

# Museum Textile Services

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*Front and back cover: 1900's embroidery made by Lily Yeats, during conservation. Silk thread on silk satin. 12 x 14.75 inches. Courtesy of Boston College.*

# Letter from the Director

The end of the summer of 2016 finds us in a very different place than we were one year ago. For starters, Museum Textile Services took over the top floor of a beautifully restored 19<sup>th</sup> century factory building in our familiar Ballardvale neighborhood of Andover, Massachusetts. Our new facility has higher ceilings, a better floor plan, and even more charm than our previous location. We share our building with the owner, who is a meticulous and helpful landlord—finally!

Our staff has also seen some major changes with the departure (I prefer to think of it as a retirement) of Cara Jordan, who spent nine years with MTS. It takes no fewer than three of us to take over Cara's role, with me happily spending more time on the bench. Morgan Carbone, who joined us right out of graduate school in 2015, has taken on additional responsibilities and our former technician Courtney Jason has been spending Wednesdays with us. Our most recent technician, Megan Mary Creamer, departed in August for the Textile Conservation Masters program at the University of Glasgow and summer intern Trevor Lamb returned to the University of Maine for his senior year.

The glue that holds us all together is our new administrator, Kathy McKenna. With a background in law and municipal administration, Kathy has streamlined and improved many of our office procedures, freeing me up to do more conservation. So the next time you call or email Museum Textile Services, you will probably get Kathy on the other end of the line.

Any project with Museum Textile Services is a combined effort of our staff and often our colleagues. The joy we get from conserving your textiles comes through in the quality of our work and the meaningful relationships we forge with our customers.



*Our new mascot's name "Joy" was suggested by Sarah Stebulis in a Facebook naming contest.*

# YOU SAY YOU WANT

**F**lags and banners are our most patriotic national textiles. Often made of silk or thin wool bunting, they can be extremely fragile and require advanced conservation techniques for their preservation.

Revolutionary War-era flags—scant few of which exist in the United States—present their own set of considerations. 18<sup>th</sup>-century flags are frequently painted and over-painted with oil-based, distemper, or other water-based paint that may have physically or chemically compromised the ground silk resulting in flaking paint or loss of original material. These older silk flags can be remarkably sound compared to 19<sup>th</sup>-century silk flags; however they are frequently distorted and dished from use and display, presenting challenges for mounting.



Due to these and other condition issues, the textile conservators at Museum Textile Services have endeavored to find new techniques for safely stabilizing and mounting 18<sup>th</sup>-century silk flags. The first Revolutionary War-era flag we conserved in 2016 was the fa-

# A REVOLUTION?

mous Bucks of America flag belonging to the Massachusetts Historical Society and now on exhibit at the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

## **Background on the Bucks of America flag**

William C. Nell in the 1856 edition of his book, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*, writes that:

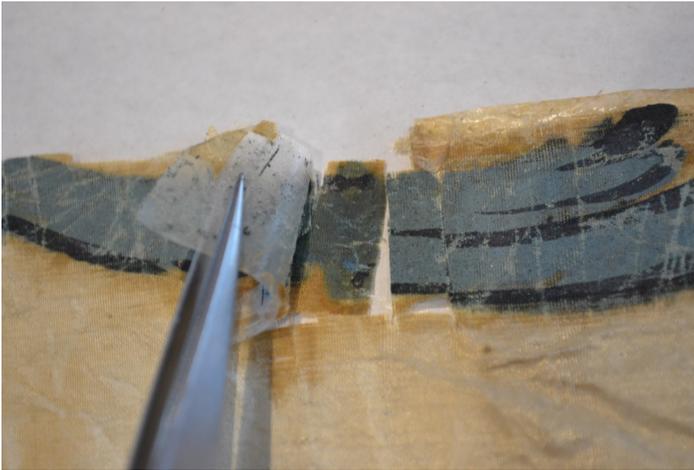
At the close of the Revolutionary War, John Hancock presented the colored company, called “the Bucks of America,” with an appropriate banner, bearing his initials, as a tribute to their courage and devotion throughout the struggle. The “Bucks,” under the command of Colonel Middleton, were invited to a collation in a neighboring town, and, en route, were requested to halt in front of the Hancock Mansion, in Beacon Street, where the Governor and his son united in the presentation.

The date of the flag has been the topic of debate. John Hancock served as governor from 1780 to 1785, and again from 1787 until the year of his death in 1793. Hancock’s only son was named John George Washington Hancock; and it is his initials that likely appear in the upper cartouche of the flag. JGWH died in 1787, suggesting that, if Nell’s story is correct, the flag was presented between 1780 and 1787.

## **Treatment**

Before the flag received its new lining, MTS conservators had to correct distortions in the flag that had occurred over time, and reverse a previous adhesive intervention. We used a Gore-Tex humidification chamber to slowly introduce cold water vapor to the flag to rehydrate and relax the fibers. We then used a small warm iron over a piece of clean muslin to press out the worst creases. Using a preservation pencil, Cara was able to introduce water vapor to target and soften





the adhesive tape on both the front and back of the painted cartouches. She was able to carefully remove both Scotch-type tape and brittle strips of transparent paper that a conservator had adhered decades ago to the shattering painted silk.

While Cara and Megan painted adhesive solution onto the silk crepeline underlay, Camille undertook the challenge of compensating for areas of loss on the flag. After consult-

ing with Anne Bentley, Curator of Art & Artifacts at the Massachusetts Historical Society, we decided to place a sheer piece of silk behind losses in the cartouches and not attempt to recreate the missing lettering. Camille custom dyed a light-weight silk plain weave that blends with the blue of the cartouches when see through the undyed silk crepeline lining of the flag. (we actually used pre-fab blue stabiltex, your samples dyed unevenly and were too green)

When the adhesive was dry, Cara and Megan peeled the silk crepeline away from the silicone-release film, making sure not to let it stick to itself. The film was removed from the back of the flag the crepeline was aligned onto the back of the flag. Using a small warm iron over a piece of silicone-release film, Cara carefully reactivated the Plextol B-500 and adhered it to the painted areas of the flag. After the flag had cooled, it was flipped face up and the silk crepeline was hemmed under and hand stitched.



