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**The needle's web: Sewing in one early nineteenth-century
American home**

Osaki, Amy Boyce, M.A.

University of Delaware, 1988

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**THE NEEDLE'S WEB:
SEWING IN ONE EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN HOME**

By
Amy Boyce Osaki

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

May 1988

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THE NEEDLE'S WEB:
SEWING IN ONE EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN HOME

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INTRODUCTION

For Eleuthera du Pont, sewing was one of many daily activities in her family's home along the Brandywine River in Delaware (Figure 1, p. 2). With her three sisters, Victorine, Evelina, and Sophie, and their mother, Sophie Dalmas du Pont, Eleuthera worked to create a complex web of relationships: between women and men, between house and factory, between family and friends, and between the Brandywine River and the rest of the nation. Eleuthera's letters from 1816 to 1834 describe days spent at home (Figure 2, p. 3):

The first thing I do in the morning after breakfast is to make my extracts. I afterwards draw, and then practise.- In the afternoon I practise again (when I do not get my time out in the morning) and sew.- . . . Sister reads out La Harpe in the evening. Immediately after supper I go up to our room, and after I have put up my hair, I read about a chapter, in the conversations on Chemistry.¹

In addition to sewing, reading, drawing, and playing the piano, she was required to assist with housekeeping. She worked with the family servants, usually Irish girls, to prepare meals, preserve fruit, and sew household items like sheets and towels. For the women, the day was oriented toward the house, and their work was usually done there.



Figure 1. Portrait of Eleuthera du Pont by Rembrandt Peale, 1831 (67.277). Courtesy, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.



Figure 2. Watercolor sketch of Eleutherian Mills by Eleuthera du Pont, 1823. Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

Eleuthera's father and brothers usually spent the day at the powder mills. Her father, Eleuthère Irénée du Pont, started the black powder manufactory in 1802, and due to the demand for powder during the war of 1812, the business expanded to include mills spread up and down the Brandywine (Figure 3, p. 5). Her brothers, Alfred, Henry, and Alexis, assisted with the operation. The men stockpiled the necessary ingredients, sulphur, saltpeter, and charcoal, and ran the refinery to purify these materials. They supervised the roll mills where the three ingredients were mixed into black powder, and the drying and packing operations that prepared the powder for sale. The du Pont mills produced for national as well as local markets, and on a regular basis barrels of powder were shipped to Philadelphia to be distributed.

The contrast between the daily activities of women and men in the du Pont family initially seems to be one of quiet domestic work in the home versus active industrial work in the mills; however, the setting along the Brandywine prevented these spheres from being completely separate. The women sewing in the house were only a few hundred yards from the men working in the mills. When a roll mill exploded because a spark ignited the powder mixture, the house as well as the mill was damaged, and both the women and men were

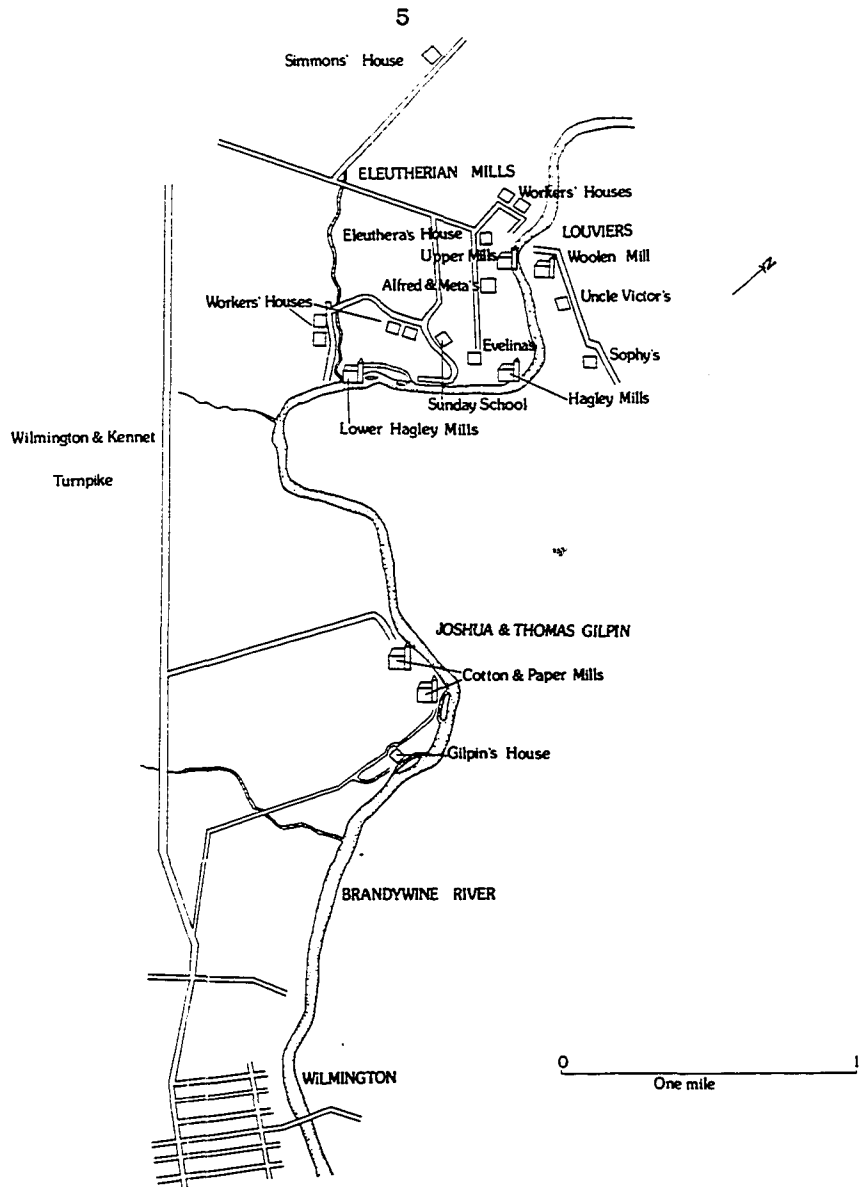


Figure 3. Map of the houses and mills along the Brandywine River, including Eleutherian Mills (E.I. du Pont), Louviers (Victor du Pont), and the Gilpins' mills. Adapted by the author from the 1826 Fairlamb survey and from a land plat c. 1820, both at the Hagley Museum and Library.

affected. Eleuthera casually mentioned an explosion on a Sunday and that neighbors kept calling at the house to see if the family was all right.² The women also became involved in the operation of the mills. They sewed powder bags and press towels, and at times the dry house was at a standstill waiting for their work. When her brother Alfred was developing a new tool to measure the superiority of du Pont powder, Eleuthera helped and described the whole process in a letter to a friend. When an accident happened in the mills, it was Eleuthera and her mother and sisters who helped to nurse the wounded and care for the widows and orphans. The workers' wives and daughters were servants in the du Pont homes, and workers' children were taught by Eleuthera and her sisters in the Brandywine Manufacturers Sunday School. Thus the house and the mill were connected, and the women and the men worked in spheres that often overlapped and were interdependent (Figure 3, p. 5).

The networks that the du Pont women made with others were of a social nature. They helped their neighbors with some tasks, especially sewing, and spent afternoons and evenings calling on each other. As Eleuthera's sisters and brothers married, they settled in houses nearby, along the Brandywine, and so many of the neighbors she visited were family members (Figure 3, p. 5). Across the Brandywine River lived her uncle Victor du Pont, his wife, Gabrielle Josephine, and their children, Amelia, Charles, Samuel Francis, and Julia. These cousins also settled along the river after marriage, continuing

the close family ties. Other neighbors were Eleuthera's friends, Mary and Sarah Gilpin, and Mary Edith "Polly" Simmons. With her sisters, cousins, and friends, Eleuthera roamed the woods, fields, and riverbanks, sketching flowers, walking, riding horses, and enjoying a pastoral landscape. Pet dogs, deer, hummingbirds, chickens, and cats filled the house and yard, adding to the agricultural feeling of her home.

For the males of the du Pont family, social networks were determined by the mills. Instead of an agrarian setting, they operated in an industrial world. The sulphurous smoke from the refinery, the noise of machinery, and the possibility of an explosion characterized their environment. Their network was based on the business of manufacturing. They knew the workers and their families, other manufacturers along the river, and business associates in more distant communities. Eleuthera's Uncle Victor ran a textile mill on the other side of the river, and the Gilpin family had their paper manufactory downstream toward Wilmington. Business trips took E.I. and his sons to Philadelphia to meet with Richard Somers Smith and Francis Gurney Smith. The Smiths ran a counting house on Front Street and helped to market the du Pont powder. The Cazenove family of Alexandria, at that time part of the District of Columbia, also conducted business with the du Ponts, and E.I. often traveled there to complete necessary transactions in person (Figure 4, p. 8). The powder industry even gave the du Pont

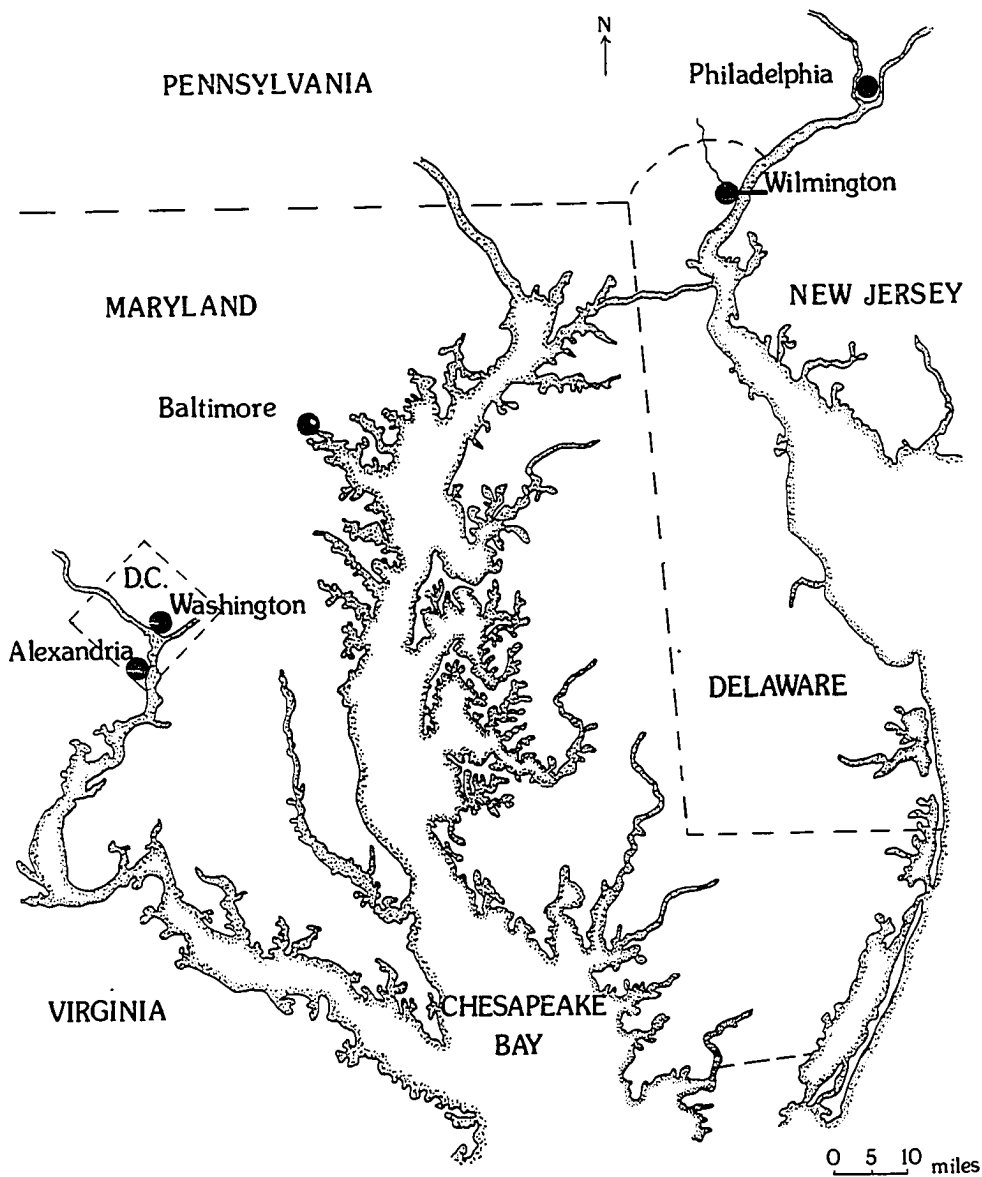


Figure 4. Map showing Delaware and the District of Columbia with parts of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Drawn by the author.

men international connections, for their raw materials came from India and Sicily.

