

# THE CLOTHES PRESS

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

In September we held an exciting working discussion entitled *Acadian Costume in Nova Scotia: Myth & Mystery* with several devoted students of Acadian dress. We talked and talked - for six hours! Even then, there was more to say, but one exasperated husband broke down the door to retrieve his wife and head home for supper. The articles in this issue provide brief summaries of the presentations that each of us made about our individual work in progress. The purpose of the discussion was to determine if we could collaborate on a publication for the Costume Society about Acadian dress. There are many perspectives, but thankfully we were able to work together to find the commonalities to incorporate into a reference work for the general public. We will continue to work toward this goal.

Jenny has done it again with *The Shoe Report!* Read all about her thorough and illuminating research on 18thc women's shoes starting on page 8. Please feel welcome to develop a report to highlight your own work. We look forward to your photos and notes that will help us all to learn more about dress in Nova Scotia.

An exhibit by CSNS member Elaine MacKay entitled *Fashion and the Women of Historic Kingston* (Ontario) opened recently at Queen's University. Elaine kindly donated an exquisite catalogue to CSNS for a door prize. Join us for the AGM on Saturday, April 12 for a chance to take this most informative book home with you.

Remember, tax time is coming! The Costume Society of Nova Scotia is a registered charity and tax receipts will be issued for all donations of \$10 and over.

Happy reading, *Sally Erskine Doucette*, Editor, The Clothes Press

(Chair Karen Pinsent is attending to family business. Our support and love go to her at this time.)

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**December 10:** Christmas Party & D'Arcy Poultney (to be confirmed)  
@ 7:30 pm, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

**April 12, 2008:** Costume Society of Nova Scotia AGM at Women's Institute House at the corner of Young Ave. and Inglis Street, Halifax (9am-5pm)

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Just a note to remind those members who have not renewed their CSNS memberships, that unless you renew, we won't be able to send you anymore newsletters! I know I always look forward to the newsletter and exchange of ideas by way of the e-mail list, and I hope you do too.

Perhaps you would like to become more involved in the group. Is there a committee you'd like to work on? We're always open to ideas from the membership \* just let us know. I'm sure you'll agree that being part of the CSNS is well worth the price. Please contact me if you are not sure about the status of your membership.

*Linda Badcock*, Membership Chair (LBadcock@gov.nl.ca)



*Acadian Costume made for Grand Pré NHS made by Gail Hamlin see p. 2*

## DRESS NOVA SCOTIA: ACADIAN COSTUME WORKSHOP

### ACADIAN COSTUME IN NOVA SCOTIA: MYTH & MYSTERY

An introduction by Sally Erskine Doucette

A number of threads about the Costume Society were drawn together into the idea to create a reference publication for use by the general public. Acadian costume became the place to start following an interesting discussion on the yahoo list. A number of questions were posed and there was sufficient interest to hold further discussions about the nature of Acadian dress. The event is subtitled "Myth & Mystery" because there seems to be a wealth of questionable information (source unknown), and because, in fact, we don't have a great deal of evidence about pre-deportation Acadian dress.

Several costume researchers agreed to make brief presentations. These were interlaced and followed by much questioning, sharing of illustrations and comments, and general costume talk. Before the afternoon was over, we focused on the question of how to incorporate our individual research into a useful research tool, without compromising anyone's potential to publish extensive individual research. We wanted to illustrate the diversity of Acadian dress over the past 400 years. We reached the conclusion that this is a highly complex and controversial subject. The consensus is that it is not possible to generalize about the definitive Acadian costume. As with any other culture, dress is dependant on many things: social status, climate, time period, region, perspective and function among them. For the purpose of this publication, each researcher will represent an individual identity from their work and portray them. These snapshots of Acadians will enable the public to become familiar with the variety of possible individuals / roles in Acadian society that they may want to represent with costumes of their own making. It is hoped that this approach will encourage the focus of research to be on real people within the context of their lives, rather than on stereotypical generalizations. We welcome both your comments on this approach, and your contributions to the publication.

