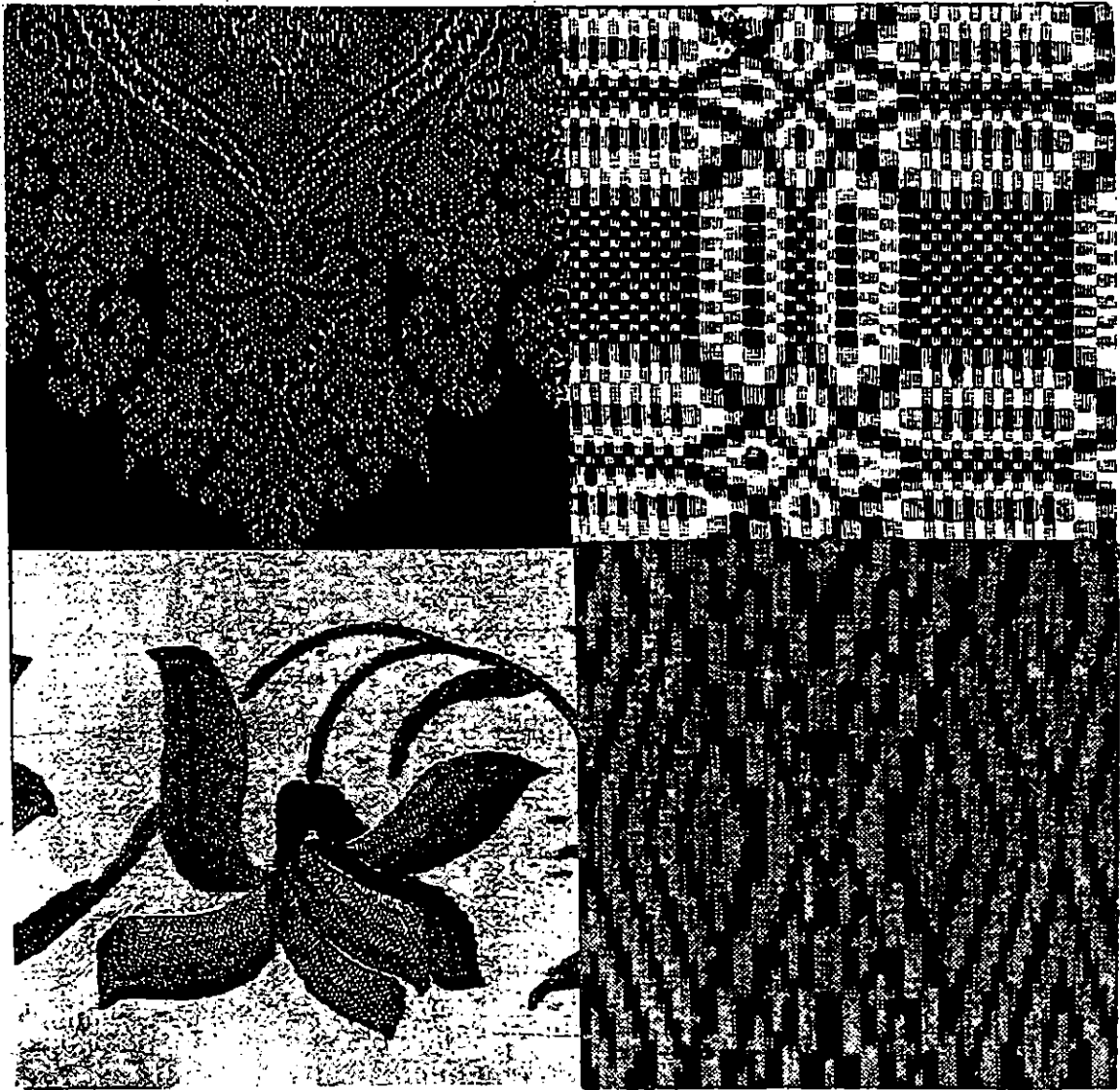


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**TEXTILE
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NEWSLETTER**

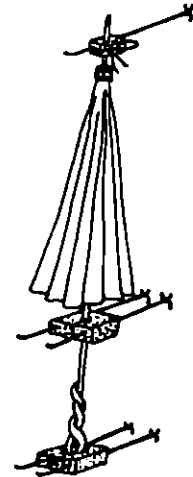
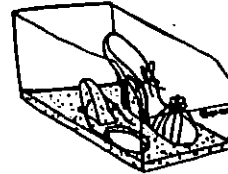
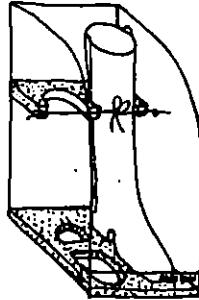
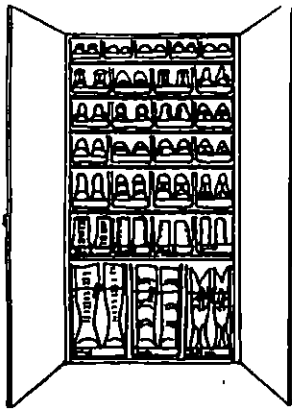


Number 25

FALL 1993

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FROM THE EDITORS

Thanks once again to our contributors for the articles which make up this Fall 1993 issue of Textile Conservation Newsletter. Next spring Montreal hosts the Costume Society of America's National Symposium. Eva Burnham, TCN Editor and Textile Conservator at the McCord Museum, along with Jacqueline Beaudoin-Ross, Curator of Costume and Textiles, are heading the organization of this exciting event.

Collection moves and storage improvements continue to be a timely topic; this issue features two articles on the subject. The move and upgrading of storage at the Royal British Columbia Museum were discussed in our Spring issue; their experience is elaborated on with a continuation of that article. A piece on the Detroit Historical Department collection move shares advice with any faced with such a challenge.

Other articles in this issue cover a wide range of subject areas. The Bernese

Historical Museum presents several options used to block light in galleries with windows. A treatment used by the Canadian Conservation Institute to remove iron-on interfacing from fragile silk is discussed. A variety of types of gold metallic threads are characterized and their production processes described in an interesting contribution drawn from an article by a manufacturer of these threads.

The TCN Editors have arrived at an important but difficult decision. At the end of the current 1993-94 subscription term, we wish to hand the production of the newsletter over to a new editorial team. We would like to hear from any interested parties who are willing to take up this rewarding but at times demanding challenge and commitment. Previous experience shows that two, or preferably three individuals are required for the smooth proceeding of all aspects of the management of subscriptions and production of the newsletter. We thus ask any interested readers to consider the possibility of taking over as the new TCN Editors, and to get in touch!

IMPROVEMENTS TO STORAGE:

PART 2

THE HISTORY COLLECTION TEXTILES, ROYAL BRITISH COLUMBIA MUSEUM

Editor's note: This article is a continuation of part one published in the Spring 1993 issue of TCN. (Number 24)

Hanging Storage

Because rolling storage for hanging garments is so compact, we could not consider making any changes. A count of garments without padded drawers, those with skimpy and squashed padded hangers, and those stored flat that could be hung, given adequate space and appropriate hangers, led to a rethinking of parts of the collection storage. Constant whining from those involved with the textiles resulted in the reallocation of a bank of rolling units that used to hold industrial memorabilia. In addition, a sizeable collection of uniforms was removed to the warehouse. The conditions at the warehouse are excellent, the collection is one that is rarely used, and the uniforms are not only robust but many are very recent (bus drivers', police, ferry workers', etc). As the warehouse is five miles from the Curatorial Tower the decision was not easily made, however.

With the increase in hanging space, the prospect of making hundreds of new padded hangers appeared: and there was not an experienced museum worker who did not blanch. Our previous hangers used bubble-pack or fibrefill and required considerable hand sewing. New hangers were designed

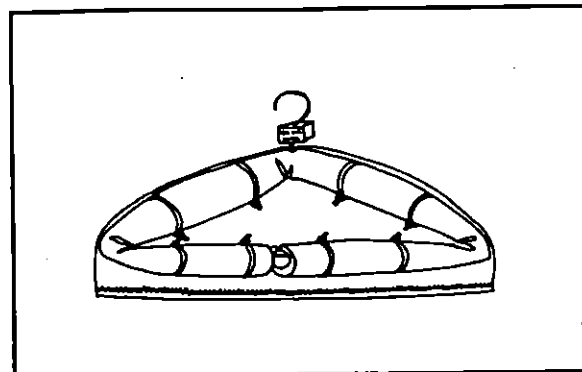


fig 1

using polyethylene pipe insulation held in place by nylon electrical tie-wraps (fig 1). There are a number of Asian two-dimensional (square cut) garments in the collection which, despite their strong condition, had been stored flat because of the inappropriateness of the sloped padded hangers. By flattening a wire hanger and covering it with a bar of pipe insulation a more suitable hanger shape was produced.

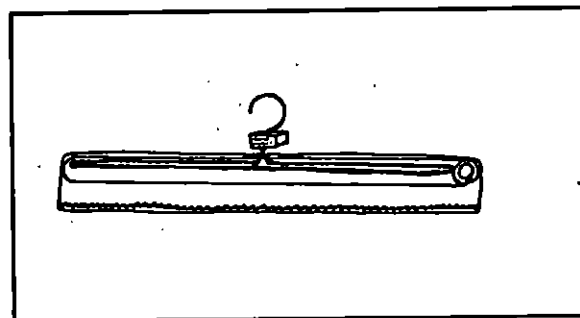


fig 2

Removable covers of washed unbleached cotton were made. We are not likely to want to remove them, but they require less hand sewing (fig 2)

For to support of the waists of skirts and trousers, experiments were made using a commercial pants hanger with a clamp mechanism. It was found that by clamping it

over a piece of 3/4" plywood, the spring mechanism was relaxed so that the hanger did not grip so tightly. To soften the surface of the wooden grips, 1/4" Ethafoam was glued to faces with hot melt glue. This proved too slippery so white velvet ribbon was glued over the top. The velvet provides a good gripping surface and using ribbon meant that there were fewer cut edges with which to deal.

