

# Museum Textile Services

Issue 2 | Summer 2013



And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise she took of the fruit thereof and did eat. And gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman what is this that thou hast done? the woman said the serpent beguiled me and I did eat.





Textile conservation is

# Preserving Beauty



[www.museumtextiles.com](http://www.museumtextiles.com)



# Director's Note

Welcome to Issue 2 of the Museum Textile Services e-Magazine. Since the debut of our annual publication last summer, I have been looking forward the opportunity to share with you once again our stories, staff, and of course textiles. I am grateful for the guidance of Erica Holthausen of Honest Marketing Revolution, who put together Issue 1, and who has taught me so much in the two years we have been working together.

When people find out that I am a textile conservator (and then learn what that is) they tell me that I have the coolest job! I get to touch old things, preserve history, and help people take care of their prized possessions. My favorite parts of my job are teaching, writing, and creative problem solving. My partner in crime since 2007 is conservator Cara Jordan. Cara is as hard working and intuitive as any colleague I've had and also can talk me down when need be.



On page 27 of the e-Magazine, you can learn more about Cara, Courtney, Tegan, Josephine, Jen, and the rest of the MTS team. Our popular intern certification program brings new faces to the studio every semester. With each intern comes a unique perspective informed by their studies in art, fiber art, art history, history, historic preservation, science, and museum studies. If you are thinking about a career in textile conservation, please visit the Education section of our web site, where you can find out how to gain experience working with textiles and prepare for a career in conservation.



This August we will be saying good bye to our technician Courtney Jason, who joined Museum Textile Services in 2010 as a knowledge management intern. She quickly moved into the workroom to assist with textile projects and was promoted to technician in 2011. Courtney is going to concentrate on her graduate studies at Harvard. We are going to miss having Courtney here in so many ways!

If you enjoy Issue 2, be sure to follow our daily antics on Facebook, and read the weekly MTS Blog. We'd love to hear from you!

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*Front and back covers: 1756 sampler made by Elizabeth Mason, before conservation. Silk and metal-wrapped silk threads on linen. 17 x 16 inches. Private collection.*

# Did Henry Adams Sleep Here?

This summer we will undertake one of our most ambitious hand-sewing projects to date—replicating of a set of silk bed hangings belonging to the [Adams National Historical Park](#) in Quincy, Massachusetts. The bed hangings were purchased by Charles Francis Adams (1807–1886), the son of John Quincy Adams, and his wife Abigail Brooks Adams (1808–1889).



In the recent past, these luxurious textiles were deinstalled from the third floor of the Old House at the Park due to their fragile condition. Working with the Park’s curatorial team, MTS Director Camille Myers Breeze decided to create a new set of hangings for the bed using digitally printed cotton sateen fabric. We chose to work with the Plymouth, Massachusetts, firm [Trustworth Studios](#) and their enthusiastic designer David E. Berman.

During the research stage of this project, several questions have been raised about the age of this set of bed hangings, how long they were on the bed, and whether they were used by Henry Adams, whose summer bedroom they have been exhibited in. One thing is clear: they were originally created for a different, larger bed.

The intriguing question then arose about which of the original imperfections to recreate and which to correct when constructing the replica. Conservators refer to these difficult choices as “curatorial decisions,” and we have been extremely fortunate to work with Adams National Historical Park’s pragmatic and knowledgeable curator, Kelly Cobble.

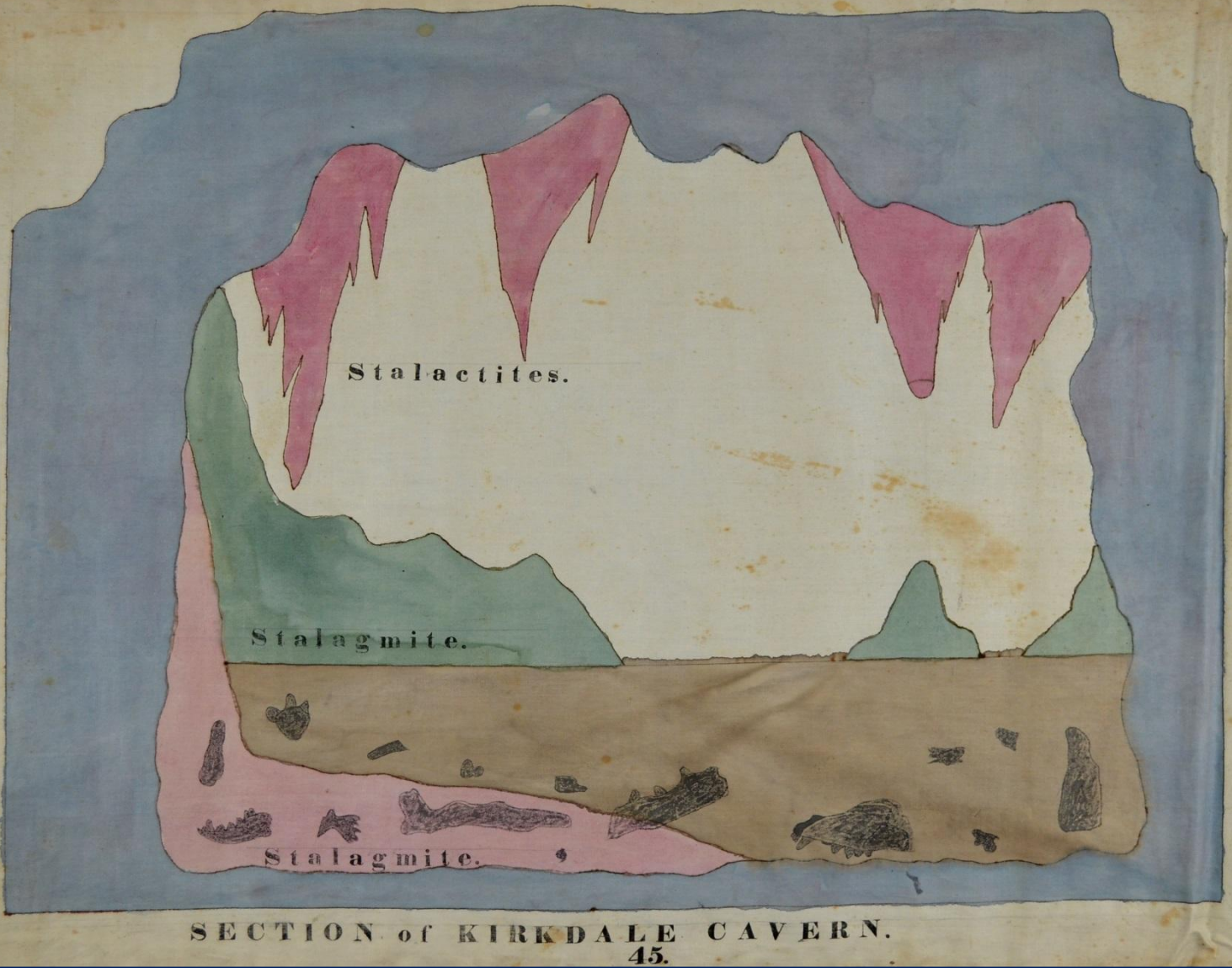
The digitally printed textiles are scheduled to arrive at MTS in time for the replica bed hangings to be completed in summer, 2013. Stay tuned to the MTS Blog for the results.

