860s popular fashion, with full sleeves, gathered bodices, and self-fabric cuffs. Though printed, the prints are extremely conservative compared to popular prints.¹² The skirts on the dresses are full enough to accommodate hoop skirts, suggested by the large 8 inch hems used to weight the skirts to keep them from billowing up over the support. The first dress (87.35.347, Figure 25) is a cream colored cotton day dress with a brown and mustard print (which resembles lollipops). The dress consists of a hand-stitched, pleated skirt attached to a machine-stitched, piped v-neck bodice with gathered front, large two piece coat sleeve with tan silk piping at the back arms, and fiddle back. The shaping on the sleeve and bodice of the dress suggest a date from 1855-1865. The skirt consists of seven twenty-four-and-one-half inch selvage to selvage panels, running-stitched together. A

Leanna Lee-Whitman notes that young Quakers dressed fairly non-distinctively, appearing very much like non-Quaker young people. See Leanna Lee-Whitman, Silks and Simplicity: A Study of Quaker Dress as Depicted in Portraits, 1718-1855, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1987 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987), 117-144; Karin Calvert, Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 79-120; Akiko Fukai, ed. Fashion: A History from the 18th to the 20th Century (New York: Taschen, 2002), 142-178; Linda Baumgarten, What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America (Williamsburg, VA and New Haven: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Association with Yale University Press, 2002), 168- 176.

¹² See Susan Meller and Joost Elffers, Textile Designs: Two Hundred Years of European and American Patterns for Printed Fabrics Organized by Motif, Style, Color, Layout, and Period (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991) and Eileen Jahnke Trestain, Dating Fabrics: A Color Guide 1800-1960 (Paducah, KY: American Quilter's Society, 1998), 41-92.

large pocket is set into the right hip, three-and-one-half inches down from the waist and extending down sixteen inches from the waist. A small watch pocket (measuring two-and-three-quarters-inches by one-and-seven-eighths inches) is stitched onto the left hip of the bodice, three- inches from center front.

The final dress (87.35.205, Figure 26) is a sheer white cotton voile summer dress printed with a small scale black floral pattern. The dress consists of a very full cartridge pleated skirt and a bodice with CF and CB gathers, and long full sleeves with gathered cuffs. The bodice has gathered, sloping shoulders and is piped at the armholes, wrists, neck, and waistline, echoing a 1855-60 silhouette. Like the previous example, this dress has a small watch pocket where the skirt fastens to the bodice at the left hip. This dress and the former indicate how conservative fabrics were used to make day dresses which could be worn in public. The contrasting brown piping in the first dress and the gathered cuffs of the second dress provide visual interest without adding excessive trims which could mar the functional aspects of the dresses.

Like Meeting dresses dating after 1835, “public” day dresses have watch pockets set in at the waistband: watches, while functional, also served a decorative purpose. Women’s watch jewelry frequently included long gold chains, worn around the neck, with a hook at the waist for attaching the watch and sometimes a pencil or fob.¹³

Although decidedly plain compared to other mainstream examples, these dresses were

¹³ In *Silks and Simplicity*, Leanna Lee-Whitman discusses the circa 1845 portrait of Rachel Burrough Coles Kaighn, a Hicksite Quaker women who attended Haddonfield Monthly Meeting in Haddonfield New Jersey. In the portrait, Kaighn is attired in the simple black Meeting dress popular with older women at the middle of the century. At her waist, Kaighn wears a gold watch chain. See Lee-Whitman, 245-246.

intended for social occasions. Though ornamentation, finer fabrics, and the use of watch jewelry as accessorizes suggests an ostentatious display, these are simple interpretations of fashionable lines. The evidence here supports conclusions that young Quaker women dressed similarly to non-Quakers when they were not in attendance at Meeting.¹⁴

The Texture of Fashion: Formal Dresses

Six additional FHA dresses indicate the use of finer plain fabrics. The first dress (91.68.716, Figure 27) is made of green and white striped silk and dates 1855-60. The bodice is fully boned with three darts at either side of the center front, fastening with green and white decorative thread buttons over functional hooks and eyes. Double piping trims the waistline and neck of the dress, while the armscyes are un-piped, but fitted with long pagoda sleeves. The most distinguishing feature of the bodice is a peplum lined in bright green silk and attached to the bodice over the join of the waist and the skirt, which is fitted at the right hip with a large cotton pocket. Although a relatively basic dress, the gown is made to fit closely to the figure: in addition to being fully boned, the bust is enhanced with cotton bust pads to fill out the shallow area formed between the corseted breasts and the shoulder.

The second dress (87.35.856 a, b, Figure 27) consists of a separate bodice and skirt fashioned from green silk and dating circa 1865. Unlike other examples, the boned bodice has puffed sleeves set over a straight sleeve, with fringe at the edge of each puff

¹⁴ Mary Anne Caton notes in her study of Chester County dresses and photographs, that younger Friends were frequently the ones pushing fashion and adopting mainstream garments. See Caton, "The Aesthetic of Absence," Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections on a Quaker Ethic in American Design and Consumption, ed. Emma Lapsansky and Anne Verplanck, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 246-269.

and at the slashed wrist, a center front closure with applied ruched fabric collar trimmed with fringe, and a self fabric bow at the back waist. The matching skirt is gored and slightly trained to fit over a small pair of elliptical hoops, popular in the late 1860s. The hem is finished with brown cotton facing and a one-and-one-half inch wide velvet ribbon on the inside of the hem (measuring 117 inches).

The next dress (91.68.60a, b, Figure 28) is made from heavy brown cotton velvet trimmed with black silk stain. The dress consists of a fully boned bodice with nine $\frac{3}{4}$ black glass buttons (6 extant), two front darts, fiddle back seaming, closely fitted coat sleeves, and black silk armscye piping. Attached is a skirt which lies smoothly across the front, is pleated over the hips, and densely cartridge pleated in the back. Skirt is smooth across the CF, pleated over the hips and cartridge pleated in the back. One pocket is hidden in the right hip pleats and the skirt fastens over the left hip. When viewed alone, the only distinguishing feature of the dress appears to be the velvet fabric. As such, the dress is very rich, but exceptionally plain. However, the plainness is called into question when the swagged overskirt is placed over the dress. The overskirt is elaborately shaped, with all of the edges bound in black silk satin. The swags echo the bustles of 1868-72, although the size and scale does not compare with the ostentatious bustles of fashionable forms.

Another dress (87.35.256, Figure 29) consists of a joined brown silk twill bodice and skirt dating circa 1885-92. Two different shades of brown silk twill are used in the bodice construction: a red-brown and a cool chocolate brown. The two fabrics have similar weave structure, however, the chocolate has a softer hand and is used on the

underside of the sleeve and on the side bodice section from the armhole to the waist. The bodice has snug coat sleeves, center front fasteners, The bodice is fully boned and darted to closely hug the figure. The close fit is aided by two interior flaps sewn to the bodice lining at the bust darts at either side of center front. These flaps fasten together with four brass wire hooks and eyes, effectively pulling the center front bodice edges together to fasten with seven hooks and eyes. The hand-sewn skirt is densely cartridge pleated across the back, with larger pleats across the hips. Two pockets are hidden in the hip pleats: a small watch pocket at the left and a larger pocket at the right.

A second dress is very similar to the previous one. It (87.35.853 a, b, Figure 30) is composed of a cocoa brown ribbed silk skirt and bodice dating from 1885-92. The dress descended from a branch of the Elkinton family who's daughters attended Westtown school, thus the wearer was probably Orthodox, although no firm provenance could be established. The machine stitched, fully-lined and boned bodice has close fitting 2 piece sleeves, a high standing collar edged with basted in cream colored cuffs and a collar band with corded edges, a V-shaped waist, slight back peplum, and a false front with lapels and tucks. The skirt consists of an upper silk layer with an underskirt of brown cotton faced with buckram overlaid by silk with wool hem tape. The hand and machine sewn skirt echoes the fashionable silhouette, which would be achieved with the use of a small bustle. It consists of an upper silk layer with an underskirt of brown cotton with a facing of buckram overlaid by silk with wool hem tape. The upper skirt floats freely over the foundation except where the two are sewn together at the side seams. The two layers are treated as one and densely cartridge pleated to a brown cotton twill

waistband. The result is a stiff skirt with dense pleats at the back to fall stiffly over the bustle. The bodice peplum would flair slightly over this fullness, adding to the graceful, but modest silhouette.

Each of these dresses utilizes mainstream construction techniques and a fashionable silhouette. Despite the seemingly rich textures of the fabrics, the dresses are very simple compared to other mainstream Victorian examples illustrated in fashion plates.¹⁵ The dresses do resemble the modest garments of many other middle class American women in the late nineteenth century.¹⁶ Like the garments studied in Erin Eisenbarth's thesis, the FHA dresses dating 1860-1900 are not distinguishably Quaker unless the provenance is consulted.¹⁷

¹⁵ Fashion plates can be a problematic source as they are frequently designers' impressions of fashion and not practiced fashions. Many fashion plates offer every option for ornamentation and finishing on a single garment, offering readers a variety of embellishments from which to choose. Many times, options featured in American fashion magazines were composites of several European fashion sources. However, the garments viewed in fashion plates should not be viewed as fashion as practiced for most people: as Stella Blum notes, "While these colored fashion plates served to inform the subscribers of the latest fashions, many of the gowns . . . were hardly appropriate for the lifestyle of most of *Godey's* readers." As editor of *Godey's*, Sarah Josepha Hale realized that fashion was important to readers. Hale advocated plainer forms of dressing and eventually "the magazine began to include more appropriate, simplified versions of European fashions expressed in clear black-and-white drawings." See Stella Blum, ed. Victorian Fashions and Costumes from Harper's Bazar 1867-1898 (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1974), i-91.

¹⁶ Many of the women pictured in Joan Severa's Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900 (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995), are dressed in fashions similar to the ones in this portion of the FHA collection. See Severa, 84-540.

¹⁷ Erin Eisenbarth, "Plain and Peculiar: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century Quaker Clothing," (Master's Thesis, University of Delaware, 2002).

The Virtues of Plainness

The use of these non-distinctive fabrics suggests that when not in attendance at Meeting, Quaker women wore plain dresses which were virtually undistinguished from their non-Quaker neighbors at home, in the street, and at social functions. Mainstream fashion critics in publications such as *Godey's Lady's Book* promoted plain dress as an index of womanly virtues: neatness, cleanliness, simplicity, and modesty. Additionally, plain dress appealed to sensible financial expenditure, Christian virtue, functionality and physical safety.¹⁸ The fabrics used in plain dress provide insight into concepts of plainness: today, velvet or satin might appear fancy, though the use of such fabrics by Quakers suggests that color and print, and not texture, defined fabric as being plain.¹⁹ I argue that the cuts and fabrics of the day dresses in the Friends Historical Association display the use of plain style, but not distinctive, aesthetics in the creation of clothing worn by Quaker women outside of Meeting. Such dresses closely resemble non-Quaker plain dress utilized and described throughout the nineteenth century.

In *Godey's Lady's Book* of January 1854, a Mrs. Merrifield writes in "Dress as a Fine Art- Remarks on Particular Costumes":

¹⁸ Sally Helvenston explores the criticisms and advice of nineteenth century dress critics in "Popular Advice for the Well Dressed 19th Century Woman" in *Dress*, Vol. 5 (New York: The Costume Society of America, 1980): 31-46.

¹⁹ For discussions of plain versus fancy goods used by Quakers, see Lee-Whitman, 111-114. Decorative arts scholar Sumpter Priddy recently published his research into a distinctive American aesthetic that he terms "Fancy". Fancy goods provide an interesting comparison with plain goods. See Sumpter Priddy, American Fancy: Exuberance in the Arts 1790-1840 (Milwaukee: The Chipstone Foundation and the Milwaukee Art Museum, 2004).

The ladies of the Society of Friends . . . are still distinguished by the simplicity and neatness of their dress- the quiet drabs and browns of which frequently contrast with the richness of the material- and by the absence of all ornament and frippery. 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 of ribbons. The dress is long enough for decency, but not so long as to sweep the streets, as many dresses and shawls are daily seen to do. . . In the style of their dress . . . they 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.²⁰

Mrs. Merrifield reminds us that Quaker women were not parading around the streets in the utmost fashionable garments. However, they were wearing modest versions of mainstream fashion which, Merrifield notes, “approach so near the fashions generally worn.” Merrifield’s comments echo those of other nineteenth century dress critics who blamed excessively fashionable dress for concealing defects in moral character²¹ and praised women who followed fashion at a distance, avoiding extreme fashions.²² Quaker women were often upheld by these critics for their plain dress. As early as February 1839, *The Lady’s Book* recorded in an article entitled “Fashion” that

Men may grow more austere religious-each successive generation may be wiser than the last, but we doubt whether the human species will ever become too good or too wise to offer sacrifices to this fantastic deity. Sometimes, indeed, we may flatter ourselves that we are not partakers in this species of idolatry;-but let us reflect a little, and our error will be

²⁰ Mrs. Merrifield, “Dress as a Fine Art- Remarks on Particular Costumes,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book* (January 1854): 25.

²¹ Mrs. M.L., “Dress: How to Adorn the Person,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, 60 (1860), 231, quoted in Helvenston, 35.

²² See Mrs. Merrifield, “Dress as a Fine Art-Ornament Economy,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, April 1854, 347, quoted in Eisenbarth, 41; and Helvenston, 35.

visible. If, for instance, our dress be not made to conform with the mode last imported from Paris, at least we are commonly anxious enough to dress in the mode most approved among our neighbours, our acquaintances, or the religious society to which we may belong. A broad-brimmed hat and a Quaker bonnet are fashionable in the Society of Friends; and those persons who are most remarkable for the plainness of their apparel, are often scrupulously exact in conforming with some standard which they conceive to be most expressive of decorum and good taste. We mention this, to illustrate the fact that, with respect to the love of fashion, men differ more in its modifications than in the thing itself. And be it remembered that pride may sometimes be shown in singularity, as well as in excess of ornament. Some attention to fashion is not, in itself, unwise nor injudicious; a total neglect of fashion is often the concomitant of a good understanding - but it frequently gives evidence of a mind unskilled in the affairs of this world. By inattention to such small matters, many good men impair their own worldly interests, and, what is worse, diminish that influence which they might exercise for the good of others. But this fault is trifling in comparison with the opposite one of bestowing an undue portion of our time and thoughts on matters which, at best, are excusable frivolities.²³

Another critic, a Mrs. Whitney, later wrote in speaking of the benefits of Quaker dress, “We grow to that which we put on. We learn to strike the keynote of our habiliments-to tone ourselves inwardly to outward expression.”²⁴ By dressing plainly, a woman called attention to her inward attributes and beauty. Fashion was the façade for a culture

²³ “Fashion,” *The Lady’s Book* Vol. XVIII (Philadelphia: 1839): 94.

²⁴ Mrs. A. D.T. Whitney, *Friendly Letters to Girl Friends* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1897), 150, qtd. in Helvenston, 39. It is curious to note that many of the dress critics and publications that Helvenston writes about respond to issues of servants attempting to “attain social equality through dress thus making an unwise sacrifice of comfort, convenience, and economy.” See Helvenston, 33. Many of the proponents of plain dress cite utility, comfort, and convenience in their promotions. The same arguments praise Quakers for holding the highest standards in plain dress. The arguments are then used to persuade servants to find satisfaction with their status, instead of clamoring for equality. The parallels between Quaker dress, the dresses and directions given in *The Workwoman’s Guide* for making servants clothing, and the relationship of Quakers to servants’ reform merit further inquiry.

appearance, and the cultured appearance spoke of the wearer's morality and propriety. For a Quaker woman in the mid-nineteenth century, plain dress imparted a non-worldly appearance and simultaneously kept her from appearing too singular.²⁵

Together, the Friends Historical Association gowns illustrate how late nineteenth century Quaker gowns, especially those worn by younger women, tended to be stylishly cut with modest trims. Compared to other examples, they are plain, but not so plain that they would be considered singular. Rather, they echo the qualities praised by many dress critics throughout the century. As Erin Eisenbarth notes in her study of the Moon and Richardson family clothes, "these gowns . . . 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."²⁶ Although most of the day dresses in the Friends Historical Society collection do not have firm Quaker provenances, they do illustrate the types of plain day dress being worn by Quaker women. Instead, Quaker women, like other American women, chose plain dress

²⁵ The simplicity of plain dress had a functional side as well. Drab colored fabrics, and conservative prints made laundering easier and helped mask dirt accumulated during wearing. Westtown School in Philadelphia informed parents that their children should be supplied with plain clothes that were easy to maintain and clean. Mary Ann Caton devotes a great portion of her text to Westtown clothing regulations. See Caton, 255-261. She determines that "Plain clothing thus served two functions. On the one hand, it marked the Quaker identity of the wearer. On the other, it ensured that the garments worn by women at Westtown would not require excessive labor to maintain, as fashionable clothes of the time certainly did." See Caton, 261.

²⁶ Eisenbarth, 32.

for day attire both in the home and in public, reaping the utilitarian and economic benefits, and arguably, the moral benefits, of plain dress.

The evidence from this collection overwhelmingly suggests that throughout the nineteenth century many Quaker women were wearing non-distinctive plain dress for day wear and weddings, reserving singular dress for Meetings. Many Friends seemed to view this attitude in a nonchalant manner: in November 1846, *The Friends' Weekly Intelligencer* notes that in Britain, "It is not uncommon to see a very neat, rather plain-looking Friend, at meeting, and the next day to meet her in the street and not be able to recognize the individual, except on a close scrutiny; perhaps in a straw bonnet with colored ribbons, & a shawl to correspond; forming a striking contrast to the dress in which she appears at meetings."²⁷ However, other Protestant groups found Quaker dress contradictory. John Wesley commented in a sermon "On Dress" about the Quaker fondness for mixing simplistic testimony with expensive goods:

Let me see, before I die, a Methodist congregation, full as plain-dressed as a Quaker congregation. Only be more consistent with yourselves. Let your dress be cheap as well as plain; otherwise you do but trifle with God and me, and your own souls. I pray, let there be no costly silks among you, how grave soever they may be. Let there be no Quaker-linen, - proverbially so called, for their exquisite fineness; no Brussels lace; no elephantine hats or bonnets, - those scandals of female modesty. Be all of a piece, dressed from head to foot as persons professing godliness; professing to do everything, small and great, with the single view of pleasing God."²⁸

²⁷ The "London Friend" in *Friends' Weekly Intelligencer*, Nov. 21, 1846, quoted in Lee-Whitman, 113.

²⁸ John Wesley, "On Dress," in *Sermons on Several Occasions: by Rev. John Wesley*, Vol. III (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1876), 27, quoted in Lee-Whitman, 114.

