

TEXTILES AND APPAREL NEWSLETTER

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Announcing

Exhibition: *A Langdon Portrait*

CHARLOTTE JIROUSEK

March 25- May 1 2003
Elizabeth Schmeck Brown Gallery
Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Cornell University

A new exhibit of costume entitled *A Langdon Portrait* is now on view in the Elizabeth Schmeck Brown Gallery on the third floor of Martha Van Rensselaer Hall at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. The exhibit, curated by Visiting Fellow Susan Greene, portrays the prominent Elmira family with treasured heirloom apparel given to the Cornell Costume and Textile Collection by Ida Langdon and Jervis Langdon, Jr. in the 1930s.



The family patriarch, Jervis Langdon, made a fortune in lumber, coal and railroads in the mid-nineteenth century. He and his wife, Olivia Lewis Langdon, lived with their three children in a fine mansion on the corner of Main and Church Streets in Elmira all their married lives. This farsighted family was well-read and closely associated with educational, political and health reform movements and their leaders. The son, Charles, toured the Near East in 1867, where he met author Samuel Clemens on the boat. They became fast friends, which led to their becoming brothers-in-law because Sam fell in love with Charley's sister, Olivia. The story became a beloved family legend, and the world still knows something of Elmira because of Mark Twain's intimate association with the city and one of its leading families.

Featured in the exhibit are two exceptional garments on loan from nearby collections, notably a stunning lilac satin and velvet visiting dress belonging to the Chemung County Historical Society of Elmira, NY that appears to have belonged to Olivia Langdon Clemens. From the Chenango County Historical Society of Norwich, NY comes a rare example of a wool wrapper and drawers of the sort recommended for patients' wear at "water cures" or spas which proliferated in the area – this reform medical treatment was avidly practiced by the Langdons.

The tantalizing but ambiguous provenance of the purple dress led Greene to attempt to settle the question of ownership: the intermediate donor ascribed it either to Charley's wife, Ida or to his sister, Olivia, wife of Samuel Clemens. The investigation has led not only to a persuasive hypothesis that the lilac dress belonged to Olivia, but to the conclusion that the so-called pansy dress given to Cornell – equally splendid – must have belonged to the same owner, as well. They are both for a taller woman than Ida, whose elegant ensembles form the nucleus of the family gift to Cornell.

The gallery can be visited Monday-Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

For information, contact:
Charlotte Jirousek, Associate Professor and Curator
Cornell Costume and Textile Collection
607-255-8064 caj7@cornell.edu

SUPPORTING INDUSTRY

PWT Launches Website

FRAN KOZEN

If you often handle questions about starting or developing a business in your county, a new web site developed by the CCE Project Work Team (PWT) Entrepreneurship and Family Business is a useful resource for you. The PWT recently launched a web portal to guide small entrepreneurs to Cornell web sites devoted to providing information and assistance to small businesses. The site, www.smallbiz.cornell.edu, has grouped resources into industry groups under the headings apparel, agriculture, community development, entrepreneurship, food, and technology. The portal also provides links to sites offering general business information and advice. Suzanne Loker and Fran Kozen are part of the PWT and they would be happy to answer questions about the resource or to accept suggestions for additions or changes to the site.

ENGAGING YOUTH

What's Up with the TXA Youth Program?

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Career Explorations: Focus for Teens

(June 24-26)

Once again, TXA combines forces with Space Sciences to offer *The Fabric/Flight Connection* during Focus for Teens on campus. Youth from across New York will work with Nancy Breen and Charlotte Coffman as they test fabrics in the laboratory, build kites, design parachutes, make nylon, and talk with kite enthusiasts. Registration materials have been distributed by the 4-H Office.

Pilot: Textile Arts & Technology

(Complete by June 30)

Twenty-one counties volunteered to test draft activities from a developing Textile Arts & Technology curriculum. Eight have already submitted data. Remember, the pilots should be completed by June 30. A summary will appear in the September issue of TXA News.

In-Touch Science Workshop

(June 7)

Beth Davis and Charlotte Coffman will offer an In-Touch Science workshop at St. Louis School, Pittsford, NY. The audience will be leaders of 4-H, scouts, and afterschool programs. Contact: Carolyn Gauvin, Tel: 585-381-8936.