*Above: Bed hangings in Henry Adams’ bedroom prior to their deinstallation for conservation.*

*Right: A different bed with different hangings seen in an 1880 photo of Henry’s room.*







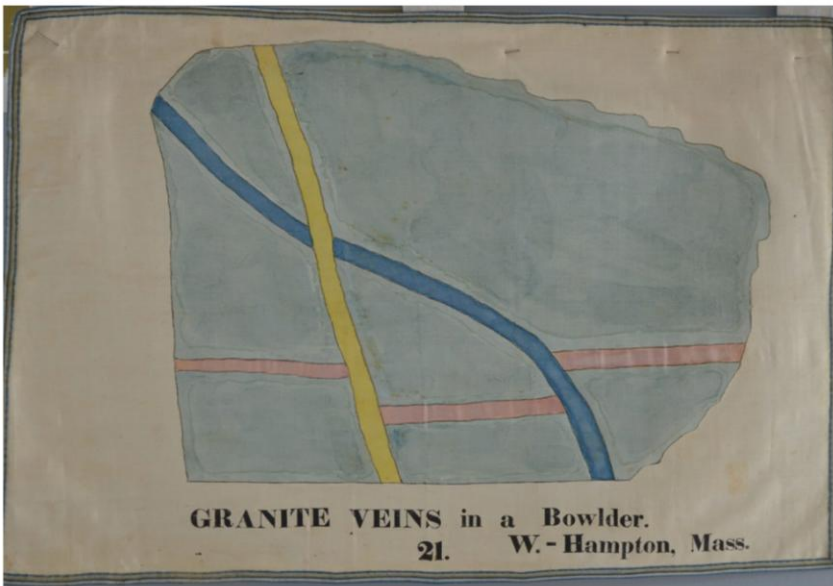
## The Orra White Hitchcock Classroom Charts

Museum Textile Services had the privilege of conserving sixty-one unique artifacts belonging to the [Amherst College Archives and Special Collections](#). Commonly referred to as “classroom charts,” the painted cotton textiles were created by Orra White Hitchcock as teaching tools for her husband, Amherst College president and geology professor Edward Hitchcock. Ranging in size from 20 x 20 inch pieces to large charts several feet in length, many of the textiles display geological strata and their formations, with special attention often given to local New England geology.

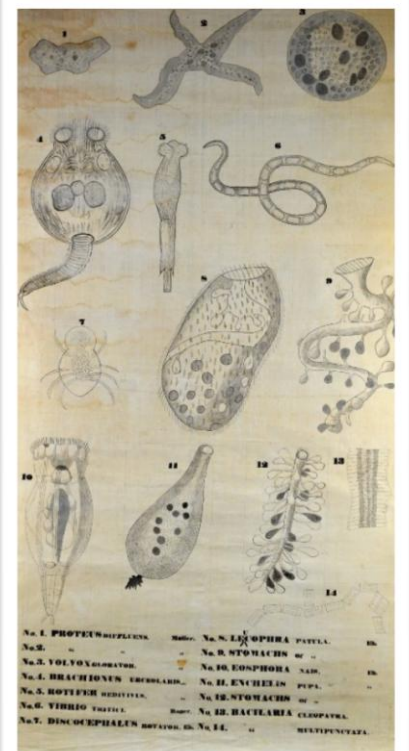
In order to undertake the daunting task of condition reporting, surface cleaning, humidifying, and rehousing this collection, we hired Ryan Cochran, a graduate student in [Public History at Salem State University](#). Intern Ryan and his weekly accomplishments soon became a fixture on the [MTS Facebook page](#) and [Blog](#). The process of rehydration and realignment, which we all came to know well after treating all sixty-one of the classroom charts, was subsequently turned into the newest MTS Handout on [The Gore-Tex Humidification](#).

To learn more about Orra White Hitchcock and her amazing body of work, you can view the 2011 Mead Art Museum exhibit, [An Amherst Woman of Art and Science](#).





*Clockwise from top-left: Palaeotherium magnum Cuv., OWH 41; Ryan Cochran with a sample of the new storage trays MTS designed; 14 Invertebrate Organisms, OWH 60; Ryan vacuuming 7 Lines of Fossil Footprints, OWH 63; and Granite Veins in a Boulder (sic.) W. Hampton, Mass., OWH 21.*





# Education at Museum Textile Services

In 2013, we created a new mission statement for Museum Textile Services. It reads:

“The mission of Museum Textile Services is to encourage the appreciation, care, and preservation of historic textiles through education and world-class conservation treatments.”



What our mission statement emphasizes, alongside the highest quality of textile conservation, is education. We realize our education and outreach goals through many avenues, including teaching, lecturing, museum advocacy, our website, social media presence, and of course our intern certification program. Our recent projects have brought us into many regional colleges and universities, which brings with it a whole new level of appreciation for the educational process.

