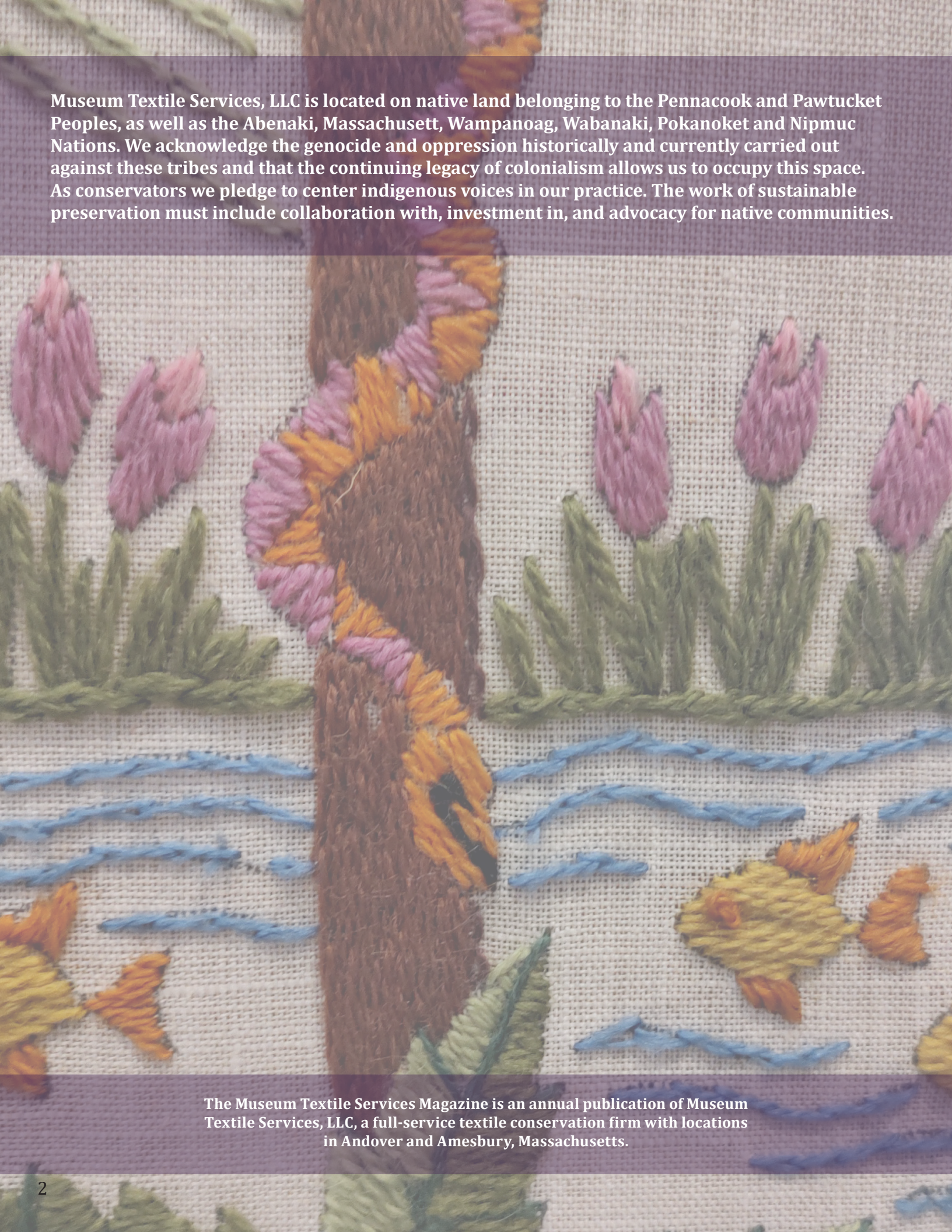




MUSEUM TEXTILE SERVICES

ISSUE 11 | 2023

www.museumtextiles.com



Museum Textile Services, LLC is located on native land belonging to the Pennacook and Pawtucket Peoples, as well as the Abenaki, Massachusetts, Wampanoag, Wabanaki, Pokanoket and Nipmuc Nations. We acknowledge the genocide and oppression historically and currently carried out against these tribes and that the continuing legacy of colonialism allows us to occupy this space. As conservators we pledge to center indigenous voices in our practice. The work of sustainable preservation must include collaboration with, investment in, and advocacy for native communities.

The Museum Textile Services Magazine is an annual publication of Museum Textile Services, LLC, a full-service textile conservation firm with locations in Andover and Amesbury, Massachusetts.

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Letter from the Director



As I write this note, I am eagerly anticipating this week's 14th biennial North American Textile Conservation Conference to be held at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. This is the first time I will see my fellow textile conservators in person since 2019! When this edition of the MTS Magazine reaches your in-box, I will already be looking forward to the New England Museum Association's annual meeting in Portland, Maine—a much shorter drive! If you are going to be at NEMA, please visit me at the “Ask the Conservators” booth, where colleagues and I will be

sharing resources and tips about all aspects of conservation and collections care.

Community has been a major theme of the past year, in many different ways. In my travels around the United States, I have been reminded of the passion that unites students and professionals as we undertake the fascinating and sometimes taxing work of caring for historical artifacts. Learning to be responsible custodians of cultural heritage requires years of study, apprenticeship, professional development, and—yes—travel. The many emails I receive over the course of each year asking for advice on becoming a conservator prompted me to expand our webpage with links to training programs, short courses, and other advice for those entering our community.

This is our eleventh issue of the MTS Magazine, and we hope you enjoy the more in-depth investigations into how conservators use historical research to help us better understand the people who make textiles, utilize textiles, and ultimately play a part in preserving textiles. I am grateful to Rebecca Helgeson and Anne Lehmer-Mattek for helping to write the articles, and to Samantha Hann and Charlie Dov Schön for producing it.

Family is who you make it—so invest in your community and your passions, and hold those you love close.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Camille Myers Breeze". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and elegant.

Camille Myers Breeze

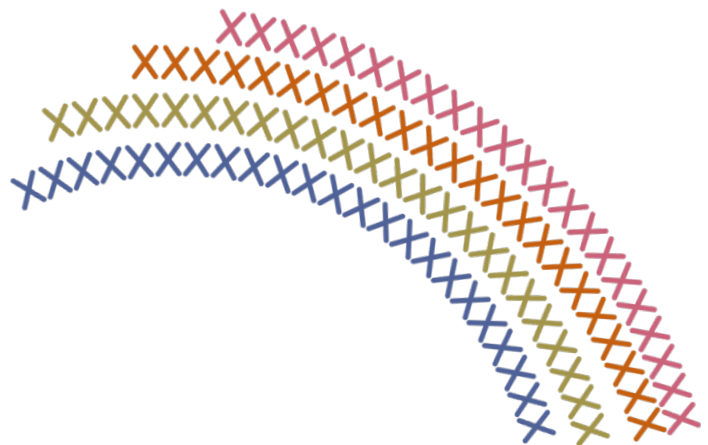



Fig. 4. Illustration inspired by cross stitches.

MTS NEWS

- Fall of 2022 saw us featured on the WCBV Channel 5's award-winning nightly show *Chronical*. Together with our colleague Barrett M. Keating, the segment on Restoring Historic Textiles and Furniture in New England showed Camille, Samantha and Rebecca working on some of our client's art works. The producers didn't fail to see the passion we have for our work, and allowed our sense of humor to shine! This segment has been re-aired twice since it originally appeared last November.
- Camille and Barrett have been hosting a quarterly lunch discussion *Ask the Conservators*, in affiliation with New England Museum Association. Our special guests come from across the conservation and preservation spectrum. All episodes are available to view on NEMA's Youtube channel.
- In January, 2023, we completed phase I of our first large-scale fumigation project helping an insurance company remediate the effects of long-term water leaks in their client's historic Boston townhouse. We would eventually fumigate and surface clean over 100 textiles in three fumigation phases over the winter. Read more about fumigation on page 19.