Wesley was admonishing Methodists to be consistent in their use of plain dress, unlike Quakers who clearly wore truly plain dress on Sundays. On other days of the week, plain dress would suffice. Though Friends saved Meeting dresses as representations of Quaker identity and wedding dresses for associations with special events, plain day dresses survived because they reflected the moral philosophy and good deeds of individuals in the Society of Friends and society at large in the nineteenth-century.

Chapter 8

QUAKER BONNETS

The crowns of their caps were formerly made very high, and for this reason it was necessary that the crowns of the bonnets should be high enough to admit the cap crown; hence the particularly ugly and remarkable form of this part of the dress. The crown of the cap has, however, recently been lowered, and the Quaker ladies, with much good sense, have not only modified the form of their bonnets, but also adopted the straw and drawn-silk bonnet in their most simple forms. In the style of their dress also they occasionally approach near the fashions generally worn.¹

Documentary evidence throughout the nineteenth century suggests that Quaker women frequently dressed similarly to middle class non-Quaker women. However, while distinctive dress ceases to be as prevalent among Philadelphia Quaker circles by mid-century, Quaker bonnets remain distinctive, calling attention to the wearer's status as a member of the Society of Friends. Even in 1901 Amelia Gummere noted in The Quaker: A Study in Costume that

It is an impressive lesson to one who thinks that the Quakers have cut their clothes by their rule of conscience, and always worn the same style of garment . . . our Friend may see the plain bonnet of today, exactly reproduced for the ladies of fashion, and worn by Queen Victoria, with only the ostrich plume to betoken any difference existing between Quaker and worldly . . . It has been with the Quaker bonnet, as with every other

¹ Mrs. Merrifield, "Dress As a Fine Art: Remarks on Particular Costumes," *Godey's Lady's Book*, Vol. XLVIII (January 1854): 25.

garment the Quaker has ever worn:- the cut has originated in that center of all fashion, and the abode of taste, Paris; while the expression of Quakerism lay simply in the absence of any superfluous adornments. In this one idea lies the secret of Quaker dress. Anything that has tended to pervert this into a uniform, unchanging and arbitrary, has been directly counter to the true spirit of simplicity and meekness which characterized early Friends.²

Two of Gummere's points address what recent scholars have argued. Firstly, many Quakers modified contemporary fashions, interpreting them with simplicity. Secondly, Quaker clothing was never a "uniform." Instead, individuals adopted their own versions of simplistic and plain dress. Thus in extant garments and accessories, first observations may suggest a standard appearance, while closer observations reveal nuances and individual preferences within a collective identity.

Seventy-eight bonnets and/or bonnet covers were examined for this thesis.

Bonnets, it seems were widely collected in early FHA circles, with many notes on file suggesting that specific donors often contributed multiple bonnets to the collection.

Eighteen of the bonnets are listed with some basic provenance (family attributions) in the Friends Historical Association object files at the Atwater Kent Museum. Sixteen bonnets are indicated by notes in Folder "Friends Historical Assn. Collection cont'd" in Box HSP. 4 at the Atwater Kent. These notes often suggest the individuals who wore the bonnets. Unfortunately, since most of these notes were written before the advent of professional collection management, they can not be connected to specific bonnets since they offer no

² Amelia Mott Gummere, The Quaker: A Study in Costume, (Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, 1901), 219-220.

description or accession numbers.³ However, the quantities listed suggest the importance twentieth century Quakers attached to bonnets.

The task of attributing bonnets without provenance is difficult considering the variety of styles for Meeting, day wear, and special occasions.⁴ It is perhaps easiest to begin by grouping the bonnets by shape and type. Within the seventy-eight bonnets are several styles of meeting bonnets, quilted silk bonnet covers for inclement weather, bonnets for non-Meeting wear, and one provenanced wedding bonnet worn by Margaret Ely Rhoads in 1860. This discussion elaborates first on Meeting styles, then on non-Meeting styles, and finally on Margaret Ely's wedding bonnet.

Meeting Bonnets

The majority of the bonnets in the FHA collection are Meeting bonnets (Figure 31). These bonnets are characterized by common shapes, drab silk fabrics, and similar construction. They are classified as Meeting bonnets because of their similarity to bonnets worn in images of Quaker women attending Meeting or in public and because of

³ Folder "Friends' Historical Assn. Collection cont'd," Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.4, Atwater Kent Museum.

⁴ The variety of headwear available to Quaker women was not solely limited to the nineteenth century. Since the seventeenth century, Quakeresses had a plethora of hats from which to choose, including silk hoods and felt hats. In the eighteenth century this trend continued with the flat felt hat, the hood, the calash, the round bonnet, and other forms of black bonnets. For Gummere's discussion of the evolution of Quaker women's hats see, The Quaker: A Study in Costume, 213-14. For a discussion of the variety of hats worn to Meeting in England see Joan Kendall, "The Development of a Distinctive Form of Quaker Dress," *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society* No. 19 (London: The Costume Society, 1985): 58-74.

notations in FHA materials.⁵ Among the shapes are the jockey bonnet (pleated), the English style (gathered), and the “shun-the-cross” style (square). A final style is a black, drawn scoop shaped bonnet which appears in variation through the second half of the nineteenth-century. Gummere suggests that pleated bonnets were known in New England as “Wilburite” bonnets, while gathered or “shun-the-cross” bonnets referred to Gurneyite friends.⁶ As she noted,

It daily grows harder to discern social differences in congregations by means of the once infallible test of hats and bonnets. Even among the worldly, the distinction of class dress is nearly or quite obliterated.⁷ To the initiated, the Quaker bonnet once spoke volumes; a glance sufficed to distinguish Beaconite, Wilburite, Maulite, Gurneyite, or Hicksite . . . But time has leveled distinctions here as elsewhere; and manifestations of doctrinal difference are sought to-day, with more regard for truth, in the heart rather than on the head.⁸

⁵ See Kendall, 58-74; Deborah E. Kraak “Variations on ‘Plainness:’ Quaker Dress in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia,” *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society*, No.34 (2000): 51-63; Gummere, The Quaker: A Study in Costume, 198-228. Gummere writes an entire chapter devoted to “The Evolution of the Quaker Bonnet”.

⁶ Gummere, 221-224. “Wilburite” Quakers identified with Rhode Island Quaker minister John Wilbur (1774-1856). Wilbur opposed the position of Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847), an English Quaker minister. Quaker Aesthetics notes, “Beginning in the 1840s, Wilburites emphasized plain life and distinctive dress, separation from the outside world in both religious and secular organizations, strict enforcement of the discipline, guidance by the Inward Light, and, in addition to an emphasis on Biblical scripture, they advocated close adherence to writings of early Quakers.” In contrast, Gurneyites (followers of John Gurney), another branch of Orthodox Friends (post-schism), “embraced many of the organizational strategies of other Protestant churches on the theory that maintaining the strength of Christianity took precedence over maintaining unique Friends practice of faith.” Gurney emphasized “the importance of the Bible over the Inward Light, and the sacredness of Jesus Christ.” See Emma Lapsansky and Anne Verplanck, eds., Quaker Aesthetics (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 378, 372.

⁷ Gummere, 224-25.

⁸ Gummere, 227.

According to Gummere, while the style of dress selected by a Quaker woman by the second-quarter of the nineteenth-century might not display what type of Quaker she was, her bonnet almost certainly did.

The first “Quaker” shape in the FHA collection is that of the “jockey bonnet,” a shape featuring a high, rounded crown and a long, tunnel-like brim (Figure 31).

Gummere refers to this style as the Wilburite bonnet:

one of drab, dating from the Revolution, has much larger stiff pleats, showing the development of the present Philadelphia “plain” bonnet, known in New England as the “Wilburite” bonnet.⁹

“Wilburite” bonnets are silk covered and made with pasteboard brims, which are frequently wired along the brim edge. The crowns of these bonnets are made from buckram pleated across the crown. Sometimes stiff paper is folded into these pleats to provide additional rigidity. Eighteen bonnets in the FHA collection are shaped in this manner.¹⁰

The Workwoman’s Guide of 1838 offers instructions for making a “Bonnet for a Member of the Society of Friends,” which resembles the illustrations in Gummere’s book and extant “jockey bonnets” in the Atwater Kent Museum Collection:

These bonnets are made of black, white, grey, or fawn colored silk . . . In making up, run the pieces cut for the outside and lining together at the

⁹ Gummere, 222.

¹⁰ Jockey bonnets include 87.35.157 (gray), 87.35.155 (brown), 87.35.163 (olive), 87.35.271 (green), 87.35.272 (dove), 01.13.1a (black), 87.35.299 (charcoal), 87.35.301 (charcoal), 87.35.278 (grey), 87.35.383 (olive), 87.35.687 (beige), 87.35.412 (green), 87.35.837 (black), 87.35.547 (green), 84.21.7 (black), 90.3.7.2 (charcoal), 87.35.831 (champagne), and 87.35.146 (brown).

edge, on the wrong side, and having turned them, slip in the pasteboard; plait the front of the crown into the poke in very small exact folds, leaving it quite plain for some distance above the ears; make a narrow runner behind of one nail and a half in depth, to form a curtain, and put on ribbon strings the same color as the bonnet.¹¹

The “narrow runner behind” refers to the bonnet’s skirt, which is often lined in a stiff fabric. The skirt effectively shields the back of the neck from the elements when worn. Sometimes a small bow ornaments the center back skirt of the bonnet. The “ribbon strings” are pieces of the same fabric used for the bonnet’s covering, hemmed down the long sides and attached to the lower edges of the brim for tying under the chin.

Jockey bonnets are a form which gained popularity in early nineteenth-century Britain, evolving from a cap worn by jockeys during horse races:

One of these was the jockey-style cap, adapted from the sporting and racing fraternity, which had become fashionable wear for men in the middle of the eighteenth century for sporting and country pursuits. The fashion crossed the Channel at the end of the 1780s and evolved into a chic style of headwear, worn by both sexes in France. The fashion then returned to Britain and ladies sported their own versions.¹²

The resulting “jockey” bonnet remained popular in mainstream fashion through the 1810s. It is likely that British Friends adopted the style and transmitted it to American Friends during these formative years of distinctive dress. Gummere quotes a turn of the nineteenth-century journal which states

Martha Routh, a Minister of the Gospel from Old England, was at Goshen (Pennsylvania) Meeting the 11th day of 11th month 1798; was a means (if I

¹¹ See Plate 20, Figures 4,5,6 in The Workwoman’s Guide, (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1838. Reprinted by Piper publishing LLC, 2002), 160.

¹² Jane Ashelford, The Art of Dress: Clothes and Society 1500-1914 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, 1996), 183.

mistake not) of bringing bonnets in fashion for our leading Frd's, and hoods or Caps on the Cloaks in the Galleries, which of Latter time the Hoods on the Cloaks of our overseers and other active members have increased to an alarming height or size:- how unlike the dress of their grandmothers.¹³

These Chester County Friends clearly had contact with English styles. The jockey bonnet, with its stiffly pleated caul and tunnel-brim, remained popular through the nineteenth-century in American Quaker circles.¹⁴

A second popular form of bonnet is the "English style," which has a shorter, slightly flared brim and a slightly rounded crown typically covered with gathered or finely pleated silk (Figure 31).¹⁵ Of the ten FHA English style bonnets, seven are black, one is brown, one is charcoal, and one is grey. Gummere praises this bonnet, noting that it was more sensible than the tunnel-brim, for,

Nothing more dangerous could have been devised for an elderly person whose sight or hearing was somewhat defective than the long tunnel sides of the pasteboard front of a plain bonnet of the nineteenth century.¹⁶

¹³ Ennion Cook "A Memorandum Book belonging to Ennion Cook of Birmingham, Chester county, Pennsylvania," 1820, cited in Gummere, 190.

¹⁴ Gummere notes, "American Friends have always been more conservative in their dress than their English cousins, probably because the latter's proximity to the continent forced them into more cosmopolitan habits." See Gummere, 191.

¹⁵ FHA English style bonnets are: 87.35.153 (black), 87.35.384 (black), 87.35.839 (black), 87.35.172 (grey), 87.35.387 (black), 87.35.1109a (brown), 87.35.688 (charcoal), 87.35.840 (black), 87.19.1.3 (black), and 87.35.149 (black).

¹⁶ Gummere, 223. Gummere's observations are excellent here, and could stem from her own wearing of historic nineteenth-century dress in tableaux. Personal experience in wearing a bonnet with a long tunnel brim does alter the wearer's senses of sight and hearing, making moving in traffic a dangerous consideration.

The difference between pleated bonnets of this type and the “jockey style” is that the buckram of the jockey style is pleated with the silk, while the buckram on an ‘English style’ bonnet is not pleated, but only the fabric covering it.

Seven FHA bonnets are styled in what Gummere labels the “shun-the-cross” style popular among Orthodox Quakers in the second quarter of the nineteenth century:

Eventually, modifications of the extreme conservative crept in; and we have the popular close bonnet, with fine gathers rather than pleats, and a shorter front, which allows itself a furtive bow under the square crown, and which is found in the more modern shades of blacks and browns, rather than the original drabs and grays, called long-ago by an irreverent young Friend, the “shun-the-cross” bonnet.¹⁷

Like other shapes, this style was composed of buckram and pasteboard, sometimes wired around the brim for added strength and shape (Figure 31).¹⁸ The silk on this shape is typically gathered over the slightly square crown of the bonnet. The bonnet sits close to the face with the brim extending only as far as the face and not beyond it. This bonnet is very like what Gummere labels the English style bonnet, the difference being a rounder crown on the English style.

The English and shun-the-cross styles are very similar to those found in popular fashion through the 1840s and 1850s. Both styles have a narrow tunnel-brim and are shaped roughly like a modern mailbox. Gummere remarks on the resemblance of Quaker bonnets to popular fashion, noting

¹⁷ Gummere, 224-225.

¹⁸ Shun-the-cross style FHA bonnets include: 87.35.146 (brown), 87.35.147 (black), 87.35.146 (black), 87.35.283 (black), 87.35.284 (black), 87.35.389 (grey), and 87.35.411 (black).

Again it becomes necessary, in order to study the Quaker headdress, to examine first the worldly bonnet and mode of dressing the hair. The clue to all the changes within the Society may be found without; and not a pleat of the bonnet as now worn by the plainest Friend . . . had its origin at some remote day--let us whisper it softly--in Paris!¹⁹

Indeed, the shapes of these styles are drawn directly from the sources of mainstream fashion: from 1840 until 1854 similar shapes abound in *Godey's Lady's Book*.²⁰

Following these shapes, another simple form of a mainstream bonnet appears, consisting of drawn black silk over a scoop-shaped buckram frame.²¹ This style remains popular in *Godey's* through the 1860s.²² Six FHA bonnets are made in the scoop shape: five of them are black, the sixth is brown.

Since the styles continued in popularity throughout the nineteenth-century, dating the FHA bonnets is a difficult task. Gummere notes, "It daily grows harder to discern social differences in congregations by means of the once infallible test of hats and bonnets."²³ Within the basic shapes are variations in trimming and finishing which display the hands of their makers. While most of the bonnets have skirts, not all do. Among those with skirts, some skirts are tucked or piped, some have a bow at the center back, and others do not. Other bonnets have a pleated or tucked band placed over the

¹⁹ Gummere, 190.

²⁰ Stella Blum, ed. *Fashions and Costumes from Godey's Lady's Book* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1985), 7-26.

²¹ Spoon-shaped bonnets include: 87.35.148 (black), 87.35.161 (black), 87.35.838 (black), 87.35.302 (brown), 87.35.158 (black), and 87.35.159 (black).

²² Blum, 27-89.

²³ Gummere, 225.

seam joining the brim to the crown. Most bonnets have self-fabric ties, though some have silk ribbon ties. Nearly all of the bonnets have flat lined brims in either the self-fabric, or a cream colored silk. The English and shun-the-cross bonnets are most frequently covered in black silk, while the Jockey bonnets are covered in tan, green, gray, or brown silk. Thus within the standard shapes, there is great variety in finish and color, supporting Gummere's claim that the bonnets were not uniform even within specific groups of Quakers. These styles remained popular into the later nineteenth century, as evidenced by machine stitching on the ties and skirts of several bonnets.²⁴

Did the shape of a Quaker bonnet truly display the wearer's Orthodox or Hicksite, Wilburite or Gurneyite persuasion? A case study of one Jockey style bonnet in the FHA collection suggests not. One olive green Jockey bonnet (87.35.150) was worn by Rachel Wilson Longstreth (Mrs. Davis Orum), a member of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (Orthodox).²⁵ Orum's bonnet contains an advertising card reading "Mary Holgate Bonnet Makers 11 N. 5th St. Philadelphia." According to Amelia Mott Gummere,

²⁴ Machine stitching is on several bonnets, for example, 87.35.411, 87.35.839, and others.

²⁵ William Wade Hinshaw, Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy (Ann Arbor: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), 714, 757. A note accompanying the donation of this bonnet reads "Quaker Bonnet worn by Mrs. Davis Orum (Rachel Wilson Longstreth) who was born July 10, 1789; married to Davis Orum November 12, 1811; and who died May 16, 1865. Rachel Orum was a member of the Fourth Street Meeting, and was buried in the Friends' Western Burying-grounds, Sixteenth and Race Streets, Philadelphia. The bonnet contains the card of the bonnet-maker, who can doubtless be traced in the Old City Directories, thus making it possible to date the bonnet with some accuracy. Presented to the museum by Rachel Orum's great-granddaughter, Grace Atlee (Mrs. John B.) Kouwenhoven". See Object File 87.35.150.1, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum.

Mary Holgate was a plain bonnet maker in Philadelphia two generations ago. Her finger became injured through making the hard pleats in the bonnet crowns, and she lost the use of her hand. This incident, together with the retirement of the popular bonnet maker, caused in that city a much greater use of bonnets with the more easily gathered crowns, since which period these bonnets have received the sanction of the plainest wearers.²⁶

Mary Hill Holgate was the daughter of Samuel and Naomi Sharpless Holgate. She was born on August 26, 1820 and died on January 25, 1897 and is buried at South Western Ground, Upper Darby, PA. Throughout her life, Mary was a member of the Orthodox Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.²⁷

Both Holgate, who made the Jockey bonnet, and Orum, who wore the bonnet, were Orthodox women. However, Gummere's comments indicate that the Jockey form might have applied to both Orthodox and Hicksite women during the first half of the nineteenth century, or "two generations ago" before Mary Holgate injured her hands. In the introduction to her chapter on bonnets, Gummere describes the pleated crown bonnet, continuing, "When a synonym was wanted for conservatism, for stability, for all things that endure, it was found in the Quaker bonnet."²⁸ It is likely that these drab colored jockey bonnets endured through the years of the Hicksite schism and the

²⁶ Gummere, 221.

²⁷ William Wade Hinshaw, Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, Vol. II, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Inc., 1994), 707.

²⁸ Gummere, 191.

