Volume 3, Issue 4

March 2009

The Volunteer

A Newsletter for the Volunteers of the 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House

RoxAnn Raisner, Director

Rules for Dancing

Rules for Dancing

From Boston Weekly Magazine, October 29, 1803

1. The music to consist of a fiddle, a pipe and tabor, a hurdy gurdy (N.B. No chorus to be sung until dancing is over).

2. Those ladies who have not white cotton stockings and black Morocco shoes will not be admitted under any pretence whatever. Two old ladies will be provided to examine all who enter.

3. Long beards are forbidden, as it would be very disagreeable if gentlemen should happen to put his cheek beside a lady's.

4. Every lady to come with a clean handkerchief, linen, with her name marked.

5. No gentleman to appear with a cravat that has been worn for more than a week or a fortnight.

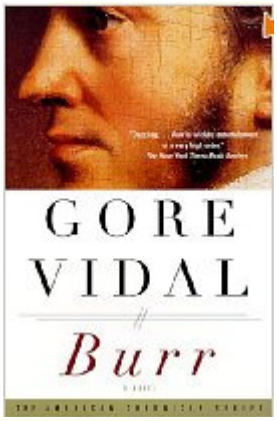
6. No scissors or gimlets are to be brought either by ladies or gentlemen unless their pockets are whole.

1806 print depicting fashionably dressed dancers.

7. No gentleman must squeeze his partner's hand, nor look earnestly upon her; and furthermore he must not even pick up her handkerchief: provided it were to fall. The first denotes he loves her- the second, he wishes to kiss her, and the last, that she makes a sign for both.

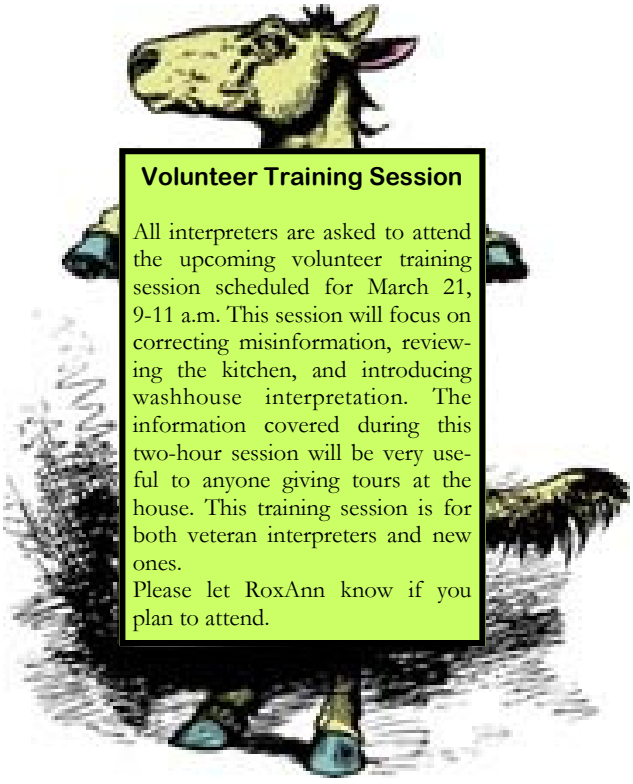
8. No whispering shall be allowed- if anyone shall be found to make insidious remarks about anyone's dancing, he or she shall be put out of the room.

Book Club Selection



Burr by Gore Vidal

Anyone who loves books is welcome. Book club will meet April 1, 7-9 p.m. Call 618-692-1818 for more information.



Volunteer Training Session

All interpreters are asked to attend the upcoming volunteer training session scheduled for March 21, 9-11 a.m. This session will focus on correcting misinformation, reviewing the kitchen, and introducing washhouse interpretation. The information covered during this two-hour session will be very useful to anyone giving tours at the house. This training session is for both veteran interpreters and new ones.

Please let RoxAnn know if you plan to attend.