An aluminum solid-support panel was purchased for the flag from Small Corp, Inc. This panel was covered with archival Polyfelt and a shade of tan cotton poplin chosen with assistance from Anne Bentley. The blue stabiltex patches were positioned onto the panel before the flag was centered onto it. Using Gutermann Skala polyester thread, conservators first hand stitched the flag to the panel around the perimeter and following the selvages and seams. We then secured the area around the paint losses, placing small stitches that connected the flag and its underlay fabrics to the panel. Additional hand stitching was necessary to secure splits in the unpainted silk areas.

After mounting was complete, a piece of UV-filtering acrylic was laid over the flag to form a pressure mount. The Bucks of America Flag had been pressure mounted with acrylic for the past fifty years without adverse effects, so we were confident that a pressure mount



would be safe for the painted surface because. The acrylic was screwed into the top of the panel through pre-drilled holes around the perimeter. The flag was then packed up for transport by US Art to the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture, where it received a custom frame. The flag is part of the inaugural exhibit at the new National Museum of African American History and Culture.



## The Third Company, Third Connecticut Regiment Flag

Camille Breeze and Conservator Morgan Carbone had a chance to try our new method again this summer. The New-York Historical Society and Library contacted us about conserving the Revolutionary War-era flag of the Third Company, Third Connecticut Regiment, which is dated to between 1781 and 1783. It is made of painted silk with losses and splits occurring where the stiff paint meets the flexible silk, just like the Bucks of America flag. Again we humidified and pressed the flag after surface cleaning with a high-efficiency filtered vacuum. We made a tracing of the painted and discolored areas of the flag onto tensioned silk crepeline using a 50% solution of Plextol B-500. We also painted adhesive around the perimeter of the flag, which allowed us to carefully cut rather than hem the silk crepeline without fear of unraveling. The same reversible bond was achieved when we tacked the flag to the crepeline with a warm iron.



The Third Connecticut flag was hand stitched to a cotton-covered solid support with tan polyester patches behind areas of loss for color compensation. It was then pressure mounted and given a powder-coated aluminum frame manufactured by Small Corp. US Art transported the crated flag to the New York Historical Society where it will hang in the “The Battle of Brooklyn” through 2016.



## Conclusion

Our new method for lining painted silk flags is reversible, requires minimal handling and flipping of the flag, is successful with or without an additional sheer overlay, and is time efficient. In the upcoming weeks we look forward to adopting it for the conservation of two other silk textiles—a light-damaged silk apron from the New Hampshire Historical Society believed to have belonged to Abigail Adams, and the chemically unstable silk dress worn by Shirley Temple in the groundbreaking movie, *The Little Colonel*.

Many thanks to all who contributed to the conservation of the two Revolutionary War flags; and especially to Megan Mary Creamer for her research into the history and technology of the Bucks of America Flag.



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

# The Legacy of Principal Bacheler

## Conserving a Civil War-Era Coat



Since 1934, generations of students, faculty, and staff of Gloucester High School in Gloucester, Massachusetts passed by a frame holding the tattered remains of a coat. A photo inside the frame is of former principal Albert William Bacheler, who brought the coat back from the Civil War. His story reads like a novel and is made all the more poignant by the survival of this fragile garment.



Bacheler was born in Balasore, India, in 1844 to missionary parents. He enlisted as a teenager in Company E of the 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New Hampshire volunteers and was promoted from private to corporal, sergeant, and finally first lieutenant. Bacheler fought in every battle the regiment engaged in except for Cold Harbor. He received injuries at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, and was captured by Confederate forces on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1864. Bacheler was held as a prisoner of war at the infamous Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia where he and another soldier were able to dig to their freedom. During the three weeks between escaping and reuniting with the US Army, he was sheltered by African-Americans. One of them gave Bacheler this coat.

Returning to New Hampshire after the war, Bacheler earned his degree from Dartmouth College. The coat went with him when he became a teacher at Gloucester High School. After his retirement the coat was given to Roger W. Babson, Gloucester High class of 1894. Babson gave the coat to the school in 1934, at which point it was likely

framed. The following year, a photograph of Albert W. Bachelor along with his heroic story, were printed in the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Edition of Gloucester High School Cadet.

The coat might have remained in its frame at the High School had concerned Gloucester parent Kim Minnaugh not noticed mold growing on the inside of the glass. Minnaugh brought the problem to the attention of the Gloucester Committee for the Arts, and Museum Textile Services was hired to assess the coat. We developed a proposal for deinfestation, cleaning, stabilization, mounting, and displaying the coat inside an existing display cabinet at the high school. Initially they hired us only to unframe and deinfest the coat while the City of Gloucester pondered how to pay for the full treatment.

Enter George and Charles King. The eleven-year-old twins occasionally accompanied their mother Catherine Ryan to meetings of the Committee for the Arts, and became interested in the coat and its story. After several months had passed and the money had not yet been raised for conservation, the boys began a crowd funding campaign. Their efforts were noticed by individuals, businesses, and media outlets who took up the boys' cause and spread the word. A final anonymous donation of \$2000 completed the fund-raising effort, and MTS began treatment.



After the initial deinfestation with chlorine dioxide to kill mold spores, the coat was thoroughly vacuumed with a high-efficiency filtered vacuum and a micro-suction tool. During this meticulous process, the coat began to reveal its secrets. It is a double-breasted tail-coat with a grey linsey-woolsey plain-weave exterior and undyed cotton plain-weave lining. The grey color comes from the combination of a blue wool weft and brown cotton warp. Immediately apparent to the viewer is the tattered state of the coat and the fact that it has been much repaired. The proper-left tal is torn off and the lower sleeves are patched with a brown and tan till weave fabric. The lining is visible through numerous tears, holes, and open seams. Both sets of buttons on the front are worn and mended, and three of the four buttons that originally adorned the tails are missing, leaving behind only the threads that once attached them.

This coat is a symbol of our community veterans' commitment to our nation and to the citizens of Gloucester. Principal Albert Bacheler served our country in time of need and returned home to influence the **next generation** of students as a teacher and principal...Through the use of his coat he taught his students of **compassion and determination** above all odds. The legacy of Principal Bacheler remains even today as our community joins together towards the preservation of his **tangible legacy** and to ensure that future generations of students and adults remember the lessons of Principal Bacheler.

