

May 2015

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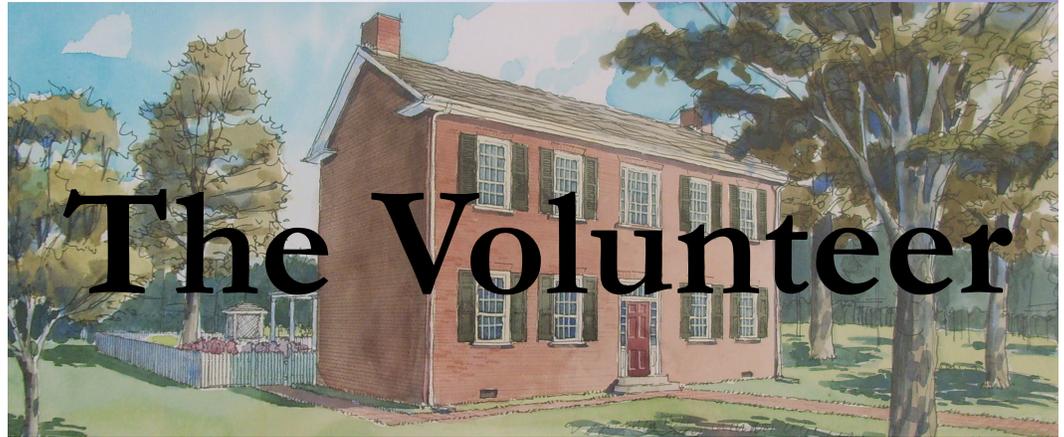
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The 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House



The Volunteer

Lucy Stephenson's 1831 Letter

On June 15, 1831, Lucy Stephenson wrote a letter to a young woman by the name of Patronella "Patty" Canal. It is one of a handful of original documents associated with Lucy Stephenson that has survived the years. In 2006 the original letter was given to the house by Dorothy Crain, a descendent of Patty Canal. This is the only item in our collection that is both associated with the family that is original to the house.

According to the 1830 census, Miss Canal lived in Lucy's home as a boarder. Whether Lucy was a guardian to Patty, a mentor, or simply a landlord remains unclear, but there was obviously a relationship between the two women. By the time the letter was written in 1831, Patty was working in St. Louis for a Mrs. Tiffin.

According to available historical evidence, Patty did not easily conform to what was expected of her. Her family had apparently wanted her to become a nun, but Patty had other ideas. She was sent to two convents, was repeatedly reprimanded for misconduct, and was finally asked to leave one facility in Missouri. Patty ultimately married and became a school teacher in Carlinville. The following text is

transcribed from the original letter written by Lucy.

Edwardsville
June 15, 1831

Dear Patty,
As I have not yet answered any of your letters I will make up for the neglect by telling you all the news that will interest you as far as I can recollect and first let me tell you that Fanny Wilson was married in about ten days after you left here, we were all at the wedding not many others were there, because the house is too small they had an excellent Dinner which we all sat down to immediately after the ceremony which was performed by Mr. Messenger, they have not yet commenced housekeeping. Betsy has been living with Elvira for sometime. there has been

many tears shed in Edwardsville for some days in consequence of the men being called out to fight the Indians. Volney went but Ise had to stay & take care of that celebrated cabin, Buckmaster, Emerson, Sample, Ben, Winchester & a great many more of your acquaintances have gone, Mr Starr was preparing to go but a crazy man who was in town struck him so severe a blow on his hip that it disabled him & he has kept his bed ever since until yesterday, if he recovers in time he will follow after the rest. I expect James will be there, Mr Thomas is amongst the volunteers. Mary, her father and Wasb, have gone to Ohio, Louisa is going to the female school in the house where Elvira lived last winter. Mrs. Hull has returned here & lives in the same house she left.

(Continued on page 3)



A copy of the letter is displayed in the master bedroom.

The Basic Anatomy of Working Garments of the Federal Period: Men

Garments worn by working class men were made for ease of movement, comfort and durability. Similar to women's clothing of the Federal Period, there was a wide variety of fabrics used and styles worn. The following garments are 'basic' items found in a working man's wardrobe.

Shirt:

- Loose fitting
- Made of linen, linsey woolsey or muslin.
- Colors commonly used were woven checks and white.
- The shirt was constructed with a series of squares and rectangles. The body is a large square cut on the fold, sleeves are rectangles cut on the fold, a square gusset connecting the sleeve to the body and a long rectangle also cut on the fold for the collar.
- The sleeves set off the shoulder, known as a 'drop sleeve'.
- Length of the body could reach to the knee.
- Long shirts often times double as under-drawers by wrapping the tails between the legs.