March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Sewing Circle	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Family Fun Sunday	16 Board Meeting	17	18	19	20	21 Volunteer Training
22 Sewing Circle	23	24	25	26 Tour	27	28
29	30	31	Apr 1 Book Club			

Calendar Activities

- March 8, **Sewing Circle**, 1-3 p.m
- March 15, **Family Fun Sunday**, 1-3 p.m. Enjoy a family day at Stephenson House. Hands-on activities include writing with quill pens, making a writing book, laundry, games, stories, and cutting a stencil. Admission fees: $3 for children (6-12), $5 for adults, FREE for children 5 and under.
- March 21, **Volunteer Training,** 9-11 a.m. Strongly encouraged for all historical interpreters. Topics to be discussed: washhouse interpretation, kitchen, misinformation.
- March 22, **Sewing Circle**, 1-3 p.m.
- March 26, **Columbus School Tour**, 12:45-2:45 p.m., 23 4th graders
- April 1, **Book Club**, 7 p.m. This month's selection is *Burr* by Gore Vidal. Everyone is welcome to participate.

Volunteer Recognition

The following is a list of the top ten volunteers of the month. This list is based on the number of hours each volunteer worked and recorded in the volunteer hours log book. We appreciate all the time our volunteers give each month, regardless of total hours worked. Thanks to each and every one of our volunteers!

1. Rudy Wilson
2. Kathy Schmidt
3. Sid Denny
4. Ellen Nordhauser
5. Valerie Klebenow
6. Veronika Jones
7. Sam Forehand
8. Katie Schmidt
9. Jane Denny
10. Walt Raisner

New to the Wardrobe!

Volunteer Kathy Schmidt recently completed this cap for the men's wardrobe. It is constructed of wool, linen, and leather and is a welcome addition to the house. This style cap was commonly worn by men of the early 1800s for a variety of activities.

Kathy works as a historical interpreter on weekends at Stephenson House. She has worked hard completing her own historical garments and now lends her skills to the expansion of the house wardrobe. Currently, she is preparing to undertake a pair of men's 1820 trousers.

Jane Austen Fashion

English writer Jane Austen (1775-1817) lived her adult life in the era of high-waisted fashion, popularly called English Regency. While only a few passages concerning clothing appear in her novels, Austen herself was very concerned with clothing, and she corresponded much on the subject. The following passages are from *Jane Austen Fashion: Fashion and Needlework in the Works of Jane Austen* (Ludlow, England: Moonrise Press, 2008) by Penelope Byrde. Byrde is retired curator of the Museum of Costume in Bath, England.

Concerning the materials from which clothing was made, Byrde writes:

> Selecting or buying fabrics for new clothes was an important aspect of shopping. Very often friends or relations visiting London or other towns were commissioned to make purchases for those left at home. Jane Austen's letters and novels provide some interesting information about the textiles fashionable during the period…
>
> Muslins, originally imported from Indian, were subsequently produced in England and Scotland. The term muslin covers many varieties of fine, delicately woven cottons which could be plain, embroidered, or with a woven pattern, of different textures and a wide range of colours. …Catherine Morland, the heroine of *Northanger Abbey*, wondering what to wear for her next ball, 'lay awake ten minutes…debating between her spotted and her tamboured [chain-stitched] muslin'….
>
> Muslins could vary considerably in quality and might well prove unsatisfactory on occasion. While in Bath in June 1799 Jane Austen 'had no difficulty in getting a muslin veil for half a guinea, & not much more in discovering afterwards that the Muslin was thick, dirty & ragged…I changed it consequently as soon as I could.'
>
> New fashions in dress textiles had brought several results. The lighter fabrics such as cotton, cambric [a fine linen] and muslin had imposed their own character on women's dress and contributed to the softer, lighter, flowing styles. Furthermore these fabrics would wash easily, unlike the elaborate dress silks…which had to be cleaned in other ways'….
>
> However well muslin might wash, it was, nevertheless, not very practical to wear light-coloured gowns, as Mrs Allen complained in *Northanger Abbey*: 'open carriages are nasty things. A clean gown is not five minutes wear in them. You are splashed getting in and getting out.' White gowns could only really be indulged in by those with means and leisure; they were certainly a mark of gentility but might also be considered unsuitable in certain circumstances. …In *Mansfield Park* the officious Mrs Norris commends a housekeeper who 'turned away two housemaids for wearing white gowns.'
>
> During the day more practical, coloured gowns could be worn. Discussing her clothes with Cassandra in January 1801 Jane wrote: 'I shall want two new coloured gowns for the summer, for my pink one will not do more than clear me from Steventon. I shall not trouble you, however, to get more than one of them, and that is to be a plain brown cambric muslin, for morning wear; the other, which is to be a plain very pretty yellow and white cloud, I mean to buy in Bath.' …A Miss Fletcher, Jane Austen wrote from Kent in September 1796, 'wore her purple Muslin, which is pretty enough, tho' it does not become her complexion.'
>
> Muslin was an important and fashionable textile not only for gowns but also for a number of other garments such as neckerchiefs or fichus (the 'handkerchiefs' or 'neck handkerchiefs' which Jane Austen refers to), to tuck into the bodice of a gown; for caps, aprons, shawls, veils and even bonnets. As Henry Tilney pointed out [in *Northanger Abbey*], 'muslin always turns to some account or other; Miss Morland will get enough out of it for a handkerchief, or a cap, or a cloak. Muslin can never be said to be wasted.'
>
> Heavier linens, or cottons (such as calico and dimity) were also used and other textiles were undoubtedly necessary for warmth. Gowns and other garments continued to be made of silks and satins. Sarsenet, a type of light silk was particularly popular and there are frequent references to this fabric in contemporary periodicals. Bonnets and pelisses could be made of velvet. Woollen cloth was also worn and Jane Austen mentions morning gowns of 'stuff' which were warm and comfortable but not particularly elegant…
>
> The plainer, softer materials which were now fashionable gave more scope for decoration than the richly-patterned silks worn previously. Muslin gowns were frequently embroidered in white or woven with a gold or silver thread for evening or Court dress. Ribbon trimming was also fashionable. In 1813 Jane Austen wrote: 'My gown is to be trimmed everywhere with white ribbon plaited on, somehow or other.' A year later she

(Continued on page 6)

A copy of Lucy Stephenson's 1831 letter to Patty Canal is now on display in the master bedroom. The original letter was featured in the November 2007 issue of *The Volunteer*. As an significant item of house history, the copy allows visitors to pick and touch a piece of Lucy. The 1831 letter is the only item in the house collection that is original to the Stephenson family.

Ben's Brigade

On Saturday, March 28, 2009, St. Charles, Mo., will celebrate its bicentennial. The city needs militia for activities that day. This is a paid event for Ben's Brigade. Hours are 11 a.m.–4 p.m. Any brigade members interested in participating, please contact Walt Raisner at 618-692-1818.

From the Hearth:

The following recipes are taken from the Old Sturbridge Village recipe section at http://www.osv.org/explore_learn/recipes.html. Enjoy!

Marlborough Pudding

Original Recipe:

Take 12 spoons of stewed apples, 12 of wine, 12 of sugar, 12 of melted butter, and 12 of beaten eggs, a little cream, spice to your taste; lay in paste No. 3, in a deep dish; bake one hour and a quarter.

Modern Adaptation:

The modern adaptation is offered by Old Sturbridge Village's Department of Education and Public Programs. The "spice to your taste" in this case is most often nutmeg and lemon. The "wine" used is dry sherry. The "paste" is just pie dough for a one-crust pie. Don't forget that an egg-rich pie filling will continue to cook after it's taken out of the oven.

