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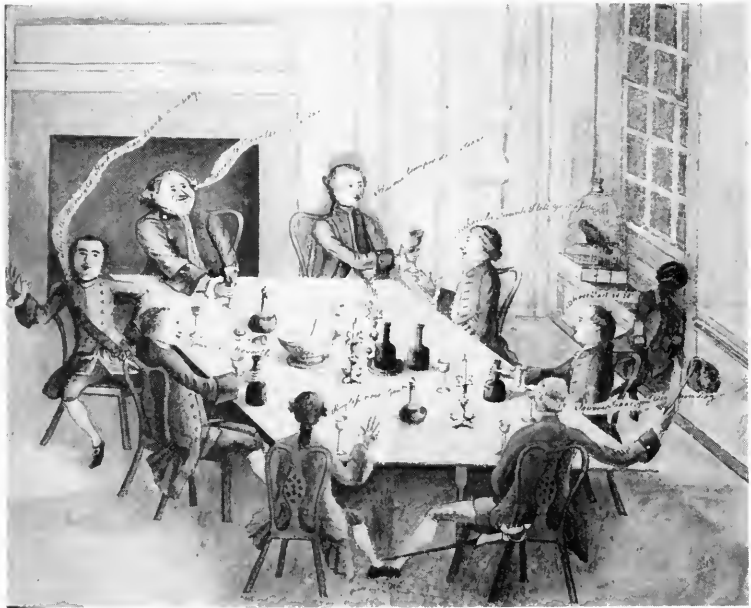


Figure 1. Peter Manigault and His Friends, c. 1760, by George Roupell, black ink and wash on paper, Charleston. HOA: 10 3/16". WOA: 13 3/16". Photograph courtesy of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, acc. 63.73.

*Editor's note:*

*In preparation for Bradford L. Rauschenberg's Charleston Furniture, the MESDA research staff has compiled a detailed study of 17th, 18th, and early 19th century Charleston estate inventories. This compilation was made available to the author when he was preparing a thesis as a requirement for his graduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The following article is a condensed version of that thesis.*

## *The Neoclassical Dining Room in Charleston*

JAMES C. JORDAN III

The dining room as a specific room for serving and consuming meals may have originated in the English country house. Although rooms occasionally were designated as dining spaces during the colonial period, such employment of interior space became fashionable in America by the time George Washington built a banqueting room at Mount Vernon in 1785.<sup>1</sup> Prior to that time, the rooms in which people dined served many functions and usually were not designed solely for the purpose of eating. For example, the first known mention of a dining room in Charleston appeared in the 1724 inventory of Joseph Morton's estate which listed ". . .Furniture in the dining room. . ."<sup>2</sup> However, this room evidently had other uses as well; later in the inventory "furniture in the little chamber within the dining room. . . ." was mentioned. It was not until the Neoclassical period that rooms in the homes of Charleston's upper class more frequently were given specific functions such as "dining room." At that time the dining room architecturally was related to the second floor parlors of these houses and finished much in the same manner. It contained musical instruments and bookcases in addition to furniture associated with dining.<sup>3</sup>

The best existing visual records of Charleston dining rooms are the ink and wash drawing (fig. 1) of a gathering of officers and gentlemen at Peter Manigault's house, Steepbrook, sketched by George Roupell about 1760, and an 1827 wash drawing (fig. 2) by Thomas Middleton, "Friends and Amateurs in Musick," that imitates Roupell.<sup>4</sup> These drawings present dining rooms occupied only by men. No women are present and an abundance of liquor bottles are placed on the tables. The dinner parties of the Southern gentry in the early nineteenth century sometimes

were segregated. In 1805 Margaret Manigault held a dinner for a large party of gentlemen whose wives were asked to join them only after the meal, and in 1832 John Grimball noted, in his diary, a dinner where no ladies were present.<sup>5</sup> Heavy drinking, cigar smoking, and the preference for political conversation over domestic topics probably were at the root of this separation. In his 1806-8 travel diary John Lambert recorded another such dinner: "The wine flows in abundance and nothing affords them greater satisfaction than to see their guests drop gradually under the table after dinner."<sup>6</sup> In all likelihood, most Southern dinners, especially in Charleston, followed traditional English convention. Women dined with gentlemen and then retired to the drawing room or parlor after the dessert course for conversation.

The Roupell drawing illustrates the hospitable environment of the Charleston dining room. Peter Manigault and his guests are making spirited rounds of toasts. The scene can best be matched with Josiah Quincy's description of Miles Brewton's house: "Dined with considerable company at Miles Brewton, Esqr's, a gentleman of very large fortune: a most superb house said to have cost him eight thousand pounds sterling. Politics started before dinner and a most elegant table set before us. At Mr. Brewton's sideboard was very magnificent plate, a very large exquisitely wrought goblet, most excellent workmanship and singularly beautiful."<sup>7</sup> This Charleston tradition of unsurpassed hospitality was an accepted thing in the eighteenth century, and it continued into the nineteenth century; many other diarists described fine houses and entertainment. On 21 March 1817 Robert Mills wrote his wife:

I went last evening to the Race Ball for which I received a particular invitation. The table was decorated from end to end with flowers in festoons &c. surrounding large cakes crowned with various devices. Cupid drawn by doves on the glass plate of this cake were either alabaster figures, or jellies, custard &c. disposed. No expense appeared to have been spared and preparation made about 200 persons.<sup>8</sup>

The Middleton picture is a scene of companionship and light entertainment. The presence of spirits was noted by the artist in his description of the event on the back of the drawing. He stated: "I have to apologize for the representation of certain glasses both





*Figure 2. Friends and Amateurs in Musick. 1827. by Thomas Middleton. ink and wash on paper. Charleston. HOA: 9½", W/OA: 13". Photograph courtesy of the Carolina Art Association/Gibbes Museum of Art.*

black and white on the table, but it was in vain to remonstrate. No. 6 said he must himself vanish if those respectable warmers of the blood (spirit and wine) were not produced, and even Nos. 4, 5, & 7 joined in for the admission at all events of the Black holder of Sparkly."<sup>9</sup>

The Charleston dining room constructed after the American Revolution typically reflected the standardized Adamesque decoration, utilizing with reeding and fluting in addition to plaster composition on cornices, friezes, and occasionally ceilings. This style was brought over from England and was influenced by discoveries at Pompeii. Gabriel Manigault, Charleston's premier gentleman architect of the period, introduced the Neoclassical style in Charleston when he designed a dining room (fig. 3) with curved ends and delicately proportioned elements for his brother Joseph. Plaster moldings were made by talented artisans such as William Purvis, whose craftsmanship may be seen in the Dock Street Theatre. Benjamin Leefe, a retailer of Neoclassical decoration, advertised "Elegant Composition Elements . . . for ornamenting of Chimney, Windows, Doors, &c. put up in handy packages."<sup>10</sup>

The plan of a Neoclassical genteel dining room in Charleston took the form of a large rectangular room with a curvilinear bay facing the front or garden side of the house, such as those in the Joseph Manigault house and the Middleton-Pinckney house, or, more rarely, an oval plan room (fig. 4) like that in the Nathaniel Russell house.<sup>11</sup> Earlier Georgian rooms were updated into dining rooms and fashionable plasterwork was added; an example of such modernization was the dwelling of William Gibbs. The houses containing these Neoclassical dining rooms were relatively conservative structures, often following architectural styles that retained significant details from the late colonial period. Charlestonians therefore tended to ignore new designs for dwellings created by the great Neoclassical period architects. They chose to use older, more familiar patterns such as the single house.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1790 Joseph Manigault house, the dining room is a southeast room located on the first floor. The dimensions of the dining room correspond with the second floor parlor; both are eighteen feet in length. Five windows framed by reeded pilasters provide a light and airy quality. Wainscoting encircles the room, and opposite, the bay is a centrally-placed Neoclassical chimney piece. The original color of the woodwork has not been determined.



*Figure 3. Manigault House dining room, 1790, Charleston. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.*

The dining room of the 1797 Middleton-Pinckney House may have been the second-floor oval room of the four-story structure. The house was built in the English tradition; the first floor was intended as a service area, and none of its rooms indicate dining space use. If the dining room indeed was located on the second floor, it was situated below the third-floor parlor and over the front entrance of the house. The size of the room is equal to the other main rooms of the house. Carved lozenges in friezes and fluted pilasters comprise the door surrounds and follow the Adam style. A paint analysis revealed that the woodwork originally was painted a brown ochre, although this may have been a base color for mahogany graining that matched the solid mahogany doors that provide entry to the room.<sup>13</sup>

The dining room of the 1812 Nathaniel Russell house is located on the first floor below a parlor and is equal in size to the other principal rooms. The room is oval in plan, and a door leads to the stair passage.<sup>14</sup> The windows look out upon the south, or garden, side of the house. A paint analysis shows that all of the woodwork was painted white.

Strong ties with England inevitably influenced the fashion in which Charlestonians served food, purchased furniture, and utilized the dining room. John Drayton, in *A View of Carolina*, best expressed this influence: "Charlestonians sought in every possible way to emulate the life of London society. They were too much enamoured of British customs, manners and education to imagine that elsewhere anything of advantage could be obtained."<sup>15</sup>

To understand how upper-class Charlestonians furnished their dining rooms, surviving inventories of the Neoclassical period were examined in order to determine the existence of sufficient evidence to produce a visual image of a Charleston dining room in the years 1790-1810. Therefore, inventories that designated the furniture by room were sought. From the period 1786-1810, thirty-eight inventories were found that listed furnishings by room. The inventories were not representative of Charleston's general population, but rather the city's wealthy residents. The appraised values of the thirty-eight dwellings range from £319 sterling (silversmith Ripley W. Singleton's estate) to \$20,205 (merchant Major Thomas Simons's estate). The average appraisal value of the thirty-eight inventories was \$3,582, well above the average appraisal of \$1,000 during this period. However, it should be noted that Carolinians, as Robert M. Weir, in *Colonial South*



*Figure 4. Southwest view. Nathaniel Russell House dining room, 1812, Charleston. Courtesy of Historic Charleston Foundation. photograph by Louis Schwartz. This room is furnished as a library, but it is believed originally to have been the dining room.*

*Carolina*, observed “may nevertheless not have been that much more materialistic than any other wealthy Americans. Recent examinations of extant inventories suggest that South Carolinians spent proportionately about the same amount of their wealth on clothing and household furnishings as their counterparts elsewhere. Being generally richer, the sum was larger in absolute terms and thus made a considerably bigger splash.”<sup>16</sup>

Seventeen of the thirty-eight inventories examined included articles in rooms clearly used for dining, but only eight inventories specifically identified a dining room. These seventeen inventories were classified together into material/object subject areas (furniture, metalwork, textiles and floorcovers, pictures and

prints, cutlery, glassware, ceramics, and silver) and listed in order of their frequency. This grouping provided a broad sense of furnishings in a genteel dining room (see Appendix).

The furniture in the Charleston dining room was either made there or imported from England, the middle Atlantic states, or New England and can be characterized as both utilitarian and ornamental in its sense of style and decoration. Pieces that assisted food service included “butlers” that served as wine coolers during the meal, and sideboards that stored plate and glassware for the evening. Ironically, the Neoclassical decoration of such pieces was described by Edward Johnson, a Charleston cabinetmaker, in his advertisement of Philadelphia furniture “finished in the style of Elegance and Neatness that surpasses anything of the kind. . . .”<sup>17</sup> Charleston furniture, in fact, gave away nothing to that city in regard to embellishment.

Dining tables appeared frequently in the inventories; they usually were listed first. The most common form probably resembled the example mentioned in the undated late eighteenth century appraisal of Thomas Murray’s estate: “a set of mahogany dining tables with oval ends.”<sup>18</sup> Such tables usually were comprised of from two to four separate drop-leaf or pedestal tables with matching shaped ends. When in use, the dining table was located in the center of the room as the Roupell and Middleton drawings illustrate, but between meals could be folded and placed against the wall. It seems doubtful, however, that large banquet tables were moved on a daily basis.

Looking glasses or mirrors were listed frequently, usually in pairs. Their frames either were made of mahogany or were gilt. Tea tables also were mentioned frequently in the inventories and estate appraisals. In 1796 Mrs. Josephine duPont fretted to a friend about the enormous teas served in Charleston, “one must be resigned to preparing endless as well as ruinously expensive toilettes in order to partake of their sumptuous teas or else stay absolutely alone.”<sup>19</sup> Tea tables were used to display the elegant tea china, silver urns and cutlery that went along with the ritual and were kept against the wall when not in use. The popularity of “pillar and claw” tables with round tops declined rapidly during the early Neoclassical period; both rectangular and square tables remained in use. The 1804 appraisal of Col. Thomas Screven’s estate listed “1 square tea table.”<sup>20</sup>

Knife cases or knife boxes stored cutlery. The caption for Plate 38 of George Hepplewhite’s *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer’s*

*Guide* stated that “the universal utility of this piece renders a particular description not necessary,” but it did say that they “may be placed at each end of the sideboard.”<sup>21</sup> In 1797 William Wrightman, a goldsmith and jeweller in Charleston advertised that he had “Imported in the last vessels from London. . . Mahogany and Satin Wood Knife Cases, with or without the knives, forks & spoons. Fashionable Urn Cases, with silver table and desert spoons and knives compleat.”<sup>22</sup>

Slab tables, sideboard tables and side tables were used in dining rooms to display silver plate and china. Such sumptuousness must have prompted traveler William Pollard to write his English friends, describing low country dining rooms: “Some of their side tables are furnished in such a manner as would not disgrace a nobleman’s dining room.”<sup>23</sup> Slab tables had tops of imported marble. On 21 January 1817 retailers Barelli, Torre and Company advertised in the Charleston *Courier* that they had received from Leghorn, Tuscany, Italy, “. . . Most elegant marble and alabaster Ornaments, of various represculations, Veined marble tables, with richly gilt and ornamented stands. . . .” The tops of side board or side tables usually were made of mahogany. Side board tables should not be confused with sideboards which had drawers and cabinets for storage.

