

# MUSEUM TEXTILE SERVICES

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The Museum Textile Services Magazine is an annual publication of Museum Textile Services, LLC, a full-service textile conservation laboratory located in Andover, Massachusetts.



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# Letter from the Director



**Resilience.** This word has been stuck in my head ever since March 24th, 2020, when Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker ordered the closure of non-essential businesses. The staff of Museum Textile Services, like many of our friends, colleagues, and clients, quickly secured our workplace, packed up our laptops and project folders, and hunkered down at home.

Resilience is not only a key skill for navigating a global pandemic, it is a requirement of anyone who owns a private practice. Conservator Claudia Chemello wrote that, “Private practice requires sheer perseverance, much like daily life in the past year. So much of your life is in your business, and this can be unnerving at times.” I felt like Claudia was speaking directly to me when she said that among our most important skills “is learning how to embrace doubt and uncertainty and to practice it daily, even hourly.” What a relief it was to hear that I was not alone, and that it was okay to feel uncertain about how we would emerge from quarantine.

But emerge we did, as a smaller, more agile, and focused group of four women, each of whom brought a different strength to the table. Associate Conservator Morgan Carbone expertly managed our existing and incoming projects to ensure cash flow. Conservator Kayla Silvia completed countless treatments without pausing for other fun things like research, writing, and teaching. Newly appointed Studio Manager Samantha Alarie worked throughout quarantine, making sure that every email and phone call was answered, and helped to keep us and our clients safe.

Thanks to our existing contracts and the great number of individuals who took the time during Covid-19 to reorganize and redecorate their homes, things were looking a little more recognizable by the end of last summer. But we soon realized that there would likely be no large-scale or grant-funded projects coming our way for another year. Again, Claudia Chemello said it best: “Private practice is a study in uncertainty. The ability to rapidly pivot and draw strength from being a small and lean company was essential in 2020.”<sup>1</sup>

Publishing the MTS Magazine this year feels like a victory. It allows us to celebrate the wonderful people and textiles we have worked with over the last 18 months, and to further unlock the stories they tell. The global pandemic is far from over, but we carry on with the work we love so much—preserving the artifacts that lend meaning to our present and our past.

Thank you!

Camille Myers Breeze

Fig. 3. Opposite. MTS Study Collection dress with 17th-century Brussels tapestry.

Fig. 4. Background. Details of a cotton appliqué quilt.



# Five Dresses, Five Voices

Ask anyone who works with a museum, historical society or other costume collection what the most abundant type of clothing is in their storage room, and the answer will probably be women's dresses. We all understand that clothing has a unique ability to tell stories about individuals, as well as the technological, economic, and cultural developments of a brief moment in time. Dresses can be amazing ceremonial costumes made from luxury fabrics and containing countless hours of hand work, which are coveted, unchanged, for generations within the same family. They can also bear evidence of thrifty tailoring and redesigning, due to the inherent value of their raw materials, making dating nearly impossible. The following set of essays by MTS staff and interns will introduce you to five dresses that received treatment at MTS in the past 18 months, and the five very different reasons why they are important to preserve.

# The Sylvia Fairbanks Wedding Dress

Camille Myers Breeze



Fig 6. Silk wedding dress on display before conservation.

On November 25, 1802, Winthrop, Massachusetts, residents Johnathan Judkins and Sylvia Fairbanks were married. They both lived into their 90s, and had five daughters and one son. A dress in the collection of the Fairbanks House in Dedham, Massachusetts, has been carefully preserved as a beautiful relic of their wedding day and a reflection of the status

of the Fairbanks family. In 2008, the dress was assessed as part of a house-wide textile survey performed by MTS Director Camille Myers Breeze. After receiving the report, the Fairbanks House removed the dress from the antiquated case in which it had been hanging and started planning for its conservation.

Wrapped in a cotton sheet inside an acid-free box, the dress and its accompanying documentation arrived at MTS in 2018, and conservators soon began photographing and assessing it. Within a few minutes, it was clear that the family history did not match up with the evidence presented by the dress. Women's dresses in Europe and America in the early years of the 19th century were generally characterized by front-closing garments, high waist, squared neckline, and a modest train. If an 1802 dress had long sleeves, they were usually straight and draped past the wrists. The Fairbanks dress was created as a back-closing garment featuring the rounded neckline, more structured, convertible sleeves, and a higher hemline. The signs that the dress had been altered began to come to light. The bodice and skirt were roughly basted together. Two darts had been made with white mercerized cotton thread running up the back of the bodice, and the



center-front of the bodice suggested that it once may have featured a point. There was a finished hem but the waistline was a mess of raw, fraying edges. All along the front of the bodice, there were also scores of pin or stitch holes where trimmings were likely removed. Most telling, a square neckline had been created by pleating the material near the collar bones—perhaps in an attempt to make it look more like an 1802 dress.



Fig. 7. Associate conservator Morgan Carbone conserving the silk wedding dress.

Fashion historian and collections specialists Karen M. DePauw writes that “While family stories may date a costume to one period, it is not unusual to find that a story may be misattributed by a generation or the date slightly off.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the author reminds us that, “with a 200-year-old wedding dress it is hard to find the true story about it or the wearer. But it has its own story to tell, not just hers.”<sup>3</sup> With this understanding, conservators approached the dress’s owners with a proposal to reestablish

aspects of the earlier silhouette, all of which suggest that the dress was made in the early 1830s.

Could the dress actually have been worn by Sylvia Fairbanks in 1802? It’s not out of the realm of possibility. The striped and printed silk was available in Boston at that time. And it is always conceivable that additional evidence suggesting an early-19th century date has been lost to time. What we are relatively sure of, however, is that it was not worn for any purpose other than fancy dress after the early 1840s. The simple skirt would not have supported the ever-increasing fashionable silhouette and underpinnings that characterize the mid-19th century, nor the bustles that the late-19th century is famous for.