But as with their work, the networks of the du Pont men and women overlapped. The Brandywine River that sculpted the rolling pastoral setting Eleuthera explored, provided the power to operate the mills. The leisure time Eleuthera and her sisters used to sew and to visit with family and friends was made possible by the financial success of their family's black powder mills. The professional ties the du Pont men had with other manufacturing families, the Gilpins, Smiths, Cazenoves, and Lammots, provided a basis for social ties that formed between the women of the manufacturing families. Eleuthera and her sisters did not spend all their time at home along the Brandywine. They frequently accompanied their father and brothers on business trips. When E.I. du Pont went to Philadelphia to conduct business with the Smiths, Eleuthera and other du Pont women went along to visit with Mrs. Richard S. Smith (Elizabeth Beach), Mrs. Francis Gurney Smith (also Elizabeth) and their daughters, Clementina, Harriet, and Joanna. Similarly, when business took E.I. du Pont to Alexandria, Eleuthera and her sisters often went along. While E.I. was discussing the powder manufactory with Antoine Charles Cazenove, Eleuthera was visiting with his wife, Anne Hogan Cazenove, and daughters Eliza, Anne, Paulina, Charlotte, and Harriet. The Gilpin and Lammot families were not directly involved in the du Pont powder business, but they shared a common

interest in manufacturing. The Gilpins manufactured paper. Daniel Lammot ran a cotton mill, and his second wife, Anna Potts Lammot, and his daughters Margaretta, Mary, and Eleanora, were close friends of Eleuthera and her sisters.

The degree to which the social and business networks of the du Pont women and men overlapped is evident in the depth of friendships that developed. Eleuthera married Francis Gurney Smith's son, Thomas Mackie Smith, and her brother Alexis married Tom's sister Joanna. Daniel Lammot's daughter Margaretta married Eleuthera's brother Alfred, and when Eleuthera attended school in Philadelphia from 1821 to 1822, she lived with the Lammots. Eleuthera and her sisters served as bridesmaids for Paulina Cazenove and Mary Lammot, and the Cazenove and Lammot women returned the favor.

For each of these family weddings, the du Pont women sewed elaborate dresses and gifts. Their needlework, the patterns used to create it, and the letters of one of the du Pont daughters, Eleuthera, serve as evidence of a network of relationships. With their needles, Eleuthera and her sisters created a web of relationships between themselves and the du Pont men, between the house and the factory, between the family and the workers, and between Delaware and other states.

THE NEEDLEWORK

Preparing to Sew

Eleuthera du Pont usually began a sewing project for one of three reasons: the work was assigned to her by someone else, an event required a gift, or she needed something for herself. Assigned sewing usually came from her older sister, Victorine, who coordinated both the education of her younger siblings and the household activities. Often these two duties were combined by delegating sewing to her sisters. Eleuthera was first given work when she was ten, and was soon doing lengths of embroidered trimmings and bands as well as collars and some of her own clothing. Working together, the four daughters could produce the yards and yards of embroidery needed to trim a dress.

In Victorine's absence, Eleuthera taught school for Henry, Sophie and Alexis, and by the time she was in her twenties, she was in charge of the household, which meant overseeing the making of sheets, towels, dusters, and chemises and performing the mending herself. "I am toiling at Papa's & your stockings with my own in the bargain it may well be called a toil for I never knew such a holy set." Wedding preparations must have provided welcome variation to a

bland fare of socks. "I shall follow all your instructions about the Dame's sewing," Eleuthera wrote to Victorine in the midst of plans for Sophie's 1833 wedding.³

Work orders also came from the powder yards: "Brother sent loads of powder sheets to mend to day; he sent word the dry house was at a stand for want of them, so I did not know what to do." Eleuthera was alone in the house when this crisis arose and was able to respond to her brother-in-law Antoine Bidermann's request by delegating the work to other women on the Brandywine. "I concluded to ask Mrs Watson to do them was I wrong? . . . Brother could not wait - I sent him 70 towels to day which Anne hemmed."⁴

As a young, unmarried woman, Eleuthera was also asked by other women to sew for them. While she was visiting the Smiths in Philadelphia, Eleuthera was asked to sew for a charitable fair: "Mrs R.S. Smith is resolved we shall contribute to her basket at this fair. Every time I go in there she finds out some new thing & asks me to do it for her!".⁵ Eleuthera ended up making a purse, a butterfly pen wiper, and two pairs of children's mittens for this particular fair. On another occasion, Eleuthera added a row of stitching on a shirt and hemstitched a handkerchief for Mrs. Smith. When visiting her friend, Paulina Cazenove Fowle, Eleuthera did some small sewing tasks as favors, and she was even asked by Antoine Bidermann to embroider his horse's name on a horse blanket.

..

"Brother B. had asked me to come & embroider his horse's name on his new dress to day, because he wished to send him to some sale in the neighborhood to morrow, to shew himself."⁶

The majority of Eleuthera's sewing, especially her embroidery, was done as gifts. Births, marriages, and birthdays among her close network of friends and family gave Eleuthera many reasons to sew. She also exchanged gifts on New Years and while visiting and found other opportunities to give presents. These presents helped to secure family ties.

Between 1816 and 1834, Eleuthera's four cousins and six siblings gave her fifteen babies to sew for. Her letters specifically mention making baby caps for three of her little cousins. She also made baby gifts for the Lammots, Cazenoves, and Grimsnaws (her teacher in Philadelphia). Eleuthera described the accumulation of baby things by the expectant mother:

I gave Paulina [Cazenove] the cap yesterday: she & Lot think it a beauty Paulina has a sweet set of little things: all so neatly made & some very pretty work. 2 caps from Paris are beauties.- I think however mine is quite as handsome as any.⁷

With these baby trousseaus went concern that was rarely articulated directly--fear or dread, should anything happen during the pregnancy or delivery. While on a visit to Philadelphia, Eleuthera wrote her sister Sophie:

Mrs Shubrick shewed me all her baby cloathes She has three bought worked caps; nothing very splendid and 6 frocks, made up very neatly of bought work.- Only think if all these are prepared for nothing! what a disappointment!⁸

The letters reveal a sense of female community in the production of these baby clothes, a sense of shared responsibility before the baby's birth that implies a shared responsibility after birth.

Three of the six important weddings before 1834 received specific mention in Eleuthera's letters: her cousin Julia's (1824), her friend Paulina's (1831), and her sister Sophie's (1833). For Julia and Paulina, Eleuthera embroidered handkerchiefs: "I shall buy a square of cambric to work her [Paulina] the long promised wedding pocket handkerchief while I'm here, if you approve."⁹ For Paulina's and Sophie's weddings, whole sets of clothing had to be made. Eleuthera was one of Paulina's two bridesmaids, and for Sophie's wedding she and Victorine were involved in producing the whole trousseau. This experience would prove useful in planning her own wedding the following year.

Eleuthera also prepared needlework gifts for holidays and birthdays. A great flurry of activity preceded New Year's Day each year as Eleuthera decided whom to give gifts to and what to make. At one point she prided herself in making rather than buying gifts for three sisters, three brothers, a sister-in-law, a brother-in-law, and four cousins as well as her closest friends and whomever she may be visiting around the holidays. Despite the sense of urgency to

complete all these projects, Eleuthera continued each year to make little gifts as tokens for those she cared for: "I have so many new year's gifts to finish that I know not how I shall get through with them all.- while I was in Pha. I was very idle necessarily, as I walked out a great deal, so now I must make up for lost time."¹⁰ In addition to giving birthday gifts to her cousins and siblings, Eleuthera gave presents to her friends, including Harriet Smith and Margaretta Lamot du Pont. These handmade items included "a working apparatus in the form of a bellow" (probably a pouch of some sort to hold needles, thread, and scissors for sewing), as well as work bags, embroidered cuffs, collars, and handkerchiefs.¹¹

These "official" gift-giving circumstances (births, marriages, New Year's, birthdays) were not the only times Eleuthera gave presents. While visiting friends, she often made them little gifts, and on other occasions she spontaneously made things for family and friends. She was fond of presenting collars, wristbands, and handkerchiefs to Margaretta Lamot du Pont, her sister Evelina, and her friends Joanna Smith, Paulina Cazenove Fowle, and Harriet Cazenove. She also gave presents to Thomas Mackie Smith, making a pair of curtains for his medical office before they were engaged, and a pen wiper for his desk in December 1833 after their engagement. When Eleuthera arrived for an extended visit at Paulina's house, she brought gifts, and after staying with the Smiths until just before Christmas, she felt obliged to leave gifts:

I think it would look strange if remaining in town until the very day before Christmas. I should go away without giving them [Clementina & Harriet Smith] something- especially if I did not send them up a new Year's gift.¹²

While her sister Evelina was in Paris, Eleuthera decided to embroider her collars on lace as a gift. These spontaneous gifts showed Eleuthera's particular fondness for some of the people in her circle and may also have been an excuse to experiment with new designs. Eleuthera wrote to Sophie: "I asked Mary, dear Sophia, if Elisa had made her some of those lamp lighters- Mary has not even seen any so I think your's will be very acceptable to her, & have all the charm of novelty."¹³

The final category of projects Eleuthera performed were those to satisfy her own needs. Although her mother, sisters, female domestics, and professional seamstresses sewed for her, she supplemented their work by sewing her own nightgowns and shifts, and mending her stockings and other clothes. She occasionally made herself a frock, handkerchief, ruffle, or collar at the spur of the moment while she was away from home. She helped with the elaborate preparations for her bridesmaid clothing for Paulina's wedding and, with Victorine's help, prepared her own trousseau. Dressmaking as well as embroidery involved scouring shops for the right materials.

Gathering Materials

Once Eleuthera decided to do a needlework project, she assembled the materials: thread, fabric, patterns, and sewing implements (needle, work bag, pins, scissors, and thimble). These materials were supplied from stock at home, purchased by Eleuthera in Philadelphia or Wilmington, bought by one of her sisters or friends and sent to her, or borrowed from a friend.

Eleuthera usually used cotton thread. Thread came in various thicknesses, with a different number of strands for different purposes. Plain sewing for seams required a strong cotton with two strands:

Shew this scrawl to Vic- . . . Mama begs her to buy some of Holts sewing cotton for Papa's shirts 2 packs of number 40 and 4 of 50- She says that in each pack there are four hanks of twelve skeins each - it is 6 of these packs she wants.¹⁴

Embroidery required thicker cotton thread (Figure 5, p. 18) for satin stitch, and surviving pieces have 3 to 5 strands. "You will find inclosed a needleful of cotton," Eleuthera wrote to Sophie. "Mama wants you to buy her half a pound of cotton as much like it as possible, only if anything coarser as this one had been stretched. - Vic wants you at the same time to buy her a hank of working cotton a little coarser than the one you bought last." The finest cotton thread was used for lace stitches (Figure 6, p. 19), had one strand, and was bought by the spool.¹⁵

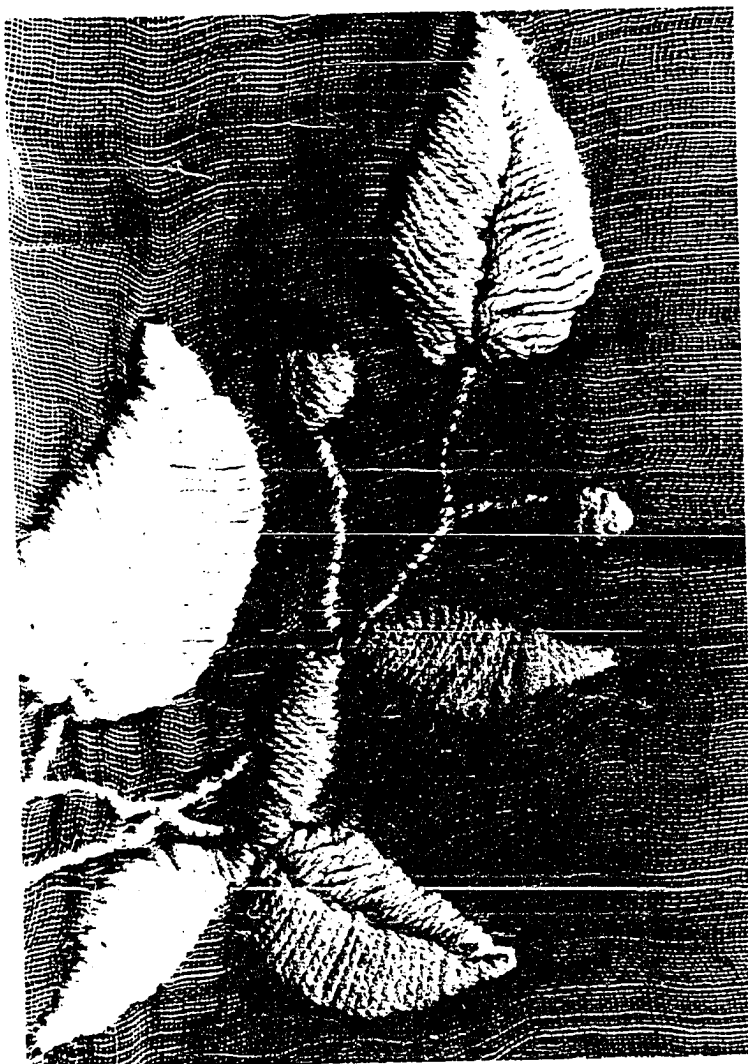


Figure 5. Detail of a scarf (acc. 71.15.4a). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