Coolers, butlers, liquor stands, cellarettes, and wine cases all



*Figure 5. Sideboard, c. 1790, Charleston, mahogany primary, poplar, cypress, white pine, and yellow pine secondary. HOA: 37", W/OA: 67", DOA: 28 3/8". MESDA research file (MRF) S-2552.*

were used for storing spirits; coolers and butlers also were used for chilling beverages. In inventories these items tend to be associated with sideboard tables or sideboards. The 1805 inventory of Major Thomas Simons's estate mentioned, "1 plain side board, 1 wine cooler."<sup>24</sup> In J. H. Sargent's well-known painting of a New York fete, "The Dinner Party," the wine cases are visible underneath the sideboard. Butlers usually were made of mahogany lined with tin or lead and trimmed with brass bands and contained chilled water to cool wine until it was served during the meal.<sup>25</sup> Liquor stands, cellarettes, and liquor cases stored wine, liquor, and cordials. The cellarette was not a common form in Charleston; the first known mention of it there was cabinetmaker William Jones's 1793 advertisement: "1 inlaid celleret."<sup>26</sup> It was not unusual to have more than one in the room to store the many different sorts of spirits offered during the various courses of a formal dinner. Col. Edward Darrell's estate inventory of 1802 mentioned "1 celleret, 4 japanned coolers. . . ."<sup>27</sup>

According to Hepplewhite's *Guide* of 1794, a sideboard was invaluable: "as the conveniences it affords renders dining rooms incompleat without [it]. . . ."<sup>28</sup> Glasses were arranged on the sideboard to impress guests, although as Roberts observed in his 1816 *House Servants Directory*, the display required planning in order to be effective: "I have often seen at parties, where I have been attending, sideboards and sidetables set out in such a manner that they looked quite in a state of confusion; whereas, if they were set out in a proper order, they would make a magnificent appearance."<sup>29</sup> The 1807 inventory of Sarah V. Johnstone's estate listed a "sideboard & glasses."<sup>30</sup> A sideboard occasionally was placed in a niche in the room, such as that shown in the Middleton drawing, to emphasize its importance.

Dining room chairs mentioned in inventories of the Neoclassical period often were in sets of eight or twelve and usually were made of mahogany. In the 1791 appraisal of John Deas, Sr.'s estate "12 mahogany chairs. . . ." were listed.<sup>31</sup> Less formal Windsor chairs, usually listed as green, also were mentioned in early nineteenth century Charleston inventories. For example, Guillaume Aertson's 1806 inventory included "12 windsor chairs."<sup>32</sup> Fancy and gilt chairs also were listed. The earliest mention of fancy chairs in Charleston was Denoon, Cambell and Company's 1797 advertisement that offered "London-made" furniture including "Fancy, Japanned and Cherry Tree Chairs. . . ."<sup>33</sup>



*Figure 6. Arm chair, 1800-10, Charleston, mahogany primary, yellow pine corner braces, ash seat frame. HOA: 35½", width at seat: 20 9/16", DOA: 17¼". MRF S-1591. This chair descended in the Vanderhorst and Conner families of Charleston and is a part of a set of twelve or more, at least ten of which are side chairs. Its design follows that of a chair attributed to Slover and Taylor of New York city (Charles F. Montgomery, American Furniture: the Federal Period, New York: Viking Press, 1966, pp. 61-2).*

Other furniture cited in dining room inventories included desk and bookcases, secretaries, and sofas, indicating that in some dwellings the dining room, following an earlier practice, continued to be used for purposes other than dining. "Sophas" could be used as additional seating for the table as a Regency watercolor by the English painter, Diana Sperling, records.<sup>34</sup> This practice, however, probably was rare.

China (porcelain) used in Charleston dining rooms reflected a desire for "elegant and neat" taste and the amount of money



available for such expenditures. Charlestonians enjoyed a wide selection of china and often owned various sets for certain times of the day. Merchants such as Mary Woodman & Smith advertised in 1804 “a complete assortment of crockery . . . a few sets of elegant tea china . . . Handsome breakfast china.”<sup>35</sup>



Figure 7. Chinese export porcelain dish, 1800-20. HOA (with lid): 4", LOA: 13", DOA: 6½". MRF S-8793. This dish is one of a set that was made for the Manigault family of Charleston.



Figure 8. Three transfer-print pearlware plates, 1800-30, England. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum. These plates, along with the other ceramic and glass shards illustrated herein, were excavated from a block in Charleston between Meeting and King streets, bounded on the north by Market Street. They are actual examples of the items Charlestonians were using in the Neoclassical period.



Figure 9. Three transfer-print pearlware cups, 1790-1820, England. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.

“India” china (Chinese export porcelain, fig. 7), “Queensware” (fine English earthenware), “blue and white china” (comprised of English porcelain, Chinese export ware, and English transfer-printed wares, figs. 8, 9), “gilt china,” “enameled,” “burnt,” and “red and white” china all were cited in Charleston inventories, and appear to have been readily available. Not all of these, of course, were vitrified wares. The most frequently imported “china” was Queensware which, in actuality, was earthenware. Between the American Revolution and the War of 1812, English potters owned warehouses of various wares that had been stockpiled due to the embargoes in effect during the Revolution. An English merchant who served the



Figure 10. Pearlware tea set, 1790-1800, England. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum.



Figure 11. Pearlware creamer, 1790-1800, England. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum. This creamer appears to be from the set illustrated in Fig. 10.

Charleston market wrote in 1804 about the glut of china, claiming that “. . . Plates we have as many as will retail in five years. A few green or blue edged Plates might sell but when we consider that all the other articles in a crate would lay on hand, it is better to do without them.”<sup>36</sup> Many wares indeed were available by the crate. In 1803 the firm of Mair & Means offered in the *Charleston Courier*, “also some crates of Blue, Brown, and Green edge Queen’s ware and China in complete sets.”<sup>37</sup>

Table china, dessert dishes, breakfast china, and tea china (figs. 10, 11) represent some of the varying china sets cited in Charleston inventories. For example, in 1806 Guillian Aertson’s appraisers listed “table crockery with a breakfast set with a set of crockery.”<sup>38</sup> A set of china cited in the 1802 inventory of Col. Edward Darrell enumerated the following items: “set of table china consisting of 2 tureens, and dishes, 2 sauce tureens & stands, a butter boat & stand, 4 salt cellars, 2 large mugs, 18 dishes, 8 baking dishes, 1 salad, 22 soup plates, 5 dozen & 10 shallow plates, 33 dessert plates, 11 smaller and 11 small soup.”<sup>39</sup> Many of the inventories listed the china as “a lot of crockery” or as “1 dinner set.”<sup>40</sup> The term “set” probably did not determine a specific quantity of china listed but was the appraisers’ method of quickly listing items. China was stored either in the sideboard or a closet built into the dining room, usually at one or both sides of the chimney piece.<sup>41</sup>

Silverware, whether made in Charleston or imported from London, often was specifically listed by weight in ounces in inventories because of its value.<sup>42</sup> From the inventories that listed



Figure 12. Dish cross marked "CW," c. 1790, Charleston. LOA: 13½". MRF S-6464. This dish cross was made by Charleston silversmith Charles Wittich (1785-1804).

dining room implements, lighting devices often were described as plated. A silver dish cross (fig. 12) such as that recorded in William Roper's dwelling in 1790 may have been placed in the center of the table. Other silver items to grace dining tables were available in Charleston. W. Wrightman advertised "beautiful and large elegant gilt and plated epergne and egg stands" for sale in his shop in January 1803.<sup>43</sup> Silver tea services also were mentioned frequently. "1 pr. sugar tongs, 1 chased coffee pot, 1 cream pot & spoon, 1 sugar basket, etc." also were found in William Roper's dining room.<sup>44</sup> Silver table and tea spoons were listed by the dozens.

An abundance of glassware was found in dining room inven-



Figure 13. Sugar tongs marked "M. MILLER," 1815-30, Charleston. LOA: 6 3/8". Courtesy of the Charleston Museum. MRF S-8114B. These tongs have been attributed to Matthew Miller, a Charleston silversmith working 1805-40.



Figure 14. Six spoons marked "REEVES," c. 1790, engraved "M G.," possibly Charleston. Dimensions not recorded. MRF S-5819. Enos Reeves, a Charleston silversmith working 1784-1807, is thought to have made these spoons.

ories, primarily in the forms of decanters and different types of glasses used for wine, various liquors, and other spirits that were consumed at the table. Glassware made in England, Ireland, and western Europe was proudly displayed on the sideboard or serving table. Roberts's *House Servants Directory* suggested a proper arrangement for the sideboard:

All the spare glasses that are for dinner must go on the sideboard, with your champagne, hawk and ale glasses. When all these are properly arranged they make a grand display. Your glasses should form a crescent or half circle, as this looks sublime. If you should have a light on your sideboard, you must leave a vacant place behind your glasses for it; in forming the crescent, your highest glasses must be the farthest off, and the smallest ones in an inner circle. Let them be put two and two you may have them ready when wanted. In the space between the glasses, place your cruet stand or casters, this must be right in the center of the sideboard, and about two inches from the edge; then put at each side of each water decanter, then your wine for the dessert, in the silver coasters, in the same manner; then if there is any vacancy left, you may fill it up with spoons, as spoons &c. give glass a brilliant display.<sup>45</sup>



Figure 15. Left to right, toddie glass ("rummer," see Appendix), wine glass, and neck of decanter, 1800-30. Courtesy of the Charleston Museum. These shards represent the different types and origins of glassware used in Charleston.

Shipments from abroad filled with glass dining accessories were advertised frequently in southern coastal cities during this period, as one merchant's 1803 advertisement noted: "Just received by the ship Achilles, Capt. Douglas from Liverpool and for sale; Eighteen casks of glassware assorted consisting of quart & pint decanters, wine glasses (fig. 16), goblets, vinegar cruets, pocket bottles, &c. &c."<sup>46</sup> In 1787 one Charleston mercantile firm announced: "Just opened. At Voss and Grave's Store, No. 39, Broad Street. A General Assortment of Glassware, of all sizes, being cut emblematic to the liberty of the 13 states, with stars, stripes, snakes &c. and of new models."<sup>47</sup> Sideboards and other serving furniture apparently were crowded with glassware. Dr. Isaac Keith's 1814 estate inventory listed the following glassware on or in the sideboard: "12 tumblers & rummers, 11 decanters,



Figure 16. Eight blown lead glass wine glasses, 1775-95. England. Dimensions not recorded. MRF S-13,571.

2 pr bottle stands, 2 pr salts, 10 jelly, 30 wine & 15 cordial glasses, 10 finger cups, 3 sweet or butter glasses.”<sup>48</sup> However, Dr. Keith’s inventory pales in comparison with that of John Deas, Jr., taken in 1791: “9 quart decanters, 10 pint decanters, 6 Guglets, 24 barrel tumblers, 13 pint tumblers, 6 wine and water glasses, 64 cut glasses, 11 champagne glasses, 1 cut cream glass with top, 4 salt cellers, 11 large sylabub glass with top.”<sup>49</sup>

The most frequently mentioned textile item in the inventories was a carpet for the dining room, usually listed as “scotch” or Wilton. Thomas Sheraton, in his 1803 *Cabinet Dictionary*, rated carpets for his readers: “The persian and Turkey carpets, are those most esteemed. The Parisian carpets are a tolerable imitation of these. But besides the Persian, Turkey, and Parisian carpets, there are the following sorts, which have their names from the places where they are manufactured, as Brussels carpet, the metropolis of the dukedom of Brabant. Kidderminster—a town in Worchester. Wilton—a town in Wiltshire, Axbridge—in Somersetshire. Venetian carpet, generally striped. And Scots carpet, which is one of the most inferior kind.”<sup>50</sup> Fashionable designs for the Wilton or Brussels carpet included floral motifs and geometric patterns. No carpets of this period with a Charleston history are known to survive; however, advertisements such as that in which Mr. George Logan offered a reward for a Brussels carpet stolen from his house in 1787 provide descriptions of Charleston floorcoverings: “one large Brussels Carpet (but little worn) the pattern, ovals, octagons and circles, of various colors.”<sup>51</sup> Canvas floor cloths or “green bays covers” were used to protect carpets from the grease and crumbs of the dinner table. This cloth, either made in Charleston or imported, usually was decorated with a painted design or printed with wooden blocks and rolled up and put away after the meal. In John Huger’s 1804 estate inventory, a “floor cloth & carpet” were mentioned together.<sup>52</sup>

William Newton’s 1805 inventory listed nine tablecloths. Apparently it was not unusual for wealthy Charlestonians to have on hand a large quantity of table linen. Cotton, Osaburg, dowlas (coarse linen) or Holland linens were used for everyday purposes; damask for special occasions. Tablecloths were hung anywhere from a few inches below the table to a few inches above the floor.<sup>53</sup> Table mats and grass mats protected the white tablecloth and were placed underneath the china at meal time.<sup>54</sup> Curtains were not mentioned in any of the dining rooms of the inventories researched, although many were listed for other rooms. Hang-

ings in the dining room were thought to be unhealthy because it was believed that they attracted and harbored insects.<sup>55</sup>

Prints in gilt frames seem to have dominated the walls of Charleston's finer dining rooms. Pictures were hung singly, or, if small, in groups. Landscapes were a popular subject, as the Roupell drawing reveals. Portraits of various luminaries and scenes of naval battles also were fashionable; several were listed in the 1810 inventory of Major George Reid's estate.<sup>56</sup>

After the contents of the upper class Charlestonian's dining room have been analyzed, a clear picture of a room as a public stage for the gentleman planter, merchant, or professional emerges. The wealth of glassware and silver displayed in the room reflected a desire to impress a constant flow of friends and business acquaintances who enjoyed the hospitality of the owner. Exotic food from far and near pleased the palate as much as its presentation delighted the eye, and the genteel Charlestonian and his family shared such pleasantries with frequency. Margaret Manigault wrote to her friend Mrs. duPont on Christmas Eve 1800 in a lighthearted fashion that says much for Charleston's dinner parties: "I had a small group to dinner, and we laughed so much, ate so many jellies, that now it is almost midnight."