We can only guess to what occasion Sylvia Fairbanks may have worn this lovely dress in the 1830s. Or perhaps the wedding dress legend is correct, and it was worn by one of Sylvia and Johnathan’s five daughters instead (they were between fourteen and twenty-seven years of age in 1833.) The most important fact is that it has survived because generations of the Fairbanks family gathered and cared for their material history, choosing to convert their homestead into a museum for all to enjoy.

To read more about the conservation of the Fairbanks dress, follow the MTS Blog at [www.museumtextiles.com/blog](http://www.museumtextiles.com/blog).

# Designer Ann Lowe's 1957 Masterpiece

Morgan Blei Carbone

The reexamination of Black creators and fashion designers has brought to light the work and legacy of Ann Lowe (1909–1981.) Born at the turn of the 20th century in Alabama, Lowe learned how to sew from her mother and grandmother, who were seamstresses for the first families of Montgomery. Lowe is best known for designing Jacqueline Kennedy's 1953 silk wedding gown. But, before dressing the future First Lady, Lowe spent decades designing and producing gowns for young women in Tampa, Florida, notably for the annual Gasparilla festivities. MTS has the distinct honor of conserving Lowe's 1957 Gasparilla Jewel Circle Gown belonging to the Henry B. Plant Museum Society, Inc.



Fig. 11. Ann Lowe's label.

subsequently created dresses for Lee's family wedding. Lowe then brought the samples of the work door to door to secure more commissions. "I wasn't turned down at a single house," she said. "By the end of the summer I had five big weddings and was swamped with work."<sup>4</sup> Lowe left Tampa for two years to attend New York's S. T. Taylor Design School in 1917. Upon her return, she became the go-to designer for Tampa's elite, and was commissioned as Dressmaker for the Gasparilla Court in 1924.<sup>5</sup>

Gasparilla is a Tampa city-wide celebration that was first organized in 1904. The event celebrates the defeat of the pirate José Gaspar, who robbed merchant ships off the Gulf Coast in the late 18th and early 19th centuries before his capture by the United States Navy in 1821.<sup>6</sup> The annual celebration was meant to promote the city and its May Day celebration. In secret, individuals formed "Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla" and surprised the city with a mock pirate invasion. The celebration is still



Lowe's defining moment came at the age of 16, when her mother suddenly passed away leaving behind a half-finished dress for the Alabama governor's sister. Upon its completion, Lowe befriended Tampa socialite Mrs. D.C. Lee and

10 Fig. 10. Ann Lowe dressing an anonymous client.

held every January and includes parades, carnivals, costume contests, debutante and coronation balls, and so much more.<sup>7</sup>

Historic Gasparilla artifacts are on display at the Henry B. Plant Museum in the 1891 Tampa Bay Hotel, now owned by the University of Tampa. The vast collection contains many of the Gasparilla court gowns including three by Lowe. The first confirmed example of Lowe's work is the 1924 dress made for Sara Lykes Keller, the Gasparilla Queen. The museum has another early Lowe piece worn by Katherine Broaddus that she wore in 1926. MTS is treating the gown worn by Rebecca Davies Smith in 1957. The dress is made of cream-colored silk satin emblazoned with silver bugle beads, ivory seed beads, small blue tulle flowers, and strands of pearls. The sweetheart neckline is adorned with finely pleated blue tulle while the train is composed of cream-colored silk satin with the interior lined with blue tulle. While the embellishments of this dress are expertly executed, Lowe's mastery can be seen in its construction. The corseting and interior supports rival that of American haute couture from the mid-20th century.

"I'm an awful snob," Lowe said in her 1966 spread in *Ebony* magazine. "I love my clothes and I am particular about who wears them. I am not interested in sewing for café society or social climbers. I do not cater to Mary and Sue. I sew for

the families of the *Social Register*." Her Gasparilla designs are a small fraction of the extant gowns by Lowe. She would dress the Duponts, Roosevelts, Posts, Biddles, Rockefellers, and Auchinclosses.<sup>8</sup> While Lowe's works were highly appreciated by these families, Lowe did not receive widespread public recognition and would declare bankruptcy several times throughout her career. When dressing Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Lowe's studio famously flooded just two weeks before the Kennedy wedding, forcing her and her staff to work day and night to recreate the wedding gown and bridesmaids' dresses.<sup>9</sup> Despite her hard work, Lowe was referred to as "a colored woman dressmaker" in the media and asked to use the service entrance, which she declined, walking in through the front door instead.<sup>10</sup>

Lowe's dresses reside in museum collections all over the country including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum at FIT, and the Smithsonian.<sup>11</sup> Keep an eye out for a forthcoming exhibit at the MET featuring the work of Ann Lowe and other American fashion designers.



Fig. 12. Stock image of Gasparilla Jewel Circle Gown.

# The Dressing Gown of Hannah H. Hunt

Kenna Libes

A floral wool dressing gown belonging to Maine State Museum was wetcleaned at MTS early in 2020. Also known as a *robe de chambre*, the garment may look drab at first glance. But to its caretakers, conservators, and researchers, it is a rare example of a casual dress worn by a larger woman, and it has survived for 150 years despite having every odd stacked against it.

Hannah Hodges Hunt (1804–1898) of Augusta, Maine, would have put on this dressing gown to go about her busy morning presentably without getting fully dressed. She could pull it over her supportive undergarments and belt it to her waist without worrying too much about her exact size. Though the front is cut in the style of a nightgown, leaving the bust and waist loose, the sleeves and back are constructed according to the mode in day dresses at the time: three back pieces, a flat, slightly raised waist, and “coat” sleeves—all popular in the late 1860s and early 1870s. It’s even piped!