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Fig. 6. Large-scale fumigation in Amesbury studio.

- St. Botolph Club in Boston's Back Bay was the scene of cozy dinner discussion about textile conservation one cold February night. Camille was invited by colleague Ken Turino to make a presentation to club members, some of whom have taught, worked with, and collected textiles. Opened in 1880, the St. Botolph Club "continues to serve its founding purpose as a place for those with a love of the arts, sciences and humanities to gather and converse."

- MTS welcomed our newest staff member, Studio Assistant Charlie Dov Schön in March, 2023. Hailing from Andover, MA, Charlie is a recent graduate of Hamilton College and is a working textile artist. This year, Charlie's art has been shown in Concord, Cambridge, Waltham, Boston and Lowell, MA, as well as New York City.
- Just in time for the Spring grand opening of the Peary-MacMillen Arctic Museum and Arctic Studies Center's new building at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, ME, the MTS staff completed nine archival display forms. Ranging from a contemporary beaded Amauti parka to indigenous seal-skin boots, the custom Ethafoam mannequins and case mounts bring the clothing of the arctic people and historic polar explorers to life. Read more in *Preserving Polar Legacies* on page 14.



Fig. 7. Director, Camille Myers Breeze at Blithewold Mansion and Arboretum.

- Spring was at its height when Camille visited historic Blithewold Mansion and Arboretum to install four recently conserved gowns. Working with the Blithewold staff was a delight and their stellar collection provides enjoyment at every turn.
- Just across town from the Peary-MacMillen, the Pejepscot History Center and its three historic properties hosted Camille for two days in May while she surveyed fourteen GAR banners recently discovered in a nearby barn. Made of cotton, these commercially made processional banners were known to have been displayed in the now-demolished Brunswick Town Hall. Learn more on page 34.
- In May, Studio Manager Samantha Hann and her husband Brian welcomed their first child, Paxton! Both baby and mom are happy and healthy.



Fig. 8. Peary-MacMillen Arctic Museum and Arctic Studies Center's display of garments conserved by MTS.



Fig. 9. Studio Manager, Samantha Hann in the hospital with her son, Paxton.



ASK THE CONSERVATORS

VISIT US IN PORTLAND, NOVEMBER 8TH & 9TH

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nema NEW ENGLAND
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

- Camille returned to Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin, to teach *Textile Stabilization and Display* at the Center for Collections Care. Joining her were many returning students. The group took a special trip to see the Helen Louise Allen Textile Center (HLATC) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. See the full calendar of courses on offer for summer of 2024 on page 9.
- Following devastating flooding in Vermont on the heels of an historically wet summer in the northeast, MTS assisted with disaster response by opening our fumigation chamber in Amesbury, MA, to a collection of over 2000 artifacts. Work to inventory, surface clean, label and rehouse the collection is ongoing.
- We welcomed Studio Manager Samantha back after her maternity leave in August. Samantha continues to split her weeks between working in Andover and at home. Paxton is a big fan of spending mom's office days with his grandparents!
- MTS contract conservator Rebecca Helgeson accepted a full-time position that began in early September. Coming from the theater world, Rebecca was most recently the Collections Manager at the Framingham History Center. She holds an MA in Extension Studies from the Museum Studies program at Harvard University. She is the proud mother of six-year old Karson.
- In mid-September, Studio Assistant Charlie headed to Montana for an Artist Residency at Flathead Lake Biological Station in Polson, MT. She returned to MTS at the end of October 2023.



Fig. 10. Conservator Rebecca Helgeson's son Karson.

Beloit College C3 Class Schedule

- **Fundamentals of Collections Care** January 18-February 8
- **Culturally Informed Collections Stewardship** February 7-28
- **NAGPRA in Practice** April 3-24
- **Fundraising and Grant Writing for Collections Care** May 8-29
- **Care of Metals** June 3-5
- **Care of Photographs** June 3-6
- **Mount Making** June 10-14
- **Introduction to Textile Conservation** June 10-13
- **Integrated Pest Management** June 12-14
- **Storage Solutions** June 17-20
- **Packing Artwork for Transit** June 17-20
- **Introduction to Paper Conservation** June 24-27
- **Traditional Gilding** July 8-12
- **Introduction to Painting Conservation** July 8-11
- **Gilding Conservation** July 15-19
- **Matting and Framing Works of Art on Paper** July 15-19
- **Rigging Works of Art** July 23-26
- **Advanced Textile Conservation** July 23-26
- **Museum Mannequins** July 30-August 1
- **Rare Books Care and Structure** July 30-August 1
- **Advanced NAGPRA in Practice** August 5-8
- **Fundamentals of Collections Management** September 5-26

STARLET: MARLENE DIETRICH

This past summer, MTS received a call from an enthusiastic repeat customer who had bought a dress with a unique history. The exquisite garment is an over-dress or robe that is intended to be worn on top of another garment. Constructed of sheer silk embellished with metallic embroidery over a black silk taffeta lining, the dress closes in the front with only two hook-eyes. It was clearly worn, based on the fraying at the center-back hem, but is in fair condition overall, and relatively clean and stable.

Based on information provided by the dress's current owner, as well as photographic evidence, this dress is believed to have been worn, if not owned, by the film star Marlene Dietrich (1901–1992). A production still of Dietrich wearing what appears to be the same dress in a scene from the film *Shanghai Express*, published in a 2012 New York Times article. While much of the dress is hidden in the photograph, the distinctive metallic embroidery is clearly visible on Dietrich's right shoulder. The dress's current owner also provided MTS with an image of a magazine showing Dietrich wearing the dress in a photograph for an article promoting the same movie. Again, while little of the dress is seen in this photograph, the distinct embroidery is visible, as is the collar of the dress in question.