### CONSERVATION SUPPLIES

THE CSNS MAINTAINS A SMALL INVENTORY OF CONSERVATION SUPPLIES SUITED TO TEXTILE CARE. THESE ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE BY CSNS MEMBERS.

### ARISTOCRAT, PEASANT, FESTIVAL AND BEYOND: ACADIAN COSTUME IN NOVA SCOTIA 2003-2004-2005

By Sally Erskine Doucette

The years 2003-2005 were high festival times in Nova Scotia for Acadians. Pubnico, the longest continuous Acadian settlement, celebrated its anniversary in 2003; the 400th anniversary of Port Royal was marked in 2004; the *Congres Mondial Acadien* was held in the province in 2004; and the 250th anniversary of the Deportation occurred in 2005: all major events, promoted as exciting tourist themes and the trigger for over 100 family reunions.

These events sparked a flurry of preparation, and in 2003. I started to hear rumours that individuals and institutions were busy making Acadian costumes. My ears perked up and my curiosity burned. I wasn't aware that there was such a thing as an "Acadian costume" so I became eager to investigate just what, exactly were people making, and what research did they base their costumes on.

I traveled the province with pen and camera in hand, and an open mind. It turned out that a great deal of research had been done by a great many people and the sewing machines were whirring to keep up with the demand. The interesting thing to me was that people had all done their own research (which was understandably kept close to the chest when I inquired), and come out with individual results, all different, for the most part: the colours were different, the materials were different, the styles were different.

Several trails did lead back to the oldest surviving Acadian costume: the Bellefontaine wedding ensemble from Chezsetcook (1847), in the Nova Scotia Museum collection. (see photo p. 12) This wedding ensemble was translated into everyday pre-Deportation peasant wear. Representations of early aristocratic explorers abounded. Depending on the function of the costume, financial budgets, time frames, and regional traditions, Acadian costumes were made as true period representations, or cotton broadcloth visual images, or hand woven reproductions, or theatre costumes with quick change adaptations. There were many red, white and blue festival costumes, and modern takes for celebrations. And there were sometimes no costumes at all - because some people didn't think that Acadians should wear "costumes" anymore.

What these various costumes represent is the full range of what it means to be Acadian today. Each community has their own traditions which are authentic and to be respected. It is important to think about and to document the sources of our costumes so we can learn from the history and share the experience.

## ELEMENTS OF FASHION TRENDS AND STYLE IN TRADITIONALLY MADE ACADIAN CLOTHING

By Annette White

The purpose of my study was to determine at what time period Acadian women of the Maritimes began to incorporate elements of fashion trends and style in traditionally made clothing. Although we know Acadians cultivated hemp and flax and raised sheep for wool to be used domestically in clothing as well as for trade, this study wishes to add another dimension to Acadian clothing. The more I tried to pinpoint a transitional period in which this change occurred, the more I realized this phenomenon was present even before the Deportation and throughout the 18th, 19th and early 20th century. My research is largely based on artifacts and documents from southeast New Brunswick.

In his recent publication, *Les Acadiens avant 1755*, historian Regis Brun sets the context for this study by analyzing some early sources which indicate that fashion was indeed integrated in Acadian clothing even before the Expulsion. Brun studies coastal traffic and trade in the Minas Basin area from as early as 1691. He mentions that indeed merchandise was available to the Acadians of that area and that 'not all Acadian women made cloth or knitted stockings.' He gives Abraham Boudreau as an example. Documents show that he brought back on his ship from Boston, at one time, over 300 yards of assorted fabrics as well as lace and men's stockings. Again in 1707, he reiterates that the situation has not changed and that fabrics and woolens are being brought from France this time, along with other tools and necessities. Keeping in mind regional variation, change over time and class, fashion elements can be ascertained in varying degrees in Acadian clothing by examining sources such as inventories, ledgers, lists, journals and interviews, as well as some existing original cloth fragments and garments. It is especially through genealogical sources that it becomes apparent that a number of Acadians mentioned in documents, who may not have been perceived as being Acadians upon first glance, had access to fashionable goods and some were in possession of such clothing items.

