

THE CLOTHES PRESS

SUMMER, 2010 No. 99

A BOOK A YEAR PROJECT

On behalf of the Spring Garden Road Memorial Library, Kelli WooShu receives this year's book donated by the Costume Society. It is titled *The Empire's New Clothes: A history of the Russian fashion industry, 1700-1917* by Christine Ruane and published by Yale University Press in 2009. It is a fascinating study of the rise of the fashion industry in Russia following Tsar Peter the Great's decree that saw the replacement of traditional Russian dress with western fashion. According to Kelli the costume section in the library is one of the most popular as both NSCAD and Dal Costume Studies students along with other discerning members of the public search out these books. So eager are some that instead of waiting to take a book home to read, they 'camp out' on the floor and there lap up the contents of the pages. The library now has 700 followers on Twitter and will be posting this new acquisition with glee."



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome. Greetings everyone. I'm wearing a different hat this year in the new role as Newsletter Editor- working alongside our hardworking committee comprised of Sally Erskine Doucette, Anita Campbell, and Karen Pinsent, that is putting each issue to print and on the web.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! You'll hear that a lot this year as Nova Scotia heralds in numerous anniversaries, bicentennials, tri-centennials and quarter-millennials that puts costume front and center. Pageantry will abound all over the province as festivals, gala days, and conferences embark on celebrating the past with period dress. In this issue we have included two articles that touch on two events- the 250th Anniversary of the New England Planters which kicks off with a conference in June, and the renaming of the town of Annapolis Royal 300 years ago. As a result of all the demand for costume for these types of events and to bring history in general alive Sally Erskine Doucette has raised some thought provoking questions in her article "The Passion for Costume". So get out your Doers and Dreamers guide and your road map, or turn on the GPS and have fun this summer checking out all the museums and festivals that showcase costume.

Happy reading and see you in the fall, *Bonnie Elliott*

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'HOOD OF DORCAS': A RARE PLANTER FAMILY ARTIFACT

Bonnie Elliott

At first glance, it's really not much of a garment at all. In fact, sitting in its dim light behind glass one could walk right past it. Plain, functional and austere this quilted hood might well be passed over if it weren't for the interpretive text beside it relating one of the most intriguing stories of a remarkable woman and remarkable family. The hood is believed to have belonged to Eliza Anne Chipman (1807-1853), teacher, diarist and wife of noted Baptist Church leader the Reverend William Chipman (1781-1865). Besides the very large family they raised, 18 in total, and the flock of parishioners in his charge, they were instrumental in the founding of Horton College in 1828, and ten years later Acadia University in Wolfville. Eliza married the Reverend as his second wife when she was nineteen years old and twenty-six years younger than him. She was also his cousin. He had eight children by his first wife and together he and Eliza had ten more. In spite of the busy demands of her domestic life, she found time to teach Sunday school, and organize a Bible study class. Her memoirs and life inspired the biography, "Eliza of Pleasant Valley", by historian James Doyle Davison.

The hood is similar in style to a head covering commonly referred to as a "pumpkin hood" worn in the New England States during the nineteenth century, although I have never found a reference to this term been used here in Nova Scotia. It is an everyday outdoor head covering for the winter while out walking or when traveling in a carriage. Its large ample style suggests a time period of 1820 to 1840 when elaborate hairdos were in vogue. It is entirely hand stitched and the quilting is rather crudely done in black thread. A thick layer of raw wool batting, as can be seen through a couple of small wear holes, is sandwiched between an outer layer of fine silk and a soft flannel cotton lining. There is a silk bow on the back of the crown which matches the binding around the front of the hood and grosgrain ribbon act as ties under the chin. It is by far the earliest and rarest textile in the museum collection and together with its association to a Planter family, all the more valuable.

Eliza would probably have been forgotten in history and then this hood, if kept at all, would have come to the museum as an orphan with no provenance or significant tale to tell. But the hood has remained in tact and Eliza's life immortalized because of a regular and persistent habit she kept. She wrote a diary. In secret, Eliza recorded spiritual thoughts and her religious progress ever since she had 'a conversion' at age 17.



Kentville Museum permanent collection
(996.202.1)

Three days before she died, she revealed the existence of the diary to her husband and he had the wisdom to publish it 'for the spiritual help of subsequent readers'. The diary as such, does not relate the daily domestic occurrences of family life but there are snippets of events that affected her greatly. The travails of nineteenth century life come home to you when you read of a particular hardship Eliza was to suffer when her first-born aged two became severely scalded by "sitting down in a kettle of boiling water" and five days later died.