Wedding dresses and other high-style garments worn by the young and wealthy are commonly preserved in museums. Clothing for casual dress or workwear, on the other hand, is rarely saved. Larger clothing was often recycled—a size 20



Fig. 8. Wool dressing gown after conservation.

bodice can easily be altered to a size 12, for example, or the textile itself harvested for a different purpose. There’s a variety of reasons that larger clothing and work clothing rarely survive, but Hannah Hunt’s wrapper was preserved intact in spite of them all.

This dress is perhaps what we would currently deem a 5X, and for that reason

alone most museums would choose not to acquire it. It's in good condition for exhibition and can tell a variety of stories about both Hannah and her social context. We can imagine that either the family treasured this dressing gown or it was hidden away and forgotten, because nothing less than complete attention (or a complete lack of it) could have saved Hannah's dress. It's also possible that this gown was deemed special for its size alone and that it acquired a kind of sanctity over the years because of that. It's easy to look around at our own time and know that bodies come in all shapes and sizes, after all, but it's a lot harder to remember that they also did in the 1860s—and Hannah is proof of that. She's doing the hard work here of representing a portion of society that is commonly and completely ignored.

Speaking of the commonly ignored, this wrapper is also notable as a garment worn by an older woman. Hannah, as a woman in her sixties and presumably the head of the house, might have gotten away more easily with wearing a nice wrapper for most of the day than a younger woman might have. And her size mattered even less: Most clothing

was still handmade to fit the wearer at this time.



Fig. 9. Wool dressing gown during wet cleaning.

Hannah Hunt's wrapper is a testament to the existence, comfort, and working life of an older woman whom we'd now consider to be 'plus-size.' It's not the kind of garment—or person—you'll often see displayed in museums, but it deserves its position in the collections nonetheless.



Since interning at MTS, Kenna has finished her MA in Public Humanities at Brown, accrued another one in Fashion and Textile Studies at FIT (in grand MTS tradition) and is now a PhD student at Bard Graduate Center. She has published on the use of beetle wings in Victorian dress, the presence of fashionable BIPOC sitters in early modern Western portraiture, and by the time this is printed will hopefully have completed her thesis on size exclusion in museum collections and exhibitions of fashion.

# Building the William H. Johnson Collection

Samantha Alarie



Fig. 13. Back of silk dress before “Vac & Pack.”

Late in 2020, Museum Textile Services was sent a recent acquisition from the William H. Johnson House in New Jersey. This civil-war-era dress was presumed to have been worn by Adelaide Johnson, William H. Johnson’s daughter. The goal was to safely exhibit the dress for patrons of the historic house, however extensive conservation treatment was not financially possible. Luckily for them, MTS introduced a new treatment in 2020, called the “Vac & Pack.”

“Vac & Pack” is a preventative conservation treatment used to slow degradation of artifacts. During this treatment, MTS staff surface clean textiles using conservation-grade tools to reduce particulate matter. This is an important step for the safety and longevity of textiles because some of the particulates may be hazardous such as mold or insect evidence. For the William H. Johnson House, it was imperative to clean the dress because it had developed small holes over the years from pests and pollutants. These holes may need to be repaired in the future so that the dress can be safely displayed.

After surface cleaning, the dress was carefully folded and packed in acid-free, unbuffered tissue paper to support fragile areas and prevent further degradation. In the case of this dress, it was especially important to support the bodice and the waistband, as the dress is threatening to separate into two pieces. Once the “Vac & Pack” was complete, the dress was returned to its home in New Jersey. It is currently not exhibitable, but the “Vac & Pack” treatment has slowed down the degradation. This will allow the William H. Johnson House to take the time to fundraise for the full conservation treatment so the dress can be exhibited safely.



Fig. 14. Packed silk dress after “Vac & Pack.”

MTS offers this “Vac & Pack” option to allow clients to take their time to consider conservation, while knowing their textile has been examined, photographed, and reboxed in archival materials. This option is also ideal for people with family treasures that have been in long-term storage in household materials. Wedding dresses, christening gowns, quilts, flags, embroideries, ethnographic textiles—all are excellent candidates for conservation-quality services. If you think your clothing & textiles need a “Vac & Pack” please visit our website, fill out the questionnaire, and our Studio Manager will reply with a quote.



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**June 8-11**

Advanced Mount Making (Level 3)  
**June 13-15**

Introduction to Textile Conservation (Level 2)  
**June 13-16**

Textile Stabilization and Display (Level 3)  
**June 19-22**

Matting and Framing Works of Art on Paper (Level 2)  
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Storage Solutions (Level 2)  
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Introduction to Paper Conservation (Level 2)  
**July 18-21**

Integrated Pest Management (Level 2)  
**July 18-20**

Rare Book Care and Structure (Level 2)  
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# 1920s Primitivism in the MTS Study Collection

Lauren Pardue



Fig. 15. Silk beaded dress.

In 2020 a group of textiles and garments were donated to the MTS Study Collection by Frances Meffen. They were formerly in the collection of the Newark Museum of Art. One dress was chosen by MTS Summer Program participant Lauren Pardue for research and rehousing. The dress is asymmetrical and features a beaded sash and rows of beaded triangles with fringe that evoke early representations of Native American dress in art and cinema. This connects the dress to the movement known as primitivism, or the fascination of earlier cultures. It is not unlike Orientalism, which

is a fascination with cultures of Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East.

Primitivism found its way into the art and fashion of the late-19th and 20th centuries through painters like Paul Gauguin, Edvard Munch, and Henri Matisse. These paintings can be identified by their use of bright and colorful backgrounds with exotic and sexualized women. Popular fashion designers that took inspiration from global cultures include Mariano Fortuny and Paul Poiret. Their work became popular because it made women feel fashionable, worldly, and colorful. Inside the dresses, the wearer was relatively unencumbered and could imagine a simpler time before industrialization and urbanization.