Another recent publication by Marielle Cormier Boudreau, Jocelyne Mathieu, and Isabelle Simard in the Université de Moncton's journal also reveals similar information for a later time period. In their comparative analysis of wedding apparel worn by women from Quebec and Acadia, their findings indicate that fashion trends appear to be undeniable throughout the 20th century. In this study the authors have determined that for the first half of the 20th century, close to three quarter of Acadian women purchased their wedding dress. Piecing together this information gives us a broader perspective of what Acadian women's clothing may have resembled.

Since before the Expulsion of the Acadians up to the present time, fashion trends and style have played a part in the clothing of Acadian women and a closer look at documentation is essential.



This bonnet is similar in cut to the other 'câlines' from the collection but it is more elaborate. It features embroidery in a decorative floral motif. A fitted bonnet of tulle, edged with lace was apparently later tacked over it. Coll. du Musée acadien de l'Université de Moncton acc.no. XX 2114 .

Photos by Bernard LeBlanc

## COSTUMES FOR GRAND PRÉ NHP, 2004

By Gail Hamlin See photograph on Page 1

I was contacted by Roger Sevigny of Grand Pré National Historic Park early in 2002 for the purpose of preparing Acadian clothing for the upcoming 400th Celebrations. I was given access to all clothing at Grand Pré. Many pieces I directly copied and some were modified because much research has been done since the pieces were acquired. My aim was to produce hand finished garments which would resemble those worn in the Claude Picard paintings. They were all constructed of appropriate natural fabrics.

My usual occupation is that of a tailor to the British forces in America during the Revolutionary War. So the exercise was an interesting diversion. I also do clothing of the French Indian War time period but much of that parallels the clothing used at Louisbourg and is more sophisticated than Acadian clothing.

It was very interesting and enlightening to meet with these ladies, especially Judith Rygiel and I wish them well in their search for an Acadian costume.

## "EXOTIC DRESSERS": ACADIAN WOMEN IN 19TH CENTURY NOVA SCOTIA

By Judith Rygiel, PhD

(A summary of the presentation offered in Halifax, Nova Scotia on September 22, 2007.)

Searching for the exotic was a cultural experience for many upper class people in both America and Europe during the nineteenth century. Whether it was the extended European tour as a rite of passage for both young men and women or a vacation to an exotic site these trips were undertaken to broaden travelers understanding of the world. A cultural minority in southwestern Nova Scotia was also deemed exotic enough to warrant traveling to Nova Scotia as a cultural experience in the second half of the nineteenth century. Here visitors could examine the "exotic and primitive" Acadian women still wearing traditional Norman dress of their eighteenth century according to one tourist promoter. Acadian men scarcely deserved notice since their clothing resembled garb commonly worn by most men of the time.

Part of my current research on Acadian dress in the Maritimes focuses on observations made by two distinct types of visitors during two different time periods. Their comments are germane in assessing whether Acadian women were becoming "more modern" by relinquishing a "traditional" dress and what factors might have encouraged such behavior. Prior to the 1850s missionaries, military officers and the occasional visitor were travelers who briefly passed through the Maritimes on some proscribed business. Their travel journals often included brief remarks on Acadian culture, including dress. Two Nova Scotia travelers, Captain Moosom in the 1830s, and a British officer by the name of Playfair in the late 1840s, both described in some detail components of Acadian women's dress in the district of Clare.<sup>1</sup>

Cultural visitors were a different breed. They were the quintessential tourist who had time and money to spend on a cultural experience. They were typically well off people on a holiday who were taking advantage of the new modes of transportation and spending a few days or weeks in the province. Nearly all travel literature mentioning Acadians in Nova Scotia focuses on the southwestern area of Clare and Yarmouth County.<sup>2</sup> Two major factors promoted Acadians as "Other" in these districts. Literary interests and commerce spurred a new regard on Acadians living in southwestern Nova Scotia. Many visitors had read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1847 seminal poem, "Évangéine". This poem evoked a nostalgia for a simpler life style and a sympathy for the plight of the dispossessed Acadian people. It was immensely popular and went into numerous reprints and translations.