Many people learn about Museum Textile Services through our website, [www.museumtextiles.com](http://www.museumtextiles.com). The [Education](#) home page contains a calendar of educational events for the upcoming months. There are also two sub-pages listed in the navigation bar, [Becoming a Conservator](#) and [MTS Internships](#).

Becoming a Conservator is an in-depth guide to exploring careers in textile conservation. The first section is on gaining experience, and has a short list of skills that every conservator needs. It then discusses the two popular career paths, apprenticeship and higher education. Links to several undergraduate, graduate, international, and non-degree training programs are listed, as well as programs in related fields. If you have an educational program you would like us to add to this list, please let us know.

The best place to start your textile conservation education is by volunteering with historic clothing and textiles under the direction of a museum professional. Local historical societies and museums are usually understaffed and happy to have knowledgeable and passionate volunteers to catalog, rehouse, and help care for the collection. A great way to meet museum professionals in your geographic area is to join the regional museum organization. We are extremely fortunate to have the [New England Museum Association](#), which offers one-day workshops, an annual conference, and many other opportunities to network with colleagues. Check out their membership programs—you are sure to find one that fits your budget and needs.





# Premier of MTS Sampler Study Days

On an icy cold Saturday morning in January, 2013, the mood was warm and cozy inside the Peabody Historical Society's Smith Barn in Peabody, Massachusetts. Members of the community gathered for a chance to have their antique sampler assessed in the first-ever MTS Sampler Study Day.

Sampler Study Days is the first public program designed by Museum Textile Services to bring visitors to our regional museums while providing preliminary conservation assessments to potential clients at a reduced cost. Participants preregister for a time slot during the morning's program or drop in and wait for an appointment.

Three stations were set up in the Smith Barn. MTS Director Camille Myers Breeze assessed the condition of each sampler, discussed potential conservation issues, and made a preliminary cost estimate for conservation, mounting and reframing. Conservator Cara Jordan then helped participants complete a short survey in order to include their samplers in a searchable online database administered by the Colonial Dames of America ([www.nscda.org](http://www.nscda.org)).



*A beautiful sampler brought for assessment to the Sampler Study Day at the Peabody Historic Society.*

Peabody Historical Society Curator Heather Leavell and Assistant Curator Lyn FitzGerald discussed details related to each sampler's age, history, and style, while sharing resources for researching the history of a sampler's maker. All the while, historical society volunteers managed drop-in visitors, served coffee, and collected registration fees.



*Hannah Hanscomb's 1805 sampler when it was brought to the Sampler Study Day (L) and after conservation at Museum Textile Services (R). We removed the sampler from the acidic board to which it had been glued and then stitched it by hand to a fabric-covered archival board. The 1980s frame and mat were then replaced with a more period-accurate frame.*

The Sampler Study Day was an undeniable success. It brought people out of their homes on a beautiful winter day. Newspaper and internet press attention was given to the Peabody Historical Society's comprehensive events calendar. And to date, MTS has conserved two of the nineteen samplers we assessed that morning.

Many thanks to Peabody Historical Society, especially Heather Leavell for her willingness to participate in the trial run of our new program. If your museum of historical society would like to host a Sampler Study Day, please contact Camille Myers Breeze at [info@museumtextiles.com](mailto:info@museumtextiles.com).



# The First Samurai

Museum Textile Services Director Camille Myers Breeze has long been a fan of Samurai armor, with its intricate blend of organic and inorganic materials bound together by unparalleled craftsmanship. Her 2008 white paper *Preventative Conservation of Samurai Armor* is one of the few resources available online that explores the relationship between Samurai materials and their preservation.



*The armor arrived poorly mounted, with the shin guards wrapped around the lower sleeves and the apron resting on the floor.*

Despite Camille's experience, MTS had never had the opportunity to conserve an entire set of historic Samurai armor. In the summer of 2012, our client's lovely set of Mid- to Late-Edo armor, c. 1700–1868, came to us for conservation. It was the subject of fascination to all in the studio, and two [MTS blogs](#) were written about it. Prompt disassembly was undertaken to reduce the stress that the fragile components were under. Meticulous photo documentation was undertaken throughout the process by intern Michelle Drummey to insure that the armor could be reinstalled correctly.



*Cara Jordan cleaning the hammered brass and lacquer plates on the haidate, or apron. Areas of lifting lacquer were re-adhered and clamped until set.*

It quickly became evident that this group comes from two or more similar sets of armor. The configuration in which it was displayed was also not up to current standards. Camille's visits to the 2013 Samurai exhibits at both the [MFA, Boston](#), and the [Currier Museum](#) in Manchester, NH, confirmed the proper method of reinstallation.



Conservation of the Samurai armor took nine months to complete. The *do* (cuirass) was the most fragile element due to its weight, size, and the effects of light damage. The three silk and lacquer panels that hang from the front were particularly challenging: many of the silk lacings were broken and the lacquer was falling off in chips. Freelance objects conservator Michaela Neiro stabilized the lacquer and infilled areas of loss. Cara, Courtney, and Camille then stabilized the remaining components. Here are six snapshots taken during re installation in the owner's apartment on Boston's Beacon Hill.



*Haidate* (apron) is installed on a wood base placed on the storage box.



*Kote* (sleeves) are laced to the base using leather cords.



*Do* (cuirass) is suspended from the stand and sleeves are padded out.



*Sode* (shoulder pads) and *menpo* (face guard) are in place.



*Kabuto* (helmet) sits atop the base. Silk ties are wrapped under the chin.



*Sune-ate* (shin guards) sit in front of the armor wrapped around tubes.



# College Bound

Over the last decade, Museum Textile Services has worked closely with students and staff of several colleges and preparatory schools, including Amherst College, Bodoin College, Boston College, Hellenic College, Middlesex School, Phillips Academy, St. George's School, and Wheaton College. What makes these projects so rewarding is not only the high quality of the collections, but frequently the opportunity to work directly with young people.



When we were contacted in 2011 by Leah Niederstadt, Assistant Professor of Art History / Museum Studies and Curator of the Permanent Collection at Wheaton College, we had no idea what an enduring partnership would ensue. After conserving a tapestry and an altarcloth that year, Camille Myers Breeze traveled down to the Norton, Massachusetts, campus to guest lecture to Professor Niederstadt's students. There she met seniors Michelle Drummey and Gabrielle Ferreira, both of whom interned at MTS in the summer of 2012.

