

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF WOMEN'S COSTUMES
AS A REFLECTION OF THE CULTURE
IN VIRGINIA FROM 1608-1900

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Virginia, the birthplace of our nation, stands out as a highly individual state. She is richly endowed with a proud heritage and strives to preserve the spirit and grace of things past. The fondness for the past and the desire to make it survive are parts of Virginia tradition that has given her a definite charm. Thirty-eight states have been carved, in whole or in part, out of the lands Virginia claimed in 1609. Her pioneering gift of great statesmen and eight presidents served as a model for other states and helped shape the foundations of our government. An appreciation for the noble deeds of the past and an understanding of the courage and wisdom required are guideposts to solving successfully her current and future problems.

It is thought that the spirit of a region is best revealed through the mode of life of the local people. A study of these patterns and practices of daily living in Virginia from 1608 to 1900 will enable one to better understand the culture of this period. The author hopes that the historical study presented here dealing with the customs of dress of Virginia women will to some degree contribute to this understanding.

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to:

1. Gain some understanding of the costumes worn by women in Virginia from 1608 to 1900.
2. Gain some understanding of the influence that brought about changes in costumes.
3. Gain an understanding of the role of clothing as a reflection of the culture in Virginia.

Review of Literature

Sources of information on Virginia costume are limited primarily to books of Colonial history, histories on general American costume, books on the Williamsburg Restoration, collections in costume museums and art galleries.

Books on historic costume dealing with the whole of America give much of the history of costume for the state of Virginia. It is assumed that books on the history of costume for America reflect the costume for the state of Virginia in as much as Virginia was a leader of fashion throughout much of the history of our country. In some instances costume for Virginia is dealt with specifically.

Warwick and Pitz (1) presented a detailed description of the various articles of costume and their accessories using the European background up to 1800. Small pen and ink sketches throughout made the history of costume come to life. Train (2) gives a costume study from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, while Langdon (3) gave us a comprehensive history of everyday things in American life from 1607 to 1776 with a great deal of emphasis on fashion. Special phases of woman's life in Colonial days are dealt with by Halliday (4). Bruce (5) interprets the economic and social reflection on the manner of living in the South in the seventeenth century. Fisher (6) discloses the important influences, social, moral, racial, political, and constitutional, which created our American Republic. Earle (7), Stanard (8) and Wardlaw (9), all depicted life as it was during the early formative years of our state and country. McClellan (10) concentrated her work on

detailed descriptions of costumes for the period 1607 to 1870 with many excellent photographs. Bradley's (11) history of western world costume is given in outline form relating certain periods.

Gottmann (12) demonstrates the rise and progress in Virginia at mid eighteenth century. Hansen (13) dealt with a chronologic order of historic costume in color prints from earliest times to 1934.

Procedure

To obtain reliable information on historical costume for Virginia women from 1608 to 1900, the investigator:

1. Visited the following museums:

- a. Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia
- b. Museum of Collections, Williamsburg, Virginia
- c. Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia
- d. Museum of Fine Arts, Lynchburg, Virginia

2. Secured books from:

- a. Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia
- b. Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia
- c. The Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
- d. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D. C.

3. Reviewed books in the Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia, books from the Altavista High School Library, Altavista, Virginia and books received by the Newman Library through inter-library exchange.

- a. Books on costume
- b. Books on history
- c. Books on art

4. Made illustrations with brief descriptions:

To supplement photographs from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Colonial Williamsburg Collections, The Smithsonian Institute, The Valentine Museum and a personal photograph, the researcher drew the illustrations and then had them reproduced.

5. The results of these findings are summarized in the chapters that follow. The discussion covers the following periods in American history:

a. The Seventeenth Century

This chapter is devoted to the historical background of our country and to the people who helped to colonize it. This was truly a land of opportunity and the people sought to make their fortunes by whatever means available for they were ambitious. This was also a land of hardships. The social, economic and religious influences are described in some detail. Costumes during this period were influenced by the regulations of law, wealth, station in life and availability of materials.

b. The Eighteenth Century

This chapter deals with two distinct periods, the Golden Age (1700-1750) with a small aristocracy dominating the social, economic and political life, and the post Revolutionary days. The eighteenth century more than any period is the one to which Virginians have looked with

pride. The costumes of the women during this era were as varied as the background from which they came.

c. The Nineteenth Century

During the first half of the nineteenth century much effort was spent on building and expanding enterprises. When the devastating war between the states was ended the state concerned itself with the tasks of healing wounds, reuniting people and new methods of communication. Costume changes during this century were rapid and more detailed designs were created.

CHAPTER II

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

History and Socio-Economic Background: The foundations of America are to be found in the Old World. From Europe came the stream of migration that peopled the new continent and determined the course of its future growth. English, Scotch, Welsh and Irish, Dutch, Swedes, Germans and French made homes for themselves in the new land, bringing with them their native customs and their culture.

This movement of varied peoples was a product of the Renaissance which sprang into life in Italy. Italy was rich in treasures of classic art and became the fountainhead of art and fashion for Western Europe, which in time influenced the new world. The wealth and talent of the land were squandered in creating a magnificent background for one of the most brilliant, beautiful and dissolute societies ever known.

The growing freedom of thought and joy in the rediscovery of man's potential powers gave all of Europe an insatiable hunger for life and knowledge. Inventions were playing their part in the upheaval. Printing, gunpowder and the compass gave navigators confidence to venture uncharted seas. Suddenly Europe found the world grown vastly larger. It is not difficult to understand, with their minds liberated, how man had extravagant imagination toward the new world. They were stirred to a lust for a fuller life and more knowledge. Contrary to belief, they were not fired with passion for religious or political freedom. The early settlers were mostly adventurers who were seeking gold and other wealth.

Spain and Portugal took the initiative in exploring the New World, but England alone possessed the necessary elements for colonization. She stood superior in human and material resources, vigor and courage. She possessed a supply of agricultural laborers accustomed to a life of toil and crude living. At the dawn of the 17th century, England was equipped for the work of transplanting her civilization to an alien shore (1). Jamestown in Virginia was the first actual settlement of the English people in America. The Virginia Company, of which Sir Edwin Sandys was president, was formed under the patent of King James I. Virginia, from the viewpoints of population and institutions, is the child of England. The common law, courts, code of manners, culture, language and literature were English. Although Jamestown was settled in 1607 by an oddly assorted group of men, it was not until 1608 that the first two women came, a Mistress Forrest and her maid, Anna Burras.

The history of Virginia during the first 12 years is rather dreary and depressing. A new trail was being blazed, and there was no past experience to point the way. Governors and ships bringing new immigrants and supplies came at intervals; but the struggle against disease, starvation, and Indians was unending. Death took a large number. These years had their romantic episodes and personalities, too. Pocahontas, daughter of the Indian Emperor Powhatan, is credited with saving Captain John Smith from execution. Later she became a Christian, married tobacco planter John Rolfe, and was presented to the Court of King James. There is the story of Cicely Jordan, who promising to marry two of her admirers threw the entire Colony into an uproar.

Three events occurred in these years to influence the destiny of the Colony. John Rolfe, in 1614, proved that tobacco could be profitably exported to England. A system of land distribution was put into effect, and in 1619 a ship brought twenty negroes who were sold to the colonists.

As a crown colony Virginia prospered and its population increased. King James died in 1625, and Charles I became ruler in England. King Charles was refused the monopoly of the Virginia tobacco trade in 1627 by the General Assembly.

Sir William Berkeley, most famous of the early governors, was of the Cavalier breed, a staunch defender of King and Church. He hated Puritans and Quakers and harried both so effectively that he purged the Colony of them.

In 1642 when King Charles and Parliament were in complete disagreement, Virginia remained loyal to the King. After Charles I was beheaded and Charles II became King, he elevated the Colony to the proud position of a Dominion to show his appreciation. It is not known how many of the supporters of the royal cause fled to Virginia but enough to give the Colony a decidedly aristocratic character.

The Colony suffered much under the governorship of William Berkeley who was fanatically determined to destroy every democratic process. Governor Berkeley's savage reprisals, his brutal hangings and his confiscations have left an indelible stain upon his memory. Charles II died in 1684 and was followed by James II, who was forced to abdicate. This suited Virginia, for she had had enough of Stuart Kings under whom there had been a steady decline in power of the House of Burgesses.

There are three periods in the history of the South, corresponding roughly to the 17th and 18th and the 19th century up to the Civil War. In the first period, colonizers, adventurers, gentlemen and cavaliers wrested a fairly rough living from the land at the water's edge. The sea was the only road they knew and they settled along its border or as far up the broad rivers as their seagoing vessels could take them (2). Except for Williamsburg the seat of government, Jamestown and Norfolk, there were few villages and no towns in Virginia as late as 1730. By the 18th century, due mainly to tobacco, their descendants had become relatively prosperous. In the Tidewater regions a gracious culture developed.

The wealth of Europe contrasted sharply with the poverty and hardship endured by the American colonists. Oliver Cromwell, during his tenure 1653-1658, actually forbade the exportation of sheep, raw wool or yarn to American colonists, when he knew what the lack would mean. As a result, the trading with Spain and Holland began.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, the large plantations, and the income from the tobacco supported the landowners in a style that enabled them to wear the best of English linen and wool, French silk and to live in stately brick houses facing the river. However, it was an empire mostly agricultural, largely self-sustaining, yet dependent upon England for its luxuries and refinements. It was sparsely settled, but much of its fertile land was under cultivation. Towns were few and the colonists often longed for town society that they had known. When planters and their wives gathered in the large communities they enjoyed balls, games, and tavern discussions. Here was as curious

a blend of sophisticated civilization and primitive life as can be found in the annals of history. These people from a grim and bare environment battling for the necessities of life were trying to live in as elegant and fashionable circle as in the old country.

It was not until the clothes the settlers brought with them were worn out and until the fur trade with the Indians began to fail, that the settlers took up the raising of flax and the money making of it into linen with much concern. Flax and wool were the two great clothing staples, flax being made into linen, and the wool of the sheep being made into woollen cloth, and the two being combined into linsey-woolsey. The manufacture of linen from the flax was a complicated and difficult process. In the processes of dyeing cloth, blues were the favorite color (3).

The Colony was a land of opportunity for the poor and middle classes from across the ocean, for small farms were profitable and wages for labor was many times those paid in England. Each settler was entitled to 50 acres, so too were apprentices upon the completion of their apprenticeships. Practically all labor was supplied by white indentured servants until the century's last decade.

With the sale of unlimited land to those who could pay, the position of the small farmer and the white servant steadily deteriorated. Plantations grew in number and great landed estates appeared. The population of the Colony was almost entirely English, representing all classes of society from the gentleman to the waifs, who were practically kidnapped from the streets of London and convicts. It is said that some

of the convicts given a choice between hanging and going to Virginia, chose hanging.

By the close of the century descendants of the Colony's first families were living in impressive homes and following the pioneer custom of raising large families. In 1699 the capitol was moved from Jamestown to Middle Plantation, later renamed Williamsburg.

Tobacco determined the Colony's economy, helped to shape its development, influenced the character of its population, and caused constant friction with England. It was the only money crop. It stifled manufacturing and a law was required to force the colonists to raise enough food for their needs.

As the areas became more thickly covered with plantations and the yielding acres poured out too large provisions to be consumed at home, tobacco was sent to England and other parts of the continent. In return came money and credit and all the rich and costly things for the home or person that the older country could supply.

The first newspaper was published in 1690, and although short lived, it is possible to check quite accurately the arrival of new fashions, and to trace the growth of manufacturers.

During the last quarter of the 17th century America was beginning to sense the increasing wealth and prosperity that were to make life in the colonies during the 18th century until the Revolution the most comfortable and prosperous in her history.

The Established Church of England was the popular, or authorized, religious institution. The earliest settlers of Virginia dutifully

observed the customs and ceremonies of the church. They were reverent and pious, meeting for prayer several times each day. At least the first 80 years of life about Jamestown on Sunday must have been a day of rest (4).

According to Bruce: "The first General Assembly to meet in Virginia passed a law requiring of every citizen attendance at divine services on Sunday. The penalty imposed was a fine if one failed to be present. If the delinquent was a freeman he was to be compelled to pay three shillings for each offense, to be devoted to the church, and should he be a slave he was to be sentenced to be whipped" (5).

Religion was not as powerful an element in the formation of the community as in Massachusetts. The churchmanship of the Virginian would now be called low. They often omitted the use of the prayer-book and it is said that the surplice was unknown in the colony for the first hundred years.

Governor Spotswood describes the Virginian of his time as living "in a gentlemanly conformity with the church of England." Gentleman was always a powerful word in Virginia. But the church, nevertheless, had a decided influence on them, and that quietude, good taste, refinement, and freedom from want which marked Washington, Madison, Jefferson, Marshall and other prominent men of the colony were its results (6).