Frederick Cozzen, the first travel writer who included documentary evidence of Acadian women's dress, carried a copy



*Saulnierville in southwestern Nova Scotia, c 1905. Note two of the ladies with black headscarves. From Lucille Comeau's "Sont les gens de Saulnierville," monographie paroissiale, 1980, page 51*

of the poem with him while visiting Nova Scotia in the early 1850s. He commissioned two ambrotypes of Acadian women from the Chezzetcook area going to sell their wares at the Halifax market. Both women were wearing a homespun dress and a headscarf. He also coined the term "Evangeline Trail" in his book *A Month With the Bluenose*, published in 1859.<sup>3</sup>

Most cultural visitors carried a copy of Longfellow's poem as a guide while visiting Acadian sites in western Nova Scotia. Their journeys, like Cozzen's, were not an exhaustive survey of Acadian culture but only a cursive look at a few Acadian districts. Unlike Cozzen, who arrived by ship in Halifax, most cultural visitors arriving at the end of the 19th century usually started their trip in Yarmouth and terminated in either Halifax or Windsor, the terminus of two short line railway systems. Visiting Acadians in Cape Breton or in the Antigonish area was not on their radar as tourist facilities were mostly undeveloped.

Entrepreneurs, such as the principals in the Yarmouth Steamship Company in 1893 and both the Coast Railway and the Dominion Atlantic Railway in 1897, capitalized on the popularity of Longfellow's poem to promote travel to southwestern Nova Scotia. They built new hotels in Yarmouth to accommodate visitors arriving in their steamships from Boston and New York. They also built short line railroads, also with a terminus in Yarmouth, to link this town to the Annapolis Valley where one could visit Grand Pré, one of the principal sites of the 1755 expulsion. These capitalists printed glossy brochures promoting travel and used commissioned images of "primitive" Acadian women for their campaigns. Featured in the Coast Railway's 1897 brochure was a "Characteristic Group" of four Acadian women from Abrams River near Tusket. There was no doubt that these women appeared exotic with their voluminous black dresses and black head scarves tied firmly beneath their chins in a large knot.<sup>4</sup>

Eliza Brown Chase and Jeannette Grant were two women visitors arriving in Yarmouth by steamship for a cultural visit at the end of the century.<sup>5</sup> Both called themselves “pilgrims” to the land of Évangéline, with Eliza coming in 1884 and Jeannette in 1892. Both spent time in the Clare district observing how Acadian women dressed and kept their households. Eliza noticed that Acadian women were slowly adapting to modernity and was not convinced that this was progress. She hoped that Acadian women would not lose their “sweet simplicity, frankness, honesty, thrift and other pleasing qualities.” She associated these qualities with wearing the traditional dress and adhering to traditional customs. On Sundays she noticed middle aged and older Acadian women all dressed in black. Their dresses were made of luxury fabrics including plain bombazine (a silk and wool fabric) and alpaca. The embroidered black silk headscarf, tied under the chin, was “surprisingly becoming” and gave women a “gypsyish effect.” This exoticness impressed her and she hoped that Acadian women would not give up their distinctive dress. If they did they would lose their cachet and become “commonplace and uninteresting.”<sup>6</sup>

Jeannette Grant arrived during festivities in Churchpoint celebrating the 1892 Acadian convention.<sup>7</sup> One of the differences with her travel book was the inclusion of black and white drawings of some of the areas she visited, including an Edwin Douglas painting of a pastoral scene with Evangeline herding cows. Grant, as well, compared modern day Nova Scotia to parts of the Longfellow poem. She was not disappointed in finding some older women still wearing the traditional black headscarf worn “in a three corner fashion” and tied under the chin. Younger women attending the festivities were dressed in more modern fashion with bright parasols.