Camille returned to Wheaton for two days of teaching and preparations for the fall 2012 exhibit, *100 Years 100 Objects*. The exhibit showcases one object for each of the 100 years since Wheaton Female Seminary became Wheaton College. Camille's visit was funded by the Art/Art History Department and the Evelyn Danzig Haas '39 Visiting Artist Program.



After a short presentation about careers in conservation, Camille broke the exhibition design students into teams according to what remained to be done to install the textiles conserved by MTS.

The first team finished framing a silk embroidery depicting "Hagar and Ishmael Cast Out by Abraham" (Genesis Chapter XXI), by Eliza Wheaton Strong (1795–1834). The textile is very fragile, but the team cleaned the frame and glass, placed the embroidery behind the custom mat, and backed the new frame with Marvelseal before hanging it in the gallery.

*Clockwise: Camille Myers Breeze helping students construct an underskirt to replicate the paniers originally worn beneath the Duchesse's dress. Camille trying on the underskirt. Silk embroidery with paint by Eliza Wheaton Strong (1795–1834).*



Another team of students addressed tasks related to the mounting of the c 1780 costume of the Duchesse de Choiseul, which had been conserved at Museum Textile Services in summer 2012. You can read about this project in intern Gabrielle Ferreira's first and second blogs. Camille designed a custom manikin for the Wheaton collection with a removable bust made especially for the Duchesse dress. The bust was covered with a show fabric by senior Josephine Johnson, who is planning for a career in conservation.

To replicate the rigid paniers originally worn beneath the Duchess's dress, students started with a replica of the skirt made by MTS Conservator Cara Jordan from cotton muslin. Next, they machine sewed 3-inch twill tape in two rows across the skirt and threaded flexible polypropylene tubing through the channel. The tubing provided the shape of the paniers, and additional pieces of twill tape tied across the underside created the correct, flat silhouette. During the final push on the second afternoon, the manikin base was attached to the exhibit platform, the manikin bust was installed, the paniers were tied to the manikin, and finally the costume was dressed.



When the time came to deinstall *100 Years 100 Objects*, Camille was able to lend a hand while on campus guest lecturing for Professor Niederstadt's Museum Controversies class. The Wheaton connection continues for summer 2013: Josephine Johnson received a scholarship to intern at MTS and will spend the summer conserving a dress and a modern hanging from Wheaton.





# The Latest Resource: Display, Storage and More

Over the past year, we have added five new MTS handouts to the library of free informational documents available on our website, [www.museumtextiles.com](http://www.museumtextiles.com).

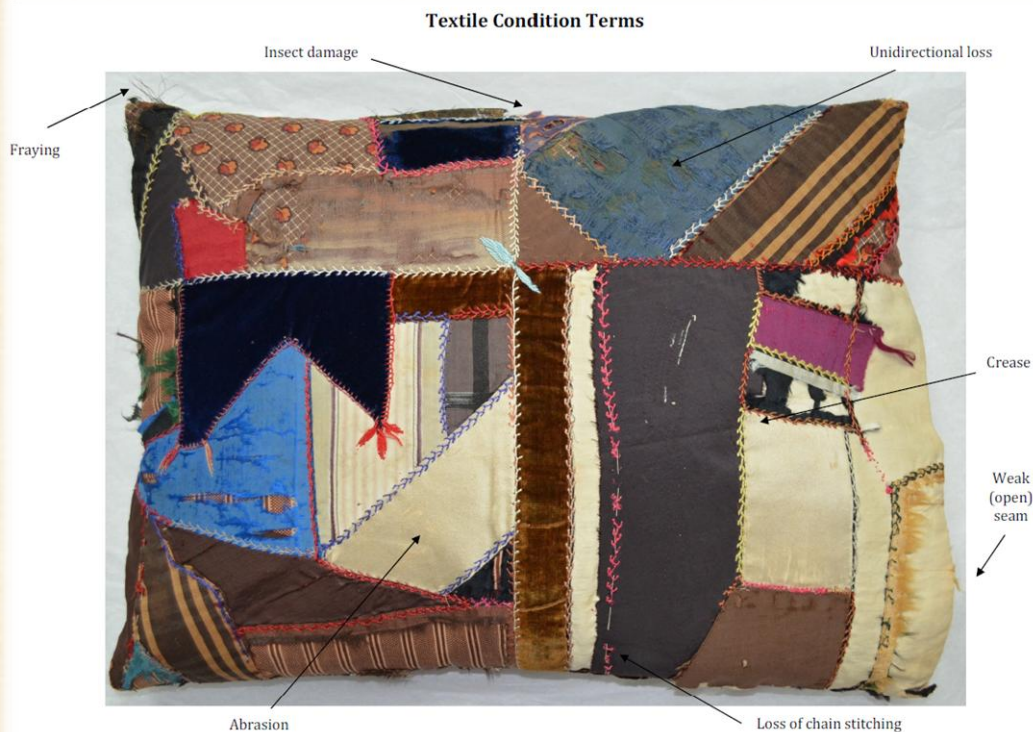
In response to questions from our clients about how to care for their textiles after we send them home, we created a handout on Displaying Textiles. It helps to choose the best locations and methods for displaying textiles that are in stable condition with proper mounting, framing, or support. The handout provides display advice for framed textiles, free-hanging textiles, and items such as pillows and carpets.

Choosing the Best Storage Materials is a two-page handout that reviews the wide array of textile storage materials available online and in catalogs from our favorite archival supply companies. It helps to steer toward proper materials, which in turn will help to find the best value for the money. At MTS we believe that a small number of pH-neutral materials are all that are needed to archive all of your items. This can help prevent accidental miss-matching, reduce supply storage area, and lower your overall costs.