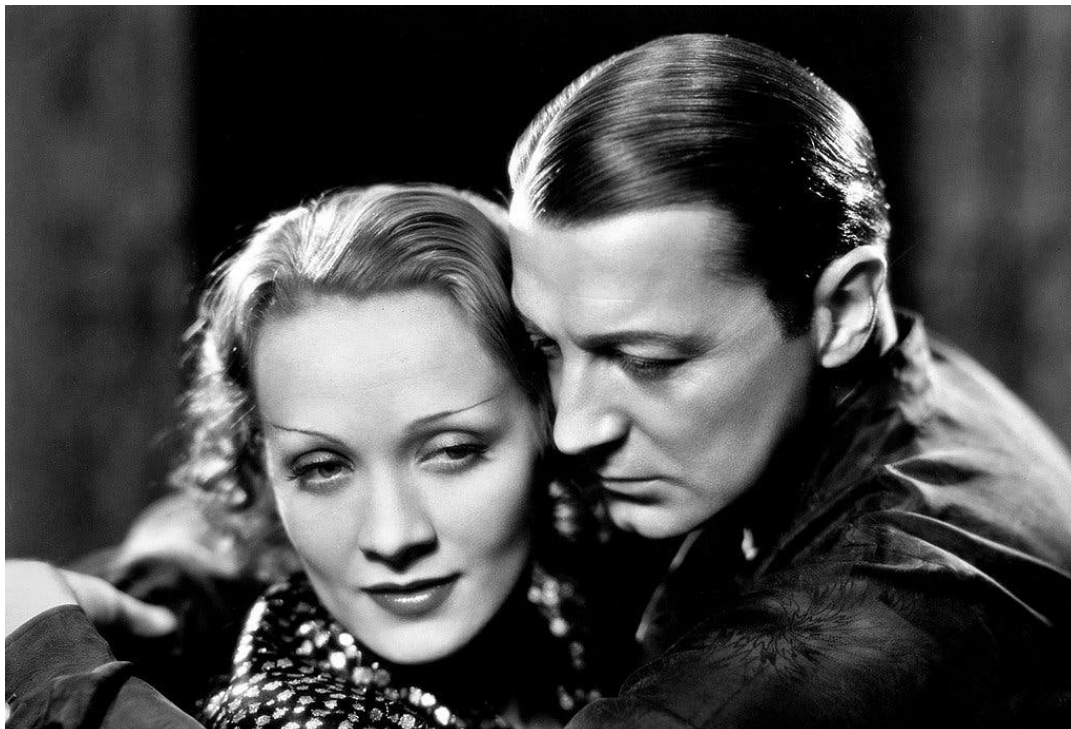


Fig. 12. Marlene Dietrich and Clive Brook in Josef von Sternberg's *Shanghai Express*. Private collection.



A leading lady of the 1930s and 1940s, Marlene Dietrich is remembered both for playing femme fatales and challenging gender norms. Her penchant for wearing pants and other staples of men's clothing made her a trendsetter in women's fashion as well as an iconic film star.

Shanghai Express, the film in which this dress appears to have been worn, is a “pre-Code” Hollywood film—an era of film that existed between the near-universal adoption of sound in cinema and the enforcement of the Hays Code censorship guidelines. Like other films made during this period, *Shanghai Express* was considered “salacious,” and it was full of shots of Dietrich “in a decadent profusion of feathers, fur, and cigarette smoke.”¹ This dress, with its sheer silk overlay, metallic embroidery, and revealing cut, would have fit perfectly into the glamorous aesthetic of this film.



Fig. 14. Conservator Rebecca Helgeson color matching our restoration patch to the patina of the original threads using alcohol inks.

The primary goal of conservation for this piece was to stabilize losses, many of which had been mended in the past. Tears at the back of the neck needed to be realigned and secured with a black syntehctic patch inserted between the embroidered silk and the taffeta lining. To gain access to this area, conservator Rebecca Helgeson began by removing stitches from previous repairs in and around the damage to the neck. This step revealed areas of loss to the silk embroidery that had created large holes in the shoulders near the tears at the back of the neck. This is typical of damage caused by long-term storage on a wire hanger.



Fig. 15. Details of Marlene Diedrich's dress, before conservation.

Instead of simply securing the perimeter of the holes to a patch, the owner opted to have MTS create patches of similar embroidery to fill in the areas of loss. MTS Studio Assistant Charlie Dov Schön created a “hoop” out of 2-ply board and stapled polyester replacement fabric taut around its border. She then marked edges of the patch area with chalk, aligning pattern spots. The replacement fabric was then embroidered with Gutermann polyester metallic-effect thread using the studio's Bernina sewing machine.



Fig. 16. Details of replacement fabric that Studio Assistant, Charlie Dov Schön created using a Bernina sewing machine.



NEW

Fig. 17. Details of completed replacement fabric on the dress.

Rebecca used layers of alcohol inks to color match the new embroidery with the patina of the original metallic threads. The shoulders and neck of the dress were then stabilized by hand stitching the new embroidered patches between the two original layers of the dress. A layer of sheer black netting was then stitched over the torn areas for added protection moving forward. The dress was returned to the client on a Hangerbee padded hanger, in a cotton garment bag designed and constructed by Rebecca to support the train.



Fig. 18. Details of Marlene Dietrich's dress, after conservation.

Because of her androgynous yet sexy trendsetting style, Dietrich is as much a fashion icon today as she was during the height of her career. Preserving this dress will allow it to be displayed for years to come and may allow future generations the opportunity to learn more about this very distinctive and exceptional woman.



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PRESERVING POLAR LEGACIES



Sometimes a client holds a special place in our collective heart at MTS. One of these clients is the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum and Arctic Studies Center at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. Not only is Bowdoin a top-notch liberal arts college right in our back yard, this postcard-perfect New England town also boasts the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and our new client, the Pejepscot History Center (PHC). Our relationship with the Peary-MacMillan goes back twenty years with projects range from conserving archaeological textiles to mounting contemporary beaded parkas.

The group of items brought to us in 2022 consisted of nine native outerwear garments constructed of wool, canvas, acetate, and beads, as well as traditional animal resources from seal, caribou, arctic fox, and polar bear. They all required surface cleaning, some moderate stabilization, and custom Andover Figures® mounts. Some garments had been on display in the permanent exhibit at the original Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum galleries, which opened in 1967. The new John and Lile Gibbons Center for Arctic Studies that houses the museum is a state-of-the-art, mass-timber structure that is all electric and solar powered to avoid the burning of fossil fuels.

“We hope to disrupt people’s stereotypes and show them that the Arctic is actually a beautiful place with wonderful, modern people there. It’s not stuck in the past, and there’s a lot of innovation happening there.”
- Geneviene LeMoine, Curator



Fig. 20. Child's sealskin and fur parka, dressed on a custom-built mount, after conservation.

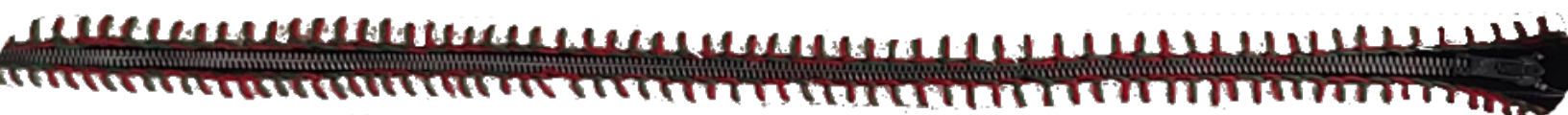
Among the items in this collection of Arctic textiles was a pair of *kamiks*, a traditional style of Inuit footwear made from caribou or sealskin hide, which are referred to as "MacMillan's North Pole boots." Sealskin is waterproof, durable, lightweight, and capable of keeping the wearer warm in zero-degree weather. One of the most fascinating aspects about these boots is how the hide is processed, as we learned from www.proudlyindigenoucrafts.com. The first step is for the harvested skin to be cleaned, scraped of blubber, stretched, and left to dry, which leaves the hide extremely stiff. To make the skin more malleable, it is then chewed and stomped on, traditionally by the women in the community. The emulsifiers in human saliva are effective in turning the skins into a workable material by breaking down connective tissues.

After Samantha surface cleaned the kamiks with vulcanized rubber sponges, a custom mounting system was created to display the boots upright without any visible structure. To make this happen, she carved two indentations into the top of a four-inch-thick block of Ethafoam to give the impression that the boots were slightly submerged in snow. A rare-earth magnet was glued to each indentation, and the Ethafoam was covered with white cotton-jersey. Two small pieces of Ethafoam with rare-earth magnets inside were covered in nylon hose and inserted into each of the boots. When the magnets find their mates in the base, the boots stand upright. Small padded Ethafoam discs covered in black show fabric were then inserted into the top of each *kamik*, providing a finished look (see Fig. 23.)