The MTS Study Collection dress can be dated to the 1920s due to many context clues. The curved C-shape neckline, the low waistline, the sash, the intricate beadwork, and the high hemline were departures from the Edwardian period. However, what leads us to believe that this dress is inspired by primitivism is the use of color, beadwork, and iconography.

Though the origins of the dress are unknown, it still tells a story about its wearer. The triangular beadwork maybe



inspired by indigenous tribal garments from North America. The triangle is a popular shape that symbolizes family, growth, and enlightenment, and can be found throughout art, including textiles. The dark orange/red shade of the silk fabric and beads represent an important color to many warm-weather cultures, including those depicted by Western primitivist painters. The beaded sash across the low waistline hints at the flapper dresses that followed, but also is an example of the appropriation of indigenous cultural elements that was so popular in the 1920s, and continues today.

This silk beaded dress is too fragile to display without considerable conservation, but it survives because someone cared about it. It still has the power today to teach us something about the symbolism and style of clothing from a century ago.



Fig. 16. Ghost Dance Dress.

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# Escape Into Her Crafts—Mary Scott Hamilton’s Embroidery



Fig. 17. Mary Scott Hamilton embroidery after conservation.

Late in 2020, an embroidered textile arrived at MTS from with a story we had never heard. A family of five, living and working in Manila, spent over three years during World War II at an internment camp awaiting peace between the Allied forces and the Japanese. MTS Director Camille Myers Breeze spoke with the eldest son of the artist Mary Scott Hamilton, Samuel Weir Hamilton III, who is living in Massachusetts.

Poppy, as he is called, was born in Shanghai in 1930, and turned twelve the year the sampler was begun. His mother Mary was a nurse in Beijing when she met Sam Senior (later known as Papa Sam) who worked for First National City Bank, now known as Citicorp. Mary was an avid knitter, and according to her son, was known to “escape into her crafts.” The basic facts are clear from the lettering around the perimeter



Fig. 18. Drawing of “the shanty” where the Hamiltons lived for nearly three years. Drawn by Donald Dang.

of the embroidery, which reads “Food and clothing for three days, Santo Tomas Univ., Internment camp, Manila, Jan. 6, 1942, Feb. 3, 1945.”

The story of the Hamiltons’ internment is poignant and heroic. In February 1941, Sam Senior received orders to transfer to Manila, the capital of the Philippines. The family enjoyed only nine months in Manila before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941 and the US entered WWII. The Japanese also bombed Manila, forcing the Hamiltons and other American families inland. After their temporary location was strafed by enemy machine gun fire, the group moved to the Manila suburb of Pasay, hoping for a quick evacuation. What happened instead is that the Hamiltons joined a group of 4000 allied civilians on the campus of the University of Santo Thomás, which is depicted

in the background of the embroidery. Being a commuter school, there were no dormitories, and the families slept in classrooms. Even though they were interned together, Sam Jr. and his father slept in a room with other men while Mary and the two younger boys shared a room next door. When middle son David was moved to the men’s sleeping quarters, the family decided to look for an alternative home on campus where they could remain together.

A drawing survives of the wooden shanty the family built in an attempt to live a more normal life. While the shanty was under construction, the Hamiltons used a tent during the daytime as a place to stay together. It was during this time on January 6th, 1942 that mother Mary



Fig. 19. Mary Scott Hamilton with her son Sam Hamilton III.

began documenting the family's ordeals in canvas and thread, using supplies available locally. The tent takes center stage in the embroidered composition, sheltering all five family members.

The end to internment for the Santo Thomás University residents came shortly after the Battle of Leyte Gulf, which took place on October 23–26, 1944. The Allied forces crippled the Japanese fleet on their way to taking control of the Pacific. The family did not have to wait long before they were able to take a US Liberty Ship out of Leyte, arriving back in the States and settling temporarily at Mary's sister's home in Grassy Spur (now Sheppie's Meadow) in Green River Village, Guilford, Vermont.

The family eventually bought a home in New Jersey. The completion date on the textile (embroidered not by Mary but by a baby sitter) is February 3, 1945. The embroidery passed into the hands of Sam Hamilton IV and his wife Priscilla, who



Fig. 21. Detail of Mary and Sam Jr. obscured by recent staining.

brought it to MTS following a water leak. Heavy tidelines were visible toward the bottom of the embroidery and lighter tidelines toward the top. There was also minor fading of the embroidery from light exposure and a haze of discoloration often seen when a textile is exposed to smoke (i.e. cigarettes or a fireplace.) The canvas ground and embroidery threads felt structurally stable and there were no holes.

Associate Conservator Morgan Blei Carbone carefully removed the embroidery from its old foam-core board. She then wetcleaned it with an anionic surfactant, which successfully reduced the tidelines and discoloration. When dry, Morgan mounted the embroidery with hand stitching onto a fabric-covered archival board and custom framed it in a new frame beneath UV-filtering glass.