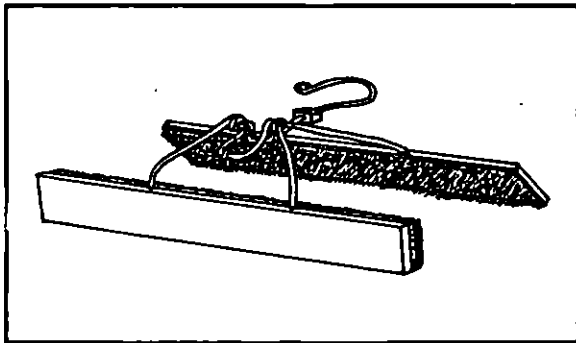


fig 3

These exciting new hangers still required many hours assembly. A sheltered workshop was found that was happy to do the work. The Museum provided the materials and prototypes. Hundreds of padded and clamping hangers were assembled by people who were pleased to do something for the Museum and who were glad of a change from their regular routine. The cost was \$2.50 per hanger (fig 3)

One of the advantages of hanging storage is that if the garments are given adequate room, access to each is immediate - no handling of other garments is necessary. Unfortunately placement of accession labels in the shoulder seams made it difficult to identify garment without laying it out, opening it and searching the shoulder seams for an accession label. For improved tracking during the move a block of Ethafoam was

slipped over the neck of each hanger. A piece of card glued to the Ethafoam with hot melt glue now displays the accession number and could carry a bar-code strip (although this became unnecessary when it was decided to track units instead of individual artifacts).

Three-dimensional storage

So many accessories had been poorly stored because of their awkward size and shape that a special effort was made to house them better.

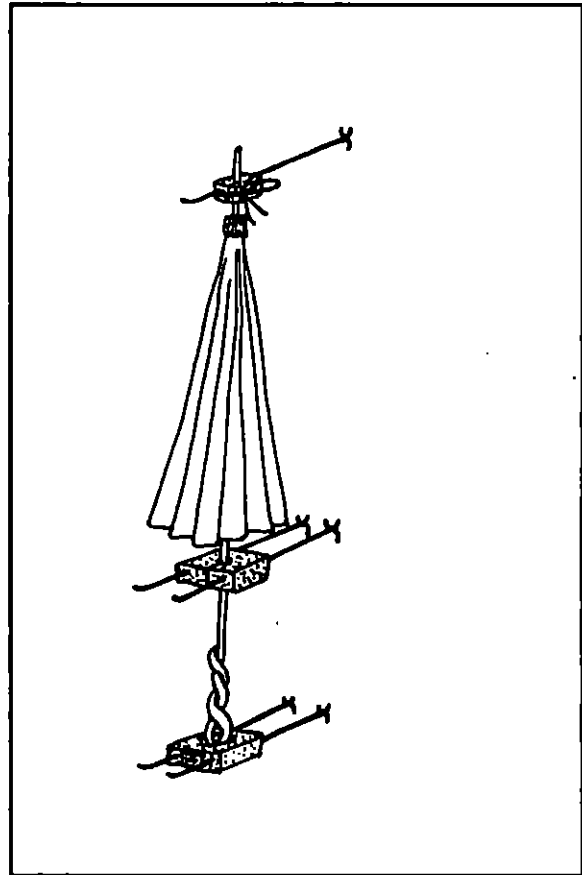


fig 4

Parasols - The parasol collection had been re-stored in 1988. The umbrellas and parasols were stored upright with the hoods held

partly open with a tie of cotton twill tape beneath the slider. Metal brackets that fit into peg-board were covered with surgical tubing to cushion their surface, and the parasol handles were tied to the brackets. A block of ethafoam attached to a bracket was used to stabilize the bottom of the handle. Unfortunately the ties had been inadequate and over the years the parasols had slipped down so that the weight was resting on the end of the handles. Rolling "closets" lined with painted peg-board were constructed with covers of clear polyethylene. The same principles of support were used for the parasols but the hoods are no longer held partly open (to reduce space). The surgical tubing was replaced by blocks of Evasote, a non-slip foam and the handles tied within their grip (fig 4)

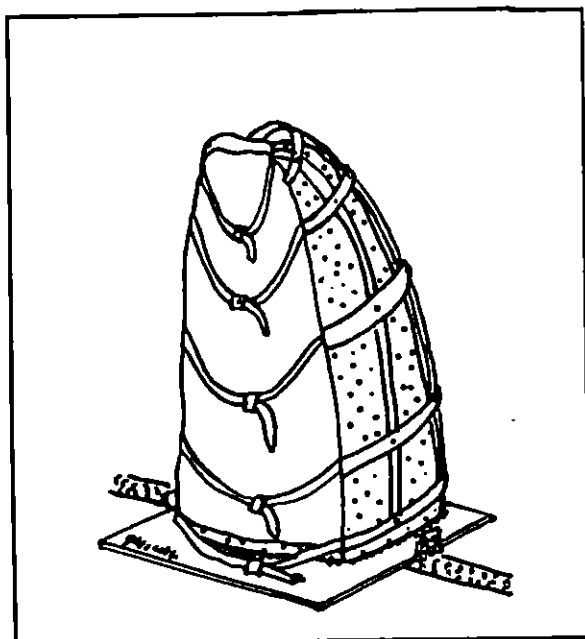


fig 5

Bustles and hoops - These had been a forgotten part of the collection. Hoops are now secured in Foamcore trays within

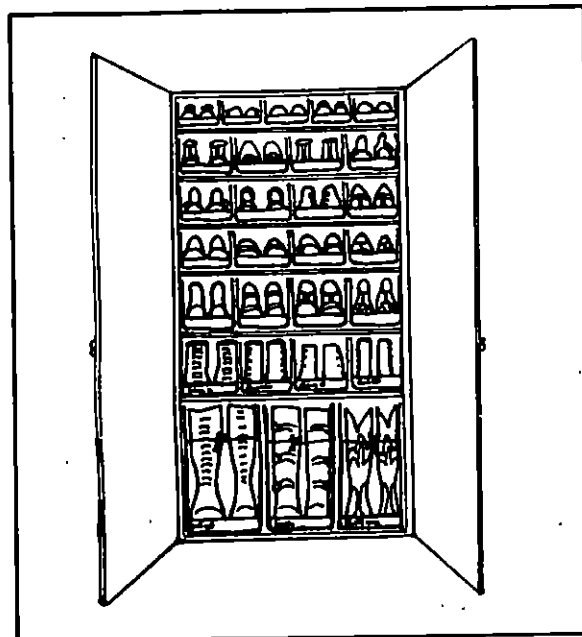


fig 6

specially designed Coroplast boxes. Although the Coroplast is difficult to use, its rigidity and waterproofness are useful. The large flat hoop boxes will be stored on top of the rolling storage under the new sprinkler system. A box stapler was used to assemble large Coroplast containers of all kinds, and while not perfect, the copper staples are quicker and as reliable as any other method that has been suggested. Bustles were mounted in the same manner as hats. A structure of Ethafoam was padded with fibrefill and covered with cotton jersey (or a more slippery rayon). This was glued and sewn to a piece of foam core. Tabs of Velcro (soft side) were adhered to the sides of the Foamcore to line up with strips of Velcro attached to shelves within the rolling storage. (fig 5)

Shoes and boots - Footwear had always posed accessibility problems. Enamelled metal warehouse cabinets were found with

shelves 16" deep - enough to accommodate large boots without wasted space. (fig 6)

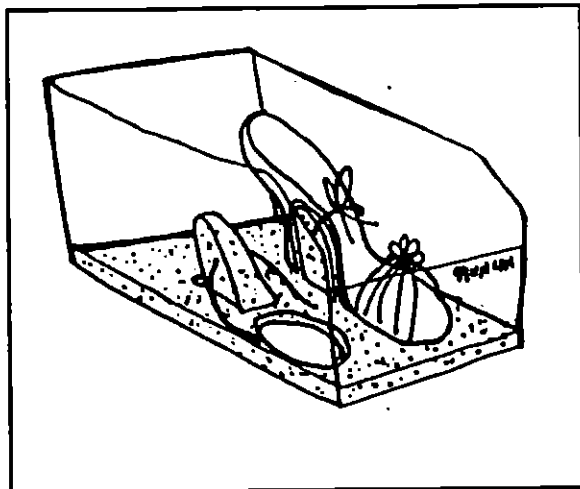


fig 7

The polyethylene bins designed to fit on the cabinet shelves also proved suitable for almost all women's shoes. To prevent shifting, 1/2" Ethafoam was cut to accept the soles of the shoes and glued into the bottom of the bin. Various techniques were used to prevent the shoes from leaping straight up - ties, grips on the heel, pressure held blocks of Ethafoam. These generally fit four to a shelf, but some of the earlier nineteenth century

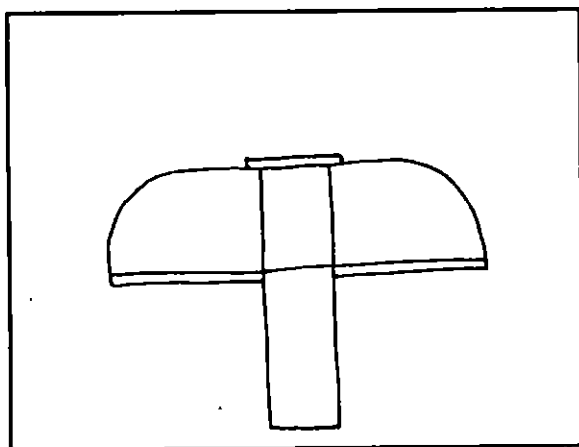


fig 8

slippers were very narrow, Foamcore boxes were made to fit five to a shelf. Foamcore boxes were also made for the babies' and childrens' shoes which could be more efficiently stored in drawers. Low boots fit into a deeper version of the shoe bin but special accommodation had to be made for the larger boots. Coroplast was chosen for its strength, and a pattern made. Two layers of 1/2" Ethafoam were used as a base, and brackets of Ethafoam were cut to stabilize the tops of the boots. Because the cut surface of the Ethafoam might abrade the boots, the brackets were lined with cotton muslin. To prevent the boots from pitching forward, and also to stop the sides of the boxes from splaying out, cotton twill tape was threaded through the Coroplast to tie in front of the brackets. (figs. 7.8.9.)