This is only a very brief survey of some of the travel literature I have read. Unfortunately the entire corpus raises more questions than it answers. In some rural areas some Acadian women, like those in southwestern Nova Scotia, continued to dress differently from their neighbours until the end of the 19th century. Was this also the case for Acadian women in Chezzetcook, Pomquet or Chéticamp? What about Acadian women in the other two provinces? Did they too retain a traditional dress? Was there a homogenous feminine Acadian dress or were there regional differences? When did women relinquish the traditional dress and what factors promoted this change? What factors encouraged women to conform to common usage especially in the first half of the century? The use of luxury fabrics in Clare is intriguing and goes counter to the myth of homespun being the type of fabric portrayed in Cozzen’s illustrations. After looking at more than 25, 000 photographs, as well as numerous charcoal drawings of Acadians, in various archives and museums in the three provinces, answers to many of these questions still remain too complex to answer.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Capt. W. Moorsom, /Letters from Nova Scotia, 1830, /261./ /John Playfair in the Yarmouth /Herald/, “The Acadians”, 06 April, 1846.
2. Frederick Cozzen’s, /Acadia, A Month with the Bluenose, /New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859 is the exception.
3. Ibid, iv.
4. Promotional materials for the Coast Railway Company, 1897, Yarmouth County Archives, YMS 412.
5. Eliza Brown Chase, /Over the Border: Acadia, the Home of Evangeline/, Boston: Osgood, 1884; Jeannette Grant, /Through Evangeline’s Country/, Boston: Joseph Knight Company, 1894.
6. Chase, 155-161.
7. Grant, 29-34.

#### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Textile books recommendations by Tina Bates, CSNS member, curator and costume history scholar, Museum of Civilization.

Women in the needle and textile trades:

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*, 2001 (I thought that the way she used textiles and context brilliant.)

Wendy Gamber, *The Female Economy: The Millinery and Dress-making Trades, 1860-1930*, 1997

Marla M. Miller, *The Needle’s Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution*, 2006 (I just ordered my own copy of this one from Chapters today.)

Adrienne Hood, *The Weaver’s Craft: Cloth, Commerce, Industry in Early Pennsylvania*, 2003

Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800*, 1997

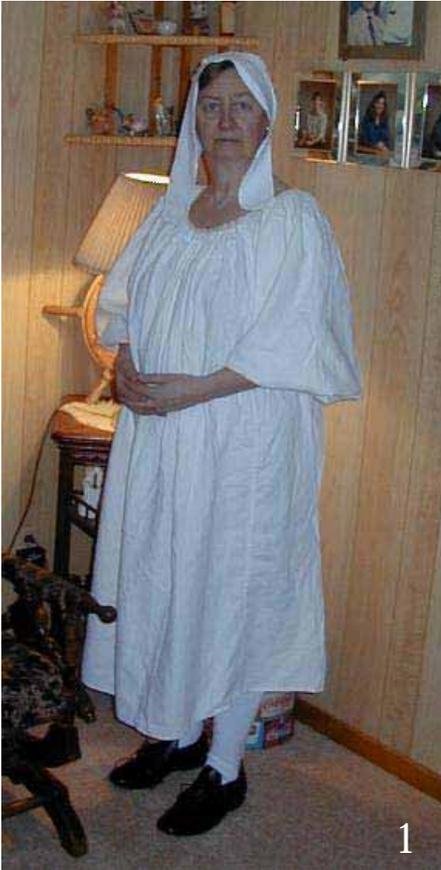
Mary C. Beaudry, *Findings: The Material Culture of Needlework and Sewing*, 2006 (I have read this one. It was really fascinating to see how an archeologist looks at sewing tools such as thimbles, needles, scissors and pins)

There is nothing comparable for Canada, so I would recommend certain chapters in the book,

Alexandra Palmer, *Fashion: A Canadian Perspective*, 2004

## ACADIAN COSTUME C 1640 by Donna Lee Butler

This outfit was made by Donna Lee Butler, Granville Ferry for the 400th anniversary of the coming of Europeans to this continent.