Gurneyite/Wilburite divisions of the mid-nineteenth century.²⁹ However, the FHA collection and Gummere's work suggests that by 1840, the Jockey bonnet might have ceased being used by both Hicksite and all Orthodox women. While Hicksite and Wilburite women might have continued to wear Jockey styles, Gurneyite and many Orthodox women adapted the black gathered versions (English and shun-the-cross) produced by milliners such as Mary Holgate. Not surprisingly, this trend seems to parallel that in FHA Meeting dresses: around 1840, Meeting dresses cease to be distinctively colored and are interpreted as plain style dresses simplified from poplar fashion. The shapes in Meeting bonnets do the same: black bonnets with the same mailbox and scoop silhouettes found in *Godey's Lady's Book* increase around the middle of the nineteenth-century. These, not the Jockey bonnets, are the bonnets which seemed to endure in popularity among older women through the early twentieth century, attesting to a conservative appearance as remarked on by Gummere.³⁰

²⁹ Jockey bonnets are seen in many images of Philadelphia Quaker, including Orthodox Arch Street women, during the first half of the nineteenth-century. Several of Krimmel's paintings and sketches from 1807-1821 illustrate Quaker and non-Quaker women in the same settings. It is the bonnets, and not the dresses, which distinguish Quakeresses in crowded scenes in Krimmel's work. See Anneliese Harding's *John Lewis Krimmel: Genre Artist of the Early Republic* (Winterthur, DE: A Winterthur Book, 1994), 21, 25, 27, 168, 170, 203, and 212; Alexander Nemerov, *The Body of Raphaelle Peale: Still Life and Selfhood, 1812-1824* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 33-35; and Laura Rigal, *The American Manufactory: Art, Labor, and the World of Things in the Early Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 110-113.

³⁰ Mary Anne Caton uses photographs of older women in black English and shun-the cross bonnet styles in her discussion. See Mary Anne Caton, "The Aesthetics of Absence: Quaker Women's Plain Dress in the Delaware Valley, 1790-1900," *Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections on a Quaker Ethic in American Design and Consumption*, ed. Emma Lapsansky and Anne Verplanck (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 266-271.

Non-Meeting and Wedding Bonnets

Attributing the bonnets to a specific group of Quakers is an even more difficult task considering that by the 1830s, some Quaker women were wearing identifiably Quaker bonnets only to meeting. Amelia Gummere's grandmother (she does not note if it is paternal or maternal) noted in 1829 that,

___ had a great deal to say on the inroads of fashion, etc., and spoke so particularly as to mention the young women having one kind of bonnet to wear in the streets, and another to Meeting. This is very generally the case I believe.³¹

Similarly, Mrs. Merrifield wrote for *Godey's* in 1854 that Quaker women had not only recently modified their cap shape (by making the crown lower), but accepted drawn and straw bonnets which resembled those worn by non-Quakers.³² Several types of non-Meeting bonnets appear with less frequency in the collection, including the straw and drawn bonnets noted by Mrs. Merrifield, felt bonnets, calashes, and silk hoods/ bonnet covers.

Four FHA bonnets are made from straw. One bonnet (87.35.267) has a very large deep brim which was originally lined in sheer silk. Ivory silk ribbons function as the ties on this bonnet, which likely dates 1800-1840.³³ The second (87.35.1099) is a straw spoon bonnet with straw skirt and wired brim. Another straw bonnet (90.3.7.1) is lined in

³¹ Gummere, 217.

³² Mrs. Merrifield, "Dress As a Fine Art: Remarks on Particular Costumes," 25.

³³ Gummere calls these bonnets "conversation" or "cottage bonnets". See Gummere 202-03. See also Nancy Bradfield, Costume in Detail 1730-1930 (Hollywood: Costume and Fashion Press, 2003), 145-173; Blum, 1-27.

cream colored silk with holes from pins along the brim where a capette was pinned in place. The bonnet is spoon shaped, with a straw skirt, black velvet trimming, and white silk ties pinned inside the brim (Figure 33). The shape of these bonnets suggests dates of 1855-60.³⁴ The final example (87.35.1100) is actually a woman's boater hat with a flat brim and round, flat crown. The hat is trimmed with cream silk bows around the crown and originally fastened with cream silk ties.

Other bonnets are felt examples, similar to those for winter wear. One example (87.35.151) is of tan felt trimmed with long gold silk ties which continue around the crown of the hat and a gold silk skirt. Another felt bonnet, this one brown (87.35.841a), has a shape similar to the first bonnet, dating both near 1840 (Figure 33).³⁵ This bonnet has no skirt or ties, though it is accompanied by a shot green and brown silk quilted bonnet cover lined in brown polished cotton. The cover exactly fits over the bonnet.

The drawn bonnets noted by Mrs. Merrifield appear in several versions in the collection. The most notable of these is Margaret Ely Rhoads' cream silk taffeta drawn bonnet (87.35.145) worn at her wedding in 1860 (Figure 34).³⁶ Accompanying her bonnet is the original pleated silk tulle capette worn to fill the space between her face and the spoon brim of the bonnet. Several aforementioned examples of drawn bonnets³⁷

³⁴ Blum, 27-89.

³⁵ Blum, 1-27.

³⁶ Ely's bonnet accompanied the 1860 wedding dress described in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

³⁷ Another cream silk drawn bonnet is 87.35.982, which is marked 1856 in graphite on the interior. This bonnet is illustrated in The Quaker: A Study in Costume in the final

(87.35.148, 87.35.161, 87.35.838, 87.19.1.3) are executed in black silk drawn over a buckram frame in the rounded spoon shape of the late 1850s and early 1860s and also have a gauze frill inside the brim (See Figure 32 for select drawn bonnets). Another bonnet (90.3.2, Figure 33) has the spoon shape, executed in corded beige silk over buckram, and with a pleated net and black velvet frill tacked into the brim. Still other bonnets in the shape of the 'English' bonnet have pleated gauze frills lining the open brims. These ruffles inside the brims of the bonnets function much like Margaret Ely's capette.

The presence of these frills or capettes inside the brims may appear contrary to ideas of plainness and simplicity. However, these items were common in bonnets throughout the nineteenth century, especially those with large, wide brims. The capette appears in 1838 in The Workwoman's Guide, described as "a sort of half-cap worn by young ladies, as a preservation from cold; it is also useful as a pretty kind of evening head dress; they are not expensive and are easily made."³⁸ The capette is illustrated in plate 15, Figure 33. Instructions describe the creation of a sort of wire-and buckram head-band trimmed with delicate fabric and ribbons:

A border of net, tulle, or blonde is then plaited on to the front, and a gauze or satin ribbon folded, and laid upon the edge of it, so as to cover the stitches, and the foundation; this ribbon is long enough to form strings. . .

image of the book. See Amelia Mott Gummere, The Quaker: A Study in Costume, 228. Similarities between this bonnet and Margaret Ely's bonnet are remarkable, closely paralleling the similarities between the Ely-Rhoads 1860 and Cernby-Morris 1861 wedding dresses. It is possible that the graphite inscription inside this bonnet was added by Lydia Gummere or another FHA member in the early twentieth-century.

³⁸ The Workwoman's Guide, 129.

The front is trimmed according to fancy, the most simple mode generally looking the best. . . Some persons wear capettes under their bonnets, and then they are usually made without wire, and merely bound with ribbon.³⁹

The description in Workwoman's Guide almost exactly describes Margaret Ely's bonnet cap. Hers is pleated down to a wired band, with ribbons attached only at the ends and long enough to tie under the chin (Figure 34). When worn, the capette was fastened over the head so as not to muss the hair, with the ends fastened under the chin in a bow. The bonnet was then placed over the capette and the wide silk ribbon ties fastened in a larger bow centered under the chin. Alternatively, as in the other bonnets, the capette is not attached to a buckram and wire frame, but simply bound in a ribbon or piece of flannel which is pinned directly to the inside brim of the bonnet.

The capettes would have filled the space between the face and the bonnet brim in a pretty fashion, also functioning to hold warm air around the face in cool weather. Additionally, the modest capettes would help preserve a fashionable silhouette while simultaneously declaring Quaker status in their simplicity. A comparison of other contemporary capettes, half caps, bandeau, or face ruches confirms the desired simplicity of the Rhoades capette and the frills in the other bonnets. The following caps are described in a discussion of wedding ensembles in *Godey's* of November 1859:

Half, or face ruches, are still in chief favor, the bandeau being greatly varied with velvet, lace, and flowers.

A white therry velvet, the brim crossed by a band of plain Azof green cut velvet, rosettes and lappets of blonde, on each side. Inside the brim, half cap of blonde; bandeau of green velvet, covered by a large rosette of

³⁹ Ibid., 129.

blonde to the centre, the left half being a ruche of the green velvet in square plaits.⁴⁰

Again, in January 1860, *Godey's* notes in a discussion of bridal headwear:

One of white crape, with a branch of white lilac on the front, and a diadem bandeau of the same inside across the forehead.⁴¹

And in December of the same year:

At a private view of bonnets imported and manufactured by Mrs. Scofield, Broadway, we noted a pale green velvet hat; the front drawn, the curtain covered by a fall of blonde, deep and pointed in the middle. Under the brim there was *no cap*, but a plaiting of white ribbon edged, with blonde. Moss rosebuds in clusters were the decoration of this hat.

A dress hat of velvet . . . Inside the brim, a light bonnet cap of tulle and blonde; in the centre a bow of white ribbon, from which a fold of the same velvet was carried down the left of the face, forming a little rosette on the temple, and from there passing between the ruches of the cap to the chin. Broad white ribbon strings.⁴²

As noted in the *Godey's* descriptions, wedding and non-wedding bonnet caps were typically highly ornamental. Perusal of fashion plates throughout the years 1858-1860 indicates that bonnet caps were more frequent than not in images.⁴³ Indeed, the special notation of '*no cap*' (accent in the quote appears in the original document) suggests that the wearing of bonnets (in the 1850s and 1860s) without caps set the wearer apart. The frilled bonnet cappettes inside FHA bonnets suggests that some Quaker women attempted to conform to contemporary fashion without setting themselves apart as singular in the mid-nineteenth-century, while exercising Quaker simplicity in their choice of materials.

⁴⁰ "Chitchat Upon New York and Philadelphia Fashions for November," in *Godey's Lady's Book*, Vol. LIX (November 1859): 477.

⁴¹ "Chitchat Upon New York and Philadelphia Fashions For January," in *Godey's Lady's Book*, Vol. LX (January 1860): 91.

⁴² "Chitchat Upon New York and Philadelphia Fashions For December" (1860): 569.

⁴³ Blum, 27-89.

That's All In A Hat

The variety of bonnets in the FHA collection suggests that although early nineteenth-century Meeting bonnets may have proclaimed the wearer's Orthodox, Gurneyite, Wilburite, or Hicksite to viewers, by the later years of the nineteenth century, such nuances were retained only by conservative members for Meetings. Thus, the shape of a bonnet alone cannot tell the persuasion of its owner or maker. Nor can the bonnets be reliably dated unless accompanied by a documented provenance, especially if the bonnet was made or worn post-1840, when differences in bonnets by Quaker division became muddled. Gradually, the importance of a bonnet came to be relegated to mere tradition:

Now the Quaker philosophy of costume is essentially in the direction of plainness and moderation. But the study we have been making shows us how contrary to the true spirit of Quakerism the technical bonnet . . . really is. Adopted in the days of decadence of spirituality, when life was easy, and time permitted infinite attention to details, the bonnet became literally a snare, a fetish, a sort of class distinction . . . That day is effectually past; the modern Quakeress has now but the tradition to preserve of the outward shell, and must address herself to far greater moral problems.⁴⁴

Evidence in the FHA collection indicates that different bonnets suited different occasions, with Meeting bonnets reflecting the drab silk fabrics of Meeting dresses and non-Meeting bonnets using fabrics more in keeping with fashionable dress fabrics. The FHA trend extends beyond Meeting and non-Meeting bonnets to bonnets for special occasions, such as weddings. If anything, the FHA bonnets attest to the impact of

⁴⁴ Gummere, 227.

mainstream fashion on later nineteenth-century Quaker women. As Gummere astutely notes,

The young Quakeresses of the middle of the nineteenth century were given to wearing silk and satin bonnets of very delicate light colors, pearl gray and a rose pink being favorites. The quilled bonnets, and those with a plain front and gather crown, both now adhered to in Philadelphia, and considered plain, may here be seen in their beginning, and that the modification for every bonnet has had its inspiration in Paris, there seems no possible doubt.⁴⁵

According to Gummere, Quaker women many Quaker women adorned their heads in a most un-Quaker-like fashion while outside of Meeting during the later nineteenth-century. Leanna Lee-Whitman notes, “Not only is the degree of conservatism of (Quaker) women’s dress so clearly illustrated, but equally remarkable is the fact that without the appearance of the tunnel bonnet, there appears to be no distinguishing characteristic in the dress of the women to differentiate them from any other conservative gentry women and girls of the time.”⁴⁶ Meeting bonnets, Margaret Ely’s wedding bonnet, and non-Meeting bonnets looked outside of the Quaker community for inspiration, just as Meeting, day, and wedding dresses did. While in the nineteenth century the Quaker bonnet distinguished the wearer’s persuasion, in the twentieth, it was merely the job of the Quakeress to wear a bonnet for the sake of tradition.

⁴⁵ Gummere, 220.

⁴⁶ Leanna Lee-Whitman, Silks and Simplicity: A Study of Quaker Dress As Depicted in Portraits, 1718-1855. Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1987), 62.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION: FASHIONING QUAKER IDENTITY

Quakerism today stands at the cross-roads. It must share in the world's great movements. It is learning to work with others, and in groups, and to face facts.¹

The Friends Historical Association Collection at the Atwater Kent Museum is a wonderful resource for the study of Quaker culture. The construction of women's garments in the collection is especially useful in contributing primary evidence to discussions about the "Quakerness" of Quaker clothing. However, as Sharon Ann Burnston notes in the introduction to Fitting and Proper, "Generalizing about what 18th century Quakers wore is risky, as Quaker theology emphasized the presence of the divine within every person. Thus, each individual's perceptions and interpretations were respected, permitting a range of variation in acceptable behaviors."² The Quaker dresses in the Friends' Historical Association collection are a self-selected sample which cannot verify generalizations about all Quaker clothing in the nineteenth century. While the

¹ Amelia Mott Gummere, "Our Past and Our Future," *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn, 1931): 72.

² Sharon Ann Burnston, Fitting and Proper: 18th Century Clothing from the Collection of the Chester County Historical Society, (Texarkana, TX: Scurlock Publishing Co., 2000), 1.

garments do indicate some Quaker construction methods and preferences, the appearances of the garments from which they are drawn illustrate the arguments Amelia Gummere made about plainness and Quaker costume in her 1901 The Quaker: A Study in Costume.

The material characteristics of the three groups of dresses in the FHA collection confirm that interpretations of plainness and simplicity evolved over the course of the nineteenth century depending on a woman's age and the occasion for which the dress was intended. Certain events, such as weddings, often merited more fashionable garments than did everyday events, including Meeting. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Quaker dresses did not appear overly different from many of the drab, empire-waisted dresses worn by middle class women. Throughout the second quarter of the century, Meeting dress visually established women as members of the Society of Friends. Dresses in this collection verify that outdated construction techniques during this era remained popular. Towards the later nineteenth century, distinctive dress diminished to be replaced by simplified versions of popular fashion, aiding Quaker women in maintaining group identity.³ All three types of dresses at this time reflect an awareness of mainstream plain-style appearance and technique. These simplified versions of popular dress helped Quaker women retain their personal emphasis on non-worldliness while

³ Emphasis on plain-dress and anti-fashion statements were not limited to the nineteenth century, nor was the Society of Friends the only religion to promote non-worldly dress. Arguments for plain dress can be found in seventeenth-century Puritan discussions. Following the Second Great Awakening, plain dress again resurfaces in public discourse, running as a leading current in nineteenth-century discussions. See Leigh Eric Schmidt, "A Church-Going People Are a Dress-Loving People: Clothes, Communication, and Religious Culture in Early America," *Church History*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (March 1989): 36-51.

operating in an increasingly public sphere. Thus the evolution of distinctive dress into simplified dress in the later nineteenth century helped Quaker women to maintain links with the Society of Friends, while engaging in public activities.

If nineteenth century garments are evidence of what Gummere promoted in 1901, why does she not elaborate on them in The Quaker: A Study in Costume? Obviously, the evidence in the garments accumulated in the FHA collection after the publication of the book. However, perhaps Gummere's reasoning needed greater distance and perspective: she was, after all, a product of the nineteenth century. Six years before her death in 1937, she stated

The nineteenth century was our critical period. . . Prosperity is always a greater test of character than adversity, and therefore, with more wealth and comfort, in the course of time, we narrowed our outlook and increased our limitations. But the community sense was lacking, and the great accomplishments of the century were those of individuals . . . The nineteenth century was a transforming period. The Society of Friends had lived through the intense concentration on religious interests and interpretations of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, which distinguished all the world at that time. It was keeping its attention fixed on itself, endeavoring to remain individual, apart, peculiar, living in a side eddy of the great stream of life, which was sweeping on to modern materialism, and the incredible scientific developments of the last fifty years. The way has opened out, and most of the trammels of Quaker convention have outlived their usefulness and been laid aside. The future is in the hands of our best educated young people.⁴

Perhaps it took thirty years of personally grappling with definitions of Quaker identity for Gummere to understand the place of the nineteenth century in Quaker history. The

⁴ Amelia Mott Gummere, "Our Past and Our Future," 71.

Quaker: A Study in Costume stopped with the emergence of distinctive dress because after the Hicksite schism and impact of the Second Great Awakening, Quaker community and identity ceased to function as it had in the past, instead relying on individuals. Clothing from the first half of the nineteenth-century emphasizes the community aspect: dresses have provenances establishing the roles of individuals in the Society. However, mid-century as “materialism” and “scientific developments” increase, most people (represented by their clothes in the collection) become anonymous cogs in the machine. Watch pockets and less distinctive dress all speak to this transformation of Quaker identity in this collection.

While the FHA garments (not unsurprisingly) support many of the conclusions made by Gummere and recent scholars, the very survival of the garments speaks to the agendas of twentieth century Quakers. The formation and early use of the collection in pageants and tableaux attests to the methods and messages early twentieth-century Friends promoted in fashioning Quaker identity.⁵ Clothes provided costumes for players and gave authenticity to the scenes re-enacted by making part of the past physically present. The clothes also helped bridge the philosophies of Quaker history and modernity, linking the generations to established traditions which had taken a secondary

⁵ Alterations to historic garments have begun to attract attention by curators and collectors. Rather than being viewed as negative features on desirable documents, alterations are starting to be valued for the additional information they offer scholars. See Linda Baumgarten, “Altered Historical Clothing,” in *Dress*, Vol. 25 (New York: The Costume Society of America, 1998), 42-57. Also, Linda Baumgarten, What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America, (Williamsburg, VA and New Haven: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Association with Yale University Press, 2002), 182-207.

role during the rapid changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the same time, the use of historic clothing visibly promoted the character and attributes that Amelia Gummere and other FHA members wanted to preserve and advocated reunification between Hicksite and Orthodox Friends.