Religion was to the colonial woman both a blessing and a curse. Though it gave courage and some comfort, it was as hard and unyielding as steel. The messages inspired fear and terror. One of the most dreadful doctrines of the Puritan faith was that all infants who died

unbaptized entered into eternal torment. We shall never know the intense anxiety that the Puritan woman suffered during the few days before the babe was taken through snow and storm to the church. Little wonder that infant mortality was exceedingly high. It is possible that the colonial woman gained one blessing from the religion of her day, for she was relieved of practically all work on Sunday. However, it is doubtful that attendance at church almost the entire day would be any more desirable than her laborous tasks during the week. The Colonial Sabbath was strictly observed (4).

Parliament passed the Toleration Act during the William and Mary reign which repealed all laws against dissenters, except Roman Catholics, and permitted them to have their own churches and ministers. This law exercised immediate influence in Virginia. The Reverend James Blair was appointed to work in the Colony. This remarkable man is credited with obtaining the charter for the College of William and Mary which was established in 1693.

Costume of the period: At the time America was settled, rich dress was almost universal in Europe among persons of any wealth or station. The dress of plain people also, such as yeomen and small farmers and work people, was plentiful and substantial, and even peasants had good and ample clothing. Fabrics were strongly and honestly made, hand sewn and lasted long (7).

For a century and a half England was the model of the colonies. They copied her art, her manners and her fashions. If something evolved different and individual it was due to distance and the cruder environment

rather than an expression of originality, and the local tailor was probably responsible for it.

The American habit of keeping up with European fashions began at Jamestown. In England each new reign brought changes in costume, which were conveyed by the first ship to Virginia where they were looked for as eagerly as "at home" and followed as faithfully as opportunity would allow. If Americans were not always dressy it was more for lack of means than of inclination.

Queen Elizabeth of England and Catherine de' Medici of Florence, Italy loved grand apparel, and both had a wide influence on fashions and fabrics. The dress of Elizabeth still prevailed when the colony named for her was settled, and no doubt the first settlers came ashore in huge ruffs associated with her name or the broad turn over collars known as "falling bands," the slouched hats with the brim turned rakishly up or down—cowboy fashion—at the fancy of the wearer (8).

The year 1619 is a memorable one in the history of Virginia and has a direct bearing upon the costume of the colonies, for it was in this year that a shipload of ninety women arrived to be prospective wives for the colonists. These ninety women were not "ladies of quality." They were poor maidens and widows, young, handsome and chaste. There is no contemporary description of the costume they wore, nor of the wardrobe they brought with them. Their gowns were probably neither of the richest materials nor of the finest cut, but it is certain they lavished upon themselves as much as their means permitted and followed the latest London mode as closely as possible.

Their dress was some form of the farthingale, a wide voluminous skirt, distended by means of hoops or a bolster; or a simple kind of skirt, made very full, but not built out in any manner. Usually, the design was cut away in front, showing an underskirt of different fabric. The bodice was stiff and straight in outline and was laced in at the waist, where it descended to a point. An even plainer bodice was not stiffened or laced but fitted closely to the figure. The sleeves were tight and finished at the wrist with linen cuffs turned back and matching the collar. Ruffs, bands and collars were much like those of the men, as were the various cloaks. A wired out whisk of linen that spread from a square base was worn around the neck. For those who dressed in the simplest manner, a broad falling collar of white linen was worn. Other than the skirts, the feminine attire followed closely the masculine mode. The clothes in the year 1619 were in the last stage of the Elizabethan style. Woman's dress underwent few changes in the next few years. The starched ruff or more becoming falling band of linen or lace, the wide or narrow brimmed sugar-loaf hat, the close fitting and more or less ornate stomacher, and the billowing underskirt had an influence on costumes for generations.

Extravagance in dress was frowned upon by the lawmakers in the early days of the Colony. The assembly of 1619 passed a law that every bachelor should be assessed according to the value of his own apparel, and every married man according to that worn to church by himself and his family(7). Certain legislation standardizing the dress of colonial people oftentimes carried a fine and on occasion also imprisonment.

In 1624 an attempt was made to produce silk from the mulberry trees which flourished in Virginia, but the effort was not successful. Virginia fussed over "excess in clothes." Sir Francis Wyatt was forced not to permit any but the council and the heads of the Hundreds to wear gold on their clothes, or to wear silk until they made it— which was intended more to encourage silk making than to discourage silk wearing.

During Lord Delaware's time the lady wore a large collar fashioned of rich lace and cuffs to match the lace band. She carried an elegant fan of ostrich feathers. Steeple hats of beaver with either a wide or narrow brim were also very popular, and they were sometimes adorned with a feather in addition to the jewelled, pearl or silver hatband (7).

During the next ten years costume was to undergo a complete transformation. Farthingales, ruffs, tightly laced and long waisted bodices were soon to go out of fashion, making way for the simpler and more easy-fitting costume of the Cavalier period. The wardrobes of these ladies were not elaborate. They were selected with a sterner view to the necessities of the type of life that they would lead in Virginia. Life was not one of ease and pleasure in those early Colonial days. It must be remembered that the constantly changing English fashions were not always followed immediately in the colonies. Possibly the royal governor and his little retinue adapted the latest mode as quickly as the means of communication of the day permitted; but remote plantations would have been slow to hear of London's fashions. Many of the older men clung to the fashion of their government. In any large gathering, it was not unusual to find fashions of several generations.

To know how the colonists were dressed, we have to learn from the lists of their clothing which they left by will, which lists are still preserved in court records; from the inventories of the garments furnished to each settler who came by contract; from the orders sent back to England for new clothing; from a few crude portraits; and from some articles of ancient clothing which are still preserved.

Captain John Smith has preserved for us a list of the articles of clothing which the Virginia Company considered necessary for the comfort of the early immigrants. The men were advised to equip themselves with a Monmouth Cap, three shirts, one waistcoat, one suit of broadcloth, three pairs of Irish stockings, one suit of frieze, one of canvas, a pair of garters, four pairs of shoes, three falling bands, and a dozen pairs of points. These purchases entailed a total of 59 shillings. Some small provision was made for "dress occasions" (?). It is assumed that women immigrants had comparable wardrobes.

Falling bands were broad, plain linen collars, turned down over the neck of the doublet (jacket), while points were ties of leather or woolen yarn decorated with tags or aiglets at one end. Points were used instead of buttons in securing clothes, almost exclusively by the early colonists.

During the reign of King Charles I, the government of the colony was largely left to the assembly, which met in the church at Jamestown, thereby providing the planters and their wives with a greatly sought-after opportunity to show off their fine apparel. Even from our 20th century viewpoint, their clothes were gay and elaborate with fine lace

and fabric. Gay colors were popular—sky color, sea green, olive and scarlet were favorites. A gentlewoman wore a long soft skirt, with a low cut bodice finished at the waist with tabs, full sleeves tied around the elbow with ribbon knot ending with soft ruffles of rich lace, and a wide collar of the same lace was worn over the shoulders but allowing the throat and neck to show. Soft breast knots of ribbon were much in vogue. The hair was usually curled over the brow, falling to the shoulders in rather tight ringlets, and arranged in a knot at the back. Earrings were very popular. Long gloves reaching to the elbow were worn with low cut dresses (10).

When Charles I was beheaded in 1649, his followers fled to the New World. Many of these were nobility, clergy and gentry—men of first rate. The arrival of great numbers of elegant and beribboned men and women placed a definite complexion upon the dress and manners of the colonists, however the dress of the Cavalier was not new to Virginia. It was fast becoming the mode in upper circles. It was a dress that fitted into the light-hearted and rich-living plantation life that was fast becoming the tradition of the Old Dominion. Virginia was not only the Tobacco Province but the Cavalier Colony.

Letters and diaries preserved, leave no doubt that woman gave a great deal of thought and attention to dress. The plantations were widely separated and often isolated. Therefore, the women saw little of each other except at the parish church, which was the center of the social life. The planters and their wives came great distances to attend the Sunday services; here too they could display their costumes. Fairs,

tobacco markets, the racetrack, holiday celebrations and weddings offered a chance to parade their fashionable attires. The planters imported all sorts of goods by the piece and stored them away in chests to be made up into garments as needed.

A feature of colonial life was the itinerant peddler, who travelled from plantation to plantation carrying the latest fashions and oftentimes the latest gossip.

The Cavalier's lady wore a loose fitting dress, skirt and bodice of the same rich silk or velvet, with full skirt often gathered back to disclose a lovely satin petticoat. The bodice was high waisted and at times almost covered by a great falling collar of linen edged with lace. The sleeves were loose, ending part way down in a turned-back cuff, or by a falling wristlet of lace. While the overdress was almost always worn, some contemporary portraits show a wide full skirt. As time progressed, it became a mark of elegance to reveal more of the neck and shoulders, which, before long were left bare. Her hair fell in curls about her shoulders, often with a fringe of curls across the forehead. Sometimes she wore it brushed back from the brow. To shield her complexion from out-of-doors elements, she wore masks usually of velvet. It was considered immodest for a lady to appear without a mask. Cloaks that hung over the shoulders were usually lined with fur or some warm material and probably cut along the same lines as the "cloak of raccoon skins" given to Captain John Smith by King Powhatan, the Indian.

The fashion of wearing patches became popular and no lady of fashion considered herself ready for society until she had carefully

gummed on at least one black silk patch on her face. Circles, stars and crescents were common; more venturesome ladies used silhouettes of other fanciful designs. Virginia kept her Cavalier ways and dress and with the coming of the Restoration in 1660 there was no upset in the fashion as was in England (1).

The dress of the humbler folk copied that of the upper circle in a less extravagant way. They had few ornaments and the fabrics they used were cheaper, mostly homespun, kersey, leather and broadcloth. Leather possessed such wearing qualities that it was not unusual to find articles in use after two or three generations.

The dress of little girls in families of wealth was certainly almost as formal and elegant as the dress of their mamas, and it was a very hampering and stiff dress. They wore vast hoop-petticoats, heavy stays and high-heeled shoes. Their complexions were objects of special care; they wore masks of cloth or velvet to protect them from the tanning rays of the sun and long arm gloves. In 1653 a band of restless spirited Virginians started to penetrate the wilderness south. Their dress was simple and homespun; practical for the frontier.

With the reign of William and Mary came more formal costume for women including the towering head-dress constructed by combing the hair upward over a cushion and decorating it with quantities of ribbon and lace. In Queen Anne's time there was a return to the simpler and more natural arrangement of tresses. Gowns were now flounced and furbelowed, and the hooped petticoat appeared. A majority of the colonial portraits of Virginia women shows costumes and head-dress of elegant simplicity.

A favorite way of dressing the hair was to have it parted and pushed softly away from the face, with a loose curl drawn over one shoulder somewhat after the fashion of the love-lock and sometimes called a "heart-breaker" (8).

In 1675 the lady wore a dress with a longer bodice descending to a point in front. If fastened down the front, the opening was embellished with bow knots, known as echelles. The long waisted bodice might be simply decorated down the front with a band of lace or it might be left open and worn over a stomacher. Her neck and much of her shoulders were left bare, or perhaps were draped with a lace scarf or folded kerchief. The horizontal low cut bodice was often edged with a lace collar. The sleeves were sometimes puffed, sometimes wide and straight, reaching to about the elbow where they ended in a fall of lace or a fringe of ribbons. Sleeves to the wrist were no longer fashionable after 1660 and appearing from under the sleeve of the bodice was the free sleeve of the chemise. The skirt was still gathered into small close pleats about the waistline. It was usually left open in the front, exposing petticoats. When split up the front in this manner it was fashionable to loop the skirt up about the hips, holding it in place with knots of ribbon. The fullness of the skirt gathered up about the hips was further exaggerated by a small bustle. Both skirt and petticoat at this time were provided with a train.

Very little of the apparel of the upper classes was made at home. The homespun linens and woolens were too coarse and local tailors too inexpert. The planter, be he ever so heavily in debt, must have his clothes new from London every year.

Speaking of the dress in the colonies, Frank Alvah Parsons says: "The instinct for dress, the fundamental desire for show and personal attraction were no different; the determination not to be outshone and the admiration for the latest and prettiest fashions from England were almost universal, and even where there was a pretense to plain living and an outward expression of piety through its manifestations, the author fails to find any considerable number of instances of individuals who resisted falling into the ways of the world at the first perfectly good opportunity" (1).

"In the time of Bacon's Rebellion, the lady of the house might have worn a crimson satin bodice trimmed with point lace, a black tabby petticoat, and silk hose with shoes of fine leather, gallooned. Her lace headdress would be secured with a gold bodkin and she would be likely to wear earrings, a pearl necklace, finger rings set with rubies or diamonds and to carry a fan" (10).

Most of the handsome gowns worn in Virginia were made of floral silk with bodices of velvet brocade and satin trimmed with lace. Petticoats were made of serge, flannel, or tabby, a kind of colored silk cloth. Some were also made of printed linen or dimity and trimmed with silk or silver lace.