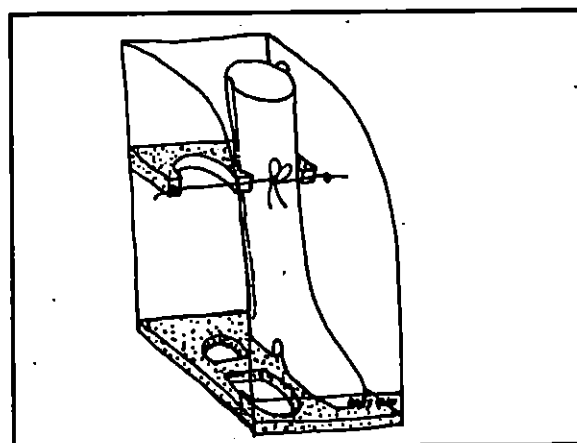


fig 9

Hats and wigs - Although some of the hats had been treated previously (see TCN Fall 1990), there were hundreds still on shelves and in boxes. Many an intern, student and contractor got their start making ethafoam and fibrefill hat mounts. The wigs were given the same treatment. The metal shoe cabinets were the right size to accommodate almost all

the headgear, with the very wide-brimmed hats going into drawers. A strong double-sided tape was found that would adhere velcro to metal shelves, so all the mounted hats will remain in place even if the cabinets fall over.

There were parts of the collection that did not receive much attention. An enormous collection of baby clothes, a study collection of fabric pieces, and uncatalogued pieces in poor condition were repacked into large Coroplast boxes. Ties and doilies were merely assigned a drawer, and tied en masse to a Foamcore tray. A lot of work remains but what was done was done really well. As with any large project hindsight shows how it might have been easier. Having planned in advance for the eager and productive contractors would have reduced some of the stress.

Boots of similar heights and purses of similar construction went together regardless of date. Without curatorial involvement little prioritization could be done however. Over its thirty-year life the collection of historic textiles has never really been curated. Considerable duplication exists in some areas and much is of questionable quality. Given the limited space, it is obvious that deaccessioning must be done, and it seemed a shame to miss such an opportunity. On the other hand, it was impossible to argue for expansion room with so many collections expanding simultaneously with improved storage. Hopefully de-accessioning will provide the collection with some room to grow in the years to come.

Although it is not an undertaking to be recommended, and the two years have seen many frayed tempers and frustrated perfectionists, there is no doubt that the move has been a good thing for the collections. There are now computer inventories complete

with location files. There are easy-to-find labels throughout the collection to prevent unnecessary handling. Despite the absence of curators, some complete anomalies were deaccessioned or sent on long term loan. Everyone involved came away with a renewed sense of the richness of the artifacts in our care, a sense that can only be an inspiration for better collections care in the future.

Colleen Wilson
Textile Conservator
Royal British Columbia Museum
Victoria, BC

SUPPLIES - Textile StorageClamping hangers:

The Closet Shop
23 - 3615 Shelbourne Street,
Victoria, B.C. 477-4123

Coroplast-sheets

Pelagic Pacific Industries Ltd.,
P.O. Box 861
Victoria, B.C. V8V 2P9
386-1811

Cotton-jersey

Kendor Textiles,
13120 Bathgate Place,
Richmond, B.C. V6V 1Z2
273-2811

Cotton-muslin

Vancouver Textiles,
2511 Vauxhall Place,
Richmond, B.C. V6V 1Z5
278-7776

Double-sided tape (3/4" Testafix 4965 -
acrylic adhesive, polyprop liner) For
attaching velcro to metal.

Rainbow Industrial Products Ltd.,
1427 Crown Street,
N. Vancouver, B.C. V7J 1G4
984-3184

Ethafoam - 1/8" sheets - 2" planks
Pelagic Pacific (see Coreplast)

Ethafoam - solid rounds

Plasti-fab Co. Ltd.,
679 Aldford,
Annacis Industrial Estates,
New Westminster, B.C. V3M 5P5
526-2771

Evasote

All Foam
Richmond, B.C.
940-9744

FoameCore

Pelagic Pacific (see Coroplast)

Metal warehouse cabinets and polyethylene boxes

R&R Schaefer,
#206 19425 Langley Bypass
Surrey, B.C. V3S 6K1
530-4519

Nylon Tie-wraps

Cat Electronics,
855 Catherine Street,
Victoria, B.C.

Polyethylene Pipe (high density, industrial)

Plasco
#8 19600 Langley Bypass
Surrey, B.C. V3S 7B1
530-9371

Polyethylene pipe insulation

Beaver Lumber, or any hardware or plumbing
supply

Twill Tape

Jefferson N. Ltd.,
22 E.5th
Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1G8
873-4641

Velcro

George Jackson,
2625 Kaslo Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V5M 3G9
251-2265

Velvet Ribbon

Jefferson (see Twill tape)

MOVING MUSEUM

COLLECTIONS: HOW TO AVOID SOME OF THOSE MAALOX MOMENTS

Introduction

The Detroit Historical Department (DHD) is one of several major institutions who, in the past few years, have moved their collections from one building to another. Each museum had its own unique situation to consider and its own stories to tell. While the exact number of bottles of Tylenol and Maalox consumed by the staff at the different museums may vary, there was undoubtedly a rise in the blood pressure and stress level of everyone involved.

In the case of the DHD, we were consolidating approximately 100,000 objects scattered throughout thirteen buildings. One of these spaces was a 27,000 sq. ft. renovated warehouse, the Collections Resource Center, which would include office, library, and archival space for the Collections Division. The planning and renovation of the Collections Resource Center are not included in this article. However, many of the renovation activities were taking place at the same time as the pre-move planning.

Pre-Move Planning

The importance of this step cannot be overemphasized. Months (and sometimes years) of pre-move planning meetings will make the difference between a situation with minimal difficulties and the makings of a Stephen King novel. Just as in any other major project, the initial meetings will be concept-oriented and later meetings will become the place to work out details.

In the early stages of the project two important pieces of information need to be determined: firstly, how the move fits into the priorities of the institution and secondly, a budget. The director and Board of Trustees need to clearly state how they view the priority of this project and back it up with the appropriate finances and staff. Secondly, as with any project, a budget needs to be established-preferably one which includes staff time. Throughout the project this estimate should be updated, and the Director kept apprised of any changes. Logs of actual staff time, and records of cash expenditures and in-kind services might be helpful to keep for future reports.

The Move Team

In the early stages of discussions it is important to designate the Project Manager and the Move Team. This core group of people can, when necessary, call on outside advisors and create subgroups to resolve details, but they will ultimately have the final responsibility for the move. It is essential that they be relieved of some other responsibilities to work on this project. If the move is to be well organized and proceed smoothly, this team needs time to concentrate and prepare.

The Project Manager needs to understand the entire project and its impact on the institution and have access to upper administration to help resolve budget and staff problems. Other members of the Team should understand the scope of the project, yet their strength lies in coping with hundreds of details that will occur in the following months.

To understand the scope of the move it is often helpful to break it down into smaller sections. This might include:

- * What is being moved (general collections - not specific objects)

- * Where it is being moved to
- * What is necessary to prepare the new space
- * What needs to be done to the collection to prepare it for the move
- * What are the resources available to do the project (personnel, in-kind services and money)
- * If this an in-house move or if professional movers are required
- * What the time constraints are

When the Team answers these basic questions various move plans can be proposed, discussed, and revised.

As the planning discussions proceed, numerous other issues also need to be resolved. Will the new space be ready as planned? What happens if it is not ready? What type of object control will be instituted during the packing and moving? Who determined the packing supplies needed and who purchases them? Who does the packing? Who determines the floor plan of the new space? If professional movers are hired how will they be chosen? Who will be working with them during the various stages of the project?

Preparing a written schedule of the move and indicating responsibilities of the Move Team will help everyone feel the project to be under control. Just like the budget, this plan needs to be periodically updated as the schedule or staff changes. The DHD decided to move various parts of the collection in phases, allowing several weeks in between moves for staff to recuperate and catch up on their other projects. The written schedule helped them remember when they were needed and what they were responsible for.

It is also important to develop a floor plan for the placement of objects in the new space in as much detail as possible: aisles need to be labeled, shelves prepared, and

spaces marked off on the floor for large objects. Make sure there are lots of copies of the floor plan available. When moving a grand piano the last statement a mover wants to hear is " Now where does this go?" Prior to the DHD move the Social History Curator measured each piece of furniture and knew exactly where she wanted objects to be placed. This detail-oriented pre-planning helped convince the move crew we were prepared for the project, and it kept reshuffling of objects to a minimum.