- Adam Curcuru

District Director of Cape Ann Veterans Services

Wicked Local Gloucester, Jan 27, 2016.

After eighty years folded sideways and pressed into a narrow frame, the coat needed multiple rounds of humidification to relax creases and folds, and correct long-ingrained distortions. Realigning the torn fabrics then allowed us to determine which tears and holes posed a threat to the overall stability of the coat, and which could be left to bear testimony to the arduous journey Bacheler took to reunite with his battalion. Hand stitching and a minimum of cotton support patches were employed before the coat was deemed fit for display.

Next we constructed a custom Andover Figures manikin that supports the coat. When the manikin was dressed, the image of the African-American who owned the coat immediately came to mind. Who was this generous man? The cut of the tailcoat forced his shoulders back and would have looked formal with the double-breasted closure, despite being made of every-day fabrics. Was it passed from a land-owner to a slave, who then wore it in a house or out in the fields? The generations of repairs certainly suggest that the coat was an essential garment to its owner. And it later became essential to the survival of a Lieutenant in the Union Army, whose service made possible the freedom of thousands.

The coat will be installed at Gloucester High School this fall and the legacy of principal Bacheler will live on. Museum Textile Services wishes to thank the Gloucester Committee for the Arts, the City of Gloucester, Charles and George King, and the many donors who made this preservation project possible.



# Exhibitions

Many of the objects MTS has worked on in the past year have been featured in exhibitions throughout the Northeast



An embroidery by Lily Yeats was displayed as a part of the exhibition “The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making It Irish” at the [McMullen Museum of Art](#) at Boston College. The exhibition was on view from February 6 to June 5, 2016.

A Chinese silk embroidery is the centerpiece of the exhibition “Draw Yourself In” at the College of East Asian Studies at [Wesleyan University](#). This interactive, student-curated exhibition is open through December 9, 2016.

MTS conserved and framed a rare Revolutionary War Era silk flag now on display at the [New-York Historical Society Museum and Library](#). The exhibition, “The Battle of Brooklyn,” is open through January 8, 2017.

“The Badge of a Freemason: Masonic Aprons from the Collection” opened March 19, 2016 at the [Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library](#) in Lexington, Massachusetts. Visit and learn more about the complex history and meanings behind the many Masonic aprons conserved by MTS.

MTS conserved a World War II war bond banner currently on display in the exhibition “It’s Showtime: A History of Manchester’s Theaters” at the [Manchester Historic Association](#) in New Hampshire. It is on display until December 17, 2016.

Another revolutionary war flag conserved by MTS, coined “The Bucks of America Flag,” is currently on display at the new [Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture](#) as a part of the exhibition “Double Victory: The African American Military Experience.”

# A Year in Collaboration

*The Museum Textile Services conservation staff is proud to be backed by knowledgeable experts that we are proud to consider colleagues and friends. Many critical projects would not be possible without their skills and expertise.*

## Barrett M. Keating, BMK Conservators

Barrett has been our go-to conservator of furniture and wooden artifacts for many years. Located on Cape Cod, Barrett is always available to pick up a project and grab a beer after work. This year we collaborated on a framed Chinese textile belonging to Wesleyan College in Middletown, CT. While MTS was conserving the textile, Barrett consolidated and replicated mother-of-pearl inlays, repaired the frame corners, touched up numerous finish-loss areas to match the existing finish, cleaned, and put two coats of beeswax on the frame. The results were stunning and even we thought the frame outshone the silk textile.

## Elizabeth Mehlin, Mehlin Conservation

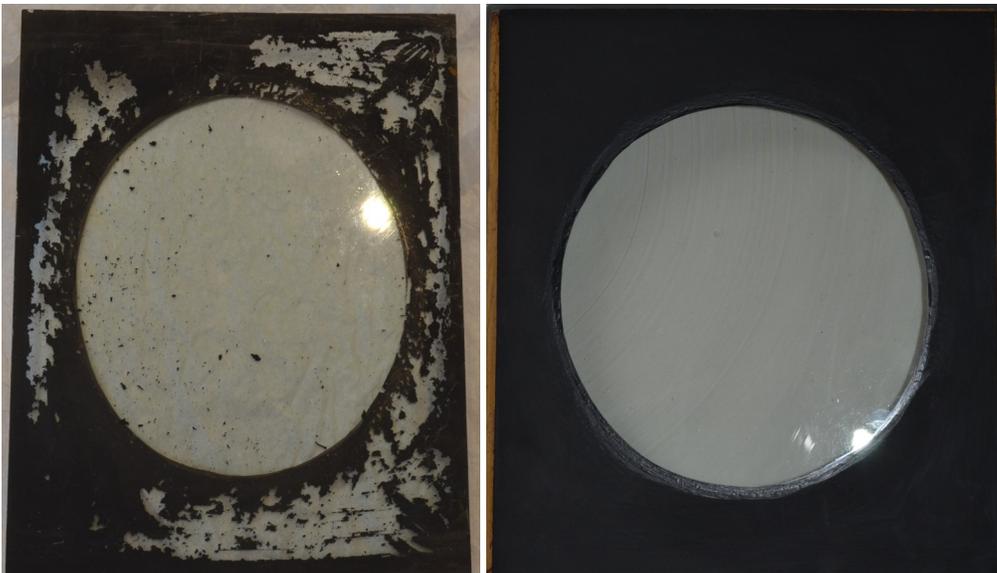
2016 was our first opportunity to collaborate with Elizabeth, another friend from our conservation social circle, whose paintings conservation studio is nearby in Ipswich, MA. When the Manchester Historic Association brought us a ten-foot painted War Bond banner in July, Elizabeth came on board despite tight time constraints. After MTS cleaned and flattened the banner, she conserved lifting and damaged paint, filled in significant losses in the banner's corners, and consolidated the surface. She also tested several methods for painting rare-earth magnets before finding just the right system and color used in the exhibit.

## Ann Frisina, Heartland Textile Preservation Services

When it comes to upholstery conservation, no one is better than Ann, who has been Camille's coworker and friend since 1989. Ann came on board for a week this April to help us reupholster two historic lolling chairs from the collection of Phillips Academy in Andover. In addition to running her own conservation studio, Ann has been the textile conservator at the Minnesota History Center since 1999.