Stew apples and push through a fine sieve to purée. Mix together 3/4 cup of apple purée, 3/4 cup of white sugar, 3/4 cup of sherry, 6 tablespoons of melted butter (cut down from original recipe), 4 well-beaten eggs, 1/2 cup heavy cream, juice of one lemon & 2 teaspoons of grated nutmeg (or to taste). Pour into pie crust and bake at 350° about one hour or until set. (Will look similar to a pumpkin pie, though lighter in color.) Cool before serving.

Potted Cheese

This receipt was originally published in Maria Eliza Ketelby Rundell's *A New System of Domestic Cookery* (Boston: W. Andrews, 1807).

Original Recipe:

Cut and pound four ounces of Cheshire cheese, one ounce and a half of fine butter, a teaspoonful of white pounded sugar, a little bit of mace, and a glass of white wine. Press it down in a deep pot.

Modern Adaptation:

2 cups grated hard cheese (assorted sharp cheeses such as cheddar or Romano)
2 ounces butter
2 teaspoons white sugar
1 teaspoon mace
¼ cup white port wine

Using food processor or mixer, combine all ingredients until smooth. Adjust seasoning according to taste.

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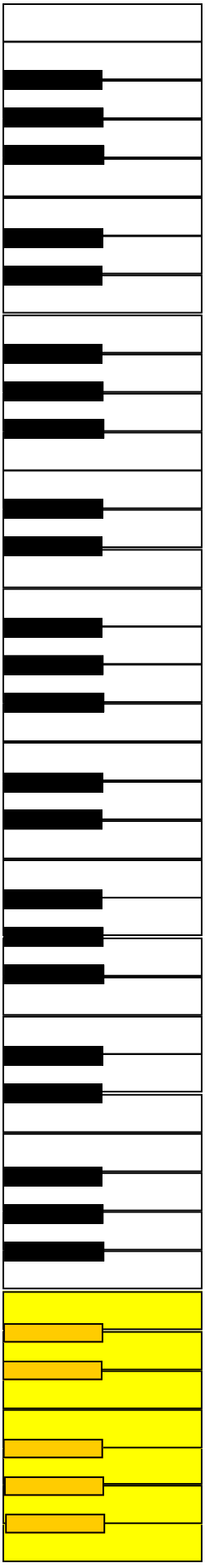


Piano Forte Repair Fund

To date, twelve piano forte keys have been purchased by donors, making our total funds raised $180. Each month the Volunteer will display the keyboard (left) with the number of sold keys colored yellow, and a list of donors who have contributed to the project. The repair fund goal is $1000.

Donors to date:

- Brenda Knox & Matt Crowe
- Dr. Robert Malench
- Elizabeth & Bill Bowling
- Kathy Schmidt

Keys are $15 each

To purchase a key, send donations to:

Piano Forte Repair Fund

c/o. 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House

P.O. Box 754

Edwardsville, Illinois 62025

Checks should be made payable to **Friends of the Col. Benjamin Stephenson House**.

News & Needful Things

NOTICE:

- Interpretive training booklets are available for volunteers to sign out, to study the basic history of the house. The booklets contain the basic house tour and various information from the interpretive tour conducted at the house on a daily basis. Anyone interested in becoming a historical interpreter, or in reviewing the tour information, may contact RoxAnn to check out a booklet.

THANKS:

Thank you to everyone who helped during the Valentine dinner and clean-up. Your assistance was invaluable and much appreciated!

Thank you, Rudy Wilson, for washing all of the laundry from the Valentine dinner.

Thank you, Kathy Schmidt, for purchasing several spools of thread for the house sewing supplies.

Thank you, Dottie Vaughn, for donating the linen tea towels and small jars.

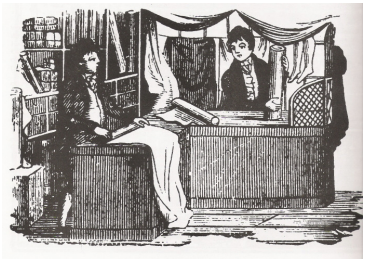
Thank you, Karen Mateyka, for the donation of *Swearingen/Vanswearingen and Related Families* by Karel L. Whyte.