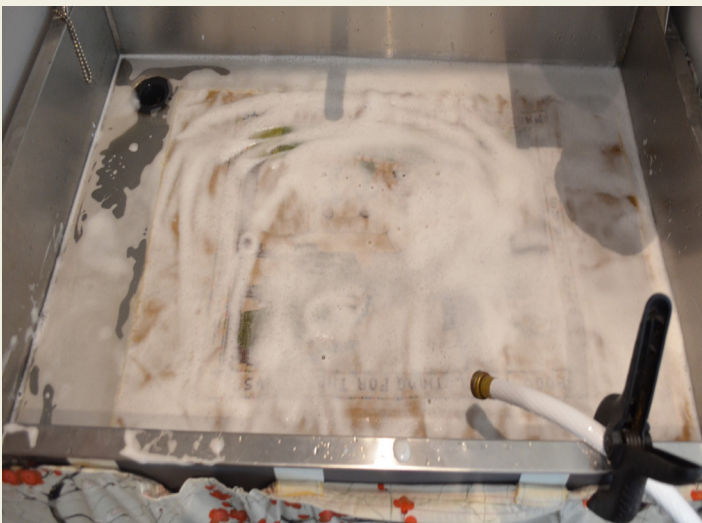


Fig. 20. Details of the embroidery during wet cleaning.

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To all the Hamiltons, especially Poppy, the embroidery is a symbol of their success in remaining a family under these terrible conditions. The lesson he took away is to be patient with situations, which are not as bad as they seem to be. Believing this makes life a little easier. Over the years, the occupants of the internment camp have gotten together numerous times. In 2019, a meeting of the Civilian ex-Prisons of War (CPOW—formerly BACEPOW) was held in New Orleans at the National World War II Museum. Many interviews were given by

survivors, and pictures of Mary Hamilton's embroidery were shared. In his confident and clear voice, Poppy told me, "I'm awful glad its still in the family."



Fig. 22. Sam Senior with "Poppy."

# Re-Stuffing a Steiff Teddy Bear

Its not every day that a bear walks in our doors. Back in late 2019, A private client brought their father's teddy bear to MTS for conservation. The bear has mohair fur on a cotton ground, wood wool (excelsior) filling, and shoe-button wooden eyes. The bear was characteristically similar to early teddy bears made by Steiff and Michtum. All we had to go on was the father's birth year: 1923.

To determine the manufacturer of the client's bear we first closely examined its

materials and construction. The fine blond mohair pile and cotton fabric on the paws is seen consistently on the majority of Steiff bears. The earliest of these were stuffed with wood wool and sometimes kapok (a traditional futon filling.) Steiff bears have an internal skeleton consisting of cardboard disks and metal pins that allow the head, arms, and legs to move. We could feel the round disks connecting the head, arms, and legs to the body of the bear. As we continued to examine the bear, we located a metal button in its ear with the word "Steiff." To



Fig. 23. Details of Steiff teddy bear before conservation.

distinguish their high-quality products from other competitors and cheap imitations, Steiff developed this brand sign, “Steiff-Knopf im Ohr;” or “button in ear.”

Margarete Steiff was born on July 24, 1847, in Giengen an der Brenz, Germany. She went to sewing school to become a seamstress. Steiff worked as a tailor and eventually founded a felt clothing business selling garments and household articles. The Steiff Manufacture was founded in 1880 and made a variety of stuffed animals including the elephant, dogs, cats, hares, horses, and monkeys. Stuffed bears did not appear until 1902 when Margarete’s nephew, Richard Steiff, designed the first bears with movable arms and legs. The bears became immensely popular in the USA in 1906 under the name “Teddy Bear,” in honor of American president Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt (served 1901–1909.)

The client’s Steiff teddy bear had tears in both arms where the stuffing was coming out. The proper-right arm had Scotch Magic tape wrapped around the tear as an old repair. Conservator Kayla Silvia carefully removed the tape using swabs of isopropyl alcohol to soften the adhesive. Missing stuffing was replaced with sausages of polyester batting wrapped in cotton stockinette. Encasing the batting in stockinette differentiates it as a conservation repair and makes future removal easier if needed. The shifting of



Fig. 24. Steiff teddy bear after conservation.

the stuffing inside the body of the bear over the years had left a void at the back that caused the head of the bear to lean forward and to the side. To amend this, the seam on the back of the body was opened and the original hump reformed with more batting encased in cotton stockinette. All seams were invisibly closed with hand stitching. The tears in the arms and areas of loss on the face of the bear were stabilized with hand stitching and cotton fabric patches. Nylon net patches were also placed over areas on the arms and face that remained



Fig. 25. Details of Steiff teddy bear during conservation.

vulnerable after repairs. The net was masked by gently pulling some of the mohair pile through the net structure. The small loss in one of the button eyes was in-painted with gouache paint.

The client requested a storage solution that would also allow the bear to remain on view. We built an Ethafoam tray with a depression matching the footprint of the seated bear. This tray was covered with polyester batting and cotton jersey. Cotton twill tape handles were attached to the tray to make the bear easily removable from the archival box we purchased from Hollinger Metal Edge. One side was cut out of the box and replaced with melinex, giving the Steiff bear his very own stage to view the world from.



24 Fig. 26. Details of Steiff teddy bear after conservation.



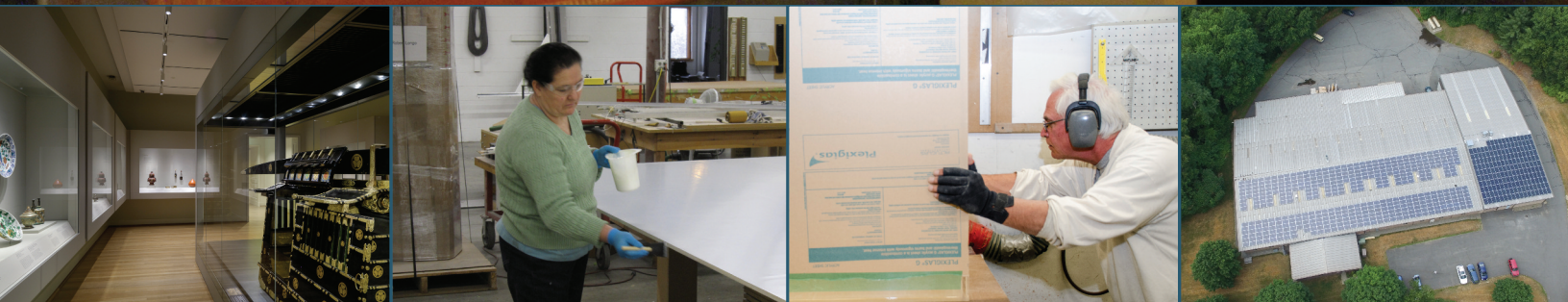
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# Conveyed In Safety—The Colonel Henry H. Hadley Flag