## Linda Abrams, Reverse Painting on Glass

Linda is well known in the Boston area for her stunning restoration, conservation, and reproduction of historic reverse-painted glass. When a petite 1820s embroidery arrived at Museum Textile Services with a terrible case of failing paint on the glass, we knew just who to call. The before and after comparison is breathtaking! Linda is also an accomplished banjo player and knows Camille from the Boston acoustic music scene.



Picture caption

# Conferences

Our staff attended several conferences this past year and will be attending many in 2017. We enjoyed our trip to Portland, Maine for the New England Museum Association (NEMA) Annual Conference. Camille Myers Breeze and Katrina Herron presented, “Articulating Bodies: Developing and Disseminating New Tools for Historic Costume Display in Small Museums,” and Camille contributed to a panel presentation called, “Speaking Conservation.”

We are enthusiastic to attend the next NEMA Annual Conference in Mystic, Connecticut beginning November 9, 2016. Camille Myers Breeze will be presenting with a panel, “Forensic Finds: Uncovering and Telling the Stories Hidden in Artifacts.” This panel will explore the role of evidence found during conservation treatment in the interpretation of historic artifacts. For more information visit the [NE-MA website](#).

We also attended the North American Textile Conservation Conference (NATCC) in New York City. The conference, whose theme was “Textiles in Motion,” was held at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Camille and Morgan have submitted two abstract proposals for next year’s NATCC conference with the theme “Embellished Fabrics: Conserving Surface Manipulation and Decoration” in Mexico City. For more information visit the [NATCC website](#).

Camille attended and co-presented a paper at the Annual Meeting of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) of Historic and Artistic Works in Montreal. The paper, called “A Ghost of the Civil War: A Man, a Flag, and a Frame,” explored the history and conservation of the Solon A. Perkins flag and its frame.

Next year’s AIC conference will be in Chicago, Illinois beginning May, 28 2017 and has the challenging theme of “Treatment 2017: Innovation in Conservation and Collection Care.” Camille has submitted a proposal discussing our treatment on Revolutionary War flags, while Morgan has submitted a proposal for a poster addressing painting magnets. For more information visit the [AIC website](#).

Picture caption



# Brilliant and Gleaming:

While we make [Andover Figures](#) manikins at Museum Textile Services for a variety of historic costume, some garments require an entirely different approach. One look at this large, heavy, beautiful, and multi-material African costume confirms its special display needs. Called an Egun, the bright and visually energetic costume was commissioned in 2015 for the permanent collection at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts. After surface cleaning and documenting this complicated garment, our challenge was to make a safe and sturdy storage/exhibition mount.

MTS Custom Support



Shoes



Egungun are costumes worn in masquerades, religious festivals, and funeral services in Yoruba culture. The Wheaton Egun was made in Benin specifically for the college's permanent collection, but many West African countries produce similar masquerade and religious garments. Seeing this type of costume in motion is really the best way to understand how it works. Around minute 1:45 of the video below, you can see the first of many Benin Egun of similar construction to the one we recently conserved.

# Egungun Costumes from Benin

The dancing of the performers is particularly impressive considering these richly decorated garments weigh about 60 pounds. As seen in the video, the performer looks through a loosely woven mesh, covered by cowrie shells, and each costume is decorated and constructed in a unique hand-crafted fashion. The wearer's entire body is covered during the performance. The under-garment of the Wheaton Egun is a deep indigo blue jumpsuit that covers the performer from the head to the fingertips and down over the toes. A pair of matched decorated shoes completes the costume. Looking out from under the hanging panels at the top is a stylized wooden face, painted bright yellow.

Conservators Camille Breeze, Morgan Carbone, Megan Creamer and Cara Jordan built a custom mount that resembles a small table inside a plastic crate. Due to space limitations, the mount measures just 55 inches tall--shorter than the dancer who wore it. Made of poplar plywood wood wrapped in Tyvek, the galvanized reinforcements and bolts allow the mount to be easily disassembled, or affixed to a platform for exhibition. Two Ethafoam crescents on top of the mount cushion and balance the heavy wooden disk, much as it would have been balanced on a dancer's back or head. The costume has nearly two dozen fabric panels, each of which we padded with archival polyfelt and rolled to fit on the base of the mount. The enclosure consists of corrugated polypropylene panels connected to the base with Velcro, and a removable Tyvek cover. The base of the mount is bolted to a dolly for easier transport.

For more historic context, take a look at the historic visual culture of Benin and much older Egungun costumes in the online collections of the [Boston Museum of Fine Arts](#), and the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) in New York.



# Under Water

*This year Museum Textile Services added two submarines to the list of historic military vessels whose artifacts have made their way to us for conservation.*



## The USS Albacore (SS-218)

A collection of kill flags was sent to us by the grandson of Captain James Williams Blanchard. A 1927 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Blanchard served in the Panama Canal Zone before taking command of the submarine [USS Albacore](#) (SS-218) in 1943. Blanchard left command in late September of 1944, roughly one month before the Albacore was last heard from, presumably striking a mine before sinking with all hands on board. He was awarded the Navy Cross and two Silver Stars for his three war patrols.

David Blanchard has become an expert on his grandfather's military history and the flags he inherited. The seven small rectangular kill flags weren't army issue, but were instead made on board the submarine. Four flags featuring a red sun with white and red rays commemorate four surface cargo ships struck by the Albacore. Two flags with the rising sun on a white ground were made in celebration of the Japanese surface combatant ships hit, the destroyer Sazanami and the Cha-165. One kill flag is all red, and was made after the Albacore struck the Taiho, Japan's first steel-deck aircraft carrier. Accompanying the kill flags is a battle streamer, which was traditionally flown above the US Flag off the submarine's fan tail. The pennant reads "USS Albacore SS218 8-9-10 War Patrols Dec 43 Sept 44" in cross stitch. The words "USS Albacore" appear to have been stitched at a different time than the rest of the writing. The hoist binding at one end is stamped, "No. 6"

Captain James Williams Blanchard relinquished command of the Albacore in September 1944 to Commander Hugh Raynor Rimmer, taking with him the flags. The submarine left Pearl Harbor on October 24th, 1944 and stopped at the Midway Islands to refuel four days later. This was the last sign of the submarine and she was never heard from again. It is believed that the Albacore struck a naval mine off the shore of Hokkaido on November 7th, taking with her the [entire crew](#) of eighty-five men. This set of kill flags is believed to be the only existing set of kill flags from a US Sub that was lost with all hands.