We produced two handouts especially to aid collections management staff and volunteers with the daunting task of condition reporting textiles. Textile Conditioning Terms is a basic lexicon of vocabulary used to describe historic textiles. Having a pre-defined glossary of terms is especially helpful when teams of people are documenting a collection. Our Sample Condition Report & Diagrams shows how easy it is to create a condition report form that can be easily modified for each job or textile type. A handy diagram of how areas of damage on one textile match terms on the Textile Conditioning

Terms handout completes this helpful set of resources.

For more advanced students and conservators, we have created a simple set of instructions on using the Gore-Tex humidification system. Camille Myers Breeze published on this topic in 1994, and the technique is still unsurpassed today as a safe way to introduce water vapor into desiccated fibers.





# Conservation Bleaching with NaBH<sub>4</sub>

Like medical professionals, art conservators must obey the Hippocratic oath, “First do no harm.” Despite this, we sometimes explore the outer reaches of our comfort zones in order to solve problems creatively and foster innovation.

One of the least reversible—and most instinctive—procedures that we regularly practice is wetcleaning. Wetcleaning is distinguished from drycleaning in that it uses water as its primary cleaning agent. A change in appearance is not guaranteed from any conservation cleaning procedure; the primary goal is to remove potentially damaging substances.

Many textile conservation studios like MTS use a deionized water system that filters normal tap water so that it will pull impurities away from the artifacts that we wash with it. Although water alone is a strong cleaning agent, we also may employ a mild surfactant (similar to soap) such as Orvus WA Paste (Sodium Lauryl Sulfate) to encourage additional soil removal. Occasionally we also use bleach when wetcleaning materials. Implied in the name “bleach” is the removal of stains, leaving behind a brighter shade of white. Historically, the motivation to bleach a textile has primarily been aesthetic. But discoloration may reappear after bleaching if a textile is displayed or stored in sub-optimal conditions.

The favorite method of bleaching at Museum Textile Services employs the reductive bleaching agent sodium borohydride (chemical symbol NaBH<sub>4</sub>). It cannot be used on protein fibers, such as silk and wool, because they are naturally acidic and sodium borohydride is a strong basic. Remarkably, sodium borohydride is color safe when used at its proper strength, but testing is strongly encouraged.

Bleaching cellulosic fibers, such as cotton and linen, with sodium borohydride is beneficial both visually and chemically. As cellulose ages, hydroxyl groups (-OH) are converted to carbonyl groups (=O), which contribute to a dingy brown or yellow color. Reduction adds electrons to the cellulose, which stabilizes its molecular weight and returns carbonyl groups back to colorless hydroxyl groups.

Whether you enjoy this scientific explanation or not, you can appreciate the results of our recent sodium borohydride treatments. The textiles below are noticeably brighter without looking over-cleaned. Most importantly, their preservation levels have been improved with a minimum of risk.

Follow this link to download the new MTS Handout on [Bleaching Textiles with Sodium Borohydride](#).



Before



After



Before



After





# Flag Conservation



On December 10, 2012, a shipment of 20 flags arrived at Museum Textile Services from Fort Knox, KY. These flags have a particularly interesting history, as many hail from the personal collection of WWII General George Patton. They belong to the General George Patton Museum of Leadership, which is undergoing a major renovation and reinterpretation.

The Fort Knox flags range from a 11.5 by 17 inch Confederate Calvary guidon to an 80 by 130 inch Nazi flag. The collection also includes a North Vietnamese flag recovered by Army engineers from a booby-trapped location, and the flag of the US Army 2nd Division 5th Brigade commanded by Henry Tunnell in Afghanistan. The common theme illustrated by each flag is that of leadership, both good and bad.



The first batch of eight vehicle flags was conserved at MTS prior to the museum's grand opening on June 14, 2013. Treatment began with surface cleaning with a high-efficiency filtered vacuum to remove particulate matter. Next we humidified those with planar distortions using the system outlined in our new MTS handout on the Gore-Tex Humidification System. No additional repairs were needed.



Each flag had a custom-made, aluminum solid-support panel manufactured by Small Corp, Inc. of Greenfield, MA. On top of each panel we placed a layer of 1/4-inch archival Polyfelt from University Products in Holyoke, MA. Our team chose a khaki-colored cotton poplin show fabric from Phillips-Boyne in Farmingdale, NY. Once each mount was prepared, the flag was centered and stitched down by hand using a curved needle. Because they would be pressure mounted, most flags required only minimal stitching around the perimeter and at several strategic points in the body. Flags with fringe, however, needed every inch of that fringe secured in order to keep it aligned.

To accomplish the pressure mounts, a sheet of UV-filtering acrylic was placed over each flag and screwed into the top of the solid-support panel using predrilled holes. A beige powder-coated aluminum frame from Small Corp completed the mount system.

*Facing page: Camille Myers Breeze examines a Nazi flag at the General George Patton Museum of Leadership. Above: Cara Jordan reviews Gen. Patton's vehicle flags. Left: Courtney Jason puts the final touches on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army vehicle flag after it is pressure mounted with acrylic and before it is framed.*



The second batch of flags contains ten mostly full-sized examples, such as Patton's 33 by 48 inch, 2-star General's flag, which bears the appliqué letters "WTF." That stands for the Western Task Force who, led by Gen. Patton, defeated Axis powers in North Africa. These ten flags will be cleaned, humidified and pressure mounted before returning to the museum in September.



Only one of the flags is being treated differently, the nearly 7 by 12 foot Nazi flag. It is impressive not only for its size and origins but because it is the first Nazi flag ever captured by US Forces. It was presented to Gen. Patton on his birthday, November 11, 1942, in Casablanca, Morocco. General Patton liked to write notes on his artifacts, including the hoist binding of the Nazi flag. The story of the Nazi presence in North Africa and the November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1942, attack named Operation Torch, is told in an [MTS Blog](#) by intern Jennifer Nason.

Because of the large size of the Nazi flag, framing is impractical. It will instead be displayed on a slant board built into a wall. Stabilizing the flag also poses particular challenges because it must support its own weight. The method we finally developed takes its cues from tapestry conservation.

After surface cleaning and humidification, cotton patches were pinned behind areas needing additional support. The patches were attached with cotton thread by a team of conservators, one on the front and one on the back. Next, a full lining was pinned to the back of the Nazi flag. The lining was made of four vertical panels of cotton poplin with a strip of Velcro-compatible fabric sewn to the top edge. Once the top of the lining was stitched to the flag, the flag was hung from the ceiling of the studio.