Amelia Gummere noted in her 1931 address “Our Past and Our Future,” given at the Two-hundred-and-fiftieth Anniversary Celebration for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting,

This anniversary would be unworthily observed did we confine ourselves to retrospect only. History will always repeat itself in a way; yet every generation must rewrite history. As new facts become available, the old facts must be re-interpreted. Upon this depends, not only progress, but our very existence. Let us then first glance in retrospect at the doings of these Fathers, and then seek to discover the heart of their Quaker message for us today.⁶

The Friends’ Historical Association understood that the purpose of assembling and collecting was to continually enlighten history. Although the collection, Association programs, and *Bulletin* articles suggest that early twentieth century Friends’ were looking backwards to define their identity, they did so knowing that the future depended on it. Without celebrating the past, they did not have a basis for the future of Quakerism.

As contemporary scholars embark on new investigations of Quaker clothing and Amelia Gummere’s work, the impact of the Colonial Revival on the shaping of Quaker identity must be acknowledged. This thinking resulted in the development of conceptions of simplicity, plainness, and distinctive dress as being characteristic of Quaker clothing in the nineteenth century. Specific collections of garments can perpetuate these notions, suggesting certain themes because of their inherent biases.

⁶ Gummere, “Our Past and Our Future,” 57.

However, case studies of demonstrably Quaker garments indicate that accepted notions can be misleading. The Friends' Historical Association suggests the evolution of Philadelphia area Quaker dress in the nineteenth century. The evidence implies that the appearance of Quaker women's clothing was not limited to distinctive Meeting dress, but that it was varied by the woman's status, age, and the occasion for which a garment was worn. These themes are maintained throughout the nineteenth century and are supported by the construction of the FHA garments, which largely parallels that practiced in popular American fashions. Nineteenth-century dress critics praised Quakers as model practitioners of plain dress, which proclaimed their moral and non-worldly concerns to the world. Quakers themselves echoed the sentiments of plain dress. Abby Hopper, a Philadelphia Hicksite woman, wrote in 1829, "I like simplicity. I never yet felt the least disposition to wear gay colors of any kind, or trimming, or ornamental work. I acknowledge I am a little particular about the cut of a garment. Our tastes differ and we cannot all agree as to what is most becoming. Therefore, everyone is to his liking."⁷ Although early twentieth-century Quakers promoted and largely collected one type of Quaker dress as "THE" Quaker dress, nineteenth century Quaker women dressed to their own liking, appearing in a becoming and appropriate manner. Perhaps the fashioning of Quaker identity is as much about how Quakers adapted their dress to the demands of an industrial world as how they adapted their dress to the needs of a post-revolutionary world.

⁷ Abby Hooper, quoted in Caton, 253.

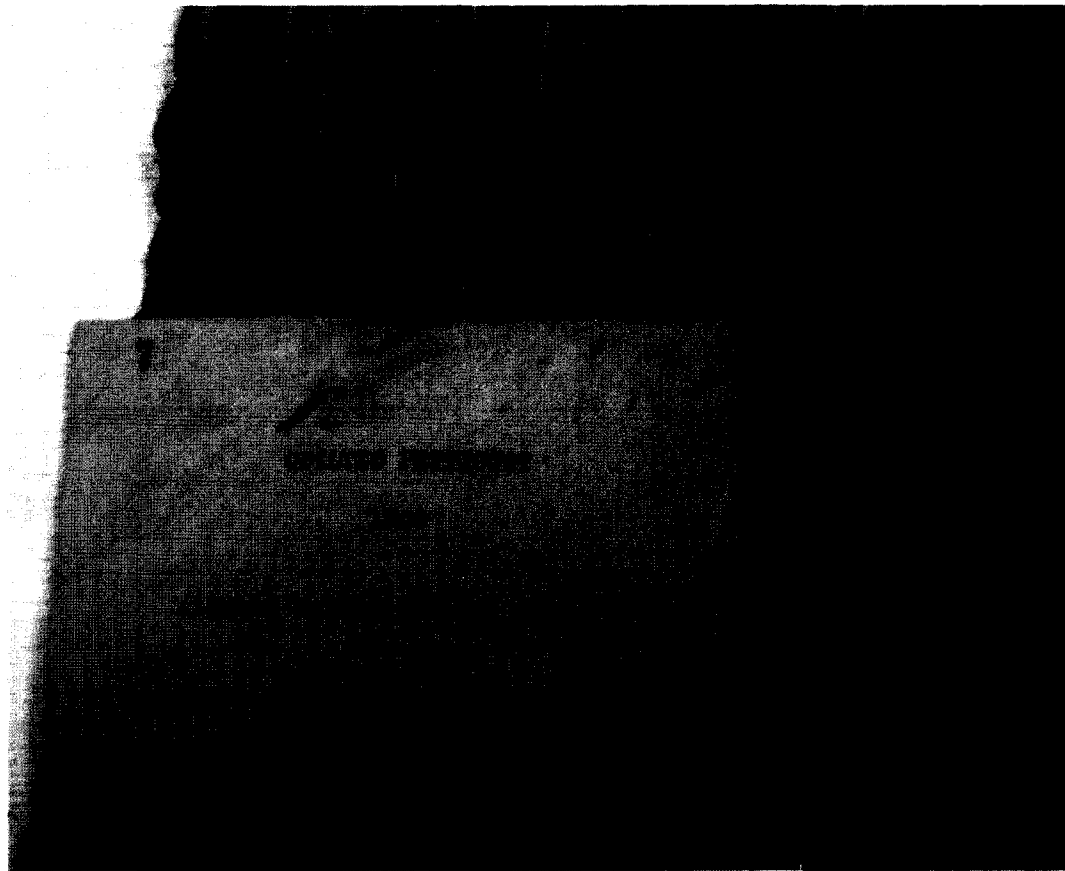


Figure 1: FHA Exhibition label on Quilted Petticoat

(Courtesy, Friends Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia).

Photographed by the author.

This brown and cream striped shot silk quilted petticoat (87.35.881) was exhibited during one of the Friends' Historical Association exhibitions during the 1930s or 1940s when Lydia Flagg Gummere was curator. The back fastening quilted petticoat is lined with brown polished cotton and has a hem circumference of seventy-six inches, suggesting a construction date of 1835-50, and not 1800 as the label indicates. The petticoat probably came from the family of Henry V. Gummere (Lydia's husband), indicated by a graphite inscription on the waistband which reads, "Martha Gummere/ Loaned by Henry V. Gummere/ 1934". Lydia frequently wrote any provenance information inside of donated garments with graphite, linking garments to families without leaving a paper trail.



Figure 2: Early Friends and Others in Period Dress

As Impersonated at the Annual Meeting of Friends' Historical Association Eleventh Month 25, 1929.

The Bulletin of the Friends' Historical Association, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 1930), frontispiece.

Amelia Mott Gummere, seated at the left, impersonates Lucretia Mott. Gummere wears a distinctive silk Meeting dress with an apron fall skirt which holds her kerchiefs in place. The ensemble is completed by a shawl and cap. The full skirt of the dress and the wool hem tape are evident in the photograph. The two women seated to Gummere's left are dressed in similar nineteenth-century clothing: the one on the far right holds a black silk jockey bonnet. Three of the standing women appear attired in textured historic day dresses: the dress of the lady at the far right appears to date to the 1870s, the other two dresses are not clear enough to date accurately. With the exception of the bald gentleman in the back row who appears to wear a nineteenth-century waistcoat, cravat, and coat, the others appear to wear seventeenth and eighteenth century styled costumes. The two women wearing hoods are portraying seventeenth century women. See The Quaker: A Study in Costume, 199.

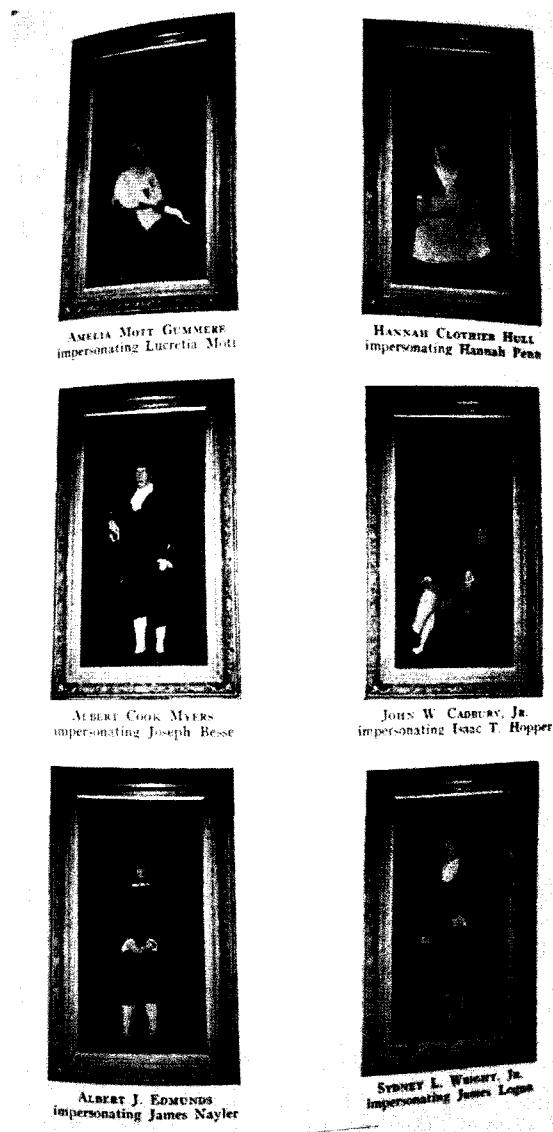


Figure 3: Early Friends in Period Dress

“As Impersonated at the Annual Meeting of Friends’ Historical Association Eleventh month 25, 1929”

The Bulletin of the Friends’ Historical Association, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 1930).

Amelia Mott Gummere, impersonating Lucretia Mott, is pictured in the upper left-hand corner.

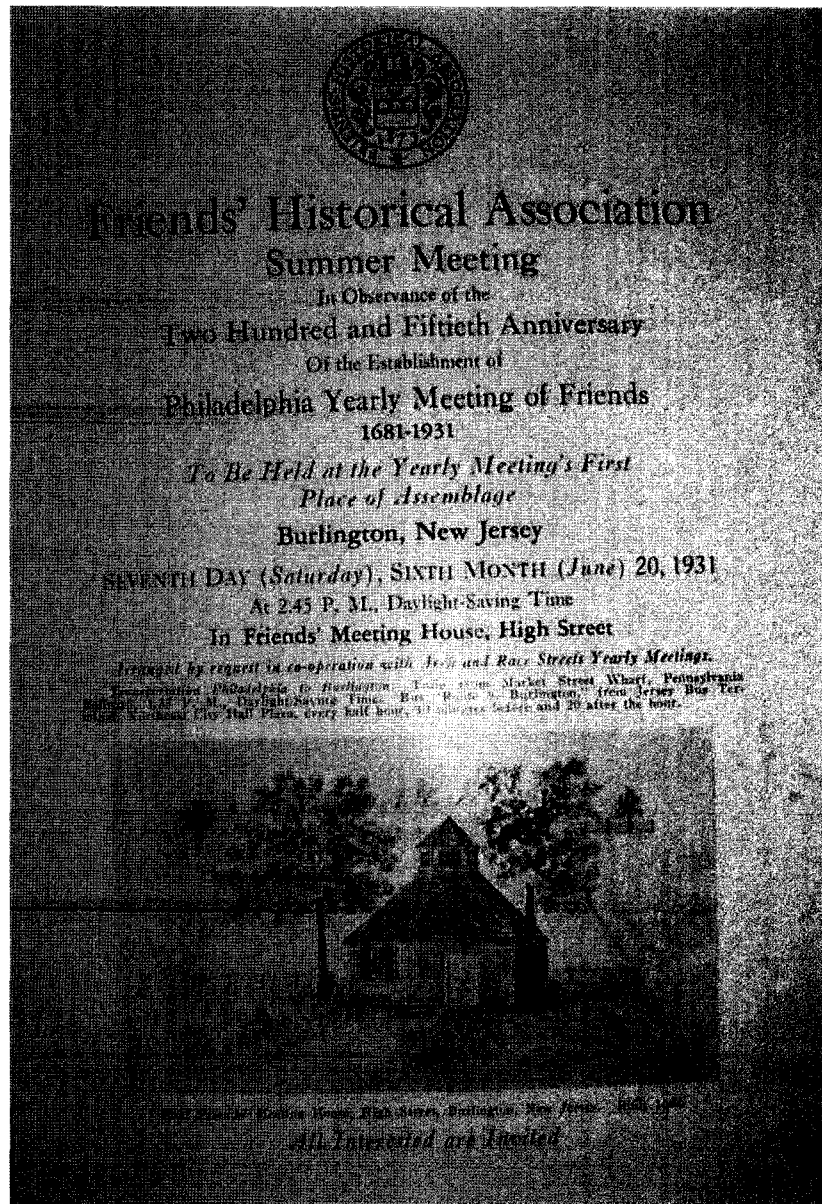


Figure 4: Front Cover FHA 250th Anniversary Program

Un-numbered Program in the Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.3.
 (Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of
 Philadelphia)
 Photographed by the author.

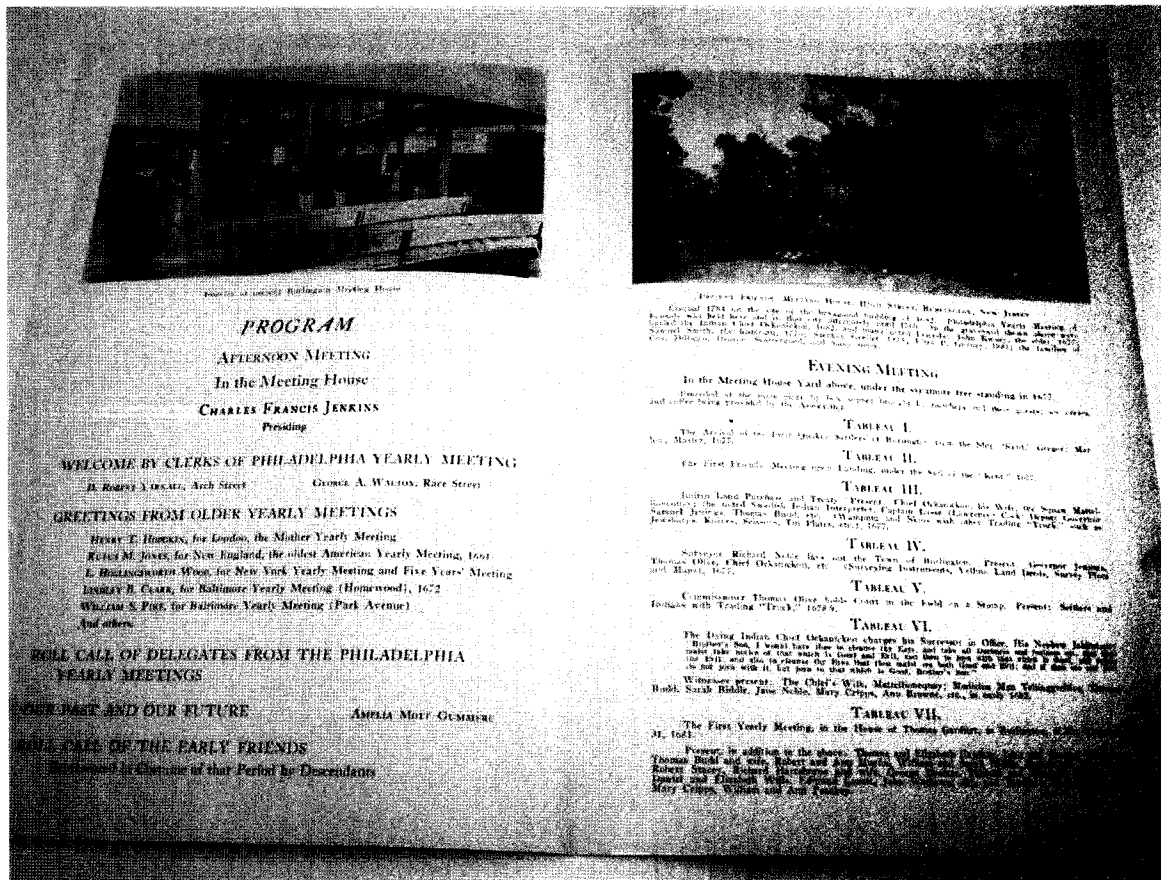


Figure 5: Inside of Program for the FHA 250th Anniversary

Un-numbered Program in the Friends' Historical Association Box HSP.3
(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of
Philadelphia)
Photographed by the author.

The left-hand side illustrates the order of Greetings and Addresses presented at the anniversary celebration. The right-hand side illustrates the order of the tableau scenes, offering an explanation of the setting, props, and characters.



Figure 6: A Group of Friends Who Participated in the Tableaux

Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn, 1931).

The Tableau participants photographed here are dressed in representative seventeenth-century costumes to re-enact the establishment of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting circa 1681. The garments seen on the players are very similar to seventeenth-century Quaker garments illustrated in Amelia Mott Gummere's 1901 The Quaker: A Study in Costume. Gummere served on the Entertainment Committee which arranged the tableaux.



Figure 7: Commissioner Thomas Olive holds Court in the Field on a Stump

“Present; Settlers and Indians with Trading ‘Truck,’ 1678-9.”
The Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn, 1931).

The trading truck used in the pageant is listed in Amelia Mott Gummere’s speech “Our Past and Our Future,” which preceded the tableaux at the anniversary celebration. Gummere’s speech told the history of Philadelphia area Quakerism, establishing the plot for the scenes depicted during the tableaux. For this scene, she relays that Quaker settlers to the Delaware were told to bring many items to trade with the native people: “30 matchcoats, 20 guns, 30 kettles, and one great one, 30 pair hose, 20 fathom duffeld, 30 petticoats, 30 narrow hoes, 30 bars of lead, 15 small barrels of powder, 70 knives, 30 Indian axes, 70 combs, 60 pair tobacco tongs, 60 scissors, 69 tinshaw looking glasses, 120 awl blades, 120 fish hooks, 2 grasps red paint, 120 needles, 60 tobacco boxes, 120 pipes, 200 bless, 100 jewsharps, 6 anchors of rum.” See Gummere, “Our Past and Our Future,” *Bulletin of Friends’ Historical Association*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn, 1931): 58.