An outfit of gown, petticoat and green stockings, composed of woolen materials, is frequently mentioned in the inventories. For outdoor wear, women of all ranks wore hoods and mantles. The hoods were made of camlet, sarsenet, or velvet often trimmed with fur. The mantles of silk or tip-pets of fur often were worn over the shoulders (4). Hose varied in color,

white, scarlet and black were used extensively and were held in place by silk garters. Shoes of the finest quality were either laced or gallooned. Wooden shoes with wooden heels were also worn. For traveling, the lady would wear a large cloaklike garment to cover her gown and use leather or woolen stockings to cover her fine silk ones.

The pictorial records for the 17th century were very limited and information from books was not too abundant. The best sources of material was obtained from artists who left their drawings.

Some Typical Examples of Costumes

Plate 1: The picture of Queen Elizabeth shows the elaborateness of the gown that she loved. The close-fitted bodice with leg-of-mutton sleeves comes to a deep point in center front. The skirt of a different fabric design has the farthingale or padding about the hips to give it the wide distended look popular during the seventeenth century. The fan-shaped wired out whisk or ruff of fine lace and linen framed her face.

Jewelry was very fashionable with beads, earrings, finger rings and brooches being favorites.

Plate 2:

Upper sketch A: This is another version of the typical dress worn by the women who first came to America. The general silhouette follows Plate 1 except for the tight-fitted sleeves and the addition of the wired whisk at the waist line that sets on the farthingale. The use of ostrich or peacock feathers in the hair and for fans, which had gold or silver handles, was a common practice.

Any footwear would have been fashioned like that of the men with narrow, rounded toes and a jewel on top.

Upper sketch B: A simpler version of the dress during this century shows the bell-shaped skirt with close-fitted bodice ending in tabs just below the waistline. The ruff is worn high about the neck. The arched cap of linen called the Mary Stuart Cap, the small shoulder cape and the fashionable etui were all a part of the costume.

Upper sketch C: This version of the large collar was usually fashioned of heavily starched or wired linen and edged in lace. The hair

continued to be worn flat about the face and pulled up in back in a soft knot.

Upper sketch D: The steeple-crown sugarloaf hat of beaver with its wide or narrow brim was usually adorned with feathers, a gay band or a jewel or a combination of these. The plain falling band or collar with small ruff is shown.

Lower sketch A: The soft flowing floor length gown with very full skirt supports a large collar, reminiscent of the ruff, that is held in place by heavy starching rather than the wiring that was previously used. The sleeves are fuller with small slashes and puffs and divided by ribbon knots at the elbow and ending with linen cuffs to match the collar.

A single strand of pearls, large brooches, long chain necklaces and ribbons ending in bow knots below the waistline were all a part of the jewelry used by the fashionable woman.

Lower sketches B and C: Two versions of the typical dress shows the rounded low necklines which were wide at the shoulders with draped collars of fine linen and lace. The shorter elbow length sleeves ended in matching linen and lace. The bodice remained close fitted with tabs forming a peplum around the waist and extending over a full floor length skirt. Some of the dresses had front openings (Sketch C). Ostrich feather fans and elbow length gloves were popular accessories.

Plate 3:

Sketch A: This costume shows the separate bodice and skirt with horizontal neckline across the shoulders which is low and wide over a low cut underdress. The bodice is laced up front over a stomacher

decorated with ribbon bows and embroidery. Elbow length sleeves are trimmed profusely with lace or ribbon. The open front skirt looped up over the hips falls in soft folds on either side displaying the petticoat. Ruffles, flounces or ruching were used for trimming the petticoat.

The hair was dressed slightly higher than in previous periods and hung in a single ringlet on the shoulder.

Sketch B: Another costume of the period had a very simple open down the front bodice with square low cut neckline with fairly straight elbow length sleeves ending in fringe, lace or ribbon. The simple straight skirt fell in soft folds with hoops or panniers of whalebone or reed being held in place at the hipline by brooches.

Sketch C: A brocade gown with bodice design same as figure A with open front skirt showing the petticoat of a different design and without panniers.

Plate 4: This dress of striped wool embroidered with silver-gilt threads shows the wide shoulder neckline trimmed with a tiny frill of lace. The slightly full sleeves end in fine lace, while the simple skirt is looped at the hips over light weight materials to form a bustle.

Plate 1



Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

Plate 2

WOMEN'S GARMENTS



1608 - 1620



1630 - 1660

Plate 3

WOMEN'S GARMENTS



A



B



C

Plate 4



Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

CHAPTER III

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

History and Socio-Economic Background: At the dawn of the eighteenth century Virginia welcomed the French Huguenots and German Protestants. Land was provided for the French on both sides of the James River at Manakintown; the Germans in Spotsylvania. The colony tried to prevent further importation of negroes. However, slavery did not become a moral issue until after the Revolution.

Alexander Spotswood was appointed governor to Virginia in 1710 and through his efforts the Blue Ridge and the Shenandoah Valley were founded. The settlers of the Shenandoah Valley came in largest numbers from Pennsylvania and New Jersey—Palatinate Germans, Lutherans, Mennonites and others. Most of these were dissenters and few owned slaves. They were land-hungry pioneers who worked their farms. Their sons made some of the finest soldiers of the Revolution and were also pioneers, migrating to Kentucky, Tennessee, the Carolinas, Ohio and other points west. During the French and Indian War, the Shenandoah Valley became a scene of utter desolation and horror, as Indian raiding parties burned homes and slaughtered men, women and children.

The period 1700-1750 is sometimes referred to as Virginia's "Golden Age." Neither before nor since has a small aristocracy so dominated its social, economic and political life. This was the era of great plantations ranging from 300,000 acres downward. In these years tobacco raising destroyed the middle class of small industrious farmers. Whatever

else may be said of these Virginia aristocrats, they sired statesmen and soldiers whose names will always be found on history's pages. The Constitution of the United States was ratified in 1788, and George Washington was elected the first President of the United States in 1789.

The American Revolution had its roots resulting from America's opposition to English efforts to dominate the colonies. For 12 years the differences were debated, but could not be reconciled, thereby making war inevitable.

The Revolution was more than a successful rebellion against England—it transformed the political, social and economic status of America. Seven years of war left its scars, but America's frontier like civilization weathered the storm.

At the close of the century, Virginia ranked first in wealth, population and influence among the 16 states of the nation which had been so largely created by the valor of her soldiers, the skill of her generals (George Washington, Daniel Morgan, Harry Lee, John Paul Jones, to name but a few), and the genius of her statesmen (Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Patrick Henry).

Virginia remained an agricultural state. The planter class remained dominant. Many beautiful and impressive homes had been built in all parts of the state.

The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 was destined to establish a cotton plantation economy throughout the lower South.

The Church carried much influence and ministers attempted to keep the magistrates within the restriction and simplification of dress. They

preached often against "intolerable pride in clothes and hair." After awhile the whole church interfered. In 1769 the church at Andover put it to a vote whether "the parish disapprove of the female sex sitting with their hats on in the meeting-house in time of divine service as being indecent." In the town of Abington, in 1775, it was voted that it was "an indecent way that the female sex do sit with their hats and bonnets to worship God." Other towns voted to have women remove their bonnets during meeting and hang "on the pegs," (7).

Costume of the Period: At the approach of the 18th century, a vast and resourceful empire had been hewn out of the wilderness that began at Jamestown less than one hundred years before.

In the first half of the century, which was the most prosperous and comfortable period of Colonial life in America, fashion was a conspicuous element. Roads were creeping from settlement to settlement and ships were beginning to link the seaport towns and villages. These merchant ships from the Orient and from Europe brought to all the seaport towns rich silks, tissues, damasks, embroidered gauzes and fine cottons.

In Virginia dress was looked upon as an important "badge of rank," a fact attested by the many orders sent to England by the wealthy planters for the latest in fabrics and fashions. Many of Virginia's early settlers were Cavaliers with no "Puritanical horror of fine dress"—hence few attempts were made to curb their extravagances in attire or that of their children whose garb was almost as elaborate as that of their parents (9). There were no restrictions placed upon the dress

of the wives of Virginia clergymen. A minister's wife flaunting such feminine finery as a fashionable brocaded suit, a blue satin petticoat, blue silk stockings and blue silk shoes, would doubtless have been "tarred and feathered" in Puritan New England, but not in the Old Dominion. Girdles and buckles of gold and silver were among the articles of dress forbidden by the Massachusetts General Court, but they were generally worn by the wealthy and fashionable Virginians, even by children. Silk and leather were also used to make girdles, but gold and silver more frequently went into the "rich ornaments" worn by older women (9). From an early date wigs were worn in the colonies and by 1716 the fashion of wearing them had become universal.

As the eighteenth century advanced the colonies grew in wealth, their trade increased and they gradually were awakened to the fact that they were Americans. Still they strove to obtain through friends who were still in England, through colonists who visited the homeland and through imported ideas in the shape of clothes, to imitate the fashions in a manner becoming their new ideal or national capability. As a result of this national awakening desires and costumes were exceedingly rich, varied and showy.

In fashions the influence of England and the continent was paramount, and the planter families eagerly awaited the arrival of letters, fashion plates and dolls dressed in the latest styles, not to mention fabrics, costumes and furnishings.

In all this striving to imitate the English styles the fashion dolls dressed in the latest modes, played a large and most important part.

It was by means of dressed dolls that many of the newest fashions first made this appearance in the colonies. They were received in the American homes with all the attention due to a distinguished visitor. Fashion "babies" were dressed by the mantuamakers of Paris and from there sent to the awaiting and expectant women of London. Many of these dolls, after having set the new styles for the fashionably dressed English ladies, together with new dolls fashioned by the London milliners, continued their journey to the colonies. In this way many new fashions were brought from France and England to far away America. After the dolls had served their first purpose and the little gowns no longer stimulated the feminine taste the dolls were given to the children to play with.

Southern dames were said to have the richest brocades and damasks that could be bought in London. Many letters still exist written by prominent citizens of Colonial times ordering clothing, rich laces, silk materials, velvet and fine cotton in light and gay colors. Frequently they ordered night gowns of silk and damask, but these were not sleepwear, but a sort of dressing gown.

Colonel John Lewis sent from Virginia to England for a wardrobe for a young miss who was his ward. The list reads thus: "a cap ruffle and tucker, the lace 5 shillings per yard, 1 pair white stays, 8 pair white kid gloves, 2 pair coloured gloves, 2 pair worsted hose, 3 pair thread hose, 1 pair silk shoe laces, 1 pair morocco shoes, 1 hoop coat, 1 hat, 4 pairs plain Spanish shoes, 2 pair calf shoes, 1 mask, 1 fan, 1 necklace, 1 girdle and buckle, 1 piece fashionable calico, 4 yards ribbon for knots, 1-1/2 yards cambric, a mantua and coat of lute string" (7).

The most fashionable dress worn in this period was the sacque. This garment, hanging from the shoulders over the large hooped petticoat, passed through a number of changes retaining its popularity from about 1720 to 1777. This loose-bodied sacque or full gown gained the height of its popularity about 1750. It hung from the shoulders with great fullness in the back spreading over a hooped petticoat. Shortly afterwards the fullness of the gown in the back was brought into a series of box pleats which descended to about the waistline and were lost in the fullness of the skirt. The sacque was worn either open all the way down the front revealing the petticoat and stomacher, or open to the waistline or closed. The sleeves came about to the elbows and were finished with ruffles. This French sacque is generally spoken of as the "Watteau gown" and the box pleating as "Watteau pleats." Later the box pleating on this quilted or elaborately embroidered gown with its flounced petticoats was sewn flat to the bodice.

The hoops dwindled in their skirts and gave way to flounces. The Watteau gown went out but panniers over petticoats remained. Children were dressed like miniature adults.

The most usual dress was the one left at the end of the seventeenth century and carried over into these years with only slight modifications. It had a long-waisted bodice laced across the front over an undergown and the skirt was looped up at the sides into panniers over the petticoat. Pinnets or aprons were worn even by ladies who planned to do no work, they were ornamental as well as practical. "Inventory of Mrs. Sarah Faylor of Lower Norfolk left a sea green apron valued at

one pound four shillings—equal to at least \$25 today" (8). Many examples of this style dress with slight variations were seen in the eighteenth century.

Hoops came into fashion between 1710-1715. The hoop skirt was a circular arrangement of whalebone. The whalebone hoops started at the waist and gradually became larger as they descended. Sometimes they were attached to a canvas petticoat. Until about the middle of the century they were made into two sidepieces that enabled the wearer to handle them easier. At first they were round and funnel-shaped but during the next few years they became more flattened in front and back, projecting over the hips in varying widths. The skirt was now more oval and this fashion prevailed throughout the period.

With the introduction of hoops the trains gradually disappeared and the skirt and petticoat touched the ground. After 1730, the skirt and petticoat did not touch the ankle except for dress occasions.

Not many of the paintings of this period show the skirt opened in front displaying the fine petticoat, the skirt is more often closed. When the skirt is shown split up the front it is gathered full over the hips and from there hanging free revealing a V shaped section of the petticoat. Another manner of wearing the opened skirt was to gather it up in the old manner and fasten it in panniers at the side.