One of the more challenging display mounts was constructed for a pair of polar bear pants, which have a sealskin drop-front closure and are deceptively heavy. The inside of the polar-bear-hide pant legs revealed that these astonishing animals grow fur on the inner surface of their skin, no doubt helping them survive the arctic climate. Camille carved two Ethafoam cylinders with black show-fabric covering the section that would stick out the bottom of each leg. An oblong disk with a padded backside connects to the top of the legs with Velcro to support the mid-section.



Fig. 21. Polar bear fur pants, dressed on a custom-built mount, after conservation.



The other seven garments were parkas and jackets, the smallest of which being a child's hooded sealskin coat. Two enormous caribou fur coats were fashioned by native craftspeople for the visiting explorers, each weighing at least fifteen pounds. All of the garments brought to MTS were handmade by Inuit natives, only some of whose names we know. The heaviest of all the items was a contemporary *amauti*, or woman's parka with a compartment for an infant to be carried beneath the wearer's hood. The torso form Camille and Rebecca built had to support twenty-five pounds of quilted fabrics with beaded appliques and fringe. This *amauti* was made by Martha Tickie (1939–2015) from the hamlet of Baker Lake (Qamani'tuaq) in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, Canada.

This and all of the other Andover Figures® mounts were installed by the museum's exhibition team using custom, low- to no-visibility hardware.

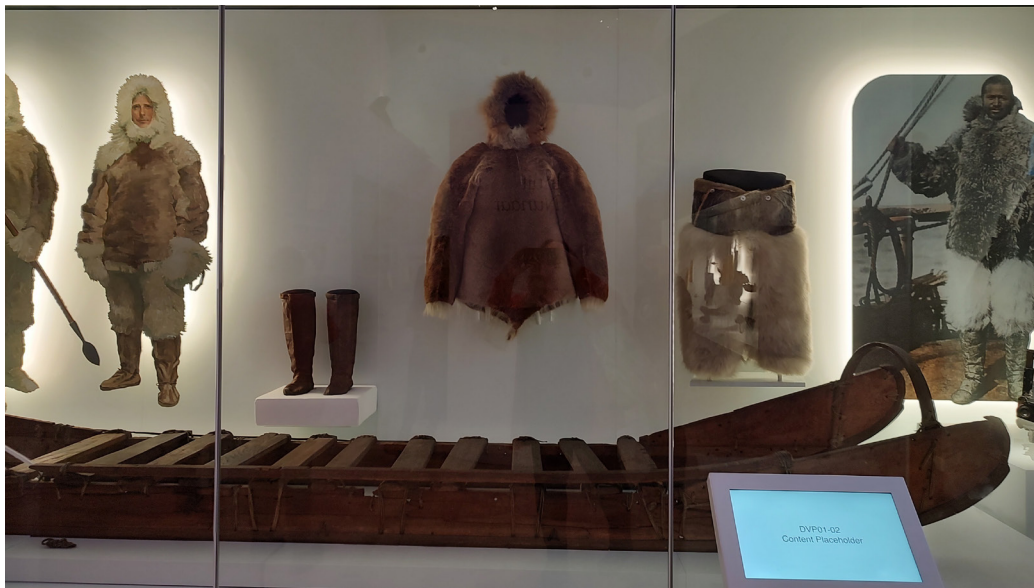


Fig. 23. *At Home in the North* exhibition at the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum and Arctic Studies Center, featuring the custom mounts carved by MTS.

The garments conserved by MTS are on display as part of the magnificent Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum exhibit *At Home in the North*. At the exhibit, they not only tell the story of arctic explorations, but they allow visitors to learn more about the history of the arctic, its indigenous people, and the fragile relationship between humans, animals, and the environment.



ARCTIC ANIMALS



Arctic garments stand out among indigenous clothing for the quantity and variety of animal materials used in their fabrication. In a land with few plant materials and an ever-demanding climate, northernmost cultures use every part of their catch for food, shelter, clothing, and spiritual life. Here are just a few of the materials we learned about while working with the Peary-MacMillen Arctic Museum's collection of garments made by the native Inuit people.



Taktu /Caribou

Several subspecies of *Rangifer tarandus* can be found across Europe, North America, Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) and Siberia. Coloration varies across subspecies; the so-called Peary caribou in the high arctic regions of Canada is nearly white. Caribou hair is twice as dense as that which grows on a seal, and is the choice for the coldest weather.

Nanuk/Polar Bear

The extraordinary qualities of *Ursus maritimus* are well known to indigenous people. From the black surface of their skin, which efficiently converts solar radiation to heat, to the hollow white guard hairs that trap air, polar bears are built for arctic survival.

Amaruq/Wolf

Long, thick guard hairs along with short, dense undercoat make the *Canis lupus arctos* a favorite fur for ruffs on hoods, which insulate around a wearer's face. Wolverine (qavvik) and dog (qimmiq) have similar properties.

Tiriqaniak/Arctic Fox

The fur of the Arctic fox is also favored for ruffs and hats. To keep feet from freezing, arctic people placed fox belly fur inside their foot coverings, and women placed it beneath their breasts to help stay warm while breastfeeding.

Nattiq/Ringed seal and Ugjuk/Bearded seal

These two species of seal are the most ubiquitous in arctic sea environments. Sealskin clothing was worn by many Arctic people in Spring and Summer, as it is lighter than Caribou hide. Naturally water repellent due to its oiliness, sealskin is also breathable and ideal for boots. Seal intestines are also used for gutskin garments.

All information is taken from *Sinews of Survival: The Living Legacy of Inuit Clothing* by Betty Kobayashi Issenman. UBC Press, Vancouver. 1997. P 32-36.

WHO WERE PEARY AND MACMILLAN?



When the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum opened at Bowdoin college in 1967, they chose to center upon the long tradition of Bowdoin alumni exploring the arctic regions, going back as far as 1860. The museum is named after two graduates who led many such expeditions during the early 20th century: Robert E. Peary and Donald B. MacMillan.

Robert Edwin Peary Sr. (1856–1920) was a Navy officer best known for the 1909 expedition originally credited as being the first to reach the geographic north pole. The native garments and equipment Peary donated to the college's collection attest to his dedication to using Inuit technologies and survival techniques. Peary spent his latter summers on an island off the Maine coast called Peary's Eagle Island. The island is now a National Historic Landmark with collections including Peary's great coat, which was conserved at MTS in 2008.



Fig. 26. The Inuit guide Ittukusuk and Donald MacMillan on the hunt for Crocker Land.

Donald Baxter MacMillan (1874–1920) graduated from Bowdoin in 1889 and was hired by Peary after news spread that MacMillan had heroically saved nine people from a shipwreck. In 1913, MacMillan set out on the Crocker Land expedition, which left him and his fellow explorers stranded in Greenland until they were rescued in 1917. While waiting for help in Greenland, MacMillan learned about Inuit traditions and practices, and even assembled a dictionary of what he had learned of their language. Among the museum's collections related to MacMillan's 30-plus arctic missions made between 1908 and 1954 are his expedition equipment, anthropological objects, films, photographs, natural history specimens, and archival papers.



FROM FUNGAL TO FRESH

On a damp day in early autumn, two Museum Textile Services staff members turned up at a Boston-area landmark with a 17-foot rental truck. The purpose of this truck was not to transport anything, but instead to refresh twenty historic trunks that are housed in the basement of an 18th-century mansion. Storing collections in attics, basements, garages, and other infrequently visited areas is often an inescapable reality in historic properties. High humidity conditions, in combination with warm or hot temperatures, can cause the spores found all around us to bloom in as few as three days. Add in dust and soil, and you have the perfect fungal breeding ground.

