

UELAC 2021 Conference talk HANDOUT; in three parts

Part A

What to do with your 'neglected' Loyalist Garments.

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- 1) Find them. Do not immediately wash them unless you know what the fabrics were and that you know the correct care. Don't throw wool into the washer and dryer. Modern wool may be able to withstand that, but wool from 20 or 30 years ago may not be able to.
- 2) Determine if you might or could use them again. (ie Do they fit at all? Would you like to use them? Perhaps ask the person who made / sold them for you)
- 3) Determine if they need 'updating' in terms of accuracy. (Question: Is there a zipper anywhere? If your answer is "Yes" then check with someone else to see if they think if it might be still useful. Photos are easy to share!
- 4) Determine if they still 'match' the character or impression that you wish to present.
- 5) Consider showing them to someone who could guide you through adjustments.
- 6) Decide what can and cannot be done so you would be proud to wear them. Who can and will do these adjustments? And when? Is your deadline UE Flag Day and Conference? Or?
- 7) What if they are no longer of any interest to you or your family?
- 8) Perhaps have them assessed by someone who could tell if they are still of value possibly to someone else. If they are sufficiently historically accurate but you will never need them again, perhaps you can offer them to a branch or region member.
- 9) If the garments are not sufficiently accurate for you to be proud while wearing them, perhaps a class set of small sized washable items could be donated to a teacher who may use them for Loyalist skirts in their class. If possible, consider removing zippers and similar inauthentic aspects before donating them.

What parts are "sufficiently accurate"?

- 1) Look at closures. Consider removing any zippers and replacing them with appropriate closures. That may mean opening or creating a seam in the item elsewhere.
- 2) Look at the length. Consider shortening if the skirt goes below your ankle bone. The right trousers may be convertible to breeches. (reasonable fabric and colour, no Cargo pockets, no patch pockets front or back, no slit pockets in the back)
- 3) Look at trims: All these should not be present. Is there polyester lace anywhere? Visible Bias Tape? Eyelet edging? Velvet ribbon? Wide ribbon? Long or lacy polyester cuffs or trim? Prominent ruffles on the chemise/shift? Bold ruffles on the dress that is for a more modest class person? Tiers on the skirt or sleeves? Coloured or polyester cords?
- 4) Look at the Fabric & Fibre. You may face these unsuitable fabrics: Polyester, Poly-cotton broadcloth, rayon, viscose, silk except for very high class, satin. ...ditto. , wide lace, corduroy occurred rarely,

blends, twill ... if not too prominent it was available but the origin of the name should help you understand who wore it. Cor[ds] (ridges) du (of) Roy / Roi (King), & modern print. Some are too modern, some too 'rich', some too European. Is your white a modern "blue-white"?

- 5) Caps and Hats. No MOB / MOP caps at all. If yours is like that, it can be altered, but in most cases starting again may be wise since it needs a piece of "brim". Especially if it is poly cotton, is from heavy sheeting, has visible machine stitching, poly lace or rick-rack. The centre back 3 to 4 inches should NOT have a brim or ruffle but may have a plain edging and / or a small adjustable cord casing to adjust the size. No lace it better than Poly lace.
- 6) Look at the sewing: Is there visible machine top stitching or a prominent hemming line? Avoid these.
- 7) Look at the bodice. Is there criss-crossed faux-lacing (from pre Loyalist times) that could be removed? Does the bodice fit snugly? Do the armpits come close to the body? Is the waist close to the natural waist of the wearer? Is there a waist point at the centre bottom of the bodice, or is it actually a 1980's dropped and pointed waist line? Are there hooks? Are they visible? Tighten / tweak them so they are not visible, and creating a gap. Are there "Princess seams"? Are they covered in ribbon or lace to draw attention to them? (YIKES! Remove the ribbon or lace. Do the seams blend in with the print? If so, good. If not, oh dear. Add a large woven shawl in all weather (knitting was not as popular as one might think), or plan to wear the earlier 'Fichu' called a Canezou.
- 8) Do you have a large handkerchief or Fichu type item? Do you know how to wear it? Might you need a pin of some sort to keep it in place?