When the bodice and skirt are made in one piece it is referred to as a gown. The bodice of the gown did not differ from the bodice made to wear separately with a skirt. The skirt of the gown was hung from the waist over the hooped petticoat or it could be hooked back over

the hips with narrow braid and buttons. The décolletage was either a round or a square cut neck line with bodice opening in front showing a richly embroidered or laced stomacher. The stomacher was further embellished with a row of ribbons down the front, the échelles and neck edge often decorated with a band of lace.

The French influence was continued with the appearance of the polonaise that was exceedingly popular and fashionable during those years just prior to the Revolution and during the years of the new Republic.

The first means of traveling and of communication between the different settlements in the colonies were by following the streams and rivers in boats and by foot along old Indian trails. Gradually the trails through the forest widened into roads making horseback riding possible. Even after carriages and stage coaches came into general use, horseback riding remained the most popular way of getting around until the close of the eighteenth century. Seated apillion was the usual way women and children rode. The custom for women to ride alone came in the late seventeenth century. The pillion was a leather or padded cushion made on a wooden frame, a sort of platform hung from the otherside. There were no specially designed riding costume worn by the women, but they protected their garments from being splashed with mud and dirt by donning a cloak and using what they called a "weather skirt" over their skirt.

The cloak, in one form or another, never lost favor. The majority of the cloaks worn in the eighteenth century were of a scarlet color with a gay and colorful lining. There was also a scarlet cloak usually

made of a woolen material called the cardinal. Many of the cloaks had hoods attached and varied in length from three quarters to full length.

Shortly after 1700 the style of high-dressed coiffures gave way to a fashion wherein the hair was dressed close to the head and off the face. This fashion lasted with slight variations until the late sixties. Powder for the hair was only occasionally used until about 1750 when it became general use for dress occasions and until 1785 when it went out of style. About 1775 the hair was arranged very tall over a wire framework and then powdered. Artificial flowers were entwined or used in the hair.

Head coverings at the beginning of the century included a small linen or lace cap worn over the low dressed hair and remained in style until the hair was dressed in tower form. These caps began to grow in height as the hair was being dressed higher and continued to be worn until the end of the century.

Another variety was the large linen or lawn cap which appeared about the same time. It was quite high in a point in front and fitted close around the face. The edge usually had a fine full ruching and was tied under the chin. Hoods were popular throughout the period, some of them enveloping the head, with the front edge turned back to reveal a gay lining in contrasting color and tied under the chin. The hood gradually lost favor and in its place came the calash, "a vast hood on hinged hoops which could be raised or lowered over the high head dresses without disturbing them" (1).

Straw hats with a broad brim and low crown appeared around 1730. These were sometimes worn over the small linen cap edged with ruffles and held in place by two long ribbon ties that went around the crown and back to tie beneath the chin.

From the 1770's on, hats were all the style and were of every shape and form. Hats were trimmed with artificial flowers and fruit, plumes, feathers, ribbons and laces and worn at every conceivable angle.

High heeled shoes with round toes were fashionable up until about 1730, when shoes with pointed toes came into style. Shoes were expensive for they were made from beautiful silks and damasks, plain or flowered. By 1760 heels became lower and buckles and small rosettes were worn on the instep. Long gloves of white, black or purple silk or kid were very fashionable. Silk or lace mittens that were fingerless gloves were used for the summer. Aprons worn were in no special size, style or color. Parasols were very few. Muffs in varied sizes and materials continued to be worn.

For evening dress women wore a bunch of either real or artificial flowers at her bosom. If real flowers, they were inserted into a small glass tube about four inches long called the "bosom bottle." The "bosom bottle" was concealed in the stomacher of the gown.

Paint, powder and patches were used in fashionable circles, the patches being significant. The ladies with Whig sympathies wore these patches on the left side of the face and Tories wore theirs on the right. Every woman of fashion carried a patch-box of enamel, china or tortoise shell. This patch box and fan were to the lady what the snuff

box was to the gentlemen. The etui, or ornamental case which hung from the waist and held a thimble, scissors and a scent bottle was worn by all fashionable ladies. The pomander was used for holding perfume.

From 1730 on, the fan became increasingly popular and fan-making at this time was already an established industry. Women of all classes carried them and wealthy women owned a number. These fans were made of tortoise shell, satin, feathers, vellum, silver filigree, or ivory.

During the Revolution there were extremes of rich and plain attire in women's dress. In the cities, which the British occupied, balls, dinners and other gatherings kept fashion uppermost in the thoughts of the ladies, while throughout the country the majority of the women dressed plainly. They wore domestic materials and curtailed expenses wherever possible in order to send materials to the fighting men.

Families of wealth and station were inclined or restrained from any display of ostentation. The growing restraint was due to the lack of imported goods as commerce with England had been cut off and contact with other countries hazardous because of the British blockade. Also from patriotic motives and to encourage home industries, the use of silk and satin fell into disfavor and it became more fashionable to wear simpler materials made in New England, such as kerseymere, a knit goods similar to jersey. In a very short time America repaired the ravages of the conflict and won a place in the world's commercial and industrial ranks.

The hatred toward England was intense and many wished nothing from her, thereby turning to France who was popular because of her aid

during the Revolution. During the last quarter of the century, the French influence on American costume and on art is very evident. Bodices remained much the same in shape and style until about 1780. They kept their long-waisted shape worn either closed or open and laced over a stomacher. The low-necked gown remained in fashion with sleeves usually of elbow length, though in the early 70's a sleeve to the wrist was popular.

As the hoops and panniers were less and less worn except for dress occasions, a skirt attached to the bodice came in. It had small gathers at the waistline and was either bunched, reefed or looped over a quilted petticoat. The low-cut bodice remained fashionable until the nineties, though the fashion of covering the neck with fine linen and gauze scarfs and fischus increased.

A change in the style of women's costume was noted about 1780 when the bodice became shorter and less pointed in front or it was cut low in front and finished with tabs below the waistline; the sleeves fitting close from the shoulder to the waist. With the gradual disuse of the hoops and panniers the full-gathered skirt attached to the bodice was held out in the back by a bustle. Another change occurred about 1790, when the waistline was again raised. The neck was bared in a deep, round decolletage edge with a full lace ruffle. Above the corsage the neck was covered with a fine gauze or by a bouffant. The fur trimmed pelisse was still worn as a fashionable wrap throughout these years.

Fashion in hats varied during this period from the small hats and caps to large enveloping bonnets and great broad-brimmed hats. They were

made of all materials; straw, beaver, felt, silk and gauze. Older women wore caps. With the coming of the short-waisted gowns the vogue of the large hat passed. With fashion changing so rapidly it is doubtful that the American ladies were able to keep up with the latest Paris fashions.

By 1775 heels on shoes were lowered and the toe rounded. Wide latches or buckles were used on the instep. When these two disappeared the front was cut lower and heels practically vanished. Then came the style of fastening the shoes with ribbons about the ankles. Gloves, muffs, scarfs, fans, parasols and jewels were all a part of the fashionable lady's attire during this period.

After 1775 there was a tendency to widen and flatten the high-dressed coiffures at the top. The front hair gathered from the forehead was pressed into a forward curve with one to three curls at the sides and one at the shoulder. The back hair was arranged in a loose loop curled on the top and set with a large bow at the back. The hair was covered with a white powder, the powder reaching its popularity just preceding and during the early years of the Revolution. This powdering the hair went out about 1785. About 1781 the high towers of head dress were lowered. For everyday wear the hair was dressed with curls clustered over the head and long flowing hair in the back. Sometimes a curl hung over one shoulder and was powdered or left natural.

Many pictures show that at the close of the eighteenth century the hair was dressed with curls over the forehead and at the side of the face with the back hair looped low and then brought to the crown of the head where it was fastened by a ribbon or comb.

The earliest settlements along the seaboard had hardly come into being before the more venturesome spirits were making their way into the unexplored wilderness. These men often carried their families with them deep into the tree country. On some pleasant hillock near a convenient spring they would hack a space in the forest wall and throw up a log shelter (1). Women were less numerous than the men in this wilderness and their dress was very simple with little glamour. Leather was the most important material used along with crude homespun. Spinning wheels and looms came in and buckskin slowly gave way in favor of linen and homespun.

The bodice of the linsey-woolsey or leather dress was loosely cut and slightly laced in front. Collars were seldom worn as the frontier lady preferred a small shawl made of a soft material that could be thrown over the shoulders. The skirts were cut full without excessiveness and fell in straight folds to the ankles. Many wore their skirts shorter, about mid-calf. The women seldom wore hats but for inclement weather selected a hood or shawl to throw over the head. The hair too was dressed in the same simple manner in which they lived. They wore it long in plaits or in a coiled knot at the back of the head.

Foot coverings on this outer fringe of civilization were made of leather. The shoes were moccasins or stout, square toed shoes that evidently weren't very comfortable as the women went barefooted when possible. Coarse linen aprons were a part of the women's costume and woolen stockings were worn in cold weather. Little jewelry was used but a strand of pearls or a ribbon was highly treasured. There is no mention of any type of undergarments worn by the women during this period.

Some Typical Examples of Costumes

Plate 5: Rare dolls, bequest of Miss Blanche Elizabeth Sprinkle to the Valentine Museum in Richmond. The second doll from the left is definitely one of the fashion dolls of the eighteenth century.

Plate 6: The Polonaise dress with close-fitted bodice shows the full skirt looped up to meet the three vertical panels called the "Watteau pleats." This is worn over a separate skirt with much ruching and festooning for trim.

Plate 7: This dress and matching petticoat of cotton block print in madder colors shows the open front skirt. The fitted closed bodice with square neck has fitted elbow-length sleeves finished with a flounce. Self-material ruching is used down center front.

Plate 8: A dress and matching petticoat in brocaded silk in yellow and pinkish mauve stripes with brocaded polychrome floral sprigs. The fitted open bodice with elbow-length sleeves are finished with a double flounce. The back of the bodice and the skirt are cut in one piece and shows another version of the "Watteau pleat." The open front skirt ends in a short train.

Plate 9: A figured silk dress with low neckline and lace trim in front. The back is pleated and features a short train. The skirt is looped up over the hips, pannier fashion. Straight sleeves have a self fabric pleated ruffle reaching just below the elbow.

Plate 10: This block printed gown and gauze apron shows the neckline draped with a square of cloth, often used for warmth.

Plate 11:

Left: This brown brocade overdress with its bell-shaped open skirt has a quilted petticoat of solid color tan. Lace trims are used on the sleeves and around the square neckline. The calash was the fashionable head dress of the period.

Center: Formerly owned by Mary Ball, the mother of George Washington, this cream brocaded dress is the oldest of the collections owned by the Valentine Museum. The close-fitting bodice has flounces on the straight sleeves. A triangle of gauze silk (tiffany whisk) is shown knotted at the neckline. The graceful bell-shaped skirt remained fashionable during this period.

Right: Man's costume typical of the period.

Plate 12: This dress of white silk, brocaded in floral design, has a fitted closed bodice with square neck and fitted sleeves ending above the elbow. The back of the bodice and skirt is cut in one piece; skirt ends in a train. This dress is said to have been brought from England for the wedding dress of Sarah Green Hill of Wickford, Rhode Island. The silk dates from the 1720's; the dress has been altered to the style of 1760's.

Plate 13: A cream and yellow flowered silk dress popular about 1770. The silhouette had become fuller over the hips but continued to fall in graceful folds over a quilt blue silk underskirt. Bobbin lace neatly trimmed the neckline and the sleeves.

Plate 14: Nearly every woman owned a cardinal. This red wool cloak or cape was cut circular. Many were pieced in the oddest places and few had

finished seams--they were just cut and put together. Most cardinals had the attached hood which was pleated in the back and gathered around the face with a drawstring.

Plate 15:

Upper left: A calash of green silk made on fifteen reed frames.

Upper right: A black horsehair circular hat with shallow, flat crown.

Lower left: A lace cap using four layers of bobbin lace gathered to form a circle. These were often worn under hats.

Lower right: Another cap of cotton and lace. It was gathered and tucked with a ruffled frill edged with bobbin lace.

Plate 16:

Upper: This pair of slippers was made of leather and brocaded silk. The uppers are of white silk brocaded in polychrome and trimmed with green ribbon ruching. Rounded toes.

Lower left: Pattens were made of oak, leather and iron. This squaretoed oak sole raised on an elliptical ring of wrought iron kept the shoe dry and clean. The leather toe and straps were for fastening.

Lower right: Clogs of leather and brocaded silk had a flat leather sole with a pointed toe, oval heel and raised arch. Two straps attached to arch were to fasten over instep. This was a type of overshoe.

Plate 17:

Upper: Another style of slipper worn features the pointed toe and broader heel. This one in white silk brocaded in blue, yellow and green.

Center: This ornate pair of shoes in white silk has metallic brocading. The pointed toe is still used, but a higher heel is noted.

Lower: Fancy buckles were used on this pair of green, brocaded silk shoes. Pointed toes and broad heels were still featured.

Plate 18:

Upper: Fashionable black chamois gloves with black lace palm insert.

Lower left: Artificial flowers made of silk and wire were used to decorate dresses, hats and other apparel.