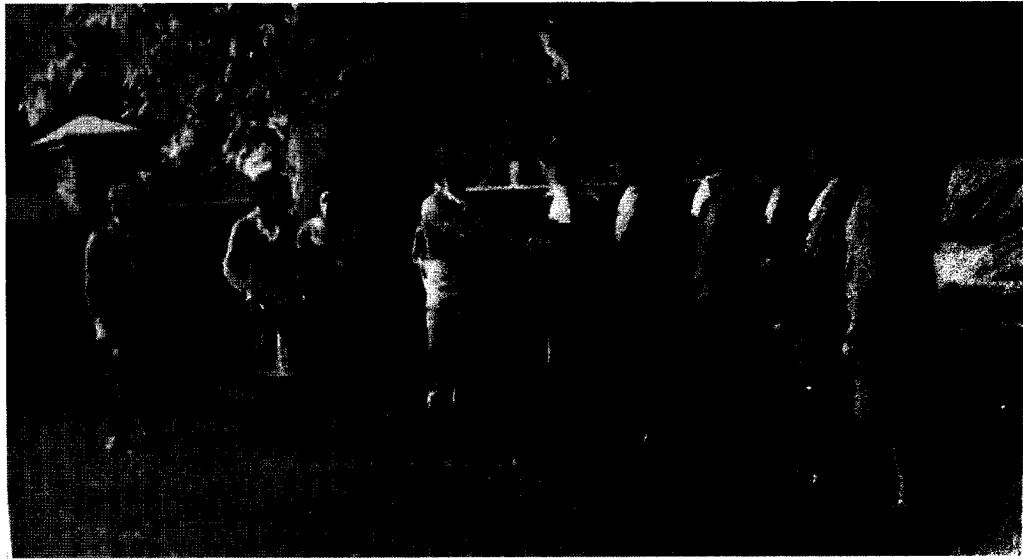


Figure 8: Quaker Settlers, 1677 and Quaker Oats Man

The Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn, 1931).

The original caption reads "The arrival of the first Quaker settlers of Burlington from the ship 'Kent,' Gregory Marlow, Master, 1677. Chief Ockanickon greeting Deputy Governor Jenings." The clothing of the men portraying seventeenth-century friends closely resembles that of the early twentieth-century Quaker Oats Man.

Quaker Oats is without a peer. It stands alone, pure, clean, wholesome, economical.



The best and cheapest food you can eat

Regular size package 10¢ except in the South and the West.
Also sold in large Family package and in tins. Ask your grocer.

The Quaker Oats Company
CHICAGO

"Eat More Quaker Oats" Advertisement, *Woman's Home Companion* (September 1909): 55. (Courtesy, Personal Collection of Emily C. Cline)

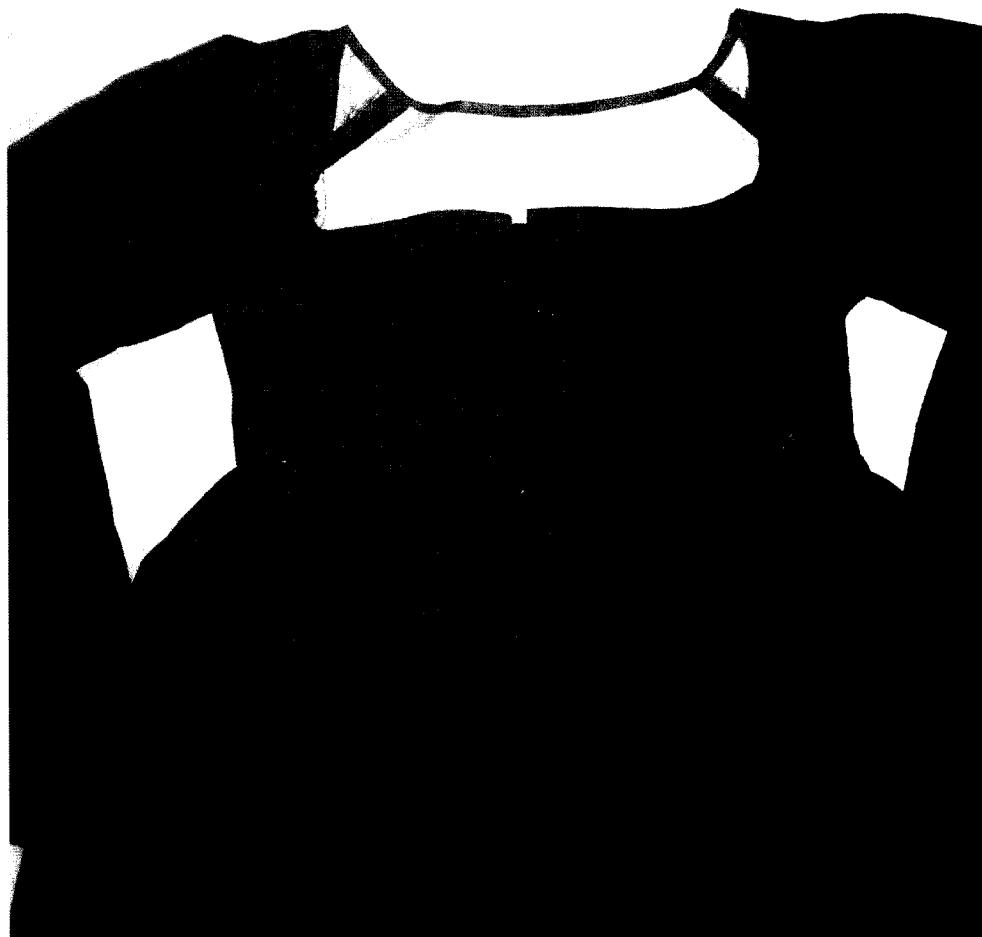


Figure 9: Rebecca Justice's Dress Bodice (98.38.1a), c.1803

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photograph by the author.

This photograph illustrates the bodice and the top of the apron fall skirt on Justice's gown. Note the square neckline which is finished in an eighteenth-century manner with the raw edges of the silk and lining folded in toward one another and stitched with an underhand hem stitch. The strip of brown fabric seen inside the center front is a twentieth-century addition.



Figure 10: Sarah Jones Gibson's Meeting Dress (81.18.2), 1825-1840

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)
Photograph by the author.

Note the voluminous skirt and wool twill hem binding. The sleeves retain cotton cuffs based into the wrist.



Figure 11: Margaret Pryor Bacon's Meeting Dress (84.21.3a), 1825-1840

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photograph by the author.

This photograph illustrates the right proper half of the bodice as it might appear when the dress is worn. The silk on the left side of the bodice is folded back to display the lining. In wearing, the linings would be pinned together, then the silks folded over and pinned, with the neckline drawstrings tied. Finally, the apron fall of the skirt would be folded up and tied around the waist.

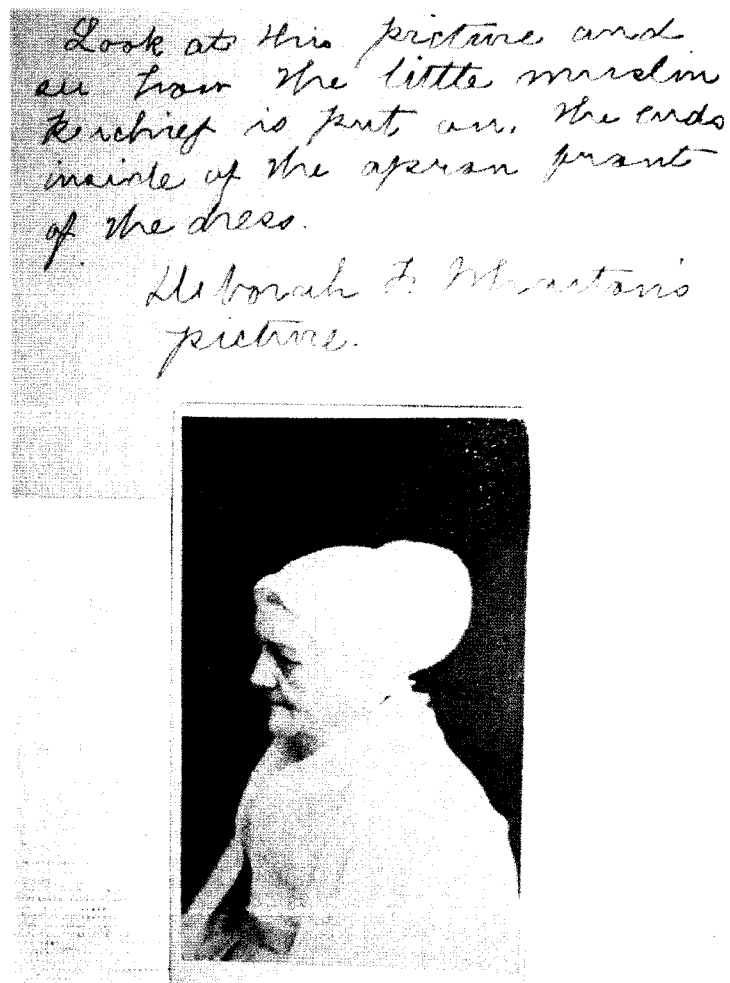


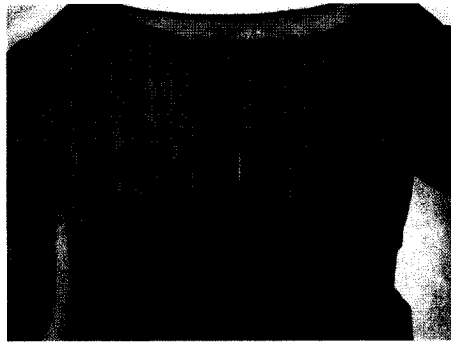
Figure 12: Deborah Fisher Wharton's Photograph and Accompanying Note

Atwater Kent Museum Object File 90.3.

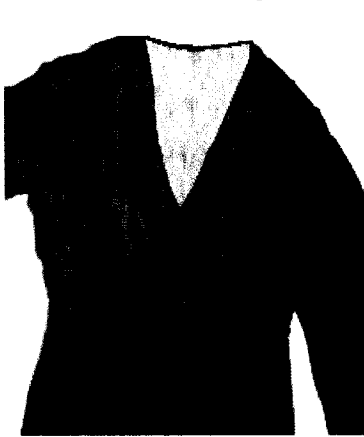
(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

It is likely that this is Wharton's Meeting dress as described in Chapter five of this thesis.

With the dress, Wharton wears a muslin "Quaker Cap," a kerchief, and a shawl. The accompanying note documents the method of wearing an apron fall dress with kerchiefs: "Look at this picture and see how the little muslin kerchief is put on, the ends inside the apron front of the dress." Wharton's use of this dress in her old age attests to the use of apron fall dresses into the mid-nineteenth century, suggesting that the style was popular among some older women whom were accustomed to this style since youth.



Elizabeth Long Nicholson's Olive Silk Meeting Dress (87.35.848), 1825-1840



Black Silk Meeting Dress (87.35.122), 1840-1860

Figure 13: Silhouettes of Dresses 1825-1860

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)
Photographs by the author.

This Figure illustrates the differences between the silhouette fashionable in from 1825-1840 and from 1840-1860. The first two photographs have a horizontally scooped neckline, with shoulders and armholes set back, slightly gathered sleeves, and a slightly raised waistline. The second pair of photographs illustrates characteristics of the silhouette found in mid-nineteenth-century dresses: sloping shoulders, almost-natural waistline, voluminous skirt, and long sleeves slightly gathered into the armholes.



Figure 14: Meeting Dress (87.35.882), 1840-1860

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photograph by the author.

This dress displays the typical characteristics of a mid-nineteenth-century Meeting Dress in the FHA collection. The fitted bodice culminates in a voluminous skirt with a faced hem. The stitch line for this facing is visible several inches p from the actual hemline. The brown polished cotton facing shows just to the left of the photograph's center.

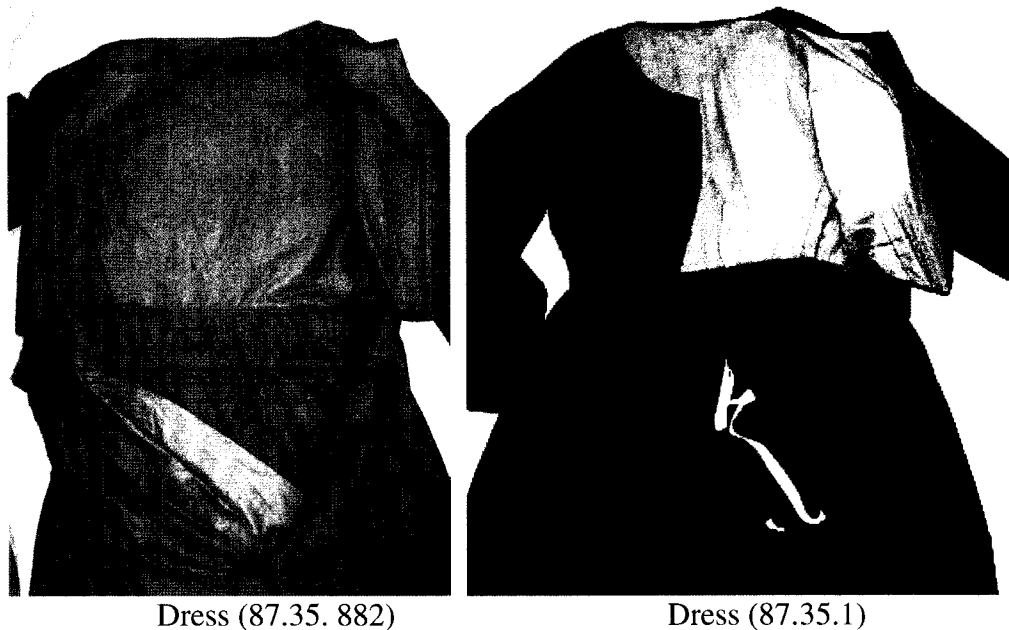


Figure 15: Meeting Dress Bodice Construction, 1840-1860

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia.

Photographs by the author.

Construction varies within each dated grouping of FHA dresses. This Figure illustrates two of the construction methods most commonly found on Meeting dresses dating 1840-1860. The first photograph shows the interior of a dress bodice with a lining cut as a back and two fronts. The curved lines of stitching seen at the back lining of the bodice represent the lines where silk fabric is stitched to the back of the bodice. The boned darts and hook-and-eye fastening are visible on the right of the open bodice. The beige fabric seen within the skirt is the pocket. The second photograph features an apron fall skirt (folded down in the image) with white cotton replacement tapes. This image illustrates the right proper bodice as it would appear when worn. The left side of the bodice is folded open to reveal the seaming and the bust pad. The bust pad helps to fill out the space between the uplift of the bust from the corset and the shoulder. With this construction, the silk and lining fabric are treated as one, which accounts for the appearance of the visible seam line.

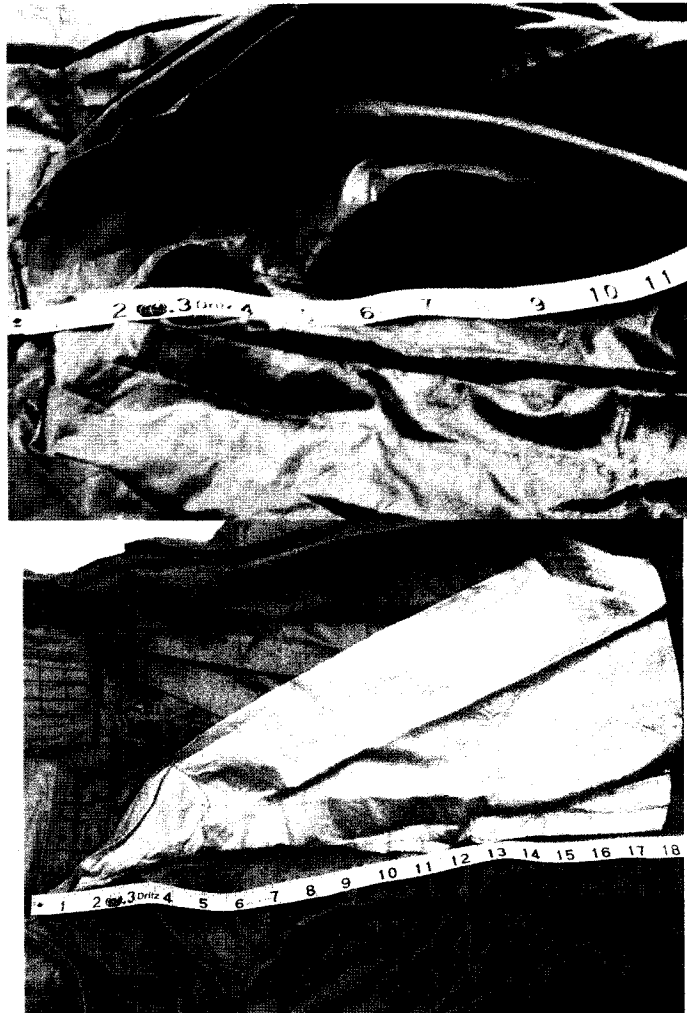


Figure 16: Meeting Dress (87.35.882) Pocket

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

The pocket in dress 87.35.882 is a singular example among the dresses in the FHA collection. The upper photograph illustrates the pockets as they appear on the right hip of the dress (laid horizontally) from the outside. The lower photograph illustrates the pocket from inside the skirt. The two pockets are created from one large pocket: the watch pocket is sewn through the top of the large pocket to a width of 2.75 inches and a length of 4 inches. The rest of the skirt pocket comprises the remaining 14 inch length.