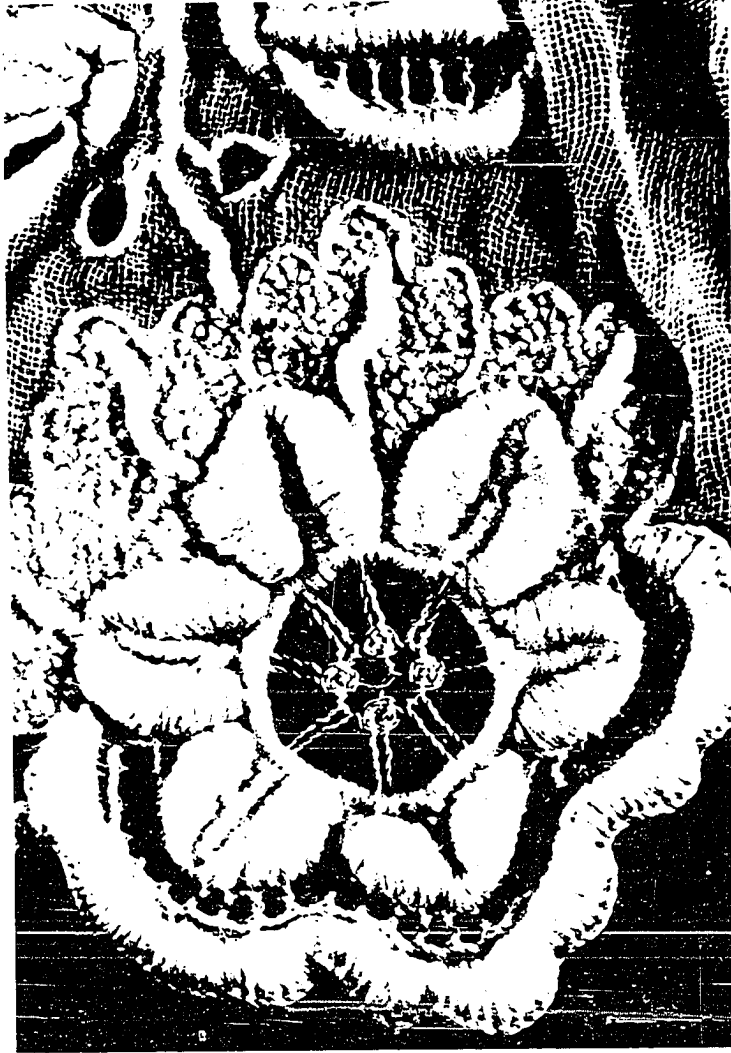


Figure 6. Detail of a collar (acc. 59.68.21). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

The type of fabric Eleuthera selected depended on what the project was and whom it was for. For her embroidery, she used muslin, cambric, "bobinett," and crape with lace trimming and insertions.¹⁶ The muslin had from 64 to 160 threads per inch and could be very fine and sheer. She used muslin for bands of trimming, handkerchiefs, and edging for a cap, and on collars, cuffs, and scarves (Figure 5, p. 18). A lacy effect was created by using a netting, "bobinett", instead of a solid fabric. Pieces that survive with netting have 24 holes an inch (Figure 7, p. 21). Eleuthera mentions using crape for a handkerchief for herself that may or may not have been embroidered. Eleuthera also used lace on the edge of collars and for inserting into collars, cuff, and caps. Lace trimmings and insertions were often hard to find:

Tuesday morning I trotted all over town to shop through slush of the worst kind. it was really most disagreeable. I went as far as Mrs Dundas! I hope you, dearest Sophy will like the belt, & insertion for your N. caps. I found it difficult to find it narrow & at all well worked. This struck me as pretty: I trust you will be pleased with it.¹⁷

For dresses and other costume accessories, Eleuthera selected from a wide range of fabrics. Her letters indicate that she used crape, silk, "french coulisse, foulards, and chintzes," gingham, "painted" and "stamped" fabric, and cambric.¹⁸ Small projects like bags and purses used crape and silk, and "french coulisse"

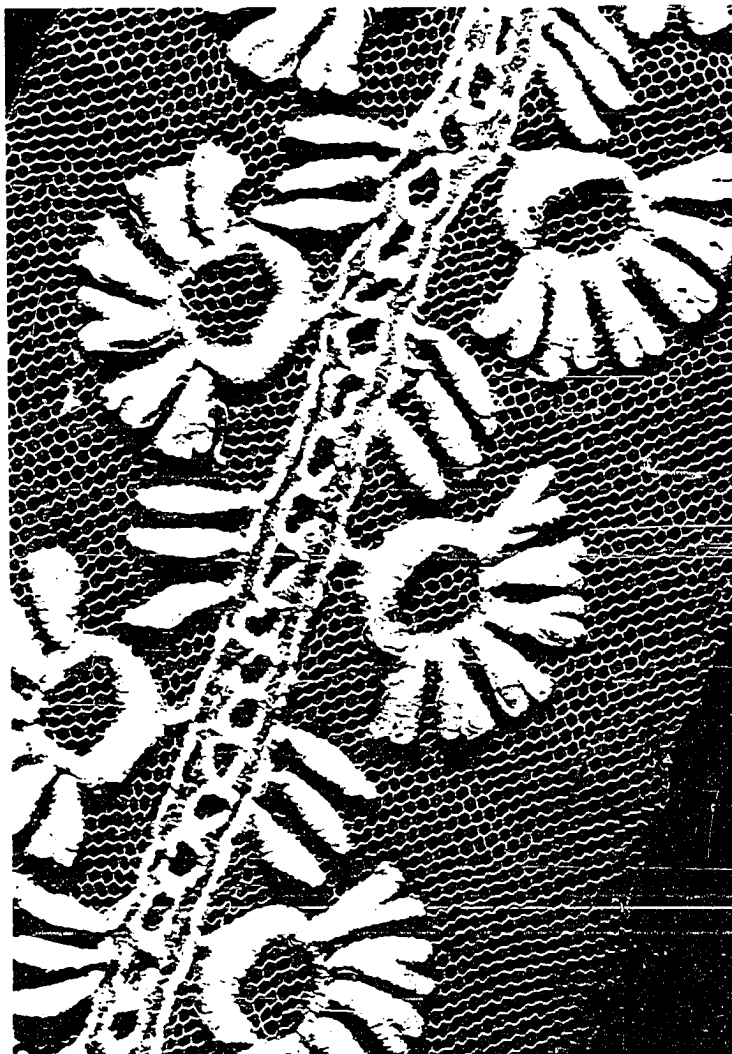


Figure 7. Detail of trimming (acc. 59.68.60). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

was used for Eleuthera's shifts. The other fabrics were bought in large quantities to supply the clothing needs of a large family.

Eleuthera and her sisters acquired thread and fabric in various ways. Unlike many women, they did not spin their own thread or weave their own fabric. Instead, they purchased their materials. Despite the proximity of stores such as Mr. Fountain's shop along the Brandywine or businesses in Wilmington, the du Pont women bought most of their needlework supplies in Philadelphia. Since the black powder was sent up regularly to Philadelphia to be sold, it was convenient for them to visit the larger and better-stocked Philadelphia stores. Eleuthera mentioned buying thread in Philadelphia on Second Street above Vine, and getting dress fabrics at the Philadelphia shops of Mrs. Krips, Mrs. Woosters, Van Harlingen's, and her friend Mrs. Richard S. Smith's.¹⁹

These supplies were purchased in large quantities so that they could be stockpiled at home. This meant that when Eleuthera ran out of sewing supplies while in Philadelphia, her first thought was to ask to have the materials sent from home rather than going out and buying them herself. When the supply at home was depleted, it was necessary to send someone out to purchase more materials. The delegated purchaser, whether Victorine, Sophie, Eleuthera, or Margaretta, had to consider style, quality, and price. Victorine had demanding standards, and she distributed the cash needed to make these purchases, so her approval was necessary. Eleuthera explained

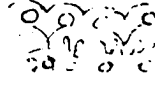

to Victorine Margareta's difficulty in completing her shopping mission:

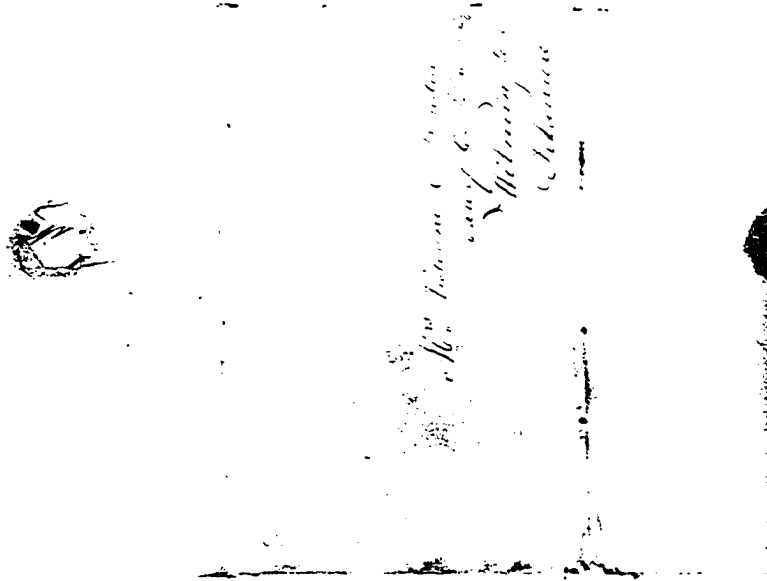
Meta bids me tell you she has searched in vain for french foulards or chintzes at half a dollar There are no real ones under 62 1/2 - She says there are the most beautiful ones she ever saw corner of Spruce & second at this price but she did not like to transgress your directions which limited her to 50 cts.²⁰

A third way to get supplies was to borrow them. If Eleuthera was visiting and was in the midst of a project she could borrow the necessary supplies. Eleuthera often needed materials at the last minute: "Do send me my band of muslin for I have no work at all and I am afraid I wont get it done." With her tight schedule, she was held up without materials: "I was much disappointed not to receive the lace yesterday, for you know I shall have but three weeks at most to do my collars; and two days lost is a serious consideration."²¹

Like information on thread and fabric, patterns for embroidery and sewing projects came to Eleuthera in many forms and from many people. Many embroidery patterns were printed or drawn on paper and could be mailed back and forth and easily borrowed. Two patterns for embroidery on caps are in Eleuthera's April 26, 1821 letter to Victorine (Figure 8, p. 24). Two volumes of patterns used by the du Pont daughters are in the manuscript collection at Hagley, and four patterns in this collection were cut out from letters. One of the patterns was in a letter sent from Mrs. R.S. Smith to Victorine. These two volumes of patterns are in homemade portfolios on loose

But with the same name
I have executed it.

 it is possible  looks very well



My grandmother said to day whenever you visit to you
my name I remember me affectionately to us.