With the flag and lining suspended off the ground, a network of pins were placed throughout. Next, vertical lines of running stitches were sewn every eight inches to marry the lining and the flag while allowing for natural expansion and contraction with environmental changes. This is reminiscent of the traditional procedure of strapping a tapestry. The lining was then hemmed on the sides, leaving the bottom edge free hanging.



*Top: Patton's 2-Star General flag. Right: the Nazi flag given to Patton on his birthday in 1942. Here it is hanging with its lining pinned to the reverse.*



The Fort Knox flags are not the only flags we have treated this year. We were contacted by a local High School teacher who has a 48-star American flag belonging to his grandfather, U.S. Navy petty officer Stanley Piotrowski. His infantry ship made 11 crossings of the English Channel and was at the Normandy beaches on D-day.



When Piotrowski died in 2007 at age 86, the flag was draped over his coffin. Other than that occasion, the 44 by 81 inch wool flag was stored carefully wrapped in a sheet and rarely seen. The owner eventually made the decision to have his grandfather's flag conserved.

Upon arrival at Museum Textile Services, we noted immediately that the flag was extremely dirty with black soot. The formerly off-white stripes were especially grey and the white stars had a pattern of black stripes across them. These black stripes are present on both the back and front of the flag, as if the flag had acted as a filter. Perhaps it was hung in front of a vent or across the radiator of a truck—but we'll never know the whole story.

Wetcleaning was undertaken using the anionic surfactant Orvus WA Past. When dry, the flag did not look appreciably cleaner. Tests of the more discolored areas showed that they still contain water-soluble soils. So the flag was wetcleaned again, this time with more-anionic surfactant Igepal, which is especially effective on wool.

Flags are among the more sentimental and honored textiles in today's culture. Conserving flags, therefore, requires a balance between understanding the needs of the owner and the needs of the flag. Understanding the range of techniques available to stabilize and display flags—even when they are extremely large or extremely fragile—had made Museum Textile Services one of the most sought-



after studios for flag conservation in the United States.

*Top: Piotrowski's flag arrived soiled and wrinkled. Left: After conservation, it is clean and stabilized in a UV-filtering pressure mount.*



# Preserving One Man's Legacy



When the opportunity to join the army arrived, young Alexander G. McLean jumped at it. After emigrating from Ireland and losing both of his parents, life in a Boston-area orphanage must have been bleak. Bleak enough to make fighting in the Great War for Civilization seem like a good option.

Alexander was one of the lucky soldiers who survived WWI and returned home. However, like many who fought alongside him, he bore wounds invisible to the eye. Although he married and became a father, Alexander G. McLean died a young man from the effects of trench warfare.

The uniform jacket of Alexander McLean arrived at Museum Textile Services late in 2012. Grandson Christopher Molloy and his wife Kristen Rivard were visibly emotional when they spoke of the man and his life. Nothing is known of their ancestors back in Ireland because Alexander McLean died before he could record what he knew of the family he left behind in the old country. His WWI items and a collection of photos are much of what remains, and the couple are adamant about preserving this legacy.

MTS Technician Courtney Jason discovered that McLean's army jacket is a 1917 pattern jacket, which is distinguishable from the earlier 1912 pattern by a single line of stitching around the sleeve cuffs. She learned this from a valuable manuscript written by David Cole and available in [PDF](#) form from the US Army's website.

*Above: Alexander G. McLean in Army uniform.  
Right: from p. 62 of David Cole's Survey of US Army Uniforms, Weapons and Accoutrements.*

## Survey of U.S. Army Uniforms, Weapons and Accoutrements



Pattern 1917 Wool Service Coat



The quickest method of distinguishing between the Pattern 1912 Winter Service Coat and the Pattern 1917 is the stitching on the cuff. The 1912 coat has two rows of stitching (top photo) while the 1917 has only one.





The jacket is in remarkable condition given its age. There was minimal soiling and only a few tiny holes caused over time by wool-eating insects. One of the interior stiffening components made of a vegetable fiber is actively powdering, which Courtney discovered after surface cleaning the jacket with a high-efficiency filtered micro vacuum. She resolved this for the time being by stitching the bottom hem of the jacket's lining closed, which will contain the fragments. However she first photographed the garment label that she discovered hidden between the layers of fabric to record its position. Improved environmental conditions and handling will provide additional protection for the fragile jacket.

A form was created for the jacket using archival padding, Volara foam, Coroplast, and muslin. This lightweight yet rigid support is connected to the inside of the jacket with Velcro and Velcro-compatible fabric. It hangs on a Small Corp. fabric-covered, solid-support panel with the aid of additional Velcro. The mounted jacket is covered with a 6-inch-deep, UV-filtering acrylic shadow box.



When the owners arrived to pick up their completed jacket, we were all touched by their emotional response. They drove directly from our studio to the nursing home to show it to Christopher's aunt, one of the few people alive who knew McLean.

*Above: the jacket before and after conservation. Left: a label found inside the lining of the jacket that confirms the 1917 date.*





In 2013, Alexander McLean's family was fortunate to discover additional items belonging to the soldier, which they brought to MTS for assessment. These including a second arm band, or fourragère, calling cards, buttons, pins, books, and a much-anticipated photograph. Thanks to these items, we know that he joined the army with the Yankee Division and that he ended the war a Private in Company M, 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry. McLean received recognition after returning from the war, and was given both a key to the City of Boston and a medal from the town of Hopedale, MA, where he had spent time in an orphanage.

After returning from WWI, Alexander McLean married a very young Dorothy Tormey. Together they had two children, Catherine Mary McLean and Gordon Alexander McLean. Within a decade, Dorothy would be widowed. McLean's grandson Christopher, who is the custodian of the collection, says that his grandmother remarried after McLean died. Mary's step-sister from this marriage is still alive. Sadly, McLean's son Gordon just died in June, 2013, at the age of 85.