WHAT NOT TO DO – Men, regardless of social status, would not have worn this garment without something over it. This



was an undergarment.

Trousers:

- Long pants worn by men of all social classes.
- Length ranged from above ankle to top of foot.
- The front fall should be narrow not broad.
- Made of jean, corduroy, wool, heavier linen
- Fit could be very baggy through the legs to snugly fitted down to ankle.
- Working men probably preferred a loose fitting trouser.
- Sailors and laborers are often depicted in period paintings wearing a garment called "slops". Slops were very loose fitting pants (similar to women's modern day 'gauchos') that could be worn over the top of regular trousers to protect them from soiling.
- High waistline. In men's trousers, this high waistline was achieved by setting the bottom of the waistband slightly above the navel then extending it up about four inches. Suspenders kept the trousers from sliding down.
- Knee britches were falling out of fashion by this period. Some men continued to wear them with riding boots, under a pair of leggings, hunting or for working in the fields. Older men who felt comfortable in the styles of their youth may have worn them but the style was very old fashioned.

WHAT NOT TO DO – 'French' fly and zipper fly trousers were not worn during this period.

Vest:

- Cut high into the arm pit.
- Narrow shoulder
- Worn over the shirt and was consider the lowest state of undress acceptable.
- Double or single breasted.
- Only two pockets on lower front. No chest pocket.
- Tall standing collar very common.
- Cut to reflect the high waisted fashions.



- Made of a linen, heavy printed cotton, wool or silk.
- The back of the vest was generally made of a cheaper material since it wasn't meant to be seen.



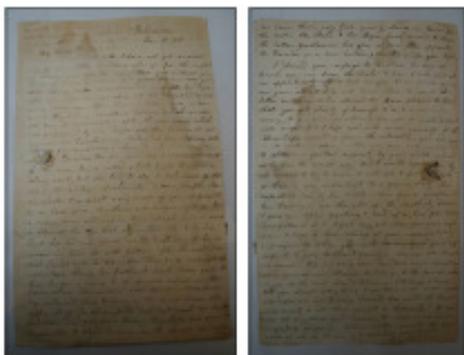
Neckerchief or neck cloth:

- Worn over the shirt collar with the collar folded over it or standing up.
- Typical fabric: linen of various prints and colors.
- Working men probably preferred a simple neckerchief



Coat, Jacket or Work Smock:

- A coat worn by someone doing hard labor **would not** have had tails; they would have only gotten in the way.
- Working men preferred a short coat or jacket.
- Coats or shortcoat could be single or double-breasted
- Commonly made of linen, jean or wool with a stand-up or rolled collar.
- A work smock is a very large loose fitting over-shirt often worn over the top of the short coat or vest to protect the other garments from soiling. *See picture below.*



The original letter.

(Continued from page 1)

Miss Emaline Judd died last week her health had been bad for some time. Eliz^z Fall has gone to Nashville & there is some doubt about her returning.

We have three very fine young ladies in town from

the East. Mr McKee & Mr Hogan have moved to town the latter gentleman has open a fine store opposite Dr. Edwards in a new building erected since you left.

I delivered your message to Mr. Starr he says the trunk you can have, the Basket & fan I will send when an opportunity offers but as you have never given me your address I do not know where to direct this letter or the articles alluded to. I am pleased to hear that you get plenty of business to do, & improve in sewing, it is a fine opportunity for you to make a first rate seamstress & I hope you will avail yourself of the advantages resulting from the situation you are now in, & continue there until you are well qualified to obtain a genteel support by your needle which is by far the easiest way. And I would advise you by all means to try & learn to cut out & fit garments as that is very important to a young Lady who expects to live by her needle. Now for a question or two, have you ever thought of the motherly advice I gave you before parting? And if so, how far have you followed it? I feel very solicitous for your well fare

& hope to hear always of your respectability & prosperity. When you write to New York give my respects to your Mother & family. We are all as well as usual. Pass has sung, some dreadful songs about you since your absence, Marion & Puss go to the female school it one of the first order I believe— I have told you almost everything & yes there is one more which will astonish you. Granny Leonard has joined the temperance society is not that almost a maracle? If you can at any time find leisure to visit us we shall be glad to see you. Adieu Patty accept the best wishes of all of the family & especially your friend.