*Mr. Jordan is Administrator of the Historic Hope Foundation in Windsor, North Carolina.*



## APPENDIX

### An Analysis of the Contents of Charleston Dining Rooms from 17 Representative Inventories

#### FURNITURE

chair	
Windsor	3
mahogany	3
green windsor	4
straw bottom	1
painted & gilt	1
horsehair	1
arm	2
child's	1
sopha	2
table	
dining	3
sets	4
w/oval ends	1
mahogany	2
tea table	7
mahogany	1
sideboard	4
mahogany side board	2
slab	4
mahogany	2
cypress	1
desk	1
secretary	
mahogany	1
bookcase	4
library, mahogany	1
spirits containers	
wine cooler	2
mahogany	3
rum chest	1
case with bottles	1
cellarette	2
liquor stand	2
clock	1
butler	1
double chest of drawers	1
knife box	1
knife cases	4
pair of	4
mahogany	2
chess stand	1
METALWORK (brass, iron)	
firedogs (pr.)	6
shovels	5
tongs	4

pokers	1
firegrate	1
fender	3
steel w/ brass fenders	2
andirons	1
firescreen	1
grate	3
fireplace equipment	1
brass chimney furniture	1
TEXTILES AND FLOOR AND TABLE COVERS	
carpet	7
Scotch Wilton	1
turkey carpet with mat	1
floorcloth with carpet	1
floorcarpet	1
tablecloth (set of 9)	1
towels (set of 12)	1
East India mats	7
table mats	7
glass mats	1
LOOKING GLASS	
looking glass	3
in mahogany frame	3
in gilt frame	3
PICTURES AND PRINTS	
pictures in gilt frames (23 + "pictures")	3
prints in gilt frames (22 + "prints")	4
paintings	1
CANDLESTICKS	
candlesticks	3
plated pairs	3
silver (6 in one)	1
inventory brass	2
CUTLERY	
teaspoons	4
silver	4
sugar tongs	2
spoons	3
salt spoons	3
turine ladle	1
knives	
green handled	3
buck handle	1
ivory handled (3 dozen)	1
in knife case	1
forks	1
green handled	3
buck handled	1
ivory handled (3 dozen)	1
dessert spoons	1
silver dessert spoons	1

soup ladle	1
fish knives	1
soup spoon	1
sauce ladle	1
ladles	1
GLASSWARE	
sundry glassware (lot)	8
decanters	1
quart	3
pint	1
set of	1
tumblers	1
rummers	2
gilt rummers	1
wine glasses (set of 12)	3
goblets	
cutglass set (1 inventory)	
1 pr. punch goblets	
1 pr. water goblets	
3 pr. quart decanters	
5 pr. pint decanters	
15 pint tumblers	
4 salt cellars	
22 half pint tumblers	
24 rummers	
24 claret glasses	
25 wine glasses	
cordials	1
jelly glasses (set of 12)	1
punch glasses	1
salt cellars (pr.)	1
glass shades	1
JAPPANED WARE	
waiters	4
bread basket	1
fish bowls with counters (game)	1
table tray	1
candlesticks	1
plate warmer	1
coolers (set of 4)	1
CERAMICS	
"a set of tea china"	4
" a lot of crockery ware"	4
dish covers	2
china	
set Nankeen china	1
red and white table (*)	1
dinner set blue china (**)	1
set of table china (**)	1
cake plates	1

PLATE, SILVER

silver teapot and stand	1
sugar dishes	1
coffee biggin	1
salt stands	1
steak dishes (pr.)	1
mugs (pr.)	1
heater (pr.)	1
baskets (pr.)	1
coffee pot-plated	1
creamer	1
cake basket-plated	1
bottle stands (2 pr.)	1
stand-plated	1
branch-plated	1
porter cups-plated	1
lot of plated castors	2
snuffers and tray	1
bread baskets	3
cross for table	2
sauce boat and stand	1
set of castors	4
waiters	7
sugar dish	2
sugar cannister	1
tea strainer	1
coffee pot	1
pr. lime squeezers	1

MISCELLANEOUS

chimney ornaments	1
tool chest	1
clothes brush	1
flower pots	1
backgammon (game/table)	1
cordial stand	1
pr. of bottle stands	2
porter jug	1
water jug	1
pewter funnel	1
trays and bread box	1
waiters (silver/wood)	6
coral tray	1
tea cannister	1
plate warmer	1
sweatmeat stand	1
butterboat	1
tea strainer	1
labels	1
milk pot and stand	1
tea urn	1
wash hand basins	1
shovels (salt)	1

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*Figure 1. Snuff handkerchief (detail), England, plate printing in blue on linen, 1770-1785, 26 3/4" X 29 1/2". Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc. no. 1950-104. The corner of the handkerchief shows a convict servant in jacket and long trousers, banished to America to work alongside a slave in the tobacco fields.*



*“Clothes for the People”*  
*Slave Clothing in Early Virginia*

LINDA BAUMGARTEN

Eighteenth century Virginia had evolved a society characterized by great disparity — human beings enslaved by men writing eloquent arguments for freedom; mansion houses surrounded by slave huts; elegant assemblies and barefoot black children. Ebenezer Hazard, a visitor to Virginia in 1777, took note of the contrasts. While he observed that Virginians had elegant entertainments, and that the ladies at an assembly “made a brilliant Appearance,” he added, “The Virginians, even in the City, do not pay proper Attention to Decency in the Appearance of their Negroes; I have seen Boys of 10 & 12 Years of Age going through the Streets quite naked, & others with only Part of a Shirt hanging Part of the Way down their Backs. This is so common a Sight that even the Ladies do not appear to be shocked at it.”<sup>1</sup> Nowhere was social disparity more evident than in the clothes people wore, proclaiming status, or lack of it, through the style of the garment, the fabric and color selection, the amount of clothing required to be “properly dressed,” even the subtlety of posture, achieved both through training and force of tight stays. Virginians, apparently, were particularly apt to judge people by their appearance. Peter Collinson counselled someone contemplating a visit to the colony:

. . . these Virginians are a very gentle, well-dressed people — and look, perhaps, more at a man’s outside than his inside. For these and other reasons, pray go very clean, neat, and handsomely dressed, to Virginia.<sup>2</sup>

Although white settlers and visitors could exercise some selection in the clothing they brought to the colony, “New Negroes,”

as recently-imported slaves were called, arrived by ship with only the few clothes and ornaments allowed by their captors. William Hugh Grove described the wretched conditions in 1732:

The men are Stowed before the foremast, then the Boys between that and the main-mast, the Girls next, and the grown Women behind the Misen. The Boyes and Girles [were] all Stark naked; so Were the greatest part of the Men and Women. Some had beads about their necks, arms, and Wasts, and a ragg or Piece of Leather the bigness of a figg Leafe. And I saw a Woman [who had] Come aboard to buy Examine the Limbs and soundness of some she seemed to Choose. Dr. Dixon . . . bought 8 men and 2 women . . . and brought them on Shoar with us, all stark naked. But when [we had] come home [they] had Coarse Shirts and afterwards Drawers given [to] them.<sup>3</sup>

Considering the wrenching experience these people had just experienced, being given clothes that were to them foreign in style and feel may have been among the least of their concerns, but clothing and ornaments are a powerful symbol of cultural and personal identity, and the new clothes were perhaps one more reminder of the transition in their lives. A ballad originally composed between 1656-71 depicting the experience of a white convict servant sent to Virginia suggests the symbolic importance of clothing:

At last to my new master's house I came, At the town of Wicocc[o]moco call'd by name, Where my European clothes were took from me, Which never after I again could see. A canvas shirt and trowsers then they gave, With a hop-sack frock in which I was to slave: No shoes nor stockings had I for to wear, No hat, nor cap, both head and feet were bare. Thus dress'd into the Field I nex[t] must go, Amongst tobacco plants all day to hoe [(fig. 1)],

.....  
We and the Negroes both alike did fare.<sup>4</sup>

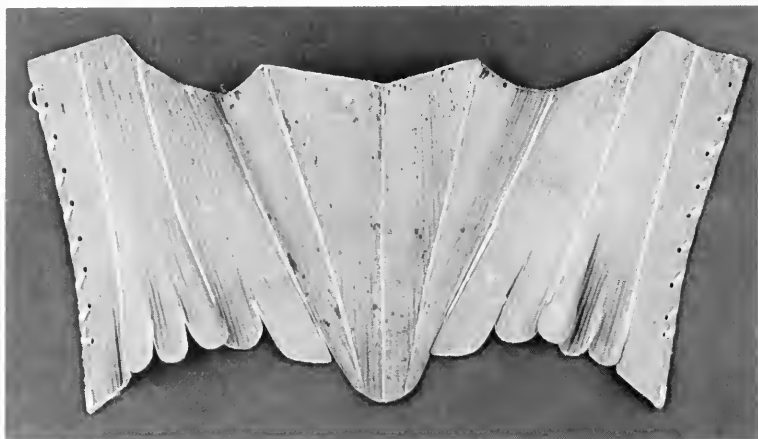
English print sources clearly show the importance of clothing as an indication of status. A mid-eighteenth century tobacco label (fig. 2) shows slaves wearing only loin cloths packing tobacco into barrels for shipment alongside white gentlemen wearing the full



*Figure 2. Tobacco paper, line engraving on paper, c. 1750, 3" X 5". Courtesy of Arents Collections, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.*

complement of clothing proper to their status: shoes, stockings, a well-tailored three-piece suit (consisting of knee breeches, waistcoat and coat), a shirt with stock, wig and hat. Absence of clothing was acceptable for blacks when it would have been unthinkable for white adults, as we have seen in the quote from Grove. Historians have pointed out that racism allowed white slaveholders to view blacks and Indians as somehow sub-human, thereby providing the justification for their enslavement.<sup>5</sup> This helps to explain why the naked children in the streets observed by travellers to Virginia went seemingly unnoticed by the proper white ladies of the town. Laws codified this growing belief in the innate inferiority of blacks; in 1705 it was forbidden "to whip a christian white servant naked, without an order from a justice of the peace." Referring to this law and how the colonists justified it, Edmund Morgan observed, "Nakedness, after all, was appropriate only to a brutish sort of people, who had not achieved civility or Christianity."<sup>6</sup>

The absence of stays (fig. 3) among the clothing assigned to female field slaves is another example. The wearing of stays was considered essential for the properly dressed lady in the eighteenth century Anglo-American culture. Stays did much more than just shape the figure into a cone from waist to bust or mould a tiny



*Figure 3. Woman's stays, England, mid-eighteenth century, wool satin lined with linen, stiffened with whalebone and edged with leather, WOA: 33". Collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc no. 1966-188.*

waistline. In fact, eighteenth century stays did less to restrict the waist than many mid-nineteenth century corsets. Stays were laced onto very young girls and many little boys to encourage proper erect posture, push the shoulders back and down, and help teach ways of moving suitable for ladies and gentlemen. The resulting eighteenth century fashionable shape, even for men, was one of sloping shoulders and very narrow backs. This exaggerated stance shows up in portraiture, but was not just a painter's convention; it is confirmed by the very narrow, flat backs of surviving eighteenth century garments. Although accounts suggest that some Virginia women, especially those in backwoods areas, left off their stays in the hottest summer months, this was not quite suitable behaviour for a lady, and certainly not for more formal situations. Philip Vickers Fithian was surprised enough to see Mrs. Robert Carter without her stays one October day in 1774 that he noted in his journal, "To day I saw a Phenomenon, Mrs. Carter without Stays!" He added that she was not wearing them because of a pain in her breast.<sup>7</sup> So important were stays to a woman's wardrobe that several British paintings show white women working in the fields wearing stays, even though their outer gowns have been removed.<sup>8</sup> Plantation records reveal that the summer clothes of many female field slaves consisted only of a linen shift (fig. 4) and somewhat heavier linen petticoat. Sarah Fouace Nourse wore such an outfit in 1781 when trying to cope with the July

heat on her plantation in Berkeley County, Virginia; she recorded in her diary, that it was very sultry, so after dinner she stayed “up stairs in only shift & petticoat till after Tea.” It is interesting that Mrs. Nourse — a white woman — did not leave the privacy of her own upstairs in this comparative state of undress.<sup>9</sup> Although stays were considered necessary and proper in eighteenth century society, from today’s vantage point we might consider the slave women who did not have to wear such a hot and constricting garment fortunate. This is not to suggest that no black women wore stays; although the records are scanty, ladies’ maids and house servants probably received stays, and one mulatto slave named Agnes or Aggie ran away from Norfolk wearing “a pair



*Figure 4. Woman's linen shift, England, 1780-1800. LOA: 48", circumference at hem: 80". Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. 1986-207. Even among wealthy women, shifts were cut in a series of triangles and rectangles to avoid wasting fabric; contemporary records show they usually required 3 1/2 yards of linen.*



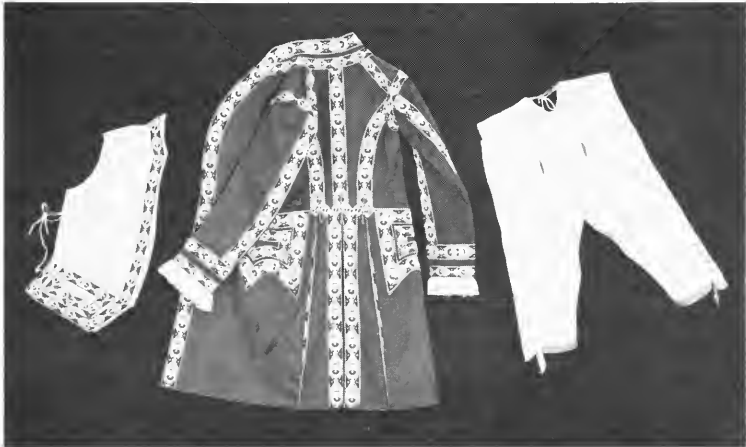
Figure 5. Henry Darnall III, *Justus Englehardt Kuhn, Maryland*, oil on canvas, c. 1710, 37 1/4" X 30 1/8". Collection of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, acc. no. 12.1.3.

of stays with fringed blue riband"; she also had silver buckles in her shoes and silver bobs in her ears.<sup>10</sup>

Appearance and ornamentation were not determined entirely by clothing, but by other physical characteristics, as well. Some markings were a constant reminder of the slave's cultural origins, as in the case of runaway Will (see fig. 15), who had "his Teeth filed, and has his Country Marks in his Face" or George, "marked in the face as the Gold Coast slaves generally are."<sup>11</sup> Other markings were less-than-subtle reminders of the institution of

slavery, as with Boston, who was “scarrified by whipping” or Annas, a “very white” mulatto woman, who was branded on her cheeks with E and R, initials of her master Edward Rutland.<sup>12</sup> Such mutilation was not illegal. Not a few slaves were branded after attempts to run away, and it was within the bounds of law to cut off toes or fingers of slaves as punishment for incorrigibility.<sup>13</sup>

Before slavery was outlawed in England in 1772, some slave owners had their household slaves wear a silver collar engraved with the owner’s name and address. Such a collar can be seen on a slave boy in plate two of Hogarth’s *Harlot’s Progress*.<sup>14</sup> Affluent Americans copied this fashion. In the portrait (fig. 5) of young Maryland resident, Henry Darnall III, painted by Justus Englehardt Kuhn, a black servant wears a wide silver collar about his neck. In Virginia, the estate inventory of Colonel Thomas Bray listed “a Silver Collar for a Waiting Man” which was sold at auction near Williamsburg in 1751.<sup>15</sup> A neck ornament of precious metal that in one context might have been a mark of wealth in the wearer instead indicated servitude, which by extension enhanced the status of the owner.