Don't want forgotten by

Figure 8. Letter from Eleuthera to Victorine, April 26, 1821 showing an embroidery pattern. Winterthur Manuscripts 6/C/23, Hagley Museum and Library.

sheets of paper. One of the portfolios was made for Victorine by Bidermann (Figure 9, p. 26), and the other was labeled: "Old Patterns for Embroidery on muslin, in satin stitch- some as old as the beginning of the century, 1800. Some that were Sister Evelina's- many of them have been worked by Sister Victorine, Eleuthera, Polly, & S.M.D.P."²² (Figure 10, p. 27). Some of these paper patterns were made professionally in Paris and are marked "A Paris chez Bonneville Rue St. Jacques No. 195," or "Fichu-Pelarine." Others have typeset numbers on them, indicating that they are part of a series. The daughters apparently employed their own numbering system, too, for one pattern is marked "535" in type and "No 54" by hand. Other patterns are hand marked "4," "7," "45," and "49." Evidently the du Ponts organized the hundreds of patterns they had in a "library" for easy reference, and appropriately cousin Julia came and consulted their library of patterns as well as of books: "In the afternoon Lina came & Polly; & soon after Julia arrived- She came on a foray after books & patterns. After an inroad in our library she carried off Denham & Clapperton, & Phedora."²³

Unlike the thread or fabric, patterns were not purchased. Instead, the daughters enlarged their collection of paper patterns by borrowing or exchanging new patterns among their friends and acquaintances. They asked friends to mail them a pattern: "Could you find me a pretty pattern to work my handkerchief?" Eleuthera wrote to Meta. "I am quite tired of those we have, and besides can

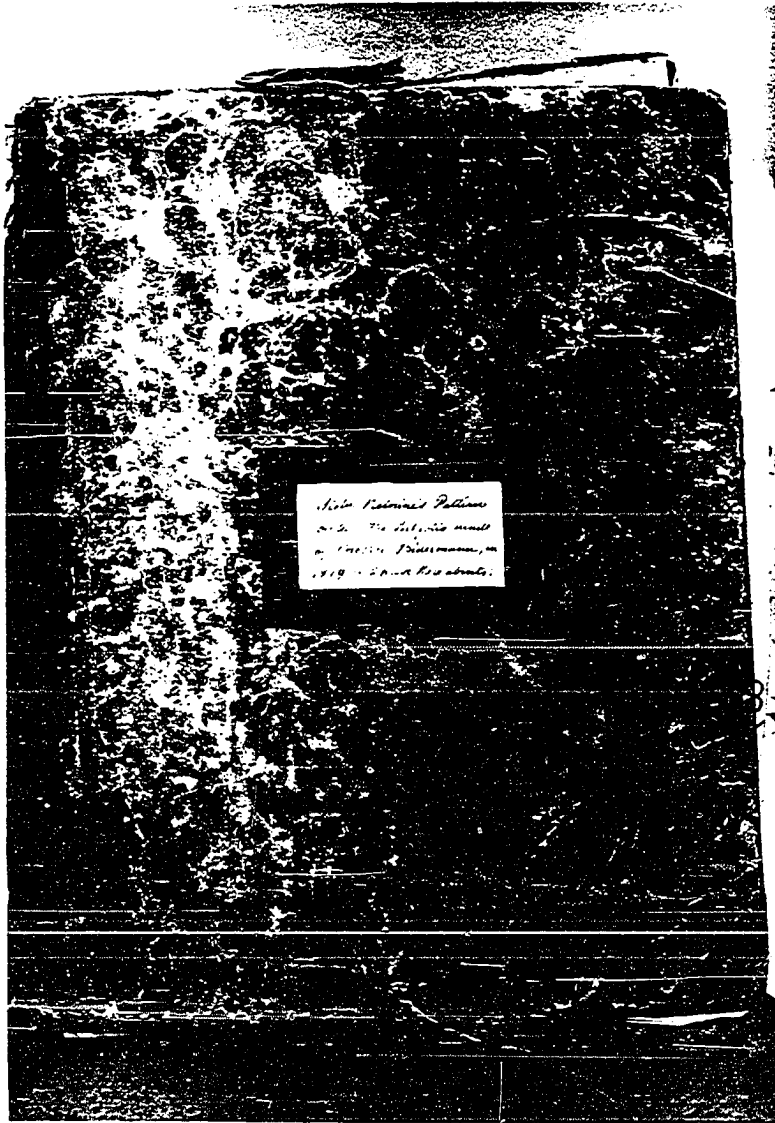


Figure 9. Cover of Victorine's Pattern Book. Crowninshield Papers, acc. 471/C/44, Hagley Museum and Library.



Figure 10. Cover of "Old Patterns for Embroidery" Book.
 Crowninshield Papers, acc. 471/C/44, Hagley Museum and Library..

find none that will do." Another choice was to get a paper pattern from a professional seamstress, like Miss Woodall in Philadelphia.²⁴ Many of the patterns that survive are on tracing paper and were probably copied. Eleuthera notes in one letter that a young nephew was assigned the task of tracing patterns.²⁵ Other patterns were original sketches as the women tapped their drawing talents and made their own designs.

Not all the patterns they used were made of paper. Victorine wanted to make a cap for her mother, and she asked Margareta to do a pattern for her: "The back part of the face piece will have to be made a little wider I think for your mothers head," Margareta wrote. "I have cut the crown after the original pattern & marked where it is sewed to the puff."²⁶ Victorine received the cap all cut out and marked, ready to be sewn. Fabric patterns were sometimes samples of the finished product, especially in dressmaking. Mrs. R.S. Smith, a connoisseur of stylish costume, offered to send Victorine a doll's dress of the latest fashion. Eleuthera and Victorine also copied full scale dresses to get new designs:

Mrs. Cardon has had a black silk dress made, & Mrs. Smith admired the way it was made - so the lady offered to lend you [Victorine] a painted muslin she has on the same pattern & I accepted her offer & send it down that you may know how dresses are now made, you see there's nothing new.²⁷

Eleuthera's dresses were occasionally mailed back and forth as samples, and even nightgowns might require another nightgown as a pattern. With her embroidery, Eleuthera used other caps and

handkerchiefs as patterns for new work. Even a simple purse often required a pattern. "Sister Lina is making a purse, & both she & Victorine have got sadly puzzled in the pattern which is the same as that of the green purse Sister V. worked you," Eleuthera wrote to Thomas Mackie Smith a few months before their wedding. "If you still have the relic of it, will you, dear Tom, inclose it in a paper & direct it & send it down by the return of the boat? . . . they cant get on without a model & your old purse is the only one of that pattern we know of."²⁸

Some patterns were taught. Mrs. Lamot received a paper pattern for a cap but still wanted Victorine to "come to shew her, how to make the open work." Mary Haven learned how to make purses "our fashion" from Eleuthera, and Mrs. Lamot advised Victorine, "it is quite useless to send it [a dress] to you as it must be cut and fitted on the person." A sample strip of a variety of lace stitches is labeled: "patterns of different stitches in lacework, taught sisters Victorine and Eleuthera when they learned lace work."²⁹

To actually begin sewing, needles, scissors, pins, and a thimble were needed. These accessories were often given as gifts, with bags, baskets, or tables to store the work in progress. Eleuthera refers to her work bag in October 1830, and she received a work basket from Paulina Cazenove at Christmas that year. She received needle books from her cousin Gabrielle and Sophie for her thirteenth birthday, and was given scissors and pins from Julia on

October 19, 1818. She had a thimble, probably made of silver or gold, that she had engraved by Mr. Pepper in Philadelphia in March 1831.³⁰ With her thread, fabric, pattern, and sewing implements, Eleuthera was ready to begin a project.

Sewing

Who actually sewed a project depended on what type of sewing was to be done. There was a hierarchy of labor that was determined by skill and status. For plain work, sheets, towels and items needed for the powder yards, Eleuthera usually relied on the domestic staff: Anne, Hannah, Elisa Anne, Mary Mullen, N. McGarvey, and Mrs Watson. Eleuthera's undergarments (nightgowns, shifts, and chemises) were usually cut out with the help of Mama and Victorine, but Eleuthera did the sewing. Even formal gowns for weddings were normally done at home, with help from Mrs. Waterman, the family seamstress, and in consultation with Miss Woodall, a professional seamstress in Philadelphia.³¹ Only the most elaborate needlework, bonnets and silk gowns, were completely turned over to a milliner or a professional. Eleuthera reserved fancy work, the embroidered collars, cuffs, caps, and dresses that form the core of this study, for herself. She assigned plain sewing or large projects like dresses to others, but not a gift to be presented to a friend or relative.

Eleuthera picked up her needle and began to sew at various times of day, and in a wide variety of locations. In the morning she

was sometimes busy at her needlework alone in her room at home or with a few close friends if she was away visiting. Her mornings were usually private, quiet times reserved for a personal project like darning her socks or making a baby frock. If she was not alone, the people she was with were her most intimate friends, Paulina Cazenove, one of the Smiths, her sisters Victorine, Evelina, or Sophie. A sense of quiet and tranquility pervaded her morning sewing sessions:

Yesterday all the morning I sewed quietly; this two days rain has proved a delightful quiet season of enjoyment to me; and I now really begin to enjoy the pleasure of our dear friend's society which we could not do last week.- from ten to near dinner time I sit in Paulina's room.³²

By midday the pace changed, and Eleuthera dressed for dinner and an afternoon of calling and receiving guests. Afternoons, and evenings after tea or supper, were social times when Eleuthera was surrounded by friends and acquaintances. Who the guests were and what she was sewing determined whether she had her needle in hand. With other young women and with married women within her core group of friends, sewing was an integral part of their afternoons and evenings (Figure 11, p. 32). Eleuthera frequently described being a

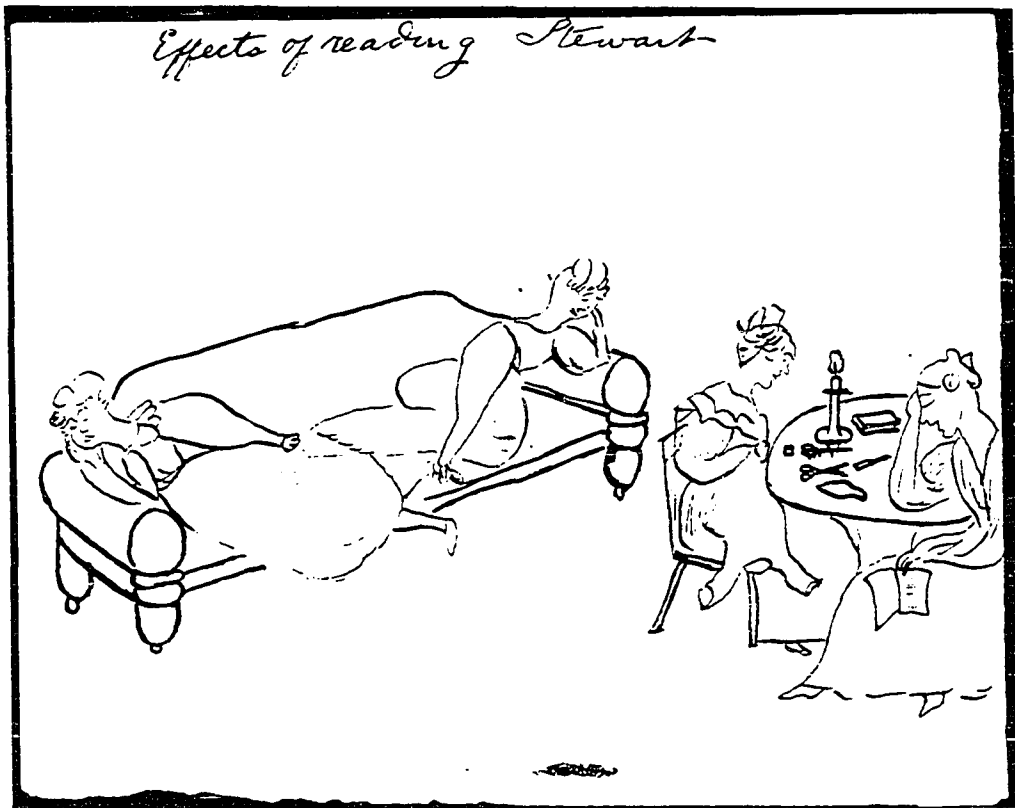


Figure 11. Sketch, "Effects of Reading Stewart," by Sophie du Pont, January 9, 1831. Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

part of a cluster of females, busy with their needles and tongues. Sewing was even a part of an invitation to call: "I saw Miss Helen in church yesterday," and she "hoped I would bring my work round some evening this week."³³ With work bag in hand, Eleuthera would stop by for a visit, keeping her fingers busy while exchanging the latest news.