1

Step 1 - the chemise. I made mine from linen using a pattern from "Cut My Cote" printed by the ROM. The neck and cuffs of the sleeves are gathered using a cartridge pleating. The decoration around the neck and the cuffs is a tatted edging very similar to a picture of handmade lace of the period. The cap is made of a finer linen than the chemise. The stockings are knit cotton from a re-enactment stores company in the USA.



2

Step 2 - the bum roll is made of course linen stuffed with lamb's wool. It is tied at the waist and hips.

Step 3 - the underskirt is made of cotton. The top is box pleated from the centre front to the sides, from the sides to the opening in the back, it is cartridge pleated. The placket is fastened with hooks and eyes and the whole thing has a drawstring waist tie.

Step 4 - the over skirt is made of a rayon fabric. The colour and weave are representative of those described for the period.



3



4



Step 5 - lacing



Step 7- the apron is made of a fine white linen. It is tied about the waist with a drawstring. The bib is stitched to the centre of the skirt. The skirt is approximately three times the width of the bib.



Step 8 - the finished look. The 'modesty' is a woven wool shawl. For outer wear in cold weather I have a cape.



Step 6 - The jumps are made of natural colour linen and not boned. They are a working jump. The lacing is done from the top down

#### LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Costume Society of Nova Scotia donated its library collection to the Costume Studies Program at Dalhousie University. This costume reference library is available to members of CSNS by contacting Dianne Kristoffe @ 494-2178 [dianne.kristoffe@dal.ca](mailto:dianne.kristoffe@dal.ca)

The library collection is housed within the Costume Studies accommodations at 1515 Dresden Row, Suite 202 in the City Centre Atlantic. Please allow time for scheduling visits as the room is used for classes also. Books, journals and videos of Costume Studies fashion shows are available.

## SHOE STUDY REPORT: 18TH CENTURY SILK WOMEN'S SHOES

by Jenny Stewart

Item: tan spotted silk shoes with red heel & straps

Location: Uniacke Estate Museum & Park

Date of Study: Sept 17, 2007

Level of Study: Hands-on

Property Of: NSM

Item # 49.8.83 A,B

Catalogue Info: Uniacke Family Artifact, c 1805



These shoes strike me as a typical example of an upper middle or upper class woman's shoe, from c 1770-85. The width of the toe curve, the width of the latches, the curve of the heel all suggest these dates to me. I believe if they had been made later the toes would be narrower and more pointed, the latches thinner, the heel more angular. To have been made during or after the mid 1790's would make a heel height of 1" or less more typical, the latches would be less common, if not gone altogether, the foot would be much more long, narrow and pointed.

### Uppers

Tan silk satin with a brocade pattern of spots. The spots are approx ¼" long, a rounded diamond or eye or lip-print shape, golden tan with cranberry red centres.

The upper is lined with a medium linen, in white. The insole (part of the construction) is brown leather, with a fine white linen sock (where the foot makes contact) over it. The tongue is lined or backed with a golden ochre grosgrain type of fabric, though it could be simply the reverse of the brocade. Examination with the shells off and the latches open would clarify this.

There is a very graceful curve to the vamp sole, and a light spring or upcurve to the sole at the toe. Many shoes of this era seem to have been made on flat lasts, and simply propped up on the heel, sometimes giving a very precarious, angled and awkward look, and leading to satirical verses at the time.

### Linings

The shoes are lined with medium linen, still nearly white. The vamp (closed in portion of shoe) may be lined with a coarser or looser linen than the quarter, the rear, open part.

The Insole is brown leather under a medium-fine white linen sock. The tongue is lined with golden ochre grosgrain type fabric.

### Fastenings & Decorations

These shoes would have had buckles to fasten them with, as in the examples shown, probably bejewelled, either with paste or real stones, or fancy silver or gilded metal. . Currently they are displayed with shell discs, 2.25" across, with a 1" hole in the centre.

The latches are currently displayed with the points to the wearer, rather than the typical way, pointing towards the toes.