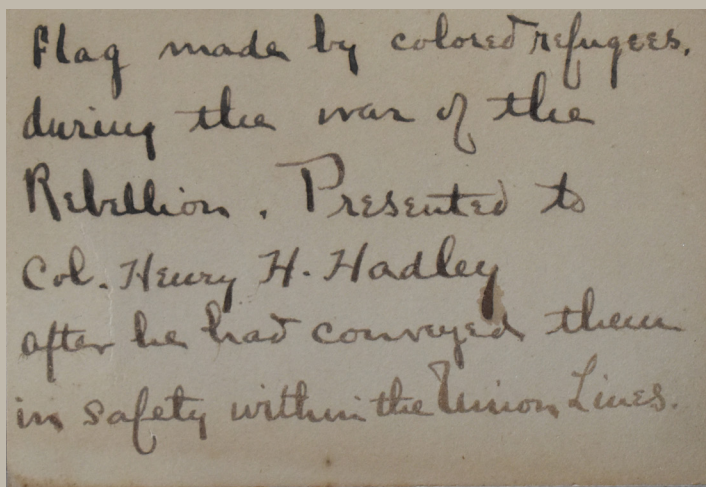


Fig. 27. Label accompanying the Hadley flag

Sometimes a client brings us a historic textile on its last legs—on the verge of turning to dust. That was the case with the framed 35-star flag that was passed down through the client's family since the Civil War. The flag belonged to Henry Harrison Hadley (1841–1903) from Malta, OH, who joined the 90th Ohio infantry in 1862.



Fig. 28. Silk flag before conservation.

Within a year, Hadley's leg was shattered and nearly amputated in Tennessee, and he was discharged for disability in 1863.

To add to his sorrows, Hadley's sister wrote him to say that their mother had died. Hadley re-entered service in 1865 as Captain of Co. D of the 119th United States Colored Infantry at Camp Nelson in Paducah, KY. Hadley left honorably in 1866. The flag has a silk canton with gold painted stars and a silk bow in the top-left corner that may or may not have held the flag to a pole. The stripes are made of alternating ribbons of a figured white silk with multiple shades of reddish ribbons; only 10 stripes are extant. At the lower-right corner of the frame was a handwritten note in ink on paper that read, "Flag made by colored refugees during the war of the Rebellion. Presented to Col. Henry H. Hadley after he had conveyed them in safety within the Union Lines."

The flag is in extremely fragile condition: an 8 on a scale of 1–10, with 10 being powdered fibers. It spent much of the 20th century glued to a now-brittle, discolored paper board. There are tidelines throughout due to multiple moisture events. The flag is heavily faded, except below where the ribbon and note card were. The silk is extremely brittle, distorted, and puckered within the frame. There are dark spots corresponding to adhesive.



Fig. 29. Detail of silk flag with Stabiltex overlay.

Given all these concerns, we would normally begin by separating a textile from its failing support board. Conservators attempted mechanical separation with the aid of humidification, isopropyl alcohol, and great patience, but we were only able to safely lift the card and bow off without creating new breaks in the silk. Any pressure easily turned the silk to powder. We needed to shift our treatment goals to find a way to conserve the flag together with its board. First the flag and board were gently rehydrated in a humidity chamber so that some creased and folded silk fragments could be unfolded and flattened. To give the

board and flag more structural integrity, an acid-free mat board was adhered to the underside of the original board using a small amount of archival double-stick tape.

Lifting areas and detached silk fragments of the flag were repositioned and re-adhered to the original board with a 6% solution of the conservation-grade adhesive, Klucel G, in deionized water. To accomplish this, Conservator Kayla Sylvia brushed adhesive onto the board and left it to dry. The larger areas of silk were repositioned after the adhesive was reactivated with acetone. Smaller silk fragments were then repositioned, and the adhesive was reactivated with denatured alcohol. The surviving silk ribbon near the hoist had been carefully removed at the outset of treatment, and we concluded that it would not withstand any attempts to flatten or



Fig. 30. Silk flag during conservation.

repair it. Therefore, it was returned to the owner in an archival box.

To further protect the flag for vertical display in a frame, an overlay of Stabiltex sheer woven polyester was placed over the flag and wrapped around the boards. After gently tensioning, the Stabiltex was adhered to the back of the new archival board to strips of BEVA thermoplastic adhesive film that we placed there for this purpose. The Small Corp, Inc. museum panel that supports the conserved flag was built up with polyfelt, leaving a depression into which the flag board fit snugly. An archival double-window mat was custom cut by our framer Larry Glickman, which covers the polyfelt and provides the finished look. The mounted flag was then framed beneath UV-filtering acrylic in a Small Corp. powder-coated metal frame.

In an extract Colonel Hadley's memoire, he confesses he took to gambling and drinking during the war.<sup>12</sup>

But this flag is a physical witness to Hadley's moral fortitude and courage, for risking his life to protect the African-Americans who presented him with this flag. After the war, Hadley dedicated himself to a life of abstinence and worked with the National Christian Abstainers Union in New York. He lived just one year after the publication of his memoire and is buried in Fountain Cemetery, Staten Island, New York.