Fumigation is the newest service that MTS is providing to our clients, including homeowners, insurance companies, museums, libraries, archives, and other collecting institutions. Our Amesbury, Massachusetts, facility is where the majority of the fumigation and surface cleaning takes place, however any enclosed space with available ventilation will do...such as a box truck.

To fumigate the twenty trunks, conservators placed them on their sides inside the truck on small Ethafoam blocks to promote air circulation. More Ethafoam was then used to prop each lid open. The fumigation was initiated, and the truck was locked and left in a secure location on the grounds. The following morning, the back of the truck was opened before the conservators returned, to allow fresh air to replace the fumigating vapor.



Fig. 28. Camille after conservators and museum staff loaded twenty historic trunks into the back of a box truck for fumigation.

MTS uses activated sodium chlorite to create a disinfecting vapor of chlorine dioxide, to which we temporarily expose artifacts. Through the process of oxidation, the vapor breaks the molecular bonds of microbes that grow on organic materials and cause deposits, odor, and discoloration. This poses no harm to either organic or inorganic artworks, including textiles. Items fumigated this way remain more resistant to re-contamination if re-exposed moist and warm conditions. With the inevitable changes to our climate and weather patterns, this treatment will only increase in demand.

Fig. 27. Border. Button from cotton twill jacket.



Fig. 29. Back of a painted, canvas-covered wicker trunk. The mold spores flourished in the cracks of the paint, seen here after fumigation but before cleaning.

Fumigating items is just the first step in stopping a microbial outbreak. After the mold and mildew spores on the twenty trunks were deactivated, conservators needed to remove soot particles, fungal growth, fuzzy mold, and the dirt they feed on from the effected surfaces. This included the exterior and interior of the trunks, which were made with materials as disparate as wicker, leather, canvas, iron, wood, paper labels, and silk ribbons. Working outside in an area with ample air circulation, conservator Rebecca Helgeson and Director Camille Myers Breeze used variable-suction vacuums and vulcanized rubber sponges to clean all available surfaces.

This collection of mixed media trunks tells the story of historic journeys by ship, rail car, and automobile. Everyday clothing can often be washed or dry cleaned when issues such as soot, odors, and mildew are present. But historic garments and textiles, clothing accessories, works of art, and other vintage valuables should be treated by a professional conservator.

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HATS OFF TO THE KENNEDYS



Fig. 30. John F. Kennedy's Navy officer's hat, before conservation.

This pair of military caps conserved by MTS embodies the traditional definition of service to one's country. Above is a Navy officer's hat worn by John F. Kennedy (JFK) when he served as an ensign during WWII. The image to the right shows a midshipmen's cap believed to be worn by Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., when he was training in the naval aviation cadet program.



Fig. 31. Joseph P. Kennedy's midshipmen's cap, before conservation.



Fig. 32. Joseph P. Kennedy's midshipmen's cap after conservation, on cotton-covered Ethafoam storage form.

Both caps underwent surface cleaning with vulcanized rubber sponges and different processes of wetcleaning to remove stains and yellowing. The midshipmen's cap also needed reshaping, as can be seen in the image above. Using the heat of the hair dryer, the brim was warmed and then held under tension to reverse some of the distortion. This process was repeated until no additional improvement was seen. The hat was placed on a cotton-covered Ethafoam storage/display form to discourage the brim from deforming again.



Fig. 34. Rose Kennedy (center) with her two daughters, Kathleen Kennedy (left) and Rosemary Kennedy (right), at their 1938 presentation at Buckingham Palace.

Exemplifying a less common form of service is a gown worn by JFK's sister Rosemary Kennedy in 1938. From 1938 to 1940, their father Joseph P. Kennedy was the US Ambassador to the United Kingdom. Diplomatic positions require both the service person and their families to fulfill certain social obligations, such as attending banquets and cultural events. In 1938, the Kennedy family was presented to the Court of St. James, to which Rosemary wore the aforementioned gown. She can be seen wearing it in the photo above taken at the Kennedy's court presentation where she is standing next to her mother Rose and her sister Kathleen (Rogers).

The two main conservation goals for this gown were to reduce wrinkling and stabilize various areas of loss throughout the dress prior to exhibition. The lining and cotton bobbinet layers of the gown were steamed to reduce wrinkling. The sequins became tacky with steam, confirming they are gelatin and were avoided as much as possible during this process. Wrinkling was greatly reduced by this treatment, although the tulle remained stiff, particularly in the sleeves, which are later additions.

Next, the sleeves and body were stabilized. The more damaged parts of the proper-right sleeve were lined with nylon net and lightly stitched with Skala polyester thread. The gathered tulle on the proper-left shoulder, which appears to be the original sleeve altered to accommodate the current sleeves, was repaired with net. Both sides of the back opening, as well as below the opening, were supported with a sequence of repairs using cotton fabric and tulle. A new line of vintage metal hooks was created with twill-tape and sewn to one side of the opening to make it possible to display the gown using the original closures.



Fig. 35. Front bodice of Rosemary Kennedy's Buckingham Palace presentation dress, after conservation.



Fig. 36. Back bodice of Rosemary Kennedy's Buckingham Palace presentation dress, after conservation.

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum's Special Exhibit *Service and Sacrifice: World War II - A Shared Experience* is open through March 10, 2024. The goal of this exhibit is to show "personal glimpses of a few of the many Americans who served" in World War II, including the Kennedys. Along with the objects conserved by MTS, the exhibit includes such items as a short-range radio used by Native American code talkers and a Women's Reserve uniform. The exhibit looks to tell the stories of not only the Kennedys during WWII but also those of often overlooked military members, like women and people of color.

PATCHWORK PRESS



Fig. 39. Details of reverse of cotton quilt top, before conservation.

Did you know ironing could be utterly fascinating, asked MTS intern Anne Lehmer-Mattek?

Pressing flat all the creased and twisted scraps of newspaper used to piece the 20th century patchwork quilt top was just that for our guest from Montana. The technique of paper piecing dates to the 19th century and helps to stabilize patches of fabric during construction. Normally the paper is torn off the assembled quilt top once it is complete, and other times it appears to have been left as an additional layer of insulation once the quilt was assembled. The maker's choice of piecing paper provides a unique opportunity to know more about the origin of the unfinished quilt, which is an anonymous loan to the Wheaton College Permanent Collection.

Transported back to a time when men's suits were advertised starting at \$15 and boys' started at \$1.50, Anne marveled at how much information could be gleaned from these fragments of newsprint. Wagon makers were trying to convince readers that theirs were superior, even claiming "The Last Word in Wagon Excellence Is...". Otherwise, you could take the train to the beach or enjoy a ride on one of the new Indian brand "motocycles," the "Master of Them All." Should all this activity wear you out, you would certainly get better rest if you purchase one of the "Feather Bed Bargains," but if your repose was challenged by ailments like asthma, itching, neuralgia or "old sores," you could turn to "Dr. Sloan's Liniment."



Fig. 40. Details of reverse of cotton quilt top, before conservation.



Fig. 41. Overall reverse of cotton quilt top, after conservation.

"SPEAKING OF CORN!" yells at the reader in all caps next to a fetching picture of a cob. But it turns out to be a distiller's ad, assuring us that we will prefer their "Straight Whiskey" over the numerous others advertised in the same newspaper. Perhaps readers were compelled to partake after seeing reports like "Germans Dented Allied Line" and "Russ Forces OVE....ENTIRE CORP..." Meanwhile, we are informed that "American Women Reach the Hague" beneath a group photo of smartly dressed women in large hats and long skirts, holding a banner with two-foot-tall letters that read, "PEA..."