WANTED:

- seamstress willing to oversee the construction of a Father Christmas robe
- medium-weight linen for ladies' mitts
- seamstresses to sew men's aprons and trousers, and ladies' shifts for the wardrobe
- old wool clothing with a 95% or greater wool content for use in a rug-hooking class
- child's and male dress forms (torsos)
- period forks and knives
- tin plates
- straw brooms (historical construction)

FYI:

- Historical clothing patterns are available for sign-out by people to make their own garb. Contact RoxAnn for a list of patterns and fabric swatches.



wrote [concerning mourning dress for the death of the queen's brother], 'I have determined to trim my lilac sarsenet with black sattin ribbon…Ribbon trimmings are all the fashion at Bath… [.]' Further on in the letter she says: 'I have been ruining myself in black sattin ribbon with a proper perl edge; & now I am trying to draw it up into kind of Roses, instead of putting it in plain double plaits' (62-5).

Concerning the making of clothes, Byrde writes:

> Women's clothes at this period were not, as a rule, bought ready-made (although Jane Austen does mention ready-made cloaks on sale in Alton, Hampshire). Garments such as gowns, pelisses or spencers, which required fitting, were either made to order by a dressmaker or made up at home by ladies themselves and their servants. Similarly, various accessories were supplied by milliners and shoemakers, but caps, hats and bonnets were frequently trimmed at home.
>
> During the eighteenth century the seamstress or dressmaker who made women's gowns was usually known as a 'mantua-maker', the mantua referring to a type of gown which became fashionable at the end of the seventeenth century. …In the cancelled chapter of *Persuasion* Admiral Croft is very anxious that Anne Elliot should visit his wife and assures her that she is 'quite alone, nobody but her mantuamaker with her, and they have been shut up together this half-hour, so it must be over soon.' 'Her mantuamaker! Then I am sure my calling now would be most inconvenient.' This passage illustrates the role of the professional dressmaker who would come to the house to receive instructions and take fittings for garments to be made. Alternatively, Jane Austen frequently mentions in her letters taking material to be made up into gowns and talks of more than one dressmaker by name. For example, Miss Burton, a London dressmaker, made pelisses for Jane and [her sister] Cassandra in April 1811. 'Our Pelisses are 17/S each', she wrote, '—she charges only 8/ for the making, but the Buttons seem expensive; — *are* expensive, I might have said — for the fact is plain enough.'