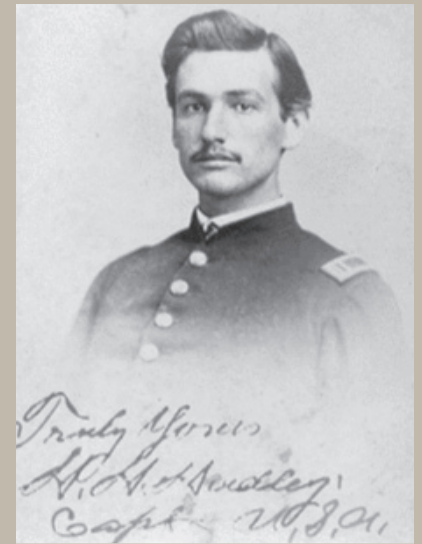


Fig. 31. Colonel Henry H. Hadley.



Fig. 32. Overall silk flag and label after conservation.

# MTS Learning Lab Returns in 2022

The Museum Textile Services Learning Lab will make its return in the spring of 2022. We will offer four afternoon classes throughout the year at our Andover, Massachusetts, studio, each taking place from 1 to 5 pm on a Saturday. Class space is limited.



## SPOTLIGHT: Tapestries

March 26th, 2022

*Camille Myers Breeze & Morgan Blei Carbone*

The first class will take place on March 26th. It is the debut of our “Spotlight” classes, highlighting the diverse and luxurious art of tapestry. Today’s museum collections contain many textiles identified as tapestries, and we will discuss which of these are actually tapestry woven, what their collections-care and exhibit needs are, and how to judge a tapestry’s condition. European tapestries being conserved at Museum Textile Services will be available for discussion, and conservators will demonstrate how they are physically stabilized. Each participant will receive a mini loom on which they will practice weaving, joining colors, and finishing.

## SPOTLIGHT: Embroidery

TBD

*Camille Myers Breeze & Morgan Blei Carbone*



## BYOT: Costume Mounting with Andover Figures®

May 21st, 2022

*Camille Myers Breeze & Samantha Alarie*

“Bring Your Own Textile” classes, or “BYOT,” provide participants with an opportunity to bring a textile or clothing item from their collection and learn new skills for safe display. Our first one will be held on May 21st on the subject of costume mounting. After a review of different methods of safe costume mounting, each participant will make a custom mount for their garment using the Andover Figures® costume-mounting system. Starting with an Ethafoam core, a period-accurate silhouette is built up using low-cost, archival materials that properly supports the garment. Participants can take their padding materials with them, and will have the option to purchase the Ethafoam core and stand.

## BYOT: Creating 3D Support Mounts

TBD

*Camille Myers Breeze & Samantha Alarie*

# The Debut of the MTS Summer Program in Collections Care and Conservation



Fig. 33. Lauren dressing mannequin with study collection silk dress.

2021 was the inaugural year of the Museum Textile Services Summer Program. We selected a single participant from a large pool of applicants to have a one-on-one experience at MTS with a focused on collections care. The Summer Program is distinct from other MTS programming because we focus on educating an emerging professional on collections care practices with a focus in textiles, rather than an introduction to textile conservation. In

selecting our participant, the staff at MTS had to re-think our education and outreach goals, considering our successes and failures when teaching elsewhere.

Lauren Pardue, an art history major at Merrimack College, who is interested in becoming a curator, was selected. Lauren has experience working in her college gallery, mostly with paintings. We were excited to work with an emerging professional with very little experience with textiles, because the material presented to her in the summer program would be completely new. She will also be able to apply her new knowledge to any career she might have in the museum field, and feel more comfortable with textile collections in general.

When Lauren started the program in June, supervisor Morgan Blei Carbone asked what her interests were in art history in order to incorporate artifacts that she might have a deeper understanding of. Lauren's area of study is early twentieth-century art, especially surrealism. Studio Manager Samantha Alarie recently catalogued and uploaded the entire MTS study collection into Airtable, where we are easily able to find the artifacts that would interest Lauren, including dresses from the 1920s.



Fig. 34. Lauren building mannequin.

Aside from designing the new Summer Program, we also had to consider Covid-19 safety protocols. Rather than Lauren coming to our studio one day a week, Morgan organized the curriculum with remote learning every other week. Collections care is extremely hands-on, and Lauren was game to do activities such as collecting and documenting pests, stitching and weaving exercises, and learning about community outreach from home. While at the studio, Lauren learned how to properly handle a variety of textiles, archival rehousing, costume mounting, and more.

This program is distinct from the other education offerings from MTS because of the amount of time spent training under our supervision, and the high-quality of information gleaned from the 60-plus hours of exposure. This experience really proved that collections-care education is an ongoing endeavor and not something that can be mastered in a short course. Although the Summer Program requires much more of a time commitment from the instructor than a one- or three-day course, Morgan found that to be a preferable model for working with pre-professionals.

We had an excellent summer getting to know Lauren and developing this new approach to collections care. Her MTS Blog can be found on our website. We look forward to opening up the Summer Program to more emerging museum professionals next year.



Fig. 35. Lauren building mount for study collection glasses.

# The MTS Team



## Camille Myers Breeze, Director & Chief Conservator

Camille began her textile conservation career in 1989 at the Textile Conservation Workshop in South Salem, NY. After earning a BA in Art History from Oberlin College, she received a 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 NYC before moving to the Textile Conservation Center at the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, MA. Camille founded Museum Textile Services in 1999 as a full-service textile conservation studio serving museums, historical societies, and private collectors. Museum Textile Services conservation and exhibition collaborations have received awards from the AAM, AASLH, NEMA, and Maine Preservation. In 2015 she co-founded the Andover Figures® line of custom museum forms for conservators and collections specialists. Camille is also a proud historic-house owner.