During the course of the project, the entire staff of the institution needs to understand and feel part of the move. Occasional updates with staff, including clerical and maintenance, will help avoid impatience and misunderstandings. These sessions don't have to go into detail but should include the purpose of the project, its size and scope, ultimate objective, and a progress report. Short tours of the new space will also help staff feel involved in the project.

Clearing up Old Problems

Very often institutions will feel it is necessary to reconcile old registration problems prior to the move. The DHD tried this and for months the staff spent two days a week trying to track down objects with missing numbers or incomplete accession information. We accomplished a great deal, but unfortunately we underestimated the time and staff needed to finish the job. In the end we packed objects without completing the registration process. *Don't expect to accomplish in a few months what had been left undone for years.* Set up reasonable goals and prepare a fall back plan if you don't make it.

Professional Moving Companies

Early in the planning stages the DHD decided that a professional moving company was essential to the project. Determining which moving company to use is in itself a major project. Once the DHD Move Team was comfortable with the basic logistics of the move, area moving companies were notified of the project and were invited to an informational meeting. This included a review of the overall project, a tour of the buildings and collections involved, a basic review of the bid process and a question/answer session.

A bid packet was developed and given to interested companies. It included: terms and conditions of the move, method of bidding, determination of award and payment, bid form, questionnaire, move schedule, summary of the move, and guidelines for supplies and materials. The questionnaire asked for information from the company regarding the following:

- * Employee training
- * Employee background and experience
- * History of company
- * Particular expertise and experience that would enable them to handle a move of this nature
- * Equipment available
- * Flexibility of company to meet museum timing
- * Willingness to follow special museum directives when handling certain types of objects
- * Insurance and bonding information
- * Loss rate for the past three years

Based on the results of the questionnaire and the bids submitted, several members of the Team visited five moving companies and personally interviewed company personnel. DHD staff felt important

information would be gathered by visiting the company's home base and observing the condition of their equipment, the attitude of company personnel to our unique situation, and the attitude of company personnel to each other. The Team made their recommendation for awarding the contract based on the bids, questionnaires, and interviews.

Since this move would (in our minds) be very different from a household move, there were special requirements written into the contract. Examples of these are:

- * The Project Manager (or designated representative) must approve all aspects of the project including: packing techniques, materials, handling techniques, schedules, the pace of the move and the path of egress.
- * No items would be stacked in trucks unless boxed and then only with permission.
- * Due to inclement weather the Project Manager reserves the right to cancel and reschedule the move.
- * The contractor provides all special equipment such as: trucks with air ride-air shocks, walk boards, ramps, etc.
- * There must be a designated work crew from the moving company and any changes of personnel must be approved by the Project Manager. There must be one supervisor for every four movers.
- * The museum provides ID badges for the moving crew. (This suggestion came from our security staff.)

Once the contract was awarded the Team found it helpful to meet with a representative of the moving company prior to each phase of the move. Movers were then prepared to bring special equipment or deal with spaces involving difficult access. It was also useful to include maintenance staff in

these walk-throughs. They assisted with doors that had to be removed from frames, blocking off elevators, or rescheduling additional maintenance personnel to assist us.

Insurance

Two important questions need to be addressed regarding insurance. First, discuss with the move company the type and amount of insurance normally carried for a move. In a household move, insurance claims on damaged objects are often based on the weight of an object. Knowing this, how much insurance could you claim if a rare experimental light bulb was broken in transit?

Second, check with the moving company regarding insurance coverage of objects not packed by their staff. If an object packed by museum staff breaks during transit who is responsible? Is it the museum staff member who didn't pack it well or the mover who didn't place it properly in the truck? Consulting with the museum's legal division may be necessary to assure proper coverage.

D-Day

If you have prepared carefully and if you trust the moving company you have hired, this doesn't have to be the worst day of your life. When professional movers are acknowledged for their experience and respected by the museum staff, many problems can be resolved without resorting to dueling pistols.

Movers are usually prepared to work in all kinds of places and unusual conditions. Their requests are simple: a project manager that knows what is going on and communicates that information well, staff on hand to direct without being dictators, a respect for their breaks and lunch hour, and

acknowledgement of a job well done. (Personally, I also suggest lots of coffee, doughnuts and ice water.)

Museum staff also need care and feeding during this project. Some museum staff can become agitated watching movers pick up objects using methods other than "museum accepted" practices. One way to avoid this problem is to work with the moving company to organize a session where museum staff and movers share information without lecturing each other. Both groups have valuable insights and when they are combined they make an unbeatable team. Unfortunately, if egos and personal territory become involved, a normal eight hour day can feel like eternity.

The DHD move involved everything from architectural pieces to industrial equipment, toy trains to medical furniture, map and plan drawers with posters inside to a native American Indian collection and from a costume collection to normal office furniture. Some of the items staff preferred to pack themselves. Other items were left to the moving crew. There are pros and cons to each approach.

Professional movers are fast and usually extremely careful. However, it is important to remember they don't understand the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of a museum collection. Unless items are divided up or well labeled prior to their arrival, movers may fill boxes with whatever objects are at hand. That means inventory will be difficult and parts of the same object may be separated.

Staff have a better chance of keeping inventory under control if they do the

packing. However, they don't pack and move collections for a living and are therefore not as fast or efficient as movers. It is also easier for staff to get sidetracked by telephone calls and meetings.

The Costume Collection

The DHD Costume Collection of approximately 30,000 objects was probably the most difficult to prepare and took weeks to pack. Finances prevented us from having the collection packed by professionals and volunteers were called in to the rescue. Simple packing instructions were drawn up for the various types of objects, mini-training sessions were held and volunteers were assigned specific segments of the collection. Whenever possible, acid-free materials were used, but as money became tight and moving day came closer, being practical and getting the job done ruled the day.

It was decided to keep the collections organized only by type of object and by decade. Staff felt once the objects were in the new space they could fine-tune the reorganization at a later date rather than use the expensive time of the movers. As an example, all the shoes from the same decade were packed together and when moved to the new storage area, they were placed close together on the shelves but not necessarily in final order. Other ideas used to prepare the costume collection for the move include the following:

- * Fans were removed from drawers, closed, wrapped in tissue, labeled and placed in medium sized boxes. An inventory was listed on the outside of each box.
- * Shoes were wrapped in tissue and placed in shoe boxes. Accession numbers and dates were listed on the outside of the box.

Individual boxes were then placed in bigger boxes for ease of handling.

- * Hats were individually wrapped in tissue. When possible, boxes were filled with two layers of hats from the same decade: flat ones on the bottom and bubble shaped or those with ornamentation on top. Accession numbers and dates were listed on the outside of the boxes.

- * Boxed garments were wrapped on the outside with a stretch wrap; this kept the boxes from falling open yet didn't compromise the acid free boxes with tape. The stretch wrap was removed shortly after the move. Accession numbers and dates were listed on the outside.

- * Jewelry and miscellaneous personal accessories were wrapped separately and placed in small boxes with accession numbers on the outside. Small boxes were then placed in bigger boxes for ease in handling.

The biggest challenge for the Costume Collection involved the hanging garments. There were over 125 commercial rolling racks of garments in the collection and it was impossible to remove the garments from the hangers, pack, move, and rehang them in the new space. There was minimal money involved available for additional boxes, tissue or storage shelves as well the garments would have to remain on rolling racks in the new storage space. With this knowledge the collection was moved on the racks using the following precautions:

- * Unstable garments were removed and boxed.
- * Using large sheets of muslin, "tents" were created over, under and around the entire rack of garments. If a garment fell off the hanger during the move it was caught in the "tent".
- * The muslin was pulled snug, but not overly tight and secured to itself with large safety

pins. If the garments swayed during the move, the entire rack swayed as one piece and garments did not rub against each other. * Each rack was marked to indicate to staff and the movers what was inside and where it belonged on the floor plan.

Conclusion

This article is not meant to be the definitive "how to" book on packing and moving museum collections. It merely contains comments and a few suggestions that may make life a little easier for institutions facing a move. The DHD does not take credit for all of the suggestions and ideas as many of them were born out of conversations with individuals from other institutions who were more than happy to share their war stories.

This article is a very brief synopsis of a very long three year project. Fortunately, the DHD move was completed with minimal difficulty and approximately 100,000 objects were moved at a cost of \$65,000 (US) excluding staff time. A staff log was not kept but estimates run at 180 staff days or 30 days for 6 staff members. It is important to note this does not include staff time needed to unpack objects once they were delivered to the new facility. Shortly after the move the DHD incurred major staff lay-offs and work in the collection dropped to a minimum. Unpacking is now being completed as-needed. This has made it difficult to assess objects damaged in the move, however, as of this writing approximately 80% of the collection has been unpacked and less than 10 objects have been involved in insurance claims.

In retrospect, as Project Manager, I

consider it a very successful move for two reasons. First, the collection is now housed in clean, environmentally stable, secure facilities. Second, the move was completed with minimal damage to the objects, within the time frame and budget initially established. This project was by no means without its problems: tempers flared, one of the moving trucks spent a morning stuck in the mud and unexpected thunderstorms ruined the best laid plans. I can't speak for the rest of the DHD staff, but as for me, if I'm ever involved in a move of this size and scope again my first phone call will be to buy stock in pharmaceutical companies who specialize in antacids.

Vicky Kruckeberg
Chief Curator of Museum Programs
Detroit Historical Department
Detroit, Michigan

REMOVING IRON-ON INTERFACING FROM A SILK DRESS

Iron-on interfacing had been used in an attempt to reinforce fragile areas of a silk dress. Unfortunately, the interfacing was too stiff and heavy, and caused the silk fabric to tear around the patches. To prevent further degradation of the silk dress, the interfacing patches were removed during treatment at the Textile Laboratory of the Canadian Conservation Institute. The method that was used to remove the interfacing is explained to

serve as a guide to other conservators who may encounter a similar situation.