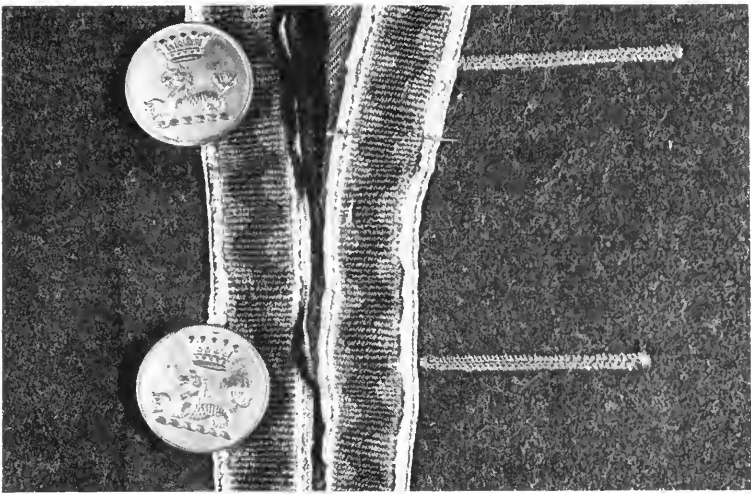
*Figure 6. Suit of livery, green and cream woolens trimmed with silk livery lace, England, 1810-40, Coat length: 46 1/2"; breeches waist: 34". Collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc. no. 1986-141, 1-3. The livery lace, used lavishly on the coat and waistcoat, is woven with a repeating crest. Livery continued in traditional eighteenth-century style, like this example, long after men's clothing had changed in fashion.*

Elaborate suits of livery (fig. 6) can also be seen as examples of symbolism. Worn by highly visible male servants — men accompanying carriages, footmen, waiters and the like — livery was an elaborate and expensive uniform whose symbolism was not lost on contemporaries. Livery was based on a gentleman's



*Figure 7. Livery coat, England, 1790-1800, LOA: 45 1/2". Collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc. no. 1954-1032. The green broadcloth coat is trimmed with red wool and livery lace in matching colors of red and green; the lining is red twill worsted.*





*Figure 8. Detail from the front of the livery coat. The livery lace is uncut velvet, woven 3/4 inches wide, the same width ordered by George Washington in 1784. The livery coat buttons are gilt brass, with the crest from an unknown coat of arms, and they are stamped "Hunter & Co., 93 [or 98] St. Martin's Lane, London," probably for John Hunter, mercer and button-seller at 93 St. Martin's Lane beginning in 1791 (Kent's Dictionary.)*

fashionable three-piece suit, but with the addition of certain prescribed elements. It was usually made of good quality wool (fig. 7) in two contrasting colors based on the colors of the owner's coat of arms. The contrast of color might be accomplished by making collar and cuffs a different color, or by having a contrasting waistcoat. Livery was usually embellished with "livery lace," elaborate edging sometimes woven of silver or gold, but most often woven like narrow velvet ribbons in colored silks or wool with designs based on the customer's coat of arms. The buttons (fig. 8) might also be molded with the owner's crest. Sometimes the trimming included a single shoulder knot resembling a military epaulet. Although livery was a European custom, it was widely used in the colonies and readily taken up by wealthy Virginians like George Washington, Robert Carter, and Landon Carter. Washington ordered materials for his red and white livery suits several times in the eighteenth century. In 1755 he ordered wool for two men's suits and matching "horse Furniture, with livery Lace, and the Washington Crest on the housing. . . ." He added specific instructions as to size and style:

The Servants that these Liverys are intended for, are 5 feet, 9 Inc. and 5F. 4In. high and proportionably made[.] I wou'd have you choose the livery by our Arms; only, as the Field of the Arms is white. I think the Cloaths had better not be quite so but nearly likely the inclos'd. The trimmings and Facings of Scarlet and a Scarlet Waistcoat, the Cloath of w'ch to be 12s 6 pr. yd. If livery Lace is not quite disus'd, I shou'd be glad to have these cloaths laced. I like that fashion best; and two Silver lac'd hats for the above Livery's.<sup>16</sup>

In August 1764 he ordered another suit of livery, this time made of wool "shagg," a napped, shaggy wool, lined with red "shalloon," a thin glazed wool. The coat's collar and waistcoat worn beneath were to be red; all were to be trimmed with livery lace, although two months later Washington changed his mind and cancelled the order for the lace.<sup>17</sup> In 1784 Washington ordered 70 yards of red and white livery lace that was to be between  $3/4$  and one inch wide.<sup>18</sup>

Once our eyes are attuned to the appearance of livery, we can more easily analyze the symbolism of the clothing in a painting of a servant and his master. John Hesselius painted young Charles Calvert (fig. 9) with a black servant kneeling beside him. Not only do their postures suggest a gulf between the young men, but their clothing reinforces the differences between their lives. Charles is wearing a suit not typical of eighteenth century daily wear; his coat with its slashed sleeves and lace cuffs turned back toward his elbows is "Vandyke" dress, a style taken from the portraits of Vandyke a century earlier, and considered fashionable wear for portraits during the second half of the eighteenth century. In Britain, Zoffany painted the entire family of Sir William Young wearing Vandyke styles.<sup>19</sup> Vandyke costume suggested to the eighteenth century viewer that the patrons of the portrait were aware of the contemporary styles in portraiture; it was also intended to dignify the sitter by recalling earlier traditions. Although he appears to modern eyes to be very finely clothed, the young black man's subservient kneeling position is further emphasized by his wearing the suit of a servant, in this case yellow livery trimmed with black collar and cuffs and edged with parti-color livery lace.

That livery was perceived as a mark of servitude can be inferred from a white servant's refusal to wear it. William Holland, a

Parson from Somerset, England, recorded in his journal that "Mr Charles my man it seems does not chuse to wear a Livery so he is to go at the month's end."<sup>20</sup> It is impossible for us to know what liveried slaves thought about their clothing. It was finer than the coarse, scratchy clothing of field slaves, and may well have carried an element of status within the slave community, especially as it indicated that the wearer held a job superior to working in tobacco fields.



Figure 9. Charles Calvert, *John Hesselius*. Oil on Canvas, 1761, 50 1/4" X 39 7/8". Collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art, gift of Alfred R. and Henry G. Riggs in Memory of General Lawrason Riggs, acc. no. 1941.4.

Household servants — even those in livery — could not always count on remaining in their positions and were sometimes transferred to less desirable work. Plantation owners did not allow economically valuable workers to be idle. George Washington gave specific instructions when he learned that his spinners were out of wool: “They must not be idle; nor ought the Sewers to have been so when they were out of thread: If they can find no other work, let them join the out door hands.”<sup>21</sup> Writing from Philadelphia in 1796, Washington sent instructions that Cyrus was to be prepared to come back into household service, gotten new clothes, and even given a more acceptable hair style:

I would have you again stir up the pride of Cyrus; that he may be the fitter for my purposes against I come home; sometime before which (that is as soon as I shall be able to fix on the time) I will direct him to be taken into the house, and clothes to be made for him. In the meantime, get him a strong horn comb and direct him to keep his head well combed, that the hair, or wool may grow long.<sup>22</sup>

The style and quality of clothing given to slaves depended upon their occupation, as well as their perceived importance and visibility to the white community. Household servants and personal body servants fared best. Thomas Jefferson suggested that his household servants received special treatment in a letter to his overseer, Edmund Bacon, early in the nineteenth century: “Clothes for the people are to be got from Mr. Higginbotham, of the kind heretofore got. I allow them a best striped blanket every three years . . . Mrs. Randolph always chooses the clothing for the house servants; that is to say, for Peter Hemings, Burwell, Edwin, Critta, and Sally.” He added that the rest of the servants were clothed in “Colored plains” or “cotton.”<sup>23</sup> If male household servants were not given livery, they wore suits based on those worn by white gentlemen. Walton, who had worked as a waiting man, ran away with four shirts, two suits of clothes, one with gilt buttons, along with “a Surtout Coat, Velvet Cap, Hat, and every Thing else suitable for a Waitingman.”<sup>24</sup> Females in similar positions were often clothed like white maids; Martha Washington’s maids wore gowns of relatively fine fabrics such as calico and linen.<sup>25</sup>

Although tradition has it that slaves routinely received “hand-me-down” clothing from whites, this was not the case

for most Virginia slaves. Those documents proving that clothing was handed down during the eighteenth century suggest that only favored or close personal servants — in other words, a small percentage of the total slave population — benefitted from the practice. Giving cast-off clothing to personal servants was an English tradition, and some colonists extended it to the blacks in their close employ. In South Carolina, there was reference in 1822 to “those waiting men who receive presents of old coats . . . from their masters.”<sup>26</sup> The tradition that slaves received hand-me-downs grew stronger in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A case in point is Sy Gilliat, a fiddler who played for white audiences in Richmond and vicinity during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1860 Sy’s costume was described as being “an embroidered silk coat and vest of faded lilac, small clothes [i.e. breeches], and silk stockings.” The author explained, “This court-dress was coeval with the reign of Lord Botetourt, and probably part of the fifty suits which, (according to the inventory he left) constituted his wardrobe. . . .”<sup>27</sup> By 1923, the author of *Richmond, Its People and Its Story* stated the tradition more strongly: “When he [Gilliat] and his fiddle graced formal occasions he is said to have appeared in one of the fifty court costumes of Lord Botetourt who had in Sy’s youth been his master.”<sup>28</sup> Although no slave named Sy, Simon or Cyrus is recorded in the service of Botetourt, it is possible he changed his name after leaving service — or he may not have worked for the Governor at all!<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, we need not rule out the story of Sy’s clothing, for the practice of distributing clothing to a few favored house servants is documented and may have been widespread. Mary Willing Byrd of Westover provided for her maid, Jenny Harris, in her 1813 will; according to the will, Jenny was to be emancipated “whenever she may chuse it.” She was to receive a small bedstead with its bed, bedding and curtains, as well as “such of my wearing apparel as my children may think proper for her to have.”<sup>30</sup> Joseph Ball sent from London used clothing from his own wardrobe and that of his “man Aron” to be given to several of the slaves at Morattico in Lancaster County. Ball wrote, “The old Cloths must be disposed of, as follows: The Grey Coat Wastecoat & breeches, with brass buttons, and the hat to poor Will: The Stuff Suit to Mingo: and the Dimmity Coat & breeches and the knife in the pocket to Harrison: and Aron’s Old Livery with one pair of the Leather breeches and one of the Linen frocks

to Moses. . . .” On another occasion he sent an old “banjan” (probably a banyan or dressing gown) and colored breeches, for Israel, black velvet breeches for Will, and another pair of breeches for Aaron, who was now residing in Virginia.<sup>31</sup> However, the great majority of slaves did not receive their master’s used clothing. Not only were there insufficient hand-me-downs to supply the thousands of field slaves working on large Virginia plantations, such clothing would have been considered inappropriate in style and fabric for the majority of slaves who had to labor outdoors. Even kindly Mary Willing Byrd charged her children with deciding which of her clothing was appropriate for Jenny to receive.

If liveried servants wore a very elaborate uniform, field slaves were allotted a uniform of another sort. Surviving accounts suggest that there was a sameness and recognizability in the clothing of field hands. Advertisements describe runaway men wearing clothes, “such as crop Negroes usually wear” or “the common dress of field slaves,” the latter spelled out as being Osnaburg shirts, cotton jackets and breeches, plaid hose, and Virginia made shoes.<sup>32</sup> To understand this fully, we must explore the ways in which plantation owners acquired clothing for their slaves.