Lower right: Petticoat of polychrome wool embroidery on white linen and cotton. The skirt is gathered and attached to waist band.

Plate 19:

Upper left: Shaped purse of white embroidered silk with gathered green ribbon binding and silk cord drawstring popular during first half of the century.

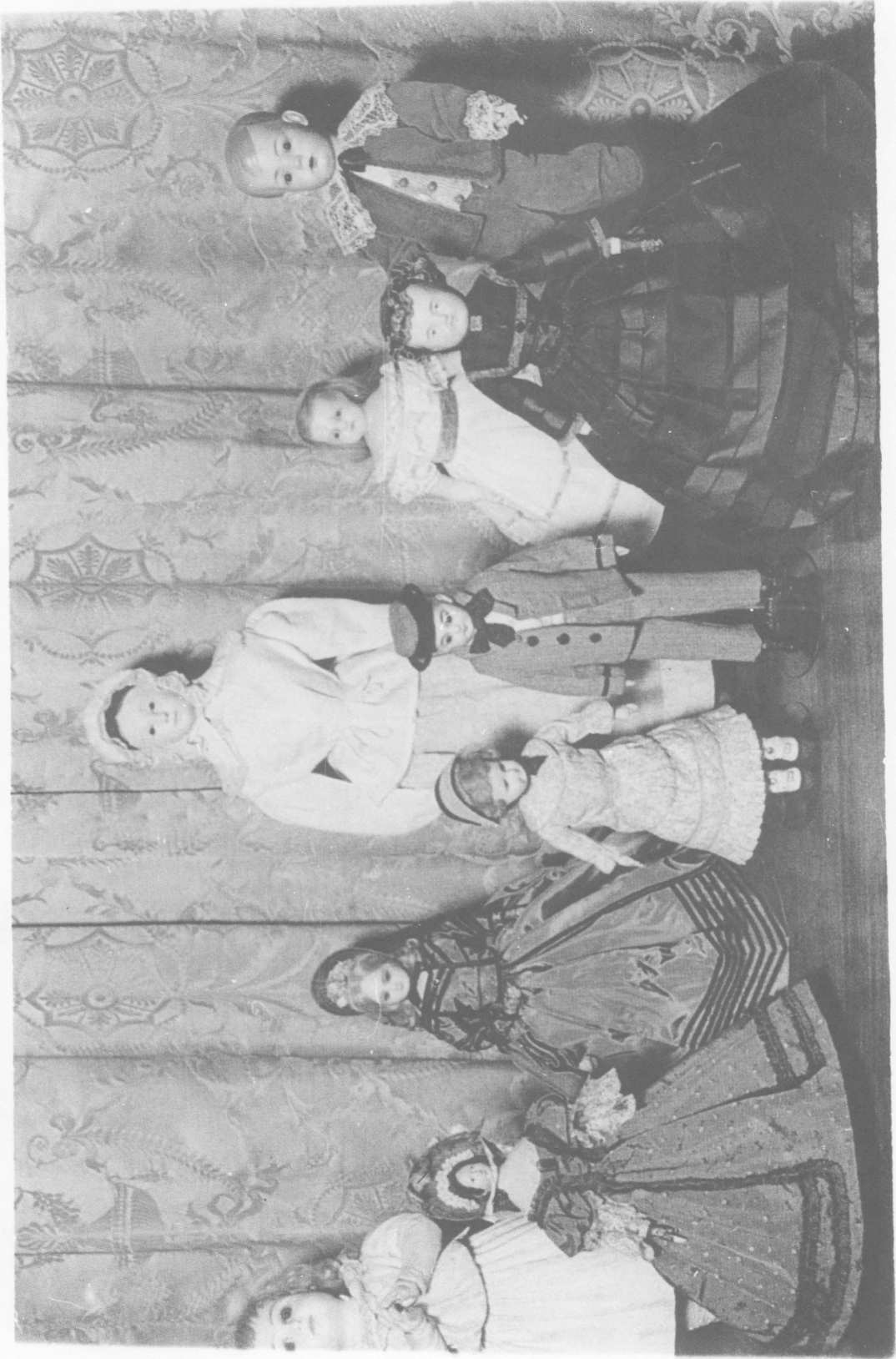
Upper right: Smaller envelope-type purse of polychrome wool embroidery on white wool ground embroidered in outline and satin stitch.

Lower: Folding case of two pockets and flap with symmetrical beaded floral design and gold lace edging on white silk used in second half of the 18th century.

Plate 20: Dress worn by Martha Custis Washington, wife of President George Washington and First Lady from 1789-1797. This dress is made of salmon pink faille handpainted with a design of the wild flowers and insects of North America in natural colors.

Gauze mitts, drawstring bag, lace shawl and cap are typical accessories for this period.

Plate 5



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 6



Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

Plate 7



Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

53-847,1-2



Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

Plate 9



Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

Plate 10



Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

Plate 11



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 12



Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

Plate 13



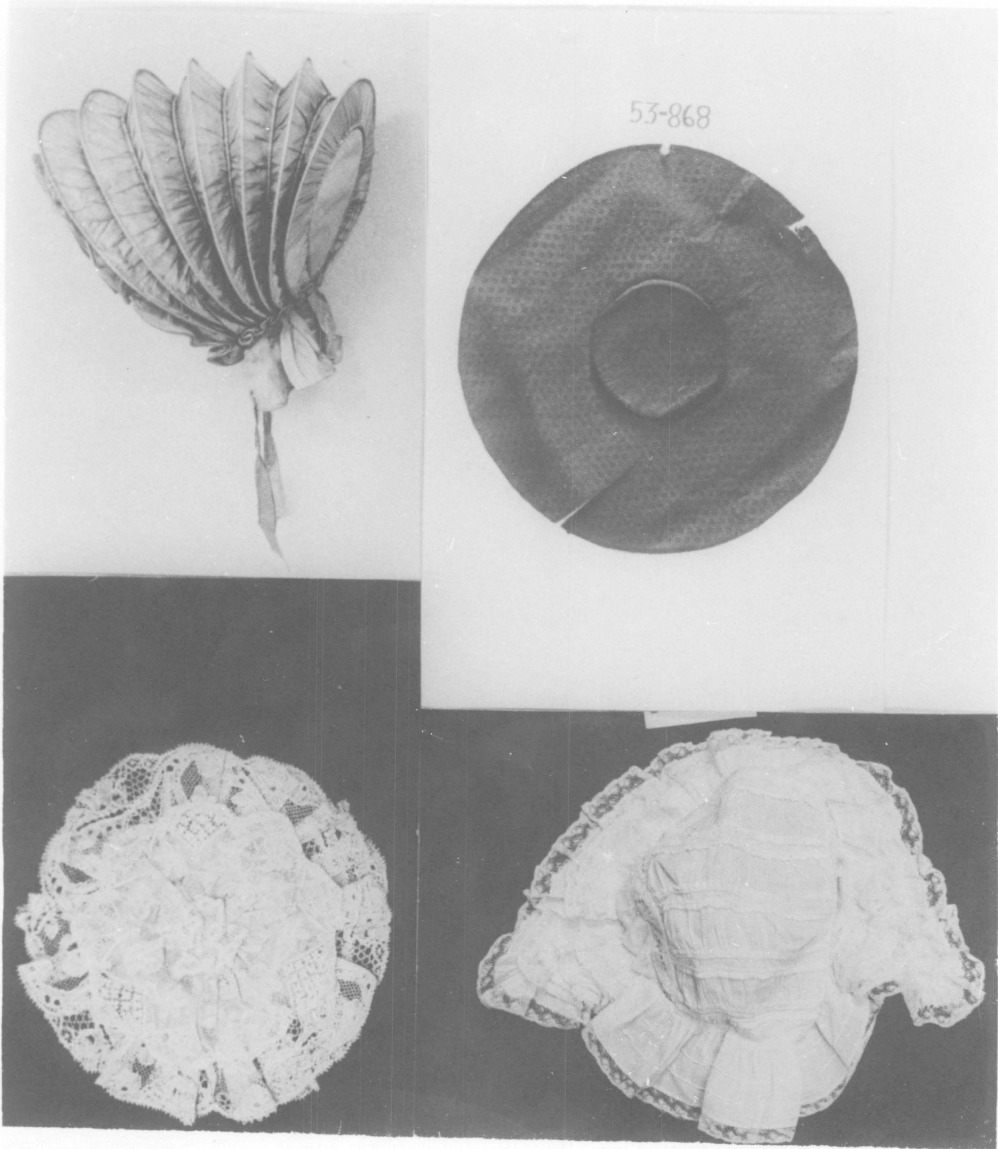
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

Plate 14



Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

Plate 15



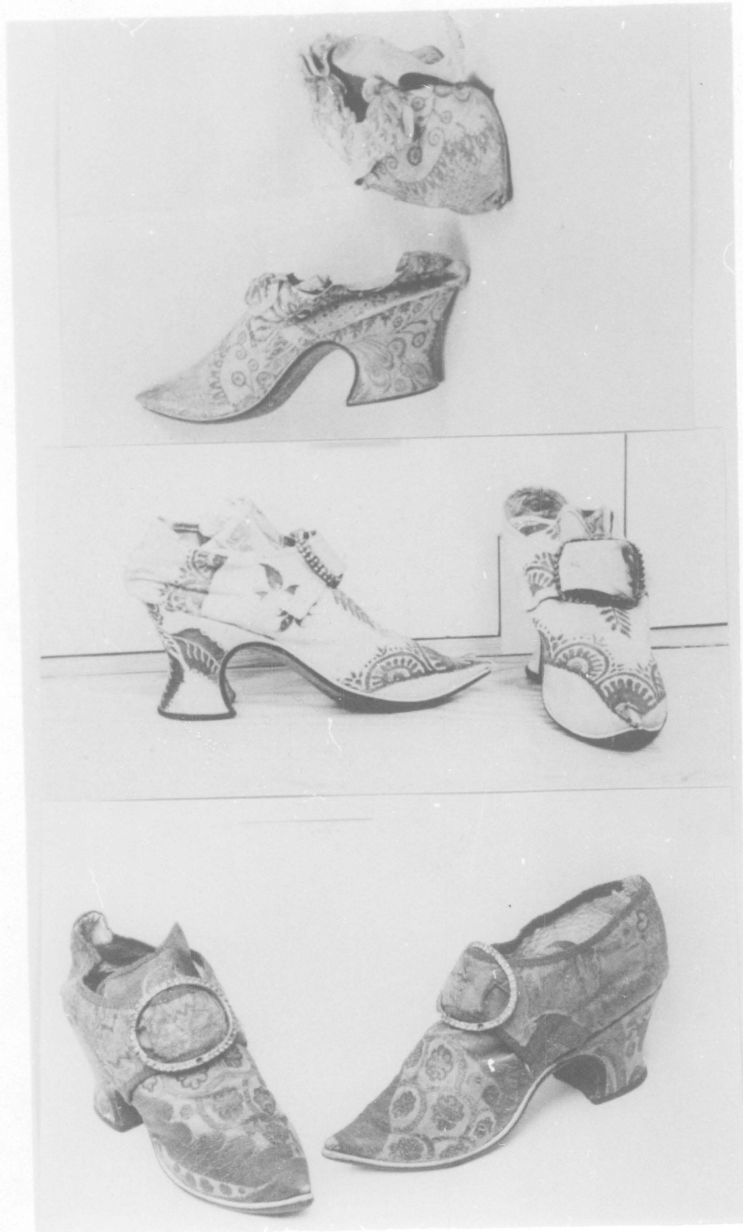
Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