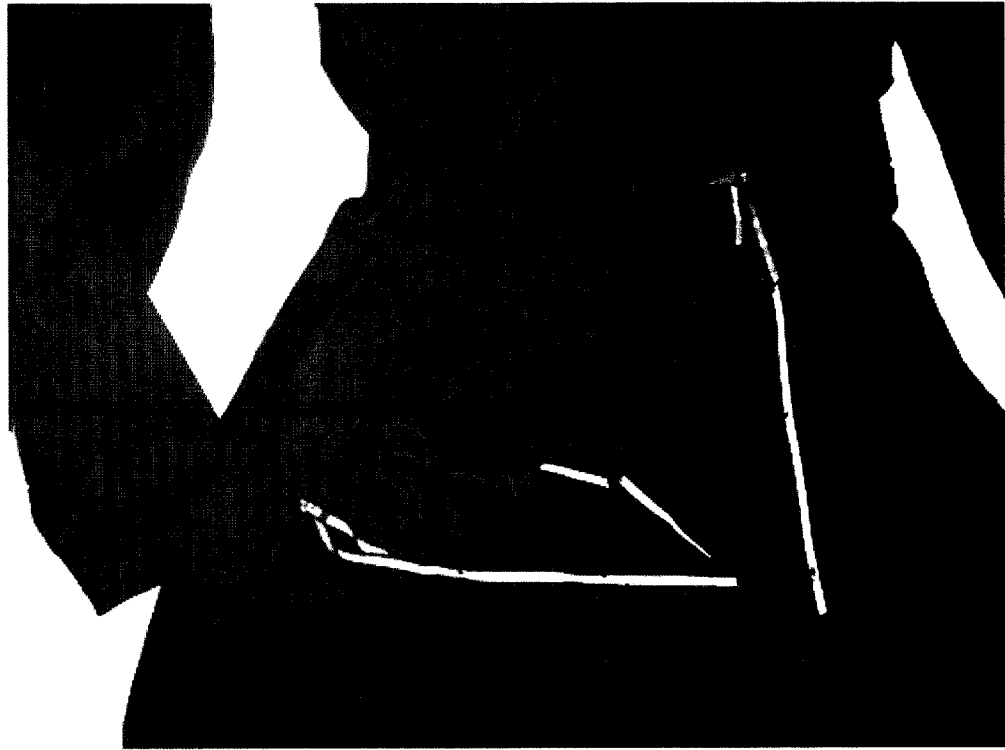
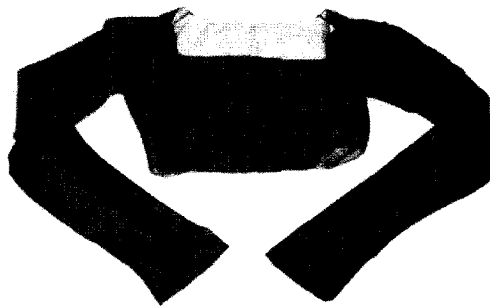


Figure 17: Black Silk Meeting Dress (87.35.1170) Waistline, 1840-1860

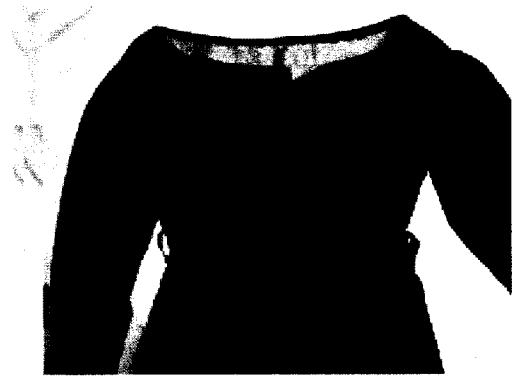
(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

This photograph illustrates the manner in which most of the FHA Meeting dresses dating from 1840-1860 fasten at the waist. The front of the skirt is typically pleated to a separate waistband sewn from the right side seam to the area near the right bodice darts. The remainder of the waistband is left free to flap over the left hip where the skirt fastens with hooks and eyes. The brown fabric seen near the center front of the gown is a twentieth-century addition.



Sarah West Pennock's Drab Silk Bodice (87.35.257)
1800-1820



Olive Green Silk Dress(87.35.125)
1825-1840



Black Silk/Wool Blend Dress (87.35.549)
1840-1860



Black Silk Satin Dress (87.35.739)
1880-1890

Figure 18: Chronology of FHA Meeting Dress Bodices

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

The first photograph (upper left) illustrates the common appearance of FHA Meeting dress bodices from 1800-1820. This bodice was originally part of a dress, the apron fall skirt of which was later removed. The second photograph illustrates one bodice type common during the 1820s and 1830s; of interest are the wide neckline and shaped sleeves. Note that the waist of this dress is longer than the one prior. Waist lines continually lengthen throughout the remainder of most of the century as seen in the lower two examples.

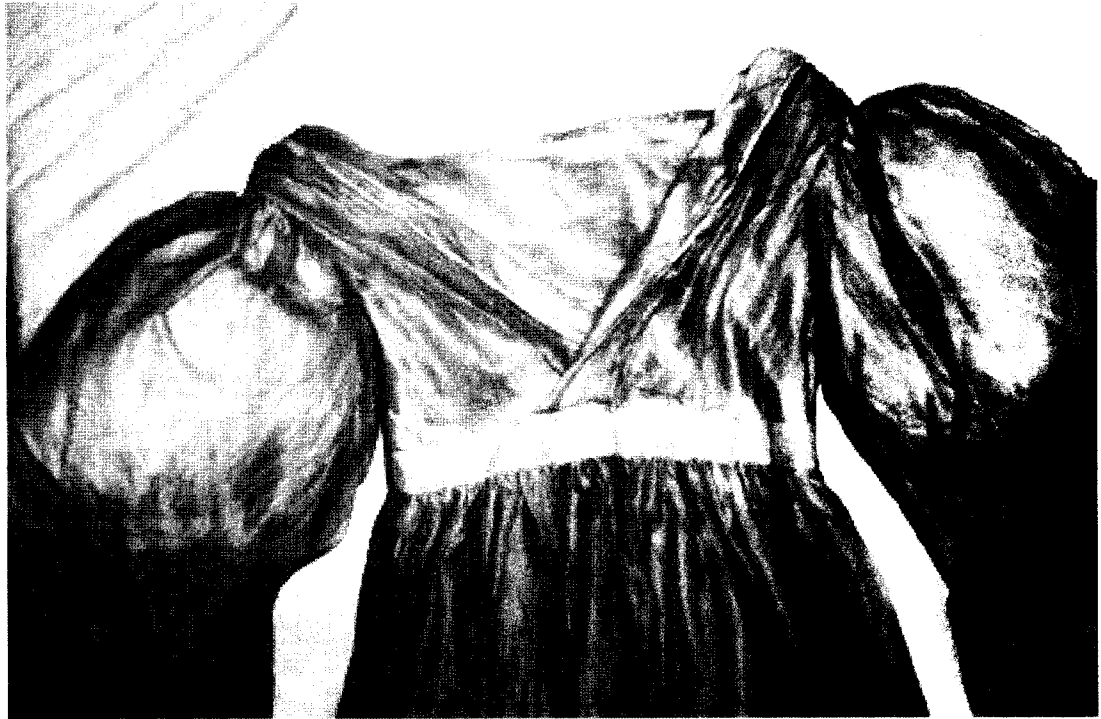
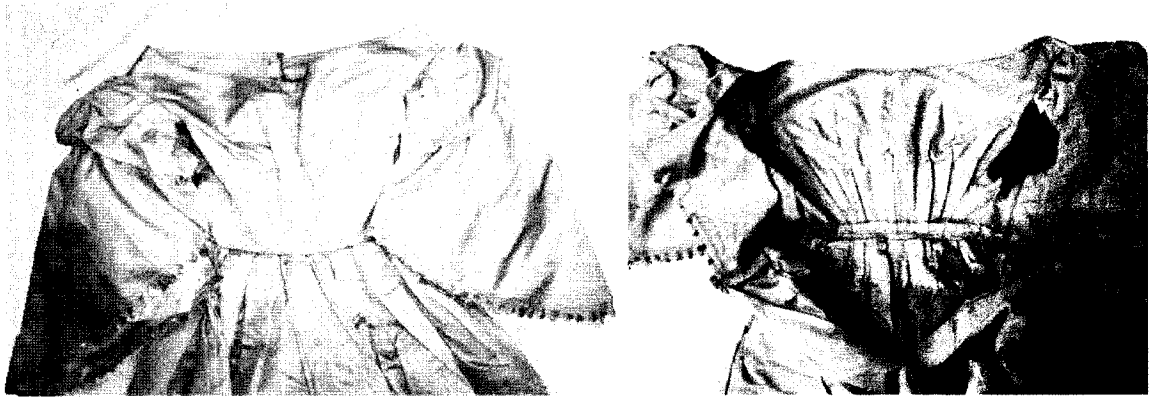


Figure 19: Elizabeth Dutton's 1840 Wedding Gown (87.35.854)

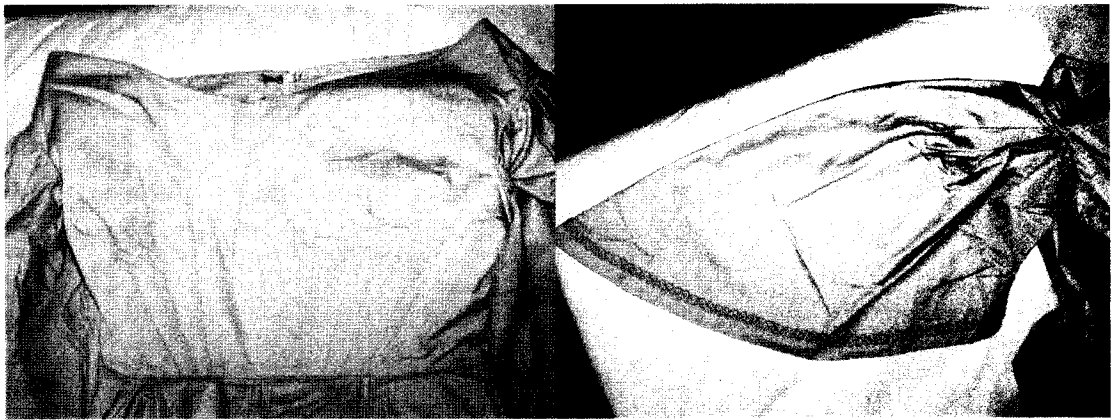
(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photograph by the author.

Dutton's dress bodice displays the cross-over front and large leg-of-mutton sleeves characteristic of high fashion dresses in the early 1830s. The dress would have been worn over an under-dress.



Margaret Ely Rhoad's 1860 Wedding Dress (87.25.845)



Martha Cernby Morris's 1861 Wedding Dress (89.80.1a)

Figure 20: Rhoads and Morris Wedding Dresses, 1860 and 1861

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

The top photographs are of Margaret Rhoads' bodice. The wide neckline, pagoda sleeves with jockey puffs, and the double box pleated skirt are typical of formal gowns in the 1860s. The interior of the dress illustrates the darted and boned effect used to achieve a good fit. The bottom photographs feature the Morris wedding dress. Visible along the bottom edge of the left-hand are the triple box pleats of the skirt. The right photograph illustrates the sleeve and trim. Note the similar bodice and sleeve shapes between the two dresses. Both are also back fastening.



Figure 21: Rachel Love Evan's 1867 Wedding Skirt (84.21.12)

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)
Photographs by the author.

The upper left photo illustrates the current appearance of the skirt. Alterations, in the form of a lace overskirt, can be viewed in the skirt's seam allowances. The provenance information is written inside the waistband of the dress, illustrated in the lower photograph.

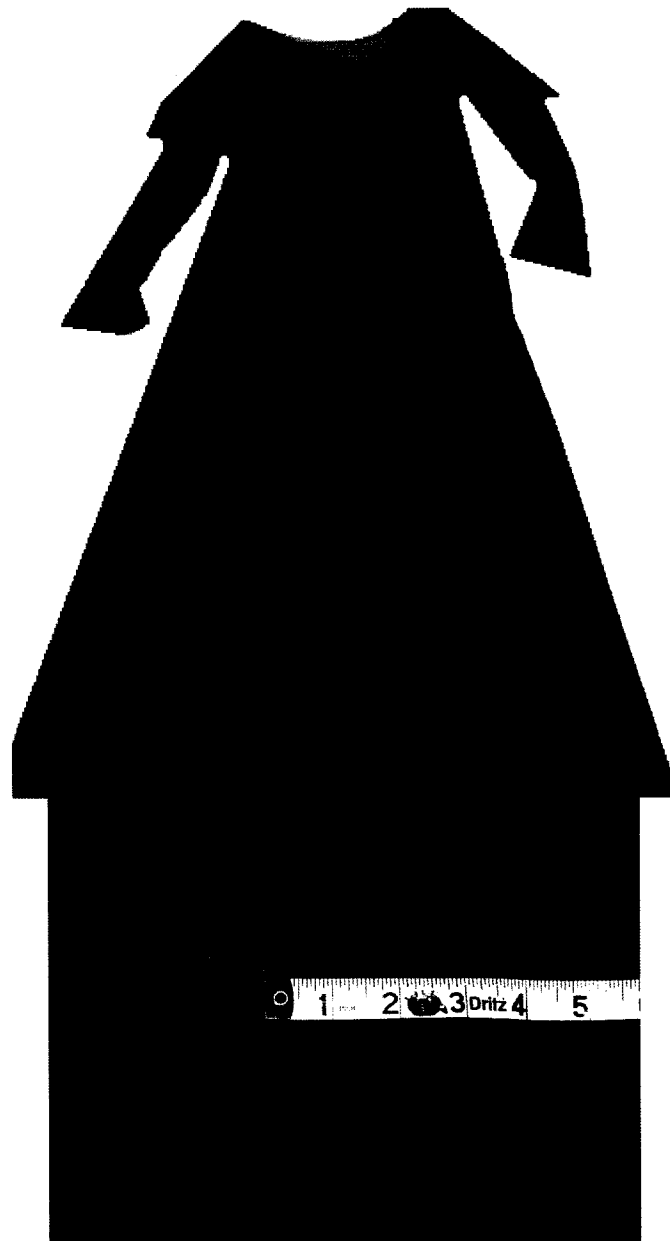


Figure 22: Green Calico Day Dress (91.68.722), 1800-1820
Friends Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum.
Photographs by the author.

The upper photograph illustrate the entire dress, while the lower photograph illustrates the scale of the fabric.

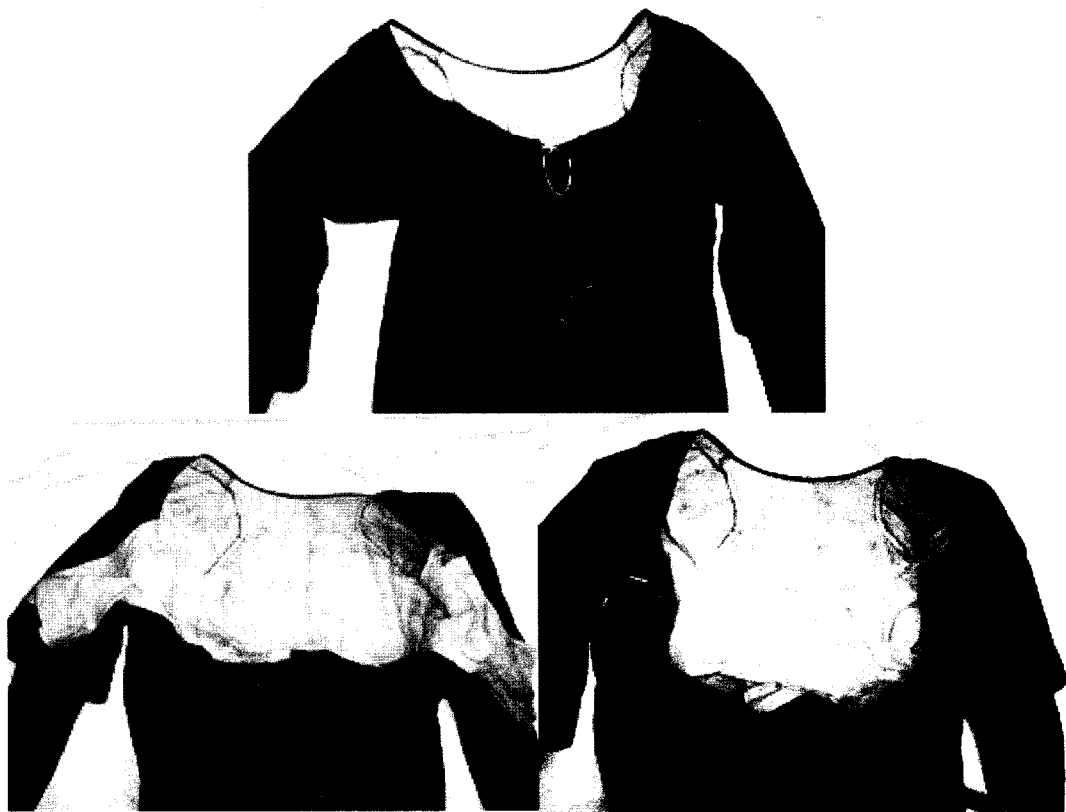


Figure 23: Construction of Green Calico Day Dress Bodice (91.68.722)

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

This series of photographs illustrates the appearance of the bodice when fastened, with the lining open, and with the lining fastened. This method of construction is popular in many examples of early nineteenth century “empire-waisted” dresses. The lining flaps fasten with pins over the bust and then the calico fabric fastens over the lining.



White Muslin Day Dress (87.35.1172), 1815-1825



White Muslin Day Dress (87.35.1171), 1815-1825

Figure 24: White Muslin Day Dresses, 1815-1820

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

The top illustrations show the back fastening of the bodice and the shape of the sleeve. The lower photograph shows the corded bands which help achieve the conical silhouette of skirts during this time.

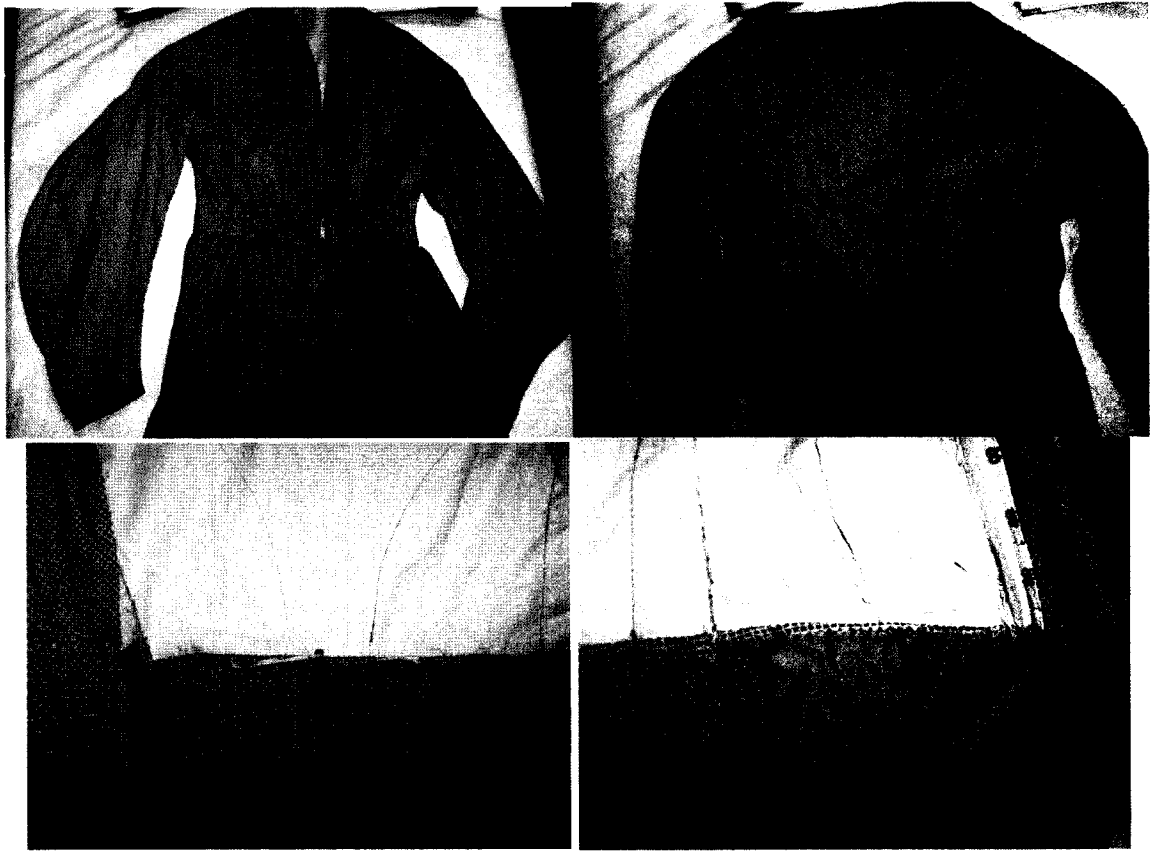


Figure 25: Calico Day Dress (87.35.347), 1850-1865

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

Note the shaping of the sleeves, shoulders, and the back seaming, elements common in mainstream day dress from this time range. The lower photographs illustrate the turned and densely pleated fabric which makes up the skirt of the dress. The second photograph illustrates the watch pocket set into the lower left edge of the bodice.