Klondike Kate's Dress

The beaded dress, which was worn by Klondike Kate, belongs to the Dawson City Historical Society. Its cut and shape is in the style of the late 1920s. However, pictures of Klondike Kate wearing the dress date from a later period, probably the early 1940s. The rhinestone jewelry at the neckline and at the seam that joins the upper and lower skirts are a later addition.

The bodice and skirt of the dress are made of silk crepe, and the underdress is made of rayon. The bodice is sewn to the underdress at the armholes and at the neckline. The bodice extends to hip level and covers part of the upper skirt. The skirt is sewn to the underdress at bust level and is made in two parts: an upper and a lower skirt. The upper skirt appears to be made of silk that is a slightly different colour from that of the silk used for the bodice and the lower skirt. This difference suggests that the upper skirt may have been added after the dress was made to lengthen it according to the fashion of the day.

Overall, the silk is very fragile. The upper skirt area, where the iron-on interfacing patches were applied, is the most damaged. It is possible that the weight of the rhinestone bracelets and buttons put too much stress on the silk crepe and tore it. Previous attempts to mend the holes by pulling the fabric and stitching it together or by applying iron-on interfacing increased the stress on the weak fabric and caused further damage to the dress. These repairs caused vertical splits in the silk along the edges of the interfacing, water

stains, severe degradation of the silk due to heat, and accumulation of dirt on the sticky surface of the interfacing.

Removing the Iron-On Interfacing

A sample of the interfacing adhesive was analyzed by the Analytical Research Services Division of CCI. The adhesive was identified as a polyamide, some of which are used as hot-melt adhesives. Of the solvents suggested for removing the interfacing, ethanol was chosen. The interfacing was removed using the following procedure.

Colour-matched Stabiltex panels were sewn to the right side of the front and back of the dress to act as a support for the silk crepe during the removal of the interfacing. These panels were sewn at the top (along the seam that joins the upper skirt to the underdress) and at the bottom (along the seam that joins the upper and lower skirts), leaving the sides open to allow access to the right side of the silk crepe.

The dress was turned inside out to gain direct access to the interfacing.

Mylar and blotting paper were placed under the surface that was being worked on to protect the surrounding area.

A cotton swab impregnated with ethanol was gently rolled over a small section of the interfacing. Depending on the strength of the bond between the interfacing and the silk--which was very uneven--the solvent took 30 seconds to one minute to soften the adhesive. In some areas, more solvent had to be applied. Once the adhesive softened, the interfacing was gently pulled away from the silk crepe. Small pieces of the interfacing

were cut out of larger patches as they were pulled away from the silk to prevent them from re-adhering to the silk.

Once all the patches were removed, the silk underwent a more thorough cleaning with the solvent to remove any remaining adhesive. In some places, however, the silk was severely damaged from the heat used to apply the interfacing. In these areas, the adhesive had totally impregnated the fabric and was impossible to remove without fibre loss.

Mending stitches from a previous repair were not removed to avoid further loss of silk fragments.

Realigning Silk Fragments

The parts of the dress that had been covered with interfacing were distorted and had curly edges. The silk fragments were realigned and flattened according to the following procedure.

A small padded board, a piece of Mylar, and a sheet of blotting paper were placed under each area while it was being worked on. The fragments were soaked with ethanol and then were realigned. A sheet of blotting paper and a light plexiglass weight were placed on top of the silk while it dried. Once it was dry, the silk remained flat.

The silk was pinned to a Stabiltex panel on the outside front of the dress. Another layer of white Stabiltex was applied to the inside front and back of the dress.

Vertical and horizontal rows of running stitches were made to keep the fragment temporarily in place between the

two layers of Stabiltex.

The Stabiltex panels were sewn at the top and bottom and then along the sides.

The dress was then turned right side out. The fragments underwent a final realignment and were sewn into place with running stitches that followed the outlines of the holes or splits. The sides of the Stabiltex panels were then sewn closed.

Ester Methé
Assistant Conservator
Canadian Conservation Institute
Ottawa, Ontario

HOW TO HANDLE DAYLIGHT AND ULTRAVIOLET RAYS IN A MUSEUM

Most custodians know how significant climatic conditions are for the objects in their museum and for a restoration to be successful in the long run. The two most important factors are humidity and light.

In the Bernese Historical Museum, light had been the subject of thorough investigation, specifically with a view to find aesthetically satisfactory solutions.

Daylight has been completely excluded from the two big galleries on the second floor, where the Burgundian tapestries are exhibited, by covering up closed windows and insulating the entire wall. In this way, we not only gained a lot of space but also prevented the UV rays and daylight (lux) from penetrating the rooms. The artificial



fig.1

light is well below the 50 lux limit which is recommended by experts. Additional protective layers on the lamps and the glass doors eliminate any remaining UV rays.

(fig.1)

A different method has been applied in the "salon de Pourtales" with its annexes and in the hall with the "Three Tables". Opalescent plexiglass has been placed into all the double glass windows in order to keep out the UV rays, and dioramas of the Bernese countryside have been inserted which convey a pleasant panorama and a background to the exhibits.

(fig.2)

In the "Liturgical Vestments Hall", a new wall has been put up with artificially illuminated, painted glass panels.

Not all windows can and should be eliminated. A museum from which it would be impossible to see out of the windows would give the impression of a prison. In the hall of the "city of Berne" and the "Stubengang" (old rooms), the window panes have been covered with tinted plexiglass. The visitor does not notice the subtle difference and yet the UV rays are kept out and the light penetration is less than 20%. (fig.3)

Further methods of keeping excess light out have been examined.

Curtains:

Four different fabrics have been tested, (three cotton and one silk). The results show that only a densely woven, non-transparent fabric



fig.2

is suitable (which covers the whole window without any opening where light could penetrate).

Direct protection of the windows with UV leaves:

Three tests were made with one transparent and two tinted leaves. The results show that UV rays are kept out but a relatively large amount of daylight penetrates. The method works for rooms where the light situation is correct and only UV rays have to be kept out.

Mounting of additional tinted plexiglass in the existing windows:

Seven tests with different colouring and tinting of the glass have been made. The results show that in all seven tests the UV

values were low, but only dark tinting keeps the light penetration below 15-20%. On bright, sunny days too much light will still come through, but the deteriorating process would be considerably slower, and the ambiance of the room with its view through the windows would be preserved.

As mentioned above, dark tinting (PMMA 3mm, GS grau 838, Firma Westiform, Freiburgstr. 596 CH-3172 Niederwangen - Bern) has been used in the hall of the "City of Berne" and the "Stubengang" without the visitor noticing any difference in the light, so that this is certainly a solution which can be taken into consideration.

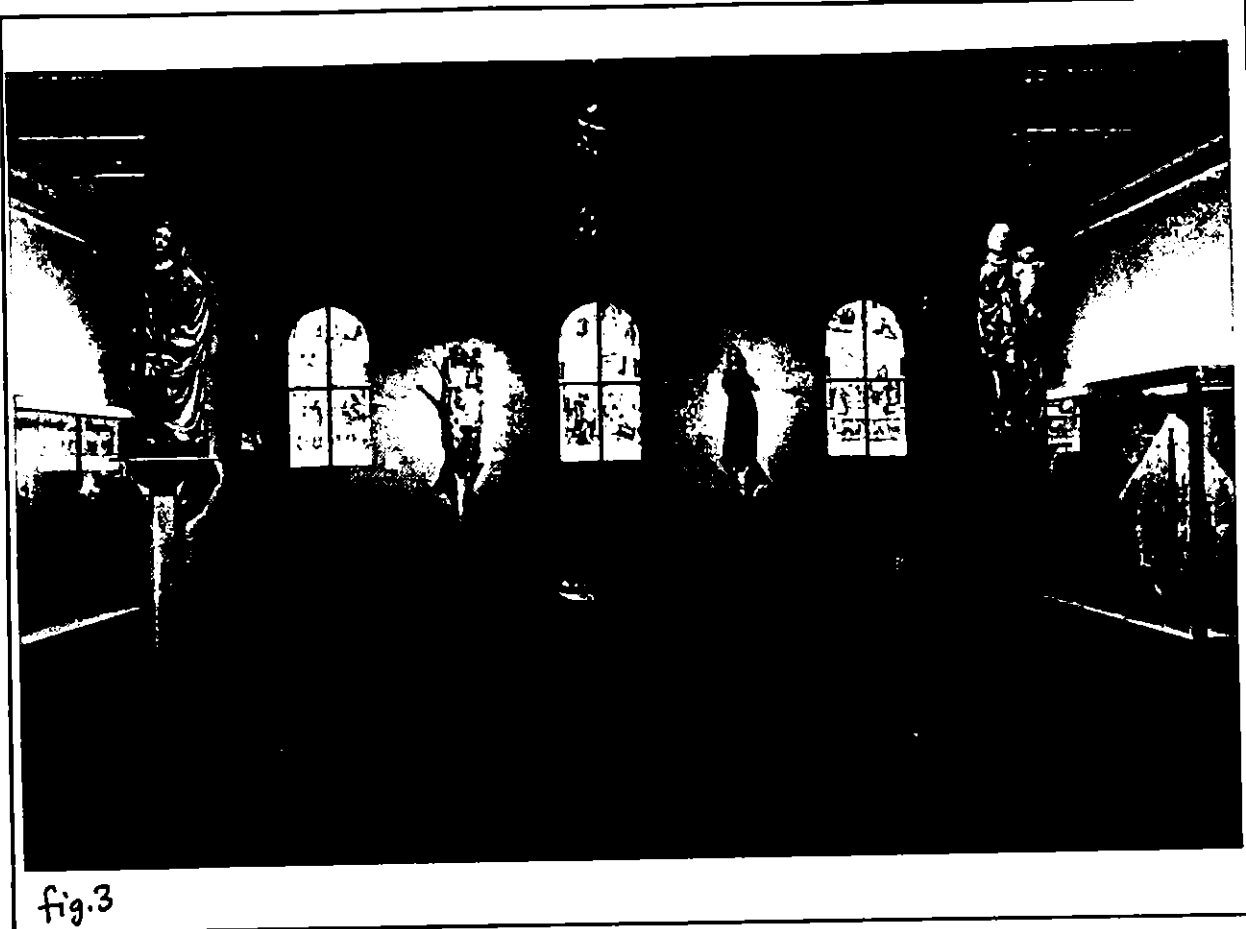


fig.3

We are interested in other possibilities and new ideas in this field and are very much looking forward to receiving additional information.