Plate 16



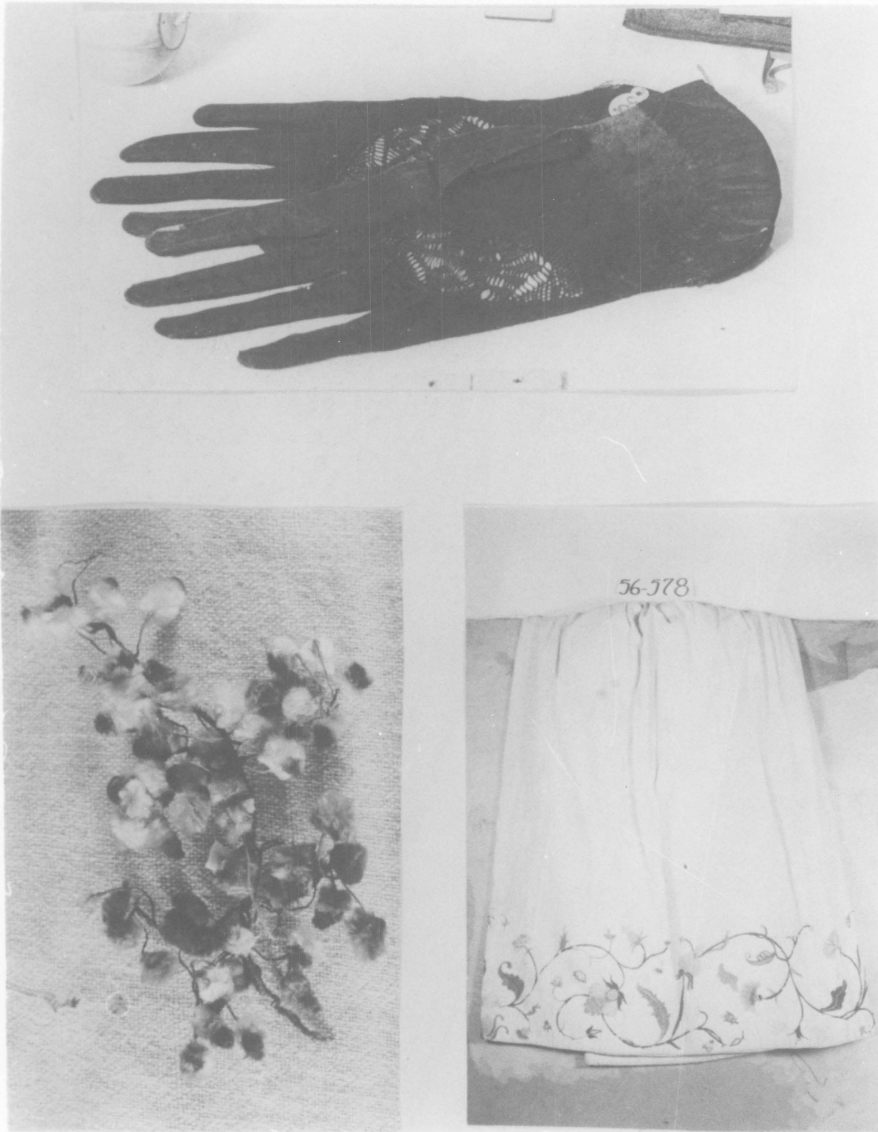
Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

Plate 17



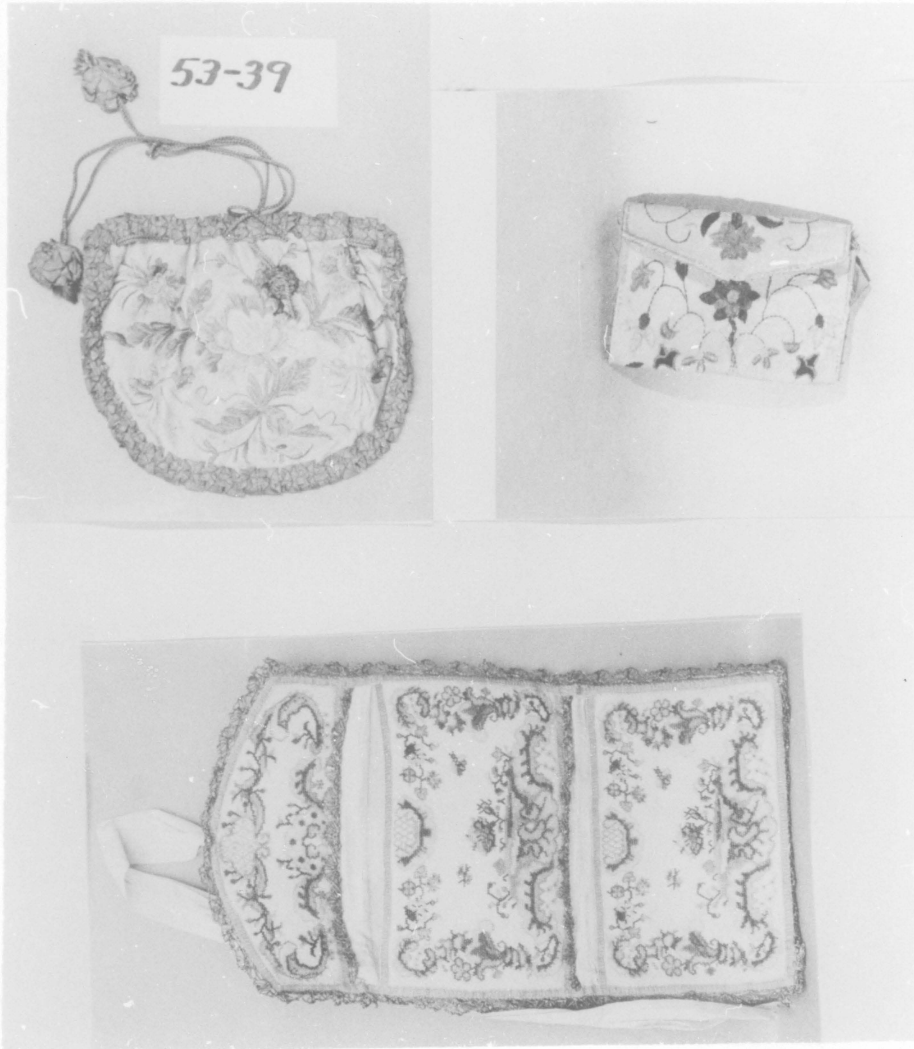
Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

Plate 18



Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

Plate 19



Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute

CHAPTER IV

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

History and Socio-Economic Background: Virginians had dominated the national government until the close of Monroe's second administration, holding the office of president for 32 of the first 36 years of its existence. Virginia gave two more presidents to the nation in 1841. From 1865 Virginia's influence upon national affairs steadily declined until the Civil War, when, for four years, Virginia leadership was to shine again in all its old glory.

The decade 1830-1840 was a period of canal, railroad, and turnpike construction. "But life was not easy, and it would be a few years before attention could be turned to anything as luxurious as fashion" (11).

There was political conflict between the North and the South over the tariff issue, for tariffs enriched Northern manufacturers at the South's expense. Plantation economy was not attractive to European immigrants, for they would not compete with slave labor. Through three decades, 1830-1860, Congress was kept in a turmoil over slavery and other issues. With the aid of extremists on both sides the situation became so grave that everyone soon realized that there would be war. Virginia was important to the Confederacy economically and militarily. Richmond had a vital supply of iron necessary for war munitions and had the nation's greatest flour mills.

Virginia fought the Civil War to maintain the rights and powers that had been included in the Constitution.

"While pathetic scenes were being enacted in camp, the ladies of Richmond were entertaining, dressing and dancing by way of keeping up their courage. During the progress of the war Mrs. Pryor was reduced to finding some means of feeding her household, and out of a trunkful of 'before the war' finery, which had been long stored away, manufactured articles of lingerie, collars, undersleeves, neckties, etc., which brought good prices in the inflated confederate currency. In her endeavor to keep in the neighborhood of General Pryor's brigade, she stopped for awhile at Petersburg, and describes the ingenuity of the woman there. Mrs. Pryor also mentions the advanced prices during the war times in the Southern States. Calico of the commonest kind in those days was sold at twenty-five dollars a yard, and we women of the Confederacy cultivated such an indifference to Paris fashions as would have astonished our former competitors in the Federal Capital" (10). Invention, that clever daughter of necessity, devised a costume for a Southern belle, for in peace or war the women of Dixie were always belles. It was a gown of unbleached muslin and trimmed with gourd seed buttons dyed crimson. They were ingenious in hat making using flowers made of feathers and cocks comb plumes for trimming.

This conflict still remains the most striking episode of Virginia's past. The destruction of the territory was frightful for it remained a major battle area for four long years. The disorganization of the entire economic system was immense. "The whole economy of Virginia had been for four years geared to war, to supplying the army and the immediate necessities of the civilian population of Confederate areas. From a

system oriented towards the production of raw materials for export, with a minor section devoted to manufacturing, it was to remain for a long while after the war a small regional economy striving to maintain even the lowest level of self-sufficiency" (12).

In reflection, the nineteenth century was one of tragedy for the Old Dominion for it came when the rural economy was enjoying a new prosperity—more settlement in the western parts, more diversification of the agricultural production and a steady growth of the main towns. The period of prosperity preceding the war was also a period of concern over educational matters. On the whole, education remained a luxury until the Civil War.

The war left Virginia ravaged and destitute. Certain regions had been completely devastated. Thousands of homes and barns had been burned, and most of the livestock had been carried away. The charming, gracious and hospitable civilization of the ante-bellum life was gone.

The years following the war were known as the Reconstruction Era. This constitutes one of the darkest chapters, for suffering and heartache were the daily portions of Virginians. Virginia set forth the grim struggle to restore her economy.

The social structure itself seemed to have deteriorated. Social and economic reconstruction proceeded at a slow pace heavily weighted by many problems. The economic system was so deeply shattered that the last part of the century was a period of slow recovery and reorganization. Industrialization finally came with the textile and lumber production steadily expanding. Owing to the development of her

railroads, Virginia maintained a strategic position in the mighty transportation system of the United States.

The nineteenth century was also an age of revivals. "The background to this period is the unprecedented economic development which ushered in the age of capitalism and the machine. Until then handwork had been supreme" (13).

The factory was a powerful influence in changing the nation's way of living. Heretofore, linen, clothing, furniture and many other articles of everyday utility had been made in the home, and only in sufficient quantity to satisfy the needs of the individual family. Women's education was still scoffed at. Female seminaries where needlework, drawing, painting, embroidery and music were taught in addition to ordinary subjects formed a link between elementary school and college.

By 1870 women began to go to work in offices and factories. They had little time to make dresses and tended to lose their skill. Meanwhile, a large number of tailors poured into the country in the 1870's and began to produce women's clothes cheaply on a mass production basis. Women found, or thought they did, that these clothes were cheaper than those they could make by hand at home.

These new or improved inventions eased the life of the average woman by creating more leisure time. Women were accepted to a limited degree in institutions of higher learning. Education itself underwent many changes. There were also many religious reforms and the development of the press was notable.

As women began to enter business and the professions, they came to adopt simple and attractive styles. In 1871 the first printed patterns were sold by the hundreds.

As the country grew and cities expanded, new horizons opened before the American woman. Horsecars made it easy for her to get about the city; railroads and steamboats facilitated travel through the populated sections of the country and packets sailing on regular schedules brought London and Paris within convenient distance.

Before and after the war, dress was considered an essential ingredient of matchmaking where Northerners and Southerners mingled and danced. North and South rivalled each other in their lavish display of costume, jewelry and fine manners. The watering places in Virginia of the 1880's was referred to as the parade ground of fashion and the marriage market of the South. These Southern Spas were instrumental in bringing together the supply of attractive Southern Belles and wealthy young blades of the North. Often times the plantation was mortgaged to afford the daughter this opportunity.

In 1898 thousands of young Virginians volunteered to fight for their country in the Spanish-American War.

As to the religion during this century it is best expressed by President Jefferson who wrote: "Believing that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should make no law respecting an

establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between Church and State" (14).

Costume of the period: Fashions changed with great rapidity and a multiplicity of styles came in with the dawn of ~~the dawn of~~ the nineteenth century. It was about 1785 when the first decided change occurred in the fashionable dress of women. Instead of the rich, heavy brocades and damasks that had been fashionable for so long, soft clinging muslin, gauze or similar materials were used and is introduced to the styles of the French Republic. With the introduction of the new style, high-dressed hair, powder and patches, large hats and high-heeled shoes were all a part of the discard.

In the early nineteenth century under the influence of the Classic Revival there was for a time a vogue for scanty attire of sheer clinging materials. One humorist remarked that "in one year 18 ladies caught fire and 10,000 caught colds" (2).

The new gown made with a very short bodice accentuating the high waist line was now the fashion. It had a low neckline, and sometimes a gauze or muslin handkerchief was draped over the shoulders. These gowns were either sleeveless or had short puff sleeves, sometimes with long sleeves attached to the puffs. When it was worn out of doors women wore long scarves reaching to the feet and long cloaks when it was cold. Slippers, for indoors and out, were light and had no heels.

Coming into fashion along with the French gown was the coiffure where the hair was brought to the crown of the head in a mass of curls or in a twisted knot giving a disheveled look. A long straggling bang or lock of hair was brought forward over the brow and cheeks. Many

colonial women did not follow this absurd mode, but continued to dress their hair simply. Among the many exotic fashions of the Directory period in France and followed by some women in America was the style of dressing the hair "a la victime." The hair was cut off close to the scalp and brushed out to make it stand out stiff with a few straggling locks brought forward into the eyes (1).

At the beginning of the 19th century fashion reigned supreme over all the civilized countries on both sides of the Atlantic. Monthly magazines with colored plates of the latest fashions were published in London as well as in Paris and sent regularly to America instead of the fashion dolls of the preceding century (10).

The Empire costume, which came in about 1804 and lasted until 1814 (had many revivals), consisted of a long narrow simple dress, cut low with an exaggeratedly high waistline and narrow sleeves. "It is distinguished from all others by the long, flowing line, the short waist and the absence of pressure on any part of the costume. This was in deed a contrast to the tightly laced and boned bodice of previous centuries, and marks one of the greatest changes in the costume of women" (15).

The bodice was so short that it was scarcely a bodice at all and showed not only the neck but the bust. The flowing gown hung in long, easy lines to the floor. Mulls, lawns, and batistes were popular materials with velvet and silk being used occasionally. Gradually the dresses became shorter and were often trimmed at the bottom with a border of self material combined with net and beads, or one embroidered

on the material. Pin tucks and heavy cords were much used for trimming. Fur was worn too as trimming and large muffs of it were carried, not only in winter, but were often seen with straw hat and muslin costumes.