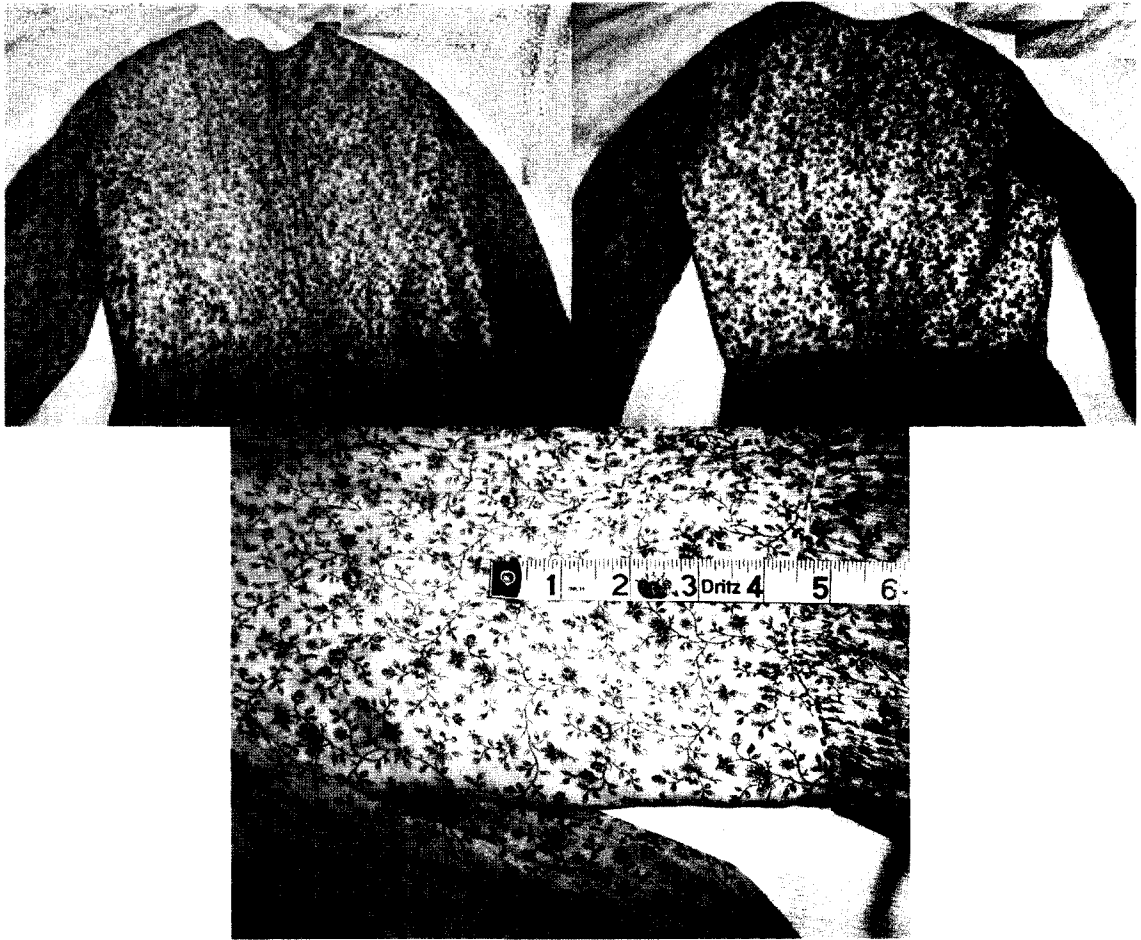


Figure 26: Sheer Cotton Printed Day Dress (87.35.205), 1850-1865

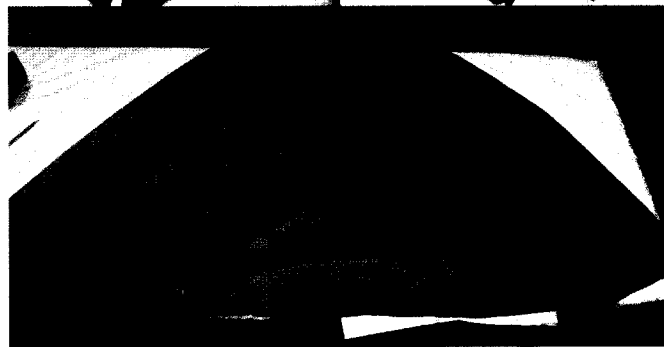
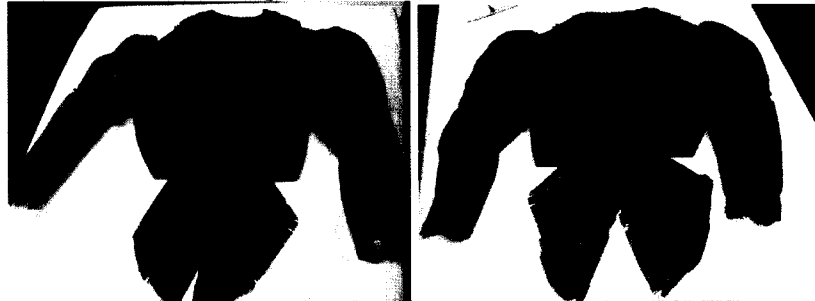
(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

The upper illustrations feature the front and back of the bodice, which parallels the fashionable shape. The lower illustration focuses on the modest scale of the print.



Green and White Striped Silk Day Dress (91.68.716), 1855-1865



Green Silk Day Dress (87.35.856 a, b) 1865-1868

Figure 27: Silk Day Dresses, 1850-1868

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

The upper photograph illustrates the bodice of a striped green and white silk day dress with pagoda sleeves and a waist peplum. The next two photographs illustrate the front and back of the bodice, while the lower photo illustrates the skirt. Gored skirts gained popularity around 1865 as hoop skirts collapsed. The shape of this skirt suggests it could have been worn over a small elliptical hoop or simply over petticoats.



Figure 28: Brown Velvet Day Dress and Overskirt (91.68.60a, b), 1868-1872

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)
Photographs by the author.

The dress is in two pieces: the dress and the overskirt. The bodice and skirt of the dress are finished to a degree that indicates they could have been worn without the overskirt. The overskirt would have been used to “dress up” the ensemble for more formal affairs.



Figure 29: Brown Silk Twill Dress (87.35.256)

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

This dress displays the voluminous skirt, tight fitting sleeves, and high neckline of late nineteenth-century day dresses in the FHA collection. The dress is not overly distinguished as "Quaker," instead displaying attributes popular among non-Quaker Protestant women during this era.

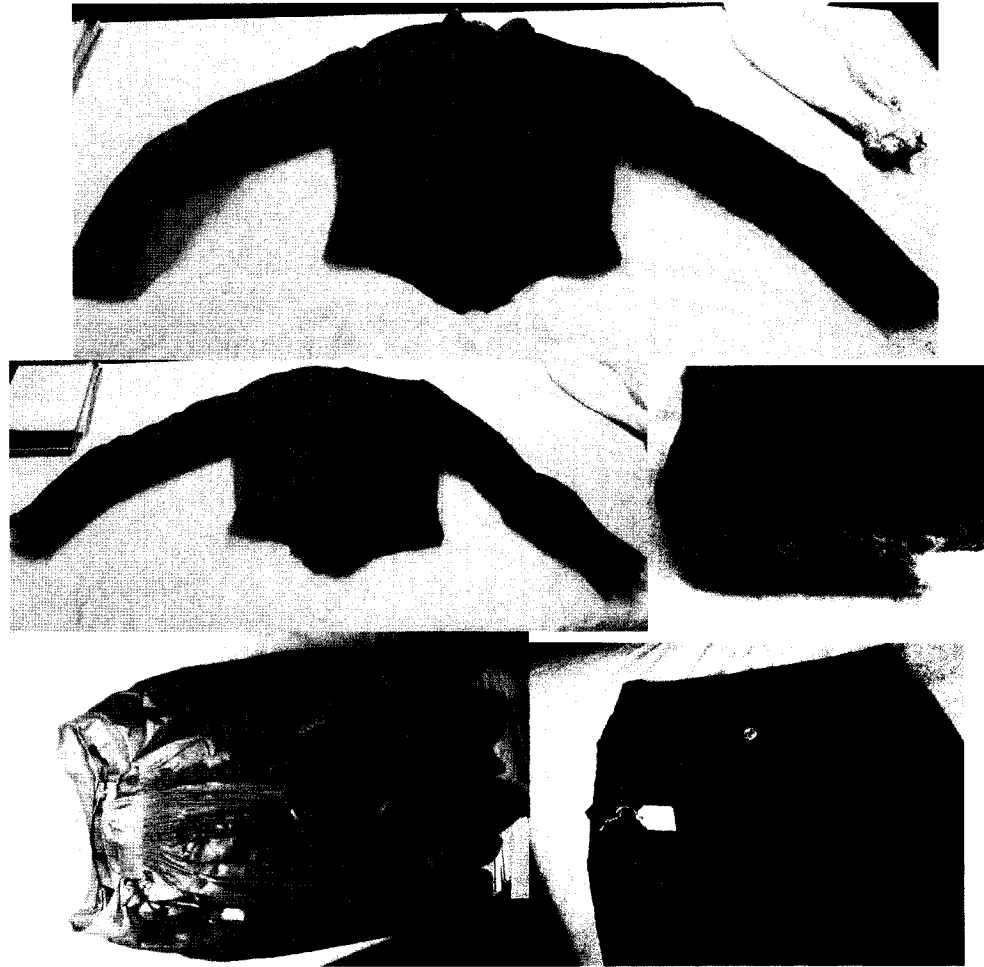


Figure 30: Cocoa Twill Dress (87.35.853)

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

This silk twill bodice displays the false tucked front and fitted sleeves seen in mainstream fashion during the late 1880s. The collar and cuffs of this bodice are trimmed with pleated sheer silk fabric which has nearly disintegrated, seen in the third photograph. The lower photos illustrate the back of the skirt, densely gathered to accommodate a small bustle. The second skirt photograph illustrates the underlining that provides additional fullness at the back.

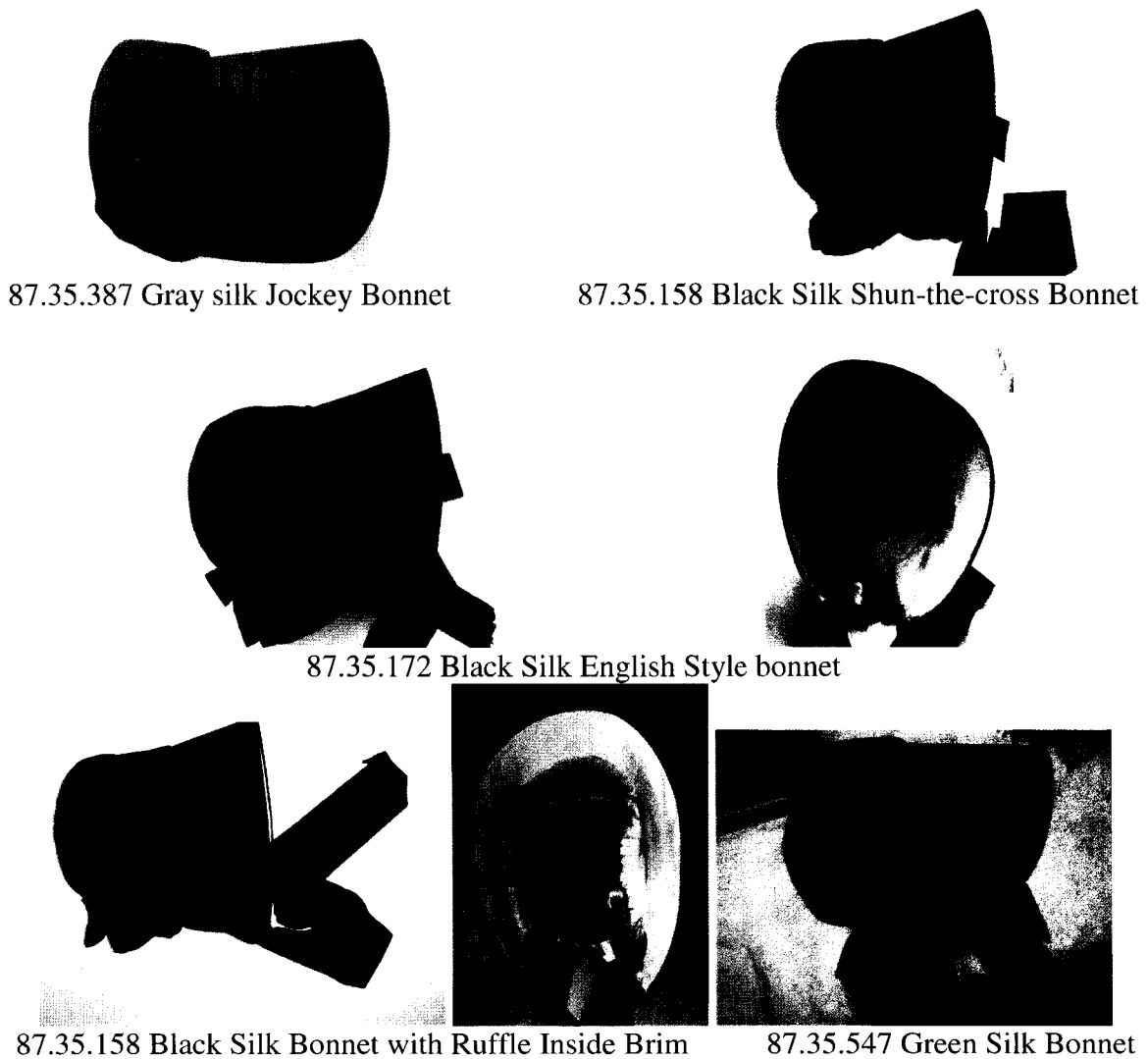
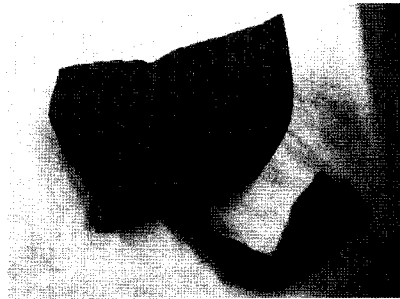


Figure 31: Selected FHA Meeting Bonnet Styles

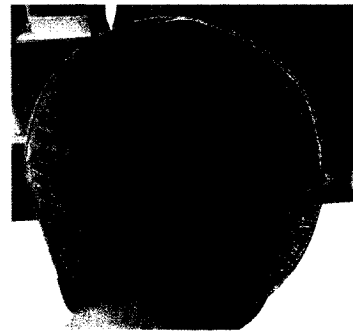
(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

These photographs reveal the variety found within FHA collection Meeting Bonnet styles. The bonnets on the bottom row have experienced some flattening on the crown, obstructing the “English” or “shun-the cross” shape. The bonnet on the left retains the pleated capette inside the brim.



87.35.152 Drawn Silk Poke Bonnet, 1815-1838



87.35.302 Brown Drawn Bonnet, 1840-1860



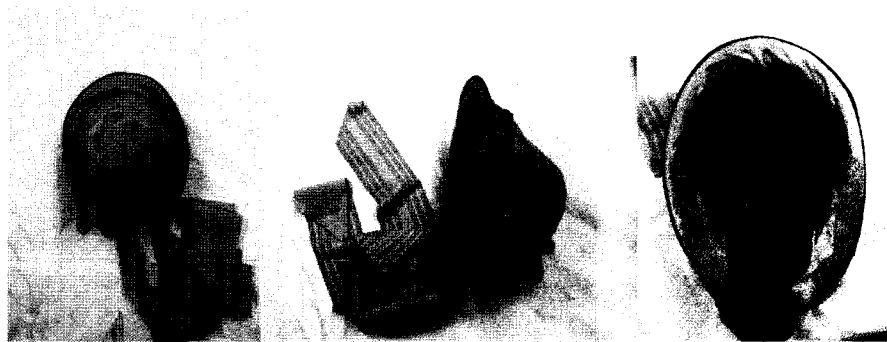
87.35.982 Silk Drawn Bonnet, 1850-1860

Figure 32: Selected Silk Drawn Bonnets

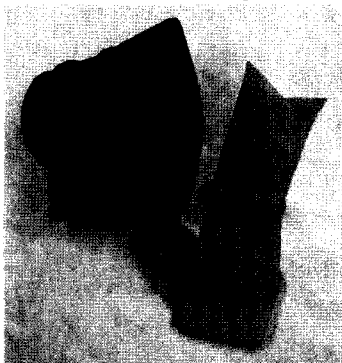
(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photographs by the author.

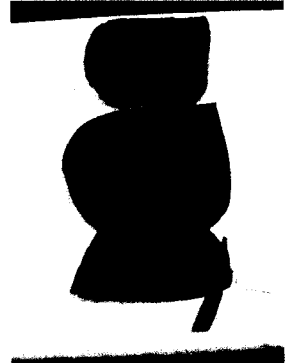
These bonnets showcase some of the styles of drawn bonnets in the FHA collection. The first bonnet is made by drawing cane through channels stitched in the silk fabric. The other two bonnets utilize drawn cane over a buckram foundation (visible in the middle photograph). The central bonnet may be a type of Meeting bonnet adopted by some women in the final half of the nineteenth century. Note the gathered lining in Bonnet 87.35.982.