Karen Christie
Textile Conservator
Bernese Historical Museum
Berne, Switzerland

LIGHT TRANSMISSION TESTS

Cotton, white, ca. 14 x 20 thr/cm
Lux : 60% UV : 82%
Cotton, white, ca. 24 x 24 thr/cm
Lux : 27% UV : 16%

Cotton, brown, ca. 22 x22 thr/cm
Lux : 5% UV : 82%
Silk, blue, ca. 40x40 thr/cm
Lux : 2% UV : 29%

UV leaves,
Company W. Richner AG
Vorstand 23
CH-5722 Grächen

RTLW 69.894-SR transparent
Lux : 100% UV : 4%
RSLWX 66.484-SR tinted (light grey)
Lux : 61% UV : 7%
RSLWX 66.364-SR tinted (dark grey)
Lux : 26% UV : 4%

Tinted plexiglass, 3 mm
 Company Westiform
 Freiburgstrasse 596
 CH-3172 Niederwangen-Bern

PMMA GS 625 Blue
 Lux : 56% UV : 16%
 PMMA GS 777 green
 Lux : 70% UV : 10%
 PMMA GS 804 umbra
 Lux : 39% UV : 12%
 PMMA GS 808 umbra
 Lux : 19% UV : 8%
 PMMA GS 400 brown
 Lux : 6% UV : 7%
 PMMA GS 838 grey
 Lux : 14% UV : 13%*
 PMMA GS 837 grey
 Lux : 8% UV : 0%

* Every result under 60 $\mu\text{W}/\text{Im}$, (27%) is accepted as good for our measure monitor type, (Elsec UV monitor type 762). Even if brown 400, and grey 837 give better results than grey 838, we have decided to use this one because of its neutral colour.

Editors note:

Plexiglass, regular, tinted or UV is available from any plastics company listed in your telephone book.

GOLD THREADS

Over the last year I have been gathering information about the manufacture of military lace. One of the contacts I made is Mr. W. S. Kentish Barnes, the managing director of Benton & Johnson Ltd., located in London, England. The letterhead from Benton & Johnson Ltd. describes the company as "Gold & Silver Wire Drawers, Manufacturers of Gold and Silver Thread, Plate, Lace, Cord, Braid and all Embroidery Materials and Masonic Regalia." It was a fortuitous contact as Mr. Kentish Barnes was in the process of writing a series of articles for specialist magazines and very generously forwarded his drafts. I was delighted with the information and obtained permission to share it with the readership of the Textile Conservation Newsletter. There are three short articles and hopefully more to come. I hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

Benton and Johnson Ltd. is a very old company and has its origins in the eighteenth century. Although the modern association with Stephen Simpson Ltd. dates from 1959, it is but a repetition of a former association. Over a hundred years previously the founder of Stephen Simpson had formed a partnership with a Henry William Johnson, a fine wire drawer in London. This arrangement worked well for many years with Mr. Johnson supplying the fine gold plated wires needed for the thread spinning capacity of Simpson's. In time the partnership lapsed and Stephen Simpson developed their own wire drawing capability, commenced weaving military laces, and producing hand embroidery. It was the need for all the different types of metallic materials which gave rise to the

specialized knowledge that Benton and Johnson Ltd. have nurtured to the present day. Because these fine threads are used for adornment on old costumes and regalia, we attempt to copy existing materials very closely, so that if repair work is necessary, they will blend with the original.

Nowadays ingenious pieces of machinery are used to speed up production processes, but much hand work and control are still necessary. Indeed, some of the large "purls" are still made by hand using simple equipment that would be recognizable to a seventeenth-century craftsman. However, the present craft owes much to the inventive genius of the founder of Stephen Simpson. Early in the last century a chronometer and watchmaker of Chorley Lancashire was acquainted with two French ladies who had settled in the district. They made their living by flattening gold plate for the Lancashire cotton manufacturers to weave into the headings of cotton cloths. Their flattening rollers required polishing and repairs from time to time, for which Mr. Issac Simpson possessed the necessary tools for this purpose. After a time he struck upon the idea of flattening the gold plate himself. He obtained a pair of rollers from a new and up and coming firm in Germany called "Krupp" of Essen. He made a machine to drive the rollers and started to flatten the gold wires on his own account. After a time one of his customers asked if he could make a machine to spin gold thread. He experimented for quite some time but eventually was successful and in 1853 patented the machine. The first machines were then made by a nephew in Mansfield. As a result this led to an increased demand for gold wire, and the partnership with Mr. Johnson. The technical foundations had been laid to bring an ancient

craft into the new industrial age.

ALL ABOUT GOLD THREADS

The term "Gold Thread" has come to be understood as the whole family of metallic and non-metallic embroidery threads, whether they consist of purls, passings, check threads or the "scrambled egg" around high ranking officers hats! Of course a great deal has been written about their past uses and illustrated with abundant historical examples. Today the embroiderer can copy or improve upon all the techniques practiced throughout history. However as embroidery is essentially a creative activity, a sound knowledge of the constituent materials is bound to enhance the finished results. As a gold thread manufacturer, I am constantly surprised when talking to embroiderers how little is actually known and understood about the nature, range, and variety of materials available. It is therefore my aim to explain something about the development of these materials.

In its basic form gold thread is a simple combination. It consists of a flattened wire lapped around a core body of either silk, cotton or man-made fibre. Apart from just flattened strips of gold, it is the oldest form of material that has been used to adorn clothing, portray rank, or embellish state and domestic fabrics. Originally the lapping process must have been done somehow by hand, probably utilizing a simple mechanism, such as that used on a rope walk. The process would have been painstakingly long and consequently difficult to produce thread in any great quantity. As gold is a rare metal the earliest applications were confined to the almost exclusive adornment of an aristocratic elite.

From remaining fragments, we know metallic embroidery manufacture survived the dark ages and threads were made in the early medieval period. Our Anglo Saxon forbears were famous for their embroideries and needlework, such as the Bayeaux tapestry. How the threads were actually made is now only guesswork. We know the craftsmen were very skilled but no record of machinery or technical know-how has survived.

The first quantum leap came around the year 1300 when a mechanical wire drawing machine was invented in Germany. The device was water powered and its details were kept a close secret for some time. Eventually this knowledge became more widespread and its use spread across western Europe.

The wires were drawn through a series of draw plates, drilled with ever decreasing sizes of aperture. It was the improvement of this device coupled with water power which allowed a wire drawing industry to develop. Soft metals such as gold, silver and copper, would have been the obvious choices initially. They are highly malleable and most importantly they have good ductility. When drawing wire, the nature of the hole through which it passes has to be considered. The shape of the entry and exit are very important as is the degree of polish within the hole itself. In order to draw gold without tearing away a proportion of its top surface, the profile of the drawhole must therefore be exact. Severe problems must have been encountered in the very earliest attempt. In those days machine tools did not exist and the only lathes would have been similar to the pole lathe, such as the "bodgers"¹ used for turning chair legs.

By the time of Queen Elizabeth I, draw plates had been developed to a degree of refinement which allowed a modern composite gold-plated silver wire to be manufactured. Indeed, it was the controls imposed upon the use of gold which must have spurred on this "cheaper" alternative. Recent analysis from a large piece of gold embroidery made in the late seventeenth century revealed that gold wires were constructed in the same form then as now.

Much of the machinery in use three hundred years ago would have been very basic. Although the first atmospheric steam engines were developed around this time, their technology could barely pump water, let alone drive small, delicate machinery. The workers therefore had to rely on water, wind or - whip! - for the motive power. Even today the very delicate nature of the materials still pose problems in mechanical manufacture. Indeed all the machinery used for production has either been specially made or significantly adapted.

After drawing the wires to the required diameter the next process requires them to be either flattened or "bruised", the latter being a state whereby the round wire is only partially shaped. In order to flatten gold wires the quality of the steel rollers must be of a very high standard. The steel is polished to a mirror finish and must be free of surface pitting. Even a pit measuring a couple of thousandths of an inch across can be enough to pierce and break a fine gold wire. To achieve such molecular excellence requires steel making of the highest order. Certainly such rollers were being made by the time of the Napoleonic wars. The early firm of "Krupp" in Essen made such rollers in the 1820's, and these were imported to

Lancashire by Issac Simpson. This remarkable man, who started life as a chronometer maker, patented the first iron framed gold thread spinning machine. The device had twenty five heads and was driven by a steam engine. It was a significant improvement in the manufacture of gold thread. Ironically the initial demand for its output was not for embroidery threads. The fine thread was woven into the headings of cotton cloth for the Lancashire industry. As a result the considerable technical innovations achieved by Isaac Simpson ensured an ancient craft a place in modern times.