Inservice: Tops & T-Shirt Independent Study

(Complete Part I by April 15; Part II by May 15)

Thirty participants are enrolled in this inservice-by-mail. Responses and questions can be sent to Beth Davis or Charlotte Coffman at Cornell University, MVR 239, Ithaca, NY 14853-4401, Fax: 607-255-2009, or Email: cwc4@cornell.edu

In-Touch Science Poster

(May 14-16)

Charlotte Coffman will present In-Touch Science at the CYFAR Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Eighteen percent of all women, regardless of income, shop for clothes at factory outlets.

—Women's Wear Daily, September, 2002

CONCERNING CONSUMERS

Fabric Fresheners

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

College students swear by them. House cleaners invest in them. Even my mother says they work. You know them as Febreze (Proctor & Gamble), FreshCare (Clorox), OdorFree (BioShield), and EverFresh (Rug Doctor) – fabric fresheners that remove unpleasant odors from textiles.



According to its Material Safety Data Sheet, Febreze contains water, ethyl alcohol, “odor eliminator derived from corn,” and fragrance. The odor eliminator is a cyclodextrin, an amorphous soluble modified starch derived from maize. It traps odor molecules, preventing their interaction with the environment rather than overpowering odors as do perfumes. Later, the cyclodextrin with the bound odor can be washed away during laundry.

Febreze is available as a Fabric Spray for items that cannot easily be washed, a Laundry Odor Eliminator for use in the washing machine, and an Allergen Reducer. It is also available in extra strength, low scent, slow-release, and deep penetrating formulations.

Pet owners have questioned the safety of Febreze due to its use of aerosol propellants and the presence of zinc chloride in the original formula. P&G notes that five years of testing uncovered no problems for pets and cites the product’s use in 40 million satisfied households. In addition, zinc chloride was eliminated from the formula in December 1998 and the product is now sold as a pump spray. The National Animal Poison Control Center states that when applied according to label instructions Febreze is not dangerous for use on pet bedding or litter boxes. As with any cleaning product, it should not be sprayed directly on a pet.

Procter & Gamble's introduction of Febreze in 1998 created a new category of fabric-care products, and its market success – reportedly sales of \$107 million the first year – attracted other players. Clorox’s release of FreshCare Fabric Refresher led to a P&G lawsuit charging patent infringement. FreshCare comes with use instructions similar to Febreze including precautions to test fabrics prone to water spot. In 1999, BioShield introduced OdorFree based on their patented antimicrobial organosilane. Additionally, BioShield has introduced Pet Stop, a product line for pet owners and kennel operators. In 2000, Rug Doctor entered the market with EverFresh, a spray product reputed to remove odors and neutralize allergen proteins.



Resources:

1. Boswell, Clay. Additives for Fabric Care, Chemical Market Reporter. Jan 24, 2000
<www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m0FVP/4_257/59329283/pri nt.jhtml>
2. Buschmann, H.J, Knittel, D., and Schollmeyer E. New Textile Applications of Cyclodextrins, J. of Inclusion Phenomena and Macrocyclic Chemistry 40 (3): 169-172. 2001.
3. Clorox Freshcare <<http://freshcare.com/>>
4. EverFresh <www.ever-fresh.com>
5. Febreze, <www.febreze.com>

ENHANCING SAFETY

CCA-Treatment of Wood Discontinued

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

The treatment of wood with chromated copper arsenate (CCA) for residential uses will be discontinued after Dec. 30, 2003. This includes wood used in play structures, decks, picnic tables, landscaping timbers, residential fencing, patios and walkways/boardwalks.

Phase-out of the residential uses will reduce the potential exposure risks to arsenic, a known human carcinogen, thereby protecting human health, especially children's health, and the environment.

This action was proposed in February 2002 by the registrants of CCA-pesticide products used to treat wood. A notice of the cancellation order will be published shortly in the Federal Register.