90.3.2 Beige Corduroy Spoon Bonnet with Black Velvet trim, 1850-1860



90.3.7.1 Straw Bonnet with Black Velvet Trim
1850-1860



87.35.841 a, b Brown Felt Bonnet and Matching Green Silk Bonnet Cover
1840-1848

Figure 33: Non-Meeting Bonnets in the FHA Collection

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)
Photographs by the author

These images display the shapes and materials found in non-Meeting bonnets in the FHA collection. The first bonnet retains the attached capette made from black velvet, silk gauze, and lace. The second bonnet has an attached straw skirt: straw bonnet skirts are frequently made from fabric. The final felt bonnet would have been for winter use. The bonnet retains the matching bonnet cover. In *The Quaker: A Study in Costume*, Gummere notes that bonnets were frequently accompanied by quilted "rainy day" cover. See Gummere, 222-23. Many of these covers, ranging from checked shot silk to drab silk, survive in the FHA collection.

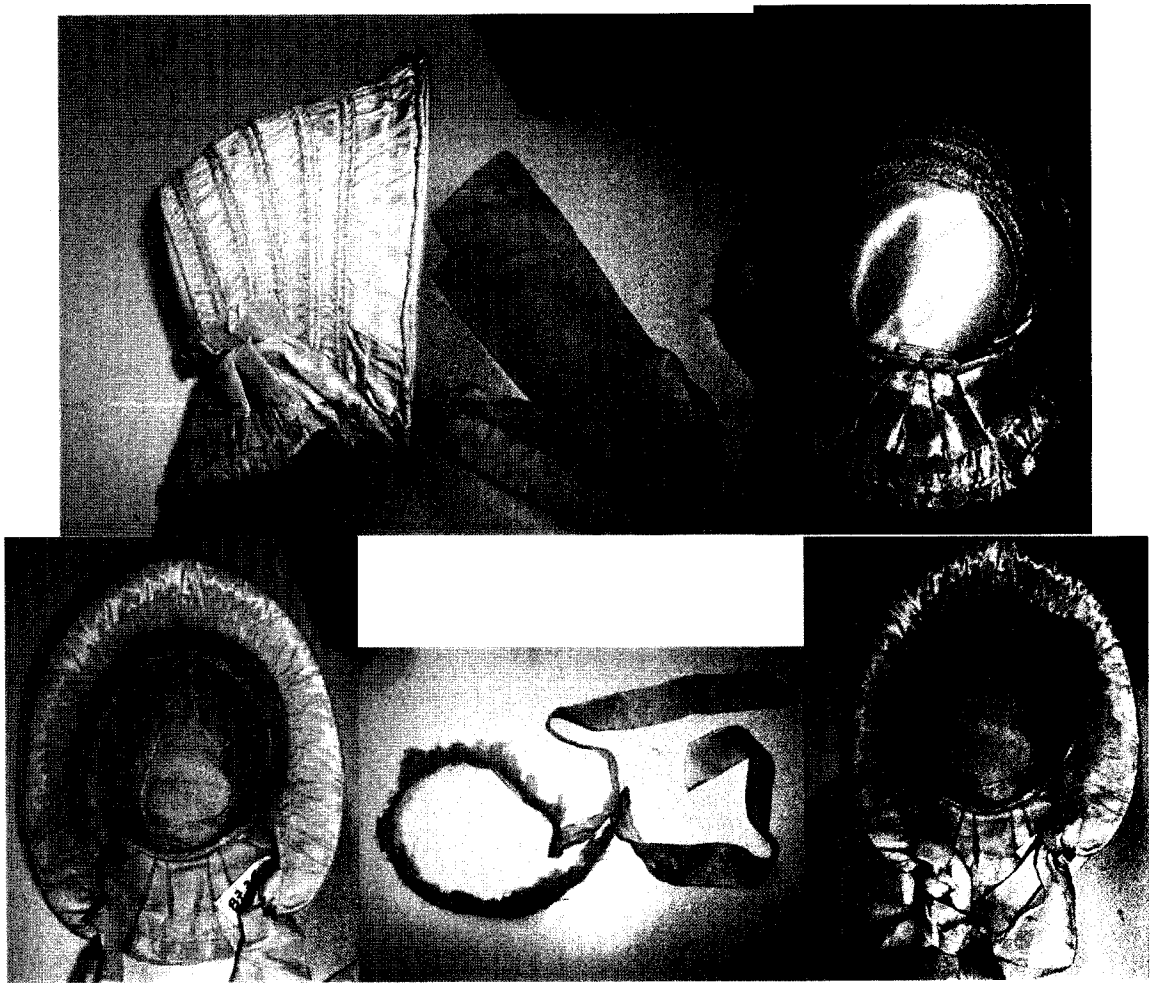


Figure 34: Margaret Ely Rhoads Wedding Bonnet, 1860 (87.35.145)

(Courtesy, Friends' Historical Association Collection, Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia)

Photograph by the author.

Margaret Ely's Wedding Bonnet is made of drawn silk taffeta over buckram. The upper photographs illustrate the side profile and back of the bonnet. The lower row of photographs illustrates the interior of the bonnet, the capette, and the capette placed inside the bonnet as it might have appeared when originally worn.

APPENDIX A:

THE QUAKER: A STUDY IN COSTUME

EARLY PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Amelia Mott Gummere, ever intent on record keeping, carefully documented the correspondence between herself and the Ferris and Leach Company that published The Quaker: A Study in Costume in 1901.¹ Agreements between both parties indicate that the first printing of one-thousand books cost \$1300.00 with each additional one-thousand books cost \$450.00 in 1901. Ferris and Leach offered two bindings which determined the selling price for each copy: cloth bound for \$4.50 and \$7.50 for a half-morocco binding. They agreed to print the first edition with a forward contribution of \$500.00 from Amelia Mott Gummere.

Amelia's records indicate that reviews of the text ran in the New York Times and the Philadelphia Times prior to July 21, 1902. By July 14, 1903, Ferris and Leach wrote to report slow sales. Displeased with the results, Amelia's husband, Professor Francis B. Gummere wrote to the publishers inquiring about sales. Ferris and Leach responded noting that five-hundred-sixty-four copies had been sent out, of which one-hundred-fifty-seven were returned and forty-one, press and complimentary copies, bringing the total sales to three-hundred-and-sixty-six.²

Sales remained slow over the next few years, despite special advertisements and displays in stores during the Christmas season. On December 20, 1906, Alfred Ferris wrote to Amelia with an idea for increasing sales. He notes, "I have thought that possibly

¹ Publishing records are included in the Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, 1055 Box D, Folder "Letters to Ferris and Leach," Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

² Ferris and Leach to Professor Gummere, January 22, 1904, Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, 1055 Box D, Folder "Letters to Ferris and Leach," Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

a circular sent direct to the members of Friends Historical Society might sell several copies. I expect to try this some time.”³ On November 6, 1907, the company wrote announcing that the circulars to the Society were prepared and awaiting Amelia’s list of addresses. Amelia evidently responded with too many addresses, for on November 20, 1907 she received another letter from Ferris stating “I have yours of the 7th inst. concerning the names to which to mail our new circular. I understood you had a list of names personally known to you as people who would be likely to purchase the book and who would not be reached by advertising in the Friends’ papers. It is entirely too costly for me to address the Blue Book list of some 15,000 names, and in addition most of these have already been covered in one way or another.”⁴ Advertising evidently paid off, for on January 10, 1908 both parties decided to print another edition. By July 16, 1908 a letter from Ferris indicates that a total of six-hundred-eighty-nine copies sold from both editions.⁵ Gummere’s records suggest that primary book sales were to Quaker individuals, since copy sales increase when circulars are mailed to Friends Historical Society members.

³ Alfred Ferris to Amelia Mott Gummere, December 20, 1906, Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, 1055 Box D, Folder “Letters to Ferris and Leach,” Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

⁴ Alfred Ferris to Amelia Mott Gummere, November 20, 1907, Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, 1055 Box D, Folder “Letters to Ferris and Leach,” Quaker Collection: Haverford College.

⁵ Alfred Ferris to Amelia Mott Gummere, July 16, 1908, Amelia Mott Gummere Collection, 1055 Box D, Folder “Letters to Ferris and Leach,” Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

APPENDIX B:

TRANSCRIPT OF AMELIA MOTT GUMMERE'S

“COOPERATION IN COLLECTING HISTORICAL MATERIAL”

“Cooperation in Collecting Historical Material.” (*Bulletin of the Friends Historical Society*, Vol. 11, No.1 (Spring, 1922): 34-35.

By Amelia M. Gummere

Under the new President of Swarthmore College, Dr. Frank Aydelotte, an effort is being made to revive interest in the Quaker collections of historical character, now housed at that college. Dr. J. Russell Hayes, Librarian, has appealed to Friends generally for old relics, family papers, diaries, journals and letters which are valuable historical records of the manners and customs of our Quaker ancestors.

This paper long since made such an appeal to its readers and to Friends generally. The subject is now most timely, in a period of transition like the present, when, if not actually as migratory as much of our population is growing to be, many persons of Friendly affiliations are yet on the move, either to apartment houses, or to other sections of this great country. A general sentiment that such things are “in the way” has often been heard. We would point out that there are several places where such possessions would be joyfully received, and carefully guarded, until the time when the historian of a later day has need of them. Moreover, it is often the most insignificant thing which will prove to be of greatest value, as when a tiny post office receipt at a New Jersey town, in the days of Benjamin Franklin, located a well known Tory, then in hiding, for the late historian Moses Coit Tyler. Cooking receipts, doctors’ prescriptions- everything has its value, and if not “old enough,” time will make it so.

The Friends’ Historical Society, Friends’ Library of Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College and Haverford College, with Westtown and other Friendly centers or schools, can all receive and safeguard such material. We

are just now most interested that *somewhere* this shall be preserved. If, as proposed, the Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia is to become the Friend's Historical Society of *America*, this point must be doubly urged. The collection of Quakeriana at Haverford is the largest and most valuable in the United States. If, as we hope, all these various headquarters, to name only those in Pennsylvania, become the receiving centers for the efforts of residents in their vicinity, or, for any reason, of persons most interested in those particular collections, the great object will have been attained. This magazine should be the medium of information regarding such work, reporting receipts and aiding collectors. With such cooperation, in prospect of a growing membership in the Society which this publication represents, there are great possibilities before us.

Therefore, let all Friends or those who are descendants of Friends, and who are interested in Quaker history, see to it that their heirlooms reach a place of security during their lifetime.

APPENDIX C:
PARTIAL CATALOG OF FHA DRESSES

1800-1824

Meeting Dresses

- 96.22.27 Olive Green Silk Dress
102" Hem, 7.75" Bodice length
Long and fitted sleeves, No piping, Box-like neckline, Apron fall skirt,
No darts
- 98.38.1a Sage Green Silk Dress; Rebecca Justice, 1803
92" Hem, 6.5" Front bodice length, 8.5" Back bodice length
Long and fitted sleeves, No piping, Box-like neckline, Apron fall skirt, No darts
- 87.35.257 Olive Green Silk Bodice; Sarah West, c. 1820
8.75" Bodice length
Long shaped sleeves with gathers over shoulder, No piping, Box-like
neckline,
Apron fall skirt, No darts

Day Dresses

- 00.29.309 Brown Cotton Dress
Straight set three-quarter length sleeves, No piping, Squared scoop-shaped
neckline, Empire Waist, Apron fall skirt, No darts but a drawstring neck
- 91.68.722 Green Calico Dress 1805-1815
91" Hem, 6" Bodice length
Three-quarter length sleeves with long sleeves tacked in, No piping, Scoop
neckline, Gored and center-front fastening skirt, Drawstring neckline, No
darts
- 87.35.1172 White Muslin Dress, 1815-1825
90" Hem, 6.75" Center front bodice length, 8" Center back bodice length
Gathered and shaped long sleeves, 1/16" neckline cording, Wide scoop
neckline, Center-back fastening, Two darts
- 87.35.1171 White Muslin Dress, 1815-1825
76" Hem, 7.5" Center front bodice length, 8" Center back bodice length
Gathered and shaped long sleeves, 1/16th inch neckline cording, Wide and
squared scoop neck, Gored skirt with center back fastening, Two darts

1825-1840

Meeting Dresses

- 87.35.123 Gold Silk Satin Dress, c. 1830
95" Hem
Pleated and shaped long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Square neckline, Empire-waist, Apron
fall skirt, Pleated across top and bottom of bodice fronts
- 90.3.3.1 Fawn Silk/Wool Blend Dress; Deborah Fisher Wharton
126" Hem
Shaped and pleated long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Scoop neckline, Empire-waist, Apron
fall skirt, Two front bust darts

- 84.21.3a Brown Silk/Wool Blend Dress; Margaret Pryor Bacon
 140" Hem, 10.75" Center Back Bodice Length (CBBL)
 Shaped and gathered long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Scoop neckline, Apron fall skirt,
 Four front bust darts
- 88.13.1 Brown Silk Dress
 138" Hem, 9.25" Center Front Bodice Length (CFBL), 10.5" CBBL
 Shaped sleeves, No piping, Squared scoop neckline, Apron fall skirt, Drawstrings
 at neck and waist
- 87.35.125 Olive Green Silk Dress
 111" Hem, 9.75" Center Back Bodice Length
 Shaped and gathered long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, 12.5" Wide scoop neckline, Apron
 fall skirt, Two front bust darts
- 87.35.848 Olive Green Silk Dress; Elizabeth Long Nicholson
 120" Hem, 10.25" CFBL, 11.25" CBBL
 Shaped and gathered long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Wide boat neckline (11.75"), Apron
 fall skirt, Two front bust darts and eight pleats
- 87.35.847 Olive Green Silk Dress; Elizabeth Long Nicholson
 125" Hem, 10.25" CFBL, 13.25" CBBL
 Close fitted long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, High scoop neckline, Apron fall skirt, Two
 boned bust darts
- 88.13.2 Black Silk Dress
 144" Hem, 8" CFBL, 11" CBBL
 Slight leg-o-mutton long sleeves, No piping, Wide scoop neckline, Apron fall skirt,
 Drawstring Neck and Waist
- 81.18.2 Brown Silk Dress, Sarah Jones Gibson
 145" Hem, 9" CFBL, 11.75" CBBL
 Gathered long sleeves, 1/8" Piping, scoop neckline, Apron fall skirt,
 Two bust darts

Wedding Dresses

- 87.35.854 White Silk Dress, Elizabeth Dutton, 1840
 103.5" Hem, 7.5" CFBL, 8.25" CBBL
 Huge leg-o-mutton long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, 12.5" Wide boat neck,
 Center back fastening, Two bust darts
- 87.35.124 Sage Green Silk Dress, Tacy Townsend, 1835
 108" Hem, 9.5" CFBL, 10" CBBL
 Slight leg-o-mutton long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, 12" Wide boat neck,
 Apron fall skirt, Two boned lining bust darts and four silk bust darts

Day Dresses

- 91.5.11 Brown and White Cotton Dress, Nancy Fell Thomas
 160" Hem, 9" Center Front, 9.5" Center Back
 Shaped long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Wide scoop neckline, Apron fall skirt,
 Two front darts

- 87.35.242 Red and Blue Calico Dress
 109.5" Hem, 8.5" Center front
 Shaped and puffed long sleeves, No piping, Square neckline, Apron fall skirt,
 Drawstring neckline

1841-1864

Meeting Dresses

- 87.35.1 Brown Silk Dress
 138" Hem, 13.5" CFBL, 13.75" CBBL
 Gathered long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Scoop neckline, Apron fall skirt, Four
 boned bust darts
- 87.35.882 Grey Silk Dress
 144.5" Hem, 13.5" CFBL, 15" CBBL
 Long and fitted sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Small scoop neckline, Skirt fastens
 left of center front, Six boned bust darts
- 87.35.122 Black Silk Dress
 144" Hem
 Slightly gathered long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Deep V-neckline,
 Skirt fastens left of center front, Two boned bust darts
- 87.35.549 Black and White Wool Dress
 134" Hem, 14.25" CBBL
 Gathered long sleeves, 1/8" Piping, Deep V-neckline, Skirt fastens
 left of center front, Two boned bust darts
- 87.35.1170 Black Silk Taffeta Dress
 123" Hem, 11.5" CFBL
 Pleated long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Small scoop neckline, Skirt fastens
 left of center front, Four boned bust darts

Wedding Dresses

- 87.35.845 a, b Silk Faille Wedding Dress, Margaret Ely Rhoads, 1860
 157" Hem, 9.5" CFBL, 9.75" CBBL, 14" Back Shoulder Width
 Pagoda sleeves with puffed jockeys, 1/16" Piping, Wide neckline,
 Center back fastening, Six boned bust darts
- 89.80.1a Silk Faille Wedding Dress, Martha Cernby Morris, 1861
 158" Hem, 9.25" CFBL, 10.25" CBBL
 Pleated pagoda sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Wide neckline, Center back
 fastening, Six boned bust darts

Day Dresses

- 91.68.716 Striped Green and White Silk Dress
 Pleated pagoda sleeves, Double 1/16" Piping, Small scoop neck,
 Six boned bust darts

- 87.35.347 Mustard and Brown Calico Dress
 171.5" Hem, 9" CFBL (v-neckline), 14.5" CBBL
 Gathered coat sleeve, 1/16" Piping, V-neckline, Two bust darts
- 87.35.205 Black and White Voile Dress
 151" Hem, 17.5" Shoulder Over Bust to Waist, 14.5" CBBL
 Gathered long sleeves, 1/16" Piping, Close scoop neckline, Four boned darts

1865-1900

Meeting Dresses

- 87.35.739 Black Silk Satin Dress, 1880-90
 Fitted coat sleeves, 1/8" Piping, V-neckline, Four boned bust darts
- 90.70.1 Black Silk Dress, 1865-1890
 120" Hem, 11.5" CF V-neck, 16" CBBL
 Slightly pleated long sleeves, Skirt fastens over left hip, Four bust darts

Wedding Dresses

- 84.21.12 Champagne-colored Shot Silk Skirt, Rachel Love Evans, 1867
 80" Hem
 Ruched hem, Smocked bustle, Fully lined, Remnants of lace in seam allowances

Day Dresses

- 87.35.856 a, b Green Silk Bodice and Skirt
 117" Hem
 Long sleeves with puffed jockeys, 1/16" Piping, Silk fringe trim, Back peplum and bow, Four boned bust darts: Skirt is gored and fully lined with polished cotton.
- 91.68.60 a, b Brown Velvet Dress and Overskirt
 Closely fitted coat sleeves, 1/8" Black silk satin piping, Swagged over-skirt, Four boned bust darts
- 87.35.256 Brown Silk Twill Dress 1885-1892
 14.25" CFBL
 Long and fitted sleeves, Skirt fastens over left hip, Four boned bust darts
- 87.35.853 a, b Cocoa Silk Bodice and Skirt 1885-1892
 126" Hem, 18.25" CFBL, 20.5" CBBL
 Long fitted sleeves, Tucked front, Fully boned, Pleated white silk cuff and collar trimming; Skirt is cut for a modest back bustle

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