The Latches are red silk, bound w matching tape, (think ribbon) stitched with tan linen thread, using a nearly joined backstitch, ~14 stitches /inch. Latches are 4" long, 1 1/4" wide. They start at 3/4" above sole edge, and the corner makes approx 60 degree angle with side seam and with sewn end of latchet. Latches are lined or backed with medium linen, presumed white.

Shapes and placements of side seams are one aspect of dating shoes. The general transition was from a "dogleg" or "stairstepped" seam to a straight, bound one, to none. You may see this borne out in the various pictures and links.

The shell decorations seem to have been glued on, and that failing, one has been whipped on with thread loops at four points around the circle. There is writing in fine ink script on the back of the stitched-on shell.

The shell decoration is extremely out of character and context for the typical shoe of this style. I believe these to be a later addition. Perhaps the script on the back of the shells holds more information.

## Heels

2 ¼" high at centre back (CB), length of shank is 4". Heel would typically be carved from wood and covered with fabric to match or complement the shoe, as it is in this case.

CB of heel has a ridge along lower part, as far as the top piece. Light natural linen thread stitching length of heel breast arch & shank

The top piece (the part of the heel that meets the ground) is an escutcheon .with concave curve to fore edge; 1 1/16" wide, 3/4" front to back.

## Soles

The Instep, heel breast and non-walking-contact portions of sole is roughened leather, or a split / suede leather, rather than smooth, grain surface of leather usually used for soles. Sole edge is neatly beveled or chamfered and edge dyed. Lasting marks: there are 2 at instep, 1 at arch, toe inner was not seen. Sole is 2.5" wide at the side seam.

## Condition

These shoes are in excellent condition. There is only the slightest bit of wear at the tips of the toes, there is barely an indication of which shoe was worn on which foot. As was typical at the time. These shoes were made straight lasts, with no left-Oright differentiation and were identical when they were made. Shoes will take on the shape and character of the foot they are worn on,

## Shoe fashion Trends:

In the 1770s the chunky heels of earlier decades began to become thinner. This thinning contined into the late 1780s, and the heels also started to drop, 'til they were sometimes no more than nubs in the late 1790s. By the turn of the century high heels were out of style. At the same time, the throat of the shoe – the part where the foot goes in – began to lengthen, 'til only the toes were covered. Also, as part of this lengthening process, shoes became narrower, with

longer narrow pointy toes. Materials became lighter, leather (very lightweight and usually quite decorated, often with the newly invented roller printing method) started to become fashionable for upper class women's shoes in the late 1770s. Women's shoes did not tend to match a gown. Rather, the silk was often from a brocade gown which dated 20-40 years earlier. The shoes which do match gowns tend to be most often from Royalty and Aristocracy weddings.

General remarks: In the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a vast market and flow of used shoes. Since they were fabric, dressy women's shoes would not stand up to a lot of outdoor wear – but neither was it the fashion for women to go about outdoors a lot. Shoes would often be handed down to servants or poorer relations, or given away, such as to a charity. The larger the shoe, the more feet it might fit; the smaller the shoe the more it will suffer on a foot that is too large, thus many shoes that survive are smaller than might be typical. Small feet were fashionable for women at this time. Special occasion shoes (and clothes) tend to be saved more often than everyday ones The condition of these shoes could suggest they were for a special occasion, but certainly they have not been worn much, and that appears to have been mostly indoors.

For further information, references, corrections or questions, please contact the author

## References

June Swann, *Shoes*

Iris Brooke, *Footwear*

Lucy Pratt & Linda Woolsley, *Shoes*

Nancy Rexford, *Women's Shoes in America, 1795-1930*

Personal pictures and notes from the Bata Shoe museum, Toronto Ont., and from the Yarmouth County Museum and Archives, Yarmouth NS.