As Eleuthera explained to Victorine, she was not always free to sew in the afternoons and evenings. While visiting Paulina in Alexandria, Eleuthera was removed from her core group of young women and close married friends. There, visitors were company, and "it is not the fashion to have your work when company comes in." This limited the amount of sewing she could do: "Needle work comes on but slowly with me. . . . We spend all the time not claimed by visitors, or my correspondents, in reading- when we have visits, unless it is Mrs G- [Mrs. Gardner, a close friend] I cannot sew."³⁴

When and where she sewed was determined by the degree of formality of the situation. It was proper to sew within a circle of close female friends; it was improper to sew in the company of guests. In addition, it was proper to sew with men in the room, if they were within your circle of acquaintances; in Eleuthera's case, members of the Cazenove, Gardner, Smith, Lamot, Gilpin, and du Pont families. In polite society she also had to consider what she was sewing. Once Eleuthera noted that she and Paulina were sewing in

Paulina's room, because Paulina was "busy with work which is not fit for the parlour." In another instance, Eleuthera got caught. She and Joanna Smith were sewing in the parlor when someone came calling. Eleuthera dashed to the back parlor to hide her work, a shirt, for it was not appropriate for the parlor.³⁵

When, where, and what you sewed fell under the constraints of etiquette; society had rules governing your needle. Two popular images illustrate the acceptable behavior. One shows a group of women together, industriously working with their needles, enriching their minds with a proper book, read aloud by one of the group (Figure 11, p. 32). The other shows an evening gathering of women and men, with the females demurely bent over their needlework while the men discuss politics.³⁶ Fine embroidery was an appropriate project for either scene, but ordinary shirts and plain sewing were acceptable only among a close group of intimate friends and family. Eleuthera's letters describe both of these scenes. With needle in hand, she represented the industrious, virtuous woman making idle moments productive. She also cast a very domestic pose for her future husband, Thomas Mackie Smith: "Clema brought her work in here on Thursday after tea and she, Joan, & I, & Tom sat in the nursery till ten working and talking." For Eleuthera sewing had other benefits, as one of her letters indicates:

I went to old Mrs. Robert Smith's . . . I was agreeably surprised to find Mrs. Lamot still in town - but the evening proved more soporific than I had expected - No one took the trouble of talking and If it had not been for my work I dont know how I should have prevented myself from falling asleep.³⁷

Details on embroidering are also found in Eleuthera's letters. Once she had selected the pattern, fabric, and needle, she basted the pattern on the back of the fabric and embroidered on the front, following the pattern's design which was visible through the sheer muslin (Figure 12, p. 36).³⁸ Eleuthera described one such project: "My collar comes on very well I have finished one half & basted up the other," and, "My collar, I took off the pattern to day."³⁹ Numerous patterns used by Eleuthera and her sisters have pinpricks and dangling threads, evidence of their use (Figure 13, p. 37). Two artifacts in the Winterthur collection illustrate the process: an unfinished piece of white-on-white embroidery with the paper pattern still attached to the back (Figure 12, p. 36), and a sampler, also with a pattern attached to the back (Figure 14, p. 38).

With the pattern attached, the embroidery could begin. Eleuthera had numerous ways to gauge her progress on a project. Trimming and some collars were measured in "teeth": "I come on very well with my trimming I have worked ten teeth already."⁴⁰ "Teeth"



Figure 12. Detail of unfinished white-work embroidery with the paper pattern still attached that was found in a queen's stitch purse (acc. 68.159a,b). Courtesy, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

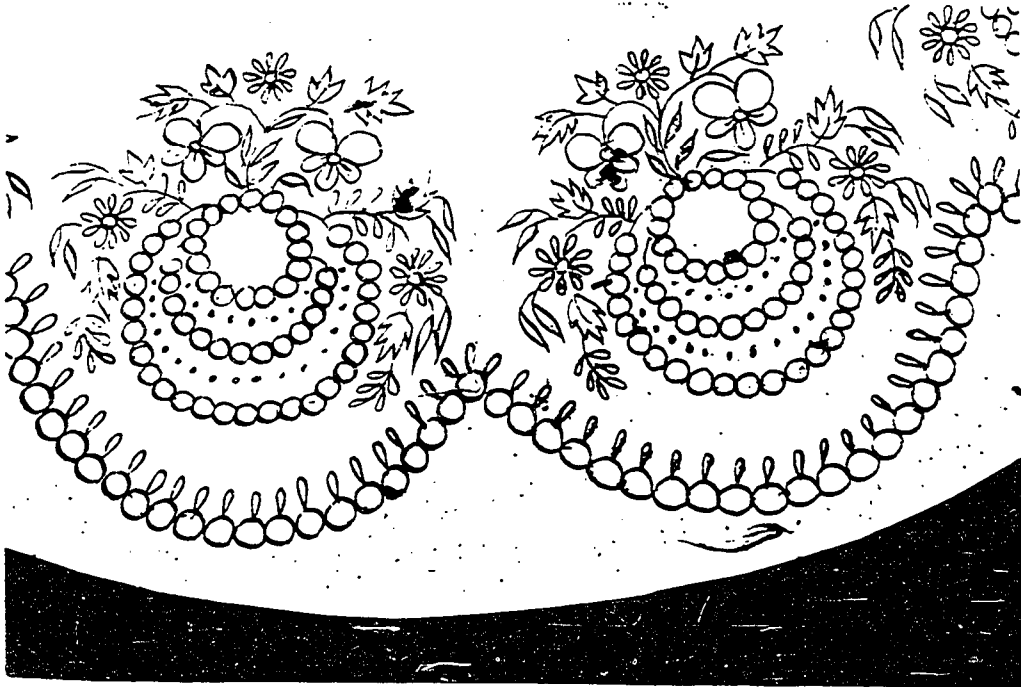


Figure 13. Detail of a paper pattern from the "Old Patterns for Embroidery" Book. Crowninshield Papers, acc. 471/C/44, Hagley Museum and Library.

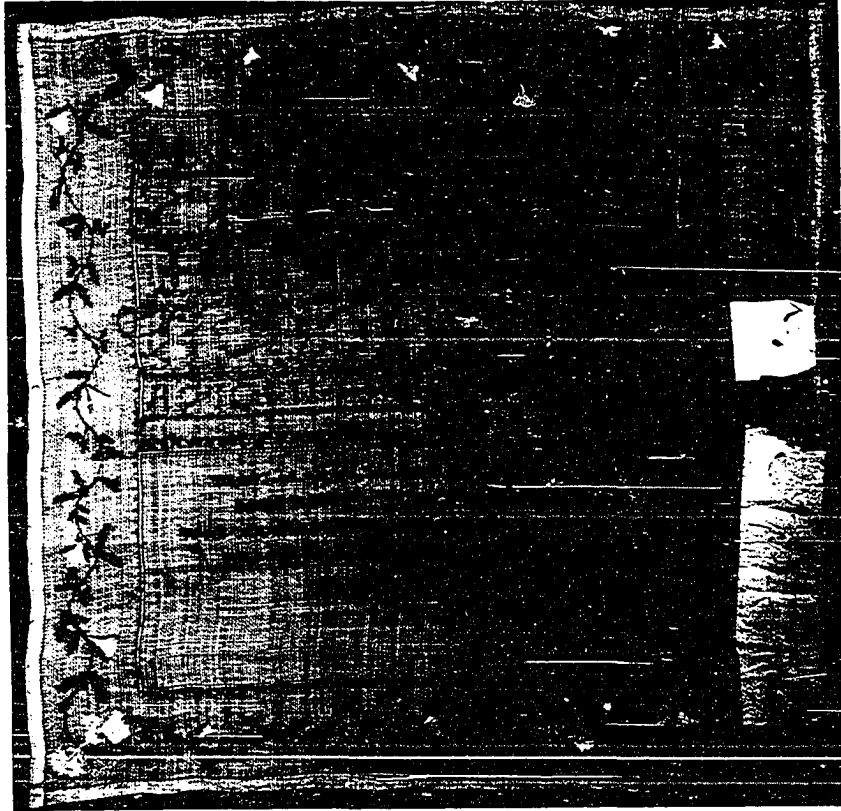


Figure 14. Detail of the back of a sampler showing the paper pattern still attached (acc. 87.3). Courtesy, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

refers to the notches in a design, such as on a collar (Figure 15, p. 40). Some designs were so large that they required multiple sheets of paper, and other projects combined two or more different designs. A handkerchief marked "E. du Pont" has four different designs, one in each corner (Figure 16, p. 41), and a pattern survives for one of them (Figure 13, p. 37). Multiple pages for a design provided Eleuthera with another way to measure progress: "I am now working at Sister's trimming and I have but one paper more to work of my share."⁴¹

To embroider a design with the paper pattern basted on the back, Eleuthera could only work from the front, and had to bury any knots in the surface of the design. This technique is verified by examining the back of the finished objects. On many collars no knots are on the back of the main embroidered section (Figure 17, p. 42). The stitches she used for these designs include: satin stitch, whip stitch, seed stitch, and eyelet stitch (Figure 18, p. 43); padded satin stitch and buttonhole stitch (Figure 6, p. 19); as well as french knots (Figure 19, p. 44).

Eleuthera and her sisters used the patterns creatively. Rather than mechanically reproducing the given designs, they combined multiple designs to produce endless variety. The same motif used on the corner of a handkerchief appears on a collar with a very different effect (Figure 13, p. 37). Another design is the dominant motif on one collar (Figure 20, p. 45) and a subtle border

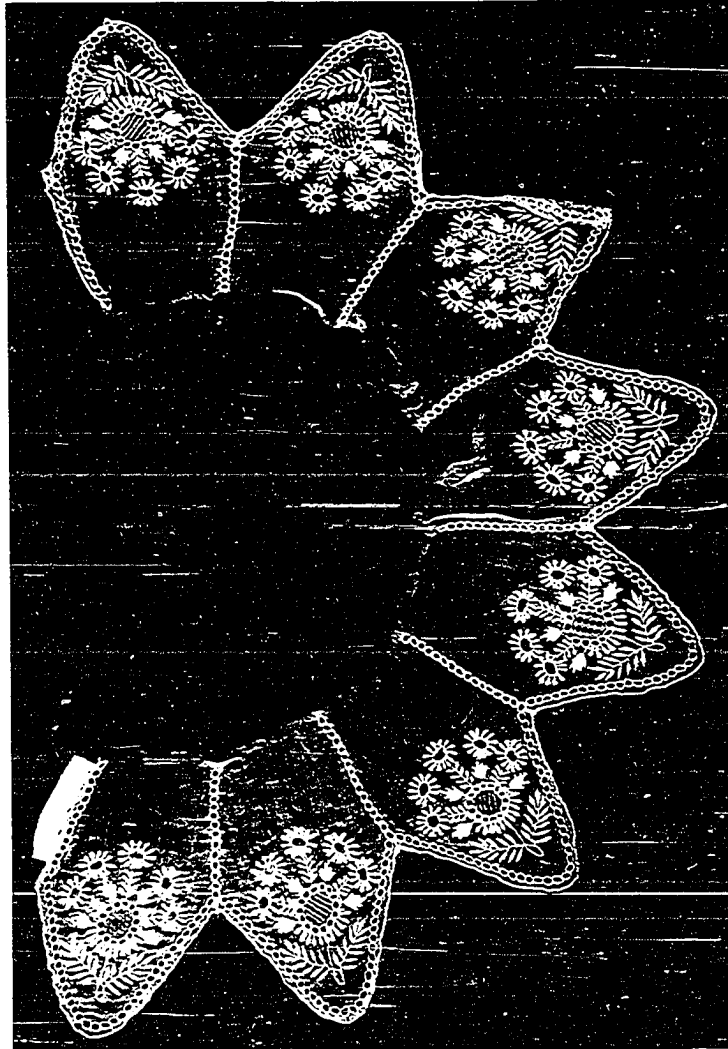


Figure 15. Collar worked by Victorine for Eleuthera
(acc. 71.15.180). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