Although some planters used locally-woven cloth for their slaves’ clothing, especially around the time of the Revolution, most of the materials for slaves’ clothing in the eighteenth century were imported from England.<sup>33</sup> A vast world-wide trade in textiles existed; they were shipped from China, India and Europe to England, where by law they had to land before being transhipped to the colonies. Two types of textiles became very important as slave goods: coarse linens from Germany and Scotland such as Osnaburg and rolls; and inexpensive woolens from England, Wales and Scotland, such as plains (fig. 10), plaid and a woolen textile with the unlikely name cotton. Local stores and planters ordered these textiles seasonally in large quantities. Robert Beverley bought most of his slaves’ fabrics from a Liverpool supplier; in 1768 he ordered 1000 ells of German Osnaburg, 300 yards of Kendal Cotton, 100 yards of pladding “for negroe children” and “60 ready-made Fear nothing waistcoats of the cheapest color.” He also ordered twenty-four dozen buttons, half of which were to be white metal in two sizes and another twelve dozen to be horn molds for coat buttons without shanks. The horn molds were covered with fabric that, when drawn up around the mould, formed its own shank on the back; one sees this type of covered button on men’s period wool coats. In July 1772,

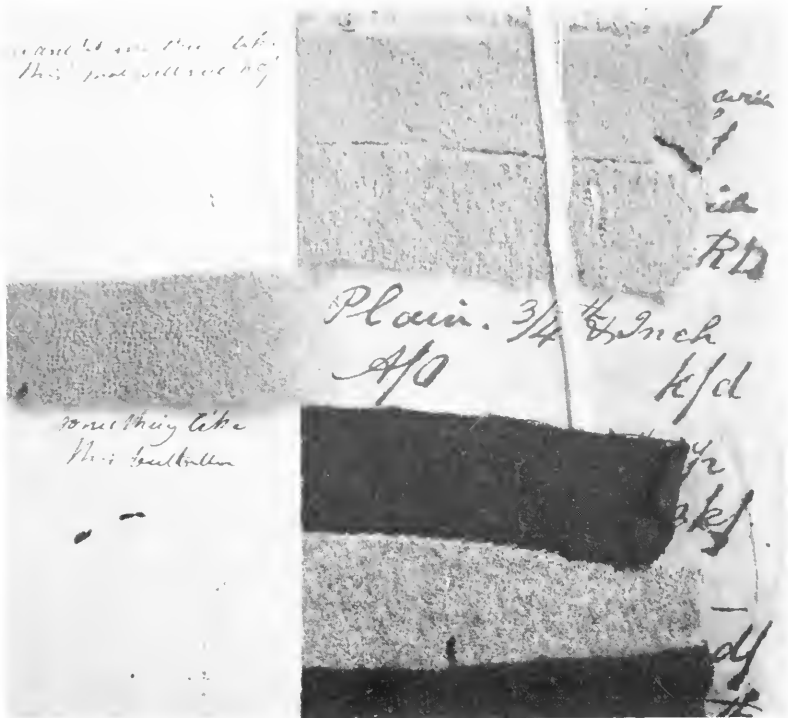


Figure 10. Detail from a merchant's sample book, England, ca. 1800. A swatch of coarse, fuzzy woolen is labelled "plain." The sample above is labelled "coating," one of the fabrics worn in Virginia by slaves and free men alike; the swatch below is broadcloth. Joseph Downs Manuscript Collection, Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum, mss. no. 69 X 216.

Beverley again ordered materials for the approaching winter season: 300 yards of Kendal Cotton, 100 yards of white plains for children, 500 yards each of British and German Osnaburg, thread, 12 dozen pair of plaid stockings, and for the "servants," a dozen coarse worsted stockings, another dozen brown thread (linen) stockings and 20 pair of shoes in "large & small Mens Size."<sup>34</sup>

There were periodic problems with the goods being delayed. George Washington still had not received his winter clothing by the end of September, 1757; he wrote, "I have waited till now, expecting the arrival of my Negro Cloaths from Great Britain; but as the season is advancing, and risks attending them, I can no longer depend [upon the shipment]. . . ." He was forced to get 250 yards of Osnaburg, 200 yards of cotton, "plad" hose

and thread from a local store.<sup>35</sup> Virginia plantation records indicate that most field slaves received only one winter suit a year; therefore, a delay would force them to wear last year's suit (if it was not worn out) until the new winter materials came in. Even when delays did not occur, some slaves must have felt the first cold weather keenly. Robert Carter specified that his slaves' winter clothes were not to be delivered until the first Monday in December.<sup>36</sup> Joseph Ball was more concerned about when clothes were received; his instructions to his nephew specified that the supplying "must be done in Good time; and not for the Winter to be half over before they get their winter Cloths, and the summer to be half over before they get their summer Cloths; as the Common Virginia fashion is."<sup>37</sup>

Once the hundreds of yards of textiles came in, they had to be made up into clothing. Some planters like Joseph Ball and Nathaniel Burwell hired tailors to make the woolen clothing. Burwell hired John Grymes to make "35 Suits for Crop People 9 1/6" and paid an extra 6 shillings for putting pockets into them.<sup>38</sup> Occasionally the planters' wives sewed some of the clothing themselves, especially in the case of smaller plantations; Sarah Fouace Nourse recorded that she cut out shirts and shifts and made jackets and petticoats for Cloe, one of her slaves.<sup>39</sup> This practice continued into the third quarter of the nineteenth century, after the sewing machine had come into general use, making the task easier. A Mississippi woman used her new machine to make clothing and other Christmas gifts for the slaves in 1860; Roxanna Chapin Gerdine wrote to Emily Chapin, "I can extol my sewing machine by the hour. My seamstress and I made one hundred sixty-five garments for the negroes in December — wool coats, pants, dresses and other garments besides thirty white boarded aprons for their Christmas gifts. They thought there never were such times. Had a tree on Christmas loaded with aprons, oranges, tobacco, and rag babies."<sup>40</sup>

Some slave holders like George Washington trained their female slaves to sew, especially linen shirts and shifts. In a letter of December 23, 1792, he complained that his "sewers" were working too slowly, producing only six shirts a week when their usual task was to make nine, and that one slave named Caroline had made only five. Two months later, he wrote that the gardener's wife should have cut out the linens, instead of Caroline, whom he suspected of dishonesty and embezzlement of materials.<sup>41</sup> Joseph Ball had some of the women skilled in sewing



make their own and their children's clothing; he wrote in 1743/4, "Bess, Winny, Nan, Hannah, and Frank, must have their shifts, and Linen Petticoats, and their Children's Linen, Cut out and thread and needles given them, and they must make them themselves. . . . The rest of the folks, must have their Linen made by somebody that will make it as it should be."<sup>42</sup>

The fact that all the field hands in any one season received a suit identical in fabric and color meant that there was a great deal of uniformity in their clothing, leaving little if any room for personal expression they had access to dyestuffs or other textiles. Such was the case of three men who ran away from a plantation in Cumberland County, Virginia, "all clothed in good white plains, good osnabruks shirts, and stockings made of the same sort of cloth as their clothes."<sup>43</sup> It is unlikely that each slave was fitted personally or carefully for his or her suit, and the ill-fitting — even if new — clothing also set slaves apart from those who could afford to have their clothing personally sized or skillfully altered. Ready-made clothing ordered by the dozens — Fearnothing jackets, plaid hose made of cut-and-sewn wool fabric, and knitted Monmouth caps — also added to the impression of uniformity and less-than-perfect fit. Even George Washington's suits of livery were ordered by the men's heights, rather than detailed measurements. In some cases, the clothing had to be altered immediately, as with the stockings received by Edward Ambler for his slave women. Ambler wrote on December 7, 1767 regarding the clothing just received, "I am apprehensive the women's stockings will prove too small. I should therefore be glad if you would give out some slips of Kendall's Cotton and thread to make them larger."<sup>44</sup> Ambler obviously was referring to plaid hose made of fabric, rather than knitted stockings; such woven stockings could be made larger by opening the seam and inserting a strip of Kendal cotton, a fabric similar to the wool used to make such stockings. The baggy stockings made of bias-cut and seamed wool fabric were a far cry from the finely-knit silk and linen stockings worn by the aristocracy, and even from the knitted wool and linen stockings worn by household servants.

If a slave's suit was ill-fitting at the beginning of the season, it was almost certainly stained, shapeless and ragged by the end of the season. Unless a slave was able to save a suit from the year before in wearable condition, he or she wore the same jacket and breeches or petticoat all winter. Washington's records suggest that slaves slept in their daytime clothing, especially during the winter

season; during one of his surveying trips, he wrote “. . . as the Lodging is rather too cold for the time of Year, I have never had my cloths off] but lay and sleep in them like a Negro. . . .”<sup>45</sup>

When workers were able to obtain scraps of fabric, they probably mended their own clothing when needed, but scraps must have been hard to come by. Anthony Whitting advised George Washington that many bags (probably grain or flour sacks) had been stolen, and Whitting recommended that the bags be marked on both sides and that “. . . Coarse Sacking of European Manufacture (which a Negro could not mend his Cloaths with without a discovery) might answer. . . .”<sup>46</sup> Textiles were valuable in the eighteenth century on all social levels, and must have been even more so to slaves, some of whom were not even allowed to cut out their own linens for fear they would steal material or waste fabric personalizing their garments. Along with clothing he sent for four male slaves, Joseph Ball sent rags which he directed should be distributed as his nephew saw fit; these may have been used for mending purposes.<sup>47</sup>

For summer, female slaves who worked outdoors received an extra linen petticoat to wear with their shift; men got a pair of summer breeches or trousers to wear with a shirt; both sexes would have worn their last winter’s wool jacket if it got cool during the summer season. Most planters whose records survive gave each field slave two shirts or shifts per year, though Landon Carter made his slaves provide their own extra shirt: “My people always made and raised things to sell and I oblige them [to] buy linnen to make their other shirt instead of buying liquor with their fowls.”<sup>48</sup> Richard Bennett of Nansemond County was somewhat more generous with his slaves; in addition to the typical yearly ration of two shirts or shifts, a waistcoat, breeches or petticoat, and summer clothes, he added a coat for the men, caps and aprons for the women, and two pairs of shoes, instead of one pair. His will of 1750 reads:

all the said negroes both young and old shall yearly and every year be well sufficiently and warmly clothed vizt: the men and Boys Two Shirts of best Double Sprigg Ozenbriggs or Other good Linnen, one waistcote and Breeches of best welch Cotton or penniston or Country made cloth, one coat of Kersey or mantu cloth, one pair of canvis breeches for summer, Two pairs of good shoes and stockings, one mill’d cap or felt hatt and the Women and Girls

with two Shifts of best Double Sprigg ozenbriggs or good Linnen, one waistcoat and Petticoat of best welch cotton or Penniston or Country made cloath, Two white Linnen caps, two aprons of check linnen, two pair of good shoes and stockings, one Petticoat of canvis or good Ozenbriggs or other good Linnen for Summertime, and the Children to have each of them Frocks for winter of good Cotton or Country made cloth and for summer frocks of strong brown linnen. . . .<sup>49</sup>

Most planters appear to have made an effort to provide shoes for the adult slaves. Joseph Ball instructed his nephew that all the workers should have "Good strong" shoes and stockings, but "they that go after the creatures or much in the Wet, must have two pair of shoes."<sup>50</sup> Washington's weekly reports for 1787 indicate that some slaves did not work because their shoes were being mended; one boy was "confined 6 days for want of Shoes."<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, some slaves probably worked barefoot. In 1732, William Hugh Grove reported that "the Negroes at the Better publick houses must not Wait on You unless in Clean shirts and Drawers and feet Washed," implying that they were barefoot.<sup>52</sup> Several males reported as runaways in the Virginia Gazette were described as having no shoes.

We have seen that the suits of most outdoor slaves were made of the same materials for all, both men and women. Not only were the materials often imported, but the style of the suits also came from English and Continental prototypes. During the period under discussion, status was shown in the clothing of whites by the choice of fabric and the quantity in which it was used, beautiful but non-functional trimmings like lace and needlework, elegance of style and fit, variety of styles, and the quantity of clothing one could afford. An upper-class woman's dress gown (fig. 11) might take 20 yards of brocaded silk, made into a style with a long, full skirt, open to reveal still more elaborate fabric in a decorative petticoat; the sleeve ruffles falling gracefully over the elbows might either have been expensive lace or whitework embroidery. In contrast, a typical poor woman's outfit used much less fabric, such as a short, loose gown of the type called a short gown or a more fitted waistcoat or jacket, all worn over a petticoat that was shortened to the ankles to make movement easier. This contrast was shown by the French encyclopedist Diderot. His engraved illustration (fig. 12) for the *Couturiere* shows a woman



*Figure 11. Woman's gown and matching petticoat of brocaded silk, worn in Virginia, but made from imported English silk, 1760-70, LOA: 58 1/2", waist: approximately 24". Collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, gift of Mrs. R. Keith Kane, acc. no. G1975-340, 1-2. The gown was worn by Elizabeth Daudridge Aylett Henley, sister of Martha Washington.*

wearing a fine gown contrasted with the servant in a "juste," or close-fitting body garment, worn with a short petticoat. As early as the seventeenth century, this type of two-piece suit was associated with poorer women. Randle Holme's 1688 *Academy of Armory* described the waistcoat as "the outside of a Gown

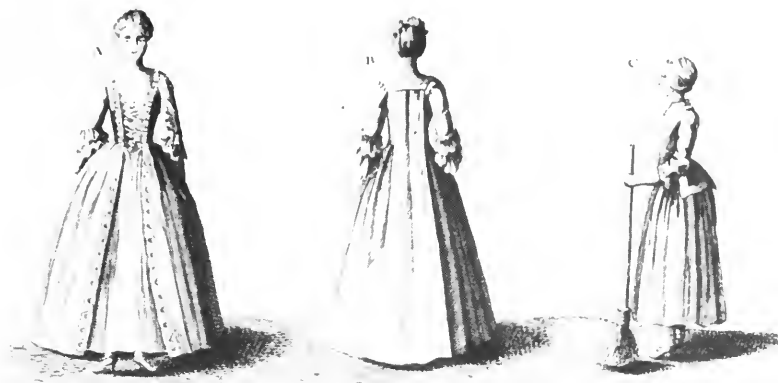


Figure 12. "Couturiere," (detail) contrasting "dress" clothing with servant's clothing, from the supplement to Diderot's *Encyclopedie*, France, line engraving on paper, 1777, 9 X 14 1/4". Collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc. no. 1966-221.

without either staves or bodies fastened to it; It is an Habit or Garment generally worn by the middle and lower sort of Women, having Goared skirts, and some wear them with Stomachers."<sup>53</sup> Virginia planters adopted this European style as appropriate for their laboring slave women. The black women (fig. 13) shown



Figure 13. An Overseer Doing His Duty, Sketched from Life near Fredericksburg, Benjamin Latrobe, pencil, pen and ink and watercolor on paper, 1798, 7 X 10 1/4". Collection of the Maryland Historical Society, acc. no. III.21.

working in the fields painted by Latrobe are wearing very similar waistcoats, complete with “goared skirts,” or tabs extending over the hips; the women’s petticoats are short enough to be practical.