McLean's medals tell some of the story of his service. He was at the Battle of Verdun, which was fought between the German and the French from February 21 to December 18, 1916. It was one of the longest and battles of the First World War, with nearly one million men losing their lives.



*Top left: The key to the City of Boston given to Alexander McLean. Top right: Conservator Barrett M Keating examining and cleaning metal artifacts. Right: McLean's bronze medal of the Battle of Verdun.*





Alexander McLean also received a The US Victory Medal with five clasps representing his service in the battles of Champagne-Marne (July 15 to 18, 1918), Aisne-Marne (July 18 to August 6, 1918), St. Mihiel (September 12 to 16, 1918), Meuse-Argonne (September 26 to November 11, 1918), and the Defensive Sector battle clasp.

This bronze medal was first created in 1919, designed by James Earle Fraser. On one side is the winged Victory holding a shield and sword. The reverse reads, “The great War For Civilization” and lists thirteen countries including France and China. We know that McLean visited Paris because

his collection includes a guide book and a small book of postcards, in addition to a card from the Mars Bar, which served “American Drinks.”

McLean also was sent to China, according to the card from Rich Cafe Restaurant, a “Gorgeous & Fresh Air Banqueting House” with “Beautiful barmaids that you will fix the love on which one you like,” and where “The music will pleasing your ears when you enter in.”

*Top left: McLean’s Victory medal with five metal battle clasps. Top right: Books collected during his WWI service, including The Soldiers and Sailors Prayer Book and Practical Hints on Paris from the Red Cross. Right: Calling card from Rich Café in China.*







Alexander McLean died from the effects of being gassed. Poison gas was among the deadliest of weapons during WWI. It could be used to attack soldiers in the trenches even when no battle was underway. It is possible that McLean was gassed at the battle of Verdun, where both mustard gas and phosgene gas are known to have killed thousands of troops.

It has been estimated that as many as 1.25 million soldiers were gassed in WWI, resulting in 91 thousand deaths. However this statistic does not include the countless soldiers who died like McLean years later, or those who were incapacitated for life.

Many of Alexander McLean's other personal belongings were also conserved at MTS for display in the owner's home. Conservator Cara Jordan repaired the paper items where necessary with Japanese tissue and wheat starch paste before hinging them to an archival board. These items were then covered with a multi-window archival mat and placed behind UV-filtering acrylic.

We enlisted furniture conservator and friend, Barrett Keating, to assess the metal artifacts during a visit. He admired their various patinas and taught us how to do just a very light cleaning with mild surfactant. Cara Jordan mounted the metal items, as well as the second fourragère, on a padded solid-support panel, which will be covered with a UV-filtering acrylic case. The books have been given a fabric-covered archival base with UV-filtering acrylic cover that allows them to still be handled and read.

To date, we have conserved 28 items acquired by Alexander McLean during his short life. Additional items, such as his cap and discharge papers, are on the way. We are grateful to the Molloy family for letting us be a part of preserving this one man's legacy.

*Top left: McLean's photos and calling cards displayed behind an archival paper mat. Top right: Metals case, including McLean's Verdun medal, Victory medal, City of Hopedale medal, key to the City of Boston, VFW medals and pins, two shell casings, and an old brass plaque engraved with his name.*



# Calendar of Events

AUGUST 29-31, 2013

Camille returns to the wonderful campus of the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies to teach Textile Stabilization using Sheer Overlays. She launched this new topic last year with a talented and diverse group of students, many of whom were veterans of the Campbell Center, affectionately known as “Conservation Camp.”



The Campbell Center is unique among the institutions offering continued-education in conservation and preservation studies not only in the breadth of subjects they offer, but in the friendly surroundings of their campus in beautiful Mount Carroll, IL. A recent finalist for Coolest Small Town in America, Mount Carroll provides a quiet place to escape the hustle and bustle of busy lives, and provides focus to study the subjects that inspire.

In this class, participants learn how to use all varieties of sheer overlay materials and, more importantly, how to determine which overlay is best for a given situation. Anyone with stitching experience is invited, including non-collections staff who must perform preservation tasks. The class is conveniently scheduled immediately following Care of Textiles II, taught by Harold Mailand, so that students may attend them back to back. For more information, including a full list of courses offered at the Campbell Center, please see the Campbell Center catalog and visit their booth at the next New England Museum Association conference.

NOVEMBER 14, 2013

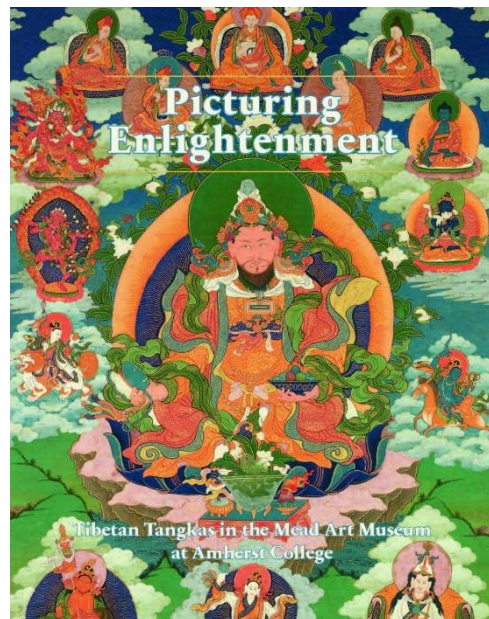
Camille will be chair the NEMA Conference session, “Alternative Ways to Manage Data: Cloud-Based Data Management Systems.” Joining her are presenters from across the museum spectrum to discuss five platforms: eHive, Collection Space, Collective Access, SKIN Museum, and Collector Systems. The other panelists are: Megan Forbes, Collection Manager, Museum of the Moving Image, Astoria, NY; Erica Donniss, Independent museum consultant, 112 Adams Street, Burlington, VT; John T. Hart, Jr., Asst. Curator of Collections, The Farmers’ Museum, Cooperstown, NY; and Eric Kahan, President, Collector Systems, LLC. New York, NY.