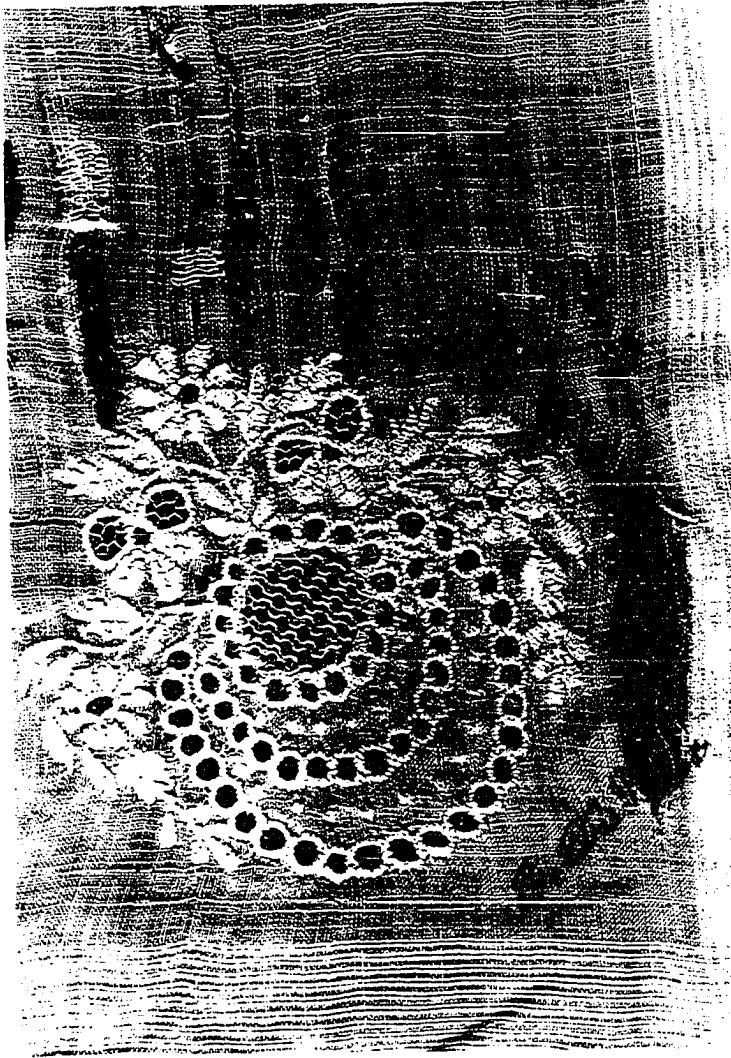


Figure 16. Detail of a handkerchief marked "E. Du Pont" (acc. 75.26.62). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

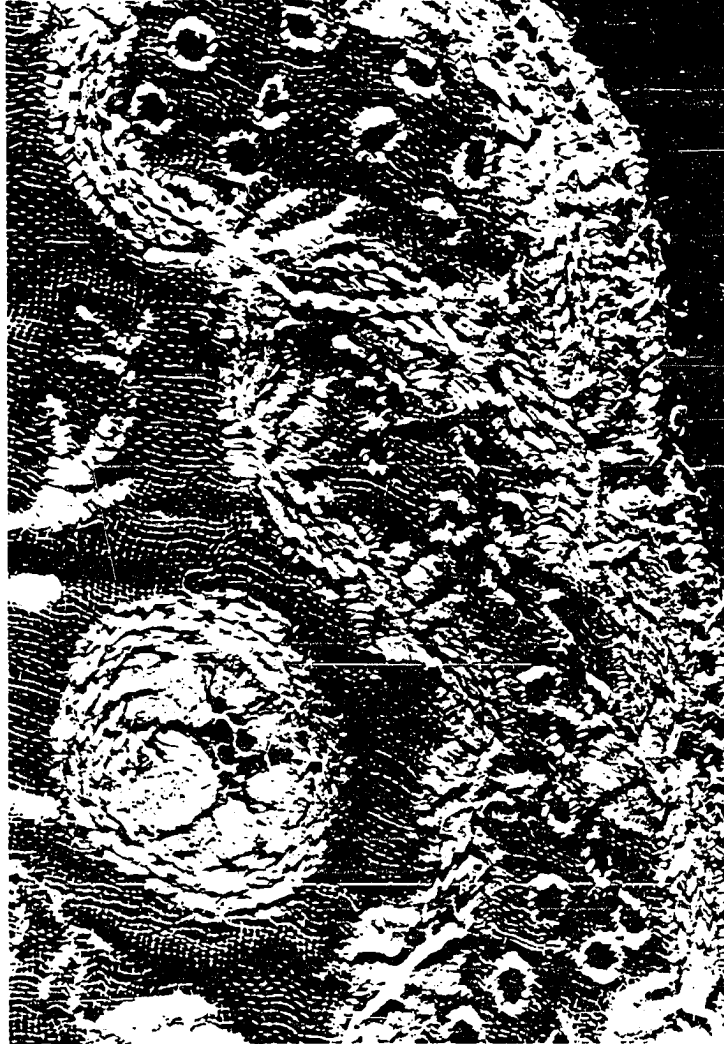


Figure 17. Detail of the back of a collar (acc. 59.68.2). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.



Figure 18. Detail of the front of a collar (acc. 59.68.2). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.



Figure 19. Detail of a shawl (acc. 71.15.4a) with a chain of french knots on the border. Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

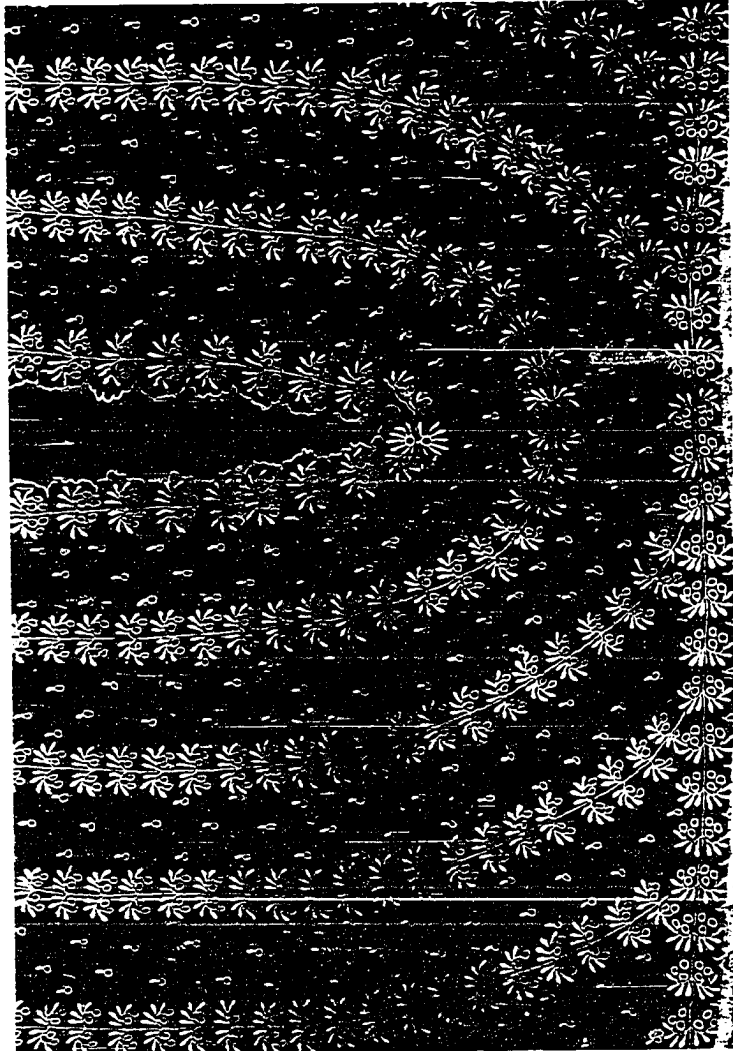


Figure 20. Detail of a yoked collar (acc. 71.15.130). Hagley Museum and Library.

on another (Figure 21, p. 47). Eleuthera and her sisters also produced variety by turning the pattern over to produce a mirror image of the design (Figure 22, p. 48). In some cases the pattern was abandoned altogether, and the designs were embroidered spontaneously: "My collar, I took off the pattern to day, but am going to add two little bunches."⁴² If a pattern was not used, knots should be visible on the back of the finished projects. This is the case with a dress and shawl where the design is similar to the pattern but not identical (Figure 19, p. 44), and the knots indicate that the piece was worked without an attached pattern. Other pieces have knots on the back and were also done without a pattern.

After Eleuthera completed her embroidery, she then finished off the project. She usually worked the edge with buttonhole stitches, and then cut the fabric up to the line of stitching (Figure 23, p. 49). In some cases, lace stitches were added to the center of flowers and leaves (Figure 6, p. 19): "I finished at last, my handkerchief yesterday but have still the lace stitches to make in it."⁴³ An alternative to needle lace was netting, which could be pulled or drawn to create lace. Netting was sewn on before any embroidery was done (Figure 24, p. 50), the pattern was then basted on, and the design embroidered with the stitches overlapping the netting. Eylet also created a lacy effect. The pattern was attached, and then the design was worked in a running stitch.



Figure 21. Detail of a piece of a collar (acc. 75.26.8a-f).
Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

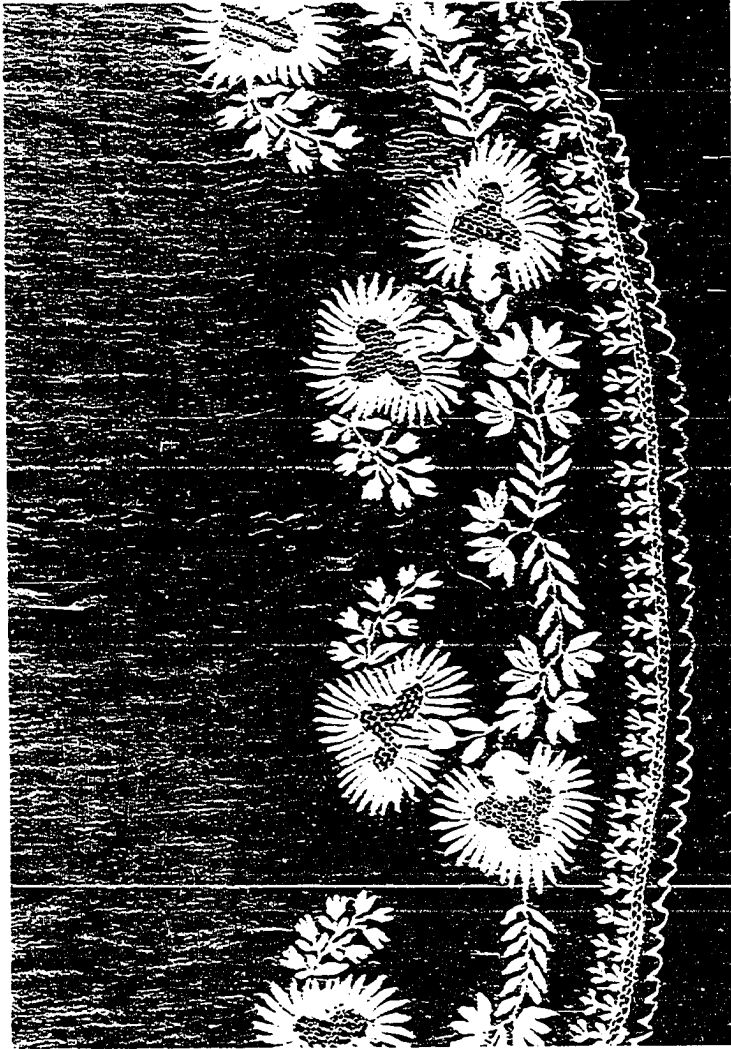


Figure 22. Detail of a collar (acc. 71.15.177). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.



Figure 23. Detail of a piece of appliqué (acc. 75.26.34). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.



Figure 24. Detail of the back of a collar (acc. 71.15.178).
Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

The paper pattern was removed, the holes cut, and then the cut edges were held back with eyelet stitches.

When all embroidery was done, some pieces were backed:

"Mother thinks the cuffs ought to be lined with yellow silk, because the purple streaks of the frock will not show the work to advantage"; while others were stiffened: "I hope you will like the collars on Lace I worked you . . . There ought to be a little collar of book muslin or something to raise them up a little."⁴⁴ The finished project may have required washing, depending on how dirty it got while it was worked or if a colored pattern had been used to transfer the design to the surface. Modern embroidery books advocate using transfers to outline the design on the fabric or pouncing the design on with colored chalk.⁴⁵ Since Eleuthera does not mention these techniques in her letters, and no physical evidence remains on the embroidery, it is questionable whether the yellow patterns used by the du Pont women are actually transfers.

Some embroidery projects, like dresses and caps, required assembling separate pieces. If assembled first, the embroidery ran over the seams (Figure 25, p. 52) in a flowing and continuous design. If embroidered first, and then assembled, the needleworker held small pieces of the garment while embroidering instead of a complete dress (Figure 26, p. 53). It was up to the seamstress to choose the method she preferred, and neither Eleuthera's letters nor the finished pieces indicate a preference; she used both techniques.



Figure 25. Detail of embroidery around the hem of a dress (acc. 71.15.10). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.