The likely origin of the newspaper used to piece the quilt top was revealed by the political campaign advertisement urging people to "Send Slaton to the Senate" because "He Knows Georgia's Needs." Additional detached pieces of the newspaper preserved in the Wheaton College Permanent Collection confirm the Georgia origin, and provide three dates: 1914; week of January 6, 1915; and February 9, 1915.

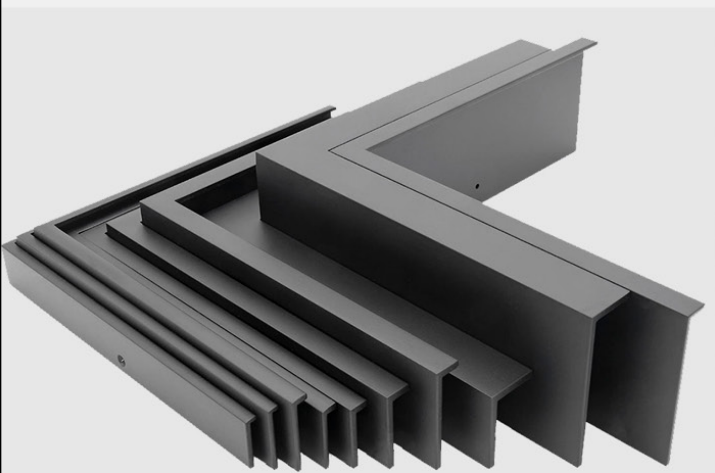
Two legible newspaper headlines reveal that the quilt top was pieced using the Atlantic Constitution Tri-Weekly. Published for several decades, starting in 1905, it served small cities and towns in rural Georgia. The combination of textiles and clues from the newspaper suggest that the quilter lived in a rural farming community. Although we cannot know for certain, the quilt's maker may also have identified as African American. As it remains today, Georgia was then home to one of the country's three largest populations of African Americans, one legacy of slavery in the United States. While their identity may remain a mystery, the quilt maker's extraordinary creativity and physical labor are obvious.

-Mairen O'Neill, Wheaton College, Class of 2023

Although our world today is different in countless ways from the years immediately before the United States entered World War I, these fragments from the past reveal striking parallels in our day-to-day concerns, values, and even those relentless efforts to make us part with our dollars. We will never know the reason this quilt didn't get its warm, insulating layer and backing fabric. But the students at Wheaton College and one lucky conservation intern are glad it was left undone!



Wopila | Lineage, 2022, Dyani White Hawk, images courtesy of the artist and Bockley Gallery



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MTS RESOURCES

During last July's visit to the Helen Louise Allen Textile Center, students from Camille's C3 class Textile Stabilization and Display got to see how important basic conservation information is to curatorial, collections management, and registrarial staff alike. Here are some of the most frequently accessed MTS Handouts available on our website:



Fig. 42. Camille with the Textile Stabilization and Display class visiting the HLATC, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Vacuuming Textiles
Conservation Stitching Guide
Choosing the Best Storage Materials
Making and Attaching a Velcro Header
Identifying and Mitigating Insect Infestations
Salvage Chart for Wet Textiles

Fig. 43. Border. Details of sleeves from a Chanel silk chiffon full-length dress. Late 1930s.

SYMPHONY OF SIGNATURES

Thousands of concert-goers, musicians, and students visit Tanglewood each year, the 110-acre former family estate in Lenox, Massachusetts, owned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO). But few have laid eyes on a silk quilt hanging in the 1912, nineteen-room summer mansion, *Seranak*, protected by dim light and quiet winters. Fewer still could have interpreted the embroidered writing scattered across the quilt's silk front, because it is entirely written in Cyrillic.



Fig. 44. Serge Koussevitzky at his summer home, *Seranak*, near the Tanglewood grounds.

The inscriptions consist mostly of quotes and signatures, and one date stands out several times amid the unfamiliar letters: 1916. This date coincides with an eleven-year period when the mansion's most famous owner, Sergei Koussevitzky, was performing throughout Europe as a double-bass soloist and conductor. Koussevitzky (1874–1951) was born near Moscow to a family of musicians. A multi-instrumentalist, he received a scholarship at the age of fourteen to study double bass and music theory in Moscow. By the turn of the twentieth century, Koussevitzky had debuted as a soloist and would relocate to Berlin shortly after with his first wife, dancer Nadezhda Galat.

During the period of 1909–1914, Russia was in political and social upheaval. Nonetheless, Koussevitzky and his orchestra toured by boat up and down the Volga River, which would have brought his music to an expanded audience. Just two years later, the group of people—and their writing—were gathered for an unknown purpose, eventually resulting in the creation of this embroidered quilt.

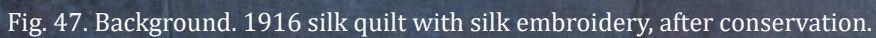
Koussevitzky continued to compose, perform and conduct in Moscow even in the face of the 1917 Russian revolution, after which he relocated to Petrograd to conduct the State Philharmonic Orchestra. But three years later in 1920, he and his second wife Natalie would leave Russia for good, emigrating to Berlin and then Paris. In 1924, the Koussevitskys moved to Boston when Serge became the conductor for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In 1941, the couple became American citizens, and eight years later Koussevitzky retired from the BSO. He died two years later at the age of seventy-seven. At that time, *Saranak* became part of the Tanglewood estate, and Koussevitzky's third wife Olga resided there until her death in 1978.

The relationship between the fifty people who signed this quilt becomes clearer once the names are identified. They include highly accomplished Russian women and men from all across the arts including music, theater, literature, and fine arts. Also notable are the small number of journalists and political figures, and at least one still-household name among classical music listeners.

- Nicolay Karabchevskiy (b 1851) was a Russian lawyer and author, known for speeches about political and criminal trials. "For the price of an effort-joy of victory!"
- Vlasiy Doroshevitch was a journalist who worked in Odessa and Moscow between 1864 and 1917. "Laugh, so you should not cry."
- Anastasia Verbitskaya (b 1861) was a writer known for her defense of women's rights. "Hello to you, new woman, who shook off the chain of love."
- Vasiliy Maklakov (b 1870) was a famous politician in pre-revolutionary Russia, and a member of the First and Second Duma (Russian Parliament). Autograph only.
- Serge Rachmaninoff (1878-1953) the composer, pianist and conductor, emigrated from Moscow to the US in 1917. Autograph only.



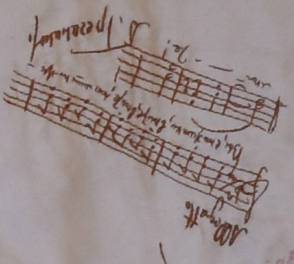
Fig. 46. Rebecca repairing the signature quilt using hand sewing techniques.



Синько

Своей творческой деятельностью - не только
многому помогла, но и сама - сама,
не имея ни крошечки.

Синько 1916



Итак, мы видим, что
это не просто
мелодия, а нечто большее.

Синько

Синько

Синько

Синько

Синько

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

All kinds of textiles contain writing, be it a weaver's mark, written label, embroidered sampler, or friendship quilt. Here are a few examples from the past year.



Fig. 48. "Arthur Locke" inked on the linen hoist of a 14-star American flag from New Hampshire.