But what's the Dorcas angle? The hood was handed down in the family and found its way home by way of a descendent who's grandmother was Mary Alberta Parker, a graduate of Acadia University in 1894 with a note attached in her handwriting that read 'Hood of Dorcas...hood of the Hand-

maiden to William Chipman'. In Victorian times most readers would comprehend the meaning behind the 'Dorcas' name, but in our now more secular society the significance of the name is lost. The raising of Dorcas or Tabitha is a story related in the Bible (Acts 9:36-42) which tells of a woman who lived in Joppa who did many good deeds and acts of charity including making clothes for poor widows. When she died the widows were distraught with grief so they sent for Peter who was in a neighbouring town. When he arrived they showed him the garments she had made for them. Peter prayed for her and miraculously restored her to life. Eliza Chipman was also a 'Dorcas' figure in that she was a good mother, and exemplary role model to her community. So the reference of this been the 'Hood of Dorcas' is entirely appropriate. One can only speculate that the author of the note was referencing Eliza and her good works.

This year Cornwallis, Horton, Falmouth and Newport are celebrating the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the New England Planters. What a fitting garment to have out on display.

AGM HIGHLIGHTS HALIFAX, APRIL 10TH, 2010

Karen Pinsent

CSNS annual general meeting generated lively discussions – the creation of an annual essay contest, and a film series highlighting accomplishment in costume. To “kick off” our plans for the latter, the film *Kinky Boots* provided entertaining afternoon programming and appreciation for the traditional craft of building quality footwear – with a twist. Highly recommended viewing! A CSNS membership directory is being compiled for distribution with the winter 2011 edition of *The Clothes Press*.

Welcome to our new Treasurer, Carol Watters – with thanks and gratitude to Anita Campbell for her years of service in this role. A new Halifax Programming committee of Denise Hansen, Estelle Lalonde, Laura Legere and Wilma Stewart-White will focus on developing spring and fall programs.

In Mahone Bay, plans are underway to showcase a local costume story with reach well beyond Nova Scotia shores – the *Suttles & Seawinds* collection.

Next year we mark the 30th anniversary of the Costume Society of Nova Scotia. Plans to launch our celebration at next AGM are underway! It's time to check your calendar and reserve Saturday, April 9th, 2011.

COSTUMES AT KNAUT-RHULAND MUSEUM

Anne Morison



Photo: David Morison

Currently on display in the Rhuland Room of the Knaut-Rhuland Museum, Lunenburg are two reproduction costumes by CSNS member, Anne Morison. The museum has a costume gallery representative of particular time periods, from 18th to late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Rhuland Room is representative of the first half of the 19th century.

Male costume: 1830s style, wool coat and vest, linen trousers, shirt and cravat. Pattern source: drafted from *Men's Garments 1830–1900* by R. I. Davis.

Female costume: 1800s style, cotton dress, silk chiffon chemisette, embroidered riticule, wool pashmina masquerading as a shawl. Pattern source: dress and riticule adapted from *The Elegant Lady's Closet - Sense and Sensibility*, chemisette adapted from Janet Arnold's *Patterns of Fashion Vol. 1*.

The Museum is owned by The Lunenburg Heritage Society, and is open from June 7 through September.

NEWS FROM ANNAPOLIS ROYAL

Mildred Hawes and excerpts from Grace Butland's 'Annapolis Royal Remembers'



Forty-three people attended the Annapolis Royal Golf and Country Club on February 6 to experience Queen Anne's 1710 royal birthday party. They came from Halifax, Dartmouth, Yarmouth, Paradise, Lawrencetown, and some from the area.

Many people came in costume, ladies in beautiful long dresses with wigs, some of the guys in kilts or tuxedos, they took it to heart. For the people who came, it was all about the experience. The Queen was in the front parlour in a receiving line. Everyone was formally introduced to the Queen as though being received at court. The Queen was seated and the Lord Counsellor and the lady in waiting stood at her side. The Town Crier announced each person formally, very much like being presented at court in 1710.

The British reclaimed the area in 1710 and renamed the town Annapolis Royal in honour of Queen Anne of Great Britain. The 300th anniversary of this historic renaming is the focus of a year-long series of programs and events in Anna-

polis Royal in 2010. Activities kicked off with a New Year's Day levee and continue throughout the year.

A number of the events will feature Queen Anne as honoured guest. Yes, Annapolis Royal has its own Queen Anne for the year, portrayed by area resident and history buff Anne Crossman. The Queen has been outfitted in full royal regalia and attends events accompanied by members of her royal court.