Figure 26. Detail of inside seam of a sleeve (acc. 59.68.27a).
Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

The time needed to complete these embroidered projects varied from a few days to weeks or months, depending on the complexity of the project, the number of distractions, and an adequate supply of materials. Plain sewing was often a one-day affair, and Eleuthera noted that she could pleat a handkerchief or ruffle or make a pen wiper in just a few hours. Usually, a project took less than a week. Eleuthera began sewing a baby frock on a Saturday and finished it by Monday.⁴⁶ A week before Margaretta's birthday, Eleuthera had yet to begin embroidering her present, but she did not seem to worry about being able to finish it. She embroidered cuffs for Evelina in less than a week.⁴⁷ On November 25, 1821, she wrote: "I began Lina's cuffs yesterday the pattern looks pretty & very neat;" then on December 1st: "I have finished the cuffs."⁴⁸ For Eleuthera, completing a project within an accepted period of time (one week) was a measure of industriousness. Speed was a virtue. "I worked a bunch on a collar that Ella has begun for C. Morris, just to convince her she could do more than 1 bunch a day, since I worked it in less than two hours by the watch."⁴⁹

Some projects necessarily required more time. Eleuthera was regularly assigned long lengths of trimming to embroider, and she diligently kept on sewing for weeks at a time. By November 1, 1821, she had sewn ten "teeth" of trimming, and a month later she had only sixteen teeth left to do.⁵⁰ She usually began work on her New Year's

gifts by the beginning of December, and started her trousseau just two months before the wedding.

If projects dragged on, Eleuthera felt obliged to explain why. Evelina's cuffs took three weeks because she used a new technique. A handkerchief took four weeks to do while visiting Paulina because it was not proper to sew when company was there. Other projects were held up due to missing materials, and in a few cases, Eleuthera's needle dragged due to lack of motivation. Mrs. R. S. Smith asked Eleuthera to sew a pair of mittens for a charitable fair. Eleuthera agreed, and Mrs. Smith then decided to cut out two pairs for her to make. Eight days later Eleuthera wrote: "To day I have done nothing but sew a little on one of my mittens."⁵¹

Considering the time and effort spent on the embroidery, it is not surprising that when the dress wore out the women attempted to salvage the embroidery. It was often cut off and appliquéd onto new fabric (Figure 23, p. 49), as two fragments of dresses or petticoats owned by Eleuthera indicate (Figures 27 and 28, pp. 56, 57). In 1832 Eleuthera wrote to Victorine: "I have disected half of your collar ready to transfer it to the lace when you have cut it out.- It is not very pleasant work as the muslin not being stiff it is not easy to cut it near the work."⁵² Of two surviving pieces with the same design, one of them is appliquéd (Figure 23, p. 49; and

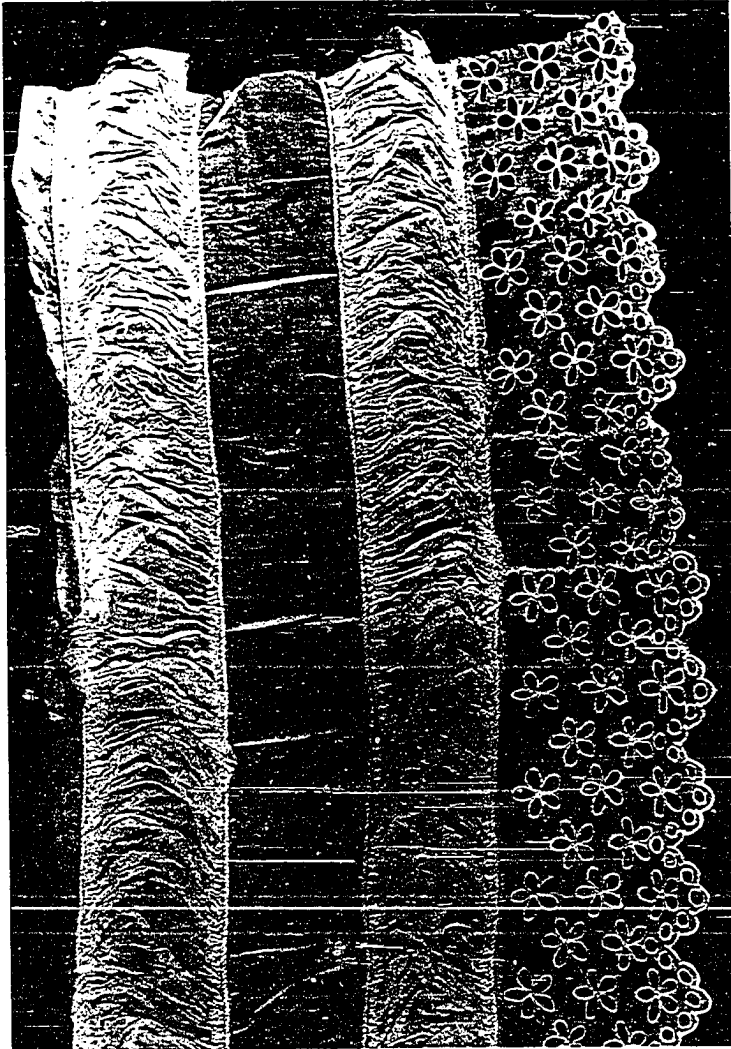


Figure 27. Detail of a remnant of a petticoat made by Polly Simmons for Eleuthera (acc. 75.26.61). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

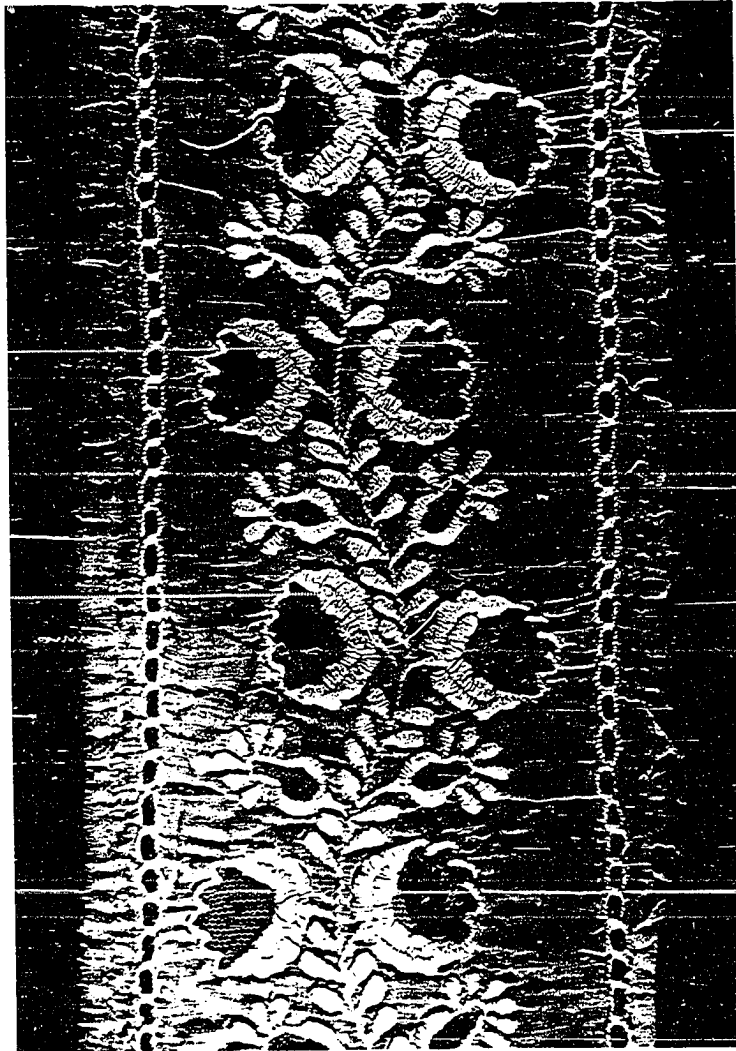


Figure 28. Detail of a fragment of a dress made by Victorine du Pont and Polly Simmons for Eleuthera (acc. 75.26.35). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

Figure 29, p. 59), which suggests that the appliquéd piece was recycled. Appliqué was also done merely to add another design to an existing embroidered collar, making a piece with some embroidery and some appliqué (Figure 24, p. 49).

The Finished Product

Eleuthera's letters indicate that she was proud of her needlework and the sewing talent of her sisters and friends. She measured her skill against the work of professionals: "I gave Paulina the cap yesterday: she & Lot think it a beauty Paulina has a sweet set of little things: all so neatly made & some very pretty work. 2 caps from Paris are beauties.- I think however mine is quite as handsome as any." Sewing was a way to publicly express her talents in design and her skill with the needle. "I went over the creek and presented my cap.- never was there any body more charmed than Julia! and the whole family praised it up to the skies.- Cousin Irvine even condescended to examine it!" When Eleuthera embroidered items, they were intended for public display. She sewed projects to be worn (caps, collars, dresses and handkerchiefs) used publicly (handkerchief boxes, pin cushions, and pen wipers). This was a conscious and deliberate way to demonstrate her skill and to



Figure 29. Detail of a collar (acc. 71.15.179). Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

proudly wear the talents of her friends:

Tell Meta that I wore her collars & that I positively was attacked by every person who knew me sufficiently with "O how beautiful, that is the handsomest work I ever saw." I was quite delighted to answer it was my sister Meta's.⁵³

When sewing was given to friends, it was meant to be worn or displayed. Occasionally she and Victorine had to remind Sophie of her duty: "I am quite vexed my dear Sophy that you have not worn that pretty handkerchief which Polly made you."⁵⁴ By wearing their friends' embroidery, the du Ponts displayed another woman's skill and their close ties to the needleworker. Needlework demonstrated one woman's skill to other women and to men, and was also a physical reminder of the bonds between women, and between women and men. Eleuthera made a pen wiper for Tom's office, and then explained to him: "I intended my pen wiper to occupy a station on your table at the office, to cheer your sight with its brilliancy: and there I hope you have allowed it to remain,- as it will serve to remind you the oftener of me."⁵⁵

Since so much of Eleuthera's sewing was meant to be worn or used, she kept abreast of current fashions. Dressing inappropriately would invite public criticism, as in the case of Hannah Ann Janney:

her dress which was highly outrée, did not prepossess me much in her favor- She had on a black satin dress very short over this a beautiful sprigged swiss muslin apron very short . . . altogether drest to death.

When properly attired, women could make a very good impression, as Eleuthera explained using the comments of her younger brother Alexis:

"Why how you've changed" - I smiled- "How changed"- "Why I never saw any one so altered"- "Altered for the worse" said I laughing "Oh no! for the better, you've grown a great deal prettier" so much for the effects of dress.⁵⁶

Eleuthera and her sisters combined the hand-embroidered items they made or were given to create fashionable and appropriate costumes. Everyday wear along the Brandywine required far less attention than dresses for parties and balls in Delaware, Philadelphia, and Washington. Making sure that she was appropriately attired was a major concern when she was away from home. Her clothing made a public statement about herself, her family, and her friends. She displayed her own and others skill with embroidery, and she also affected how others viewed her and her family, which could affect her family's reputation. Eleuthera was aware of her sister's concern when she wrote Victorine from Alexandria: "I write this to console you about my dress for I assure you I do very well so do not vex yourself about it I pray."⁵⁷

Eleuthera's appearance at parties was the result of the combined efforts of many women:

The evening was still more agreeable than that here.- . . . (I forgot to tell you, my dress!) It consisted of a sprigged muslin with the lace trimming you gave me basted at the bottom & three rows of Meta's crepe lisse folds on the top It looks very well. I had on my satin spencer, & your heart necklace.

On October 16, 1826, she wore Margareta's wedding dress to a party, and later she directed Sophie to return Victorine's shoes, for "she is shoeless in their absence."⁵⁸ By combining their sewing talents and sharing their finished clothes, Eleuthera and her sisters sought to ensure public approval and praise for their appearance.

Even though she often found it entertaining, sewing was a form of work for Eleuthera. At the age of twelve, Eleuthera wrote to Victorine about her sewing: "I am very industrious indeed." On another occasion she wrote: "I hope you will like the collars on Lace I worked you. It is my first trial of this kind and I found it more difficult than working on muslin."⁵⁹ Direction of needlework projects was Victorine's responsibility. Victorine usually assigned Eleuthera a certain amount of needlework, and Eleuthera felt guilty when something prevented her from completing her assignment:

I have not yet begun my night gown. Mama cannot cut it out without one of yours that has a seam in the back. I suppose you have taken it with you for it is not here- It vexes me very much to think that I cannot fulfil your wishes and have it most done when you return. I am afraid you will be displeased with me but indeed it is not my fault.