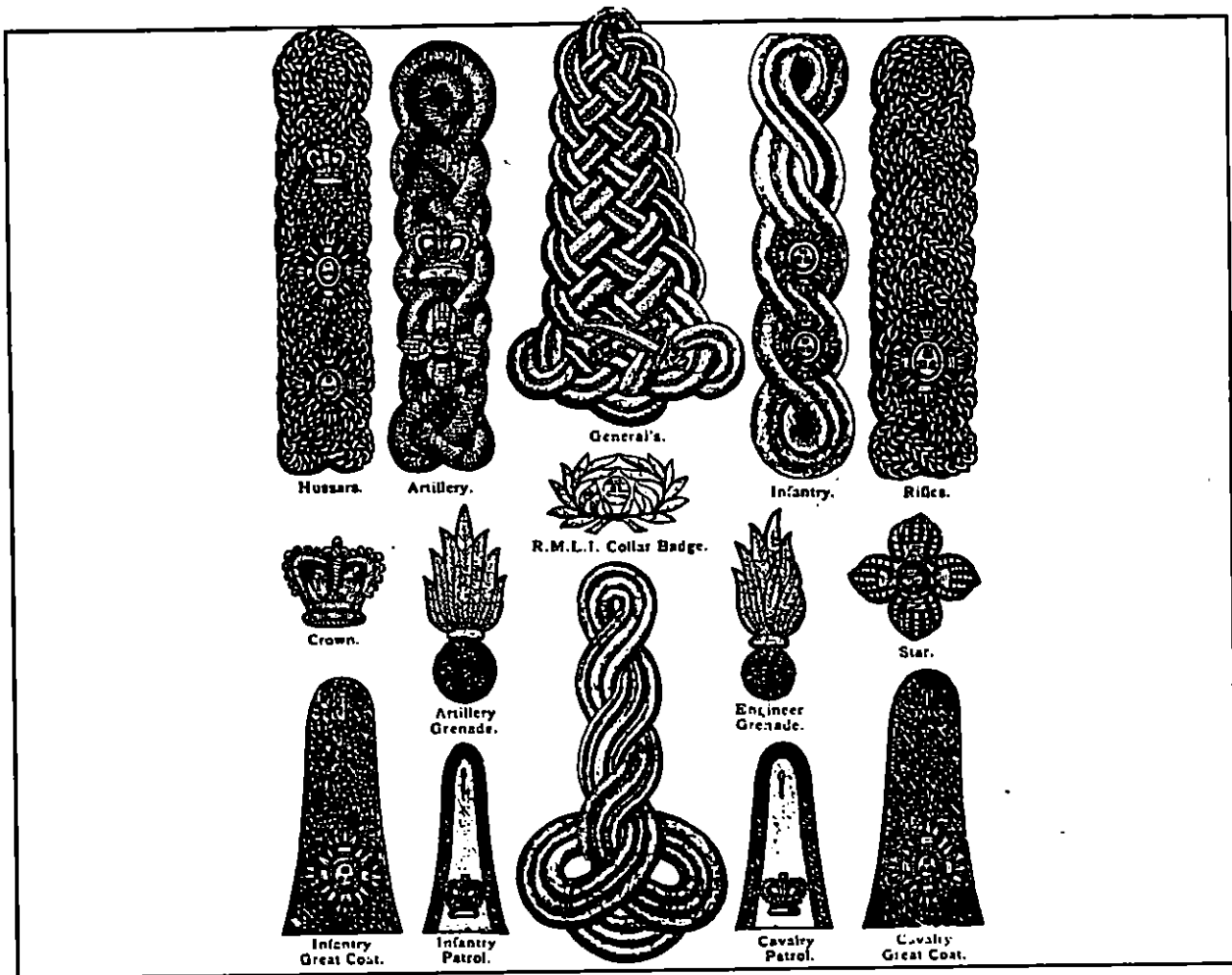
PURLS AND PLATE

Certainly the advent of machinery made it possible to produce more and increase the variety of types of gold thread. The ornate uniforms of the nineteenth century made lavish use of all metallic materials such as "Purls", "Pearl Purls" and "broadplate". Purl in its simplest form is a perfectly round wire that is coiled up tightly by a needle spinning at high speed. This produces a long snake-like coil which is subsequently cut into short lengths, threaded with a suitable yarn, and stitched into position. As any metallic embroiderer knows, the knack lies in cutting the purl to just the right length for the task in hand. "Rough Purl", when made correctly is anything but rough. In fact it is important that the wire is as round as possible in order to give a matte appearance. This apparent contradiction of its name makes sense when it is compared with "smooth purl". Smooth purl is made by "bruising" the wire so that it has a flat top and bottom. If the wire is flattened too excessively it grips the spinning needle during the purling operation too tightly and will not form the necessary snake-

like purl coil. A variation of smooth purl is "bright check purl". Again the wire for this is "bruised". However it is coiled up, not on a round needle, but on a three cornered needle which produces the distinctive "check" appearance. It is a tricky material to make as the special tooling has to be just the right shape to form and push the material off the needle in a continuously smooth flowing operation. The pattern of the check can be controlled by the tension fingers through which the incoming "bruised" wire arrives at the point of purl.

Before the advent of the mechanical purling frame, the operation was done by hand using a spinning wheel which drove a long parallel needle. The wire was attached to the free end of the needle where there was a small notch to give the necessary initial grip. As the wheel was turned with the right hand, the left hand guided the wire up the length of the needle, keeping a steady tension. On reaching the other end the wire was cut, and with a deft stroking movement of the forefinger of the left hand, the tension in the purlled wire was then released, causing it to expand and loosen along the length of the spindle. The anchor point at the start could then be cut and the finished purl slid off the needle. Like many an art, this one takes considerable practice in order that the purl finishes up with uniform coiling. How we know about this in such detail is that the larger purls known as "Bright Bullions" are still made like this today!

"Pearl Purl" manufacture requires more processes than simple purling. Whereas purls are used to embroider the body or give the correct shape to a piece of metallic work, Pearl Purl's prime function is to edge or provide a dividing line or "backbone" to the



design. In essence it is a "Jumbo" purl, but unlike a larger bullion it is made with a wire of much greater diameter. This makes it, therefore, a heavier material altogether. The stages of manufacture are as follows. Firstly the gold wire is drawn to the correct diameter for the particular size required. This wire is then flattened into a stout ribbon. At this point the ribbon is passed through another diamond die with a "forming end". As both the former and the ribbon are drawn through, the flattened wire wraps itself around the form and forms a horseshoe shape. This shape is known as a "bead". If all goes to

the plan the outside edge of the bead will have a nice convex shape. When the bead is purred up in the final process, it is the regularity of this convex shape which makes or mars a good "Pearl Purl". A relatively unknown material called "Lizerine" is a halfway stage in the making of Pearl Purl. After the flattening operation, the stout ribbon is purred up instead of being beaded. This makes the "Smooth" shiny version of the "Pearl Purls". As there is little call for it, it is usually only made in the size SUPER. Samples are available on request. Originally the final process for "Pearl Purls" and

"Lizerine" was done in the same way as the larger bullion purls, a time consuming task. About thirty years ago an ingenious machine was designed and built to do this task mechanically. It has been very successful and, intriguingly, its exact design is kept a closely guarded secret.

Broad plate is perhaps one of the most difficult materials with which to embroider. It is also a difficult substance to make correctly. A very special pair of rollers are employed which can withstand enormous pressure. The wire cannot be flattened in one pass. It has to go through the rollers many times and the difficulty is in keeping the plate from developing a corkscrew dimension. Towards the end of the operation, more often than not, the rollers have to be stripped down and polished in order to clean them and maintain a high finish on the broadplate. The end result is certainly one of the most attractive materials for embroidery, but it requires great skill and patience to achieve all this. Although broad plate is used "ungarnished", as an embroidery material, it is also "whipped" as an additional variation. When the broad plate is complete, or indeed a plate of narrower proportions, the material is then lapped with either a fine wire or fine thread. This is done in a slow moving spinning frame. The end result produces a subtle pattern which is required in certain applications, and which looks very attractive.

THE MANY SHAPES OF GOLD THREAD

Gold threads come in all shapes and sizes. Just as the all metallic types of embroidery material have different finishes, in order to produce contract, shape, and form, actual gold thread is made in a great variety

of types too. This allows the embroiderer the scope with which to achieve the correct or desired subtleties in any particular design.

At this point it is necessary to explain the process of tambouring and what is meant by a Tambour thread. When a thread is "lapped" or spun a great deal of kick or twist can be imparted. For some types of thread this feature is used to advantage in subsequent stages of manufacture. However where a thread has to be used on its own, like a sewing cotton, this excess has to be removed. This is achieved by rotating a bobbin of completed thread at high speed, in the opposite direction to which it was spun. At the same time the thread is being pulled onto another bobbin called a receiver. The exact amount of twist to be removed is regulated mechanically so that the finished thread hangs "lank". This thread is known in the craft as "Tambour". Tambours are quite fine threads and are invaluable as couching materials or for very fine embellishment to an intricate design.

It must be admitted that most threads, twists etc. have this tambour feature otherwise they would be impossible to work with. Yet the term Tambour is only applied, in the craft, to a particular range of threads that are smaller than passing threads. These are used principally for peaks on service headgear.