## Samantha Alarie, Studio Manager

Samantha Alarie joined Museum Textile Services in 2019 as an intern and was hired in February of 2020 as the Studio Manager. She earned her BA in Chemistry and Visual Arts, with a minor in Art History, from Roger Williams University. Before coming to MTS, she was the Museum Experience Coordinator at the Newport Art Museum. Samantha handles most of the administration work at MTS, and uses her range of education and experience to help out the conservators in any way she can. In her free time, she enjoys cross-stitching, is in the process of planning her wedding with her partner, and is a new home owner.



## Kayla Silvia, Conservator

Kayla Silvia was part of the MTS Team from September 2019 through June 2021. After earning a BA in Anthropology and BS in Art with a concentration in Art History from SUNY Oneonta, Kayla received a MPhil in Textile Conservation at the Centre of Textile Conservation from the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Prior to joining the MTS team, Kayla had interned and worked at several museums and institutions all around the world. Kayla now works for the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville.





### **Morgan Blei Carbone, Associate Conservator**

Morgan Blei Carbone joined Museum Textile Services in 2015 and was promoted to Associate Conservator in April of 2019. She earned her BA in Art History from Grinnell College in Iowa with an award for excellence. Morgan then received an MA in Fashion and Textiles: History Theory, and Museum Practice with a focus in conservation at the Fashion Institute of Technology. At MTS, she specializes in conservation of historic dress and project management. She is also the supervisor of the MTS Summer Program in Collections Care and Conservation. Morgan is a Professional Associate of the AIC. She has published a poster and co-authored two papers for the AIC Textile Specialty Group and co-authored a paper for the North American Textile Conservation Conference.



### **Lauren Pardue, Summer Program Participant**

Lauren Pardue is a rising Senior at Merrimack College, double majoring in Art & Art History and Graphic Design and triple minoring in European History, Spanish, and Studio Arts. She's been a lover of the arts since a kid, and plans to attend graduate school for an MA in either Curatorial Studies or Museum Curation. In her spare time, she loves doing DIY projects and spending time with her pups.

# MTS Resources

As many clients, students, and colleagues as Museum Textile Services helps every year, the numbers don't come close to the tens of thousands of people who use the MTS website annually. Our resources page was created especially for online visitors to provide information on a number of conservation and collections-care subjects. In most cases, we include not just our own MTS Handouts, but also links to online resources available from other museum and cultural agencies.

MTS Handouts are available on many topics, including the following:

- Textile Conservation Basics
- Textile Stabilization and Storage
- Displaying Clothing and Flat Textiles
- Modern Materials
- Museum Pests
- Disaster Response
- Advanced Topics for Conservators
- Staff Publications
- Resources in Spanish
- MTS Videos and Slideshows
- MTS Blogs
- MTS Magazine Archives



Displaying Historic Costume

<b>MTS Handouts</b>	<b>Online Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Andover Figures Booklet</li><li>• Textile Display Supplies</li><li>• Customizing Mannequins</li><li>• Retrofitting Dress Forms</li><li>• Making Ethafoam Disk Mannequins</li><li>• Polly Willman's Ethafoam "Disk" Method</li><li>• Building T-Bar Supports</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Condition Report for Costume Display</li><li>• NPS Museum Handbook, Part I, Appendix K</li><li>• An Illustrated Guide to the Care of Costume and Textile Collections (MGC)</li></ul>

Fig. 36. The Displaying Historic Costume resources page on the Museum Textile Services website.



Resources for Conservators

<b>MTS Handouts</b>	<b>Online Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bleaching Textiles with Sodium Borohydride</li><li>• Gore-Tex Humidification</li><li>• Thangka Lining with Silk Crepeline</li><li>• Thangka Conservation Recipes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CCI Adhesive Symposium Bibliography</li><li>• The Abrasiveness of Sheer Overlay Fabrics Used in Textile Conservation by Donna Fulkerson LaVallee, URI 2005</li><li>• A comparison of natural and synthetic stitching threads used in textile conservation by Sarah Jane Benso, University of Glasgow, 2013</li></ul>

Fig. 37. The Resources for Conservators page on the Museum Textile Services website.

# Notes & Image Credits

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Figure 1. Fairbanks Family in America, Inc. Photo by MTS.

Figure 2. Fairbanks Family in America, Inc. Photo by MTS.

Figure 3. Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens. Photo by MTS.

Figure 4. New England Quilt Museum. Photo by MTS.

Figure 5. Fairbanks Family in America, Inc. Photo by MTS.

Figure 6. Fairbanks Family in America, Inc. Photo by MTS.

Figure 7. Fairbanks Family in America, Inc. Photo by MTS.

Figure 8. Maine State Museum. Photo by MTS.

Figure 9. Maine State Museum. Photo by MTS.

Figure 10. Photo by L'Officiel.

Figure 11. Photo by The New Yorker.

Figure 12. Henry B. Plant Museum Society, Inc. Photo by The New Yorker.

Figure 13. The William H. Johnson House. Photo by MTS.

Figure 14. The William H. Johnson House. Photo by MTS.

Figure 15. MTS Study Collection. Photo by MTS.

Figure 16. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo by Altoon Sultan.

Figure 17. Private Client. Photo by MTS.

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Figure 31. Private Client. Photo by MTS.

Figure 32. Photo by Tony Cossean.

Figure 33. Private Client. Photo by MTS.

Figure 34. Photo by MTS.

Figure 35. Photo by MTS.

Figure 36. Photo by MTS.

Figure 37. Photo by MTS.

Figure 38. Fairbanks Family in America, Inc. Photo by MTS.

Fig. 38. Back Cover. Morgan Carbone photographing the Fairbanks wedding dress.