She felt obliged to explain why she was unable to sew. Her reasons included lack of materials, lack of time, other obligations, and etiquette. Sewing, or work, was also a way Eleuthera could forget her other concerns. When she was left alone at Eleutherian Mills,

she wrote to Victorine: "Yesterday afternoon I sewed furiously & did not feel my loneliness till evening; then I felt indeed forlorn.- & while sitting up in your room was thinking of you."⁶⁰ When Eleuthera began to sew, she was commencing a project that represented the work expected of her and the networks that connected her to others.

CONCLUSION

Eleuthera's letters, patterns, and embroidery reveal insights into her work and her world. Her sewing was an obligation, not a mere pastime. It was a way for her to demonstrate her industriousness and to cement her social networks. Emotional and physical threads connected her circle of friends, threads that were displayed in each completed needlework project. But some questions remain. Does Eleuthera's needlework illustrate her gender or her social class? Did she sew a web of friendship with other women or with other members of her class?

This issue of gender versus class is illuminated by whom she sewed with; whom she sewed for; and where, how, and what she sewed. When Eleuthera picked up her needle to sew powder bags, she was with a group of working-class women. Together they completed the project. When a big project like a trousseau was underway, it was accomplished with the help of wives and daughters of the powder mill workers. Eleuthera sewed handkerchiefs, collars, work bags, thread cases, and pin cushions as premiums for the workers' daughters in the Brandywine Manufacturers Sunday School.⁶¹ She and Victorine even opened a sewing school for these daughters.

With other women Eleuthera was free to sew on a wide range of projects, from undergarments to fancy work. This flexibility was limited if men were present. Her sewing projects were planned with other women--her mother, sisters, friends, or a seamstress like Mrs. Waterman. She used her needle to provide support for important female and family events, making gifts for a marriage or the birth of a baby. Each completed needlework project was proudly worn or given as a way to display the skill of women and the importance of family.

These examples all reveal ways in which her needlework bonded Eleuthera to women of all classes; however, her needle also connected her very firmly to her own class. Some projects were done with the help of working-class women, but Eleuthera always sewed gifts such as collars and cuffs herself, and these were usually given as presents to other members of her social class. She did sew premiums for the working-class girls, but they did not reciprocate with patterns, fabric, and other gifts like the women in her own sphere. Sitting in a group of women, Eleuthera did have more control over the type of sewing she could do, but only if she was with women of the same class or a lower class. Eleuthera explained that if she was with women of a higher class, she could only sew fancy work if anything at all. These provide a few illustrations of how her social class as well as her gender influenced her work.

Eleuthera's sewing also exposes questions concerning her social networks. Her needle connected her to others and created a web of relationships. The basis for these relationships was a cycle of giving. Instead of a direct exchange of gifts, Eleuthera was involved in a circular flow of small gifts. For instance, she received a pattern from someone, worked that pattern on a collar, and gave it to someone else. Thus it is a chain of gifts involving numerous people rather than a direct exchange between two of her friends. These gifts could be patterns, fabric, thread, sewing, or a finished piece. Each gift created an obligation on the part of the receiver to return the favor in a gift of equal value and distinguished her group from others.

It is this obligation to repay the gift that limited Eleuthera's exchange of needlework to members of her own class. She gave premiums to the working-class girls in the Sunday School, but these gifts were not part of her elaborate cycle of giving. Participation in the exchange of patterns, fabric, thread, and finished sewing required money and time and was not possible for working-class women. Thus, even though Eleuthera's needlework did connect her to women of all classes, the elaborate cycle of giving took place only among the sisterhood of women in her own class.

The importance of sewing among women has often been explored, and Eleuthera's needle does reveal a network of connections with other women. However, her sewing also illustrates how her sphere

overlaps with men's spheres.⁶² For instance her brother Henry learned to sew from Sophie.⁶³ When Eleuthera was asked to sew a project, the request could come from one of her brothers. She sewed black powder bags and sheets for Alfred, and she sewed for her Antoine Bidermann's horse. When she was learning to sew, Eleuthera was taught to make men's shirts as well as ladies' nightgowns: "I am also making a shirt for Alfred. You know Spec [the Spectator] says that it is indispensable for a woman to know how to make a shirt."⁶⁴

Learning to sew men's shirts prepared Eleuthera for the next stage of her life--marriage. This thesis has focused on the years 1816-1834 when Eleuthera was young and unmarried. A new stage of her life began in September 1834 when she married Thomas Mackie Smith. As a wife she had more household duties, including cleaning, cooking, gardening, and supervising the servants. Since it was her own home and not her parent's, Eleuthera was solely responsible for the smooth operation of the household. In addition, since her husband was a physician, she assisted him with his medical practice by keeping his books and receiving patients when he was out. In this new role as wife, Eleuthera's sewing changed. She spent more time sewing Tom's shirts and mending their clothes and less time doing fancy needlework. With all her new responsibilities, she still managed to make a few baby caps and wedding presents, but not as many as before her marriage.

Eleuthera never became a mother. Her husband died in 1852, and after sixteen years of marriage she was a widow and childless. She remained on the Brandywine, became even more involved in the Methodist Church, and devoted herself to her roles as sister and aunt. The networks she established with the help of her needle in her early years continued. She died in 1876 at the age of seventy. Her embroidery lived on. It was passed down through her family, and her letters and patterns were saved by her sister Sophie and then given to her nephew Henry Algernon du Pont and her great-nephew Pierre Samuel du Pont. Her embroidery is the tangible legacy of Eleuthera's work and networks.

NOTES

1. Eleuthera du Pont to Margaretta Lamot, January 22, 1824. Winterthur Manuscripts (WMSS) 6/C/23, Hagley Museum and Library (HM&L). Wilmington, Del.
2. The explosion was on Saturday August 25, 1832 and is mentioned in Louise du Pont Crowninshield, and Pierre S. du Pont (eds.), Tancopanic Chronicle, 1830-1834 vol. 3 (Wilmington, Del.: Privately printed, 1949). 48.
3. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine du Pont Bauduy, Jan. 30, 1832, and Monday [May 1833], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
4. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Monday [September 1829]. WMSS 6/C/24. HM&L.
5. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, March 4, 1833, WMSS 6/C/24. HM&L.
6. Eleuthera du Pont to Thomas Mackie Smith, February 19, [1834], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
7. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, [May 16, 1832], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
8. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, [1833-1834], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Sophie du Pont saved a baby cap from her baby that either miscarried or died at birth, and it is in HM&L, WMSS 9/F Box 189. Eleuthera saved fabric bought to make clothes for her baby. After her miscarriage or baby's death, she used this material to make a pillow for another woman's baby. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, [1852]. WMSS 6/C/27, HM&L.
9. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Monday [April 1831], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
10. Eleuthera du Pont to Henry du Pont, December 25, 1829. WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

11. Eleuthera du Pont to Henry du Pont, April 24, 1830, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
12. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Monday [December 1829], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
13. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Saturday [February 16, 1833], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
14. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, February 21, 1825, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L.
15. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, March 5, [1828], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Sunday [1832], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
16. Cambric, "A kind of fine white linen, originally made at Cambay (Also applied to an imitation made of hard-spun cotton yarn)." Bobbinet or bobbinet, "A kind of machine-made cotton net, originally imitating the lace made with bobbins on a pillow." Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 48, pp. 959-960.
17. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Thursday [February 1833], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
18. Foulard, "A thin flexible material of silk, or of silk mixed with cotton." Stamped fabric, "Ornamented with an embossed pattern or design." Oxford English Dictionary, pp. 491, 796.
19. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Thursday [February 1833], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Specific stores are mentioned in letters: Mrs. Krips: Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Monday [April 1831], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Mrs. Woosters and Van Harlingen's: Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, March 29, [1834], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Mrs. R.S. Smith: Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, March 12, 1833, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. In Robert Desilver, Desilver's Philadelphia Directory, and Strangers' Guide 1831 (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1831), Mrs. Krips dry goods store is listed at 171 S. Second St. (p. 117), Ann Wooster's dry goods store at the southwest corner of Second and Spruce Streets (p. 237), John M. Van Harlingen's dry good store at 138 Chestnut St. (p. 220), and Richard S. Smith, merchant, at 82 S. Front Street (p. 198).
20. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Thursday [December 1829], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

21. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, May 2, 1821, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, [February-March 1828], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
22. Crowninshield Papers, acc. 471/C, Box 44; HM&L.
23. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Wednesday [1832], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
24. Eleuthera du Pont to Margaretta Lamot, March 14, 1824, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Friday [April 1831], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
25. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Tuesday [November-December, 1849], WMSS 6/C/27, HM&L.
26. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, December 8, 1821, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L.
27. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Monday [April, 1831], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
28. Eleuthera du Pont to Thomas Mackie Smith, May 13, 1834, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
29. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Tuesday [January 15, 1832], WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, [February 1833], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Wednesday January, 1822, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Lace sampler, acc. 70.25.86, Hagley Museum Collection.
30. None of Eleuthera's sewing accessories have been located, however Hagley Museum has Victorine's work table (acc. 61 G51 T10.91) and thimble (acc. 72.4.12), and Sophie's work bag (acc. 75.26.58) and sewing scissors (acc. 65.7.46a,b).
31. Betty-Bright Low, and Jacqueline Hinsley, Sophie du Pont: A Young Lady in America (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), 78.
32. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Friday [May 25, 1832], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
33. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, Monday [April 1831], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
34. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, June 14, [1832], and November 15, 1830, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

35. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Friday [May 25, 1832], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, February 25, 1833, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
36. Rozsika Parker, The Subversive Stitch (London: Women's Press, 1986), figs. 4, 5.
37. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Saturday [February 16, 1833], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine du Pont, October 1, 1830, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
38. Period advice books recommend transferring the pattern to the fabric by either outlining the whole design in running stitch or using indigo ink; An American Lady, The Ladies' Hand-book of Embroidery... (New York: J.S. Redfield, 1844); and John Cassell, The Ladies' Work-Book... (New York: A. Montgomery, 1853).
39. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, May 3, 1828, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Thomas Mackie Smith, December 16, 1833, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
40. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, November 1, [1821], WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L.
41. Eleuthera du Pont to Margaretta Lamot, February 26, 1824, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L.
42. Eleuthera du Pont to Thomas Mackie Smith, December 16, 1833, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
43. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, June 14, 1832, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
44. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, December 8, 1821, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Evelina du Pont Bidermann, March 23, 1828, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.
45. Bibliothèque D.M.C., Broderies Tchequeslovaques (Mulhouse, France: Dollfus-Mieg, 1955), opp. figure 41.
46. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, April 23, 1821, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L.
47. A pattern for Ayrshire work in Parker, Subversive Stitch, fig. 89, reads: "If Good work & done in 10 days will be paid." Thus professional embroiderers were expected to complete a project within ten days.

48. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, November 25, 1821 and December 1, 1821, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L.

49. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, September 4, 1830, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

50. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, November 1, 1821, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, December 8, 1821, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L.

51. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, March 12, 1833, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

52. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, February 3, 1832, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

53. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Wednesday [May 16, 1832], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, May 1, 1825, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, Saturday [1833-1834], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

54. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, May 1, 1825, WMSS 6/C/23; HM&L.

55. Eleuthera du Pont to Thomas Mackie Smith, December 12, 1833, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

56. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, October 22, 1830, and [Friday April 1831], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

57. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, October 16, 1826, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L.

58. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, October 20, 1826, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Sophie du Pont, March 4, 1828, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

59. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, October 12, 1818, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Evelina du Pont Bidermann, March 23, 1828, WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

60. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, December 2, 1819, WMSS 6/C/23, HM&L. Eleuthera du Pont to Victorine Bauduy, [Friday 1832], WMSS 6/C/24, HM&L.

61. Information on premiums can be found in: Premium Book 1826, acc. 389, Box 3, WMSS, HM&L; and Girls Premium Book, 1826-1835, acc. 389, Box 3, WMSS, HM&L.

62. For a discussion on separate spheres, see: Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1785-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Carl Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Joan M. Jensen Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); and Barbara Welter "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" American Quarterly 18, no. 2, pt.1 (Summer 1966): 151-174.

63. Low and Hinsley. Sophie du Pont, 76.

64. Eleuthera du Pont to Margareta Lamot, January 4, 1821, WMSS acc. 761, Box 6, HM&L.

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