Passing thread gets its name from the winding action as a thread is "passed" around the former or core which is subsequently stitched onto the peak of a service hat. This thread is much stronger and is made with a heavier wire than the Tambour types. Originally the core was always a twisted silk body with the "residual kick" left in. When

spun, the thread would be made the opposite to this "kick" with the result that the finished thread would hang "lank". As can be readily appreciated it is another way of achieving this essential Tambour feature. Because silk is so expensive, alternative ways of making passing body are utilized today. However silk is still used on occasion and it certainly produces a finish that is second to none. There are three standard sizes of smooth passing - Nos 4,5, and 6. Larger sizes can be made but the requirement is not frequent. A slight deviation to smooth passing is a type known as wavy passing. This is where the passing body contains a couple of built in "rogue ends". They pull the smooth stranding slightly out of shape so that when the thread is spun a slight pattern or flecking appears. Sometimes smooth passing body decides to go rogue all by itself so it ends by being used as a wavy passing. Waste not want not!

Although there are still more gold threads to talk about it might be of interest to explain something about the sort of machine which actually produces this material. The flattening process, which prepares the wire for spinning, has already been described. The spinning frame itself is technically a multiheaded machine that laps the flattened wire upon a core body. The core travels from the rear of the machine through a "gate" which is weighted to provide the correct tension. Guide wheels then align the core so that it passes through a pipe to the point of spin. The flattened wire, contained upon a bobbin called a quill, is located on a hollow mandrel through which the core passes. The flattened tape of wire is looped over a fly spring which rotates in a planetary motion with the spinning mandrel, and is then brought to bear upon the core as it emerges

from the hollow spindle. The fly spring's function is to tension the flattened plate so that it lies smoothly on the core. The speed of travel of this core can be altered minutely to give the desired coverage. The finished thread is then temporarily stored on a bobbin, known as a receiver. The control of this sort of machine is a very skilled job. Each of the spinning heads functioning varies to a greater or less extent and the wire plate can also vary in its width and texture. This means that monitoring and adjustment are very necessary to produce uniform threads.

Helen Holt, Conservator
Dress & Insignia
Canadian War Museum
Ottawa, Ontario

BLANCHE PAYNE EASTERN EUROPEAN COSTUME COLLECTION REUNITED

The Museum of History and Industry in Seattle has generously transferred the Eastern European costumes given to the museum by Blanche Payne in 1971 to the Henry Art Gallery to reunite the collection. The Henry Art Gallery's Textile Collection includes over 600 Eastern European costumes, including over 300 pieces from five regions of Yugoslavia and from 41 districts and towns.

Blanche Payne was a faculty member at the University of Washington from 1927 to 1966, a prominent costume scholar and author of History of Costume, a classic

classroom textbook on Western dress. Her extended study of Yugoslavian folk costume explored the design, construction and regionalism of these costumes.

In the 1930's, Blanche Payne traveled twice through Eastern Europe, visiting Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia to collect and photograph costume. She could never have predicted the upheaval and destruction occurring there today, nor the importance that her collection and thorough documentation now plays in preserving knowledge of the diverse traditional dress of the communities in the former Yugoslavia.

The collection is now researched, catalogued, and properly stored. Doris Brockway, former faculty member of the University of Washington Hone Economics Department, left a bequest for research of the costume collection. Vilma Matchette was hired by this endowment to research the collection.

Over 1100 photographs (with negatives) of people in costume taken by Miss Payne during her travels have been catalogued and organized by country and village. This visual documentation of the costumes worn in the 1930s provides invaluable information to costume historians. The photographs, negatives, and archival materials are available for study by appointment in Special Collections in the University of Washington Allen Library (FM-25). For more information please contact: Richard Engeman at Special Collections, (206) 543-1929.

For inquiries or access to the costume collection contact: Judy Sourakli, Curator of

Collections at the Henry Art Gallery,
University of Washington
Seattle, WA, 98195

FASHION IN THE COURT OF THE MEDICIS

CONSERVED COSTUMES WORN BY COSIMO I, ELEONORA DI TOLEDO AND THEIR SON DON GARZIA

The exhibition *Fashion in the court of the Medicis* highlights the laborious conservation work accomplished on the costumes worn by Cosimo I de Medici, Eleonora di Toledo and their son Don Garzia, when they were buried at San Lorenzo. The tombs were opened in 1857 and again in 1947. The first time, the tombs were opened under the vigilant eye of the grand Duke, and the remains and costumes were left untouched. Such was not the case after World War II when the mayor of Florence, professor Gaetano Pieraccini wanted to study the remains of these figures and create an ossary. Having scandalized both the press and public opinion with this outrageous project, the mayor of Florence was forced to give up his plans.

Among the costumes found, only those on view were salvaged by the *Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze*. In 1983, the costumes were handed over to the new *Galleria de Costume* with its conservation laboratory, in an attempt to accomplish an almost impossible conservation project. The project was indeed

completed successfully thanks to the support of the Friends of the *Galleria del Costume*, funding from the region of Tuscany, and the Florentine Savings Bank.

From the undescrivable mass of clothing almost reduced to rags, it was possible to recover the elegant suit worn by don Garzia, which is the earliest male costume dating from the Italian Cinquento. Made of Red satin with trunkhose of velvet and satin, the prince's costume had been wore and bore traces of mending on the elbow. His cape of black damask was extremely luxurious, and the quality of the garment is visible although it was not possible to restore it to its original three dimensional state.

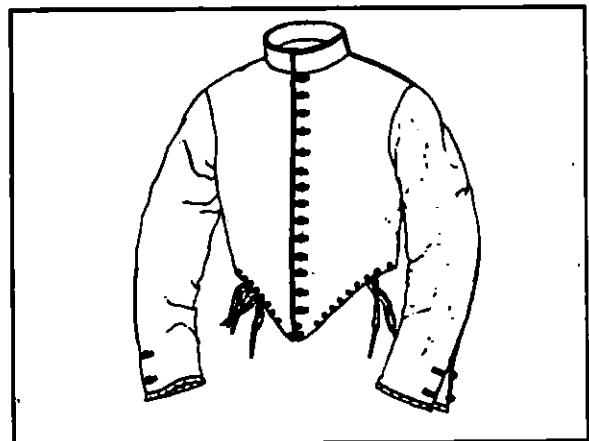
Eleonora's costume (exhibited 1988) and those of Don Garzia and Cosimo enabled conservators and curators to draw new information on the fashions of the period. On view in this exhibition will be Eleonora's reconstructed costume based on the original dimensions and recreated by Janet Arnold, respected scholar in the cut and construction of historic dress. The satin and the passementrie of the copy were woven expressly by hand in order to recreate the richness and the splendor of the original wardrobe of the Duchess of Tuscany.

The garments are those worn by the Medicis during their lifetime and both the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue describe the life of this important family. The catalogue texts (by Stefania Ricci, Giovanni Lazzi, Robert Orsi Landini) highlight life in the court of the young Duke, later Grand Duke, and his wife, who were responsible for the selection of the court's garments and textiles.

An article by Janet Arnold also describes the difficult identification process of the individual costumes accomplished prior to conservation by Mary Westerman Bulgarella in the conservation laboratory of the *Galleria del Costume*. An international team of experts contributed to the production of this catalogue: London's Victoria and Albert Museum, Stockholm's *Historiska Museet*, Genova's *Accademia Linguistica delle Belle Arti*, Florence's *Opificio delle Pietre Dure* and *Centro di Studio sulle Cause di Deperimento e sui Metodi di Conservazione delle Opere d'Arte*. The catalogue is published by Centro Di and the exhibition is on view until the end of the year.

Press release translated from Italian by
Wanda Palma
McCord Museum of Canadian History
Montreal

The catalogue of the Medici costumes (entitled *Moda della corte dei Medici: abiti restaurati di Cosimo, Eleonora e don Garzia*) can be purchased for 30.000 Lire from Centro Di, Piazza de' Mozzi, 1R, 50125 Florence, FAX (55) 2342667, tel. (55) 2342666.



Speculated appearance of Cosimo I's doublet. The buttons are of silk, worked over wooden foundations.

design/drawing
Janet Arnold

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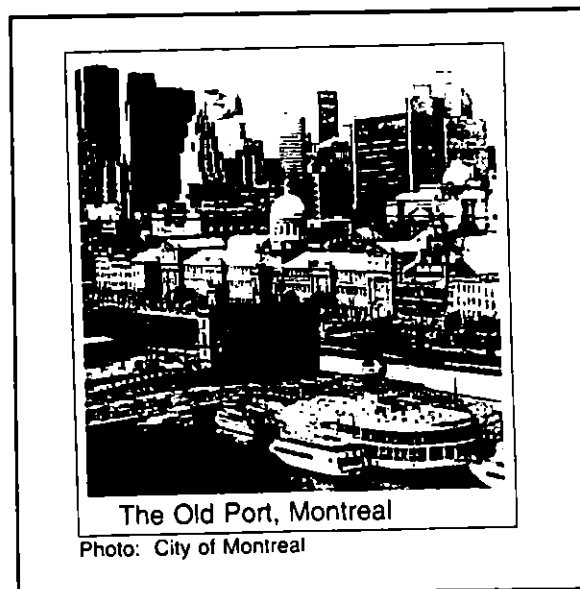
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CONFERENCES

Montreal is the site of the 1994 CSA Symposium: mark June 1-4 on your calendar right now! The topic is Dress Addressed: Costume Across the Disciplines, a review of both traditional and innovative methods in costume-related studies, which promises to stimulate a lot of interest and discussion. The conference program will be available at the beginning of April from the Costume Society of America, 55 Edgewater Drive, P.O. Box 73, Earleville, MD. 21919, U.S.A.



For more information, contact University Products, Inc., 517 Main Street, P.O. Box 101, Holyoke, Massachusetts 01041-0101, (413) 532-3372, 1 (800) 628-1912, fax 1 (800) 532-9281.



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Editors : Eva Burnham
Cynthia Cooper
Ruth K. Mills

Subscriptions: Eva Burnham
Treasurer: Cynthia Cooper

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