Many of the 300th Anniversary activities will take place on Fort Anne grounds. These events kick off with a military pageant on July 3rd featuring members of the 78th Highlanders from the Citadel in Halifax and the *Compagnie Franche de la Marine* from Louisburg. Period demonstrations of music, military drills, and black powder demonstrations will be featured. On August 8, the Queen is throwing a huge picnic for her "subjects" (anyone who would like to come!) at Bishop Park on Highway 201. Clowns, buskers, food, dancing lessons will be part of the entertainment.

EVENTS, EXHIBITS, CONFERENCES

NOVA SCOTIA

1) The Fifth Planter Studies Conference: "The Next Generation" hosted by The Planter Studies Centre of Acadia University, June 17-20th 2010 @ Acadia University

2010 marks the 250th Anniversary of the arrival of the Planters. The conference is open to the public and features a re-creation of an 18th century Planters settlement by the Atlantic Living Heritage Association, an exhibit of Planter-related archival materials at the Acadia Art Gallery, an Ancestor Registry and community-related historical displays.

For more information or to register online visit: <http://libguides.acadiau.ca/planter>

2) Randall House Museum, 259 Main Street, Wolfville. Horton Planters 1760-2010. The story of the arrival of the New England Planters and their arrival to Horton Township. Reproduction costumes are featured.

ONTARIO

Bata Shoe Museum

416-979-7799. www.batashoemuseum.ca

Until September 2010-05-29

Socks: Between You and Your Shoes featuring the history of hosiery & *On a Pedestal: From Renaissance Chopines to Baroque Heels & Beauty, Identity, Pride: Native North American Footwear.*

Midwestern Region, Costume Society of America

Study Tour of Ottawa/Gatineau.

October 1-2, 2010

http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com/RegionIII/event_workshop_sym.htm

U.S.A.

Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology

www.fitnyc.edu

Until November

Eco-Fashion: Going Green

Dublin Seminar, Deerfield, Massachusetts

Dressing New England: Clothing, Fashion, and Identity

June 18-19, 2010

<http://www.bu.edu/dublinseminar/Conference10.html>

U.K.

Victoria & Albert Museum

www.vam.ac.uk

[Grace Kelly: Style Icon](#)

17 April - 26 September 2010

The spectacular wardrobe of Grace Kelly is on display which traces the evolution of her style from Hollywood actress in the 1950s to Princess Grace of Monaco. Over 50 of Grace Kelly's outfits together with hats, jewellery and the original Hermès Kelly are exhibited.

THE PASSION OF COSTUME

Sally Erskine Doucette

Costume interpretation makes historic sites come to life. The public knows this. Costume professionals know this. However, there is a perceived gap between the significance of costume to historic sites and museums, and the budgets to create and support them.

Although it is common for institutions to want costumed interpretation on site, and some research has shown costumes to be economically beneficial to heritage programs, the value is not widely reflected in funding for costume creation and maintenance. Very few paid museum staff are hired to work on costume related work. However, there are some CSNS members employed in costume, or in some costume-related work. These include Meg Wilcox at Historic Sherbrooke Village; Anita Campbell as Curator, Cultural Resource Management at Parks Canada; Bonnie Elliott, Curator at Randall House in Wolfville; Sheila Yeoman in the History Section of the Nova Scotia Museum; Elaine MacKay at Black Creek Village in Toronto; Elizabeth Tate (and her assistant Lilly) at Fortress Louisbourg.

The website "cultural heritage tourism" says "The human drama of history is what visitors want to discover, not just names and dates...Find ways to engage as many of the visitors' five senses as you can, as the more visitors are involved, the more they will retain."

It goes on to say that "On average, visitors will remember: 10% of what they HEAR; 30% of what they READ; 50% of what they SEE; 90% of what they DO."

Costumes are both visual art and art history. Costumes allow visitors to see and to do. Costumes tell the stories. The continuing success of "tickle trunks" demonstrates this point; and re-enactment events with a costumed public are very popular.

In Nova Scotia, there are many costume collections – mostly in storage due to the financial cost and space required for exhibition. Most of the costumes that are easily accessible are part of 'living museums' or historic sites like Sherbrooke Village, Citadel Hill or Fortress Louisbourg. Without costumed interpreters, the sites are flat, 2-D.

The recent loss of a 'costume' job in Nova Scotia brought this issue back to the surface. CSNS members on the Yahoo List began a discussion about why costumes are important, and what they contribute to museums and historic sites. There was an out-pouring of deep passion from people who care enough about dress to have made it their lives. Some British costume professionals weighed in too.