> Even when made by the professional dressmaker, the style and construction of a garment were largely dependent on the choice and direction of the customer who would also choose the material. …As a result, the making of any new gown involved some considered planning and it must, at times, have seemed troublesome to make frequent decisions of this kind. Complaining to her sister in December 1798 Jane Austen wrote: 'I cannot determine what to do about my new Gown; I wish such things were to be bought ready made… — I want to have something suggested which will give me no trouble of thought or direction.' Usually, however, she expresses a natural interest in new clothes. In the same letter, referring to the purchase of a new muslin gown she says: '*I* am determined to buy a handsome one whenever I can, & I am so tired & ashamed of half my present stock, that I even blush at the sight of the wardrobe which contains them.'
>
> At home, dressmaking was undertaken by many ladies themselves and sewing was also done by the maids. In *Mansfield Park*, for instance, Lady Bertram's maid 'was rather hurried in making up a new dress for her' and in *Emma*, Mr Woodhouse speaks of a servant, Hannah, who comes to the house to do needlework.
>
> Jane Austen's nephew in his *Memoir [of Jane Austen]* recalled of his aunt that 'some of her merriest talk was over clothes which she and her companions were making, sometimes for themselves, and sometimes for the poor.' Where her own clothes were concerned, her dressmaking efforts tended towards the alteration or trimming of various garments, such as the gauze gown of which she 'lowered the bosom especially at the corners, & plaited sattin ribbon round the top.' Jane and Cassandra do not appear to have made their own gowns; for example, from Bath in May 1801 she told Cassandra: 'I will engage Mrs Mussell as you desire. She made my dark gown very well & may therefore be trusted I hope with Yours — but she does not always succeed with lighter Colours. — My white one I was obliged to alter a good deal.'
>
> Some letters to her sister contain minute details of the intended construction of a new gown and her remarks quite often express an awareness of changing fashions, especially when staying in London or at their brother's large country house, Godmersham Park in Kent. In January 1809 she wrote to Cassandra who was visiting Godmersham: 'I can easily suppose that your six weeks here will be fully occupied, were it only in lengthening the waist of your gowns.' Fashion illustrations of this date reflect attempts to lengthen the bodice by a few inches, although it was to be a long time before the waistline returned to its natural level. Several years later, in 1813, when skirt hems were becoming wider and more ornamented, she wrote from Godmersham herself to encourage Cassandra to alter her gowns: 'Miss Chapman', she says, 'had a double flounce to her gown. — You really must get some flounces. Are not some of your large stock of white morn'g gowns just in a happy state for a flounce, too short?'
>
> Other items such as caps for herself, shirts and cravats for male relatives, baby clothes, shirts and other items for the poor were certainly made at home by Jane Austen and her family. The custom of making clothes for the poor was quite general; in *Mansfield Park* Mrs Norris tells Fanny: 'if you have no work of your own, I can supply you from the poor-basket' (54-8).

Byrde continues:

> Jane Austen mentions on more than one occasion in her letters the length of seven yards to be purchased for a gown for her mother, although in January 1801 she asks Cassandra to buy: 'Seven yards for my mother, seven yards and a half for me' as, she says, she is a taller woman. Writing from London in April 1811 she told her sister that she was tempted, in a linendraper's shop 'by a pretty coloured muslin, & bought 10 yds of it, on the chance of your liking it.' She often refers in her letters to buying 'a gown' but by this she means the standard length of material required to make one and not a garment itself. Ready to wear gowns

were not available for sale at this time, except through the second hand market.

Printed paper dressmaking patterns were also not in common use at this date but it is evident that both old and new garments were copied or used as patterns themselves. In January 1801 Jane wrote to Cassandra at Godmersham that 'Mary…will be much obliged to you if you can bring her the pattern of the Jacket & Trowsers, or whatever it is, that Eliz:th's boys wear when they are first put into breeches — ; or if you could bring her an old suit itself she would be very glad, but that I suppose is hardly do-able.' In *Emma* Harriet Smith talks of her 'pattern gown' which she has left at Emma's house. One new or particularly fashionable garment might serve as the pattern for several others and in *Sense and Sensibility* the Misses Steele took patterns from some of Lady Middleton's elegant new dresses. In a letter of January 1807 Jane Austen mentions to her sister that a certain Mrs Dickson had desired Mrs Francis Austen (Jane's sister-in-law…) 'not to provide herself with a christening dress, which is exactly what her young correspondent wanted; and she means to defer making any of the caps as long as she can, in hope of having Mrs D's present in time to be serviceable as a pattern.' Again, in 1813 Jane Austen and her niece have been buying new caps for themselves but she says: 'Fanny is out of conceit with hers already; she finds that she has been buying a new cap without having a new pattern, which is true enough.'

Since procuring and taking new patterns involved a certain effort they were naturally quite highly valued and Jane wryly told Cassandra in June 1799: 'I am quite pleased with Martha & Mrs Lefroy for wanting the pattern of our Caps, but I am not so well pleased with Your giving it to them.'

From the evidence of her letters it appears that women's clothes were altered frequently to vary the style and provide the maximum amount of wear. This was partly because dress fabrics were still expensive to buy. Her nephew in his *Memoir of Jane Austen* said that as a child, her brother Francis Austen's 'first cloth suit was made from a scarlet habit, which, according to the fashion of the time, had been his mother's usual morning dress' (60-2).