Men’s dress clothing (fig. 14) was a three-piece suit, consisting of knee breeches worn with a waistcoat beneath an outer coat; the shirt was fine bleached linen, often ruffled. In contrast the typical working man’s outfit (see figs. 1, 5) was a shorter form of coat, called a jacket or waistcoat, worn with breeches and a shirt of lesser-quality linen. In occupations where knee breeches with their tight bands around the leg were too constricting, trousers of various lengths and styles were adopted, and it was this working man’s outfit that was used for slave laborers. Planters naturally transferred their conception of what poor working people customarily wore to clothing for their slaves, using cheap but relatively sturdy fabrics. Robert Carter III of Nomini Hall delivered such clothing to his overseers on various plantations in November, 1773; the slave men and boys received a waistcoat, a pair of breeches and two shirts each; the women and girls received a jacket, petticoat and two shifts each. In addition, some people received shoes and plaid hose, and plaid fabric was delivered to make clothing for the little children.<sup>54</sup> In a 1798 court case in which he sued his renter, Benjamin Berkely, Carter clearly specified the clothing he expected his slaves to receive:

each male Negro 9 years old, and upwards to have one Waistcoat and breeches, one pair of Woolen Hose one pair of Summer Breeches, two oznabrigs shirts, one Blankett, and one pair of Shoes each, Each Female Negro 8 years old and upwards to have one Jackcoat and Petticoat one pair of Woolen Hose, two oznaburg shifts, one blankett, one summer Petticoat, one one [sic] pair of Shoes each, of the younger Negroes to have one Woollen frock, the males one shirt the females one shift, the summer Breeches and Petticoats & Shirts & Shifts for Children to be furnished the first Monday in June, the other cloathing & Blanketts to be furnished the first Monday in December.<sup>55</sup>

Carter charged Berkely with failure to fulfill the terms of his rental agreement, including providing proper clothing for the 19 slaves, and the court ruled in his favor. Obviously, slaves were at the mercy of overseers and renters, even when their owners had every intention of providing sufficient clothing.



*Figure 14. George Booth as a Young Man, William Dering. Oil on canvas, Virginia, 1740-50, 50" X 40". Collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc. no. 1975-242. Booth, who lived in Gloucester County, Virginia, wears the three-piece suit and fine white shirt appropriate to a gentleman.*

Throughout the Virginia records, there is strong indication that better clothing was assigned to productive workers than to those who were not contributing as much. Economics took precedence over sentiment or humanity. Washington ordered two qualities of blankets and Osnaburg in 1795, adding “. . . let the better sort of Linnen be given to the grown people, and the most deserving; whilst the more indifferent sort is served to the

younger ones and worthless.” Regarding the blankets, the larger and better ones were to go to the adults.<sup>56</sup>

Little children were among those who received clothing made of “indifferent” textiles. Several travelers to America described the harsh life of slave children. During the 1790s, Julian Vrsyn Niemcewicz visited Washington’s plantation where he entered a slave “hut.” Niemcewicz observed that the “husband and wife sleep on a mean pallet, the children on the ground. . . .”; he added later that “Gl. Washington treats his slaves far more humanely than do his fellow citizens of Virginia.”<sup>57</sup> A Frenchman who visited a slave home in Maryland looking for a drink of water observed “Some little Negro boys and girls, naked, [who] offered us a gourd that they had just filled. These children were thin; naps of tawny hair which covered their temples indicated lack of nourishment, or poor quality: their restless eyes fearfully looked us up and down.”<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, most plantation owners did provide materials to clothe children, although in less quantity and of poorer quality than the clothing of the more economically-valuable workers. Children who had reached the age of 7 to 9 began to work alongside adults, and therefore wore clothing like their adult counterparts. Younger children of both sexes wore dresses — usually called frocks — just as white children at the time did. Joseph Ball’s slave children were to receive one “coat” and two shirts or shifts per year; the coat was to be of “Worser Cotton, or Plaiding, or Virginia Cloth” and the shirts and shifts of Osnaburg. Ball also directed that baby clothes be made from old sheets or other old linen torn up for the purpose until he could send “proper” things at a later date.<sup>59</sup> We have already seen that Robert Carter allowed little children only one shirt or shift, along with a woolen frock. Although Richard Bennet gave the children both summer and winter frocks, neither Ball nor Carter mentioned extra summer clothing or shoes for the children under working age, lending credence to travellers’ accounts of some children being naked and barefoot.

Between the well-clothed personal servants on one hand and plantation field workers on the other lay a whole group of slaves who worked at other trades, and whose clothing (fig. 15) reflected greater variety based on their occupations. The descriptions of clothing worn by runaway slaves advertised in colonial newspapers give a fascinating glimpse of what is otherwise largely unrecorded. As we would expect, some runaways wore patched and mismatched clothing. Sypbax, a blacksmith “lately bought” from





**R**UN away from the subscriber in *Chesterfield*, about the end of *August* last, a middle sized Negro man named **WILL**, about 30 years old, of a yellowish complexion, very much marked on his face, arms, and breast, in country fashion, speaks very broken, and can hardly tell his master's name; had on when he went away a new *ohnaburgs* shirt, *Virginia* linnen short trousers, old cotton jacket, and felt hat, with part of the brim burnt off. He has made three attempts, as he said, to get to his country, but was apprehended. All masters of vessels are hereby forewarned from carrying the said slave out of the colony. Whoever apprehends him, and brings him to me, shall have 20 s. reward, besides what the law allows.

JORDAN ANDERSON.



**R**UN away from the subscriber in *Chesterfield*, the *Wednesday* before *Easter* last, a bright mulatto wench named **JUDE**, about 30 years old, is very remarkable, has lost one eye, but which I have forgot, has long black hair, a large scar on one of her elbows, and several other scars in her face, and has been subject to running away ever since she was ten years old. I have great reason to think she will pass for a free woman, and endeavour to make into *South Carolina*. She is very knowing about house business, can spin, weave, sew, and iron, well. She had on when she went away her winter clothing, also a blue and white striped *Virginia* cloth gown, a *Virginia* cloth cap, and white striped coat, besides others too tedious to mention. Whoever conveys the said slave to me shall be well rewarded for their trouble.

MARY CLAY.

Figure 15. Two advertisements for runaway slaves. *Virginia Gazette*, Purdie & Dixon, 20 Oct. 1768, *Virginia Historical Society*. Photostat courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Will retains the facial markings from his homeland, and his clothing is typical of what a field slave would have at the end of the summer when he ran away. Jude is described as "very knowing" about house business, including sewing.

Maryland, ran away from Middlesex county wearing a brown cloth coat with "two patches on the left Side of the Back sewed in with white Thread;" he also took striped Virginia cloth breeches, several brown linen and white shirts, and a waistcoat.<sup>60</sup> In addition to the typical cotton waistcoat and breeches, a runaway named Jack had a coarse felt hat with part of the crown burned.<sup>61</sup> Sterling, who had been born in the West Indies and was scarred from severe whipping, had a jacket of a bluish or purple color, "the jacket being too narrow, had a piece of cloth put in to widen it at the

neck and shoulders;" in addition to the Osnaburg shirt and breeches he was wearing, Sterling also took his blanket.<sup>62</sup> Sixteen-year-old Billy was colorfully dressed in a green plains waistcoat and breeches, worn with a brown cloth coat that had red sleeves and collar.<sup>63</sup>

Some slaves had relatively large quantities and varieties of clothing, including articles considered fashionable in white society. Harry, a runaway slave who dealt in oysters and fish in Williamsburg, was wearing a black wig, in spite of the fetters he had on his legs.<sup>64</sup> Sambo was clothed in the usual "Negro cotton" jacket and wide-kneed trousers, but he had a cocked-up hat and wore large buckles in his shoes.<sup>65</sup> Joe, who always had been kept as a waiting man, had "a variety of cloaths," including two hats, one bound with black ferret and the other "laced," a blue Newmarket coat, several white shirts, a leaden colored cloth coat and vest, leather breeches, and several other items.<sup>66</sup> Joseph Ball's manservant, Aron Jameson, was sent to Virginia from England supplied with a large cask of personal effects, including a mattress, feather bolster, coverlets, old bedclothes, three suits, one of them new, twelve shirts and neckcloths, and a violin.<sup>67</sup> David Gratentread, a mulatto slave who "plays the fiddle extremely well," carried away his fiddle and the following items:

a new brown cloth waistcoat, lapelled, lined with white taminy, and yellow gilt buttons, a new pair of buckskin breeches, gold laced hat, a fine Holland [linen] shirt, brown cut wig, and several old clothes that I cannot remember, except an old lapelled kersey waistcoat.<sup>68</sup>

Leather breeches, usually made of buckskin, were worn by men of all social levels, including Virginia slaves. It is possible that some of the breeches were made here; in 1766, James Terrell, by trade a leather breeches maker, ran away from George Cousins wearing a pair of leather breeches, possibly of his own making.<sup>69</sup> However, many leather breeches were reaching Virginia stores from abroad. In 1766, Balfour and Barraud of Norfolk had London-made leather breeches for sale in their store; other Virginia merchants sold leather breeches imported from Philadelphia and Europe.<sup>60</sup>

Throughout the eighteenth century, leather breeches had been a favorite garment for everyday wear by English country gentlemen, especially for riding. They were not limited to the



*Figure 16. Leather breeches with a history of having been worn in Massachusetts by a slave, Jack Durfee, who later was able to purchase land near Plymouth Avenue in Taunton, 1760-90. Collection of Old Sturbridge Village, acc. no. 26.40.21. The breeches are of buff colored leather.*

gentry, however, for working men also chose them for their durability in occupations where fabric breeches might have been more easily torn or snagged. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, many of the styles formerly associated with countrymen and laborers were taken over into high style, and leather breeches became accepted in fashionable circles.<sup>71</sup> In Virginia, they continued to be worn by workingmen for practical reasons, at the same time they were becoming more fashionable among the gentry. The leather breeches of Virginia slaves probably resembled those (figs. 16, 17, and 18) surviving at Old Sturbridge Village with a history of having been worn by a free black man in Massachusetts; they are well constructed in a style similar to dress breeches, with fall front, side pockets, and buttons to a buckled knee band.

Trousers — which show up in approximately one out of eight slave runaway ads — were another workingman's garment that later entered high style, and in various forms have continued to be worn by men to this day. Worn by sailors, peasants, convicts and other workers throughout the eighteenth century in Europe,



*Figure 17. Detail of knee buttons and band on the leather breeches. The leather-covered buttons are fastened on by pushing the shanks through holes in the leather; a leather thong is then pulled through the shank of each button to prevent their being torn off during strenuous work. The knee band is made to accommodate a knee buckle.*

trousers were a practical alternative to breeches with their tight-fitting bands below the knee. Virginia trousers were usually made of coarse linens, which added to the practicality, as they could be more easily washed than woolen breeches. Today usually thought of as long pants, the trousers (see fig. 1) worn in early Virginia came in a variety of lengths, ranging from just below the knee down to the shoe tops, and were sometimes very full — described as “wide or wide-kneed.” Virginia craftsmen, both black and white, sometimes layered the full trousers over breeches; in 1777 a mulatto slave named James ran away wearing “leather



*Figure 18. Leather breeches, detail of fall front and waist area. The waist measures about 30 inches.*

breeches, and linen trousers over them.”<sup>72</sup> These layered trousers probably resembled those worn by the man holding a spear in John Singleton Copley’s “Watson and the Shark”; one clearly sees the man’s knee breeches under very full, culotte-like trousers.

Sometimes slave runaways wore specialized clothing associated with their occupation. Peter ran away from the schooner *Warwick* near the mouth of the Potomac River wearing typical seamen’s clothing — striped flannel trousers, a light colored pea jacket, and a straw hat covered with a “tarpawlin.”<sup>73</sup> Ben, a farmer and gardener who ran away from a plantation in Gloucester County took with him the “leather leggins” often worn by farmers.<sup>74</sup> Several blacksmiths ran away with their protective aprons, including Jemmy, who “usually wears a leather apron.”<sup>75</sup> Isaac (fig. 19), a blacksmith employed on Thomas Jefferson’s plantation later sat for his daguerreotype portrait around 1845 wearing his apron, probably resembling the one Jemmy wore.

The most typical suit worn by female runaways was the waistcoat or jacket worn with a matching petticoat, such as we have seen assigned to field slaves. The suits (see fig. 13) were typically made of woolen, but several women wore linen, especially in the summer months. Lydia, who ran away in July of 1770,



Figure 19. Isaac, *daguerreotype*, c. 1845, 2 1/8" X 3 1/4". Collection of the Tracy W. McGregor Library, University of Virginia Library. Isaac, formerly the blacksmith slave of Thomas Jefferson, is shown wearing his smith's apron.

had a white Osnaburg jacket and petticoat.<sup>76</sup> Another unidentified women who ran away in July of 1786 wore an Osnaburg waistcoat and petticoat; she was described as "very big with child."<sup>77</sup> Although many slave women wore solid colored clothing, several of the ensembles described in runaway advertisements were made of striped Virginia or country cloth (figs. 20, 21).<sup>78</sup> Besides the jacket-petticoat suits, some slave women wore gowns. We have already examined the clothing worn by Aggie, who had a pair of stays, a striped calimanco or worsted gown, silver buckles, and

silver bobs. Several runaways are described as having clothing “too tedious to mention.” Jude, who was good at spinning, weaving, sewing and ironing, ran away in “her winter clothing,” but she also had a blue and white striped Virginia cloth gown, a Virginia cloth copperas and white striped coat (probably a petticoat), and other clothes “too tedious to mention.”<sup>79</sup> A woman named Milla ran away in 1772 wearing “a short striped Virginia cloth gown and petticoat, oznabrig shift and bonnet.” The subscriber added that she endeavors to pass for a free woman.<sup>80</sup>



Figure 20. Alexander Spotswood Payne and his Brother, John Robert Dandridge Payne, with their Nurse, *oil on canvas, c. 1790, 56" X 69"*. Collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, gift of Dorothy Payne, acc. no. 53.24.

Many slaves were able to obtain clothing similar to that of free men and women, and there is a suggestion in the records that better clothing might allow slaves to rise in status. Amy was accused of stealing an indenture and, her master suggested, had clothing to help her maintain a new identity; she “had when she went away silver buckles, and change of apparel, which makes her appear more like a free woman.”<sup>81</sup>

Taken as a whole, a study of slaves’ clothing through plantation records and runaway advertisements reveals several important facts.<sup>82</sup> There was a great diversity within the slave

community. Occupation and status were as obvious as they were in the free community. Eighteenth-century observers could determine readily from the clothing and fabric whether a slave was working as an upper level household servant, a field hand or a craftsman. Status did not necessarily depend on how new the clothing was; a waiting man wearing an old suit handed down from his master was undoubtedly considered better dressed than a field hand with a brand new suit of coarse Negro cotton made



*Figure 21. Detail of Payne portrait. Standing alongside young John in his child's shift, the young nurse is wearing a short petticoat and a striped waistcoat with the edges of her linen shift showing at the elbows and around the low neckline; she is also wearing beads.*



exactly like all the other slaves' suits. In Virginia, fabric and trimming, rather than garment type, seem to have determined the status of the clothing. This especially is seen in the widespread use of coarse woolsens such as "cottons" and plains for slaves' clothing; only a few white indentured runaways wore those fabrics which were so closely associated with slavery. The Anglo-European origin of slaves' clothing is clear, both in fabric and style. While the suits of field slaves were distinguished by type and textile, the clothing of male slave runaways working in skilled trades differed little from that of indentured white runaways, whether from choice or (more likely) because that was the clothing most readily available. Female runaway slaves wore a higher proportion of jacket-and-petticoat ensembles than did runaway white women; even so, some slaves did wear gowns, as we have seen.