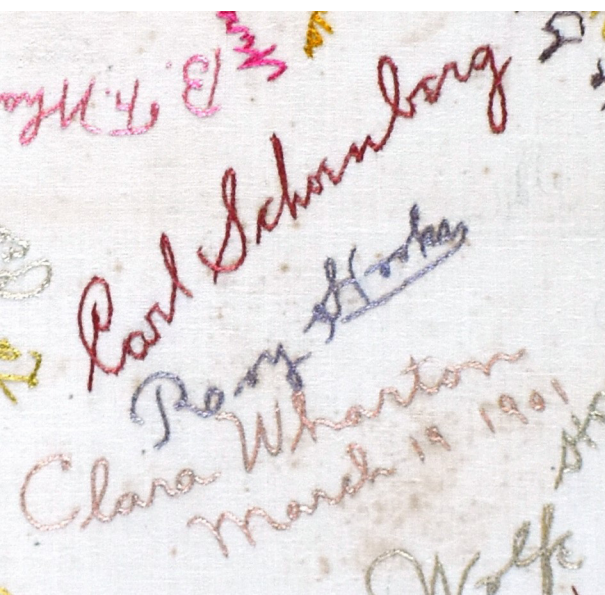


Fig. 49. Embroidered signatures from a cotton handkerchief.



Fig. 51. Stitched name from a silk & linen sampler.



Fig. 50. Inked signature from a Massachusetts cotton patchwork quilt.

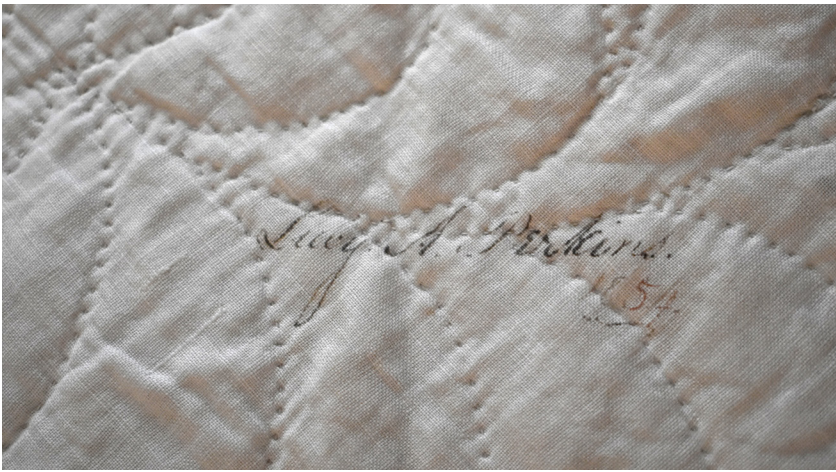


Fig. 52. Inked signature found on a cotton quilt from Maine.



Fig. 53. Weaver's mark from a Herter Looms tapestry.



Fig. 54. Stitched name on a silk & linen sampler from Maine.



Fig. 55. Embroidered signature from an applique textile.



Fig. 56. Details of an 1888 crazy quilt with embroidered names, initials, and dates.



Fig. 57. Maker's name on a cotton quilt from Alabama.

REVIVING THE BATTLE CRY



Fig. 58. The Joshua L. Chamberlain house, relocated to the corner of Potter Street and Maine Street by the Chamberlains in 1867, now operates as a museum.

MTS Director Camille Myers Breeze was hired by the Pejepscot History Center (PHC) in Brunswick, Maine, to assess fourteen Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) banners. Their survival alone is a miracle, but the story they tell is even more remarkable. The banners were salvaged by resident Earle Ormsby from a barn on his family's property along the Androscoggin River. The land was previously part of the 140-acre Merrymeeting Park, which entertained turn-of-the-century visitors with indoor and outdoor attractions. The city of Brunswick purchased the Ormsby family property in 2021, which coincided with the donation of the fourteen GAR banners.



Fig. 59. The Old Town Hall, built between 1881 and 1889, was demolished in 1961. The elegant brick building was decorated the year it completed in honor of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Brunswick.

Brunswick played a major role in the Civil War from its lead-up through its conclusion. Since its founding in 1888, the PHC (formerly the Pejepscot Historical Society) has preserved, educated, and supported research relating to the Brunswick region's Civil War history. The PHC owns the Joshua L. Chamberlain house, which was relocated to the corner of Potter Street and Maine Street by the Chamberlains in 1867 (Fig. 58.) The Civil War General, Bowdoin College alumnus and professor, and three-term governor of Maine owned the house from 1859 to 1914. Chamberlain (1828–1914) was the commander of the 3rd brigade, 1st division, 5th corps, 20th Maine Voluntary Infantry at the time of the Battle of Gettysburg. He and his troops prevented the confederate army from overtaking the union army at Little Round Top on July 2, 1863. Chamberlain was chosen by Union General Ulysses S. Grant to receive the formal surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee on April 12, 1865, at Appomattox, VA.

The fourteen banners and flag fragment that Camille assessed were removed from the Brunswick Town Hall prior to its demolition in February, 1961. It is not known when or for what occasion the banners were purchased. The elegant brick building was built between 1881 and 1889, and was decorated the year it was completed in honor of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Brunswick. A photograph in the PHC collection taken at that time shows several shapes and sizes of American flag with other pendants and bunting on the exterior of the building (Fig. 59). The town hall contained a large second-floor meeting space, referred to as the GAR Hall, in which the banners and other flags and bunting were known to have been displayed for decades.

Each banner has a different symbol, or badge, used to enable identification of corps divisions at a distance. According to an uncredited quote on the website www.addressinggettysburg.com:

After taking command of the Army of the Potomac [January 26, 1863], Major General Joseph Hooker introduced the use of corps badges as a means of readily identifying a soldier or body of men in the confusion of battle. These badges, typically made of cloth, were pinned or sewn onto the soldier's caps or coats. Badges were also privately produced in metal and other materials. The shapes were distinctive for each corps of the Army of the Potomac and the colors red, white, and blue signified whether they belonged to the first, second, or third division of their respective corps.

Chamberlain's attachment to the red Maltese cross symbol representing the 1st division of the 5th corps is well documented. It is found through his residence, including on plaster architectural elements. However, Maine vexillologist David Martucci revealed that the PHC does not have a banner with a Maltese cross, but rather the cross formée, or cross patée, of the 19th corp. The Maltese cross and the cross formée are easily mistaken today, but it is hard to imagine that there would have been confusion while the GAR was still active.

The lack of a banner in this group with the Maltese cross of Chamberlain's 4th Corps is perplexing. Perhaps it was separated from the group and subsequently lost. If the banners were purchased for the 1889 opening of the Brunswick town hall, one could assume that Chamberlain's 4th corps would merit inclusion in the group. There are two other noteworthy events that might be tied to the acquisition of a group of GAR banners. The Nineteenth Annual Encampment of the National GAR was held in Portland, Maine, in 1885, and the Fortieth Annual Encampment was held in Bangor, Maine, in 1907. Catalogs have survived that show that commercially made GAR banners were sold into the 20th century for such reunions. The larger question perhaps is why these banners in particular have survived. Without photographs inside the GAR hall, we can't know if there was a full set of corps banners and these are the only ones preserved.















			
1 st corps	2 nd corps, 1 st division	3 rd corps	4 th corps
			
6 th corps, 1 st division	7 th corps, 3 rd division	8 th corps, 1 st division	9 th corps, 3 rd division
			
11 th corps, 3 rd division	14 th corps, 3 rd division	17 th corps, 3 rd division	18 th corps, 3 rd division
		Fig. 2. GAR banners in the collection of the Pejepscot History Center.	
19 th corps, 1 st division	20 th corps, 3 rd division		

Fig. 61. Overall of all fourteen GAR banners with titles, before conservation.