# MTS News

**Camille Myers Breeze's** much-anticipated debut on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) happened in May with the publication of "Picturing Enlightenment: Thangka in the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College." The beautiful 170-page catalogue has scholarly entries for all of the Mead's eighteen thangkas, written by Professor Marylin Rhie of Smith College. Camille's essay, "Opening Doors: Conserving the Mead Art Museum's Tibetan Thangka Collection," adds to the current literature on thangkas by highlighting our mix of textile- and paintings-conservation techniques.



**Cara Jordan** was promoted to Conservator upon completing her ALM in Museum Studies from Harvard Extension School. Cara is also celebrating her recent engagement to long-time boyfriend Justin Davis!

Intern **Ryan Cochran**, who joined MTS to work on the conservation and rehousing of Amherst College's Orra White Hitchcock textiles, completed his MA in Public History at Salem State University in May, 2013. Ryan moved on to an internship at the USS Constitution Museum after MTS. He is now on the hunt for a full-time museum job.

Intern **Jennifer Nason** collected her BA in Historic Preservation from Salve Regina University in, RI, this May. Jen is taking a gap year while she works and looks into graduate schools.

Technician **Courtney Jason** is doing a month-long internship with the National Park Service at [Scotty's Castle](http://Scotty's Castle) in California's Death Valley. This internship is part of her graduation requirements for her Museum Studies degree. Courtney will be performing regular maintenance of the castle and its collections.



Intern **Tegan Kehoe** is heading to Tufts University this fall for their MA program in Museum Studies.

Former MTS intern **Kaleigh Paré** is now Program Coordinator at Buttonwoods Museum.



# MTS Staff

Camille Myers Breeze, Founder & Director



Camille began her textile conservation career in 1989 at the Textile Conservation Workshop in South Salem, New York. After earning a BA in Art History from Oberlin College, she received an MA in Museum Studies: Costume and Textiles Conservation from the Fashion Institute of Technology. She spent five years in the Textile Conservation Laboratory at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City before moving to the Textile Conservation Center at the American Textile History Museum, in Lowell, MA. She founded Museum Textile Services in 1999. Camille is an avid motorcyclist and shares a 4-acre farm with her boyfriend in southern New Hampshire.

Cara Jordan, Conservator



Cara joined Museum Textile Services in 2007 as a volunteer. She quickly joined the staff where she became responsible for intern training and project management. Cara's specialties include flags, quilts, samplers, and conservation framing. Cara earned an MLA in Museum Studies from the Harvard University Extension School in 2013. She is also a 2007 graduate of Tufts University in affiliation with School of the Museum of Fine Arts. Cara has worked on several art exhibitions and her art focuses mainly on painting, alternative process photography, and fiber arts.

Courtney Jason, Technician



Courtney was born in Beverly, MA, and grew up in Newton, NH, where she is now a member of the Newton Historical Society and Newton town historian. Courtney graduated from the University of New Hampshire in May 2010 with a Bachelor's in History, and is currently pursuing her ALM in Museum Studies at Harvard Extension School. Courtney began as a Knowledge Management Intern and completed the MTS Intern Certification Program before coming on staff in 2011. Her interests include history, reading, and cooking, and she has been a lifelong fan of the Boston Bruins.

Tegan Kehoe, Intern



In addition to interning at Museum Textile Services, Tegan works at the Old South Meeting House in Boston. She majored in History and Creative Writing at Brandeis University, doing her thesis on the gender politics of authorship in early 19th-century Boston, and will begin the Tufts University MA program in Museum Studies in 2013. Tegan enjoys sewing and embroidery and is a gifted knitter.



### Josephine Johnson, Intern



Josephine Johnson is 2013 graduate of Wheaton College, MA, and now lives in Somerville, MA. She majored in chemistry and minored in art history and studio art in preparation for a career in art conservation. At Wheaton College, she worked as a student conservator in the Permanent Collection where she had the opportunity to conserve many pieces in the collection. She also assisted MTS with the installation of a duchess's dress for the exhibit, 100 Years 100 Objects. With a background in object conservation, Josephine is excited now to learn about textile conservation.

### Jennifer Nason, Intern



Jen is a Chelmsford, MA, native and 2013 graduate of Salve Regina University with a degree in Historic Preservation. She participated in an archaeological dig at the American home of Irish philosopher George Berkeley and wrote her undergraduate thesis on a constructive analysis of his home as a modern house museum. Jen developed her love of material culture and historic textiles while interning at the Naval War College Museum in 2012. When not interning at Museum Textile Services, Jen is the Volunteer Coordinator of the Lowell Wish Project and the chaplain of the Aquidneck Island chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution.

### Aimee-Michele Pratt, Intern



Aimée-Michelle a.k.a. Charlie is a Cantabridgian born and raised. She is currently completing the Museum Studies Certificate Program at Tufts University and holds a degree in Visual and Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In addition to her internship at Museum Textile Services, Charlie has interned at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago History Museum, and the Tufts University Art Gallery (permanent collection). She has also worked at the Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum in Chicago. Charlie is an avid fiber artist, specializing in fiber dyeing and textile design.

### Jennifer Cruise, Intern



Jennifer is a native New Englander, transplanted to the upper Midwest, where she works as a science professor, and advances her “stealth career” in conservation. Years after her BS and PhD degrees in biology, Jennifer received an MA in conservation from the University of Lincoln, in the UK, and interned at the National Trust’s Textile Conservation Studio. She has also volunteered at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Textile Conservation workshop in South Salem, NY. Jennifer joins MTS for an intensive, one-month internship during which she lends her scientific background to our ongoing projects while gaining hands-on experience.



## In the Next Issue . . .

Final results of the Digital Reproduction of the Adams National  
Historical Park's Bed Hangings

Conservation of a 200-year-old bicorn hat belonging to a  
sailor from the USS Constitution

Calendar of Sampler Study Days





And the lord of commandments the man saying of every tree of the garden thou shalt not eat of it for in the day that thou shalt eat thereof thou shalt surely die and the lord said unto the woman what is this that thou hast done



And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise she ate of the fruit thereof and gave also of the fruit unto the lord and he did eat and the lord God said unto the woman what is this that thou hast done and she said the serpent beguiled me and I did eat



Elizabeth Thason her work done in the year 1728