Although a great deal is known about the clothing given to Virginia slaves, questions still remain. The plantation records and runaway advertisements were written by whites and so express the intentions and interpretations of the white community. Perhaps the biggest unanswered questions are how slaves and free blacks communicated their individual personalities and cultural heritage through clothing and accessories and how our twentieth-century eyes can detect those expressions. Self expression may have been too subtle to be detected and therefore condemned by whites, such as obtaining clothing in a color like red that had been favored for wearing apparel in Africa.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps some field hands individualized their white suits by dyeing them with whatever dyestuffs could be found. Were natural materials used for adornment when jewelry could not be obtained? Were some of the caches of buttons found on archaeological sites of slave dwellings used — as the author suspects — as beads for adornment? We have, perhaps, one indication of personalized adornment in the early-nineteenth century descriptions of free blacks — both men and women — whose ears were "perforated for the purpose of wearing Ear rings."<sup>84</sup> Perhaps individuality lay in how the clothing was worn, such as wrapping a handkerchief around the head to make a turban (fig. 22) in African fashion, rather than wearing it around the neck and shoulders, as in the white community.<sup>85</sup> Cultural expression could take the form of clothing left off, rather than worn; in some tribes, African children went seminude until puberty, and the reports of poor unclothed slave children in America may be missing the concept of nakedness as an extension of African custom.<sup>86</sup> One would like to find a



Figure 22. Sallie Gladman, Mammy of Edward V. Valentine, *daguerreotype*, Richmond, Virginia, c. 1850, 3'' x 3 5/8.'' Sallie wears a large white handkerchief in the fashion of the late eighteenth century; she wears a white cap or headwrap. Lydia Jean Wares points out that mammies in the low country of South Carolina wore white turbans to mark their status; Sallie's head covering may stem from a similar tradition in Virginia (Lydia Jean Wares, "Dress of the African-American Woman in Slavery and Freedom: 1500-1935," Ph.D. diss., Purdue University, 1981, p. 148).

surviving garment made by one of the many black seamstresses working in Virginia. It is clear that even rural slaves working on plantations had access to money through the sale of products they grew, but one wants to know more about what they purchased with their money. And where did poor people (both black and white) get their clothing? In England the buying and selling of

used clothing was a thriving trade. David Walker, who had been born in North Carolina to a slave father and a free mother, set up a successful used-clothing business after he moved to Boston, Massachusetts around 1827.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps time will turn up evidence of used clothing sales among blacks in eighteenth century Virginia.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, we can hope that time will answer many of our remaining questions about the clothing of enslaved people in America.

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## GLOSSARY OF FABRIC AND CLOTHING TERMS

**Breeches** (see fig. 16): Men's pants that ended just above or (more often) just below the knee, where they fastened around the leg with a band. The waist and center front closed with buttons that were covered by a "fall" or flap during the second half of the century. Slaves' breeches were usually made of coarse, inexpensive woolens for the winter and linen for the summer; a few craftsmen had leather breeches like those worn by white workers.

**Canvas, canvis:** Coarse, heavy linen.

**Coat:** (Male, see fig. 14) A sleeved body-garment, worn as the uppermost layer of a three-piece suit; a great-coat was an overcoat worn for warmth. (Female) Coat usually refers to the woman's petticoat. (Children) Joseph Ball in 1744 instructed that the slave children should have a woolen "coat" and a shirt or shift; this may refer to a petticoat, but it more likely refers to a skirted frock made with sleeves and a front opening, of the type one sees in portraits of white children (see Linda Baumgarten, *Eighteenth-Century Clothing at Williamsburg*, Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg, 1986, p. 75). Ball may have been using an archaic term, which once meant an everyday loose tunic worn from the thirteenth century.

**Cotton:** (Depending on origin and type, described as Kendall, Welsh, and Negro cotton.) During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the term "cotton" was used in two contrasting ways; it indicated fabrics made of cotton fiber as well as woolens that were napped or "cottoned" to give a fuzzy appearance resembling the fluffy fibers of the cotton boll. The "cotton" used for slaves' clothing and blankets during the period under discussion was usually the woolen fabric. Governor Dinwiddie reported in 1755 that ". . . The People in Y's Dom'n [Virginia] are supplied from G. B. with all sorts of Woolen Manufactories such as B'd [broad] Cloth, Kersey, Duffils, Cottons. . . ." (R. A. Brock, editor, *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, vol. 1, Richmond, Va: Virginia Historical Society, 1883, p. 385). This important trade in English woolens was disrupted just prior to and during the Revolution, but quickly resumed shortly thereafter. In 1822, James Butterworth described the trade in Welsh and Kendal cottons from Britain, adding that they "are used chiefly for Negro clothing in America, and the West Indies. . . ." (Florence Montgomery, *Textiles in America 1650-1870*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1984, p. 206.) During the late eighteenth into the nineteenth centuries, the cotton plant gained greater importance in the southern economy, and some plantations could grow enough cotton to make shirts and shifts for slaves or to weave mixed wool and cotton fabrics for slaves' use.

**Crocus:** A coarse linen fabric used for slave's trousers.

**Drawers:** Men's pants. Although the term usually was used to indicate a man's undergarment, it occasionally was used to refer to an outer garment. William Hugh Grove, a visitor to Virginia in 1732, reported that blacks waiting on customers in the better public houses wore clean shirts and drawers. He also described the summer clothing of many gentry men as being a "White Holland West Coat & drawers" (*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Jan. 1977, pp. 22, 29).

**Fearnothing, fernaught:** A sturdy and thick wool fabric that was used to make men's jackets and waistcoats. Ready-made fearnothing jackets and other "Negro Cloathing" were available from London shops (Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1715- 1789*, London: B. T. Batsford, 1984, pp. 61-2).

**Frock:** A child's dress worn by both sexes until boys were breeched; or a man's coat with a collar, such as the livery coat (see fig. 9) worn in the Calvert painting.

**Gown** (see figs. 11, 12): The term used in the eighteenth century for a woman's dress. Gowns were not worn by field laborers, although household servants and some other upper-level slave women had gowns; typical fabrics used for slaves' gowns were linen, calico cotton, striped Virginia cloth and striped callimanco (worsted).

**Handkerchief** (see fig. 22): A large square or triangle of cloth worn as a neckerchief by both men and women. When made of fine, sheer fabrics, handkerchiefs were worn as fashionable accessories by white women; less fine striped, printed and solid handkerchiefs were worn by working-class men and women. Slave women sometimes used the handkerchief as a head wrap, a fashion that originated in Africa and became identified with black women in America. Lydia Jean Wares quoted a slave, Osifekunde, who had been sold into slavery in 1756; his memoirs spoke of West African women using red cloth to make a kerchief rolled like a turban around the head. European- and Indian-made handkerchiefs were reaching Africa through the textile trade, and it must have been natural for transported African women to continue this fashion in America, as handkerchiefs from the same sources reached America (Lydia Jean Wares, "Dress of the African-American Woman in Slavery and Freedom: 1500-1935" Ph.D. diss., Purdue University, 1981). Betsey, who ran away in 1823, had her hair "platted" and had a handkerchief which she wore "round her head in sugar-loaf form" (*Richmond Enquirer*, 21 Mar. 1823).

**Jacket, jackcoat** (see figs. 12, 13, and 21): (Female) A woman's fitted bodice with  $3/4$  or long sleeves with a front closure, worn with a separate petticoat to form a work suit. Jackets and petticoats were the traditional work costume for European white women, and their use was quickly adopted for slave women. The name evolved from the "jack," a short, close-fitting garment worn by men and women during the 14th century; in 1798, Robert Carter still used the term "jackcoat" to refer to a garment for slave women (Carter Vs. Berkeley, Dumfries Court records, May 1798). The jackets worn by Virginia runaway women were primarily of unpatterned wool fabrics, although one is described as "check'd" and another striped in black and white. Charleston runaways also wore jackets, one of striped blue and white callimanco (worsted) with blue "Negro cloth" sleeves (Audrey Michie, "Goods Proper for South Carolina: Textiles Imported 1738-1742," M. A. thesis, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1978). The terms Jacket and Waistcoat apparently were used interchangeably in Virginia. (Male, see figs. 1, 5, and 15) A short coat worn with breeches was a workman's suit. Jackets usually had sleeves, but a few runaway Virginia slaves were described as wearing jackets without sleeves. Although jackets usually were buttoned, one white runaway had a jacket that was laced rather than buttoned (*Virginia Gazette*, ed. Hunter, 20 Oct. 1752). Men could layer jackets for extra warmth; in 1774, Caesar ran away with "an upper jacket, made out of a blanket, and an under one, of negro cotton, without skirts . . ." (*Virginia Gazette*, Pinkney, 10 November, 1774.) As with women's clothing, the terms jacket and waistcoat were essentially interchangeable, a thesis supported by the phrasing of an order by South Carolinian Robert Pringle; he asked for an elaborately-trimmed "Jackett or Waist Coat" for his own wear (Robert Pringle to David Glen in London, 22 Jan. 1738/9 in Walter B. Edgar, ed., *The Letterbook of Robert Pringle*, vol. 1, Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1972, p. 63).

**Kersey:** Inexpensive, coarse woolen woven in twill weave; late in the eighteenth century, some Lancashire manufacturers made cotton velvets which they also called Kerseys (Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, pp. 272-3).

**Monmouth cap:** A close-fitting knitted wool cap without a wide brim, made in Monmouth, England and usually worn by men. Some slave owners ordered Monmouth caps by the dozen for their slaves' winter headgear. (Monmouth caps are described and pictured in Kirstie Buckland, "Monmouth Caps," *Costume*, 13 [1979]).

**Negro shoes:** Coarse shoes made both in England and in the colonies for slaves' use. Although their exact appearance is not known, they probably did not have buckles (as did fashionable shoes) and they may have been made of unblackened leather. An order for lasts for Negro shoes received by James Carter in 1771 also included 2000 hob nails, suggesting that the shoes were hobnailed like the clogs of English countrymen (Francis Norton Mason, ed., *John Norton and Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia*, Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1937, p. 152). George Washington inquired about Philadelphia leather for "Negro shoes;" he indicated that the leather should be unblackened, and that the shoes would have three soles (John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington*, Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-40, vol. 28, p. 492).

**Osnaburg, oznaburgh, osnaburgh, oznabrigh, oznaburg:** Coarse linen or hemp fabric made in Germany and some parts of Great Britain, imported by the thousands of yards for slaves' shirts and shifts. Osnaburg apparently was unbleached or "brown," as suggested by the runaways who are described as taking both "white" and "osnaburgh" shirts. In the nineteenth century, osnaburg was sometimes made of cotton fiber.

**Penistone:** Coarse woolen, sometimes napped, made in Yorkshire.

**Petticoat, pettycoat** (see figs. 11, 12, and 13): A woman's skirt with fitted waist, full skirt, and worn calf-length or longer. When worn with dress gowns, petticoats were often of the same fine fabric, as they showed beneath the open skirt; working women wore petticoats with jackets or waistcoats to form a suit. Landon Carter indicated in his Diary that his slave women's petticoats required four yards of fabric (Jack P. Greene, ed., *The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778*, vol. 2, Richmond, Va: Virginia Historical Society, 1987, p. 1040, 15 May 1776). Many middle and upper class women wore underpetticoats to add fullness and warmth to their skirts, although field slaves were not issued underpetticoats.

**Plaid, plad:** An inexpensive woolen textile, not necessarily patterned, made in Scotland; it was ordered for slave children's clothing and used to make cloth hose for men and women.

**Plaid hose:** Stockings for men and women made of the fabric called plaid, not usually patterned. These fabric stockings evolved from a long tradition in England, where poor people wore warm but ill-fitting hose cut on the bias of the fabric and seamed up the back of the leg. Wool Kersey stockings were widely exported and worn by poor people during the sixteenth and seventeenth century; although that trade died out in the 1630s, it was replaced by plaid hose, which were available to the American market as ready-made goods (for a discussion of kersey stockings, see Pauline Croft, "The Rise of the English Stocking Export Trade," *Textile History* 18, no. 1, Spring, 1987).

**Plain, plains:** Simply-woven, coarse woolen fabric, made in Wales, and used for slaves' winter jackets, breeches and petticoats; so important was it to the

trade in slave goods that it was often called "Negro plains." The most common colors of plain were white, blue, and green. A labelled sample of early nineteenth century plain survives in a textile pattern book in the collections of the Winterthur Museum Library; the swatch is a tabby-woven woolen with a slightly napped surface (ms. no. 69X216).

**Rolls:** Coarse linen, often described as "brown," indicating that it was not bleached. Used to make summer petticoats and breeches, as well as hats for slaves.

**Sagathy:** Thin wool fabric woven in twill weave, related to serge; occasionally mixed with silk and sometimes woven with a white warp and a colored filling. Some slave men owned sagathy clothing. A swatch published by Florence Montgomery shows flecks in the weave, giving it a mottled appearance (Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, plate D-59).

**Shift:** A woman's undergarment made of unpatterned linen or cotton, with a scoop neckline, sleeves to the elbows, and worn knee length (see fig. 14). All women wore a shift under their outer clothing, whether that was a gown or a two-piece suit. Slave women's shifts were almost always Osnauburg, sometimes described as "brown," indicating that the linen was unbleached. During the summer, slave women apparently worked in a shift and petticoat, as no other summer clothing was typically issued. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the shift was sometimes called a "smock"; in the nineteenth century the name evolved to "chemise."