Text by Jenny Stewart, © 2007



**Similar examples:**

18<sup>th</sup> century Silk Women's Shoes mostly from the Bata Shoe Museum, The black ones with white latches and large rectangular buckles (BSM P81-367) are European, dated 1775-90. The black ones with pink latches and embroidery (BSM P98.5) are dated 1780-85. ; The white satin pair did not have a number, but are dated to the 1780s. The ivory tan or pale pink pair, of ribbed or "laced" silk (BSM 86.68) are also English from the 1780s. The green brocade pair with white binding (BSM P85.221) are English, dated 1780-89. The group of three shoes are from 1790-1800 and show the changes in style and shape. The yellow kid shoe with the pink kid heel, shown in profile, is from the Yarmouth County Museum and Archives, but has no number. It has a label from a London shoemaker in it.

After 1800, heels (and buckles) went out of style; heels did not return until the 1850s.

Also shown are an assortment of shoe buckles – men's and women's. The men's might be inclined to be larger, as catching on petticoats was not a problem for them. Shoe buckles were like jewellery, used with different outfits, kept carefully, sometimes with specially fitted curved boxes.



## EXHIBITS, CONFERENCES, TOURS AND EVENTS

### SILHOUETTES: PROFILES IN FASHION

Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, until April 6, 2008

The detailed and lavishly illustrated catalogue to accompany this exhibit, *Beyond the Silhouette: Fashion and the Women of Historic Kingston*, is written by CSNS member Elaine Mackay

### DRESS AND THE NATURAL WORLD

27 & 28 June 2008, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London.

Call for Papers: From feathers to leathers, bones to stones, jewels and furs and hair, this conference will explore the convergence of dress and the natural world. Papers are solicited that draw on a wide variety of symbolic, cultural and technical aspects of flora and fauna in dress, from a diversity of approaches and a spread of historical periods and geographical areas. Please send a one-page abstract and brief CV by Friday 14 December to s.stanfill@vam.ac.uk.

### LOOKING BEYOND THE MASK: DISGUISE, IDENTITY, AND COSTUME

Costume Society of America Symposium May 20-25, 2008 New Orleans .

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE 1860S CONFERENCE: CLOTHING AND CULTURE OF THE CIVIL WAR ERA  
Harrisburg, PA March 6-9, 2008. Presented by Genteel Arts.

### CSA ENGLAND-SCOTLAND STUDY TOUR

June 22 to July 2, 2008

### NEW FASHION MUSEUM IN ONTARIO

Jonathan Walford intends to use his historical clothing collection and library to create The Fashion History Museum somewhere in the Waterloo, Ontario region, according to the *Costume Journal* - publication of the Costume Society of Ontario.

### CSA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN COSTUME DESIGN

CSA has established an *Award of Excellence in Costume Design*, to be presented for the first time at the 2008 symposium. The biennial award recognizes a single designer who has demonstrated excellence in creative, innovative and imaginative approaches to costume design in the performing arts. The nominee must be a current member of CSA who has been working as a professional designer for a minimum of 10 years.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

*Beyond the Silhouette: Fashion and the Women of Historic Kingston*, written by CSNS member Elaine Mackay to accompany the exhibit *Silhouettes: Profiles in Fashion*. Published by the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston Ontario, July 2007.

*The Art of Knitting 1892* (Original publisher Butterick)

All aspects of Victorian knitting for the entire family. Reprinted by Piper Publishing.

*The Seductive Shoe: Four Centuries of Fashion Footwear*, written by Costume Society of Ontario Past Chair Jonathan Walford. Published by Thames and Hudson. 288 pages - ISBN-13: 978-0500513460

**THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF  
NOVA SCOTIA**

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**THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA**

The Society encourages interest in the history, development and conservation of Nova Scotian costume and personal adornment, and offers learning opportunities through workshops and hands-on programming. The Society's membership is diverse, including collectors, museum professionals, designers, costumers, reenactors, researchers, historians, and students.

CSNS was founded in 1981 and celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2006. CSNS is a member of the Costume Society of America, the Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage, and the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.



Oldest surviving Acadian costume: the Bellefontaine wedding ensemble from Chezzetcook (1847), in the Nova Scotia Museum collection. Photo by Sally Erskine Coucette

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