Lucy Stephenson

A Receipt for History

Bookbinding Paste (historical)

This is an excellent receipt (recipe) for a historical glue/paste. We've used this for many projects at Stephenson House ranging from bookbinding to wallpaper boxes.

Use 1 part flour (not self rising) to 5 parts

water, heat just to simmer, stirring constantly. Use a whisk as if you were making a cream sauce.

Add more water, if needed to get a thick cream/thin pudding/gravy consistency. DO NOT boil, but cook until it's translucent. This paste creates a very strong bond.

This receipt will make a large amount of paste. Leftover paste can be stored in the refrigerator for a couple weeks.



On display in the master bedroom is a wallpaper box made using this paste recipe.

Upcoming Dates

- May 1, **Trinity Lutheran School Tour**, 12:30-2:30pm, 17+/- 5th
- May 2, **Junior Gardener** (Girl Scout Badge Program)
- May 6, **Columbus School Tour**, 9:30-11:30am, 58+/- 3rd
- May 6, **Columbus School Tour**, 12:30-2:30pm, 58+/- 3rd
- May 7, **Woodland Elementary School Tour**, 10am-12pm, 50+/- 4th
- May 7, **Woodland Elementary School Tour**, 12:30-2:30pm, 50+/- 4th
- May 8, **Woodland Elementary School Tour**, 12:30-2:30pm, 50+/- 4th
- May 9, **Birthday Party**, 2-4pm
- May 13, **Maryville Christian School**, 10:30am-12:30pm, 31+/- 2nd graders
- May 15, **St. Bonifae Catholic School**, 10am-12pm, 54+/- 3rd & 4th graders
- May 15, **St. Peter School Tour**, 1:30-3:30pm, 12-3rd & 4th

New to the House Wardrobe

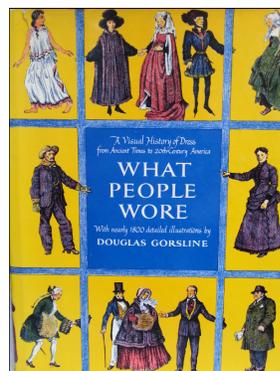
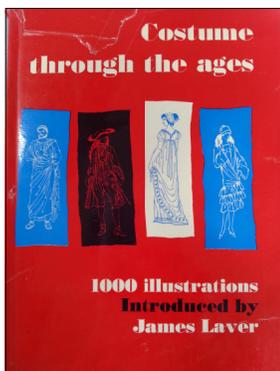
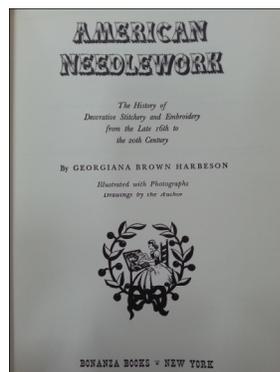
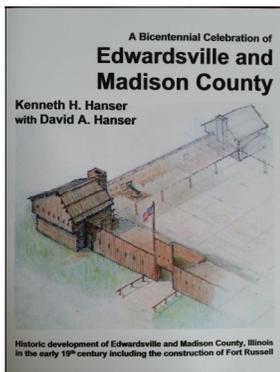


A reproduction child's robe was recently donated to the house by Dottie Vaughn. It is a welcome addition to our limited wardrobe.

New to the House Library

Four books have been added to our reference library thanks to the generosity of David Hanser and Dottie Vaughn. (Upper left) David co-authored *A Bicentennial Celebration of Edwardsville and Madison County* with his brother Kenneth. He donated a total of four copies to the house.

Dottie downsized her home library to our benefit. Our library now has *American Needlework*, *What People Wore*, and *Costumes through the Ages*.





The Volunteer

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News & Needs

Thank you....

- Diane Schrader for the donation of paper towels and toilet paper
- Dottie Vaughn for the toddler's reproduction robe to the wardrobe, fabric and reference books to the house library.

Needs....

- flour
- unprocessed honey
- volunteers to help with school tours, house tours, gift shop, garden & grounds, grant writing & research, special events.
- cleaning supplies such as Windex,

toilet bowl cleaner,
hand soap,
disinfecting wipes,
bleach, toilet
paper,

- seamstresses to sew clothing for the volunteer wardrobe
- bolt of 100% cotton batiste