Redyeing was another way that the life of women's clothing was extended.

Women's clothes during this period seem quite frequently to have been dyed either to provide an alternative fashionable colour for a gown or to convert other clothes into mourning. Dyeing was not always successful and in October 1808 Jane asked her sister: 'how is your blue gown? — Mine is all to pieces. — I think there must have been something wrong in the dye, for in placed it divided with a Touch. — There was four shillings thrown away…' (73).

Specifically concerning mourning, Byrde notes:

Strict observance of mourning, even for distant relatives, was the rule in the early nineteenth century and the Austens being a large family were often obliged to wear it. A number of references in Jane Austen's letters illustrate the expense involved in reserving special clothes for these occasions, but various expedients such as altering and dyeing other garments were usually found. In October 1808 she wrote to Cassandra from Southampton: 'my mother is preparing for Mrs E. K. [a relative] — she has picked her old silk pelisse to pieces, & means to have it dyed black for a gown — a very interesting scheme.'

A week later, following the sudden…death of their sister-in-law, Elizabeth Austen Knight, she wrote to Cassandra about her own mourning. She was, she said, to be 'in bombazeen and crape, according to what we are told is universal *here*…. My mourning, however, will not impoverish me, for by having my velvet Pelisse fresh lined & made up, I am sure I shall have no occasion *this winter* for anything new of that sort. — I take my Cloak for the lining — & shall send yours on the chance of its doing something of the same for you — tho' I beleive [sic] your Pelisse is in better repair than mine. — *One* Miss Baker makes my gown, & the other my Bonnet, which is to be silk covered with Crape' (77-9).

Regarding the manufacture of men's items, Byrde writes:

Men's shirts and cravats were usually made by their families at home. Shirts were made of linen, often Irish. In January 1799 Jane Austen told Cassandra: 'when you come home you will have some shirts to make up for Charles [their brother]. Mrs Davies frightened him into buying a piece of Irish [linen] when we were in Basingstoke.' The following year she wrote: 'I have heard from Charles, & am to send his shirts by half dozens as they are finished; one sett will go next week.' Like Jane Austen, Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* was kept busy at home making linen for her brother before he went away to sea: 'by working early and late…she did so much that the boy was shipped off at last, with more than half his linen ready.' Catherine Morland on the other hand was not so diligent on her brother's behalf and her mother remarked: 'I do not know when poor Richard's cravats would be done if he had no friend but you.' The cravat was a large triangle or square of muslin, lawn [fine cambric] or silk folded crosswise into a band which was then wrapped round the neck with the long ends brought to the front and tied with a knot or bow (93-4).

The fitted items of a wealthier man's wardrobe, such as coats and breeches, pantaloons, or trousers, were professionally made by tailors. A case in point is Colonel Brandon in Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, whom fellow character John Willoughby resents because he "has more money than he can spend…, and two new coats every year" (92).

Upcoming Workshop

Clothed in Modesty:

Making a Woman's Early-19th-Century Neckline Filler

April 18 & May 2, 12 – 4 p.m.

During the early 19th century, women typically filled the necklines of their high-waisted gowns with lightweight modesty cloths or false shirts--the historical equivalent of a modern "dickey." Learn to make this garment for your reenacting wardrobe. Project is completely hand sewn. Some hand-sewing experience required.

Class $65. Fee includes supply packet/instructions. Limit 10 students. Instructor: Elizabeth Bowling

Bring Sewing Kit: pins, small and large fabric scissors, small sewing needle, white cotton sewing thread, measuring tape, and fabric marking pencil or washable marker.

Note: At least one week before class date, you must contact the instructor (618-692-1818) with the following measurements: neck, shoulder width, bust, under bust (bra band), and length from throat to under bust.

To Register call Lewis & Clark Community College at 618-468-2222.

The Volunteer

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