"The contest between muffs and muslins is at present very severe among the ladies, most of whom condescend to keep their hands warm, though the cold and thin clothing should dye parts of their sweet persons an imperial purple" (10).

In the beginning years of the Empire Period the sleeves were short puffs at the shoulder, and later extended almost to the elbow. These gradually changed into the long, close fitting sleeve, sometimes extending well over the hand. The favorite style was that of open sleeves caught up in several places by buttons or gathered, this fashion lasted several years. The long sleeve could easily be removed leaving the little puffs or short sleeves. Long gloves of lace, linen or kid were used with the short puff sleeves. Muffs were large and made of beaver, chinchilla and swansdown. The train worn over the Empire Style dress was a separate garment, very long and wide, and of a different material and color from the dress itself. It was often of a richly decorated velvet or satin and was attached to the bodice just below the bust. This ceased to be fashionable after 1805. The dress, after losing its train began to grow shorter and to show more of the feet and the flat shoes. This airy costume apparently had one garment under it and was scarcely more than two yards wide at the bottom.

In the early days of the Republic, girls dressed as their mother did, in high waisted short-sleeved dresses with narrow skirts reaching to the ankle. About 1811 the pantalet appeared on the fashion horizon.

Those of everyday use were of calico, but for dress occasions they were elaborately trimmed with lace and embroidery, or deep starched ruffles. Some fashions featured the dress and pantalets to match. The mode in some version lasted for forty years.

The robe or open tunic popularized by Napoleon developed into new articles of attire—the redingote, pelisses, morning dresses or cloaks for extra warmth. In 1812 these comfortable and roomy robes of varied design were much worn with a broad collar of colored material and gathered sleeves. A peculiar over-dress was the sleeved over-apron or "robe en tablier." These robes looked like ordinary dresses made to fasten at the back, but they were only fastened with a few buttons or bows of ribbon (16).

All sorts of wraps were worn, partly for warmth and partly for show. Rectangular or square shawls or plaids of taffeta, muslin or crepe—mostly white or some delicate shade were fashionable. Their size allowed them to be worn in many ways and draped in graceful lines. Wealthy women wore shawls of delicate cashmere.

During the summer, shawls, short mantles, the long silk scarf and the ever popular spencers were a part of every lady's wardrobe. The spenser, a short long-sleeved jacket worn over the dress, is referred to from 1800 to 1833. One source under the date of 1803 reads: "Spencers are worn both for walking and carriage dress. Levantines, spotted silks, striped lutestrings are the favorite materials. The trimming is always of satin. The Augusta spenser is one of the prettiest of dress spencers. The waist if finished in tabs is cut

in the form of leaves. In velvet spencers, black, purple and bottle green are favorite colors. The velvet is cut bias. Percale dresses are worn with these" (17).

Some of the spencers were shaped like a blouse, an eton, or zouave, and opened in front never reaching below the waistline.

Hats took on many shapes and were made from a variety of materials. The poke bonnet was a popular name for the capote or close fitting bonnet that projected over the face. The poke bonnet, made of straw, willow and chip, was worn in the winter as well as in the summer and was frequently tied down with a red silk handkerchief or a folded silk or lace veil. Another type resembled the gypsy hat with its broad brim and scant trimming. The Troutback was a flat straw hat and the Shaker-bonnets were small pokes of strawboard. Turbans were popular and worn in every variety of material, Chinese crepe and Peruvian gauze being favorites. It was also fashionable to decorate the turbans with hand painting. Lace was used for very dressy turbans.

Earlier types of hats and bonnets continued to be worn, but fashions were ever changing and by 1814 bonnets were very tiny and close-fitting. The bonnets and hats so covered the head that little of the hair could be seen. The hair was simply arranged in a coil at the nape of neck with short curls fringed across the forehead. Flowers worn in the hair were very fashionable. In 1806 a tall ostrich feather stuck perpendicular in the hair was seen often.

Footwear followed the same capricious fancy as in the eighteenth century. The shoes were generally low and wider and held on by ribbons tied crosswise. "Another invention of this period was, the Grecian

sandle in the form of a half-boat, cut out on each side of the lace holes, showing the stocking, made of white kid, bound, laced and embroidered in silver" (10). Ankle-boots laced at the back were popular in 1808. The slippers had astonishingly thin soles and many were made to match the dresses. Rights and lefts in shoes were introduced and shoe polish and shoe blackening began to be employed. Previous to this a mixture of lampblack, suet and tallow had been used.

"Although convention required that only certain materials should be worn in mourning, it was not customary for mourners to seclude themselves, or refrain from social gayeties, for in all the fashion books of the first half of the nineteenth century, plates and descriptions of full dress as well as demi-dress, both in deep mourning and light mourning, are given" (10). Bombazine, crape, Gossamer satin, and light silk are mentioned for deep mourning. Bombazine appears to have been popular in colors, white, blue and red are mentioned, but bombazine of any color is very irritating to the touch and required self-restraint to wear.

Lavendar became a new color and it was much worn. Dove gray, fawn, pale-pink and blue continued to be favorites.

Shawls were still worn in colors that contrasted with the lighter color of the dress. With the tendency for dresses to fit more closely, the shawl lost its importance as a graceful accessory and was supplemented by a small triangular shoulder scarf or fichu. With the increase in the number of petticoats worn, the gracefulness of the Empire style was lost and within a few years a new mode emphasizing the waistline

made its appearance. With the reaction against the Empire style about 1820 other styles appeared.

The dresses of this period were fuller and gave ease to the figure. The outstanding feature was the leg-of-mutton sleeves that were introduced about 1827. It is not known who invented these sleeves or gave them the name which so well describes their shape. The sleeves continued to increase in size until they became grotesque. "Padding was used in the top of silk sleeves, for they could not be starched sufficiently to meet the demands of fashion" (15). Almost as much material was required to make a pair of fashionable sleeves as for the skirt. "A contemporary says of this fashion that walking behind a pair of these sleeves one could always hear a curious creaking sound made as they rubbed together at the back" (10).

Skirts were short to the ankles and elaborately trimmed, gathered at the waist onto a band. Belts were broader and fastened with a buckle in front. With this order of dress waists looked very slender. Deep collars of lace or needle work embroidery contributed to the broad effect. The skirts and leg-of-mutton sleeves made all other details of the costume fade into insignificance. The combination of wide skirt, wasp waist and exaggerated sleeves produced the hour-glass silhouette. The bodice was very plain with no pleats or puckers. The materials were beautiful and varied. Embroidered cambrics, muslins, crapes and cashmeres. The more ornate dresses were made of tulle over satin, sarcenet or colored gauzes. Pelisse dresses of cambric were the favorites for house wear. They were ankle length and opened over a false petticoat trimmed to match the gown. They were both graceful and dignified.

Bonnets and hats became larger with the brims being lined with a bright color to correspond with the trimming. Full frills of lace were worn on the edge of some of the most fashionable bonnets. The hair was arranged in a single coil of braids. Other styles showed the front hair parted and arranged in soft curls at the temples with the Grecian knot high at the back. The use of hair dye became popular and ladies made use of rouge and pearl powder during this period.

The Waltz became the fashionable dance though it was not as interesting to watch as the minuet with its bows and courtesies or the Quadrille of the beginning of the nineteenth century, with its intricate figures.

Riding was still the fashionable exercise for the woman. Little change in the riding habit was made.

About 1836 the extravagantly large sleeves went out of style and was followed by a close fitting to the arm at the top and full at the elbows. The fullness of the sleeves descended lower and lower until it disappeared altogether. The skirts lengthened, ankles were no longer seen and only the toe of the shoe was seen beneath the edge. Skirts were trimmed with flounces and bows of ribbons and many petticoats were worn. Slender waists were very much admired and the bodices were gradually made with deeper points and worn without belts. Tight lacing, though popular, was frowned upon for health reasons.

Fur muffs and tippetts continued to be worn. "Gloves were in a great variety. With short sleeved dresses they reached the elbow, while with the long-sleeved dresses they were short, usually with one or

two buttons. Frequently the gloves were edged with frills of lace or ruching. Lace mittens were also worn through the thirties and forties" (15). Parasols were used in favor of the fan and seldom did she emerge without her tiny fringed sunshade. Prior to this sunshades had weighed as much as ten pounds.

Sleeveless jackets called canezous came into fashion in 1840. They were opened in front, finished at the neck with small collars and were either richly embroidered or trimmed with lace. During this time lace was worn extensively. In 1841, the sleeves were worn long and close fitting for house and street wear, sometimes finished with an epaulet cap called a jockey. Skirts were trimmed with flounces, bodices fitted close to the figure and were stiffly boned and finished with a point coming a little below the waist line in front.

During 1842 the skirts were worn very full over petticoats of crinoline. Sleeves became bell shaped with undersleeves of white muslin. The shoulders were very long and sloping. Black varnished leather shoes were a new fashion. Mits and even gloves of lace were very much in vogue. A small embroidered collar was often fastened with a brooch at the throat.

In 1846 Elias Howe, Jr. secured his first patents on the sewing machine. The tailors of Paris who feared competition from the sewing machine were not far wrong. During the Civil War the Union government supplied sewing circles with these machines to speed up the making of uniforms. Women quickly learned how to use them and for the next quarter of a century most of the dresses were made at home.

From colonial days until some years after the Civil War nearly every woman was her own Chanel. She bought a length of yard goods, a dress pattern (when available), lace trimmings, thread, etc. and according to her own whim, by hand or by machine made a garment. It was expected that every woman be able to sew. There was no place in a pioneer society for women who could not ply a needle. For more than 150 years, American women, except for a tiny minority, who bought ready-made imported clothes, fabricated their own clothing or had it made by a dressmaker. The sale of yard goods and sewing notions expanded and dress pattern manufacturers grew rich. Shortly after the Civil War came the changes that were to revolutionize women's wearing apparel. The early days of this period was the beginning of the full bodiced skirt, not very different from the hoop skirt in vogue a hundred years before. A noticeable feature of the dress of 1850 was the basque, a bodice with short skirt or tails below the waist. Basques made of velvet of some dark color were worn with skirts of a contrasting design. Nearly every woman's wardrobe boasted one of these which could be worn with any skirt. India muslins embroidered in colors were popular.

The long straight skirt of the classic era gradually expanded until by the middle of the century it had reached a maximum of ten yards in circumference. Tapering as it did to the waist, it gave the wearer the appearance of a gracefully proportioned bell. "The bell shaped skirt was distended by several petticoats worn one over the other, and to make it even fuller the petticoats were stiffened. This was done in various ways. Over a flannel petticoat came first a petticoat padded

with horsehair, then one of cotton stiffened with braid, then one with flounces of horsehair, and finally, under the dress, one or two petticoats of starched muslin" (13).

At first these skirts were held out by petticoats with pads of horsehair, to which they owe the name of crinoline, crin and lin being the French words for horse hair and flax cloth. By 1850 these pads had been replaced by wire hoops, but the name stuck and this period is known as the Crinoline Age.

Eventually the weight of so many petticoats became intolerable and a frame was introduced to hold out the dress. It was a frame work of bamboo, whalebone or metal hoops suspended from tapes and increasing in width towards the hem. In the next decade it was the indispensable basis of every dress. "News items in the Jeffersonian Republican of Charlottesville, July 2, 1857, whalebone nearly doubled in price within past 4 months consequence of the enormous consumption in hoop skirts" (18).

As skirts grew wider they also grew longer stopping a little short of the ankle at first, then gradually reached to the floor. The lower part of the dress often consisted of several layers of different lengths, or there were flounces at the hem. "Crape dresses are reported to have had fifteen, organdie dresses eighteen and tarlatan dresses as many as twenty-five" (13). The effect of flouncing on the skirt was repeated in the bertha round the shoulders and the sleeves. The sleeves gradually became funnel shaped, with undersleeves of white tulle. An "elevator" was devised which made it possible to pull up the outer skirt, revealing the decorative under-skirt, and enabling the wearer to walk more freely.

Few fashions have been more ridiculed than the crinoline. The rigidity of the projecting wire hoop made it clumsy and awkward to go through a door, tie a shoe lace, pin up the back hair, get in and out of carriages or pass in aisles of trains and trolleys. It is recorded that when Lady Neville's hoop skirt caught fire at a party, none of the other ladies could come near enough to be of assistance; fortunately, she had presence of mind to roll herself in the hearth-rug and extinguish the flames.

The crinoline, in spite of all its disadvantages had its advantages. It allowed more freedom than did the many petticoats of an earlier day. It was lighter and more hygienic and it made the wire manufacturers prosperous.

The woman of small villages and farms created practical styles which conformed more closely to the figure and allowed them to perform the arduous tasks of maintaining a home.