The point of controversy is why the value of costumes, and our history in general, are not reflected in budget priorities, in Nova Scotia and in Canada. Costumes are not on the political agenda. Also, in Canada, costume research is not supported by a robust academic discipline, as is present in the USA and elsewhere. The study of dress does not have credibility here, and employment does not match our passion for the field. Nova Scotia has no museum of cultural history, as such, or galleries or exhibits for this section. Budgets for some costume programs have not increased in years.

Question is, what can we, as CSNS members, do about this?

How can costume be re-interpreted to fit within current political priorities, in order to gain access to funding? How can the desire for a cultural history museum gain energy and move forward?

What can we do about this? Find independent private funds to support a museum of cultural history, including a costume exhibition space?

Or do we go small, and just try to build public education about dress slowly, with annual exhibits and publications?

Or do we join forces with the fashion folks and be their history wing?

What is the relationship between NSCAD fashion & art history and Dalhousie Costume Studies? And how do we want CSNS to relate to either of them?

Let's keep this discussion going on yahoo and in future issues: send us your thoughts!

Yahoo List discussion participants: Meg Wilcox, Bonnie Elliott, Sheila Yeoman, Elizabeth Tate, Kelly Grant, Linda Babcock, Elaine MacKay, Sally Erskine Doucette.

Other references included in the discussion:

Hannah Miller re conference Scotland; head of interpretation @ wealdown.co.uk

Linda Baumgarten at Williamsburg

Ruth Goodman www.thetudorgroup.co.uk

Mark Wallis at Past and Pleasures info@pastpleasures/co.uk

Barbara Rosseau Brosseau@CWF.org Weald and Downland Open Air Museum in West Sussex

Conference Costumed Interpreters – Plymouth Foundation – 20 years ago

John Ververka, consultant

Open Air Museums in Scandinavia – 2006 Conference 'Dressing the Past' – re making replica clothing and how to ask for funds (ask Steph Wallis)

NOVA SCOTIA COSTUME JOBS: PROFILE MARITIME MUSEUM OF THE ATLANTIC – KELLY GRANT

At the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Kelly Grant was responsible for costume research and construction for interpreters to wear while telling exhibit stories. She says visitors from around the world were thrilled to be in the presence of interpreters representing different themes and often would have their photographs taken with museum staff. Kelly believes that costumes greatly enhance the museum experience and help people to imagine themselves in the circumstances being exhibited.

Kelly Grant has an Advanced Diploma in Costume Studies, with a specialization in Museum Studies from Dalhousie University, and work experience on costumes at Citadel Hill, L'Anse aux Meadows, Grand Pre, Port Royal, Neptune, the Tattoo and the Nutcracker, as well as the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. Kelly is currently enrolled in an Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Fine Arts at NSCADU.

CSNS CONSERVATION SUPPLIES LIQUIDATION SALE

- White cotton gloves, one size
\$1.50 now 75 ¢ a pair
- Unbuffered acid free tissue, sheet (30" X 40")
\$1.35 now 75¢
- Orvus Paste, 1.25 oz vial
\$2.00 now \$1.00
- Heavy-weight, unbleached cotton, 120 cm. wide
\$5.00 now \$2.50 a metre
- Light-weight, unbleached cotton, 120 cm.
\$5.00 now \$2.50 a metre
- White cotton sheeting, 112 cm.
\$5.00 now \$2.50 a metre
- Interfacing piece (144 cm X 56 cm)
\$4.00 now \$2.00
- Netting piece (50 cm X 90 cm)
\$10.00 now \$5.00
- Silk thread spool (200 meter spool)
\$6.85 now \$3.50

Supplies are limited so don't wait.

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 programs. The Society's membership is diverse, including collectors, museum professionals, designers, costumers, reenactors, researchers, historians, and students.

CSNS was founded in 1981 and is a member of the Costume Society of America, the Association of Nova Scotia Museums, and the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

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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. 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.

Also check out the Spring Garden Branch of the Halifax Public Library. There is a growing costume collection in the Reference section on the second floor.

THE CLOTHES PRESS

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Bonnie Elliott— editor, Sally Erskine Doucette, Anita Campbell, Karen Pinsent

Contributors

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Submissions

The Clothes Press encourages content from its readers. Send articles, reviews, and letters to the Editorial Committee. The Clothes Press is published quarterly by the Costume Society of Nova Scotia. Views expressed in The Clothes Press are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent CSNS or its supporters.