# Under Attack

## USS Barb (SS-220)

Like the Albacore, the [USS Barb](#) was a Gato-class submarine built in Groton, Connecticut. During her seven patrols in the Pacific, the Barb is credited with sinking 17 enemy vessels totaling 96,628 tons, including the Japanese aircraft carrier [Unyo](#). She was credited with the only ground combat operation that took place on the main Japanese islands when the sub blew up a railroad train during its final patrol.



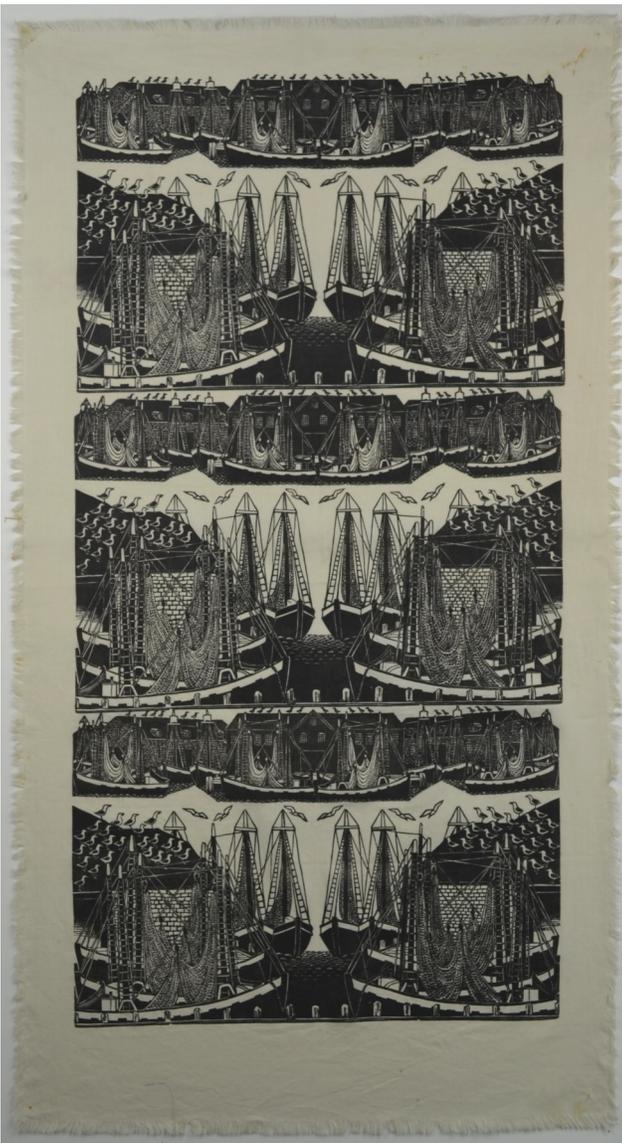
Several photos exist of the crew of the Barb with their [battle flag](#), which consisted of their many kill flags. An original Barb battle flag, now on display at the Submarine Force Museum in New London, CT, was hand sewn prior to November 1944 by Petty Officer First Class John Higgins. Alongside it is displayed one of the same replica flags we have here at Museum Textile Services. Our souvenir flag belonged to Ralph Shaver, whose father served on the Barb. Like all crew members, Shaver was given a flag after returning home from the war.

A printed label on the back of the flag indicates it was made by Carleton Company in Rochester, NY. The flag is screen printed onto cotton canvas. The red, black, yellow, turquoise, and green were printed first, and then the navy blue background color was printed last. At some point in time, thick white paint was placed around the perimeter to imitate the white border of the original flag. The greatest challenge we face in conserving this flag will be preventing further losses along the edge where the heavy white paint is putting strain on the thin ground fabric.

As with all military textiles, these flags have been an opportunity for us to learn more about World War II and the men who fought in it.

# Folly Cove Designers

Museum Textile Services is in the process of conserving several Folly Cove textiles belonging to the [Rockport Public Library](#) and a private collector. The Folly Cove Designers worked from 1941 to 1969 on Massachusetts' Cape Ann peninsula. Prior to the group's establishment, its founder and leader [Virginia Lee Burton Demetrios](#) taught design courses to her neighbors in the Folly Cove section of Gloucester. The Cape Ann Museum's 1996 exhibit catalog [Folly Cove Designers](#) provides an in-depth view of the history and processes of the group.



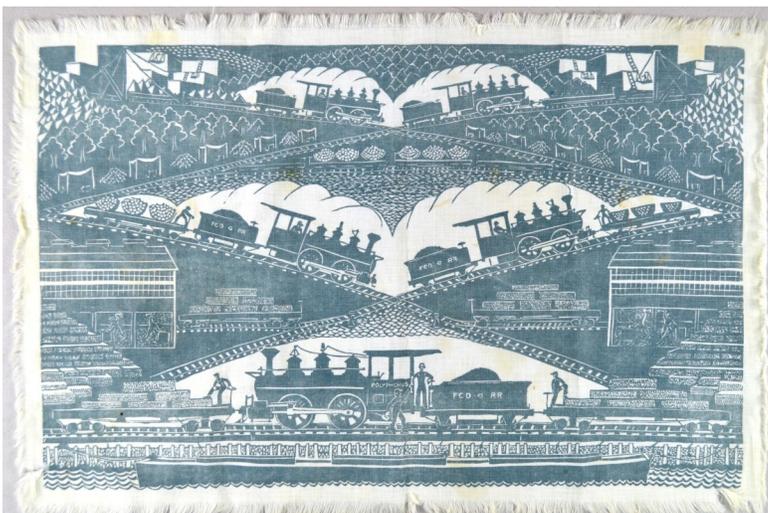
The textiles that we are treating were designed by Eino Natti and Peggy Norton, active Folly Cove Designers from the 1940s through the 1960s. After receiving these artifacts over the summer, the MTS crew took a trip to [the Cape Ann Museum](#) to see its Folly Cove Designers permanent exhibit. Upon her death in 1968, Folly Cove founder Virginia Lee Burton Demetrios donated the textiles and blocks to the museum.