Part B

Resources:

Three books that are well regarded but that I have not seen personally, except excerpts online:

BOOK: Wearable Prints, 2014; <https://www.amazon.ca/Wearable-Prints-1760-1860-Materials-Mechanics/dp/1606351249>

BOOK: Printed Textiles; 2014; <https://www.amazon.ca/Printed-Textiles-British-American-1700-1850/dp/1580933939>

BOOK: Threads of Feeling; 2010; <https://www.amazon.ca/Threads-Feeling-Foundling-Hospitals-1740-1770/dp/0955180856>

'BOOK': Women's Dress during the American Revolution, 2004. Brigade of the American Revolution (Poss hard to get except in USA. Check their website.) <https://www.brigade.org/product-page/women-s-interpretative-dress-guide>

PUBLICATION: UELAC Loyalist Clothing guide & Simcoe Clothing Guide. 1981 or 1993

BOOK: *Rural Pennsylvania Clothing, Ellen J Gehret*, George Shumway Publisher, 2005. Reference for German and English Inhabitants, specifically for South Eastern Pennsylvania in the late 18th C. (1700's) With a 10 page bibliography, an extensive INDEX, Glossary, Photos of: Reproduction items being worn, Museum items, Fabrics, with Excellent drawing of items with measurements and sewing instructions. (Yes I love this book!) Some of these images were used in the 1993 version of the Loyalist Clothing Guide, pages 91-93. This book is expensive.

BOOK: The American Dutchess Guide to 18th Century Dressmaking; Lauren Stowell and Abby Cox, 2017, Page Street Publishing, Dist: Macmillan. When you see intense ruffles, remember which Socio-economic class wore them and which did not. This book does not address regular farming-family clothing that would have been worn by most of our Loyalists, and no men's items are included. This shows the highest class, BUT many of the illustrations are informative! And there are a few patterns that can be adapted.

BOOK: Tidings from the 18th Century, 1993, also printed '98, '01, and July 2006. This is a less expensive book and contains excellent photos of all the aspects needed including sewing methods, suitable fabrics. Also: Recipes, kitchen ware, bedding, soap making, basket making, haying, men's clothing, Children, and more lifestyle things. Written in an anecdotal /letter writing style. Good Table of Contents, No index, no bibliography. But **an excellent and more economical second choice**. About \$25.00 via Amazon.

BOOK: For visuals only, no educational text: Everyday Dress Of The American Revolution Coloring Book Paperback – Jan. 1 1975 by Peter F. Copeland (Author). Covers some trades not included above.

BOOK: AVOID!!! Everyday Dress of Rural America, 1783-1800: With Instructions and Patterns, by Merideth Wright. Some correct information, but not great!

Websites mentioned (or not):

UK, American Loyalist Claims, 1776-1835: <https://www.ancestry.ca/search/collections/3712/>

Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario - 2nd report (1904)

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/520063?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

American Duchess – for shoes, stockings, education <https://www.americanduchess.com/>

Townsend's: Items of all types of Rev War. Use caution with regard to fabrics and fit. www.townsend.us

Burley and Trowbridge: Rev War items & bergère style straw hat. <https://burnleyandtrowbridge.com/>

Samson Historical, Indiana <https://www.samsonhistorical.com/> They have the 'woman's flat straw hat' / Bergere.

Wm Booth, Draper <http://wmboothdraper.com/> fabrics, hats etc. and education at:

<https://www.facebook.com/wm.booth.draper/?ref=ts>

COMPENDIUM of SUPPLIERS and Sources of Historic information:

<http://sharpecompendium.net/shops/> **NB: Some/ MANY may be inactive.**

Farthingales Corset Making, Stratford, Ontario: <https://www.farthingalescorsetmakingsupplies.com/>

Re-enacting and more, with much educational material

The Online Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies, with Todd Braisted

<http://www.royalprovincial.com/reenactors/reen.shtml>

The Canadian Regiment of Fencible Infantry <https://fencibles.ca/> (Eastern Ontario)

The King's Royal Yorkers <http://royalyorkers.ca/main.php>

The Loyalist Fifes and Drums <http://loyalstdrums.ca/index.php>

US National Park service Educational item:

<https://www.nps.gov/mima/learn/education/upload/essentials.pdf>

Journal of the American Revolution <https://allthingsliberty.com/>

Glossary of 18th Century Costume Terminology: (Content under copyright but sharing the link is fine!)

<https://www.nwta.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/FabricHints.pdf> Basic Fabric knowledge, but includes Linsey-woolsey: (NB: Good info, but some/many dead links, and some require a search at the site.)