Consumers may continue to buy and use the treated CCA wood for as long as it is available. The transition to using the new generation treatment products is well underway.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is deferring any action on two uses involved in the termination requests, therefore wood used in permanent wood foundations and fence posts for agricultural uses may continue to be treated with CCA at this time. EPA is continuing its work on an ongoing comprehensive re-evaluation of CCA-treated wood that has been underway as part of the Agency's effort to reevaluate older pesticides to ensure that they meet current health and safety standards. More information on CCA treated wood is available at:
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/chemicals/1file.htm>

GATHERING RESOURCES

Book Review: *Easy Guide to Sewing Tops & T-Shirts*

BETH DAVIS

This book, *Easy Guide to Sewing Tops & T-Shirts* by Marcy Tilton, is the basis for the in-progress TXA independent study by the same name. Even if you did not have time to join our in-the-mail inservice, you might be interested in my review of the publication.

Tops are garments with beginning level sewing appeal - they have simple necklines and sleeves and can be made from woven or knit fabrics. Ease of construction is due to few pattern pieces and construction details such as buttonholes, cuffs and collars. *The Easy Guide to Sewing Tops & T-Shirts* provides an overall guide for sewing this type of garment, covering the process from the initial pattern selection to the final garment construction. The process begins with an analysis of figure types, followed by advice on flattering pattern and fabric choices. A guide to altering patterns to coordinate with personal measurements is provided, unfortunately with several errors.* Once the alterations are completed on the flat pattern, directions for pin-fitting the pattern and checking for errors is discussed. The garment is cut out with wide seam allowances, basted and checked before the final sewing.

I like this guide for several reasons. Verbal explanations of techniques are accompanied by both photographs and line drawings, giving the reader more than one option for understanding processes. Working with both knit and woven fabrics is included, and two handy "Order of Construction" charts neatly summarize construction and fitting information and provide time-saving quick references. In addition, instructions are given for both basic and more advanced construction details. This begins by directing the seamstress to make a well fitted, basic garment that is comfortable and flattering, followed by an encouragement for experimentation, especially working with the same pattern but using different fabrics and more advanced styling details. With subsequent garments, the technical abilities of the seamstress are challenged and improved, giving rise to an ability to make personal design choices and garments that are both comfortable and attractive.

This is one in a series of "Easy Guides" published by Taunton Press as part of their Sewing Companion Library. The price ranges from \$10-\$20 depending on condition and source. It is widely available from bookstores and online vendors.

**A corrected version of this guide, "Additions and Corrections," is available upon request.*

BROWSING WEBSITES

Website: www.patternreview.com

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Wondering which sewing pattern to try? Confused as to which pattern company addresses your needs? Check out this website by Deepika Prakash, software developer and sewing enthusiast. The site offers honest, straightforward accounts of home sewers' experiences with a variety of patterns. The reviews are written by sewers who share such details as successful alterations and digital photos of their completed garments. Also included are links to fabric stores, pattern companies, book reviews, a chance to barter patterns, and live chats with sewing experts. Membership is free.

Website: www.fabrics.net

Looking for a website with basic information about fabrics? This is a good place to start. You can read about fabric identification, care, and sources. Descriptions of natural and manufactured fibers include a glossary of common weave structures. Click on Q/A and you will move into a chat area where viewers are discussing everything from fugitive dyes to how to start a business. The Wisdom category offers advice and articles from sewing/quilting professionals. Instructions are included for projects such as working with Polarfleece and learning how to tuft. You can also sign up for a free electronic newsletter and join various contests.

EXTENSION FACULTY AND STAFF

	Phone	E-mail
Charlotte Coffman	255-2009	cwc4@cornell.edu
-Textiles and Apparel, Youth and Safety Issues		
Susan Darling	255-1943	sd247@cornell.edu
- Water Quality, Septic Systems, Home*A*Syst		
Fran Kozen	255-0465	fhk2@cornell.edu
-Textiles and Apparel, Industry Outreach		
Ann Lemley	255-3151	atl2@cornell.edu
-Department Chair, Water Quality, DEL		
Suzanne Loker	255-6204	sl135@cornell.edu
-Textiles and Apparel, Industry Outreach		
Elizabeth Davis	255-3427	ed55@cornell.edu
-Youth Programs, Workshop Coordinator		
Paula Smith	255-3196	pjs15@cornell.edu
-TXA News Production Manager		
-TXA Loan Library		txa_extn-mailbox@cornell.edu

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