The women and men who took Folly Cove Design courses created mainly table linens, wall hangings, and bedspreads to decorate their homes. The first Folly Cove exhibit in 1940 was of these textiles. The Folly Cove Designers organized professionally in 1941 in order to sell their artwork and goods to the public. The group was founded on the philosophy that, by combining the role of the designer and the craftsman, the creator can achieve an aesthetic lost to the industrial era.

# at Museum Textile Services

In order to become a member of the Folly Cove Designers, the candidate was required to complete one of Demetrios' courses and to submit a design for approval by a jury composed of senior members. The designer would submit a sample on ink-coated cardboard. After getting approval from the jury, the artist would carve their design into a sheet of linoleum that was mounted on a piece of plywood. The artist would then coat the printing block with ink, place the block ink side down onto a piece of fabric, and then stamp on the block with their feet. The Folly Cove Designers did not switch to a manual press—the signature acorn press—until 1943. Anthony Iarrobino, a friend of Museum Textile Services, donated the acorn press on view at the Cape Ann Museum.

MTS will be conserving two textiles designed by Eino Natti: the 1961 *Gloucester*, representing the Gloucester harbor, and the 1950 *Polyphemus* (see slide show.) *Polyphemus* shows the transportation of granite by trains to barges on the sea-coast. Polyphemus was the giant one-eyed son of Poseidon in Greek mythology, and the large front light of the trains in the design reference him. Another group of Folly Cove textiles at MTS is from the Rockport Public Library. In addition to their copy of *Gloucester*, they have six copies of *Strawberry*, made in 1964 by designer Peggy Norton. The textiles are small squares of cotton used as coasters and napkins, staying true to the earliest Folly Cove creations.





## **“When Your Stockings Run,**

**W**ithin the last four months Museum Textile Services has received four Grenfell Industries hooked mats for conservation. Made of silk and other fine fabrics hooked onto a burlap base, these mats can be circular or rectangular. They feature Arctic animals, depictions of indigenous and local people, and other picturesque scenes of life in Labrador and Newfoundland. These mats are not only wonderful textiles, but also speak volumes about the distinctive maritime culture of these northern provinces during the first half of the 20th century.

The economy of Newfoundland and Labrador has long been heavily dependent on the fishing industry. All of a family's income traditionally came from money made by men during the fishing season. This money would have to last a family for an entire year, and by 1900 many families were living in poverty as it was becoming increasingly hard to live comfortably off this income. An Englishman named Wilfred Grenfell established hospitals and industrial missions at various small coastal villages where he and his employees taught local women to make different crafts to sell to the public in Canada and the United States. The craft of rug hooking from scraps of fabric had long been practiced in Newfoundland and Labrador by local women for domestic use, but beginning in 1912 Grenfell began capitalizing on the market potential of these mats.

Hooked mats made from stocking scraps became the mainstay of the Industrial starting in the mid 1920s. At that time, the Grenfell mission began soliciting donations of used silk stockings from Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom with the slogan "When your stockings run, let them run to Labrador." These mats were sold at shows throughout northeastern North America, with a special focus on New England. They were also sold to people who stopped at the mission while on leisure cruises. Grenfell hooked mats reached peak popularity in the 1930s, and began to wane with the advent



of the Second World War. Beginning in 1940 all imports of mats to the United States were suspended. The reliance of local women on these mats for income declined further in 1949 when Newfoundland and Labrador's confederation with Canada offered family allowances, pensions for the elderly and other government programs to mitigate poverty in the region.

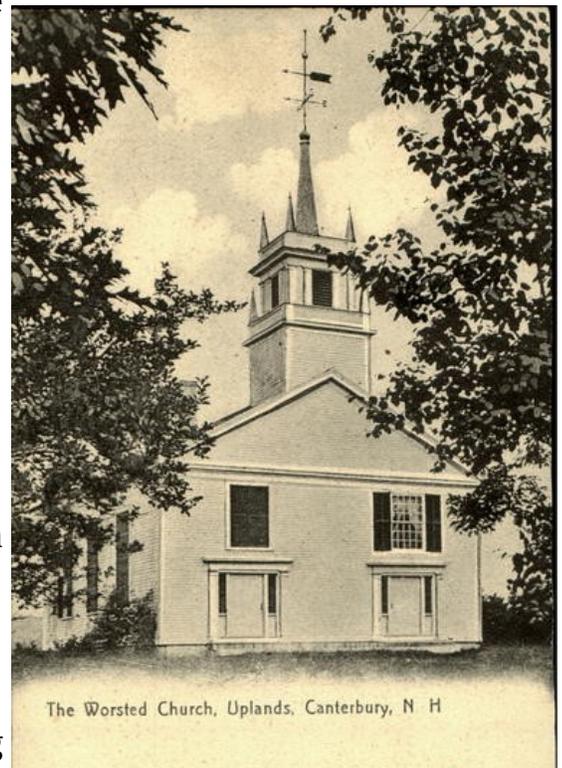


Two of the mats we received are small circular "table mats" and feature a polar bear and a sled dog. These mats were intended to be used as pot holders or coasters and were popular products of Grenfell industries, where they were often hooked by young girls to introduce them to the craft of mat hooking. One of the other mats recently received by MTS for conservation features an image of a dogsled team lead by a man. It is worked in silk dyed a variety of browns and greens, and is an important reminder that all of the mail and supplies that arrived at the Grenfell mission during the winter months came via dogsled. The last of the mats is a rectangular "nursery mat" featuring a variety of images of life in Labrador such as fishing boats, nets, dogsleds, and a dock. Two figures are dressed in traditional clothing, with the female figure wearing sealskin boots, which was a piece of fashion common to Labrador but absent in Newfoundland. The mats were all cleaned with the use of a microvac and then wrapped in acid free tissue and packed in archival boxes.