<https://people.csail.mit.edu/sfelshin/revwar/glossary.html#f>

Fabric 1764: <https://nyhistory.tumblr.com/post/188234786318/notions-from-an-early-new-york-businesswoman-from>

<https://thistlehillweavers.com/>

Fabric names: Oznabrig, Irish Linen, Cambrick, Callico, Callimanco, Chints/ Chintz, Camblet, Diaper, Cotton, Nail, Broadcloth, Duffil/Duffel, Fearnought, Shaloons, Serge, Durant, Tammy, Fustian (Festian), Everlasting, Bombazine, Taffety (Taffeta), Ferreting, Gartering, Ribbands are a few.

North Carolina Magazine 1764 image from slide.

LINK: <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/4625374/samuel-cornell-sale-of-goods-nov-2-1764/>

Modern fabric weight comparisons: <https://heroandvillainstyle.com/fabric-weight/#linenweights>

Make a "Housewife": <https://www.facebook.com/wm.booth.draper/posts/2750064445030018>

Historically correct gathering for 18th C is not like gathering for 1795. 4 rows of hand-stitching for each gathered length. Of course, for things not visible, modern works! Check out this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=520Af9rkP48>

Indigo dying: <http://www.sharonburnston.com/indigo.html>

ARTICLES:

Dress In Upper Canada 1790-1840 by Hannah Milliken.pdf

<file:///C:/Users/ar11/Downloads/Dress%20In%20Upper%20Canada%201790-1840%20by%20Hannah%20Milliken.pdf>

Mens Hair : Queues: <http://www.revolutionarywarjournal.com/pigtails/>

Mostly Fancy Stomachers and notes about using used clothing / hand-me-downs from upper classes:

<https://thepragmaticcostumer.wordpress.com/2013/05/07/an-appetite-for-fashion-decadence-a-brief-history-of-stomachers/>

Scottish Clothing: <https://www.marariley.net/celtic/scotland.htm>

Two Nerdy Girls: <https://twonerdyhistorygirls.blogspot.com/>

Cap Making A: I disagree with: **1)** I put a narrow casing at the back of a round crown like the others. **2)** The length of the ruffle at 1 ½ to 2 times the length. Many are much less than that! And in general, **the more fabric used for the ruffle, the higher status a person.** Regular folks had modest ruffles with less fabric needed. **3)** And where the author comments about the lack of extant items to look at, again we know more now, and there are many to look at. **4)** The back centre casing: I find the method where the casing 'strings' come out at the end of the casing works fine, and may be easier.

http://people.csail.mit.edu/sfelshin/revwar/caps/making-caps.html?fbclid=IwAR00RFOTSfaLelz3zj_qzcvXjuObp9VVxjabBC-kHqY3llsuZ3BavbBzh8M

Cap making B: You will like the photos of the process in this one. <https://capalog.blog/2021/02/28/a-pattern-for-an-18th-c-lappet-cap/?fbclid=IwAR1goQKmwK9RnemfomckOOKlR-ByWgGANsJMfGzkevQama3if20M5JXMQ0o>

Bonnets in the 18th Century: <https://people.csail.mit.edu/sfelshin/revwar/bonnets/index.html>

'Dressing the part':

Women's Clothing at Colonial Michilimackinac: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ggvvr_I-U2Q

Getting dressed in the 18th century, Society woman:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpnwWP3fOSA>

Getting dressed in the 18th century - working woman:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUmO7rBMdoU>

British Men at Fort Michilimackinac: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=ZNM00dhTIDY>

Part C

More About Fabric

Re Linen / Cotton for Shifts, Shirts, Caps and other items:

A re-enacting novice friend did not ask enough questions and purchased a sturdy linen to make a shift / chemise thinking that it would be long lasting. It is very hot, heavy, and not the correct weight at all. A good weight for a fine chemise, most parts of the cap, and a fichu for a summer events is very light cotton or Linen or perhaps VOILE (pronounced like FOIL or VWAHLL), which is a very thin cotton. Batiste is another option or name for something similar. In early 1900's something similar was called Lawn. The comparable weight in linen is not commonly available at an economical price. And our common "Canadian Fabric Source" (Fabricland) only gets any of these lightweight choices in about mid March or April, and there is never enough white or ivory to go around. In Linen, cotton or a linen-cotton blend it is called Handkerchief weight. 3.5 oz weight is about 120 GSM in metric.