**Short Gown:** A woman's gown with shortened skirt, apparently cut looser than most longer gowns, and with sleeves cut in one with the bodice, rather than being set in. Short gowns were worn as a bodice with a petticoat to form a working woman's suit. Most slaves wore jackets or waistcoats, instead of short gowns, though one runaway slave had on "a short striped Virginia cloth gown and petticoat" in 1772 (*Va. Gaz.*, ed. Rind, 19 Nov. 1772). It is unclear whether this was merely a fitted gown with short skirt, or whether this meant one of the unfitted short gowns that survive in museum collections (See Claudia Kidwell, "Short Gowns," *Dress*, 4, 1978, and Baumgarten, *Eighteenth-Century Clothing at Williamsburg*, pp. 30-1).

**Trousers, trowsers** (see fig. 1): Men's pants without a knee band. During the eighteenth century, they were worn by workmen, and could be anywhere from knee to ankle length; they were usually worn looser than fashionable clothing, and were sometimes worn over a man's breeches as an overall. In the early nineteenth century, long trousers were taken over into men's fashionable wear. Runaway advertisements indicate that approximately one out of eight slaves wore trousers, sometimes described as "short," "wide" or "wide-kneed." These "wide" trousers resembled a pair of women's coulottes. George Washington specifically requested that the trousers be made short: ". . . What does the Gardeners wife in her report mean by Trowsers? She is not making them longer than common breeches I presume. This wd. be a great consumption of cloth" (George Washington to Anthony Whiting, 9 Dec. 1792, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. 32, p. 259). Trousers were usually made of linen which could be easily washed, such as crocus, Osnauburg, or rolls.

**Waistcoat, wastcoat:** (Female) A fitted bodice worn with a petticoat to form a workwoman's suit; a jacket. Randle Holme's 1688 *Academy of Armor* described women's waistcoats as unstiffened bodices with gored skirts, worn by middle and lower sorts of women. Virginia slave women's waistcoats continued this tradition, though one runaway was described as having a waistcoat

of a different sort. The green plains waistcoat worn by Venus in 1767 had "metal buttons and button holes instead of a lace before, [that is, instead of being laced up the front] and without skirts" (*Va. Gaz.*, Purdie & Dixon, 5 Feb. 1767). The waistcoats of most field slaves were made of unpatterned woolen such as plains or cotton, matching the winter petticoat, but several runaway slave women had striped waistcoats. (Male) The waistcoats worn by middle and upper class men usually took the form of a vest worn as part of a three piece suit; the waistcoats worn by workmen were short coats or jackets, usually with sleeves and buttons in the front. Apparently similar, if not identical to the jacket, Virginia slaves' waistcoats usually took the place of a coat, being made of warm woolen fabrics like plains and cotton.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Fred Shelly, ed., "The Journal of Ebenezer Hazard in Virginia, 1777," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 62, no. 4 (Oct. 1954): 409-10.
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3. Gregory A. Stiverson and Patrick H. Butler III, eds., "Virginia in 1732, The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, (Jan. 1977): 31-32.
4. James Revel, "The Poor Unhappy Transported Felon's Sorrowful Account of his Fourteen[!] Years Transportation, at Virginia, in America," ca. 1765-1775, reprint, with notes by John Melville Jennings, in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 56, no. 2 (Apr. 1948): 191.
5. See Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1986) and Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery American Freedom, The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975).
6. Morgan, *American Slavery*, p. 331.
7. Hunter Dickinson Farish, ed., *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian* (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 1983), p. 207, journal entry for 17 Aug. 1774.
8. See, for example, E. Haytley, "An Extensive View from the Terrace of Sanford Priory," and Lambert, "View from Sandleford Priory toward Newton," in *British Life through Painters Eyes, 1740-1840, and Some Aspects of Dutch Landscape, 1640-1680*, exhibition catalog (New York: Hirschl & Adler, [1982]).
9. The Diary of Sarah Fouace (Mrs. James) Nourse, Piedmont, Berkeley County, Virginia, entry for July 8, 1781. Private collection; Microfilm at Alderman Library, University of Virginia; typescript at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
10. *Virginia Gazette*, eds. Purdie and Dixon, 25 Apr. 1766.
11. *Ibid.*, 14 Jan. 1773, 15 Jan. 1767.
12. *Virginia Gazette*, ed. Hunter, 17 Oct. 1755; ed. Purdie & Dixon, 28 Jan. 1768. For other runaways with brands, see *Virginia Gazette*, ed. Purdie, 2 May 1766; Purdie & Dixon, 1 Aug. 1766, 3 Nov. 1768, and 2 Nov. 1769.



13. Morgan, *American Slavery*, pp. 312-13.
14. Aileen Ribeiro, *A Visual History of Costume, The Eighteenth Century* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1983), p. 45.
15. *Va. Gaz.*, Hunter, 29 Aug. 1751.
16. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 1 (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-1940), p. 254.
17. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*. vol. 2, p. 420; "Washington's Invoices and Letters, 1755-66," originals in the Library of Congress, typescript notebook in the library, Mount Vernon Ladies Association, p. 94.
18. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. 27, p. 296.
19. For a discussion of the Zoffany painting and of Vandyke dress, see Janet Arnold, *A Handbook of Costume* (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 24-7.
20. Jack Ayres, ed., *Paupers and Pig Killers, The Diary of William Holland, A Somerset Parson, 1799-1818* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 74.
21. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*. vol. 32, p. 295.
22. *Ibid.*, vol. 35, p. 34.
23. James A. Bear, Jr., ed., *Jefferson at Monticello* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967), pp. 53-4, instructions from Thomas Jefferson to Edmund Bacon, Overseer, early nineteenth century.
24. *Va. Gaz.*, Purdie & Dixon, 1 Dec. 1774.
25. Stephen Decatur, Jr., *Private Affairs of Washington*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1933), p. 32.
26. Robert S. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822*, in Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 46.
27. Samuel Mordecai, *Virginia, Especially Richmond. In By- Gone Days* (Richmond, Va: West & Johnston, 1860), p. 352.
28. Mary Newton Stanard, *Richmond, Its People and Its Story* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1923), p. 92.
29. Graham Hood's research in the records of Governor Botetourt has shown that the Governor's clothing was apparently given to his butler, Marshman, as his perquisite. Mr. Hood suggests that Marshman may have sold some or all of it in Virginia rather than shipping it back to England, and that Sy could have received a suit of Botetourt's from a master who bought it from Marshman. I am indebted to Pat Gibbs of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for providing the references to Sy Gilliat and his possible relationship to Governor Botetourt.
30. Will of Mary Willing Byrd of Westover, 1813, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 6 (1899): 346-6.
31. Joseph Ball Letter Book, original in the Library of Congress; microfilm M-21 in the research department, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Letters from Joseph Ball to his nephew, Joseph Chinn, who was managing his Virginia plantations, 30 June 1749, 7 Oct. 1758.
32. *Va. Gaz.*, Purdie & Dixon, 4 May 1769, 13 Dec. 1770.

33. One of the most commonly worn types of Virginia cloth during the 1770s and 1780s was a fabric described as cotton warp filled in with wool or a mixture of wool and cotton in the weft; it was sometimes striped. It typically was used for men's and women's jackets and for women's petticoats. See, for example, *Va. Gaz.*, Purdie & Dixon, 5 Mar. 1772 and *Virginia Gazette or American Advertiser*, ed. Hayes, 10 May 1783. Virginians also were producing homespun linen, cotton, and linen woven on a cotton warp for shirting.
34. Robert Beverley Letterbook, undated letter to John Backhouse, probably 1768, and letter to John Backhouse, July 20, 1772. Original manuscript in the Library of Congress; microfilm M-3 in the Research Department, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
35. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. 2, p. 137, George Washington to Mary Washington, 30 Sept. 1757.
36. Robert Carter versus Benjamin Berkely, May 1798, Records at Large in the Dumfries District Court, Archives Branch, Virginia State Library and Archives.
37. Joseph Ball to Joseph Chinn, Ball Letter Book, 18 Feb. 1743/4.
38. Nathaniel Burwell Day Book, 20 December, 1784. Original manuscript at Colonial Williamsburg; microfilm M-1558.
39. Nourse Diary, entries for 4, 29, and 20 Jan. 1781; 24 Mar. 1781; 21 May 1781; 16 June, 1781; 1 and 6 Oct. 1781; 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, and 22 Oct. 1782; 3, 16, and 21 Dec. 1782.
40. *Antiques*, 117, no. 3 (Mar. 1980): 642.
41. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. 32, pp. 277, 348.
42. Ball Letter Book, 18 Feb. 1743/4.
43. *Va. Gaz.*, Purdie & Dixon, 9 Feb. 1769.
44. Edward Ambler letter, 7 Dec. 1767, Charles W. Dabney papers, Microfilm M-24-1, Research Department, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
45. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. 1, p. 17, Washington to a friend, "Richard," [1749 or 1750].
46. Anthony Whitting to George Washington, 22 Jan. 1792, in "Negroes and Negro Quarters," a typescript notebook in the library of Mount Vernon Ladies Association.
47. Ball Letter Book, 30 June 1749.
48. Jack P. Greene, *The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778*, vol 1 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the Virginia Historical Society, 1965), p. 484.
49. Will of Richard Bennett, 1750, "Vestry Book, 1749-84", Episcopal Church Records, Lower Suffolk Parish, Nansemond County, Virginia, p. 9. Reference courtesy of Martha McCartney.
50. Ball Letter Book, 18 Feb. 1743/4.
51. Notes on Slave Labor Lost Because of Lack of Shoes in "Negroes and Negro Quarters," typescript notebook at Mount Vernon Ladies Association.
52. Grove Journal, p. 22.
53. Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory* (1688, reprint, Menston, England: Scholar Press, 1972), p. 95.

54. Robert Carter III of Nomini Hall, Waste [Day] Book, 17 and 22 November, 1773, original manuscript at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Microfilm M-50.
55. Carter vs. Berkeley, p. 25.
56. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. 34, p. 379.
57. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Under their Vine and Fig Tree, Travels through America in 1797-1799, 1805 with some further account of life in New Jersey*, trans. and ed. Metchie J. E. Budka (Elizabeth, N. J.: Volume XIV in the Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society, The Grassmann Publishing Company.) p. 100.
58. Ferdinand-M. Bayard, *Travels of a Frenchman in Maryland and Virginia with a description of Philadelphia and Baltimore in 1791*, trans. and ed. Ben C. McCary (Williamsburg, Va: Ben C. McCary, 1950), p. 13.
59. Ball Letter Book, 18 Feb. 1743/44.
60. *Va. Gaz.*, Hunter, 12 June, 1752.
61. *Ibid.*, Purdie, 21 Mar. 1766.
62. *Ibid.*, Purdie & Dixon, 23 June 1768.
63. *Ibid.*, ed. Rind, 15 June 1769.
64. *Ibid.*, 26 May, 1768.
65. *Ibid.*, ed. Royle, 4 Nov. 1763.
66. *Ibid.*, Rind, 17 Aug. 1769.
67. Ball Letter Book, 23 Apr. 1754. Ball added in his letter to Chinn that Aron's bedding was quite new and clean, and he wanted it kept so. For that reason, Aron was to be put up in a clean location like the kitchen loft until his 12' X 10' house could be built.
68. *Va. Gaz.*, Purdie & Dixon, 7 May 1767. The violin or fiddle was the musical instrument most commonly mentioned as being played by slaves in the runaway advertisements; other instruments included drums, French horn, fife, and banjo.
69. *Va. Gaz.*, Purdie & Dixon, 28 Mar. 1766.
70. *Ibid.*, 27 Oct. 1768, 25 July, 1766; Purdie, 19 Apr. 1776.
71. Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1715-1789* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1984), chapter six.
72. *Va. Gaz.*, Purdie, 28 Nov. 1777.
73. *Ibid.*, Hunter, 17 July 1755. The "tarpawlin" on the straw hat was to waterproof it from sea spray.
74. *Ibid.*, Rind, 3 Mar. 1768. For a print of an English farmer wearing leggings, see Linda Baumgarten, *Eighteenth-Century Clothing at Williamsburg* (printed for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1986), p. 65.
75. *Va. Gaz.*, Purdie & Dixon, 16 May, 1766; *Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, Nicolson & Prentis, 17 Apr. 1784.
76. *Ibid.*, Purdie & Dixon, 19 July, 1770.
77. *Virginia Gazette or American Advertiser*, Hayes, 5 July 1786.
78. *Va. Gaz.*, Rind, 22 Mar. 1770; Purdie & Dixon, 30 June 1768; Purdie, 21 Nov. 1777.

79. *Ibid.*, Purdie & Dixon, 20 Oct. 1768. The subscriber does not accuse Jude of stealing the clothing, suggesting that it was probably hers at the time she ran away.
80. *Ibid.*, Rind, 19 Nov. 1772.
81. *Ibid.*, 26 Oct. 1769.
82. The author's conclusions are based on a survey of over 1700 runaway advertisements in Virginia newspapers from 1735-90. Of these, 276 were indentured or convict males, mostly whites, 16 indentured white females, 1313 slave males, and 186 slave females. Most of the slave runaway advertisements are published in Lathan A. Windley, ed., *Runaway Slave Advertisements, A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790*, vol. 1, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983.)
83. Lydia Jean Wares, "Dress of the African-American Women in Slavery and Freedom: 1500-1935," (Ph.D. Diss., Purdue University, 1981), pp. 88, 93, 95.
84. "Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, 1798-1831," in the York County, Virginia Guardian Account Books for 1780-1823 and 1823-46, microfilm M-1.42 at Colonial Williamsburg; typescript notes courtesy of Mr. Ed Chappell. Some whites also wore pierced earrings, and we cannot be certain that the free blacks were wearing earrings in styles of their native countries, although one women in the register also had her lip pierced for an ornament.
85. Wares, "Dress of African-American Women," p. 88.
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 101.
87. Stuckey, *Slave Culture*, p. 117.
88. Harold Gill, in his study of Virginia storekeepers for Colonial Williamsburg, awaiting publication, found evidence that several merchants returned used clothing on consignment from England, explaining that it would not sell in Virginia because Virginians were too proud to wear it. Nevertheless, it is possible that used clothing was sold in some Virginia communities.





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