# Conserving a Worsted Church Valance

**M**useum Textile Services recently conserved a valance made by author, artist, and lay preacher Sarah Elizabeth (Harper) Monmouth (1829-1887), whose name is synonymous among Canterbury, New Hampshire, historians with the phenomenon of the “Worsted Church.” One of literally dozens of decorative textiles made by Monmouth between 1871 and 1879, this eight-foot-long valance is composed of brushed cotton twill flannel and paper cut outs from printed wallpaper. The effect from just one of these textiles is a bit dizzying and confusing to the eye, so an entire church full of Monmouth's textiles must have been a true Victorian work of art.

The Worsted Church building dates to 1839. Services were no longer being held there by 1870, when Monmouth moved in after the death of her father and husband. She began to decorate the interior of the church with her own artwork, and even performed sermons on Sundays for the local villagers. An 1879 article from the [New York Times](#) describes the interior as “a perfect mosaic of needlework of vines, flowers, and decorations, composed of worsted in all colors and designs.” Monmouth had left the church by 1879, retiring





to a farm and writing a memoir entitled [Living on Half a Dime a Day](#). Fortunately, the textiles she made were saved from the 1958 fire that destroyed the Worsted Church building, and the substantial holdings of the [New Hampshire Historical Society](#) are now being cataloged.

The valance has a noticeable pattern of discoloration and creasing as a result of inappropriate storage and folding. It has also suffered from water damage, which compromised the adhesive at the top right corner. Several edges of the glued paper cutouts were also lifting. After arrival at MTS, the valance was surface cleaned thoroughly with a micro-vacuum in order to reduce dust and particulates. Caked-on deposits resembling mud were removed mechanically using a micro-spatula and a toothbrush.

The valance was lightly pressed with a warm iron through muslin on the front, and through damp muslin on the back, in an attempt to correct planar distortions and paper folds. The lightest creases released easily, while deep creases around the worst tide-lines had a strong memory. It was while pressing the valance that we detected an odor of urine, so we decided to fumigate the valance with [Chlorine Dioxide](#) to reduce the smell.

After fumigation, the worst areas of lifting paper were readhered back to the canvas using [BEVA 371 film](#). A strip of BEVA was placed behind the area that needed to be readhered, and the shape of the wallpaper cutout was carefully traced onto the paper backing of the adhesive film. The custom-cut adhesive shape was then tacked to the underside of the wallpaper, and finally adhered to the cotton fabric using a tacking iron at low heat. The final treatment was to repair several holes in the white fabric with cotton underlays and nylon net overlays. After conservation, the valance was rolled on an archival storage tube.

We were very excited to have the opportunity to conserve this truly unique object. It was a joy to learn more about Sarah E. Monmouth, who is an inspiration to anyone who has ever found solace and healing in the art of handicrafts.

# The Proud and Careless Notes Live On

EMBROIDERY . . . LILY YEATS.  
HAND PRESS . . . ELIZABETH C. YEATS.

DUN EMER INDUSTRIES, LTD.,  
DUNDRUM, CO. DUBLIN, IRELAND.



DUBLIN DEPOT, 28 CLARE STREET.

*Hely's, Limited, Dame Street, Dublin*

In December, 2015, Museum Textile Services textile conservators Camille Myers Breeze and Morgan Carbone traveled to Boston College to condition report, vacuum and install a tapestry now on display at the Burns Library. While there, we looked at an embroidery done by Lily Yeats and Brigid O'Brien in 1915, which needed some conservation TLC. The newly-purchase embroidery will be on display in "The Arts and Crafts Movement: Making it Irish," opening at the McMullen Museum at Boston College on February 6, 2016. The exhibit contains over one hundred artifacts from the Irish Arts and Crafts movement.

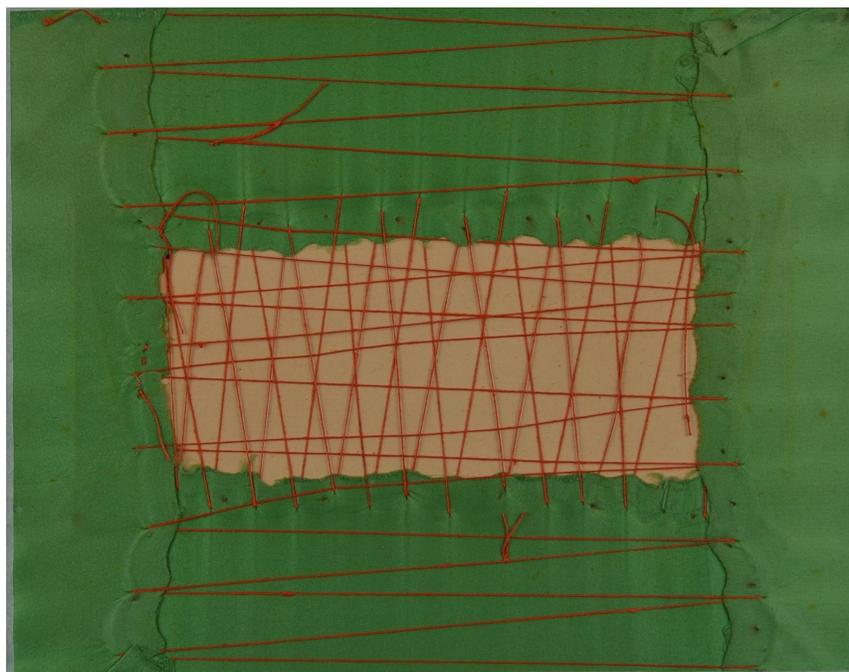
The signatures "BO'BRIEN" and "Lily YEATS" are stitched at the bottom corners of the embroidery. Brigid O'Brien is credited as the designer and Lily Yeats was the maker. Yeats had been involved in the Arts and Crafts movement for many years by the time she made this embroidery. She studied embroidery under May Morris, daughter of William Morris, starting in 1888. In 1902 Lily, along with her sister Elizabeth and friend Evelyn Gleeson, founded the Dun Emer guild in Dublin. Dun Emer focused primarily on

# But Bless Our Hands That Ebb Away

tapestry and carpet making. In 1908, the group separated and Lily and her sister founded Cuala Industries which ran a printing press and an embroidery workshop. The embroidery that MTS conserved was created in the Cuala embroidery workshop around 1915.