Coiffures were equally fantastic. Worn flat in front and parted in the middle, the hair was drawn up from the neck and built into a fancy crown adorned with combs, flowers, feathers, ribbons or lace. Side curls peeped out from behind the ears and a lock was allowed to be out of place on the forehead. Later, as the hair came down from its height, half-hanging curls framed the face. Bonnets were at first worn well forward and tied under the chin. Then they slipped so far back that they seemed to be slipping off. A ruffle like veil was added which hung down to the shoulders. There were so many sizes and shapes of bonnets that the entire nineteenth century seems to be a period of

bonnets. Frequently the open bonnets were trimmed with lace and ribbon just inside the brim suggesting the colonial fashion. For summer, bonnets of tulle and fancy straws were worn and velvet and beaver for winter use. The small capote hat was tied under the chin with silk ribbons.

The crinoline led to the replacement of the coat by a large shawl, square in shape but folded in a triangle with the point hanging down the back. (More of a coat than a shawl, it was so large). Other outer garments were capes, stoles and mantles.

The hoop skirt, already more than ample in the fifties, reached such proportions by the Civil War that chroniclers assert that one lady tried to run the blockade with several rolls of cloths, pairs of calvary boots, packages of gold braid and tins of bully beef hidden under hers.

"Notice in the Richmond Daily Dispatch, April 29, 1863, Fashion plates arrived from London through blockade. Costume of ladies returning to a simple style. Hoops rational dimensions, trains have entirely disappeared. Dress falls hardly below the ankle—the whole foot exposed" (18).

The extreme size of the crinoline spelled doom. It became so unmanageable that women realized the need of a new style. To abandon the bell shape at once would have been too drastic a change and so the amount of the fabric for a dress was reduced from the required 16 or 17 yards to a mere 10 or 12 yards.

Gradually the fullness left the front and the sides of the skirt, now cut in gores and was built up in the back. It seems that milady

could not help exaggerating somewhere. When the yardage became so heavy a contraption had to be invented for support. Thus was born the startling petticoat bustle. A sort of cage made of fans or six vertical springs encased in cloth, it was held up by elastic ribbons, which were worn over the shoulders and were buttoned to the belt in front. The skirt cascaded in folds over the bustle to trail for more than a yard behind the wearer. One had to hold oneself very erect to achieve a proper silhouette.

The year 1865 marked a change in shoes. They were now made entirely of kid or patent leather and frequently the two were combined. The lacing came over the instep. The heels were high and gradually became still higher.

In the early part of the sixties the hair was fastened up in a shapeless mass and held in a net. Silk nets were extremely chic and many were spangled with jet. Frequently the front hair was parted in the center, combed down on each side making a loop over the ear or arranged in masses of ringlets. Later the graceful side curl became the fashion and with it flowers were often arranged in the hair. Small hats became more elaborate in 1870 and were worn tilted forward over the eyes. Feathers, quills, bows and veils adorned the brims and crowns. The hat foundations were straw, felts, furs or corded silk. Later the hats were adorned with bird, floral, vegetable and fruit displays.

There was a decided taste for jewelry at this period; earrings, brooches, necklaces and bracelets were in vogue. In place of bracelets, black ribbons were frequently worn about the wrist.

Fashion always swings from one extreme to another and following the hoop, gowns molded the figure. Not long satisfied with the change from hoop skirt to bustle, women began to draw the skirt so tight over the knees in front that walking was difficult, and to mold the bodice so close that breathing was an effort. With the tied-back effects gaining in popularity, the bustle assumed more important proportions. The bustle, both with and without a small hoop, was worn well into the next century. This was the great period for trimmings. Machinery had been contrived to spin them in endless lengths. There were marabout, rat-tail chenille, jet gimp, mohair braid, military braid, feathers and flowers. Any good "Sunday" dress had at least fifty yards. The more emancipated and widely traveled compared their fashion with Europe. Women began to adapt their clothes to their manner of living and their needs, demanding that they be useful as well as beautiful. These have had their influences in the trend toward more simplicity.

The bicycle was a blessing in disguise. One could not ride on one in a bustle. Riding, golfing and tennis, too, taught one how to dress more comfortable and reasonably. Time was when vigorous exercise of any sort was thought unfitted for women. Any exercise more energetic than a game of croquet was unheard of and frowned upon.

During the 1870's and 1880's underclothing was worn in several layers. In winter, the women wore flannel or mixed wool and cotton long underwear, over which was worn a chemise, a corset, a corset cover, a pair of cotton drawers and several petticoats. The chemise

was a one piece garment much like today's underslip, but it was worn under the corset and was made of muslin or fine linen.

Halfway through the 1890's a new corset appeared which changed the outline of the stiff rather formal carriage of the feminine figure. It gave women a curious S-shape, sway back figure which was considered a danger to the health. A demand for its replacement led to a reform and out of this came the Bloomer costume. It consisted of a jacket and short skirt over baggy trousers. Physical exercises for women had its influence on this costume.

The coiffure stayed complicated. At first the hair was piled on the top of the head in a towering mass, confined in a net. It was parted in the middle in front and combed into neat ringlets on the sides. Later the side curl became popular. Old fashioned bonnets were superseded by hats sometimes so loaded with flowers, lace and feathers that their wearers had to bend forward to restore balance. This must have been something of an achievement in the days before the tight bodice, the close-tailored sleeve, the high and narrow collars and the snug-fitting shoe had given way to more sensible garb (2).

By now the skirt had lost its train and the bustle had subsided to a mere plumpness at the hips. The neck was always covered by a collar, except for ball dresses, and sleeves sometimes came to the wrist. There were two kinds of fashions that prevailed at the same time, dressmaker fashions and artist's fashions.

In the short space of two decades the telephone, the electric light, the typewriter and the female stenographer had all invaded the

business office. The business girl dressed demurely in leg of mutton sleeved shirtwaists and long skirts—the sleeves became puffier as the decade advanced.

Charles Dana Gibson was the leading artist of the day. The women in the nineties embraced the "Gibson Girl" costume with its belted full skirt, balloon sleeved shirt—waist and straw sailor hat.

Rich trimming, Irish lace, feathers and froufrou embellished the feminine dress with its full breasted bodice and bell bottom skirt.

There was also the tailored, masculine, suit for the new woman. Her hair was worn plainer. Ladies of leisure wore small hats with wings and veils.

Woman's dress of this century underwent many changes, each playing its part in the historical background of costume.

Some Typical Examples of Costumes

Plate 21: Dress worn by Dolly Madison, wife of President James Madison and First Lady of the White House, 1809-1817.

The overdress is made of yellow satin brocaded with a design of wheat in silver, black and white. The underskirt made of white satin is embroidered with a design of wild roses, cherry blossoms and forget-me-nots. Lace is profusely used as a trim on the dress and for the shawl.

Plate 22: The Empire style of the early nineteenth century featured low necklines and high waistlines with a very narrow skirt. Sleeves were often two-in-one - a long straight sleeve that could be removed from the short puff. This dress was made of checked blue silk.

Plate 23: Another version of the Empire style with a slight flare at the hemline. Fancy embroidery added much to the beauty of this muslin dress. Drawstring bag, straw poke bonnet and gauze mits were accessories chosen by any fashionable lady.

Plate 24: Elizabeth Monroe, wife of President James Monroe and First Lady of the White House from 1817-1825, wore this sacque dress made of cream color taffeta brocaded with dark red flower design.

Plate 25: Blue satin spencer (bodice) with long sleeves worn over an embroidered India mull dress popular around 1810.

The silk gauze veil was worn turban fashion on the head. A black ribbon choker was a favorite accessory.

Plate 26: This inaugural dress made of dark brown velvet with embroidered muslin collar and cuffs was worn by Jane Findlay, friend of the family

of President William Henry Harrison and First Lady of the White House in 1841. The outstanding feature of the costume during this time was the leg-of-mutton sleeve.

Plate 27: This blue watered silk gown was one of a trunk load inherited by Anna Price (relative of the investigator) at the death of her aunt in Savannah, Georgia.

Plate 28: Julia Gardiner Tyler, second wife of President John Tyler and First Lady of the White House in 1844 and 1845, wore this dress of white gauze embroidered with flower design in pastel colors. The close-fitted bodice opened in front and had tiny cap sleeves. The floor length skirt was made in tiers and gathered onto the under skirt.

Plate 29: Hat styles from 1800-1900.

Plate 30: Photograph made at Valentine Museum shows a brown silk brocade dress made in tiers with lace collar and wrist length sleeves gathered above the elbow. A Medallion on a black ribbon and drop earrings were favorite pieces of jewelry.

Ribbons in small bows were worn on each side of the head with little "buns" of hair over each ear.

Plate 31: This plaid taffeta dress with bell skirt, sloping shoulders and full sleeves with linen undersleeves was typical during the 1850's.

Plate 32: This brown and blue watered silk dress with tiny lace collar and embroidered undersleeves was typical in the 1860's. A blue mesh snood was worn over the hair. Beige linen cape was edged in braid. This outfit donated by great-great granddaughter of Julia Wickham Leigh, daughter of John Wickham, builder of the Wickham Valentine Museum.

Plate 33: Photograph made at the Valentine Museum showing a grandmother dressed in a black satin dress and Point D' Esprit day cap in vogue in the 1860's. The small boy was dressed in a wool suit trimmed in braid with a lace collared, long sleeved blouse.

Plate 34: Hair styles from 1800-1900.

Plate 35: A silk dress and train in salmon pink with white lace trimming.

Plate 36: This tiered dress in floral dimity fabric with off the shoulder neckline shows the sleeves made in two sections, the bottom half removable.

Plate 37:

Left: A striped, gold taffeta full length gown with solid gigot sleeves was fashionable during the later part of the century.

Center: Man's costume typical of the period.

Right: This black velvet gown features a gold brocade front panel with lace collar and cuffs.

Plate 38: This dress made from grey satin, grey silk and grey velvet is trimmed with silver braid. Leg-of-mutton sleeves are the outstanding features of this costume.

Plate 21



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute

Plate 22



Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

Plate 23



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 24



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute

Plate 25



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 26



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute

Plate 27



Plate 28



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute

Women's Hat Styles



Plate 30



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 31



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 32



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 33



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 34
WOMEN'S HAIRSTYLES



1800



1860



1830



1855



1870



1875



1885



1895



1900

Plate 35



Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

Plate 36



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 37



Courtesy of Valentine Museum

Plate 38



Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The influence of the culture in Virginia has had its impact upon the entire nation. In fact, cultural developments in Virginia, were the beginning influences for the United States. Much has been written in the annals of history pertaining to this growth and development. However, little has been written regarding the role played by clothing.

This research is designed to study the influence that clothing in Virginia played in the lives of women and the manner in which clothing played a major role in social and cultural life. It is hoped that this study of Virginia women's costumes will contribute to a better understanding of the way of life in the early history of our nation.

The researcher believes that the typical woman's costume for any given period reflects the characteristics of that period, culturally. The immediate relationship of historical events to the style of costume is evident. This is well illustrated in the influence of wars, the mail order catalogue, the garment factory, the sewing machine and the ready-made dress department.

The general silhouette of the woman's costume in Virginia, relating to the different periods presented in this study have been evaluated from descriptions presented in various historical and cultural books and periodicals and from portraits which reveal the typical fashions of the period.

Some of the earliest accounts of colonial life in Virginia indicate that dress was the badge of rank, of social status and dignity. Dress

had a moral effect on the early immigrants. They soon learned that dress indicated a person's occupation, position or locality. The aspirations and goals of the immigrant were influenced accordingly. With all of the hardships, restraints, deprivations and inconveniences, women still thought much about their attire other than the requirements of warmth, comfort, and durability. Actual fabric and fashion depended upon a woman's activities, physical as well as social.

The typical, smartly dressed Virginia woman of the early period made her own clothes, guided by fashion dolls and plates. She relied upon her own ingenuity, color sense, and deftness of needle. When something new evolved from a social leader of the day, a new trend was established.

It is only from the nineteenth century that the clothes of our ancestors have survived in sufficient quantities to make a year-to-year account possible of the changes produced by fashion. Thirty-eight plates are included in this study, illustrating the costumes of Virginia women of various periods.

Study of the various costumes gave this researcher many indications of style adaptations in use today. During the nineteenth century fashions were so completely dominated by those in authority that this influence was still apparent in the fourth decade of the twentieth century.

Culturally, the Virginia women's clothing has been a social manifestation and a means of aesthetic expression. They have always been influenced by contemporary affairs and conditions—social, religious and political. Climate, race, poverty and wealth have all played a part in the fashion of clothing.

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ABSTRACT

A historical study of women's costumes for selected periods as a reflection of the culture in Virginia was designed to gain some understanding of the costumes worn, to observe the role that clothing played in the lives of the settlers and of the influences that brought about changes in costume.

Much information pertaining to this subject was found in books on history. The researcher conducted this study by visiting various museums, reviewing related books and studying historical portraits.

The researcher found that most of the information that is recorded about clothing belonged to persons of some wealth and station of life. The costumes, fabrics, shoes, and other apparel still in existence are relics of past days.

Thirty-eight illustrations on costumes have been included in this study.