The fourteen GAR banners are machine sewn from red, blue, and light brown cotton plain weave. The corps badges have raw cut edges and were applied onto the light brown fabric. A twill-woven red wool ribbon was machine sewn to the lower, hemmed edge of the banners. A sleeve was created out of the top edge, through which each banner was hung using an unfinished ½-inch diameter wood dowel. The banners were secured to their dowels by a single nail at the center that passes through the dowel from front to back, sticking out approximately ½ inch. Two of the banners (the 6th and 9th corps) have visible pen marks on the lower-back edge, likely dating to their manufacture. The banners are all consistent in size, however they do vary slightly. Although they could be homemade, they are more likely a commercial product.

During the course of the conservation assessment, the front of each banner was photographed, with additional detailed photos taken where necessary. A Miele vacuum with variable speed control and micro-suction tool kit were purchased for the history center collections as part of the project budget. Each banner was vacuumed on front and before being minimally folded with acid-free tissue and wrapped loosely in Tyvek. The symbol found on each banner was drawn on the outside of the Tyvek wrapping, until the banners can be properly labeled by museum staff. The banners were photographed again before being placed in one of two acid-free storage boxes.

Funding for this important conservation assessment was provided by a Preserving Americana Grant Program. Sponsorships are still being sought for the cleaning, rehousing, and display case to allow these GAR banners to be enjoyed by visitors to the Pejepscot History Center.



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WHAT WE ARE READING

Museum people are so often book people, too. Only holding a glossy color photograph in your hand can come close to seeing an object in person. Here are our four favorite books that we added to the Museum Textile Services library. They're not all new this year, just new to us.

Kiki Smith's *Real Clothes, Real Lives: 200 Years of What Women Wore*, the Smith College Historic Clothing Collection (Rizzoli Electa, 2023) tells the history of everyday women through their everyday clothing. As the author states in the preface for this book, "though images of upper-class women in fashionable dress are plentiful...and actual examples of such clothes can be found in many museum collections...documentation and examples of more mundane garments are harder to locate." This book is taking steps to fill in this gap in the history of women's fashion. Broken down into chapters such as "Home," "Public Dress," and "Rites of Passage," Smith provides numerous visual examples juxtaposed with historic images of women wearing similar (and sometimes the exact same) items as the objects shown, as well as advertisements or packaging for the patterns to buy or make same. The text provides historical information and social context for each subset of women's clothing and describes the evolution of certain garments over time. The garments were professionally mounted and styled by a team of mannequin dressers led by Lynne Z. Bassett. Lynne has been a good friend of MTS since our early years and is a major contributor to clothing and textile history and museum exhibitions in the Northeast. Anna-Marie Kellen was the book's photographer.

In a similar vein, *The Dress Diary: Secrets from a Victorian Woman's Wardrobe*, by Dr. Kate Strasdin (Pegasus Books, 2023) relates what life was like during the Victorian era through the materials that were used to make clothing. In 1838, a new bride received a diary as a wedding present, which she turned into a "dress diary" for collecting swatches of fabric from various articles of clothing. Over a century later, Dr. Strasdin used this unique scrapbook to piece together the story of this one woman's life, from her origins in Lancashire to her travels to Singapore and back. The fragments contained in the original diary bares insights into etiquette customs, working conditions, and industrial fabrication techniques as well as styles and fashions of this time. This long-anticipated book covers the well-trodden history of Victorian life from a fresh perspective that would be of interest to anyone who works with textiles. Strasdin's social media accounts are among our staff's favorites, and she is well worth following.

Closer to home, *Ann Lowe: American Couturier*, by Elizabeth Way, et al (Rizzoli Electa, 2023) recounts the life story of couture fashion designer Ann Lowe through the use of "surviving garments, primary sources, and oral histories." Having conserved Lowe's 1957 Gasparilla Jewel Circle Gown (detailed in Issue 9 of the Museum Textile Services Magazine in 2021) the chapter "Preserving Ann Lowe's Gowns: Conservation Research and

Treatment” written by textile conservators Laura Mira, Katherine Sahmel, and Heather Hodge, was of particular interest to us. This chapter discusses Lowe’s construction techniques with accompanying photographs of the interiors of several of her dresses, followed by two case studies of conservation work done for the *Ann Lowe: American Couturier* exhibition at the Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library, on view through January 7, 2024. Along with outlining the steps taken to clean and stabilize these objects, the authors also discuss the aesthetic decisions involved in conservation, such as the choice to use a black organza overlay to visually bring lace that had been bleached to a light brown closer to its original black coloring, allowing readers to learn about the art, as well as the science, of conservation.

Finally, ***Woven Tapestry: Guidelines for Conservation***, by Ksynia Marko (Archetype Publications, 2020) is an excellent and thorough reference book for anyone looking for a guide to tapestry conservation. Marko covers everything from what a tapestry is to preventive care to consolidation to display and even continuing education. She includes many useful images, such as overall shots of tapestries, details of repairs, and diagrams of stitching techniques. The book ends with twenty case studies describing real-life conservation issues and solutions, and an appendix full of forms useful to anyone in need of a starting point for how to accomplish this work. Camille was thrilled to find the annotated bibliography of tapestry conservation she published in the Spring 2000 TCN Supplement cited in the book’s bibliography!

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OUR MTS TEAM



Camille Myers Breeze, Director & Chief Conservator

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 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 Hann, Studio Manager

Samantha Hann joined Museum Textile Services in 2019 as an intern and has been the Studio Manager for three years. 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, where she initiated procedural upgrades and developed her excellent customer service skills. Samantha manages the business and client-relations side of MTS, as well as providing project management and conservation treatment assistance. When she has free time, Samantha enjoys cross-stitching and nesting in her new home. She and her husband recently welcomed their first child.





Rebecca Helgeson, Textile Conservator

Rebecca Helgeson completed a Museum Studies Masters at Harvard University in May of 2020. She began working part-time at MTS in 2018, contributing to several major projects both in the studio and off-site. Rebecca has recently returned as a vital part of the conservation staff, using her excellent sewing skills to assist on projects for private and institutional clients. Her highlights include historical garments ranging from Arctic exploration clothing to a first-lady's dress; antique and modern tapestries; Civil War uniforms and military equipment; and school-girl embroideries. She is the mother of a rambunctious and creative six-year-old boy, Karson.



Charlie Dov Schön, Studio Assistant

Charlie Dov Schön joined MTS as a Studio Assistant in March, 2023. She graduated from Hamilton College with degrees in Environmental Studies and Visual Art. Charlie is a working textile artist whose practice centers transparencies, reuse, and the natural world. Her pieces have been exhibited at Viridian Artists Gallery, Brandeis Kniznick Gallery, Essex Art Center, and Boston City Hall, among other locations. As Studio Assistant she aids in both conservation and administration at MTS, bringing with her skills in social-media marketing, machine embroidery, hand sewing, and writing.

Anne Lehmer-Mattek, Intern

Anne Lehmer-Mattek is a lifelong sewist, costume enthusiast and cultural anthropology student, grateful for the chance to intern with Museum Textile Services. Anne earned a BA in Anthropology from Mills College and a MA in Museum Studies from San Francisco State. While working with collections from the SFSU Global Museum, the California Academy of Sciences, The National Nordic Museum (Seattle) and the Milwaukee County Historical Society (Milwaukee, WI), Anne discovered her affinity for the intensive detail involved in collections care. She went on to learn custom corsetry and historic costuming at Dark Garden, stitching many creations for private clients including bridal, theatre, dance and Halloween. For several years, Anne has been learning upholstery techniques with a focus on restoring vintage and antique chairs.



NOTES & IMAGES

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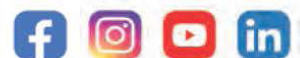
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