Framing the central figures in the embroidery are two banners reading, "The Proud and Careless Notes Live On But Bless Our Hands That Ebb Away." The text is from the W. B. Yeats poem *The Players ask for a Blessing on the Psalteries and themselves* from his collection of lyrical poems called *In the Seven Woods*. The poem was also Elizabeth Yeats' first hand-printed publication at Dun Emer, in 1903. W. B. Yeats was the brother of Lily and Elizabeth Yeats. Their other brother, Jack Butler Yeats, designed textiles for both Cuala Industries and the Dun Emer guild.

The Boston College embroidery has several condition issues, including fading due to light exposure, an area of unidirectional loss to the right of the figures, and gummy adhesive tape holding the back of the mounted textile to an acidic paper mat. When Museum Textile Services received the embroidery it was mounted onto an acidic board behind a gold paper mat inside an oak frame. The ground silk was wrapped around to the back side of the board and strung with orange linen thread. The mounted object was quite a bit smaller than its frame.





In order to center the mounted embroidery into the frame, someone had taped it to the back of the gold window mat. MTS conservator Cara Jordan was able to remove most of the tape mechanically with limited loss of silk. Small areas of tape that were more difficult to remove were humidified, allowing Cara eventually to lift the tape from the silk.

In order to remount the embroidery, the orange lacing had to be removed. The thread was

cut in a few key spots, after which it was easily unlaced from the silk ground. The orange thread was too weak to reuse, so it was returned to the client. To our surprise, the back corners and an area of deterioration on the front had been glued to the board. Cara successfully released these adhered areas with acetone.

Cara remounted the embroidery onto a board of the same size as the original because the deep folds in the ground silk retained a memory of that shape. She lightly tensioned the embroidery around a new archival 8-ply board to which she had attached cotton poplin. While the embroidery was face up, it was hand stitched to the outer edge of the board using DMC cotton thread. It was then flipped over onto a padded surface and the folds of fabric were arranged on the back of the board before being hand stitched in place. The embroidery was then flipped face up again and Cara placed a network of hand stitching around the figures. Once the embroidery was properly mounted, the areas of damage were couched to the fabric-covered board with Gütermann Skala polyester thread.

Since the newly mounted embroidery was smaller than the frame, Cara needed to make a spacer system to properly position the embroidery. She cut a ring of corrugated polypropylene and covered the interior edge with archival frame tape. A new gold mat was cut for the piece to hide the sharp line between the faded front and the still-green sides. The mat was adhered to the polypropylene spacer with archival double-stick tape. The embroidery was then framed behind UV-filtering glass in its oak frame.

## Donate to the MTS Study Collection

Did you know that our study collection is catalogued in a searchable database that includes one thousand objects and scholarly publications? Currently we are accepting donations in the following areas:

- Military uniforms and accessories with photographs and biographical information of the service man or woman who wore them.
- Sports uniforms with photographs and biographical information on the athlete.
- School-girl samplers and embroideries.
- Ethnographic and archaeological textiles with provenance.

Please contact Camille Myers Breeze if you are interested in making a donation. Museum Textile Services is not a 501(c) and we cannot appraise items or provide a tax receipt.

# MTS Staff



**Camille Myers Breeze, Founder & Director**

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 an MA in Museum Studies: Costume and Textiles Conservation from the Fashion Institute of Technology. She spent five years in the Textile Conservation Laboratory at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in NYC before moving to the Textile Conservation Center at the American Textile History Museum, in Lowell, MA. Camille is an avid singer, motorcyclist, gardener, and chicken keeper.

**Kathy McKenna, Administrator**

Kathy McKenna has taken the position of part-time Administrator. She comes to MTS after eleven years as the Assistant Town Clerk in Andover. In addition to being a seasoned manager of large-scale projects and re-organizations, Kathy has a background in Law. On her days off, Kathy is dedicating herself to writing a novel.



**Cara Jordan, Conservator**

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

**Trevor Lamb, Intern**

Trevor is a rising senior at the University of Maine in Orano, where he is majoring in Anthropology. He has a wide range of experience in archaeology, and is especially interested in archaeological textiles. Trevor has just returned from a semester spent at the University of Birmingham in the UK.



# MTS Staff

## Morgan Blei Carbone, Conservator

Morgan Blei Carbone joined Museum Textile Services in 2015. After earning her BA in Art History from Grinnell College in Iowa, she received an MA in Fashion and Textiles: History, Theory, and Museum Practice at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Since working at MTS, Morgan has come to specialize in wet cleaning and bleaching, mounting and framing flat textiles, and historic clothing. Morgan is also an avid knitter of laced shawls and scarves.

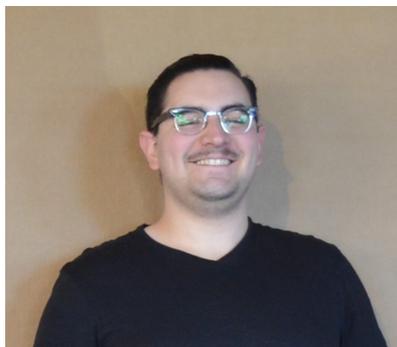


## Courtney Jason, Contract Technician

Courtney Jason has worked with MTS since 2010, when she began a Knowledge Management internship. We quickly stole her and put her on the thangka conservation team in preparation for the Mead Art Museum exhibit. Since then, Courtney has been a key player in many of our most important projects, with her specialties in tapestry, flags, and large-scale mounting. Courtney will complete her ALM in Museum Studies at Harvard Extension School in 2017.

## Megan Mary Creamer, Technician

Megan has a BFA in industrial design from Massachusetts College of Art, and is completing an ALM in museum studies at Harvard University Extension School. She has tailored most of her education towards textiles, exploring the subject from the industrial revolution to new methods and materials used in the 20th & 21st centuries. Since joining the MTS team as an intern, Megan had added new skills to her experience across the fields of materials-based design, collections management, non-profit management, and planning arts events in the greater-Boston area.



## Dylan Almendral, Intern

Dylan is a military specialist who researches individuals to whom objects belonged in order to tell their stories. Dylan has interviewed over 250 people, from WWII veterans to classic Hollywood actors. In 2013, Dylan published a photographic history of Victorville, California, for Arcadia Publishing's 'Image's of America' series. He is also co-founder, lead researcher, collections manager and curator of the American Legacy Museum.