For men's shirts a more-sturdy cotton or linen fabric is needed.

If making one, think of the lighter weight of unbleached cotton that is available. Sometimes it is called Muslin. And it does come in different thicknesses. Each have their uses. If you know the wearer may be 'rough on clothing', choose 1 thickness up.

Avoid the very slubby-dark-yellow-cream versions, and look for something with a uniform strong weave, in an ivory or normal cream.

For hot weather, perhaps lightweight 100% cotton sheeting would be a reasonable option for shifts and shirts but avoid the blue-white that looks too modern. If it is that colour, it is likely what we call broadcloth today, and is poly-cotton. You may think that it will make life easier, but it will NEVER look like a natural fabric in its hang, crease, and general look. You are replicating natural Linen which if not bleached or dyed is more ivory, or very light tan. Some people have made them from sugar sacks. Be cautious of older cotton that can become brittle.

Since only a couple yards or more are needed for a skirt, 100% cotton would be suitable for most people in our situation. If re-enacting in cooler seasons, fine wool is good for many garments since it can be warm, but it was not used for shirts or shifts. No one would wear thick coating-wool for a skirt. Use a weight more like suiting-wool but in a heritage-appropriate colour, and not likely broadly striped. For a warm 'skirt', a quilted underskirt was worn.

For a woman's bodice or jacket, linen is great, since it breathes well, and shapes well since it has a bit of natural stretch, especially when warm and a bit moist. It is also strong! Jackets can be lined or unlined. Men's vest fronts and coats could be made from something like the weight of sturdy Flannel, Cotton Twill or light-weight Denim (not with lycra or of a blue-jeans colour though!). Vest backs were often

made of a lighter weight and plainer fabric, like muslin or sheeting (not printed sheets! FYI). Vests were often adjustable in the back. An image is coming up. Cotton Poplin would be suitable as well, though most of the poplin available is a poly blend.

Fabrics Not available were:

Printed cottons from India. Cottons of any large amount. The American Cotton 'industry' did not yet often produce much except for the landowner's family or community. In scarce supply were fine cottons, linens and lace from Europe.

Silks: Again, due to trade constraints and timing, not much silk was available except to those with a link to Europe or India. Silk Dhaka Muslin was not available. This is a diaphanous fine nearly transparent fabric that is so fine that some people cannot even see the fibres to weave it.

Strongly coloured fabrics in MOST cases: Wool and linen tend to take dye 'softly' and hence saturated colours were rare. Silk takes dyes better into deep colour. Cottons from India were printed with strong colours, but those were rarely available as new yardage in the Loyalist years. Things were regularly made-over, and repurposed, so textiles from earlier years were used until they were completely falling apart, after numerous hand-downs, which is why some show up in this Loyalist era. Since making black textiles took a great deal of dye, more civilian clothing was grey to charcoal rather than actual black.

But what was calamanco, this special item coveted by women of wealth and women of the middling sort? Calamanco (also spelled callimanco, calamanco, or calamink) is a worsted wool textile finished with a glossy, glazed surface, created by forcing the cloth through hot rollers. Historians trace the earliest usage of the term back to the late 16th century. Some scholars attribute the derivation of the word from a modification of Spanish "calamaco," and from the Late Latin word "calamaucus," referring to a felt cap or skullcap. The worsted wool was made from specific sheep and using the longest fibres. Early American consumers got most of their calamanco from Norfolk, England. They appreciated the fabric's ability to take bright colors, such as the vibrant reds and yellows fancied in the early part of the 18th century, and the elegant greens that became the fashion by mid-century. But the calamanco process also worked for plain, damasked, or brocaded weaves.

Regarding Scots Women: This is not a specific area of my research. A few bits:

They may have had a laced-front jacket or vest, but the lacings were possibly hidden under the edges of the fabric, and when pinned together it would be indistinguishable from other bodices. See:

<https://www.marariley.net/celtic/scotland.htm>

And <http://www.marariley.net/jackets/karenaugusta1780.htm>

LECTURE: The Isabella MacTavish Fraser Gown - The Historical Contexts of a 1785 Tartan Wedding Dress:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SE1G6ckI9lo>

At 48.21 minutes in, there is an image of the front closure that is not seen when fully fastened. I am not suggesting that all Scots women dresses were of tartan fabric.



